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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ogontz Hall
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 7175-7165 Ogontz Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity
state Pennsylvania code PA county Philadelphia code 101 zip code 19138

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>6</u>	<u> </u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwellingCommerce/specialty store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~Domestic/Vacant~~Commerce/specialty store**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals-Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls Brickroof Terra Cotta Tile

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ogontz Hall complex is a series of 6 distinct buildings unified by a common architectural treatment which presents the group as a single building. The primary presence in the group is that of the Ogontz Hall itself, a four story apartment house with a commercial arcade at street level. The remaining five buildings appear as a secondary addition, three stories tall but sharing the same commercial arcade at the street and residences above.

The dominant mode of architectural expression is a liberal application of traditionally Spanish and Classical elements to a contemporary apartment plan, in a manner consistent with the Spanish Colonial revival popular during the 1920's. The architect, G. Harold Murphy, is credited with designing primarily speculative housing and modest apartment buildings in west and northeast Philadelphia. Ogontz Hall is one of his last credited apartment house designs, representing perhaps a synthesis of the body of his prior work in as much as it resembles most an overgrown row house, particularly the three story portion along Ogontz Avenue.

The commercial arcade is clad in smooth-faced limestone blocks, articulated by segmented, arched bays, comprising the storefronts. The massing of the building is determined by these bays, 6 of which comprise the 72nd Street elevation and 10 of which comprise the Ogontz Avenue elevation. A tripartite transom sits within the arch of each bay, flush with the plane of the facade. The original leaded glass lites remain along 72nd Street and in four bays of the Ogontz Avenue elevation. Along Ogontz Avenue, the transom course is broken by a barrel vaulted canopy which delineates the individual storefront entrance. This occurs at every non-altered bay with the exception of the three closest to the 72nd Street corner, as those three bays comprise a single store, whereas throughout the remainder of the commercial strip each bay comprises an individual shopfront. The store entrances are recessed at the termination of the barrel vault, while the plate glass fronts extend to the plane of the masonry.

Along Ogontz Avenue, the entrances to the residential apartments above the commercial level are distinguished from the commercial entrances by a limestone pediment supported by carved consoles. Beneath each pediment is an elliptical arch which is bisected by the partywall.

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The entrance door with transom is recessed within the arch on either side of the partywall. The principal entrance to the 4 story apartment building occurs along 72nd Street. The entrance bay is the tallest part of the structure, crowned by a hip-roofed tower within which rests the old water tank, enclosed behind an arched, blind window of parquet patterned buff brick, alluding to the bell tower motif common to Spanish architecture. Due to a change in grade along 72nd Street, the entrance is above grade, atop a limestone balustraded staircase. The entrance itself lies beneath an ornate, carved limestone pediment supported by limestone consoles and a limestone architrave. Remnants of the original transom and sidelights remain in an advanced state of disrepair.

The upper floors of the building are clad in buff brick on the principal elevations along Ogontz Avenue and 72nd Street. This brick is laid in a running bond throughout. The rear elevations are clad in red brick, laid in an American Bond, with glazed, black brick header courses throughout. This brick rises from a water table of local schist. The black glazed brick ends are also used randomly throughout to accent some of the window reveals and break up large expanses of masonry, and as quoinwork at the corners.

The second floor level fenestration along the principal elevations is primarily double leaf "French" doors with transom, set within a simple limestone architrave. Most doors contain 15 lights, and are set behind a simple wrought iron railing which is essentially in the same plane as the facade. Those masonry openings at this level which do not contain doors contain casement windows with transoms, whose lights maintain the scale and rhythm of the doors. The third floor fenestration is less detailed than the second. Masonry openings are comprised of limestone at the sills and lintels only. Windows are 6/1 double hung, ganged by two in the majority of openings. At the fourth floor level, the masonry openings have lost all ornamentation save a brick lintel laid in soldier course, and limestone sills. Along the secondary elevations, all masonry openings are simple red brick with brick sills. All windows are double hung, 6/1, two or one per opening depending on location.

The rise of the principal elevations are terminated by a simple, pressed metal cornice, above which is a decorative terra-cotta tiled hipped roof. Evenly spaced, arched limestone medallions with low relief carvings articulate the bay spacing of the buildings above the cornice level on both Ogontz Avenue and 72nd Street. The secondary elevations are terminated in a brick parapet wall capped with simple, terra cotta tiles.

The interior architectural elements of Ogontz Hall continue the Spanish Colonial motif but are subdued to a large degree by what were presumably the cost constraints of the speculative nature of apartment development in this

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area of the City. The primary areas of architectural detail are the lobby and the windows.

