

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Poth and Schmidt Development Houses

JUL 12 1982

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 3306-3316 Arch Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia

vicinity of congressional district

state Pennsylvania

code 42

county Philadelphia

code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See attached list

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Housing

street & number Broad and Market Sts.

city, town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation

city, town Harrisburg

state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u> N/A </u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Poth-Schmidt doubles present a continuing Victorian Queen Anne Streetscape along the South side of the 3300 block of Arch Street. Though they were allowed to fall into disrepair, and were ultimately acquired by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, their essential integrity remained largely intact. When the group was first erected, it was set off at each end by larger single mansions at the corners, which were separately built for specific clients while these, like much of Powelton, were speculative houses with no particular client in mind, and were in fact leased for the better part of half a century.

The houses, while essentially identical from the rear show the customary Victorian variety on the front. The pairs at 3306-08 and 3310-12 are basically the same with minor deviations on the front porches, but share the overall compositional theme of projecting three-story bays, capped by wall gables, on either side of a central recessed section. Such a scheme has the merit of expressing the internal use of space by denoting the central circulation space, while showing that the perimeter is occupied by the living spaces of the house, with front parlor, middle drawing room and rear dining room, above a basement kitchen. The double home at 3314-3316, on the other hand, pushes the front gables to the center, with corner bay towers above angled corner bays.

In each of the houses, handsome wood porches with knee braces above turned posts screen the lower facades. Small and large turnings, and narrow grooved panels create a rich texture in the entrance zone. The original paired double varnished doors, with segmented transom light above survive and the segmented opening is repeated on the three-light second floor bay window, and the three double-hung windows of the third floor. The main facade is a hard, Philadelphia pressed brick decoration accents the wall, while a corbel table, suggesting a lattice sets off the major gables of 3306-08, and 3310-12 Arch Street. Brownstone sills project below windows on all levels.

The upper level of each house is treated as a double-angled mansarded roof, with the more vertical surface covered in hung, fish scaled, red terra cotta shingles. Shingles surfaces cover the next level of the roof, while the top is a flat, felt roof.

The sides are treated with great simplicity, accented only by a three-story bay, surmounted by a wall gable, like the front. Here, instead of one large three-light window, pairs of segmented headed windows light the middle drawing room. The rears of the houses are marked by immense stick style bays, with strongly marked vertical timbers overlaying horizontal clapboards. The net effect is a cubic mass of brick, with projecting bays at front, side, and rear, breaking up the box and anticipating, as many Victorian buildings do, the early-20th century designs of Bruce Price and Frank Lloyd Wright.

The interior, as befitted speculative houses, were of great simplicity, with most of the detail concentrated near the entrance. Brightly colored, patterned tiles form the vestibule entrance, while cornices, with deep grooves crown the plaster wall surfaces. In the main corridor, is a handsome walnut stair with turned wood balustrades terminated by a rectangular newel. The newel, like the remainder of the house trim, is accented by narrow grooves, and capped by sunburst patterns. The principal rooms were simply furnished with most of the decoration concentrated in the bay. Chamfered corners, and small paired brackets supporting the principal beam frame the wood detailed bay. There, and in other windows small panes frame a larger central pane in the upper, while the lower sash are single panes.

8. Significant

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1890 **Builder/Architect** A.W. Dilks

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Poth-Schmidt development houses are an important group of large double houses by A.W. Dilks, that describe the lifestyle, and the architectural possibilities of post-Centennial Philadelphia. These are of added interest because the financiers were developers of much of Powelton, as well as important Philadelphia industrialists. They brought the new, flamboyant taste of the nouveau riche to their speculative venture, and found in Dilks the appropriate architect for highly styled buildings that stand out in the Quaker City. The breaking up of the great Powel family estate, Powelton, in the 1880s, resulted in a sudden efflorescence of building activity, that culminated with the development of the region east of 34th Street, below Powelton Avenue. Three distinct development types appeared: prosperous and large three and four story brick rows, along Powelton Avenue, neat doubles just to the south, while the largest single and double houses were built along Arch Street and north along 32nd Street. It was these large houses that formed the places of residence of the industrial, railroad and energy elite of the city, appropriately near the railyard that formed the basis of this economic power. The architect for these houses was A.W. Dilks (active 1887-1917). He was a veteran of the office of Theophilus Parsons Chandler, where he served as chief draftsman for many of the residential projects, probably including the home of the railroad engine manufacturer George Burnham, at 34th and Powelton of 1886, which served to introduce Dilks to the region. In the next generation, Dilks would do another dozen projects in the neighborhood, ranging from, additions and alterations to new houses. Dilks' work tended towards an elaborate, multitextured, and spatially expressive Victorian, loosely based on the English Queen Anne, but mixed with a personal potpourri of American bracketed detail. In this particular group, that style is fully developed, and creates a notable street front of great richness, that recalls the lifestyle of Powelton as a fashionable neighborhood.

