

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SG-1911

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building

Other names/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 300 Cherry Street

City or town: Pottstown State: PA County: Montgomery

Not for Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

<u>Andrea McDonald</u>	<u>11/3/2017</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>PA Historical & Museum Commission</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other: _____

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

12/21/2017
Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

INDUSTRIAL – Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials: Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Granite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building stands on the east side of S. Charlotte Street between Cherry Street to the north and Amanda Smith Drive/Bringhurst Alley to the south in Pottstown, PA. The property is at the edge of a predominantly residential neighborhood known as the South End or South Side neighborhood, tucked in between rail lines and industrial zones along the Schuylkill River. The 4 ½-story rectangular textile mill building was constructed in 1900, designed and constructed by the local firm Davidheiser and Wiand, and is red brick with a rusticated granite base. The building has a gabled roof and metal coping along the roofline. In the late 20th century, the 12/12 double-hung wood windows were removed but remain inside the building. All window openings were infilled with a combination of painted plywood and contemporary units. The stone sills and arched brick lintels also remain throughout. The building has a level of design that is more pronounced than many of the other, comparable industrial buildings in the area. The nominated property contains one contributing resource, the former textile mill, which retains integrity. The remainder of the block contains primarily residential buildings, as does the neighborhood, with occasional industrial, commercial, or institutional resources scattered among the houses. Across Cherry Street is the St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church complex. New residential townhouses have recently replaced the large industrial buildings that formerly filled the area west side of Charlotte Street, and have also been added on the south side of the nominated property, across Amanda Smith Drive/Bringhurst Alley.

The west elevation of the building (facing S. Charlotte Street) has a concrete sidewalk and a small strip of grass between the building and the street, which is edged by a concrete curb. The north elevation (Cherry Street) has a concrete sidewalk and curb between the building and the street. The south elevation (Amanda Smith Drive/Bringhurst Alley) has a small strip of grass between the building and a narrow drive. To the east of the building is open space, which is paved on the northern half and overgrown on the southern half. Earlier, there was a 1-story shed near the northeast corner of the lot, which was removed in the mid-20th century. The site slopes downward to the south, making the south elevation nearly a full floor taller than the north elevation. The subject property is located approximately 500 feet to the north of the Industrial Highway and the Schuylkill

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River and one-tenth of a mile south of the railway line. The Pottstown Roller Mill (1725, NR 1974) is located approximately one-fifth of a mile to the west.

The building's north elevation, facing Cherry Street, is three bays wide (Photographs #1, 2 and 6). There is a narrow, rusticated granite base and, on the 2nd through 4th floors, each bay is slightly recessed, by a single course of brick, in a continuous plane from the remainder of the elevation with a stepped slope at the bottom. There are also accentuating brick corbels below the 2nd floor openings and above the 4th floor openings; four centered steel star brackets that were added at an unknown time. On the 1st floor, the westernmost bay contains a single window opening to the east. The western opening contains a single-leaf wood door with a wood panel below, 1-light opening with plywood infill above and a 1-light transom. The elevated door is located up one stone step. The center bay contains two window openings. The easternmost bay contains a single window opening to the west. The eastern opening contains a mid-20th century single-leaf wood replacement wood. The original window head remains partially visible above. The elevated entrance is located up two concrete steps with a painted metal railing. On the 2nd through 4th floors, all bays contain two window openings. The gable contains a centered multi-light wood fanlight.

The west elevation, facing S. Charlotte Street, is twelve bays wide (Photographs #2 and 6). Because of the change in grade of the site, the rusticated granite base is narrow at the north end and nearly a full floor in height at the south end. On the 1st through 4th floors, each bay is slightly, by a single course of brick, in a continuous plane from the remainder of the elevation with a stepped slope at the bottom. There are also accentuating brick corbels below the 1st floor openings and above the 4th floor openings. In the third bay from the north, between the 3rd and 4th floors, is a projecting metal hoist. In the basement, the first, third and twelfth bays from the north have no openings. The second bay from the west has a 4-light wood window with an arched brick head. The fourth and fifth bays from the north have 8-light wood windows with arched brick heads. The sixth through eleventh bays from the north have window openings, which have been infilled with plywood, and arched brick heads. On the 1st floor, the first, second and fourth through twelfth bays from the north have been infilled with plywood. The third bay from the north contains a larger opening with a square 1-light window and contemporary concrete infill. It was presumably originally used as a loading bay. On the 2nd floor, the first, second and fourth through twelfth bays from the north have been infilled with plywood. The third bay from the north contains a longer opening with a single-leaf wood door and a 1-light wood transom. On the 3rd and 4th floors, all openings contain plywood infill.

The south elevation, facing Amanda Smith Drive/Bringinghurst Alley, is three bays wide (Photographs #3 and 4). The basement level is rusticated granite. On the 1st through 4th floors, each bay is slightly recessed, by a single course of brick, in a continuous plane from the remainder of the elevation with

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a stepped slope at the bottom. There are also accentuating brick corbels below the 1st floor openings and above the 4th floor openings; four centrally-positioned steel star brackets were added at an unknown time. In the basement, there is a contemporary single-leaf metal door to the west and a large centered opening with metal infill. On the 1st through 4th floors, all bays contain two window openings. The gable contains a centered multi-light wood fanlight.

The east elevation, facing the open lot, is twelve bays wide (Photographs #4-6). Because of the change in grade of the site, the rusticated granite base is narrow at the north end and nearly a full floor in height at the south end. On the 1st through 4th floors, each bay is slightly recessed, by a single course of brick, in a continuous plane from the remainder of the elevation with a stepped slope at the bottom. There are also accentuating brick corbels below the 1st floor openings and above the 4th floor openings. In front of the second through fourth bays from the south is a mid-20th century brick projection, which contains a stairwell. The rectangular projection has one arched window opening at the south end of the east elevation and one single-leaf metal door in a projecting section of the north elevation. The projection extends slightly above the roofline. In front of the projection is a concrete and cinderblock ramp with a metal railing. The sixth bay from the west contains an enlarged opening with a single-leaf metal door and concrete infill. The elevated entrance is accessed by a cinderblock platform with a wood railing, which is adjacent to the ramp. In the basement, the eighth through eleventh bays from the north contain arched window openings with a variety of contemporary infill. There are no other basement openings. On the 1st through 4th floors, with the exception of the bays mentioned above, all bays have been infilled with plywood.

Interior

On the interior of the building, the floor plate is open in plan but divided by two rows of painted wood columns that extend from north to south in an axial arrangement and get narrower as the floor heights increase. An impressive king truss structural support system and column free interior is found at the top floor. The other existing finishes include wood flooring, painted plaster walls that show some brick underneath, painted wood ceilings and floor joists and exposed mechanicals. The building had a continuous industrial use between the time it was constructed and the late 20th century. There are no extant finishes specifically associated with any of its tenants.

The interior of the building has one freight elevator and three stairways. One U-return stairway is located in the southwest corner of the floor plate and has wood treads and risers, along with some contemporary drywall and linoleum landings (Photograph #10). It provides access between the basement and 4th floor. The second U-return stairway is located in the contemporary stairwell at the north end of the east elevation (Photograph #16). It has metal treads and risers and extends between the 1st and 4th floors. The third, L-shaped, stairway is located to the north of the center of the floor

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plate (Photograph #9). It has concrete treads and risers and extends between the basement and 1st floor. The freight elevator is located at the north end of the east elevation and provides access between the 1st and 4th floors (Photograph #13). All existing circulation dates to c.1980. It is likely that the original circulation was removed at this time.¹

Integrity

The Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building retains integrity. The building remains intact since the time of construction in 1900 with the only notable interior alterations involving the circulation areas and the only substantial exterior alteration involving the construction of the projecting brick stair tower. Both the overall form and the defining interior and exterior industrial characteristics remain, including its brick masonry sections, brick, stone and granite detailing, regular window openings, painted wood columns, exposed painted wood flooring and ceiling systems and painted plaster walls. While the window sashes have been removed from their frames, the original fenestration patterns remain visible on all elevations. Additionally, as the removed historic, multi-light, wood window sashes remain in the building, stacked up on each floor, there is not an irreversible loss of fabric. While there are no specific interior components, other than those referenced above, the floors would have been primarily open in plan during the period of significance and therefore any loss does not have any significant adverse impact. It is not known precisely how the space was used by Mrs. Smith's Frozen Foods late in the 20th century, but the only significant changes that were undertaken during that occupation were to the circulation.

