

**ADDRESS: 3201-45 MIDVALE AVE**

Name of Resource: McMichael Park

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia

Nominator: Beth Gross-Eskin, Friends of McMichael Park

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3201-45 Midvale Avenue, McMichael Park, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B and I.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed this nomination at its April 2019 meeting and recommended that the nomination failed to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I. At the May 2019 meeting of the Historical Commission, the nominator requested that the Commission remand the nomination to the Committee to provide her with an opportunity to participate in the review. The nominator had not attended the April Committee meeting. The Commission granted the request, sending the nomination back to the Committee.

Under Criterion B, the nomination argues that the property “Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation,” an encampment of the Continental Army in 1777. The nomination claims that “It is likely that this land once contained the Morgan House, which is said to have been the headquarters of the Marquis de Lafayette for two days in September 1777.” However, the nomination demonstrates neither that the Morgan House stood on the land that is now McMichael Park nor that Lafayette was billeted at the Morgan House. Both are conjectural.

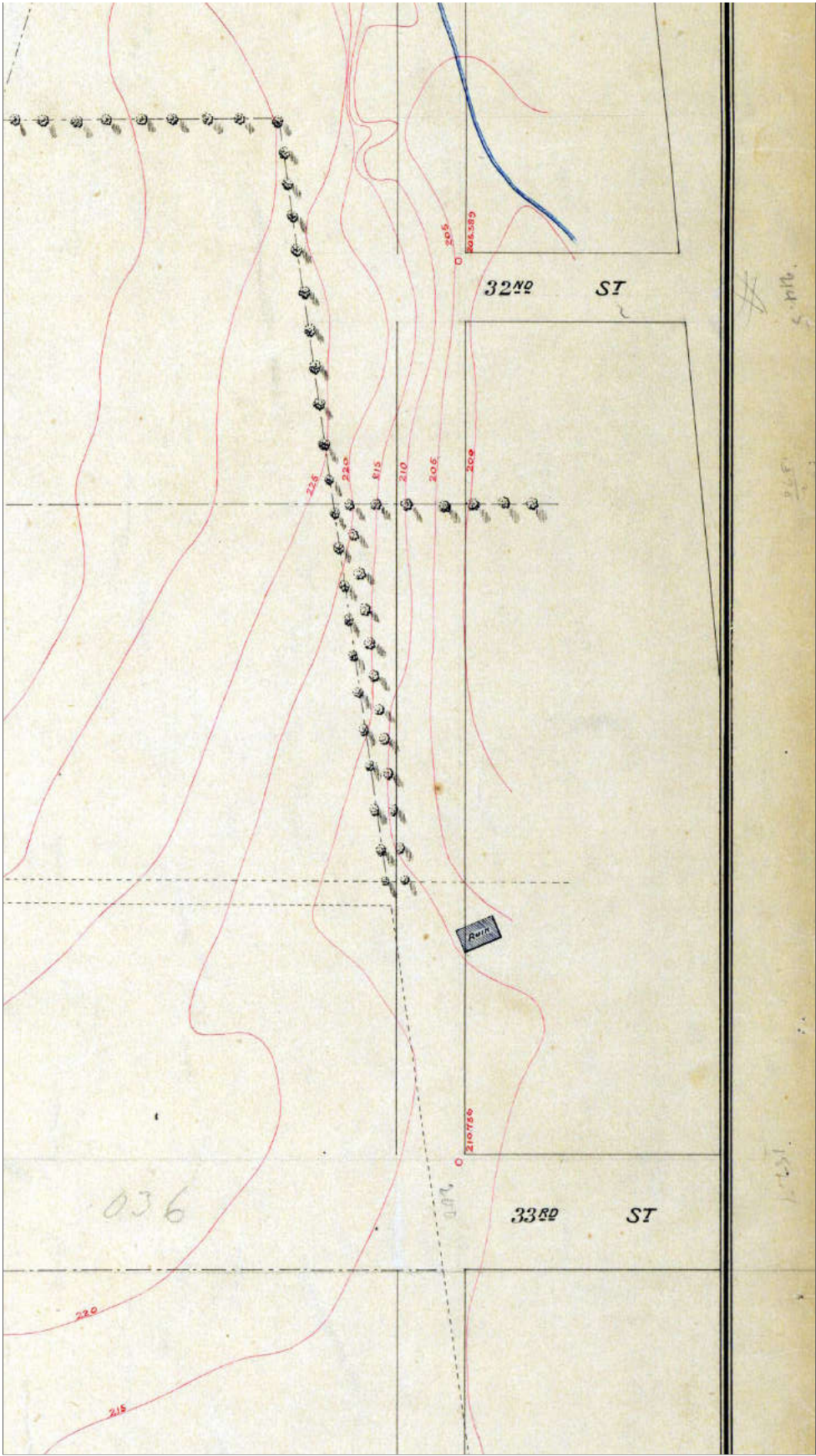
The nomination cites the Scull & Heap map of 1753 to pinpoint the location of the Morgan House, but the map is not nearly accurate enough to be used in that way. The nomination also identifies a building on the 1884 Hopkins Atlas as the Morgan House, but provides no basis for the identification. The nomination also provides an 1876 drawing of the house and an 1880s photograph of the house, but neither can be used to precisely locate the house. Moreover, the building identified in the nomination as the Morgan House on an 1884 map is described on a very detailed 1886 topographical survey by City surveyors laying out streets as “Ruin,” but the house in the photograph dated to the 1880s is clearly not in ruins. They are unlikely the same building. Finally, without access to the 1880s photograph, the information on the reverse of the photograph cannot be interrogated or verified. The staff has reviewed numerous documents including deeds, real estate advertisements, and newspaper articles and has been unable to identify the location of the Morgan House. Likewise, the nomination provides no evidence that Lafayette was billeted at the Morgan House and, in fact, concedes in Footnote 1 that “No firm evidence has been found which places the Marquis de Lafayette in the Morgan House.” The nomination’s claim that the property satisfies Criterion B because it “Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation” is untenable.

The nomination makes no direct argument for the satisfaction of Criterion I, that the site “Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.” The nomination implies that the site may yield archaeological artifacts related to Lafayette and the encampment in 1777. However, the nomination fails to demonstrate that Lafayette or any Revolution War figures occupied this plot of land or that, even if they had, artifacts would remain at the site.

Finally, the nomination seems to assert that, if McMichael Park is designated, no playground could be constructed at the site. In fact, the designation of this park would not necessarily preclude any potential future construction including the construction of a playground.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 3201-45 Midvale Avenue, McMichael Park, satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION, APRIL 2019:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination does not demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.



Topographical  
survey  
between  
Coulter St.  
and School  
Lane from  
Ridge Avenue  
to  
Wissahickon  
Avenue in the  
Twenty-  
eighth Ward  
Philadelphia.  
[Ordinance  
June 17,  
1886], 1886  
ca.

