

FIEDLER BUILDING  
14 Park Place, Block 17, Lot 5  
Newark  
Essex County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1056

HABS  
NJ  
7-NEARK,  
44-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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FIEDLER BUILDING

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Location: 14 Park Place, Block 17, Lot 5,  
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey.  
USGS: Elizabeth, NJ  
UTM Coordinates: 18.570210.4510100

Significance: An example of a modestly-scaled business structure built within a dense urban setting for a small insurance/real estate company, the Fiedler Building is representative of this area's change from one of large single-family residences to that of prominent buildings for well-established businesses and institutions.<sup>1</sup> The building's Federal-Revival style is typical for a building of its size and original use. The building was constructed circa 1925.

Description: The Fiedler Building is a three-bay, three-story rectangular building located on Park Place and facing the eastern side of Military Park. Its major or street facade is faced with a veneer of limestone which is also used as the building's decorative detailing. (Photo No. 1,3) Among the building's most significant decoration are the limestone door surrounds framing the twelve-panel wooden doors at the street level. While the building is primarily Federal-Revival in style, these surrounds are a curious combination of classically-inspired Renaissance details with Tudor-inspired motifs. (Photo No. 3) Three shallow panels with low reliefs of drapes and swags set equidistant between the second- and third-story windows present a detail more consistent with the building's overall style. There are three six-over-six double-hung sashes on both the second- and third-story front facade.

A simple cornice enriched with an egg and dart molding is located at the roof level on the front of the building,

and below a tri-partite stone balustrade which is only partially extant. Archival photographs indicate the presence of a shallow iron railing that was designed to appear as a balcony located at the second-story front facade.<sup>2</sup> However, this feature, along with the original storefront fenestration, is no longer in place. The windows and doors at the rear of the building have been covered over and could not be examined. (Photo No. 2)

Approximately twenty-five feet in width at its street facade, the building is constructed, along its east-west axis,

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directly against the property lines and as seen in the floor plan (See page 7) and on the Sanborn Map of Newark, 1930,<sup>3</sup> is rectangular in shape until it reaches the slight bends in the property lines at both their north and south

sides. The Fiedler Building was built between the Newark Athletic Club (c. 1921-1923) to its south and the Fireman's Insurance Company Building (c. 1924-1928) to its north.

The first or ground floor of the building is distinguished by a rectangular shop with street access through a door to the right of a large glass window.<sup>4</sup> (Photos No. 1, 3) This door is identical to that on the left of the window which gives access to a straight-run stairway and the second floor. In addition to the shop, which served the Fiedler Corporation, are rooms that appear to have functioned as small offices and stores rooms. There is a service corridor along the northern wall as well as a stairway to the basement. Access to this corridor was primarily through an exterior door at the rear or east wall of the building. Access to the second floor is gained by two stairways. Major vertical access to all three floors is made by the dog-leg stairway located at the center of the building's northern wall. A straight-run stairway that is accessed from the front door to the left of the shop-window rises only to the second floor. (See floor plan page 7.)

At the second-story front of the building is a large rectangular room overlooking the park. Embellished in a refined Classical style, its decoration consists of baseboard and chair rail, a simple cornice with egg and dart molding, and paneled areas at the cheeks, window embrasures and the corresponding soffits. Of special note is a finely carved Adamesque-style fireplace surround of white and variegated red marble. The scale and finish of the room suggest that it was either the company boardroom, the office of the company president or perhaps both. (Photos

No. 4, 5) The remainder of this floor includes rooms that likely functioned as secretarial and private office space.

At the third floor, rooms are located only above that part of the building that is built to the point where the property lines begin to skew, or to about a depth of 50 feet in a westerly direction from Park Place. The three major rooms on this floor likely served as offices. A flat roof with parapet sides covers the two-story portion of the building beyond the front three-story section.

