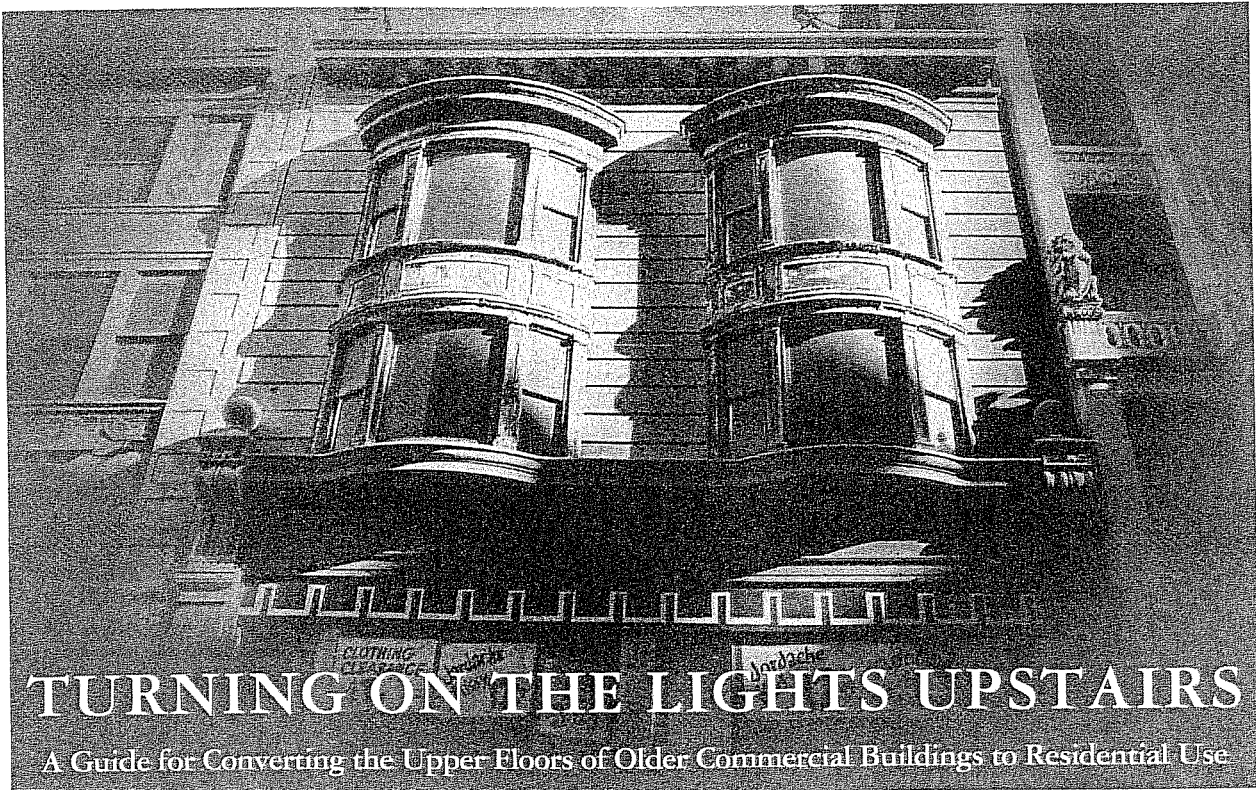
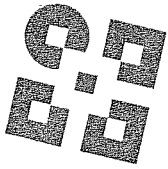


# CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT

CENTER CITY DISTRICT  
February 1996



## TURNING ON THE LIGHTS UPSTAIRS

A Guide for Converting the Upper Floors of Older Commercial Buildings to Residential Use

Funding provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts

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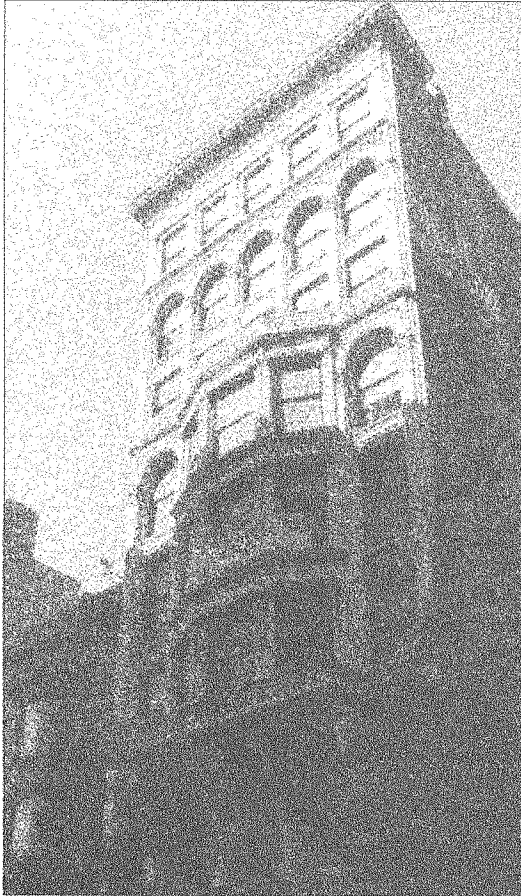
# TURNING ON THE LIGHTS UPSTAIRS

*A Guide for Converting the Upper Floors of Older Commercial Buildings to Residential Use*

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## PREFACE

*Turning on the Lights Upstairs* is a guide for owners and developers interested in restoring life to the upper floors of older commercial buildings in Center City. Philadelphia is unique not only because it has preserved much of its colonial and federal architecture, but also because it has an extraordinary range of late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings.

However, many of these buildings - particularly those with only six to ten stories, located east of Broad Street - will probably never be economically viable again as office or warehouse space. Yet many are ideal as housing for students, young professionals and "empty nesters," as lofts for artists or as bed-and-breakfast establishments.

Many obstacles stand in the way of this appealing objective: the overall image of the area, the complexity of the building code, and uncertainty about economic viability. This study was undertaken to

overcome those obstacles; to solve the puzzle of why so many remarkable structures sit empty; to look at these buildings from the perspective of owners and developers; to make the numbers work.

We focused on the smaller sites because they require less capital and risk. The area east of Broad Street was selected not only because the need and challenge here is greater, but also because this area is poised for revitalization. New volumes of foot-traffic are being generated by the Pennsylvania Convention Center and related hospitality development. In the next two years, improvements to lighting, paving, landscaping and signage will be made through the Center City District's streetscape improvement program. What is necessary is a few highly visible projects at key locations to awaken interest and jump-start the redevelopment process for the larger buildings as well.

In this effort we had exceptional support from a wide range of individuals and organizations. First, financial support from The Pew Charitable Trusts made possible a detailed review of the architectural, code and cost issues that no one owner could afford on their own - given the small size of the buildings in question.

Second, we had the benefit of first class consultants, Cecil Baker and Janice Woodcock of Cecil Baker & Associates, and Gene LeFevre, a real estate developer, who offered their extensive experience with the successful rehabilitation of many older buildings in Philadelphia. Third, we were fortunate to have an advisory group, whose names are listed in Section II, who volunteered their time and experience to this project. Fourth, we had the full cooperation of nine building owners who gave our team permission to survey and analyze their buildings as "guinea pigs" for this study.

Fifth, Pat Gillespie and members of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Building & Construction Trades Council reviewed our assumptions and have contributed to the economic viability of this effort by agreeing to hold down renovation costs by treating this initiative as a demonstration program.

*Sixth, during the process of the preparation of this study, Regent National Bank stepped forward to support reinvestment in older buildings in this area of Center City.*

*Finally, Nancy Goldenberg, Director of Public Information for the Center City District, served as project manager, reaching out to interested owners, coordinating the work of volunteers, the consultant team, city officials and representatives of financial institutions.*

*Working together this diverse group of individuals and organizations has generated an exciting and innovative approach to restore economic viability and life to some of Center City's oldest and most strategically located architectural gems.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul R. Levy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

*Paul R. Levy, Executive Director  
Center City District  
January 1996*

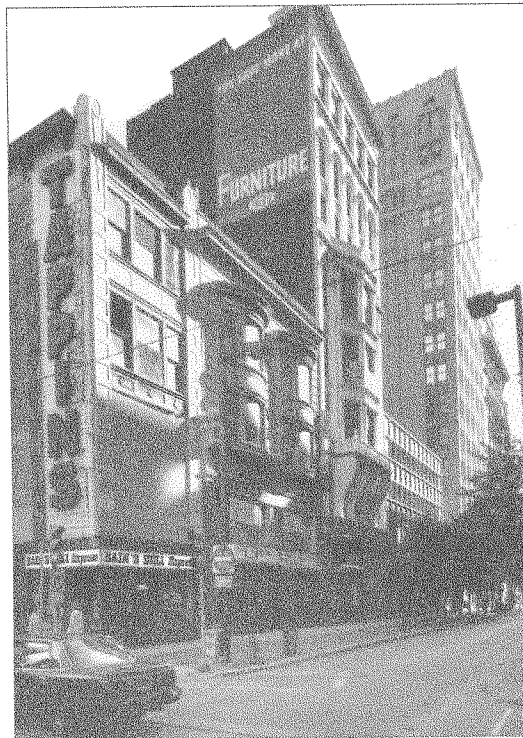


## I. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Following the building of City Hall in Center Square at the end of the 19th century, Philadelphia's office and financial district moved from the area east of Independence Hall to the wide boulevard of Broad Street. From the 1880's through the 1920's, many architecturally prominent buildings such as the Land Title Building, the Fidelity Bank Building, the Bellevue Stratford Hotel, and the Girard Trust Company were developed in the area, while a series of distinctive, smaller-scale buildings were constructed along Chestnut and Walnut Streets. For almost a century, the "100% location" in Philadelphia for offices and financial institutions was at Broad and Chestnut Streets.

The demolition of a massive rail trestle along West Market Street, as part of urban renewal efforts, opened up a new development zone in Center City in the 1950's. Penn Center, the first new office construction in Philadelphia since the completion of the PSFS Building at the beginning of the Depression, initiated another major westward migration of Philadelphia's office district. During the commercial real estate boom of the 1980's for example, 90% of the new office space constructed in Center City was developed west of City Hall. These prominent new towers, such as the Liberty Place complex and the Mellon Bank Center, drew their tenants not from other cities, but rather from the upper floors of older buildings east and south of City Hall.

Then, with the recession at the beginning of the 1990's and with corporate down-sizing, a large supply of new, high-quality office space became available at very competitive rents. This accelerated the exodus from older buildings as tenants in these "Class B" buildings could find more competitive rents in the new "Class A" buildings. Today, 30% to 40% of the office space on east Chestnut and east Walnut Streets is vacant. Several older



*From 1880 to 1920 many smaller, distinctive structures built "off Broad" along Walnut and Chestnut Streets were used for office and retail functions.*

buildings on South Broad Street have been completely emptied out and "moth-balled." While some owners are "hanging-on," maintaining their properties, and hoping for the market to rebound, others have allowed buildings to deteriorate or have demolished them for parking lots.

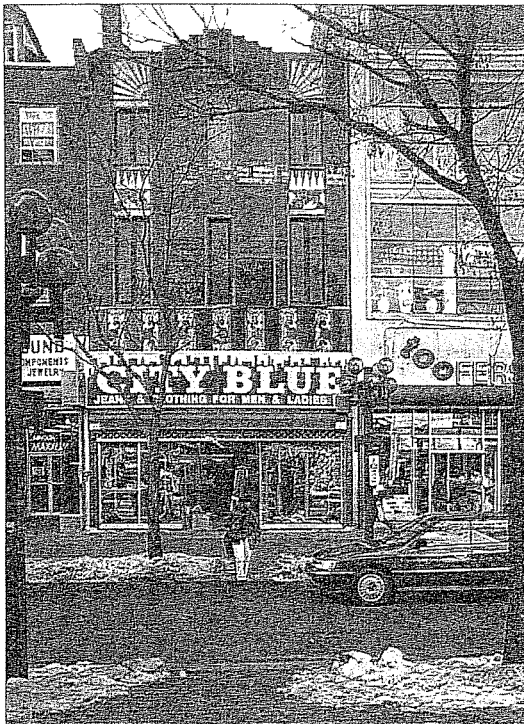
A number of factors have compounded this problem. First, many older buildings have small, obsolete floor configurations that are not easily adapted to current office technology, work-station sizing, space needs, and code requirements. Second, the lack of financing for commercial real estate in general has been exacerbated by the diminished size and value of investment tax credits for the rehabilitation of older buildings. Finally, many of these older buildings are not owned locally or are owned by the retailers who lack the information or the development capacity to consider alternative re-uses, particularly if such changes require code or zoning variances. This has



*These buildings on Walnut Street are abandoned and boarded up above the first floor.*

left many owners east of Broad Street to pursue a self-defeating strategy: leasing only the ground-floor space and thereby depriving their retail tenants of the expanded customer base that upper-floor uses would generate. In the process, moreover, many have demolished the stairs leading to the upper floors in order to maximize the leasable space at ground floor and have sealed off the upper floors.

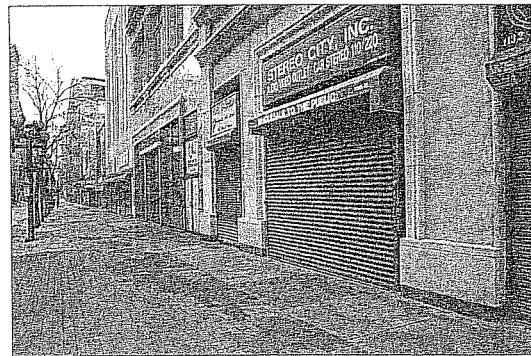
From the broader public perspective, the upstairs vacancies east of Broad Street create an area of Center City that



*A number of retail tenants have expanded to occupy space formerly used for lobbies and stairs to upper floors.*

shuts down and depopulates after the working day. At night a handful of taverns and restaurants struggle to survive in the face of a disturbing number of prostitutes, drug-dealers and other criminal elements who continue to pose challenges to the police. Thus, a strategically positioned portion of Center City - between the office and historic districts and along the route between the Convention Center and the Avenue of the Arts - is characterized too often by deteriorated buildings, unattractive retail uses, and the near total absence of the type of night life that Philadelphia needs to compete as a first class visitor destination.

The Center City District (CCD) has undertaken this demonstration program, with the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, to explore methods to stimulate

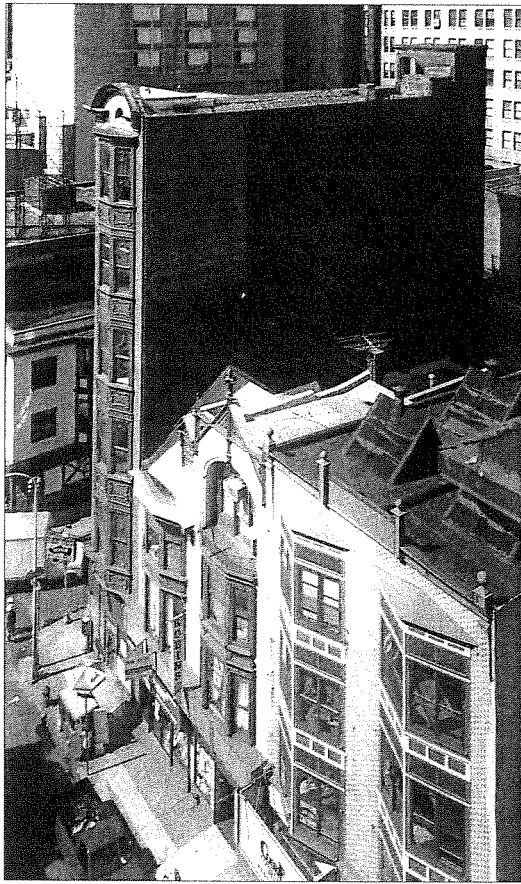


*Without residents to support a variety of uses, most retailers close after five - leaving streets devoid of night life.*

the re-use and renovation of these older commercial buildings. The goals are to restore life to the upper floors of older buildings and to the sidewalks of Center City at night, to preserve the historic fabric of Center City, and to strengthen the downtown tax-base.

## II. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The CCD began this demonstration program by convening a project advisory group composed of Center City property owners, developers and real estate professionals experienced with older buildings, including Kenneth Balin, John Connors, Carl Dranoff, Alex Generalis, Gene LeFevre, Tom Miles, Stanley Taraila, and Kelly Wolfington; architect Cecil Baker; and City officials including Bennett Levin and David Wismer from the Department of Licenses & Inspections, John Haak and Warren Huff of the City Planning Commission, Noel Eisenstadt of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, and Jack Shannon and Dorothy Tom of the Mayor's Business Action Team. All members of the project advisory group served on a voluntary basis. Cecil Baker served as a paid consultant.



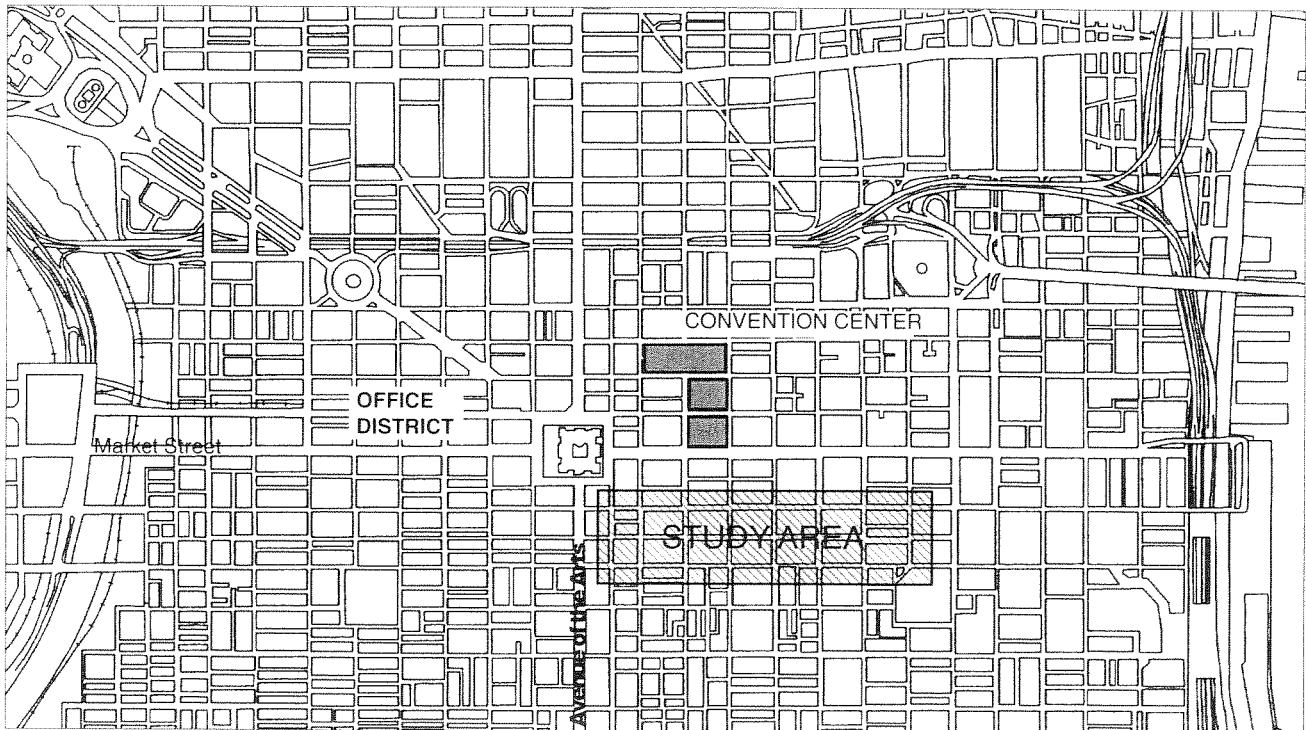
*Vacant and deteriorating buildings occupy a key portion of the route between the Convention Center, the Avenue of the Arts and Walnut Street restaurants.*

An initial meeting of the project advisory group was held in June 1995 to discuss a variety of methods and incentives that could stimulate the rehabilitation process, such as technical assistance, long term tax abatements, low-interest or tax increment financing, and transfer of development rights. The group agreed to focus on a number of buildings east of Broad Street to test the feasibility of rehabilitating these properties and to determine what incentives or subsidies might be necessary to "make the numbers work."

Architect Cecil Baker and developer Gene LeFevre then conducted a sidewalk survey to identify buildings with substantial vacant space above the ground floor whose location, visibility, and architectural characteristics might make them suitable for residential conversion. Fourteen buildings between Chestnut and Walnut, Broad and 7th Streets were selected for more detailed analysis and field measurements. The owners of these properties were contacted by the CCD, requesting permission for the consultant team to walk through and analyze their buildings. With the cooperation of the owners, ten buildings were ultimately selected for in-depth evaluation by the consultant team.

These buildings are:

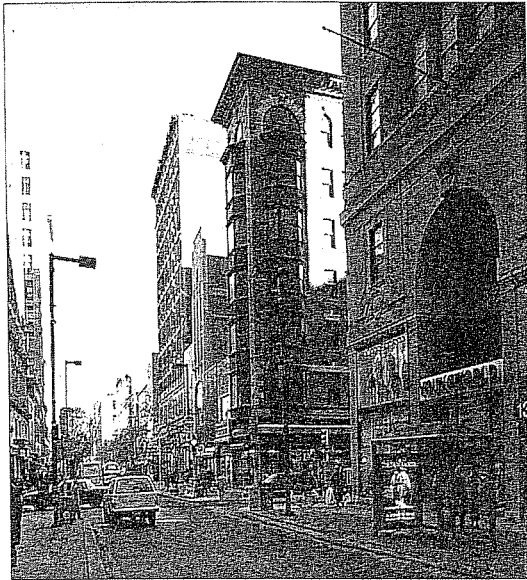
- Delong Building, 1232 Chestnut Street
- Bernley Building, 1229 Chestnut Street
- Blum's Department Store, 1300-1306 Chestnut Street



*Plan of Center City, Philadelphia*

- Penne Building, 114 South 13th Street
- Empire Building, 1231 Walnut Street
- 118 South 12th Street
- 927 Walnut Street
- Society Hill Building, 701 Sansom Street
- Balderson Block, 708-714 Chestnut Street
- Society Hill Furniture Building, 1033 Chestnut Street

The consultant team obtained base maps, zoning information and available drawings. They inspected the buildings and documented the type of construction and building



*The corner of Chestnut and 13th Street is a key intersection and the location of three buildings in this study.*

materials. They evaluated floor layouts, stairway exits and tested a set of alternative uses for these upper levels. Each building was then evaluated to determine how the applicable codes would affect the feasibility of renovating them for alternative uses. The results, which are summarized in Appendix A, were presented to the project advisory group in September 1995 and were reviewed by the Department of Licenses & Inspections in December 1995.

### **III. OVERVIEW OF CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS**

Owners of smaller commercial buildings with vacant upper floors face a dilemma. Any change to residential use requires that they master a range of code requirements, prepare preliminary plans, and file requests for variances. For owners who are not real estate developers, the cost and complexity of this preparatory work is daunting; the returns are at best uncertain. If ground-floor retail rents are strong and stable, it is often easier to turn off the lights and seal the upper floors.

Support from The Pew Charitable Trusts enabled the consultant team to undertake a significant portion of this pre-development work for ten representative buildings: to prepare schematic plans and to have the City's Department of Licenses & Inspections review these plans and confirm interpretations made by the consultant team about code compliance. Because the ten study buildings are representative of the diverse inventory in Center City, the lessons learned from this analysis have wide reaching application.

What follows is an overview of the regulations that govern all older commercial buildings and a number of recommendations as to how, by following specific aspects of the codes, these buildings could be renovated economically.

The reuse of buildings in the study area is regulated by the City of Philadelphia Zoning, Building and Fire Prevention Codes, by federal and local accessibility requirements, and by federal and local historic preservation policies. These codes and policies were reviewed to determine their effect on the economics of renovating the ten buildings in this study.

The City of Philadelphia's Zoning and Building Codes are administered and enforced by the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The Zoning Code regulates land use, pedestrian, and vehicular circulation. The Building Code addresses building construction with an emphasis on fire and life-safety. The Building Code also requires compliance with accessibility and historic preservation policies. Both Zoning and Building Code permit approvals are required for the renovation of existing buildings.

