

**ADDRESS: 1039 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Union Republican Club

Review: Designation

Property Owner: Samson Asset Management

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, [theodore.maust@phila.gov](mailto:theodore.maust@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1039 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building, constructed in 1878 and significantly modified in 1918, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. The property was the headquarters of the Union Republican Club from 1878 to 1901 and for the Republican City Committee until 1934. The property has a long history of commerce at the first-floor level, and from 1949 through the 1970s, the whole building was used by Tappin's Jewelers for retail sales. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J, exemplifying the social and economic history of the city in its political and commercial history. The nomination further argues that the distinctive architectural elements of both the original structure, exhibiting trademarks of nineteenth-century eclectic design, and the renovated façade along Chestnut Street, in the Commercial Style, satisfy Criteria for Designation C and D.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1039 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J.



**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT**  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current/Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building

Structure

Site

Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:     excellent     good     fair     poor     ruins

Occupancy:     occupied     vacant     under construction     unknown

Current use: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

**6. DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: \_\_\_\_\_

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Other significant persons: \_\_\_\_\_

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name with Title \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Notice Issuance: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

**NOMINATION FOR THE  
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**



*Figure 1: View of 1039 Chestnut Street, looking Northeast. Photo by author, October 2023.*

**UNION REPUBLICAN CLUB  
1039 CHESTNUT STREET  
CONSTRUCTED 1878  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107**

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: 1039 CHESTNUT STREET

The property boundaries, as described on deeds of sale, are as follows:

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground, together with the four story brick building erected thereon, SITUATE in the Fifty (formerly the ninth) Ward of the City of Philadelphia, described according to a Survey and Plan thereof made by Ben H. Joseph, Esquire, Surveyor and Regulator of the Third District, on the Sixty day of September, A.O. 1950, as follows, to wit: -

BEGINNING at a point formed by the intersection of the Northerly side of Chestnut Street on City Plan by Ordinance dated March 31st, 1884 (60 feet wide) and the Easterly side of Eleventh Street (50 feet wide) thence extending Eastwardly along the Northerly side of Chestnut Street Nineteen feet to a point; thence extending Northwardly along a line parallel with the said Eleventh Street passing through a brick party-wall the distance of Seventy-six feet, to a point in the Southerly side of a certain three feet wide alley, leading Westwardly into Eleventh Street; thence extending Westwardly along the Southerly side of said three wide alley parallel with the Northerly side of said Chestnut Street, the distance of Nineteen feet to a point in the Easterly side of Eleventh Street aforesaid; and thence extending Southwardly along the Easterly side of Eleventh Street, the distance of Seventy-six feet to the Northerly side of Chestnut aforesaid, the first mentioned point and place of beginning. BEING No. 1039 Chestnut Street.

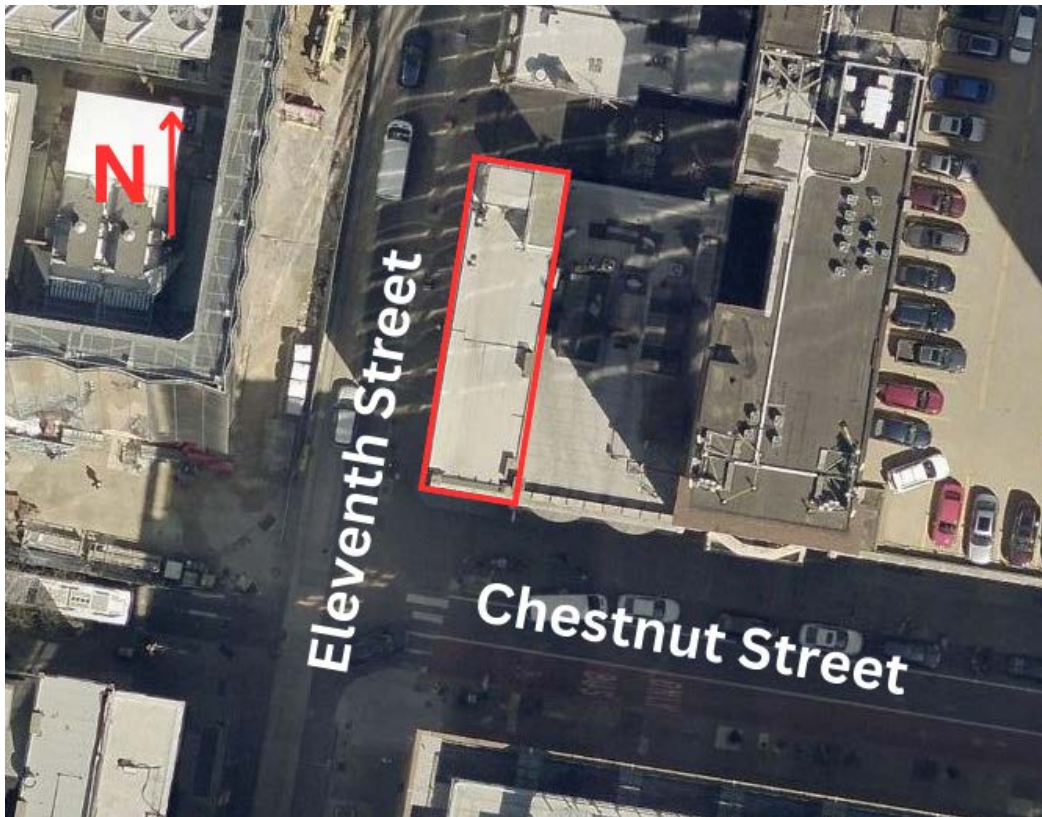


Figure 2: Aerial Photo from Pictometry.phila.gov, edited by PHC staff to show property boundaries.

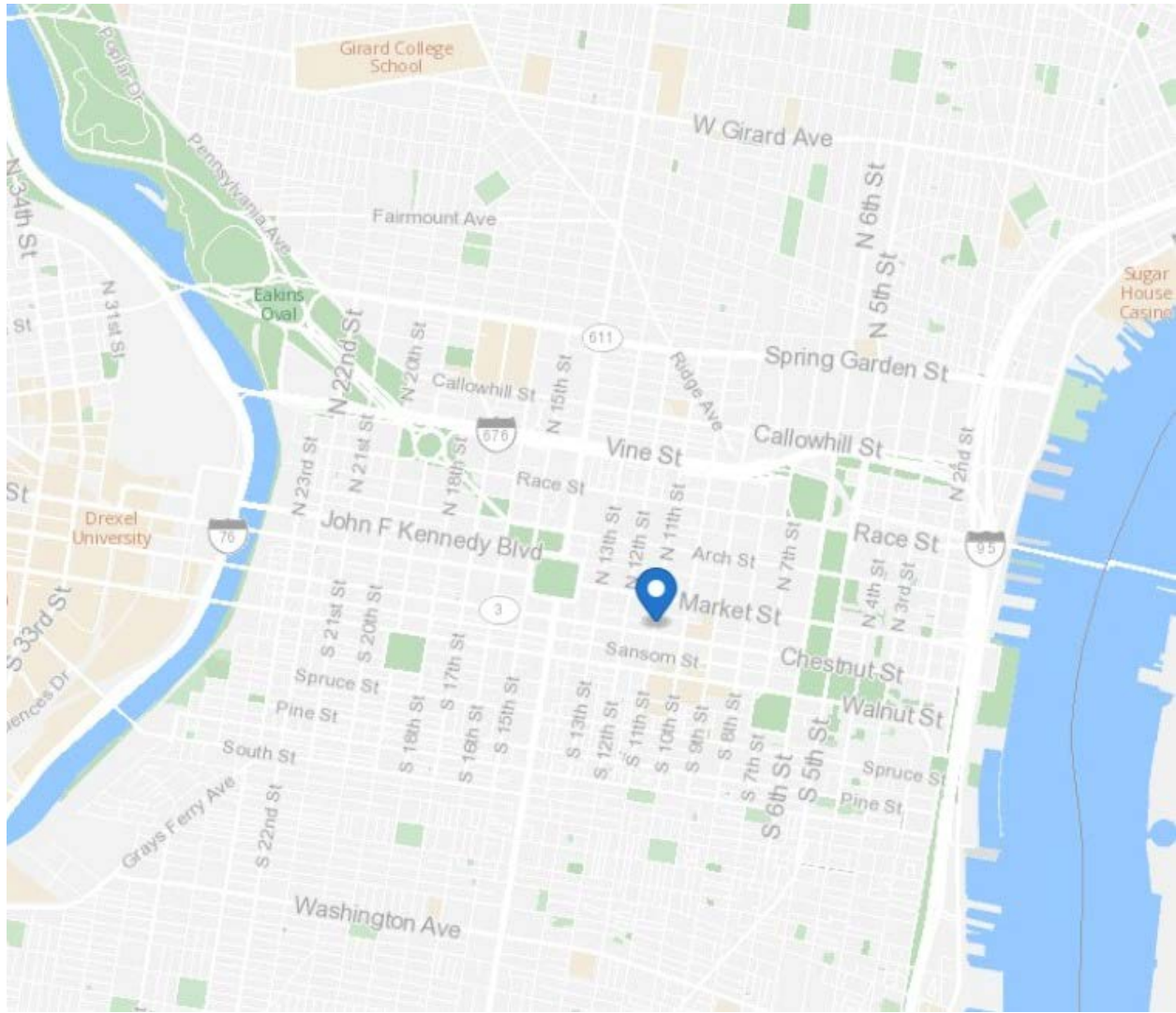


Figure 3: Location of 1039 Chestnut Street. Image from [phila.atlas.gov](http://phila.atlas.gov).

## 6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The former Union Republican Club is located in the Market East area of Center City Philadelphia. The building occupies the northeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Chestnut Street, extending 76 feet along the former and 19 feet along the latter. Originally constructed in 1878, the four-story Victorian Eclectic brick building was shortened in depth in the 1910s following the passage of an ordinance to widen Chestnut Street by five feet. As with most commercial properties, the building includes more recent alterations to the first-floor storefronts.



Figure 4: View of 1039 Chestnut Street, looking Northeast. Photo by author, October 2023.

The surrounding area is a mix of large-scale contemporary buildings and older structures of two to four stories with street-level storefronts. Toward the east and immediately south of Chestnut Street is the campus of Thomas Jefferson University.



