

**ADDRESS: 8527-29 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: PTBK LLC

Nominator: Chestnut Hill Conservancy

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue as historic and listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company building, constructed in 1927, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the property reflects the environment of Chestnut Hill and the larger German Township in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century, and embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, satisfying Criterion D. Under Criterion E, the nomination asserts that the property is significant as the work of Arthur H. Brockie, a prominent local architect of the first and second quarters of the twentieth century.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E.



**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: **8527-29 Germantown Avenue**  
Postal code: **19118**

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **The Chestnut Hill Office of the Bank of Germantown**  
Current Name: **Wells Fargo Bank**

**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:    Commercial/School

**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): **1927 to 1928**  
Date(s) of construction: **1927-28**  
Architects: **Arthur Howell Brockie**  
Builders: **W. H. Gruhler Co.**  
Original owners: **Germantown Trust Company**  
Significant person: **NA**

**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: **Chestnut Hill Conservancy**

Author: **Keeping Society of Philadelphia**

Date: **15 January 2023**

Address: **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107**

EMAIL: **KEEPER@KEEPINGPHILADELPHIA.ORG**

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 1/25/2024

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 2/28/2024

Date of Notice Issuance: 2/29/2024

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: PTBK, LLC (grantee in Dec 2023 deed)

Address: 113 Mill Road

OPA-listed owner:

GERMANTOWN TR CO

Thomson Reuters

PO Box 2609

Carlsbad, CA 92018

City: Flourtown State: PA Postal Code: 19031

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. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Northwest) and Primary (Southwest) Elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

**CHESTNUT HILL OFFICE**  
**OF THE**  
**GERMANTOWN TRUST COMPANY**  
**ERECTED 1927-28**  
**8527-29 GERMANTOWN AVENUE**  
**CHESTNUT HILL**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**



Figure 2. The boundary for the proposed designation is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary for the proposed designation is as follows:

BEGINNING at a point formed by the intersection of the northeasterly side of Germantown Avenue (sixty feet wide) and the southeasterly side of Evergreen Avenue (fifty feet wide); thence extending along the said southeasterly side of the said Evergreen Avenue to the north approximately forty-one degrees, nineteen minutes, forty seconds East, one hundred and fifty feet and one-eighth of an inch to a point in the southwesterly side of a certain twelve-foot wide driveway leading into Evergreen Avenue, thence extending along the said driveway to the south approximately forty-eight degrees, one minute to the east, fifty-five feet, ten and one-eighth inches to a point; thence extending to the north approximately forty-one degrees, fifty-nine minutes to the east and crossing the said driveway, extending twelve feet to a point in the northeasterly aide of the same; thence extending along the northeasterly side of said twelve-foot wide driveway to the south approximately forty-eight degrees, one minute to the east, nineteen feet, ten and one-eighth inches to a point; thence extending to the south approximately forty-one degrees, fifty-nine minutes to the west, and recrossing the said twelve-foot wide driveway, extending eighty-eight feet, two inches to a point; thence extending to the south approximately forty-eight degrees, one

minute to the east, extending two feet to a point; thence extending to the south approximately forty-one degrees, thirty-six minutes to the west, seventy-three feet ten inches to a point in the northeasterly side of the said Germantown Avenue, and thence extending along the said northeasterly side of the said Germantown Avenue to the north, approximately forty-eight degrees, one minute to the west, approximately seventy-six feet, five and one-half inches to the original point and place of beginning. Being known as Nos. 8523-25-27-29 Germantown Avenue.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM AND THEREOUT ... all that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected... beginning at a point on the Northeasterly side of Germantown Avenue (60 feet wide) at the distance of fifty-four feet ten and one-half inches Southeast from the Southeasterly side of Evergreen Avenue (50 feet wide); thence extending North forty-one degrees fifty-nine minutes East one hundred and fifty feet to a point; thence extending North forty-eight degrees one minute West nine feet to a point; thence extending North forty-one degrees fifty-nine minutes East and crossing a certain twelve foot wide driveway leading Northwesterly into Evergreen Avenue twelve feet to a point in the Northeast side of the said driveway; thence extending along the Northeast side of said driveway South forty-eight degrees one minute East nineteen feet ten and one-eighth inches to a point; thence extending South forty-one degrees fifty-nine minutes West and recrossing the said twelve foot driveway eighty-eight feet two inches to a point; thence extending South forty-eight degrees one minute East two feet to a point; thence extending South forty-one degrees thirty-six minutes West seventy-three feet ten inches to a point in the said Northeast side of Germantown Avenue and thence extending along the said side of Germantown Avenue North forty-eight degrees one minute West twenty-one feet seven inches to the first mentioned point and place of beginning. Being known as No. 8523 Germantown Avenue.

And the said remaining portion is now known as No. 8525-8529 Germantown Avenue and assessed as No. 8527-29 Germantown Avenue.



Figure 3. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Northwest) and Primary (Southwest) Elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is a handsome one-and-one-half- and two-story, stone banking house that stands at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue. Emulating the scale and massing of the earlier building that it replaced in 1927-28, this Colonial Revival design is articulated in a sophisticated package of Wissahickon Schist with a symmetrical, five-rank fenestration at the primary (southwest) elevation. The main volume is a one-and-one-half-story structure that is approximately the size of most of the two-and-one-half-story buildings along Germantown Avenue. The rear volume of the building is a two-story stone structure.

The stone walls feature a random ashlar bond, rising at the side elevations to create prominent double chimneys at each end. The side-gable roof is situated within the stone walls, connected by a balustrade between the chimney stacks. The roof appears to retain its original or period-appropriate slate cladding. A prominent wooden cornice with dentils delineates the roofline from the single-story façade below with returns that extend to the side elevations. Copper downspouts descend from each end of the cornice, featuring original and/or aesthetically appropriate hardware and materials.



Figure 4. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Primary (Southwest) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

The primary (southwest) elevation features a prominent double-door entrance at the center, which is further distinguished by a pedimented door surround that is supported by simple pilasters. Appearing to be comprised of wood, this frontispiece emulates the old doorways of dwellings that once lined Germantown Avenue in the eighteenth century. Below the pediment is an iron lantern, which is supported by scrolled wrought iron brackets in the Colonial Revival style. Modern double doors fill the opening under what appears to be an original transom. The primary entrance is flanked by four windows, two on each side. The openings are served by twelve-over-twelve-light sash units. Each window opening features a header comprised of Wissahickon Schist with marble keystones at the center. Each window is served by a marble sill. Following the symmetry of the primary (southwest) elevation, simple marble panels rise above each opening, appropriately spaced below the cornice. A decorative iron bracket, designed to hold a sign, extends from the primary (southwest) elevation near the west corner at Germantown and Evergreen Avenues. An unsympathetic ramp and steps have been installed over the original steps.

