NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SG3136

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: Crown Can Company Building
Other names/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 956 E. Erie Avenue
City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local Applicable National Register Criteria: X A _ B X C _ D

Andrea MacDonald, Deputy SHPO 10/9/2019

Signature of certifying official/Title: Date

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ 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 (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper 11/20/18 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/TRADE: Business
COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse
Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph
The Crown Can Company is a former can manufacturing facility located along East Erie Avenue in the Juniata Park neighborhood of North Philadelphia. Occupying approximately 18 acres, the site is bounded by East Erie Avenue to the north, I Street to the east, the tracks of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor to the south, and G Street to the west. The site contains four resources designed by architect Lucius Read White: 1) Building 1, the original one- to three-story, L-shaped brick can factory built between 1936-1937, which spans nearly the full 1100' distance between I Street and G Street and extends south along I Street by about 650'; 2) Building 2, a one-story brick and concrete block manufacturing space, built to the south of the original 1936 building in 1951; 3) a brick guardhouse built in 1937 near the northwest corner of the site, facing Erie Avenue; and 4) a water tower added in 1938 along the west side of the site, just south of Building 1. A prominent brick smokestack (part of Building 1) marks the southeast corner of the property. The site is primarily urban in character, but south and west of Building 2, the site is wooded or heavily overgrown with dense foliage. Building 2, which is largely hidden from view on surrounding streets, is accessed by an asphalt driveway from I Street at the southeast corner of the site. The building complex is sprawling and low in character, with a strong horizontal emphasis and prominent Moderne details. Although portions are not currently in use, the factory retains all aspects of integrity.

Narrative Description

Building 1
Built in 1936 and expanded on the west side in 1937, Building 1 was the primary manufacturing space for the Crown Can Company. It is two stories tall in most areas, although a large section of the main production floor is one-story and another section at the southeast corner is three-stories tall due to the change in grade from north to south. The building was designed in the Moderne style by architect Lucius Read White and is constructed of reinforced concrete and faced in red brick with limestone trim.

The north or primary elevation, which faces Erie Avenue, spans nearly the entire 1100' width of the site between I Street and G Street. Except for the westernmost section, which is 100' wide and set back from the street (this garage/cafeteria section, although part of Building 1, is described separately below), the north elevation consists of a symmetrical composition. In the center, there is a two-story, approximately 400' wide office section, the center portion of which –

nine bays or approximately 160' wide – projects out from the main face of the north elevation by about 25' (**Photo 1**). This section is itself symmetrical and is nine bays wide with the outermost bays projecting out slightly with stepped corners from the main part of the façade. Between and above the windows on both floors, including on the east and west elevations, there are alternating courses of projecting and flush bricks, creating distinct horizontal bands that unify the windows on both floors. Above the center seven bays, there is a limestone parapet while the outer bays contain only simple limestone coping.

On the first floor of the office section, the center bay contains the former main entrance, which is currently covered by metal siding but retains its stylized, Moderne-influenced limestone door surround (**Photo 2**). In the pediment above the door, the surround contains a stone plaque with the roman numerals MCMXXXVI, indicating the year of construction. In the three bays on either side of the entrance, there are two tall window openings and one smaller window opening, which have all been covered by metal siding. The outermost bays contain groups of four windows each, which are also covered in metal siding but retain their rounded limestone mullions and jambs. The corresponding windows on the second floor of the outermost bays have not been covered by siding; they consist of three-light steel windows with the same limestone mullions as on the first floor. The second floor windows in the center seven bays also remain uncovered. In the center bay, above the entrance, there is a tall, multi-light steel window with two operable tilt-in sash. The two bays on either side of the center bay contain similar but shorter steel windows; between these windows and those on the first floor, there are limestone spandrel panels with geometric ornamentation. The outermost of the center seven bays on the second floor contain single three-light steel windows.

On the west elevation of the office section, there is a secondary entrance – reached by three concentric half-circle granite steps – that has been covered with metal siding but retains its limestone surround (**Photo 4**). The door surround is simpler than that on the north elevation but contains a small, projecting banded metal canopy with rounded corners. There are small windows on either side of the entrance, but they are covered by metal siding. The second floor of the west elevation contains a pair of three-light steel windows with rounded limestone mullions and jambs, matching the treatment found in the outermost bays on the north elevation. Matching pairs of windows are found on both the first and second floors of the east elevation (there is no first floor entrance on the east elevation).

The two-story office section extends an additional 120' east and west of the center block (**Photos 3 and 6**). Both side wings are faced in red brick with striated brick banding between the windows and contain limestone coping. On the first floor, both wings contain six large window openings covered in metal siding on the first floor and a continuous row of 20 four-light steel windows with steel mullions on the second floor.

East and west of the 400' wide office section, the roof steps down to the one-story level of the main manufacturing floor. The north elevation of these sections, which are faced in red brick but without the banding found on the office section, contain twelve large window openings each, all of which are covered in metal siding (the windows, however, which are multi-light steel factory

units with operable awning sash, remain largely intact and are visible on the interior of the building). On the east side, there is a ground level below the first floor – visible due to a change in grade – with ten similar but shorter window openings that are also covered in metal siding (**Photo 5**). The twelve bays on the east side are bookended by a slightly taller two-story, three bay wide tower that is faced in brick, including brick banding between the windows on the second floor. The first floor contains three multi-light, steel porthole windows while the second floor contains three glass block corner windows (the easternmost bay on the second floor is set back slightly from the other two bays). The twelve bays on the west side of the office section are bookended by a one-story section that matches the second floor treatment of the corresponding section at the east end (**Photo 7**).

The east elevation, which is approximately 650' long and contains 32 bays, is broken up by three projecting towers – one at each end and a wider, deeper tower in the center (**Photos 9-14**). The uppermost level of all three towers contains – on the east elevation and on the north and south sides – the same brick banding treatment that is found on the north elevation. All three towers also contain simple limestone coping. Despite these similarities, the entrances and fenestration of the towers varies. Moving from north to south, the first tower contains a modern, roll-down metal door in the center bay of the first floor, on either side of which are small porthole windows that have been infilled with concrete block (**Photo 10**). The second floor contains glass block windows at each corner and repeats the brick banding treatment found on parts of the north elevation. The center tower contains two large roll-down metal garage doors in the center with rounded, painted metal jambs and a round metal column between them (**Photo 12**). Directly above the garage doors, there is a large limestone panel that historically served as a background for signage. On either side of the garage doors, there are former pedestrian entrances with identical limestone door surrounds with Moderne-style, geometric ornamentation. The northern entrance contains a modern, roll-down metal unit while the southern entrance contains hollow metal doors. The second floor contains a row of six multi-light steel industrial windows with operable awning sash. The third tower, which due to the change in grade is the tallest of the three, contains a simple limestone door surround in the center bay on the ground floor (the door itself is covered by metal panels) that is flanked by two porthole windows that are currently infilled with stucco (**Photos 13 and 14**). The second or mezzanine level, directly above the entrance, contains two tall, rectangular window openings that are covered by metal siding. The third level, which corresponds to the main production floor, contains multi-light industrial steel windows with operable awning sash at each corner. The southernmost part of this tower sets back and contains identical corner windows at the third floor, but none on the lower levels. Adjoining the south elevation of the third tower is a tall red brick smokestack with "Crown Can Co." spelled out vertically in prominent, contrasting white bricks.

The two setback sections between the towers contain twelve bay each, most of which are covered by metal siding (behind the siding, there are multi-light steel industrial windows, which are visible on the interior side). The section between the northern and center towers contains two levels, with four of the ground floor openings consisting of modern roll-down metal garage doors with short, banded metal canopies with rounded corners (**Photo 11**). The section between the center and southern towers contains three levels due to the change in grade. Here, the ground

floor contains a series of loading docks with modern, roll-down metal doors, as well as a modern aluminum storefront system in the sixth bay south of the center tower.

The south elevation (S1[1]) of Building 1, which faces the tracks of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, is approximately 282' wide and contains 15 bays on two levels. Like the other elevations, the south elevation is framed by two towers with brick banding that project out slightly from the ten center bays, all of which have rectangular openings covered by metal siding (**Photo 15**). Like the other elevations, the historic multi-light steel industrial windows remain and are visible on the interior. Just south of this elevation, there is a small, one-story concrete block extension, which is rectangular in plan and has a flat roof, and is connected to the south elevation by a narrow hyphen.

The west elevation (W1), which faces the interior of the site (and now Building 2), is approximately 362' wide and contains 18 bays on two levels (**Photo 16**). Although the size of the openings is consistent, there is a mix of windows, including original multi-light steel factory windows (some of which are covered by metal siding on the exterior but visible on the interior), and glass block infill. In addition, a one-story, five-bay wide concrete block loading dock with a pitched roof extends out from the southernmost part of this elevation. In the fourteenth bay from the south, a one-story hyphen extends from the west elevation to connect to Building 2. North of the hyphen, the west elevation contains a loading dock area with seven roll-down metal garage doors (**Photo 17**).

The south elevation (S2) of Building 1, facing the interior of the site, is approximately 642' wide and contains 32 bays along a continuous concrete loading dock (**Photos 18 and 19**). Many of the bays have enclosed with concrete block and contain modern, roll-down metal garage doors. The remaining bays contain either openings that are currently covered by metal siding, or functional roll-down metal garage doors. All of the bays that have not been enclosed are covered by simple metal canopies attached to the façade above with steel rods. Above the canopies, there are multi-light steel clerestory windows, and the corrugated glass in the angled roof monitors is also visible.

At the far west end of Building 1, there is a final 100' wide section, with a garage on the first floor and cafeteria on the second floor, that is set back significantly from Erie Street (**Photos 21-27**). In the space in front of this section, there is a wide driveway that slopes down from Erie Street, where a small brick guardhouse along the sidewalk (described in greater detail below) once controlled the access of delivery trucks into the facility (**Photos 21 and 22**). The center two bays of this section contain large garage openings, one of which is infilled with concrete block and the other of which contains a modern roll-down metal door.

The south elevation (S3) of the garage/cafeteria area (Building 1) is essentially a mirror of its north elevation, described above, but it is largely obscured by dense foliage. The west elevation (W2) of the garage/cafeteria area, which fronts on G Street, is approximately 220' wide and

[11] Elevation notations correspond with the site plan in Figure 2.

contains 12 bays on one level with a raised basement. The elevation is symmetrical with a projecting center tower, which is two bays wide with two entrances, both of which are framed by tall limestone piers and covered in metal siding. Most of the windows on either side of the center tower are covered by corrugated fiberglass panels, but some are visible. The windows consist of steel casements with fixed side, top and bottom lights (as in other parts of the building, the covered windows remain visible on the interior). Level with the windows, the façade contains the same striated brick banding treatment found on the north and south elevations. The basement level windows are infilled with brick.

Interior

The main floor in Building 1 contains a series of large spaces that historically functioned a single vast production space (**Photos 32-38**). Despite the partition of these spaces with concrete block walls, likely constructed within the last 30-40 years, nearly all other historic finishes and features remain intact. In the section fronting on Erie Avenue, the main floor is seven bays deep, with an additional nine bays extending south in the section that fronts on I Street. In both sections, there are concrete floors and the structural system is identical. Each east-west bay is defined by a consistent 40’ by 40’ grid of steel columns, which support large steel truss girders running the length of each section. Attached to the girders above are cambered, trapezoidal roof trusses spaced 20’ apart for the full length of each bay – one at each north-south column line and one halfway between each column line. The cambered trusses support roof monitors of the same shape. The monitors feature corrugated metal decking and continuous rows of steel-framed, corrugated glass windows on the angled north and south sides, which are the main source of natural light into these spaces. The perimeter walls in all sections are faced in yellow glazed brick.

The mezzanine level of Building 1, which exists below the main floor only in the eastern leg of the building, contains two large, roughly 280’ by 301’ storage areas (**Photos 40-42)** on either side of a center loading dock (**Photo 39**), which is entered through the two large garage doors in the center of the east elevation. All three sections contain concrete floors and ceilings supported by a consistent 20’ by 20’ grid of concrete mushroom columns. The north and south sides of the loading dock area, which are faced in buff brick and concrete block in some areas, contain multi-light steel factory windows – similar to those found elsewhere in the building – as clerestories.

Below the southern half of the mezzanine, there is a ground floor space, which also contains concrete floors, ceilings, and mushroom columns (**Photos 43-44**). A furniture store currently occupies this space.

