



Name of Property: Keim Homestead
City, State: Pike Township (Oley vicinity), Pennsylvania
Period of Significance: ca. 1753 – ca. 1820
NHL Criteria: 4
National Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
Previous Recognition: 1974 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: Special Study
XVI. Architecture
X. Vernacular

NHL Significance:

- The Keim Homestead is nationally significant as an exceptionally illustrative and intact example of early German-American domestic vernacular architecture. The two nationally significant buildings on the homestead, the main house and the ancillary building, both constructed circa 1753, together represent methods of construction, elements of architectural decoration, and patterns of dwelling and domestic outbuilding layout and design that were characteristic of the German-American tradition in its period of florescence circa 1740 to circa 1775. The plan of the two buildings, i.e., the layout and usage of the various rooms, embodies the lifeways expressive of the culture of the eighteenth-century German-speaking immigrants from the upper Rhine Valley and adjacent regions as this pattern for social and economic life evolved amidst the conditions encountered by the settlers in the New World environment. The Keim Homestead stands in the first rank of intact domestic single-family properties in a region spanning from upstate New York to Piedmont North Carolina that portray this important tradition within America’s vernacular architecture. The Keim Homestead presents a rich



array of original architectural elements and details from the German-American vernacular architectural tradition of the mid-eighteenth century.

- The Main House is an outstanding example of the *Flurküchenhaus* (entry-kitchen) house type, the predominant multi-room plan constructed during the mid-eighteenth century by German-Americans in the region from the Delaware Valley to the Shenandoah Valley where the great majority of immigrants settled. This house type appears to have been developed in the American settlement environment in about the period 1690-1720 by German-speaking immigrants, incorporating elements derived from the European vernacular tradition.
- The Ancillary Building is an unusually early surviving example of an architectural form that was also derived from elements rooted in German-speaking Europe and modified in the American environment. Typically constructed on an embanked site, an ancillary building housed residential, craft work, domestic work, and springhouse or cellar storage spaces and served in effect as an extension of the main dwelling under a separate roof. The Keim Ancillary first floor level served primarily as a workshop rather than as residential quarters.
- The Ancillary Building is additionally important due to the presence of the remarkably well-preserved turner's workshop room, quite possibly the earliest extant essentially intact woodworker's craft workshop in the United States.

Integrity:

- Since circa 1820, when the addition to the Main House was built, the two buildings have undergone limited alteration. For the most part, these two structures are quite intact in terms of their historic design and fabric, and thus demonstrate the integrity essential to manifest their national-level significance. Modern plumbing and heating were never installed, although a limited electrical service was introduced in about the second quarter of the twentieth century.
- Alterations made at unknown dates include the removal of the three five-plate jamb stoves, as was done during the nineteenth century in virtually all houses throughout the multi-state early German-American settlement region; and the removal of the two partition walls and the workshop bench in the Ancillary, though clear evidence of their locations remains. In about the 1920s, the owner removed the rafters and the clay roof tiles on both buildings, although the major roof framing structures of posts, purlins, and braces were left intact.

Owner of Property: Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County, Inc. (Douglassville, PA)

Acreage of Property: 12.83 acres

Origins of Nomination: The Historic Preservation Trust, custodian of seven eighteenth-century museum properties, is pursuing a program of attaining the highest potential level of official recognition for each resource to further its mission of raising local public awareness of historic resources.



Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- NHL recognition for this property holds great potential to raise the profile of local historic preservation efforts, increase opportunities for use of historic properties in educational programs, facilitate fundraising for the restoration and maintenance of this and other Trust properties, and improve popular and academic understanding regarding the depth and complexity of the cultural history of German-Americans and other settlement groups in the southeastern Pennsylvania region.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Stevens moved, Dr. Allan seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 05/6/16):

John C. Larson, Vice President for Restoration, Old Salem Museums & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Shirley M. Moyer, Secretary/Treasurer, Oley Township Board of Supervisors, Pennsylvania
The Honorable David M. Maloney Sr., 130th Legislative District, State Representative, Harrisburg, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Jeffrey E. Gorrin, Chairman, Pike Township Board of Supervisors, Boyertown, Pennsylvania
Sime B. Bertolet, Executive Director, Berks History Center, Reading, Pennsylvania

The Honorable Mark M. Gillen, State Representative, 128th Legislative District, Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Christian Y. Leinbach, Chairman, Berks County Commissioners, Pennsylvania

Eddie Shean-Hammond, Former Superintendent, Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

David T. Shultz, Chapter Secretary, Governor Joseph Heister Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, Pottsville, Pennsylvania

Lisa Minardi, Executive Director, The Speaker's House, Home of Frederick Muhlenberg, Trappe, Pennsylvania

William G. Koch, Sr., CPA, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

Diane E. Wenger, Division of Global History & Languages, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Gabrielle M. Lanier, Professor, Interim Head, and Public History Coordinator, Department of History, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Geo. M. Meiser, IX, L.H.D., Limekiln, Pennsylvania

Advisory Board Recommendation: