

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Plaza Apartments

other names Vernon House

2. Location

street & number 1719-1725 N. 33rd Street, 3226-3228 Clifford Street N/A not for publication

city or town Philadelphia N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Philadelphia code 101 zip code 19121

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	3	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		3	0
			buildings
			sites
			structures
			objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not in use
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
 Metal
roof Asphalt
other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1909

Significant Dates

1909

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sauer & Hahn

Stafford, John

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Plaza Apartments
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	4 8 4 9 1 0 Easting	4 4 2 5 6 8 0 Northing	3			
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shelby Weaver Splain, Associate
Organization Noble Preservation Services, Inc. date April 2004
street & number 10 Log House Road telephone (215) 679-5110
city or town Zionsville state PA zip code 18092

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Richard Barnhart, Vernon House Housing Partnership, L.P.
street & number One Liberty Place, 1650 Market Street, Suite 3810 telephone 215-979-1100
city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19103

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Constructed in 1909, the Plaza Apartments is a complex of three, four-story rectangular brick and stone buildings designed in the Colonial Revival style. This grouping of three apartment buildings is situated on a .4 acre parcel at the corner of N. 33rd and Clifford Streets in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of Philadelphia. Although the floor plans were slightly altered in the latter half of the twentieth century, the plan of each of the three buildings is similar with several apartments per floor accessed from common stairs. Although the property has been vacant since the early 1990s and been subjected to repeated vandalism, it retains its seven aspects of integrity.

This complex of apartments occupies a prominent site opposite East Fairmount Park and is located along one of the principal avenues defining this north Philadelphia neighborhood. The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of small-scale residential and commercial properties, typically two and three story brick and stone rowhouses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The three buildings are sited with Buildings A (1723-1725 N. 33rd Street) and B (1719-1721 N. 33rd Street) parallel to each other and facing Fairmount Park to the west and Building C (3226-3228 Clifford Street) perpendicular to Buildings A and B to the east and facing north (see site and first floor plans).¹ Together, the buildings create a U-shape with a narrow T-shaped sidewalk within the two narrow courtyards. Natrona Street borders the complex to the east and a developed lot creates the southern boundary.

Buildings A, B, and C share a common vocabulary of Roman brick walls with white terra cotta belt courses on the main facades. Each building rises four stories from a brick foundation to a heavy elaborate modillioned and dentillated pressed metal cornice. Two sets of three sided pressed metal bays further articulate the walls along the fourth floor of the main facades and the secondary facades, as do projecting brick quoins at each corner of the buildings. Six-over-one wood windows line the main and secondary facades, and survive in various conditions. All of the windows except for those in the pressed metal bays share the same exterior ornamentation: thin cast stone sills and wide cast stone jack arch lintels with a keystone. Most of the basement level windows have been infilled concrete or wire mesh screens.

Each of the three buildings is accessed from a set of wide steps at the first floor of the main façade via a simple wood door, and through a metal door at the rear entrance within the alley along Building C. Contemporary metal fire escapes obscure the rear facades of the three buildings.

Perhaps the most impressive exterior feature of the Plaza Apartments complex are the two massive three-story wood porches which anchor each of the primary facades. At each building, exquisite three-story fluted Corinthian columns and pilasters support second and third floor porches that terminate with heavy dentillated cornices, which in turn support the fourth floor open balconies. On each of the lower levels, simple wood balusters of delicately turned newels once framed the deep porches; all but a few have been removed through vandalism or neglect. At the fourth floor level, simple square posts frame the open air balconies. Each of the front apartment units that faced (in the case of Buildings A and B) or had a view of (in the case of Building C)

¹ The building designations of A, B, and C are used within this nomination for the purposes of identification and are not historic designations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

Fairmount Park had private access to their porches via wood doors in the front parlors. Originally, all three buildings had these distinctive porches; within the last decade, the porch of Building C had been lost to neglect and was removed for safety. The porches remain in fair condition on Buildings A and B, and are accessible from some units on the upper floors.

Originally, the interior of the three buildings were virtually identical with regard to plan and decoration. A stair at the front and rear of each building provided access to each of the four residential floors and the basement.² The stair at the front end of the building was more ornate and utilized an architectural vocabulary which reflected the style and prestige of the building more than the plain utilitarian rear stair. Although original architectural plans have not been located, it appears that there were two units per floor (one per side) accessed from the small vestibule off the main stair. Each unit ran the length of the building and most likely included a front parlor, dining room, pantry, kitchen, bathroom and two or three bedrooms, all of which were accessed from an internal hallway.

