

KRASBEY & MATTISON CO., STORE
Corner of Lemon Street and Trinity Avenue
Ambler
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-6048-A

HABS
PA
46-AMB,
10A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

KEASBEY & MATTISON COMPANY STORE
(J & R MARKET)

HABS No. PA-6048-A

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PA
46-AMB,
10A-

Location: Corner of Church Street and Brannockburn Avenue, Ambler, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Significance: The Keasbey and Mattison Company Store was built by the company during the final building phase in the 1920s. It, like others of this time period, were designed by Philadelphia architect John Bothwell. The placement of the store, in the center of the largest concentration of company housing in Ambler, is typical of company town planning.

Description: The store two stories high and is four bays across the north front wall by two bays across the west side. The building follows a quasi-linear plan, but is not a simple four-cornered structure. The walls are square-cut stone set in irregular rows. There is a large wraparound porch attached to the north and west walls. The roof has a large eave overhang and exposed rafters. There is a balcony above a one-story addition on the east side of the store. This one-story concrete-covered addition is enclosed by a metal railing, forming a balcony on the top which can be reached by stairs from the first floor. A doorway provides access to the store's second floor. There is a low stone patio with a concrete deck on the south side of the building.

There are three stone chimneys: one, located at the northeast corner of the building, it is built of the same stone as the store itself. There is also a pair of taller chimney's flanking the cross-gable on the store's south wall. Both are capped by a row of sawtooth-pattern stones.

The main entry to the store is through a set of double doors facing northwest which are reached by a stoop. It is unknown whether the original doors were at this location in the enclosed porch or whether the enclosure is an addition. This seems unlikely as there are no bearing walls beyond the double doors in the enclosed porch, suggesting that the entranceway appears as originally designed. Additional doors are found in the south wall of the building. One enters off the low patio, the other off a fire escape which extends to the second floor, and a third is located on the second floor on the east side of the store.

The windows are for the most part modern replacements. The segmented lintels are flat with a keystone. The most notable window openings are on the two separate gable ends facing west. The northerly gable has an oval-shaped window cased in stone and set above a pair of windows. In the southerly gable there is a small rectangular window set high in the gable above a similar pair of windows. The opening has been filled in with stone

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matching the store's walls.

The roof is rather complex. The main body consists of a gable roof running east to west with a number of cross-gables located to the south, west and northwest. The northwest facing gable ends in a parapet. The southwest ends in a simple gable-front. All gables but the parapeted example have false beams at the gable ends, and a slight eave overhang with wooden fascia.

History: This company store was constructed by Keasbey & Mattison Company during the final building phase, in the 1920s. It and the other buildings of the same period were designed by Philadelphia architect John Bothwell. The buildings of this phase included those on nearby Upper Church Avenue and Renfrew and Randolph avenues. The company store and an adjacent park were included as part of the plan and are evidence that the institutions of the company town were becoming more formalized. It is unclear whether the space above the store was occupied by the storekeeper's family or rented to other K & M employees. The placement of the store in the center of the largest concentration of company housing in Ambler is typical of company town planning. It is unclear whether goods could be purchased on credit deducted from a worker's pay, in the infamous 'scrip' as in some company towns, or if the store was operated as any other in the community. The store is now occupied by J & R Market.

Sources: Sanborn Map, Ambler Including Fort Washington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Sanborn Map Co., New York: 1930.

Magnusson, Leifer. "Employer's Housing in the United States." Monthly Labor Review.

Historian: Thomas Heard, HABS, Summer 1994.