*Figure 5: 1039 Chestnut Street seen from above. Image from Pictometry.phila.gov*

The present building is at least the second on the site. The 1860 Hexamer atlas shows an earlier complex on the site comprised of a four-story building at 1039 Chestnut Street and a two-story rear ell addressed as 43 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street.



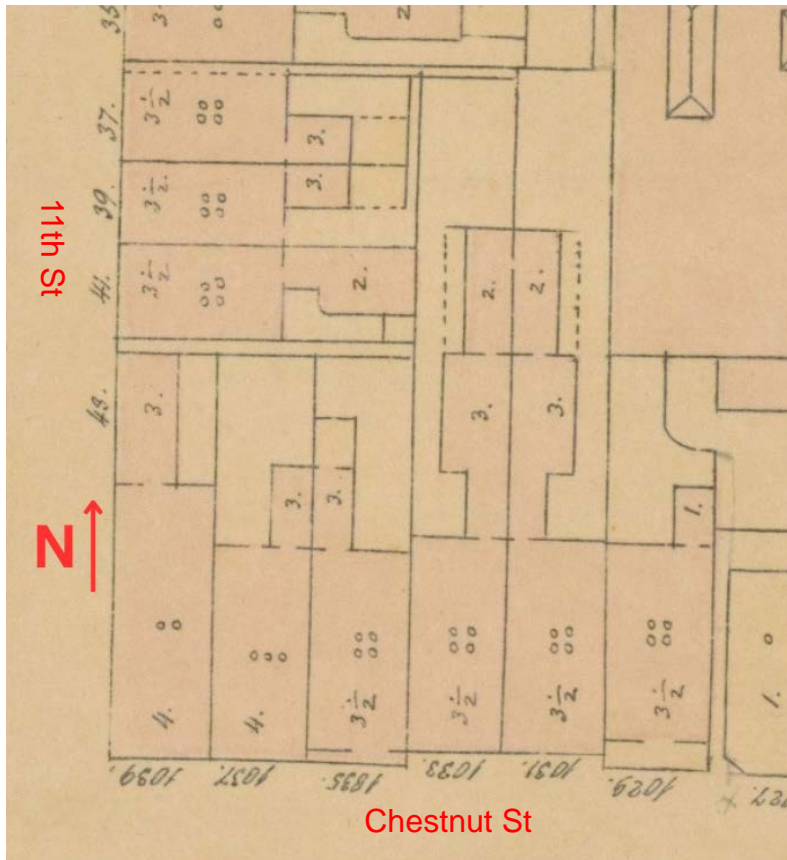


Figure 6: A previous building on the site, including a rear ell, can be seen at the bottom left of this plate from the Hexamer & Locher's Maps of the City of Philadelphia, (1860).

In April 1878, the Union Republican Club temporarily moved to rooms in 1021 Chestnut Street, while its earlier building at 1039 Chestnut Street was “torn down, and a new and more commodious structure erected” by the builders and architect Yarnall and Cooper.<sup>1</sup> When construction was completed that fall, a description in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* was full of praise, such that it seems to have exaggerated the new building’s measurements:

The building...is built of pressed brick, with tile ornamentations. It has a frontal of twenty-five feet and runs back one hundred feet on Eleventh street. The entrance to the club room is on Eleventh street, and the second story, in which is located the parlor and dining room, is reached by a broad stairway. There are two rooms on the third floor, duplicates of those on the floor below, the one fronting on Chestnut street to be used as a library room, and the other as a committee room. A large room, occupying the entire fourth floor, will be used for banqueting purposes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Local Summary,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 23, 1878, page 3; “Building Improvements,” *Philadelphia Times*, April 25, 1878, page 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Union Republican Club Reception,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 October, 1878, page 2.

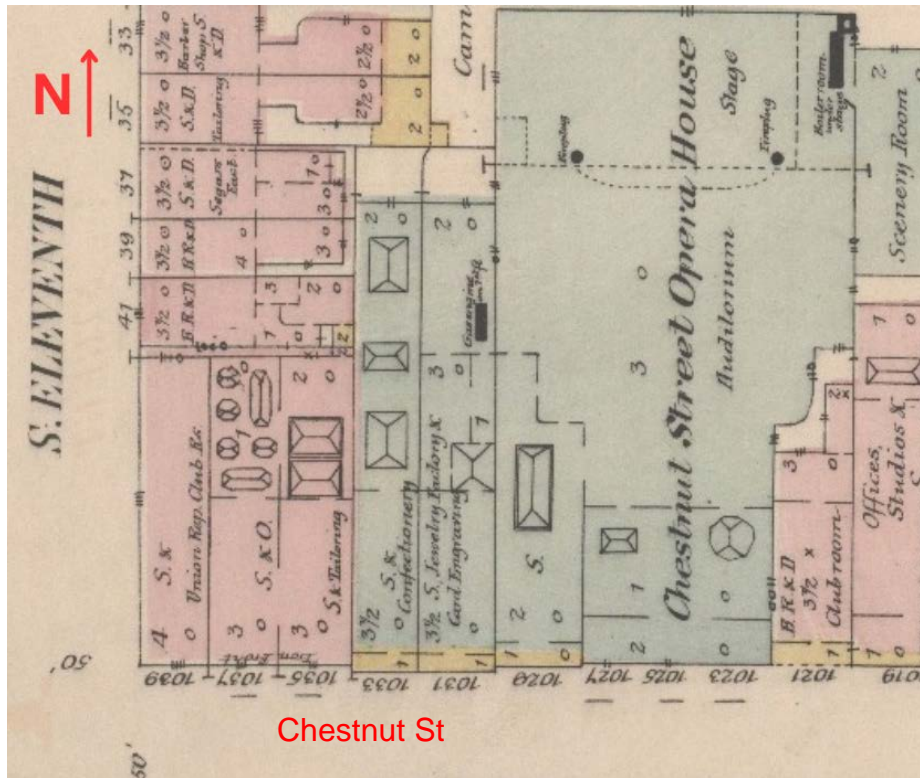


Figure 7: The current building at 1039 Chestnut Street as it appears in Ernest Hexamer & Son's Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia, 1887.

### West Façade, 11th Street

The Western façade, facing 11<sup>th</sup> Street, largely retains the features of the 1878 construction above the first-floor storefronts. The façade is six bays wide and four stories tall. The first floor has five contemporary storefronts as well as one which wraps around the corner to Chestnut Street. These are typified by large shop windows and glass doors, with signage and awnings.



Figure 8: 11th Street elevation.

The second and third floors feature six window openings each, with the southernmost on each floor being a narrower version of the other five—an alteration to the original design. Each of the windows in the original openings is a two-over-two double-hung window, with an arch-top transom above. The arched lintels are ornamented with bands of cream and black brick and prominent stone springers and keystones. The windows have stone sills.

The fourth floor features paired windows with round-top transoms. These windows are also two-over-two double-hung with round-topped transoms above.

The left (north) end of the facade features several windows bricked up, others converted to doors, and new openings cut for doors. The exterior doors on the third and fourth floors step out onto balconies, and the modifications on the second floor suggest that there was once a balcony there as well. This rear corner was adapted to contain a separate fire tower, as was once required by Philadelphia city code. In the event of a fire, people on upper floors could exit one door onto the balcony, and then re-enter the separate, smoke-free, fire stair through the other door. While variations on this requirement existed as early as 1876, this fire tower was not built until 1935.<sup>3</sup> By 1952, the second-floor balcony had been removed (Figure 14).

This fire stair modified an existing stair, which led up from original entrance to the building at the rear corner. Small windows, which do not survive (but which can be seen in Figure 9), likely provided more natural light to the “broad stairway” described upon the building’s completion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sara E. Wermiel, “Fire Escapes,” *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia; Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder’s Guide* (hereafter “*Builders’ Guide*”), March 13, 1935, page 57.

<sup>4</sup> “Union Republican Club Reception,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 19, 1878, page 2.



*Figure 9: Turn-of-the-century photograph from the Frank Taylor Photographs collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The shortening of the building in the early twentieth century led to significant modification of the paired windows along the southern edge of the façade.*



*Figure 10: Detail of the Baxter Panoramic Business Directory, from the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings collection of the Philadelphia Athenaeum.*

Many of the windows on this elevation appear relatively new, but they generally replicate original pane arrangements. The Baxter Panoramic Directory (Figure 10) shows round-topped double-hung windows on the fourth floor of the front façade and the side elevation likely had the same. By about 1900, however, the round-top effect was achieved with semi-circular transoms as it is today (Figure 9). While it seems likely from the Baxter Panoramic Directory illustration that the second- and third-floor windows were predominantly two-over-two and the fourth-floor windows were one-over-one, by around 1900 (Figure 9) many windows seem to have been replaced and the windows 11<sup>th</sup> Street façade displayed several pane arrangements.

The historic window openings on each floor are linked by decorative bands of brick and tile. On the second and third floors, this band is made of decorative tiles surrounded by black bricks. On the fourth floor, the band between the windows has a course of black brick, one of red brick, one of cream brick, another of red, and another of black, with a single tile in the center (see Figure 39, Figure 39 below).

Though it is somewhat difficult to discern the color of the mortar today, it appears that it was originally a dark, even black, color. An 1893 article in the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* (Figure 11) highlighted the building's dark mortar, responding to a critical note in the *Item*. The *Item*, according to the *Builders' Guide*, had been too hasty in its condemnation of the "fad" of black mortar. Rather, what that publication had identified as staining and soiling of the brick was simply, according to a "well-known expert of this city" instead the accumulation of dust attributable to the mortar joint being "struck back from the edge of the brick."<sup>5</sup>

The 11<sup>th</sup> Street façade is crowned by a cornice which includes another band of ornament as well as a corbelled eave. The right edge of the elevation is formed by a banded pilaster from the renovated front façade, topped by an inverted teardrop ornament. Originally the right-most bay on this elevation had paired windows on the top three floors (Figure 9).

#### *South Façade, Chestnut Street*

The front façade, facing south on Chestnut Street, originally resembled the side façade, as can be seen in the Baxter Panoramic Directory (Figure 10). Above a storefront with a wide doorway and a large window, the façade once featured two bays of the two-over-two double-hung windows, with arch-topped transoms above, on the second and third floors, with a quartet of the narrower, round-top, double-hung windows on the fourth. These windows were ornamented in the same fashion as those which remain on the 11<sup>th</sup> Street elevation, and the cornice once wrapped around to the front, as did the storefront cornice, which no longer survives on the side or front. In 1893, the *Builders Guide*

THE "Item," usually correct in most things, made a serious mistake when it said in a recent issue that

"The foolhardiness of the fad of using black mortar in a house front is pointedly shown in the building of the Union Republican Club, at Eleventh and Chestnut Streets. The black mortar has stained and soiled the face of the bricks, requiring the Club to go to the expense of cleaning the twin fronts."

