

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100003635

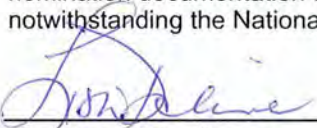
Date Listed: 4/22/19

Property Name: Updike, John, Childhood Home

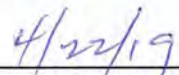
County: Berks

State: PA

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:
The property is listed at the state level of significance.

The PENNSYLVANIA SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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5. 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>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Domestic/single dwelling; Health Care/medical office

Current Functions: Work in Progress; Commerce/professional office

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7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, concrete, brick, asbestos, wood, asphalt

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The John Updike Childhood Home is a detached, two and one-half story side-hall brick house of the Late Victorian Period with Italianate influences located in the Borough of Shillington, Berks County, Pennsylvania. John Updike lived here from 1932-1945; this property and Shillington feature repeatedly in novels, short stories and essays throughout his career. Located at 117 Philadelphia Avenue on the northwest corner with Shilling Street, among other single-family and twin duplex homes, the house was erected in 1884 and expanded c.1900 and 1950. The three-bay wide house faces Philadelphia Avenue and is built of brick on a rubble stone foundation with an asphalt gable roof and a one-story front porch. Attached to the main block is a contemporaneous service ell constructed of the same materials with a two-story side porch facing Shilling Street. To the rear of the ell is a c.1900 two-story two-bay-deep frame addition covered with shallow roof and wrap-around one-story porch. A one and one-half story, brick-clad, three-bay frame addition, erected in 1950 as a doctor's medical practice, abuts the west side of the house's main block, facing Philadelphia Avenue. It is two-bays deep with a prominent front cross gable. At the rear of the property, separated from the house by a paved parking area and broad yard, is a non-contributing two-story chicken house that has been converted into a garage. The property retains integrity as the only major change to the primary resource is the addition of the doctor's office, which does not compromise overall integrity.

Setting & Exterior

The John Updike House stands at the northwest corner of the intersection of Philadelphia Avenue and Shilling Street in a mixed-use neighborhood. At the time of the dwelling's construction, the side hall form was a common architectural adaptation to the narrow lots in early suburban communities, like Shillington, and is found across southeastern Pennsylvania. The surrounding area is characterized by tree-lined primary and secondary streets bordered by tightly-set detached and semi-detached dwellings. *(Photo 1)* Nearby commercial and business operations commonly occupy residential quality structures though some contemporary infill construction is present. The .63-acre flat, corner property is fronted by a grassy lawn that wraps around to the east with two mature trees. An important landscape feature of the property is a mature pink flowering dogwood located just east of the main block of the dwelling, near the corner of Philadelphia Avenue and Shilling Street, which was planted in March of 1933 by the parents and grandparents of the young John Updike to commemorate his first birthday. *(Photo 2)* Updike would later memorialize the tree in the autobiographical essay "The Dogwood Tree: A Boyhood" published in 1965, which explains his sadness at moving away from the house at the age of twelve. Updike also mentions the property's cherry trees and other plantings in his various writings.

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Photo 1: The John Updike Childhood Home (indicated by arrow) looking west along Philadelphia Avenue.



Photo 2: This pink flowering dogwood was planted in March of 1933 to commemorate John's first birthday.

A paved driveway and parking area accessed from Shilling Street interrupts the broad lawn to the rear of the house as it extends to Brobst Street, which parallels Philadelphia Avenue.¹ The rear yard is lined with dense shrubbery and trees and includes a one-and-a-half-story, frame garage that was a chicken-coop during Updike's childhood. (Photo 3) It has been altered with the addition of several garage doors. Because it no longer resembles the chicken coop as it appeared in the 1930s or 1940s, it is considered to be a non-contributing building.

¹ The nominated property consists of the entire area historically associated with the Updike House during the family's occupancy. The original lot was subdivided in 1994 and is now two separate parcels; both are included within the nominated boundary.

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Photo 3: The former chicken house at the rear of property was later converted to a garage.

The architectural aesthetic of the John Updike Childhood Home is spartan. The front, south-facing elevation (*Photo 4*) of the main block of the house is defined by four, two-story brick pilasters between which its fenestration is recessed, and a one-story porch supported with Tuscan, three-quarter columns that rest upon a distinctive, scalloped brick knee wall with decorative openings at the base; all appear to be original features of the house, or changes made prior or during Updike's time in the house. Based on the 1920 Sanborn insurance maps and historic photos, the porch's brick knee walls (*Photo 5*) may have replaced the original porch during the Hoyer-Updike era (John Updike's grandparents, John and Katie Hoyer, moved into the house in 1922). The windows are original, two-over-two double hung sash topped by small pedimented window hoods with decorative keystones. The primary entrance, offset left and denoting the location of the dwelling's side hall, holds a one-light, multi-paneled door topped by a transom with street number and pedimented door hood with keystone. The door had been replaced; it was restored in 2017 based on historic documentation. This elevation is topped by a bracketed cornice over a broad frieze decorated with circular medallions. The decorative frieze and bracketed cornice (*Photo 6*) had been removed; they were restored in 2017 based on historic photographs (see page 10).



Photo 4: The Philadelphia Avenue-facing elevation, featuring the 1884 original home with the 1950 doctor's practice addition.

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The one and one-half story 1950 addition attached to the west wall of the original house includes paired, six-over-six double hung windows flanking the extended cross-gable supported by a plain column on brick pier. This covers the entrance stoop with its nine-light over two-panel wood door. All features are original to the 1950 construction, which was built to house the medical practice of the doctor living in the home at that time.



Photo 5 & 6: The front porch, 2-over-2 sash windows, front door and window hoods, and door frame are all original. The front door and transom glass date to the 2017 restoration, as do the cornice, brackets and frieze.

The east elevation along Shilling Street is defined by the tall gable end of the 1884 main block surmounted by a corbelled brick chimney. (Photo 7) Six original two-over-two, double hung sash (two per floor) punctuate the elevation with simple casings and sills. Behind this stands the three-bay service ell with center entrance with a one-light, multi-paneled door with transom, matching the south. This entrance was bricked in after 1945; the door, frame and transom date to the 2017 restoration. They were restored to match the front door. This door is flanked by original wood, two-over-two double hung sash. The door and window configuration are matched on the second floor with the mid-20th century door restored to match the other exterior doors. The elevation is fronted by a two-story porch with chamfered columns supporting a frieze with circular medallions below a bracketed cornice, matching the front. The porch columns are bracketed at the second story, which is ornamented with a jig-saw balustrade. (Photo 8) (The original cornice was removed as was the woodwork of the porch which was replaced by wrought iron in the mid-20th century.) The new porch elements date to the 2017 restoration and are based on historic photographs (see page 10).



Photo 7: The east elevation includes the original house with the two-story c.1900 frame addition at the rear.

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A c.1900 two-story extension was added to the north end of the service ell. It has asbestos siding, original wood, two-over-two double hung sash and a five-panel door at the southern end of the east elevation. This extension has an original one-story porch with matching chamfered columns that is an extension of the side porch and wraps around to the north elevation.



Photo 8: The two-story side porch was restored in 2017.

The first-floor porch roof distinguishes the rear, north elevation. (*Photo 9*) It protects a bulk head cellar entrance at grade on the north end. A molded cornice defines the eave of the ell extension's low-slope roof while the gable of the brick service ell is visible beyond. Windows are original two-over-two double hung sash. The west elevations of the rear extension and the service ell contain original two-over-two double hung sash at each floor. (*Photo 10*) The rear of the 1950 addition to the west of the main block is set back with paired, six-over-six double hung windows at opposite end bays as well as on the west elevation.



Photo 9 (left) and Photo 10: The north elevation includes the c.1900 addition, the upper gable end of the original service ell and the rear of the 1950 addition. The view looking southeast shows the relationship of the 1950 addition to the front of the original house.

Interior

The interior of the house is defined by its side-hall circulation and the double-pile arrangement of the main block at the first and second floors. At the first floor, the side hall includes a small un-partitioned foyer area at the front door, a stairway that rises to the rear of the house along its west wall, and a narrow hallway that provides passage to the one-room rear service ell and its one-room extension. Adjacent to

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the stairs was a bay window, which was removed by Dr. John Hunter c.1950 to create an internal passageway into his medical practice addition. A new four-panel door, matching the other original doors in the house, leads to the addition.

