

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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

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

Street address: **5831 Yocum Street**

Postal code: **19143**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **The Conchy-Leech Tenant House**

Current Name: **Unknown**

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☒ unknown

Current use: **Unknown**

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

6. DESCRIPTION

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

7. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): **ca.1803-05 to 1939**

Date(s) of construction: **ca.1803-05**

Architects: **Unknown**

Builders: **Unknown**

Original owners: **John Conchy**

Significant person: **NA**

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

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

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

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization: **University City Historical Society**

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

Date: **10 July 2025**

EMAIL: **KEEPER@KEEPINGPHILADELPHIA.ORG**

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: July 10, 2025

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 7/28/2025

Date of Notice Issuance: 8/1/2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: MNH LLC

Address: 5901 Woodland Ave

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19143

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated

☐ Rejected

12/7/18

NOMINATION
FOR THE
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. Top: Looking north at the side (southwest) and primary (southeast) elevations of the subject property in a painting by Larry Francis, an artist trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, in 1987. Source: www.worthpoint.com.

THE CONCHY-LEECH TENANT HOUSE

ERECTED IN CA. 1803-05

5831 YOCUM STREET
WEST PHILADELPHIA
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



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

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The proposed boundary for the subject property is as follows:

SITUATE at a point on the Northwest side of Yocum Street (40 feet wide) measured North 49 degrees, 29 minutes, 30 seconds East along the said Northwesterly side of Yocum Street the distance of 35 feet, 5 inches from the Northeast side of what was formerly 59th Street (stricken from City Plan); thence North 40 degrees, 32 minutes, 30 seconds West 36 feet, 11-1/2 inches to a point; thence North 49 degrees, 33 minutes, 31 seconds East 85.75 feet to a point; thence South 40 degrees, 32 minutes, 30 seconds East 36 feet, 9-3/4 inches to a point; thence South 49 degrees, 27 minutes, 30 seconds West 85.75 feet to a point, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning.



Figure 3. Top: Looking north at the side (southwest) and primary (southeast) elevations of the subject property in 2021. Source: Oscar Beisert. Figure 4. Bottom: Looking north at the side (southwest) and primary (southeast) elevations of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Conchy-Leech Tenant House is situated at 5831 Yocum Street in the Kingsessing neighborhood of West Philadelphia. The house is located on a private street that extends from Woodland Avenue to the rear of larger commercial, street-facing lots. The subject house was previously part of a parcel that fronted Woodland Avenue. Yocum Street includes two sets of twins and a row of dwellings.

The Conchy-Leech Tenant House is a two-and-one-half-story frame dwelling with a side-gable roof that appears to have been constructed as a single-pile structure to which a number of additions have been made over time. A one-story porch addition appends the primary (southeast) elevation. A two-story flat-roof addition at the side (southwest) elevation of the main block and a one-story shed addition at the western corner of that block both appear on a 1925 map of the property (Figure

32). Another one-story shed addition at the rear (northwest) elevation was built at some other point in the twentieth century.



Figure 5. Top: Looking west at the primary (southeast) and side (northeast) elevations of the subject property in 2022. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 6. Bottom: Looking west toward the subject property in the private section of Yocum Street in 2024. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

Between March 2023 and March 2024, a significant renovation consolidated the various volumes of the property. A half-story was added to the southwest two-story wing, with the front slope of the gable roof now extending across the full width. The one-story shed addition at the west corner

was lengthened and the rear addition was raised to two stories. A new rear roof segment, beginning just behind the original peak of the gable roof, extends across this addition to the rear. A large deck extends off the rear of this addition at the second-story level.

The original main block is two bays in width and two bays in depth. The side (southwest) addition is one bay in width. The one-story porch (southeast) addition is three bays wide. The entire building is clad in vinyl siding. All the windows have been replaced, though original window openings may survive on the front (southeast) elevation of the main block and the southwest wing.



Figure 7. Top: The primary (southeast) elevation in 2022. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 8. Bottom: The primary (southeast) elevation in 2024. Source: Zillow.



Figure 9. Looking north at the context of the subject house in 2024. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

A painting created in 1987 (Figure 1) and photographs taken in 2022 (Figures 3, 5, and 7) delineate the various phases of construction more clearly. The side (northeast) elevation of the side-gable roof previously featured a window at the garret level, which appears to have been sheathed in vinyl siding during the recent renovation. There was also a chimney stack at the center of the southwest elevation, which has been removed.



