

4408

5763 / SE
(KIRKWOOD)

4406

4405

47°30'

(472)

MT. VERNON 2 MI.
13 MI. TO U.S. 222

4403

LOWER OXFORD

Oxford
(BM 567)

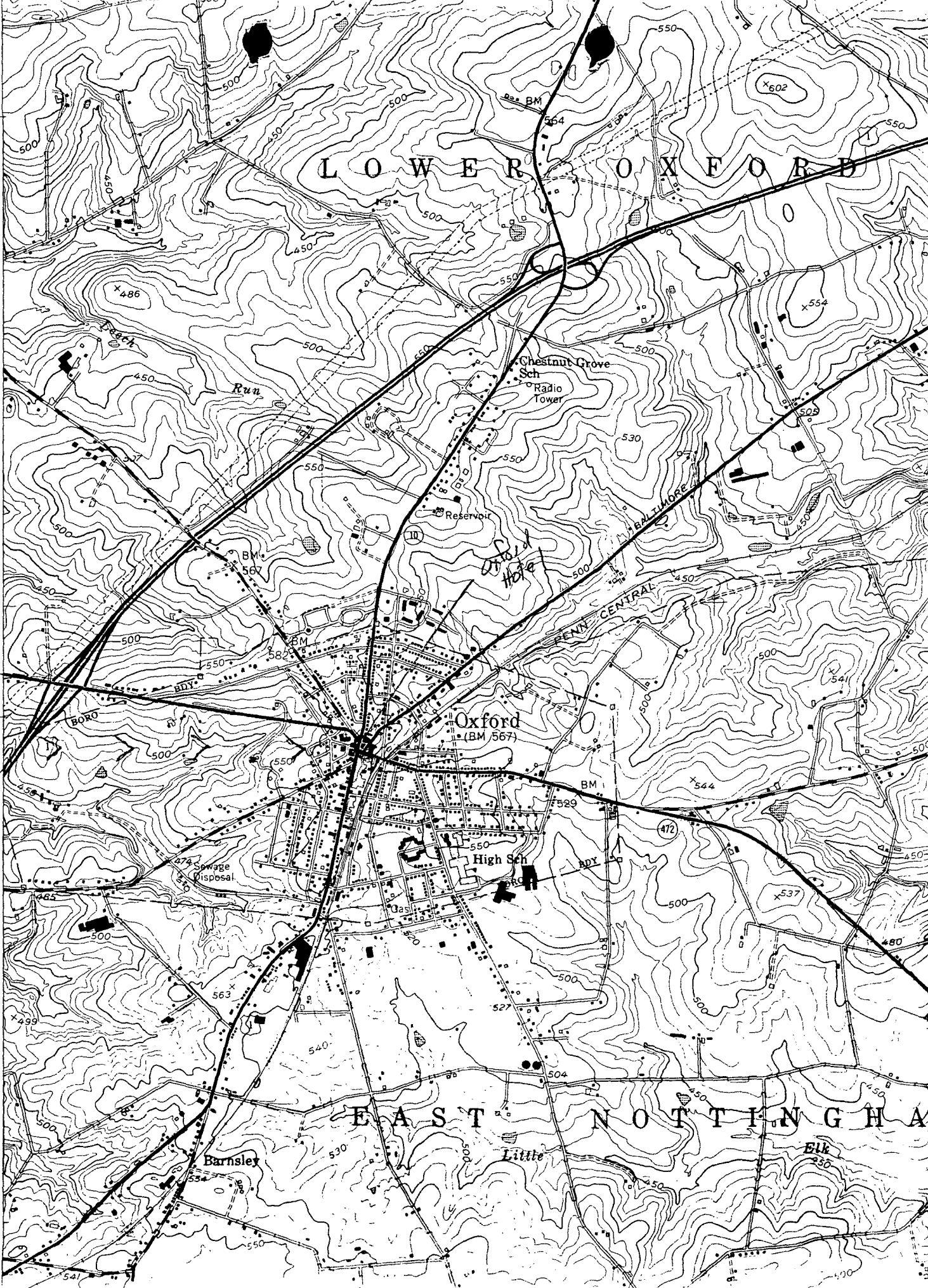
High Sch

EAST NOTTINGHAM

Barnsley

Little

Elk



6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/restaurant

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Slate, Metal (some areas)

other Bituminous Membrane (majority)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Situated on the corner of Market and N. 3rd Streets, in the heart of Oxford's business district, stands the borough's oldest hotel, the Oxford Hotel. This four story, brick, Italianate structure occupies a block along Market Street between N. 3rd St. and Lincoln Avenue, and extends back to an alley. The hotel originally was a three story brick structure with a simple porch and a steeply pitched gabled roof (see photograph H-1). That 1853 structure has been continuously altered and extensively renovated. As described in detail below, the 1853 structure received additions in 1888, 1894, and 1924. In spite of the substantial additions to the 1853 structure, the building retains its integrity as a gradual accretion, reflecting the growth of the borough, and the economic prosperity of the hotel. The structure retains the distinctive characteristics which define the Late Victorian/Italianate style of the borough's commercial district.

