

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES

FOR PHC USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

June 9, 2006; amended

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

Sept 9, 2006

1. NAME

HISTORIC

Greenbelt Knoll

AND/OR COMMON

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER

Longford Street (Northeast Philadelphia)

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY		OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT		<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
		<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

various

STREET AND NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

ZIP CODE

5. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

1 mile east of Route #1, Greenbelt Knoll begins at Longford Street on the southside of Holme Avenue, runs south to cul de sac where it dead ends. Surrounded on three sides by Pennypack Park, the south end of property lines ends at railroad track which cuts through the Park on the west side of Greenbelt Knoll and runs northward under Holme Avenue. On the eastside, property lines end in Pennypack Park.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

See attachment

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES - (Continued)

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

- PREHISTORIC
- 1601-1700
- 1701-1800
- 1801-1880
- 1881-1900
- 1901-1980
- 1981-
- ARCHELOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHELOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE
- ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- THEATER
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (Specify) _____

SPECIFIC DATES 1956

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Robert Bishop

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See Attachment

[Empty space for text or images]

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached sheet.

10. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Charles Fuller

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET AND NUMBER

15 Longford Street

TELEPHONE

215-331-2716

CITY OR TOWN

Philadelphia

STATE

PA

SECTION 7 - DESCRIPTION

Greenbelt Knoll is a suburban development comprised of 19 parcels and 18 single-family detached houses. The development is surrounded on three sides by wooded parkland. The 19 parcels are arranged around an asphalt-paved cul-de-sac, which extends southward from Holme Avenue about 500 feet. The cul-de-sac runs along a north-south ridgeline and is bounded by concrete sidewalks. The land drops off precipitously to the east and west. Although some houses have lawns, most of the land is naturally wooded. The irregular lots are approximately 1/3 acre each. The lot configurations conform to the natural topography.

The houses are similar. With one exception, they are one-story, flat-roofed, rectilinear, mid-century Modern dwellings with wood siding, large overhanging eaves, large windows, and decks and patios. One was significantly altered and now has a gable roof. Most of the houses are set into the land with the basement facades revealed where the land drops away. Several have significant retaining walls; some have terraced patios. The houses are arranged on the land to maximize privacy and to merge with the natural environment. The houses were sited and designed to accommodate existing trees. In many cases, the large old trees grow through openings in roofs or stand in niche-like recesses. The most distinctive features of the houses are triangular projecting brick fireplaces and entryways, which dramatically break with the otherwise orthogonal geometry. The fireplaces have tubular metal chimneys, which are freestanding and pierce the flat roofs. Several properties included detached garages, some of which are later additions. Others have parking pads. Most have driveways.

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Greenbelt Knoll, a modest suburban subdivision located off Holme Avenue southeast of Roosevelt Boulevard in Northeast Philadelphia, has extraordinary historical significance for the city, commonwealth, and nation. Along Longford Street, a cul-de-sac, the community is situated on a finger of land bounded by parkland. It originally included nineteen single-family Modern residences set in a natural, wooded environment; one has been lost, but eighteen survive in nearly original condition. Morris Milgram, a leader of the open housing movement in the United States, created Greenbelt Knoll in the mid 1950s as the first planned integrated suburban development in the city and one of the first in the nation. The development marks a major milestone in the American open housing and civil rights movements. In addition to its important place in American socio-political history, Greenbelt Knoll is important architecturally. Designed by the prominent firm of Montgomery & Bishop with architect Harry Duncan, landscape architect Margaret Lancaster Duncan, and consultant Louis I. Kahn, one of the most important architects of the twentieth century, the houses and landscape at Greenbelt Knoll are excellent examples of the organic vein of mid-century Modern architecture. Set in a wood and isolated from its neighbors, Greenbelt Knoll is one of the most important collections of Modernist buildings in Philadelphia.

Greenbelt Knoll is highly significant and therefore eligible for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The district fulfills Designation Criteria a, b, c, d, e, g, and j as delineated in paragraph 5 of the City's "Historic Buildings" ordinance, section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. Greenbelt Knoll:

- a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif;
- j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

MORRIS MILGRAM

Morris Milgram, the driving force behind the creation of Greenbelt Knoll, was the son of Orthodox Jews driven from Russia by tsarist terrorists. His family immigrated to the United States before his birth and settled in New York's Lower East Side, where his father was a peddler. As a student at the City College of New York, Milgram led campus protests against fascism. Expelled from City College for his political activities in 1934, he graduated from a Dana College in Newark, New Jersey in 1939. After college, he became an

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organizer for the Workers Defense League, a civil rights and legal aid group for tenant farmers and the poor. He quickly advanced to position of national secretary at the civil rights organization.¹

While employed by the Workers Defense League, Milgram met and married Grace Smelo. William M. Smelo, Milgram's father-in-law, ran a small construction company in the Philadelphia area. Milgram joined the construction firm and, after learning the suburban development business, directed the company into integrated housing. While speaking at a conference of the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials in 1956, Milgram recounted his emergence as a developer of open housing.

