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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property
   historic name   Park Towne Place
   other names/site number   N/A

2. Location
   street & number   2200 Park Towne Place
   city or town   Philadelphia
   state   PA
   code   PA
   county Philadelphia
   code   101
   zip code   19130
   N/A
   not for publication
   N/A
   vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ meets___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   _national_    _statewide_    _X_ _local_

Date: November 2, 2011
Signature of certifying official/Title
PA Historical and Museum Commission
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official
Date

Title
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   _entered in the National Register_   _determined eligible for the National Register_
   _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.)

- [x] private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- [x] building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Domestic: Multiple Dwelling
- Commerce / trade: Restaurant
- Transportation: Road-related (vehicular)
- Recreation & Culture: Sports facility
- Commerce / trade: specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Domestic: Multiple Dwelling
- Transportation: Road-related (vehicular)
- Commerce / trade: specialty store
- Recreation & Culture: sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Modern Movement: International Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation:
- walls: Brick
- Marble
- roof:
- other: concrete
- Metal: aluminum
Park Towne Place is an enclave of four twenty-story apartment buildings and related structures that was built as a single project between 1957 and 1959. It is located on a polygonal property between the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the Vine Street Expressway and 24th and 22nd streets in the Logan Circle section of the city. The site is organized by an interior drive that enters the site from Park Towne Place and a secondary perimeter road that provides access to the garage and retail facilities. The property consists of 5 contributing buildings and 2 contributing structures. The 5 contributing buildings are the “South Tower” (including the underground retail area), the “North Tower,” the “East Tower,” the “West Tower” and the one-story restaurant. The 2 contributing structures are the underground parking garage and the pool and spa complex. The towers are organized so that three run parallel to the Parkway with one, the so-called “South Tower,” at 90 degrees to the group. The three parallel buildings on the east half of the site, the so-called “East, North and West Towers,” are surrounded by green lawns with mature trees while the “South tower” is set on a terrace on one side with an adjacent one story structure that was originally used as a restaurant. Below the terrace is a retail complex including a grocery store and shops which connect to the two level parking structure that links all of the buildings below ground and is covered by a lawn. A swimming pool and spa complex are placed at a lower level of the site along the south side of the complex. The four nearly identical twenty-story, parallelepiped-shaped towers were built using column and slab, reinforced concrete, construction and in a restricted palette of limestone-tan brick, white marble, and bright aluminum trim and glass. They are rigorously modern in design with no extraneous historic ornament. Instead, the architects relied on proportion, elegant materials, and vertical groups of balconies at each end countering horizontal runs of aluminum-framed windows and brick spandrels for articulation. The original plan and the buildings of the complex survive in excellent condition with few alterations since construction and remain in their original usage as rental apartments.

Narrative Description

The Park Towne Place site is situated on the diagonal of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway one of the principal public avenues of Philadelphia. Access is via a service street, also called Park Towne Place (formerly Callowhill Street) that is set back one hundred feet and parallels the Parkway. The east side of the site is bordered by 22nd Street (photos 1, 32), the south side is bordered by the depressed Vine Street Expressway (photo 1) and the west side is bordered by 24th Street, an access ramp to the Expressway that was originally designed as part of the river drives of the early twentieth century Parkway project. Sidewalks line the streets and form a transition to the densely treed edge that continues the Parkway landscape (photos 20, 33). The site slopes down toward the Vine Street Expressway, making it possible to incorporate surface parking together with a perimeter driveway that provides access to the underground garage as well as the swimming pool and spa (photos 3, 35) all below the main grade of the site. With its large buildings and multi-acre property, this is part of the many large-scale twentieth century developments along the Parkway which define its more urban and modern character.

Public access is by the one-way loop road that enters the site from the north end of Park Towne Place. It passes in front of the West Tower, (photo 26) then turns at the South Tower to the southeast (photo 30) passing the entrances to the East and North towers before re-entering Park Towne Place. This road loop frames the “great lawn,” an open green that atop the garage (photos 7, 36). The garage connects the four towers below grade and provides the majority of parking for the complex. A secondary service drive enters the site at the very north end and parallels the adjacent ramp to the Vine Street Expressway. This road provides access to surface parking lots adjacent to the West and South towers and continues around the South Tower to provide a delivery route to
the retail facility and to the garage. The two drives separate the general public from the service access. The circulation remains as it was originally conceived.

The landscape is conceived in large gestures. The edges along the major roads are framed by mature trees that screen the buildings and provide a degree of privacy to the lower level units. The densest group was called "the Grove" on the cover sheet of the original 1956 drawings and marks the most heavily traveled intersection of 22nd Street and the Parkway. Walkways connect between buildings. Small plazas and sitting areas, some of them of more recent date, are woven into the site but have little effect on the integrity of the landscape (photos 20, 39). At the core of the interior of the site between the four towers is the large, open lawn atop the garage which contrasts with the hardscape of the terrace that sets off and differentiates the South Tower and related restaurant. The plaza in front of the restaurant and South tower is a striking, modern period design of contrasting elements with its original "jet fountain" water feature (photos 8, 31) and "tree bin" or planter with a seating edge around the perimeter. Open concrete block protective and privacy screens form barriers where there are changes of level particularly overlooking the swimming pool and surrounding deck (29, 20, 35). These are deteriorating and have been replaced in parts with simple metal railings that preserve the original economical character. The original site plan and landscape remains intact with mature trees filling out as the designers intended.

The site contains a second landscape / water feature, the pool complex, which remains in its original location and configuration (photos 3, 35). As a private amenity for the apartment renters it is placed on the lower level to the southeast of the South tower and along the edge of the property adjacent to the Vine Street Expressway so that noise from the pool does not affect the upper, quieter levels of the site. The pool complex consists of a larger and smaller pool connected at one corner, and with surrounding decks for lounge chairs. The pool connects under a driveway ramp to showers and locker facilities. A photograph of a lost model for the complex shows all of these elements in the same relationship and indicating little or no change.

The big visual element of the complex is the cluster of four similar towers that are modeled on LeCorbusier's Unite D'habitation type of high rise housing with large buildings in a green setting (photos 1, 32, 45). The South Tower is differentiated from the others by its orientation at 90 degrees to the other towers and by its location adjacent to the former restaurant and its direct connection to the retail zone in the basement. These reflect its role as the administrative center for the complex. The location of the marble cornerstone for the project (photo 9), carved with the name of the complex, a tree and the city grid coupled with the date, 1959, on the end wall of the South tower toward the loop road, further denotes its more central role to the complex. Its central role is also indicated by external marble cladding of the piers that face into the lobby of that tower (photo 8). The book-matched sheets of marble of the lobby of the South Tower continue inside to wrap the piers of the lounge off the lobby creating a connection between interior and exterior that was characteristic of modern design. On the three other buildings of the complex, the piers are simply concrete though marble appears in the vestibules and lobbies (photo 21).