Figure 10. Note that the early owner of the subject property, Yocum, is shown as owning the land in this Scull and Heap map in 1750. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Conchy-Leech Tenant House at 5831 Yocum Street in West Philadelphia is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

j) *Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community.*

The period of significance for the subject property dates to the period of construction in ca.1803-05 through the first major phase of urban development in 1939.

Please note that the subject building was particularly evasive as a research subject, being one of two small wooden houses historically on a single lot. The subject house is located at the rear of what was a larger parcel extending from Darby Road (Woodland Avenue). A smaller log house, referred to in this nomination as the “Swedish Type of Log Farm House” and the “Swedish Log House,” stood immediately upon Darby Road. Neither house is specifically mentioned in the early deeds of the subject property; however, the log house was mentioned in the U.S. Federal Direct Tax of 1798. At that time the log house stood on a much larger parcel owned by the Hansell family. In 1800, the Hansells created ten lots along Darby Road, one for each of the family’s surviving children. The subject house is sited on what is referred to in the nomination as Lot 4 of the said ten lots. Lot 4 was sold in 1803 to John Conchy for \$140, at which time it would have contained the Log House. In 1805, Conchy sold Lot 4 to Jacob Leech for \$270, indicating that the subject house was likely built between 1803 and 1805. It appears that the subject house was used as a tenant house from the time of its construction through the beginning of the twentieth century. It now stands on its own lot immediately upon a private street that extends from Darby Road (woodland Avenue). Citations for this information are located within the forthcoming text in this nomination. The period of significance commences in 1803-05, when the subject house was likely constructed, and extends through 1939, when it was sold out of the Robinson family.



Figure 11. Looking north, Gray’s Lane from Darby Road (Woodland Avenue) in ca.1900, showing the rural prospect of the area, as well as the nature of wooden houses in the area. Source: HSP.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Conchy-Leech Tenant House is significant under Criterion J. Built ca. 1803-05, the subject house represents the early development of West Philadelphia, when Kingsessing Township was essentially a sprawling rural section of the city. Additionally, the subject house signifies the economic and social history of Woodland Avenue (henceforth referred to as Darby Road), when it was known as Darby Road, the highway leading from West Philadelphia to Upper Darby. Being more than 200 years old, this is one of the few remaining houses in the area, along Darby Road, that speaks to the early development and history of the community.

While Philadelphia was known for its red brick houses, wooden dwellings were always part of the city's built environment. The subject house is akin to the type of timber frame houses constructed in the larger region since the foundational period. Domestic buildings of this size and scale were occupied by middle class people and working tenants throughout the history of the city. These houses generally had either board-and-batten or lapped wooden siding. The floor plans usually included one to two rooms per floor with a winder staircase providing vertical access. A context of frame buildings in Philadelphia is discussed in Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Joseph Langer Building, 1031 Shackamaxon Street (AKA 1032 Day Street), which led to the designation of the ca.1820-28 building. Specifically, the section called "The Frame Dwelling in Philadelphia, The Northern Liberties and Kensington" provides information on wooden houses in general.¹ Additionally, the Conchy-Leech Tenant House represents the most common dwelling type of Kingsessing Township at the turn of the nineteenth century.

By 1782, the primary occupations of those who inhabited Kingsessing Township were grazier, farmer, and laborer with over ten people listed as such in the tax assessment survey. Other professions, including botanist, carpenter, carter, cordwainer, fowler, innkeeper, tailor, and weaver, were each represented by one or two citizens. Familiar Philadelphia families were present in the area by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, including the Paschalls, the Bonsalls, the Justuses, and the Morrisses. The eminent horticulturist John Bartram was then listed as a farmer with 140 acres.²

The Conchy-Leech Tenant House is situated on a small lot known today as 5831 Yocum Street, which was once associated with a much larger parcel fronting Darby Road. It was this very parcel that Peter David Hansell (ca.1724-1785), a German immigrant yeoman of Kingsessing, purchased from Peter Yocum, a tailor of Philadelphia, for 150 pounds on February 24, 1783.³ Originally from Bavaria, Hansell settled in Kingsessing with his wife Anna Dorothea Hencht Hansell (1732-1812) and the survivors of their eleven known offspring.⁴ At that time, he earned his living as a farmer.

¹ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Joseph Langer Building, 1031 Shackamaxon Street (AKA 1032 Day Street), Fishtown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2021).

² Tax & Exoneration Lists, 1762-1794. Series No. 4.61; Records of the Office of the Comptroller General, RG-4. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

³ *Find a Grave*. Find a Grave®. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>; and Deed: Peter Yocum to Peter David Hansell, 24 February 1782, Philadelphia Deed Book D, No. 6, p. 360. Source: CAP.

