

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

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

For HCERS use only
received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic BRESLYN APARTMENTS

and/or common 4624-42 WALNUT STREET

2. Location

street & number 4624-42 WALNUT STREET, 201-213 S. 47th Street N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" 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: <u>multiple residence</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Walnut Associates, c/o Nolan Atkinson, Esquire

street & number Suite 1500, 1346 Chestnut Street

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Department of Records

street & number 153 City Hall

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Breslyn Apartments is a three-story coursed rusticated rough-faced granite and brick apartment complex with terra-cotta and galvanized-iron trim and flat roofs. Each of its five buildings, arranged in a row along the south side of Walnut Street between Farragut and Forty-seventh Streets measures approximately 38 feet front by 98 feet depth. The five buildings evidently were built to present a roughly symmetrical streetscape of two flat porticoed buildings with ornamental terra-cotta Corinthian piers flanked by similar porticoed buildings with small central pediments and fluted terra-cotta Roman Ionic columns, to give the streetscape an a-b-a-b-a rhythm. The westernmost building, however, is an eccentric exception. It has a rounded galvanized-iron turret-like corner and a flat three-bay wall with battlements in juxtaposition with a one-bay three-story Roman Ionic porch-balcony. Because Walnut Street is on grade, rising approximately seven feet from east to west, the three easternmost buildings have raised basements.

Large open porch-balconies distinguish the two pedimented buildings, 4624-26 and 4632-34 Walnut Street. The rough-faced stone porch, with its center steps and segmental-arch openings in its low front walls, forms exaggerated plinths for the Roman Ionic tetrastyle portico at the second and third floors. A small galvanized-iron pediment with a wreathed oculus in its tympanum interrupts the galvanized-iron Ionic cornice over the center bay. Semi-Hexagonal one-over-one sliding-sash bay windows are on each floor of the front facades. Arranged in a roughly symmetrical fashion on the side facades are second and third-story semi-hexagonal galvanized-iron oriels with rectangular one-over-one sliding-sash windows and rectangular one-over-one sliding-sash windows set within segmental arch openings. The fenestration on the east facade of 4624-26 Walnut Street extending southward is arranged as follows: two segmental-arch windows, second- and third story oriels and a first-story triple window, double window with first- and second story segmental-arch recesses and third-story trabeated recess, single segmental-arch windows, oriels and first-story triple window, double windows, segmental-arch windows flanking narrow segmental-arch (water closet) windows. The typical brick side walls are similar in fenestration design and execution to the stonewalls, with the exception of the triple window masonry opening. The nine-foot opening in the brick walls is spanned with a pair of steel channels bolted together with rosettes concealing the connection; a three unit bow window is formed within the three wythe wide brick wall.

The two buildings without pediments, 4628-30 and 4636-38 Walnut Street, are similar to the other two buildings, but differ in significant details. Open front porches with center steps are formed by rough-faced stone, but the porch posts do not form plinths; instead the porch is demarcated by a galvanized-iron cornice molding that extends across the front. The second- and third-story balconies with their simple iron railings are formed by four terra-cotta piers with Corinthian caps and ornamented panels, and are capped by a plain thin galvanized-iron frieze and consoled cornice (which does not extend along the sides of the buildings). The fenestration, with the front semi-hexagonal one-over-one sliding-sash bay windows, is very

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Breslyn Apartments, Philadelphia County

Continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION

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similar to that of the two pedimented buildings.