**I. Zoning Code:** Philadelphia adopted its first zoning code in 1933. All of the buildings in this study were built well before then. Activities present in these building prior to the adoption of the Code and on-going today are "grandfathered." But when a building owner wishes to change the use of a structure, the new use must be allowed by the zoning designation of the property. The designation for all buildings in the study is "C-5 Commercial" (Chapter 14-305) allowing for office, residential, retail and wholesale uses. There are thus no specific disincentives in the Zoning Code that prevent the reuse of existing structures in this study for any of these purposes.

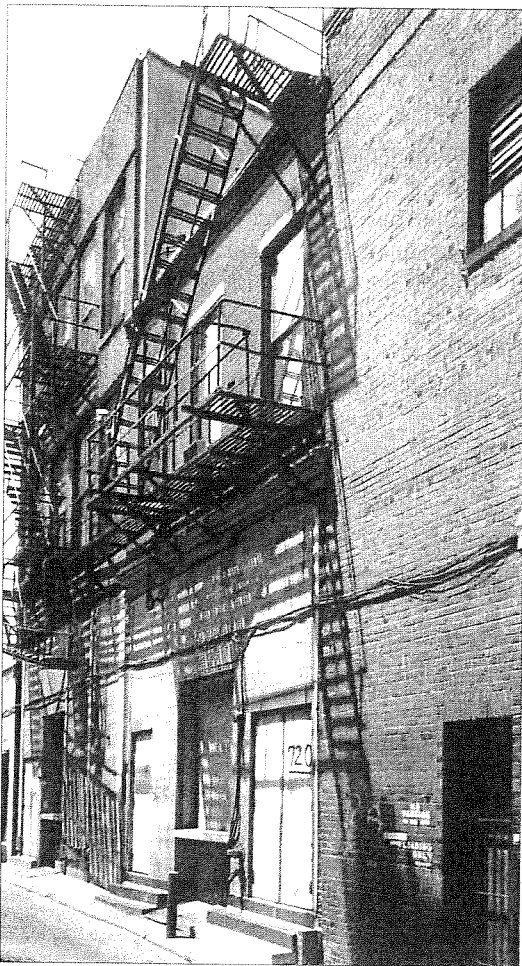
Variances from the Zoning Code are granted by the City through the Zoning Board of Adjustment on a case-by-case basis, or a special district may be designated and provisions incorporated into the Code by ordinance for that district. The use of a special district under the Zoning Code could be used to offer special public



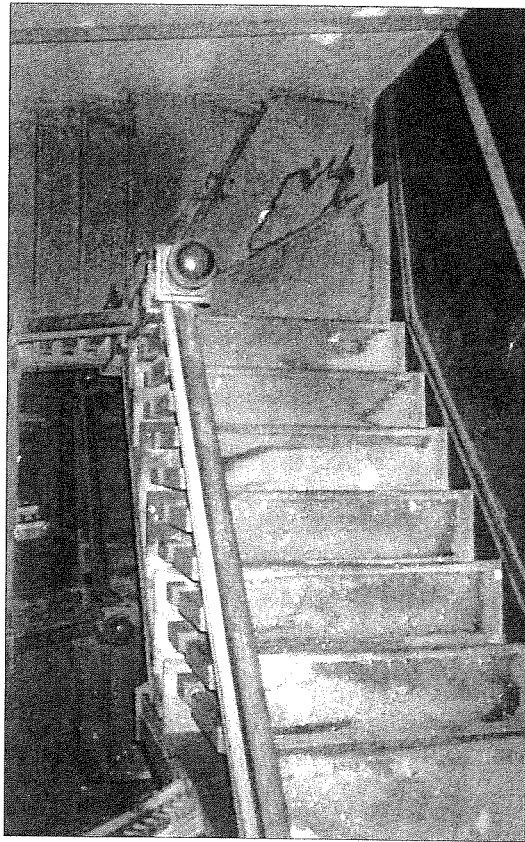
incentives for the study area to encourage the reuse of existing buildings.

**2. Building Code:** The City of Philadelphia Building Code references the Building Officials and Code Administrators International (BOCA), 1990 Edition. The Philadelphia Building Code regulates the design of existing and new buildings based on the use or "occupancy classification" of the structure. Each building has a registered occupancy. When a change of use is proposed, the Code allows two options. The first, most conservative option, considers the building as if it is new construction, which makes the renovations considered in this study too expensive to build. The second option requires adherence to all crucial health and life-safety objectives but allows a flexible application of regulations.

This flexible system can be found in Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code and it specifically addresses the range of life-safety conditions found in existing buildings. Entitled "Existing Structures," the chapter



*While new fire escapes are not allowed under today's codes, existing escapes can be used to provide a code compliant exit from upper floors.*



*Many older structures have narrow passages and open stairways which detract from their "safety score."*

employs a scoring system to rate a building's performance as it relates to height, area, fire resistance, exiting requirements, and fire protection systems. "Safety scores" are applied to a series of life-safety features, such as sprinklers and maximum distances between fire exits. This scoring system allows buildings to achieve a "passing grade" by addressing some, but not all, of the areas of non-compliance with the Code. The scoring system can be applied to all existing structures (except institutional occupancies), whether a change of use is proposed or not.

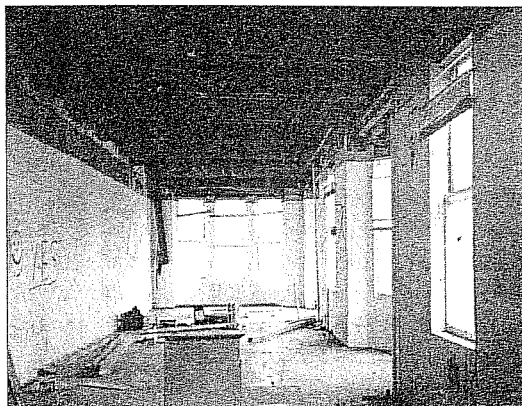
While this evaluation and scoring system has been in place for several years, its provisions have rarely been used in Center City. This may be due to a lack of awareness on the part of architects and engineers, an incomplete understanding of its advantages, or a lack of clarity over exactly how the Department of Licenses & Inspections would interpret this system.

The obvious advantage of the "scoring system" approach is the flexibility it offers to owners and developers. It allows owners to get credit for existing safety features and does not require owners to address every single code deficiency. Owners can select upgrade features which are feasible given a particular building's characteristics.

In Appendix A of this study, each of the ten buildings is reviewed in accordance with the Philadelphia Building Code scoring system contained in Chapter 32. The Department of Licenses & Inspections has indicated its willingness to apply this section of the code to the study buildings, thus opening up a major opportunity for the cost-effective redevelopment of these structures.

3. **Fire Code:** In 1994 the City of Philadelphia issued a new Fire Prevention Code (effective January 1, 1995) to supplement the provisions of the Building Code. The Fire Code addresses fire safety for new and existing construction, as well as maintenance of existing structures. Where a conflict between the City of Philadelphia Building Code and Fire Prevention Code occurs, the most conservative provisions govern (Chapter One, Section F-102.2).

Unlike the Building Code, the Fire Code requires the retrofitting of existing buildings considered to be “unsafe,” whether or not a renovation project or change of occupancy is proposed. The type of retrofitting depends on the height of the building and its occupancy. For the buildings in the study area, the Fire Code requires (in most cases) fire alarms at a minimum, which is similar to



Many 1900-era structures have wood floors and ceilings. Covering these combustible structural elements with drywall can be an inexpensive way to improve the buildings “safety score.”

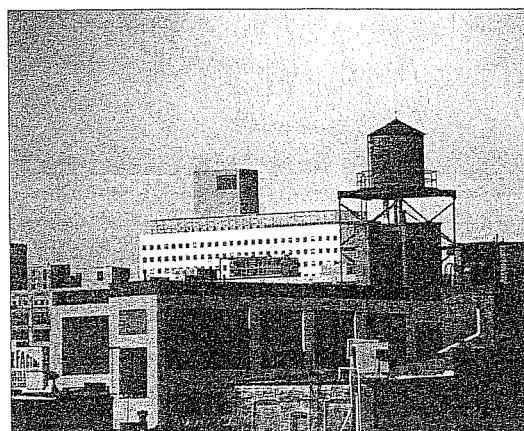
Philadelphia Building Code provisions. In addition, the Fire Prevention Code requires that high-rise structures (those with occupied floors over 75 feet in height) install an automatic fire suppression system (sprinklers) by 1999 (Chapter 5 Section F-503.4). The Code makes an exception to this requirement in portions of high-rise buildings used for multi-family residential (R-2) occupancy.

Three of the ten buildings in this study are classified as high-rise: Blum’s Department Store, Society Hill Furniture, and the Bernley Building. Unless these structures remain vacant above 75’ or are used for apartments, the

Fire Prevention Code will require a new automatic sprinkler system to be installed in these buildings by 1999.

*Alternative Means of Compliance:* Despite the development of new building technologies, many older fire protection systems existing in buildings today have merit and could provide an alternative means of code compliance. Two common existing types of systems are wood water tanks and dry standpipes.

*Wood Water Tanks:* For years, wood water tanks have been used on the roofs of older buildings to supply water to standpipe systems. Gravity carries water from the tanks to risers and hoses located inside a building. The system works well as a back-up to the city water supply

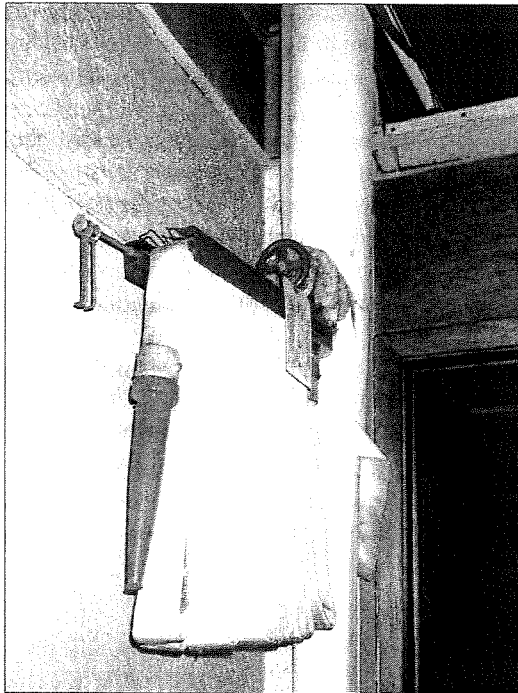


Many Center City buildings have (or once had) rooftop wood water tanks which could be used today for fire protection.

and can perform even in the event of a power outage. Another advantage of the tanks is their price; rooftop water tanks could supplant the need for a fire pump, which costs between \$30,000 and \$50,000 to purchase and install. This savings is significant, especially for small buildings where the cost of the pump per square foot is particularly burdensome.

While wood water tanks are not mentioned in the Philadelphia Fire Prevention or Building Codes, the Fire Code does state that, “alternative means of compliance will be permitted as long as these methods are approved by the Code Official” (Chapter 1, Section F-104.4). If the use of tanks are continued, restored, or even newly installed on small buildings, these structures could be made safe in an economical way. Thus this technology, once reviewed by fire safety experts, may provide a reasonable alternative for the small buildings in this study.

*Standpipes* are supply risers with fire hose connections at street level to permit fire trucks to provide water inside the structure in the event of a fire. At each floor, the



*Old fashioned standpipes can become part of new fire protection systems. Pressure from City water mains is sufficient to pump water up several stories.*

standpipes are equipped with fire hoses that extend the length of the building and/or with hose connections for fire department use. Existing dry standpipe systems can be converted into wet systems by hooking them up to a dependable water supply and adding sprinkler heads and piping for water distribution. The pressure from a nearby city water main may be sufficient to pump water up several stories. For taller buildings, a wood water tank could be used to provide the water supply, as long as the system *automatically* activates to put out a fire in an emergency. The use of standpipes represents a cost savings to owners to the degree existing equipment can be approved as part of a new system.

**4. ADA Review:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law intended to prevent discrimination against disabled persons. Design guidelines for the law have been incorporated into the City's review process through Philadelphia's adoption of regulations to implement Pennsylvania Accessibility Act 166. Projects are reviewed for compliance by the City's Department of Licenses & Inspections. Proposals not in strict compliance with the guidelines may be further reviewed by L&I's Accessibility Advisory Board which has the power to grant waivers in certain circumstances.

There are limited exceptions to these requirements for renovations to existing buildings. Exceptions can be granted if ADA alterations would change the historic

character of the building. However, the ADA Accessibility Advisory Board tends to seek a way for a building to meet the intent of the law rather than simply exempt a building because of its historic status. Exceptions are also made at the owner's own risk. While federal legislation offers a *reasonableness clause* to excuse owners from making overly expensive repairs, a non-complying design based on that clause alone could be open to legal challenge from any member of the public.

Another exception to the accessibility guidelines is allowed for small buildings. For new and existing construction with a net floor area under 12,500 net square feet, an elevator or ramp is not required to provide an accessible route to levels that are not at grade. In addition, only residential units on the ground floor are required to be adaptable. This provision can exempt many of the buildings in this study from having to provide a new or modified elevator and elevator shaft, thus significantly reducing building costs.

The buildings in the study exceeding the 12,500 square foot threshold, and therefore not automatically exempt from accessibility guidelines noted above, include the Empire Building (1231 Walnut Street), the Society Hill Building (701 Sansom Street), Society Hill Furniture (1033 Chestnut Street), and Blum's Department Store (1300 Chestnut Street).

Buildings for which the existing registered use will be changed as a result of renovation are treated as new construction under the City's accessibility guidelines. Since most of the buildings considered in this study would be converted from office use, they would be considered as "new" for the purposes of the City's accessibility review. This means that, for any buildings over 12,500 net square feet, accessible elevators, rest rooms and circulation are required and interiors of individual residential units must be adaptable for disabled tenants. Although the design of new housing units can comply without difficulty, constraints imposed by fixed stairs and elevators could significantly increase construction costs. In these instances the Accessibility Board can consider requests on a case-by-case basis.

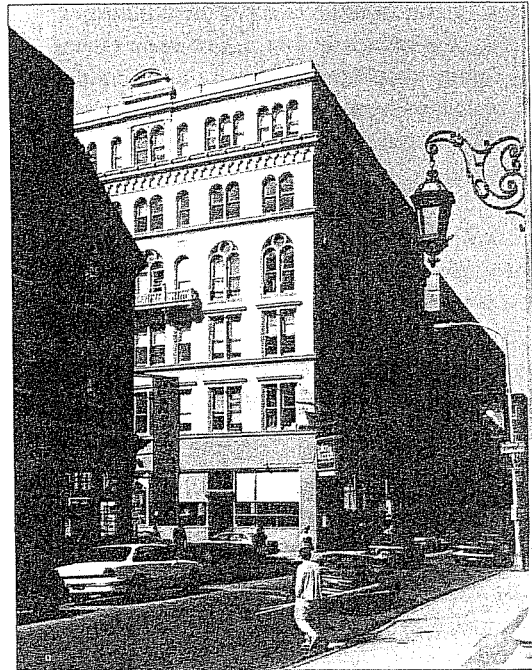
The types of exceptions described in the City's accessibility guidelines indicate some flexibility in applying design standards to particular situations. The Accessibility Advisory Board can and does permit deviations from established standards if the deviations are the best reasonable alternative to full compliance.

**5. Historic Preservation:** The buildings in this study are listed on the Philadelphia or National Register of Historic

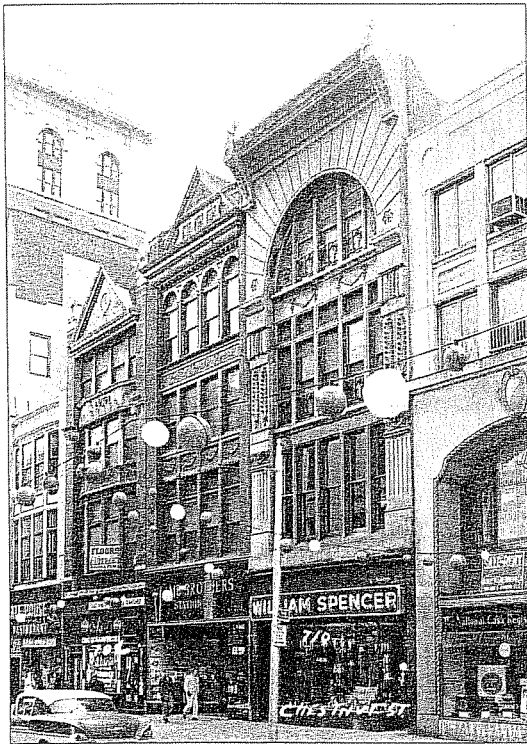
Places. Federal historic preservation policies provide incentives to owners of historic buildings, while the local preservation ordinance seeks to protect these structures from harmful alterations or demolition.

At the federal level, the National Park Service implements federal historic preservation policies by listing buildings or historic districts on the National Register for Historic Places. Individual buildings, as well as structures of historic importance inside historic districts, are eligible for federal preservation programs. All of the buildings in this study are listed as "contributing" or "significant" to the Center City East Historic District and are eligible for rehabilitation tax credits.

Local preservation ordinances are enforced by the City's Historical Commission, which reviews any proposed



*The Society Hill Building is listed on both the local and national Registers for Historic Places. Without a local listing, many historically significant structures may be demolished without City Historical Commission review.*



*As recently as the late 1950's, the Balderson Block in the 700 block of Chestnut Street retained its splendid architectural details. This series of buildings has been analyzed in this study as a single building, in order to test the feasibility of combining adjacent properties.*

demolition or alteration to buildings listed on the local register. Three properties; the Society Hill Building (701 Sansom Street) Society Hill Furniture (1033 Chestnut Street) and the Empire Building (1231 Walnut Street) are protected by their listing on the local register.

Applications for federal rehabilitation tax credits in Pennsylvania are reviewed by the State Historical and

Museum Commission and the National Park Service. The review uses the *Department of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (1992) to determine the acceptability of proposed renovations. The standards are used to guide the Department of Interior's review of projects to determine their consistency with preservation policy. The Standards generally require that the historic qualities of the structure be retained in the new project. Complete restoration of features removed or altered in the past is not required.

Since 1986, changes to the federal income tax law limit the possible tax benefit for individuals to \$7,000 per year of tax savings and restrict the ability of passive investors (i.e. those not actively involved in management of their property) from receiving tax benefits. The tax benefit is allowed only if the owner's investment in a renovation exceeds a building's worth or "adjusted basis." (The "adjusted basis" of a building is what the owner originally paid for the property, minus the land cost as defined by appraisal, minus the depreciation taken by the owner, plus any improvements made up to the present time.) Using the adjusted basis value as a threshold for determining tax encourages renovations that are well-planned, comprehensive, and not piecemeal.

While changes to the rehabilitation tax credit laws served to reduce the potential for tax savings in the '80s, there is still potential benefit for owners of the buildings in this

study. Typically, the adjusted basis of the buildings in their current state is relatively low, which means even modest renovations would be eligible for a tax credit. Additionally, most owners are not syndicated real estate investors and are therefore not restricted from participation in the program.

Clearly, there will be limited resources left over for exterior restoration efforts after repairs and reconstruction expenditures are made. In applying preservation policies and approving tax credits for owners, a balance will be needed to encourage financially feasible conversions of old buildings while preserving the historic character of their facades.

**6. Summary of Code Review Recommendations:** A flexible interpretation and application of existing codes, accessibility guidelines, and preservation policies can work to foster feasible conversion projects. Expensive items such as sprinkler systems and expanded elevator shafts often need not be required. Proposals that repair and preserve buildings and do not damage existing historic fabric may well be entitled to available benefits. Due to the uniqueness of each situation, consideration of each building renovation will be required on a case-by-case basis.

What follows is a list of suggestions to the city's review agencies for flexible code interpretations that could significantly reduce expected construction costs for building owners:

- (1) Wood water tanks utilizing an existing standpipe system should be considered an acceptable sprinkler system supply as long as activation is automatic and an adequate supply of water is available in the event of a fire.
- (2) New wood water tanks should be approved as a water supply for sprinkler systems on small buildings, or on any structure where the original water tank has been removed.
- (3) The size of small buildings exempted from key provisions of the City's accessibility guidelines (currently structures under 12,500 net sf) should be increased in order to include more buildings in Center City.
- (4) A change-of-use should not automatically require that an existing building be considered as new construction under the City's accessibility guidelines. Accessibility features for conversion projects can be incorporated with ease in many cases; however, exceptions for existing elevators and other fixed elements should be considered.

5) Tax benefits for the conversion of historic structures should be granted to owners who properly repair their buildings and renovate them for residential use; keeping in mind that extensive restoration of building exteriors may not be feasible due to the relatively low revenues generated by apartments.



*Chestnut Street looking east from 13th Street*

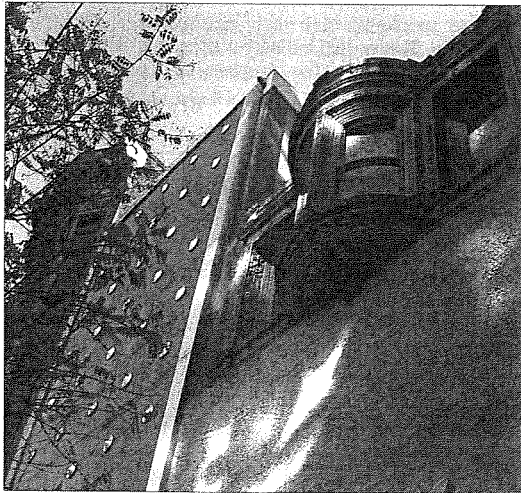
#### IV. RENOVATION FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

The lessons learned from the code review were applied to all ten study buildings. A description of each can be found in Appendix A, including current photographs, a site location map, a brief history, information about the building's construction type and mechanical and electrical systems, and its current use. Existing and proposed plans are illustrated along with a code-compliance analysis.

One of these buildings, the DeLong Building at 1232 Chestnut Street, was analyzed in greater detail. Renovations were documented to a preliminary level, with outline specifications, and then bid to two general contractors. These cost estimates then served as the basis for a detailed project pro-forma that was prepared for the DeLong Building.

The consultant team believes that all ten buildings could be made economically viable based on several key conclusions:

- The attractiveness of the study's buildings lies in their distinctive architecture and the fact that the buildings would yield large loft-like apartments with tall ceilings, abundant natural light and splendid views of the city.



*Re-using the upper floors of buildings will preserve the lively and varied character of the street.*

- While any number of public incentives would be strongly desirable, the aim was to make the economics work without them. This project thus has to be a "no-frills" renovation with total development costs limited to \$35,000 to \$45,000 per unit.

- While the Center City residential rental market is particularly strong at the writing of this report, the study area is currently perceived to be marginal for housing. It

was therefore felt that the initial target market, "pioneers" like students and artists, would only support rents in the \$500/month to \$650/month range.

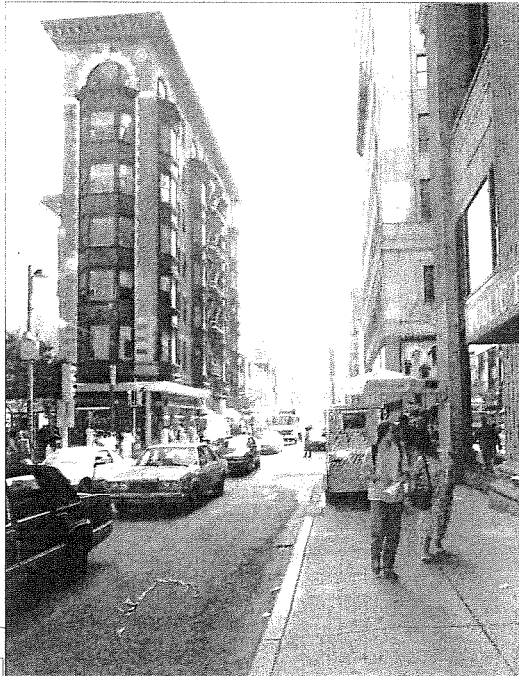
- The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Building & Construction Trades Council has agreed to consider to this effort as a demonstration program to contain renovation costs.