In 1947 my father-in-law, William M. Smelo of Philadelphia urged me to join him in the building business. I told him I could not come to Philadelphia to build houses for white people only as is the local pattern. He replied that if I joined his firm, I could build houses that all people could live in. On this agreement I came to Philadelphia in June 1947 and for four and a half years built houses according to the local pattern while my conscience hurt. Early in 1952 I announced my determination to re-tool to open-occupancy housing at a meeting at the home of Frank Loescher, then Director of the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. I burned my bridges behind me and told the group that I would rather be laborer and live in a slum than build housing for whites only; that I would build nothing not even commercial properties until I could get my open-occupancy projects underway.²

During an interview in 1965, Milgram elaborated on his entry into open housing more than a decade earlier. He explained that his crusade for integrated housing began in earnest after a clash at a zoning hearing in Hatboro, Pennsylvania. A young man, who lived in a house built by Milgram, confronted the builder at the hearing, charging that "Mr. Milgram hasn't told us whether he's going to sell to niggers or spicks!" Angered, Milgram retorted: "I'm sorry, I don't know what spicks are. However, the township president has said in the past that restrictive covenants are unenforceable. In any event, I can tell you now, no Negroes have applied." The board approved Milgram's zoning application, but he left the meeting in a rage, vowing never again to build all-white housing. By 1952, he had reorganized his business, which he had inherited from his father-in-law, for the construction integrated housing only.³

GREENBELT KNOLL

In 1952, Milgram began planning the Greenbelt Knoll development.⁴ The earliest surviving site plan depicting the layout of the houses on the landscape is dated 23 June 1952.⁵ After the early planning, the project stalled owing to antagonism. Contractors, bankers, real estate brokers, and even those who had been urging open-occupancy housing refused to aid him in his effort. But Milgram was as tenacious as he was idealistic and he forged ahead, seeking backers to invest in his open-housing plans. In 1953, George E. Otto, a Quaker leader and the owner of Penn Valley Constructors, a prosperous residential building firm in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, agreed to invest in Milgram's scheme. The prestigious Otto drew others, both black and white, to Milgram. Dr. William H. Gray, the former president of Florida A & M College, the chair of the Governor's Commission on

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Industrial Race Relations, and the Pastor of Bright Hope Baptist Church, joined the investors. Gray recruited Dr. Nathaniel Duff, the superintendent of his Sunday School. Physician Dr. E.G. McGruder of Bristol, Pennsylvania also joined the board of investors, which eventually numbered six white and three black members. Together, they formed Greenbelt Knoll, Inc. In November 1953, the corporation purchased the nine-acre property for \$22,200.⁶ By April 1954, the board raised \$150,000 in working capital from sixty-five stockholders. Otto suggested that they proceed with a second, larger but less complicated project before beginning construction at Greenbelt Knoll. Quickly, they broke ground for Concord Park, the first integrated suburban housing development in the Philadelphia area. Built on fifty acres of farmland outside of the Philadelphia city limits in Trevoese, Pennsylvania, Concord Park opened in August 1954.⁷ The sales of the 139 traditional suburban homes were strictly controlled by what Milgram called a "fair housing pattern," a quota system, which required 55% of buyers to be white and 45% non-white.⁸

With the success of Concord Park, Milgram restarted the design of Greenbelt Knoll. Situated on a hilly, wooded tract surrounded on three sides by Pennypack Park and separated from nearby residential developments, it was ideally suited for the potentially controversial housing project. Milgram commissioned the prominent architectural firm of Montgomery & Bishop to design Greenbelt Knoll. Newcomb Montgomery and Robert Bishop had formed their partnership in 1952. An important Philadelphia firm, Montgomery & Bishop worked in a Modernist vocabulary, concentrated largely on residential projects, and produced designs informed by their Quaker beliefs.

Robert Bishop, who directed the design of Greenbelt Knoll, trained in the office of noted architect W. Pope Barney before attending classes at the Drexel Institute and the T-Square Club. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, who lectured at the University of Pennsylvania in 1932, Bishop enrolled at Taliesen, Wright's atelier in Wisconsin, where he remained as a fellow for three years. While there, Bishop participated in the design of Broadacre City, Wright's conservative Jeffersonian proposal to safeguard American democracy with the substitution of rural, yet technologically sophisticated development for dense urban development. At Taliesen, Bishop melded his Quaker social philosophy with Wright's idealistic notions of nature, home, and community. Bishop returned to Philadelphia after accompanying the completed Broadacre City model to New York for exhibition in 1935. In the late 1930s and 1940s, Bishop worked for several Philadelphia architectural firms. In 1939, he helped found Bryn Gweled, a cooperative Quaker homestead community in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where designed houses and made his residence. In 1945, he formed a partnership with John W. Wright. In 1952, he formed a new firm with Montgomery. Bishop was prominent in Philadelphia's architectural community. He was the director of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1951 and 1952. He joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Fine Arts in 1952, where he lectured. Bishop's first-hand knowledge of Wright's theories and his talent for designing with wood in Wright's vein were important contributions to the reform of the university's dated architectural curriculum. Bishop continued to teach at the university until 1960. He retired from practice in 1972 and died in 1984.

