

**United States Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: U.S. Mint Building at Philadelphia  
 Other names/site number: Community College of Philadelphia Mint Building  
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

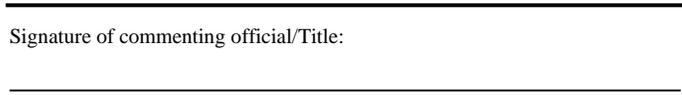
**2. Location**

Street & number: 1700 Spring Garden Street  
 City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia  
 Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
 In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
X national X statewide    local      Applicable National Register Criteria: X A    B X C    D

|   |          |
|---|----------|
|  | 4/9/2021 |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy SHPO                                 | Date     |
| <u>Pennsylvania Historical &amp; Museum Commission</u>                              |          |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government                                 |          |

|   |      |
|---|------|
| In my opinion, the property <u>  </u> meets <u>  </u> does not meet the National Register criteria. |      |
|                  | Date |
| Signature of commenting official/Title:   |      |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government   |      |

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

*Lisa Delina*  
 Signature of the Keeper

5/27/2021  
 Date of Action

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### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

Private:

Public-Local

Public-State

Public-Federal

#### Category of Property

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

#### Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u>     | <u>0</u>        | buildings  |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | sites      |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | structures |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | objects    |
| <u>1</u>     | <u>0</u>        | Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Government/Office; Industry/Manufacturing

**Current Functions:** Education/College

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

Category: Late Victorian

Subcategory: Renaissance Revival

### Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Granite, Concrete

### Narrative Description

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Mint at Philadelphia is a 1901 granite Renaissance Revival building, designed by William Martin Aiken, that faces Spring Garden Street. The building, which is a hollow rectangle in plan, with a cross wing in the center and two flanking interior courtyards, occupies the block created by Spring Garden Street, Sixteenth Street, Seventeenth Street, and Buttonwood Street (now vacated) (Photographs 1-3 and Figures 1-2). It is located in an urban setting that contains a mix of institutional and residential uses. Although designed largely by William Martin Aiken, the building was completed under the direction of James Knox Taylor in 1901. Aiken and Taylor held, in succession, the position of Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury. In designing the Mint, the architects employed characteristic Italian Renaissance Revival principles in the architectural detailing as well as in the hierarchy of the massing of the building. Volumetrically, the front portion comprises three stories with a raised basement. This section housed the prominent office spaces of the Mint, including the formal Board Room (historically called the Reception Room) at the interior of the balcony on the second floor. The rear volume, which is articulated as two stories with a raised basement, housed utilitarian corridors, secondary rooms, and the Mint's large manufacturing spaces (Photographs 19-20 and Figures 13-16). In 1982, the Mint (in use by that time as a community college) was enlarged with two extensive additions. One of these additions was appended to the western elevation of the Mint building via a substantial bridge connector over Seventeenth Street. The other was joined to the southern elevation of the Mint building. Both additions, which featured expanses of concrete, brick, and glass, were designed by the Kling Partnership. Offset from the building, they were conceived to complement the original design of the Mint, but are immediately identifiable as later additions. (The additions are not considered character-defining features of the property based on the period of significance pursued in this nomination.) Despite the additions, and adapted use of the building by the Community College of Philadelphia, the Mint retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. The building's overall design has been maintained and its historic building fabric, both externally and internally, remains largely intact.

#### Exterior

Like other contemporary government buildings intended to honor the history of ancient ideals and convey heaviness and the institution's power, the Renaissance Revival-style Mint utilized the Italian palazzo as its inspiration. At the edges of the property, a formidable stone wall of large cut

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granite blocks wraps the front portion of the building. The wall encloses the windowless basement level that housed vaults and other storage spaces for bullion, silver, and coins. The wall acts as plinth for the building proper, which is set back from the street edge by approximately twenty-five feet, with the basement's roof forming a terrace; the original roof openings providing natural light into the basement have been covered over. The terrace is enclosed with a stone balustrade with regularly-spaced stone piers. The central monumental front stair interrupts the enclosure with perpendicular cheeks walls that meet the balustrade on both sides of the stair. An early 1980s addition is appended to the west elevation of the front volume via a multi-floor enclosed connector over the terrace wall and Seventeenth Street (Photographs 3-4). The 1980s gray brick and glass addition, which fronts on Spring Garden Street between Seventeenth Street and Eighteenth Street, aligns with the front façade of the Mint and gradually negotiates the setback to align with the sidewalk edge nearer Eighteenth Street.

The main form of the front volume is symmetrically composed with seven bays on each side of the projecting central block and portico. The horizontal elements are expressed in palazzo style: a watertable course and large cut blocks distinguish the base of the first-floor level; rusticated stone is used for the remaining height of the first floor with metal grates on the windows; a carved string course with another course of large cut blocks lies below the second floor windows; the second and third floors have smooth ashlar block walls of smaller stone size; a large entablature with projecting cornice that incorporates modillions and dentils caps the building on all sides of both volumes; a stone balustrade tops three sides of the front portion to conceal the shallow and flat hipped roof. All wall and decorative elements are granite, including carved lion head mascarons (similar to gargoyles though not serving any drainage function) that adorn the cornice and symbolically protect the Mint building.

The central block, which is five bays wide, contains a central portico with three grand arched openings. The portico is reached by monumental granite steps that ascend from street level. The steps (which replaced original granite steps) are framed with stone cheek walls that terminate with stone piers. Each pier is adorned with paired decorative consoles. A historic photo indicates that the arched openings once had decorative paired wrought iron security gates.<sup>1</sup> At an unknown date, the openings were enclosed with paired doors and transoms and the gates were removed.<sup>2</sup> Those doors were subsequently replaced with a new set of replacement doors and transoms. The entrance vestibule, which has a vaulted ceiling, supports a recessed two-story balcony with a metal railing and a row of four fluted monumental Corinthian columns. The balcony is flanked on either side by paired pilasters on the outer bays. The openings from the Board Room onto the balcony retain the original wood casement windows and transoms (Photograph 17). All other windows have replacement sash: first-story windows are rectangular with single panes of replacement glass; the rectangular second-story windows with stone

<sup>1</sup>Franklin Davenport Edmunds, "U.S. Mint deface," undated Glass Plate Negative, Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. An undated early sketch also shows the openings with no enclosure (Castner Scrapbook vol. 8, Print and Picture Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia.) The security gates were manufactured by Flour City Ornamental Iron Works. See, *Sweet's Indexed Catalogue of Building Construction For the Year 1909*. Library of Congress photo.

<sup>2</sup>A historic photo reveals that each original door had a single light set above horizontal panels, with divided-light transoms above. See, <https://www.ccp.edu/celebrating-50-years/looking-back/timeline-college-history/history-mint>.

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window hoods have replacement sash with simulated divided lights; and the rectangular third-story windows have replacement sash with simulated vertical divisions.

The rear volume of the Mint is articulated as two stories in height with an elevated basement. Like the walls of the front volume, the rear volume has walls of rusticated granite on its first story and walls of smooth ashlar on its second story. The rear volume is set back slightly from the wall plane of the front volume. The basement-level windows have rectangular openings that are filled with fixed, single-light replacement sash. Historic photos indicate that they were once secured with metal grates. The first-story windows have arched openings with replacement sash and simulated divided lights. The second-story windows have rectangular openings with replacement sash with simulated divided lights. Historic photos indicate that the arched windows were originally fit with double-hung wood sash as well as sash that pivoted from the center.<sup>3</sup> These windows had fixed transoms with divided lights. On the east elevation of the rear volume, a stone wall, topped with a metal balustrade, encloses a below-grade courtyard. The balustrade is topped with an ornamental metal railing (Photograph 5 and Figure 17). The railing's geometric design is repeated in multiple areas inside the Mint, including in some windows and doors. Historic photos reveal that the sash in nearly all the second- and third-story windows originally had similar designs (Figure 18). The fluted railing posts are cast with decorative crests that have lettering that reads "U S" (Photograph 5). The basement level of the east elevation of the rear volume has a wide bay with an overhead door. This bay, which is accessed via a ramp from Sixteenth Street, was originally used for vehicular transportation of gold, silver, and coins to and from the Mint vaults (Figure 19). At this elevation, rectangular openings that once accommodated additional doors have been infilled with glass. The rear volume has a shallow roof with intersecting gables with third-floor attic rooms. A three-story glass and brick addition constructed during the early 1980s nearly conceals the south elevation of the building (Photographs 6-8). To create access between the addition and the Mint, existing windows on the basement level and first and second stories were cut to the floor level to form doorways.

## Interior

The Mint's formal entry procession from the monumental stair on Spring Garden Street to the main opulent interior public space – the Cabinet (similar to a rotunda) – progresses in grandeur as is typical in Renaissance Revival plans and sections. From early renderings, the portico's three arched portals were originally conceived without doors into an open vestibule; iron gates and doors were added, as previously discussed. Through the vestibule, with its granite walls, ceiling groin vaults, and bronze skylights, the visitor proceeds up an additional short flight of steps to the three pairs of robust three-paneled arched bronze entrance doors, adorned with cast rosettes (Photograph 10). The blind arch above the doors is treated similarly. Each door, with a bronze lion-head knocker, has been fixed open at present with storefront doors installed in the openings. Inside the one-story-height lobby, one's eye is drawn upwards by the ceiling with a series of groin vaults embellished with gold-hued mosaic tiles (Photographs 11-12 and Figure 8). The columns that support the ceiling are faced with veined marble.

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<sup>3</sup> "Exterior of the Fire Damaged Old Mint," March 9, 1920. George D McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center.

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The terrazzo marble field tiles of the lobby floor are bordered with mosaics.<sup>4</sup> Lighting fixtures in the lobby are from the workshops of Cassidy & Son Manufacturing Co., a Philadelphia firm.

Beyond the lobby and corridor, the space expands to a grand two-story volume with a formal bifurcated marble stairway (Photograph 13 and Figure 8)<sup>5</sup> and coffered ceiling that is gold-toned and decorated with rosettes (Photograph 14). The mezzanine landing is dominated by two consoles that support gold eagles with outstretched wings. A vaulted loggia open to the surrounding second-floor corridors is supported by a series of marble Corinthian columns (Figure 9).

The formal entrance procession culminates in the Cabinet (an octagonal room that historically exhibited rare domestic and foreign coins) at the center of the building on the mezzanine level (originally called the Numismatic Room) (Figure 12). The vaulted three-story room has walls faced with red marble and accented with red marble columns (Photograph 15). It has marble surrounds at the windows and doors. The large transom windows that peer into the second-floor corridors and the large arched windows above retain the sculptural bronze muntins and grilles. Lunettes above the arched windows contain encaustic murals depicting the mining process in the western United States (Photograph 15). A chandelier, crafted by Cassidy and Son, hangs from the room's leaded glass domed ceiling (Photograph 16).

