

**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)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with a Board of Revision of Taxes address)

Street address: **1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway**

Postal code: **19103-1205**

Councilmanic District: **5th District**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **United Fund Building**

Common Name: **United Way Building**

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: excellent good fair poor ruins

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: Office Building

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED

6. DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTECHED

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Period of Significance (from year to year): **1969-1971**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **1969-1971; concrete painted c.1995**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Mitchell/Giurgola Associates**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **Hughes-Foulkrod Construction Co.**

Original owner: **United Fund**

Other significant persons:

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (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; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) 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,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) 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,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTCHED

9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title: Ben Leech (Director of Advocacy) with Kristin Hagar (Graduate Intern) Email: ben@preservationalliance.com

Organization: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Date: 9/13/2010

Street Address: 1616 Walnut Street, Suite 1620

Telephone: 215-546-1146 x5

City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19103

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: _____

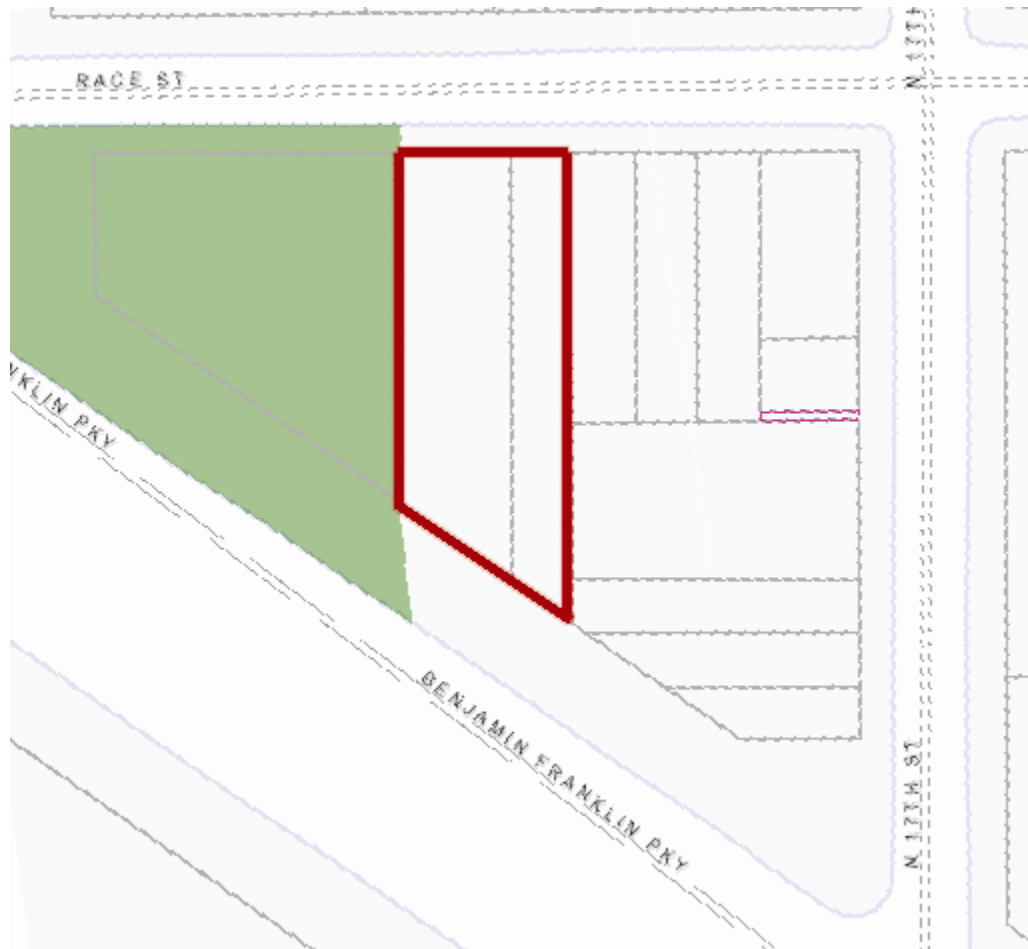
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

5. Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the south side of Race Street at a distance of 99 feet west from the west side of 17th Street, the property boundary extends eastward along Race Street for a distance of 59 feet 3 inches; thence southward 117 feet 11-1/2 inches to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway; thence southeast along the Parkway for a distance of 69 feet 8-3/8 inches to a point; thence northward 158 feet 8-3/8 inches to the point of origin. This boundary circumscribes four contiguous parcels described as Parcels A (1710 Race Street), B (no address), C (1712-14 Race Street) and D (no address) delineated by Parcel Register 01-N-23 and now known as 1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway.



6. Description

The United Fund Building, also known as the United Way Headquarters, is located at 1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the northwestern quadrant of Center City. The seven-story building is comprised of grey glass and beige painted poured-in-place concrete and has a flat roof, with a one-story flat-roofed pilot house set back from the south, west, and north facades [Fig. 1]. The site is located within a comparatively small, triangular block formed by the Parkway's diagonal bisection of 17th and Race Streets. The United Fund organization purchased the property in January 1967 and commissioned the building; it remains the owner today. The western portion of the block is city parkland with lightly scattered trees and a large memorial sculpture commemorating Nicolaus Copernicus (Kopernik) and the city's Polish community, and the eastern portion retains an historic rowhouse streetscape along 17th Street (including a prominent church structure) and Race Street.

The building has a trapezoidal footprint that fills the entirety of its lot. Because of the siting there are three primary elevations. The west and south elevations are both oriented to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, while the north elevation faces Race Street [Figs. 2-4]. The east elevation is partially obscured by adjacent structures, though its upper floors are also visible from the Parkway [Fig. 5]. The building envelope is a combination of glass and concrete. The glass is grey tinted with dark grey anodized aluminum mullions. The concrete bears subtle form-work marks typical of poured in place concrete and is incised with narrow, horizontal lines of relief [Fig.6]. Originally left raw, the concrete has been painted a neutral cement beige color in response to weathering, which also obscures some of the original form-work details.¹ Each of the four elevations combines these two primary materials in unique ways, responding to the context of the site.

The west elevation is comprised of a concrete sunscreen set in front of a glass curtain wall. Long horizontal openings in this concrete façade expose ribbon-like bands of the glass curtain wall at each floor level, each band divided by thirty-six mullions. Below each band of glass, the concrete sunscreen tapers inward to meet the base of the exposed glass, forming a continuous beveled sill [Fig. 7]. The sunscreen panels cover roughly the top and bottom third of each floor height. Where the building meets the ground there is a battered concrete base that repeats the angle of the recessed sills above. The top of the concrete façade is a panel approximately double the height of screen panels below, forming a parapet that rises above the roofline. It features a rectangular opening above the 24th through 28th windows, aligned above a corresponding notch at ground level to accommodate an auxiliary double-leaf glass door. Currently, all of the sunscreen openings are covered by a protective black mesh; this is not part of the original design.

The south elevation, like the west elevation, is also comprised of a mixture of glass and concrete. However, here the concrete does not function as a sunscreen but as a bearing wall. The acute angle between the

¹ B.R. Beier, "Preserving the Work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates" (Masters Thesis), University of Pennsylvania, 2006, 51.

west and southwest elevations necessitates additional support (from the wall) to the building's column-and-beam concrete frame.² The concrete wall is punctured by deep recesses revealing inset curtain glass windows [Fig. 8]. There are six recesses in total: the two uppermost provide windows on the 6th and 7th floors; the two middle openings provide windows on the 3rd, 4th and 5th floors; and the lower openings provide 2nd floor windows. At the first floor, there are two fixed-pane windows in plane with the façade and an offset auxiliary metal door. The building's main entrance is located at the corner of this and the west elevation. The walls' concrete edges do not meet but rather are indented to form a glass-walled recess that emphasizes the entryway. The glass double doors feature polished steel frames and a painted glass transom denoting the United Way name, logo, and address [Fig. 9].

The north elevation on Race Street is entirely glass curtain wall, divided vertically by fifteen mullions and horizontally by six mullions, offset from the floor plates to allow full visibility of the concrete frame behind the facade. The glass also reflects the surrounding streetscape over its entire façade, including the notable oxidized copper dome of the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul [Fig. 10]. A concrete framed loading dock is located in the place of what would have been the fourth through seventh windows of the first floor.

