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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property	~	e querra	5 / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /
historic name Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse	0		
other names/site number Pyramid Electric Supply Co	ompany		
2. Location			
street & number 3101-27 West Glenwood Avenue			not for publication
city or town Philadelphia			vicinity
city or town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania code PA county	Philadelphia code 101	zip cod	
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		Zip Cou	6 19121
or otation output Agonoy continuation			
As the designated authority under the National Historic	c Preservation Act, as amended,		
I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request</u> for registering properties in the National Register of Histor set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.			
In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u>does</u> not n be considered significant at the following level(s) of sig		l recom	mend that this property
nationalstatewide X_local	(2/15/2017 Date	5	
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government			
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Nation	nal Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official	Date	-	
Title Si	tate or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Gov	ernment	
4. National Park Service Certification			
I hereby certify that this property is:	determined eligible for the Na	tional Regi	ster
determined not eligible for the National Register other (explain:)	removed from the National Re	egister	
Patrick Andres	4/10/2017	0	
Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action		

# Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property

## 5. Classifi cation

Philadelphia, PA County and State

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)Category of Property (Check only one box.)		Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
		Contributing Noncontributing	
x private	x building(s)	1 0 buildings	
public - Local	district	sites	
public - State	site	structures	
public - Federal	structure	objects	
	object	<u>    1    0     Total</u>	
lame of related multiple pro Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a	multiple property listing)	Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register	
N/A		0	
6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)	
Warehouse		Vacant	
7. Description Architectural Classification		Mataniala	
(Enter categories from instructions.)		<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions.)	
No style		foundation: Reinforced concrete	
		walls: Reinforced concrete & brick	
		roof: Synthetic	
		. ()	

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse

Name of Property

OMB No. 1024-0018

Philadelphia, PA County and State

### Narrativ e Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

## **Summary Paragraph**

Located at 3101 W. Glenwood Avenue, in Philadelphia, PA, the Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse is a 6-story red brick and reinforced concrete frame industrial building with a flatiron footprint. The warehouse was designed by architect Leroy B. Rothschild in 1922. The building features large, steel-framed multi-light windows. On the interior, the building has an open floor plan with exposed concrete and brick walls, concrete mushroom columns, and concrete ceilings. The warehouse is located in a prominent position, adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks at the "gateway" to the Brewerytown neighborhood of North Philadelphia, and is predominantly surrounded by two- and three-story rowhouses and former industrial buildings. The building is currently vacant, and rehabilitation of the building is in the planning stages. In general, the building retains its historic appearance on the exterior and interior, but has been heavily tagged with graffiti. In addition, some of the original steel windows are missing or survive in a state of extreme disrepair. The property retains the integrity needed to convey its significance.

## **Narrative Description**

**Setting**: The building is located in the Brewerytown neighborhood in North Philadelphia. The subject building at 3101 W. Glenwood Avenue is located on the western edge of the neighborhood, delineated from the neighboring Strawberry Mansion neighborhood by the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks (see Figure 1). The area adjacent to the railroad tracks is industrial in character, housing many former warehouses and factories. The subject building is highly visible from the surrounding blocks, rising several stories higher than the other buildings at the edge of the neighborhood. It is located adjacent to the Pennsylvania railroad tracks, between W. Glenwood Avenue (to the east) and Oxford Street (to the north), and is surrounded by predominantly two- and three-story rowhouses and two-four-story former industrial buildings. The site abuts a parcel of vacant land to south, the unrelated former J.C. Kahn warehouse to the north, and a former community garden and a former industrial building to the east. Modern wrought iron fencing sits on top of a concrete knee wall that runs along the south edge of the Oxford Street Bridge and is under separate ownership (a gap in the fencing provides access to the north entrance to the building). The building is visible not only from the street and various points in the Brewerytown neighborhood, but also from the neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> The shape of the building is distinctive, and its presence on the highly travelled regional rail and Amtrak lines make this building highly recognizable to Philadelphians.

<u>Site</u>: The subject building is located on a 0.26 acre parcel, which matches the building's footprint (see Figure 2). A deteriorated concrete sidewalk separates the building from the street on its north and east elevations. Adjacent to the south and west elevations are overgrown vacant lots. A former railroad siding was located to the northwest of the building, extending into the current railroad right-of-way, but it no longer exists and the area is now overgrown. There is currently no vehicular access to the site beyond the curb cuts that provide access into the building along the east elevation.

**Structure**: The subject building has a reinforced concrete structure with brick masonry bulkheads or spandrel panels below the window openings. The five-story building is supported by concrete mushroom columns and square piers in a 9x4 grid pattern (see figure 4). Mushroom columns that lessen in diameter with each story run along the western edge and northern edges of the building, aligning with the fenestration pattern. The mushroom columns are only interrupted around the freight elevator shaft, which is supported by square piers that run the entire height of the building (see figure 5).

http://philly.curbed.com/archives/2014/01/27/pyramid-warehouse-sold-before-development-after-getting-permits.php.; "Major renovation of conspicuous North Philadelphia warehouse into apartments." Philadelphia Heights Blog.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> Webb, Molly. "Brewerytown Warehouse Conversion To Be Asks \$2M." Curbed, Philly.

https://philadelphiaheights.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/major-renovation-of-conspicuous-north-philadelphia-warehouse-into-apartments/.

**Exterior**: The building's massing forms an irregular flatiron shape. All elevations are reinforced concrete with brick spandrel panels with no ornamentation, similar to the Commercial Style. In areas, the brick spandrel panels have been painted.

The north elevation faces (and abuts) Oxford Street, while the west elevation fronts onto a vacant lot along the Pennsylvania railroad tracks. The east elevation abuts W. Glenwood Avenue, and the narrow south elevation faces an open lot. The grade changes from the north elevation to the south elevation at the west elevation, and does not fully expose the ground floor in sections.

