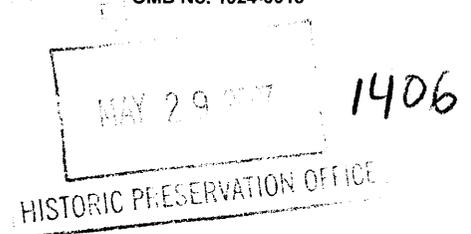
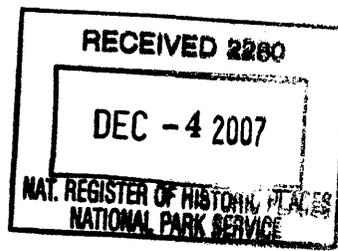


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oswald J. Nitschke House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 49 South 21 Street  not for publication

city or town Kenilworth  vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Union code 039 zip code 07033

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Amy Cradic Signature of certifying official/Title Date 9/20/07

Amy Cradic Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHDD  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 1.17.08

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and culture

Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete block and red brick

walls clapboard

roof asphalt shingles

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See attached continuation sheets)

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1905-1934

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Nitschke, Oswald J. (1867-1934)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) (See attached continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) (See attached continuation sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data

- x State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
x Other

Name of repository:

Kenilworth Historical Society

Name of Property Oswald J. Nitschke House

County and State Union County, N.J.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 559914 4502899  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) (See attached continuation sheet)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) (See attached continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shirley Boyden Maxwell, President

organization Kenilworth Historical Society date Oct. 29, 2006

street & number 567 Boulevard telephone 908-298-7411 (Work)  
908-709-0434 (Home)

city or town Kenilworth state N.J. zip code 07033

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Kenilworth Historical Society, Inc.

street & number 567 Boulevard telephone 908-709-0434

city or town Kenilworth state N.J. zip code 07033

**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.470 et seq.)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
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Union County, N.J.Section number 7 Page 1Narrative Description**Summary Description**

The Oswald J. Nitschke House (c. 1880) is located at 49 South 21 Street in Kenilworth, New Jersey. It is set on a 50 ft. x 100 ft. relatively flat piece of property adjacent to a small memorial park owned by the Kenilworth Veterans Center on one side and a ceramics studio on the other side. In 2003, the Kenilworth Historical Society moved the house approximately 1,500 feet to its present location to save it from demolition due to commercial development at its former address (513 Boulevard, at the corner of South 21 Street and the Boulevard). The piece of property on which the house currently stands (Block 115, Lot 25.01) previously was owned by the Kenilworth Veterans Center. The house's previous (historic) setting on the Boulevard and its current location are similar in appearance and were once part of the same tract of land owned by farmer J. Lawrence Benedict. The land on which the house now resides was acquired by the Kenilworth Historical Society through a N.J. DEP Green Acres grant and with the generous cooperation of the Kenilworth Veterans Center membership.

Although the house has been moved from its original location, it derives its significance primarily from its association with Oswald J. Nitschke (1867-1934), a historically significant local pioneer, political leader and guiding force during the critical formative years of the Borough of Kenilworth, N.J. Nitschke owned and resided in the house during the period of his greatest significance to Kenilworth history (1905-1934).<sup>1</sup> The house has undergone very few improvements over the years, and it has retained the same basic appearance as when Nitschke owned it. Furthermore, its current setting is very similar to its historic setting, and the property on which the house currently resides and its previous location were once part of the same tract of land owned by farmer J. Lawrence Benedict.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the fact that the house no longer stands on its original site does not diminish its greater significance.

Based on extant documentation, the house was located at its former address (513 Boulevard) at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> The original building footprint had a ground plan of an L, which was modified with the addition of a single corner bay at its southeast corner. A footprint of the house at its previous location and in its original L-shape form appears on an atlas map from 1902-1906.<sup>4</sup> A lithograph of an L-shape 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse that is believed to be the Oswald J. Nitschke House also appeared among other "existing residences" in a promotional brochure that was published (c. 1894) by a New York-based group of real estate developers called the New Orange Industrial Association, to entice individuals and businesses to purchase property in New Orange, the area now known as Kenilworth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tax records, 1917; 1920 U.S. Federal Census; Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth Directory for 1922 (Cranford Chronicle); The Polk & Co. Directory for Westfield and Cranford (1929-1930); 1930 U.S. Federal Census; Elizabeth Daily Journal, Oct. 24, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Essex County, Twp. of Union: 305

<sup>3</sup> Walter E. Boright, Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 6.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Bauer, Atlas of Union County, 1902-1906.

<sup>5</sup> New Orange Industrial Association, Greater New York, Western District (New York NY: The New Orange Industrial Association, c. 1894): 13.

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The house now has approximately 35 feet of front yardage, including a small parking area and 20 feet of rear yardage. The building is set adjacent to the property line on its south side with the park located to its north. The neighborhood is mixed with both residential and commercial properties, with 21<sup>st</sup> Street serving as a major transportation artery connecting Kenilworth and Cranford. Across the street, there is a row of historic buildings that were moved there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when many homes were being moved from the north side of the borough to the south side.<sup>6</sup> A small unpaved parking area is set parallel to the street, allowing for head-in parking. Much of the lot is grass with concrete walks running parallel to the parking and leading to the front entrance. Pavers run along the north side of the house in an east/west direction and lead to the rear bulkhead entrance. A metal fence defines the property boundary to the south and west.

The Oswald J. Nitschke House appears to have been constructed circa 1880 based on its simple, late Italianate architectural features and finishes. The Oswald J. Nitschke House was built during this period as a farmhouse. Kenilworth was, at the time of the building's construction, primarily farmland that was part of Cranford and Union Townships in Union County.<sup>7</sup> The design of the house is similar to residences advertised in mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century plan books, although it is much simpler and vernacular in style. Specific information about the construction of the house has not yet been found. However, it is evident that the home did not have an architect, and it is highly possible that the unknown builder of the home referenced local trends of the time in constructing the house.<sup>8</sup>

**Exterior Description:**<sup>9</sup>*Overall Building (Ref. Photos 1-9):*

The Oswald Nitschke House is a two-story wood frame building with a basement and an attic. It is one of Kenilworth's original clapboard-clad, wood frame farmhouses. This originally three-bay, L-shape building is now square in shape due to an addition, believed to have been made by Oswald Nitschke in the early 1900s, that filled in the front corner of the building. Among the structure's distinguishing features are a porch with Doric columns also added circa 1905 and two-leaf doors with three panels and bolection molding. The original gable roof is complemented by a hipped roof addition and cornice returns on the gable end. The front facade faces east and fronts 21<sup>st</sup> Street, which runs in a north/south direction. A wood frame porch runs along the front facade, and a rear porch is located at its southwest corner. This porch is integral with a narrow one-story shed addition that runs partially along the west elevation. Each component, with the exception of the foundation, is wood frame clad with wood siding. Each building edge is defined by wood corner boards. The roofs are clad with asphalt shingles. The foundation is modern concrete block finished with stucco, except each of the porch piers are constructed of red brick masonry.

<sup>6</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 36.

<sup>7</sup> Robert G. Woods, *Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years* (Kenilworth, NJ: 1982): 7.

<sup>8</sup> HJGA Consulting, *Historic Preservation and Architecture, Oswald J. Nitschke House Historic Preservation Plan* (2005): 16.

<sup>9</sup> HJGA Consulting, *Historic Preservation and Architecture, Oswald J. Nitschke House Historic Preservation Plan* (2005): 27-30.

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The house is four bays wide by three bays deep. The building measures approximately 44'-6" east/west (inclusive of rear shed addition and front porch) by 30'-6". The front porch is one story in height and is approximately 6'-0" deep. The one-story rear shed is approximately 5'-0" deep and incorporates a small covered porch. The primary entrance to the building is via a pair of wood paneled doors located in the south center bay, which are flanked in the three other bays by two-over-two double-hung wood windows. The front porch, one of the most distinctive features of the building, is wood frame supported by four columns of the Doric order that are set equidistant from each other. The east (front) porch columns of the house are set on brick piers, one under each column. A set of wide wood closed riser steps set off-center on the porch lead to the front door. There is a single metal pipe rail centered on the steps. The rear porch has a single brick pier under its corner post. The steps to this porch have been removed due to their poor condition.

The original building footprint had a ground plan of an L, which was modified by a single corner bay at its southeast corner that was constructed in the early 1900s. The roof over the L is evident in the two intersecting gable roofs with the ridge of the main gable running east/west and the intersecting gable running north/south. A modified partial hip roof was constructed over the corner addition and sits atop of the intersecting gables. The roofs over the main building and rear shed were originally clad with wood shingles, as evidenced by the existing open board sheathing and extant wood shingles which were covered when the corner addition was constructed. The roof over the front porch would have been clad with metal. Each of these roofs also formerly had built-in gutters, a portion of which was documented during the latest re-roofing campaign.

*Roofs:*

The cross-gabled roof is clad with asphalt shingles. The roof line at the main building is adorned with a simple wood cornice with corner returns at the gable ends. The cornice is further defined with a plain narrow wood entablature. The roof over the front porch is a shallow hip roof that simply abuts the front facade along its west side. The porch roof has a simple wood cornice with deep projecting soffits. The rear shed addition has a simple shed roof with a projecting eave.

A brick masonry chimney penetrates the roof approximately center on the north elevation. The chimney stands approximately six feet in height and tapers through shallow brick corbelling from its base to its top. There is evidence within the attic of a second chimney located center of the roof towards the rear of the building just south of the east/west thru gable; this chimney may have been removed in the 1950s, when the building was converted to a three-family residence and the stove chimney was removed in the rear first-floor kitchen.

The original roof drainage system consisted of a built-in metal gutter with round leaders that penetrated the roof soffits. Two of these leaders remain but no longer function.

*East Elevation:*

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The east facade is the primary entrance to the house and faces 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The facade is asymmetrical and is dominated by the front porch at the first floor level. The front facade is also the most architecturally delineated facade with the front porch, numerous window openings and detailed front entrance.

The front porch is open on all four sides at both its base and body. The four columns that support the porch roof are slender with unadorned bases and capitals. These are set equal distant apart on brick masonry piers. The wood porch floor is composed of narrow tongue-and-groove wood boards running in an east/west direction. A deep skirt board runs the perimeter. A set of wide steps set off-center of the porch is composed of three treads and four risers and provides access to the first-floor level from grade.

As the primary facade, the front elevation sets the architectural standard for the entire building. The features found here, particularly the siding, the use of wood corner boards and the window types, are also found on the secondary facades. The main building is clad with wood clapboard siding with an approximately 4 1/2" exposure, and each corner is delineated by a 5"-wide corner board. The front facade, exclusive of the porch, consists of two components, the gabled front composed of three equal bays and the corner addition composed of a single bay, which is wider than the other bays. The gabled front and corner addition are distinguished from each other by a vertical wood board at the second-floor level. On the front facade are the entrance doors, and a pair of two-over-two double-hung wood windows on the first floor, three one-over-one double-hung vinyl clad windows at the second floor and a single two-over-two wood double-hung wood window centered on the gable at the attic level. Centered on the corner addition is a single window. Each of the openings is detailed with a plain wide wood surround with simple sill or threshold. Each of the first floor window openings is fitted with a wood framed storm enclosure. The entrance is composed of a pair of three-paneled wood doors creating a 4'-6" wide opening. The doors appear to be original to the house. Each of the top panels is glazed.

*North Elevation:*

The north elevation, which is composed of three unequal bays, fronts the Kenilworth Veterans Center memorial park and is highly visible from the street. The east bay is the widest, with two narrower bays of equal width located to its west. The foundation is visible above grade and contains two window openings, one centered on the east bay and the other centered between the two west bays. On both the first and second floors are the typical double-hung windows with wide wood surrounds. There is a single leader attached to the siding adjacent to the west corner board.

On the north side of the front porch, a porch roof leader is attached to the corner column. Centered on the north elevation of the rear shed addition is a typical wood hung window. The corner boards at this addition are slightly narrower than found on the main house.

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*West Elevation:*

The west or rear facade faces the back yard, which is adjacent to a residential neighborhood. This elevation is composed of a two-bay-wide gabled area to the north and one simple bay to the south.

The dominant feature of this elevation is the one-story rear shed addition, which occupies about three-quarters of the first floor from the south wall to the center of the two north bays. The addition sits on a concrete block foundation finished with stucco and a shed roof with detailing that is similar to the main building except the corner boards are narrower. The addition consists of two components, wall enclosure and small porch.

The porch is opened on its west and south sides and is delineated at its southwest corner by a turned wood post set on a brick masonry pier. The porch floor is composed of tongue-and-groove narrow wood floor boards running east/west, and the perimeter of the porch is detailed with a wide skirt board. The underside of the porch is open. There are no stairs currently, but there was a set of wood steps with closed risers located off center of the porch at its west side. Set at the west wall of the main building within the opened area of the porch are one window and one door. The door opening is located north of the window, and the door is a single wood door with a four-light top panel over two vertical side-by-side lower panels. The window is a two-over-two wood double-hung window, which is much smaller in height and width than the other first-floor windows. Off center on the closed section of the shed addition is a single small six-over-six wood window. A single leader set just to the north of the porch drains the shed roof. A bulkhead entrance to the basement is located to the north of the shed addition. Constructed of concrete block, it has steep wood stairs and a metal bilco door.

The body of the main building is similarly adorned as the other facades with single typical windows in the north bay on the first and second floors and in the gable end at the attic level. There is a small atypical vinyl replacement window located off-center at the second floor of the south bay. All of the openings are similarly trimmed with wide plain surrounds and simple wood sills. There is a single leader draining the main roof located adjacent to the south corner board; this leader drains to the shed roof.

*South Elevation:*

The south elevation is composed of two main components: the two-bay wide gabled area to the west and the wide corner addition to the east. The foundation is exposed on this elevation and contains two small vinyl windows, one each in the two bays of the gabled area. There are three windows on each of the first and second floors, one each centered in the two bays of the gabled area, and one off-center to the east at the corner addition. There is also one wood window centered on the gable at the attic level.

The south side of the front porch carries the architectural detailing of the east elevation. A porch roof leader is attached to the corner column. The south side of the rear porch also carries the architectural detailing of the west elevation. There are no openings in the south wall of the shed addition.

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**Interior Description:**<sup>10</sup>

*General:*

The Oswald J. Nitschke House has two finished floor levels: the first floor and the second floor. There are two additional levels, the basement and the attic, which cannot be considered finished or habitable given their current conditions. Most of the original fixtures and historic elements of the house have been well preserved, thereby contributing to the historic/architectural integrity of the house. Among the distinguishing interior features that appear to be "original" to the building are its oak banister, oak flooring, crown molding, wide window molding, glass window panes, doors and locksets, large baseboards (6+ inches in width), steam radiators, tongue and groove beadboard closet, window panels and 9-ft. ceilings on both levels.

The house is set on an east/west axis with the front of the building facing east. The building has three distinct components, the front porch, the main building and the rear shed addition. The corner addition set within the block of the main building is considered part of the main building rather than its own component. The rear shed addition and the front porch are each one-story structures.

