

# 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 WYCOMBE VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

and/or common N/A

## 2. Location

street & number Intersection of Township Line Road, Park Avenue, Cherry Lane,  
Washington Avenue, Mill Creek Rd., and Forest Grove Rd. — not for publication

city, town Buckingham & Wrightstown — vicinity of  
Townships

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Bucks code 017

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple - see Continuation Sheets No. 1 - 7 for list of current owners

street & number

city, town — vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bucks County Courthouse

street & number Main & Court Streets

city, town Doylestown state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 9/4/1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

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**

Wycombe is a predominantly late nineteenth/early twentieth century village which developed astride the Mill Creek on the boundary between Buckingham and Wrightstown Townships. While the village has some eighteenth and nineteenth century structures, as well as a small number of mid twentieth century buildings, the overall appearance of the village reflects its turn-of-the-century heritage. The main impetus for development was the opening of the Northeast Pennsylvania Railroad Station in 1891. This factor transformed a tiny mill-oriented hamlet into a busy service-oriented community in less than a quarter of a century. Despite the rapid suburbanization of central Bucks County within the past decades Wycombe virtually remains as an island of the late Victorian era protected and isolated by surrounding farmland.

The Mill Creek is the most important natural feature influencing the development of the site. In 1743 a grist mill was constructed on its banks. In 1891 the Northeast Pennsylvania Railroad, running a line from Ivyland to New Hope, paralleled the southeast side of the creek. Where the line crossed the road to the mill a railroad station was built. The site received a second major boost when the path of the Newtown to Doylestown Trolley line crossed the Mill Creek several hundred feet south of the railroad station. The combination of the presence of the mill and its long established road network, the railroad, and the trolley in the middle of a rich agricultural region made the site ripe for development.

The makeup of the village is defined by the Mill Creek and the railroad line which parallel each other and divide the district on a north/south axis. These two features serve to separate the village into two distinct regions. To the east of the rail line the village is a more unified assemblage of homes and buildings. With the exception of an early nineteenth century farmhouse on Township Line Road and six intrusions all the buildings date from 1891 to 1928.

To the west of the railroad, spanning both sides of the Mill Creek, the village has a different flavor. This portion is dominated by commercial structures which were part of the lumber and coal yard or are residences converted from shops and similar structures. It is also in this area that one finds a concentration of eighteenth and early nineteenth century structures including a grist mill (converted into a residence c.1927) and miller's house and two stone farmhouses.

The main approaches to the village form a "Y" shape interection with the railroad station acting as its focal point. Township Line Road approaches from the northeast and is known, appropriately enough as Main Street in the village. From the point where it intersects Cherry Lane to the railroad station it is delineated by large shade trees on both sides of the street. Twenty-nine of the village's sixty-two total buildings front on Township Line Road. Mill Creek Road follows the path of the railroad as it approaches the village from the south/southwest. With the old hotel, town hall, and numerous shops, Mill Creek Road (formerly called Railroad Avenue) presents a much more commercial appearance than the wooded, well spaced lots of the residential Township Line Road. Forest Grove Road approaches the village from the northwest. Just as it approaches the village it bends slightly to the north passing several homes on both sides of the road and winds around the protruding mill (which has its corner clipped to facilitate the sharp turn) and over the stone arch bridge into the main portion of the village.

Two other roads lead into the village striking the stem and one branch of the "Y".

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Both roads approach the village from the southeast on parallel paths. Several hundred feet from the center of the village Park Avenue bends to the north and strikes Township Line Road approximately four hundred feet northeast of the main intersection. Washington Avenue bends to the west and strikes Mill Creek Road less than six hundred feet from the main intersection. Approaching the village on Park Avenue one passes the Wycombe School House before entering the village proper. Once past the school the road becomes tree lined with residences on both sides of the road. There is an open lot on the east corner of the intersection of Park Avenue and Township Line Road which has served as almost a community park. Washington Avenue was originally known as Trolley Road since it paralleled the Newtown to Doylestown Trolley. Washington Avenue was opened in the first decade of the twentieth century. It was broken up into building lots within the next decade. Many of the building lots were promptly improved, and others remained open for many years. Consequently there is a less defined pattern of historic structures. Therefore the district boundary has been drawn just before the Cope Mansion near the intersection of Washington Avenue and Mill Creek Road.

The main period of significance for the village of Wycombe was between 1891 and 1915. It was during this period that the overwhelming majority of the development within the village took place. Of the district's fifty-nine major historic buildings and structures forty-six can be dated to this period. However one can not ignore the fact that there was earlier and later development in the village which must be considered significant. The period between 1920 and 1928 was also important in the development of the village as it now exists. It was during this period that five of the historic buildings within the district were erected. Most importantly was the expansion of the feed mill complex which dominates the center of the village. In 1927 a new feed mill, the largest building in the district, was erected. With the opening of this mill the eighteenth century grist mill which was the original impetus for the development of the site, became obsolete and was closed. The fact that there was a mill on the site as early as 1743 necessitates the recognition of an earlier period of significance. The period between 1743 and 1820 saw the mill, rear section of the miller's house, and two stone farm-houses along the Lingohocken, or Mill Creek. The presence of the mill and surrounding structures built by the owners of the mill occasioned the establishment of a road network leading to the mill. This established road network and the presence of the mill undoubtedly contributed to the decision of the railroad to establish a station on the site.

During Wycombe's significant period (1891-1915) the major type of building to be constructed were residences. These structures included large individual homes, double houses, combination shop/residences, and smaller bungalows or cottages. However a train station, hotel, church, school, town hall, and the coal and lumber yard were also constructed. The village grew into two separate directions: one public, and one private. The portion of town near the railroad, trolley, and grist mill became a more public, service area with shops, the hotel, town hall, coal and lumber yard located between the train and trolley stations. Township Line Road and Park Avenue became a predominantly residential area. In keeping with this residential aspect one finds the town's church and school in this section of the village.

The predominant architectural styles within the village are vernacular Queen Anne and Bungalow. The main exceptions to this pattern were several structures designed by Doylestown architect Oscar O. Martin. These buildings include the almost Richardson Romanesque Wycombe School House, the Colonial Revival Edward R. Kirk House, and the Albert S. Worthing House

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with its three Mediterranean-like curvilinear cross gables.

The overall integrity of the village is very high. While many of the structures have undergone changes since their original construction, such as the grist mill, it appears that many of the alterations were made during Wycombe's main period of significance and reflect the needs of the village at that time. In the case where structures, such as the school or the old Herald Office, have been converted into residences external modifications have been minimal. Even the intrusions generally fit into the scale of the district. All but one, the Lingohocken Fire House, are single family residences. Even the Lingohocken Fire Company is a historic part of the village having originally been housed in the brick store in 1913. The company takes its name from the original name of the Creek astride which Wycombe developed. Wycombe today has successfully retained the overall feeling of its main period of significance.

The village of Wycombe is comprised of sixty-two major buildings and three additional structures (a stone arch bridge, a railroad line, and piers for an elevated trolley line) situated on approximately sixty-three acres of land. The evaluative classification of the structures is as follows:

SIGNIFICANT: 13 buildings and 2 structures

CONTRIBUTING: 43 buildings and 1 structure

INTRUSION: 6 buildings.

Additionally all the ancilliary and major buildings within the proposed district have been identified as being more or less than fifty years old. Those over fifty years old are felt to be contributing to the district. The only exception to this classification of lesser buildings is the feed mill complex. In this instance the number and diversity of the buildings on the site warrants greater individual recognition. The district also includes two vacant lots, totalling less than two acres, and a small amount of frontages on four other parcels along Township Line Road. These latter parcels have been included within the proposed district due to the presence of large shade trees which were placed along Township Line Road as early as 1902. Today this double row of trees vividly marks the beginning of the village.

