

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy, Inc.

AND/OR COMMON

Mount de Chantal

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Wheeling

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

West Virginia

CODE

54

COUNTY

Ohio

CODE

069

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

X EDUCATIONAL

X PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

X RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

X YES RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Sisters of the Visitation

STREET & NUMBER

Mount de Chantal, Washington Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Wheeling

VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Ohio County Courthouse, County Clerk's Office, Deed Book #47,  
pages 140-141

STREET & NUMBER

1500 Chapline Street

CITY, TOWN

Wheeling

STATE

West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- PERI
- PREH
- 1400-
- 1500-
- 1600
- 1700-
- X 1800-
- 1900
- SPEC
- STAT

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy is a building of fascinating architectural styles, details and contradictions located on a beautiful thirty-acre site. The use of the building clearly dictated the exterior ornamentations which appear to have been selected from architectural pattern books available during the 1860's. In one word, the building is a good example of eclecticism. The resulting truly American structure is distinctive and pleasing in a ppearance.

The original structure is composed of three major parts connected by two recessed wings. Each major component has strong vertical lines which are lightened by the graceful curvilinear parapets. All foundations are native sandstone with five course common bond brick bearing walls with wood joists. The bricks were made on the site. Heavy timber trusses support the slate gable roof. All eaves are boxed and bracketed. Pilasters are prominent features on the major components which originally had chimneys.

The center section visually dominates the total structure. This area serves as the main entrance with parlors and the chapel on the first story. A two-storied c. 1910 brick porch extends the entire width. The first story of the porch is open while the second story is enclosed with casement windows and center French doors opening onto a small balcony. The entrance door, transom and side lights are beveled, leaded glass. The door is flanked by large six over six sash windows with flat surrounds. The windows above the porch have flat surrounds with six over six lights. A nine over six sash semi-circular surround window is in the attic area and has smaller "wagon-wheel" windows on either side. The ornate parapet like its two counterparts, is Boroque in spirit. The resemblance to mission archicture of the southwest is striking. A major octagon shuttered cupola with a cross on top rests on a fifteen light base. These windows provide natural light to enter the non-visible dome below which is located in the chapel. The rear elevation has a wooden decorated porch which serves as a direct entrance to the chapel. Above the porch is a niche in the brick wall.

The two connecting wings are offset and simply treated. The first story windows have straight surrounds while those above are segmental. All lintels are wooden with incised designs which were added at a later date as were the roof dormers. The cupolas with crosses complement the main cupola of the center section.

The music hall section is clearly indicated by the three stained glass windows with semi-circular surrounds. The c. 1910 open two story brick porch completely wraps around the section. It is interesting to notice all the c. 1910 porches have roof outlines which copy the original building's parapets. Circular fire escapes are included in this porch. Only three sash windows are above the stained glass windows plus one "wagon wheel" window in the attic. The parapet is again curvilinear but differs from the center section parapet.

A large cross is centered on the front elevation of the simply treated parapet of the south unit. Obviously, this entire area is for the use of the Sisters. Again fenestration is different with five windows across, while the center section

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has six and the music hall three. An 1870's wooden decorated porch remains from a time when the Sisters were strictly cloistered and required complete privacy.

The 1906 Fine Arts addition is connected by a long enclosed corridor with a passage wide enough for trucks to drive through at ground level. The lower windows in the brick building have stone keystones with radiating brick arches in the surrounds while the upper windows are a variation of elliptical style. In this area the brick bond is diagonal Flemish with darker colored bricks forming the "X" pattern. The gable roof contains skylights.

The 1908 "laundry building" is a neatly planned structure with patterned brick and brackets at the roof line. It is connected to the main structure at ground level and the third story level. The final addition was completed in 1972. It serves as the living quarters for the Sisters. Fortunately, this two-story structure is not very noticeable as little attention was given to the design to make it either sympathetic or complementary to the main building.

The interior of "The Mount" retains most of its original characteristics. Few alterations have been made to room and corridor arrangements. The windows contain wooden louvered shutters, original woodwork survives, and the general atmosphere is of the nineteenth century. Of particular interest are the Wheeling made Hobbs Brockunier gasoliers in one parlor and the music hall. Many pieces of period furniture are still in use. The chapel, which seats two hundred people, is most appealing. It has an old world charm because of the hand carved altars, large stained glass windows on three walls, paintings, statues, balconies, architectural painted wall decorations, simple pews, electrified gas lights, and marquetry flooring. The entire ceiling, which also includes a stained glass dome, is completely supported from the floor above it.

The thirty acres of land set off and complement the building of Mount de Chantal. The main entrance is marked by brick columns with a paved drive to the top of the hill. A circular drive is on front of the main structure while additional roads lead to other areas. There are several utilitarian outbuildings. There is also a substantial c. 1910 stucco dwelling which has a Spanish flavor design. The grounds are well cared for and flowers, trees, shrubs, and extensive lawns abound. There is also a simple gazebo, plus statuary, grotto of natural stones, and tennis courts.

This description in Callins' 1877 Wheeling Directory is as true today as it was then: "The buildings, extending 250 feet front, are fine and spacious, and surrounded on every side by the loveliest natural scenery."

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS-GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1865

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles F. Barthberger, architect  
Bishop Vincent Whelan, builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The large and "commodius" building of Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy has graced a Wheeling hilltop for one hundred and thirteen years. Within these walls the Sisters of the Visitation have provided quality education for young women of all denominations. The school began in 1848 in a downtown Wheeling building and has continued in the present building which was completed in 1865. "The Mount" has always been regarded with nostalgic pride, and now is also recognized as an important architectural landmark. The style does not fit a specific category or mode; it is, however, eclectic, Victorian, and very American. The uses of the building dictated the ornament of the exterior. The main facade is divided into three major components with different fenestrations defining the original uses within; academy, main entrance with parlors and chapel, and monastery. The entire complex is in a park-like setting of thirty acres.

A small band of eight Visitation Sisters arrived in Wheeling, Virginia to establish a school at the invitation of the Most. Rev. Vincent P. Whelan, Bishop of Richmond. They opened their school in downtown Wheeling on Monday, April 10, 1848. Wheeling was a bustling community of eighteen thousand people, thriving as the western terminus of the National Road and as a U.S. Port of Entry on the Ohio River.

As the school prospered and grew, so did Wheeling. The first bridge across the Ohio River was erected and Wheeling became the Western terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Shortly thereafter, the Civil War began with the citizens of Wheeling divided in loyalty for or against the Union. The school students were primarily from the South, but there were those who supported the Union cause. Therefore, Sisters and students alike were forbidden to discuss the political issues. By 1863, there was a demand for expanding the school plus the difficulties of operating a school in a city teeming with soldiers. This resulted in the purchase of a one hundred acre farm located immediately east of the city in the country. Mr. Charles F. Barthberger, an architect from Pittsburgh, drew up the plans. The supervision of building activities was the responsibility of Bishop Whelan. In July 1865, the Sisters moved into their new building, reportedly using converted Civil War ambulance wagons for their transportation. The school appeared to be typical of early victorian boarding-finishing schools, both in curriculum and facilities. Students were given the advantages of classical courses, mathematics and the fine arts. Strong emphasis was placed on music, which is still true today. The grounds were equipped for outdoor activities which included a riding course. Basic foods were supplied by the gardens, orchards and dairy, all of which were located on the grounds.

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Few changes were made to the building until the twentieth century. A fine arts wing was added in 1906 which in itself is architecturally interesting. A large utility building was added at the rear in 1908. It is a plain but nice building. It was during this era also that college preparatory courses were emphasized to meet the trend of the times. During the depression, student enrollment dramatically dropped and financial difficulties were experienced as they were following the Civil War.

In the early 1950's sixty acres of farmland were sold to the Bishop of the Diocese for the site of Wheeling College. Additional land was sold to the West Virginia State Highway Commission for a major east-west Interstate, I-70. Fortunately, the school structure is still surrounded on all sides by its own holdings.

The School enjoyed an upward enrollment during the 1960's, but at the same time the condition of the Sisters' living quarters continued to deteriorate. The decision was made to build a new wing. This last major addition was completed in 1972; it is practical but does not add to the architectural qualities of the main structure.

Today, Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy continues to receive the accolades of the community. Students still enjoy quality education. The resident and day students use the same chapel, entertain in the same parlors, enjoy programs in the same music hall and participate in the traditions of their predecessors of over a century ago. "The Mount" is monumental building in a beautiful setting. It is costly to maintain, but beautiful to behold.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Unpublished documents from the Archives and Mount de Chantal Academy and Convent.  
 Newton, J. H., C. C. Nicholds, and A. C. Sprankle, History of the Panhandle, Ohio, Brooks, Hancock and Marshall Wheeling, West Virginia: J. A. Caldwell, 1879, pages 218 and 219 1877 Illustrated Atlas of the Upper Ohio River and Valley  
The Wheeling Daily Register, April 21, 1865; June 1865; Saturday Morning

# GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8

QUADRANGLE NAME Wheeling, W. Va., Ohio

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 5261010 44353010

B         

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property is bound by Wheeling College on the northeast, by Interstate 70 on the southwest, by Wheeling Creek on the north and northwest, and by Washington Avenue on the east and southeast

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Sister Mary Helen O'Brien  
Mrs. Robert Miller

ORGANIZATION

DATE

March 27, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

304/233-3771

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

WV 26003

Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy

Wheeling

# STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Clarence Moran*

TITLE West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 16, 1978

NPS USE ONLY

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

TEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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August 19, 1865; Wednesday Morning, August 23, 1865  
Callin's Wheeling Directory, 1877, page 233 The Daily Intelligencer, 8/2/1864; 8/22/1864

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The nominated boundaries of Mt. de Chantal Academy consist of landscaped grounds immediately surrounding the building, specifically the land fronting upon the building at its southeast elevation containing the oval driveway/approach, and parkland adjacent to the building on the northwest, northeast, and southwest elevations at a radial distance of approximately 250 feet. In a general context, Mt. de Chantal is situated at approximately mid-point between Wheeling College on the northeast and Interstate 70 on the southwest, and between Wheeling Creek on the north and northwest, and Washington Avenue on the southeast.