While the existing structure dates to 1853, it replaced an earlier Oxford Hotel which is believed to have been a much smaller, log structure. This site is of great historic significance in the borough's history, as it was a stopping point on the stagecoach line from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Upon the arrival of the railroad, the Borough of Oxford was quickly transformed as it was accessible to larger numbers of people which afforded new opportunities for local businesses. The structure stands at the intersection of major rural roads which promoted its continued growth and success through the 20th century.

The hotel's neighboring buildings are primarily of the same architectural style as the hotel and stand as evidence of the town's economic boom period. Directly across Market Street from the hotel is the "Trade Center," a three story brick, flat roofed Italianate structure with storefronts on the first floor. Its wide cornice is supported by paired brackets. A series of late 19th century commercial structures are located to the east of the Trade Center along N. 3rd Street. These buildings are primarily constructed of brick and rise three stories in height. The first floors contain storefronts, though many of these have been altered. One block to the south on N. 3rd Street is an early 20th century stone bank with large entrance portico, supported by four columns. One block to the north along N. 3rd Street is a ca. 1890 three story, four bay brick structure with paired windows on the upper floors and storefronts below. This facade is crowned by an elaborate pressed metal cornice with finials.

The demise of Oxford's thriving commerce began with the arrival of the automobile and commercial trucking which replaced the carriage and railroad industries. With the emerging economic self-sufficiency, residents migrated to larger metropolitan areas such as Wilmington, Lancaster and Philadelphia.

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
 ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1853-1943

Significant Dates

1894
 1869
 1853

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Jones, George
 others, unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Oxford Hotel represents the evolution of Oxford's most important commercial structure from the earliest settlement of the town through the late 20th century. Its commercial and architectural significance can be recognized in the various additions to the original structure, a result of the hotel's financial success.

In 1754 John Hayes arrived in Chester County and built a "public house" which he called the *Londonderry Inn* on the heavily traveled Limestone Road at the point where the road to Tanner's Mill and eventually to the tidewater at Christiana continued east.¹ He soon transferred control to his son-in-law Walter Hood. The Hoods, recognizing the allegory in their surname and the historical Nottingham Township renamed the tavern the *Robin Hood Inn*. It was later shortened to the *Archer*. In the late 18th century, the crossroads where the Oxford stands was known as Hood's crossroads. In 1790-93 road papers were drawn, which depict a sketch of the structure and identify it as "Walter Hood's."² The Oxford Meetinghouse stood diagonally across the street, indicating that this was indeed the major crossroad of the town. Charles Carlson's 20th century mural of the original tavern at Oxford depicts the structure as a two and one-half story, four register, gable roof log structure with a porch along the main elevation and continuing around to the side elevation.

During the Revolutionary War, under Hood's tenure, local farmers gathered at the hotel to manufacture saltpeter which was necessary in the manufacture of gun powder for the Continental Congress.³ The hotel was designated as a depository for wheat that was hauled from Chester County's farms and then transported to feed Washington's army during the Battle of the Brandywine.⁴

The hotel left the Hood family upon the death of Samuel Hood and the title was transferred to Col. David Dickey. A description of the hotel and surrounding land was published in a January 24, 1810 advertisement in the *Chester and Delaware Federalist*, a West Chester newspaper which offered for sale,

"The Village of Oxford, including the tavern by Col. David Dickey...The tavern "stand" had 38 acres and three quarters of land, a large portion of which is woodland and meadow of excellent quality...There is on the premises a large apple and peach orchard.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography:

The Chester County Historical Society Clippings file contains many newspaper articles which have been clipped, mounted, and chronologically organized. All referenced clippings are contained in the *Oxford Hotel* collection.

Ficcio, Louie J. "History of the Oxford Hotel." Undated. Located in the Oxford Hotel Clippings file of the Chester County Historical Society.

