

MARSHALLTON 3 MI.
COPEVILLE 1.7 MI.

57°30"

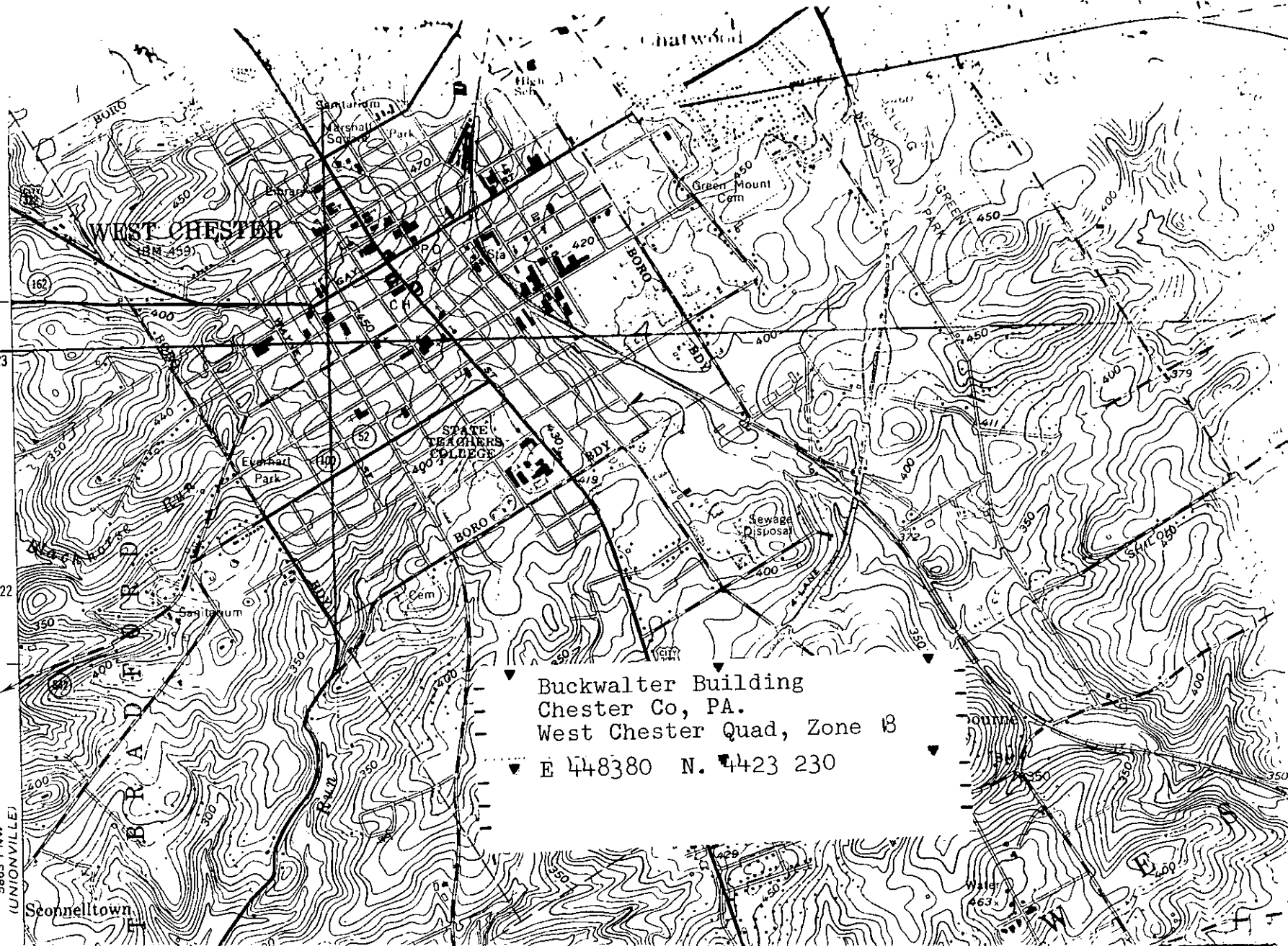
4423

4422

UNIONVILLE 7.5 MI.
WAWASET 3 MI.

