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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 18 1984

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received FEB 7 1985

date entered MAR 26 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Center Bridge Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number On the River Road (SR32) between Ely Rd. and _____ not for publication

Laurel Road

city, town Center Bridge _____ vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Bucks code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Deed Recording Office - Bucks County Courthouse

street & number Court and Main Streets

city, town Doylestown state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Bucks County Conservancy
title Wind Screen Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bucks County Conservancy

city, town Doylestown state Penna.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 proposed historic district of Center Bridge lies along the River Road in Solebury Township, Bucks County, Pa. It is about 45 miles north of Philadelphia, 66 south of New York City and 25 northwest of Princeton, N.J. It is divided by Upper York Road and its branch, the original highway. On the East it is bounded by the Delaware Division Canal (Roosevelt State Park) which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and on the West by Chestnut Ridge, which rises to an elevation of 410' and casts its shadow over the village. It extends from the red camel back "Haines Bridge" on the South to the Burgess Lea farm on the North, both being on the Eastern side of the River Road. Of the 62 buildings, 10 are significant, 50 are contributing and 2 are intrusions. There are 3 man-made structures, 2 sites and 21 parcels of open land, most of which are small lots located on the river side of the canal banks.

1700-1750	3 buildings,
1751-1800	10 buildings
1801-1850	16 buildings, 2 structures, (two camelback bridges)
1851-1900	18 buildings, 1 structure (pier of a bridge)
1901-1933	11 buildings
1934-1950	2 buildings
1951-1983	2 buildings
	<u>62 buildings, 3 structures,</u>

The view from the hill on Upper York Road is of a harmonious cross roads village of homes secluded in the Delaware River valley and sheltered by quantities of old trees. The northern part of the village is distinguished by the 18th century, pointed fieldstone, dignified Pennsylvania Quaker farm complex, the Burgess Lea property which was the home of Isaiah Paxson. It is also the location of the two large, pink plaster over masonry Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial style houses, both of which were erected in the 1930's for well-to-do businessmen, and in addition the impressive 18th century pointed stone manor house built by William Mitchell in 1815 and modified in the 1930's by Edward W. Redfield. North of the latter house is one of the outstanding features of the village. A stream winds down to two spring fed ponds, one of which has a fountain. This spring furnished water to all who lived in the northern part of the village for many years and residents of neighboring communities also drew their water here. On the hillside overlooking the West side of the River Road, opposite the field and orchards are 7 acres of hard wood forest, a heavy growth of maple, ash, walnut, beech and sycamore, as well as one or two elms. The thick undergrowth is primarily rhododendron. This park land is owned by the Bucks County Conservancy and will therefore remain undeveloped. Beyond it is a plaster over fieldstone residence which was the one room schoolhouse that was converted to a dwelling sometime after 1928.

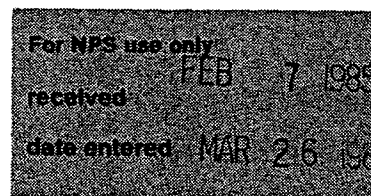
The middle section of Center Bridge is also residential. A large, old, white plaster over fieldstone residence of the early 19th century has two handsome pedimented Federal doorways with fluted pilasters, crowned with a lozenge shape and dentils on the entablature. Its two dependencies, an old smoke house and a clapboard tenant cottage, are located to the West of this lovely dwelling.

There is also a large, comfortable looking home built in the Colonial style in the second half of the 19th century. A full length 1 story porch supported by Roman columns is joined by turned spindles. A Victorian atmosphere is furnished by the door, which has 4 panels, recessed side lites and a rectangular transom.

Standing about opposite is a handsome, large, plaster and pointed fieldstone dwelling, one section of which was the general store. Its carefully clipped yew hedge is so

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tall it nearly obscures the view of the beautiful old boxwoods. In the rear are two parallel rows of old sycamore trees which form a leafy alley as the land slopes down to the road.

Also in the central section are the two intrusions. The first, a 1 story brick seasonal restaurant of compatible style, is sheltered by an old swamp maple. Its prominent sign, "Dilly's Corner", however, is out of keeping with the rest of the community. The other, the Center Bridge Inn, while an intrusion based on age, is a handsome Georgian style building standing on the foundations of the original 18th century inn, which harmonizes with the rest of the village.