Secondary public spaces, including corridors, also exhibit highly decorated surfaces and ceilings. The first-floor vaulted corridors, extending to the east and west of the lobby, are separated by marble pilasters into separate bays, each of which contains a recessed entrance to a classroom or office. The corridor walls are faced with veined marble wainscoting. Lighting fixtures, also the work of Cassidy and Son, hang from the corridor ceilings (Photograph 11).

The east-west corridor that leads from the stairs on the second floor has terrazzo marble floors. Pilasters spaced at regular intervals divide the corridor walls into bays. A number of bays contain deeply-recessed entrances that lead to classrooms and offices. The second floor is also the location of the Board Room (historically called the Reception Room) (Photograph 17 and Figure 11). This long, rectangular room with side alcoves at the ends is located above the lobby. It has original wood casement windows with ornamental transoms facing Spring Garden Street. Fluted wood pilasters with gilded Corinthian caps frame the windows. The modillioned wood cornice divides the ceiling into multiple sections related to the geometry of the room. An original six-light chandelier is suspended from the ceiling. The third floor of the front volume, which is reached by two stairwells at opposite ends of the building, has a similar plan to the second floor.

The rear volume largely provides circulation and contains the College's library (first floor). When the Mint functioned as a manufactory, the large rear room was divided by partitions into distinct two-story work spaces. This area is now a large, open space that accommodates book stacks and other library-associated resources (Photographs 19-20 and Figures 13-16). The second floor of the rear volume

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<sup>4</sup> Work on this floor may have been executed in part by the Italian Marble Mosaic Company of Philadelphia. See *Sweet's Indexed Catalogue of Building Construction For the Year 1909*.

<sup>5</sup> Newspaper report indicates that the Philadelphia contractor John Gibson was responsible finishing for the lobby's marble walls. See, "The Philadelphia Mint," *The Times*, 25 August, 1900.

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contains offices and classrooms, some of which overlook the main reading room. A series of narrow corridors connect the rear to the front volume, with windows on the first and second floors to the two open courtyards (Photograph 18). The courtyards are lined with enameled white bricks.

The basement level of both volumes houses mechanical and electrical equipment, storage, and support offices and building systems. The historic vaults are also located at this level (Photograph 21). The primary corridors on this level are granite (Photograph 22). Secondary corridors are faced with enameled tiles (Photograph 23).

### **Integrity**

The Mint retains integrity, and easily conveys its significance as a grand, substantial building and retains most of its character-defining spaces and details. Overall, the Mint readily exhibits the aspects of integrity including design, materials, workmanship, setting, and location. Externally, the Mint's feeling and association have been somewhat altered by the brick and glass 1980s additions to its south and west elevations. The additions, which introduce new volumes to the building, disrupt the strict symmetry imposed by the Mint's original plan. Overall, however, the additions, which the later architect created to complement the fortress-like exterior of the 1901 Mint, respect the original design; the west addition is set back from the building and the south addition has large expanses of glass that permit the original south wall to be viewed both from outside the addition and from within addition.

The interior also retains integrity. Overall, it retains nearly all of its original character-defining features (with the exception of the Tiffany murals<sup>6</sup> that depict Roman coining) as well as its original floor plan. The rear volume of the Mint, which once housed manufacturing space, has been altered to meet the College's needs. On the first floor, machinery that once filled the room has been removed. The space, however, still remains a mostly-open volume as it did during the manufacturing era. The large arched windows, which delivered light into the manufacturing rooms, survive, as does an original overhead gallery from which visitors could view the coining process. In addition, the space still retains the open layout of a manufacturing floor. Many features on the basement level also remain intact, such as the corridors, which retain their granite walls and enameled tile walls, and of the vaults, which retain their original bronze doors. Other original features of the basement, including the room that housed the gas plant, are intact.

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<sup>6</sup> In 1971 the Treasury removed these mosaics, which had been mounted within lunettes in the lobby, and reinstalled them in the new mint at Fifth and Arch Streets.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

Architecture

Government

### Period of Significance

Architecture: 1901

Government: 1901-1969

**Significant Dates** 1901

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**Significant Person** N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder**

William Martin Aiken (Architect); James Knox Taylor (Architect)

Tiffany Studios (Artist); William B. Van Engen (Artist)

Charles McCaul (Builder)

[Eric Chung, project architect for the Kling Partnership's 1982 additions; unrelated to current period of significance]

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The United States Mint Building at Philadelphia (the Mint) is nationally significant under Criterion A in the area of Government. Additionally, the Mint is significant (at the state level) under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. When it was opened, the building was widely noted to be the largest mint in the world. It was also reported to be the most modern and efficient coin-making factory ever constructed. The building's monumental size and state-of-the-art machinery accorded with its assignment: to produce – in speed and volume – a supply of coins unrivaled by any other mint, domestic or foreign. Less than a year after its opening, the facility triumphed in this undertaking, having “broken the record not only of the whole country, but of the entire world, in the coinage of money.”<sup>7</sup> The magnitude of the facility, both in size and productivity, reflected the self-assuredness of the United States at the turn of the century and the ascent of the country as a global power. It also symbolized the government's adoption in 1900 of gold as the standard currency of the United States; in expense, importance, allure, and physical presence, the Mint more certainly embodied the qualities of this precious metal than it did of silver, a currency the Treasury had, throughout the late nineteenth century, also contemplated adopting. The Renaissance Revival design of the building was conceived by William Martin Aiken and completed under James Knox Taylor. Multiple federal buildings designed by Aiken and Taylor (both of whom worked on the Mint during their respective tenures as the head of Office of the Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>8</sup> The Mint Building is not necessarily inventive in its design; rather, it is faithful to Academic Classicism, the prevailing and reliable style of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century public buildings, and especially of buildings executed by the architects within the Treasury Department. In its size, scale, and muscular stone-block construction, the Mint was designed to trumpet the wealth, sovereignty, permanence, and supremacy of the federal government. The building's lavish public interior spaces, which are embellished with shimmering gold-toned mosaic designs, were also designed to radiate the optimism and vanity of the country at the turn of the century. The titanic manufacturing spaces of the Mint, which the public could appreciate from observation corridors within the building's interior, are equally impressive. Outfitted with dozens of specialty rooms that were designed to optimize the coin-

<sup>7</sup> “The Greatest Money-Maker in the United States,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, 28 December, 1902.

<sup>8</sup> While serving as Supervising Architect, Aiken designed the National Register-listed Federal Building and Post Office in Denver, Colorado (1897) and the post office in Saginaw, Michigan (1897), among others. During his tenure in this position, he was associated with the design of more than a dozen National Register-listed federal buildings, including the Denver Mint (1897).

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making process, these spaces demonstrated the government's commitment to equipping its facilities with the most advanced technology available. Under Criterion A, the Period of Significance for the Mint is 1901-1969, reflecting the years during which the Mint played an important role as a producer of the country's currency. Under Criterion C, the Period of Significance is 1901, which reflects the year the Mint was completed and opened. (While not considered character-defining features based on the scope of this nomination, the later additions to the Mint building may be appropriate for consideration for architectural significance in the future.)

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Mint Building at Seventeenth and Spring Garden Streets was Philadelphia's third facility dedicated to the manufacture of U.S. coins. The city's (and the nation's) first mint was constructed in 1792 at the corner of Seventh and Arch Streets. Located within blocks of Congress Hall and agencies of the federal government, this mint produced the first coins of the new republic. By the third decade of the century, the needs of the government outgrew this space and the Treasury replaced the 1792 facility with a new mint. Erected in 1833 at the corner of Juniper and Chestnut Streets, the new mint was designed by the noted Philadelphia architect William Strickland and executed in the popular Greek Revival style. By the late 1880s, the demand for coins outpaced this facility and the government began to plan for a new and larger mint.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning, the planning process for the new Mint was plagued by uncertainty and disagreement about multiple considerations, including where the building would be located. Although Philadelphia had hosted mints since nearly the founding of the republic, the selection of the city as the site for a new mint was not immediately assured; during the 1880s, when the Treasury began to consider options for increasing the nation's supply of coins, multiple cities, including New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis, as well as several nebulous entities (including a vocal assembly from the "Mississippi Valley") vied for the opportunity to host a new mint. It was not until 1892 that the Treasury settled on Philadelphia as the location for the facility.<sup>10</sup>

Even then, the construction of a new mint in the city was not certain; for several years, an inability to secure adequate appropriations for the building, as well as difficulty in locating a site for the mint, threatened Philadelphia's claim to the project. Officials contended with the latter challenge for several years, principally because they were thwarted in their efforts to secure their leading choice for a building site – a group of properties at the corner of Broad and Cherry Streets.<sup>11</sup> The government

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<sup>9</sup> The need for a new facility was made even more urgent by the dearth of mints in the country; in 1895, the United States was dependent on just two facilities – the mint in Philadelphia and a mint in San Francisco, to produce all its gold coins. "New Mint Building for Philadelphia: Architect Aiken At Last Tells What the Structure Will Be Like," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 October, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> "A Site For the New Mint: Secretary Carlisle Selects Sixteenth and Spring Garden," *The Times*, 2 August, 1894.

<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 14 June, 1901. Although the Treasury announced that it had "finally fixed upon the ground for the new mint in Philadelphia" at the corner of Broad and Cherry Streets, the site's multiple property owners, including the brothers, Richard and Louis Wistar, declared that they "would never sell their land." (*Gettysburg Compiler*, 3 October, 1893; "Eccentric Brothers: The Two Men Who Promise Trouble Over the Mint Site," *The Times*, 20 August, 1893.) In 1893, the government moved to condemn the properties on the site. Confronted with a lawsuit that challenged the appraised value of the properties, the government abandoned eminent domain proceedings in 1894. "To Discontinue Mint Site Proceedings," *The Times*, 14 August, 1894.

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eventually identified an approximately two-acre property in the Spring Garden area for the new Mint. At the time of its acquisition, the property, which was bounded by Spring Garden, Buttonwood, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Streets and nearly surrounded by the Baldwin Locomotive Works factory, contained the Bush Hill Iron Works (Figure 1).

For the federal government, the purchase of the property, which occurred in December 1894, represented the “end of a long search.”<sup>12</sup> The Spring Garden site, officials contended, offered multiple advantages over the Broad and Cherry site: its price was approximately half what the government would have been compelled to pay for the city center site; it was located on one of the “broadest thoroughfares in the city;” it rested on a “solid foundation” (unlike the Broad and Cherry site, which was reported to require stabilization measures); it contained more useable land than the Broad and Cherry site; and its erection would precipitate welcome development on Spring Garden Street.<sup>13</sup>

The Mint’s principal architect, William Martin Aiken, explained and defended the decision to locate the Mint in this area of the city:

The mint buildings in Denver and Philadelphia have called for special treatment, for conditions governing each being entirely different, not only from those of other government buildings to be designed and erected at this time, but from those governing the other. These two...are fortunate in fronting upon wide streets, this permitting the use of broad and simple motives. A mint, being a money making building, can well afford to assume somewhat of an industrial air; yet in these two instances (being situated on the border line between the residential and commercial sections of their respective cities) the surroundings have received special consideration, with a result which may be discernable.<sup>14</sup> (Figure 2 reveals the location of the Mint on Spring Garden in relation to other development.)

Yet, local reaction for the Mint’s location in Spring Garden was overwhelmingly negative. The city’s two leading newspapers particularly objected to the site. *The Times* maintained that the “government has committed a serious blunder in changing the new Mint site from Broad and Cherry to Sixteenth and Spring Garden Streets,” and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* lamented that the government had chosen this “boiler plate site” in “spite of the almost unanimous desire of Philadelphians to have the building placed on Broad Street.”<sup>15</sup> Hostility was rooted in a belief that locating the building in Spring Garden, a neighborhood nearly a mile distant from the city center and populated with railroad spurs and manufacturing concerns, would reduce the Mint to a “mere factory.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Mint Site Property Transferred,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 December, 1894; “A Site For the New Mint: Secretary Carlisle Selects Sixteenth and Spring Garden,” *The Times*, 2 August, 1894.

<sup>13</sup> “Now Move On,” *The Times*, 3 August, 1894; “Mint Site Settled By Mr. Carlisle,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 July, 1894; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 May, 1894.

<sup>14</sup> William M. Aiken, “The Architecture of Our Government Buildings,” *The Engineering Magazine* 12 (1896-1897), 825, 827.

<sup>15</sup> “No Mint Yet,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 July, 1894; “The New Mint Site,” *The Times*, 2 August, 1894.

<sup>16</sup> “Secretary Carlisle and the Mint,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 January, 1893.

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The site settled, however, planning for the design of the Mint commenced within the year under the direction of the Office of the Supervising Architect, a bureau of the U.S. Treasury Department.<sup>17</sup> Established in 1852, the Supervising Architect's office was responsible for the design of the country's federal buildings. Its formation predated the practice of architecture as a profession in the United States and was intended to centralize the design, construction, repair, and management of federally-owned buildings. It was also meant to ensure the government a steady supply of dependable in-house designers.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, the Supervising Architect's office was tasked with:

the selection and purchase of sites for all buildings under the Treasury Department; the procuring of cession of jurisdiction to the United States by States in which sites may be situated; making of plans and estimates for custom houses, mints and marine hospitals, the general superintendence of their construction and the collection, arrangement and preservation of all reports, memoirs, estimates, plans and models relating to all buildings in charge of the Treasury Department.<sup>19</sup>

During its existence, which extended from 1852 to 1939, the Supervising Architect's office designed thousands of government buildings across the United States. Between the mid-nineteenth century and the early 1890s, buildings designed by the Supervising Architect took on landmark status in many American towns and cities. Large and central, these buildings both heralded the ascendancy of smaller population centers and reinforced the dominance of established commercial hubs. A historian notes that during this period, buildings commissioned by the Supervising Architect "represented an ideal architecture." Additionally, buildings of the Supervising Architect reflected design trends that dominated the American landscape.<sup>20</sup> These trends favored Italianate architecture during the 1850s, Second Empire architecture during the 1860s and 1870s, and High Victorian and eclectic architecture during the 1880s.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the office of the Supervising Architect transitioned from designing singular landmark buildings to designing buildings that were not only intrinsically imposing and celebratory, but that could also be integrated into larger urban plans. During this era, the office of the Supervising Architect applied Beaux Arts, Renaissance Revival, and other interpretations of late Neoclassical styles to the design of its federal buildings. These styles, which emphasized symmetry, proportion, classical detailing, and monumental scale, originated from the curriculum of the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris. In the United States, these styles were disproportionately applied to civic and commercial architecture.

William M. Aiken, the head of the Office of the Supervising Architect from 1895 to 1897, was charged with overseeing the creation of drawings for the new Mint building. Aiken had started his career in the Boston office of the famed architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. He spent part of his career teaching at the architecture school of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the curriculum of which was heavily influenced by ideals advanced by the Ecole de Beaux Arts. Immediately prior to his

<sup>17</sup> "Let Local Architects Compete," *The Buffalo Commercial*, 1 November, 1895.

<sup>18</sup> Carl M. Sapers and Penny Pittman Merliss, "The Liability of Architects and Engineers in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Architectural Education* 41 (Winter 1988); Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Darrell Hevenor Smith, *The Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1923), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Lee, *Architects to the Nation*, 7.

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engagement at the Treasury, Aiken had managed an architectural practice in Cincinnati. Although neither well-known nor favored by establishment architects, he was said to have been “competent and willing to assume its duties and responsibilities.”<sup>21</sup>

Aiken debuted his preliminary plans for the Mint in late 1896. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the architect’s “classic style” building was to comprise two volumes and would be “constructed of granite up to the top of the terrace balustrade; above that it is to be white marble, including a balustrade on roof.” The raised three-story front volume, which was to accommodate the Mint’s public spaces, administrative offices, and below-grade storage vaults, would be entered by a flight of steps from Spring Garden Street. The rear part of the building, a two-story volume with an elevated basement, would house the facility’s manufacturing spaces. Although the *Philadelphia Inquirer* never warmed to the building’s Spring Garden location, it did praise the appearance of the new facility, noting that the neighborhood was fortunate “to be graced with one of the finest buildings yet erected by the government.”<sup>22</sup>

Response to Aiken’s design, however, was not universally laudatory. In June 1897, the *Philadelphia Press* reported that Boise Penrose, a prominent U.S. senator and a powerful figure in Philadelphia’s Republican machine, ordered that plans for the Mint be “held up,” owing to his belief that its architect was incompetent and that the building was an “architectural monstrosity.”<sup>23</sup> Other formidable voices echoed this sentiment. The *North American* (a Philadelphia newspaper), for example, characterized the plan for the Mint as a “cross between a cotton mill and a Blockley Almshouse.”<sup>24</sup>

Yet, the Mint’s classicism was not entirely unlike that of other recently-erected Renaissance Revival buildings in Philadelphia, including the Reading Terminal (1891-1893) and the Bourse (1893-1895), both National Register-listed properties, as well as the United States Post Office (1884) and Art Club of Philadelphia (1889). In fact, the Mint building was neither novel nor provocative in its presentation. “In style,” the *Washington Evening Times* noted, the building was “pure Italian Renaissance.”<sup>25</sup>

In July, 1897, after a month of frenzied talk about commissioning a new set of plans for the Mint, Lyman J. Gage, the Secretary of the Treasury, ultimately adopted Aiken’s design, “rather than yield to the requests of a number of Philadelphia men well qualified to judge...”<sup>26</sup> By this time, the Treasury Department had already forced Aiken’s resignation. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that Aiken’s “failure to make a success as supervising architect is believed, greatly, due to his lack of practical knowledge, and also because he selected inexperienced and untried men as his advisors to carry out his ideas.”<sup>27</sup> In October 1897, following a competition administered through the Civil Service Commission, the Treasury filled the position with James Knox Taylor, a principal draftsman in the Supervising Architect’s office.<sup>28</sup> Before his employment at the Treasury, Knox had practiced with several esteemed architects, including Bruce Price and Cass Gilbert.

<sup>21</sup> Lee, *Architects to the Nation*, 191; “A New Supervising Architect,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 March, 1895.

<sup>22</sup> “New Mint Building For Philadelphia,” 1896.

<sup>23</sup> “May Hold Up Mint Plans,” *The Philadelphia Press*, 4 June, 1897.

<sup>24</sup> “The Mint Plans,” *North American*, 5 June, 1897. The almshouse was designed by William Strickland and executed in the Greek Revival style. It was located in West Philadelphia.

<sup>25</sup> “The New Quaker City Mint,” *Evening Times* (Washington, D.C.), 13 June, 1901.

<sup>26</sup> *Public Ledger*, 9 July, 1897.

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Work on the Mint's construction commenced in late 1897 under the direction of Charles McCaul, a prolific Philadelphia-based contractor who had already supervised the erection of multiple public, commercial, and institutional buildings in Philadelphia and beyond, including the Reading Terminal Market, the Land Title Building, and the Drexel Institute of Technology.<sup>29</sup> Newspaper articles and photographs indicate that the Mint's foundation, which was constructed of concrete and faced with a brick lining that measured between three and four feet thick, was nearly complete by the winter of 1898.<sup>30</sup> (Figure 3 ) The massive foundation supported the Mint's heavy exterior walls, which were constructed of granite blocks quarried in Mount Desert, Maine.<sup>31</sup> The final choice of stone for the walls was, like many matters associated with the erection of the Mint, controversial.

Preliminary descriptions of the Mint (issued in the spring of 1897) indicate that granite was to be "employed in construction as high as the top of the terrace balustrade."<sup>32</sup> These descriptions accord with the as-built appearance of the building. Yet, contemporary reports reveal that as late as the fall of 1898, federal officials were considering marble for the building's exterior walls. "Shall it Be Constructed of Granite or Georgia Marble," read the byline of a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article published in October 1898. Although the Treasury Department in Washington was reported to be "at loggerheads" about the stone selection, architects in Philadelphia vigorously opposed marble as the building's primary building material. Marble, they argued, would be vulnerable to the effluvia of factories in the vicinity (Figure 2 reveals the proximity of factories to the Mint). The "gases from these smokestacks will be injurious to a limestone or marble building, and the discoloration from the smoke would appear more as a defacement to a building built with marble than to one built with granite," the established architect James T. Windrim (and Supervising Architect from 1889-1890) noted. Frank Miles Day, another luminary of the period also maintained that marble was a poor choice.<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, *The Times*, having already opined about both the design and location of the new Mint, also now fulminated about the government's consideration of marble as a building material:

Any attempt at making it ornate by the use of marble would be not only inappropriate but would certainly make the structure unattractive, however faultless it might be in architecture. One thing that the Secretary of the Treasury should not entertain at all is the use of marble for the Philadelphia Mint.<sup>34</sup>

The Treasury ultimately acceded to these petitions and agreed to construct the building with granite.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "Architect Aiken's Resignation," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 9 May, 1897.

<sup>28</sup> "Skilled Architects Compete for Place," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 September, 1897.

<sup>29</sup> "Mint Contract Awarded," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 November, 1898.

<sup>30</sup> "Philadelphia's New Mint," *The Times*, 10 January, 1898; Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia.

<sup>31</sup> *The Philadelphia Record*, 7 January, 1899.

<sup>32</sup> "The New Philadelphia Mint," unidentified newspaper, 10 April, 1897. On file. Newspaper Clippings of the New Mint, Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia.

<sup>33</sup> "Stone for the Mint," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 October, 1898.

<sup>34</sup> "Don't Bungle the Mint," *The Times*, 12 October, 1898.

