OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

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

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY | 3 |988 date entered

For NPS use only

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

1. Nam	S—complete app	il Cable Se	CHOHS	<del></del>	
I. Nan	16				
historic	John Staff	ord Hist	oric District		
and or common					
2. Loca	ation				
street & number	· 100 blocks	of Vass	ar Sq.; Baton F	Rouge, Marion, & Aust	Avenues in not for publication NA
city, town	Ventnor		vicinity of		
state 1	New Jersey	code	034 <b>cou</b>	nty Atlantic	<b>code</b> 001
3. Clas	sification	n			
Category X district building(s) structure site object	Ownership publicX private both Public Acquisi in process being consi		Status  X occupied  unoccupied  work in progres  Accessible  X yes: restricted  yes: unrestricted  no	entertainment government	museum park X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
name Mul	ltiple				
city, town	-4:6:		vicinity of	state	
5. Loca	ation of	Lega	l Descrip	tion	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc.	County	Clerk, Atlanti	c County Courthouse	
street & number		Main St	reet		
city, town		Mays La	anding	state	New Jersey 08330
6. Rep	resentat	ion i	n Existing	Surveys	
title North A	tlantic Count	y Survey	has this	property been determined e	eligible?yes _Xno
<b>date</b> 1986				federal st	ate _X_ county local
depository for su	urvey records	Office	of New Jersey	Heritage, CN 404,	
city, town $^{\mathrm{Tr}}$	enton			state	New Jersey 08625

### 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
$\underline{X}$ excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	<u>X</u> original sit	te
good	ruins	X altered	moved	date
fair	unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Stafford development is located at Ventnor's east end, between South Vassar Avenue and South Austin Avenue immediately adjacent to the earlier and largely developed Atlantic City. On the south is the Boardwalk and the beach; to the north is Atlantic Avenue, one of the principal broad streets that runs the length of Absecon Island, through Margate, Ventnor and Atlantic City. The district is given spatial cohesiveness by two modern apartment slabs, running perpendicular to the beach, that set this district apart at Vassar and Austin conforming, through chance, to the Stafford holdings, and marking the long since infilled position of an inlet that once separated Ventnor from Atlantic City. The district consists, as most of Ventnor did, of large, revival style single family houses, set back a prescribed distance from the street, by restrictive covenants, and reaching a required value of construction, again to meet deed restrictions.

The original subdivision scheme as depicted in an 1896 Atlas called for narrow lots facing Atlantic Avenue with the remainder of the block undivided. By 1910, with the changed perception of Ventnor as a significant society resort separate from Atlantic City, that idea was modified to six or seven large lots on each side of the street with the largest at the Boardwalk. Lot sizes vary from the smallest, some 50 by 62.5 feet on Vassar Square and Baton Rouge to the largest, 125 by 62.5 feet on the Boardwalk. Some of these were developed with three story houses by John Stafford shortly after he purchased the land in 1913, and others were sold to buyers who constructed their own houses.

Though each block is essentially the same, containing six or seven houses, the sequence of construction can be determined from the atlases of 1914 and 1924, They show that the earlier houses were built at the Atlantic City end, and that the boardwalk sites were the last to be developed, perhaps because of unrealistic prices, or it may have been the planned retailing scheme of a Philadelphia developer who may have assumed that they could be sold for a higher price if development was nearly complete. The earlier houses at the east end are more diversified, ranging from moderate sized shingled cottages such as that at 107 Baton Rouge (Fig 7, center) or 114 Vassar Square (fig. 9, center) to the large brick and terra cotta residence at 110 Vassar Square. (Figs. 10, 11). Some such as 111 Baton Rouge, the Craig Heberton house, (Figs. 7 right, and 8) are similar enough to other buildings in Ventnor and nearby Atlantic City to possibly be a standard builder's up-scale cottage design. For example, the similarity of 111 Baton Rouge to the shingled bay fronted cottage at 107 Baton Rouge (Fig. 7 left) for a Mr. Piersol suggests that they may both have been by the same The interior of the Heberton house is of note as well, for it builder. demonstrates that even the smaller cottages were handsomely finished with hardwood trim around windows and doors in a style derived from the Colonial Revival.

A second group of cottages can be linked to developer Stafford. His property holdings on the 1914 Atlas are shown between Baton Rouge and Austin, and are numbered one through twelve on both block fronts. In their midst are three cottages on the Marion and Austin block and two fronting on Baton Rouge and

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Section number	rage	Atlantic County, New Jersey	

Marion that are probably the groups of three and two cottages erected from Frank Seeburger's designs and published in the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide in 1913. These are typically frame, two and a half story (gable roofed) cottages, which based on Seeburger's training in the office of Horace Trumbauer are Georgian in spirit and proportion. The stuccoed house at 105 Austin (Fig. 1, center) and the clapboarded, gambrel roofed, center hall colonial at 102 Marion (Fig. 2) are well preserved examples of this work. The similarity of 102 Marion to 107 across the street (Fig. 3, center) tends to confirm Seeburger's authorship, and to establish a clear group that suggests that other houses may be by the same designer.

The last group of buildings are those closest to the beach, and include several houses for names associated with the Atlantic City hotel industry, including White (Blenheim and Traymore hotels) and Buzby (Dennis Hotel). These show greater tendency to move away from historicizing styles towards freer interpretation of the past, and are often of stucco over hollow tile including the vaguely Spanish styled house for the White family at Vassar Square, which is probably the building designed by J. Fletcher Street in 1914 (Fig. 9, left). Its smooth stucco surfaces, and modern, astylar character are in keeping with the earlier work of Price and McLanahan, architects of the Traymore and Blenheim, and the office where Street was trained.

Another large house is the simplified federal styled brick house erected at the corner of Marion and the Boardwalk which is given character by its Palladian windows, and its flattened portico. It is probably the house erected for theater magnate George Earle, by his theater designer, the Hoffman Company in 1915.

Unified by their construction within the span of a decade, and by their similar scale, palatte of materials and purpose, and now set apart by the two modern apartment slabs that frame the district, the houses of the Stafford development district survive with a high degree of integrity. Moreover, the district itself continues essentially in its original use as an automobile suburb by the sea.

Inventory:
(owners listed from 1914 atlas)

Vassar Square, west side

100, 102, 104, 106, 108 Vacant

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110: Circa 1910. Major brick and terra cotta mansion; among the earliest built in zone; massive quoins surround windows and doors, and are linked by belt courses; massive oversized cornice crowns facade; some handsome clear leaded glass windows on side elevations. -- Key. Josiah White residence, 1914.

112: side yard of 110

114: Circa 1925. Two story gable roofed colonial cottage, like the similar building at 113 Baton Rouge to rear oversized clapboards on sides; large chimney at end of gable toward street. -- Contributing. Property of Josiah White, 1914.

1914. Three-story hipped roofed, "modern" house for family of Josiah White, massive overhanging eave, but without historicizing detail. Stucco over hollow tile for main construction materials; large one-over-one sash. J. Fletcher Street, architect. -- Contributing.

### Boardwalk

### Baton Rouge

John Stafford Cottage. 100: Circa 1910. Three-story Italianate cottage; originally clapboarded; now replaced with asbestos shingle; second story bays like 109 and 111 Baton Rouge suggesting that these were all built at same time. Deep overhanging flat most tile roof; brick base; sashs eaves; -- Contributing.

102: Circa 1915. Two-and-one-half story hipped roofed, cubic center hall colonial; brick corner piers; originally stucco between piers, like 106 Baton Rouge; now resurfaced in aluminum. -- Contributing.

104: Circa 1914. Robert Taggersoll Residence. Two-and-one-half story gable roofed colonial with large pedimented portico at street end containing a sleeping porch between paneled wood piers. Side walls stucco over hollow tile; six-over-one sash; bay at second story. -- Contributing.

