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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

historic name Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse  
other names/site number Quaker Commercial Warehousing Company

### 2. Location

street & number 901 Poplar Street

n/a
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 not for publication  
city or town City of Philadelphia

n/a
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 vicinity  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Philadelphia code 101 zip code 19123

### 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  
Andrew J. MacDonald 10/9/2018  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
PA state Historic Preservation office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting official Date  
Title e or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature] 11/20/18  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**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

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

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

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE - Warehouse

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

roof: ASPHALT, CONCRETE

other:

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### Narrative 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

The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse is located at the northwest corner of Poplar and 9th Streets in the lower Northern Liberties neighborhood in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The building is located amid residential neighborhoods to the west, south, and southeast, with vacant land and low-scale commercial buildings to the east and north. The building is composed of two sections; a front, 10-storey, Warehouse Building constructed in 1918 (1918 Warehouse Building); and a rear, 5-storey, Remote Delivery Station addition constructed in 1928 (1928 Addition). A railroad spur from the Reading Railroad enters the 2nd Floor of the south elevation of the 1918 Warehouse Building and is supported by large, metal rectangular columns. Constructed and opened in 1918, this long rectangular, reinforced, flat-slab concrete warehouse building exemplifies commercial style architecture of the early twentieth century with large industrial style windows in every bay. The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse is in fair condition and retains all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, materials, workmanship, association, setting, and feeling.

The building has zero setbacks on the south, east, and west elevations and is built to the property line of the adjacent parcel to the north. As a result, there is no landscaping. Surrounding the building to the west and southwest is the Richard Allen Homes public housing complex, which includes two-storey, single-family residences on grassy lots and townhouses that were constructed in 2003 as part of the Philadelphia Housing Authority's city-wide public housing reinvestment program. To the southeast are recreation fields, with vacant land and high-rise senior housing to the west. Immediately to the north is a mixture of commercial buildings and parking lots that front on Girard Avenue, a major thoroughfare in the City of Philadelphia. The property is immediately adjacent to a SEPTA line that runs north and south. It is unknown when the buildings on the vacant land immediately to the west were removed.

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### Narrative Description

The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse, which includes the front 1918 Warehouse Building and rear 1928 Addition, is situated on a 100 feet wide by 539 feet long, narrow parcel of land, that is bounded by sidewalks along the west, south, and east elevations and an adjacent parcel of land to the north. Immediately adjacent to the 1918 Warehouse Building's north elevation is a brick masonry smoke stack that dates to 1918. The 1928 Addition was framed and built around the chimney and encloses the chimney within the building on Floors 1 through 6.<sup>1</sup> The main entrance into the Warehouse is from Poplar Street. The building is located between North Percy Street to the west; Poplar Street to the south; and 9th Street and an elevated SEPTA railroad line immediately adjacent to the east. A spur line from the elevated railroad line enters the 2nd floor of the warehouse (see Figures 15 and 17). Immediately surrounding the site, the Warehouse towers over the adjacent two-storey single-family houses and townhouses that are part of large square blocks with bisecting streets and cul-de-sacs to the west and southwest. To the east are long blocks that have vacant land, playgrounds, recreation fields, low-rise commercial and industrial buildings, high-rise senior housing, and a church. To the north is a vacant parcel of land and a one-storey commercial building that both front on West Girard Avenue.

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<sup>1</sup> The floors in the 1928 Addition do not align with the floors in the 1918 Warehouse Building. Due to the differing floor to ceiling heights between the two sections, the 1918 Warehouse Building has the following Floors – 1, 2S, 3S, 4, 5, 6, and 7 to 10, while the 1928 Addition has the following Floors – 1, 2N, 4, 5, 6. The floors of the two sections align on Floors 4, 5, and 6.

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The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse is supported by a reinforced flat-slab concrete structural system, which is composed of vertical pilasters with horizontal panels between the pilasters. The verticality of the 1918 Warehouse Building's concrete bays (Photograph 1) is reinforced with concrete panelized brackets at the parapet level of each pilaster (Photograph 4). The brackets are found on the east, south, and west elevations with the north (rear) elevation being blank. The horizontality of the 1928 Addition (Photograph 5) is reinforced by the long shallow construction with horizontal ribbons of industrial sash. Within the interior, the flat-slab concrete structural system is supported by concrete mushroom columns that transfer the load, eliminating the concrete beams that had been previously used to support the floor system and provide for an unobstructed interior space (Photographs 15, 16, and 17).

***Exterior***

The south elevation of the 1918 Warehouse Building, which faces Poplar Street, is the primary elevation and has four bays (see Photograph 1 and Figure 14). Starting at the southwest corner and proceeding left to right, there are four bays. The entire front elevation is not flat; Bays 1, 2, and 3 are parallel to Poplar Street, while Bay 4 is at an obtuse angle that forms a chamfer at the southeast corner. The main entrance, which is located in Bay 2, has a segmental arched frame with decorative glazed tile that is in poor condition (see Photograph 2). Inset within the tile frame are concrete masonry units (CMU) and steel that replaced industrial sash, all at an unknown time. Centered within the concrete frame is a recessed opening that has glazed tile framing within the recess. Centered within the recess is a modern metal door that was installed at an unknown time. While the industrial sash that flanked the entry had also been removed at an unknown time and infilled with CMU, the recessed-panel, reinforced concrete frames remain. Centered above the entrance is a stepped parapet that acts as the front of the elevator penthouse (see Photograph 3). The reinforced concrete construction system forms the framework for the industrial sash. The windows were removed and the fenestration pattern was infilled with plywood by the Philadelphia Suburban Development Corporation in 2015. While the horizontal dimensions of the fenestration remain similar, the vertical dimensions changed due to the differing floor-to-floor heights. Bay 4 is open on the 1st and 2nd Floors to provide access from a railroad spur into the building.

The east elevation parallels 9th Street and the SEPTA rail line and showcases both the front vertical, 10-storey 1918 Warehouse Building and the rear, horizontal, 5-storey, 1928 Addition. In total, the east elevation has 22 bays (see Photograph 2). The reinforced, flat-slab concrete construction presents a concrete grid in which large industrial sash windows were inserted within the 1918 Warehouse Building; they were replaced with plywood in 2015. In the 1928 Addition, the industrial sash are smaller in height and thus, present a low, horizontal building (see Photograph 7). The concrete details in the 1928 Addition are more defined with the vertical pilasters having a reveal along both exterior edges. The concrete spandrels between the windows vary in width per floor, due to the inconsistency between floor heights.

On the 1st Floor, starting at the southeast corner of the 1918 Warehouse Building and proceeding left to right, there are 9 bays of glazed, metal, half-panel doors, with two pairs of doors being found in each bay. Dividing each pair of doors is a painted metal column (see Photograph 6). Each half-panel metal door has 9-lights above with a single panel below. Above each door, there is a 3-light transom set within a metal frame. Bays 1 through 9 are recessed beneath the railroad spur. Bays 10 to 22, located in the 1928 Addition, are flush with the remainder of the building with a metal roll-up door found in each bay. A pair of metal pedestrian entry doors are found in Bay 15, and a pair of metal fire doors are situated in Bay 22. The metal roll-up doors that are located along this elevation predate 1951 (see Figure 22 that was taken by the City of Philadelphia in 1951). The SEPTA rail line covers the 2nd Floor though the top of Bays 1 through 3 are open and only have a heavy concrete beam that is visible above the rail line. The windows in all floors of the 1918 Warehouse Building were infilled with plywood in 2015; Bays 10 through 21 have industrial sash; and Bay 22 has a fire stair with an open landing with a metal railing at the outside edge. Floors 3 and 4 have five sections of windows with 6-lights per section. Floors 5 and 6 also have five sections of windows with 8-lights per section.

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The north elevation is clearly a secondary, rear elevation (see Photographs 8 and 9). The 1918 Warehouse Building is recessed behind the 1928 Addition. The entire north elevation of the 1928 Addition is solid concrete. Starting at the northeast corner of the 1918 Warehouse Building and proceeding left to right, Floors 7 to 10 have four bays with industrial sash in Bays 1 to 3 and solid concrete in Bay 4 (Photograph 9), which is original. Bay 1 has 20-30-20 lights per section with a metal mullion between each section. Bay 2 has 20-20-20-20 lights per section also with metal mullions between each section. Bay 3 only has one section of 30-lights, due to the brick masonry smoke stack that is adjacent to the exterior wall. Bay 4 is the fire stair and extends out so that it is flush with the edge of the stack. Only the windows on the 10th Floor were replaced with plywood in 2015.

The west elevation is comparable to the east elevation (Photographs 9 and 11 and Figure 16 and 20-21). In the 1918 Warehouse Building, the windows were similar to those in the south and east elevations except they have/had concrete mullions instead of metal. The windows were all removed in 2015 except for four windows that are visible on the 3rd Floor and several of the concrete mullions that are still visible on the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Floors (see Photograph 10). Starting in the northwest corner of the 1928 Building and proceeding from left to right, the industrial sash and metal roll-up doors have all been removed from the 1st and 2nd Floors, except for the existing metal roll-up door in Bay 1 (see Photograph 9). Between the 2nd and 4th Floors, there is a recessed panel in the concrete that reinforces the horizontality of the 1928 Addition. The windows remain on Floors 4, 5, and 6 and are similar to those in the east elevation with the 4th Floor having 6-lights per section with a metal mullion dividing each section. Within the industrial sash, a hopper window is located within the 2nd and 4th sections. On Floors 5 and 6, there are 8-lights per section with a metal mullion dividing each section. Within the industrial sash, a hopper window is located within the 2nd and 4th sections. The depth of the concrete panels at the floor levels varies between Floors 4 and 5, and 5 and 6, due to the differing floor to ceiling heights (the 4th Floor is 8'8", while the 5th Floor is 13'0", and the 6th Floor is 12'10").

Starting on the northwest corner of the 1928 Addition, there is an open fire stair in Bay 13 with a metal railing and wire mesh above (see Photograph 9). A second elevator penthouse extends above Bay 17 (see Photograph 10). Like Bay 13, the stair in Bay 17 is an open fire stair with a metal railing. Adjacent to the stair, there is a narrow bay of industrial sash. The only remaining windows are found in Bay 22 on the 3rd Floor and have 12-16-12-light industrial sash configuration on this level. Various wire grates were added over openings on the 1st Floor at unknown dates. The reinforced concrete is in fair to poor condition with exposed rebar in multiple locations.

The 1918 Warehouse Building has an asphalt roof (Photograph 19) while the 1928 Addition has exposed concrete with a concrete parapet extending around the top. Within the 1918 Warehouse Building roof, there are two elevator penthouses, four skylights, and 10 cell tower antennae (7 independent and 3 on the side of the west, four-storey penthouse.) The asphalt roof is accessed from the south elevation penthouse that includes a fire stair and two elevators. The penthouse is one and one-half stories, concrete and gable framed with a 22-light skylight within the gable roof. A four-storey concrete penthouse is located above Bay 17 on the west elevation. Between the two penthouses and centered on the structural system are four, saw-tooth skylights that are in fair to poor condition with glazing being removed from the skylight nearest the north elevation (Photograph 19). Parallel to the east elevation are two cell tower antennae that are located along the parapet wall; five cell tower antennae are located above the north elevation parapet.

Even though the 1928 Addition roof is longer, it only has two small penthouses (Photograph 20). Starting at the southeast corner and proceeding left to right, the first penthouse is located between Bays 15 and 16 on the east elevation and the second penthouse is located in Bay 22 at the northeast corner of the east elevation. The first penthouse is one- and one-half stories tall with multi-light industrial sash and two sets of metal stairs to provide access to the roof level. The rear penthouse has a small, one-storey concrete enclosure. Rebar extends above the parapets that are located on the west, north, and east elevations, as well as extending above the exposed concrete structural

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system on the 6th Floor (Photograph 20). Based on a structural condition report by Keast & Hood Structural Engineers, the rebar was intended to support additional floors that were never constructed.<sup>2</sup>

***Interior***

The interior of the building is divided into two sections; the front 1918 Warehouse Building and the rear 1928 Addition with the former exterior wall of the 1918 Warehouse Building acting as a demising wall between the two sections. The 1918 Warehouse Building has a reinforced concrete two-way concrete slab that is supported by circular interior concrete columns and rectangular perimeter concrete columns. The columns decrease in size as they go up the building. At the floor level of each column base is a steel wrap that extends up approximately 40" high with both column caps and drop panels below the slab of each column capital. There are three rows of regularly spaced concrete mushroom capital columns that are located 25'0" on-center, providing an unobstructed interior (see Photographs 15-17). There are concrete exterior walls with concrete frames and sills. The 1918 Warehouse Building has wood tongue and groove flooring that is laid over cinders in concrete troughs and is in poor condition, particularly on the top two floors, due to water penetration from the open skylights. The ceiling is the concrete deck that retains the indentation of the wood forms.

The southeast corner of the 2nd Floor is a railroad siding that extends into the building three bays (see Figure 17 and Photograph 14) and extends up from Floor 2S into Floor 3S. Between Floors 3S and 4, there is also a two-storey space with metal industrial sash that overlook this space. On the 9th Floor there is a brick masonry wall with metal fire-doors that extends west to east along Column Line F, dividing the floor into two-thirds (south) and one-third (north). The 10th Floor is lit by four saw-tooth skylights (Photographs 18 and 19) that runs west to east. Each of the skylights spans two structural bays so that a concrete beam bisects the skylight. Each skylight is composed of six, 16-metal framed lights that are divided by a concrete mullion, so that there are three sections per each bay.

The 1918 Warehouse Building has three means of egress; two combination stair and elevator towers and a single stair. The combination towers are brick enclosures with a concrete stair with pipe metal railings and two brick-walled freight elevators, whose doors were removed at an unknown time and enclosed with brick. One tower is located in Bay 2 of the south elevation and the second tower is found in Bay 17, immediately behind the penthouse on the west elevation. The third stair tower is located along the north elevation immediately west of the smoke stack in Bay 4 and has an open landing with a metal railing that is perpendicular to Bay 13 on the west elevation. This tower has concrete risers, treads, and walls with metal pipe railing.

