

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 Wertz Mill

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 60 Werner Street not for publication N/A

city, town Wernersville vicinity N/A

state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19565

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Cristmills in Berks County

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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 _____

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)

Agriculture/processing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/specialty store

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Second Empire

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof slate

other tin

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wertz Mill is located beside the railroad tracks in the borough of Wernersville. It is across the tracks from the railroad station in the center of town. Built in 1892, it is a fine example of a Victorian flour mill, large in size and embracing the popular architectural design features of its period. Operated as a gristmill until 1969, it is now used as a garden center.

The Wertz Mill is three stories high with a Mansard roof. The main building is constructed of brick and measures 60' by 58'3". A 12'6" two story extension was built on the north side in the early 20th century. It matches the original mill in width, style, and materials. It is one bay deep and has a shed roof. The first floor has a central loading doorway with a transom that matches the other mill doorways. The entire width of the second floor of this addition has a mounted panel with the name WERTZ painted in large letters. The building has a stone foundation which extends about three feet above grade level, having a course of small-paned windows to admit light to the basement. The roof has slate sides and a tin top. It has five dormers with bracketed gable roofs across the front and rear elevations and three dormers on each side. The roof is surmounted by an open cupola. A brick chimney is located near the northwest corner. The fenestration follows even courses. The first and second floors have 6/6 window sash set into frames with brick arched lintels. The third floor also has six over six sash under gable roofed dormers. Entrance doors are found on the north, east and south sides. The south side is the front of the mill and it has the typical set of three vertically aligned doors in the central bay. A second two story brick addition was attached to the west side of the building in the 1930s. This measures 58'3" by 29'6" and has a shed roof. It has two courses of brick-arched six over six windows on the north end, and a sliding glass door reached by a ramp on the south end which is the main entrance to the garden center retail area. The exterior of the mill retains the appearance of a gristmill and is in good condition.

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The interior of the mill building is currently used as retail sales space for hardware and garden merchandise. The sales desk and storage areas are in the addition on the west side, while the main display areas are on the two main floors of the original mill building. All milling equipment has been removed and wooden shelving installed. The open spaces are evident and the structural components consist of large rounded wooden posts and large wooden beams. Seven posts run east and west across the center of the building. The ceiling has been filled in with acoustic panels. The floors are narrow wood boards. The windows and mill doors are of their original design. The interior is in good condition.

The exterior of the Wertz Mill has good integrity in its architectural features and in its location along the railroad track. Detracting from the setting is the large paved parking area in front of the mill and the entrance ramp and sliding glass doors of the addition. A metal exterior stairway or fire escape has been added on the east side, reaching from the pavement to a second floor window. The interior of the mill retains its open spaces, its appropriate windows and doors, its brick walls and its support posts. It has the feeling of a converted industrial building.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1892-1939

Significant Dates

1892

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 Wertz Mill is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. It was directly associated with the grain milling industry between 1892 and 1939, being one of the county's large Victorian flour mills that used the latest in roller milling technology at the turn of the century. Its appearance emulates the popular Second Empire style of the 1890s, making it an excellent example of period architecture in an industrial building.

This mill was built in 1892 by George W. Wertz after he sold his former mill property to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a state mental hospital. In addition to being a prominent miller in Western Berks, Mr. Wertz was president of the Wernersville National Bank. He learned the trade of milling from his father who owned mills in Exeter Township and Reading, and from an associate of his father in Montgomery County where George served as an apprentice millwright. In 1876 he purchased the Frederick Hain Gristmill in South Heidelberg Township, later selling this property to the state.

Mr. Wertz installed the most modern roller mill equipment of the day in this mill. He made a specialty of whole wheat flour and buckwheat flour. In 1906 he established an electric plant in the mill for supplying the residents of the village and vicinity with electric light, and also put up service lines along the public highways.

The last operating miller in this building was Wilson Morrow who discontinued milling operations March 1, 1969. A garden center was opened in the mill a month later, and is still in operation.

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The Wertz Mill was built during the last great period of Berks flour mill construction - the 1880s and 1890s. Mills such as the Latshaw Mill, Washington Township 1885; the Brown Mill, Fleetwood 1885; the Spannuth Mill, Bethel Township 1991; and the Wertz Mill, Wernersville 1992 were designed to house sizable roller-milling operations. Their large dimensions and lofty ceilings lend these buildings some of the feel of factories. Mansard roofs with cupolas and Victorian decorative detail make these mills all the more imposing.

Progress in technology during the mid to late 19th century had an effect upon the siting of mills built during this period. Mills not dependent upon water power could be built to take advantage of transportation or market advantages. The Wertz Mill is a good example of this principle. When George Wertz sold his rural mill (the former Hain Mill on Hospital Creek) he built his new mill in the village of Wernersville beside the Lebanon Valley Railroad. This made it possible for him to ship his products throughout Pennsylvania and to New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. The development of steam power at the mill enabled the generation of electricity that could be used by the community and this was influential in the growth of Wernersville.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Berks County Conservancy Multiple Property Nomination and Survey: Gristmills in Berks County, 1989

Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Evert, Peck & Richards, 1886).

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Berks Co. Conservancy

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 18 408280 4464530
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phoebe Hopkins, Project Director
 organization Berks County Conservancy date June 1990
 street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215 - 372-4992
 city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

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Continuation Sheet**

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Wertz Mill

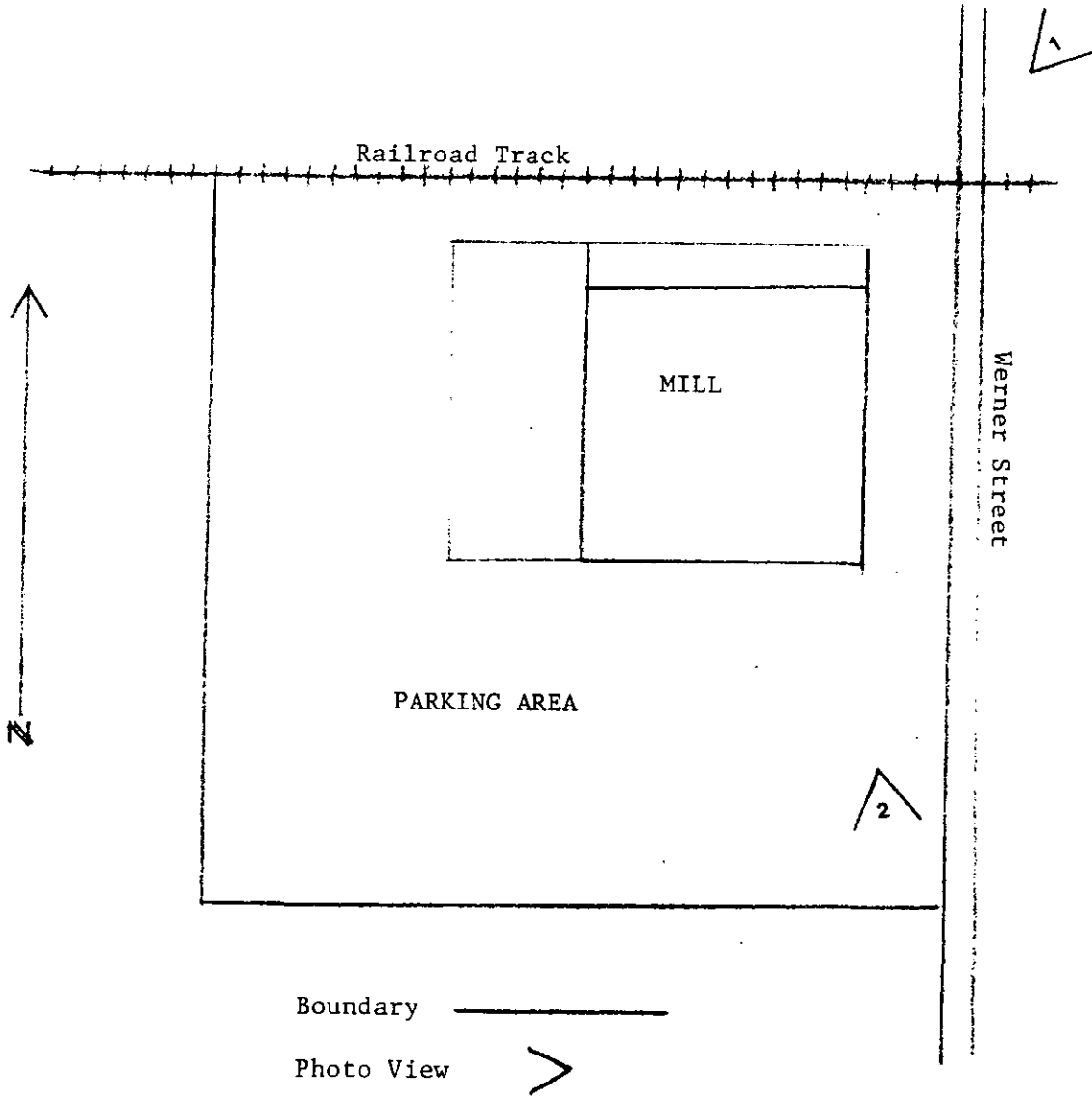
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the Railroad Crossing on Werner Street, continue south on Werner Street to the rear of the parking area at Wertz's Garden Center, approximately 175 feet; thence westerly to the lot line west of the Garden Center, approximately 175 feet; thence northerly along the lot line to the railroad track, approximately 175 feet; thence easterly along the railroad track approximately 175 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the parking area immediately surrounding the mill building which is the only contributing building on the lot. The boundary is defined by the road, the railroad track, and the rear and side parking lot lines. Excluded are the large parking lot to the north adjacent to the former railroad station, and residential properties to the east, south and west. The mill property is located one-half block south of the main street of Wernersville with commercial properties to the north and a residential area to the south.

WERTZ MILL
BERKS COUNTY, PA



Wertz Mill
Berks County
Sinking Spring Aund
zone 18

408280 4464530 464