The east elevation is mostly hidden from view by adjacent buildings. Only the extreme southern end of this façade is fully visible, while portions of its upper stories can be seen above the adjacent two- and three-story buildings on 17th Street. This façade features three vertical strips of windows set into a flat concrete facade. The southernmost bay is an uninterrupted glass curtain in plane with the concrete but terminating below the height of the parapet. The middle bay is recessed at an angle to accommodate another thin strip of glass facing southeast. This recessed bay is topped by a sign panel featuring the United Fund logo. The third bay is composed of three stacked upper-story windows set in plane with the concrete and divided by concrete spandrels. The elevation rises a story higher in the middle to accommodate a pilot house.

² J. M. Dixon, "Headquarters Building, United Fund of the Philadelphia Area," *Architectural Forum*, 134, 1 (Jan-Feb 1971), 42.



Figure 1: United Fund Building as viewed from the northeast (September 2010)

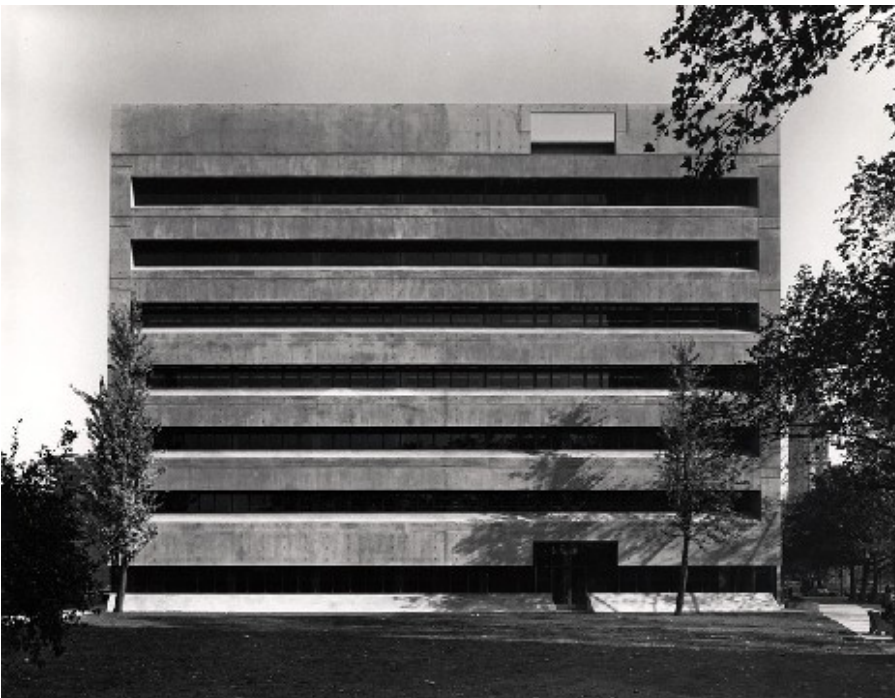


Figure 2: West Elevation, c.1971 (Rollin R. La France, photographer) Mitchell/Giurgola (Philadelphia Office) Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.



Figure 3: South elevation (September 2010)



Figure 4: North elevation (September 2010)



Figure 5: South and east elevations (September 2010)



Figure 6: South elevation detail (September 2010)



Figure 7: West elevation detail (September 2010)

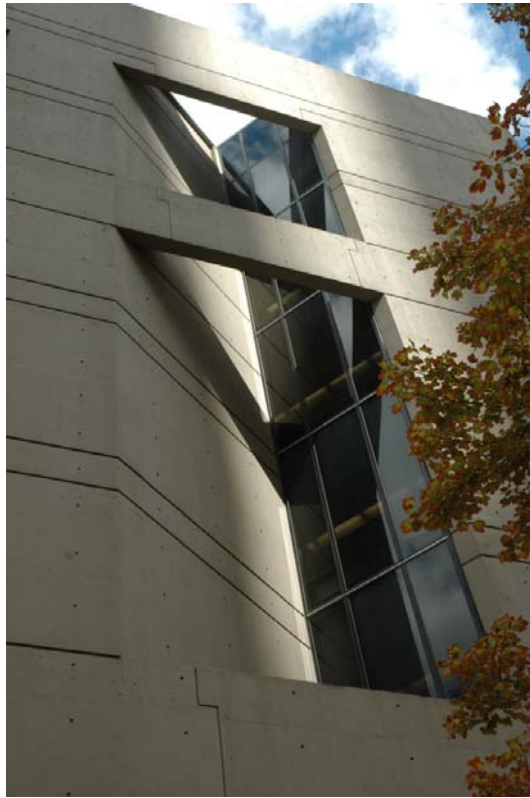


Figure 8: South elevation detail (September 2010)