⁴ Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1518-1921. Various sources.

According to the U.S. Tax and Exonerations records of 1785 and 1787, the population of Kingsessing remained relatively consistent, as did the agrarian professions.⁵ Peter David Hansell died in September 1786, at which time he was buried in the churchyard of St. James Church, Kingsessing.⁶ His will, dated September 1, 1784, provided for his wife and children, though his estate wouldn't officially be probated until the turn of the nineteenth century.⁷

In 1798, there were reportedly 69 houses in what was then known as Kingsessing Township. This was the lowest number of dwelling houses of any nearby district compared to 529 houses in the East District of Southwark, 729 houses in the West District of Southwark; 298 houses in Moyamensing Township; and 107 houses in Passyunk Township. Of the houses reported in the 1798 U.S. Direct Tax, one survey page details fifteen of the buildings in Kingsessing. Four of the houses were of masonry construction: two brick and two stone. Eleven of the dwellings were of frame construction, five of which were located on the Darby Road. These frame houses were usually twenty feet square or smaller, meaning that the main block of the subject building, measuring between seventeen and twenty feet square, may have existed.⁸ However, research on the subject property is particularly cumbersome as there were two wooden houses on the property. Set immediately upon Darby Road was a small log-hewn dwelling that stood at the center of what would one day become the path of 59th Street. The “Swedish Type of Log Farmhouse” was described as “1 Log Lumber House, 14 by 10 feet,” being owned by Dorothy Hansell.⁹ However, it wasn't until 1800 that the Estate of Peter David Hansell was undergoing resolution.

⁵ Tax & Exoneration Lists, 1762–1794. Series No. 4.61; Records of the Office of the Comptroller General, RG-4. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

⁶ *Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

⁷ *Philadelphia County Wills, 1682-1819*. HSP, 1900.

⁸ *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. NAID: [5121373](#). Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791-2006, Record Group 58. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

⁹ *United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania*. M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. NAID: [5121373](#). Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791-2006, Record Group 58. National Archives at Washington, D.C.



Figure 12. Top left: The side and primary elevations of a small house that once stood at the front of Lot 4. Figure 13. Top middle: The primary elevation of a small house that once stood at the front of Lot 4. Figure 14. Top right: The primary and side elevation of the small house that once stood at the front of Lot 4, taken by Dr. Broomall in 1909. Source: Jane Campbell Scrapbooks, HSP. Figure 15. Bottom: The side and primary elevations of a small house that once stood at the front of Lot 4. Source: Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress.

On March 14, 1800, the estate subdivided a large portion of the Hansell's land, particularly the portion that fronted 82 feet of Darby Road, which became ten lots. The new parcels were shaped like parallelograms and each about one hundred and thirteen perches, equivalent to three-quarters of an acre, in size. The lots were situated on the northly side of Darby Road between present-day 58th Street and 60th Street. From 58th Street to the west, the first lot was deeded to Barnet Hansell (1760-1809), and so-forth as follows: Lot 2: Jacob Hansell (1762-1810); Lot 3: Andrew Hansell (1778-1554); Lot 4 William Hansell (1757-1800); Lot 5: Heirs of David Hansell (1756-1798), a cordwainer; Lot 6: Charles Hansell (1770-1813), a blacksmith; Lot 7: George Hansell (1759-

1819): Lot 8: Peter Hansell (1773-1845); Lot 9: Elizabeth Hansell; and Lot 10: Mary Hansell.¹⁰ The subject property was associated with Lot 4, which was deeded to William Hansell just three months before his death in 1800. His widow, Sarah Morris Hansell (1762-1833), petitioned the Courts to sell Lot 4 to pay William Hansell's outstanding debts with the residue to aid in maintaining their children. The subject house may have been built around this time to make the lot more attractive to a potential buyer; however, it was not specifically described in the newspaper advertisement at the time of sale.

