

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 513-525 North Tenth Street

city, town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania code PA

county Philadelphia code 101

not for publication vicinity

zip code 19123

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date 7/31/90

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

stone

roof other

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building is a seven-story warehouse, completed in 1927, located at the southeast corner of Spring Garden and Tenth Streets in Philadelphia. The building, which measures approximately 190 feet by 112 feet, has a reinforced concrete frame and floor system. The exterior is clad with cast stone on the double-height first story and brick on the upper stories. The building has a flat gravel roof located behind a parapet wall that is slightly raised at the building corners. The cornice is expressed by a stone beltcourse.

The north side of the building contains seven arched truck bays at street level. Welded steel coverings at each opening protects the cast stone. The brick upper stories of this facade are divided into nine bays by pilasters. The easternmost bay projects slightly out and contains an open fire stair with two window openings at each floor. The westernmost bay also projects, and contains two steel-framed windows with opaque glass at each floor. The remaining bays each contain three windows separated by thin piers. A band of stone runs along the top and bottom of each pilaster and pier.

The west side of the building contains five bays delineated in the same manner as the north facade. Centered on the west facade is an arched entrance with a keystone. The entrance has been infilled with wood and contains modern glass and aluminum doors.

The south facade is entirely faced with brick and contains no pilasters or piers between windows openings. The fenestration pattern is, however, identical to that of the north facade. Window sills are cast stone and lintels are brick. The easternmost bay contains an open fire stair. On the east end of the south facade are three openings originally used to load and

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Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building
Description (continued)

unload railroad cars. The stone belt course found on the west and north facades is alluded to on this facade by two rows of headers.

The five-bay east facade contains no ornamentation. Windows, although smaller than elsewhere on the building, are grouped in a similar fashion. The fire stair towers have no openings on this facade.

The building's interior consists of open loft space with concrete floors and rows of evenly spaced concrete mushroom columns. On the west half of each floor is a freight elevator shaft. Exposed piping and lighting fixtures run along the ceiling. The Tenth Street entrance vestibule includes pink marble wainscoting and terrazzo floor and stairs below plaster walls.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1940

Significant Dates

1927

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kellogg, Thomas and

Rankin, John Hall

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, one of the first druggists' buying cooperatives in the United States, erected this warehouse in 1927. The building is significant for its associations with the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, a leading firm within Philadelphia's important pharmaceutical industry. The building is also significant as a rare example of industrial architecture designed by the prominent local firm of Rankin & Kellogg.

Philadelphia's associations with the development and growth of the science of pharmacy and the manufacture of drugs dates to the eighteenth century and the first efforts to separate pharmacy from medicine. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century Philadelphia became the first city in the United States to establish a school of pharmacy. In 1825, four years after its founding, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy began publication of a journal that became The American Journal of Pharmacy. Drug manufacturing in Philadelphia probably began as early as 1786, when Christopher and Charles Marshall started a company that produced pharmaceuticals (Sonnedecker 1963:286).

During the nineteenth century the demands of the medical profession and the development of new techniques for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals led to the establishment of large, specialized drug manufacturers. The development, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, of synthetic techniques for the preparation of drugs, greatly increased the number and type of drugs available to physicians. The costs associated with synthetic production

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Statement of Significance (continued)

techniques effectively eliminated small laboratories and concentrated the industry within the hands of large corporations. In Philadelphia large drug companies such as Powers & Weightman and Smith, Kline & French flourished as a result of these developments. By 1880 fifty-four drug and chemical companies, producing over \$11 million worth of products, operated in Philadelphia (Report on the Manufactures of the United States 1883:422).

As pharmaceutical companies in Philadelphia and other cities grew larger and developed more products it became difficult for small retail druggists to easily supply their customers with the entire range of new products offered by the large manufacturers. The drug wholesaling business, developing in step with the drug manufacturing industry, provided the simplest means for small retailers to obtain access to the growing selection of pharmaceuticals. However, wholesalers and manufacturers generally offered volume discounts or special offers to large buyers that were unavailable to small retailers. Retail druggists formed cooperative manufacturing and buying groups to assure themselves access to the full range of new products at competitive prices. Cooperative manufacturing ventures, while a popular idea in the late nineteenth century, proved unsuccessful and generally short-lived (The Druggists Circular 1907:149).

Cooperative buying clubs, however, proved quite successful. In an effort to utilize the volume bonuses offered by wholesalers and manufacturers, retail druggists formed buying clubs that purchased large quantities of various products and passed the savings that accrued from these large purchases along to individual members. Between 1886 and 1907 buying clubs were founded by groups of retail druggists throughout the United States. These clubs usually specialized in distributing well known products and limited their stock to particular items and

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Statement of Significance (continued)

brands (Sonnedecker 1963:269). The number of buying clubs increased rapidly in the early twentieth century, encouraging the formation of the Associated Drug Companies of America. The organization, founded in 1906, benefitted groups interested in cooperative buying. The organization encouraged the formation of local buying clubs and provided a forum for a united stand against the opposition of drug wholesalers toward the buying clubs (The Druggists Circular 1907:149).

Cooperative buying companies sprang up rapidly in most large American cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The clubs sought members from retail druggists located within their geographic area. The New York Consolidated Drug Company, formed in 1896, had two hundred members by 1907, while the Brooklyn Consolidated Drug Company had approximately two hundred additional members. The Washington Wholesale Drug Exchange owned a building and included in its membership approximately half of the city's retail druggists. Baltimore, Buffalo and Providence also had successful buying clubs (The Druggists Circular 1907:149). These numerous cooperative ventures formed and flourished without the approval of the National Association of Retail Druggists. That organization opposed buying clubs and preferred retailers to buy their drugs through regular wholesale operations (Sonnedecker 1963:270).