This raid against colored mortar is sheer nonsense; in fact, the use of it should be earnestly commended, as it adds to the beauty of brick work without in the least impairing the quality of the mortar.

If the "Item" will recommend to its readers the Peerless mortar colors manufactured by the originators of mortar colors in this country, Messrs. Samuel H. French & Co., corner York Avenue and Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, it will have no future cause to condemn the use of colored mortar in cases where the products of this firm are used at least.

NOTE.—Since the above was placed in type we have received the report of a well known expert of this city who, at our request, has investigated the premises, and sends us the following:

"I have visited the property at the northeast corner of Eleventh and Chestnut Streets and find that the difficulty is not with the mortar; but that the mortar joint was struck back from the edge of the brick, allowing the accumulation of dust, which has from time to time run out over the surface of the bricks and thus defaced them.

"You will find it most apparent at the ends of the window sills, where a greater amount of dust accumulated. The surface of the joints do not seem to be affected in any way."

Figure 11: The 1893 article in the *Builders' Guide* regarding colored mortar.

<sup>5</sup> *Builders' Guide*, April 5, 1893, page 205.

reported that contractor Allen B. Rorke was adding a bay window to “the Union Republican rooms,” which can be seen as it appeared around 1900 (Figure 9).<sup>6</sup> A photograph of the neighboring property, Hughes and Muller’s Tailors, also taken around the turn of the century (Figure 12), shows that all of the front windows had extendable awnings.



Figure 12: Photograph of 1035-37 Chestnut Street by photographer Frank Taylor shows the awnings extended on 1039 Chestnut Street at left.

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<sup>6</sup> *Builders' Guide* January 11, 1893, page i.



Figure 13: The Chestnut Street elevation features prominent pilasters topped with inverted teardrop ornaments.

Today, the first floor is a contemporary storefront like those along the 11<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. The remainder of the elevation features elements added when the façade was shortened and significantly renovated in the early twentieth century. Each side of the elevation has a pilaster which extends up the façade, topped with ornament featuring green accents.<sup>7</sup> The second floor

<sup>7</sup> The Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey form for the property suggests these pilasters could be terra cotta.



once featured a round bay (Figure 45), but since at least 1952 has simply been a blank stucco wall between the pilasters.

The upper floors have three windows each, with stamped metal detailing between the floors and on the cornice. A small mansard roof extends above the cornice, covered in shingles. Today, the second-floor windows are two-over-two double-hung windows and the third-floor windows are one-over-one double-hung. A photograph of the façade from 1952 shows the façade much as it is now, but all of the windows were then one-over-one, a piece of pressed metal has since been removed from below the windows, and the mansard was roofed with tiles rather than shingles (Figure 14).

The pilasters which flank the elevation have regular banding which gives way to finials featuring low-relief geometric ornament. It is a kind of inverted teardrop, which gives the sense of extending beyond the edge of the pilaster, which has already broken past the cornice and small mansard. It is unclear whether the green accents on the pilasters was an original feature of the design, given that the whole façade was painted in the mid-century period, but the two-tone look evokes the oxidization of the decorative metal details.

Those metal details, at the cornice and on spandrels between the third- and fourth-story windows, echo the ornament on the pilasters. Most notably, just below the cornice are two rhombuses which match the shape, position, and even size of those in the center of the inverted teardrops. Similar rhombuses were a part of the panels (now removed) below the third-floor windows (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Tappin's Diamonds in 1952.

### North Façade

The North (rear) façade of 1039 Chestnut Street abuts a three-foot wide alley. The rear wall is brick, like the rest of the building, though it is unadorned and has no punched openings for windows. It appears there may be a fire exit at the first-floor level.

There is a brick pilot house on the roof, flush with the rear wall. It appears to be largely unchanged from at least 1952 (Figure 14). The rear wall of this pilot house is covered in a light-colored stucco (Figure 15).



Figure 15: A narrow alley runs along the rear of 1039 Chestnut Street. The narrow aperture and debris in the alley make it difficult to photograph the North facade.

### East Façade

The east façade is largely a party wall with 1037 Chestnut Street, which shares the same depth from Chestnut Street. There is a small utility room or pilot house on the roof of 1039 Chestnut Street which extends above the neighboring structure with a simple brick wall. There is also what appears to be a capped chimney along the eastern edge of the roof (Figure 16).



*Figure 16: Aerial view of the utility room/pilot house on the roof of 1039 Chestnut Street and the party wall with 1037 Chestnut Street (right). Image from Pictometry.phila.gov.*

## **7. SIGNIFICANCE**

The property at 1039 Chestnut Street is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property may also be eligible for designation as part of a larger historic district. Pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. The property:

- A. Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation or be associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- C. Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- D. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; and
- J. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

The period of significance is from the building's construction in 1878 to the closure of the Tappin's Jewelers store there around 1980.<sup>8</sup>

The Union Republican Club was one of Philadelphia's most influential political organizations from 1876 until around 1920. From the club's founding in 1876, the intersection adjacent to its clubhouse, "Eleventh and Chestnut," became a shorthand in the press for a particular brand of machine politics within the Republican Party.<sup>9</sup> This connection lasted until the end of the Vare machine in 1934, at which point the Republican City Committee, which remained in the building after the Club left it in 1901, moved away from the building as the party leadership literally distanced itself from its previous politics.<sup>10</sup> The building, designed and built by Yarnall and Cooper in 1878 features flourishes of the Victorian Gothic style throughout, highlighted by the use of polychrome brick and tile ornaments.

The first-floor storefronts along Chestnut Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street were designed and used for retail during the building's use by the Republicans, by various stores including Israel Hollander's Gents' Furnishings, Godfrey S. Mahn's Cigars, and Hollander and Fleishman, jewelers. After the departure of the party in 1934, first Hollander and Fleishman and then Tappin's Jewelers used significant portions of the building for high-end retail through the 1970s. The façade along Chestnut Street is the result of renovations in the Commercial Style circa 1918.

In 1982, sometime after the tenancy of Tappin's, the property at 1039 Chestnut Street was acquired by developer Samuel Rappaport.<sup>11</sup> Rappaport partitioned the building, creating storefronts wrapping around the first floor and sealed off the rest of the building. For the past four decades, the first floor has been used for a procession of cafes and small stores. As recently as 2015, *HiddenCity* reported that the upper floors were only accessible by climbing a ladder and entering through a window.<sup>12</sup> During that period, the upper windows along the 11<sup>th</sup> Street elevation were boarded up with plywood painted to imitate windows, but by 2018, new windows had been installed on that façade, suggesting the upper floors may be once again put to use.

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<sup>8</sup> The last newspaper reference to Tappin's located at 1039 Chestnut occurred in 1977, but there was a Tappin's somewhere in the city at least as late as 1983. "Help Wanted: Jewelry Retail Manager Trainee," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 7, 1977 page 43; "A Shopping Day in the Life of a Mother on Welfare," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 3, 1983, page 7-B.

<sup>9</sup> "Dissatisfied Club Men," *The Philadelphia Times*, January 27, 1888, page 1.

<sup>10</sup> "Philadelphia's Week," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 10, 1934, page 48.

<sup>11</sup> Hine, Thomas, "The two ways of looking at Sam Rappaport," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 18, 1994, page 181.

<sup>12</sup> Dennis Carlisle, "Abused, Neglected, But Not Forgotten: Top 10 Derelict Properties," *HiddenCity*, December 22, 2015.



Figure 17: A photograph from 2017 shows the windows boarded up with plywood painted to resemble windows.  
Image from [cyclomedia.phila.gov](http://cyclomedia.phila.gov)

## Criteria A and J

As a club and political center for Philadelphia Republicans, including William Vare, for over fifty years, 1039 Chestnut Street is a building of significance to both the immediate surrounding neighborhood and the city of Philadelphia as a whole.

Throughout the building's tenure as a hub of politics and beyond, it also served as a commercial space, contributing to the vibrant shopping corridor along Chestnut Street, exemplifying the social and economic heritage of Center City Philadelphia.

## *Republican Political Clubs*

### The Mysterious Pilgrim Club

The Union Republican Club grew out of another organization, the Mysterious Pilgrims' Club, which adopted the rococo rituals, symbols, and passwords of many secret societies of the era.<sup>13</sup> While the members always insisted that the "Pilgrims" were a social order, they wielded both political and economic power. One observer described them thus:

Men of all political denominations are among their members, and though strongly partisan for each other, there are no distinctions in the order. But they do possess, while not assuming to, a mysterious power in the application of their influence; subtle and silent; their work is done without show, but results they desire are certain and definite.<sup>14</sup>

Put another way, by Addison Burk in the *Republican Club Book* (1904):

The members protested that it was a purely social organization, but the public believed that it was formed to promote deals between the leaders of the two parties and to enable a "ring" to control both nominations and elections.<sup>15</sup>

The club began with thirty members around 1868, but the first mentions of the club appeared in newspapers in 1871, and the next year, the club was officially chartered with the state of Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup> When the club came under public scrutiny for alleged election tampering, members insisted that the organization was a social, rather than political one, while acknowledging that the membership included many holders of public office. By 1875, the Pilgrims' Club exercised significant sway over the Republican nominating committee and the elections of that year came to be seen as a referendum on the Club's approach to politics. Following a heavy defeat in the October election, the Mysterious Pilgrims dissolved their organization in December 1875, though "[i]n vain did a few plead for another season of brotherhood; for another round of contracts."<sup>17</sup>

In its eulogy for the Mysterious Pilgrims' Club, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* included this prescient paragraph:

The resolution provides that the club shall formally disband on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, but whether this means a total dissolution or not remains to be seen. It is likely that a new organization with another name will be founded by a portion of the old Pilgrim membership.<sup>18</sup>

### Union Republican Club

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<sup>13</sup> "Meeting of the Pilgrims," *The Philadelphia Times*, November 8, 1875, page 1. There are also a couple of references (in Addison Burk's *Republican Club Book* and John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott's *History of Philadelphia*) to a predecessor "Union Club" or "National Union Club." It is difficult to discern from primary sources how this club was connected to the Pilgrim Club.

