

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

*NEW CENTURY
CLUSTERHOUSE*

75°37'30"

447000m.E

PA. TURNPIKE 6 MI.
EXTON 2 MI.

448,760

PHOENIXVILLE 10 MI.
2.4 MI. TO U.S. 30

35'

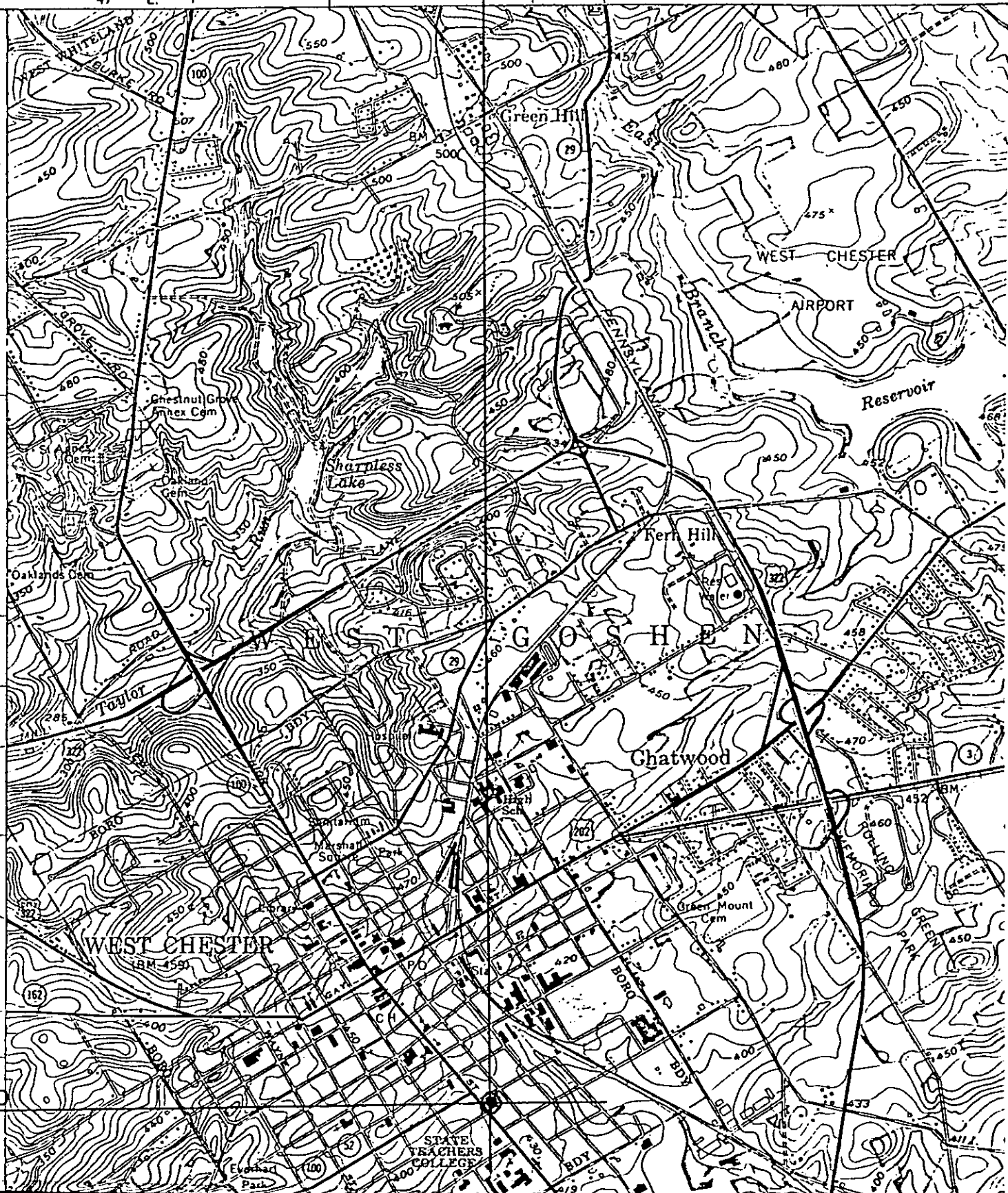
40°00'

4427000m.N

5.8 MI. TO U.S. 30
ALTON 2.5 MI.

MARSHALLTON 3 MI.
COPESVILLE 1.7 MI.

