

**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 Langhorne Library

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 160 W. Maple Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Langhorne N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Bucks code 017

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Langhorne Library

street & number W. Maple & Hill Avenues

city, town Langhorne n/a vicinity of state Pennsylvania

**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 Pennsylvania

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Bucks County Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date March 25, 1981  federal  state  county  local

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

city, town Doylestown state Pennsylvania

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input 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 Langhorne Library is situated on a large well landscaped lot bordered by an iron fence at the corner of West Maple and Hill Avenues in a residential section of Langhorne Borough. Its form and overall architectural presentation is visually enhanced by its set-back from both streets.

Built in 1888 this Victorian-Romanesque Revival brick library was designed by architects Newton Culver and T. Mellon Rogers in a cruciform plan. The overall dimensions are 30' wide by 60' deep with the 18' wide cross bays projecting 6' on each side. It is an oversized 1-3/4 story steep hipped roofed building with a narrow cross gable over the front entrance bay and smaller gables built out of the hipped roofs over the side projections. The roofs are slate with a band of patterned slate.

The building is set on a rough ashlar stone foundation and is primarily measured brick with mortar joints. The brickwork is corbelled towards the cornice line with the cornice itself of molded brick. Flat corner pilasters of Corinthian influenced molded terra-cotta capitals are located at the front (north) corners and the corners of the cross bays. Molded terra-cotta panels in a similar leaf pattern are located in negative window spaces on the sidewalls before the cross bays. Diamond pointed diaperwork of brick fills the spandrels on the front cross gable above the multi-paned arched window. This window, and the corresponding transom arch over the entrance door below and the large 2-story arched window in the cross bays are topped with full segmental arches of cut stone with neatly fashioned keystone and voissures. Tall 2-story windows light the large reading room and corresponding room (now kitchen) in the rear. The front half the building has smaller windows in the Queen Anne pattern of small panes on the perimeter of a large pane. The location of these windows in a 2 story arrangement was apparently to relate to an interior balcony which is shown in original blueprints but was not constructed until the 1960's.

The general exterior appearance is formal yet cozy, blending well while remaining distinct from the surrounding houses. The brickwork is the primary exterior surface decoration and the integrity, excepting some deterioration of the brick, is very good. The only major change is the regulation metal front door installed when the building became a public library.

The interior exhibits close to 90% of its original appearance with grained woodwork and doors, interior shutters and two back-to-back fireplaces faced with smooth glazed Pompeian brick with granite lintels. Throughout the library are custom oak-grained glass enclosed bookcases with cabinets below used to hold books and artifacts.

The entry and vestibule are under the austere 1960's balcony. The staircase for the balcony is also within the front section allowing the main hall to be a free, open space roughly 30' x 15'. The hall is primarily lit by the large arched windows in the cross bays and has as a focal point the fireplace flanked by angled doors into the rear rooms. The fireplace, being recessed into the rear wing has a "nook"-like quality.

The rear reading room is commodious with a broad corner fireplace and custom bookcases. The remaining two rooms house a small powder room (original) and kitchen facilities. Staircases occur between the rear rooms to the attic and basement. The attic space consists primarily of a sophisticated heavy truss system for the roof and to support the hall ceiling. The basement has a fascinating system of brick arches in intermediate support walls.

In general the library is well maintained by the Historic Langhorne Association and the furniture and appointments are all "in-keeping" with the late 19th century period.

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LANGHORNE LIBRARY, Langhorne Borough, Bucks Co., PA.

Continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION

Item number

7

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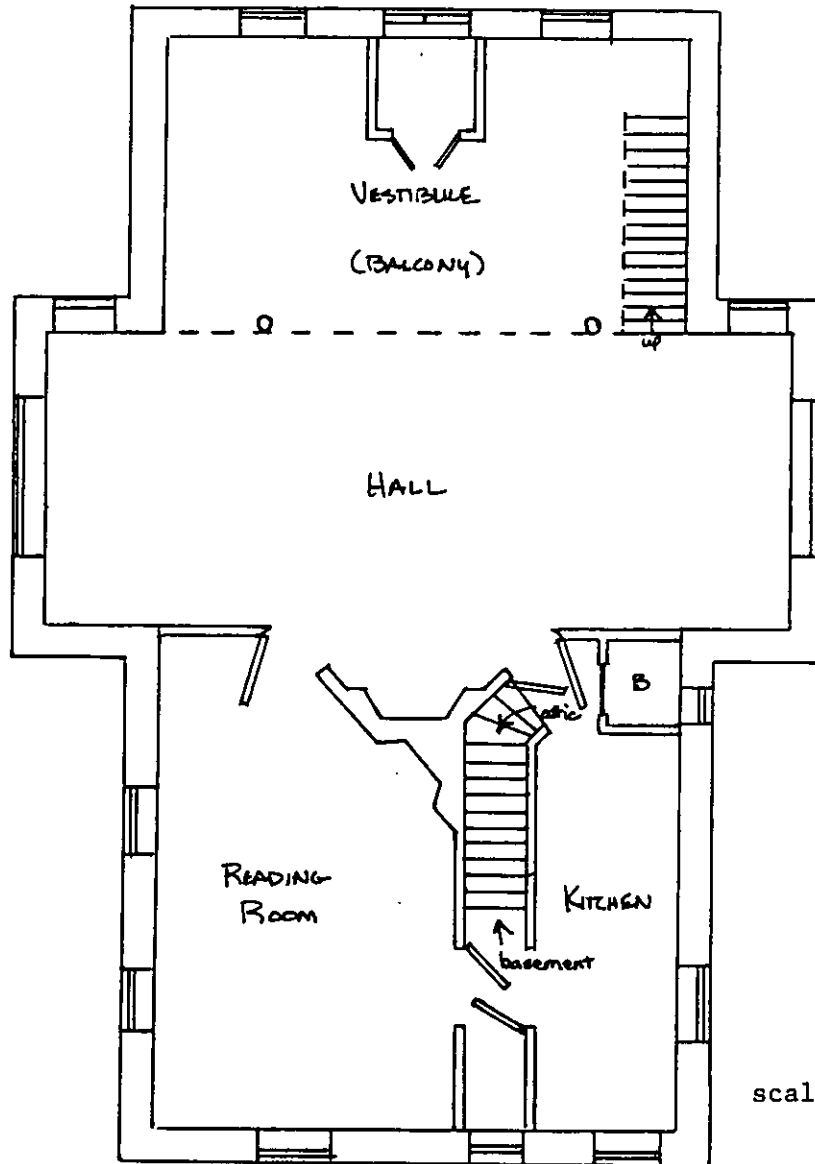
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LANGHORNE LIBRARY

TP#18-3-43



scale approx. 1" = 10'

KAA, 8/1/85

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

scale not exact

# 8. Significance Langhorne Library, Langhorne Borough, Bucks Co., PA

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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 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** 1888

**Builder/Architects** Newton H. Culver & T. Mellon Rogers

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Langhorne Library building is a significant architect-designed building in a community otherwise dominated by conservative, vernacular homes and businesses.

In 1888, following a bequest made in the 1886 will of Anne Mary Williamson, the Langhorne Library was constructed. In this benevolent action Anne Mary Williamson was following in the footsteps of her philanthropic uncle Isaiah VanSant Williamson, who in 1875, donated money for the establishment of a library in the village of Fallsington.

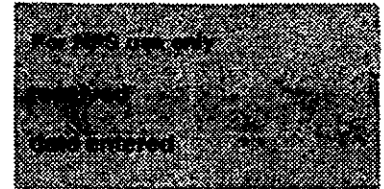
The Langhorne Library had its roots in the seventeenth century when the Middletown Friends Meeting established a library. By 1718 three hundred books were circulating among the members of the meeting. In 1799 villagers signed a petition for the charter of a library. Three years later Governor McKean issued a charter to the Attleborough Library Company. The library was housed in different locations throughout the nineteenth century. When the borough name was changed from Attleborough to Langhorne in 1876, the library became the Langhorne Library. During this period the library was kept in a small house near the Richardson House at the center of the village. On May 5, 1888 Mary Richardson sold the library trustees a small tract of land nearby at the corner of Maple and Hill Avenues.

