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April 12, 2024

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Jon.Farnham@phila.gov

Re: 1330-36 Chestnut Street
CHD Hearing: April 17, 2024
PHC Hearing: May 10, 2024

Dear Dr. Farnham:

This firm is counsel to Treeco/Manor Limited Partnership (“Treeco”), the owner of real property located at 1330-36 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA (the “Property”). As you know, on August 3, 2023, the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission (the “Commission” or “PHC”) nominated the Property for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (the “Register”). Treeco adamantly opposes the Property’s nomination.

Enclosed for the Commission’s review and consideration is a detailed report prepared by Treeco’s architectural historian expert, George E. Thomas, Ph.D., founding partner of Civic Visions LP and former co-director of the Critical Conservation program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (2011-2022). Within his report, Dr. Thomas thoroughly explains why the Property does not satisfy any of the criteria necessary for historic designation. Dr. Thomas’s extensive research and evaluative analysis lays bare the fallacy that the Property deserves recognition on the Register. To briefly summarize some of the key points from Dr. Thomas’s evaluative report:

- The Property **fails to satisfy Criterion A**, as it lacks “significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City.” At the time it was constructed, the Property was merely one of thirty-five Woolworths stores in Philadelphia.
- The Property **fails to satisfy Criteria C or D**, as it neither “reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style” nor “embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style.” The nomination contends that the Property “reflects the International Style of the Modern design movement;” however, as Dr. Thomas explains at length, the Property is “[f]ar from being International Style.” Rather, it “is a hybrid mix of styles cobbled into a poorly integrated design.” According to Dr. Thomas, due to numerous alterations of the façade over the years, the building now stands as “a misch-mash of unrelated stylistic elements that span multiple periods.” Further, Dr. Thomas opines that the Property is at odds with its environment, which is

otherwise characterized by “Philadelphia’s best concentration of early twentieth century Beaux Arts office buildings,” including the Adelphia Hotel, the Widener Building and the Victorian Hale Building, to name a few.

- The Property **fails to satisfy Criterion H**, as it does not “represent[] an established visual feature of the neighborhood” on account of its “unique location or singular physical characteristics.” To the contrary, the building’s “low height” and heavily-altered, “disjointed design” is analogous to “a discolored broken tooth that breaks the rhythm of the tall buildings near Broad Street.”

Dr. Thomas’s report sets forth considerable research and analysis of the Property’s significant alterations since it was constructed “that have destroyed its already minor design significance.” In addition, unlike the nomination, Dr. Thomas researched the building’s architect, Harry Hake, Jr., ultimately classifying him as a “third-tier architect” from Cincinnati, Ohio with no other ties to Philadelphia. Notably, Hake Jr.’s minor reference in the 1956 Bowker Dictionary of American Architects does not even list the Property as one of Hake’s notable works, instead pointing to some alterations of Ohio suburban train stations and designs for a group of utility buildings and garages. I encourage both the Commission and the Committee on Historic Designation to closely study Dr. Thomas’s report and contrast his comprehensive and thorough research and analysis with that contained in the nomination.

Notwithstanding the nomination’s failure to satisfy any of the necessary criteria for historic designation, the Commission should also refrain from designating the Property on public policy grounds. Enclosed is a report prepared by Richard Wentzel, R.A. of Thornton Tomasetti, Inc., detailing the significant challenges and barriers to any future adaptive reuse of the building due to its current design. For example, the building lacks operable windows along the Chestnut Street façade and would require the lowering of the existing second- and third-floor windowsills to meet emergency escape and rescue requirements imposed by the Building Code. As explained by Mr. Wentzel, “[a]ny attempt to retrofit the windows to function as emergency escape will necessitate modifying the appearance of the window.” The future adaptive reuse of the building would also likely require the installation of numerous additional egress doors. In other words, historic designation of the building would result in an inability to accommodate a multitude of uses without further, substantial alterations to the property’s already heavily-altered façade.

Lastly, it bears noting that the Property is zoned Center City Core Commercial Mixed-Use (CMX-5), which is the most liberal commercial zoning classification in the Philadelphia Zoning Code. CMX-5 properties are allowed a base floor area ratio (FAR) of 1,200%, which is more than double the allowable FAR of any other zoning district in the City. The Property is further located within the boundaries of the Center City/University City Floor Area Ratio Map, and therefore entitled to a base FAR of 1,600% – higher than anywhere else in the City. The building has an existing FAR of only 300%, meaning that historic designation of the Property would unnecessarily preclude and/or impede the development of over 275,000 square feet of developable floor area within the core of Center City.

For all of the foregoing reasons, as well as those set forth in the enclosed expert reports and further argument, testimony and documentation that may be submitted at the upcoming meetings of the Committee on Historic Designation and the Commission, I respectfully request that the Commission reject and/or deny the nomination.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Michael V. Phillips
Michael V. Phillips

Enclosures

cc: Kim Chantry
Daniel Shachar-Krasnoff

Evaluation of 1330-1336 Chestnut Street for Philadelphia Historic Designation

Prepared for:
Michael V. Phillips, attorney
Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg

Prepared by:
CivicVisions, LP
George E. Thomas, Partner
April 10, 2024

Summary

1. Loss of integrity and lack of design significance: 1330 should not be designated

The nomination for 1330 -36 Chestnut Street fails to accurately describe the extent and irreversibility of alterations to the former Woolworth's store building that have destroyed its already minor design significance. As a consequence of these changes, the building does not have the integrity or the design significance to warrant historic designation.

- The newly added features to the building change it from a relatively restrained design to a harlequin pastiche overwritten by a stridently colored, unrelated features.
- Because of these alterations, more than a third of the original main façade no longer exists and every element of a once symmetrical composition has been changed.
- Instead of being a chaste composition, the building is now little more than a billboard for multiple unrelated uses, each proclaiming their separate identity.

2. The nomination ignores the building's minor role in the retail history of the Woolworth firm or its minor role in the business history of Philadelphia in the post WW II city. Given the corporate history of the Woolworth chain, the claim cannot be made that a building for a firm whose work was ubiquitous across the city and the nation and that had such a minor role to Philadelphia's design culture meets the standard of Criterion A.

- Woolworth's downtown flagship buildings had begun more than a decade earlier with buildings in New York, Minneapolis, Seattle and elsewhere.
- These typically had a design character that reflected their urban context and often were by significant regional architects.
- Philadelphia's role in the chain was minor for the first third of the twentieth century, being managed from Wilkes-Barre, PA and when Philadelphia did become a district center in 1935, it was under the former Wilkes-Barre manager.
- The nominated building was commissioned more than a decade after the initial flagships and was the design of a third-tier Cincinnati architect.
- The building is not a significant flagship store for the Woolworth chain.

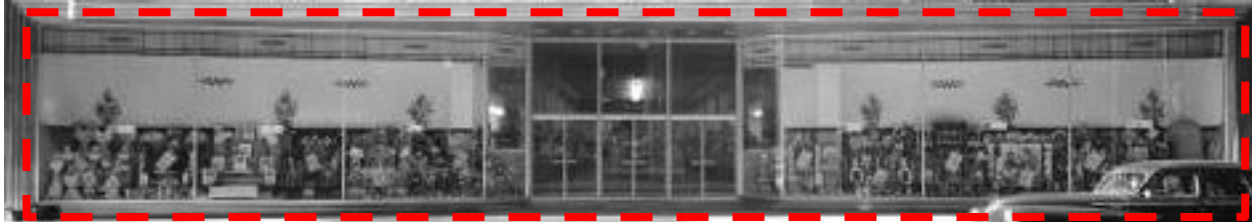
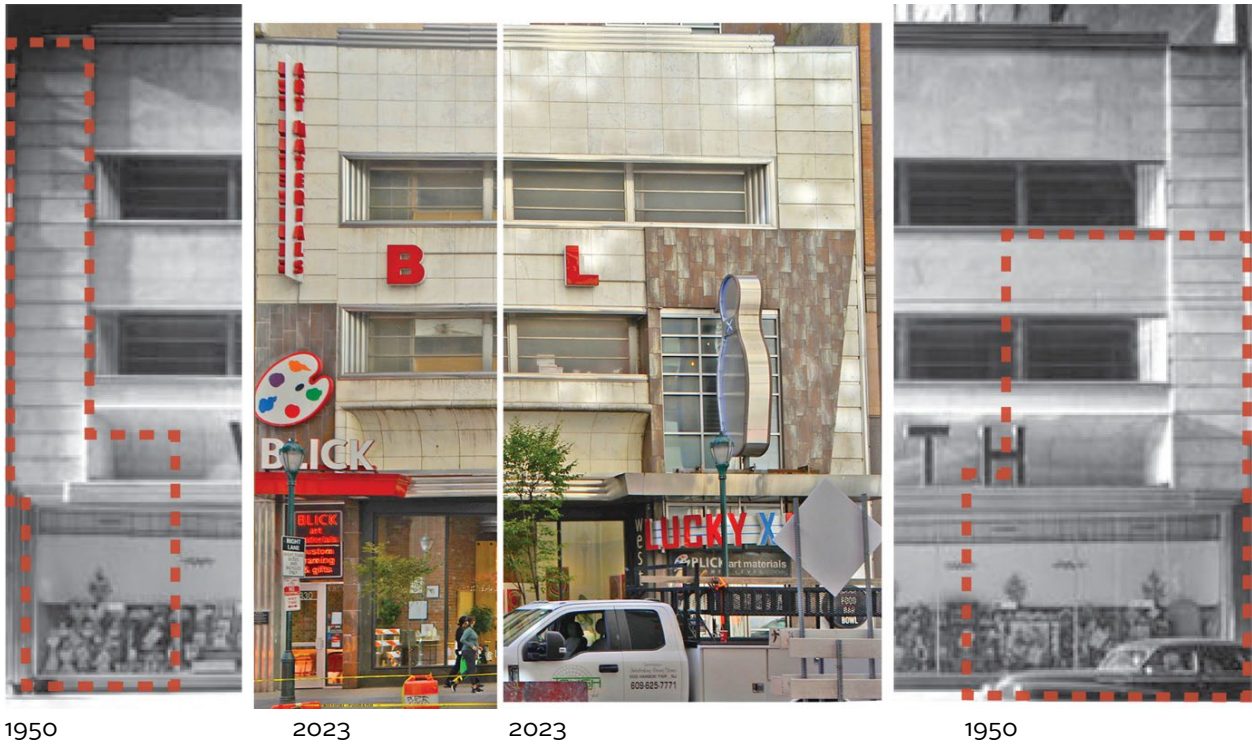
3. Further, the building does not play a memorable role in its streetscape. In the canyon formed by Philadelphia's best concentration of early twentieth century Beaux Arts office buildings, the low height and now disjointed design of 1330 Chestnut Street is like a discolored broken tooth that breaks the rhythm of the tall buildings near Broad Street.

4. In addition, the building design creates significant problems for future uses with upper-level, inoperable windows, with sills at head height on the front façade, and inadequate windows on the rear, thereby not meeting building and fire code requirements.

5. The core value of the property is the 16-story CMX center city zoning that reflects City Planning goals for density near transit. This value is lost if the building is designated.

- See attached report from Richard Wentzel, Thornton Tomassetti.
- The building design presents significant difficulties for fire exiting.

Loss of Integrity: Critical elements removed and new unrelated design features added



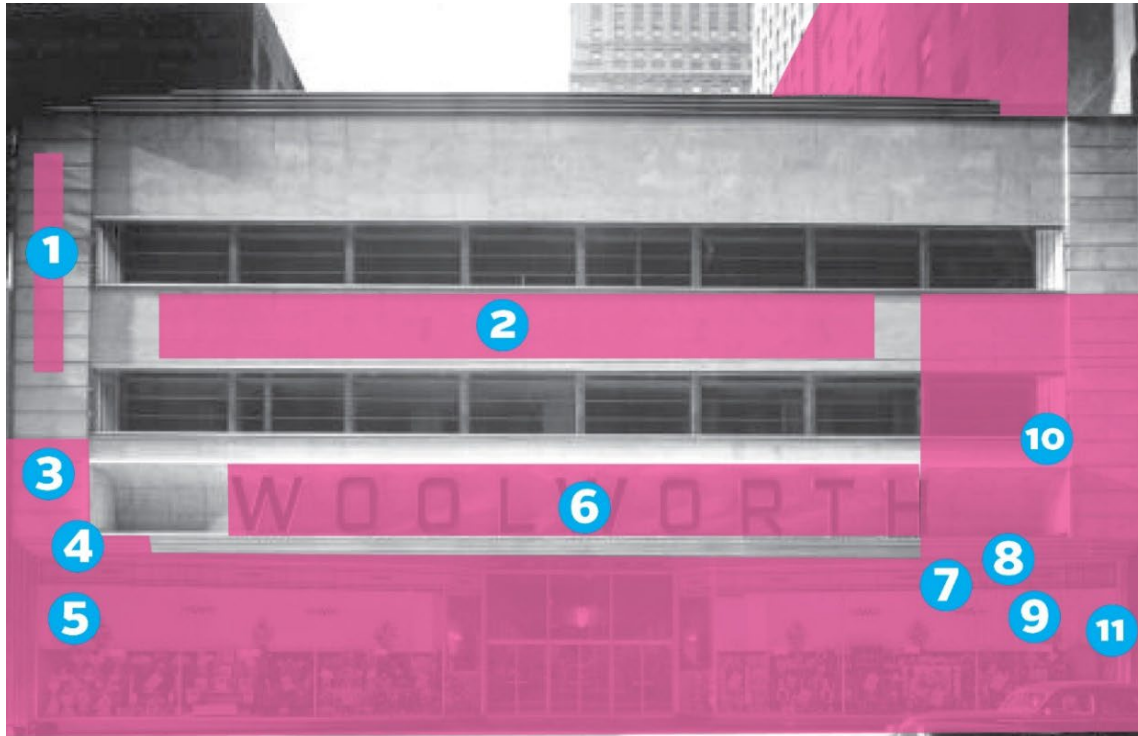
1950 – Light, bright and symmetrical shop window frames, clear glass, wide doors, and street character



2023 – Dark window frames, darkened glass, small doors, and asymmetrical shop window

Areas of alteration: **— — —**

Areas of alterations to the main façade of 1330 Chestnut Street



Pink represents zones of change in the façade. Numbers mark new signs and inconsistent fonts. The multiple businesses are now represented in multiple signs with differing fonts, styles, colors, sizes, and media, each intended to outshout the others and make the building little more than a background for signs.