# 8. Significance

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

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The major significance of the village of Wycombe, and what makes it almost unique in Bucks County, is that it developed as a direct result of the modern transportation age boom that reached rural Bucks County at the end of the nineteenth century and that it has, with little intrusion, retained its sense of time and place. Despite the fact that there are a handful of eighteenth and early nineteenth century structures including an old grist mill within the boundaries of the proposed district; the overwhelming majority of the development in the village only began in the last decade of the nineteenth century after the opening of the New Hope-Ivyland Branch of the Northeast Pennsylvania Railroad and the first decade of the twentieth century after the opening of the Newtown-Doylestown trolley line. With the opening of these two transportation systems, and particularly the railroad, the Wycombe area was transformed from rural farmland dotted with old stone houses into an active service-oriented village. The impact of the railroad was noted in the May 6, 1893 edition of the New Hope News in which the editor writes, "Who says the Northeast extension hasn't boomed up and removed stagnation all along the line. Why we haven't had a new building in the recollection of the oldest resident until the railroad and now three new and handsome buildings have sprung up like mushrooms....the prospect of another soon". The village's first name of Walton Station reflects its origin.

Unlike the village of New Hope which was the Bucks County terminus of the rail line upon which Wycombe is located, the railroad did not run a line to Wycombe - Wycombe grew along the railroad. Therefore in attempting to compare Wycombe to other Bucks County railroad villages one must avoid villages and towns which were important centers before the coming of the railroad such as Doylestown, Quakertown, New Hope, or Bristol and concentrate on other "station villages" along the various Bucks County rail lines such as Warwick, Grenoble, Rushland, Buckingham Valley on the Northeast Pennsylvania Line; Trevoise, Neshaminy Falls, Langhorne Manor on the Bound Brook Line; Churchville on the Newtown Line; and Rockhill and Shelly on the North Pennsylvania Line.

In the context of these latter villages one can see the tremendous growth which transformed Walton Station into village of Wycombe. Over three quarters of the major buildings in the proposed historic district were built within twenty five years of the opening of the railroad. Additionally, most of the existing older buildings such as the mill, miller's house, Lacey house and Smith house were remodeled or adapted during the same period. It is this rapid growth in such a short period of time which makes Wycombe significant. This growth was directed by a small group of community-minded individuals. Three names stand out in the early development of the village: Walton, Cope and Thompson.

The most important developer of the village was John C. Walton, who with his brother Samuel Walton purchased three large tracts of land along the proposed railroad right-of-way. When the railroad line was opened in 1891 the Waltons made improvements around the station, built their own siding, and constructed stores and a lumber and coal yard adjoining the station. Walton also had a building erected which housed the Wycombe Herald and served as a public hall. It was the Waltons who sold property to the Copes and Thompsons. After purchasing

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his brother's interest in the Wycombe property John C. Walton began selling small individual building lots along Township Line Road and Park Avenue.

C. E. and Emma Cope, who operated hotels in Atlantic City and the Delaware Water Gap opened a hotel in Wycombe soon after the opening of the railroad. In addition to the hotel they built several houses, stores, shops, as well as a public hall and trolley station. Warner Thompson and his son Albert J. Thompson purchased the coal and lumber yard and store in 1895. They made improvements to the coal and lumber yard, building the large lumber mill which now dominates the core of the village (and superseded the milling operation of the eighteenth century mill which they purchased and converted into a dwelling) and constructed several large mansions, single and double residences.

It was due to the generosity of the Copes, Thompsons, and Waltons that Wycombe had a public hall, trolley waiting station, picnic grove, office for the first office of the Wycombe Herald Newspaper. The Copes, Thompsons, and Waltons did more than construct buildings. They made general improvements to the village such as laying of macadam walks, planting trees, constructing community water systems, and grading of roads. It is no coincidence that the rapid development of the village came to a close in 1916, the year John C. Walton died and Emma Cope's estate was settled. Despite continued small scale building around periphery of the village Wycombe remains an intact representation of a turn-of-the-century village.