In the two-story, westernmost section of Building 1, the first floor consists of a two-bay wide, enclosed loading dock area (**Photo 46**) historically accessed through the two garage door openings on the north elevation and exited through two corresponding openings on the south elevation. Along the east side of the space, there is an elevated loading area with roll-down metal garage doors that open into the main production floor. The space contains concrete floors and large, exposed concrete beams and cross beams at the ceiling. The beams are supported by round concrete columns arranged in 40’ intervals down the center of the space from north to south, as

well as square concrete columns spaced 20' apart along the loading dock on the east side of the space. The second floor is the former cafeteria for Crown Can employees. This large, open space contains wood floors and is spanned by a gabled roof supported by a series of east-west steel I-beam joists, which are spaced 20' apart and curve into the corresponding piers on each side (**Photos 47-48**). The perimeter walls on the east and west sides contain yellow glazed brick (below and between the windows). The north end contains what appears to have served as a stage for company assemblies with two smaller spaces of undetermined function on each side. The south end contains the former kitchen and serving area, although there are no traces of kitchen equipment or fixtures.

Building 2

Located south of Building 1, Building 2 is a one-story concrete block manufacturing facility that was largely built in 1951. This building was constructed south of an original loading platform that served trains accessing the site from a siding off of the adjacent Pennsylvania Railroad line (now Amtrak's Northeast Corridor). The original platform can be seen in a 1938 aerial view (**Figure 10**). Around 1940, a relatively small, one-story warehouse structure, which can be seen in a 1951 Sanborn map (**Figure 7**), was built at the west end of the platform. Building 2 was built directly on the south elevation of this warehouse. Although the construction of Building 2 in 1951 created a long, narrow open space between it and the parallel platform – except for a hyphen structure as seen in a 1959 aerial view (**Figure 11**) – this area was covered over in the early 1960s to create the building that exists today. In total, the building measures approximately 202' by 437'. There is modified gambrel roof of corrugated metal over the southern half while the northern half has a flat roof. **(Photos 20, 53)**

On the west elevation, which is faced in concrete block on a base of quarry faced granite, contains eight loading dock bays with roll-down metal doors. The northernmost four bays are the only part of the circa 1940 warehouse structure that is currently visible. Above the southernmost four bays, there is a narrow, pitched metal canopy with corrugated metal cladding. The north elevation is also faced in concrete block, which was added in the 1960s to enclose the original loading dock platform (the platform's concrete supporting structure is still visible on the left side of **Photo 18**). This elevation contains only a few small, inconsistent window openings, which are covered in metal siding, and some hollow metal doors. The loading dock platform was originally uncovered, but the existing roof, which pitches in toward the building, was added during the 1951 project. The south elevation, which is faced in red brick, contains 28 bays of multi-light steel factory windows with operable awning sash. Nearly all of the east elevation is obscured by overgrown foliage, although the upper portion of the gambrel roof on the southern half of the building is visible.

Interior

The southern half of Building 2 consists of a large, open center space or "nave" oriented east to west with narrow side aisles. The floors throughout this section are concrete. The center space is open to the gambrel roof above, and the roof's supporting steel trusses, which are spaced 40 feet apart, are fully visible from below. The angled north and south sides of the roof contain continuous rows of steel-framed, corrugated glass windows much like those found in the roof

monitors in Building 1. The center space is separated from the side aisles by rows of steel I-beam columns. The north and south walls of the side aisles contain concrete block below the windows. There are several one-bay wide openings between the southern half and northern half of the building. The interior of the northern half of Building 2 is largely open in plan and contains regularly spaced steel I-beam columns.

Guardhouse
Located near the northwest corner of the site where a driveway leads down from Erie Avenue into the former receiving area, there is a small, one-story brick 1937 guardhouse (**Photos 21-22**). This building measures approximately 10' by 20' and in plan consists of a stretched octagon with a flat roof. There are windows on the east, west, and north sides, but they have all been covered with metal siding. The north elevation is framed by limestone piers. On the south side, there is a swinging metal door that provides access to the interior. On either side of the building are large iron picket gates that secure the driveway area.

Water Tower
Located on the west side of the site, just south of Building 1 near G Street, there is an approximately 150' tall 1938 water tower (**Photos 18, 21 and 24**). The cylindrical metal tower has a conical roof and sits on a tall platform with four steel legs with steel cross bracing.

Overall Integrity
The Crown Can Company Building retains integrity. The aspects of design and materials are retained in the distinct industrial form of the building and its unusual Moderne-influenced exterior treatments. Typical of industrial buildings of this period, the Crown Can Company Building's reinforced concrete structure and large, regularly spaced window openings with characteristic multi-light steel factory sash, help to convey the building's industrial function. Although many of the windows are covered by metal siding, they remain largely intact and are visible on the interior. Unlike most factories of the early twentieth century, however, the building's intact Moderne-style treatment – including its horizontal emphasis, striated brickwork, rounded limestone mullions in the center and end blocks, and porthole windows (some of which are currently infilled with stucco), all of which remain largely intact – affords a level of articulation and character to its expansive facades that would otherwise appear dull and monotonous.

In equal measure, the aspect of setting is retained in the surrounding neighborhood's largely intact industrial fabric, not to mention the mid-nineteenth century rail line – once critical to the building's operation as a manufacturing space – that remains in its original location along the south side of the site and is still used today. The Crown Can Company Building stands on its original site in an area that retains the general industrial character that has defined this section of the city since it was first developed in the 1920s. Finally, the aspects of feeling and association are retained. Although the equipment, furnishings and people have long since departed, the vast interior spaces, which retain most of their original finishes and all of their original structural members, effectively relay the sense of place and the notable industrial history of the prominent nationally known company that once occupied this building.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ 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.
- ☐ C. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ 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, Architecture

Period of Significance
1936-1957

Significant Dates
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Lucius Read White, architect

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 Crown Can Company Building is locally[2] significant under Criterion A in the area of Industry as one of the largest beer can factories in the United States from 1936 through the early 1950s. During this period, much of the manufacturing activity that took place within the building centered on the "Crowntainer," which was developed on-site by company engineers as the first seamless beer can in the United States. The Crowntainer revolutionized the brewing industry beginning in 1940 and led to a growing national acceptance of the metal can as a beverage container. Equally notable, the company's in-house research and development team developed the first commercial aerosol can, called the "Spra-tainer," which became the leading product produced in the Erie Avenue plant after 1950 and led to such iconic consumer products as canned shaving cream and whipped cream, among a long and varied list of others. In addition to its industrial significance, the Crown Can Company Building is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a major industrial work in the Moderne style by architect Lucius Read White. Eschewing the purely utilitarian factory architecture of previous decades, White deftly rendered the sprawling Crown Can Company Building with a level of articulation – primarily through striated brickwork, rounded corners, and projecting towers with corner and porthole windows – that, though subtle, successfully broke up the enormous massing of the building and leant an air of modernity through its relatively streamlined form. The period of significance of the Crown Can Company Building begins in 1936, when the vast majority of the building was completed, and ends in 1957, when the Crown Can Company was folded into its parent company, Crown Cork & Seal, which consolidated operations at a new facility in Northeast Philadelphia and began to phase out production at the Erie Avenue plant.

Following the eventual departure of the Crown Can Company from the Erie Avenue plant in 1963, the complex was acquired and occupied by the Progress Manufacturing Company, makers of residential light fixtures, in 1964. Although the importance of Progress Manufacturing within this industry between 1890 and 1964 has been established by the recent National Register Nomination for an earlier Progress facility at 1401-1409 Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia (NRHP #16000572), the company's post-1964 significance has not been fully established. Therefore, while it may be possible to extend the period of significance beyond 1957 in the future, for the purposes of this nomination the areas and period of significance are limited by association with the Crown Can Company.

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

Significance Under Criterion A in the Area of Industry:

The Early History of the Crown Can Company

The Crown Can Company was formed in 1936 after Crown Cork & Seal, a nationally prominent bottling company founded in Baltimore in the 1890s, acquired the Acme Can Company. Based at

[2] Statewide or even national level of significance may be appropriate but would require additional information to compare the facility to other similar manufacturers beyond Philadelphia.

1026 West Allegheny Avenue in Philadelphia, Acme, which was known as the Ritter Can & Specialty Company until 1922, had been producing a wide range of "general line cans, and other metal containers, both plain and lithographed," since about 1915. Until the mid-1930s, Crown Cork & Seal had specialized in the manufacture of metal caps for glass bottles, but the increasing popularity of cans for beer and food products motivated the company to diversify its business. In January, 1936, Crown acquired the Acme Can Company for $650,000. Rather than occupy the Acme plant on Allegheny Avenue, Crown decided to embark on the construction of a large new manufacturing facility on Erie Avenue in North Philadelphia. Just weeks after the Acme sale went through, Crown moved forward with its ambitious expansion program, purchasing the then undeveloped site on Erie Avenue from the J.S. Thorn Company, a manufacturer of steel casement windows, for $200,000 (**Figure 6**).[3]

Although the Acme Can Company was a relatively small player in the can industry – one competitor, the American Can Company, was far larger and had plants in many cities – the enormous size of the proposed Erie Avenue plant made it clear that Crown intended to enter the market in a major way. Costing $3 million and consisting of around 700,000 square feet of floor space, the new building not only provided Crown with all the manufacturing space it expected to need for years to come, but also contained offices for management as well as a laboratory for research and development (the company's corporate headquarters remained in Baltimore). On its completion in October, 1936, the new facility, which was subsequently featured in *Architectural Record* in February, 1940, was by many accounts the largest can making facility in the world. Shortly after its opening, the plant was producing around 3,600,000 beer and sanitary cans daily, a number that more than doubled to 7,500,000 within six months once all equipment and machinery was installed.[4]

The production process within the new building was illustrated by a flow diagram in the 1940 *Architectural Record* feature (**Figure 13**). First, sheet metal would be brought up in freight elevators from the ground floor storage area on the east side of the building, then coated and/or lithographed with the necessary branding. The flat material would then progress to the main production lines, where large canning machines would cut and roll the metal sheets into a cylinder shape, also providing a soldered vertical seam where the two ends met. Can bottoms were attached at this time with the tops left off until the can contents were filled at the customers' own plants.

The *Architectural Record* diagram also shows how trains and trucks accessed the site. Trucks being loaded for local or regional shipments would enter the site through two large garage doors in the center bay on the east elevation, then progress up a ramp located between two train platforms on the interior of the site. Toward the west end of the site, trucks would turn north into the enclosed loading dock or "garage" as indicated on the diagram, where they would be loaded for local or regional outgoing shipments. The departure of loaded trucks was controlled by the guardhouse at the end of the driveway north of the garage. Train cars, on the other hand, would

[3] Charles Henry Hession, "Competition in the Metal Food Container Industry, 1916-1946," PhD diss., Columbia University, 1948, p. 155.
[4] "New Plant in Phila. To Make Crown Cans," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 Oct 1936.

enter the site on the south side from the adjacent tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which today serve Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. The site contained a rail siding that started at the southeast corner, extending west until it made a 90-degree turn toward the loading dock platforms in the center of the site.

As mentioned above, the new building included a laboratory, located in a space at the northwest corner of the main production floor, where extensive research, testing and product development took place. Led initially by W.I. Gladfelter, Crown Can's Manager of Production and Engineering, the lab developed a range of innovative products and machinery that were the subjects of at least three dozen successful patents between 1936 and 1953. Among the many products developed by the Crown Can Company were a powder dispensing can in 1937 (US Patent 2,091,911); a new type of vacuum sealing can for ground coffee, malted milk and other food products in 1938 (US Patent 2,130,637); and an adherent film of chlorinated rubber to be applied to the insides of cans to preserve food longer in 1940 (US Patent 2,198,630). The company also developed numerous types of manufacturing equipment, including an "apparatus for forming can bodies" in 1936 (US Patent 2,175,746), a machine for soldering can seams on the inside rather than outside in 1940 (US Patent 2,193,955), and a container sealing machine, also in 1940 (US Patent 2,223,480). These machines, like others developed by the company, were presumably developed for use in the Erie Avenue plant.