The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials, as well as the level of exterior detail remain intact. The workmanship is in keeping with contemporary trends. Although the equipment, furnishings and people have long since departed the building, the exposed materials, voluminous open spaces, and the consistency of construction effectively relay the sense of both place and industry.

The overall setting of the building has changed considerably over the years. Historically, the area between High Street and the Schuylkill River was home to numerous large- and small-scale industrial complexes but, as stated in the *Old Pottstown Historic District* National Register nomination, this area traditionally used for industrial development "has changed beyond recognition since 1900."² While the expansive industrial properties flanking the neighborhood containing the Meyerhoff property have been replaced by new townhouses, this building continues to reflect the

¹ According to the relevant Sanborn maps, the building originally had two freight elevators located near the southwest corner and in the middle of the west elevation. There was also a straight-run stairway that ran parallel to the north end of the east elevation.

² "*Old Pottstown Historic District*", *National Register Nomination* (1974): 7:1.

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local trend of interspersing smaller mills and factories among the worker housing and neighborhoods supporting the businesses. The changes immediately west and south of the Meyerhoff, Son and Company property do not prevent the building from continuing to be understood as a notable and intact example of an early 20th century mill building.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Industry

Period of Significance

1900-c.1965

Significant Dates

1900

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Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Davidheiser and Wiand

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building has local significance under Criterion A, Industry, for its important association with the Pottstown textile industry and is a notable local example of an early 20th century mill in Pottstown. Meyerhoff was the first formal shirt company in Pottstown and the oldest shirt company in Pottstown that was exclusively based there. Built at the height of Pottstown’s manufacturing prowess, the building plays a specific role in the narrative of historic Pottstown with a local owner, a local designer, and local occupants. The building was constructed in 1900 and, from that time until 1924, it was occupied by Meyerhoff, Son and Company, shirt manufacturers. From 1925 until 1976, it was occupied by the Pottstown Shirt Company. From 1976 until the end of the 20th century, it was occupied by Mrs. Smith’s Frozen Foods, another local Pottstown Company. From 1976 until 2017 the property has been vacant. The period of significance begins with construction in 1900, and extends to c.1965, as the owner at that time, the Pottstown Shirt Company, appears to have still been an important local textile producer at least into the early 1960s.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

A Brief History of the Meyerhoff, Son and Company

Meyerhoff, Son and Company was formed in Philadelphia by three brothers, Solomon K., Emmanuel L. and Louis L. (Lewis) Meyerhoff.³ As a family enterprise – one owned and operated by close relatives – “the filial structure and ethnic character of the company typified Philadelphia’s clothing manufacturers from the late 19th through early 20th centuries.”⁴ Period advertisements and job postings show that it was originally located on 23-25 S. 4th Street in Philadelphia and that it

³ In Pottstown, the brothers lived nearby the new factory at 438, 810 and 818 E. High Street, respectively.

⁴ “Walter M. Steppacher and Brother Shirt Factory,” *National Register Nomination* (2004), 8:1; Rosara Lucy Passero, *Ethnicity in the Men’s Ready-Made Clothing Industry, 1880-1950: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1978, 35-36.

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specialized in men's shirts with approximately fifty employees. In 1896, Solomon obtained a patent for a dress shirt with a built-in tie (Figure 10).⁵

The company moved to Pottstown in 1897 and continued in shirt manufacturing. Although the reasons for the move are not explicitly known, lower operating costs combined with the industrialized nature of Pottstown and its proximity to both Philadelphia and rail and riverways make it a sensible choice. It was also a time in which the Philadelphia textile industry, originally located along the Delaware River was moving west, so its former S. 4th Street location was not as desirable as it had once been.

After the move, the company was originally located at 221 E. High Street, three blocks away from the subject property. On July 1, 1900, the Security Trust Company, which was headquartered at 152 E. High Street in Pottstown, commissioned local contractors Davidheiser and Wiand to build a 4-story factory that would be exclusively occupied by Meyerhoff, Son and Company.⁶ The extent of the relationship between the Security Trust Company and the Meyerhoff family is not completely known but it possible to assume that the Security Trust Company wanted to construct a speculative factory building and the Meyerhoff, Son and Company was an available tenant.

Prior to the construction of the Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building, the site was occupied by 2-story twin frame dwellings, which faced Cherry Street, with three freestanding 1-story frame buildings to the south. The construction of this factory was notable as it appears to be the first factory designed specifically for the textile industry in Pottstown.⁷ The location of such a manufacturing building in a mostly residential neighborhood was very common in Pottstown. In Pottstown, other similarly sited industrial buildings include, S. Liebovitz and Sons, which was located at Beech and Evans Streets, the Mission Manufacturing Company, located at Chestnut and N. Charlotte Streets, the March-Brownbeck Stove Company, located at South and S. Penn Streets and the Champion Silk Company and Heirloom Silk Garment Company, which shared a building located at Apple and S. Washington Streets.

On November 28, 1900, the company officially opened for business with approximately 200 employees.⁸ A 1902 Sanborn map shows the building as fully constructed and operational, with pressing, laundry and a boiler in the basement, sorting and office space on the 1st floor, a stock room

⁵ "Shirt." U.S. Patent #562,636, 23 June 1896.

⁶ "50 Years Ago." *Pottstown Mercury* (7 January 1950): 4.

⁷ "History of Pottstown." *Pottstown Mercury* (20 July 1965): 16.

⁸ "50 Years Ago." *Pottstown Mercury* (28 November 1950): 4.

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on the 2nd floor, a cutting room on the 3rd floor and “operating” on the 4th floor.⁹ By 1909, the Sanborn shows that the company shifted around slightly with boxes and packing in the basement, offices, laundry and pressing on the 1st floor, a stock room on the 2nd floor, a cutting room on the 3rd floor and “operating” on the 4th floor (Figure #3).¹⁰ A report by the Commissioner of Health in 1912 states that the company had approximately 200 employees and, in 1920, the company had 206 employees, making it the largest employer in Pottstown at the time.¹¹

The Meyerhoff, Son and Company specialized in the manufacture of men’s shirts. Employees were tasked with “cutting, sewing, steaming, starching and ironing” and period jobs offerings list openings for those with knowledge of cuffs, pockets, button holes, sleeves, as well as sewing machine operators, double needle operators and collar spreaders.¹² Their four best known brands were the Mohawk, the Yale, the Mascot and the Ben Franklin and all came in a range of colors – gray, green, white, cream, tan, blue – and styles, such as with an attached collar, a detachable collar and cuffs or a neck band. All were specifically noted as being “union made” and the company was so confident about the quality of the Mohawk brand, in particular, that they gave the shirt a one-year guarantee because the fabric was so sturdy.¹³ A fifth brand, Elbeco, focused on the manufacture of uniforms for firemen, police officers and postal workers. For this line, the company would manufacture the shirts according to the specifications of the larger Wide Awake Company, which was based in Reading. The Wide Awake Company would then re-sell the final product to their clients. This was common practice at the time, as the larger companies often needed additional help on a contractual basis and the smaller companies were too small to fulfill those contracts independently.

By late 1924, the last of the Meyerhoff brothers had died or retired and the hopeful “son” in the company name never came to fruition.¹⁴ The business closed that year and vacated the building. In 1926, the company was officially purchased by the Friendmen-Bodelheim Company of Philadelphia, making that company “the largest manufacturer of shirts in Philadelphia.”¹⁵

⁹ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1902.

¹⁰ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1909. There are no changes on the 1916 or 1925 Sanborn maps.

¹¹ *Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Healthy for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Part II* (Harrisburg, PA: Wm. Stanley Ray, 1912): 1261; *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1920.

¹² *Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Healthy for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Part II*, 1261.

¹³ 1909 Advertisement.

¹⁴ In 1906, one of Solomon’s sons spent time in the Friends’ Asylum in Philadelphia for forgery. “Fugitive Found in Asylum.” *Utica Daily Press* (12 October 1906): 2.

¹⁵ “Notes.” *The Cumulative Daily Digest of Corporation News* 1 (1929): 384.

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A Brief History of the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company

The Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company, also known as the Pottstown Shirt Company, was incorporated on April 4, 1916, with a capital of \$6,000. Its function was listed as the “manufacture and sale of shirts, garments, wearing apparel, and other articles, from fabrics, textiles, or other materials.”¹⁶ Louis Nayovitz (d. 1967) was the founder and president.

