

**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 JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE  
and/or common LANGHORNE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL BUILDING

**2. Location**

street & number Southwest corner of Bellevue and Maple Avenues N/A not for publication  
city, town Langhorne N/A vicinity of  
state Pennsylvania code 042 county Bucks code 017

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: offices

**4. Owner of Property**

name Langhorne Community Memorial Association  
street & number c/o Langhorne Borough, 114 East Maple Street  
city, town Langhorne N/A vicinity of state PA.

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bucks County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds Office  
street & number East Court Street  
city, town Doylestown state PA

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Bucks County Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 10/27/1977  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Bucks County Conservancy, Inc., 11 N. Main Street  
city, town Doylestown state PA.

## 7. Description

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

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

The JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE, also known as the Langhorne Community Memorial Association building, is located on the south corner of the main intersection in Langhorne Borough—Maple and Bellevue Avenues, also the roads from Bristol to Durham and from Trenton, NJ to Philadelphia (formerly Durham Road and Route 1). Langhorne grew out of the eighteenth century village of Four Lanes End and this intersection still retains eighteenth century buildings on all four corners with the RICHARDSON HOUSE as the oldest documented and best preserved structure. The large, landscaped lot upon which the RICHARDSON HOUSE is situated enhances the residential, small town character of Langhorne although adjacent to commercial uses. The house served primarily as the residence of members of the Richardson family from 1738 through the early 20th century when it was donated for community use to the Association. With modest alterations over the centuries to porches, shutters and exterior stucco excepted, the house has excellent exterior integrity from the eighteenth century.

The plastered fieldstone house is two and one-half stories high with an asphalt shingle gable roof oriented to Maple Avenue (old Route 1). The interior gable end chimneys are set slightly to the forward of the peak. The plain boxed cornice continues around into a pent eave on the northeast gable end (facing Bellevue Avenue). Within the gable above this pent and between two 6/6 sash attic windows is the datestone alcove in the Queen Anne "tombstone" shape and reads "J R M 1738". The northwest facade facing Maple Avenue is three bays wide with a center entrance door and early 20th century hipped portico with round columns. The southeast facade is a narrow five bays wide with slightly wider spacing of the bays towards the east corner. Unique in the fenestration is the small shuttered window in the second bay of the second floor which lights the circular staircase to the attic. The entrance door is in the center protected by a hipped, three bay Victorian porch. Bulkhead doors to the cellar are near the east corner. The windows on this facade are 9/9 and 9/6 with the remainder on the other facades 12/12 and 12/8. All the shutters are paneled and appear to date from the early 19th century. The doorways are topped with four-pane transoms with the Maple Avenue door recessed with paneled jambs. A doorway to the store room immediately to the right of the window in the northeast Bellevue Avenue wall shows in early photographs but has since been filled in.

A one and one-half gambrel roofed, plastered stone kitchen addition comes off of the southwest gable end of the main house with a door and window on both the southeast and northwest facades. The southwest wall, into which the cooking fireplace is built has a tiny, closed first floor window and two, unmatched attic windows. There is a tall, rather narrow gable end chimney and a shed porch extending off of the roof for the full length of this addition. On the northwest wall near the intersection of the two sections is a small window near the ground level which allows light to enter the stone interior staircase to the cellar. This section still has the seamed metal roof and appears to have been built contemporary with the main house.

The interior of the RICHARDSON HOUSE is highly significant in having the earliest identified finish woodwork and paneling yet found remaining in Bucks County of a relatively high style. The second floor, in particular, retains close to 90% of the original floorplan and woodwork with only the west chamber being altered for the installation of a wide staircase c.1840-1850. The south and north chambers have the original corner fireplaces with surrounding Queen Anne paneling. The north chamber is especially formal with an arched fireplace opening and corresponding raised panel and a row of "tombstone" arched raised panels in the uppermost tier. The center panel in this tier, centered above the fireplace is slightly

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Continuation sheet    DESCRIPTION    Item number    7    Page 1 of 3

higher and has two buttons or knobs upon which to set a plaque or picture. There is a simple board mantle above the fireplace which does not interfere with the panel arrangement. A tall narrow closet with matching panels is furthest to the right next to the plaster wall. A delicately molded cornice with a multiple beaded pattern reminiscent of William and Mary detailing is carried around the entire room. The original enclosed staircase remains between the south facing chambers. These chambers are quite different in proportion with the large chamber having four windows and a corner fireplace and the small, closet-type chamber "above the shop", probably used for storage.

