

ADDRESS: 5001-11 LANCASTER AVE

Name of Resource: The Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication House

Review: Designate

Property Owner: Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Staff Contact: Joshua Schroeder, joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue, the Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication House, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The two-story rectangular manufacturing building composed of brick, reinforced concrete, and structural steel with a brick façade containing limestone features was constructed from 1929 to 1930. The building's exterior generally retains its original appearance, with infilled windows, doorways, or bays consisting of the most significant alterations.

The proposal argues that the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building satisfies Criterion J because it is representative of Philadelphia's historical prominence as a center of the United States' publishing and printing industry. The proposal further argues the building's historic significance for its connection to Philadelphia's once-vibrant religious print industry. Finally, the nomination highlights the building's connection to the Lutheran denomination in Philadelphia, whose origins are traced to seventeenth-century Swedish colonists predating the city's founding.

The proposal also contends that the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building satisfies Criterion E as representative of the work by Harris & Richards, Architects and Engineers, a prominent firm known for designing industrial and institutional buildings during the interwar period. Harris & Richards was the successor to Wilson, Harris & Richards, a continuation of Wilson Bros. & Co., one of the most important architectural and engineering firms of the late nineteenth century.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue satisfies the Criteria for Designation E and J.

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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

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

Street address: **5001-11 Lancaster Avenue**

Postal code: **19131**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **The Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication 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): **1929 to 1945**

Date(s) of construction: **1929-30**

Architects: **Harris & Richards, Architects & Engineers**

Builders: **Robert E. Lamb Co.**

Original owners: **The Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church**

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:

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

Date: **4 September 2025**

EMAIL: **KEEPER@KEEPINGPHILADELPHIA.ORG**

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: September 4, 2025

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: September 4, 2025

Date of Notice Issuance: September 11, 2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

Address: 3451 Walnut St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19104

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: October 15, 2025

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: November 14, 2025

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

NOMINATION
FOR THE
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. The primary (south) and side (east) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2025.

THE MANUFACTURING BUILDING
OF THE
UNITED LUTHERAN PUBLICATION HOUSE
OF THE
BOARD OF PUBLICATION
OF THE
UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH
-
ERECTED IN 1929-30
-
5001-11 LANCASTER AVENUE
WEST PHILADELPHIA
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