The principal entrance vestibule contains a masonry wainscot which is covered with several layers of paint. The material appears at initial inspection to be marble. The interior entrance door repeats the transom but not the sidelight construction found at the exterior door. Upon entering the lobby, one finds a simple, open stairway to the second floor. The balustrade is of simple square stock terminating in turned newel posts at either side of the first step. The open stringer is decorated with a simple, bracket shaped applied panel. The lobby and vestibule floors are of random broken polychromatic slate. It appears that this floor may in fact be original. Two blind Serlianas, a simple plaster architrave, and a simple plaster cove at the ceiling comprise the remaining architectural elements of the lobby.

The smaller residential entrances along Ogontz Avenue are devoid of any architectural embellishments. A plain, straight run staircase leads to the second floor hallway, which is of "shotgun" configuration. The stair becomes a box spiral to the third floor, of the same construction and detail of that in the 4 story building.

The hall floors throughout are simple wooden narrow slats. Architectural detail is limited to a two piece baseboard and a simple, wooden molding at the doors topped by a flat pediment of the same trim, typical of the "builder's trim" of the period. At various points in the hallways, corresponding to interior bearing walls, simple plaster arches carry the walls across the halls.

The interior plan of all the units are similar. Every unit is a one bedroom, in which one enters the living area off of which radiate the bedroom and the kitchen and bath. The same two piece baseboard trim found in the hallways is used within the units. Likewise, the door trim found in the halls is also used at the interior doors and windows. The masonry reveal of the exterior windows and French doors are finished with a plain, flat wooden panel. Some of the units employ a plaster arch of similar configuration to those in the halls at the entrances to the kitchens. The baths are finished in a white porcelain tile typical of the period with a black border course. Floors are wet set mosaic tile.

Ogontz Hall has been vacant for a number of years and the entire building is in an advanced state of decay. In addition, vandals have stripped the building of all salvageable materials and in the process have caused extensive amounts of damage to most finishes. The weather and neglect have also added to the deterioration of the structure. Despite these conditions, however, the building can be rehabilitated without further compromise of its architectural character.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) N/A A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1920-1935 1929

Significant Dates

1929

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

G. Harold Murphy

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Ogontz Hall is significant as one of the best remaining representations of a type of speculative real estate development of its period in Philadelphia, characterized by development of the outer fringes of the City made accessible by automobile rather than by train or trolley. Ogontz Hall has remained relatively unaltered since its construction, and has for the most part been in continuous use as a commercial/residential property since its inception.

Dr. Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer for the City of Philadelphia, best described the significance in a letter to the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation dated May 6, 1987:

Ogontz Hall is of particular architectural significance because it and the surrounding neighborhood, given the name West Oak Lane by its developers, reflect a period of residential construction markedly different from earlier real estate endeavors. This change was caused by the advent of the large apartment building as a desirable place to live and by the increasing popularity of the automobile. Within the blocks bounded by Cheltenham Avenue on the east, Walnut Lane on the north, Linekiln Pike on the west and Wyncott Avenue and Northwood Cemetery on the south, stand rows of dwellings constructed in the late 1920's and early 1930's, each house built with a basement garage in the rear, accessible from a driveway. The wide residential streets, also planned with the car in mind, circle towards the main thoroughfare, Ogontz Avenue, where large apartment buildings and commercial structures of the same genre dominate the streetscape.

Ogontz Hall is the largest of these apartment buildings and an early example of the type of apartment that began appearing in urban areas during the twenties and early thirties.¹

Apartment houses had gained wide acceptance by the time Ogontz Hall was developed, and the architectural journals of the time published lengthy treatises on their design and planning. Ogontz Hall belongs to a period in which the apartment house became viable in a suburban setting as apartment living was an accepted matter of choice. The Architectural Record of 1929 commented:

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Scarcely a generation ago the apartment house was characterized as an "undesirable and makeshift habitation" suitable only for individuals with transient habits. Today we find those who select their place of residence with deliberateness and with an eye to comfort and convenience, turning to the apartment house as a matter of choice."²

Having emerged from the stigma of the tenement, apartment houses, particularly suburban developments, found themselves competing with the detached house as a place to live. As a result, the suburban apartment building had to address a different set of criteria than its urban counterpart:

The suburban investor must have greater consideration for his neighbors than is incumbent upon the city builder. It has been demonstrated that it pays handsomely to consider not alone the exterior design and the general arrangement of rooms, not only the question of an individual lawn for the building, but equally the question of possible damage to adjoining property. Owners of improved suburban property usually have a disposition to place a social boycott upon apartments... Speaking broadly, families who need more than five rooms, or at the outside, seven, will rent a detached house. It is to families requiring five rooms and less that the average suburban apartment may almost profitably be made to appeal.³

The design and planning of Ogontz Hall is consistent with this position. Recognizing the competition of the booming row houses of West Oak Lane, or Erlen, as to which the area is sometimes referred, the complex was designed to contain in its entirety one bedroom flats. Over the course of the next fifty years, the unit distribution was unaltered, a relative rarity among buildings of this age and significant in that the original market for the units appears to have held despite the changing demographics and affluence of the neighborhood.

