

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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: **Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**

Other names/site number:

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: **4900 N. Broad Street**

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Not For Publication: N/A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 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

	<p>3/24/2015</p>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<p>Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

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:)

For Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

5.11.15
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION – Communications Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: **Brick, Limestone, Terra Cotta**

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company is located at the northwest corner of N. Broad Street and Rockland Street in the Logan neighborhood of North Philadelphia. Designed in the Colonial Revival style, the building is four- to six-stories tall and is constructed of a steel frame clad in Flemish Bond red brick with limestone and terra cotta accents. The building stands on a gently sloping urban lot, spanning the half block along the north side of Rockland Street from N. Broad Street on the east to N. Carlisle Street on the west. The surrounding neighborhood consists of other commercial and mixed-use buildings to the north, south and east along the Broad Street corridor, and of small, early twentieth-century brick rowhouses in the residential area to the west. Additionally, the building stands just two blocks east of the historic Tabor Branch of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, which provided service between Philadelphia and New York and now serves as part of SEPTA's regional rail commuting network.

Narrative Description

The building consists of three sections constructed in several phases between 1912 and 1963: Section 1, which is four-stories tall but was originally only three-stories, was built in 1912 and is located at the southeastern corner of the site, with its primary elevation facing N. Broad Street; Section 2, which is four-stories tall, was built in 1920 west of Section 1, extending to N. Carlisle Street (a fourth story was also added to Section 1 at this time); and Section 3, which is six-stories tall but was originally only two-stories, was constructed in 1954 to the north of Section 1. In 1963, two floors were added to Section 2 and four floors were added to Section 3. Despite the phased construction, the architectural style and building materials, including the Flemish Bond brickwork and limestone and terra cotta accents, are consistent among all sections of the building and present a composition of relatively unified appearance.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

The Wyoming Central Office retains its integrity as both the overall form and defining commercial characteristics of the building remain intact since the last significant addition in 1963.

In 1973, Bell purchased adjoining properties at 4908-4918 N. Broad Street, demolished the buildings on those sites and began construction of a new one-story building. A zoning permit from 1974 indicates that the building would be used for "telephone service and equipment," however further details relating to its function have not been found. Although the building abuts the north elevation of Section 2 and Section 3, there are no interior passageways between the buildings. The buildings are located on separate parcels and are under separate ownership.

Section 1

Constructed in 1912, this section of the building was originally three-stories tall (Figure 11). On the east or N. Broad Street elevation, which is the primary elevation, Section 1 consists of the first three bays north of Rockland Street. On the south elevation facing Rockland Street, Section 1 consists of the first five bays west of N. Broad Street. The west elevation abuts Section 2 and the north elevation abuts Section 3.

As the earliest part of the building, Section 1 established the architectural vocabulary and materials that the later sections would likewise employ. On both the east (primary) elevation facing N. Broad Street and the south elevation facing Rockland Street, Section 1 features a granite water table with a terra cotta belt course, window surrounds and denticulated cornice between the 3rd and 4th floors. On the 2nd floor, the window surrounds contain terra cotta triangular pediments. As noted above, a fourth story was added to Section 1 in 1920, at the same time that Section 2 was completed. The fourth floor is capped by a terra cotta stringcourse and brick parapet wall with terra cotta coping and punctuated by short sections of terra cotta balustrades, which are aligned vertically with the windows below. The main entrance is located in the northernmost bay of Section 1 and consists of modern, double-leaf glazed metal doors with a terra cotta surround. "BELL TELEPHONE" is inscribed in the entablature above the doorway (Photo #2). All other bays on both the east and south elevations contain 12/12 double-hung windows – wood on the 1st floor and steel on the upper floors.

Section 2

Constructed in 1920, this section of the building was originally four-stories tall. On the south elevation facing Rockland Street, Section 2 consists of the first seven bays east of N. Carlisle Street, and on the east elevation facing N. Carlisle Street, of the first three bays north of Rockland Street. The east elevation abuts Section 1 and the north elevation abuts Section 3.

The south and west elevations of Section 2 are treated similarly to Section 1. Like its predecessor, Section 2 features a granite water table and a terra cotta belt course, window surrounds and cornice. Unlike Section 1, however, the 2nd floor window surrounds on Section 2 feature alternating triangular and segmental pediments and the cornice between the 3rd and 4th floors is plain rather than denticulated. Above the 4th floor, Section 2 features a terra cotta string course like Section 1, however there is no parapet wall due to the addition of a 5th and 6th floor and penthouse on top of Section 2 in 1963. The 5th floor features 12/12 steel windows like the lower floors, but with no terra cotta surrounds, only a terra cotta sill and small keystone. The 6th floor contains no window openings. Between the 6th floor and penthouse level there is a simple terra cotta string course and the roofline on the penthouse features terra cotta coping.

The west elevation facing N. Carlisle Street is five-bays wide. The first two bays from the north correspond with an interior fire stair. At the basement level, there are double- and single-leaf metal doors with metal security grates while the 1st floor features double-hung wood windows and a large

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

metal vent. The 2nd through 6th floors contain two single-leaf glazed metal doors with multi-light steel transom windows per floor. The doors open to metal fire balconies with simple metal guard rails on all floors. These first two bays also feature terra cotta belt courses at the same levels as the remainder of the west elevation (see below), which likewise are a continuation of the same terra cotta ornament found on the east elevation.

The next three bays of the west elevation are treated much the same as the east elevation with granite water table and terra cotta belt and string courses, window surrounds and cornices. Likewise, all floors contain 12/12 double-hung steel windows. Unlike the east elevation, however, the penthouse level of the south elevation contains windows, again steel and with a 12/12 configuration, terra cotta sill and keystone. Additionally, due to the slope of the site, the basement level is accessible on the south elevation, which contains several doorways with single- and double-leaf glazed metal doors and a single 1/1 metal window, all with metal security screens or grates.

The north elevation consists of two parts. The westernmost half is largely a blank brick wall surface with no windows, interrupted only by terra cotta belt courses and the company name "BELL TELEPHONE" appearing in terra cotta at the 4th floor to contrast with the surrounding red brick (Photos #4 & 5). The northernmost half abuts an adjacent building on the 1st floor and contains five 12/12 double-hung steel windows on 2nd through 4th floors. Again, this part of the north elevation features terra cotta belt courses, however the wall surface above the 4th floor is blank, consisting only of red brick with no windows or other articulation.

The east elevation of Section 2 abuts Sections 1 and 3.

Section 3

Constructed in 1954, this section of the building is six-stories tall but originally consisted only of two stories. The east or primary elevation along N. Broad Street mimics the appearance of Section 1. It features the same Flemish bond red brickwork with granite water table and masonry accents (all limestone on this section) such as a belt course between the 1st and 2nd floors, window surrounds (with segmental pediments on the 2nd floor), a simple (non-denticulated) cornice between the 4th and 5th floors, and an additional belt course between the 5th and 6th floors. The 3rd through 6th floors were added to the top of Section 3 in 1963, again extending the Colonial Revival vocabulary upwards, albeit in a simpler fashion. These 5th and 6th floors contain 12/12 steel windows, but without full surrounds, only limestone sills and keystones.

The north elevation of Section 3 abuts an adjacent 1-story building and has no window openings on the upper floors (Photo #5). The south elevation of Section 3 abuts Section 1 while the west elevation abuts Section 2.

Interior

On the interior, the building is largely open in plan in all sections except on the 1st floor, where large switching equipment, which appears to date from the late-twentieth century, is still present (Photos #8-10). There are concrete columns on a grid throughout most of the spaces. The connection details between the columns and the ceiling are features of note and vary throughout the different sections of the building. In Sections 1 and 2, both the primary concrete beams, which run east-west, and the smaller cross beams, which run north-south, intersect with the tops of the columns rather than resting directly on top. In Section 3 and on the top two floors of Section 2, every other pair of primary beams contains smaller cross beams located at intervals between them. The cross beams rather than the primary beams are carried by the columns.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

On all floors, Section 1 is fully open to Section 2, but Section 3 is separated from Sections 1 and 2 by a concrete wall with openings of various sizes. The finishes within the spaces vary, with concrete floors and plaster walls and ceilings throughout much of Sections 1 and 2 (Photos #8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, & 21). In Section 3 and the additional floors added to Section 2 in 1963, the perimeter walls consist of painted concrete block (Photos #12, 16, 22, 23, 25 & 27-30). Apart from bathrooms and some closets located at the northeast corner of Section 1 and the northwest corner of Section 2, there are few partitions within any of the spaces. Exceptions include a plaster partition that divides the eastern third of Section 2 from the other two-thirds on the 2nd floor only (Photo #14) and several drywall partitions that create a series of small but inconsistently laid out rooms on some floors of Section 3 (Photo #12).

Although at the time of survey the basement was inaccessible due to safety concerns, it is believed that the structural system and interior finishes are similar to the above-ground floors.

The only decorative historic finishes of note in the building are located in the lobby off the main entrance in Section 1 (facing N. Broad Street) with associated stairway (Photos #6 & 7). The lobby contains rubber tile floors, plaster walls with pilasters and wood trim, and plaster cornice molding. The west side of the vestibule is open to a U-return stairway (Photo #11).

The stairway off of the main lobby in Section 1 is U-return in configuration and provides access between the basement and 6th floors. It features metal treads and risers with decorative wood balustrade and hand rail to the 4th floor. Above the 4th floor, the stairway features simple wood hand rails attached to the brick and concrete wall enclosure (Photo #20). The other two stairways are fire stairs located at the northwest corner of the building and are enclosed by brick and poured concrete walls with concrete treads and risers and simple metal pipe hand rails.

Integrity

The Wyoming Central Office Building retains integrity, particularly in the aspects of design and materials. The building's strongly defined Colonial Revival vocabulary – with Flemish bond brick work and limestone and terra cotta details, particularly the belt courses, pedimented window surrounds, and cornices – is fully intact. The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials remain intact and characteristic of both the Colonial Revival style and the era in which the building was constructed. The workmanship is of good quality and is characteristic of the quality of design and construction present throughout the network of Bell Telephone exchanges and central office buildings in Philadelphia.

The aspects of feeling and association are also retained in the intact finishes, voluminous spaces and periodic building campaigns. Although the equipment, furnishings and people have long since departed, these features and characteristics effectively relay the sense of place and the notable telecommunications history of the once omnipresent Bell Telephone Company.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

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.
- D. 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

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1912-1963

Significant Dates

1912, 1920, 1954, 1963

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

- 1) John T. Windrim
- 2) Borie & Smith
- 3) Francis, Cauffman, Wilkinson & Pepper

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

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 Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company has significance under Criterion A, Industry, for its representation of competition and monopoly in Philadelphia's telephone networks in the early-twentieth century. The Wyoming Central Office was the central telephone exchange for a wide swath of North Philadelphia, built in part to prevent Bell's largest competitor, the Keystone Telephone Company, from expanding in the area. The building's significance under Criterion A, Industry, also encompasses its architectural history. The Wyoming Central Office is notable for being designed by the firm of John T. Windrim, a prominent Philadelphia architect of the early-twentieth century who designed dozens of buildings for Bell throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Windrim's work for Bell frequently employed the Colonial Revival style, of which the Wyoming Central Office is highly representative. The building's period of significance begins in 1912 with the first phase of construction and ends in 1963 when the last phase of construction was completed.