Although the 1928 Addition is newer than the 1918 warehouse Building, the same structural system was utilized; the slabs, columns, caps, and drop panels are of similar size and configuration and are also spaced 25 '0" on-center. The base of the concrete columns have steel column wraps at the concrete floor level that extend approximately 46" up the shaft of the columns. There are three rows of regularly spaced concrete mushroom capital columns that continue the unobstructed interior in each section (see Photograph 16). There are concrete exterior walls with concrete frames and sills. The 1928 Addition has concrete floors and a ceiling that is the concrete deck that also retains the indentation of the wood forms. Within the 1928 Addition are two means of egress that are both located on the east elevation; a combination fire stair, elevator, and freight elevator that is located adjacent to Bays 15 and 16, and a second concrete stair that is located next to Bay 22.

The interior floor level configuration differs between the sections of the Warehouse. The number of stories for the 1928 Addition is confusing. While it appears as if there are 5 Floors, there is no 3rd Floor in the 1928 Addition so that Floors 4,

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<sup>2</sup> Keast & Hood Structural Engineers, *Quaker Building, 9<sup>th</sup> and Poplar Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19123: Structural Condition Assessment Report*, 2016, page 4.

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5, and 6 align between the two sections. To simplify, 1918 Warehouse Building has Floors 1, 2S, 3S, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, and the 1928 Addition has Floors 1, 2N, 4, 5, and 6. Likewise, the floor to ceiling height is also inconsistent between the 1918 Warehouse Building and the rear 1928 Addition, particularly for Floors 4, 5, and 6. The 4th Floor ranges between 9'0" (south) to 8'8" (north); the 5th Floor is 13'3" (south) to 13'0" (north); and the 6th Floor is 12'10" (north and south).

The Warehouse was constructed as a furniture warehouse in addition to being used as warehouse space for other large items such as carpeting and appliances. The truck bays along North 9th Street were used to move goods and items. The 1928 Addition provided additional truck bays on the first floor and additional storage space on the upper floors for various types of furniture and housewares. Goods were moved between floors via the large freight elevators that are located next to the south elevation Bay 2, west elevations Bay 17, and east elevation Bays 15 and 16. Goods were stored on small racks with furniture on larger racks (Figure 19). It is unknown how the goods were moved initially on individual floors, but metal walkways were placed across the wood floors to provide ease of movement and metal bands were placed on the columns to protect the columns from damage. By 1949, metal conveyors had been added to the 1928 Addition (Figure 18) to provide ease of movement.

It is unknown where offices were within the Warehouse. By 1955, when the Warehouse was used by United Parcel Service, which was under contract with Strawbridge & Clothier, the first floor (Photos 12 and 13) was used for packing and shipping. The 2nd Floor (3S and 2N in Figure 23) has a number of small brick masonry rooms with industrial sash and chicken wire and wood stud partitions. These rooms appear to have been used for Small Appliance repair and TV and Radio Repair. The terra-cotta tile partition rooms along the west elevation were used for Stock, Spray Room, and Repair Shop. The upper floors were primarily used for warehousing different types of furniture with part of the 3rd Floor used for Toys while part of the 4th Floor was used for Housewares. The 9th and 10th floors appear to not have been used.

**Conclusion**

The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse retains integrity as an early 20th-century commercial building. It retains integrity of **location** as it has not been moved. It retains integrity of **design** that includes the original, 1918 ten-storey flat-slab reinforced concrete structural system industrial building with regularly spaced window openings, and concrete detailing at the parapet, and 1928 five-storey, flat-slab reinforced concrete structural system rear addition with ribbon industrial sash. Within the interior, it retains its intact floor plan, though there have been minor alterations for loading dock spaces along 9th Street. It retains integrity of **materials**, which include its exterior concrete structural system with window openings, concrete detailing, windows in the 1928 rear addition, and saw-tooth skylights in the tower; and on the interior, it's regularly spaced concrete flat-slab construction with mushroom capital columns in both buildings. Although window sash have been removed, and some ground-level openings blocked, the openings are visible. The building's integrity of **workmanship** is evident in the original reinforced concrete surfaces of the exterior, the parapet detailing, concrete with mushroom capital columns, remaining wood and concrete floors, and concrete ceilings. Integrity of **association** has been maintained through its open interior spaces that are consistent with use as a warehouse. The building still retains integrity of **setting** in its urban neighborhood by maintaining its original setback from Poplar, 9th, and Percy Streets and the SEPTA rail line. It retains integrity of **feeling** as a substantial commercial building. Based on the evaluation of these seven aspects of integrity, the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse retains its integrity.

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**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.)

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1918 - 1970

**Significant Dates**

1918, 1928

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Ballinger & Perrot

Abbott, Merkt & Company



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse (Warehouse) is locally significant under Criterion A in the Area of Commerce for its association with Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store (Strawbridge or Strawbridge & Clothier), a prominent retailer in the Philadelphia area. It reflects the evolution and growth of the company and the larger trends in twentieth century department store development. Strawbridge & Clothier was a pioneer in the retail industry for constructing its own off-site service buildings to facilitate its operations. The Warehouse, constructed in 1918, was part of Strawbridge & Clothier's adoption of emerging integrated management practices in inventory control, accounting, and services. The construction of the Warehouse inaugurated the post-World War I reorganization and modernization of Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store and supported the operations of the new downtown store and suburban branches built in 1928-1932. It released valuable retail floor space by providing off-site storage of goods, relieved congestion of delivery vehicles around the store and permitted more efficient flow of stock via delivery from the railroad to distribution to the store and to customers, and it provided efficient housing of services such as repair and cleaning. The Warehouse reflects the industry-wide trend toward moving storage and services away from the central store into large integrated facilities. It was among the earliest and largest built by a department store before the Second World War; its design and location were intended to facilitate the movement of large amounts of merchandise and to house space-consuming services away from the busy and expensive spaces of the main store. The Period of Significance begins with the construction of the building in 1918 and ends in 1970, when Strawbridge and Clothier closed the warehouse and moved all warehousing operations to a new, larger building near the airport.

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

***History of Strawbridge & Clothier***

Strawbridge & Clothier began as a dry goods store in a building leased by Justus Strawbridge, at the corner of 8th and Market Streets in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1861. In 1868, Justus Strawbridge partnered with wholesaler Isaac Clothier, and they constructed a new five-storey building on the site. Over the next three decades, Strawbridge & Clothier expanded its operations, broadening its merchandising from traditional dry goods (fabrics, notions and trims, blankets, etc.) to include men's and women's clothing and underwear (with store manufactured brands in coats and clothing), carpeting, and household goods. It also offered services for the repair, cleaning, and storage of clothing, furs, and furniture. Strawbridge & Clothier held out as a dry goods retailer well into the 1890s, resisting the trend toward general merchandise, but with the retirement of both original partners in the 1890s, and vigorous competition from Wanamaker's, Gimbel Brothers, Lit Brothers, and N. Snellenberg & Sons, the company's next generation of leaders began to broaden its offerings.<sup>3</sup> By 1900, Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store had become one of Philadelphia's premier retailers; its merchandise, like those of other grand department stores in almost all American cities, included an

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<sup>3</sup> In the early 20th century, Wanamaker's (established 1866) and Strawbridge's were considered the most prestigious of the City of Philadelphia's department stores, claiming patrons from the middle and wealthy classes, and handling extensive delivery services to customers on the Main Line. Gimbel Brothers (established 1887 in Indiana), Lit Brothers (established 1891 in Philadelphia), and N. Snellenberg (established 1869 in Philadelphia) drew clientele from the middle, lower-middle and working classes. (In the early 20th century local wisdom defined the department store hierarchy: a customer could not buy a hot dog at the restaurants in Strawbridge's or Wanamaker's).

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immense array of items and services, offered to patrons in an atmosphere of opulence and attentive service. By 1905, the company had offices in Paris and London, and by 1920, annual sales topped \$26 million.<sup>4</sup>

Strawbridge & Clothier developed three branches of operations: retail sales, wholesaling, and clothing manufacturing. Initially, all the operations were staged out of the building at 8th and Market Streets. As it expanded, in order to maximize selling floor space and facilitate operations, Strawbridge & Clothier moved some operations, such as clothing manufacturing, out of the main building, usually into leased loft space. In 1892, the company began building its own facilities, in order to specialize the functions of its workspaces. It acquired a property behind the store on Filbert Street to be used as a warehouse and as a coat factory.<sup>5</sup> Then in 1896, this warehouse on Filbert Street and an adjacent stable were demolished for an eight-storey, Addison Hutton-designed building to house both manufacturing and wholesaling (Figure 9).<sup>6</sup> In addition, an annex joined the Filbert Street side of the store at the corner of 9th Street, which housed receiving and delivery.<sup>7</sup>

In the early twentieth century, more operations were moved out of the main store. In 1901, Addison Hutton was commissioned to design a new seven-storey delivery building/warehouse four blocks north of the store on Race Street between 8th and 9th Streets (Figure 10). In addition to stables and warehousing, the building also housed a mattress-making operation. In 1909, Strawbridge & Clothier built a garage at 16th and North Streets and established a delivery transfer station at 59th Street, out of which went auto truck deliveries to the Main Line; in 1910, a full block at 62nd Street and Walnut Street was acquired for a truck garage and stable. By 1914, the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store occupied almost the entire block between 8th and 9th Streets back to Filbert Street; its service buildings comprised the wholesale department in the Filbert Street building, the Race Street warehouse/delivery/mattress manufacturing center, the North Street garage, the 59th Street transfer station, and the 62nd Street garage.<sup>8</sup> In 1918, Strawbridge & Clothier constructed the Warehouse about a mile north of the main store at the corner of 9th and Poplar Streets. The construction of the 1918 Warehouse completed the company's building activities until 1928, when the major expansion campaigns for the new downtown store and branch stores in Ardmore and Jenkintown began, and when a large addition was made to the Warehouse. With the construction of a warehouse for large items and workspace, the warehouse space at Race Street focused on holding clothing and fine goods. The clothing manufacturing and wholesaling had been phased out in the 1920s and the Filbert Street building repurposed for administrative use.

By the end of World War I, modern methods of scientific management finally took hold of department store retailing, and in the 1920s major stores across the country introduced strenuous methods of planning and control. Strawbridge & Clothier underwent its first systems audit, learning to its surprise that its much-prized clothing manufacturing operations netted only a few hundred dollars of profit annually, and that its wholesale operations were equally marginal—both were phased out in the early 1920s.<sup>9</sup> In addition to reorganization of sales and back-store operations and introduction of revolving charge-accounts, Strawbridge & Clothier was incorporated in 1922, ending the series of private contracts among family members that had structured the company for 60 years. While family members remained majority

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<sup>4</sup> Alfred Leif, *Family Business. A Century in the Life and Times of Strawbridge & Clothier*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968): 15, 113, 155, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> The clothing factory (previously in a building at 10th and Filbert) employed 800 operatives turning out a thousand garments a day. Strawbridge & Clothier claimed to be one of the largest garment manufacturers in the country. See the *Second Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania*, 1916, <https://archive.org/details/secondindustrial00openn>, accessed March 18, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Leif, p. 86, 87, 91, 97, 113, 123; also see <https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/>, accessed on February 8, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website indicates this building was designed by Savery, Scheets, & Savery; no image is available. <https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/>, accessed on February 8, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Information regarding buildings campaigns was derived from Leif, pp. 58, 70, 84, 87, 91, 97, 113, and 123; and from <https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/>, accessed on February 8, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Leif, p. 95.

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shareholders and filled most officer's positions, the company was now a legal entity, able to own property and incur debt. The immediate practical result was that all property, which had formerly been held in real estate trusts under the

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names of various family members, was transferred to company ownership.<sup>10</sup> A second, more dramatic result was that the company could leverage funding to begin construction of a new, million square-foot store in 1928, and the opening of two suburban branches on the Main Line at the new Suburban Square shopping center in Ardmore in 1930 and Jenkintown in 1931.

After World War II, retailing took another turn as demographic change, the automobile and Federal housing and highway policies funneled population out of cities into the suburbs. Strawbridge & Clothier again reconfigured its operations to improve operations and meet changing markets. In 1960, the company built another new service building, designed by Abbott, Merkt, & Company, replacing the buildings on Filbert Street behind the store. While the company remained remarkably committed to the flagship store, and took an active role in various city planning initiatives aimed at revitalizing downtown Philadelphia, the primary growth of the company occurred in the development of suburban outlets. Following World War II, Strawbridge & Clothier's opened a number of branch stores, typically in new suburban malls, throughout the Philadelphia region (adding to the branches established at Ardmore in 1930 and Jenkintown in 1931). By the 1980s, Strawbridge & Clothier had 21 branch stores in malls across eastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and northern Delaware. The company posted record earnings in 1967, and in 1972, it led Philadelphia department stores in sales—with total sales of \$216 million, edging out Wanamaker's and more than doubling the sales of Gimbel's and Lit Brothers. The company predicted it would reach \$500 million in sales by 1980.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1980s, the world of department store retailing began a long struggle arising from demographic shifts and rapidly changing trends in popular consumer culture. The revival of trendy specialty retailers able to draw specific consumer groups pulled customers away. Overbuilt suburban malls, where department stores reigned as anchors, collapsed under their own weight and began to buckle under the assault of big box stores and warehouse clubs. Finally, a major wave of buyouts, consolidations, and leveraged takeovers ultimately consolidated almost all major department stores (and their names) under the umbrella of either the May Department Stores Company, a department store holding company established in 1877, or Federated Stores Inc., a department store holding company established in 1929—both of which merged under the name Federated Stores, Inc., in 2005.<sup>12</sup>

Strawbridge & Clothier maintained its viability through the success of its branch stores and by adapting to market demands. In 1970, with record earnings and planned expansions, Strawbridge & Clothier opened a new 706,000 square foot warehouse and distribution center in the Penrose Industrial Park near the Philadelphia International Airport.<sup>13</sup> The suburban stores were responsible for the success of the company through the 1980s, as the flagship store struggled with the decline of downtown patronage (the flagship store posted profits only through the 1940s and by 1972, over 70% of

<sup>10</sup> Until 1922, the property title for the 9th and Poplar Streets warehouse was held in trust under the name of Morris. L. Clothier, the son of founder Isaac Clothier. Morris Clothier became president of the company upon incorporation.

