

**ADDRESS: 1629-37 S 28TH ST**

Proposal: Legalize removal of and remove remaining stained-glass windows; install windows

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1629-37 S 28th Street, LLC

Applicant: Raymond Rola, Raymond F. Rola, Architect

History: 1902; John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church; T.P. Lonsdale, architect

Individual Designation: 7/6/1972

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to remove the stained-glass windows on the north, east, and south elevations of the church building at 1629-37 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street and install new aluminum framed windows in their places. The new windows will fill the existing masonry openings and be comprised of various combinations of fixed pane, sash, and awning windows all with clear glass. New wood brickmolds that will approximate the general proportions and appearance of the historic ones will also be installed. Located at the southwest corner of S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Morris Street, the former John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church historically featured wood-framed, stained-glass windows with Gothic arches and tracery. In July 2025, the historic stained-glass windows were removed from the side elevations of the church as part of a project to convert it into apartments as the windows were deteriorated and not compatible with the new intended use of the building. This removal occurred without review by the Historical Commission. Historic stained-glass windows with wood brickmolds and gothic tracery remain in the rear elevation openings, though in a deteriorated condition.

In addition, historic stained-glass windows were also removed from the front façade of the property in approximately 2014 without the Historical Commission's review or approval and were replaced with a combination of inappropriate new vinyl windows and infill panels. The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) issued a violation for that work in 2017 at the request of the Historical Commission. The violation remained unresolved, and records indicate that L&I closed it in January 2025 owing to its age, though no attempts were ever made to correct the incompatible windows and infill. The current building owner did not own the property in 2017 when the violation was issued but did purchase the property in 2022, when the violation was still open. Property certificates PC-2022-017337 and PC-2024-009874, issued in 2022 and 2024 respectively, did document the open violations for the illegal windows and infill. The current application does not address the non-compliant front windows and infill panels.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Remove historic stained-glass windows
- Install new windows

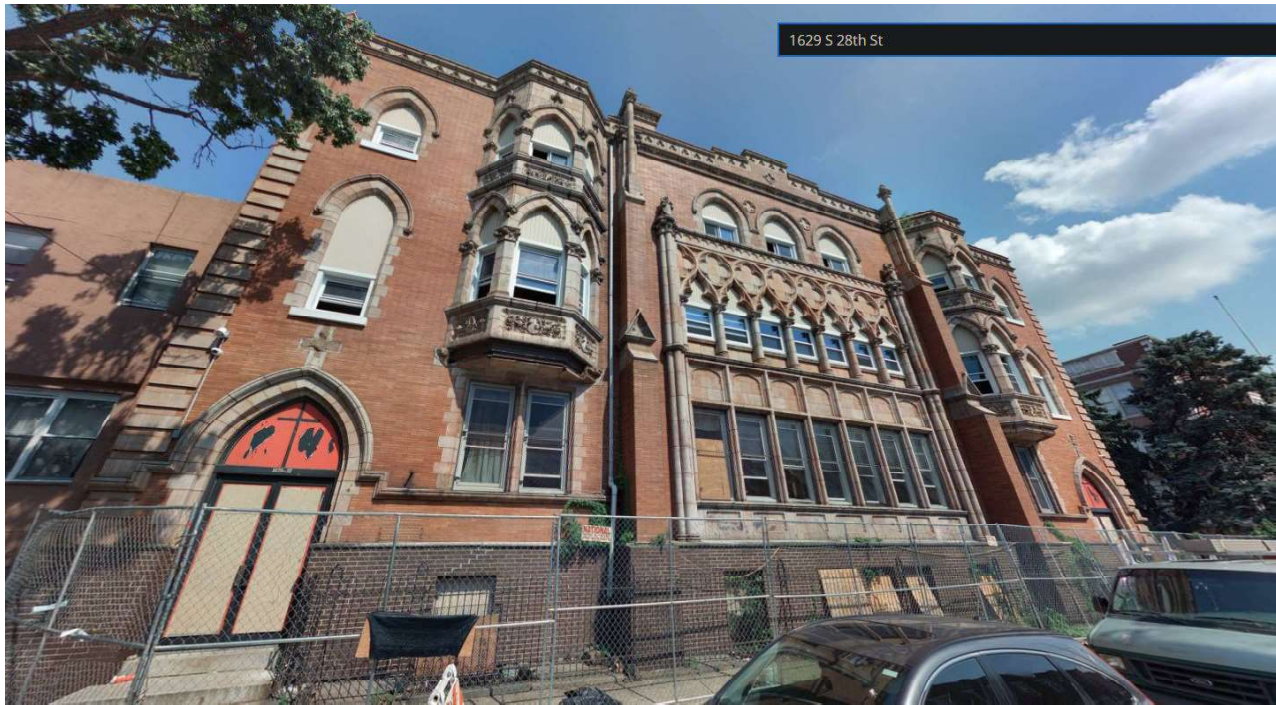
**STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:**

- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
  - The new windows fit the existing masonry openings, and the arches will be filled with fixed pane arched windows to match, but the proposed arrangement of sashes and panes does not closely match the design of the historic windows. The new windows could satisfy Standard 6, provided the design of the panes is simplified and more closely aligns with that of the historic windows and new brickmolds are made to match the surviving ones in the rear openings. In addition, the surviving stained-

- glass windows should be salvaged and stored in a safe location and, if possible, one window with brickmolds and tracery should be restored and left in place.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
    - The new windows are differentiated from the old and are compatible with the materials, features, size, scale, and proportions of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of the application, provided that the details are updated to more closely align with the historic design, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. An approval of this application will not legalize the non-compliant windows at the front section of the building.

Current front (west) façade facing S 28<sup>th</sup> St, windows date to approximately 2014, photo from Jul 2025:



Side (south) façade facing Morris St, photo from Dec 2021:





Portion of rear (east) façade facing S Marston St, PHC staff photo from Sept 2025:





Side (south) façade detail, PHC staff photo from Sept 2025:



Rear (east) façade detail, PHC staff photo from Sept 2025:





View of north façade from S Marston St, PHC staff photo from Sept 2025:

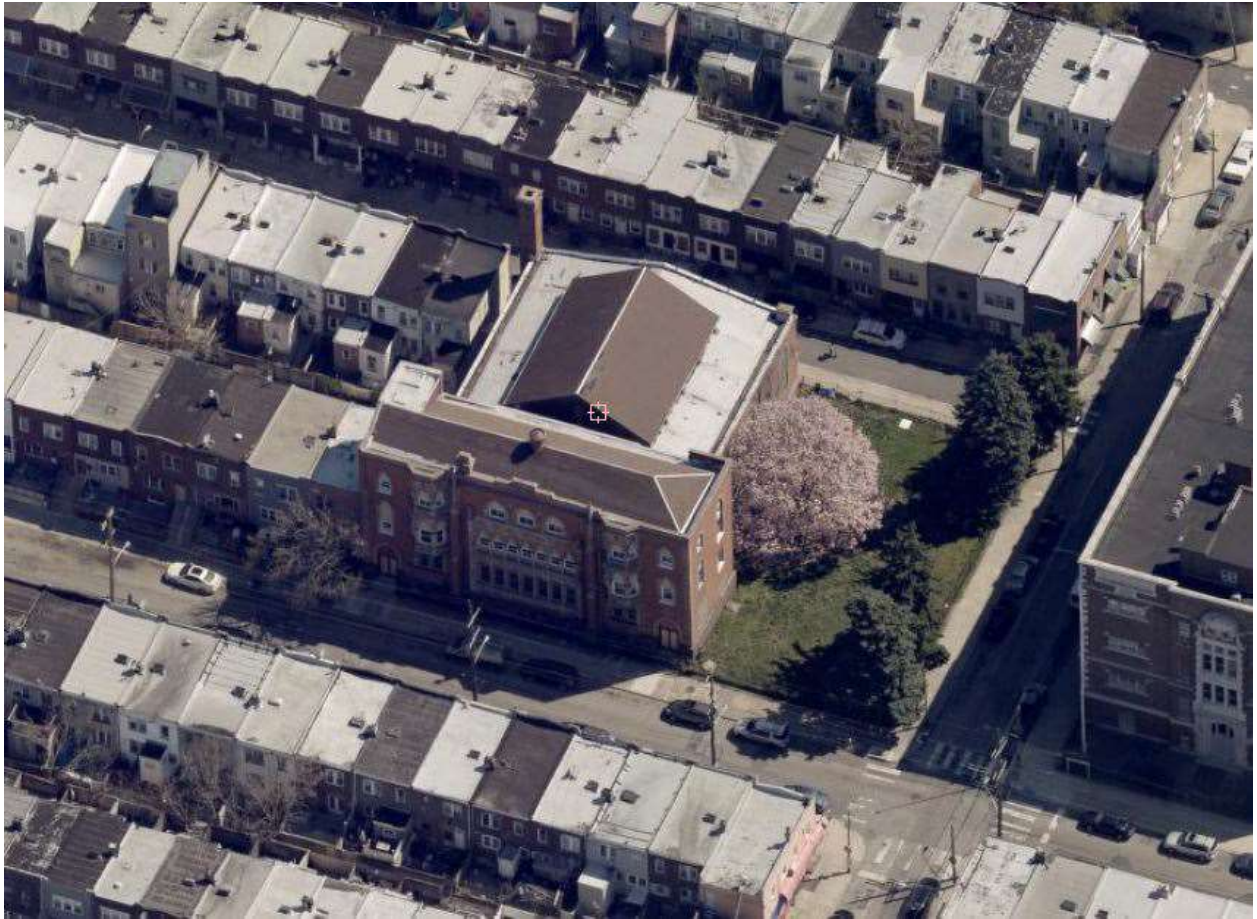




Historic photos from PHC file, c. 1966:



Aerial view facing east, Mar 2024:



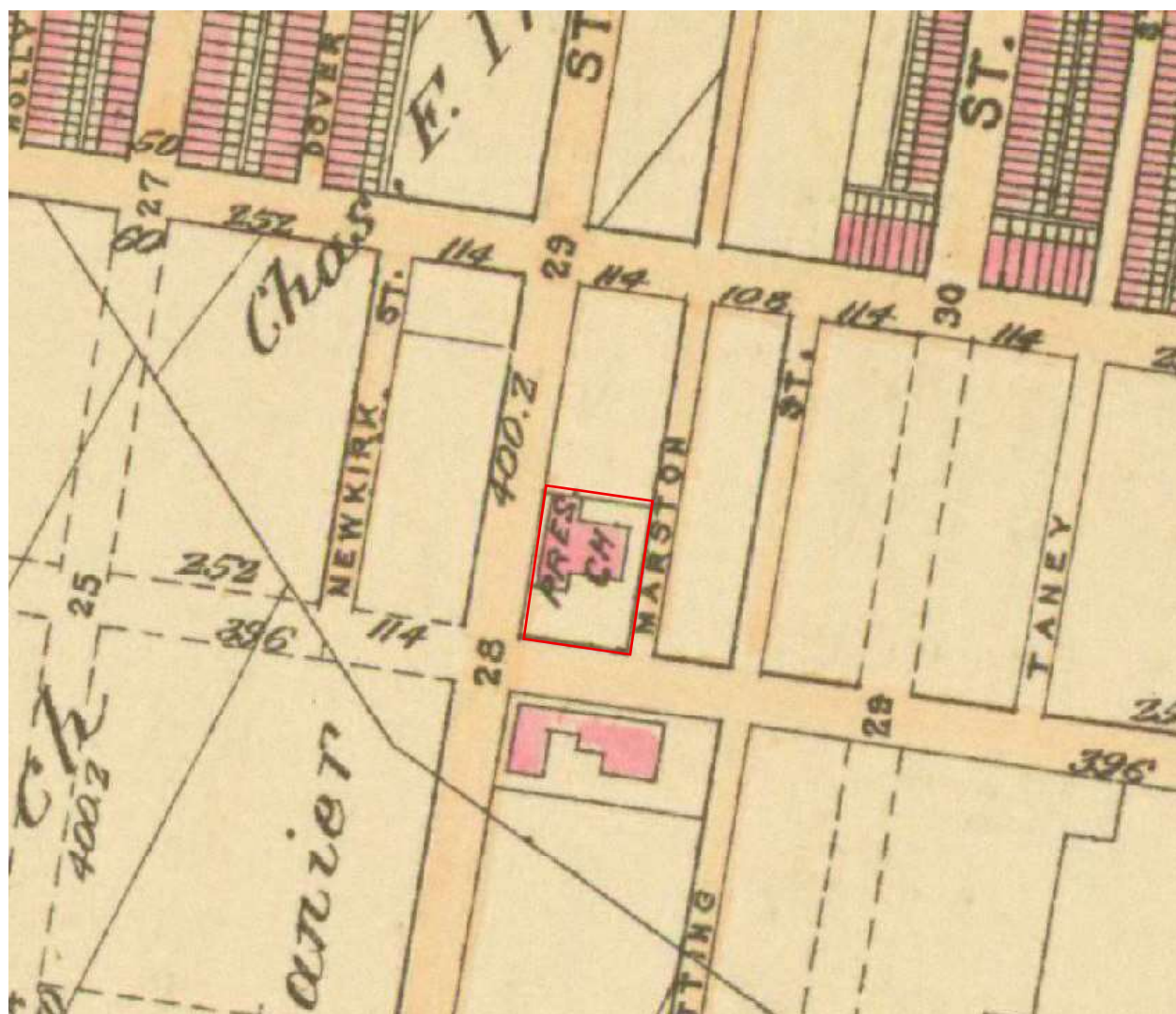


Aerial view facing north, Apr 2024:





1910 G. W. Bromley Atlas, property outlined in red:





September 16, 2025

Philadelphia Historic Commission  
1515 Arch Street  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, Pa 19102

Re: Proposed Alterations to 1629 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA

Owner/Client:  
1629-37 S 28<sup>th</sup> Street, LLC  
1744 Federal St.  
First Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19146

To whom it may concern,

This submission is for final approval of window alterations to 1629-37 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street, also known as The John Chambers Memorial Church. This church building was built in 1901 in the Gothic Revival style. Work is currently progressing under an approved building permit #CP-2023-001936 that includes interior alterations of the existing building to create Thirty-Seven (37) dwelling units, with interior bicycle storage. The current approved Building Permit did not include any work regarding the existing window fenestration.

The 28th Street fenestration and part of the Morris Street fenestration had been significantly altered prior to the building being purchased by the current owner. It is not known when these alterations took place. The existing stained-glass windows at the sides and rear of the sanctuary and at the balcony level did exist when the building was purchased by the current owner. Many of these windows, although very beautiful, were damaged. They also could not be used as the primary windows in the new plan for multi-family units. The windows were removed by a salvage company for restoration and circulation in the antique and historical artifacts marketplace.

Included in this submission is an inventory of all the existing window openings as well as the shop drawings for proposed new windows.

Sincerely,  
  
Raymond F. Rola, AIA





HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH



HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH



RECENT PHOTOGRAPH  
1629 S. 28TH STREET





RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS  
1629 S. 28TH STREET



**APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT**

APPLICATION # \_\_\_\_\_

(Please complete all information below and print clearly)



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS  
MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING - CONCOURSE  
1401 JOHN F. KENNEDY BOULEVARD  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102  
For more information visit us at [www.phila.gov](http://www.phila.gov)

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION****1629-37 S. 28th****APPLICANT:****Keith Yaller****COMPANY NAME:****Architectural Window Corp.****PHONE # 215-292-7505****FAX #****PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME:****Finch Development LLC Meir Badush****PHONE # 732-496-0303****FAX #****ARCHITECT / ENGINEER IN RESPONSIBLE CHARGE:****ARCHITECT / ENGINEERING FIRM:****PHONE # 267-212-6200****FAX #****CONTRACTOR:****Mike Morton****CONTRACTING COMPANY:****Architectural Window Corp.****PHONE # 877-286-1881****FAX #****USE OF BUILDING / SPACE:****APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:****1901 Hazzard st****Philadelphia, Pa 19125****LICENSE #42428****E-MAIL:****PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS:****1629-37 S 28 th st****Philadelphia, Pa 19145****ARCHITECT / ENGINEERING FIRM ADDRESS:****LICENSE #****E-MAIL:****CONTRACTING COMPANY ADDRESS:****1901 Hazzard St****Phila, pa 19125****LICENSE #45550****E-MAIL:****ESTIMATED COST OF WORK****\$ 155,200.00****BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WORK:**

**Supply and Install New Aluminum windows: Into Existing Openings**  
**Historic Casing Trim to be installed on windows**

**Per Drawings****TOTAL AREA UNDERGOING CONSTRUCTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ square feet**COMPLETE THESE ITEMS IF APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICATION:****# OF NEW SPRINKLER HEADS** (suppression system permits only): \_\_\_\_\_ **LOCATION OF SPRINKLERS:** \_\_\_\_\_**# OF NEW REGISTERS / DIFFUSERS** (hvac / ductwork permits only): \_\_\_\_\_ **LOCATION OF STANDPIPES:** \_\_\_\_\_**IS THIS APPLICATION IN RESPONSE TO A VIOLATION?** ☐ NO ☐ YES **VIOLATION #:** \_\_\_\_\_

All provisions of the building code and other City ordinances will be complied with, whether specified herein or not. Plans approved by the Department form a part of this application. I hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further certify that I am authorized by the owner to make the foregoing application, and that, before I accept my permit for which this application is made, the owner shall be made aware of all conditions of the permit. I understand that if I knowingly make any false statement herein I am subject to such penalties as may be prescribed by law or ordinance.

**APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_**DATE:** **8, 19, 25**

# PRE-REQUISITE APPROVALS FOR:

ADDRESS:

APPLICATION #:

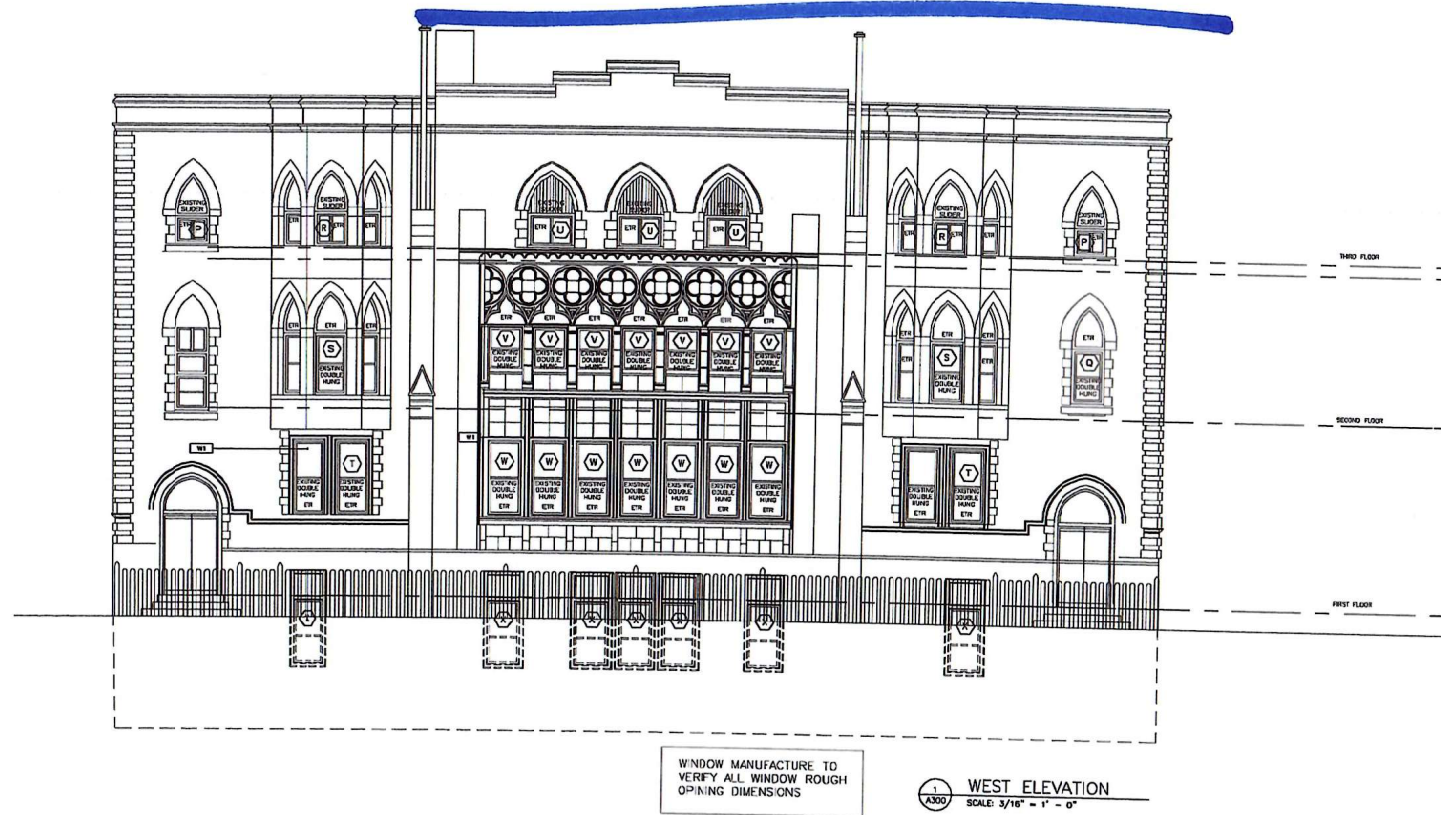
√ IF REQ'D	AGENCY	INITIALS	DATE	REMARKS
	ART COMMISSION			
	13TH FLOOR - 1515 ARCH STREET			
	CITY PLANNING COMMISSION			
	13TH FLOOR - 1515 ARCH STREET			
	HISTORICAL COMMISSION			
	13TH FLOOR - 1515 ARCH STREET			
	FAIRMOUNT PARK COMMISSION			
	<input type="checkbox"/> CITY <input type="checkbox"/> STATE			
	AIR MANAGEMENT / HEALTH DEPARTMENT			
	STREETS DEPARTMENT			
	ROOM 940 - M.S.B.			
	WATER DEPARTMENT			
	2ND FLOOR - 1101 MARKET STREET			
	EMERGENCY SERVICES & ABATEMENT UNIT			
	ROOM 1140 - M.S.B.			
	ZONING			

WAS VIOLATION FOR WORK WITHOUT A PERMIT? ☐ NO ☐ YES (INSPECTION FEE MUST BE ADDED TO PERMIT FEE)

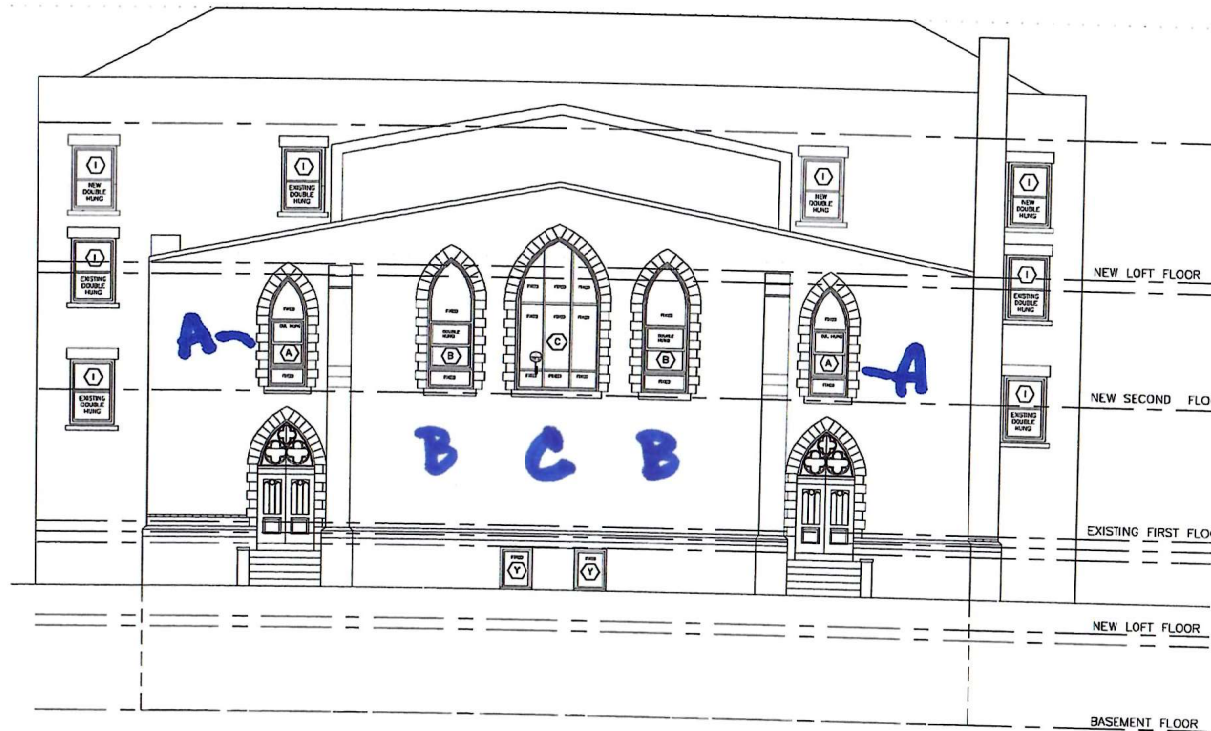
VIOLATION # \_\_\_\_\_



# Nothing of Front Elevation



A300



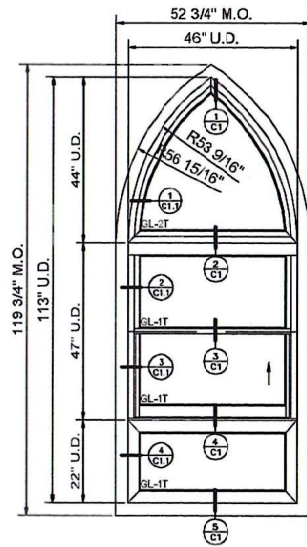
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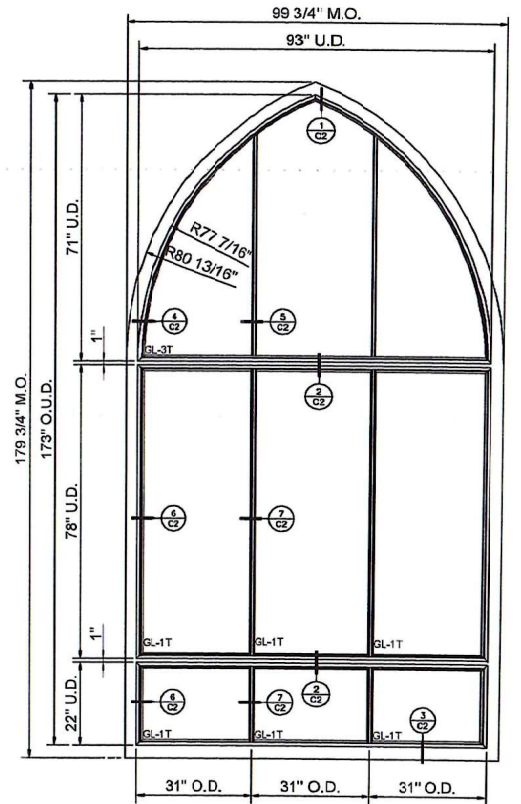






