**Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object**

**Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**

**Philadelphia Historical Commission**

Submit all attached materials on paper and in electronic form on CD (MS Word format)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Address of Historic Resource</th>
<th>(must comply with a Board of Revision of Taxes address)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street address: 1314-1316 North Broad Street</td>
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<td>Postal code: 19121 Councilmanic District: 5</td>
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<th>2. Name of Historic Resource</th>
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<tr>
<td>Historic Name: Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54</td>
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<td>Common Name: Blue Horizon; Legendary Blue Horizon</td>
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<th>3. Type of Historic Resource</th>
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<td>☑ Building</td>
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<th>4. Property Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Condition: ☑ good</td>
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<td>Occupancy: ☑ vacant</td>
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<td>Current use: Vacant</td>
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<th>5. Boundary Description</th>
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<th>6. Description</th>
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<th>7. Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Period of Significance (from year to year): <strong>c.1878-2010</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: <strong>c.1878; 1914-1916; 2003</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Architect, engineer, and/or designer: <strong>Unknown (c. 1878); Carl Berger (1914-1916)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: <strong>Richard J. Dobbins</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Original owner: <strong>Richard J. Dobbins</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other significant persons: <strong>Theodore Armstrong, Moses Aaron Dropsie, Gustav Schwarz, Jimmy Toppi Jr.</strong></td>
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CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:
The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

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

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
SEE ATTACHED

9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title: Ben Leech, Director of Advocacy
Organization: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Street Address: 1608 Walnut Street, Suite 1300
City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19103
Email: ben@preservationalliance.com
Date: June 25, 2014
Telephone: 215-546-1146 x5
Nominator ☑ is ☐ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt:__________________________________________
Correct-Complete ☑ Incorrect-Incomplete ☐ Date:____________________________
Date of Notice Issuance:____________________________________
Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name:____________________________________________________
Address:________________________________________________
City:____________________________________ State:_____ Postal Code:________
Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation:____________________
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission:____________________
Date of Final Action:_____________________________________
Designated ☑ Rejected ☐ 3/16/07
Acknowledgments

The nominator would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Gabriel J. Massalley, Temple University, and Jennifer Carr, University of Pennsylvania, in the research and assembly of this nomination.

5. Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point on the west side of Broad Street 146 feet north of the north side of Thompson Street; containing in front or breadth 74 feet and extending of that width in length or depth between parallel lines at right angles to Broad Street the distance of 200 feet to the east side of Carlisle Street.
6. Description

The Blue Horizon occupies three former townhouses and a large rear addition at 1312, 1314, and 1316 North Broad Street in North Philadelphia. The four-story, flat-roofed building occupies the full width and depth of a mid-block parcel now legally consolidated into 1314-16 N. Broad Street, which is bounded by Broad Street to the east, Carlisle Street to the west, and detached two-story structures to the north and south [Figs. 1-2]. Originally constructed c.1880 as three contiguous brownstone townhouse residences with rear els [Fig. 18], the rear portions of all three structures were demolished and replaced with a large auditorium addition in 1916 when the properties were converted into the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54 [Fig. 20]. The building stands on the same block as the National Historic Landmark Edwin Forrest House (now the Freedom Theater, 1326 N. Broad Street) and directly opposite of the former William Penn High School (1333 N. Broad Street).

East Elevation

The building’s primary east (Broad Street) elevation is composed of three contiguous Italianate brownstone facades, each three bays wide and four stories tall. The façade is divided horizontally into three major sections: a grand ground floor level which sits atop a partial basement, a second and third floor level featuring nine nearly-identical bays of round-arched windows, and a continuous fourth-floor mansard roof featuring six evenly-spaced round-arched dormer windows [Fig. 3].

The ground floor features five entrance doors grouped into two main entryways, each sitting approximately five feet above sidewalk level. The southernmost and central units (1312 and 1314, respectively) feature mirrored doorways in the third and fourth bays [Fig. 4], while the northernmost unit (1316) features three identical doors across bays seven through nine [Fig. 10]. A paired set of winding porch steps leads to a landing that serves the southern and central unit entrances, underneath which sits a partially-sunken rathskellar entrance with a non-historic aluminum door [Fig. 4]. The landing features granite treads and ornate wrought-iron railings [Fig. 5]. The paired entryways are each flanked by flat brownstone pilasters with low-relief ornament featuring ornate floral, bird, and urn motifs [Figs. 7, 8]. Foliated column capitals
support half-round arches above each doorway, each featuring a keystone incised with an abstracted flower design. A low-relief brownstone entablature spans both arched entrances, above which sits a projecting brownstone moose head sculpture [Fig. 6]. The entry doors themselves are double-leaf painted wood doors with glass upper lights and heavy scrollwork, paneling, and roundel embellishments, set below clear half-round transoms [Fig. 7].