<sup>11</sup> Trudy Prokop, "Strawbridge's Profits Gain; Expansion Next," *Women's Wear Daily*, April 2, 1968: 25; "Strawbridge & Clothier Led the List in '73 Retail Sales," *The Sunday Bulletin*, March 14, 1974: 30; "Strawbridge Aim: \$500M Sales by 1980," *Women's Wear Daily*, April 23, 1970; William Campbell, "1972 Sales of Top Department Stores," *Stores* (August 1973): 13-16. Box 88, Series VIII, Advertising & Public Relations Records, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807. Snellenberg's closed in 1962; Lit Brothers filed for bankruptcy in 1977; Wanamaker's sold out to a California-based company in 1978; Gimbel's closed its stand-alone store in 1977 and moved, closing finally in 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Seph Lawless, *Black Friday: The Collapse of the American Shopping Mall*. [Published by Seph Lawless], 2014; Richard A. Feinberg and Jennifer Meoli, "A Brief History of the Mall," *Advances in Consumer Research* Volume 18(1991): 426-427. <http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?id=7196>, accessed February 20, 2017; "The Rise and Fall of the Shopping Mall," *The Economist*, December 19, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/node/10278717>, accessed February 20, 2017; Nelson D. Schwartz, "The Economics (and Nostalgia) of Dead Malls," *The New York Times*, January 3, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/business/the-economics-and-nostalgia-of-dead-malls.html>, accessed February 19, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> At the opening of the new facility, Philadelphia's mayor hailed the store as a local institution "which has made an urban commitment by keeping its distribution headquarters in Philadelphia." The site had been acquired through the Philadelphia Industrial Corporation. "S&C Opens A Warehouse Near Airport," *The Philadelphia Bulletin*, April 22, 1970. Newspaper clipping, Folder PR 1897-1974, Box 88, Series VIII, Advertising & Public Relations Records, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

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sales were at branch stores). Competition from discount chains induced the company to create its own discount store, Clover, which it launched in 1971. Eventually there were 26 Clover stores, which were modeled on Target stores, usually located in strip malls.<sup>14</sup> The company fought off a hostile takeover attempt in 1986, and in 1995, in an attempt to become the dominant retailer in the Philadelphia region, Strawbridge & Clothier partnered with Federated Department Stores, Pomeroy's, and the Rubin Brothers real estate development company to acquire Wanamaker's Department Store, but were outbid in bankruptcy court by the May Department Stores Company (May Company). In 1996, the Strawbridge & Clothier directors, mostly family members, voted to sell the Strawbridge & Clothier Company to the May Company. The Clover stores were liquidated by 1997. After the sale, the stores operated simply as "Strawbridge's" until they became Macy's in 2006, after Federated Stores, which owned Macy's, bought out the May Company.<sup>15</sup>

**History of the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**

The Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse was constructed in 1918, about a mile north of the main store at the corner of 9th and Poplar Streets (Figure 8 and 11), in a mixed working class/industrial neighborhood at the lower edge of Northern Liberties, just south of Girard Avenue.<sup>16</sup> The building was constructed to hold furniture, reupholstering, finishing jobs, and other repair/cleaning services, and storage for other large items—and relieve pressure on the much smaller storage facilities downtown. The 1918 building, designed by Ballinger & Perrot, reflects the now-familiar features made possible by reinforced concrete construction—large open space and windows for light, ventilation and ease of movement, and massive freight elevator tower. More importantly, the 10-storey, 247,000 square foot warehouse building was designed to maximize use of motor and rail transportation. Goods arrived via the adjacent Reading Railroad and were unloaded into the warehouse on the 2nd Level from a track spur directly into the building. Goods arriving or leaving by truck used sheltered truck bays at street level. Wooden flooring eased foot traffic, and metal pathways speeded rolling carts.

In 1928, a five storey, 151,000 square foot dedicated delivery station addition, designated as the Remote Delivery Station, was constructed onto the north elevation (Figure 12 and 13). Strawbridge & Clothier consolidated all its delivery operations in this addition, designed by Abbott, Merkt, & Company. All delivery operations were moved from Race and Filbert Streets to the Remote Delivery Station at 9th and Poplar Streets. All deliveries in the City of Philadelphia and New Jersey were dispatched directly, while deliveries to the Main Line were still routed out of the warehouse through the 59th Street transfer station.<sup>17</sup> In a valuation assessment of the 1928 delivery station addition, the assessor noted that "This building having been especially designed for delivery services, is equipped with 20 motor-driven Kinneer doors, ... a belt conveyor system, and two electric freight elevators".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Veale, Frank R. *Family Business. Strawbridge & Clothier, The Momentous Seventies*. Philadelphia, PA: Strawbridge & Clothier, 1981. Box 88, Series VIII, Advertising & Public Relations Records, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

<sup>15</sup> Sandy Smith, "Buildings Then and Now: Think Strawbridge & Clothier First," *phillyliving.com*, <http://www.phillyliving.com/blog/buildings-then-and-now-think-strawbridge-clothier-first.html>, accessed on January 20, 2017; Dan Rottenberg. "Quality Went Out of Style," <https://www.familybusinessmagazine.com/sites/default/files/articles/2015/10/01/sellingth276.html>, accessed January 20, 2017; John Fischer, "Gone But Not Forgotten: Strawbridge's – The Last of the Great Philadelphia Department Stores to Close," <http://philadelphia.about.com/od/history/a/strawbridges.html>, accessed on January 20, 2017; "Strawbridge & Clothier," <http://www.thedepartmentstoremuseum.org/2010/07/strawbridge-clothier-philadelphia.html>; accessed January 20, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Sanborn Insurance maps show the site of the 1918 warehouse to have been occupied by row houses; the site of the 1928 addition was occupied by a foundry. Since the 1970s, the City of Philadelphia Department of Records has considered the area to be the Poplar neighborhood, defined as the area north of Chinatown between Spring Garden and Northern Liberties. <http://www.phila.gov/phils/docs/otherinfo/pname2.htm>, accessed on March 15, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Leif, p. 178.

<sup>18</sup> Undated typescript, Folder 948-958 North Ninth Street (warehouse). Box 33, Series V, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

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In 1938, shortly after the settlement of a warehouse workers strike,<sup>19</sup> Strawbridge & Clothier outsourced its delivery operations to United Parcel Service (UPS); under the agreement, UPS leased the store's delivery stations (at Poplar Street and 59th Street) and purchased all of the equipment.<sup>20</sup> Although the 1938 strike caused Strawbridge & Clothier to outsource its delivery services, the use of the building did not change. United Parcel Service became the contracting delivery company and Strawbridge & Clothier continued to manage the operations and use of the entire Poplar Street building. Plans dated 1955 show existing and proposed organization of the building's spaces, including areas needed for United Parcel Service delivery use (See Figure 23).<sup>21</sup>

The Warehouse operated as the company's primary off-site service center until 1970, when it was replaced with a larger facility near the Philadelphia International Airport. The company sold the Poplar Street building to the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development for \$1.2 million, which in turn, sold it for one dollar to Quaker Commercial Warehousing Inc. in 1985. Quaker Commercial Warehousing Inc., which later became Quaker Storage, used the building for warehousing until 1998, when it was sold to the Philadelphia Suburban Development Corporation for \$50,000.00.<sup>22</sup> The building has been unoccupied since 1998.

**Ballinger & Perrot**

The firm of Ballinger & Perrot (1901-1920) was one of the largest industrial and design concerns in the United States. The firm was established in 1901, when Walter F. Ballinger partnered with Emile Perrot. Ballinger had worked in his predecessor firm Hales & Ballinger. Emile G. Perrot gained national recognition for his innovative design work with reinforced concrete. Ballinger & Perrot built upon the industrial building interests of the earlier firms, but also completed churches, schools, commercial structures, and pioneered in the use of reinforced concrete. Nine Ballinger & Perrot buildings in Pennsylvania are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including Tindley Temple, the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office, and the Defense Personnel Center. A prototypical Ballinger & Perrot building is the Goodman Brothers & Hinlein Building at 1238 Callowhill Street, an eight storey reinforced concrete loft building that established the formula the firm applied to warehouse buildings into the 1950s (National Register-listed).<sup>23</sup>

**Abbott, Merkt, & Company**

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<sup>19</sup> During the spring of 1938, members of the Storage Warehouse Union went on strike. The strike lasted a full month; eventually over 900 warehouse employees were directly on strike, plus other employees who refused to cross picket lines, effectively shutting down delivery services for four of the City of Philadelphia's major department stores—Strawbridge & Clothier, Lit Brothers, Gimbel's, and Snellenberg's—and affecting thousands of customers as well as over 25,000 workers in associated trades. The strikers requested a two-hour work week reduction, recognition of seniority rights, and a \$2-3 dollar wage increase. The strike began at the Strawbridge & Clothier warehouse with 125 walking out. At Gimbel Brothers, about 160 followed. Then 200 warehouse workers at N. Snellenburg & Co. and 450 at Lit Brothers joined the strike. The strike was followed in the *New York Times* and in newspapers across Pennsylvania. "900 Warehouse Employees Walk Out in Philadelphia," *Shamokin News-Dispatch*, April 13, 1939: 5; "Clerks Join Strike of 900 Warehousemen," *The Gettysburg Times*, April 16, 1938: 4; "Clerk's Union Joins in Philadelphia store Strike," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 15, 1938: 1; "Elevator Men Join Strikers," *The Times-Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), April 28, 1938: 1; "Labor Group seeks Store Strike's End," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 16, 1938: 3; "Prospects of Settling Store Strike Reported," *The Evening News* (Harrisburg, PA), April 20, 1938: 2; Schrage, Saul. "Department Store Strike Settled; Men Return Today," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 11, 1938: 1, 16; "Seek Mediation of Warehouse Strike," *The Evening Times* (Sayre, PA), April 19, 1938: 1; "Strike Halts Delivery By Philadelphia Stores," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 13, 1938: 11; "State Mediators Seek Peace in Stores Strike," *Reading Times* April 15, 1938: 9; "Strike Halts Delivery Service of Four Stores," *The News-Herald* (Franklin, PA), April 13, 1938: 8; "Warehouse Strike Settled at Philadelphia," *Mount Carmel Item*, May 11, 1938: 3. [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com), accessed January 20, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Leif, p. 213.

<sup>21</sup> "Small Scale Block Plans" (ring binder) Box 33, Series V, Real Estate Records. General Plans, Construction, Valuation. , Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807. In 1958, a local delivery company was contracted with and replaced UPS. In 1972 Strawbridge & Clothier switched all deliveries to parcel post through the United States Postal Service and in 1979 it eliminated free postage on parcel post.

<sup>22</sup> Philadelphia Deed Book D001/310; Philadelphia Deed Book D0835/806; Philadelphia Deed Book D 0723/443.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth R. Mintz, "Goodman Brothers and Hinlein Company," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1984. On file at the State Historic Preservation Office, Harrisburg, PA.

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Abbott, Merkt & Company was founded in 1923 in New York City by Hunley Abbott and Oswald L. Merkt as an engineering and construction service for industrial plants. The company became one of the leading architecture and

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engineering firms on the East Coast after World War II, acquiring major commissions for commercial buildings, industrial and commercial buildings, and civil infrastructure in the United States and internationally. Among Abbott Merkt's most prominent commissions were major terminal and support facilities for Pan American World Airways at John F. Kennedy Airport and for Terminal B at Newark International Airport; department stores and merchandise warehouses across the country for such clients as; Bamberger's; B. Altman, Woodward & Lothrop; Hecht's; J.C. Penney; Macy's; Strawbridge & Clothier; Saks and Company; Wanamaker's; and Sears, Roebuck; major materials handling facilities for United Parcel Service and the United States Post Office; schools and commercial centers in France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Syria and Saudi Arabia; and parking structures across the East Coast. In 1985, Abbott Merkt Architects, Inc. was acquired by a subsidiary of the Los Angeles-based architecture and engineering firm Daniel Mann Johnson and Mendenhall (DMJM).<sup>24</sup>

***Department Store Service Buildings and Warehousing***

Delivery and storage comprised the two most crucial backstore challenges for department stores in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Need for maximized sales floor space pushed stores to find off site space and the introduction of large items like furniture definitely required housing elsewhere. Furthermore, the congestion created by dozens, or more, delivery wagons, lining up daily in the streets became a considerable problem. (In Philadelphia, the close proximity of three major stores—Strawbridge & Clothier, Gimbel's, and Lit's—on Market near 8th, exacerbated this problem.) Adopting trucks, which stores began doing well before 1910, facilitated hauling, but did not resolve the congestion problems. Thus stores, regardless of their specific management styles, were driven to find solutions in space outside the store building.

Well into the twentieth century, most stores with insufficient space, handled warehousing and other back-store operations through an ad hoc leasing of loft space or through commercial warehouses.<sup>25</sup> But after the turn of the century, as department stores expanded their offerings to include large objects such as pianos and furniture, storage became increasingly problematic. Strawbridge & Clothier had begun moving some operations out of the main store as early as 1892, and continued the practice into the next two decades. In the early twentieth century, larger stores across the country began constructing facilities for off-site storage, services, and management. A working list of department store service buildings, compiled by architectural historian Richard Longstreth, includes over 40 new buildings constructed between 1913 and 1930. A few service buildings of 300,000 square feet were built in the mid-1920s, and by the end of the 1920s, Bloomingdales in New York constructed a 585,000-square foot facility.<sup>26</sup>

After World War I, construction of service buildings and warehouses, and moving other operations out of the store and building satellite spaces, meant more than simply creating more sales floor space in the stores. It was a matter of cost accounting and efficient operations. Department stores experimented with streamlining back-store operations with the construction of large off-site service and warehousing facilities. Moving warehouses and delivery operations out of the main store was usually the first step, although the facilities were placed close to the store. After 1910, support facilities began to be constructed or acquired some distance away from the congested traffic around the downtown stores.

