

ADDRESS: 419 W CLAPIER ST

Name of Resource: Outbuildings
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Shelby Lane LLC
Nominator: SoLo Germantown
Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 419 W. Clapier Street, near McKean Avenue in southwest Germantown, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Several outbuildings, some interconnected, stand on the property. They were associated with the house on the adjacent property at 5000 McKean Avenue but were subdivided off in the 1950s. The same nominator has submitted a nomination for 5000 McKean Avenue, which was planned to be reviewed simultaneously, but the property owner was granted a continuance to July 2026.

The Historical Commission reviewed and rejected a nomination to designate this property at 419 W. Clapier Street on 14 November 2025; the Commission concluded that the nomination failed to demonstrate that the property satisfies any Criteria for Designation. The Historical Commission's jurisdiction over the property from the first nomination lapsed on 14 November with the rejection of the nomination. Following that rejection, the nominator submitted the current, revised version of the nomination on 23 November 2025. The Historical Commission notified the property owner that it would review the revised nomination on 16 December 2025, initiating its jurisdiction over the property for a second time.

On 19 November 2025, before the submission of the revised nomination, the property owner submitted demolition permit application DP-2025-001255 to the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I). The application proposed to demolish all structures on the site. The Historical Commission did not review the demolition application because it had no jurisdiction over the property at the time. L&I issued the demolition permit on 12 December 2025. The demolition activities authorized by the permit are not subject to the Historical Commission's review or approval. All structures on the site can be legally demolished regardless of the action the Historical Commission takes on this nomination.

The original nomination argued that the property satisfied Criteria A and J, owing to its association with the James Mapes Dodge family. The Historical Commission rejected that argument. The current, revised nomination argues that the property satisfies Criteria C and J. To satisfy Criterion C, a resource must "reflect the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style." The nomination asserts that the "adaptively reused collection of auxiliary buildings harmoniously designed with romantic, picturesque detailing and features, creating a stylistic through line, ... satisfies Criterion C." Although unrelated to architectural style, the nomination also claims that the group of outbuildings with the house on the adjacent parcel constitute "the most complete surviving suburban ensemble in Germantown, satisfying Criterion C." To satisfy Criterion J, a resource must "exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community." The nomination asserts that the "property's continuous occupation by upper-middle class and affluent Philadelphians of professional and civic distinction underscores Germantown's historic significance as a domestic retreat for the city's mercantile and industrial elite" satisfies Criterion J.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the revised nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation. The nomination fails to associate any distinctive architectural style with the group of modest

outbuildings; therefore, the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criterion C. Moreover, the nomination asserts without evidence that the outbuildings are “the most complete surviving suburban ensemble in Germantown.” Many nineteenth-century outbuildings that are more architecturally and historically significant than these survive in Germantown. The nomination asserts that property satisfies Criterion J because a series of nineteenth and twentieth-century owners were affluent, but affluence alone is not a measure of historical significance; the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criterion 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: 419 West Clapier Street

Postal code: 19144

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Greenhouse, Garage, Gardener's Cottage, Grounds

Current/Common Name: (cont'd from above) at the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate

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: Residence

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): from 1855 to 1954

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: ca.1855-63, ca.1885-1889, ca.1905-1911, 1923

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: J. L. Connaroe (1923)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: H.H. Hudson (ca.1905-1910)

Original owner: H.L. Carson; G.S. Strawbridge; J.M. Dodge

Other significant persons: _____

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 SoLo Germantown Date November 23, 2025

Name with Title Allison Weiss Email awfromhh6@gmail.com

Street Address 4908 Wayne Avenue Telephone

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19144

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: November 23, 2025

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: December 15, 2025

Date of Notice Issuance: December 16, 2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Shelby Lane, LLC

Address: 62 Rockford Rd, Suite 300

City: Wilmington State: DE Postal Code: 19806

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: January 21, 2026

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: February 13, 2026

Date of Final Action:

Designated Rejected

12/7/18



NOMINATION OF

419 WEST CLAPIER STREET

**The Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Garage,
Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds for the
Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate**

TO THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NOVEMBER 2025

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



Fig. 1. Parcel map of 5000 McKean Avenue from the website of the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. The original parcel extended in the same length and breadth southeasterly to the abandoned Sevier Street easement and included 419 West Clapier Street.

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected. Situate in the 59th Ward of the City of Philadelphia and described to wit: Beginning at a point on the Northwesterly side of Clapier Street (fifty feet wide) at the distance of One hundred Fifty feet measured South Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds West along the said Northwesterly side of Clapier Street from the Southwesterly side of McKean Street [sic] (fifty feet wide); thence extending South Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds West along the said Northwesterly side of Clapier Street One hundred Forty Six feet, Eight inches to a point; thence North Fifty degrees, Nineteen minutes, Thirty-two seconds West One hundred Forty nine feet, Eleven and One-eighth inches to a point; thence North Thirty-seven degrees, Ten minutes, Thirty-four seconds East One hundred Forty-eight feet, One inch to a point; thence South Forty-nine degrees, Forty-seven minutes, Four seconds East One hundred Fifty feet to a point on said Northwesterly side of Clapier, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning. Being known as 419 West Clapier Street.

The property is known as Parcel No. 047N040066, Office of Property Assessment Account No. 133066700.

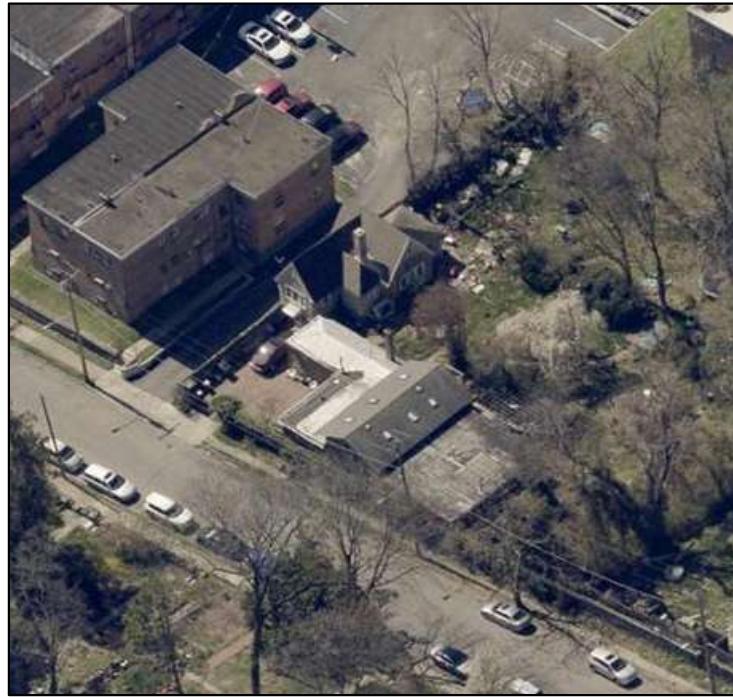


Fig. 2. Aerial photo of 419 W. Clapier Street from the northwest. Source: Pictometry, the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 29, 2025.

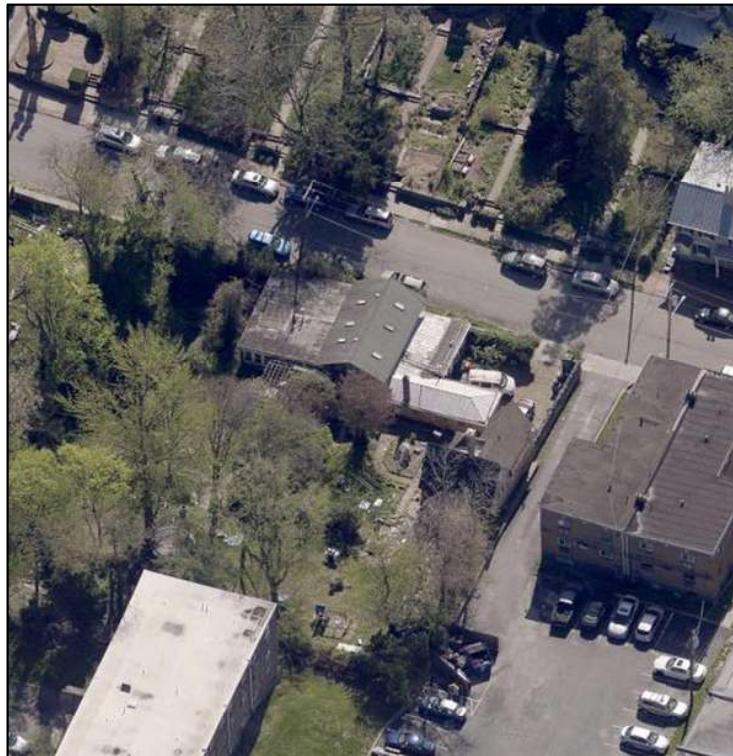


Fig. 3. Aerial photo of 419 W. Clapier Street from the southwest. Source: Pictometry, the Office of Property Assessment, City of Philadelphia. Accessed March 29, 2025.



Fig. 4. Key to Site Plan and Features for the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate. Source: Zillow.com

Buildings on the parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue (see separate nomination)

1. Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge House, constructed ca.1855-62;¹ alterations, 1891 by architect Mantle Fielding.
2. Perimeter schist wall, approximately 48" tall, constructed after 1915.²

Buildings on the parcel at 419 W. Clapier Street

3. Greenhouse, constructed completed ca.1905-10.³
4. Carriage House, constructed ca.1855-62.⁴
5. Garage, constructed ca.1906-1911.⁵
6. Coachman's Residence, constructed ca.1885-1889.⁶
7. Brick Courtyard, constructed ca.1885-1889.⁷
8. Gardener's Cottage, constructed 1923, architect J. Linerd Connaroe.

¹ Plan of A Lot of Ground Situate in the 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, Surveyed June 30, 1855, by Joseph King, Jr., Surveyor (King Survey 1855). Source: Collins & Autenrieth Architectural Works (MSS 0359), University of Delaware Special Collections; and Philadelphia Atlas (Philadelphia: Samuel Smedley, 1862).

² This date is based on photographic evidence from April 1915 that does not show the perimeter wall between the Greenhouse frontage along Clapier and the McKean Avenue corner.

³ A notice was published in November 1905 addressing the construction of the one-story structure. However, the building is first indicated on the 1910 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1910).

⁴ This date range is based on visual evidence and the Carriage House's presence on the 1862 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Samuel Smedley, 1862). Casey Weisdock from the International Masonry Institute has indicated that the random course, rubble schist typology of the Carriage House (and House at 5000 McKean) is common in pre-industrial quarrying, concurrent with ca.1855-1862 (Interview, October 23, 2025).

⁵ The Garage is an enclosure of the south entry to the Carriage House with its large roof overhang. It appears initially on the 1911 Bromley Atlas.

⁶ The Coachman's Residence was the first addition to the property after the initial ca.1855-1862 build. It appears on the 1889 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 22nd Ward.* (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co.).

⁷ The Brick Courtyard was installed as early as ca.1885-1889 when Strawbridge built the Coachman's Residence creating a courtyard accessed from Clapier, abandoning the driveway bisecting the Grounds.

6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject property at 419 West Clapier Street contains the auxiliary buildings of the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate from the mid nineteenth century through 1923: a Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, a Garage, a Greenhouse, a Gardener's Cottage, a Brick Courtyard, and a perimeter schist wall enclosing and framing expansive Grounds. They were purpose built for the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate whose main House is located on the adjacent parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue in the Germantown neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia (ref. companion nomination of 5000 McKean Avenue). The oldest of the buildings dates to ca.1855-1862 and the latest construction dates from 1923. The small collection of buildings on a large, verdant south parcel are remnants of an era and neighborhood were replete with suburban estates with outbuildings that served the practical and recreational pursuits of its residents.



Fig. 5. Main entrance to the subject property from Clapier Street. A bluestone sidewalk extends from the driveway all the way to McKean Avenue to the north (right side of photo). Date: March 28, 2025.

Site

Situated on the northwest side of West Clapier Street, south of McKean Avenue, the resource is one half acre in size with two distinct building footprints surrounding a brick Motor Court, all

situated in the southernmost corner of the property. The buildings cluster to maximize garden space at the interior of the lot, as several residents employed gardeners, and to facilitate vehicular access from Clapier Street. There remain some specimen trees and shrubs, including a weeping cherry, a large crape myrtle, and a European beech.⁸ A brick path meanders through the garden space defined by the L-shaped footprints. The subject parcel was from ca.1855 until 1954 one half of a full acre parcel, connected to the existing half-acre parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue.⁹

There is a schist wall at the south end of the property, at the boundary with the driveway of an adjacent apartment building. The wall turns from that driveway up along West Clapier Street, opening briefly with simplified newels - and without gates - to the brick-paved motor court, and extends along Clapier and the adjacent property at 5000 McKean where it terminates as a retaining wall at the corner with McKean. The schist base of the Greenhouse is aligned with and older than the perimeter wall. Along the entire Clapier Street frontage, there is a bluestone slab sidewalk that extends from the driveway opening to the corner with McKean Avenue.



Fig. 6. A view of the subject property along Clapier Street with the motor court in front of the Gardener's Cottage to the left, the Coachman's Residence and Garage, the Carriage House, and the Greenhouse. The schist perimeter wall at the south side and along the street that terminates at McKean Avenue, underscoring the once unified parcels of 5000 McKean and was open at the Brick Courtyard to allow vehicular access on Clapier. There is photographic evidence that the wall was constructed after 1915. Date: August 9, 2025.

⁸ John T. McNeill, "Great and Historic Trees of Philadelphia County." *Germantowne Crier*, Vol. 20, Number 1, March 1968, p. 21-29.

⁹ Deed dated May 24, 1954, Lot 66 (subdivision of 9), 22nd Ward. Grantee: Kern Dodge and The Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts, Trustees; Grantor: O.C. No. 566, Estate of Josephine Kern Dodge by will.

One enters the property today via the West Clapier Street Brick Courtyard in the southeast corner of the lot around which the buildings are huddled, allowing for a panoramic view of the expansive grounds and illustrating the premium owners had for maximizing garden space.

Buildings

Gardener's Cottage

The building at the southernmost part of the parcel was designed in a simple, cottage revival style in 1923 by J.L. Connaroe, two and a half stories tall (1 ½ above a cellar) with walls treated in stucco above a schist water table that matches the height of the adjacent schist wall that surrounds the property. It is relatively unadorned in architectural detail but its massing with sharp vertical peaks in its roof cross gables faintly expresses the spirit of a picturesque Gothic revival cottage. Maps and anecdotes indicate that this cottage replaced an earlier one in about the same location, (further proved by a demolition line item in the 1923 Pay Requisitions).



Fig. 7. East elevation of 1923 Cottage with motor court and schist entry newels in the foreground. At the far left are the Erringer Place apartments and a driveway that corresponds to an access easement from the Godfrey ownership era.¹⁰ Date: March 28, 2025.

¹⁰ Deed Book T.H., Vol. 29, page 253-54, dated November 2, 1863, between Benjamin G. & Emeline M. Godfrey (grantor) and Hampton L. Carson (grantee). “A certain Twenty-foot-wide Lane or street hereafter mentioned land ...for the use and benefit of his [Godfrey] lots adjoining same,” allowing Godfrey access to his adjacent property fronting Manheim Street from Clapier Street behind and to the south of the subject property.

East (Motor Court) Elevation

The east elevation of the Gardener's Cottage faces the Brick Courtyard off Clapier Street. As the last building constructed on the property, it appears to have been designed on the footprint of an earlier cottage where it completes the courtyard formed by the Coachman's Residence and Garage. There is a narrow passage between the Gardener's Cottage and the Coachman's Residence allowing access to the Grounds beyond.

The side gable facing the Motor Court recounts three levels, with a small, vertical window at the third level, a tripartite "Chicago-style" window at the second level, and a single-leaf entry door at the ground level. This lower level may be the cellar level the architect called out as a \$500 change order to the contract in a 1924 pay application. The windows all have brick sills. The door opening is cut into the tall, schist water table and is covered by a wall-mounted, metal awning. Beyond and to the north of the side gable of the main L-shaped volume, and past the gate separating the buildings from the garden can be seen a chimney and a small cube volume with pyramidal roof; there is a rectangular window near the eave in the cube volume.



Fig. 8. North elevation of 1923 Cottage by J.L. Connaroe sited at the southernmost edge of the subject parcel, facing the garden and the main House at 5000 McKean Avenue. Date: March 28, 2025.

North (Garden) Elevation

The north elevation of the Gardener's Cottage reads as a two-story building since the lowest level, expressed in schist, is barely visible above the ground plan. This elevation shows the variety of the massings with the main L-shaped volume that faces the east motor court expressed here at the north side similarly with a small, vertical casement window at the top level and a

window opening with three, equally sized windows at the lower level; all opening have brick sills. The lower windows are 6/6 divided light and double-hung.

To the east, in the crux of the L-shaped main volume, is a one-story cube with pyramidal roof; within the wall with its head abutting the roofline is a small, vertical window with brick sill. Between the cube volume and the north-facing side gable of the main volume is a chimney covered in stucco with brick trim at the opening.

To the west of the side gable of the main volume is a one-story lean-to with a single-leaf access door to the west of a boarded-up window opening.



Fig. 9. West elevation of the Gardener's Cottage. Note the brick footpath that extends from the motor court side beyond along the north side of the building to the left and around to the rear lean-to in the foreground. Date: March 28, 2025.

West (Rear) Elevation

The west elevation of the Gardener's Cottage has the pyramidal-roof lean-to in the foreground with the roof plane of the L-shaped main volume in the background with a small sliver of the wall of the main volume shown at the north. The west wall of the lean-to mostly contains four window openings, all with jalousie windows (though one is boarded-up from the exterior), within a wall of side shingles. The stucco from the wall plane of the main volume is visible on the north or garden side of the elevation.



Fig. 10. South elevation of the Gardener's Cottage showing the driveway and brick wall (left side of photo) of the Erringer Place Apartments to the south. Date: March 28, 2025.

South Elevation

The south elevation of the Gardener's Cottage abuts the south property line. The schist water table meets the height and plane of the earlier schist property wall construction that surround the motor court to the east (Fig. 9). The L-shaped main volume is expressed with two different roofs: a central side-gabled bay with an extension to the east that reads as one-story tall under its tall roof. A lower level is indicated by two small window openings (one in each bay) at the upper part of the schist foundation wall, which itself gets smaller the further west it goes. In the side gable, a similar pattern is found to the other gable-front elevations: a small, vertical window in the peak of the gable at the upper level, and a window opening with two, 6/6 divided light, double-hung windows; both openings have brick sills. The eastern side wall has two window openings under a slight roof overhang that has been patched; a tv-satellite dish is mounted here.



Fig. 11. South elevation of the auxiliary buildings from the Erringer Place Apartments driveway. Peeking over the top of the roof ridge of the stone building is the main residence. Date: August 9, 2025.



Fig. 12, left. The L-shaped footprint wrapping the Brick Courtyard is comprised of the Coachman's Residence which extends out from the Carriage House creating a courtyard and access off Clapier Street. Date: March 28, 2025. Fig. 13, right. A photograph from the *Evening Ledger* dated May 12, 1930, showing a Dodge grandson and friend in the Brick Courtyard in front of the Garage. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Coachman's Residence and Garage

The Coachman's Residence and Garage represent two different construction initiatives yet are clad uniformly in the same siding giving a unified impression around the Brick Courtyard. Collectively, they create an L-shaped footprint around the northern part of the Brick Courtyard. The Coachman's Residence is the earliest construction, dating from ca. 1885-1889 during George Strawbridge's residency. It extends south from the Stable creating a partially enclosed area at the south opening to the Carriage House, formally dividing the private garden from the quotidian disruptions of horse and carriage maintenance. This represented a change in the way the Estate was approached by the residents: an earlier extension from the McKean Avenue governor's drive that allowed access to the Carriage House was abandoned in favor of access from Clapier Street into the Brick Courtyard at the south opening to the Carriage House. The Coachman's Residence extending south from the Carriage House was a deliberate decision to form a cloister visually removed from the Grounds. The Garage appears in a 1930 photograph taken in the motor court.



Fig. 14. West elevation of the Chauffeur's Residence, taken from the garden. Date: July 27, 2025.

West (Garden) Elevation

The west elevation of the Coachman's Residence faces the garden side of the property. It is a one-story construction with weathered wood siding and a metal seamed pitched roof with a brick chimney extending up from close to the eave. There are four window openings of various sizes, three of which having high sills giving cause to think that this leg of the garage was used more as a workshop. The building is connected to the earlier stone building which intersects the roofline.



Fig. 15, left. The junction of the north elevation of the Carriage House and the Coachman's Residence. Date: July 27, 2025. Fig. 16, right, the southernmost window opening in the west elevation of the garage's workshop extension showing what may be an original cased wood window with divided lites. Date: August 9, 2025.

South (Motor Court) Elevation

The south elevation of the Coachman's Residence has contemporary infill windows installed behind security bars. The roof extends only slightly over the wall plane. Horizontal wood cladding covers the entire exterior wall with simple wood window frames and sill at the window opening.



Fig. 17. The south and east elevations of the Coachman's Residence. This leg of the L-shaped construction extends toward the Gardener's Cottage (left) into the brick motor court. The wood gate between the Garage and the Cottage leads from the Brick Courtyard to the Grounds. Date: Mar. 28, 2025.

The south elevation of the Garage has had only superficial changes since 1930 when it was in the background of a photograph of the owner's grandson that appeared in the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger* (Fig. 13). Moving from west (at the extension) to east (at Clapier Street), there is a single window opening, a door, a car door, and another window. While the doors and windows themselves have been replaced, the configuration of these openings has not changed.



Fig. 18. A view along West Clapier Street looking westwardly toward the outbuildings. Left to right, the Gardener's Cottage, the Coachman's Residence, the Garage, the Carriage House, and the Greenhouse, all huddled against the schist perimeter wall opening to the Brick Courtyard at the rear corner of the subject property. Date: August 9, 2025.

East (Motor Court) Elevation

The east elevation of the garage faces the brick motor court and is an extension of the workshop portion of the garage. It is covered in horizontal wood siding and has one window opening with a replacement window. The east elevation of the vestibule part of the building faces the schist wall at the perimeter of the property and has two window openings each divided into four lites with a high sill. This part of the garage connects flush to the corner of the stone building to its north.

Carriage House

This building was constructed ca.1855-1862 at the same time as the main House at 5000 McKean Avenue. It is a rectangular volume that is one and a half stories in height under a gable roof with deep overhang exposing rafter tails at all elevations. The east and west elevations are the gable ends that face the street and garden, respectively. The Carriage House is entirely clad in schist configured in a random, rubble course pattern like main House. It was constructed with a south facing entry and deep porch overhang now enclosed within the Garage (Fig. X).¹¹

East (Street) Elevation

The east elevation of the Carriage House faces West Clapier Street. There is one opening centered in the masonry at the second, or loft, level of the building that is infilled with a door made of vertical wood boards with long, metal hinges at the south side. In the center of the door is a six-lite window above a protruding air conditioning unit. To the north, the Greenhouse wall connects in an overlap of a few inches deep from the corner of the stone building.



Fig. 19, left. The east elevation of the Carriage House between the Garage to the south and the Greenhouse to the north. Fig. 20, right. The east elevation of the Greenhouse to the north of the Carriage House. The shingled panels are not original; they cover window sashes. The base of the east Greenhouse wall is flush with the later perimeter wall on either side. Photos dated August 9, 2025.

¹¹ In a letter from James Mapes Dodge to his mother dated May 12, 1890, he mentions visiting the new house (subject property) and mentions “I expect [son] Kern’s pony this week...” indicating an early stable use to the building. From the Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

North (Solarium) Elevation

The masonry wall of the north elevation is only barely visible above the roof of the solarium and under the overhang of the roof. The field of the roof (covered in asphalt shingles) is pierced by three skylights, matching somewhat the configuration at the south elevation.

West (Garden) Elevation

The west elevation of the Carriage House faces the garden and is the gable end of the pitched roof, like the east elevation. The first level of the masonry contains two window openings neither of which appear to have been altered from door openings (thereby implying access to the building was always from the north or south through the existing constructions). There is a non-historic wood, switchback staircase that leads to a door centered in the second level of the building.



Fig. 21. The west elevation of the stone building facing the garden and showing the connections to the garage to the south (right) and to the solarium to the north (left). There are two window openings at the lower level which do not appear to have been altered from door structures; each contains wood frames and divided lite windows. Date: March 28, 2025.

South (Garage) Elevation

The south elevation of the Carriage House is only visible above the roof of the Garage below. The roof plane, covered in asphalt shingles, overhangs this connection. In the roof plane, three square, evenly spaced skylights can be seen.

Greenhouse

This one-level construction to the north of the Carriage House was likely constructed between 1905 and 1910 by the Dodge family, judging by both its initial presence on the 1910 Bromley Atlas and by its brick construction style, reminiscent of early twentieth century construction. There is a reference in the Nov. 1, 1905, *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* for a “carriage house” in brick and glass by H.H. Hudson (who constructed the porches at the main house in 1902) at the southwest corner of Clapier and McKean. The space seemed designed certainly to use as a Greenhouse, allowing plant storage or winterization. There is glazing in the roof directly above a concrete basin centered in the north wall, a feature that could be used for goldfish or more tropical plantings. It's likely, given the concrete floor, that it could have been a sculpture studio for Mrs. Dodge who was active as an artist between 1916 and 1928.



Fig. 22, left. The north walls of the Carriage House and the Greenhouse intersect with each other, and the solarium wall rises from the perimeter schist wall. Fig. 23, right. The north wall of the solarium showing the extensive fenestration along this elevation with low sills in the brick wall and a couple of brick pilasters breaking up the window openings. An access door is located closer to the east side of this elevation. The roof field of the stone building beyond can be seen with skylights. Far left foreground is the top of the perimeter schist wall. Photos: August 9, 2025.

East (Street) Elevation

The east elevation of the Greenhouse faces West Clapier Street. The base of the east wall of the structure is aligned with the later perimeter schist wall; the half-round capping stones of the wall in front of the stone building give way to the corner brick pilasters that frame the wall. There is a central brick pilaster that historically divided the window openings, two on each side. Only the pair of windows on either side of the central pilaster are exposed today; the other two openings have been infilled with plywood over which are wood shingles. This elevation shows a gentle slope to the shed roof as it extends down to the north.

North Elevation

The north elevation of the Greenhouse faces the main House. The corner brick pilasters frame another window wall which is subdivided by two additional brick pilasters. All windows meet the low brick wall base that encircles the structure. There is an access door placed between two pairs of windows at the northern section between the pilasters. Several of the windows seem to be original wood, double hung sashes with divided lites, but access was limited for closer inspection. The roof can barely be seen since the slope toward this elevation is low, but there is a gutter extending the length of this elevation.



Fig. 24. The west elevation of the Greenhouse faces the garden and a pergola structure under which currently is a hot tub. There are double doors between a slate patio and the interior. Date: Aug. 11, 2025.



Fig. 25. The interior of the Greenhouse from the garden-facing windows. There is glazing in the roof at northern side of the building and below it what seems to be a piped concrete basin that allowed for goldfish or permanent plantings. The floors are exposed concrete and there is no insulation at the ceiling rafters. The east side (opposite) shows the windows on each far end boarded up by plywood (and faced at the exterior by shingles). There is a parge coat on the interior side of the east perimeter schist wall with a more structured sill below the windows. Date: August 11, 2025.

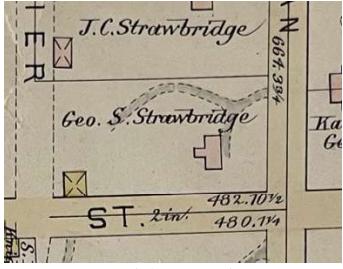
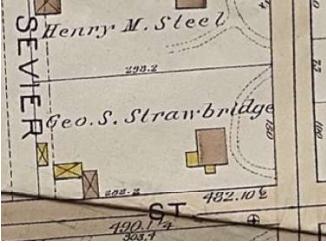
South (Garden) Elevation

The south elevation faces the garden and, like the other elevations, contains mostly pairs of windows framed by brick pilasters and a brick base. There is a pair of contemporary French doors that open to a patio of slate blocks over which is a contemporary pergola structure. It is from this elevation that interior photos were taken of this structure. It has an exposed frame ceiling, concrete floors, and what seems to possibly be a plumbed planting bed and sink of some sort under the roof skylight at the north side of the roof.



Fig. 26. The yard facing north toward the main House at 5000 McKean Avenue, from the Gardener's Cottage with the Carriage House and Coachman's Residence to the right and the Grounds laid out to the left. Date: July 27, 2025.

Timeline of Construction of Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate components

Year	Resource	Property Owner	Justification
Ca.1855-1862	Construction of the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge House and Carriage House	Benjamin Granger Godfrey (1853-1863)	Not on 1855 survey; appears initially on 1862 Smedley Atlas
Ca.1885-1889	Coachman's Residence	George Strawbridge (1882-1891)	Not on the 1885 Atlas; appears initially on 1889 Atlas (see below)
Ca. 1885-1889	Brick Courtyard; abandoned driveway extension from McKean Avenue governor's drive through the estate to the Carriage House	George Strawbridge (1882-1891)	Coachman's Residence at the Carriage House creates a courtyard with access to Clapier Street making it possible to abandon the steep drive that extends from the McKean governor's drive through the estate; drive extension shown in 1885 Atlas, not on 1889.
	 1885 Hopkins Atlas	 1889 Bromley Atlas	
Ca.1905-1910	Greenhouse	James Mapes Dodge (1891-1953)	Notice for construction advertised in 1905; doesn't appear on maps until 1910
Ca.1906-1911	Garage	James Mapes Dodge (1891-1953)	This is an enclosure of the south porch of the Carriage House. Doesn't appear on 1906 or 1910 Atlases but does in 1911.
1923	Gardener's Cottage	James Mapes Dodge (1891-1953)	By architect J. Linerd Connaroe to replace an earlier version.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Part of the larger Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate, the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Brick Courtyard, Garage, Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds at 419 West Clapier Street is a significant historic resource in Philadelphia and meets Criteria C & J for designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia zoning code:

- (c) Reflect the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;**
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.**

The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Brick Courtyard, Garage, Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds are a distinguished example of Germantown's domestic architecture from the last half of the nineteenth century, exemplifying a collection of auxiliary buildings on a large tract of land arranged to service the practical needs and recreational pursuits of its wealthy residents. Situated on a half-acre parcel today, adjacent to another half-acre parcel where the Estate's House is located (as presented in the companion nomination of 5000 McKean Avenue), that together embodies the once rural character of lower Germantown, the subject property stands as one of the most intact, nineteenth century suburban estates of moderate size in southwest Germantown.

Together with the associated Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge House, the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate constitutes one of the most intact suburban residential ensembles surviving in Germantown. Similar neighboring estates have mostly since been removed in favor of denser housing development. The subject property emulated larger estates that were nearby such as Fernhill, the estate developed in 1817 by wealthy merchant Louis Clapier and continued in 1848 by Henry Pratt McKean, a grandson of US founding father Thomas McKean, governor of Pennsylvania. The Fernhill estate included a remarkable Italianate Mansion from McKean's residency, two cottages, a large barn, and multiple greenhouses; only one building of this estate survives. The subject property was historically occupied by upper-middle class and affluent Philadelphians whose professional and civic prominence reflected Germantown's stature as a desirable suburban community for the city's elite citizens. As a unified complex, the Estate represents the economic, social, and historical heritage of the Germantown community and its development as a suburban district.

The Carson family occupied the subject property when it was relatively new, from 1863 to 1882. During this time, the property included both the Carriage House and the main House within the combined, one-acre grounds of the subject parcel and the adjacent property at 5000 McKean Avenue. The property may have been a speculative development by Benjamin Granger Godfrey who owned the subject property 1853-1863 when it was adjacent to his Manheim Street dwelling as part of a multi-acre parcel (Fig. 33). Dry goods merchant Hampton Lawrence Carson, along his son Joseph, both graduates of Germantown Academy, met the profile of Philadelphia's

business elite. During the family's nearly two decades of ownership, the Carson family made no documented additions to the property. They used the Carriage House for vehicle storage – a luxury in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, when limited suburban homes in Germantown included such auxiliary structures – and perhaps for staff accommodations. The 1866 Tax Assessment confirms Carson's ownership of two carriages, and according to the 1870 US Census, William Morgan, a gardener, lived with the family and may have occupied the Carriage House loft, as a male staff member likely would not have lived in the main House (Fig. 36). The presence of both a Carriage House and extensive Grounds with a dedicated gardener demonstrates the Carsons' elevated economic and social standing within the Germantown community. Their tenure maintained the estate's architectural integrity and preserved its semi-rural setting at a time of increasing suburban infill.

The Strawbridge family occupied the subject house from 1882 until 1891. George Stockton Strawbridge, a prominent Quaker merchant and businessman, was part of the family firm – Strawbridge and Clothier, founded in 1868, one of the most important department stores in Philadelphia commercial history. His brother and business partner, Justus C. Strawbridge, lived next-door at 5008 McKean Avenue until 1886 at an estate long since demolished. George and his wife Clara Stetson, niece of the eminent hat manufacturer John Stetson and member of nearby Calvary Episcopal Church, used the property as a private residence for a much shorter period than the Carsons yet made significant additions that underscored the elevated social status of the Estate's residents.

By ca.1885-1889, the Strawbridge family had enlarged the Carriage House with a Coachman's Residence, an extension of the Carriage House that provided living accommodations. By orienting that rectangular building close to the garden side and extending south from the Carriage House, this new construction immediately created an arrangement of buildings that reoriented the vehicular approach to the Estate and created zones of privacy for the family and the staff. The commissioning of the Coachman's Residence and Brick Courtyard (as well as a small cottage, demolished and replaced in 1923) reflected their affluence and social prominence. Their tenure expanded the Estate's auxiliary uses and created a more private and hierarchical arrangement of auxiliary buildings within the pastoral suburban setting.