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Section number	Page Atlantic County, New Jersey
106:	Circa 1915. Like 102, but with original stucco between brick corner piers; one-over-one-sash; large concave brackets in eave Contributing.
108:	1913. A.C. Buzby Residence, designed by Barton Ireland, two and one half story, tile roofed, center hall colonial; stucco over tile construction; many of sash altered Contributing.
110-112:	John Stafford property, side yard of 108.
Boardwalk	
Baton Rouge	
101:	Circa 1914. F.C. Reed Residence. Two-and-one-half story gable roofed stucco over terra cotta block colonial revival raised on a high brick base; large porch on street front, with side entrance; one-over-one sash; slate roof on dormers and main roof; tile ornament in gable end Contributing.
103:	vacant
105:	vacant
107:	Circa 1910. E. Piersol Residence. Three-story Italianate building with brick base shingled walls; large sash with wide board frames; bays on second story above porch roof; broad front porch on raised brick base; similar to 111 Baton Rouge and probably among earliest buildings built in Ventnor Contributing.
109:	Circa 1910. T. Drake Residence. Three story gable roofed shingled

cottage on high brick base; one over one sash, wide board frames; cross gable roof with large wall gables brings light into top story; shallow bay under porch in center of first floor. -- Contributing.

111: Circa 1910. Craig Heberton residence. Three story wood Italianate cottage on high brick base; first floor remains clapboarded under porch; upper stories resheathed with asbestos shingle; bays on second floor above porch roof; broad front porch; deep overhanging eaves. -- Contributing.

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113: Circa 1925. Two-story gable roofed Colonial Revival wood framed cottage faces street with long shed dormer at side that makes second floor useable. Like 114 Vassar Square, it has nine-over-one sash in major public rooms. -- Contributing.

115: Circa 1925. Two-and-one-half story, gable roofed, brick Flemish bond center hall colonial facing beach; fanlighted pedimented wood door frame; broad three light windows towards water; slender porch columns support Hollywood portico. -- Contributing.

### Boardwalk

#### Marion Avenue

100: Circa 1940. One-and-one-half story stucco over hollow tile bungalow; gable roof; colonial details in porch and door. -- Contributing.

1914. Two-and-one-half story center hall colonial; wood clapboard over frame; front porch with Tuscan columns; bays at second story; various eight, six and four-over-one sash; gambrel roof; Frank Seeburger architect for John Stafford; -- Contributing.

104: Circa 1980. Gable roofed post modern cottage. -- Non-contributing.

106. Circa 1914. E.B. Talcott Residence. Two-and-one half story shingled cottage with gable end towards street; expressed piers clad in shingle with abstract capitals above supporting eave return; stucco panel between piers; large glazed side porch with shingled piers. -- Contributing.

108: Circa 1915. Two-and-one-half story gable roofed cottage; Colonial Revival trim and front porch with Tuscan columns; paired projecting windows on second story above porch roof; aluminum siding over exterior. -- Contributing.

110: Circa 1915. Center hall brick colonial with Flemish bond brickwork; large projecting portico with fanlighted sash; Palladian windows on either side of portico on first floor; large stained glass window on second floor; sun room at ocean end and garage to north. -- Contributing.

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Boardwalk

Marion Ave

101: Circa 1915. Two-and-one-half story, gable roofed cottage; aluminum

cladding over original material; brick base. -- Contributing.

103: Circa 1915. Two-and-one-half story center hall colonial; handsome two story portico with flanking one-story porches; six-over-one

sash; massive brick chimney at each end; multi-colored slate roof.

-- Contributing.

105-07: 1913. Two-and-one-half story gambrel roofed center hall plan colonial house with clapboarded walls; various four, six and

eight-over-one sash; fanlighted windows in sun room; Tuscan porch columns; Frank Seeburger for John Stafford. -- Contributing.

Adjacent side yard has small period garage.

109: 1915. Two-and-one-half story gable roofed center hall colonial

with clapboard sides; slate roof; large fanlighted windows in glazed sunroom on side towards ocean; portico with Tuscan columns

at entrance; Frank Seeburger for John Stafford. -- Key.

111: side yard of 109; vacant.

**Boardwalk** 

Austin Avenue

101: Circa 1914. Three-story wood frame Italianate cottage with deep

overhanging eaves supported on long wood brackets; center hall plan; bays at second floor above porch; all porch columns replaced with wrought iron; various windows include eight-over-one;

six-over-one etc. raised brick base. -- Contributing.

