

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

For HCERS use only

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

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic La Blanche Apartments

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 5100 Walnut Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Philadelphia \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district

state Pennsylvania code county Philadelphia code

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial (apts.) <span style="margin-left: 10px;"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name DCJL Partnership c/o Walter M. Kubiak

street & number 521 West Lancaster Avenue

city, town Haverford \_\_\_ vicinity of state Pennsylvania

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. 153 City Hall

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### DESCRIPTION

The Georgian Revival of the early Twentieth Century is well represented in the handsome La Blanche Apartment House, built in 1910. The north, east and south elevations face the three street sides, with the plain west elevation on an alleyway. The building contains three subdivisions (each with its own entrance and firetower) and are referred to as Building "A", "B", and "C", respectively in a north to south direction. The entrance on Walnut Street and the two on Fifty-first Street serve as entrances to these subdivisions

The rusticated cast stone base is level around the street elevations, sitting on a foundation course containing the basement windows and varying in height. The base is accented by slightly bayed windows within the wall thickness. Along the Fifty-first Street elevation, the base is interrupted by two entrances marked by pedimented Tuscan porticoes which carry the name of the apartment house "La Blanche" lettered in relief. The recessed entrance on Walnut Street is covered by an original glassed-roofed walkway.

Above the street base course, and separated from it by a metal string course, rise three stories of red brick wall framed by cast stone quoins and capped by a heavy and extensive pressed metal cornice finely dentiled and modilioned. On the Fifty-first and Walnut Street elevations pressed-metal balconies extend from deep-arched niches framing wooden Palladian windows and doors, to form porches. In addition to these balconies, the Fifty-first Street elevation has one bay of long metal balconies which serve a firetower behind them. The south elevation facing Chancellor Street is in contrast distinguished by rectangular projecting stacked bay windows of a similar painted galvanized iron pressed metal. All these projecting metal elements are visually supported on scroll-shaped brackets. Additional rectangular windows with wooden sash complete these street elevations and are crowned by deep cast-stone lintels.

The building's irregular shape, evident in the alleyway into which the west elevations face is a result of property-lines originating well before the development of the area, an interesting legacy of an early land pattern. These west elevations are brick and are devoid of ornament except for the brick relieving arched masonry openings above all doors and windows. Three firetowers exit from the west side as evidenced by the metal fire balconies which feed the firetowers.

The building has a flat asphalt roof on which sit skylight towers topping each main interior stairwell.

Originally the building totalled 28 units, but in 1926, 1927, and 1960 these were subdivided increasing the number to today's 49 units. The present apartments retain some original detailing evidenced by mouldings and the Palladian doors. The integrity of the exterior building shell is excellent and has in no way been effected by these internal changes.

The building's scale relates to other apartment buildings which are scattered throughout the neighborhood, and does not seem in opposition to the majority of three storey row-houses. It boldly holds the corners of the block and lends a dignity to the surrounding neighborhood.

# 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 checked="" 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** 1910, 1926, 1927, 1960      **Builder/Architect** Anderson and Haupt Architects

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The La Blanche Apartments reflect the second wave of housing construction in West Philadelphia brought about by the completion of the Market Street Elevated in 1907. Built in 1910 according to City Building Permit records, the building filled a growing need for respectable housing for the new middle classes. The building also stands among the first large apartment buildings to come to this City, and is a fine example of the Georgian Revival Style.

The new industrial mass production together with the building boom of the first decades of the twentieth century, provided more conveniences and better living conditions to more people than ever before. The western part of the city provided an open environment for the housing flurry, and for the new middle classes who were making their way out of the business and slum districts. Better lighting, ventilation and drainage systems allowed the apartment building to provide a respectable housing alternative for the new classes. Its acceptance came late in the City of Philadelphia which is characterized by the large majority of single houses, and whose residents' opinion of the apartment building had long been colored by memories of the slum tenement.

In the early twentieth century, West Philadelphia was considered the favored side of the Schuylkill and Philadelphia's finest examples of old large apartment houses can be found there. One of the earliest was Hamilton Court (39th & Chestnut Streets) built in 1901, which although taller than La Blanche, shares many stylistic similarities, such as projecting bays and an extensive cornice. In fact, many of the early apartment buildings in the area that did not disguise as row houses, were built in a Georgian Revival Style. Two of these, Kingscourt (36th & Locust Streets) and Brighton (52st & Locust Streets) typify the early Georgian Revival type with their simple massing, projecting stacked bays and extensive cornices. These buildings share a friendly and approachable, yet dignified quality that is made possible by the relaxed eclecticism of the early Georgian Revival.