Futhey, J. Smith and Gilbert Cope. *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with Genealogical and Biographical Sketches*. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Chester Co. Hist. Soc. & Chester Co. Office of Parks and Recreation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1/2 acre

UTM References

A 18 416190 4404170
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the Southwesterly corner at the center lines of Third Street and Market Street, extending North 29 degrees East 170.15' to a point and North 17 degrees 39 minutes East 4.38' to the Alley; thence extending South 59 degrees 22 minutes 03 seconds East 137.12' to the center line of Lincoln Avenue; thence extending South 38 degrees 32 minutes 30 seconds West 168.47' to the center line of Market Street; thence extending North 63 degrees 26 minutes West 107.40' to the place of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The above mentioned legal boundary description, as stated in the deed, includes the entire city lot that contains the Oxford Hotel.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia A. Rose/Associate

organization Noble Preservation Services, Inc. date 11/1/93 revised 2/4/94, 5/10/94

street & number 10 Log House Road telephone (215) 679-5110

city or town Zionsville state PA zip code 18092

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oxford Hotel, Chester County, Pennsylvania

Section number 7 Page 1**Original 1853 Section**

The six westernmost registers of the Market Street facade comprise the original brick L-shaped building (see photograph E-1). This original structure extends four registers along N. 3rd Street with one register recessed forming the rear ell. At some point between 1853 and 1866 (the date of photograph H-1), an additional register was added to the east end of the Market Street facade, as evidenced by the change in roofing materials, porch structure, and by the chimney locations, in photograph H-1. As confirmed by the shadow line on the N. 3rd Street elevation, this four story structure originally rose only three stories. The fourth story with shallow-pitched gable roof and bracketed wood cornice, was added ca. 1874-1886. A two-story Victorian porch with elaborate iron balustrade was added to the Market and N. 3rd Street elevations in 1869, marking the transformation of the vernacular structure into a local landmark of architectural interest (see photographs H-2 - H-5). Structural deterioration precipitated the removal of the second story of this porch and the enclosing of the first story in the mid-twentieth century. Crowning this existing enclosed porch is a section of the original balustrade. An historic photograph ca. 1944-49 depicts the removal of the 2nd story of the porch with the retention of the 1st story and iron balustrade (see photograph H-6). Shortly thereafter, this 1st story was enclosed to gain a dining room. Though not original to the building, the two-story porch was a significant architectural feature, and its demolition greatly altered the appearance and architectural character of the building.

The fenestration of the Market Street elevation reflects the sequence of building changes. Earlier portions retain 6/6 single hung sashes, latter 19th century additions have 2/2 double hung sashes, and the porch has modern sashes of various configurations. Modern louvered shutters adorn the windows on the 3rd and 4th stories, although historic photographs indicate that the building had contained shutters for much of its existence (see photographs H-1 - H-3). The hotel's main entrance is located on this facade and is reached by a set of granite steps with decorative iron railings. Below the porch is a partially below-grade commercial area built into the gradual slope of the site. The pattern of fenestration is similar to that shown in historic photographs, though the walls have been covered with brick-cote. Significant alterations occurred on the 1st story of the N. 3rd Street elevation of the 1853 building. They include the addition of permastone siding, pent-eave, modern windows, and a double leaf door. In the mid-20th century, the brick exterior was painted, though these elevations have subsequently been stripped of paint. A variety of sash configurations are contained in the upper stories including 1/1, 2/2 and 6/6 sashes.

1888 N. 3rd Street Hipped Roof Barroom Section

In 1888, a one story dining room was added to the north along N. 3rd Street, which shortly thereafter became the barroom. Originally brick, the street facade now has permastone with three 6/6 sashes. This structure is topped with a standing seam metal hipped roof. As indicated in the Sanborn Atlases, the structure originally contained a one-story porch off the rear.

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Oxford Hotel, Chester County, Pennsylvania

Section number 7 Page 2**1894 Market Street and Lincoln Avenue Section**

Economic prosperity in the last decade of the 19th century fostered the four-story brick addition which joins the original section immediately to the east and consists of the two easternmost bays on the Market St. facade (see photographs E-2, E-3). This addition extends north six registers along Lincoln Avenue. A paneled door with a small canopy above provides access from Lincoln Avenue. Bracketed wood cornices were continued on this elevation. A three story ornate pressed metal turret with conical roof sheathed in metal shingles completes the southeast corner from the 2nd to 4th stories. Crowning this feature is a decorative cast iron railing. The Market St. facade contains 1/1 and 2/2 sashes with modern sashes in the enclosed porch. Evidence of former porches is apparent on the Lincoln Avenue facade at the second and third stories immediately north of the turret. A variety of window openings are contained in this facade with 2/2 sashes on the upper stories and glass block infill on the 1st story. Openings on the second and third stories to the south contain double leaf doors which led to balconies that have subsequently been removed. A modern metal fire escape extends from the 2nd - 4th stories along Lincoln Avenue.

