

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 Tabor Home for Needy and Destitute Children

and or common Tabor Home/Philip H. Fretz Mansion

2. Location

street & number 601 New Britain Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Doylestown Township

N/A vicinity of

state PA

code 042

county Bucks

code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Institutional

4. Owner of Property

name Tabor Children's Services, Inc.

street & number 601 New Britain Road

city, town Doylestown

N/A vicinity of

state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bucks County Administration Building

street & number Court Street

city, town Doylestown

state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Bucks County Register

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 24, 1985

federal state county local

depository for survey records Bucks County Conservancy, 11 North Main Street.

city, town Doylestown

state PA

7. Description

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Tabor Home is situated in Doylestown Township along the old Turnpike road, Old Easton Road, in what was once a rural agricultural area that is now being gradually developed. However, the immediate area surrounding the mansion still retains its rural character. The house is the main structure on the Tabor Children's Service's property. The surrounding buildings on the remainder of the property include a stone carriage house (1886) converted to a dormitory in the 1920's; Strecker Hall (1941), a stone dormitory; and a small frame outbuilding currently used as a maintenance building.

The nominated resource is a large brownstone Victorian mansion built for Philip Henry Fretz in 1879 in the Second Empire style with undertones of the Chateausque style. The building is asymmetrical in design, of generous proportions, consisting of a main "L" shaped block two and a half stories in height having five bays width on the entrance (east) facade and five bays width on the south facade, a two and a half story hipped roof pavilion within the angle of the "L", and a rear one and a half story library wing attached to the southerly wing of the "L". The brownstone is patterned and the roof is a very steep polychromatic slate and multi-gabled. The building is currently vacant. While there have been some changes to the exterior, the overall integrity of the building remains good. There have been no major additions to the building. The nominated property contains one contributing building.

The five bay east facade (entrance facade) is tripartite in design consisting of a two and a half story projecting gable wing with a two story polygonal bay window and an interior chimney; centrally, there is a three story slightly projecting square tower (formerly surmounted by a mansard roof) which serves as the entrance pavilion with a projecting Classical Revival port-cochere; and lastly, the two and a half story, two bay facade of the main block which has a central gable dormer. The date of 1879 is carved on a stone high on the central ashlar stone tower. The porte-cochere appears to date to the original construction for it has footings of brownstone and it appears in a photograph from c. 1913. The porte-cochere has flat roofed openings surmounted by a modillion cornice and an elliptical arch pediment. The main entrance to the building is sheltered by this porte-cochere.

The North facade of the building is composed of three sections also. Firstly, there is the two and a half story north gable end wall of the main core of the building. Secondly, there is a recessed two and a half story hipped roof infill section to the west of the preceding section. The final section on this facade is a one story frame and glass sun porch. This sun porch is attached to the northernmost side of the Library addition. According to residents, the porch was added sometime before 1932.

The rear or west facade is composed of the following parts: the hipped roof infill section; the one story frame and glass sun porch; and the west gable end of the one and a half story gabled library wing, behind and above which, the gable end of the southerly wing of the main block is visible. The west facade of the infill section has a second story elliptical bow window with stained glass transoms. The entrance to the infill section is on the north. This door has an elliptical fanlight and sidelights of stained glass.

The south facade has two main sections: the facade of the library addition and the facade of the southerly wing of the main block. The south facade of the library wing is dominated by a second story gable roof wall dormer with a round arch 2/2 window. Also, interrupting the same eave and abutting the westerly gable end of the main block, is a modified hipped roof wall dormer that delineates the entrance bay below. Projecting off

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Continuation sheet

Description

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of the south facade of the main block, is the one story sun porch and above a smaller second story sun porch addition. The first story sun porch has a raised stone foundation that matches the stonework of the main core of the house, and presumably dates to the building's original construction. The second story frame porch is of newer vintage. The southerly facade of the main block has a cross gable above a two story three sided bay window which is partially obscured by the second story frame sun porch.

The windows, with the exception of the library wing, are one over one and dressed with arched keystone granite label moldings over the elliptical and round arch windows on the front facade and brownstone moldings on the rear facade. The cornice is plain and has deep eaves with the exception of the scroll brackets on the tower cornice. There is a cut granite water course along the front facade and a brownstone watercourse on the rear of the building. The house has interior gable end chimneys and exterior end chimneys. There are gable dormers on all the major slopes of the roof.

The mansion is eclectic in its combination of architectural styles. The tower gives the impression of a Second Empire central pavilion; however, the irregular plan with a tower and the steep gable roof of the building are more representative of the Chateausque style. The windows are narrow, tall and in the tower they are paired as they often are in Second Empire buildings (with the exception of the upper window in the tower which shows evidence of having been changed to a larger, single window, possibly when the tower roof was changed.) The multi-colored slate roof tiles of red, gray and green and the tall first story windows are generally attributed to the Second Empire period.