422,760



**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

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

1. Name

historic THE NEW CENTURY CLUBHOUSE

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number High and Lacey Streets N/A not for publication

city, town West Chester N/A vicinity of congressional district 5th

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Chester code 029

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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 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 The New Century Club

street & number High and Lacey Streets

city, town West Chester N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse

street & number High Street

city, town West Chester state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys NA

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

date 1980-82 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built in the Colonial Revival style, the New Century Clubhouse stands on the east side of High Street between the town center and the campus of West Chester State College. Planned as a T, with a rear ell providing ample auditorium space, 75'6"x 38'6", the clubhouse rather cleverly provides an otherwise residential neighborhood with a quasi-public building which accommodates the domestic scale of the already established streetscape.

Set back on a corner lot and facing west on the major north/south artery of the borough, the clubhouse is made distinctive by its formal presence among some of the more picturesque Queen Anne facades of the duplex housing which dominates the vicinity.

The front facade relates to a three-bay, two-story-above-basement, single-pile masonry block, flanked by one-story wings. The strength of its Colonial Revival style is emphasized by the scrupulous attention the architect has given to academic detail. The white-stuccoed high basement reads clearly as a podium. The gray-stuccoed walls of the upper two stories provide strong but unobtrusive background for the well-worked-out details of the windows, doorways, and cornice, all painted white. A hipped roof provides a continuous cornice line, a horizontal which is given artistic purpose by a Doric cornice, articulated with mutules. The axial entrance and the flanking wings provide a strong sense of symmetry. Almost as if deliberately to avoid a monotonous sense of the ideal, this symmetry is broken by the use of only one chimney stack; this rises on the north wall.

The central entrance features a pedimented Doric porch which is approached from a front terrace by a rise of seven brick steps; the porch floor is set at a level close to that of the watertable of the basement level. At the doorway, Doric pilasters flank a panel door; two wooden benches "fence" the edges of the porch, butting the two fluted Doric columns which provide the frontispiece entrance. These columns are surrounded by a complete entablature; the frieze band here serves as a sign board. Block letters identify "The New Century Club."

On each side of the porch are wide windows made up of eight-over-eight sash set in moulded frames and hung with paneled shutters. The three windows of the upper floor repeat these details, the white of the frame and muntins and the black of the shutters setting off the details sharply against the muted stucco walls. Although the wings are placed symmetrically, each serves a different function and provides a different visual weight. A ballustered side porch is incorporated in the north wing; an enclosed cloak room occupies the south wing. On the porch, built so that "young people could promenade or rest," square masonry uprights support the demi-hipped roof. Departing from the strong academic reference elsewhere, the porch details are defined rather freely; on each of the three porch sides a pair of columns is separated by a spindled ballustrade which literally limited the porch precincts to the clubhouse. The south wing is comparable in size and shape, but otherwise enclosed, the single window on each of the three sides comparing in detail to the five windows of the main block.

The rear wing, placed on center of the main block, is five bays deep, each bay set apart by stuccoed vertical piers. Long round-headed windows, set in the three forward bays, provide light to the structure's major public space. Double-leaf doors in the fourth bays, topped with fan lights set in line with the tops of the windows, provide necessary exit areas. A non-conforming eight-over-eight window is set high in the most easterly bay.

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The interior plan provides a successful treatment for the circulation of large groups of people. Whether for the lectures, antique shows, teas, concerts, dances, or theatricals, all of which have been a part of the club agenda. The plans allow for entrance into a main lobby of living room proportions. The north wall of the lobby houses a fireplace for colder weather; to the south there is access to a porch for the summertime; anterooms are on the second floor. Beyond is the auditorium, including also a stage and dressing room.

The high basement of the front block provides ample light for a sitting room with fireplace below the lobby space. (This was originally a room set apart as a men's lounge.) East of the sitting room is a dining room with kitchen attached. The second-floor was enlarged in 1923 when an addition, designed by William J. Corcoran, was built by Cloyd R. Baldwin. This 13ft. by 28ft. addition was built behind the stage and provided closets and storage area. The exterior walls were finished in gray stucco and on each side of the addition are wide windows made up of eight-over-eight sash set in moulded frames. The same Doric cornice was used as on the original areas of the building.

