

WYCK HOUSE

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Wyck

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 6026 Germantown Avenue Not for publication:

City/Town: Philadelphia Vicinity:

State: PA County: Philadelphia Code: 42 Zip Code: 19144

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
7

Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 7

Name of related multiple property listing:

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register October 1971
- Determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- Determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- Removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action



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kitchen are in a one story lean-to which is a later addition. In addition to the house, the brick terraces, and the arbor, several out-buildings remain, among them a smoke house, a wood shed, and granary which subsequently was made into a carriage house.

A letter from Reuben Haines to his wife, dated from Germantown, May 23, 1824, makes it clear that the entire first floor was rebuilt at that time. Previously, the rear part of the house, which now contains the parlor and dining room, had been divided into three rooms with an entry to the northwest. The present dining room and parlor fireplaces occupy the same position as did the original chimney stack, which was triangular in plan and measured 14' on a side in the cellar. The kitchen fireplace on the south was 7' wide and had an elliptical baking oven 3' wide and 5' deep at one side. The partition separating the kitchen from the room to the northwest was coincident with the northwest side of the winding stairs in the dining room.

The story heights are modest at Wyck. There is just a little over 6' of head room in the cellar. The first floor has a ceiling height of 8' 6"; the second floor, 7' 9"; and the third floor is 6' 3" to the roof intersection.

The house is in an excellent state of repair. A great deal of the original hardware has been preserved.

The drawing of the first floor plan is part of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The complete survey contains 22 drawings illustrating the building in detail. These are in the Library of Congress. [1]

It should be noted that Wyck is one of the very few completely documented colonial houses in America. In addition to its carefully documented past, the house and grounds have also recently been investigated. In 1974, John M. Dickey, FAIA, prepared a report detailing the architectural and engineering soundness of the property, and found Wyck to be "generally in good condition," [2] particularly considering the age of the house. In the years since, the house and grounds have been maintained in beautiful condition.

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**List of Contributing Structures**

1. Main House
2. Coach House
3. Ice House
4. Smoke House
5. Privy
6. Greenhouse
7. Woodshed

**Noncontributing Structures**

1. Modern Garage (20th Century)

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide:     Locally:    

Applicable National Register Criteria:       A     B X C X D    

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):       A     B     C     D     E     F     G    

NHL Criteria: #2, #4

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1690-1852	1690, 1824

NHL Theme(s): XVI. Architecture  
                  A. Colonial

Significant Person(s): Reuben Haines III  
                          Caspar Wistar

Cultural Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Unknown; William Stickland (1824)

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

Wyck is a rare example of a colonial type of structure that has been completely documented by nine generations of the same Quaker family. The house, outbuildings, and gardens, as well the interior furnishings and record books, letters, etc., provide a vivid record of one family's way of life from the 18th to the 20th century. A brief history of the house follows:

In 1689 Hans Millan, [sic] a Swiss Quaker, claimed ownership of lot seventeen in the "German Township." Little is known about Millan, who died in 1698, but it is assumed that about 1690 he built a small house on the property that was perhaps absorbed into the present building. Dirk Jansen (c. 1680-1760), who had married Millan's daughter Margaret by 1702, was the next owner of the property, and it is likely that he built the two-and-one-half-story house that now forms the western end of Wyck. With a plan of 36' by 29', Jansen's house would have been quite large in comparison to other houses in the neighborhood at the time, but it shared fundamental qualities with them: it was built of stone, the favored construction material in Germantown from its settlement in the seventeenth century until the middle of the twentieth century; the gable end of the building faced the main road, an orientation found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German and Dutch houses; and it originally had a three-room plan dominated by a massive central chimney ...