Figure 9: Entrance detail (September 2010)



Figure 10: North elevation detail (September 2010)

7. Significance

The United Fund Building at 1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway is a sophisticated response to environment and urban context characteristic of the mid-twentieth-century work of the Philadelphia-based firm Mitchell/Giurgola Associates. The building combines poured-in-place concrete with curtain glass, exhibits innovative façade treatment, and achieves a civic-oriented monumentality that respects its setting on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Mitchell/Giurgola was a leader among the “Philadelphia School” architects and planners based at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1960s, and among the most prolific in terms of number of projects realized. The firm was an influential presence in both the national and international architectural arenas in the 1960s through 1980s, most notably evidenced by its competition-winning design for the Australian Parliament House in Canberra. But while their buildings and influence span the globe, the greatest concentration of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates’ work is in the Philadelphia area. Exemplary among its Philadelphia projects, the United Fund Building has been called “one of the most prominent and significant modernist designs in Philadelphia in mid-century.”³

The United Fund Building meets the following criteria for designation as set forth by the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007(5), of the Philadelphia Code:

- (e) 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;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; and
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City.

In addition, through its association with the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania it also merits listing under the additional criterion:

- (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.

³ M. Clendenin with Introduction by E.T. Cooperman, "Thematic Context Statement: Modernism: 1945 to 1980" (available: www.PreservePhiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/HCSModernism.pdf), 22.

Criterion E: 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.

Mitchell/Giurgola Associates is recognized as one of the most distinguished American architectural firms of the mid-20th century. The firm was awarded the American Institute of Architect's Firm Award in 1976. Romaldo Giurgola, the firm's principal designer, received the AIA Gold Medal in 1981 and Ehrman B. Mitchell was elected national president of the AIA in 1979. Mitchell/Giurgola Associates achieved international renown with its consistently innovative, contextually sensitive designs and through the professional and academic activities of its principals.

Ehrman B. Mitchell and Romaldo Giurgola established Mitchell/Giurgola Associates in 1958 after working together in the offices of Philadelphia architectural and engineering firm Bellante and Clauss. Born in Italy and educated at the University of Rome, Giurgola came to the United States in 1950 to study at Columbia and then taught at Cornell. Because of his excellent drawing skills many architecture firms hired him to prepare renderings, including Bellante and Clauss. Mitchell studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and had headed Bellante and Clauss's offices in London and Arizona. Their partnership was formed to design the Wright Brothers Museum in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Mitchell/Giurgola Associates soon became a leader among an emerging generation of architects and planners associated with University of Pennsylvania in the 1960s, including Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, Robert Geddes and George Qualls, first dubbed the "Philadelphia School" by *Progressive Architecture* editor Jan C. Rowan in 1961.⁴ Mitchell/Giurgola's early reputation burgeoned through their notable contributions to high-profile design competitions, including the 1962 competition for Boston's City Hall, in which they placed second with a design that many regard as more innovative than the winning design. It is retrospectively viewed as ahead of its time in departing from the prevailing bold, classical monumentality with an open-ended scheme, an approach which would become a hallmark of their architectural philosophy. Other competition-winning designs included the American Institute of Architects Headquarters in Washington, DC (1965), the renovations of the Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building in St Louis (1981), and the firm's biggest achievement, the Australian Parliament House in Canberra (1980).

Although Mitchell/Giurgola's buildings span the globe, nowhere were they more successful than in Philadelphia in the 1960s and '70s.⁵ Like the United Fund Building, their Philadelphia area commissions of the time were predominantly public/institutional and corporate office buildings, including the American College campus in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania (1968-72), the INA Tower (1971-75), Swarthmore College's Lang Music

⁴ J. C. Rowan, "Wanting To Be: The Philadelphia School," *Progressive Architecture* (April 1961), 131-63.

⁵ B. R. Beier, "Preserving the Work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates" (Masters Thesis) (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2006), 30.

