1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **COLTRANE, JOHN HOUSE**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1511 North 33rd Street Not for publication: __

City/Town: Philadelphia Vicinity: NA

State: PA County: Philadelphia Code: PA101 Zip Code:19121

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	___ buildings
___	___ sites
___	___ structures
___	___ objects
1	0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register:

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register
____ Determined eligible for the National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register
____ Removed from the National Register
____ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	DOMESTIC	Sub: Single dwelling
Current:	DOMESTIC	Sub: Single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th and 20th century revivals:
Colonial Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Brick
Walls:	Brick
Roof:	Tile
Other:	Pressed metal

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The John Coltrane House is a three-story brick rowhouse, built at the turn of the century as a speculative building project in a middle-class neighborhood. It consists of a raised basement, a projecting wood porch on the first story (now enclosed), a three-sided polygonal bay on the second story, and a Palladian window on the third story.[1] A curvilinear Dutch gable caps the building. Although a modest house, only sixteen feet in width, it is notable for its very high degree of historic integrity, both within and without.

The Coltrane House is the best preserved of a row of six units, which consists of two basic facade types: one curvilinear gable with a Palladian window alternating with a flat-roofed unit with a trio of round-arched windows. Although the houses alternate in style, they are part of an interlocking composition, and the pedimented porch of the Coltrane house is shared with 1509 North 33rd street next door.[2]

The facade is graced by a wealth of eclectic detail. To either side of the entrance there are a pair of Doric columns, of wood, which carry a pedimented porch with central garland. The porch is built of brick and is relieved by a single basement window, under a segmental arch. The brick continues upward to form a porch parapet, which is capped by a limestone coping and which is ornamented by a graceful downward curve. The space of the porch itself has been enclosed and glazed in a mid-twentieth century alteration, presumably by a local carpenter, who reused pieces of Victorian carpentry with grooved and chamfered beams[3]. At the second story is a three-sided polygonal bay, constructed of pressed metal on wood sheathing. Each facet of the bay is decorated by an ornamental wreath in the metal. The windows are double hung, and preserve their original sash, as do the third-story windows. At the third story the windows are grouped into a Palladian motif and set under a curvilinear gable, behind which the tile-clad roof recedes slightly. Completing the composition are ornamental firebreaks, clad in pressed metal and capped by tiny pediments, which project beyond the cornices of the adjoining rowhouses.

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[1] The porch was enclosed some time before Coltrane bought the property, most likely by the Konrad family, the previous owners. The framing and paneling consists of reused Victorian era paneling and framing. Interview with Mary Alexander, October 21, 1996.

[2] This device of alternating different facade types in a row of houses of identical plans was a characteristic of Philadelphia row house design since the 1880s, when it was refined by architect Willis G. Hale, the city's principal architect of speculative rowhouses. At the turn of the century, the city's rowhouse architects had embraced Hale's techniques: the rhythmic alternation of facade types, the standardization of machine-produced ornamental detail, and a predeliction for motifs of the Northern Renaissance. Hale's followers and pupils at this time included Angus Wade, Henry Flower and E. A. Wilson. See Willis G. Hale, *Some Selections from an Architect's Portfolio* (n.d., probably c. 1893), copy at the American Philosophical Society.

[3] Mary Alexander, John Coltrane's cousin and subsequent owner of the house, confirms that the porch enclosure preceded Coltrane's purchase of the property. Interview with Mary Alexander, October 21, 1996. Apparently one of the previous owners commissioned the addition, which was built without benefit of a building permit. Records, Department of Licenses and Inspections, City of Philadelphia.

[4] In plan, the Coltrane House shows a late Victorian open arrangement, with room divisions marked by ceiling arches and implied partitions rather than complete enclosures. It is an excellent example of a plan type that had been perfected in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Previously, the presence of a side hall was an absolute requirement for a middle-class rowhouse; in fact, this was the element which distinguished it from the lower-class or working-class "trinity type", which admitted no privacy in the parlor from the entrance vestibule. For this mark of social status, several feet of a parlor's width were sacrificed. By the turn of the century, changes in social mores and planning practice made it possible to omit the side hall, and place an entrance vestibule in a corner of the parlor. This opening up of the plan is one of the hallmarks of late Victorian design.

