

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Packard Motor Corp. Building

AND/OR COMMON

"Press Building"

RECEIVED

OCT 12 1979

PH & MC
Historic Preservation

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

317-321 North Broad Street

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

COUNTY

Philadelphia

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Carl Massara, A.I.A.

STREET & NUMBER

1427 Vine Street

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Philadelphia City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Broad & Market Streets

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

October 18, 1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN

Harrisburg

STATE

Pennsylvania

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

The building at 317-321 North Broad Street is a seven story, terra cotta clad, reinforced concrete and steel frame building originally erected as a show room and assembly building for the Packard Motor Car Co. of Detroit. The Broad Street facade is divided horizontally into three levels that recalls the Chicago skyscraper formal solution of the column, with a base, shaft and capital. The base is two stories high, with fixed glass in metal frames, and a central metal and glass canopy that projects over the entrance. It is surrounded by a broad terra cotta border, subdivided into three sections that reflects the bay system of the building. Above, broad terra cotta clad piers rise six stories to a crowning cornice. The wall treatment is the most simple and direct as befits the work of America's best known early 20th century industrial architects, Kahn and Wilby of Detroit. Recessed terra cotta clad spandrels emphasize the verticality of the facade, and with the all glass curtain wall establish a strong pattern of light and dark.

The crowning feature is derived from classical design with the dentils and modillions of the corinthian order developed in terra cotta and supporting a strong overhanging cornice. Giant Rosettes further embellish the entablature, and added to the richness of the effect.

The terra cotta is formed into decorative panels, punctuated with rosettes. It too is related to the Chicago facade solution most particularly to Daniel Burnham's Reliance Building. The building differs from the classic skyscraper solution in two significant respects--in shape--and in the application of the decorative skin. The shape is essentially the modern slab, with the length far longer than the width (14 bays to three), a form developed logically out of the use of the building as a store room and assembly point for motor cars. The decorative skin is applied only to the front half of the building (the first seven bays) while the remainder of the building is a direct and unadorned reinforced concrete.

The interior of the building is essentially undecorated, except for the spaces that are accessible to the public--the elevator lobby, and the grand two story high show room and mezzanine. The elevator lobby is embellished with wood paneling around piers, and framing the elevators, using the principal theme of the spandrel decoration of the exterior, providing a unifying device for interior and exterior.

The main auto showroom was designed to be an overwhelming and stately room appropriate to the act of purchasing a Packard Motor car. Two story high piers carry immense beams sheathed in decorative plaster, embossed with a grape vine pattern. Panels, framed with molded plaster add to the richness of the room. The overall effect is heightened by electric chandeliers, hanging from the beams. Beyond a wood panelled bay projects from the mezzanine.

Though the room was subdivided at a later date, the vast majority of the original materials remain to permit a handsome restoration.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

PREHISTORIC
 1400-1499
 1500-1599
 1600-1699
 1700-1799
 1800-1899
 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
 ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
 AGRICULTURE
 ARCHITECTURE
 ART
 COMMERCE
 COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNITY PLANNING
 CONSERVATION
 ECONOMICS
 EDUCATION
 ENGINEERING
 EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
 INDUSTRY
 INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
 LAW
 LITERATURE
 MILITARY
 MUSIC
 PHILOSOPHY
 POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

RELIGION
 SCIENCE
 SCULPTURE
 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
 THEATER
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES 1910-11

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Kahn & Wilby of Detroit, Mich.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building at 317-21 North Broad Street has significance as an important work by a major American architect Albert Kahn; as the sales office of the most important early American automobile manufacturer, the Packard Company, as the cornerstone of the developing North Broad Street motor car business, and as a speculative project involving Louis J. Bergdoll, who actively encouraged the North Broad Street automobile business.

It is probably the Albert Kahn connection that is of greatest significance, for Kahn became the best known, and among the most creative of the industrial architects of the Nation. His Packard Assembly Plant of 1903 revolutionized the auto industry and his Dodge half-ton truck plant remains a standard for austere, powerful and functional design. Kahn should not however be limited to the sole dimension of industrial design, for he like his contemporaries was interested in the symbolic nature of architecture and regularly differentiated between levels of occupation and hierarchies of space in his buildings,

In this sense, 317-21 is a notable continuation of Kahn's and the era's aesthetic sensibilities for the detailing, derived from classical sources responds to the urbane quality of a major center city street, while the mass production of the terra cotta ornament, and the simplicity of the building lines responds to the industrial processes within, and the scale of the owner and his building. The result is a building that adds to its site, describes its owner and function--all with a remarkable economy. Of further note is the generally stylized and abstracted quality of ornament that responds to the broad building surfaces, and to the terra cotta material in a way that belies the arguments of this century about the alien quality of ornament in machine society. For Kahn and his contemporaries nothing could be further from the truth--and without it, the architect would have lost a major communicative device. In this sense the building is of great significance, indicating that modern technics and the requirements of mass design and modern scale could be met with traditional responses.

The building has further significance locally as one of the early applications of reinforced concrete to the commercial building. In this instance it is the design of Kahn's associate firm, the Trussed Concrete Steel Company (later Truscon) which pioneered in the development of reinforcing theory and in the design of reinforcing steel shapes. It is thus important in the progress toward modern concrete technics.

Finally, the building has local significance as the center of the local automotive industry, much of which was encouraged by Louis Bergdoll, Jr. son of the noted Philadelphia brewer and developer Louis Bergdoll, whose brewery forms an important part of the Philadelphia brewerytown skyline. Bergdoll was involved with franchising the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Benz and Fiat motorcars, in addition to Packard, and owned and operated a garage across Wood Street. The interest was probably furthered by son Grover Cleveland Bergdoll's mania for fast automobiles and racing.

Bergdoll's auto buildings were followed by other dealerships, notably the Cadillac dealership at Broad & Fairmount, and Ford to the south making this the motor car hub of the city. With the Packard Assembly Plant, and the Autocar Company in nearby Ardmore, it made Philadelphia a national center for automobile production in the early part of the 20th Century.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hildebrand, Grant Designing For Industry: The Architecture of Albert Kahn
Cambridge, Ma., The M.I.T. Press, 1974, xvii, 232 p. illus.

PRER&BG, XXV:32 (19 August 1910); XXV:38 (21 September 1910); XXV:46 (16NN:1910).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2

QUADRANGLE NAME Philadelphia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:2400

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 11861120 11212960
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

East side of North Broad Street, between Pearl and Wood Street, 71' north from Pine to Wood, east 351'; south 69'3", west 231', south 2' to Pearl Street, west 120' to Broad Street.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Pennsylvania	42	Philadelphia	101
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George E. Thomas, Ph.D., President

ORGANIZATION

Clio Group, Inc.

DATE

10 September 1979

STREET & NUMBER

3920 Pine Street

TELEPHONE

215-386-6276

CITY OR TOWN

Philadelphia,

STATE

PA

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

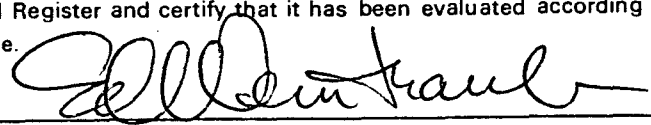
NATIONAL X

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

ED Weintraub, Director
Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

12-10-79

FOR NPS 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