In 1924, the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company purchased the building from the Security Trust Company and moved into it, taking over the entire building and using the space in much the same way as did Meyerhoff.¹⁷ From the mid-1920s until World War II the company primarily manufactured men’s shirts, averaging approximately 600 dozen shirts per week.¹⁸ During the war, the company averaged approximately 150 employees and not only had large Army contracts but also exported “shirts in large quantities to England, South Africa and other distant points.”¹⁹ After the war, the company returned to its pre-war output and employee numbers.²⁰ One particular contract of note was a 1961 commission by United Airlines for 75,000 men’s uniform shirts, which were given to every single male employee of the airline.²¹ In 1976, the building was sold for unknown reasons to the Mrs. Smith’s Pie Company and the employees were absorbed by the Wide Awake Shirt Company, which was headquartered in Reading, PA.²² The only relationship between the Wide Awake Shirt Company, the Meyerhoff, Son and Company and the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company appears to be that the former was a conveniently located larger operation and the two latter companies operated on a smaller scale.

A Brief History of Industrial Pottstown

Pottstown was incorporated in 1815 but the iron and steel industries had a presence there beginning in the 18th century.²³ By the time the railway arrived in 1837, Pottstown grew significantly and, by the late 19th century, its role “manufacturing in iron and steel and in textiles and apparel was firmly established . . . [similar to other towns] that originally had water power and now had good access to coal. . . . Available labor, developing support services, and railroads linking the county to upstate coal regions and to Philadelphia’s port favored this growth.”²⁴ The railway was vital for Pottstown

¹⁶ *Alphabetical List of Charters of Corporations* (Harrisburg, PA: Wm. Stanlet Ray, 1917): 147.

¹⁷ “Plan Is Announced.” *Pottstown Mercury* (30 June 1944): 1. It is not specifically known why the Security Trust Company chose to sell the building at that time.

¹⁸ “25 Years Ago.” *Pottstown Mercury* (11 April 1962): 4.

¹⁹ “Plan Is Announced.”

²⁰ “Fire Scare.” *Pottstown Mercury* (15 August 1966): 4.

²¹ “10 Years Ago.” *Pottstown Mercury* (16 July 1971): 4.

²² “Tribute.” *Pottstown Mercury* (16 January 1976): 4.

²³ “*Old Pottstown Historic District*”, 8:1.

²⁴ Jean Barth Toll and Michael J. Schwager, eds., *Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years, Volume 2* (Montgomery County, PA: Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1893): 1319.

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not only for this reason but also because it was a self-sustaining industry. As long as the railway was there, related manufacturing efforts, such as for locomotives and bridges, would always be required.

The population totals reflected this industrial growth with only 676 residents in 1830 and increasing to 14,000 in 1905.²⁵ By the early 20th century, Pottstown was referred to as “quite an important manufacturing town” and one with diversified industries, ranging from dental floss to tires, boxes to ice cream.²⁶ The built environment of Pottstown grew along with its population with most of the prominent buildings, with the exception of the Security Trust Company building (1887-1888), being constructed in 20th century, including National Bank (1916), YMCA (1916), Bell Telephone building (1917), City Hall (1924), Pottstown High School (1924), and the Masonic Temple (1927).²⁷

Pottstown’s position both on the Schuylkill River and a railway line provided it unique access to a flow of goods both in and out and established it as a key point between Philadelphia and Reading. Although it was primarily iron and steel that brought this concept of industry to Pottstown, their presence led to the full industrialization of Pottstown, which, through its entrepreneurs and infrastructure, opened the town to other industries. It was these small-scale industries that complimented the scale of the town and became an integral part of Pottstown’s success in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

After iron and steel, the second most important industry in Pottstown in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was textiles.²⁸ By 1900, “the boom-town atmosphere was subsiding as Pottstown’s iron mill began to have slack periods. Competition from new mills around Pittsburgh” was a factor and textiles helped to fill that gap.²⁹ Representing the north terminus of Philadelphia’s textile empire along the Schuylkill River, Pottstown initially had a number of small textile operations, either in repurposed buildings or individual homes with only a handful of employees.³⁰ This was the circumstance for Meyerhoff, Son and Company, who initially occupied a floor in an existing building when they moved to Pottstown. What did not yet exist were freestanding buildings with

²⁵ Rev. L. Kryder Evans, “Historical Sketch of Pottstown” (Norristown, PA: Herald Printing and Binding Rooms, 1905): 365.

²⁶ Evans, 365; “History of Pottstown”, 16.

²⁷ “History of Pottstown”, 18.

²⁸ While Pottstown specialized in iron and steel and in textiles, other towns in Montgomery County had their own specialties. Ambler was known for its asbestos manufacturing and Lansdale was known for its machinery. Toll and Schwager, 1319.

²⁹ Jean Barth Toll and Michael J. Schwager, eds., *Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years, Volume I* (Montgomery County, PA: Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1893): 531.

³⁰ “History of Pottstown”, 18. Marcus Hook was considered the south end.

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single textile occupants and employees in the triple digits. When Meyerhoff, Son and Company moved to the subject property in 1900, they were the first textile company in Pottstown to achieve such a feat, definitively establishing a formal textile industry in Pottstown.

A 1901 annual report of the Chief Factory Inspector lists Meyerhoff, Son and Company as the only manufacturer of men's shirts in Pottstown, with 225 employees.³¹ By 1905, there were fifteen hosiery and shirt factories in Pottstown, the two largest of which were Meyerhoff, Son and Company and S. Liebovitz and Sons, both of which had 150 employees.³² The next largest company was the Searles Knitting Company, which had 120 employees and produced hosiery.³³ In 1916, Meyerhoff, Son and Company had 207 employees and S. Liebovitz and Sons had fifty-three employees.³⁴

By 1920, 254 people in Pottstown were employed in shirt manufacturing.³⁵ Of these, 206 people were employed by Meyerhoff, Son and Company and the remainder were employed by S. Liebovitz and Sons, also manufacturers of men's shirts.³⁶ In 1931, there were three shirt manufacturers in Pottstown. S. Liebovitz and Sons had sixty-two employees, Sweet-Orr Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of work shirts, had seventy-five employees and the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company had 158 employees.³⁷ It is important to note the strength of the industry at this time, as "textiles saved Pottstown during the Great Depression. Steel came almost to a standstill; but people still needed clothing and the factories were generally busy."³⁸

By 1941, S. Liebovitz and Sons had seventy-six employees, Sweet-Orr Manufacturing Company had eighty-nine employees and Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company had 156 employees.³⁹ There was a slight shift in 1950, when the S. Liebovitz and Sons is no longer listed in Industrial Directories and the Publix Shirt Company has replaced it with sixty-five employees. Sweet-Orr

³¹ *Annual Report of the Chief Factory Inspector of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1901.

³² Evans, 365.

³³ Evans, 365. The Searles Knitting Company went out of business in 1910.

³⁴ *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1913. The shift in Liebovitz's numbers can likely be explained by the company's diversification and opening of other plants in adjacent towns.

³⁵ Clifton S. Hunsicker, *Montgomery County, Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1923): 286.

³⁶ *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1920. S. Liebovitz and Sons also had plants in Bechtelsville, Blossburg, Donaldson, Fredericksburg, Hazelton, Kutztown, Mohnton, Myerstown, Philadelphia, Reading, Rosetta and Shartlesville.

³⁷ *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1931. Both Liebovitz and Sweet-Orr had their office space in New York. Only the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company was wholly based in Pottstown.

³⁸ Toll and Schwager, 536.

³⁹ *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1941.

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Manufacturing Company experienced huge growth with 158 employees and the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company remained consistent with 154 employees. A second new company, the H.W. Kemp Company, had forty-five employees.⁴⁰ The Sweet-Orr Manufacturing Company closed in the early 1960s and, over the next two decades, Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company continued as the primary shirt manufacturer in Pottstown. In the 1970s and 1980s, the textile industry virtually ceased to exist in Pottstown as competition from the south became too significant. Currently, there are no major textile manufacturers that are headquartered in Pottstown, although a few former company buildings remain in addition to Meyerhoff's, including S. Liebovitz.