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Louis I. Kahn, one of the most important architects of the twentieth century, consulted on the Greenbelt Knoll project. A left-wing, Jewish intellectual who supported the labor movement, Kahn shared Milgram's political and social beliefs. Although little is known about Kahn's role in the project, a surviving photograph depicts Kahn with Montgomery, Bishop, Otto, Milgram, and contractor William Jones. Kahn is presenting a large rendering of one of the Greenbelt Knoll houses to Otto and Milgram. The drawing held by Kahn, which is in the famous architect's unique hand, is inscribed: "This is wishing a marvelous success. Louis I. Kahn."⁹

Bishop, with the aid of Kahn, designed a collection of 19 Modernist houses. Each is unique, but together they create a homogeneous whole. The houses are simple, Modern rectangular forms with flat roofs, but are enlivened by large expanses of glass, natural wood siding, broad shading eaves, and, most notably, sculptural diagonally-projecting brick fireplaces and entrances.

For the design of Greenbelt Knoll, Montgomery & Bishop associated with architect Harry Duncan and landscape architect Margaret Lancaster Duncan, a husband-and-wife team from Southampton, Bucks County. Harry Duncan executed the detailed design drawings and Margaret Lancaster Duncan executed the site plan and landscape design. Civil engineers Barnes & McLaughlin of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania prepared the site survey and drainage and paving plans. A portfolio of Montgomery & Bishop designs published in 1962 emphasized the importance of the relationships of the houses to the landscape.

Perhaps the most satisfying feature of the project is the arrangement of buildings to form handsome outdoor spaces between them, while at the same time achieving good orientation and family privacy for each house. The contour of the land was not disturbed and all trees except those in the roadway and within house walls were retained. This luxurious growth overhead eliminates all reflective glare from glass, and gives to the living areas an exceptional degree of openness and communion with the land.¹⁰

A surviving architectural drawing emphasizes the importance Milgram and the designers placed upon preserving trees at the site. Dated 23 January 1956, the drawing evidences that the design for 2 Longford Street was revised with the insertion of a large notch to allow for the retention of a significant tree.¹¹ At 6 Longford Street, a large, double tree grows up through an opening in the roof of the breezeway, which connects the house and garage. Contemporary accounts of the development also accentuate the importance of the relationship between the built and natural environments for Milgram. For example:

Morris Milgram is in his middle forties. He lives with his wife and two children in one of the earliest of his integrated developments—Greenbelt Knoll. The "Johnny Appleseed" of integrated housing, who has spoken on his favorite subject in over fifty cities, does not sound much like a man with a social mission when interviewed on home ground. He sounds like an enthusiastic builder, with emphasis on the building.

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And no wonder, when one sees what Milgram has built at Greenbelt Knoll. The site ... is completely wooded and surrounded by park on four sides, including a two-acre private park for Greenbelt home-owners. There are nineteen award-winning homes in the \$20,000 to \$45,000 range. As the builder conducts his visitors on a tour of the project, he waxes eloquent over the skill and artistry employed to exploit every rise, every slope, every tree of the beautiful site and rolling terrain for the greater glory and loveliness of each individual home. His "pitch" spills over with attacks on the architects and builders who level off hills and cut down trees to make building simpler—and more uniformly ugly. He extols the builders, like himself, who submit to the loveliness of nature instead of trying to obliterate it. He talks about drainage, flexibility of design, resale values.¹²

The houses were constructed during 1955 and 1956. The house at 4 Longford Street, which was served as the model house for the development, was erected first. The Department of Licenses & Inspections issued zoning and building permits for the model house in the spring of 1955. The model house was completed by November 1955, when Montgomery & Bishop applied for and were granted the permits for the other houses and garages.¹³

Greenbelt Knoll won several awards for design excellence. For example, the American Institute of Architects, *House and Home*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and the National Broadcasting Corporation bestowed its Homes for Better Living award on the development. Also, Philadelphia's Mayor Richardson Dilworth, an ardent advocate of exceptional planning and design, conferred a City of Philadelphia Tribute on Montgomery & Bishop. He gave the tribute "for the design of Greenbelt Knoll Homes, which ... brought new standards of contemporary residential architecture to Philadelphia."¹⁴

At Greenbelt Knoll, as at Concord Park, Milgram employed a quota system, "fair housing pattern" or "controlled occupancy," as he called it. He explained the system to a group of housing officials in 1956.

At the present time we have 130 of our houses under roof [at Concord Park]; 104 of them occupied, 55% white and 45% Negro. Getting the first 10 or 20 white sales was the most difficult. After that it became easier to secure white sales.... There was no problem securing Negro sales. We found more than an adequate number of Negro customers who have enough cash to buy the houses. The average Negro family income in the development is about \$6300 per year which is about \$200 higher than the average white family at Concord. At Greenbelt Knoll ... we went through a similar period of difficulty getting the few white sales. Now we have eleven sold. However, with the knowledge secured at Concord Park the job is easier. There the builder now lives with other families, Negro and white. (As of September 27, 1956, five families had moved in, 4 white, 1 Negro. Sales to date are 5 Negro, 6 white.) There we have only 19 houses and we have set the quota at 1/3 Negro and 2/3 white, which is the pattern we would have preferred Concord Park maintain but couldn't apply since we had made many sales to Negroes before we established controlled occupancy. ... There is no opposition from Negro customers to the quota, provided we take adequate time to explain it to them as a

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device for breaking down racial discrimination. ... I believe, as does William H. Hastie of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, that "prejudice may explain Jim Crow housing, but in the dynamics of society Negrophobia grows and flourishes as white persons are deprived of normal neighborly contact with Negroes isolated on the other side of the railroad tracks or in the obsolete and blighted city area which whites have abandoned. We must address ourselves frankly and vigorously to the great field of private housing.... Too many of us who should be in the forefront of this effort have not convinced ourselves, much less undertaken to convince others that segregated living makes for an unhealthy society. This evil will be with us undiminished until its elimination becomes a fighting faith of very many Americans."¹⁵

At Greenbelt Knoll, Milgram explained, the "actual quota was set at one-third black and two-thirds white" to mirror Philadelphia's racial mix at the time.¹⁶ Eventually, non-white buyers purchased eight of the nineteen houses. To maintain the racial ratios, Milgram included a clause in every sales agreement requiring that his company oversee all subsequent sales of the property. Over the intervening five decades, Greenbelt Knoll, unlike Concord Park, has maintained its racial diversity.

In addition to Milgram himself, who lived at 5 Longford Street, several prominent Philadelphians resided at Greenbelt Knoll. U.S. Representative Robert N.C. Nix, the first African American to represent Pennsylvania in the U.S. Congress, purchased 16 Longford Street in 1957 and resided there for many years. Famed civil-rights leader the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, the "Lion of Zion," who developed the Sullivan Principles and hastened the end of apartheid in South Africa, resided¹⁴ Longford Street.

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MILGRAM AFTER GREENBELT KNOLL

After building Greenbelt Knoll, Morris Milgram continued to develop integrated residential communities. In 1958, he organized Modern Community Developers to finance and supervise the projects.¹⁷ He assembled an honorary advisory board, which included former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike, U.S. Senators Adlai Stevenson, Jacob Javits, and Joseph S. Clark, and African-American leaders Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, A. Philip Randolph, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, and baseball legend Jackie Robinson.¹⁸

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Milgram and Modern Community Developers were thrust into the headlines nationwide when Milgram attempted to build two interracial residential developments in the Chicago suburb of Deerfield, Illinois. Recounted in a best-selling book by Harry and David Rosen entitled *But Not Next Door*, the Deerfield Case, as it became known, revealed that racism and segregation were not limited to the South, but were nationwide phenomena. In 1957, Milgram purchased two tracts of land in the all-white suburb of Deerfield through Progress Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Modern Community Developers. He planned two subdivisions, Floral Park and Pear Tree, but did not inform the local government or community that they would be integrated. With the requisite building and zoning permits, he subdivided the land and began to build two model homes. After Milgram revealed that the subdivisions would be integrated, the town

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quickly became polarized; a majority opposed the developments, but a large and vocal minority supported them. Town officials drummed up several bogus building code violations to halt the construction. After a long series of contentious public meetings and a referendum, which were covered by the Chicago and national print, radio, and television media, the town seized the land by eminent domain for parkland. Milgram, who was represented by Adlai Stevenson's law firm, sued, claiming that members of the Deerfield Park Board and a residents' association had conspired to violate his civil rights while seeking to block the developments. Both sides suffered victories and setbacks in the courts, but in 1961 the United States Court of Appeals found in favor of the Park Board. Milgram petitioned newly-elected President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to back his appeal to the United States Supreme Court, but the Kennedy brothers declined to support it. A last-minute petition on behalf of Milgram by Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, A. Philip Randolph and James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Whitney Young of the Urban League failed to move the Kennedy brothers. Eventually, the court refused to hear the case. The Park Board retained the land slated for the integrated developments and Milgram moved on to more accepting locales. However, Milgram's efforts at Deerfield educated Americans on prevalence of bias and segregation in the North, forever changing the course of the open-housing movement in the United States.¹⁹

Milgram enjoyed a long and illustrious career after Deerfield. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy asked Milgram, through Angier Biddle Duke, his chief of protocol, to buy white apartment communities in Washington, DC and integrate them to ensure that nonwhite diplomats were properly housed. Milgram accepted the task and bought three communities with a total of 633 units in the Washington area and integrated them without incident. He also created the Mutual Real Estate Investment Trust, which managed open housing throughout the country, providing shelter thousands of people.²⁰ In 1975, Milgram and civil-rights leader James Farmer founded Fund for an OPEN Society, which endures as the nation's only nonprofit promoting inclusive communities.²¹ At first, OPEN provided below-market-rate mortgages to people moving to neighborhoods where their race was underrepresented. More recently, OPEN has focused its efforts on working with communities seeking to become diverse and inclusive. He wrote dozens of articles and, in 1977, published *Good Neighborhood: The Challenge of Open Housing*.²² Milgram has received numerous awards for his groundbreaking work. In 1956, the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing awarded Milgram the Walter White Award for Distinguished Service in Housing.²³ In 1968, he was awarded the first National Human Rights Award by the Department of Housing & Urban Development. And he was awarded the Clarence Farmer Service Award by the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations in 1990. Morris Milgram died in Langhorne, Pennsylvania on 22 June 1997. He was 81 years of age.²⁴

CONCLUSION

The Greenbelt Knoll Historic District satisfies Designation Criteria a, b, c, d, e, f, g, and j, and, therefore, should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Satisfying Criterion a, Greenbelt Knoll, one of the nation's first integrated suburban housing developments, has significant character, interest or value as part of the development,

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heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, and Nation and is associated with Morris Milgram, Louis I. Kahn, Robert N.C. Nix, and the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, persons significant in the past. Satisfying Criterion b, Greenbelt Knoll is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; its development is a highly significant event in the open housing movement. Satisfying Criteria c and d, Greenbelt Knoll reflects the environment characterized by a distinctive architectural style, the mid-century Modernist style; and it embodies distinguishing characteristics of the architectural style. Designed by Montgomery & Bishop with Louis I. Kahn, Greenbelt Knoll is the work of architects whose designs significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, and cultural development of the City, Commonwealth and Nation; it thereby satisfies Criterion e. Satisfying Criterion g, Greenbelt Knoll is worthy of preservation because it is located on a finger of land projecting and integrated into Pennypack Park. And finally, satisfying Criterion j, Greenbelt Knoll truly exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community. The Greenbelt Knoll Historic District overwhelmingly deserves to be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

¹ Joseph Wershba, "Morris Milgram: Builder of Integrated Housing," unknown newspaper, 8 March 1960, n.p.