The first story consists of a parlor, a free-standing stair placed diagonally across from the entrance vestibule, and behind this a dining room; a kitchen and pantry follow to the rear.[4] The decorative elements throughout are in an excellent state of preservation. In the entrance vestibule are retained the decorative tile floor and walls, although one of the transom lights has lost its leaded glass. The principal features of interest in the living room are the brick fireplace, capped by a vigorously molded wood mantel, and the Colonial Revival stair, with its lathe-turned spindles. The floor is of oak. In the southeastern corner of the living room is a slender, leaded glass window, a rather uncommon feature in Philadelphia rowhouse design, where such windows--made possible by indentation of the rear ell--are generally found in the dining room.

The dining room is also lighted unconventionally. In place of the typical corner window, the dining room is indented from the southern property line to create a slender polygonal bay, lighted by a skylight. A built-in wood cabinet is placed in the northwest corner of the room. All are well-preserved, although the room now bears a modern dropped ceiling. Between dining room and kitchen is a narrow service space, comprising a pantry with built in cupboards and a secondary servants' stair--a distinctive feature of the prosperous middle-class rowhouse. The rear ell contains the kitchen, which is lighted by two side windows. Although it has been successively modernized and altered, it preserves its tile wall. As in much of the rest of the house, the mill work is mass-produced, and shows some of the crudeness of Philadelphia's large turn-of-the-century housing operations, often visible in the sloppiness of the mitered joints of the door surrounds. The rear porch is lightly enclosed in wood, and is used as a utility room.

Above the first story, the house becomes a more conventional sidehall rowhouse plan, with a few unusual features. Across the front of the house is the master bedroom with its bay window, its chief feature being an ornate, built-in cabinet along the north wall, a Colonial Revival composition with a central mirror. (After Coltrane purchased the property this served as his mother's room.) Directly accessible from it is a second, smaller room, square in plan, built to serve as a dressing room or a second bedroom. It is lighted by a corner window, made possible by the contraction of the rear ell. The side hall broadens toward the front of the house, making room for the stair, but in the ell it contracts. This transition is made by the curved wall of the bathroom, the first room in the ell. Behind this is another smaller bedroom, and beyond this the servant stair. The rear of the second story is taken over by another bedroom, entered through a round-arched door with a leaded transom--a door form that is more typically a mid-Victorian feature. This was John Coltrane's own room.[5]

Above the second story, the plan is repeated although with more modest trim. Walls are of plaster, with milled wood baseboards and door surrounds. All rooms retain their original sash and doors, which are in very good condition. During Coltrane's later period of residence, he occupied the entire third story as his own apartment.

The property fronts directly on Fairmount Park. Bounded by North 33rd street and the park to the west, the house rests on a triangular block, with Oxford Avenue to the north, while the chord of the triangle is formed by the tracks of the Pennsylvania railroad.

The park exercised much influence on the development of the property. It was originally part of a vast tract of land owned by Charles Rhoads through much of the nineteenth century. In 1872 a piece of that land was sold to Israel Pemberton.[6] After the death of Israel and his wife Rebecca, it passed to Clifford Pemberton, who held it

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[5] Interview with Mary Alexander, October 21, 1996. Subsequently Coltrane took the entire third story while Mary Alexander took this room for herself.

[6] See Philadelphia deeds: 12 N16 32; 12 N16 40; 12 N16 42; and 12 N16 75.

jointly with his real estate associates John Neill and Frank Mauran, Jr., prominent real estate speculators.[7] Various portions of their holdings were sold off during the 1890s and developed as housing.
The Coltrane House presents with unusual clarity the forces affecting real estate speculation in North Philadelphia. Above all this was a tug of war between the working class factory neighborhood and the socially prominent districts addressing Fairmount Park, both of which influenced the Coltrane House.[8] On the one hand, North 33rd street was a socially prestigious location, forming the western edge of Fairmount Park. After the park's boundaries were set in 1867, most of the land facing it increased in potential value, and much of it eventually was developed as prestigious housing.[9] The immediate neighborhood around the Coltrane House became especially attractive after 1884, when a bronze fountain *of Orestes and Pylades,* designed by the prominent German sculptor Carl Steinhduser, was installed at the Columbia Avenue entrance of the park.[10] With the property torn between positive associations with the park, and industrial neighborhood to the rear, Pemberton seems to have hesitated about developing it. As long as its social character was unclear, it would be risky to pitch the house at too high a social character than the neighborhood would bear. While it was more profitable to build large and prestigious houses for the prosperous middle classes, the industrial character of the immediate neighborhood made this strategy a gamble. Rather than building more expensive houses than the market would bear, it might be more profitable to build cheaper houses. Therefore, the Pemberton land was developed somewhat later than the surrounding district, as historical atlases show.[11]

After 1894 the status of the immediate neighborhood rose when a new entrance to Fairmount Park was opened at the corner of 33rd and Oxford streets.[12] This spurred development across the street; architect W. Frisbey Smith built nine houses that year at the nearby corner of 33rd and Columbia streets, where two years later the East Park Methodist Church would be built, taking its name from the park.[13] In 1895 Pemberton acquired sole possession of

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[7] Neill and Mauran collaborated professionally and personally as well, even building a paired house together. See George B. Tatum, *Penn's Great Town* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961).

[8] Much of this area was developed by speculative builders, such as William Elkins, Peter A. B. Widener and William Singerly, who helped create its character of upwardly mobile, middle-class homeowners. Michael J. Lewis, "'He was not a Connoisseur': Peter Widener and His House," *Nineteenth Century* 12, nos. 3 and 4 (1993), pp. 27-36.

[9] A number of large mansions were built on North 33rd Street around Diamond Street during the 1880s and 1890s. For example, the Albert Dingee House by Diamond Street, designed in 1891 by architect Angus Wade. See Sandra Tatman and Roger Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984).

[10] Fairmount Park Association, An Account of its Origin and Activities since its Foundation in 1871 ... (Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Art Association, 1922) p. 42, p. 138. Also see Fairmount Park Association, Sculpture of a City: Philadelphia's Treasures in Bronze and Stone (New York: Walker & Co., 1974), p. 148. While the park contributed to the respectable character of the houses on 33rd Street, other factors acted against development of socially fashionable houses. In particular, the presence of the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad to the east of the block gave the immediate area a rather industrial character, and directly to the east was a district of breweries, comprising the buildings of the F. A. Poth brewery and the Bergner & Engel brewery. Much of the surrounding land was developed in the course of the 1880s and built densely with two and three-story brick rowhouses. Despite the park to the west, the neighborhood was largely industrial in character, and many of the inhabitants worked in nearby plants, including the Knickerbocker Ice Company at 3 1 st and Columbia streets, and the Bergner & Engel Brewery at 3 1 st and Jefferson streets.

[11] *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley, 1895).

[12] The engineer for the Fairmount Park Commission, G. Thayer, designed the entrance. *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* (April 18, 1894). *Fairmount Park Association, An Account of its Origin and Activities since its Foundation in 1871 . . ., p.* 42, p. 138.

[13] *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* (April 11, 1894) and *Philadelphia Inquirer* (July 9, 1896)

the property from his partners[14]. Some time thereafter, by about 1900, he subdivided his parcel and built two blocks of rowhouses. His architect was likely E. Allen Wilson (fl. 1894 - 1936), whom he later used for a 50-house real estate development around 58th and Pentridge Streets in West Philadelphia[15]. Wilson was an architect-builder who specialized in large-scale housing operations, which maximized social status while minimizing cost, and ultimately brought him a steady stream of commissions from the city's real estate speculators. His great strength was the harnessing of industrial operations in the building process, and the use of mass-produced materials and trim. As was typical of Wilson's work, the 33rd Street houses boasted an array of fanciful pressed metal detail, stained glass and colored tile, although in fact they were rather modest in cost and size, measuring no more than 16 feet in width. His designs achieved a compromise that suited Pemberton's unusual site, houses with the pretense of an exclusive townhouse though built on a rowhouse budget.

Rather than sell his houses, for the first decade or more, Pemberton rented them. Apparently his were not the most prosperous of tenants, and in one instance the intended purchase failed and 1511 North 33rd street reverted to Pemberton.[16] The property was rented to a series of tenants until it was finally sold in 1919 to Karl W. Konrad, a caterer, whose family would remain there for over thirty years.[17]

In the course of the next two generations, the composition of the neighborhood changed. The gritty urban texture of the neighborhood to the east came to reach 33rd street, which by the 1920s became denser and more industrial, with the construction of apartment houses and garages. The population also became more predominantly Jewish.[18]

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[14] Neill and Mauran finally transferred the property to Pemberton on June 10, 1895 (property record 12 N1632).

[15] Tatman and Moss, pp. 862 - 868. The Pemberton Estate buildings at 58th and Pentridge Streets were built in 1914.

[16] The property was sold on August 9, 1905 to Blanche de Lery (or Delery), wife of Joseph B. de Lery. The couple lived here for a few years after 1905, after which the property reverted to Pemberton. See Philadelphia City Directories, 1905, 1906.

[17] Konrad died by 1927, when the property was inherited by his widow Caroline (Lena) and daughter Matilda, a bookkeeper. Deed, December 8, 1919, Clifford Pemberton, Jr., and Anita LeRoy to Karl W. Konrad. Property record 12 N16 75. Philadelphia Dept. of Records. Also see Philadelphia City Directories, 1916, 1919, 1923, 1927.

[18] A. Leitvitz built a garage at 1507 North 33rd street in 1920. In the years that followed two apartment houses were built at the nearby corner of 33rd and Columbia, both by Jewish architects working for Jewish clients: the Parkway Apartment

This shift in the pattern of living coincided with another demographic shift, the migration of southern Blacks to northern cities in the 1930s and 1940s. Of course many houses, in the turn of the century neighborhoods in north and west Philadelphia, were owned by aging populations whose children had left. Property had dropped in desirability in comparison with new suburban tracts, and a rapid transformation of these neighborhoods was underway. On July 21, 1952 the property was sold by Matilda Konrad for the sum of $5,416.00 to John Coltrane, then twenty-six years old.[19]

Corporation apartment, designed by Frederick Greisler (1926) and the William Shalita apartment, designed by Charles Caspary (1927-28). Finally, in 1929, architect Isidore W. Levin is reported as having built an apartment house for Samuel Lear at 1521-27 North 33rd. See *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide (May* 12, 1920 and June 26, 1929). For listings of the individual architects, see Tatman and Moss.

[19] Deed, July 21, 1952, Matilda Konrad to John W. Coltrane. Property record 12 N16 75. Philadelphia Dept. of Records. The purchase of the house receives much attention in the standard Coltrane biographies. See Thomas, pp. 51-52; Porter, p. 91.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B X C___ D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G X

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Criteria Exception: 8

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing cultural values
2. Visual and performing arts

Areas of Significance: Performing arts, social history

Period(s) of Significance: 1952-1967

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s): Coltrane, John

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Wilson, E. A. (attributed to)

