

BETHLEHEM STEEL COMPANY SHIPYARD,
CARPENTER SHOP
(W. & A. Fletcher Company)
1201-1321 Hudson Street
City of Hoboken
Hudson County
New Jersey

HAER No. NJ-95-D

HAER
NJ
9-HOBO,
8D-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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Location: 1201-1321 Hudson Street
City of Hoboken
Hudson County, New Jersey

UTM: 18.582400.4511450
Quad: Weehawken, N.J.-N.Y., 1:24,000

Dates of Construction: 1918; c. 1920

Present Owner: Shipyard Associates, L.P.
5 Marine View Plaza, Suite 500
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Carpenter Shop is sited to the east of the Machine Shop within the Bethlehem Steel Company Shipyard complex. This structure was built as a woodworking shop by the W. & A. Fletcher Company in 1918 as part of a program of expansion during the First World War. The building was expanded circa 1920 and remained in use primarily as a woodworking facility (it also housed some metal-working activities) until the closing of the yard in 1984.

Project Information: The Carpenter Shop is to be demolished as part of the planned redevelopment of the property.

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History of the Bethlehem Steel Company Shipyard Carpenter Shop

The original section of the Carpenter Shop was built to the east of the Machine Shop and south of the Blacksmith Shop/Boiler Shop in 1918 (see Photograph of Love map of 1919 in Overview Section). The first and second floors of this structure, which measured 145 feet by 50 feet in plan, housed the yard's carpenter and joiner shops, while the third floor was used as the tinsmith shop. The second section of the building, which measures 64 feet by 50 feet in plan, was added to the western end of the original structure circa 1920 (see G.M. Hopkins Company map of 1923 in Overview Section). By 1925 the larger original section of the building was fully devoted to woodworking activities, housing the carpenter shop on the first floor, the joiner shop on the second floor, and the pattern shop on the third floor (see Photograph of Cross map of 1925 in Overview Section). The first floor of the smaller addition was a garage for vehicle repair, while the second floor housed an extension of the joiner shop and the third floor was used for wood storage.

The building continued in essentially the same uses during the tenure of United Dry Docks, Inc./United Shipyards, Inc. on the property (see G.M. Hopkins Company map of 1934, Sanborn Map Company map of 1906 [Corrected to 1938], and Photograph of Hoboken Yard General Plan Prior to Lease by Bethlehem Steel Co. in 1938 map of 1945 in Overview Section) and during the occupation of the Bethlehem Steel Company Shipbuilding Division (see Photograph of Sanborn Map Company map of 1944 in Overview Section). In 1970 the first and second floors of the original section still housed the yard's carpenter and joiner shops, respectively. These two large shops included a wide variety of woodworking machinery installed both at the time of the building's original construction and during the Second World War (see Photograph of Hoboken Yard Carpenter Shop Floor Plans of 1970). The third floor, formerly the pattern shop, was in use as a storage area, and it later would be converted to serve as the sheet metal shop. Within the western addition the first floor garage had been converted to serve as a storage area, while the second and third floors functioned as extensions of the joiner shop and the storage area within the main building. The structure continued in its primary function as the focus of the yard's woodworking activities until the closing of the yard in 1984 (see Photograph of Hoboken Yard General Plan map of 1983 in Overview Section).

Description of the Bethlehem Steel Company Shipyard Carpenter Shop

The Carpenter Shop is a 3-story brick structure measuring 209 feet by 50 feet in plan located to the east of the Machine Shop and to the north of the South Warehouse. This building is capped by a flat roof with tile coping and reaches a height of approximately 43 feet. The south elevation of the original section exhibits one loading entrance per floor, each located in a different bay, while in the addition there are three ground floor garage entrances and a single second floor loading entrance (see Photograph). All other openings are windows, which here (and throughout the building) are 12-light metal tilt sash with concrete sills. The west elevation, which is 6 bays in width, exhibits openings in five of the six bays on all three floors. All of these openings, with the exception of a single door at the ground floor level, are windows.

The north elevation, with the exception of the windows, is quite different from the south (see Photographs). This facade is defined by a corbelled band at the roofline and a tall elevator shaft associated with the original section of the building that extends nearly 24 feet above the roofline. A total of nine loading bays (three to a floor) are symmetrically arranged within this elevation, with additional entrances located at the ground floor. The east elevation, like the west, includes a number of windows and a single door in its six bays, but this facade is dominated by a pair of large, wood shaving collectors that were installed in 1944 (see Photograph).

The interior of the eastern (original) section of the Carpenter Shop exhibits three largely open working floors that once housed woodworking and sheet metalworking activities. The only significant surviving piece of machinery within the building is a 24" American swing saw within the former carpenter shop on the first floor that was installed in 1918 (see Photograph). The former joiner and sheet metal shops on the second and third floors, respectively, are largely empty, with only some overhead shafting and workbenches remaining (see Photographs). The interior of the western section of the building still reflects its former uses: the former garage and storage area on the first floor, the extension of the joiner shop on the second floor, and the storage area with its loading bay on the third floor (see Photograph).

Sources of Information/Bibliography

Engineering Drawings

"Hoboken Yard General Plan." Hoboken: Hoboken Shipyards, Inc., 1983.

"Hoboken Yard General Plan Prior to Lease by Bethlehem Steel Co. in 1938." Hoboken: Bethlehem Steel Company Shipbuilding Division, 1945.

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Historic Views

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Primary and Unpublished Sources

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