Wycombe is a rural village with modest late Victorian homes, primarily two-and-one-half story of frame, set on spacious wooded lots or adjacent a planted allee of trees bordering the street. It is a village of transitional architecture, representing Queen Anne and Victorian Gothic styles tempered by the upcoming American Foursquare and Colonial Revival period. Many of the homes have the Victorian traits of asymmetrical facades and floorplans, patterned shingles and steep roofs, but in a number of cases, one or more of these traits are matched with squarish floorplans, hipped roofs with matching hipped dormers and porches, gambrel roofs, modified Palladian windows and double windows or porches with classic or Georgian motifs. The bungalow style is evident in buildings towards the fringes of the district, c.1920's. Novelty windows of diamond, round or tripartite shapes are often found in the gables. Victorian gingerbread is modest, if it is used at all.

The subtlety of Victorian elements in Wycombe's architecture is due primarily to the time of the arrival of the railroad- the town's impetus for growth. The majority of construction in the town took place after 1891 when the Victorian era was waning. Coupled with the fact that the buildings were located in a rather conservative, mostly Quaker, agricultural region, gingerbread decorations and fanciful plans were abandoned readily to the simplicity of the American Foursquare and traditionality of the Colonial Revival.

Wycombe is a village in contrast to the other villages, development patterns and general architectural norms of the central Bucks region. Rural villages in this area grew up after the Revolution, primarily between 1820 and 1850. In this latter time period, no buildings were built in Wycombe and from the mid-1780's to 1891 only three houses were constructed or added to: The Carver/Slack House (TM#6-23-17)-1790-1820, the Thomas Atkinson (TM#53-3-31) c.1815 and the Miller's House (TM#6-23-51) "1868" (possibly c.1743). The preferred building material of the region was fieldstone, and later quarried stone and brick;

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Wycombe's primary construction is of frame, even for significant or public buildings such as the church, the hotel, the train station, the feed mill, the post office and the town hall. With two exceptions, the Warner C. Thompson Mansion (TM#53-3-32) and the Nellie T. Cooper House (TM#53-3-50), the stone buildings either predate 1891 or were designed by Oscar Martin, early 20th century Doylestown architect.

Part of Wycombe's architectural significance is based on the above mentioned Oscar Martin. Martin, active from 1896 to 1942,<sup>1</sup> was a talented architect in the central Bucks region designing private homes and engineering county bridges. His buildings often are very square and substantial, almost always of brick or stone. He commonly used a hip roof with a moderate to heavy cornice overhang and distinguished many of his structures with curvilinear cross gables, such as the Albert S. Worthington House (TM#6-24-16). Four structures, including the Worthington House, in Wycombe can be documented as designed by Oscar Martin: the stone-arch bridge, 1905 (adjacent TM# 6-23-18), the Edward Kirk House, 1911 (TM# 6-24-15), and the Wycombe Independent Schoolhouse, 1913 (TM#53-3-41). The stone-arch bridge, commissioned by the county, is designed in a very traditional manner, quite similar to bridge built c.1800, although the arches are segmental and not semi-circular. The schoolhouse is also of stone with many Colonial Revival motifs. Both the Kirk and the Worthington houses are of brick, with the Kirk house following mostly Colonial motifs and the Worthington house exhibiting Spanish Revival influences.

Martin's popularity with the well-to-do of Wycombe can be attributed to his quality, traditional style, incorporating tasteful architectural details onto a substantial, masonry, rectangular core with symmetrical fenestration. What is not evident of Martin's style in Wycombe is his use of Arts and Crafts and Wrightian features seen on his work in the more cosmopolitan Doylestown. It appears that Wycombe village had already developed an architectural tradition and that Martin adapted his versatility to the "Wycombe style". By the same token, Martin introduced an educated and classic approach to the prevailing casual building manner.