Historic Context: XXII: Music
C: Jazz

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The house at 1511 North 33rd street, Philadelphia, was the home of the tenor saxophonist and American jazz pioneer John Coltrane (1926-1967) throughout the critical years during which he developed his characteristic musical language. A musician and composer, Coltrane is a principal figure in twentieth-century American music who played a central role in the development of jazz during the 1950s and 1960s. In such albums as *Giant Steps* (1959) and *My Favorite Things* (1960), he took the American jazz tradition as it had developed by the late 1940s with its established forms and harmonies and radically transformed it. HE pioneered modal harmonies and incorporating influences from a variety of international sources.[20] At the same time he is--along with Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker--one of the most influential performing soloists in the history of jazz. During the 1950s when the worldwide prestige of American culture was at its height, with the rise of modernism in architecture and abstract expressionism in the pictorial arts, jazz was hailed as America's truly indigenous art form. In this period fell Coltrane's greatest achievement, and he remains a figure of international importance. [21]

John William Coltrane was born on September 23, 1926 in Hamlet, North Carolina. [22] When he was two months old his family moved to High Point, North Carolina, where he spent his childhood. He lived with his parents in the house of his maternal grandfather, Reverend William Wilson Blair, a prominent member of the African Methodist Zion Episcopal Church. This family was musically inclined, and at the age of twelve Coltrane joined the band of the church's boy scout troop. First playing alto horn, and then clarinet, he finally settled on the alto saxophone, imitating his model Johnny Hodges, who played with Duke Ellington. Upon graduation from high school in 1943 he moved to Philadelphia, working in a sugar refinery while enrolling at the Ornstein School of Music. He was drafted into the navy in 1945, serving in Hawaii, and returning to Philadelphia upon his discharge in 1946.

Coltrane completed his musical apprenticeship over the next decade through a combination of study and relentless playing.[23] Performing in a series of local rhythm and blues bands, he occasionally toured throughout the country.[24] During this period Coltrane met many of the luminaries of post-war American jazz, and developed his own characteristic style, now becoming adept at the tenor saxophone as well. In 1949 he joined Dizzy Gillespie's band, remaining for just over a year. Here he was exposed to more complex music, and particularly the

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[20] For a modem account of Coltrane's importance, see the Ted Gioia, *The History of* Jazz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). The best modern biography of the musician is Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and* Music (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998).

[21] Coltrane continues to be studied in Britain, France, Germany and Japan. See, for example, Alain Gerber, *Le cas Coltrane* (Marseille: Parentheses, 1985). For a full bibliography, see Porter, pp. 378ff.

[22] Besides Porter, useful biographies of Coltrane include Bill Cole, *John Coltrane* (New York: Schirmer, 1976); Eric Nisenson, *Ascension: John Coltrane and His Quest* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) and J. C. Thomas, *Chasin' the Trane: The Music and Mystique of John Coltrane* (New York: Da Capo, 1976).

[23] Coltrane studied under the GI Bill at the Granoff School of Music, where his teachers were Dennis Sandole in theory and Matthew Rastelli in saxophone. For an interview with Sandole in which he discusses Coltrane's interests in harmonic development, see Thomas, p. 5 1.

[24] Throughout this period, beginning in 1946, Coltrane appeared on numerous recordings as a session player. For an exhaustive discography see Yashuhiro Fujioka, with Lewis Porter and Yoh-Ichi Hamada, *John Coltrane: A Discography and Musical Biography,* Rutgers, State University of New Jersey, Studies in Jazz, no. 20 (Metuchen, New Jersey and London: Scarecrow Press, 1995).

Afro-Cuban percussion of Gillespie's band. It was also around this time that Coltrane was introduced to heroin, quickly becoming a serious addict.[25]

In early 1952 he bought a house, about fifty years old, at 1511 North 33rd Street in North Philadelphia. This was an area that was then in transition, as rural southern blacks relocated to northern cities, finding work opportunities in such industrial neighborhoods.[26] Coltrane moved into the property with his mother, his first cousin Mary Alexander and a childhood friend from North Carolina, James Kinzer; Mary's mother had intended to join them but she died before moving in. The final member of the household was Juanita Austin, known by her nickname Naima, whom Coltrane met in June 1954, and whom he married on October 3, 1955.[27] Until the end of his life, he would own the property, using it either as his principal residence or a temporary base during his tours, while his mother and cousin Mary Alexander lived there permanently.