The north (Oxford Street) elevation is seven bays wide. The easternmost bay is positioned at a 45 degree angle to Oxford Street, while the rest of elevation is parallel to Oxford Street. The next two easternmost bays equal the width of one regular bay. The first floor bays are all infilled with painted brick. An entrance with two steel doors, flanked by two windows that have been infilled with concrete block is situated in the center of the elevation, accessible at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level by a concrete sidewalk which extends from the Oxford Street bridge. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is not visible from the public right-of-way, as it is concealed beneath the Oxford Street bridge. On floors 3-6 concrete openings in the easternmost two bays are "blind windows" infilled with red brick, while the third easternmost bay contains a brick spandrel with multi-light industrial steel windows. All other windows in regular-sized bays are multi-light industrial steel windows.

The west elevation is nine bays wide. On the first floor, the northernmost three bays are infilled with painted brick. On floors 2-6 all bays have multi-light industrial steel windows. A basement level is also visible on this elevation, with loading docks enclosed by metal roll-up security gates located in the first three northernmost bays. The remaining six bays contain multi-light industrial steel windows. Located centrally, between the third and fourth floors, there is a sign that reads "Pyramid Electric Supply Company" in green plastic lettering mounted on a metal signboard that is missing several letters (Pyramid Electric was an occupant of the building following the Kahn company).

The east (W. Glenwood Ave) elevation is 12 bays wide, with the northernmost equal to half the width of a regular bay. The central bay contains a steel fire stair and balcony with three single-leaf doors on the second floor and balconies with central doorways on floors 3-6. Steel steps lead up from the basement (street) level to an entrance on the first floor. An entrance is located on the east elevation at grade with a utilitarian flush metal door. The central bay contains a series of steel fire stair balconies with central doorways containing utilitarian metal flush doors that provide access to the balconies from the interior. Steel steps lead up from the basement (street) level to another entrance on the first floor. Both entrance doors are heavily corroded and practically inoperable. The balcony doors have been heavily tagged with graffiti.

On the first floor, the southernmost bay contains one multi-light industrial window over a brick bulkhead. The second southernmost bay on this level contains one multi-light industrial window over a painted brick bulkhead. The remaining bays are all infilled with concrete. On floors 2-6, the southernmost bay contains multi-light industrial windows over brick spandrel panels. The northernmost bays are filled in with brick, surrounding multi-light industrial windows. The remaining bays contain multi-light industrial windows over brick spandrel panels.

At the basement level towards the southern end of the elevation are three loading docks, enclosed with metal roll-up security gates. There are two entrances that have been boarded up at the basement level, one towards the center of the elevation, and another towards the northern end of the elevation.

The south elevation is one bay wide. All floors contain multi-light steel-framed industrial windows over brick spandrel panels. Though currently inoperable, the steel windows formerly provided ventilation through two 6-light hoppers.

Window sash on all elevations are corroded, with some missing or broken glass panes, or have panes filled in with green fiberglass. One window on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the west elevation is missing completely.

The building contains a flat roof that is not visible from the street. The roof houses a single-story elevator penthouse and cellular equipment.

**Interior**: Floors 2-6 are identical in plan. Rows of concrete mushroom columns, which align with each bay, run along the western and northern edges of the building in a 9x4 grid pattern. The grid decreases in size moving towards the southern end of the building, aligning with the triangular footprint. The grid is interrupted in the fourth bay towards the eastern edge of the building by a former (currently inoperable) freight elevator, which services all floors and a fire stair.

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In addition to the freight elevator, all floors are vertically accessible by a stairwell located in the northeastern corner of the building, and another stairwell located to the rear of the freight elevator. The roof is accessible by a steel ladder and hatch on the fifth floor ceiling.

The first floor differs from the upper floors in plan. It is characterized by the same mushroom-column grid as the upper floors. Along the northeastern portion of the floor, the floor-level drops down by several feet. An entrance accessible on W. Glenwood Avenue at street level is located centrally in the depressed area of the floor that formerly served as a loading dock. The rest of the floor is accessible by a set of 9 concrete steps.

The ground floor, originally used for receiving and shipping large freight from the neighboring Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and from trucks accessing the building from W. Glenwood Ave, differs from the upper floors in plan. It is characterized by the same column grid as the upper floors, but columns surrounding the elevator shaft are rectangular, rather than round. Along the western edge of the basement, the floor level drops down by several feet to a loading dock with two large openings enclosed by steel roll-up doors, formerly used for unloading and shipping freight via a railway spur. The lower level of the ground floor is accessible from the upper level by a set of concrete steps. Former railroad tracks are embedded in the floor where the railroad cars used to enter the building to unload and load freight (see Photos 21 and 22). Towards the southern end of the building, behind the elevator shaft, the floor level rises again, with a make-shift wood ramp that leads to the higher level. This higher level contains three more large openings enclosed by steel roll-up doors, formerly used as loading docks for trucks on W. Glenwood Avenue.

The building's exposed concrete floors, concrete columns and ceilings, concrete and brick walls, are representative of the original warehouse purpose of the building and period of construction.

<u>Alterations and Integrity Assessment</u>: The exterior of the building has been painted and tagged with graffiti. Some sash is in deteriorating condition, and some window glazing has been replaced with fiberglass. A few openings have been filled. The interior of the building is open in plan and any former partitions for office areas or divisions of work spaces were previously removed during a failed previous redevelopment project. The number and locations of any former partitions are not known, and were likely not numerous as the building's function as a warehouse would not have required them. Many of the interior concrete surfaces have been covered with graffiti. These changes do not substantially compromise the integrity of the building. In general, the building retains its historic appearance and feeling as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century reinforced concrete warehouse. Its utilitarian appearance, including exposed concrete structure and steel multi-light windows convey the industrial aesthetic of the period and its historical use. The railroad spur that provided access from the Pennsylvania Railroad into the building is no longer in use, but still conveys the historical relationship between the building and the railroad. The adjacent railroad line remains active and is utilized by SEPTA and Amtrak.

The surrounding neighborhood, formerly a center for industry and warehousing, is now primarily residential. While many of the surrounding warehouses and industrial buildings situated along the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks remain, they have generally been vacated and are not in use and in various states of decay.

## Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse

Name of Property

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8. S	State	ement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)		in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) Commerce
x	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	
	В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
	С	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high	Period of Significance
		artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	1922-1961
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates
(Mar	'k "x"	a <b>Considerations</b> in all the boxes that apply.) y is:	Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
	А	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
	В	removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation
	С	a birthplace or grave.	
	D	a cemetery.	Architect/Duilden
	Е	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	Architect/Builder Leroy B. Rothschild
	F	a commemorative property.	
	G	less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.	

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (In *one* paragraph, provide a summary that briefly states what the significance of the property/district is, and, for each claim, identifies the level of significance and applicable criteria that apply. The summary paragraph also needs to identify the period of significance.)

The Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse is a former furniture warehouse with a utilitarian industrial design by Philadelphia architect Leroy B. Rothschild in 1922. It is significant under Criterion A (Commerce) for its association with prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century furniture retailer, Harry C. Kahn & Son, which operated in Philadelphia between 1900 and 1961. The Warehouse enabled the early 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of Kahn's furniture business and contributed to the success of their Center City operation. Harry C. Kahn & Son, or Kahn's, was unique among Philadelphia furniture retailers in its approach as a single retailer following a department store business model. Kahn's capitalized on Philadelphia's emerging middle-class market and demand for quality furniture at a moderate price. The warehouse was an integral component of Kahn's furniture business, as it increased stock capacity for Kahn's Center City retail stores until Kahn's left the City in 1961. The location of the building enabled the company to deliver furniture to customers directly from manufacturers whose products were shipped by railcar to the Warehouse. The later story of Kahn's in Philadelphia reflects the impacts of the industrial decline and shifting demographics felt by many northeastern cities in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The period of significance begins in 1922, with the construction of the Warehouse, and ends in 1961 when the company moved to the suburbs.

Develop mental history (Explain the construction history or the creation of the property, and its evolution through the period of significance.)

Before the extant building was constructed, the southwest corner of W. Glenwood Avenue and Oxford Street was occupied by Nelson Pedley Construction Company, based at 1615 Spruce Street in Philadelphia.<sup>ii</sup> The reinforced concrete and brick six-story warehouse was designed by local architect Leroy B. Rothschild, and was erected as a warehouse building for Harry C. Kahn & Son's downtown Philadelphia furniture business in 1922.<sup>iii</sup> This construction method was typical of industrial buildings erected during this period.

Located in the Brewerytown neighborhood of Philadelphia, the warehouse was surrounded by other industrial buildings, as well as blocks of rowhouses sited next to the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. Harry C. Kahn & Son used the building as a storage facility and during the 1950s, the building largely housed Simmons mattresses.<sup>iv</sup>

After the company vacated the building in 1961, it sat vacant for four years until 1965, when Nathaniel B. Richter purchased it. The warehouse had a series of different owners in the following years, until Universal Packaging Company Inc. purchased the building in 1967. Pyramid Electric first occupied the building in 1967, purchased the building by 1980, and operated from the building until 2000.<sup>v</sup> Pyramid Electric used the building for truck loading and storage of electrical supplies. Plans are underway to rehabilitate the building for new uses under new ownership.

## National Register Criterion A: Significance in Commerce

## History of the Furniture Industry in Philadelphia 1850-1960

Furniture manufacturing and retail was a major industry in Philadelphia from its beginnings during Colonial times through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the furniture industry in some other cities, Philadelphia had a tradition of craft passed down through apprenticeship, which transferred to the quality of furniture production. But, what began as furniture wholesaling by manufacturers and artisans, transformed into a major industry as the city industrialized throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the "Workshop of the World."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>ii</sup> Historical maps do not show a building on the site prior to 1922.

iii The American Contractor. Volume 43: May 27, 1922. 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>iv</sup> Sanborn Insurance Map. 1951.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>v</sup> EDR City Directory Report. 12 December 2015.

Between 1850 and 1880, furniture manufacturers greatly increased the scale of production.<sup>vi</sup> Following the increase in production, furniture retailers also expanded.<sup>vii</sup> During this period of retail expansion, furniture dealers favored displaying furniture in small shops or room-style settings in larger stores, so storage space became imperative. Furniture stores required both a high stock of different types of furniture, as well as a high square footage of storage space to accommodate larger furniture pieces. Space was at a premium in Center City Philadelphia, where most furniture stores were clustered; therefore, many downtown furniture retailers built or rented warehouse space in North Philadelphia where land was inexpensive to store larger stocks nearby.<sup>viii</sup>

With the increased volume of production, various qualities and styles of furniture were introduced to the market. While there had always been an exclusive upper-class market for high-end furniture and the lower class tended to pass on furniture through generations, the 1880s marked the emergence of a new market for the middle class.<sup>ix</sup> Class consciousness contributed significantly to the furniture market, as newly middle-class households wanted to announce their position by purchasing home furnishings.

Simultaneously, the downtown "Department" store was becoming the predominant shopping destination for middle-upper class consumers. It became necessary for smaller retailers to expand inventory and customer base to compete with more aggressive businesses, like the department store.<sup>×</sup> While there were many furniture retailers and department stores in Philadelphia by the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were few that were based upon the department-store model, but focused primarily on furniture sales.

Furniture stores and larger department stores thrived in Center City Philadelphia until the Post-World War II period, when the predominant mode of shopping shifted from downtown department stores to suburban shopping centers. Changes in transportation technology, including the shift away from train transportation to the automobile, changes in manufacturing technology and changes in railroad technology led to the national decline of the railroad system. In Philadelphia, the suburban expansion funneled large populations out of the city, fueled by access to the automobile and national VHA and FHA housing policies. At the same time, the primary mode of shopping was radically changing to accommodate for the automobile.

As a result, popular shopping destinations accessible by train, like Center City Philadelphia, began a steady decline. Strip malls with surface parking lots began to replace traditional downtown department stores as the primary shopping destination for the middle class. This meant that commercial activity and development was increasingly concentrated in the suburbs. Three major Philadelphia department stores located in close vicinity to Kahn's—Gimbel's, Lit Brothers, and Snellenberg—closed in the 1950s, following the exodus to the suburbs.<sup>xi</sup> Consequently, Center City became less of a destination for shopping and commerce. While some furniture stores managed to stay in business into 1950s and 1960s, by 1950, most stores in the suburbs were doing better business that those in the city.<sup>xii</sup> Many furniture retailers saw the writing on the wall, and closed shop or relocated to the suburbs. Consequently, Philadelphia's furniture industry steadily declined as department stores closed, and shops moved to the suburbs.