All of the towers are given the appearance of sitting on pilotis in the manner of LeCorbusian modernism with bands of dark glass giving the apartment portion of the building the illusion of being elevated above the ground (photos 30, 33, 38, 44, 45). This was a common theme of the period in buildings such as the State Office Building at Broad and Spring Garden Streets (I2L2, architects, 1959), the Society Hill towers by I. M. Pei (1962), the Dorchester on Rittenhouse Square (Milton Schwartz, 1964) and the Municipal Services Building (Vincent Kling & Associates, 1963) and continuing at least to 1970 in the 5 Penn Center (1601 Market Street, Vincent G. Kling, 1970). Park Towne Place appears to have been one of the earliest, if not the earliest to use this motif.

Adjacent to the South Tower were two of the principal amenities of the complex. Sharing the terrace is a one-story building that housed a restaurant and bar that was intended to give the complex something of the air of a
private club (photo 3). This is a simple one story building with oversized glass windows. The 1956 bid plans show a storefront along the plaza with sliding doors opening onto the plaza. However, its main entrance came from the glazed foyer that linked the restaurant and the South Tower. The restaurant building was simply constructed with pre-fab metal trusses spanning from the masonry perimeter walls to a line of metal columns and at the rear a stud wall that closed off the kitchen in the SW quadrant. The front NW quadrant was occupied by a bar that opened directly from the restaurant foyer. The bar was enlivened by a cylindrical coat room as a large sculptural interior object (removed at some time in the past) that partly screened the bar from the foyer. Exterior walls are of the limestone-hued brick of the rest of the complex. With the rehabilitation of the adjacent neighborhood, it is no longer essential to have a restaurant for the complex and this building has been renovated to serve other community purposes. As a part of that renovation the front façade was resurfaced with a neutral grey metal skin but the original brick remains beneath it and on the other three sides. The former dining room is now the principal rental office for the complex while the former bar is a lounge for the complex with a small service kitchen. The rear commercial kitchen that served the restaurant and bar has been adapted together with the former coffee shop as a fitness club, again shared by the complex. Despite the change to the front façade, the building remains in its original configuration as a one-story facility juxtaposed against the taller tower with the retail group below.

The interior arrangement of the main level of the South Tower differs slightly from the other towers in that it provides a more generous lobby and meeting rooms that represent its central role in the complex. It also differs in having a public stair off to the side of the lobby that connects down to the retail level that occupies the basement space directly below the former restaurant / bar. The stair to this level is of contemporary design with the treads suspended on aluminum rods on the upper run and supported from below on similar aluminum rods so that the stair appears to float (photo 12). The stair leads down to doors that open through a storefront glazing system into the shopping arcade (photos 4, 5). This arcade continues the modern vocabulary of aluminum shopfront systems of the restaurant foyer on the upper level and contains a convenience grocery store directly on axis with the stair. A corridor in front of the grocery turns at the corner of the store and runs along the fronts of the small shop fronts that house cleaners and other routine commercial spaces. The plan provided for five retail spaces, each opening onto the main corridor that wrapped around the store and occupying the space under the plaza. These are minimal in design with dropped ceilings and metal and glazed shopfront systems arranged in the saw-tooth angles of contemporary street fronts. At present, two of the shops are in use and the others are vacant.

The corridor through the retail zone continues to another set of simply detailed metal and glass doors that open into the garage. The garage occupies the entire space between the four towers, under the great lawn with interior connections to each basement (photo 6). This makes it possible for residents of all the towers to walk underground to the retail group without going outside during inclement weather. The garage was constructed during the site excavation with two reinforced concrete decks connected via internal ramps (photo 45). It was built using a poured-in-place system with large metal pans that formed voids between the reinforcing in the beams that carry the honey-comb slab. The main beams are carried on widely spaced reinforced concrete piers with cars parking in rows between the piers.

With minor exceptions at the bases, depending on their connection to the main plaza, and in the case of the South Tower, its more central role in the complex, each of the towers is a simple rectangular block of nineteen stories including the two-story base. On all of the buildings, the long elevations read as bands of yellow brick spandrels surmounted by strips of windows separated by aluminum muntins organized in groups of five and six lights save for the end bays on the entrance ends of the building which contain four windows. The window strips are interrupted in the plane of the glass by barely visible strips that mark internal demising walls between units (photos 29, 30, 33, 36). The long facades are accented at the next to last bays at each end with stacks of
projecting balconies in a syncopated rhythm of a projecting canopy above a pair of balconies and then a pair of stories without balconies before repeating the pattern three more times to the top (photo 42). The top floor of each tower is surmounted by a mechanical penthouse of the same yellow-tan brick. The shorter end walls, by contrast with the sides are nearly solid panels of the limestone-hued brick interrupted by windows. These differ at each end with pairs of windows at each floor on the ends above the entrances (photos 30, 35, 43) and with three windows on the opposite ends (photos 34, 38, 40). These end windows light rooms in the larger units and are spaced as punched openings to emphasize the continuity of the brick wall that contrasts with the continuous bands of the side elevations.

The entrance level of each building visually opens out either onto the central plaza, the great lawn or landscaped side yards with floor to ceiling glazing emphasizing the relationship of the buildings to their Parkway and landscaped site. Entrances are placed at one of the narrow ends of each building on the face toward the main loop drive rather than in the center of the long sides (photo 30). As with the South Tower, dark glass on the base and two story high mullions for the glazing gives the illusion that the buildings are elevated above their sites. This glazing makes it possible to incorporate apartments in the non public zones of the lower two stories, increasing the efficiency and rentable space of the buildings.

All of the towers share the same features of small entrance canopies, entrances framed in bright-finished aluminum shop systems and opening in turn into brightly lit outer vestibules that are framed with aluminum mullions and glazed with giant sheets of glass from floor to ceiling. Of particular interest are the vestibule floors which were an invention of the architect, Milton Schwartz, with brightly colored terrazzo in colors reminiscent of pistachio and orange sorbet, flecked with egg-sized pieces of white marble that relate to the color of the book-matched marble paneling of the vestibule and that continue into the inner lobby (photo 25). All but one of the original terrazzo floors survive though with some deterioration reflective of fifty years of service, the exception being that to the south tower which has been replaced in the last decade with a dark terrazzo.

The entrance sequence leads from the entrance vestibule (photo 24) to the two-story lobby and lounge (photo 21, 22, 28; Figures 7-9), in turn leading to one-story spaces beyond where the mail room and related services are located (photo 11) and continuing on to the elevator lobby. The rear of the first floor contains apartments that are served by a corridor that exits from the rear of the elevator lobby through a simple doorway. Walls and ceilings of the public spaces are typically of plaster with ceilings that step up in several planes from the window wall to the floor slab above (photos 21, 22, 44). This emphasizes the window height and the open visual flow to the exterior. The same palette of plaster walls and ceilings and masonry floors continue into the elevator lobbies and the mail rooms. Decorative wall surfaces, marble in the lobbies and wood paneling reflect the original design.