The trustees of the library chose Culver and Rogers, of Philadelphia, as the architects for the new library. Newton H. Culver and T. Mellon Rogers were partners for only about two years when they received the commission. The choice of Culver and Rogers undoubtedly stemmed from the fact that the firm had designed the Langhorne Improvement Company's large Langhorne Manor Hotel a year earlier. The hotel, since razed, and the library are the only two buildings attributable to Culver and Rogers in Bucks County. According to the Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, the firm was short lived, having dissolved by mutual consent on September 28, 1888, well before the completion of the library. Newton H. Culver continued in operation independently at the firm's offices for several months until December, 1888. At that time he closed the business and became the secretary of the Untied Adamant Plaster Company of Baltimore, Maryland. T. Mellon Rogers had a more distinguished career. After his association with Culver ended in 1888 he joined the firm of Constable Brothers. He only remained with that firm until 1890. Thereafter, Rogers worked independently in Philadelphia through 1907. In his latter days Rogers specialized in the restoration of colonial buildings including Independence Hall, Old St. David's Church in Wayne, PA and Mt. Vernon.

The Langhorne Library is unique in being the only remaining documented structure designed by Culver and Rogers, architects, in Bucks County. As the original blueprints remain in possession of the Historic Langhorne Association (present tenants) it is especially interesting. The blueprints show changes in the design and roof configuration and show plans for a balcony with a dramatic staircase. While the changes were followed, the balcony and staircase were not built, due possibly to either the lack of funds remaining for the construction, or due to the fact that the architectural firm had dissolved before the building was completed.

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Continuation sheet Langhorne Library Bucks Co. Item number 8

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As a building designed by architects, the Langhorne Library exhibits some traits more than likely not found by a structure designed by a builder using vernacular, domestic construction techniques. Most impressive is the extensive truss system found in the attic. The trusses are a truncated triangle of heavy timber with bar iron cross braces similar to the Howe Truss system. This system is very elaborate, and possibly excessive, given the size of the building and the spans and loads involved. The basement, too, exhibits a very substantial and attractive support system. A brick wall built as a series of brick arches runs the entire 60 foot length of the central structure supporting floor joists spanning the basement outer walls. Arches are also used where the wings intersect the main foundation. The proportionally related overall dimensions of 30 feet wide by 60 feet deep is also characteristic of a thought-out plan and not standard domestic dimensions.

Other undomestic features which subtly distinguish the Library from the substantial, yet conservative Federal and Victorian homes along West Maple Avenue are the cruciform plan, the two-story windows and oversized entrance door, lack of porches and extensive use of molded brick and terra-cotta. While not strongly associated with one particular Victorian style the Langhorne Library is designed in the spirit of the Romanesque Revival in its display of monochromatic brick patterns, particularly the corbelling and terra-cotta molded panels, and in the use of the semi-circular stone arches over the entrance door and focal point windows. Eclectic Victorian features include the steep pyramid roof and steep cross gables, tall, corbelled brick chimney and Queen Anne type windows with a perimeter of small panes in the upper sash and a solid pane in the lower. The freedom of fenestration in the Victorian period results, in this case, with the window arrangement reflecting the use of space on the interior tall windows for the main hall and small upper story windows for the balcony.

Brick buildings of this particular design and detail are not common in Bucks County, where Classical and Georgian influences prevailed even during the Victorian era. A contemporary building of similar design is the Melinda Cox Library in Doylestown Borough, originally built as a bank. It features decorative and corbeled brickwork but adheres to a rectangular plan and wood carved pedimented entrance. Most Victorian homes in the county are frame or detailed in frame, not brick.