The interior details of the house are representative of the eclecticism of the Victorian period. The single most dominating interior feature of the mansion is the heavy Baroque revival carved staircase that curves dramatically as it rises out of the main entrance hall. Halfway up the first rise, the stairway incorporates an arched statue niche. With the exception of the library wing, the majority of the other rooms in the house are not highly ornamented. The main decorative elements are the interior folding pocket shutters on the windows, the wood door and window surrounds, and the fireplaces throughout the house. The door surround trim throughout the front of the house has a Victorian stylized floral pattern at the tops of the corners of the doors; while in the rear of the building the wood trim is a simple Colonial Revival rosette pattern. There are marbled fireplaces on both levels of the house some with the pattern of the Maltese cross. The parlors on the main floor have marbled fireplaces with almost semicircular elliptical arches. There is one fireplace in the rear wing (office 2 on enclosed plan) that is constructed of brick with a split and corbelled flue. Separating the hallway from the rear wing on the first floor (office 2 on enclosed plan), there is a curved sliding pocket door. The northwest parlor (office 1 on enclosed plan) contains elaborate plaster valances above the windows and a plaster medallion surrounding a ceiling light fixture. In another parlor room on the first floor (office 6), there is an ornate mirror with plaster trim that matches the window valances in the other parlor.

The original library, located on the second floor (conference room on the enclosed plan) also has fine ornamentation. There is a round arch recessed lozenge paneled entranceway to the Library. Inside the Library, there is an elaborately carved mantle, exhibiting an Eastlake decorative influence similar to the carved

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decoration on the main staircase. The ceiling is a cathedral type with dormers and there is a round arch niche to one side of the fireplace of the same height. This is the only room with extensive wood paneling on the walls. On the second floor in one of the front rooms (office 7), there is a bay window with a storage bench and folding pocket shutters identical to the ones on the lower level.

Despite its use as a children's home for sixty years, the building has maintained a great deal of its integrity. A circa 1913 photograph of the building shows a Victorian porch spanning the remainder of the front of the main facade to the north of the porte-cochere, a tower with a mansard roof and bargeboard trim in the east gable. Exterior alterations include: the loss of the central tower's mansard roof with a change to the upper window of the tower and the removal of a front porch after 1913. The tower roof is now flat. The east gable no longer has its bargeboard trim. The exact dates that the porch and trim were removed and the tower was altered have not been determined. Considering the scale of the entire building, these changes are not major and do not greatly lessen the overall integrity of the building. The interior integrity of the building is good as well despite its use as an institution from 1913 until 1979. The first story retains a great deal of its plaster ceiling ornamentation and window valances in addition to the wood trim. The interior changes that have been made are the updating of the kitchen to institutional demands, the modernization of bathroom facilities on the upper stories, and the division of a large bedroom on the third floor into three smaller rooms. The overall integrity of the interior is not diminished by these relatively minor changes. The future plans for the building are restoration for office and conference rooms.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1879 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Tabor Children's Services' property is significant on a county wide level in the categories of architecture and social/humanitarian. The Philip H. Fretz Mansion exhibits high style Victorian architecture tempered only slightly by the conservative nature of rural Doylestown. Historic site surveys of the central Bucks County are indicate that this house is a fairly unique blend of design and construction. In the latter category of social/humanitarian, Tabor Home was an inter-denominational Christian home providing shelter for children whose parents could not provide for them. Tabor Home was important for its philosophy of keeping families (siblings) together when placement was necessary. This policy was rare amongst other children's institutions. This practice was accomplished by admitting children of all ages and by being a co-educational institution.

The building on the nominated property was originally constructed for Philip Henry Fretz (1846-1910), the owner of the nearby Turk Mills from 1879 until 1913. Fretz had the house constructed in 1879. Fretz, from a prominent Bucks County family, worked in the jewelry business in New York City and as a banker in San Francisco. His house reflected his cosmopolitan background. Returning to his native Doylestown Township, Fretz had his handsome home constructed.

There are only two other houses in the surrounding area that are quite similar in massing, styles and construction. These two houses are the Ruckman mansion in Solebury Township and the Darlington mansion (1878) in Doylestown Borough. Although much larger, the Tabor Home also resembles another smaller Ruckman house and an addition to the Thomas Lyman house (1873) both in Doylestown Borough. A common denominator among all of these buildings are the materials, brownstone and multi-colored slate. The styles are similar as well. The Darlington mansion and the Lyman house both have steeply pitched gables, round arched windows, an attic story, and similar cross gables. The keystone label molding on the Ruckman mansions in Solebury Township appears much like the moldings on the Fretz mansion. The only main differences between the Ruckman and Darlington mansions, and the Tabor Home are the Tabor Home's central tower and classically derived porte-cochere. Together, the above cited buildings constitute a unique collection of residential architecture in central Bucks County in terms of construction, style and massing.

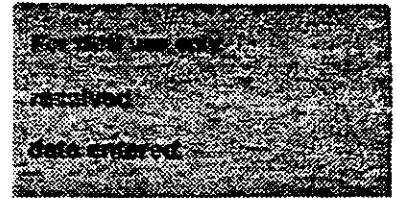
Although not documented, it is possible that the Fretz house was designed by Philadelphia/Doylestown architect Thomas Cernea. All of the other above cited buildings, the only buildings of similar size, material and design, have been definitely attributed to Cernea. The similarity of the Fretz house to the above documented residential works of Cernea in the surrounding area makes a strong case for its association with Cernea. Thomas Cernea was born in Buckingham Township, Bucks County and is virtually the only documented native architect of the period. To date, no complete list of Cernea's projects has been compiled.

Tabor Home has an important place in the evolution of children's homes in the Philadelphia region. According to a c. 1913 Tabor home brochure, there were seventy-four charitable homes for the aid of the unfortunate in Philadelphia and the vicinity: one cared for infants only, eleven cared for infants and mothers, thirteen cared for boys only, eighteen cared for girls only and thirty-one cared for boys and girls. Of

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the 31 institutions which cared for boys and girls, most received only orphans or had an age limit above or below which they would not accept children. These age and sex requirements resulted in many of these institutions separating children from their siblings. Tabor Home diverged from this practice of specialization through segregation by preserving family groups despite age and sex. In this aspect, Tabor Home was unusual. The institution's goal was to preserve family groups while caring for them. As stated in a Tabor Home brochure of c. 1913, Tabor Home was instituted with the aim and ideal of preserving the Christian family.

Tabor Home began in 1907 when Mrs. Emma Chichester, a Philadelphia area philanthropist, offered to transfer her home in Cheltenham to the Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation if it was used as a home for destitute children for whom there was no provision. There were homes for orphaned or crippled children but there was no assistance for dependent children in unfortunate financial circumstances. She suggested that the church underwrite the expense for this short-term care program if the family could not provide for the children. The program soon became swamped by requests for care. By 1913, there were so many children that it was necessary to move to a larger facility, preferably in the country. It was then that the Philip H. Fretz property was purchased from Fretz's estate and became the Tabor Home for Children. Before the purchase of this facility, the younger children were sheltered in the Chichester home in Cheltenham and the older children were housed in the Pastor's former residence in Philadelphia. The difficulty in running two separate facilities and separating siblings by age precipitated the move.

From 1913 to 1973, Tabor Home was run by the Lutheran Church and the care of the children was provided by trained deaconesses of the Philadelphia Motherhouse. During the years from 1913 to the early 1940's, Tabor Home developed a farming program and building projects. In 1922, Tabor Home reported a resident population of sixty-five children between the ages of two and seventeen. In the 1960's, the nominated building became the administrative offices. In 1979, Tabor Home became a secular county welfare institution and in 1985 Tabor Children's Services, Inc. had 120 clients, a small resident population and also provided foster care programs, adoption services, family counseling and psychiatric and psychological services.

In a local context, Tabor Home is one of only two early twentieth century homes for children in Bucks County. The other such institution is Christ's Home in Warminster Township. The two institutions, although having some interesting parallel development and a similar purpose, are quite different. Like Tabor Home, Christ's Home was founded in Philadelphia. It was chartered in 1903, and moved to Bucks County in 1907 (five years before Tabor Home) to provide its children with the advantages of country life. A basic difference between the two is that Tabor Home was designed to provide a temporary home for dependent children of entire families, while Christ's Home soon expanded its services. In addition to providing a home for dependent children, Christ's Home housed the aged and provided a stop for missionaries.

Regionally, there are two other Homes that were opened by the Lutheran Church. Kencrest, originally the Kensington dispensary, was designed to specialize in serving those suffering from tuberculosis, and later for the retarded. The Martin Luther School, originally part of the Germantown Home for Children and the Aged, is a facility which specialized by accepting seriously disturbed clients who were not appropriate for foster care. The Martin Luther School also maintained its affiliation with the Lutheran

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Church, while the Tabor Home separated from the church in 1979 and became Tabor Children's Services, Inc.

There was also another secular institution established in Flourtown, Pennsylvania for orphaned girls. Carson Valley School was founded with funds from a businessman and philanthropist, Robert Carson, and was non-denominational. Its residents were limited to orphaned girls and the community was designed expressly to provide a positive environment for these children. Thus this institution also differed from the Tabor Home in caring for orphaned girls rather than keeping all siblings together.

The Tabor Home's philosophy of attempting to maintain the resident children's family attachments made the institution a rare organization. It was one of very few institutions that maintained family groups. Most contemporary institutions separated children by sex or age, accepting infants only, boys only, or girls only. Tabor Home, following its Christian ideal of preserving the Christian family, too, all the children in a family, not separating a younger brother or sister from older siblings. Current practice at Tabor Home has remained the same; Tabor Home is still a temporary home for children of the same family. According to the Assistant Director of the Tabor Home, it has become the norm among children's homes in the Philadelphia area to keep children of the same family together.

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.184

Quadrangle name Doylestown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 18 488980 4459990
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

see continuation sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

Judith H. Moore, Assistant Director of Hist. Preserv. Dept. / edited by
 name/title Jeffrey L. Marshall, Director of Hist. Preserv. Dept. / William Sisson

organization Bucks County Conservancy/PHMC date March 11, 1987

street & number 11 North Main Street/Penn Museum telephone (215)345-7020 and 345-8966/
(717) 783-8946

city or town Doylestown/Harrisburg state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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 Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer 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

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Continuation sheet Bibliographical References Item number 9

Page 1



_____. What God Hath Wrought through Christ's Home, 1903- 1963. Private printing, Warminster, Pa., 1963; pages 1-6, 18-20, and 97-106.

_____. "Tabor Home For Needy and Destitute Children", W.H. Deisroth Co. Printers, Philadelphia, Pa. n.d. (circa 1913); pages 1-9.

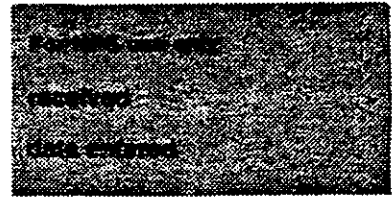
Davis, W.W.H. History of Bucks County Pennsylvania From the Discovery of the Delaware to the Present Time, Second Edition Revised and Enlarged with a Genealogical and Personal History of Bucks County by Warren S. Ely and John W. Jordan, Volume III, Lewis Publishing Co., New York, 1905, pages 143-47.

Tatman, Sandra, et al. A Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects 1700-1930. G.K. Hall, Boston, 1985, pages 138-39.

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Continuation sheet Geographical Data Item number 10 Page 1

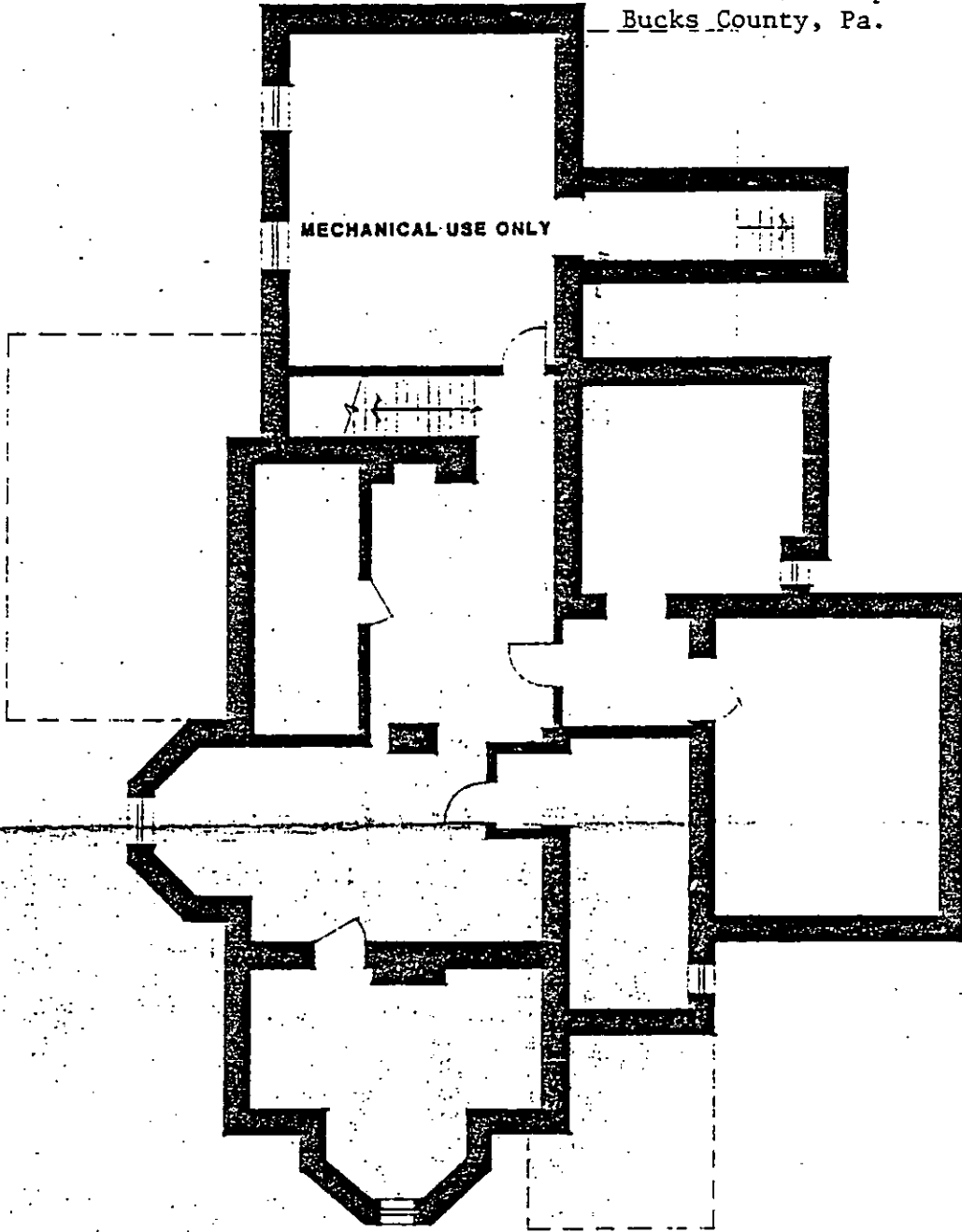
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 480' north of the intersection of New Britain Road and the westerly fork of southbound Route 611, thence the next four courses: westerly 100', northerly 80', easterly 100' and southerly 80' to the place of beginning. The boundaries form a rectangle which enclose the land upon which the nominated resource is located.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries are designed to form a rectangle around the nominated building and to exclude the surrounding open space and non-contributing buildings. The remainder of the current parcel's 42.71 acres has been omitted.

Tabor Home/Philip H. Fretz Mansion,
Bucks County, Pa.



BASEMENT PLAN

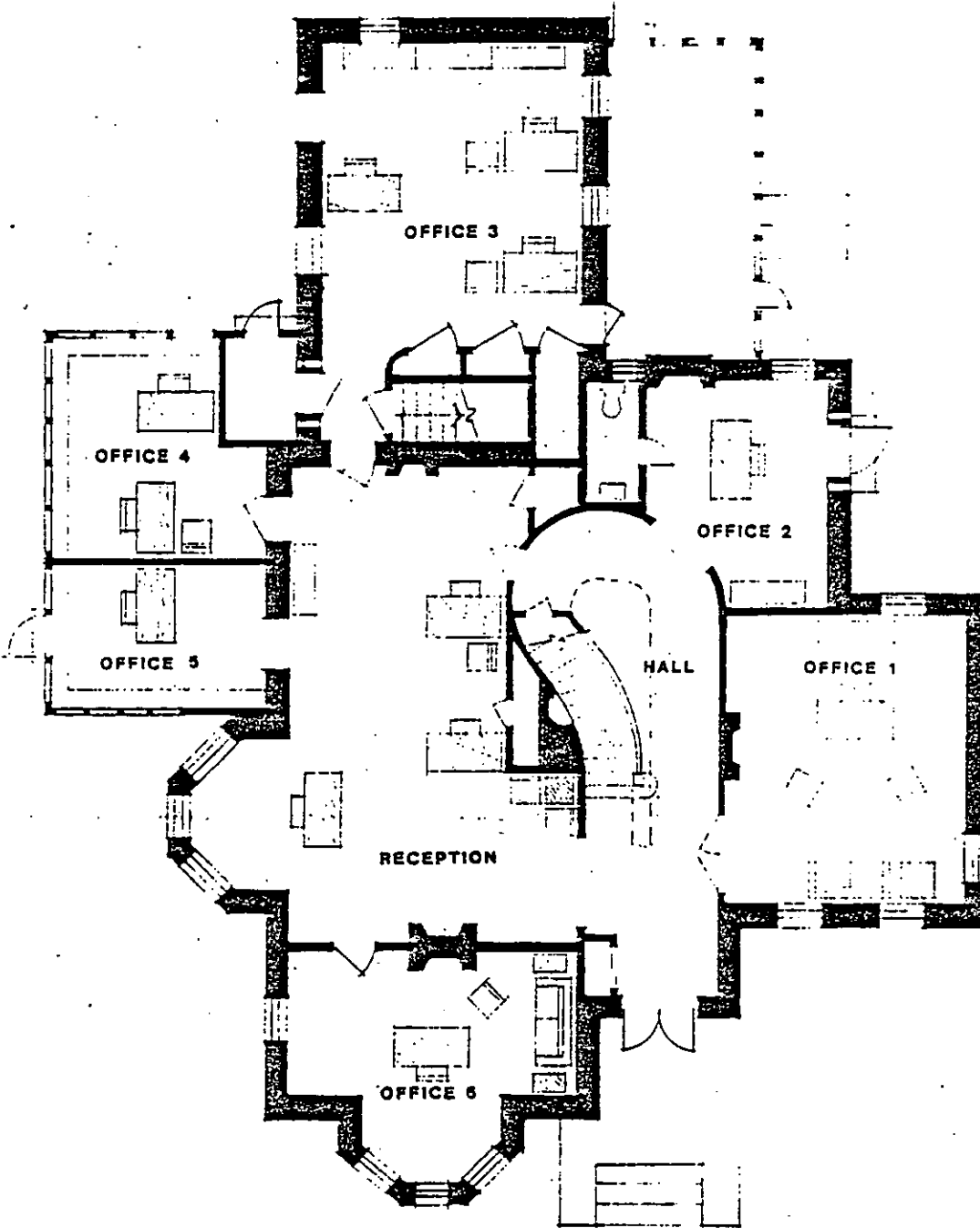
VICTORIAN MANSION

TABOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCALE: 0 $\frac{1}{8}$ 1 1 1/2 2 1/2 3 1/2 4 1/2 5 1/2 6 1/2 7 1/2 8 1/2 9 1/2 10 1/2 11 1/2 12 1/2 13 1/2 14 1/2 15 1/2 16 1/2 17 1/2 18 1/2 19 1/2 20 1/2 21 1/2 22 1/2 23 1/2 24 1/2 25 1/2 26 1/2 27 1/2 28 1/2 29 1/2 30 1/2 31 1/2 32 1/2 33 1/2 34 1/2 35 1/2 36 1/2 37 1/2 38 1/2 39 1/2 40 1/2 41 1/2 42 1/2 43 1/2 44 1/2 45 1/2 46 1/2 47 1/2 48 1/2 49 1/2 50 1/2 51 1/2 52 1/2 53 1/2 54 1/2 55 1/2 56 1/2 57 1/2 58 1/2 59 1/2 60 1/2 61 1/2 62 1/2 63 1/2 64 1/2 65 1/2 66 1/2 67 1/2 68 1/2 69 1/2 70 1/2 71 1/2 72 1/2 73 1/2 74 1/2 75 1/2 76 1/2 77 1/2 78 1/2 79 1/2 80 1/2 81 1/2 82 1/2 83 1/2 84 1/2 85 1/2 86 1/2 87 1/2 88 1/2 89 1/2 90 1/2 91 1/2 92 1/2 93 1/2 94 1/2 95 1/2 96 1/2 97 1/2 98 1/2 99 1/2 100 1/2

DATE: 12-20-84

Tabor Home/Philip H. Fretz Mansion,
Doylestown Township, Bucks County, Pa.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

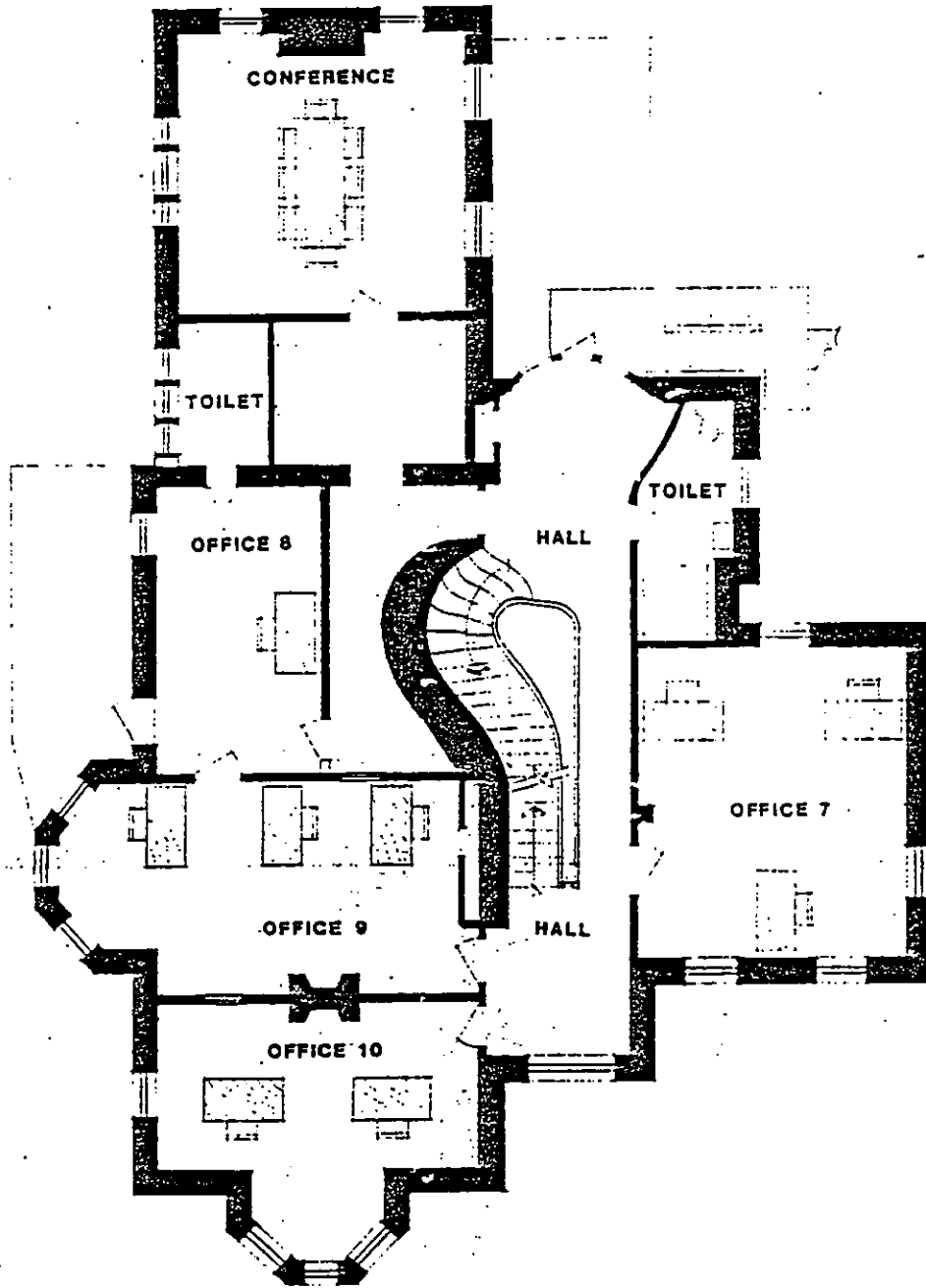
VICTORIAN MANSION

TABOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCALE: 0" = 4' 8"

DATE: 12-20-84

