

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization
 West Whiteland Twp. Historical Commission

8. property owners name and address
 Bernard R. and Margaret M. Benvignati
 363 Balderston Drive
 Exton, PA 19341

9. tax parcel number/other number
 41-5-79

10. U.T.M. Zone easting
 118 | 4147131510
 1.5 acres

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 Exton By-Pass EIS
 (1983)

usgs sheet: Malvern
 4143114010
 northing

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building (x) district (x)

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1937 (deeds)
 14. period
 1937-1938

15. style, design or folk type
 Tudor Revival

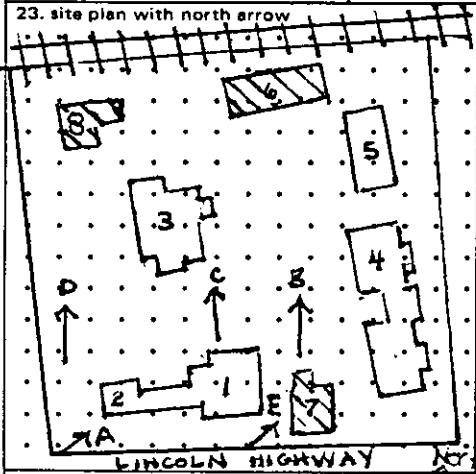
19. original use
 Domestic/hotel
 20. present use
 Domestic/Hotel-Commercial/

16. architect or engineer
 unknown

17. contractor or builder
 Leon M. Williams

18. primary building mat./construc.
 wood frame with
 rough-face stucco

21. condition
 Good
 22. integrity
 Good



BLACK AND WHITE PRINT(S)
 31/2" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
 note location of negative in block 24.

24. photo notation
 PC: Diane Snyder
 PD: 11/1986
 [shaded box]: Non-contributing

25. file/location
 West Whiteland Twp. His. Com

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)
 The motel buildings which comprise this property are situated on level ground on the north side of the Lincoln Highway. Of the 7 buildings within the district, 4 contribute to its significance (#1-5) and 3 are non-contributing (#6-8). The contributing buildings include a service station, a motel office, a house, and 2

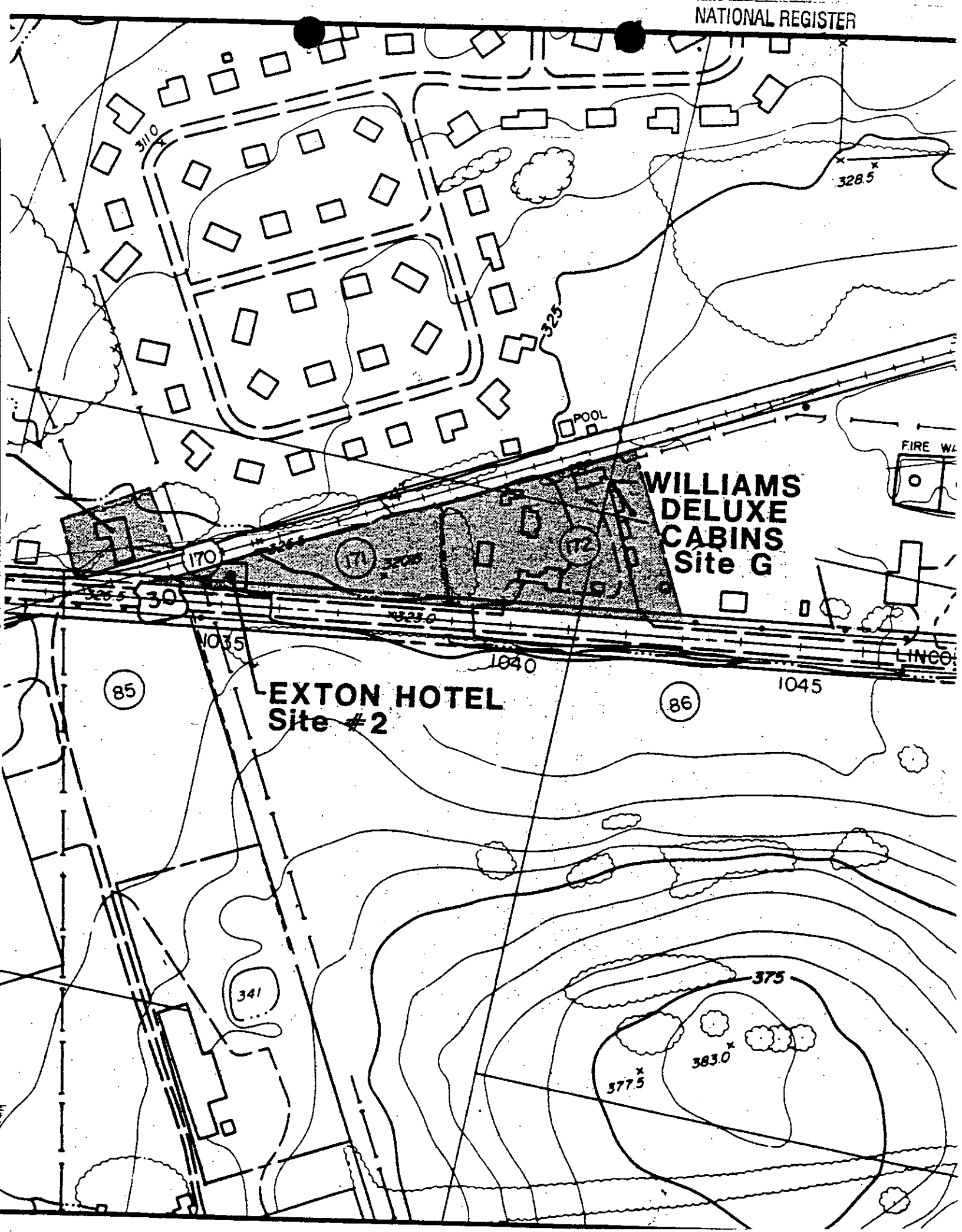
27. history, significance and/or background
 Under Criterion A, the Williams Deluxe Cabins are significant in the area of transportation. As with so many of West Whiteland Township's important historic resources, the Williams Deluxe Cabins are directly associated with developments in transportation which occurred along the route of the old Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike later to become part of the Lincoln Highway. Just as the Ship Inn (#311) exemplifies late 18th century roadside accommodations, the Williams Deluxe Cabins