The side (northwest) elevation is almost as prominent as the Germantown Avenue façade, given its situation along Evergreen Avenue. The main volume of the elevation features a symmetrical fenestration that calls to mind the design motifs of Andre Palladio. The three-bay fenestration is dominated by a blind arch opening that is delineated by Wissahickon Schist voussoirs. At the center of the blind arch is a large rectangular opening, featuring twelve-over-twelve-light sash windows. The same windows flank the blind arch, one on each side, all of which feature the same headers as described in the primary (southwest) elevation. The outer windows include the same decorative



stone panels, also described in the primary (southwest) elevation. Rising above the blind arch is a large oculus that is trimmed in limestone with keystones at three, six, nine, and twelve o'clock. This opening is served by a simplified version of a wheel window. Above the oculus is a datestone: "1927." The exact fenestration and treatment comprise the side (southeast) elevation of the main volume, which is visible from a pedestrian alley that extends from Germantown Avenue to the northeast where a parking lot extends from the rear of the subject building. The alley features a heavy iron gate at Germantown Avenue, which aligns to the Colonial Revival style.



Figure 5. Top: The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Northwest) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024. Figure 6. Bottom: The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Northwest) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.



Figure 7. Top: The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Southeast) Elevation from South corner. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024. Figure 8. Bottom: The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Southeast) Elevation from East corner. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.



Figure 9. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Rear (Northeast) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

The rear volume of the subject building is a two-story stone structure with a hipped roof that appends the main volume at the northeast. The same stonework is employed throughout this structure. The hipped roof is delineated from the stone walls by a wooden cornice with dentils. The side (northwest), the side (southeast), and the rear (northeast) elevations feature semi-symmetrical fenestrations. The rear volume is recessed slightly from the main volume at the side (northwest) elevation. The fenestration motif of the main volume extends into the rear volume with a single bay, repeating one of the large rectangular windows used in the primary (southwest), side (northwest), and side (southeast) elevations. This extension of the fenestration also occurs within the side (southeast) elevation. Beyond this section of the side (northwest) elevation of the rear volume is a symmetrical, three-bay fenestration of small, rectangular openings that serve both floors. The symmetrical fenestration of the side is flanked by copper downspouts that extend from the cornice, featuring original or aesthetically appropriate hardware and materials. The first-floor features two blind openings and one window, which is served by a single, nine-light sash that may be fixed. The three openings on the second-floor feature similar single, nine-light windows. All the window openings are delineated with headers and sills like those described in the main volume. The blind openings are not trimmed but are simple recessed panels of continuous Wissahickon Schist. A decorative wrought iron bracket is mounted to the second floor of the side (northwest) elevation near the north corner. The side (southeast) elevation of the rear volume extends two bays beyond the single window described above to a semi-symmetrical, two-story fenestration. The windows in this section are small and rectangular, including three like windows that mimic those employed in the side (northwest) elevation—one on the first floor and two on the second. The second opening on the first floor features a three-part mullion window.

The rear (northeast) elevation of the rear volume features a one-story shed addition along the first floor that features a hipped roof. A blind opening extends from the shed addition to the northwest. A single window is present at the far, southeast end of the rear (northeast) elevation, being partly obscured by a wooden fence. Rising above the shed addition is a symmetrical fenestration of four windows, all of which are detailed in the same manner as described on the side (northwest) elevation of the rear volume. An original or early alarm is present on the second floor, that resembles a fancy medicine cabinet.



Figure 10. An early alarm device on the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Rear (Northeast) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

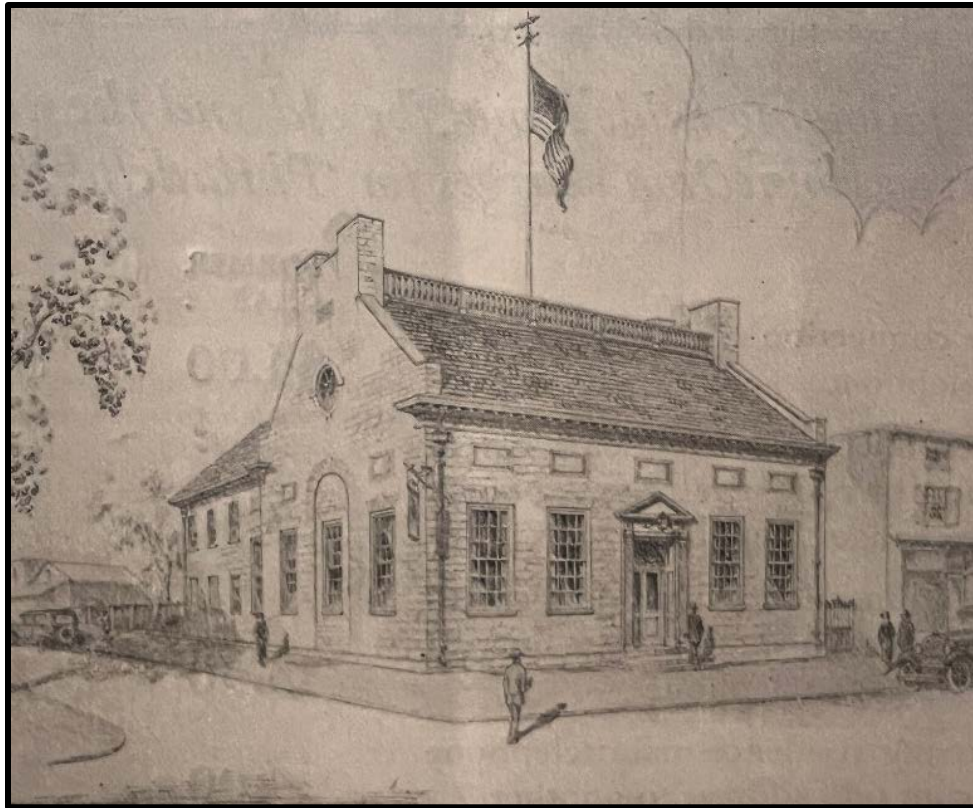


Figure 11. A rendering of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company at 8527-29 Germantown Ave., as published in *The Beehive* in 1928. Source: "Chestnut Hill's New Bank Building Will Open Week of September 24<sup>th</sup>," *The Beehive*, September 1928, 16.