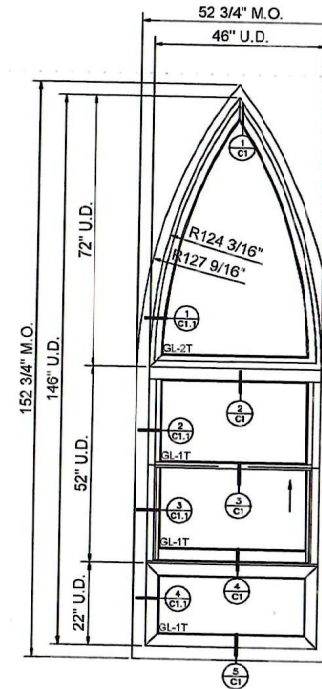
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QTY. 2

**DP-60**



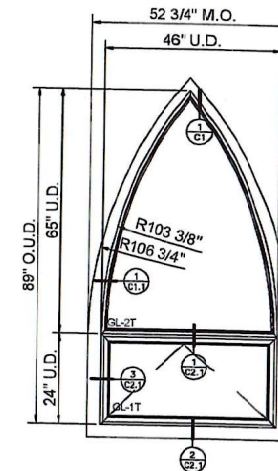
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QTY. 1

**DP-30**



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QTY. 2

**DP-60**

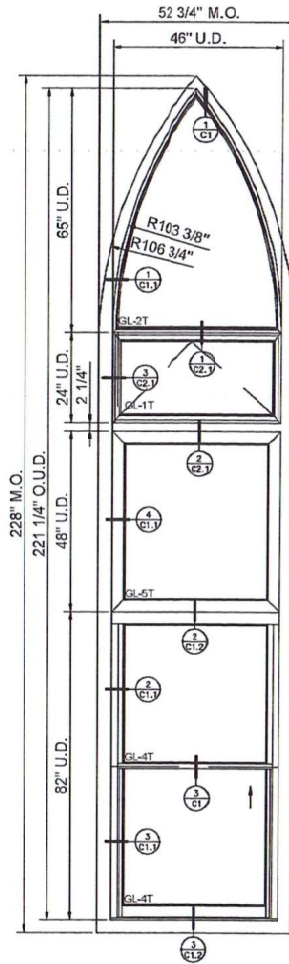


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QTY. 3

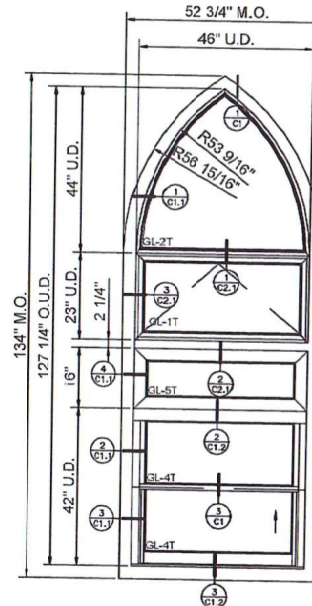
**DP-85**

FOR FULL CONFIG. REFERENCE SHEET A5

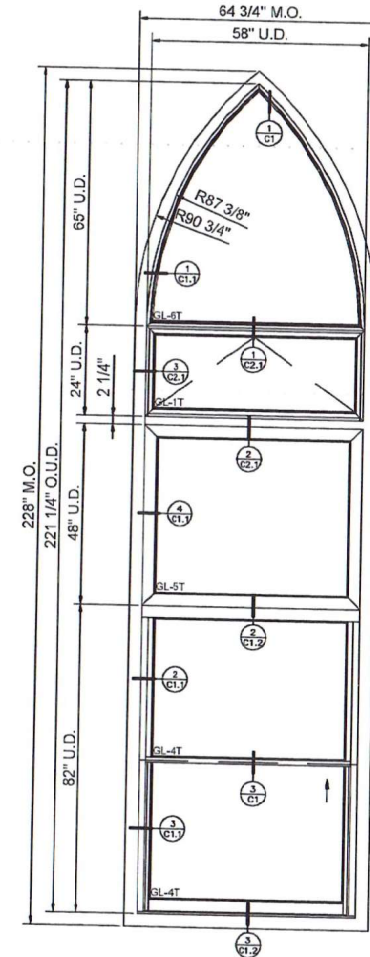
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		1629 S 28TH ST CHURCH 1629 SOUTH 28TH STREET PHILADELPHIA, PA 19145-1201		
PHONE (800)-347-0438 FAX (573)-744-5586 COMMERCIAL FAX (573)-744-5822 www.quakercommercialwindows.com		QUAKER WINDOW PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FIELD MEASUREMENT DIFFERENCES & INSTALLATION DESIGN. CONTRACTOR MUST VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS.		
Scale: 3/8" = 1' Sheet #: A3				



TYPE D-1



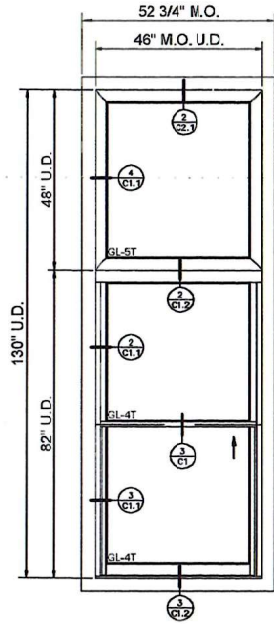
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TYPE E

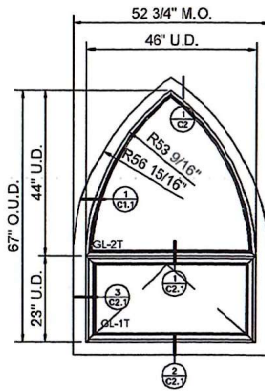
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Checked By JS							





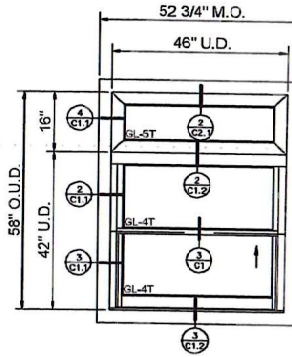
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**DP-60**  
FOR FULL CONFIG. REFERENCE SHEET A5



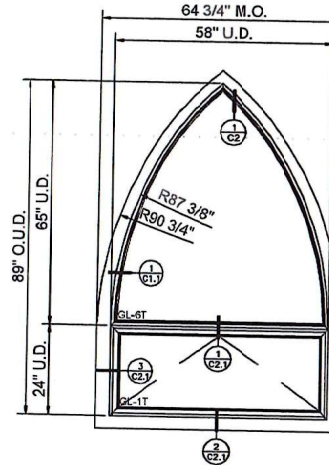
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**DP-85**  
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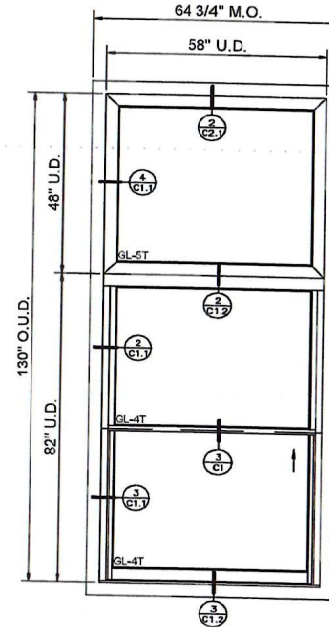
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FOR FULL CONFIG. REFERENCE SHEET A5



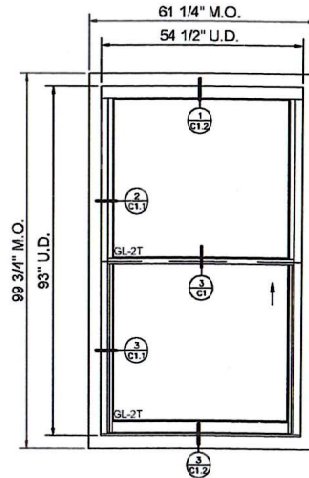
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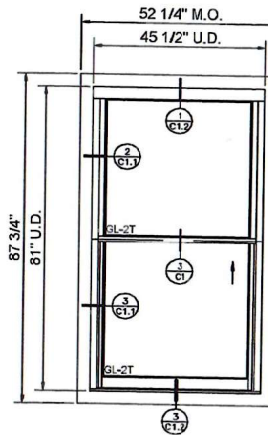
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QTY. 8

**DP-60**  
FOR FULL CONFIG. REFERENCE SHEET A5



**TYPE N**  
H650 GEO SH  
QTY. 4

**DP-60**



**TYPE O**  
H650 SH  
QTY. 2

**DP-60**

Project Name  
**1629 S 28TH ST CHURCH**  
**1629 SOUTH 28TH STREET**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PA 19145-1201**

**ELEVATIONS**

QUAKER WINDOW PRODUCTS  
WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE  
FOR FIELD MEASUREMENT  
QUANTITIES & INSTALLATION  
DESIGN. CONTRACTOR MUST  
VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS.  
www.quakercommercialwindows.com

**QUAKER**  
COMMERCIAL

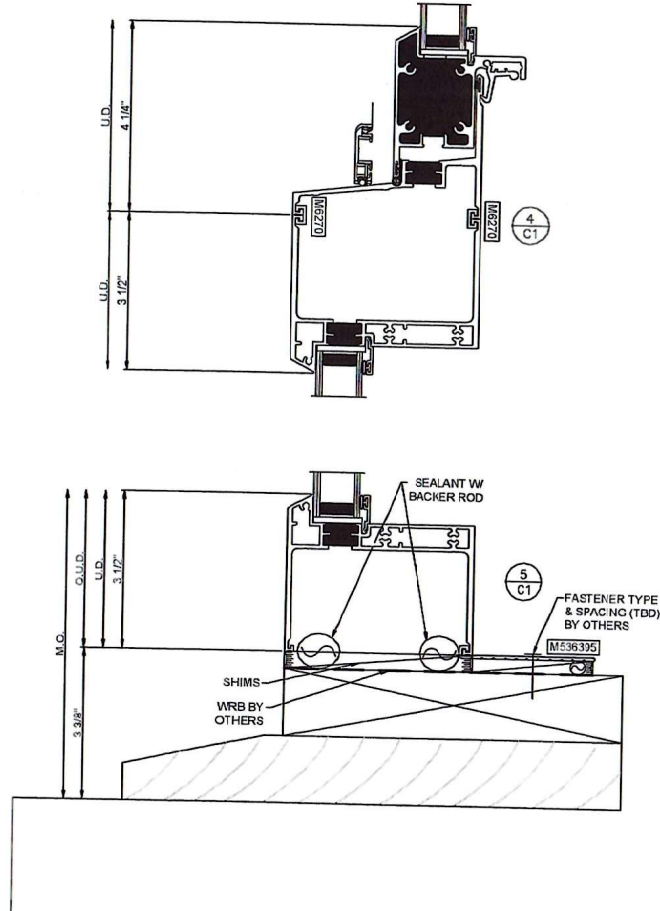
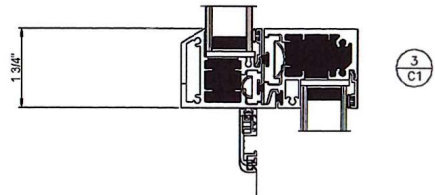
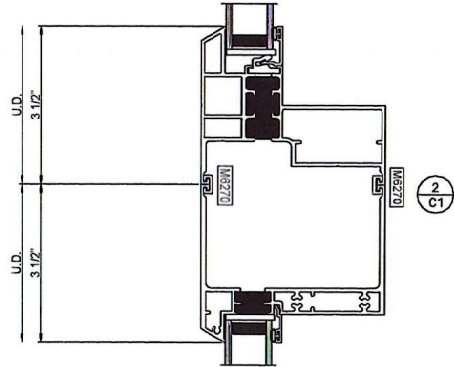
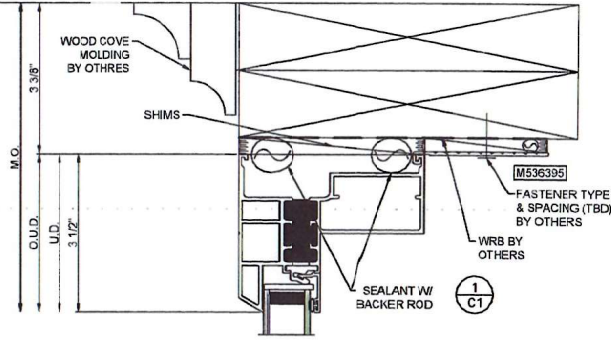
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Freeburg, MO 65035