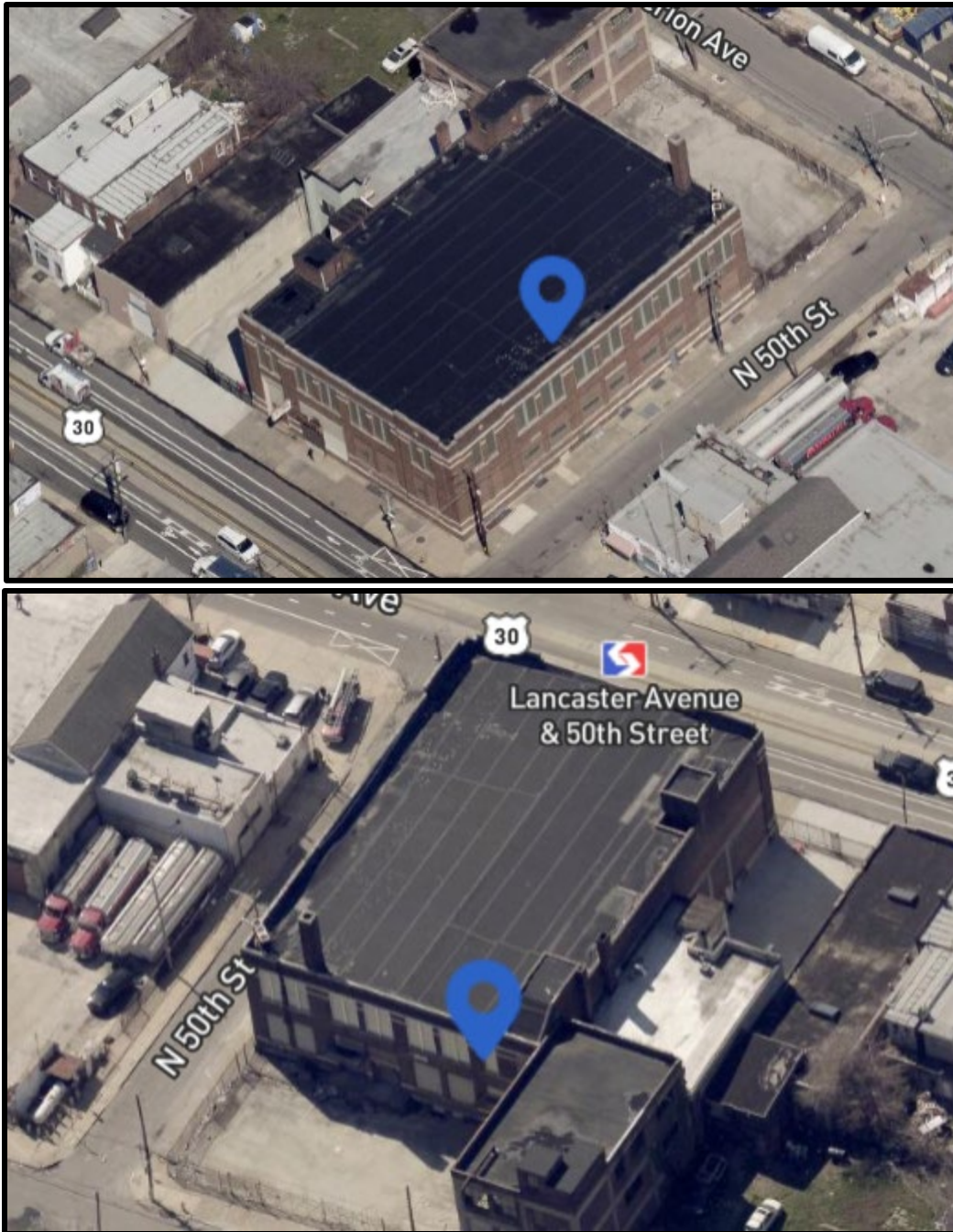


Figure 3. Top: Looking north at the primary (south) and side (east) elevations of the subject building. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2024. Figure 4. Bottom: Looking south at the rear (north) and side (west) elevations of the subject building. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2024.



Figure 5. The primary (south) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2025.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Standing prominently at the northwest corner of Lancaster Avenue and 50th Street, the Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication House associated with the Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church (Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building) is an industrial building at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue in the Hestonville section of West Philadelphia. The subject two-story building is comprised of brick masonry, reinforced concrete, and structural steel in a rectangular form with a flat roof. Stylistically, the building is indicative of many other industrial structures of the interwar years with both Colonial Revival and modernist characteristics. Originally, there were only three visible facades: the primary (south), side (east), and rear (north) elevations. All three of the said elevations featured a continuous, formal façade comprised of red tapestry brick with limestone details. Each elevation features a base course of limestone with two limestone string courses near the base of the building. The roofline features the same limestone detail in the form of coping with two limestone string courses below. These details are present in each of the said, fully articulated elevations.

The primary (south) elevation is six bays wide, featuring pairs of windows in each bay. The original entrance is visible in the westernmost bay within a limestone surround, though it features modern infill and replacement doors. The second floor above is served by a pair of windows with replacement units delineated by a single, connecting limestone sill. A diamond-shaped decorative pendant adorns the parapet in this bay. Just east of the original entrance on the ground floor, two bays of windows have been removed from the façade, where a large glazed opening now serves as a new primary entrance. The original fenestration has been retained in the floor above with two pairs of windows with replacement units, featuring single, connecting limestone sills. Immediately to the east on the first floor are two pairs of windows also featuring modern replacement units. A similar grouping of two pairs of windows with replacement units are located in the floor above, each featuring single, connecting limestone sills. The easternmost bay of the first floor features a pair of windows, also with replacement units. The second floor features a similar pair of windows defined by a single, connecting limestone sill. A diamond-shaped decorative pendant adorns the parapet in this bay. This exact fenestration is repeated in the southernmost bay of the side (east) elevation. The remaining fenestration serving the side (east) elevation is comprised of eight bays

of mullion windows featuring single limestone sills and replacement units. Basement windows are present in both the primary (south) and side (east) elevations, being generally aligned with the larger fenestration.



Figure 6. Top: The side (east) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2025. Figure 7. Middle: The side (east) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2025. Figure 8. Bottom: The side (east) and rear (north) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert.

A similar architectural treatment and fenestration are employed in the rear (north) elevation. Four loading bays are also crucial features of the first floor. A single chimney stack rises above the roofline near the northeast corner of the building. A paved open lot and cyclone fencing appends the rear (north) elevation. The side (west) elevation is a blind brick wall that was not visible historically.

Originally, the building appears to have featured nine-over-nine sash windows.



Figure 9. Top: The rear (north) elevation of the subject building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2025. Figure 10. Bottom left: The side (west) elevation in 1951, then obscured by the former Hestonville Fire House. Source: Fred R. Twers, photographer, www.phillyhistory.org. Figure 11. Bottom right: The side (west) and primary (south) elevations of the subject building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2024.