## Harry C. Kahn & Son

Harry C. Kahn & Son was a prominent family-run furniture retailer during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Philadelphia, and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century as Jonn's Contemporary Interiors in suburban Montgomeryville. Kahn's foray into retail began

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>vi</sup> Talbott, Page. The Philadelphia Furniture Industry 1850-1880. Thesis for Ph.D. in American Civilization. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>vii</sup> Talbott, 69-70.

viii Talbott, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>ix</sup> Talbott, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>×</sup> Talbott, 286.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xi</sup> Tidwell, Marshall. "Design in the Service of Consumerism.: Greun and Kreummeck's Robinson Store, Philadelphia." Term Paper for Historic Preservation Course 600: Theories of Historic Preservation, December 2010. University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xii</sup> Morgan, Thomas J. Relocation of Retail Stores in the Philadelphia Area. A Thesis in Marketing Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Division of the University of Pennsylvania, in partial fulfillment for the degree of Masters of Business Administration. University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia. 1955.

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in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Harry C. Kahn began selling dry goods from a pushcart.<sup>xiii</sup> Kahn later joined Martin B. Stern in his first formal business venture, Kahn and Stern, a short-lived furniture retailer located at 34 North 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 1426 Franklin.<sup>xiv</sup> In the first decade of the 1900s, Kahn opened his own store selling furniture and clothing in the same location at the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> and Filbert Streets, currently the site of Jefferson Station (formerly known as Market East). Two former hotel buildings composed the store, and were connected by an addition that created one large building.<sup>xv</sup> The original Kahn's Furniture Store was created by combining two former hotel buildings and was not purposebuilt for Kahn's, nor was their second (1927) store at 9<sup>th</sup> and Market. The original store, at 11<sup>th</sup> and Filbert, does not remain, nor does the location at 9<sup>th</sup> and Market. Kahn's Warehouse in Brewerytown is the only remaining vestige of Kahn's Philadelphia operation.

Harry C. Kahn & Son, or Kahn's, as the store was colloquially known, sold mainly furniture, but also homewares including kitchen supplies and appliances as well as a limited stock of clothing. An industry publication, *Men's Wear*, announced that Kahn turned over management of the clothing department to Mr. I. Diechengreen in 1908, suggesting that Kahn himself had a targeted interest in furniture.<sup>xvi</sup> Kahn's, like other furniture stores in Center City Philadelphia, functioned more like a department store than a single retailer, selling furniture from multiple manufacturers displayed in room-like settings.<sup>xvii</sup> Kahn's specialized in the middle-income Philadelphia market. Other larger Philadelphia department stores like Wannamaker's, Lit Brothers, Snellenberg's, and Gimbel's also sold furniture, but they did not specialize in it. While there were certainly other successful furniture retailers in Philadelphia, Kahn's true competitor was Stern's (not to be confused with the other version of Stern's: a rebranded offshoot of Gimbel's that sold furniture in the early 1980s). From 1907 to 1985, Stern's of Philadelphia operated a store at 706-14 Market St., just blocks away from Kahn's at 11<sup>th</sup> and Filbert.<sup>xviii</sup>

During the store's early years, Kahn's was an innovator in delivery and warehousing. As early as 1910, Kahn's was using Motor Cars for delivery services. The store had several autocars for transportation of furniture to customers' homes. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century autocar delivery was common among larger department stores like Wanamaker's, but less common for smaller stores like Kahn's until later in the century.<sup>xix</sup> Motor car, or automobile, delivery services did not become standard practice for department stores until the 1920s. In addition, the inclusion of loading docks in Rothschild's original design on the Glenwood Avenue elevation suggests that it was a purpose-built feature to accommodate for Kahn's expanded delivery services and a larger stock.

The 1920s marked a turning point for the company during which Kahn's expanded into a new store and the warehouse at 3101 W Glenwood was constructed. In earlier years, advertising for Kahn's was sparse, but starting in 1922, advertising in the *Evening Bulletin* exploded. In 1922, Kahn's published an advertisement in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* that mentions the opening of a second store in Center City, which coincides with the construction of the Brewerytown warehouse. An ad from 1927, illustrates the importance of the warehouse, referencing "Kahn's Tremendous Warehouse at 31<sup>st</sup> and Oxford Streets."<sup>xx</sup> Kahn's other advertisements throughout the decade were distinguished from other retailers in their emphasis on value and various financing options. The store's competitors had similar products, but imitated the larger department stores like Gimbels, Lit Brothers, and Wannamaker's in their merchandizing techniques, appealing to an upper-middle class sensibility. Kahn's found a niche in economical furniture, marketed towards the masses. Advertisements commonly proclaimed that the store has "most value for the dollar" and "most liberal credit in Philadelphia," thereby asserting the store as a leader in value. The very mission of the business to provide a variety of furniture and home goods at low prices was enabled by the addition of the warehouse in 1922, which accommodated allowed for a larger stock. Kahn, an innovative businessman, was creative with financing options to further expand the customer base.

Unlike other mid-level retailers, like Stern's, Kahn's made the decision to open a second store in Center City Philadelphia, just blocks away from the original store at 11<sup>th</sup> and Filbert. In 1927, Kahn's opened a second store at 9<sup>th</sup> and Market (not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xiii</sup> Holmes, Kristin M. "Harry C. Kahn 2<sup>nd</sup>, 88, furniture" retailer." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Accessed October 28, 2015. http://articles.philly.com/2003-05-07/news/25459736\_1\_furniture-showroom-furniture-business-furniture-showcase

xiv Boyd's Co-partnership and Residence Business Directory of Philadelphia City. 1900. 381.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xv</sup> Riccetti, Lee. Telephone Interview with Harry C. Kahn III. October 30, 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xvi</sup> *Men's Wear*. Vol. 26, No. 1. 1908. 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xvii</sup> Interview.

xviii Burke, Richard. "One Stern's Sues Another." Philadelphia Inquirer. September 10, 1986.

xix Power Wagon. National Authority on Motor Road Transportation, 1913. 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xx</sup> "Opening the New 929 Market Store with Extraordinary Values. *Evening Bulletin*. January 14, 1927.

