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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dr. John Vermeule House

other names/site number Vermeule-Mundy House

2. Location

street & number 223 Rock Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Green Brook Township ☐ vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Somerset code 035 zip code 08812

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title 10/18/10 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☑ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

3/20/13

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [ ] private
- [X] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
1	1	sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

FEDERAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls WOOD
roof SLATE
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Dr. John Vermeule House occupies a level, 2.2-acre parcel fronting on Rock Avenue in Green Brook, New Jersey, the remainder of a 116.75-acre tract at the foot of the first Watchung Mountain, acquired by Cornelius Vermeule from John Laing in 1768. The house, which takes its popular name from the first and last families to have owned and occupied the premises, is a vernacular frame Federal style dwelling built c. 1800 by Dr. John Vermeule, who had inherited the property from his grandfather Cornelius in 1784. Dr. Vermeule's two-story, gable-roofed house features a symmetrical five-bay front elevation, interior gable-end chimneys, and double-pile floor plan. Although long neglected and in need of considerable repair, it remains relatively unaltered, retaining much early fabric, including an extensive group of cellar storerooms and Federal style mantels and other woodwork. A utilitarian shed-roofed rear appendage, which evidently replaced an earlier detached kitchen or kitchen wing, dates from c. 1900. The house is located near the northeast corner of the property, facing south – perpendicular to Rock Avenue – and set back about twenty-one feet from the right-of-way. The property also encompasses the remains of what apparently was an extensive assemblage of domestic and agricultural outbuildings located north and west of the house, most of which have been lost or removed. Despite minor physical deterioration and modern alterations, the Dr. John Vermeule House still reflects its c. 1787-1850 period of significance.

The property contains two contributing and four non-contributing resources. In addition to one contributing building (the house, feature #1 on site map), the property has one contributing site, a small area of brick pavement, constructed of what appears to be hand-made brick, located just north of the house (feature #2). Recently uncovered, it may relate to the detached kitchen or kitchen wing, the existence of which is documented by an 1850 estate inventory. The pavement probably dates to the early 19th century. The four non-contributing resources include one structure, a concrete-capped, 20th-century well located just west of the house (feature #3); two buildings, a small, crudely built, frame, wood-shed of late 19th/early 20th century date just northwest of the house (feature #4) and a small, stone, mid-20th-century work shop near the west side of the lot (feature #5); and one site, concrete foundation remnants located northwest of the stone work shop, that include the foundations of a barn that burned during the 1960s.

House (feature #1 on the site map)

Summary Description

The Dr. John Vermeule House consists of two sections, both of frame construction: a two-story, five-bay, gable-roofed main block and a one-story, shed-roofed rear appendage. The main block has a full stone cellar, double-pile floor plan and brick interior gable-end chimneys. Based on physical and documentary evidence, it can be dated to c. 1800 when the property was owned by Dr. John Vermeule, but may have taken some years to complete. Timbers used in its construction were evidently harvested in 1787, according to dendrochronological results, and an inscription of the date "1799" which is found in the cellar way apparently bookend the

period during which the main block was built, with full completion and occupancy not occurring until 1806.[1] The rear appendage was added in the late 19th or early 20th century, probably by Abram Voorhies who purchased the property in 1901.[2] Rather crudely built, it presumably replaced an earlier detached kitchen or kitchen wing of which a small square of brick paving behind the house may survive.[3] The main block is of traditional mortise-and-tenon construction, utilizing a mix of hewn and sawn timber and employing – to judge from the small portions of the frame that are exposed to view – traditional English box framing techniques (somewhat unusual for a house associated with a Dutch family). The exterior walls are in-filled with brick and sheathed with clapboard and wood shingle siding. The roof is slate, over a 19th-century wood shingle roof, and the eaves are flush. At the front eaves, a wide fascia board with two horizontal moldings suggests a classical entablature. Other early exterior features of the modestly detailed dwelling include 9/6 sashes with simply molded trim and the front entry's Federal style transom with tracery muntins.

