

JAN 05 REC'D

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Girard Group

and/or common Piers 3 and 5 North

2. Location

street & number Delaware Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

N/A

state Pennsylvania

code 42

county Philadelphia

code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private (pending)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Piers 3 and 5 North Associates

street & number 1626 Locust Street

city, town Philadelphia

N/A vicinity of

state PA 19103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Deed Registry Unit, Department of Records

street & number Room 153, City Hall, Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia

state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None known has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Piers 3 and 5 North (the Girard Group) in Philadelphia's central riverfront district, stand immediately north of Penn's Landing, an urban park built for the U. S. Bicentennial; they are also a block south of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. Their west fronts face the dual carriageway of Delaware Avenue, a riverfront road built in part in the early nineteenth century to accommodate Philadelphia's maritime commerce. A high stone retaining wall which relates to the construction of Interstate 95 occupies a major portion of the west side of Delaware Avenue. North of this three-story high road construction is a range of warehouses (ranging in date from c.1850 to 1925), which represent a rare survivorship of what was once a common building stock along Delaware Avenue. Adjacent to the warehouses and standing at the corner of Race Street is a brick and brownstone pumping station, now redundant (Figure 1). The mammoth ashlar abutment of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge stands on the opposite side of Race Street. On the east side of Delaware Avenue, between the bridge and the Girard Group, are two finger piers constructed of steel and corrugated metal (Figure 2).

The Girard Group (Piers 3 and 5) refers to a five-part complex of which the principal features are two architecturally embellished concrete and steel sheds which house double berth piers. Each of these structures accommodates approximately 101,177 square feet. Extending along the Delaware Avenue bulkhead between the two finger piers is a range of 10 one-story concrete, steel, and brick sheds, which are 24 feet deep and 126 feet long. The continuous streetside loading dock attending these sheds is a 7'6" wide concrete platform, sheltered by a cast iron canopy with a wood frame covered with copper sheeting. Small metal medallions survive in some sections of the fascia, indicating original ornament. North of Pier 5 is a shorter range of five one-story sheds which connect on the north to a compatible row of five two-story offices (canopied). Loading platforms also attend this range of ancillary structures (Photo 1).

The finger piers differ slightly in dimension, accommodating the gradual change in the established pierhead. Pier 3 is 546 feet by 185 feet, composed of 101,177 square feet; Pier 5 is 531 feet by 185 feet, composed of 98,209 square feet. While the piers dominate by virtue of their size, there is nevertheless a sense of order and scale, achieved by a geometry of organization based on a system of architectural panels and piers. These relate to the structural pier and lintel system which is basic to the scheme. Regular but unequal rhythms explore a strongly organic sense of placement. While the rhythms work toward axuality when possible (as in the bulkhead sheds where loading dock doors are the principal feature), the Piers (which do feature a central but secondary vertical element) depict no major central entrance because no such feature is necessary to the function of the superstructure.

The pier fronts are articulated into nine units; windowless terminal bays flank a range of seven "access" units. These alternate the four wide bays with narrower units. The spaces between the four equally wide, two-story-plus-mezzanine bays are divided horizontally by a limestone lintel devised in a pyramid of panels simulating the three planes

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of an entablature. Overhead rolling metal doors operate within the first floor areas of these bays, but only the door of the freight car entrance (the second principal bay in Pier 5 or the third principal bay in Pier 3) occupies the entire space. In the three other principal bays, bands of continuous glazing relate to a mezzanine area and separate the limestone of the mid-section from a similar, narrower band which crowns the wagon entrance (Photos 1 and 2).

Above the limestone lintels are individual windows set up in triplicate at the second floor level. These are recessed from the wall plane and set on separate limestone sills. Capping the ranges of windows and the intervening panels and piers is a three-plane limestone string-course which serves as the major horizontal emphasis overall.

In lieu of a cornice, a stone-capped, brick parapet wall terminates the pier elevations. Appropriate visual breaks in the overall horizontality occur in the terminal bays and in the central vertical unit where incised stone name and date panels are placed.

The one- and two-story bulkhead sheds emphasize their regular repetitive rhythms marked by stone-trimmed, segmental arches which define the loading dock doors. Above each shed door, each unit incorporates its own terra cotta embellished friezeband. This is articulated by intervening brick uprights on the pilaster-piers which rise to break the horizontal line of another overall stone parapet. Otherwise, the bands function as anchor plates for the rods of what was once a continuous protective canopy, now evidenced by the remnant frame of that canopy (Photo 1). The waterfront walls of these sheds are strictly utilitarian, exhibiting only the overhead doors in the brick walls. A continuous shed roof extends from the Delaware Avenue parapet to the eavesline (Photo 2). The northernmost five office structures (the first section of the complex to have been constructed) take on a more commonplace elevation, and their regular fenestration identifies three window bays in each unit (Photo 3). The composition roofs here are of a relatively flat pitch.