Dirk Jansen probably also built a smaller house eighteen feet closer to Germantown Avenue, the south wall of which aligned perfectly with the south wall of the large house. The floor plan of the second house was conspicuously different from that of the first. The first floor consisted of a single room with a comparatively small chimney on the north wall and a narrow stair hall with the main entrance on the southern wall. This floor plan is similar to that used in countless eighteenth-century Philadelphia houses and demonstrates the flow of building ideas between that city and Germantown. Dirk Jansen and his Germantown builders, however, used stone rather than brick, which

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was preferred overwhelmingly in Philadelphia. This pattern of amalgamating local tradition with Philadelphia styles characterized many Germantown houses built between the middle of the eighteenth and the end of the nineteenth century.

Jansen's son Richard inherited Wyck in 1760 and on his death in 1767 it passed to his sister Catherine Jansen Wistar (1703-1786). Catherine had given up full-time residence in Germantown after she married Caspar Wistar (1696-1752) in 1726 and they moved to Philadelphia. Wistar had arrived in Philadelphia virtually penniless in 1717, but quickly made his fortune as a brass-button manufacturer, merchant, and the founder of the first successful glassworks in the Colonies, the Wistarburgh Glassworks in Alloway, Salem County, New Jersey. Several rare examples of Wistarburgh glass remain at Wyck today. Before Catherine inherited Wyck, she and her husband occasionally visited Germantown in the summer, living in a small frame house not far from her father. Later in the eighteenth century Germantown became increasingly popular as a summer residence for wealthy Philadelphians.

The two houses on lot seventeen were connected by a two-and-a-half-story addition sometime before the Battle of Germantown in 1777, when the building was used as a hospital for the British army. In 1771 Reuben Haines I (1727-1793), the husband of Caspar and Catherine's daughter Margaret Wistar Haines (1728/9-1793), listed expenses for L77 and L20/1/0 in his ledger, which may reflect the costs of quarrying the stone and connecting the houses. The original floor plan of both houses was retained, however, permitting their frequent use as separate dwellings for the next fifty years. Most often a tenant farmer rented the western end and the connecting section year round and the Haines family used the eastern end during the summer. For many years the first floor of the connecting section was left open, as a cartway or breezeway, while the second floor had a single bedroom. By the 1790s the cartway had been enclosed with large paneled doors. These could be thrown open in the summers to create a pleasant cross-ventilated room known as the hall.



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Disastrous yellow-fever epidemics devastated Philadelphia in 1793, 1794, and 1797, killing about one-seventh of the city's population. Philadelphians poured into Germantown, which enjoyed the benefits of a higher elevation and fresh, cool air. The exodus from Philadelphia intensified in the early nineteenth century, resulting in a proliferation of stylish new houses in Germantown. Long-established Germantown families responded by renovating their old houses or building new ones. The Wyck property was no exception. It was inherited by Reuben and Margaret Haines son Caspar Wistar Haines (1762-1801) after his parents died nursing yellow-fever victims in the fall of 1793. A wealthy brewer who lived and worked in Philadelphia, Caspar Haines had rarely frequented the "Germantown place," as he called it, until 1794, when he moved with his young family to live there year round. During the next seven years he made many improvements to the old house and property.

In order to continue his brewing business close to home, Caspar built the Germantown Brewery one hundred feet north of his house in 1794 at a cost of \$1,200. The local air was redolent with the smell of fermentation until the 1840s, when the temperance movement forced the family to close the brewery. In 1796, Caspar built an enormous stone barn 150' northwest of the house. It became the center for a variety of innovative agricultural activities engaged upon by Caspar and later by his eldest son, Reuben Haines III (1786-1831). In 1890 the family sold the barn to Mantle Fielding, a Philadelphia architect, who remodeled it into a colonial revival house for himself. Shortly after the construction of the barn, Caspar erected a coach house and in 1799 he applied a coat of stylish white stucco to the three prominent sides of his rambling stone house.