Although the symmetrical five-bay facade of the Dr. John Vermeule House gives the appearance of a Georgian center-hall house, the central entry instead opens into a small vestibule providing access to an enclosed staircase and flanking rooms, a rather uncommon arrangement in the region, judging by the few documented examples. The rear range of rooms consists of a larger rear entry hall with an enclosed staircase and flanking rooms. The cellar is divided into several secure, well-ventilated store rooms; the attic is open. Most interior partitions are of stud construction, at least some with brick in-filling; a few vertical-plank partitions are present on the second story, along with slatted wood and brick partitions in the cellar. The house retains considerable early fabric, and finishes are noticeably simpler in the rear, or "service," half of the house than in the more formal front rooms. Early features include tongue-and-groove flooring, wall and ceiling plaster, an exposed beam ceiling in the rear hall, five fireplaces, panel and batten doors, door and other hardware, and delicately molded woodwork revealing Federal style influences typical of the early 1800s, such as the Adamesque mantel in the southeast parlor (Room 106) (photo #15). Various anomalies in the interior finishes (like the southeast parlor mantel that is slightly too wide for the chimney breast) may be the result of the recycling of material and/or work being performed by different hands over time.

Later alterations are relatively few and include, in addition to the rear shed appendage and slate roof, modifications to entry porches, doors and several windows and replacement of siding of the north elevation and

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[1] Cut nails with hand-hammered heads, a nail type in wide use between the 1790s and 1820s, were sampled from the siding and attic floor boards, and Federal style influences typical of that period as evident in the fireplace mantels, front staircase and other woodwork. The date "1799" inscribed in the cellar stairwell may well commemorate its construction, or at least an early phase of construction. Tax records suggest that Dr. Vermeule did not occupy the premises until 1806; construction may have taken some years, and the dwelling may not have been ready for occupancy until 1806 [Bernards Township Tax Ratables, 1805 and Warren Township Tax Ratables, 1806]. Samples taken from timbers in the house yielded a 1787 harvest date [Richard Veit, "Dendrochronological Study of the Vermeule/Mundy House, Rock Avenue, Greenbrook, Somerset County, NJ."]

[2] Photographs dating to the early 20th century document that the shed appendage was extant by that time, and the wire-nails used in its construction indicate that in could not have been erected by the late 1800s.

[3] James Vail's 1850 estate inventory lists items in the "kitchen and shed" and the "kitchen chamber" [NJ 3223R]. Since the inventory names all of the other first-story rooms in the house, the kitchen must have been located in an addition or detached building that has not survived.

small areas elsewhere, along with the introduction of modern utility systems, kitchen and bathroom fixtures, and several closets. Most of these modifications date to the first half of the 20th century.

Exterior

The foundation of the dwelling's main block is of rubble-stone construction. On south, east and west sides of the exterior, above-grade portions are faced with an approximately four-inch thick veneer of carefully cut and dressed rectangular blocks of sandstone laid in an ashlar pattern, providing one of the dwelling's more sophisticated design details (photo #2). The veneer projects slightly beyond the face of the bottom clapboard forming a water table. The projection is now capped with mortar but probably originally had a canted wood strip of which a fragment remains that would have been somewhat more effective at shedding water. The walls of the shed appear to be supported by crudely built stone foundations.

