

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

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

Street address: 3000 West School House Lane

Postal code: 19129

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Stone Gothic Cottage on Cherry Lane

Current/Common Name: _____

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: Penn Charter School faculty residence

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1848 to 1850

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: estimated 1848 to 1850

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: unknown

Original owner: surmised to be James C. Kempton

Other significant persons: S. Morris Waln

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

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization East Falls Historical Society Date 6/22/2020

Name with Title Nancy Pontone Email npontone@gmail.com

Street Address 3428 Midvale Ave Telephone 215-843-9244

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19129

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 28 June 2020

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 2 November 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 2 November 2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: The Overseers of Penn Charter School

Address: School House Lane and Oak Road

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19129

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 12/3/2020

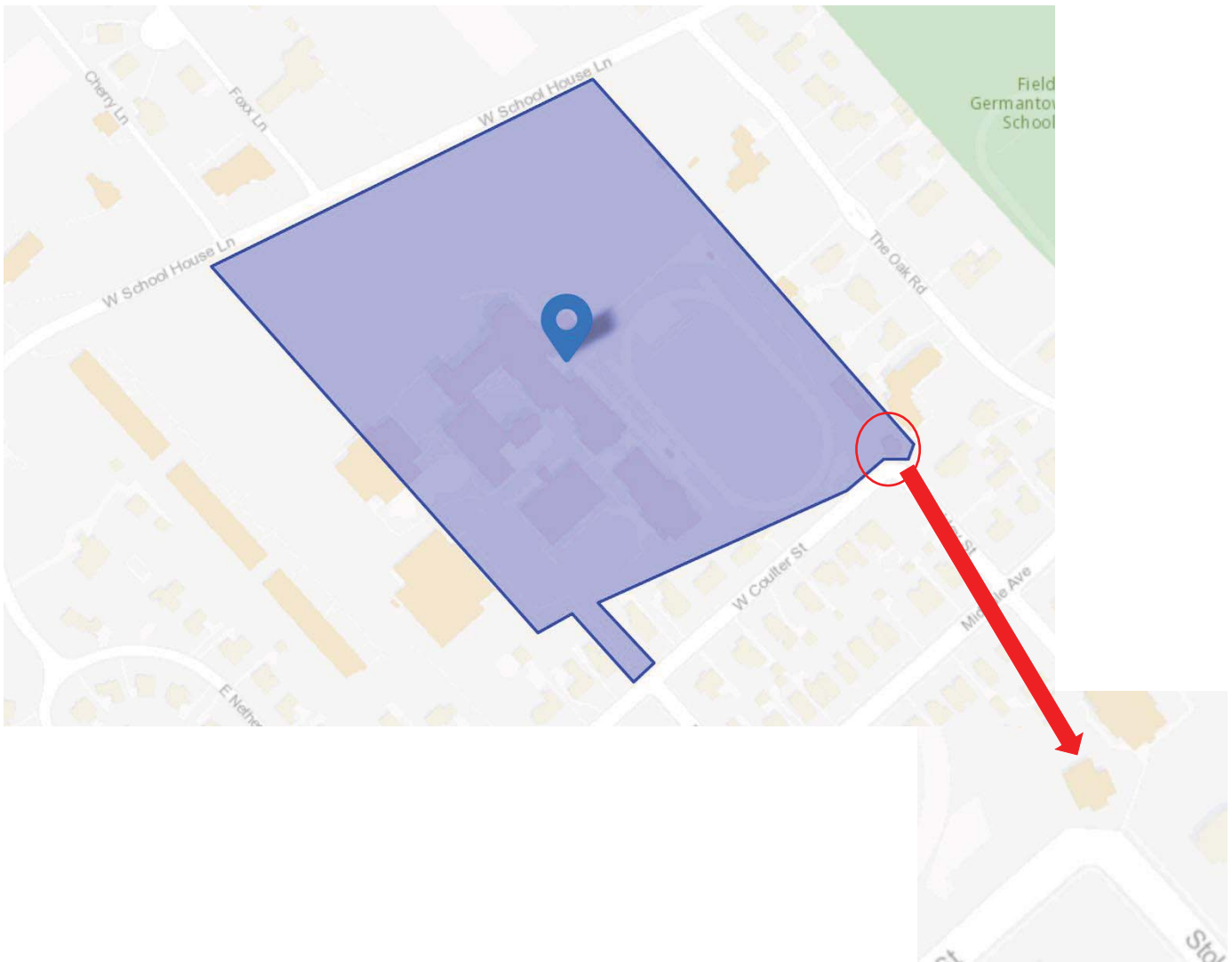
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 1/8/2021

