

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 5710 Wissahickon Avenue

Postal code: 19144 Councilmanic District: 4

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Francis R. Strawbridge House

Common Name: None

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☐ good ☒ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☒ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Vacant

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1905 to 1917

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Constructed: 1905-06

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Brockie & Hastings

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Stacy Reeves & Sons

Original owner: Francis R. Strawbridge

Other significant persons: Herman C. Rumpp, second owner

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☒ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☒ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian Email Oscar.Beisert@gmail.com
Organization Off Boundary Preservation Brigade Date 7 April 2015
Street Address 205 Rochelle Avenue Telephone 717-602-5002
City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19128
Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 1 July 2015
☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 24 July 2015
Date of Notice Issuance: 24 July 2015
Property Owner at Time of Notice
Name: Eastview Realty
Address: 5710 Wissahickon Ave; 5500 Wissahickon Ave, Management Office
City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19144
Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 16 September 2015
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 9 October 2015
Date of Final Action: _____
☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

Proposed for Historic Designation in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



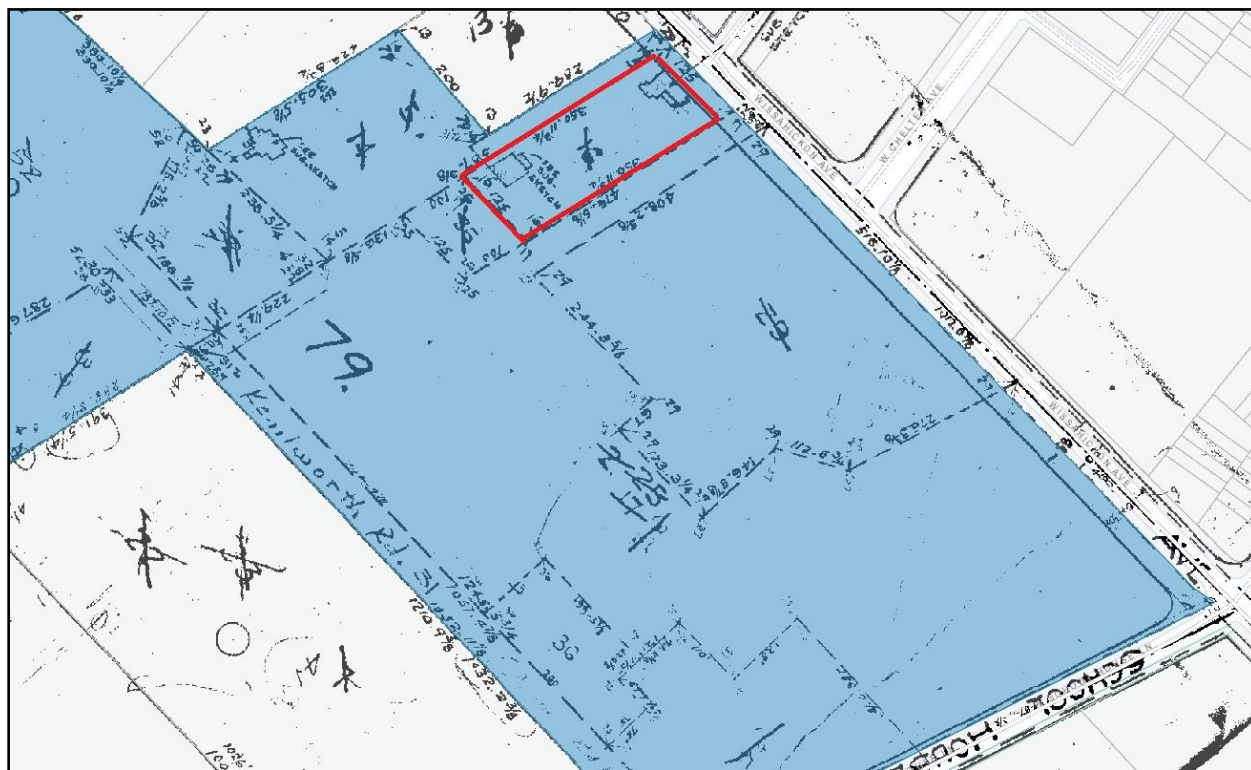
**The Francis R. Strawbridge House
5710 Wissahickon Avenue
Germantown**