Lot 4 was ultimately sold at auction on September 16, 1803, for \$140 to John Conchy, a merchant of Southwark. It does not appear that Conchy ever lived on the site, indicating that it was likely occupied or used by tenants. Just two years later, on April 11, 1805, Conchy sold Lot 4 to Joseph Leech, a wheelwright of Kingsessing, for \$270, at which time the property had been reduced from one-hundred and thirteen perches to one-hundred and two perches.¹¹ The change in value from \$140 to \$270 in a period of two years likely indicates that the subject building was constructed on the site by Conchy; however, it was not referenced specifically at the time of sale.¹²

Very little is known about Joseph Leech; however, it appears that he did not live on the subject property, indicating that it was likely occupied and used by tenants. On May 20, 1809, Joseph Leech sold Lot 4 to Jacob Lincoln, a yeoman of Kingsessing. It appears that Jacob Lincoln (1766-1834) was born in Kingsessing to Jacob Lincoln the elder (1724-1769) and Anne Rambo (1722-1819). Jacob Lincoln the younger married Mary Taylor (1770-1822), the daughter of Hester Taylor, with whom he had approximately nine children: Jacob Taylor Lincoln (1793-1826); Mary Lincoln Davis (b. 1803); John Rutter Lincoln (1808-1856); William Lincoln (d. 1856); Israel Lincoln; Charles Lincoln (d.1832); Samuel Lincoln (d.1832); Moses Lincoln (d.1832); and Rebecca Lincoln (b.1799). The same year that Mary Taylor Lincoln died, Jacob Lincoln penned his Last Will & Testament, within which he described a small house on the subject property. In the document, he references that his son (also Jacob) resided in the house. The youngest of the three Jacob Lincolns, who lived in the subject house, married Rachel Tage in 1817, which led to at least two children. It appears that the younger Jacob Lincoln was a tenant of his father. Despite this residency, the subject house and property was willed to the younger Jacob Lincoln's unmarried daughter Mary, who soon wed John Davis on October 17, 1825, in the Dutch Reformed Church. It does not appear that Mary ever lived on the subject property, indicating that it was likely occupied and used by tenants. After the death of Mary Lincoln Davis in ca.1832, John Davis sold the subject property to William S. Robison in 1840, though little is known about this period of ownership.

¹⁰ Deed: George Hansell, et. al. to Wm. Hansell, 14 March 1800, Philadelphia Deed Book G.W.R., No. 35, p. 56. Source: City Archives of Philadelphia (CAP).

¹¹ Deed: Sarah Hansell & Others to John Conchy, 16 September 1803, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 19, p. 279. Source: CAP.

¹² Deed: John Conchy & Wife to Joseph Leech, 11 April 1805, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 19, p. 281. Source: CAP.



Figure 16. Left: George Gray Thomas by Thomas Sully. Source: Ancestry.com. Figure 17. Middle: Ann Gray Leiper Thomas by Thomas Sully. Source: Ancestry.com; and Figure 18. Right: Ann Gray Leiper Thomas. Source: Liveauctioneers.com.

On March 23, 1848, the subject property was sold to George Gray Thomas (1798-1854) and Ann Gray Leiper Thomas (1798-1868), a wealthy and well-known Philadelphia couple who had married despite the controversy of being first cousins.¹³ He was the son of Evan William Thomas (1769-1840), a “Gentleman” of Kingsessing, and Martha Gray Thomas (1771-1868), the latter of whom grew up at Whitby Hall, a famous eighteenth century house owned by her father George Gray (1725-1800), perhaps Kingsessing’s wealthiest resident.¹⁴ Evan William Thomas was the owner of Greenwood Farm, which he bought from the heirs of Peter David Hansell in 1818. George Gray Thomas would eventually take over Greenwood Farm, where he lived with his second wife and first cousin Ann Gray Leiper Thomas. This substantial acreage extended narrowly from just above Darby Road (Woodland Avenue) between 58th and 60th Streets to the north, widening substantially above Chester Avenue, and extending to Cobbs Creek at the west and 53rd Street at the east and to the north where the property narrowed considerably to a point where Gray’s Lane crossed Baltimore Avenue. The subject property was one of several lots fronting Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), featuring dwellings that the Thomases likely used for needy relatives and rental purposes. These rental properties included the subject property with its two wooden houses. The subject house and property would remain in the Thomas family from 1848 to 1878. As it was not the primary residence of the Thomases, it was likely occupied and used by tenants.

Just above the subject property, Ann Gray Leiper Thomas donated more than ten acres of Greenwood Farm to become the Presbyterian Home and the Presbyterian Orphanage. This soon became a campus of impressive Victorian institutional buildings with domestic architectural overtones. This legacy was completely obliterated for modern housing estates between 1999 and 2002. At the northerly extreme of Greenwood Farm, she donated land which became the Protestant Episcopal Orphanage. This legacy too has been annihilated for modern development.¹⁵ In 1878, Ann Gray Leiper Thomas sold the subject property to William C. Longstreth, a “Gentleman.”¹⁶

¹³ *Find a Grave*. Find a Grave®. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

¹⁴ Ancestry.com. *North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.; and *Appletons' Cyclopedia of American Biography*; Volume: *Vol. II*.

¹⁵ *Philadelphia County Wills*, Ancestry.com.

¹⁶ Deed: Ann Gray Thomas to William C. Longstreth, 2 March 1878, Philadelphia Deed Book D.H.L., No. 138, p. 517. Source: CAP.

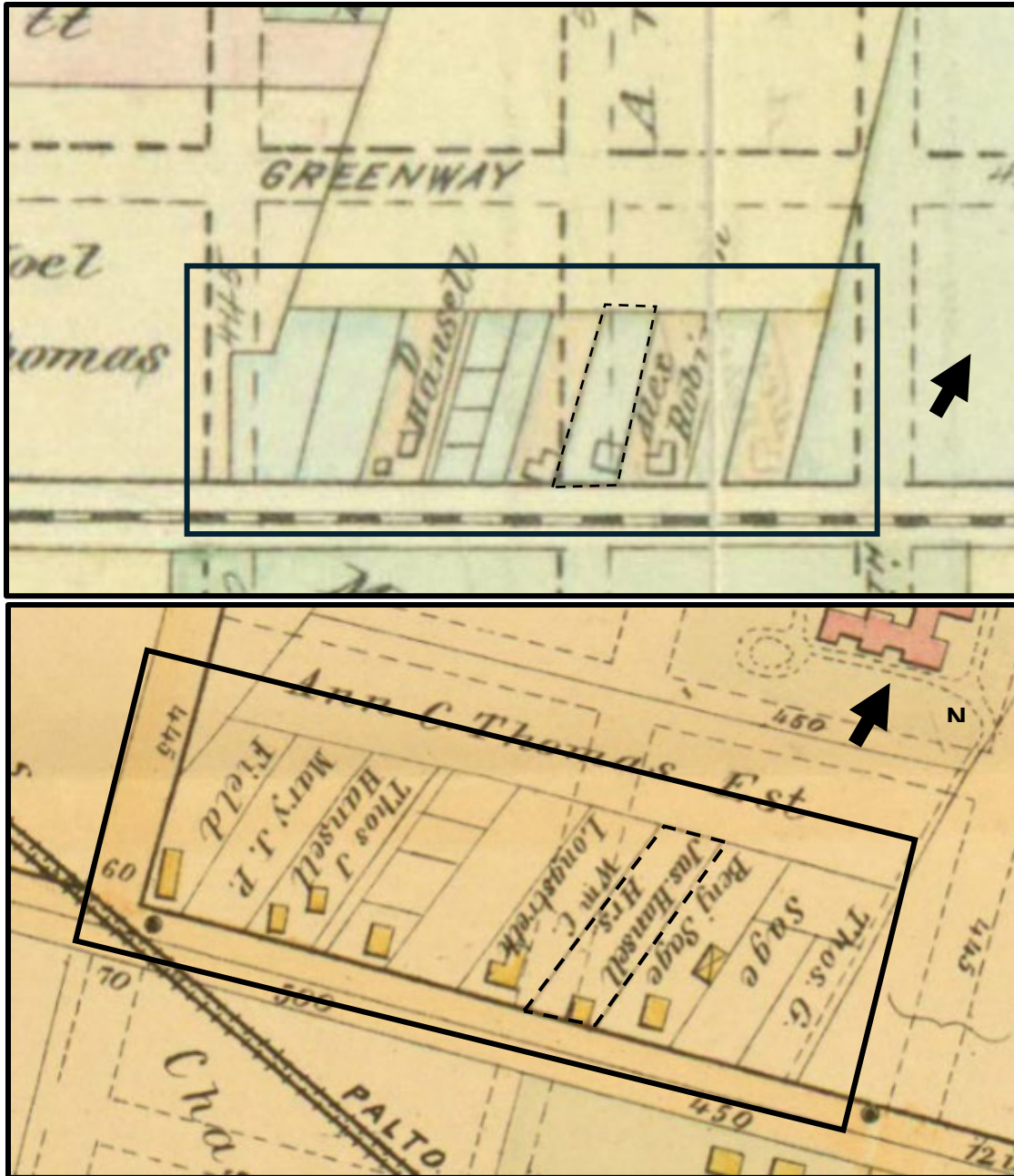


Figure 19. Top: The ten Hansel lots (delineated by a rectangle), including Lot 4 (delineated by dashed black line) along Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), as shown in the Atlas of the 27th Ward of 1878. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 20. Bottom: The ten Hansel lots (delineated by a rectangle), including Lot 4 (delineated by a dashed black line), along Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), as shown in the Atlas of the 27th Ward of 1886. Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Please note that the black arrow indicates north.