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extant), on a highly visible corner, in an effort to capitalize on Center City Philadelphia clientele.<sup>xxi</sup> Stern's was a larger chain with that had 14 branches in the Philadelphia region by 1951, but it did not depend solely on Philadelphia clientele as did Kahn's.<sup>xxii</sup>

The store's large stock and autocar delivery options led to its success among middle class clientele residing in the city and its outskirts. By 1922, Kahn's furniture business was thriving, so Harry Kahn and his son, Eugene, decided to build a warehouse storage facility in the Brewerytown neighborhood of Philadelphia to expand the store's stock. Land close to the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks was both economical and convenient for its access to transportation networks, so it was an obvious choice for a warehouse building. Kahn chose local architect, Leroy B. Rothschild, to design the building. Kahn was not an uninformed client as he had experience with industrial and commercial buildings during his time on the Board of Directors of the Merchant's and Manufacturer's Building Association.<sup>xxiii</sup> Rothschild designed the building to access both railroad and autocar transit networks, conveniently sandwiching the building between Glenwood Avenue from autocar (and later truck) access, and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and creating loading docks to receive and ship freight from both sides of the building. Both members of the Jewish community, Kahn and Rothschild met through J.C. Kahn, a relative of Harry Kahn and one of Rothschild's partners.<sup>xxiv</sup> At the time the Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse was built, J.C. Kahn owned the warehouse building immediately across Oxford Street to the north, though there was no formal relationship between the two enterprises.<sup>xxv</sup> So, J.C. Kahn possibly suggested both the site and Rothschild as an architect to Harry Kahn.

By the 1920s, Eugene Kahn had taken over the business from his father, though Harry still had a vested interest and kept an office in the Filbert Street building.<sup>xxvi</sup> Decades later in the 1950s, Harry Kahn II took over from his father. Harry Kahn II had a different vision for the business than his father and grandfather, recognizing that center-city department stores were quickly becoming outmoded by suburban automobile-oriented shopping centers.

Kahn's Center City Philadelphia store remained open until 1961, when the family closed the department store and warehouse and opened Jonn's Contemporary Interiors in Montgomeryville, a suburb of Philadelphia. Kahn II, a savvy businessman, had recognized that the Philadelphia market was weakening. He saw the firm's future in the expanding suburbs and hence, followed the middle-class clientele.<sup>xxvii</sup> The move to the suburbs was an opportunity for Harry C. Kahn II to reinvent his store from a department store selling classic economical furniture and home goods to a more upscale purveyor of modern furniture. Along with the change in merchandise, Kahn's changed its name to Jonn's Contemporary Interiors to reflect its new modern inventory.

Jonn's Contemporary Interiors' common inventory items included high quality copies of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Chair, other Bauhaus-styles, and Danish modern furniture. By 1968, Jonn's or JCI, had become one of the leading furniture stores in the Delaware Valley.<sup>xxviii</sup> An opportunistic businessman, Harry Kahn II also opened an Ethan Allen franchise store around the same time, in Montgomeryville.

The movement of Kahn's company to Montgomeryville, along with a new business model meant that the warehouse was no longer needed. Jonn's Contemporary Interiors was no longer a volume business, but a specialty business that catered to the upper-middle class clientele with a taste for high-end modern furniture. Items were scouted out individually rather than bought in large quantities from manufacturers. Therefore, the warehouse was no longer needed to support the retail operation and Kahn sold the warehouse in 1965.<sup>xxix</sup> While Jonn's Contemporary Interiors thrived for years, changing tastes and new big box stores priced out smaller retailers like Jonn's. In 2008, Jonn's Contemporary Interiors closed its doors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxi</sup> "Kahn to Open a New Store." *Evening Bulletin*. January 1, 1927.

xxii "Department Store Marks 50th Year." Evening Bulletin. March 6, 1947.

xxiii Steel and Iron. National Iron and Steel Publishing Company, 1911. iii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxiv</sup>Leroy B. Rothschild with Jacob C. Kahn, builder. Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project. Philadelphia Athenaeum. Accessed 15 November 2015. http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab.

xxv J.C. Kahn Building. Historic Resource Information. State of Pennsylvania. CRIS. Accessed 12 December 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxvi</sup> Interview.

xxvii Interview.

xxviii Interview.

xxix Philadelphia Deed Index, 1965. www.philadox.gov/philadelphiahistoricalindex.

## LeRoy B. Rothschild

LeRoy B. Rothschild was a Philadelphia-based architect who was chiefly known for his work on commercial buildings. Rothschild was born in Philadelphia in 1886. He graduated from the William Penn Charter School in 1904, following graduation he briefly worked for Price & McLanahan (1905) and Henry L. Reinhold (1906). He then established a shortlived partnership with Carl Zilenziger from 1907 to 1908 and, upon the dissolution of this office, entered the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his B.S. in Architecture in 1910.

Rothschild specialized in hotels, offices, and warehouses in the city of Philadelphia designed in the Commercial Style, a popular style for commercial buildings common in the early 20th century. He is best known for the Sylvania Hotel (1922) at Juniper and Locust streets as well as office buildings at 1600 Walnut Street and at 1700 Walnut Street in Philadelphia.<sup>xxx</sup> As aforementioned, he designed several warehouses including the subject building, and the J.C. Kahn warehouse. He also designed the Trunk and Bag Co. Building (also known as the Larkin Building; NR 2003) (1920).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxx</sup> Adapted from: Tatman, Sandra. "Leroy B. Rothschilde." Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Database. Philadelphia Athenaeum. https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\_display.cfm/21477

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property Philadelphia, PA County and State

9. Major Bibliog raphical References

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

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Holmes, Kristin M. "Harry C. Kahn 2<sup>nd</sup>, 88, furniture" retailer." *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Accessed October 28, 2015. http://articles.philly.com/2003-05-07/news/25459736 1 furniture-showroom-furniture-business-furniture-showcase

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Leroy B. Rothschild with Jacob C. Kahn, builder. Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project. Philadelphia Athenaeum. Accessed 15 November 2015. <u>http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab</u>.

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- Tidwell, Marshall. "Design in the Service of Consumerism.: Greun and Kreummeck's Robinson Store, Philadelphia." Term Paper for Historic Preservation Course 600: Theories of Historic Preservation, December 2010. University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, Historic Preservation Program.

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- <u>x</u> 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
- Other

### Name of repository:

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse

Name of Property

Philadelphia, PA

County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.26

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

## Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 39.980620

Longitude: -75.186095

## Verbal Boundary Description

The property consists of Philadelphia Office of Property Assessment parcel #884699300, which consists of the building footprint. (See Figure 2) Additional space around the building is included within the nominated boundary on all sides, including the sidewalks along Oxford Avenue and Glenwood Avenue, and a bit of open space on the south end and west side of the building. See Figure 12 for a plan showing the building footprint plus additional space included in the boundary.

## **Boundary Justification**

The company originally appears to have leased land from the Railroad to create driveways and a rail spur access into the building. The nominated boundary includes the land legally owned by the company—the building footprint—and a small amount of the leased land to enable an understanding of how the company moved freight in and out of the building by auto/truck or rail. Adjacent sidewalks that provided additional access into the building are also included.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Lee Ricetti, Junior Associate; with PA SHPO

Organization:Heritage Consulting Group, 15 West Highland Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118Date:8/31/2016Telephone:215-248-1260email:Iricetti@heritage-consulting.com

## Addition al Docum entation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Continuation Sheets (in ascending numerical order, by section and page number)
  - Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. A 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 or FPO for additional items, especially for "Photographs" below.)

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. Each digital image must include an array of 3000x2000 pixels or greater. For the submission of hard-copy photographs, consult your SHPO or FPO. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Property Name: <u>Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse</u> Location: <u>3101 W. Glenwood Avenue, Philadelphia</u> Photographer: <u>Nick Kraus; original images on file with Heritage Consulting Group</u> Date: November 18, 2015

Photo Number	Description
1	View of the south elevation, looking north
2	View of the south elevation, looking north
3	View of south elevation, looking north
4	View of south elevation, looking northwest

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse

Name of Property

Philadelphia, PA County and State

5	View of the east elevation, looking west
6	View of east elevation, detail of a typical window, looking west
7	View of east elevation, looking west
8	View of east elevation, looking west at loading docks
9	View of northeast corner, looking southwest
10	Perspective of northeast corner. looking southwest
11	View of north elevation, looking southwest
12	View of northwest corner, looking southeast
13	View of northwest corner, looking southeast
14	View of west elevation, looking southeast
15	Perspective of west elevation, looking southeast
16	View of west elevation, looking south
17	View of a typical floor, looking south
18	View of the elevator shaft, looking southeast
19	View of a typical floor, looking south
20	View of a typical floor, looking northeast
21	Ground Floor, upper level, looking north
22	Ground Floor, lower level, looking south

Philadelphia, PA County and State



KEY:

BREWERYTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

STRAWBERRY MANSION NEIGHBORHOOD

FAIRMOUNT PARK

Figure 1: Context Map, current aerial view

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property Philadelphia, PA County and State

Figure 2

**Title:** Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse, Philadelphia Assessors Map, showing footprint of building in blue. See Figures 7 and 12 for nominated boundary. Parcel #884699300.

Source: Parcel Explorer. <u>http://www.phila.go</u>v/Records/ParcelExplorer



Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property Philadelphia, PA County and State

## Figure 3

**Title:** 1927 Advertisement for Kahn's featuring images of both stores and the warehouse. Note that the warehouse is descsribed as "tremendous."

Source: Opening the New 929 Market Store with Extraordinary Values. Evening Bulletin. January 14, 1927.



Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property

Philadelphia, PA County and State

## Figure 4 Title: Typical Mushroom Columns

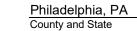


Figure 5 Title: Typical Square Columns



Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse

Name of Property



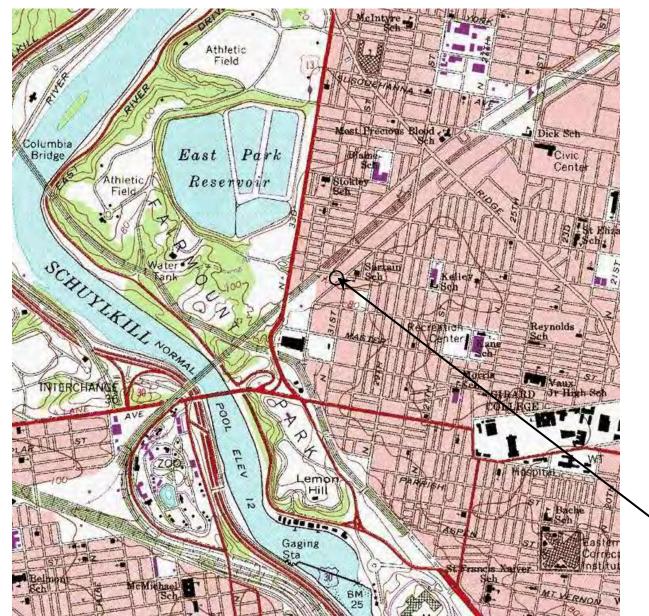
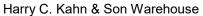
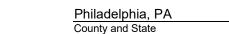


Figure 6: USGS Philadelphia Quadrangle; Arrow pointing to location of property, inside circle. Latitude: 39.980620 Longitude: -75.186095



