

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| STATE:<br>Pennsylvania  |      |
| COUNTY:<br>Philadelphia |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY        |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER            | DATE |

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Old City

AND/OR HISTORIC: Old City (including parts of Washington Square East Development Area and Franklin Square East Development Area)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
(see Continuation Sheet)

CITY OR TOWN:  
Philadelphia

STATE:  
Pennsylvania

CODE: 42

COUNTY:  
Philadelphia

CODE: 101

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)   | OWNERSHIP   | STATUS   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site<br><input type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both  | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered  | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)  |   |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)  |
| Comments: _____<br>_____<br>_____   |   |  |  |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall, Department of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Broad and Market Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Philadelphia

STATE:  
Pennsylvania

CODE:  
42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
(see Continuation Sheet)

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

|           |   |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                                 |  |                                | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered       | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In spite of the diversity of architectural styles in the Old City area most of the buildings are brick, a minority faced with granite, marble, brownstone, stucco, or cast iron. Trim is usually of wood or stone for the earlier buildings and after 1850 often of iron. Buildings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries are residential in character and occasionally in function, two or three-and-a-half stories with gable roofs. Those of the mid-19th century (1830-80), however, are commercial buildings, four or five stories with flat roofs, often with a store front of a material different from the upper stories.

Very few of the buildings, almost exclusively those in Elfreth's Alley, have been restored. The rest of the buildings remain with their exteriors and interiors in various degrees of alteration, but most of them have been altered but slightly over the years.

The commercial character of the Old City area is predominant. The neighborhood is a showcase of 19th-century wholesale-retail stores and warehouses. Among the more outstanding examples is the John Singer warehouse at the rear of 319 Market Street, the oldest surviving warehouse in Philadelphia. The three-and-a-half-story brick building was built in 1806 and is similar to the LaTour warehouse on South Water Street that was demolished in 1967. Nearby the architect S. D. Button provided in the five-story Leland Building, 37-39 South Third Street, an early (1855) architectural solution for the tall, narrow commercial building by recessing the spandrels behind continuous granite piers to emphasize verticality. The commercial building at the northwest corner of Front and Arch Streets is a fine example of mid-19th-century cast-iron architecture. Built between 1855 and 1857, it has brick bearing walls and a cast-iron front with an arcade at each of its five stories articulated by engaged columns, originally sanded and painted to simulate marble.

Throughout the area are entire blocks of commercial buildings that are as significant as individual structures. The west side of North Front Street between Market and Arch Streets (2-66 N. Front Street) is a rare surviving block of early-19th-century brick warehouses, characterized by marble piers at most of the ground stories. The north side of Chestnut Street between Strawberry and Third Streets (213-43 Chestnut Street) serves as a catalogue of mid-19th-century commercial architecture, displaying brick, brownstone, granite, and cast-iron facades with a variety of designs ranging from the academic to the utilitarian. The east side of North Third Street between Market and Arch Streets (1-63 N. Third Street) is even more stylistically diverse, ranging from gable-roof brick stores to Italianate and Gothic designs in iron and sandstone.

In spite of its commercial character the area retains some of the nation's most famous residences. Elfreth's Alley, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965, is the oldest unchanged and continually inhabited street in Philadelphia and illustrates the typical side-street dwellings of 18th-century artisans. Twenty-nine contiguous brick houses extend along this six-foot-wide alley between Front and Second Streets above Arch Street. Five similar dwellings

(see Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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| COUNTY<br>Philadelphia |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY       |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER           | DATE |
|                        |      |

(Number all entries)

7. Description

are at 12-18 and 24 Cuthbert Street (formerly Coombe's Alley), a parallel alley below Arch Street. Unlike their neighbors on Elfreth's Alley, these houses have not been restored or rehabilitated.

Less famous than Elfreth's Alley yet significant, is the German Reformed Church district, an area including 327 Cherry Street (Old German School) on the south, Nos. 129-37, 141-43 North Fourth Street on the west, and the First Reformed Church, 322-30 Race Street, on the north. All of these properties were owned by the German Reformed Church in the early 19th century and played a prominent role in the predominantly German neighborhood. The Reformed Church was founded in Philadelphia in 1727 and erected its first church building on this site in 1747. The present building was its third structure, built in 1837; since 1967 it has been in the process of restoration. Abutting the church's lot to the south is the two-and-a-half-story brick Old German School. Built in 1761, most of its original fabric was destroyed by a fire in 1878; it has recently been renovated into a florist shop. The seven houses on North Fourth Street were built as dwellings during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and are now being renovated into shops and homes, illustrating how old structures can be converted to contemporary use without disrupting or destroying the architectural scale or historic nature of a neighborhood.

The Betsy Ross House, 239 Arch Street, is one of the best known houses in Philadelphia, popularly accepted, even if not historically documented, as the residence of Betsy Ross, the legendary maker of the first flag of the United States. The two-and-a-half-story brick town house is a fine example of 18th-century Philadelphia domestic architecture, but has become a national shrine because of its supposed associations with Betsy Ross. It was built c. 1760, conjecturally restored in the 1930's, and in 1966 a wing for visitors' center was added to the rear.

Some of the oldest and most significant churches in the United States are found within this area. Christ Church, 22-26 North Second Street, an outstanding example of Palladian church architecture in the United States, was built between 1727 and 1744; its steeple was completed in 1754. Many Revolutionary heroes worshipped here, helping it to be named a National Shrine by Act of Congress in 1950. A block to the west, at 330 Arch Street, is the Arch Street Friends Meeting, built in 1804 from the designs of Owen Biddle, author of The Young Carpenter's Assistant (1805), and enlarged in 1811. A center of 19th-century Quaker activity, it remains the site of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and was recently put on the National Register.