² Morris Milgram, "Building Private Interracial Housing Developments," in *Non-Discrimination Firsts in Housing, Proceedings of the 10th Annual Conference on the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials*, Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, 29 November 1956, p. 1.

³ Alfred Balk, "The Builder Who Makes Integration Pay," *Harper's Magazine* 231, no. 1382 (July 1965): 94-99.

⁴ See Edward Teitelman and Richard W. Longstreth, *Architecture in Philadelphia: A Guide* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974): 169; Tom Sugrue, "Morris Milgram's Interracial Levittowns: Civil Rights Activists and the Struggle to Integrate Postwar Suburbia," Seminar at Emory University, 8 March 2006; Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁵ See Plot Plan 11-1, dated 23 June 1952, in the Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

⁶ The deed was recorded on 24 November 1953 in M.L.S. 1953, Book 544, Page 380.

⁷ On Concord Park, see "Interracial Housing Project Opened in Lower Bucks Co.," *Evening Bulletin*, 15 November 1954, n.p.; W.M. Dwyer, "Experiment in Housing: Concord Park," *Commonweal* 62 (12 August 1955): 465-466; Eunice and George Grier, *Buyers of Interracial Housing: A Study of the Market for Concord Park* (Philadelphia: Institute for Urban Studies, January 1957); S.B. Applebaum, "For Everybody Only," *Coronet* 42 (August 1957): 64-66; Matthew P. Blanchard, "A Vision of Suburban Racial Utopia Blurs," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 October 2000, n.p.

⁸ Balk, "The Builder Who Makes Integration Pay," 97-98.

⁹ The photograph is housed in the Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.29, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

¹⁰ Catalogue of Montgomery & Bishop Projects, c. 1962, n.p.

¹¹ See Alterations to Bedroom 3 on Lot 2, 11-A9, dated 23 January 1956, in the Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

¹² Harry and David Rosen, *But Not Next Door: An Account of the Deerfield Case and Integration* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1962), 35.

¹³ On 17 May 1955, Montgomery & Bishop applied to the Department of Licenses & Inspections for a zoning permit for the model house at 4 Longford Street under Application No. 97349B. The Department apparently issued the permit, but no record of it has survived. On 4 November 1955, the architects applied to the Department for a zoning permit for the other 18 houses under Application No. 7778F. The Department issued the permit three days later, on 7 November. The Department issued Building Permit 4405 for the

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model house at 4 Longford Street in 1955. It issued Building Permit 10741 for the house at 5 Longford Street during the same year. It issued Building Permit 10742 for the houses at 1 to 3 and 6 to 10 Longford Street and Building Permit 10745 for garages at five of the houses during the same year. It issued a Building Permit 10743 for the houses at 11 to 19 Longford Street and Building Permit 10744 for garages at five of the houses during the same year.

¹⁴ See a copy of the award in the Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.44, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

¹⁵ Milgram, "Building Private Interracial Housing Developments," in *Non-Discrimination Firsts in Housing*, pp. 3-6.

¹⁶ Morris Milgram, *Good Neighborhood: The Challenge of Open Housing* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 58.

¹⁷ "Integrated Housing Corporation Formed," *Philadelphia Post*, 19 August 1958, n.p.

¹⁸ Balk, "The Builder Who Makes Integration Pay," 98.

¹⁹ On the Deerfield Case, see "Suburbia: High Cost of Democracy," *Time Magazine* 74, no. 23 (7 December 1959): 23; "Races: Caws in the Wind," *Time Magazine* 75, no. 1 (4 January 1960): 19; Harry and David Rosen, *But Not Next Door: An Account of the Deerfield Case and Integration* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1962); Robert A. Low, "Bias 30 Miles from the Loop," *Saturday Review* 45, no. 27 (14 July 1962): 29; James A. Wechsler, "Not Next Door," *New York Post*, 18 April 1963, p. 23; "The Supreme Court: Device for Division," *Time Magazine* 81, no. 17 (26 April 1963): 24.

²⁰ Eugene R. Eisman, "Building with a Plan, and a Conscience," *Sunday Bulletin Magazine*, 29 June 1969, pp. 4-6.

²¹ Raymond A. Berens, "Milgram's Continuing Battle," *Evening Bulletin*, 29 May 1977): n.p.

²² Morris Milgram, *Good Neighborhood*.

²³ "Phila. Builder Gets Walter White Prize," *Evening Bulletin*, 13 October 1956, n.p.

²⁴ Lawrence Van Gelder, "Morris Milgram, 81, Who Built Interracial Housing," *New York Times*, 26 June 1997, n.p.