The industrial center of Pottstown was historically located between the railway line to the north, Industrial Highway and the Schuylkill River to the south, Pottstown Pike to the west and Moser Road to the east. Historic maps from the 1880s and 1890s show that the neighborhood was heavily industrialized with both small and large scale companies ranging from the Nagle Steel Company to the Pottstown Pike Produce Company, Kerber and Geary Dye Manufacturers to the Vaughan Knitting Company. The oldest industrial building in the area, and the one that was the catalyst for later industrial development in Pottstown, is the Pottstown Roller Mill (1725, NR 1974), which is located along the Industrial Highway, just west of S. Hanover Street. The mill is one of the earliest grain mills in Pennsylvania.⁴¹ While there are a few additional extant industrial buildings in this area – the Seltmann and Knight Silk Hosiery Company (1919) and portions of the Light Manufacturing and Foundry Company complex (1921) – the Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building is notable as a light industrial building that is representative of Pottstown's first wave of industrial development that wasn't directly linked to the iron and steel industries. As one of only a small number of buildings in Pottstown that chronicle the industrial growth and development of the city, it is also one of the only buildings in the area that is representative of Pottstown's industrial peak in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A Brief Discussion of Mill Construction

The Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building is a good, intact local example of late 19th and early 20th century mill construction. Such loft-type buildings had both programmatic and practical requirements, which were ideally all fulfilled to achieve a successful project. Programmatically, the mill needed to have wide, open floor plates, bisected by only a minimum number of structural members. This would not only allow a flexibility of uses but also the flexibility to accommodate future changes in manufacturing technology. There needed to be numerous large windows offering ample light and ventilation to facilitate the interior work. The floors needed to be able to bear the

⁴⁰ *Industrial Directory of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1950.

⁴¹ "Pottstown Roller Mills", *National Register Nomination* (1974): 8:1.

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significant weight of manufacturing machines and the floor heights also needed to be tall enough to accommodate them. Interior circulation should include both stairways and a freight elevator.

Practically, the most important aspect of a factory was that it be resistant to fire, both in the interest of retaining stock and employees but also in the management of insurance rates. Beginning in the late 19th century,

The main principles of fire-resistive methods of construction as mandated by the fire insurance association were: masonry walls, compartmentalization of functions (isolating the most fire prone operations), separation of horizontal from vertical spaces (exterior stair towers separated by fire-resistive doors), on-site fire extinguishing capabilities (a source of water such as a reservoir or standpipes with hose outlets), and the implementation of “slow burning construction” techniques [including the configuration of timbers in such as way as to prevent masonry collapse].⁴²

By the time the Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building was constructed, these fire-resistive methods had become standard and were entirely incorporated into the design of the new factory. In particular, the use of exterior brick, while typical, was easily selected as Davidheiser owned his own brickyard several miles to the west. One less typical finish was the use of painted plaster applied to the entirety of the interior brick. This not only protected the interior walls from heavy industrial use, but was also an additional precaution against fire that went beyond the norm. The use of plaster was not recommended on wood framing, however, as it might lead to dry rot. As such, the building is not only an archetypal and intact example of its type but is also one of a few extant late 19th or early 20th century industrial loft buildings in Pottstown’s former industrial areas. Many of the other numerous factories and foundries from this era have been demolished leaving few testaments to a significant chapter in Pottstown’s industrial history.

Davidheiser and Wiand

Milton R. Davidheiser (1851-1909) was born in Montgomery County in 1851. He attended The Hill School in Pottstown, eventually becoming a teacher there, and worked as a builder in the summers. In the late 19th century, he established a brickyard with his brother, Reuben, in nearby Stowe.⁴³ Also around this time, Davidheiser formed a partnership with George W. Mauger, a local builder. Not many specifics about their portfolio are known, but the firm was awarded a contract for the erection

⁴² “Olympia Cotton Mills”, *National Register Nomination* (2005): 8:9-10; The main principles of fire-resistive construction are addressed in pages 104 – 112 of Sara E. Wermiel, *The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the Nineteenth-Century American City* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

⁴³ Ellwood Roberts, ed., *Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1904): 439.

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of a school on Evans Street near Cherry Street by the Pottstown School Board in 1884 (demolished).⁴⁴

William H. Wiand (1860-1936) was born in Chester County in 1860. He moved to Pottstown in 1881 and was employed by the Pottstown contractors Davidheiser and Mauger. When Mauger retired in the mid-1880s, he and Davidheiser formed their own firm.⁴⁵ Their first known major commission was as the contractors for the Security Trust Company, located at 152 E. High Street in Pottstown, PA, in 1887. Perhaps because of their good work on this project, the Security Trust Company later put them in charge of their investment – the construction of the subject property.⁴⁶ As there was no architect for the project, as there had been for the construction of the Security Trust Building, the firm of Davidheiser and Wiand was wholly in charge. Other industrial commissions for the firm included enlarging the foundry for the March-Brownback Company of Pottstown in 1902 and a new foundry building for the Stanley G. Flagg Company of Reading, PA in 1905.⁴⁷ Other non-industrial commissions of the firm include the Lutherans Orphans Home in Topton, PA (1896) and St. John's Catholic Church of the Greek Rite in Pottstown (1903).⁴⁸ After Davidheiser's death in 1909, Wiand continued to practice locally and was referred to in his obituary as a "builder of many churches and business houses in this borough."⁴⁹ His independent projects included the First Baptist Church in Pottstown (1910), the Odd Fellows' Temple in Pottstown (c.1913); a passenger and freight station in Douglassville, PA (1917); the St. Clair Building in Pottstown (1925); and the Royersford High School in Royersford, PA (1931).⁵⁰

Comparable Shirt Manufacturers in Pottstown

Two other local shirt manufacturers with a comparable product and date of operation are S. Liebovitz and Sons and the Sweet-Orr Manufacturing Company. S. Liebovitz and Sons Company was founded in the early 20th century and originally headquartered at 75 Leonard Street in New York City. At their peak, they operated sixty-five plants throughout Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and as far south as South Carolina. The company also manufactured men's shirts, and on

⁴⁴ "50 Years Ago." *Pottstown Mercury* (3 May 1934): 3.

⁴⁵ Roberts, 457.

⁴⁶ "50 Years Ago." *Pottstown Mercury* (7 January 1950): 4. The Security Trust Company financed at least one other factory construction project in Pottstown, the Seltmann and Knight Silk Hosiery Company in 1919. The building, located at 70 S. Franklin Street, remains. "History of Pottstown", 16.

⁴⁷ Flagg, established in Philadelphia in c. 1854, was the "first manufacturer of malleable iron screwed pipe fittings." Gailynne Ferguson, "Pottstown's Early Industrial Beginnings." *Berks-Mont News* (13 July 2013): <http://www.berksmontnews.com/article/BM/20110413/NEWS01/304139961>. Accessed on April 11, 2017. The foundry built by Davidheiser and Wiand was one of the largest in the Schuylkill Valley.

⁴⁸ "Contractor W.H. Wiand Dies at 75." *Pottstown Mercury* (31 January 1936): 1.

⁴⁹ "Contractor W.H. Wiand Dies at 75."

⁵⁰ "Contractor W.H. Wiand Dies at 75."

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a scale comparable to that of the Meyerhoff, Son and Company and the Pottstown Shirt Manufacturing Company. However, given that the Pottstown factory was only a small component of their overall operation, its factory does not have the same level of local impact. After World War II, the company was absorbed by the Publix Shirt Company, who also had a factory in Pottstown at one time.

The Sweet-Orr Manufacturing Company was of a comparable scale and longevity to those companies at the subject property. However, it was best known for the manufacture of men's overalls, only later expanding into men's workshirts and, similar to the S. Liebovitz and Sons, had numerous plants in New York, Philadelphia and Illinois. The Pottstown factory was closed in the early 1960s.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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“25 Years Ago.” Pottstown Mercury (11 April 1962): 4.

“Walter M. Steppacher and Brother Shirt Factory,” *National Register Nomination*, 2004.

Wermiel, Sara E. *The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the Nineteenth-Century American City.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government

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University
 Other: Name of repository: Library of Congress

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: One acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (Datum if other than WGS84:)

Latitude: 40.242069 Longitude: -75.647962

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building corresponds to a tax parcel identified in Figure 2 as the grey-colored parcel, at the SE corner of Charlotte and Cherry Streets. The tax parcel number is PARID 160015856013.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the building is situated, which includes all land historically associated with the nominated property during the period of significance. No extant known resources historically associated with the mill have been excluded.