The apartment levels are uniformly planned for all of the buildings with a central spine consisting of a double-loaded corridor entered from the off-center elevators (photos 13, 16). These are flanked by fire-stairs on either side creating an efficient core. Walls and ceilings of the corridors are plaster with surface mounted lighting. Door frames from the corridor into the units represent the impact of mid-century modern fire codes and the new economical detail of modernism with unobtrusive metal frames and solid-core, flush, natural wood doors accented only by a brushed aluminum door handle and door-bell with a viewing system (photo 16).

Apartments are built with an eye to efficiency of space planning and construction. Interior doors are flush, set into metal frames with sliding doors hung on tracks for closets (photos 49, 50, 51, 56). Window openings are frameless making the view the principal object of the interior (photos 47, 48, 50). A different sliding floor to ceiling window occurs in the living rooms with balconies (photos 52, 55). The base below each window bank without a balcony is occupied with a built in metal case for HVAC topped with a wood sill set directly against the base of the window so that nothing interrupts the juxtaposition of ceiling and wall to the openings. In an
interesting accommodation of the units to the exterior grid. many of the original closets partially cover windows but are set back at the plane of the front wall and are not visible from the exterior (photos 50, 51).

The original layout of the complex provided for apartments in a variety of sizes and relatively evenly scattered through the complex. The units are stacked from floor to floor for vertical plumbing runs with kitchens and bathrooms back to back where possible. Balconies are reserved for the larger units at the ends while efficiencies are concentrated toward the center near the elevators and services. The balconies are an important part of the design with glazed front panels and solid concrete end panels. This keeps the viewing plane open from the living rooms and is an original feature evident in the 1959 photograph (photo 45). The plans of most units share common strategies. The one to four-bedroom units all link the dining and living areas so that they flow together seamlessly from the entrance vestibule to the large bank of windows on the far wall that are the focus of the unit. Bedrooms are separated from the more public zone by a corridor with the bath in close proximity. Kitchens usually take the form of a galley kitchen with banks of cabinets and appliances on both sides. They are open at one end toward the entrance for ease of bringing in supplies and on the other end into dining areas. Some retain their original painted metal cabinets with streamlined handles. In the smaller efficiencies there are Pullman Kitchens that are parallel to the entrance wall and screen off the large walk-in closet and bathroom from the remainder of the living space.

The four-bedroom units are of note in that they consist of seven rooms with separate living, dining, and kitchen areas and two bathrooms. The second bathrooms have a shower instead of a full tub and were linked to one of the bedrooms as a master-suite with the full bathroom connected to the main corridor. Bathrooms are largely original with original brightly colored 4x4 wall tile. The larger units suggest families and wealthier empty-nesters while the smaller units were aimed at young couples and individual professionals. These remain in the same spatial order of the original plans with larger units at the end opposite the lobby entrance and farthest from the elevator and stairs while the smaller units are near the elevator bank. Although a few of the smallest units have been combined the mix is essentially as it was originally designed and the essential layout system remains for the vast majority of the units.

These apartments have worn well and remain attractive living places. The present configuration of apartments appears to be largely unchanged with the original array from studios (the smallest of which are in the range of 500 square feet) to four-bedroom, two bath apartments in excess of 1,400 square feet. The majority of units now as originally are the one and two-bedroom units. The present count by size shows similar mixes with each building containing efficiencies, one, two, three and four bedroom units arranged on each floor. They continue to share common planning features and make use of contemporary open planning emblematic of the 1950s. At present there are some 930 units across the four towers. The cover sheet of the original plans provides counts of the unit types which ranged from one room efficiencies to four-bedroom apartments. The unit types listed on the cover sheet of the original architectural plans describe the intended audience with half of the units divided between efficiencies (14%) and one-bedroom units (36%) and the other half divided between two-bedroom units (26%) and a nearly equal number split between three and four-bedroom units (11% and 13% respectively).

The Park Towne Place complex exists with remarkably few changes and is a handsome period piece in its retro-1950s character from its light-hued yellow brick and marble masonry with its aluminum framed oversized sheets of glass for windows to its landscaping with its screen walls, jet fountain and tree planters and its period interior finishes and design strategies. The location of the property remains unchanged, facing on to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and in the close proximity to center city. The design remains with minor changes that do not affect the core integrity. All of the buildings remain in their original footprint and with their original masonry skins and glazing patterns; the sole change is of minor consequence, a removable and reversible metal cladding of one façade of the former restaurant. The materials remain in their original light tonality that marks the complex as a 1950s design and are in good condition with the original brick and pointing of the facades as
well as most of the interior materials, the principal loss being to one of the entrance terrazzo entrance floors. Workmanship was that of large scale modern construction with no individual craft for detail. The managers of the complex through various minor renovations have understood and valued the workmanship character. The setting remains as originally designed with the original plan, road circulation, landscape features and elements in situ. In every way the site retains its character as a modern, downtown sophisticated residential development. The entire complex reflects the flavor of its era with the consequence that it retains a remarkable degree of integrity that has been carefully guarded by its owners. This is one of the most complete 1950s ensembles in Philadelphia and fully expresses its designers’ original intentions surviving with high integrity.
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 patterns of our history.

[ ] B Property is 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance
1957-1959

Significant Dates
1957
1959

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Kahn, Louis I.
Bacon, Edmund
Schwartz, Milton

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance constitutes the period of design in 1957 to the end of construction in 1959.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A
Park Towne Place meets National Register Criterion A for community planning and development. Tracing its roots to Louis I. Kahn’s 1947 design for the “Triangle District” (bounded by Market Street, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and the Schuylkill River on the west) this property is significantly associated with the trend of post-war urban renewal and planning in Philadelphia. Realized under city planner Edmund Bacon, Park Towne Place was one of the first of the realized Bacon projects that helped give Philadelphia a national reputation for urban planning in the postwar period and influenced the postwar development of the city. It is particularly notable as the first modern housing complex for middle and upper middle class residents in the downtown and set the stage for later projects such as the better known Society Hill Towers and Hopkinson House, both dating from the early 1960s. The period of significance is 1957 – 1959 which corresponds to the dates of construction.

Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Better Philadelphia Exhibit:
Philadelphia’s City Planning Commission was initially headed by Robert Mitchell, a former planner and academic from Chicago who surrounded himself with soon-to-be important modern architects including Oscar Stonorov and Louis I. Kahn and his eventual successor, planner Edmund Bacon. Together, they set the tone for the future with the goal of making planning a part of city government while simultaneously creating a popular vision of the possibilities of a revitalized city. In 1945, Oscar Stonorov suggested to Mitchell the idea of a popular exhibit that would show how the city could be transformed according to modern planning principles. Over the next two years, the young architects and planners made a series of designs covering many areas of the city from the old neighborhoods along the Delaware to enlarged urban universities. These ideas were jointly presented to the general public in the Better Philadelphia Exhibit which was held in 1947 in the Gimbel’s Department Store on Market Street.

The exhibit featured an immense model of the existing center city area of Philadelphia from the Delaware River to the Schuylkill River and between Bainbridge Street and the Art Museum on Fairmount. Operable panels containing the darkened volumes of the buildings of the existing city could be rotated over to show the planners’ vision of the new crystalline and light-hued city of the future. Most notable was the area that had been defined as the “Triangle Zone” encompassing the area between the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the Schuylkill River

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2Gimbels was headed by Arthur C. Kaufman, a member of the city’s new planning commission and a cousin of Edgar Kaufman, the Pittsburgh retailer who was part of the Allegheny Conference then actively reshaping downtown Pittsburgh. Philadelphians capitalized on Pittsburgh’s previous use of the Golden Triangle for Philadelphia’s “Triangle district.” See AIA yearbook, 1949 Challenge.
and Market Street. This area was compromised by the Pennsylvania Railroad’s massive viaduct known as the “Chinese Wall” that brought trains above street level to the Broad Street Station. The viaduct cut the city in two between City Hall and the Schuylkill River and was framed by largely abandoned warehouses and other services related to the railroad. The model showed this zone transformed by removing the Broad Street Station and its viaduct to create a site for a new downtown of office towers and housing.

In keeping with the idea of shaping each area by functional principles, the proposed uses included an office district in what is now Penn Center, a new urban civic center in the vicinity of 18th Street that was predicated on the demolition of City Hall (Bacon’s 1932 thesis at Cornell University), a recreation area with a new department store to the west, and a new residential district along the river that would become Park Towne Place. All of these zones were envisioned in the new mode of modern architecture that in Peter Reed’s assessment “was emblematic of a positive, bright future anticipated by a new generation of architects, planners and civic activists who were ready for the physical and political transformation of their gloomy and corrupt city.” The planners repeated the duality of the model in the light hue of architecture and large and simple architectural volumes that contrasted with the forms of the old, dark, ornamented buildings with small windows. Every new project in the city developed by the Planning Commission under Bacon in the 1950s and early 1960s would reflect these principles and design characteristics.

**Louis Kahn’s Role in the Triangle Development:**
While the architectural model together with its execution was Stonorov’s idea, Peter Reed proves that the design of the Triangle zone was the work of Louis I. Kahn who was a part of the Associated City Planners (ACP) team that included Stonorov and landscape architects Wheelwright and Stevenson and realtor C. Harry Johnson. They were assigned in 1946 to make the initial study of the Triangle district by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. At this time, Kahn and his colleagues were much enamored with the CIAM idea of separating functions for the modern city into distinct zones for work, residence, recreation, and transportation. Kahn and his team proposed a similar strategy for the Triangle to undo the existing conditions which his team characterized as “Hungarian Goulash” with land value below the city average despite its proximity to the downtown, leading to the “blighted” designation, which made it ripe for urban renewal. In place of the “multiple and contradictory uses, [Kahn proposed] an orderly plan based on the cleft demarcation and separation of functions [which] was considered to be economic and efficient. The much simplified and segregated plan made a startling contrast to the existing conditions.” Kahn prepared ten perspective sketches that became the basis for the Triangle portion of the 1947 Better Philadelphia Exhibit Model [figure 1]. Kahn’s array of LeCorbusian slabs on pilotis along the river corresponds to the actual construction beginning in 1957.

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3 The model attained such fame that it was exhibited at the Brussels World’s Fair. Kahn’s drawings for the site are at the University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives.
4 Reed 38-39. This correlates with Christopher Klemek’s thesis *Urbanism as reform*: “Across all disciplines, modernism was generally characterized by a purist tendency toward abstraction ... but more than anything it represented a break with [old] European stylistic canons and professional academies formalized since the Renaissance.” p. 9.
5 Reed, 36-39.
6 Reed, p. 55. These principles set the stage for the later conflict with Jane Jacobs and Robert Venturi, both of whom preferred messy and vital over clear and static – but Jacobs *Death and Life of Great American Cities* would not be written until 1961, largely in response to the type of planning that Bacon and his contemporary Robert Moses advocated.

11
**Edmund Bacon’s Role:**

In 1949, Bacon was named the new executive director of the planning commission where he immediately turned into action principles the ideas of the Better Philadelphia Exhibit by creating a ground swell of public interest that would in turn pull the political and economic interests along. The evolution of the project can be traced in city planning reports from the period beginning with the ACP “Report on the Redevelopment of the ‘Triangle,’ (January 1948).” With the impetus of federal funding two additional studies were undertaken of the Triangle area west of City Hall. In 1949, the Pennsylvania Railroad station and its vast viaduct between the River and Penn Station to the west were an obstacle to remaking the city. Ever the initiator, Bacon prepared for the moment when the railroad would decide to demolish the station with the goal of having a visionary plan ready and waiting. This led to the larger study by the Urban Land Institute which looked at the entire Triangle region and in turn led to a fourth study, the 1950 report which examined the “North Triangle Redevelopment Area,” the zone between the Parkway, the Schuylkill and the proposed Vine Street or Crosstown Expressway that would separate this area from the larger Triangle district to the south.

The “North Triangle” study represents Bacon’s fusion of Kahn’s CIAM-based ideas of differentiating the urban functions with his own ideas learned at Cranbrook under Eliel Saarinen that “emphasized design as the relationship of form and space; so the real design problem is the city.” Under Bacon’s leadership, the “North Triangle” report made the case that “the proposed Vine Street Expressway will tend to divide the ‘Triangle’ into two sections.” The report continued: “The proximity of the North Triangle Area to the main business district and to Fairmount Park makes it potentially one of the most convenient and desirable residential areas in Philadelphia.” According to the report, planning studies had found a demand for “modern apartments” and concluded: “With the erection of modern apartment buildings on the south side of the Parkway and full utilization of the surrounding park facilities, the North Triangle Area might well become one of the finest residential developments in America.”

The section of the report, “Proposed Land Uses Following Redevelopment,” continued: “a group of 8-story and 14-story apartment buildings is recommended [figure 3]. These modern structures, provided with coordinated shopping and parking facilities would function as an integrated unit closely related to the Parkway and the proposed Vine Street Expressway.” The plan continued by calling for what Kahn had sketched and what was eventually built, “large apartment buildings, integrated parking, and open green spaces” [figures 3-6]. Access “to the apartment buildings and underground parking garage would be provided by driveways leading into the

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8 Dated January 19, 1948 the Associated City Planners scheme is the earliest analysis of the site. Its 83 pages included analysis of the physical conditions, drawings and plans divided between Findings and Proposals. The “Hungarian Goulash” reference is p. 4. The most notable drawing by Kahn is the well-known aerial view from the south east with the big new zones of the proposed transformation including “Philadelphia’s New Business Address,” “Amusement & Civic Center” and “In-town Living” which is dated 1947. While most of the drawings focus on the new downtown, there are several images of the proposed housing raised on pilots and arranged in a large spatial order with roads separated. The most telling is the “View North of Apartments Along the Schuylkill River.” Based on the goals of the 1945 enabling legislation for the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law (General Assembly #385, 24 May 1945) which provided municipalities with the opportunity to acquire areas determined to be blighted, the ACP report by Kahn and his colleagues made the initial determination of blight.