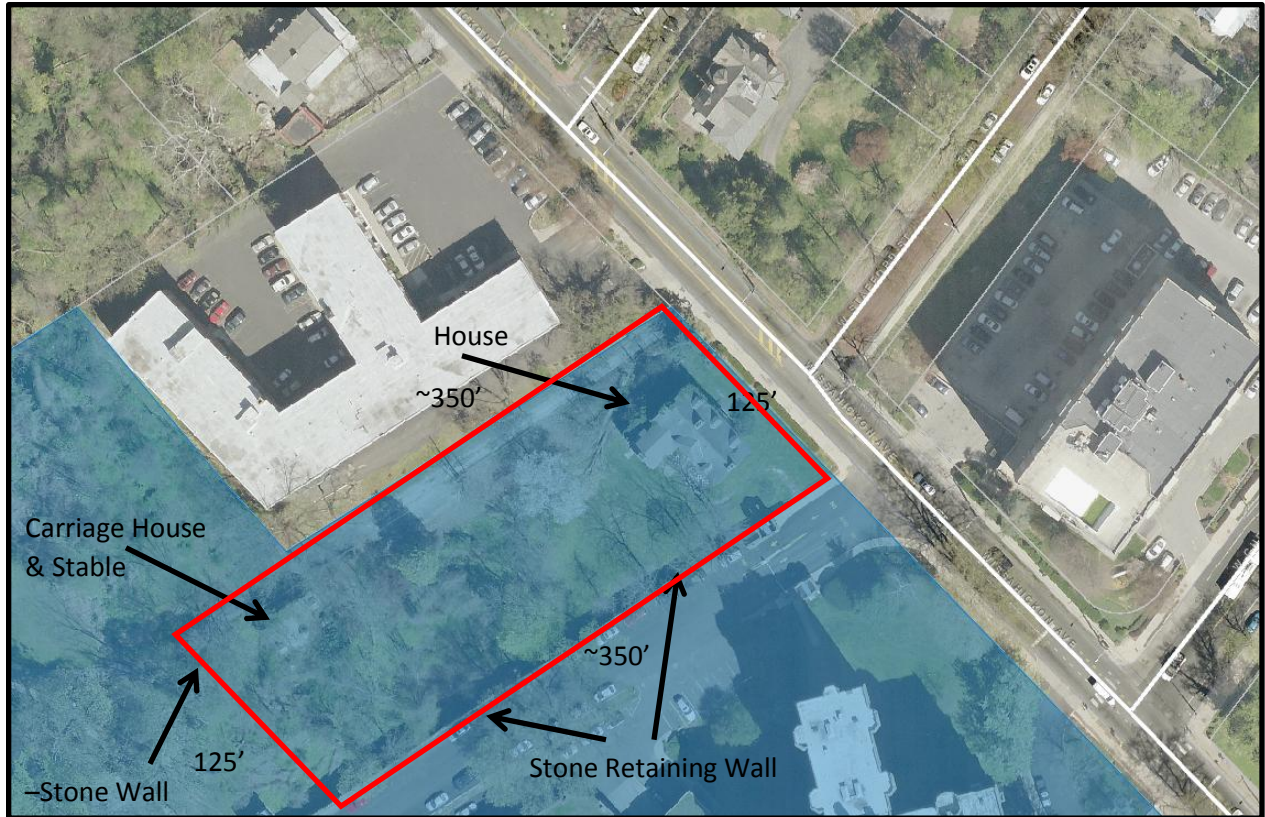
5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the resource encompasses a rectangular portion of a larger parcel located at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue. Beginning at a point 994' 3½" to the northwest from the juncture of Wissahickon Avenue and School House Lane, the boundary extends southwest 350' 11¾" to a point where it turns northwest and runs for 125.' The boundary then turns northeast and runs for 350' 11¾" to Wissahickon Avenue, where it turns southeast and extends in front or breadth along Wissahickon Avenue for 125.'

The boundary of the resource is limited to the original boundaries of the parcel conveyed by Justus Strawbridge to Francis R. Strawbridge, dating 18 July 1905 in deed book W.S.V. 479, page 519, and containing a 2.5-story stone house and detached carriage house/garage. The parcel was sold in 1957, along with several other parcels, by the trustees of the will of Herman C. Rumpp to Alden Park Corporation, and described as "Premises E" in deed book C.A.B. 653, page 151. The former Parcel No. 137N06-0016 was later consolidated with several other parcels into Parcel No. 137N06-0079, but retains its own Office of Property Assessment Account No. 881085405.



Above: Courtesy of the Philadelphia Parcel Explorer. Page 1: From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge. Courtesy of Francis R. Strawbridge, III and Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.



Above: Courtesy of the Philadelphia Parcel Explorer.

6. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, Francis R. Strawbridge commissioned the notable Philadelphia architecture firm of Brockie & Hastings to design a residence at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue. Constructed entirely of Wissahickon schist stone in 1905-06, the two-and-a-half story house stands as a fine example of the Colonial Revival style. The house is organized in three distinct sections: the main block, the rear addition, and a small side addition. The house is set close to Wissahickon Avenue, giving a strong Colonial and/or Federal-period appearance. Towards the rear of the parcel is a carriage house and stable, constructed at the same time as the house. The Alden Park Apartments are located immediately to the east, which has been the case since the first half of the twentieth century, upon the former estate of Justus C. Strawbridge. With the exception of a few mid-century and more modern apartment houses, Wissahickon Avenue has a strong representation of its historic past through the early twentieth century.

The current L-shaped footprint spans five bays across the primary, northeast elevation of the main block. The central entrance, accessed from a short stair landing of granite slabs, is framed by a pair of fluted Tuscan columns that support a pair of ornamental scrolled brackets and a pediment above. Immediately flanking each entrance column is a narrow, four-over-four wooden sash window. Larger eight-over-eight wooden sash windows occur beyond on both sides at the first-floor level. Above, at the second-floor level, four separate six-over-six wooden sash windows balance a larger central tripartite aperture, consisting of a six-over-six wooden sash window that is immediately flanked by a narrow two-over-two wooden sash window on each side, forming a mullion window. Each window aperture is embellished by a similar stone jack arch. A dentiled cornice formally transitions between the prominent stone exterior to the roofline above. Peering from the roof are three distinguished dormers. Each dormer features an arched, double-hung, multi-light wooden sash window that is formalized by a broken pediment above. Interspersed among the three high-styled dormers are three heavy stone chimneys that also peer above the roofline, though the chimneys do not quite adhere to the same strict rules of symmetry as demonstrated by the rest of the house.

The southeast elevation of the main block is characterized by a fenestration of two window bays that balance a tapering stone chimney. The first- and second-floor windows consist of six-over-six wooden sashes, with stone jack arches formally defining the openings above. The smaller four-over-four sash windows of the upper gable section cling tighter to the chimney with respect to spacing than their counterparts below. The side gable itself is outlined by a dentiled broken pediment cornice.

The northwest elevation of the main block is mostly similar to the southeast for the first two bays. Again, there are two separate six-over-six wooden sash windows at both the first- and second-floor levels, with the smaller four-over-four wooden sash windows spaced closer together in the upper gable section above. There is also a dentiled broken pediment cornice here. The only difference is that there is not a central stone chimney running between the first two window bays here. A third bay is wedged in at both the first- and second-floor levels on the right side, located slightly higher than the neighboring bays

towards the front of the house. Additionally, the northwest elevation also has a somewhat curious one-story-and-basement addition known as the northwest addition, appending in a single-room configuration with gable end in the form of a gambrel. (hence resulting in the overall L-Shaped footprint). To the south of the northwest elevation of the main block is the rear addition, which becomes a continuation of the northwest elevation.

