

PH0502227

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED AUG 9 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 31 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Philadelphia Watch Case Company Building

AND/OR COMMON H.K. Porter Company Building

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Pavilion and Lafayette Avenues

CITY, TOWN Riverside --- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE New Jersey --- VICINITY OF  
CODE COUNTY Burlington CODE

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Riverside Metals Company

STREET & NUMBER 1 Pavilion Avenue

CITY, TOWN Riverside --- VICINITY OF New <sup>STATE</sup> Jersey

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Burlington County Administrative Offices

STREET & NUMBER 49 Rancocas Road

CITY, TOWN Mount Holly <sup>STATE</sup> New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Burlington County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE 1976 --- FEDERAL --- STATE  COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Burlington County Cultural and Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN Smithville <sup>STATE</sup> New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Philadelphia Watch Case Company building is a roughly L-shaped complex occupying a commanding position along Pavilion Avenue and around a corner formed by the junction of the street with the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The complex actually consists of two discrete buildings, the old Pavilion Hotel, built in 1852, to the north, and the structure erected for industrial purposes in 1906/7 at the corner.

The latter is composed of four distinct sections. Predominant is the trapezoidal seven-story office structure. Like many late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century tall buildings, it was conceived on the principle of base, shaft, and capital. The base, consisting of the basement and first story, is severe, of tooled granite. The shaft, consisting of the next four stories, is of buff-colored brick with granite quoins. It is terminated by a substantial cornice supported on paired brackets. Beneath these the corners are marked by swags with pendent wreaths. The attic story is topped by a simpler bracketed cornice. The front and sides are differentiated by the fenestration systems, the front having triple windows and the side single. All are enframed with crosseted surrounds with keystones. In front of this mass is an eight-story stair tower. At ground level the main entrance is marked by paired Corinthian columns bearing an entablature decorated with wreaths. Spandrels between the paired windows in the "shaft" section are decorated with swags and grotesques. The last stage of the tower rises one story above the building. It is adorned on each face with an elaborately framed clock and surmounted by a lavishly decorated mansard roof with cresting. On the interior, the stair, visible through the windows, wraps around an open-cage Otis elevator.

To the north of this is a functional factory building, recessed approximately 12 feet from the building line. Its divisions are defined by its reinforced concrete post and lintel construction. Each bay is approximately 18 feet square and is occupied by a triple window above a spandrel of brick infill. This section is terminated by a square pavilion, projecting to the same building line as the office, and, with the exception of the basement and tower, repeating its forms in simpler vein. The fourth section, again recessed approximately 12 feet, replicates the second.

This massive structure is attached at the north to the older three-story building that was originally the Pavilion Hotel. It consists of a central pavilion with flanking wings, all carried out in stuccoed brick with stone trim. The central feature of the first floor is a glazed arcade, with the arches narrowing towards the periphery. Above is a Venetian window with hood mold, flanked by a single arched window on either side. The third floor has plain rectangular sash. Each flanking five-bay wing has first floor windows with blind arches, second floor windows with hood molds, and plain sash on the third floor. Originally, this building consisted only of the basement and two stories above. It was surmounted by a large, square cupola and encircled by arcaded porches. It was evidently altered several times before its purchase in 1892 by the Philadelphia Watch Case Company. At this time, the top story was added and the building was extended to the east.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Entertainment	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1852/3; 1906/7

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings of the Philadelphia Watch Case Company have been important visual landmarks of Riverside since the town's founding. The oldest portion of the complex, the former Pavilion Hotel built in 1852, was the first major public building in town and the focus of the town's early history as a resort. The remainder of the complex was once considered to be the largest watch case factory in the world and is a notable example of an early reinforced concrete modular factory building.

What is now known as Riverside was incorporated as the town of Progress by Samuel Bechtold, a real estate promoter, in 1851. In the spring of 1852, Bechtold began constructing the Pavilion Hotel. A year later he laid out an area known as Spring Garden Park, and advertised both the hotel and park widely in the Philadelphia newspapers. The hotel was a popular destination for summer excursions, reaching a peak in the late 1860s, but quickly declined in popularity later in the century, after the opening of railroad lines from Philadelphia to the Jersey shore. It had been vacant for some time prior to its purchase in 1892 by Theophilus Zurbrugg, owner of the Philadelphia Watch Case Company.

The Philadelphia Watch Case Company had been founded in that city in 1884, expanding rapidly after 1888 when the firm commenced the manufacture of gold-filled cases. Continued expansion called for new quarters and provided the motive for purchase and expansion of the Pavilion Hotel building. Zurbrugg maintained firm control over the company. In 1898 he founded the Riverside Metal Company, which supplied the alloys needed in the manufacture of gold-filled and plated watch cases. In addition, the company ran "The Homestead," a boarding house for female employees patterned after the Lowell system in Massachusetts.

Late in 1906 the company announced plans to build a "mammoth new building,"<sup>1</sup> comprising the major extension of the complex along Pavilion Avenue south of the old hotel. At this time the company was a mainstay of the town, employing 1,000 persons and producing 6,000 cases per day. The cases were sold not only domestically, but to Swiss watchmakers as well. The construction of this plant, completed early in 1908 was progressive for its day. Reinforced concrete as a structural system for large-scale buildings was introduced in the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the Philadelphia Watch Case building is thus an early example of the genre. In particular, the straightforward handling of the material in the factory sections of the complex is of note.

1. Mount Holly Herald, September 29, 1906, 2.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burlington County Press (Riverside), December 20, 1907.

Mount Holly Herald Historical and Industrial Edition, July 1, 1916.

Riverside's Bi-Centennial Souvenir Booklet, 1976.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	50,34,6,0	4,43,210,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at intersection of Pavilion (Burlington) and Franklin Avenues, then northeast along Franklin Avenue approximately 75 feet, then north approximately 200 feet, then west following north elevation of former Pavilion Hotel, then south approximately 225 feet along east side of Pavilion Avenue to place of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Constance M. Greiff/Director  
Charles H. Ashton/Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Heritage Studies

DATE January 6, 1978

STREET & NUMBER 10 Nassau Street

TELEPHONE 609-924-1728

CITY OR TOWN Princeton

STATE New Jersey

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE [Signature]  
TITLE Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE APR 15 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE 1 31 78

ATTEST: [Signature]  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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DATE 1 31 78

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Case Company      ITEM NUMBER 8      PAGE two

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During the course of its operation, the company acquired a number of other businesses, and utilized several names. It is sometimes referred to by one of these, the Keystone Watch Case Company.

Ironically, one of the subsidiaries, the Riverside Metal Company survives today and is still in operation in an adjacent plant. The Philadelphia Watch Case Company, which later became the H.K. Porter Company, succumbed to the decline in popularity of pocket watches. It ceased operation, and its buildings have been vacant since 1972. The property is now for sale.

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Philadelphia Watch

CONTINUATION SHEET Case Company ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE two

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Woodward, E.M. and Hageman, John F., History of Burlington and Mercer Counties,  
Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1883.