9 The entire Triangle was certified as a Redevelopment District 9 January 1948, see cover letter, Edward Hopkinson to Earle N. Barber, Chairman, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 26 September 1950.

10 *Time,* “Urban Renewal: Remaking the American City,” p. 4. (http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,876419,00.html).

11 p.v.

12 p. 5.

13 p. 7.
project from Callowhill Street [now Park Towne Place], thereby minimizing interference with the heavy through
traffic of the Parkway and 22nd Street.” Parking facilities were to be “sufficiently ample to serve the occupants
conveniently. In the surface parking areas and in the underground garage, an average of one-car space for every
two units is recommended.” Various sizes between 750 and 832 units were suggested with a density of
roughly 60 units per acre. These forms and density became the guidelines when the property was offered for
development in 1954 and were met with minor modifications in the actual construction.

**Construction Phasing of the Triangle Zone:**

With the city hemorrhaging jobs in the early 1950s, the city planners’ first push was for the construction of
offices to support the new service economy that was to remake the city. The most important early office project
occupied the site of the former Broad Street Station and was given the name Penn Center. Its goal was to
compete with outlying office parks and to take advantage of the existing transportation infrastructure of the
subway and the railroad. The project began with the demolition of Broad Street Station in 1954 and extended
west along Market Street. This zone has gradually been completed and now runs the entire distance between
City Hall and the Schuylkill River providing a catalog of post-World War II architectural types beginning with
the simpler rectangular blocks of Emory Roth & Sons first buildings for Penn Center, then continuing with
greater individuality and architectural expression in Vincent Kling’s office towers including the Transportation
Building and the slightly later and more sculptural twin towers of Centre Square followed by later post-modern
references to New York skyscrapers in the Liberty Place and Mellon towers by Chicago and New York
architects respectively. The earliest are in the light hues of the 1950s and early 1960s buildings and then
shifted to the architectural glass and other materials of the post-modern era. The first Penn Center towers have
been significantly updated with the limestone painted, the glass replaced with modern tinted glass, and other
changes that significantly affect their design integrity.

Bacon was a maker of clusters. He encouraged other office districts around the city including the University
City Science Center west of 34th Street along Market that was intended to provide incubator space for tech
businesses as well as offices and services that could connect to the University of Pennsylvania’s mainframe
computer at Unicoll at 34th and Market Street. This was part of the large university urban renewal districts
that encompassed much of the region south of Market Street and west of the Schuylkill, extending to 40th Street.
The counterpart to the western office development was the retail spine that Bacon hoped would reinforce
Market Street on the east side of City Hall. In plans from 1954, Bacon proposed to demolish most of the
buildings north of Market Street including Reading Terminal and its great market using transportation funding
for a new railroad connection between the former Pennsylvania and Reading railroad commuter lines. In its

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14 p. 8
15 p. 6. The site plan has elements of what was later built with a group of buildings paralleling and reinforcing the line of the Parkway with others at right angles.
16 The original design architect for the Centre Square project for Kling was Richard G. Colville who discussed the reason for the
17 George E. Thomas and David Brownlee, *Building America’s First University: An Historical and Architectural Guide to the
University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 290-96. This zone was largely planned by Robert
Geddes with the idea of tall buildings at the corners of blocks and low-rise loft-like buildings in the center. It has gradually infilled and
now extends to 40th Street.
18 In 1992, Marianna Thomas undertook a design project as a second year architecture student at the University of Pennsylvania,
guided by Nicholas Gianopoulos, engineer, to determine if it would be possible to preserve the terminal and the market by tunneling
underneath. Reading Terminal was nominated to the National Register by Craig Morrison forcing Bacon to change his plans.
place Bacon envisioned a line of garages and new retail linking the major department stores along Market Street and with offices above. Elements of this plan including the Gallery and the ARA tower were constructed in the 1970s.¹⁹

**North Triangle District:**

In the meantime, the land along the Schuylkill where the city loaded garbage barges to be taken to incinerators and the related small factories, warehouses and parking lots was acquired by the Redevelopment Authority in accordance with the 1950 plan and the 1945 enabling legislation. By 1954 the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* headlined “Option Taken on ‘Triangle’ 4 Big Apartments Planned.” The paper reported that the land was being made available on a lease / sale to a development team headed by two Philadelphians, Bernard Weinberg and Harry K. Madway, principals in the Park Triangle Corporation who were the successful bidders for rental at $75,000 / year with an option to purchase at $1,675,000.²⁰ The majority of the funds for the project up to $10,000,000 were to be guaranteed by the Housing and Home Finance Administration. This project marked the first time that federal funds were used for a private builder in “so-called blighted or slum areas” instead of being turned over to a public housing agency. This was a critical decision, one that paved the way for Society Hill Towers and Hopkinson House because only with additional funds could sufficient design quality be incorporated to bring middle class residents back to the downtown. This met the goal of Bacon’s central thesis of preserving the center of the city as a destination for all. As critically, this marked the first time that the federal government allowed the value guaranteed to be based on “future value” rather than the current values of a rundown area of the city.²¹ A year later financial negotiations were continuing with the FHA backing 4 eighteen story buildings for $12,500,000.²² Eventually local banks provided the direct funding that was backed by the federal guarantees.

**Park Towne Place:**

Though the land lease was taken in 1954, construction was delayed until 1957 after the initial demolition had taken place for the western portion of the Vine Street Expressway. As with Penn Center and Market East, Bacon used transportation-related funds to clear and organize a site for a project with a differing purpose. The Parkway Triangle Corporation’s initial architectural team was John Hans Graham and Associates of Washington, D. C. together with Wheelwright and Stevenson, the landscape architects from the ACP team who had developed the initial Triangle project.²³ By the fall of the year, Milton M. Schwartz (1925-2007), a Chicago architect with expertise in reinforced concrete construction who frequently operated as a design / build expert was brought in as the lead designer and the landscape was turned over to Collins, Simonds and Simonds who had designed several of Pennsylvania’s best modern landscapes including Mellon Square in Pittsburgh.²⁴

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²⁴ Schwartz is listed in the design team with Graham in the “Plans of North Triangle No. 1, RDA 8 October 1956” referenced in the deed. These drawings survive and are on file at Park Towne Place “North Triangle No. 1, Redevelopment Project” Federal Housing
significant figure in Chicago’s development of post World War II architecture. Within a few years, he was constructing high-rise reinforced concrete towers in Chicago that brought him national attention both for their speed of construction and their economy. As discussed in the interview for the Art Institute, Schwartz developed a broad array of techniques to speed the building of reinforced concrete structures which came into play at Park Towne when the building crew was pouring a floor a day using forms of Schwartz’s invention.  