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

Criterion A, Significance in Industry

The Beginnings of Bell Telephone in Philadelphia

The telephone was first introduced to Philadelphia and the world at the Centennial Exposition in the summer of 1876. Its inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, demonstrated his miraculous device to crowds of fascinated onlookers, and the "acclaim of the nation and the world followed." Shortly after the exposition, in Boston in 1877, Bell's father-in-law, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, founded the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company, which later grew into the American Bell Telephone Company after a series of mergers and acquisitions. Two years later in Philadelphia, Thomas E. Cornish, an electrical supply dealer, founded a small telephone company of his own with the help of Colonel Thomas Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, who wished to have a line installed between his home and office. After beginning with fifteen subscribers, Cornish's company was quickly acquired by Bell, becoming the Bell Telephone Company of Philadelphia. By 1907 the subsidiary had evolved into the much larger and more geographically inclusive Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania.¹

As in many other cities, the Bell system grew exponentially throughout Philadelphia over the following decades, with 3300 subscribers by 1890, 15,800 by 1900, 116,600 by 1910, and 175,000 by 1917. In the latter year there were 450,000 miles of telephone wire running to nearly every developed part of the city. Although Bell's original headquarters at 4th and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia was sufficient to handle the relatively small amount of subscribers around the turn-of-the century, the company quickly realized that a network of satellite exchange buildings would be necessary to meet the demands of a public who increasingly demanded better and more extensive telephone service.²

¹ Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. "Telephone, Telegraph and Wireless Systems in Philadelphia, Educational Pamphlet No. 9," (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, 1917), 4-6, and Herbert Newton Casson, *The History of the Telephone* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1911), 70-71.

² Bell Telephone Company, 7.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

The Role of the Central Office

The Bell Telephone system depended on a network of interconnected exchanges or central offices to route calls to both local and long-distance locations. The Wyoming Central Office, one in a web of 28 Bell central offices located throughout Philadelphia by 1917, functioned in a highly standardized way to “place the subscribers in talking relations with each other and to disconnect their lines when conversation is completed.”³ To satisfy the communication needs in the developing neighborhoods centered on Broad Street in upper North Philadelphia, Bell began construction on the new Wyoming office in 1912.

When it was completed in 1913, the Wyoming Central Office consisted of a terminal room and joint telephone-telegraph office on the 1st floor, an operating room on the 2nd floor, and operators’ rest areas and dining room on the 3rd floor. The terminal room was where the outside underground telephone cables terminated and the circuits were permanently connected with the switchboard wire system. The switchboard was “the chief and most important feature of the central office because the success of the system as a whole depended upon its proper operation”. Located in the operating room on the 2nd floor, the switchboard was the apparatus by which operators would connect the lines of different telephone subscribers “by means of plugs joined by flexible conductors, all connections being made in accordance with the oral instructions of the calling subscribers” (Figure 16). Because the switching system was a manual process and required the attention of operators on a twenty-four hour basis, the provision of break rooms with areas for rest, dining, and socialization were provided in most central office buildings. In the Wyoming Central Office, the operator break and rest rooms were located on the 3rd floor, however there is little physical evidence left to distinguish these spaces from the remainder of the purely functional terminal and switchboard floors.⁴

Manual switching was a relatively cumbersome process, but the rapid development of new technologies such as automatic switching and dial telephones, however, would change how central offices like Wyoming would function. The Bell system officially adopted the automatic switching system in 1919, allowing subscribers to have dial telephones for the first time. In many places manual switching remained in operation, but for most residential consumers in the unusually competitive Philadelphia market – Bell’s largest rival there, the Keystone Telephone Company, also adopted automatic switching in 1920 – the new automatic technology took hold early on. Although the automatic system was quicker and easier for subscribers to use, in many cases it meant that central office buildings no longer required operators to manually connect two callers. At the same time, the more efficient and cheaper automatic system meant that more space was required to house the new automatic switching equipment. As a result, numerous new central offices were constructed and large additions were added to those that already existed.⁵

The Development of the Wyoming Central Office

Company documents related to the construction of the Wyoming Central Office outline the need for expanded telephone service in the Logan neighborhood of North Philadelphia after 1912.⁶ According to a study that year, the nearby Tioga, Oak Lane and Germantown Central Offices would be

³ Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports: Telephones and Telegraphs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 44.

⁴ *Telephone News* 8.18 (September 1912), 1.

⁵ Anton Huurdeman, *The Worldwide History of Telecommunications* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 237-238.

⁶ Bell Telephone Authority Sheet (April 6, 1912).

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

overwhelmed by new subscribers by 1914.⁷ Much of the upper North Philadelphia area was quickly developing due to increasing population brought on by the introduction of affordable electric streetcar service.

Much of the area surrounding the future site of the Wyoming Central Office, which fit within what was then the city's 42nd ward, was virtually open country with scattered gentlemen's estates, farms, and light manufacturing activity until about 1890 (Figure 12). Public transportation had been introduced to the area as early as 1879 when the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad opened the Tabor Branch Connecting Railway, a steam railway that ran just two blocks west of the site at N. Broad and Rockland Streets, but the new line was built primarily to streamline service to New York and had only occasional stops through North Philadelphia (one such stop, the Logan Station, was located just two blocks north at Lindley Avenue). Additionally, the steam railroad was expensive to use on a daily basis, making it an inefficient means for a growing, largely working class city to expand northward.

It was only in the mid-1890s, when electric streetcar or trolley service was introduced to this part of North Philadelphia that the area around the future Wyoming Central Office began to densely develop (Figure 13). The People's Traction Company, one of the city's largest passenger trolley networks, opened the Old York Road Passenger Railway from downtown Philadelphia to the outlying suburban town of Willow Grove in 1894.⁸ The new line on Old York Road, which ran parallel to North Broad Street in this part of the city, was faster and more affordable than the steam railway and connected the Logan neighborhood to a vast network of other lines, allowing many workers the freedom of living beyond walking distance to their workplace. Also, unlike the steam railroad, the trolley connected to the heart of downtown Philadelphia, making the amenities of the central business district available to a much wider population.

As a result of new, more affordable, and easier to use public transportation, the population in the Logan neighborhood and the larger North Philadelphia area began to explode around 1900. That year, the population of the 42nd Ward, which began at Stenton Avenue in the west and straddled North Broad Street from Wingohocking Street in the south to adjacent Montgomery County in the north, was 23,610. This figure grew rapidly, doubling more than twice to 137,686 persons by the 1930 census year.⁹

Naturally, with the increase in the population of upper North Philadelphia, particularly in the Logan neighborhood, the number of telephone subscribers grew. To relieve the existing, already strained central offices nearby, Bell proposed a new exchange for Logan in 1912, later becoming known as the Wyoming exchange area.¹⁰ Although the precise boundaries of the new exchange area are unknown for that year, they likely are similar to or the same as those as seen in a 1952 citywide map of Bell's Philadelphia accounting area, which plotted each district with subsidiary central office areas. The 1952 map shows the Wyoming exchange, which had been renamed the Michigan-Gladstone-Davenport exchange, comprising a large area to the north and south of Wyoming Street from Germantown Avenue and Coulter Street in the west to Tacony Creek in the east (Figure 23).

⁷ The Tioga office was located at 3429-33 N. 17th Street, roughly 1.5 miles to the southwest; the Oak Lane office, although named for a Philadelphia neighborhood, was actually located 2.25 miles to the northeast in the suburban community of Melrose in Montgomery County; and the Germantown office was located one mile to the west at 26-34 W. Chelton Avenue.

⁸ "Willow Grove Park and Electric Road," in *Electrical World* 28.14 (October 1896).

⁹ John Daly and Allen Weinberg, *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions* (Philadelphia: Department of Records, 1966), 100.

¹⁰ The Wyoming Central Office was named after Wyoming Street, which extended east to west through the center of the exchange area.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

A new central office would eventually be required to relieve the other offices of some of their projected growth in the amount of 2,100 lines. At a cost of \$125,700, the new Wyoming Central Office, briefly called the Logan Central Office, would make provision for the 2,100 new lines and another 400 lines in addition.¹¹ However, the area that the Wyoming office serviced, encompassed largely by Philadelphia's 42nd Ward, was itself growing at a tremendous rate.

Bell Telephone was well aware that the quickening pace of development in and around the Logan neighborhood would continue and projected that the new building would only provide sufficient service until July of 1916. With the expectation that far more than 2,500 lines would be serviced at the Wyoming Central Office, the company asked the building's architect, John T. Windrim, to design the third floor to carry an ultimate fourth-story operating room and that "the building and equipment layout will be arranged for growth toward the rear of the lot."¹² Although the onset of World War I delayed the construction of the new addition and 4th floor, the new space was badly needed by 1920, when the conversion of Bell's system from manual to automatic switching brought the need for more space.¹³ Although automatic switching meant that the Wyoming office no longer needed operators to manually switch calls, the new automatic equipment and increasing demand required more space. In 1920 Bell again hired Windrim to design the planned 4th floor on top of the 1912 building and a large new four-story addition to the west, all at a cost of \$400,000.¹⁴ As the population of upper North Philadelphia continued to grow over the following decades, Bell expanded the Wyoming office yet again in 1954, with a two-story addition to the north of the original three-story building, and in 1963, with the addition of several floors on top of all parts of the existing building.

The Architecture of the Wyoming Central Office

Like many of Bell's central office buildings, the Wyoming Central Office was designed by the firm of John T. Windrim (1866-1934), arguably Philadelphia's preeminent civic architect of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.¹⁵ Apart from numerous city commissions for court houses, police stations, fire houses, jails, and other municipal buildings, Windrim and his firm also designed dozens of office buildings, banks, hospitals, theaters and private residences for many of Philadelphia's most prominent companies, institutions, and residents.

Most often, Windrim tended toward a sober but refined expression of the Classical orders. Some of the firm's most highly acclaimed Philadelphia work includes the Commonwealth Title & Trust Company, a fifteen-story Beaux-Arts style bank and office building, built in 1901 at 1201 Chestnut Street; two massive generating stations for the Philadelphia Electric Company, built on the Delaware River in nearby Chester, PA and in the Fishtown section of Philadelphia in 1916 and 1920, respectively; and the Franklin Institute Science Museum, a Classical Revival limestone edifice on Logan Square completed in 1931.¹⁶ "Due to the visibility of his projects," architectural historian

¹¹ "Bell Telephone Improvements in Philadelphia," *Electrical Review* (February 17, 1912), 379.