1924 Lincoln Avenue 3 Story Addition/N. 3rd Street Modern 1 Story Addition

A three story, flat roof, L-shaped brick addition was constructed in 1924 to provide additional rooms and modern facilities for the hotel. This section adjoins the building to the north and continues to the rear alley. The Lincoln Avenue elevation contains two registers with 1/1 sashes and glass block infill. A modern metal fire stair leads from the second to third stories abutting modern doors at each level. The elevation along the alley is five registers in width with paired 2/2 sashes. The N. 3rd Street elevation contains three registers with 1/1 sashes. A modern one-story, flat roof addition adjoins this section to the west and contains three registers along N. 3rd Street with two 6/6 sashes and a centrally located door opening which has been filled with brick. The elevation along the alley also contains three registers with 2/2 sashes and a central door.

Interior Features

The first floor is accessed through entrances on Market and N. 3rd Street. It contains the hotel's service facilities, including bar rooms, dining rooms, a kitchen, lobby and a lounge. The bar room in the hipped roof addition contains an original pressed metal ceiling with exposed wood beams and an ornate carved wood bar-back (see photograph E-4). Some original wood trim survives on the first floor, including door trim, window trim, baseboard, crown molding and chair rail. Much of this trim dates, however, from extensive 1949 renovations which created a Colonial Revival interior.

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Oxford Hotel, Chester County, Pennsylvania
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Hotels in the twentieth century became lavish complexes with restaurants, shops and special rooms for social affairs. Accordingly, the Oxford Hotel underwent this mainstream transformation. In 1949 a Grand Reopening was announced and with it came a new interior of pastel colors. These interior alterations were extensive and included the *Londonderry Room* (ballroom) which was finished with red and green walls, a black and white linoleum floor and bright copper chandeliers. The *Coffee Shoppe* contained tables and counter stools with a black and white linoleum floor, dark green walls, white ceiling and flowered curtains. The *New Kitchen* was treated with tan and black tile walls. The *Mason-Dixon Room* (dining room) contained spacious windows to view passersby. The *Robin Hood Room* (lounge room) was formally finished with a deep rose carpet, tan walls and green woodwork. Finally the *John Hayes Room* (cocktail lounge) contained an oval bar, carpet, green and red walls, green leather stools, upturned copper lamps, and gold and green paintings done by Charles X. Carlson depicting the hotel in the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s. Further renovations in the 1980s included cosmetic alterations to the 1949 rooms.

The upper floors are reached by a handsome wood stairway dating to the original 1853 building. It includes an original balustrade and newel posts (see photograph E-5). This stairway extends from the 1st through 4th floors. The second through fourth floors are comprised of a series of narrow corridors which lead to individual rooms. A central open light shaft provides light to abutting rooms. An additional light shaft exists near the northeast corner of the building.

Renovations have been made to these floors altering both the original floor plan and the original finishes. Generally, the corridors contain modern suspended ceilings, obscuring the existing plaster above, modern crown molding and plaster walls. An array of corridor doorways exist, some with salvaged or new doors, and some original transomed surrounds with paneled doors. Individual rooms contain primarily plaster walls and ceilings and wood baseboard and bullseye door and window trim. Trim on the upper floors also dates from later alterations. Corner rooms of the upper floors contain the most original trim, and the most significant features, including elaborate fireplaces (see photograph E-6). The building remains in fair condition with some deterioration, particularly on the upper floors, as a result of neglect and abandonment.

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Oxford Hotel, Chester County, Pennsylvania
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Outbuildings

As mentioned in numerous 19th century newspaper advertisements, the hotel property contained various outbuildings including, brick stables, shedding, carriage house, ice house, and "necessary outbuildings." These structures were located to the rear of the hotel, along Lincoln Avenue, with additional shedding across Lincoln Avenue which disappeared between February 1914 and September 1924. Changing technologies eliminated the need for many of these facilities, as they were either incorporated into the building itself, or transformed for other functions. The six Sanborn maps of Oxford Borough which date from March 1886 to September 1924, depict the existence and transformation of these outbuildings, including the progression of the horse shed into the garage. Subsequent to the September 1924 map, the remaining outbuildings were removed, and replaced with modern structures.