

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic A.J. Holman and Company

and/or common Holman Building

2. Location

street & number 1222-26 Arch Street

not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of

state PA code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<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	<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
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Arnold Schlein CITY SCAPES

street & number 311 Barwynne Road 413 So. BROAD ST.

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of PHILA., Pa. state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Historic Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state PA

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 1881
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The 1200 block of Arch Street takes its character from the multi-story lofts of the turn of the century light manufacturing near the Reading Terminal. Its principal architectural interest is derived from the five story red brick loft building for the A.J. Holman and Company Bible Publishing company. That building stretches from Arch Street, where its public face appears, south to an industrial facade on Cuthbert Street.

The Arch Street facade is subdivided horizontally by changing materials: a cast and rolled iron base framing glazed shop fronts, three stories of brick rising walls, and at the top a range of cast iron columns screening the top brick story and carrying portions of the brick cornice. Those subdivisions describe the interior use of space, on the first floor a commercial level containing two shops and the Bible Publishing outlets, and on the upper stories the manufacturing use. Against that pattern is a countering vertical subdivision of the main wall into thirds, marked by major cast iron piers at ground level, which continue as broader piers on the second and third floors and then turn into corbelled piers that support paired rather than single columns on the fifth floor. The vertical lines finally continue to the pier caps that break the skyline of the facade, and frame the triangular pediment emblazoned with 1881 below a Gothic arch.

A.J. Holman & Co

Just as the horizontal divisions described the functions, so too the vertical order describes the internal subdivision of the constructive grid, with cast iron columns and brick walls running through the building at those points. Such descriptive design is ultimately Ruskinian in origin, and suggests the happy consequence of a theoretical framework for the formal and engineering decisions. At the same time, the pseudo projection of the central bay reflects French Beaux Arts formalism, known by the Wilson Brothers from their training in McArthur's office during the design of City Hall. The attempt to fuse French formalism and English architectural theory was typical of the age, having been attempted by Furness in a number of commissions, including the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

The rear, Cuthbert Street facade is more spartan, as befitted its service role, but the horizontal layers and the vertical subdivision are still very much in evidence. The first floor is a simple cast iron, pilastered base, subdivided at the third points to describe the internal column grid. The brick wall is accented at the same points by broader piers, again marking the interior construction, and rises up to a massive corbelled brick cornice. Each bay is further divided by three tall segmental-headed window openings, reiterating the tripartite division of both facades. At the east, a narrow bay containing a loading entrance is slightly recessed to separate it from the principal composition, but, as will be seen below, it refers to one of the more important plan elements, the side light wells.

Internal planning confirms the evidence of the exteriors. Three long commercial spaces open off Arch Street. Though much altered, their principal features are still in evidence. Original entrances passed through vertical chestnut tongue and groove panels, framed in chamfered and grooved corner posts. Doors are similarly detailed with grooved sills and rails, accented by raised panels with shallow roundels. Circular wood ceiling panels over the doors and in the shop window bays survive on the east bay.

The easternmost bay contained the Holman Bible Sales office. Though the bay grid of the building is apparent in the regular placement of masonry piers, spanned by rosetted U channel steel beams carrying the second floor, the shop spaces are conventional. Tall plastered walls were capped by massive plaster cornices. At the rear, windows open into a light well on the east. A portion of the ceiling still contains the small paned glazing of a roof skylight, marking the position of a second light well that cuts the building from east to west at the mid point. That subdivision served both functional and safety

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received 1/11/83

date entered

Continuation sheet A.J. Holman & Company

Item number 7

Page 2

considerations, for while providing light and air at the mid-block position, it also separated the front office from the explosive rear printing plant. Iron shutters on the walls of the light well suggest that the danger was clearly considered.

A doorway near the center of the middle shopfront opens onto a short vestibule, leading to a stair that stops at landings on the second and third floors which contained space leased to editorial offices of other publications, including Godeys Ladies Book. Because of the public nature of the hall, the stair received a level of finish not expected in an industrial building. The rail, balusters and newels were of stained hardwood, with grooving and roundels on the newel similar to those at the entrance.

The upper levels are finished in plain plaster walls with tongue and groove wood on the ceilings of the more public spaces, while the remainder of the spaces show the bridged timbers of the floor framing, carried on riveted steel beams, in turn carried on cast iron, Tuscan columns. While the front block stretches the full width of the Arch Street front, the rear block is reduced by light wells on the sides that suggest a careful attempt to deal with the occupational hazards of the printing trades. Tall, double-hung 2/2 sash in handsome wood frames, opening onto the light wells, are the principal ornament of each room.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1881 **Builder/Architect** Wilson Brothers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

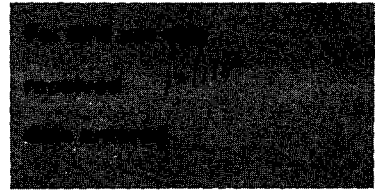
The Holman Building is significant as an imposing brick building for manufacturing and retailing, designed by the Wilson Brothers, the most important late 19th-century architecture/engineering firm in Philadelphia. Their skills are amply evidenced both in the monumental facade which defines the building's dual function and in the carefully considered and original internal arrangement of space that reduced the occupational hazards of printing caused by the highly volatile nature of the ink. Moreover, the Holman Company is of historical interest as one of the city's oldest publishing companies, tracing its history back to the publisher of the first German language bible printed in the United States. When A.J. Holman commissioned the new building, it was the largest printer of bibles in the country, and was responsible for the proliferation of "family bibles" as a part of its astute marketing. Finally, the location of the building on the 1200 block of Arch Street has its own significance as it marks the beginning of the shift of the printing trades from their historic location near 7th and Chestnut toward their position in the newly developing light manufacturing district north of Market Street.