After Caspar's premature death in 1801, his widow and children moved back to Philadelphia, but they made frequent summer visits to the Germantown house. In 1820 Reuben, the only surviving child of Caspar and Hannah Haines, packed up his Philadelphia town house and moved with his wife, Jane Bowne Haines (1790-1843), and their children to Germantown. The years of their

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residence at Wyck were an important era in its history. Reuben's wide range of interests in agriculture, technology, natural history, education, social reforms, and the arts placed him within a group of early nineteenth Philadelphiaans who shared a Jeffersonian zeal for creating model society. Between the time Reuben left the Westtown Boarding School after his father's death in 1801 and his own death in 1831, he helped organize the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Franklin Institute, several fire companies, "infant schools" for poor children, and the Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown Railroad, one of the first in the country. He was an active member of the American Philosophical Society and the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture; he worked on committees that investigated proposals for the internal improvement of Pennsylvania; and he served as an overseer of the Philadelphia public schools. He also supported Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum, lent Rembrandt Peale \$3,000 for a study trip to Europe, and, with Franklin Peale, "spent [a] day boiling bones of [an] elephant for exhibition." With equal enthusiasm Reuben sponsored projects of the naturalists John James Audubon, Thomas Nuttall, and William Maclure, as well as those of the utopianist educators Amos Bronson Alcott, William Russell, and Robert Owen.

In theory, Germantown was a practical and pleasant alternative to Philadelphia as the Haineses' residence. In actuality, the stone farmhouse was plagued with the inconveniences inherent in old buildings. Reuben, Jane, and their children suffered through four years of drafty rooms and cramped quarters, at first crowding into the eastern section of the house with its single room and hallway on the ground floor and two rooms each on the second and third floors. Then, when the tenants left the western section in the autumn of 1820, the Haineses moved ...

By 1824, the structural condition of the old house had deteriorated to the point where major repairs were necessary and alterations desirable. Floor plans, itemized ledger entries, and receipts for 1824 document the changes that Reuben and his architect, William Strickland, introduced to the old house at a total cost

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of \$1,500. By 1824, Strickland was well established as an architect of public buildings, most recently the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, but he rarely altered houses during his long career. As there is no record of his being paid by Haines, he may well have worked on Wyck purely out of friendship. The two men knew each other through their mutual membership in the Academy of Natural Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Franklin Institute.

Wyck was a collection of old parts when Strickland started work on it. He altered little on the exterior so that it retained its colonial appearance, but his inspired solution for the inside successfully blended the interiors of the two houses into a single mansion that makes quite modern use of space and light. The most extensive alterations occurred in the western section of the house. The first step was the removal of the central chimney, which Strickland replaced with a narrow stack designed specifically to burn anthracite. He then removed the various partition walls and created two large rooms on the first floor--a kitchen (now the dining room) and a parlor or dining room (now the library)--both of which had windows overlooking the lawn on the south and the garden on the north.

Strickland transformed the hall joining the west and east sections of the house into a room that was sunny year round by installing sliding glass-paned doors in the thick wall. In the summer these and the large existing wooden doors would be opened for cross-ventilation, and in winter the wooden doors alone were opened so that sunlight streamed into the room, which soon doubled as a conservatory. There were other alterations that relocated a fireplace and a cupboard.

With these changes Strickland created four large rooms on the first floor, three of which he then connected with pairs of doors that swung on pivots and hinges at ninety-degree angles. Opening the doors created a space nearly sixty feet long that was suitable for large-scale entertaining. Closing them created three rooms suitable for the intimacy of family life. Altogether, Strickland introduced spatial and

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functional flexibility to the house and demonstrated his talent for adapting old buildings using historically sympathetic yet conveniently modern designs appropriate for everyday use.

The setting of the renovated house was enhanced by the addition of an ornamental rose garden on the north lawn. A vegetable garden and orchard had grown on the side from the eighteenth century.

As Jane Haines' husband set about to improve the appearance of the house, Jane set about to improve the gardens. According to a notebook she kept between 1821 and 1827, she planted parterres on the north lawn with iris, syringa, hydrangea, and more than twenty types of roses. With the practicality of a Quaker housewife, she also planted raspberries, asparagus, currants, gooseberries, and a pear tree. Jane's gardens have been tended continuously since the 1820s, with subsequent generations not only preserving the old plants but also adding new ones.