Does not meet Criterion A: Significant character, interest or value in the development, heritage or cultural life of the city, commonwealth, or nation.

Buildings from a ubiquitous national chain store such as the Woolworth's chain, by definition, are rarely of local consequence. By 1940 as the Depression ended, there were 2,027 Woolworth stores scattered around the nation and Canada with additional stores in Britain, Germany, and Cuba. In 1950, when 1330 Chestnut had been recently completed, the Philadelphia telephone directory listed 35 separate Woolworths within the boundaries of the city. There were 37 others in the immediate suburbs including Delaware County's county seat, Media, as well as Darby and the 69th Street Shopping district in Upper Darby, Chester County's county seat, West Chester, and downtown Wayne, Ardmore. Shopping center Woolworths were located in the Flouertown Shopping Center in Montgomery County and the West Goshen shopping center on Paoli Pike, while Bucks County had Woolworths in the Oxford Valley Mall near Levittown.¹

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------|--------|
| 1-4087-R | Woolwine Ralph | 2611 S Bouvier | HO wrd | 5-1369 |
| -4861-W | Woolworth F W Co | | | |
| | Dist otc | 123 S Broad | PE nypkr | 5-6067 |
| iler-1280 | 5 & 10c Stores | | | |
| -1267-W | 5030 Baito Av | | AL legny | 4-6651 |
| e 6-1450 | 4919 N Broad | | DA vnprt | 4-6067 |
| | 6000 Castor Av | | DE lawr | 6-8423 |
| 9-9079 | 5510 Chestr Av | | SA ratga | 9-1938 |
| 17-6487 | 1330 Chestnut St | | PE nypkr | 5-7578 |
| 4-1240 | 1618 Chestnt St | | RI tnhse | 6-1862 |
| 9-3475 | 1421 Columbia Av | | ST evnsn | 4-6741 |
| | 2223 Columbia Av | | ST evnsn | 4-2150 |
| 9-3475 | 6926 Elmwood Av | | BE lgrd | 6-0494 |
| | 4450 Fkd Av | | JE frsn | 5-4100 |
| 7-8074 | 7310 Fkd Av | | MA yfair | 4-6422 |
| 9-8351 | 2318 N Front | | RE gnt | 9-2711 |
| 5-7295 | 2627 Gtn Av | | BA ldwn | 9-2865 |
| | 3610 Gtn Av | | RA dclf | 5-2975 |
| 3-9400 | 5611 Gtn Av | | GE rmtn | 8-3833 |
| 4-0109 | 7165 Germtn Av | | CH estHil | 7-4067 |
| 9-2408 | 3134 Kensn Av | | RE gnt | 9-4315 |
| 5-6039 | 4028 Lancstr Av | | BA ring | 2-1299 |
| 4-3343 | 6118 Lansdwn Av | | GR emwd | 3-7845 |
| 5-6144 | 2524 W Lehigh Av | | BA ldwn | 9-0974 |
| 7-1878 | 4323 Main | | IV yridg | 3-3766 |
| | 4023 Mkt | | EV ergrn | 6-4143 |
| 4-4981 | 7210 Ogontz Av | | WA vrly | 4-7345 |
| 2-6787 | 1701 E Passynk Av | | HO wrd | 8-8765 |
| 5-0024 | 1446 Pt Breeze Av | | FU ltn | 9-2223 |
| 4-3771 | 1702 Ridge Av | | PO plr | 5-1441 |
| 5-4595 | 6174 Ridge Av | | IV yridg | 3-0323 |
| | 431 South | | LO mbrd | 3-6696 |
| 5-9978 | 1718 Susq Av | | FR emnt | 7-2993 |
| 5-9978 | 6900 Torresdle Av | | MA yfair | 4-2135 |
| 9-1047 | 6327 Woodind Av | | SA ratga | 9-6712 |
| | 5526 N 5 | | WA vrly | 4-7724 |
| 5-8124 | 1205 N 52 | | GR enwd | 3-5134 |
| 2-2694 | 52 & Market | | AL legny | 4-2936 |
| | 18 S 60 | | SH erwd | 7-3286 |
| 9-1047 | Woomer Eileen Mrs | 7203 Greenway Av | SA ratga | 7-2725 |
| 8-4016 | Woomer Harold F | 5258 Osage Av | SH erwd | 7-2239 |
| 4-3346 | Wopnsocket Color & Chemical Co | | | |

1950 "Woolworth, F W Co"; Bell Telephone Philadelphia City Directory, p. 1221 (Ancestry City Directories)

The thirty-five stores in Philadelphia of the 1950s Woolworth chain were as common as contemporary McDonalds and Starbucks Coffee shops in Philadelphia today.² They were

¹ Many of these suburban stores were listed in a store closing ad that illustrated an article by Herb Fry, "Club Members Remember Shopping at Woolworth's" in the *Tredyffrin-Eastown Historical Quarterly*, April 1994, 32: 3, pp. 45-58 (<https://www.tehistory.org/hqda/html/v32/v32n2p045.html>).

² McDonald's list 53 restaurants according to City Data (<https://www.city-data.com/locations/McDonalds/Philadelphia-Pennsylvania-4.html>) while Starbuck's had two fewer shops than F. W. Woolworth & Co.

everywhere in the thriving portions of the city with one or more in every neighborhood including four on Germantown Avenue that were served by a trolley line as well as railroad lines on either side of the avenue. Two other Woolworth's were located within three blocks of 1330 Chestnut on Chestnut Street (1210 Chestnut and 1638 Chestnut, the last occupying the ground floor of the then recently completed art deco WCAU building). Woolworth's red background sign with gold letters became as ubiquitous as the golden arches of McDonalds and the mermaid of Starbucks – and like those chains, store locations moved as markets changed. Unlike the regional flagship department stores that were anchors of their retail districts such as center city's Wanamaker's, Strawbridge's and Lit's stores, the Woolworth chain found sites in existing districts, typically following rather than leading. Thus Woolworth's found center city sites bracketing the downtown shopping district along Chestnut Street but did not have a role in creating the already existing shopping district.

Philadelphia's Minor Role in the Woolworth Company History

The Woolworth phenomenon had its beginning in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1879 and by 1910-13 had attained its great architectural monument in New York's Woolworth Building by Cass Gilbert. This was the tallest office building of its time until it was surpassed by the Chrysler Building and shortly thereafter the Empire State Building. Philadelphia played a minor role in the shaping of the growing business. For its first half century until 1935, Philadelphia was only a subsidiary of Woolworth's Wilkes-Barre office; when Philadelphia was promoted as the headquarters city of the regional district in 1935, the Wilkes-Barre director, Samuel H. Huber, was simply moved to Philadelphia.³ As discussed below, downtown Philadelphia did not get a larger downtown Woolworth store until more than a decade after the first large stores in Minneapolis, New York, and Seattle, and then received a relatively modest store building by a third tier architect, Harry Hake of Cincinnati, OH [note the name is not Hakes as appears in the nomination, apparently from the Baumol thesis cited in the text].⁴ Hake's other works for the Woolworth's firm were in their third-tier communities such as Trenton, NJ, Princeton, NJ, and Jenkintown, PA. Hake's Lancaster store replaced Woolworth's first six story building for an ordinary two-story shop.⁵

Woolworth's stores were typically of minor architectural interest, usually being little more than a new sign on a pre-existing building or two. This began to change in the late 1930s with the incorporation of new industrial façade materials, often tan terra cotta. This material enabled the company to create a more unified identity, perhaps following the model of the far more ubiquitous Philadelphia-centered Horn & Hardart chain with its more than 70 locations in the city that included retail stores, and the famous automats; by the 1930s that

³ *F. W. Woolworth Co: Report for Twenty-third Year – 1934* (New York, 1935) p. 2. Samuel H. Huber is listed as District Manager and Treasurer of Woolworth's, living in Scranton, PA in the *Polk's Directory for Wilkes-Barre* (1933) p. 325. He is still listed in Philadelphia at the Woolworth's corporate office in 1950. (*Bell Telephone Philadelphia City Directory*, 1950, (Bell Telephone: 1950) p. 517.

⁴ Jeffery Baumol, "A Study of Post-war Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia," UPenn MA thesis, 1992. This is one of many sloppy errors that mar his survey.

⁵ Turner Construction Co. *50 Years of Buildings by Turner* (1952) p. 45. Illustrated on cover of *F. W. Woolworth Annual Report, 1950*, with text, p. 17.

chain extended north to New York and south to Washington, D.C.⁶ In Philadelphia, Horn & Hardart's architect Ralph Bencker devised a tan overall color scheme with deep blue and red trim that made the buildings identifiable and made the buildings part of the company's brand identity. While varying the facades for architectural interest, each of the Horn & Hardart buildings shared a modern vocabulary that represented the dynamism of the chain. By contrast the Woolworth stores typically communicated their brand identity by the sign alone.

Woolworth's Flagship Buildings in other Cities Began Fifteen Years Earlier, in the 1930s

By the mid-1930s the Woolworth Co. began to devise a larger building type for certain urban centers. The largest of the first round of stores was the five-story building on New York's Fifth Avenue (1936-1938) by Starrett & VanVleck (architects for Lord & Taylor, Saks, Bloomingdales in New York and Garfinckels in Washington, D.C.).⁷ In 1935 a five-story building was begun on Nicollet Street in Minneapolis from plans by a regionally important architectural firm, Larson & McLaren.⁸ Their work was published in a monograph in 1928 and projects received the high praise of publication in the *American Architect & Building News*.⁹

LARSON, ALBERT OLIVER. (AIA) Office: 1901 Foshay Tower, Minneapolis. Home: 4804 W, Surmyaioppe Rd, Minneapolis, b. St. Paul, Minn, Aug. 24, 93. M. 19, Children 2, Educ: Univ. of Penna, 17. Present Firm: Larson & McLaren, org. 22. Reg: Fla, Iowa, Ky, Minn, Nebr, N.Dak, S.Dak, Wisce. Prln. Wks: Baker Block, 26-55; Star-Tribune Plant, 48; Dayton Co. Dept. Store, 49; W. Elec. Plant, 52; Glen-Dale Housing Proj, 53; Fed. Reserve Bank Add, 55, all Minneapolis. Super. Archt: State of Minnesota, 25-28. Consult. Archt: World-Herald Newspaper Plant, Omaha, Nebr, 46; Argus-Leader Newspaper Plant, Sioux Falls, S. Dak, 54. Gen. Types: 1,2,3.Gov. Serv: Engl'. Corps, U.S. Army, 17-19. AIA Mem: Minneapolis Chapter; Pres, 45; Minn, Soc. of Archts. (R. W. Bowker, *American Architects Dictionary*, 1956); 320.

Three-story buildings like the much later Philadelphia building were constructed in Charlotte, NC, and by 1940 in Louisville, KY; far larger buildings were constructed for second tier cities beginning with the immense store at Third and Pike Streets in Seattle, WA of 1940.¹⁰ In 1948 Woolworths opened its largest store in Newark, NJ, a mammoth building

⁶ List of Horn & Hardart sites, *Bell Telephone Directory* 1950, p. 511.

⁷ Starrett & Van Vleck had a national practice with department stores across the nation from New York to California including the flagship stores of Saks, Lord & Taylor, and Bloomingdales in NYC, Kauffman's Department Store in Pittsburgh and Garfinckel's in Washington, D.C. . A biography of Ernest Van Vleck is published in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 43 (New York, James T. White, 1961): 317-318. Their firm is extensively published as well.

⁸ "Construction Plans Announced for Five Story Business Block on Niccolet," *The Minneapolis Journal* July 26, 1936, p. 15. Larson & McLaren were important Minneapolis architects; the building incorporated a black granite base and upper walls of limestone with stainless steel doors. For the importance of the firm see: Larson & McLaren, *A Monograph of the Work of Larson & McLaren, Architects, Minneapolis, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: 1928)

⁹ Grover Apartment Hotel, *American Architect & Building News* (Feb 5, 1929) <https://www.stcroixarchitecture.com/products/exterior-groveland-apartment-hotel-minneapolis-mn-1929-lithograph-larsen-mclaren> (accessed February 2024); the firm's papers are collected in the University of Minnesota Archives: <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/8/resources/2266> (accessed Feb 2024).

¹⁰ The New York building was opened on February 24, 1938 and described "Business Men View Woolworth Store," *New York Times* Business Section L, p. 28. It was illustrated in the Woolworth Annual Report for 1938 together with other multi-story buildings in Minneapolis, MN and Charlotte, NC. These new and larger buildings correspond to an enlargement of the annual report from 6 pages to 16 and shortly to 20 pages. <https://archive.org/details/woolworthvenatorfootlockerannualreports/woolworth1938/page/n13/mode/2up>; <https://archive.org/details/woolworthvenatorfootlockerannualreports/woolworth1940/page/n15/mode/2up>

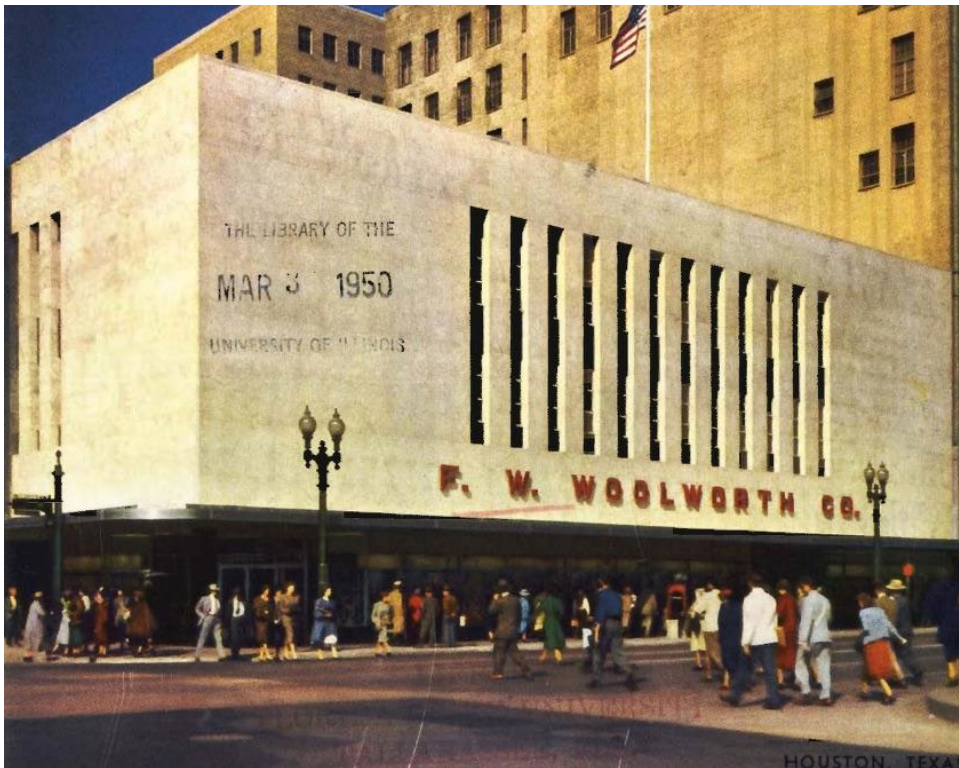
with three shopping floors and an attic plus basement and the following year opened an even larger building in Houston, TX. These buildings show vertical motifs in their façade designs, aligning them with their up-to-date urban settings.



