

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

For NPS use only

**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 Lehigh Valley Railroad Headquarters Building

and/or common Conrail Building

2. Location

street & number 425 Brighton Street

not for publication

city, town Bethlehem

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code 042

county Northampton

code 095

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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Benjamin Walbert

street & number 412 North 8th Street

city, town Allentown

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania 18102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Northampton County Governemnt Center

street & number 7th & Washington Sts.

city, town Easton

state Pennsylvania 18042

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local _____

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____

state _____

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date 1885-1890

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Reflecting Late Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne influences the former Lehigh Valley Railroad Headquarter Building at 425 Brighton St. was constructed in two successive stages. The ground through third floors of the eastern section were constructed during 1885-1886. The upper floor of the eastern section along with the entire western wing was constructed about 1889-1890. Both segments were constructed as offices.

The building is red brick masonry set on a stone masonry base and arises in a number of stories due to the severe slope of the site. The stone masonry is rough ashlar with segmented arches above the eastern openings and segmental arches and cut limestone lintels above the western openings.

The brick masonry above is laid in running band with red mortar joints. Two cut limestone belt courses punctuate each level of the eastern end, while the western end only has a cut limestone beltcourse at the heads of the second floor windows. There are several panels at the third floor of the western end of molded footed brick. The eastern end has a frieze of terra cotta quatrafoils and diaper pattern gable ends.

The windows on the east end are single lite casements on the ground floor, while those on the first, second and third floors are four over one double hung. The sills and heads of these windows are cut limestone. The windows on the west wing and the fourth floor of the east wing are one over one double hung windows. The heads, mullions tension bars, and sills are all cut lime stone. The basement windows of the western section are simple one over one sash with only limestone heads, mullins and sills.

Two copper bay windows are located on the south elevation. The one window is three stories tall while the other is a single story corner window. Both bay windows are topped with hipped roofs and elaborate finials.

The front entrance on the south elevation is french gothic arch leading to an exterior vestibule. The floor of the vestibule is marble black/white. The walls are glazed brick, and the door wall which appears to date from 1889, has large areas of glass. The ceiling is boxed beams with plaster panels. This entrance leads onto a central cast iron staircase with wrought iron railings leading to all floors. This staircase with its marble floors, glazed brick walls and original elevator shaft is the primary interior architectural feature of the building.

The rest of the building is divided into large office space on each floor connected by the grandstairs. The building was constructed of mill construction with masonry fire proofs on each floor. Although modifications have been made to these office areas, it is suspected that the modifications have been few indeed in the last 95 years. In any event the exterior survives almost intact.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1885-1890

Builder/Architect Robert Sayre

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Between 1885 and 1890 the Lehigh Valley Railroad constructed its first general office and headquarters building. Prior to this time the railroad was principally administered from the homes of railroad executives. Construction of the Headquarters Building corresponded to changes in the railroad's leadership and took place in an era when many railroad companies were building major offices and terminals. An eclectic combination of late Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne features the building reflected the wealth and stature of one of the region's most powerful companies. Although the importance of the Headquarters Building declined after 1898 when Drexel and Morgan interests gained control of the company and established new headquarters in New York City, the Headquarters Building continued to serve as a railroad office until 1976.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad was the outgrowth of an early attempt to break the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company's dominance over the Lehigh Valley and Eastern Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania. Originally chartered in 1847 as the Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill and Susquehanna Railroad, this transportation system remained a paper corporation until 1851, when Asa Packer gained control of the enterprise. Packer was a transplanted Connecticut "Yankee" who had made a fortune as a canal boat builder, contractor and coal mine operator for the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. He possessed both the financial resources and skills to make the enterprise a reality. To oversee the actual construction of the line, he engaged Robert Sayre, the chief railroad engineer of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. Sayre's skills and experience would eventually enable him to dominate rail transportation and industrial development in the Lehigh Valley for almost fifty years. Symbolic of the renewed activity of the Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill and Susquehanna Railroad, was a formal change in its corporate title. In 1853, it became the Lehigh Valley Railroad, a name that it would bear for the remainder of its corporate existence. By 1855 its original mainline was completed.

The initial route of the Lehigh Valley stretched from Mauch Chunk (Jim Thorpe) in the Anthracite Region through Allentown and Bethlehem and terminated at Easton, the mouth of the Lehigh Valley. Already a major center for iron production and other industrial activities, due in large measure to the efforts of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, this region underwent an unprecedented era of growth with the completion of the Railroad. By 1867 the Lehigh Valley Railroad reached Wilkes-Barre and by 1870 it had extended its route northward to Waverly, New York. During this same period the Lehigh Valley Railroad acquired enormous anthracite coal holdings and by 1875 it would mine almost 25% of Pennsylvania's total yearly production of this vital fuel. By 1875 also marked the completion of the eastward extension of the Lehigh Valley Railroad to New York Harbor. Its final westward extension was not completed until 1892, when the main line reached the Great Lakes at Buffalo, New York.