Reuben and Jane Haines transformed the old "Germantown place" into an elegant country house, and three generations of their descendants devoted much of their lives to its preservation. Nonetheless, certain changes have been made. The construction of the Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad during the 1830s caused real estate values to skyrocket and by 1852, much of the family property had been sold and some of Germantown's most imposing Victorian houses were built on it. The house itself changed little, but Jane Reuben Haines (1832-1911), the seventh-generation owner, kept abreast of the times by adding fashionable Victorian furnishings.

Fewer changes occurred at Wyck during the twentieth century, when it was owned by Caspar Wistar Haines II (1853-1935) and his nephew Robert Bowne Haines (1893-1967), the eighth and ninth generation owners, respectively. The family, however, began to realize the unique qualities of their home, and in 1973 Mary T. Haines, Robert's widow, gave the property to the Wyck Charitable Trust. Since then, the Trust and the Wyck Association have worked to preserve and interpret the

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rich heritage of this unusual house for future generations. [3]

The integrity and quality of this property is exceedingly rare in America and lends itself to interpretation from scholars to visiting school children. In a narrower context, Wyck is of great interest to architects and historians because of William Strickland's additions of 1824. Wyck illustrates a sequential building history, a house fully furnished with original pieces set in an old garden carefully laid out by the original family.

**Footnotes**

1. Tinkcom, Harry M. and Margaret B., and Grant Miles Simon. Historic Germantown. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955). Pages 86-87.
2. Dickey, John M., "Architectural and Engineering Investigation of Wyck," August 1974. Page 230.
3. Lloyd, Sandra Mackenzie, "Wyck," Antiques, Volume CXXIV, No. 2, August 1983. Pages 276-283.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

There are approximately 100,000 items that include letters, diaries, bills, and accounts housed at Wyck that have been preserved and are currently being catalogued.

There are also primary resources at the Germantown Historical Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the City Archives of Philadelphia.

Deed books are available in City Hall from the first deed (1697) to present ownership, as well as City Directories, Fire Insurance Surveys, and Court Records, etc.

**Other Sources**

Lloyd, Sandra Mackenzie, "Wyck," Antiques. Volume CXXIV, No. 2. August 1983. Pages 276-283.

Mackenzie, Sandra Foster, "What a Beauty There is in Harmony," Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Delaware, 1979.

Peterson, Charles E., ed., Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia 1786 Rule Book, (Princeton) 1971.

Dickey, John M., "Architectural and Engineering Investigation of Wyck," August 1974.

Righter, Elizabeth, Final Report on Archaeological Excavations at the Wyck House, Philadelphia, May 1982.

Rosenthal, Ellen M., "The Interior View: Photographs of Wyck 1871-1906," Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Delaware, 1979.

Watson, John Fanning, "Historical Incidents of Germantown Recorded for Posterity," 1823, MSS, HSP.

Welsh, Frank S., "Paint Analysis of Wyck," prepared for John M. Dickey, FAIA, 1986.

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**Secondary Sources**

Clausson, W. Edmunds, Wyck, (Philadelphia) 1970.

Gilchrist, Agnes A., William Strickland, architect and Engineer 1788-1843 (New York: Da Capo Press) 1969.

Haines, John W., Richard Haines and His Descendants. Volume I (Boyce, Virginia) 1961.

Hocker, Edward W., Germantown 1683-1933 (Germantown: By the Author) 1933.

Hotchkin, Samuel F., Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia) 1889.

Keyser, Dr. Naamen H., History of Old Germantown (Germantown) 1906.

Lloyd, Sandra Mackenzie, "Three Centuries of Earthly Delights: A History of the Wyck Garden," in Germantown Green: A Living Legacy of Gardens, Orchards, and Pleasure Grounds (Philadelphia: Wyck Association) 1982.

Pennypacker, Samuel W., The Settlement of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and the Beginning of German Immigration to America (Philadelphia) 1899.

Tinkcom, Harry M. and Margaret B., and Grant Miles Simon, Historic Germantown (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society) 1955.

Webster, Richard, Philadelphia Preserved. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press) 1976.