The building at the southeast corner of Forty-seventh and Walnut Streets is the anomaly in the group. Its easternmost front bay has a porch and Ionic balconies like those on the two pedimented buildings, but its four western bays are finished in an eclectic fashion. The round-arch entrance with engaged terra-cotta columns forming side lights and the round-arch one-over-one sliding-sash third-story windows are drawn from the classical tradition. Its castellation and semi-circular corner turret (finished in galvanized iron without its initial, probably conical, roof), however, are drawn from medieval fortress architecture. The western facade along Forty-seventh Street is organized in four horizontal bands -- ground-story shop fronts, second-story segmental-arch one-over-one sliding-sash windows, third-story round-arch one-over-one sliding-sash windows, and castellation -- and four vertical sections -- a central rectangular triple-window oriel at the second and third stories flanked by four bays and a four-bay rear section with a pedimented parapet. The plain brick rears of the buildings have brick fire towers with small balconies at each floor.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates built 1913 **Builder/Architect** Frederick C. Michaelsen

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

As a well-preserved example of a housing type that grew in popularity after about 1890 the Breslyn Apartments possess both architectural and historical significance. In its use of relatively cheap manufactured elements, to express the florid Beaux-Arts style, it is a significant example of speculative housing for a middle-class clientele. Its use of rough-faced stone at the street frontages sets it apart from the smooth brick that has been the traditional building material for Philadelphia dwelling; in fact, its uncharacteristic color and texture still catch the attention of passers-by. In this respect Breslyn Apartments was a good example of architectural advertising, which, in conjunction with its rich style, lent the building an attractive aura, helping to make it a desirable, but affordable address. Yet its scale relates well to that of its row-house neighbors, preventing it from becoming an awkward, aberrant folly. It is a significant example of marrying careful investment, middle-class taste, and sensitivity to -- and successful resolution of -- social pretensions and the existing built environment. A large number of such buildings can be found along the main thoroughfares of West Philadelphia, but few are as striking as Breslyn Apartments.

Historically Breslyn Apartments reflect the flurry of housing construction that broke out in West Philadelphia with the completion of the Market Street Elevated rail line in 1907. Built in 1913, these buildings stood as a response to the growing middle-class demand for new, more spacious housing removed from the crowded condition of business district and immigrant neighborhoods. This architecturally pretentious development best represents an unusual and short-lived building form in Philadelphia: the three-story walk-up apartment.

The architect-builder of Breslyn Apartments adds another dimension of local significance. Frederick C. Michaelsen was an excellent example of local real-estate developers who, because they grew out of the city's builders' families and operated with modest amounts of capital, contributed to the conservation of local domestic architecture. The son of a local bricklayer turned builder, Michaelsen worked ten years with his father and as a superintendent of construction before beginning his own "contracting builder" company in 1904. This helps to explain why his buildings reflect the tradition of solid construction and conservative style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Building Permit of City of Philadelphia. February 13, 1913.
2. Warner, Sam Bass, Jr. The Private City - Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A	<u>118</u>	<u>4811</u>	<u>61010</u>	<u>414</u>	<u>212</u>	<u>6112</u>	B						
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing			
C							D						
E							F						
G							H						

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Webster, for
organization Gray Smith's Office date July 8, 1982
street & number 1505 Sylvania House telephone (215) 546-4985
city or town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

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 _____

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

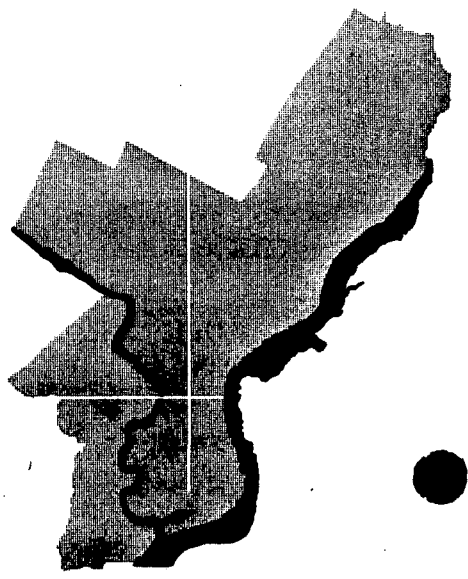
date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