The exterior design "used the Spanish Colonial palette found in the rowhouses of Erlen to create this exaggerated form of the rowhouse, choosing buff colored brick for the primary facades and patterning, green patterned tiles for the roofs and embellishing the facade with classical motifs pressed into metal or carved into stone."⁴ Consider Dr. Tyler's assessment of the character of West Oak Lane:

The character of West Oak Lane, known today as Erlen, is that of Garden Court National Register District in West Philadelphia, where early twentieth century designers gleaned details from favorite historic Continental prototypes, and embellished simple Philadelphia row houses to evoke the character of Spanish Colonial villas or Medieval English or French cottages....

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The apartment buildings and commercial structures contain the same detailing, bonding the community together, and contrasting it with adjacent neighborhoods. Those communities bordering on the southern edges of Erlen largely contain turn of the century Colonial Revival rows easily recognized by second floor bays covered with pressed metal panels, architraves, columns, cornices and swags and ground floor porches supported by classical columns; this type also dominating the familiar streetscapes of West Philadelphia....⁵

The integrated design of the commercial area within the complex is consistent with Dr. Tyler's assessment of the district as a whole. Also not to be overlooked is the building's presence as a commercial development on Ogontz Avenue. Ogontz Hall is situated at the widest point along Ogontz Avenue at a three point intersection at which point the avenue curves, lending more prominence to the site. Tax maps of the area from 1928 indicate that the development of the area originated at this intersection. Ogontz Hall was built during the early phase of the area's development, and is easily the most imposing structure for blocks, the focal point of the entire area, and the center of retail activity along the avenue.

Ogontz Hall was constructed in 1929, designed by architect G. Harold Murphy for his client George Nalun. Little is recorded of the body of Murphy's work, however, what it consists primarily of his early efforts, small apartment houses and small developments of row homes. His apartment house work reflects the prevalent popular styles of the period: an oversized Jacobean manor house (the Wyneva Hotel), a Spanish Colonial villa (Ogontz Hall), a large, Tudor inspired boarding house (4109 Walnut Street), and, uncharacteristically, a Deco inspired apartment house (the Fairview), designed during a brief partnership with Charles Talley. Not surprisingly, most of Murphy's credited work appears either on the fringes of the Garden Court District or in the vicinity of Oak Lane and the lower Northeast section of the city.

In the latter stages of his career, Murphy was considered among the most prolific designers of the "airlite" row house in Philadelphia, the successor to the row house prevalent in West Philadelphia and West Oak Lane stripped of its applied decoration, and the dominant residential building type in post-war Philadelphia. Ogontz Hall's significance in Murphy's work is as a hybrid

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rowhouse inspired apartment building foreshadowing his ultimate concentration in row house designs.

Dr. Tyler best summarizes the significance of Ogontz Hall as follows:

...Ogontz Hall appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as a fine example of an early twentieth century apartment building that reflects a new pattern of urban living. It is architecturally significant as an important example of a large apartment building styled to exploit the trend in Philadelphia row house design of the 1920's and 1930's.⁶

ENDNOTES

- ¹ City of Philadelphia, Historical Commission, Letter to Dan Deibler from Dr. Richard Tyler, May 6, 1987, (held by Phila. Historical Commission).
- ² Henry Wright, "The Modern Apartment House", The Architectural Record, Volume 65, No. 3, March 1929, Page 213.
- ³ Myron Hunt, "Suburban Apartment Houses", The Architect and Engineer, No. 199, Volume 58, Page 89.
- ⁴ City of Philadelphia, Historical Commission, Letter to Dan Deibler from Dr. Richard Tyler, May 6, 1987, (held by Phila. Historical Commission).
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Webster, Richard J., Philadelphia Preserved, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, c1976, page 382.

Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, pp. 559-560

Hunt, Myron. "Suburban Apartment Houses ", The Architect and Engineer, V. 58, No. 199, pp. 82-89.

Wright, Henry, "The Modern Apartment House", The Architectural Record, V. 65, No. 3, March 1929, pp. 213-240.

City of Philadelphia, Historical Commission, Letter to Dan Deibler from Dr. Richard Tyler, May 6, 1987, (held by Phila. Historical Commission).