Figures 21. and 22. Two ca.1860-70 photographs of John Dick's Nursey, at the northwest corner of Darby Road (Woodland Avenue) and 52nd Street. Source: Jane Campbell Scrapbooks, HSP.

During the Thomas period of ownership, Woodland Avenue retained its rural identity as Darby Road, especially west of 45th Street, which remained sparsely developed. Perhaps the largest development by the mid-nineteenth century was John Dick's Nursery, which stood on a multi-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Darby Road and 52nd Street with frontage nearly to 54th Street. Dick, a nurseryman and florist, had a large property that extended north to Chester Avenue. His Darby Road frontage featured a substantial two-and-one-story, five-bay vernacular house; a barn; outbuildings; and rows upon rows of commercial greenhouses. Figures 21 and 22, taken in the ca.1860-70 period, show a rural identity that the subject house existed within just a few blocks away. This is essentially a lost world that the Conchy-Leech Tenant House represents.¹⁷

¹⁷ Jane Campbell Scrapbooks, HSP.



Figure 23. Top left: An old frame house at the intersection of Darby Road, Kingsessing Avenue, and 42nd Street, which was demolished around ca.1910 by the Bureau of Highways. Source: HSP. Figure 24. Top right: The Matsinger House standing west of 42nd Street on the north side of Kingsessing Avenue in 1913. Figure 25. Bottom left: The Sorrel House Hotel stood at 51st Street and Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), which was purportedly built in ca.1800. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 26. Bottom right: The Rising Sun Tavern at Darby Road (Woodland Avenue) and 54th Street. Source: HSP.

Beyond Dick's horticultural density, Figures 23, 24, 25, and 26 illustrate the old world and rural prospects that the subject house existed within throughout the nineteenth century. There were locally famous houses and other buildings along Darby Road from West Philadelphia to Upper Darby. An old frame house (Figure 23) stood near the intersection of Darby Road, Kingsessing Avenue, and 42nd Street, which was eventually taken down by the Bureau of Highways. The Matsinger House (Figure 24/Demolished) stood near the same intersection, appearing as two semi-detached two-and-one-half-story stone houses.¹⁸ The Sorrel Horse Hotel (Figure 25/Demolished) was a rambling three-story, seven-bay house that was enlarged overtime. The building stood at Darby Road and 51st Street, purportedly constructed in ca.1800.¹⁹ Dick's complex followed, all of which has been replaced by dense residential and commercial development. The Rising Sun Tavern (Figure 26/Demolished) stood at Darby Road and 54th Street, a three-and-one-half-story stone house with a side-gable roof and a two-and-one-half-story frame addition. One of the oldest houses still standing in the area is situated just southeast of Darby Road at 1817 South Vodge's Street. Known as the Sellers House, the building was constructed in 1764, a two-and-one-half-story stone farmhouse wedged between two-story brick row houses.²⁰ Then came the ten lots, along with various houses, including the subject property. Further out, Saint James Church of Kingsessing (Figure 27), founded by Lutherans in 1761, occupies the entire square on Darby Road between

¹⁸ "Real Rye, 8 Quarts For Dollar-In 1842," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 March 1922, 4.

¹⁹ Frank H. Taylor Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia.

²⁰ Ann de Forest. "In Kingsessing, A Colonial Cottage Keeps History In Place," *Hidden City*, 27 May 2016.

68th and 69th Street. The site includes the eighteenth-century church, as well as the burial ground.²¹ Just below St. James Kingessing, the Paschall-Garrick House (Figure 28) stands at 69th Street and Paschall Avenue. It was said to have been built in ca.1723; however, its precise date of construction is unknown. Near St. James Kingessing was a famous house in the area known as Whitby Hall, a large stone mansion that was built by James Coultas in 1741 and enlarged with an impressive wing in 1754.²² The house was later taken down and rebuilt at Haverford, Pennsylvania in the 1920s. In Paschalville, the Bannaker School (Demolished), a small one-room building, stood at Darby Road and 70th Street. Also, just east of 70th Street was a two-one-half-story stone house (Demolished) that was likely built in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It eventually became the property of St. James Kingessing, and, later, part of St. Vincent's Home. Paschalville also had numerous wooden houses along Darby Road between 64th Street and the city line. Almost none of these houses survive in 2025. Perhaps another of the oldest known buildings along Darby Road in Paschalville is the twin at 7027-35 Woodland Avenue. As you exit Philadelphia on Darby Road, the last building is a small, two-and-one-half-story stone portion of the once larger Blue Bell Tavern, most of which was demolished. This brief inventory of structures along Darby Road provides insight as to the rarity of the subject house to survive in 2025, increasing its import as a representative specimen of the community's development, as well as its economic and social heritage.



