

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Delaware	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Nitre Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Karakung Drive

CITY OR TOWN:
Haverford

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Delaware CODE: 045

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Haverford Township and Haverford Township Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Haverford STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Delaware County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Media STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: Harrisburg STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Nitre Hall mansion open to public on Sundays,
to be hdqtrs. of Haverford Township
Historical Society.

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

[Faint, illegible text describing physical appearance]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Nitre Hall gunpowder mill complex was built on Cobb's Creek, Haverford Township, shortly after 1800. The plant included a refinery, a willow house for producing charcoal, a stamping mill, a dry house, a press house, cylinder mill, a barrel mill, a testing house and a powder magazine. The powder master's house, Nitre Hall, and the tenements for workers were all, in spite of obvious danger, located nearby.

All that remains of the Nitre Hall complex is the mansion house, Nitre Hall, and parts of the exterior walls of the stone powder magazine—the only remaining mill building of the Nitre Hall Mills. The powder magazine should be saved. (Nitre Hall is virtually unchanged on the interior. The exterior of this four storey mansion was restored in 1861 by the township. Steps, and probably a porch, to the main entrance on the second storey have disappeared. An end door (now covered) probably led to a side porch. Recent restoration includes a new roof in 1959, replacement of the window on fourth floor of the north wall, exterior painted in 1960 and plastered in 1961.)

The Nitre Hall gunpowder complex was built shortly after 1800 by Israel Whelen. A few years later he formed a partnership with William Rogers, Jr. and they conducted the business jointly until Whelen's death around 1825. Rogers operated the mills until his death in 1839 or 1840 when the property was sold to Dennis Kelly, a successful manufacturer of cloth.

The Nitre Hall Mills provided gunpowder for military, hunting, mining, and engineering uses and was an important contribution to the opening of the West. The quality and reputation of Nitre Hall gunpowder fluctuated considerably. Up to the time of the War of 1812 the company sold all the powder it could possibly make; after the war the Nitre Hall Gunpowder Mills were in a favorable condition to compete successfully in an expanding national market.

Nitre Hall was second only to Eleuthere Irenee DuPont's gunpowder manufacturing company near Wilmington, Delaware and there was strong competition between the two companies. In 1821 E. I. DuPont acknowledged that, "the Nitre Hall mills are the largest after ours." In a letter to the Secretary of War, James Monroe, on October 14, 1814, Israel Whelen and William Rogers wrote, "Presuming from the recent advices from Europe that the Government may want an additional supply of Gun Powder, we beg leave respectfully to offer to manufacture for the United States any quantity of that article that the Government may want and our establishment the Nitre Hall Mills being the largest in the United States be capable of manufacturing."

On New Year's Day 1825, the Barrell Mill exploded with no loss of life but considerable damage to property. On November 9, 1825, a large explosion wrecked the Barrell Mill again and destroyed 2,500 pounds of powder. Also in 1825 Israel Whelen died. Because of the large financial losses

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance:

and the loss of leadership, the year 1825 marked the beginning of a downward trend for the Nitre Hall Company.

By 1830 E. I. DuPont wrote to a New York agent about his former chief competitor, "as to the Nitre Hall powder we have nothing to apprehend from that quarter, this powder is so inferior to ours that their sales are almost altogether for exportation and at a low price." The next year an explosion destroyed the Stamping Mill and took four lives.

For the next ten years the business declined, due primarily to a lack of technological improvement. With the death of its owner in 1839 or 1840, the Nitre Hall Gunpowder Mills closed.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashmead, Henry G. History of Delaware County. Philadelphia, 1889.
 Eckfeldt, Dr. John W. Cobb's Creek in the Days of the Old Powder Mill.
 N. P., 1917.
 Gibson, George H. "Nitre Hall Gunpowder Mills." 1963.
 National Archives of the United States, Record Group 92-Powder.
 Smith, George. History of Delaware County. Philadelphia, 1862.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39°	58'	59"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		75°	17'	07"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

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

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Elisabeth Donaghy

ORGANIZATION: Historic Delaware County, Inc. DATE: 8/12/70

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Box 267

CITY OR TOWN: Swarthmore STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name: S. K. Stebbins

Title: Executive Director

Date: September 8, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NITRE HALL circa 1810

Inspection of stone and stucco building - located on Karakung Drive in Powder Mill Park, Haverford Township, Pennsylvania, 23 January, 1966 by Lee Nelson, architect, and Mrs. Robert H. Johnston.

This building was the residence of the Powder Master of Nitre Hall Powder Mills, and has been called Nitre Hall for some years.

Ground Level - Center Hall with brick paving runs through building east to west with outside door in each wall. Kitchen
South Side - Original base boards, 2 windows in east wall, 1 in west - trim, stool and apron original, sash new. Fireplace (sealed off) has lost lintel - remnants of inside bake oven. Old cupboards - mortise and tenon construction - hand planed cupboard doors, cornice over cupboard old - probably before 1840. Partition - east end to left of door as you enter kitchen - replaced. Half of flooring mid-nineteenth century, half new. Original brick floor under wood, according to carstager.
Storage Room - north side. Brick paving. Pintle for strap hinges on frame - door opened in. Door trim original, door new. One window in east wall - trim original, sash new. Storage room little changed. Traces of wall shelving.
Hall Way - Outside door on east wall new. Some of trim on door in west wall original. Frame old. Closet door under stairway original. Panelling, beaded sheathing below stair original. Rail and spindles not old. Treads on stairway replaced.

Main Floor - Center Hall - Front Door on east wall - carpet hinge or skew hinge. Hardware, door, transom and inside trim original. Stone sill at this door unusual since entrance is not on grade. All doors leading off hall original. Base boards, plaster, coat rack original. Back door on west wall, trim and hardware original. Stair panelling, hand rail, dove tailed spindles original - some spindles missing. Treads, risers, skirt original. Reeded pilaster. Paint never removed. Reeded pilaster door frames, reeded architraves, all original.

23 January 1966

Continued - Nitre Hall- circa 1810- Powder Mill Park, Haverford Top.

Main Floor - Parlor - south side. Original yellow pine flooring through out all of house except ground floor. Original hearth with trimmer board; mantle with reeded trim. Base boards original. All window trim- stools, apron, original-some of sash. Plaster original- breast cupboards original and typical of the period. Door opening to porch sealed off- original trim.

Smaller room - north side-Door, trim, baseboards and flooring original. One window on east wall- one on west. Trim, stools, apron and sash original. Small beaded projection six to eight inches deep on north wall is a flue for a stove. No fireplace.

Window on stair landing- trim original- sash new.
Stairway all original.

Third Level- Ceilings a little lower. Hall originally went from front to back, section in front partitioned off for closet probably before 1840. Window and trim in closet original. Closet door salvaged from elsewhere, has strip added to make it fit opening.

Bedroom over main parlor - south side- Closet with original clothes pegs next to fireplace. Fireplace, hearth, mantel original. Flooring, baseboards, door and frame original. Four windows- two on east, two on west wall- window sash, most of trim original.

Door from hall to side hall original- baseboards etc. in side hall original.

Small room in front or east side - Original window frame- door missing- may be door to closet in hall.

Back room- west - Closet with interesting shelves-on two sides- top shelf has clothes pegs on two sides, clothes pegs on third wall. Closet door missing- keeper there for thumb latch. Stove stood in closet corner. Floor sagging in this room. One window- trim and sash original -badly burnt at one time. Baseboards, flooring, door and hardware original.

Stairway continues to be original to fourth level.

Garret - All original with baseboards in all rooms. Cast and wrought iron thumb latches- everything here. Roof structure- original access or hatchway- Roman numerals on rafters for keying them together. Cut nails- hand made heads. Plaster and flooring original in garret.

Hardware throughout house right for the period.

Generally electricity through house.

No central heat. No plumbing.