The interior of the first floor of the main house was remodeled in the mid-19th century when the enclosed staircase and the partitions between the north parlor and the shop were taken out. The corner fireplace was changed to a standard fireplace parallel with the outside wall and a late Greek Revival influenced mantle applied over the reused 18th century paneling. The south parlor fireplace was retained, with its original cast iron fireback set into the plastered back wall and shaped in the prevailing "tombstone" pattern. The entry from the northwest door was boxed and the staircase rebuilt in a much larger format in the west corner parlor, removing the corner fireplace. Presently there are no partitions excepting the entry and one wall of the staircase. The kitchen addition has a large cooking fireplace and an enclosed winding staircase to the attic. Beneath these stairs is a unique set of stone steps leading down to a fully excavated basement under the main house. This cellar is very well preserved and shows evidence of the original staircase near the shop coming down in a boxed area, and the format for a milk cellar mentioned in the 1772 inventory. There is also a set of stone steps leading from an outside bulkhead to the cellar near the shop stairs. There appears to be no cellar under the kitchen wing.

There are no other buildings presently on the 1 acre lot although old photographs and inventories indicate barns and storage outbuildings. Dr. Barbara Liggett is undertaking a preliminary archaeological survey of the property to identify possible archaeological features. Initial artifact findings date as early as the 1700 - 1720 period. The conclusions of her preliminary survey indicate that further excavation will expose early occupation areas, and as developed, reveal the pattern of use at the site in the early eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Barbara Liggett, "Archaeological Feasibility Report: Richardson House and Store, Langhorne, Pennsylvania," (unpublished report, 1985, Bucks County Conservancy), passim.

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Continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION

Item number 7

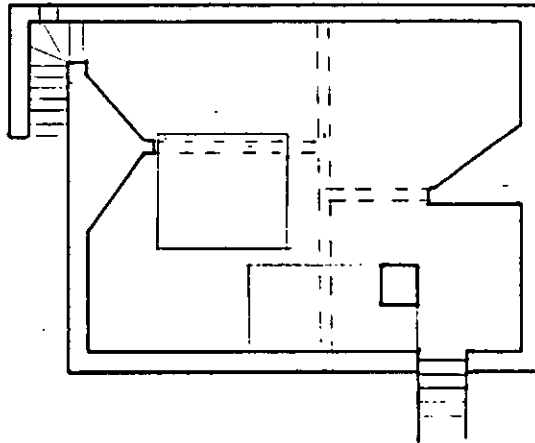
Page 2 of 3

JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE

#18-4-160

Floorplans:

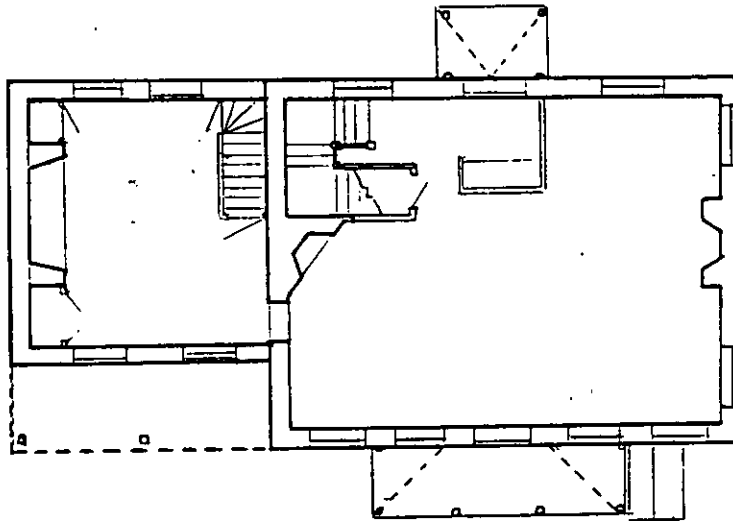
Basement



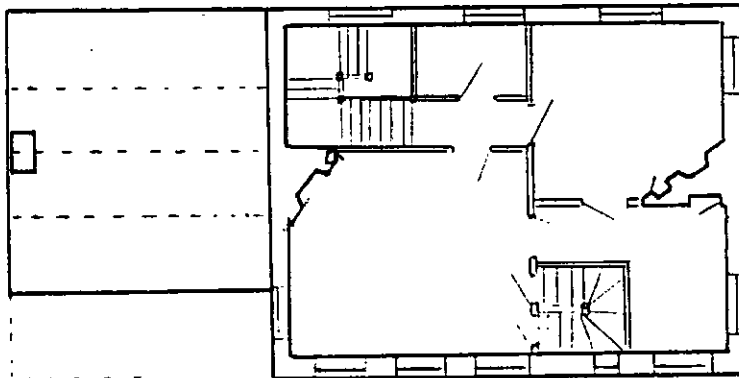
North



1st Floor



2nd Floor



# 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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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** 1738 **Builder/Architect** Commissioned by Joseph Richardson

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE is significant as one of the earliest identified historic structures in Bucks County; one of the earliest stores in the county; and for its association with Joseph Richardson and the Richardson family.