***National Register Significance: Criterion A, Commerce***

The history of Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store reflects the national trends for the industry from the initial emergence of department stores in the mid-nineteenth century. The construction of the Warehouse at 9th and Poplar Streets was part of the post-World War I reorganization and modernization of Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store that began with the construction of the Warehouse in 1918, phased out the garment making and wholesale operations, incorporated the company, opened two Main Line branch stores and finished up with the construction of the massive new downtown store in 1932.

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd\\_5654955/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd_5654955/); accessed on May 24, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Longstreth, p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Longstreth, comp., "Purpose-Built Service Buildings for Department Stores, 1913-1960," typescript, 2009.



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The Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store Warehouse, therefore, is significant for its association with modern methods of scientific management in the department store industry, particularly in relation to the warehousing and distribution of goods to their customers. While other Philadelphia area department stores were incorporating these methods into their warehousing and distribution operations, very few of them were doing so at the scale or with the efficiency of the Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store. For example, Richard Longstreth's examination of department store service buildings built throughout the country between 1913 and 1930, indicates that Strawbridge and Clothier's 1918, 247,000 square foot building was already one of the largest in the United States; its 151,000 square foot addition in 1928, kept it near the top of that list for department store facilities in the country during the 1920s. Other departments store warehouses in Philadelphia did not approach the scale of operations seen at the Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store Warehouse.

For example, the 1914 N. Snellenburg & Company Department Store reinforced concrete warehouse/loft at 10th and West Berks Streets (designed by William Steele and Sons Company) was only 8 stories (National Register listed 2003; see Figure 24). In addition, Snellenburg occupied only about half the building, using its space for stables and a delivery station, furniture and carpet storage, and upholstery services; the remainder was leased to other firms for manufacturing or storage.<sup>27</sup> In 1912, Wanamaker's Department Store acquired the Howell Brother's Paper Hangings Manufactory, a three-storey, brick masonry building complex at 2101 Washington Avenue and built several additions between 1912 and 1917 (see Figure 25).<sup>28</sup> In 1916, Wanamaker's constructed a large facility at 23rd and Walnut Streets which consisted of an eight-storey, reinforced concrete garage section and an eight-storey, steel and brick distribution center. The eight-storey garage section of the building remains; it is located in the National Register-listed Ramcat Historic District (see Figure 26).<sup>29</sup> Gimbel's moved some support operations off-site and by 1916 had a small two-storey brick warehouse at 20th and Market Streets, which housed a stable, garage, and furniture storage (not extant).<sup>30</sup> In 1931, Gimbel's opened a two-storey delivery station on Hamilton Street, designed by Abbott, Merkt & Company (not extant).<sup>31</sup> In 1937, Lit Brothers still had its warehouse and storage behind the store on Filbert Street; Lit's finally built a modern service center, designed by Simon & Simon, at 17th and Buttonwood Streets in 1939 (not extant). All of these facilities were nowhere near the scale of the Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store Warehouse.

The Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store also stood out from other department store warehouse and distribution facilities in terms of the efficiency of its operations. According to Longstreth, the Poplar Street warehouse was regarded as a model at the time of its construction; it was laid out to provide the most efficient flow of stock and operations.<sup>32</sup> By way of illustrating the importance of such management logistics, Longstreth relates a 1937 anecdote about Lit Brothers' Department Store's cumbersome inventory control, in which items would be moved from warehouse to store to

<sup>27</sup> Sheryl Jaslow, "N. Snellenburg Company Department Store Warehouse," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2003: Section 8, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Kevin McMahon, "Howell Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory," Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form, 2017: 12-13. On file at the PA SHPO. The commercial real estate website cityfeet.com has a listing for a building identified as Wanamaker's warehouse, located at 300 Allegheny Avenue. Although it has the characteristics of early 20<sup>th</sup> century reinforced concrete construction, the building does not appear on the 1919 Philadelphia Sanborn Insurance maps or on historic maps available at the Greater Philadelphia Geohistory Network; the date of construction and/or Wanamaker's acquisition of the property is unknown. The building has extensive later additions. See <http://www.cityfeet.com/cont/pa/philadelphia-industrial-space?lat=39.9882566612887090&lng=-75.1451637543827640#id=LN19926768&overlay=true>, accessed January 15, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps for Philadelphia, Volume 2, 1916, Sheet 134. <https://collection1.libraries.psu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/maps1/id/16437/rec/2>, accessed on February 10, 2017; see George Thomas, "Ramcat Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1985.

<sup>30</sup> Sanborn Insurance Maps for Philadelphia, Volume 2, 1916, Sheet 125. <https://collection1.libraries.psu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/maps1/id/16437/rec/2>, accessed on February 10, 2017. The building was designed by architect Willis Gaylord Hale. See [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj\\_display\\_allarchitects.cfm/51120](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj_display_allarchitects.cfm/51120), accessed on February 10, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Longstreth, "Purpose-Built Service Buildings ...".

<sup>32</sup> Longstreth, p. 69-70.

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warehouse to repair shop to delivery station in a time consuming and cost-adding series of transfers that were avoided by the Strawbridge & Clothier practices (Lit Brothers' did not build a consolidated warehouse until 1939). In comparison, the Strawbridge & Clothier Warehouse permitted more streamlined customer service and handling of bulk goods—most items were delivered directly from the warehouse to the customer, who chose from floor samples at the store. This stock management technique was quickly applied to other goods as well.<sup>33</sup>

The Warehouse served the needs of the company through the 1960s, as the City center and the local neighborhood declined, and the company's majority retail operations spread into the branch suburban stores. By the end of the 1960s, the expansion and relocation of retail sites, and particularly, the increased size of motor trucks<sup>34</sup> that were unable to easily maneuver in the close streets and the increasingly inadequate truck bays of the Warehouse, made the building obsolete and prompted the construction of a new larger highway-accessible facility near the airport.

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<sup>33</sup> Longstreth, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup> It is unknown if or when the rail spur into the warehouse was deactivated before the warehouse closed.

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**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
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**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
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**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: **Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE**

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

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.2  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places.)

**Latitude:** 39.969217  
**Longitude:** -75.151803

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

The NR boundary for the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse corresponds to tax parcel 88-4-0720-00, which can be located at the Philadelphia County Courthouse. The boundary is shown on the site map in Figure 2, drawn at a scale of 200 meters at 1/2 inch.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the land and physical resources historically associated with the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse.

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Bonnie Wilkinson Mark

organization Delta Development Group, Inc date September 22, 2017

street & number 2000 Technology Parkway telephone (717) 441-9030

city or town Mechanicsburg state PA zip code 17050-9407

e-mail bmark@deltaone.om

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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 any additional items.)



**United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse****Name of Property****Philadelphia County, PA****County and State****Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels 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 one on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Name of Property:** Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse  
**City or Vicinity:** City of Philadelphia  
**County:** Philadelphia **State:** Pennsylvania  
**Photographer:** Bonnie Wilkinson Mark  
**Date Photographed:** January 2017 (photos 1-8 and 10-20), June 2017 (photo 9)

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1. South elevation
2. South elevation – detail of main entrance
3. South elevation – parapet detail
4. South elevation – cornice detail
5. South and east elevations
6. East elevation – first floor recessed storefront detail
7. East elevation – Remote Delivery Service Addition
8. North and west elevations
9. North elevation – 7th through 10th Floors
10. West elevation – Remote Delivery Service Addition
11. West elevation
12. Remote Delivery Service Addition – 1st Floor interior
13. Remote Delivery Service Addition – 1st Floor interior with access from west elevation
14. Main Building – 2nd Floor railroad spur
15. Main Building – 5th Floor looking north
16. Remote Delivery Service Addition – 5th Floor looking south
17. Main Building – 8th Floor looking south
18. Main Building – skylight
19. Main Building – roof
20. Remote Delivery Service Addition – roof from 10th Floor

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**Figures**

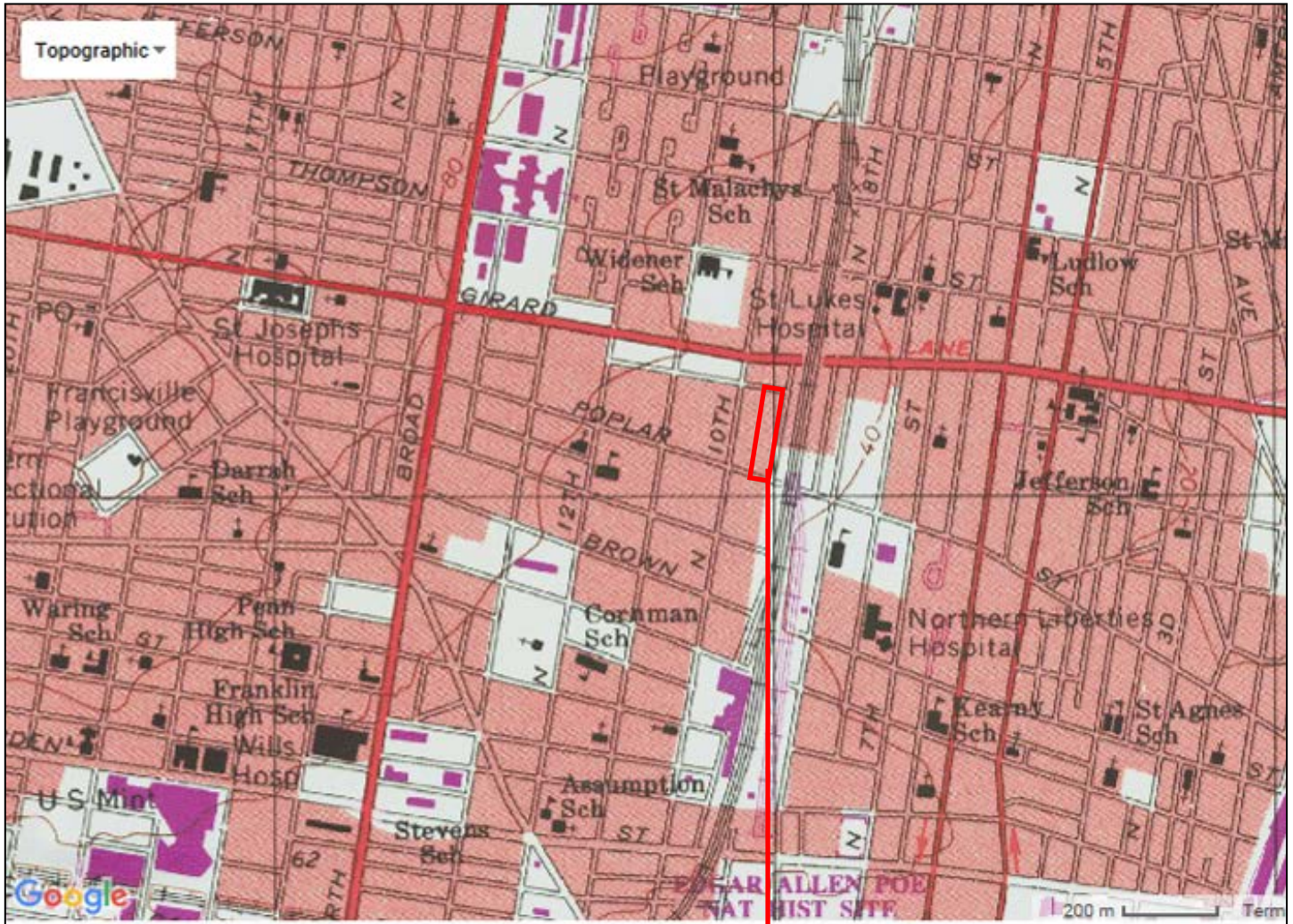


FIGURE 1 – USGS Map (NAD 1927)