Three sides of the dwelling – north, west and south – are covered with clapboard siding, while the east side is covered with wood shingles (photo #s 1, 2 &3). The clapboards on the south and west sides and the wood shingles, except for a few areas of patching, evidently are original fabric. They were installed using the distinctive cut nails with hand-hammered heads in use before and after 1800, and traces of reddish brown paint can be seen where subsequent paint layers have worn away, a color known as Spanish brown that was popular in the 18th and early 19th century.[4] The wire-nailed clapboard siding on the north or rear elevation can date no earlier than the late 19th century, and may be contemporary with the construction of the shed appendage.[5] The shed appendage features clapboard siding on its two end walls, and vertical, bead-bead siding on its north side, all of which is wire-nailed. Patched areas of wire-nailed clapboard siding is present on the both gable-end walls at the first-story north corner, and presumably relates to the 20th-century window modifications in these areas. In photos from c.1920, the house appears to be painted in a monochrome scheme in a light shade, probably white; however, slightly earlier photographs suggest the body of the house was painted a slightly darker shade with contrasting window trim

Judging by its condition, the slate roof probably dates to the first half of the 20th century. It covers a wood shingle roof, exposed to view in the attic, which was extant by 1850-55, based on the evidence of the name "Martha P. Vail" inscribed on the shingling near the top of the attic stairs.[6] The roof eaves are flush,

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[4] Cut nails with two-strike hand-hammered heads were introduced in the 1790s and remained in general into the 1820s [Lee H. Nelson, *Nail Chronology as an Aid to Dating Old Buildings*, n. p.; Henry C. Mercer, *The Dating of Old Houses*, p. 6.]. Spanish brown, made with iron oxide, would have been an economical color choice, widely used for both prime and finish coats for exterior and interior work, throughout the 18th and early 19th century, but was decidedly less fashionable than white as an exterior finish color later in the period. The use of Spanish Brown as the original finish color for the Vermeule-Mundy House (if it was so used, and not a primer) could be an indication of rural conservatism or simply an economic choice [Roger W. Moss (ed), *Paint in America*, pp. 33, 36, 70, 71 & 73].

[5] Wire nails were first introduced in the 1880s [James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England*, p. 77].

[6] Martha P. Vail, the daughter of James Vail, died sometime between 1850, when her father died, and 1855, when the property was sold [NJ Wills 3223R & Somerset County Deeds, Book V2, p. 457]. Whether the inscription is her signature or by another hand, perhaps to commemorate her death, it is unlikely to postdate 1855, after which the Vails had no association with the property.

trimmed with plain raking boards on the two gables and wider fascia boards (photos # 2 & 3) on the north and south elevations. The south eaves fascia is divided horizontally roughly into thirds by two half-round moldings, a treatment suggestive of a classical entablature, perhaps a folk interpretation of a more high-style example consistent with the Federal style. A cut nail with hand-hammered head retrieved from one of the moldings is evidence that the detail is an original feature. The modern metal gutter on the front roof eaves is held in place by spike-mounted, U-shaped iron brackets that appear to be hand-wrought and undoubtedly are early fabric. Their form indicates that they must have been intended for U-shaped box gutters, perhaps detailed to resemble a cornice and serve as the uppermost element of the eave's entablature.[7] The shed appendage features an asphalt shingle roof, which presumably dates to the second half of the 20th century.

The brick chimney stacks with simple drip caps, one centered on each gable, appear to be early fabric. The common bond was employed for their construction, as well as for the exposed chimney backs (two on the east gable end and one on the west). The exposure of masonry at the base on an interior chimney is a distinctive traditional feature typical of early frame dwellings throughout the region.[8] The concrete-block exterior chimney centered on the west gable-end wall dates to the 20th-century installation of the central heating system.