- In order to limit soft costs it was important to enlist the support of local financial institutions as part of a broader public/private effort to improve the area east of Broad Street. From these meetings emerged a uniquely strong commitment from Regent National Bank to focus its attention on a few demonstration buildings, offering, for instance, a combined construction and permanent financing package within a three year "mini-perm" vehicle for qualified borrowers.

- To eliminate the impact of acquisition costs, the CCD has formed a development consultant team that can work with existing owners and offer to them services ranging from design and permit application to assistance with financing, rehabilitation and property management. These services are outlined in Appendix B. The pro forma assumes that existing owners will take advantage of this package. The initial products of this work include the building survey, estimate and pro forma which follows. Additional services to the owner can be provided as necessary.



13th Street facade with fire escape



View of Chestnut Street facade from 13th Street

# DELONG BUILDING

## 1232 Chestnut Street

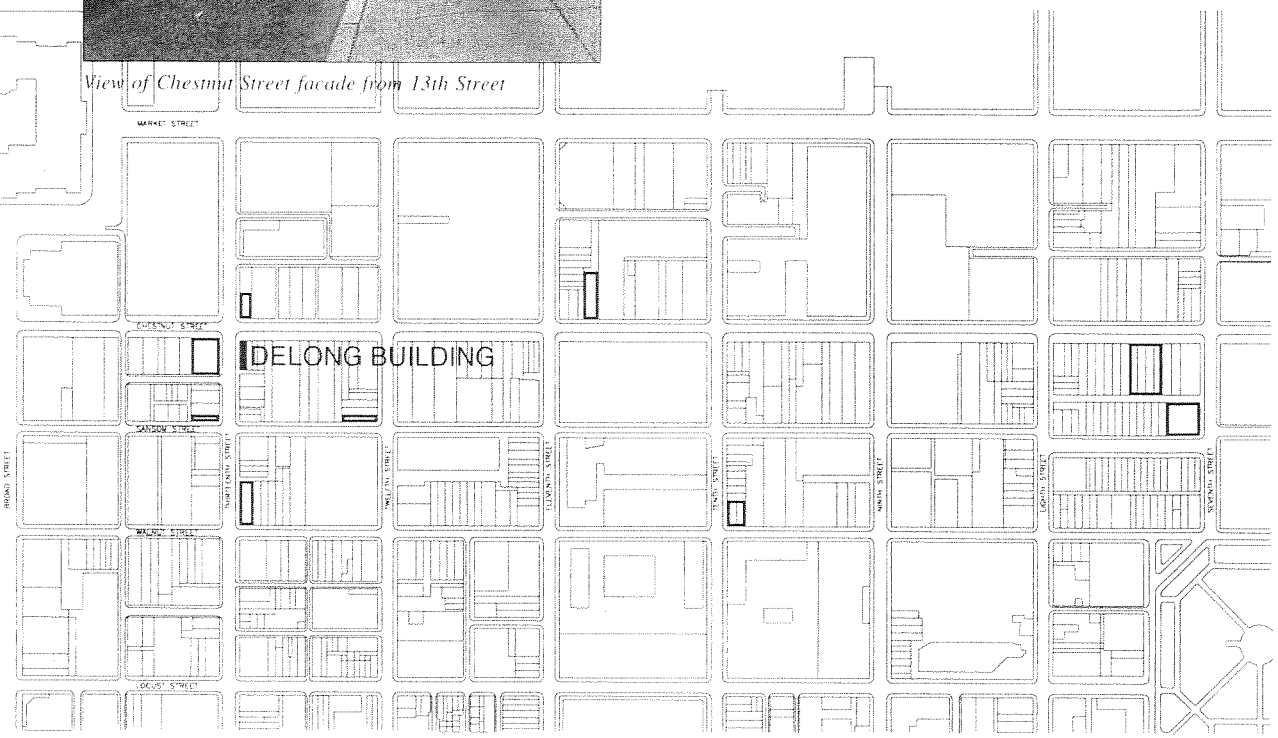
The DeLong Building occupies a prominent corner lot at 13th and Chestnut. Dating back from 1900, the seven-story building features dark-colored brick trimmed in limestone. The projecting bay windows and wide cornice give the building a strong profile; its elegant fire escape is one of the most distinctive in the city.

The DeLong Building was designed by Horace Trumbauer, a noted local architect, and is considered a fine example of the commercial architecture of its era. The building is not protected by local historic ordinances. However it is significant to the Center City East Historic District and eligible for rehabilitation tax credits.

From 1900 through the late '70s, the structure was occupied continuously with offices and street level retail. In 1978 the owner converted the ground floor lobby into a small retail space, blocking the only access to the upper floors. Since then, the upper floors have remained completely vacant.

Presently, the ground floor is fully occupied with retail; a wig store faces Chestnut Street and jewelry and clothing stores line south 13th Street. One of the retail tenants occupies the elevator lobby and would have to relocate to restore access to upper floors.

The floor configuration of the DeLong Building is too long and narrow for office use, however it would be ideal for apartments. Each 2,200 square foot floor would make two generous living spaces, divided by the existing stair core. The apartments would be modulated with bay windows and flooded with natural light.



The bay windows would offer views down Chestnut and 13th Streets. The strong image of the building façade, a corner location, and “loft-like” interiors would be easy to make attractive to tenants.

Despite standing empty for decades, the Delong Building’s shell is in relatively good condition. It is constructed of masonry walls with wood and steel floor framing in good condition. The historic wood windows do need some repair, and a water leak has damaged the plaster and flooring on the top level.

Typical of structures left vacant for any length of time, conversion to apartments will require a significant amount of interior work. This includes removal and replacement of existing partitions, dropped ceilings, and damaged plaster. Only the mechanical, electrical and plumbing serving the ground floors may remain in place; otherwise, new electrical service, wiring, plumbing, and heating units are required. The existing standpipes are in good condition and should remain, although the standpipe system would not be considered a true sprinkler system under today’s building codes. The elevator car and hoistway may be reused, but they require a new motor, control panel and wiring to be operational. A larger accessible elevator car would not be mandated by current City regulations due to the small size of the building (under 12,500 net sf).

Presently, the building owner may legally use only the ground floor of the building. To reopen the upper floors, the building would be evaluated by L&I prior to issuance of an occupancy permit. As shown on the following pages, the Delong Building currently has a relatively

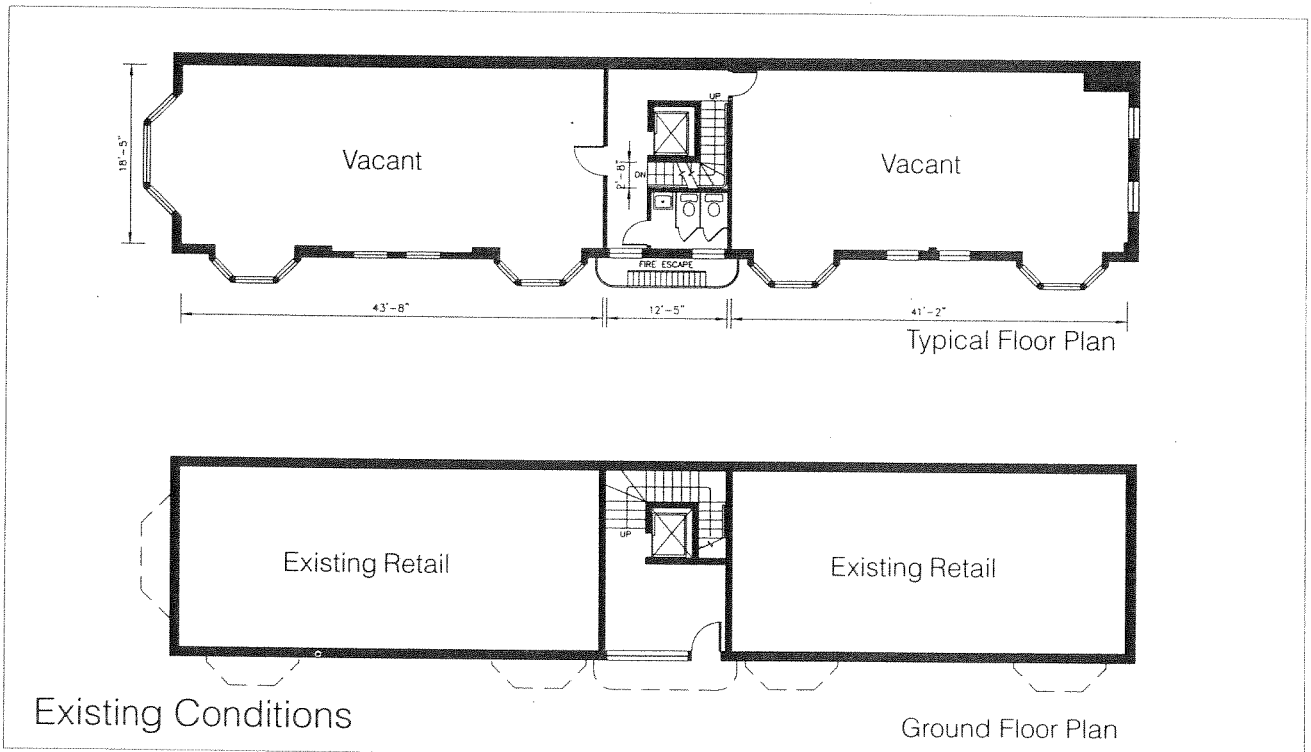
high negative safety score because of its interior wood construction, open exit stairs and lack of fire protection systems. This can be corrected in two ways:

Without sprinklers, the building can achieve a passing score by repairing the existing fire escape as a second exit, adding drywall to protect the exposed wood and steel structure on all floors, providing fire resistant walls, egress lighting, and a new detector and alarm system throughout.

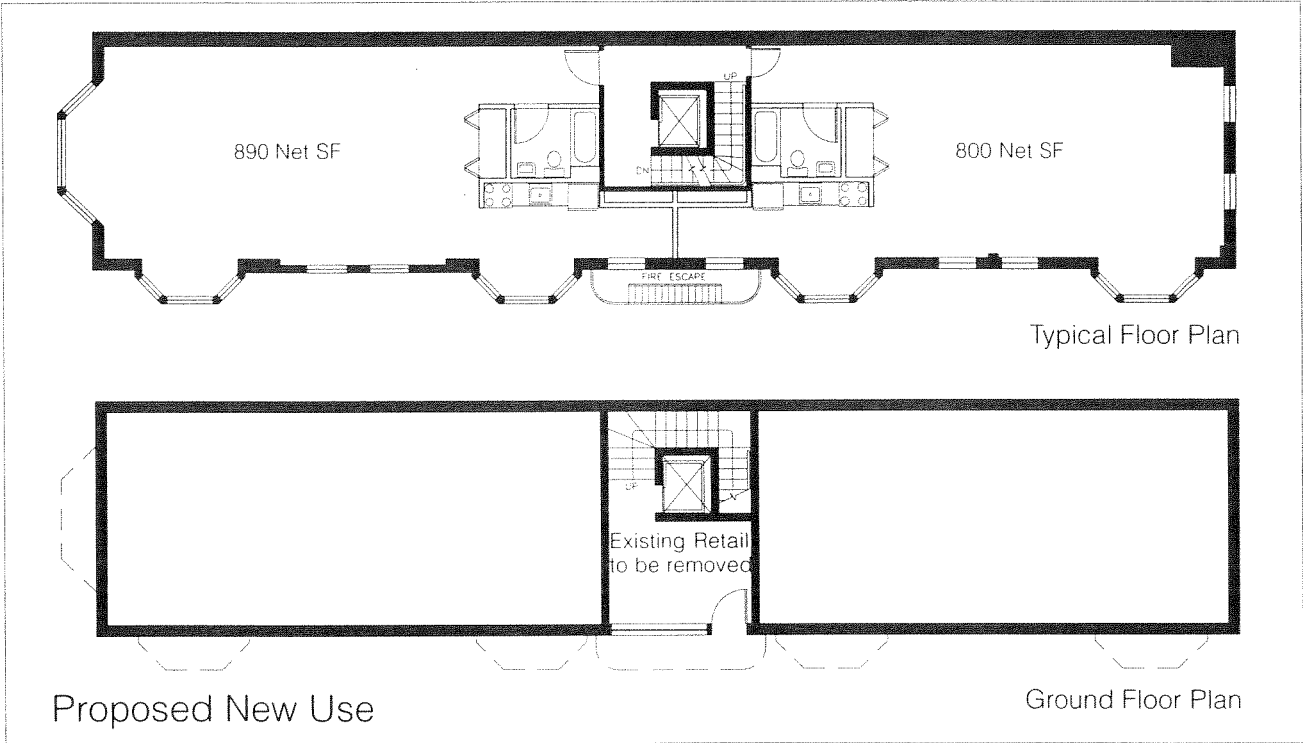
With sprinklers, drywall ceilings would not be required for street level spaces and the existing manual pull fire alarm system could be re-used.

An estimate of probable construction cost (see next page) compares the renovation costs for conversion, both with and without sprinklers. It shows the cost trade-off between providing a sprinkler system versus the installation of additional drywall and fire alarm equipment. A new sprinkler system would increase the construction cost per unit from \$36,360 to \$42,110 per unit. These figures represent a 20 percent increase for the “with sprinkler” option. The additional cost of \$6.60 per sf is over twice as high as normal due to inefficiencies of providing a fire pump, diesel power source, and a hook-up to the City’s water main for such a small structure. Clearly, converting the Delong Building to apartment use by providing additional drywall and no sprinklers results in significant construction cost savings.

Yield: 12 apartments







**ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST**

LINE ITEMS	
GENERAL CONDITIONS	34,550
EXTERIOR ALLOWANCE	21,500
DEMOLITION	38,600
MILLWORK AND CARPENTRY	35,490
DOORS, FRAMES, & HARDWARE	10,400
GLASS AND GLAZING	0
GYPSUM WALLBOARD	56,600
FLOORING	21,500
PAINTING	19,900
APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT	12,210
WINDOW TREATMENT	0
SPECIALTIES	2,200
ELEVATOR	60,000
HAVC (INCLUDED IN ELECTRICAL)	0
SPRINKLERS	0
PLUMBING	57,500
ELECTRICAL	45,100
SUBTOTAL	415,550
ADD OVERHEAD & PROFIT (5%)	20,754
TOTAL (WITHOUT SPRINKLERS)	\$436,304
ADD SPRINKLERS/DEDUCT ALARMS/DRYWALL)	69,000
TOTAL (WITH SPRINKLERS)	\$505,304
COST PER UNIT: \$36,360	
(WITH SPRINKLERS: \$42,110)	

*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	
Year Constructed	1900	Number of Stories	7
Type of Construction	3B	Building Height	90 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	1,740
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	50%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	Yes	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Heat Pump	Serving Number of Floors	1
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	Manual Pull
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	Yes
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	40 ft	Elevator Controls	No
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-12	-12	-12	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7
3408.6.2 Building area	6	6	6	9	9	9	12	12	12
3408.6.3 Fire area	0	0	0	8	8	8	8	8	8
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-7	-7	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-10	-10	-10	5	5	5	7	7	7
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	-10	-10	-10	6	6	6	6	6	6
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	-5	-5	-5	5	5	5	0	0	0
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	2	2	-	3	3	-	2	2
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	5	5	-	5	5	-	5	5
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2	-	2	2
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	-10	-	-10	0	-	0	-10	-	-10
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	6
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-43</b>	<b>-53</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-73</b>	<b>-78</b>	<b>-88</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

The preceding analysis indicates that the flexible application of the Philadelphia Building Code as outlined in Section III would allow for a reasonably limited scope of construction for the conversion of the Delong Building to residential use.

**Project budget:**

**Hard Costs:**

Acquisition costs:	\$0
Construction:	\$436,304
Contingency @ 5%:	<u>\$21,815</u>
Subtotal:	\$458,119

**Soft Costs:**

Architectural:	\$28,720
Legal:	\$8,000
Financing fees:	\$9,600
Construction interest:	\$10,000
Insurance during construction:	\$3,000
Development supervision:	<u>\$10,000</u>
Subtotal:	\$69,320

The pro-forma for the Delong Building also assumes the following:

- No acquisition costs. Existing owners rehabilitate their buildings with the assistance of the development consulting team.
- "No frills" rehabilitation
- All pro-forma income is net of current retail income
- All pro-forma expense is net of current expenses
- Conventional financing at 9%
- Rental occupancy similar to contiguous neighborhood

**Rental assumptions:**

- 6 one bedroom/lofts \$550/month
- 6 two bedroom/lofts \$650/month

**Total project costs:** \$527,439

**Cost/unit without sprinklers:** \$43,953

**THE DELONG BUILDING  
Project Proforma**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	
<b>INCOME</b>							
Residential Rent	\$86,400	\$89,856	\$93,450	\$98,123	\$102,048	\$106,130	
- 8% Vacancy	6,912	7,188	7,476	7,850	8,164	8,490	
	79,488	82,668	85,974	90,273	93,884	97,639	
Application Fees	240	120	120	120	120	120	
Interest	500	500	500	500	500	500	
Laundry	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$81,428</b>	<b>\$84,488</b>	<b>\$87,794</b>	<b>\$92,093</b>	<b>\$95,704</b>	<b>\$99,459</b>	
<b>EXPENSE</b>							
Repairs	2,000	2,080	2,163	2,250	2,340	2,433	1.04
Maintenance	4,300	4,472	4,651	4,837	5,030	5,232	1.04
Supplies	1,000	1,040	1,082	1,125	1,170	1,217	1.04
Insurance	3,000	3,120	3,245	3,375	3,510	3,650	1.04
Management @ 6%	4,886	5,069	5,268	5,526	5,742	5,968	1.04
Cleaning	2,400	2,496	2,596	2,700	2,808	2,920	1.04
Electricity	2,000	2,080	2,163	2,250	2,340	2,433	1.04
Gas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Water/Sewer	2,000	2,080	2,163	2,250	2,340	2,433	1.04
Trash Removal	2,400	2,496	2,596	2,700	2,808	2,920	1.04
Legal & Accounting	1,000	1,040	1,082	1,125	1,170	1,217	1.04
Real Estate Taxes	-	-	-	4,000	4,160	4,326	1.04
Local Business Taxes	262	272	283	295	307	319	1.04
Licences & Permits	400	416	433	450	468	487	1.04
Miscellaneous	1,000	1,040	1,082	1,125	1,170	1,217	1.04
Advertising	1,000	1,040	1,082	1,125	1,170	1,217	1.04
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$27,648</b>	<b>\$28,742</b>	<b>\$29,887</b>	<b>\$35,130</b>	<b>\$36,531</b>	<b>\$37,987</b>	
<b>NET INCOME BEFORE DEBT</b>	<b>\$53,780</b>	<b>\$55,746</b>	<b>\$57,907</b>	<b>\$56,963</b>	<b>\$59,173</b>	<b>\$61,472</b>	<b>\$345,042</b>
Debt on \$527,439 @ 9%	\$47,470	\$47,470	\$47,470	\$47,470	\$47,470	\$47,470	
<b>NET CASH FLOW</b>	<b>\$6,311</b>	<b>\$8,276</b>	<b>\$10,438</b>	<b>\$9,494</b>	<b>\$11,704</b>	<b>\$14,002</b>	<b>\$60,225</b>

## V. PUBLIC INCENTIVES

The City of Philadelphia could accelerate and simplify the process of rehabilitating older commercial buildings by offering any or all of the following incentives:

- **Low Interest Financing:** The City of Philadelphia could designate as a public priority the conversion to residential use of long-term vacant commercial buildings and make available low-interest financing through the sale of tax-exempt bonds by either the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) or the Redevelopment Authority. Alternatively, existing federal funding or other grant resources could be committed to the effort.

- **Expansion of Real Estate Tax-Abatement:** In 1978 Philadelphia City Council approved a five year real estate tax abatement of the improved value of commercial and industrial properties that were converted to residential purposes. This ordinance (Bill #1130) was subsequently amended twice — in 1983 to clarify definitions and in 1990 to reduce the exemption schedule to a three year abatement on the improvements.

Under Commonwealth law, Philadelphia's City Council has the authority to offer abatements of up to ten years, if they are uniformly applied to all properties of a specific type. A special class of long-term vacant properties could be designated and an extended abatement could be granted if they are converted to residential use.

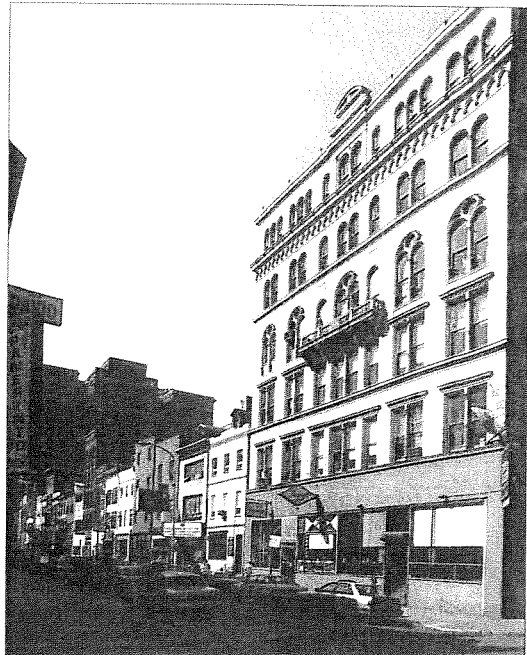
- **Transfer of Development Rights:** The transfer of development rights (TDR) from existing historic properties to new development sites was authorized by 1991 amendments to the Center City Zoning Code. With the halt of new office construction, however, there have been no developers with a need to purchase the unused floor area ratio (FAR) of historic properties. A new incentive might be created by enabling those who rehabilitate historic structures to "bank" unused FAR and then to transfer or sell it at some point in the future. While this may have little value today, it could have value in the future and be of interest to developers with long-term horizons.

## CONCLUSION

The cooperation of many individuals and organizations has made possible this demonstration program which documents how the upper floors of Center City's older commercial buildings can be renovated economically and reused for housing.

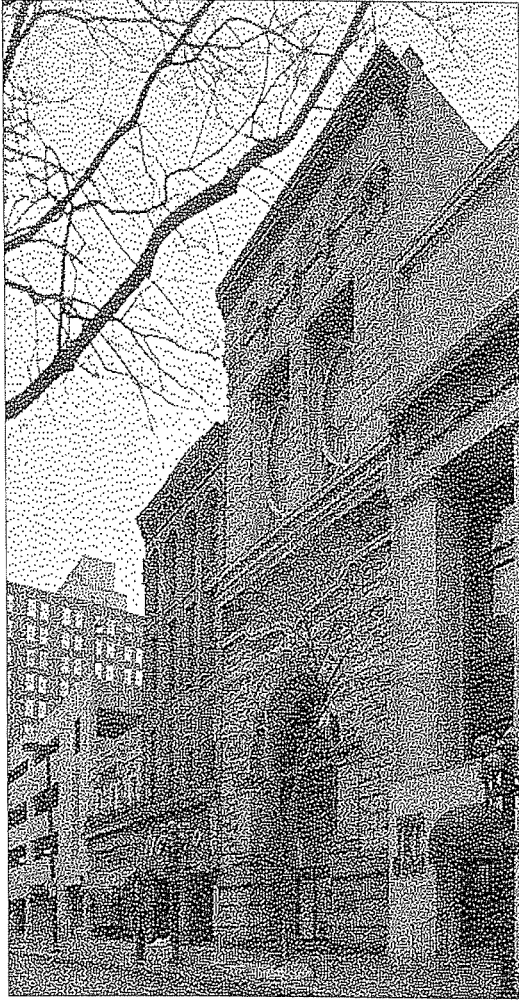
Compared to many American cities, Philadelphia begins with a huge advantage: an existing downtown residential population of 50,000 individuals. We do not need to persuade people of the benefits of Center City living. Restaurants and shops, theaters and world-renown cultural institutions are just minutes away from the front door.