Form Prepared By

name/title: Logan I. Ferguson, Senior Associate, with PA SHPO
organization: Powers and Company, Inc.
street & number: 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717 city or town: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19107
e-mail: logan@powersco.net telephone: (215) 636-0192 date: July 12, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building
City or Vicinity: Pottstown
County: Pottstown State: PA
Photographer: Robert Powers, Powers and Company, Inc.
Date Photographed: April 2017
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building
 Name of Property

Montgomery County, PA
 County and State

<i>Photo #</i>	<i>Description of Photograph</i>
1.	North elevation, view south
2.	North and west elevations, view southeast
3.	South and west elevations, view northeast
4.	South and east elevations, view northwest
5.	East elevation, view west
6.	North and east elevations, view southwest
7.	1 st floor, view north
8.	1 st floor, view south
9.	1 st floor, Stairway, view west
10.	2 nd floor, Stairway, view east
11.	2 nd floor, view northeast
12.	2 nd floor, view south
13.	2 nd floor, Freight elevator, view east
14.	3 rd floor, view northeast
15.	3 rd floor, view south
16.	3 rd floor, Stairway, view north
17.	4 th floor, view north
18.	4 th floor, view south

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4.	Interior Plans with photo key: basement, first and second floors.
5.	Interior Plans with photo key: third and fourth floors.
6.	1937 Aerial View.
7.	Recent aerial views, showing adjacent residential development of former industrial zone.
8.	Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1909, detail.
9.	Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1909, full sheet, showing relationship of building to South End neighborhood and industrial zone.
10.	Illustration of shirt with incorporated bow tie, patented by Solomon Meyerhoff, 1896.

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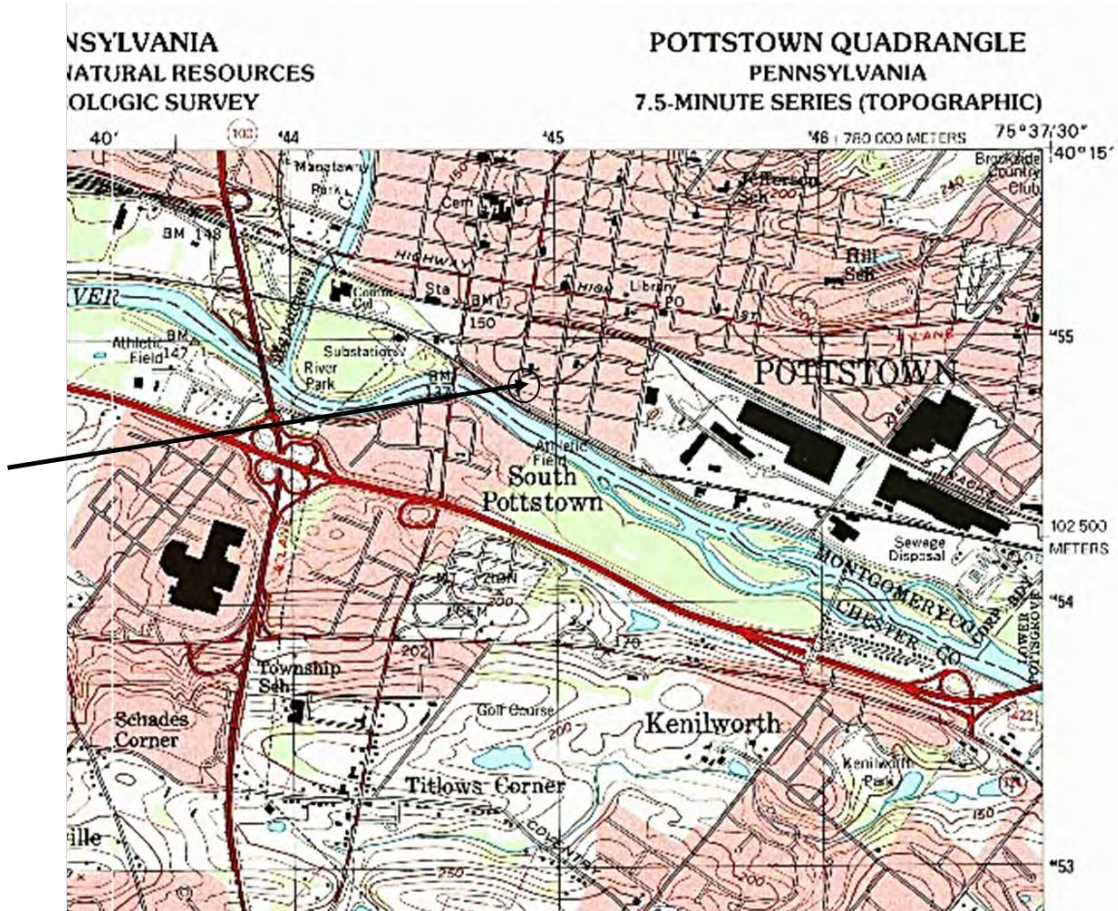


Figure 1: USGS Map, 1999 Pottstown PA quadrangle. Location of nominated property inside circle.
Latitude: 40.242069; Longitude: -75.647962

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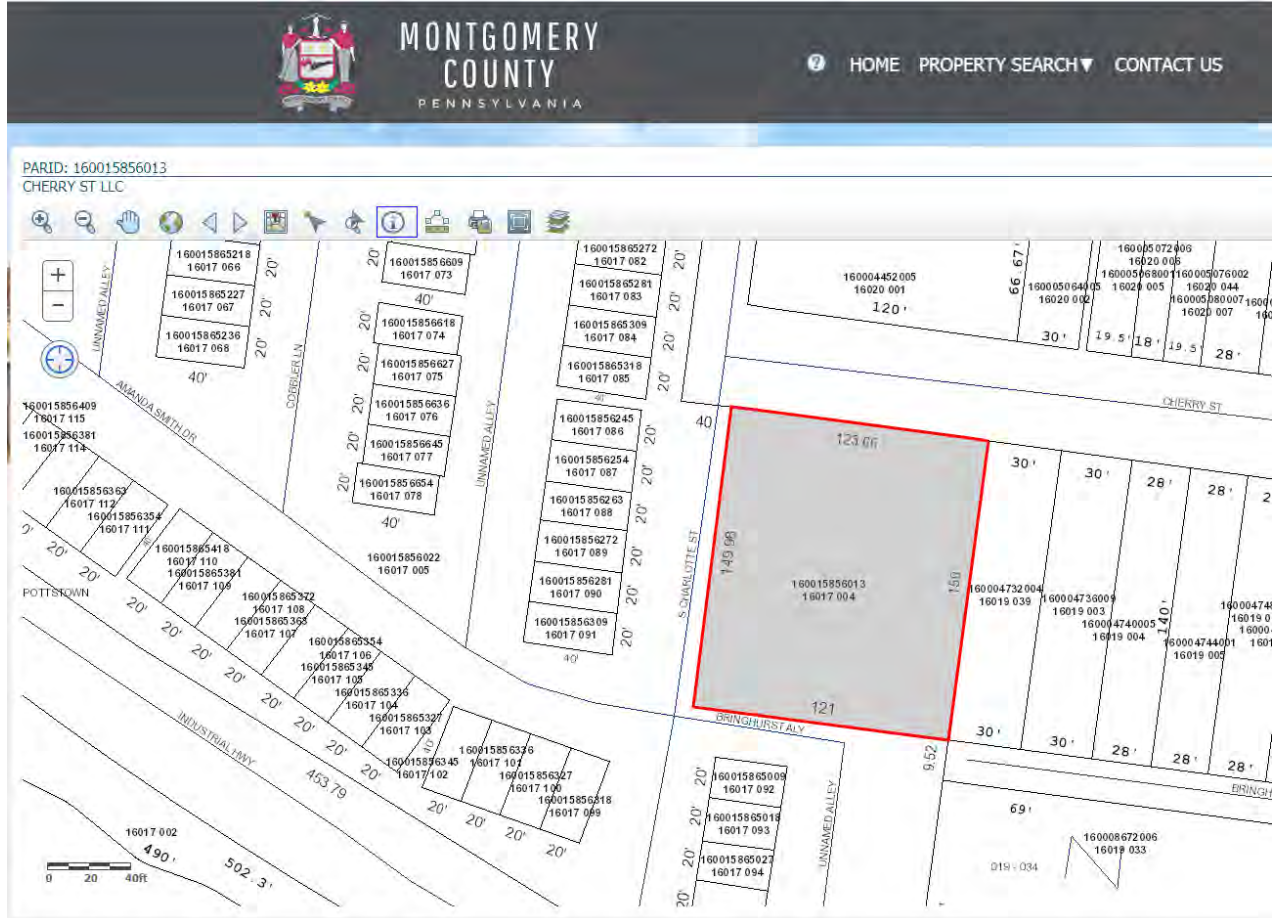