The Dodge family acquired the property around 1891, maintaining ownership until 1954. Upon acquisition, the Dodges commissioned the final architectural expansion of the Estate, continuing the perimeter cluster of buildings to focus attention on the Grounds and to provide for the family's keen interest in automobiles. Architect Mantle Fielding was hired to execute stylistic updates to the main House, and a local carpenter was used later for updates to the front and side porches.

James Mapes Dodge was the president of the Link-Belt Company nearby in Nicetown and the inventor of the silent chain drive coal storage system that revolutionized coal storage and distribution. Like many prosperous industrialists of the period, Dodge was an automobile

enthusiast who owned several cars over the years, which he proudly photographed around the neighborhood. Reflecting this new vehicular modernity, the family commissioned the Garage ca.1906-1910 by enclosing the south porch of the Carriage House, converting the structure into one suitable for car storage to accommodate their growing collection of automobiles. The Garage and Coachman's Residence were clad in the same siding to allow both spaces to read externally as one, L-shaped building. Additional improvements to the estate included the construction of a Greenhouse and a Gardener's Cottage, reinforcing the estate's role as a symbol of early twentieth-century domestic sophistication and economic success.

The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate was one of several, similar suburban estates that included auxiliary buildings within the boundaries of the property. The area immediately around the subject property, and in Germantown at large, contained dense suburban estates for Philadelphia's elite families that contained auxiliary buildings such as carriage houses, ice houses, greenhouses, cottages, and other structures. These buildings were commissioned to serve the domestic lives of the residents, whether practical (carriage/car storage or staff accommodations) or recreational (gardening or sculpture).

Aside from the expansive Fernhill estate, the subject property was located across Clapier Street from that of Francis B. Reeves, Immergrün, with its carriage house and icehouse on approximately 3.5 acres. The Reeves Estate was noted in Edwin Jellett's accounting of the horticultural life and legacy of the neighborhood in *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners*. The garden aspect of the area's estates meant that several were supported by greenhouses and gardeners. As accounted by Jellett, West Manheim Street, around the corner from the subject property, were the noteworthy suburban estates of civic leaders like William W. Justice, J.L. Erringer and others that likewise contained remarkable landscaped grounds and garden staff.

Additionally, the subject property represents the taste even among the Philadelphia elite, for altering existing properties to continue their serviceable life and use. As an architectural palimpsest, the layers of auxiliary buildings reflect the evolving needs and pursuits of the Estate's residents and the history of the neighborhood, from a pastoral setting of sparsely spaced country seats to an increasingly dense enclave of Philadelphia's civic leaders and wealthy businessmen. This estate represents the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community and is a particularly significant example in Germantown of nineteenth century domestic life.

Together with the associated Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge House on the adjoining parcel at 5000 McKean Avenue, the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate, with its Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Brick Courtyard, Garage, Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds, remains the most complete surviving suburban ensemble in Germantown, satisfying Criterion C. The property's continuous occupation by upper-middle class and affluent Philadelphians of professional and civic distinction underscores Germantown's historic significance as a domestic retreat for the city's mercantile and industrial elite, satisfying Criterion J.

Period of Significance

The Period of Significance is from ca.1855-62 to 1954 spanning the time during which the subject property was documented as part of a one-acre parcel inclusive of the adjacent property at 5000 McKean Avenue (see companion nomination) with the main House and Carriage House as its initial constructions. Currently, the subject property is one half-acre in size.

Ca.1855-1862 marks the last survey of the subject parcel before owner Benjamin Godfrey subdivided approximately four acres on McKean Avenue between Manheim and Clapier Streets. Such a subdivision would have primed the subject property to receive a stone residence and carriage house making it attractive to buyers. By 1862, the House and Carriage House appear on the Smedley Atlas. In 1954, the one-acre parcel was equally subdivided into two half-acre parcels by will of Josephine Kern Dodge, the immediate past owner.

Historic Context: Site Evolution

The southwest corner of Germantown was far enough away from the main Avenue to have avoided the narrow and deep lot partitions that defined those located along Main Street in the eighteenth century. Instead, the subject property had been whittled down over the course of the nineteenth century from larger plantations. In 1777, far southwest Germantown had been owned by members of the powerful Shippen family to the north, and mariner John Ashmead to the south and adjacent to James Logan's land, according to the Duffin map. In 1817, William Shippen sold most of his property in the area to the French-born marine merchant Louis [alternately Lewis] Clapier (1765-1837), who then became the chatelain of Fern Hill.¹² According to an entry in American Aristocracy online, Fern Hill "lay four miles northwest of the city limits, beautifully situated on the first ridge of ground of that long succession of ridges, which, mounting constantly higher, run parallel with each other with short undulating intervals through Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill, some five miles distant on the west and north, where the ground then falls away to the beautiful White Marsh Valley."¹³ Clapier's land holdings extended from Fern Hill up to (and in some cases, past) Manheim Street between Township Line Road (Wissahickon Ave.) and Morris Street.

¹² Deed dated December 6, 1817 Grantor William Shippen et. ux. to Grantee Louis Clapier, Deed Book M.R. Book 17 page 294.

¹³ www.americanaristocracy.com, "Fern Hill Germantown," accessed July 27, 2025, based upon the Henry McKean obituary in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 6, 1894, p1, accessed August 10, 2025.

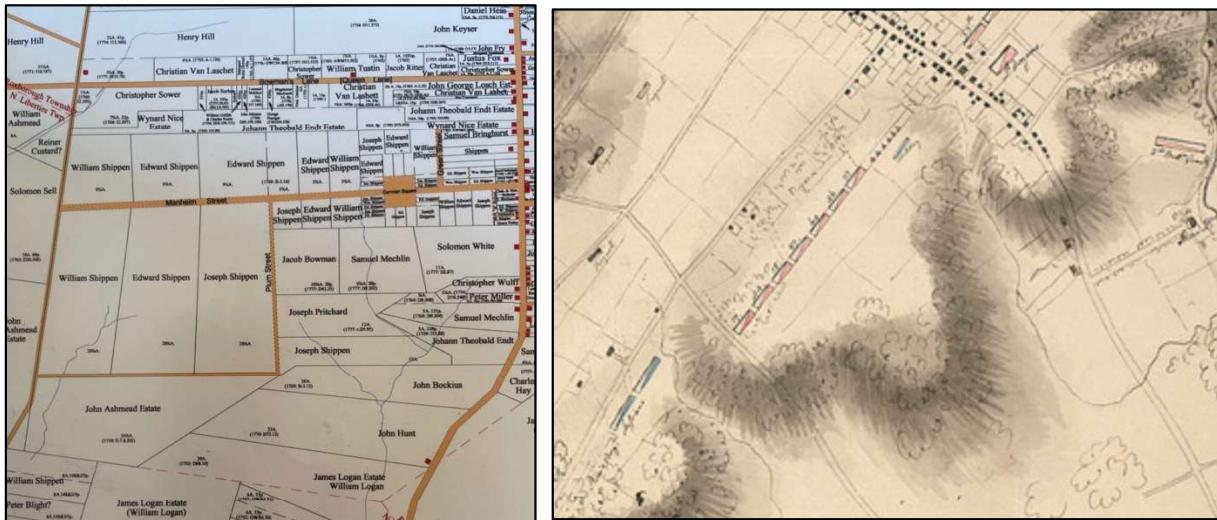


Fig. 27, left. The 1777 Duffin map of Germantown land ownership showing Shippen family ownership of the subject property. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 28, right. The 1777 map of the Battle of Germantown by Archibald Robertson showing the extreme topographical ridge of the plateau where Fern Hill Park is located. Source: Royal Collection Trust online, accessed August 20, 2025.

Over a decade after Clapier's 1837 death, his widow Mary (née Heyl) and four daughters (Theresa Clapier, Caroline [Mrs. Henry] Chancellor, Dorothea [Mrs. Charles] Norris, and Mary Louise [Mrs. Edward Jenner] Coxe) sold the southern parcel – south of approximately what is now Abbottsford Avenue – to Henry Pratt McKean who kept the boundaries of the large parcel more or less intact south and west of Morris Street.¹⁴ He retained Clapier's barn, “which from its size and unique character, and great ship which acts as a vane above it (was) one of the best-known features of the country round about” located close to Morris Street, in recognition, it seems, of its notable presence in the neighborhood, but demolished Clapier's residence in favor of a remarkable Italianate stone dwelling designed by John Notman in 1852, setting his own taste standard.

¹⁴ Deed dated June 4, 1851, Grantor Mary Clapier et. al. to Grantee Henry Pratt McKean, Deed Book T.H. Vol. 71 page 150.



Fig. 29, left. The 1848 J.C. Sidney map indicates Clapier's enduring presence at the end of a street (presumably what would become McKean Avenue) allowing access to Fern Hill from Manheim Street to the north. Fig. 30, right. The 1855 Barnes map shows that H.P. McLean has taken on ownership of Fern Hill and the city is planning through-streets around it. Benjamin Godfrey's homestead is indicated on the south side of Manheim. Godfrey owned the subject property at this time.

The large estate south of Abbotsford Avenue set the tone for the emerging suburban neighborhood to the north. The new Fern Hill was described by Nancy Holst as “a model of modern taste and beauty – a showcase built to satisfy the highest ideals of the American villa.”¹⁵ Based on Richard Upjohn’s designs for the Edward King Villa in Newport, Rhode Island, the grand house nonetheless took somewhat of a backseat to the gardens and vistas of the estate. The former were tended by Martin Baumann and his sons, including Louis Clapier Baumann, named to honor the previous sire. Opened to the public on Sundays and public holidays, this place above the first rise in the Atlantic Fall Line in Northwest Philadelphia was known for its imported pear trees and rare plant species. In addition to a large main house, the property included an expansive barn from Clapier’s ownership and a few greenhouses. Fern Hill seemed to set a pastoral and romantic model for the enclave to its immediate north (including the subject property) to follow suit with the same collection of residential and supportive auxiliary buildings on smaller, but still expansive, suburban parcels.

¹⁵ Nancy Holst (2008), PhD diss., “Pattern Books and the Suburbanization of Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” University of Delaware, 2008, 354.