Wistar, Thomas, "The Significance and Development of Wyck's Architecture," Germantown Crier Volume 30, Number 2, Spring 1978, pages 33-35.

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- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # PA 7-3 1934
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: Haines Family Papers

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 2.5 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 18 484760 4429960

Verbal Boundary Description:

Starting at the northwest corner of Germantown Avenue and Walnut Lane, southeasterly along Germantown Avenue 26 degrees, 2 minutes (320 feet, 7 3/4 inches) from a point moving southwest at 63 degrees, 39 minutes (200 feet) then indent 50 degrees, 37 minutes (66 feet, 3/4 inch), northwest 44 degrees, 10 minutes (145 feet, 6 5/8 inches), turning northeast 46 degrees, 12 minutes (111 feet, 10 1/2 inches), turning northwest 45 degrees, 34 minutes (98 feet, 3 7/8 inches), turning northeast 44 degrees, 25 minutes (161 feet, 4 1/8 inches), indent 51 degrees, 55 minutes (85 feet, 8 3/8 inches) to the beginning.



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**Boundary Justification:**

The present 2 1/2 acres described above is the property boundary fixed in 1890 as the Wyck holding.

Survey and Plan of Property: Survey and Regulator, 9th Philadelphia District, April 24, 1990. Parcel 1, Folder 6-190.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: Sandra Lloyd, Curator Wyck;  
assisted by Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian,

Organization: History Division, WASO, NPS Date: 10 May, 1990

Street & Number: 1100 L Street, Room 4209 Telephone: (202) 343-8166

City or Town: Washington State: DC ZIP: 20013-7127

September 24, 1990

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

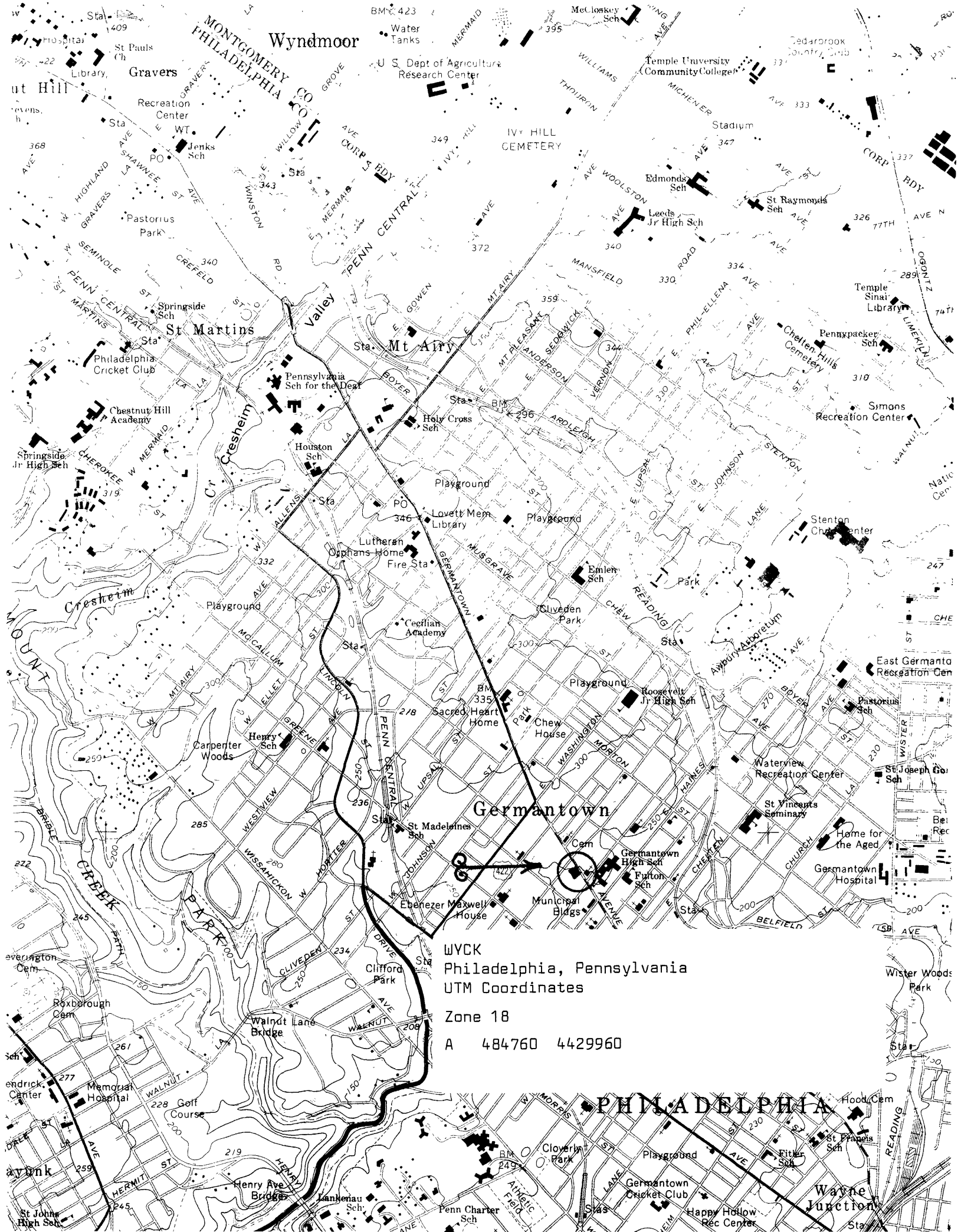
Name/Title: Sandra Lloyd, Curator Wyck;  
assisted by Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian,