Figure 2 –National Register Boundary, based on current tax parcel map. Grey parcel is the nominated property, #160015856013. Accessed from Montgomery County property records website, 8/16/2017; <http://propertyrecords.montcopa.org/pt/maps/map.aspx?sIndex=0&idx=1&LMparent=20>

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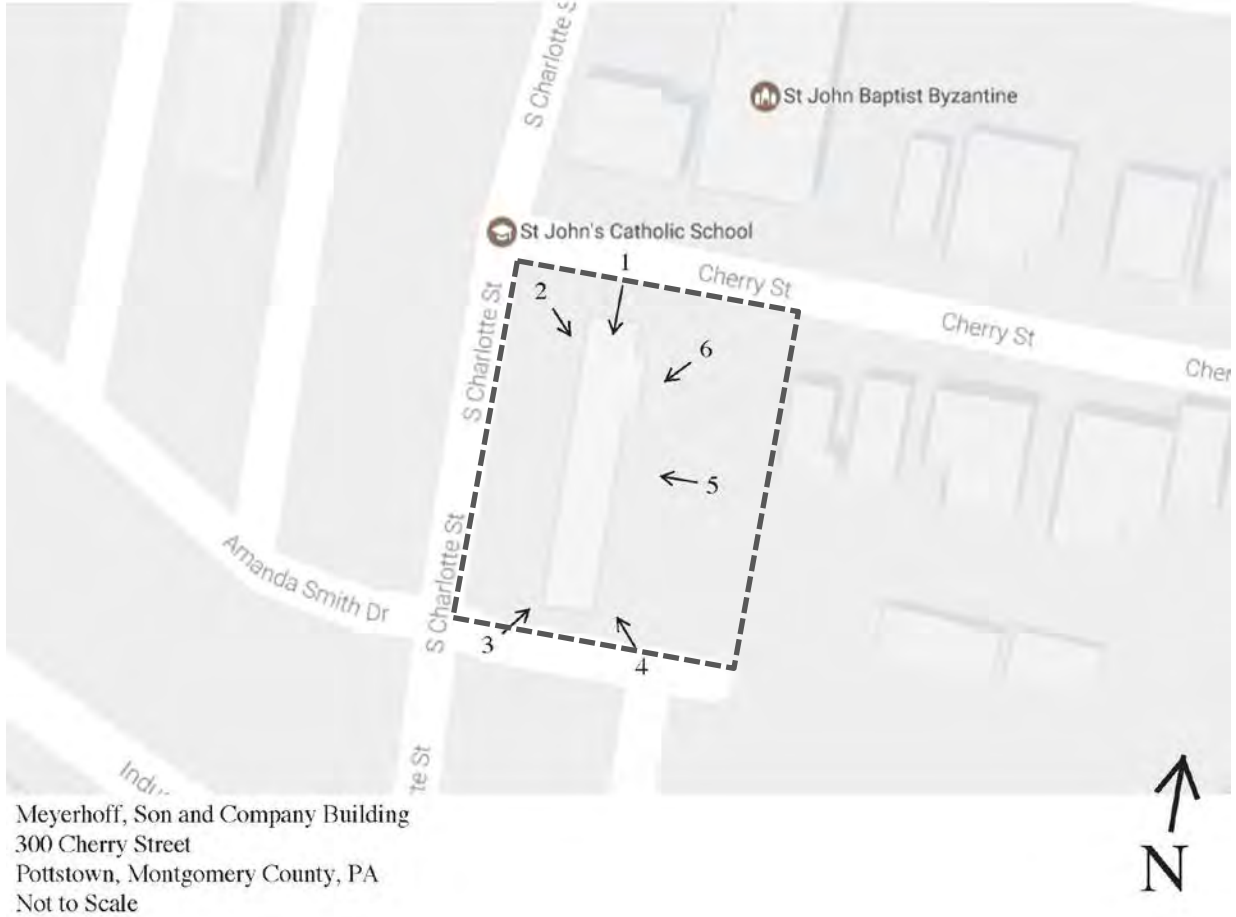


Figure 3: Exterior Photo Key; nominated boundary (approximate) shown as dashed line.

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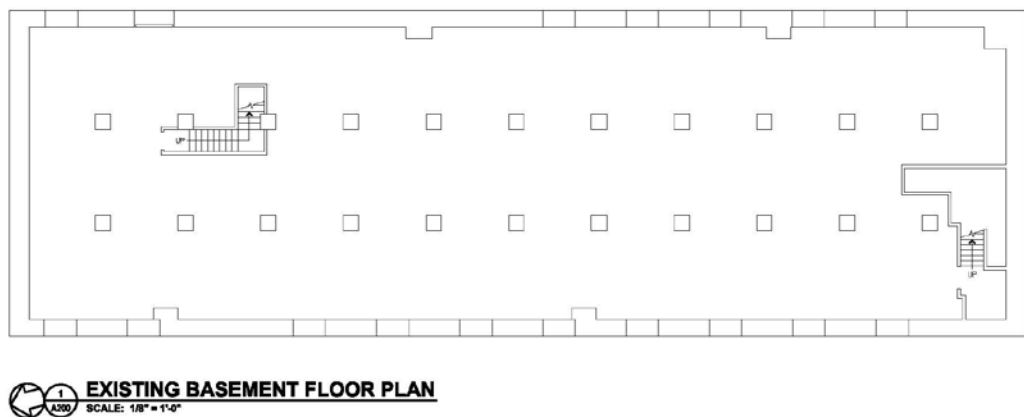
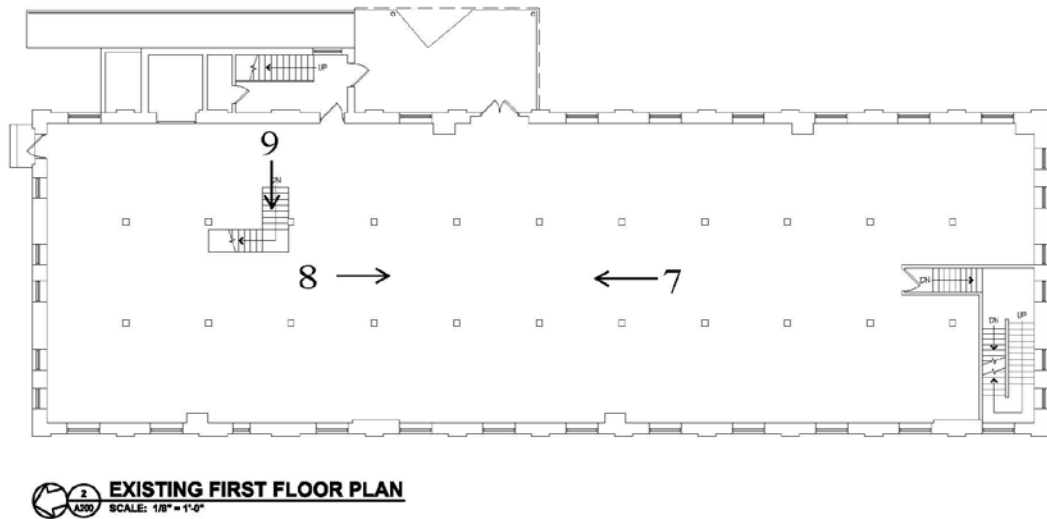
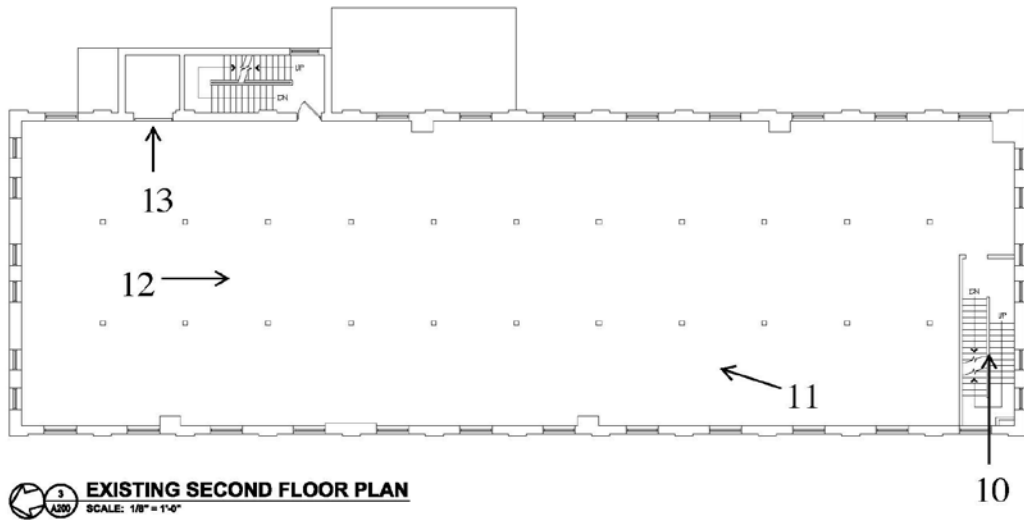
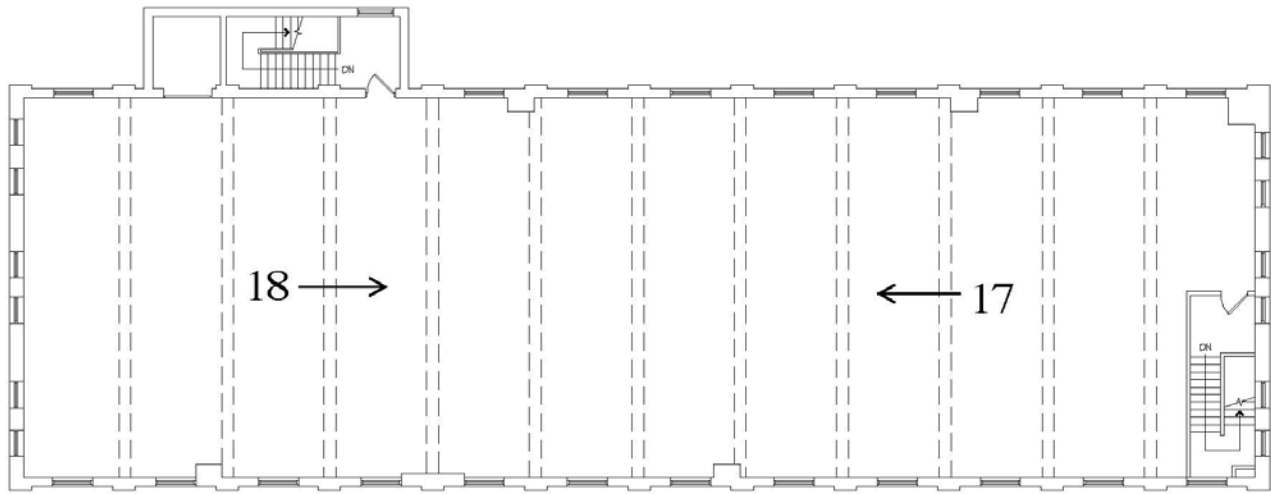