Date of Final Action: 1/8/2021

Designated Rejected Criteria for Designation C&D

5. Boundary Description

This nomination proposes to designate one small building situated in the southeast corner of the larger parcel of 3000 West School House Lane (OPA# 775533000) that currently includes several school buildings and athletic fields for the William Penn Charter School. The overall parcel is bounded by West School House Lane to the north, what was formerly known as Stokley Street to the east, West Coulter Street to the south and what was formerly known as Fox Street to the west.



3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

The boundary of the subject property begins at the intersection of W Coulter Street and Stokley Street. The proposed boundary includes the footprint of the building with a perimeter buffer.

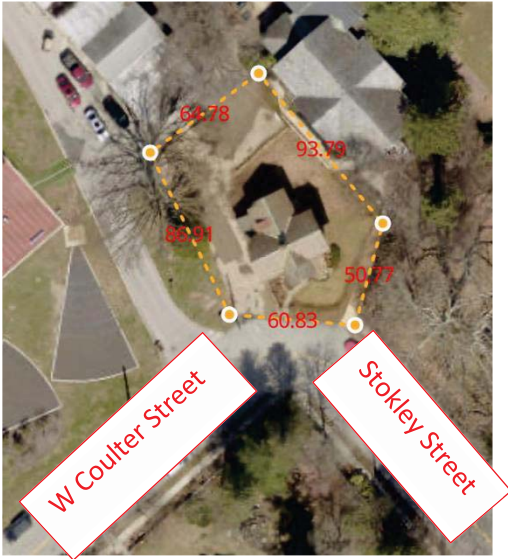


Figure 1 -Pictometry view from south of the subject property, atlas.phila.gov

6. Description

The small stone cottage formerly faced now extinct Cherry Lane that ran parallel to School House Lane.¹ This lane ran along a property line of the 22-acre parcel on which the cottage is sited. The property southeast of the cottage was the larger estate from which the parcel was subdivided. Located at the southeast corner of the 22-acre piece of land, the cottage obliquely faces Stokely Street today and sits at a slight angle to W. Coulter Street, formerly Mill Street, part of the current street grid.² The cottage remains from the mid-19th century configuration of properties when vast tracts of land were subdivided into smaller estates.

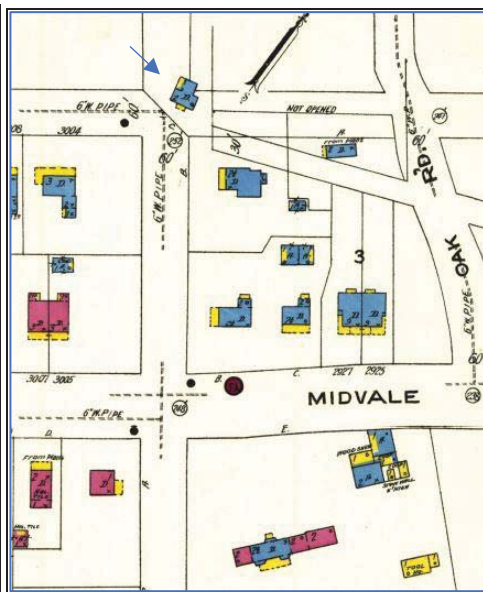


Figure 2 - Sanborn Atlas 1923. Penn State Univ Library.

Figure 3 - Sanborn Atlas 1923. Penn State Univ Library.

Built of polygonal or uncoursed pointed Wissahickon Schist, the Gothic Revival cottage is one and a half stories with a slate roof. The three-bay front with an entry porch forms the main section. A centered one-bay back extension has a side porch. No outbuildings remain although some were evident in a 1938 photograph.³ Post and rail fencing define two sides of the area around the cottage. A walkway to a neighboring church, front hedge and driveway adjacent to the cottage define the other boundaries of the area in use by cottage residents.