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the floor plans of the buildings have been changed to accommodate more apartments. The essential components of the original plan were retained, with the main stair at the front of the building and a rear utilitarian stair, and a central passage flanked by apartments. These later alterations were limited to the creation of more individual apartments, particularly within Building C, and allowed the buildings to retain an important character-defining feature of living spaces spread lengthwise along the perimeter walls.

Throughout each of the three buildings, the original Colonial Revival-inspired wood trim survives in fair to good condition. Heavy multi-faceted surrounds outline the deep bay windows, and baseboard and door trim graces the walls and openings throughout most rooms. In select rooms, wide crown moldings transition between the flat plaster walls and high plaster ceilings. In each of the front parlors, blind fireplaces are located against the interior stair wall; years of neglect and vandalism have resulted in the loss of many of the fireplace mantels and associated tile work.

The Plaza Apartments retains integrity as an example of an early 20th century apartment house in North Philadelphia, qualifying the buildings for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. With its virtually unaltered facades and the retention of significant character-defining interior features such as the original interior trim and main stair, this complex of buildings communicates its status as a significant neighborhood icon.

² Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*, (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1918), PAPH7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The Plaza Apartments is a three-building complex at 1719-1725 N. 33rd Street and 3226-3228 Clifford Street in the Strawberry Mansion section of North Philadelphia. It is significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an example of early 20th century apartment house design in Philadelphia. Designed in the Colonial Revival style by the firm of Sauer & Hahn and constructed by developer John Stafford, the apartments once housed the middle and upper middle class residents drawn to the late-nineteenth century enclave of Strawberry Mansion. It represents not only the popular architecture of the period, but also an unusual type of housing in a community, and city, dominated by endless blocks of modestly-scaled rowhouses. The buildings' period of significance is their year of construction, 1909.

Summary History

Philadelphia has long been described as a city of neighborhoods, ethnic enclaves spread throughout the city that create a patchwork across the physical, historical, and cultural fabric of the city. In the early 20th century, the neighborhood of Strawberry Mansion was developed in North Philadelphia along the east side of the Schuylkill River and Fairmount Park, beginning around the area of North 33rd and Diamond Streets.³ Named for the 18th century "Strawberry Mansion" in Fairmount Park, this area was initially developed for and inhabited by Eastern European Jews emigrating from the immediate downtown area; as Edwin Wolf 2nd notes in his history of Philadelphia, "Eastern European Jews began to move out from the southern slums, the more successful of them to Wynnefield and Strawberry Mansion..."⁴ Several trolley lines connected the growing neighborhood of Strawberry Mansion with the early immigrant communities in North and South Philadelphia, allowing upwardly mobile Jewish families to move out of the crowded inner city yet still be conveniently connected to their jobs and families.⁵

As the city's Jewish families moved into this area of North Philadelphia, the community developed as a traditional neighborhood. At the time the Plaza Apartments were built, the young neighborhood's housing stock was primarily two-to-three story single family rowhouses with few single family homes scattered amid the rows. These houses were often large and spacious, with green space, sidewalks and access to neighborhood conveniences.⁶ The site for the Plaza Apartments is in the southwestern corner of the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, which extends roughly northward along Fairmount Park to approximately Lehigh Street, and east to 29th Street.

Plaza Apartments was designed by the Philadelphia firm of Sauer & Hahn (1906-1915) and constructed in 1909 by local real estate developer and builder John Stafford. The buildings were designed in the Colonial Revival style popular in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Interior spaces made opulent in Colonial

³ See Sanborn Maps for this neighborhood, 1918 through 1968, PAPH 5 through PAPH 10

⁴ Edwin Wolf, 2nd, *Philadelphia: Portrait of an American City* (Philadelphia,: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1990) p 264.

⁵ Meyers, Allen, *Strawberry Mansion: The Jewish Community of North Philadelphia*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishers, 2000) 23-24.

⁶ See Meyers, Allen, *Strawberry Mansion: The Jewish Community of North Philadelphia*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

Revival-inspired trim and picturesque views of the adjacent Fairmount Park made the Plaza Apartments one of Strawberry Mansion's more prominent and desirable addresses.