The house's original stair is perhaps its most distinguishing original Victorian Era stylistic elaboration. (*Photo 11*) It features an open stringer, paneled newel post, spindle balustrade, and molded handrail. Front and rear parlors comprise the balance of the first floor of the main block. The entrance to the front parlor is elaborated by an arched spindle work frame. A columned and paneled room divider separate the two spaces. (*Photo 12*) These adornments date to the 2017 restoration and are based on architectural evidence as well as interviews with Updike's classmates and the Hunter Family. The Victorian spindle work that Updike lamented had been removed from the opening to the parlor from the hall was also restored.

The single room in the service ell to the rear was a dining room. It has wainscot while the kitchen, with similar wainscot, anchors the first floor in the rear addition. (*Photo 13*) An original strip of wainscot was uncovered in the dining room and used to restore it to its entirety in both rooms, based on architectural evidence. The kitchen cabinet is based on architectural evidence and interviews with the Hunter family.



Photos 11 & 12 (top): The stairway with bannister and newel post are original; the columned and paneled divider between the parlors and spindle work above the front parlor door is a 2017 restoration. Photo 13 (bottom): The c.1900 kitchen's trim is original, but the wainscot and built-in cupboard are recreations.

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The house's stair provides access to the second floor of the main block and rear service ell by way of two small secondary stairs that rise from a high landing; a straight run continues north into the service ell while a switchback returns toward the front of the house, where it meets a narrow hall that penetrates the main block of the dwelling. Front (*Photo 14*) and rear bedrooms comprise the balance of the main block at the second floor and are accessed through doors opening from the narrow hall. The front bedroom was where John Updike was inspired to be a writer from watching his mother work here. This room was where his mother's typewriter was located, and also the room Updike stayed in when sick. The west wall was removed in the mid-20th century to make this room larger; it was restored in 2017. Along with architectural evidence, this part of the restoration was based on evidence from Updike. In his short story "The Black Room," John Updike wrote, "Outside the guest-bedroom door, the upstairs hall, having narrowly sneaked past his grandparents' bedroom door, broadened to be almost a room, with a window all its own and a geranium on the sill"

A closed stairway to the attic, stacked above the house stair, is accessed from the narrow hall. It ascends the east wall to the north. A bedroom and small bathroom are included in the rear service ell and two small bedrooms comprise the ell-extension at the second floor. The eastern one, with its original wainscot, was known to be John Updike's childhood bedroom. (*Photo 15*) In Updike's bedroom, the west wall was removed to combine two small rooms into one larger room in the mid-20th century. The west wall was recreated in 2017. The wainscot on the exterior Shillington Street wall is original; on the other walls, it has been reconstructed.



Photos 14 & 15: Front bedroom (left) and John Updike's bedroom (right) in the c.1900 addition.

The interior of the John Updike Childhood Home, like its exterior, is rather a simple affair. Standing and running trim found throughout the house is largely original and while not ornate, is noteworthy for its more complex machine molded profiles that identify the main block and rear ells' broad periods of construction. Most of the dwelling's original four-panel doors and two-over-two window sash remain in place, as does its original wide-plank plank flooring, and wall and ceiling plaster finishes. Where possible, the existing paint colors are based on extant paint. Period colors from the 1930s also were used. John Updike's four children were consulted for color choices, based on their Grandmother's (Updike's mother) likes and dislikes. Updike spoke fondly of the house often to his children; their memories helped in the restoration. Small samples of historic wallpaper were uncovered; the current wallpapered rooms reflect period patterns. The Updike children helped in these choices as well. The strawberry border in the

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dining room was chosen because Updike's mother loved strawberries. Many of the light fixtures are historic, owned by John's parents and grandparents, and donated by the Updike children. Some were once located in the house; others came from the Plowville farmhouse the family moved to after leaving Shillington. The children have also donated furniture to the Updike Society. A bed Updike painted with stars and moons that originally stood in the Shillington house's guest room has been returned. The writing chair he used for a long period of his adult life (which his children tried repeatedly to replace, see photo 15) now sits in his former bedroom. While not appropriate for the period reflected by the house, it is just one of many Updike artifacts that will be used for future exhibits and interpretative programs.

Integrity Assessment

The construction chronology of the home is fairly straight-forward. After the house was built in 1884, a two-story, one room kitchen wing was added to the rear ell c.1900, likely by the house's second owner. The house remained in this configuration until 1950 when, following purchase (in 1945) by John and Grace Hunter, they commissioned the construction of the one-story west addition for John's medical practice. The addition involved removal of a bay window near the stairs to create an internal connection between the office and home. The Hunter family also made other changes, primarily removing some Victorian-era elaborations. On the interior, they removed the decorative spindle work at the front parlor entrance from the foyer and the woodwork between the parlors. Wainscot in the rear rooms of the first floor was removed, as well as two partitions at the second floor, making the front and back bedrooms larger. On the exterior, they similarly simplified the architecture, removing the decorative friezes and brackets of the original cornices, and the woodwork of the two-story side porch, changing it to wrought iron and replacing the porch's ground level wood floor with a concrete pad. The center entrance to the service ell, from the side porch, was bricked in and the door, frame and transom removed.



March 1946 photo (left) of the Hunter family, who moved in immediately after the Updikes, showing the distinctive grape arbor and extensive plantings discussed in Updike's writings. Circa 1960 photo (right) of the house showing the original decorative appearance of the eave, side porches and arbor; note the dogwood tree in the side yard. (Photos courtesy of John Updike Society)

On August 27, 2012, the property was purchased by the John Updike Society with the intent of operating the house as a museum and historic site honoring the legacy of John Updike. In 2017, the Society

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reversed some of the Hunter-era changes and returned many of the Hoyer-Updike-era details to the house using photographs, interviews, and Updike's own writings as evidence. While the majority of the architectural features of the house are original, those that date to the restoration include: all of the exterior doors, the decorative cornices, the chamfered wood columns and wood jig-saw balustrade at the two-story porch on the rear service wing (*Photo 8*), the decorative spindle work at the front parlor, the paneled and columned partition between the two parlors (*Photo 12*), the wainscot in the dining room and kitchen, the west wall of the front bedroom (*Photo 14*) and the west wall of Updike's rear bedroom (*Photo 15*).



Early spring 2012 with the dogwood tree in bloom. This tree was planted for Updike's first birthday. The photo shows the side porch as of 2012 with the c.1950 Hunter family changes; the side porch was recently replaced to mimic what the porch looked like during the Updike family's occupancy, based on historic photos and the grape arbor was replaced in early 2019.

The John Updike Childhood Home retains integrity and can easily convey Updike's association despite the one-story office addition. The addition's location on the "inside" of the lot, away from the open corner-side yard with the side porch, arbor, and dogwood tree, minimize its impact on the property's overall integrity. The house retains its original side-hall plan and form, scale, and massing. It retains its original suburban neighborhood setting and ambiance crucial to recognizing the presence and impact of the house in much of Updike's writings. The majority of materials, features and workmanship employed in its original construction and, importantly, present during John Updike's inhabitation of the residence remain; those materials that were lost were restored during the recent restoration. Most importantly for this property's integrity are the aspects of setting, feeling and association, which all survive sufficiently intact to provide the sense of place from John Updike's childhood, which is so vital in his writings.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance: Literature

Period of Significance: 1932-1945

Significant Dates: March 18, 1932

Significant Person: Updike, John

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The John Updike Childhood Home is significant under Criterion B, in the area of Literature, for its important association with John Updike, an acclaimed novelist, poet, short-story writer, essayist, and critic. Updike's childhood home had a strong and lasting impact on him and recurs throughout his work, including the *Rabbit* series of novels, two of which won Pulitzers. The house at 117 Philadelphia Avenue, Shillington, is the place where a young John Updike proclaimed that his "artistic eggs were hatched"² and where he lived until the age of thirteen. Updike, who is routinely identified as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century, professed in his literary work, personal memoirs, and in numerous recorded interviews that he learned what it meant to be a writer by watching his mother, an aspiring writer, in the upstairs front bedroom of his childhood home. It was in this house and in Shillington where he learned the discipline of writing and was inspired to begin a prolific and influential 60-year writing career. The period of significance is 1932-1945, the years Updike lived in this home with his parents and grandparents. As Updike is a nationally important American author, and the property influenced some of his major works, the property is considered to have a national level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The History of Ownership of the John Updike Childhood Home

The John Updike Childhood Home is the result of three distinct phases of construction carried out between 1884 and 1950. According to county records, the original dwelling was constructed in 1884 on land owned by Shillington founder Sam Shilling for Shilling's newly married son, Howard Shilling, and daughter-in-law Amelia (nee Stamm). The Italianate influenced two and one-half story home is a form sometimes referred to as a side-hall townhouse, which is identified by its double-pile plan, side-hall entry and circulation axis and is common in southeastern Pennsylvania towns. The original dwelling included a service ell to the rear to include both kitchen and bathroom amenities under a single roof. Both the main block of the 1884 dwelling and its service ell were constructed of brick. The original dwelling occupied a sizable, more than one-half-acre corner lot, with a noteworthy distance between it and other nearby dwellings. The house faces Philadelphia Avenue (State Route 724), a main street in town, and is only a few blocks from the commercial center.

The new home did not remain in the Shilling family long. It was sold in 1891, after Amelia Shilling's unexpected death at the age of 26.³ While Howard Schilling lived in the house, records show that he served as the Census Enumerator of Cumru Township and served as Republican county committee member during these seven years.⁴ The connections he made during this period positioned him to become one of the leaders who would organize the Borough of Shillington as an incorporated community in 1908. For many decades the property at 117 Philadelphia Avenue was known as the Shilling House,

² James Plath, ed. *John Updike's Pennsylvania Interviews* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2016), xiii.

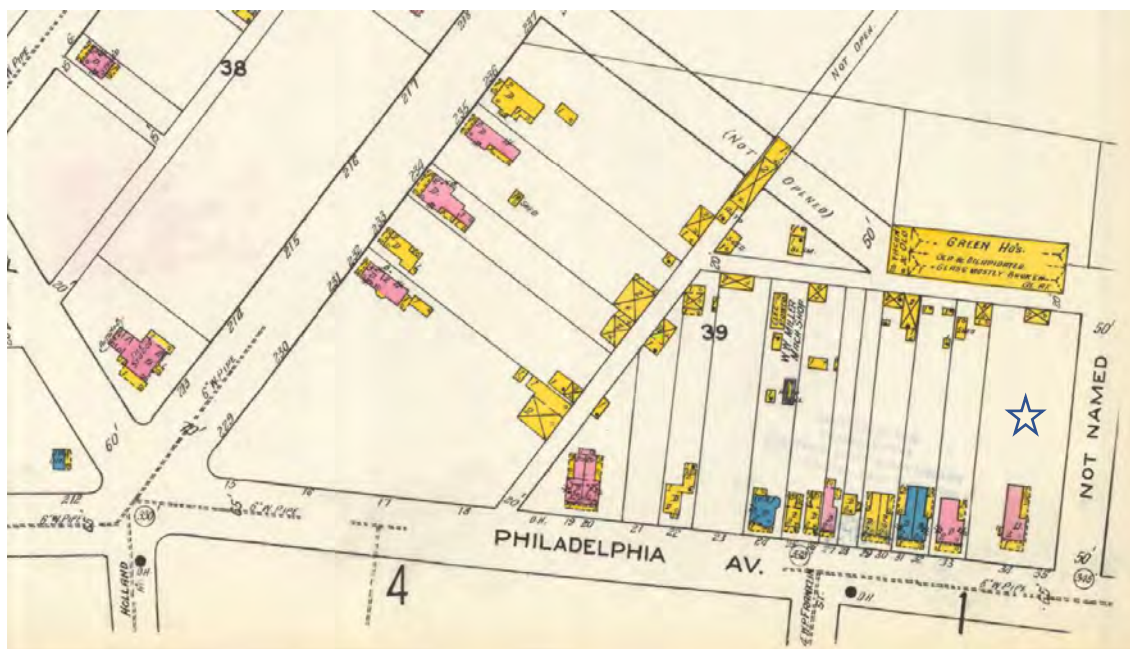
³ The history of the property is based on Berks County Deeds and "Provenance for 117 Philadelphia Avenue, Shillington," a chronology based on local research available via the John Updike Society website <https://johnupdikechildhoodhome.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/provenance-for-117-philadelphia-avenue1.pdf>

⁴ Ancestry.com, "Howard Shilling," https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2392/31509_263091-01068?pid=48506&treeid=&personid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=ZOx121&_phstart=successSource

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and in recognition of the house's connection to the founding family, the Borough later named the secondary street that runs along the west side of the property Shilling Street.⁵



1920 Sanborn Map excerpt, showing the future Hoyer-Updike property (indicated by star shape) and neighboring houses. Note the larger lot and deeper set-back than many neighboring properties.

Following the Shillings, the residence changed hands several times. In August of 1899, Michel and Clemence Thiry purchased it. It is believed that during their nearly twenty-year residency, the dwelling experienced its second phase of construction, with the addition of a small frame and clapboard-sided two-story extension to the rear of the original 1884 dwelling. This is clearly an addition as is evident at the soffit lines and in the foundation. It is believed to have been constructed to house indoor services—plumbing, bath and kitchen. The Thiry family occupied the house until May, 1918, after which they sold the property to Irvin J. Griesemer for \$6,750, nearly twice the sum it first sold for in 1891. Griesemer held the property until 1922. The ownership period of Thiry and Greisemer corresponds with a steady expansion of the Shillington community during the first quarter of the 20th century. The neighborhood surrounding the dwelling took on an increasingly dense early-suburban character during these years as larger parcels were subdivided into house lots and built out with detached and semi-detached dwellings. This development accompanied the ongoing expansion of nearby Reading, an industrial city whose population peaked around 1930.⁶

In April, 1922, the property at 117 Philadelphia Avenue with its substantial brick dwelling, large yard, orchard, and chicken coop was purchased by John and Katie Hoyer, John Updike's maternal grandparents, for \$8,000 with money the couple made growing tobacco on their nearby farm in Plowville, roughly 10 miles south of Shillington. In the heart of the Great Depression the Hoyers' daughter Linda and son-in-law Wesley Updike joined them in the Shillington House around 1930, and on March 18,

⁵ "History," Shillington Borough, <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Muni/Shillington/Pages/History.aspx>

⁶ Berks County Deeds; Sanborn Map Company, *Shillington, Berks County, Pennsylvania* (New York, 1928), Plate 7; "Provenance"

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1932, the two-generation household added a new member with the birth of John Hoyer Updike. On the occasion of his first birthday, the family planted a pink flowering dogwood tree in the southeast corner of the yard that continues to mark the arrival of spring. Updike, an only child, spent the first thirteen years of his life as the Hoyer-Updike household's youngest member and experienced his early years as a precocious and adventuresome participant in the life of the vibrant Shillington community. The Hoyer-Updike family returned to the family farm following Linda Hoyer's efforts in 1945.⁷ The move was not welcomed by Updike. He especially missed urban living and the freedom it afforded him. He had to rely on his father for transportation and this greatly curtailed his social life.



Photo taken during the Hoyer-Updike family's ownership of the property, presumed to be between 1932 and 1945. (Courtesy of John Updike Society)

Following the Hoyer-Updike family's return to the family farm, Dr. John and Grace Hunter purchased the Shillington property. In 1950, Dr. Hunter commissioned the construction of a one and one-half-story addition to the west side of the house, visible along Philadelphia Avenue, for his family medical practice. Most of the changes to the house occurred during the Hunters' long occupancy. In addition to the 1950 office wing, several interior and exterior details (mentioned in the preceding description) were altered by the Hunters. Following the Hunters' sale of the property c.1989, the house went through a succession of owners who used the property for both residential and commercial purposes. The northern half of the property containing the rear yard and outbuilding was subdivided and sold in 1994. On August 27, 2012, the parcel containing the home was purchased by the John Updike Society with the intent of operating the building as a museum and historic site honoring the legacy of John Updike.⁸

⁷ Adam Begley, *Updike* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014) 21-32.

⁸ "Provenance"

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The Significance of the John Updike Childhood Home



John Updike as a toddler in front of the side porch of the family's Shillington home, c.1935, and as a young reader (c.1940), enjoying the shade of the side porch and arbor. (Courtesy of John Updike Society)

John Updike read voraciously and began writing at a young age. Shaped by his mother's belief in his achieving greatness, he wrote his first published pieces for the elementary school newspaper, *The Little Shilling*, while living in this house. On his mother's typewriter, positioned in the front bedroom's window looking down on Philadelphia Avenue, he wrote his first short story. According to Updike, I remember as quite a small child watching my mother try to write, in Shillington, and it was the same room I was put in when I was sick in bed [the front 'guest' room]. When I was sick I would watch her trying to write and I even remember she would ask me to stop talking. I've never heard a harsh word from her before, really, and this insistence on silence was one of my first lessons on how to be a writer. . . .⁹

From his own back bedroom, he worked on stories, poems, artwork and articles, some submitted for the elementary school's newspaper *The Little Shilling*. (Later, he contributed more than 280 articles, poems, and drawings to the Shillington High School *Chatterbox*.) Updike's first grade teacher labeled him a genius, so his abilities were recognized early. Shillington offered him the experiences "to transform this sensibility into magnificently expressive language."¹⁰

Throughout his career Updike frequently wrote about the house, Shillington, and other nearby locales in his fiction, poetry, and essays. In Updike's fictional world, Shillington was renamed Olinger, while Reading was christened Brewer, or Alton. An entire collection of short stories, *Olinger Stories*, draws upon memories of his childhood home, neighborhood, and his beloved Berks County. Updike's first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair* (1959), paid tribute to the grandfather he lived with in the house at 117 Philadelphia Avenue and described an annual fair Updike attended as a youth that was held on the

⁹ John Updike, *John Updike's Pennsylvania Interviews*, ed. James Plath. Bethlehem, Pa.: Lehigh Univ. Press, 2016.

¹⁰ Jack De Bellis, "John Updike, Pennsylvania, and 'the matter of America'" The Library of America, <https://www.loa.org/news-and-views/1467-john-updike-pennsylvania-and-the-matter-of-america>

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grounds of the county poorhouse just two blocks away. In the opening of Updike's second novel, *Rabbit, Run* (1960), protagonist Rabbit plays basketball in an alley on what can readily be identified as Shilling Street. Throughout the book, Updike described the surrounding neighborhood in such detail that numerous journalists have followed the trail of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom for feature stories. His novel *The Centaur* (a National Book Award-winner in 1963) paid tribute to his father, Wesley, a popular Shillington teacher and intimately described many of Updike's experiences in his neighborhood. In 2004 Updike explained that

[The people of Shillington] sheltered me for the first 13 years of my life, and it was a nice time to grow up in. And they shared—there's a sharingness you realize, looking back. People in that part of Pennsylvania are somehow more open. And there's a sort of warmth that got me through the Rabbit novels. That Pennsylvania—Lutheran or something, I don't know what it can be traced to—but there's something about it that makes it easy to write about.¹¹



Photo of John Updike at the base of the staircase, in front of the doorway to the medical office, taken by a member of the Hunter family during Updike's February 1989 visit to the house with his mother. (Courtesy of the Hunter family and the John Updike Society.)

Updike's award-winning short story "The Black Room," published in 1994, is a sharp melancholic autobiographical account of his family's departure from the house in 1945 and the occasion of visiting the home again with his aging mother. Updike regularly returned to Shillington throughout his life but this was first return visit to the house with his mother. The story provides a virtual walk-through of the home occupied by the Hoyer-Updike family in the 1930s and 40s. Film crews from Germany and England have visited Shillington to film the house and the surrounding neighborhood for use in documentaries of

¹¹ Hoerr, Dorothy. "In the Limelight: Shillington Native, World-Renown Author John Updike." *Berks County Living*, November 2004: 48

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Updike. Updike devotees regularly pay tribute to the author with a visit to his childhood home in Shillington, often posing for a snapshot in front of the dwelling and invariably asking for directions so they can make the same walk Updike described in his well-known essay “A Soft Spring Night in Shillington” retracing a visit in the early 1980s. As William Ecenbarger wrote in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* Sunday magazine,

Among contemporary authors, none has cleaved as closely to his roots as John Updike, who has borrowed the area south of Reading, Pennsylvania, as the setting for most of his fiction. For the literary traveler, a tour of ‘Updike Country’ is unusually rewarding because much of what he wrote about remains...you can walk . . . and touch concretely the geographical sources of his imagination.

The house at 117 Philadelphia Avenue is invariably the hub of such journeys, and the dogwood tree planted by his family in 1933 and about which Updike wrote in “The Dogwood Tree: A Boyhood” still blooms in the side yard. Updike returned often to Shillington and always checked on the house, which, along with the rest of Shillington and Berks County, remained central to Updike’s personal and fictional worlds.

As a local educator and historian wrote in a letter to the *Reading Eagle*, “Millions of readers throughout the world know about Reading, Shillington, Plowville, West Reading and Mount Penn” because of Updike, “who has a worldwide readership.”¹² When Updike was named the fourth Distinguished Pennsylvania Artist in 1983 (following James Stewart, James Michener, and Marian Anderson), Gov. Thornburgh called him “the soul of Pennsylvania” and an *Eagle* editorial noted,

All of Berks County can share in the honor the state of Pennsylvania is bestowing on Pulitzer Prize-winning author John Updike [because] John Updike is Berks born and bred, and our local landscape and heritage have populated and influenced most of the 26 books he’s written over the past 25 years, [and] because of him, the world beyond the county line . . . knows us.¹³

Updike is best known for his “Rabbit” quartet of novels—*Rabbit, Run* (1960), *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit Is Rich* (1982), and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990)—in which he followed one middle-class everyman’s journey through life. The last two of those novels, featuring Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom (a composite of friends and acquaintances from his Shillington school days) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction—making Updike one of only a few writers to win the prize twice (along with Booth Tarkington and William Faulkner), and forever cementing Updike’s link to his beloved Shillington and Berks County. His childhood home continued to appear in works throughout his career, including in his 1994 short story collection *The Afterlife*, his 2004 novel *The Villages*, and his 2009 short story compilation *My Father’s Tears*.

Updike’s influence on American literature is vast. Known as “a writer who has defeated the High Culture bias against novels of manner by restricting himself to the supposedly barren settings of America’s middle-class cultural homogeneity,”¹⁴ Updike chronicled the American experience in the second half of the 20th century in a way that was unique. It was deeply personal and yet, universal, an everyman view, which made him an essential voice of his generation. His well-crafted erudite sentences, eye for sensory detail and keen insights, often comic, into human nature were signatures of his writing which he aimed to

¹² “Berks a Large Part of Updike’s Writing,” *Reading Eagle/Reading Times* (January 29, 2009).

¹³ *Reading Times* (April 23, 1983).

¹⁴ Kerry Ahearn, “Family and Adultery: Images and Ideas in Updike’s Rabbit Novels” *Twentieth Century Literature* (Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 1988), 1.

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speak to everyone rather than the literary elite. This humble Pennsylvania boy wrote about what he knew. And even though he went on to become the literati he tried to avoid, he truly believed art was for all and that “only art can track the nuances of experience.”¹⁵

President George H. W. Bush awarded John Updike the National Medal of Arts in 1989, and President George W. Bush presented him with the National Humanities Medal in 2003, making Updike one of only four Americans (the others being Philip Roth, Ernest Gaines, and Maxine Hong Kingston) to receive both honors. In a further indication of the author’s cultural significance, only 130 writers have appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine since its inception, and Updike was one of only three literary writers to be featured twice on the cover (the others being Nobel laureates Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner). Updike’s first appearance on the cover of *Time* came in 1968 as a result of his groundbreaking novel *Couples*, after which Updike was hailed as the spokesperson for the “post-pill society” in an America forever changed by the Sixties. Upon Updike’s death in January 2009, the celebrated American novelist Philip Roth told *The New York Times* that Updike was “our time’s greatest man of letters, as brilliant a literary critic and essayist as he was a novelist and short story writer. He is and will be no less a national treasure than his 19th-century precursor, Nathaniel Hawthorne.”

