

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# 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 Nicholson House and Inn

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number 4838 West Ridge Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Erie

N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

code 042

county Erie

code 049

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input 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 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 Mr. & Mrs George E. Nicholson

street & number 4838 West Ridge Road

city, town Erie

\_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Pennsylvania

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Erie County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Erie

state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

# 7. Description

## Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

## Check one

unaltered  
 altered

## Check one

original site  
 moved

8/3

date

\_\_\_\_\_

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Nicholson House is a rare existing example of the early Pennsylvania Inn and Tavern and Stage Stop. The Federal architectural style of "four over four", and the simple yet elegant style of the rooms and the lovely open staircase are rare in Erie County. It is a fine example of the local craftsmen of the day.

The basic structure of the Nicholson House and Tavern consists of stone foundation walls topped with courses of brick on which the hewn log form beams rest. The logs are planed on top to provide a level base for the floor boards.

The walls of the house are of brick, having been made from clay found on the premises. The masonry is of Flemish bond and rises two floors with an attic extending the entire width of 52 feet. The interior wall surfaces are covered with plaster for partitioning walls. Framing members are approximately 3½" thick and varied in depth, generally set on 20" centers. The flooring, all original, consists of one layer of tongue and groove, hardwood boards 1" thick and of varied widths.

The cornice is of simple design. It is made up of a narrow face board running against the ends of the extended rafters and a wide return board under the overhang, which meets a frieze board of moderate width which drops over the brick. A matching cornice and frieze run up the rake of the roof on the west and east sides. The overhang is supported by decorative brackets mounted equidistantly against the frieze and return.

The roof has a slope of about 30 degrees. The original roof covering of wood shingles was replaced by galvanized tin shingles (date unknown) and later replaced by the present asphalt shingles.

In all except the Tavern Room, doors and window trim consist of fluted architrave and blocks with bullseye turnings at the top. The base-boards are nailed directly on the wood lath (or brick) and the walls plastered to the baseboard.

The present chair rail is to be replaced. The original style matched the contour of the window sill edge and stool. In the tavern rooms, the trim is of mixed styles--some similar to the main part of the house and the remainder being plain. The bar (restored) is of the design of the day. Its location was determined by mortise and tenon marks in the floor.

The house contains seven fireplaces, of which five are being used. Contemporary firebrick, flues and dampers have been installed for energy conservation and to satisfy local fire codes. The largest fireplace was used for cooking as well as heat. It contains the original crane, although shortened because of the addition of the firebrick lining.

The mantels are of simple Federal style with hand-gouged carvings made by John Pherrin--a local artisan of the time, and are in good condition. All of the mantels are of different design. The wall of the room containing the cooking fireplace has been paneled as is believed to have covered a portion of the fireplace, which contained a baking oven.

The interior wooden doors are original and are of the type with style and rails and raised panels--two small panels above four larger panels. The hardware is all face-latch with slide-lock type. False graining has been preserved on one door (they were all finished with false graining, but the date of application is unknown). There are three exterior doors of approximate design, although none is original.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Lathrop, Elise. Early American Inns and Taverns. (New York: Tudor Publishing Co.) 3rd. ed. 1937  
 John Nicholson Tavern Petition, 1824  
 Andrew Nicholson Tavern Petition, 1835

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2  
 Quadrangle name Swanville Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	5	6	7	4	4	0	4	6	5	7	7	0	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point in the north line of West Ridge Road (Rte. 20), said point being a distance of 230.95 feet from the intersection of the west

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

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Claridge, Executive Director  
 organization Erie County Historical Society date Amended 10/84  
 street & number 417 State Street telephone (814) 454-1813  
 city or town Erie 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 12/31/84

### For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Verbal Boundary Description

Continuation sheet and Justification

Item number 10

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line of Tract 313 with the north line of West Ridge Road; thence north 54° 52' east along the north line of West Ridge Road 130.95 feet to a point in the east line of the Nicholson Estate; thence north 24° 54' west along the east line of Nicholson Estate 225 feet to a point; thence south 54° 52' west by residue of Nicholson Estate 131.55 feet to a point; thence south 25° 4' east by residue of Nicholson Estate 225 feet to place of beginning.