Drawing Created  
8/12/25

# A, B, C, D, E

LAST UPDATED BY: DMOORE 8/13/2025 8:51 AM

## EXTERIOR



- NOTICE:**
- Customer to verify installer detail method.
  - Customer to verify wall details.
  - Quaker does not supply any fasteners, shims, backer rod or sealants. Unless otherwise noted.
  - Sealant must meet or exceed ASTM C920-11 Specification.
  - Provide adequate blocking to support the sill of the window.
  - Nailing flanges and drip caps (integral or applied) do not take the place of window flashing. All windows and doors must be properly flashed and sealed with material compatible sealant for protection against water and air infiltration around the entire perimeter. Failure to do so could result in product or property damage.
- QWP INSTALLATION GUIDES TO REFERENCE:**
- IG-017 ANCHOR STRAP INSTALLATION GUIDE

Project Name: 1629 S 28TH ST CHURCH  
1629 SOUTH 28TH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19145-1201

**CUT DETAILS**

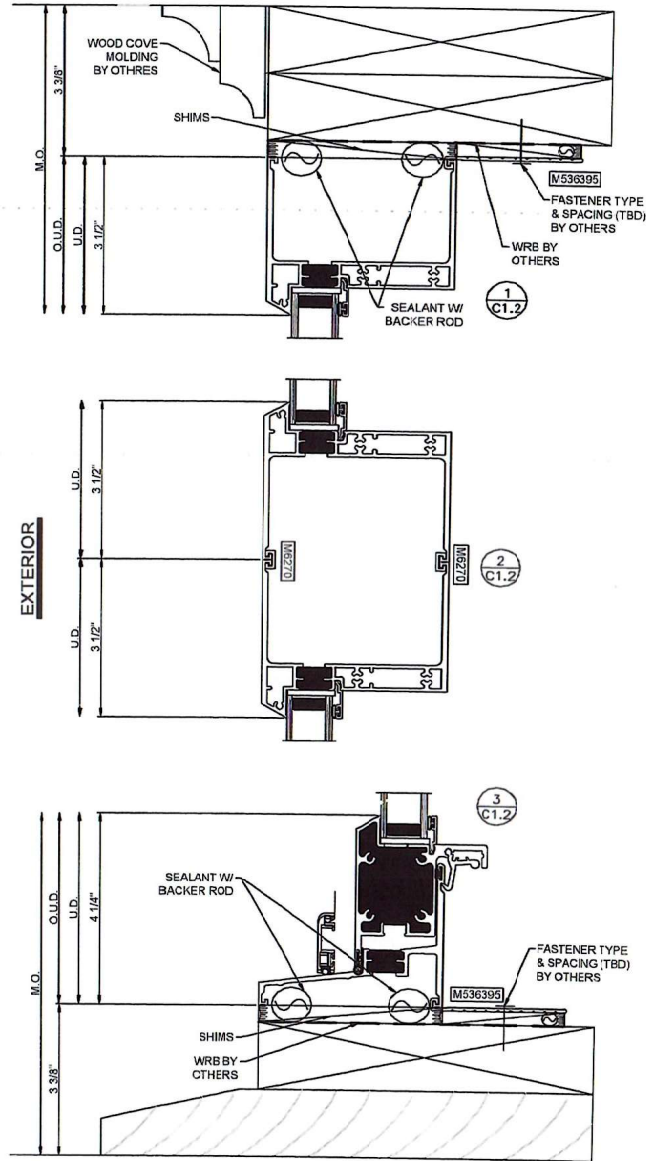
QUAKER WINDOW PRODUCTS  
WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE  
FOR FIELD MEASUREMENT  
QUANTITIES & INSTALLATION  
DESIGN. CONTRACTOR MUST  
VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS.

PHONE (800)-347-0438  
FAX (573)-744-5586  
COMMERCIAL FAX  
(573)-744-5822  
www.quakercommercialwindows.com


**QUAKER**  
C O M M E R C I A L  
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Checked By JS  
Sheet # C1

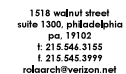
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		Project Name	
1629 S 28TH ST CHURCH		1629 SOUTH 28TH STREET	
1629 SOUTH 28TH STREET		PHILADELPHIA, PA 19145-1201	
CUT DETAILS		QUAKER WINDOW PRODUCTS DO NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FIELD MEASUREMENT QUANTITIES & INSTALLATION DESIGN. CONTRACTOR MUST VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS.	
Description:		QUAKER WINDOW PRODUCTS	
PHONE (800)-347-0438		FAX (573)-744-5866	
COMMERCIAL FAX		(573)-744-5822	
www.quakercommercialwindows.com			
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DDM		JS	
504 Highway 63 South		Freeburg, MO 65035	
Drawing Created		8/12/25	



1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

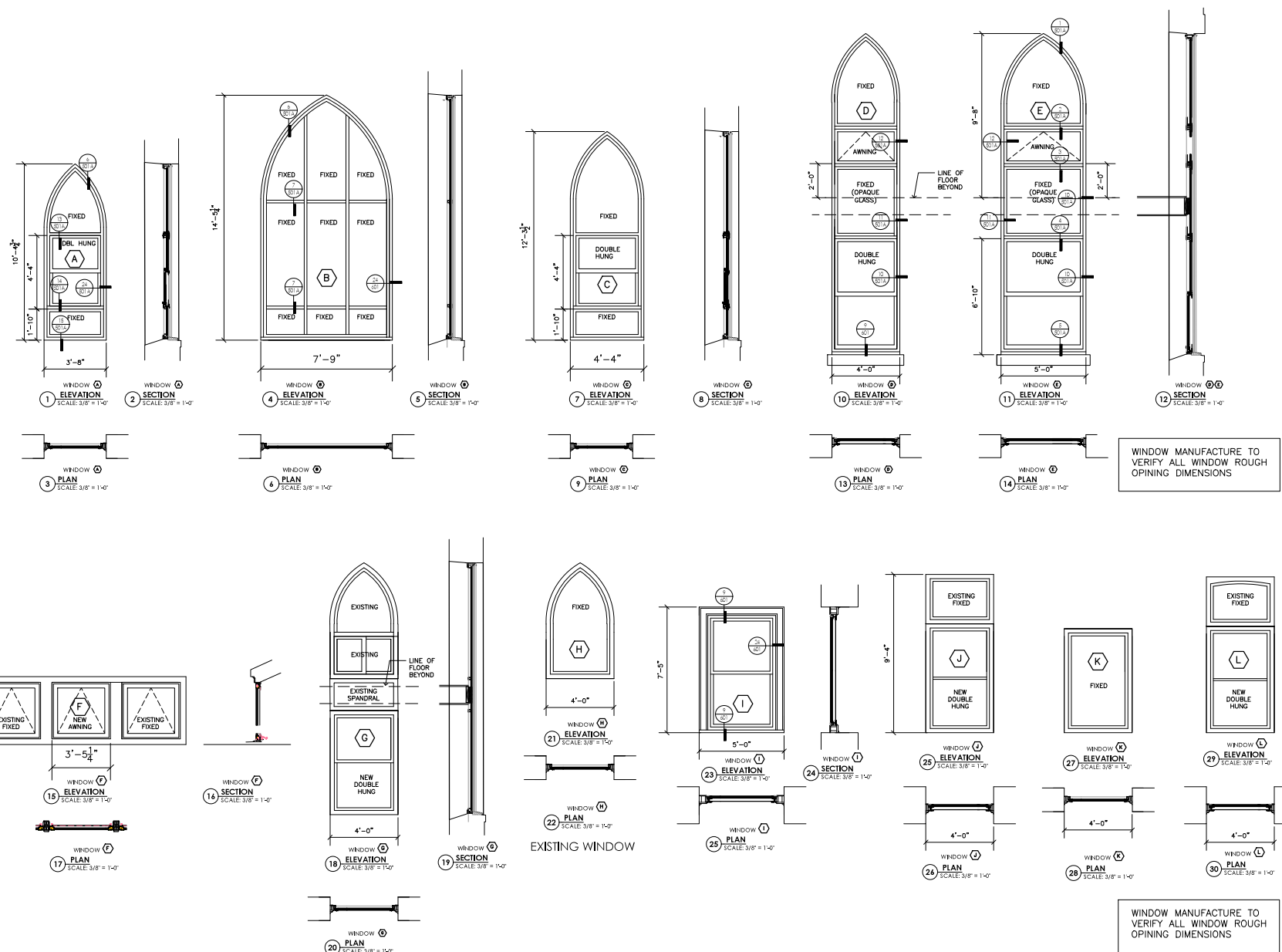
PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING

1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

SHEET TITLE :

SHEET NO.

501





ARCHITECT



1618 walnut street  
suite 1300, philadelphia  
pa. 19102  
t 215.548.3155  
f 215.545.3999  
rolaarch@verizon.net

SEAL



OWNER

1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

DATE	DESCRIPTION
08/15/22	ZONING
06/08/23	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
08/18/23	REVISION 1
08/28/23	REVISION 2
01/26/24	ADD WALL EXTRUSION ADD DOWNSPOUTS
01/02/25	REVISION 3
06/16/25	WINDOW SUB.

PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING

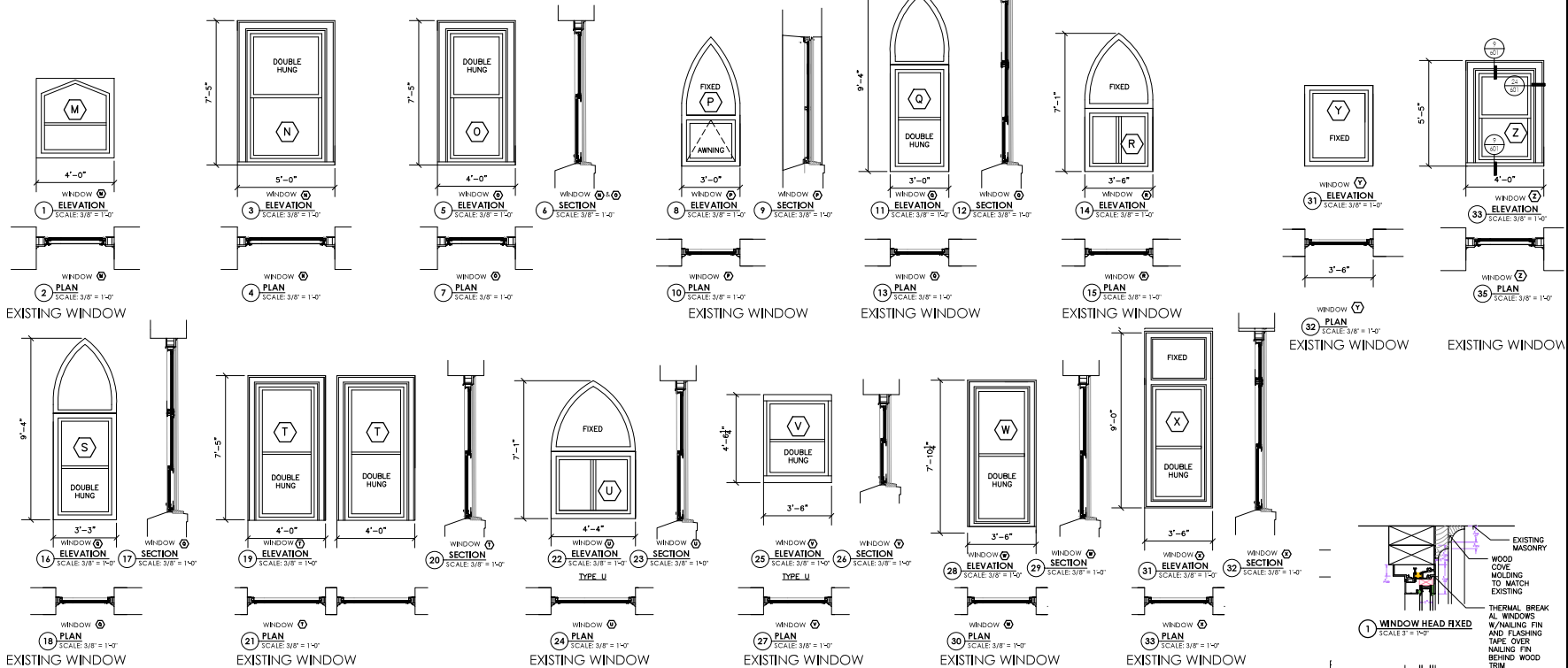
PROJECT LOCATION

1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

BLOCK: -  
LOT: -  
SHEET TITLE:

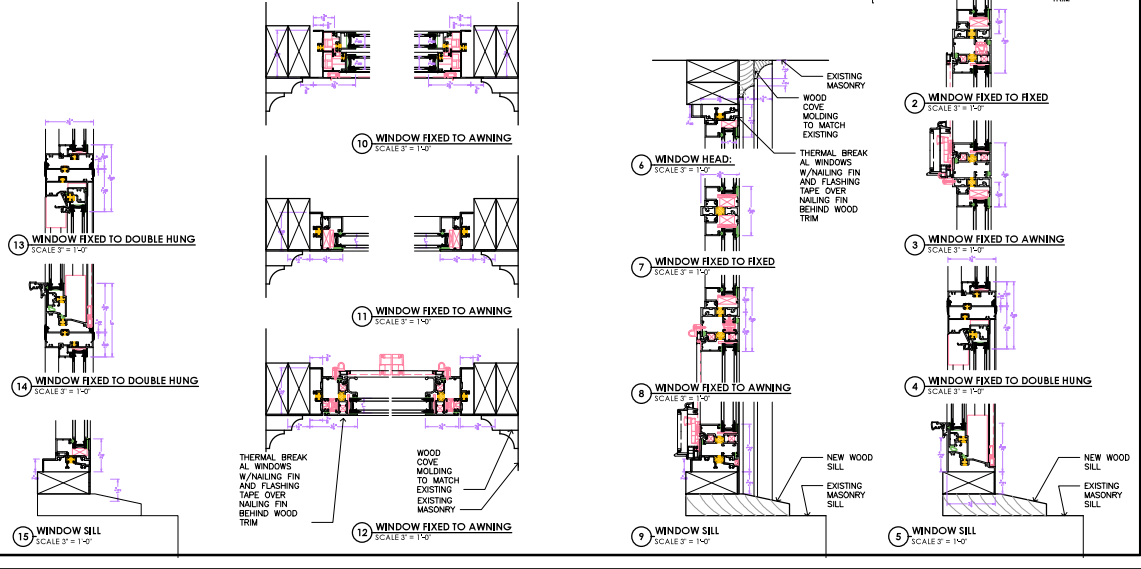
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DATE: 2017  
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REVIEWED BY: RR  
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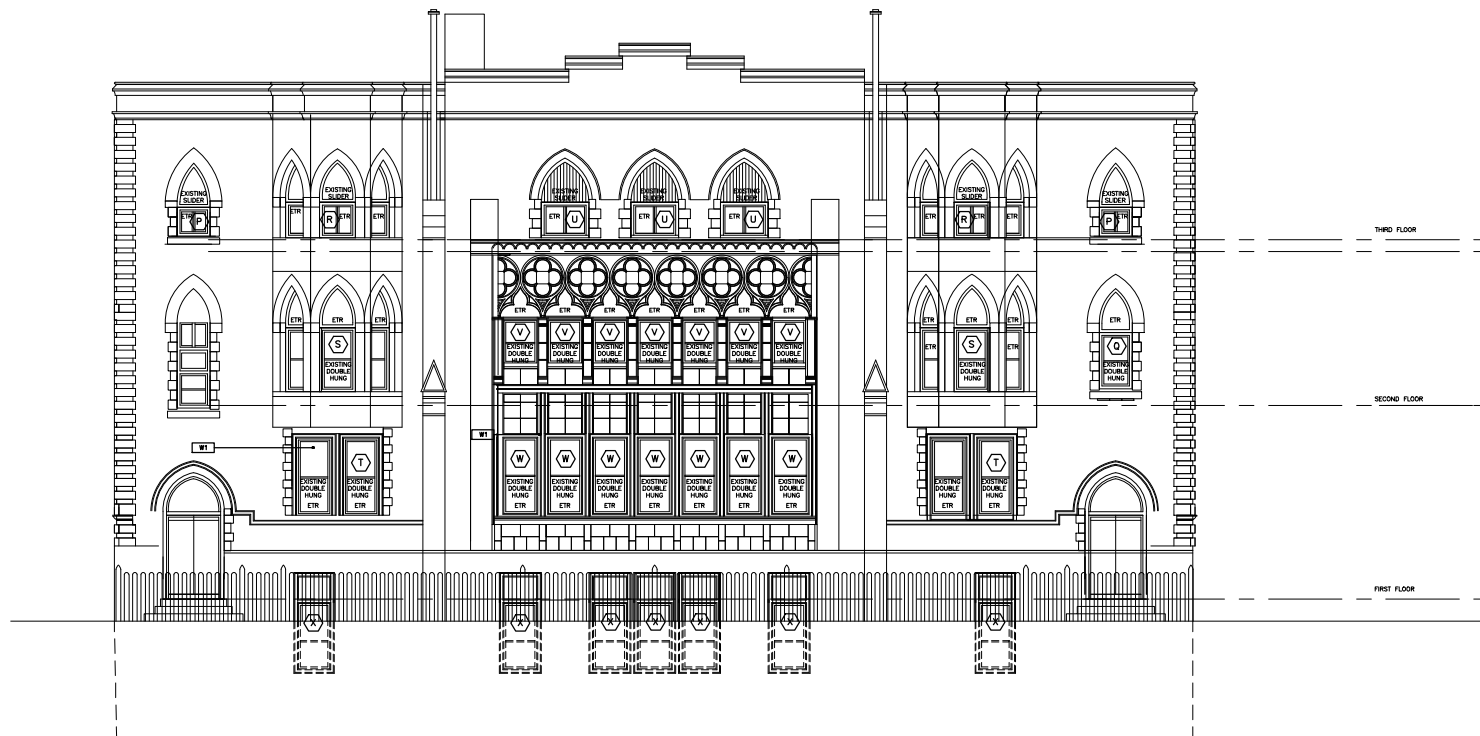
501A



# WINDOW SCHEDULE

TAG	SIZE	QUANTITY		EXTERIOR FINISH	REMARKS
		NEW	EXISTING		
A	PER DRAWING	2		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
B	PER DRAWING	2		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
C	PER DRAWING	1		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
D	PER DRAWING	4		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
E	PER DRAWING	8		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
F	PER DRAWING	8		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
G	PER DRAWING	1	1	ANODIZED BROWN	REPLACE DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW ONLY
H	EXISTING		1	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
I	PER DRAWING	3	5	ALUM	MATCH COLOR OF EXISTING WINDOWS TO REMAIN
J	PER DRAWING	1	1	ALUM	MATCH COLOR OF EXISTING WINDOWS TO REMAIN
K	PER DRAWING	1	1	ALUM	MATCH COLOR OF ADJACENT WINDOWS TO REMAIN
L	PER DRAWING	1	1	ANODIZED WHITE	REPLACE DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW ONLY W/ NEW AWNING AND FIXED WINDOW. MATCH COLOR OF ADJACENT WINDOWS TO REMAIN
M	PER DRAWING		1	WOOD	EXISTING STAINED GLASS WINDOW TO REMAIN
N	PER DRAWING	8		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
O	PER DRAWING	3		ANODIZED BROWN	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
P	PER DRAWING		2	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
Q	PER DRAWING	1		ALUM	MATCH COLOR OF ADJACENT WINDOWS TO REMAIN
R	PER DRAWING		6	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
S	PER DRAWING		7	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
T	PER DRAWING		4	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
U	PER DRAWING		3	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
V	PER DRAWING		7	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
W	PER DRAWING		7	VINYL	EXISTING TO REMAIN
X	PER DRAWING		7	ALUM	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
Y	PER DRAWING		2	ALUM	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING
Z	PER DRAWING		2	ALUM	ALUMINUM THERMAL BREAK W/ 1/2" INS GLASS, TEMPERED GLASS BELOW 24". PROVIDE EXTERIOR WOOD TRIM TO MATCH EXISTING





WINDOW MANUFACTURE TO  
VERIFY ALL WINDOW ROUGH  
OPINING DIMENSIONS



WEST ELEVATION  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"



1518 walnut street  
suite 1300, philadelphia  
pa. 19102  
t: 215.644.3155  
f: 215.645.3999  
rolsarch@verizon.net

SEAL



OWNER

1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

DATE	DESCRIPTION
08/15/22	ZONING
06/08/23	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
08/18/23	REVISION 1
08/28/23	REVISION 2
01/26/24	ADD WALL RATINGS ADD DEHWASHERS
01/02/25	REVISION 3
06/16/25	WINDOW SUB.

PROPOSED MULTI-  
FAMILY DWELLING

PROJECT LOCATION

1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

BLOCK: -

LOT: -

SHEET TITLE:

PROJECT NO.

SCALE: AS NOTED

DATE: 2017

DRAWN BY: RR

REVIEWED BY: RR

SHEET NO.

A300

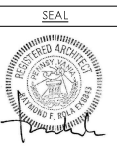




WINDOW MANUFACTURE TO  
VERIFY ALL WINDOW ROUGH  
OPINING DIMENSIONS

1 SOUTH ELEVATION  
A301 SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"

ARCHITECT  
**raymond f. rdo**  
architect  
1518 walnut street  
suite 1300, philadelphia  
pa. 19102  
t: 215.646.3155  
f: 215.646.3999  
rolsarch@verizon.net



OWNER  
1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

DATE	DESCRIPTION
08/15/22	ZONING
06/08/23	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
08/18/23	REVISION 1
08/28/23	REVISION 2
01/26/24	ADD WALL RATINGS ADD DEHWASHERS
01/02/25	REVISION 3
06/16/25	WINDOW SUB.

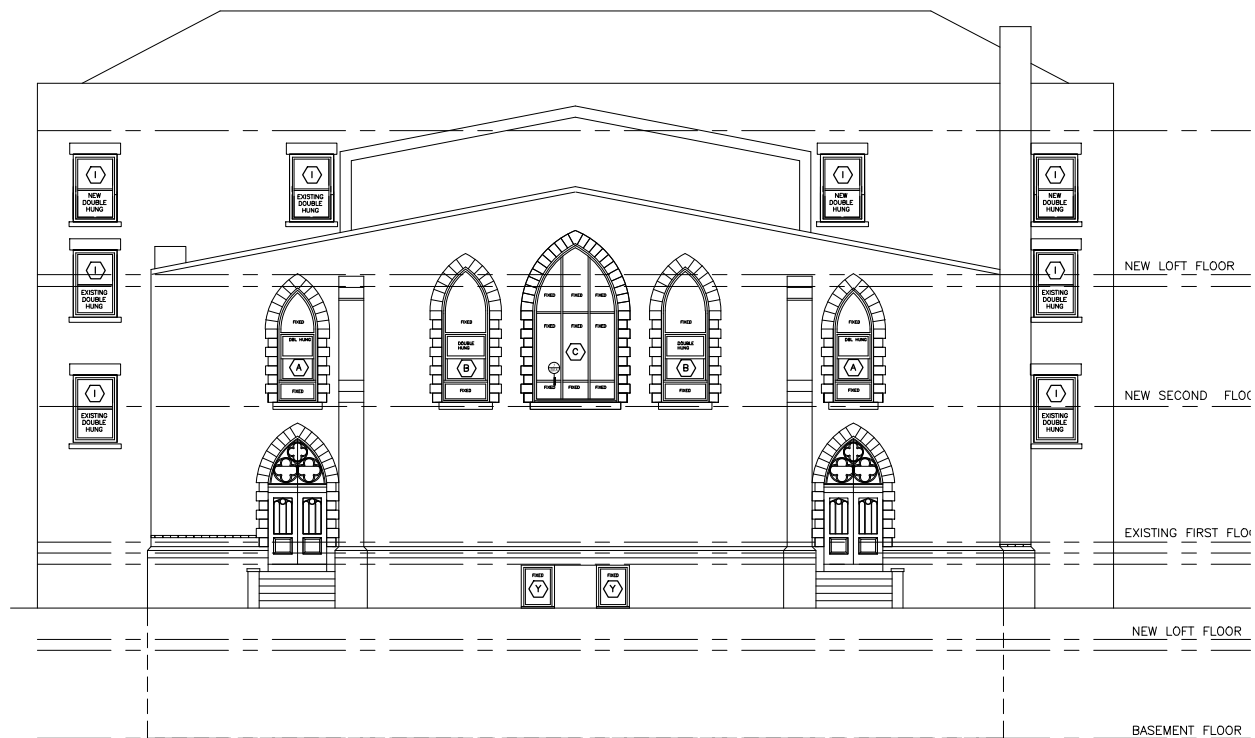
PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING

PROJECT LOCATION  
1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

BLOCK: -  
LOT: -  
SHEET TITLE:

PROJECT NO.  
SCALE: AS NOTED  
DATE: 2017  
DRAWN BY: RR  
REVIEWED BY: RR  
SHEET NO.

A301



WINDOW MANUFACTURE TO  
VERIFY ALL WINDOW ROUGH  
OPENING DIMENSIONS

**EAST ELEVATION**  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"



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suite 1300, philadelphia  
pa. 19102  
t: 215.644.3155  
f: 215.645.3999  
rolsarch@verizon.net

SEAL



OWNER

1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

DATE	DESCRIPTION
08/15/22	ZONING
06/08/23	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
08/18/23	REVISION 1
08/28/23	REVISION 2
01/26/24	ADD WALL RATINGS ADD DEHWASHERS
01/02/25	REVISION 3
06/16/25	WINDOW SUB.

**PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING**

PROJECT LOCATION

1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

BLOCK: -

LOT: -

SHEET TITLE:

PROJECT NO.