When the Hoyer-Updike family left Shillington, they moved almost eleven miles away to Plowville to reclaim the family farm. Updike did not welcome this move. He described his junior high and high school experience on the farm as dislocating, boring and lonesome. In a letter Updike’s mother sent him on the 5th anniversary of their move out of the house in Shillington she wrote “If I had known then how much you hated to leave that house, I might not have had the courage to go.”¹⁶ His life in Shillington and at the house on Philadelphia Avenue were at the core of his existence—he measured most of his future experiences against his years spent there.

The farm near Plowville also exerted an influence on his writing career, as Updike explained: “The firmest house in my fiction, probably, is the little thick-walled sandstone farmhouse of *The Centaur* and *Of the Farm*; I had lived in that house, and can visualize every floorboard and bit of worn molding.”¹⁷ In 2014, the John Updike Society visited the Plowville house; photographs from that visit reflect a house that retains historic integrity and may be eligible for listing because of its connection to Updike. As of January, 2019, the family’s Plowville farm has not yet been evaluated for National Register eligibility.

Other places associated with Updike may also prove to be individually eligible for National Register listing for their association with the writer. Updike attended Harvard and afterward lived in New York City, but very little fictional inspiration appears to have come from either place. Following New York City, Updike and his wife moved to Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1957. Among the Ipswich houses he lived in are a 17th century house known locally as the Polly Dole House at 26 East Street and another at 50 Labor-in-Vain Road. Like Shillington, Ipswich proved to be a fruitful source for his fiction. He renamed the town Tarbox; *Couples*, set in Tarbox, sold an astonishing 4.2 million hardcover copies.¹⁸

¹⁵ Charles Thomas Samuels, “John Updike, The Art of Fiction, No. 43” *The Paris Review* (Issue 45, Winter 1968) <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4219/john-updike-the-art-of-fiction-no-43-john-updike>

¹⁶ Begley, 33.

¹⁷ John Updike, “Fictional Houses,” *Architectural Digest* (December 31, 1984) <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/john-updike-article>

¹⁸ Louis Menand, “Imitation of Life: John Updike’s Cultural Project” *The New Yorker* (April 28, 2014), <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/04/28/imitation-of-life>

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Updike's final home was in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, where he lived with his second wife for twenty-seven years. It was while living—and writing—at 675 Hale Street in Beverly Farms that Updike received most of the awards and accolades that sealed his place in American annals.

Within Pennsylvania, there are several writers' houses listed on the National Register, including the Pearl S. Buck House in Bucks County, the Bayard Taylor House in Chester County, the Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and the Edgar Allan Poe Houses in Philadelphia, the John O'Hara House in Schuylkill County, and the Zane Grey House in Pike County. Perhaps the most similar listed resource is the August Wilson House in Pittsburgh because like the subject property, it was Wilson's childhood home until age thirteen.

Nationally, the childhood homes of other prominent writers are also listed, including the Flannery O'Connor Childhood Home in Savannah, Georgia, a house museum commemorating the writer's early years. Mark Twain's Boyhood Home in Hannibal, Missouri, is a National Historic Landmark. Twain lived there from age 9 to 14. The Emily Dickinson Homestead Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts, is where Dickinson was born and spent the first 10 years of her life. Her family repurchased the house and Dickinson spent the last 31 years of her life there.

The John Updike Childhood Home influenced Updike's entire writing career, and was where, as he himself said, he became an artist. He continued writing poetry in the last year of his life following his diagnosis with lung cancer. Just weeks before his death in January, 2009, he wrote a poem yet again referencing his childhood in Shillington, remembering his classmates and acknowledging their influence upon him, as well as the area's influence, that contains these lines:

Dear friends of childhood, classmates, thank you,
scant hundred of you, for providing a
sufficiency of human types: beauty,
bully, hanger-on, natural,
twin, and fatso—all a writer needs,
all there in Shillington, its trolley cars
and little factories, cornfields and trees,
leaf fires, snowflakes, pumpkins, valentines.
To think of you brings tears less caustic
than those the thought of death brings. Perhaps
we meet our heaven at the start and not
the end of life.¹⁹

¹⁹ "Peggy Lutz, Fred Muth." The seventh in a ten-poem sequence *Endpoint*, published in the *New Yorker*. "Peggy Lutz, Fred Muth" was written in December, 2008. The people in the title were two of Updike's closest friends from his Shillington school days. The poem was read at Updike's graveside service.

John Updike Childhood Home
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Books

- Begley, Adam. *Updike*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.
- De Bellis, Jack. *John Updike: A Bibliography, 1967-1993*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1994.
- De Bellis, Jack. *The John Updike Encyclopedia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.
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- Detweiler, Robert, *John Updike*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984.
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- Updike, John. *The Afterlife and Other Stories*. New York: Random House, 1994.

Journals, Newspapers and Magazines

- Androne, Richard G. "The Pennsylvania Updike." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*. Vol. 85 No. 1, Winter 2018.
- Ahearn, Kerry. "Family and Adultery: Images and Ideas in Updike's Rabbit Novels." *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. 34, No. 1. Spring 1988.
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- Reading Eagle/Reading Times*. October 3, 2014.
- Samuels, Charles Thomas. "John Updike, The Art of Fiction, No. 43." *The Paris Review*. Issue 45, Winter 1968.
- Updike, John. "The Black Room." *The New Yorker*. September 6, 1993.

Public Records

Berks County Recorder of Deeds, Reading, PA.

Special Collections

David Silcox and Thelma Lewis Collection, Alvernia University Archives and Special Collections, Reading, PA.

The John Updike Collection, Reading Public Library, Reading, PA.

Websites

"A Brief Updike Biographical and Literary Chronology." *The Centaurian*. Accessed 01/1316.

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“John Updike Biography.” *Academy of Achievement*. Accessed 12/01/2015.

“John Updike.” *The Literary Encyclopedia*. Accessed 12/01/2015.

Maps

Sanborn Map Company. *Shillington, Berks County, Pennsylvania*. New York, 1920 and 1928.

Shillington Borough Tax Maps. Berks County Mapping Office, Reading, PA.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Library of Congress; Harvard University; John Updike Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees): 40.302358/-75.964935

Datum if other than WGS84: NAD 83

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary consists of Berks County tax parcels 77439508787071 and 77439508788019 and extends to adjacent street edges (Philadelphia Avenue/Route 724; Shilling Street; and Brobst Street) to include sidewalks and plantings. The tax parcel containing the house and abutting medical practice is 77439508787071; the tax parcel containing the rear yard and outbuilding is 77439508788019. The boundary is illustrated in Figure 2.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary encompasses the two tax parcels subdivided from the original Shilling House lot, and extends to include the street-side sidewalks, to the edge of the streets. Inclusion of both parcels ensures that all resources/land historically associated with the John Updike family's occupancy of the property are included within the nominated boundary.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Margaret Newman
 organization: in conjunction with Eclectic Architecture LLC
 street & number: 20 Municipal Drive city or town: Phillipsburg state: NJ zip code: 08865
 e-mail: mnewmanhistory@comcast.net telephone: 609 273 7003
 date: February, 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: John Updike Childhood Home
 City or Vicinity: Shillington County: Berks State: Pennsylvania
 Photographer: Margaret Newman
 Date Photographed: February 12, 2018

<i>Photo #</i>	<i>Description of Photo, including direction camera facing</i>
1	The John Updike Childhood Home looking west down Philadelphia Avenue.
2	The pink flowering dogwood in the side yard, which was planted in March of 1933 by his parents and grandparents to commemorate John's first birthday. Updike later memorialized the tree in the autobiographical work "The Dogwood Tree: A Boyhood" published in 1965.
3	The non-contributing chicken house at the rear of the property, now used for storage.
4	The south facade includes the original 1884 house with the 1950 wing.
5	The front porch, 2-over-2 sash windows, door hoods and door frame are all original. The door and transom glass with house number date to the 2017 restoration.
6	The cornice, brackets and decorative frieze date to the 2017 restoration.
7	The east elevation includes the original main block and service ell along with the c.1900 frame addition at the rear.
8	The woodwork of the two-story side porch was removed in the mid-20th century and replaced with wrought iron and a first-floor door opening was enclosed with brick. The chamfered wood columns, jig-saw balustrade, the bracketed cornice with decorative frieze, the door frame and transom and all the exterior doors date to the 2017 restoration.