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company was one of the many drug buying clubs formed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Founded in 1886 as the Apothecaries' Union Limited, the company was one of the first retail druggists' buying clubs established. In 1895 the company changed its name to the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, with offices at 610 Arch Street (Gospill 1895:1494). By 1915 the firm had moved to 522 Arch Street, and by 1919 it had moved again, to larger quarters at 645 North Broad Street. Among the firm's officers

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Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building
Statement of Significance (continued)

were two former druggists, Augustus T. Pollard and Russell T. Blackwood. The company's successful organization of retail druggists enabled it to virtually monopolize the wholesale drug business in Philadelphia (Sonnedeker 1963:367). An indication of the company's success and importance in the cooperative buying business was the instrumental role played by the firm's president, Frank Rohrman, in establishing the Associated Drug Companies of America (The Druggists Circular 1907:149). Growth in the pharmaceutical industry in the 1920s contributed to Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company's growth, and by 1930 the company's sales to its eight hundred members, and other retail druggists, surpassed \$12 million (Sonnedeker 1963:367). Such growth made it necessary for the company to build its own warehouse. The size of the building that the firm constructed at Tenth and Spring Garden Streets is ample testimony to the firm's importance within Philadelphia's wholesale drug industry.

The new warehouse of the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, designed by the architectural firm of Rankin & Kellogg was located on Spring Garden Street between Ninth and Tenth Streets. The area, already established as a prime location for light industry and warehouses, enjoyed exceptional access for rail and motor vehicle transportation. During the late nineteenth century, following the construction of Reading Terminal at 12th and Market Streets, businesses intent upon taking advantage of the excellent new transportation network developed the area north of Market Street and south of Spring Garden Street. This development began on Arch Street and moved north to Spring Garden Street.

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company remained in this building until the 1950s. As the need for cooperative buying clubs waned, many clubs, including the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, became drug wholesalers. The Philadelphia

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Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building
Statement of Significance (continued)

Wholesale Drug Company remains in business at the present time as West Wholesale Drug Company. Following the removal of the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company from the building in the 1950s the Packard Press, a publishing company, used the building as their Philadelphia office. In the 1980s Packard Press relocated their operations, and the building has remained vacant since that time.

The architects of the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building, John H. Rankin (1868-1952) and Thomas M. Kellogg (1862-1935) were significant Philadelphia architects. Rankin and Kellogg first formed a partnership in 1891. Kellogg, after attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology worked for the architectural firms Van Brunt & Howe and McKim, Mead & White. After graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1889 Rankin worked for several prominent Philadelphia architectural firms before associating himself with Kellogg. Rankin & Kellogg's projects consisted largely of institutional buildings, including several federal government commissions, and residences. Their facility with the Beaux Arts style predated and often rivaled that of Paul Cret (Tatman and Moss 1985:437, 643).

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company building is a rare example of Rankin & Kellogg's industrial work. The building is distinguished from the other warehouses and light industrial buildings in the area by its lack of traditional architectural ornamentation. The building was constructed at the northern fringe of the light industrial and warehousing district north of Market Street shortly before the onset of the Great Depression, at the conclusion of the area's development. Consequently, the building displays a more abstract and modern appearance than earlier works in the area. The older buildings along Arch, Race, and Cherry Streets generally display more architectural ornamentation and the design of the ornamentation on these

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Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building
Statement of Significance (continued)

buildings is based upon historical sources. The limited ornamentation on the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building is more abstract and geometric and less specifically based upon historical sources.

Structurally, Rankin & Kellogg designed the building with a type of reinforced concrete construction known as flat-slab construction. Invented in 1900 by a Swiss engineer, this system was independently developed by an American engineer in 1905-1906. By the time Rankin & Kellogg designed the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company building in 1927 flat-slab construction had become a common type of construction for warehouses and freight-handling facilities. The large building is testimony to the scale of the business developed by the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company.

The design of the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building fully utilized the excellent local transportation facilities. The Reading Railroad tracks pass alongside the east side of the building, and a railroad spur along the south side of the building serves a series of loading bays, facilitating rail delivery of pharmaceuticals. Truck bays along the Spring Garden Street facade permitted trucks to easily unload and pick-up merchandise.

The Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company building is emblematic of the importance of Philadelphia's pharmaceutical industry. As the warehouse of one of America's oldest drug buying clubs, the building is representative of late nineteenth and early twentieth century business practice. It is the only extant property associated with the Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company, the other buildings associated with the firm having been demolished. The building, the work of an important local architectural firm, is also significant as one of the few industrial buildings designed by Rankin and Kellogg.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .5

UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	6	7	0	0	4	4	2	3	2	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies City Lot 152 on Plat Plan 4N11. It measures roughly 190 feet by 112 feet.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date April 2, 1990
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Philadelphia Wholesale Drug Company Building
Bibliographical References (continued)

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PHILADELPHIA
 WHOLESALE
 COMPANY
 Philadelphia
 County
 Philadelphia
 Quads
 Zone 10
 E 486700
 N 4123270

4424
 4423
 57'30"
 2.7 MI. TO U.S. 130
 ATLANTIC CITY 68 MI.
 4422
 4421
 4420

DELAWARE RIVER
 PENNSYLVANIA
 NEW JERSEY

PHILADELPHIA CO
 CAMDEN CO

PENN - CENTRAL

CAMDEN

FRANKLIN BRIDGE

Franklin Square
 Independence Mall
 State Park

Museum of Art

30th St Su

MARKET ST

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MARKET ST

MARKET ST

MARKET ST