On the Northwest side of River Road the heavily wooded Chestnut Ridge rises, with tier upon tier of stone retaining walls. Built into the hill is a 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ story clapboard house with wood corner posts. Of undistinguished style, it has been decorated with such architectural elements as a handsome dentillated cornice, Federal doorway with oval sidelites having surrounds of acanthus leaves carved from wood, and cornice window heads with dentils. The result is an ordinary mid-1800 structure with an elaborate Greek Revival overlay.

At the end of the village is the unique row of 2-family workers' houses built over a period of about 6 years for the men employed by the various commercial enterprises in the area. Although of undistinguished appearance, all are well maintained and have been converted to single family dwellings, and most of them have lovely gardens in the rear, where their deep lots slope down to the canal, glimpses of which are evident from the road. Opposite this row of little houses is a white plaster over stone farmhouse which stands well back from the River Road. One section is single pile, the other double. It is an austere plain Colonial style residence built in the 1700's, with a red bank barn and the remnants of a quarry in the rear. A little to the North stands its former tenant house, built in similar style.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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	Builder/Architect
N/A	N/A

Center Bridge has served the Delaware River Valley for over two centuries as a hub of local transportation and commerce. The village first became prominent in the eighteenth century as the site of a Delaware River ferry crossing and a much used inn. Until well into the nineteenth century Center Bridge served both travelers and traders going between Philadelphia and New York City. Later, in the early twentieth century, the village became a part of the famous New Hope Art Colony. In addition, the town retains numerous good examples of the vernacular architecture typical of eastern Pennsylvania.

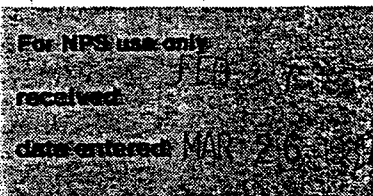
The first permanent settlement in the area that later became Center Bridge occurred in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1765 Joseph Mitchell purchased a large tract of land along the Delaware River. On his acreage Mitchell established a ferry and built an inn. About fifteen years later another settler, Isaiah Paxson, carved out a farmstead along the west bank of the river adjacent to Mitchell's land. In the years that followed Mitchell and Paxson became business partners on numerous ventures including a fishery. After Mitchell's death, Paxson and Mitchell's son Joseph collaborated on the construction and operation of a toll bridge across the Delaware. Located mid-way between the ferries at New Hope and Lumberville, the "center-bridge" became the focus of the small community around it.

In the early nineteenth century a small village began to develop around the bridge. With a steady flow of travelers using the bridge, commerce in the village fared well. The addition of the Delaware Canal which began operating in the community in about 1830, enhanced the commercial potential of Center Bridge. At the time the canal opened the village consisted of a general store, a tavern, the inn and half-a-dozen dwellings. Soon afterward a post office was established and, a decade later, the construction of a schoolhouse became necessary. In the years that followed Center Bridge came to include the homes of three dozen families and a host of businesses including blacksmiths, carpenters, masons and wheelwrights. Spurred by business from the nearby mills and quarries, as well as the bridge trade, Center Bridge prospered during the Ante-Bellum period.

By 1860 the Belvidere Railroad, which was built along the east bank of the Delaware, had ended the days of slow but steady growth for Center Bridge. The railroad provided a cheap method of transporting coal thus significantly reduced the canal traffic through Center Bridge. While the village remained the primary trading place for nearby farmers and the bridge still served a regular flow of travelers, the village grew only slightly during the late nineteenth century.

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In 1898 the eminent landscape artist Edward W. Redfield bought a farm on part of the original Paxson estate. Educated at the Spring Garden Institute, the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, and in Paris, Redfield was one of a new breed of landscape artists who gained prominence at the turn of the century. His works, which were considered avante garde in their day, were shown primarily in well known New York City and Philadelphia galleries. Redfield's most famous painting, "The Burning Bridge," depicts the night in 1923 when center bridge burned. Redfield was joined in Center Bridge by two fellow artists, Kenneth and Alfred Nunamacher. With these three artists residing in the village, Center Bridge became part of the colony of artists that developed in the New Hope area.

Redfield's home, an impressive late Georgian style building which was built in 1815, is perhaps the most outstanding dwelling in the village. However, as a whole the village provides numerous examples of the vernacular styles, especially Georgian and Federal, common to southeastern Pennsylvania during the early nineteenth century. Primarily stone, two stories with gable roofs, these buildings are comparable to those in nearby villages such as Lumberville or New Hope. While most of the buildings date from the mid-19th century, a few, including a Mediterranean style dwelling, were added to the village in the early 20th century. These recent structures brought a degree of diversity to Center Bridge and offer an interesting insight into the evolution of the village.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 40 acres

Quadrangle name Stockton, N.J.-PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 8	5 0 1 4 6 0	4 4 7 2 3 0 0	B	1 8	5 0 1 0 8 0 0	4 4 7 2 0 1 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	5 0 1 9 6 0	4 4 7 1 7 4 0	D	1 8	5 0 1 4 4 0	4 4 7 1 9 0 0
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Gwen R. Davis, Ex. Director Suzenne Moyer, Asst., Helen Sirmay/Andrea Graham

organization Solebury Twp. Historical Society date Amended June 1, 1984

street & number Box 223 telephone 215 297-8771


city or town Solebury, Bucks County state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

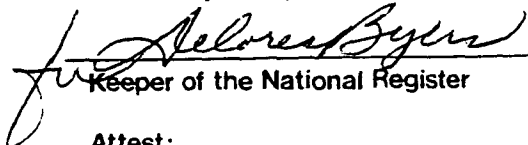
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 1/24/85

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


Keeper of the National Register

date 3-26-85

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Center Bridge Historic District, Bucks County
Continuation sheet

Item number 9

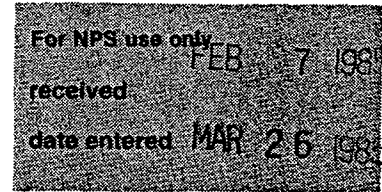
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- Gordon's Gazetteer of Pennsylvania, published by Belknap, 1832.
- Catalogue of the Edward W. Redfield one man show at Rutgers University Art Center, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1981.
- Catalogue of the 50th anniversary retrospective art exhibition of the Phillips Mill Community Association, 1979.

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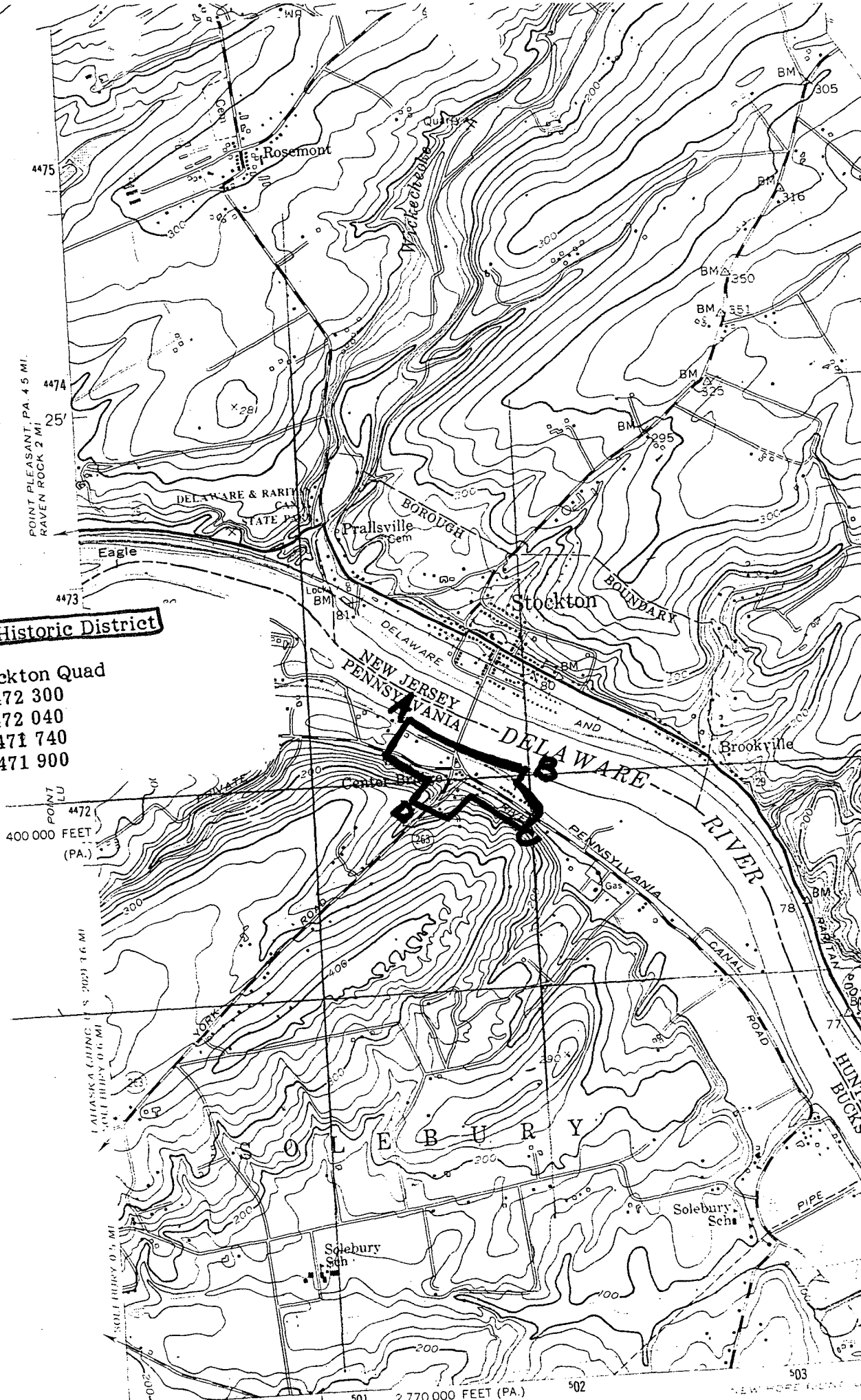
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Including all those tax lots and properties, together with all structures and appurtenances erected thereon, as such appear on the Bucks County Tax Map for the Township of Solebury, which lie within the boundaries more fully and properly described as follows:

Beginning at a point on the northwesterly side of Upper York Road at the point of intersection of said side with the southwesterly side of Tax Lot #41-018-038 (property of Humphrey);
Thence northwesterly along said line, approximately 290', to the point of intersection of said line with the southerly line of Tax Lot #41-018-037 (property of Daniels),
Thence northwesterly along said southerly line and, continuing in a straight line, along the southerly line of Tax Lot #41-018-036 (property of the Bucks County Conservancy), approximately 760', to a point being the southwesterly corner of Tax Lot #41-018-036;
Thence northerly along the westerly line of said tax lot, approximately 390', to a point being the intersection of said westerly line with the southerly line of Tax Lot #41-018-038-001 (property of Waldie/Weimer);
Thence westerly along said southerly line, approximately 150', to a point being the southwesterly corner of said lot; thence northeasterly along the westerly line of said lot, approximately 100' to the point of intersection of said westerly line with the southerly side of PA Rte #32 (also known as River Road)
Thence easterly along said southerly side of River Road, approximately 75', to a point of intersection of said southerly side with the westerly line of Tax Lot #41-018-049 (property of Durell) as extended
Thence westerly along the northerly side of River Road, approximately 2200', to a point being the southwesterly corner of said Durell property; said property and the continuation thereof, across the Delaware Canal, to a point on the southerly bank of the southerly fork of the Delaware River;
Thence easterly along the southerly bank of said river, approximately 5200', to a point of intersection of the easterly line of Tax Lot #41-020-015 (property of Farrell) with the southerly bank of the Delaware River;
Thence southwesterly, approximately 280', along said tax lot line to a point of intersection of said line with the northeasterly side of the Delaware Canal;
Thence southeasterly, approximately 1420', along said northeasterly side of said canal to a point immediately southeasterly of the Col. Haines canal bridge;
Thence southwesterly, at right angle to the Delaware Canal, across said canal and River Road (PA Rte #32) to the southwesterly side of said road;
Thence northwesterly along said side of said road, approximately 50', to a point being the northeasterly corner of Tax Lot #41-018-122 (property of Fischer);

11 99



Center Bridge Historic District

- Bucks Co., PA.
 Zone 18, Stockton Quad
 A. 501 460 4472 300
 B. 501 980 4472 040
 C. 501 960 4471 740
 D. 501 440 4471 900

POINT LU
 4472
 400 000 FEET
 (PA.)

LAKASKA (CHINESE) 2.023 76 MI
 SOLEBURY 0.6 MI

SOLEBURY 0.5 MI

40°22'30"

501 2 770 000 FEET (PA.)

502

503

NEW HOPE 1000