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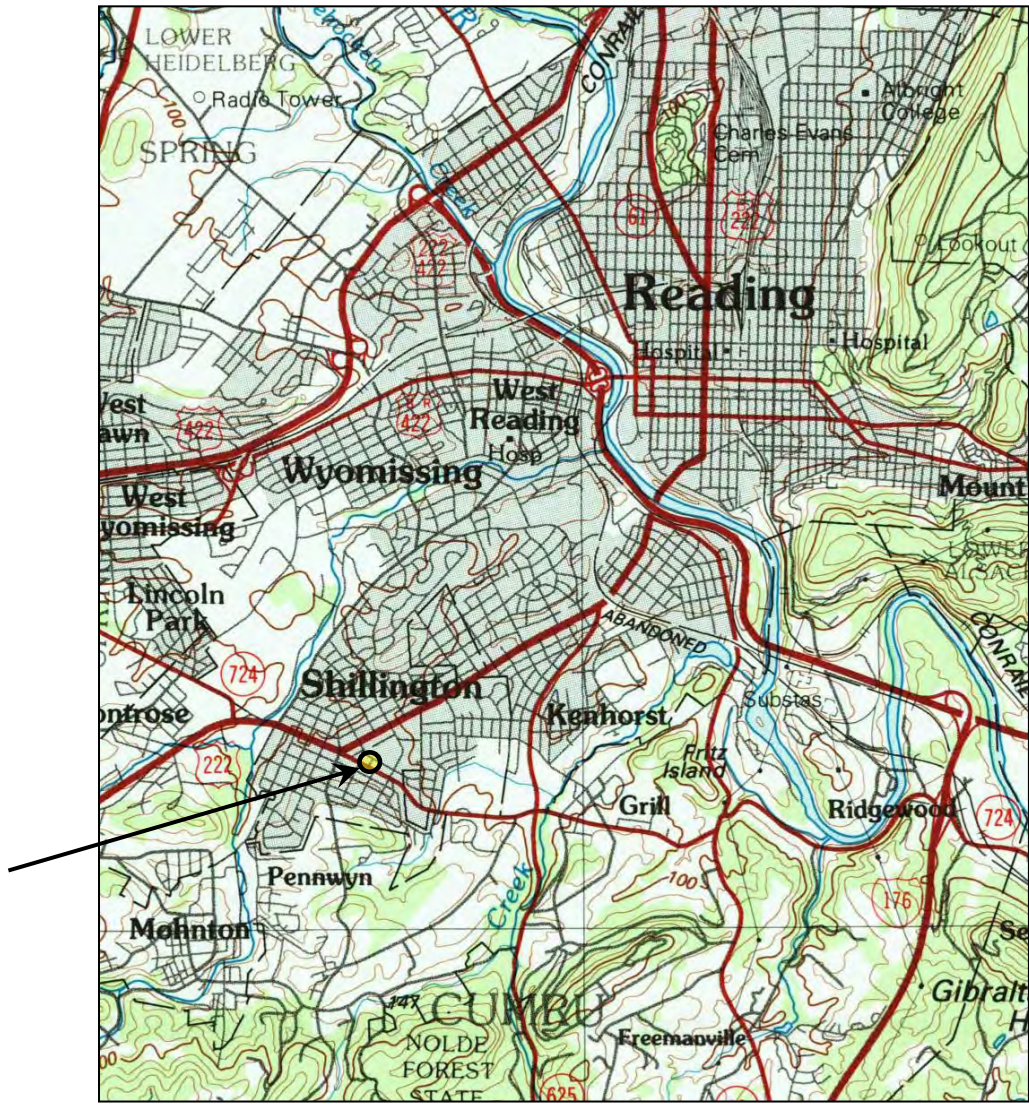
9	The north elevation includes the c.1900 addition, the upper gable end of the original service ell and the rear of the 1950 addition. The 1900 section's wrap-around porch and chamfered wood columns are original.
10	The rear of the building showing the full evolution, with c.1900 and c.1950 additions, facing SE.
11	The stair is an original feature.
12	The first-floor's double parlors (looking south) are original but some of woodwork was removed in the mid-20th century. The columned and paneled divider and spindle work above the front parlor door date to the 2017 restoration. The rest of the features—the floor, plaster and trim—are original.
13	The kitchen was added c.1900. It was restored in 2017; the wainscot dates to then. The window trim is original.
14	The front bedroom was where John Updike was inspired to be a writer from watching his mother work here. The west wall was removed in the mid-20th century to make this room larger; it was restored in 2017.
15	John Updike's childhood bedroom in the c.1900 section. In the mid-20th century, the west wall was removed to combine two small rooms into one larger room. The west wall was restored in 2017. The wainscot is an original feature.

Figures

1	USGS Map excerpt from the Reading Quadrangle showing location of property.
2	Tax Parcel Maps showing property boundary.
3	Site Plan showing exterior photo locations.
4	Basement Plan.
5	First Floor Plan showing interior photo locations.
6	Second Floor Plan showing interior photo locations.

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USGS Map - Reading Quadrangle; resource location indicated with arrow

Figure 1: USGS Map excerpt; location of the Updike House indicated by arrow, inside circle.

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Figure 2: The nominated boundary encompasses the two tax parcels subdivided from the original Shilling House lot, and extends to include the street-side sidewalks, to the edge of the streets. Inclusion of both parcels ensures that all resources/land historically associated with John Updike's occupancy of the property are included within the nominated boundary. The tax parcel containing the house and attached office is 77439508787071; the tax parcel containing the rear yard is 77439508788019. The nominated boundary (approximated) is shown above as the area inside the dashed lines. (County of Berks GIS website, accessed 1/2019; <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/GIS/Pages/ParcelViewerInfo.aspx>)

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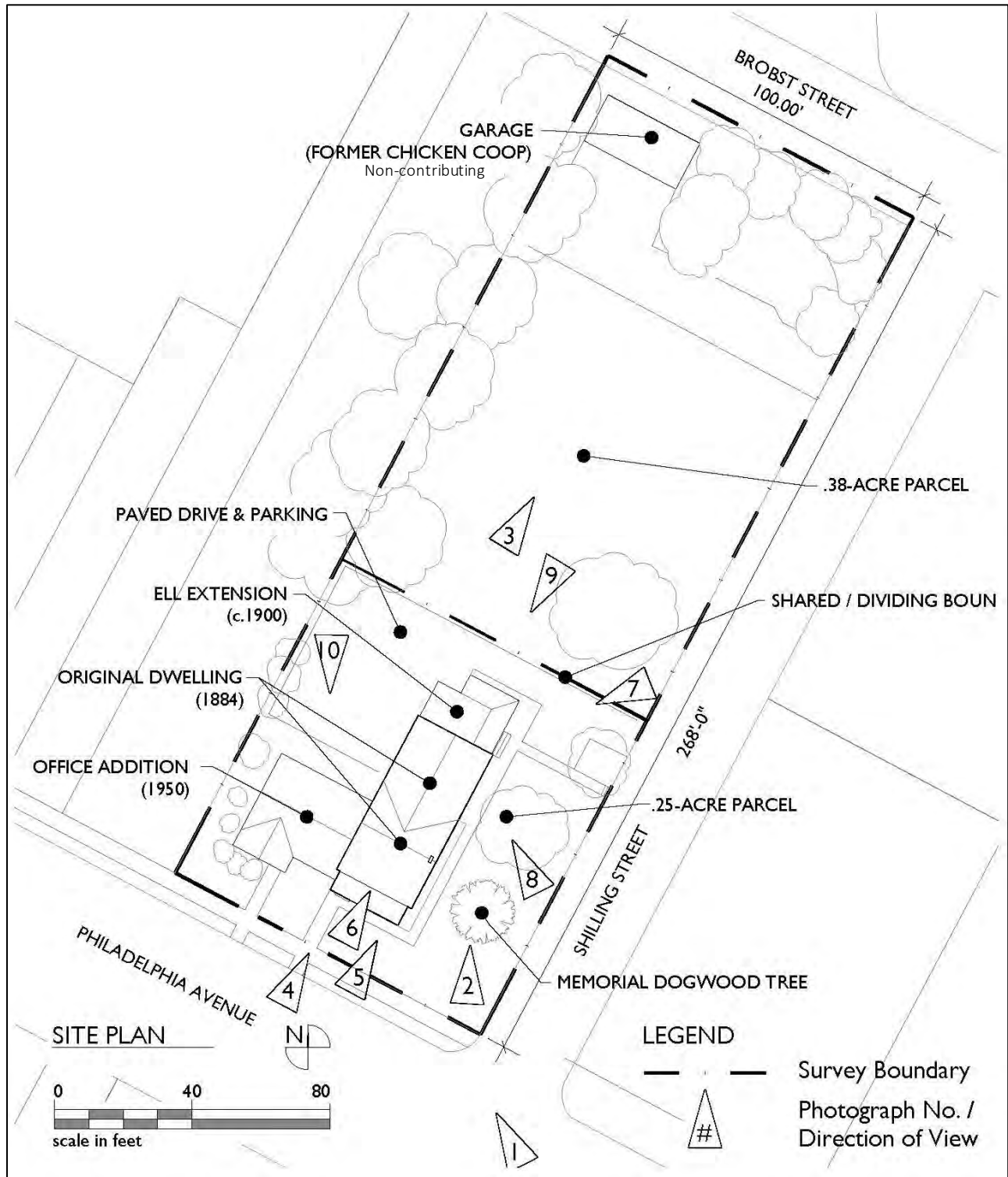


