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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Kirk Johnson Building

and/or common Kirk Johnson Building

2. Location

street & number 16-18 West King Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Lancaster N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Lancaster code 071

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Lancaster Newspapers, Incorporated

street & number 8 West King Street

city, town Lancaster N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lancaster County Courthouse - Registry of Deeds

street & number 50 North Duke Street

city, town Lancaster state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Lancaster City Architecture has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County

city, town 123 North Prince Street, Lancaster (17603) state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Kirk Johnson Building is a long, narrow rectangular structure fronting on the south side of the first block of Lancaster's West King Street. The facade is four full stories in height, with an attic contained within the mansard roof. The facade is built predominately from white tile and sheet copper, with other elements being of wood, white marble, and glass. The foundations and other walls of the building are of brick; structural steel is used throughout most of the interior.

Due to the limitations of this site, originally flanked by other buildings on both sides, the facade was the focal point for all important architectural details of design. The first-floor level storefront fills the entire sixteen foot breadth of this facade. This storefront is enframed by a bolection molding in white marble which rises from bases of pink granite. The original signage in gilt letters occupies a tablet in the central section of the horizontal part of this molding. A leaded glass transom which spans the width of this enframed area is entirely original. The doors and small-paned windows of the storefront reflect the style of Parisian shops of the late 1600's and the early 1700's.

The second, third, and fourth stories are flanked by white tile piers which simulate ashlar masonry. On each level, there are four tall windows with nearly square-form transoms. These windows are separated according to the respective floors of the building by friezes with Grecian key motifs and lattice-pattern balustrades, all done in oxidized pressed copper. The fourth story terminates in an elaborate cornice, having console brackets at each side, a reeded frieze, rectangular modillions, and a central oval bearing a lyre motif. This cornice supports a parapet with panelled plinths; behind this parapet rises the copper-clad mansard roof. At the center of this parapet is located a richly ornamented dormer window which is crowned by a domical-form scroll pediment with central urn finial. The sheet copper which covers the mansard roof is divided into vertical panels with hollow corners.

In all respects, this facade is more than 90% intact to its original design, materials, and construction. From the second story to the top of the roof, all the component parts are entirely original. All enframing moldings and signage of the storefront area are likewise the originals. The original French-style display windows and entry doors were removed as part of a remodelling which was completed by December, 1926. These windows and doors were restored in 1979-1980, following the form of the originals as documented by the 1911 drawings by C. Emlen Urban. It is not absolutely certain whether the metal and glass canopy or marquee seen in photographs of the 1920's was a feature of the original building; thus, this feature was not restored.

Since this structure was erected as a store, with a series of connecting rooms of large scale, the floor plan in itself is not important. The outstanding elements of the 1911-1912 interior are plasterwork moldings and acanthus ornamented console brackets which adorn some first floor ceilings.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1911-1912 **Builder/Architect** C. Emlen Urban, architect; W.V. Eisenberger, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built as a music store for Kirk Johnson in 1911-1912 from designs by C. Emlen Urban (1863-1939)¹, this building is an unusual example of the adaptation of the Beaux-Arts Style to a commercial building. This narrow, ornate facade of white tile and cut stone, crowned by a copper clad mansard roof, may be reminiscent of the fronts of Parisian stores built c. 1660-1720. In terms of the total design of the facade, the Kirk Johnson Building is a unique commercial structure for both Lancaster City and County. Moreover, no closely related commercial facade exists in any other town in south-central Pennsylvania. The architectural significance of the facade of the Kirk Johnson Building is twofold; it is an elegant expression of the Beaux-Arts taste, and it is a unique creation for its time and place.

1. For about half a century, Kirk Johnson (1861-1939) was the leading music dealer in Lancaster. He opened his first store in Lancaster City about 1885. In 1903, the Biographical Annals of Lancaster County stated that Johnson was "...a man who has done more than any other citizen of the county toward making it possible for a musical instrument to be placed in every home..." Kirk Johnson purchased the site of this present building on August 1, 1911 from John and Charles Metzger for \$25,000. In July, 1911, the Lancaster architect C. Emlen Urban (1863-1939) designed the present structure for Johnson. On August 25, 1911, a building permit was issued to the builder-constructor W. V. Eisenberger to "erect one Building, Iron and Brick - Store for Kirk Johnson." An advertisement for this business in the Lancaster New Era for April 2, 1912 stated that the building would soon be occupied; the facade of the completed structure was illustrated in Kirk Johnson's advertisement in the New Era for May 20, 1912.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached list.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .09 acre

Quadrangle name Lancaster Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

UTM References

A 18 388510 4432510
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Fronting on the south side of the first block of West King Street, the Kirk Johnson Building is bounded by West King Street on the north, West Mifflin Street on the south, Steinman Park on the west, and properties of Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. on the east. See attached deed.

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 John J. Snyder, Jr. - Architectural Historian

organization Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County

date January 3, 1983

street & number 123 North Prince Street

telephone 717-291-5861

city or town Lancaster (17603)

state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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 Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/23/83

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Kirk Johnson Building, Lancaster County

Continuation sheet

Item number

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Major Bibliographical Sources

There are no printed books that pertain directly to the history or stylistic significance of the Kirk Johnson Building.

The following sources pertain to the history of the site and the documentation of construction:

Deeds at the Archives of the Lancaster County Courthouse: S-20-210 (1911 - John Metzger and Charles Metzger to Kirk Johnson); and G-25-181 (Kirk Johnson to Kirk Johnson & Co.).

Lancaster City Building Permit No. 1301, August 25, 1911, Lancaster City Hall, Lancaster, PA.

Original drawings by C. Emlen Urban (1863-1939), architect in Lancaster, dated July 10, 1911; these are owned by Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., 8 West King Street, Lancaster, PA.

Newspaper articles, some illustrated, as follows: Lancaster New Era, April 2, 1912; Lancaster New Era, May 20, 1912; and the Lancaster Intelligencer, December 1, 1926. All these are available at the Library of Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., 8 West King Street, Lancaster, PA.

The following sources provide biographical information on Kirk Johnson, Lancaster's leading music - store operator in the early twentieth century:

Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Chicago, 1903, pp. 928-929.

Lancaster Semi-Weekly New Era, April 28, 1897.

Kirk Johnson Will, R-3-6 (1939), Archives, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, PA.

Interviews in January - March, 1980, with Kirk Johnson's Granddaughter, Sally Moore Breneman (Mrs. Joseph Breneman) of Lancaster.



USGS

Lancaster Quadrangle
Kirk Johnson Building