For the next several years, Coltrane traveled with various bands, returning to Philadelphia between tours. His years of obscurity were soon to come to an end. In 1954 he began to play in the band of Johnny Hodges, who had become famous playing alto saxophone for Duke Ellington, and whom Coltrane had emulated as a young musician. His star now rose rapidly. One year later, in September 1955, he joined the band of the jazz innovator Miles Davis (1926-1991).

> In time, Coltrane would be revered as the most influential saxophonist of his generation, but when Miles brought him into the band, Coltrane's reputation in the jazz world was modest ... One of the jazz world's most successful late bloomers-his maturing as a major stylist took place, for the most part, during the last twelve years of his life...[28]

By the end of 1956, Coltrane, because of a falling out with Davis, aggravated by Coltrane's heroine addiction, was fired from the Davis quintet.[29]

Coltrane's critical year came in 1957, when his mature style first became apparent and when he underwent a profound personal trauma. Apparently the two events were connected. In this year he recorded his first solo album, *Coltrane,* which was released by Prestige Records in May. At the same time he set about overcoming his heroin addiction, an event which took place in his house on North 33rd Street. Here he confined himself to the second story rear bedroom during the peak of the crisis, which seems to have taken place in the spring.[30] Besides breaking his addiction, Coltrane also renounced alcohol and tobacco, and turned to religion, partly under the influence of his wife, who was a Moslem.

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[25] Porter places the beginning of Coltrane's heroin addiction some time before the fall of 1950 while Thomas suggests it began in 1953. Porter, p. 85; Thomas, pp. 51-52, 63.

[26] Russell F. Weigley, ed., *Philadelphia: A Three Hundred Year History (New* York: W. W. Norton, 1982); Allan F. Davis and Mark H. Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life,* 1790-1940 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973); Theodore Hershberg, *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century: Essays Towards an Interdisciplinary History of the City* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[27] Naima had a daughter named Antonia who also moved in to the Coltrane house. Porter, pp. 96-99; Thomas, p. 64.

[28] Gioia, p. 295.

[29] Ibid., p. 296.

[30] Presumably this happened before Coltrane's move in the early summer to New York, where he stayed first at the Alvin Hotel and, beginning in late August, in an apartment at 203 W. 103rd Street, where he moved with Naima. Interview with Mary Alexander, October 21, 1996; Thomas, p. 82.

Now Coltrane joined the quartet led by the famed pianist Thelonious Monk, and moved temporarily to New York where they played at the celebrated Five Spot. For the first time Coltrane received attention in the popular press.[31]

> The attraction of this combo was as much its star saxophonist as it was Monk himself. John Coltrane was on the verge of establishing himself as the leading tenor saxophonist in jazz at the time he joined Monk's band ... Even at this early point in his career, Coltrane stood out from the pack with his explosive improvisations, his technical prowess, and the unprecedented energy of his performances ... In the final analysis, this was an extraordinary band, one of the most creative units of its day, not because Coltrane served as disciple to Monk, as is so often stated, but because these two masters of the jazz idiom met, for the most part, on equal terms. During their few months together, these two premiere stylists-one espousing a music of pregnant pauses and lingering overtones, the other filling each measure to the fullest, to overflowing, in a music of delirious excess-called to mind the physicists' assertion that the creative energy of the universe is founded, ultimately, on the attraction of opposites.[32]

This marked the end of Coltrane's extended musical apprenticeship. At the end of the year Coltrane left Monk to rejoin the band of Miles Davis, which now included the celebrated alto saxophonist Julian "Cannonball" Adderley. The collaboration between this constellation of musicians was unusually fertile and productive, and in short order they radically transformed the nature of modern jazz. At this point there existed a consensus about what a jazz performance involved: a piece would open or close with recognizable phrases of a familiar song, which would then give way to improvisations which would involve variations of the melody against the original harmony, or occasionally new harmonic relationships would be explored underneath the original melody. A succession of soloists would then play, accompanied by certain formulaic rhythmic devices, such as a walking bass pattern, swinging symbols and piano block chords that carried the chord progression. The point tended to be more the personal virtuosity of the soloists rather than the coherence of the piece itself.[33] Such was the jazz movement designated as Bebop.