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- 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*
- 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.*

The period of significance for the subject property dates to the time of construction in 1927-28.

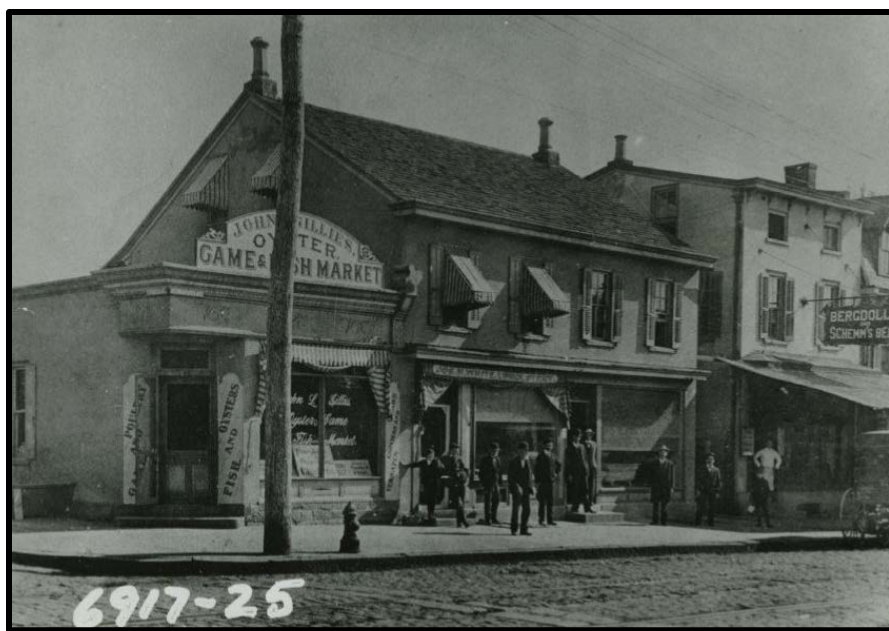


Figure 12. The site of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, previously containing two buildings: a one-story store at the corner and a two-and-one-half-story store at the corner. Source: The Chestnut Hill Conservancy.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company was built at 8527-29 Germantown Avenue between 1927 and 1928 (Figure 13). The project was first announced in *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG)* on July 28, 1926, stating that “Arthur Brockie” was the architect, though plans had “not yet started.” Nevertheless, the work was “contemplated in 1927,” which reflects the datestone in the gable of the side (northwest) elevation.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the subject building, the site featured two buildings: a small one-story store at the corner and a two-and-one-half-story stone store-dwelling immediately to the southeast (Figure 12).

After more than a year, the precise plans were finally published in the *PRERBG* on December 14, 1927. The announcement included the following details about the subject building: “Brick, reinforced concrete, steel, stone, 1 story, mezzanine and basement, 52x79 feet, gray slate roof, cement, linoleum and rubber floors, plumbing, vapor heat, electric light, oil burners, metal lath, tile and marble work, kalamein doors, fire doors, iron pipes, cinder concrete block, steel toilet stalls, demolition and elevators.” Construction was completed by the W. J. Gruhler Co., 219 High Street, at a projected cost of \$115,000.<sup>2</sup>

*The Beehive* published an article on the building, when it was completed, announcing that the opening would take place on September 24, 1928. The following description was included:

The new building is constructed of local quarry ledge stone in the early Colonial style of architecture. White marble trimmings and an old-fashioned sign hanging from the corner give it an atmosphere in harmony with the historic traditions of its

<sup>1</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG)*, 28 July 1926, 473.

<sup>2</sup> *PRERBG*, 14 December 1927, 794.

surroundings. High, paneled wainscoting extends around the entire walls, while the white rough plastered ceiling is supported by oaken beams.<sup>3</sup>

The building also featured modern alarms, as well as steel vaults with safety deposit boxes and silver storage. The interior layout was designed with space for the following departments: “Banking, Trusts, Safe Deposit, Real Estate, Travel, Title, Savings Fund and Christmas Club.” At the time of the subject building’s completion, the Germantown Trust Company was under the leadership of Clarence C. Brinton, President. The first manager in the new building of the Chestnut Hill Office was L. A. Dix.<sup>4</sup>

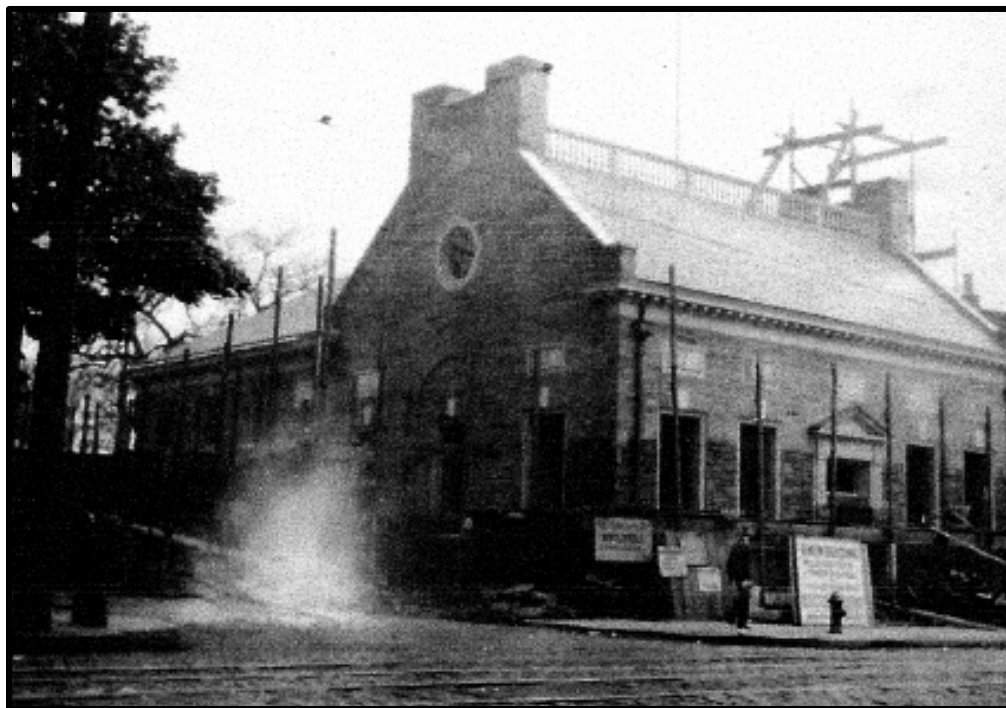


Figure 13. During the final phases of construction, the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, Side (Northwest), and Primary (Southwest) Elevations in May 1928. Source: Policy No. 26334: Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Ave., 21 May 1928, the Philadelphia Contributionship.