Asa Packer continued to serve as President and direct the general policies of the Lehigh Valley Railroad until his death in 1879. Operational control remained in the hands of Robert Sayre during the brief reigns of Packer's immediate successors.

Sayre also controlled Bethlehem Iron (Steel) Company and ran special trains bringing executives to view the company's plant.

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With the death of Packer's son Harry, in 1884, Elisha P. Wilbur became the chief executive of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. A nephew of Asa Packer, Wilbur proved to be a tough and autocratic executive, who worked effectively with Robert Sayre to provide the Lehigh Valley Railroad with decisive management. During the remaining years of the 19th century, Wilbur and Sayre would bring the Lehigh Valley Railroad to the apex of its power and prestige, qualities which were reflected in its Headquarters Building.

Constructed in two stages the Headquarters Building was designed to provide adequate space for the increased record-keeping and administrative functions of the railroad. Prominently sited above the railroad's main line the building also served as a showpiece for the railroad (Primarily a freight-hauler which served smaller cities the Lehigh built no facility comparable to Broad Street Station, Reading Terminal or other grand structures of its era).

Robert Sayre headed the building committee for this structure and was largely responsible for its design. Influences and suggestions of Addison Hutton and Frank Furness may also be reflected in the building's design as both men had been hired by Sayre to design buildings for Lehigh University. A combination of Late Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne styles the building displays extensive use of copper and decorative brick trim.

During the period that Wilbur and Sayre managed the Lehigh Valley Railroad, it became a true trunk line system, which carried a significant portion of the general freight traffic between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic. It also continued to be a major factor in the anthracite industry, and through its branch lines operation it did much to encourage the orchard and dairy production in central and western New York. Equally as important Wilbur and Sayre initiated a series of crack passenger trains, such as the "Black Diamond" which soon became known as the most beautiful train in America. Its New York City to Buffalo route became a favorite with the generations of honeymooners who journeyed to Niagara Falls. All of these various operations were overseen from the Headquarters Building.

The glory days of the Lehigh Valley were ended by a series of disasters which overtook it during the last years of the 19th century. An abortive alliance with the Reading Railroad to create an anthracite mining and transportation monopoly, weakened the Lehigh Valley's financial position. A destructive strike in 1893 also inflicted severe damage to the line's physical plant. Despite these problems, Wilbur and Sayre, were able to maintain effective control and even plan for further expansion, until a group of stock speculators drove down the price of the Lehigh Valley Railroad's securities in 1897. To thwart this attack Wilbur and Sayre sought the support of the noted financiers Anthony Drekel and J.P. Morgan. They assumed control by 1898 both Wilbur and Sayre retired. Within a few years, they also lost control of Bethlehem Iron which was purchased and reorganized by Charles M. Schwab into the present Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

After 1898, executive decisions were no longer made at Bethlehem and a new headquarters was established at New York City. The former Headquarters Building however continued to serve as a major office until the Lehigh Valley Railroad became a component of Conrail in 1976. From 1976 until 1983, Conrail maintained a switching center and housed a small staff of clerks in the structure. In 1983 the former Lehigh Valley Railroad Headquarter building was purchased by a restoration architect, who plans to convert it into an apartment complex.

Symbolic of the great days of America's railroad, anthracite and iron industry, the former Lehigh Valley Railroad Headquarters has lost little of its design integrity and none of its historical significance. As it did during the 1880's and 1890's it continues to dominate its surroundings and it is hoped that through adaptive reuse it will once again become the focal point for Bethlehem.

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Continuation sheet _____ Item number 9 Page 1

- Alderfer, Gordon, Northampton Heritage, Easton, Pa., 1952.
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- Myers, Richmond E., Lehigh Valley, The Unsuspected, Easton, Pa. 1972
Reports of the Board of Directors of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company to Stockholders, 1885-1890
- Sayre, Robert, Diaries of Robert Sayre 1852-1906 (Unpublished manuscripts in the collection of the Center for Canal History and Technology, Canal Museum, Easton, Pa.)
- Schlegel, Marvin W., Ruler of the Reading: The Life of Franklin B. Gowen 1836-1889, Harrisburg, Pa. 1947

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .25 acres

Quadrangle name Allentown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 18 467400 4495700
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