Seattle, WA Woolworth's store, 1940



Newark, NJ Woolworth's store, 1948 – 4 stories



Houston, TX store, 1949 – 5 stories

- Despite being the fourth largest city in the nation, Philadelphia was one of the last “flagship” stores and its building was the smallest and least architecturally interesting of all.
- Thus, the three-story building at 1330-1336 Chestnut Street, completed in 1949, was begun more than a decade after the first of the new urban stores and was smaller

than many of the earlier buildings including New York's Fifth Avenue building, the Newark, NJ downtown store, Seattle's Pike Street store, and the Houston store.

- Tellingly, the company did not look for a local architect, instead relying on a mid-western firm with no link to the city or its culture.
- Where the other "flagship stores" were urban in character, the Philadelphia building was frankly modeled on highway strip shopping centers in its horizontal design presumably to compete for attention with the rise of the automobile shopping centers.
- By 1952, most of the new stores for the company would be in the suburbs, "each adapted to the architectural scheme of its community."¹¹
- The downtown stores were about to become dinosaurs and the "Woolco" stores of regional shopping centers, initiated in 1960 would become the future.¹²

The Architect: Third-Tier Firm from Cincinnati

The architect of 1330 Chestnut Street was Harry Hake (actually Harry Hake, Jr. of Hake & Hake, Jr.) of Cincinnati, OH. Apart from designing the building at 1330 Chestnut Street, the firm had no other role in Philadelphia.¹³ The nominator did not even bother to research the architect who is readily found using standard sources. It is likely that son Harry, Jr., a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Beaux Arts School of Architecture in the 1920s, was the principal in the firm by the time of the Woolworth project in the late 1940s. By the 1950s, the firm's more typical projects were in the brick Colonial Revival style that had lost the energy of their commercial art deco work of the 1920s. Their Philadelphia building was not listed in Hake's selected projects in the 1956 Bowker *Dictionary of American Architects*. Instead the Hake firm lists as its principal works some alterations work for Ohio suburban train stations, and designs for a group of utility buildings and garages:

Prin. Wks: Pa. RR Bldgs, 47; Garages & other Bldgs for Cincinnati & Suburban Bell Tel. Co, 50; Univ. of Cincinnati, Cunningham, Hanna, McMicken Halls, 50; Pk. Garage for Western & Southern Life Ins. Co, 52; Cent. HS, L Union Cent. Life Ins. Co, Garage & Off. Bldg, Cincinnati Gas Elec. Co.¹⁴

Jane Merkel, architectural critic for the *Cincinnati Enquirer* described Hake's post- World War II designs writing, "Many architects regard the Convention Center and the new Federal Reserve Bank as design failures. The Fortress-like Cincinnati branch of the Federal Reserve of Cleveland suffers from the same misconceived blend of pompous classicizing and streamlined modern forms."¹⁵

¹¹ F. W. Woolworth & Co. *Annual Report for the Year Ended December 31, 1952*. (New York: 1953) 22.

<https://archive.org/details/woolworthvenatorfootlockerannualreports/woolworth1952/page/n21/mode/2up>

¹² The 1966 Woolworth Annual Report listed 52 Woolcos and an equal number (47) to open in the next two years. <https://archive.org/details/woolworthvenatorfootlockerannualreports/woolworth1966/page/n17/mode/2up>.

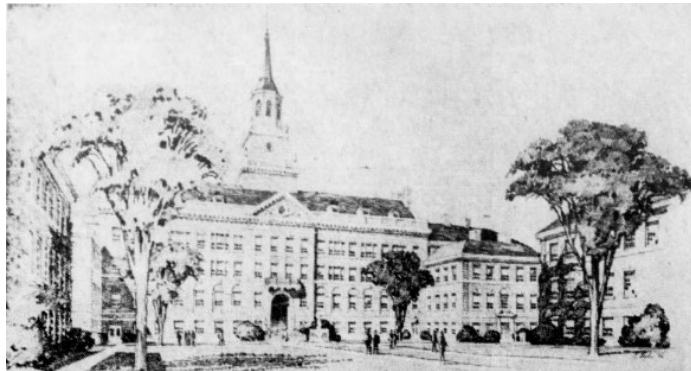
¹³ A far from complete list of Woolworth store buildings is in Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Woolworth_buildings

¹⁴ "Hake, Harry, Jr. AIA" R. W. Bowker, *American Architects Dictionary*, 1956); 220.

¹⁵ The character of the office shortly after the time of the design for 1330-36 Chestnut Street was reported by Cincinnati architectural critic Jane Merkel, *Architecture*, "Cincinnati Enquirer" Dec. 11, 1977.



Hake & Hake, Trenton, NJ Woolworth's c. 1949



University of Cincinnati, Hanna, Cunningham Halls, 1950

Failure to Place 1330 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia Moderns Context

The nominator also failed to place Hake's design in the Philadelphia context, making no attempt to link it to or contrast it with regional modernism. By the 1930s, Philadelphia had developed a significant line of modern and modernist architects beginning in the pre-World War I years with the office of Price & McLanahan and its successors, McLanahan & Bencker, and then after 1925, Ralph B. Bencker.¹⁶ They developed the manner for Atlantic City's Traymore Hotel of 1914-15 that the Price's office referred to as "the Vertical Style." Their work anticipated the later "Art Deco," named after the French Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris eleven years later in the spring of 1925. Examples of the various Price, McLanahan & Bencker projects include the Traymore Hotel, the Rittenhouse Plaza on Rittenhouse Square (1924), numerous buildings into the 1960s for the Horn & Hardart chain including its offices at 16th and Chestnut Streets (1925), a smaller office and store at the corner of 13th and Chestnut Street (1925) as well as the Pennsylvania Building for the Sesquicentennial Exposition. Outside of Philadelphia, Bencker designed numerous Horn & Hardart automat restaurants scattered from New York City to Washington, D.C. In addition the firm designed several important Philadelphia office towers including the N. W. Ayer offices on Washington Square (1929) and the nearby Guarantee Trust at 1422 Walnut Street as well as the Horn & Hardart offices on Chestnut Street (1929).¹⁷ These were characterized by vertical accents intended to mark their urban character using palettes of sand colored terra cotta with red and blue trim or sand-colored brick and limestone derived from the Traymore Hotel or entirely of limestone as for the Horn & Hardart offices and the N. W. Ayer Advertising offices.

¹⁶ The office and its successors are chronicled in George E. Thomas, *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000) particularly the final chapter, "Epilogue," pp. 174-182. See also George E. Thomas, *Oxford Bibliographies* "William L. Price," (February 21, 2022). <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780190922467/obo-9780190922467-0070.xml>

¹⁷ The office at the corner of 13th and Chestnut Street is misidentified in the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings site as Horace Trumbauer. (see *PRER&BG* v. 40: 39 [September 30, 1925].)



Ralph Bencker: l. Horn & Hardart offices, Chestnut Street, 1929; c. original tan, red and blue color scheme, 3940 Chestnut Street, 1939; r. Horn & Hardart restaurant, 1421 Arch St. 1931



McLanahan & Bencker, Rittenhouse Plaza, 1924

R. B. Bencker, N. W. Ayer offices, 1929

An alternate Philadelphia modern style was created in the late 1920s by George Howe, independently and in partnership with William Lescaze. They explored a more European modern style albeit one that also reflected Howe's initial training in Frank Furness's office in the expressive use of materials, fenestration, and forms to represent changes of function in projects such as the PSFS skyscraper at 12th and Market Streets (1929 ff).



Left - Howe & Lescaze, PSFS, 1929, ff. ; George Howe: Center - "Square Shadows," Wasserman House, Blue Bell, Pa 1933; Right - Maurice Speiser house, Delancey Street, 1933

The Harry Hake project for 1330 Chestnut Street had nothing to do with either local style nor as noted below did it meet the characteristics of the International Style. Instead it is a standard commercial building of the era, more suited to the coming horizontality of the shopping center rather than the verticality of its urban location in Philadelphia. In this it contrasts with the earlier downtown Woolworth's stores on New York's Fifth Avenue and Newark's midtown location which were massive urban blocks that were much larger than this later building.



A FEW OF OUR RECENTLY IMPROVED STORES
F. W. Woolworth, *Annual Report: 1938*, p. 14. Stores all completed by 1938, 11 years before 1330 Chestnut St.
R. Larson & McLaren, Minneapolis Woolworth Store, 5 stories, 1935-1937.

Conclusion

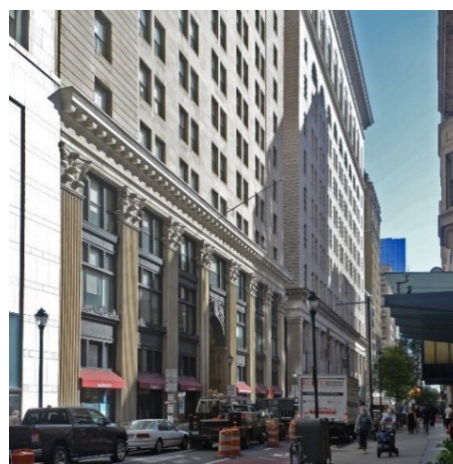
Given the corporate history of the Woolworth chain one cannot make the claim that a building for a business whose work was ubiquitous across the nation and that gave such a minor role to Philadelphia, meets the standard of Criterion A. Instead of being a leading part of the move to create downtown stores, the Philadelphia building lagged fourteen years after the first flagship stores were being constructed and was designed by a minor out-of-town architect at the moment when the focus of the Woolworth business was moving to suburban malls. As a design, it was a chaotic pastiche of various modern modes. Finally, and most significantly, the massive modifications to the main façade, detailed below, eliminate any claim to meeting criterion A.

Not claimed: Criterion B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Does not meet Criterion C: Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

The design of the Woolworth store is a poor example of its style as noted below, and it is in a setting that is characterized by Beaux Arts classical designs that extend east on Chestnut Street to the Adelphia Hotel and the Commonwealth Building, including the massive Wanamaker Store and the Widener Building, and continuing to Broad Street landmarks including the Land Title, Real Estate Title & Trust, North American, Girard Trust and Rodman Wanamaker towers. On the 1300 block to the east is Willis Hale's flamboyant Victorian Hale Building, originally constructed to serve the John Lucas Paint Company and the Keystone Bank. Its Victorian conflation of materials and stylistic elements denotes the initial transformation of the block from residential to commercial uses in the 1870s and 1880s, precipitated by the movement of City Hall to Broad Street. Its punched windows and detailed architectural façade show the characteristics of Philadelphia Victorian design that drew hostility from New York and Boston critics in the architectural press and led to the change toward conventional historicizing designs by the generation of the 1880s and 1890s.

The principal buildings of this classicizing group are two enormous structures on Chestnut Street, the earliest being the Wanamaker Store occupying the entire block between 13th and Juniper Streets and Market Streets that was designed in 1911 by the Daniel Burnham office from Chicago. Its style is manifested at street level with its large display windows framed by two-story limestone classical pilasters carrying a cornice, then continues with seven stories of massive limestone-clad masonry leading to a beltcourse and a two-story cap with windows crowned by round-head sash below the attic and crowned by a significant overhanging cornice. Across Juniper Street, filling the eastern half of its block north to South Penn Square is the Widener Building, by Horace Trumbauer (1913-1916) for the nouveau riche transit and real estate magnate Peter A. B. Widener. Like the Wanamaker Store it begins with a monumental street level three-story base framed by pilasters capped by a massive cornice supporting 17 stories of offices again of limestone and crowned by a massive cornice that essentially is at the same height (246') as the Wanamaker Building.



1300 block of Chestnut Street, Left - Widener Building, Trumbauer, 1913; Center - Widener and Wanamaker Buildings, Burnham, 1911; Right - Chestnut Street from Commonwealth Building at 12th Street to Broad Street.

Philadelphia's Beaux Arts canyon extends from 12th and Chestnut Street beginning with the 16-story Commonwealth Building (1201 Chestnut, James Windrim architect, 1901) and the neighboring 1207-9 Chestnut, also by Windrim (1901) with its rectilinear nearly Chicago-style façade. It then continues with the 20-story Adelphia Hotel (Trumbauer, 1912).

The large-scale order of the Beaux Arts group continues around the corner onto Broad Street where the former Real Estate Title & Trust Company at the SE corner by Edgar V. Seeler (1897-8), reached 18 stories, (the last story occupies the zone of the now-removed massive Beaux Arts cornice). At the NE corner of Broad and Chestnut is the limestone-clad tower for Rodman Wanamaker's Men's Store by John T. Windrim's firm (1929-31) that continued Beaux Arts classicism in its motifs but with an Art Deco profile above the 23rd story where the building rises to a bell tower that houses the Sesquicentennial Bell that is heard ringing in downtown Philadelphia. The ensemble extends north and south along Broad Street ending on the west side of the street with the office tower for the Girard Trust at South Penn Square and Broad (McKim, Mead & White with Furness, Evans & Co, 1930-1931). To the south on the west side of Broad Street between Chestnut & Sansom Streets are the paired Land Title buildings (15-story north building, Daniel Burnham of Chicago, 1896-1898; and 22-story south building, Horace Trumbauer, 1902). 1330 Chestnut's façade was the equivalent in height of the base of the typical skyscraper.



S. Broad Street looking north, Land Title towers and Girard Trust offices in distance contrast with small Woolworth's image at scale that would have reached only to the base of the Land Title group.

The line of punched-windowed Beaux Arts towers with massive cornices then continues south on Broad Street with the brownstone, 21 story North American Building (1900, James H. Windrim, cornice removed) between Sansom and Walnut Streets. Across Walnut Street is the enormous 30-story Fidelity Building on the east side (1927-8, Simon & Simon). The Manufacturer's Club shares block frontage with the Union League on the west side (Simon & Bassett, 1915).

Conclusion

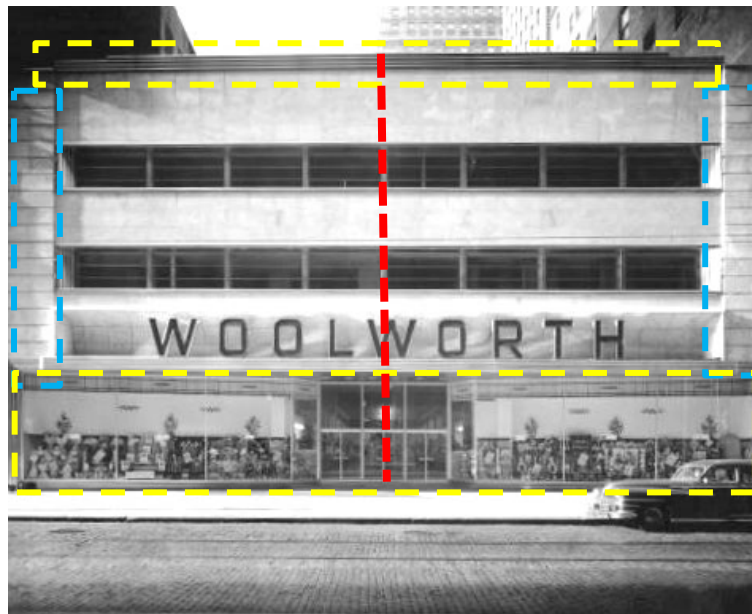
This unified cluster of classically inspired towers of similar heights and detail, all with punched windows in classically-inspired masonry facades, forms a memorable ensemble that defines the early twentieth century downtown after the removal of City Hall to Broad and Market Streets. Together they mark the shift of Philadelphia architects toward the national classicizing architectural styles of the turn of the century. The exception to this remarkable group of largely intact and towering buildings is the low, horizontal, incoherently styled strip-windowed and now much altered Woolworth's building. Its closest parallel is the three-story modern base to the Real Estate Title & Trust building with its strip windows on the third story that today is a sadly dated band aid in place of the removed giant arcuated base of the original façade. That unfortunate renovation was designed by Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, the successors to Paul Cret's architectural firm, in 1947, setting off the shift away from the classical grandeur of the immediate context toward a poorly understood modern applique.



Three story yellow sandstone base with polished brown granite corner pier for Western Savings Fund Society offices, Woolworth store to the left, January 29, 1955 PhillyHistory.

Does not meet Criterion D. That embody the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.

Far from being International Style or any other definable style, the Woolworth store is a hybrid mix of styles cobbled into a poorly integrated design. When this building was being designed, the International Style as defined by Henry Russell Hitchcock had been codified in character and order.¹⁸ According to Alfred Barr in the introduction to the Museum of Modern Art's catalog for the exhibition *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition (1932)* the new architecture was an affair of volume as opposed to mass or solidity; asymmetry rather than symmetry, reflecting use together with "technical perfection" in the use of materials and "Lack of ornament" so as to not "mar" "the clean perfection of surface and proportion."



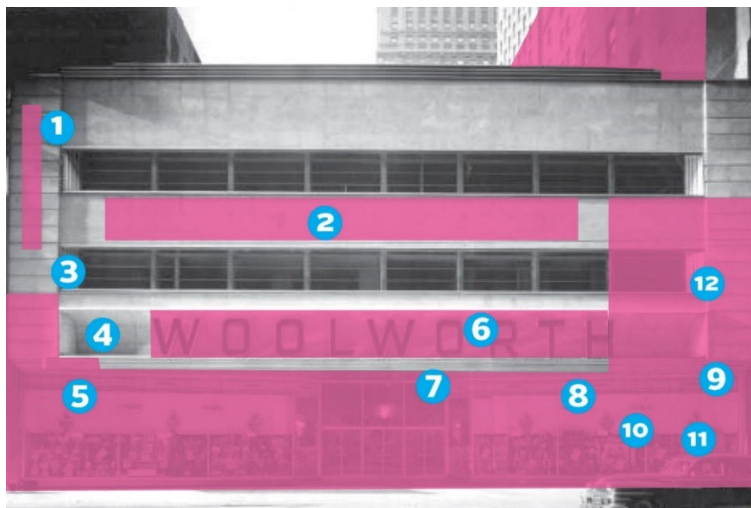
Museum of Modern Art, 1939: volume rather than mass, asymmetry rather than symmetry, technical perfection, lack of ornament so as to not "mar" "the clean perfection of surface and proportion"; the Woolworth store is symmetrical (dotted red line), is detailed with side piers (blue outline) to suggest load-bearing masonry instead of the flat planes of MOMA, has bands of ornament and window trim (yellow outline) and floor-tile sized surface stonework instead of smooth, abstract planes.

The design of the Woolworth store misses each of these characteristics. Unlike such doctrinaire International Style buildings as the 1930s MOMA building, the new Woolworth's building was symmetrical following the norms of Beaux Arts design with the entire façade arrayed around a central axis. The details of the building convey a mixed Beaux Arts message about mass and weight. The piers with recessed joints between blocks of stone on either side of the upper levels suggest a load-bearing purpose left over from Beaux Arts plans, again carried over from the mass-masonry past. This is more in accord with architectural design systems reflecting the early twentieth century Beaux Arts training of the post-World War II leader of the firm, Harry Hake, Jr.

¹⁸ Alfred Barr, intro in Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932) pp. 14-15.

The Beaux Arts mode was then undercut by the architect's decision to perch the visually weighty piers on the corners of the glass shop window. The result is an anomalous scheme as if the upper levels stood as a separate zone atop the shop window, like a parking garage sitting atop a shopfront. Beaux Arts ornamental bits reappear in the reeded stainless steel borders of the shop window that is now much altered by the removal of both ends of the windows and the loss of critical details of the ornament. Similar splayed reeded panels, again contrary to the ornament-less mode of International Style modern, frame the ends of the second and third floor windows. The metal frames transition into a single rounded frame that entirely surrounds the windows of the upper stories. Again the added detail is contrary to the International Style. None of these features align with the absence of ornament and the rejection of the appearance of mass and solidity that were features of the International Style. Jane Merkel, architectural critic for the *Cincinnati Enquirer* commented on a couple of later Hake projects, the Cincinnati Convention Center (reclad 17 years later and since redesigned again) and the Cincinnati branch of the Cleveland Federal Reserve, noting "... the same misconceived blend of pompous classicizing and streamlined modern forms."¹⁹

Today because of the recent alterations, the core design features of the symmetry of the windows and the balancing elements of the weighty piers on each side and the splayed reeding framing the windows were undone by the new doorway apparatus on the west side that sliced off the end detail of the coved sign zone and the last bay of the second story window. That colorful new element cut off two stories of the west pier and interrupted the bottom portion of the window surround on the west end of the third-story window. Similarly the east door surround cuts off the shop window at first floor and cuts one story into the "structural" mass of the east pier. The added color panels are further disruptive to the design.



Pink shows areas of alteration; numbers mark new signs that undo the simplicity of the original facade

Contrary to the claim that the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, today the building is a misch-mash of unrelated stylistic

¹⁹ Jane Merkel, "Architecture," *Cincinnati Enquirer* February 5, 1977.

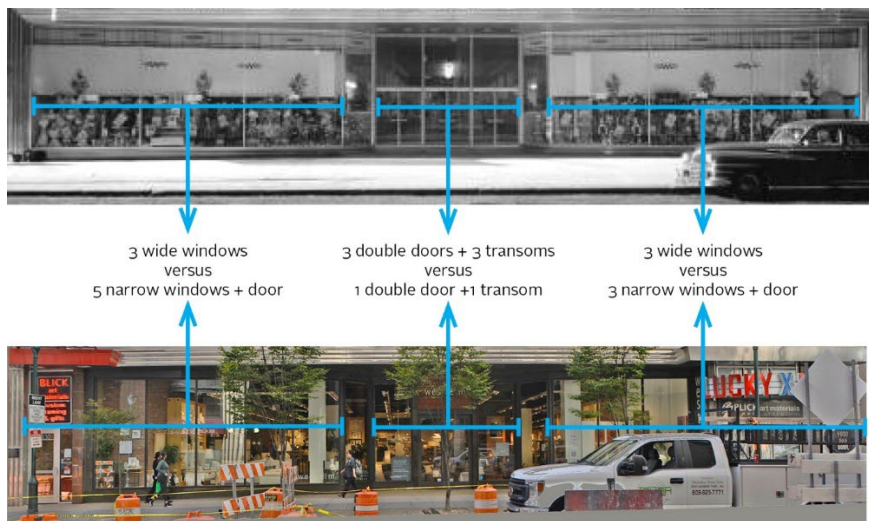
elements that span multiple periods. As such it typifies work by a second-generation office whose members were trained in Beaux Arts classicism but here were attempting to design in the new post-war modern styles. It as much altered present-day appearance further mixes up the narrative. The result is farcical being undone by the host of unrelated colors, motifs, and materials that break up all of the façade motifs while simultaneously wrecking the intended symmetrical order of the overall façade.

Alterations to individual design elements

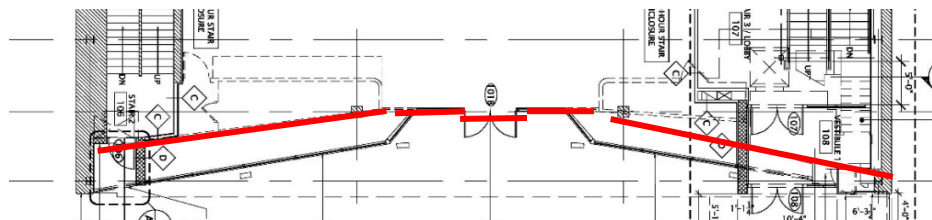
The individual features of the façade have been so altered as to no longer represent “distinctive characteristics of a type or period”. What exists today are discordant elements that are described below. The impact of the extent of their alterations is evaluated below.

1. Zone of Alteration: Chestnut Street commercial shop front:

The Chestnut Street commercial shop front of 1330-36 Chestnut Street is the single most important element of the façade in that it is the piece that is closest to the pedestrian. For those walking near to the building the shopfront constitutes the entirety of the architectural experience.



Redesigned and rebuilt shop front, entirely new materials, details, proportions, elements



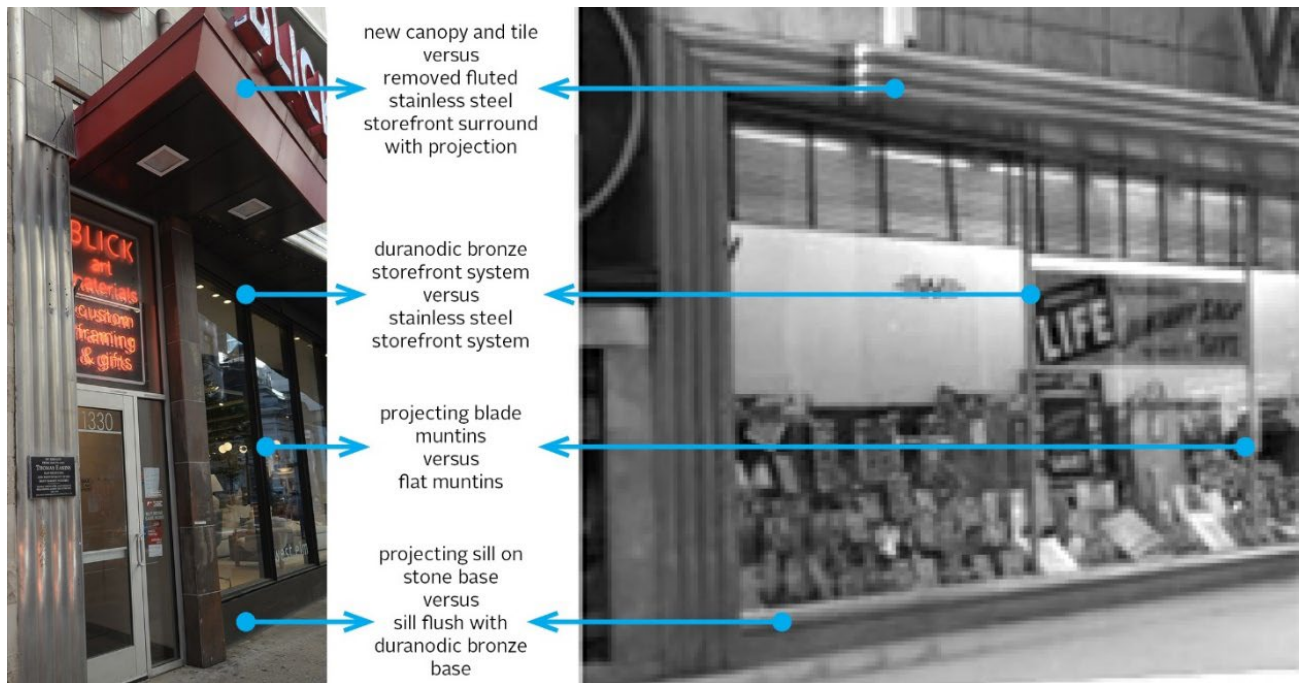
JKRoller plans, 2005 shows original shop façade dotted lines (where red lines are) with original three shop entrance doors. Shop front 100% altered and redesigned from symmetrical to asymmetrical, from delicate, shiny stainless to heavy black aluminum frames.