The northernmost three bays of the ground floor comprise the building’s principal entrance, with three identical arched doorways served by a wide granite staircase and set beneath a projecting bronze and glass canopy. Staircase handrails match the design of those on the curved south stair. The doorways are flanked by engaged fluted Ionic columns and separated by flat pilasters. Each doorway features a modern double-leaf wood panel door with glass upper light and clear glass transom [Fig. 10]. The remaining four ground-floor bays (bays one, two, five, and six) feature identical tall double-hung arch-topped windows framed by ornate surrounds whose side pilasters, column capitals, and decorated keystones repeat the design motifs of the two paired entryways [Fig. 9]. The windows themselves are one-over-one wood sashes.

The upper floors of the east façade are separated from the ground floor by a brownstone belt course that spans the full width of the southern and central units before terminating at the canopy and framing entablature of the northern unit. The second- and third-floor windows are all arch-topped double-hung wood sashes. Each second-floor window is flanked by flat pilasters with foliated capitals supporting a half-round arch hood with a decorated keystone. Third-floor windows feature bracketed sills, flat pilasters and foliated capitals, and arches without keystones [Fig. 10]. The three northernmost bays of the second floor have higher sills than the rest of the façade to accommodate the entablature above the projecting canopy [Fig. 3]. The building’s three-story brownstone façade terminates in a bracketed copper cornice, atop which sits a slate-clad, concave mansard roof. Six arch-topped copper-clad dormers with flat-arched one-over-one wood sash windows are evenly spaced across the façade.

**South Elevation**

Given the building’s close proximity to the neighboring two-story structure to the south of the property, only the upper floors of the south elevation are visible from the public right-of-way. Nevertheless, the visible portions of the south elevation clearly express the spatial relationship of the original c.1880 front portion of the building and the large auditorium addition.
to the rear [Fig. 13]. The front portion features a continuation of the slate-clad mansard roof and copper cornice, which return for approximately 45 feet along the south elevation. The mansard features two dormers matching those of the Broad Street elevation. In the place of a third dormer bay is a brick chimney stack which projects out from the face of the building and pierces the cornice line. Below the mansard roof, the remainder of the front portion of the south elevation is clad in red face brick and features three visible double-hung one-over-one windows, (two on the third floor and one on the second floor) and one large second-floor masonry opening filled with glass block [Fig. 12].

The rear portion of the south elevation clearly expresses the volume of the auditorium addition. It also stands four stories tall and is clad in common brick. Nine bays of shallow-arched masonry openings are regularly spaced across the second and third floors; some of these openings retain their original paneled doors and multi-light transoms, while others have been partially or completely infilled with brick and glass block. A steel balcony projects out from the façade at the third floor, spanning the easternmost four rear bays. An elevator tower pierces the roofline at the eastern front of the auditorium wall, and a limestone-capped brick chimney rises near the rear.

**West Elevation**

The rear west elevation of the building fronts Carlisle Street [Fig. 14]. Also clad in common brick, this elevation features a prominent stepped roofline that follows the profile of the auditorium’s clerestory, which remains extant across the full depth of the auditorium massing. The upper floors are blank, while lower two floors feature masonry openings in a variety of configurations and conditions, including two prominent projecting brick bays at the second floor level, each with three tall shallow-arched window openings. An irregular assortment of steel casement windows, double-hung windows, doors and infilled masonry openings complete the fenestration of the rear elevation.

**North Elevation**

The north elevation largely mirrors the composition of the south elevation, with a few key exceptions. Unlike the south elevation, the cornice and mansard roof of the Broad Street elevation do not return around the north elevation; instead, a four-story blank wall extends back
from Broad Street approximately forty feet before its transition to the auditorium addition. A contemporary mural is highly visible at the front of the north façade, painted in 2002 and featuring portraits of the famous heavyweight boxers Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes and George Foreman. The rear auditorium façade steps back slightly above the ground-floor level, with eight bays of masonry openings above a stuccoed ground floor featuring seven glass-block windows. A steel balcony projects across two bays of the third floor [Fig. 15].

Development Chronology/Alterations

A definitive original construction date for the building has yet to be established, as no building permit or citation has been located. Though the building’s date is often cited as c.1865 or c.1870, archival research strongly suggests a construction date circa 1878. The parcels appear as undeveloped land in the 1875 G. M. Hopkins City Atlas of Philadelphia [Fig. 17] and no addresses or residents on the site were recorded in the 1880 federal census, but fire insurance survey records describe three mansard-roofed brownstone buildings on the site in 1878, and the addresses begin to appear in Philadelphia Blue Books beginning in 1881.

Architectural plans, building permits, and press reports definitively document the buildings’ conversion to Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54, which began in 1914 and was completed by 1916. The current appearance of the building closely matches a nine-sheet drawing set completed by architect Carl P. Berger in 1914, with minor alterations and losses as noted below. Though not indicated explicitly on the drawings, it is assumed that the majority of the existing Broad Street facade predated this 1914-16 building campaign and are original to the c.1878 rowhouses. In addition to the highly significant rear auditorium addition, notable exterior changes undertaken for the Moose Lodge included the reconfigured three-bay entrance and projecting canopy at 1316 and the moose sculpture at 1312-14. Berger’s drawings also indicate that the south façade originally featured a projecting bay window in place of the current glass-block infill [Fig. 23], and early photographs also show a no-longer-extant “Moose” sign mounted to the facade of 1312-1314 [Fig. 24]. The mansard roof also originally featured delineating borders between individual units.

Few significant exterior changes accompanied the building’s conversion to the Blue Horizon in the 1960s. At some point during or after Moose ownership, the projecting canopy over 1316 was removed and replaced with two flat sign panels reading “Auditorium” and “Ballroom.” Additional flat signage was installed over the arched door transoms at 1312-1314 and a mounted blade sign reading installed over the moose sculpture that read “Jimmy Toppi’s Blue Horizon” [Fig. 26]. The building underwent a comprehensive restoration campaign in 2003, which included removal of this 1960s-era signage, installation of a new projecting canopy, the replacement of original iron railings with sympathetic facsimiles, installation of new double-hung windows on the Broad Street elevation, and repair and replacement of deteriorated brownstone cladding and ornamentation.²

In 1921, the Loyal Order of Moose purchased the adjacent property to the south and cleared the site, removing an existing rowhouse at 1310 N. Broad Street [Figs. 19-20]. In 1929, Carl Berger drew up plans for alterations and additions to the lodge that included a new five-story Beaux-Arts façade that encompassed 1310; this was never executed.³ The existing two-story brick building at 1310 (visible in Figs. 1 and 2) was constructed by the Moose Lodge around this time, perhaps in place of the larger addition. Though historically associated with the Moose Lodge, this adjacent building is currently on a separate legal parcel and is not part of this nomination.

Figure 1: Site context, looking northwest.

Figure 2: Site context, looking southwest.
Figure 3: Broad Street (east) elevation.
Figure 4: Ground-floor detail of 1312-1314 N. Broad Street.

Figure 5: Stoop and railing detail, 1312 N. Broad Street.
Figure 6: Moose head detail.
Figure 7: Entrance at 1312 N. Broad Street.
Figures 8 and 9: Doorway pilaster detail (left) and typical ground floor window detail (right).
Figure 10: Auditorium entrance detail at 1316 N. Broad Street.
Figure 11: Typical upper story window details.
Figure 12: South elevation detail.

Figure 13: South elevation.
Figure 14: West (Carlisle Street) elevation.
Figure 15: North elevation.
Figure 16: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Samuel L. Smedley, 1862. The 1300 block of North Broad Street remained largely undeveloped prior to the Civil War.

Figure 17: City Atlas of Philadelphia, G. M. Hopkins, 1875.
Figure 18: Baist’s Property Atlas, G.Wm. Baist, 1895.

Figure 19: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, G.W. Bromley and Co., 1910.
Figure 20:  *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia (Central)*, G.W. Bromley and Co., 1922.

Figure 21:  *Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas*, Philadelphia Volume 7, Plate 614, 1918.
**Figure 22:** Carl P. Berger’s 1914 plans for Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54 (sheet 5 of 9).