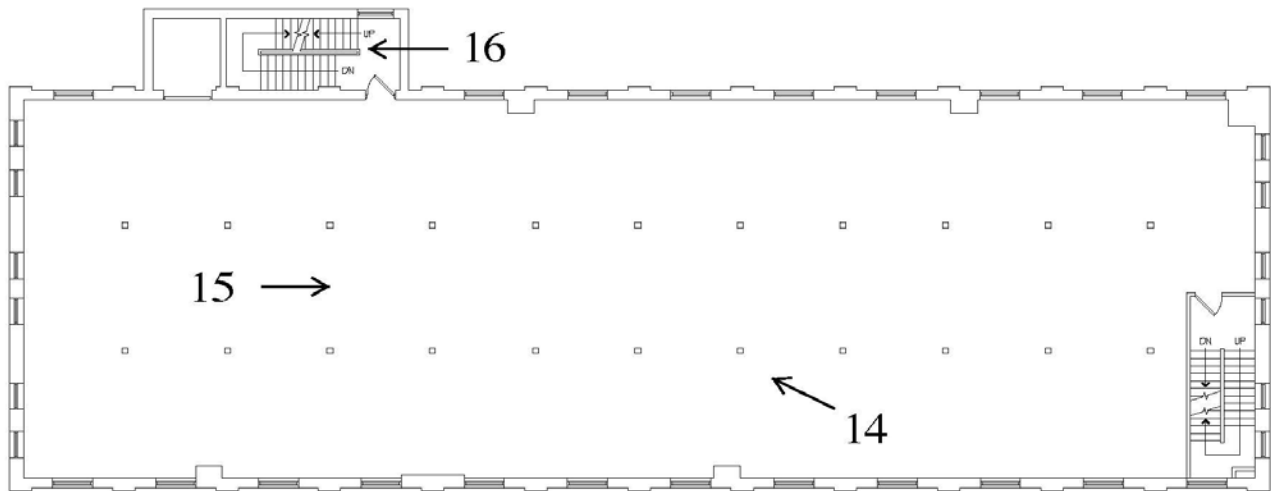
Figure 4: Interior plans with photo keys; Basement, First and Second floors.

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 **2**
EXISTING FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



 **1**
EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Figure 5 – Interior plans with photo keys, third and fourth floors.

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Figure 6: 1937 USDA Aerial View, from www.pennpilot.psu.edu, showing location of property (see arrow) and residential and industrial areas in and around the South End (aka South Side) neighborhood. Grey areas were iron works or heavy-industry zones.

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Figure 7: Recent aerial views, showing new residential development just beginning west of the nominated property (inside dashed line, approximate boundary) in the top view, and completed below (top view is from Bing maps; below is Google maps).

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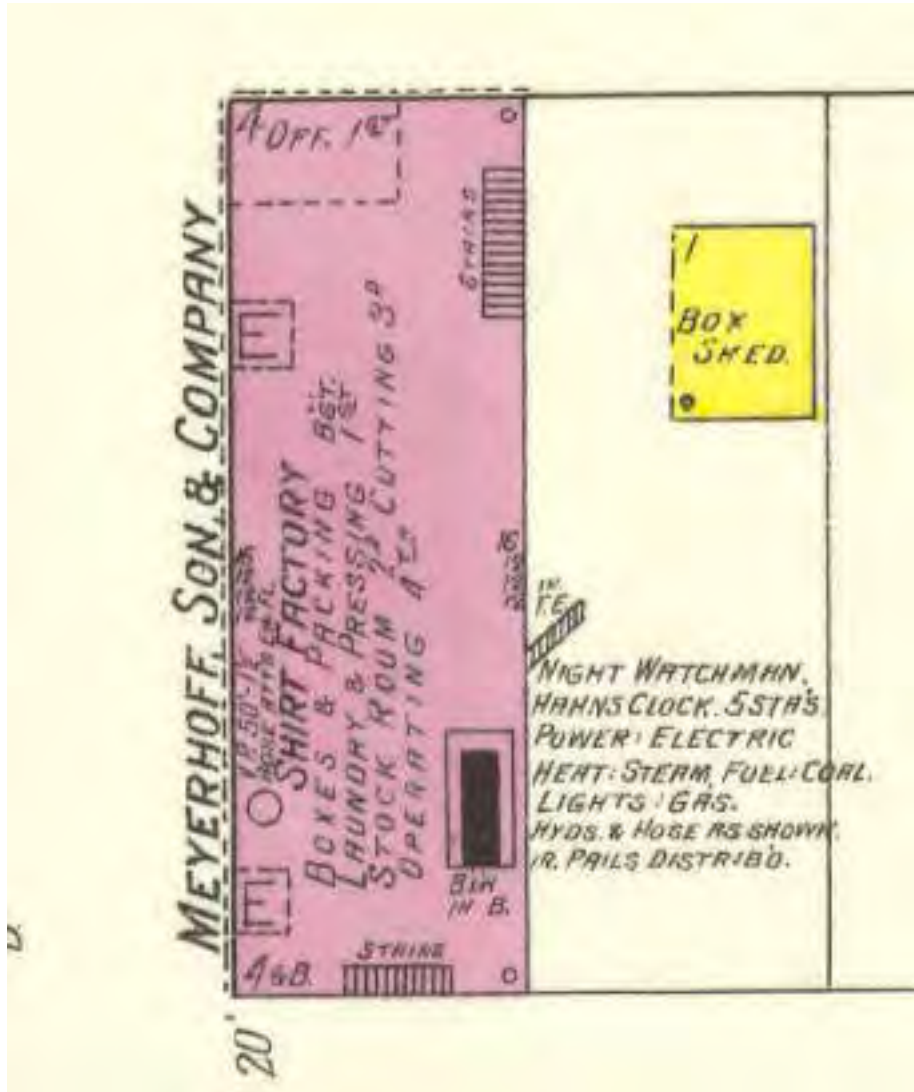


Figure 8 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1909, detail excerpt.