Building (1970-74), the Liberty Bell Pavilion (1974-76), the Penn Mutual Tower (1971-75), the Tredyffrin Township Public Library in Strafford, Pennsylvania (1974-76), and William Penn High School (1967-75). Other notable projects include houses in Society Hill and Chestnut Hill, two parking garages at the University of Pennsylvania and an addition to the University Museum. Giurgola also served as a consultant to the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on the Market East Project (1963-65). In the view of noted architectural critic Paul Goldberger, they impacted the Philadelphia landscape “in a way that no architects of serious quality have done on any city since Mies van der Rohe started building in Chicago,” achieving what Goldberger called “one of the most successful balances between serious design and pragmatic business sense of any firm practicing [in the 1970s] in the United States.”⁶

The work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates is particularly representative of the Philadelphia School’s emphasis on contextuality. In the Philadelphia context specifically, this entailed a recognition of the extensive fabric of 18th and 19th century buildings “in which the threads of 250 years of evolution were woven.”⁷ Mitchell/Giurgola saw relevant architectural value in old forms, as well as the importance for modern design to interact with the broader urban landscape. In Giurgola’s words, “A building is no more than a fragment of the fabric of our environment, a fragment seeking the measure of its relationship with other elements: trees, water, meadows, sky, other buildings, or other open spaces of the city.”⁸

Jan Rowan’s seminal essay on the Philadelphia School—published only three years after Mitchell/Giurgola was founded—highlights the approach that Giurgola took in an earlier design for a school administration building. He began with a “completely symmetrical solution,” then altered different parts as differing needs forced changes, yet managed to retain the essential concept of a “college building”.⁹ The United Fund Building, completed a decade after this article, is a masterwork of their honed approach of design bound by the realities of program and place. *Architectural Forum* wrote, “very simple internal needs—for a ‘box’ of office space—have been acted on by compelling external demands—need for sunscreens, shape of site, etc.—and the resulting design symbolizes this interplay of forces.”¹⁰

The review continues: “The location along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, determined just about everything about the form of the building.” Indeed, the external demands were strong. Mitchell/Giurgola dealt with them by discarding “early Modern inhibitions about structural honesty” in order to focus on what is more important: reconciling what the building and what the environment call for, the building’s internal need to be a

⁶ P. Goldberger, “Innovative Firm Puts Its Imprint on Philadelphia,” *New York Times* (May 6, 1976).

⁷ M. Clendenin with Introduction by E.T. Cooperman, “Thematic Context Statement: Modernism: 1945 to 1980” (available: www.PreservePhiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/HCSModernism.pdf), 4.

⁸ Quoted in K. Frampton, Foreword, in E. B. Mitchell & R. Giurgola, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 9.

⁹ J. C. Rowan, “Wanting To Be: The Philadelphia School,” *Progressive Architecture* (April 1961), 131.

¹⁰ J. M. Dixon, “Headquarters Building, United Fund of the Philadelphia Area,” *Architectural Forum*, 134, 1 (Jan-Feb 1971), 41.

box of offices conducive to daytime working, and the external need for suitability and sufficient presence for a civic-oriented thoroughfare.

Rather than sterile functionalism or anything-goes eclecticism, Philadelphia School designers sought a balanced approach, retaining integrity of concept and a sense of unity and meaningfulness in expression, nonetheless directly addressing particularities in programmatic needs, environmental and urban/site conditions, and historical influences. In contrast to others associated with the Philadelphia School, namely Robert Venturi, Giurgola's use of history in modern design entailed the sensitive integration of the site's surroundings into the new design, as opposed to literal use of historical elements for communicative or charismatic ends. While Venturi fostered a sense of complexity and contradiction through perceptual ambiguity in the relationship between a building's parts and their contemporary meaning, Giurgola facilitated an intriguing tension between a building itself and its environment. In Giurgola designs, tensions may be explicitly addressed between new building and older surroundings, between the original and the addition, between simple composition and multidimensional facets, all of which reflect the impermanence and dynamism that he believed are innate to the built environment. For Mitchell/Giurgola scholar Brendan Beier, in sum, contextual sensitivity "is perhaps the primary hallmark of the firm" and their "greatest departure from orthodox Modernism is their resolute belief that architecture should not exist in a vacuum, driven and shaped by abstract ideology."¹¹