28. sources of information
 See Continuation Sheet #2
 (continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:
 Richard Meyer, John
 Milner Associates
 30. date 10/4/82
 revision(s) 12/86, 12/87
 Martha L. Wolf

31. county _____ 32. style _____
 33. construction material _____ 34. roof _____
 35. design type _____
 36. historic function _____
 37. construction feature _____ 38. ext. walls _____ 39. plan _____
 40. facade width _____ 41. roof material _____ 42. stories _____ 43. depth _____
 44. ext. design _____
 45. int. design _____

1. County Chester
 2. municipality West Whiteland Twp.
 3. street address or specific location East Lincoln Highway, approximately 800 feet east of railroad crossing.
 4. survey code 029-09-41-348
 5. present name Ichabod's
 6. other name (historic name if any) Williams Deluxe Cabins



multiple rental units, as described below:

- C 1. Ichabod's News Agency - Formerly an Esso service station, the building is one and a-half stories, T-shaped, with a steeply pitched cross-gable roof. The exterior walls of rough-face stucco feature decorative half-timbering and wood siding in the gable ends. The south, or main, facade contains a triple grouping of six-over-six sash windows flanked by small wall-mounted metal lanterns. There are multi-pane casements on the east and west facades. Doors on both the south and west facades feature molded Tudor-arch surrounds. A single story, shed-roofed addition adjoins the east facade, partially replacing a decorative corner pier of rubble stone and flaring parapet, continuing the plane of the roof. The parapet originally may have sheltered a storage room and is likely to have balanced a similar detail adjoining the west wall of the Office (#2). The interior has a poured concrete floor, vertical beaded matched board wainscot with paneling above the chair rail, and a coved ceiling with simple wood balks. Linking this building with the Office is a three-bay breezeway with a gable roof, the ceiling of which is sheathed in beaded matched boards. On axis at either end of the breezeway are the side doors of the Esso Service Station and Office.
2. Ichabod's Used Paperback Book Nook - Originally the Office for the motor court, this building is similar in form and materials to the Service Station. The south, or main, facade contains a single door hung in a wood Tudor-style surround. The other facades contain paired, ten-pane casements. The west end of the main facade terminates in a coursed rubble pier capped by a flaring parapet which continues the plane of the steep gable roof. The single interior room features walls sheathed in beaded matched boards. Buildings 1 and 2 were originally constructed as one connected building and are therefore counted as one contributing building.
- C 3. House - Situated to the north of the Service Station/Office complex is a one and a-half story house which, like the other two buildings, is wood frame faced with rough stucco. The south, or main, facade features a projecting centered entrance with steeply pitched gable roof and round-arch door surrounds and door. A coursed stone chimney arises from its west wall. The stoop is poured concrete and is enclosed with a wrought iron rail and banister. Windows are six-over-one sash; those in the gable ends of the main roof are one-over-one. Adjoining the north facade is a gabled appendage with enclosed entry and simple chimney. A small gable-roof wing extends off the east facade.
- C 4. Units 1-4 - Originally built as two structures, they were joined with a slightly recessed center hyphen. The building is now ten bays long, articulated into 4 evenly spaced pavilions with transverse gable roofs which are linked by 3 hyphens with gable roofs. A three-pane, three-panel door is located in the west, or main, facade of each pavilion, adjacent to which are metal pendant lanterns. There are wooden louvered ventilators in the gable ends of the main facades, just below the ridge line.
- C 5. Units 5-6 - Located immediately north of Units 1-4, this building is one story with a centered cross gable which frames the entrances for the two units. Like the others, it is wood frame faced with stucco. Extending off the north facade is a small mechanical room. It may be a later addition as early motor courts lacked central heating.
- NC 6. Units 7-9 - Built mid 20th century, this is a one story stuccoed building with a gable roof, containing three motel units. Its brick sills and fenestration set it apart from the contributing units.
- NC 7. Store - Formerly a Texaco Service Station, this small building features horizontal wood siding, a gable roof, and a shed-roof appendage on the north. Its south, or main, facade contains a centered entrance flanked by six-over-six sash windows.

EVALUATION

The Keeper of the National Register determined the Williams Deluxe Cabins eligible for listing on January 25, 1984 in response to a request from DOT/FHWA concerning the Exton By-Pass project.

EVALUATOR(S)

ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front

Williams Deluxe Cabins

4. survey code
029-09-41-348

Sheet # 2 Area of Significance: Transportation

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The verbal boundary description for the Williams Deluxe Cabins is the same for tax parcel 41-5-79, comprised of two tracts acquired by Leon Williams in 1934 and 1937 on which he erected his motor court. The tracts were sold together by his widow in 1964 (Deedbook R38, pp.136 and 137, parcels #1 and 2) :

Beginning at an iron pin in the middle of the Philadelphia and Lancaster Pike, at a corner of the land formerly of Hanna Jacobs, thence north 26 degrees, 51 minutes west, 346.05 feet to an iron pin set in the middle of the tracks of the Chester Valley Branch of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad; thence along the middle of the tracks of said railroad, south 63 degrees, 10 minutes west 135.4 feet to an iron pin; thence leaving the railroad and extending along other land formerly of Harry Diem, south 26 degrees, 51 minutes east, 297.48 feet to an iron pin set in the middle of the Philadelphia and Lancaster Pike; thence extending along the middle of the said Pike, north 82 degrees, 54 minutes east 143.86 feet to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

Beginning at a spike in the middle of the Lincoln Highway at a corner of land formerly belonging to Norman C. Schultz; thence extending along the center of said Highway, south 82 degrees, 54 minutes west, 132.5 feet to a spike, a corner of other land formerly belonging to the aforesaid Harry Diem; thence leaving the Highway and by said Diem's land, north 12 degrees, 4 minutes west, 261.4 feet to an iron pin in the center of the track of the Chester Valley Railroad; thence along the center of the said track, north 63 degrees, 10 minutes east, 58 feet to an iron pin, a corner of land formerly belonging to Norman C. Schultz aforesaid; thence along said land, south 26 degrees, 51 minutes east, 297.48 feet to the first mentioned spike and place of beginning.

The two tracts together containing approximately 1.5 acres.

28. Sources of Information

Belasco, Warren James. Americans on the Road, from Autocamp to Motel, 1910-45. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1979.

Chester County Deedbooks, Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, PA

Patton, Phil. "America's home away from home is still a good motel." Smithsonian, March, 1986, pp. 127-137.