It is as the work of the Wilson Brothers that the building is of greatest note. The firm originated in the office of John McArthur, gained acclaim for designing the principal Centennial Building, and became renowned for their engineering formulation for large span train sheds and bridges. The surviving Reading Terminal and Jersey City Terminal sheds and the now demolished Broad Street Station shed were engineering triumphs that pushed against the limits of materials and theory. The Wilson Brothers were significant as theoreticians as well: they developed the notion of wind bracing for tall steel framed office buildings at the Drexel Building (1888), and Joseph Wilson was so highly respected in his profession that he served as the president of the American Society of Civil Engineers for nearly a decade. Indeed, it can be argued that it was this firm which first merged architectural talent and engineering training in a manner which achieved the theoretical synthesis that had been anticipated for the industrial age. As such, they are extensively discussed in Carl Condit's American Building Art.

The Wilson Brothers were highly thought of as architectural designers as well. While they were designing their homage to the Crystal Palace in the Centennial Main Exhibition Hall, they were also designing houses and office that are often confused with Frank Furness' exuberant Victorian creations. Later they worked with success in the Richardsonian Romanesque and the more historical styles with considerable flair. No building type was beyond their grasp or beneath their interest: resort hotels, from the New Jersey seashore to upper New York State, college buildings in Philadelphia and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



A.J. Holman Building, Philadelphia PA.

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

story of the building in 1885. Moreover, the Holman company was itself significant in the history of publishing, tracing its antecedents to the German firm of Christopher Sower, who published in German the second Bible printed in America. That company was eventually absorbed by the Holman Company (organized 1869), which became the largest printer of Bibles in the land, and remains the Bible publishing arm of J.B. Lippincott, which absorbed the A.J. Holman Company in 1961.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Deed 1-N-7-58
(The Wilson Brothers) The Work of the Wilson Brothers, (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1888) p. 16 and photo facing p. 60.
Jefferson Moak, "The A.J. Holman Co.", files, Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1979.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	1	8
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 Zone

4	8	16	2	8	10
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 Easting

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 Northing

B

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 Zone

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C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Property listed as 1222-24-26 Arch Street, having a frontage of 60' on Arch, extending south 173' to Cuthbert Street, then east 60' on Cuthbert, then north to Arch Street.

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

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

organization Clio Group, Inc. date August 2, 1983

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue 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 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 

Dr. Larry E. Tise,

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 11/23/83

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

11-3318
EXP. 10/31/84

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

A.J. Holman Building, Phila. PA.

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2



American Architect and Building News, Vol. 6 #256, 1881
Clio Index: 0026122

Carl Condit, American Building Art; 19th Century (New York: Oxford University Press)
1960



Gaging Sta
BM 25

Museum of Art

30th St Sta
PO

Franklin Field
Pena

U.S. Naval Home

Wharton Square
St. Simon's

St. Francis Xavier Sch
Francisville Playground
Waring Sch
Penn High Sch
Franklin High Sch
U.S. Min
Cathedral Sch
Court House
Doctors Hospital
Hahnemann Medical College

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Court House
Doctors Hospital
Hahnemann Medical College

Franklin Institute
Logan Circle
Arch
MCA

PHILADELPHIA
Independence National Historical Park
Washington Square
Cem

Graduate Hospital
Dunham Sch
Childrens Hospital
Recreation Center
Stanton Sch
Library

Wharton Square
St. Simon's
Barratt Jr High Sch
St. Josephs Hospital

St. Josephs Hospital
Gorham Sch
Assumption Sch
Stevens Sch

Stevens Sch
Assumption Sch
Holy Redeemer Sch
Franklin Square
Police Sta

Reading Station
City Hall
Independence State Park
Independence Hill

Independence Hill
Washington Square
Cem
Pennsylvania Hospital
McCall Sch

Segor Recr Ctr
Stair Garden
Pallumbo Playground
Bartlett Jr High Sch
Hospital

St. Josephs Hospital
Barratt Jr High Sch
St. Philip Nee Sch
Settlement Park
Nebinger Sch

Jefferson Sch
Boone Sch
Northern Liberties Co
Tiptop Playground
Penn Treaty Park

Jefferson Sch
Boone Sch
Northern Liberties Co
Tiptop Playground
Penn Treaty Park

Paxson Sch
Mather Sch
Christ Ch
Pier 5

Christ Ch
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Tow
Hospital

Meredith Sch
St Stanislaus Sch
Settlement Park
Nebinger Sch

St. Philip Nee Sch
Settlement Park
Nebinger Sch

Jr High Sch
Chandler O Sch
Penn Treaty Park
A Penn

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Chandler O Sch
Penn Treaty Park
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Cooper Point
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Penn Central
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4424

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57'30"

2.7 MI TO U.S. 130 MI.

ATLANTIC CITY 62 MI.

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