The southwest elevation features the projecting wing to the south, featuring a gable end in the form of a gambrel and at the southwest elevation, while the main block is recessed further back. Both elevations of this facade bear similar fenestrations to the remainder of the building, but this, the rear elevation, has a slightly different configuration. Along the elevation are two window bays that balance a tapering stone chimney. The six window fenestrations here are currently shuttered with plywood. Each fenestration features the familiar stone jack arch. The rear addition also features a lone dormer window, facing the interior "L" space. The dormer window fenestration is also shuttered with plywood, while its simple shed roof above is supported by exposed rafters, breaking away from the Colonial Revival style, showing the Craftsman influence of the period. Along the rear of the main block, two central bays rise to a full three stories in height, topped with its own hipped roof section. This central hipped-roof extension almost appears to be Italianate inspired, compared to the rest of the house. The remaining southwest elevation bay on the right observes the regular two-and-a-half-story height configuration of the primary façade, with a similar dentiled cornice marking the transition between the main stone body exterior and the shingled roof. A single dormer peers above the roofline on the right, this one similar to the Colonial Revival style dormers described along the front façade. All roof sections appear to be finished in asphalt shingles.



Looking southeast, Circa 1905-06. From the Scrapbook of Francis R. Strawbridge, II.
Courtesy of Francis R. Strawbridge, III.



Looking southeast.



Looking southwest.



Looking southeast.



Looking southwest.



Looking east.



Looking southeast.



Looking south.



Looking southwest.



Looking northeast.



Looking northwest. From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Francis R. Strawbridge, III and Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.



Looking northwest.



Looking northwest.



Looking northwest.

6. BUILDING DESCRIPTION CONTINUED – Carriage House and Stable

Part of the Francis R. Strawbridge House at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, the Carriage House and Stable is located to the southeast of the house with a strong sense of physical separation, distinguishing the building from garages of the period. Also designed by Brockie and Hastings and then constructed by Stacy Reeves & Sons, the Carriage House and Stable is a one-and-one-half-story building of load-bearing, stone masonry construction. The building is dominated by its heavy half-, second-story, which is articulated in the form of gambrel roof, which includes a small attic level at the top and originally had a cupola at the center of the roofline. However, the condition of the building is poor due to deferred maintenance of the current owners.

The primary, northeast elevation is centered on a vehicle entrance, which retains ruins of the original, large wooden doors, typical of such entrances of this period. Set within a wide arched aperture, the extant doors are two-part with a multi-light window at the top and paneling at the bottom. Guarding the stone, bollards are featured at the base of each corner of the entrance, which were cast in iron by the William Adams Foundry Company, formerly of 960 North 9th Street, Philadelphia. Flanking the doors are two apertures of equal size, which retain cast iron grills and are shuttered beneath with plywood. At the roofline of this elevation the coursing of the stonework is interrupted by crude stonework, which illustrates the location of the former projecting, side gable porch that served as both covered entrance and verandah, attached at the top of the stonewall and slopping downward from the gambrel roof. Within the original roof were three dormers; however, these appear to have deteriorated.

The northwest elevation features the side gable in the form of a massive gambrel. This elevation features four apertures of shuttered windows at the ground floor and two apertures of the same within the half-story, which are centered upon a large aperture for loading and unload. The apertures within the half-story are not shuttered and feature six-over-six wooden sash windows. All of the apertures are treated with the same lintels as found within the elevations of the house; however, the large central aperture within the half-story maintains a dramatic arch. A heavy chimney may or may not be present within this elevation.

The southeast elevation features the same type of fenestration, which is obscured by vegetation; however, there are only two windows present at the northeast extreme of the first floor, as the southwest extreme features three sets of two apertures within the stone façade for ventilation at a height typical of those designed for occupation of horses.

The southwest elevation is heavily obscured by vegetation. However, the roof of the half-story, side-gambrel is visible and appears to be intact. Two of three of the dormers are certainly present. This part of the building still features a slate roof.



Looking west. From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoades.



Looking northeast.



Looking southeast.



Looking east.



Looking west (façade of Carriage House).



Looking southwest.



Looking southwest.



Looking southwest.



Looking east (basement entrance).

6. BUILDING DESCRIPTION CONTINUED – Stone Walls within the Grounds



Set upon a long and narrow lot, the Francis R. Strawbridge House is situated upon a sloping terrain that declines in elevation to the southwest of the house, and, at current, the portion of the parcel occupied by the Alden Park Apartment Houses is elevated by up to ten feet at the highest point. The elevation is retained from the subject parcel by a wall of Wissahickon Schist of varying heights from one end of the parcel to the other. A free standing stonewall runs along the rear line of the subject parcel, despite its current connection to that of Alden Park.

Looking northwest from the rear of the lot through the garden.
Courtesy Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoades.



Looking east (stone wall at rear of parcel).

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

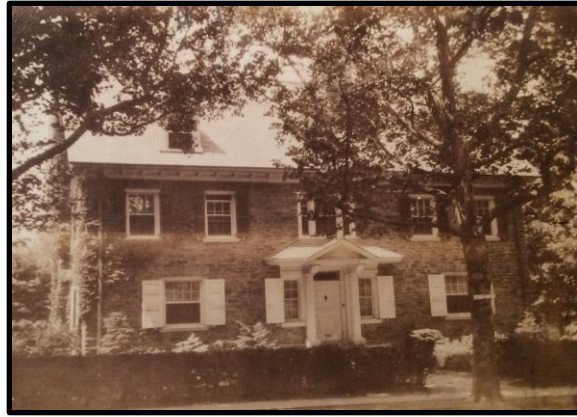
The Francis R. Strawbridge House located at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building satisfies Criteria for Designation a, d, and e of Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code. The building:

(a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past,

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen,

(e) Is the work of designer, architect, landscape architect, or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation,