**Figure 23:** Carl P. Berger’s 1914 plans for Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54 (sheet 6 of 9).

Figure 24: Circa 1920 Loyal Order of Moose publication.

Figure 25: *Moose Magazine*, October 1926.

Figure 26: Circa 2002 (Buell Kratzer Powell Ltd.)
7. Significance

Operating for nearly half a century as the Blue Horizon boxing auditorium, the property at 1312-16 North Broad Street [legally consolidated as 1314-1316] is a culturally and architecturally significant building whose rich and multifaceted history merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Originally constructed as three contiguous brownstone rowhouses circa 1878, the properties were combined and converted into a fraternal hall by the Loyal Order of Moose in 1914, with a large auditorium addition designed by architect Carl Berger completed in 1916. In 1961, the property was renamed the Blue Horizon and hosted its first professional boxing match. Before its eventual closure in 2010, “The Blue” was the last-surviving and longest-operating of the many neighborhood boxing clubs which characterized the sport in twentieth-century Philadelphia. Its intimate, unpolished atmosphere also drew internal recognition as one of the sport’s most celebrated venues. Reflecting three distinct and significant periods of development, the property meets the following criteria for historic designation as stated in Philadelphia’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-1004 (1):

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

c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;

and

j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

Featuring a largely intact row of brownstone rowhouse facades, the property is a noteworthy example of speculative upper-middle-class nineteenth-century residential development along North Broad Street, reflecting the environment in an era characterized by distinctive Italianate-influenced Second Empire rowhouse design (Criterion C) reflected in the building’s brownstone cladding, round-arched windows and doors, ornamentation, and mansard roof massing. In addition to its architectural significance and integrity, the property is noteworthy for its character, interest, and value as part of Philadelphia’s development, heritage
and cultural characteristics (Criterion A), uniquely exemplifying the evolving cultural, economic, and social heritage of its North Philadelphia neighborhood over the course of one hundred and fifty years (Criterion J). This heritage is reflected not only in its unparalleled legacy as a Philadelphia boxing institution, but also in its earlier periods of development that include associations with prominent early residents Gustav Schwarz, Theodore Armstrong, and Moses Aaron Dropsie, as well as the property’s later conversion and expansion into the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54, whose 18,000 members in 1914 constituted one of the largest single chapters of any fraternal organization in the country. The building’s architectural and cultural significance therefore includes the prominent 1914-1916 auditorium addition, a major character-defining feature of the site.

Residential History (c. 1878-1912)

In 1863, the Farmers and Mechanics Land and Building Association conveyed the site containing 1312-1316 N. Broad Street to Richard J. Dobbins, a prolific builder and developer active in Philadelphia’s northward expansion in the decades following the Civil War. The land was undeveloped at the time of the transaction, as was the majority of Broad Street north of Girard Avenue. Samuel L. Smedley’s 1862 Atlas of the City of Philadelphia depicts higher-density rowhouse development concentrated between 15th and 17th Streets north of Girard, an area well-served by two new streetcar loops, but only a few buildings on Broad Street proper [Fig. 16]. By 1875, more of Broad Street had been developed, including a row of houses built by Dobbins at 1300-1310 North Broad Street [Fig. 17], but the parcels containing 1312-1316 remained undeveloped for fifteen years following Dobbins’ ownership.

The first evidence of buildings on the property appears in March 1878, when Jacob Seneff took out fire insurance policies for buildings at 1312, 1314 and 1316 N. Broad Street with the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company. The policies describe each property as a “three story brick dwelling house with mansard roof” featuring brownstone fronts and slate-clad mansards, each insured for $10,000. Seneff is listed as a carpenter in McElroy’s Philadelphia City Directory of 1867 and appears to have briefly owned or leased the properties from Dobbins.

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6 Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company Survey #10655, March 5, 1878.
before a sheriff’s sale returned full title back to Dobbins in October 1878. The nature of Dobbins’ relationship to Seneff is unclear, but Seneff’s vocation suggests that he may have played a role in the construction of the row. Following the sheriff’s sale, Dobbins replaced Seneff on the insurance policies in 1882. The first recorded residents of the row were John and Mary Love, who purchased 1314 from Dobbins in 1881 and appeared in that year’s Boyd’s Blue Book as residents at the address. The other two units were apparently slower to be filled, with Mr. and Mrs. George Bumm first occupying 1316 in 1884 and Mr. and Mrs. James Pollack occupying 1312 in 1889.

