

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS,
BUILDING B
37-55 East Wister Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-213-B

HAER
PA
51-PHILA,
716B-

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, PA 19106

HAER
PA
ST-PHILA,
716 B-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS, BUILDING B

HAER No. PA-213-B

Location:

37-55 E. Wister Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

Present Owner:

Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation
48 East Penn Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Present Occupant:

Vacant.

Significance:

Building B is significant because it served as the office of the Germantown Dye Works, and is one of the earlier structures on site.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

Date(s) of Erection:

Building B was erected in 1875 (Hexamer 1878).

Architect:

Unknown.

Original/Subsequent Owners:

See Chain of Title.

Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Unknown.

Original Plans/Construction:

Building B, as evidenced on the 1878 Hexamer Survey, was depicted as a 2-story stone dwelling, with a shingle roof. The structure measured 29' by 16'.

Alterations/Additions:

In the early twentieth century, a one-story brick addition was erected on the north (rear) wall of the office. This is part of the same building program that placed additions to the rear of Building A.

B. Historical Context

The establishment of building B represents the early success of the Germantown Dye Works. From this building, Mills could oversee his growing operation, as well as meet with clients.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

Architectural Character:

Building B reflects the scale and form of residences along Wister Street. Although an office building, it could easily be confused as a mid-nineteenth century residence. Prior to Building A's roof alteration, the two were very similar in character.

Condition of Fabric:

The structure is in generally poor condition, with some mortar erosion and falling stucco.

B. Description of Exterior

Overall Dimensions:

Front section: 16' x 29', 2-story, 1-bay.
Rear section: 10' x 15', 1-story.

Foundations:

.....Masonry.

Walls:

Stucco-over-brick. The 1875 Hexamer Survey records the walls as 13" thick.

Structural System/Framing:

Load bearing brick masonry walls with wooden framing members.

Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

There is a three-step stoop, made of concrete, on Wister Street at boarded-over entrance. A two-step stoop, also of concrete, is at the rear addition's doorway.

Chimneys:

The 1875 Hexamer Survey notes a chimney on the rear slope of Building B. Presently, the building does not have a chimney.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Front elevation doorway is off-center, occupying the bay closest to the cartway. The doorway is boarded-over, as is the two rear doorways -- one to the main section and the other to the rear addition.

Windows/Shutters:

The only window openings not boarded-over are the second story, front facade openings. The two windows are two-over-two double-hung wooden sash. There exists a small easement window on the gable-end, above the cartway. A large storefront window on the first floor is boarded-over -- this storefront window was created in the early twentieth century, when both A and B buildings were altered.

Roof:

A gable roof with box cornice and returns, sheathed with standing seam metal roofing.

C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

Off-center stairway. Two floors of rectangular space, separated by office partitions.

Stairways:

Wooden stairway in rear of Building B.

Flooring:

Wood planking.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

In 1875, the walls of the first and second floors were each 10' high, and the ceiling was lathed and plastered.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Molded surround door frames.

Windows:

Simple wood surrounds.

Decorative Features and Trim:

Not available.

Hardware:

Mid-twentieth century replacement locks, hinges, and knobs.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

The 1878 Hexamer Survey records a galvanized iron heater in cellar of office building. Present conditions are not available.

Lighting:

Originally lighted by gas, presently modern electrical fixtures throughout.

Plumbing:

Rear, second-floor, mid-twentieth century toilet.

D. Site

General Setting/Orientation:

Building B sits on the southeastern corner of the dye works site, between Building A (dwelling/office) and the access cartway. Its front facade (south) is on Wister Street.

Historic Landscape Design:

The 1878 Hexamer Survey records a picket fence at the rear of Building B, separating its rear yard from the cartway.

Outbuildings:

None