The outshore facades of the piers assume a five part, center pavilion scheme, emphasizing an academic architectural pretension not so strongly registered in the more organic Delaware Avenue fronts. New forms are determined by segmental arches in the principal side bays. These relate to a narrow axial bay which resembles a tower in elevation. Polygonal, stone-trimmed, brick towers rise from each corner, capped by domed stone cupolas set up in two stages. Flapole bases are attached to the center of each dome and stylized lancet windows (with straight jambs and sills rather than splays and weathering) are set in the stonework, adding to the Gothic tone of these outpost-type features (Photos 4, 5, and 8).

The towers flank a facade wall comprised of four principal side-bays which are liberally trimmed in limestone. A three-foot-high stone plinth marks the entire first level and stone is cut to conform to the curves and moldings of the segmental arches which crown the stock metal windows set in the spaces. At the second floor level, quadruple windows

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encased as units in terra cotta and limestone surrounds, assume a Tudor profile to mark each of the wide bays; the stringcourse and parapet elements featured on the Delaware Avenue facade are repeated as the uppermost elements in the outriver facades.

Contrasting with the architectural quality of the faces, the south and north flanks assert that the piers are skeletal structures, only partially packaged by the east and west masonry walls. On the north and south, the counterforce of pure organic functionalism of the pier and lintel system is shown in the steel and concrete superstructure, comprised of 21 two-story bays set between doubled concrete and glass end-bays and occupying a space of about 550 feet. At the deck or apron level, the inner bays constitute an open frame in which overhead metal doors become the walls of the lower area. In the second floor area, the more traditional walling is composed of concrete units set in the upper and lower thirds of each bay. A row of four standard metal window frames (some of which are now enclosed) serves the middle third section (Photos 6, 7, and 8). Surviving on the south flanks of each pier shed, connected to the structural piers between each bay, are the shackles which relate to the continuous cargo masts (Photos 6 and 8). A concrete apron, 7'6" wide on the north and south and 17 feet wide outshore, defines the sides of the piers (Photos 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8).

Offices occupy the west sections of the piers; otherwise, the open space of the first and second floor interiors hearkens to the transshipment activity for which the structures were intended. The remaining tracks, elevators, chutes, and shackles are the significant signs of the bygone function. The superstructure overall relies on a two-story steel frame, set up in four bays and roofed in a Warren truss. It is otherwise set in stone ballast with concrete piers over pilings which are driven through the dredged river bottom (Figure 3).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1923

Builder/Architect Fred Havens, Frederick Snare Corp.,

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Triest Contracting Corp. / John P. Sinkler, Dept. of Engineering, City of Philadelphia

Piers 3 and 5 North, together with their bulkhead sheds, derive significance from their sensitivity to organic architecture and from their association with an innovative long-range port improvement program established in 1907. Their historical significance is of primary importance because the plan of which they were a part allowed for public investment and private enterprise to work together in order to upgrade the port. The scheme involved a trans-shipment system improving all transportation links on which the port of Philadelphia relied for trade volume. The piers epitomize these goals.

Federal, state, local, and private money was invested in the program. The U. S. Corps of Engineers dredged the Delaware River to create a 35 foot deep channel which extended from Allegheny Avenue to the sea, bringing the Delaware River to a depth equal to channels in Boston and Baltimore. Pennsylvania and New Jersey set up procedures to build the Delaware River (Benjamin Franklin) Bridge and the city embarked on two real estate schemes. It not only purchased Delaware River marshlands within its jurisdiction with a view to dredging the river edge and constructing bulkheads; it also purchased obsolete, privately-owned piers, intending to replace them with municipal piers to be leased to private interests. The city initiated use of reinforced concrete and steel for pier construction and designed the piers in-house.

Completed in 1923, Piers 3 and 5 North represent the third phase and the virtual culmination of the \$27,000,000.00 program. (Piers 80 and 84 South, the largest of the series, were begun in 1926.) In this context, they relate to a specialized form of community planning, and they refer as well to marine and land transportation and commerce emphasizing the expeditious handling of any type of cargo.

When new, the piers represented both a new interpretation for industrial architecture and the state-of-the-art in cargo handling transfer technology. They are said to have transformed Delaware Avenue into the "greatest shipping thoroughfare in the country." As a result, Philadelphia became known as the topmost U. S. port in cargo handling.

In keeping with their emphasis on technology, the piers' facades rely on an abstracted classicism in that they respect elemental relationships. They also use academically acceptable materials to make an architectonic statement in favor of organic functionalism and they possess a high degree of architectural integrity.

The present pier complex relates to the approximate site of wharves owned by the famed Stephen Girard in the early nineteenth century. Referred to as the Girard Group because of this association, the complex was designed as combination piers, that is, piers set up to serve foreign, intercoastal, coastal, and river trade.