Figure 3: Site plan, showing nominated boundary (encompassing both parcels, extending to adjacent street edges) and exterior photo locations.

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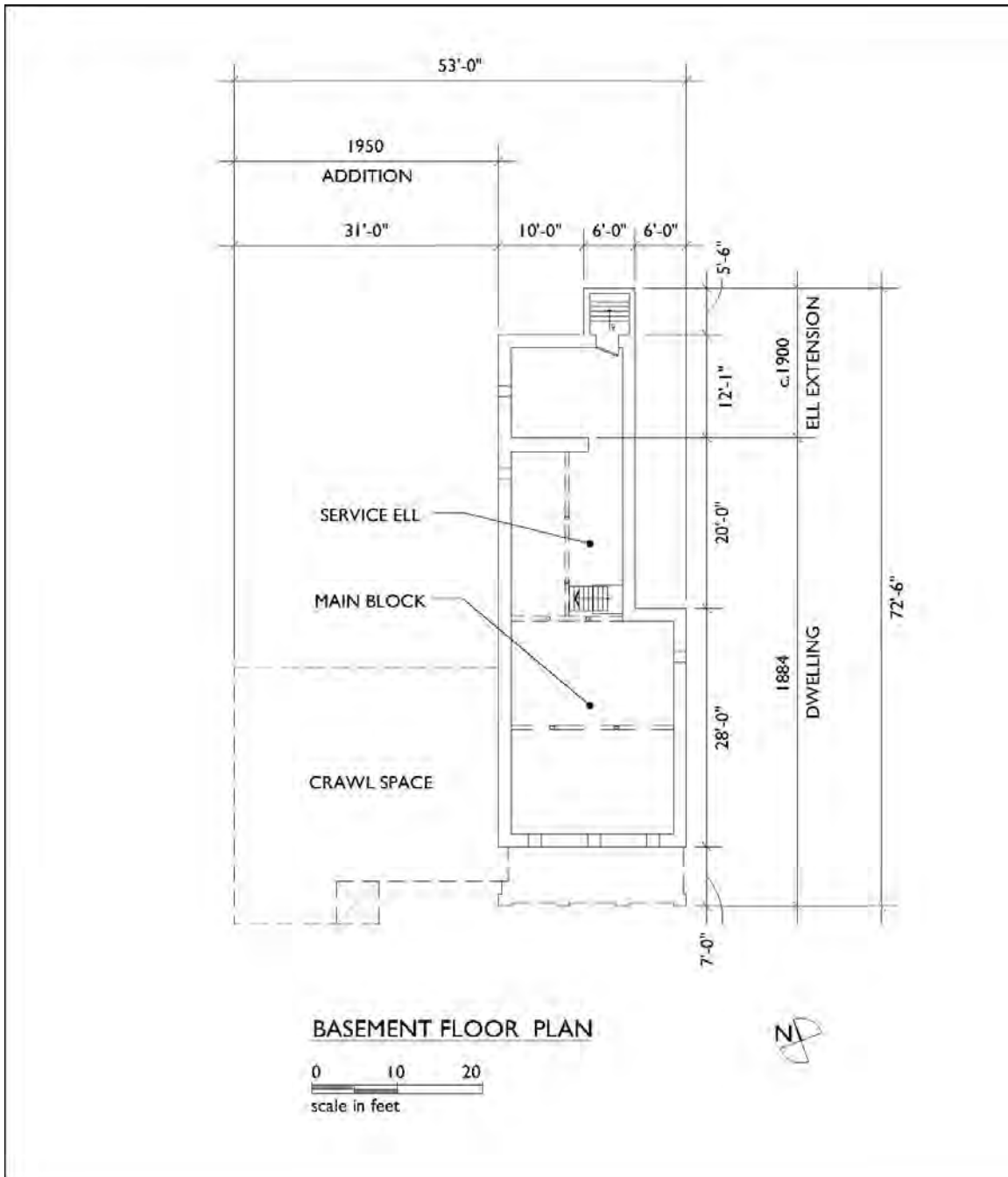


Figure 4: Basement plan.

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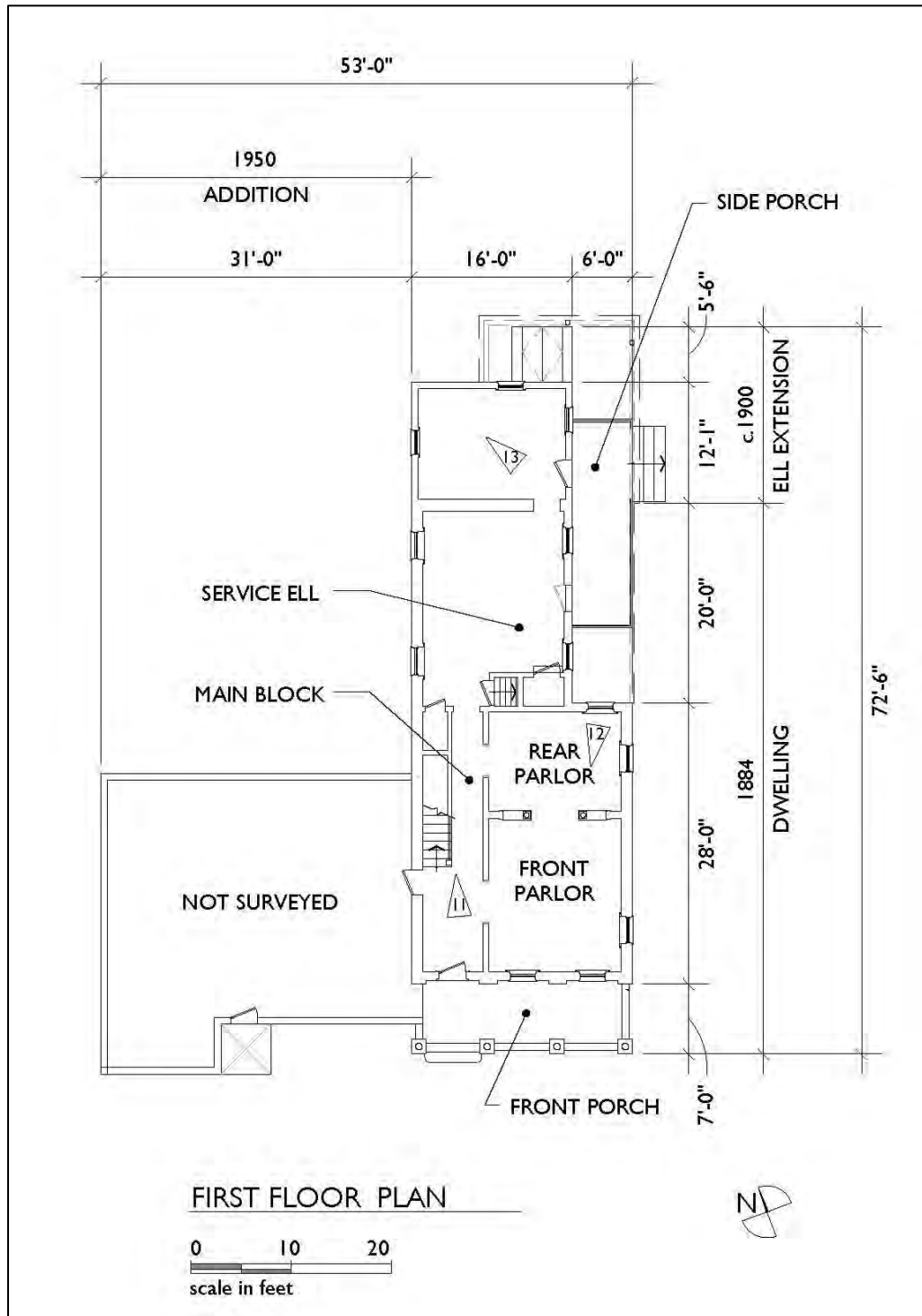


Figure 5: First Floor plan, showing interior photo locations.