<sup>14</sup> "Meeting of the Pilgrims," *The Philadelphia Times*, November 8, 1875, page 1.

<sup>15</sup> Addison Burk, *Republican Club Book*, 1904.

<sup>16</sup> "The Pilgrimage Ended," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 13, 1875, page 2; "Watering Place Notes," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 27, 1871, page 1; *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania... 1872*, page 929; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania... 1872*, page 614.

<sup>17</sup> "The Pilgrims Smash Their Altars," *The Philadelphia Times*, December 13, 1875, page 2.

<sup>18</sup> "The Pilgrimage Ended," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 13, 1875, page 2.

As predicted, a new organization did come about the following year: the Union Republican Club. The new club moved into the Pilgrims' Club's old rooms at the northeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Street and immediately expanded the space to accommodate the membership of 125 Republicans.<sup>19</sup>

Whereas the previous organization had courted Democratic membership, the new one was explicitly partisan. The Americus Club, affiliated with the Democrats, had its headquarters on the northwest corner of the same intersection and during the elections of 1876 and 1877 this heightened the drama, if the press was to be believed:

As The Inquirer reporter passed the corner of Eleventh and Chestnut streets, an illiterate but wise young man standing on the corner, remarked, 'It's funny, ain't it? The returns over there (Americus Club) all favor the Democrats, while down there (Republican Committee), it's all Republican. Wonder if a fellow could get the truth at the Labor headquarters? I'd like to know where it is.'<sup>20</sup>



Figure 18: Photograph of the interior of the Union Republican Club rooms in Philadelphia Club Men, 1894.

In 1878, the Union Republican Club demolished the previous structure at the northeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut and built a new building for their headquarters, the present structure. It became the de facto center of the Republican City Committee and so intertwined were the two

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<sup>19</sup> The club's quarters "have been much extended by cutting passages into the second floor of the adjoining building on Chestnut Street." A note the next day noted that the Club's rooms were on "the second floor of the building at the northeast corner of Chestnut and Eleventh streets," suggesting they were expanding into 1037 Chestnut Street. "The Union Republican Club Tenders a Reception..." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 18, 1878, page 2; "From the Evening Telegraph," *The Philadelphia Times*, January 19, 1878.

<sup>20</sup> "The Republican City Committee," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 7, 1877, page 1.

organizations that newspapers referred to both the Club and the Committee by the metonym “Eleventh and Chestnut.”



Figure 19: Detail showing Union Republican Club insignia on the bay, added 1893.

After defeats in 1887, the two entities parted ways for a time as the City Committee moved to offices at 1205 Chestnut Street and as many as fifty members quit the club.<sup>21</sup> For the next few decades, 1039 Chestnut Street remained one of several centers of Republican party activity. The 1891 Republican victory was celebrated by parades down Chestnut Street, with fireworks and a cannon fired from the clubhouse roof but celebrations were also underway at the Young Republican headquarters (presumably 1205 Chestnut Street).<sup>22</sup> In 1901, the Union Republican Club moved out of 1039 Chestnut Street, taking up new quarters at 227 South Broad Street, but the building remained a party stronghold—the 1906 election saw it once again acting as the offices of the Republican City Committee.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> “Dissatisfied Club Men,” *The Philadelphia Times*, January 27, 1888, page 1.

<sup>22</sup> “Celebrating the Victory,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 18, 1891, page 2.

<sup>23</sup> “For Central Republican Headquarters,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 2, 1901, page 1; “Republicans Active in Local Campaign,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 30, 1906, page 8.





Figure 20: Photo of 1039 Chestnut Street, draped in bunting for the campaign of 1906. Published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 Sept 1906.

The accusations of corruption which had been levied at the Mysterious Pilgrim Club in the 1870s continued to follow the Union Republican Club, but also Philadelphia's governance more broadly. An exposé published in 1903 labeled the city "corrupt and contented" and detailed the workings of the Philadelphia "machine." Author Lincoln Steffens cited a wide variety of anecdotal evidence as well as a report from the Municipal League that the voter rolls were padded with fraudulent names, their votes cast by "repeaters" who would don different coats or hats to vote more than once at the same polling place. The whole operation was protected by the police, who supervised polling places and turned a blind eye. Yet Steffens also condemned the average voter as complicit through their apathy in the face of the fraud being committed. Comparing the city to others in the country, Steffens was unflinching:

All our municipal governments are more or less bad, and all our people are optimists. Philadelphia is simply the most corrupt and the most contented.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln Steffens, "Corrupt and Contented," *McLures Magazine*, July 1903, excerpted at *Explore PA History*: <https://explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-2A6>



STILL ON THE FIRING LINE.

Figure 21: A political cartoon by John De Mar in *The Record*, circa 1911, depicts struggles within the Republican party. The flag indicating "The Downtowners" likely represents the Republican City Committee's headquarters at 1039 Chestnut Street.

John Thomas Salter, political science scholar in the 1930s and author of *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics*, described "nine feudal barons" who oversaw the machine from the 1850s through the 1930s. The final two on Salter's list were brothers Edwin and William Vare, who built on their older brother George's work to consolidate power at the city and even the state level. The Vare brothers began their careers as building contractors and entered the arena of politics to secure public contracts: in just the years 1924-28, it is estimated that the company won between \$15,000,000 and \$20,000,000 in such contracts.<sup>25</sup>

Upon Edwin Vare's death in 1922, William stepped up, and unlike his predecessors, fully controlled the Republican City Committee, which remained based out of 1039 Chestnut Street. William Vare parleyed his family's control into a 14-year career in Congress from 1912-1926. He ran for the Senate and won but was refused his seat due to questions about his campaign finances. During the three years he fought for his senate seat, Vare suffered a massive stroke, but his power base in Philadelphia still scored a resounding victory in the municipal elections of 1929. For the next few years, Vare continued as the figurehead for city control though he was unable to campaign and rarely left his house near Atlantic City.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> J. T. Salter, "The End of Vare," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (June 1935), pp. 214-215.

<sup>26</sup> Salter, 216-223.

In 1933, the Republicans lost city elections for the first time in decades as the Democrats rode Franklin Roosevelt's popularity to victory.<sup>27</sup> The next summer William Vare was forced out of Republican control by a reform coalition. To emphasize the new direction for the party, the Republican City Committee decided to move from 1039 Chestnut Street to new offices in the Market Street National Bank Building. A poetic note in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* captured the scene at the old headquarters:

Meeting place of the Republican City Committee is a long, dingy room in a building at Eleventh and Chestnut sts. A vast chandelier, swathed in mosquito netting, hangs from the ceiling. Up near the rostrum is a deep, dusty leather chair. For years that seat held William Scott Vare. It was empty last week. Mr. Vare was taking a ride in Ventnor. The City Committee also took him for a ride, made political history in the dingy room, put the House of Vare out of business, made bustling Edwin R. Cox (his hobby: boxing) chairman of the de-Vareized committee.<sup>28</sup>

Vare was indeed at his home on the Jersey shore, and it was there that he suffered a fatal heart attack in early August:

It seemed to be the irony of fate that Vare's more than 40 years in politics terminated at a time when the City Committee was preparing to move from 11<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut sts. to more commodious quarters in the Market Street National Bank Building. Vare's career was linked with the 11<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut sts. establishment.

There his portrait, the largest in the big meeting room, dominated the scene as he himself had dominated sessions of the committee for more than a decade. When news of his death reached Philadelphia, workmen were at the old headquarters repairing and packing the furnishings that are to be carted to the new meeting place."<sup>29</sup>

While Philadelphia has continued to struggle to shake off the "corrupt and contented" label into the twenty-first century,<sup>30</sup> William Vare's passing marked the end of a Republican control of the machine. The empty and dusty rooms at 1039 Chestnut Street were left behind as Republican politicians moved on and tried to reshape the party's identity.

### *Chestnut Street Commercial Corridor*

The 1880 Baxter Panoramic Business Directory (Figure 10, Figure 22) shows that 1039 Chestnut Street was a part of a flourishing commercial corridor from its beginning, with a first-floor storefront on the Chestnut Street elevation. That legacy has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, peaking when all four floors of the building were put to commercial use in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>27</sup> Salter, 223.

<sup>28</sup> "Philadelphia's Week," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 10, 1934, page 48.

<sup>29</sup> "Wm. S. Vare Dies of Heart Attack at Ventnor Home," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 8, 1934, pages 1 and 11.

<sup>30</sup> See Brett H. Mandel, *Corrupt and Consenting: A City's Struggle against an Epithet*, Temple University Press, 2023.

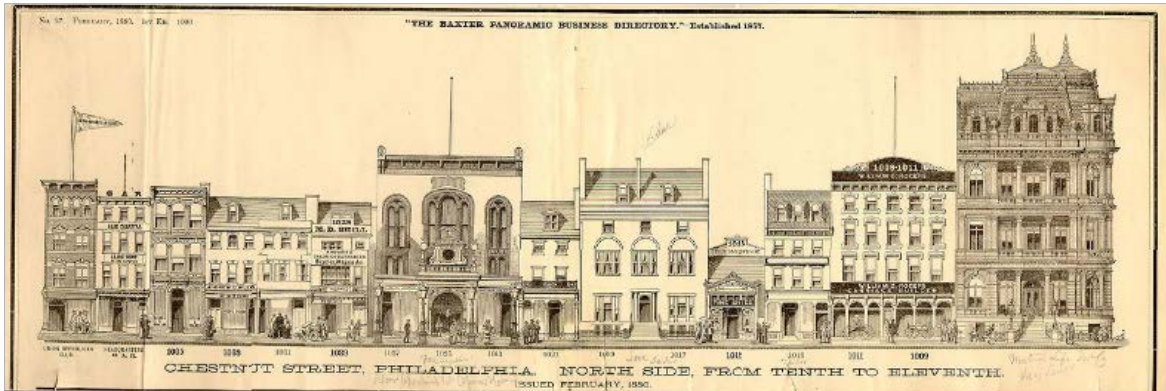


Figure 22: The Union Republican Club can be seen at left of this page from the Baxter Panoramic Business Directory, from the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings collection of the Philadelphia Athenaeum.

