

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**USE THIS COPY
FOR DUPLICATING**

1. Name

historic The Monte Vista

and/or common The Monte Vista

2. Location

street & number 917-931 N. 63rd St.; 6154-6160 Oxford St.; 6151-6157 Nassau Street
N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of _____ congressional district _____

state PA code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> complex	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: flats

4. Owner of Property

name Monte Vista Limited Dividend Housing, Attention: Gordon Ogilvie

street & number 6160 West Oxford Street, "E" Building

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of _____ state PA 19151

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall, Records Room

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pa. Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records PHMC-BHP; Philadelphia Historical Commission

city, town Harrisburg; Philadelphia state PA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	<u>X</u> unaltered	<u>X</u> original site	
<u>X</u> good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved	date <u>N/A</u>
___ fair	___ unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Monte Vista is a complex of four, four-story stone apartment buildings constructed in brick and Port Deposit granite ashlar. The complex is located in the west half of the extended block defined by North 63rd Street, West Oxford Street, North 61st Street, and Nassau Street. The front buildings are oriented to North 63rd Street, a wide, dual carriageway divided by trolley tracks. To the north of West Oxford Street (which is perpendicular to North 63rd Street) is Lebanon Street, intended as a boulevard and still divided by seeded islands. Two brick apartments which post-date the Monte Vista (one is a high rise) are located on North 63rd Street close to Lebanon Avenue; two other later apartments (one of brick, the other of brick and adobed stucco) are located immediately south of the Monte Vista. The neighborhood is residential; the duplex houses which flank North 63rd Street are two-and-one-half- and three-story dwellings built c.1900; these are eclectic in architectural character, affecting revivalist interpretation of Jacobean, Romanesque, and Georgian styles. The secondary streets are built up in rows of two-story houses which have no particular architectural pretension.

The main building of the Monte Vista complex, built in 1910, contains Units A to D. This is a 180 foot wide structure which depends on the rhythms of three pavilions and two squared projecting end-bays to visually break the massing (Photos 1 and 2). Rock-faced limestone belt courses provide horizontal lines above the basement and first floor levels; a galvanized metal cornice based on the Doric order follows the alternating rhythms of the facade, terminating at the east corners with emphatic returns (Photo 3). The center pavilion is crowned by a metal pediment which serves also as a sign identifying the Monte Vista. The end walls of the building are built up in ashlar; the intervening backbuildings are brick (Photo 3).

Units E, F, and G, each three bays wide and dimensioned approximately 48 feet by 156 feet, were constructed in 1915, 1916, and 1921, respectively. These are set behind the main building, their side walls parallel to the front of the main building and their short north and south entrances facing West Oxford and Nassau Streets, respectively (Photos 2 and 4). The court width between these buildings is 20 feet; the court width between these and the main building is 45 feet. Unit F was gutted by fire in the last year and has lost its cornice detail. With this exception, the rear buildings correspond to the main building in exterior finish detail. All stonework is rock faced (Photo 5).

The stonework of all four buildings depends on the texture of the rock-faced tooling, together with the ample size of the ashlar blocks and deliberately executed corners and curves, to produce a bold planar statement which exhibits a strong architectural chiaroscuro. Each of the ten entrances, for instance, features stone archways with jambs executed in hollow chamfers (Photos 6 and 7). Likewise, the corners of the main building are double cut deliberately to provide shadows at the terminal vertical.

In further details, careful attention is paid to alternating entrance features; beginning with 6154 West Oxford Street and continuing around to 6157 Nassau Street, the porticos feature either metal and glass canopies set on double consoles of metal or

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more academically inspired Doric porches (featuring cast-stone Roman Doric columns, and galvanized metal entablatures to correspond) (Photos 1 and 2). Serving some units, including Unit E, is a metal sign which caps the canopy. In this, the metal is cut to display "Monte Vista," the letters taking advantage of the back light of the entrance lamp to provide effective nighttime signage (Photo 7).