¹ Sanborn Atlas, Philadelphia, 1923, volume 20, sheet 1960, Penn State University Library.

² Sanborn Atlas, Philadelphia, 1923, volume 20, sheet 1920, Penn State University Library.

³ Penn Charter 1938 Yearbook, https://www.penncharter.com/uploaded/Yearbook_Archives/1930s/1938.pdf.

3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



Figure 4 - 3/4 southwest facing view of subject property. Nancy Pontone, February 2020.



Figure 5 – 1938 photo northwest facing view of subject property, https://www.penncharter.com/uploaded/Yearbook_Archives/1930s/1938.pdf



Figure 6 – Dallin for Penn Charter, 1938 aerial photo south facing view, Hagley Digital Archives.

3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

At one and a half stories high, the front of the house is symmetrical with 3 bays. The south facing front is about 32' wide and 18' deep with side gables and a front gable centered over the entry way. The rear one bay extension, about 18' wide and 14' deep, is gabled opposite the front wall gable. A shed enclosure about 7' wide and 14' deep, described as a piazza in a November 1865 Insurance Company of North American fire insurance survey⁴, is on the west side along the rear extension.



Figure 7 – 3/4 southwest facing view, 1955 photo with Penn Charter grounds keeper Michael J. Burke in foreground, [Google.com/maps/place](https://www.google.com/maps/place).

⁴ Insurance Co. of North America policy #623, November 1865 survey, ACE Group Archives, courtesy of David M. Breiner, PhD.

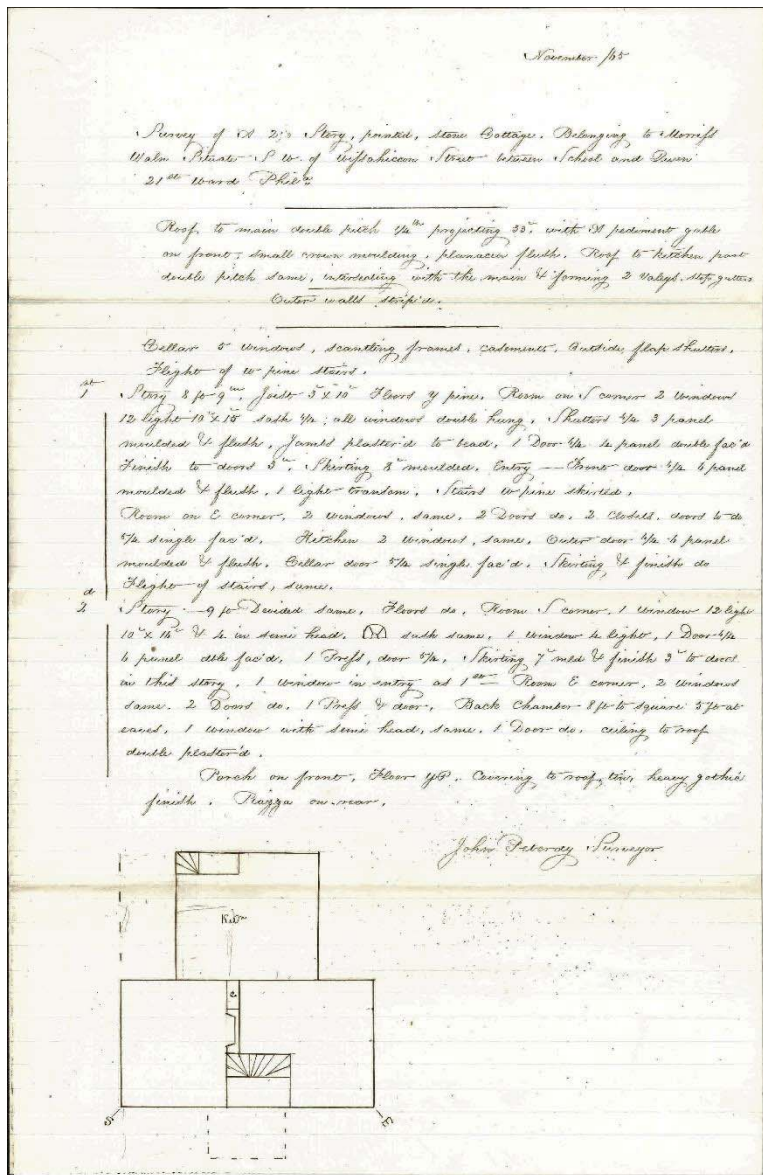


Figure 8 - Insurance Co of North America policy #623, November 1865, courtesy of David M. Breiner, PhD.

The front door features glass above and two raised wooden panels below. In the insurance survey, the door was described as 6 panels so it is not deemed original. A three light transom tops the door. A one-story porch centered in front of the entry door measures about 10' across and 8' deep. The porch has a wooden deck with four supporting wooden columns chamfered above square bases with cornices and braces supporting joists of the low-pitched roof. A center brace supports the ridge board of the roof from the roof's tie beam. The insurance survey describes "heavy gothic finish" and a tin roof. No evidence has been found to verify if existing porch materials are original. Today the roofing material is asphalt shingles.

Below the first-floor windows are cellar windows, with newer jalousies, indicating a basement. The insurance survey cites five cellar casement windows with flap shutters. The first

floor double hung windows on either side of the entry door have segmental arches with six over six lights, wooden trim and sills. Wissahickon schist voussoirs create the window arches. The half story double hung windows above end at the eave and are rectangular with three over three lights. A window above the entry way in the gable dominates the front with a semicircular arch of stone voussoirs. The six over six double hung window has curved glass in the upper panes. A sketch in the insurance survey shows the "semi head" window with three lights radiating from a half circle centered at the bottom. A 1955 photograph shows this window configuration so the current windows are not original (fig 8). The slate roof has deep overhangs now covered with fabricated siding. Original materials are not visible although "small crown mouldings" were described in the insurance survey.

3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

A basement window on the west side of the front section is blocked up. The first story window matches the front windows and an arched window above matches the front gable window. Further north the shed enclosure with a centered door and small window to the right has fabricated siding and an asphalt shingled roof. Two small high windows with shutters light the north side of the shed enclosure. This area, described as a piazza in the 1865 insurance survey, was not originally enclosed. A roof dormer window with a shed roof in the back extension of the house sits close to the valley of the roof where the sloping gabled roofs meet. This dormer is not described in the insurance survey and is not deemed original.

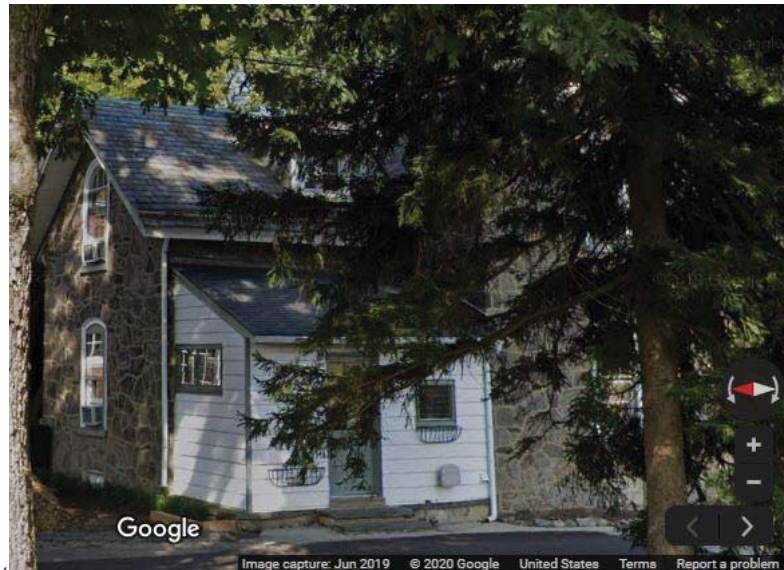


Figure 9- 3/4 northwest facing view of subject property, June 2019. [Google.com/maps/place](https://www.google.com/maps/place).