One of the first stores in the first-floor retail spaces of 1039 Chestnut Street was Israel Fleishman's Gents' Furnishing Store (Figure 23) when the present building was completed in the fall of 1878.<sup>31</sup> In 1880, when local Republicans headed to the national convention in Chicago were notified that appropriate "gloves and neckties can be obtained at Fleishman's, corner of Eleventh and Chestnut Streets, during the week."<sup>32</sup> Fleishman was an active member of the Union Republican Club and took active roles in the party organization.<sup>33</sup> While members of his extended family operated gents' furnishing stores throughout the 1880s, Israel began leasing the Walnut Street Theater in 1882 and was primarily known as a theater empresario thereafter, passing away in 1891; it is unclear how long Fleishman's store operated on the northeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 23: Advertisement for Israel Fleishman's Gents' Furnishing Store, in The Philadelphia Times, 1878.

A photograph of the building from sometime around 1900 (Figure 9) shows the two storefronts in great detail. Along 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the photograph shows gloves for sale in Leopold Stein's men's furnishings store, which he ran in this location from at least 1895 to 1904.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The *Gopsill's Philadelphia Business Directory for 1887* (page 230) lists "Israel Fleishman" at 1039 Chestnut St., corroborating Fleishman's first name.

<sup>32</sup> "Bound for Chicago," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 29, 1880, page 2.

<sup>33</sup> Newspapers listed Fleishman as an attendee at several URC events and his stature in the organization was such that William Leeds, the ex-sheriff and leading boss of the outfit for much of the 1880s, attended Fleishman's funeral. "Israel Fleishman Buried," *The Philadelphia Times*, August 26, 1891, page 6.

<sup>34</sup> A brief biographical sketch of Israel Fleishman appears in Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, 1894, pages 384-385.

<sup>35</sup> Stein is listed as a partner, with Manuel Koshland, in a gents' furnishing store at 35 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street (as the West-facing storefront was addressed) in the 1895 *Boyd's Co-Partnership and Residence Directory*, and as sole proprietor at the same address in the 1904 edition of the same publication.



Figure 24: Detail of turn-of-the-century photograph showing Leopold Stein's men's furnishings store (left) and Godfrey S. Mahn's cigar store (right).

On the Chestnut Street side is the shop of Godfrey S. Mahn, who operated a cigar business from at least 1896 to 1915 in this location. Mahn, was also a member of the Union Republican Club.<sup>36</sup> A cigar shop, though possibly not under Mahn's direction, continued in the spot until at least 1920 (Figure 25).<sup>37</sup>

Some three decades after Israel Fleishman took to the theater, another Fleishman set up shop in 1039 Chestnut Street, when the jewelry firm of Hollander and Fleishman moved into the 11<sup>th</sup> Street storefront. Jacob Fleishman, of Philadelphia, and Jacob Hollander, of Newark, New Jersey, had operated several jewelry stores in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre before opening a shop at 46 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia in 1909.<sup>38</sup> By 1912, the store had moved to 808 Chestnut Street, and by 1919 moved again to 1039 Chestnut Street.<sup>39</sup> Because they traded in luxury goods, Hollander and Fleishman offered a variety of credit plans for customers, which they advertised in various ways, including a token worth \$2 (Figure 27). The firm made significant use of marketing in Philadelphia newspapers to the extent that the *Inquirer* sited Hollander and Fleishman as one of its successes in a print advertisement of their own (Figure 28).

<sup>36</sup> Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, *Club Men of Philadelphia*, page 38.

<sup>37</sup> As early as 1887 a cigar shop was operating on the Northeast corner of the intersection. Mahn is listed at the address in 1896 (he would then have been 31 years old) and an advertisement in a souvenir program for Fairmount Park has him operating the store at least as late as 1915: "Gray, Morales & Dalton, Manufacturers of Fine Cigars," (advertisement), *Philadelphia Times*, May 21, 1887 page 8; "A Call Issued for the Crow Meeting," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 26, 1896, page 1; Fairmount Park Guard Pension Fund Association, "Descriptive Souvenir of Fairmount Park," 1915, page 98.

<sup>38</sup> Advertisement, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 29, 1909, page 3.

<sup>39</sup> Advertisement, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 8, 1912, page 9; Advertisement, *The Evening Public Ledger*, December 5, 1919, page 20.

While Fleishman was not an exceptionally common name in Philadelphia in the 1880s, when both Israel and Jacob Fleishman were living in the city, it is not clear if the men were directly related.<sup>40</sup>

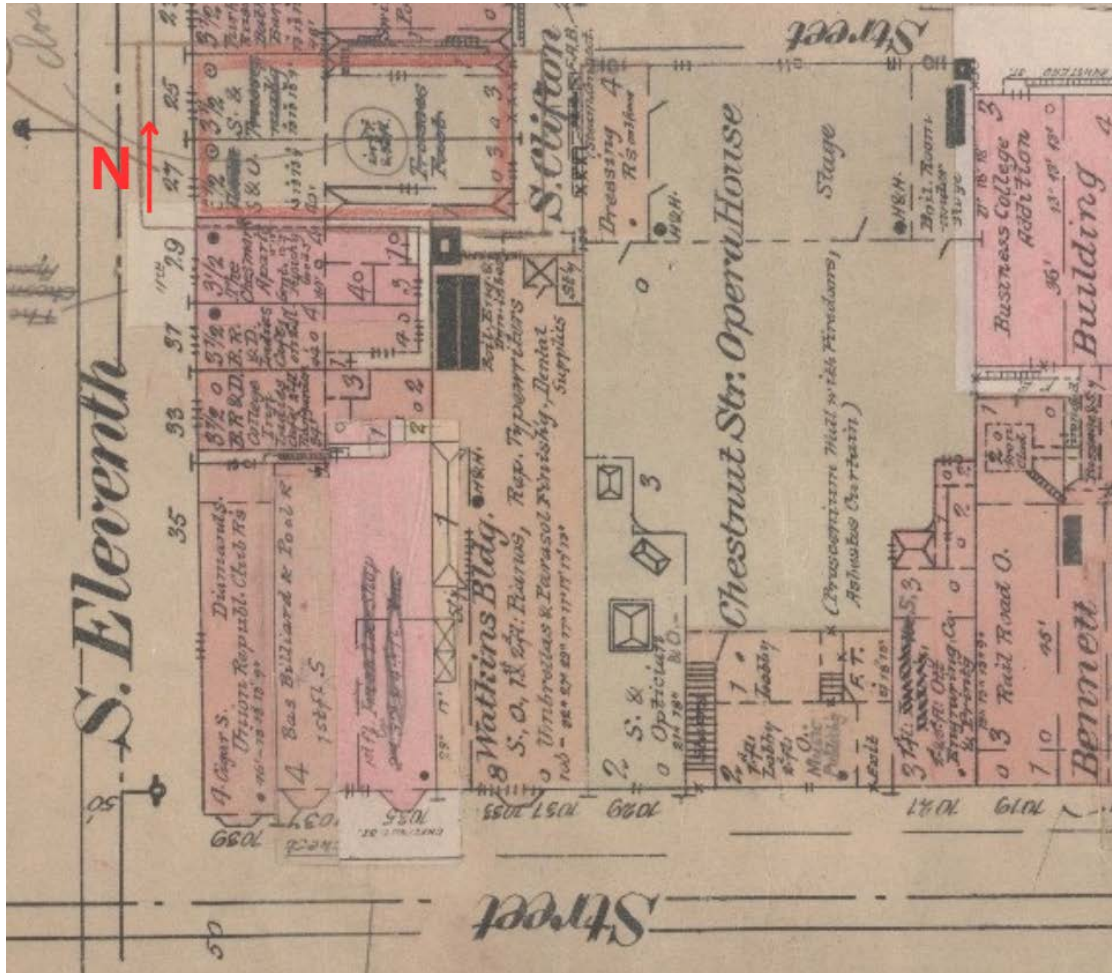


Figure 25: A 1915 insurance map (with some updates pasted in) labels 1039 Chestnut with its various occupants, though the terms are inexact. The Union Republican Club had moved out two decades prior, but the Republican City Committee still used the upper floors. The cigar store remains, though it's unclear who the proprietor was, and Hollander and Fleishman's store is labeled as simply "Diamonds." The building now stands proud of the neighboring buildings, the result of the planned widening of Chestnut Street.

<sup>40</sup> Israel Fleishman had no children but possibly nephews through his brother Henry. Jacob Fleishman's father's name was Samuel. The clearest picture of Jacob's parents and siblings can be found in the 1880 United States Census, Enumeration District 385, page 12.



Figure 26: By 1934, Hollander and Fleishman occupied the entire first floor—their awning at the right stretches around the corner.



Figure 27: Front and back of a token issued by Hollander and Fleishman as a promotion.

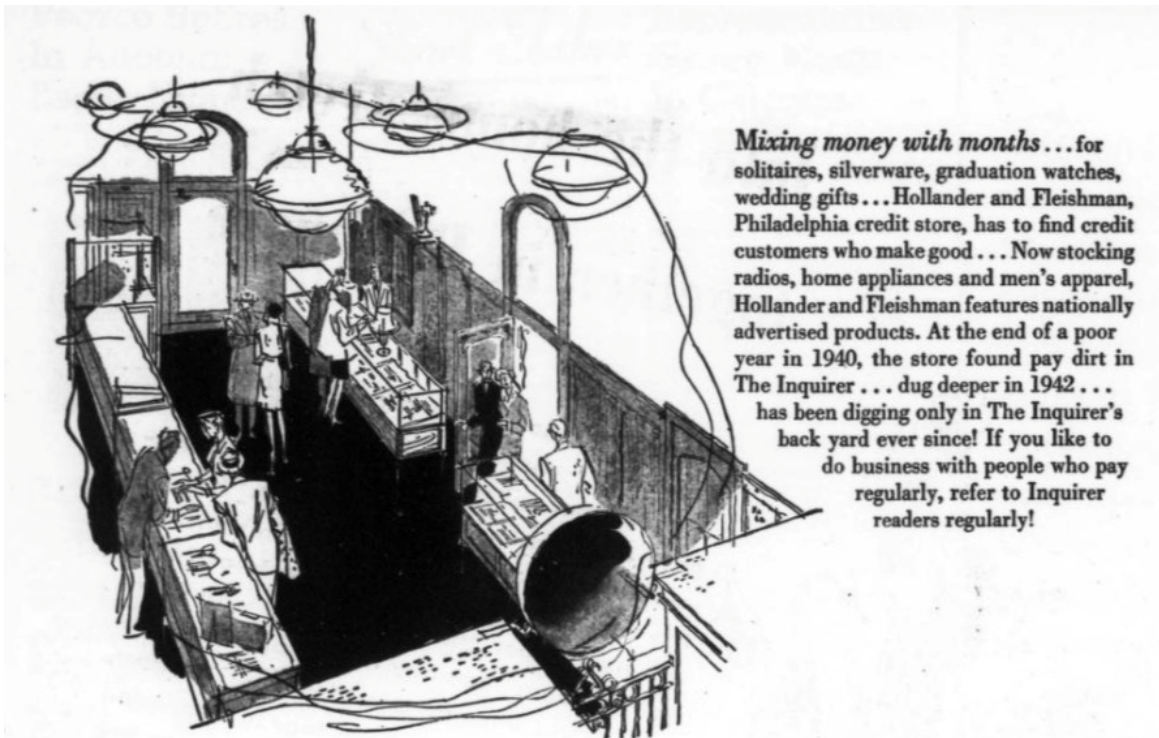


Figure 28: An advertisement for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in Editor & Publisher cites Hollander and Fleishman as a store that benefited from advertisements in its pages.