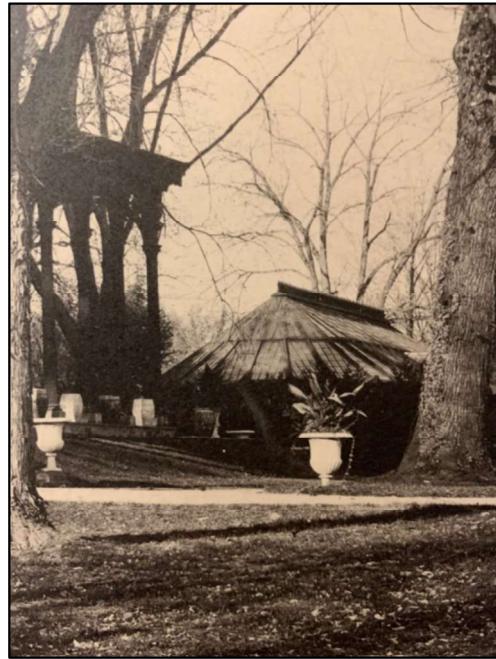
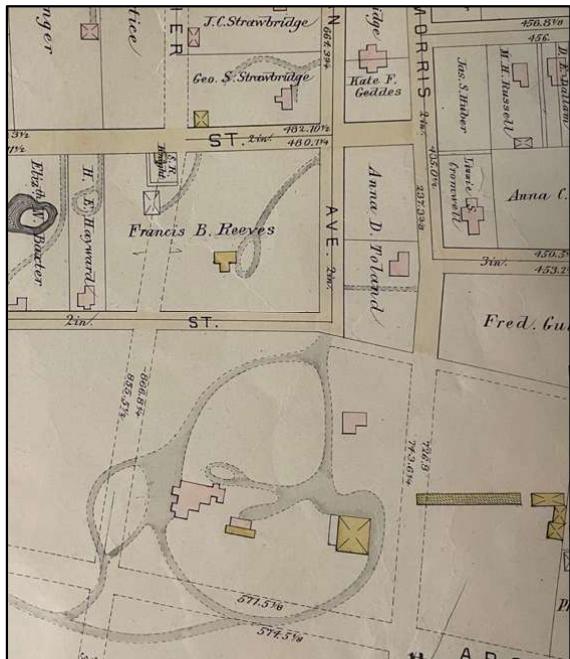


Fig. 31, left. The 1885 Hopkins Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 22nd Ward showing the many buildings of Fern Hill toward the bottom of the page and the subject property at the top of the page under George S. Strawbridge's ownership. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 32, right. A ca.1890 photograph of the greenhouse immediately behind the main residence at Fernhill. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

Germantown, certainly between Louis Clapier's death in 1837 and the 1850s when his heirs partition and transfer their land holdings, was widely recognized as a desirable location for city residents of certain means to establish country seats. The landscape was open, green, and pastoral in feel, providing a rural counterweight to the city five miles to the south. According to Holst, the pre-suburbanization of Germantown "indicate[d] a complex process of interaction between old and new patterns"¹⁶ forging a tension between nostalgia for its romantic landscape with market interest. Real estate transfers were made locally, often among business or church associates, with a relative few controlling the ownership of several parcels, keeping the enclave's population tightly controlled among business associates and social equals. In the immediate neighborhood of the subject property, this was certainly the case. On McKean Avenue, Francis Reeves bought property from J.C. Strawbridge, who named his eldest son after his friend with an estate at McKean and Clapier, and Reeves sold again to wool merchant William Tatem Tilden a decade later, for example. Tilden and Reeves were not just neighbors, but leaders at the Wakefield Presbyterian Church on the Avenue.

Additionally, existing stone dwellings and auxiliary buildings were often modified and adapted to suit new tastes, making a priority of renovation that combined ideas from the era's popular pattern books with a frugal and practical re-use ethic. The unique arrangement of existing

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

buildings and landscapes with local control is a theme of the subject neighborhood's development, including especially at the subject parcel. The tight relationships among residents seem to have contributed to the enclave's professional and social profile through the early years of the twentieth century.

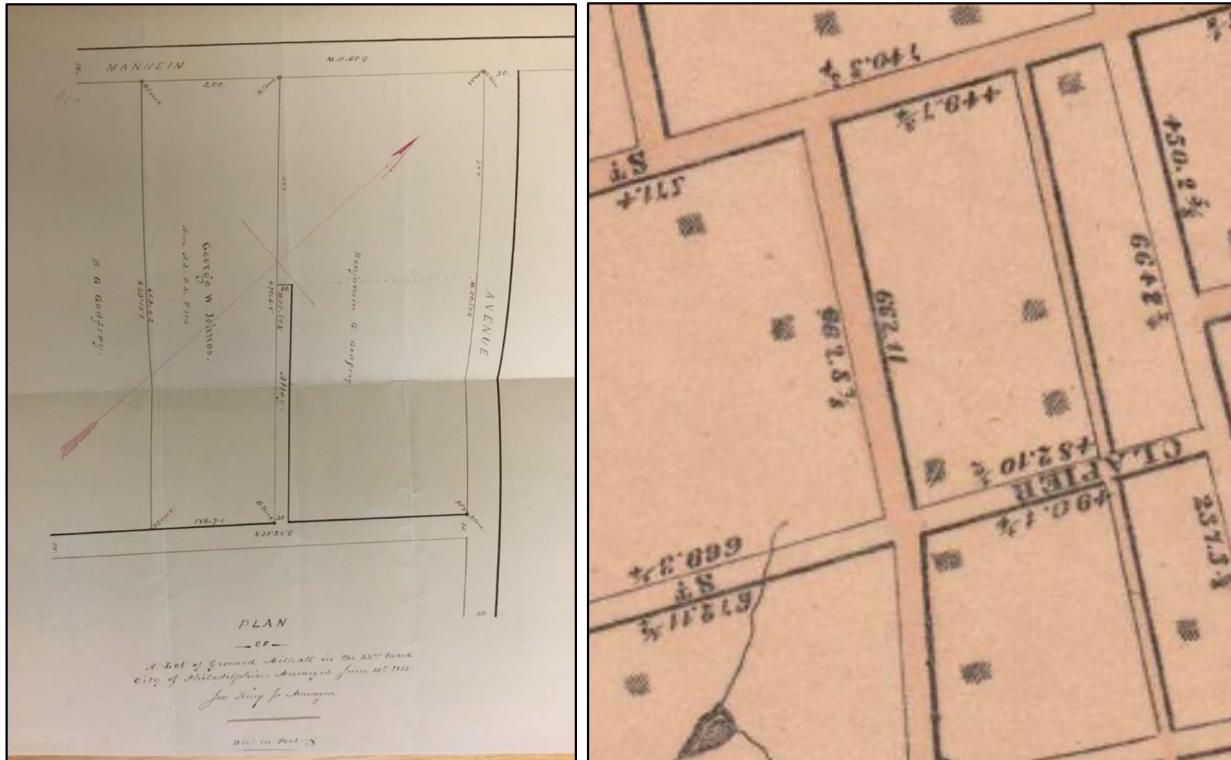


Fig. 33, left. 1855 survey by John King, Jr. of the subject property when it was owned by Benjamin G. Godfrey. It was part of a large parcel of approximately 4 acres that extended from Manheim Street to the north down the west side of McKean Avenue to Clapier Street. Godfrey's primary residence was located on a parcel facing Manheim Street. Fig. 34, right. The 1862 Smedley *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* shows the subject property fronting McKean Avenue at Clapier Street with a rear building that is likely the Stable as discussed in the nomination for 419 West Clapier Street.

Carson H. & Son	McKean Ave						
20							241
21							241
22							241
23							241
24							241
25							241
26							241
27							241
28							241
29							241
30							241
31							241
32							241
33							241
34							241
35							241
36							241
37							241

Jackson Edward	20 M. 10	Edw. Jackson					Second
122-146 Broad St. 6	60 ft. 6 in.	By Grounds	20,000				11
6	56 ft. 6 in.						11
122-146 Broad St. 6	58 ft. 6 in.	By Grounds					11
122-146 Broad St. 6	50 ft. 6 in.						11
Hale E.	57 ft. 6 in.						11
Morgan William	27 ft. 6 in.	Gardener					11
McNamee Margaret	28 ft. 6 in.	Groundskeeper					Ireland
Agnew Mary	25 ft. 6 in.						11
133-187 Fairbridge Justice	30 ft. 6 in.	By Grounds	20,000	40,000			Penn.
133-187 Fairbridge Justice	30 ft. 6 in.	By Grounds	20,000	40,000			Penn.

Fig. 35, left. The 1866 Tax Assessment roll for H.L. Carson and his son indicates they owned two carriages during their residency at the subject property. Fig. 36, right. The 1870 Census indicates that the Carsons employed a gardener for their expansive grounds. Source: Ancestry.com

Above the Fernhill estate, the northern part of Mr. Clapier's parcel was quickly subdivided into large suburban parcels for stylish Philadelphians which looked toward Fern Hill in terms of erecting similar complexes of residences with auxiliary buildings, albeit on relatively smaller parcels. In 1853, merchant Benjamin Granger Godfrey (1822-1900) purchased the subject parcel near a property he inhabited facing Manheim Street, which was, at that time, one of the only streets allowing access to the neighborhood.¹⁷ Godfrey was a devout Episcopalian and served as Chair of the Building Committee for Calvary Episcopal Church a block away on Manheim at Pulaski Avenue.¹⁸ J.C. Sidney was the architect of that (now demolished) 1859 church and himself embraced the picturesque Italianate designs that were popular in this era.

The neighborhood's shapeshifting into suburban estates from Clapier's consolidated parcel continued to be met with growing interest by Philadelphia's business elites. In November 1863, Godfrey sold the subject property in its one-acre configuration to merchant Hampton L. Carson (1809-1874) as 5000 McKean Avenue. Carson purchased his one-acre parcel with a "stone messuage and other improvements" which describes the Carriage House and the main House as discussed in the companion nomination for 5000 McKean Avenue.

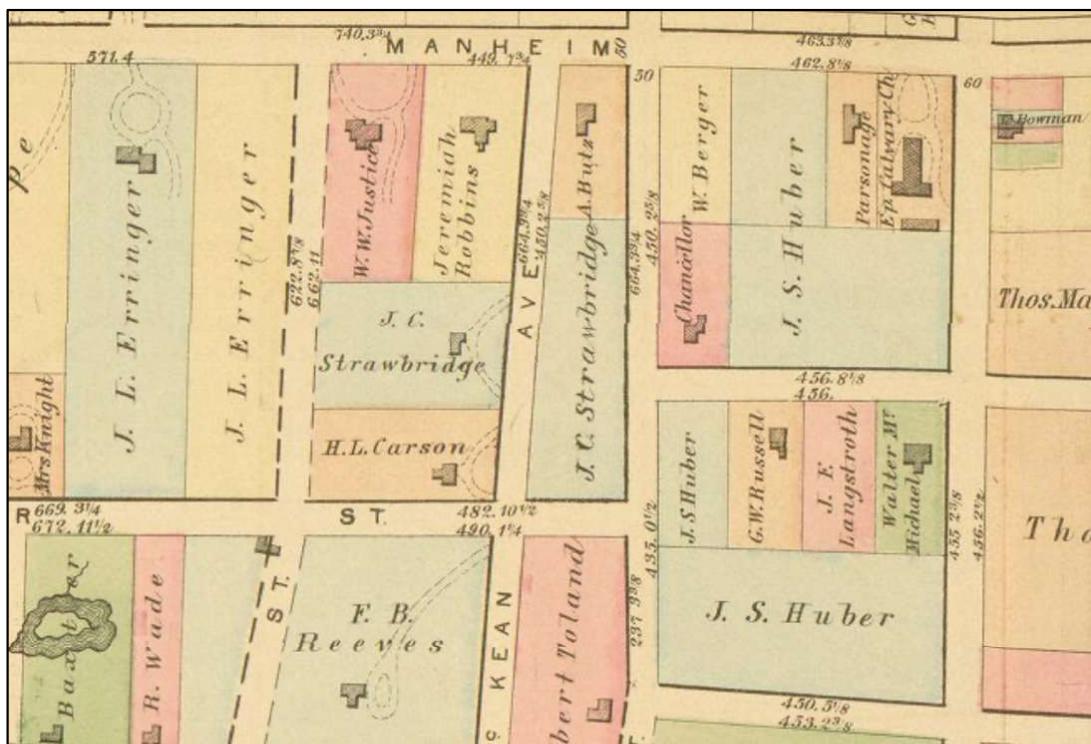


Fig. 37. The 1871 Hopkins map of Germantown during H.L. Carson's ownership of the subject property. His near neighbors form part of the city's wealthy elite class forming a suburban enclave that advantages its pastoral setting and gardens.

¹⁷ Deed dated May 12, 1853 Grantor Mary Clapier to Grantee Benjamin Godfrey, Deed Book T.H. Vol. 80 p. 555.

¹⁸ Rev. S.F. Hotchkin, M.A. *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill*, (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 279.

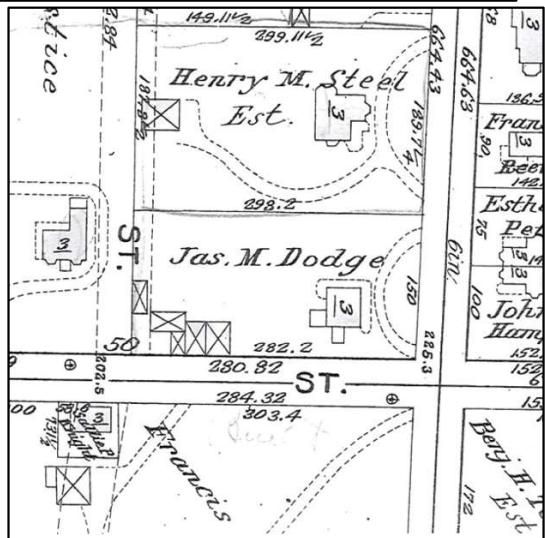
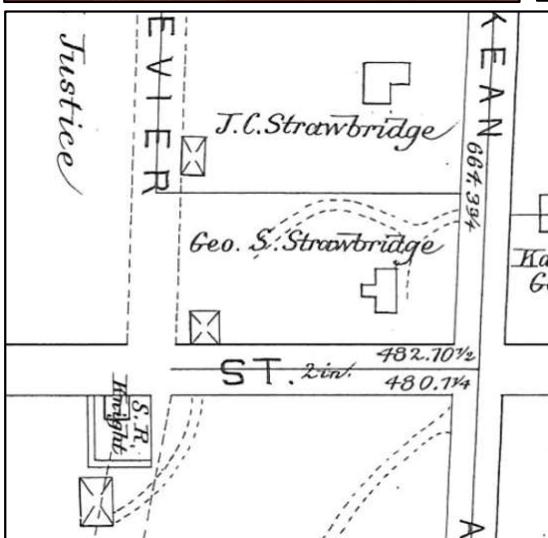
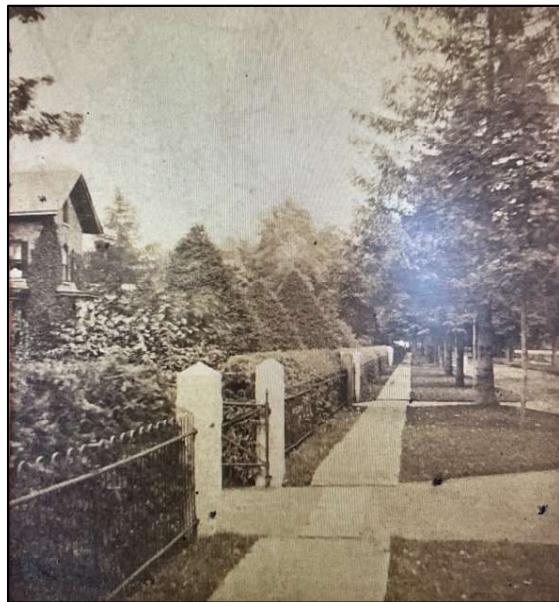
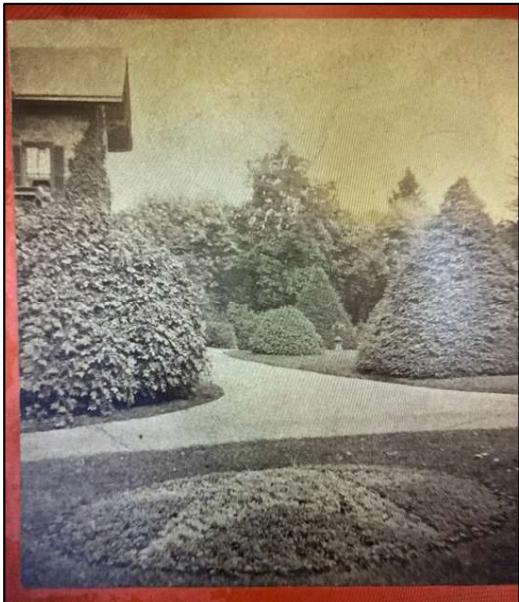
At the time of Carson's residency, and as the 1862 Atlas indicates, the neighborhood was beginning to be dotted with stone residences and country seats, indicating the rural character of the neighborhood and the elite patina that Fernhill cast over it. Houses and auxiliary buildings are filling in the landscape. While the 1871 Atlas doesn't indicate auxiliary buildings, they are present in subsequent maps of the area.

Between Carson's 1863 purchase of the property and indications on the 1871 *Atlas of the Borough of Germantown*, his immediate neighbors included several wealthy Germantowners. The Chancellor family residing in an 1858 Italianate at 337 Seymour Street were related to Louis Clapier. Across the street from the Chancellors, jeweler G. Wilbur Russell had a property that was described by Edwin Jellett as a fine garden worthy of mentioning in the immediate area. Russell employed a gardener named Alexander Moore who dignified the property on Seymour Street with "its exhibitions of massed blooms and striking hedge of Rambler Roses.¹⁹ Jellett was also praiseworthy about the gardens of other close neighbors such as Francis B. Reeves at McKean and Clapier. Carson's next door neighbor Justus C. Strawbridge had manicured topiary shrubs at his estate on McKean Avenue (Figs. 38 & 39).

While business elites moved into the immediate neighborhood, clustering together in an exclusive enclave with short access to the city, the neighborhood's rural character was part of the attraction. In a remembrance of engineer Charles Day (1879-1931), who grew up between Abbotsford Avenue and Clapier Street, his widow Margaret writes "where [Charles and his brother] experienced the joy of open spaces... and the steep grades and unusual depth of the property giving just the necessary qualifications" for skiing and sledding in the winter, and kite-flying when warmer. "Germantown at that time (1888) was a true suburb, sparsely settled, with meadows, woods and streams within easy reach."²⁰ The Day residence included a carriage house in the rear of the property and can be depicted in two photographs, one from summer, another from winter (Fig. 47).

¹⁹ Edwin Jellett, *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners*. (Germantown, PA: Horace F. McCann, 1914), 63.

²⁰ Margaret Dunning Day, "Charles Day: A Memory," Philadelphia 1934, 3. Printed by Day & Zimmerman, Inc. Germantown Historical Society.



Figs. 38 & 39, top row. The manicured topiaries in the front lawn at the Justus C. Strawbridge residence at 5008 McKean Avenue, adjoining the subject property, in pre-1886 photos, indicate the seriousness of gardening the area estates undertook. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Figs. 40 & 41, below. The 1885 map (left) and the 1911 map (right) show the difference in a quarter of a century: an abandoned driveway through the Grounds to the Carriage House in favor of street access to a cluster of auxiliary buildings around a Brick Courtyard. Source: Philadelphia Water Department maps.

According to correspondence, Jamie Dodge – as he was called in the family – wrote to his mother already in May 1890 about the new homestead, “yesterday we visited our new home – it’s a beautiful place and I am sure you and FAYAL will like it - the children are so happy when there that they don’t want to come back to Arch Street.”²¹ According to the letter, a pony was on order for 10 year old Kern and a shepherd dog had joined the family, indicating that their new

²¹ Letter from Jamie to his mother Mary Mapes Dodge, May 12, 1890. Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

abode could accommodate such pets with the space not afforded to them downtown. Presumably, the pony could be sheltered in the Carriage House and be available for riding or cart pulling, hobbies largely limited to children of well-to-do families (Fig. 49).

Historic Context: Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House (ca.1855-1863)

The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, along with the main House, was the first construction on the newly defined, one-acre parcel. Like the main House, the Carriage House is clad in a random coursed rubble stone (schist) with a deep roof overhang and moderately decorative brackets at the wooden board eaves. The roof overhang differentiates the structure from the more vernacular stone buildings that were constructed as auxiliary structures in the countryside. There is a certain romantic aspect to the building through this one detail even if it is otherwise a straightforward and somewhat stark design, without decorative excess and almost Quaker in its presentation. This more simplified and stern construction could add to evidence that both buildings were part of a speculative development by landowner Benjamin G. Godfrey.

The south elevation of the Carriage House was the entry point for the carriages, and later, automobiles. Today, there is a contemporary wall assembly that infills the opening, creating the Garage. Door access into the Carriage House can be seen in Fig. 42. The structure had a large overhang to protect from the southern sun that was later enclosed to create the Garage, as seen in Fig. 44, where newer wood was used to add on to the porch overhang, creating a deeper enclosure large enough to hold an automobile of the era.

A carriage house or stable generally contain two functional levels within the confines of a one and a half story building: the ground level being for the storage of carriages, and later automobiles, and the upper loft level, storing hay or later, once conversion to car storage was undertaken, becoming a living space for a chauffeur. The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House has plumbing and skylights at the loft level which may have been present early enough to allow for occupancy beyond the Coachman's Residence if needed, otherwise, a storage use was possible.



Fig. 42, top left. The door to the Carriage House's south wall, now enclosed in the Garage dating from ca.1906-1911. Fig. 43, top right. The loft in the Carriage House. Photos: SoLo Germantown. Fig. 44, bottom left. A view of the underside of the original south porch overhang at the Carriage House. It had later been expanded into a garage. Fig. 45, bottom right. An older water spigot at a once exterior location, now enclosed in the Garage.



Fig. 46. The pre-1862 carriage house from the G. Wilbur Russell House on West Seymour Street above Morris. The main house was demolished at some point after 1910. Photo: SoLo Germantown.

There is one notable extant carriage house in the immediate neighborhood that is also a survivor of the pre-Civil War era: that of G. Wilbur Russell (and subsequently, his daughter Mary) whose house and gardens were located on West Seymour Street above Morris. The Russell carriage house is a typical carriage house in the manner of A. J. Downing (Fig. 46) in a simple cross gable plan with cupola. Downing believed that monumentality and symmetry were incompatible with the American landscape and advocated for more harmony between buildings and landscape. While dissimilar in form and style from the subject Carriage House, the predominant shared feature with the Russell carriage house is the choice of Wissahickon schist at the exterior in addition to a deep roof overhang. The Russell carriage house had later been modified into a garage, illustrating the adaptive nature of these buildings and the similar impulses of their owners.

Downing's principles of picturesque simplicity and charm were put into practice in the nation's earliest suburbs, and Germantown was no exception. The Day carriage house on Abbottsford Avenue was a simpler one-and-a-half story affair than the Russell cross-gable with its single gable roof, but it also contained dormers and a center cupola (Fig. 47).



Fig. 47, left. From the Charles Day biography, a ca.1880-1919 photo of the Day family's Abbotsford Avenue carriage house at a lower grade below the house (left) toward Clapier Street. Fig. 48, right. An example of a carriage house with deep porch overhang. Source: Germantown Historical Society.



Fig. 49. The children of Francis R. Strawbridge in their pony cart, 1915. Source: Shipley-Strawbridge Family Papers (HC.MC-857), Scrapbook compiled by Anna Strawbridge for the Shipleys, part 4, undated, Box 18, Folder 2, Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections.



A collection of surviving Germantown carriage houses. Fig. 50, top left. The John Campbell Harris carriage house on School House Lane. Fig. 51, top right. The 1886 William C. Sharpless carriage house/garage by G.W. Hewitt. Fig. 52, bottom left. The 1902 John C. Winston stable by Will Price. Fig. 53, bottom right. The James Copperfield carriage house on Wayne Ave. Photos: SoLo Germantown.

Historic Context: Coachman's Residence, Brick Courtyard, and Garage

The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Coachman's Residence, Brick Courtyard, and Garage may be rudimentary and basic in their design, they are indicative of both a spirit of adding to existing buildings and of a functionality for the residents of the main House and their practical and recreational pursuits. The Coachman's Residence and Brick Courtyard from ca.1885-1889 falls in line with this way of thinking and queued up a new way of interacting with the Estate.

A new spatial arrangement was introduced to the Estate when the Coachman's Residence was constructed ca.1885-1889. The one-story, rectangular plan building is simple, but the long elevation of the Coachman's Residence oriented south from the Carriage House and faced the south carriage opening. This new staff Residence at the Carriage House now formed an L-shaped frame at a newly defined courtyard between the buildings and Clapier Street. The Coachman's Residence has only one door which is at the corner nearest to the Carriage House facing the courtyard. There is a brick chimney that would have been connected to a heat source for an

occupant. The courtyard would have received a new installation of bricks around the Coachman's Residence and up to the Carriage House (likely removed for concrete when the Garage enclosed the south porch of the Carriage House) to define the space and offer a hard surface to ease the mobility and maintenance of the open service area. The new arrangement would allow the Strawbridge family to abandon the driveway extension through the Grounds from the McKean Avenue governor's drive down to the Carriage House in favor of using West Clapier Street to move carriages between it and the main House. This new arrangement announces a hierarchy of spaces between public and private spaces and those used by the family and those used for servicing the Estate and housing staff. Ultimately, the new arrangement prioritized the Grounds, creating a zone of privacy around the rear yard of the Estate, maximizing areas for plantings.

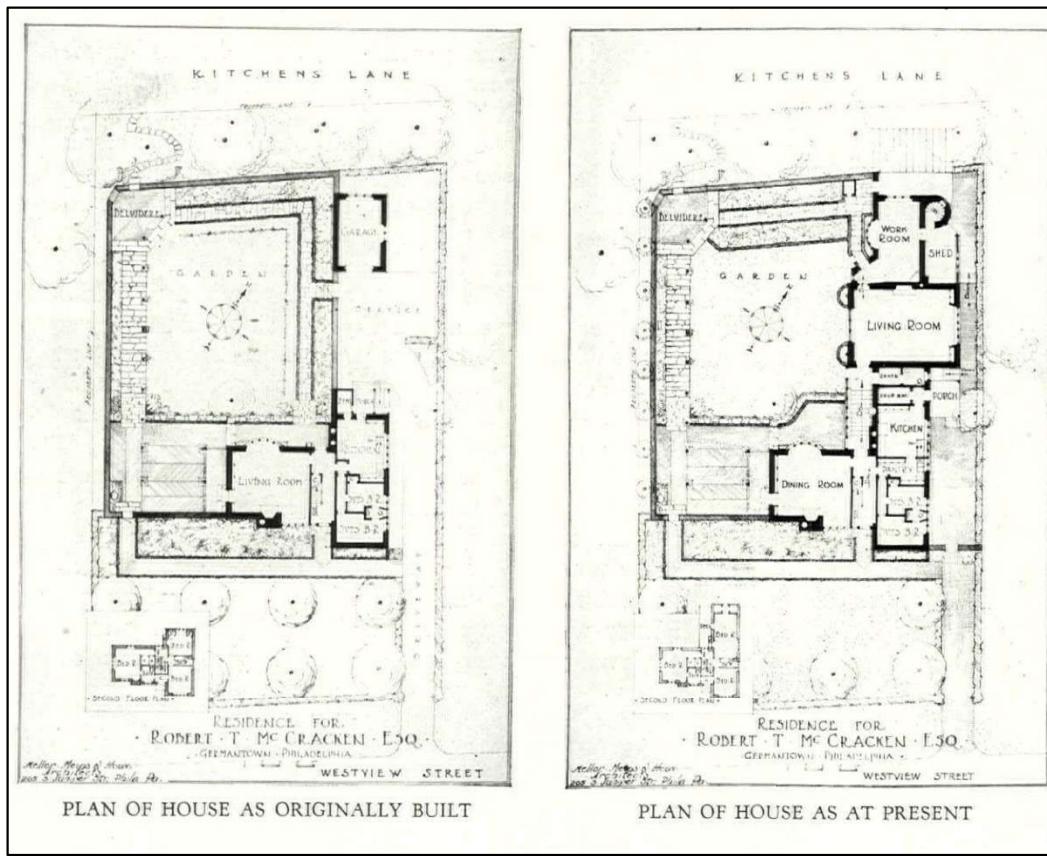


Fig. 54. A before and after site plan for the Robert T. McCracken Estate "Garth" on Kitchens Lane in Upper Germantown/West Mt. Airy by Mellor, Meigs & Howe, architects. On the left is the estate as originally laid out and the same site in 1926 after the house and buildings were expanded. Source: *Architectural Record* online, (November 1928).

The hierarchy of spaces for estates has long been used in Germantown, even on smaller parcels of an acre or two like the subject property. Mellor, Meigs & Howe were commissioned in 1919 to design Garth, an estate for Mr. Robert T. McCracken, two miles north of the subject property. The architects designed a house on a relatively modest estate with "a notion of any possible

future enlargement.”²² Like the subject property, Garth was laid out on a steep bank of land yet was half the size of the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate. In 1926, when the family enlarged their house, they instructed the same architects to do so without spoiling the garden. The old garage became a workroom, and the new garage was built into the grade, and an old road became a service yard. The work done in the seven-year span of building out an estate on a parcel that didn’t grow is well illustrated at Garth and matches the experience over a longer span of time at the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate. At Garth, keeping the automobile out of the family’s outdoor space was a particular priority from the outset since the project started in 1919, but the earlier arrangements made for the Carriage House and its animal occupants came into good use once carriages were replaced by automobiles. The first car purchased for use by the residents of the subject property was in 1899 when the Dodge family purchased a Mobile Steamer.

Greenhouse & Grounds

The Grounds of the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate were already formally tended by a gardener from early days. The one-acre site with House and Carriage House located at or near the periphery of the Estate was laid out with plantings and gardening in mind when the first build occurred in ca.1855-1863. The Carsons employed a gardener according to the 1870 Census underscoring the estate’s planting bona fides. When the driveway extension through the Estate was abandoned ca.1885-1889, this action created even further possibilities at the Grounds.

The Greenhouse was constructed in ca.1905-1910 by the Dodge family. A notice was placed in the November 1, 1905, *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, that H.H. Hudson, carpenter, would be building a one-story brick “carriage house” for \$1,000. The same Hudson was contracted by the subject property owners in 1902 to construct porches at the main House.

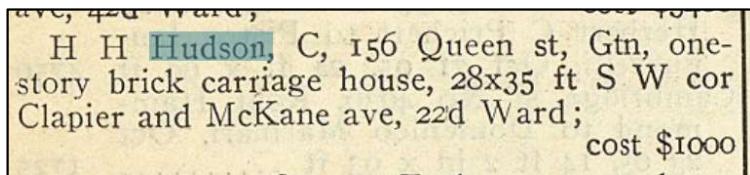


Fig. 55. Notice in the November 1, 1905, *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, for the construction of the Greenhouse.

The dimensions and sparse description of this construction match those at the Greenhouse. The brick base and columns or pilasters interspersed with glazing and holding up a simple, shed roof are indicative of early twentieth century design as exemplified by the Craftsman style. According to McAlester, Craftsman was the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country between 1905 and the 1920s.²³

²² Arthur Meigs, “‘Garth’; House of Robert T. McCracken, Esq., Germantown, Philadelphia,” *The Architectural Record*, Vol. 64, No. 5, November 1928.

²³ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to America’s Historic Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 454.

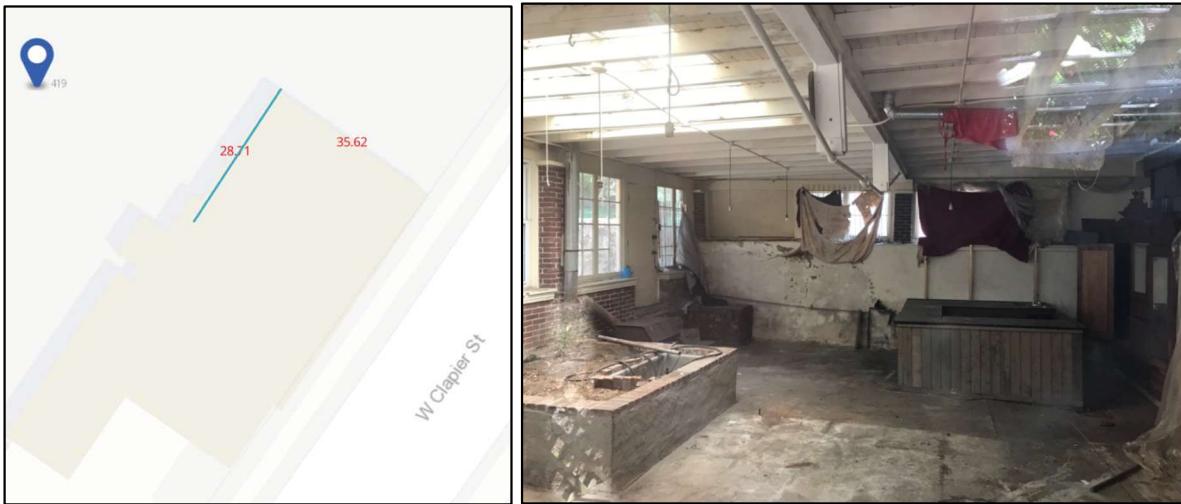


Fig. 56, left. Dimensions of the existing Greenhouse from Atlas match those given in the 1905 announcement of its construction (35' x 28'). Fig. 57, right. The Greenhouse as it appeared in 2025 with a piped, concrete basin under roof glazing. Photo: SoLo Germantown.



Fig. 58. This 1915 photo shows the ca.1905-1910 Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Greenhouse to the left when all glazing was exposed. in the background. Source: "Kern Dodge: Pioneer Automobilist" by Barron H. Bohnet. *Antique Automobile*, Nov.-Dec. 1978.

It is not clear why the Greenhouse was described as a “carriage house” in the construction announcement except that it was located at the north side of the existing Carriage House and has an interior connection through the Carriage House’s north wall. But the construction certainly indicates a greenhouse use. The floors are concrete, suggesting a utilitarian use, and there is a concrete basin with plumbing directly under glazing in the shed roof indicating either a pool for

goldfish or an area for plantings such as acacia trees.²⁴ The Greenhouse had windows at three elevations, maximizing daylighting and heat gain, despite being located at the north side of the Carriage House. That it was directly attached to the Carriage House, continuing the cluster of service buildings at the periphery of the Estate with direct access to the Grounds, indicates the thoughtful pragmatism with an addition to the auxiliary building complex at the rear of the site, keeping services together and gardens highlighted.



Fig 59, top left. Commercial greenhouses from the 1880s in Germantown. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 60, top right. The Thomas Meehan House in Mt. Airy with greenhouse. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 61, bottom left. The Thomas U. Walter Estate greenhouse in Germantown. Source: Germantown Historical Society. Fig. 62, bottom right. The Greenhouse and Potter's Shed at the Carroll S. Tyson, Jr. Estate in Chestnut Hill. Photo: Oscar Beisert Collection. Only Tyson greenhouse exists today.