A glimpse into the 1920 census, the first year for which the Plaza Apartments is listed, reveals that a total of twenty-one families lived in the complex: 10 families in Building B, 6 families in Building A, and 5 families in Building C.⁷ The demographics of the Plaza Apartments reflected those of the greater Strawberry Mansion community: largely American born, middle-class residents of Eastern European Jewish descent. The Apartment's residents ranged from young couples to middle-aged families with one or two children to elderly widowers; approximately half of the tenants employed one female house servant. In most cases, only the head of the household was employed; professions included merchants, employees at millinery and clothing factories, salesmen, owners of dry goods and real estate enterprises, a Navy Yard inspector, and store clerks.⁸

Many of the Plaza Apartments residents likely walked to their jobs or businesses or took the Route #10 trolley, which had a stop at the corner of Cecil B. Moore Ave. (then Columbia Ave.) and N. 33rd Street, downtown. With a host of synagogues, kosher butchers and restaurants, merchants, and community services within the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, residents could stay close to home. From the Plaza Apartments, families could easily walk to the closest business district along 31st Street, elementary schools, and the Park.

Throughout its history, the Plaza Apartments has continued to serve the community as a visual landmark and gateway into the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. Until the early 1990s, the building continued its original residential use. Although subsequent owners in the latter half of the twentieth century made some alterations to the floor plan to accommodate a greater number of apartments, these interior changes did not destroy the building's interior or exterior integrity. During the 1990s, as the local Strawberry Mansion neighborhood degraded and the building was abandoned and fell into disrepair through neglect. Recently, the property has been renamed "Vernon House" and the City of Philadelphia's Redevelopment Authority has targeted the Investment Tax Credit rehabilitation of the complex as a key component of the revitalization and stabilization of the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood.

Summary Significance

The Plaza Apartments is significant under Criterion C for architecture as an example of early apartment house design in Philadelphia. As one of the initial apartment buildings in the predominantly nineteenth century Jewish neighborhood of Strawberry Mansion and an uncommon building type in this area of the city, it is an illustration of the national trend in housing in the first quarter of the 20th century as apartment buildings became an integral part of an urban culture that considered the apartment a sign of financial and social status.

⁷ See 1920 Federal Census, Pennsylvania Enumeration District #969, pages 25 and 26.

⁸ 1920 Federal Census, Pennsylvania Enumeration District #969, pages 25 and 26.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

The Plaza Apartment's architects, Andrew Sauer (1880-1940) and Frank E. Hahn (1879-1962), are traditionally known for their institutional, industrial, and commercial designs in and around Philadelphia; Plaza Apartments is one of the few residential projects designed during the firm's short history. The buildings' Colonial Revival design and academic execution reflects both Sauer & Hahn's classical training and mastery of nationally popular architectural trends. Sauer and Hahn both studied architecture in Philadelphia, the former at the Franklin Institute Drawing School and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the latter at the University of Pennsylvania's engineering program and the atelier of the famous T-Square Club, led by renown Beaux Arts architects Paul A. Davis, III and Paul P. Cret. Sauer and Hahn complemented each other well, with Sauer as the principal designer and Hahn the partner responsible for the firm's engineering and construction work. As well-respected members of the Philadelphia Jewish community, many of the firm's other commissions include sites in and around Strawberry Mansion and cultural sites throughout the city. Some of their more notable commissions are: the Yiddish Theater (1906) at 5th and Locust Streets, the theater for the North Penn Amusement Co. (1910) at 2416-20 N. 27th Street, the Jewish Foster Home (1911) at Church Lane and Chew Street, and the Young Men's Hebrew Association Building (1914-15) at 1616 Master Street. In 1915, Sauer and Hahn left the firm to establish their own independent practices. Both men continued to practice as local architects until their deaths.⁹

John Stafford, the buildings' builder/developer, was active in the North Philadelphia building community in the late 19th and into the 20th century as a developer of speculative rows, many of which lie along N. 33rd Street. The construction of this apartment complex indicates Stafford's awareness of the future of urban housing for the middle classes.

Although the apartment building, whether individually or as part of a complex, had been a popular form of urban housing since the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that this type of property became widespread throughout most major U.S. cities.¹⁰ Until the first decade of the 20th century, architects and builders were continually hampered by critical social and professional reviews of the role of the apartment house in the in the family and in the community. In the mid-19th century, particularly after the Civil War (1861-1865), major cities like New York saw the development of the apartment/hotel as an option for middle-class families that could not afford a single-family home and would not live in the tenement buildings relegated to lower-class citizens and as the most cost-saving way to accommodate large numbers of people on dwindling open land space. Once the national apartment-living model had proven acceptable in New York City, other mid- to large cities like Philadelphia found the apartment building gaining ground as the choice for urban citizens.¹¹

⁹ Sandra Tatman, "Sauer & Hahn (fl. 1906-1915)" (*Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, Copyright 2002, Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project, November 15, 2002).

¹⁰ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981) 135.

¹¹ See Elizabeth Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

Association with the tenement culture, and the outspoken moral need for family privacy and decency clouded most apartment house development until architects developed building and apartment plans that separated middle- and upper-class apartment buildings from lower-class tenements. By the 1880's, legislation was already in place that began to change the nature of the apartment house and influenced design characteristics that both challenged and frustrated apartment building architects. Throughout the major American cities, height restrictions placed limits on the number of floors in apartment buildings and "Right-to-Light" laws required all apartment rooms have access to sunlight and fresh air. The battle between private and public space, combined with legislative and code mandates, continued to call for the evolution of apartment design. In the quest to distinguish the apartment from the tenement, architects sought key features that could be incorporated into their buildings that would make them first-class dwellings. Some of these ideas were manifested through the creation of shared public spaces that controlled social interaction, such as the stair hall, and through the incorporation of technological advances like electricity, and telephones.¹² Tenements had none of the features of privacy or luxury found in middle- and upper-class apartment buildings.

Traditionally, the apartment-hotel was aimed at the wealthy upper-class markets that demanded stylish, metropolitan living without the burdens of domesticity.¹³ Because apartments units were often larger and more expensive than single family homes of the time, they were seen as status symbols to those who could afford them. As Elizabeth Cromley notes in her social and architectural history on apartment houses in NYC, the apartment offered tenants the type of luxury and convenience beyond the reach of private home owners.¹⁴ When combined with picturesque views of the surrounding area, apartments – whether in a single building or part of a larger complex like the Plaza Apartments – became the preferred mode of living. They played a large part in the changing roles of women, and provided women with the opportunity to work, as burdens of housekeeping were reduced and responsibilities like child-rearing could be shared with the community network found in apartment house living. As America came to symbolize the "culture of convenience" in the first few decades of the 20th century, the apartment became a symbol of this culture and inextricably linked to its personality.¹⁵

In many ways, the Plaza Apartments represents the transitional nature of early apartment house design, and is one of the few examples left in Philadelphia that bridges the change of urban lifestyle from small 19th century rowhouses to the luxurious high rise apartments of the mid-20th century. Of this group of modestly-scaled and architect-designed transitional apartment houses in Philadelphia to which Plaza Apartments belongs, there are five listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the Beaux-Arts-styled Breslyn Apartments (1913) at Walnut and 47th Streets, the Colonial Revival La Blanche Apartments (1910) at 5100 Walnut Street, the Greek Revival Monte Vista (1910) at 63rd, Oxford, and Nasseau Streets, the Classical Revival Pinehurst Apartments (1914) at Pine and S. 45th Streets, and the Colonial Revival Regent-Rennoc Court (1910) at Regent and S. 52nd

¹² Wright, 138.

¹³ Wright, 139. See also Cromley, 102.

¹⁴ Cromley, 201.

¹⁵ Cromley, 27. See also the final chapter, "The Modern Apartment House".

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

Streets. Notably, all of these properties are located in West Philadelphia; the Plaza Apartments complex is one of the few National Register properties in general and the only one of this type specifically located in this neighborhood of North Philadelphia.

All of these apartment buildings mentioned above share several characteristics with the Plaza Apartments; it is these characteristics and their dates of construction that differentiate these buildings as transitional buildings in the development of twentieth century urban residential buildings. These transitional types of apartment buildings are few on the Philadelphia landscape because of the growing popularity of the luxurious high rise apartment made possible by the development of structural steel and the gearless traction electric elevator for domestic use in the years after World War I. These characteristics include:

- A “court” or arrangement of buildings that allows for dense development of a single site but accommodates green space and ample natural light and ventilation
- A moderate scale of no more than four stories, not only to create a presence over and above the neighborhood rowhouses but also because these were walk-up flats without elevators
- Classically-inspired exterior and interior architectural styles, representing a movement toward the correct historical interpretation of early European styles
- Apartments arranged as at least two “flats” per floor, essentially living spaces spread lengthwise along an exterior wall to capture natural light and air for all rooms; living spaces typically included parlors, dining rooms, kitchens, pantries, and several bedrooms
- Heavy, detailed interior trim in most or all rooms
- Porches or balconies along the main facade

Of this set of similar transitional apartment houses, the Plaza Apartments is the earliest with a construction date of 1909. Given the earlier construction date, it is not known if the Plaza Apartments influenced or inspired the design or plan of these apartment buildings in West Philadelphia. However, they all clearly retain their integrity as local examples of early 20th century urban apartment buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References:

- "Breslyn Apartments," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1982, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- Clio Group, Inc. Pennsylvania Historic Resource Form for 1719-1725 N. 33rd Street, Philadelphia. 1985.
- Cromley, Elizabeth. *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- "La Blanche Apartments," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1984, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- Meyers, Allen. *Strawberry Mansion: The Jewish Community of North Philadelphia*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishers, 2000.
- "Monte Vista," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1982, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- "Pinehurst Apartments," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1986, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- "Regent-Rennoc Court," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1985, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1918 through 1968.
- Tatman, Sandra. "Sauer & Hahn (fl. 1906-1915)" from *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*. Copyright 2002. Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project. November 15, 2002. www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm?ArchitectId=A1212
- United States Census Bureau. United Federal Census for 1920, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. Enumeration District #969.
- Wolf, Edwin 2nd. *Philadelphia: Portrait of an American City*. Philadelphia: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1990.
- Wright, Gwendolyn. *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*. Cambridge, MA; MIT Press, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The National Register boundary follows the approximately 18,700 sq. ft. lot defined by N. 33rd Street to the west, Clifford Street to the north, Natrona Street to the east, and, to the south, metal fencing that separates this parcel from an adjacent lot which contains a gas station. The lot's entire boundary follows the line demarcated by its current tax parcel and as described in the property's deed:

Beginning at a point, the intersection of the easterly side of North 33rd Street and the southerly side of Clifford Street; thence along Clifford Street south 170.0' to a point on the westerly side of Natrona Street; thence along same south 110.0' to a point; thence north 170.0' to a point on easterly side of N. 33rd Street; thence along N. 33rd Street 110.0 to point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary for the Plaza Apartments encompasses the entire building and surrounded open space that occupies the northern half of this city block. This boundary and tax parcel has historically been associated with the building since its construction in 1909.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plaza Apartments

Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA

County and State

Section _____ Photographs Page 1

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Plaza Apartments/Vernon House

1719-1725 N. 33rd Street/3226-3228 Clifford Street

Philadelphia City, Philadelphia County, PA

November 2002

Tim Noble, Photographer

Negatives held at Noble Preservation Services, Inc., 10 Log House Road, Zionsville, PA 18092

1. Looking northeast at Building B (1719-1721 N. 33rd Street, foreground) and Building A (1723-1725 N. 33rd Street, background)
2. Looking east at Buildings B (right) and A (left) and center courtyard
3. Looking southeast at Building A (foreground) and Building B (background)
4. Looking east along Clifford Street at the side (north) façade of Building A (foreground) and the main (north) façade of Building C (3226-3228 Clifford Street, background)
5. Looking west along Clifford Street at Building C (foreground) and Building A (background)
6. Looking west at Fairmount Park from center courtyard between Buildings A (right) and B (left)
7. Looking north at Clifford Street from rear alley between Buildings C (right), B (left, foreground) and A (left, background)
8. First floor corridor, Building A, looking west. Typical corridor appearance and conditions for all floors of Buildings A, B, and C
9. Second floor apartment, Building A, looking northeast in rear room. Typical appearance and conditions for all apartments of Buildings A, B, and C
10. Second floor corridor, Building B, looking east. Typical corridor appearance and conditions for all corridors of Buildings A, B, and C
11. Third floor apartment, Building B, looking northeast in front bay window room. Typical appearance and conditions for all front rooms/apartments of Buildings A, B, and C
12. Third floor apartment, Building B, looking east in front parlor room. Typical appearance and conditions for all parlors/apartments of Buildings A, B, and C
13. Main stair at third floor, Building B, looking west. Typical appearance and conditions for all main staircases of Buildings A, B, and C
14. Stair hall at fourth floor, Building C, looking south. Typical appearance and conditions for all stair halls of Buildings A, B, and C
15. Fourth floor apartment, Building C, looking northwest in rear bay window room. Typical appearance and conditions for all fourth floor apartments in Buildings A, B, and C
16. Fourth floor apartment, Building C, looking north down hallway.