The Francis R. Strawbridge House at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue was constructed in 1905-06, and is significant as an intact example of a Brockie & Hastings interpretation of the Colonial Revival style, as well as being a fine example of the Georgian tradition of architecture in Philadelphia at-large and, specifically, in Germantown. The house is also significant for its association with its first owner, the son of Justus C. Strawbridge, co-founder of Strawbridge & Clothier—Francis R. Strawbridge, who also played an important role in the evolution of the family business during the early twentieth century. Due to its connection with Francis Reeves Strawbridge, the house was incidentally the birthplace of all of his children, including, most importantly, G. Stockton Strawbridge, the most eminent of the Strawbridges of Philadelphia in recent history. Furthermore, the juncture of School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue is one that was long associated with the Strawbridge family. Now the site of the Alden Park Apartments, the land to the west of the juncture of School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue was once home to the sizable estate and mansion of Justus C. Strawbridge and, later, his son Frederick Strawbridge, as well as two of the homes of Francis R. Strawbridge. While the vast majority of the buildings associated with the Strawbridge family in Germantown have been lost, the subject property remains as the last intact vestige of the Strawbridge legacy in the Germantown neighborhood.



Courtesy Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Criteria D and E: Constructed in 1905-06, the Francis R. Strawbridge House at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue was designed by the prominent Philadelphia architectural firm, Brockie & Hastings, and is a high style example of the firm's commitment to Philadelphia's Georgian tradition of architecture and the Colonial Revival style—and, specifically, how that style was articulated and honored in Germantown by an Old Philadelphia family.

Responding to the greater context of Germantown, the Francis R. Strawbridge House at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue is set immediately upon Wissahickon Avenue, recessed only for inclusion of a small front yard, the house is a high style example of the Colonial Revival as designed by Brockie and Hastings in 1905-06 and thereafter constructed by Stacy Reeves & Sons. Even within knowledge of the prominent architectural firm as its designers, the house is furthermore a fine example of Philadelphia's Georgian tradition of architecture, as applied to revivalist houses in Philadelphia at-large and, specifically, in Germantown. Designing the house for both Francis R. and Anna Estes Strawbridge, Brockie and Hasting certainly understood the deeply rooted familial connections to Germantown and Old Philadelphia, and the design of this house reflects Philadelphia taste of the age, including the above-referenced stylistic elements. While not a component of the nomination, the interior finishes were tacitly executed by the architects to suit the Quaker aesthetic that was in comportment with this family of Old Philadelphia Friends.

Georgian and Colonial Revival Styles in Philadelphia

The Colonial Revival style, well established in Philadelphia and nationwide as a result of the influence of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 and the 1893 World's Columbian exposition in Chicago, looked back for inspiration to the Georgian and Federal architecture of America's founding period. By the early years of the twentieth century, the rather free interpretation of the Colonial Revival had given way to a more exacting study and duplication of early American buildings. Design elements such as façade symmetry, pedimented entrances, fanlights and sidelights surrounding doors, and the use of dormers were translated and sometimes copied from earlier prototypes, but often on a grander scale than their predecessors.

While the stylistic movement described certainly was a national trend in the post-Centennial period, it was especially popular in Philadelphia, and particularly among the city's old families. These Old Philadelphians invoked their own standards in their finest moments, adhering to age-old Philadelphia taste and tradition in architectural expression, particularly in Germantown.

During this period, many new houses in Germantown were designed to pay homage to their Georgian architectural antecedents; however, beyond that, some projects emulated certain, specific buildings that were significant to their family's heritage. For example, Spencer Roberts designed a large house for Benjamin F. Dewees, who was married to his relative Elizabeth Roberts.¹ Located on Church Lane, the house was completed the early twentieth century and strongly emulated the period Spencer Roberts Mansion, which had been demolished a few decades earlier. The well-known architect and tastemaker, Mantle Fielding, nearly broke the mold when he purchased the barn at Wyck and converted it into a fanciful dwelling for himself and his family, which was certainly not common at all in that period.² The subject house commands a colonial presence in its stately, constrained form and bearing; however, more importantly, its placement at the front of the lot by the street is a method of situation that pays homage to another older Germantown building tradition and breaks the Victorian tradition of the suburban house set back in the lot.

Among Brockie and Hastings' most sophisticated commissions in the Colonial Revival style were homes for Benjamin F. Pepper in Chestnut Hill (1910); for J. S. Arndt in Ardmore (1908); for Joshua Howell in Chestnut Hill (1908); and for Francis R. and Anna H. Strawbridge on Wissahickon Avenue (1906). The Arndt and Howell houses were the subject of photo-essays in the *American Architect and Buildings News* at the time of their completion.³

¹ *The Eighteenth Architectural Exhibition Given by the Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects and the T Square Club April 14th to May 5th, 1912* (Philadelphia: John Molitor, 1912), 47.

² Mabel Tuke Priestman, *Artistic Homes* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910): 7-18.

³ Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), 89-91; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Colonial Revival Style, 1880-1960," accessed June 15, 2015, [http://portal.state.pa.us](http://portal.state.pa.us;); *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Brockie & Hastings (fl. 1903-1919)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed June 15, 2015, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24037 (hereafter *PAB*, "Brockie & Hastings," by Tatman); *American Architect and Building News* 94 (Nov. 11, 1908), n.p.



Entrance to 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, Circa 1905-06.
From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoades.

Brockie and Hastings

The architectural practice of Brockie and Hastings was among Philadelphia's most prominent at the turn of the 20th century. Best known for suburban residences in Germantown, Chestnut Hill and the Main Line, Brockie and Hastings also produced high-profile institutional and commercial designs, in particular hospitals and banks.⁴

Arthur Howell Brockie (1875-1946) was a native of Germantown, attended Germantown Academy and received his B.S. in architecture in 1895 from the newly-established program at the University of Pennsylvania. Early recognition of his abilities in design and draftsmanship came via a prize membership to the T-Square Club in 1893. Upon graduation from Penn, he was hired as a draftsman by the prestigious firm of Cope and Stewardson, a position he retained until volunteering to serve in the Spanish-American War. He briefly returned to Cope and Stewardson in 1898, but the following year he won the John Stewardson Memorial Scholarship, which enabled him to embark upon a sketching tour of England, Europe, and four months of study at the American Academy in Rome. His prize-winning design, "A School of Architecture with a Museum of Architectural Casts" and a selection of his tour sketches were published in the AIA/T-Square Club Yearbook in 1899 (p. 115) and 1900 (p. 131).⁵

His studies completed, Brockie returned to Philadelphia and established his own architectural practice in 1903, where he was soon joined by T. Mitchell Hastings, thus forming the firm of Brockie and Hastings. In addition to the T-Square Club, Brockie was a member of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and both the local and national chapters of the AIA. He was elected a Fellow of the AIA in 1931, an honor bestowed on AIA member architects who have made outstanding contributions to the profession through design excellence.⁶

Theodore Mitchell Hastings (1876-1950) was also a native Philadelphian. He was educated at St. Paul's School in New Hampshire and received his B.S. in architecture from Harvard University in 1898. Following five months of study at the Atelier Lambert in Paris, he acquired two years of office training in the architectural practice of one of Philadelphia's best known senior architects of the day, Theophilus Parsons Chandler. After joining Brockie's practice in 1903, Brockie and Hastings quickly rose to local prominence and the partnership remained active until Hastings departed to serve in World War I. The partnership was dissolved shortly after Hastings returned from war service, and in 1919 he moved to Santa Barbara, California where he was affiliated with the practice of Soule,

⁴ James B. Garrison, *Houses of Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill and the Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930* (New York: Acanthus Press, 2008), 293.

⁵ Reproduced online in *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Brockie, Arthur Howell (1875-1946)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed June 15, 2015, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24038 (hereafter *PAB*, "Brockie," by Tatman).

⁶ *PAB*, "Brockie," by Tatman

Murphy, and Hastings. Inheriting a large fortune, Hastings retired in 1925 and devoted himself for the rest of his life to water color painting.⁷

Brockie and Hastings, and Brockie's solo practice after 1918, made a significant contribution to Philadelphia's built environment with numerous institutional, educational, commercial, and residential projects. Of their institutional commissions, hospitals were among the most important, examples being the Rush Hospital for Consumptive and Allied Diseases at 33rd St. and Lancaster Ave., currently the Rush Building of Drexel University; the Dorrance Memorial Pavilion at Cooper Hospital in Camden; and a series of major hospitals for the University of Pennsylvania. The design of the Penn hospital projects were intended to harmonize with Jacobean Revival structures nearby, such as the earlier dormitory complex by Cope and Stewardson. Among the hospitals constructed were the Maternity Building, Surgical Building and Building for Contagious Diseases. The earliest, the J. William White Memorial Building, is still in use and displays Jacobean influence in the exterior strapwork, the projecting balcony of the 6th story, and the vestigial towers of the façade.⁸

Other educational commissions undertaken by Brockie and Hastings included Cheltenham High School in Elkins Park and Penn's Valley School in Trevose. The variety of the firm's institutional work is reflected in their designs for the Bird House and Reptile House at the Philadelphia Zoo and the Sedgely Club house on Boathouse Row in Fairmount Park. The latter, built for a women's bicycling and canoeing club, surrounds and incorporates the 1887 Turtle Rock Lighthouse and is prominently located and highly visible from Kelly Drive.⁹

Banks formed the centerpiece of Brockie and Hastings' commercial work. Primarily designed in the Georgian or Colonial Revival styles, examples included several located on Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill, near many of their residential commissions, lending an air of financial dignity and stability to the main shopping street of the upscale suburb. The Germantown Ave. banks included the Chestnut Hill Title and Trust, Germantown Real Estate, Deposit and Trust, and the Germantown Trust Company.¹⁰

While highly successful with their institutional and commercial projects, Brockie and Hastings' reputation rested primarily on their residential work and continues to do so today. The firm was among a small, select group of well-connected architects specializing in historic revival houses for wealthy and socially prominent Philadelphians. As was true of their peers, who included Mantle Fielding (1865-1941), Robert R. McGoodwin (1886-

⁷ PAB, "Brockie & Hastings," by Tatman; *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Hastings, Theodore Mitchell (1876-1950)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed June 15, 2015, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22169.

⁸ PAB, "Brockie & Hastings," by Tatman; George E. Thomas and David Brownlee, *Building America's First University, An Historical and Architectural Guide to the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) p. 250-252; George E. Thomas, *University of Pennsylvania, The Campus Guide* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press) 2002, pp. 114-115.

⁹ PAB, "Brockie & Hastings," by Tatman

¹⁰ PAB, "Brockie & Hastings," by Tatman.

1967), D. Knickerbacker Boyd (1874-1944), and R. Brognard Okie (1875-1945), Brockie and Hastings were adept at interpreting a variety of historic styles, but their forte was the Elizabethan/Jacobean and, especially, the Colonial Revival styles.

Criteria D and E Conclusion. Historical significance sufficient to fulfill both Criteria D and E have been described above with regard to the architectural significance of the building in its own right and through its associations with an eminent architectural firm of the period.