Tabor Home/Philip H. Fretz Mansion,
Doylestown Township, Bucks County, Pa.



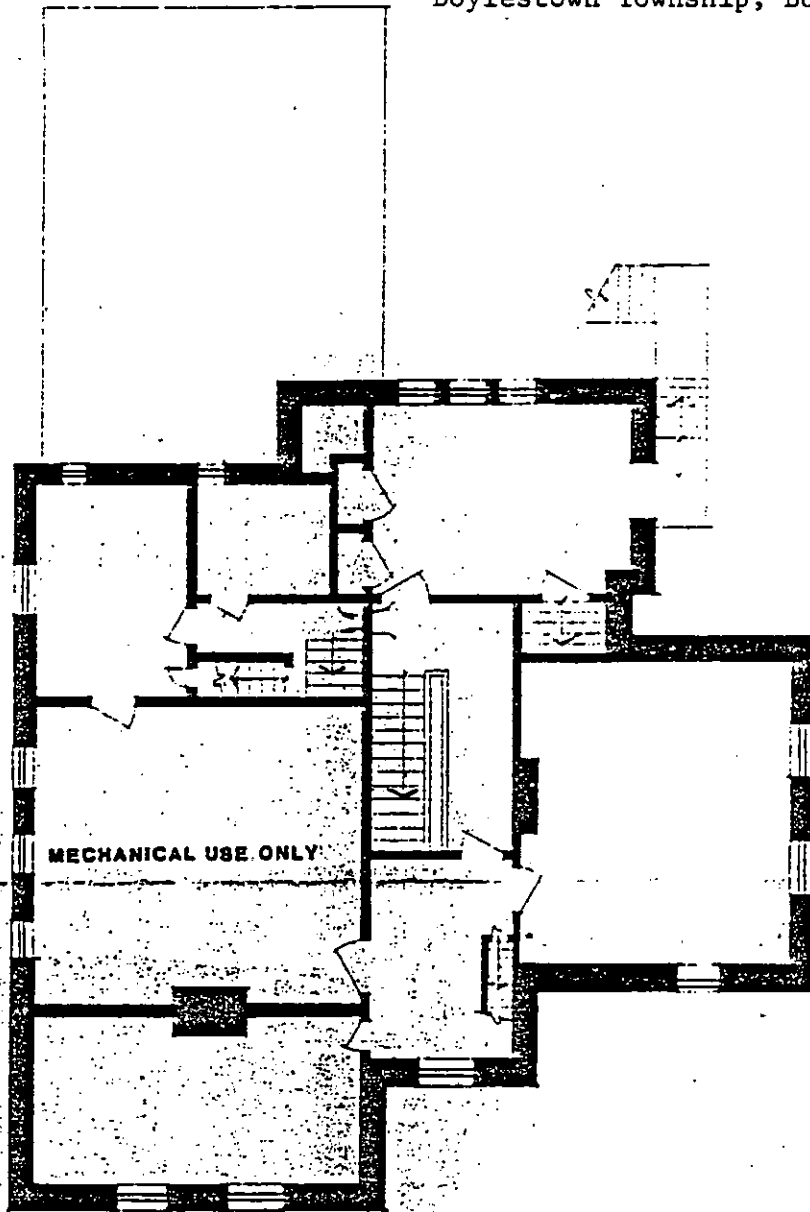
SECOND FLOOR PLAN.