Wycombe's "sister" village of Ivyland offers a contrast in development patterns of small towns planned and built as the result of the construction of the railroad line. On the same line as Wycombe, Ivyland was reached by the railroad in time for the Philadelphia Centennial celebration, c.1874, and was planned to be a resort community for the many tourists wishing to escape the crowds and heat of the city. Developed on existing early farmsteads, the town was laid out in a distinct grid pattern with the large hotel as the central and architecturally dominant feature. While the patronage of Philadelphia tourists never materialized, Ivyland continued to develop on the established grid as a primarily residential community with services and businesses spread throughout. Wycombe, in contrast, began on previously established transportation routes and developed in a very random pattern, with no two roads paralleling each other. For the most part, the services and businesses in Wycombe hovered close to the railroad tracks which became somewhat of a town core. Ironically, while Wycombe did serve as a tourist community, the hotel (TM#53-3-22) is neither large nor architecturally distinct. The open lot on the corner of Park Avenue and the Mill Creek passing through the village add to the casualness of development and contrast with Ivyland's more regimented spacing of buildings.

<sup>1</sup>Doylestown Intelligencer, February 5, 1942. Obituary of A. Oscar Martin. Doylestown, PA.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 63 acres

Quadrangle name Buckingham, PA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See Continuation Sheet No. 2 for USGS Map.  
See Continuation Sheet No. 3 for UTM References.

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 4 & 5 for Verbal Boundary Description.  
See Continuation Sheet No. 6 for Verbal Boundary Justification.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey L. Marshall & Kathryn Ann Auerbach

organization Bucks County Conservancy, Inc.

date July 2, 1984

street & number 11 N. Main Street

telephone (215)345-8966/7020

city or town Doylestown

state PA 18901

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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



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"Centennial Anniversary 1843-1943 Farmers & Mechanics' Mutual Insurance Association of Bucks County." Pamphlet available at the Bucks County Conservancy, Doylestown, PA.

Davis, W.W.H., History of Bucks County. Lewis Publishing Company, New York; 1905. Volume III, pgs. 349,663.

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Slack, Leslie "As I Remember Wycombe" Unpublished Manuscript available at the Bucks County Conservancy, Doylestown, PA.

"Wycombe Herald" December 28, 1899 - August 10, 1922.

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## Verbal Boundary Justification:

A large percentage of the boundaries of the proposed Wycombe Historic District are clearly defined by the fact that the village is isolated, surrounded by open farm fields and woodland. The remaining borders of the district are drawn to encompass as many of the historic buildings associated with the village while excluding as much intrusion and open space as possible.

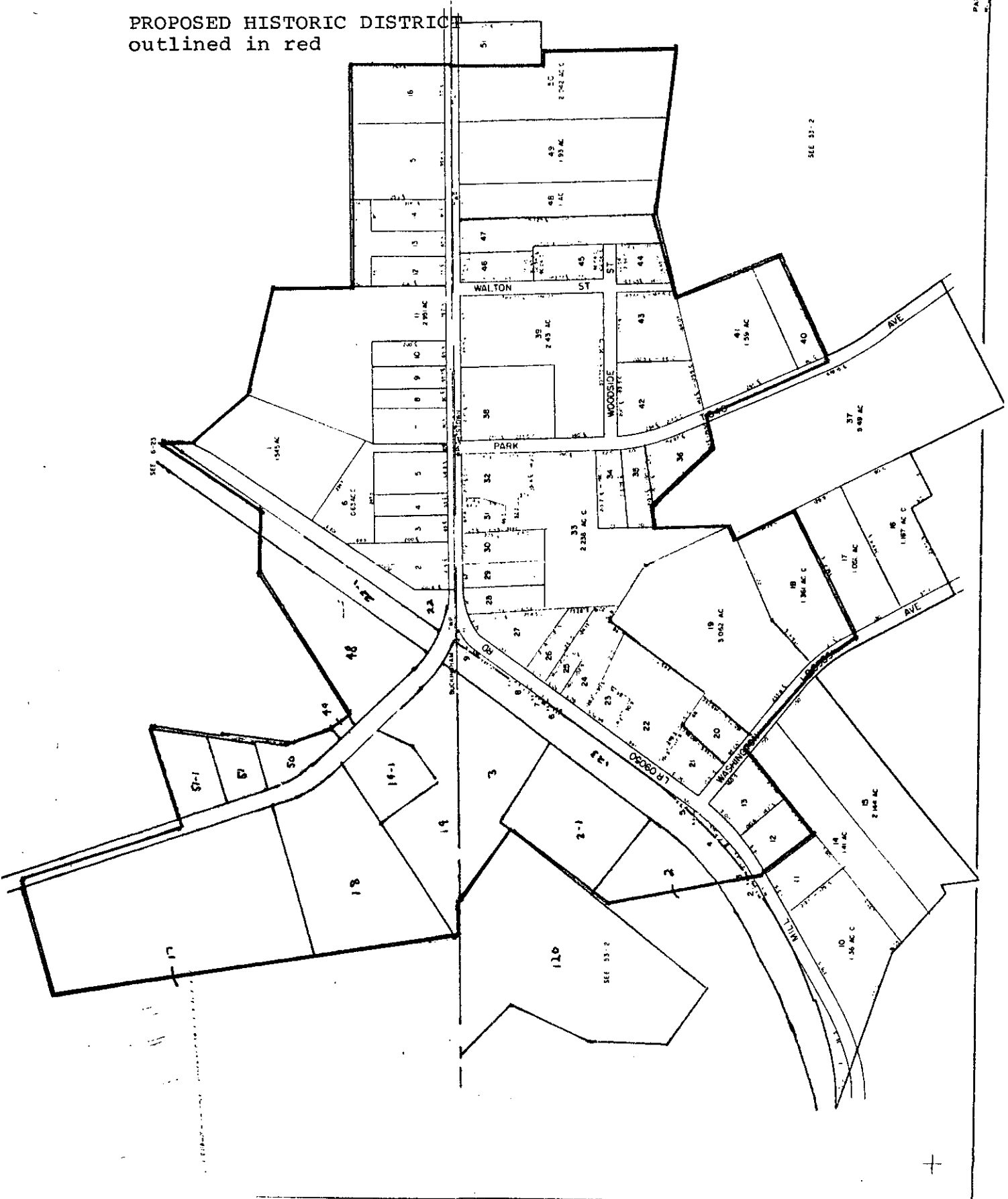
Wycombe's location in the middle of miles of agricultural land has resulted in the formation of a natural buffer zone around the village which has preserved its sense of time and space. Developing from a central point around the railroad station Wycombe has a strong central core where almost every parcel of land has a historic structure. Like many similar villages the percentage of intrusion increases as one gets further away from that core. Therefore it has been necessary, especially along Washington Avenue, to cut the boundary of the district very close to the core. This has necessitated the omission of several historic buildings which were traditionally part of the village and/or were constructed during the village's period of significance due to the amount of intrusion between these buildings and the village core.