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

state N.A. code county code

state N.A. code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lance E. Metz, Historian/Greg Ramsey, Chief

organization Canal Museum/Bureau for Historic Preservation date 1/84 - 2/84

street & number 200 S. Delaware Drive/PO Box 1026 telephone 215 258-7155, 717 783-8946

city or town Easton/Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

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 *Larry E. Tise*

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/4/84

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

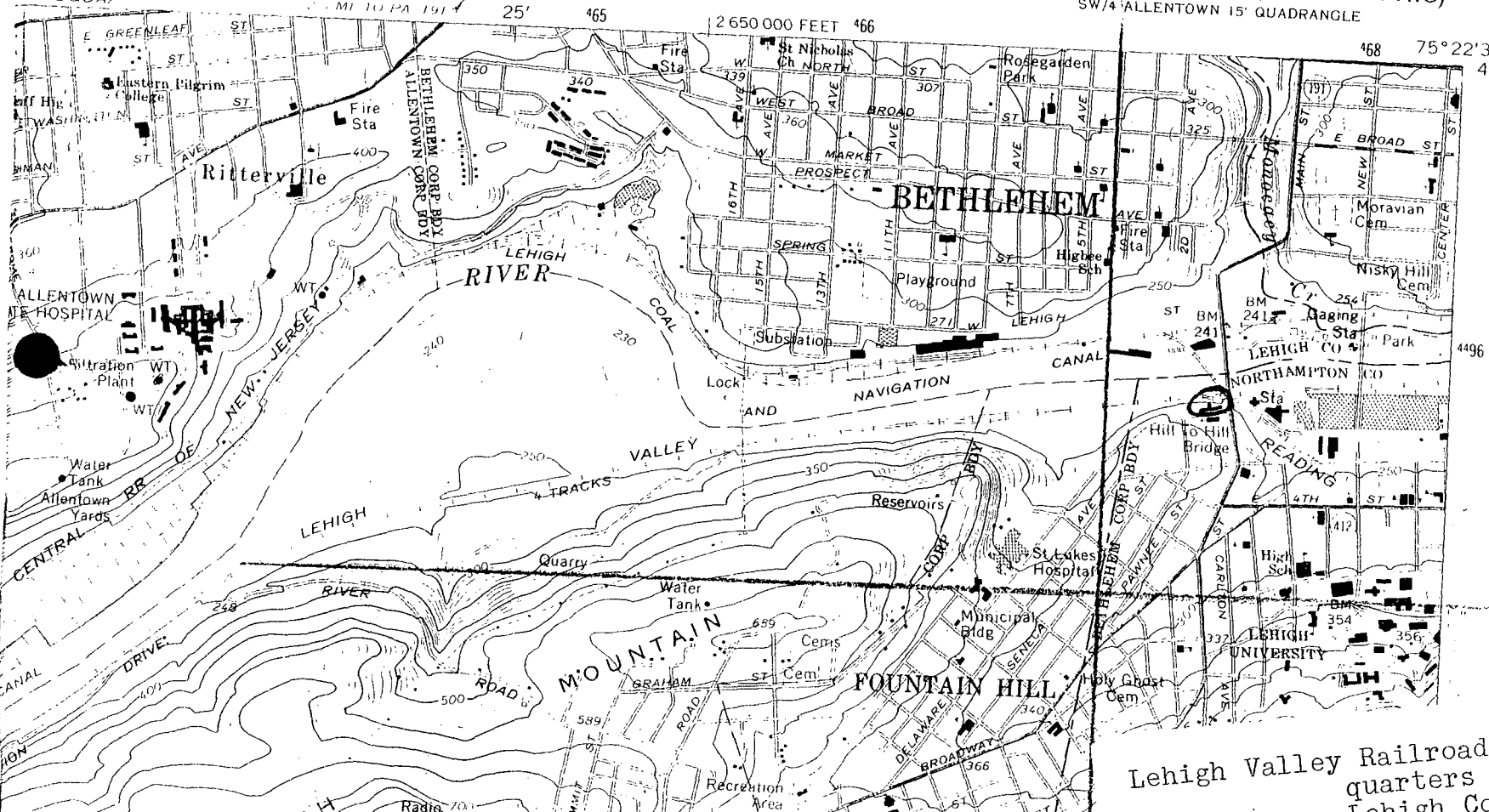
date

Chief of Registration

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF GEOLOGIC SURVEY
1505 III NW
ASASQUA

ALLENTOWN EAST QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 ALLENTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE

5965 III NE
(NAZARETH)



Lehigh Valley Railroad Head-
quarters
Lehigh Co.