The Crowntainer

By far the most successful of Crown's innovations during its first five years on Erie Avenue was the "Crowntainer." Developed as a new type of metal can for beer and first introduced in 1939, it was the first seamless beer can produced in the United States. Until the Crowntainer, beer cans were formed by a rectangular piece of sheet metal that was rolled and joined at each end by a rolled flange, with a bottom and coned top that were attached in the same way (**Figure 18**). Coned topped cans, which mimicked the form of glass bottles and could be filled with traditional bottling machinery, were first produced by the Continental Can Company in 1935 for the Schlitz Brewing Company in Milwaukee. To compete, Crown Can introduced its own cone model in 1937, known as the J-Spout because of its "straight, narrow neck which flares into a wide base." Due to several issues with the J-Spout, however – its elongated spout, shorter body and concave bottom made it unpopular – Crown began experimenting with an altogether different type of can.[5]

In the late 1930s, Crown Can developed an electrolytic tin-plating process that allowed the production of cans in steel, which were thinner, stronger, and less expensive than cans made fully of tin. Recognizing the suitability of this new type of can for beer, Crown developed the Crowntainer, which was the first two-piece, drawn (rather than cut and rolled), necked-in steel can (**Figure 19**). Hailed by *The American Brewer* as a "fundamentally new container," the Crowntainer had a streamlined shape entirely without side or top seams, presenting a "striking appearance with its smooth shoulders and sides, its smartly balanced design."[6] Not only was it an

[5] D.B.S. Maxwell, "Beer Cans: A Guide for the Archaeologist," *Historical Archaeology* 27, no. 1 (1993): 99.
[6] "New Container," *American Brewer* 72, no. 12 (December 1939): 50.

attractive can, but the streamlining also had the practical effects of facilitating the exhaustion of air from the top of the can and allowing easier pouring, according to one observer. Furthermore, by eliminating the side seam, a smooth, even surface for the application of lithographic branding was achieved. Because its tin plating provided an attractive metallic finish, the Crowntainer was rarely if ever painted; rather, the silver color served as a background for labels. Inside, the Crowntainer was lined with the Crown-developed "Fermax" coating, which entirely removed any hint of metallic taste or odor, which was one of the chief complaints about metal beer cans during this period. Developed by the brothers Amos Calleson and Edgar A. Calleson for Crown Can, the technology that led to the Crowntainer was finally patented in September, 1945 (US Patent 2,384,810).

Within months of the Crowntainer's introduction to the market in late 1939, it had become an "instant success," according to *Financial World*. That publication also remarked that "sales have been limited only by the capacity of the equipment thus far installed" – the CEMCO 80, a machine developed by Crown specifically to make Crowntainers, could produce up to 400 cans per minute.[7] The first brewery to utilize the Crowntainer was C. Schmidt & Son in Philadelphia, and the can quickly proliferated among breweries throughout the Northeastern and Midwestern United States, becoming the predominant beer container in those regions by the early 1940s. Well-known names, including Anheuser-Busch in St. Louis and Schlitz in Milwaukee were among the 74 breweries, spread among 53 cities in 19 states, that are known to have used Crowntainers during the 1940s and 50s. Breweries as far away as Santiago, Cuba and Caracas, Venezuela, also bottled beer in Crowntainers during this period. As the Crown Can plant on Erie Avenue plant was increasingly occupied in the production of Crowntainers, the company was forced by 1941 to transfer much of their sanitary can business to new plants in Orlando, Florida and Nesbraska City, Nebraska.[8] In recognition of the centrality of the Crowntainer to Crown Cork & Seal's overall business, the company placed an image of the product on their letterhead, which also contained an engraving of the Philadelphia plant despite the main headquarters being located in Baltimore (**Figure 22**).

When the United States entered World War II in late 1941, production of the Crowntainer was not initially affected in a significant way. Despite government restrictions on the use of certain metals, the only major change to the Crowntainer was that its tin-plated bottom was replaced with lacquered metal. In February 1942, however, the newly created War Production Board placed further restrictions on the use of steel for civilian or non-essential use, virtually halting production of the Crowntainer. However, because Crown Can benefitted greatly from numerous government contracts during the war – among its various wartime activities, the Erie Avenue plant began to manufacture gas mask canisters – the company's business was not materially affected. In fact, due in large part to government business, Crown's sales increased considerably from $45 million in 1942 to $53.5 million in 1943 and $62.8 million in 1944. When in early 1944 the Quartermaster General arranged for the purchase of "a large quantity of beer," production of the Crowntainer resumed "in substantial volume," according to the company's

[7] *Financial World* 73 (1940): 220.
[8] Crown, Cork & Seal Company, Inc., 1941 Annual Report, p. 9.

1943 annual report. The Crowntainers manufactured for military consumption overseas were painted in an olive drab color for camouflage.[9]

With the end of the war in 1945, Crown Can's Erie Avenue plant was fully reconverted for the production of Crowntainers for domestic consumption. The Crowntainer continued to be popular among a wide variety of breweries. Beginning in the early 1950s, however, punch-top cans closer in form and function to the beer cans that exist today (but without tab openers) began to dominate the market. For one, punch-tops could be filled more quickly and therefore were cheaper than cone-tops and Crowntainers. Additionally, as explained by archaeologist D.B.S. Maxwell, revenues at many breweries began to exceed the costs required to install new canning lines; up to this point most breweries still operated using old bottling equipment adapted for bottle-like cone-tops.[10]

A rapid drop in demand for Crowntainers after 1950 led the Crown Can Company to largely discontinue the product by 1955. Although the Crowntainer existed for a period of only 15 years, due to its various innovations – most important were its strength, elegant form, and coated interior that eliminated any hint of metallic taste – it played a major role in the growing acceptance of the metal can as a beverage container in the United States. The metal can did not overtake the glass bottle as the most popular container for beer and soft beverages until the early 1960s, but the Crowntainer led to significant developments in canning technology that ultimately resulted in the seamless, all-aluminum can with tab opener that has been so ubiquitous for decades.

The Spra-tainer

While the Crowntainer dominated the Crown Can Company's product line for over a decade, the company continued to conduct research and develop innovative new products. Much of this activity focused on how the seamless metal can technology used in the Crowntainer could be adapted for consumer-friendly aerosol products, such as shaving cream, insecticides, and spray paint, which, to be used efficiently as sprays, needed to be contained under pressure. Due to the strength of the Crowntainer's steel construction, it was perfectly suited for the high pressurization required in such applications.

Aerosol was introduced in the late 1920s; a Norwegian chemical engineer, Erik Rotheim, was the first to patent an aerosol spray can. The technology had very few practical applications until the 1940s, when aerosol insecticides or "bug bombs" were developed by the United States military for use by soldiers in Southeast Asia during World War II. Due to the heavily pressurized contents of the bug bomb, however, it required a super strong canister, which, because of its weight and expense, was not disposable, making it mostly unsuitable for consumer use. In addition, once released, the spray mechanism could not be controlled; the can's contents were expelled continuously until it was empty.[11]

[9] Crown, Cork & Seal Company, Inc., 1942-1944 Annual Reports.
[10] Maxwell, 103-104
[11] Montfort Johnsen, Entry for "Aerosol Containers" in *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology*, edited by Kit L. Yam (Wiley, 2009): 24-25.

During World War II, Crown engineers began to think about how a lower pressure, lighter and therefore less expensive aerosol can could revolutionize the consumer market. Their research, led by Crown Can's chief chemist, Earl Graham, was focused on adapting the Crowntainer; with its relatively thin but strong steel walled construction, Crown's leading product proved useful as a container in a wide range of consumer applications beyond beer. With a lower pressure, compressed gas propellent and other modifications – most importantly a controlled release valve and delivery tube – the Crown team discovered that this existing product could relatively easily serve as a pressurized spray can. The result was the Spra-tainer, the first practical, light-weight aerosol spray can made available to consumers in the United States. Concurrently but independently, Harry E. Petersen, an engineer at the Continental Can Company, which was still one of Crown's largest competitors, developed a similar aerosol spray can. Crown's Spra-tainer was the first to reach the market.[12]

Like the Crowntainer, the Spra-tainer had seamless steel construction with an aluminum coating, which served as a surface for an endless variety of colored, lithographic branding. Due to its affordability and ease of use, not to mention lightweight and compact 6oz. and 12oz. sizes, the can immediately became popular among a wide range of manufacturers on its introduction in 1946. The products most commonly sold in Spra-tainers were air fresheners, shaving cream, insecticides and whipped cream, but the can was also used for deodorants, hair spray, spray paint, rug cleaners, and spray snow during the holidays. Some of these products became iconic American brands. Reddi-Wip whipped cream, for example, was first sold in 1948 and made possible only by the availability of Spra-tainer and the liner Crown developed to make the can suitable for food products. Like other Spra-tainer products, Reddi-whip rapidly achieved national distribution and made its St. Louis inventor, Aaron S. Lapin, one of the first "aerosol millionaires."

The aerosol spray can developed by the Crown Can Company was one of a number of military technologies, including nylon, plastics, and Styrofoam, among others, that were reconfigured for the home after World War II. In fact, the introduction of the Spra-tainer coincided with a postwar housing boom and rapidly proliferating consumer culture that came to dominate American life during this period. By easing the work of homeownership, particularly for the idealized suburban housewife, aerosol spray cans such as the Spra-tainer became fixtures in American homes and transformed the way that many products were distributed and consumed. Many products that arose with the arrival of the aerosol spray can in the late 1940s and early 1950s, including Reddi-Wip, Krylon spray paint, and WD-40, among numerous others, entered the popular imagination as icons of domestic life and are still available in virtually the same format today.[13]

Growing Sales, Falling Profit: Crown Can After 1950

Due in large part to the success of the Spra-tainer, Crown's annual revenue nearly doubled between 1946 and 1954, from $62.2 million to $111.4 million. Despite rapidly growing sales,

[12] Johnsen.

[13] Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007): 40-41.

however, the company's profitability began to plummet over the same period, from a high of $4.5 million in net income in 1948 to $1.4 million in 1954. Due to growing inventory, a series of poor acquisitions and its ill-conceived high-volume, low-margin strategy, by 1957 the company actually recorded a first quarter loss of $600,000. As the company's situation worsened, the Bankers Trust Company called in a $2.5 million debt, bringing Crown Cork & Seal nearly to brink of bankruptcy. To stave off disaster, Crown's board acted quickly, bringing on John Connelly, a Philadelphia box manufacturer and the company's largest shareholder, as the new president. As part of Connelly's turnaround plan, production was halted until remaining orders were filled with an existing large stockpile of unpurchased cans, unprofitable product lines such as ice cube trays were discontinued, and redundant labor costs were eliminated, leading to a payroll reduction of 25%. In addition, the company's headquarters was relocated from Baltimore to a new building at 9300 Ashton Road in Northeast Philadelphia. Crown Can was subsequently folded into its parent company and manufacturing activity at the Erie Avenue plant was phased out beginning in 1958. In 1963, relocation of operations to 9300 Ashton Road was completed. Although Connelly's strategy resulted in the closing of Crown Can's original and largest plant, it succeeded in saving the company, which remains today as one of the largest aerosol spray can makers in the world.[14]

Once the Erie Avenue plant was completely vacated, Crown Cork & Seal sold the property in December, 1964, to the Progress Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia, a maker of residential lighting fixtures, for $4.2 million.[15] Progress, which was formerly located in two separate facilities in Philadelphia – one at Castor Avenue and Tulip Street and another at 1401-1409 Germantown Avenue – was one of the largest producers of its kind in the United States.[16] Like the proliferation of the Spra-tainer, the postwar housing boom led to a huge demand for lighting fixtures, which helped quite literally to illuminate the ideal of the American suburban home during this period. Due to its success in the 1950s and 60s, Progress sought to consolidate its manufacturing and distribution operations in the former Crown Can Company building, which it occupied until the early 2000s, when the company relocated to South Carolina. Since that time, the building has been only partially used for storage and commercial purposes. Apart from a furniture store and storage company that currently occupy parts of the ground floor and mezzanine on the east side of the building (fronting on I Street), the plant is vacant.

Significance Under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture:

When Crown Cork & Seal embarked on the construction of their new Philadelphia canning division, they hired Baltimore architect Lucius Read White (1887-1970) to design the new structure. Born in 1887 in Baltimore, White studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1909. After working briefly in Philadelphia, White returned to his native city to work as a draftsman for architect Otto G. Simonson. When

[14] Entry for Crown Holdings, Inc. in *International Directory of Company Histories*, Vol. 83, edited by Jay P. Pederson (Detroit: St. James Press, 2007): 96-97.
[15] "Progress Buys Plant in $6 Million Deal," *Philadelphia Daily News*, 30 Dec 1964.
[16] The Progress Manufacturing plant at 1401-1409 Germantown Avenue in Philadelphia was individually listed on the National Register in 2016 (NRHP #16000572).

Simonson died in 1922, White assumed leadership of the firm. Known to Crown Cork already in 1936, White had designed several large additions to the company's Baltimore plant in 1928. At the time, his other notable works included the Maryland Casualty Company buildings in Baltimore and Philadelphia (1922 and 1924, respectively), a library and gymnasium for Loyola College in Baltimore in 1925, and the Court Square Office Building in Baltimore in 1929 (all four buildings remain standing). Later, White would go on to serve as consulting architect on the design and construction of Crown Cork plants in San Francisco, New Orleans, Birmingham, Milwaukee and in international locations such as London, England; Antwerp, Belgium; and Johannesburg, South Africa. A longtime member of the American Institute of Architects, White was elected a fellow of that organization in 1952.[17]

White's early commercial work, particularly as illustrated by the Maryland Casualty Buildings in Baltimore and Philadelphia, reflected the strong influence of the Classical Revival style in the early twentieth century and the Beaux Arts tradition in which he was trained. As the decade progressed, simplified massing, an emphasis on verticality and setbacks, and abstracted, geometric ornamentation became increasingly popular, resulting by the end of the 1920s in White's Court Square Building, an Art Deco-influenced, 18-story office tower in Baltimore.

Representing a further shift away from the Beaux Arts language of previous decades, by the mid-1930s White's work clearly demonstrated his preoccupation with the more streamlined Moderne style, which was an outgrowth of Art Deco and an attempt to evoke the increasing speed and motion of everyday life. In this way, Moderne architecture, with its smooth surfaces, rounded corners, and lack of ornamentation, which together created a strong horizontal emphasis, was heavily influenced by the design of ships, planes, railroad engines and automobiles during this period. Seeking to give a more appropriate expression to the factory, architects like White increasingly applied this aesthetic to industrial buildings, resulting in works like the Crown Can Company Building.

Prior to the growth of the Moderne Style in the 1930s, White's early industrial work, including his additions to Crown Cork & Seal's Baltimore plant, reflected a purely functional approach to industrial building design that predominated in the United States between about 1910 and 1930. In fact, the widespread use of reinforced concrete, pioneered by Philadelphia firms like William Steele & Sons and Ballinger, among those in other cities, led to more than two decades of standardized factories with consistent, rectilinear grids of reinforced concrete with brick spandrel panels and large steel factory windows. In some cases, factories built during this era were decorated with Commercial Style motifs like ornamented parapets with pedimented end bays or decorative stone or terra cotta panels, but these features most commonly served as embellishments on what were otherwise façades of economy and efficiency.

The Crown Can Company Building was both a continuation of and a clear break from the factory building tradition of the previous twenty years. In its reinforced concrete construction and use of

[17] American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory*, edited by George S. Koyl (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1955): 599.

repetitive, multi-light steel factory sash – in "punched" openings, not as continuous ribbon windows, which were becoming increasingly common – the Crown Can Company Building can be understood as an extension of the ubiquitous Steele-type model. Other attributes – a relatively planar brick curtain wall façade, horizontal emphasis by way of striated brick banding, porthole and corner windows, and rounded limestone mullions and metal canopies – point in a different direction. Although the building does not contain the sweeping curves often associated with the Streamline Moderne aesthetic of the 1930s, these features nonetheless clearly demonstrate the brief popularity of the Moderne style in the United States between 1930 and 1940 and the growing influence of the Modern Movement in general. They also had the practical effect of providing articulation and complexity of massing to what would otherwise be vast, monotonous facades.

The Crown Can Company Building was featured in the February 1940 issue of *Architectural Record* as one of five notable industrial buildings completed within the previous few years. These five buildings, unlike other recent factories, were important in that they eschewed the principle of standardization in the design and construction of manufacturing facilities so embodied by the Steele system. The publication stressed that "It is essential…that a factory design be *first* considered as a problem in production," continuing, "since manufacturing processes are subject to such very wide variations, it follows that factory design is controlled quite directly by type, program, and cost of production operations and the force of size, locality, and site as by technical characteristics of structural systems and equipment." Therefore, because White designed the building around an existing production process, rather than fitting a process into a predetermined plan, he had the freedom to give expression and personality to the building in ways that the Steele system could not.[18]

It is unclear to what extent White was involved in the design of other Crown Cork plants around the country and world, but at least one, the company's St. Louis plant, appears to be a close relation in form and materiality to its counterpart in Philadelphia despite being far smaller in size (roughly 200' by 250'). It was built in 1937, just after the Crown Can Company's Philadelphia building. Likewise, White's Elmira Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Elmira, New York, which was built in 1939 and individually listed on the National Register under Criteria A and C in 2002 (NRHP #97000423)., contains many of the same Moderne-style treatments found in the Philadelphia building.

[18] "Design for Mass Production," *Architectural Record* 87, no. 2 (February 1940): 96-97.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Sturken, Marita. *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

Periodicals (see footnotes for individual citations)

American Brewer

Financial World

Philadelphia Inquirer (All clippings were retrieved from www.newspapers.com).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
_X_ 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
____ University
____Other/Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ~18.00 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.005336 Longitude: -75.109489
2. Latitude: 40.003243 Longitude: -75.109991
3. Latitude: 40.003740 Longitude: -75.113807
4. Latitude: 40.005840 Longitude: -75.113408

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundary of the property is shown as a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Site Plan with National Register Boundary." The boundary consists of the entire block bounded by Erie, I, and G Streets and Pennsylvania Railroad tracks (now Amtrak's northeast corridor) immediately south of the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the present complex is situated. This matched the historic boundary of the property. No extant known associated resources have been excluded.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kevin McMahon, Associate organization: Powers & Company, Inc.
street & number: 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717
city or town: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19107
e-mail: kevin@powersco.net telephone: (215) 636-0192 date: October, 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Crown Can Company Building
City or Vicinity: Philadelphia
County: Philadelphia State: PA
Photographer: Robert Powers; Photo 53 by Rob Armstrong, September 2018
Date Photographed: May 24, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #	Photo Subject/Description	Camera Facing
1.	Building 1, office section, north elevation	S
2.	Building 1, office section, north elevation, entrance detail	S
3.	Building 1, north (N1) elevation	SW
4.	Building 1, office section, west elevation, entrance detail	E
5.	Building 1, north (N1) elevation	S
6.	Building 1, north (N1) elevation	SE
7.	Building 1, north (N1) elevation	SW
8.	Building 1, north (N1) elevation, end tower	S
9.	Building 1, east elevation	SW
10.	Building 1, east elevation, end tower	W
11.	Building 1, east elevation	NW
12.	Building 1, east elevation, center tower	W
13.	Building 1, east elevation, end tower	W
14.	Building 1, south (S1) and east elevations	NW
15.	Building 1, south (S1) elevation	N
16.	Building 1, west (W1) elevation	NE
17.	Building 1, west (W1) elevation	E
18.	Open space between Building 1 and Building 2	W
19.	Building 1, south (S2) elevation	NE
20.	Building 2, north and west elevations	SE
21.	Building 1, north (N2) elevation	S
22.	Guardhouse, east and north elevations	SW
23.	Building 1, north (N2) elevation	S
24.	Building 1, north (N2) and west (W2) elevations	SE
25.	Building 1, west (W2) elevation	E
26.	Building 1, west (W2) elevation	NE
27.	Building 1, west (W2) and south elevations	NE
28.	Interior: Building 1, office section, first floor	S
29.	Interior: Building 1, office section, corridor	E
30.	Interior: Building 1, office section, second floor	E
31.	Interior: Building 1, office section, second floor	N
32.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	E
33.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	NE
34.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	W
35.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	E
36.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	EW
37.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	E
38.	Interior: Building 1, main floor	S
39.	Interior: Building 1, mezzanine	W
40.	Interior: Building 1, mezzanine	W
41.	Interior: Building 1, mezzanine	N

42.	Interior: Building 1, mezzanine	N
43.	Interior: Building 1, ground floor	NW
44.	Interior: Building 1, ground floor	E
45.	Interior: Building 1, stairway	E
46.	Interior: Building 1, loading dock	SE
47.	Interior: Building 1, second floor, cafeteria	S
48.	Interior: Building 1, second floor, cafeteria	N
49.	Interior: Building 1, typical view of monitors	S
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52.	Interior: Building 2	W
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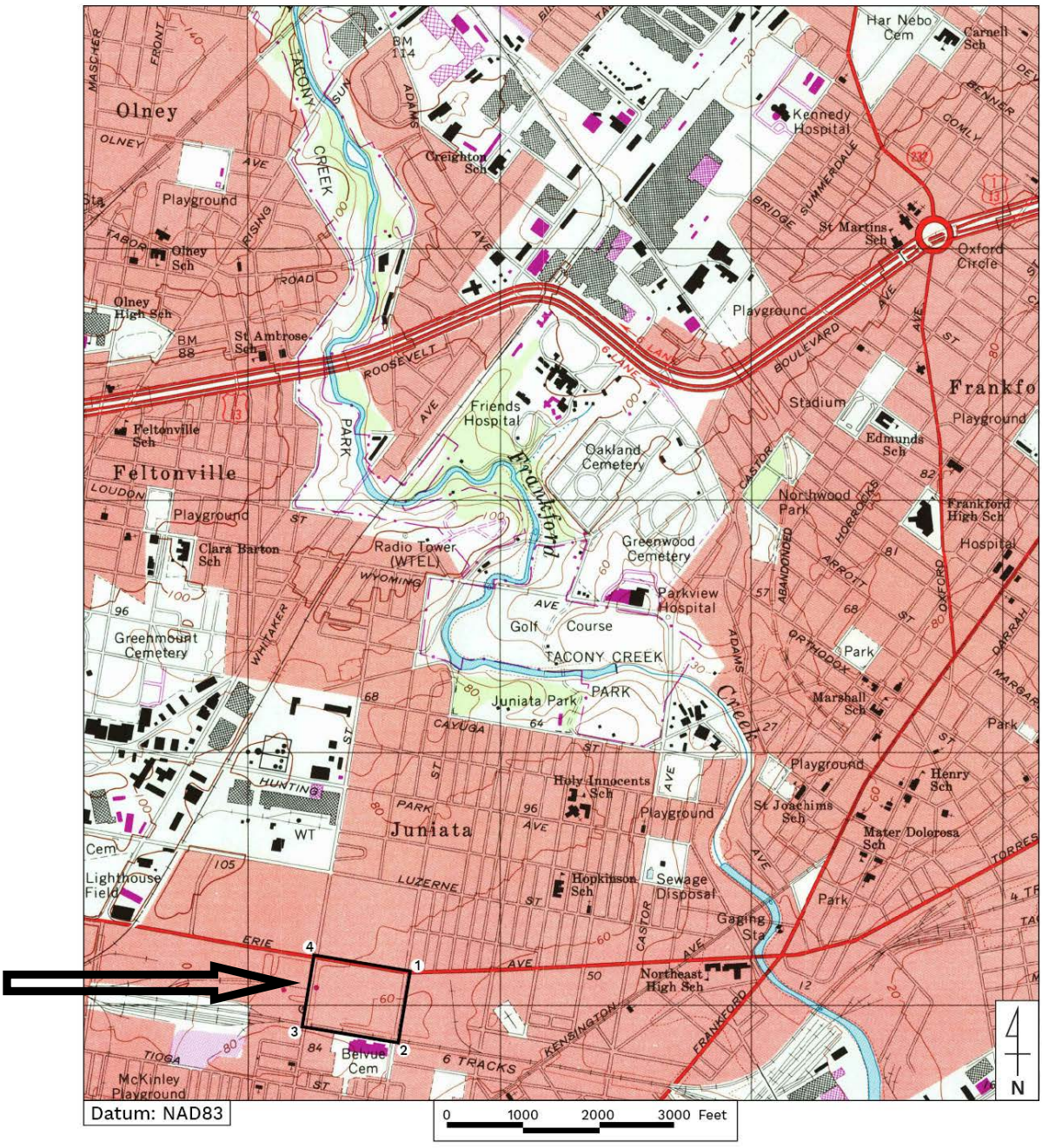

USGS Map Excerpt - Frankford Quadrangle - Pennsylvania (1997)
Crown Can Company Building
956 E. Erie Avenue
Philadelphia County, PA