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GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

Architect: Montgomery & Bishop
Lead Designer: Robert Bishop
Associate Designer: Harry Duncan
Consultant: Louis I. Kahn
Landscape Architect: Margaret Lancaster Duncan
Civil Engineers: Barnes & McLaughlin

Unit block of Longford Street

Cul-de-sac with asphalt paving and concrete sidewalks

1 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; large rear deck; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof; chain link fences; stone walls.

History: Original owner, Dr. Sol L. Nemzoff, deed recorded 1 October 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10742, 1955
Building Permit 9243, 1956, for heater
Building Permit 3594, 1963, for alteration
Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Addition of office, garage, and terrace," 1957-1958, 3 sheets, 060.13, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

2 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting brick knee wall at entrance; projecting brick fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof; parking pad.

History:
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10742, 1955
Building Permit 10745, 1955, for garage
Building Permit 9234, 1956, for heater
Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Alterations to Bedroom 3 on Lot 2," 23 January 1956; "Site Plan for Lot No. 2," 15 April 1955; Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

3 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; aluminum replacement casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; redwood patio on rear of house, broad eaves; flat roof; parking pad.

History:

Original owners, Roosevelt & Virginia Barlow, deed recorded 25 February 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10742, 1955

Building Permit 10745, 1955, for garage

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Deck Details for No. 3," 17 February 1956, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

4 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood- and tile-sided, detached house with addition; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; redwood patio with sliding glass doors; sliding glass door to basement; broad eaves; flat roof.

History: First house constructed, used as model house for the development

Original owner, William Niskanen, deed recorded 21 May 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 97349B, 17 May 1955

Building Permit 4405, 1955

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Site Plan for Lot No. 4," 18 April 1955, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

5 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached, L-shaped house; covered porch; casement, sliding-glass, double-hung, and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; large decks at rear; broad eaves; flat roof.

History: Original owner, Morris Milgram, deed recorded 16 January 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10741, 1955

Classification: Significant

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

6 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement section; car port attached to house by open breezeway; large tree pierces breezeway roof; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof.

History:

Original owners, James H. & Emma Richardson, deed recorded 25 February 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10742, 1955

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Revised Basement for No. 6," 24 January 1956, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

7 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; cement patio; broad eaves; flat roof; cedar-sided two-car detached garage.

History: Original owners, Paul & Mary Ridgley, deed recorded 16 November 1956

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10742, 1955

Building Permit 5107, 1957, for garage

Classification: Contributing

8 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof.

History: Original owner, George & M. Green, deed recorded 4 March 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10742, 1955

Building Permit 10745, 1955, for garage

Classification: Contributing

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

9 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof; two-car detached garage.

History:

Original owners, John D. & Georgia Glenn, deed recorded 25 February 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10742, 1955
Building Permit 10745, 1955, for garage
Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Kitchen for House No. 9," 14 February 1956, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

10 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof.

History: Original owners, W.A. & B.S. Peterson, deed recorded 27 April 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10742, 1955
Building Permit 10745, 1955, for garage

Classification: Contributing

11 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting fireplace with metal chimney; wood walkway with pergola; small porch; wood patio; broad eaves; flat roof; detached cedar-sided artist's studio; wood fence.

History: Original owners, Spahr & Helen H. Hall, deed recorded 25 February 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Plot Plan for Lots 11, 12, 13, 14," 21 December 1955, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

12 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached, T-shaped house; exposed basement; casement and fixed windows; addition with large windows, and wood entry stairs with carport beneath; gable roof with skylight.

History:

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10743, 1955

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Plot Plan for Lots 11, 12, 13, 14," 21 December 1955, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Significantly altered and expanded

Classification: Contributing

13 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; replacement double-hung windows; broad eaves; flat roof; two-car detached wood-sided garage; garden shed.

History: Original owner, B. Doreen Jolly, deed recorded 19 June 1957

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10743, 1955

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Plot Plan for Lots 11, 12, 13, 14," 21 December 1955, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Contributing

14 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; replacement double-hung windows; projecting brick fireplace with metal chimney; broad eaves; flat roof; concrete steps down to house; broad eaves; flat roof.

History: Original owner, Civil-rights pioneer the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan

Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955

Building Permit 10743, 1955

Building Permit 10744, 1955, for garage

Building Permit 6747, 1961, for addition

Building Permit 7992, 1961, for heater

Architectural drawing, Montgomery & Bishop, "Plot Plan for Lots 11, 12, 13, 14," 21 December 1955, Montgomery & Bishop Collection, 060.12, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Classification: Significant

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

15 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; replacement windows; brick knee wall at entry; projecting brick fireplace with metal chimney; sliding glass doors broad eaves; flat roof.

History: Original owners, Boris & Margo Kaufman, deed recorded 18 February 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Classification: Contributing

16 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house with large front addition; exposed basement with artificial stone cladding; replacement windows; broad eaves; flat roof.

History:
Original owner, Robert N.C. Nix Sr., first African American to represent Pennsylvania in the U.S. Congress, deed recorded 24 May 1957
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Building Permit 10744, 1955, for garage
Classification: Significant

17 Longford Street

Vacant lot

History: Demolished in 1997
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Building Permit 10744, 1955, for garage
Classification: ~~Non-contributing~~ **Classified as contributing by PHC, 6/9/2006**

18 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; exposed basement at rear; casement and fixed windows; projecting brick fireplace with metal chimney; concrete stairs to basement; broad eaves; flat roof.

