

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

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

and or common East Berlin Historic District

2. Location

street & number Portions of King Street, Harrisburg Street  
and Abbottstown Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town East Berlin \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code county Adams code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners - See continuation sheets

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Adams County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Gettysburg state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Adams County Historic Sites  
Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date 1978-79 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Historical & Museum Commission  
Historic Gettysburg Adams County, Inc./Pennsylvania

city, town Gettysburg/Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	W/A
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

### Summary Description

East Berlin, a borough located in Adams County is situated in a bend of the Conewago Creek near the point where it leaves Adams County at the York County border. The nominated area includes most of King Street (the main street) and parts of Locust, Abbottstown and Harrisburg Streets. East Berlin was established in 1764 and contains a mix of commercial and residential buildings plus out buildings dating from the third quarter of the 18th to the early 20th century. The district is characterized by a concentration of 18th century log and stone dwellings which retain important interior and exterior architectural features of their age. There are also a significant number of brick and frame structures of the late 19th century with Queen Anne and Italianate detailing. In East Berlin there is a distinct type of late 19th century window trim consisting of a wide architrave with an arched top and modified crossettes. The district has only a few scattered non-contributing elements, nine out of a total of 186 properties.

### Additional Information

The nominated area of East Berlin presents a collection of Pennsylvania vernacular architecture. The buildings therefore should not be tightly categorized by style. However, a number of distinguishing influences are noticeable and contribute to the character of the district. The oldest residential buildings can be defined only as traditional structures influenced by the Germanic origins of their builders. Where stylistic influences are present, they appear Georgianese and are found specifically in interior and exterior trims and moldings and with a few buildings, their formalized overall plan with symmetrical fenestration and central passage. These early buildings are almost exclusively of log or stone construction. Many have their original exterior finishes, a factor that sets East Berlin apart from other towns in Adams County. The log houses were sheathed with beaded siding as was typical in the late 18th century. Front elevations were covered with fairly uniform widths of board, while the side and rear walls were covered with random widths. A substantial number of East Berlin's early log buildings retain their original or early siding. Stone construction uses uniform squared blocks laid in regular courses.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

East Berlin H.D. Adams Co., PA.  
Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

In the 19th century, brick and after 1860, balloon frame became the preferred material for construction. With many buildings "stylistic" influence remained traditional with Georgian or Federal style detailing continuing in use well after the "terminus post quem" for these styles. These stylistic influences are apparent in moldings, window and door framing and trims, and interior woodwork. Flemish bonding was the preferred method of laying bricks at the facade or principal elevations until approximately 1840. Later choices included all stretcher brick work or American bond at the front elevation.

During the late 19th century, as with earlier times styles did not dominate but rather influenced traditional forms. The three, four or five bay brick or frame house with gable roof remained typical as new construction after 1860. Italianate or Queen Anne motifs were applied as decorative elements. In East Berlin there are only a very few pure examples of any particular style. In fact, the architectural character and consequently significance of East Berlin results from its vernacular, traditional quality and the interpretation builders expressed of various styles.

One of the most prominent architectural features of East Berlin is a form of Italianate-inspired exterior window and door treatment which apparently was popular only in East Berlin. Such treatment, at least, is not seen in other nearby towns. This trim consists of wide molded architraves with arched tops and modified cassettes or "shoulders." Numerous brick and frame buildings from the late 19th century in East Berlin have this treatment. Generally, it is used in combination with bracketed eaves and a frieze with applied jig sawn decoration.

For specific examples showing the various stylistic influences discussed in the preceding paragraphs, please refer to the following building inventory.

