

TAYLOR-WILSON MANUFACTURING COMPANY  
(Pennsylvania Drilling Company)  
500 Thompson Avenue  
Pittsburgh  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HAER PA-640  
*PA-640*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

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HAER No. PA-640

LOCATION: 500 Thompson Avenue, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County,  
Pennsylvania.

DATE OF  
CONSTRUCTION: 1905

ARCHITECT/  
ENGINEER: Robert A. Cummings (1866-1937), engineer.

PRESENT OWNER: P.D. Warehouse Company

SIGNIFICANCE: This building is an early example of a concrete “daylight factory,” a building type that revolutionized industrial architectural design at the turn-of-the-last-century. Engineer Robert A. Cummings followed Ernest L. Ransome’s patented concrete construction system, which allowed columns to intersect with floor slabs, countering structural forces through a framework rather than through solid masses of load-bearing walls.

DESCRIPTION: Constructed for the production of custom-built machinery for heavy industry, the building is composed of a central shed that is six bays wide, sixteen bays long (120’ x 160’), and three stories high. There are one story ancillary wings on either side. The structure of the main space is composed of two stories of round concrete columns, which carry concrete beams running the entire length of the building. The beams support the sloped roof rafters of the adjacent wings on the first story, and a rail for a traveling crane on the second story. The arched roof is supported by a series of wooden arched trusses. The exterior walls feature two sets of nine-over-nine, double-hung wooden windows per bay, three stories high, producing a true “daylight factory.”

SOURCE: Franklin Toker. Buildings of Pittsburgh. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007.

PROJECT  
INFORMATION: This short-form history was prepared to supplement photographic documentation of historic sites in western Pennsylvania. In 2005

Nicholas Traub photographed several sites for the *Buildings of Western Pennsylvania* publications, with funding from HABS/HAER/HALS. The Society of Architectural Historians cosponsored the photography project and is producing two volumes, *Buildings of Pittsburgh* and *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania* as part of their *Buildings of the United States* series published by the University of Virginia Press. The documentation was facilitated by Lu Donnelly, Project Director, Buildings of Western Pennsylvania, for the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. The documentation was edited and transmitted in the Washington office of HABS/HAER/HALS by Christopher H. Marston, HAER Architect.