Description: The original shop front as depicted in photographs taken at the time of the opening of the building showed a symmetrical shop window configuration spanning the

entire front of the building with a subtly angled plane of shop windows beginning at the outer corners of the façade and receding toward the center. The windows sat on a shiny dark base, probably dark granite. The three oversized glass window bays on either side were framed in up-to-date stainless steel in a design that angled in from the façade corners to a point several feet back from the street at which point the final shop window panels turned more sharply toward the recessed centered entrance. The entrance itself consisted of three pairs of stainless steel-framed glass doors, each with a transom.

Analysis: The entire original shop window system from the base to the ceiling above it has been removed and replaced in a different plane with a clunky, black-framed, rectangular section, aluminum system that now, because of the added doors at each end, begins at some distance from the corners of the façade. Every piece of the shop front is not the same. In this instance differing materials, architectural vocabularies and design characteristics make clear the design change.

- Where the original shop front extended from the east and west ends of the façade, it now begins within the zone of the overhead recessed cove of the sign bay.
- The shop window has been shortened different distances at each end to accommodate the new entrances and stairs to the upper and basement floors.
- Despite its reduced length the new glazing system has five narrower panels of glass on the east side of the center door and three panels of glass on the west side.
- As a consequence of the reglazing, instead of the essentially square panes of the original glazing, the new glass panes are rectangular and vertical in form.
- Instead of being clear glass, the new glass is tinted a dark grey hue.
- The difference in the number of panes on either side of the door marks the loss of the original symmetry that reflects the different widths of the new street-front entrances.
- The recessed central entrance of three stainless steel framed doors with transoms above has been replaced with a single centered door with inoperable side panels all extending to the ceiling.
- Thus instead of being a symmetrical shop front extending from one edge of the façade to the other, with glistening stainless muntins and frames and clear glass, the present system is asymmetrical, altered in proportion, with a dark aluminum frame system, and dimmed by dark glazing that is nothing like the original bright and welcoming façade.
- Evidence on the sidewalk shows that the present shop window system is in a different location than the original and likely with different angles in the entrance portion of the shopfront.
- The entire ceiling plane under the overhanging upper level has also been covered removing evidence of the original system.



Changes to the shopfront: east end

In addition, the overall shop window was framed on the top and sides by a broad band of three lines of stainless steel reeding that framed the vertical ends of the shop front at the very edge of the façade and then ran along the top of the shop window with a slight projection that began just outside of the sign cove above the shopfront, on either side of the façade.

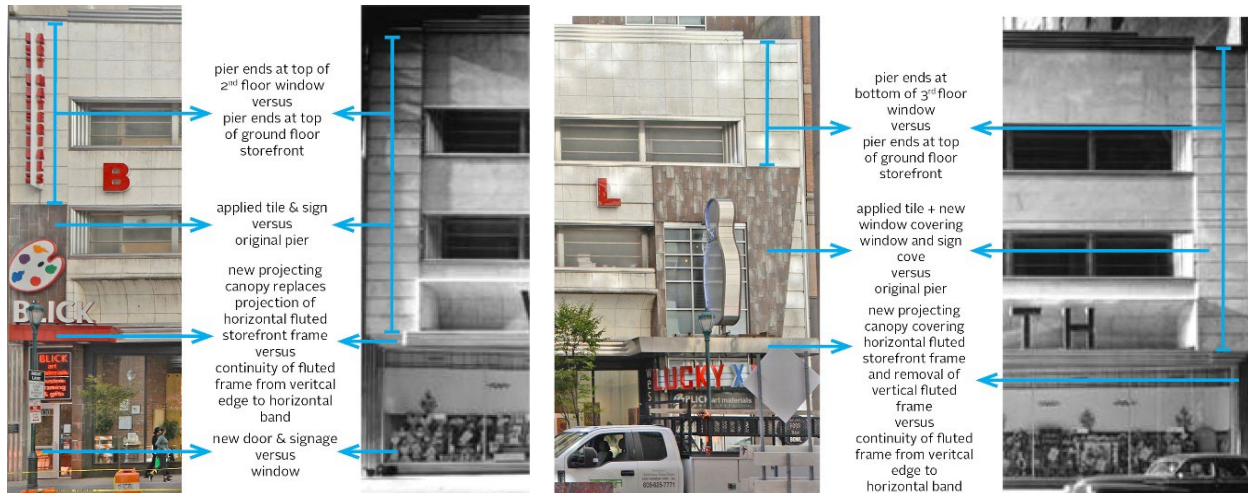
- That framing element has also been shortened by the large doors and decorative inset tile panels with overhanging canopies at each end of the façade that obliterates the west end of the shop window and the top-framing ornament at both ends.
- The offset of the stainless steel reeding is no longer evident because the east and west ends have been cut off for the new door canopies.

Conclusion

The shop windows and surrounds are drastically altered from the original system and mark a significant change from the original, transparent and glittering appearance. What exists today is a standard twenty-first century shopfront that has lost the character of the original.

2. Zone of Alteration: Added public doors at each end of the façade

Description: In 2006, new entry doors were cut into the main façade at the east and west ends of the building to provide access to separate commercial spaces in the basement and on the upper floors.



- These new doors and surrounds resulted in the shortening of the main show window for the first-floor retail space.
- The doors are embellished with angled overhanging canopies as well as signage and an overhanging bowling pin that represented the new businesses.
- Instead of a relatively planar façade, the present façade has three-dimensional elements that are more in keeping with standard shopping center design.
- The aluminum doors were placed in an architectural frame of metal-glazed, copper-hued tiles that establish a new and dominant element at each end of the main façade.
- The doors were treated differently on each side. The door at the east end is framed by a limited area of tile while the door at the west end is twice as wide with an architectural side panel ornamented with an angled panel of the dark tile set into rusticated banded panels of white marble against the west party wall.
- The differences continue to the upper levels of the façade with the east entrance, canopy and tile continuing to the top of the second story window while the wider and more decorative door surround of the west portal continues half-way into the third story to the base of the third story window.

Analysis: The impact of the added door surrounds affects the entirety of the main façade, contrasting with the original unified pale color scheme, destroying the original façade symmetry of every element of the original façade design, and with their projecting signs and canopies countering the planarity of the original design.

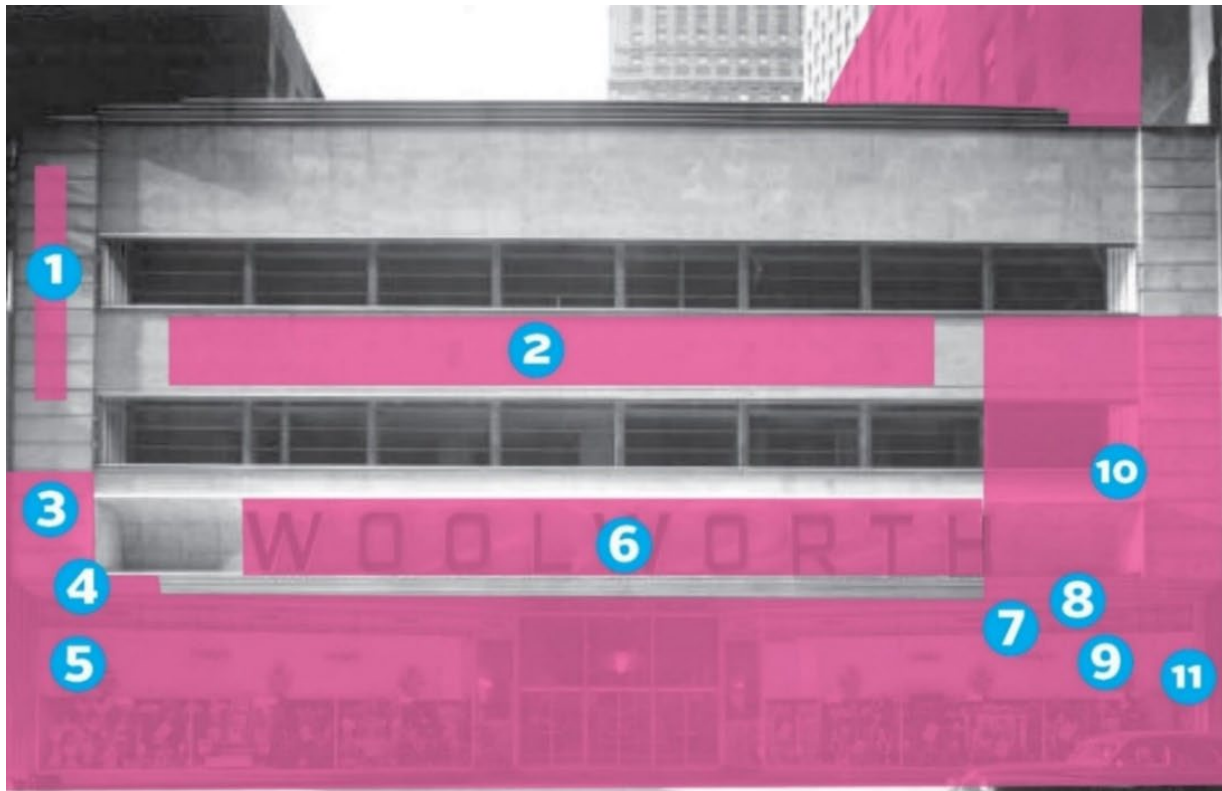
- A careful look reveals the removal of significant elements of the façade with a resulting further shift from the original design.
- On the east side, the door and decorative tile framing panel cut off the original stainless frame at the top of the shop window while also cutting off the easternmost panel of the shop window.

- The decorative tile above the door forms the background for the artist's palette and the store name and cuts off the first story of the rusticated stone pier on the east edge of the façade that had appeared to sit on the shop window.
- On the west side, the wider and taller decorative tile panel framing the door is even more destructive, cutting off the first-floor shop window the equivalent of two of the modern glazing panels and removing the stainless trim around the entire west end of the shop window.
- The wider tile panel at the western end also cuts off the west end of the coved sign area with its quarter-round closure pieces. Their removal and the shortening of the coved sign zone breaks the symmetry of that unit.
- Similarly the western bay of the second-story window and its stainless steel reeded end trim and the rusticated stone pier are both cut off.
- The copper-hued tile differs in size from the east end, continuing to the middle of the third story and adding another asymmetrical element to the facade.
- A large window with lights of varying sizes is inserted in the tile panel above the west door, lighting the second-floor landing. The suspended bowling pin sign projects from a steel strut and cuts through multiple stories, further undermining the original horizontality of the façade.

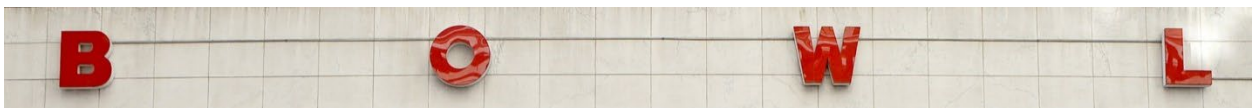
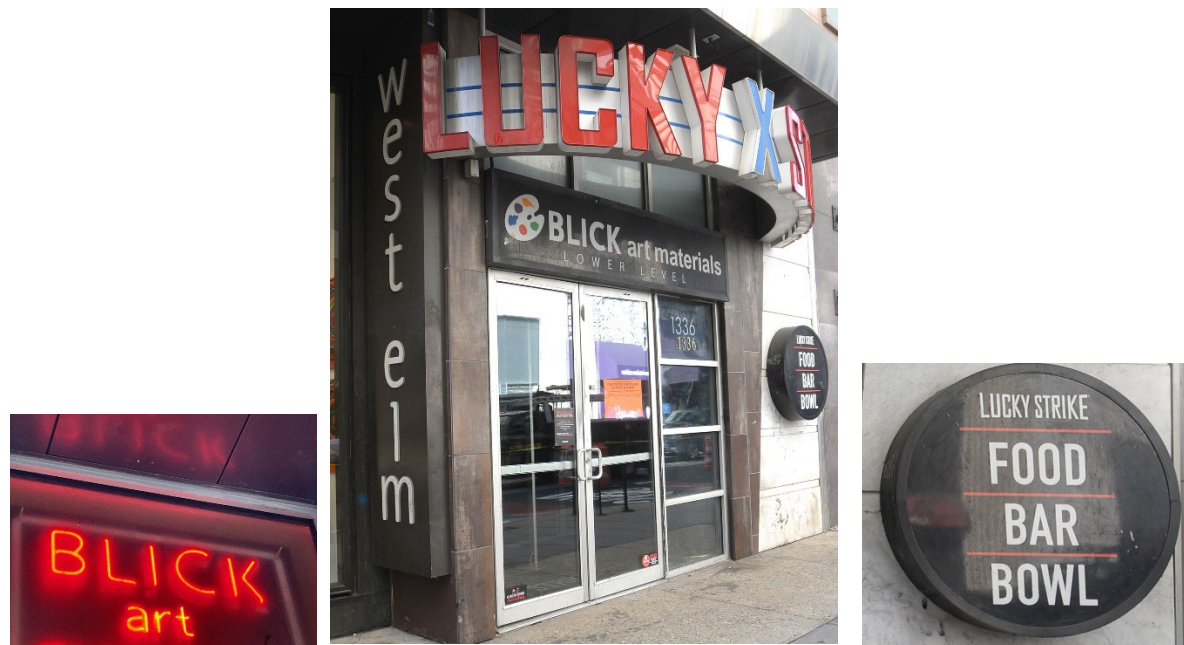
Zone of Alteration 3: Signage

The original Woolworth store front had one singular sign with the name of the chain set into the recessed cove above the entrance. That coved zone was exactly centered on the overall façade with curved stone panels forming the transition from the recessed sign zone to the front façade plane and with custom closure pieces at each end that completed the sign cove. This zone has now been cut off at the west end and the original single sign has now been replaced with twelve sign panels, each different and calling for attention like a highway strip shopping mall building.