Park Towne Place was Schwartz’s most aestheticized scheme with only the balconies ornamenting an otherwise relentlessly severe project and with the volume of the residential quarters lifted off the ground on a two story high lobby that reflects Kahn’s original Le Corbusian scheme. In its minimalism it was in line with the other important modern landmark erected on the Parkway during Bacon’s tenure, the euphemistically named Youth Study Center, by Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen (1950, demolished 2009) that was placed on the far side of the Parkway, opposite the Park Towne site. With Bacon’s support, the Art Commission approved the Park Towne Place project in December of 1956 and the Bulletin headlined “Art Commission Okays Plans for Four Luxury Apartments” which were summarized in the article as built with “aluminum trim, two story lobbies enclosed with glass and underground parking for 600 cars.”

Construction:
Financing delayed the project until August of 1957 but the New York Times reported that it was “one of the largest urban renewal developments ever attempted in this country.”  

Construction was to begin immediately and the entire project was to be complete in little more than a year. Demolition occupied much of the fall and winter of 1957. This was followed by excavation of the center of site for the two-story garage and below grade retail stores. The Evening Bulletin reported that for the groundbreaking, Mayor Richardson Dilworth climbed atop a bulldozer and was given instructions by one of the work crew to work the machine to begin the demolition of the old industrial buildings on the site. In the mayor’s remarks at the beginning of work he proclaimed the apartment group as “one of the finest things for the future of our city.”  

The developer who was interviewed in the same article reported “many times our development seemed to be stalled permanently. Dilworth would call in the people involved to ‘sit down and talk this over and see what we can do.” The alliance of Bacon and political leadership, particularly with Mayors Joseph Clark and Richardson Dilworth was an essential part of the evolution of modern planning in Philadelphia. When political leadership was in the hands of socially elite politicians, innovative design could follow; when the ward politicos of the city regained power after Richardson Dilworth’s abortive run for governor, innovative design was less likely. In early summer 1958, the Bulletin headlined “Builders are Setting New Speed Records on Park Towne Place Apartments Project.” The article reported that 500 men were working at a rate of a floor per day with giant cranes including “the tallest crane of its type in the country” moving forms and pouring 45 nine-cubic-yard mixers of concrete.
per day. The foundations of the West Tower were begun in February and the first sample apartments would be ready in November.29

Post War Planning Context:
By the time that Edmund Bacon took over as executive director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in 1949, Philadelphia like other American cities had endured a lost generation that began with the Wall Street crash in 1929 followed by the Great Depression and then continued in the high employment but low infrastructure investment years of World War II before concluding with years of material shortages as the economy turned back to a peace time basis. In the meantime, many Americans had seen the world in the military, some had returned to college for a GI bill education, and others were attracted to the new lifestyle of suburbia with its inexpensive housing and access to the new forms of retail and jobs along expanding highway networks. For city planners the problem was to remake cities in a way that would enable them to compete even as their basic work environments were being devastated, first as manufacturing jobs left for the non-union south, and, later, as they moved overseas to low-wage nations and as their old and increasingly dated housing failed to compete with new housing forms in the suburbs.

In Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York Hillary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson make the point that de-industrialization, the need for new spatial orders, and new connections to new transportation systems affected most great American cities after World War II. The work of Robert Moses and the issues of New York City directly parallel the problems that Bacon faced in Philadelphia. It was Ballon and Jackson’s conclusion that powerful urban leaders were needed as their city’s counterparts to the new federal engagement in cities via urban renewal programs. Robert Moses in New York, Edward Logue in Boston, and Bacon in Philadelphia are examples of the type of leaders who were able to marshal the economics, the developers, and the urban interests to actually get projects built.30 Where power was dispersed, redevelopment lagged – and where projects were not pre-organized and pre-bid, they did not happen. This was the experience of Newark and Detroit where large areas were cleared, but no developers chose to bid on the properties. This problem led Moses, Bacon, and Logue to pre-plan and pre-bid projects to ensure that they actually happened. Park Towne Place was the earliest example of this type of process in post-war housing in Philadelphia.

Ballon and Jackson summarized Moses’ goals for New York which were to “reinforce the role of the central city[and] to keep New York the thriving center of a spreading metropolitan region” by meeting three objectives, “recapture the middle class ... by building modern, affordable housing,” making New York a “center for higher education by making land available for university expansion,” and adding world class institutions. These goals were close to those of Edmund Bacon’s goals for Philadelphia. These are enunciated in the 1949 AIA yearbook.31 Philadelphia even competed with New York in the 1940s to bring the United Nations to Philadelphia’s Roxborough section of the city but lost out to Moses and David Rockefeller’s offer of land on the East River where the United Nations was eventually built.

31 Ballon and Jackson, p. 106.
Moses’ model for effective planning action involved highly corporate professionals communicating with the public in brochures that used bold design for the graphics, strong modern planning typically led by a team from Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) to present a message that the public would understand and accept, coupled with land acquisition by important real estate firms who were trusted by other corporate and government leaders and who could present the real estate “write-downs” or subsidies as a necessary part of redevelopment instead of as a giveaway to the wealthy.32 Bacon and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission followed a similar order using graphic tools, corporate and efficient architects (usually a Philadelphia veteran of SOM, Vincent Kling) who brought the same corporate character, and the requisite real estate professionals. Many of the economic tools that Philadelphia would use were advanced by Moses including engaging FHA to ensure mortgages in urban renewal areas, and making it possible to get a mortgage for 90% of the cost of a project. Each of these steps was also part of the Park Towne Place narrative.

In addition to the social and economic issues that cities faced, urban designers were devising new formal orders to represent the new forces of contemporary life particularly the highway and the new scale of construction. Edmund Bacon’s Design of Cities (1967) offers his overview of post-war planning issues in Philadelphia and the city’s response to deindustrialization and job losses.33 Because Bacon’s goals were focused on urban design, his examples are more about formal design strategies than the nitty-gritty of policy. However, by synthesizing his essays it is possible to see the elements and sources of the new urban form that he would utilize to resolve the urban problems. Imbued with the possibilities of the post-war era, Bacon found new models for planning that he applied to Philadelphia. The most notable international model was the Charter of the Congres International de L’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) that was codified and published by LeCorbusier in 1943 and was expressed visually in LeCorbusier’s so-called “Voisin” plan for Paris with high rise towers in a green setting. These ideas became important parts of the new urban order. The modern design idea of buildings as volume rather than mass was exemplified by Le Corbusier’s buildings appearing to float on columns above the plane of the ground and connected by roads across vast space. Brasilia’s high identity modern buildings as sculptures in a landscape became expressions of new cultural opportunities; and highways were conceived not as liabilities but as an expressive part of design that could become a foil for architectural form.

Bacon would incorporate all of these elements in the modern plan of the city. Iconic large scale building projects – first Park Towne Place, then Society Hill towers and finally the University of Pennsylvania’s superblock of highrise dorms and Graduate Towers were big signs that announced new activity in the city to those traveling on the new highways, the Schuylkill Expressway along the west side of the downtown, the Delaware Expressway on the east side and the proposed cross-town links at Vine Street and South Streets (the last fortunately never built). These roads enabled Bacon to connect Philadelphia to the new truck and car-based transportation systems of post-war America while simultaneously reinforcing the old downtown identity as “Center City.”