Alterations to buildings in the East Berlin Historic District generally include the application of modern sidings such as aluminum or vinyl and replacement of older roofing materials. Unfortunately a few buildings have been replaced by newer structures, although only about 5% of the buildings are considered to be non-contributing. In fact, in terms of the district as a whole, alterations are so few, or so minor that East Berlin's significant qualities derive from its ability to portray itself today largely as it appeared during the late 19th century.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	X architecture	education	military	social
X 1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
X 1800-1899	X commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Meets Criteria A and C

## Summary Statement of Significance

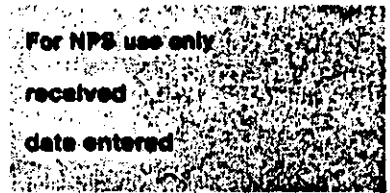
East Berlin's significance lies in its architectural expression of an 18th century Pennsylvania German community. A large portion of 18th century structures survive with recognizable original features. In addition the town also illustrates a number of important 19th century styles and motifs, including specific features such as window trim which are particularly distinctive of East Berlin. A substantial number of out buildings also remain as built. The town of East Berlin is also significant as a viable commercial entity, a center for the surrounding farming community. Shortly after it was established, the town had a grist mill which served to process locally grown grain into usable products of flour and meal. The large number of 18th century buildings in the town show that it was from the time of its founding a thriving community. Its architectural make up shows that it continued to thrive through the early 20th century. East Berlin's historic value lies in its ability to convey its evolution as a commercial center from the 18th through the early 20th century with notable examples from several periods and with so few non-contributing elements. Settled principally by people of German descent, the town also represents architectural traditions and preferences which characterize the Pennsylvania Germans. These ethnic features may be observed in the form, plan and detailing of the remaining 18th and early 19th century structures.

## Additional Information

East Berlin was laid out in 1764 by John Frankenberger. Initially it was known as "Berlin." Proprietary rights to the town were transferred several times, first in 1774 to Peter Househill, then in 1782 to Andrew Comfort, and in 1794 to John Hildebrand. A mill was established at the west end of the town on the Conewago Creek in 1769.

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

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



East Berlin H.D. Adams Co., PA.  
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

In 1840, the town had 410 inhabitants. There were at that time 84 dwellings, three taverns, three stores, three apothecaries, two schools, one church shared by the Lutherans and German Reformed congregations and a public library. There were also two grist mills and a fulling mill. East Berlin was incorporated into a borough in 1879.

Of particular importance are the large number of 18th century houses in East Berlin, of log and stone construction. Many of them have substantial original elements, both interior and exterior and display characteristics such as proportion and floor plan associated with Germanic traditions. Some specific features include use of a central chimney, irregular fenestration, two center front doors and a preference of log construction. Also architecturally significant is a group of later buildings from the late 19th century with distinctive decorative trim associated with the Italianate style and apparently exclusive to East Berlin. It consists of molded arched door architraves with modified crossettes. This trim is combined with the use of large, paired brackets and decorated frieze and cornice work.

The town is also noteworthy as the home of the Studebaker family in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Studebakers were wagon builders who eventually developed the Studebaker automobile. The Studebaker home, an 18th century log house with original siding stands on the south side of King Street and is because of its age and minimal alterations as well as its historical associations considered a key building in the district.

"Berlin," as the town was called until the time of its incorporation in 1879, was laid out in 1764 with 85 lots. One hundred additional lots were laid out in 1794. In 1797, the American Gazeteer described East Berlin as a "flourishing town" containing about 100 houses. A 1770 map of Pennsylvania does not show Berlin, suggesting that it had not yet developed into a viable community. Between 1800 and 1840, the size of the town remained fairly constant. In 1820 the populaton was 418; in 1840 it was 410; in 1880, 510; in 1900, 668; in 1920, 610 and 1960, 1033. As is evident from these population figures, the largest growth in any 20 year period was between 1880 and 1900 which also coincides with the rather large number of buildings constructed or remodeled during that time.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

East Berlin H.D., Adams Co., Pa  
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

East Berlin is one of seventeen towns that existed in Adams County in the 19th century. Having been laid out in 1764, it is among the oldest. Its siting is the result of a cross roads, one road leading from Harrisburg to Hanover and eventually Baltimore, and the other from York to the north and west. Another factor in East Berlin's development is the Conewago Creek which loops around the town site on the south, west and north. It provided good water power for grist milling, a principal industry in the 18th and 19th centuries in this rich agricultural area. Eventually, however, East Berlin was by-passed by other, more direct roads leading from the north and west to Baltimore and Philadelphia respectively, allowing East Berlin to become a small center serving the local agricultural area of northeastern Adams County, western York County and southern Cumberland County.

