

THEME: Architecture

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Philadelphia
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON: Mount Pleasant

AND/OR HISTORIC: Mount Pleasant

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: East Fairmount Park, road between East River Drive and Columbia Ave.

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2nd

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Philadelphia CODE: 101

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum 	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Philadelphia, administered by Philadelphia Museum of Art

STREET AND NUMBER: Benjamin Franklin Parkway

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Philadelphia City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER: Broad and Market Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (31 sheets, 1940, 18 photos 1938-39, 1970)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1938-39, 1940, 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER: Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY: Philadelphia

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main block of Mount Pleasant is two-and-a-half stories high, with rubble masonry walls 18 inches thick, upon a base of grey ashlar, 6 feet high. The outside walls are stuccoed with yellow buff roughcast, scored to resemble ashlar stone masonry. A horizontal belt of red brick runs around the entire house and heavy quoins of the same material frame the corners and are repeated on the sides of the pavilions on the east and west facades. Lintels of stone, incised in imitation of flat arches, span the window openings whose broad frames are uniformly white. These lintels were unpainted to match the natural gray cut stone of the basement windows which fortunately escaped the brush during the last painting. Also the correct color for the stucco is a soft barely salmon pink to contrast with the deep red of the brick, the white woodwork and a gray roof. The current green hipped roof should be replaced with cedar shakes, original examples of which have been found under the gables.

The roof, chimneys, and elaborate dormers are among the most important architectural details of the building. Above a heavy cornice with prominent modillions the hipped roof rises, pierced on both sides by two elaborate dormers with fanlight windows under gable roofs and flared scrolls at the base. It is surmounted by a beautifully balustraded belvedere and two great brick chimney stacks, one at each end of the building, with four arched openings near the top, which give stately presence to the whole. The principal feature of the facade on both the east and west is the slightly projecting central pavilion with an ornate Palladian window. Ionic pilasters frame the sides and the whole rests on four consoles above the pedimented doric portico with full entablature.

The dormers, quoins, beltcourse, and window lintels are repeated on the two dependencies which are located to the north and south of the building. These are set forward on the east, forming a triangular composition. The south dependency is missing part of the crown of its roof. It should be corrected to retain the bell shape, which is a distinctive feature which should be maintained. Both dependencies need attention on their dormer windows, especially the scroll ears which are missing on two of them. The south dependency should not have a doorway entering the east side; that was a window. The first floor of this building was originally a summer kitchen.

Inside, the house has a central main hallway that is unbroken by a stairway. The stair is located in a small separate hall at the southeast corner. The hall has a deep Roman Doric cornice and wainscot of broad boards. The doorways have eared frames and finely dentiled pediments with a pulvinated architrave frieze. Fluted Doric pilasters mark the junction of the stair-hall to the mainhall. To the north of the hall, a drawing room extends the full length of the house, dominated by a great chimney piece with an overmantel ornamented with bands of Greek fret design. This is flanked by elaborately pedimented false doors which are balanced by shallow niches on the opposite wall. The dining room to the south, has a paneled chimney wall with semicircular headed side cupboards.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1761-62

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Pleasant, located in Fairmount Park on the east bank of the Schuylkill River, has been called the most important Georgian architectural block in the Middle Colonies. Built in 1761-62 by John MacPherson, Scottish sea captain and privateer, the mansion is probably the only surviving example in the Middle Colonies of a symmetrical late Georgian composition of three units, found so frequently in Southern Colonies. The exterior is rubble masonry coated with stucco, scored to resemble stone masonry, with prominent brick quoins at the corners. The east and west facades are identical, with pavilions framing arched doorways, above which are Palladian windows opening onto each end of the second floor hall. It is also one of the finest and most elaborate examples of a late Georgian interior, not only in the Middle Colonies, but in all of American Georgian design. The first floor consists of a large center entrance hall which extends from the east to west. The stairway is placed in the southeast corner in a separate hall. The three second story rooms are especially notable for their design and workmanship, most evident in the scrolled ornamentation and arched cupboard doors in the chamber on the southwest corner. Although the land around the house has been changed, Mount Pleasant still retains some of the imposing character it must have presented to the 18th century traveller as he approached its hilltop position.