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2	40.003243, -75.109991
3	40.003740, -75.113807
4	40.005840, -75.113408

Figure 1 – USGS Map

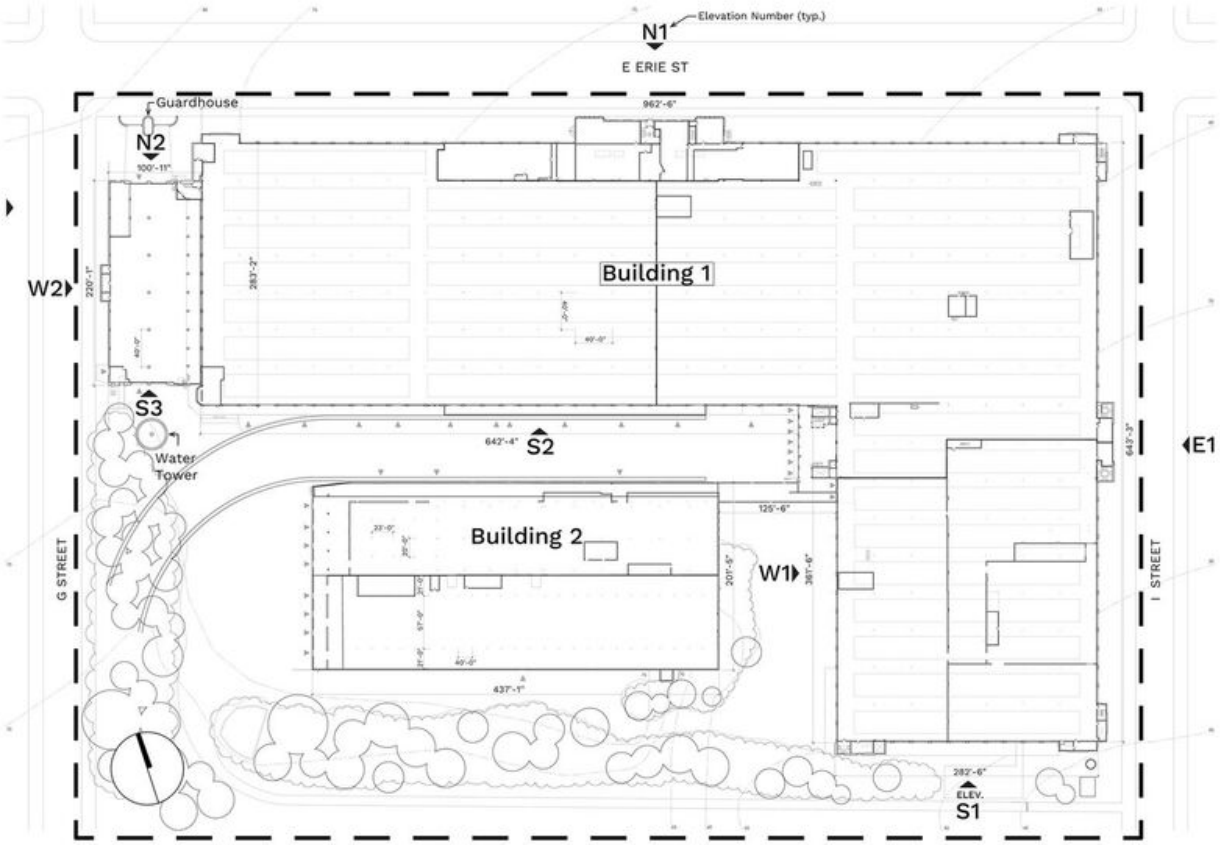


Figure 2 – Site Plan with Proposed National Register Boundary (dashed line, encompassing entire block); elevation indicators (N1, E1, S1, etc.) correspond to the physical description, primarily useful when reading page 6.