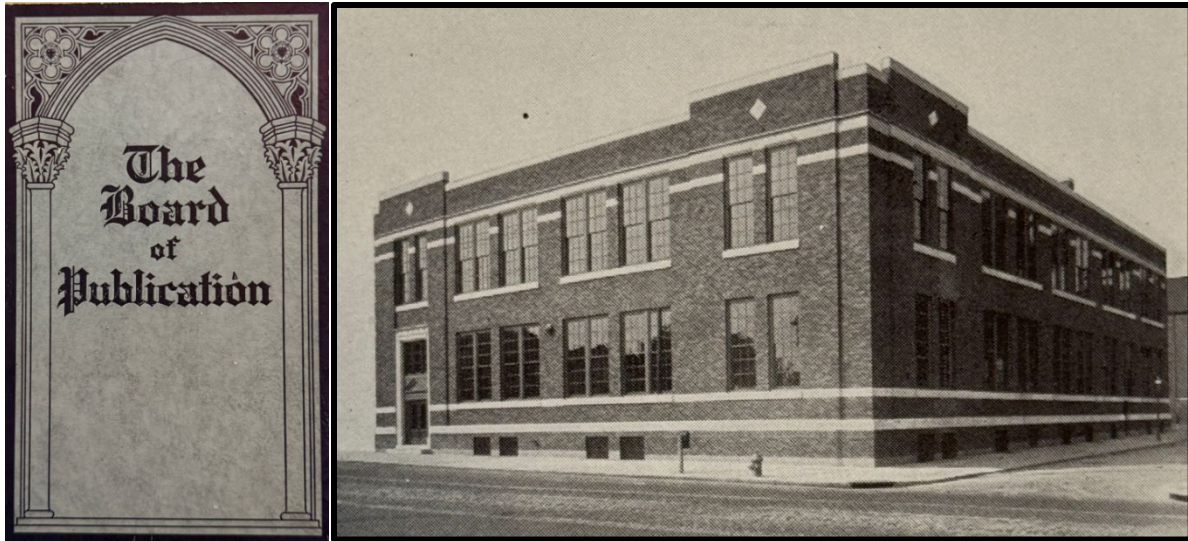


Figure 12. Left: The cover of a 1932 pamphlet on the Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church. Source: Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932). Figure 13. Right: The primary (south) and side (east) elevations of the subject building in 1932. Source: Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building 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:

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

The period of significance dates to the time of construction between 1929 and 1930 through the entire period of use, which terminates in 1945 when the plant moved to a new facility.

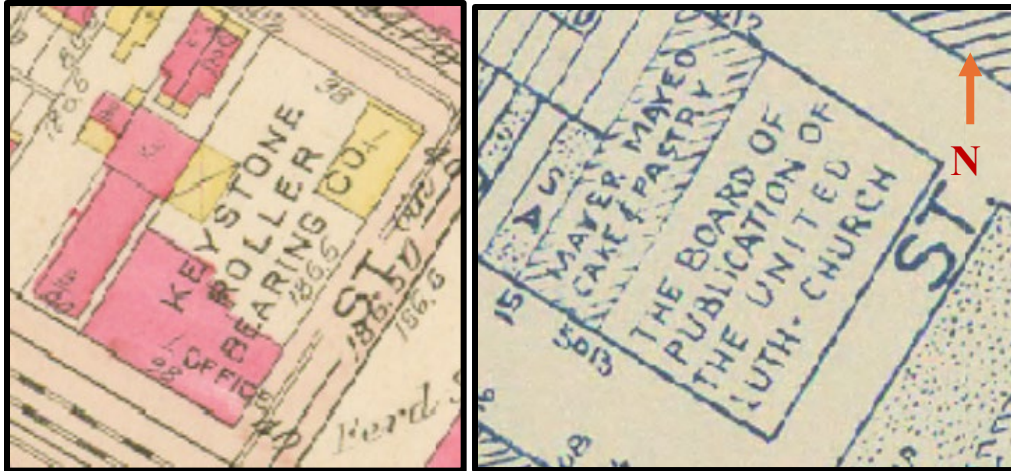


Figure 14. Left: 1927 West Philadelphia Atlas by G.W. Bromley. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 15. Right: 1942 Land Use Maps by the Works Progress Administration. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