It has been the goal of this project to select a few strategically located and architecturally prominent properties,



*The Society Hill Building stands prominently at the corner of 7th and Sansom Streets, at the entry to Jewelers' Row. The strategic renovation of attractive buildings such as this one will anchor this unique district.*

often at corner locations, and to show how new housing opportunities can be created in an area of Center City that would benefit greatly from increased pedestrian activity day and night. By creating a guide for smaller properties, we have sought to minimize the complexity and uncertainty of renovating older buildings, awaken interest in some architectural gems, and jump-start the redevelopment process for larger buildings as well. The benefits of success will accrue not only to owners and tenants in the area, but also visitors to the Convention Center, the historic area, and to the Avenue of the Arts who might soon discover a new vibrant, historic district filled with lofts, small hotels, apartment buildings, offices, shops, galleries and restaurants.

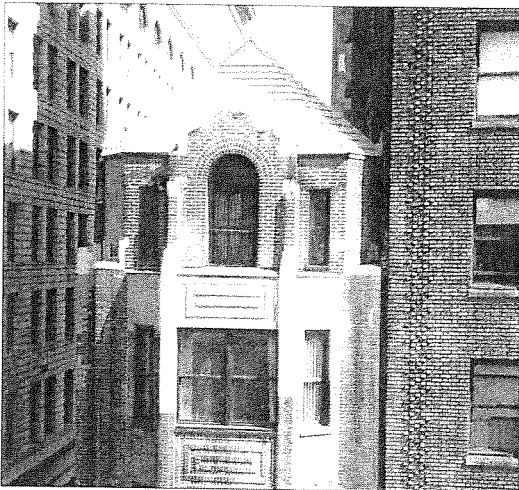


## Appendix A

*This exuberant Victorian façade on Chestnut Street boasts materials and craftsmanship rarely found today.*

# BERNLEY BUILDING

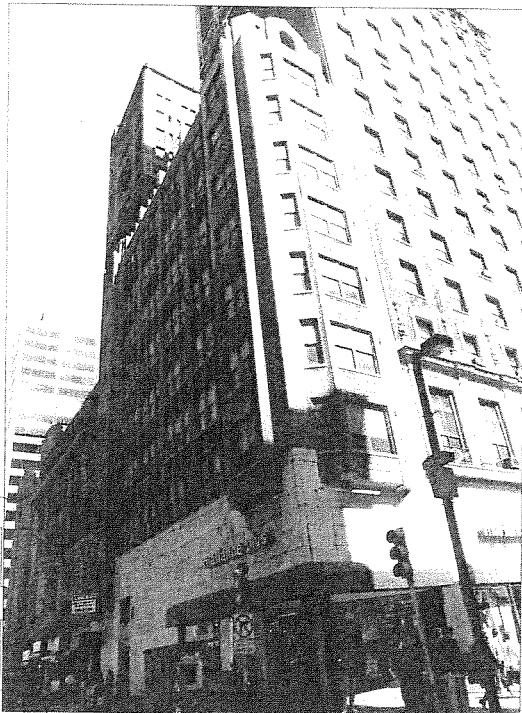
1229 Chestnut Street



Penthouse with copper roof

Built in 1925, the Bernley Building occupies a corner site at 13th and Chestnut Streets adjacent to the Adelpia House Apartments. The ground floor has been altered with a modern storefront. Above, the original masonry and limestone-trimmed facade remains a projecting bay faced with brown brick spandrels and geometric patterning. The bay terminates with a copper gable roof.

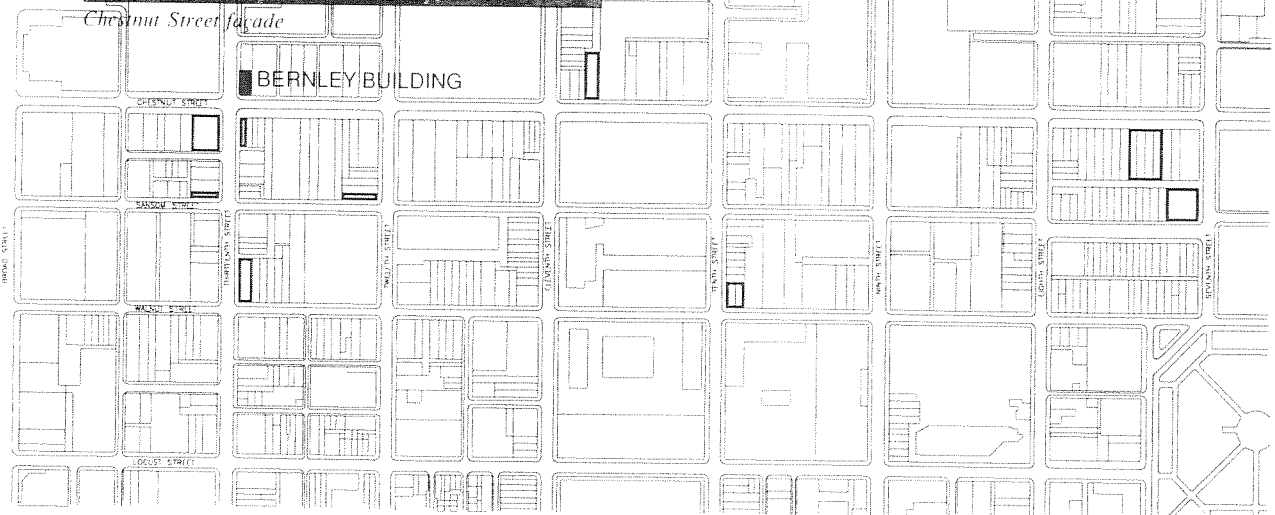
Designed by Ralph Benecker, the Bernley Building is a fine example of Art Deco architecture. The structure is listed both on the local and national historic registers. With the federal classification, the building is eligible for tax credits for historic rehabilitation. The local listing protects the building from demolition through review by the City of Philadelphia Historic Commission.



Originally built for offices, the interior of the building was remodeled in the '70s for a single tenant. Since then the building has provided space for a succession of small businesses. However, the last one moved out of the topmost floor in 1994. The ground floor retail space is occupied by a clothing store facing Chestnut Street. Fortunately, no disruption of existing retail tenants will be required to re-open the structure since a separate lobby provides access to the upper floors from 13th Street.

The building has a long narrow floor plate with a single exit stair at one end. Restrooms for each floor are located at stair landings, out of reach of wheelchairs. The small size (1,300 gross sf) of each floor makes the building obsolete for all but the smallest business tenant. But apartments could use the existing configuration very well.

Chestnut Street facade



With one apartment per floor, each unit would have its own bay window with views to Chestnut and 13th Streets. The spaces would have tall coffered ceilings and would be very quiet, given the building's solid concrete floor construction. The structure's fine facade, corner location, and daylight units would be strong selling points for prospective tenants.

Due to the presence of recent tenants and good maintenance, conversion of the Bernley Building to residential use would require only a moderate amount of construction work. Existing wood stud partitions and acoustical ceiling would be removed to expose the solid concrete structure. Some new electrical wiring would be needed. However, the basic service could remain in place.

The existing elevators and mechanical systems are original, but have been upgraded and may be reused. Although the elevators would not be considered accessible under today's codes, new cabs would not be necessary because the building is relatively small (under 12,500 net sf). Steam heat, available from an existing boiler in the Adelphia House, is presently in operating order. There is no air conditioning system, although each tenant could install their own using window units if desired. For fire protection, existing alarm and standpipe systems could be re-used.

The Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code classifies the Bernley Building as a high-rise structure because the highest occupied floor exceeds 75 feet. An automatic sprinkler system will be required in the building by 1999 unless the approved use is multi-family residential.

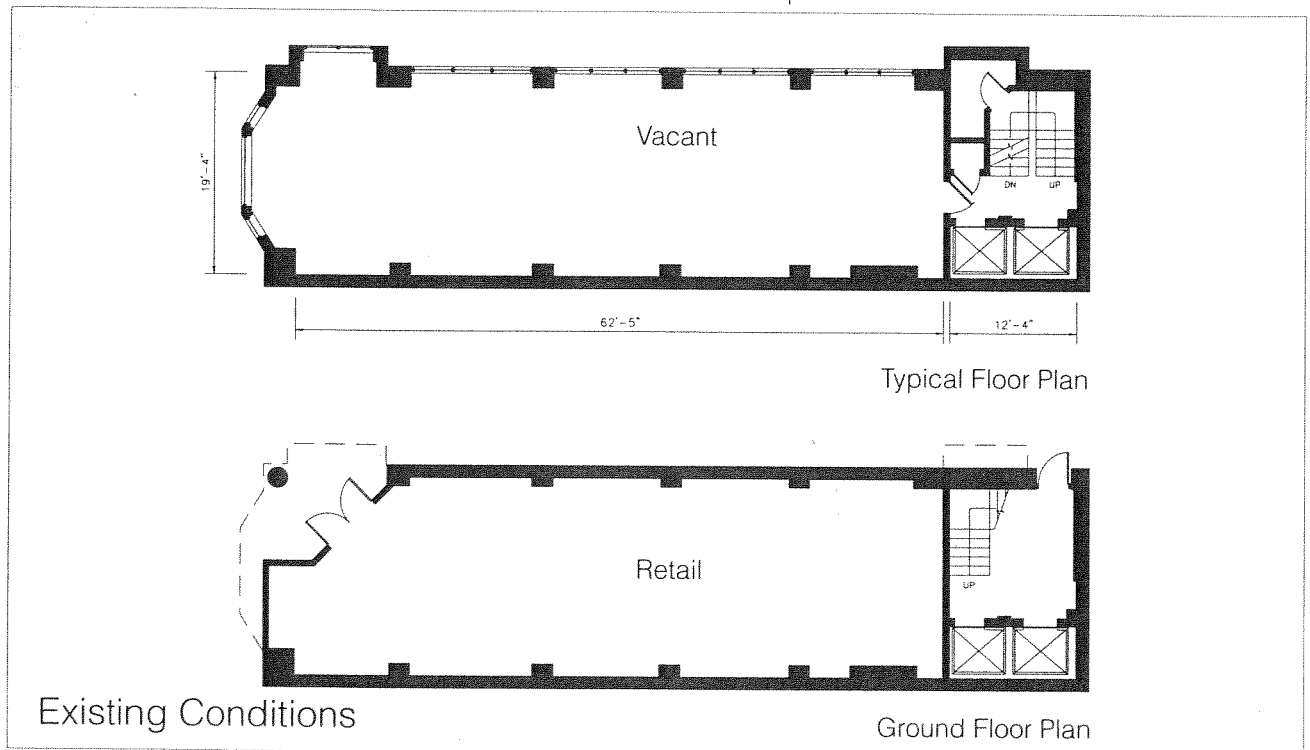
The plan on the following page shows a single apartment on a typical floor with a small kitchen and bath at one end. The Philadelphia Building Code scoring system does not permit a building to have a single means of egress, thus a variance for exiting will be needed from the City's Board of Building Standards.

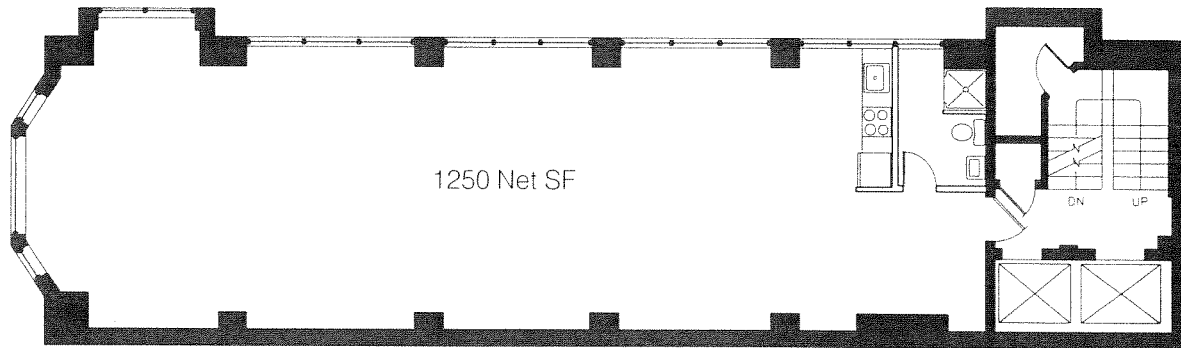
Assuming a variance for a single egress could be obtained, a passing safety score would be possible by providing fire resistant partitions and doors, an expanded detector and alarm system, and emergency egress lighting.

An estimate of probable construction cost (see following page) shows a per-unit cost of \$37,370 without sprinklers. The per-unit cost is higher than the Delong Building because there would only be seven (vs twelve) residential units in the structure. Installation of a sprinkler system would add \$9,860 for a total of \$47,230 per unit. This represents a 26 percent increase if sprinklers are required.

The installation of sprinklers with a fire pump would not be economically feasible given current expected rent levels. However, the existing fire-resistant structure of the building, modern fire detection and alarm equipment, or the addition of a rooftop water tank may be considered by the City to compensate for the lack of a second exit.

Yield: 7 apartments





Typical Floor Plan

Proposed New Use

**ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST**

LINE ITEMS	
GENERAL CONDITIONS	21,000
EXTERIOR ALLOWANCE	0
DEMOLITION	23,400
MILLWORK AND CARPENTRY	21,000
DOORS, FRAMES, & HARDWARE	8,400
GLASS AND GLAZING	0
GYPSUM WALLBOARD	21,000
FLOORING	32,170
PAINTING	17,500
APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT	10,850
WINDOW TREATMENT	0
SPECIALTIES	2,630
ELEVATOR	60,000
HAVC (INCLUDED IN ELECTRICAL)	0
SPRINKLERS	0
PLUMBING	60,000
ELECTRICAL	31,150
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>249,100</b>
ADD OVERHEAD & PROFIT (5%)	12,500
<b>TOTAL (WITHOUT SPRINKLERS)</b>	<b>\$261,600</b>
ADD SPRINKLERS/DEDUCT ALARMS/DRYWALL)	\$69,000
<b>TOTAL (WITH SPRINKLERS)</b>	<b>\$330,600</b>
COST PER UNIT: \$37,370	
(WITH SPRINKLERS: \$47,230)	

The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".

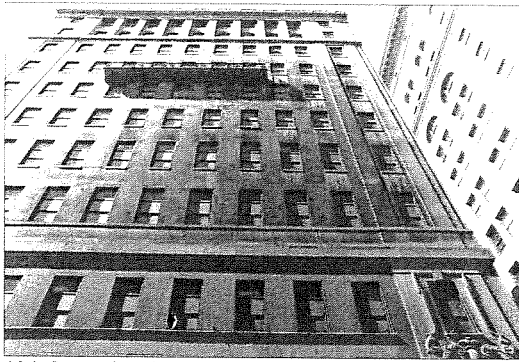


## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-2
Year Constructed	1925	Number of Stories	9 plus penthouse
Type of Construction	2B	Building Height	115 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	1,300
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	60%
Compartmentalization	Yes	Corridor Wall Rating	2
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	Yes	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Steam	Serving Number of Floors	7
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	
Fire Protection Signaling System	Yes	Type	Manual Pull
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	No	Dead Ends	130 ft
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	130 ft	Elevator Controls	No
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
<i>3408.6.1 Building height</i>	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-2	-2	-2
<i>3408.6.2 Building area</i>	10	10	10	10	10	10	12	12	12
<i>3408.6.3 Fire area</i>	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
<i>3408.6.4 Space division</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>3408.6.5 Corridor walls</i>	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
<i>3408.6.6 Vertical openings</i>	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
<i>3408.6.7 HVAC systems</i>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<i>3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection</i>	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	0
<i>3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling</i>	0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	0
<i>3408.6.10 Smoke control</i>	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	3	3
<i>3408.6.11 Exit capacity</i>	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
<i>3408.6.12 Dead ends</i>	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
<i>3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance</i>	-	0	0	-	5	5	-	5	5
<i>3408.6.14 Elevator control</i>	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7
<i>3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting</i>	-	-10	-10	-	2	2	-	2	0
<i>3408.6.16 Mixed use groups</i>	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0
<i>3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	6
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>



13th Street façade



Chestnut Street entry with arch

# BLUM'S DEPARTMENT STORE

1300-1306 Chestnut Street

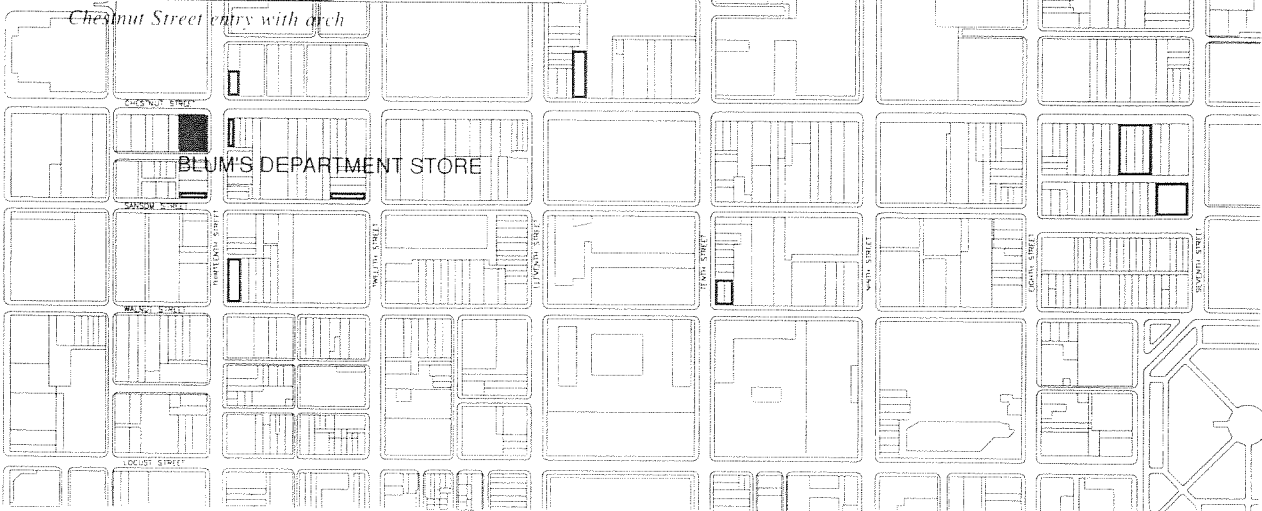
Blum's Department Store takes its name from its original tenant, rising ten stories at the southwest corner of 13th and Chestnut Streets. The building faces Chestnut with a two-story storefront trimmed with decorative bronze relief. A tall arch marks the former entry to the store and upper floors. Above, the building is faced with stone, punctuated with false balconies and topped with a narrow copper cornice.

Designed by architects Simon & Simon, the building's façade mixes art deco and neoclassicism, a typical retailing image for the late '20s. The building is not listed on the local historic register. However, it is significant to the Center City East Historic District and eligible for rehabilitation tax credits.

After the decline of retailing, Blum's was adapted for office use. Until about five years ago a single office tenant occupied the upper floors. Except for the ground floor, the building is now vacant.

Contributing to the lack of tenants, a clothing store at street level recently expanded along Chestnut Street, blocking access to the elevator lobby. Restoring this entry will be required to re-open the upper floors.

The floor plan shows the 68,000 gross sf building is actually two structures behind a single façade. When first built, the façade probably combined a new corner structure with an existing adjacent building. Inside, the two buildings share a central elevator core and exit stairs.



Both the exterior and interior are in good condition. The walls, floors, and columns are constructed of concrete. There are two enclosed stairways (one a so-called "Philadelphia fire tower," a stair entered by an exterior balcony at each level). The existing elevators are in fair condition and are of adequate size to accommodate wheelchairs.

Under the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code, the structure is considered a hi-rise because the elevation of the highest occupied floor exceeds 75 feet. As a hi-rise, the building must either have a sprinkler installed by 1999, be used for multi-family residential, or remain vacant above the sixth floor.

With its large footprint, the building is not readily adaptable for apartments. The orientation of the elevator core would make layout of efficient daylight units difficult, and the concrete construction would be troublesome to modify for plumbing and electrical risers. Offices could still work well on the upper floors; single or multiple tenants could share support services around the central elevator lobby.

The compartmental floor plan with central core suggests small businesses or organizations might be a target audience for leasing the building; the location of Blum's near the Avenue of Arts, government offices, and other services would be attractive to prospective tenants.

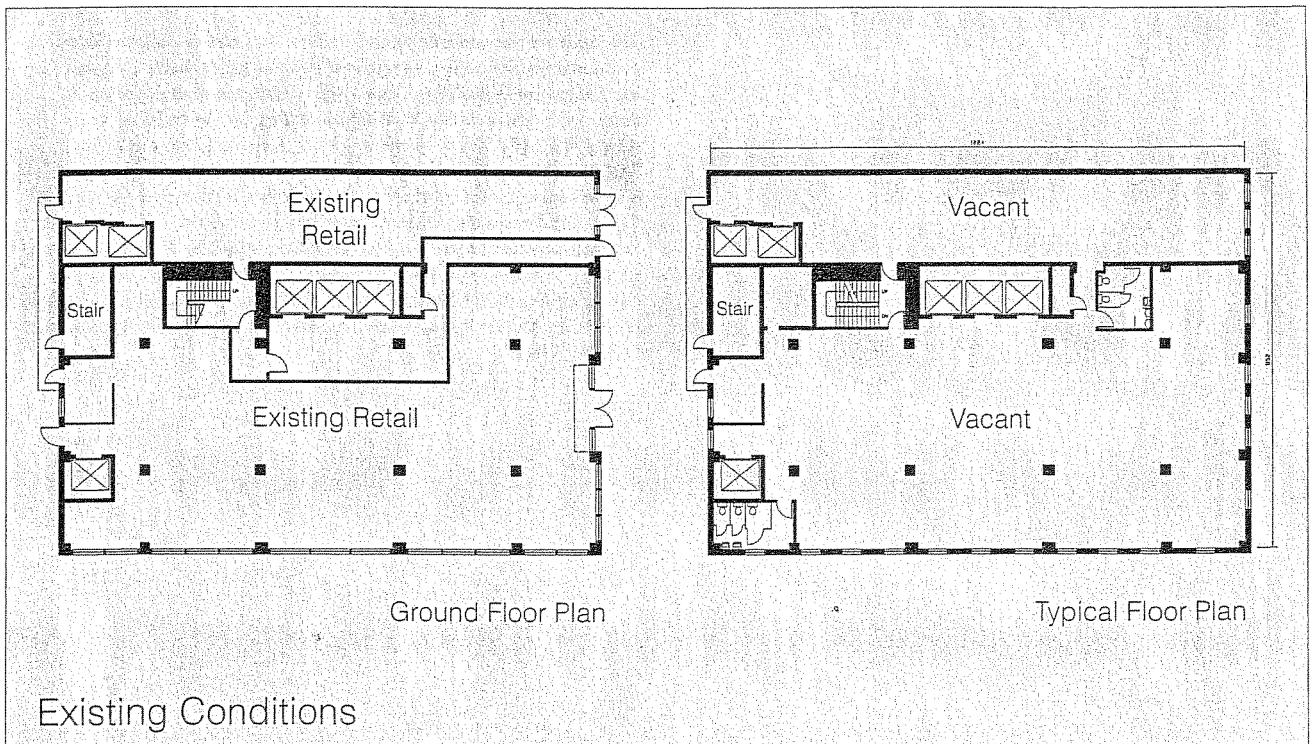
The plan on the following page shows a corridor configuration for single or multiple office tenants. In its current condition, the owner may legally use only the street level of the structure. When re-opened, the building will be evaluated by L & I using the scoring system in

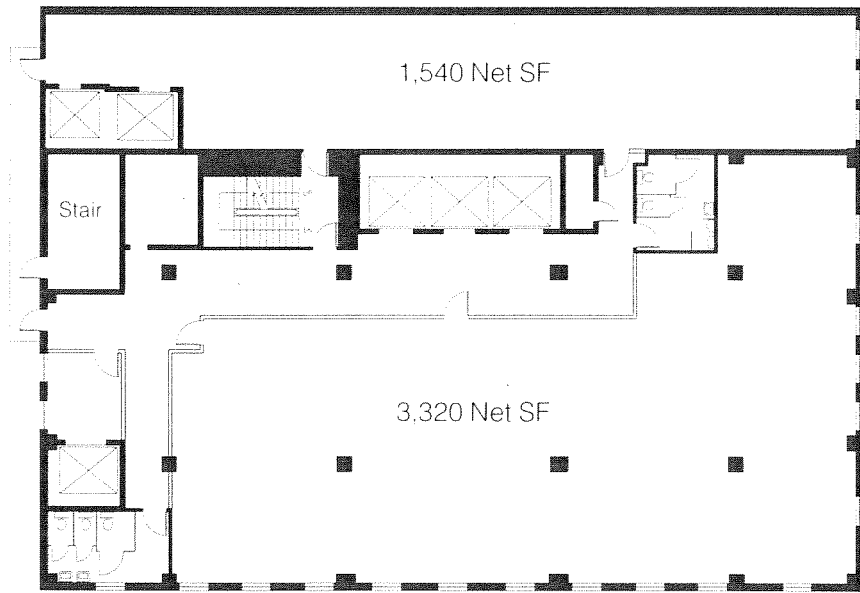
Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. The scores on the following pages illustrate a passing score would not be difficult to obtain due to the fire resistant construction of the building and the presence of two enclosed exit stairs.

