

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO.

HISTORIC NAME: "Lindenwold"
LOCATION: 247 South Street

COMMON NAME: Peck School
BLOCK/LOT B120/L1 & 1A

MUNICIPALITY: Morristown
USGS QUAD: Morristown
OWNER/ADDRESS: Peck School
247 South St., Morristown, NJ 07960

COUNTY: Morris
UTM REFERENCES:
Zone/Northing/Easting

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1886 for main block & east wing, c. 1905-10 for west wing. Source of Date: newspapers and atlases, see significance and references.
Architect: - Builder: -

Style: Victorian Gothic with Jacobean Revival and Queen Anne motifs Form/Plan Type: 3 bay main block with projecting gabled pavilions at both ends of the front and a hipped projection centered on the rear; a gabled 3 bay wing; a round 3 story tower at its junction with the main block; and a gabled west wing with projecting front pavilion.
Number of Stories: 2½
Foundation: Stone

Exterior Wall Fabric: irregularly shaped, rock-faced gray stone, carefully fitted; rock-faced, ashlar brown stone trim.

Fenestration: Various sash windows with brown stone surrounds (Gibbs-like) and brown stone sills many sash with geometric mutin patterns; some are round arched.

Roof/Chimneys: slate-clad hip/gable roof with terra cotta tile cresting and some remaining finials and gargoyles; several ashlar stone chimney stacks capped by triple round, "rope Additional Architectural Description: coiled", terra-cotta pots.

--gable ends are parapeted either with "Dutch" gables or A-gables with corbelled eared ends and peak embellishments; copper gutters at eaves, copper down spouts have elaborate heads (lion's mask, etc.); wood shingled triple gable dormer on the rear and two gable dormers on the front of the east wing.

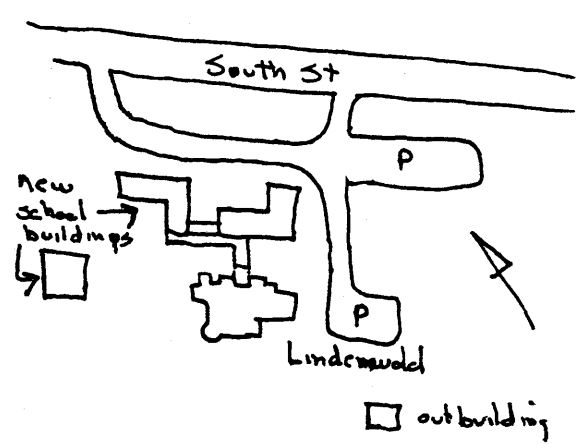
--main entry centered on main block is fronted by a one bay porch with a robust, voussoir outlined round arched opening; brownstone corner piers with carved foliated capitals; and a capped parapet; the entry itself has Tudor-arched, double glass and panel doors and flanking windows.

--a projecting bay above the entry supports a Dutch gabled wall dormer that has a belt course and ball finial with triangular pendant.

--The two flanking pavilions are asymmetrically treated. The A-gabled east pavilion has a segmentally arched, tripart gable window with transoms, hood molding (continued on attache

PHOTO Negative File No.

Map (Indicate North) (1910 atlas) page)



← SW view

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION, 109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292-2023

SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES: "Lindenwold" is well set back from the street behind an iron fence and surrounded by many large trees and shrubs, that survive from its original landscaping. The front lawn, unfortunately, is occupied by the low rise masonry classrooms built by Peck School in the 1950s. However, they are attached to the mansion only by a covered walkway and do not totally obscure the public's view of its principal facade from the street. To the west of the mansion, a post-modernist classroom complex is being built that is more sympathetic to the original. One early outbuilding survives to the east (continued on attached page)

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban Suburban Scattered Buildings
Open Space Woodland Residential Agricultural Village
Industrial Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other

The residential neighborhood once surrounding Lindenwold has been encroached upon by Interstate 287 to the east and commercial/office development along South Street and Madison Avenue. A number of substantial 19th and early 20th century dwellings survive nevertheless.

SIGNIFICANCE: In spite of the modern low-rise classrooms that negatively impact the integrity of its setting, "Lindenwold" still possesses the architectural and historical significance requisite for inclusion on the National Register. Architecturally, it is an outstanding example of eclectic High Victorian residential architecture combining Victorian Gothic, Jacobean Revival and Queen Anne motifs. Its imposing scale and the quality of its materials and detailing, make the well-preserved mansion a notable survivor of Morristown's "gilded age". "Lindenwold" was one of the first great houses to be built in Morristown during the late 19th, early 20th century period and presents a marked contrast to the smaller, mostly frame villas popular in the area in the mid-Victorian era.

The historical significance of "Lindenwold" stems from the prominence of the two families who owned and occupied it before it became a private school in 1947. The original portion of the house evidently was built in 1886 by William B. Skidmore, a lawyer from New York who married Julia Cobb, the only child of one of Morristown's most prominent citizens, George T. Cobb. Cobb, who served several terms a local mayor and state senator, owned considerable property in and around Morristown which was inherited by his daughter. The Skidmores were living in the family home which stood on the north side of South Street when on October 26, 1885 (continued on attached page)

ORIGINAL USE: residence **PRESENT USE:** private school
PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No Part of District
THREATS TO SITE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
No Threat Other

COMMENTS:

REFERENCES: -Claflin and Cobb family files at Morristown Public Library
-"Daily Record" June 13, 1938:1
-"Jerseyman" Oct. 30, 1885:3, Nov. 6, 1885:3, March 3, 1905:1
-Mueller, A.H. Atlas of Part of Morris County, NJ 1910
-Robinson, E. Atlas of Morris County, 1887

RECORDED BY: D. N. Bertland **DATE:** Spring, 1984
ORGANIZATION: Morris County Historical Society

"Lindenwold"

Additional architectural description (continued):

- voussoirs and keystone that is fronted by a stone balcony with stone brackets and a scrolled iron railing; the Dutch gabled with pavilion features a tripart second floor window surmounted by scroll pediment broken by a gable window with eared pediment. The A-gabled pavilion of the added north wing has round-arched windows at the attic and first floor levels.
- the round tower also has round arched windows and in addition carved foliated belt courses; its wooden turret has a window band with surmounting panels and an octagonal roof with kicked eaves.
 - the hipped rear projection features a 2 story, curve-cornered, stained glass oriel window; to its east is a square hip-roofed porch (glass enclosed) with bracketed eaves and plain columns above which is a small shed porch with bulbous turned posts; a similar porch to its west (now enclosed) wraps around the north side and has a round protrudence at the northwest corner.

Note: The interior is quite well preserved and has suffered relatively few modern alterations, especially in the principal rooms of the first floor. Of particular interest are the central hall with mahogany paneling (Tudor arch and Gothic tracery motifs) and an open staircase with massive carved newel posts that rises to the third story; the dining room with coffered and leather paneled ceiling and brick and foliated carved terra-cotta fireplace; the paneled library with a marble fireplace framed by rope columns; and the reception and drawing rooms whose Colonial Revival motifs result from the early 20th century remodeling.

Siting, boundary description, and related structures (continued):

a brick hip-roofed structure now used for a nursery school. The once landscaped grounds to the rear which drop off considerably have become overgrown.

Significance (continued):

it was extensively damaged by fire. A local newspaper account of the following week stated the owners' intention to sell the remains at auction and "to erect a fine new residence on the opposite side of the street" ("Jerseyman" Nov. 6, 1885:3)

The plans and construction of "Lindenwold" must have proceeded quite quickly as the main block and east wing were depicted in the 1887 Morris County Atlas.

The Skidmores were active in the community despite his poor health and the loss of all their children in infancy. She was involved in local charities and he served as the director of a local bank and several clubs. Skidmore died in 1905 at age 56; his wife predeceased him by several years.

On December 1, 1905 the Skidmore estate sold "Lindenwold" to John Claflin of New York for \$150,000. Claflin and his family used the place for a summer residence and before 1910 added the west wing with its large drawing room. Claflin obtained national prominence as the country's foremost dry goods merchant. He successfully managed his father's firm for many years and in 1909 organized the United Dry Goods Co., a holding company capitalized at \$51,000,000 which had many retail affiliates around the country. This company failed in 1914, but Claflin's private wealth and other business interests allowed him to recover.

Claflin served on the board of directors of several banks and insurance companies and in 1912 was elected president of the New York City Chamber of Commerce. He belonged to various clubs in New York and Morristown and was associated with J.P. Morgan in founding Georgia's Jekyll Island Club. He also travelled widely including a South American trip in the 1870s on which he travelled with one companion by foot, donkey and canoe from the coast of Peru to the mouth of the Amazon.

"Lindenwold"

Significance (continued)

Claflin died in 1938 aged 88 and survived by his wife and four daughters. In 1947 the "Lindenwold" estate was sold to the Peck School, a private elementary day school long established in Morristown.



detail of north front