Figure 27. Left: St. James Kingessing. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia. Figure 28. Right: The Paschall-Garrick House. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia.

The heirs of William C. Longstreth, led by Benjamin Longstreth, sold Lot 4 to Alexander Robinson, a basket maker, on August 4, 1885.²³ As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, the old-world appearance of Darby Road was rapidly transitioning to the Woodland Avenue of the twentieth century. Robinson developed Lot 4, as well as portions of Lots 2 and 3. It appears that he built a three-story brick house for himself at the front of Lot 3, which also included an existing wooden house. Between 1885 and 1895 (Figure 27), Robinson opened a private section of Yocum Street at the rear of Lots 2, 3, and 4, which included the subject house on Lot 4; two sets of two-story brick twins on Lot 3; and a row of six two-story brick houses on Lot 2.²⁴ Between 1910

²¹ John T. Faris. *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia & London: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1917), 39-40.

²² John T. Faris. *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia & London: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1917), 40-41.

²³ Deed: Benjamin Longstreth to Alexander Robinson, 4 August 1885, Philadelphia Deed Book G.G.P., No. 54, p. 545. Source: CAP.

²⁴ Philadelphia Atlas, 27th Ward, 1895. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.; and Philadelphia Atlas, 27th Ward, 1910. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

(Figure 30) and 1927 (Figure 31), the block changed significantly. A commercial building was constructed to the east of the “Swedish Log House,” occupied by the Fairmount Electric and Manufacturing Co. A movie theater was built at the front of Lot 2. Lots 5, 6, 7, and 8 were commercialized with warehouses belonging to Harry S. Miller; J. Jos. McHugh, and the U.S. Pencil Company.²⁵ The subject property was clearly used as a tenant house during Robinson’s period of ownership. The Conchy-Leech Tenant House continued to serve as a tenant house for its successive owners through 1939, when it was sold out of the Robinson family.²⁶

It is remarkable that the subject house survived the dense commercial and residential development that occurred along Woodland Avenue and in West Philadelphia, and its survival represents the early economic and social heritage of the community, as well as the development of Kingsessing Township in the nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion J.