The Germantown Trust Company had operated a branch office in Chestnut Hill since the second year of its existence. The branch office was first established in 1890, being housed for many years in a small, one-story brick office building (Figure 15) at 8628 Germantown Avenue, which featured a pediment and four pilasters.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Chestnut Hill’s New Bank Building Will Open Week of September 24<sup>th</sup>,” *The Beehive*, September 1928, 16.

<sup>4</sup> “Chestnut Hill’s New Bank Building Will Open Week of September 24<sup>th</sup>,” *The Beehive*, September 1928, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Pamphlet: Germantown Trust Company, Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues, Philadelphia, Thirty-five Years. (Philadelphia: 1924). Source: Germantown Historical Society.

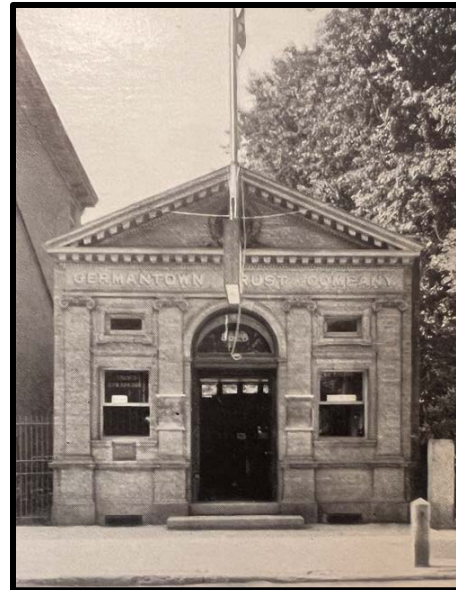
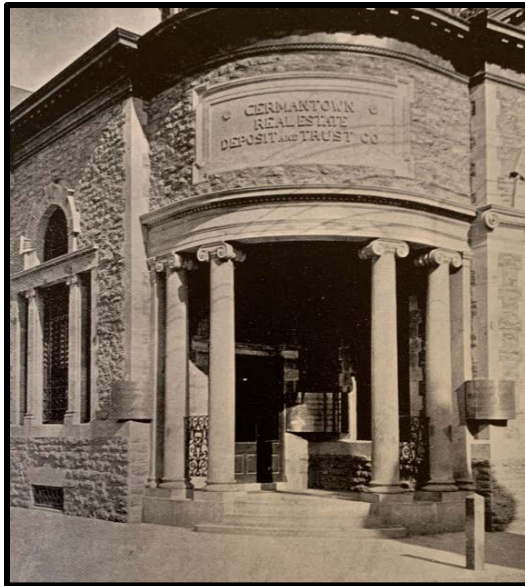


Figure 14. Left: The Entrance Portico of the Germantown Trust Company (Demolished) at Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues. Source: GHS. Figure 15. Right: The Chestnut Hill Office (Demolished) of the Germantown Trust Company, 8628 Germantown Avenue, 1924. Source: Pamphlet: Germantown Trust Company, Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues, Philadelphia, Thirty-five Years. (Philadelphia: 1924). Source: Germantown Historical Society.

The Germantown Trust Company was established as the Germantown Real Estate, Deposit and Trust Company in 1889. Philip C. Garrett, Francis B. Reeves, Samuel Emlen, W.A. Church, and Frank J. Firth were among the early founders of the institution. The first meeting of the shareholders took place on July 25, 1889, at the Workingmen's Club on W. Cheltenham Avenue in Germantown. The first board meeting took place the month following. Samuel Mason was the first president. The firm eventually established its headquarters in a three-story, brick store-dwelling at the southeast corner of Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues.<sup>6</sup>

In the age before nationalized banking, local financial institutions were standard in most places, and the Upper Northwest was no exception. When the Germantown Trust Company was founded, three primary banks dominated the market through the 1940s: the National Bank of Germantown, the Savings Fund Society of Germantown and its Vicinity, and the Germantown Trust Company. From the time of its founding, the Germantown Trust Company had at least one branch office: the Chestnut Hill Office. Other locations were opened over the years, including East Germantown, Logan, Mt. Airy, etc. In March 1947, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published an advertisement that announced the merger of the Germantown Trust Company and the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities.<sup>7</sup> At the time of the merger, the firm was known as The Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts, which would later become the First Pennsylvania Bank.<sup>8</sup> This institution would remain in the subject building through the 1990s. It was eventually occupied by Wells Fargo Bank.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Fraizer Lloyd. "A Note On The Founding Of An Old Germantown Banking Institution," *Germantown Crier*, Fall 1980.

<sup>7</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 31 March 1947, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Fraizer Lloyd. "A Note On The Founding Of An Old Germantown Banking Institution," *Germantown Crier*, Fall 1980.





Figure 16. Top left: The door surround of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Primary (Southwest) Elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024. Figure 17. Top right: Details of the Primary (Southwest) Elevation of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024. Figure 18. Bottom: The iron bracket for signage on the Primary (Southwest) Elevation near the north corner. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

#### **CRITERION D**

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is a building that possesses distinguishing characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, as applied to banking houses and other institutional buildings in the Upper Northwest section of Philadelphia, during the interwar years.