103: Circa 1920. Two-and-one half story stucco over tile house with large sun room on south corner; center hall plan house with elaborate cast terra cotta trim and window surrounds; hipped roof with polychrome slates; and similar in plan but not detail to 109

Austin. - Contributing.

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Section number _	7	Page	John Stafford Historic District, Ventnor,	
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105: 1913. Two-and-one-half story gable roofed center hall colonial revival house; stucco over tile; large nine over one sash in front; large porch carried on paneled piers with sun room in second story above entrance. -- Contributing.

107: 1933. Two-and-one-half story tile roofed clapboard and stucco center hall colonial house; three large dormers in tile roof; bays on second story, above porch; handsome Tuscan porch; side lighted door; Bertram Ireland for A.C. Buzby -- Contributing.

109: Circa 1920. Two-and-one-half story stucco over tile French provincial house with hipped slate roof; large segmental headed dormer in roof with terra cotta cast cornice; sun room at corner. -- Contributing.

111: Circa 1920. Tan stucco over brick base; Spanish revival house with tile roof on overhanging eaves; large chimneys flank projecting entrance porch; tile coping on parapet; windows towards ocean altered; others typically eight over one. — Contributing.

### **Boardwalk**

Number of buildings in district: 30; Key: 2; Contributing: 27; Non-Contributing: 1.

### 8. Significance

Specific dates

Period	Areas of Significance—C	heck and justify below		
prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X 1900-	archeology-prehistoric		landscape architectu	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)

Builder/Architect

c. 1910-1940

Various (including Frank Seeburger, J. Fletcher Street & Bertram Ireland)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Ventnor was about to explode from a developer's dream into a fully blown seaside automobile suburb. Where Atlantic City had relied on the train to concentrate guests in downtown hotels, Ventnor was connected by the Black Horse Pike to Philadelphia, and provided up scale houses in a planned automobile suburb to attract the driving public. The result was a new form of resort, one which anticipated Miami Beach as well as much of the remainder of the twentieth century New Jersey seashore development in its low Although much of Ventnor is a unified development, density and wide streets. certain districts have particular interest; among the earliest areas to develop, and one which retains its identity owing to a chance isolation created by its being bracketed by modern high rise apartments is the zone associated with Philadelphia developer John Stafford. It was Stafford who hired Philadelphia architect Frank Seeburger to design the buildings that established the area's Occurring simultaneously with Ventnor's principal growth, Stafford district affords a microcosm of the resort's heyday, and represents a pattern of development of significance in resort history.

The growth of Ventnor is apparent in the changes in the atlases of the city between 1896 and 1914. In 1896 there were no more than a handful of cottages between Madison Avenue and Atlantic City, and indeed it was not until 1903 that Ventnor was incorporated. By 1914, almost every square showed some development from the ocean to the rear Thoroughfare as the rear channel was called. This is corroborated by published data on the growth of the village from fewer than 100 houses in 1910 to nearly 1300 in 1917. It was in those same years, that New Yorkers Carrere and Hastings, best remembered for their design of the New York Public Library and for the early concrete hotels at St. Augustine, Florida, were asked to provide a plan for the new city. Published in the 1907-8 T-Square Club Catalogue, it shows a City Beautiful arrangement of broad boulevards and cross Subsequently carried out, the plan is still reflected in the street pattern and by its connection to Atlantic City at the World War I monument, designed by the same architects in 1922. With such stimuli and the growth of the highway networks it was no surprise that Ventnor would become so fashionable, attracting Wanamakers and film makers to cottages that were valued in the tens of thousands of dollars. In the 1920s, newspaper accounts of real estate prices were extraordinary. Houses that had sold before World War I for "\$13,500 to \$15,000 are now reselling at prices ranging from \$40,000 to \$65,000, while beach front lots were quoted at \$25,000 to \$40,000." This was accounted for by the proximity to "the greatest resort in the world", but also by the city's "wise restrictions and zoning plan" making it a distinctive monumental planned resort neighborhood.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

