

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Palmer, Amos, House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Township Line Road N/A not for publication
city, town Langhorne (Lower Makefield Township) N/A vicinity
state Pennsylvania code PA county Bucks code 017 zip code 19047

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Dr. Brent Glass, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic, single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic, multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls brick and stone

roof asbestosother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Palmer House (Photos 1-5) is on a one half acre parcel that lies between Township Line Road and Interstate 95, just south of Langhorne-Yardley Road in Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. This early Georgian farmhouse consists of five sections: the original two story double pile brick house (c. 1760); a two and a half story one pile stone addition (c. 1810); a stone/rubble filled one and one half story and frame shed roofed kitchen (c. 1870); a two story frame kitchen addition (c. 1900); and a small frame shed (c. 1940-1980). The house is basically in good condition, although considerably altered inside. The exterior components generally appear to be in near original condition. The house sits at its original construction site.

The brick section is the oldest part of the Palmer House (Photos 3&6). It is constructed on a mortared stone foundation with a wooden sill plate. The roof ridge line is oriented east - west with the front elevation facing north. Although the original rear elevation is now partially hidden with an early twentieth century kitchen addition, it appears to have been identical to the front (north) elevation (Photos 4, 8 & 9). Both front and rear walls are laid up in Flemish bond (Photo 3), the front with glazed headers, and the gable end walls with English bond. A raised brick belt course defines the second floor elevation, the water table is molded brick and there is a raised brick label or hood over both front and rear entrances (Photo 7). The most outstanding feature of the brick section is the large plaster cove cornice that continues across the pedimented gable ends (Photos 3 & 8). Part of this cornice has been removed to accommodate a later large stone addition to the east end (Photo 9).¹ The cornice bracketing across the east elevation is still evident in the attic of the stone addition (Photo 10). Although hidden, the cornice is intact beneath the two story frame kitchen addition to the south elevation (Photo 8). The decorative rectangular hood above the front and rear entrances, formed with an angled brick course, is partially hidden by the existing porch roof structure and completely obscured at the rear by the kitchen addition (Photo 7). The roof is asbestos shingle installed over wood shingles on lath. All windows have double hung sash which appear to be complete replacements (there is no evidence that the muntions have been cut).

The floor plan of the original brick section consists of two front/back rooms on each floor with three corner fireplaces serviced by the west gable end interior chimney (Photos 11-14). There is no fireplace in the south second floor room. The front fireplaces are supported on a foundation corbelled out from the building foundation walls, while the larger fireplace in the rear parlor rests on an arched brick foundation. Although larger, the south parlor fireplace (Photo 12) is small for a kitchen and, as other evidence suggests, the house may have been built in conjunction with or as an addition to, another

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Palmer House

Section number 7 Page 1

7. Description, Continuation Sheet 1

structure which contained the kitchen.² The first floor partition wall is masonry (brick) with a large timber summer beam extending across the front/rear parlor to support the second floor joists (Photo 11). A paneled wall/closet unit now on the second floor was moved from the first floor front parlor (Photo 14).

The two story frame kitchen addition to the south elevation of the brick section has a low pitched metal roof (Photos 4, 5 & 8) with a shallow boxed cornice and is sided with asbestos shingles over clapboards. The mortared stone foundation is on grade with no basement. Openings consist of a rear doorway set in the east elevation under the second floor window, four symmetrically placed windows in the south elevation and two in the west. All windows have original two-over-two double hung sash.

The interior plan of this section consists of a first floor kitchen, second floor bedroom, and a stairway between these floors along the north wall (south elevation of the original brick house) Passage to the brick house on the second floor is through the enlarged west window opening. Both original first and second floor windows to the right of the original rear (south) entrance to the brick house are obscured by the stairway.

The stone section is three bays wide and one room deep (Photos 1 & 2). It is constructed of dressed stone with larger stone quoins at the east end corners. The front (north) facade consists of three second floor windows and two windows and door opening on the first. The front porch extends just over the front door and across the entire front of the brick section. The rear facade has three second floor windows and one central window flanked by two door openings on the first floor (Photo 4). The right (east) door opening has been closed with masonry. Both front and rear openings are offset about one foot toward the west to accommodate the massive east end fireplace/chimney structure. The asbestos shingle over wood shingle on lath roof is finished at the eave with a boxed cornice. The large inside gable end stone chimney is offset slightly to the front and there is a small attic window set in the gable end (east) to the left (south) of the chimney (Photo 5). The rest of the east elevation of this section is obscured beneath the kitchen addition.

The first floor Plan consists of one large room with a fireplace at the east end (Photo 15). The large arched stone foundation for the fireplace and evidence of a larger hearth and a bake oven indicates that this fireplace was much larger and served for cooking, probably until the kitchen shed was added later in the nineteenth century. There is also evidence (floor joist framing) that the first floor room was formally partitioned with a central staircase to the basement, second floor and attic. The second floor plan has two bedrooms partitioned with a single tongue and groove board wall. The second floor ceiling is paneled with thin tongue and groove beaded wood strips. The second floor plan is also

CONTINUED...

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Palmer House

Section number 7 Page 2

7. Description, Continuation Sheet 2

not the original, but the result of the central staircase relocation. Based on the style of the doors and other finish materials, this remodeling probably occurred in the late 1800's and was most likely associated with the east end kitchen addition. Openings in both the first and second floor ceiling reveal that the original floor joist are beaded and originally exposed.

The one and a half story kitchen addition to stone section has two rubble filled frame exterior walls (south and east) and a stone front wall (north), an obvious attempt to conform with the existing stone front facade. The frame/rubble walls are sided with clapboards. The interior plan consists of a first floor kitchen, a second floor bath and a bedroom with a dormered window. This addition is constructed on an on-grade masonry (stone) foundation. The addition replaced a former bake oven structure, as evidenced in the front facade stone work, foundation plan and oven opening behind the closet to the left of the existing fireplace.

Notes:

1. There is also evidence that this cornice was originally intersected with an adjacent shed roof structure that was subsequently enlarged to two stories with a gable roof.
2. Archeological investigations have revealed the foundation of a separate kitchen in the rear (south) yard, which is also mentioned in the inventory description of Amos Palmer's estate in 1770 (John Milner Associates, page 20).

In discussion of this property at the September 13 meeting of the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board, a question was raised concerning exterior brickwork. The dark appearance of stretcher bricks in the photographs of the front elevation suggested that they were glazed. Subsequent discussion with the preparer of the nomination and an on-site inspection by Mary DeNadai of the Board revealed that some of the stretchers were burnt thereby giving them a dark appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
c. 1760

Significant Dates
c. 1760

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Amos Palmer House is significant as an early Georgian farmhouse in lower Bucks County because it incorporates quality brickwork, a formal facade, a plaster cove cornice and a double pile plan with such vernacular features as a box winding main staircase and the absence of a separate stair hall. Nearly all of its original features are either intact or quite readable. The subsequent additions to the house demonstrate the growing needs of farm households in Lower Makefield Township.

The Palmer House was built for Amos Palmer on land his father, Daniel, acquired in 1758. In 1770, Amos Palmer died and it is through the inventory of his estate (which gives a detailed description of the brick section of the house) that his ownership of the house at the time of its construction can be justified. The construction of the house can also be dated by the Georgian and pre-Georgian construction techniques found throughout this small, semi-formal, early house. First, the brickwork, which is of high quality, combines the use of the old English bond on the gable ends of the house with the more contemporary Flemish bond, on the front (also with glazed headers) and rear elevations. The brickwork, with its original scored pointing, demonstrates collective masonry traditions of the 17th and 18th centuries by its use of a molded water table, a belt course at the second floor level and segmental relieving arches over the windows. Of particular note is the enhancement of the beltcourse above the north and south entrance doors into a continuous, raised label. This treatment recalls English Tudor traditions and was generally abandoned by the Georgian period when a continuous straight beltcourse was used. Physical evidence currently being uncovered suggests that a projecting bracketed hood may have been set into the outlined rectangle above the north entrance door while a full portico, to protect the south door, was set within the southern facade rectangle.

Second, the cove cornice used on the Palmer House is found only on isolated examples of 18th century architecture in Bucks County. Several known examples of the cove cornice include the Parry Building (1763) in Langhorne Borough, the Buckingham Friends Meeting (1768) and the Cross Keys Inn (c. 1758), both in Buckingham Township. Its use on the Palmer House adds refinement and sophistication to the exterior presentation of the building emphasizing the classical pediment form of the west gable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Palmer House

Section number 8 Page 1

8. Statement of Significance, Continuation Sheet 1

A feature quite unique for the 18th century Bucks County architecture and found on the Palmer House is the formal north facade. Almost exclusively, 18th century farmhouses oriented their primary or formal facade to the south. Only in town architecture did street orientation prevail over southern exposure. On the Palmer House, the north and south facades were basically identical in design but distinguished by formal and every day function. This distinction is primarily evidenced by the use of the glazed headers in the Flemish bond of the north facade. Further evidence of the segregation of the formal and everyday facades is seen in the bricks flanking the south door, which indicate benches were originally built into the brick on either side of the door which was flanked with pilasters (this is not apparent on the north facade). Beyond these distinctions, the facades are identical; three bays wide with a center door and a blank center bay above. According to the inventory of Amos Palmer, 1770, the back room downstairs, or north room, was used as the parlor where items of value, such as books, money scales and weights, silver buckles, etc., were kept. The front, or south, room was the hall. Each room had a separate outside entrance with the north facade articulated to indicate the formal entrance directly into the parlor. The verbal distinction in the inventory of front and back indicates the traditional perception of the south as the front and the north as the back of a house and contrasts with the fact that the north is the formal entrance to the Palmer House.

Third, the Palmer House, as a modest, two room house, is unusual in mid-18th century Bucks County architecture in demonstrating the double pile floor plan. This plan is essentially a two room, front-to-back plan. Those houses of mid-18th century Bucks County which have the double pile construction generally have a full Georgian plan with parlors flanking the center hall or a separate side hall with the staircase (Trevoise, Bensalem Township; Summerseat, Morrisville Borough; The Amos Strickland House, Newtown Borough; and Jenks Hall, Middletown Township). The Palmer House is unusual in that it has no separate stairhall; instead, the staircase appears to have been located in the south room and was a boxed partial winder.

The use of brick in house construction in 18th century lower Bucks County was not uncommon, but was generally found on better than average farmhouses or in areas where fieldstone was not readily available. Of extant houses in lower Bucks County (Bristol Falls, Middletown, Lower Makefield and Newtown Township) dating prior to c. 1800, only approximately twenty can be found of brick or partial brick construction. Out of that number, only six can be documented with erection dates prior to the Revolution. The Amos Palmer House is one of the best preserved examples of documented pre-Revolutionary brick houses of lower Bucks County. The bricks have never been painted and the pointing is original. The combination of English and Flemish bond is unique, and the glazed headers, window arches and enhanced label and beltcourse collectively are exceptional for Bucks

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Palmer House

Section number 8 Page 2

8. Statement of Significance, Continuation Sheet 2

County. Two formal country houses of the c. 1760 period which use brick in their construction are Summerseat in Morrisville Borough and the Amos Strickland House (Brick Hotel) in Newtown Borough. Both buildings have dramatic center halls and elaborate woodwork and paneling which show a direct contact with the current Philadelphia trends. Summerseat, constructed of brick and stone, reflects this sophistication on its exterior through its brick-front facade with finely matched bricks and jack arches over the windows. The Strickland House is constructed completely of brick. It is, like Summerseat, of formal plan, scale and interior appointments; but, unlike the Palmer House, is of lesser quality masonry, showing no evidence of window arches or an elaborate beltcourse. Both of these houses, due to the stature of their owners and the formality of their design, can only be tangentially compared with the Palmer House.

Several more brick buildings of the c. 1760 period exist for comparison with the Palmer House. The Court Inn (Half Moon Inn) in Newtown Borough was built as a double pile structure with an attached kitchen dependency. Its front (west) facade facing Court Street is highlighted with the glazed header Flemish bond, while the sides and rear are stone. Likewise, the rear section of the Shade Brook Farm house, near the Palmer House, has a glazed header Flemish bond front facade with a modest drip line above a center door, but with no window arches. The Isaac Brelesford House (1769), on Big Oak and Stony Hill Roads, appears to have also been brick, originally. There is no evidence, here, of the Flemish bond having glazed headers; however, it is the only other known example of a raised label beltcourse, which is identical to the one on the Palmer House. The beltcourse at the Brelesford House appears to occur only on the front facade. The Parry Building, built by Gilbert Hicks, is the building outwardly most similar in proportion to the Palmer House. It is a full brick structure, three bays wide and two piles deep in its original section, with Flemish bond brickwork (without glazing) and a plaster cove cornice. The brick chimney is of similar width as the one at the Palmer House.

Comparative illustrations of formal north facades of the 18th century are scarce. The only known example is the Richardson House (1738) in the center of Langhorne Borough. Located on an important intersection, then known as Four Lanes End, the Richardson House served a dual function as the home for the family and as a store. The commercial and everyday activities operated out of the south and east sides of the house, with the south facade an asymmetrical five bays. The north facade, facing the main road out of Philadelphia, is a symmetrical three bays wide with a center door and served as the formal entrance for the family. The rooms of the interior along this north side are the most formal of the house and identify the family's private living space.

The use of the double pile plan in the Palmer House with the exterior unity and symmetry of design indicates a house built for someone of taste and, at least, aspiring class. On

CONTINUED...

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Palmer House

Section number 8 Page 3

8. Statement of Significance, Continuation Sheet 3

the other hand, the lack of separate stairhall and the relatively small size of the original section of the house might indicate that the house was built for someone of limited or conservative means. Amos Palmer died in 1770, leaving a will behind; his inventory describes the brick section of the present house. The rooms are very well and fully furnished and indicate Amos was a well-educated man of some means. Household and personal goods include books, several mirrors, two cases of drawers, five horses, a sleigh and several wagons.

Ownership of the Amos Palmer House transferred to the Knight family on March 10, 1786 (Deed Book Volume 60, page 669) and lasted for over a century. Most, if not all, of the additions and alterations to the original brick house were made by the Knights to adapt to growing family and farming needs. The first addition was that of the two and a half story, three bay, one pile stone section, to the east of the brick section, which included a kitchen on the first floor and several bedrooms on the second. Stone additions to early brick houses were not unusual as the fieldstone was plentiful and on-site kilning of the bricks not practical. Plus, additions to moderately sized 18th century farmhouses were quite common by the turn of the century. Generally, new additions became the formal living area of the house, while the original section became the service area. In the case of the Palmer House, the formal design of the original brick house dictated that the addition become the service area.

At some point in the 19th century, the south room in the brick section was remodeled, at which time the opening to the fireplace was made smaller, the original fireplace paneling was removed and the winding staircase taken out. Although, currently paneling hidden beneath drywall, the original at the staircase wall is extant. A straight staircase was placed in the north parlor of the brick section, possibly as late as the end of the 19th century when the frame addition was built against the south wall. By mid-19th century, the stone section had been added to when the bake oven shed on the east gable end was enlarged to a full-sized kitchen.

Toward the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, frame additions became common. Throughout Bucks County, but particularly in rich agricultural regions such as Lower Makefield Township, two story frame additions were placed to the side or functional rear of houses to add modern kitchen facilities, additional living space, or to accommodate two or more families. The frame two story addition on the south facade of the original brick section of the Palmer House provided a modern kitchen area, an additional bedroom and allowed the house to serve two families. In the early 20th century, under the ownership of the Satterthwaite family, the four bay porch extending across the north fronts of the brick and stone sections was added. This porch hides beltcourse and part of the enhanced lable on the brick section and tends to unify the north facade, belying its actual two family function.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Auerbach, Kathryn and Marshall, Jeffery L., The Palmer/Knight Farm Research Report On Property Ownership In The Eighteenth Century. (Bucks County Conservancy, Doylestown, Pa.), 1986.

Gwynedd Meeting Records, Plymouth Township, Bucks County, Pa.

Hughes, Thomas, Farm Map Of Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County, PA. (Thomas Hughes, Philadelphia, Pa.), 1858.

John Milner Associates, Inc., Archeological Investigations At The Kirkbridge-Palmer House, Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County, PA., (West Chester, Pa.), 1986.

Noll, E. P., Atlas Of Bucks County Pennsylvania. (E. P. Noll & Co., Philadelphia, Pa.), 1891.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bucks County Conservancy,
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 0.5

UTM References

A 18 510090 4451100
 Zone Easting Northing

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Lots 168 and 169, as shown on the plan entitled "Palmer Farm Village, Plan of Lots", located in the Bucks County Courthouse, Register of Deeds, Court Street, Doylestown.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the farmhouse and 1/4 acre of land historically associated with the house. The rest of the original farm has been excluded as it has been subdivided.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ray Orr / Kathryn Auerbach
 organization Cee Jay Frederich Associates/ N/A date 1988
 street & number 29 S. Walnut St. / Coldspring Rd. telephone (215) 431-7899 / (215) 862-2879
 city or town West Chester / Doylestown state PA zip code 19382 / 18901

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

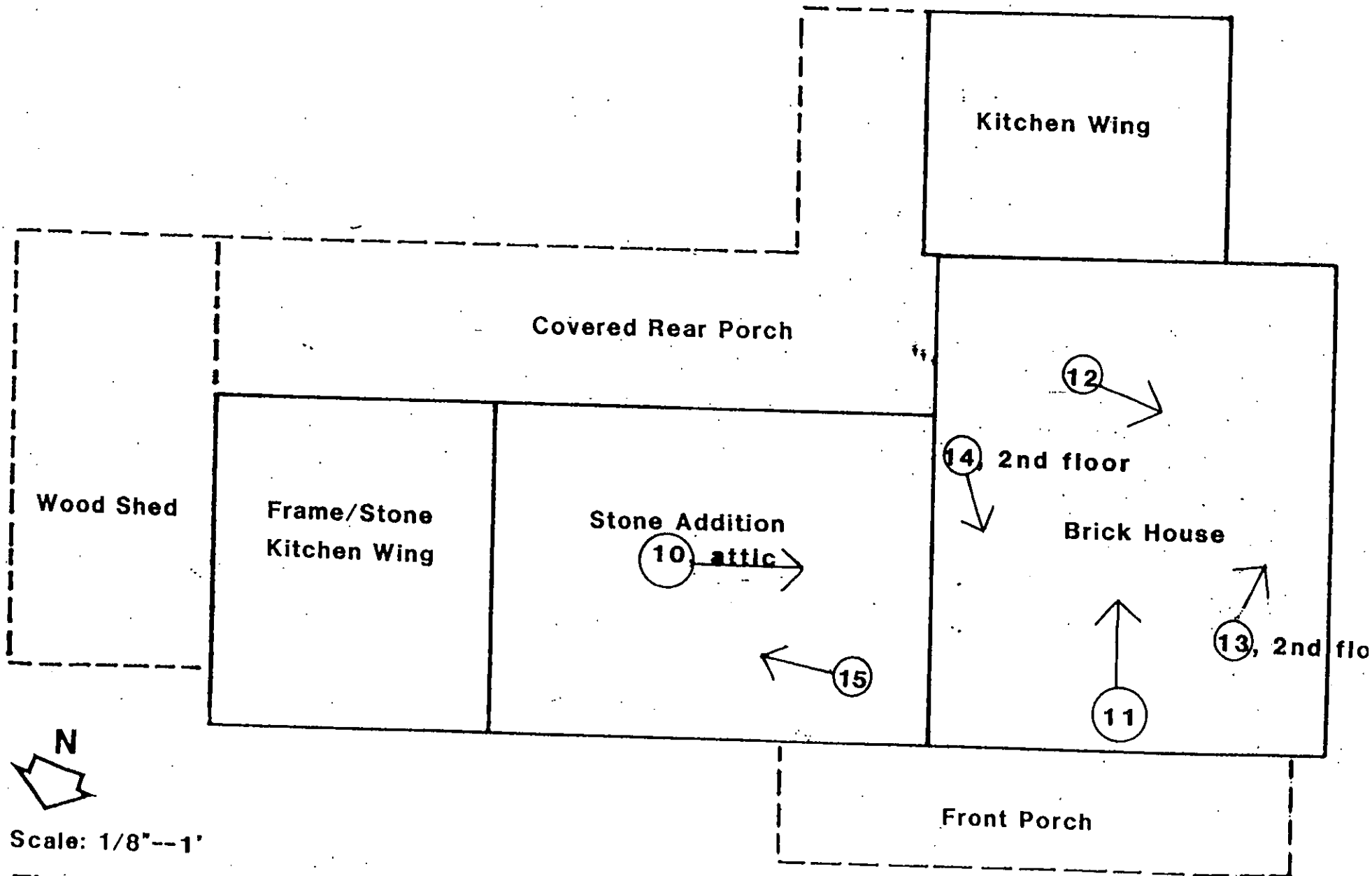
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Palmer House

Section number 9 Page 1

Pennsylvania Gazette, February 15, 1786.

Scott, J. D., Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, (J. D. Scott, Philadelphia, Pa.), 1876.



Scale: 1/8" = 1'

Figure 2 House Footprint/Photo Views
Palmer House Bucks County, PA

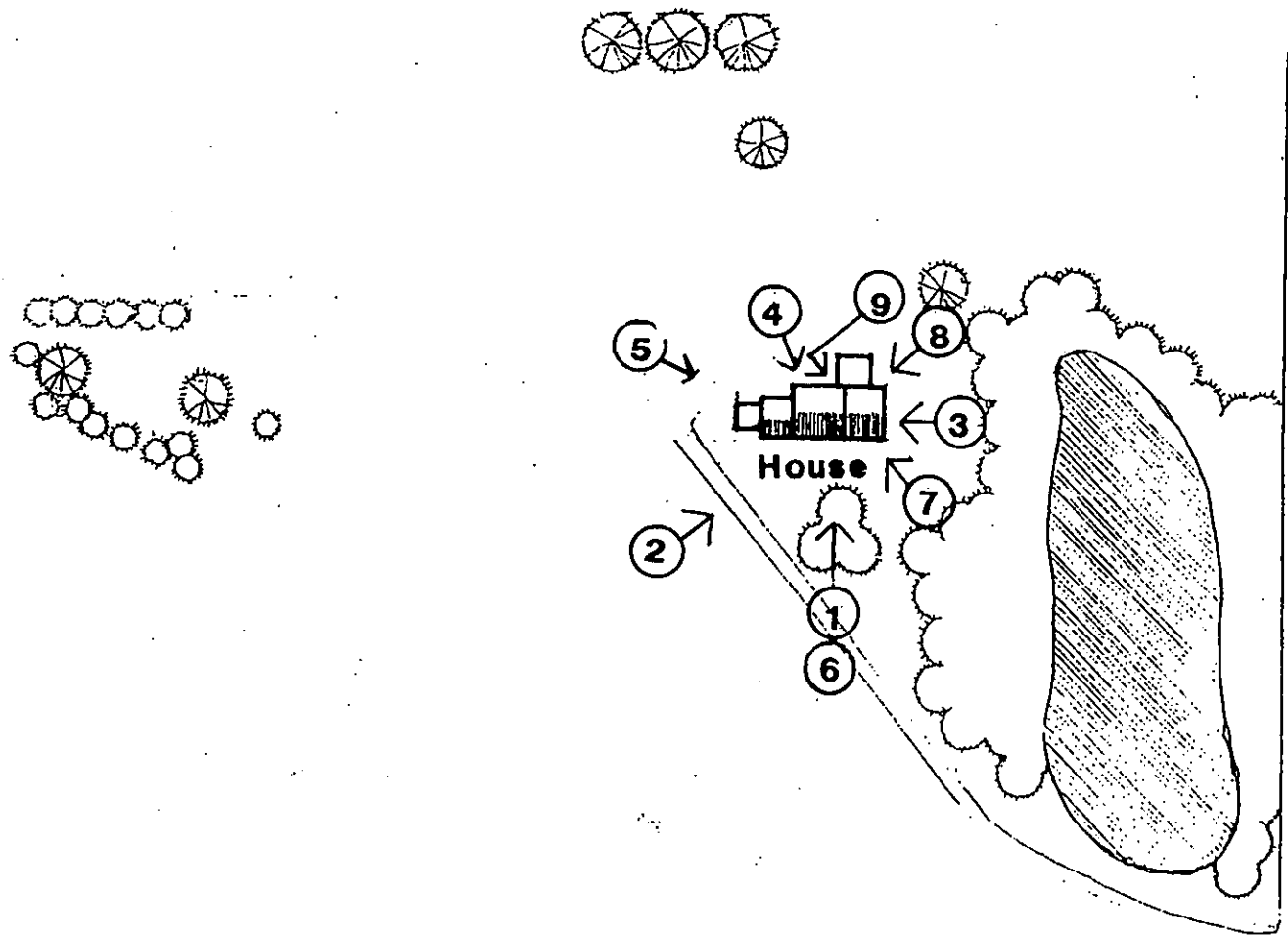


Figure 1 Site Plan/Photo Views
Palmer House Bucks County, PA