Name of Property



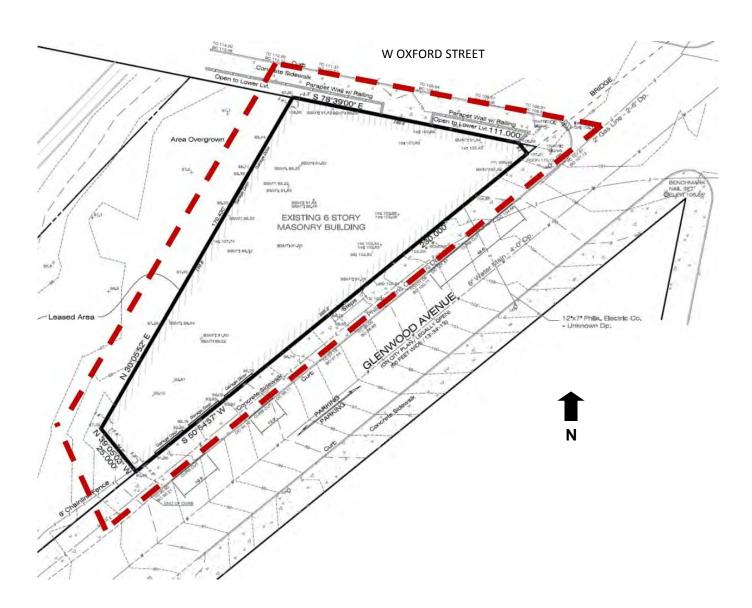
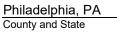


Figure 7: Site plan, showing approximate National Register boundary. Boundary consists of building footprint with additional space to convey entrance approaches, enabling understanding of the movement of goods in and out of the building, by truck or rail, and sidewalks adjacent to building. See Figure 12 for formal boundary.



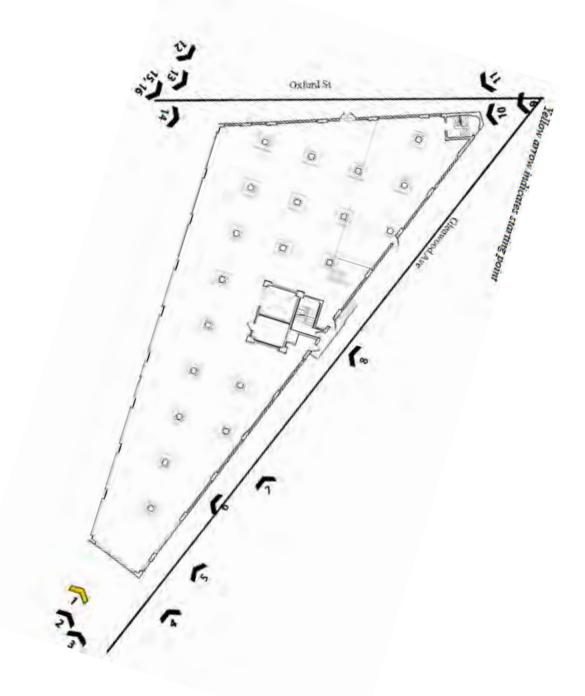


Figure 8: Exterior Photo Key, Photos 1-24 Yellow arrow indicates starting point.

Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse Name of Property

OMB No. 1024-0018

Philadelphia, PA County and State

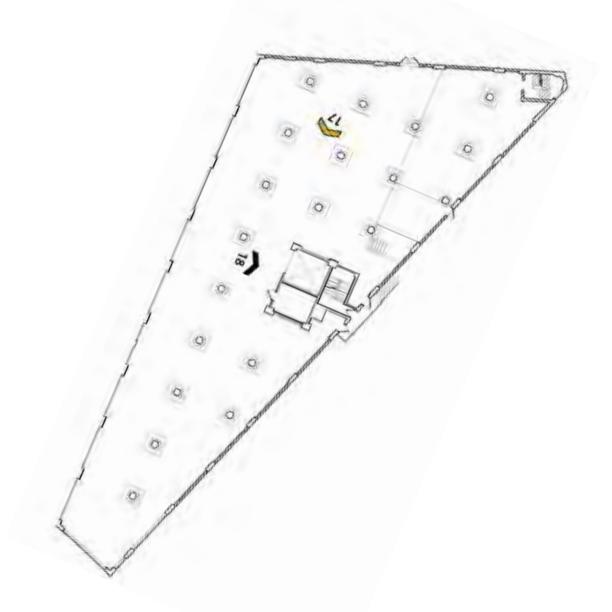


Figure 9: Interior Photo Key, First Floor; Photos 17-18. Yellow arrow indicates starting point.

Philadelphia, PA County and State

Figure 10: Interior Photo Key, Second Floor; Photos 19-20. Yellow arrow indicates starting point.