Post Cards, "Williams' Deluxe Cabins", West Whiteland Historical Commission, Exton, PA

Wolf, Martha L. "Effects of Turnpike Construction Still Being Felt in Chester County Some 200 Years After Completion." Brandywine River Museum Antiques Show, 1982, pp. 12-15.

Area of Significance: Transportation
Criterion: A

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front.

Williams Deluxe Cabins

4. survey code
029-09-41-348

Sheet # 1

26. (continued)

NC 8. Garage - Located north of the House, the Garage is one story L-shaped, with a gable roof. Its exterior is clad in wood shingle and vertical board siding. It contains an overhead door on its south, or main, facade.

27. (continued)

are evidence of a chapter in early 20th century motor culture.

This district is the earliest of its kind in Chester County and one of the few remaining examples of a motor court in the Delaware Valley.

A fuller understanding of the Williams Deluxe Cabins can be gained from a brief recounting of developments in transportation which occurred along the route of the Lincoln Highway in West Whiteland Township. Originally laid out as the nation's first turnpike, the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike dominated the Township's history from 1793-94 until the Columbia (Pennsylvania) Railroad was constructed through West Whiteland in 1833-34. Trade and travel along the Turnpike subsequently declined, and in 1866 the Turnpike Company began disposing of portions of the road. By 1880, a stretch of the Turnpike in West Whiteland had been sold. The remaining portion was sold c. 1900 to the Philadelphia and West Chester Traction Company for a trolley route. That plan, however, never was realized, and in 1907 the County of Chester purchased the old road bed and declared it free of tolls.

Although locally regarded as a "wornout turnpike toll road," the Lincoln Highway Association thought otherwise, envisioning it as a component of a coast-to-coast modern road for automobile travel. Under the Sproul Highway Act of 1911, a state highway department was established and the former turnpike added to that system as the Lincoln Highway. Soon thereafter, the road received a hard surface and motorists in their new Model-T Fords took to it in great numbers.

By the 1920s, as more Americans had acquired automobiles and discovered the freedom and enjoyment of motor travel, auto camps developed along major routes like the Lincoln Highway. Camping became an economical and convenient alternative to hotels, particularly in sparsely populated scenic areas. By 1923, this phenomenon was evident in West Whiteland. The road was lined with brilliantly lit places of business, a tourist camp, and cars, trucks, and motorcycles with license plates from distant states.

During this first period of motor travel, the tourist camp made its debut. Initially just land set aside for erecting temporary overnight accommodations, such as tents, chairs, and tables, the auto tourist camps gradually were enhanced with cabins and other amenities. The earliest of these cabins were quite primitive, appearing first in California in the 1920s. Camp owners began operating restaurants and service stations as well. The industry matured over the next decade and by 1932 had its own trade publication, Tourist Trade, which in 1934 had attained a circulation of 12,000. The boom continued through the early 1940s until World War II disrupted everyday life.

It was during this second phase of motor tourist growth that Leon H. Williams purchased one acre of land along the Lincoln Highway and constructed a full-blown motor court, complete with a house, service station, office and cabins, all in the Tudor-Revival style. Williams operated it as a motor court until 1964. He sold the property to Dyffrin Construction Company which changed the name to Tudor Motor Inn.

Since its construction in 1937, several changes have been made to the original layout: the 4 original cabins were connected into a single structure; Units 5-6 were built; central heating and baths were added; and Units 7-9 were built after World War II. Despite these changes, the property conveys its original sense of the formal motor court, the successor to the early auto tourist camp. Although the Williams Deluxe Cabins have been in continuous use since first opened, overnight tourists have been replaced by weekly boarders, a change which can, at least in part, be attributed to the growth of chain motels.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization West Whiteland Historical Commission, Exton, Pa.