Plan

WORK TITLE:  
Topographical survey  
between Coulter St. and  
School Lane from Ridge  
Avenue to Wissahickon  
Avenue in the Twenty-  
eighth Ward Philadelphia.  
[Ordinance June 17,  
1886], 1886 ca.

CREATOR:  
Datesman, George E.

DATE:  
1886 ca.

PHYSICAL FORMAT:  
20 x 80 in.

IMAGE NOTE  
The colors in this image  
may have been adjusted  
to enhance legibility, and  
may not accurately reflect  
the original item.

MAP FEATURES  
Topography, with many  
details: planted trees and  
woodland, building  
footprints (with one  
marked 'in ruins'),  
streams, springs, ponds,  
marshland

MEDIA  
Mounted

SOURCE:  
[Philadelphia Streets  
Department, Survey and  
Designs Bureau](#)

IMAGE FILE(S):

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**17 APRIL 2019, 9:30 A.M.  
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029  
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	x		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	x		
Janet Klein		x	
Bruce Lavery		x	
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	x		
Douglas Mooney	x		

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner I  
Leonard Reuter, Law Department

The following persons were present:

Cathy and Jack Johnson  
Julia Gowe  
Jennifer Loustau  
Lee Berman  
Lucia Ester, WP/SP RCO  
Chuck Bode, WP/SP RCO  
Michael Nevadomski  
Lauren Kane  
John Gonzales  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance  
Steven Ford, Sharktown  
Katie VanVlier, Sharktown  
David Farlane, Sharktown  
Michael Fekete, Esq., Montgomery McCracken  
Tim Cooper, City Council  
Brendan O'Mara, Tacony Club  
David Traub, Save Our Sites  
Steven Peitzman, Drexel  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance

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Finally, the nomination seems to assert that, if McMichael Park is designated, no playground could be constructed at the site. In fact, the designation of this park would not preclude any potential future construction including the construction of a playground, provided that the playground satisfied the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 3201-45 Midvale Avenue, McMichael Park, satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 02:17:28**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**

- The Committee discussed the nomination with the staff. Mr. Cohen stated that he agrees with the staff's recommendation. Ms. Cooperman concurred and noted that Mr. Mooney, the archaeologist on the Committee, who excused himself from the meeting earlier, had apprised her that he agrees with the staff as well. Ms. Milroy contended that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the site Satisfies Criteria for Designation B and I but observed that the famous Kelly family lived adjacent to the park.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The exact location of the Morgan House is unknown. It may or may not have stood on the land now comprising McMichael Park. The nomination speculates on its location but does not provide any compelling evidence that the house stood at the site in question.
- The nomination speculates that Lafayette and other Revolutionary War figures occupied the site in question but does not provide any compelling evidence that they did in fact occupy the site.
- The nomination provides no information explicitly supporting the claim that the site "has yielded or may be likely to yield" archaeological artifacts.
- The nomination provides no information about grading or excavation at the site that would demonstrate that subsurface artifacts could have survived there.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination does not demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination does not demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

<b>ITEM: 3201-45 Midvale Ave, McMichael Park</b>					
<b>MOTION: Recommend that the site does not satisfy Criteria B or I</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cooperman</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	x				
Jeff Cohen	x				
Janet Klein					x
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney					x
Total	3				3

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the audio recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.

### **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (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 professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: Midvale & Henry Avenues

Postal code: 19129

Councilmanic District: 4

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Midvale Park

Common Name: McMichael Park

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

☐ Building

☐ Structure

☒ Site

☐ Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☒ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Park

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

See attached.

**6. DESCRIPTION**

See attached.

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1777 to 1778

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: ca. 1900, 1934, 1949, 1965

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: \_\_\_\_\_

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Civil Works Administration

Original owner: Benjamin Morgan

Other significant persons: Marquis de Lafayette



**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (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; or,
- ☒ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (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; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (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; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☒ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See attached.

**9. NOMINATOR**

Name with Title Beth Gross-Eskin, Member Email [Bdh3@verizon.net](mailto:Bdh3@verizon.net)  
Organization The Friends of McMichael Park Date 12/31/18  
Street Address 2101 Market St, Apt 4002 Telephone 215-842-3412  
City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: January 3, 2019  
☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: March 15, 2019  
Date of Notice Issuance: March 15, 2019  
Property Owner at Time of Notice  
Name: Department of Public Property, City of Philadelphia  
Address: City Hall, Room 790  
1400 John F. Kennedy Blvd.  
City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19107  
Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

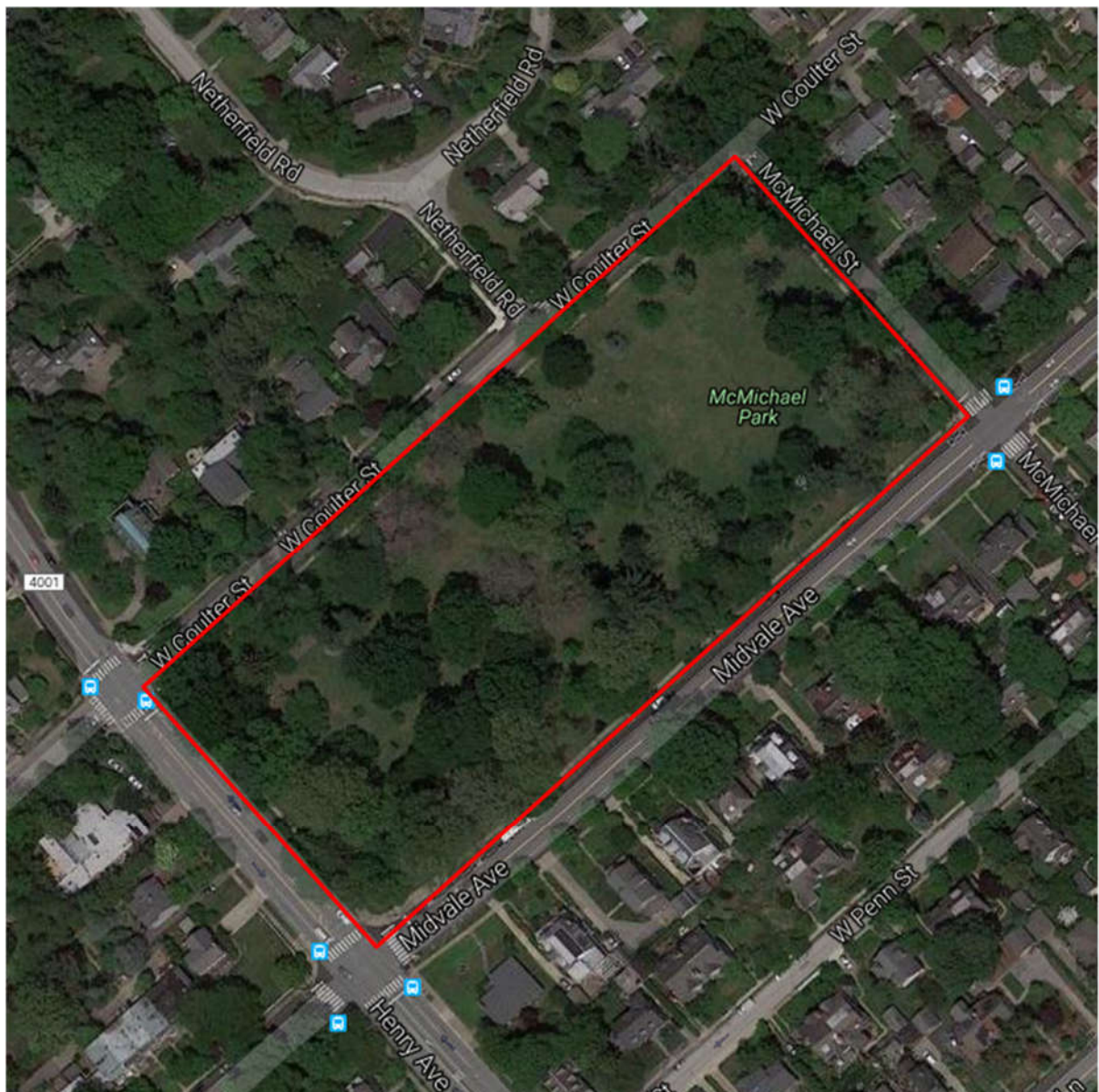
## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 5A. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From a point at the curb line of the north corner of the intersection of Midvale Avenue and Henry Avenue northeast along the northwest curb line of Midvale Avenue approximately 750 feet to the western corner of the intersection of that avenue with McMichael Street, then northwest along the southwest curb line of McMichael Street approximately 325 feet to the south corner of the intersection of McMichael Street and W Coulter Street, then southwest along the southeast curb line of W Coulter Street approximately 750 feet to the east corner of the intersection of W Coulter Street with Henry Avenue, then southeast along the northeast curb line of Henry Avenue to the place of the beginning. Containing approximately 5.1 acres.