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Ancillary storage sheds and offices were built at the bulkhead line to provide facilities for both immediate and storage-delayed shipping.

Because the piers were intended to expedite cargo handling and transfer of any type of maritime trade, the piers were set up as break-bulk cargo facilities, accommodating general cargoes of mixed sizes and shapes all handled by gangs of stevedores. To fit this function, continuous cargo masts with shackles of a capacity of five tons each were strung along the tops of the north and south walls of each shed, providing accommodation for four ships of lengths up to 500 feet. The huge overhead doors at the apron level of each bay in the north and south walls provided immediate access to and from the first floor interior of the sheds and allowed for simultaneous on and off loading of more than one vessel at a time.

The shed interiors were equipped to handle both horizontal and vertical transfer to trucks and trains, emphasizing that the piers not only connected to an unparalleled system of railroads directed to all points of the inland United States; they also provided the Delaware Valley's local commerce with direct transfer via convenient pick-up by trucks and wagons.

Emphasizing their technological significance, the piers and their bulkhead sheds make a unique statement in favor of the existence of art on the industrial scene. While they promoted new services for the Philadelphia waterfront, they also added a new aesthetic to the long-term port improvement program. They were unlike earlier piers, which by 1915 emphasized a monumental Beaux Arts type of classicism already virtually the trademark of railroad terminal architecture. They also provided significant contrast to the nearby piers which were blatantly utilitarian structures offering no artistic relief. In tending toward a blend of architecture and engineering, Piers 3 and 5 marked a significant transition between the tradition of historic eclecticism and the abstractions of the modern movement. Considering this, their pre-1925 date emphasizes their architectural significance in addition to their significance relative to transportation and commerce.

9. Major Bibliographical References PRIMARY

Free Library of Philadelphia, Prints Department; Photos c.1900, c.1930.
Philadelphia Historical Commission; Photos 1899, 1923
Philadelphia Archives; Annual Reports, Philadelphia Department of Wharves, Docks, and
Ferries, 1921-1926

Continued

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 15.2

Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	18	4	8	17	0	10	10	4	14	2	12	2	1	20
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	18	4	8	18	17	10	4	14	2	12	1	1	8	10
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	18	4	8	18	1	4	10	4	14	2	12	0	1	00
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	18	4	8	17	9	6	10	4	14	2	12	0	1	0	10
Zone		Easting				Northing									

E

Zone		Easting				Northing									

F

Zone		Easting				Northing									

G

Zone		Easting				Northing									

H

Zone		Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state MA code MA county MA code MA

state MA code MA county MA code MA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alice Kent Schooler, Senior Associate, Research

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date January 4, 1983

street & number 309 North Matlack Street telephone (215) 436-9000

city or town West Chester state PA 19380

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

For HCERS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Building Guide, vol 5:22, 4 June 1890

Philadelphia Deed Books, Register number 55N19

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .41 acres

Quadrangle name Philadelphia Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	3	7	2	0	4	4	2	2	8	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

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H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

"Beginning at a point situated on the south side of Arch Street at a distance of 181'10" west of 33rd Street; containing in front of breadth on Arch Street 169', and in depth southward at right angles with Arch Street on the east line 133'4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and on the west line 88'7-5/8" to the north side of Cuthbert Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas

organization Clio Group, Inc.

date May 13, 1982

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue

telephone 215-386-6276

city or town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania

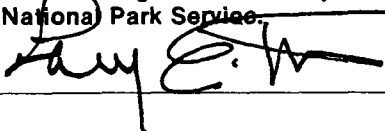
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State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/16/83

For NPS use only

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Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

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UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	3	7	2	1	0	4	4	2	2	8	5	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing							

B

Zone			Easting						Northing							

C

Zone			Easting						Northing							

D

Zone			Easting						Northing							

E

Zone			Easting						Northing							

F

Zone			Easting						Northing							

G

Zone			Easting						Northing							

H

Zone			Easting						Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

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state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas

organization Clio Group, Inc.

date May 13, 1982

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue

telephone 215-386-6276

city or town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania

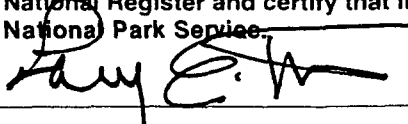
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State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/16/83

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

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Philadelphia Archives; Scrapbooks 68.11; 92.5

Philadelphia Archives; Facilities Surveys 92.2; 92.4; 92.6

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Books and Articles:

Philadelphia Department of Wharves, Docks, and Ferries. The Port of Philadelphia, 1926.

"Famous Arch Street Wharf to Give Way to Modern Structure." Philadelphia Record, Oct. 9, 1922.

"Pier Dedication Honors Stephen Girard." Philadelphia North American, June 25, 1923.