5863 (NW
(UNIONVILLE)

Seonneltown



▼ Buckwalter Building
Chester Co, PA.
West Chester Quad, Zone B
▼ E 448380 N. 4423 230

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 Buckwalter Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 11-13 South High Street not for publication

city, town West Chester vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Chester code 029

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Lawrence E. and Jane C. MacElree

street & number 17 West Miner Street

city, town West Chester vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chester County Courthouse
Office of the Recorder of Deeds

street & number High and Market Streets

city, town West Chester state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

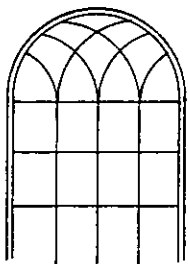
original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Buckwalter Building is an irregular three-bay, three and one-half story cross gable masonry building of the late Gothic revival style - diagonally across the street from the Chester County Court House. The facade of Roman brick and red sandstone includes a projecting wood frame oriel of two stories, balanced against a series of tripartite windows set in deep reveals. The third floor window is Venetian, the second floor a transomed bay in the reveal, and the center window on the first floor is a low-sprung arch divided in the center with a heavy vertical mullion. A photograph taken within five years of its construction in 1893 shows that the facade is unchanged except for air conditioners and some deterioration of the stone.

The building was planned to have offices on the first floor, apartments on the second and third, and storage on the fourth, or attic. The front room of the street floor was apparently divided in two at the center window mullion originally. The staircase at the south rear corner is original. There was a two-story frame extension on the south side of the rear lot within three years of its completion, but whether the wing was built with the front part is questionable. The wing has been demolished.

The design of the masonry facade is complex, with smooth ashlar arches over the first floor openings and around the Venetian window, but with heavy rusticated ashlar belt courses at the second floor line and above the second floor window, and below the center window. There is rusticated stone trim at the parapet of the front gable. The slate roof has alternating horizontal bands of fish-tail and square cut shingles.



WINDOW AT
WILMINGTON CITY HALL

Perhaps the most interesting design feature of the facade is the muntin pattern of the wood sash, which consists of variations on the late Georgian "Gothick" pattern used in the Philadelphia and Wilmington City Halls in the arched windows. The square-headed sash have a simple series of bisected arches, but the round head windows are individual and clearly inspired by the Federal motif.

The mouldings are unusual as well. The panel mouldings on the doors and oriel are simple chamfers, without any profile. The transom bars extend out to a very sharp edge at the face of the trim with an elaborate profile, as on the base of the oriel. This disparity between elaborate small scale profiled mouldings and heavy plain trim extends through the original fabric of the interior as well. The interior has been remodelled at various times, and has less integrity than the exterior, but is in excellent condition.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates Construction Date: 1893 **Builder/Architect** Builder: William Burns

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Buckwalter Building is an important example in the breakdown of the romantic architectural styles and the re-establishment of a rational rather than emotional evaluation of building. The design elements used in the facade are Roman or Renaissance in origin, arranged in a characteristically asymmetric cross gable facade, in contrast to the Gothic or fantasy elements of Furness or Eyre.

As might be expected, the beginning of the Colonial Revival style occurs in an area full of existing late Georgian buildings such as Chester County, and where the owner for whom the building was designed was a real-estate banker whose rational approach had been eminently successful. Henry Brinton Buckwalter, the builder, was the son of a prosperous farmer in West Vincent Township, and started business in West Chester in 1879 as a "conveyancer" or real-estate broker. By 1893, when the building was built, he was president of the Farmers Bank, a dealer in "Western" mortgages and insurance, a vestryman of Holy Trinity Church, and trustee of the Normal School.

In contrast to contemporary medieval buildings like the Fire House at 24 North Church Street in West Chester which displays Gothic arches, a crenellated tower and (masonry) half-timbering, the Buckwalter Building contains an assembly of Colonial elements arranged in a characteristically medieval facade. The elements include not only a Venetian window and the late-Georgian muntin design for an arched-head window (inspired perhaps by those in the Wilmington City Hall), but also the Roman elements of Pompeian brick and red, rather than brown, stone for the arches over the first floor openings and the rusticated base. These elements look back to the Roman revival of the 1850s, when Pompeian interior decoration had been recently discovered and was extremely fashionable.