Lat: 39.969217  
Long: -75.151803



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Name of Property

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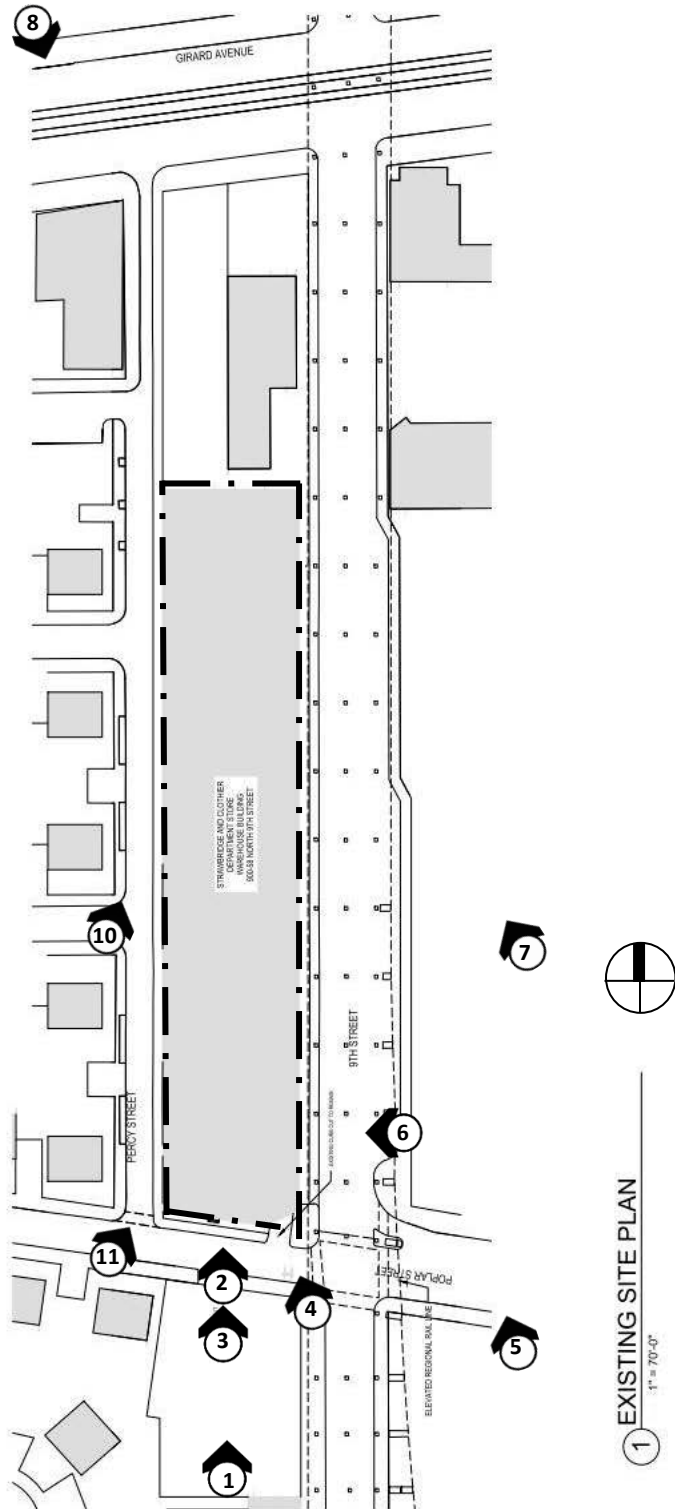
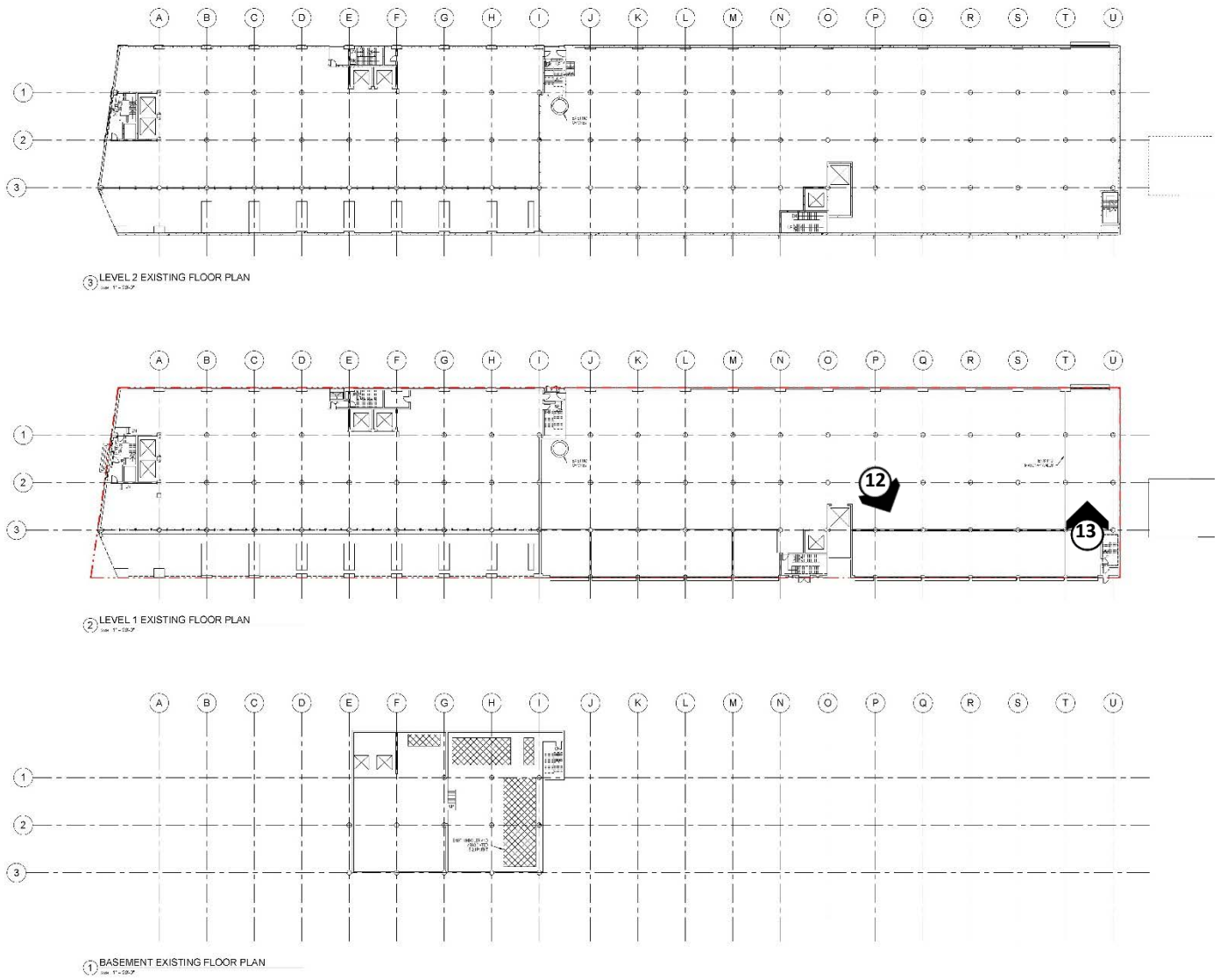


FIGURE 2 – National Register Boundary

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

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**FIGURE 3 – Existing Floor Plans and Photograph Keys – Floors Basement, 1, and 2S**

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

**Philadelphia County, PA**  
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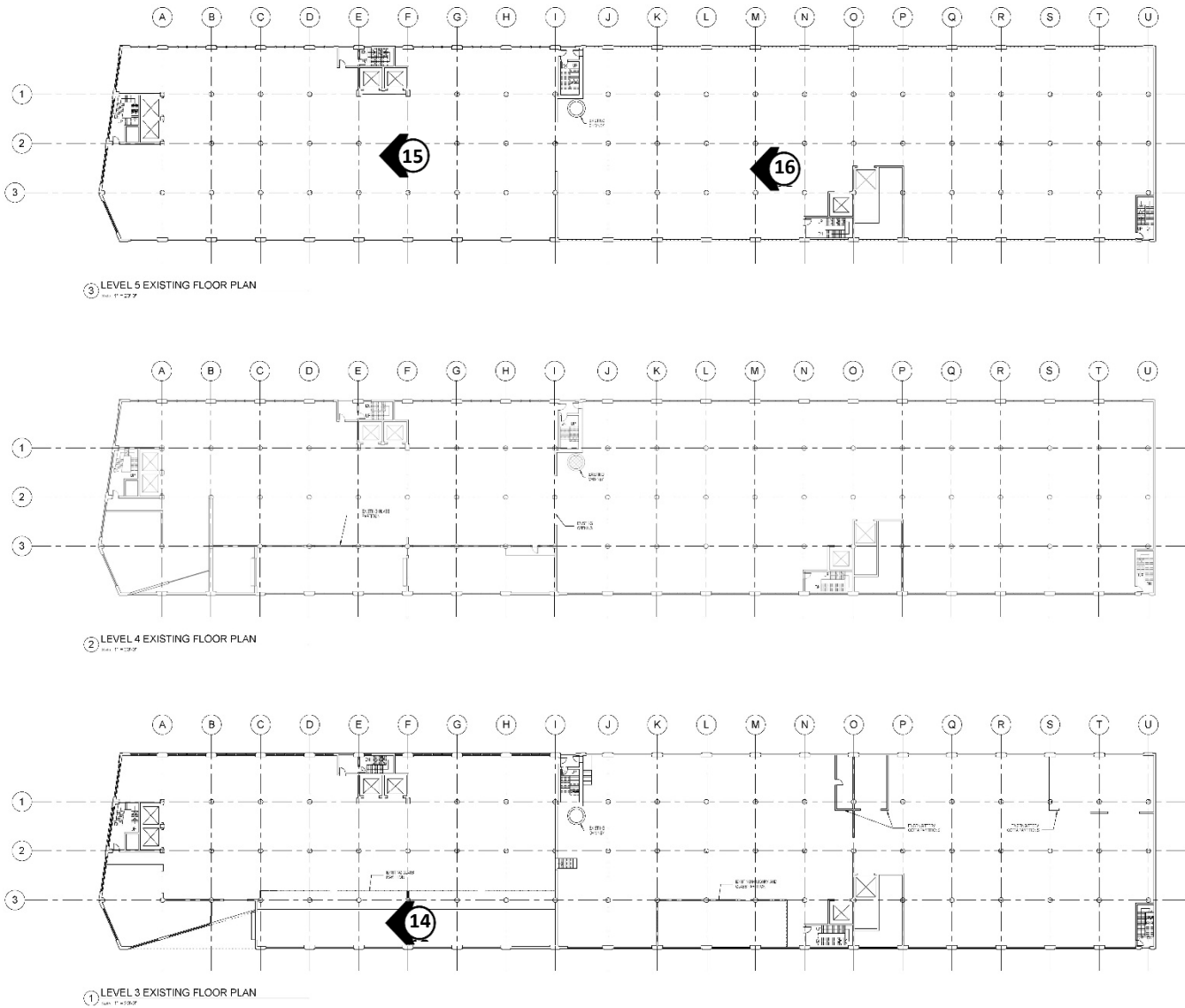
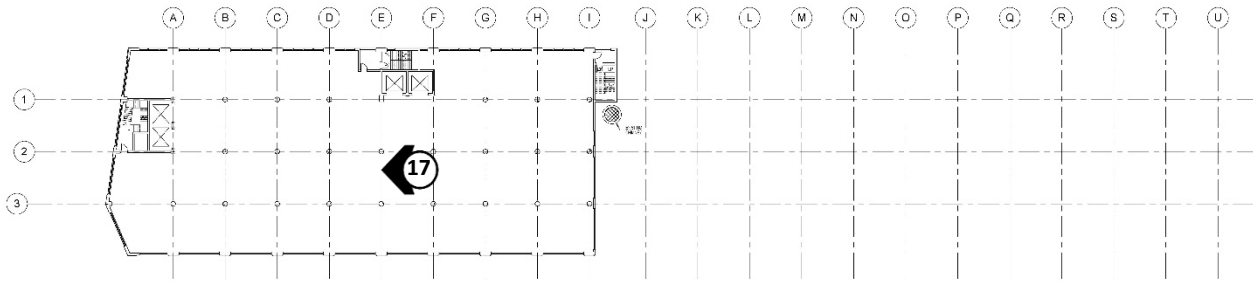


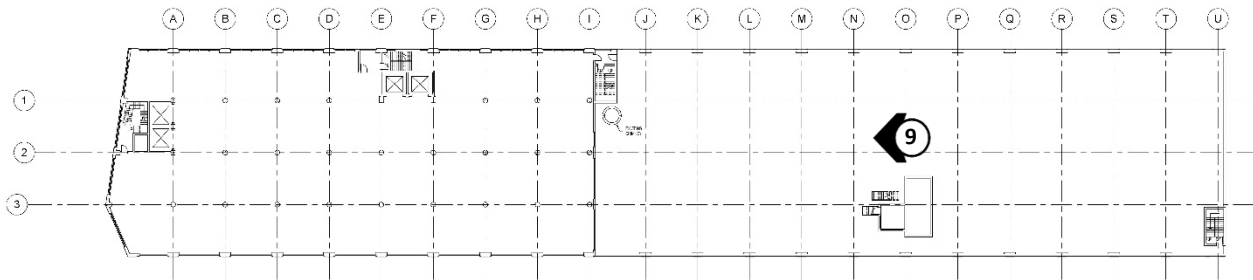
FIGURE 4 – Existing Floor Plans and Photograph Keys – Floors 3S and 2N. 4, and 5

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

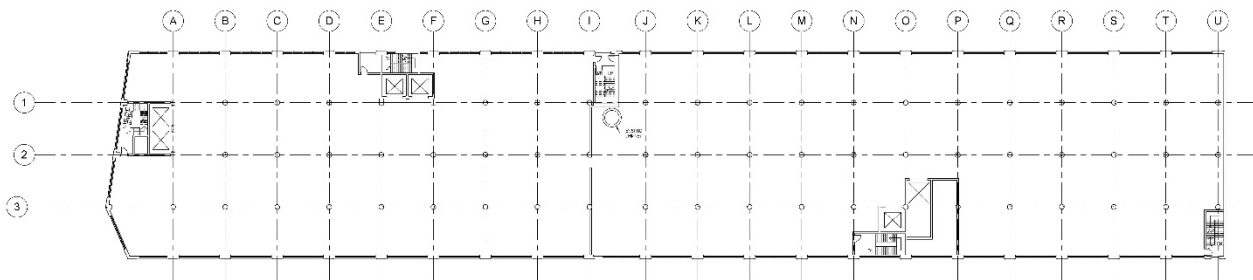
**Philadelphia County, PA**  
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3 LEVEL 8 EXISTING FLOOR PLAN  
DATE: 11-2007