The 1738 date attributed to the house makes the Richardson House one of the oldest remaining buildings yet identified in the county.

It is significant in that the house is not a typical settler's cabin, but a grand house for its day. The rich architectural style of the building, constructed at a time when most structures within the region were relatively simple, is reflected in an often repeated quote that was said to Joseph Richardson during the house's construction; "Be careful thee doesn't get to the bottom of thy purse before thee gets to the top of thy fine house." ("On the Richardson House in Langhorne", by Mrs. Joshua Richardson, reprinted in the Delaware Valley Advance newspaper, July 22, 1965.)

The RICHARDSON HOUSE is one of Bucks County's most significant early structures representing the home and business of a wealthy entrepreneur from the first half of the eighteenth century. The inclusion of the store business within the four walls of the rather formal main house recalls traditions of European and early Philadelphia bourgeoisie. It is the only identified example known remaining from before 1740 of a commercial middle class home and is especially valuable for the study of class representations in architecture when compared with its contemporary c.1737 Growden Mansion, a Palladian estate, as well as with the settler's cabins of stone and log dating from this period.

The 1738 date attributed to the house is reinforced by the fact that Joseph Richardson purchased a one acre lot where the house is situated in 1737. His will of 1770, wherein he identifies himself as "gentleman", indicates that he is living in this house, despite extensive landholdings in Middletown, Northampton and Southampton townships, and the detailed inventory of 1772 verifies the storekeeping activity. The datestone, which appears in all of the early photographs, has the initials of Joseph and Mary Richardson and the date "1738". Most significantly in verifying the 1738 date is the pre-Georgian fenestration and house plan and the Queen Anne paneling.

While the south facade is five bays wide, the fenestration is not precisely even and the bays are narrow, precluding a full-Georgian plan with a wide center hall. The original staircase is enclosed in a box near the south door and the four rooms on each floor are of unmatched sized. The setting of the house close to the intersection may be cause for both the north and south facades to be significant, the south- five-bay facade being the traditional front and the commercial side and the north three bay facade facing the street being the private family side. The north facade is evenly fenestrated and presents a formal appearance. Correspondingly, the north chamber on the second floor has today the most

continued ...

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Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

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elaborate and formal paneling of all the rooms and suggests a special private use perhaps similar to the most lavishly appointed "closets" in English country manors. The treatment of woodwork in this room, being stylishly distinctive is the best preserved example of Queen Anne interior architectural treatments yet found in Bucks County. The remaining original woodwork represents standard pre-Revolutionary paneling and molding. The five-panel doors, however, are more unusual, and earlier, than the predominant "cross-and-bible" six-panel pattern. The cast-iron fireback in the south parlor is also significant of the early period

The original kitchen wing is important in illustrating the practice of building service wings to formal houses as part of the initial plan. It is visually distinct, not only in size, but also in the use of the gambrel roof—quite rare in Bucks County, although most prevalent in or near Dutch settled areas, as in the nearby Northampton and Southampton.

Joseph Richardson's receipt book from 1736 to 1750 indicates his extensive mercantile activity, and constant transactions with numerous Philadelphia merchants, at a time when the Borough of Langhorne was merely a crossroads known as Four Lane End. Later ledger books (not available for reference) are said to contain accounts with Benjamin Franklin and John Hancock, suggesting activity far greater than a typical country store. The store was described by historian J. H. Battle as being the only store in Bucks County between Bristol and Durham during the mid-eighteenth century.

The 1772 inventory of Joseph Richardson gives some insight into the goods handled by the store. In the shop room in the house were listed the more valuable items such as fabrics needles, buttons, nails, lead and ropes. The "safe" was kept in the cellar along with soap tube, barrels, churns and a milk cellar with cheese vats and earthenware. "Furniture" in the "room over the shop" included trunks, a side saddle, warming pan and blankets. Other goods listed with the shop but most likely in an outbuilding were oak plank, walnut and maple boards, farm and smith's tools, salt and animals.