Two details mark a subtle difference between Units A, B, C, and D, and Units E, F, and G. The entrance doors of the main building are double leafed, topped by an oversized plate glass fanlight. The doors of the side buildings are single leaf, flanked by sidelights and capped by the same fanlight detail. The north and south walls of the main building feature semi-hexagonal metal oriels which extend from the second through fourth floors; the end bays of the north and south walls of the side buildings echo the geometry of the oriels, but provide bay windows in masonry rather than metal. Each entrance features a lobby wainscoted in marble and floored in tile. The inner doors of these introductory spaces are frosted glass stenciled with the name "Monte Vista" (Photo 8).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect Daniel Crawford, Jr., Builder
James C. Fernald, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Monte Vista makes prominent use of Port Deposit granite to create a monumental effect in an otherwise conservative multiple residence building. Its significance lies primarily, however, in the contribution made by the complex to the speculative suburban development of Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. Particular to its location, the Monte Vista represents not only the early developmental response to the electrification of public transport and its extension to the western city limits; it emphasizes the beginning of a new trend toward maximizing property investment and providing comfortable, affordable housing which was aesthetically admirable as well. The Monte Vista goes a step further than similar ventures in other cities such as New York and Washington in that the Monte Vista provided such alternative housing for middle income clientele as well as for the affluent.

The Monte Vista is located in Overbrook, a streetcar suburb also served by the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Suburban development here was phased over three decades prior to 1930. Because the Overbrook area was not affected by the industrialization which had earlier produced nuclear communities (such as Manayunk, Frankford, and Kensington) within the city, the consequent open space allowed for wide streets, boulevards, and curving lanes. The earliest development consisted of ample simplex and duplex dwellings, built in rather ribbon fashion along the streetcar lines; the second generation brought the ubiquitous rows of commuter housing which walled the narrower east-west streets south of the railroad, while more prestigious single homes were built in quiet lanes set out north of the railroad between the city limits and Fairmount Park. In the midst of this overall resident-oriented housing, the Monte Vista introduced the rental apartment as an alternative type of suburban housing on 63rd Street in a location accessible not only to trolleys but also to trains close by to the north.

The Monte Vista is one of the earliest apartment complexes in Philadelphia; it seems also to have served as a model for the integration of the multiple residence development in neighborhoods otherwise built up in single family tax parcel units. Initiated in Buildings A, B, C, and D, as housing for an affluent clientele, the complex integrated social structure within its ten year plan. The first units, erected on the prime location overlooking 63rd Street, featured three bedroom flats geared to comfortable entertaining supported by resident domestic service; the second and third buildings (E and F) were constructed just prior to World War I as less pretentious residences made up of one and two bedroom apartments. After the war, the last of the four buildings (G) was constructed and fitted out in modest one bedroom units. By 1921, when it was complete, the Monte Vista not only represented a microcosm of the neighborhood, it was the only such new type of housing which addressed a planned social mix. It is reasonable to assume that if the war had not interrupted construction this theme would have been realized by 1917.

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Daniel Crawford, Jr., the contractor-developer of the Monte Vista, was not only a resident of the neighborhood at least by 1910, he was a major developer of the region as well. Crawford's choice of a block-sized complex of flats in an otherwise single family neighborhood was a landmark social and economic venture, not approached again until after this project was completed. With the help of James C. Fernald, a local architect whose work was concentrated in West Philadelphia, Crawford produced a scheme which set up pavilioned four-story facades that played up distinctive but regular rhythms enhanced by a deliberate use of well-crafted granite to achieve a conservative sense of well-being for all classes of commuters.

Whether or not it was the original intention, Crawford phased his construction effort over more than 11 years, and while social and political pressures over that time affected concurrent shifts in density of development and architectural aesthetics, he did not digress from his original architectural theme; the result is a pre-planned complex made up of four buildings which assume the sense of an architectural entity reminiscent somewhat of American collegiate architecture, even to its use of an "institutional" building material rather than the more "domestic" brick used by all the complexes which followed the Monte Vista and which survive to the present.

In both the developmental process and architectural style, the Monte Vista is an excellent example of conservative real estate development in Philadelphia, a city historically bound to such traditions. In function, however, the complex broke from tradition, introducing a new lifestyle which allowed middle income tenants the amenities previously reserved for property owners.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Deed Books CJP2168:377(19480: CJP1892:168(1947).
Registry Unit 68N22-231(1948).
Building Permits 308:Jan. 26, 1910; 1135:Feb. 10, 1915; 770:Feb. 15, 1915.
G. W. Baist, Detailed Property Atlas, West Philadelphia, 1900, Plate 11. (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	4	7	8	9	8	5	4	4	2	5	2	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the southeast corner of N. 63rd St. and Nassau St. and extending north to W. Oxford St., then extending east to the line between Lots and , continue south to Nassau St. and west to the point of beginning.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A state N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A state N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alice Kent Schooler

organization John Milner Associates, Inc.

date December 8, 1982

street & number 309 North Matlack Street telephone (215) 436-9000

city or town West Chester

state PA 19380

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service...

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date
Keeper of the National Register
Attest:
date
Chief of Registration

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G. W. Bromley, Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, 1918, rev. 1923,
Plate 10

Gopsill, Directory of Philadelphia, 1910.