2 LEVEL 7 EXISTING FLOOR PLAN  
DATE: 11-2007

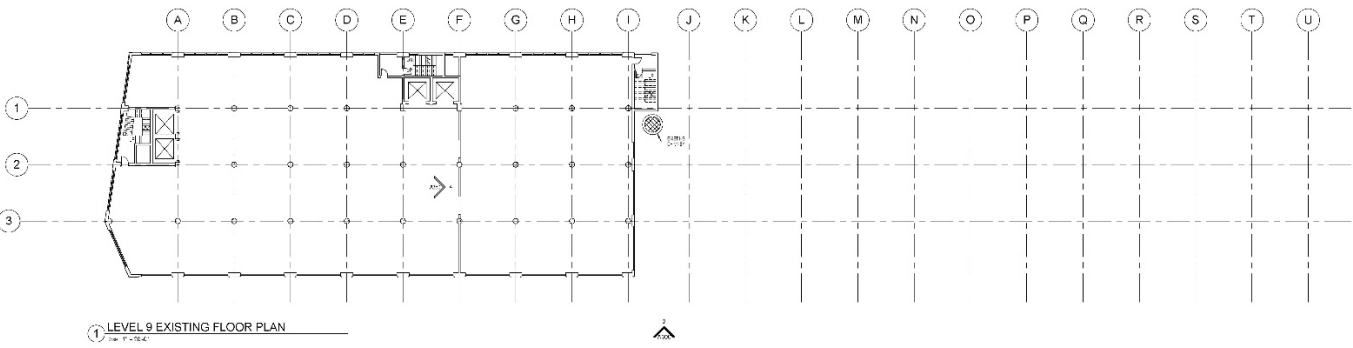
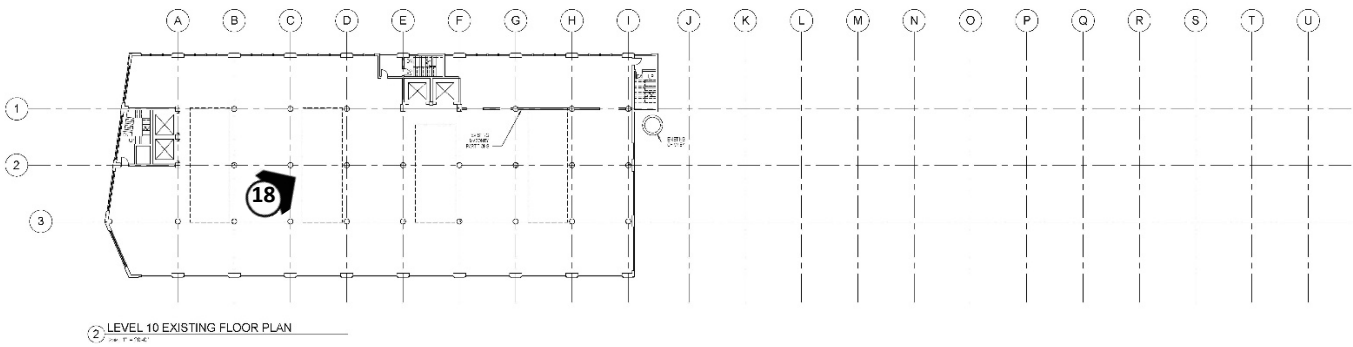
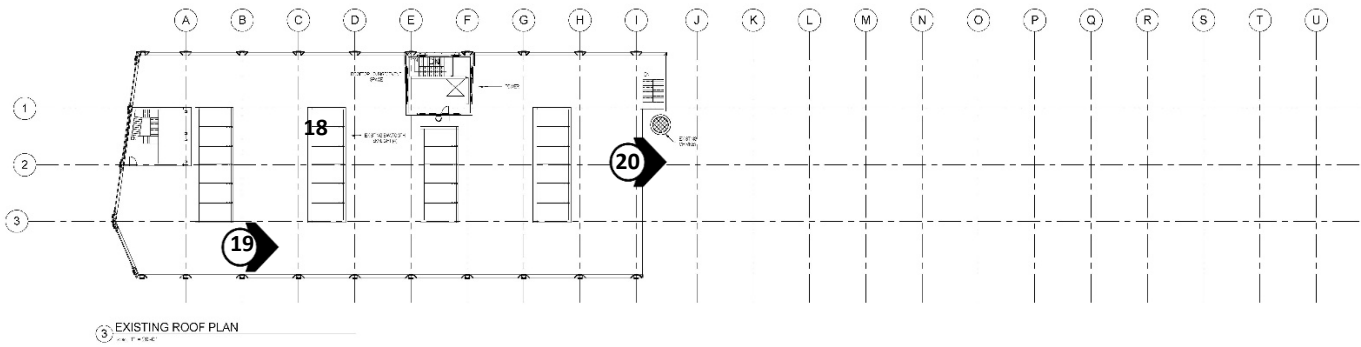


1 LEVEL 6 EXISTING FLOOR PLAN  
DATE: 11-2007

**FIGURE 5 – Existing Floor Plans and Photograph Keys – Floors 6, 7, and 8**

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**FIGURE 6 – Existing Floor Plans and Photograph Keys – Floors 9, 10, and roof**

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FIGURE 7 – Aerial. [www.bing.com/maps](http://www.bing.com/maps), accessed on June 15, 2017.





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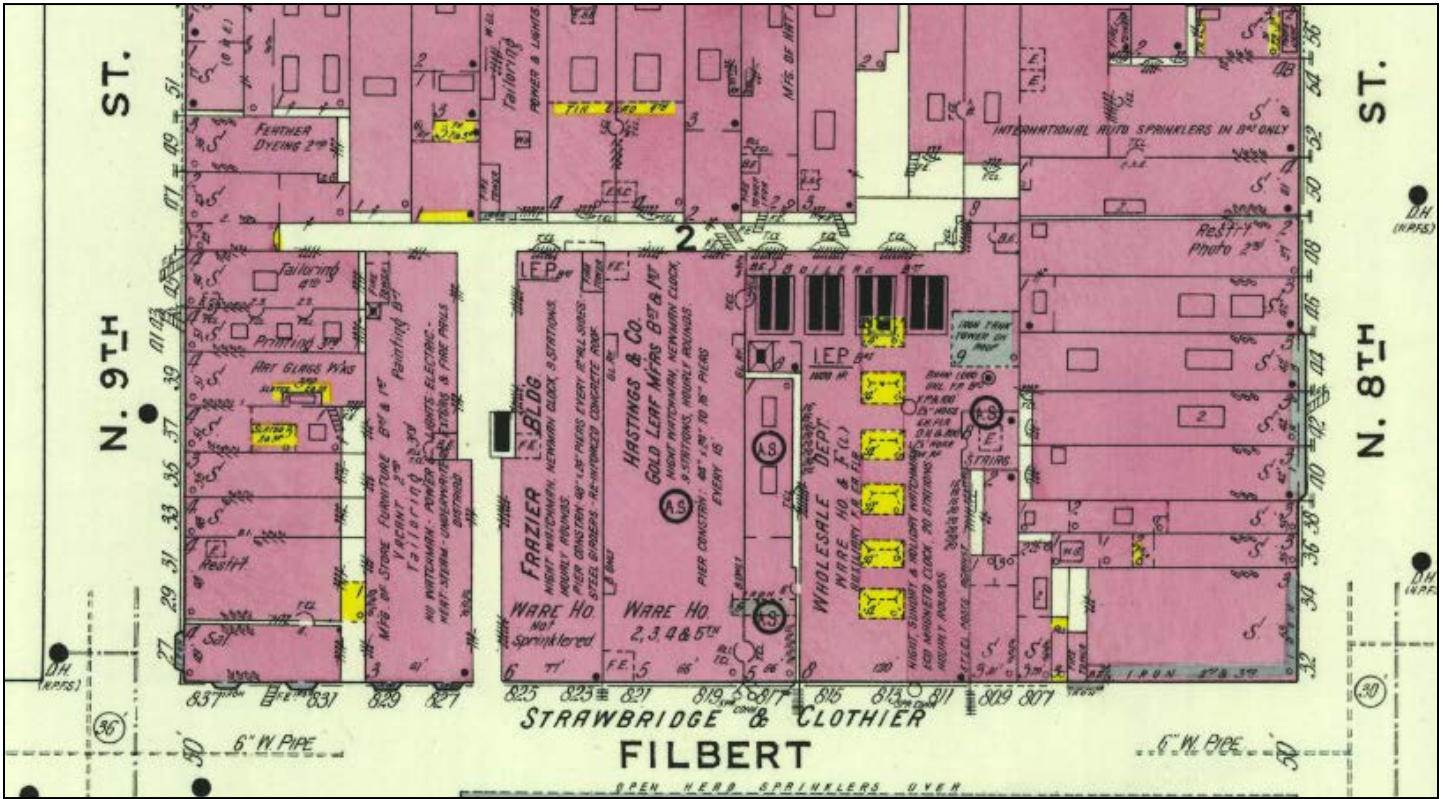


FIGURE 9 – Strawbridge & Clothier wholesale annex, (1896) (Addison Hutton) Sanborn Insurance Maps, Philadelphia, 1916, Volume 1, plate 14. <http://www.libraries.psu.edu>, accessed on February 10, 2017.

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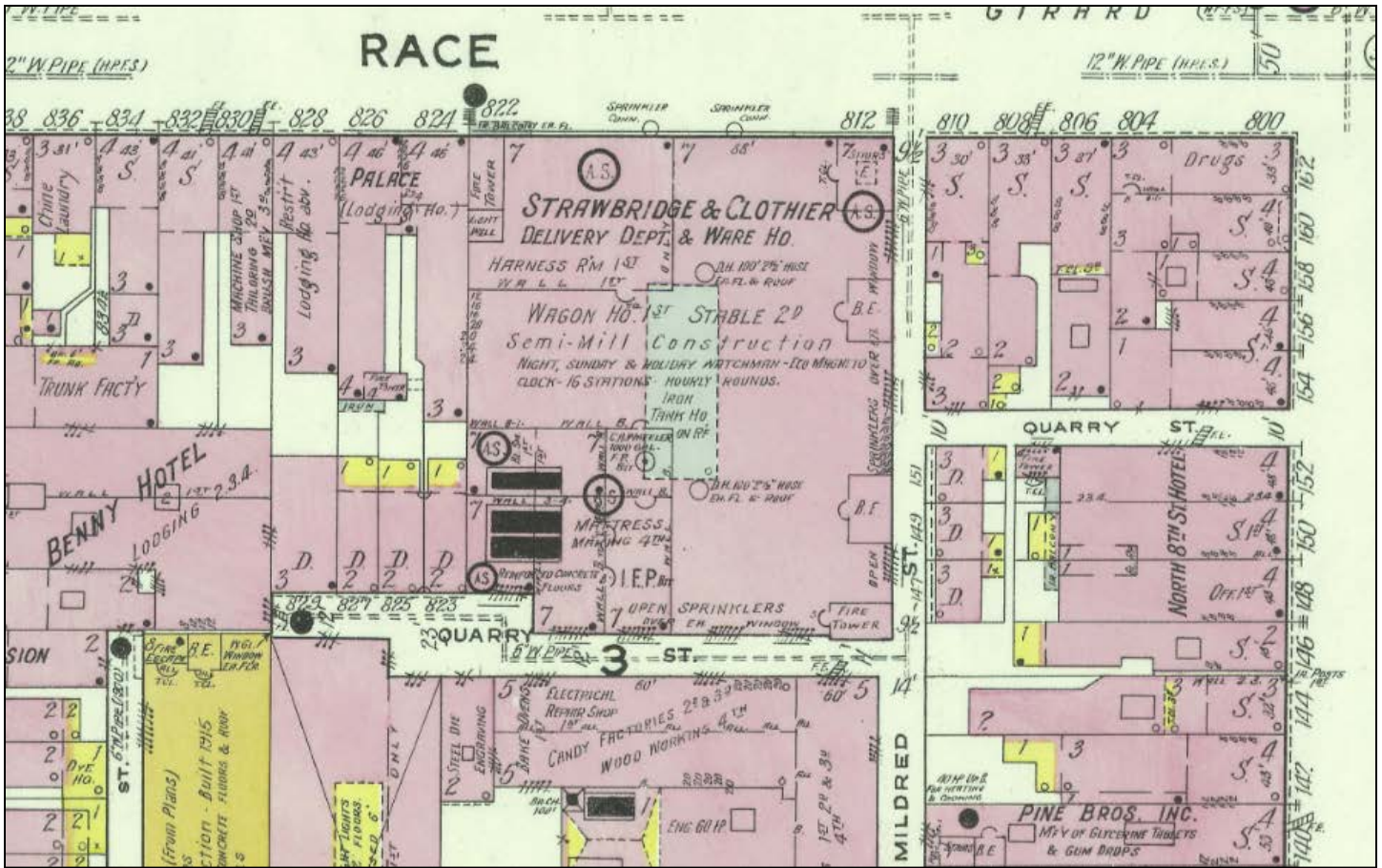
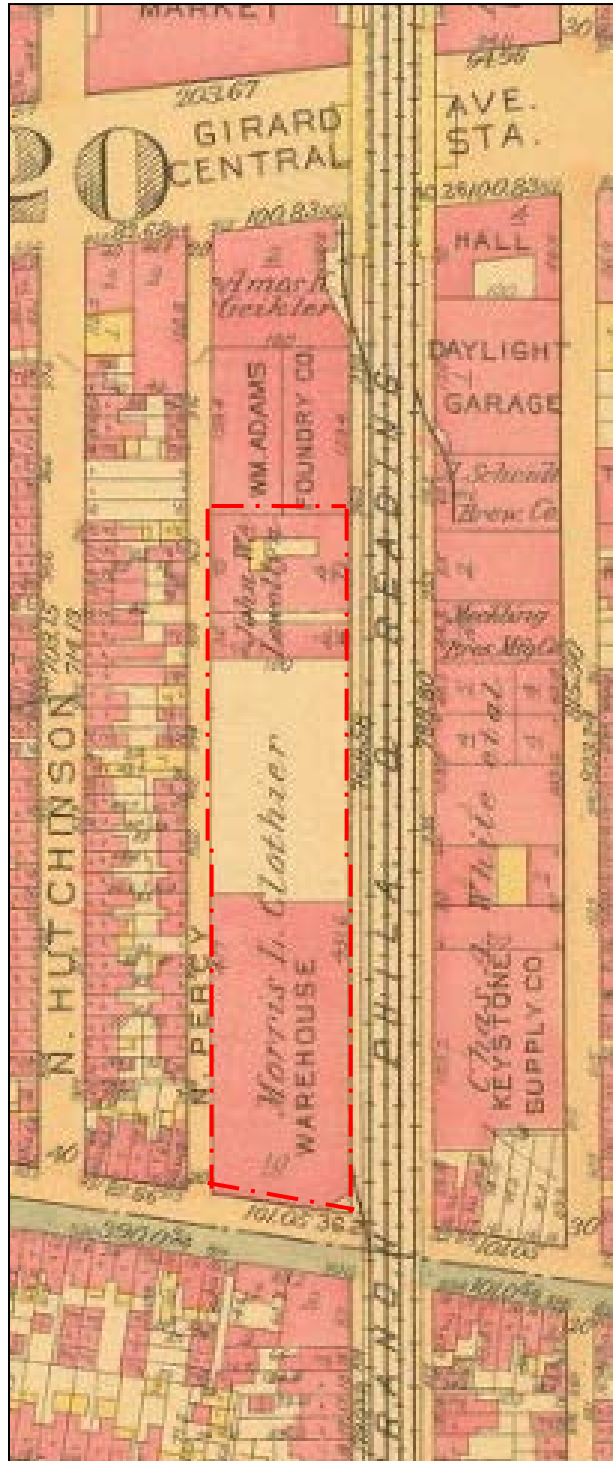


FIGURE 10 – Strawbridge & Clothier Delivery Dept. and Warehouse (1901) (Addison Hutton). Sanborn Insurance Maps, Philadelphia, 1916, Volume 1, plate 4. <http://www.libraries.psu.edu>, accessed on February 10, 2017.