CRITERION J

Under Criterion J, the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building represents the cultural, economic, and social heritage of the institutional publication and printing industry between 1929 and 1945. Specifically, the subject building's role as a printing house of the United Lutheran Publication House for the Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church embodies a significantly advanced aspect of the Lutheran community's history in Philadelphia, the larger region, and the nation. As the place of the Board of Publication's physical printing operations, the product produced in the subject building served a wide variety of cultural and religious purposes, including communication, education, and institutional advancement, as well as religious devotion and training.¹

These aforementioned aspects of significance relate to greater themes in Philadelphia's historical heritage, including printing and publishing and Lutheranism. Philadelphia was a major center of the American printing and publishing industries from the late seventeenth century through the mid-twentieth century.² Outside the larger, mainstream realms of printing and publishing, Philadelphia also housed many niche components of the industry, including printers and publishers of religious texts, as well as the publishing houses of various religious denominations. The United Methodist Publishing House was established in 1789 at Philadelphia as the Methodist Book Concern.³ The American Baptist Publication Society was founded in 1824 at Washington, D.C., but it soon moved to Philadelphia in 1827, where it grew to be an important printing and publishing nexus for the denomination. Between 1896 and 1898, the Crozer Building, an impressive twelve-and-one-half-story skyscraper, was built by this institution at 1420-22 Chestnut Street.⁴ The Roger Williams Building was another structure commissioned by the Baptist Publication Society, also located on Chestnut Street.⁵ The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation was founded in 1833 at Philadelphia as

¹ Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

² John William Wallace. "Early Printing in Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, (Philadelphia: 1880).

³ Henry C. Jennings. *The Methodist Book Concern*. (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1924).

⁴ Rev. J. G. Walker, D.D. "Fifty Years Among Philadelphia Baptists," *The Baptist Commonwealth*, 11 June 1908, 8.

⁵ "The Roger Williams Building," *The Mercantile and Financial Times*, 28 March 1908, 7.

the Presbyterian Tract Society. In 1896, the Witherspoon Building at 1321 Walnut Street was commissioned to house the Presbyterian Board of Publications and Sabbath School Work, resulting in one of Philadelphia's most elaborate buildings.⁶ The Jewish Publication Society was established in 1888 at Philadelphia, becoming well-known for its English translation of the Hebrew Bible, which the institution printed in mass quantities.⁷ Naturally, Philadelphia was also home to most printing and publishing for the Society of Friends. Perhaps most pertinent to this nomination, the Lutheran denomination also has a rich history of printing and publishing in Philadelphia with the establishment of the Lutheran Publication Society in the mid-nineteenth century at Philadelphia. This eventually became the Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church. The organization commissioned the impressive Muhlenberg Building at the southeast corner of 13th and Spruce Streets. Additionally, Lutheranism has been a dominant religious community in the region since the seventeenth century, first represented by Swedish colonists and, later, Germanic populations. In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, Philadelphia served as an American nucleus of this Christian denomination, being home to the Lutheran Theological Seminary and the second oldest continually operating congregation in North America—St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Germantown.

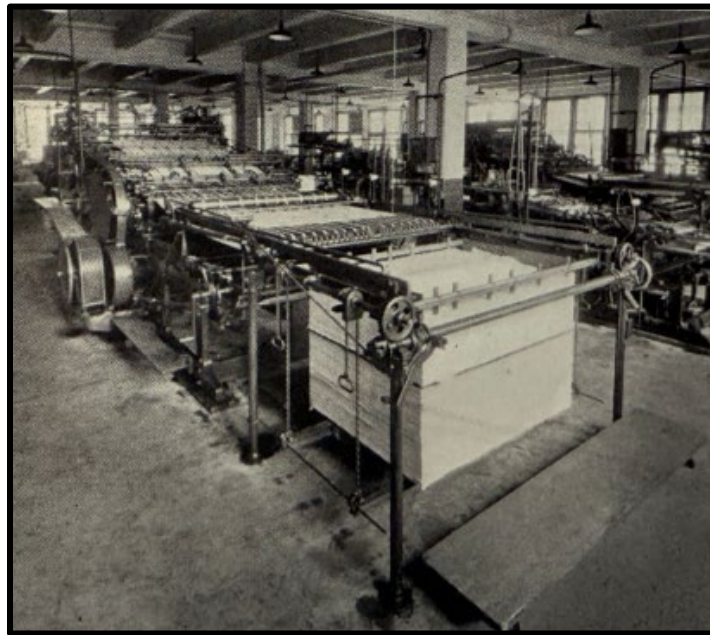


Figure 16. The historic interior of the subject building in 1932. Source: Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

The Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building was conceived in the Fall of 1929 when it was announced that the architectural firm of Harris & Richards had been commissioned to design a “factory” for the printing arm of the Board of Publication. While the institution already had the Muhlenberg Building, the increased demand for their products required a new, purpose-built manufactory.⁸ Harris & Richards began taking bids for the subject building in October 1929, which was described as follows: “reinforced concrete, brick, two stories and basement, 98x135 feet, slag

⁶ “The Witherspoon Building,” *The Herald and Presbyter*, 14 April 1909, 4.