J. L. Smith, Atlas of the 24th, 34th, and 44th Wards of the City of Philadelphia (1913),
Plate 28.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5964 II SE
(WORRISTOWN)

75° 15'
40° 00'

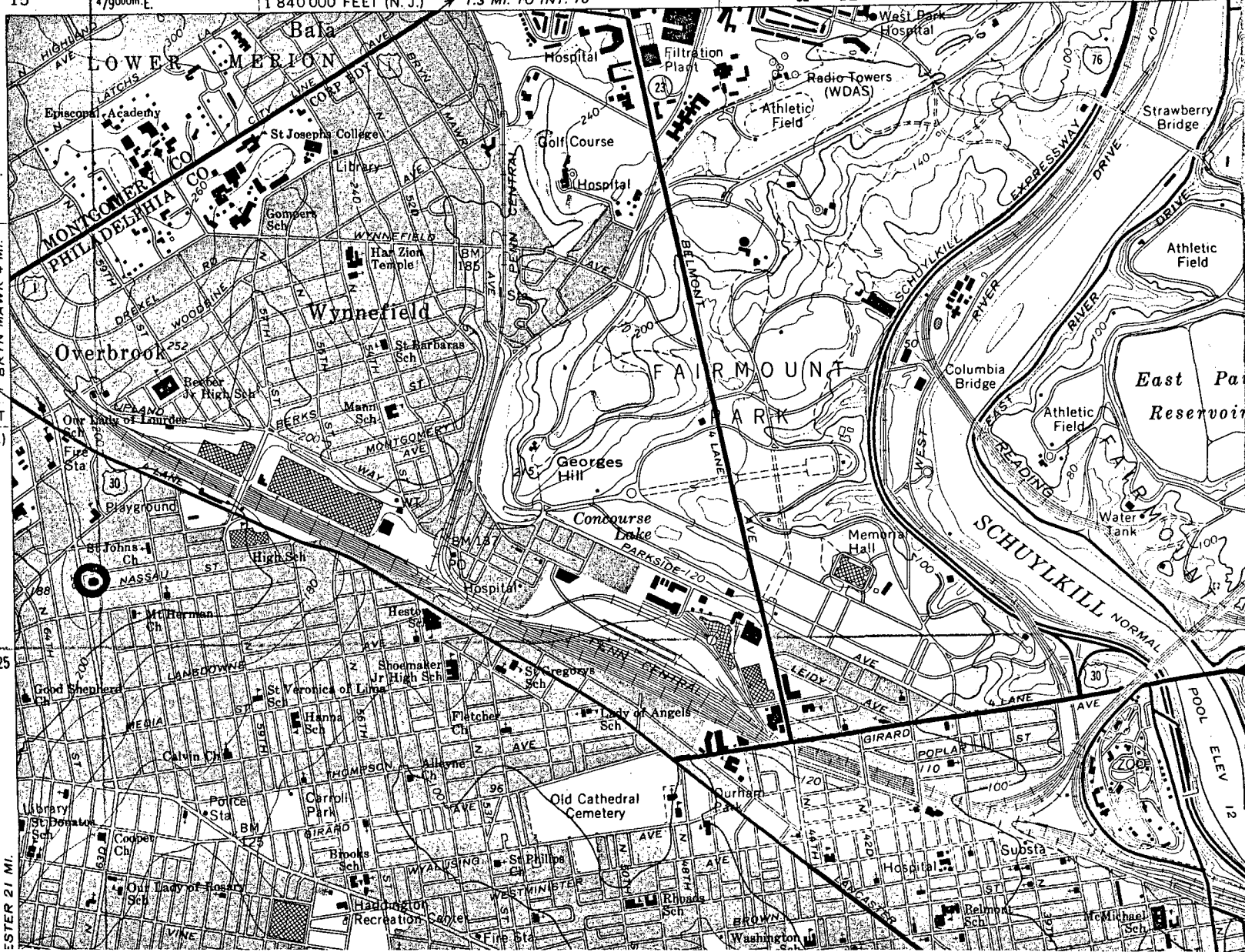
479000m. E.

1 840 000 FEET (N. J.)

1.3 MI. TO INT. 76

482 12'30" WEST CONSHOHOCKEN 8 MI.
PA. TURNPIKE 14 MI.

4427000m. N.
LANCASTER 54 MI.
BRYN MAWR 4 MI.
420 000 FEET
(N. J.)



The Monte Vista
County
Philadelphia N4425270
E478980
Z18

ESTER 21 MI.

POOL ELEV 12