#### 5B. BOUNDARY MAP



# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

McMichael Park, located in the East Falls Neighborhood of Philadelphia, is an approximately 5.1 acre park bounded on the southwest by Henry Avenue, on the southeast by Midvale Avenue, on the northeast by McMichael Street, and on the northwest by W. Coulter Street. The park is planted with a variety of species of trees, the greatest number of which are London Planes. A concrete sidewalk circles the park, and a ring of trees are planted around the perimeter of the park between the sidewalk and the streets. Most of the trees are mature, but it appears as though some trees have been replaced as a few younger trees have been planted around the perimeter (Photographs 3 and 9). In places, particularly along W. Coulter Street, remnants of a Belgian block curb are visible, but in many places this historic curb has been removed or buried (Photograph 16). A row of six concrete posts stand along Midvale Avenue, but their purpose is unclear (Photograph 7).

Trees are planted throughout the interior of the park, in an undistinguishable pattern, and the southern half of the park is more thickly planted than the northern half. The southern half (Photograph 17) of the park has a more varied topography than the northern half (Photograph 18). The west corner of the park contains the highest area of the park (Photograph 2) and the ground slopes downwards from this low hill to the east and to the north (Photograph 3). Approximately midway through the park the ground flattens out, and the northern portion of the park appears to be fairly evenly graded.

Two types of benches are placed throughout the park, and like the trees, are placed in a seemingly random pattern. The first type has concrete ends with wood plank seats and backs, while the second type is comprised of metal supports with wood plank seats and backs. Small planters appear at the four corners of the parks. The planter at each the south and west corner of the park are built of stone and contain flowering plants and wooden signs which welcome visitors to McMichael Park (Photographs 1 and 5), and the planters at the north and east corners of the park are built of plastic garden edging and contain low flowering plants (Photographs 11 and 13).

The park contains a small number of built objects, the largest of which is a stone and concrete Veterans Memorial built at the western corner of the park (Photograph 20). A stone and concrete water fountain is located along Henry Avenue between the midpoint of the park and the south corner (Photograph 4). The only formal play equipment exists in the form of a concrete turtle surrounded by asphalt and bordered by a low stone wall (Photograph 8). The community has erected a number of plaques throughout the park, including a sign to Morton McMichael erected by the Friends of McMichael Park placed along Midvale Avenue near the east corner of the park (Photograph 11), a stone and plaque demarking 'The Anniversary Tree' which honors the Friends of McMichael Park and the East Fall Tree Tenders (Photograph 19), and a stone and plaque commemorating the first Philadelphia Mayor from East Falls Edward G. Rendell erected by the East Falls Tree Tenders (Photograph 17). The park also contains a few metal waste baskets on concrete platforms, a couple of 'Dog Depot' stations, a couple of electric poles, and a power box (Photograph 15).

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The earliest known history of the land now occupied by McMichael Park dates to the Colonial Era when this area played a role in the American Revolution. It is likely that this land once contained the Morgan House, which is said to have been the headquarters of the Marquis de Lafayette for two days in September 1777.

In July 1777 Colonel Timothy Pickering moved the main branch of the Continental Army (some 11,000 men) from a camp near New Hope, Pennsylvania to a site at the top of a plateau near the Falls of the Schuylkill, now the site of the Queen Lane Reservoir. The men camped in the area (likely including the land that is now the park) and nearby estates were chosen to house the commanding officers, including the Henry Hill House, the Dr. William Smith House, the Williams Estate, and the Morgan House (Figure 1).

The army was encamped at the Falls from August 1-9, 1777 awaiting the advancement of the British on Philadelphia, but when that failed to manifest, it was decided to move the army back towards New York City. Two days into their march north, the army gained word that the British had landed in the Chesapeake Bay, and so the Continental Army was marched south and eventually headed off the British at the Battle of the Brandywine. After the Continental Army's defeat the men were scattered, and Lafayette and Pickering returned to the Falls encampment in an attempt to allow soldiers to regroup. The army remained at the Falls encampment for two days (September 12-14, 1777), during which time it is believed that the Marquis de Lafayette, who was injured at the Brandywine, was headquartered at the Morgan House.<sup>1</sup>

Little is known about the Morgan House. It first appears on a map of the area from 1753 (Figure 2). The Philadelphia Library collection contains a copy of an 1876 drawing of the house entitled "Tranquility," and an accompanying label explains that the house was originally the residence of the Morgan family (Figure 3). It is unclear if "Tranquility" is the name of the house or simply the title of the drawing. A *circa*-1885 photograph of the house contains a written inscription: "Located at Midvale Ave and Henry Ave – Date 1880s" (Figure 4). By overlaying the 1753 map, the 1884 map, and a current street map, it appears that the Morgan House was likely located on what is now McMichael Park, and likely fronted on Henry Avenue (Figure 5). A stone structure, which may be the house, is depicted at the site on a map from 1895, but this building was removed ca. 1900 (Figure 6).