Other towns located on more major thoroughfares have been affected continually by the traffic and services generated by those roads. Still other towns set off from major roads never developed quite as large as East Berlin did. Thus, East Berlin is set apart from other towns in Adams County because of its age and circumstances which created its development and its subsequent slack in growth.

As a result, East Berlin has maintained a healthy, but static existence. The town prospered enough to maintain its buildings neatly, but not enough to launch major renewal, growth and construction projects to destroy its early architecture.

East Berlin has become, in effect, an architectural showcase. The Germanic heritage of its early settlers is common knowledge and easily documented. The features of traditional Germanic house construction are also well documented in a large number of sources. Germanic features that appear in the earlier architecture of East Berlin include the general form and plan with a central chimney and off-center door. A variation found frequently in East Berlin and elsewhere probably evolved from the central chimney plan and consists of a four bay facade with two central front doors and inside end chimneys. This type which was a single family dwelling should not be confused with four bay duplexes which were prominent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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

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

For NPS use only  
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East Berlin H.D., Adams Co., Pa.

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 4

The relatively rapid growth that East Berlin experienced during the late 19th century is probably the result of the generally prosperous times then, particularly in the 1890's. In 1877, a railroad spur was completed which connected East Berlin with a larger rail line operating between York and Gettysburg, part of the Western Maryland Railroad. Much of the development on Locust Street was the result of the rail line and its ability to haul freight. The train depot was located at Locust and Third Streets. Opposite was a warehouse built in 1897 which later became the location of a coal, feed and lumber business. Both buildings are still standing. Most of the architecture on Locust Street dates from the late 19th century and relates to the businesses and rail activity there.

With the circumstances surrounding East Berlin's history, it is difficult to compare it with other nearby towns. The closest, Abbottstown, four miles to the south, was settled in the 1760's. Located on US Route 30, the major route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, it had during the mid 19th century 40-60 dwellings and was approximately half the size of East Berlin. It is not productive to compare or contrast East Berlin with major towns such as Gettysburg, county seat of Adams County, located 18 miles to the southwest; or York, county seat of York County, located 13 miles to the southeast. Both cities as county seats and located on major transportation routes grew larger and faster than East Berlin and with different emphasis.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Rupp, I.D. History of Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, Bedford, Adams and Franklin, Counties, Pa. Lancaster, PA 1846  
Wheels of Time. East Berlin Bicentennial Publication, 1964

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property appx. 40

Quadrangle name Abbottstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

18	330120	4422910
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

18	330020	4422790
Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

18	330510	4422400
Zone	Easting	Northing

D 

18	330800	4422280
Zone	Easting	Northing

E 

18	330880	4422260
Zone	Easting	Northing

F 

18	331210	4422300
Zone	Easting	Northing

G 

18	331010	4422600
Zone	Easting	Northing

H 

18	330910	4422620
Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Attached Continuation Sheets

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

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paula Stoner Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Preservation Associates, Inc. date September, 1984