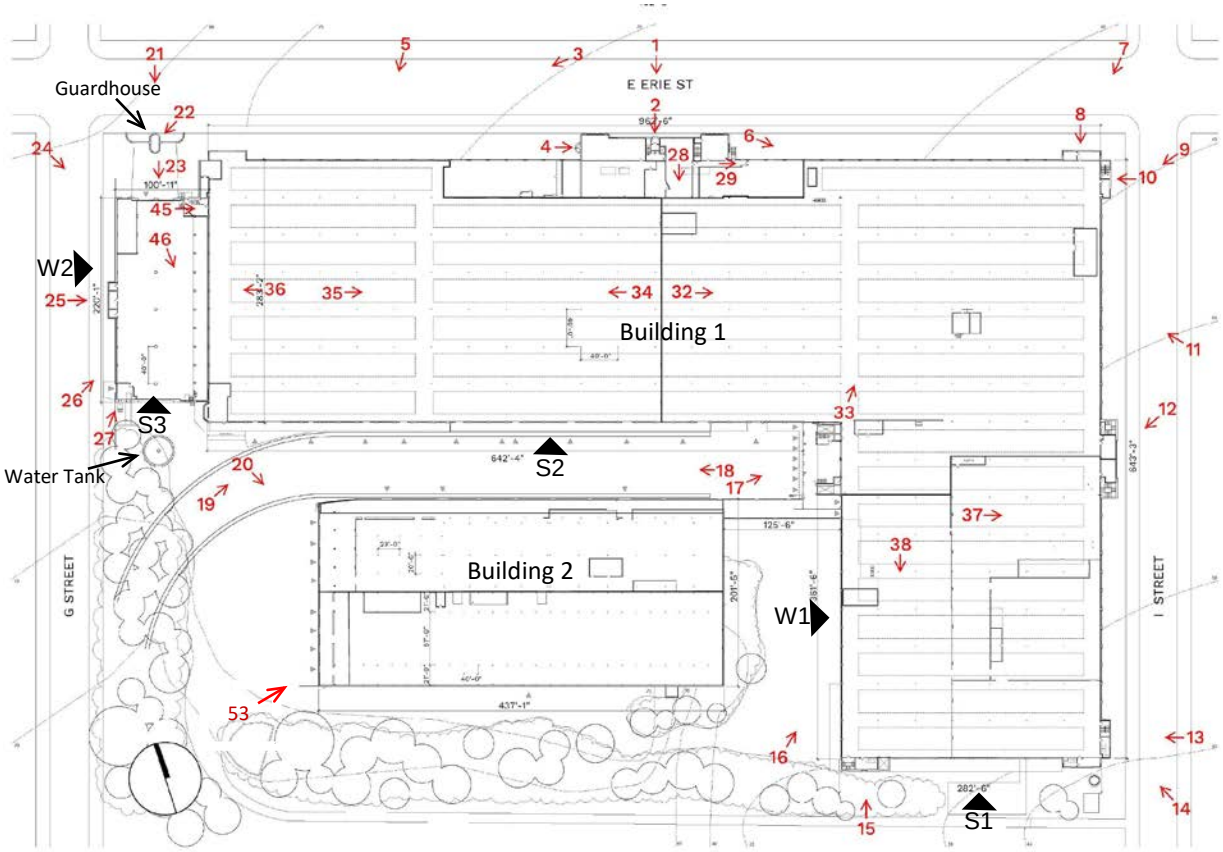


Figure 3 – Site and First Floor Plan with Photo Key

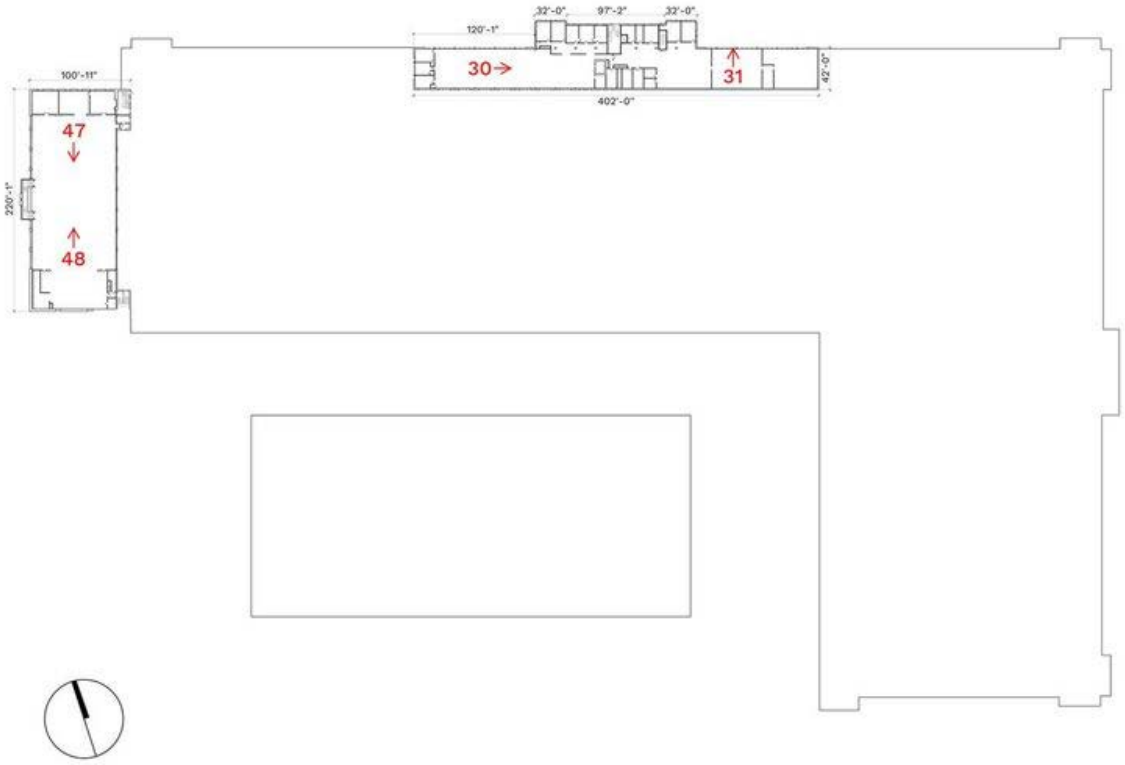


Figure 4 – Second Floor Plan with Photo Key

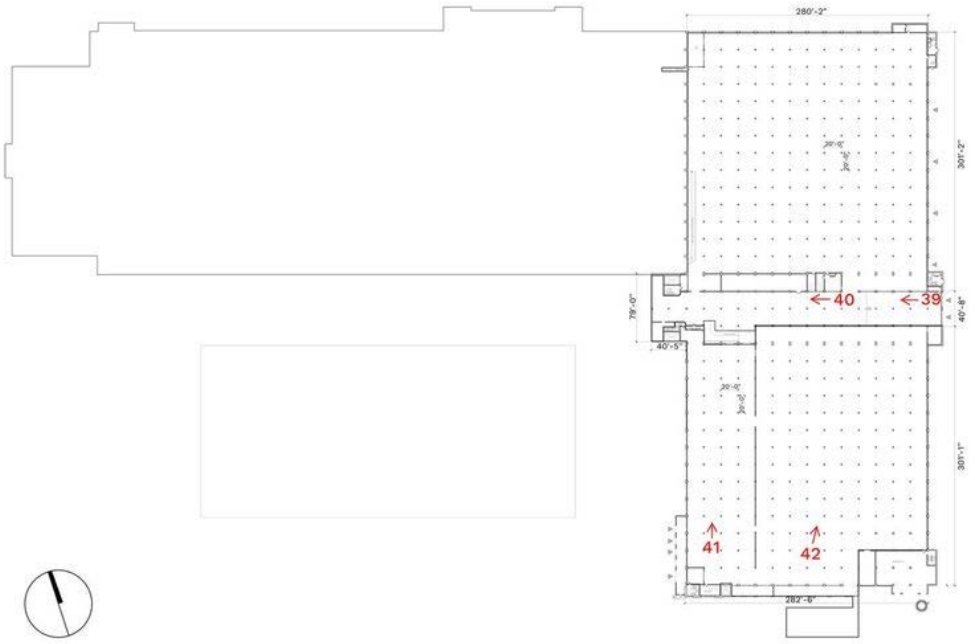


Figure 5a – Mezzanine with Photo Key

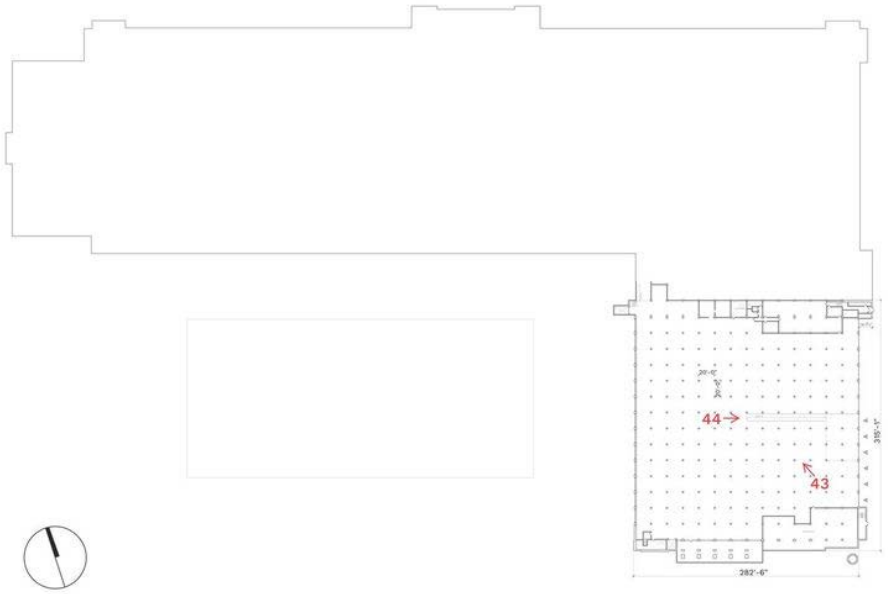


Figure 5b – Ground level with photo key

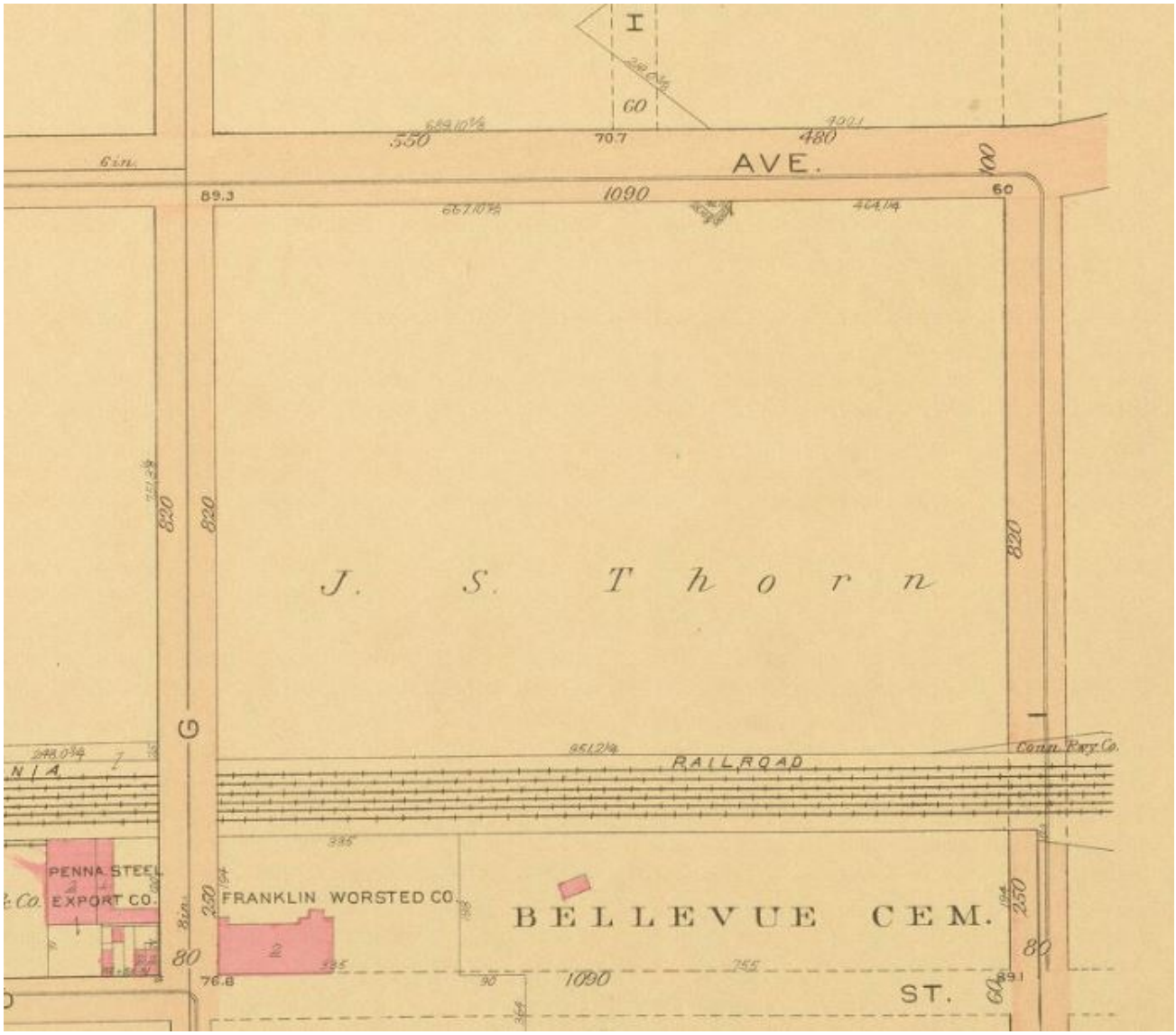


Figure 6 – A view of the future site, prior to any development by Crown Can. G.W. Bromley and Co. Atlas of the City of Philadelphia (North Philadelphia), 1925.

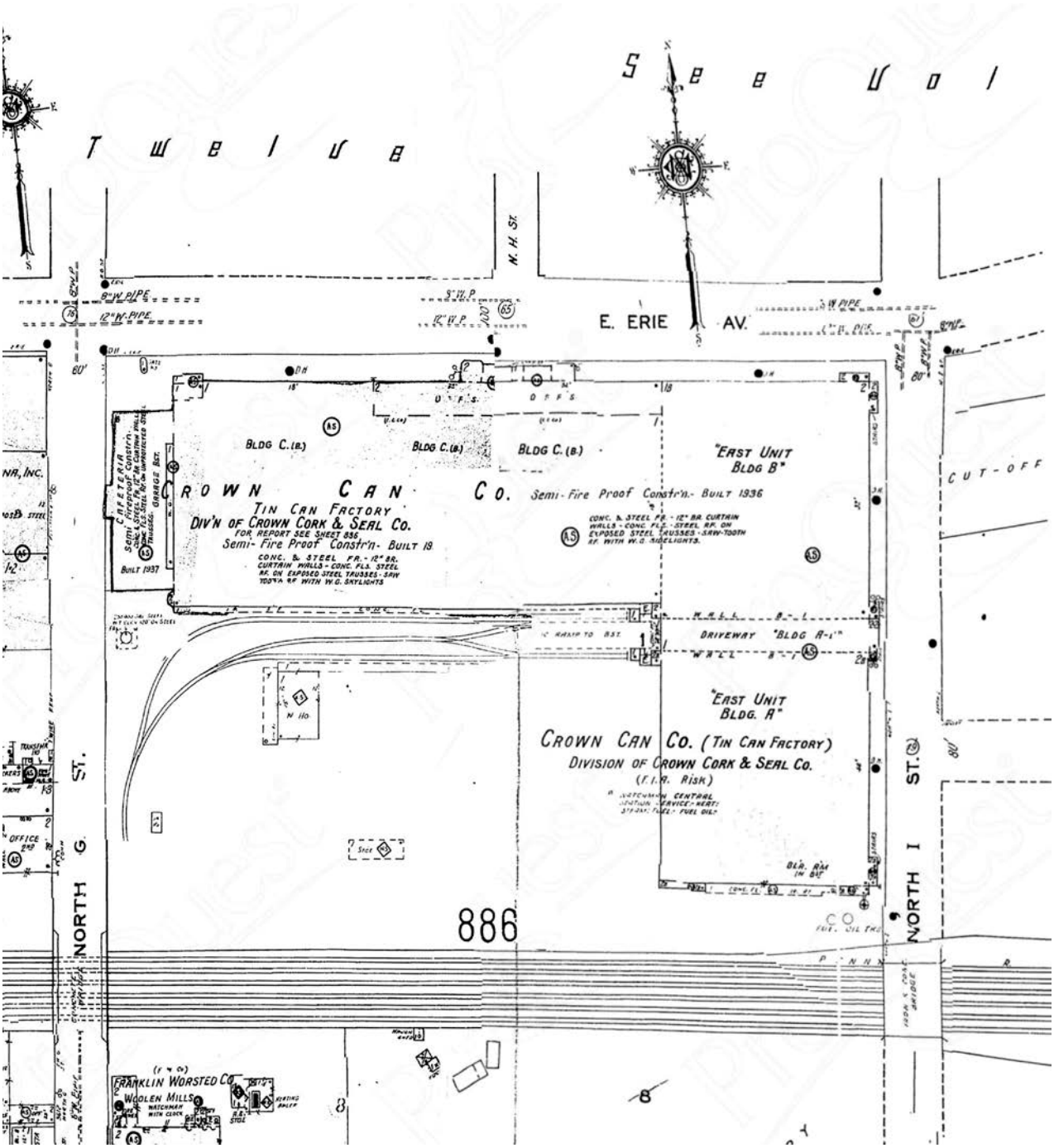


Figure 7 – The Crown Can property, immediately prior to construction of Building 2. Sanborn Map excerpt, 1951.

Figure 8 – Birdseye view, looking southeast, 1939.
(Aero Service Collection, from the Library Company of Philadelphia)

Figure 9 – Birdseye view, looking south, 1939.
(Dallin Aerial Survey, from the Hagley Library)

Figure 10 – Birdseye view, looking northeast, 1938.
(Dallin Aerial Survey, from the Hagley Library)

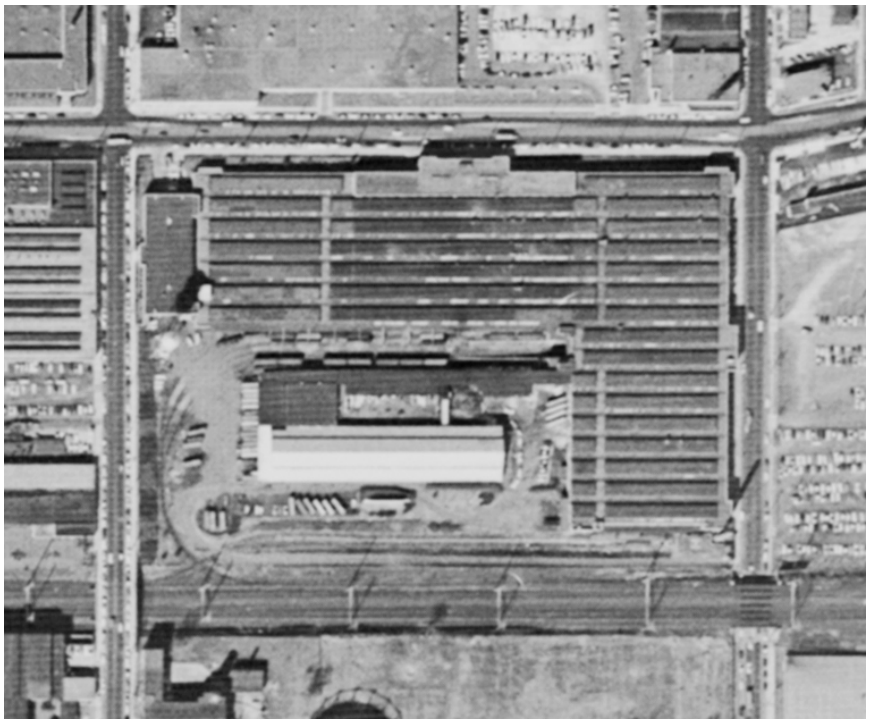


Figure 11 – This and the image below show Building 2 filling in the open space within the "ell" of Building 1. Aerial view, 1959 (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission).

Figure 12 – Aerial view, 1965 (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission).