McMichael Park was formed by ordinance of June 12, 1928, which appropriated the 5.089 acres of land bordered by Midvale Avenue, Henry Street, McMichael Street, and Coulter

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<sup>1</sup>No firm evidence has been found which places the Marquis de Lafayette in the Morgan House. Lafayette composed a letter on September 12, 1777 to his wife in France. None of the translations or transcriptions of the letter mention the Morgan House directly, and it is unknown if the original does either. No reference to the Morgan House was located in Washington's, Pickering's, or Knox's journals or correspondence, and all three men wrote from the camp. The only reference to the Morgan House and its relationship to the Marquis de Lafayette is from an article written by Margaret Spino, "It was in a house owned by Benjamin Morgan near what is now Henry Ave. and Coulter Streets, that General Lafayette had his headquarters when the Continental soldiers were encamped on the Queen Lane site." See: Margaret Spino "Falls Patriots Fought in Every Major War," *East Falls: Three Hundred Years of History*, Lois Childs, ed. (Philadelphia: Lithographic Publications, Inc., 1976), 53-56.



Street for “park purposes.”<sup>2</sup> The property was appropriated from two owners, and \$94,850 in damages were paid to the developer John H. McClatchy, and \$148,500 to Samuel Osterneck.<sup>3</sup> On June 29, 1929, the yet unnamed park at Midvale and Henry Avenues was placed under the care and management of the Fairmount Park Commission (FPC).<sup>4</sup> The park first appears in the annual reports of the chief engineer of the Fairmount Park Commission in 1929 when he wrote that “a small tract of land bounded by Midvale avenue, Henry avenue, Coulter and McMichael streets was placed in our care. It is yet unnamed as a park. We have cut the weeds, but have done no other work upon it.”

The park was not mentioned again in the Fairmount Park Commission annual reports until 1934, suggesting that little work was completed at the park until funding was made available through federal relief programs. From December 6, 1933 to April 30, 1934 the Civil Works Administration (CWA) employed approximately 4,100 men to improve the FPC properties. During this period 38 projects were approved and work was carried out until the appropriations were exhausted in August 1934.<sup>5</sup> The annual report from that year listed the park as Midvale Park, a name that remained with the park until 1940, and the Chief Engineer, Alan Corson, described the work completed:

“Through the Civil Works Administration this five acre park has been cleared of all brush, old trees and stumps and has been graded, seeded and in general made available for the use of the public as a neighborhood park. A new concrete footwalk about 5’ wide, 2,000’ long has been constructed around this park in addition to the planting of 38 new trees between the walks and curb.”<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Baxter, head of the Landscape Gardener’s office added, “87 trees, 952 shrubs and 43 evergreens were set out here by men on L.W.D. project No. 1025 in accordance with the plan.”<sup>7</sup> Aside from the annual assets list, the park only appears in the annual reports once in the following decade, in 1936 when it was the recipient of necessary maintenance.<sup>8</sup>

The annual report from 1941 is the first time that the park is referred to as McMichael Park. There may not have been a formal dedication of the park, as mention of the dedication does not appear in the city ordinances, the FPC annual reports, or in the FPC board minutes. Common belief is that the park was named for Morton McMichael, former Mayor of Philadelphia and President of the FPC who died in 1879. (McMichael Street, which forms the northeastern boundary of the park was, in fact, named for Morton McMichael in 1889.) However, it seems more likely that the park was named after C. Emory McMichael, a long-time member and former president of the FPC who died in 1940, the winter before the park is first referred to as McMichael Park.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia from January 1 to December 31, 1928 and Opinions of the City Solicitor.* (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Co., 1929), 327.

<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Brown, “History of McMichael Park” *Town News Today*. June 19, 2016 (Available online: [https://townnewstoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/McMichaelPark\\_CulturalLandscape.pdf](https://townnewstoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/McMichaelPark_CulturalLandscape.pdf)), 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia from January 1 to December 31, 1929 and Opinions of the City Solicitor.* (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Co., 1930), 267.

<sup>5</sup> After the CWA ended at the end of April 1934, the city’s Local Works Division employed many of the same men to complete the projects that were started in the Fairmount Park system, LWD work commenced on May 6, 1934 and continued until August 20, 1934.

<sup>6</sup> *Annual Report of the Chief Engineer for 1934 to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park.* (Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Commission, 1935), 38.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Annual Report of the Chief Engineer for 1936 to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park.* (Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Commission, 1937), 31.

<sup>9</sup> The board minutes of the Fairmount Park Association from 1929-1945 do not contain any discussion surrounding the naming of McMichael Park, nor is there any formal designation of the park from this period in either the FPC minutes or the

In 1945<sup>10,11</sup>, 1963<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>, 1990, 2006<sup>16</sup>, and 2016, there were attempts to build a playground on the grounds of McMichael Park. However, there has continued to be a conditioned precedent that McMichael Park remain an open, green space and that a playground not be built on the grounds of the park.

On November 15, 1945, the East Falls War Memorial Association (EFWMA) was organized with the intention of erecting a memorial to military veterans of the community. In 1949 the EFWMA admitted that its main objective initially was to build a recreation center at McMichael Park, but the city stepped in and purchased Dobson Field for that purpose. Instead, the EFWMA erected a veterans memorial in McMichael Park, consisting of three stone steps leading to a stone platform 35 feet wide by 18 feet deep and a podium, which was dedicated on April 30, 1949.<sup>17</sup>

In 1965, a few new trees were planted and dead trees were removed. Additionally, installation of a concrete play turtle and sandbox, a new drinking fountain, new lighting, and the rehabilitation of the area around the veterans monument were all completed.<sup>18</sup>

In 1990, the Friends of McMichael Park group was formed to rehabilitate the park which had fallen into neglect during the latter decades of the twentieth century, and in 1995 the park was once again placed under the jurisdiction of the FPC.<sup>19</sup>

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city ordinances. A memorial written about C. Emory McMichael appears in: *Annual Report of the Chief Engineer for 1940 to the Commissioners of Fairmount Park*. (Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Commission, 1941), 1.

<sup>10</sup> "Petitions Presented in Playground Fight," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Friday, March 15, 1946, pg. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia from January 1 to December 31, 1946 and Opinions of the City Solicitor*. (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Co., 1947), 560.

<sup>12</sup> "Crawford Wins Support for Park Changes," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, November 12, 1964, pg. 19.

<sup>13</sup> "Voters Hold Key to Recreation Improvements," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday, October 20, 1963, pg. 54

<sup>14</sup> "\$4 Million Set for Northwest Projects," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday, January 26, 1964, pg. 21.

<sup>15</sup> "East Falls Council Splits on Equipping of McMichael Park," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, July 16, 1964, pg. 23.

<sup>16</sup> "Playground Plan Drawing Ire," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Monday, September 18, 2006, pg. B01.