⁷ The Jewish Publication Society <https://jps.org/about/> Accessed on 21 March 2025.

⁸ Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

roof, cement floors.”⁹ *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the proposed building would cost \$175,000.¹⁰ By early December 1929, it was announced that the “Printing Building” was to be constructed by the Robert E. Lamb Co.¹¹ The “new manufacturing plant” was completed and in use by October 1930.

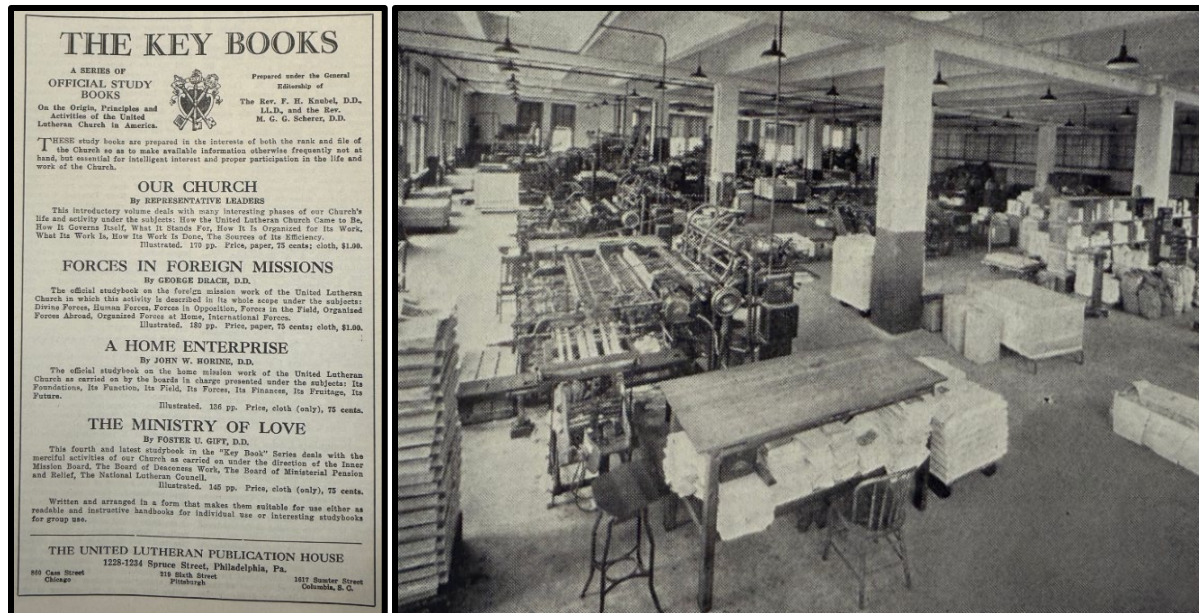


Figure 17. Left: Advertisement for “The Key Books” from the United Lutheran Publication House. Source: *The Lutheran*, October 1930. Figure 18. Right: The interior of the subject building in 1932. Source: Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

The subject building came into being at a moment when the Board of Publication issued 953,522 new books; 2,509,805 reprints; and 4,277,250 copies of tracts and pamphlets.¹² The Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America was created and authorized by a formal resolution on November 16, 1918. The Board of Publication was formally chartered on January 29, 1919 by the Court of Common Pleas at Philadelphia. The 1918 creation of the Board of Publication was a merger of the Board of Publication of the General Council; the Lutheran Publication Society of the General Synod; and the Lutheran Board of Publication of the United Synod of the South. The Lutheran Publication Society was the oldest of the three organizations, officially forming on May 1, 1855. The General Council was organized in 1867. The Board of Publication of the United Synod of the South was initiated in 1898 when nine members were assembled to pursue the institution’s interest in “providing and circulating” church literature. This establishment occurred just over a decade after the United Synod organized in 1886. The following publications were initially issued by this press: “the *Book of Worship*; *Hawkin’s Memorial Catechism*; *Voigt’s Primer of Lutheranism and Biblical Dogmatics*; *C.A. Miller’s Sacramental Feast*; and *Cronk’s Sunday School Hymnal*.¹³

⁹ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders’ Guide (PRERBG)*, 30 October 1929, 692.