Criterion F: Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation

The United Fund Building is innovative in its design through its employment of distinctively different faces to respond to the urban and environmental context and through the innovative manner in which it combines poured in place concrete elements with tinted glass. In the context of the late 1960s, the building was "a dramatic contrast to the uniform exterior character of most contemporary buildings."¹² This employment of distinctively articulated independent facades, each inspired by the particularities of the building site and the broader urban context, is among the most significant characteristics of the United Fund Building. The north elevation is entirely glass curtain wall, reflecting the lack of need for sun protection. This allows for maximum natural light on a smaller-scale, narrower street and allowing views of the magnificent Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul across the street. The west elevation also permits views of the Cathedral and the broader Parkway/Logan Circle landscape but contains the sunscreen, which shades excessive sunlight as well as contains the perimeter air duct system. The southwest elevation is directly on the heavily-trafficked Parkway

¹¹ B. R. Beier, "Preserving the Work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates" (Masters Thesis) (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2006), 25, 32.

¹² J. A. Gallery, *Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Paul Dry, 2009), 138.

and inside houses the executive offices, thus large but deeply recessed, partially shaded windows are suitable. The east elevation is mostly covered by adjacent buildings, but one exposed section, along the Parkway side, is maximized with a vertical strip of windows. Michelle Osborne, architectural critic of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, remarked upon its construction, “With four different faces turned toward four different environments... the building should seem chaotic. Instead, it achieves a ‘difficult unity.’”¹³

The use of the concrete sunscreen made of horizontal panels affixed to the sun-facing sides of a typically glass building, characteristic of Mitchell/Giurgola’s work, is employed to greatest effect both here and in their INA Tower, which also exhibits a north wall of glass and a west wall shaded by long horizontal sun screens. They did not invent the usage—Le Corbusier, for one, had been using similar devices for over twenty years, most notably in his Unités d’Habitation of Marseille, Berlin, and Briey. And a related trend was evident in early-’60s America involving an intermingling of Miesian steel frame/tinted glass and Corbusian exposed concrete. However, for Mitchell/Giurgola the use of concrete in glass buildings was not formalist in intention, not aspiring for monumentality (Frampton emphasizes Giurgola’s distancing himself from his peers’ preoccupation with monumentality¹⁴), but rather in response to their consideration of the environmental needs of a site. In this way they were roughly a decade ahead of their contemporaries.¹⁵ In the 1980s interest among architects in local landscape and climate grew, and buildings that explicitly respond to the particularities proliferated.¹⁶ Giurgola presaged this trend, which he saw vis-à-vis the mid-century modern desire to harness nature through technology. He writes, “It has become increasingly clear throughout past years that built forms gain little by standing in harsh contradiction to the grand design of the natural environment. In the same way that the order of the city naturally varies in response to differences in land configuration, climate or orientation, the design for an individual building should also seek to establish a proper balance between surrounding elements of the natural and built environment.”¹⁷

The sunscreen’s functioning in the United Fund Building may be understood from an additional perspective. Numerous scholars and critics have noted that Mitchell/Giurgola’s buildings—not just the United Fund but others as well—resemble architectural models, with their seemingly detached walls and “cut-out” voids in the elevations, or as “stage-sets,” where a façade appears separate from the structure.¹⁸ This may in part be motivated by a desire for structural expressiveness, but it also seems to be exemplary of site consideration in a broader sense, underscoring their belief that buildings are never isolated objects placed

¹³ M. Osborn, “UF Building on Parkway Called Eloquent in Design,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (April 28, 1970).

¹⁴ K. Frampton, Foreword, in E. B. Mitchell & R. Giurgola, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 8.

¹⁵ J. A. Gallery, *Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Paul Dry, 2009), 138.

¹⁶ W. J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 635-55.

¹⁷ “An Open Letter to Students and Colleagues,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 35, 1 (Autumn 1981), 17.