<sup>17</sup> "Scope of Action Widened By East Falls Unit to Provide Sports Program for Youth," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, October 20, 1949, pg. 29.

<sup>18</sup> "Play Sites to Be Renovated," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Thursday, April 29, 1965, pg. 20.

<sup>19</sup> William E. Mifflin to Michael DiBerardinis, February 17, 1995.

### Timeline Of Lafayette's Movements In Summer/Fall 1777<sup>20,21</sup>

July 28: Lafayette presents himself to members of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia

July 31: Lafayette meets Washington at the City Tavern, 2nd above Walnut Street

Aug. 1-8: First Falls Encampment

Aug. 1: Washington and Lafayette examined the defenses on the Delaware River and spent the night in Chester

Aug. 2: Washington and Lafayette return to Philadelphia and remain there until Aug. 4th when they joined the army at the Falls encampment. Washington's headquarters were at the farmhouse of Henry Hill until Aug. 10th when Washington joined the army already on its march northward.

Aug. 8: Lafayette present at the troop review of the army by Washington at the Falls encampment

Aug. 8: Army departs encampment and moves to Neshaminy Creek near Hartsville, Bucks County

Aug. 9-18: Lafayette remains in Philadelphia

Aug. 19-22: Lafayette at camp with the army on Neshaminy Creek

Aug. 23: On march from Neshaminy back to Philadelphia, Lafayette spends the night at Stenton house in Germantown, then owned by James Logan's grandson George Logan.

Aug. 24-Sept. 9: Lafayette in and around Wilmington, Delaware

Sept. 10: Lafayette camped near Chadd's Ford

Sept. 11: Battle of Brandywine where Lafayette is wounded in the leg

Sept. 12-14: Second Falls Encampment

Sept. 12: Lafayette back in Philadelphia following The Battle of Brandywine

Sept. 13-17: Lafayette carried on a litter to the Indian Queen Hotel at 4th and Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

Sept. 18-19: Lafayette at Bristol, Bucks County. Transported there by boat up the Delaware.

Sept. 20: Lafayette on the way to Bethlehem, PA.

Sept. 21 - Oct. 18: Lafayette in Bethlehem being cared for by the Moravian community.

Oct. 18: The healing of his wound enabled Lafayette to leave Bethlehem and rejoin Washington at Methacton Hill in Montgomery County, PA.

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<sup>20</sup> Nolan, J. Bennett. *Lafayette in America: Day By Day*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934.

<sup>21</sup> Baker, William. *The Camp by Schuylkill Falls*. The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 28-41, Apr. 1892.

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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William E. Mifflin to Michael DiBerardinis, February 17, 1995.



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#### 10. FIGURES

Figure 1:



This image shows a detail of J.M. Duffin's interactive map located at the University of Pennsylvania Archives website "Mapping West Philadelphia: Landowners in October 1777". The area chosen shows the proximity of the East Falls encampment of 1777. Orange stars represent sites important during that period, while red stars depict current landmarks. The rectangle outlines the current boundaries of McMichael Park. The Hill House, the Williams Estate, the Smith House, and likely the Morgan House were used as headquarters for commanding officers during the period of encampment. The Queen Lane Reservoir is now located atop the plateau where the encampment of approximately 11,000 men was located. In 1895 the Sons of the American Revolution erected a marker commemorating the encampment at the corner of Fox Street and Queen Lane. The earliest depiction of the Morgan House appears on the 1753 Scull & Heap map (Figure 2), but the house is located on an approximately 88 acre parcel of land purchased by Joseph Warner in 1771. The 1777 version of Scull & Heap's map also labels the Morgan House in this location. It is unclear if Morgan ever owned the property, or how the house came to be attributed to him.

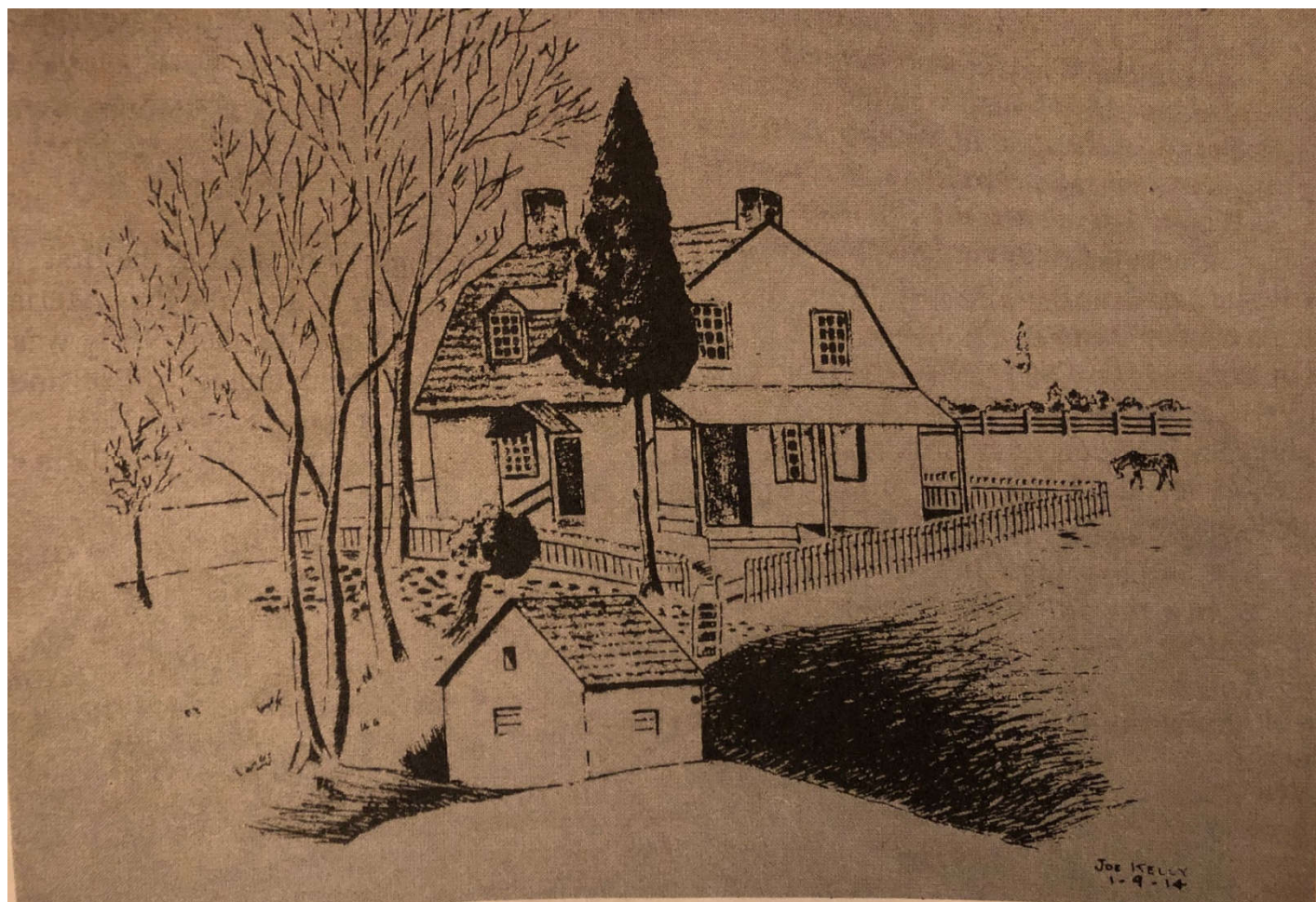
### Figure 2:



Detail from N. Scull & G. Heap's "A Map of Philadelphia and Parts Adjacent" from 1753 is the earliest found depiction of the Morgan House. The 1777 version of this map depicts these same houses with the same attributions.



