

Union League of Philadelphia  
140 S. Broad Street  
Philadelphia (Center City)  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1626

HABS  
PA,  
SI-PHILA  
346-

PHOTDGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 2024D

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE PENNSYLVANIA	COUNTY PHILADELPHIA	TOWN OR VICINITY PHILADELPHIA
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA		HABS NO. PA-1626
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 140 S. Broad Street, on west side of Broad Street, near the City Hall		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1864-65	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) John Fraser, architect; John Crump, builder	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Founded in 1862, the Union League is the oldest Republican party club in the nation. The building is also noted for its Philadelphia Second Empire style.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick with brownstone trim		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Approx. 100' (seven-bay front) X 130'; two-and-a-half stories on raised basement.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Reddish-brown brownstone walls; central Corinthian porch with curved double-entry stairway; projecting cornices; first floor wings; mansard roof with dormers; south side tower (original mansard roof removed later); balustrades on wings, porch, and roof.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Central-hall plan. Notable interior.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Exterior and interior altered and remodeled over the years.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Still in use as a Republican party clubhouse; not open to the public.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Webster, Richard. <u>Philadelphia Preserved</u> . Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Susan McCown, HABS Historian	DATE July 31, 1984	

ADDENDUM TO:  
UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA  
140 South Broad Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-1626  
*HABS PA,51-PHILA,346-*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDEDUM TO  
UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

HABS No. PA-1626

One page was previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 140 South Broad St., Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

The coordinates for the Union League of Philadelphia are 75.095215 W and 39.570001 N, and they were obtained through Google Earth in November 2011 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Significance: The Union League of Philadelphia is significant both as an organization and as a work of architecture. Founded in 1862, during a time of intense political upheaval and growing Confederate sympathy, this patriotic society was formed in support of the Union and the policies of President Abraham Lincoln. It laid the philosophical foundation for numerous additional Union Leagues sprouting up across a country divided by Civil War. The League's clubhouse on South Broad Street, completed in 1865, is significant because there was only one other building in the neighborhood comparable in size for a time (The Academy of Music). Also, it was an early example of the French Second Empire Style that would become popular for both residential and institutional buildings in post-Civil War America. The Union League of Philadelphia has hosted United States presidents, heads of state, visiting dignitaries from around the globe, industrialists, and entertainers. Driven by its founding motto, "Love of Country Leads," it has supported the American military in each conflict since the Civil War. In the twenty-first century, the philanthropic missions of the Union League and its over 3,200 members include educating the public about United States history and providing scholarships to deserving students.

Description: The Union League of Philadelphia's Broad Street clubhouse consists of an original Broad Street building, completed by John Fraser in 1865, and a 1912 addition by Horace Trumbauer and Julian Abele, which extends the complex west to Fifteenth Street.

The original site was open on three sides – to Broad, Moravian, and Sansom Streets – which offered the architect abundant space to create a building in the trendy French Second Empire Style. Later Philadelphia landmarks of this style, popular in post-Civil War America, include the Victory Building and, most notably, City Hall. Oriented toward Broad Street, a three-story, five-bay central block sits atop a granite base and is crowned by a mansard roof with cast-iron cresting. The nearly vertical slope of the lower part of a mansard roof allows ample attic headroom. This central block is bookended by symmetrical single-story, single-bay pavilions which take advantage of the Broad Street frontage by

adding two additional windows while allowing space for two large first-story reception rooms off the central hall. A central tower projecting from the façade, complete with a porch and a mansard roof, rises the full height of the building. Two broad flights of curved stairs lead from the sidewalk to the porch and main entrance. Originally, the basement level connected to north and south courtyards and the southern courtyard contained a four-story tower, breaking the building's symmetry. The tower remains, but the courtyards have been filled by additions to the pavilions. A rear annex was added to the original building after the Civil War, when membership increased.

When this annex proved inadequate, Horace Trumbauer replaced it with a powerful Italianate Renaissance palazzo of Indiana limestone in the spirit of London's Pall Mall gentlemen's clubs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This large addition consisted of two parts, a Fifteenth Street building and a "middle building." Although the architect had originally hoped to demolish Fraser's existing Broad Street building, he managed to effectively unify the entire complex by means of a grand marble corridor running east to west and connecting the Broad Street and Fifteenth Street entrances. Spacious dining and reception rooms open off either side of this hallway. The Victorian-era McMichael Room fronting Broad Street and a library overlooking Fifteenth Street are connected by a similar corridor on the second floor. Lincoln Hall, a shrine of sorts to the Union League's inspiration, is midway between these two rooms.

The Union League is home to the work of decorative painter George Herzog, a leader in his field toward the end of the nineteenth century. He also lent his brush to the nearby Masonic Temple and Philadelphia's City Hall, plus many private residences in the area.