The turn of the twentieth century marked the height of North Broad Street’s stature as a nouveau riche residential enclave. The social character of the row is succinctly reflected in the 1900 federal census, which recorded the households of Thomas Armstrong, Gustav Schwarz, and Moses Aaron Dropsie at 1312, 1314, and 1316 North Broad Street, respectively. Each was an established and successful businessman whose move to North Broad Street in the late 1880s and early 1890s reflected the upwardly-mobile nature of their own career paths as well as the rising cache of the neighborhood.

Theodore Armstrong’s wife Fannie purchased 1312 N. Broad Street from Wilhelmina Dobbins, trustee of the Richard J. Dobbins estate, in 1894. According to Blue Book listings, Theodore and Fannie moved to 1312 in 1895 from their previous residence at 742 N. 20th Street; at the time of the 1900 census, their household included three sons (aged 31, 29, and 13), two Irish-born female servants, and a Pennsylvania-born African American coachman. Theodore Armstrong was born in New York City in 1844 and served in the Union Army during the Civil War. After working for seven years in western Pennsylvania for the the Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing Company, he was transferred to Philadelphia in 1873 and rose to the office of company president in 1887. He was a member of the Union League, the Manufacturer’s Club, and more than a dozen other clubs and professional organizations.

Next door, the German-born Gustav Schwarz resided at 1314 with his wife Theresa[?], son Henry, and two female servants (one Irish-born and one German-born). Schwarz owned the

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7 Sheriff’s Deed Book CP, Book 74, page 346, Oct. 19, 1878.
8 Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company Survey #12301, March 10, 1882.
9 Deed Book LW, Book 169, page 520, June 25, 1881.
10 Deed Book JJC, Book 8, page 536, October 4, 1894.
G.A. Schwarz Toy Emporium, which operated at 1006 Chestnut Street from 1859 to 1917. Schwarz was one of four brothers who owned toy stores in New York City, Baltimore, Boston and Philadelphia, the most famous being New York’s F.A.O. Schwarz.13 Gustav purchased 1314 in 1889 and moved there the following year from 133 N. 19th Street.14

Perhaps the most notable resident of the row, Moses Aaron Dropsie (1821-1905) purchased 1316 in 1886 and lived there with his brother Gabriel, sister Elizabeth Lazarus, and two female servants (one a white Pennsylvania native and the other an Irish immigrant).15 Dropsie was born in Philadelphia to Dutch immigrant parents. His father was Jewish and his mother was Christian; at the age of fourteen, Moses formally converted to Judaism. After a watchmaking apprenticeship, he pursued a career in law and was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar in 1851. At the same time, he invested heavily in early Philadelphia streetcar lines, eventually becoming president of both the Lombard and South Street Company and the Green and Coates Streets Company. Dedicated to the cause of Hebrew education in America, he also served as president of Gratz College and bequeathed $800,000 in his will for the establishment of Dropsie College, which first held classes in 1909 and opened its landmark building at 2321 North Broad Street in 1912.16

At the time of the 1910 census, Thomas and Fannie Armstrong (then aged 62 and 60, respectively) continued to reside at 1312, Moses Dropsie’s sister Elizabeth Lazarus (then aged 87) remained at 1316, and the former Schwartz residence at 1314 was vacant. North Broad Street had begun to lose some of its wealthier residents to more prestigious suburban neighborhoods, and like the 1312-16 row, long-time residents were aging. But at the same time, the neighborhood experienced a new influx of activity as cultural and civic institutions increasingly located along the street. While some, like Dropsie College and the Mercantile Club at 1422-26 N. Broad Street (1892, demolished) constructed grand purpose-built structures, many others established themselves in former residences. For example, the Philadelphia School of

14 Deed Book GGP, Book 576, page 278, Dec. 7, 1889; Boyd’s Blue Book, 1887
15 Deed Book GGP Book 194 page 18, Sept. 16, 1886; Twelfth Census.
Design for Women (later Moore College of Art) relocated to the former Edwin Forrest House at 1326 N Broad Street in 1880. La Salle College moved into a former mansion at 1240 N. Broad Street in 1886. In 1900, Peter A. B. Widener donated his mansion at Broad and Girard to the Free Library of Philadelphia, which established the Josephine Widener Memorial Library in the converted residence. In the years following the establishment of the Moose Lodge, the Knights of Columbus converted a residential property at 1326 N. Broad Street into their clubhouse, as did the Patriotic Order Sons of America at 1317 N. Broad Street and the Irish-American Club at 1428 N. Broad Street.17