According to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission’s (PHMC) Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, the Colonial Revival Style, 1880–1960, is “one of the most frequently produced and enduring popular styles in America.”<sup>9</sup> While related to an aesthetic that was always

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, “Colonial Revival Style, 1880-1960,” accessed 15 January 2024, <http://portal.state.pa.us>.

an essential part of the Quaker City's built environment and identity, the Colonial Revival emerged in popular culture after it was showcased at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia. The style was further popularized by the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago.<sup>10</sup> While these international fairs in 1876 and 1893 greatly influenced American design, the Colonial Revival became most prominent during the interwar years. According to Timothy Davis, an Architectural Historian, Americans “embraced Colonial Revival architecture with a vengeance.”<sup>11</sup> As building technologies advanced in the 1920s and 1930s, people welcomed modern conveniences, while being largely nonplussed by modernity in architecture. As a result, “the intrinsically modern but superficially traditional Colonial Revival style was infinitely more popular than its unadulterated modern counterpart.”<sup>12</sup> When an intrusive new commercial or institutional building was developed, it was often better received when designed in a traditional manner. There was perhaps no place more faithful to a Colonial Revival ethos in the local built environment than the Upper Northwest section of Philadelphia, where the majority of modern structures, developed between the First and Second World Wars, featured building envelopes inspired by Georgian and/or Germantown Vernacular antecedents.

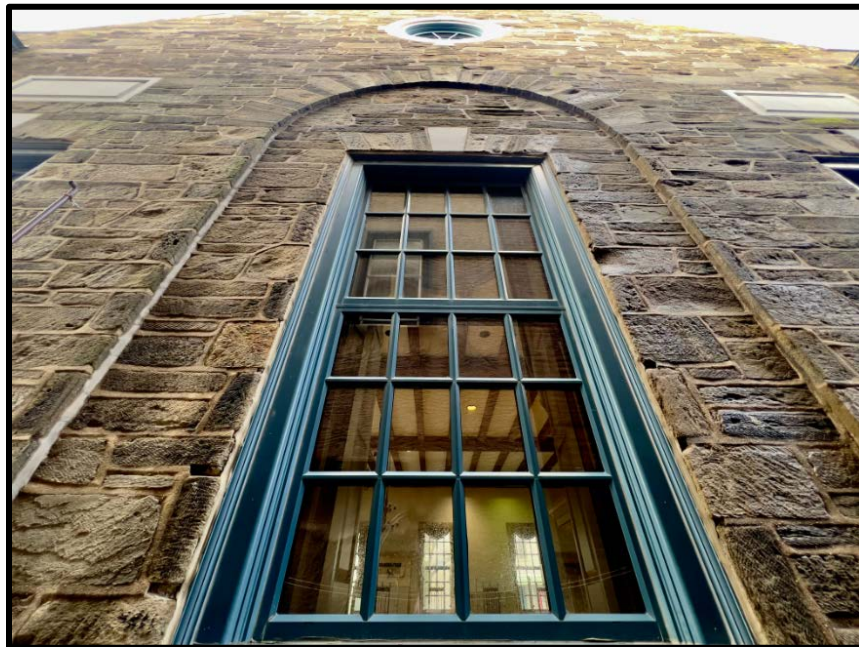


Figure 19. A view of the blind arch opening within the Side (Southeast) Elevation of the Main Volume of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is an exceptional example of the mania for Colonial Revival design as articulated in a banking house design in the 1920s. The subject building features a characteristic array of identifying features, as outlined and recognized in standard sources on architectural style, including the Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide and *A Field Guide to American Homes* by Virginia Savage McAlester.

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, Shaun Eyring, and Kenny Marotta. *Re-creating the American Past, Essays on the Colonial Revival*. (University of Virginia Press, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, Shaun Eyring, and Kenny Marotta. *Re-creating the American Past, Essays on the Colonial Revival*. (University of Virginia Press, 2006).

Among the most identifiable features that were commonly associated with the Colonial Revival style, the subject building is appropriately scaled in size and massing to the site and its environs, employing Wissahickon Schist for both its main and rear volumes. The two-and-one-half-story main volume is distinguished by a side gable roof that is supported by prominent double chimneys at each end, a design motif known in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This historic motif is further developed with the inclusion of a balustrade that runs between the stacks along the roofline. The primary (southwest) and side (northwest and southeast) elevations are beautifully designed with symmetrical fenestrations. The façade along Germantown Avenue features a central entrance that is set off by a Colonial Revival frontispiece, which is comprised of a pediment and pilasters. This type of door surround is one of the great hallmarks of the Colonial and Federal periods. The windows are generally large, featuring multi-light sashes, as well as marble keystones and sills, all of which derive from historic precedence. Additionally, marble panels rise above most of the first-floor openings, calling to mind fine examples of Georgian design. The side elevations, especially in the main volume, are finely detailed with blind arches, large windows, oculi with marble trimmings, and a marble datestone. The roofline is delineated by a Classically inspired cornice, and the roof itself is clad in slate. Both the cornice and the roof cladding are evocative of Colonial Revival buildings. The traditional design details are further embellished by ironwork, including a lantern with decorative supports over the front door and ornate brackets for painted wooden signage near the north and east corners. All of these characteristics unite in an important specimen of Colonial Revival style design.

In conclusion, the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company epitomizes the Colonial Revival style, satisfying Criterion D.

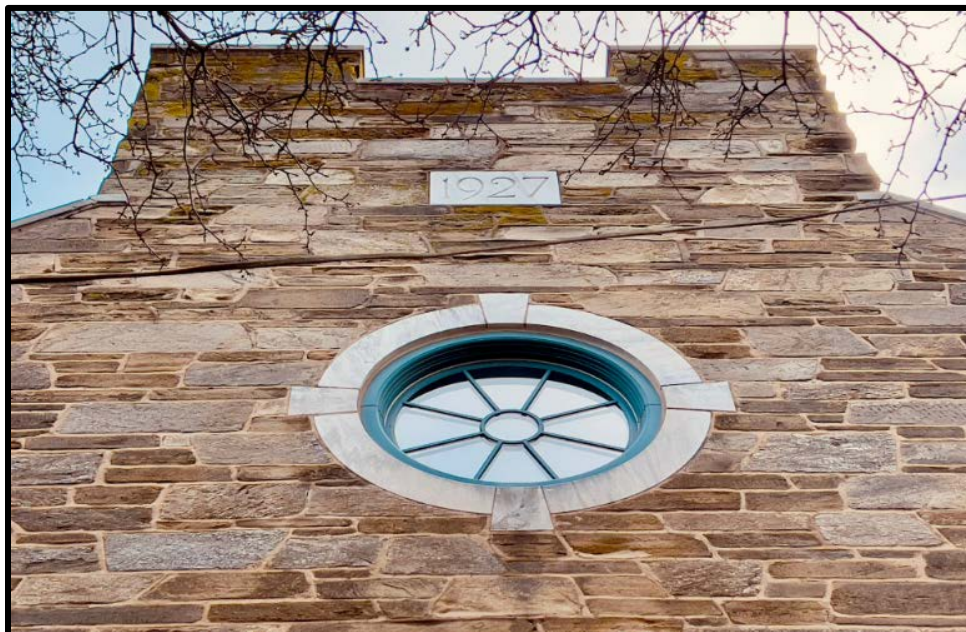


Figure 20. The oculi and datestone within the gable of Side (Northwest) Elevation of the Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Ave. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2023.