8. Significant

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 1914 **Builder/Architect** Joseph M. Burns/Ralph E. White

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The New Century Clubhouse was built in 1914 as a meeting place for the local women's club, which had been founded in 1894. Designed by architect Ralph E. White and built by local contractor, Joseph M. Burns, it is significant because it provides a well-executed example of the Colonial Revival style to the community. In addition, the subtly striking building is the home of an organization which has long championed women's rights and the role of women in politics and the arts.

The symbolic value of the architecture has even been inferred in the history of the New Century Club since its beginning. When the New Century Club of West Chester, Pennsylvania, was founded, it met first on North Church Street in T. Roney Williamson's new West Chester Library, and outstanding local example of the Romanesque Revival; when the club chose a design for its own headquarters, it selected an individualistic example of the Colonial Revival. Each place, the library and the clubhouse, provides a strong reference to the Arts and Crafts movement which was philosophically akin to the women's club movement.

The New Century Club, an outgrowth of a similar organization in Wilmington, Delaware, grew from forty to over one hundred members in a few years. Concentrating at first on self improvement and cultural awareness, the group always encouraged the arts, but began early to emphasize social concerns and political involvement. In 1897 the club proposed a Health Protective Association, supplementing the work of the Board of Health and Borough Council relative to clean streets. By 1899 the club was sponsoring a free kindergarten for West Chester; next, it organized a Girls' Club. The club not only invited nationally-known poets, artists, and musicians to speak or perform in West Chester; it encouraged families of the members to perform also. This included the young Samuel Barber, son of Mrs. S. L. Barber and now a renowned composer; also opera diva Louise Homer, sister of Mrs. Barber. There was also Ada Williamson, artist daughter of Mrs. T. Roney Williamson.

The New Century Club moved to its own headquarters just before World War I; it paid off its mortgage by 1920, and enlarged the building in 1923. In the more than fifty years since the organization has used this building, it has continued to foster art, literature, music, and the theater, and it has encouraged political involvement. Dedicated ladies from 1893-, motivated by the desire for self-improvement and cultural experience, studied and grew culturally. They became aware of ways in which they as a group could bring about improvements in their town by sending petitions to the legislature, advocating their ideas to supplement the work of the Board of Health and Borough Council. These ladies made their influence felt in the community. They built their clubhouse in 1914 and by hard work and dedication paid the mortgage in full on March 1, 1920. So their legacy to the women of the future was one of inspiration. The building itself represents the motivation of many ladies of the past and inspires those who are carrying the responsibilities in the present.

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First Current Event Class, 1894-1900.

Membership Book, New Century Club of West Chester, 1894-1902.

Minutes of the Corporation Board of the New Century of West Chester, 1913.

Minutes of the Corporation Board of the New Century of West Chester, No. 1
1913-1926.

Minutes of the Executive Board of the New Century Club of West Chester,
Book 1, March 10, 1894-May 13, 1902.

Minutes of the Executive Board of the New Century Club of West Chester,
Book 2, June 9, 1902-May 13, 1912.

Minutes of the Executive Board of the New Century Club of West Chester,
Book 3, June 10, 1912-March 12, 1923.

Minutes of the Stated Meetings of the New Century Club of West Chester,
Book 3, October 20, 1914-November 18, 1928.

Secondary Sources

Current Events Book, 1913-1929.

"T. Boney Williamson, Architect," pamphlet, Chester County Historical
Society, West Chester.

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

PRIMARY SOURCES

Chester County Historical Society Vertical Files, "New Century Club"
Daily Local News, 1894-1926.
West Chester Star, July 17, 1913.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .22 acre

Quadrangle name West Chester

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	4	48	7	6	0	4	4	2	2	7	6	0
Zone Easting				Northing									

B

Zone Easting				Northing									

C

Zone Easting				Northing									

D

Zone Easting				Northing									

E

Zone Easting				Northing									

F

Zone Easting				Northing									

G

Zone Easting				Northing									

H

Zone Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

85' front, 57' back, and 134' deep
west boundary is High Street
north boundary is Lacey Street

east boundary is Sharon Alley
south boundary is the Alfred Ralston property

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 Frances W. Ring and Katharine Stambolian with Alice Kent Schooler

organization The New Century Club

date August 6, 1982

street & number 501 South High Street

telephone 215-696-7532

city or town West Chester

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCRS 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