¹² Bell Telephone Authority Sheet (April 6, 1912).

¹³ Bell Telephone Authority Sheet (March 15, 1920).

¹⁴ *Electrical Review* (June 26, 1920), 1087.

¹⁵ James H. Windrim also was appointed Director of Public Works in Philadelphia by mayor Edwin S. Stewart in 1895, leaving his son again to manage most of the firm's business.

¹⁶ Windrim served as the chief architect for the Philadelphia Electric Company, designing numerous power plants and substations and the company's headquarters at 130 S. 9th Street in Philadelphia in 1927. Both of the generating stations on the Delaware River remain today. The Chester station was listed on the National Register in 2007.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

Sandra L. Tatman writes, "Windrim became the best-known Philadelphia practitioner of the classical revival style often designated as Beaux-Arts."¹⁷

It appears that Windrim's firm was first hired by Bell in 1905 to design a new exchange building at 1705-07 S. Broad Street in South Philadelphia, followed shortly by another at 54th Street and Woodland Avenue in West Philadelphia in 1906.¹⁸ Windrim's association with Bell would continue over the next two decades, with the architect and his firm designing over a dozen exchange buildings within the city of Philadelphia and many others in locations such as Media, PA; Haddonfield, NJ; and Wilmington, DE; where Bell's network also extended (Figs. 17-22). Even towns as far away as Bethlehem and Erie could boast a Windrim-designed Bell central office by the early 1920s. Windrim's largest and most important commissions from Bell became the company's Parkway Central Office, a 17-story building at 17th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, completed in 1921; and its western region headquarters at 420-24 7th Avenue in Pittsburgh, a 20-story building completed in 1923. In total, Windrim and his firm would design about sixty buildings for Bell throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware by 1933. Although it is unknown how many of these buildings Windrim designed himself and how many were designed by associates in his firm, other architects he employed, including W.R. Morton Keast (1888-1973) are known to have executed designs for several Bell central office buildings.¹⁹

The significance of Windrim's commissions for Bell arises both from their individual expressions of the Colonial Revival style and for their collective formation of an architectural "brand" for the company. Nearly all of Windrim's central office and exchange buildings were derivations of a basic Georgian-inspired Colonial Revival formula. While their scale and level of architectural detail varied from building to building, nearly all of them were two- to three-stories tall, occasionally four, and constructed of brick with details such as water tables, string courses, window surrounds, and cornices executed in limestone and/or terra cotta.

At first glance, the application of a refined architectural style with high quality materials to what was a utilitarian building type seems unusual, but the Colonial Revival mode fit well into existing streetscapes and ennobled the central office – and, by association, telephone communication itself – through its inherent formality and serious tone. Because central offices and exchanges functioned most efficiently closest to the center of their service areas, they were often located in highly visible locations in both residential neighborhoods and commercial downtowns. With the addition of dozens of such buildings throughout Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware between 1905 and 1930, Bell and Windrim sought to create a consistent architectural language throughout a large geographic area, one that would be compatible with existing commercial and residential streetscapes. The relatively small scale of the buildings paired with the Colonial Revival style, which originated historically in residential applications and was prevalent in American houses of all sizes in the early twentieth century, meant that Bell's central offices would appear familiar and blend well into existing urban and suburban environments. The serious tone of the Colonial Revival style also glorified the central office in recognition of the great stature that Americans had begun to place on

¹⁷ Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985), accessed at www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21563 on 9/12/14.

¹⁸ *Engineering News* 54.23 (December 1905), 192. Although the precise circumstances surrounding Bell's choice of Windrim are unknown, the company was using other architects to design exchange buildings as late as 1903. The first Lombard Exchange at 17th and Lombard Streets near Rittenhouse Square for example, was designed by the firm of Rankin, Kellogg & Crane in 1903, although it was later replaced with a Windrim-designed version in 1923 (Figures 21-22).

¹⁹ A photographic portfolio of Keast's work while employed by Windrim is held by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Keast began working for Windrim in 1910 and remained with the master until he retired in 1933.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

the telephone, a means of communicating that was becoming essential to almost every aspect of their daily lives.

By 1912, when Bell asked Windrim to design a new central office at N. Broad and Rockland Streets, the architect had fully developed an architectural standard for Bell's network, one rooted in the Classical tradition. Still, as demonstrated by his Bell designs both before and after the Wyoming Central Office, Windrim never applied the standard in an formulaic or repetitive way. In fact, the architect had to be flexible since budget and program both played a role in determining how the final product would appear. As noted above, the level of ornamentation, grandeur and sometimes material quality depended on the size of the exchange area the building serviced, where it was located, and whether or not future expansion was planned.

The result of Windrim's commission for the new Wyoming Central Office was a noble Colonial Revival design. Like his earlier work for Bell on a central office at 54th Street and Woodland Avenue in West Philadelphia, the building's prominent location on a busy commercial corridor demanded full Classical treatment with a granite base, a façade of red brick laid in a Flemish Bond pattern, Indiana limestone window and door surrounds on the 1st floor, and terra cotta belt courses, window surrounds and pediments, and cornice on the upper floors. As explained above, the building was designed for future expansion by means of an additional 4th floor and a large western addition along Rockland Street. In fact, the repetitive rhythm of the building's fenestration and other ornamental features allowed the possibility of future expansion without compromising the balanced effect of the original building, perhaps another reason why the Colonial Revival style was particularly well-suited to the central office type. By the time the expansion was executed in 1920 –the 4th floor and western addition were both completed that year – the overall composition read as if it had been the original design. The additions were treated much the same as the original building; with a Flemish bond brick wall surface, terra cotta ornament and fenestration pattern, the expansion only reinforced the dignified and balanced nature of the original building. Further additions in 1954 and 1963, although not designed by Windrim, also loosely adhered to the Colonial Revival style. Such expansions were typical of many Bell central offices during this period. The Belmont Central Office (Figs. 19-20) at 5160 Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia was built in 1911 and expanded in 1922, the Germantown Central Office (Figs. 17-18) at 25-34 W. Cheltenham Avenue was built in 1919 with two stories added in 1927, and the Lombard Central Office (Figs. 21-22) at S. 17th and Lombard Streets in Center City, was built in 1924 with a third story added sometime after 1950.

Competition in Philadelphia Telephone Networks

Bell's decision to build the Wyoming Central Office was a direct response to the growing population of upper North Philadelphia and the accompanying need for telephone service, but it was also a strategic, territorial move to ensure that its vast network would remain dominant. Thanks to patents filed by Bell early on, American Bell and its many subsidiaries, including Bell Telephone of Philadelphia, held exclusive rights to their telephone technology until 1894, meaning that the company enjoyed a de facto monopoly on all telephone service, including the setting of rates, throughout much of the late-nineteenth century. However, in Philadelphia, the company would not remain unchallenged for long.

Apart from holding exclusive rights to their telephone technology, at least temporarily, Bell executives and economists claimed – rightly or wrongly – that the monopoly was a "natural" one, asserting that Bell's gargantuan network was inevitable due to economies of scale. The network was vast, so theoretically Bell could provide far less expensive service than any smaller independent company would be able to (In reality, Bell was often accused of gouging subscribers on rates). Additionally, the monopoly grew out of Bell's vast political influence and the lack of regulation of

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

telephone utilities. For example, even if Bell had competitors during the company's early years, there was no mechanism by which the government could force the networks to interconnect. In fact, for decades, telephones could only connect to other telephones within the same network.²⁰

The story began to change in 1894 when Bell's seventeen-year patents expired and independent telephone companies began to crop up in cities across the United States, eventually forming the National Independent Telephone Association to combat the further spread of the Bell monopoly.²¹ In Philadelphia, one such enterprise was the Keystone Telephone Company, which began operations in 1900 and was officially chartered in 1902. While many independent companies in other cities could only claim a small market share compared to that of the Bell system, Keystone forged ahead to make Philadelphia one of the most competitive telephone markets in the country. Bell fiercely attempted to maintain their dominance through rapid expansion, but Keystone had enough success in Philadelphia by 1903 that the *Western Electrician* noted that Philadelphia was the largest city in the United States to have an independent telephone company competing on a large scale with Bell.²² In fact, Philadelphia was the last major city with dual service as late as 1945, when Bell finally acquired Keystone.²³

Like Bell, Keystone followed the growth of the city and expanded their network throughout both the built-up downtown and the developing, outlying neighborhoods. Many subscribers were attracted to Keystone by their lower rates and new telephone technologies. By 1907, Keystone was operating with six exchange buildings and had 28,888 subscribers, a figure which grew to 40,868 by 1916 (although statistics for comparable years are not available, Bell had 116,600 subscribers in 1910 and 175,000 in 1917). Although Bell remained a much larger company – even by 1920, Bell had assets of \$134,997,070 versus Keystone's \$19,229,389 – Keystone eventually captured a significant share of the telephone market in Philadelphia in the early twentieth century, a level of competition that no other Bell subsidiary experienced.²⁴

Despite Keystone's late start, the company arrived just as the upper reaches of North Philadelphia began to densely develop, meaning that this was a prime area for the competition between Bell and Keystone to play out. In fact, in 1905 Keystone constructed an exchange building in the Germantown neighborhood, an already densely settled area just one mile west of the future Wyoming Central Office at N. Broad and Rockland. Located near the intersection of Germantown Avenue and Collum Street, the Keystone exchange was a direct challenge to Bell who had also recently arrived in the neighborhood. Bell had built an exchange building in Germantown several blocks north of Keystone's at 26-34 W. Chelton Avenue sometime before 1910²⁵

²⁰ In *The People's Network: The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), historian Robert MacDougall notes that a city with two telephone systems would require "two networks of poles and wires, ... two sets of operators and exchanges, two solitudes of nonconnecting telephones." (p. 160).

²¹ Robert MacDougall, *The People's Network: The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 92.

²² "Keystone Telephone System in Philadelphia" in *Western Electrician* 30.14 (April 1903), 221.

²³ MacDougall, 160.

²⁴ *Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corporation Securities, Public Utility Section, Twenty-Third Annual Number* (New York: Poor's Publishing Company, 1922), 1012 and 1720.

²⁵ City of Philadelphia, *Journal of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia from December 4, 1911 to July 1, 1912* (Philadelphia, 1912), 847, and *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (G.W. Bromley, 1910). According to the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database, the Germantown Exchange was rebuilt as the Germantown Central Office by John T. Windrim in the early 1920s (Figs. 17-18).