Figure 21. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 8527-29 Germantown Avenue, Side (Northwest) and Primary (Southwest) Elevations, ca.1930. Source: HSP.

### **CRITERION C**

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is a building that reflects the environment of Chestnut Hill and the larger German Township in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century, when the Colonial Revival style characterized prominent banking houses and other institutional buildings. While the era gave rise to many Art Deco and Art Moderne structures, new, modern buildings were ennobled by historic precedence found in Georgian architecture, as well as the Germantown Vernacular. From the time of the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 through the mid-twentieth century, the prevalence of this architectural tradition greatly influenced the built environment of Philadelphia—especially along Germantown Avenue in Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Chestnut Hill. The style is inextricably linked to the identity of the city and the community, which harkens back to the eighteenth century and the foundational period of the United States.

The Germantown Trust Company was an important local financial institution that appears to have factored heritage into both its architectural and marketing products. As for their buildings, employment of the Colonial Revival appears to have been equivalent to a religious solemnity. Their first purpose-built banking house was a small, but wonderful Colonial and Queen Revival-style edifice. Designed by Hazelhurst & Huckel, architects, it stood on a narrow lot at the southeast corner of Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues, replete with an integral portico of four Corinthian columns; Palladian windows on both street-facing elevations; and pediments along the roofline. The institution would go on to commission other buildings, including continuous improvements

to their headquarters and branch offices. In 1922, the Germantown Trust Company greatly expanded its footprint at Germantown and Cheltenham. Arthur H. Brockie, the subject architect, was commissioned to complete a design that would terraform the Hazelhurst & Huckel building into a large two-story stone institutional structure. By the time Brockie's plans were realized in 1923, the improved building was two or three times the size with a decidedly corporate or even governmental appearance.<sup>13</sup> Brockie was engaged several times over the years to enlarge this structure, which culminated in an eight-story tower (Figure 22) at the rear of the two-story banking house in 1929.<sup>14</sup> The front, two-story portion would later be demolished for a department store, though the tower was retained.



Figure 22. Top: The Germantown Trust Company at Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues, showing both the main two-story building and the eight-story tower, taken in 1931. Source: *The Beehive*, January 1931. Figure 23. Bottom left: The East Germantown Office of the Germantown Trust Company. Source: "Germantown Trust Company Holds Annual Dinner and Dance," *The Beehive*, February 1930, 12. Figure 24. Bottom right: The Logan Office of the Germantown Trust Company, 5001 N. Broad Street. Source: Pamphlet: Germantown Trust Company, Germantown and Cheltenham Avenues, Philadelphia, Thirty-five Years. (Philadelphia: 1924). Source: Germantown Historical Society.

The Germantown Trust Company's branch offices were also designed in the Colonial Revival style. In 1926, Arthur H. Brockie, the subject architect, was commissioned to design the Logan

<sup>13</sup> "Splendid New Banking House," *Germantown Independent Gazette*, 29 March 1923.

<sup>14</sup> *PRERBG*, 21 August 1929, 533.

Office (Figure 23) of the Germantown Trust Company for a site at 5001 N. Broad Street. The \$50,000, red brick banking house was a relatively small structure, but a strong and attractive example of the Colonial Revival style.<sup>15</sup> The masonry façade featured smooth-faced stone trimmings, large round-arched openings with multi-light windows, keystones, medallions, etc. The Germantown Trust Company’s East Germantown Office (Figure 24), founded in 1930, was perhaps its least significant design; however, it still boasted a red brick façade featuring smooth-faced stone details, including four pilasters, a base course, headers with keystones, and a cornice inscribed: GERMANTOWN TRVST COMPANY.<sup>16</sup>

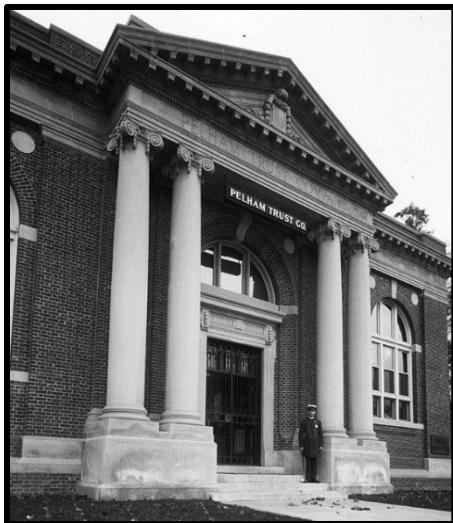


Figure 25. Top left: The Chestnut Hill Title & Trust Company, Germantown Avenue and Gravers’ Lane, ca.1955-60. Source: Chestnut Hill Conservancy. Figure 26. Top right: The Chestnut Hill Savings and Loan Association (Demolished), 8328 Germantown Avenue, ca.1960s. Source: Chestnut Hill Conservancy. Figure 27. Bottom left: The Pelham Trust Company, Germantown Avenue, Mt. Airy, taken by Franklin Davenport Edmunds in 1909 Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 28. Bottom right: Saving Fund Society of Germantown, 5452-58 Germantown Ave., NE Elevation, designed by Ritter & Shay, architects, in 1929.

<sup>15</sup> *PRERBG*, 6 October 1926, 635.

<sup>16</sup> “Germantown Trust Company Holds Annual Dinner and Dance,” *The Beehive*, February 1930, 12.