Arriving in America virtually penniless in the early 1720's, Joseph Richardson worked on area farms until the early 1730's when he took up store keeping in a section of the tavern located directly across the road to Philadelphia from his future residence. After the completion of the house in 1738 the store was moved to a portion of the Richardson House. That the store was designed as an integral part of the large house is evidenced by the fact that the southeast room on the first floor of the house, and the room above it, was designed without a fireplace.

Joseph Richardson was extremely successful as a merchant and acted as the local banker. He held numerous mortgages, bonds, and notes, and by his death in 1772 he owned well over a thousand acres of land in and around the township of Middletown (where the village was located until erected into a separate borough of Langhorne). With the impetus provided by Joseph Richardson, the Richardson family became one of the area's wealthiest families.

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RICHARDSON HOUSE, Langhorne Borough, Bucks County, PA.

Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PRIMARY SOURCES:

- Richardson, Joseph, Receipt Book 1735 - 1750, photocopy of original in possession of Historic Langhorne Association, 160 West Maple Avenue, Langhorne, Pennsylvania.
- Richardson, Joseph, Inventory of the estate. Filed May 5, 1772, Filed #1344, Bucks County Register of Wills Office.
- Richardson, Joshua, Inventory of the estate. Filed Dec. 15, 1800, Filed #2975, Bucks County Register of Wills Office.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Davis, W. W. H., History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania..., Volumes I & III, Revised and Enlarged by Warren S. Ely and John H. Jordan. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1907. (Vol. I, pages 126-144; Vol. III, pages 255-256)
- Battle, J. H., History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania..., Philadelphia: A. Warner & Co., 1887. (pages.445 - 466, 970,990)
- Richardson, Joshua, "Record of the Richardson House", February 1, 1869.
- Richardson, Mrs. Joshua, "On the Richardson House in Langhorne" reprinted in the Delaware Vally Advance newspaper, July 22, 1965.
- Wingert, Bridget ed. Langhorne Centennial 1876-1976, Langhorne, PA.: Advance of Bucks County, 1975. (pages 30-31)

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JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE, Langhorne Borough, Bucks County, PA.  
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The following verbal boundary description is taken from the most recent deed for the property, the transfer of May 20, 1921 to the Langhorne Community Memorial Association, Deed Book 453, page 260:

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate at the southwest corner of Bellevue and Maple Avenues, Langhorne Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, described according to survey thereof made by Edward Pickering, Jr. surveyor, on the Twenty Fourth day of March 1920 as follows:

BEGINNING at the intersection of the Southerly side of Maple Avenue with the westerly side of Bellevue Avenue; thence extending along the westerly side of Bellevue Avenue South fifteen degrees twenty-seven minutes east seventy-one (71) feet to an angle in said Bellevue Avenue; thence by the same South seventeen degrees twenty-nine minutes east sixty-five and one-tenth (65.1) feet to a corner of land of the Peoples National Bank of Langhorne, formerly a part of this tract; thence by the same South seventy-two degrees twenty minutes West one hundred twenty-six (126) feet; thence by the same and by other lands of the said Peoples National Bank south seventeen degrees twenty-nine minutes east seventy-five (75) feet to a point in line of land of Fred E. Russell, formerly Emily Bailey's land; thence by the same South seventy-seven degrees thirty-two minutes West forty-eight (48) feet to a corner in line of land of Clara M. Briggs; thence by said Briggs land North sixteen degrees West two hundred twenty-six (226) feet to a point in the southerly side of Maple Avenue; thence by the southerly side of the said Maple Avenue North seventy-eight degrees thirty-three minutes East one hundred seventy-one and three-tenth (171.3) feet to the place of beginning, be the same more or less.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries herein submitted follow the property lines of county tax parcel #18-4-160 and have been such since 1921. Two sides of the property are bounded by Bellevue and Maple Avenues respectively. Adjoining properties now have buildings constructed there on. The entire parcel - which includes open ground in lawn and planting has been historically associated with the property and may yield significant archaeological resources associated with the house and its uses.



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September 16, 1777 his entourage stopped at the Richardson house, where his wound was tended and he spent the night. As other verified accounts place Lafayette in Bristol at this time, and the Richardson house is on the main route north from Bristol towards Bethlehem; the assertion that he stopped at the finest house in the area is quite plausible. Richardson also stated that Washington's troops stayed in the house after the Battle of Trenton, December 5, 1776. This, too, is logical as the crossroad at Four-Lanes End was the road from Trenton to Philadelphia.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .64 Acre

Quadrangle name Langhorne, PA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See Continuation Sheet No. 1 for USGS Map

A 

1	8	5	0	6	8	0	0	4	4	4	7	0	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing					

### 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

name/title Kathryn Ann Auerbach & Jeffrey L. Marshall

organization Bucks County Conservancy

date September 1985

street & number 11 N. Main Street

telephone 215-345-8966

city or town Doylestown

state PA.