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

The intense competition that played out between Bell and Keystone in North Philadelphia was repeated in other parts of the city. In fact, when Keystone began construction of their new central office buildings between 1900 and 1905, they were careful to locate them in close proximity to existing Bell offices. In 1903, for example, only two years after Bell had constructed an exchange building at 8-12 N. Preston Street in the West Powelton neighborhood of West Philadelphia, Keystone built its own exchange directly across the street at 9-13 N. Preston Street (The Preston Exchange was listed individually on the National Register in 2002).²⁶ Keystone also built a central office at 2757 Frankford Avenue in the Kensington neighborhood, just a few blocks north of Bell's existing office at the northwest corner of Sargeant and Emerald Streets. Echoing Bell's vast expansion of the Wyoming Central Office in 1922, Bell greatly expanded their Kensington office in 1923, assuring their dominance over Keystone in this part of the city.²⁷ Perhaps due to Bell's unrelenting expansion, however, Keystone never grew beyond their original six central offices. The latter company's attempt to unseat Bell as the dominant telephone company in Philadelphia therefore was limited to only a few other hyper-localized neighborhood settings.

The proximity of Keystone's new Germantown exchange to the future site of Bell's Wyoming Central Office meant that the competitor was already well established in the vicinity of upper N. Broad Street by the time Bell had begun to consider a new central office there. In fact, even by 1904, Keystone had started to bury telephone conduit below both N. Broad and Carlisle Streets just several blocks south of Rockland Street, and on Logan Street just west of N. Broad Street.²⁸ Nonetheless, much of the area centered around N. Broad and Rockland Streets was still relatively uncharted territory for either company, at least in comparison to the dense commercial corridor along Germantown Avenue.

Following their strategy of rapid expansion to maintain dominance over Keystone, Bell began construction on the Wyoming Central Office in 1912. The new office had the practical purpose of consolidating thousands of nearby lines, which previously led to three separate central offices in Germantown, Tioga and Oak Lane, into a single, more central exchange, closing in what had become a hole in the doughnut of Bell's North Philadelphia network.²⁹ With the addition of the Wyoming office, therefore, Bell swiftly took control of the upper North Philadelphia market. In addition, by moving thousands of existing lines into the new Wyoming exchange area, Bell's other central offices in Germantown, Tioga and Oak Lane could now focus on expansion within their individual exchanges rather than straining to meet the demands of the newly developing upper N. Broad Street area.

The construction of the new Wyoming office not only increased efficiency in the Bell network, but it also ensured that Keystone would not be able to compete in upper North Philadelphia. Perhaps not expecting Bell to establish a new central office so nearby an existing one, Keystone was caught off guard. With such a concentration of Bell service, it became difficult for Keystone to establish itself as a true rival to Bell in upper North Philadelphia. This move was typical of Bell's competitive strategy as soon as Keystone arrived on the scene in the early 1900s. Bell's goal was to overwhelm the independents, especially Keystone, through a rapid and constant expansion of their network,

²⁶ Jean K. Wolf, National Register Nomination for the Bell Telephone Exchange Building (Preston Telephone Exchange), Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, 2002.

²⁷ *American Contractor* 44.1 (December 30, 1922), 42.

²⁸ City of Philadelphia, *Second Annual Message of John Weaver, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1904* (Philadelphia, 1905), 359.

²⁹ Unlike Keystone, Bell had already established exchanges not only in Germantown to the west, Lower North Philadelphia and Center City to the south, and Kensington to the east, but also several to the north in suburban locations like Melrose Park and Willow Grove in Montgomery County, meaning that their telephone infrastructure already extended entirely up N. Broad Street and into the suburbs before the Wyoming office was proposed.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

building on a vast infrastructure that was already in place. As already demonstrated, Keystone never became quite as large as Bell in Philadelphia – by 1937 Bell had built as many as 42 central offices in the city while Keystone continued to operate only with their original six – but their presence was significant enough for Bell to continue rapidly expanding.³⁰

Among the numerous Bell central offices located in Philadelphia and elsewhere throughout Pennsylvania, only two, the Preston Telephone Exchange and the Bell Telephone Company Building at 1827-35 Arch Street in Center City Philadelphia, are listed individually on the National Register. Neither building was designed by Windrim. Although the architect of the Preston exchange is unknown, it was built around 1900 and therefore predates Windrim's involvement with Bell. The Preston exchange, which functioned much like the Wyoming Central Office, was listed on the National Register in 2002. The Bell Telephone Company Building, designed by architect Eugene Stopper, was built in 1925 and listed on the National Register in 2000. This building encompassed an exchange or central office function, serving the large Center City business district and surrounding neighborhoods, but also contained administrative offices. As a result, the building was much larger – a 17-story high-rise, in fact – than all other Windrim-designed Bell buildings in Philadelphia. A third Bell Telephone central office, designed by Windrim in 1924 and located at 1500-06 N. 16th Street in North Philadelphia, is a contributing resource within the North Broad Street Mansion Historic District, listed on the National Register in 1984.

By the mid-1940s, Bell's strategy to overwhelm Keystone through rapid expansion paid off. In 1944 Bell acquired Keystone, including all of the latter company's exchange buildings in Philadelphia meaning that the city was no longer a dual-service one in which two separate networks operated. Previously, Bell had also acquired the Central District Telephone Company in 1918, the Pittsburgh and Allegheny Telephone Company in 1934, the Lehigh Telephone Company in 1930, and Forest Telephone & Telegraph Company in 1933, meaning that the acquisition of independent companies was a major part of their expansion strategy during the early- to mid-twentieth century.³¹ After Bell's acquisition of Keystone, the latter company's exchange building in the Germantown neighborhood was closed and those subscribers' lines were consolidated into various nearby Bell central offices, including the Wyoming Central Office. This meant that the building at N. Broad and Rockland Streets experienced a significant increase in calling traffic after 1944 despite slowing population growth in North Philadelphia.³²

Bell's continued expansion throughout the 1940s coincided with the rapid development of new telephone technology, particularly national toll dialing and automatic message accounting (AMA). These innovations were eventually applied throughout the entire Bell system, but they were first tested in Philadelphia, often resulting in the enlargement of central office buildings to accommodate new equipment. The additions made to the Wyoming Central Office in 1954 and 1963 were representative of these changes.

National toll dialing was a process by which all telephones were assigned national directory numbers in addition to local ones, which made the connection of calls between distant locales quicker and more efficient. The system first went into service in Philadelphia in 1943 and was gradually

³⁰ Federal Writers' Project, *Philadelphia, a Guide to the Nation's Birthplace* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1937), 141.

³¹ Finding Aid for the Lehman Brothers Collection – Contemporary Business Archives, located the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School:
http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/company.html?company=the_bell_telephone_co_of_pennsylvania. Accessed October 20, 2014.

³² Peter L. Schauble, "Dual Telephone Service Ends in Philadelphia," in *Bell Telephone Magazine* (Winter 1945-46), 316.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

Philadelphia County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

implemented throughout the city. Automatic message accounting, on the other hand, was a new system that had the ability to record precise details about calls – both local and long distance – that resulted in more accurate billing to customers. Each call was assigned a number that allowed details such as the number called and the length of the call, information that Bell was previously unable to capture but that allowed the company to apply charges more precisely. The AMA process utilized a “gigantic electrical contrivance” in the form of a call reader, which collected the details of a call, and a perforator, which punched holes in a paper tape to record those details permanently for the accounting department to read. These machines, in addition to the other new equipment necessitated by national toll calling, required significant additions to many central office buildings throughout the Bell network. As with prior new technologies developed in Bell’s own laboratories, Philadelphia was the first city in which both new systems were installed and used widely. In fact, the enlargement of the Wyoming Central Office in 1954 occurred just when national toll dialing equipment was being added to Bell central offices throughout the city, a process which began only one year prior.³³

Like the 1954 addition, the later expansion of the Wyoming Central Office in 1963 coincided with the implementation of the first touch-tone telephone service, also known as dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) technology, in the United States, also developed in Bell’s own laboratories. The vastly more efficient dialing method – touch-tone phones were push-button as opposed to rotary dial telephones – was available to all Bell customers for an extra charge of \$1.50 per month but was largely used in commercial operations. The new touchtone service generally required larger electronic switching machines, however, resulting in the expansion of numerous central offices through the 1960s.³⁴

Although neither the 1954 or 1963 additions were designed by John Windrim, both fell within the volume of an expansion plan that Bell and Windrim had approved for zoning purposes in 1933.³⁵ That plan also expected that the Wyoming Central Office would be expanded to six stories. Both additions, as discussed below, also conformed to the Colonial Revival style of the 1912 and 1920 sections of the building, replicating their red brick construction with limestone accents and a similar fenestration pattern.

In 1974 Bell constructed an additional one-story building to the north at 4908-4918 N. Broad Street, which stood abutting the 1st floor of Section 2 and Section 3. The new building was likely constructed to handle increased calling traffic resulting from more efficient touch-tone service, however it was never connected on the interior to Section 2 or Section 3 and therefore it is not included within the boundaries or the period of significance of the property.

³³ Oliver E. Buckley, “Post-War Achievements of Bell Laboratories: II” in *Bell Telephone Magazine* (Winter 1951-52), 224-228 and “Your Phone Dial Computes Your Bill” in *Popular Science* (February 1949), 135-136.

³⁴ Ross Gregory, *Cold War America, 1946 to 1990* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2003), 166.

³⁵ Several zoning records were recently uncovered that indicate the 1963 expansion was approved under the terms of a previous 1933 zoning board approval.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. "Telephone, Telegraph and Wireless Systems in Philadelphia, Educational Pamphlet No. 9." Philadelphia: Chamber of Commerce, 1917.

Bell Telephone Magazine (periodical, accessed at <<https://archive.org/search.php?query=publisher%3A%22%5BNew+York%2C+American+Telephone+and+Telegraph+Co.%2C+etc.%5D%22>> on October 3, 2014).

Buckley, Oliver E. "Post-War Achievements of Bell Laboratories: II." *Bell Telephone Magazine* (Winter 1951-52).

Casson, Herbert Newton. *The History of the Telephone*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1911.

City of Philadelphia. *Journal of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia from December 4, 1911 to July 1, 1912*. Philadelphia, 1912.

City of Philadelphia. *Second Annual Message of John Weaver, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1904*. Philadelphia, 1905.

Daly, John and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*. Philadelphia: Department of Records, 1966.

Electrical Review (periodical, accessed at <https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=electrical+world&gws_rd=ssl#hl=en&tbm=bks&q=editions:vmiZ6iyp-MgC> on September 29, 2014).

Electrical World (periodical, accessed at <https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=electrical+world&gws_rd=ssl#hl=en&tbm=bks&q=editions:BLYRYQ1jaYAC> on September 29, 2014).