In place of this, Coltrane and Davis devised a freer jazz, which was based not on conventional chord progressions but rather on a modal accompaniment. To some extent, this modal accompaniment was like the sustained pattern of an Indian raga, which permitted harmonic relationships of much greater scope than in Bebop, which was still based harmonically on traditional Western musical scales. Musical unity was no longer provided by the structure of the original song, but rather through motivic association, the pattern of repeated motifs and phrases, and the overall harmonic coherence of a piece.[34] This radical new approach marked the end of the Bebop era and the start of the period of free jazz which has persisted, in large measure, to the present.

Coltrane remained with Davis until 1959 when he began his independent career and moved to the St. Albans section of Queens.[35] In April, following the expiration of his contract with Prestige Records, he signed with Atlantic Records. With Atlantic Records Coltrane immediately recorded the album Giant Steps, which was hailed

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[31] For an early notice see Whitney Balliett, "Hot and Cold," *New Yorker XXXIII* (December 7, 1957), pp. 192-194.

[32] Gioia, pp. 245-246.

[33] See Barry Dean Kernfeld, "Adderley, Coltrane and Davis at the Twilight of Bebop: The Search for Musical Coherence (1958-59)," Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1981, pp. 177-78; 225ff.

[34] Ibid., p. 178; Gioia, pp. 303-308. The most important recording of this collaboration is Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue,* released in 1959 on Columbia Records.

[35] *Thomas, p. 116.*

for its pioneering compositions and performances and "as a major landmark in jazz history."[36] Coltrane demonstrated his artistic independence from Davis and his spare modal accompaniment by taking his pieces through rapid and difficult chord changes, particularly in the title piece which has since become a standard of the American jazz repertoire. Here Coltrane also began to give play to his own system of chord substitutions, which permitted an enormous expanse of the harmonic possibilities of a piece while still remaining in the original tonality.[37] On this album was his composition "Cousin Mary," written for his cousin Mary Alexander who continued to live in his Philadelphia house, and who still lived there in 1998.

In 1960, Coltrane recorded the most influential and popular album of his career, My *Favorite Things,* which remains one of the most important albums in the history of jazz. His fourteen-minute interpretation of the Rogers & Hammerstein standard became an unexpected commercial success, with 50,000 copies sold in the first year. With this triumph, Coltrane's harmonic and structural innovations entered the mainstream of American jazz. In My *Favorite Things* Coltrane showed his increasing musical eclecticism, drawing on Indian, African and Latin American music, among others.[38] Perhaps more than any other jazz musician, he was responsible for reorienting American jazz from a reliance on indigenous sources to an awareness of international music. Not only did his thorough training in musicology lead him to explore these sources (as did his increasingly mystic and religious temperament) but his radical transformation of the structure of jazz made it possible for other musicians to expand dramatically their own range of source material.

The next five years mark the summit of Coltrane's achievement and influence. During this period he performed with essentially the same group of musicians, including McCoy Tyner (piano), Jimmy Garrison (bass) and Elvin Jones (drums), a line-up which is generally regarded as the most influential jazz quartet of the decade. When his contract with Atlantic Records lapsed in 1961, he shifted to Impulse Records, where he remained until the end of his life, releasing over 25 albums. Coltrane was at the height of his fame in 1965, and was named "Jazzman of the Year" by the influential jazz magazine *Down Beat.*[39]

Coltrane's classic period came to an end in that year. He had already separated from his wife during the summer of 1963, returning to live in his Philadelphia house or in hotels. In 1965 he took Alice McLeod as his common-law wife, not only replacing Naima with her, but McCoy Tyner as well, for McLeod was a pianist of some accomplishment herself. Together the couple moved to Dix Hills on Long Island, New York. (Coltrane did not legally divorce Naima until 1966) [40]

During 1965 Coltrane's music moved from the channel he had followed since the late 1950s. Replacing all of his band members except for his bassist, Coltrane began a period of avant garde experimentation, exploring non-traditional saxophone tones and structureless free-form improvisations--drawing on the example of such innovators as Ornette Coleman. Coltrane himself was no longer in the forefront of jazz, but this new experimental phase was curtailed by his battle with liver cancer that was identified in late 1966. Coltrane died on July 16, 1967.

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[36] David Perry, Jazz Greats (London:Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p. 193.

[37] The most detailed analysis of Coltrane's technique of chord substitutions is contained in Porter.

[38] Gioia, p. 306

[39] Thomas, p. 205.

[40] Porter, p. 272.

Although he died over three decades ago, John Coltrane continues to be of popular and scholarly interest, not only musically but also in terms of racial history. In addition to the biographies of Coltrane that appear with some regularity, one recent book looks at his music as a response to racism in America.[41] Coltrane has also been the subject of doctoral dissertations in musicology.[42] The Coltrane bibliography continues to grow, and in early 1998 the most definitive biography to date appeared, Lewis Porter's *John Coltrane: His Life and* Music, published in the influential Michigan American Music Series.

The house at 1511 North 33rd Street is the property most closely associated with Coltrane during the productive period of his life, and many of the principal events in his life are connected with it.[43] It represents Coltrane's life and social milieu in an exceptionally vivid manner. Since 1952 it has remained virtually unchanged, and has remained in continuous family occupation, owned first by Coltrane, then his mother, and finally by Coltrane's cousin, Mary Alexander, the daughter of his mother's sister Bettie. In recent years, the surrounding neighborhood has fallen on harder economic times, in particular with the collapse of the nearby industrial base. Abandoned buildings and vacant lots blight many of the surrounding streets, and many of the houses are in dilapidated condition. The adjacent park has also been affected, and the statue of *Orestes* at the entrance has been mutilated. Nonetheless, the Coltrane house and its adjacent property at 1509 North 33rd Street, where the John Coltrane Association is housed, form an important nucleus of stability in the neighborhood.[44]

The Coltrane House is intimately connected with the life of one of the most significant figures in American music of the twentieth century. "Whether it was the striving tenor solos on the *Milestones LP,* the majesterial soprano work on My *Favorite Things or* the delicate, sinuous minimalism of *Expression,* Coltrane at his best could match the finest jazz ever played.[45]

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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[41] Karlton E. Hester, *ne Melodic and Polyrhythmic Development of John Coltrane's Spontaneous Composition in a Racist Society* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1997).

[42] See Kernfeld, op. *cit.*

[43] Two other properties are associated with Coltrane: his birthplace in Hamlet, North Carolina and his childhood home in High Point, North Carolina, both of which are designated with historic markers. See the illustrations in Porter, facing p. 174.

[44] The Coltrane House has been certified by the Philadelphia City Historic Commission. See Randall Baron, City Historic Certification of John Coltrane House (1985), Philadelphia City Historic Commission.

[45] David Perry, Jazz Greats (London:Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p. 198.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark. Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #____
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
_X_ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository): _____

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References:

	Zone	Northing	Easting
A	18	4425380	483850

Verbal Boundary Description:

The John Coltrane property is situated on the east side of 33rd Street at a distance of 277 feet 3 inches southward from the south side of Oxford street in the 29th ward of the city of Philadelphia, containing in front or breadth on said 33rd Street 16 feet and extending of that width in length or depth eastward between parallel lines at right angles with said 33rd Street on the north line thereof 157 feet and three inches and on the south line thereof 143 feet seven inches to a certain four foot wide alley leading northeastward into Natrona Street, and containing at the rear end thereof along said alley 21 feet and one half inch.

Boundary Justification:

Encompasses the boundaries of the historic property purchased by John Coltrane in 1952.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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