

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization

West Whiteland Twp. Historical Commission

8. property owners name and address

Lee Land Company
 915 North Delaware Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA
 19123

9. tax parcel number / other number

41-4-25

10.

U.T.M. zone 18 Easting 4439210

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)

44131041210
 Northing

usgs sheet: Downingtown

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building (X)
 In N.R. district yes () no ()

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1935 (deeds, letter)

14. period
 1932-42

15. style, design or folk type
 Colonial Revival/
 Arts and Crafts

19. original use
 Residential

20. present use
 Residential

16. architect or engineer
 Ralph P. Minich

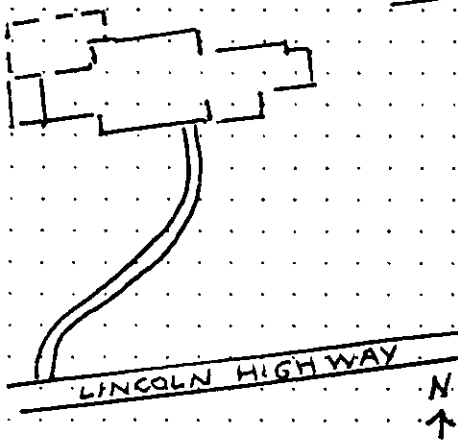
17. contractor or builder

18. primary building mat./construction
 Stone (pointed)

21. condition
 Excellent

22. integrity
 Excellent

23. site plan with north arrow



BLACK AND WHITE PRINT(S)
 3 1/2" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
 note location of negative in block 24.

24. photo notation
 PC: Diane Snyder
 PD: 11/1986

25. file/location
 West Whiteland Twp. His. Com.

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)

The property known as "Woodledge" sits on the north side of the Lincoln Highway, in a wooded area near the western limits of West Whiteland Twp. Both buildings on the tract--a stone dwelling and stone/frame stable--contribute to its architectural significance.

In the tradition of other important buildings along this major transportation route, e.g., Whitford Hall, Whitford Lodge, and Oaklands, the dwelling's principal facade is oriented south, toward the highway. Although built as one unit in 1935, the house affects the additive form of a Pennsylvania farmhouse. It is comprised of a three-bay, double pile, two and a-half story main block, flanked on the west by a slightly recessed two-story, two-bay wing and on the east by an attached garage with sleeping quarters above. Except for the main block's east gable end which is sheathed with beaded horizontal board, all exterior walls of the house are pointed stone.

(continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background

"Woodledge" is an extraordinarily crafted and well preserved example of the Colonial Revival style in West Whiteland Township. While most of the Township's other Revival buildings are derived from formal styles, "Woodledge" pays tribute to vernacular architecture and the inherent beauty of good materials and flawless craftsmanship. It is a testament to the client's and architect's thorough knowledge of and reverence for the area's vernacular architecture. Rather than being an exact reproduction of

(continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information

See Continuation Sheet #2

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

29. prepared by:

M.L. Wolf
 D.S. Snyder

30. date
 12/86

revision(s)

(continue on back if necessary)

1. County
 Chester

Whitford Farm

2. municipality
 West Whiteland Twp.

Woodledge

3. street address or specific location
 525 West Lincoln Highway

4. survey code
 029-09-61-222

5. present name

6. other name (historic name if any)

Each of the three sections has a gable roof. The garage roof contains three gable dormers (one amusingly small). A hefty stone, lipped chimney arises at the juncture of the main block with the west wing.

The dwelling's facade features regularly spaced windows of traditional proportion. The main entrance located in the west bay of the central block, however, has a bold surround with a curved broken pediment and semi-circular fanlight with tracery. Extending off the southwest corner of this section is a low, stone wing wall with a central, curved picket gate. All windows on the south facade feature working, four-panel shutters. The back (north) elevation is somewhat informal. Here, fenestration is asymmetrical, and the rear entrance is sheltered by a small, plain porch with a built-in stoop. In contrast to the main facade, the rear shutters are louvered on the upper level and two-paneled on the first level. A shed-roofed porch extends off the west end wall of the west wing, opening onto a stone terrace which wraps around the house's northwest corner. With its stone floor, beaded ceiling boards, and squared columns beaded at the corners, the porch shows the same high quality construction as the rest of the house. A small stone vestibule provides the transition from the main block to the two-car attached garage on the east. The gable roof is cantilevered over the south facade which contain two sets of arched double doors with prominent strap hinges, hung in arched stone surrounds. An outside stairway on the east end leads to a bedroom above.

Attention to detail, use of quality materials, meticulous craftsmanship, and references to historical architecture so evident on the exterior is continued within the dwelling. The main entrance opens into a wide stair hall containing a back door oppositely situated on the north wall. The handsome staircase, which rises two flights to the third level, features carved brackets, fluted balusters, oak treads, and a curved cherry-wood hand rail. The formal dining room is to the east and contains raised panel window reveals, wainscotting, and crown molding. The kitchen is located behind this room and, despite some updating, retains its original paneled oak cabinets and enclosed winder stairway to the second floor.

The second and third floors of the main block, which in form adheres to the "two-thirds Georgian" or double-pile, side hall plan, contains bedrooms and bathrooms. The back, second floor room is noteworthy for its heavy chair rail and crown molding. The two bathrooms retain their porcelin pedestal sinks, cast iron tubs, and tile walls and floors.

The west wing of the house, located behind the charming wing wall, is modeled on an earlier plan than the main block: the Colonial single pile house. The pent roof across the south facade, as well as the large "cooking fireplace" with vertical board cupboards adjacent, are derived from Colonial prototypes. Floors throughout the house are oak; door knobs are of the small brass variety with reproduction iron box locks; and the doors are six-panel. Even the cellar refers to historical architecture. Although cement block was available as a building material in 1935 when the house was constructed, the foundation is chiefly fieldstone. In the cellar's northeast corner a small, arched door opens, not into the traditional root cellar, but rather into a wine cellar, its arched ceiling formed of brick.

The one story stone and frame stable sits a few hundred feet to the northeast of the dwelling. It is divided into three sections, the center of which contains four stalls. The tack room is located in the western section. Inside, the walls are finished with tongue and groove board. The gable roof is wood shake. Where not stone, the exterior walls are sheathed in board and batten.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

Sheet #1

27. (continued)

a particular property, vernacular elements are mixed and matched in the true spirit of the Revival styles. What distinguishes "Woodledge" from other houses of this type is its painstaking craftsmanship and attention to detail, obvious from cellar to attic. The abundance of historical architectural reference in the house, e.g., the Colonial and Georgian plans, rounded plastered window reveals and paneled rectangular reveals, and the Federal and winder staircases, underscores its value as a "vocabulary house" of the Colonial Revival. It is, without question, the best example of this style in West Whiteland Township and, as such, merits addition to the Township's National Register Multiple Resource listings.

The client who commissioned "Woodledge" was Park L. Plank, a prominent industrialist in Downingtown. Born in Lancaster County in 1883, Plank graduated from the Lancaster Business School and went on to establish, with two associates, the Downingtown Iron Works. For years, Plank served as its Chairman of the Board and Treasurer. At its zenith, the Works employed 285 people in the fabrication of steel plate and production of pressure tanks and rendering equipment. Plank's success in industry led him into a long involvement with civic groups, among them the Downingtown Business Men's Club, Rotary Club, and West Whiteland School Board. During his tenure on the Downingtown Park Commission, the first restoration of the Downing Log Cabin was undertaken. Plank retired from industry in 1952; he died at "Woodledge" in 1960.

Plank's choice of architect for his custom home was West Chester's Ralph P. Minich. Born in 1889 in Florida, Minich graduated from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia and also studied at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. Early in his career, Minich was associated with Joseph M. Huston, architect of the Pennsylvania capitol, and Stamford B. Lewis of Philadelphia. Minich relocated to West Chester in 1925 and remained there until his death in 1950. Buildings in West Chester credited to Minich include the Slack Auto Building, Thomas B. Smith house, John Thorpe residence, and Baptist Church and parsonage. One of his last commission's was the library at the Pennsylvania Military College in Chester.

Comparison of "Woodledge" with R. Brognard Okie's work in the Colonial Revival style is unavoidable. Like Okie, Minich combines principals of the Arts and Crafts movement and Colonial Revival style at "Woodledge". Reliance on traditional forms combined with meticulous craftsmanship, use of quality materials, and attention to detail is evident at "Woodledge" and in Okie's much praised work. Although Minich's career to this date is largely unassessed, hopefully this will be undertaken in the future. Like Okie, he was involved in the 1926 Sesquicentennial held in Philadelphia, but to what extent is unknown. Along with Elliston P. Bissell and John P.B. Sinkler, Okie was chosen to design a reconstruction of High Street in Philadelphia. Interestingly, Bissell and Sinkler had designed additions and alterations to West Whiteland's most historically significant property--Whitford Lodge -in 1914. As more becomes known about the Sesquicentennial, perhaps the stylistic influences and connections will become clear. In any event, "Woodledge" is a property worthy of continued preservation as West Whiteland's most carefully crafted example of the Colonial Revival style.

EVALUAT

EVALUATOR(S)

Sheet #2

28. Sources of Information

Clipping File, Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA
(CR 8-5-1931, 11-24-1937; DLN 12-16-1940, 5-6-190-, 6-12-1950, 7-9-1966)

Deedbooks, Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, PA

Letter, Dorothy (Mrs. Glenn R.) Plank, 9-16-1986 (held by the West Whiteland Township Historical Commission, Exton, PA)

Tatman, Sandra L. and Moss, Roger W. Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall and Co., 1985, pp.72-74, 583-85, 727-29.

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

"Woodledge" currently sits on a 23.342-acre tract which is proposed for subdivision. The following boundary description conforms to the intent of the subdivision, which is not yet final, to protect the house and stable and preserve the frontage on the Lincoln Highway, from where the best public view can be had:

Beginning at a point in the title line of the Lincoln Highway, a corner of the lands of Alfred N. Gustofson and Lee Land Company; thence north 19 degrees 18 minutes west along the line of Gustofson approximately 750 feet to a point; thence north 86 degrees 35 minutes east approximately 500 feet through the lands of Lee Land Company to a point; thence south 3 degrees 25 minutes east 700 feet to a point in the title line of Lincoln Highway; thence along the title line in a westerly direction approximately 300 feet to the point of beginning. Containing approximately 6 acres.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization
 West Whiteland Twp. Historical Commission

8. property owners name and address
 Lee Land Company
 915 North Delaware Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19123

9. tax parcel number/other number
 41-4-25

10. U.T.M. Zone Easting
 11 8 4 14 13 19 12 10
 2.8 acres

11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 West Whiteland Twp.
 Historic Sites Inv.

usgs sheet: Downingtown
 4 14 13 10 14 12 10
 northing

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building (X) district ()

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1935 (deeds, letter)
 14. period
 1935

15. style, design or folk type
 Colonial Revival

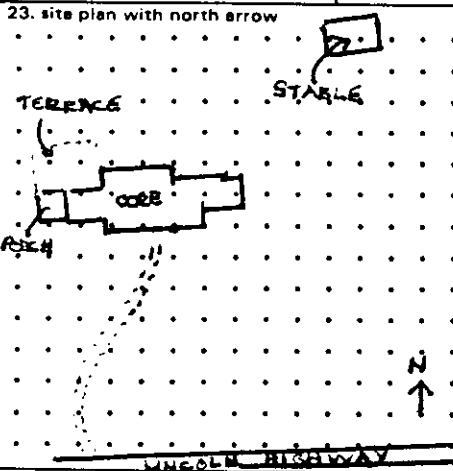
19. original use
 Domestic/Single Dwelling
 20. present use
 Domestic/Single Dwelling

16. architect or engineer
 Ralph P. Minich

17. contractor or builder
 unknown

18. primary building mat./construc.
 Stone (pointed)

21. condition
 Excellent
 22. integrity
 Excellent



BLACK AND WHITE PRINT(S)
 3 1/2" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
 note location of negative in block 24.

24. photo notation
 PC: Diane Snyder
 PD: 11/1986

25. file/location
 West Whiteland Twp. His. Com.

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 The property known as "Woodledge" sits on the north side of the Lincoln Highway, in a wooded area near the western limits of West Whiteland Township. Both buildings on the tract--a stone dwelling and stone/frame stable--contribute to its architectural significance.
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 (continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information
 See Continuation Sheet #2
 (continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:
 M.L. Wolf
 D.S. Snyder

Computer Coding (BHP Survey Grantees Must Complete)

30. date
 12/86
 revision(s)
 12/87

- 31. county _____ 32. style _____
- 32. construction material _____ 34. roof _____
- 35. design type _____
- 36. historic function _____
- 37. construction feature _____ 38. ext. walls _____ 39. plan _____
- 40. facade width _____ 41. roof material _____ 42. stories _____ 43. depth _____
- 44. ext. design _____
- 45. int. design _____

1. County
 Chester

2. municipality
 West Whiteland Twp.

3. street address or specific location
 525 West Lincoln Highway

4. survey code
 029-09-41-223

5. present name
 Whitford Farm

6. other name (historic name if any)
 Woodledge

In the tradition of other important buildings along the major transportation route of Route 30, the Lincoln Highway, such as Whitford Hall, Whitford Lodge, and Oaklands, the dwelling's principal facade is oriented south. Although built as one unit in 1935, the house assumes the additive form of a Pennsylvania farmhouse. It is comprised of a three-bay, double pile, two and a-half story main block, flanked on the west by a slightly recessed two-story, two-bay wing, and on the east by an attached garage with sleeping quarters above. Except for the main block's east gable end, which has horizontal beaded board, all exterior walls of the house are pointed stone. Each of the three sections has a gable roof. The garage roof contains three gable dormers (one amusingly small). A hefty stone, lipped chimney arises at the juncture of the main block with the west wing.

The dwelling's facade features regularly spaced windows of traditional proportion. The main entrance located in the west bay of the central block, however, has a bold surround with a curving broken pediment and semi-circular fanlight with tracery. Extending off the southwest corner of this section is a low stone wing wall with a central curved picket gate. All windows on the south facade feature working four-panel shutters. The back (north) elevation is somewhat informal. Here, fenestration is asymmetrical, and the rear entrance is sheltered by a small plain porch with a built-in stoop. In contrast to the main facade, the shutters are louvered on the upper level and two-paneled on the first level. A shed-roofed porch extends off the west end wall of the west wing, opening onto a stone terrace which wraps around the house's northwest corner. With its stone floor, beaded ceiling boards, and squared columns beaded at the corners, the porch shows the same high quality construction as the rest of the house. A small stone vestibule provides the transition from the main block to the two-car attached garage on the east. The gable roof is cantilevered over the south facade which contains two sets of arched double doors with prominent strap hinges, hung in arched stone surrounds. An outside stairway on the east leads to a bedroom above.

Attention to detail, use of quality materials, meticulous craftsmanship, and references to historical architecture, so evident on the exterior, is continued within the dwelling. The main entrance opens into a wide stair hall containing a back door oppositely situated on the north wall. The handsome staircase, which rises two flights to a third level, features carved brackets, fluted balusters, oak treads, and a curved cherry-wood hand rail. The formal dining room is to the east and contains raised panel window reveals, wainscotting, and crown molding. The kitchen is located behind this room and, despite some updating, retains its original paneled oak cabinets and enclosed winder stairway to the second floor.

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The west wing of the house, recessed behind the charming wing wall, is modeled on an earlier historical plan than the main block: the Colonial single pile house. The pent roof across the south facade, as well as the large "cooking fireplace" with vertical board cupboards adjacent, are derived from Colonial prototypes. Floors throughout the house are oak; door knobs are of the small brass variety with iron box locks; and the doors are six-panel. Even the cellar refers to historical architecture. Although

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

Sheet #1

26. (continued)

cement block was available as a building material in 1935 when the house was constructed, the foundation is primarily fieldstone. In the cellar's northeast corner a small arched door opens, not into the traditional root cellar, but rather a wine cellar with an arched brick ceiling.

The one-story stone and frame stable sits a few hundred feet to the northeast of the dwelling. It is divided into three sections, the center one containing four stalls. A tack room is found to the west. Here, the walls are finished with tongue and groove board. The gable roof is wood shake. Where not stone, the exterior walls have board and batten siding.

27. (continued)

of the area's vernacular architecture. Rather than being an exact reproduction of a particular house, vernacular elements are mixed and matched in the true spirit of the Revival styles. What distinguishes "Woodledge" from other houses of this type are its painstaking craftsmanship and attention to detail, evident from cellar to attic. The abundance of historical architectural reference in this house, e.g., the Colonial and Georgian plans, rounded plastered and paneled window reveals, and the Federal and winder staircases, underscores its value as a "vocabulary house" of the Colonial Revival. It is, without question, the best example of this style in West Whiteland Township and, as such, merits addition to the Township's National Register multiple resource listing.

The client who commissioned "Woodledge" was Park L. Plank, a prominent industrialist in Downingtown. Born in Lancaster County in 1883, Plank graduated from the Lancaster Business School and went on to establish with two associates the Downingtown Iron Works. For years, Plank served as Chairman of the Board and Treasurer. At its zenith, the Works employed 285 individuals in the fabrication of steel plate and production of pressure tanks and rendering equipment. Plank's success in industry led him into a long involvement with civic groups, among them the Downingtown Business Men's Club, Rotary Club, and West Whiteland School Board. During his tenure on the Downingtown Park Commission, the first restoration of the Downing Log Cabin was undertaken. Plank retired from industry in 1952; he died at "Woodledge" in 1960.

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Comparison of "Woodledge" with R. Brognard Okie's work in the Colonial Revival style is unavoidable. Like Okie, Minich combines principles of the Arts and Crafts movement and Colonial Revival style at "Woodledge." Reliance on traditional forms combined with

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

Sheet #2

27. (continued)

meticulous craftsmanship, quality materials, and attention to detail are evident in "Woodledge" and in Okie's much praised work. Although Minich's career to date is largely unassessed, hopefully this will be undertaken in the future. Like Okie, he was involved in the 1926 Sesquicentennial held in Philadelphia, but to what extent is unknown. Along with Elliston P. Bissell and John P. B. Sinkler, Okie was selected to design a reconstruction of High Street in the city. Previously, both Bissell and Sinkler had designed additions and alterations to West Whiteland's most historically significant property, Whitford Lodge, in 1914. As more becomes known about the Sesquicentennial, perhaps the stylistic influences and connections will become clear. In any event, as West Whiteland Township's most carefully crafted example of the Colonial Revival, "Pennsylvania Style," "Woodledge" is a property worthy of continued preservation.

28. Sources of Information

Clipping File, Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA
(CR 8 -5 1931, 11-24-1937; DLN 12-16-1940, 6-12-1950, 7-9-1966)

Deedbooks, Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, PA

Letter, Dorothy (Mrs. Glenn R.) Plank, 9-16-1986 (held by West Whiteland Township Historical Commission, Exton, PA)

Tatman, Sandra L. and Moss, Roger W. Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930. Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co., 1985, pp. 72-74, 583-85, 727-29.

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

"Woodledge" currently sits on a 23.342-acre tract on the north side of the Lincoln Highway. The boundary has been drawn to include just the dwelling and the associated stable which contributes to its architectural significance. Non-contributing vacant land has been excluded on all sides.

Beginning at a point approximately 3350 feet west of the intersection of Whitford Road and Lincoln Highway and approximately 350 feet from the north side of the Lincoln Highway; thence north 19 degrees 18 minutes west approximately 250 feet to a point; thence continuing north 86 degrees 35 minutes east approximately 500 feet through the lands of Lee Land Company to a point in those lands approximately 700 feet from the north side of the Lincoln Highway; thence south 3 degrees 25 minutes east 250 feet to a point approximately 450 feet north of the Lincoln Highway; thence south 86 degrees 35 minutes west approximately 500 feet to the place of beginning.

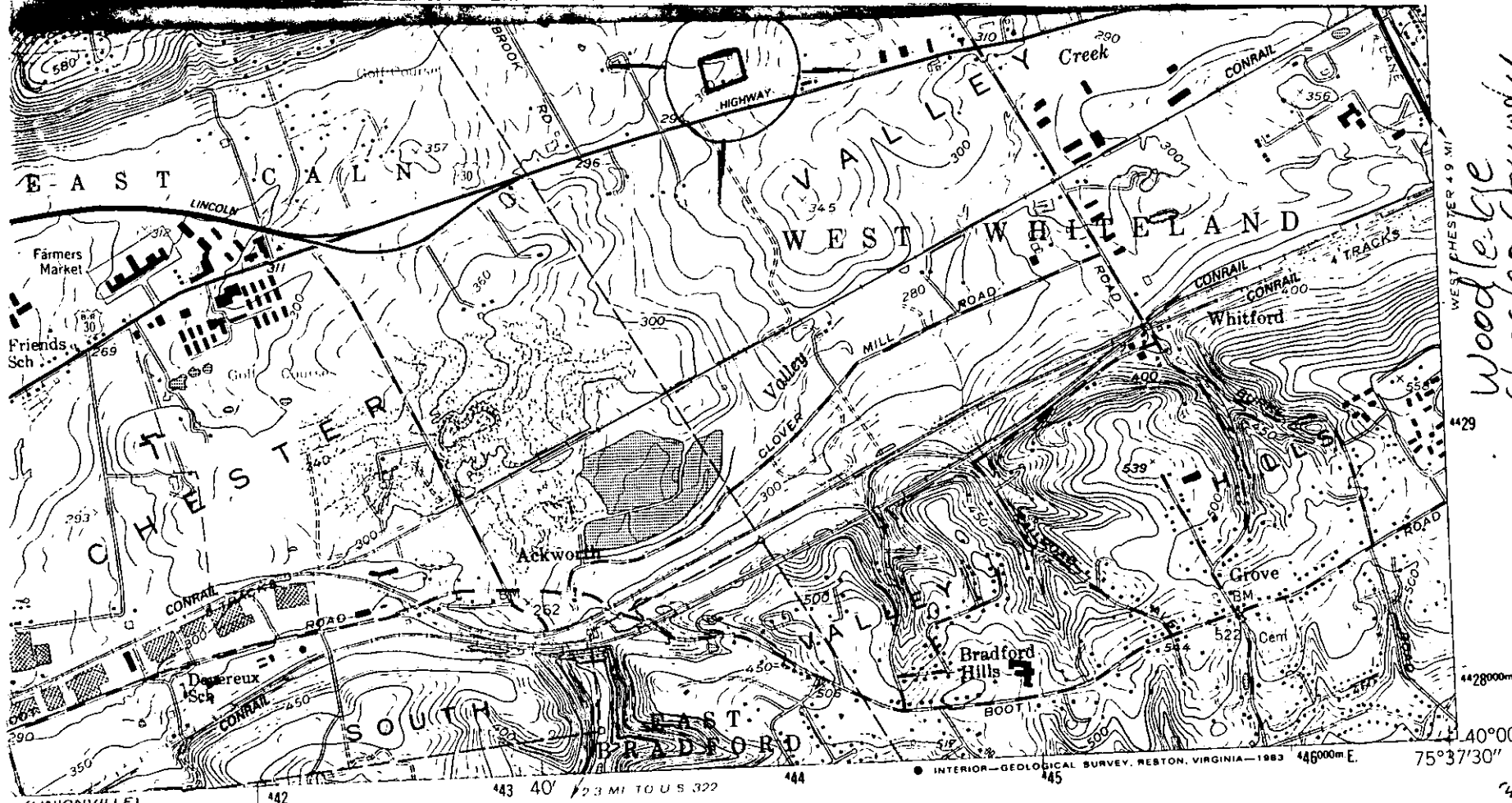
The nominated property encompasses approximately 2.8 acres.

Area of Significance: Architecture

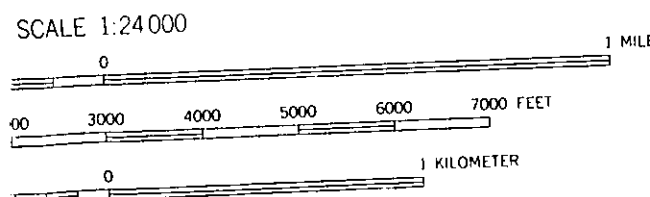
Criterion: C

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

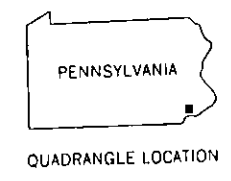


Woodley
 Chester boundary
 Zone 18 - Downriver
 E 443920 N 4430



OUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 EODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 GRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



- ROAD CLASSIFICATION
- Heavy-duty Light-duty
 - Medium-duty Unimproved dirt
 - Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

DOWNINGTOWN, PA.
 40075-A6-TF-024
 1956
 PHOTOREVISED 1983
 DMA 5864 II SW - SERIES V831

(WEST CHESTER)
 5863 I NE