- The east entrance with its bright red canopy carries the art business name and a colorful artist's palette while the west entrance is sheltered by a larger stainless steel canopy with a bowed sign carrying the name of the bowling business and a giant bowling pin, outlined in neon that is suspended from a steel girder.
- Where originally there was a single sign for the Woolworth business, there are now twelve signs, in different materials and typefaces, some flat on the façade, others projecting forward, with different colors and designs.
- Where there was one horizontal sign set into the recessed center, there are now signs that are vertical, projecting, sculptural with neon frames, in brilliant reds to make the signs as striking as possible.

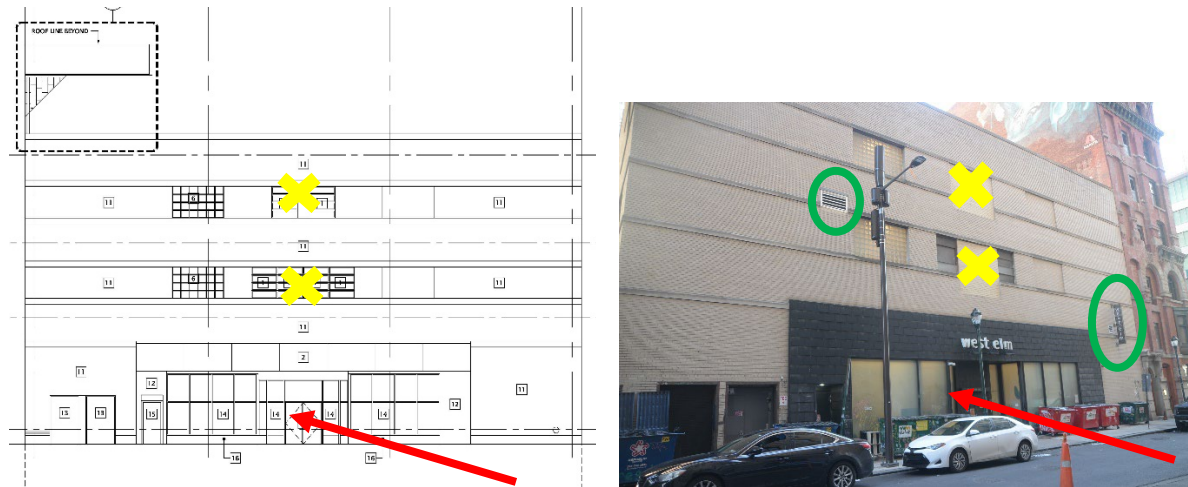


Instead of a single sign style, there are now a jumble of signs with multiple fonts in different styles, colors, sizes, and media, each intended to outshout the others and making the building little more than a background for signs.



Rear façade

Though of less architectural consequence and more modest materials, here the main material shifts to the ubiquitous yellow brick of the 1950s public schools. The rear façade has been similarly altered – again with no real discussion in the nomination. A comparison of the JKRoller elevation and the present façade makes clear the extent of change.



Like the main façade, the original exterior has been drastically altered to the point that, like the main façade it has been taken over by distracting elements that belie the original. Here the red arrows point to the totally redesigned and largely resurfaced lower rear façade. As demonstrated by a photograph of the rear of the building, the shop front on the first floor was similar in material and design to the Chestnut Street front with polished stone panels flanking the recessed entrance. All of that material was removed c. 2006 and now is highlighted by a giant black scrim of a shopfront of the crude aluminum metalwork.



Jeffery Baumol, "A Study of Post-war Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia," fig. 66, p. 124.

On the upper stores, windows that were to be restored, per the original façade drawing, were simply removed and infilled with a lighter yellow brick that doesn't match the facade brick (yellow Xs). Glass block infills on the left side of center were apparently replaced with similar materials. Again they were originally the top-hinged metal hopper sash of the surviving metal windows of the second story. Other jarring new elements were added including the blade sign and the big vent (green ovals).

Conclusion

The redesign of the building in 2005-6 ignored and then undermined every design element of the original façade design. What began as symmetrical façade elements are now asymmetrical below the capping stainless steel band at the top of the building. Further, the new elements shout their presence, in color, in angular form, and in three-dimensionality supplanting the original scheme. No attention was paid to the original design intent; indeed the purpose of the early 21st century alterations appears to have been to alter as much as possible the character of the façade. The design change continues with the added stair tower in the same copper-hued tile that creates a large vertical accent on the west end of the façade. As a result, the façade is a jumble of features, materials, and colors that undermines the original design so that it no longer is reflective of “a distinctive architectural style.”

In the National Register’s criteria for listing, design integrity plays a critical role.

“Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant.”²⁰

While integrity is not specifically called out in the relaxed standards of the modern Philadelphia Historical Commission, it is part of the basis for project review under the Secretary of Interior Standards and thus should be considered in reviewing appropriateness for designation. The nomination for 1330-36 Chestnut Street does not adequately or accurately describe the extent of alterations to the building and the resulting loss of integrity and thus does not explore the impact of those alterations on the supposedly significant design. In the case of the Chestnut Street façade, the extent of those alterations is either not understood or the writer did not intend to express the extent of those alterations.

Analysis: The result of the 2005-6 scheme was the insertion of multiple design vocabularies and a palette of new colors that together counter the original design.

²⁰ National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C., revision for internet, 1995) 44-48.

- Broad panels of brightly colored tile with angled design wreck the original façade design.
- The understated West Elm sign in skinny metal letters in the original coved sign zone contrasts with the boldly colored artist's palette that is flat but on the surface of the building and the bulging sign panel and projecting bowling pin of the bowling alley. Together with neon signs and the neon outline of the bowling pin, these elements are more of conventional commercial strip mall signage.
- Each of the secondary businesses are also marked by brightly colored plastic signs on the plain stone panels of the upper stories with "B O W L" in red letters attached to the masonry panel between the second and third stories; the Blick name is in neon with the artist's palette above the door and "Art Supplies" screams with the red plastic letters on both sides of a vertical blade sign on the fictive pier of the east end.
- Roofline: An added elevator and stair penthouse on west side to provide access to an entertainment venue on the roof is clad in the same copper-hued tile with a large glazed door / window. This further breaks the symmetry of the façade and ties the copper hued materials vertically from base to attic, adding a giant vertical element to the west side of the facade.

Conclusion: Destructive Design Alterations Should Prevent Designation

What had been a simple if confused design reflecting a mix of Beaux Arts and Modern design systems has become a highway strip shopping mall type façade that shouts for attention in every inch of its façade. The changes to the façade affect the integrity in design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship such that the façade should no longer be considered as significant. The loss of design integrity is striking and irremediable and the failure to take into account the impact of these design alterations undermines the nomination.

To put this into a comparative design context, it is as if a Volkswagen Beetle were modernized by covering the front hood with a fake Rolls Royce hood, with the roofline revised from the rounded form removing the essential characteristics of a VW for an unlikely misch masch. It's the same frame – but a different design.



Modified Volkswagen as Rolls Royce – disparate parts but VW windshield and rear volume. It is not a Rolls.

Zone of Alteration 4: Rear façade

The description of the rear facades in the nomination again makes it clear that the nominator failed to understand the design features of those facades and thus ignored

design problems of the rear wall that are similar to those of the front façade. And he apparently ignored the evidence in the Baumoel master's paper that shows the totality of the change of the rear façade in 2006.

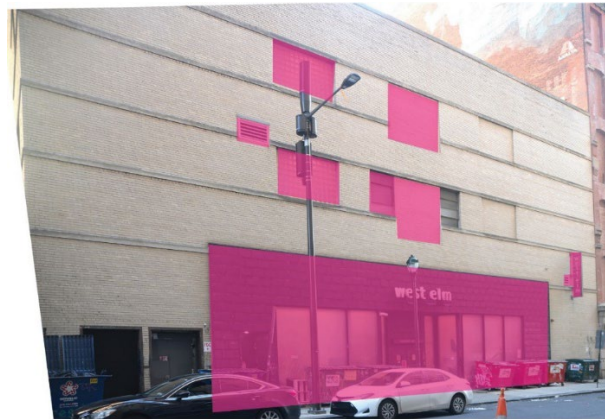


Figure 66.

Woolworth's: View of
Rear Elevation Cladding.

[Photograph taken by the
author.]

Jeffery Baumoel, "A Study of Post-war Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia," fig. 66, p. 124.



The rear façade is clearly secondary, using ordinary materials – tan 1950s brick and bands of limestone (not concrete, as stated) running the width of the building. Instead of the reveals of modern architecture that denote floor levels, the limestone bands are again remnants of Beaux Arts design, marking the sills and window heads with no reference to the interior floor levels. The rear facade has also been significantly altered:

- The core of the first-story stretching across approximately half of the façade has been removed and covered in black metal shingles with new glazing in place of the original polished masonry flanking a centered doorway. This corresponds to major changes on the interior structure that suggest other earlier alterations.
- The lack of windows on the rear facade, together with the inoperable windows of the front façade create significant problems for use.
- The blind niches on the left side of the second and third floors have been opened and filled with glass block. This provides light – but not ventilation.
- A new center panel of lighter yellow brick appears to have been cut into the wall, with a band of concrete mortar filling the cut edge of the brick.

- The left (west) sash of the two original windows of the second floor has been altered from the original center pivot sash to a fixed sash.
- A modern ventilation grill has been cut into the façade, cutting through the limestone band.
- A vertical fin sign has been added on the east side of the façade, though the rear entrance is no longer in use.

Conclusion

The changes on the rear are equally significant in that most of the main elements and design motifs have been removed and what remain were altered. New elements are introduced and the façade has been altered apparently to no real purpose and without adding the light, ventilation, and access that should be required for the use of the building. See attached report by Richard Wentzel, Thornton Tomasetti.

Criterion E not claimed: Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation.

Criterion F not claimed: Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation.

Criterion G not claimed: Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif.

Does not meet Criterion H: Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, it represents an established visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or city.

The nomination claims that the horizontal proportions, minimal aesthetic, and stark white color make the building stand out and thus it can be said to be “an established visual feature of the neighborhood.”

Conclusion: In fact it is these characteristics that make the building almost invisible amidst its streetscape of towering and massive Beaux Arts landmarks. The closest approximations to 1330 Chestnut St. are the post-World War II renovations to building facades on Chestnut Street and on Broad Street to get rid of the curse of “old– fashioned” looks. This began with the mutilation of the Real Estate Title and Trust Company with its 1947 “modern” base characterized by slabs of yellow sandstone and large strip windows across both the Chestnut and the Broad Street facades.²¹ Less obvious changes removed the pilasters of the first story and mezzanine of the Lincoln / Liberty building across Chestnut Street.

²¹ The base of the Real Estate Title and Trust was altered by the firm of Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson who had been students of Paul Cret at the University of Pennsylvania and later members of Cret’s firm. Doubtless as a nod to the pinkish-tan brick of the 1890s design of the Real Estate Title & Trust, the yellow-hued sandstone façade was a harsh change, one that quickly was repeated on the facades of other Broad Street. The classical detail of the pilasters and capitals of the Lincoln/Liberty building were removed for dark granite panels framed with marble trim for the modernized base of the PNB tower (since renovated in light stone).

Criterion I not claimed: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

Criterion J not claimed: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

Other Alterations missed in the nomination:

The nomination missed significant alterations and changes in the use of the building that are evident in historic photographs of the site and clarify the history of the building. The new door on the added west pier of the building appears in the 2005 renovation drawings by J. K. Roller. It features a door with a colonial broken pediment above the door frame that provided access to the upper stories. This change caused the shortening of west side of the main shop window and the removal of the metal trim that framed the side of the original first floor shop window. This 1960 addition marked the closing of the upper levels of the store and the rental of the upper floors to a stock broker.²² It is visible in the c. 1997 photo (below) at the time of the closing of the building, the shop windows were safeguarded with rolled metal grills that are located above the main windows. This reflects the changes in the store, probably in the early 1960s, when the Chestnut Street building store was significantly reduced in size and at least one floor of the upper levels were rented out to other tenants.²³

Examination of local newspapers finds that at least one floor was occupied for many years by office space for the Bache Company that advertised its use of space at the new western door at 1336 Chestnut Street. At a later point in the 1970s, another tenant, Blue Cross, occupied the second story. This corresponds in date to the opening of the new and larger Woolworth's on Market Street opposite Reading Terminal and the Gallery.



Woolworth's Store 1997 at time of going out of business sale with anti-theft grills and colonial doorway on west end of façade.²⁴

²² Philadelphia Building Permits, #928, 1960 cited in Baumoel, p. 55, n. 2.

²³ Beginning in 1962 the Bache Co., stock brokers, rented at least one of the floors and held seminars on stock trading there. In the 1970s, Blue Cross had its offices in the building as well. Advertisement for "Bache & Co. 1336 Chestnut Street," *Philadelphia Inquirer* April 17, 1962, p. 19.

²⁴ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/scavenger49/6117243829> (accessed JA 2024)

Inadequacies of the building that impact future and present uses:

The report attached to this document by Richard Wentzel, RA of the scientific and consulting firm Thornton Tomasetti, Inc. finds significant liabilities because of the present design, that if repaired to make the building more usable would further undermine the original scheme. Most notable are the fixed, inoperable front windows that cannot be opened for an emergency exit and whose 16" openings are inadequate for a fire exit while the sill height at both of the upper floors is far higher than the 44" permitted being 58" on the second floor and 53" on the third floor, thus they are between 9" and 14" above the height permitted by city code. In the present condition with the lowest glazing subdivision screened by a constructed plaster surface for bathroom privacy, the actual present height is 71" – or more than head height for me. The problem of the front windows is exacerbated because of the side party walls that block exitways and the three windows of the rear façade again have the operable sash at 52" above the floor and thus do not meet exit requirements. The other openings have been infilled with brick or glass block.



Present window 71" heights above floor with inoperable sash

CMX5 Zoning with Center City Bonus to 16 FAR

Because of its location close to the city's most transit-rich area near Center Square and Broad Street, the building site receives the most liberal zoning of the city, CMX5, with the goal of encouraging density near transit. Together with the overlay created along Broad Street this makes the site eligible for a 16 FAR and is a significant part of the value of the property – which was reflected in the purchase price at more than twice the assessed value. This zoning permits by right more than 330,000 square feet of construction on the site. Floor area value is lost in Philadelphia when a property is designated and can not make use of the air rights. In other cities, such as New York, air rights can be moved and sold within certain zones of the city. This is not the case in Philadelphia except in the situation where an immediately adjacent property, sharing ownership, can transfer air rights. These circumstances are impossible in the vicinity given the historic status of the Hale Building on

the east and the built-out sites along Broad Street on the west. That there was unrealized value in the site was clear in the documents from the sale of 1330 in 2015.