8. property owners name and address
 Bernard R. and Margaret M. Benvignati
 363 Balderston Drive
 Exton, PA 19341

9. tax parcel number / other number
 41-5-79 (tax)
 R38/0136 (deed)

10. U.T.M. zone easting northing
 usgs sheet: Malvern

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 None

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

13. date(s) (how determined)
 c.1937 (present owner)
 14. period 1932-1942

15. style, design or folk type
 Tudor Revival

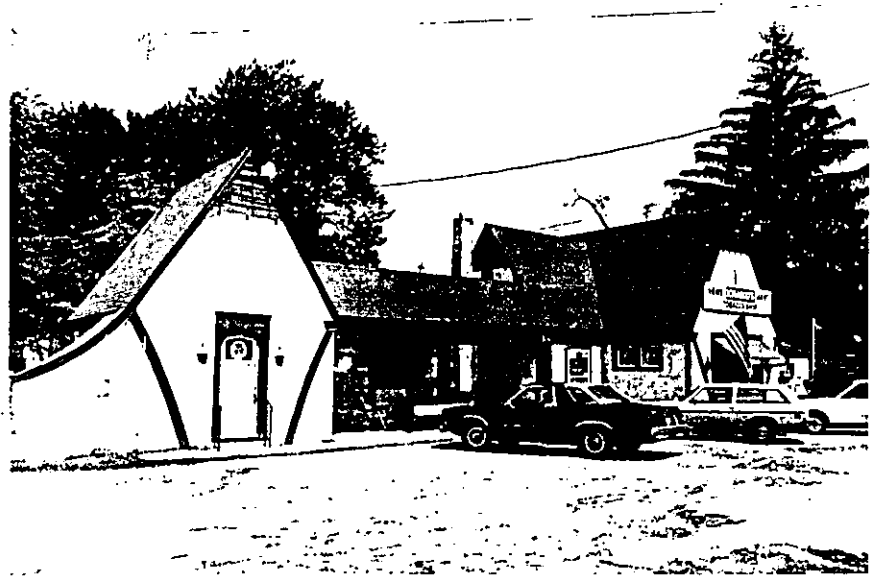
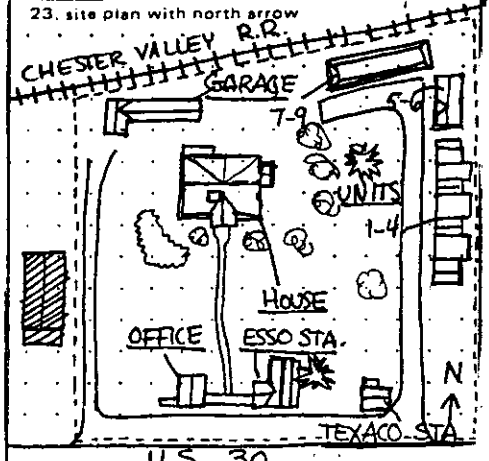
19. original use commercial
 20. present use commercial

16. architect or engineer
 unknown

17. contractor or builder
 Leon M. Williams
 (present owner)

18. primary building mat./construction
 wood framed, rough-faced stucco

21. condition good
 22. integrity good



24. photo notation
 3.17 Office and Esso station from southwest
 3.18 Units from south (continued reverse)
 25. file/location
 John Milner Associates

26. brief description (note unusual features, integ;

The complex, situated on level ground, consists of the following structures:

Esso Service Station (Ichabod's News Agency) - The Esso Service Station, closely paralleling U. S. 30 consists of a one-and-one-half-story, T-shaped, wood-framed block in Tudor Revival style with a steeply pitched, cross-gabled roof. Exterior walls have a rough-faced stucco treatment and are distinguished by decorative half-timbering and wood siding in the gable ends. Roofing is asphalt shingle. The south or main facade contains a triple grouping of 6/6 sash windows framed by small, wall-mounted metal lanterns. There are multi-pane casements on the east

see reverse side

(continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background
 see continuation sheet

(continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information
 see continuation sheet

29. prepared by:
 Richard Meyer
 John Milner Assoc.

30. date/82
 10/4/82

revision(s)

(continue on back if necessary)

1. County Chester
 2. municipality West Whiteland Township
 3. street address or specific location East Lincoln Highway, approx. 800' east of Chester Valley RR crossing, Exton, Pa.
 4. survey code
 5. present name Ichabod's News Agency
 6. used Paperback Book Nook
 7. other name (historic name if any) Williams (sic) Deluxe Cabins

24 (cont'd.)

- 3.19 Office and Esso Station from northwest
- 3.20 House from east

26. continued

and west facades. Doors on both the south and west facades are hung in molded wood Tudor arch surrounds. A single story, shed-roofed addition adjoins the east facade, partially replacing a decorative stone rubble corner pier and flaring parapet, continuing the plane of the roof. The parapet originally may have sheltered a storage room and is likely to have balanced a similar detail adjoining the west facade of the office.

The interior has a poured concrete floor, a vertical beaded matched board wainscot with panelling above the chair rail, and a coved ceiling with simple wood balks.

Linking this structure with the office is a three-bay breezeway with a gabled roof. Its ceiling is sheathed in beaded matched boards. On axis at either end of the breezeway is the side door of the Esso service station and office, respectively.

Office (Ichabod's Used Paperback Book Nook): The office, situated west of the Esso Service Station, consists of a one-and-one-half-story block similar in form and materials to the former. The south or main facade contains a single door mounted in a shaped wood Tudor surround, while paired ten-pane casements mark the other facades. The west end of the south facade, which continues beyond the west wall line, terminates in a coursed rubble pier capped by a flaring parapet which continues the plane of the roof.

The interior comprises a single room, its walls sheathed in beaded matched boards.

House The house, situated directly north of the Esso Service Station and Office, consists of a one-and-one-half-story, wood-framed block in Tudor Revival style with a poured concrete basement and a cross-gabled roof. The south or main facade contains a central entry projection with a steeply pitched gabled roof and round arched door. Adjoining the projection on the west is a coursed fieldstone chimney and on the south, an elevated poured concrete stoop and steps, enclosed with a wrought iron rail and banister. Windows are 6/1 sash with a 1/1 sash in either gable end of the main roof. A cellar entry adjoins the west facade, while both a gabled appendage with enclosed entry and a simple chimney adjoin the north facade. Projecting from the east facade is a single bay projection with a gabled roof. Exterior walls are stuccoed, and the roofing is asphalt shingle.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

26. continued

Units 1-4 Units 1-4, situated roughly perpendicular to U.S. 30 along the east side of the site, consist of a single story, stucco/wood-framed block, ten-bays long and one-bay wide. The block is articulated into four evenly spaced pavilions with transverse gabled roofs, linked by three hyphens each with a gabled roof. The outer hyphens have a west facade flush with that of the pavilions, while the center hyphen is recessed slightly. Originally, the block was built as two separate structures. The center hyphen was a later addition (postcards). Windows are 1/1 sash and one and three pane casements. A three pane/three panel door is located in the west wall of each pavilion. A metal pendant lantern hangs next to each door. Two fixtures are presently missing. Gable ends have wood louvered openings just below the ridge. The roofing is asphalt shingle.

Units 5-6 Units 5-6, situated immediately north of Units 1-4, consist of a single story, stucco/wood-framed block similar to the former. Here the pavilions are replaced by a single facade gable which frames both doors of the units. A mechanical room with a simple stuccoed chimney adjoins the north wall of Unit 6. This room may have been a later addition, as early motor courts often had no central heating initially.

Units 7-9 Units 7-9, paralleling the railroad at the north side of the site, consist of a single story, stucco/wood-framed block similar to the other units. A mid-twentieth century addition, Units 7-9 are marked by large four-pane casements, brick sills, plain doors, and a pent roof (intrusion).

Texaco Service Station (vacant) The Texaco Service Station, situated just east of the Esso Service Station, consists of a single story, wood-framed block with a gabled roof and wood clapboard siding. Suggesting a Cape Cod bungalow, the structure contains a central nine pane/ two panel door flanked on either side by a 6/6 sash window. A concrete chimney rises on the west side of the block, while a small appendage with a shed roof adjoins on the north (intrusion).

Garage The garage, situated northwest of the house, consists of a single story, wood-framed, L-shaped block with a cross-gabled roof and a poured concrete base. An overhead door at the west end of the block faces south. The exterior is clad in wood shingle and vertical board siding and asphalt shingle roofing (intrusion).

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front

William's (sic) DeLuxe Cabins 4. survey code
Exton, Chester County

27. continued

The Williams' DeLuxe Cabins, built c.1937 (conversation with present owner), are rare evidence of an important episode in the early development of American motor culture. This site is the earliest of its type in Chester County, and is one of the few remaining tourist camps in the Delaware Valley region dating from before the Second World War.

By the 1920's, as more Americans were acquiring an automobile and discovering the freedom and enjoyment of motor travel, auto camps began to develop along the major routes. Camping became an economical and convenient alternative to hotels, particularly in sparsely populated or scenic areas. With increased demand for lodging, competition among camp owners and the heightened demands of the public resulted in upgraded accommodations. Auto camps acquired cabins, and as a hedge against seasonal fluctuations in the tourist traffic, camp owners often operated a restaurant or service station, as well. The earliest of the cabins were quite primitive, built in California in the 1920's.