Winter Views of the Francis R. Strawbridge House

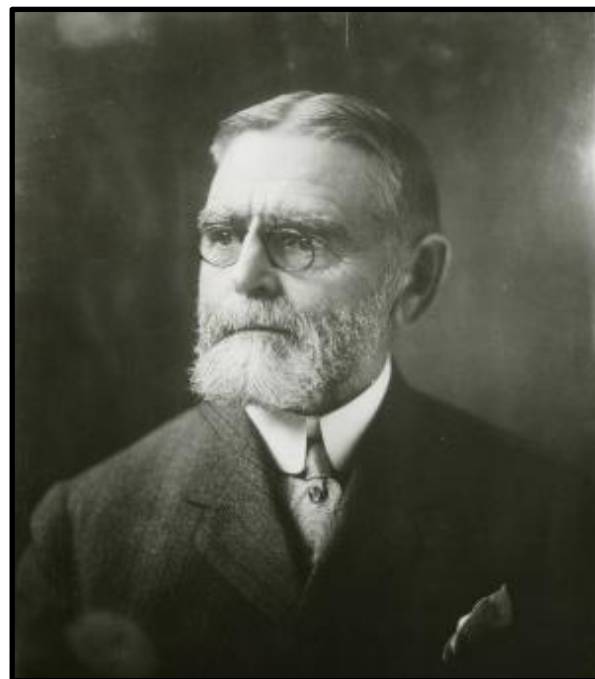


**From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Marianne “Nancy” Dawson Shipley Rhoads.**

Criterion A: The Francis R. Strawbridge House at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue has significant character, interest or value for its association with the life of its first owner, Francis R. Strawbridge, the son of Justus C. Strawbridge, co-founder of Strawbridge & Clothier. Francis R. Strawbridge played an important role in the evolution of the family business during the early twentieth century. Due to its connection with Francis R. Strawbridge, the house was incidentally the birthplace of all of his children, including, most importantly, G. Stockton Strawbridge, the most eminent of the Philadelphia Strawbridges in recent history.

Built on a small parcel subdivided from Justus C. Strawbridge's larger estate, which extended from School House Lane to West Stafford Street, the high-style Colonial Revival residence is an important architectural landmark in the community, as the last vestige of the former Strawbridge estate that once dominated roughly thirty-eight acres of land at the southwest corner Wissahickon Avenue and School House Lane in Germantown.

The Strawbridge Family of Strawbridge & Clothier



Founder of Strawbridge & Clothier, Justus Clayton Strawbridge.
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The surname Strawbridge has long and deep associations with the mercantile history of Philadelphia, dating as far back as the late eighteenth century. However, the branch of the family from which Francis R. Strawbridge was descended initially settled in what is now Columbia County, Pennsylvania. The son of Dr. George F. Strawbridge and Hannah (Ann) Zelly, Justus Clayton Strawbridge (1838-1911), was born on January 11, 1838 in Maiden

Creek, near Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania. After the death of his father, his widowed mother moved the family back to her native Philadelphia.¹¹

At the age of sixteen, Justus C. Strawbridge entered a wholesale silk house at a salary of fifty dollars per year, and it did not take him long to form an understanding of retail merchandising as a business.¹² By 1860, it is said that Justus C. Strawbridge was operating a small store in Philadelphia.¹³ Through his business dealings, Justus C. Strawbridge befriended Isaac H. Clothier (1837-1921), a fellow Quaker and then a representative of a cloth wholesaler. In 1862, the two joined forces to establish Strawbridge & Clothier, which would become one of the most eminent dry goods stores in America, as well as one of the longest-lived commercial fronts in Philadelphia. The store remained, and expanded, at its early location at 8th and Market Streets until 2006. The next year he married Mary Lukens on April 7, 1863 at the North Meeting House in Northern Liberties.¹⁴ By 1870, things were already going well, as Justus C. Strawbridge was projected to be worth \$20,000 in real estate and \$40,000 in personal estate (equivalent to approximately \$350,000 and \$700,000 today). At this time, he, his wife Mary Lukens, and their two sons, Edward R. (1865-1903) and Frederick H. (1866-1958) were living in a private house on McKean Avenue in Germantown in the 22nd Ward with two domestic servants and coachman.¹⁵ The couple would go on to have three more sons, Robert E. (1871-1963), William J. (1873-1911), and Francis R. Strawbridge (1876-1965).

Between 1870 and 1900, Strawbridge & Clothier became a Philadelphia institution. The success of Strawbridge & Clothier enabled Justus C. Strawbridge to purchase “Torworth,” the 38+ acre estate of J. Vaughn Merrick, at the corner of School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue.¹⁶ Strawbridge immediately commissioned prominent local architect Addison Hutton to make extensive alterations to the existing two-story Georgian house. Describing the house to her children, Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall wrote that Hutton “kept the

¹¹ *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians* (Philadelphia: The North American, 1891), 198–99; Ancestry.com. *U.S. Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014).

¹² No. 23907, January 5, 1889, *Passport Applications, 1795–1905* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1372, roll 318); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

¹³ *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians*, 198–99.

¹⁴ Marriage Certificate Book B, 1836-1907, p. 194, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Northern District, Records, in Ancestry.com. *U.S. Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014).

¹⁵ Justus Strawbridge; p. 16 (stamped), line 23, 71st Division, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia (first enumeration), Pennsylvania Census of Population; *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, roll 1408); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, NARA. And G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1871), plate 12. He purchased the house in 1869 and sold in 1886 (Plan 47N4, Plot 1, Title Registration Sheets, Board of Surveyors Registry Office Records, Record Group 90.10, CAP [hereafter Title Registration Sheets, CAP]).

¹⁶ Deed: J. Vaughan Merrick and William H. Merrick, surviving devisees in trust of the will of Sarah Merrick, widow of Samuel V. Merrick, and Laura T. Merrick, singlewoman, to Justus C. Strawbridge, city, merchant, for 21 acres 37.45 perches, 1 April 1885, Deed Book G.G.P., No. 3, p. 557, City Archives of Philadelphia (hereafter CAP); Entry for June 10, 1886, Diary 1886, Cornelius Nolan Weygandt Diaries and Papers, 1859-1907, UPT50 W547, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania. Interestingly today, as well as to Justus C. Strawbridge, the land that he purchased from the J. Vaughn Merrick Estate had been the exact same size since for one-hundred and seventy-five years, a fact Justus C. Strawbridge informed Edward Costley Jellett for his book *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners* in 1908. Edwin Costley Jellett, *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners* (Philadelphia: H.F. McCann, 1914), 74.