¹⁸ See B. R. Beier, “Preserving the Work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates” (Masters Thesis) (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2006); D. Bell, “Unity and Aesthetics of Incompletion in Architecture,” *Architectural Design* (July 1979): 175-182; K. Frampton, Foreword, in E. B. Mitchell & R. Giurgola, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983); P. Goldberger, “Innovative Firm Puts Its Imprint on Philadelphia,” *New York Times* (May 6, 1976).

discretely in time and space and are always works in progress and components of a larger scheme. Goldberger notes Giurgola's "realism of the partial vision," in Goldberger's words, "the idea that no building is a perfect, finished object in itself, but merely a part of a greater landscape, and that dealing piece by piece with the problem of the overall landscape is more realistic than proposing a grandiose and total scheme."¹⁹

H: Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City

The United Fund Building is an established feature of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia's principal civic thoroughfare. Its construction represented a continuation of the Parkway's decades-long development as an architectural and civic showcase framed by City Hall at one end and the Philadelphia Art Museum at the other. Within this context, the United Fund Building maintains a sensitive monumentality that is distinctive on both a pedestrian and auto-oriented scale. As Malcolm Clendenin remarks, "The seven-story structure is a sophisticated and nationally influential response to the site limitations and the classicizing architecture on Logan Circle in its breaking up of the mass into lights and darks, its proportions, scale, and overall composition."²⁰ The prominence of the site is especially acute when viewed from the northwest, where the building establishes a strong backdrop to the uninterrupted vistas provided by Logan Circle and the triangular city park at the building's base.

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.

In addition to its primary significance for its architectural design and its architects, the United Fund Building also meets Criterion A through its association with the United Fund, known today as the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, which raises funds and mobilizes resources for local health, education, and social service needs.²¹ Founded in 1921 as the Welfare Federation of Philadelphia, the organization consolidated a disparate collection of overlapping and sometimes redundant charity organizations working across Philadelphia. From late 1957 to 1971, the United Fund rented offices in the Suburban Station Building. By the 1960's, the organization sought their own headquarters, specifying the desire for "an inexpensive building of inconspicuous distinction."²² In January 1967, the United Fund convened a building committee guided by the University of

¹⁹ P. Goldberger, "Innovative Firm Puts Its Imprint on Philadelphia," *New York Times* (May 6, 1976).

²⁰ M. Clendenin with Introduction by E.T. Cooperman, "Thematic Context Statement: Modernism: 1945 to 1980" (available: www.PreservePhiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/HCSModernism.pdf), 22.

²¹ "About UWSEPA: Our History, available http://www.uwsepa.org/aboutus_missionandhistory.asp (accessed August 27, 2010).

²² M. Osborn, "UF Building on Parkway Called Eloquent in Design," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (April 28, 1970).

Pennsylvania's Dean Holmes Perkins and headed by New York investment banker Moreau D. Brown. They recommended both the Benjamin Franklin Parkway site and the architecture firm of Mitchell/Giurgola. The project (including acquisition of the 8,195 square-foot site, clearance, design, and construction) totaled approximately \$3 million, paid by donations from individuals and foundations and not the regular charity contributions. Design began in 1968, construction by Hughes-Foulkrod Construction Co. began in early 1969, and the building opened in 1971.

Conclusion

For a Philadelphia architecture firm among the most prolific and influential of the twentieth century, Mitchell/Giurgola's legacy has been largely underappreciated. Two Mitchell/Giurgola buildings have recently been demolished—the Liberty Bell Pavilion in 2006 and the Philadelphia Life Insurance annex in 2008—and the fate of their William Penn High School building is uncertain following the school's closing in 2009. The United Fund building, meanwhile, has undergone insensitive maintenance work, including painting over the exposed concrete walls.²³

To help rectify this relative inattention to the firm and its work, the United Fund Building presents a worthy opportunity for recognition by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. The architectural significance of the United Fund Building fulfills Designation Criteria E, F, and H, as described in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007(5), of the Philadelphia Code, while its cultural significance fulfills Criterion A. Satisfying Criterion E, the United Fund Building is a definitive work by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates, a Philadelphia-based firm that was nationally and internationally influential, both professionally and academically, in the 1960s through 1980s. Satisfying Criterion F, the United Fund Building exhibits innovative façade treatment and a contextual and environmental sensitivity that was unusual for its time but presaged later architectural interest in locality and climate. Satisfying Criterion H, the United Fund Building is an established feature of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway landscape. Satisfying Criteria A, the United Fund Building was commissioned by one of the city's preeminent charity organizations and has been its headquarters since the building's completion in 1971. The United Fund Building is one of Philadelphia's most noted and influential buildings of mid-century modernism. Satisfying multiple criteria for designation, it merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

²³ B. R. Beier, "Preserving the Work of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates" (Masters Thesis) (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2006), 45.

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