Only a "with sprinklers" option is shown due to the requirement in the Fire Prevention Code for sprinkler systems in hi-rise structures. In addition to sprinklers, the building would need new smoke detectors throughout, fire alarms, and emergency lighting for a passing safety score.

Assuming the costs for sprinkler equipment, a fire pump and sprinkler distribution would be similar to the other buildings in the study, the probable cost per square foot for sprinklers would be between \$2.50 and \$3.00, about half the cost of a similar system in a smaller building. The lower cost is due to the greater efficiency of the equipment.

Yield: Office occupancy, 58,000 sf





Proposed New Use

Typical Upper Floor Plan

*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B
Year Constructed	1928	Number of Stories	10
Type of Construction	2B	Building Height	125 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	7,580 sf
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	80%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	2 Hr
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	Yes	Required Door Closures	yes
Type of HVAC System	Duct	Serving Number of Floors	9
Automatic Fire Detection	Yes	Type	Manual Pull
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	None
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	150 ft	Elevator Controls	None
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-8	-8	-8				-4	-4	-4
3408.6.2 Building area	11	11	11				12	12	12
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8				8	8	8
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0				4	4	4
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	5	5	5				5	5	5
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	5	5	5				5	5	5
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	0	0	0				0	0	0
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	0	0	0				6	6	6
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	0	0	0				5	5	5
3408.6.10 Smoke control	3	3	3				3	3	3
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0				-	0	0
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0				-	0	0
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	0	0				-	0	0
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7				-7	-7	-7
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10				-	2	2
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	0	-	0				0	-	0
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0				6	3	6
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>				<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>				<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-28</b>	<b>-28</b>				<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>



South-facing bay windows



Penne building, side view

# PENNE BUILDING

114 South 13th Street

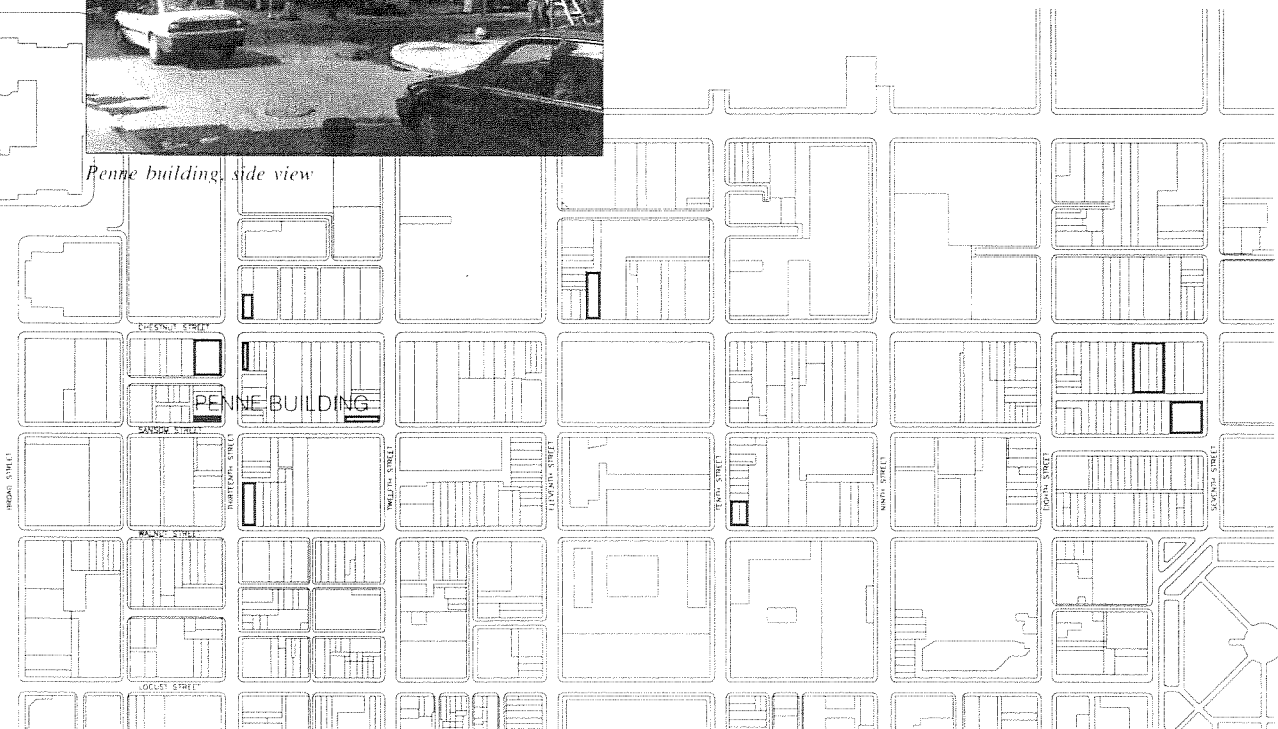
The Penne Building stands at the center of a group of buildings at 13th and Sansom Streets suffering from neglect and high vacancies. Nonetheless, the colorful character and variety of the architecture gives the area great potential.

Visible for blocks in all directions, the tall, thin Penne Building is a local landmark. The reuse of the structure will be instrumental in bringing needed new activity to the neighborhood.

The building's unusual proportions are the result of placing a six-story building on a single, sixteen-foot-wide lot. The brick structure has large, wood-framed projecting bays trimmed in pressed metal. The front of the building has a single projecting bay, topped with a curving brick parapet. The structure is not listed on the local historic register and could be demolished by the owner without approval from the City Historic Commission. Yet it is significant to the Center City East Historic District and would be eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits.

Built in 1904 as an apartment house, the building has also been used for offices and a dance studio with retail on the ground floor. Currently the building is totally vacant.

The floorplates are long and narrow with a single exit stair at one end and no fire escape. The exit stair is an example of a Philadelphia fire tower common to buildings from the first quarter of the 20th century. The tower includes an exterior balcony to provide an alternate entry to the stairwell from outside the building. While the floor plan is



inefficient for modern offices, the building could work well for apartments. Each of the upper floors would contain a single unit with four large bay windows, evenly flooded with southern light.

The large floor area and tall ceilings would be particularly attractive to artists looking for live-in studio space. If the Penne Building were converted to studio-lofts, the first floor could become a highly visible ancillary gallery.

After standing vacant for a number of years, the condition of the building's masonry envelope, wood framed bays, and roof are fair, but in need of repair. While demolition would be minimal, the wood interior stairs must be rebuilt, and the elevator equipment, electrical service and plumbing replaced.

Major changes to elevators and stairs would not be required under Philadelphia's accessibility guidelines because the building's floor area is less than 12,500 net sf.

The scoring system in the Philadelphia Building Code used to evaluate the fire-safety does not permit a structure to have only one means of egress. Thus a variance from the City's Board of Building Standards would be required to re-open the building.

The installation of a conventional sprinkler system would not be economically feasible given the expected rental income generated by apartments. However, a gravity-fed sprinkler system or the addition of a fire escape may be an acceptable substitute for a second stair.

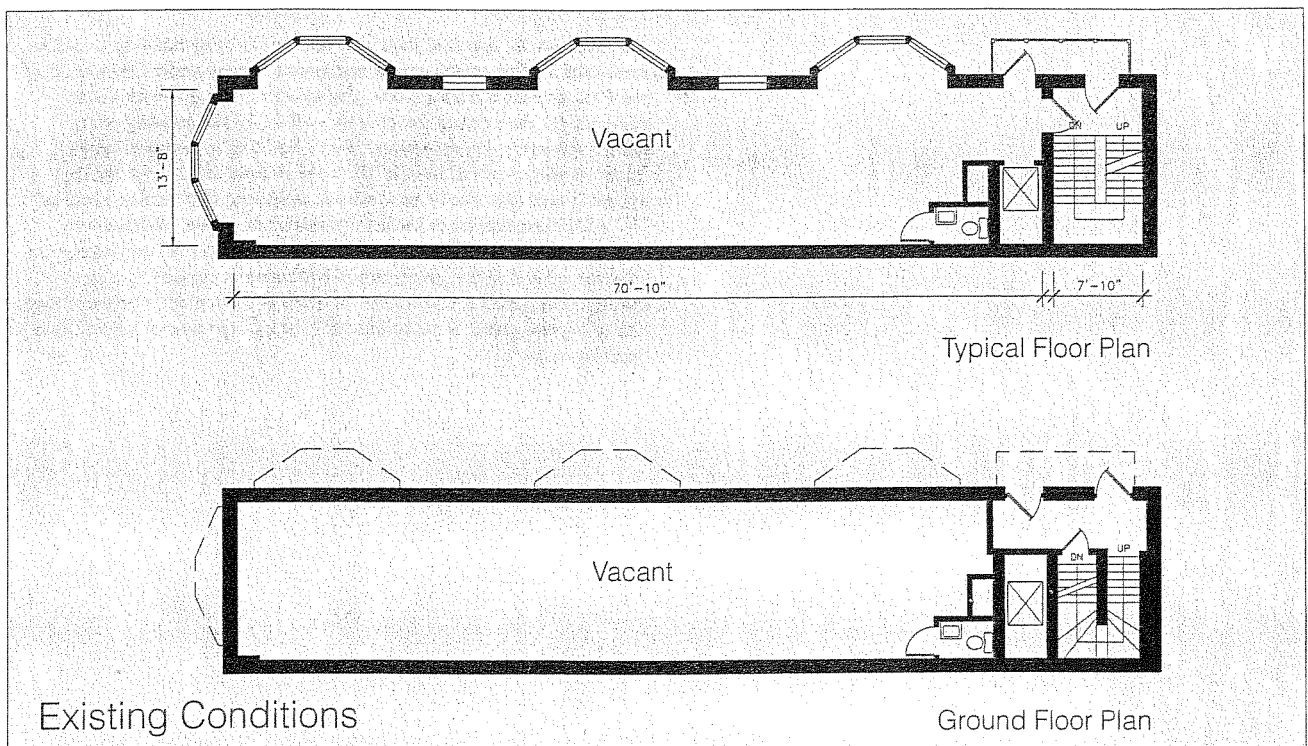
Although new fire escapes are not typically considered a viable option for providing an additional means of egress, current national codes have recognized the acceptability of new fire escapes in difficult circumstances where lot lines limit the use of exterior stairs (BOCA, 1993, Section 1025.0).

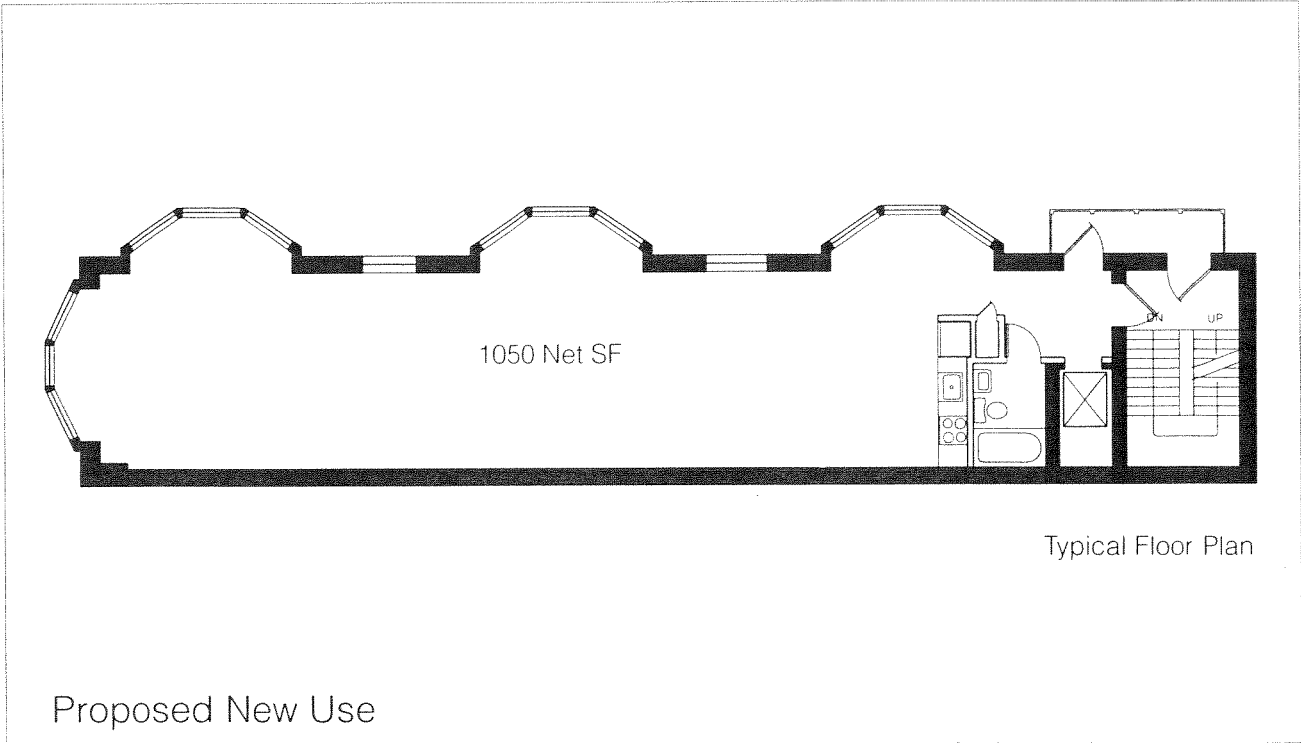
Assuming approval of a variance for egress, a passing safety score would result from providing drywall partitions and floor/ceiling assemblies, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and emergency egress lighting.

In terms of construction materials and condition, the Penne Building most closely resembles the Delong Building. Using the same unit costs of about \$32 per square foot (a cost which includes floor, wall, and ceiling finishes and excludes some demolition), each unit in the Penne Building would cost about \$46,000 to build, without sprinklers. This cost would be too high to be supported by current rents.

This suggests that artist lofts, rented as unfinished shells with only the essential equipment, may be the best use of the building in the short term. Without floor or wall finishes, the costs for providing unfinished space could be reduced to make renovation financially feasible.

Yield: 5 apartments





*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*



## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-2
Year Constructed	1904	Number of Stories	6
Type of Construction	3B	Building Height	84 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	1,430
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	50%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	No	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	None	Serving Number of Floors	-
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	No	Dead Ends	70 ft
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	70 ft	Elevator Controls	No
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-12	-12	-12	-6	-6	-6			
3408.6.2 Building area	7	7	7	10	10	10			
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	2	2	2			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-7	-7	-7	0	0	0			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-18	-18	-18	7	7	7			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5	5	5	5			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	-10	-10	-10	5	5	5			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	-5	-5	-5	5	5	5			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	2	2	-	2	2			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7	0	0	0			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	-10	-	-10	10	-	10			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-45</b>	<b>-54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-72</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-89</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>			



*13th Street façade with terra cotta trim*



*View from Walnut down 13th Street*

# EMPIRE BUILDING

**1231 Walnut Street**

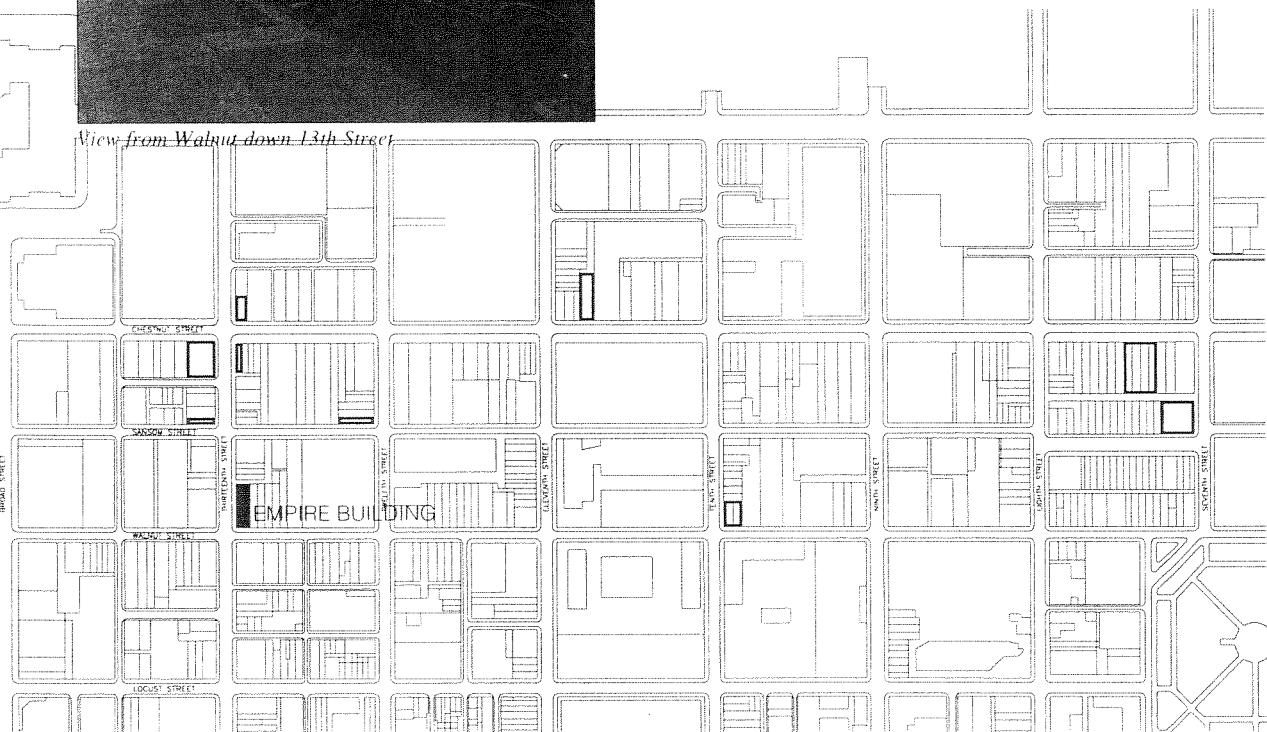
The Empire Building occupies a corner lot at Walnut and 13th Streets. Built in 1900, the ground floor of the building has been altered by a succession of retail tenants. The upper stories are largely intact with a rich mix of neoclassical details, brickwork, and terra cotta trim.

The original architect, Carl Berger, designed the structure as the Albemarle Hotel, a men's rooming house. The facade has a banded terra-cotta base, brick middle stories with projecting windows, and a wide ornamental cornice. The exterior masonry is a fine example of red and black Flemish bond brickwork.

The building is listed on both the local and national historic registers. The local listing requires that modification or demolition of the building be reviewed by the City Historic Commission. With the national listing, the renovation of the building is eligible for rehabilitation tax credits.

Currently, retail establishments occupy the ground floor and a mixture of retail and offices fill portions of the second, third and fourth floors. The fifth through seventh floors of the building are vacant. Fortunately, the Empire Building still has a clear, visible entry point to the upper floors from 13th Street used by the current tenants.

Over time the building has been converted from a hotel to offices for small businesses. Outside, the structure appears somewhat worn, but is in relatively good condition. Most of the terra cotta trim is in place, although some ornamental pieces are missing from beneath the balconies and cornice. The exterior brickwork and trim need to be painted and repaired soon to prevent further damage.



Inside, the original layout of the building is largely unchanged. A central hallway covered with marble mosaic runs the length of the building on each floor.

The corridor walls are faced with stone and have continuous glass transoms above door height. The building has two exits; one is an open stair finished with solid marble; the second is an enclosed stairway entered by an exterior balcony.

To re-use the upper floors, the central hallway should remain in place. The original floors and wall finishes should be retained since they add to the building's character and would be expensive to modify. With a center corridor, the building divides into a series of small, daylit spaces suitable as studio apartments, small offices, shops, or a small hotel. The character of the interior and plentiful windows would be selling points to prospective residents or guests.

To convert the structure and re-open the top three floors only a moderate amount of interior work would be required. The existing structure is concrete and in sound condition. Mechanical and electrical systems are operational, but they would need to be upgraded if expanded into currently vacant spaces. The elevator is operational, with a cab large enough for wheelchairs.

The existing fire protection system includes a standpipe and a rooftop water tank installed in 1984. A new smoke detection and alarm system was recently installed throughout the occupied floors. If office use were expanded to the currently vacant floors, the fire protection equip-

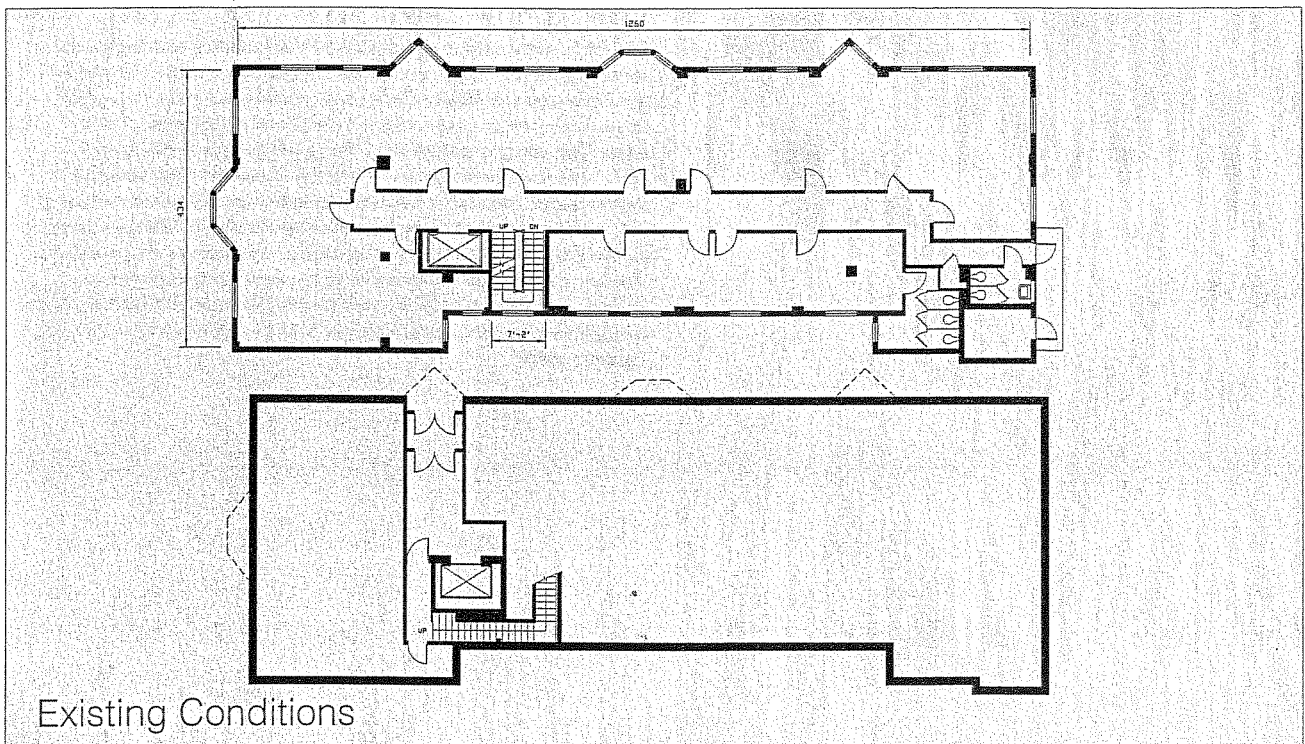
ment (including the alarms, detectors, water tank and standpipes) could remain.