By 1932, the roadside phenomenon had grown into a recognized national industry with its own journal, Tourist Trade, which by 1934 had attained a circulation of 12,000 (Belasco 1979:144). From the depths of the Great Depression in the early 1930's, travel expenditures rose steadily until the war boom of the early 1940's (Belasco 1979:155).

It was during this period when Leon H. Williams purchased approximately one acre along the Lincoln Highway near Exton and built his house, service station, and cabins, all in Tudor Revival style (Chester County Deed Book T19/94, 23 April 1937; postcard). The use of historic formal references was not unusual among camp builders. Although some strove for a homey, somewhat austere bungalow image, others borrowed freely from the local vocabulary. The use of Tudor Revival references may relate to the popularity of this style in the suburbs along the Main Line several miles to the east. In any event, the site remained in the Williams family until 3 September 1964 when it was sold to the Dyffrin Construction Company (Chester County Deed Book Z35/109) and the name changed to the Tudor Motor Inn (Daily Local News, 21 September 1964). During this period, several additions appear to have been made. The four original cabins (Units 1-4) were connected into a single structure, first in pairs (postcard), then as a whole. The hyphens between cabin pavilions contain bath facilities, indicating that Williams upgraded his accommodations as the market demanded. A second structure (Units 5-6) was built which contains two additional units, as well as a central heating plant. It is likely that the cabins were unheated originally. A third structure (Units 7-9), dating from after the Second World War, apparently was built in response to the travel boom of the 1950's and 1960's. Together the structures suggest the form of a tourist court, the immediate successor to the individual cabin arrangement.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

27. continued

The adjoining Texaco Station (postcard) is likely to have been owned by a competitor. From 1937 on, a heated debate regarding service stations was presented regularly in the pages of the Tourist Court Journal. Court owners who wished to continue selling gasoline offered the argument that tourists preferred one-stop service, while owning a service station as well as a tourist camp provided a source of income during the off-season. The opposition contended that gasoline-only dealers down the road (or next door) resented the competition and would fail to recommend their customers to the cabins of competing dealers. Furthermore, it was charged, service stations were dirty, and it was impossible to provide both services to public satisfaction. Eventually, the latter group won out, and although it is not certain when Williams closed his service station, most tourist camp operators had dropped their gasoline dealerships by the late 1940's (Belasco 1979:164-165).

The present episode in tourist court or motel development was heralded as early as 1938 when Tourist Court Journal reported: "[Expressways] will render out-of-date and obsolete many roads at present in service; their construction will destroy the value of many tourist courts in their present locations, thereby wiping out millions of dollars." The editor urged his readers to write Congress, opposing "this scheme for raiding the treasury" ("Watch the Super-Highway Idea," Tourist Court Journal, March 1938:16).

Needless to say, his efforts were unsuccessful, and it is certain that Williams lost much of his business to new long distance travel routes, such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Contributing to the demise of the small independent motel were the many large national franchises and associations which managed to capture most of the tourist dollar along the new routes, as well as many of the major older routes. These motels, reinforced by a common advertising strategy, universally identifiable trademarks and, in some cases, architecture, were able to consistently deliver a standard of hotel-like accommodations which the traveller could expect, regardless of where he decided to stop each night.

Although the Williams' DeLuxe Cabins have been in continuous use since first opened, overnight tourists have long been replaced with weekly boarders (conversation with Bernard R. Benvignati, present owner who bought the property on 15 February 1969 from Dyffrin Construction Co., Chester County Deed Book R38/136). This change in clientele must be attributed in part to the market saturation of the chain motels.

The site is considered eligible for the National Register. Although its future is uncertain, the evidence it provides about early motor culture is sure. Such sites have become increasingly rare as the first motor age slowly draws to a close.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

ADDITIONAL DATA/PHOTOS
number all continuations from front

William's (sic) DeLuxe Cabins
Exton, Chester County

28. Sources of Information

Post Cards, William's Deluxe Cabins, West Whiteland Historical
Commission Collection, Exton, Pennsylvania.