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**FIGURE 11** – Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse. Morris Clothier held the property in trust prior to company incorporation in 1922. *Atlas of City of Philadelphia* (Central), 1922, Plate 11, G. W. Bromley. <http://www.philageohistory.org>, accessed on May 24, 2017.

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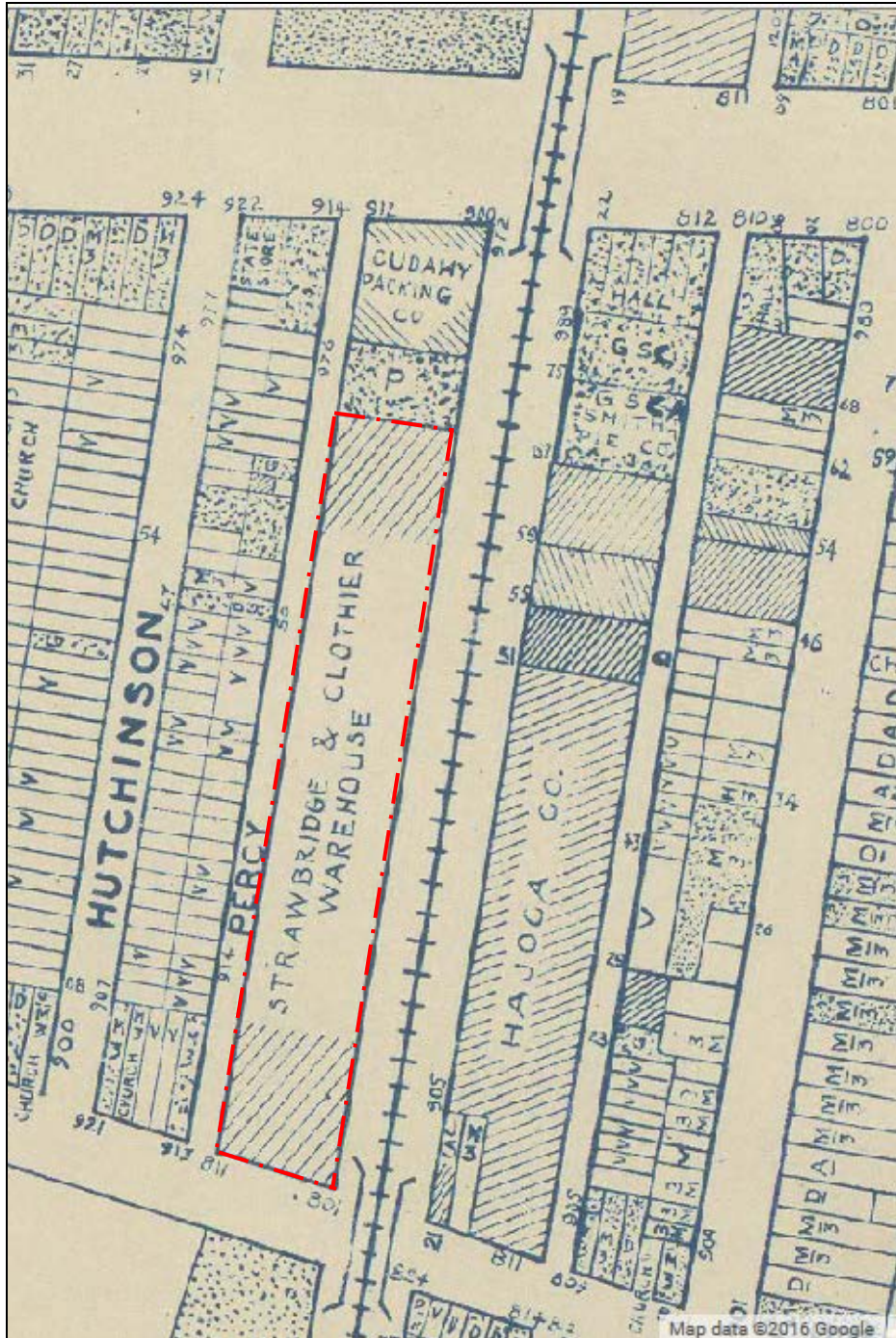
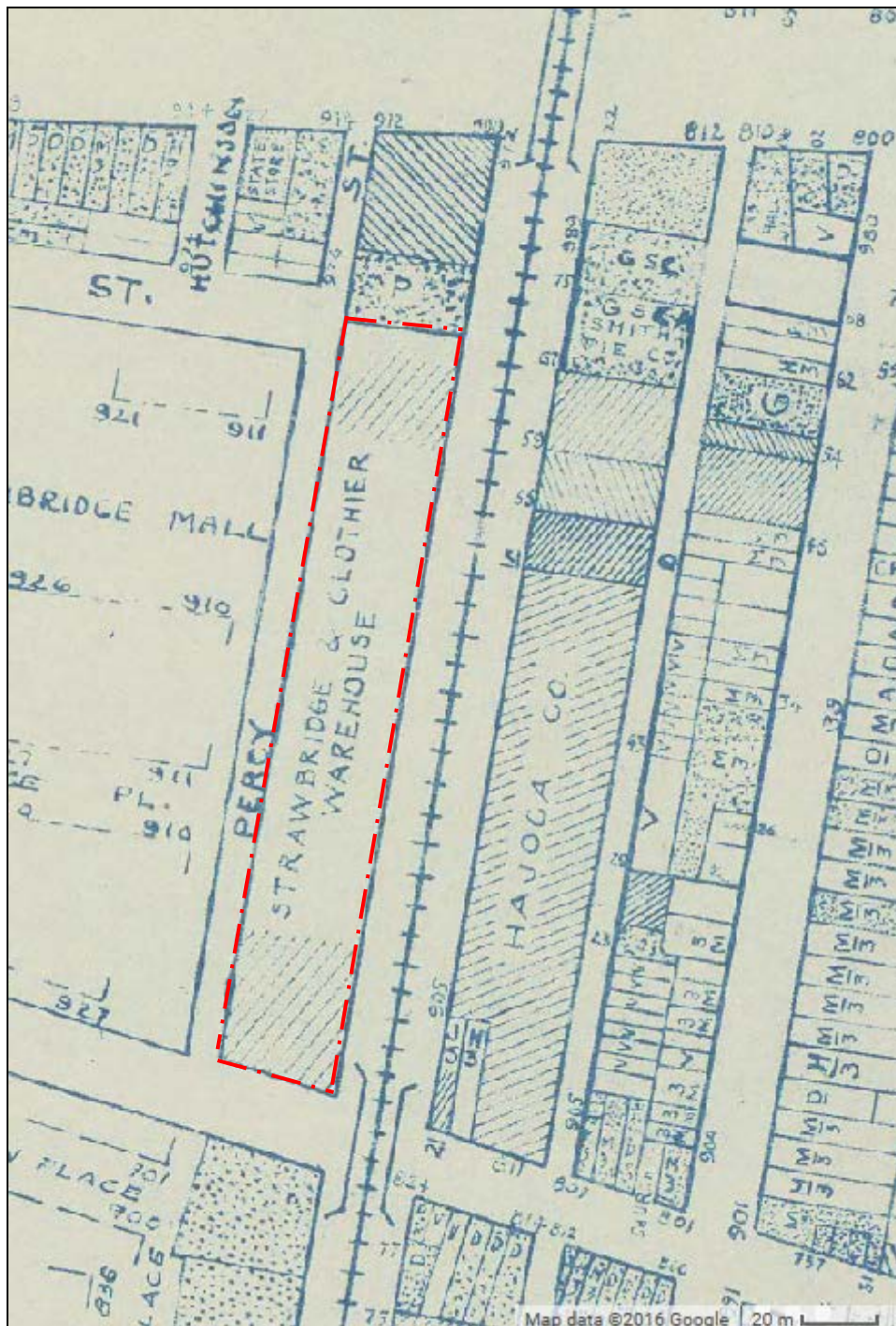


FIGURE 12 – Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse, 1942. Land Use Map, 1942 – Works Progress Administration, <http://www.philageohistory.org>, accessed on February 9, 2017.

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Name of Property

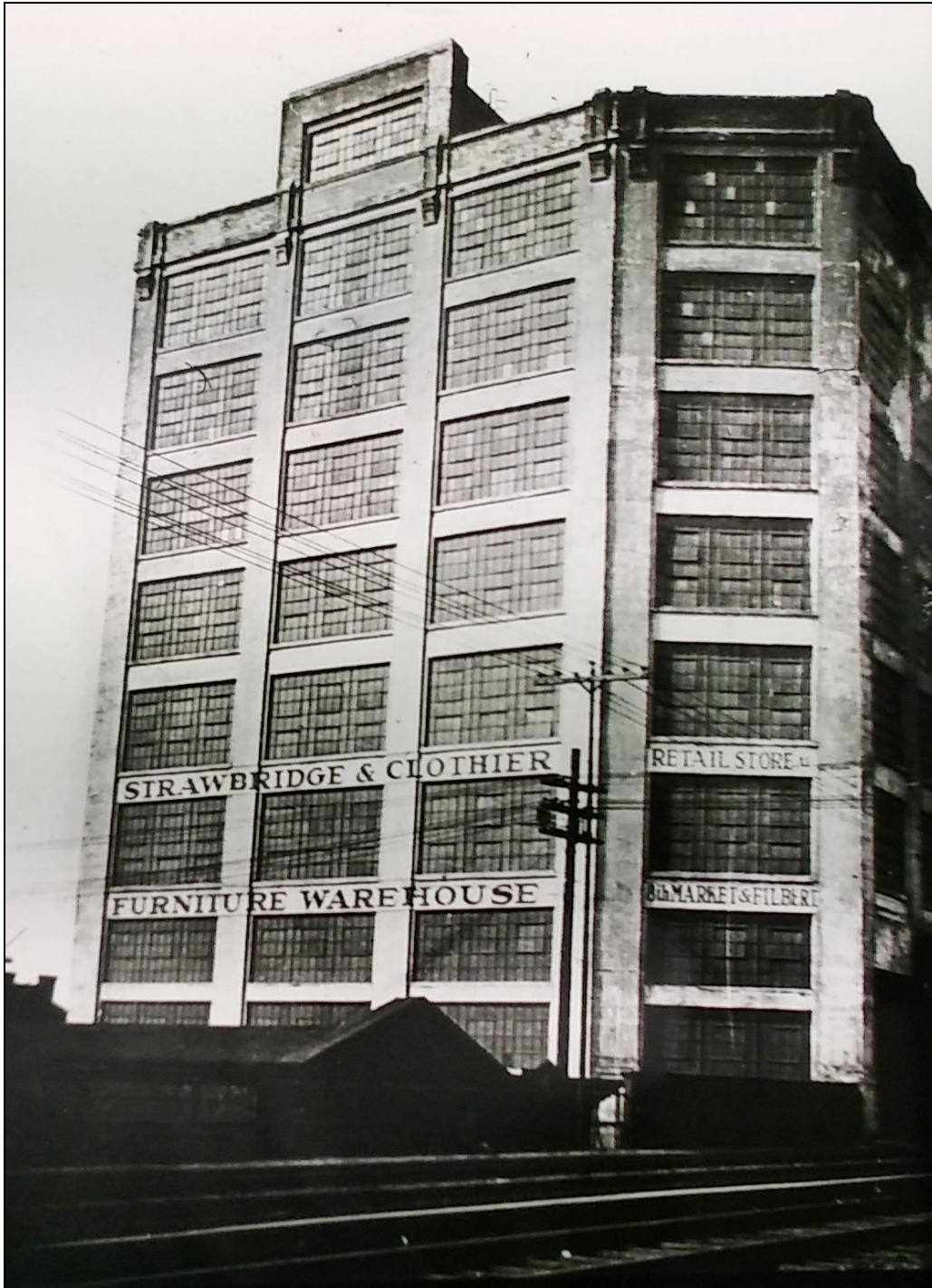
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**FIGURE 13** – Site of Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse in 1962. Land Use Map, 1962 – Works Progress Administration, <http://www.philageohistory.org>, accessed on February 9, 2017.

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**FIGURE 14** – South Elevation, 1917. **SOURCE:** Photograph – Box 20, file 8, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

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**FIGURE 15** – South and east elevations, 1919. **SOURCE:** Photograph – Box 7, file 8, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.



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**FIGURE 16** – West and south elevations, 1918. **SOURCE:** Ballinger Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Local ID#2855, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/image\\_gallery.cfm/1240921](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/image_gallery.cfm/1240921), accessed on February 8, 2017.

