

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

HAER No. PA-213-D

HAER  
PA  
51-PHILA,  
716D-

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  
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716D-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS, BUILDING D

Location:

HAER No. PA-213-D

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 D remains from William Mills' proprietorship of the Germantown Dye Works. Essentially an extension of Building C, Building D represents the continued growth and expansion of the dye works. It is also one of the few buildings at the dye works that presents a street facade.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

#### Date(s) of Erection:

Building D was built in 1878 or 1879 (Hexamer 1879).

#### Architect:

Unknown.

#### Original/Subsequent Owners:

See Chain of Title.

#### Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Unknown.

#### Original Plans/Construction:

Measuring 40' x 70', Building D is a one-story brick industrial structure. Its principal facade, along Wister Street, has not been altered. The original roof was probably of slate, to match Building C.

#### Alterations/Additions:

Building D's exterior west wall has a yellow-brick veneer that matches Building R. It is uncertain how much of Building D's original fabric has been retained or altered. Building permit research has revealed numerous alterations to Germantown Dye works' dye houses in the past. However, the permits do not specify which dye house.

### B. Historical Context

Building D, most likely, extended the dyeing operation housed in Building C. The need was such that three row houses along Wister Street were removed to allow for the erection of Building D. With each successive building, the dye works site became more restrictive and with the erection of this building, a majority of Mills' land has been built-upon. By 1885, Mills purchased a lot at the corner of Lena Street and Collom Street (previously Jefferson Street). However, Mills' successor, Daniel F. Waters, is responsible for erecting buildings on this parcel and incorporating it as part of the Germantown Dye Works.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

#### Architectural Character:

Building D is a brick, industrial structure highlighted by its original brick facade along Wister Street. The symmetrical facade has a stepped gable with four bays and a stone foundation.

#### Condition of Fabric:

Building D appears to be in generally fair condition, with sound masonry.

### B. Description of Exterior

#### Overall Dimensions:

40' x 70'.  
4 bays wide, 1-story

#### Foundations:

Ashlar.

#### Walls:

Brick.

#### Structural System/Framing:

Load bearing brick masonry walls with wooden framing members.

#### Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

Not applicable.

#### Chimneys:

No record exists concerning chimneys on Building D. Roof vents and standpipes were present to ventilate the interior of the dye house.

#### Openings:

##### Doorways/Doors:

Modern aluminum double door on east elevation, near Building C.  
Windows/Shutters:

East elevation windows are boarded-up. South elevation has four windows with twelve-over-twelve double-hung wooden sash. Brick segmental arch lintels and sills frame the openings.

Roof:

Gable roof with built-up asphalt roofing and deteriorated monitor.

### C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

Open, rectangular floor plan with irregularly-spaced columns.

Stairways:

Not applicable.

Flooring:

Concrete with approximately 10' x 10' x 1' recesses in floor for dyeing vats.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

Exposed truss work on ceilings. Exposed brick walls.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Rolling metal fire-door between Building C and Building D.

Windows:

Simple wood surrounds.

Decorative Features and Trim:

Not applicable.

Hardware:

Modern hardware throughout.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

Overhead, forced air, registers.

Lighting:

Modern electrical fixtures.

Plumbing:

Mid-twentieth century piping.

**D. Site**

General Setting/Orientation:

Building D is situated south of Building C, and there is interior access between the two. To the south is Wister Street, and to the west is Building R and its parking lot. Building D frames the cartway, opposite Building B, the office.

Historic Landscape Design:

None.

Outbuildings:

None.