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1925, 1931.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Philadelphia Historical Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 1/2 acre

UTM References

A

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

C

1	8	4	8	7	1	1	0	4	4	3	4	4	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

1	8	4	8	7	1	6	0	4	4	3	4	6	9	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the northeasterly side of Ogontz Avenue and the south side of 72nd Avenue, thence extending along the south side of 72nd Avenue 179'-9 1/4"; thence southwardly 107'-8 1/8"; thence southeastwardly 30'-0"; thence southwestwardly 180'-0"; thence northwestwardly 207'-7 7/8" to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the historically associated buildings which comprise Ogontz Hall.

See continuation sheet

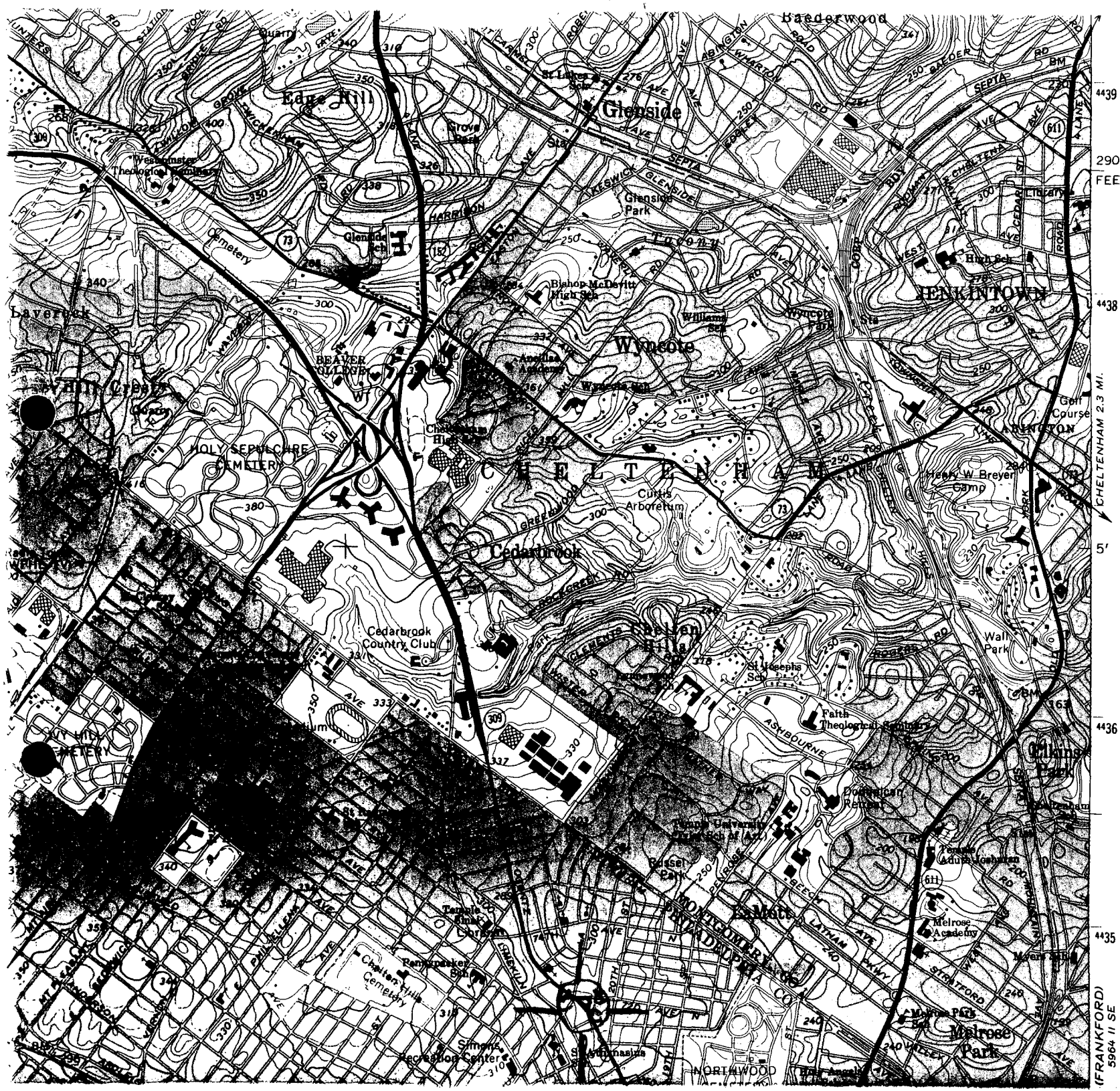
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Greenblatt, Vice President

organization Canus Corporation date 5-28-91

street & number 4401 Cresson Street telephone 215-483-3769

city or town Philadelphia state Pa. zip code 19127



(FRANKFORD)
5964 II SE

4435

5'

CHELTENHAM 2.3 MI.

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FEET

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Doughty Hall
 Philadelphia County
 Servantown Quad
 Zone 18
 A E 48860 N 4434600 LE 48710 N 4434480
 B E 48760 N 4434600