Figure 3:



1876 drawing of the Morgan House entitled "Tranquility" from Philadelphia Library's photo collection. Accompanying the photo is the following inscription: "'Tranquility,' originally the residence of the Morgan family. This which was very old was torn down a few years ago. It was located at a position which corresponds with what is now about the northeast corner of 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Midvale Avenue. This sketch was made by a young lady who lived in the house." (Of note, 33<sup>rd</sup> St is what is currently Henry Avenue)

Figure 4:

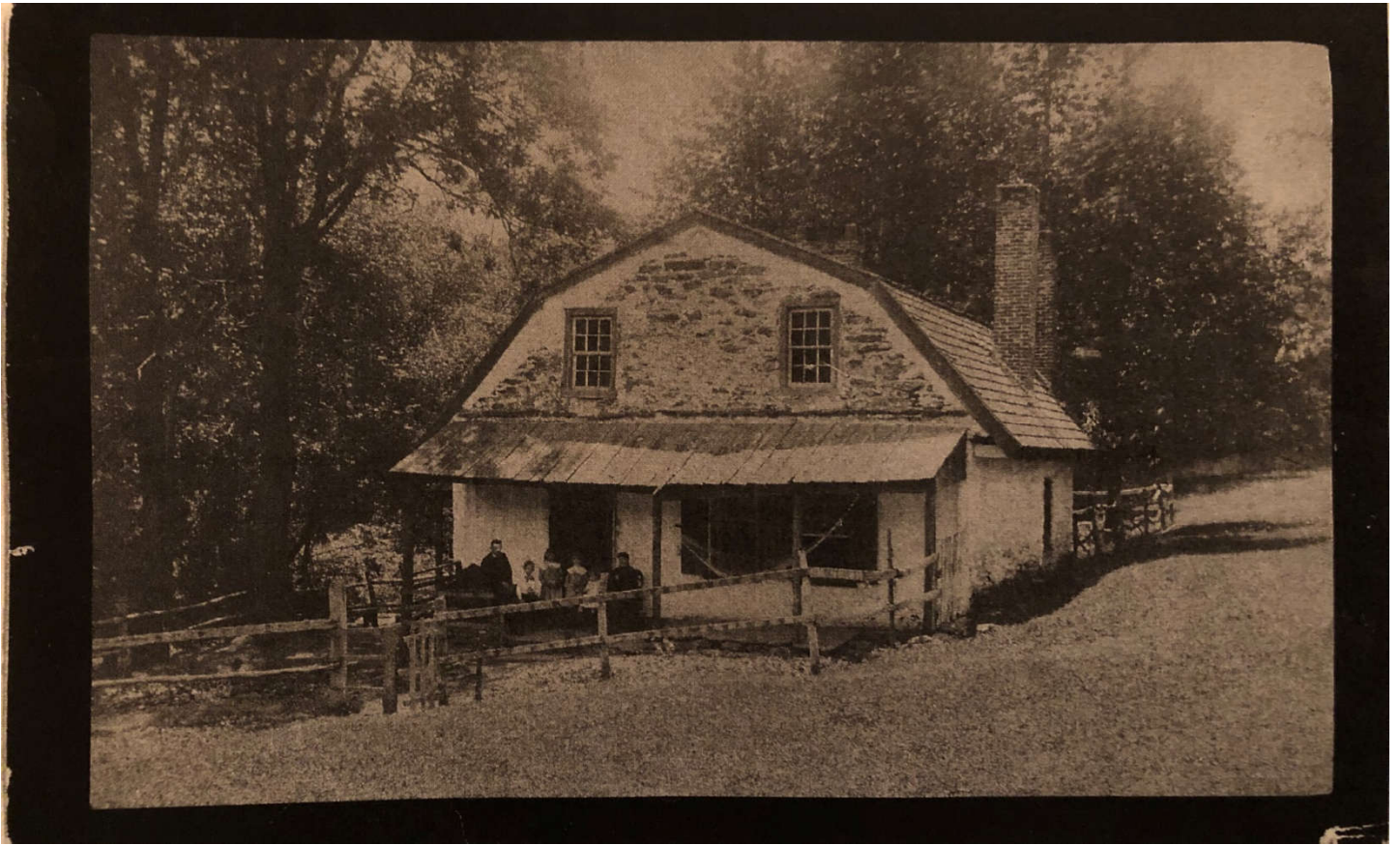
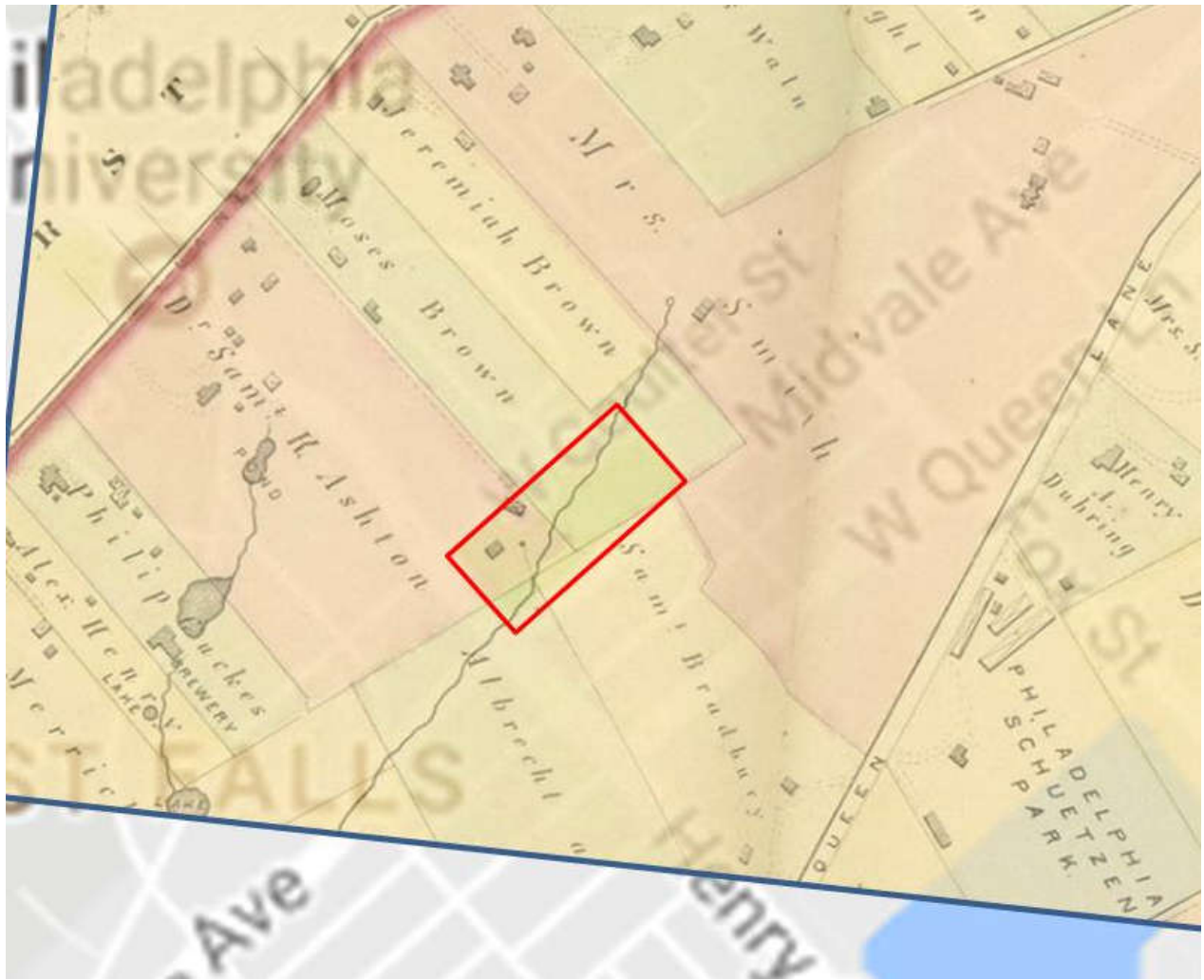


Image of Morgan House from McClenahan Family effects. Handwritten on the back of the photo reads "Located at Midvale Ave and Henry Ave – Date 1880's"



Figure 5:



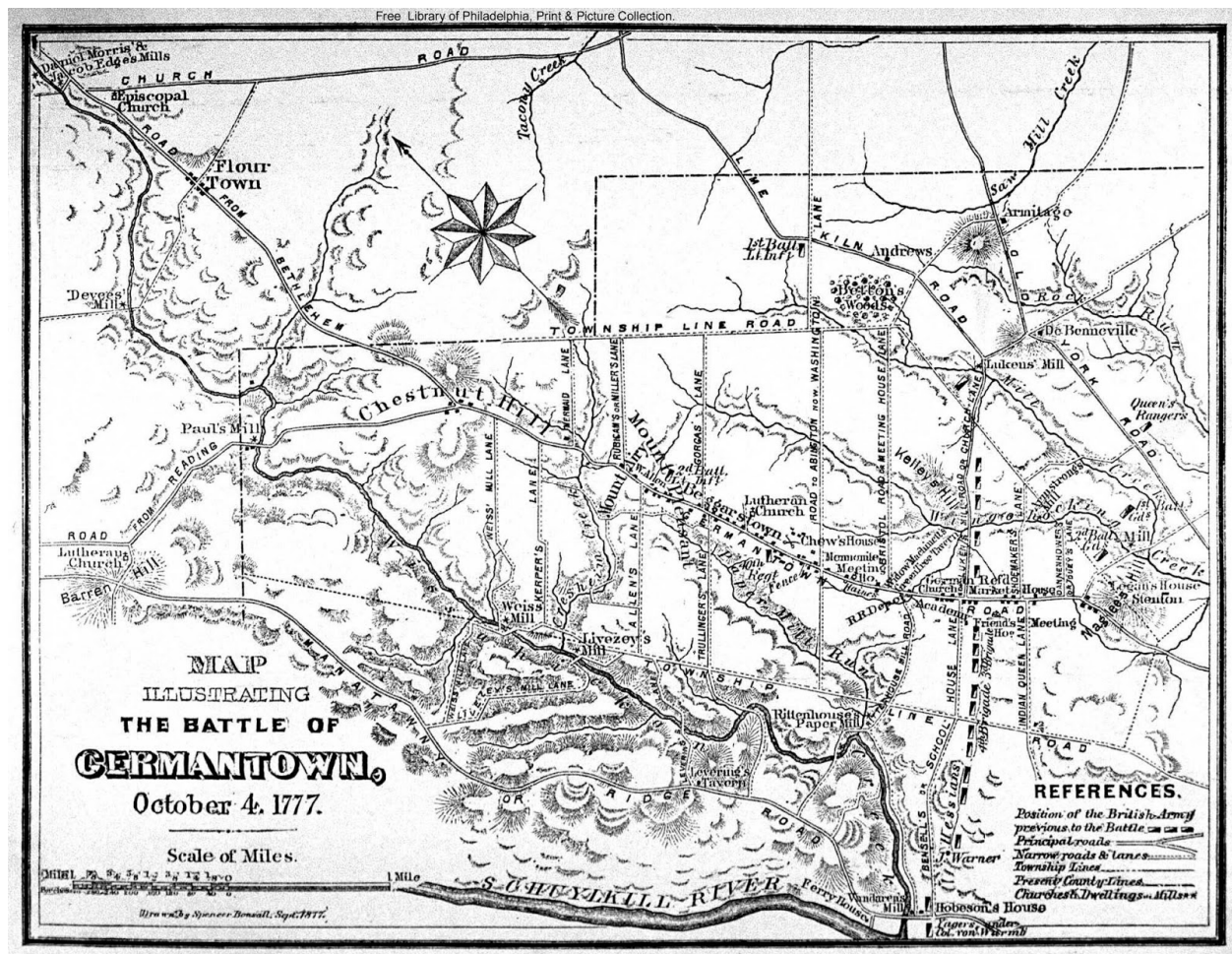
This figure shows a detail from the 1884 Hopkins Atlas of the City of Philadelphia County, 21st & 28th Wards overlaid on a current street map. The boundaries of McMichael Park are in red. Two buildings appear on what is now the park property, a stone building and a frame building to the north. It is likely that the stone structure is the Morgan House, which as evidenced by photographs is still standing in the 1880s. In 1884 the Morgan House was located at the back of the Dr. Samuel K. Ashton Property, accessible by an unimproved road from School House Lane at the northeastern edge of the property.

**Figure 6:**



A stone structure is still present on the future McMichael Park property on the 1895 Bromley Map. For reference, the former Ashton Estate has been divided into four parcels, three of which are owned by William G. Warden, and the fourth owned by John F. Orne. The structure is shaded as a stone structure, but the positioning of the building is the same as the frame structure depicted on the 1884 Hopkins Map.