Engineering News (periodical, accessed at <https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=electrical+world&gws_rd=ssl#hl=en&tbm=bks&q=editions:jelCuxf-qXMC> on September 29, 2014).

Federal Writers' Project. *Philadelphia, a Guide to the Nation's Birthplace*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1937.

Keast, Morton. *Photographs of Some of the Architectural Work of the Office of John T. Windrim* (Self-published, 1934).

Lehman Brothers Collection Finding Aid – Contemporary Business Archives, located the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School:
<http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/company.html?company=the_bell_telephone_co_of_pennsylvania>. (Accessed on October 20, 2014).

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

Gregory, Ross. *Cold War America, 1946 to 1990*. New York: Infobase Publishing 2003.

Huurdean, Anton. *The Worldwide History of Telecommunications*. New York: Wiley, 2003.

MacDougall, Robert. *The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corporation Securities, Public Utility Division, Twenty-Third Annual Number (New York: Poor's Publishing Company, 1922).

Schauble, Peter L. "Dual Telephone Service Ends in Philadelphia." *Bell Telephone Magazine* (Winter 1945-46).

Tatman, Sandra L. and Roger W. Moss. *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985.

Telephone News (periodical, accessed at
<https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=electrical+world&gws_rd=ssl#hl=en&tbm=bks&q=editions:cTy2xz_2hasC> on September 29, 2014).

U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census. "Special Reports: Telephones and Telegraphs." Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906.

Western Electrician (periodical, accessed at
<https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=electrical+world&gws_rd=ssl#hl=en&tbm=bks&q=editions:pHbWTBwAmhMC> on September 29, 2014).

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

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
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property ~ 0.30 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: 40.027783 | Longitude: -75.147392 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the property is shown as a dotted line on the accompanying map entitled "Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company: Site Plan with National Register Boundary."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the building is situated and historically associated with the property. No extant historically associated resources have been excluded.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

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: November 25, 2014

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.)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
 Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
 County and State

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.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

City or Vicinity: Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia State: PA

Photographer: Robert Powers

Date Photographed: September 2014

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

<i>Photograph #</i>	<i>Description of Photograph</i>
1.	South and east elevations, view northwest.
2.	East elevation, view west.
3.	West and south elevations, view northeast.
4.	North and west elevations, view southeast
5.	East and north elevations, view southwest
6.	1 st floor lobby, Section 1, view west
7.	1 st floor lobby, Section 1, view east
8.	1 st floor, Section 1, view west
9.	1 st floor, Section 2, view west
10.	1 st floor, Section 3, view east
11.	2 nd floor, main stairway in Section 1, view south
12.	2 nd floor, Section 3, view northeast
13.	2 nd floor, Section 2, view northeast
14.	2 nd floor, Section 2, view east
15.	3 rd floor, Section 1, view northwest
16.	3 rd floor, Section 3, view east
17.	3 rd floor, Section 2, view southwest
18.	3 rd floor, Section 2, view east
19.	3 rd floor, fire balcony in Section 2, view north
20.	3 rd floor, fire stair in Section 2, view east

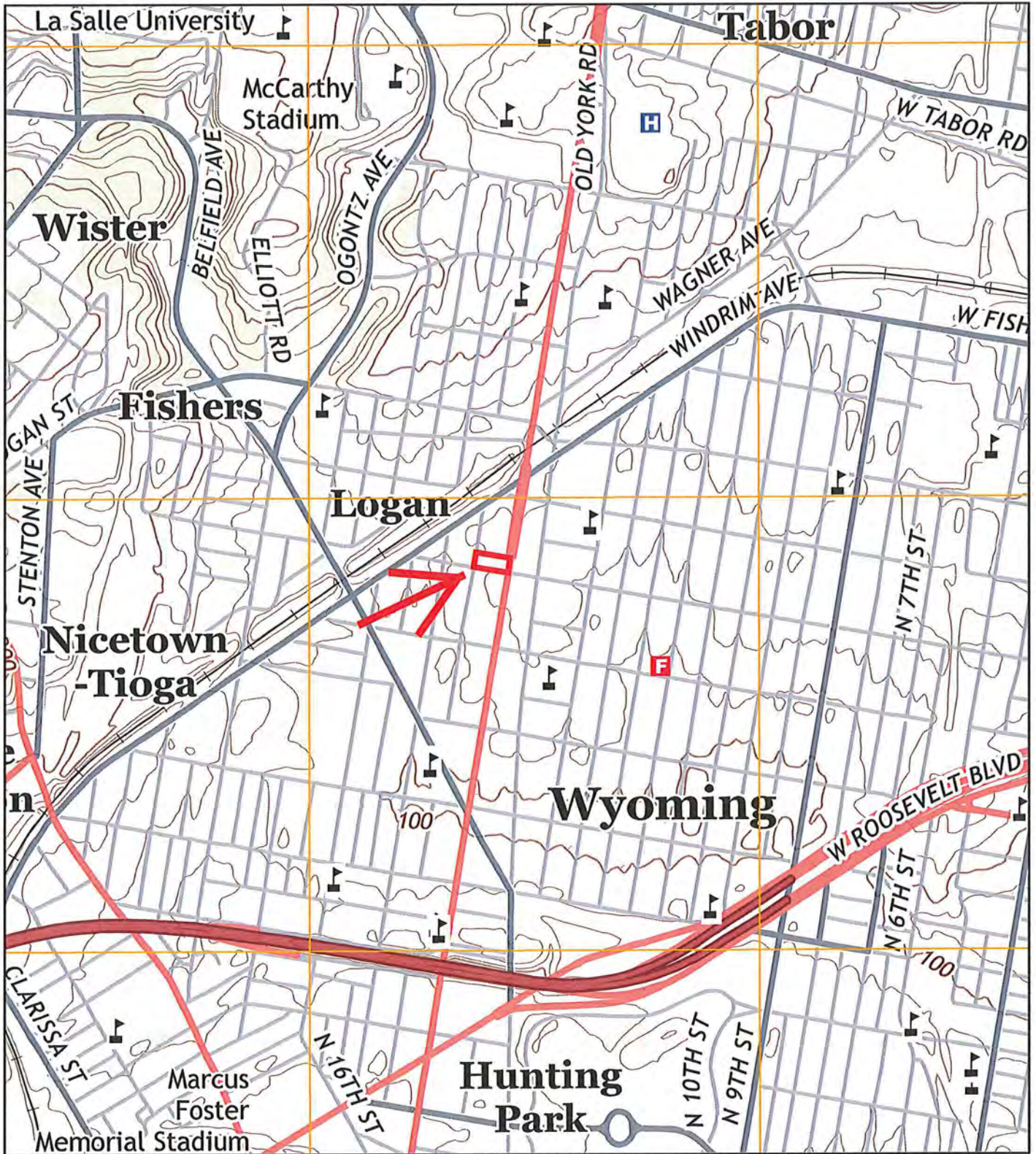
Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

21.	4 th floor, Section 2, view west
22.	4 th floor, Section 3, view west
23.	5 th floor, Section 3, view west
24.	5 th floor, stairway in Section 3, view east
25.	5 th floor, Section 2, view southeast
26.	Roof over Section 1, view west
27.	6 th floor, elevator in Section 3, view south
28.	6 th floor, Section 3, view east
29.	6 th floor, Section 2, view southwest
30.	6 th floor, Section 2, view southeast
31.	Penthouse floor, view east
32.	Roof over Section 2, view north
33.	Roof over Section 3, view east

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.



Wyoming Central Office of the
 Bell Telephone Company
 4900 N. Broad Street
 Philadelphia Co., PA

USGS Map
 Germantown Quadrangle
 Pennsylvania
 Latitude: 40.027783
 Longitude: -75.147392

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

Index of Figures



Figure 1

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

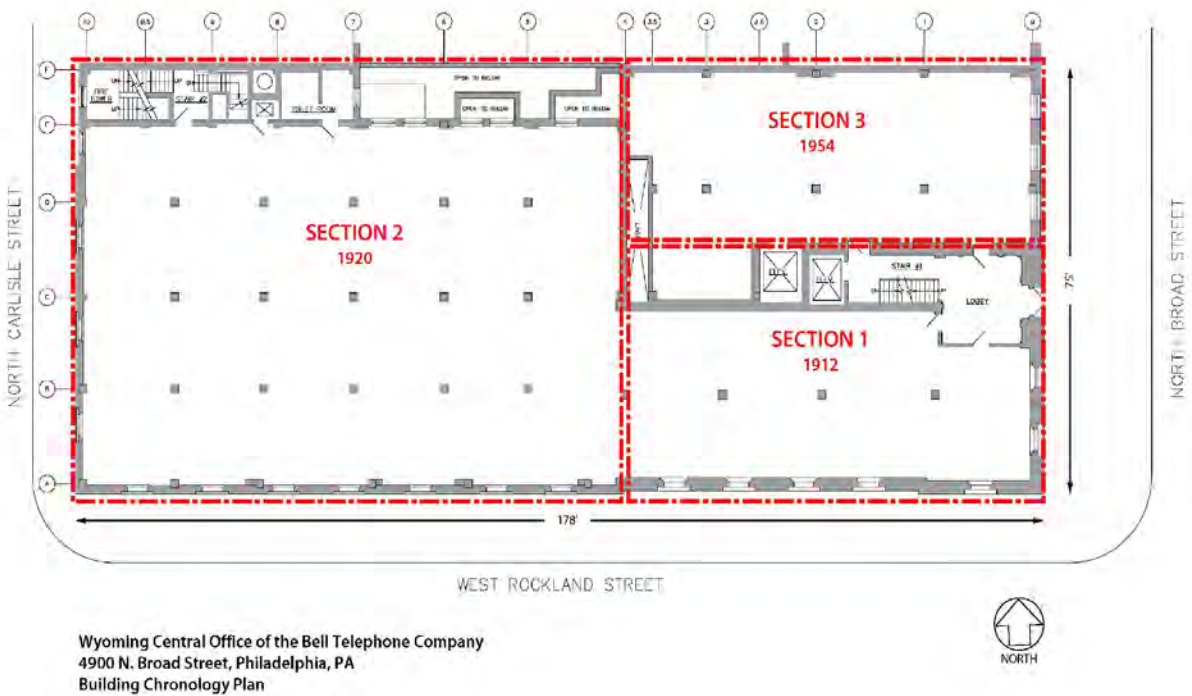


Figure 2

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



YEAR BUILT: 1912 1920 1954 1963

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
4900 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA
Building Chronology Diagram