Conclusion:

Given the value of the property for development, the liabilities of the design that limit uses and would require extensive modifications to both facades to meet fire egress and light and air requirements, the lack of original historical design significance, and now the wreck of the original design from massive alterations, this building should not be historically designated.

Changing conditions since building was recommended for review in 1991

The Baumel thesis notes that in 1991 the Woolworth building was recommended for review as part of a survey of mid-century buildings that included several other downtown buildings, but that erred in leaving out the Louis Magaziner's Sydney Hillman Medical Center and Louis Kahn's and Oscar Stonorov's Coward Shoe store.²⁵ When that recommendation was made, the building was still in relatively original condition. That recommendation was not followed, suggesting that the Woolworth building was not considered significant at the time. Since then, the changes detailed in the first portion of this study have been made that totally undermine the design and make it inappropriate for designation.

One final note must be made about the lack of significance of the building. The absence of references to this building in the architectural histories of Philadelphia confirm its lack of significance.

²⁵ Baumel, p. 87.

GEORGE E. THOMAS, Ph.D.

Professional Practice

George E. Thomas is a cultural and architectural historian practicing with Susan Nigra Snyder in Civic**Visions**, a consulting practice based in Philadelphia. They use research, analysis, and design to create urban and institutional identity for communities and colleges. Dr. Thomas's research investigates how regional history is expressed in contemporary life.

Dr. Thomas served as co-director with Ms. Snyder of the Critical Conservation MDes program at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University from 2011-2022. There they looked at broader cultural issues than the simple preservation of a structure or object; placing the action of preservation in a larger context of elite power and social injustice through the lens of the uses and abuses of history and heritage. He has taught at Bryn Mawr College (1976-7 and 1978 and in the University of Pennsylvania's Historic Preservation Program (which he co-founded in 1978) and the Urban Studies Program at University of Pennsylvania from 1978-2015. In 1995 he was awarded the University's Provost's Award for Distinguished Teaching.

Dr. Thomas has written and lectured widely on nineteenth and early twentieth century American architecture. His research on post-Civil War American commercial and industrial architecture has broadened our understanding of the origins of modern design in the work of Pennsylvania architects serving industrial clients. In 1991 he was the principal author of *Frank Furness: The Complete Works* (Princeton Architectural Press) which reintroduced that vigorous Victorian to the American profession. His *Building America's First University: An Architectural and Historical Guide to the University of Pennsylvania* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000' with David Brownlee) places Philadelphia's university in the context of the city's industrial culture. His *William L. Price: From Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2000) extends this research into the twentieth century forging a link between the better-known modernism of the mid-west and Price's progressive east coast architecture that was rooted in the industrial culture. *Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018) explored the critical cultural frame that explains Furness's architecture. It won the Victorian Society in America's award for 2018 and was reviewed in the *New York Review of Books*.

In 2000, Mr. Thomas was asked to organize a team to prepare the first comprehensive architectural and cultural guide to eastern Pennsylvania under the aegis of the Society of Architectural Historians Buildings of the United States series. Published in 2010, *Buildings of the United States: Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania* examines the role of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania in shaping the early nation while placing the region in the theoretical frame of the ecological relationship between culture and design. His writing has as its central thesis the culture of innovation that was initiated by William Penn's open society and continued in the great industrial culture of the late 19th and early 20th century that culminated in the invention of ENIAC, the first computer in 1945.

Dr. Thomas's work has been represented in numerous architectural exhibits beginning in 1973 with the Philadelphia Museum's "*The Architecture of Frank Furness*" and has continued in multiple books and exhibits including "*William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design*" that traveled to the National Building Museum in 2001 and 2002.

Mr. Thomas has been active in the field of historic preservation since the early 1970s where

he helped develop the role of the research team as an adjunct to architectural and planning professionals. Mr. Thomas was founding partner of the Clio Group, Inc. in 1977 and served as its president until 1988. There he directed a multi-disciplinary team of archaeologists, urban, architectural and landscape historians, materials conservators, and photographers. Working independently, and in conjunction with many of the region's premier architects, this team directed the preservation of many of the landmarks of the mid-Atlantic region including 30th Street Station and the University of Pennsylvania's Fisher Fine Arts Library, College Hall, Logan Hall, and Irvine Auditorium.

Education

Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, History of Art, 1975

B.A., Dickinson College, 1966

Consulting Work

Founding partner: CivicVisions, LP, 2002

Founding Principal, George E. Thomas Associates, 1992

Clio Group, Inc. Founding Partner, 1977

Clio Group, Inc. President, 1977-1988

Director of Historic Research, 1977 - 1992 with responsibility for: 30 National Register Historic District Nominations; Over 100 National Register Nominations: Traymore Hotel, Atlantic City, 1972; Lits Brothers Department Store, Philadelphia, 1973; Reliance Insurance Company, Philadelphia, 1973, Hamilton Estate, Philadelphia, 1981; Rittenhouse Historic District, Philadelphia, 1982; Bindley Hardware, Pittsburgh, 1982; Schuylkill Historic District, 1985, Stoddartsville, Pa. Historic District, 1998; Cobbs Creek Historic District, Philadelphia, 1998

Teaching

Harvard University, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Department of Architecture:
Lecturer 2011 - ff. Co-Director Critical Conservation, 2011 to 2022

University of Pennsylvania: Lecturer 1975-1976, 1979-2015, Historic Preservation; Urban Studies; Architecture and City and Regional Planning; Teaching Fellow 1967-1969.

Bryn Mawr College, Lecturer and interim director, Growth and Structure of Cities program 1974-1975; Centennial lecturer, 1978.

Academic & Literary Awards

2019 Victorian Society in America, Literary Award for *Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

2000 Athenaeum of Philadelphia Literary Honor Award, *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to*

Modern Design (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000).

1995 Provost's Award for distinguished teaching, University of Pennsylvania

1991. American Institute of Architects, Honor Award for *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*. Principal author, with Michael J. Lewis and Jeffrey A. Cohen. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991).

Pennsylvania Society of Architects, "Service to the Profession" award, 1988

Samuel H. Kress Fellow, 1971-1972

Teaching Fellow, History of Art Department, University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1969

Professional Honors

2014 Adaptive Re-Use and Restoration of the American Chemical Heritage Foundation Storage Facility, Preservation Alliance Award for Adaptive Re-Use

2006 Restoration of the Hotel Fauchère, Milford, Pa PHMC Awards

2003 Lower Merion Conservancy Award for Bryn Mawr Student Village with Buell-Kratzer, Powell.

2002 AIA honor award for adaptive reuse of Bryn Mawr College's Frank Furness-designed Charles Perkins House, for adaptive reuse as the new Admissions Office, with Buell Kratzer, Powell.

2001 Preservation Alliance Award, Perelman Quadrangle, with Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, for the University of Pennsylvania.

1992 Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, President's Award for Furness Building, University of Pennsylvania, principal-in-charge, 1992, with Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates

1991 Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, special award, Furness Building Restoration, principal-in-charge

1988-90 Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, special award, Old Economy Village Report, principal-in-charge.

Publications

Books

Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. *Winner: Victorian Society in America, 2019 Literary Award*.

First Modern: Frank Furness's Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2017

Buildings of the United States, Pennsylvania: Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, Principal author, with Patricia Likos Ricci, Richard Webster, Bruce Thomas, Lawrence Newman and Robert Janasov. Charlottesville, VA, University of Virginia

Press, 2010.

The University of Pennsylvania Campus Guide. New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

William L. Price: From Arts and Crafts to Modern Architecture. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000. *Winner Athenaeum of Philadelphia Literary Honor Award*.

Building America's First University: an architectural and cultural history and guide to the University of Pennsylvania Principal author, with David B. Brownlee. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

American Architectural Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century. With Michael J. Lewis. Reprint of Lewis Mumford and Oliver Reagan, *American Architecture of the Twentieth Century* (New York: 1927) and Hoak and Church, *Masterpieces of American Architecture*, (New York, 1931). Princeton Architectural Press, 1992.

Frank Furness: The Complete Works. Principal author, with Michael J. Lewis and Jeffrey A. Cohen. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, February 1991 *Winner, American Institute of Architects, Honor Award*.

The Book of the School - 100 Years. Principal author with Ann Strong. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts, 1990

Drawing Towards Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics 1732 - 1986. With James F. O'Gorman, Jeffrey A. Cohen, and G. Holmes Perkins. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986

Cape May: Queen of the Seaside Resorts. Principal author with Carl E. Doebley. Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1975

William L. Price: Builder of Men and of Buildings. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1975

The Architecture of Frank Furness. Principal essay by James F. O'Gorman. Philadelphia; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973

Articles:

With Susan Nigra Snyder

"Curating Exclusion and Privilege: History, Heritage, and Nature as Neoliberal Tools." *Landscape Architecture Frontiers*, 2020, Vol. 8, Issue (6): 60-85.

"From Ruskin to Pleasantville: Color as an Instrument of Social (dis)Agreement," *New Geographies 3: Urbanisms of Color*, Gareth Doherty, ed., Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2011.

"William Price's Traymore Hotel: Modernity in the Mass Resort," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, 25, *The Hotel*, (spr. 2005), 186-213.

George E. Thomas

"Palm Springs: From Hot Springs to Global Resort," in Alan Hess, ed. *Palm Springs* forthcoming

"Frank Furness" In *Oxford Bibliographies in Architecture, Planning, and Preservation*.

- Ed. Kevin Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
- "William L. Price." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Architecture, Planning, and Preservation*. Ed. Kevin Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
 - "Wilson Brothers." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Architecture, Planning, and Preservation*. Ed. Kevin Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
 - "From a Side Pew: Meditations on the Saints of St. Peter's," Cordelia Frances Biddle, et al., *St. Peter's Church: Faith and Action for 250 Years*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2011.
 - "The Sixth Pennsylvania "Lancers" Monument," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 135: no. 4 (October 2011): 543-546.
 - "Building Penn's Brand," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 101:1 (Sept/Oct. 2002) 28-33.
 - "The Happy Employment of Means to Ends: Frank Furness's Library of the University of Pennsylvania and the Industrial Culture of Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, (April 2002).
 - "From Frontier to Center City: The Evolution of the Neighborhood of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 124 (January/ April 2000) 7-42.
 - "Wildwood At Heart," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, (September – October 1998) 40-41.
 - "The Wildwoods-by-the-Sea: Learning from an `Other-Directed' Place," *Penn in Ink*, April 1998, pp.1-2.
 - "Frank Furness and the Poetry of the Present," Introduction to Ted Bosley, *University of Pennsylvania Library*. London: Phaidon, 1996.
 - "Drexel University - An Architectural History of the Main Building, 1891-1991," Booklet published in conjunction with the Drexel University Centennial, 1991.
 - "William Price's Rose Valley: Social Radicalism leading to Architectural Modernism," publication for American Craft Museum's Centennial Publication, 1993.
 - "A House Built on Sand: The Construction of Atlantic City's Traymore Hotel." *VIA* 7, issue on structures, 1984: 8-21.
 - "William L. Price, Architect: Prophet Without Honor" and "Rose Valley Architecture: Where Art Served Life." In *A Poor Sort of Heaven, A Good Sort of Earth: The Rose Valley Arts and Crafts Experiment*. William Ayres, ed. Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania: Brandywine River Museum, 1983: 23-26.
 - "Social Stratification and Architectural Patronage in Philadelphia, 1840-1920." In *The Divided Metropolis*. Howard Gillette and William Cutler, eds. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980: 85-124.
 - *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*. Darrel Sewell, ed. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976. Various biographical and catalog entries.

- “The Statue in the Garden” and “Art Deco Architecture and Sculpture.” *Sculpture of a City: Philadelphia Treasures in Bronze and Stone*. Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Art Association, 1974.
- “The Goals of William L. Price.” In *A History of Rose Valley*. Peter Ham, ed. Rose Valley: privately published, 1973.
- *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architecture*. Various biographies.
- *International Encyclopedia of Architecture*. Chicago: St. James Press. Various articles.
- “The Politics of Destruction: When We Destroy the Past, We Also Destroy the Future.” *Philadelphia Magazine* LXIV, no. 4 (April, 1973): 100 ff.
- Architecture editor, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 1976-1978.

Reviews:

Engineering America: The Life and Times of John A. Roebling. By Richard Haw. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020) *Journal of American History*, 108: no. 4 (March 2022): 835-836.

Louis I. Kahn's Jewish Architecture: Mikveh Israel and the Midcentury American Synagogue. By Susan G. Solomon, (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 134 no. 2 (April 2010): 197-199.

Historic Landmarks of Philadelphia, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) By Roger W. Moss and Tom Crane, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (July 2009): 307-308.

H.H. Richardson: Architectural Forms for an American Society. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987) By James F. O’Gorman. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 113:4 (October 1989): 665-667.

The Engineering Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Edited by Darwin H. Stapleton, (New Haven: Published for the Maryland Historical Society by Yale University Press, 1980) *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 105, no. 3 (July 1981): 353-354.

Various articles, exhibitions, brochures and pamphlets, including “Philadelphia: Panorama of a Civilization” exhibition texts and brochures for 1895-1915 and 1915-1940.

Exhibition Curator

“*Building a Modern Masterpiece: Frank Furness’ Factory for Art*”: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Summer Fall 2012.

“*Frank Furness: Working on the Railroads*,” Library Company of Philadelphia, fall 2012 –

spring 2013.

"Frank Furness's Machine for Learning: The University of Pennsylvania Library," with James F. O'Gorman, fall 2012.

"Identity and Individualization: The Commercial Architecture of Frank Furness" Drexel University, fall 2012.

"Learning from Frank Furness: What Louis Sullivan learned in Philadelphia," Philadelphia Museum of Art, fall 2012.

With Susan Nigra Snyder, Special Photography & Map of Artists Houses in Phippsburg and Seguinland: "Maine Moderns: Art in Seguinland, 1900-1940," Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine, June 4-September 1, 2011.