Figure 29: A 1959 photo shows the entrance to Tappin's at street level.



In 1949, another store, Tappin's Jewelers, bought a controlling share of Hollander and Fleishman and elected to renovate 1039 Chestnut Street and use "the entire building for its expanded activities."<sup>41</sup>

Tappin's operated similarly to Hollander and Fleishman, offering payment plans for luxury goods. Newspaper advertisements show that the store's product offerings expanded to include eyeglasses, radios, cameras, fine china, and more. Like Hollander and Fleishman, Tappin's often focused on the gift market, heightening its marketing around Christmas.<sup>42</sup> Tappin's had been founded in 1927 and operated as a family business through the middle decades of the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> In 1975, Tappin's owned 27 stores in New York and New Jersey but by 1989 had gone through at least one merger and only had nine stores.<sup>44</sup> It appears the firm continued operating out of 1039 Chestnut Street until at least 1977 and had a store in Philadelphia as late as 1983.<sup>45</sup>

## Criteria C and D

The two main elevations of 1039 Chestnut Street display hallmarks of two distinct styles: the older, 11<sup>th</sup> Street elevation features polychromic brick and tile ornaments in a brick facade which demonstrates an eclectic style of the late nineteenth century, and the Chestnut Street displays the Art Deco in a modest commercial scale. When the building was constructed in 1878 it fit in with the buildings around it, many of which had first-floor storefronts with more ornamental windows and cornices above. The adaptation of the Chestnut Street elevation in the early twentieth century was also typical of the commercial corridor as changing fashions and the widening of Chestnut Street led to the renovation of many nearby buildings in that era.

### *Nineteenth-Century Eclecticism*

The west elevation of 1039 Chestnut Street (along 11<sup>th</sup> Street), which survives from the 1878 construction, is an excellent example of the eclecticism of late nineteenth-century architecture, with touches which evoke both Victorian Gothic and Italianate styles.

The most distinctive feature of the older portion of the building is the ornamentation between the windows and at the cornice in tile and multi-colored, or polychrome, brick. The revival of polychrome brickwork is generally regarded as a trademark of the High Victorian Gothic style, which was instigated by British critic and architectural theorist John Ruskin, in his 1849 book

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<sup>41</sup> "Tappin's Jewelers to Open 2 Stores," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 9, 1949, notice on page 31 and advertisement on page 9. The store is variously referred to as "Tappin's Jewelers," "Tappin's Jewelry Stores," "Tappin's Diamonds," and simply "Tappin's" in marketing materials.

<sup>42</sup> For instance, Advertisement, *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 28, 1969, page 12 and Advertisement, *Philadelphia Daily News*, December 7, 1960, page 10.

<sup>43</sup> "Goodman Opens in Summit," *The Item of Millburn and Short Hills*, (Millburn, NJ) May 7, 1987, page 7.

<sup>44</sup> "After Nearly 50 years, Sosin's Jewelers Closing," *The Central New Jersey Home News*, (New Brunswick, NJ), June 29, 1975, page B13; "Speer and Tirico Earn Award," *The Montclair Times*, (Montclair, NJ) June 1, 1989, page 15.

<sup>45</sup> "Help Wanted: Jewelry Retail Manager Trainee," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 7, 1977 page 43; "A Shopping Day in the Life of a Mother on Welfare," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 3, 1983, page 7-B.

*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, where he lauded Medieval and Gothic architecture as not only “truer” than the Classical, but also the “honest” medieval use of materials as both structure and decoration, above the use of applied colors or veneered materials. British Architect William Butterfield made lavish use of the technique in his All Saints, Margaret Street Church, built between 1850–59, and the buildings of Keble College, Oxford, which use patterned brickwork in black and cream on red brick backgrounds.<sup>46</sup>



Figure 30 (left): All Saints, Margaret Street church, designed by the architect William Butterfield and built between 1850 and 1859, is considered to be one of the most significant examples of structural polychromy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Figure 31 (right): The chapel at Keble College, Oxford, designed by William Butterfield, making extensive use of colored brick ornament.

There are relatively few surviving examples of polychromic brickwork in Philadelphia, yet there were once many more buildings which showcased the technique. Ruskin’s ideas and Butterfield’s use of structural polychromy certainly impacted Philadelphia architecture, especially in larger buildings such as banks and places of worship. For example, Frank Furness’ design for the Guaranteed Trust and Safe Deposit Company, now demolished, displays striking motifs in the masonry, even in a sepia tone photo (Figure 32).

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<sup>46</sup> Portions of this paragraph are drawn from “731 South Broad Street: Provident Home Insurance Home Office,” (Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places), designated August 11, 2023.



Figure 32: *The Guaranty Trust and Safe Deposit Company, designed by Frank Furness.*

The Centennial Exhibition of 1876, however, was a catalyst for increased use of polychrome masonry designs in Philadelphia, especially those using colored or enameled brick. A summary of the brick displayed at the Centennial noted that while the English remained the world leaders in production of colored bricks but that enameled bricks were being produced more locally:

The Exhibition furnished an almost endless variety of bricks, both as regards quality and manufacture. The ordinary brick made in this country is not excelled by that of any other nation, and for color, material, and finish, the face bricks of Philadelphia and Baltimore are unrivaled. The Dutch exhibit of this article is curious for variety of dimension and color, also for crude finish. The English, on the other hand, excel in their various exhibits of moulded blue and colored bricks.

The blue and metallic bricks manufactured by Thomas Peake, Wood & Ivery, Joseph Hamblet, and others, are of especial value for pavements and ornamental work, their value being based principally on their resistance.

Enameled bricks, so useful in decoration and so proper for facings, especially where great cleanliness is a desideratum, were exhibited by Messrs. Minton and others, England. A very superior article was also furnished by the Brick Enameling Company, Philadelphia.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> "General Report of the Judges of Group XXVI," *International Exhibition, Philadelphia 1876*, page 14.

The Philadelphia Brick Enameling Company was incorporated the year of the Exposition and marketed itself as “Manufacturers of all Colors and Shades of Colors of Enamelled Bricks for outside and inside ornamentation and innumerable other purposes.”<sup>48</sup> There is no record showing whether the brick used on 1039 Chestnut Street was produced locally or imported them. If it was the former, the Philadelphia Brick Enameling Company remained the only local producer of these bricks through at least 1882, when the firm’s leadership lobbied for a protective tariff to be implemented on glazed or enameled brick.<sup>49</sup>

Newspaper accounts show that the use was relatively common in the decade following the Exposition. An 1879 article on Philadelphia’s “business boom” cited, as one piece of evidence of prosperity, that “[e]nameled brick fronts with stone trimmings are coming into demand.”<sup>50</sup> A glowing review, the same year, of a new building with an enameled brick facade on S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street built for the Philadelphia Brass Works (Figure 33) rendered its verdict: “The design is as artistic as the finish is durable.”<sup>51</sup> Not every review was positive, and an 1880 takedown of façade work on the 1100 block of Chestnut opined that enameled brick had “about as much artistic value as so many patches of varnished oil-cloth.”<sup>52</sup>



Figure 33: The Brass Works building at 223-225 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, built 1879, now demolished. The Philadelphia Times said “[t]he design is as artistic as the finish is durable.”

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<sup>48</sup> “Notice,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 16, 1876, page 6; “A New Building Material” (advertisement), *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 26, 1876, page 5.

<sup>49</sup> “The Tarriff,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 16, 1882, page 1.

<sup>50</sup> “The Business Boom,” *The Philadelphia Times*, September 15, 1879, page 1.

<sup>51</sup> “Business Improvements,” *The Philadelphia Times*, October 21, 1879, page 4.

<sup>52</sup> “Street Architecture,” *Philadelphia Times*, September 10, 1880, page 2.

Two articles in 1885 noted the impact of the colored brick trend. Among other “Facts About Bricks,” *The Times* noted that “Black bricks for ornamental lines are made by dipping the brick in pitch” and that the use of colored brick was “a beautiful art, which has sprung up entirely since the Centennial.”<sup>53</sup> Another *Times* article reflected on how technology was changing the look of the city:

The manner of building the fronts of houses has changed very materially during the last eight or ten years. Pressed brick still maintains its sway, but instead of the plain walls there have been introduced terra cotta and tile ornaments, brick friezes at the eaves, with brick pilasters and projections rising from the upper stories...The effect has been beneficial in breaking up the monotony which so long reigned in our streets.<sup>54</sup>

Today, buildings using polychrome masonry are relatively rare in Philadelphia. Perhaps the most prolific architect of surviving polychrome masonry was Willis G. Hale. The nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places of the 1416-32 W. Girard Avenue Historic District includes an extensive inventory of Hales work, much of which features decorative polychrome bands and panels and decorative tiles.<sup>55</sup>

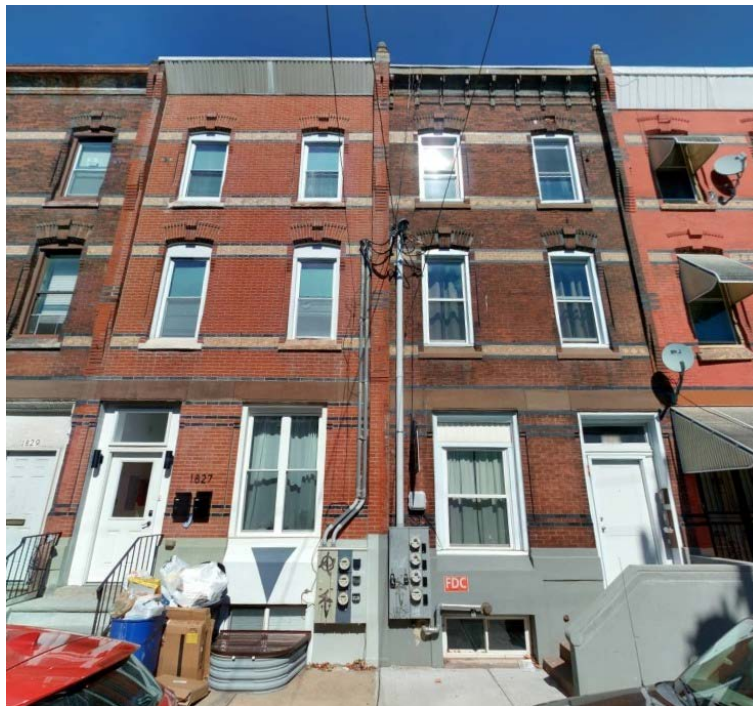


Figure 34: 1825 and 1827 Master Street, designed by Willis G. Hale in 1881, include bands of decorative tiles bounded by colored brick. Cyclomedia.