Figure 3

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

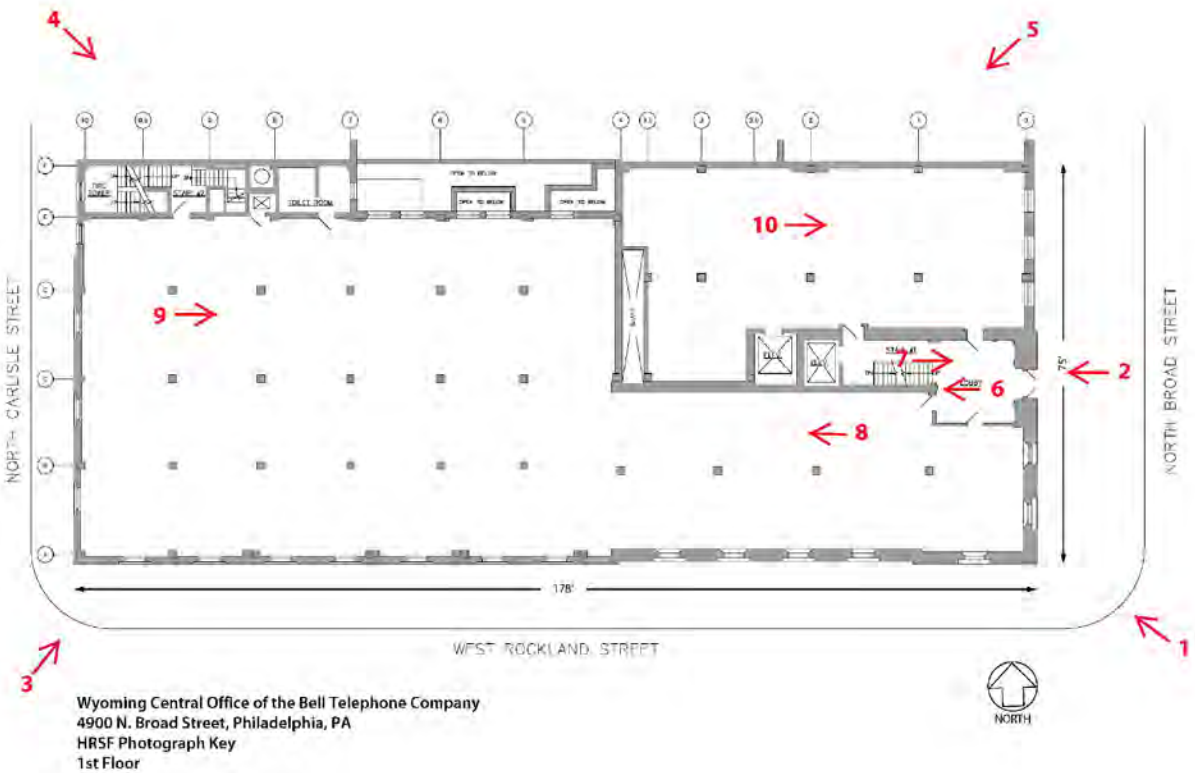


Figure 4

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

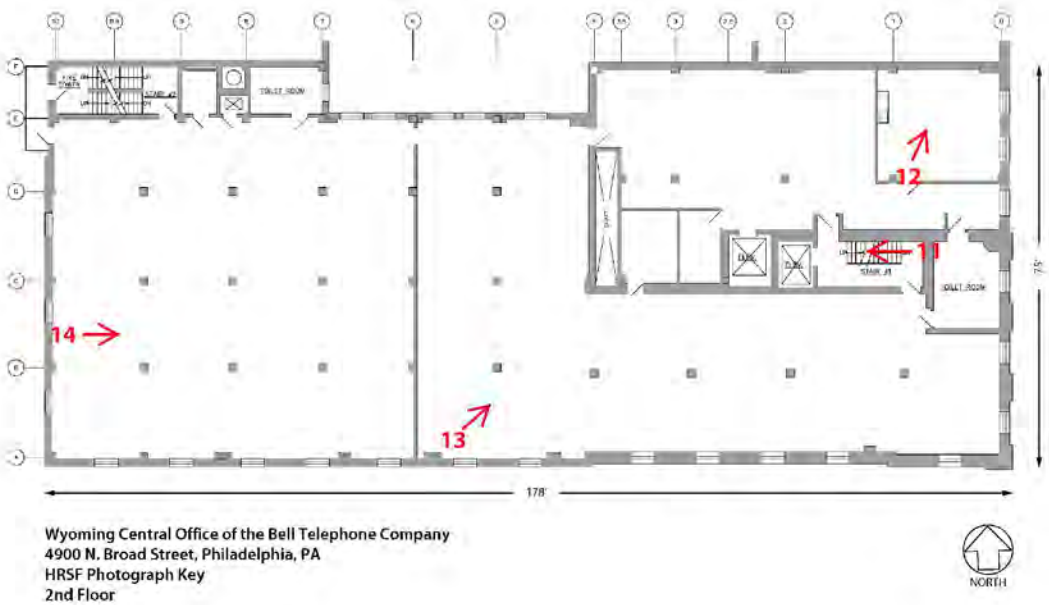


Figure 5

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

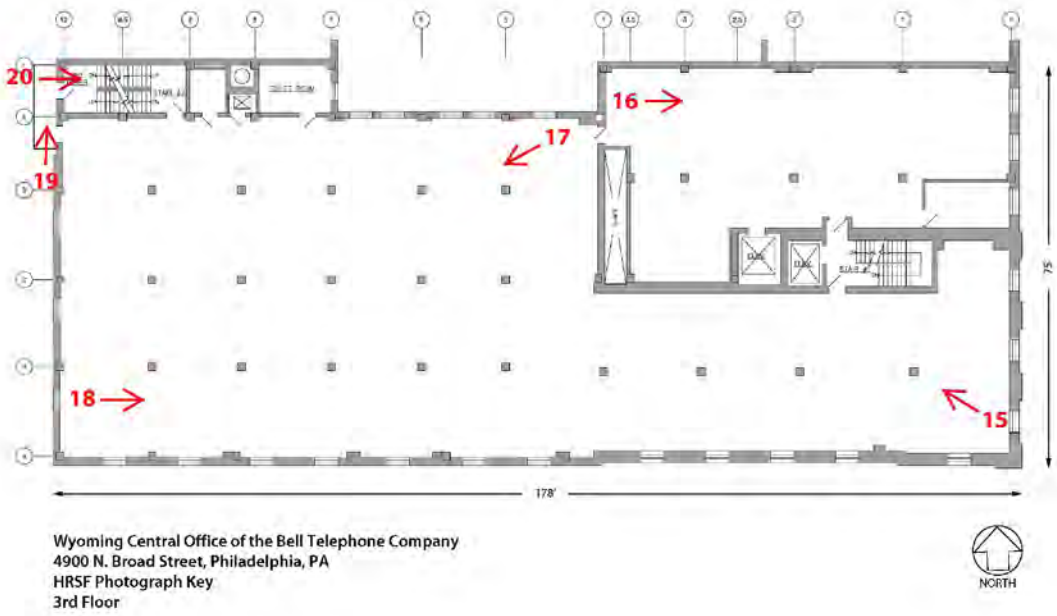


Figure 6

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

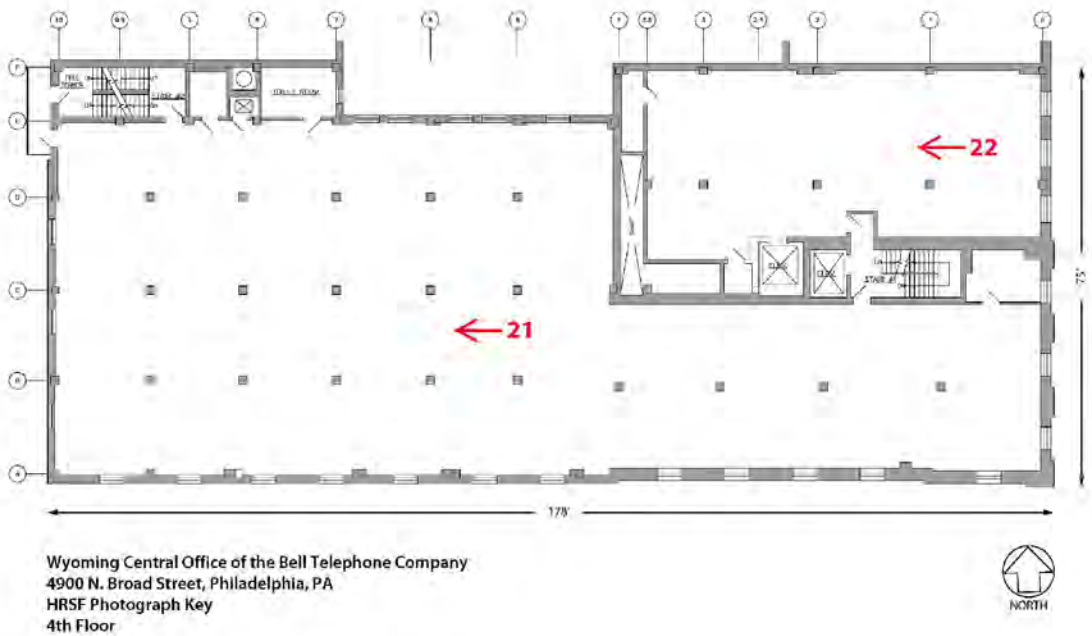


Figure 7

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

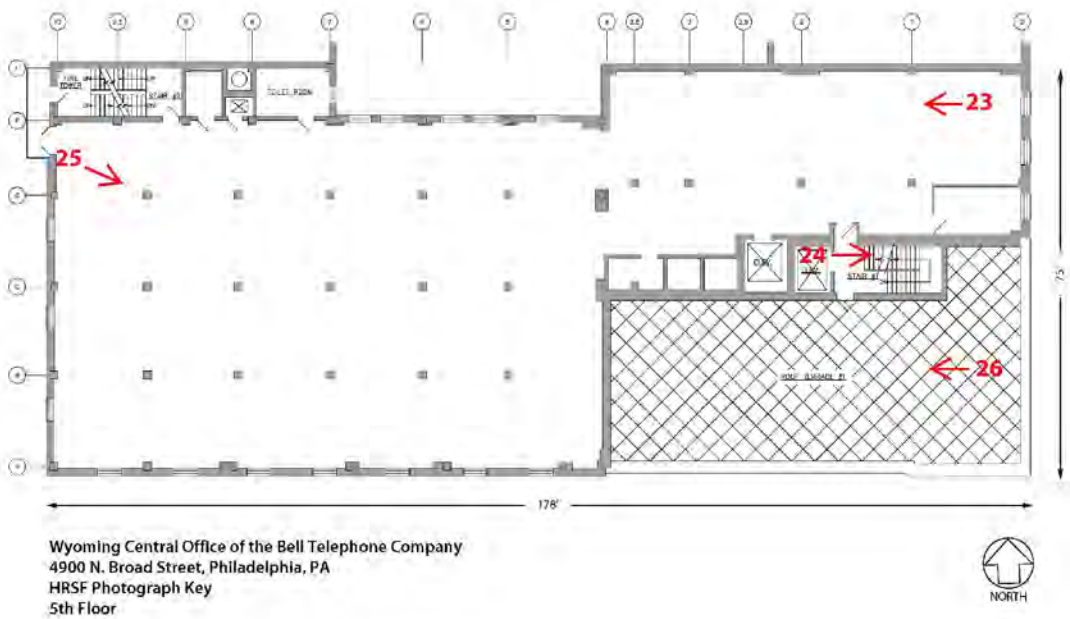


Figure 8

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

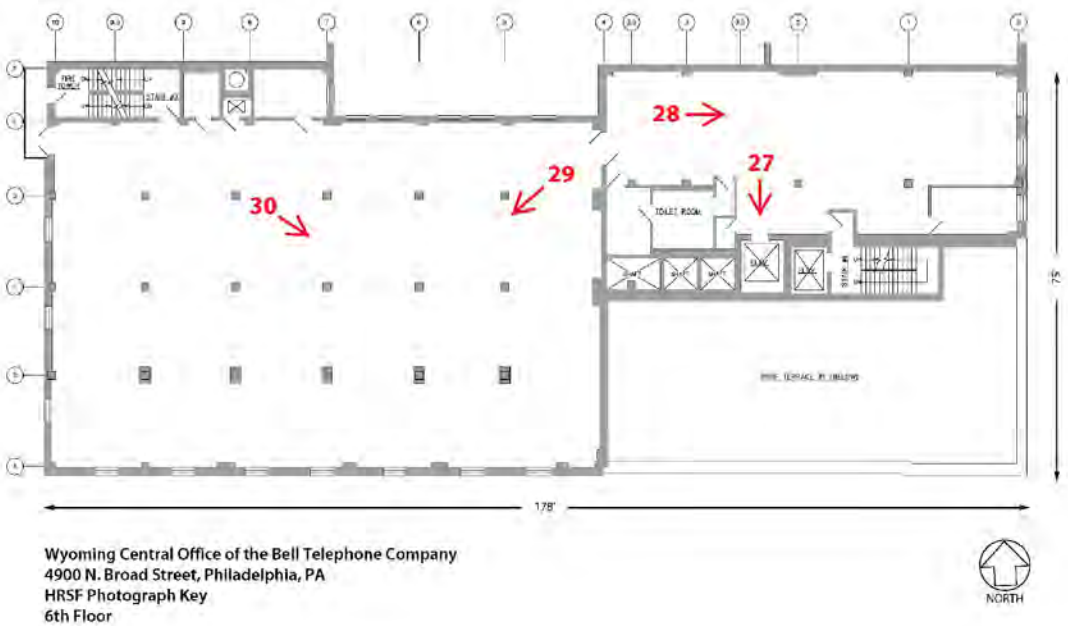


Figure 9

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

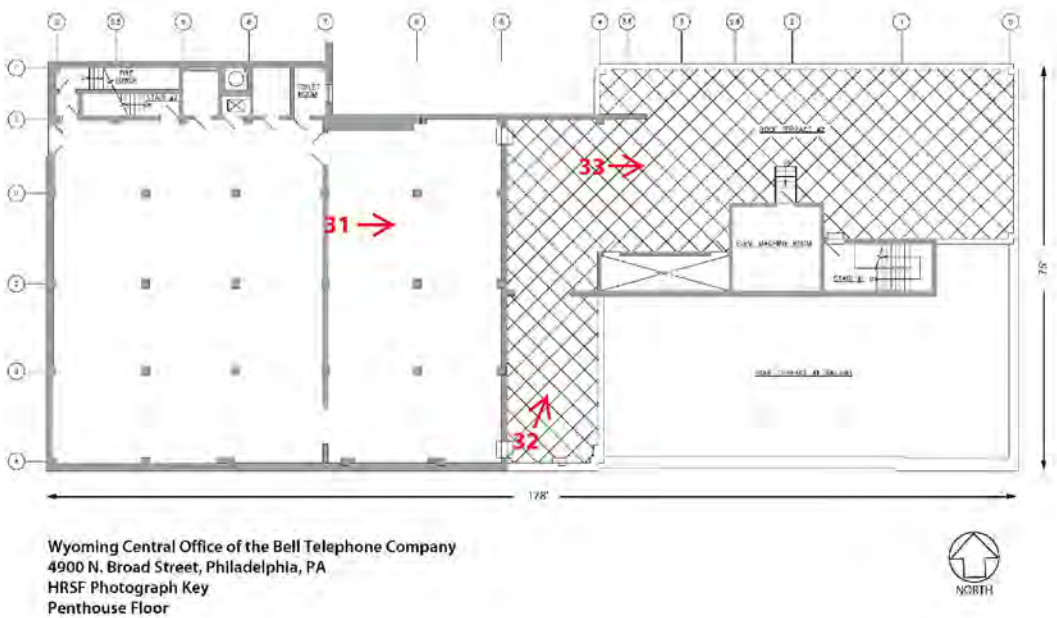


Figure 10