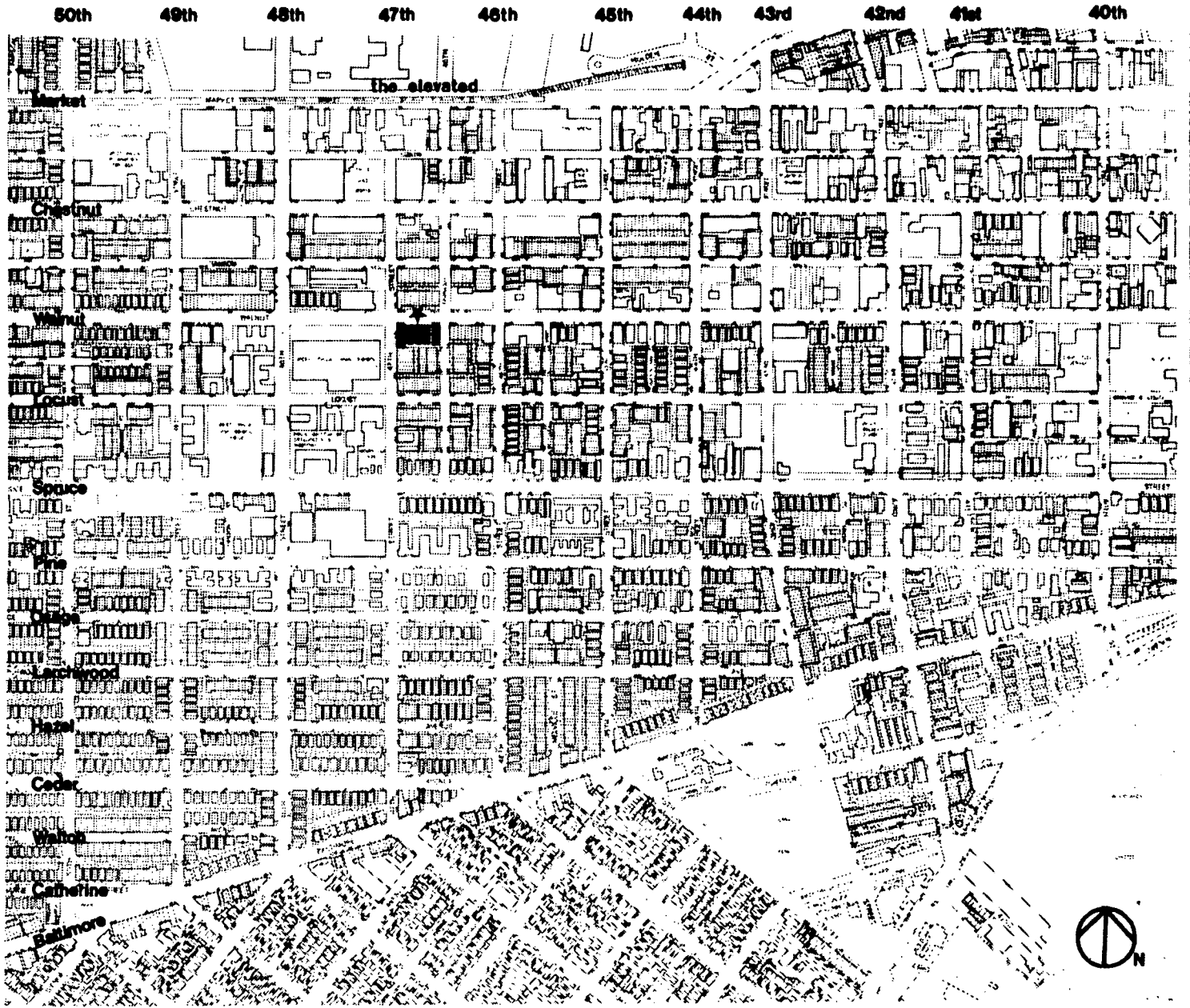
date _____

Chief of Registration



PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

4624-42 WALNUT STREET
 CENTER CITY and WEST PHILADELPHIA
 ★ the site
 USGS '73



4624-42 WALNUT ST.
 WEST PHILADELPHIA
 building footprints
 * the site USGS '73