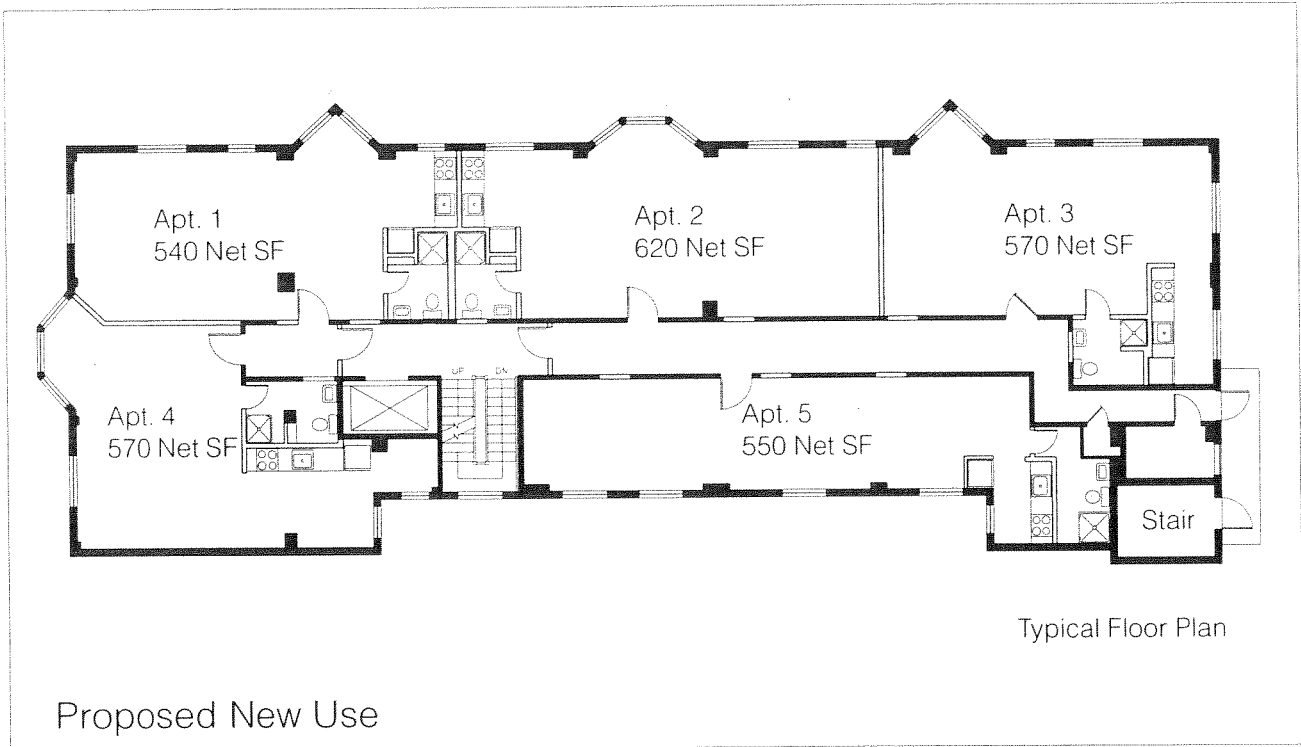
To rehabilitate the building for a use other than office, a new occupancy permit will be required. L & I would use the scoring system in the Philadelphia Building Code to evaluate the fire safety of the building.

Under the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code, the structure is not considered a high-rise, since its highest occupied floor is lower than 75 feet. Therefore L & I would not automatically require a sprinkler system as part of the renovation, sprinklers would not be required to achieve a passing safety score under the Philadelphia Building Code. New work will only include drywall partitions, fire resistant doors, an expanded smoke detector and alarm system, and emergency egress lighting.

Assuming the same unit costs per square foot (\$28.75) as in the Bernley Building, the cost per unit for conversion to apartment use would be about \$22,000, well below the \$37-38,000 per-unit cost in the other buildings in the study. The lower cost is due to the higher number of units (five versus one or two) accommodated per floor.

Yield: 30 apartments





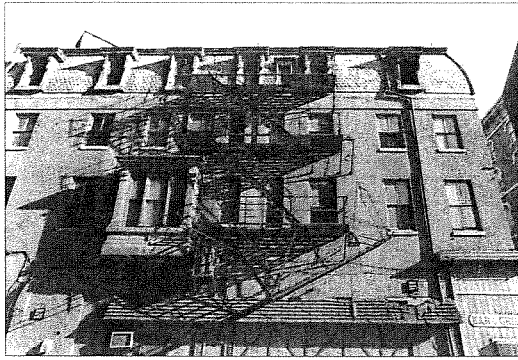
*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-2
Year Constructed	1900	Number of Stories	7
Type of Construction	2B	Building Height	85 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	3,790 sf
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	50%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	None	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Radiator	Serving Number of Floors	1
Automatic Fire Detection	Yes	Type	Corridor
Fire Protection Signaling System	Yes	Type	Automatic
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	15 ft
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	50 ft	Elevator Controls	Fireman's Key
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7			
3408.6.2 Building area	9	9	9	9	9	9			
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	2	2	2			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-7	-7	-7	0	0	0			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-22	-22	-22	2	2	2			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	4	4	4	6	6	6			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	5	5	5	5	5	5			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	3	3	-	2	2			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	5	5	-	5	5			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	-10	-	-10	0	-	0			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>		<b>-47</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>+2</b>			



*Sansom street façade showing mansard roof*



*View toward 12th Street from Sansom*

# 12th & Sansom STREETS

## 118 South 12th Street

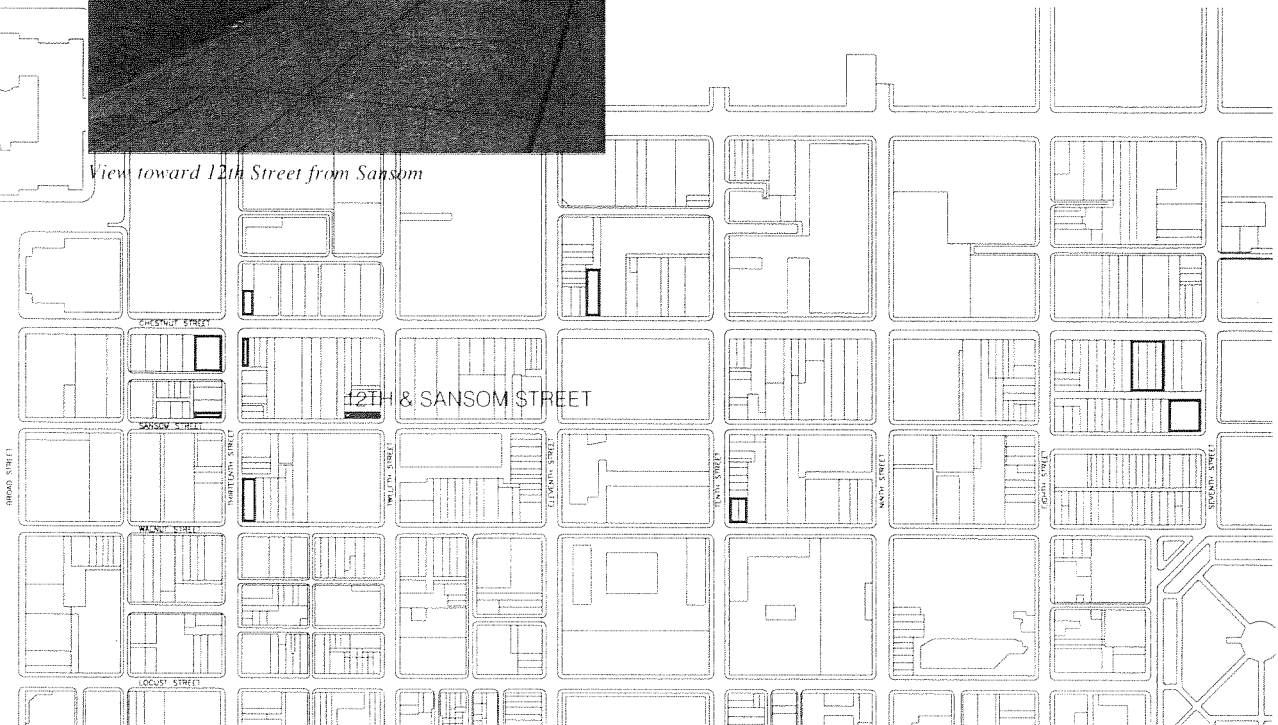
Built in 1840, this four-story property is the corner structure of a group of four historic buildings at 12th and Sansom Streets. With long, narrow plans and street-level entries, this row of buildings should be preserved as an important part of the pedestrian connection to the Convention Center.

Dating from the mid 19th century, 118 South 12th Street is one of the oldest structures in the neighborhood. Only a single lot wide, the exterior of the building is masonry with wood trim. A mansard roof with Victorian-style dormer windows was added in the late 1800's.

Over the years this building has served many tenants. The ground floor has almost always been occupied by a tavern, while the upstairs has been a rooming house, a hotel and more recently, an exercise center. All floors are now vacant. A narrow rear stair leads to an interior hallway and small guest rooms, each with its own fireplace. A fire escape along the Sansom Street wall provides a second legal exit.

Damaged by water and from standing vacant, the building shell is only in fair condition. On the roof, a wood penthouse encloses a wood water tank in good condition. Other than the tank, little is left of the building's fire protection system.

The roof was repaired following a recent fire, but portions of the top floor are exposed to weather where windows are missing. All remaining windows are in need of replacement. The missing windows must be repaired soon to prevent further damage to the structure. The interior walls are plaster with wood-framed floors and ceilings.



On the top two floors the walls and floors must be replaced due to fire and water damage. New electrical and mechanical systems will be required since the existing systems serve the first floor only.

best as small, conventional units (i.e. not "lofts") in order to take full advantage of the building's configuration, image and location.

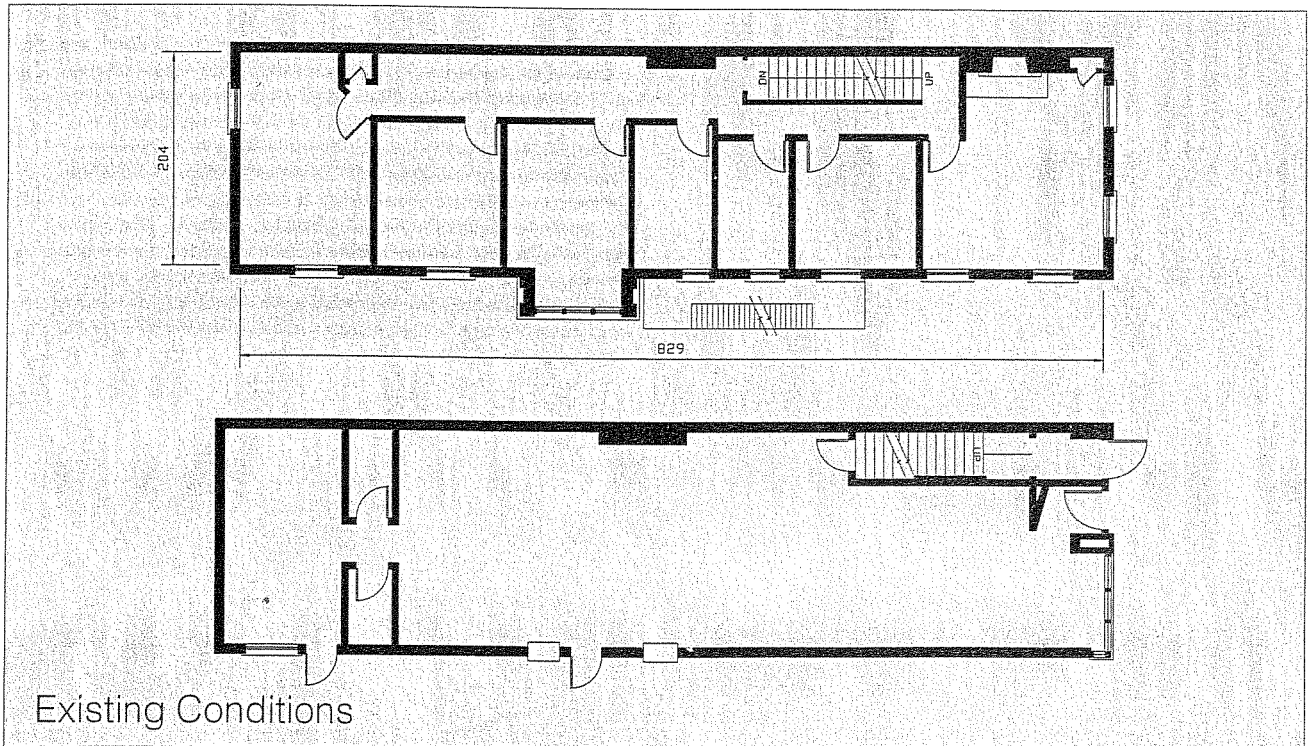
The building owner has indicated a desire to renovate the building for a residential or commercial tenant. Given the location near the Convention Center, a bed-and-breakfast would be appropriate and would complement a neighborhood restaurant, serving guests as well as the general public. The property currently includes a liquor licence, a benefit of substantial economic impact, that could well serve a hospitality use.

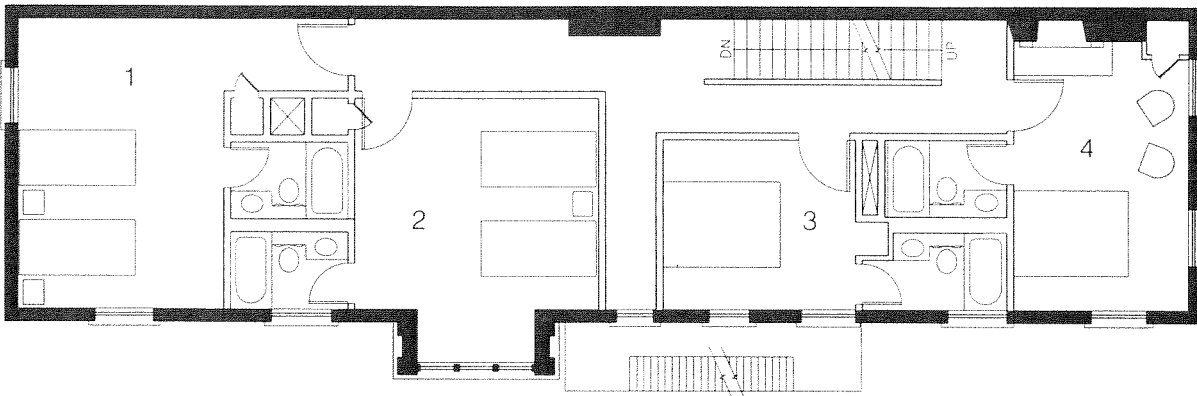
The plan on the next page shows a typical upper with four small guest rooms, each with private bathroom. The plan retains the existing non-conforming stair. No elevator is provided, since it would not be required under City accessibility guidelines for buildings less than 12,500 net sf in size.

To re-open the structure, the fire-safety of the building will be evaluated by L & I using Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. The safety scores on the following pages indicate the building could be renovated for a hotel use without adding a sprinkler system. The existing open stair and lack of an elevator are included as a negative factor in the analysis. New construction work would include drywall partitions and fire-resistant doors, a new smoke detector and fire alarm system, and emergency egress lighting.

Should the owner develop the property as apartments, they would be

Yield: 12 room bed & breakfast or 6 apartments





**Typical Floor Plan**  
**4 Rooms**

Proposed New Use

*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

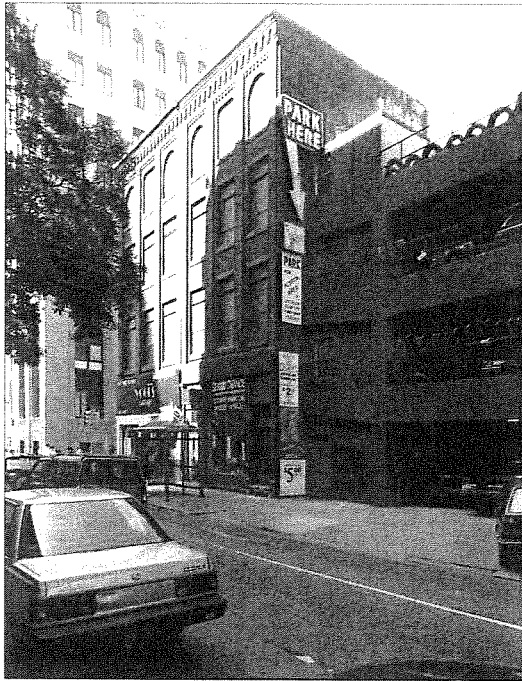


## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

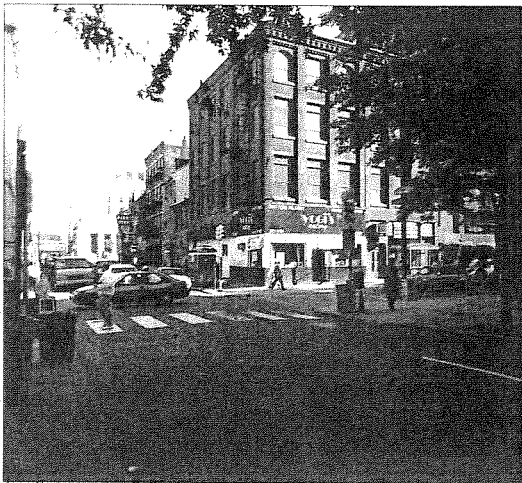
Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	R-1
Year Constructed	1840	Number of Stories	4
Type of Construction	3B	Building Height	50 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	1,260
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	20%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	No	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	None	Serving Number of Floors	-
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	25 ft
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	40 ft	Elevator Controls	No
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1			
3408.6.2 Building area	9	9	9	12	12	12			
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-7	-7	-7	2	2	2			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-10	-10	-10	7	7	7			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5	5	5	5			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	-10	-10	-10	6	6	6			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	-5	-5	-5	5	5	5			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	2	2	-	2	2			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	5	5	-	5	5			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	-10	-	-10	0	-	0			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-52</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>-67</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>			



*Walnut Street façade looking west*



*View down 10th Street with two-story portion beyond*

# 927 WALNUT STREET

## 927 Walnut Street

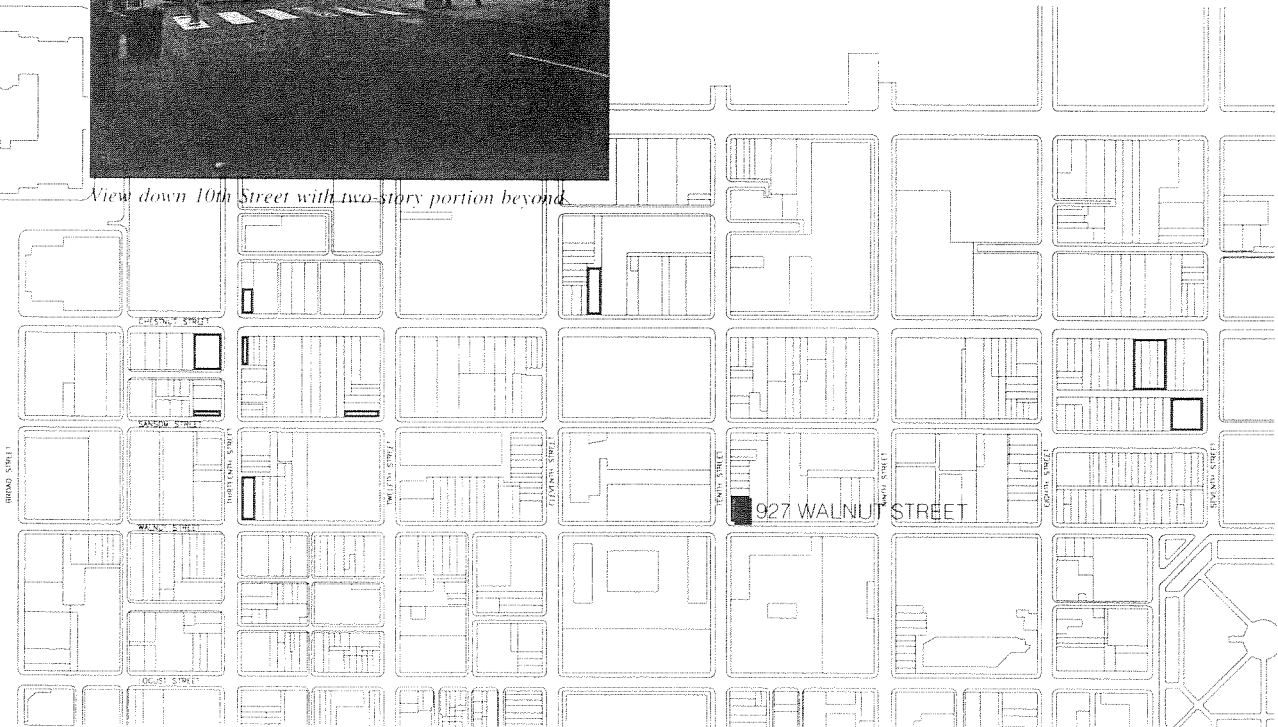
927 Walnut consists of three connected structures, two of which face Walnut Street behind a finely detailed four-story masonry façade. The third building is a two-story structure with separate entry on South 10th Street. The 10th Street building has a stone base at ground level with painted brick masonry above.

The property is located in the Society Hill Historic District but is not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Given the architectural character and vintage of the property, it could be eligible for tax benefits for historic rehabilitation. Application for historic status would be the responsibility of the owner.

All three buildings are vacant on the upper floors. Two retail tenants, a take-out restaurant and an antique shop, occupy the two four-story structures facing Walnut Street.

Despite standing vacant for a number of years, the building shell is in relatively good condition. The owner, Thomas Jefferson University, has placed protective covers on the windows and made necessary repairs to mothball the structure. The exterior shell, historic wood windows, and roof are in good condition except for limited water damage to the two-story building facing 10th Street. The interior spaces are divided by masonry bearing walls. The floors are supported on wood joists spanning between the walls. The building's electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems are not operational except for those on the bottom level.

Together, the structures have three exit stairways and two fire escapes.



Two stairs and fire escapes serve the Walnut Street buildings. The remaining stair is located in the two-story portion. The property has no elevator.

The plan on the following page shows a modest scheme for re-using the building. The owner has expressed an interest in office use; the plan shows a scheme for offices in the four-story portion of the structure. The two story building facing 10th street would have marginal value if renovated in its present form, however a connection to the second floor space could be made if the owner wished to retain the structure. The ground floor of the four story portion could be modified to accommodate a small entry lobby facing Jefferson. On the upper floors, a new corridor would be formed by filling in the space between the structures. An elevator, optional under City accessibility regulations, could be added if desired. Altogether, the plan would result in 2,720 net sf of retail on the ground floor and 6,500 net sf of office on the upper floors.