Significance:
The impact of the Triangle district was very much what Bacon had hoped for the future of the city. With the demolition of the “Chinese Wall” of the old Broad Street Station, the new Penn Center office district began to develop near City Hall creating the modern downtown. In the first buildings by New York developer architects Emory Roth and in later buildings by Vincent Kling (b. 1916 - ) the new palette of materials, limestone and glass came to the fore along with new proportions that emphasized horizontality in the strips of office windows.

32 Ibid. p. 103.
and simple design forms of modern architecture.\textsuperscript{34} In 1957, the new Vine Street Expressway cut across the city and gave the North Triangle zone secure boundaries that encouraged new residents to try the new vertical lifestyle in Park Towne Place. The immediate success of Park Towne Place ensured that Bacon’s vision of new downtown housing would be created in the new center city in close enough proximity for walking connection to the business district and the museums. Because the site had been largely unpopulated with fewer than 100 people to be relocated, Park Towne Place did not cause mass dislocation on the order of other urban renewal projects such as Eastwick in Southwest Philadelphia or the more infamous Robert Moses projects in New York City. When the \textit{Philadelphia Tribune}, the city’s African American paper compared the two sites, it found Park Towne Place to be “integrated housing of luxury” with “very few instances of residential hardship cases...”\textsuperscript{35} Similarly it was viewed as one of the anchors of “the most eventful year in [the] 12-year history [of] the Redevelopment Authority.”\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{Comparable Downtown Housing in Philadelphia:}

In the first decade of Bacon’s tenure as head of planning, new downtown housing occurred in five zones: the earliest occurred on and around Rittenhouse Square where the Rittenhouse Savoy on the south side of the square, and the Rittenhouse Claridge at 18th and Walnut were built in 1951 and 1949 respectively by Samuel Oshiver and J. Ethan Feldstein. These are characterized by strongly marked panels of brightly colored terra cotta that contrasted with light-hued brick and strip windows. The next group which represented the impact of the newly strengthened City Planning Commission and Bacon’s vision fronted the Parkway including the Park Towne Place group and later the Philadelphia (Samuel Oshiver, 1961). A third group began to the north of Market Street along the line of the demolished railroad viaduct with one group on Pennsylvania Avenue including the Penn Towers (Samuel Oshiver, 1961). The last but best known was in Society Hill and Washington Square where I.M. Pei’s Society Hill Towers (1961–4) and Oscar Stonorov’s contemporary Hopkinson House continued the vocabulary of light-hued, reinforced concrete modern apartments that Park Towne Place had initiated five years before. Each of these groups of buildings reinforced existing patterns of residence with the Rittenhouse Square group reifying the old location of the wealthy of the city around the square while the new housing north of Market Street began the process of completing the Parkway after its initial uses as an arts district had been left largely vacant and as a counterpart to the office district.

The Parkway had already attracted large scale apartments beginning with a project by Paul Cret in 1930 that was delayed by the Depression. It came back in 1939–40 as 2601 Parkway (NR) by Aaron Colish, a former member of the Cret office, and presumably reflecting some of Cret’s intentions. It is a single immense building with 514 units in three connected wings in bright yellow brick with brown brick pilaster-like strips and very much “moderne” in fashion.\textsuperscript{37} With its stylistic references to art deco and its punched windows it was pre-war in character while its single building configuration meant that it did not explore the type of campus relationships essayed in the Alden Park complex in Germantown. That group, despite its Hollywood Gothic detail, was modern in sited and form and not unlike LeCorbusier’s recently published “Voisin” plan for Paris with separate towers in a landscaped setting with a central garage and centralized recreational amenities including a covered swimming pool (NR).

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} “2601 Parkway: Aaron Colish, architect, Turner Construction Co. builders,” \textit{Architectural Forum} 74 (May 1941) 330-332.
The next large apartment building along the Parkway is the Parkway House by Roth & Fleisher (1952) that looks out over the Parkway with its north side on Spring Garden Street and its front on Pennsylvania Avenue again set well back from the Parkway because of the Fairmount Park regulations. It too was immense in size, but followed pre-World War II models established by Raymond Hood in the Rockefeller Apartments opposite the Museum of Modern Art on 56th Street with a symmetrical, pyramidal volume articulated by vertical stacks of bays in lieu of pilasters. With its dark tonality and unified mass, it was more like 2601 Parkway than the new light-hued modern design mode that would characterize the 1950s. After the Park Towne Place group was completed in 1959, the Philadelphia (Samuel OShiver, 1961) was the last of the apartment houses of the Parkway.

*Bacon’s Achievement in new housing in the downtown:*
Throughout his career, Bacon was an unapologetic advocate of modern design which he saw as using new tools to solve new problems and which was best expressed by the modern high rises that he encouraged. This led to his advocacy of overtly modern schemes wherever possible. Philadelphia’s strongest period of modern design occurred in the years that the City Planning Commission was under his direction. The resulting buildings of his planning reign begin with Park Towne Place on the Parkway (1954-9) followed by I. M. Pei’s 1961 project for Society Hill Towers near the Delaware River front. This was followed by Hopkinson House by Oscar Stonorov which overlooked Washington Square (1962). The line of high-rise residents extended west along the line of Locust Street to Penn’s “Superblock” of three high rise dormitory towers (Perkins & Romanach, 1968-72).

Of all of these projects, only Park Towne retains its original exterior material unadulterated by paint or surface coverings as has happened at Society Hill Towers, the Hopkinson House and more recently in the two-toned paint-job on the high-rises at Penn. As such Park Towne Place remains the best example of 1950s modern middle class housing in the city that anticipated the future of the city in which work, residence, and lifestyle merged. This is exemplified in its landscape setting, connecting residence, park and city living anticipated the lifestyle mode of 20th century living and was captured by the name of the complex, Park Towne Place. As the earliest and best preserved of the modern apartment complexes that brought together the architectural vision of Louis Kahn with the planning and strongly modern design that characterized Edmund Bacon’s plan for reviving center city Philadelphia, Park Towne Place meets criterion A of the National Register.
Fig. 1 1947 Louis I. Kahn perspective of the “Triangle District” calling out the various uses. Louis I. Kahn Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Fig. 3. 1950. Redevelopment Area Plan, p. iv. The Kahn / Stonorov scheme for the “Apartment house development in a portion of the Triangle Redevelopment Area.”
Fig. 4. 1950, North Triangle Area, showing the road access on PA 3 and the Expressway that would connect at the Vine Street Expressway. The grey gridded zones are industrial districts.

Fig. 5. 1950 North Triangle Area, Existing Land Use with industrial sites and vacant land along the river.
Fig. 6. 1950 "Preliminary Site Plan 1, North Triangle Area" showing mid-rise apartments arrayed in relation to the axis of the Parkway and with a new treed zone between the apartments and the road.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Philadelphia City Plans:


General Literature:


“Philadelphia Plans Again,” Architectural Forum v. 86 (Dec 1947) 66-88>


Reed, Peter Shedd, Toward Form: Louis I. Kahn’s Urban Designs for Philadelphia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania) Ph.D.