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 11 – The Wyoming Central Office in 1913, shortly after completion.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 12 – Bromley Atlas of Philadelphia, 1895
(Red line indicates future location of the Wyoming Central Office)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

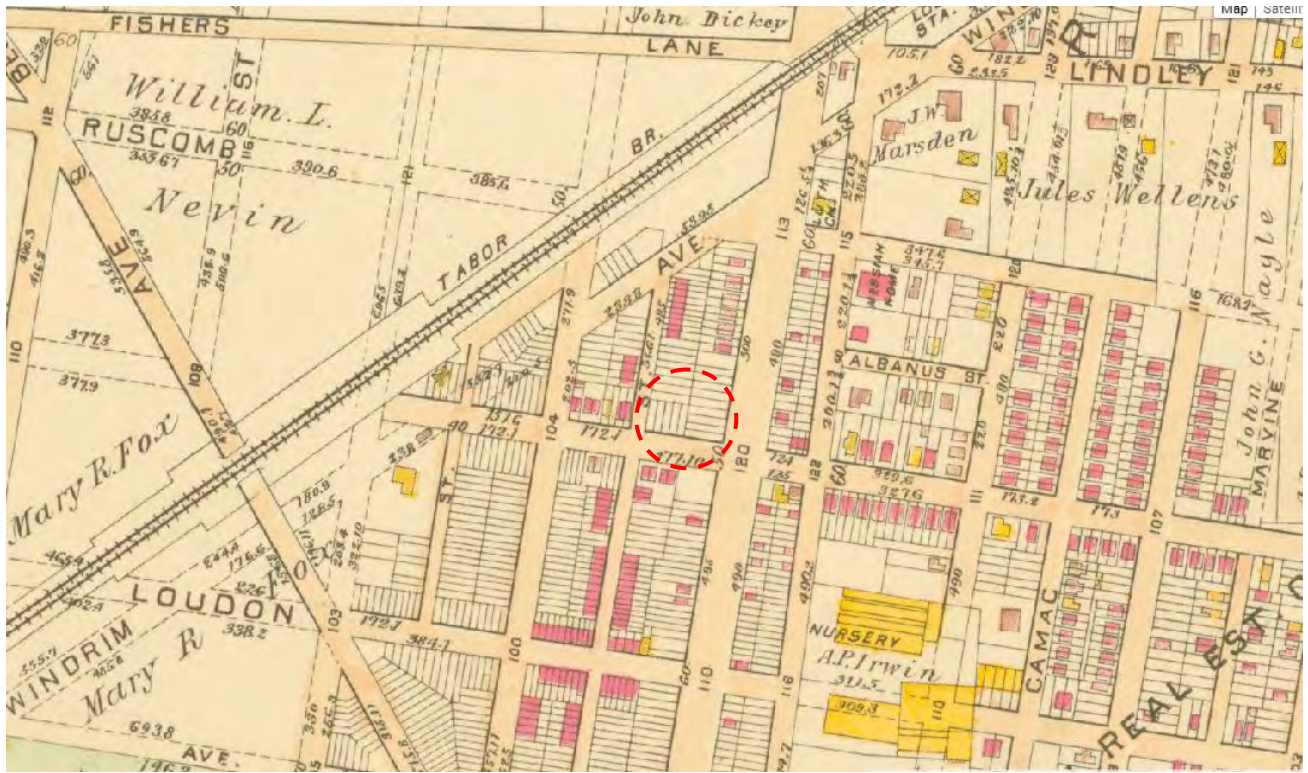


Figure 13 – Bromley Atlas of Philadelphia, 1910
(Red line indicates future location of the Wyoming Central Office)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

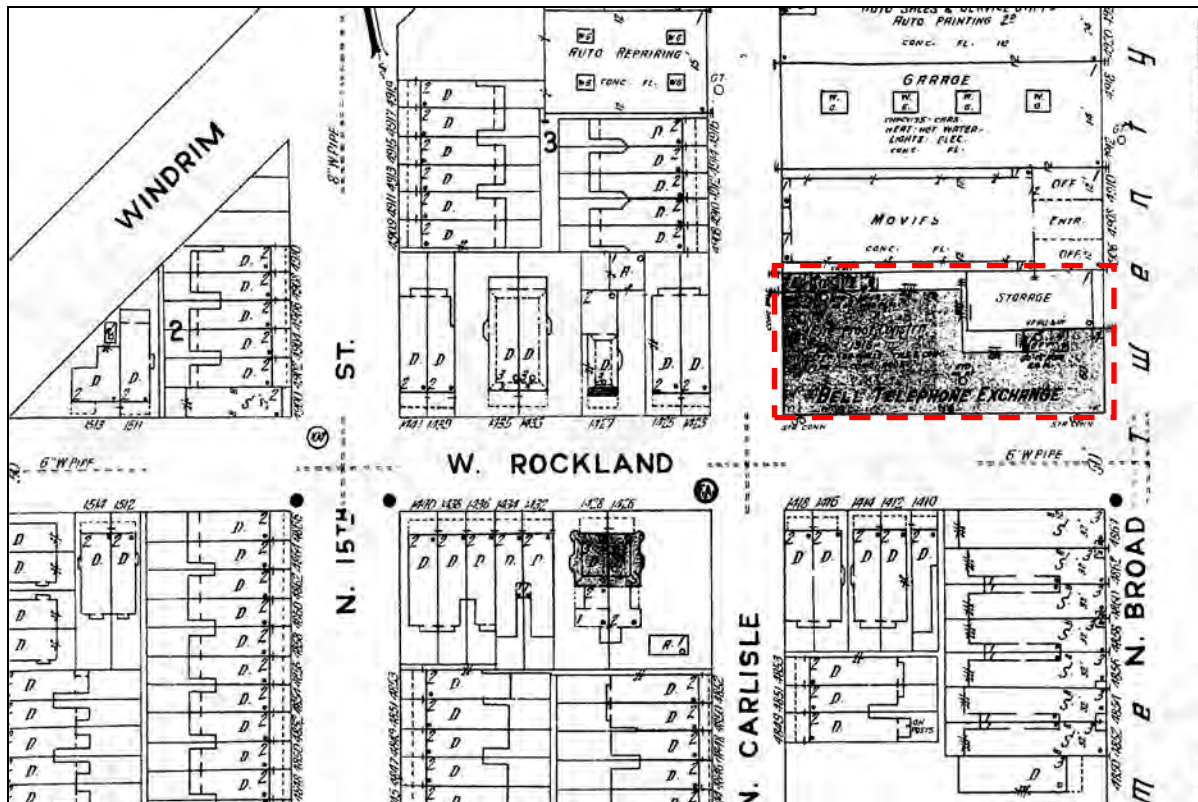


Figure 14 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1929
(Red line indicates the location of the Wyoming Central Office)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