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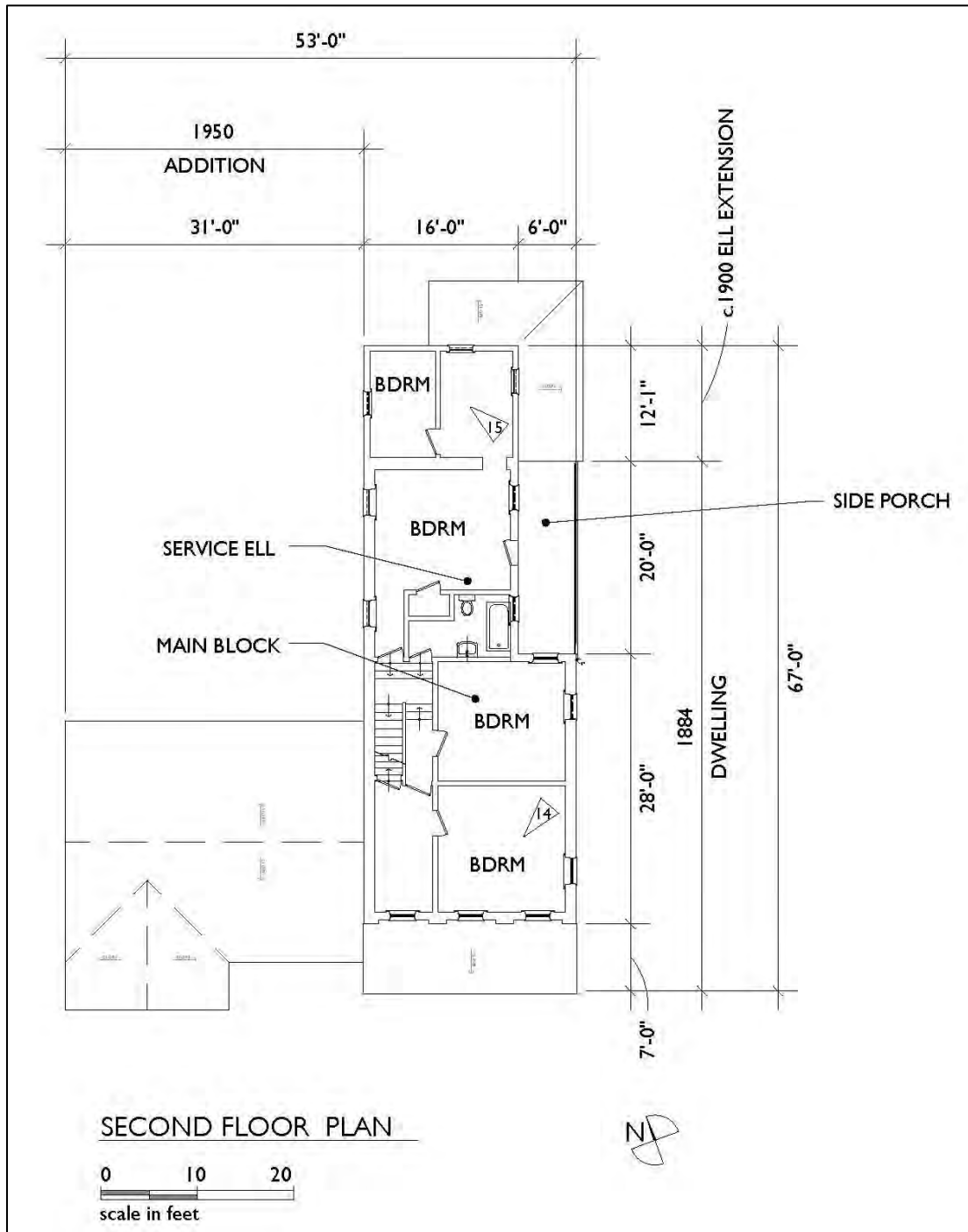


Figure 6: Second Floor Plan showing interior photo locations.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.











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The Floral Room
This room was used by the
family as a study and
writing room. It was
one of the most
important rooms in
the house.



John C. Spiller's Business
[Illegible text]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Updike, John, Childhood Home

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: PENNSYLVANIA, Berks

Date Received: 3/6/2019 Date of Pending List: 3/21/2019 Date of 16th Day: 4/5/2019 Date of 45th Day: 4/22/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100003635

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <i>State</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 4/22/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary POS: 1932-1945; AOS: Literature; LOS: State. Childhood home of John Updike.
Comments:

Recommendation/ NR Criterion: B.
Criteria

Reviewer Lisa Deline

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239

Date 4/22/19

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No *yes*

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

MARK M. GILLEN, MEMBER
128TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PO Box 202128
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2128
Phone: (717) 787-8550
Fax: (717) 783-7862

E-mail: mgillen@pahousegop.com
www.RepGillen.com



House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

February 1, 2019

29 Village Center Drive, Suite A-7
Reading, PA 19607
Phone: (610) 775-5130
Fax: (610) 775-3736

Committees:
Agriculture & Rural Affairs
Education
Labor & Industry
Veterans Affairs and
Emergency Preparedness

Andrea MacDonald, Director
State Historic Preservation Office
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120



Dear Ms. MacDonald:

Please consider this letter as my official support to include John Updike's childhood home on the National Register of Historic Places. No question exists as to the importance of one of America's favorite and more prolific writers. As one of only three Pulitzer Prize (Fiction) winners to win this prestigious award more than once, Updike published almost two dozen novels and over a dozen short-story collections. He was also known for his poetry, art, literary criticism, and children's books.

His fascination with writing began when he was quite young, living in Shillington, Pennsylvania, which is part of my legislative district. Updike's mother was a strong, favorable influence in his young life, and he found himself drawn to the accoutrements that accompanied a writer's life.

Much painstaking effort has been put into refurbishing Updike's childhood residence. No expense has been spared. No shortcuts taken. In fact, his daughter, Elizabeth Updike Cobblah and her husband, Tete, took the opportunity to evaluate the restoration in 2018. They were both duly impressed with the workmanship and attention to detail. Family heirloom donations continue to be added to contribute to the authenticity of this important undertaking.

Again, I ask you to sincerely consider including this property on the National Register of Historic Places, and I encourage you to contact me if you have any additional comments, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark M. Gillen".

Mark M. Gillen
State Representative
128th Legislative District
PA House of Representatives



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

February 27, 2019

Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service, US Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Re: John Updike Childhood Home, Berks County
Oaks Cloister, Philadelphia

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed please find the National Register of Historic Places nominations for the above properties. Included is the signed first page of each nomination, CDs containing the true and correct copies of the nominations, letters of support, and CDs with tif images.

The proposed action for the **John Updike Childhood Home** is listing at the *national* level of significance, in recognition of the impact of this home and the surrounding area upon John Updike's literary career. Our Board also supports this nomination.

The proposed action for the **Oaks Cloister** is listing. The Philadelphia Historical Commission supports listing. Our Board supports the eligibility of the property, but members were divided in their votes to endorse the nomination presented to them. Some members urged what they considered to be extensive revisions and a return of the nomination to their next Board meeting. A summary of their meeting discussion is enclosed. Our staff edited the nomination, and supports listing with the nomination submitted here. The owner of the property has requested the nomination be submitted to the Keeper at this time. His letter is enclosed.

If you have any questions regarding the Updike or Oaks Cloister nominations or our requests for action, please contact me at 717-783-9922 or afrantz@pa.gov. Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Sincerely,

April E. Frantz
National Register Reviewer

enc.