Another surviving example of colored brick ornament in Philadelphia is 731 S. Broad Street. Built as a house for Pennsylvania State Senator John Cochran in 1879, the building exhibits some similar flourishes to 1039 Chestnut Street.<sup>56</sup> Like the Union Republican Club, Cochran’s

<sup>53</sup> “Facts about Bricks,” *The Philadelphia Times*, October 3, 1885, page 5.

<sup>54</sup> “City Dwellings,” *The Philadelphia Times*, March 14, 1885, page 14.

<sup>55</sup> Donna J. Rilling, and friends of 1416-32 West Girard Ave, “1416-32 West Girard Avenue Historic District” (Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places), designated May 11, 2018.

<sup>56</sup> “Obituary: Hon. John Cochran, State Senator from the Second District,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 August 1881, page 8.

house was constructed in the years following the Centennial and is located on a corner property, and so despite both properties having their front elevations significantly modified in the twentieth century, their older side elevations survive as evidence of the original style.



Figure 35: Polychrome brick on the Fitzwater elevation of 731 S. Broad Street. Image from [Cyclomedia.phila.gov](http://Cyclomedia.phila.gov)

The Victorian Gothic style was most often used on institutional buildings, and so many of its trademark features, such as turrets, are not applicable to the more modest size of 1039 Chestnut Street. Yet the extensive use of polychrome brick and gothic arches above the windows do mark the building as Victorian Gothic in character.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "High Victorian Gothic," *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*.



*Figure 36: Detail from a turn-of-the-century photograph shows the ornament and cornice before the façade was painted.*

The surviving portions of the original Union Republican Club display a mix of styles and the building's relatively modest scale and commercial first floor make it difficult to pigeon-hole into a specific architectural style. In addition to the Victorian Gothic touches, the bracketed cornice is more Italianate in character. In this eclecticism, the building was very much in line with the styles of the late nineteenth century.



*Figure 37: Detail showing decorative band on the second floor.*



*Figure 38: Detail of a turn-of-the-century photo shows the tile before it was painted over, as well as the window arrangement which previously existed on the right-most bay on the 11th Street elevation.*



*Figure 39: Detail showing the fourth-floor ornament as well as the cornice, which features a band of tiles as well as several courses of colored bricks. This elevation was previously painted, obscuring some of the flourishes.*





Figure 40: A photograph from 1912 shows decorative flourishes including polychrome banding.

### Yarnall and Cooper, Architects and Builders

Hibberd Yarnall and Joseph B. Cooper began their careers as builders, before beginning to offer architectural services in 1880.<sup>58</sup> The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia credits them with about a dozen buildings, but, unfortunately, most of these have been demolished.<sup>59</sup> For instance, the firm was responsible for a complex of buildings on Minor Street, between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, which is now part of Independence Mall. One of the firm's projects which survives is 723 Sansom Street (Figure 41), built circa 1887, which features various uses of decorative brick as well as terracotta tiles between the upper floors.<sup>60</sup> Like 1039 Chestnut Street, 723 Sansom Street displays a command of a variety of masonry textures and materials in a distinguished commercial façade.

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<sup>58</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, "Yarnall & Cooper (fl. 1857 - 1889)," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project*, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>59</sup> "Yarnall & Cooper (fl. 1857 - 1889)" (Project List), *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project*, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>60</sup> "Architects Notes," *Builders' Guide*, August 22, 1887, page 390.



*Figure 41: 723 Sansom Street, another surviving Yarnall and Cooper building.*

## *Twentieth-Century Architectural Styles*

Perhaps the most striking feature of 1039 Chestnut Street today is the juxtaposition of nineteenth-century architecture with twentieth-century architecture at the front corner. The more contemporary façade along Chestnut Street was the result of the shortening of the building by about five feet.

### New Chestnut Street Façade, circa 1923

In 1884, a Philadelphia city ordinance called for the widening of Chestnut Street on the city plan from the Delaware River to the Schuylkill River by five feet on each side, for a total width of sixty feet.<sup>61</sup> This change was confirmed by the Board of Surveyors the next year.<sup>62</sup> Buildings along the length of Chestnut Street would remain where they were but the ordinance stated that property owners could not “rebuild or alter the front of any building now erected, without making it recede so as to conform to the lines established.”<sup>63</sup>

The addition of the bay window on the Chestnut Street elevation in 1893 apparently did not trigger this provision.<sup>64</sup> By 1914, however, the stretch in front of 1039 Chestnut Street was officially opened.<sup>65</sup>

A photograph (Figure 43) taken in 1918 or slightly before shows the front elevation of 1039 Chestnut Street seemingly unchanged from its turn-of-the century appearance, but that it now stands proud of the other buildings on the block as they have all been shortened to accommodate the street widening.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Philadelphia City Council, “An Ordinance to provide for the widening of Chestnut street on the City Plan,” Approved March 31, 1884. *Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia*, pages 54-55. Thanks to Thomas F. Marro, PLS, City Plans Officer for help understanding the process by which the street was widened. In his nomination of the Chestnut Street East Commercial Historic District to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Oscar Beisert shows in detail how the effort to widen Chestnut Street affected blocks between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets.

<sup>62</sup> Philadelphia Board of Surveyors, “LC007302: Legal Card for Chestnut Street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Streets,” accessed via the Legal Card Application.

<sup>63</sup> Philadelphia City Council, “An Ordinance to provide for the widening of Chestnut street on the City Plan.”

<sup>64</sup> *Builders' Guide*, January 11, 1893, page i.

<sup>65</sup> Philadelphia Board of Surveyors, “LC007302: Legal Card for Chestnut Street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Streets.”

<sup>66</sup> The photo ran in the *Sunday Evening Bulletin* in 1921, but was taken in 1918 at the latest, dated by the tenancy of Fellman and Company in 1029 Chestnut Street (visible in the center of the photo). Fellman and Company moved premises to 1010 Chestnut Street by 1918. Advertisement, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 15, 1918, page 19.

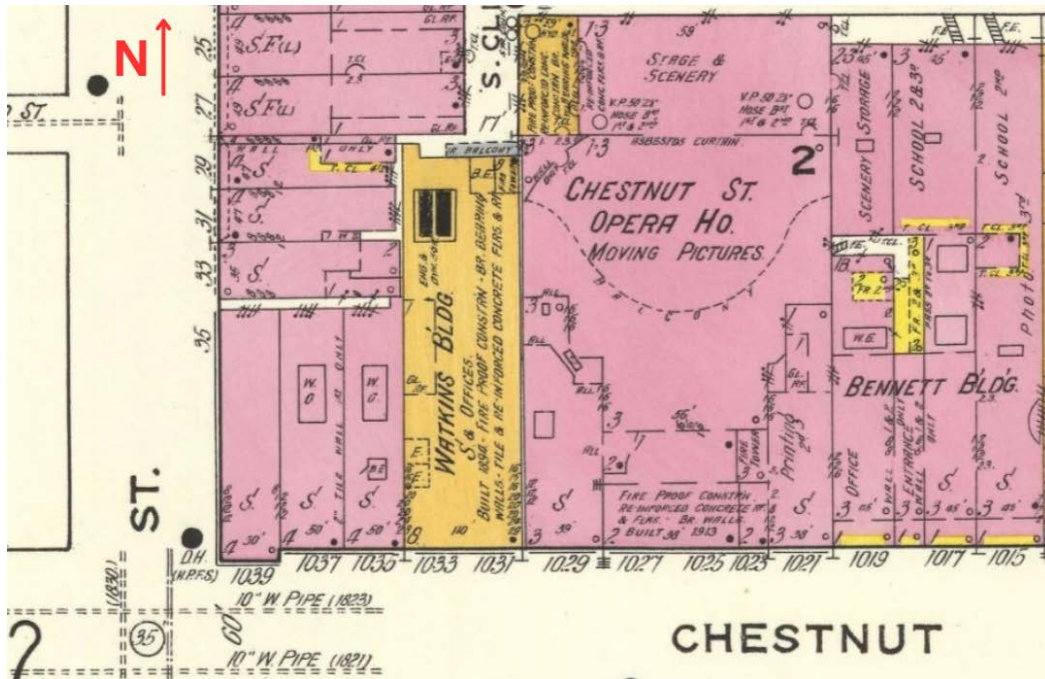


Figure 42: A 1916 map produced by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company shows 1039 Chestnut Street to be the last building on the block to be shortened in compliance with an 1884 city ordinance to widen Chestnut Street. The map labels the street at its current width of sixty feet.



Figure 43: A photograph taken in 1918 or shortly before shows the facade of 1039 Chestnut Street at the far left.