The Langhorne Library remained a private subscription agency until 1960 when the boroughs of Langhorne, Langhorne Manor, Pennel, and Hulmeville joined with Middletown Township to support it as the Langhorne-Middletown Public Library. Following this action, in 1962, the only structural change to the library occurred. A small balcony was constructed to add 551 feet to the original 1,500 square feet. As the population in the region continued to grow, so did the demands on the library. In 1971 the Langhorne-Middletown Library merged with the Bucks County Free Library System. As part of the merger agreement a new, larger library was given a high priority. After several years a new library was erected in Langhorne.

After the construction of the new library, the old library building was no longer needed as part of the county library system. In order to comply with Anne Mary Williamson's will that the building be used as a library for the people of Langhorne, the Langhorne Library Company reclaimed its original books and reverted into a private library. In addition to housing the library books, the building

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became the center for another community activity: the Historic Langhorne Association. In 1965 the Historical Committee of Langhorne Sorosis formed the Historic Langhorne Association whose purpose included the researching and recording of local history, the encouragement of interest in the history of Langhorne and its environs, and the preservation of artifacts and documents of local historical importance. For nearly a century the library building has been important within the community, first and foremost as a library; and more recently as the headquarters of the Historic Langhorne's most important links to its past. It now serves as a museum, library and community meeting room

Designed by architects Newton H. Culver and T. Mellon Rogers, the Langhorne Library is a finely detailed eclectic Victorian building in an area dominated by conservative vernacular homes and businesses.

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .378 acre

Quadrangle name Langhorne, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	8	5	0	6	5	2	0	4	4	4	7	0	0	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 215/345-7020

city or town Doylestown

state Pennsylvania 18901

# 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 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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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Continuation sheet      GEOGRAPHICAL DATA      Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Taken from the most recent recorded deed of November, 9th, 1889. Deed Book 235, Page 108.

ALL THAT CERTAIN Brick Library, Building and Lot of Land situate in the Borough of Langhorne aforesaid bounded and described as follows, viz:

BEGINNING at a point of the southerly side of Maple Avenue at a corner of Margery P. Canby's land, thence by the same, South, sixteen degrees, thirty minutes East, one hundred and sixty-five feet to a corner; thence by lands of Mary J. Richardson, from which this was taken, South, seventy-seven degrees, forty-three minutes, West, one hundred and three and twenty-five-hundredths feet to the Easterly side of Hill Avenue, as recently extended and widened to a width of sixty feet, by an Ordinance duly enacted by the Town Council of the Borough of Langhorne; thence along the Easterly side of said Avenue, North, fourteen degrees, twenty-six minutes, West, one hundred and sixty-five feet to the Southerly side of the said Maple Avenue; thence along the Southerly side of the same, North, seventy-seven degrees, forty-nine minutes East, ninety-seven, and twenty-five hundredth feet to the place of beginning be the same more or less.

(Contains: 0.378 acre more or less)

Boundary Justification:

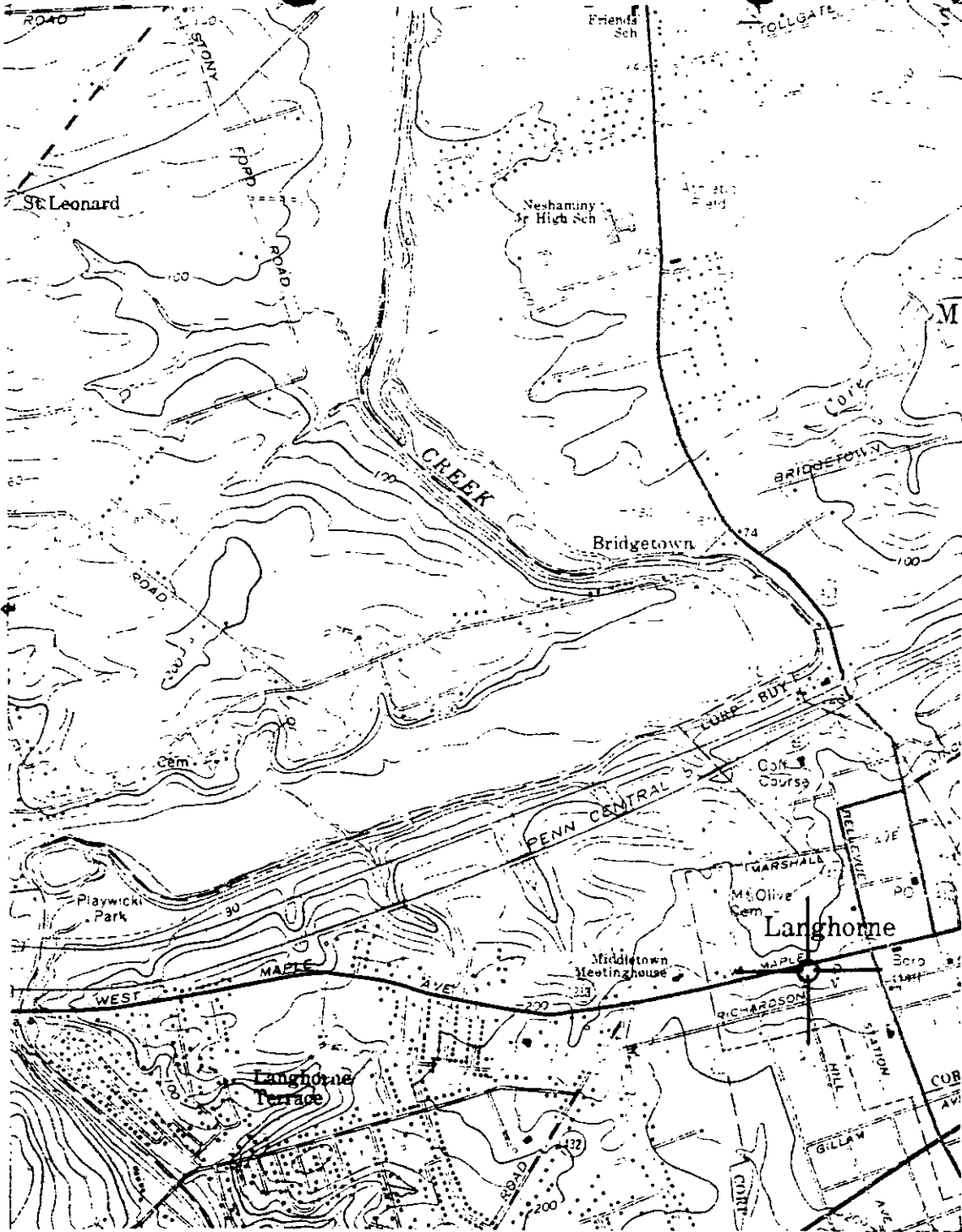
The lot of land (Tax Parcel #18-3-43) included with this nomination is the land that has always been associated with the library. It is the same lot that was subdivided in 1888 for the purpose of constructing a library.

74°-57'-30"

74°-55'-00"

40°-12'-30"

40°-12'-30"

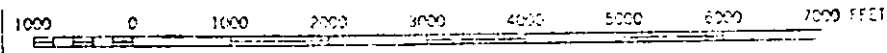


40°-10'-00"

74°-57'-30"

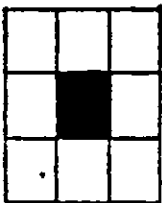
40°-10'-00"

74°-55'-00"



SCALE 1:24,000

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 Bucks County  
 PA.



UTM References: 18 506 520 4447 000

LANGHORNE, PA.

NW 1/4 BURLINGTON TWP. JENKINSBORO  
 N4007.5—W7452.5—7.5

1966

AMS 5051 III NW—SERIES 7551