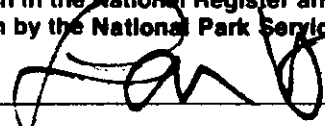
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11/19/85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

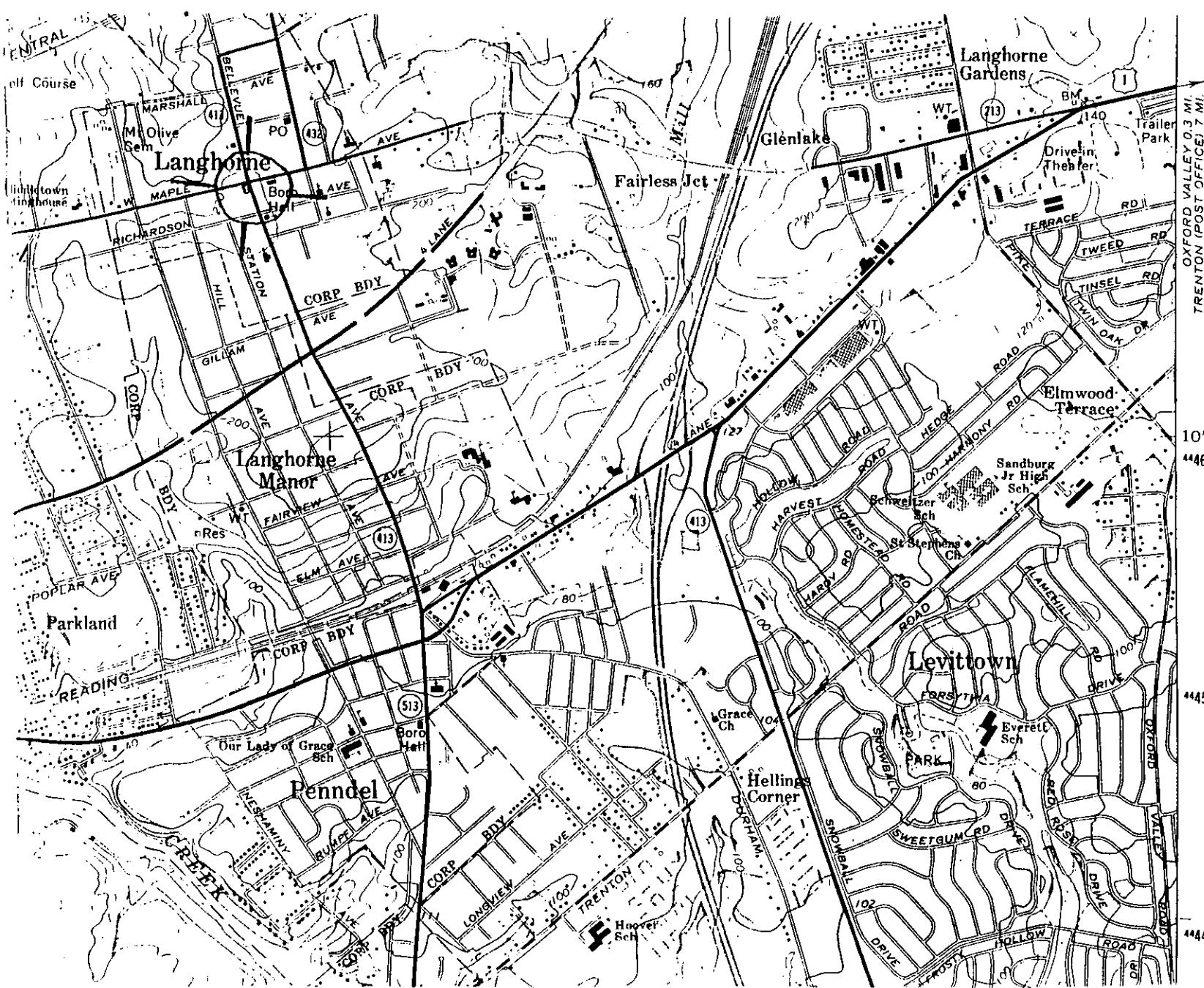
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



OXFORD VALLEY 0.3 MI.  
TRENTON (POST OFFICE) 7 MI.

10'  
446

445

444

JOSEPH RICHARDSON HOUSE  
 Bucks County  
 Langhorne Quadrangle  
 Zone 18  
 E506800 N4447080