<sup>35</sup> "Granite for the Mint," *The Washington Times* (Washington, D.C.), 5 November, 1898.

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By mid-spring, construction on the Mint walls was nearly finished (Figure 5). During the following months, work on the remaining parts of the building proceeded rapidly. On June 13, 1901, the Secretary of the Treasury ceremoniously opened the Mint to government officials, dignitaries, and journalists. Although the Mint is credited to both Aiken and Taylor, it is likely that its final design was minimally influenced by the latter architect. This is suggested by the as-built appearance of the Mint, which is very similar to the design William Aiken proposed in an 1896 sketch.<sup>36</sup> (Figure 6)

In their reporting, journalists routinely noted that in design, extravagance, and function, the Mint reflected the state of the nation. “No wonder Uncle Sam is proud of the new mint at Philadelphia,” one newspaper noted. “It is not only the largest but also the most perfect of its kind in the world. An imposing, substantial and beautiful structure reared to serve a great Government.”<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the building’s refined exterior, which was distinguished by muscular granite walls, ornamental stone carvings, a grand flight of steps, and a columned entrance set with heavy bronze doors, awed visitors. The interior of the building similarly impressed audiences. The Mint’s front section particularly invited wonderment, as its spaces appeared better suited to a museum than to a manufacturing plant. The main attraction of this section was the entrance lobby, a “rich and dazzling” space outfitted with marble floors, heavy bronze and brass lighting fixtures, a bifurcated marble staircase leading to a mezzanine level and a vaulted ceiling<sup>38</sup> (Figures 7-9). The latter was embellished with colorful mosaic panels designed by the celebrated artist William B. Van Ingen and executed by Tiffany Studios.<sup>39</sup> The first-floor corridor ceilings also shimmered with lavish gold-toned Tiffany Favrile glass mosaics designs (Figure 10). The remaining areas within the building’s front section, including the board room, executive offices, second and third-floor corridors, and Cabinet (a room exhibiting rare coins), were given elegant, if more restrained, decorative treatments (Figures 9 and 10).

The functional areas of the Mint were equally impressive. If the opulence of Mint’s lobby excited wonder and delight, the dynamism of its manufacturing area aroused awe. This vast space, which was located in the rear section of the Mint, housed machinery used in the coining process. Plans prepared in 1897 reveal that this space was divided into multiple rooms that were specially designed to execute each stage of the minting process (Figure 13). Here, gold and silver were weighed, melted, parted (refined), rolled into strips, and finally, pressed and stamped into coins (Figures 13-16). The largest share of the space was given to the Melting Room, the Rolling and Cutting Room, and the Counting Room. Visitors to the Mint could view these spaces (and the work that occurred within them) from

<sup>36</sup> “New Mint Building for Philadelphia,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 October, 1896. Aiken’s 1896 design proposed “two board flights of granite leading up to the terrace” and entrances with square openings. As completed, the Mint was designed with central flight of stairs and arched entrances.

<sup>37</sup> “The Greatest Money-Maker in United States,” *The Pittsburgh Daily Post*, 28 December, 1902.

<sup>38</sup> James Rankin Young, *The United States Mint at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1902), 14; lighting fixtures throughout the Mint, including the massive chandelier in the Cabinet Room and the bronze lamp on the staircase landing were made by the Cassidy and Son Manufacturing Company of New York. Correspondence of the Superintendent of the Construction at the Philadelphia Mint, 1897-1901, Box 4, Records of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia. See also, “The Future of Metals in Decoration,” *Architectural Record* 16 (July 1904), 146.

<sup>39</sup> The government later commissioned Van Ingen to paint walls in the Mint with four murals depicting the gold mining process. See, *American Art Annual* 9 (1911), 27; “W. Van Ingen, Muralist, Dies,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 February, 1955.

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overhead galleries.<sup>40</sup> The rear section of the Mint also accommodated a gas plant, a power plant, and what was reported to be the “largest switchboard in the world.”<sup>41</sup> The latter, which measured six feet high by 36 feet wide, controlled the machine engine-motors as well as fifty-one telephones. Together, Secretary Gage maintained, these many requisites represented the “best and most effective machinery and appliances for these purposes.”<sup>42</sup>

Although contemporary newspapers crowded their pages with laudatory pieces about the new Mint’s advantages, they reserved their highest praise for the building’s vaults, below-grade storage rooms into which bullion and minted coins were deposited. These vaults, the *New-York Tribune* wrote, were “the largest in the world, and embody all of the latest improvements in the safeguarding of money.”<sup>43</sup> The design of these rooms, which featured two-and-a-half-foot-thick brick walls armored with two-inch-thick plates of steel and further fortified by a “subterranean fortress of granite and concrete,” particularly attracted interest.<sup>44</sup>

During its initial years of operation, the Mint was a sensation. Its prodigious output dominated headlines. In 1903, just two years after the Mint’s opening, the *Washington Times* reported that the facility had “surpassed the world’s record” in the production of gold and silver pieces.<sup>45</sup> The Mint also drew acclaim for its other achievements: it was reported to produce the dies for every other operating mint in the nation and to be the only manufactory with the capability of manufacturing every coin in U.S. circulation.<sup>46</sup> During the first decade of the twentieth century, these distinctions, accompanied by the Mint’s other merits, including its novelty, magnitude, and extravagance, made the facility one of the “most popular buildings in Philadelphia” and the most visited federal building outside of Washington, D.C.<sup>47</sup>

None of these distinctions, however, rendered the Mint immune to the pace of progress. Like the coining facilities that preceded it, the 1901 Mint eventually slid into obsolescence; only a little more than a half-century after the building’s promising opening, the federal government closed the facility. Its machinery outdated, its space too small, and its design the relic of another era, the turn-of-the-century building ceded its operations in 1969 to the newest “new mint”: a 490,000 square foot, five-story edifice at the corner of Fifth and Arch Streets. Designed by the Kling Partnership, a prolific Philadelphia

<sup>40</sup> “Uncle Sam Gets the New Mint,” *The Times*, 14 July, 1901; Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia.

<sup>41</sup> “Many Gallons of Naptha Used,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 August, 1901.

<sup>42</sup> “Uncle Sam Gets the New Mint.”

<sup>43</sup> “The Philadelphia Mint,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, 8 February, 1903.

<sup>44</sup> “Uncle Sam’s Mint Has Surpassed the World’s Record,” *Washington Times*, 11 January, 1903; *Annual Report of the Director of the Mint for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1902* (Washington: Government Printing House, 1902), 130; Young, *The United States Mint at Philadelphia*, 70.

<sup>45</sup> “Uncle Sam’s Mint Has Surpassed the World’s Record.”

<sup>46</sup> “Uncle Sam’s Mint Has Surpassed the World’s Record,”; “Mint Coinage is Trade Barometer,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 November, 1904.

<sup>47</sup> “Souvenir Medals May Be Sold By Government,” *The New York Times*, 14 April, 1907; Young, *The United States Mint at Philadelphia*, 4.

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firm responsible for the 1960s redesign of the City Hall area, this new facility assumed a distinction once reserved for the 1901 Mint: the world's largest mint.<sup>48</sup> During the new mint's period of construction, which occurred between 1965 and 1969, the Spring Garden Mint continued to operate, continuing to play its important production role despite aging and outdated equipment – in fact using much of the same machinery that it was originally equipped with in 1901.<sup>49</sup>

For a short period of time after operations ceased in 1969, the Treasury Department used the decommissioned Mint building as a storage facility.<sup>50</sup> In 1971, it bequeathed the building (which it identified as “excess property”) to the Community College of Philadelphia (College).<sup>51</sup> The College subsequently commissioned the Kling Partnership to adapt the Mint for educational purposes. Plans show that in the front section of the building, the firm's architects moved multiple interior office walls to accommodate classrooms and offices. They also removed walls in building's rear to create a library. With (a few notable) exceptions, the architects retained the original finishes in the building's public areas, including the glass mosaic walls and ceilings, the mosaic floors, the marble wainscoting, and the electric fixtures.<sup>52</sup> They also largely preserved the original floor plans in the public areas.

During the late 1970s, the College re-engaged the Kling Partnership to design two extensive additions to the Mint building. One of these additions was appended to the western elevation of the Mint building via a bridge connector over 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The other was joined to the south façade of the Mint building. Eric Chung, the project architect for the additions, noted that he designed the stark concrete and brick buildings (which were completed in 1982) to complement the fortress-like posture of the 1901 Mint. Recently, the Kling Partnership additions have themselves been altered in some areas.

### **Criterion A Significance**

The Mint's construction was necessitated by multiple considerations, including the obsolescence of the existing (1833) Philadelphia mint, demand for additional facilities to process the nation's abundant and growing supply of gold, pressures to increase the supply of U.S. coins in circulation, the opportunity to produce coins for a number of foreign countries, and the desire of the government to create commemorative coins and medals. A voluminous collection of newspaper articles, government reports, books, commemorative literature, and images reveals the extent to which construction of the Mint addressed these considerations. When the Mint was completed, it was one of only two facilities in the United States, including the San Francisco Mint, that produced the nation's gold coins.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “A New Money-Maker For Philadelphia,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 August, 1969.

<sup>49</sup> Eva Adams, the Director of the Mint, testified that the Bureau of the Mint had engaged a private company to replace equipment that had been in use since 1901. See, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Mint, *Annual Report of the Director of the Mint* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 178.

<sup>50</sup> “Community College Puts in Bid For Old Mint,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, 9 February, 1970.

<sup>51</sup> “Old Money Factory on Spring Garden Declared ‘Excess Property’ By Government,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 October, 1970.

<sup>52</sup> In 1971, the Treasury Department removed the Tiffany/Van Ingen tile mosaics from the 1901 Mint and reinstalled them in the new Mint at Fifth and Arch Streets. See, “Tiffany Glass in New Setting,” *New York Times*, 9 June, 1971.

<sup>53</sup> The New Orleans Mint, the country's other operating mint, produced silver coins through 1909.

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If the new Mint commanded respect for its expanded and outsized influence on the American economy, it also reestablished Philadelphia's relevance as a city of national and even global economic importance. The federal government had selected Philadelphia as the site of the nation's first mint (1792). It reaffirmed the importance of Philadelphia with the erection of a second mint in this city in 1833, and a third mint – the world's largest – in 1901. As a possible mint site, Philadelphia had practical and strategic advantages over other cities, including St. Louis and New Orleans, which the government had also considered for a coin-producing facility, one being the city had a glut of relatively inexpensive properties on which a large civic building could be erected. It was also within close proximity of New York and Washington, D.C., cities of great commercial and political importance. Locating a mint in Philadelphia would also help to balance the production and distribution of coins between the eastern and western parts of the country.<sup>54</sup> Finally, the government recognized the symbolic importance of locating a new mint in the birthplace of the nation. Philadelphia, a city that was already home to an impressive collection of buildings representing American exceptionalism, including Independence Hall, Carpenter's Hall, and the First Bank of the United States, would seem to be a perfect choice for the new Mint.