VICTORIAN MANSION
TABOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCALE: 0  8

DATE: 12-20-84

Tabor Home/Philip H. Fretz Mansion
Doylestown Township, Bucks County, Pa.



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

VICTORIAN MANSION

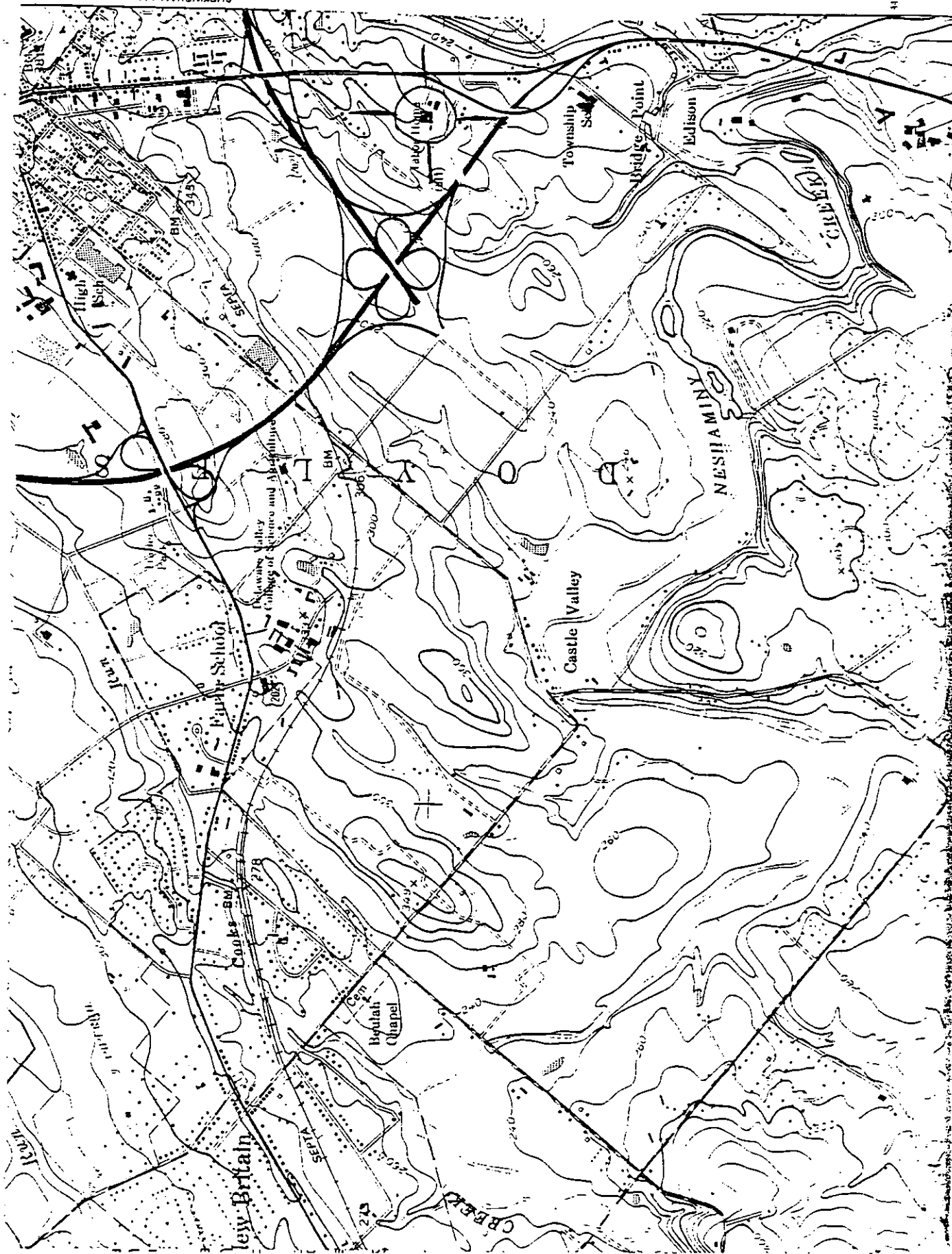
TABOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SCALE: 0 4 8 16

DATE: 12-20-84

Philip Home/Philip H. Bretz Mansion
Bucks County
Doylestown Quadrangle
Zone 18
E488980 N4459990

BUCKINGHAM & M.
NEW HOPE 1:25,000



488