Organization: History Division, WASO, NPS Date: 10 May, 1990

Street & Number: 1100 L Street, Room 4209 Telephone: (202) 343-8166

City or Town: Washington State: DC ZIP: 20013-7127

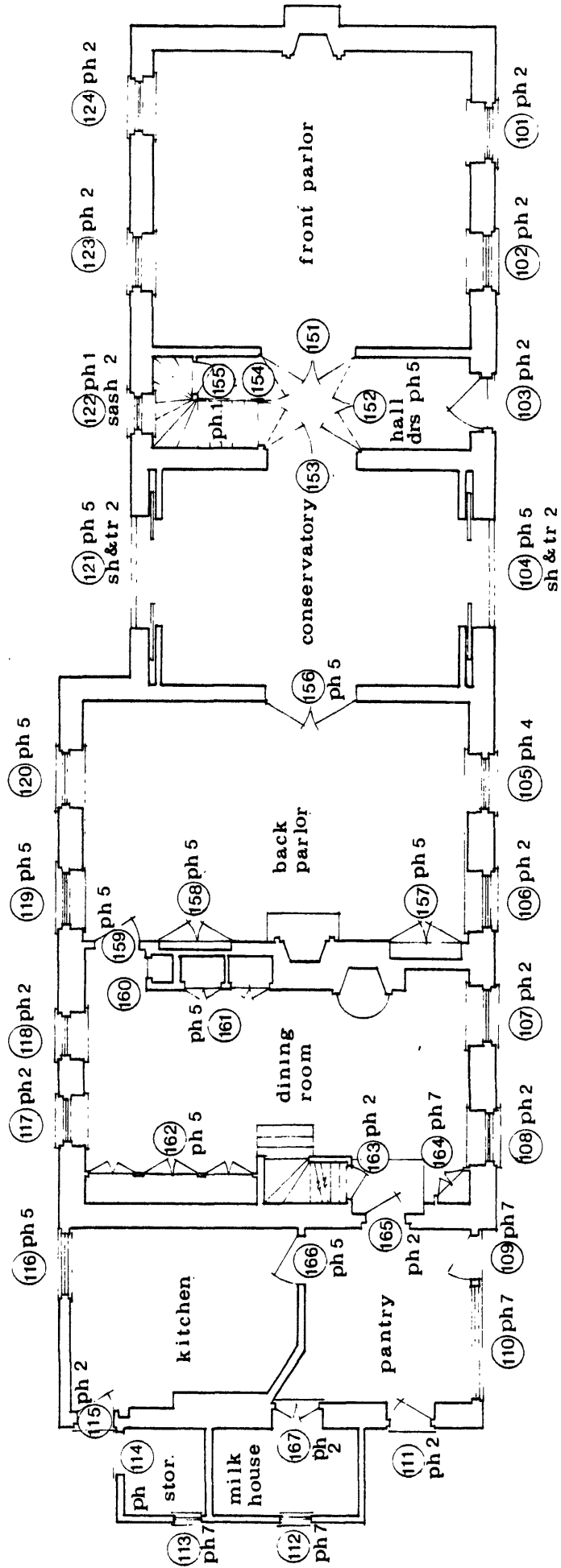
September 26, 1990



WYCK  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
UTM Coordinates  
Zone 18  