SCALE: AS NOTED

DATE: 2017

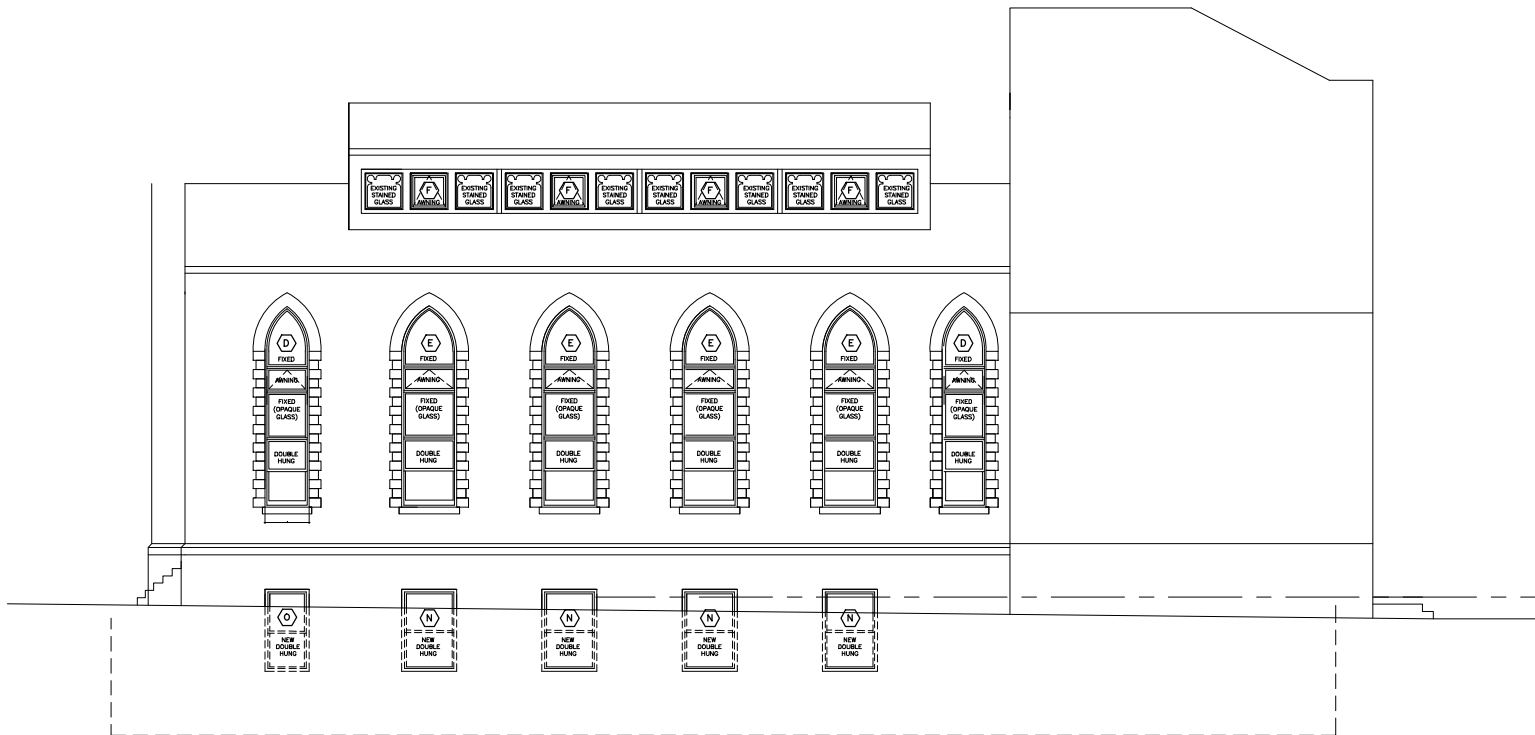
DRAWN BY: RR

REVIEWED BY: RR

SHEET NO.

**A302**





WINDOW MANUFACTURE TO  
VERIFY ALL WINDOW ROUGH  
OPINING DIMENSIONS

1  
A303

NORTH ELEVATION  
SCALE: 3/16" = 1' - 0"



1518 walnut street  
suite 1300, philadelphia  
pa. 19102  
t: 215.644.3155  
f: 215.645.3999  
rolsarch@verizon.net

SEAL



OWNER

1629-37 S 28TH ST LLC

DATE	DESCRIPTION
08/15/22	ZONING
06/08/23	ISSUE FOR PERMIT
08/18/23	REVISION 1
08/28/23	REVISION 2
01/26/24	ADD WALL RATINGS ADD DEHWASHERS
01/02/25	REVISION 3
06/16/25	WINDOW SUB.

## PROPOSED MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING

PROJECT LOCATION

1629-39 S 28TH ST.  
PHILADELPHIA PA

BLOCK: -

LOT: -

SHEET TITLE:

PROJECT NO.

SCALE: AS NOTED

DATE: 2017

DRAWN BY: RR

REVIEWED BY: RR

SHEET NO.

A303




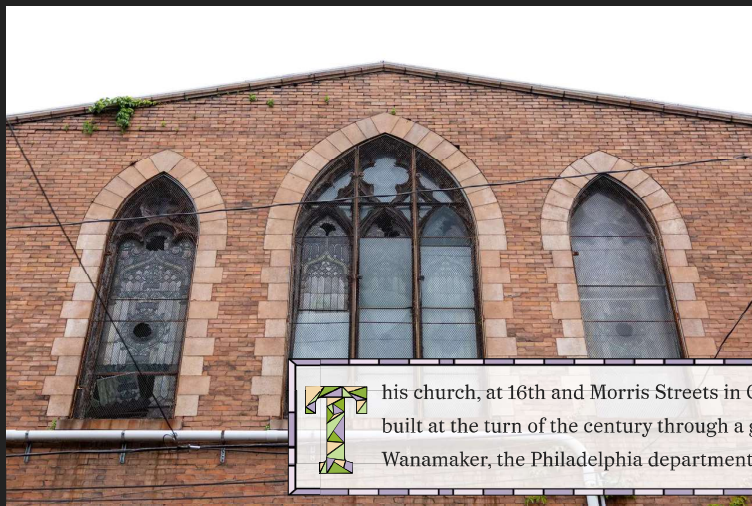
# The Treasure Hunter

See what  
he finds.

Paul Brown salvages stained glass windows, rusty signs, and century-old pews from Philadelphia buildings, searching for treasure.

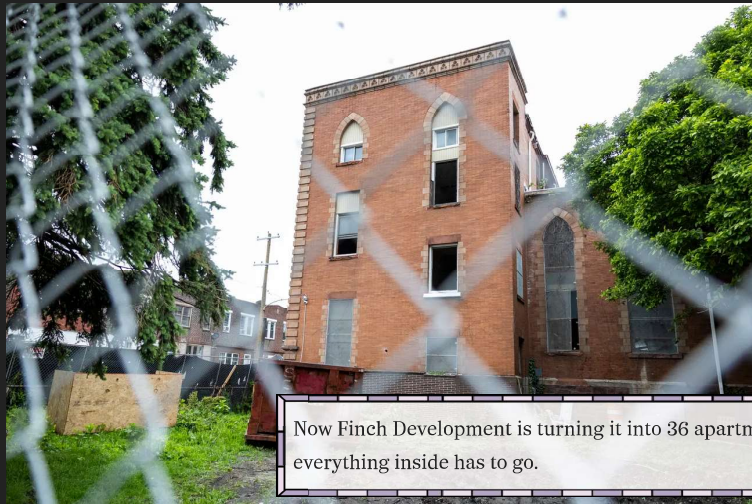
By Zoe Greenberg and Charmaine Runes  
Published Jul 8, 2025

Copy gift link 



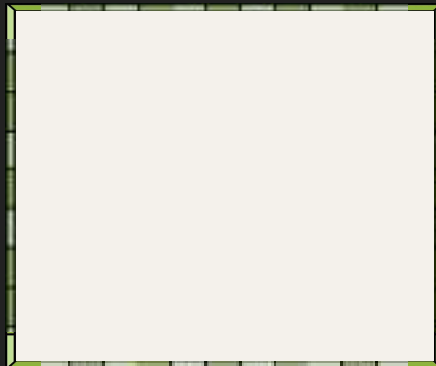
his church, at 16th and Morris Streets in Grays Ferry, was built at the turn of the century through a gift from John Wanamaker, the Philadelphia department store tycoon.

Thomas C. Lansdale, an architect known for  
“flamboyant” projects, designed it.



Now Finch Development is turning it into 36 apartments. Almost  
everything inside has to go.

ADVERTISEMENT

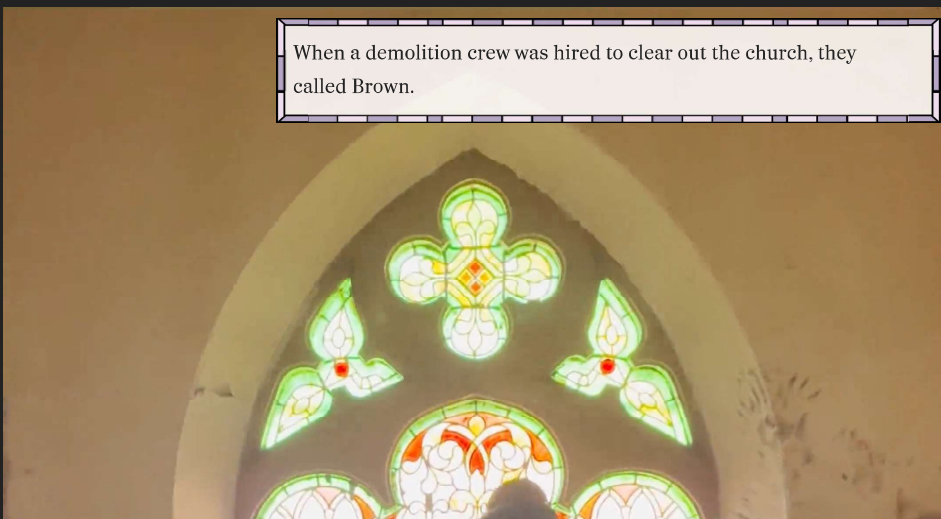


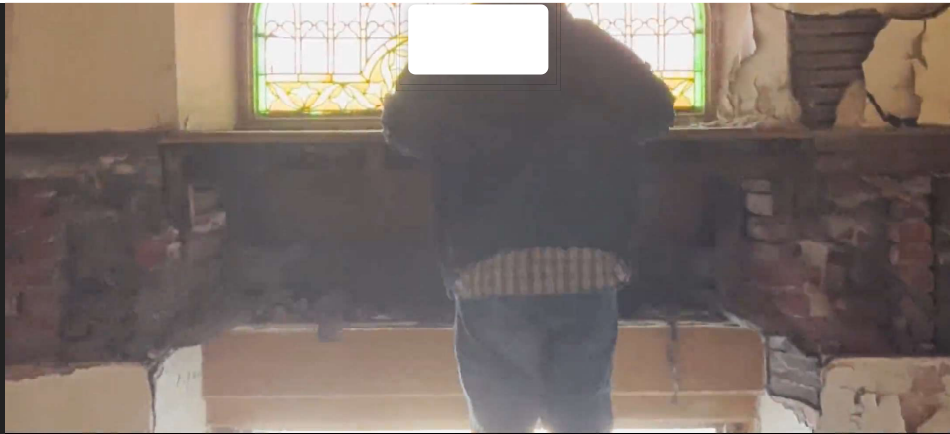


Meet Paul Brown. Some of the guys I  
with call him a junkman, but he prefers  
“insatiable collector.”

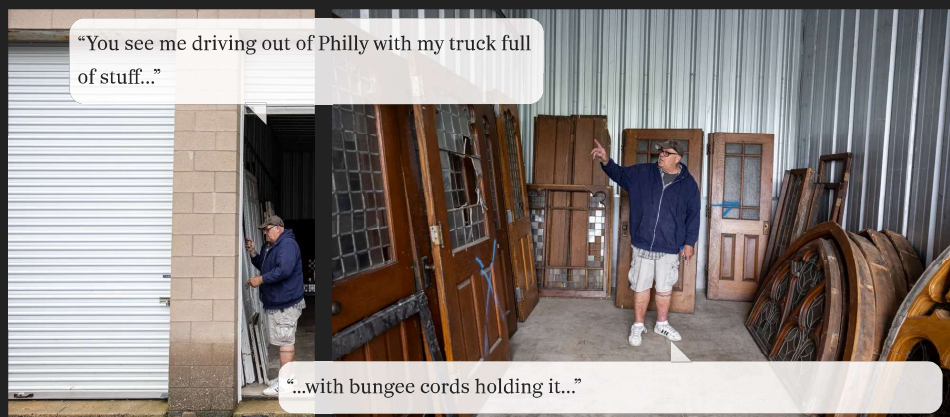
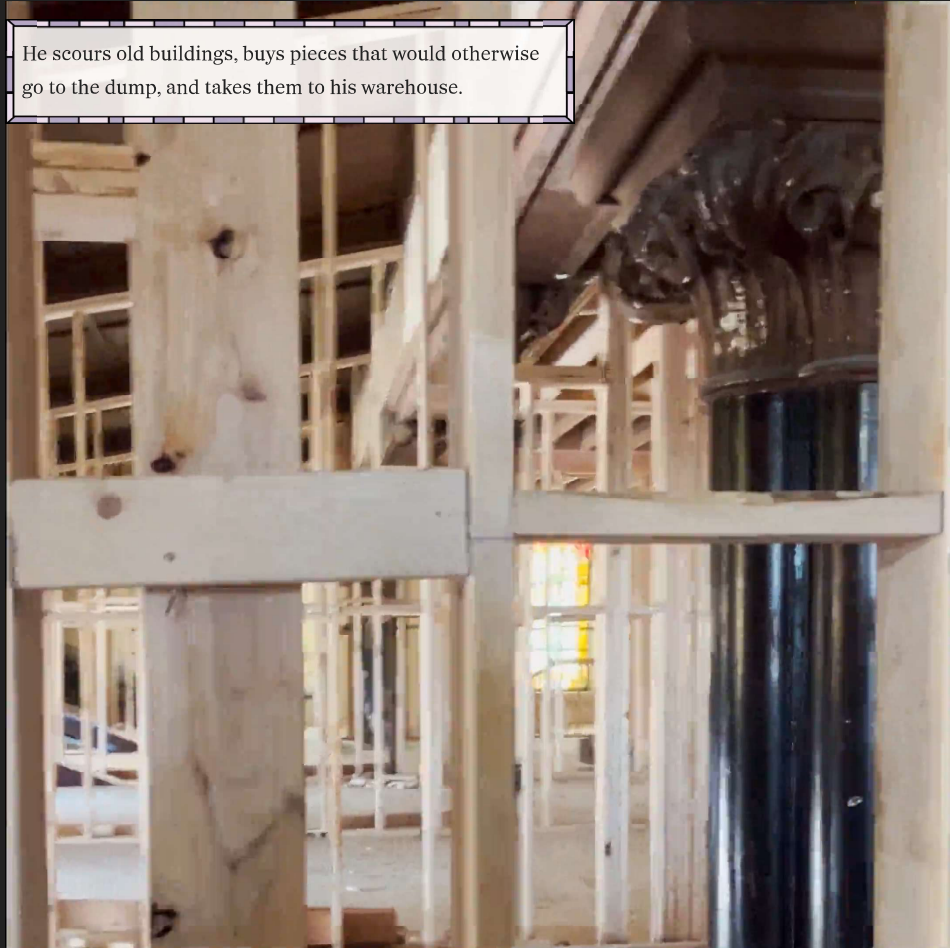


When a demolition crew was hired to clear out the church, they  
called Brown.