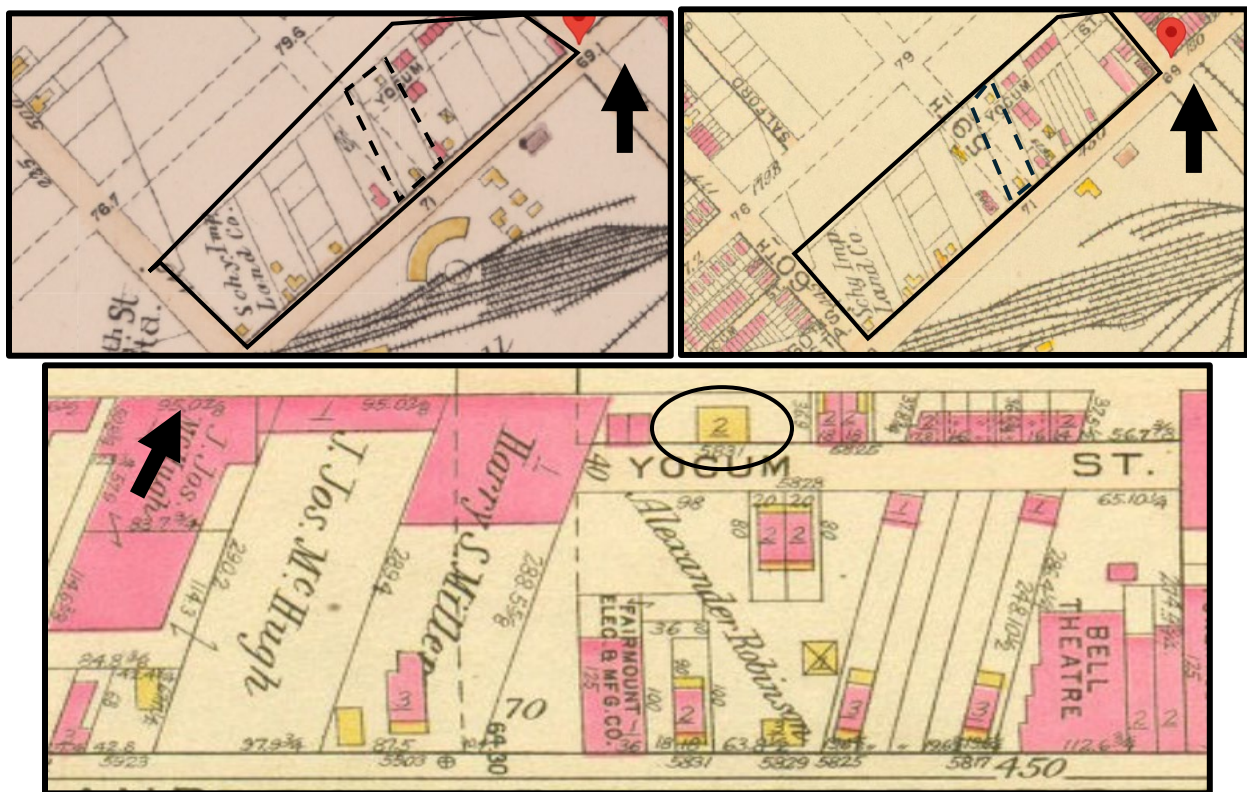


Figure 29. Top left: The ten Hansel lots (delineated with a solid black line), including Lot 4 (delineated with a dashed black line), along Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), as shown in the Atlas of the 27th Ward of 1895. Figure 30. Top right: The ten Hansel lots (delineated with a solid black line), including Lot 4 (delineated with a dashed black line), along Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), as shown in the Atlas of the 27th Ward of 1910. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 31. Bottom: The site of the ten Hansell lots, including the subject house (circled in black), along Darby Road (Woodland Avenue), as shown in the Atlas of the 27th Ward of 1927. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. The black arrow indicates north.

²⁵ Philadelphia Atlas, 27th Ward, 1927. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

²⁶ Reg. Plan No. 29-S-4, CAP.

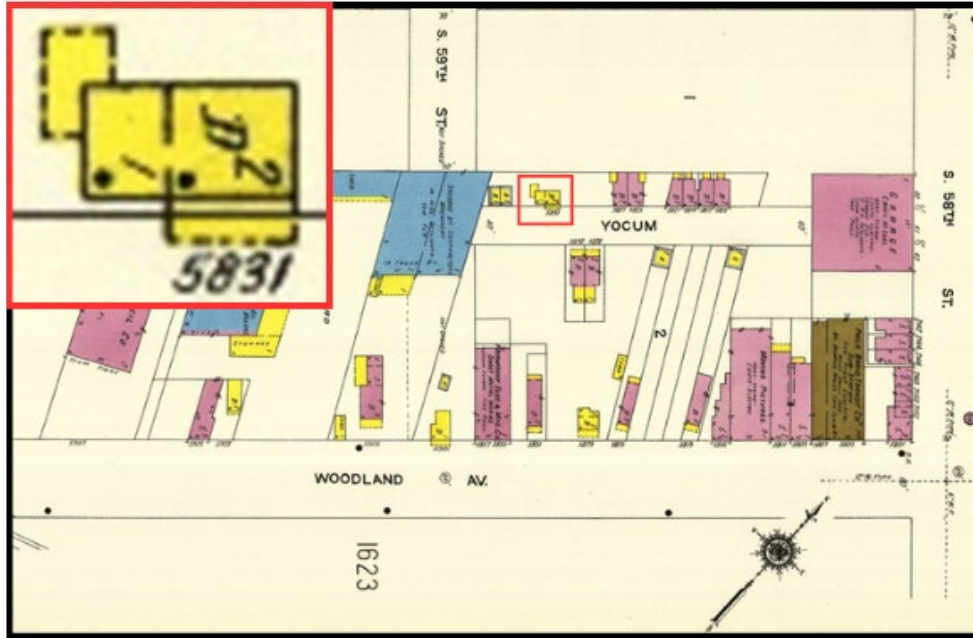


Figure 32: Volume 17 of the Insurance Maps of Philadelphia (1925) shows some of the building's additions (detail inset). Plate 1623, accessed via Pennsylvania State University Libraries.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

This nomination is being submitted by the University City Historical Society under the leadership of Amy Lambert, President, and written by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with Oscar Beisert as the primary author.

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