The basement of the main building is not currently finished and was constructed when the building was moved from the Boulevard. The house did have a basement when located on the Boulevard, but as part of the move, structural improvements were inserted to allow for a more open basement plan than was found at the Boulevard site. It is the Kenilworth Historical Society's intention to finish the basement and make it a usable space.

The foundation walls and interior bearing walls in the basement are composed of concrete masonry block. The basement floor is gravel. The first and second floor wall and floor framing is wood. The walls and ceilings at the first and second floors are generally finished with plaster on wood lath, with some modern interior partitions finished with gypsum board. The flooring is typically wood with some noted exceptions.

The building's original side-hall plan was adapted within the last 50 years, when the house was a rental property, to accommodate three living areas – two three-room apartments on the first floor and a four-room apartment on the second floor. Although the original door and window surrounds and baseboards and other trim remain at many of the original interior partitions, some have been removed to reflect its more modern use, and newer partitions have been constructed to reflect the change in layout needed to accommodate three families in one house. In order to better understand what are significant features and what additions may be removed, this description will attempt to distinguish the circa 1950s or later modifications. (Numbers correspond to those on the enclosed floor plans.)

The interior doors are typically wood with four panels, two taller over two shorted vertical panels with moldings inset within each panel on the side of the door facing the primary space. The hardware appears to be late-19th

<sup>10</sup> HJGA Consulting, Historic Preservation and Architecture, Oswald J. Nitschke House Historic Preservation Plan (2005): 31-38 (plus corresponding Floor Plans).

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century with porcelain knobs and box locks, and the doors are hung with simple painted hinges. The windows are typically two-over-two double-hung wood sash on the first floor and one-over-one vinyl replacement windows at the second floor. The doors and windows on the first floor are typically surrounded by wide wood trim detailed at the outer edge with a combination of rounded and flat moldings. Some of the surrounds on the first floor and those found on the second floor are simpler, consisting of flat stock wide wood trim without moldings.

With the exception of the front parlor, each window sill at the first and second floors is adorned with a simple wood apron with a bead along its bottom edge. The wood baseboards on the first floor that remain from the late 19th century are typically 8 1/4" in height with a molded top edge and plain base. Later period baseboard trim varies in height and detail, depending on space and time of the modification. The second-floor baseboard is 6" in height, and its profile is limited to a beaded top edge.

### Basement:

The basement is composed of two areas, the large open area under the main part of the building and a smaller area under the shed addition. The basement has an unfinished floor to unfinished ceiling height of approximately 8'-6". The single point of entry to the basement is via the bulkhead stair located along the west foundation wall. A metal door with metal frame encloses the opening to the bulkhead. There are four modern vinyl clad awning type windows, two each in the north and south elevations.

The ground plan at the main building includes two interior masonry bearing walls set perpendicular to each other and located under the southeast corner addition. There is a single opening to a full height space in the west interior wall. Four metal columns are set off-center of the main space running east/west and support a newly installed summer beam. Concrete block engaged piers support each end of the summer beam. The narrow basement area under the shed addition is unadorned and has a single masonry opening to the main basement in its east wall.

### First Floor:

The floor-to-ceiling height of the first floor varies, but the main spaces are typically 8'-9" with some of the ancillary spaces having slightly lower ceilings. The flooring varies; however, the floor levels are fairly contiguous throughout the first floor. All wall and ceiling framing is concealed by either plaster or gypsum board finishes.

The first floor is set on an east/west axis, with the Center Hall (101) establishing the axis. The center hall running from east to west is the main circulation space and connects the north side of the building to the south and the first floor to the second. There are essentially three main spaces on each side of the building with two smaller rooms located off the two main rear spaces within the one-story shed addition.

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National Park Service

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## Center Hall (*Ref. Photo 10*)

The Center Hall (101) is located off center of the main building and extends from the east wall to about half the depth of the main building. The space measures 15'-0" deep by 5'-10" wide. The defining feature of the space is the single-run stair, which leads to the second floor along the south wall. The ceiling height is 8'-8." The walls are plaster finished with a couple of layers of wallpaper that has been painted. The ceiling is modern gypsum board over plaster, and there is a modern cove molding the perimeter of the space. The floor is wide wood tongue-and-groove boards. The baseboard and door surrounds have the typical 8 1/4"-high late 19<sup>th</sup>-century trim.

The stair is wood frame with wood treads and closed wood risers. The underside of the stairs is closed on the hall side. The treads are detailed with a cove bracket carried along the tread return. The face stringer is unadorned. The railing, which begins at the first tread and rises to the second floor landing, is composed of a turned newel post, rounded top rail integral with the newel post and two turned balusters set into the top face of each tread. The newel post, top rail and balusters are stained. The railing is believed to be original to the house.

On the east wall, a pair of three-panel wood doors is set off-center of the room. The top panel of each door is glazed, and the height of each panel gets progressively taller from top to bottom. The door is 7'-6" in height and is fitted with early brass knob hardware as well as modern knob hardware. One opening (D116) in the north wall provides access to the Front Parlor (109), and one opening (D117) in the west wall provides access to Living Room 1 (103). The trim at D117 is truncated at its sides.

## Bedroom 1 (*Ref. Photo 16*)

Bedroom 1 (102) occupies the southeast corner of the building or the corner addition. The space measures 12'-7" deep by 9'-7" wide, and the ceiling height is 8'-10." The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The floors are finished with linoleum over narrow tongue-and-groove wood boards. The baseboards are less than 6 inches in height and are unadorned. The door and window surrounds are plain wood. There is one window in each of the east (W115) and south (W114) walls. One door (D119) in the west wall provides access to Living Room 1 (103). There is an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century light fixture centered on the ceiling of the room.

## Living Room 1 (*Ref. Photos 13, 14*)

Living Room 1 (103) was formerly part of Kitchen 1 (104). The west interior wall was inserted in the 1950s. A closet was also created in the northwest corner where there was door that provided direct access to the Dining Room (108). The center hall projects slightly into the space, making the room irregular in shape. A small closet, which formerly contained the stair to the basement, is located adjacent to the stair hall and is part of the ground plan projection. The space measures 9'-8" deep by 16'-0" wide at its greatest dimensions. The ceiling height is 8'-9." The floor is covered by at least two layers of linoleum. The original flooring material is unknown. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The wood baseboard is modern wood with a simple

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molded top and is 4 1/2" in height. It is carried throughout the room at both original and modern partitions. There are two door openings in the east wall projection. One opening (D117) provides access to the Center Hall (101) and one (D118) provides access to the closet. A third door (D119) is located at the east interior partition and provides access to Bedroom 1 (102). Doors D119 and D118 each have plain wood trim similar to that found in Room 102. There is a single window with plain trim set approximately center on the south exterior wall. There is a single arched double width opening located off-center on the west interior wall which is without a door or trim.

**Kitchen 1 (Ref. Photo 15)**

Kitchen 1 (104) is a narrow space with a small alcove located at its southwest corner and an interior stair that runs along the west exterior wall to the second floor. The stair is not visible from the kitchen but has been incorporated into the discussion to ease description purposes. The space measures 9'-0" deep by 16'-0" wide at its greatest dimensions. The ceiling height is 8'-8". A stove is located within the alcove, and there is a sink with integral counter and base cabinet, and wall cabinets above located along the south interior partition.

The floor is covered with several layers of linoleum, a portion of which was removed to reveal a plywood subfloor. This subfloor is an indication that there have been changes to the flooring in this space and possibly Living Area 1 (103) since its original construction. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The baseboard and door surrounds match the trim found in Room 103. There is a single window opening in the south wall and one much smaller two-over-two window at the west wall within the alcove. Each are fitted with plain wood trim. Two four-panel wood doors with late 19<sup>th</sup>-century hardware are set within the west interior partition. The south door (D121) provides access to the interior stair and the north door (D124) access to Bath 1 (105).

The space that houses the interior stair to the second floor is enclosed on all four sides and incorporates a small landing at the first-floor level. The width of the stair (2'-6") is equal to the width of the space. The east and north interior walls, the south exterior wall and the ceiling are finished with plaster. The west exterior wall is finished with gypsum board. There is a single exterior door with four-light top and two-panel bottom (D122) in the west wall that provides access to the south porch. A four-panel wood door (D221) is located at the second-floor level where there is a shallow landing. The door trim at each door is plain. The stair is a straight run with closed wood risers and treads that have been painted. A simple metal pipe railing is attached to the west exterior wall.

**Bathroom 1**

Bathroom 1 (105) is located off Kitchen 1 (104). A small area of the bathroom occupies the main building, but the remainder is located within the shed addition. It is a small irregular shaped space containing a toilet, lavatory and bathtub measuring 4'-9" deep by 6'-2" wide in the rectangular area occupied by the plumbing fixtures. The ceiling height varies but is 7'-9" at its greatest dimension; a portion of the bathroom is located under the stair to the second floor. The walls and ceiling are finished with gypsum board with a tile finish at the

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bathtub. The floor is finished with several layers of linoleum. The baseboard matches the trim found in Kitchen 1. A small closet is located in the southeast corner under the stair to the second floor. The door (D123) to this closet is half-size flat panel wood with plain trim. The four-panel wood door (D124) between the kitchen and bathroom is located in the east interior wall. There is a small six-over-six wood double-hung window (W109) with plain trim located in the west exterior wall, set adjacent to the north interior wall.

**Bathroom 2**

Bathroom 2 (106) is located off Kitchen 2 (107) at the west end of the building within the one-story shed addition. The space is rectangular in plan, with a small plumbing chase located in the southeast corner, and contains a toilet, lavatory and bathtub. It measures 4'-9" deep by 6'-6" wide at its greatest dimensions. The ceiling height is 7'-9". The floor is covered with several layers of linoleum. The walls and ceiling appear to be finished with plaster. The baseboard matches the trim found in Kitchen 1 (104). The door (D125) to Kitchen 2 is four-panel wood with plain 4"-wide trim and is located in the east interior wall. There is a single one-over-one window (W108) centered on the north exterior wall.

**Kitchen 2**

Kitchen 2 (107) occupies the northwest corner of the main building and is located adjacent to the Dining Room (108). The space is basically rectangular in plan with the exception of a five-foot section of the east interior wall that angles west approximately 20 degrees. The room measures 13'-0" wide by 10'-3" deep at its greatest dimensions. The ceiling height is 8'-9". The stove, sink with integral counter and base cabinet, and wall hung cabinets occupy the northwest corner.

The floor is linoleum over wood. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster, with a small section in the kitchen area finished with wallpaper. The baseboard appears to be late 19th century with the molded top edge and stands 7" in height. The opening (D126) to the Dining Room (108) is centered on the angled portion of the east interior partition; the opening is missing its door. The door (D125) to Bathroom 2 is set at the south end of the west wall, and there are single windows (W107 and W106) approximately centered on each of the west and north exterior walls. The door and window trim appear to be late 19th century.

**Dining Room (Ref. Photo 12)**

Dining Room (108) is the center room on the north side of the house and has direct access to Kitchen 2 (107) and the Front Parlor (109). Formerly there was direct access to Living Area 1 (103) along the south interior partition, but behind the existing door is a small closet. The space is irregular in shape. The west interior partition angles into Kitchen 1, and a chimney breast occupies the northeast corner of the space. The space measures 13'-0" wide at its greatest dimension by 9'-11" deep between the east and west interior partitions. The ceiling height is 8'-8". The floor is finished with linoleum. The walls and ceilings are finished with plaster. The plaster walls are covered with wallpaper that has been painted.

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There is a cove molding the perimeter of the ceiling. The baseboard matches the trim found in Kitchen 2 (107). The opening (D128) to the Front Parlor (109) located at the south end of the east interior partition is finished with very plain trim; there is no evidence of a door. D127 to the closet along the south wall is four-panel wood with the more elaborate paneling located on the closet side. The closet appears to be finished with gypsum board. The trim at D126 matches the first-floor window trim on both sides of the opening. One window (W105) is located approximately center between the east wall and chimney breast in the north exterior wall; this window is finished with late 19th-century trim.

**Front Parlor** (*Ref. Photo 11*)

The Front Parlor (109) occupies the northeast corner of the house, is rectangular in plan, and has direct access to the Center Hall (101) to its south and the Dining Room (108) to its west. The space is rectangular in plan, measuring 12'-10" wide by 11'-5" deep. The ceiling height is 8'-9". The floor is painted wide wood boards. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The plaster walls are covered with wallpaper that has been painted. The baseboard has a molded top edge and stands 8 1/4" in height. The door (D116) to the Center Hall is four-panel wood with a molded surround matching the first-floor windows. D128 to the Dining Room is without a door and is trimmed with a plain surround. The windows in the Front Parlor are the most elaborately detailed in the house, with the wide molded surround at their jambs and head, and a rectangular pattern paneled bottom at its base. There are three windows in this space. Two windows (W102 and W103) are located a distance apart in the east exterior wall, and the third window (W104) is located off-center to the west in the north exterior wall.

**Second Floor**

The floor-to-ceiling height of the second floor is typically 8'-9". The flooring type varies, but the floor levels are contiguous. All wall and ceiling framing is concealed by either plaster or gypsum board finishes.

Similar to the first floor, the second floor is set on an east/west axis with the Hall (201) establishing the axis. The Hall running from east to west is the main circulation space and connects the north side of the building to the south, and the second floor to the first floor and the attic. There are essentially two main spaces on each side of the building, with a bathroom located center at the front.

**Hall** (*Ref. Photo 17*)

Hall (201) is a narrow rectangular space that is irregularly shaped at its west end. The hall originally opened to the stair to the second floor, but a modern partition was added in the 1950s replacing the wood balustrade that ran along the perimeter of the stair opening. The space, excluding the area occupied by the stair, measures approximately 2'-10" wide by 14'-2" deep at its greatest dimensions. The west interior partition angles approximately 45 degrees to the west. There is a small closet set above the stair along the south wall, which is accessed via a small plain wood door (D216). The walls and ceiling are finished with a mix of plaster and gypsum board. The walls are covered with wallpaper that has been painted. The baseboard is typical 6"-height

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wood with beaded edge except for a small section along the west wall that matches the first floor. The floor is covered with linoleum. Each door is finished with plain wood trim. The doors (D213, D223, D222 and D215) to the stair, to Bedroom 3 (204), to Kitchen 3 (205) and to Living Room 2 (206) respectively are each missing their doors. D214 to the attic and D217 to Bathroom 3 (202) each are fitted with four-panel wood with box locks and pintal hinges.

**Bathroom 3** (*Ref. Photo 25*)

Bathroom 3 (202) is rectangular in plan, measuring 6'-4" deep by 5'-10" wide, and serves as the only bathroom on the second floor. The lavatory and toilet are located along the north wall, and the clawfoot bathtub with shower attachment is located along the south wall. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. There is a plain wood molding set at wainscot height the perimeter of the room. W201 is set approximately center on the east exterior wall, and D217 is set off-center on the west wall. Both the door and window are fitted with plain trim.

**Bedroom 2** (*Ref. Photos 18, 19*)

Bedroom 2 (203) is rectangular in plan and occupies the southeast corner of the building. The space measures 12'-6" deep by 9'-6" wide. The floor is finished with linoleum. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The baseboard and trim are plain. There is one window in each of the east (W212) and south (W211) walls. One door (D226) in the west wall provides access to Bedroom 3 (204). There is a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century gas fixture located center of the ceiling.

**Bedroom 3** (*Ref. Photos 20, 21*)

Bedroom 3 (204) is irregular shaped in plan with a small room along the rear wall over the back stair, which contains a toilet along its south wall, a closet located in the northwest corner, and a portion of the stair and hall occupying the room's northeast corner. The space measures, at its greatest dimensions including rear toilet room, 19'-5" deep by 16'-0" wide. The floor is finished with linoleum. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster; the walls are covered with layers of wallpaper that has been painted. The baseboard and trim are plain. D223 is located in the east angled wall adjoining the hall (201), and D226 is located in the far east wall, providing access to Bedroom 2. There are two windows (W210 and W209) set equal distance apart in the south wall. D225 along the west wall provides access to the rear toilet room; this door is four-panel wood with box lock and pintle hinge hardware. Within the toilet room is a single small one-over-one vinyl replacement window at the north wall. A single four-panel wood door (D224) provides access to the small closet and matches D225.

**Kitchen 3** (*Ref. Photos 22, 23*)

Kitchen 3 (205) is rectangular in plan, measuring 15'-7" deep by 12'-10" wide. The floor is finished with multiple layers of linoleum, and the walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. There is a modern cove molding

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at the ceiling and plain wood molding located at wainscot height. A stove and wall cabinets are located along the south wall, and a sink with base cabinet is located in the northwest corner. In the east wall, D219 provides access to Living Room 2 (206), and D220 provides access to a small closet under the stair to the attic. D219 is a typical four-panel wood door. D220 is a beaded vertical board door with small latch lock. Opening D222 is located along the south wall, provides access to the hall (201) and is missing its door. D221 is located at the west end of the south wall and provides access to the rear stair. This door is a typical four-panel wood fitted with both box lock and modern hardware. There is one window in each of the west (W207) and north (W206) walls.

**Living Room 2** (*Ref. Photo 24*)

Living Room 2 (206) occupies the northeast corner at the second floor and is irregular in shape. A closet integral with a chimney breast occupies the northwest corner of the space, and the stair to the attic runs partially along the west wall. The floor is covered with multiple layers of linoleum. The walls and ceiling are finished with plaster; the ceiling is fitted with a modern cove molding its perimeter. The baseboard is of two varieties. At the east and a portion of the north and the west walls, the trim matches that found elsewhere with a beaded top. At the attic stair wall (west) and at the closet, the baseboards are without the beaded edge. There are two windows (W203 and W202) in the east wall set equidistant apart. Opening D215 is located at the west end of the south wall and is missing its door. There is one opening D219 set between the attic stair and closet in the far west wall. D218 is set at the east end of the north wall of the small closet.

**Attic**

The attic is accessed via a straight run of stairs set perpendicular to the north wall of the second floor hall (201). The stair therefore runs south to north with a single door (D214) in the south wall. It is open at the attic landing, and the opening is without any enclosures. The attic floor space occupies only the original L portion of the main building and is composed essentially of three spaces, the front gable, the back gable and the south gable. The two rear spaces, the back gable and south (or L) gable, were at one time enclosed by wood frame walls finished with plaster; the plaster finishes have been partially removed and the walls modified. The flooring is wood. The walls are typically exposed wood framing and the ceiling exposed rafters except at the two rear spaces. There is a single two-over-two double-hung window in each of the three gable ends.

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary:

The Oswald J. Nitschke House (c. 1880) possesses historical significance under National Register Criterion B, in the area of politics and government, for its association with Oswald J. Nitschke (1867-1934). Nitschke was a historically significant local pioneer, political leader and guiding force during the critical formative years of the Borough of Kenilworth, N.J. His wisdom, vision, direction and notable achievements as a councilman and five-term mayor paved the way for the thriving community that exists today, thereby contributing to his stature as a prominent figure of historic significance to Kenilworth.

In July 2003, long after its period of significance, the Oswald J. Nitschke House was moved 1,500 feet from its historic address at the corner of the Boulevard and South 21<sup>st</sup> Street to its current address on South 21<sup>st</sup> Street in order to save it from destruction. The two properties were once part of the same tract of land owned by farmer J. Lawrence Benedict and their setting, similar.<sup>1</sup>

Nitschke came to Kenilworth (formerly known as New Orange) as a young German immigrant in 1899, at the height of the area's first major building boom. Soon thereafter he became involved with the development of the community, assuming leadership positions with the Kenilworth Realty Company, the Kenilworth Building and Loan Association and the Kenilworth Board of Trade and Municipal Progress. He purchased the Nitschke House, one of Kenilworth's original farmhouses, in 1905 and resided there with his wife and two sons during the period of his greatest significance to Kenilworth history (1905-1934).<sup>2</sup>

Nitschke was among the first individuals to advocate for the incorporation of Kenilworth in 1907, a move that prompted his appointment on the borough's first council and propelled him into local politics.<sup>3</sup> After serving on the borough council for several years, Nitschke was elected mayor in 1919, a post that he held for a record five terms within the period 1920-1933.<sup>4</sup> He was Kenilworth's first foreign-born mayor. Nitschke had a clear vision of how the Borough of Kenilworth should advance and be improved "as a place of residence for those who desire the benefits of a wholesome community life."<sup>5</sup> He believed that the future growth of Kenilworth depended largely upon opening up means of transit to and from the borough. One of his most significant achievements toward that end was giving the borough its first major artery and opening up a vast tract for development by extending its unique 120-foot-wide Boulevard (reportedly the widest road in New Jersey aside from state and federal highways to date) westward through the County Park System to Cranford.<sup>6</sup> Nitschke also is credited with bringing about vast advancements in the developing community's infrastructure, including

<sup>1</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Essex County, Twp. of Union: 305

<sup>2</sup> Tax records, 1917; 1920 U.S. Federal Census; Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth Directory for 1922 (Cranford Chronicle); The Polk & Co. Directory for Westfield and Cranford (1929-1930); 1930 U.S. Federal Census; Elizabeth Daily Journal, Oct. 24, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Cranford Citizen (Cranford NJ: July 1, 1926): 1.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Boright, Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 10.

<sup>5</sup> Mayor Oswald Nitschke's Address to the Kenilworth Borough Council, Jan. 1, 1920.

<sup>6</sup> Cranford Citizen (Cranford NJ: July 1, 1926): 1.

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major road improvements and the installation of street lights, lateral sewers and a means of bringing an adequate potable water supply to the community via an independent water plant. A strong advocate for order, economy and efficiency, Nitschke initiated and implemented parliamentary procedures and other guidelines that, to this day, continue to dictate the way the borough is governed and council meetings are conducted. As an ardent proponent of "an educated citizenship," Nitschke began the practice in the borough of allowing residents to actively participate in council meetings "to see for [themselves] whether [their] public servants are discharging their duties as honest trustees should" and to offer "constructive criticism and suggestions for the advancement of [our] common interests."<sup>7</sup> Nitschke additionally is known for setting a legal precedent in the state for tied elections when he refused to abdicate his mayoral seat following the disputed local election of 1921.<sup>8</sup> In addition to his many contributions as a leader in the community, Oswald Nitschke influenced the development and appearance of Kenilworth through his various construction projects as a contracting builder. He was involved in all major changes to Kenilworth that were characteristic of the suburbanization of New Jersey, including real estate development through subdivision and building, the incorporation of Kenilworth as a borough, and transportation improvements.

Nitschke dedicated the major part of his life to serving the Borough of Kenilworth; and his achievements set the foundation for the thriving community that exists today. The Oswald J. Nitschke House is the residence where Nitschke formulated his vision for the community and launched his plans, where he raised his family, and where he ultimately died.

**Historical Background:**

The setting of the Oswald J. Nitschke House (c. 1880) at its current location is very similar to the building's historic setting on the Boulevard (1,500 feet away), from which the house was moved in July 2003 in order to save it from destruction. The two properties were once part of the same tract of land owned by farmer J. Lawrence Benedict.<sup>9</sup>

Around the time that the house was built, a group of businessmen and land speculators from Elmira, N.Y., known as the Elmira Industrial Association, became interested in New Jersey. They decided to purchase approximately 30 farms in Union and Cranford Townships, which encompassed the area now known as Kenilworth. The businessmen formed the New Orange Industrial Association in 1894 with the intent of developing this targeted area in a way that would be ideally suited to industry and at the same time provide for low-, middle- and upper-income housing.<sup>10</sup> They called the area "New Orange" because that was originally the name given by the Dutch to New York City in 1673 and, as the new city in New Jersey was to be "patterned after the metropolis of the nation in enterprise, commerce and general attractiveness, the assumption of the title

<sup>7</sup> Mayor Oswald Nitschke's Address to the Kenilworth Borough Council, Jan. 1, 1920.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 14-18.

<sup>9</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Essex County, Twp. of Union: 305.

<sup>10</sup> Robert G. Woods, *Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years* (Kenilworth, NJ: 1982): 7.

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[would] be an assurance of a faith in an undertaking born to succeed.”<sup>11</sup> The historic location of the Oswald J. Nitschke House was among the properties that the New Orange Industrial Association obtained in 1894 as part of the real estate venture.

The New Orange Industrial Association hired local engineer J. Wallace Higgins to survey the New Orange area and design a master plan for it, which called for industrial zones, a lake and yacht club, connections with mass transit via a railroad (which eventually became known as the Rahway Valley Railroad) and trolley lines, a shopping area, a press club, an opera house and theaters.<sup>12</sup> The real estate developers also published a promotional brochure (c. 1894) to entice individuals and businesses to purchase property in “the new and charming city of New Orange.” The brochure described New Orange as “a model city,” “easily accessible to the City of New York and to all points included in the territory of Greater New York east and west of Manhattan Island,” and “undoubtedly one of the most desirable sections of the metropolis.”<sup>13</sup>

A lithograph of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmhouse that is believed to be the Oswald J. Nitschke House, in its original L-shape form, was among the “existing residences” that were featured in the brochure.<sup>14</sup> It is highly probable that the brochure made its way into the hands of Oswald Nitschke, a young German immigrant who was living and working in New York at the time when the publication was printed.

Nitschke, who was born in Germany on Nov. 1, 1867, emigrated to the United States in 1892 at the age of 25. He initially settled in New York City, securing “a foothold in the land of his adoption” and preparing “a home in which he should be the head of the family.”<sup>15</sup> The following spring he was joined by his young German-born wife Anna and their four-month-old son, Oswald Jr. A second son, Hugo, was born in 1896. The opportunity to purchase property in and be part of the developing community of New Orange apparently interested Nitschke and prompted him to relocate there.

Nitschke moved to New Orange in 1899, at the height of a local building boom that had begun a year earlier. The building opportunities of that time drew to the area such tradesman as James Arthur, who contracted to build “a hundred homes in a hundred days.”<sup>16</sup> Nitschke worked as a stationary engineer for the New York-based Circular Loom Company, which was among several large companies that the New Orange Industrial Association brought to New Orange.<sup>17</sup> Nitschke eventually went into business as a contracting builder and furthered the development of Kenilworth by building and selling many homes in the area.

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<sup>11</sup> New Orange Industrial Association, Greater New York, Western District (New York NY: The New Orange Industrial Association, c. 1894): 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Robert G. Woods, *Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years* (Kenilworth, NJ: 1982): 7.

<sup>13</sup> New Orange Industrial Association, Greater New York, Western District (New York NY: The New Orange Industrial Association, c. 1894): 6, 7, 8, 16

<sup>14</sup> New Orange Industrial Association, Greater New York, Western District (New York NY: The New Orange Industrial Association, c. 1894): 13.

<sup>15</sup> A.V. Honeyman, *History of Union County* (New York: Lewis Historical, 1923): 310.

<sup>16</sup> Robert G. Woods, *Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years* (Kenilworth, NJ: 1982): 10.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 10.

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In 1904, the New Orange Industrial Association decided to retreat from its New Orange real estate project for an unknown reason. Some of the principals of the association formed a new corporation – Kenilworth Realty Company – to buy out their partners, and they renamed their real estate project “Kenilworth.” The name “Kenilworth” was derived from a literary society to which the real estate developers belonged, called the Kenilworth Club, in honor of Sir Walter Scott’s renowned novel *Kenilworth*.<sup>18</sup> Published in 1821, the novel relates to England’s famous Kenilworth Castle, which to this day is depicted on Kenilworth’s gateway signs, on its corporate seal and letterhead and on its police badges.

Nitschke, who was close friends with at least one of the key players in the New Orange Industrial Association, became a director of the newly formed Kenilworth Realty Company and the Kenilworth Building and Loan Association and a trustee of the Kenilworth Board of Trade and Municipal Progress.<sup>19</sup> He thereby became directly and actively involved in the further development of Kenilworth. Such affiliations also spurred Nitschke’s long-standing interest in real estate.

One of Nitschke’s first real estate investments was the property at 513 Boulevard (the former address of the Nitschke House), which had been purchased by John M. Hall in 1902 and which Nitschke purchased on Aug. 30, 1905.<sup>20</sup> At the time, this was one of the few lots in the neighborhood that was owned and built upon.

In the early 1900s, Nitschke constructed a small addition at the front corner of the then L-shape house, giving the building its present square shape. This change, marked by foresight, facilitated the evolution of the house from a single-family farmhouse to a two-family dwelling. Evidence of New Jersey’s industry-spurred population and its dependency on the newly arrived immigrants is reflected in this enlargement of the Oswald J. Nitschke House.<sup>21</sup> The home would stay in the Nitschke family for 84 years. Nitschke invested in other real estate ventures in Kenilworth and built and sold many homes in the area, including a duplex that was built next to the Oswald J. Nitschke House. However, the nominated house is the only remaining building associated with Nitschke’s productive career that currently stands. It is the house that is most associated with Nitschke’s local fame as a politician and land speculator.

In 1906, James Arthur, founder of the New Orange Park Project, moved the homes he had previously constructed north of the Boulevard to the area on the south side of town that comprised Newark Avenue and was intended to be the borough’s exclusive residential section. The practice of moving homes from the outskirts of town into the central core of Kenilworth became commonplace in Kenilworth, and the trend continued through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup>

In 1934, at the height of the Great Depression, police reports state that Nitschke committed suicide. He left the Oswald J. Nitschke House and the duplex home that he had built next door (c. 1916) to his wife Anna. When

<sup>18</sup> Robert G. Woods, *Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years* (Kenilworth, NJ: 1982): 15.

<sup>19</sup> A.V. Honeyman, *History of Union County* (New York: Lewis Historical, 1923): 310.

<sup>20</sup> Deed: John M. Hall to Oswald J. Nitschke, Book 451:88 (1905)

<sup>21</sup> HJGA Consulting, *Historic Preservation and Architecture, Oswald J. Nitschke House Historic Preservation Plan* (2005): 22.

<sup>22</sup> Kenilworth Historical Society, *Kenilworth Celebrates 95 Years* (Kenilworth NJ: 2002): 9.

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Anna died in 1952, their son Hugo inherited both houses. He sold them to his nephew, Oswald G. Nitschke, for \$30,000 in 1953. Based on oral history and architectural evidence, Oswald G. further modified the Oswald J. Nitschke House from a two-family to a three-family residence.<sup>23</sup> On Nov. 8, 1989, the house was sold out of the family to local proprietor Manny Goncalves.<sup>24</sup> The house changed hands again in 2003, when it was sold to local dentist Dr. Jerome Forman. Dr. Forman had plans to demolish the Nitschke House and erect a new office building in its place, at the corner of the Boulevard and South 21 Street (a commercially zoned downtown area), but the Kenilworth Historical Society convinced him to donate the house so that the organization could save it from destruction by relocating it. In July 2003, the Kenilworth Historical Society acquired the Oswald J. Nitschke House from Dr. Forman and moved it (1,500 ft.) to its present location.

**Nitschke's Political Career/Legacy:**

From 1907 until his death in 1934, Nitschke remained strongly committed to Kenilworth and served the community in many capacities. In 1907, a movement began in Kenilworth to break away from the townships of Cranford and Union, to which residents had been paying property taxes, and incorporate as a borough unto itself. Nitschke was among the first persons to advocate the incorporation of Kenilworth, which enabled the borough to make necessary infrastructure improvements that had been overlooked by Cranford and Union.<sup>25</sup> Nitschke became ardently involved in this issue as a principal of the Kenilworth Realty Company, which owned much of the land in the area. The Kenilworth Realty Company filed an application with the state legislature for passage of a bill "to create and incorporate the borough of Kenilworth from portions of the townships of Union and Cranford."<sup>26</sup> Although the company had connected the community's development to rail transportation and zoned the area for different uses, it had not provided for all the needs of its residents, who therefore were dependent on the townships' governments. After meeting all requirements, with 90 percent of local votes cast in favor of its adoption, the Bill of Incorporation creating the Borough of Kenilworth and establishing the boundaries of Kenilworth, Cranford and Union was signed into law by N.J. Governor Stokes on June 18, 1907.<sup>27</sup> The incorporation gave the borough of Kenilworth an opportunity to secure various local improvements that it previously had been prevented from making when under the jurisdiction of Cranford and Union. Among the benefits gained was McKinley School.<sup>28</sup>

Nitschke subsequently was elected to serve as a councilman and a member of the first governing body of the newly incorporated Kenilworth, sparking his local political career. One of his first assignments on the newly formed council, and member of its three-member finance committee, was the important responsibility of negotiating an agreement with Union and Cranford to fairly divide assets and liabilities and settle other affairs

<sup>23</sup> HJGA Consulting, Historic Preservation and Architecture, Oswald J. Nitschke House Historic Preservation Plan (2005): 18.

<sup>24</sup> Deed: Oswald G. Nitschke and Madelyn Nitschke to 513 Boulevard Company (Manny Goncalves), Book 3618: 0694 (Nov. 8, 1989).

<sup>25</sup> Cranford Citizen (Cranford NJ: July 1, 1926): 1.

<sup>26</sup> The Cranford Chronicle (Cranford NJ: April 15, 1907).

<sup>27</sup> Robert G. Woods, Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years (Kenilworth NJ: 1982): 19.

<sup>28</sup> The Cranford Chronicle (Cranford NJ: April 15, 1907).

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resulting from Kenilworth's independence from the two townships. Nitschke completed this assignment successfully and within a short period of time.<sup>29</sup> While serving on the council's finance, light, water, ordinance, highway and police committees, Nitschke spearheaded infrastructure improvements that were important to the developing community and which laid the groundwork for the Kenilworth that we know today. In particular, Nitschke addressed the community's need for an adequate source of potable water by arranging for the establishment of a water plant that would adequately serve the needs of the community. He served more than seven years in the capacity as councilman, during which time he headed various council committees and presided as council president. He was elected and served as Mayor of Kenilworth for three terms of six years (1920-1921; 1928-1929; 1932-1933), constituting a more extensive tenure than any other mayor in Kenilworth history. However, Nitschke actually served as mayor five times, considering that he completed the unfinished term of Mayor Charles C. Boyd, who died in office in 1919, and that he served a "carry-over" term of office following the disputed election of 1921.<sup>30</sup>

Nitschke's popularity as a candidate and as an active member of the Democratic Party was evidenced by his inclusion in *Who's Who of New Jersey* (the only known case when a Kenilworth mayor was cited in the directory) and in Honeyman's *History of Union County*, and by his landslide victory in Kenilworth's 1931 mayoral election, which he won with the biggest majority ever received by any local candidate.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, some of Nitschke's political campaigns were reportedly hostile. Nitschke has been described in historical references as a "real scrapper" in politics who did not take "no" for an answer. When he felt he was right, he would "stick to his guns." If knocked down, he would pick himself up, dust himself off, and start all over again.<sup>32</sup> He is remembered and respected for his resilience.

Nitschke's Mayoral Election Results<sup>33</sup>

1913: Nitschke ran for mayor for the first time, and he was defeated by Republican John Hiller. Election results: Hiller – 63; Nitschke - 51

1919: Nitschke ran for mayor again, this time defeating Republican William E.C. Antrobus. Election results: Nitschke – 113; Antrobus – 80

1921: Disputed election\* in which incumbent mayor Nitschke ran against Republican Dennis O'Brien. Election results: O'Brien – 197; Nitschke – 196

(\*Detailed below)

1927: Nitschke ran for mayor against Republican Harry E.H. Cox and defeated him.

<sup>29</sup> Kenilworth Council Meeting Minutes: Dec. 30, 1907.

<sup>30</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 13.

<sup>31</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 13.

<sup>32</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 18.

<sup>33</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 11-13.

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Election results: Nitschke – 297; Cox - 244

1929: Incumbent mayor Nitschke ran against Republican August Stahl and was defeated.

Election results: Stahl – 356; Nitschke – 295

1931: Nitschke ran against Republican John McCluskey and defeated him by the biggest majority ever received by any candidate in Kenilworth. The vote was the heaviest ever cast until that time in Kenilworth. Election results: Nitschke – 509; McCluskey – 299

### The Landmark Election of 1921 (Nitschke vs. O'Brien)<sup>34</sup>

Nitschke's political "scrappiness" and resilience are perhaps best demonstrated through the sequence of events surrounding Kenilworth's 1921 mayoral election, which evolved into what was reported to be a landmark case in the State of New Jersey.

During this election, Dennis O'Brien (R) received 197 votes, and Oswald Nitschke (D) received 196 votes. Nitschke, the fighter he was known to be, filed for a recount of the votes cast. The court-ordered recount changed the result to a tied vote: 196 to 196. To counter Nitschke's recount, O'Brien filed a petition with the Circuit Court, alleging the election to have been illegal because persons not entitled to vote were permitted to cast their ballots. The court ruled against O'Brien. The conflict continued to boil. At the annual organization meeting of the Kenilworth Mayor and Council on Jan. 2, 1922, the Republican-controlled council declared the office of Mayor as vacant and proceeded to elect O'Brien to fill the vacancy. After this decision by the council, Nitschke held his ground and refused to vacate his seat in the council chambers. He asserted that, as the mayor serving at the time of the 1921 election, he had the right to continue in office until such time as a successor was elected by the people. Since the election results were tied, the people had not elected a successor. The council members caucused and directed the local police officer on duty to forcibly remove Nitschke from his seat.<sup>35</sup>

Nitschke went back to the courts and obtained a "writ of certiorari," setting aside the action taken by the council that elected O'Brien as mayor.<sup>36</sup> Nitschke once again took the helm. The council majority walked out and continued a boycott of the council meetings for a number of weeks, denying the body or a quorum to conduct business. A legal route was considered to force the attendance of the absentee councilmen. Newspaper accounts reported that plans were under way to have a petition signed by the taxpayers with a view to starting mandamus proceedings against the absent councilmen in an effort to compel their attendance at meetings.<sup>37</sup> Nitschke set January 27, 1922, as the next meeting date. The four delinquent council members showed up, and the municipal budget was adopted.

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<sup>34</sup> Walter E. Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 14-18.

<sup>35</sup> *Elizabeth Daily Journal* (Elizabeth NJ: Jan. 4, 1922): 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Elizabeth Daily Journal* (Elizabeth NJ: Jan. 7, 1922): 1.; N.J. Supreme Court in *Certiorari* (Case File #8843, filed Feb. 23, 1922).

<sup>37</sup> *Elizabeth Daily Journal* (Elizabeth NJ: Jan. 25, 1922): 7.

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This case reportedly was a landmark case and set a precedence in New Jersey for tied elections, whereby an incumbent is allowed to continue in office until a successor is named. It is the first time that someone (Nitschke) asserted his right to hold office until a successor was elected.<sup>38</sup>

The post of mayor did not come up for election until the next scheduled general election in November 1922. Nitschke served as mayor until November 1922, but he did not seek reelection. The next time that Nitschke ran for mayor and won was in 1927. He ran for the office for the final time in 1931 and won by a margin of 210, constituting the heaviest vote ever cast in the borough until that time and the biggest majority ever received by any borough candidate.<sup>39</sup>

**Nitschke's Community Involvement and Major Achievements**

Nitschke is described in Honeyman's *History of Union County* as someone who, as a young immigrant, "won his way to success in a strange country" and who "gained the sincere respect and esteem of those who knew him."<sup>40</sup> He was a man who advanced in spite of challenges and obstacles – and one who was interested in improving himself and his family's position. He is remembered and respected for his resilience and resourcefulness.

Nitschke was actively involved in just about every major aspect of the Kenilworth community, from building homes and serving in trade organizations such as the Woodmen of the World, to promoting the growth of the borough through leadership roles in the Kenilworth Realty Company, the Kenilworth Building and Loan Association and the Kenilworth Board of Trade and Municipal Progress, to his long-standing civic service as councilman and mayor, to serving as a volunteer fireman and president of the Board of Education for two terms.<sup>41</sup> No other leader in the history of Kenilworth is documented as having demonstrated such a broad scope of community service.

Nitschke has been referred to by people who knew him as "the person in Kenilworth you had to go to see to get things done." He liked to be hands-on, in total control and to know everything that was going on. He also is remembered as being a great orator. Newspaper accounts refer to Nitschke as "one of the biggest boosters for the borough" who "led in moves to improve the borough as a place for homes."<sup>42</sup>

Nitschke's terms as Mayor of Kenilworth were marked by many important achievements. He had a clear vision of how the Borough of Kenilworth should advance and be improved. Part of that vision involved ensuring the future growth of Kenilworth by opening up means of transit to and from the borough. One of his most significant achievements toward that end was giving the borough its first major artery and opening up a vast

<sup>38</sup> Walter Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 15.

<sup>39</sup> Walter Boright, *Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures and Stories* (Kenilworth, NJ: 2004): 13.

<sup>40</sup> A. V. Honeyman, *History of Union County* (New York: Lewis Historical, 1923): 310.

<sup>41</sup> *Elizabeth Daily Journal*, Oct. 24, 1934: 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> *Elizabeth Daily Journal*, Oct. 24, 1934: 1-2.

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tract for development by extending its unique 120-foot-wide Boulevard westward through the County Park System to Cranford. He also was instrumental in establishing bus service to and from Kenilworth.

Nitschke is credited with bringing about vast advancements in the developing community's infrastructure, including major road improvements and the installation of street lights, lateral sewers and a means of bringing an adequate potable water supply to the community via an independent water plant. Upon completing his 1928-1929 mayoral term, Nitschke was honored by the Borough Council for bringing about "works of great benefit to the Borough of Kenilworth," particularly, dramatic improvements in road conditions at a time "when roads were so bad, if you got out of one hole, you stepped in three more," and initiatives to light the streets and to install lateral sewers.<sup>43</sup>

A strong advocate for order, economy and efficiency, Nitschke initiated and implemented parliamentary procedures and other guidelines that, to this day, continue to dictate the way the borough is governed and council meetings are conducted. As an ardent proponent of "an educated citizenship," Nitschke began the practice in the borough of allowing residents to actively participate in council meetings.

So many of the actions taken by Nitschke as Mayor (some of which are detailed further below) spurred the development of the community and paved the way for its future prosperity. Nitschke proved to be a thoughtful planner, and his actions had a direct, positive effect on the appearance and character of Kenilworth as we know it today.

### Nitschke Spearheaded the Expansion of the Kenilworth Boulevard

One of Nitschke's greatest achievements as a leader was his initiative to extend the Kenilworth Boulevard, through the County Park System, to Springfield Avenue, Cranford – a move that gave Kenilworth its first major artery, on the direct line of travel from Newark to Plainfield, and opened up a vast tract for development.<sup>44</sup> It allowed for the widening of the road into a 120-foot-wide grand boulevard, which reportedly constitutes the widest road in New Jersey to date (with the exception of state and federal highways), and is unique in size and function as contrasted with roads in other towns in the area.<sup>45</sup> Nitschke also spurred the designation of a large strip of the Boulevard/Galloping Hill Road as a county road, thereby bringing about considerable improvements in accessibility and road conditions. The Boulevard that Nitschke is credited with creating enhanced Kenilworth's attractiveness to prospective residents because it offered the advantage of living in a community that was tied to other towns, not isolated.

Nitschke also was a major proponent of establishing parks in the area, noting that land values were known to rise in every section of the county in which parks were located.<sup>46</sup> Kenilworth today is in the center of the Union County Park system formed in 1921 and is surrounded by parks on all but the south border. Given the

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<sup>43</sup> Kenilworth Council Meeting Minutes, Jan. 1, 1920.

<sup>44</sup> Robert G. Woods, Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years (Kenilworth NJ: 1982): 24.

<sup>45</sup> Cranford Citizen (Cranford NJ: July 1, 1926): 1.

<sup>46</sup> Cranford Citizen (Cranford NJ: July 1, 1926): 1.

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recreational popularity and picturesque scenery of these parks, Kenilworth developers often advertised the town as being situated "in a horseshoe of parks."<sup>47</sup> The Kenilworth Realty Company constructed a 20-foot horseshoe on the airfield that once existed on 24<sup>th</sup> Street to advertise its office, and the Kenilworth Board of Trade and Municipal Progress commissioned a drawing that illustrates the various Kenilworth attractions within a horseshoe of parks.<sup>48</sup>

Nitschke Introduced Parliamentary Procedures and "Educated Citizenship"

One of Nitschke's major contributions to the Borough of Kenilworth was the introduction and implementation of procedures and practices that, to this day, continue to dictate the way the borough is governed and council meetings are conducted.