¹⁰ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 October 1929, 30.

¹¹ *PRERBG*, 4 December 1929, 773.

¹² Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

¹³ Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

Even after the Crash of 1929, the Board of Publication produced copious materials, including, but not limited to the following:

The Annual Year Book of the United Lutheran Church in America
The Lesson Commentary
The “Student’s Illustrated Self-Pronouncing” Gift Bible
A Manual on Worship by Paul Zeller Strodach, D.D.
Office Literature and Requisites for Vacation Church School, including Primary and Junior publications
The Common Service Book
The Occasional Services
The Family Service Book
The Parish School Hymnal
The Children’s Hymnal and Service Book
Kirchenbuch
Altar Service of the Common Service Book
The Vestryman, “A New Handbook for Church Officers,” by Calvin P. Swank, S.T.D.
Lutheran Makers of America by I.O. Nothstein, D.D.
The Lutheran Church in American History by Abderl Ross Wentz, Ph.D., D.D.
Henry Melchior Muhlenberg by William K. Frick, D.D.
Penn’s Lutheran Forerunners by Rev. John W. Richards
Lutheran Landmarks and Pioneers in America by William J. Finck, D.D.
An Eagle of the Wilderness by Margaret R. Seebach
Paths in the Wilderness by Rev. C.E. Sparks
Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg by W.J. Mann, D.D.
Weekday Church School, Official Textbooks and Manuals
Sunday School Periodicals:
The Parish School
Lutheran Young Folks by the Editorial Staff of the Parish and Church School Board
Lutheran Boys and Girls edited by Charles P. Wiles, D.D. and Miss Jane Gilbert
Der Jugend Freund
Luther’s Small Catechism
The Key Books, A Series of Official Study Books:
Our Church by Representative Leaders
Forces in Foreign Missions by George Drach, D.D.
A Home Enterprise by John W. Horine, D.D.
The Ministry of Love by Foster U. Gift, D.D.¹⁴

Other products included duplex and single envelopes for Churches and Sunday Schools, Rally Day supplies, etc.

The impetus to build this new manufactory was rooted in the growth of the United Lutheran Church during the interwar years. By 1930, there were 2,790 parishes and 1,511 pastors in the denomination. The number of pastors increased dramatically during the 1920s, escalating from 905 in 1921 to 1,511 in 1930. Adult baptisms and confirmations increased by more than fifty percent, rising from 17,907 in 1921 to 29,002 in 1930.¹⁵

As demonstrated above, the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building satisfies Criterion J.

¹⁴ *The Lutheran*, Various Issues. Source: The Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy.

¹⁵ *The Lutheran*, 29 May 1930.