The Germantown Trust Company was not alone in its taste for the Colonial Revival. Many financial institutions followed this aesthetic tradition, especially in the Upper Northwest. In Chestnut Hill, a few blocks from the subject property, the Chestnut Hill Title & Trust Co. (Figure 25) commissioned Arthur H. Brockie, the subject architect, to design a new building at the southwest corner of Germantown Avenue and Gravers' Lane in 1931. The Colonial Revival style building of Wissahickon Schist construction featured a symmetrical fenestration of large round-arched openings with multi-light windows, keystones, a Georgian door surround, a hipped roof, and a cornice with dentils. The Chestnut Hill Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, built earlier in 1907, is a remarkably similar design at 8711 Germantown Avenue. The Chestnut Hill Savings and Loan Association (Figure 26) appears to have occupied a repurposed Victorian house at 8328 Germantown Avenue as their offices, which included a cheap one-story addition at the primary (northeast) elevation. While relatively streamlined in design, the low stone volume was constructed of Wissahickon Schist and the two doorways featured surrounds in the Colonial Revival style.

Other important Colonial Revival banking houses stand prominently along Germantown Avenue: the Pelham Trust Company (Figure 27) at 6740 Germantown Avenue by Churchman & Thomas, architects, in 1907; the Mt. Airy National Bank at 7208 Germantown Avenue by Norman Hulme, architect, in 1928-29; the Savings Fund Society of Germantown and its Vicinity (Figure 28) at Germantown Avenue and School House Lane in 1929; and the Fidelity Bank at Germantown Avenue and School House Lane by Paul M. Hesser, Jr. in 1959, a replica of the De La Plaine House.<sup>17</sup>

The examples shown above exhibit the widespread employment of the Colonial Revival in the Upper Northwest. The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is representative of an era characterized by the Colonial Revival style, satisfying Criterion C.

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<sup>17</sup> Oscar Beisert. *PRHP Nomination: The Pelham Trust Company, 6740 Germantown Ave., Mt. Airy*. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2020).



Figure 29. Left: Arthur Howell Brockie, ca.1890s. Source: Nancy66liskey, Ancestry.com. Figure 30. Right: Arthur Howell Brockie, taken by Bachrach. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 September 1946, 14.

### **CRITERION E**

The Chestnut Hill Office of the Germantown Trust Company is the work of Arthur H. Brockie, an architect who figured among Philadelphia's most prominent in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century. Best remembered for fine suburban residences in Germantown, Mt. Airy, Chestnut Hill, and other Main Line suburbs, Brockie also produced high-profile commercial and institutional designs, including banks and hospitals.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: ARTHUR HOWELL BROCKIE, ARCHITECT**

Hailing from a prominent Philadelphia family, Arthur Howell Brockie (1875-1946) was a native of Germantown, "where much of the work of his mature practice would also be located."<sup>18</sup> Reared in a Second Empire-style twin at 30 W. Walnut Lane (now 113 W. Walnut Lane), he was the son of William Brockie and Anna Penniston Brockie. Like many boys of his social standing, he attended the Germantown Academy, then in W. School House Lane within walking distance of his childhood home. In 1891, he matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania, studying in the newly established architectural department. Midway through college in 1893, his excellence in design and rendering earned him a prize membership in the T-Square Club. In due time, Brockie attained a B.S. in Architecture, Class of 1895.<sup>19</sup>

Upon graduating, Brockie entered the prestigious architectural firm of Cope & Stewardson as a draftsman. This endeavor was interrupted in 1898 by the Spanish-American War. He enlisted in Battery A of the Philadelphia Volunteers, participating in the Puerto Rican Campaign from April

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<sup>18</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "Arthur Howell Brockie (1875-1946)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 15 January 2024, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24038](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24038).

<sup>19</sup> "Arthur Brockie, Architect, Dies," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 September 1946, 14.



through November 1898. After mustering out of the service, Brockie returned to his position at Cope & Stewardson.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 31. An article published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on March 15, 1899, announcing his “John Stewardson memorial scholarship”. Source: Newspapers.com.

In March 1899, Brockie was awarded the John Stewardson Memorial Scholarship of \$1,000, “providing for a year’s travel and study abroad,” which was the result of a juried competition. His successful design, “A School of Architecture with a Museum of Architectural Casts,” won him the academic version of a grand tour.<sup>21</sup> He sailed upon the *Menominee* to London on March 29, 1899, where he first traveled through England and Scotland by bicycle.<sup>22</sup> It is said that he studied at the

<sup>20</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, “Arthur Howell Brockie (1875-1946),” by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 15 January 2024, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24038](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24038).

<sup>21</sup> “Successful Competitor, Arthur H. Brockie Awarded the Stewardson Scholarship,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 March 1899, 2.

<sup>22</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 March 1899, 14.

American Academy in Rome for four months. Brockie's award-winning design and a selection of his travel sketches were ultimately published in the *T-Square Yearbook* in 1899 and 1900.

Returning to Philadelphia, Brockie established his own architectural firm by November 1900, when he was noted to have designed a Coachman's House for a Mrs. Brock of Wyncote, Pennsylvania. His first office appears to have been at 1020 Chestnut Street.<sup>23</sup> The first year of his practice included an addition to the Thomas Roberts Co. Warehouse at 116 S. Front St. in January 1901 in Philadelphia; a coachman's house for George R. Packard, Esq. at Villanova, Pennsylvania in April 1901; and alterations and additions to various suburban residences.<sup>24</sup> Early in 1902, Brockie was commissioned to design a new house for Rodman Wister on Olney Avenue "in Germantown." This was the first of enumerable residential commissions that characterized his oeuvre.<sup>25</sup> Another early, but important commission was the Sedgley Club House in Fairmount Park, a project that began late in 1902.<sup>26</sup> These are just a few examples among dozens of early projects.