History:
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Building Permit 10744, 1955, for garage
Classification: Contributing

GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

19 Longford Street

One-story, Modern, wood-sided, detached house; casement and fixed windows; front wood deck; broad eaves; flat roof; two-car detached garage; stone landscaping.

History: Original owner, Nathaniel S. Duff Sr., deed recorded 21 December 1956
Zoning Permit, Application No. 7778F, 4 November 1955
Building Permit 10743, 1955
Building Permit 10744, 1955, for garage
Building Permit 9233, 1956, for heater
Building Permit, 1957, for retaining wall

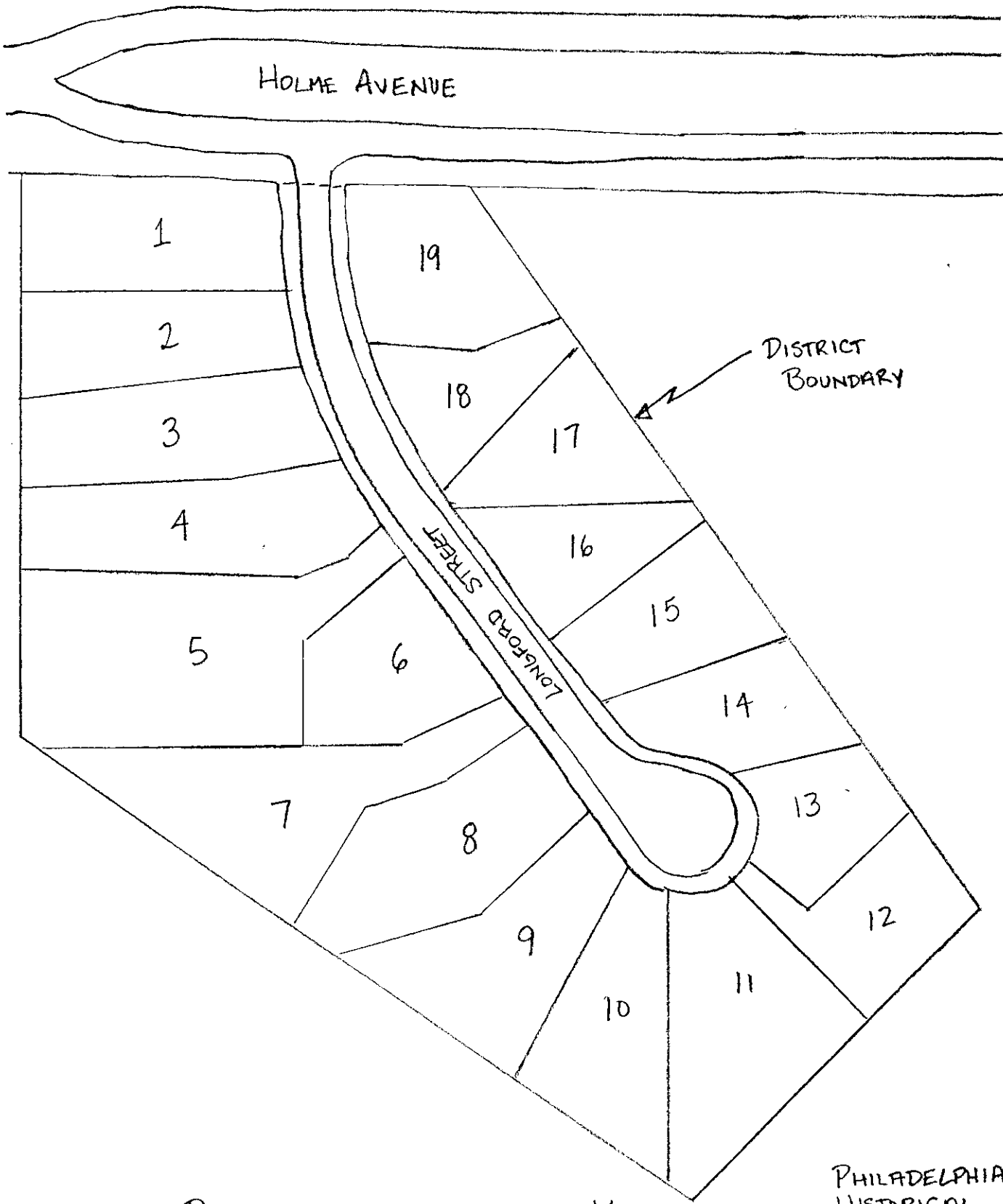
Classification: Contributing

**ADDENDUM TO INVENTORY FOR THE GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROPERTY ADDED TO THE GREENBELT KNOLL HISTORIC DISTRICT ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2006**