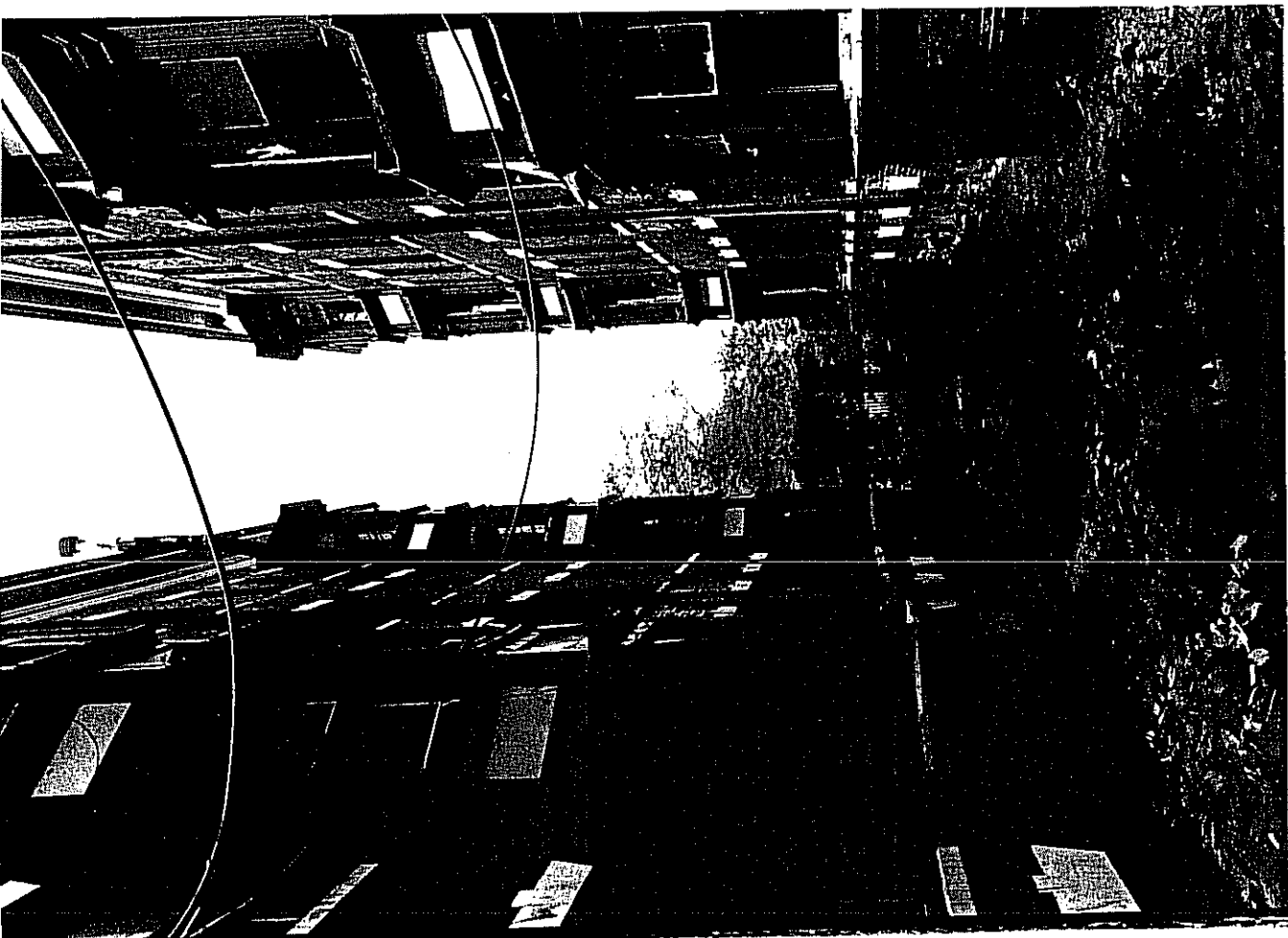
3.



4.



5.



6.