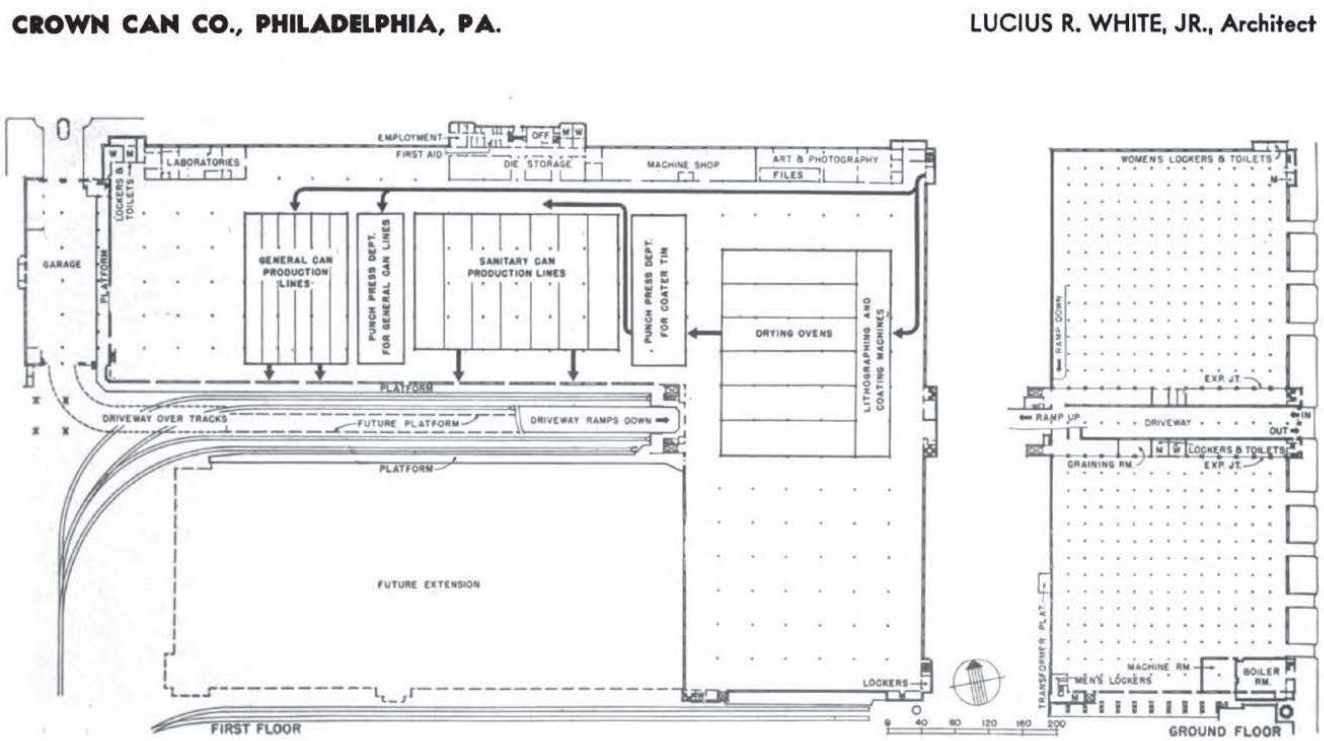


Figure 13 – Production Diagram from *Architectural Record*, February 1940

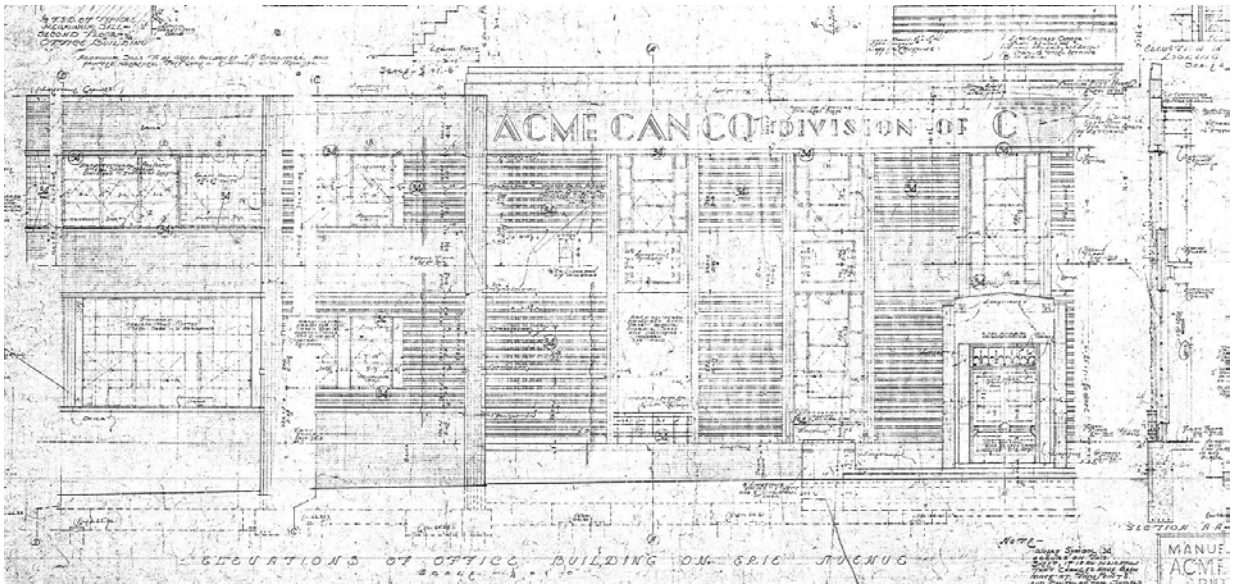


Figure 14 – North Elevation of Office Section, drawing by Lucius Read White, 1936. The drawings in Figure 14 and 15 were with the building when the current owner acquired the property; private collection of Shift Capital, included with permission.

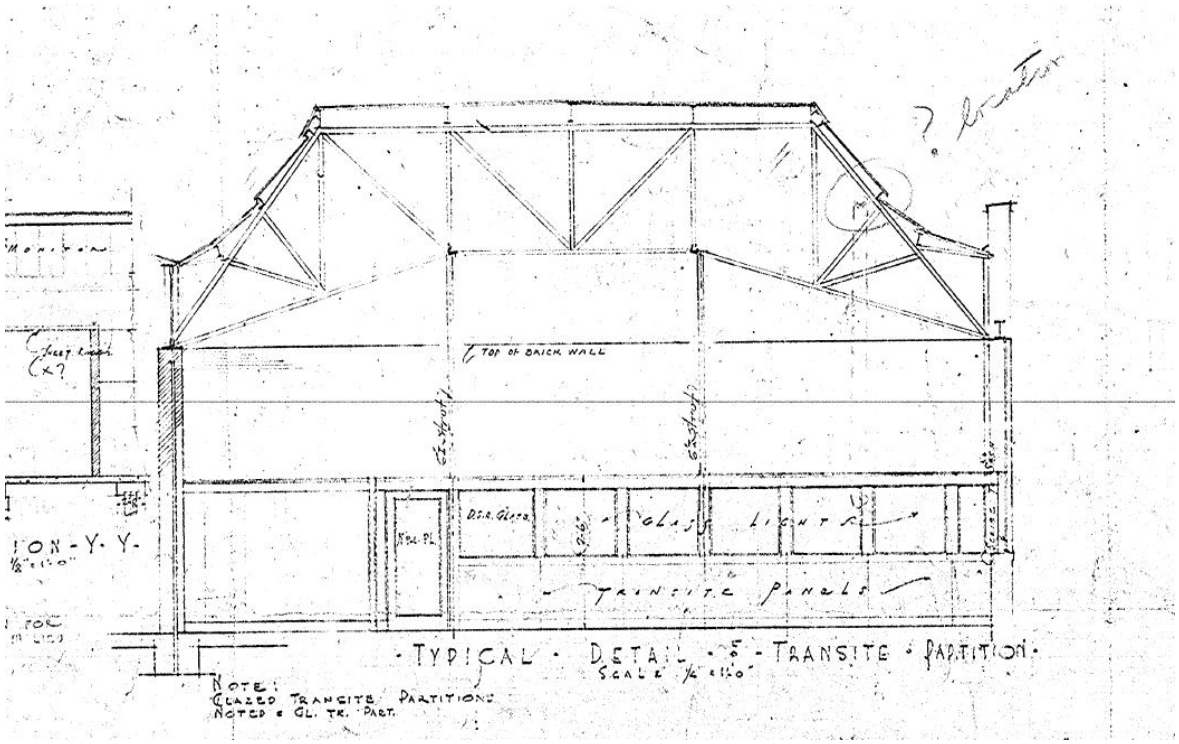


Figure 15 – Typical Section showing Roof Trusses, drawing by Lucius Read White, 1936.

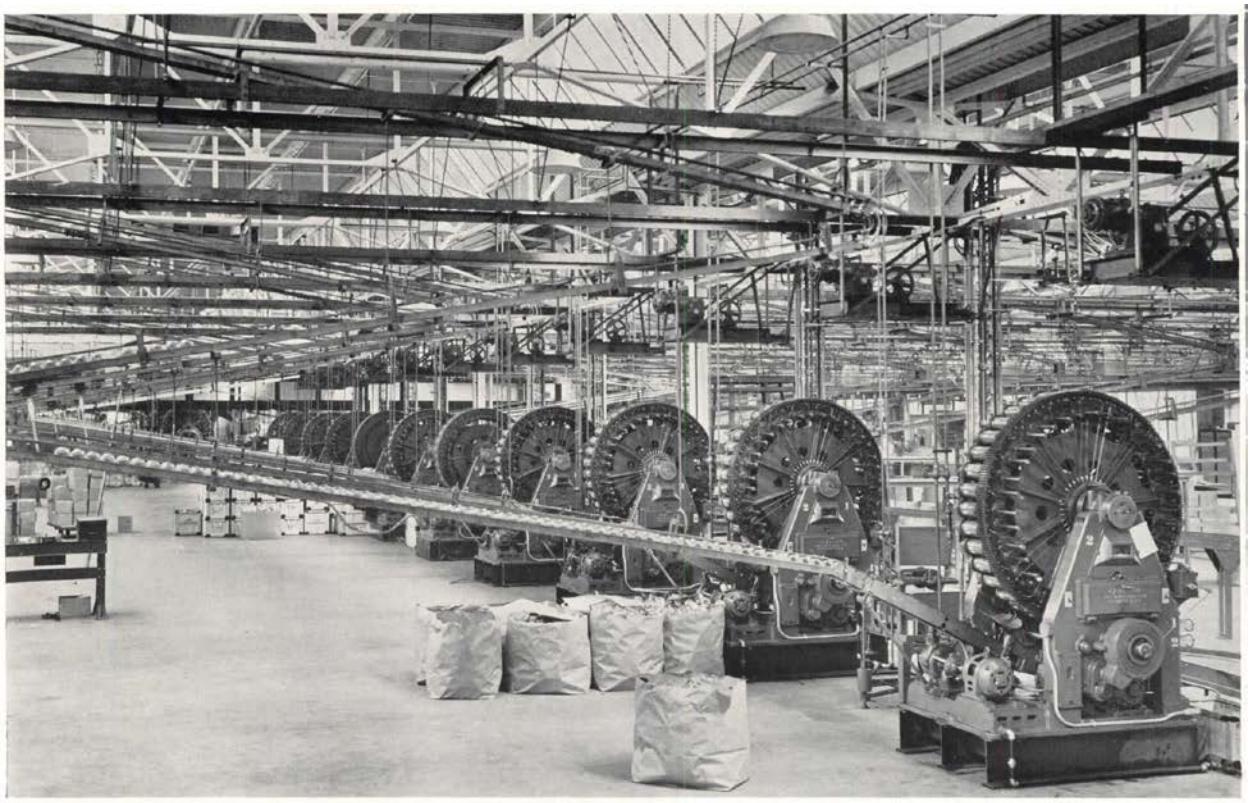


Figure 16 – Interior view showing can production in Building 1, from *Architectural Record*, February 1940.