The north side of the house features windows like the west side. The east side of the back extension has one of the same first story windows above a cellar trap door added later. The east side of the front section of the house mirrors the west.



Figure 10- 3/4 northeast facing view 3001 W Coulter Street. Nancy Pontone, February 2020.



Figure 11- East facing view of subject property. Nancy Pontone, February 2020.

A chimney of ashlar with a course of stone near the top sits to the left of the front gable. The insurance survey shows a floor plan with a fireplace slightly off center below the chimney.

The earliest discovered photographs, aerial shots taken for Penn Charter School, show the cottage looking basically as it does now. Details are not clear in the photo but today the condition of the eaves and lower roof indicates deferred maintenance.

7. Statement of Significance

The subject property is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in the East Falls neighborhood, the subject building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- C. Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and
- D. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen

Historic Context

The land on which the subject property sits was part of a larger property owned by Henry Hill in 1777 when the Continental Army camped there before and after the Battle of Brandywine. In 1780, Hill built a house on the site of an old farmhouse on the property that existed into the 20th century. This house, later called “Carlton”, was south east of the current junction of Midvale Avenue and Stokely Street, a stone’s throw from the subject property. Subsequently the property was owned by the Lee and then Craig families.⁵

⁵ Eberlein, Harold, *The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and Its Neighborhood*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1912), pp. 257-261.

3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

In 1840, Cornelius S. Smith and his wife Elizabeth owned 84 acres of land in Roxborough Township purchased from John C. Craig, minor and Josephine Craig, widow of John C. Craig, deceased.⁶ Five years later in 1845, a 22 acre “piece of land” from this parcel along School House Lane was granted by Cornelius S. Smith to James C. Kempton and his wife Elizabeth for \$6,900.⁷ James Kempton’s wife was the daughter of Thomas Smith, brother of Cornelius S. Smith.⁸ Although exact information is not known about the subject property, it can be inferred that the house was built in about 1848 by James Kempton who obtained a mortgage for \$10,000 recorded on March 11, 1848.⁹ This sum at the time would have been more than enough to build this cottage; other uses may have been intended for the borrowed funds. The mortgage presumably housed in the Philadelphia City Archives has not been available for review.

On December 12, 1850, the 22-acre property and buildings thereon were conveyed by James C. Kempton and his wife to S. Morris Waln for ten thousand two hundred dollars subject to the payment of two mortgage debts.¹⁰ S. Morris Waln, a coal merchant, built a complex of buildings he named Pinehurst which was approached from School House Lane.



Figure 12 - Waln Estate photo, Germantown Historical Society, undated, courtesy of Oscar Beisert.

According to Census reports, Waln and his siblings lived in South Ward, 2th Division, 6th Ward of Philadelphia in 1850 and 1860.¹¹ According to the Pennsylvania Septennial Census of 1863 four Waln siblings resided in the 21st Ward which included Pinehurst.¹² S. Morris Waln died on December 21, 1870. In his will recorded in Will Book No. 70 Page 157 he devised his estate to his sisters Sally M. Waln,

⁶ Deed Book CL No. 10 Page 450 recorded May 18, 1840, Philadelphia City Archives.

⁷ Deed Book AWM No. 2 Page 86, recorded November 1, 1845, Philadelphia City Archives.

⁸ Chadwick Papers, Volume 32, pp. 19-20, East Falls Historical Society.

⁹ Mortgage Book AWM No. 24 Page 216 recorded March 11, 1848 in the amount of \$10,000 as noted in Deed Book WSV No. 220 Page 57, Philadelphia City Archives.

¹⁰ Deed Book GWC No. 73 Page 491 recorded December 12, 1850, Philadelphia City Archives in the amount of \$10,200 (the ten is not clear). The Mortgage Book AWM No. 1 Page 127 recorded December 11, 1845 in the amount of \$6,800. Second Mortgage noted above in Note 9.

¹¹ United State Census for 1850 and 1860, Philadelphia Ward 5, Division 2, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/>.

¹² Pennsylvania Septennial Census 1863, Philadelphia Ward 21, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/>.