A strong advocate for order, economy and efficiency, he introduced various parliamentary procedures "to bring greater order to the [governing body's] method of dispatching business,"<sup>49</sup> He also amended the council bylaws, establishing the practice of submitting written committee reports, signed resolutions and audited bills in advance of council meetings and of conducting work sessions prior to each council meeting to work out details of the business at hand. Such practices, which continue to this day, have resulted in greater order and efficient use of time at council meetings.

As an ardent proponent of "an educated citizenship," Nitschke also began the practice in the borough of allowing residents to actively participate in council meetings "to see for [themselves] whether [their] public servants are discharging their duties as honest trustees should" and to offer "constructive criticism and suggestions for the advancement of [our] common interests."<sup>50</sup>

Nitschke believed that "it is every person's business to become interested in public affairs." His position on the matter and his personal commitment to community service are perhaps best reflected in the first inaugural address that Nitschke, who is remembered as being a great orator, made at a council meeting on Jan. 1, 1920:

*"It is to be remembered that the Mayor and Council must at all times feel the pulse of the people...together we must study their needs and as far as possible, unselfishly administer the public affairs. Nothing short of this policy will do. You must not shirk responsibility, you must not fail in the discharge of duty, you must be real servants if effective work is to be done to improve the welfare of our citizens..."*

*It is of primary importance that the building of our community should not be delegated to a few public officials, and cannot be committed to them if the work is to be successfully done. Don't forget that the community is made up of individual citizens, and it is the business of the individual to do his part, for it is his affair as well as*

<sup>47</sup> Robert G. Woods, Kenilworth, Celebrating 75 Years (Kenilworth NJ: 1982): 28. (Original source from the Kenilworth Board of Trade and Municipal Progress)

<sup>48</sup> Kenilworth Board of Municipal Progress drawing

<sup>49</sup> Mayor Oswald Nitschke's Address to the Kenilworth Borough Council, Jan. 1, 1920.

<sup>50</sup> Mayor Oswald Nitschke's Address to the Kenilworth Borough Council, Jan. 1, 1920.

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*his neighbor's. No citizen can shirk his civic duties without measurably injuring the whole political structure. The day has passed when the good, honest and upright individual can afford to stand aloof from the public affairs; he is, as Aristotle said, a "political animal" and by the nature of present social conditions, a part of the whole social body. As such, he must be held responsible for the way in which public business is conducted. Remember, fellow citizens, that no one has a right to criticize who does not attempt to substitute something better in its place. It is every person's business to become interested in public affairs...An educated citizenship is indeed needed. Let high ideals be assimilated into the body politic, then will come a new dawn for a better government.*"<sup>51</sup>

## Nitschke Served as Mayor of Kenilworth During the Great Depression

As a businessman who reportedly was suffering from personal financial losses at the time of the Great Depression, Nitschke faced additional challenges in leading an entire community through this especially difficult time in America's history.

He remained sensitive to the needs of residents during this period, as reflected in his comments during council meetings. He noted on Jan. 1, 1932, "Most of the residents of Kenilworth are earnestly endeavoring to pay for their homes, and in these times of depression a good many find it hard to meet their financial obligations. It will therefore be doubly necessary at this time to see that they get full value for every dollar contributed by them in taxes. The motto of this administration should therefore be "economy and efficiency."<sup>52</sup> Nitschke also stated that "cooperation and devotion to duty should be the aim of every councilman."<sup>53</sup>

As a large amount of taxes were uncollected during the period of depression, and budgeted monies for the maintenance of streets were not available as a result, Nitschke personally applied to the state highway commission in Trenton for state aid for street improvements and was granted \$6,000 for that purpose.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, Nitschke was cited in *The New York Times* for his resourcefulness in issuing vouchers to Kenilworth teachers in lieu of pay in order to secure their jobs while assuring them of compensation when the community recovered from the Depression.<sup>55</sup> He was again cited in *The New York Times* at the time of his death.<sup>56</sup> Such citations by a publication as prestigious as *The New York Times* attest to Nitschke's significance as one of the prominent local leaders of his time.

## Nitschke's Personal Challenges

<sup>51</sup> Mayor Oswald Nitschke's Address to the Kenilworth Borough Council, Jan. 1, 1920.

<sup>52</sup> Kenilworth Council Meeting Minutes, Jan. 1, 1932.

<sup>53</sup> Kenilworth Council Meeting Minutes, Jan. 2, 1933.

<sup>54</sup> Kenilworth Council Meeting Minutes, Jan. 2, 1933.

<sup>55</sup> *The New York Times* (New York NY: Oct. 12, 1932): 25.

<sup>56</sup> *The New York Times* (New York NY: Oct. 25, 1934): 24.

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Nitschke not only was a man of great vision but he also provided the leadership to gain supporters and carry those visions through to fruition. No one in borough government before him had accomplished so much. He was a great thinker and opinion leader with a mission to boost the borough and foster its continued advancement.

Nitschke no doubt had many struggles along the way to his achievements. He symbolizes the realization of the American Dream in Kenilworth, exemplifying the pursuit of what many immigrants at the time aspired to be but couldn't always achieve. It must not have been easy for Nitschke, a young German immigrant in a town where other heritages were predominant. The entrepreneurial spirit that Nitschke exhibited as an immigrant factory worker and building contractor, combined with a sense of civic responsibility and perseverance, enabled him to advance far beyond what may have been perceived as "his station" in life as a young immigrant. He was one of the only foreign-born mayors in Kenilworth.

It is not surprising that, being the devoted public servant that he was, Nitschke attended a Borough Council meeting as his final act on this Earth. He remained unsullied in his commitment to Kenilworth despite any personal difficulties he may have been facing at the time. This dedicated public servant of Kenilworth reportedly took his own life with a revolver on Oct. 24, 1934, "in the small wooden garage in the rear of his home, Kenilworth Boulevard and 21<sup>st</sup> Street."<sup>57</sup> He would have celebrated his 67<sup>th</sup> birthday on Nov. 1. An article in *The New York Times* stated that, according to associates, Nitschke was experiencing financial reverses at the time, at the height of the Great Depression.<sup>58</sup> Sources at the time indicated that Nitschke also was devastated over others' rejection of his proposal to bring a cemetery to Kenilworth, a venture that Nitschke adamantly believed would benefit the borough.<sup>59</sup> The matter evidently had been discussed at the council meeting that Nitschke attended on the night that he reportedly took his own life. It is ironic that, after Nitschke's death, the cemetery was in fact brought to Kenilworth. So Nitschke's one last vision for Kenilworth, which Nitschke died thinking would never be realized, did eventually come to fruition.

Newspaper accounts of Nitschke's funeral reported that "a throng of borough officials of Kenilworth and surrounding towns, in addition to many relatives and friends, as well as delegations from practically every organization in [this] borough" were in attendance,<sup>60</sup> further showing that Nitschke had won "the sincere respect and esteem of those who knew him."<sup>61</sup>

**Conclusion:**

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Daily Journal (Elizabeth NJ: Oct. 24, 1934): 1.

<sup>58</sup> The New York Times (New York NY, Oct. 25, 1934): 24.

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Daily Journal (Elizabeth NJ: Oct. 24, 1934): 1.

<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Daily Journal (Elizabeth NJ: Oct. 29, 1934).

<sup>61</sup> A.V. Honeyman, History of Union County (New York: Lewis Historical, 1923): 310.

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In light of research and documentation gathered for this nomination, the Oswald J. Nitschke House is historically significant and eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion Consideration B because:

It was the home of the late Oswald J. Nitschke, a German immigrant who became directly involved in the development of Kenilworth during the borough's formative years. Nitschke was involved in all major changes to Kenilworth that were characteristic of the suburbanization of New Jersey, including real estate development through subdivision and building, the incorporation of Kenilworth as a town, and transportation improvements. Nitschke's wisdom, vision, direction and notable achievements paved the way for the thriving community that exists today. Nitschke lived in the Oswald J. Nitschke House during his period of greatest significance to Kenilworth history (1905-1934).

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## Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Oswald J. Nitschke House comprise Block 115, Lot 25.01, as shown on the enclosed Kenilworth tax maps.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is the one with which it has been associated since the Oswald J. Nitschke House was moved to this site in 2003.

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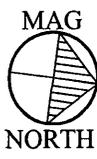
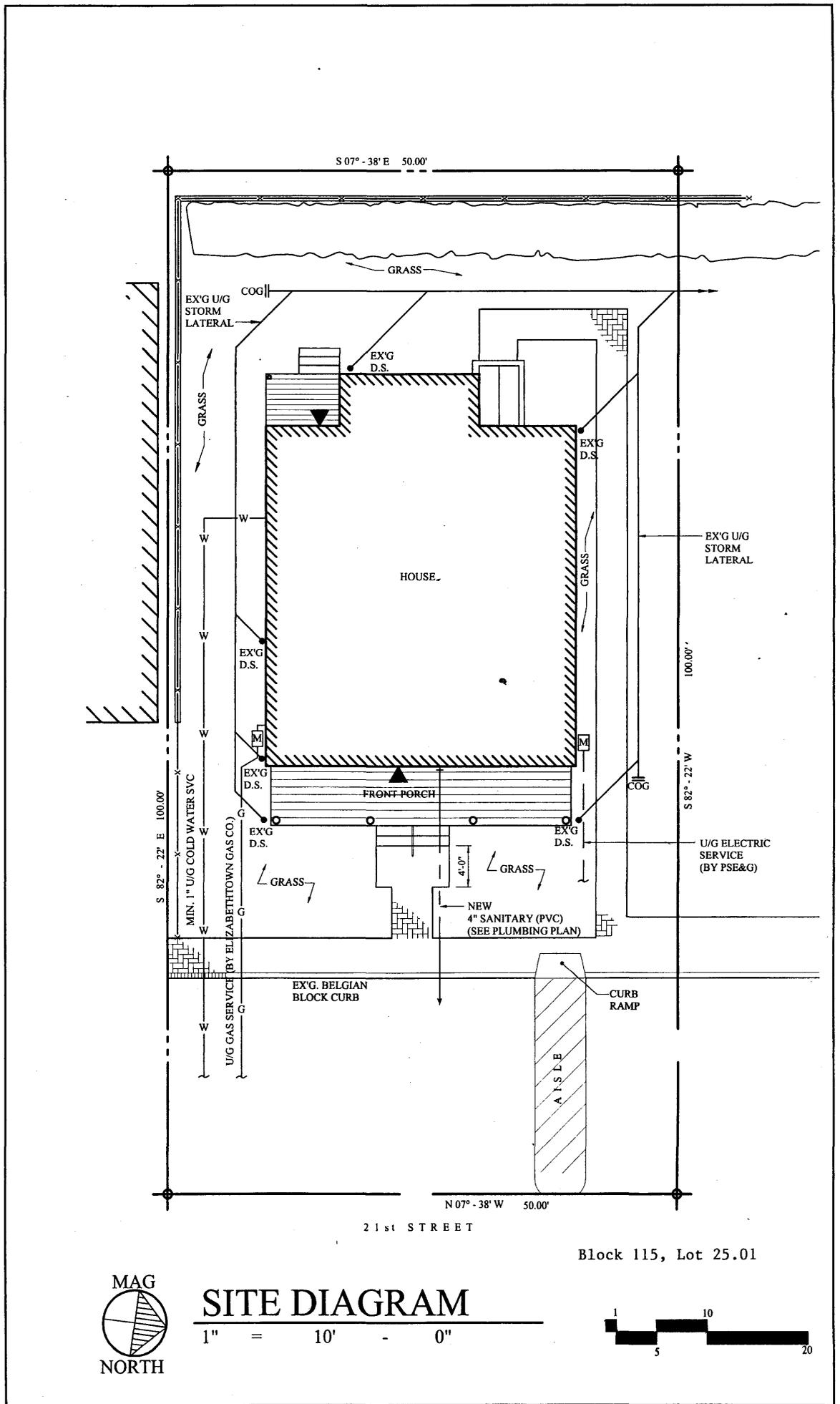
**Photographic Identification:**

The following information is the same for all the photographs submitted:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Name of property:      | Oswald J. Nitschke House   |
| 2. Location:              | 49 South 21 Street, Kenilworth (Union County), New Jersey  |
| 3. Photographer:          | Margaret Hickey  |
| 4. Date of photographs:   | August 2006  |
| 5. Location of negatives: | Kenilworth Historical Society<br>c/o Shirley Boyden Maxwell, President<br>38 South 24 Street<br>Kenilworth, N.J. 07033 |

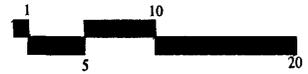
**Photograph Number (as marked on back of photos) and Description of View (room numbers correspond to those on enclosed Floor Plans):**

1. Exterior of Oswald J. Nitschke House; View looking west at the front elevation.
2. Exterior: View looking southwest at the front (east) and side (north) elevations.
3. Exterior: Detailed view of front porch.
4. Exterior: View of the side (north) elevation.
5. Exterior: View looking south at the rear elevation.
6. Exterior: Detailed view of rear porch and shed addition.
7. Exterior: View looking northeast at rear elevation.
8. Exterior: View looking east at the side (south) elevation.
9. Exterior: View looking west at the side (south) elevation.
10. Interior: First Floor/Room 101 Stair Hall, view looking west.
11. Interior: First Floor/Room 109 Front Parlor, view looking southwest.
12. Interior: First Floor/Room 108 Dining Room, view looking northwest.
13. Interior: First Floor/Room 103 Living Area, view looking southwest.
14. Interior: First Floor/Room 103 Living Area, view looking northwest.
15. Interior: First Floor/Room 104 Kitchen, view looking south.
16. Interior: First Floor/Room 102 Bedroom, view looking east.
17. Interior: Second Floor/Room 201 Hall, view looking east.
18. Interior: Second Floor/Room 203 Bedroom, view looking southeast.
19. Interior: Second Floor/Room 203 Bedroom, view looking west.
20. Interior: Second Floor/Room 204 Bedroom, view looking west.
21. Interior: Second Floor/Room 204 Bedroom, view looking east.
22. Interior: Second Floor/Room 205 Kitchen, view looking east.
23. Interior: Second Floor/Room 205 Kitchen, view looking west.
24. Interior: Second Floor/Room 206 Living Area, view looking southwest.
25. Interior: Second Floor/Room 202 Bathroom, view looking east.



**SITE DIAGRAM**  
 1" = 10' - 0"

Block 115, Lot 25.01



Oswald J. Mitschke house  
Union County, NJ

Tax map of Kenilworth, N.J.

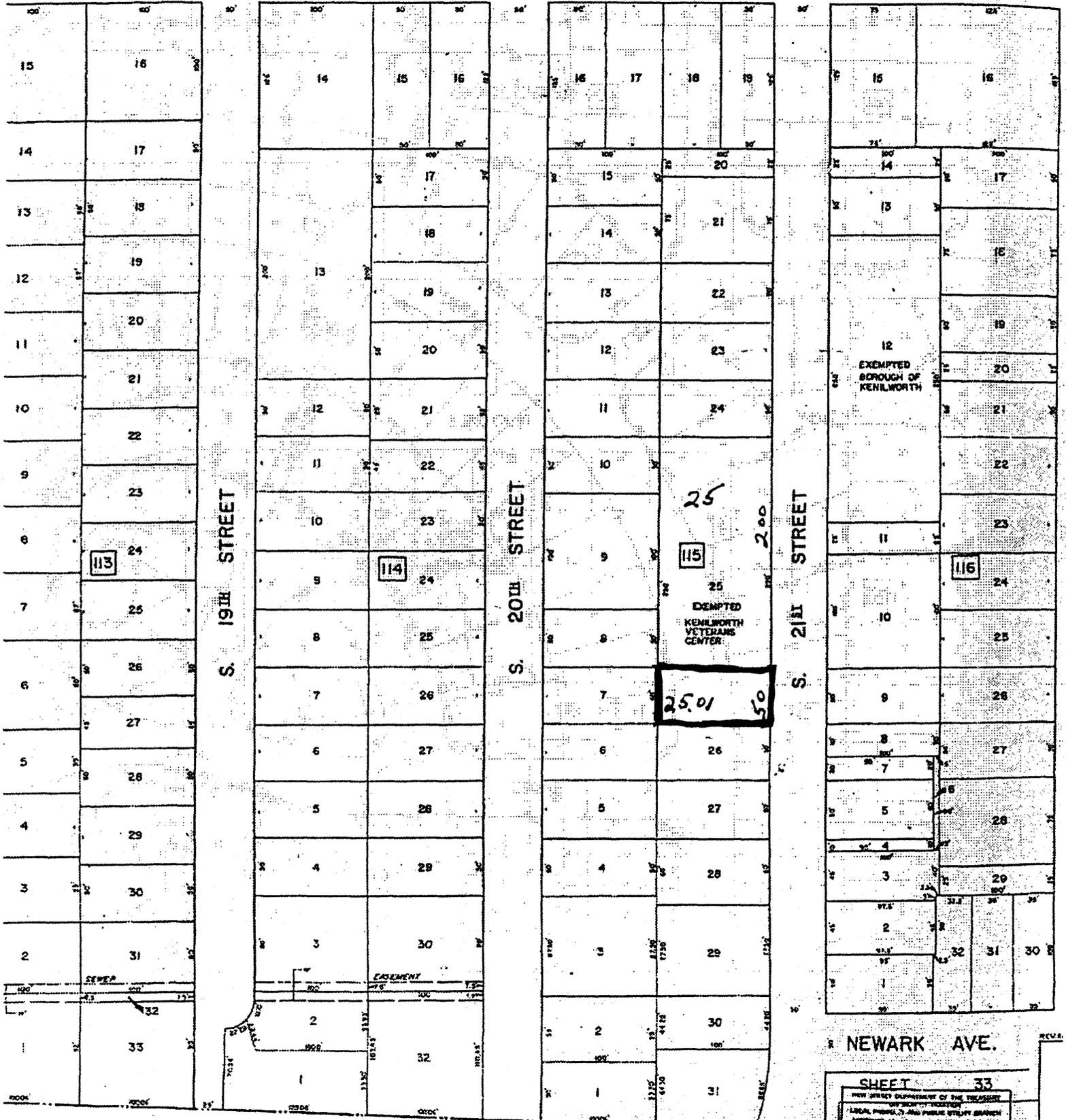
22

SHEET

23

KENILWORTH

BOULEVARD



TOWNSHIP

UNION

COUNTY

NEWARK AVE.

SHEET 33

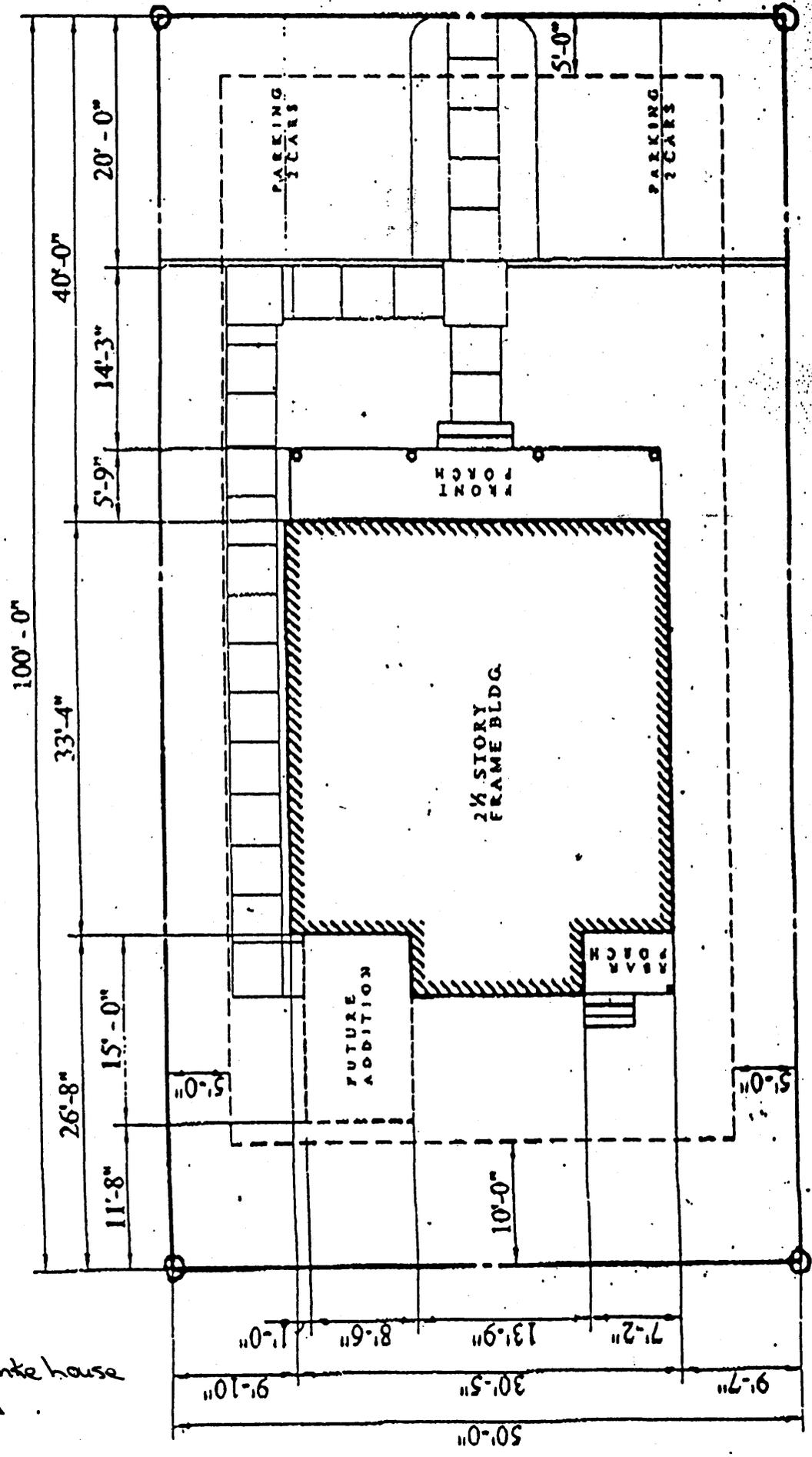
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
 DIVISION OF TAXATION  
 LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND PUBLIC UTILITY DIVISION  
 APPROVED AS A TAX MAP PURSUANT TO THE  
 PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 175, LAWS OF 1982, ETC.  
 FOR THE DISTRICT, TOWNSHIP OF KENILWORTH

*Richard J. Hagan*  
 COUNTY CLERK

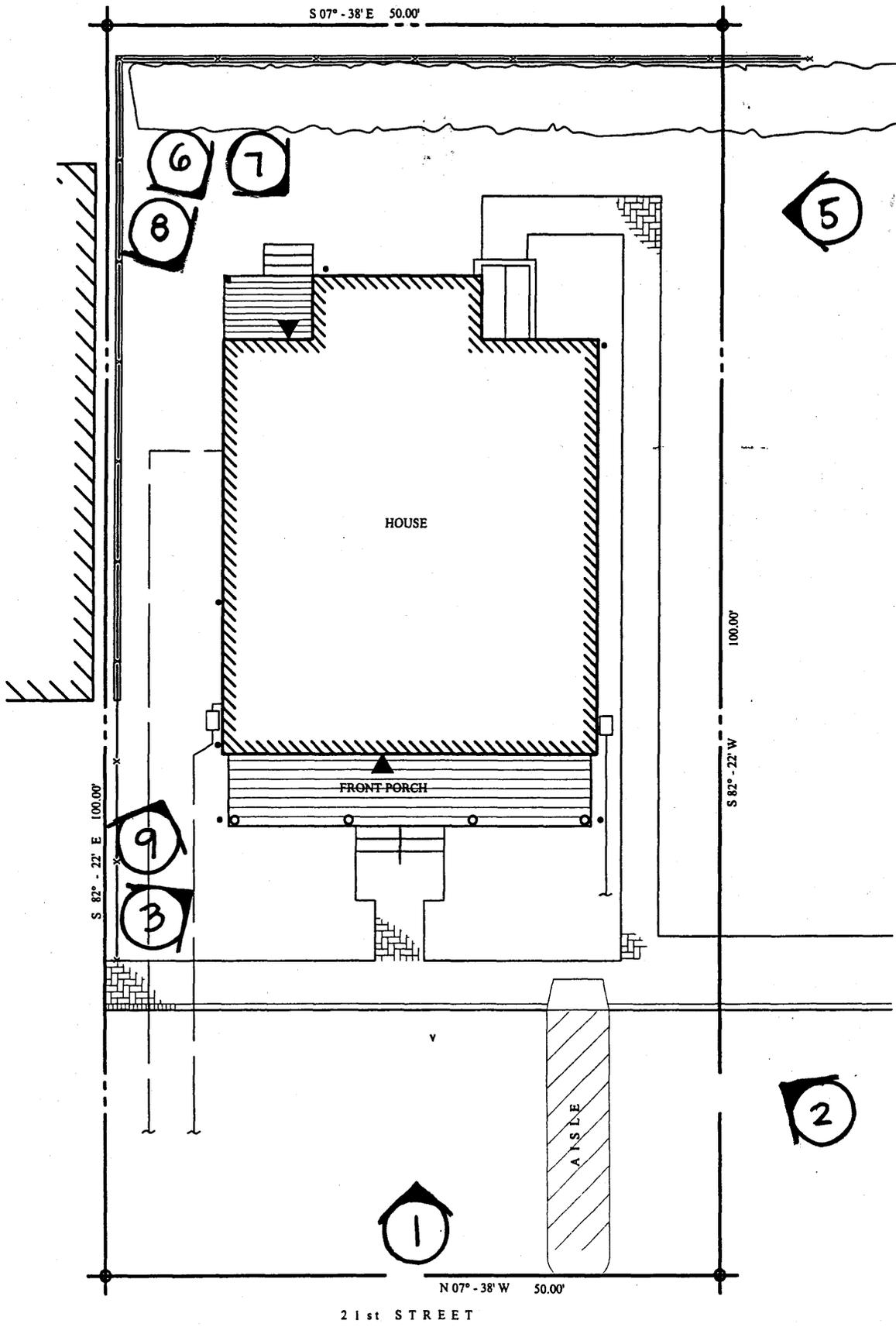
DATE: 11/15/83

DRAFTED





Oswald J. Nitschke house  
 Union County, NJ



OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE - SITE DIAGRAM  
NOT TO SCALE

Union County, NJ

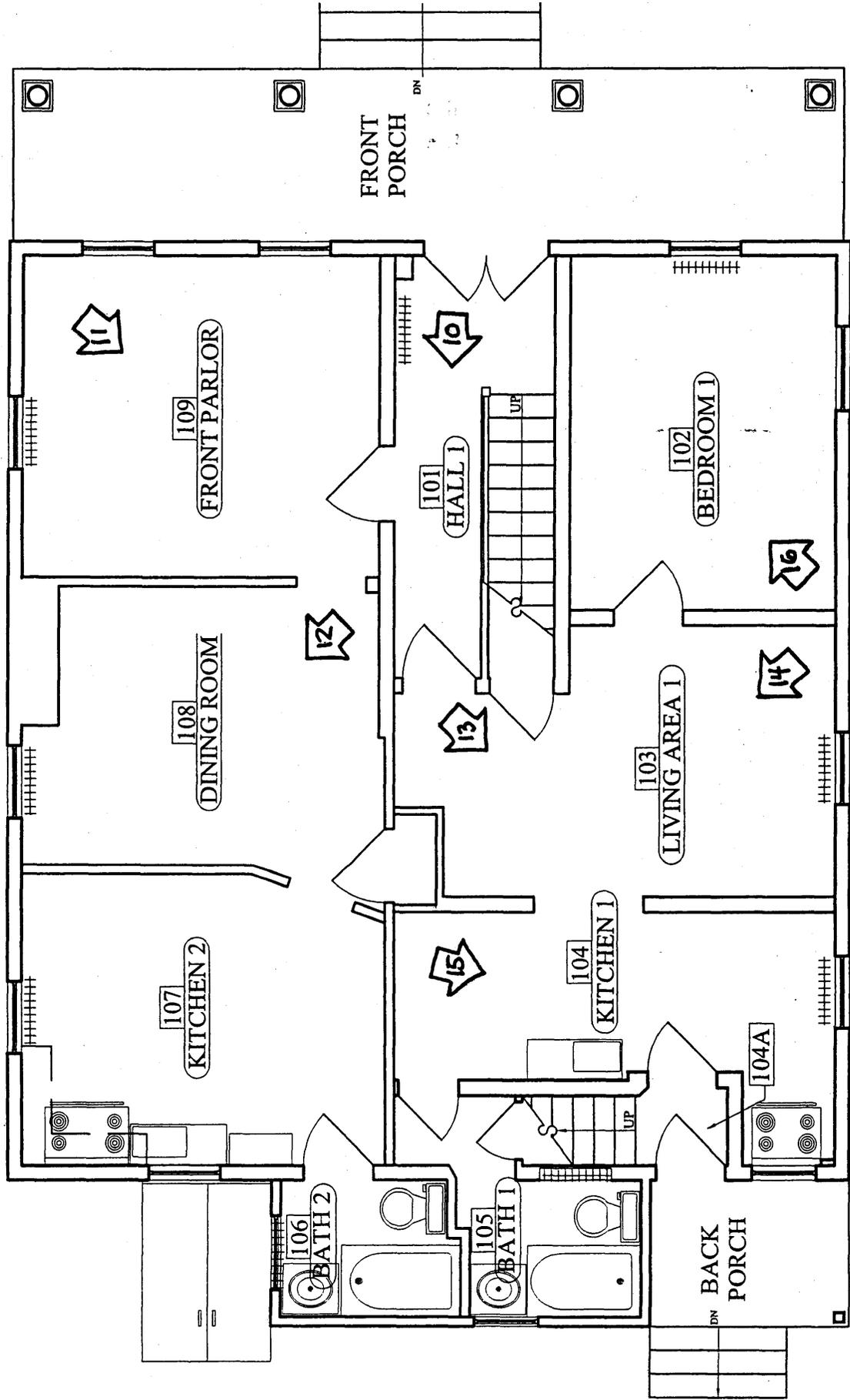
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THOMAS B. CONNOLLY, P.A.  
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C.E. JOHN WAY, P.A.  
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973 746-4911

