

APPENDIX E:
OVERLOOK SERVICE STATION/JOE &
TONY'S SERVICE STATION (N09455)
DOE FORM

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 (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Overlook Service Station

Other names/site number Joe & Tony's Service Station

2. Location

street & number 3207 Philadelphia Pike not for publication

city of town Brandywine Hundred vicinity

State Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003 zip code 19703

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official Date

Title State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
___ 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:)	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal
- private

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- building(s)
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade-Business
- Commerce/Trade-Specialty Store
- Domestic-Multiple Dwelling
-
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade-Business
-
-
-
-
-
-

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late 19th- and early-20th- Century American Movements-Bungalow/Craftsman
-
-
-
-

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: Concrete Block
- walls: Stucco, Concrete Block
- roof: Asphalt, Wood Shingles
- other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Overlook Service Station, more commonly known as Joe & Tony's Service Station, at 3207 Philadelphia Pike is located on the northwest side of Philadelphia Pike between Commonwealth Avenue and Lawson Avenue along a commercial strip in Claymont, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The 0.28-acre property includes a two-story *circa*-1927 service station with a *circa*-1982 side garage addition, surrounded by a small parking area. Modern gas pumps are sheltered by a modern canopy between the roadway and the service station.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Pages 7.1-7.2

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)

Settlement Patterns and Demographic Change

Architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1927 - ca. 1960

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for the Overlook Service Station begins in ca. 1927, when the service station was constructed, and extends to ca. 1960, which is 50 years from the present. The service station continues under the same use in 2010.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Overlook Service Station is significant under Criterion A for its association with early automobile-related commercial development along a state highway corridor as well as under Criterion C as an example of pre-standardized, residential style service station design. Based on the background research conducted for this project, the property does not appear to be associated with an individual of historic importance; therefore, the property is not eligible under Criterion B. The property does not appear to possess the potential to yield information on building practices or methods of construction; therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for listing under Criterion D.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

See Continuation Pages 8.2-8.3

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See Continuation Pages 8.1-8.2

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See Continuation Page 9.1

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.28
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>460414</u> Easting	<u>4405587</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The National Register boundary for the Overlook Service Station includes the entire 0.28-acre tax parcel on the northwest side of Philadelphia Pike.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the service station building as well as features of the setting that contribute to the significance of the property, such as the area historically occupied by gas pumps and canopies.

11. Form Prepared By

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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 black and white 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.

Overlook Service Station/Joe & Tony's Service Station
Name of Property

New Castle County, Delaware
County and State

Name of Property: Overlook Service Station

City or Vicinity: Brandywine Hundred

County: New Castle **State:** Delaware

Photographer: Shauna J. Haas

Date Photographed: June 15, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number: See attached photograph pages.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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General Description

Description

The service station at 3207 Philadelphia Pike is located on the northwest side of Philadelphia Pike along a commercial strip, just east of the intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. The rectangular tax parcel is almost entirely occupied by the *circa*-1927 service station and the side garage addition constructed in 1982. A small parking area is located between Philadelphia Pike and the side garages. Modern gas pumps sheltered by a modern canopy are located between the roadway and the main service station building. The rest of the lot is paved with asphalt and is separated from the roadway by a concrete sidewalk.

The *circa*-1927 service station building is comprised of a two-story concrete block square building with a *circa*-1927 rear, one-story garage/service area, and a 1982 side garage addition. The walls are covered in painted stucco. A painted metal sign, which replaced the original sign in the mid- to late twentieth century, is installed in the façade (southeast elevation) on a painted strip that separates the first and second floors on all elevations. The two-story block has a hipped roof with hipped dormers on each side. The garage at the rear of the service station is also stuccoed and has a low-pitched gambrel roof with exposed eaves. The 1982 side garage addition is concrete block with a shed roof and a faux mansard at the southeast elevation. The roof of the original block is covered with asphalt shingles, and the mansard roof of the garage addition is covered with wood shingles. Paired six-over-one light, double-hung wood sash windows are located in each dormer. The eaves are covered by a smooth layer of stucco connecting to the wall below.

The façade includes a central vehicle entrance flanked by pedestrian entrances and display windows on each side. The vehicle entrance is an open vestibule leading to the rear service area. The areas flanking the vehicle entrance were originally used as a show room (south corner) and office (east corner); the show room is now used as storage and a work area. The pedestrian entrances are glass doors with metal frames and are topped by single light transoms. The display window on the southwest side of the façade features a single pane of plate glass with a painted multi-light toplight, similar to that seen in ca. 1930 photographs of the station. The display window to the northeast is an 18-light steel fixed sash with a painted multi-light toplight; the display window was likely replaced in the mid- to late twentieth century. Pairs of original six-over-one light, double hung wood sash windows are found in each of the four bays of the second floor. The southeast elevation of the garage addition has three vehicle bays, each with a modern metal roll-up door.

The southwest elevation includes three bays in the two-story block and two bays in the one-story garage block. The first floor has 20-light steel sash windows with central pivot sashes in the outer two bays. A five-panel wood door leads into the restroom in the center bay. Two narrow, frosted, six-light, fixed wood sash windows are located immediately to the northwest of the door. Paired, six-over-one light, double-hung wood sash windows are found in each of the three bays on the second floor; it should be noted that the center bay of windows is smaller than the windows in the outer bays.

The northwest elevation includes three bays in the one-story rear garage and three bays in the 1982 one-story side garage addition. Twenty-light steel sash windows with central pivot sashes are located in the outer bays of the garage, which has a central vehicle entrance comprised of a modern metal roll-up door. There are no

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windows in the northwest wall of the garage addition, although there are three metal louvered vents. The second floor of the main block has no openings.

The northeast elevation includes four bays in the two-story block and three bays in the 1982 side garage addition. Single-light rectangular windows with aluminum sashes are located in the southeast two bays of the original block. A modern wood door covered by a modern aluminum screen door is located in the third bay. A 20-light steel sash window with a central pivot sash is located in the fourth bay of the two-story building, adjacent to the southeast wall of the garage addition. Paired six-over-one light windows are found in the east two bays of the second story; the second pair is smaller than the first. A single one-over-one light, double-hung aluminum sash window is found in the third bay. A stuccoed chimney extends the center of the northeast slope of the roof. Modern, solid steel doors are found in three bays of the garage addition.

The interior of the service station consists of the storage room (former show room) in the south corner, the office in the east corner, and the two rear service areas. The storage room and 1982 garage addition were not accessible at the time of survey. A row of three, six-over-six-light, double-hung wood sash windows open from the former showroom into the vehicle entrance vestibule. The office area has changed little over time, and is comprised of a service counter, side shop, and rear office. Doors connect the service vestibule to the southwest and rear service area. The service area is a large open space with poured concrete floors and exposed concrete block walls. Modern fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling, and vehicle lifts and other equipment are located throughout the room. It appears that few alterations have been made to the service area other than upgrading or replacing equipment.

Alterations

The Overlook Service Station has been relatively unaltered since its construction in 1927. Gulf signage was added in 1928 after the oil company took control of the service station, and has updated the signage, gas pumps, and canopy over the years, resulting in the current modern configuration. Although the building has been repainted, the gas pumps are in the same location as the original pumps and service station is still under operation of Gulf Oil Company. A three-bay, one-story garage addition was constructed against the east wall of the original building in ca. 1982, located on a rear addition so that it does not interrupt the relationships between the building, the gas pumps, and the roadway. The main building continues in use as a service station, and retains the original wall materials, windows, and layout.

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Historical Narrative

The service station at 3207 Philadelphia Pike was constructed ca. 1927 on lots 7 through 13 of Section B of the Overlook Colony subdivision. James McNulty and Edward Herley bought the lots from Claude Banta, the developer of the subdivision, in November 1926.¹ The two-story concrete block service station was constructed soon after, as it appears on the 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Claymont. First known as the Overlook Service Station, the building operated as a filling station, service station, and auto showroom and had two apartments on the second floor. Today, the station remains in operation as a filling and service station under the name Joe & Tony's Service Station. The showroom and apartments are no longer in use as such and serve primarily as storage.

The first gas stations had tanks directly on the roadway, which quickly became a nuisance to communities as lines for service extended out onto the highway, impeding traffic. By the early 1920s, stations provided driveways off of the road, and gas pumps were placed on islands between the building and roadway, typically under a canopy or porte cochere. Signage was often placed by the roadway to catch the attention of passers-by, and soon each oil company established a distinctive image in signage and/or architecture. One of the earliest trends in service station architecture masqueraded as a house, conveying a traditional and comforting image to motorists. Independent stations, such as the Overlook Service Station, often designed their buildings to fit in with the community character, whether it be Main Street or a residential district. The Overlook Service Station included stucco walls and a residential form common in Claymont that was similar to the Four-Square type dwelling. In the 1920s, filling stations began to provide service areas so motorists could fill up, wash their cars, and receive automobile repairs and maintenance in one stop. Some stations, such as the Overlook Service Station, even included showroom spaces to sell cars in addition to servicing them, and most would provide restroom facilities for travelers².

The Overlook Service Station began operation under Gulf Oil in 1928 and continues in operation as a Gulf station today. Gulf Oil opened its first drive-in service station in 1913 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Gulf expanded its service facilities rapidly, and by 1930 it operated hundreds of gas stations throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern states. A 2007 survey of Philadelphia Pike in Brandywine Hundred that was prepared by the Center for Historic Architectural Design (CHAD) at the University of Delaware (UDel) and a pictorial history of Claymont by Scheick and Hester states that the Gulf Oil Company has indicated the service station at 3207 Philadelphia Pike is the longest continuously operating Gulf station in America³. The Overlook Service Station was constructed as an independent service station, and therefore did not utilize the standardized, streamlined design seen in some Gulf Oil stations. Rather, it embodies the form of the Foursquare, a

¹ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Property record, 19226. Downloaded from <http://www.ncc-deeds.com>. Accessed 4 March 2010.

² Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1995: 95-107.
Elizabeth Rossin and Martha H. Bowers, *Historic Context for the Evaluation of Commercial Roadside Architecture*. Prepared by Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. Originally published in Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeology Series No. 99, Cultural Resource Survey of U.S. Route 113, Milford-Georgetown, Sussex County, Delaware, 1992.

³ Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware (UDel), "Historic Properties of Claymont, DE." *Scenic and Historic Highway Application for Philadelphia Pike, Brandywine Hundred*, CHAD UDel, Newark, Delaware, 2007.
Martha Scheick and Ray Hester, *Claymont*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2000: 93.

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contemporary residential architecture form. However, the orange disc signage was installed near the entrance and branded gas tanks were installed on the island near the road. The stucco walls were also painted at some point, likely in the orange and white colors of Gulf Oil, although they are now shades of blue with orange signage.

Gulf Oil Company formally purchased the property in 1932 through a sheriff's sale for the debts of James McNulty. Gulf Oil maintained ownership until 1949, at which time the company sold the station to brothers Joseph and Anthony Vassalotti. The Vassalottis formed a partnership called Joe & Tony's Service in 1957. Ten years later, the Vassalottis sold the service station property to Michael DeCostanza⁴. Michael DeCostanza and his brother, John DeCostanza, continue to operate the service station today under the name Joe and Tony's Service Station. The 1982 garage addition was constructed under the ownership of the DeCostanza brothers, and the current canopy and gas pumps were installed. While the original orange disc signage and branded gas pumps are no longer extant, the modern Gulf label and colors are still used on the *circa*-1980 canopy and gas pumps, which are located in the same place as the original island. No other significant changes have been made to the property. In 2000, the DeCostanzas received the New Castle County Historic Review Board's "Preservation Award"⁵.

Statement of Significance

The property at 3207 Philadelphia Pike was evaluated as an auto support facility. The building is located along a commercial section of the Philadelphia Pike and is amidst service stations and retail shops constructed between 1925 and the twenty-first century. Overlook Service Station is significant under Criteria A and C; although modern alterations have been made to continue and update services, the property retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic and architectural significance. The property meets the registration requirements developed for the Claymont Improvement Project, as it retains its original roadside location, the form and layout of the office separate from the repair facilities, its original fenestration and wall cladding, and its original use as a service station. While the signage and pumps have been replaced, these alterations were made in a manner that does not detract from the integrity of the commercial property.

Under Criterion A, the station is an example of a 1920s service station and auto showroom associated with the development of a secondary commercial district along a state highway. Local histories indicate this is the longest continuously operating Gulf station in the nation. Although the original Gulf signage and gas pumps were replaced, the modern pumps and canopy are in the same location as the original, and updated signage continues to convey the association of the station with the Gulf Oil Company. The replacement of the pumps and the construction of additional service bays in the 1982 addition detract from integrity of design but are seen as necessary for the continuation of use of the service station. The original layout of the property remains intact, with the gas pumps in the same location. The service station also continues in operation under the Gulf name; therefore, the service station continues to convey its significance under Criterion A.

⁴ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1932, 1949, and 1957.

⁵ Scheick and Hester 2000:93.

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Based on the background research conducted for this project, the property does not appear to be associated with an individual of historic importance; therefore, the property is not eligible under Criterion B.

The property is also significant under Criterion C as an early traditional design for service stations and auto showrooms; the building emulated contemporary residential architecture, which was common for early auto support facilities. While the original pumps and signage have been lost, the service station building remains intact and the modern pumps and side addition do not detract significantly from the residential design of the building. The Overlook Service Station retains integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, and association adequate to convey its appearance during the period of historic operations and its significance as an early service station.

The property does not appear to possess the potential to yield information on building practices or methods of construction; therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible for listing under Criterion D.

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References

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