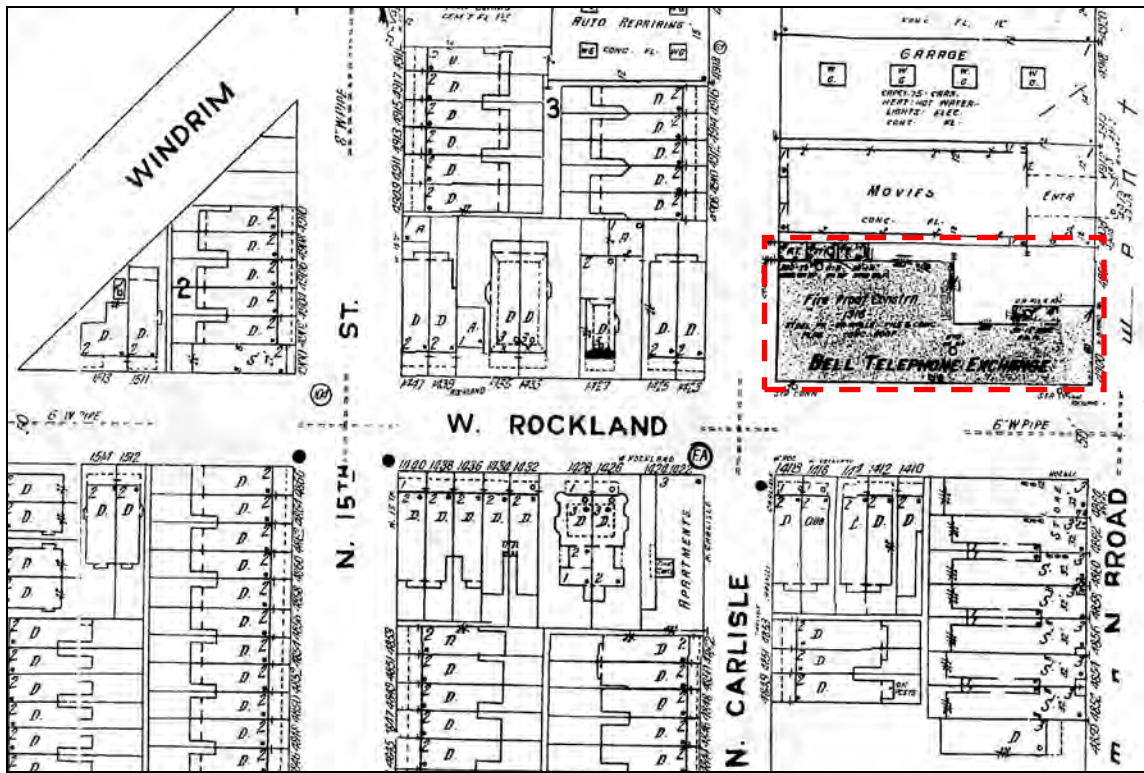


Figure 15 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950
(Red line indicates the location of the Wyoming Central Office)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 16 – Operators at the switchboard in an unidentified Bell central office in Philadelphia, c. 1920.
(Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 17 – Germantown Central Office, 26-34 W. Chelton Avenue, c. 1925.
(Historical Society of Pennsylvania)



Figure 18 – Germantown Central Office, 2014.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 19 – Belmont Central Office, 5160 Lancaster Avenue, c. 1920.
(Historical Society of Pennsylvania)



Figure 20 – Belmont Central Office, 2014.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State



Figure 21 – Lombard Central Office, NE Corner of 17th and Lombard Streets, c. 1925.
(Historical Society of Pennsylvania)



Figure 22 – Lombard Central Office, 2014.

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

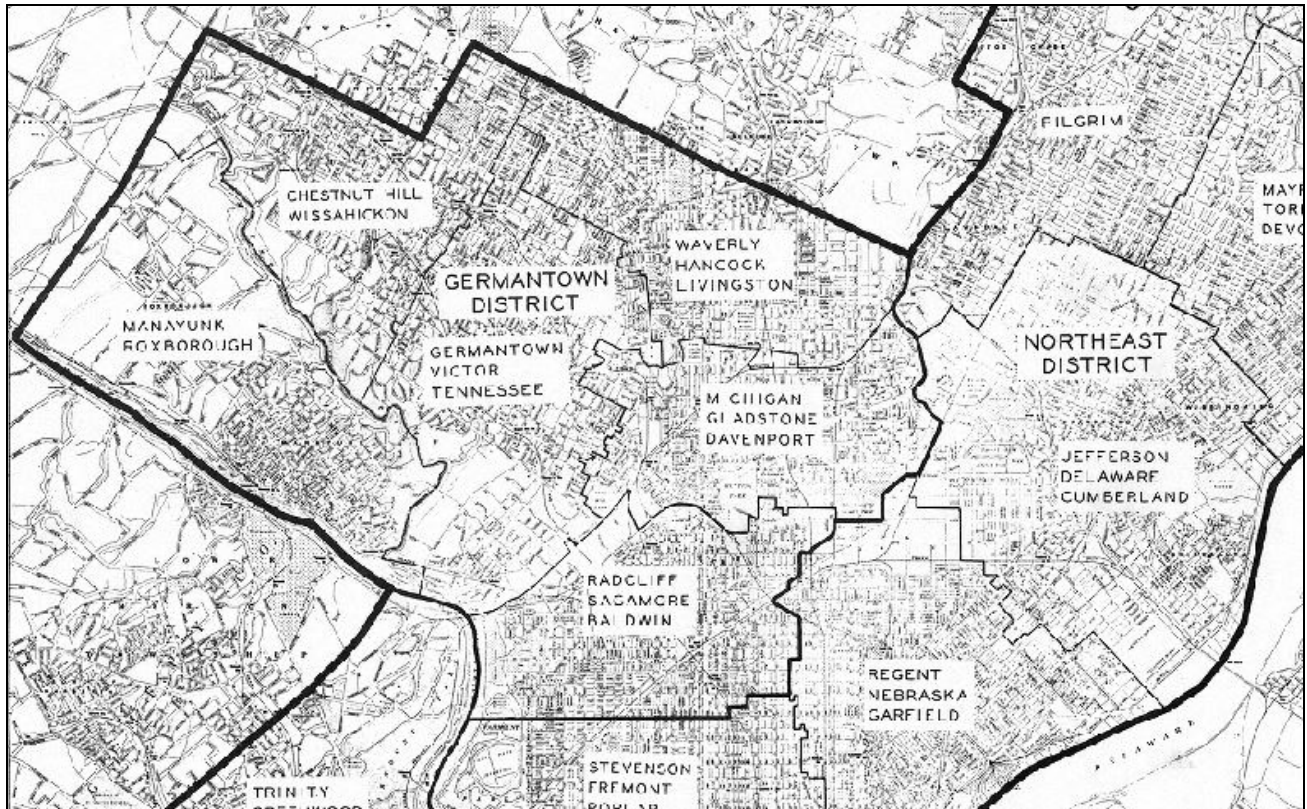


Figure 23 – Map of Bell Telephone Exchange Areas, 1952.
(Athenæum of Philadelphia)



NO TURN ON RED



HEARD MUSEUM





LEWIS & CLARK

46 00



BELL
TELEPHONE





BELL
TELEPHONE

verizon

LEFT LANE
MAY BE
USED FOR
RIGHT TURN

WALSH































3













ELEVATOR
FIREMANS
SERVICE

6

CAUTION

CAUTION















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

DATE RECEIVED: 3/27/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/20/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/12/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000219

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5.11.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



March 24, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington D.C. 20005



Re: NR nomination forms

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following nomination form is being submitted for your review:

Duquesne Brewing Company, Allegheny County

The proposed action is listing in the National Register.

The following nomination form is 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)":

Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company, Philadelphia County

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company to the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed action is listing in the National Register.

The following nomination form is being submitted for your review:

Penn-McKee Hotel, Allegheny County

This unsigned nomination is being submitted under National Register of Historic Places regulations, 36CFR60.6(l), as one where the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Historic Preservation Review Board disagree on whether a property meets the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Our office does not believe that this property meets the National Register Criteria, but the Review Board does; we are, therefore, requesting a substantive review by your office. The staff opinion and the minutes from the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board's meeting are enclosed.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations please contact Keith Heinrich at 717-783-9919.

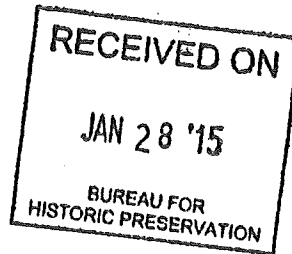
Sincerely,

Keith T. Heinrich
National Register and Survey

Historic Preservation Services
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093
www.phmc.state.pa.us
The Commonwealth's Official History Agency



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

Room 576, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
Tel: 215.686.7660
Fax: 215.686.7674

Sam Sherman, Jr.
Chair

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

14 January 2015

Dave Maher
National Register Program/Central Region
Bureau for Historic Preservation
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
400 North Street, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

Re: Wyoming Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company, 4900 N. Broad St.

Dear Mr. Maher:

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 4900 N. Broad Street in Philadelphia to the National Register of Historic Places. At its monthly public meeting on 09 January 2015, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed and discussed the nomination and accepted public testimony. The Commission agreed that the property at 4900 N. Broad Street satisfies National Register Criterion A for industry and communications. The Commission contends that the resource retains sufficient integrity to be added to the National Register.

The Philadelphia Historical Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board that it supports the listing of 4900 N. Broad Street in Philadelphia on the National Register of Historic Places. Thank you for providing the Philadelphia Historical Commission with the opportunity to comment on these nominations.

Yours truly,

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director