four standing walls and added to it in height and breadth, redecorating the inside, and making what was to us a very attractive home.”¹⁷



Torworth, the Mansion of Justus C. Strawbridge.¹⁸

In 1900, Justus C. Strawbridge retired, his sons taking over his part of the business.¹⁹ With several homes for use in various times throughout the year, Justice C. Strawbridge had built a residence in Thomasville, Georgia, and it was there that he died of apoplexy on March 27, 1911 at the age of 73. He was buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery.²⁰

Upon his father's death, Frederick Strawbridge, the oldest surviving Strawbridge son, took over Torworth, where he resided until 1937, at which time he removed to "Oakley" at 500 West Moreland Avenue in Chestnut Hill. At the removal of the Strawbridges, Alden Park Apartments took over Torworth and the house was eventually used as the Alden Park Inn, along with other uses over the years. Torworth burned in 1979 and is no longer extant.

Strawbridge & Clothier, which was administered and operated largely by family members until it was sold to the May Company in 1996, was known for its acute fashion sense and innovative marketing practices, which included the establishment of a radio station and one of the country's first suburban branches.²¹ The Strawbridges and the Clothiers were important figures for decades in Philadelphia's business, social, and cultural spheres. The well-known department store remained at 8th and Market Streets until the business closed in 2006.²²

¹⁷ Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall, *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916* (Philadelphia: Associated Press, 1974), 56. Cornelius N. Weygandt describes the home on a visit in 1886 as "an almost entirely new house, on the site of the old Merrick abode; which is very large and comfortable looking inside, and as is said by ten newspapers, is quite 'replete with every convenience!'" (Weygandt Diaries, UARC).

¹⁸ Lewis, *American Country Houses of the Gilded Age*.

¹⁹ *American Friend*, 17 (1910) and 18 (1911)

²⁰ Buried in lot 316-317; Kirk & Nice Funeral Home Record Books, Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985* [database on-line] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011).

²¹ "Strawbridge & Clothier Is Officially Sold to May: A Philadelphia Institution Ends," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 16, 1996.

²² "Strawbridge Flagship Site Sold," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 19, 2006. The building at 801 Market Street still stands, and has been repurposed as a Century 21 store. It was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2006.



Market Street From Eighth, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Note: Strawbridge & Clothier is immediately on right, taking up nearly half the block from the corner. The building is extant. Courtesy the Library of Congress.²³

Francis Reeves Strawbridge

No matter who you were at Strawbridge & Clothier, even if you were a member of one of the families, there was no guaranteed or immediate entre to retail management and guaranteed success. Members of the family still had to pay their dues, and work their way up through the ranks, in keeping with the Quaker value of hard work. Nevertheless, many of Justus C. Strawbridge's descendants chose to work in the family, even if it led to early retirement.²⁴

My Uncle Frederick was a director, but he was the oldest child. He was first in charge of deliveries, perhaps the wagons. My father [Francis R. Strawbridge] worked for his brother. He was in charge of the horses [used for deliveries].²⁵

According to Francis R. Strawbridge, III, his grandfather started at the bottom, and, like all family members interested in entering the retail business, was required to work at another retail house for at least one year prior to entering Strawbridge & Clothier.²⁶ Since Francis R. Strawbridge loved horses (an aspect of his preferred country living), it is fitting that his early task in the family business was the care of the horses.

²³ Detroit Publishing Co., photographer. "[Market Street from Eighth, Philadelphia, Pa., Circa 1904]" Photograph. Washington, D.C.: Detroit Publishing Co. From Library of Congress: *Detroit Publishing Company*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/det1994000791/PP/> (accessed June 19, 2015).

²⁴ Francis Reeves Strawbridge, III, interview by Oscar Beisert, Philadelphia, June 18, 2015.

²⁵ Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads (daughter of Francis R. Strawbridge, II), interview by Oscar Beisert, Gwynedd, Pa., June 18, 2015.

²⁶ Francis Reeves Strawbridge, III, interview, 2015.



Taken around 1905, this photograph portrays Francis R. and Anna Estes Hacker Strawbridge. From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge. Courtesy of Marianne “Nancy” Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

Francis Reeves Strawbridge (1877-1965) was born in Germantown to Justus Clayton Strawbridge and Mary Lukens, attending Germantown Friends School and graduating from Haverford College in 1898. Like his father, he was active in social, civic, and charitable affairs, as was his wife, nee Anna Estes Hacker, who he married on April 30, 1902 at the Quaker Meeting House in Burlington, New Jersey. Anna Estes Hacker was the daughter J. Barclay and Mary P. Hacker, then members of the Evesham Monthly Meeting in New Jersey.²⁷ Their first house was at 646 Westview Street in Mount Airy, which they moved into immediately after their marriage.

By early 1905, Francis R. and Anna E. Strawbridge had commissioned the eminent architectural firm of Brockie and Hastings to design the Francis R. Strawbridge House, Carriage House and Stable. In July of that year, Francis’ father carved out a section of the “Torworth” property for Francis’ new house and gave him title to the property.²⁸ The house was constructed between 1905 and 1906 by Stacy Reeves & Sons, a Quaker company perhaps known to the Strawbridges through their Quaker connections.²⁹

²⁷ *Swarthmore, Quaker Meeting Records*. Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

²⁸ Deed: Justus C. Strawbridge, gentleman, and Abby H., his wife, to Francis R. Strawbridge, 18 July 1905, Deed Book, W.S.V., No. 479, p. 519, CAP.

²⁹ Permit No. 2007 of 1905, April 8, 1905, Philadelphia Building Permits, CAP. Like Francis’ mother Mary, the founder of Stacy Reeves & Sons was a New Jersey Quaker.