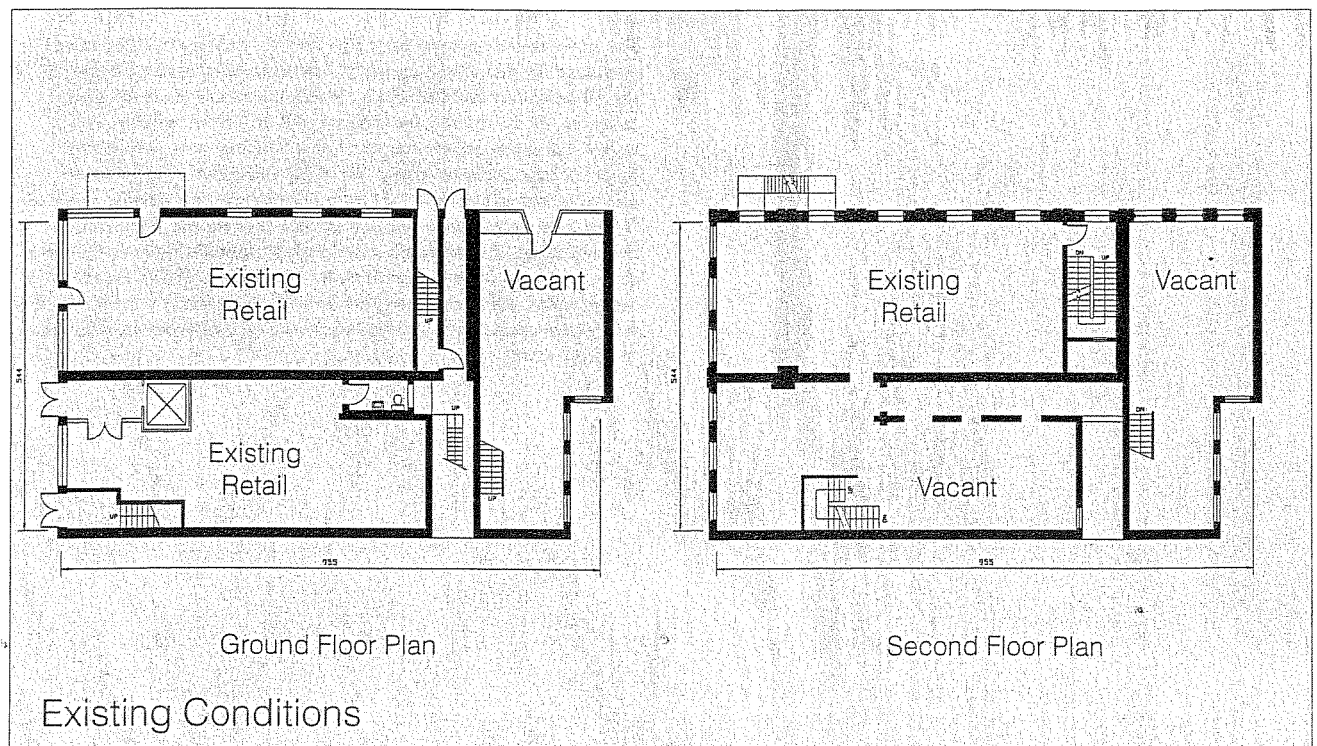
To make better use of all three structures, the two story building could be demolished and replaced with a four story elevator and stair tower. This would eliminate the need for the existing stairs and yield a larger useable area on each floor, resulting in 3,420 net sf of retail on the ground floor and about 8,500 net sf of office on the upper floors.

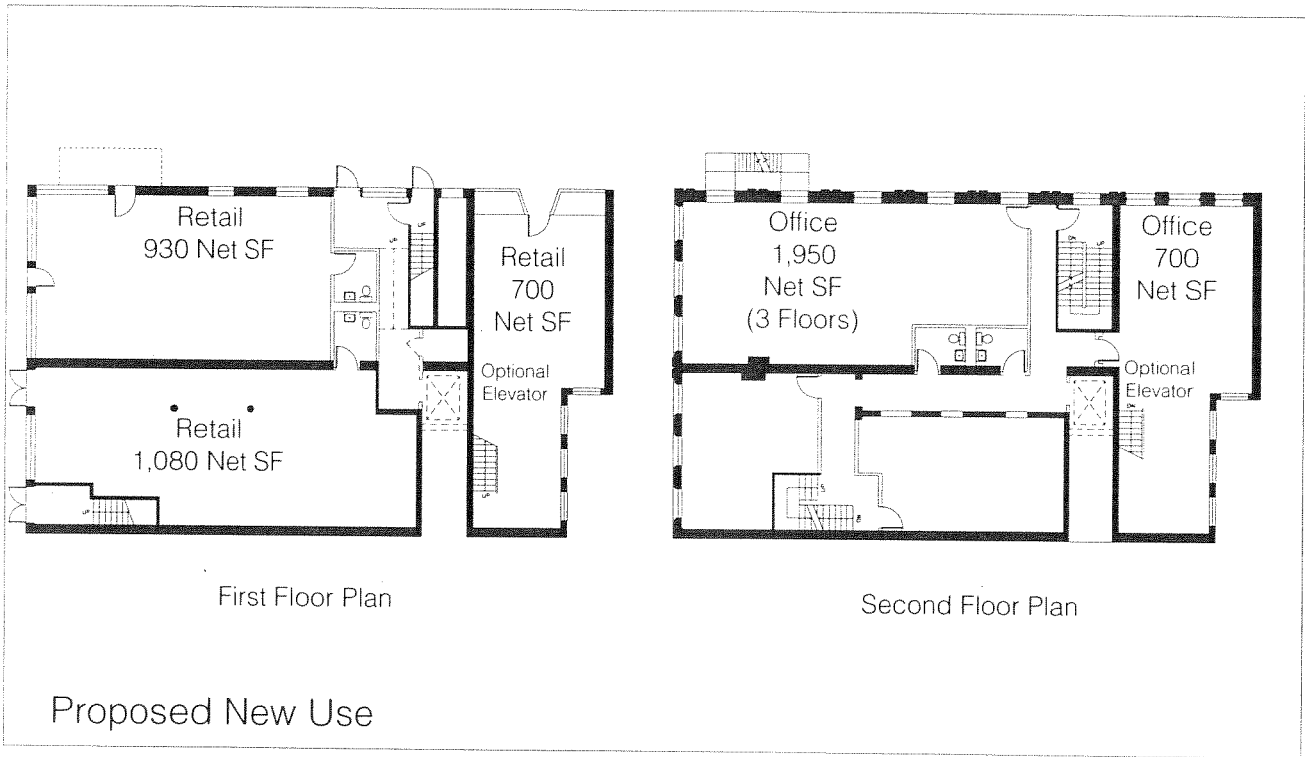
Alternatively, it would be possible to reuse the structure for apartments. The most economical approach would be to divide 927 Walnut Street into its former three separate entities, each using its own existing inter-

nal stairs. Under this plan a variance for a single exit without a fire escape would be required for three of the seven units. The apartments would range in size from 700 sf to 1,000 sf.

To re-open the upper floors for any of the above, a new occupancy permit will be required. L & I will evaluate the overall life safety of the structure using the scoring system found in Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. A passing score would result from providing drywall ceilings and partitions, fire resistant doors, and a new smoke detector and alarm system. The scores show that for office or apartment use, neither elevators or sprinklers would be required.

Yield: office occupancy, 6,500 sf.





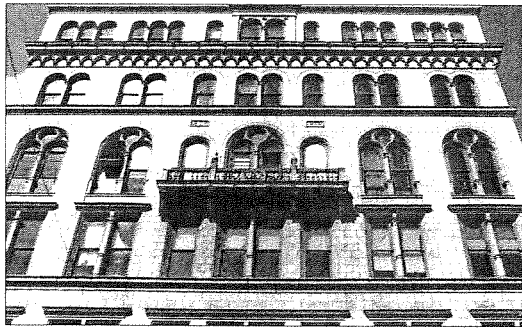
*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B
Year Constructed	1900	Number of Stories	4
Type of Construction	3A	Building Height	50 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	50%	Area/Floor	3,600
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	20%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	None	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Steam	Serving Number of Floors	One
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	No
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	40 ft	Elevator Controls	None
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-6	-6	-6	-2	-2	-2			
3408.6.2 Building area	12	12	12	18	18	18			
3408.6.3 Fire area	-1	-1	-1	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-7	-7	-7	5	5	5			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-35	-35	-35	-25	-25	-25			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	-10	-10	-10	8	8	8			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	-5	-5	-5	10	10	10			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	2	2	-	2	2			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	10	10	-	10	10			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7	6	6	6			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	0	-	0	0	-	0			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-59</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-28</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>-40</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-82</b>	<b>-92</b>	<b>-92</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>			



*Terra cotta façade with arched windows*



*Jewelers' Row along Sansom Street*

# SOCIETY HILL BUILDING

**701 Sansom Street**

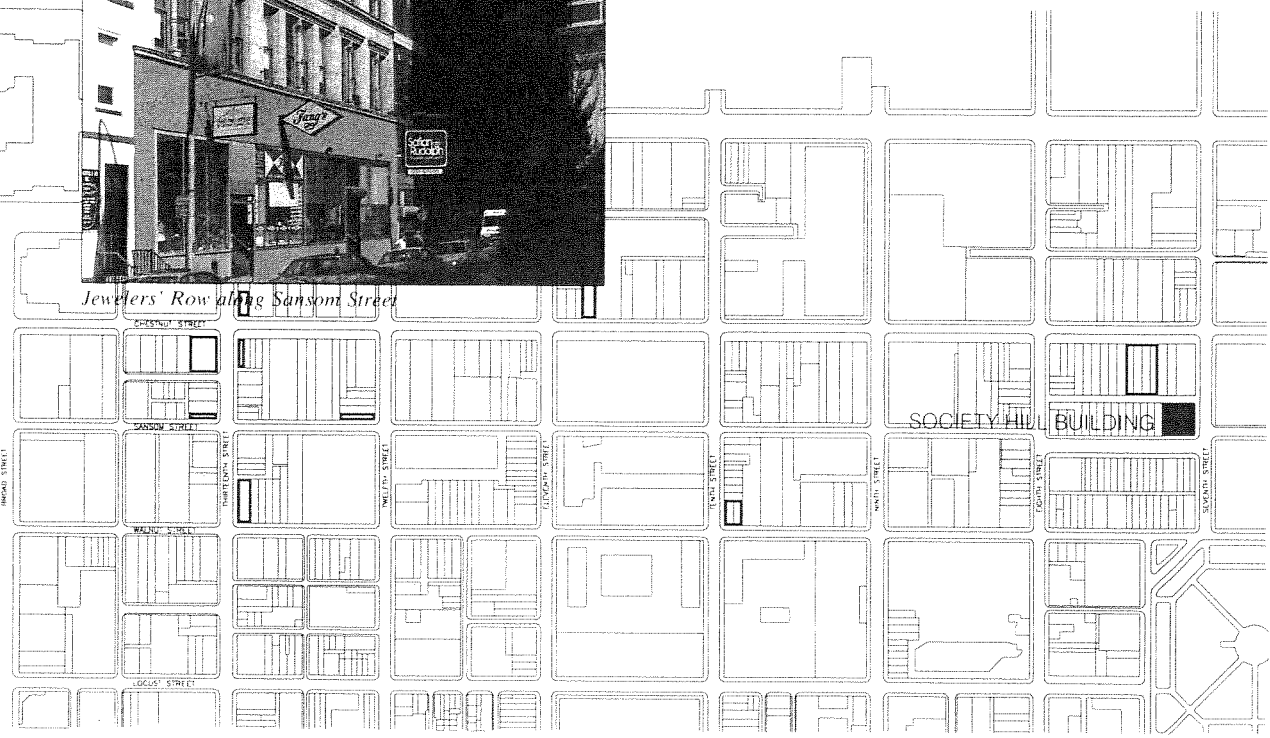
The Society Hill Building is located near Washington Square at the east end of Jewelers' Row. Built when the area was a center for the publishing industry, the 1896 structure was originally a printing house, with a ground floor elevated five feet above the sidewalk to accommodate deliveries. Below, a fourteen-foot-high basement provided storage space for paper goods. As the jewelry trade took hold in the area, the building was adapted for retailing and jewelry manufacturing.

Designed by T.P. Chandler, the building resembles a palazzo. Above street level, the facade retains its original design. Italianate terra cotta cornices decorate each level. Rows of arched windows diminish in height toward the top to make the building seem taller. In the '50s the south and east facades at street level were faced with blue ceramic mosaic tile. The original scheme remains only on the north, facing an alley.

The Society Hill Building is not protected by local preservation ordinances but is listed on the National Register as part of the Center City East Historic District. Owners investing in the renovation of the building are eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits.

Currently the 40,000 gross sf building is about 50 percent occupied. Three jewelers, including the owner, occupy ground floor retail spaces. The upper floors are used for offices, jewelry manufacturing, and an artist studio.

With windows on all sides, a strong image, and proximity to Independence National Historic Park, the building would be an ideal small hotel



for tourists. It would also be well suited to jewel merchants, who regularly conduct business on Jewelers' Row and are concerned with security as well as convenience.

The plans on the following pages show a layout for a small hotel. The retail spaces facing Sansom Street remain unchanged. A lobby and restaurant are located adjacent to the existing stair and elevator to permit easy access to hotel rooms and to give the hotel a visible presence on 7th Street. Above, each floor divides into 12 guest rooms arranged around a storage and central service core.

Due to the presence of existing tenants, extensive repairs to the building envelope and interior will not be required to convert it to another use. The masonry walls and vaulted floor/ceilings are in sound condition. The wood windows require new paint but can be retained. The heating system may be reused, however new air conditioning and electrical wiring may be required for new tenants. Other work includes the demolition of existing interior construction such as a concrete masonry vault on the second floor and plaster masonry partitions on all floors.

The building has an enclosed stair and a fire escape. Under the Philadelphia Building Code, the travel distance between the stair and fire escape is inadequate. A variance would be required from the City's Board of Building Standards for this exiting configuration to remain.

Alterations to the structure will be necessary to comply with the City's accessibility guidelines. A building must comply with the guidelines if its registered use changes or it exceeds 12,500 net sf in area. In this

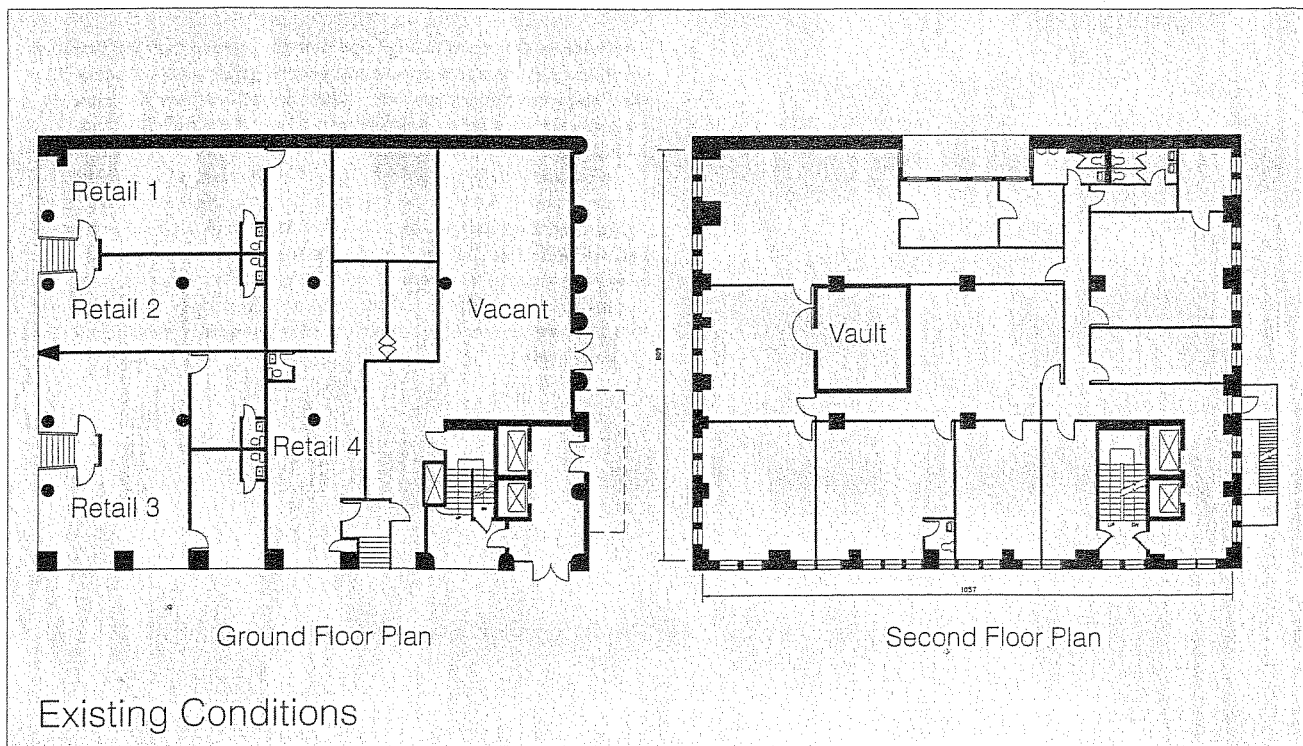
case, strict application of accessibility guidelines will result in costly modifications. While the new hotel rooms could be made accessible without difficulty, access to ground floor spaces would not. Ramps or lifts to existing retail spaces would be required or alternatively, the elevation of the thick, vaulted floors could be lowered. The existing elevators, which are smaller than current guidelines specify, would be replaced. These changes are cost prohibitive.

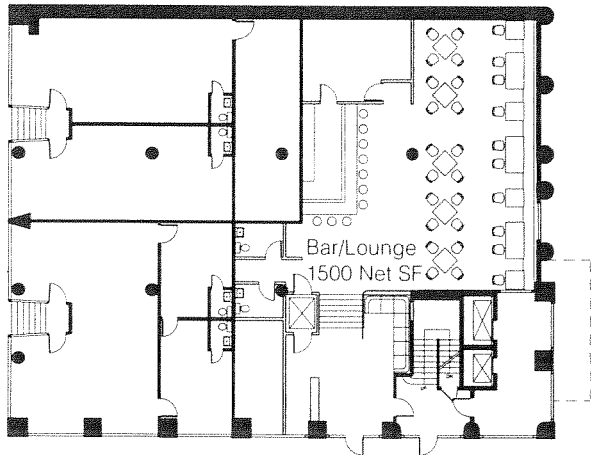
A more economical approach lowers only a small portion of the hotel lobby to street level. A lift provides access to the restaurant beyond and the existing elevator cabs are retained. The extent of alterations required for accessibility will be reviewed by the City's Accessibility Board and will be important in determining the construction cost of the project.

With a change of registered use, L & I will evaluate the fire safety of the building using Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. A passing score would be obtained by providing drywall partitions with fire resistive doors, a smoke detector/alarm system, emergency egress lighting, and a new elevator control panel to allow fire department control. A sprinkler system would not be necessary.

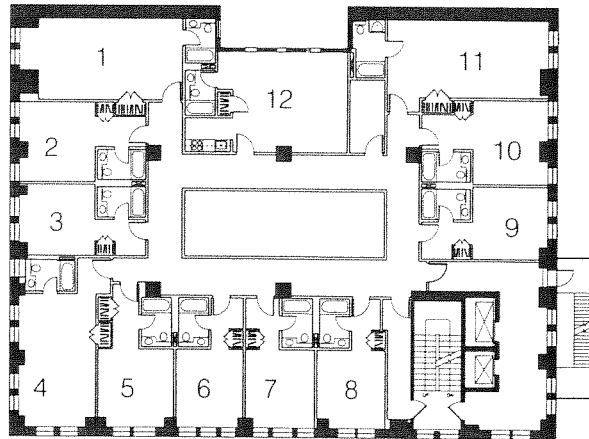
The building could also be used as apartments. The large units would have tall ceilings and perimeter windows. To accommodate the existing exits, the building would have a maximum of three units per floor in the 1,800 sf range.

Yield: 60 inn/hotel rooms or 15 apartments





Ground Floor Plan



Typical Floor Plan  
12 Rooms

Proposed New Use

*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

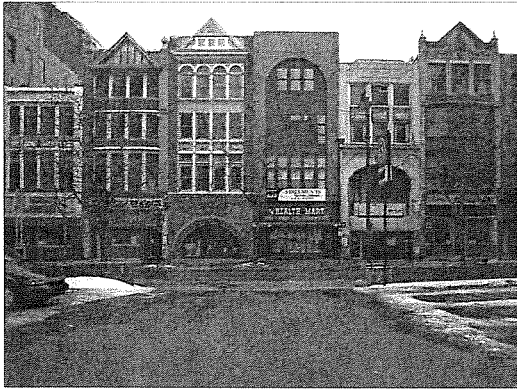


## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

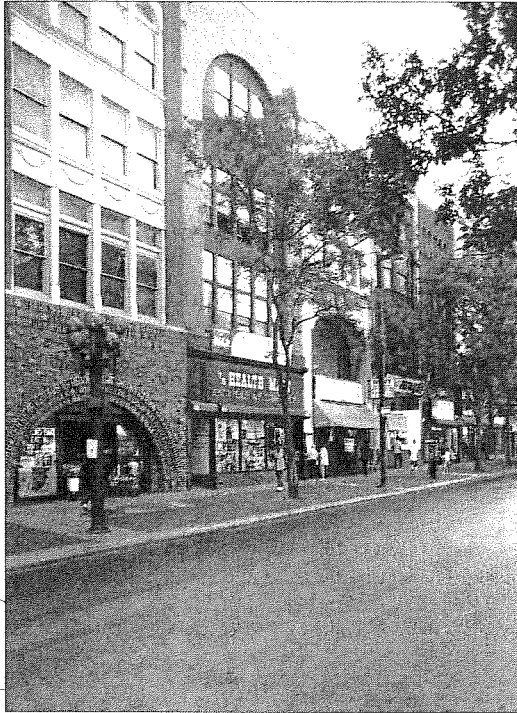
Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-1
Year Constructed	1898	Number of Stories	6
Type of Construction	2B	Building Height	75 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	70%	Area/Floor	7,200
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	40%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	Yes	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Steam	Serving Number of Floors	One
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	65'
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	100 ft	Elevator Controls	None
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6			
3408.6.2 Building area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	-3	-3	-3	2	2	2			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	4	4	4	3	3	3			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5	5	5	5			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	-10	-10	-10	6	6	6			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	0	0	0	10	10	10			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	3	3	-	3	3			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	-5	-5	-	-5	-5			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	5	5	-	5	5			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	0	0	0	6	6	6			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	-10	-10	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	0	-	0	0	-	0			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-36</b>	<b>-36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>			



Front view showing floor alignment



View, left to right, of 708, 710, 712, and 714 Chestnut

# BALDERSON BLOCK

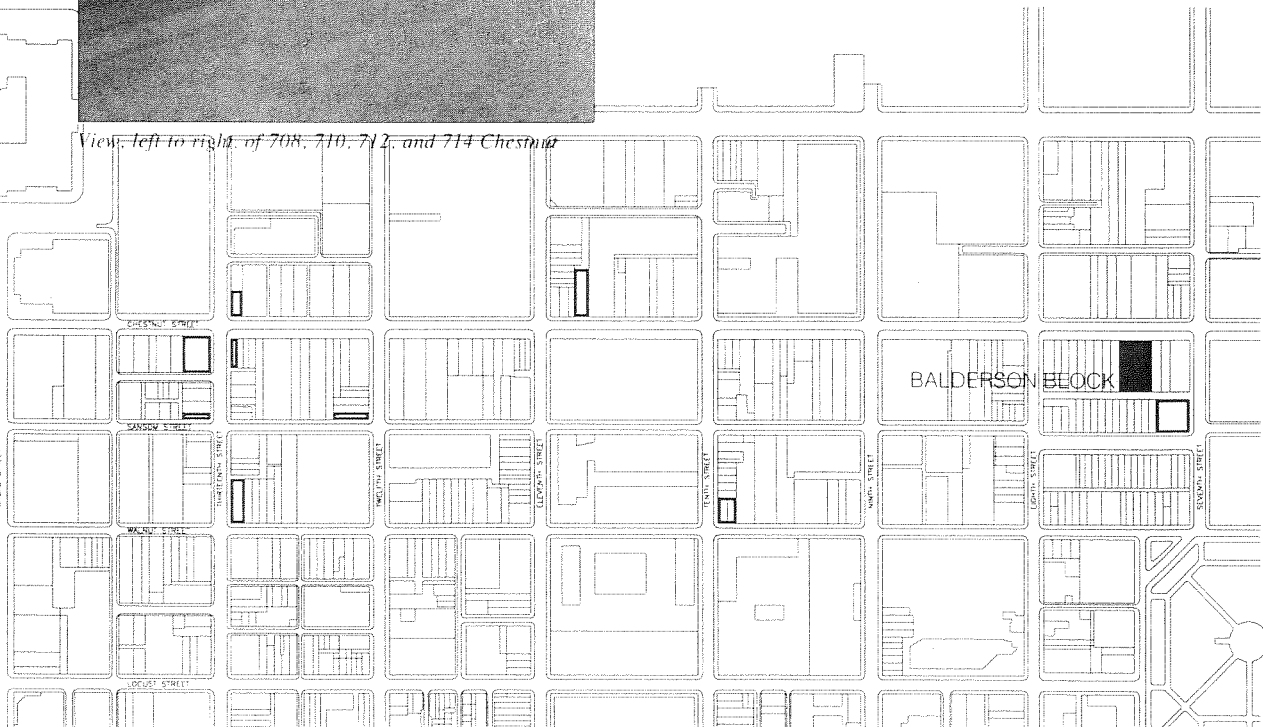
## 708-714 Chestnut Street

The 700 block of Chestnut Street contains a series of single-lot, masonry and wood structures of historic value. Several of the buildings were built around 1892, during a period when older, smaller structures were replaced and the entire block was rejuvenated. Over the years since, their façades have been altered to varying degrees, but the buildings still create a lively retail street with harmonious scale and historic character.