Loyal Order Of Moose Lodge 54 (1912-1961)

Between May 1912 and June 1913, agents working on behalf of the Loyal Order of Moose acquired all three properties at 1312-16 N. Broad street for the purpose of establishing a new clubhouse. The Loyal Order of Moose was founded as a fraternal organization in Louisville, Kentucky in 1888 by Dr. John Henry Wilson. In its early years, local chapters known as “lodges” were established in a number of Midwestern cities, but by 1906 membership had shrunk to less than 250 members and only two active lodges.18 The founding of Philadelphia’s first local chapter, Lodge 54, in 1908 corresponded with the organization’s rapid national growth under the direction of “Supreme Organizer” James J. Davis, a Welsh immigrant and steel worker in Indiana and Western Pennsylvania who would later serve as Secretary of Labor under Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Beginning in 1907, Davis promoted Moose membership to a primarily working-class population as vehicle for social welfare; with modest annual dues between five and ten dollars, families were assured benefits in the event that a member died or was disabled.19 In addition, Moose lodges provided members a place to socialize and recreate, offering “a new kind of saloon wherein weary men could play poker and discuss the affairs of mankind in a more genial atmosphere than obtained in regular barrooms.”20 Between 1907 and 1912, Moose membership grew to include nearly a half-million individuals in more than one thousand lodges.21 Davis was personally responsible for recruiting the first one

19 Ibid.
hundred charter members of Philadelphia’s Lodge 54, which was founded in October 1908.\textsuperscript{22} The lodge initially met in a clubhouse at 857 North Broad Street, but rapidly growing membership soon led the chapter to plan a large new facility.\textsuperscript{23} In May 1912, the brownstones at 1314 and 1316 N. Broad were purchased for a new clubhouse, and 1312 N. Broad Street was acquired the following year.\textsuperscript{24} Between 1914 and 1916, the property was renovated to roughly its current configuration, with a large rear addition spanning the three original lots and extending back to Carlisle Street. The ground floor of the addition featured a banquet hall, while the upper floors contained an auditorium with a stage, proscenium, and U-shaped balcony. Offices, parlors, and auxiliary spaces filled the fronts of the original rowhouses and a rathskeller was added in the basement.\textsuperscript{25} Though original plans called for the total recladding of the original Broad Street elevations in white marble, only minor facade alterations were eventually undertaken. The most substantial exterior changes to the front facades included the reconfiguration of the ground floor at 1316 into a three-bay grand auditorium entrance with projecting canopy and the addition of the sculpted moose head between the doorways at 1312 and 1314.

The alterations and additions were designed by Philadelphia architect Carl P. Berger (1873-1947), a prolific designer of houses, theaters, banks and social halls across the state in the first decades of the twentieth century. Berger served as treasurer of Moose Lodge 54 for over two decades and also designed Moose facilities in Bucks, Dauphin, and Delaware Counties.\textsuperscript{26} Berger’s original 1914 drawings for the lodge expansion survive as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s Carl P. Berger Collection, as do plans for a grandiose 1929 addition that was never executed (presumably due to the onset of the Great Depression).\textsuperscript{27} When the new Moose Lodge 54 was completed in 1916, the lodge claimed to have the largest membership of any chapter of any fraternal organization in the world, and the auditorium

\textsuperscript{22} “Order of Moose Forms Lodge Here,” \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}, Oct. 18, 1908, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{24} “Moose to Build Home,” Philadelphia Inquirer, May 26, 1912, p. 7; “Review of Week in Real Estate,” Philadelphia Inquirer, June 1, 1913, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{25} “Journeys to Homes of the Moose,” \textit{Moose Magazine}, October 1926.
\textsuperscript{27} Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Carl P. Berger Collection, Folders 25-26. \textit{The Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey} form for the property completed in April 2000 by George Thomas misidentifies the date of the existing auditorium addition to 1928, likely as a result of this unexecuted building campaign.
was designed in part for massive annual induction ceremonies that numbered in the thousands. The 1,500-seat facility also hosted regular lectures, theatrical and musical performances and sporting events (including at least two boxing matches in 1938), and was regularly advertised for special events rentals in the Philadelphia Inquirer, along with its ground-floor banquet hall.