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**FIGURE 17** – First rail car loaded, July 18, 1918. **SOURCE:** Photograph – Box 7, file 8, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

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**FIGURE 18** – Company employees who worked in the warehouse, October 1949. **SOURCE:** Photograph – Box 16, file 1, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

## United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse

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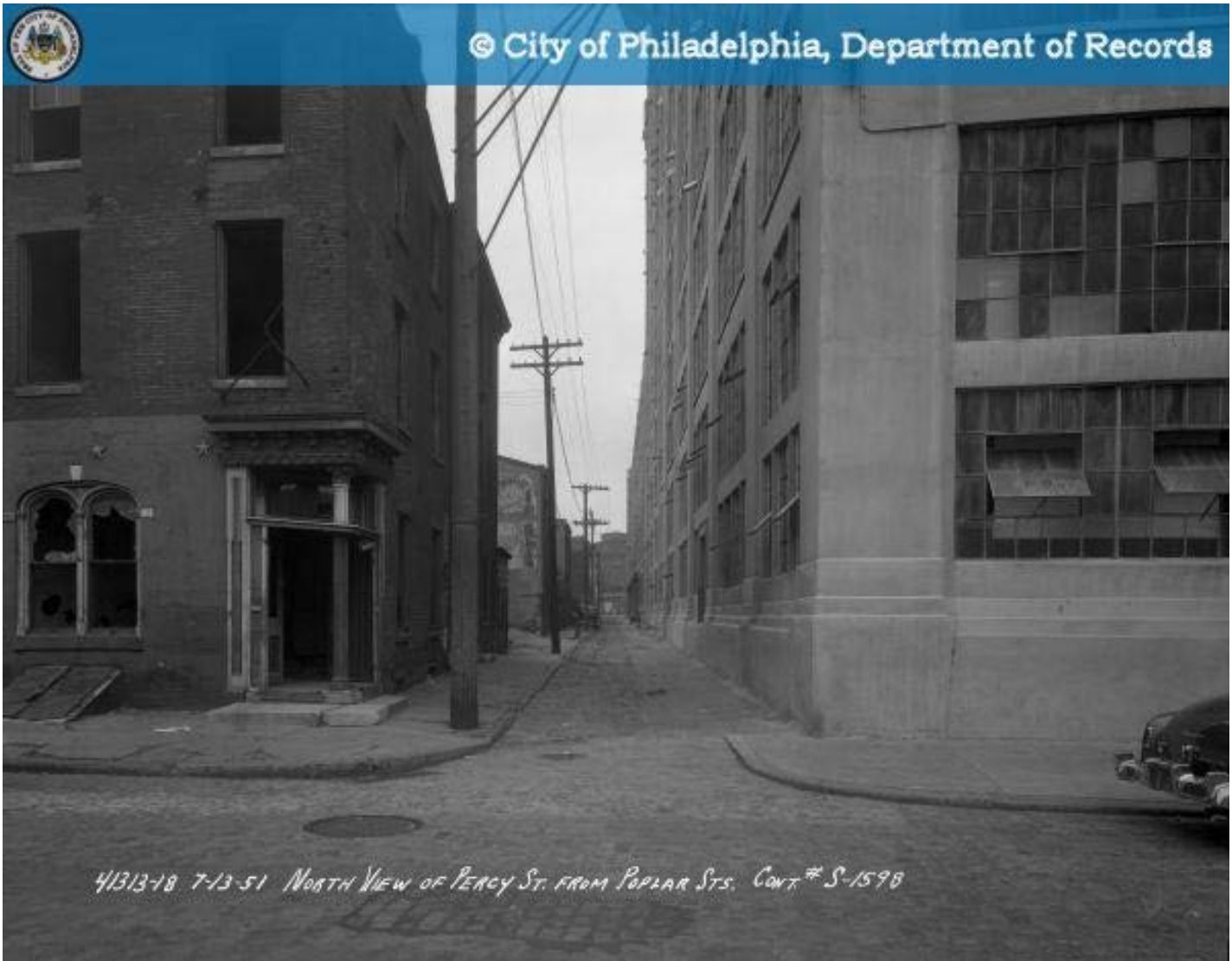
**FIGURE 19** – Company employees who worked in the warehouse, October 1949. **SOURCE:** Photograph – Box 16, file 1, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**

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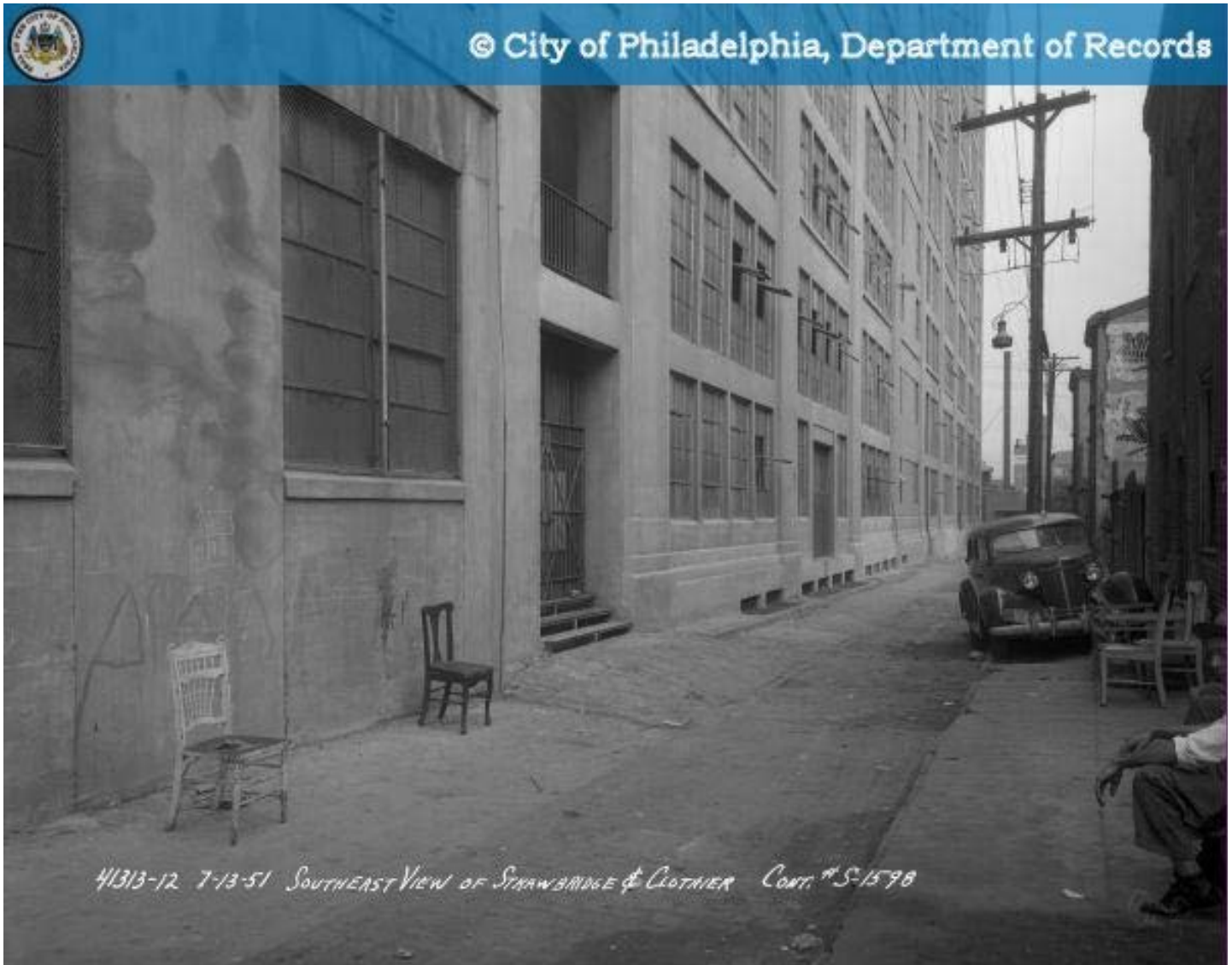


**FIGURE 20** – North view of Percy Street from Poplar Street, July 13, 1951, *City of Philadelphia Records*.

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Search.aspx?action=link&type=address&address=9th+St+near+POPLAR+ST>, accessed on March 7, 2017.

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**FIGURE 21** – Looking south towards Poplar Street from Percy Street, July 13, 1951, *City of Philadelphia Records*.  
<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Search.aspx?action=link&type=address&address=9th+St+near+POPLAR+ST>, accessed on March 7, 2017.

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

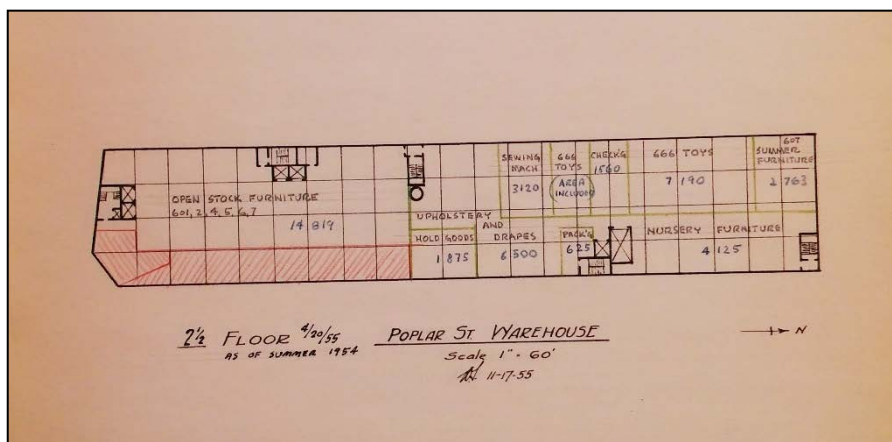
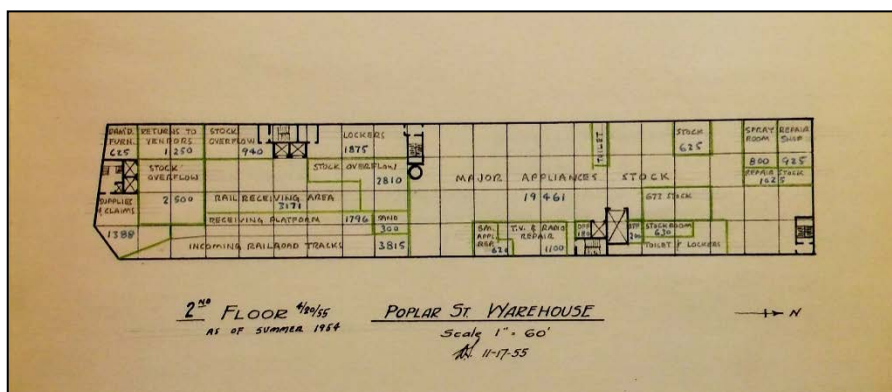
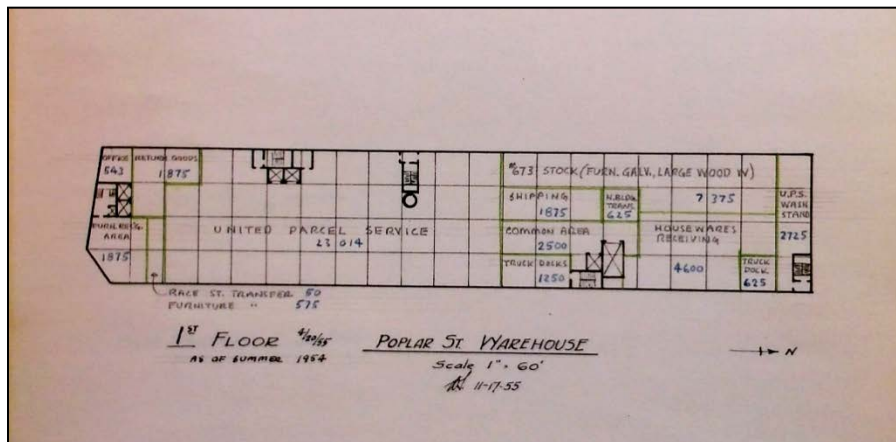
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County and State



FIGURE 22 – Looking south on Percy Street, July 13, 1951, *City of Philadelphia Records*.  
<http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Search.aspx?action=link&type=address&address=9th+St+near+POPLAR+ST>, accessed on March 13, 2017.

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
 Name of Property

**Philadelphia County, PA**  
 County and State



**FIGURE 23** – Floor plans for the Strawbridge & Clothier Warehouse dated November 17, 1955. The first and second floors show the areas assigned to UPS and the rail spur entry.  
**SOURCE:** “Small Scale Block Plans” (ring binder), Box 33, Series V, Real Estate Records. General Plans, Construction, Valuation, Strawbridge & Clothier records (Accession 2117), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807.

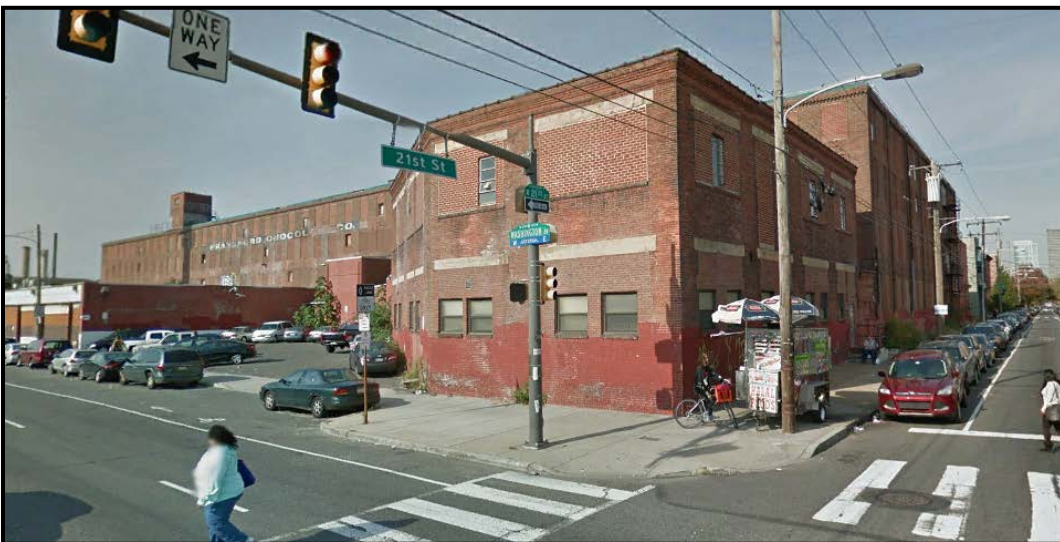


**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

**Philadelphia County, PA**  
County and State



**FIGURE 24** – N. Snellenberg Department Store Warehouse (1914), 1825 – 1851 North 10th Street  
**SOURCE:** National Register of Historic Places Registration Form 2003.



**FIGURE 25** – Howell Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory/Wanamaker Warehouse (1865), 2101 Washington Avenue. **SOURCE:** GoogleEarth 2017.

**Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store Warehouse**  
Name of Property

**Philadelphia County, PA**  
County and State



**FIGURE 26** – Garage section of Wanamaker Warehouse (1916) at 24th and Walnut Streets. The warehouse section has been demolished.  
**SOURCE:** GoogleEarth 2017

**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 18 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.



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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: Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store Warehouse  
Multiple Name:  
State & County: PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

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

Reference number: SG100003137  
Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

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

Accept       Return       Reject      11/20/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary AOS: commerce; POS: 1918-1970; LOS: local  
Comments:

Recommendation/ NR Criterion: A  
Criteria

Reviewer Lisa Deline      Discipline Historian

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

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

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



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION



October 9, 2018

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

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

Dear Ms. Beasley:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

April E. Frantz  
NR Reviewer/Eastern Region

enc.