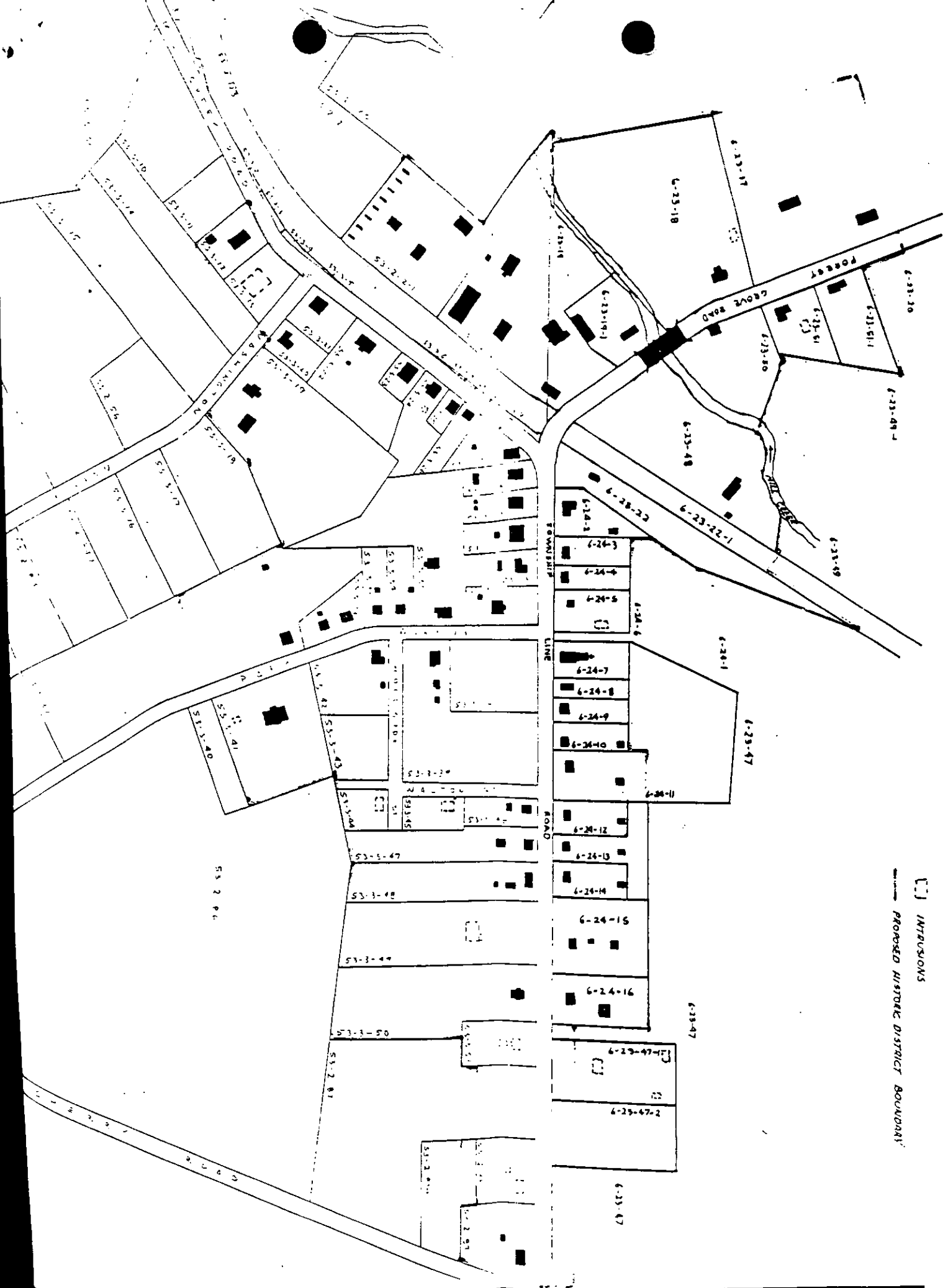
While there has been intermitten development around the boundaries of the proposed historic district from the 1930's until the present Wycombe retains a strong village appearance. In all cases there are only one or two newer structures between the edges of the proposed district and visual barriers such as a stream, road, or large open field. Many of these newer structures were built almost fifty years ago and are only intrusive by age and not by character.

The proposed historic district boundaries were viewed and approved by the Bureau for Historic Preservation on May 4, 1984.