HISTORY

Mount Pleasant was begun late in 1761 by John MacPherson, Scottish sea captain who made a large fortune through privateering. The house was a showplace, both for its physical splendor and for the lavish entertainments which were constantly held. Around the house, a working farm or plantation was maintained. After suffering financial setbacks, MacPherson sought the chief command of the American Navy at the outbreak of the Revolution. When he failed in this attempt, he leased Mount Pleasant to Don Juan de Merailles, the Spanish ambassador. Then in 1779 MacPherson sold the property to General Benedict Arnold, who was then in command of Philadelphia, following its evacuation by the British. He lived there with his bride, Peggy Shippen, until its confiscation at the time of his flight to the British lines. Mount Pleasant was then leased to Baron von Steuben for a short time. After passing through several hands, it finally fell to General Jonathan Williams of Boston, whose family remained there until the

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cousins, Frank, and Riley, Philip M., The Colonial Architecture of Philadelphia, Boston, 1920, pp. 72-76.
 Eberlein, Harold D., and Lippincott, The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and its Neighborhood, Philadelphia, 1912, pp. 113-126.
 Garvan, Beatrice, A Proposal for the Restoration of Buildings and Grounds at Mount Pleasant, unpublished report for Department of American Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, January, 1974.
 Kimball, Fiske, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic, New York, 1922.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	UTM 18.482500;4	425770		0	0	
NE	18.483190;4	426130				
SE	18.483110;4	425430				
SW	18.482900;4	425310				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **70 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Patricia Heintzleman, architectural historian, Landmarks Review
Project; original form prepared by Charles Snell, 1967

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE: 8/30/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Title _____

Date (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
 Designated: Oct 9, 1960
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Certified: 6-23-75
 Date 6-23-75
 Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST: _____
 Boundary Affirmed: 7/2/75
 Keeper of National Register
 Director, OAHF

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7. Description: (1)

Mount Pleasant

The main stair has a gracefully curved banister and paneled wainscoting, accented by small fluted pilasters which forms another handrail mirroring the profile of the banister. On the second floor, the junction of the two halls is marked by fluted Ionic pilasters in keeping with the lighter effect of the smaller scaled modillioned cornice. Ionic pilasters also form the interior frame for the Palladian windows located at either end of the main hall. Here the first two doorframes have broken pediments while those to the west have full pediments. The most elaborate room is located in the southwest corner. A light cornice with Greek fret frieze surrounds the room. To either side of the fireplace and foliate crested overmantel are two semicircular cupboards framed in broken pediments with a similar Greek fret design. The frames are repeated on the opposite wall balancing the entrance and blind doors. The third floor contains four bedrooms with corner fireplaces and a molded chair rail with no wainscoting.

The house was restored in 1925, and although handsomely furnished as a house museum by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is in need of repair. Currently, research is being conducted to determine original paint color and landscape design. It has been determined that the broad axial approach, today lined with trees is incorrect, and that the entrance was most likely off to the side where Edgely Point Road entered the property from the Rockland side, leading to a small circular turn-around in front of the main building, surrounded by fields with post and rail fencing. There are plans to return the ground immediately surrounding the house to its original appearance as a working farm.

Boundary

The two barn like structures are 1920's additions by the Park Commission but the small dependencies located to either side of the original ones were added by Jonathan Williams as a beer house and chicken house. The boundary has been drawn to preserve the remnants of the original site which utilized the house's position on a rise to secure impressive views from both the land and water, and includes the main house and two original dependencies in the landmark designation; the other four buildings named do not contribute to the significance of the landmark; beginning at the point where Mount Pleasant Drive intersects Reservoir Drive then continuing along the far side of Reservoir Drive in a southwesterly direction along the section called Fountain Green Drive to the Grant Monument continuing in a line to the river bank, then north along the bank of the Schuylkill River to a point in line with the intersection of the East River Drive and the railroad, then northwest from the point in a line intersecting Mount Pleasant Drive, continuing along the far side of Mount Pleasant Drive until the point of beginning, as illustrated on the sketch map.