In November 1903, it was announced that Arthur H. Brockie would enter into partnership with Theodore Mitchell Hastings (1876-1950), forming Brockie & Hastings at 328 Chestnut Street.<sup>27</sup> Also a native of Philadelphia, Hastings was educated at the St. Paul's School in New Hampshire and received a B.S. in Architecture from Harvard University in 1898. He too studied abroad, spending five months in the Atelier Lambert in Paris. When he returned to Philadelphia, Hastings trained in the office of the eminent architect, Theophilus Parson Chandler.<sup>28</sup> By 1901, Hastings was also conducting his own architectural practice. Like Brockie, one of Hastings' earliest designs was for C.C. Harrison's Coachman's House at Devon, Pennsylvania.<sup>29</sup>

Brockie & Hastings proved to be a prolific partnership. One of their first commissions was for improvements to the Philadelphia Commercial Museum in 1904.<sup>30</sup> An early residential commission was a residence for William T. Wright, Esq. at St. David's, Pennsylvania, which cost roughly \$56,605.<sup>31</sup> The firm completed many important residential designs: the Dixon Residence at Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia in 1905; the Glendenning Residence at 1901 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia in 1906; the Disston Residence at 8300 Saint Martin's Lane at Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia in 1906; the Morris Residence in 1907 at Chestnut Hill; the Rawle Residence at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania in 1907; the Morgan Residence at 1900 Spruce Street, Philadelphia in 1909; the Wilson Potter Residence (Figure 32) at Chestnut Hill in 1912; the Lea Residence at Devon, Pennsylvania in 1914; the House of Louis R. Page, Esq. (Figure 33) at Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania; the Morice Residence at 8212 Saint Martin's Lane at Chestnut Hill in 1915; and the

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<sup>23</sup> *PRERBG*, 24 October 1900, 683.

<sup>24</sup> Various articles in the *PRERBG* in 1901.

<sup>25</sup> *PRERBG*, 19 March 1902, 177.

<sup>26</sup> *PRERBG*, 29 October 1902, 709.

<sup>27</sup> *PRERBG*, 4 November 1903, 715.

<sup>28</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "Hastings, Theodore Mitchell (1876–1950)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 15 January 2024, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/22169](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22169)

<sup>29</sup> *PRERBG*, 30 October 1901, 703.

<sup>30</sup> *PRERBG*, 3 February 1904, 71.

<sup>31</sup> *PRERBG*, 20 April 1904, 243.

Trotter Residence at 8870 Towanda Ave., also at Chestnut Hill in 1918.<sup>32</sup> These designs “are examples of the taste in the Philadelphia area for a colonial Pennsylvania style, whether it is couched in the Pennsylvania farmhouse model or in a more high style Georgian or Federal revival.”<sup>33</sup> As previously stated, the partnership also developed expertise in banking houses and hospital buildings. Hastings would first leave the practice to serve in World War I, and, soon after his return, the partnership was dissolved in 1918, when he relocated to Santa Barbara, California, becoming a partner in Soule, Murphy, and Hastings.

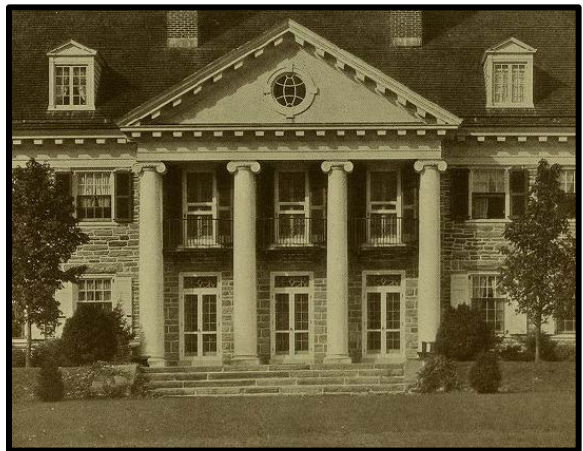


Figure 32. The Wilson Potter Residence, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, ca.1912. Source: PAB. Figure 33. The House of Louis R. Page, Esq., Lower Merion Township, Pa. Source: PAB.

Beyond Brockie and Hastings as a partnership, Brockie’s solo practice made significant contributions to Philadelphia’s built environment with numerous institutional, educational, commercial, and residential projects. Of the institutional commissions, hospitals were among the most important, examples being the Germantown Hospital, E. Wister Street, Germantown, Philadelphia; the Rush Hospital for Consumptive and Allied Diseases at 33rd Street and Lancaster Avenue—currently the Rush Building of Drexel University, in West Philadelphia; the Dorrance Memorial Pavilion at Cooper Hospital in Camden, New Jersey; and a series of major hospitals for the University of Pennsylvania. The design of the Penn Hospital projects were intended to harmonize with the Jacobean Revival structures nearby, such as the earlier dormitory complex by Cope and Stewardson. Among the hospitals constructed were the Maternity Building, the Surgical Building, and the Building for Contagious Diseases. The earliest, the J. William White Memorial Building (Figure 34), is still in use and displays Jacobean influence in the exterior strapwork, the projecting balcony of the sixth story, and the vestigial towers of the façade.<sup>34</sup>

Banks proved to be an integral component of Brockie’s commercial work. Largely reflecting the Georgian or Colonial Revival styles, examples included the aforementioned banking houses

<sup>32</sup> *PRERBG*, 18 January 1905, 37.; *PRERBG*, 20 June 1906, 390.; *PRERBG*, 7 November 1906, 718.; *T-Square Yearbook*, 1907, 123.; *PRERBG*, 5 May 1909, 273.; *T-Square Yearbook*, 1912, 69.; *PRERBG*, 1 September 1915, 556.; and *T-Square Yearbook*, 1918, 32.

<sup>33</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, “Brockie and Hastings (1876–1950),” by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 15 January 2024, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/22169](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22169)

<sup>34</sup> Oscar Beisert and Sam Streit. *NRHP Nomination: The Francis R. Strawbridge House, 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, Germantown*. (Philadelphia: Off Boundary Preservation Brigade, 2015).

located on Germantown Avenue, near many of the firm's residential commissions, lending an air of financial dignity and stability to the main shopping street of the upscale suburb.<sup>35</sup> The Germantown Avenue banks included the Chestnut Hill Title and Trust Co., the Germantown Real Estate, Deposit and Trust Company, and the Germantown Trust Company.

Highly successful in his commercial, institutional, and residential work, Arthur H. Brockie was an architect and designer, who greatly impacted the built environment of Philadelphia and the larger region, satisfying Criterion E.



Figure 34. The J. William White Memorial Building, University of Pennsylvania, West Philadelphia. Source: University of Pennsylvania.

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This nomination was completed for the Chestnut Hill Conservancy by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with the primary author as Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist with assistance from Alex Barlett, Archivist and J.M. Duffin, Historian.

The following repositories and sites were used to create the nomination:

Ancestry.com

Chestnut Hill Conservancy

Germantown Historical Society

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

Newspapers.com

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<sup>35</sup> Oscar Beisert and Sam Streit. *NRHP Nomination: The Francis R. Strawbridge House, 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, Germantown*. (Philadelphia: Off Boundary Preservation Brigade, 2015).

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