

7. Local survey organization
 West Whiteland Historical Commission

1. County Chester
 5. Present name

8. property owners name and address

Church Farm School
 Box 662
 Paoli, PA 19301

9. tax parcel number (other number)

41-2-84

10. U.T.M. zone **18** easting **4481810**

MAP# **14** northing **441312240**

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)

CCHSS

usgs sheet: **Malvern 1.72A**

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building
 in N.R. district yes () no ()

13. date(s) (how determined)

14. period **1840-1859**

15. style, design or folk type

Federal/transitional

19. original use
Residence-farm

20. present use
Residence-farm

16. architect or engineer

17. contractor or builder

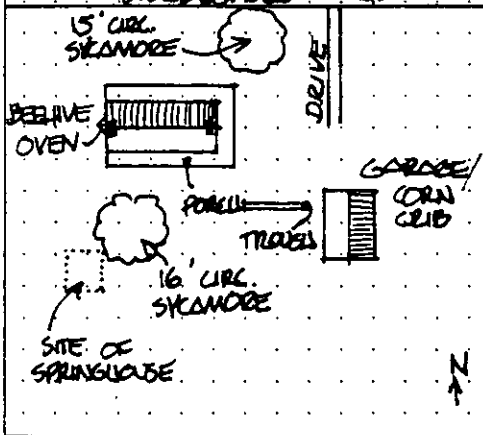
18. primary building mat., construction

Stone

21. condition **Above average**

22. integrity **Above-average**

23. site plan with north arrow
SWEDSFORD RD



2. municipality West Whiteland Twp.
 6. Other name (historic name if any) Benjamin Pennypacker House

24. photo notation

PG: John Ronayne
 PV: Northeast elevation
 PD: 11/1981

25. file/location
 CCHS, WWHC, #09-72, #6

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)

The Benjamin Pennypacker House is immediately distinguished by its prominent, three-sided, one story porch which, although an addition to this otherwise traditional late Federal rural home, sets it apart from all others in the Township. The structure is additionally noteworthy for its architectural integrity. Other than the addition of the porch and a few temporary interior partitions, the house has undergone little alteration since its construction in the 1840's. It is located along the south side of the Old Lancaster Road which was by 1820 a secondary route, the Lancaster Turnpike by then accommodating the bulk of east-west traffic. This comfortable country house is rectangular, (44' x 33') two and one half stories, stuccoed stone and shows a plain gable roof with box cornice and return. Brick lipped chimneys are set flush with the gable ends. Two elliptically-arched and pilastered dormer windows are found on the north elevation. The five bay facade shows a centered entrance above which is a semi-circular fanlight. A stairway, now concealed by a

(continue on back if necessary)

3. street address or specific location
 800 S Swedesford Rd.

27. history, significance and/or background

Architecture:
 The design of the Benjamin Pennypacker House illustrates the persistence of vernacular architectural traditions well past their introduction and prime. Although constructed in the 1840's by Benjamin Pennypacker, when the Greek Revival and early Victorian styles were taking hold in urban areas, the house adhered to conservative forms long established in this rural area. Like Arrandale (1810) and Summit Hall (1822) the Pennypacker

(continue on back if necessary)

4. survey code 029-09-41-336

28. sources of information

CCHS: A.P. Reid R.S.2050; AR 9-30-1851, L 5-8-1906, Personal Communication Mrs. Driscoll, 1981

29. prepared by:

D. Snyder WWHC
 M. Wolf BC

30. date revision(s)

12/1981

#26 cont.

partition, rises in the rear of the central passage and leads to the basement and attic. The hall opens into two rooms on either side, all of which were served by fireplaces. The four room plan with fireplaces in every room is repeated on the second level. Trim used throughout the house is of the symmetrically molded corner block variety. The window reveals are plain and rounded. One of the more remarkable features of the house is its preserved basement cooking area, the large fireplace and two bake ovens which appear intact. Other than the cooking fireplace, supports for the remaining fireplaces are rectangular with an unusual inverted V-shaped opening, apparently identical to those found in nearby Summit Hall (c. 1822).

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House was constructed on a four room, center hall plan. Its sole decorative feature, the Federal-style fanlight over the main entrance, was popular in the County as early as 1780. The house is of its generation, however, in its ample dimensions and four levels of living areas. Its expansive basement kitchen containing not one, but two, bake ovens is unique to the Township and seen rarely in the County. The preservation of the basement kitchen and other original interior features is remarkable in view of the farmhouse's ownership by Church Farm School for 60 years.

Education and Agriculture:

The Benjamin Pennypacker House and farm was one of the first properties to be acquired by Church Farm School after its founding in West Whiteland in 1918. It was used by the School as the residence of its farm manager and as such was important to the agricultural operations which helped sustain the school financially. Howard Avil was the farm manager between 1922 and 1937. He had lived in the house prior to his employment as farm manager. Originally a printer in Philadelphia, he and his wife Nellie purchased the farm in 1910 and relocated to the Great Valley to commence farming. Their decision to do so was influenced no doubt by the encouragement of Clarence Sears Kates, a relative by marriage. Kates had established himself at nearby Solitude Farm in 1904, taken up scientific farming and was instrumental in the organization of the Church Farm School in 1918. Avil farmed for seven years, installed heat and plumbing in the house, but sold the property in 1917. He returned, however, in 1922 and was hired as the School's farm manager, a position he held until 1937. Since that time, especially in the 1950's, the School acquired several additional farms, most of which are used as faculty residences and dormitories. The Benjamin Pennypacker House has remained, however, principally a farmer's house.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

West Whiteland Township, Chester County, PA
Multiple Resource Nomination

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Statement Summary of Significance:

The Benjamin Pennypacker House is eligible for listing under Criterion C because it demonstrates the continued use of the traditional Georgian floor plan well into the nineteenth century. Even the use of Federal decorative elements serves to highlight the conservative nature of building practices in the nineteenth century.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point in the southern edge of Swedesford Road located 837.5 feet west of the intersection of a private road with Swedesford Road, thence due south 250 feet to a point; thence due west 300 feet to a point; thence due north 250 feet to another point in the southern edge of Swedesford Road; thence in an easterly direction 300 feet along the southern edge of said Road to the place of beginning, containing 1.72 acres.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

West Whiteland Township, Chester County, PA MRA

Continuation sheet

Item number

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Map #14

The nominated acreage consists of a rectangle that includes sufficient land around the house to maintain the integrity of setting and provide a green buffer zone from future development. The non-contributing garage/corn crib shown the the site and contour maps has been demolished.