PARCELS

PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT  
outlined in red

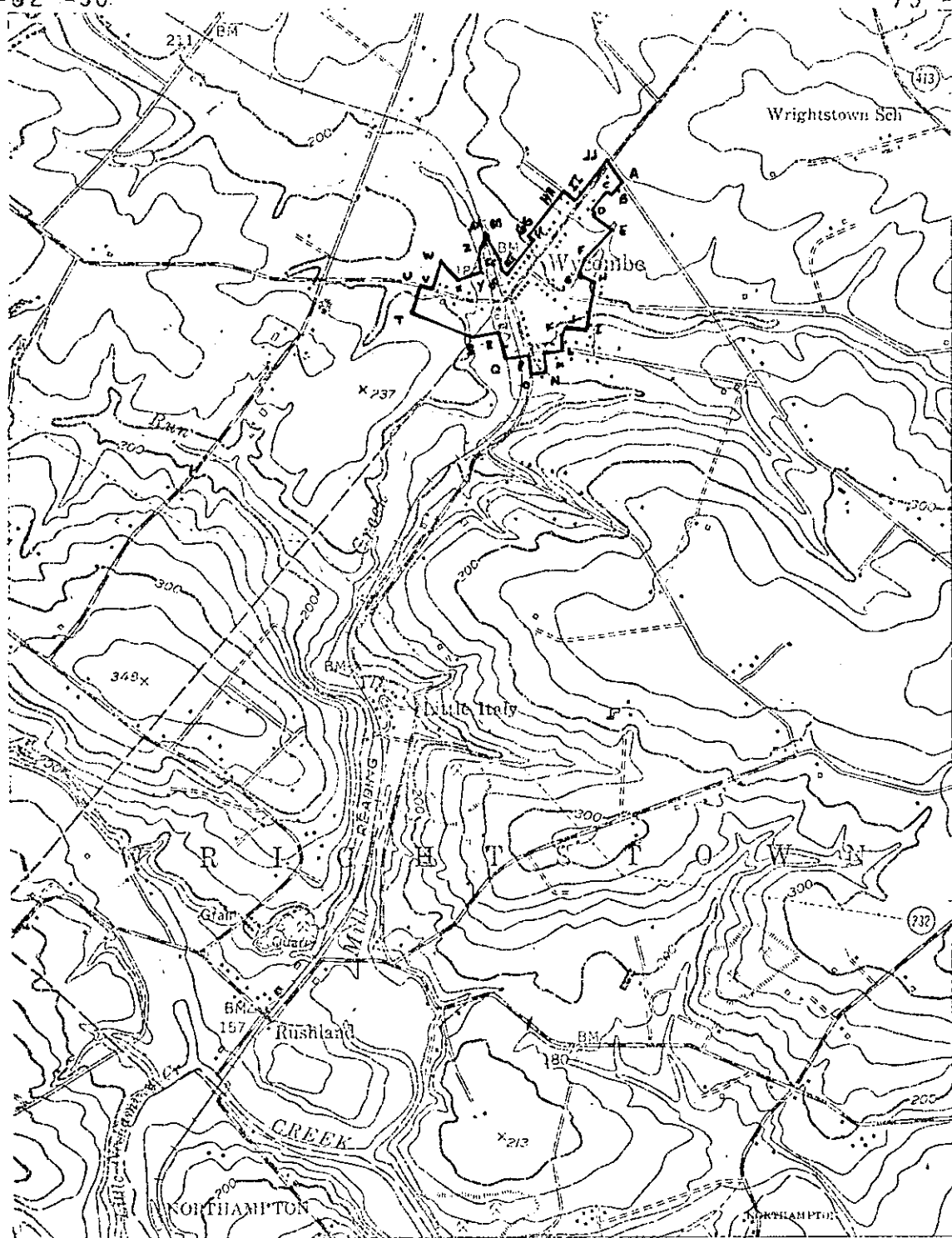




[ ] INTRUSIONS  
 - - - - - PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY

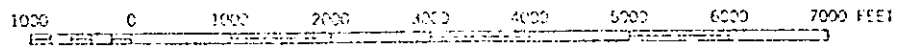
75°-02'-30"  
40°-17'-30"

75°-00'-00"  
40°-17'-30"



40°-15'-00"  
75°-02'-30"

40°-15'-00"  
75°-00'-00"



SCALE 1:24000

**Wycombe Village Historic District**  
Buckingham and Wrightstown Townships  
BUCKINGHAM, PA.

Boundaries as outlined by BHP Site  
Visit May 4, 1984 U4015-W7500/7.5