In addition to having been used for the growing, maintenance, and winterization of plants, the Greenhouse may have also been used as a sculpture studio. Josephine Kern Dodge reconnected with an old friend from Chicago after Mr. Dodge's death in December 1915. She was commissioned in 1916 by Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh to fashion a model of Raleigh's poem, *The*

²⁴ Interview with Irwin Richman, Ph.D., architectural and landscape historian. November 8, 2025.

Good Fairy. Raleigh owned a toy company and doll factory and felt the need for an object that “would appeal to the longing for the beautiful in every breast, that would embody joy and freedom.”²⁵ Mrs. Dodge took on other commissions sporadically until 1928 when her artistic career seems to have come to an end. The Greenhouse would have been an ideal place to create sculptures, with a concrete floor, plumbing for water, and direct access to the main House.

Greenhouses were once plentiful in this corner of Germantown, with those at Fernhill taking the top spot for the number and size of privately owned greenhouses. Commercial greenhouses were not far away with many clustered on Manheim Street near Wayne Avenue. Residences with greenhouses were not hard to find in northwest Philadelphia. They were a common feature of suburban estates of varying sizes.



Fig. 63, left. The house for tropical plants at Butler Place on Old York Road is an example of a greenhouse that doesn't take on its expected appearance. Fig. 64, right. An eighteenth-century greenhouse as a lean-to construction against a house in England. Photos: Oscar Beisert Collection.

The unprepossessing Greenhouse at the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate through its lean-to construction at the north side of the Carriage House has precedent in other greenhouse designs. Though typically thought of as independent buildings created of glass and airy structural framing, this greenhouse with a brick base balances the practical need for daylighting for protected plants with that of durability. The house for tropical plants at Butler Place, the Pierce Butler Estate on Old York Road, was a brick building with no roof glazing that could not be easily identified as a hot house (Fig. 63). It was copied from one seen in England, perhaps by British actress Fanny Kemble, Mrs. Butler, on visits back home, led by gardener James Leddy.²⁶ England has a plethora of private greenhouses that are small lean-to structures with a brick bases; these constructions veer to the practical more than the fanciful in its design.

²⁵ Excerpt from the Good Fairy brochure which came with the statue.

http://lmmontgomeryliterarysociety.weebly.com/uploads/2/2/6/5/226525/the_good_fairy_1916.pdf. Accessed August 21, 2025.

²⁶ Edwin Jellett, *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners*. (Germantown, PA: Horace F. McCann, 1914), 34.

The Grounds at the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate have not been very well documented but there are indications that the gardens were well-tended. Mrs. James Mapes Dodge posed in 1940 in front of her hollyhocks at the western edge of her property, under the shadow of the Steele House next door at 5008 McKean Avenue. In 1968, the *Germantown Crier* called out three specimen trees at the “Dodge Estate” that were notable including a 12’ tall white oak and a 13’ tall European beech.²⁷ Equally, there is a 100+ year old pin oak at the northwest corner of the property that was documented in a 1908 photograph and is still growing in the present day.

The grandest activity on the Grounds after the Dodge family became residents in 1891 was the lighted skating pond that James Mapes Dodge constructed for the children of the neighborhood (Fig. 72). Such was the affection for the ice rink that after Mr. Dodge’s death, chronicler Nancy Wynne reported in the *Evening Public Ledger* on December 9, 1915, that the neighborhood boys gathered up money to send Mrs. Dodge some flowers as a posthumous tribute to her husband. Accessed from McKean Avenue, the skating pond represents the neighborhood focus of the residents of the Estate as well as a spirit of fun and camaraderie the Grounds provided.



Fig. 65, left. An extant pin oak tree can be seen behind the car in this 1908 photograph of the Dodges in the governor’s drive of their Estate. Source: “Kern Dodge: Pioneer Automobilist” by Barron H. Bohnet. *Antique Automobile*, Nov.-Dec. 1978. Fig.66, right. Mrs. James Mapes Dodge in a photo from May 1940 with her hollyhocks on the Grounds of the Estate. Photo: *Philadelphia Record* Photo Morgue, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

²⁷ John T. McNeil, “Great and Historic Trees of Philadelphia County,” *Germantown Crier*, Vol. 20, No. 1, March 1968, 23 & 27.

Gardener's Cottage

The Gardener's Cottage was commissioned in 1923 by Mrs. James Mapes Dodge from architect J. Linnerd Connaroe, a former classmate of her son Kern from a time when the two were classmates at both Germantown Academy and the Drexel Institute. Designed in a simple, cottage revival style, it is relatively unadorned in architectural detail but its massing and sharp peaks at the roof gable ends facing both the Brick Courtyard and the Grounds, the Cottage expresses the spirit of a small, Gothic revival cottage in the style of Andrew Jackson Downing (Fig. 70), fitting in with the Picturesque character of the other buildings on the Estate. It also indicates that the Estate's owners' intent to add a design that would be harmonious with the surroundings and provide a cheery contribution to the domestic life on the Estate for those who would occupy the dwelling. The Gardener's Cottage has two orientations: one, toward the Grounds, providing direct access to them via the rear, west lean-to porch at grade, the other at cellar-level, toward the Brick Courtyard and Clapier Street, providing access to a hardscaped area for deliveries and plant preparation that could withstand regular soil and potting activities. There is a small pathway between the Gardener's Cottage and the Coachman's Residence leading one from the Brick Courtyard up a few steps to access the Grounds. The Gardener's Cottage replaced one that was located within approximately the same footprint dating from the Strawbridge residency ca.1885-1889.

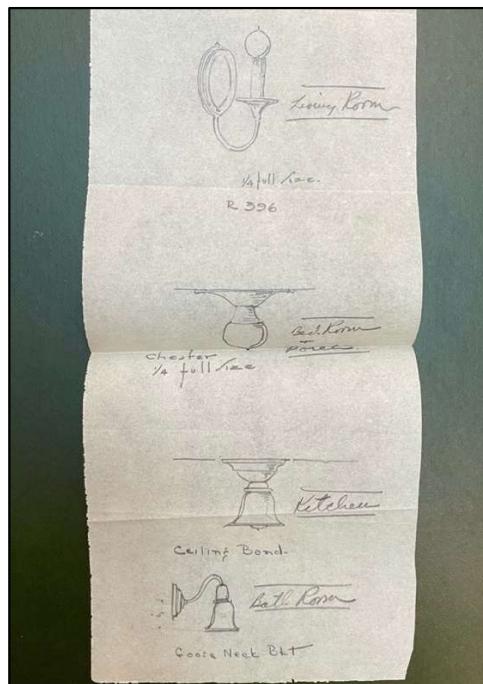
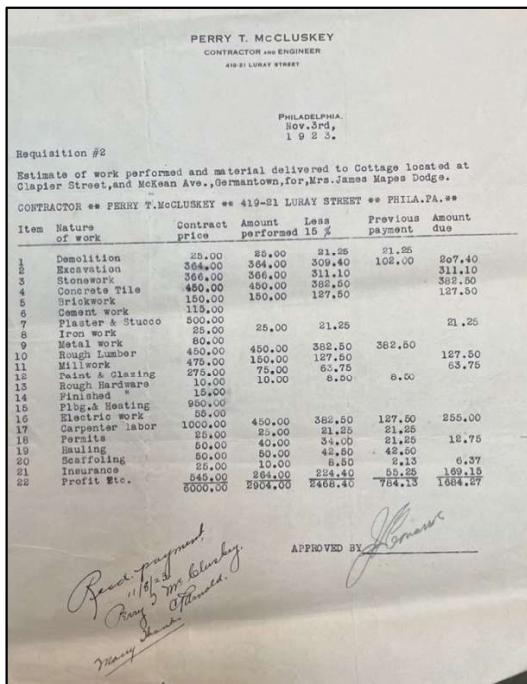


Fig. 67, left. A Pay Requisition (#2) from contractor Perry T. McCluskey for work performed at the Cottage for Mrs. Dodge, signed by architect J. L. Connaroe and dated Nov. 3, 1923. Fig. 68, right. Sketches of light fixtures from the office of Connaroe for the Dodge Cottage included in his Oct. 3rd letter to Mrs. Dodge. Sources: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University.

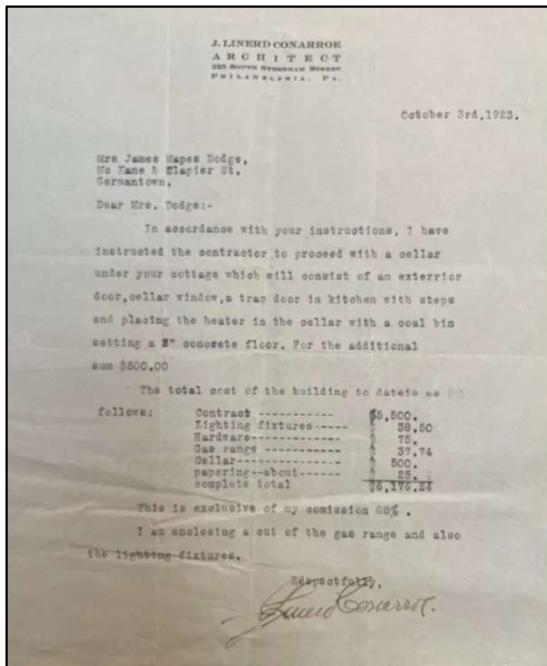


Fig. 69, left. A letter from J. Linerd Connaroe, Architect, to Mrs. James Mapes Dodge, dated Oct. 3, 1923, confirming a Change Order to include a cellar in the Cottage with exterior access. Source: Donald and Robert M. Dodge Collection, Princeton University. Fig. 70, right. An ornamental farm house from Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences*, 1842. Source: Univ. of California Libraries online.



Fig. 71, left. A report from August 13, 1938, *Philadelphia Inquirer* indicates that the Dodge family employed a gardener, a resident of the Gardener's Cottage with an address of 419 W. Clapier St. Source: Newspapers.com. Accessed August 13, 2025. Fig. 72, right. Undated photo of "D&B at Dodge Rink." D&B may refer to Donald and Bob, Dodge grandsons. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

Conclusion

The Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Garage, Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds at 419 West Clapier Street merits designation as a suburban Residence that serviced the domestic, artistic, and engineering pursuits of some of Philadelphia's most prominent families. It is a reminder of an elite enclave of early suburban dwellers in Germantown in the shadow of the Fernhill estate when the neighborhood still had a rural character prior to dense residential development in southwest Germantown, satisfying Criterion J.

As an architectural palimpsest, the ensemble of auxiliary buildings reflects the layered evolution of Germantown's built environment – from a semi-rural landscape of scattered, stone country seats to a mid-nineteenth century enclave of prosperous merchants, and finally to a twentieth-century neighborhood of civic leaders and industrialists. Accordingly, the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Estate's auxiliary buildings adapted changes in technology and use, from carriages to cars, and supported staff residency on site as well as recreational pursuits on its Grounds, giving use to the entire acre of property. The survival of the Estate offers rare insight into how Philadelphia's elite adapted and modernized earlier suburban dwellings rather than replacing them, thereby extending the life and relevance of Germantown's architectural legacy. As an adaptively reused collection of auxiliary buildings harmoniously designed with romantic, picturesque detailing and features, creating a stylistic through line, the Carson-Strawbridge-Dodge Carriage House, Coachman's Residence, Garage, Greenhouse, Gardener's Cottage, and Grounds satisfies Criterion C.

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