A 484760 4429960

PHILADELPHIA

Wayne Junction



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**

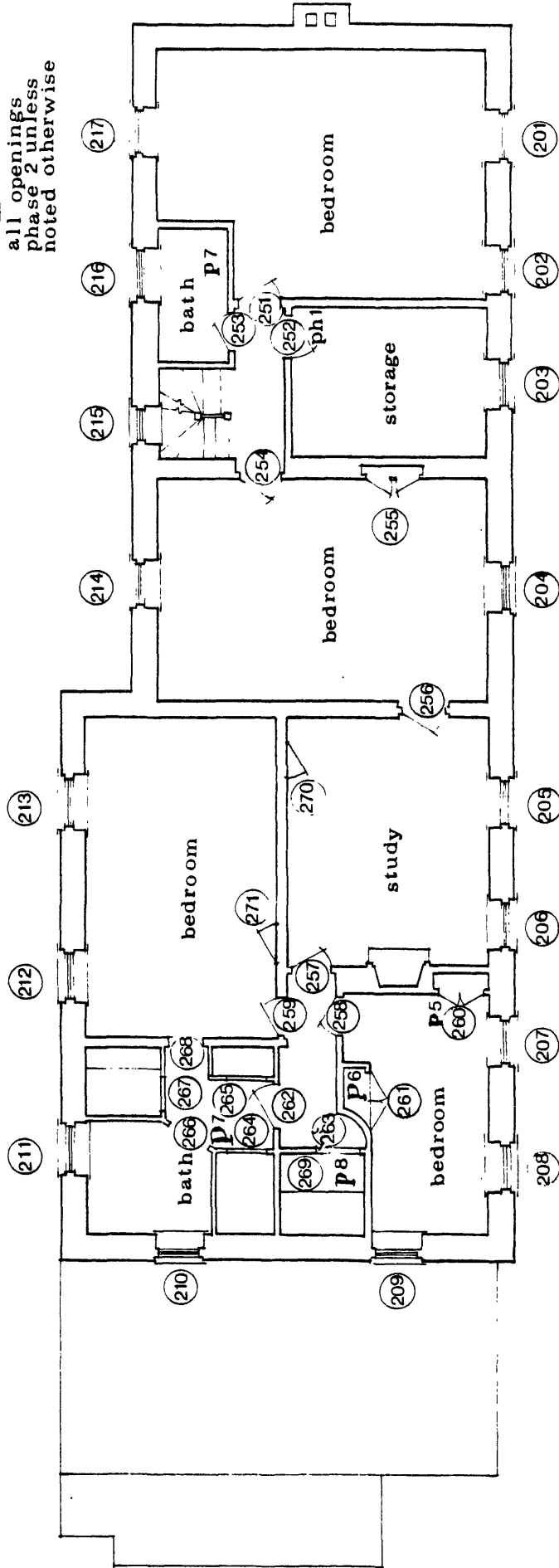
wyck hsr

**LOCATION OF OPENINGS**

not to scale



note:  
all openings  
phase 2 unless  
noted otherwise



## SECOND FLOOR PLAN

wyck hsr

LOCATION OF OPENINGS

not to scale