Ellen Waln and Annie Waln. Sally M. Waln was the only surviving sister at the time of her brother's death and the entire property vested in her.¹³ Sally M. Waln died July 25, 1900.¹⁴ The executor of her estate, Edward M. Wistar, sold the "22.05 acre" Pinehurst property with a residence and some outbuildings to the Overseers of the Public School Founded by Charter in the Town and County of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, otherwise known as Penn Charter School, on June 5, 1903.¹⁵ At first the property was used as athletic fields for the school located at 11th and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Students arrived by train at the nearby Queen Lane Railroad Station. The estate home was leased, but beginning in 1923 school buildings were erected and the Waln home was demolished. A triangular piece of land alongside the cottage was sold to the Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd built in 1926-1927 as a passage way to the church from W. Coulter Street.¹⁶

Sally Waln's caretaker lived in the cottage, and beginning in 1906, William Burke, a caretaker and grounds man for Penn Charter School, and his family, lived there.¹⁷ Subsequently Penn Charter ground keepers and teachers have been residents. Finding purpose, this cottage has survived on its out-of-the-way corner of the 22-acre property.

Criterion C

The Gothic Revival style is part of the mid-19th century picturesque and romantic movement in architecture. Interest in this medieval style prevailed from about 1830-1860 in Pennsylvania. Gothic Revival departs from earlier colonial styles that drew on classical forms of ancient Greece and Rome. Greek Revival style also reflected the past and was popular in mid-19th century, but relied on Greek not medieval sources.¹⁸ The Gothic Revival style was promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. Davis was the first to champion Gothic domestic buildings in his *Rural Residences* (1837), the first house plan book, complete with floor plans and three-dimensional views, published in this country.¹⁹ The subject cottage resembles the style and plan of one such more elaborate cottage illustrated in Downing's *Cottage Residences* (1842).²⁰ Davis and Downing stressed that Gothic Revival was for rural settings, rather than narrow city lots, such as the rural site of this cottage in the mid-19th century.²¹

The nominated structure was built in this Gothic Revival Style prevalent in rural settings. Other nearby buildings of this period expressed this style as well. Further down present day Stokely Street (30th Street) on Indian Queen Lane, later Queen Lane, architect Samuel Sloan designed a villa of "English Gothic style of stone rough-cast" 30' by 90' with ornamental dormers and roof slates applied in

¹³ Deed Book WSV No. 220 Page 57, recorded June 5, 1903, Philadelphia City Archives. Includes description of S. Morris Waln's will, Will Book 70 Page 157 recorded May 29, 1863 and vesting in Sally M. Waln.

¹⁴ Return of Death in the City of Philadelphia No. 2426, July 25, 1900, Philadelphia City Archives.

¹⁵ Ibid, Deed Book WSV No. 220 Page 57.

¹⁶ West, Ralph A., Jr. and Burkhart, John W. co-editors, *...better than riches, A Tricentennial History of William Penn Charter School 1689-1989*, (Philadelphia: William Penn Charter School, 1989), pp 85-86, p 89.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.96.

¹⁸ Gothic Revival Style 1830-1860, Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, published online by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Accessed 4/21/2020.

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/gothic-revival.html>

¹⁹ McAlester, Virginia Savage, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1914) p. 270.

²⁰ Downing, Andrew Jackson, *Cottage Residences*, (New York: Dover, 1981) Design II, after p 40.

²¹ Ibid, McAlester, p. 280.

3000 W School House Lane Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

decorative patterns in August 1852 for Robert K. Wright. The house was sold to Sarah and Emma Taylor (the family of Frederick Winslow Taylor) in 1856, became known as “Cedron”, and existed with alterations into the 20th century.²² In West Philadelphia Sloan designed stone summer houses in the “Gothic Style” in the early 1850’s.²³



Figure 13 - Ivy Cottage, The Oak Road, PHC nomination 1974.

Close by, at what is now 3819 The Oak Road, but approached from School House Lane at the time, is Ivy Cottage, on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Built around 1850 in the Gothic Revival style, the stucco covered house is larger than the cottage with architectural detailing such as barge boards. No architect has been identified.²⁴



Figure 14 - Alexander Henry House, 3460 W. School House Lane, PHC nomination 2019.

Also, nearby at 3460 W. School House Lane is the Alexander Henry House, on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Built beginning in 1853, the Gothic Revival house is based on an Andrew Jackson Downing plan.²⁵

²² Cooledge, Harold N., Jr., *Samuel Sloan, Architect of Philadelphia 1815-1884*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 175.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 161.

²⁴ 3819 The Oak Road, Philadelphia Historical Commission Nomination, 1974.

²⁵ Beisert, Oscar, 3460 W. School House Lane, Philadelphia Historical Commission Nomination, 2019.



Figure 15 – Church of St. James the Less, HABS, Library of Congress collections.

The Church of St. James the Less built in 1846 was the Episcopal church for this region. It reflects the Gothic style of St. Michael’s Church in Longstanton England. No local architect or builder would fail to be aware of this building now a National Historic Landmark. Later in 1859, Calvary Church on Manheim Street in Germantown was built in the Gothic Revival style also with steep gabled

roof and buttresses like St. James the Less but with round-headed windows rather than its Gothic peaked windows.



Figure 16 - Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion, https://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/ebenezer-maxwell-mansion-philadelphia?select=okD5EFna0sR1oLiJC8HBQQ.

The Ebenezer Maxwell mansion with Gothic as well as Second Empire architectural features was built in about 1859 in nearby Germantown. Its polygonal or uncoursed stone and stone voissors primarily of Wissahickon schist are similar to the subject cottage. The architect is not known but Samuel Sloan designed a nearby house for a friend of Maxwell. The mansion is based on a Samuel Sloan suburban villa plan.²⁶

The subject cottage and other houses and churches in the vicinity described above built in the mid-19th century reflect Gothic Revival architecture produced locally. This was a rural/suburban setting suitable for this style that required space for porches and grounds unlike urban settings where row and town houses predominated. Few roads existed in this area where the early thoroughfare School House Lane intersected with Township Line Road (now Wissahickon Avenue) to the east and Ridge Road west near the Schuylkill River. As is seen in the Ellet Map of Philadelphia County in 1843 (fig 18) few homes, mostly large estates existed in this area. After 1854 when Roxborough and German Townships consolidated into the City of Philadelphia, the city grid extended into this area. See the Barnes Map of Philadelphia City from 1855 (fig 19) with few owners but the imposition of a grid evident in the

²⁶ Moss, Roger W., *Historic Houses of Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 128.



Figure 19 - George W. Bromley & Co Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 1895, plate 31, <http://www.philageohistory.org/tiles/viewer/>.

Criterion D

This cottage could be described as vernacular, defined as unpretentious, simple and made of local materials²⁸ e.g. Wissahickon schist. Simple as it is, this cottage displays many characteristics of Gothic Revival such as those described in Virginia Savage McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*.²⁹ It has a steeply pitched roof with center gable and steep cross gables, the first subtype of six the author identified. Wall surfaces extend into the gables without breaks. Windows extend into the gables. A one-story entry porch graces the front. The "heavy gothic treatment" described in the insurance survey of the porch confirms the original style but not necessarily the originality of the present porch.

Gothic Revival "frequently" displays pointed Gothic arch shaped windows, an easy give-away to the style, although lacking here. The U-shaped crowns and segmental-arch shaped window treatments are more Italianate (1840-1865) than Gothic. Leland M. Roth's *American Architecture, A History*, however, attributes "varied window shapes" to the Gothic Revival style.³⁰

²⁸ Stevens, James and Wilson, Susan, *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 806.

²⁹ Ibid, McAlester, pp. 267-270.

³⁰ Roth, Leland M., *American Architecture, A History*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 2016 second edition), p. 189.