In June 1916, the owners of 1039 Chestnut Street received some amount of damages for the five feet of property that was used to widen the street though they had yet to shorten the building.<sup>67</sup> In March 1918, the owners were awarded a further \$12,200 in compensation by the Board of Viewers in the Court of Common Pleas.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps the conditions of the award compelled speedy action to shorten the building, because less than a month later, the following appeared in the *Builder's Guide*:

Store Building (alts.), northeast corner of Eleventh and Chestnut streets, \$7,500.  
Architect, private plans. Owner, John B. Miller, Land Title Building, Philadelphia. Brick, terra cotta, new front, 4 stories, cement, tile and pine floors, hot water heating, tile and terrazzo work (lighting reserved). Contract awarded to John V. Speth & Co., 1615 Sansom street.<sup>69</sup>

A week later, another *Builders' Guide* note was even more explicit about the location of work and materials used for the shortened façade: "New front on Chestnut street, brick and terra cotta."<sup>70</sup>

An entry in the August 1923 issue of the *Builders' Guide* described work to 1039 Chestnut Street, citing the firm Hollander and Fleishman which then occupied the store:

Store. Northeast Corner Eleventh and Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Architect, Frank E. Hahn, 1112 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Owners Hallander & Fleishman Co., on premises. Carpentry and mill work, metal bulk windows, painting, brick, steel, iron work, plastering, glazing, hardware, electric. Contract awarded to Basch & Co., Ruan and Tackawanna streets, Philadelphi[a].<sup>71</sup>

On the evidence of this citation, the Pennsylvania Historic Research Survey of 1980, conducted locally by the Clio Group, attributed the present façade to Frank Hahn, but the description of work in 1918, including the use of terra cotta, suggests that Hahn's project was not responsible for the bulk of the new façade.<sup>72</sup>

Whatever Frank Hahn's role, a 1924 aerial photograph (Figure 44) shows the new façade, and in a 1939 photograph (Figure 45), the elements of that new front can be seen. At that time the second floor featured a bay window similar to what had been in place previously. The pilasters, finials, and mansard roof can all be seen in this photo, and while the windows and spandrels cannot be discerned, it appears that all of the major features of the façade were in place by this time.

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<sup>67</sup> Philadelphia Board of Surveyors, "LC007302: Legal Card for Chestnut Street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Streets."

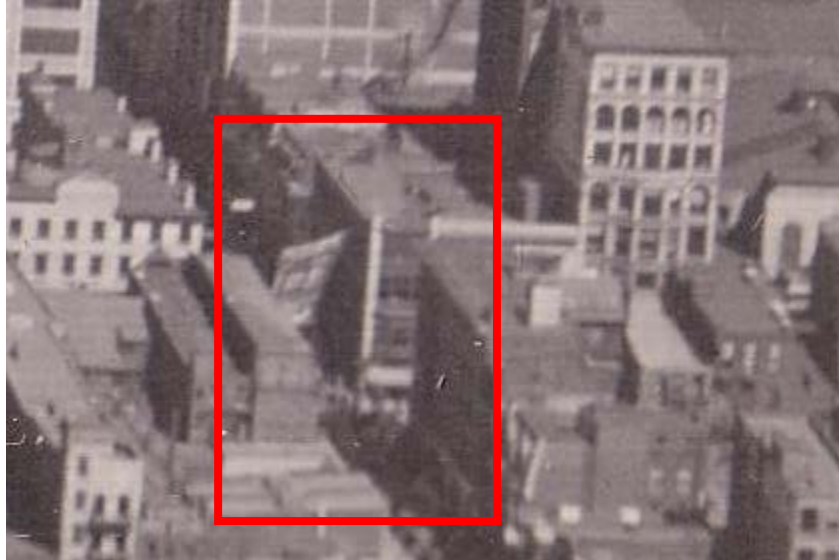
<sup>68</sup> "Awards Chestnut St. Realty Damages," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 15, 1918, page 15.

<sup>69</sup> "Store Building," *Builders' Guide*, April 3, 1918, page 219.

<sup>70</sup> "Store and Offices," *Builders' Guide*, April 10, 1918, page 239.

<sup>71</sup> "Store," *Builders' Guide*, August 1, 1923, page 487.

<sup>72</sup> C. Doebley, Clio Group, "1039 Chestnut Street," Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey, July 30, 1980. Files of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.



*Figure 44: An aerial photograph from 1924 shows the reworked front elevation of 1039 Chestnut Street. Strung across the intersection is a banner, likely installed by the Republican City Committee as they had done in 1906 (see Figure 20).*



*Figure 45: A detail of a 1939 photograph shows the revised façade with a round bay window at the second floor.*

## The Commercial Style

The Chestnut Street elevation of the former Union Republican Club features hallmarks of the Commercial Style which developed between 1890 and 1920 as building technology was revolutionized. While this style is often associated with skyscrapers, the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission Architectural Field Guide notes that most of the examples in the state

tend to be of the more vernacular scale and cites car dealerships and storefronts as common types.<sup>73</sup>

The Automobile Row Thematic Historic District along N. Broad Street features several examples of the Commercial Style at this smaller scale. The buildings at 802, 804, 806, and 808, built between 1915 and 1921, feature distinct designs, but are united by their use of architectural white terra cotta and similar proportions of their fenestration to the surrounding masonry (Figure 46).<sup>74</sup> Like 1039 Chestnut Street, these buildings once featured tripartite window arrangements (Figure 47), a common trademark of the Commercial Style.<sup>75</sup>



Figure 46: 802, 804, 806, and 808 North Broad Street are examples of the Commercial Style.

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<sup>73</sup> Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, “Commercial Style, 1890 - 1920,” *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*.

<sup>74</sup> Kevin McMahon and Logan Ferguson, “Automobile Row Thematic Historic District,” (Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places), designated July 9, 2021.

<sup>75</sup> Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, “Commercial Style, 1890 - 1920,” *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*.



*Figure 47: 802, 804, 806, and 808 North Broad Street. The date of the photograph is unknown, but it was taken after the top two floors of 808 were removed in 1941.*

Another excellent example of the Commercial Style from the Automobile Row Thematic Historic District is 681-687 North Broad Street (Figure 48). Built as a significantly wider building, pilasters break up the elevation into smaller portions and it maintains similar relationships between fenestration the terra cotta façade. Notably, the areas below the second-floor windows



feature low-relief spandrel panels which bear a striking resemblance to the panels on 1039 Chestnut Street.



*Figure 48: 681-81 North Broad Street*

### The Commercial Style on 1039 Chestnut Street

The front elevation of the former Union Republican Club, added in 1918, like the buildings on the 800 block of N. Broad Street, features tripartite windows which largely fill the façade, trimmed in terra cotta detailing. With the original second-floor bay, this relationship might have been even clearer. Like these other buildings, 1039 Chestnut Street has more ornament located at the cornice, though the architect opted for a small tile mansard roof rather than Classical detailing, with finials flanking it and defining the limits of the elevation.

It would be easy to look at the forms of the finials and the spandrel panels on 1039 Chestnut Street, with their stylistic geometry, and categorize the building as Art Deco. However, recognizing that it was built nearly a decade before the Paris Exposition which would later give that movement its name, that would be inaccurate. Rather it appears that the building features elements of the Commercial Style which also became associated with the Art Deco, especially at the modest commercial scale, including use of architectural terra cotta, a vertical rhythm created by piers or pilasters, and low-relief ornament.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> For examples of commercial-scale, Art Deco buildings in Philadelphia see nominations to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places including: Kerner, Tim, “1722-24 Chestnut Street: The Peck & Peck Store Building,” (Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places), designated January 13, 2023; Leech, Benjamin, “1501-05 Fairmount Avenue: Overseas Motor Works,” (Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places), designated February 13, 2015; and Lin, Xue Fei and Matt



Figure 49: Tappin's Diamonds in 1952.

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Figures 2, 3, 5, 16, 17, 34, 35, 38, 39, 41, 46, 48: Images from Cyclomedia, Pictometry, and Atlas.

Figure 6: Hexamer & Locher. *Maps of the City of Philadelphia, 1858-1860, Plate 16*.

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Figures 9, 19, 24, 36, 38: Photograph of the store of Godfrey S. Mahn, Importer and Manufacturer of Cigars, taken some time between 1895 and 1904 (judged by the tenancy of Leopold Stein's store), from the Frank Taylor Photographs collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia. <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/5758>

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Figure 11: Article from the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, April 5, 1893, page 205.

Figure 12: Photograph of Hughes and Muller, tailors, (likely taken around the same time as the photo of 1039 Chestnut Street by the same photographer) from the Frank Taylor Photographs collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia. <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/1464>

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Figure 21: "Still on the Firing Line," political cartoon by John De Mar from *The Record*, 1911, scanned from microfilm in the collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia and digitally refined by Jon Farnham.

Figure 23: Advertisement for Israel Fleishman's Gents' Furnishing Store in *The Philadelphia Times*, October 20, 1878, page 8: <https://www.newspapers.com/image/52213076/>

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- Figure 30: Photograph of All Saints, Margaret Street, by Steve Cadman via WikiMedia Commons under Creative Commons [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/):  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All\\_Saints,\\_Margaret\\_Street.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All_Saints,_Margaret_Street.jpg)
- Figure 31: Keble College Chapel, Oxford, photo by Wikipedia user Diliff, used under Creative Commons License [CC BY 2.5](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/):  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keble\\_College,\\_Oxford#/media/File:Keble\\_College\\_Chapel\\_-\\_Oct\\_2006.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keble_College,_Oxford#/media/File:Keble_College_Chapel_-_Oct_2006.jpg)
- Figure 32: Photograph of the Guaranteed Trust and Safe Deposit Company, designed by Frank Furness, from the Frank H. Taylor Photographs at the Free Library of Philadelphia:  
<https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/2833>
- Figure 33: Photograph of the Philadelphia Brass Works, built 1879, from the Frank H. Taylor Photographs at the Free Library of Philadelphia:  
<https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/5746>
- Figure 40: "11<sup>th</sup> Street-North from Chestnut Street-Union Repu...", April 24, 1912. From the records of Philadelphia Public Works. Accessed via PhillyHistory.org. Asset ID: 6660.
- Figure 42: Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance maps of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Vol. 1, 1916, plate 23*: <https://digital.libraries.psu.edu/digital/collection/maps1/id/15988>
- Figure 43: "Chestnut Street Opera House and the surrounding Neighborhood," dated December 18, 1921 (likely date it ran in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, see footnote 66) George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Collection, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center:  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/17>
- Figure 44: "Broad Street north from Pine Street," 1924, [1970200\\_00351](https://www.aerialsurvey.com/1970200_00351), J. Victor Dallin Aerial Survey collection (Accession 1970.200), Audiovisual Collections and Digital Initiatives Department, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.
- Figure 45: "The entire block will be demolished," July 25, 1939. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Collection, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center:  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/50665/rec/41>
- Figure 47: "802 - 806 North Broad Street Project," Historical Commission Archives. Accessed via PhillyHistory.org. Asset ID: 875.