Curator: "William L. Price: From Arts and Crafts to Modern Design," Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania, May -August, 2000.

Curator and artist, "Cape May: Then and Now," photographs of Cape May in 1997 and the 1970s, Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts Gallery, spring 1998.

Curator and artist: "When the Buildings Were White," photographs of Cape May, NJ in the 1970s, Genus Locii Gallery, spring 1996.

Curator, "Frank Furness: The Flowering of an American Architecture," Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania, 1991

"100 For 100, History of the Graduate School of Fine Arts," exhibit concept and selection of objects, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 1990

Exhibition Co-Organizer, "Drawing Towards Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732-1986." Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, October 9, 1986 - January 1987.

Rose Valley," Brandywine Museum, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, Winter 1983.

"Philadelphia: Panorama of a Civilization," exhibition cycle, sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, produced and directed with Carl Doebley, 1976:

"The Eighteenth Century" at Pennsylvania Hospital

"1800-1840" at the Second Bank of the United States

"1840-1870" at Maxwell Mansion, Germantown

"1870-1895" at Drexel University

"1895-1915" at the University Museum

"1915-1940" at Strawbridge and Clothier Store

"1940-1976" at Municipal Services Building

"A Victorian Masterpiece Rediscovered," co-curator with Hyman Myers, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the American Institute of Architects, 1974

Curator, "The Restoration of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: A First Look," the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1973

"The Architecture of Frank Furness," co-curator with James F. O'Gorman, Hyman Myers, and the Division of Education, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973

Selected Lectures

"Toward a Modern American Architecture: The Vertical Style of Will Price," Southern California Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians, March 06, 2021

"Frank Furness – Architecture in the True First Machine Age," Southern California Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians Gamble House, Pasadena, January 4, 2020

"Furnaces of Innovation: The Furness Family and the Idea of Progress," First Unitarian Church, November 14, 2019.

"What Frank Furness taught Will Price," Rose Valley Historical Society, April 14, 2019.

"First Modern – Frank Furness's Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. November 7, 2018.

"Inventing Modern: Frank Furness in Philadelphia," Woodmere Art Museum, April 12, 2018.

Co-chair, Society of Architectural Historians conference session Chicago with Susan Nigra Snyder, April 2015.

"It's Not Your Mother's Main Street," International Downtown Association (IDA) National Conference, Milwaukee, with Susan Nigra Snyder, September 2009.

"Learning from Las Vegas in the Media Age," Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) National Convention, Las Vegas, with Susan Nigra Snyder, October 13, 2006.

"Frank Furness and the roots of American Modernism," June 2005, Preservation Alliance lecture series.

"Learning from Las Vegas in the Media Age," AIA National Convention, Las Vegas, with Susan Nigra Snyder, May 2005.

"From Our House to the Big House – Architectural Meaning in Philadelphia School Design," Society for the City and Regional Planning History, National Conference, St. Louis, Nov. 2003.

"The Madonna Effect: Learning From Las Vegas in the Media Age," Syracuse University Architectural Lecture Series, with Susan Nigra Snyder, April 2003.

"From Our House to the Big House," Lecture on Philadelphia School Buildings, Urban Studies, University of Pennsylvania. February 27, 2003.

"Disparate ores: The architectural melting pot of the Delaware Valley," "Worldly Goods" Symposium, Philadelphia Art Museum, November 1999.

"Frank Furness: Learning from the present," Connecticut College Architectural Program Lecture series, 18 February 1998.

"New Jersey's Varied Approaches to Resort Building," Penn-Yale joint architectural studio

- presentation, Wildwood, NJ 20 January 1998.
- Society for Commercial Archaeology National Conference: "The Meaning of Names in the Cultural Universe: Cape May, Atlantic City, Wildwood," 20 September 1997, Wildwood, NJ
- "New Wine in Old Bottles: The Building of Penn's Graduate School of Fine Arts," Society of Architectural Historians, National Conference: Baltimore, MD 19 April 1997
- Keynote address: Chestnut Hill Historical Society 30th Anniversary Lecture Series, "Deconstructing Chestnut Hill: the Social and Architectural History of the pre-Houston Village" 23 February 1997.
- University of Pennsylvania Art History Colloquium, "Frank Furness's Muse: the Poetry of the Present," 21 February 1997
- "William L. Price: Utopian Realist," Arden Single Tax Association dinner, 18 January 1997.
- Lecture tour for Penn Alumni Council, Indianapolis and Minneapolis, 22, 23 October 1996
"Frank Furness and the Philadelphia Origins of Architectural Modernism"
- Fall 1996, 21, 28 Sept., 5 Oct. University of Pennsylvania SCUE Preceptorial Program: Three walks through the Revolutionary City:
"William Penn's Creation of the Modern Diverse Society,"
"The Evolution of the Revolutionary City,"
"Sites of the Continental Congress"
- 1996 University of Pennsylvania "Urban Studies Program: 25th year celebration" "The Seven Revolutions of Philadelphia tour"
- 1996 "Penn Gets a Life" campus tour for Alumni Affairs
- 1996, "Frank Furness: the Poetry of the Present," Philadelphia Open House, Merion Cricket Club
- "Philadelphia: City of Revolutions" Lecture for Annual meeting of Chestnut Hill Historical Society" 29 April 1996
- "Frank Furness and the Engineering Culture of Philadelphia" Capstone lecture for 25th anniversary of Urban Studies, Bryn Mawr College, 27 April 1996
- "The Seven Revolutions of Philadelphia," Cliveden Winter Institute, Cliveden House, Germantown, 14 March 1996
- "Houston Hall: When Penn Got a Life," Houston Hall Centennial Lunch Lecture series, 23 January 1996
- San Diego, CA University Alumni Meeting, -- "Campus legends and myths: a celebration of the University of Pennsylvania," 20 January 1996
- Denver, CO, University of Pennsylvania Alumni Meeting, "The Building of the Campus of the University of Pennsylvania: form and content," 19 January 1996
- "Prague: the medieval city as user-friendly Internet," Wharton International Forum, Prague,

Czech Republic, 12 January 1996

“Rose Valley Price: Philadelphia roots for modern architecture,” Rose Valley Town Hall, 27 April 1995.

“Roots of the Modern Movement in Philadelphia Machine Culture,” concluding lecture for the Decorative Arts Trust conference, Philadelphia, 9 April 1995

“William Price: Radical Quaker Architect,” Chestnut Hill Historical Society, 15 February 1995

“Frank Furness: radical architect for modern engineers,” Yale School of Architecture, 16 January, 1995.

“Robert Smith's St. Peter's: the origin of a Philadelphia type,” Robert Smith Society, 14 January 1995.

“Turner Brooks and Frank Furness: American Architects Rooted in the Present”, School of Fine Arts, 4 November 1994.

“The Poetry of the Present - The Meaning of Frank Furness's Architecture,” University Alumni Society, October 1994

“Toward a Modern Infrastructure: the Wilson Brothers in Philadelphia,” Society of Architectural Historians national convention, Philadelphia, PA, 28 April 1994

“Frank Furness in New Jersey,” Millville Historical Society, Annual Meeting, 26 May 1994

“Toward a Modern Infrastructure: the Wilson Brothers in Philadelphia,” Society of Architectural Historians national convention, Philadelphia, PA, 28 April 1994

“The Six Revolutions of Philadelphia,” Independence National Historic Park Advisory Board meeting, keynote address, Philadelphia, PA, 9 April 1994.

“The Clients of Frank Furness -- the importance of being engineers,” Yale School of Architecture, Frank Furness studio, January 1994

“The Frank Furness Cookbook -- a building every other week for 40 years,” Yale School of Architecture, Frank Furness studio, February 1994

“Frank Furness's Red City,” Yale School of Architecture, Frank Furness Studio, January 1993

“William Price: shaper of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Style and the National Commercial Style,” Wellesley College, 8 April 1992, seminar on American Arts and Crafts movement

“Frank Furness: Red Architecture for a Revolutionary America;” “Frank Furness: Individualist in Search of Emerson's Leopard,” Yale lectures in association with Turner Brooks's studio on Frank Furness, Spring, 1992

“Frank Furness and the Reform of the American House,” keynote lecture, Victorian Week, Cape May, New Jersey, 14 October 1991

“Surprising Philadelphian: Joseph Wilson and the reshaping of American Architecture,” Drexel University Centennial Series, November 18, 1991

“Mark Twain, Thomas Eakins, and Frank Furness: The American Generation,” Colloquium on modern architecture, Yale University, November 7, 1991

The Drexels of Philadelphia and their architect, Joseph Wilson,” keynote address, Drexel family gathering for the Drexel Centennial, October 19, 1991

“George Howe - Philadelphia Modern adapted to Philadelphia Tradition - the Spieser House,” Cosmopolitan Club, 25 September 1991

“Philadelphia Architecture - five revolutionaries - Furness, Price, Howe, Kahn, and Venturi,” Foundation for Architecture, 13 March 1991

“100 For 100 - The Graduate School of Fine Arts at 100,” September 18, 1990, Philadelphia.

RICHARD WENTZEL, R.A.

Associate



Summary

Richard Wentzel joined Thornton Tomasetti in 2012 and has more than 35 years of experience providing architectural services. His experience includes design and management of commercial, educational, industrial, institutional, residential, mixed-use and parking structures; and site planning. Richard has acted as an expert witness giving testimonies before zoning, planning and architectural review boards as well as Federal District Courts. He also has experience in historic preservation projects.

Areas of Technical Expertise

- Technical Architecture
- Forensic Architecture
- Building Envelope

Education

- B. Arch., 1984, Drexel University

Registrations

- Registered Architect in AL, MD, NJ, PA and VA

Professional Activities

- Board Member and Treasurer, The Center for Historic American Building Arts
- Member, Building Enclosure Council
- Member, Association for the Preservation of Technology

Select Project Experience

Technical Architecture

ACTS Country House Roof Replacement, Wilmington, DE. Architectural services for the replacement of an existing ballasted EPDM roof. Scope included preparation of construction documents for roof replacement, bidding assistance and construction administration.

Amsted-Griffin Wheel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CAN. Architectural consulting services in response to a fire at a railroad wheel manufacturing plant.

1100 Wilson Blvd Roof Terrace, Arlington, VA. Architectural building envelope services for a new observation roof deck on the 32nd floor.

1100 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA. Construction administration services for cleaning of aluminum skin panels and reapplication of additional protective coating on a 32-story office tower.

1101 Wilson Boulevard Roof Replacement, Arlington, VA. Architectural services for the replacement of an existing terrace IRMA roof and SBS mechanical roof. Scope included preparation of construction documents and construction administration services for the roof replacement.

Temple University, Morgan Hall, Philadelphia, PA. Administration of water and air pressure testing on existing curtain wall construction.

Pennwood High School, Lansdowne, PA. Code review of student laboratory equipment and support systems, which were proposed as replacements for fire-damaged equipment and systems.

Commodore Barry House Condominiums, 736-8 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA.* Architectural design services for reuse of masonry row homes as luxury condominiums. Special considerations included preservation/restoration of existing façades.

RICHARD WENTZEL, R.A.

University of Pennsylvania, The Creperie Houston Hall, Philadelphia, PA. * Architectural design of a retail food space in a 116-year-old masonry building located at the heart of the campus.

University of Delaware, Harrington Hall Renovation, Newark, DE. Roofing design of five residence halls and the central commons encompassing 78,000 square feet of replacement roof area as preventive maintenance. Project also included assessment, repair recommendations and thermal performance requirements for the replacement roofing system as part of the building envelope upgrade initiative.

9th District Police Station, Philadelphia, PA. * Architectural design services for the adaptive reuse of an existing 5-story commercial building as a multi-story police headquarters and detention center, including the integration of a new public entrance into an existing masonry façade.

Building A-100, Newport, DE. Architectural services in support of a partial demolition required for replacement of lateral bracing, termination of steel framing and concrete slabs, and support of a new full-height masonry firewall in the remaining structure.

Forensic Architecture

Acropolis Hotel, North Wildwood, NJ. Forensic evaluation of a multi-story hotel building related to façade and roof conditions associated with CAT-90 Sandy.

Shore Club Condominiums, Margate, NJ. Forensic evaluation of a 3-story residential condominium building related to façade and roof conditions associated with CAT-90 Sandy.

Four Points by Sheraton, Philadelphia, PA. Forensic evaluation of a multi-story hotel building related to façade conditions associated with CAT-90 Sandy.

Antoinetta's Restaurant, West Creek, NJ. Forensic evaluation of a 3-story waterfront restaurant related to façade and roof conditions associated with CAT-90 Sandy.

The Art Institute of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. Forensic evaluation of the interior and MEP assessment for litigation support.

University Campus, KSA. Investigation of claims related to the development's design and construction; and proposal to carry out necessary remedial work.

Building Envelope Investigation and Repair

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, La Plata, MD. Evaluation of a 4 story hospital masonry façade; generation of demolition and repair details.

The Rittenhouse Savoy, Philadelphia, PA. Evaluation of a 22-story condominium building masonry façade; generation of demolition and repair details.

The Watermark at Logan Square, Philadelphia, PA. Evaluation of a 24-story senior citizen apartment and assisted living facility building façade; generation of repair details.

Sworn Testimony

Trial Testimony, Federal District Court Civista v. Travellers, regarding insurance claim for damage caused by earthquake and hurricane causing water intrusion and aesthetic issues. July 15, 2015.

Sworn testimony, 69-71 N. 2nd St. LLC v. Chancery Court Partners, regarding characteristics of a second means of egress from a building, Philadelphia Common Pleas Court. October 22, 2020.

Litigation

Watermark Logan Partners, LP v. Sustainable Constr. Grp., et al, regarding design and construction deficiencies resulting in systemic sealant joint failures and water intrusion.

Civista v. Travellers, regarding insurance claim for damage caused by earthquake and hurricane causing water intrusion and aesthetic issues at regional 200+ bed hospital.

Select Papers, Lectures and Publications

"Exploring the Performance of Pompiagnan Limestone as Exterior Cladding and Pavers in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States," 13th International Congress on the Deterioration and Conservation of Stone, Paisley, Scotland. September 6-10, 2016 (co-author and presenter)

CONTACT

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