street & number 207 S. Potomac Street telephone (301) 791-7880

city or town Hagerstown, state Maryland 21740

## 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



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

For NPS use only

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

Continuation sheet

Item number

10

Page

2

Verbal Boundary Description

The East Berlin proposed National Register Historic District is bounded as follows: beginning at a point at the corner of the curb line at the southeast corner of West King Street and Sixth Street and proceeding in a southerly direction along the east curb line of Sixth Street to the north edge of South Avenue; then turning 90 degrees to the east and proceeding along the north edge of South Avenue in an easterly direction to a point opposite the west property line of the property located at 101 Fourth Street; then turning 90 degrees to the south and crossing South Avenue and continuing in a southerly direction with said west property line to meet its south property line; then turning 90 degrees to the east and proceeding with the south property line to and across Fourth Street to its east curb line; then turning 90 degrees to the south along the east curb line to the north curb line of Locust Street; then turning 90 degrees to the east along the north curb line to a point opposite the east edge of Third Alley; then turning 90 degrees to the south and following the east edge of Third Alley to the north edge of Long Alley; then turning 90 degrees to the east and following the north edge of Long alley to the east property line of 308 Locust Street; then turning 90 degrees to the north along the east property line to and across Locust Street to its north curb line; then turning 90 degrees to the east and following the north curb line to the east edge of Zinn Alley; then turning 90 degrees to the south and following the east edge of Zinn Alley across Long Alley to the south property line of the building located at 215-217 Abbottstown Street; then turning 90 degrees to the east and continuing with the south property line to and across Abbottstown Street to its east curb line; then turning 90 degrees to the north to and across Long Alley to its north edge; then turning 90 degrees to the east along the north edge of Long Alley to the west edge of Stoner Alley; then turning 90 degrees to the north along the west edge of Stoner Alley to the north property line of the building located at 204 Abbottstown Street; then turning 90 degrees to the west and continuing with the north property line to the rear property lines of 200-202 Abbottstown Street; then turning 90 degrees to the north with said rear property line to

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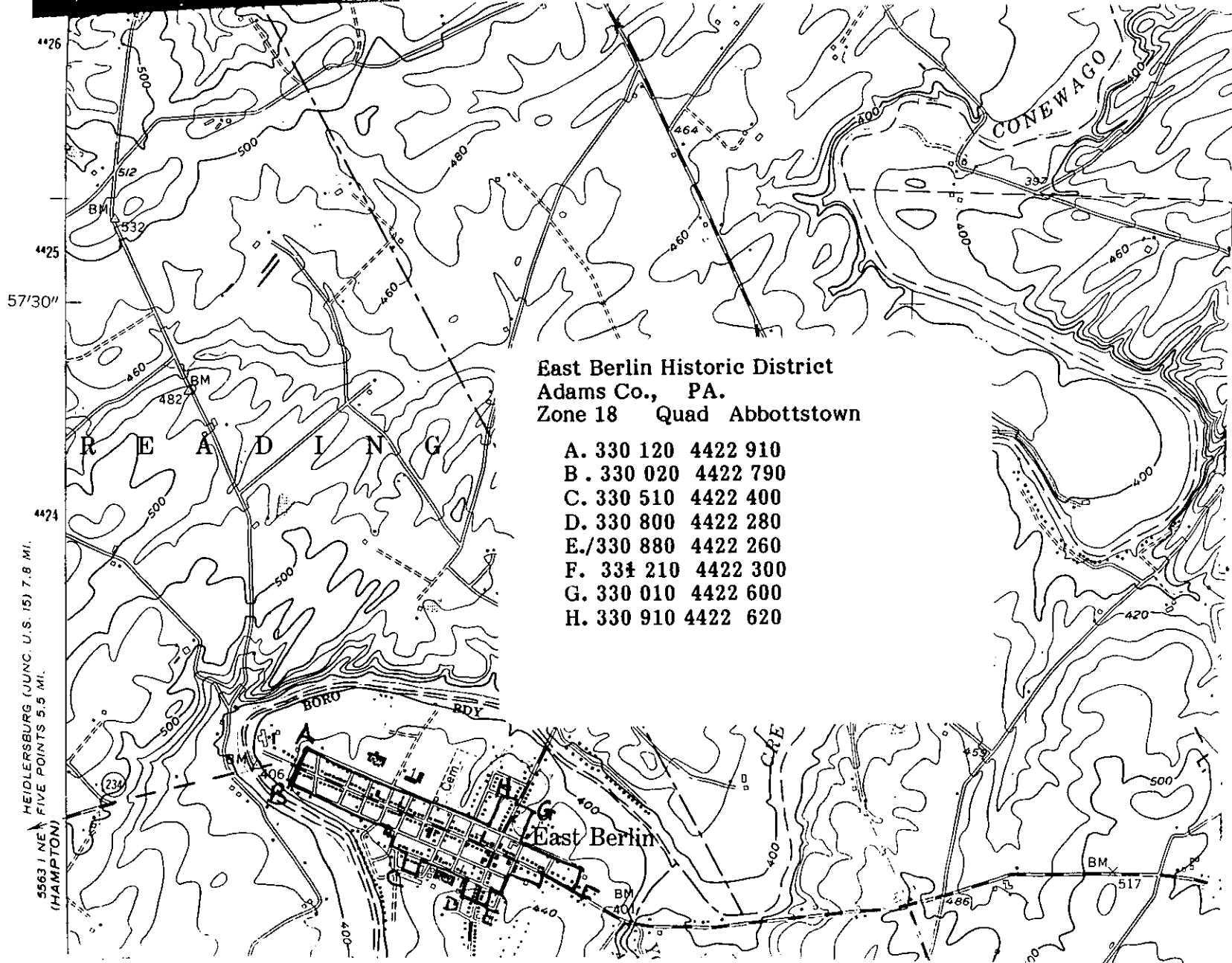
Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 3

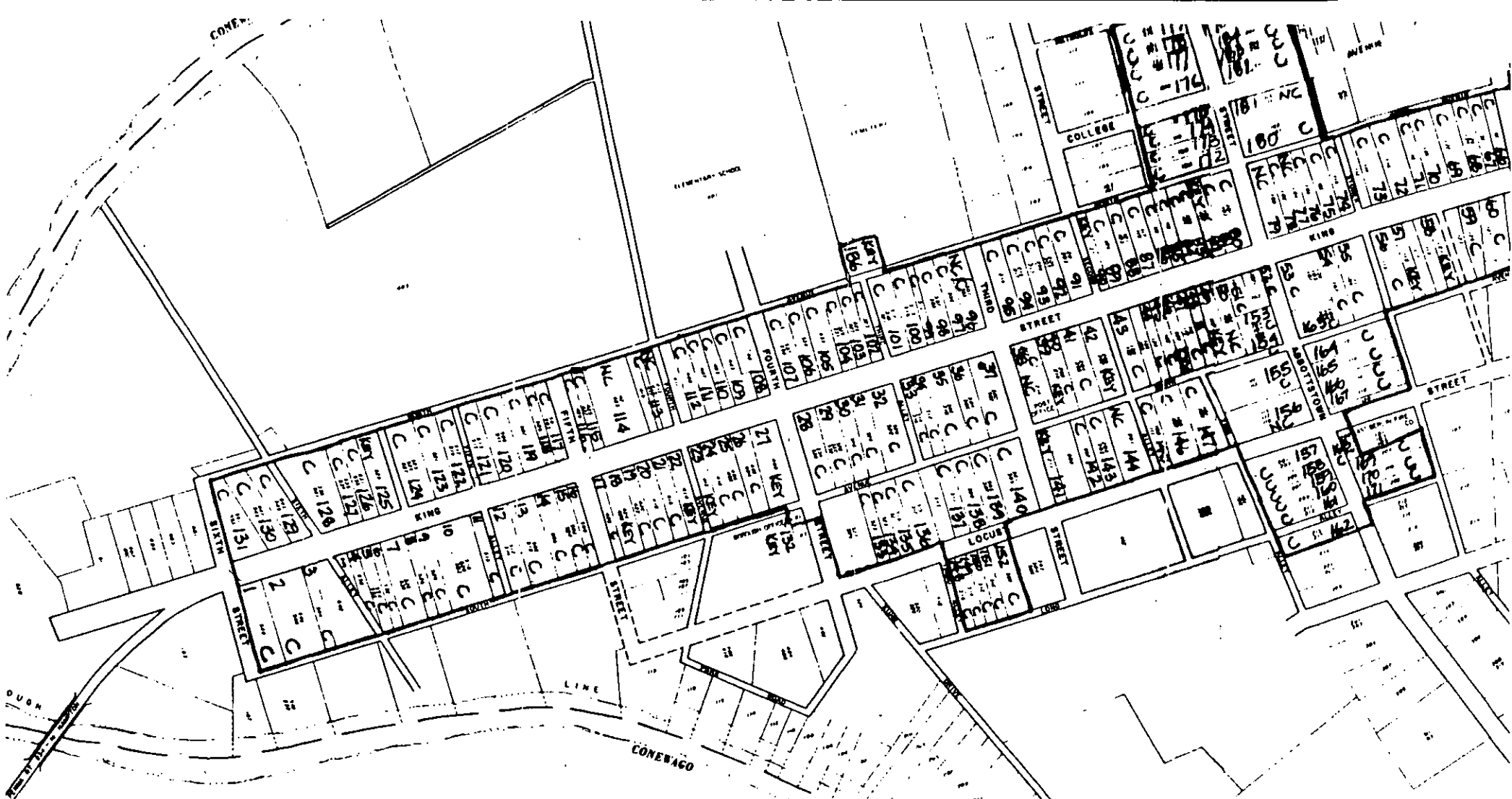
and across Locust Street to its north curb line; then turning 90 degrees to the east and following the north curb line in an easterly direction to the west edge of Stoner Alley; then turning north 90 degrees and following the west edge of Stoner Alley to the north edge of South Avenue; then turning 90 degrees to the east along the north edge of South Avenue to the west edge of Jacobs Street; then turning 90 degrees to the north along the west edge of Jacobs Street to and across East King Street; then turning 90 degrees to the east along the north side of East King Street to the east property line of the building located at 214 East King Street; then turning 90 degrees to the north and following said property line to its rear property line; then turning 90 degrees to the west and following the north property lines of the lots facing onto the north side of East King Street to a point opposite the west edge of Front Street; then turning 90 degrees to the north and proceeding north along the west edge of Front Street to the south edge of Garden Lane; then turning 90 degrees to the west and continuing to and across Harrisburg Street to its west side; then turning 90 degrees to the north for a short distance to the south edge of Reynolds Street; then turning 90 degrees to the west along the south edge of Reynolds Street to the east side of Spangler Avenue; then turning south along its east edge to the south edge of North Avenue; then turning 90 degrees to the west along the south side of North Avenue to a point 50' east of the