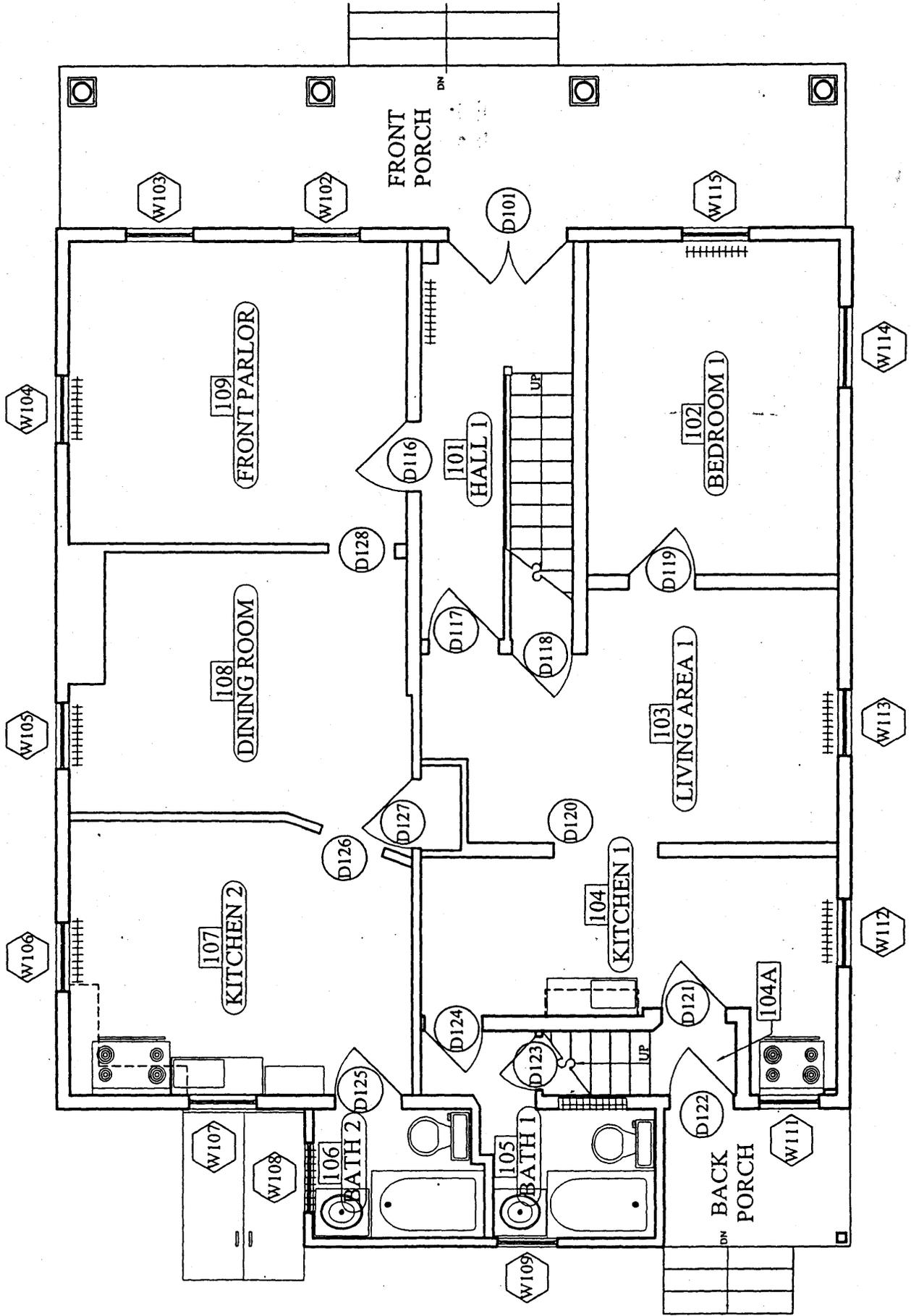
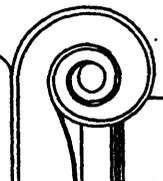
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HJGA CONSULTING  
ARCHITECTURE &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
36 Park Street



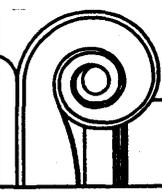
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE





FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE



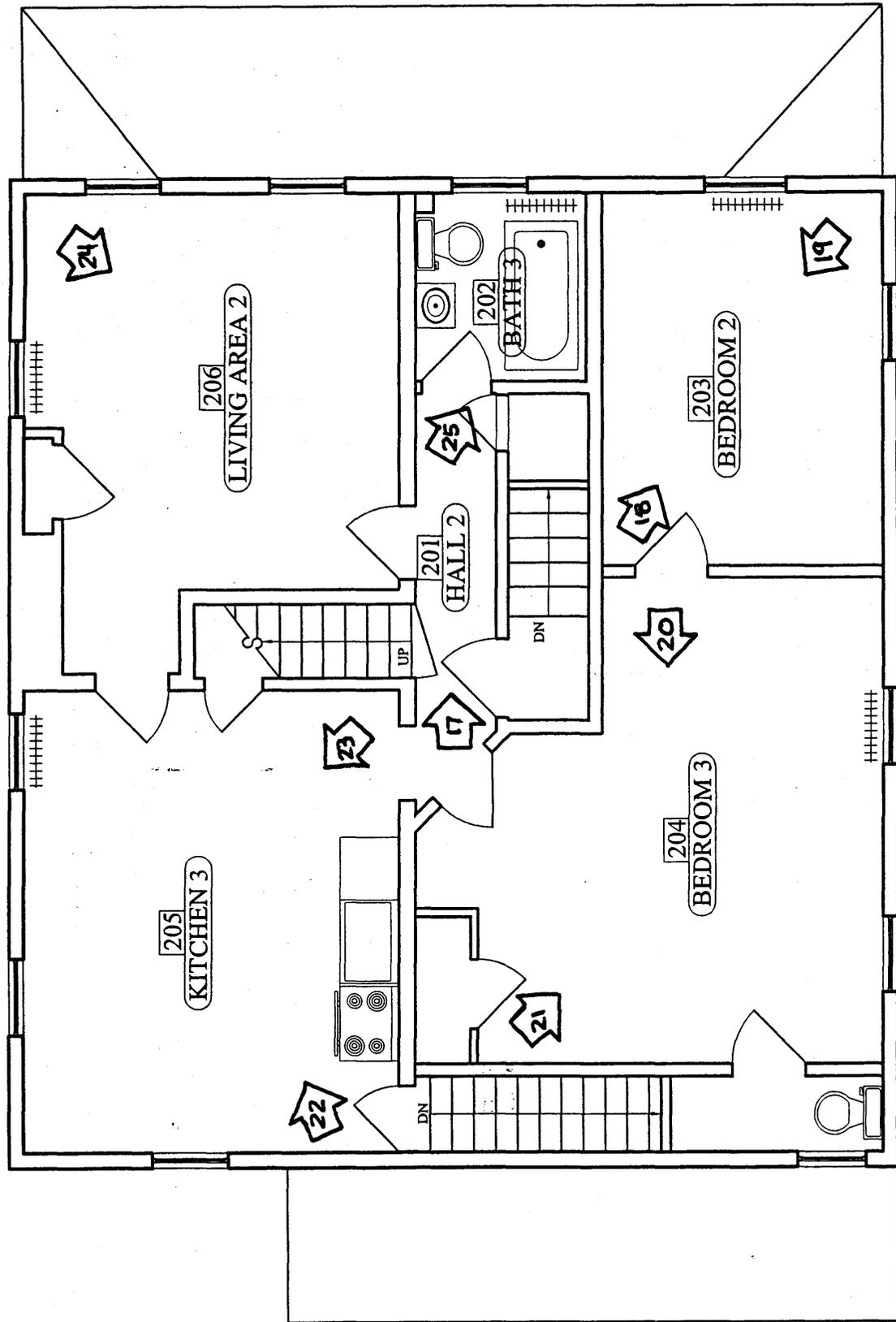


HJGA CONSULTING  
ARCHITECTURE &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
36 Park Street  
Montclair, N.J. 07042  
973 746-0911

THOMAS B. CONNOLLY, R.A.  
NJ 21A1010992  
CE JOHN WAY, R.A.  
NJ 21A100610100  
NY 008814-1  
DATE: 29 DEC 2005

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE  
KENILWORTH, NJ

3



SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE

DATE: 29 DEC 2005

C.E. KIRBY WAY, P.A.  
NJ 218080100  
NY 2081151

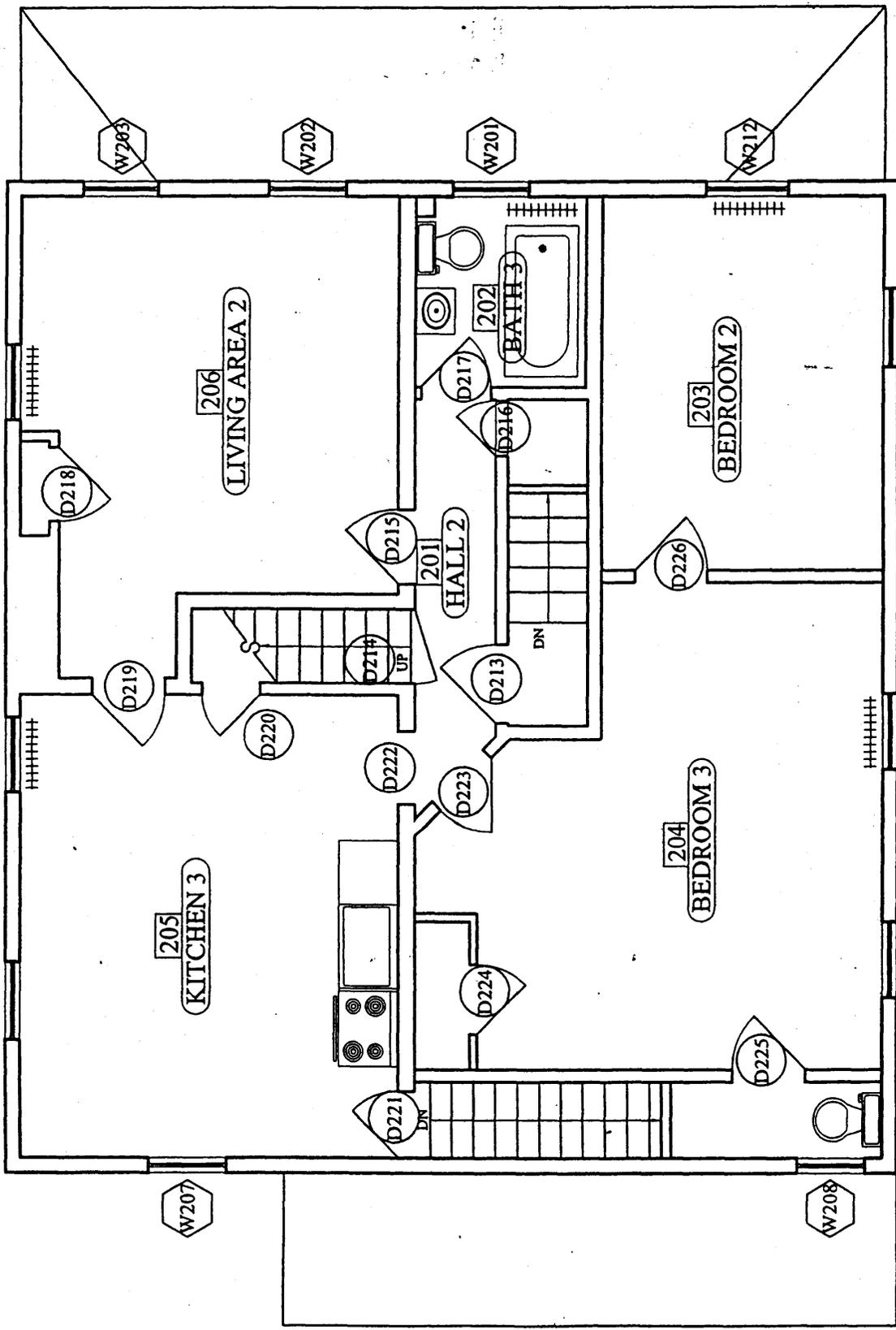
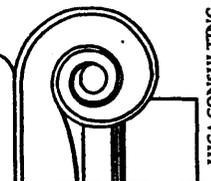
THOMAS B. CROKOLLY, P.A.  
NJ 218018992

973 744-4911

Mendham, N.J. 07942

36 Park Street

HJGA CONSULTING  
ARCHITECTURE &  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION



SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE



HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
 OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE  
 KENILWORTH, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

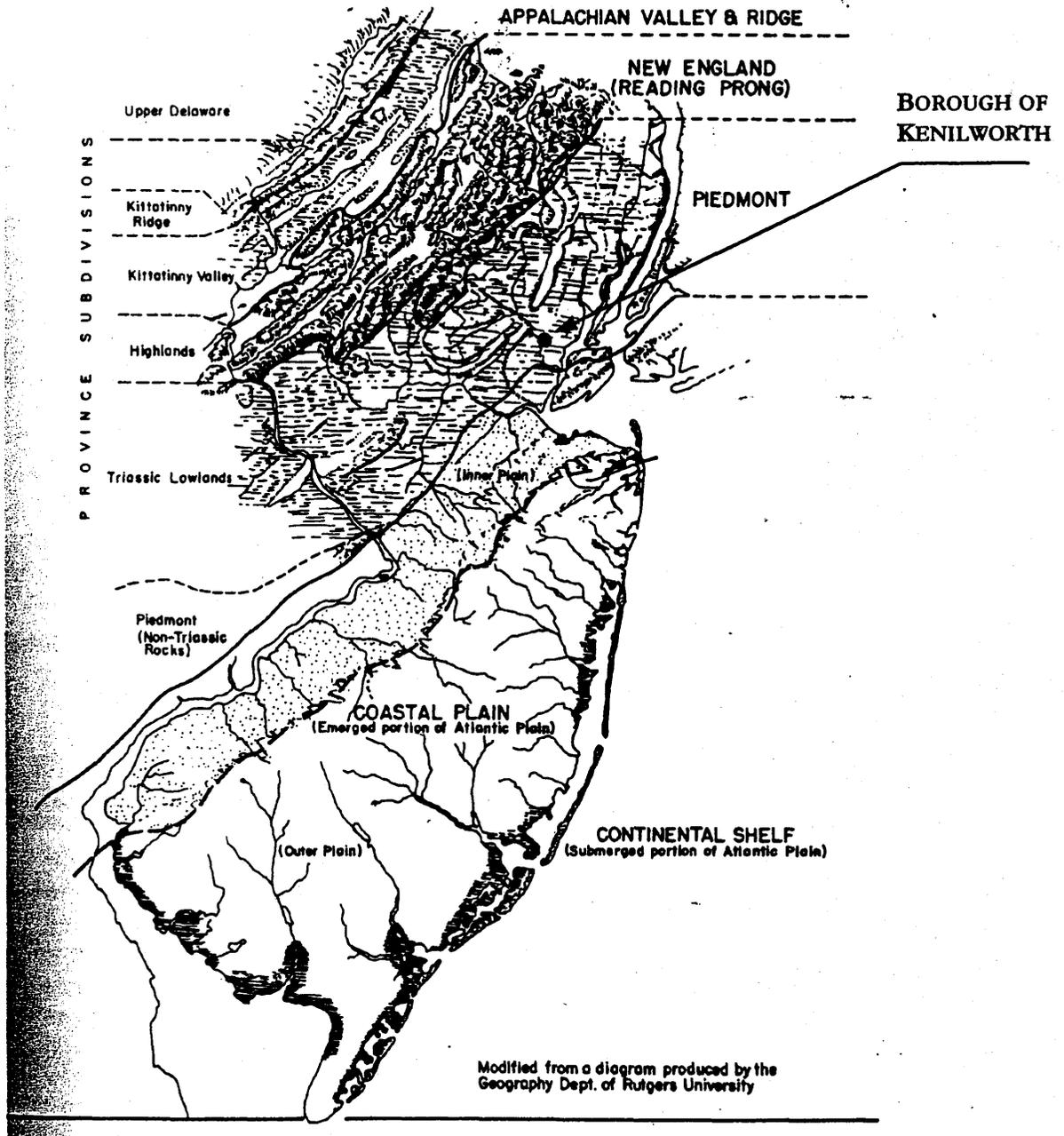


Figure No. 1  
 Physiographic Location Map

Credit: Geographical Department, Rutgers University. *Physiographic Provinces of New Jersey*. New Brunswick, New Jersey.