A few other comparable working-class fraternal halls from this era survive in Philadelphia, including the Philadelphia Register-listed Elks Lodge #2 at 1320-22 Arch Street (Caldwell & Simon, 1904) and the former Improved Order of Red Men headquarters at 1521-23 Girard Avenue, also designed by Carl Berger and built circa 1921. However, the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54 remains unique in both the size of its membership at the height of fraternal activities in early twentieth-century Philadelphia, the lodge’s relatively intact state of preservation, and its rich post-fraternal history, in which it attained worldwide renown as a professional boxing venue.

**Legendary Blue Horizon (1961-2010)**

The property ceased operations as an active Moose lodge in the years following World War II but remained under the organization’s ownership through the 1950s. In 1961, the property was purchased by Jimmy Toppi Enterprises, a father-son promotional team that operated a number of boxing and events venues across the city, including the Olympia Athletic Club, the Imperial Ballroom, the Alhambra, the Plaza, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the short-lived Toppi Stadium. Like Moose Lodge 54, the majority of the Toppi’s other properties were former auditoriums or theaters converted to host boxing matches and other events, including rollerskating, wrestling, weddings, jazz concerts, and cabaret nights. In the case of the Blue Horizon, very little was done to alter the facility from its incarnation as a Moose Lodge, with the auditorium retaining its original stage, proscineum, balconies, seats, and assorted Moose-related commemorative plaques. On November 3, 1961, the newly rechristened Blue Horizon hosted its first fight night, headlined by Philadelphia boxer George Benton’s third-round knockout victory over Chico Corsey.

At the time the Blue Horizon opened, boxing was an established and popular spectator sport with a history in Philadelphia stretching back to the colonial era. Early bouts were

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typically clandestine, bare-knuckle contests popular among immigrant, working-class populations and vilified by the city’s Quaker elites. The sport’s gradual path towards respectability traveled in fits and starts, aided in part by the adoption of standardized rules (known as the Queensberry Rules) that established universal standards of fair play, proper equipment, and duration of rounds. Another contributing factor was the nineteenth-century rise in organized physical education and the establishment of private gymnasiums and athletic clubs where boxing or “sparring” was practiced as a means of exercise [Fig. 27].

As a spectator sport, nineteenth-century prize fights were held in athletic clubs and “boxing salons” across the city. Perhaps the most famous venue of this era was the Philadelphia Arena at Broad and Cherry Streets, immortalized in the 1898 Thomas Eakins painting Between Rounds [Fig. 28]; other popular venues included the Olympic Athletic Club at 8th and Vine Streets and the Broadway Athletic Club at 15th and Washington Streets.

By the early twentieth century, these were joined or supplanted by the Olympia Athletic Club, the National Athletic Club, and the Cabria Club, as well as by fights in the city’s major outdoor stadiums, including Shibe Park, the Baker Bowl, and Sesquicentennial Stadium (later known as Municipal Stadium and JFK Stadium), where a heavyweight championship bout between Jack Demsey and Gene Tunney set an attendance record of 120,757. While such events demonstrate the immense popularity that boxing had attained by the 1920s, the vast majority of professional matches were held in much smaller venues, often converted from other uses. As described in a Philadelphia Public Ledger editorial in 1911,

Philadelphia, it appears, is the boxing center of the universe. The sport reaches its height of popularity here; the number of contests is unending, the host of ambitious young men who are trying to develop a useful “wallup” constitutes an army, and the constant succession of crowded houses testifies to the ‘drawing power’ of the exhibitions of “the noble art of self-defense.” ... There are several arenas, there are several exhibitors each week, and on a “good night” with a “strong card” thousands are in attendance.