La Blanche differs from the typical early Georgian Revival apartment building in the area in its abundance of recessed niches with balconies and Palladian windows which are added to the basic type. Elliptical arched niches as well as Palladian windows are details which can be found on other buildings in the area, but never in such an arrangement or abundance. In this way, La Blanche is a fine example of creative eclecticism in a revival style.

Of the apartment buildings listed in a 1915 Real Estate brochure of the neighborhood, roughly half of them remain today. The Georgian Revival continued in apartment buildings after 1915, but these had a more formal and more institutional quality. At the expense of the expression of the individual unit with the use of many repeated details, to the grander expression of the whole with fewer and more centralized detailing, these stylistic differences reflect the more academic turn of the style after 1915.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The La Blanche Apartments with its Georgian Revival detailing, well embodies the dreams and pretensions of the new classes who were successfully making their way in society. Its details including the pompous doorways, deep recessed porches and elegant Palladian doors opening onto balconies, emulate a wealthy house of the period. Hidden behind the forms of the past, the progressive technical developments in the building industry can be found in the use of new industrial materials. At La Blanche, galvanized sheet iron and cast stone allowed for a generous indulgence of detailing at an economically feasible cost. Few apartment buildings in the area can boast of such a display as La Blanche.

The Architects of La Blanche, Anderson and Haupt (Julius J. Anderson and Max Haupt) designed numerous industrial and commercial buildings, as well as housing and churches in Philadelphia and surrounding regions, most of which were built in a revival style. Both men had varied backgrounds including architecture, engineering and practical trades work. Their buildings show both a competence in construction techniques, and a knowledge of architectural detail including classical window and door ornamentation and revival style. Their Hebrew Free School of 1909 at 314 Catherine Street in South Philadelphia housed for a time a group of newly immigrated Russian Jews, demonstrating the Architects' awareness of, and involvement in, the need for adequate housing of ethnic groups, particularly Jews. This building, in an historic district, is currently being remodelled into condominiums. The La Blanche Apartments were one of the firm's largest and most substantial architectural commissions and afforded them the opportunity to show their ability with the Georgian Revival architectural style creatively.

The present neighborhood in which the La Blanche Apartments stand today has somewhat deteriorated, as evidenced by the cutting up of La Blanche's spacious apartments to provide cheaper housing. Despite these changes, much of the interior detailing remains, and the building's exterior remains unaffected. The apartment building stands among a sea of row houses, and breaks the monotony of the neighborhood. It well preserves the corners of an urban block, and stands as a distinct landmark in the neighborhood. It is a building which deserves to be preserved, and if well renovated will bring back some of the glories of the neighborhood of the past, encouraging the renewal that is starting in that neighborhood.

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data \* See Attached U.S.G.S. Map location.

Acreeage of nominated property 0.17 (approx.)

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UMT References

A          
Zone Easting Northing

B          
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title H. Mather Lippincott, Jr., Architect

organization Cope Lippincott Slifer Architects date December 6, 1984

street & number 138 N. 17th Street telephone (215) 564-1322

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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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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9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA:

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

PREMISES "A"

BLOCK 18 S 23 LOT 233

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate in the 60th Ward of the City of Philadelphia and described according to a survey thereof made on the 14th day of September 1911 by J. Harvey Gillingham, Esq. Surveyor and Regulator of the 12th District as follows to wit:

BEGINNING at a corner formed by the intersection of the West side of Fifty-first Street (of the width of sixty feet) with the South side of Walnut Street (of the width of eighty feet) thence extending Southward along the West side of Fifty-first Street fifty eight feet three and one-half inches to a point; thence extending Westward at right angles to said Fifty-first Street passing through the middle of a thirteen inch wall of the building erected partly on this lot and partly on the lot of ground adjoining to the South seventy-three feet four and seven-eighths inches to a point; thence extending North no degrees no minutes and twenty-four seconds West fifty-nine feet four and five-eighths inches to the South side of said Walnut Street; and thence Eastward along the same eighty-four feet nine and one-eighth inches to the West side of Fifty-first Street the place of beginning.