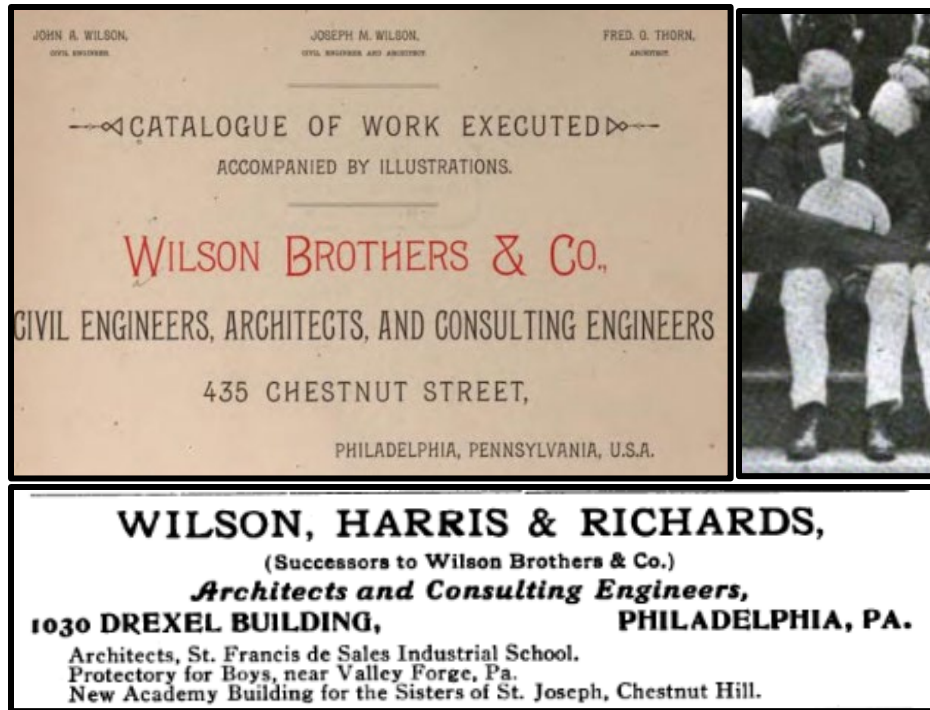


Figure 19. Top left: The cover of a book published by the firm on their own works. Source: *Catalogue of Work Executed, Wilson Brothers & Co.* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1885). Figure 20. Top right: John McArthur Harris, Architect. Source: University of Pennsylvania. Figure 21. Bottom: An advertisement for Wilson, Harris & Richards. Source: *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 30 June 1922, 761.

CRITERION E

The Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building is a distinctive institutional and industrial representation of Harris & Richards, Architects and Engineers. The architectural and engineering legacy of the firm significantly influenced the architectural and economic development of the City of Philadelphia, the larger region, and the nation. As previously discussed, the subject building embodies several heritage themes that mark the Quaker City, including printing, publishing, and the Lutheran church. Representing those legacies, Harris & Richards too descends from an important Philadelphia lineage, originating as Wilson Brothers and Company. By the 1920s, the firm was well-established in the design of both institutional and industrial structures. In fact, the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building was essentially a continuation of an earlier project, which originated in the Muhlenberg Building, also designed by Harris & Richards.

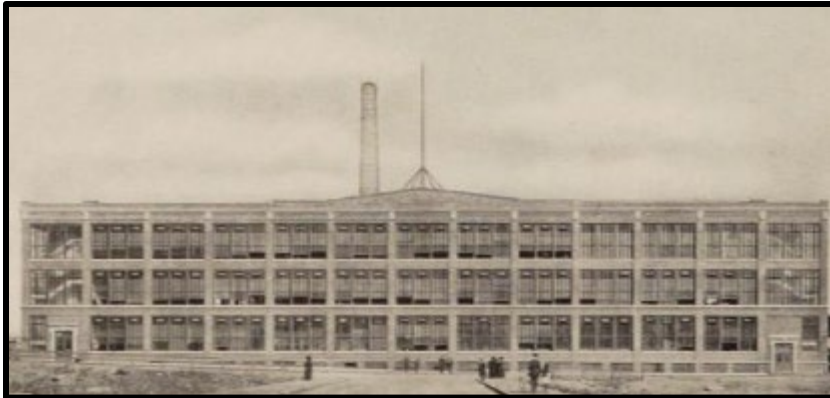


Figure 22. Top: The General Electric Company, Laboratory, Schenectady, New York. Source: p. E. Figure 23. Middle: General Electric Company, Lamp Works, East Boston, Massachusetts. Source: p. 35. Figure 24. Bottom: The General Vehicle Company, Long Island City, New York. Source:.. 34.

When the subject building was commissioned, the practice was comprised of partners John McArthur Harris (1867-1948), architect, and Howard Smith Richards (1867-1937), architect and engineer. A nephew of the eminent architect John McArthur, Jr., who designed Philadelphia's City Hall, Harris, attended the Germantown Academy and received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, during which time he also took classes at the Franklin Institute. After briefly working for George Peterson, architect, he entered into the employ of Wilson Brothers and

Company in 1889, spending the rest of his career in that firm, where he would eventually become a partner.¹⁶ A native Philadelphian, Richards, who attended the University of Pennsylvania and graduated from the Towne Scientific School, was an architect and engineer, spending most of his career with Wilson Brothers and Company before becoming a partner in the firm.¹⁷ This iteration of the firm formed in 1910, enduring a solid quarter-century until Richards retired in 1935. Few design firms were endowed with such a pedigree of architectural and engineering accomplishments. In fact, the origins of the firm date to ca.1876, when Joseph Wilson, John A. Wilson, and Frederick Thorn established the partnership of Wilson Brothers & Company. Beginning with “Centennial Exhibition efforts,” the “illustrious practice” became a national leader in commercial, industrial, and institutional projects, offering an ingenious hybrid of architectural and engineering services. Their clients included colleges and universities, state and local governments, manufacturers, and the transportation industry. The firm worked for giants like the Drexel Estate and the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1899, Wilson Brothers and Company reorganized to include Henry W. Wilson, John McArthur Harris, and Howard S. Richards. Upon the death of Joseph A. Wilson in 1902, the firm became known as Wilson, Harris, & Richards, a partnership that extended until 1910. Under the partnership of Wilson, Harris and Richards, the firm designed major buildings like Union Station in Richmond, Virginia, and the Land Title & Trust Company in Philadelphia.¹⁸



Figure 25. The General Electric Company, Building No. 26, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Source: Hathi Trust.

