

AMBLER RAILROAD STATION
North side of Butler Avenue, East and West
of the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad Tracks
Ambler
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-6051

HABS
PA
46-AMB,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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AMBLER RAILROAD STATION COMPLEX
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across the tracks from the main building and runs parallel to the railroad tracks. It is approximately 100' long including shedding. The building is three bays across and one bay deep. It has a hipped roof. The roof is cross hipped at the juncture of building and shedding. There is a slight eave overhang with decorative brackets. There are half-hipped dormers projecting out from the northwest and east hips. These are set with paired louver windows of wood. A hip-on-gable dormer projects out from the junction of shedding and station on the south elevation. A series of posts and arches supports the shedding. This design is carried through into the building itself where two more arches are visible while one is presumably buried in the west wall. Many of the posts which support the shed structure are composed of two separate timbers lap-jointed together and joined by large round-headed bolts.

Freight Station(Original Station): This is the smallest of the three buildings in the complex. The building is located on the east side of the tracks and is just north of the northbound (secondary) station. The platform is on the west wall of the building approximately four feet above the railroad grade level. The substructure of this building is post and beam construction. The building is set above a stonewalled millrace which runs under the building.

History: The first station, a one room frame structure named Wissahickon, was erected in 1855 several hundred yards away from the current site. On July 20, 1869, the structure was removed and placed on the east side of the railroad above Butler Pike (opposite the main building of the present station) and named Ambler. This is possibly the current freight station. The building is currently owned by SEPTA, and is presently used as a balloon store occupied by Bernadette Dougherty.

Sources: Preliminary Historical Site Survey of Ambler, PA,
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, 1990.

"Ambler Railroad Station A Study in Architectural
Monstrosity" Scrapbooks MCO Historical Society.

Historian: Tom Heard, HABS, Summer 1994.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

AMBLER RAILROAD STATION

HABS No. PA-6051

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Location: North side of Butler Avenue, east and west of the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad Tracks, Ambler, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Significance: The Ambler Railroad Station is among the few extant railroad stations dating from the late nineteenth century in Montgomery County. The station, or more importantly, Ambler's location along the railroad line was a primary consideration in the location of Keasbey & Mattison Company in Ambler. Railroad transport of raw materials in and products out was key to company operations, as was accessibility of the factory for a portion of the workforce.

Description: The complex consists of three buildings: the main station and ticket window on the southbound side of the track, a secondary passenger station, and a small freight station, both on the northbound side. All three are one-story wood frame buildings. The substructure of the freight station is heavy timber construction. The clapboard siding was covered with asbestos shingles.

Main Station: The main station is five bays long and two bays deep. Windows are primarily groupings of three one-light hopper windows over larger one-light hinged casement windows. The stations four doors are one-light-over-two-panel wooden. The floor plan follows a rough oval shape and is symmetrical. A rounded, five-sided ticket window interrupts the north wall. A raised walkway originally carried passengers from the station to the train at a height equal to the train door. The current steps and pavilion were added later; the platform remains at grade level today. The interior has wood floors and simple vertical tongue-and-groove wainscoting and plain chair rail. A fireplace with an arch and keystone opening is centered on each gable wall. Flanking each fireplace is bay window of the type described above. The ticket window projects into the station from the north wall and is entered by a single door from the west waiting room. The framed walls of the restrooms project out from the south wall, the space between them and the ticket window creates a hallway connecting the waiting rooms. Originally the east waiting room was designated for men only, the west for women. Each was entered by separate doors in the north and south walls. A divided staircase led to the platform, but the waiting rooms shared a common ticket window. The rooms were originally ringed with benches anchored to the wall, and has a punched symbol of the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad. Half of the benching remains in each waiting room.

Outbound(Secondary) Station: The secondary building is located