Francis R. Strawbridge Family at Thornton Cottage, Jamestown, Rhode Island including Francis, Francis, II, Anna E., Mary, and Elisabeth Strawbridge. From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge. Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

It was while living at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue that Francis Strawbridge made some of his greatest achievements, both professionally and personally. In 1908, ten years after graduating from Haverford College and after having served in lower-level positions, Francis R. Strawbridge was made a partner in the family business, finally having proved himself worthy of partnership. He joined ranks with his older brothers Robert and Frederick, along with Morris and Isaac Clothier, a journal article noting that he had been "identified with the business for some years," and had shown "exceptionable ability."³⁰ By 1922, Francis would be made Vice President and Secretary of the company.³¹

³⁰ "Francis R. Strawbridge in Firm," *American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, 10 January 1908.

³¹ *Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corporation Securities* (New York: Moody Manual Company, 1922) 2: 1110.

In addition to his successes in the workplace, while residing at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, the Strawbridges welcomed five children:

1. Mary Dawson Strawbridge (born: February 8, 1906)
2. Estes Strawbridge (born: April 25, 1908; died: April 25, 1908)
3. Elisabeth Hacker Strawbridge (born: February 2, 1910)
4. Francis Reeves Strawbridge, Jr. (born: January 12, 1911)
5. George Stockton Strawbridge (born: December 17, 1913)³²



Rear view of the Francis R. Strawbridge House (left). Façade view of the Carriage House and Stable (right). From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Lukens Strawbridge. Courtesy of Marianne “Nancy” Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

With his expanded family and steady position of authority in the company, Francis R. Strawbridge purchased the nearby estate of Edward T. Steele, called “Woodside,” in 1917 and removed from 5710 Wissahickon Avenue.³³ The Strawbridges sold their home at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue the following year to Ida W. and Herman C. Rumpp, President and Director of C.F. Rumpp & Sons, a fine leather goods company.³⁴

Located at 3001 School House Lane, and separated from Justus Strawbridge’s Torworth estate by only one other parcel, Woodside would have been well-known to Francis Strawbridge. Built originally as an Italianate mansion, Woodside had been modified in 1875 when Steele commissioned architect Addison Hutton to make “alterations and additions” to the home to reflect a Victorian influence of style and taste. Hutton’s work on Woodside may have inspired Justus Strawbridge to make alterations to Torworth a decade later.

³² Weddings announcements, newspaper clippings, letters and notes concerning the Strawbridge family of Philadelphia, Pa., Family Collections, FC st, HSP.

³³ Plan 136N6, Plot 21, Title Registration Sheets, CAP.

³⁴ Deed: Francis R. Strawbridge to Herman C. Rumpp, 20 June 1918, Philadelphia City deed book J.M.H. 343, p. 396.



"Woodside," School House Lane, Germantown. Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

Francis Strawbridge retired in the 1930s, splitting his time between Woodside and his farm in Montgomery County, "Ship Road." Both Francis R. and Anna E. Strawbridge lived out their entire lives at Woodside, Francis passing away in 1965 at the age of 88, and Anna Estes Hacker Strawbridge living until 1980, when she was nearly 101 years old.

Anna Estes Hacker Strawbridge. Descended from some of Philadelphia's oldest families, Anna Estes Hacker Strawbridge, like her husband, was active in the management of the family business, remaining so well into her nineties. A celebrated grande dame of Philadelphia society, she lived to be 100 years old (1880-1980) and was featured often in the Philadelphia press, recognized for her many charitable undertakings, ranging from the United Way, Germantown Hospital to the Morton Street Day Nursery, the Welcome Society and the Germantown School Committee.³⁵

George Stockton Strawbridge. The son of Francis R. and Anna E. Strawbridge, G. Stockton Strawbridge was born on December 17, 1913 at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue. Known simply as "Stock," he would go on to be one of the most important members of the Strawbridge family in the twentieth century, expanding Strawbridge & Clothier during his time as President of the company.

³⁵ "Francis R. Strawbridge Dies in Germantown at 88," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, May 11, 1965; Mary-Virginia Geyelin, "Society Honors Mrs. Strawbridge," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, November 2, 1977; Burr Van Atta, "A. Strawbridge, Family Matriarch," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 7, 1980; "Anna Strawbridge, Kin of Co-Founder of Store, Dies at 100," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, January 7, 1980.



Both views show the children of Francis R. Strawbridge, with G. Stockton Strawbridge at center.
From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Lukens Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

CONCLUSION

For nearly 100 years, from 1885-1980, and on three different parcels, the Strawbridge family occupied the land to the west of the intersection of School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue. Justus C. Strawbridge, founder of Strawbridge & Clothier established his familial home at Toworth in 1885, carving out a portion of his lot for his youngest son Francis in 1905. Although Francis and his family relocated to the nearby Woodside estate in 1917, 5710 Wissahickon Avenue was his residence during some of his most important years personally and professionally. While Torworth and Woodside have both been demolished for over thirty years, the Francis R. Strawbridge house at 5710 Wissahickon remains as one of the last physical reminders of the Strawbridge legacy in Germantown. In addition to its association with an important Philadelphia family, the house, as well as its period carriage house and stable and stone wall features, are significant as a fine example of a Brockie & Hastings interpretation of the Colonial Revival style, and of the Georgian tradition of architecture in Philadelphia at-large and, specifically, in Germantown.

Interior Views of the Francis R. Strawbridge House



From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

Interior Views of the Francis R. Strawbridge House



From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

Interior Views of the Francis R. Strawbridge House



From the Scrapbooks of Anna Estes Strawbridge.
Courtesy of Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads.

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Contributors.

Upon hearing about plans that may include the demolition of this historic property, this nomination was assembled to reinforce the significance of the building listed in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue. The nomination is submitted by a group of concerned citizens, including the following contributors:

Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist

J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian

Sam Streit, Retired Librarian and Historian

Kate Stojasavljevic, Architectural Historian

The information provided to Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian, by Francis R. Strawbridge, III, and Marianne "Nancy" Dawson Shipley Rhoads was invaluable in underlining the important architectural beauty of the building through the period photographs when the building was in perfect repair.

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