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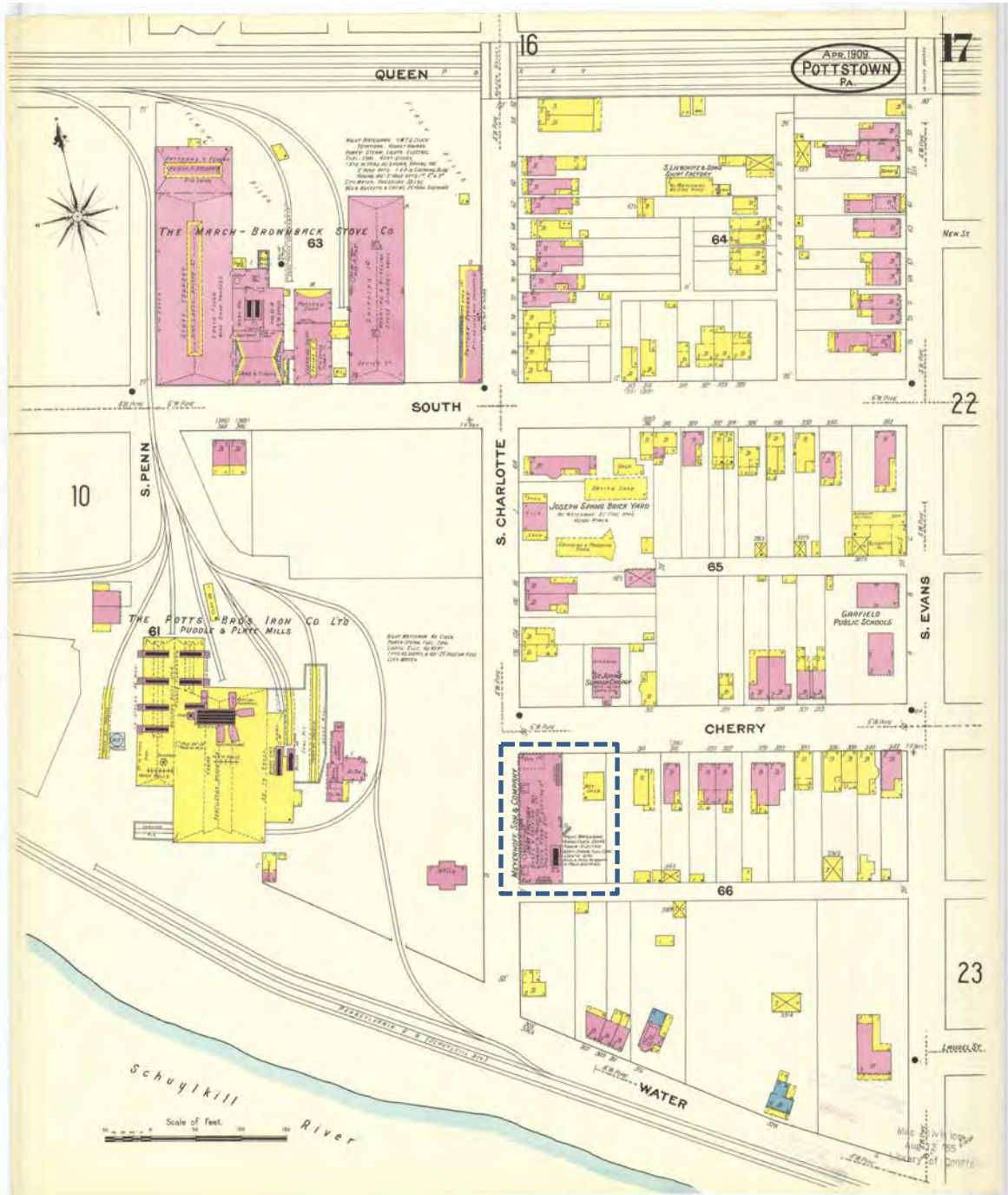


Figure 9: Full Sheet from 1909 Sanborn Map, showing location of property (inside dashed line) in the South End neighborhood, adjacent to large industrial zone.

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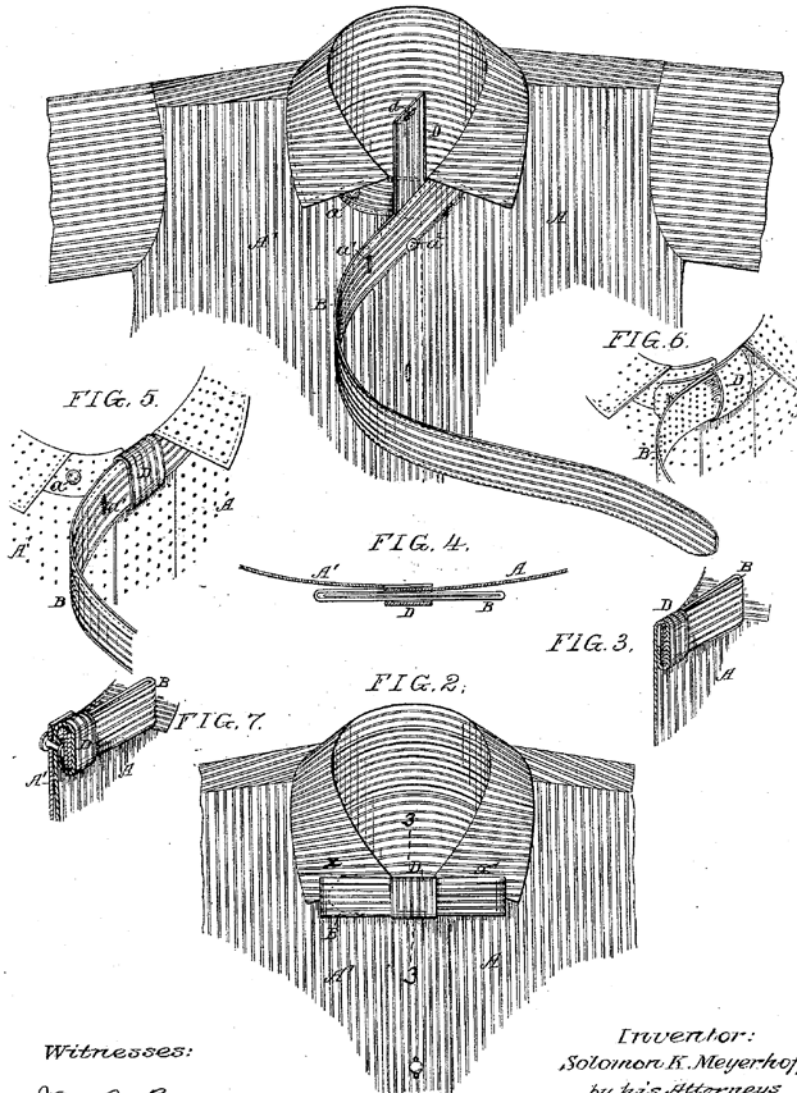
(No Model.)

S. K. MEYERHOFF.
SHIRT.

No. 562,636.

Patented June 23, 1896.

FIG. 1.



Witnesses:

Will. W. Barr.
P. D. Goodwin

Inventor:

Solomon K. Meyerhoff
by his Attorneys
Howard & Howard

Figure 10: Illustration of shirt with incorporated bow tie, patented 1896 by Solomon Meyerhoff.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



















EXIT















CAUTION
USE
HANDRAILS





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building

Multiple Name:

State & County: PENNSYLVANIA, Montgomery

Date Received: 11/6/2017 Date of Pending List: 12/5/2017 Date of 16th Day: 12/20/2017 Date of 45th Day: 12/21/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100001911

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

Accept Return Reject 12/21/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept, National Register Criterion A.

Reviewer Patrick Andrus Patrick Andrus Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2218 Date 12/21/2017

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION



November 3, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Program
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Re: NR nomination discs

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following nomination forms are being submitted electronically per the "Guidance on How to Submit a Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on Disk Summary (5/06/2013)":

- Boyertown Burial Casket Company, Montgomery County
- Hotel Abraham Lincoln, Berks County
- Lycoming Rubber Company, Lycoming County
- Howell & Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory, Philadelphia County
- Meyerhoff, Son and Company Building, Montgomery County

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copies of the nominations listed above. The proposed actions are for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations please contact David Maher at 717-783-9918.

Sincerely,

David Maher
National Register section
Preservation Services