A block further north, at 322-30 Race Street, Old First (German) Reformed Church is being restored to its 1837 appearance. Another block to the north, at the southeast and northwest corners of Fourth and New Streets stand St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church and St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church respectively. St. George's Church, also on the National Register, was built in 1769 and remains the world's oldest

(see Continuation Sheet)

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

7. Description

Methodist Church in continuous use. St. Augustine's was originally built between 1796 and 1801 but was burned during the "Native American" riots of 1844; the present building dates from 1848.

Although famous Bank Row, Chestnut Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, lies just outside the officially designated Old City area, three important bank buildings remain within the area. Bank of North America, 307 Chestnut Street, was the first commercial bank in the United States, chartered by the Continental Congress in 1781. In 1929 it merged with the First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company and continued to occupy the present, original site until 1967. The present Late Victorian Roman Revival building was built in 1895 from the designs of James H. Windrim.

Adjacent to the Bank of North America, at 315 Chestnut Street, is the First National Bank, the first national bank chartered in the United States. John McArthur, Jr. designed the chaste Italianate building, which was erected between 1865 and 1867 and is now a branch bank of the First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company. Nearby is the Mechanics Bank, 22 South Third Street. Built in 1837 it remains one of the last local Greek Revival designs of the noted architect-engineer William Strickland. It has been used as the Norwegian Seamen's Church since 1930. Other bank buildings of less importance are also in the area, including the Manufacturers National Bank, 29 North Third Street, and one at 18 South Third Street with notable Egyptian-Revival Doors.

**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   | _____  |

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Old City area is part of the original 1682 plan of the city of Philadelphia as laid out by Thomas Holme, surveyor for the province's proprietor, William Penn. In terms of architectural style and historic significance it remains one of the most important parts of the city. It includes some of the city's famous residences, historic churches, important financial institutions, and perhaps most importantly rare surviving 19th-century commercial districts, probably without equal in the United States for their extent and diversity.

Although the area possesses some significant buildings, some of which have been restored, equally as important is the promise of the area for future renovations into a residential-commercial neighborhood. It is relatively isolated from the bustle of the large retail and office buildings of the city's center. Superhighways border the area to the north and east. Society Hill, a successfully restored and preserved historic residential district, borders it to the south, and the Independence National Historic Park, encompassing some of the most historically significant buildings in the nation, borders much of the area to the west. Preservation and development of the Old City area would create a large, contiguous district of historic buildings renovated for contemporary use.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic Philadelphia: From the Founding Until the Early Nineteenth Century, Vol. 43, part 1, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1953.

Sellers, Horace Wells, "Old Phila. Survey," unpublished typescript of a report on the 1931 A. I. A. survey. Copies at the American Philosophical Society and at the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Tatum, George B., Penn's Great Town: 250 Years of Philadelphia Architecture, Philadelphia, 1961 (see Continuation Sheet)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER  | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |    | LATITUDE  | LONGITUDE               |  |
|   | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |    | Degrees Minutes Seconds   | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW  | 39 ° 57 ' 22"           | 75 ° 09 ' 00"           |    | ° ' "   | ° ' "                   |  |
| NE  | 39 ° 57 ' 22"           | 75 ° 08 ' 33"           |    |   |                         |  |
| SE  | 39 ° 56 ' 48"           | 75 ° 08 ' 33"           |    |   |                         |  |
| SW  | 39 ° 56 ' 48"           | 75 ° 09 ' 00"           |    |   |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 75 Acres

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Richard Webster, Editor of HABS Catalog for Philadelphia

ORGANIZATION: Philadelphia Historical Commission DATE: 1/21/72

STREET AND NUMBER: 1319 City Hall Annex

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

I am the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), and 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
State Liaison Officer  
Deputy Executive Director,  
Pennsylvania Historical and  
Museum Commission

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Historic Philadelphia: From the Founding Until the Early Nineteenth Century, Vol. 43, part 1, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1953.

Sellers, Horace Wells, "Old Phila. Survey," unpublished typescript of a report on the 1931 A. I. A. survey. Copies at the American Philosophical Society and at the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Tatum, George B., Penn's Great Town: 250 Years of Philadelphia Architecture, Philadelphia, 1961 (see Continuation Sheet)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE  | LONGITUDE               |  |
|  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees Minutes Seconds   | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW   | 39 ° 57 ' 22"           | 75 ° 09 ' 00"           |        | ° ' "   | ° ' "                   |  |
| NE   | 39 ° 57 ' 22"           | 75 ° 08 ' 33"           |        |   |                         |  |
| SE   | 39 ° 56 ' 48"           | 75 ° 08 ' 33"           |        |   |                         |  |
| SW   | 39 ° 56 ' 48"           | 75 ° 09 ' 00"           |        |   |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 75 Acres

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Richard Webster, Editor of HABS Catalog for Philadelphia

ORGANIZATION: Philadelphia Historical Commission      DATE: 1/21/72

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1313 City Hall Annex

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia      STATE: Pennsylvania      CODE: 42

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name: [Signature]  
State Liaison Officer

Title: Deputy Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Date: 4/17/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Old City HD

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA CO  
CAMDEN CO

4427

250 000 FEET (PA.)

4426

5 MI. TO U.S. 13

4425

4424

4423  
57'30"

2.7 MI. TO U.S. 130

ATLANTIC CITY 62 MI.

4422

55