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LANDMARKS)

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COUNTY Philadelphia	
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8. Statement of Significance: (1)

Mount Pleasant

middle of the 19th century. In 1868 the house became the property of the City of Philadelphia. The mansion has been furnished in period style by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and is maintained as a house museum.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

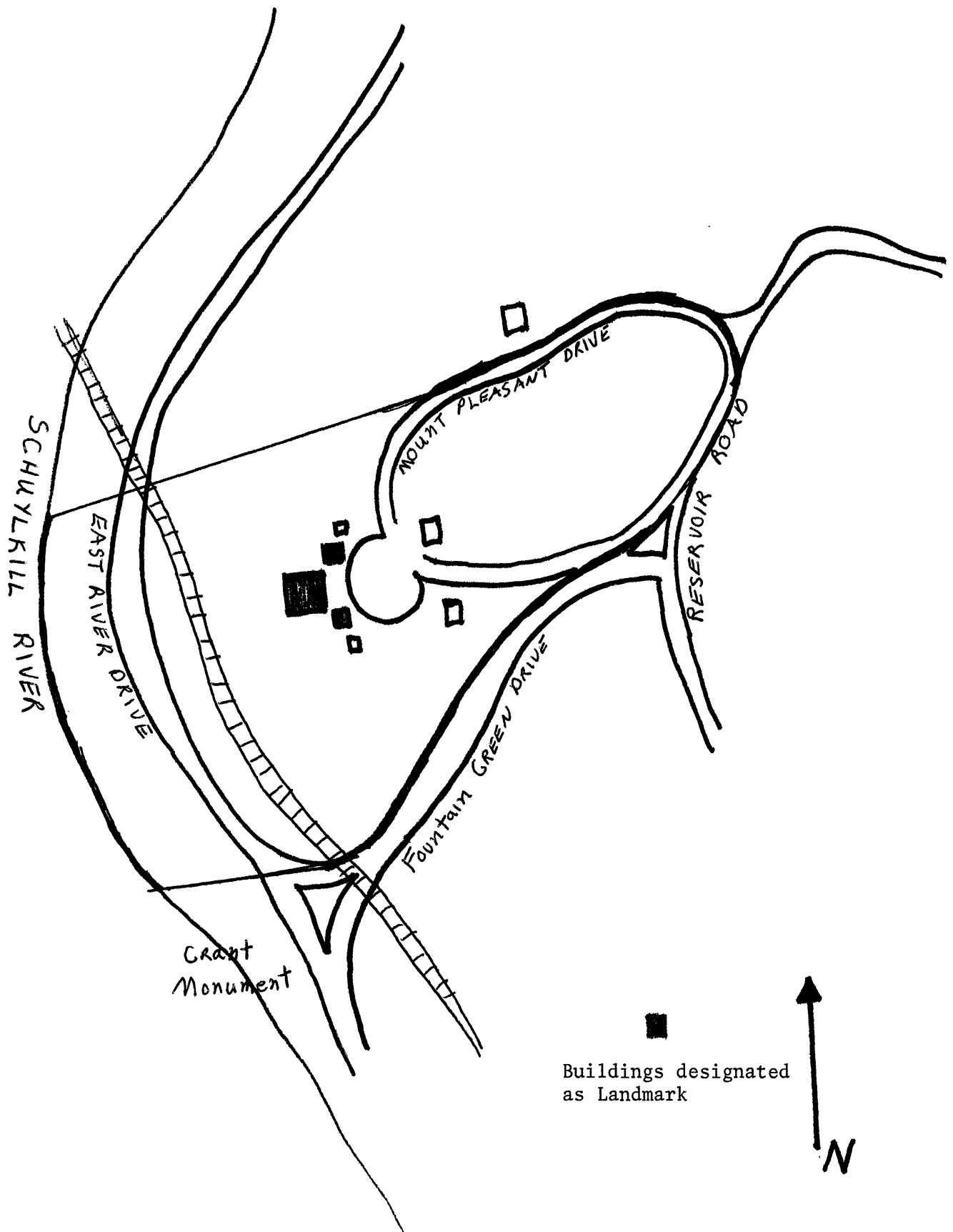
STATE Pennsylvania	
COUNTY Philadelphia	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References: (1)

Mount Pleasant

Madeira, Louis C., "Mount Pleasant", Antiques, Vol. LXXXII, No. 5, 1962.
Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952, pp. 526-28.
Tatum, George B., Penn's Great Town, Philadelphia, 1961, pp. 16, 29, 35, 158.



SCHUYLKILL RIVER

EAST RIVER DRIVE

MOUNT PLEASANT DRIVE

FOUNTAIN GREEN DRIVE

RESERVOIR ROAD

Grant Monument

Buildings designated as Landmark