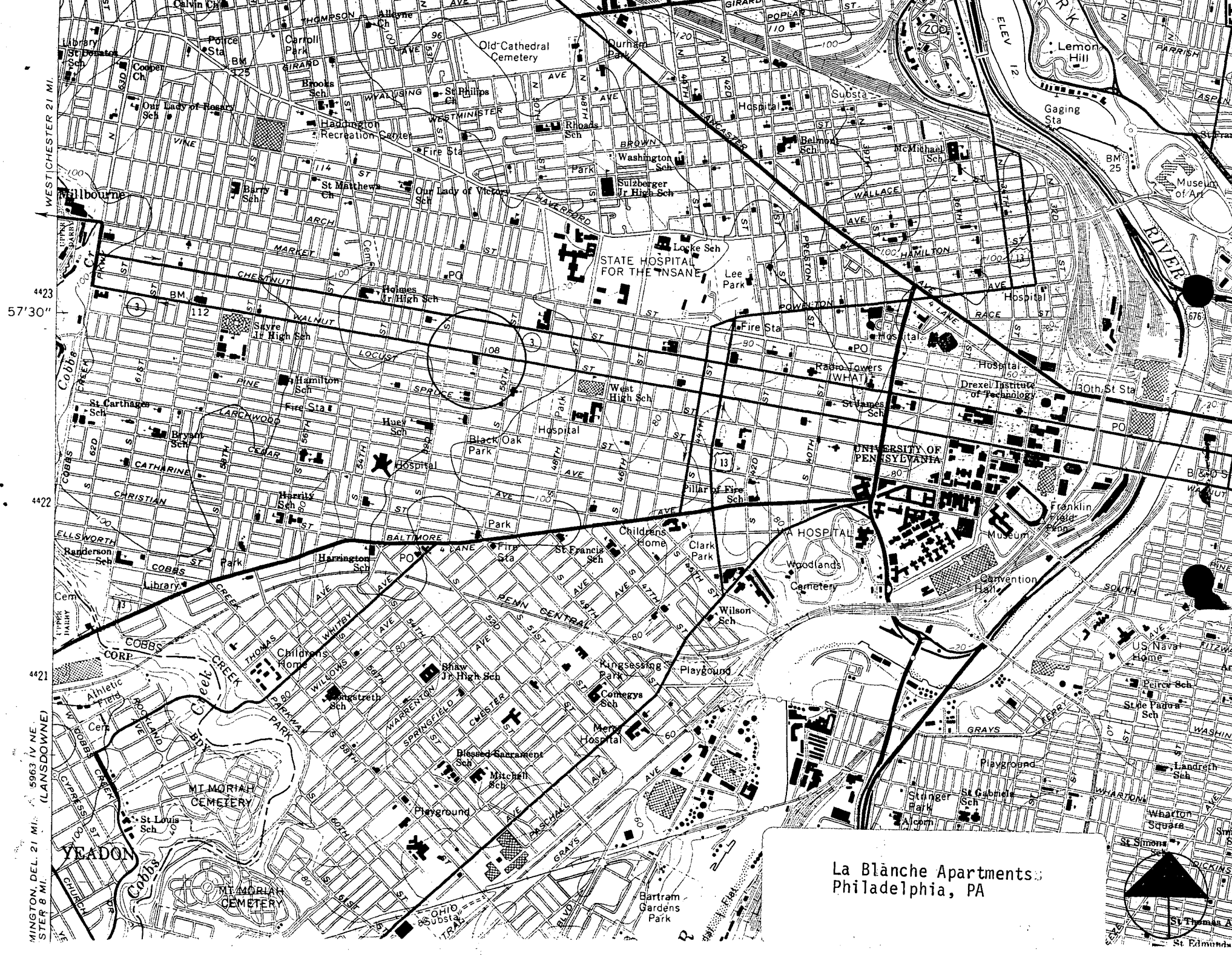
PREMISES "B"

BLOCK 18 S 23 LOT 230-231

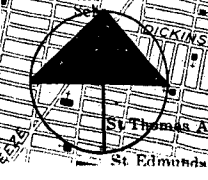
ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate in the 60th Ward of the City and County of Philadelphia and described according to a Survey thereof made on the 14th day of September 1911 by J. Harvey Gillingham, Esq. Surveyor and Regulator of the 12th Survey District as follows to wit:

BEGINNING at a point on the North west corner of Fifty-first and Chancellor Street thence extending Northwardly along the West side of Fifty-first Street ninety-seven feet and one and one quarter inches to other ground of Andrew J. Maloney, thence extending Westwardly at right angles to said Fifty-first Street passing through the middle of a thirteen inch wall of buildings erected partly on this and partly on the adjoining lot to the North seventy-three feet four and seven eighths inches to a point thence extending South no degrees no minutes twenty-four seconds East fifty-two feet two and one-eighth inches to a point thence Southward forty-four feet ten and seven eighths inches to a point on the North side of Chancellor Street thence Eastwardly along the North side of Chancellor Street sixty-three feet five and one-eighth inches to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.





La Blanche Apartments  
Philadelphia, PA



WESTICHESTER 21 MI.  
4423  
57°30"  
4422  
4421  
MINGTON, DEL. 21 MI. 5963 IV NE (LANSDOWNE)  
STER 8 MI.