The popularity of boxing and boxing venues continued throughout the twentieth century. Some clubs were short-lived; the Alhambra was a former movie theater at 12th, Morris, and

Passyunk Avenue that only hosted fights for three years between 1959 and 1962 [Fig. 29].\(^{33}\)
Others enjoyed much longer tenures; the Cambria Club operated in another converted movie theater at Kensington and Sommerset Streets from 1917 to 1963. Known as the “Bucket of Blood,” the Cambria was nationally recognized at the time of its closing as the oldest boxing arena in the country.\(^{34}\)

Within this context, the Blue Horizon stands out as the most famous, longest-operating, and last surviving example of Philadelphia’s rich collection of twentieth-century boxing venues. The auditorium’s dimensions and configuration were ideally suited to boxing, where 1,500 spectators were accommodated on the auditorium floor and in balcony seating on three sides of the ring [Fig. 30]. “There isn't another sports arena in the country remotely like the Blue Horizon,” wrote Bill Barich in a 1996 *Sports Illustrated* feature story on the venue. “It's the sort of raw and smoky cavern that George Bellows painted early this century, a throw back to the era of straw hats, stogies and dime beers…. From the rickety balcony, an overexcited spectator can practically reach down and slug the participants.... Indeed, if boxing has a soul, it might well be located in the City of Brotherly Love.”\(^{35}\)

The intimate atmosphere of the Blue Horizon was also ideally suited to televised boxing, which drew even more attention to the venue. The first nationally televised bout at the Blue Horizon was held in 1963, and the club was a regular host of the USA Network’s “Tuesday Night Fight” series in the 1980s and 1990s.\(^{36}\) In addition to television coverage, the Blue Horizon has been featured in national publications including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Ring Magazine*, which famously dubbed the club “the best boxing venue in the world” in 1999.

Between 1969 and 2001, most fights at the Blue Horizon were booked by Hall of Fame promoter J. Russell Peltz, whose career was launched in 1969 when Jimmy Toppi Jr. hired the then-22-year-old rookie journalist to promote fights at venue.\(^{37}\) Over the course of its 49-year boxing tenure, the Blue Horizon hosted more than fifty future or former world champion boxers,
including Bernard Hopkins, Matthew Saad Muhammad, Meldrick Taylor, Tim Witherspoon, and Sugar Ray Leonard.  

In 1988, Toppi sold the property to Ross Collette, the pastor of New Horizons Baptist Church. The congregation used the ground-floor ballroom for weekly services while boxing continued in the auditorium upstairs. Six years later, the property was purchased current owner of record Ray-Whittier, Inc, a partnership between Vernoca Michael, Carol Ray, and Carol Whittaker.  

In 2004, the partnership oversaw a $2 million rehabilitation project that stabilized and restored the building’s auditorium space and exterior. As the country’s first licensed female African American boxing promoter, Michael booked regular fights at the Blue Horizon until the venue’s abrupt and unfortunate closing in 2010. Since that time, no significant changes have occurred to either the building’s exterior or auditorium space.

Conclusion

Given the social, cultural, and architectural significance of the property commonly known as the Blue Horizon, 1314-16 N. Broad Street clearly merits historic designation under Philadelphia’s Historic Preservation Ordinance. The property’s three distinct incarnations—first, as a fashionable nineteenth-century residential row; second, as a notable early-twentieth-century fraternal club; and third, as a world-renowned boxing venue in the late twentieth century—uniquely reflect the cultural heritage of North Broad Street and the City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criteria A and J of the Preservation Ordinance. In addition, as both a rare surviving example of Victorian rowhouse on North Broad Street significantly modified for use as a prominent fraternal clubhouse, Criterion C is likewise satisfied.

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Figure 27: Circa 1863 advertisement for the Philadelphia Physical Institute promoting the benefits of boxing (at lower right) and other activities for the “proper development of strength, health, mind and the cure of chronic affections.”

Source: Library Company of Philadelphia Digital Collections, P.8719.26
Figure 28: Thomas Eakins, *Between Rounds* (1898-1899) depicts the interior of the Philadelphia Arena at Broad and Cherry Streets (demolished).

Figure 29: The former Alhambra Theater converted into a boxing arena, circa 1959. Temple Urban Archives Collection.  

Figure 30: Poster for a nationally-televised 1964 bout at the Blue Horizon.  
Source: http://www.phillyboxinghistory.com/posters/images/19640501po.jpg
Figure 31: Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 54, auditorium interior circa 1928, looking from stage towards balcony.
Source: Moose Magazine, October 1928.

Figure 32: Blue Horizon interior in 1971, looking from balcony towards ring (with original stage visible beyond), Temple Urban Archives Collection.
Figure 33: Circa 1980s view of Blue Horizon interior.  
Source: http://www.phillyboxinghistory.com/venues/venue_blue.htm

Figure 34: Blue Horizon interior following 2003 restoration. 
Photo credit: Buell Kratzer Powell, Ltd.
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