Although it remains undocumented, the Buckwalter Building was almost certainly designed by architect T. Roney Williamson, who was born in West Chester in 1852 and worked in Philadelphia with the office of Henry and James Sims, two Canadians who are recognized for their restraint and sensitivity in contrast to the excess of others such as Furness and Evans. Working in the same imaginative Romanesque and Gothic revival styles, the Sims, and particularly Williamson, were remarkably creative without being offensive.

By 1890, Williamson had moved back to West Chester where he developed an extensive practice, designing several buildings at the State Normal School, banks from New Jersey to Delaware, and the existing wing of the County Court House (1892) across Market Street from the Buckwalter Building, which is on the National Register. Also in 1892 he designed the Choir Building for Holy Trinity with intersecting round arches producing an arcade of pointed arches reminiscent of the muntin pattern

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Continuation sheet Buckwalter Building

Item number 8

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in the rectangular windows of 11-13 South High Street. The high asymmetrical tower of the Church, designed by Williamson in 1889, was recently (1982) demolished. Buckwalter, who lived in the large mid-century brick house across High Street from the Church, was an influential member of its vestry. Like his contemporaries, Williamson was always imaginative, intending that none of his buildings should resemble each other, or even draw from the same sources. A number of his surviving buildings in Philadelphia are less successful than his West Chester work, but all are restrained compared with the work of Furness, which was not universally admired; as Ralph Adams Cram wrote in 1936 "for fifty years architecture in America fell to a lower level than history had ever before recorded... vulgar, self-satisfied and pretentious, instinct with frontier ideology, and as rampantly individualistic as the society it so admirably expresses." Cram continues later: "I count these years between 1880 and 1900 as the most remarkable in American architectural history, for in so brief a space of time it was given a wholly new direction. Two years before the beginning of this era it was, as I have said, the most degraded in human history; at the close, it stood in the front of all the work of the western world, with new possibilities opening before it..." The breakdown of romantic eclecticism was swift and dramatic. On one hand, the imaginative and innovative architects continued in the development of a new style, with Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and the California school; while Cram, McKim Mead and White, Arthur Little, and Brognard Okie purified the Gothic, Roman, and Colonial styles in an effort to recreate the old values.

There are few examples of these individualistic buildings in Southeastern Pennsylvania, especially West Chester, which has normally been a conservative town with a downtown district filled with Federal and Greek Revival buildings. The Buckwalter Building represents a significant cultural change in West Chester, and is a symbol of an unusual sophistication. In Pennsylvania the Federal style had never entirely disappeared during the romantic revivals, but had remained part of the vernacular since 1800 (Glassie, Winterthur Portfolio, 7); and its characteristic elongated columns, Venetian windows and mouldings had been used along with the "Georgian" house plan in farmhouses throughout the nineteenth century. The detail of the great square flat-roofed houses in Chester County is Federal rather than Italianate.

The importance of the Buckwalter Building lies in the fact that the facade is a rare example of the inclusion of these Federal elements in a romantic revival design, anticipating the Colonial Revival by a decade. It is clear that it embodies the distinctive characteristics of both a type and period of construction, and possesses integrity of an unusually high degree.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Insurance Maps of West Chester, Pennsylvania; 1896, 1902, 1909.
Daily Local News, Dec. 30, 1892; Jan. 5, Mar. 23, Apr. 2, 3, 5, 6, 21, 29, May 4, 6, 12, 24, June 8, 16, 17, 21, 24, 28, 29, Aug. 3, 1893; Feb. 2, 1894; Nov. 5, 7, 1896.
Boyd's Chester County Directory 1893-4, p. 42; 1900-1, pp. 59, 123.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3532.32 s.f.; 0.081 acres

Quadrangle name West Chester

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	4	8	3	8	0	4	4	2	3	2	3	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification Block 9, Lot 292 West Chester (Area 1)
From SW corner 163 feet E to SE corner of lot. Thence 21.67 feet N to NE corner. Thence 163 feet W to NW corner. Thence 21.67 feet S along High Street to SW corner and place of beginning.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Dickey

organization Office of John M. Dickey, FAIA

date June 30, 1983

street & number 207 West Baker Street

telephone (215) 566-8670

city or town Media

state Pennsylvania

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