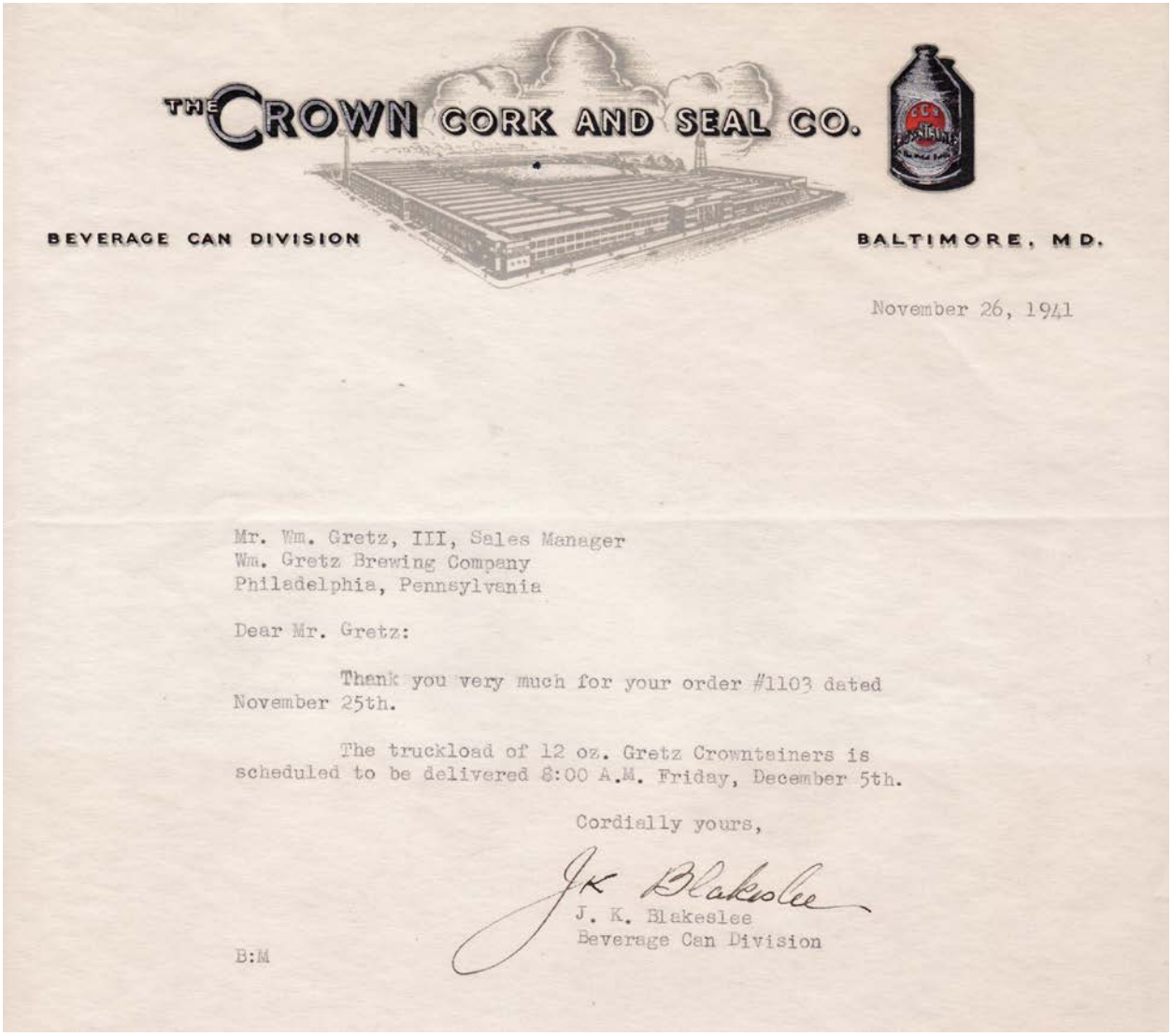
Figure 17 – Crowntainer Advertisement from *American Brewer*, April 1940. Although Crowntainers were developed and produced in the Philadelphia plant, the company headquarters were located in Baltimore, as reflected in this ad.

Figure 18 – Yuengling cone-top can, produced by Continental Can Company, circa 1940.

Figure 19 – Typical Crowntainers produced by Crown Can Company, circa 1940. (From the collection of Gary Gauger, www.crowntainer-central.com. Photos reproduced with permission).

Figure 20 – Spra-tainer advertisement; May, 1952, accessed online at https://www.fulltable.com/vts/p/pk/ppp/a.htm on 6/12/18.

Figure 21 – Reddi-wip advertisement from the *St. Louis Star and Times*, August 26, 1948. Shows the first Reddi-wip can ever sold (and it was packaged in a Crown Can Spra-tainer).


THE CROWN CORK AND SEAL CO.

BEVERAGE CAN DIVISION BALTIMORE, MD.

November 26, 1941

Mr. Wm. Gretz, III, Sales Manager
Wm. Gretz Brewing Company
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Gretz:

Thank you very much for your order #1103 dated November 25th.

The truckload of 12 oz. Gretz Crowntainers is scheduled to be delivered 8:00 A.M. Friday, December 5th.

Cordially yours,

JK Blakeslee

J. K. Blakeslee
Beverage Can Division

B:M

Figure 22 – Crown Cork & Seal letterhead from 1941, detailing an order of Crowntainers from the Gretz Brewing Company in Philadelphia. Despite being headquartered in Baltimore, the Crown Cork & Seal Company placed an image of Crown Can's Philadelphia plant on their letterhead in recognition of its major role within the company. A small Crowntainer is also included. (From the collection of Gary Gauger, www.crowntainer-central.com/info_ccs.htm. Used with permission).

Recent aerial view, facing NW, showing the south and east elevations of the nominated property and surrounding area.

Recent aerial view, facing SE, showing the north and west elevations of the complex and the surrounding area.

Figure 23: Aerial views, Google 2018.


826


STORMIN
SHOWROOM
826 E. ERIE


1st
1000E900
Erie Av


AVAILABLE
15,000 - 750,000 SF
Pat Gilmore : Colin Flynn
(215) 561-6565


AVAILABLE
15,000 - 750,000 SF
(219) 561-6565


H.B.C.
SHIPPING & DELIVERY
USE I STREET GATE ENTRANCE
BUILDING C


TAKE IT HOME
$40
Today's Furniture
215-334-3500


C.O.


TODAY'S FURNITURE


A


I Buy Houses


FURNITURE MATTRESS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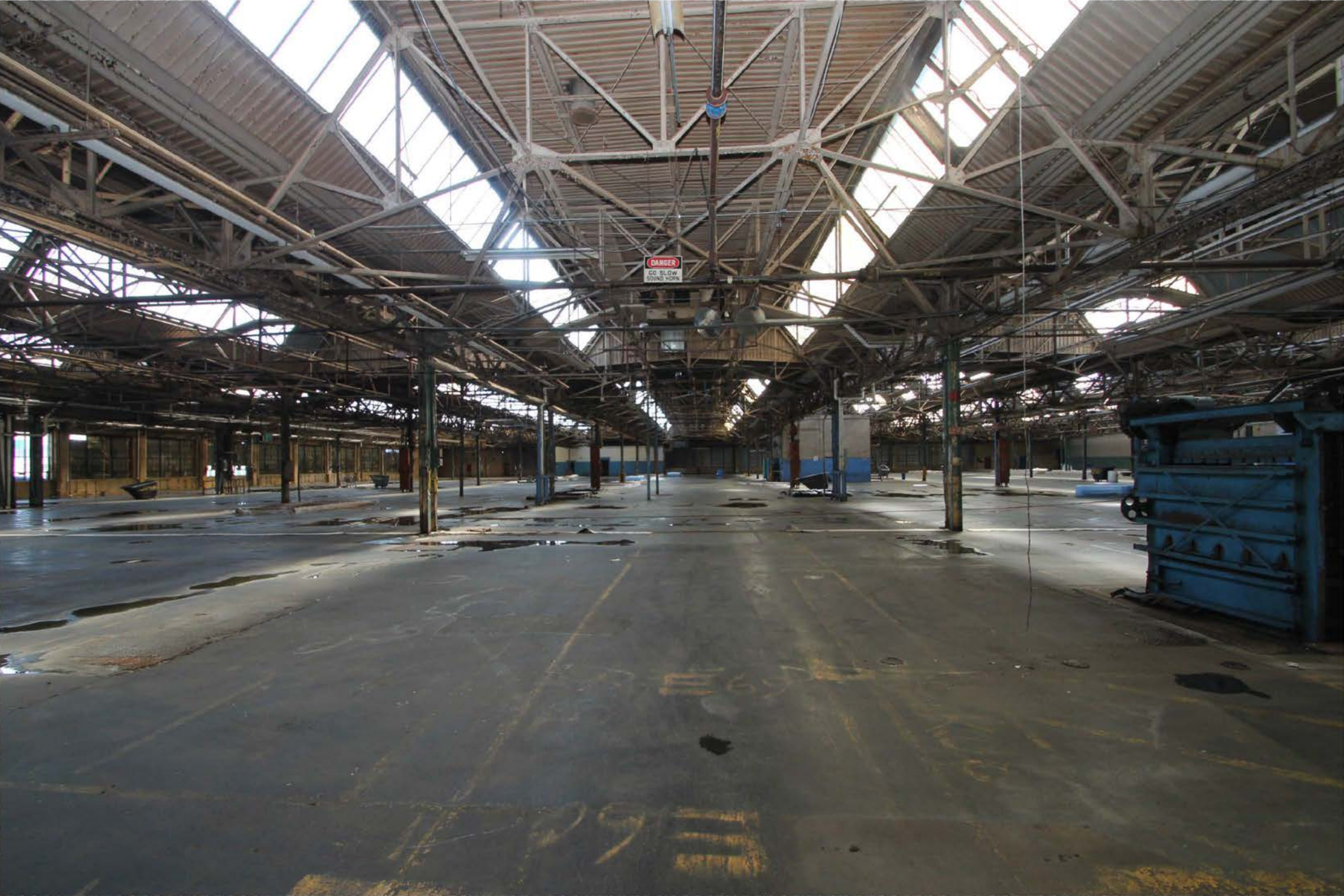
DANGER
GO SLOW
SOUND HORN


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M19


P18 05
R18 01


R
21


CREDIT
NEEDED


FIRE
EXTINGUISHER
FRONT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Crown Can Company Building
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
10/11/2018	10/25/2018	11/9/2018	11/26/2018	

Reference number:	SG100003136
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	X PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	X CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **11/20/2018** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	AOS: Industry, architecture; LOS: local; POS: 1936-1957
Recommendation/ Criteria	NR Criteria: A and C.

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239 Date 11/20/18

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.

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102
Tel: 215.686.7660

Robert Thomas, AIA
Chair

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

30 August 2018

Elizabeth Rairigh
Division Chief, Preservation Services
PA State Historic Preservation Office
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

Re: 956 E. Erie Avenue, Crown Can Company

Dear Ms. Rairigh:

I am writing in response to your request that the Philadelphia Historical Commission provide its official Certified Local Government recommendations on the nomination proposing to add the Crown Can Company, 956 E. Erie Avenue in Philadelphia, to the National Register of Historic Places. At its monthly public meeting on 10 August 2018, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed and discussed the nomination and accepted public testimony.

The Commission agreed that the building satisfies Criterion A in the area of Industry as one of the largest beer can factories in the United States from 1936 through the 1950s and is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a major industrial work in the Moderne Style by architect Lucius Read White. Emily Cooperman, Commission member and Chair of the Committee on Historic Designation, commented that this group of buildings has been overlooked in the past and is pleased that 956 E. Erie Avenue is now being recognized with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Commission supported the National Register nomination for 956 E. Erie Avenue.
Thank you for providing the Philadelphia Historical Commission with the opportunity to comment on this amendment.

Yours truly,

Jon H

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

October 9, 2018

Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service, US Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Re: Crown Can Company, and Strawbridge & Clothier Warehouse, Philadelphia; Scranton School for the Deaf, Lackawanna County; and Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Allegheny County

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed please find National Register of Historic Places nominations for the above four properties. Included is the signed first page of each nomination, CDs containing the true and correct copy of each nomination, and CDs with tif images. Also enclosed are letters of support for the Crown Can Company and Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant. The proposed action for Crown Can, Ford Motor, and the Strawbridge & Clothier Warehouse is listing in the National Register. Our Historic Preservation Board members support each of those nominations.

SHPO staff and Board members also unanimously support the nomination of the Scranton School for the Deaf. The current owner, Marywood University, has decided to formally object to listing, as they are currently offering the property for sale. Their notarized letter of objection is enclosed. They have acknowledged that the pending owner, or a new owner, may choose to pursue listing in the future. The current action proposed for that property is a Keeper's Determination of Eligibility.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations or our request for action, please contact me at 717-783-9922 or afrantz@pa.gov or David Maher at 717-783-9918 or damaher@pa.gov . Thank you for your consideration of these submissions.

Sincerely,

April E. Frantz
NR Reviewer/Eastern Region

enc.