Figure 7:



1877 Spencer Bonsall map which shows the mill on the upstream side of Ridge during the 1777 Battle of Germantown. This is where the Hessian Jaegers fought with the Pennsylvania Militia. Marquis DeLafayette was in charge of the Third Brigade, which shows location on this map.

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### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 11A. PHOTOLOG

Photographer Name: Travis Olson

Photography Date: June 6, 2017

Location Electronic Images Stored: Fairmount Park Archives, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1515 Arch Street

Photo #	Photo Subject/Direction	Camera Direction
1	View of west corner planter and sign from park sidewalk at the eastern corner of the intersection of Henry Avenue and W. Coulter Street, facing east. Note the bench which has metal supports with wood plank seats and backs, and the topography of the landscape which descends in all directions from the highest corner of the park.	E
2	View of west corner of McMichael Park from western corner of the intersection of Henry Avenue and W. Coulter Street, facing east.	E
3	View of southwest edge of McMichael Park, facing northwest. Note the young trees between the sidewalk and Henry Avenue.	NW
4	View of <i>circa</i> -1965 stone and concrete water fountain, facing north.	N
5	View of south corner planter and sign from park sidewalk at the northern corner of the intersection of Henry and Midvale Avenues, facing north. Note again the topography of the land, which descends from the western corner to Midvale Avenue.	N
6	View of the south corner of McMichael Park from the southern corner of the intersection of Henry and Midvale Avenues, facing north.	N
7	View of the southwest edge of McMichael Park, facing northeast. Note the concrete posts along Midvale Avenue.	NE
8	View of the <i>circa</i> -1965 formal play equipment, facing north.	N
9	View of the southwest edge of McMichael Park, facing northeast. Note the variety of species of trees.	NE
10	View of the southwest side of McMichael Park, facing northwest.	NW
11	View of the east corner of McMichael Park from the east side of the intersection of Midvale Avenue and McMichael Street, facing west. Note the planter nestled among the small trees in the foreground of the picture, and the green plaque erected by the Friends of McMichael Park in honor of Morton McMichael.	W
12	View of the northeast end of McMichael Park, facing southwest. Note the two types of benches present throughout the park, the concrete type (at left) and the metal type (center).	SW



13	View of the north corner of McMichael Park from the north corner of the intersection of McMichael and W. Coulter Streets, facing south.	S
14	View of the northwest edge of McMichael Park, facing southwest. Note the metal trash bin and on concrete platform (at left) and the adjacent 'Dog Depot' just visible at the left edge of the tree.	SW
15	View of the northwest side of McMichael Park from the intersection of Netherfield Road and W. Coulter Street, facing southeast.	SE
16	View of some of the remaining Belgian block curb along W. Coulter Street, facing southwest.	SW
17	View of the southern half of McMichael Park from the park's center, facing southwest. Note the subtle rise in the topography towards the west corner of the park (right, background). The memorial to Mayor Edward G. Rendell (installed 1999) is located at the base of the tree located at the center of this photograph.	SW
18	View of the northern half of the park from the park's center, facing northeast. Note the flat topography.	NE
19	View of the anniversary tree (planted and dedicated 2010), facing southeast.	SE
20	View of the southeast elevation of the <i>circa</i> -1949 Veterans Memorial, facing northwest. Note the landscaping surrounding the stone and concrete memorial.	NW

11B: PHOTOKEY



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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: LETTERS OF SUPPORT**



**To: The Friends of McMichael Park; Alexis Franklin, President**  
**From: The Roxborough, Manayunk, Wissahickon Historical Society**  
**Re: Nomination of McMichael Park as an historical site**

The Mission of the RMW Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and document the history, art, and culture of this area of Philadelphia.

McMichael Park has met the initial criteria for historic preservation and the RMW Historic society supports further research, documentation, and ongoing preservation of this Park.

Thank you for your work for the community and for future generations.

Lyn Triborn  
RMW Historic Society President

Laura Di Pasquale Zupan  
Historic Preservation Planner II  
Philadelphia Historic Commission

Dear Ms. Zupan,

The East Falls Historical Society is in support of the historic designation of McMichael Park, located at Henry Avenue between Coulter Street and Midvale Avenue in the East Falls section of Philadelphia. With the establishment of the Fairmount Park Commission, our river banks in East Falls were preserved for access to the river for recreation use; fishing, skating, jogging and boating. We are especially grateful to have an oasis in the center of our community, McMichael Park, named for Morton McMichael, whose dedication to the park service as Fairmount Park Commissioner established East Falls as a community providing green space along two of the most heavily trafficked routes in our community, Henry Avenue and Midvale Avenues.

This park has been meticulously maintained for almost thirty years by membership of the Friends of McMichael Park. The continued support by our community attest to the value residents place on the importance of the park. It provides physical, emotional, social and financial enhancement for its residents. Overdevelopment in East Falls and its surrounding communities makes the need for elevation of our parks to historic designation more and more apparent.

Midvale Avenue is situated over what was Mifflin Run, an underground stream. The East Falls Development Corporation has long been concerned about the water run off on Midvale Avenue. They have a plan to add green space along Midvale Avenue to contain the water during rain storms. The green space provided by McMichael Park is an important component to enhance this initiative. Please feel free to contact us for our presence at any hearings or meetings of the commission in regard to this matter of historic designation of McMichael Park. We will be happy to attend any meetings and to supply any additional information you deem necessary.

Sincerely,

Patty Cheek and Ellen Sheehan  
Co-Presidents, East Falls Historical Society



The Friends of McMichael Park  
Alexis Franklin, President

RE: McMichael Park Historical Preservation

The Independence Hall Chapter NSDAR has been committed to the preservation of local historical sites since 1899.

McMichael Park is more than worthy of receiving Historical Site designation. We support the continuing efforts toward this goal.

These sites must be preserved not only for today but for our future generations.

Thank you for your efforts, they are very much appreciated.

Antoinette "Toni" Levitt, Regent  
Independence Hall Chapter NSDAR  
Chartered 1899

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**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE CONTACTS**

Diane Windham Shaw  
Director of Special Collections & College Archives  
Skillman Library  
Lafayette College  
710 Sullivan Road  
Easton, PA 18042  
(610) 330-5401  
[shawd@lafayette.edu](mailto:shawd@lafayette.edu)

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania  
1300 Locust Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 732-6200

Germantown Historical Society  
5501 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144-2225  
(215) 844-1683  
[library@germantownhistory.org](mailto:library@germantownhistory.org)

Paul Steinke  
Executive Director  
The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
1608 Walnut Street, Suite 1702  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
(215) 546-1146

David W. Young, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Cliveden of the National Trust  
6401 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 848-1777 ext. 222  
(215) 438-2892  
[dyoung@cliveden.org](mailto:dyoung@cliveden.org)

Andy Sullivan  
Membership Committee  
Pennsylvania Sons of the American Revolution  
121 South Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 545-1888