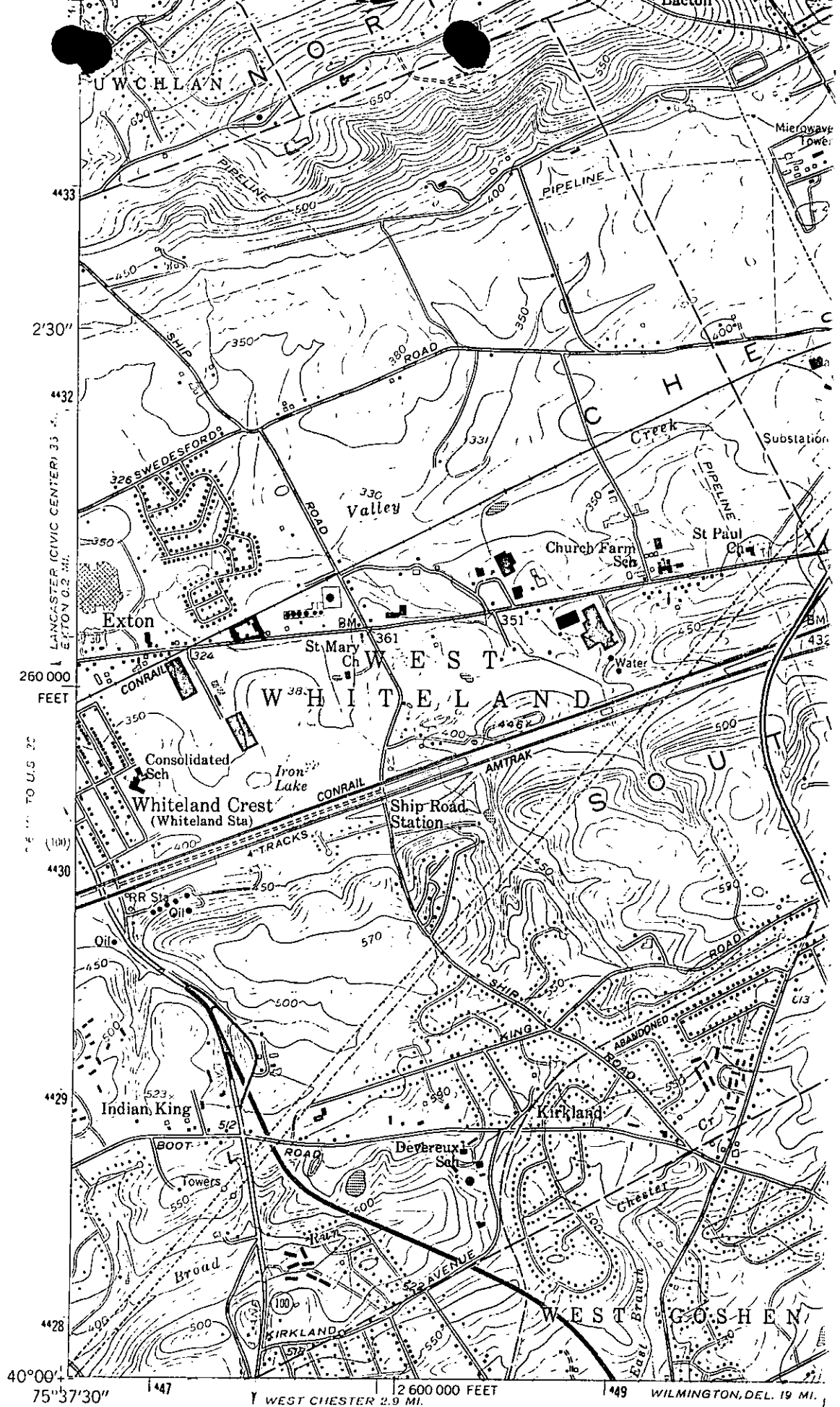
1979 - Belasco, Warren James. Americans on the Road, from Autocamp to
Motel, 1910-1945, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Chester County Deed Books, Chester County Courthouse, West Chester,
Pennsylvania.

Post Cards, Williams' DeLuxe Cabins, West Whiteland Historical
Commission Collection, Exton, Pennsylvania.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)



WILLIAMS DELUXE CABINS
 WEST WHITELAND TWP., CHESTER CO., PA
 (MALVERN)

and published by the Geological Survey

NOS/NOAA

metric methods from aerial
 951. Field checked 1955