He scours old buildings, buys pieces that would otherwise go to the dump, and takes them to his warehouse.



"You see me driving out of Philly with my truck full of stuff..."

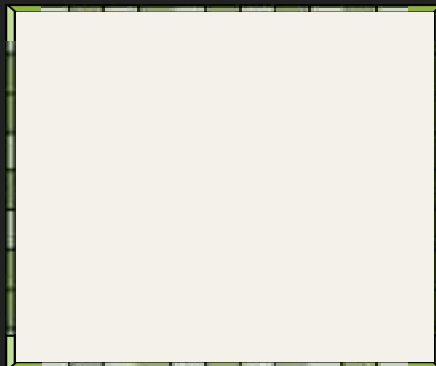
"...with bungee cords holding it..."





"...I guess I would be deemed a junkman. But junk in an antique kind of way."

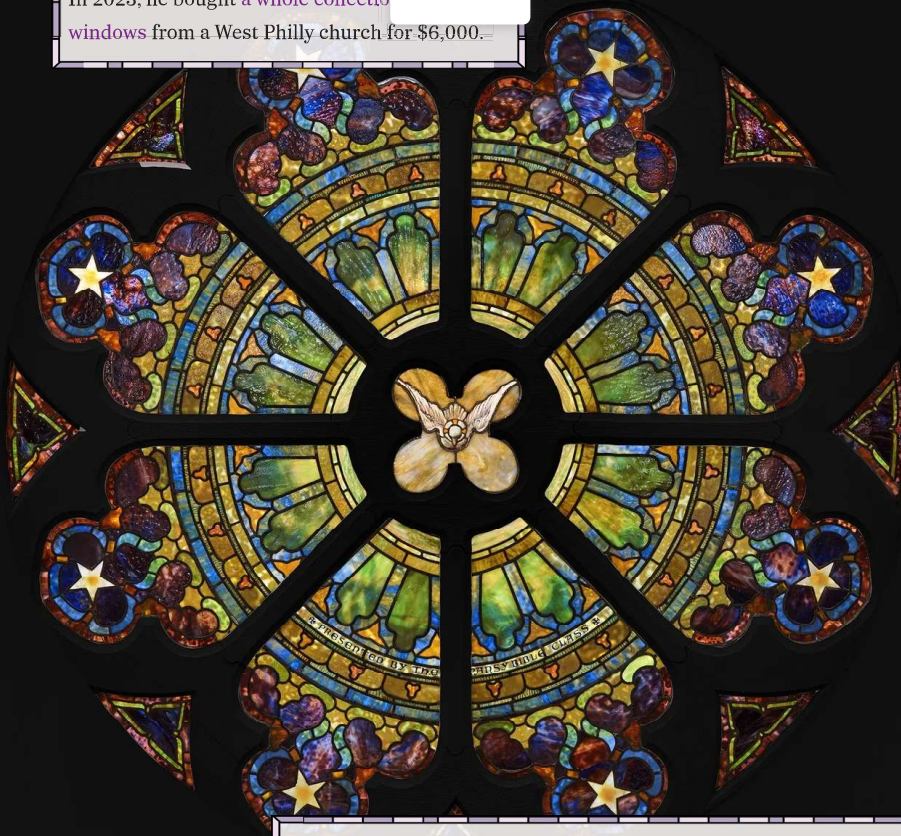
ADVERTISEMENT



Brown is always looking for what he can restore and resell.

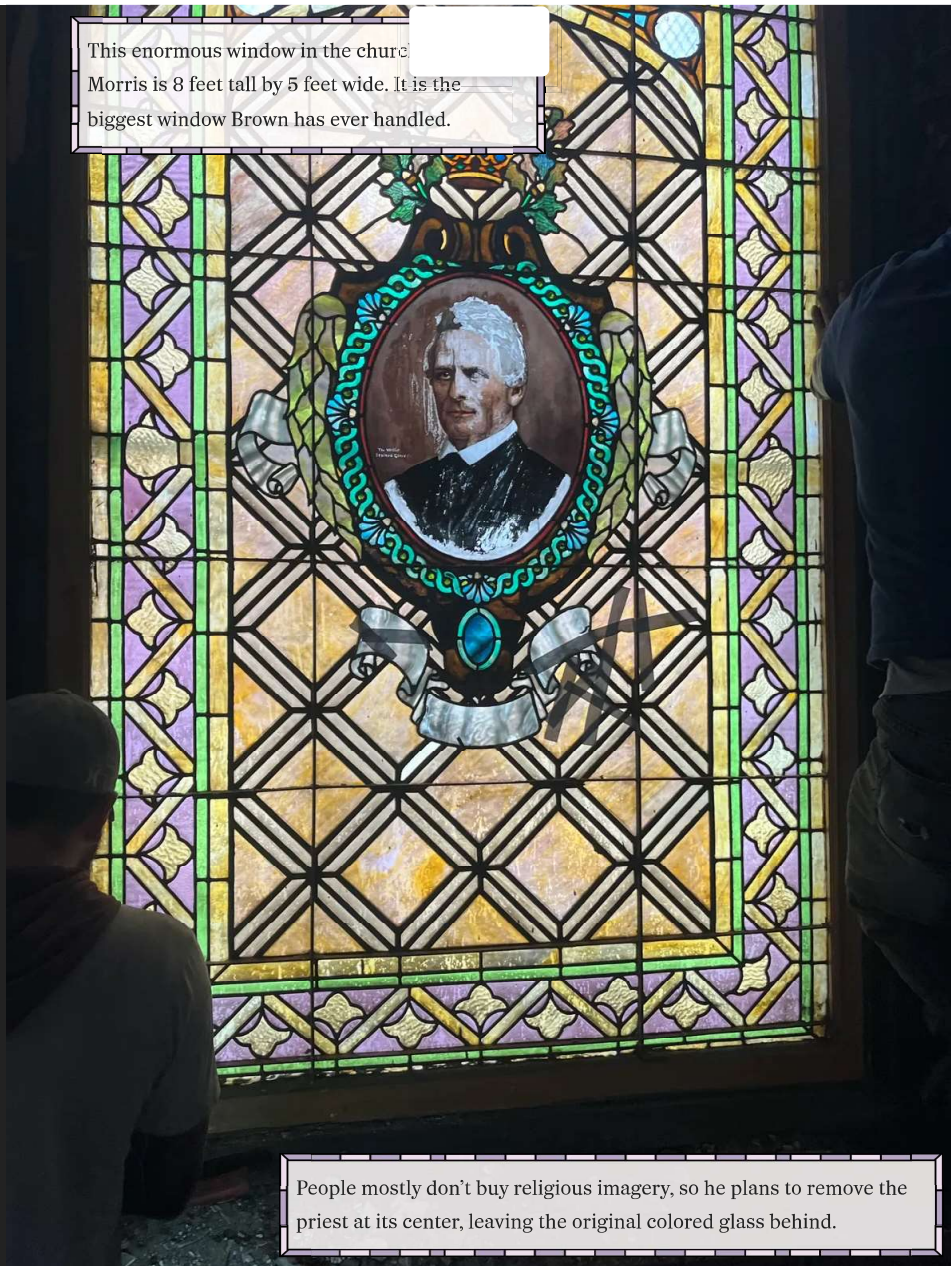


In 2023, he bought a whole collection of windows from a West Philly church for \$6,000.



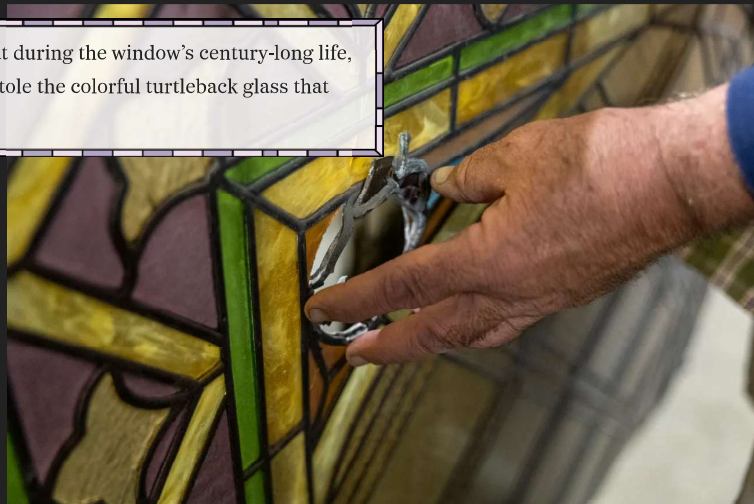
Two of them went on to sell for \$100,000 each.

This enormous window in the church Morris is 8 feet tall by 5 feet wide. It is the biggest window Brown has ever handled.

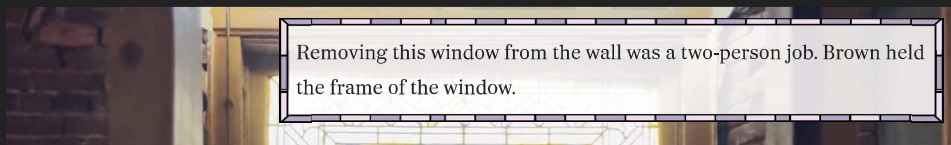


People mostly don't buy religious imagery, so he plans to remove the priest at its center, leaving the original colored glass behind.

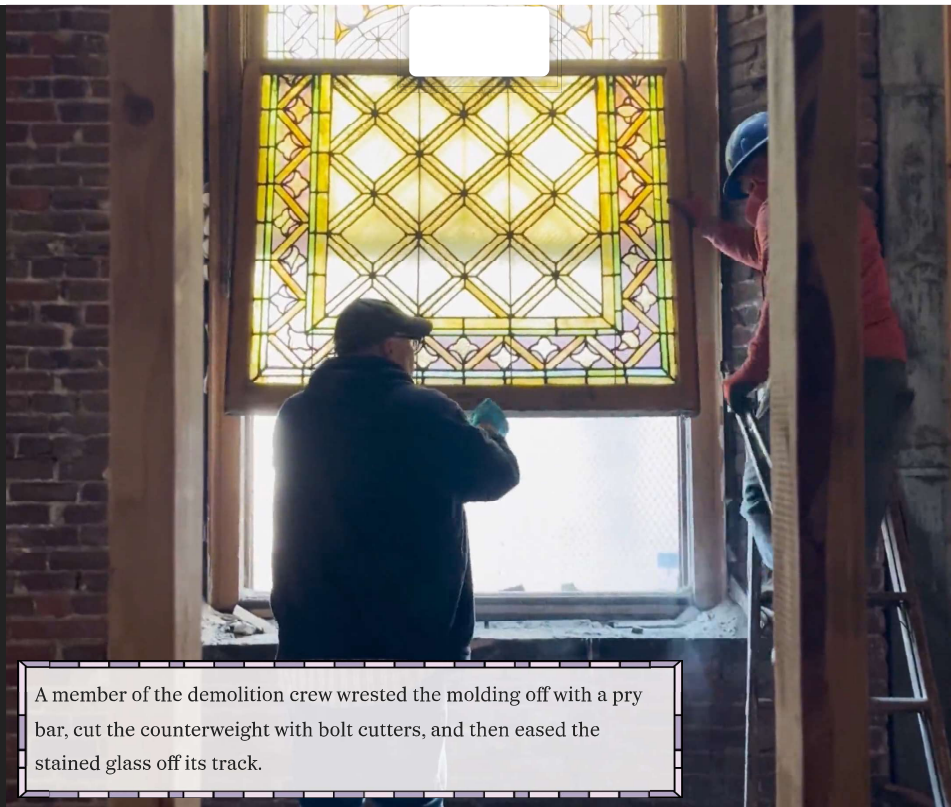
Brown guessed that during the window's century-long life, vandals probably stole the colorful turtleback glass that used to be here.



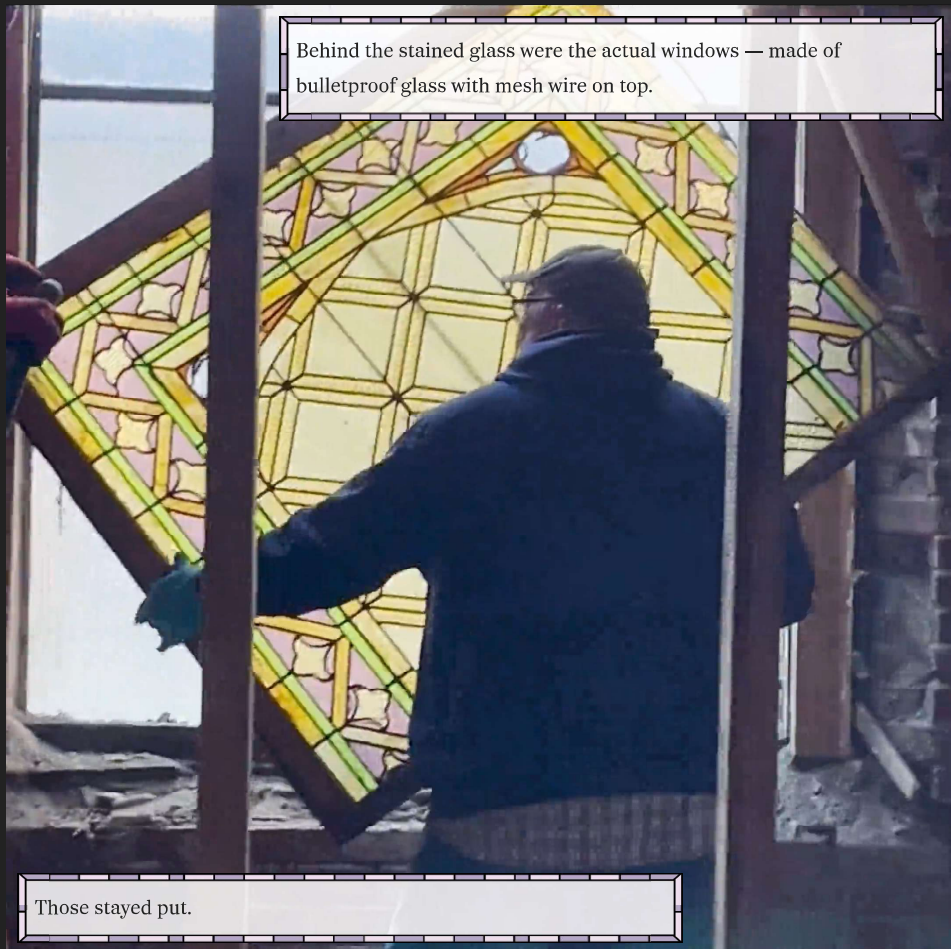
Removing this window from the wall was a two-person job. Brown held the frame of the window.







A member of the demolition crew wrestled the molding off with a pry bar, cut the counterweight with bolt cutters, and then eased the stained glass off its track.



Behind the stained glass were the actual windows — made of bulletproof glass with mesh wire on top.

Those stayed put.





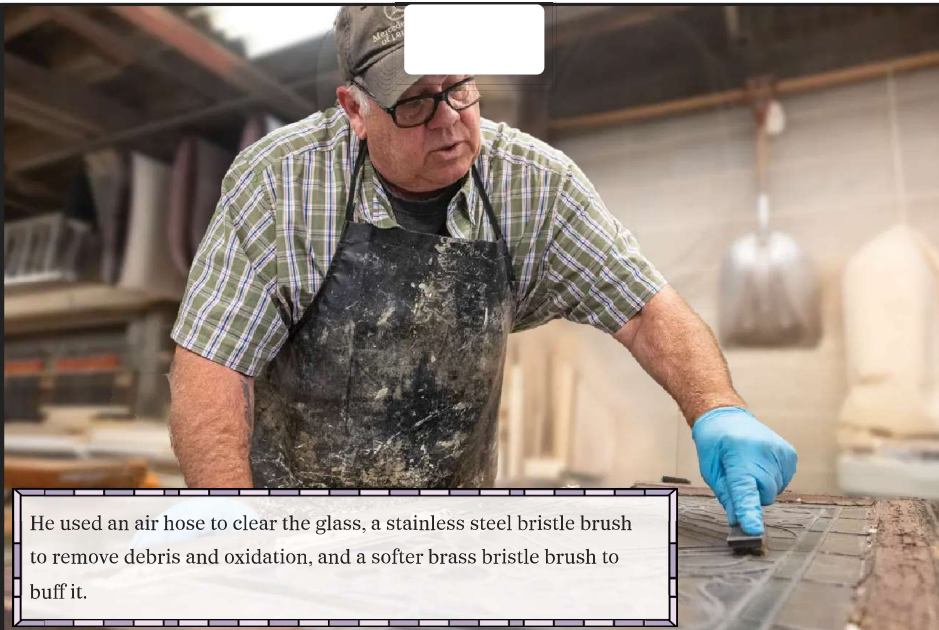
Brown used [redacted] rope, and ratchet straps to stack the windows in the back of his pick-up.

He drove the bundle back to Lancaster County on the turnpike.

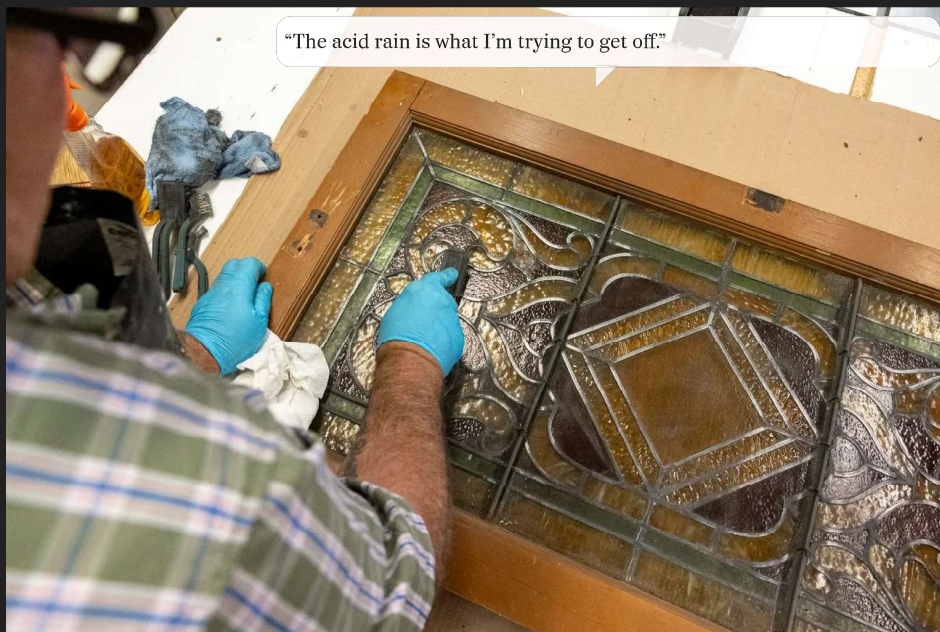


At a rented woodshop in Manheim, Brown set about cleaning a 27.5 inch by 57 inch transit window, which once helped to ventilate the church.





He used an air hose to clear the glass, a stainless steel bristle brush to remove debris and oxidation, and a softer brass bristle brush to buff it.

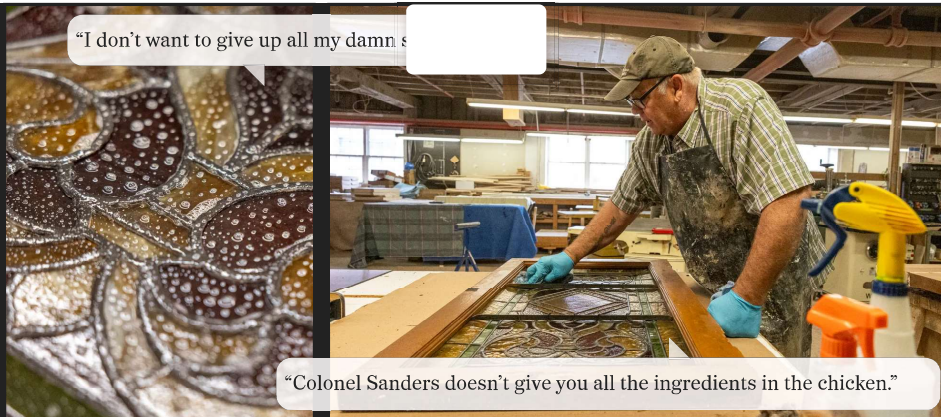


"The acid rain is what I'm trying to get off."



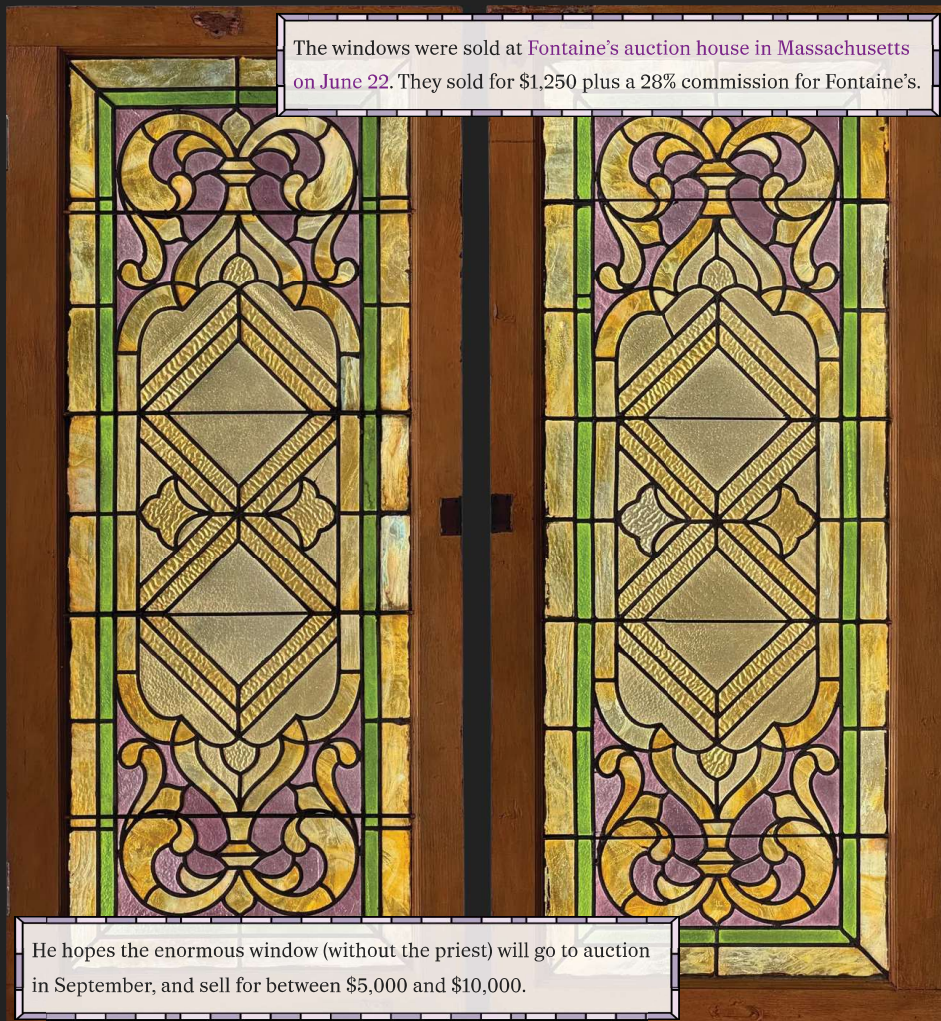
Next he used Windex and a citrus cleaner to make it shine. He won't divulge the brand of the final cleaner.





"I don't want to give up all my damn s

"Colonel Sanders doesn't give you all the ingredients in the chicken."



The windows were sold at [Fontaine's auction house in Massachusetts](#) on [June 22](#). They sold for \$1,250 plus a 28% commission for Fontaine's.

He hopes the enormous window (without the priest) will go to auction in September, and sell for between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

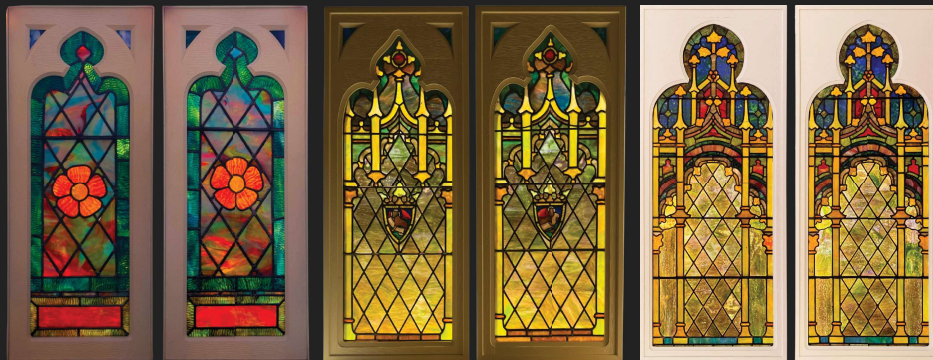




Brown has salvaged stained glass windows from a dozen churches across Philadelphia.



The ones featured here are all Tiffany Studios, circa 1905, bought cheap from the old church at 50th and Baltimore.



After Brown removed, prepped, and polished them, they sold for \$134,355 total, including the buyer's commission, in a May auction at Fontaine's. "Where [else] do you get a chance to go back in time," he asked, "to salvage a piece of history?" [1](#)

#### Staff Contributors

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