GPO 911-399

10. Geographi	cal Data		
Acreage of nominated property _ Quadrangle nameAtlantic		<u> </u>	Quadrangle scale 1:24000
UT M References	-0129		
A 1 <sub>1</sub> 8 5 4 <sub>1</sub> 5 8 <sub>1</sub> 2 <sub>1</sub> 0 4 Zone Easting No	13 5 14 7 18 10 orthing	B <u>1 8</u> Zone	5 4 5 9 6 0 4 8 5 4 8 8 D   Rorthing
c 1 <sub>18</sub> 5 4 <sub>1</sub> 6 0 <sub>1</sub> 8 <sub>1</sub> 0 4	13 5 14 7 16 10	D 1 8	545900 4854660
E		F L	
		H	
Verbal boundary description	and justification		
See continuation	n sheet.		
List all states and counties f	or properties overl	apping state or co	unty boundaries NA
state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code
11. Form Prep	ared By		
	<u></u>		
name/title George E. Thomas	s, Ph.D.		
organization Clio Group, Ir	nc.	da	te July 21, 1986
street & number 3961 Balti	imore Avenue	tel	ephone (215) 386-6276
city or town Philadelphia	1	sta	ate Pennsylvania 19104
12. State Hist	oric Prese	ervation (	Officer Certification
The evaluated significance of this	property within the s	state is:	
national	state	X local	
665), I hereby nominate this propaccording to the criteria and proc	erty for inclusion in th	ne National Register a	ric Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89– and certify that it has been evaluated vice.
Deputy State Historic Preservation Office	er signature	len 10	Leurle
title Assistant Commission			sources date April 26, 1988
For NPS use only			
I hereby certify that this pro	perty is included in the	ne National Register	1 1 100
Jinda II	) CULKIA	10	date 6/8/88
Keeper of the National Regist	LET		

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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The Stafford district conformed to the planned character of the community, with building set backs, investment requirements, and nuisances and uses controlled in the manner of modern zoning. It is of special note both for its developer, and his chosen architect, Frank Seeburger (c. 1880-1934). As noted earlier, John Stafford was a well known Philadelphia businessman who at the end of the nineteenth century and the first years of this century, commissioned Horace Trumbauer to design the St. James Hotel on Walnut Street in Philadelphia, and who was active in the development of North Philadelphia real estate. It was probably that connection that caused him to retain Frank Seeburger who had been in the Trumbauer office, and had then gone out on his own, designing houses in other resorts including Cape May. In Ventnor he designed the handsome, broadly proportioned colonial revival houses that made him such an asset in the Trumbauer office. These give visual unity to the district and help establish its pleasant character.

Of even greater interest are some of the early residents who commissioned houses here. Their names are familiar to the student of Atlantic City's hotel trade, for at least four of the properties were owned by members of the Josiah White family, owners of the Marlborough and Blenheim hotels, while another was owned by A.C. Buzby, whose family owned the Dennis, adjacent to the Blenheim. The 1914 Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide lists two houses by Philadelphia architect J. Fletcher Street, formerly of the office of Price and McLanahan, architects of the Marlborough and Blenheim hotels, one of which was specifically noted as being for the White family, while the other was listed as "owner's name withheld". Both were of hollow tile and concrete, the chosen materials of the office, and are probably the buildings on Vassar Square.

The house for A.C. Buzby also was listed in the Philadelphia Real Estate Record but was designed by an Atlantic City architect, Bertram Ireland (fl. 1900-1930), who was active in the early twentieth century and designed a number of the high style buildings in his resort. That house, visable in the center of Figure 5, and at the extreme left edge of Figure 6, is also in the colonial revival style so popular in Ventnor. The proximity of these houses for the hotel operators of Atlantic City, while still being out of the city, probably indicates the pressures of operating a major resort hotel. On the other hand, the character of the architects working in this zone of Ventnor seems to typify the community and most of the later seashore suburbs - young architects, who either have an earlier contact with the client for a parent office - or a local architect.

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NATIONAL REGISTER

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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John Stafford Historic District, Ventnor, Atlantic County, New Jersey

As an intact, unified development from Ventnor's heyday associated with persons of significance to the Atlantic City region; and that represents the character, scale and style of this early planned resort while describing the evolution of the major cultural event of the seaside resort, the Stafford district deserves to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Footnotes

- 1. Sarah Thompson, History of Ventor City, New Jersey, Ventnor, 1963, p. 18.
- 2. Atlantic City Press, Morgue, "Ventnor" 26 Sept 1926; 6 Nov. 1925.
- 3. Philadelphia T-Square Club, Catalogue of the Exhibition 1907-8 Phila., 1908, n.p.
- 4. Atlantic City Press, Morgue, "Ventnor", 6 Nov. 1925; 9 June 1928.
- 5. Typical deed restrictions are noted in deed, John Stafford to John Mackert, 15 Feb. 1913, Vol 500, pp. 481-486.
- 6. "Frank Seeburger" Tatman and Moss, <u>Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia</u>
  <u>Architects</u>, Phila. 1985, p. 704-708.
- 7. George E. Thomas, Carl E. Doebley, <u>Cape May; Queen of the Seaside Resorts</u>, Phila., 1975.
- 8. Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide (PRER & BG) Vol. 29: No. 1 (7 Jan. 1914); and Vol. 29: No. 31 (6 Aug. 1914). J. Fletcher Street is mentioned in George E. Thomas William L. Price: Builder of Men and Buildings, University of Pennsylvania, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1975, pp. 163-5.
- 9. PRBR & BG, Vol. 28: No. 1 (1 Jan 1913).

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#### Atlases:

A.H. Mueller and Co. Atlas of Atlantic City, New Jersey, Including South Atlantic City, Chelsea, Ventnor, Oberon and Longport, Philadelphia, 1896, plates 13, 17.

A.H. Mueller, Atlas of Absecon Island, vol. II, Philadelphia, 1914, plate 23.

A.H. Mueller, Atlas of Ventnor City, Margate, Longport, vol. II, Phila. 1924, plate 24.

### Primary Sources:

Atlantic County Clerk, Mays Landing, Records, deeds, tax maps; property restrictions are summarized in Vol. 500. pp 481-6 Deed from John Stafford to John Mackert, 15 February 1913.

Secondary Sources:

### Journals:

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide, Philadelphia, 1886-1940, lists projects outside of Philadelphia with enough frequency to warrent investigation.

The T-Square Club Journal, 14th Annual Exhibition catalogue, 1907-8, p. 35.

Atlantic City Press, numerous articles filed in morgue at Pleasantville, under "Ventnor".

### Books:

Butler, Frank, Book of the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, 1952.

Funnell, Charles, By the Beautiful Sea, New York, 1973.

Smith, Sarah T., A History of Ventnor City, New Jersey, Ventnor, 1953.

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	Atlantic County, New Jersey

Thomas, George E., et al. <u>Atlantic City Historic Building Survey</u> New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation, 1980.

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		rage	Atlantic County, New Jersey

Boundary Description and Justification:

The Stafford Historic District comprises the 100 block of the west side of Vassar Avenue; the east and west sides of the 100 blocks of Baton Rouge and Marion Avenues, and the east side of the 100 block of Austin Avenue, with the exception of 100, 102, 104, 106, and 108 Vassar Square and 103, 105 Baton Rouge (parking lot). Beginning at the northeast corner of Boardwalk and Austin Avenue, extending east 475' to the northwest corner of Vassar Square and Boardwalk; then north along Vassar Square 225' to a point then west 62.5' to a point, than north 50' to a point then west 62.5' to a point, then east 62.5' to a point, then north 50' to Atlantic Avenue, then north 100' to a point, then east 62.5' to a point, then north 50' to Atlantic Avenue; then west 412.5' to the southeast corner of Atlantic and Austin Avenues, then south 425' to point of origin.

This comprises the houses and yards of the Stafford Historic District excluding non-historic uses.

### John Stafford Historic District City of Ventnor Atlantic County, New Jersey

NOT-TO-SCALE