FIGURE NO. 1

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE  
KENILWORTH, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

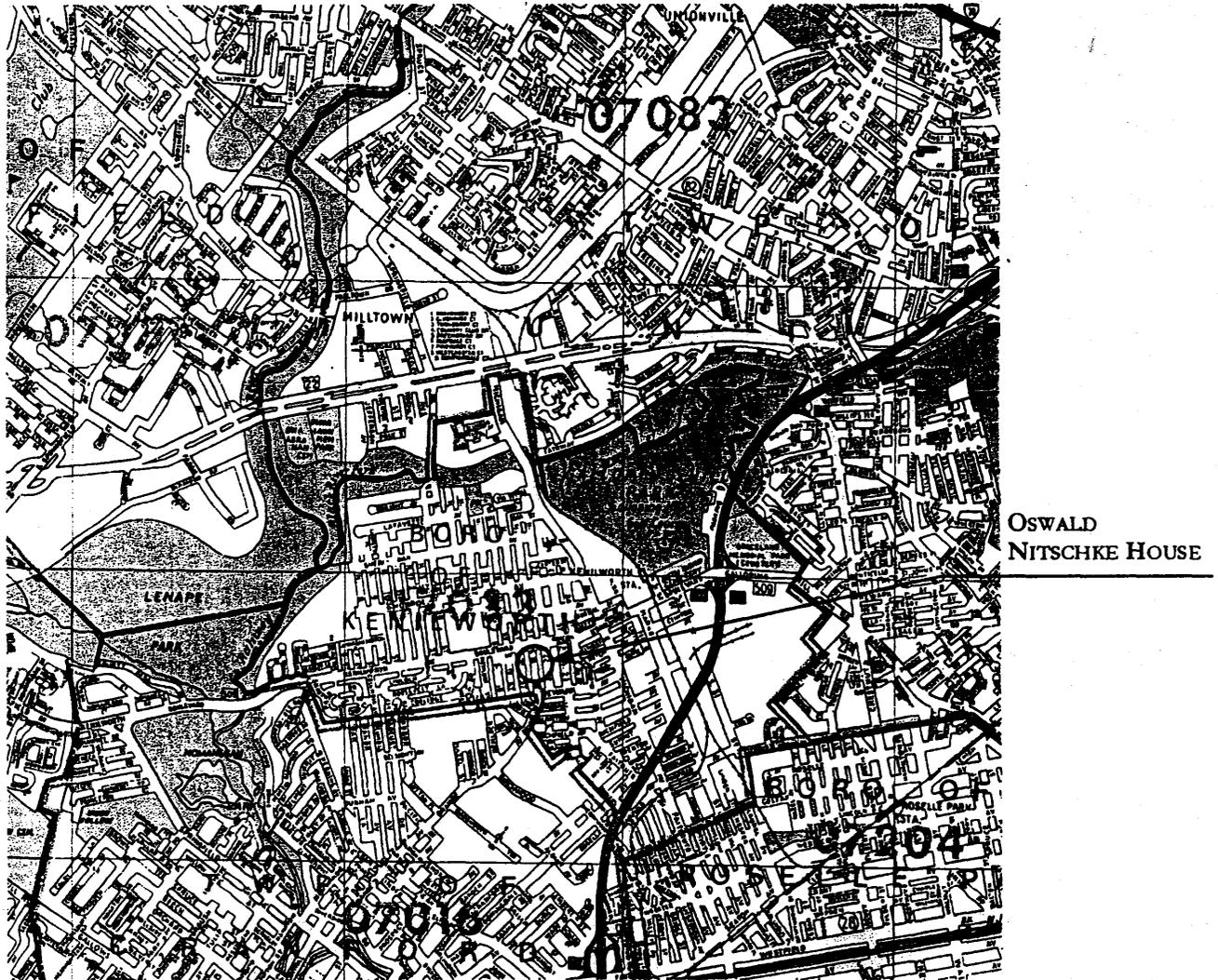


Figure No. 2  
Site Location Map

Credit: *Map of Union County*. Maspeth, NY: Hagstrom Map Company, 1997.

FIGURE NO. 2

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE  
KENILWORTH, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

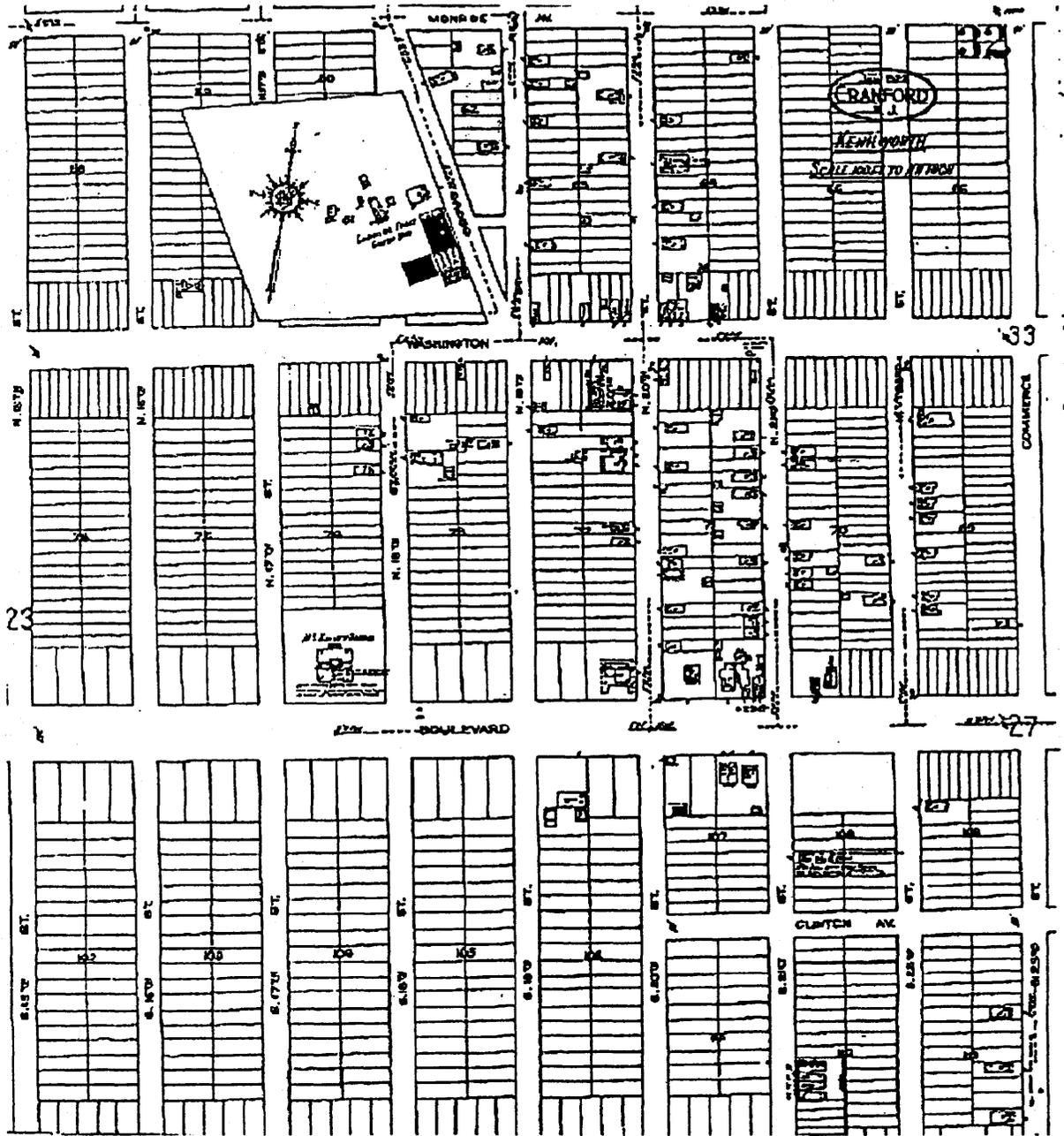
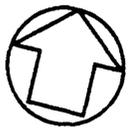


FIGURE NO. 6

1922 Sanborn map showing the 21st Street and the Boulevard site with the Nitschke House in its current configuration.



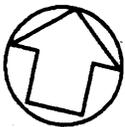
Credit: *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Kenilworth*. The Sanborn Library, LLC., 1922.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
 OSWALD NITSCHKE HOUSE  
 KENILWORTH, UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



FIGURE NO. 5

1906 Sanborn map showing the 21st Street and the Boulevard site with the Nitschke House in a plan configuration of an L.



Courtesy: Kenilworth Celebrating 75 Years, Township of Kenilworth, 1982.

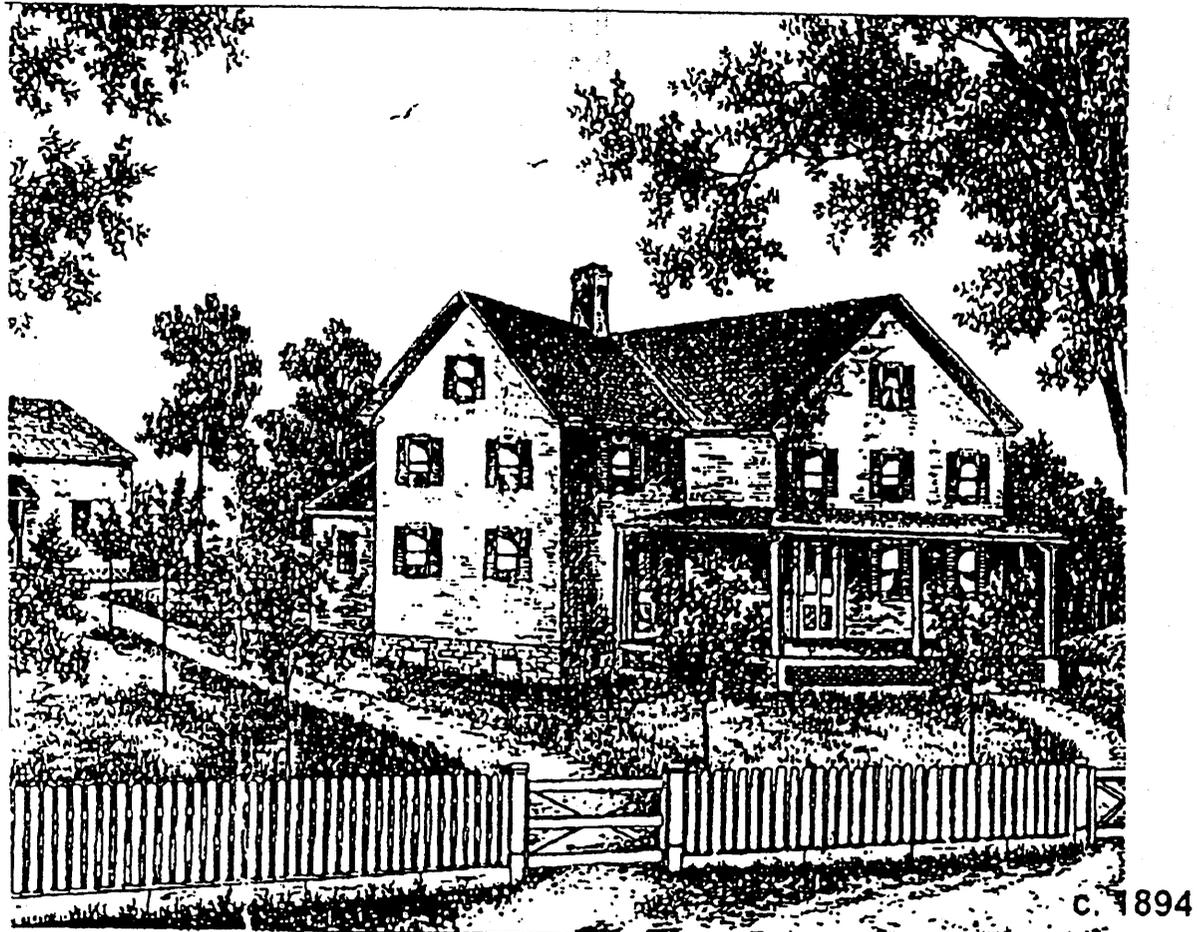


FIGURE NO. 3

Rendering of the Oswald Nitschke House which appeared in an 1894 real estate brochure published by the New Orange Industrial Association to attract residents and businesses to Kenilworth.

Courtesy: The Kenilworth Historical Society

FIGURE NO. 3





FIGURE NO. 7

Photograph of the Oswald Nitschke and his family sitting on what may have been the rear porch of the Nitschke House in circa 1901. Oswald and Anna are seated at top, and Oswald Jr. (left) at age 9 and Hugo (right) at age 5 are seated at bottom. There is no definitive evidence that this is the Nitschke House but it is similar in configuration to the rear porch of the existing house.

Courtesy: Boright, Walter E. Kenilworth: Houses, People, Pictures, and Stories. (Kenilworth, NJ), 2003, p. 8.

FIGURE NO. 7