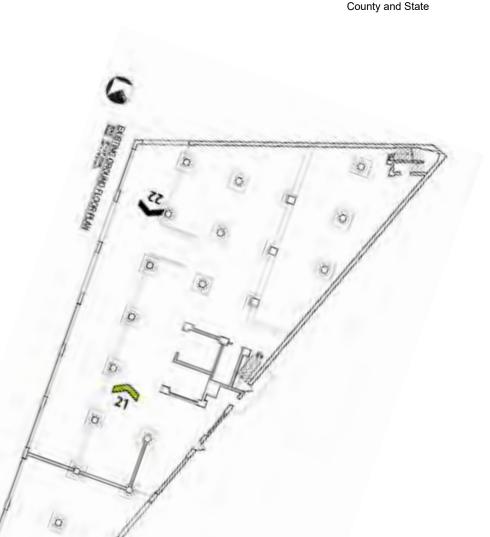
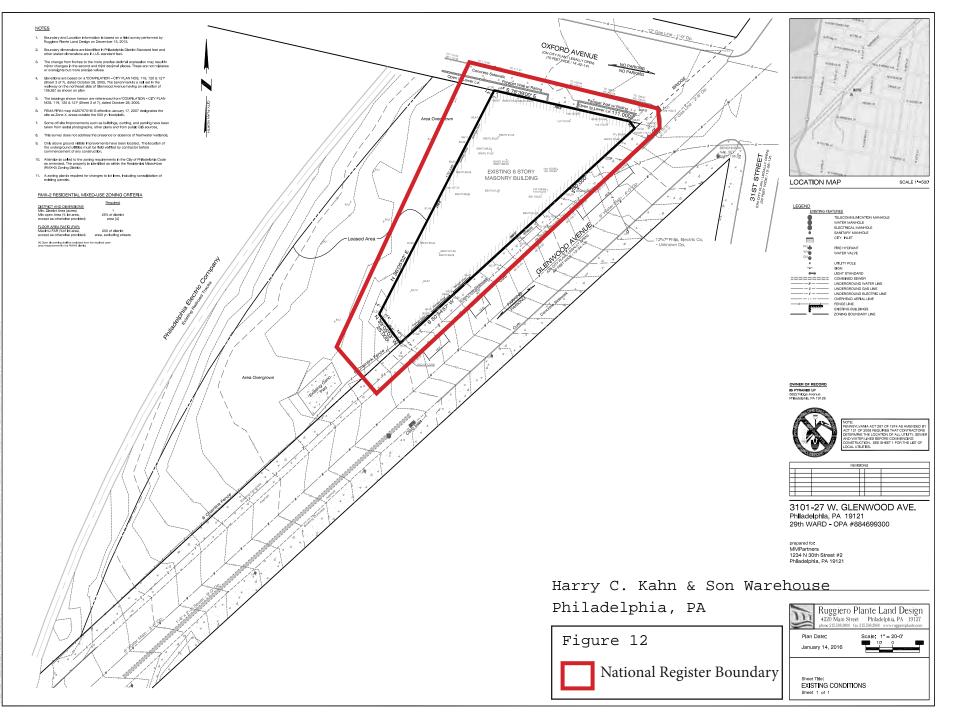


Figure 11: Interior Basement/Ground Floor Photo Key; Photos 21-22. Yellow arrow indicates starting point.



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## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination					
Property Name:	Kahn, Harry C. and Son, Warehouse					
Multiple Name:						
State & County:	PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia					
Date Received: Date of F 2/24/2017		f Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day: 4/10/2017	Date of Weekly List:	
Reference number:	SG100000857					
Nominator:	State					
Reason For Review	<i>r</i> :					
Appeal		X PC	DIL	Text/Data Issue		
SHPO Request		La	ndscape	Photo		
Waiver		Na	National		Map/Boundary	
Resubmission		Mc	Mobile Resource		Period	
Other		TC	TCP		Less than 50 years	
		X CL	G			
X_ Accept	Return	)R	eject <u>4/1</u>	0/2017 Date		
Abstract/Summary Comments:						
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept, Nationa	I Register Criter	on A			
Reviewer Patrick	Andrus Batu	ick Ander	1 Discipline	Historian		
Telephone (202)3	54-2218		Date	4/10/20	17	
DOCUMENTATION	I: see attache	d comments : N	o see attached S	SLR : No		
If a nomination is re	turned to the new	ination outboatt	the permination is	o longor under eer	nideration by the	

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. Famham. Ph.D. Executive Director

30 September 2016

April E. Frantz National Register Reviewer/Eastern Region PA State Historic Preservation Office 400 North Street Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

Re: 3101-27 WEST GLENWOOD AVENUE, HARRY C. KAHN & SON WAREHOUSE

Dear Ms. Frantz:

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 Harry C. Kahn & Son warehouse at 3101-27 West Glenwood Avenue in Philadelphia to the National Register of Historic Places. At its monthly public meeting on 9 September 2016, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed and discussed the nomination and accepted public testimony. The Commission agreed that the building satisfies National Register Criterion A, for its association with prominent twentieth-century furniture retailer, Harry C. Kahn & Son. The Commission contends that the resource retains sufficient integrity to be added to the National Register.

The Commissioners discussed the National Register nomination for 3101-27 West Glenwood Avenue, and concluded that they are supportive of it. The likelihood that this nomination is intended for historic rehabilitation tax credit purposes was also discussed, and the Commissioners were in support of that opportunity. Thank you for providing the Philadelphia Historical Commission with the opportunity to comment on this nomination.

Yours truly,

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D. Executive Director



## **CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

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30 September 2016

April E. Frantz National Register Reviewer/Eastern Region PA State Historic Preservation Office 400 North Street Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

Re: 13475 PROCTOR RD, MILL-RAE (RACHEL FOSTER AVERY HOUSE)

Dear Ms. Frantz:

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 Mill-Rae, located at 13475 Proctor Road in Philadelphia to the National Register of Historic Places. At its monthly public meeting on 9 September 2016, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed and discussed the nomination and accepted public testimony. The Commission agreed that the building satisfies National Register Criterion A, for its association with the women's suffrage movement in the United States, and Criterion C, as a significant work of Minerva Parker Nichols.

The Commissioners discussed the National Register nomination for 13475 Proctor Road, Mill-Rae, the Rachel Foster Avery House, and concluded that they are supportive of it. Several Commissioners commented that this building has an impressive history and is certainly worthy of listing on the National Register. Thank you for providing the Philadelphia Historical Commission with the opportunity to comment on this nomination.

Yours truly,

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D. Executive Director



RECELVED FEB 2 4 2017 Natl. Reg. of Historic Places National Park Service

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

February 17, 2017

Stephanie Toothman, Keeper National Register of Historic Places National Park Service, US Department of Interior 1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW, 8th Floor Washington D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Toothman:

Enclosed please find four National Register nominations for your review. Included are signed first pages, CDs containing the true and correct copy of the nominations, and CDs with tif images. Copies of correspondence are enclosed as well. The nominations submitted are:

- 1. Harry C. Kahn & Son Warehouse, Philadelphia County
- 2. Highland Park Camp Meeting, Bucks County
- 3. Llanerch Public School, Delaware County
- 4. Marcus Hook Plank House, Delaware County

The proposed action for each nomination is listing in the National Register. Our staff and Historic Preservation Board members support these nominations. If you have any questions please contact April Frantz at 717-783-9922 or afrantz@pa.gov. Thank you for your consideration of these properties.

Sincerely,

Qualez

Andrea L. MacDonald, Director State Historic Preservation Office

enc.

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