#### History:

The Union League was founded in Philadelphia in 1862 as a patriotic club in support of President Abraham Lincoln's efforts to preserve the union of the United States of America. In response to the president's call for volunteers, the city had already recruited many men for the Union army. However, Confederate sympathy remained prevalent due to the Southern ties of many of Philadelphia's economic and social leaders, connections going back many decades through marriage, banking, shipping, or commercial interests. The Copperheads, or Democrats in staunch opposition to the war and to the president's efforts to quash the Confederacy, were bolstered by early Southern military successes. In Philadelphia, Southern sympathy was accepted, and it was growing. It was in this tumultuous environment, in an effort to combat what they deemed to be local treasonous leanings, that prominent Republicans formed the Union League. The League was conceived of during a conversation following a chance meeting of friends George Boker, a dramatist and poet, and Judge J.I. Clark Hare on the sidewalk of Seventh Street, between Sansom and Chestnut Streets.

Initially, some rented houses on Chestnut Street served as the League's headquarters. In 1864, the members purchased the land on the west side of Broad

Street between Moravian and Sansom Streets. A new clubhouse was designed by Scottish-born architect John Fraser and constructed at this site at the close of the Civil War, between 1864 and 1865. At this time, the Academy of Music was the only larger building in the area. Shortly after the Union League Broad Street building's completion, Fraser's original drawings were destroyed in an attic fire on September 7, 1866. The cause of the fire was arson, but the guilty party was never apprehended.

In the decades following the Union's Civil War victory, Union League membership expanded and more space was needed. A rear annex proved insufficient. The lot extending from the Broad Street building west to Fifteenth Street was purchased and, in 1905, a competition was announced for the design of an addition on this site. Architect Joseph M. Huston's design was chosen. While working on the State Capitol in Harrisburg, however, Huston was charged with, convicted of, and imprisoned for conspiracy to defraud the Commonwealth, and the Union League promptly replaced him with Horace Trumbauer.

Trumbauer's proposal had assumed that the original Fraser building would be demolished so as not to be towered over. Thankfully, only the inadequate annex was removed. The addition of Trumbauer and his chief designer, prominent African-American architect Julian Abele, was built in two parts. The cornerstone of the portion oriented toward Fifteenth Street was laid on October 9, 1909. The 1880s annex was demolished and construction began on the "middle building" in January 1911. The entire addition was ready for occupancy by early 1912.

The Union League is the proud home of a renowned art and artifact collection, amassed over the years. According to the League's historian, "the collection is a rich, historical chronicle of Philadelphia's unique imprint upon the American landscape from the 19th century to today and is recognized by historians and art experts as valuable components of our shared American history."<sup>i</sup>

During its first century, the League's membership was white, male, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, and Republican. The apparent value of such clubs declined during the 1950s and 1960s, when club dues were no longer deductible thanks to new tax laws. Consequently, for survival, the Union League began welcoming blacks, women, Jews, Catholics, first generation Americans, and Democrats. According to social historian and Philadelphian E. Digby Baltzell, since class had become "irrelevant," the Union League became "the most relevant club in Philadelphia."<sup>ii</sup>

In the fall of 2010, demolition of some partitions and layers of built-up material from numerous renovations began on the basement level of the Union League's original Broad Street building in order to make way for the Atkin Olshin Schade Architects-designed Heritage Center, due to be completed in 2011. The Heritage Center will provide a permanent venue for the League's extensive Civil War-related archives and collections. This demolition revealed parts of the building concealed for over a century, the drawings of which were lost during the 1866 arson.

Sources: “History/Philanthropy.” The Union League. 2011.  
<<http://www.unionleague.org/history-philanthropy.php>> (17 May 2011).

Mendte, J. Robert. The Union League of Philadelphia: 125 Years. Devon, PA: William T. Cooke Publishing, 1987.

Moss, Roger W. Historic Landmarks of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Mundy, James. “Interview with Union League historian James Mundy.” Interview by Sara Patrick and Kristina Simcic. 10 Dec. 2010.

Peacock, Gibson, Ed. “The New Union League House, Philadelphia.” Daily Evening Bulletin. 5 May 1865, 1(A).

Historian: Kristina Simcic, 2011.

Project Information: Kristina Simcic completed the measured survey of the Union League’s basement and sub-basement levels post-demolition and pre-Heritage Center construction, in October 2010. Sara Patrick assisted with this documentation and is also the singular author of the photographic survey. Simcic is responsible for the AutoCAD drawings, including plans, sections, elevations, and details. Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, architects of the Heritage Center, provided some background information and base drawings. Michael Schade, AIA often offered his professional advice and guidance. Union League Director of Library and Historical Collections James Mundy shared some of his extensive knowledge of the history of the building with Simcic and Patrick and was the impetus for this project.

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<sup>i</sup> “History/Philanthropy,” The Union League, 2011, <<http://www.unionleague.org/history-philanthropy.php>> (17 May 2011).

<sup>ii</sup> E. Digby Baltzell qtd. in J. Robert Mendte, The Union League of Philadelphia: 125 Years (Devon, PA: William T. Cooke Publishing, 1987), 171.