None of the buildings are protected by a listing on the City historic register. Except for the property at 710 Chestnut, the group is classified as "contributing" to the Center City East Historic District. Renovations would be eligible for rehabilitation tax credits.

Four adjacent structures, from 708 to 714 Chestnut, could be developed as a single project. If considered individually, each building would require its own exit corridors, stairs, and fire protection systems. Renovation would not be feasible. Combining the structures would result in greater efficiency and lower construction costs. The current use, condition and architectural character of the four buildings are summarized below:

**708 Chestnut** has a salad bar and delicatessen at street level. The upper façade retains much of its 1892 character, with brick piers, pressed metal spandrels and an ornamental gable. Currently, the second and third floors serve as high-bay warehouse space for a nearby furniture store. After fire destroyed part of the building in the '80s, the original wood floor construction on much of the second and third floors was replaced with steel decking and open-web steel joists.



A portion of the fourth floor at the front of the structure remains. Entry to this space is currently sealed. An automatic sprinkler system serves the warehouse area.

**710 Chestnut** houses a health food store at ground level but is vacant on the upper floors. Part of the original 1892 row, the building has wood floors framed into the masonry party walls. The wood framing is exposed on the interior but in good condition. The façade has been altered using unattractive stucco-finished insulated panels.

**712 Chestnut** is entirely vacant. A compelling reason for the vacancy is the addition of a concrete stairway and elevator near the front of the structure. The stair blocks the view into the store and disrupts the upper floor spaces. Unlike its neighbors, 712 Chestnut dates from 1920 and is built of reinforced concrete. The limestone beaux-arts façade is in excellent condition; it has a two-story arch with braided edging, and a shield ornament above. Spandrels between the third and fourth floor windows are marble and bronze. The building has an interior light well with steel windows.

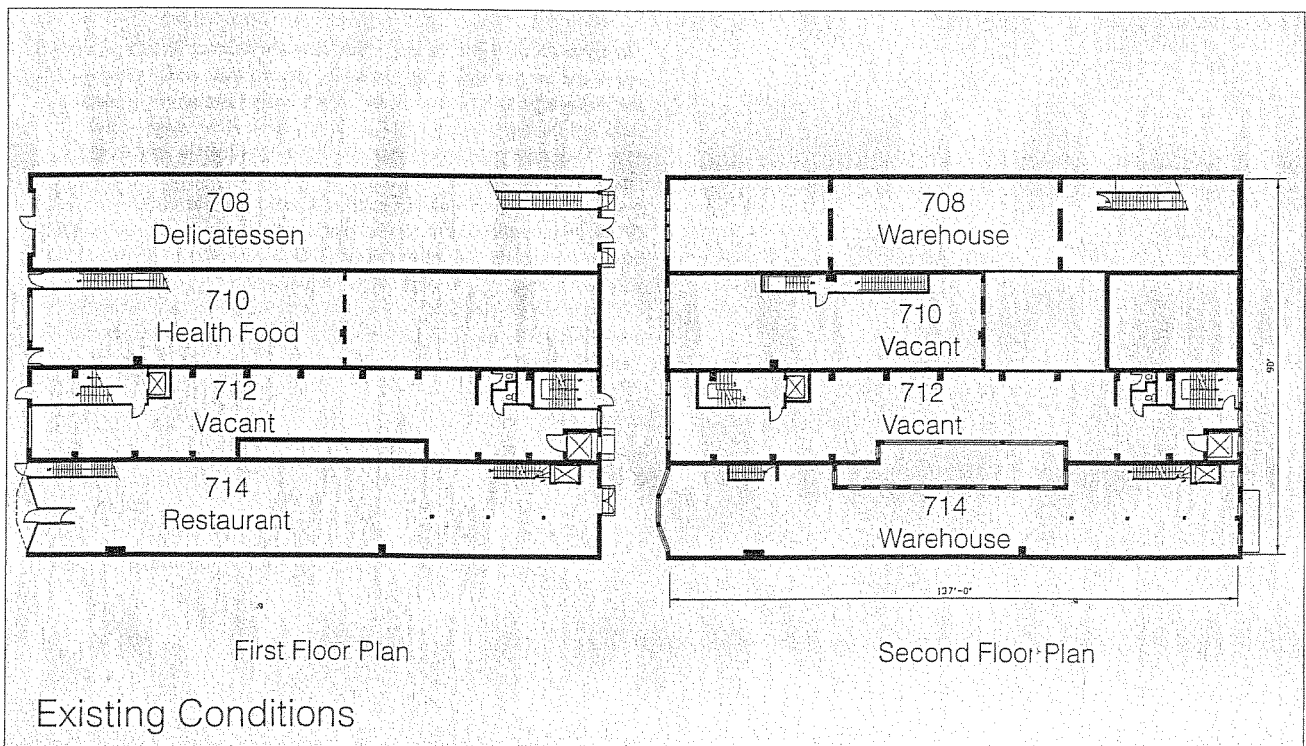
**714 Chestnut** has a take-out restaurant on the ground floor with warehouse space for furniture above. There is a narrow stairway near the Chestnut Street entry, and access to the warehouse from the alley. There are two existing stairways, a fire escape and a freight elevator. Both the elevator shaftway and stairway are open to each floor and are constructed of wood. The exterior of the 1892-era building is in good condition. The lower level has an aluminum storefront, but the upper levels still show the original Queen Anne-style design.

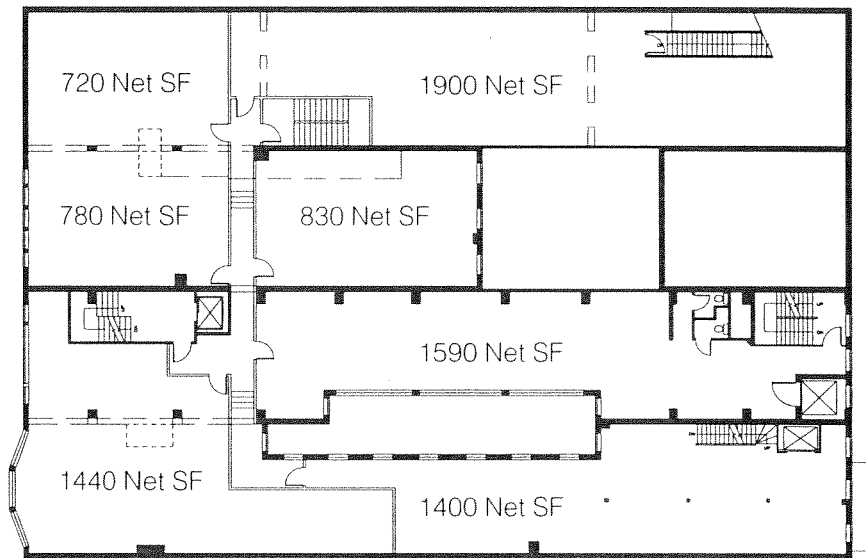
To assess the potential benefit of combining the properties, the alignment of floors, availability of daylight and egress paths are evaluated for the structures as a group. The concrete stairway in 712 Chestnut is detrimental to a single building, but could be an asset if connected to adjacent structures. Similarly, the elevator in 712 could be shared by all upper level tenants. A rough survey shows the levels align within 18" at most floors. Horizontal connections between buildings would require from two to six stair risers.

The plans on the following pages show large, loft-style apartments with interconnected circulation in the four buildings. A new enclosed stairway would be necessary in 708 or 710 to assure a second exit from each unit.

To change the use of these structures, L & I would evaluate the fire safety of the proposed plans using Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. A passing score would be obtained by providing drywall ceilings and corridor walls, drywall vertical shafts, fire resistant doors, new smoke detectors/alarm systems, and emergency egress lighting. A sprinkler system would not be required.

Yield: 14 -16 Units





Typical Floor Plan

Proposed New Use

*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*

## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-2
Year Constructed	1892	Number of Stories	4
Type of Construction	3B	Building Height	50 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	25%	Area/Floor	11,400
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	20%
Compartmentalization	No	Corridor Wall Rating	None
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	No	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	None	Serving Number of Floors	-
Automatic Fire Detection	No	Type	-
Fire Protection Signaling System	No	Type	-
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	-
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	-
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	50 ft	Elevator Controls	None
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
<i>3408.6.1 Building height</i>	-3	-3	-3	0	0	-0			
<i>3408.6.2 Building area</i>	4	4	4	6	6	6			
<i>3408.6.3 Fire area</i>	0	0	0	8	8	8			
<i>3408.6.4 Space division</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<i>3408.6.5 Corridor walls</i>	-7	-7	-7	2	2	2			
<i>3408.6.6 Vertical openings</i>	-18	-18	-18	5	5	5			
<i>3408.6.7 HVAC systems</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<i>3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection</i>	-10	-10	-10	6	6	6			
<i>3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling</i>	-5	-5	-5	5	5	5			
<i>3408.6.10 Smoke control</i>	-	2	2	-	2	2			
<i>3408.6.11 Exit capacity</i>	-	0	0	-	0	0			
<i>3408.6.12 Dead ends</i>	-	0	0	-	0	0			
<i>3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance</i>	-	0	0	-	0	0			
<i>3408.6.14 Elevator control</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<i>3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting</i>	-	-10	-10	-	10	10			
<i>3408.6.16 Mixed use groups</i>	-10	-	-10	0	-	0			
<i>3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-47</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-72</b>	<b>-82</b>	<b>-92</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>			

# SOCIETY HILL FURNITURE BUILDING

**1033 Chestnut Street**



*Terra cotta façade*



*View to east showing adjacent vacant buildings*

A towering commercial structure in its day, Society Hill Furniture reaches eight stories on the north side of Chestnut Street. The building occupies a strategic site among of a series of older structures suffering from a high vacancy rates. To the east, the '50s-era Mercantile Library is vacant and even a Rite-Aid nearby is deserted; to the west, the upper levels of buildings are sealed off and dormant. Because of its location, visibility, and size, a commercial or residential reuse of the 39,350 sf building would have a significant positive impact on the neighborhood.

Designed by A.W. Dilks in 1894, the building expresses the commercial style of the late 19th century. The white terra cotta and masonry facade has large neoclassical brackets beneath a three-story projecting bay and wide cornice. The building has been owner occupied for many years and retains most of its original storefront and upper story design. The building is listed on the City historic register. Proposals to alter or demolish the structure must be approved by the City Historic Commission. The building is also significant to the Center City East Historic District and eligible to receive rehabilitation tax credits.

At present, Society Hill Furniture is the only tenant in the structure. The store occupies the ground floor, mezzanine, second and third floors. The fourth through sixth floors provide warehouse space for the store. Floors seven and eight are not used by order of L & I, due to a lack of fire protection.

At 4,600 gross sf per floor, the footprint of Society Hill Furniture is



somewhat difficult to divide into conventional apartments. The structure does have good vertical circulation however, which allows for a single corridor between the two enclosed stairs at the front and rear of the building. Daylight and views are available for each of four apartments per floor. The units have two means of egress without making significant structural alterations.

If the current owner relocated warehouse space, consolidated the furniture showroom, or expanded sideways to adjacent vacant ground floor space, the top six floors could be developed as residential units. The proposed plan shows a scheme with four large units per floor for a total of 24 units on seven levels.

Due to deferred maintenance, some repairs to the building envelope will be required to re-use the building. The existing concrete and masonry structure is in good condition. However the exterior wood windows need repair and in many cases, replacement. The electrical and mechanical systems serving the upper floors are in poor condition and require replacement.

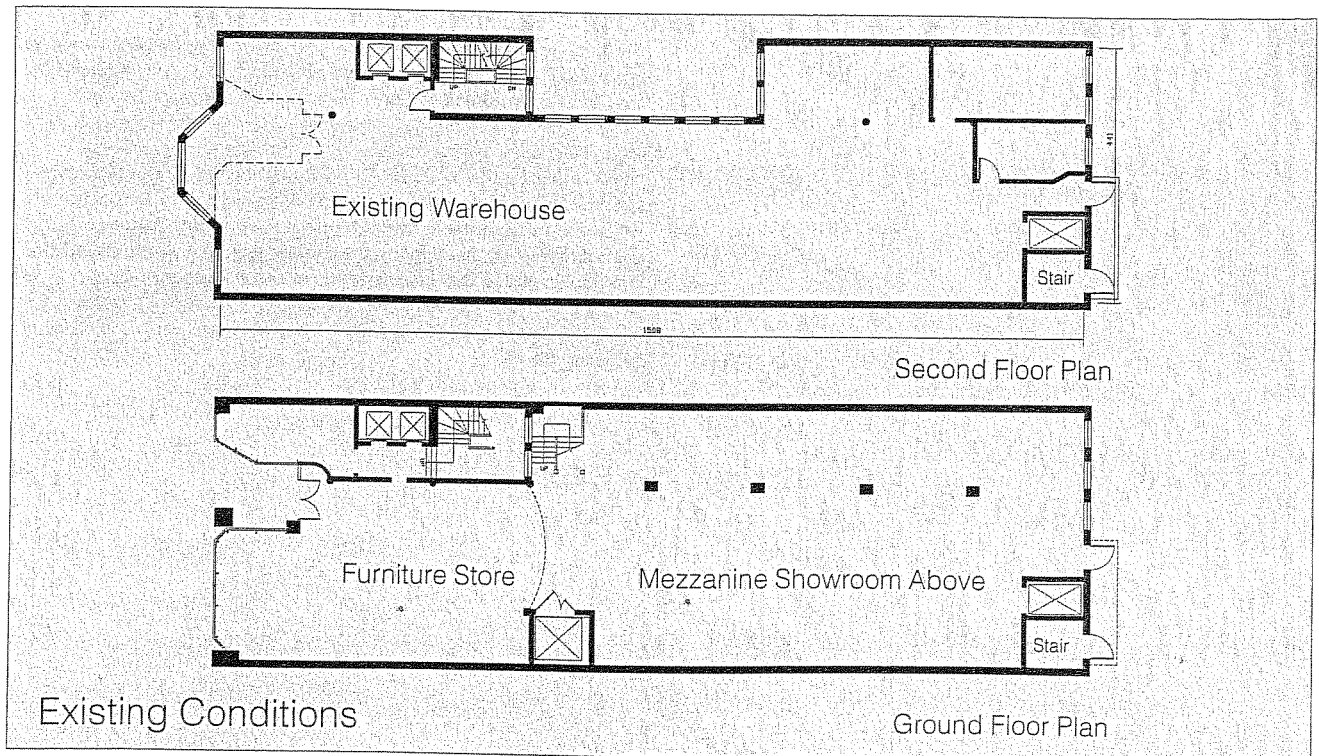
Under the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code, Society Hill Furniture is considered a high-rise building because its highest occupied floor is over 75 feet from the street. Unless the structure is developed with residential uses, or the top two floors remain vacant, the owner must install a new sprinkler system by 1999.

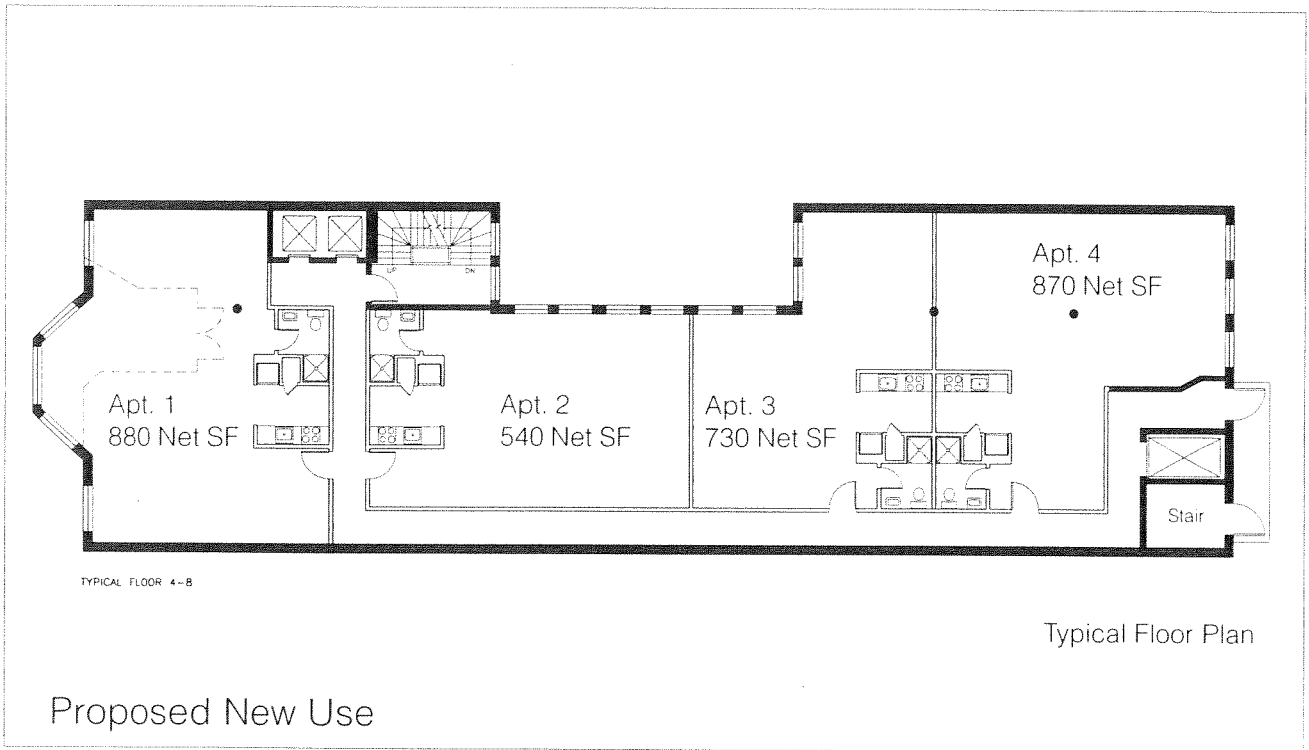
If the building is re-used for apartments, L & I will evaluate the fire safety of the structure using Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building

Code. A passing score results from providing drywall partitions with fire resistant doors, drywall vertical shafts, a smoke detector and fire alarm system, and emergency egress lighting. Unless required by the City to be made accessible, the existing elevators could remain in service without modification. If the building is used for apartments, an automatic sprinkler system would not be required.

In terms of construction materials and required systems, the Society Hill Building resembles the Bernley Building. Although more infrastructure and repairs are required in Society Hill Furniture, the construction costs would be somewhat lower per square foot due to the larger size of the structure. Assuming roughly comparable unit costs from the Bernley Building of about \$30 per square foot, the construction cost for apartments in Society Hill Furniture would be about \$34,000 per unit. This construction cost could be supported by expected rental income, especially if the units had two bedrooms. With the average floor area of 1,140 sf per unit, providing two distinct sleeping areas in the available space would not be difficult.

Yield: 24 apartments





*The table on the opposite page lists how the existing building would be evaluated for fire safety, egress and general safety under Chapter 32 of the Philadelphia Building Code. Safety scores are given for each category for the existing building as well as for the building with added life safety improvements. For a building to be considered "safe", it must score at least a "0" in the evaluation. If a sprinkler system is cost effective or necessary in achieving this passing score of "0", a third evaluation to include sprinklers is shown. Renovations that will affect the building's score include upgrades to construction to slow the spread of fire, improvements to assist occupants' escape during a fire, and systems to provide early detection of a problem. Any mix of improvements is acceptable as long as improvements result in a "passing score".*



## Code Overview For Existing Conditions - Philadelphia Building Code

Existing Use Group	B	Proposed Use Group(s)	B/R-2
Year Constructed	1894	Number of Stories	8 + mezzanine
Type of Construction	2B	Building Height	112 ft
Percentage Open Perimeter	25%	Area/Floor	4,600
Completely Suppressed	No	% of Height Reduction	50%
Compartmentalization	Yes	Corridor Wall Rating	1 Hour
Rating of Vertical Enclosures	No	Required Door Closures	No
Type of HVAC System	Steam	Serving Number of Floors	One
Automatic Fire Detection	Yes	Type	Yes
Fire Protection Signaling System	Yes	Type	Manual Pull
Smoke Control	Yes	Type	Natural
Adequate Exit Routes	Yes	Dead Ends	No
Max. Exit Access Travel Distance	-	Elevator Controls	No
Egress Emergency Lighting	No	Mixed Use Groups	Yes

## SAFETY SCORES

	EXISTING BUILDING			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (without sprinklers)			WITH LIFE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (with sprinklers)		
	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General	Fire	Egress	General
3408.6.1 Building height	-11	-11	-11	-1	-1	-1			
3408.6.2 Building area	2	2	2	5	5	5			
3408.6.3 Fire area	8	8	8	8	8	8			
3408.6.4 Space division	1	1	1	1	1	1			
3408.6.5 Corridor walls	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3408.6.6 Vertical openings	-10	-10	-10	4	4	4			
3408.6.7 HVAC systems	5	5	5	5	5	5			
3408.6.8 Automatic fire detection	0	0	0	6	6	6			
3408.6.9 Fire protection signaling	5	5	5	10	10	10			
3408.6.10 Smoke control	-	3	3	-	3	3			
3408.6.11 Exit capacity	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.12 Dead ends	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.13 Max. exit access travel distance	-	0	0	-	0	0			
3408.6.14 Elevator control	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7			
3408.6.15 Egress emergency lighting	-	0	0	-	2	2			
3408.6.16 Mixed use groups	0	-	0	0	-	0			
3408.6.17 Automatic sprinklers	0	0	0	0	0	0			
<b>Building Score - Total Value</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>			
<b>Mandatory Safety Score</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-35</b>			
<b>Total Score (0 or greater to pass)</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			



## Appendix B

*Many of the features of Philadelphia's older commercial buildings are irreplaceable. This unique penthouse atop the Bernley Building was once the home of the Philadelphia Chess Club.*

## Scope of Predevelopment Services

The Center City District Foundation (CCDF) has engaged a development consultant team consisting of Cecil Baker (architect) and Eugene LeFevre (developer) to continue the work initiated through the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Owners may contract directly with the CCDF for the following services:

1. The Development Consultant Team (“the Team”) will meet with the Owner to review the proposed reuse plans.
2. The Team will undertake further architectural analysis to prepare typical floor plans and to make revisions to the original conceptual layout in response to issues raised by the owner or due to cost or code considerations.
3. On behalf of the Owner the Team will undertake a preliminary code review of the proposed use with officials at the Department of Licenses and Inspections (“L&I”) to determine whether code rating assumptions made by the Team are confirmed by L&I.
4. The Team will prepare a preliminary cost estimate for the project.
5. The Team will prepare a preliminary project proforma for review by the Owner.
6. The Team will identify an appropriate financing source for the project and arrange a meeting with the Owner, an officer of the financial institution, and the Team in order to present the Owner’s financing requirements for the project.

Services will be provided on an hourly basis against a Five Thousand Five Hundred Dollar (\$5,500.00) upset per building.

Owners interested in further assistance may then contract directly with the development consultant team for construction documents, construction management, project leasing, and property management.