History:

The Fiedler Building is located in the area that saw the original landing of settlers in 1666 as well as the town's earliest settlement. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the residences of Newark's social and business elite were located on this block fronting the park or Military Common as it was onetime called.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, this particular lot was occupied by a three-bay four-story rowhouse set, like its neighbors, well back from Park Place.<sup>6</sup> Various nineteenth and early twentieth century owners included Mr. A. Pennington Whitehead (c. 1889) and Mr. Arthur Devine (c. 1912).<sup>7</sup>

The present structure was built by the Fiedler Corporation, circa 1925. One of the leading real estate and insurance businesses in Newark,<sup>8</sup> the Fiedler Corporation was also listed in various late 1920's city directories as a purveyor of mortgage loans. Operated by the prominent German-American Fiedler family, the city directories also listed the Fiedler Service Corporation as a subsidiary.<sup>9</sup> The property was sold in 1924 to the Fiedler Corporation by W.C. and Martha Fiedler (W70-359). In 1975, the Fiedler Corporation sold the property to the United Community Economic Development Corporation. In 1977, the United Community Corporation purchased the property and in November 1992, ownership was transferred to the New Jersey Economic Development Corporation (5208-213).<sup>10</sup>

The Fiedler family was headed by William Henry Frederick Fiedler, who was born in 1847 of German immigrant parents. Although he would have been in his late seventies by the time the Fiedler Building was completed, Fiedler had been actively engaged in the business with his sons, William C. (b. 1875) and Ernest J.E. (b. 1878) before the company's new building was constructed on Park Place. The elder Fiedler had been Democratic mayor of Newark during the 1880's, as well as a three-time member of the New Jersey State Assembly and the United States Congress. He was later appointed to the largely ceremonial title of Postmaster of Newark.<sup>11</sup> The Newark City Directory lists the following family members in association with the Fiedler Corporation in 1929: William C. Fiedler, president and treasurer of the Fiedler Corporation and president of the Fiedler Service Corporation, Ernest J.E. Fiedler, Salesman (residing in N.Y.C.), Louis T. Fiedler retail store department (residing in South Orange) and Mrs. Martha W. Fiedler, vice president of the Fiedler Corporation (residing in South Orange).<sup>12</sup>

- Sources: Feist and Feist. Atlas of the City of Newark, New Jersey. Vol. I. 1912. New Jersey Historical Society.
- Hunter Research, Inc. Report: A Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center Site, City of Newark, Essex County, New Jersey. Prepared for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark, New Jersey 07102. Trenton: 1991.
- A History of the City of Newark, 1666-1913. Vol. III. Newark: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913. New Jersey Historical Society.
- Newark Athletic Club and the Fiedler Building on Park Place, circa 1930. Archival Photograph. Newark Public Library.
- Newark City Directories. New Jersey Historical Society.
- Park Place from Military Park, August, 1922. Archival Photograph. Newark Public Library.
- Park Place: Site of Newark Athletic Club, March, 1920. Archival Photograph. Newark Public Library.
- Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Map of Newark, New Jersey. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1930. New Jersey Historical Society.
- Scarlet and Scarlet. Atlas of the City of Newark, New Jersey. Newark: Scarlet and Scarlet, 1889. New Jersey Historical Society.

- Footnotes:
- <sup>1</sup>This change is pictorially documented in archival photograph, Park Place from Military Park..., "August, 1922.
- <sup>2</sup>The original iron balcony can be seen in archival photograph, "Newark Athletic Club and Fiedler Building on Park Place," circa 1930.
- <sup>3</sup>Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Map of Newark, New Jersey. (Newark: Sanborn Map Company, 1930).
- <sup>4</sup>See note No. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Hunter Research, Inc. Report: A Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center Site (Trenton: 1991), p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>An excellent view of the townhouse that occupied this site can be seen in archival photograph, "Park Place, Site of Newark Athletic Club," March, 1920. (House is fourth from the right.)

<sup>7</sup>Refer to the 1889 Scarlet and Scarlet Atlas of Newark, New Jersey and Feist and Feist's 1912 Atlas of the City of Newark, Vol. I.

<sup>8</sup>A History of the City of Newark, 1666-1913, Vol. III (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), p. 233.

<sup>9</sup>Newark City Directory, 1929.

<sup>10</sup>Essex County Deeds.

<sup>11</sup>A History of the City of Newark, p. 233.

