

NORTH PHILADELPHIA STATION, STREET CAR WAITING HOUSE
2900 North Broad Street, on the northwest corner of
Broad Street and Glenwood Avenue
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-5958-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NORTH PHILADELPHIA STATION, STREET CAR WAITING HOUSE

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Location: 2900 North Broad Street on the northwest corner of Broad Street and Glenwood Avenue (bounded by Broad Street to the east, Indiana Avenue to the north, rail lines to the west, and Glenwood Avenue to the south) in Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Philadelphia Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 18.487300.4427220

Significance: The Street Car Waiting House is an important element of the overall operational design of the North Philadelphia Station. When designed and constructed at the turn of the twentieth century, light rail street cars were the most efficient means of intra-urban transportation. Areas in close proximity to rail lines were developed as soon as tracks were laid; the rapid growth of North Philadelphia in the last decades of the nineteenth century reflects this mode of development. Passengers arriving by street car were let off in front of the Street Car Waiting House and walked to the Station Building under the covered ramp. Passengers arriving by train walked down the ramp to wait for the next street car. The west half of the split ramp descended to the ground floor level allowing direct access to baggage tunnels and the ticket lobby while the east half ascended to the first floor through the loggia.

The Street Car Waiting House is an important element of the Station's overall stylistic cohesion. Through the strong design relationship to the Station Building, and high integrity, the Street Car Waiting House allows important information concerning the original design of the Station Building. In contrast to the classical French expression of the Station Building proper, the Street Car Waiting House, as well as the covered ramp, relate more to Italian Renaissance influences.

Description: The Street Car Waiting House is a small, highly ornamented, one story brick building fronting on Glenwood Avenue; the front elevation faces south. The building measures thirty-six feet wide, twenty feet deep and seventeen feet from grade to roof ridge. The steeply pitched hipped roof retains many of its original details: terra cotta finials at the ridge edges, terra cotta coping at the crest lines, and scallop-butt slate shingles. On the south elevation, two semi-circular arched window openings, framed by Composite-order pilasters and heavily molded projecting sills, flank a center door opening similarly ornamented - all symmetrically placed. Windows were double-hung single lights with wood sash. At each corner of this south elevation is a terra cotta console which once supported a standing seam hipped roof canopy; this element is mirrored on the north elevation and does, visually at least, support the ramp roof.

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this south elevation is a terra cotta console which once supported a standing seam hipped roof canopy; this element is mirrored on the north elevation and does, visually at least, support the ramp roof. The west and east elevations each have a central three-window arcade with, again, semi-circular arches over Composite-order pilasters or columns. The north elevation is a mirror image of the south elevation with the exception of square brick elements supporting the roof of the covered ramp which flank the windows. All of the ornamental trim for the Street Car Waiting House - window arches, pilasters, and cornice - is terra cotta.

The interior of the Street Car Waiting House has a varnished beaded matchboard wainscot, white painted beaded matchboard walls, and varnished beaded matchboard ceiling with no collar beams, and arched painted wood window surrounds.

Plywood has been installed to the exterior of the windows and doors, and to some interior window openings; approximately thirty percent of the original sash survives. Window openings have grills made of steel reinforcing rods. The building is in poor to fair condition.

History: The Street Car Waiting House was constructed in the initial 1901 phase of development at the North Philadelphia Station complex and has been subjected to no significant alterations except removal of the shed porch on the south elevation. No documentation has been found to date indicating when the building last functioned as a Street Car Waiting House; it has functioned as a storage room since 1977.

Sources: Richards, Frederick L. *Germantown Junction National Register Nomination*. March, 1992.
Historical Society of Pennsylvania - Philadelphia Record (v.7:1777), c.1915
Perkins Collection (vol.5c, p.65); c.1901
Library Company - Pa. RR: 1560, b,c; c.1930
Temple University Urban Archives - Box 438, Folder 18b; c.1915, 1922.
Bulletin Collection
Pennsylvania State Archives - Penn Central Railroad Collection, M.G. 286

Graphic Documentation: See North Philadelphia Station, HABS No. PA-5958

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Historic Preservation Group
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