

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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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 Ringgold Place

AND/OR COMMON 1900 block Waverly Street

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1900, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 Waverly Street

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Estate of J. Berton Carnett, Jr., Fidelity Trust Company

STREET & NUMBER Broad and Walnut Streets

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia VICINITY OF Pennsylvania STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Philadelphia City Hall

STREET & NUMBER Broad Street and Penn Square

CITY, TOWN Philadelphia STATE Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE 11/9/77 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN Harrisburg STATE Pennsylvania

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

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

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

The twenty six houses of Ringgold Place were erected during the Civil War, probably from the designs of Walter C. Allison, a house carpenter and the owner of the property. During the previous decade he had assembled five lots on Nineteenth Street, perhaps to build five townhouses, but the housing and material shortages induced by the war caused him to change his plans and to construct instead two rows of houses on a narrow street perpendicular to Nineteenth Street. Unlike the typical mid century row and town houses which were usually sixteen to twenty feet wide and forty to fifty feet deep, the Ringgold Place houses are tiny, typically fourteen by twenty feet, recalling the "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" houses of the previous century. As had been the case with the eighteenth century houses, the limited floor area resulted in one room per level, a basement kitchen, opening onto the street through a door under the high front stoop, a first floor parlor, ornamented with a simple wood fireplace, and bedrooms on the top floors.

The facades are as spartan as the interiors, depending on the regular pattern of doors and windows rhythmically placed across the wall plane and the sculptural element of the steep marble stoops for interest. That general austerity continued even to the cornice. There, instead of the deep, bracketed wood designs common at mid century, the builder merely corbelled out the uppermost brick courses, and by turning one course on its side to form a dentil row, adequately, though by no means extravagantly, crowned his houses. Only the delicate cast iron railings provide a relieving touch.

If the principal facades are practically without ornament, the walls facing Nineteenth Street show several decorative features that are simple enough to be a part of the original work, but suggest a greater sophistication than might be expected of a carpenter builder. A central window lighting the parlor is given added size and interest by a blind lunette above, immense flanking shutters, and a blind panel with a fictive sill below. The result is a giant element that relates across the street to its counterpart on the other row. Above, small octagonal windows, also blind, reiterate the theme of the single, street related composition.

That work is in fact the design of one of Philadelphia's sophisticated firms of the 1920's, Tilden, Register and Pepper. Interestingly, it was done in 1925, shortly after the properties were acquired by George Howe, architect in the next decade of the PSFS tower, a National Landmark. He would use the same stripped colonial vocabulary three years later in the facade for the renovation of the George F. Tyler house in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. Whether the design of the Ringgold Place houses was in fact Howe, or Tilden, Register and Pepper, the skillful and rich street facade should not be ignored. At the same time, numerous changes were made in the houses, including the introduction of indoor plumbing, as well as alterations to the rear walls which permitted the introduction of handsome, tripartite windows in the parlor.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1862; 1925-26

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Walter Allison, builder, 1862  
Tilden, Register & Pepper, Arch., 1925

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Despite the unprepossessing appearance of the Ringgold Place rows, the tiny houses are of considerable interest. To the urban planner they suggest contemporary alternatives to the monstrously scaled housing project, and exemplify the merits of the intimate court; for the social historian they are an expression of the impact of the Civil War on the housing market in a major American city. To the architectural historian, Ringgold Place is one of the few Civil War era rows by an identifiable carpenter builder, and it has architectural interest because of the sensitive alterations by the important architects Tilden, Register and Pepper. Finally, 1900 Ringgold Place served as the site of the architectural offices for George Howe of Howe and Lescaze, during the years that his firm was producing its most creative work, culminating with the design of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Building. Howe owned the row from 1925 until 1934.

The charm and quiet of Ringgold Place provides its obvious rewards, creating a restful preserve, seemingly far removed from the city. More interesting in the context of establishment west center city, is the opportunity which houses such as these provided for a different type of resident. Census data from 1870 and 1880 indicates that these housed shopkeepers, dressmakers, laborers, brick masons, mostly native born white, but also a few first generation Irish. The result was a greater heterogeneity of residents than is generally assumed - and the continuing presence of these houses has helped to assure a rich urban mix for the past century.

The architectural merit of the Ringgold Place houses has already been noted. Walter Allison was a well known builder who published his own treatise on industrial building. Its later alterations by Tilden, Register and Pepper adds to its distinction, both for the sensitivity of the new work, and for the richness of the Nineteenth Street facade conceit. Whether George Howe, the owner of the block at the time of the renovation was involved with the design cannot be ascertained. The building permit mentions only Tilden, Register and Pepper, and the tendency of the more avant garde of the modern movement to disavow their early work makes any discovery of a document linking Howe to the work unlikely. However, Howe's office was located in 1900 Ringgold Place from 1929 until 1934, while PSFS was being designed, and Howe thought enough of his office to publish views of its interior, with plans, in 1931, in the Architectural Record. Thus, the houses are significant in their own right as an urban idea, as a design and to commemorate Howe in Philadelphia.





1900  
Waverly St

Ringgold  
Palace  
18 485 105  
4421 570

4425  
4424  
4423  
57'30"  
27 MI TO U.S. 130  
ATLANTIC CITY 62 MI.  
4422  
4421

PHILADELPHIA CO  
CAMDEN CO

PENNSYLVANIA  
NEW JERSEY

PENN. CENTRAL  
(CAMDEN)  
5963 1 NE