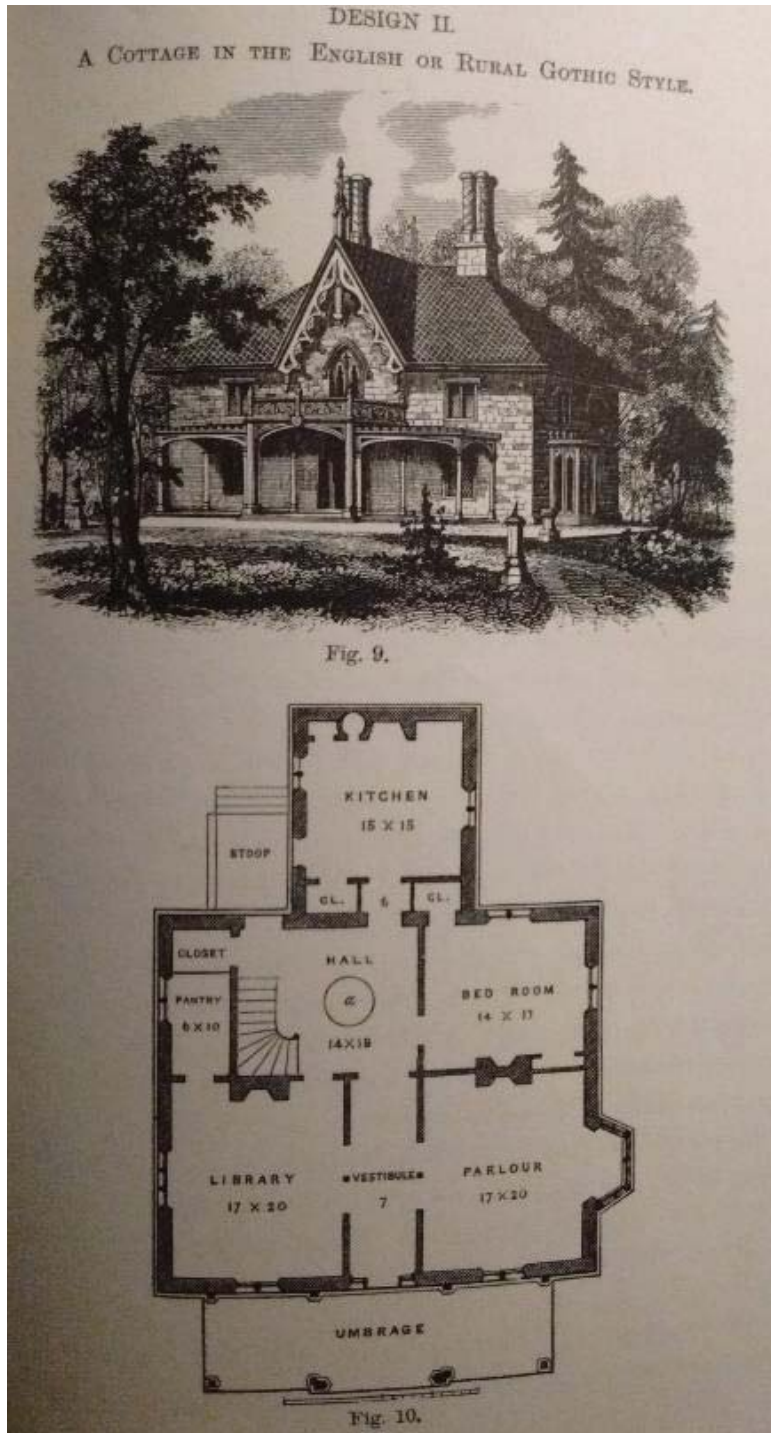


Figure 20 - A J Downing, *Cottage Residences* floorplan, 1842.

The floor plan of the house mirrors that of the Downing plan found in *Cottage Residences* with the mass of the house in front with a back extension for the kitchen, a front porch and back porch along the kitchen extension. Downing conceded that stone is generally superior to any other building material. "This is owing to its great durability and solidity both in expression and in reality."³¹ This stone cottage is a durable and solid example of Gothic Revival espoused by Davis and Downing and deserves listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

³¹ Ibid., Downing, *Cottage Residences*, p. 9.

8. Bibliography

Coolidge, Harold M., Jr., *Samuel Sloan, Architect of Philadelphia 1815-1884*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986)

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McAlester, Virginia Savage, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1914)

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Roth, Leland M. and Amanda C. Roth Clark, *American Architecture, A History*, Second Edition, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2016)

West, Ralph A., Jr. and John W. Burkhart, co-editors, *...better than riches, a Tricentennial History of William Penn Charter School 1689-1989*, (Philadelphia: William Penn Charter School, 1989)