¹⁶ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG)*, 12 November 1919, 721.; Sandra L. Tatman. “John McArthur Harris (1867-1948),” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Database. < [Harris, John McArthur \(1867-1948\) -- Philadelphia Architects and Buildings](#)> Accessed on 25 February 2025.

¹⁷ Sandra L. Tatman. “Howard Smith Richards (1867-1937),” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Database. < [Richards, Howard Smith \(1867-1937\) -- Philadelphia Architects and Buildings](#)> Accessed on 25 February 2025.

¹⁸ Sixteenth Street Architecture. (United States, Commission of Fine Arts, 1978.)



Figure 26. The General Electric Company, West Philadelphia. Source: *The Brickbuilder*, September 1929.

The final iteration of the firm was no less impressive than the previous decades. Their work included the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer at New York City in 1912; a new four-story factory building for Walter P. Miller at York Avenue and Noble Street at Philadelphia, also in 1912.^{19 20} In 1914, the firm was engaged in several projects related to the State Sanatorium for Tuberculosis, which was commissioned by Pennsylvania's Department of Health. Located in Cresson, Pennsylvania, the work extended through 1919.²¹ In 1917, the Niles-Bement-Pond Company at Kearny Meadows, New Jersey commissioned a \$3 million industrial plant for the manufacture of machinery.²² Soon after came the Sprague Electric Works at Bloomfield, New Jersey in 1918.²³ The firm was commissioned to design a factory for the Peerless Paper Box Manufacturing Company at Philadelphia in 1922.²⁴ These are just a few examples of the variety of their work.

Like Wilson Brothers before it, Harris & Richards was adept at evolving with the times, amassing an impressive oeuvre of institutional and industrial commissions during the interwar years. The subject building fits into a period in which Harris & Richards designed large industrial buildings, often articulated in the Colonial Revival style, as applied to large, often multi-story factories. While smaller in scale based on the needs of the client, the subject building is akin to other works of the firm, including the seven-story laboratory of the General Electric Company at Schenectady, New York; the Lamp Works of the General Electric Company at East Boston, Massachusetts; Building No. 6 of the General Electric Company's Erie Works at Erie, Pennsylvania; the General Vehicle Company at Long Island City, New York; the five-story Building No. 26 of the General Electric Company at Fort Wayne, Indiana; and the colossal seven-story General Electric Company in West Philadelphia.²⁵ All of these structures are of a similar Colonial Revival, red-and-white appearance.

¹⁹ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 March 1912, 13.

²⁰ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 October 1912, 11.

²¹ *PRERBG*, 7 October 1914; and *PRERBG*, 1 November 1916.; and *PRERBG*, 1 January 1919.

²² "Designing \$3,000,000 Plant," *The Central New Jersey Home News*, 10 December 1917, 5.

²³ *American Architect*, 27 February 1918.

²⁴ *The Iron Trade Review*, 2 March 1922, 634.

²⁵ *PRERBG*, 13 March 1912.; *Lupton Service Products, Catalogue No. 9*. (Philadelphia: David Lupton's Sons Company, 1916), 46, 57, 74-75, and 83.; and *PRERBG*, 15 June 1927, 373.

Ranking at the top of their field, Harris & Richards combined an attractive architectural treatment with the most up-to-date technology in the building trades, continuing to bring both architectural and engineering services to the table for their clients. The subject building is no exception, satisfying Criterion E for its representation of the work of Harris & Richards.



Figure 27. The primary (south) and side (east) of the subject building in 1951. Source: Fred R. Twers, photographer, Phillyhistory.org.



Figure 28. The Board of Publication at the subject building in 1930. Source: Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry C. Jennings. *The Methodist Book Concern*. (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1924).

John William Wallace. "Early Printing in Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, (Philadelphia: 1880).

Lutheran Archives and Records Center, Mt. Airy

Library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy

Pamphlet: *The Board of Publication*. (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, United Lutheran Church, 1932).

Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Database

Rev. J. G. Walker, D.D. "Fifty Years Among Philadelphia Baptists," *The Baptist Commonwealth*, 11 June 1908, 8.

The Jewish Publication Society <https://jps.org/about/> Accessed on 21 March 2025.

The Lutheran.

The Philadelphia Inquirer.

The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders' Guide.

"The Roger Williams Building," *The Mercantile and Financial Times*, 28 March 1908, 7.

"The Witherspoon Building," *The Herald and Presbyter*, 14 April 1909, 4.