property line dividing the elementary school from the cemetery; then turning 90 degrees north and proceeding 50'; then turning 90 degrees west and proceeding 50'; then turning 90 degrees south and proceeding 50' along the property line to include within the district the "Church Schoolhouse"; then turning 90 degrees to the west along the south edge of North Avenue and proceeding to the east curb line of Sixth Street; then turning south along the east curb line to the place of beginning.

The boundaries were chosen to include the oldest parts of the borough while eliminating concentrations of non-contributing structures. While there are other potentially eligible sites within the town limits, they are separated from the district by groups of more recent non-contributing buildings and therefore are not included in this nomination.



East Berlin Historic District  
Adams Co., PA.  
Zone 18 Quad Abbottstown

- A. 330 120 4422 910
- B. 330 020 4422 790
- C. 330 510 4422 400
- D. 330 800 4422 280
- E. 330 880 4422 260
- F. 334 210 4422 300
- G. 330 010 4422 600
- H. 330 910 4422 620



**BOROUGH OF EAST BERLIN**

**ADAMS COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

**GENERAL PLAN OF LOTS**

SCALE 1" = 100' (approx)

DATE DECEMBER, 1994

PREPARED BY  
BUCHART - HORN  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

26 50 RIDGEMAN AVE  
TOWNSHIP, PENNA

**EAST BERLIN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

KEY  
 CONTRIBUTING BLDGS - C  
 NON-CONTRIBUTING BLDGS - NC

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP  
 - ADAMS COUNTY