3064 Holme Avenue, Parcel #156N18-48
2-acre wooded area

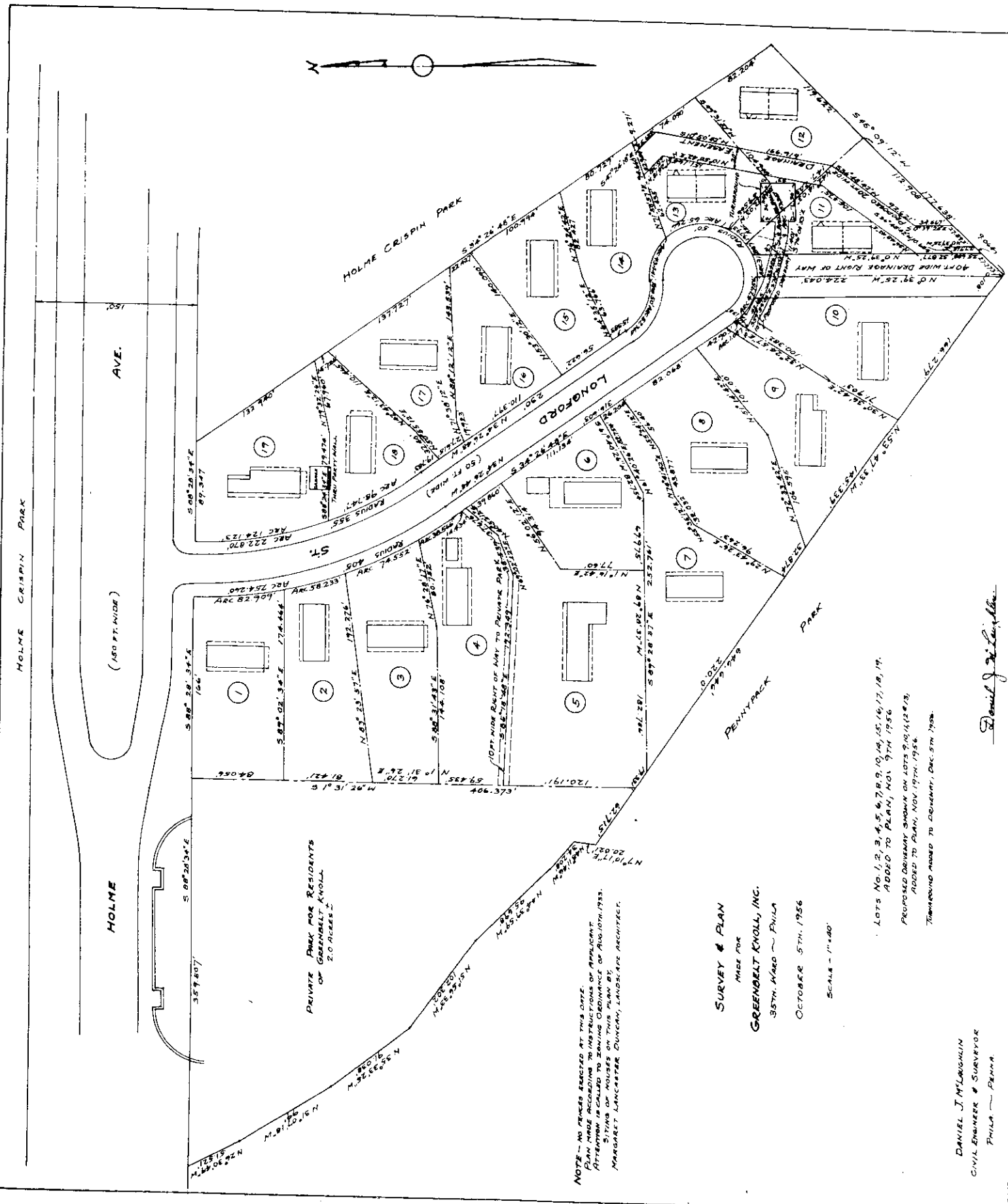
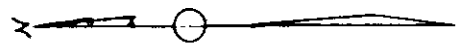
History: This wooded tract was part of the original Greenbelt Knoll development. The Greenbelt Knoll Park Association owned the property, which was used as a private communal recreation area by the residents of Greenbelt Knoll. In 1962, architect Harry Duncan, landscape architect Margaret Lancaster Duncan, and engineers of the John F. Thornton Co. constructed a swimming pool, wading pool, and changing facility under Building Permit #3541, 1962. In 1985, the residents transferred the property to the Fairmount Park Commission. The Commission demolished the structures and returned the land to its natural state. On the construction of the pool and other facilities, see Department of Licenses and Inspections, Longford Street, Greenbelt Knoll zoning file. On the transfer to the Commission, see the deed, FHS, book 298, page 34, recorded 12 November 1985.

Classification: Contributing



PROPOSED GREENBELT KNOLL
HISTORIC DISTRICT

PHILADELPHIA
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
22 MARCH 2006



NOTE - NO TREES EXIST AT THIS DATE.
 PLAN MADE ACCORDING TO ORDER OF RESIDENT.
 ATTENTION IS CALLED TO ZONING ORDINANCE OF AUGUST 1933.
 SITING OF HOUSES ON THIS PLAN BY
 MARGARET LANCASTER DUNCAN, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

SURVEY & PLAN
 MADE FOR
GREENBELT KNOLL, INC.
 35TH WARD - PHILA
 OCTOBER 5TH, 1956
 SCALE - 1"=40'

LOTS NO. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.
 ADDED TO PLAN, NOV. 9TH 1956
 PROPOSED DRIVEWAY SHOWN ON LOTS 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.
 ADDED TO PLAN, NOV. 17TH, 1956
 TURNING ADDED TO DRIVEWAY, DEC. 5TH 1956.

DANIEL J. McLAUGHLIN
 CIVIL ENGINEER & SURVEYOR
 PHILA - PENNA

Daniel J. McLaughlin