The houses have additional architectural interest, both as representatives of contemporary architecture theory, and also as examples of the work of an important regional designer, for two of the principal developers, Frederick Poth and Edward Schmidt (of Schmidt's brewery). Poth himself was an American Horatio Alger, a German immigrant, whose brewery, near his first home in the German section of Philadelphia, became the source of his fortune. Income from the brewery was used for real estate development most notably in the Powelton neighborhood. In 1887, he hired A.W. Dilks to design his own house, a project that established Dilks in the neighborhood. There, in honor of Poth's German origins, Dilks built a houses in the manner of the late German Gothic, as revived in the 19th century Poth was the developer for the houses on the 3300 block of Powelton (on the National Register) and it was Poth who rescued the failed Willis Hale project at 35th and Powelton (also on the Register) and turned it into successful apartments. Schmidt, Poth's son-in-law, was another brewmaster- whose brewery Christian Schmidt and Son, ultimately absorbed the Poth brewery.

The Dilks career is straightforward, and marks the transition from high Victorian individualism, through Queen Anne, toward the eclectic revivals of the end of the century. As with so many of his contemporaries, the anglicizing Queen Anne provides the vehicle for that transition, by providing the avenue, early on, for expressions of personality, while

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Building Guide, vol 5:22, 4 June 1890

Philadelphia Deed Books, Register number 55N19

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .41 acres

Quadrangle name Philadelphia Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	3	7	2	0	4	4	2	2	8	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

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Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

"Beginning at a point situated on the south side of Arch Street at a distance of 181'10" west of 33rd Street; containing in front of breadth on Arch Street 169', and in depth southward a right angles with Arch Street on the east line 133'4 1/2" and on the west line 88'7-5/8" to the north side of Guthbert Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas

organization Clio Group, Inc.

date May 13, 1982

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue

telephone 215-386-6276

city or town Philadelphia

state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Poth and Schmidt Development

Continuation sheet Houses, Philadelphia, PA

Item number

8

Page 2

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later offering the historical sources in English half-timbered gothic, for an accurate historicizing design. The style further offered the opportunity to utilize Ruskinian theory as developed in The Seven Lamps of Architecture, which called for the logical expression of the materials used, as well as expressions of function. Those values are the transformed by Dilks into an important American commercial value system, by loading most detail on the front facades and entrances to make the buildings a readily saleable commodity.

As a consequence of Dilks' training, and his understanding of contemporary taste, the buildings that he designed for Arch Street are among Philadelphia's most important examples of the Queen Anne style, showing all of its essential features. Those include the Japanese influenced porch details, which alternate with the Mediaevalizing knee braces of other porch details; the empathetic use of brick detail to describe architectural weight; and the multiple textures from painted wood to smooth brick, to shadow catching hung tile. The buildings were further enlivened by formal variation within the group that adds to the richness of the ensemble. There are few equals to the Dilks achievement in the generally plain Quaker City. The exterior richness continued in the interior finishes, with most of the detail confined to the public rooms of the front. Noteworthy too are the large window groups that light the interiors, and mark the transition toward the modern house.

Within Dilks' career, these are first-rate examples of his early work which culminates in his Powelton Village projects. Dilks' work after leaving Chandler's employ was of considerable interest for it showed a Victorian designer who made the transition from the freely interpreted Victorian gothic, toward the more historically accurate revivals common at the end of the century. His most notable early house (1887) for brewer Frederick Poth, at 33rd and Powelton, shows an awareness of contemporary German Victorian design in its massive corner tower, and brownstone detailed brick walls. By 1893, his office building at 1031-33 Chestnut Street showed deep Chicago brackets, supporting the second floor bay, and suggesting an awareness of Sullivan's work which he probably saw from a visit to the Chicago Fair. By 1900, his Provident Bank on State Street in Media was an elegant variation on a French Mediaeval castle, with round towers breaking through a hipped roofline. In those same years, the Dilks residential design changed toward the greystone, country gothic that would typify the Philadelphia suburban mansion at the end of the century. Like most Victorian designers who made the transition, these early houses clearly were of greater interest than the later works.

One final note about the condition of the houses is in order. Through quirks of chance, the houses have been acquired by owners interested in historic preservation, and significant features have been carefully restored. Indeed, in the instance of 3312, new handmade terra cotta hanging tiles were made to duplicate the damaged originals. In most instances, historic paint colors (an olive with black trim) have been found and matched, creating a handsome Victorian streetscape.

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Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration