

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON:
Birmingham Friends Meetinghouse & School

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
1245 Birmingham Road

CITY OR TOWN:
West Chester

STATE Pennsylvania	CODE 42	COUNTY: Chester	CODE 029
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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"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Birmingham Friends Meeting

STREET AND NUMBER:
1245 Birmingham Road

CITY OR TOWN: West Chester	STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Chester County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Market and High Streets

CITY OR TOWN: West Chester	STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Building Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1763**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" 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 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The national significance of the Birmingham Meetinghouse lies in its strategic location during the Battle of the Brandywine, and its use during and after the Battle as a field hospital. Townsend, and eyewitness to the Battle, wrote that the American Army took possession of the building in order to use it as a field hospital after the rapid march north from the Chesapeake. (Townsend, p. 20.) After the Americans' defeat, the British housed wounded officers there. A common grave in the cemetery contains the bodies of a number of British soldiers who fell during the Battle. After the Battle, "considerable repairs were necessary afterwards, to place it (the Meetinghouse) in the condition it was in previous to our being deprived of it." (Ibid., p. 29). George Smith reiterated Townsend's recollections in his History of Delaware County. (George Smith, p. 312)

Like other Meetinghouses in the southeastern part of the Commonwealth, Birmingham provided a focal point for community activities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nor least among its members' concerns in the eighteenth century was a desire "to extend religious care to the black People" and include them in the Meeting. (Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Quakerism at Birmingham, pp. 22-25.)

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Meeting was instrumental in founding and operating a library (1795-1884) in southern Chester County at a time when books were difficult to obtain. It was one of the earliest, if not the first library in the County.

The schoolhouse is an example of the Friends' interest in learning. In May, 1819 the subscribers to the school voted to build an octagonal school on the site of the existing building. The building, constructed at a cost of \$712.57, was completed by that August. Benjamin Sharples, Ennion Cook, and Isaac Sharples were appointed to superintend the building, but the records do not indicate who designed it or who did the actual work. (Birmingham Township Manuscript Collections, Chester County Historical Society.)

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input 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

The first Friends Meetinghouse at Birmingham was built of red cedar around 1718. (J H. Brinton, Diary, I,20.) There is no indication of where it was located.

In 1763 the Meeting erected a structure made from native stone. It was a simple rectangular structure facing south. There was a double door on the south, a smaller double door on the west, and a door leading into the graveyard on the north. There were pent roofed hoods over the doors. There were paneled shutters and a shingle roof. The northern doorway was closed at a later date. The building was 38 x 41 feet. There does not appear to have been a chimney in the original building. (Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Quakerism at Birmingham, p. 63).

The integrity of the 1763 structure was altered by the enlargement made in 1818, but the changes were in keeping with the character of the original structure. The east wall was torn out and 17½ feet added to the earlier structure. The new addition included a door and window to the south; a window in the northern facade, and a door on the east. In the interior the partition which separated the men and women's meeting was removed in the earlier building and placed in the middle of the enlarged building. At some point in the nineteenth century the stairway to the loft was removed.

In 1968 Mather Lippincott of Cope and Lippincott Architects, Philadelphia designed the First Day School which replaced the old horse sheds on the east.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Futhey, J. Smith and Cope, Gilbert. History of Chester County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Louis B. Everts, 188, p. 234.
 Lossing, Benson J. Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution. New York: Harper Brothers, 1852. Two Volumes. II, 169.
 MacElree, Wilmer W. Along the Western Brandywine. West Chester: F. S. Hickman, 2nd Edition, 1912, pp. 140-41.
 Smith, George E. History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania from the Discovery of the Territory Included Within Its Limits to the Present Time. Philadelphia: A. B. Ashmead, 1862, pp. 311-13.

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°	54'	20"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		75°	35'	42"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2.4 Acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

ORGANIZATION: **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission** DATE: **Dec, 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 1026

CITY OR TOWN: **Harrisburg** 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 _____
State Liaison Officer

Title _____
Executive Director
Pa. Historical and Museum Commission

Date _____

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 _____