Externally and in its public spaces, the building had the appearance of a library or a museum. The sumptuousness of these features, however, belied the building's primary use, which was industrial. The Mint was, for all intents and purposes, a factory – namely, the world's most advanced coining factory. Technologically advanced in every way, the Mint was designed to quickly and efficiently meet the country's growing demand for coins. Its manufacturing space reflected this objective. The building not only had its own gas and electric plants, it also had an electrolytic plant (the world's largest) for refining its precious metals. The availability of these systems enabled the facility to exceed the coin-manufacturing capacities of every other Mint in the world, as measured by volume, range of product, and speed. The success of the Philadelphia Mint was a major achievement for the U.S. Government, and one that it enjoyed promoting.

### ***Criterion C Significance***

The Mint at Philadelphia is representative of the federal government's determination during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to embrace Academic Classicism in the design of important public buildings. From its scale, to its materials, to its ornamentation, to its heavy use of classical details, including columns, balustrades, rusticated stonework, and monumental entrance steps, the Mint is an important example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture, a subset of Neoclassical architecture. The building was erected within a decade of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, an international event that showcased and celebrated Neoclassical architecture on a monumental scale and that heavily influenced the use of classical styles in American civic and commercial buildings.

Renaissance Revival architecture was particularly well-suited to the Philadelphia Mint. Its scale, size, and severe materials acknowledged the Mint's function as a factory and a fortification. Its restrained classical ornamentation reflected the country's wealth and democratic ideals. In its style, the Mint was similar to numerous other buildings commissioned by the federal government during the late

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<sup>54</sup> The San Francisco Mint had been in operation since 1854 and a new building was erected for this mint in 1874. The Denver Mint opened in 1906, but planning for it commenced during the 1890s.

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nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>55</sup> The Mint's principal designer, William Martin Aiken, was himself a known admirer of Academic Classicism, and particularly of Renaissance Revival architecture. In his capacity as Supervising Architect, he applied this style to the design of the Denver Mint (1895-1904) and to the Pueblo, Colorado Federal Building (1897), both National Register-listed buildings.

The Mint was not the first building in Philadelphia to be designed by the Supervising Architect; the 1901 coinage facility followed the U.S. Post Office, a building at Ninth and Chestnut Streets completed in 1884 under the direction of the Supervising Architect. During the decade before the Mint's erection, the Supervising Architect also located federal buildings in multiple cities near Philadelphia, including post offices in Lancaster (1889) and Reading (1889). Shortly after the Mint opened, the Supervising Architect constructed post offices in Norristown (1906), Allentown (1907), and West Chester (1908). The Mint, however, is the largest and, arguably, the most commanding federal building in the Philadelphia region.

The building's stunning and decorative Favrite tile installations, designed by the artist William Van Ingen and produced by Tiffany Studios, are character-defining features of the Mint's lobby and first floor corridors. Tiffany Studios, the celebrated glass studio managed by Louis Comfort Tiffany, designed and executed extravagant glass mosaics for both private residences and public buildings. His mosaics are less often seen in government buildings. William Van Ingen, a native of Pennsylvania, was famed for his skill in designing mosaics and for his talent as a mural artist. His work adorns the walls of multiple government buildings, including the Library of Congress, the Pennsylvania State Capital, and the New Jersey State Capital, among others.

The Mint's collection of Tiffany and Van Ingen installations originally included a series of seven glass mosaics depicting scenes of Roman "children engaged in the various processes of coinage."<sup>56</sup> In 1971 the Treasury removed these mosaics, which had been mounted within lunettes in the lobby, and reinstalled them in the new mint at Fifth and Arch Streets. The removal of these notable features diminishes the artistic integrity of the Mint. The ceilings and walls of the Mint, however, still retain substantial expanses of mosaics and murals, respectively, executed by Tiffany Studios and Van Ingen. The mosaics, which are dominated by gold hues, line the vaulted ceilings of the lobby and the first floor corridor. Van Ingen's encaustic murals, which were completed by 1910 and depict scenes of gold mining in America, adorn the walls of the Mint's Cabinet (also called the Numismatic Room), the space in which the Treasury exhibited rare U.S. and foreign coins.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The Italian Renaissance Revival buildings are too numerous to list in full, but include the William O. Douglas Federal Building (1912) in Yakima, Washington; the Federal Building in Bellingham, Washington (1912); U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Atlanta (1911);

<sup>56</sup> "Glass Mosaics," *New-York Tribune*, 23 June, 1901.

<sup>57</sup> "Exhibition Room of the Mint Cabinet," *American Journal of Numismatics* 45 (1911), 45-46; *The Cincinnati Inquirer*, 21 January, 1912; *Guide to the Numismatic Collection of the Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 104.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # HABS PA,51-PHILA,372—2; PA-1741-2
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: National Archives (Mid-Atlantic Region), Philadelphia

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** NA

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acres of Property:** 8.5 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

Longitude: -75.165565                      Latitude: 39.962533

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Mint is at the southwest corner of Spring Garden and N. 16<sup>th</sup> Streets. Historically the property was also bounded by N. 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Buttonwood Street, but in 1982 the building was expanded with two very substantial and integrated additions to the south and west. The boundary includes those additions, as shown on the aerial view and campus plan below.



*Campus map (left) and aerial view (right) showing the nominated boundary as the red-dashed line. Approximate historic Mint parcel is shown as the yellow-dashed line, for reference. (See also larger versions in Figure 21)*

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### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Mint contains the original lot of the 1901 building (bounded by Spring Garden Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and vacated Buttonwood Street) as well as the building area of two 1980s additions designed by the Kling Partnership architectural firm extending from the Mint's south and west elevations. They are included within the boundary because they are substantial additions carefully integrated into the original Mint building. The additions created a striking internal rectangle of landscaped open space within the building's footprint. The boundary was drawn to include potential elements of landscape design related to the additions. In time, the property could also be re-evaluated for eligibility to assess if the Kling Partnership additions are architecturally significant. In that case, a separate period of significance would be established to focus on the design of the additions to amend the nomination. Under the existing nomination, the character-defining features of the property are entirely within the immediate area of the historic parcel, and bounded by Spring Garden Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and the former line of Buttonwood Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets, roughly indicated by the box in the upper right corner of the boundary shown above and in Figure 21. The additions at this time are not character defining.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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street & number: 10 Shurs Lane, Suite 104 city: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19127

e-mail: [kabplanalp@pdparchitects.com](mailto:kabplanalp@pdparchitects.com) date: February, 2021

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

U.S. Mint Building at Philadelphia  
Name of Property

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## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: U.S. Mint Building at Philadelphia

City or Vicinity: Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia State: Pennsylvania

Photographer: Kathleen M. Abplanalp

Date Photographed: October, 2019 (SHPO confirmed that photos reflect current appearance)

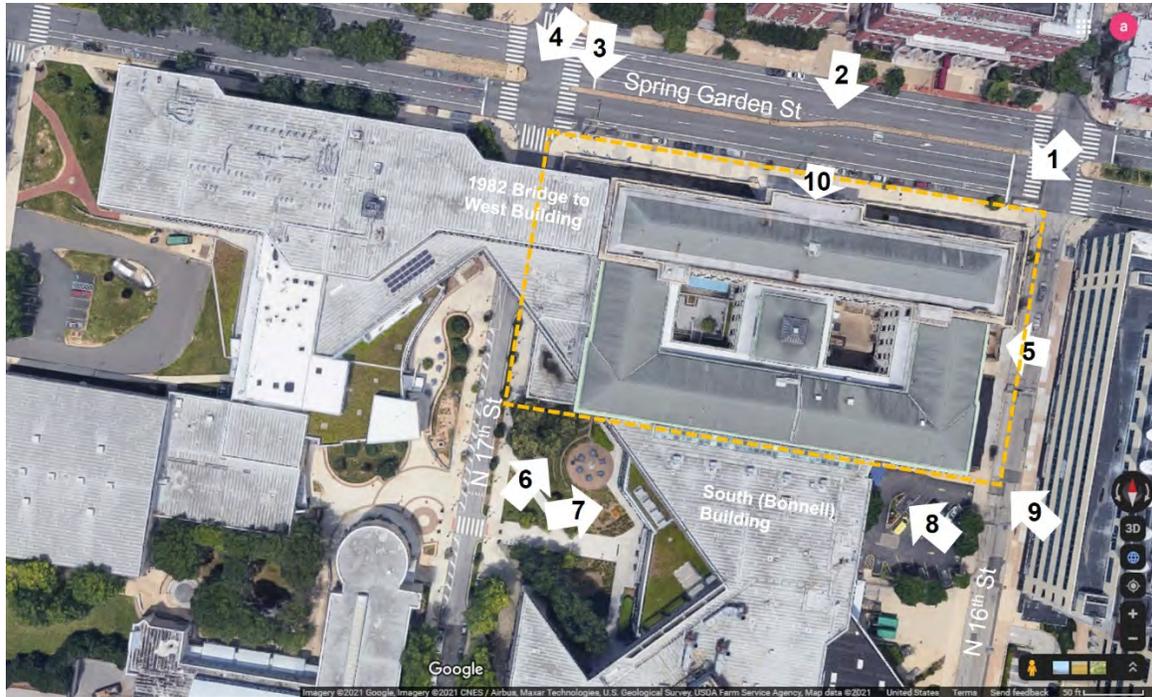
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1: Mint, North Elevation Camera Facing SW
- 2: Mint, North Elevation, Camera Facing S
- 3: Mint and West Addition, North Elevations, Camera Facing S
- 4: West Addition, North Elevation, Camera Facing S
- 5: Courtyard Railing, Camera Facing W
- 6: Mint and South Addition, Camera Facing N
- 7: Mint and South Addition, Camera Facing NE
- 8: Mint and South Addition, Camera Facing NW
- 9: Mint, East Elevation, Camera Facing NW
- 10: Entrance, Camera Facing S
- 11: First Floor Corridor
- 12: Ceiling Tiles
- 13: Mezzanine Steps
- 14: Mezzanine Ceiling
- 15: Mural in Cabinet Room
- 16: Ceiling, Chandelier, and Mural in Cabinet Room
- 17: Board Room
- 18: View into Courtyard, Facing W
- 19: Library and Historic Manufacturing Space
- 20: Library and Historic Manufacturing Space
- 21: Vault
- 22: Vault Corridor
- 23: Basement Corridor

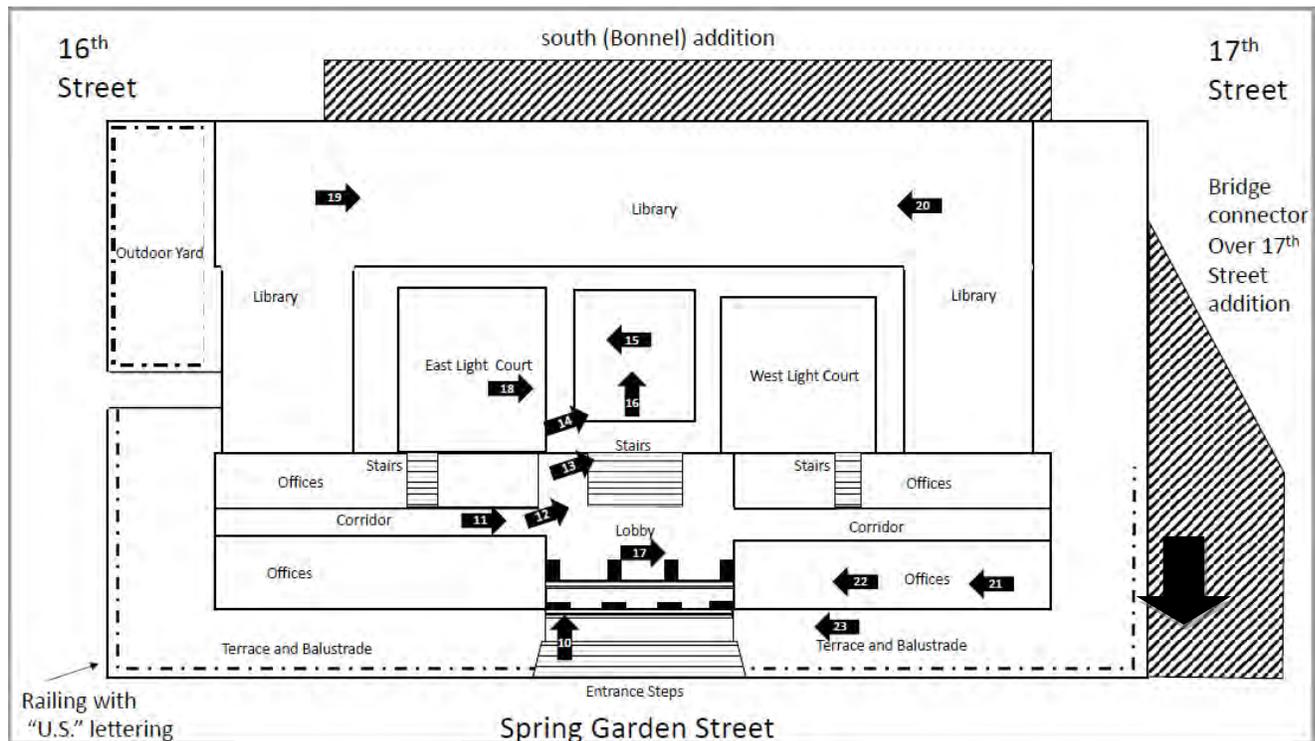
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**Current Photo Keys**



Exterior Photo Key, with approximate boundary of historic Mint shown as yellow dashed-line.



Interior Photo Key (plus Photo 10 of entrance)

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- 4: Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia
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- 18: Oblique View, North (Front) Elevation, Looking East, HABS PA,51-PHILA,372, Library of Congress.
- 19: United States Mint Photographs, 1938-1946, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- 20: USGS map excerpt.
- 21: National Register boundary shown on campus plan and aerial view.

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1. North elevation, from Spring Garden Street.



2. Main entrance, north elevation.

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3. West end of original building, with addition, from Spring Garden Street.



4. North elevation of the west addition.

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5. Courtyard Railing Detail.



6. Rear, south addition extending to the rear of the Mint, facing N.

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7. South addition, facing NE.



8. Juncture of Mint and south addition, facing NW.

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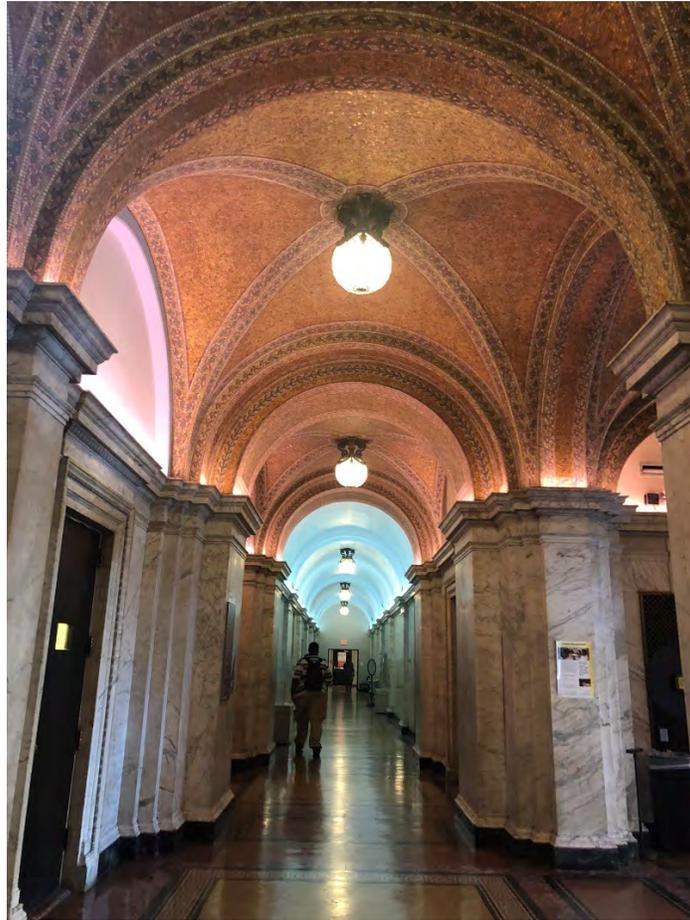
9. East end elevation, facing NW.



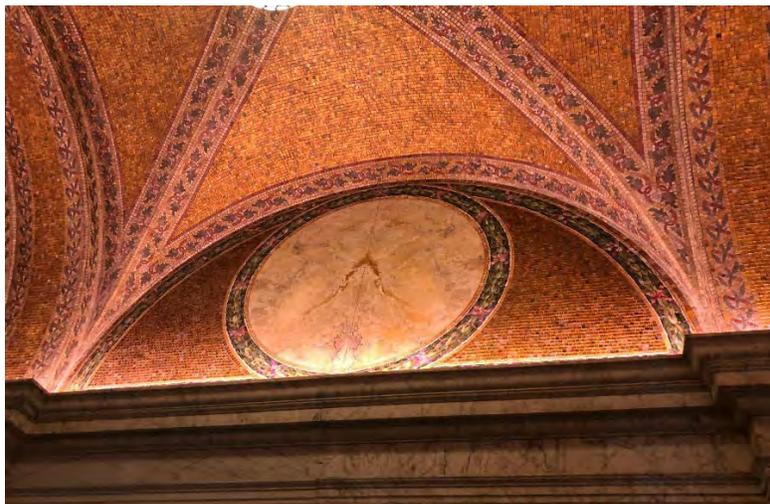
10. Spring Garden Street entrance detail.

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11. First floor corridor.



12. Ceiling detail.

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13. Mezzanine stairway, left and 14. Mezzanine ceiling, right.



15. Cabinet room detail, including mural around window.

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16. Chandelier and ceiling detail in Mural room, left, and 17. Board room, right.



18. View into the Mint's courtyard, facing W.

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19. Library, in the former manufacturing space, facing W.



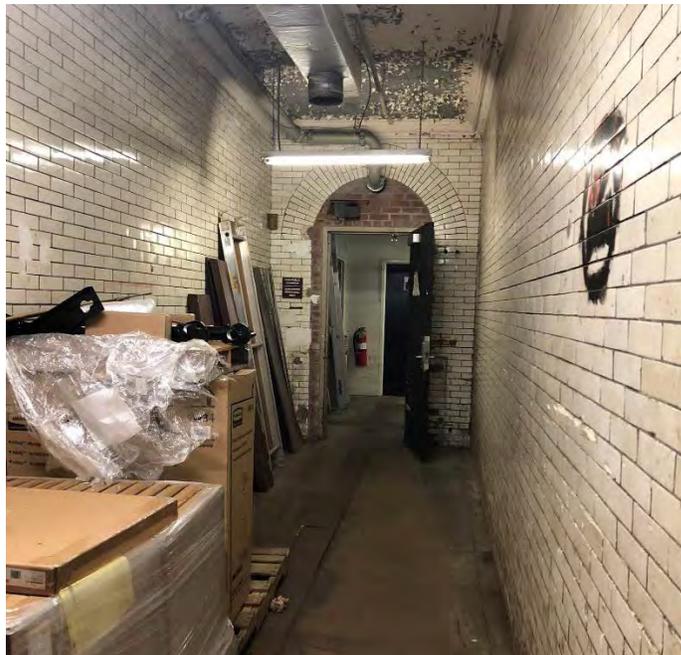
20. Library, in the former manufacturing space, facing E.

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21. Vault.



22. Vault Corridor.

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23. Basement Corridor.

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### Historic Plans, Photos, and Maps

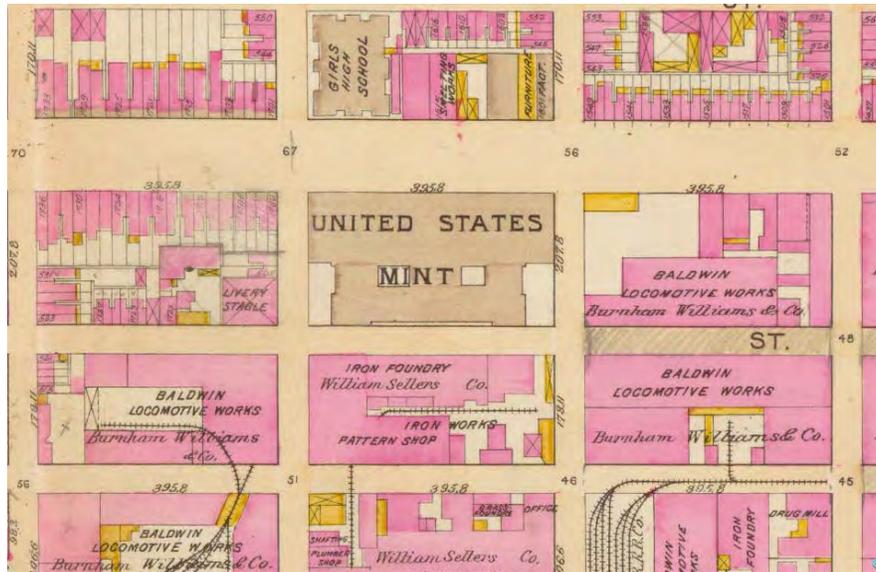


Figure 1: 1901 plan showing the Mint and immediate surroundings. George W. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley and Company), 1901.



Figure 2: US Mint, left, and Wills Eye Hospital across the street, 1922. "U.S. Mint and Wills Eye Hospital." J. Victor Dallin Aerial Surveys, Hagley Museum and Library, October 28, 1922.

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Figure 3: US Mint, under construction, March 31, 1899. Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia.



Figure 4: US Mint, under construction, September 30, 1899. Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia.

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Figure 5: US Mint, completed. Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia

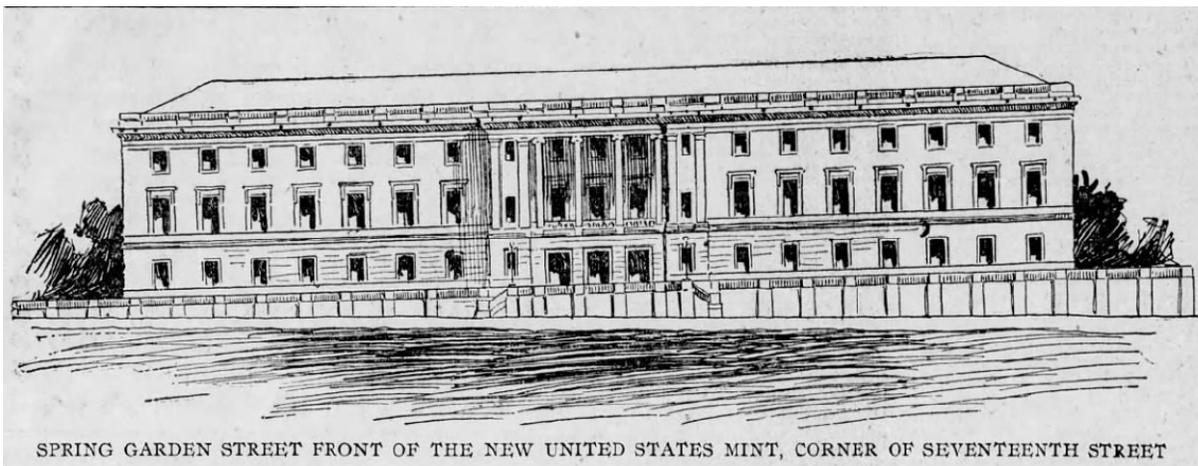


Figure 6: Sketch of the Mint, from an article in *The Times* (Philadelphia), October 29, 1896.

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Figure 7: Bronze lamp detail, by the Flour City Ornamental Lamp Works, from *Architectural Record* 16 (1904).



Figure 8: Postcard showing the main lobby and corridor. David Sklow collection.

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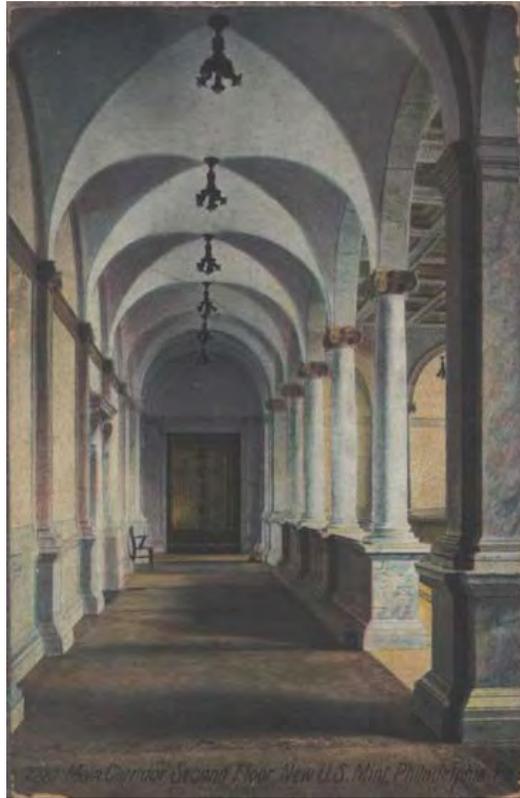


Figure 9: Postcard, showing the main corridor of the second floor. David Sklow collection.



Figure 10: "Splendid" corridor of the US Mint. 1905, Library of Congress Print and Photographs Division.

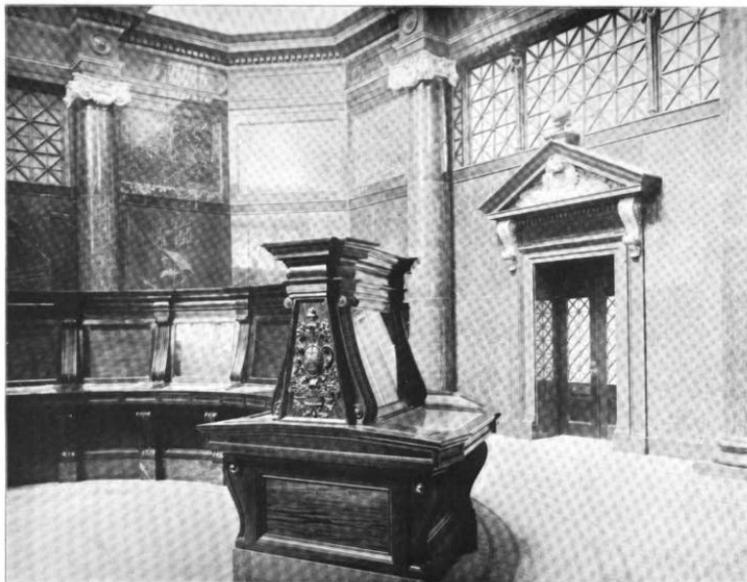
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Figure 11: Postcard of the Board Room. David Sklow collection.

THE INLAND ARCHITECT AND NEWS RECORD.



VIEW IN NUMISMATIC ROOM, NEW U. S. MINT, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Figure 12: Numismatic Room, from the *Inland Architect and News Record*, 37 (1901).

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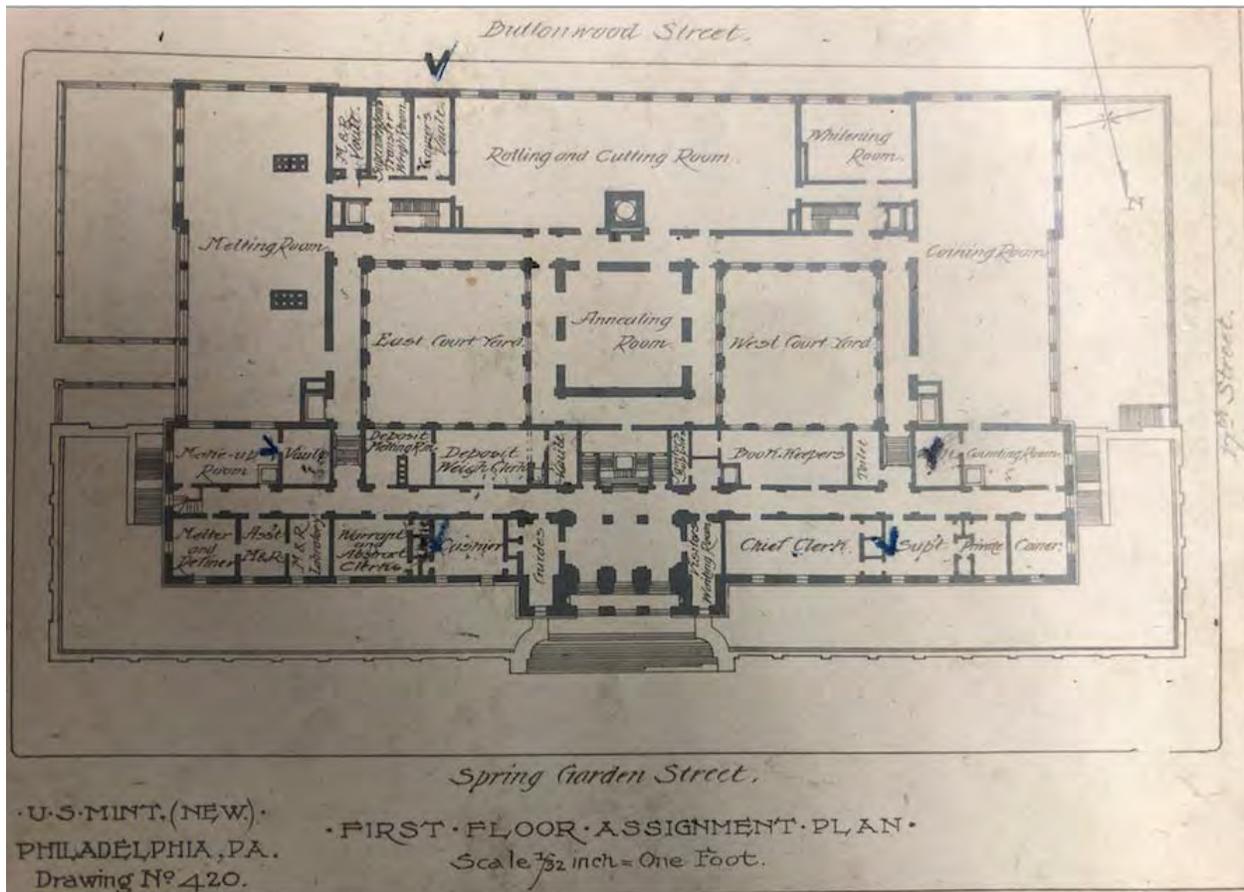


Figure 13: First-floor plan, 1897. Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104.4.5, National Archives, Philadelphia

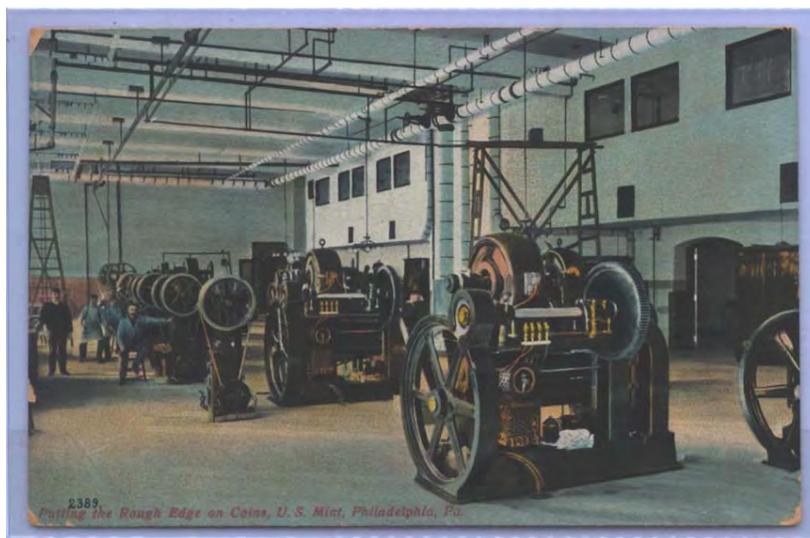


Figure 14: Manufacturing floor equipment, "putting the rough edge on coins." David Sklow collection.

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Figure 15: Manufacturing floor equipment, "where the metal is converted into coin." David Sklow collection.

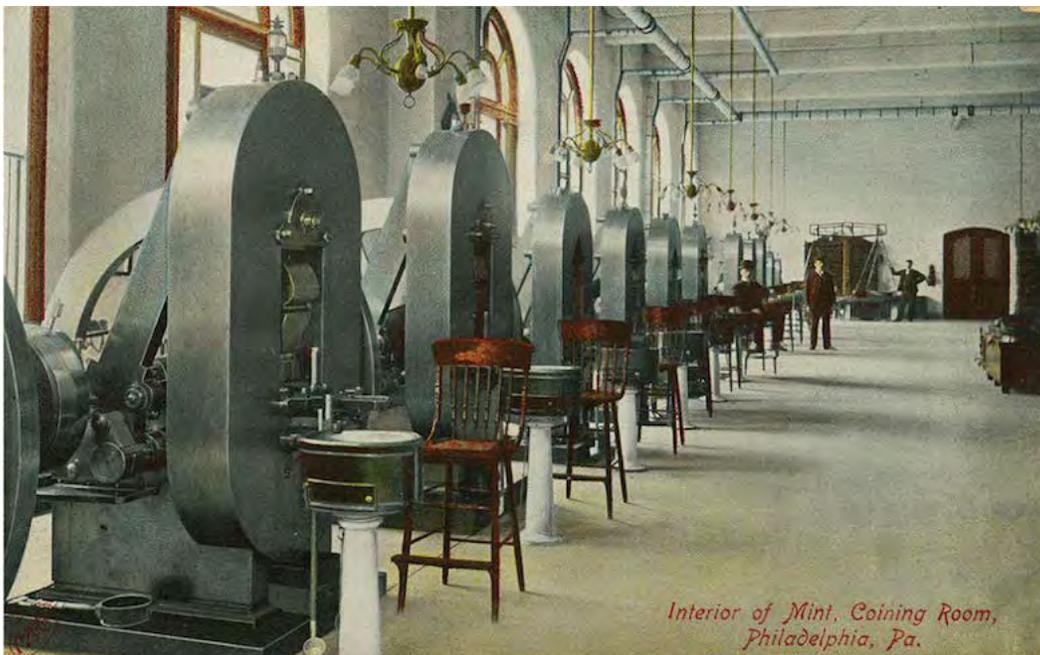


Figure 16: Manufacturing floor equipment, "interior of Mint, Coining Room." David Sklow collection.

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Figure 17. West end elevation, between 1938 and 1946. Historical Society of Pennsylvania Digital Collection.



Figure 18. North elevation, facing East, in 1974.  
HABS PA, 51-PHILA, 372; HABS No. PA-1741-2, Library of Congress

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Figure 19: Loading dock, between 1938 and 1946. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

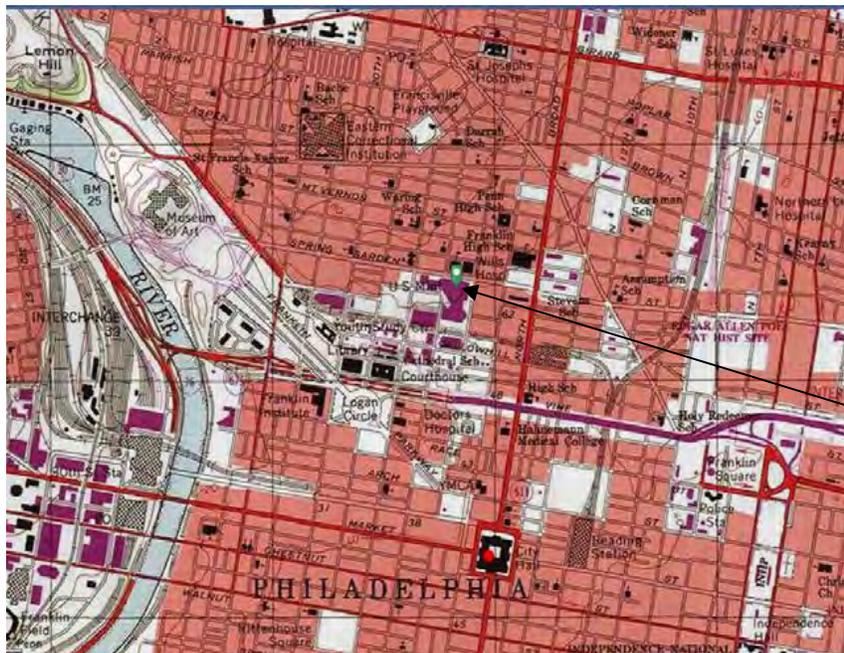


Figure 20: USGS Map excerpt  
Longitude: -75.165565 Latitude: 39.962533

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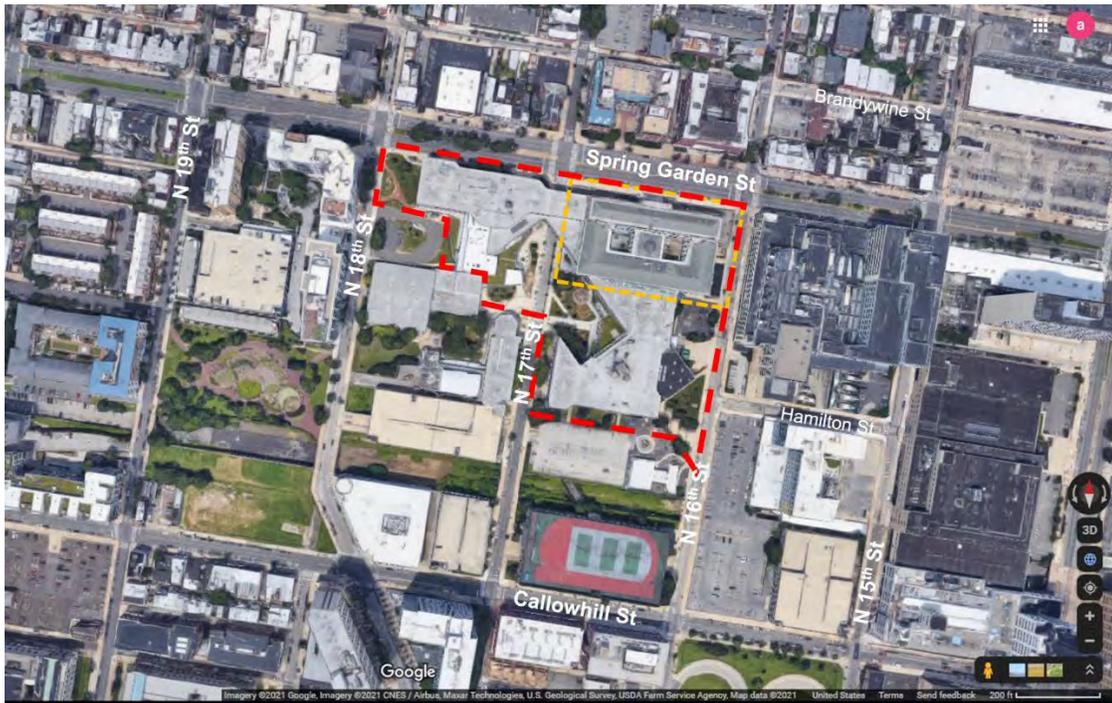
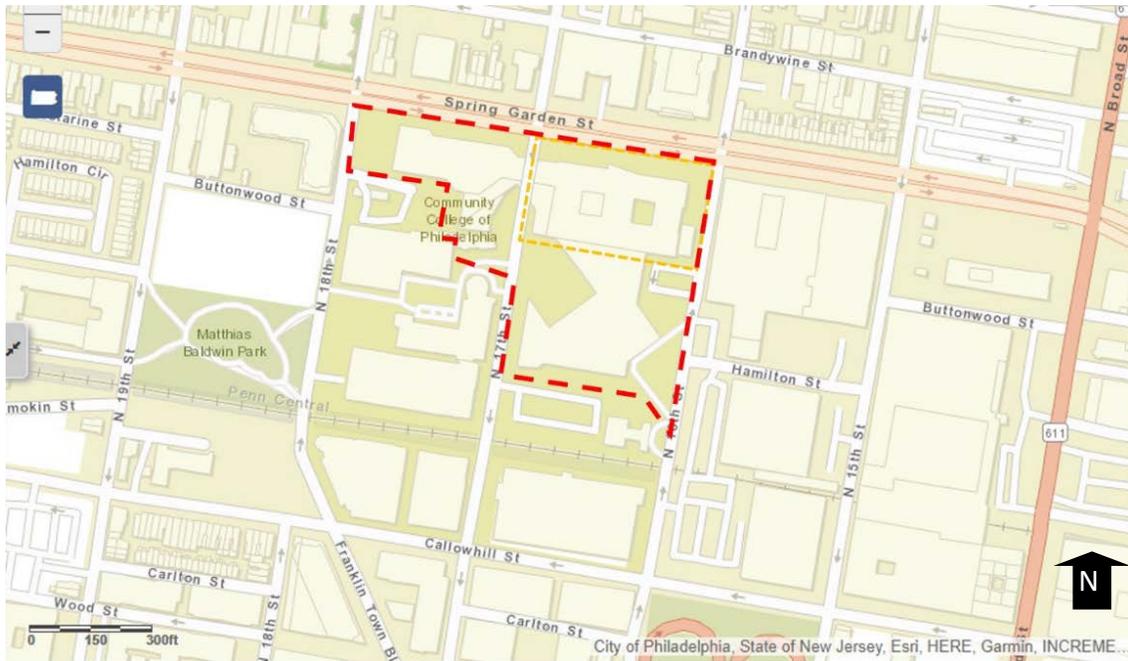


Figure 21: Campus map and aerial view showing National Register boundary (red dashed line) and approximate historic Mint property (yellow dashed line).

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows: Tier 1 – 60-100 hours; Tier 2 – 120 hours; Tier 3 – 230 hours; Tier 4 – 280 hours.

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/19/2021      Date of Pending List: 5/4/2021      Date of 16th Day: 5/19/2021      Date of 45th Day: 6/3/2021      Date of Weekly List: 5/28/2021

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL                | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource     | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG                 |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      5/27/2021 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Lisa Deline      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office  
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

April 16, 2021

Joy Beasley, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service, US Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington DC 20240

Re: US Mint Building at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed please find a pdf version of the true and correct National Register of Historic Places nomination for the above property, including signed first page. Letters of support and tif images will follow in the future. There were no objections received for this property.

The proposed action for this property is listing in the National Register. Our Historic Preservation Board supports the nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations or our request for action, please contact Elizabeth Rairigh via [erairigh@pa.gov](mailto:erairigh@pa.gov) . Thank you for your consideration of these submissions.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. MacDonald  
Director, PA SHPO

enc.

ALM/ebr