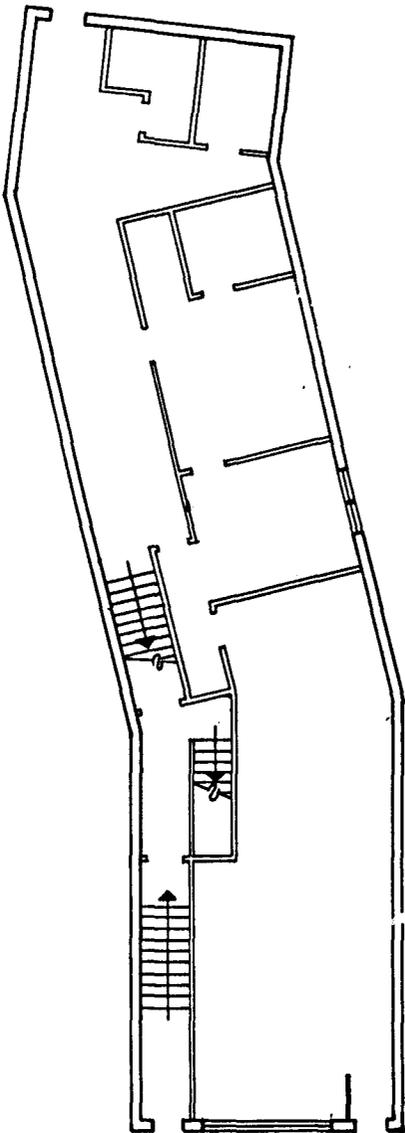
<sup>12</sup>Directory, 1929.

Historian: Herbert J. Githens, Historic Architect  
Montclair, New Jersey

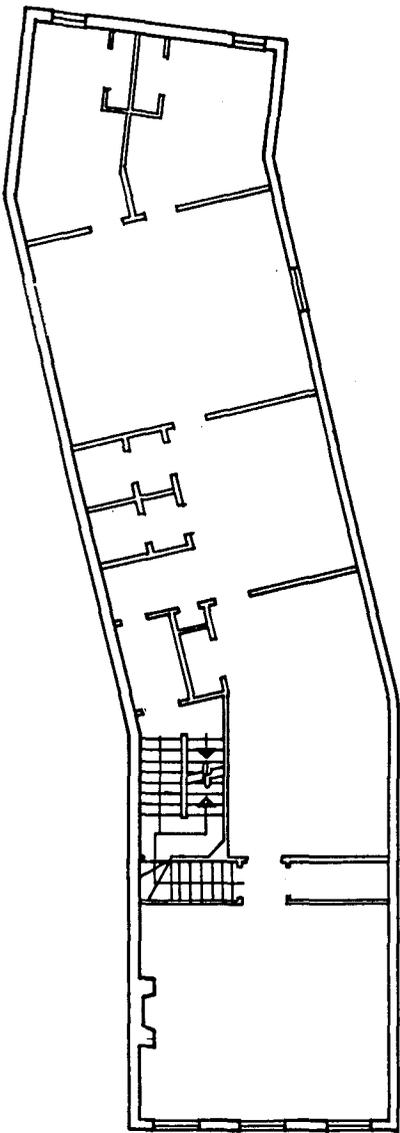
Tony Masso, Photographer  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Lawrence Schwin III, Architectural Historian  
Clark, New Jersey

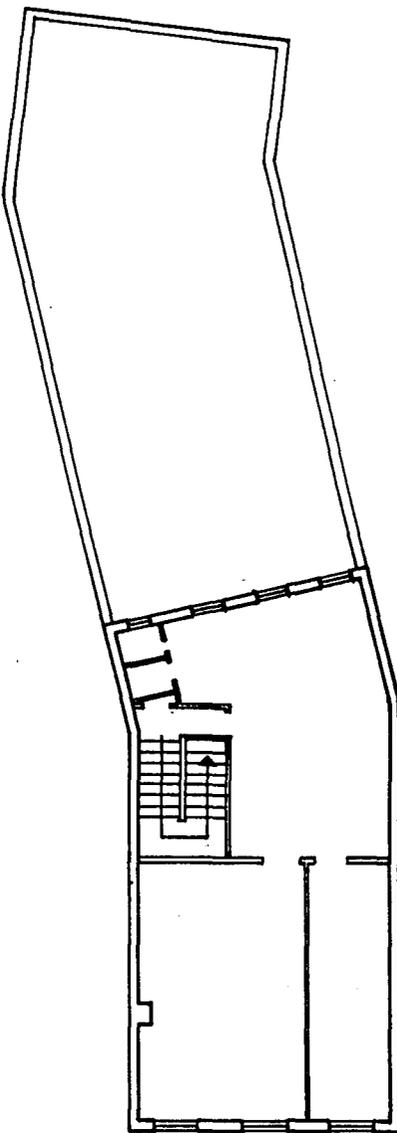
25 November 1992



FIRST



SECOND



THIRD  
NOV 1992  
FLOOR PLANS