Time Magazine Staff, “The City: Under the Knife, or All for Their Own Good,” Time Magazine (6 November 1964)

Park Towne Place
Name of Property

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 #
___recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:
State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Park Towne Place is bounded on the east by the west side of North 22nd Street, on the north side by the south side of the 2200 and 2300 blocks of Park Towne Place, on the west side by the east side of North 24th Street (feeder ramp to the Expressway), and on the south side by the north side of the Vine Street Expressway which extends east to the North 22nd Street beginning. This is Philadelphia tax parcel #881030930.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This property contains the entire Park Towne Place site as developed between 1955 and 1959.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
organization CivicVisions
date 3 January 2011 rev. April 2011
street & number 2029 Walnut Street
telephone 215.563.1555
city or town Philadelphia
state PA
zip code 19103
e-mail get@civicvisions.net
Park Towne Place
Philadelphia County, PA

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Park Towne Place
City or Vicinity: Philadelphia
County: Philadelphia State: Pennsylvania
Photographer: George E. Thomas
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number:
The photographs are printed with silver halide emulsion on RC paper.
1 of 28
1. Park Towne Place from 21st Street Bridge over I-676, looking NW at South, East and North towers.
2. Park Towne Place looking NW at central plaza or “Great Lawn with South Tower on left, West tower on right with loop road through site.
3. Park Towne Place looking W at South Tower on right, restaurant, now offices in middle distance and pool complex at lower level in foreground.
4. Park Towne Place, lower level shopping center under restaurant / office building with grocery store.
5. Park Towne Place, with shopping arcade adjacent to grocery store in lower level.
6. Park Towne Place upper level of parking garage under “Great Lawn” from South Tower entrance.
7. Park Towne Place looking SW at South Tower from “Great Lawn” with restaurant now office in center.
8. Park Towne Place, looking SW at detail of base of South Tower with marble revetment at piers into main lobby.
9. Park Towne Place, looking SW at cornerstone, detail of South Tower.
10. Park Towne Place, looking NE from corridor connecting South Tower to former restaurant with marble clad piers of South Tower in center.
11. Park Towne Place, South Tower, main elevator lobby, first floor.
12. Park Towne Place, South Tower, suspended stair with aluminum balusters and posts to lower level, grocery and shopping arcade.
13. Park Towne Place, South Tower, typical apartment corridor.
14. Park Towne Place, South Tower, 3rd floor apartment, living room in 1 bedroom unit facing SE.
15. Park Towne Place, South Tower, 3rd floor apartment, bedroom facing SE.
16. Park Towne Place, South Tower, typical apartment corridor, paired doors into units, metal frames, solid core, flush doors.
17. Park Towne Place, South Tower, 9th floor apartment looking NW toward West Tower and Art Museum
18. Park Towne Place, South Tower, 9th floor apartment, typical kitchen with original steel cabinets. Photographs continued:

19. Park Towne Place, South Tower, 9th floor apartment, typical interior flush door with metal frame.
20. Park Towne Place, East Tower on left, North Tower to right looking NW through mature landscape toward “Great Lawn.”
21. Park Towne Place, East Tower, main lobby looking N toward Park Towne Place and Parkway in distance.
22. Park Towne Place, East Tower, main lobby, detail of piers of main lobby showing lobby windows rising clear of the structure.
23. Park Towne Place, North Tower from Park Towne Place looking SE
24. Park Towne Place, North Tower, typical outer vestibule with original marble paneling, shop front glazing and terrazzo floor
25. Park Towne Place, North Tower, terrazzo floor with oversized marble chips, typical of all but South Tower.
26. Park Towne Place, West Tower, from Park Towne Place looking NW.
27. Park Towne Place, West Tower with Art Museum from 9th floor of South Tower looking NW
28. Park Towne Place, West Tower, lobby looking NW into landscaped gardens.

Second set, April 2011, George Thomas, photographer, silver halide prints on RC paper
Photos 29-57
29. Park Towne Place, South Tower, east and north facades looking NW from sidewalk along drive.
30. Park Towne Place, South tower, north and west facades looking S from sidewalk along drive
31. Park Towne Place, South Tower, original “jet fountain” in front plaza looking E from plaza.
32. Park Towne Place, East Tower, east and south facades with South tower in distance, from 22nd Street looking NW.
33. Park Towne Place, East Tower, north façade looking W from Park Towne Place.
34. Park Towne Place, East Tower, east façade looking W from 22nd Street.
35. Park Towne Place, East Tower, south façade looking East across pool.
36. Park Towne Place, North Tower, south and east façades, looking N across “Great Lawn.”
37. Park Towne Place, North Tower, detail of south façade with service entrance looking N.
38. Park Towne Place, North Tower, north and west facades looking S from Park Towne Place.
39. Park Towne Place, West Tower, east and south facades from internal drive looking NW.
40. Park Towne Place, West tower, north and west facades from Park Towne Place looking S.
41. Park Towne Place, overall view from East with East Tower in foreground and North and West towers in distance looking NW from 22nd Street.
42. Park Towne Place, East Tower, detail of typical upper level balconies.
43. Park Towne Place, North Tower, east end, detail of typical end wall windows.
44. Park Towne Place, detail of oversized lobby windows, East Tower from Park Towne Place
45. Park Towne Place, Jacob Stelman photo, 1959-29, private collection, with garage still to be covered in center and showing that balconies are glazed and railed as per present.
46. Park Towne Place, studio apartment, North Tower Apt. 903 with Pullman Kitchen, toward entrance door.
47. Park Towne Place, 1 bedroom apartment, East Tower, Apt. 308 living room toward window.
48. Park Towne Place, 1 bedroom apartment, East Tower, Apt. 308 toward bedroom window.
Photos: continued:
49. Park Towne Place, 1 bedroom apartment, East Tower, Apt. 308 bedroom closet and door to hall.
50. Park Towne Place, 3 bedroom apartment, South Tower, Apt. 1105, bedroom with closet in front of window.
51. Park Towne Place, 3 bedroom apartment, South Tower, Apt. 1105, detail of closet in front of window. Photographs continued:

52. Park Towne Place, 4 bedroom apartment, West Tower, Apt. 1906, living room toward window and balcony.
53. Park Towne Place, 4 bedroom apartment, West Tower, Apt. 1906, detail of balcony, original railings and glazing.
54. Park Towne Place, 4 bedroom apartment, West Tower, Apt. 1906, kitchen toward main entrance, original cabinets.
55. Park Towne Place, 4 bedroom apartment, North Tower, Apt. 506 living room toward balcony.
56. Park Towne Place, 4 bedroom apartment, North Tower, Apt. 506, corridor to bedrooms, original doors and trim.
57. Park Towne Place, 2 bedroom apartment, North Tower, Apt. 514, bedroom toward window.

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