The dwelling's fenestration remains largely original, exhibiting only minor modifications (photo #s 1, 2 & 3). The south or front elevation exhibits a symmetrical fenestration pattern, comprised of five bays with a central entry; the pattern of the other three elevations is irregular. While the plank frames of the four front cellar windows may be early fabric, the two-light sashes are replacements of 20th century, or possibly late 19th century date. The other nine front windows retain their original frames, whose trim features a very small quirk-bead molding around the inner edge. The 9/6 sashes appear to be early, if not original, fabric, The second-story windows retain two-panel shutters with movable louvers, whose construction and butt hinges suggest that they date to the second half of the 19th century; the first-story windows were fitted with similar shutters that have been removed, although the surface mounted butt hinges remain. On the west side of the main block the pair of garret windows and the single second-story window also appear to be original. Although the latter's 6/6 sashes date to the 19th century, the 6-light attic windows are 20th century replacements; an early 20th-century photograph indicates that these windows had 4/2 sashes. That photograph also documents that the first-story windows are 20th-century alterations. The 6/6 sash window immediately adjoining the chimney back replaced a narrow window apparently fitted with 4/4 sashes. A 9/6 sash window vertically aligned with the north gable window was removed sometime in 20th century, and the small 1/1 sash window near the north corner added, presumably in conjunction with the installation of kitchen fixtures and cabinetry in Room 103. The vertical seam between the original and replacement siding demarks the east side of the removed 9/6 sash window. Both the 9/6 and 6/6 sash windows had shutters. On the east-gable end, the two first-story windows and single, central gable window have been reworked. The first-story windows now have 6/6 sashes; a c. 1938 photograph

[7] Another early example of spike-mounted, wrought-iron gutter brackets has been documented at the c.1800 Bodine–Carkhuff House, a modest frame farmhouse in Branchburg Township, Somerset County. Those brackets were V-shaped, designed to hold V-shaped wooden gutters constructed of two boards, a simpler treatment than box gutters at the Vermeule–Mundy house [Dennis Bertland Associates, *Bodine – Carkhuff House Historic Documentation Report*, p. II-2].
[8] The construction detail may have been intended to reduce the chance of fire by eliminating framing members behind the fireplace.

indicates that both had shutters and that the south window at least had 9/6 sashes. The three second-story north windows have 2/2 sashes with plain trim. The sashes, and perhaps the trim, probably date to the late 19th or early 20th century renovations, work that included replacing the clapboards on that elevation. The north elevation also has a west-bay cellar window, curiously located almost directly below one of the three rear entries, which features a plank frame, exterior wooden grill (horizontal bars set on the diagonal) and a horizontal five-light sash whose thick muntins suggest that it is early fabric, although what appears to be in-filled masonry below it may be the result of an alteration. The opening of what may have been a smaller cellar window in the east bay has been in-filled with masonry.

The main block has entries on its south, west and north elevations, all of which exhibit evidence of alterations (photo #s 1, 2 &3). The central front entry retains its original surround and transom. Matching that of the windows, the trim has a small quirk-bead molding on its inner edge. Obscured by blocking installed to accommodate the wooden, 20th-century screen door, the transom features curvilinear muntins incorporating shield and fan motifs suggestive of Federal style influences. The four-panel door is a replacement dating to the mid/late 19th-century, or perhaps somewhat later; a simple ogee molding outlines the recessed panels of its outer face. It is hung on cast-iron butt hinges mounted on the west jamb and has a small Victorian cast-iron lock of a type usually associated with interior doors. Butt hinge ghosts on its east jamb, visible inside, indicate that its predecessor was instead hung on that jamb. The interior wooden crossbar and cast iron throw bolt are 20th century features. The shed roof of a single-bay front entry porch was removed recently, leaving a wire-nailed wooden floor deck supported by short brick and concrete block piers. While the deck certainly is 20th-century work, the porch roof and the two slender chamfered posts which supported it probably dated to the mid/late 19th century, and its profile can been seen in photographs dating to the early 1900s. Materials salvaged from the porch roof, including vertically sawn rafters, wide sheathing boards and tin roofing, retain a mix of a mix of cut and wire nails used in its construction and/or subsequent alterations. The gap in the foundation's ashlar stone veneer behind the extant porch deck is evidence that the main entry was designed to have a stoop, if not a roofed porch. The unpainted ghost on the siding above the entry, exposed to view upon the removal of the porch roof, may be associated with an earlier porch roof.

The side entry hugging the south corner of the dwelling's west elevation also appears to be original, judging by the same lack of stone veneer on the foundation behind the present porch. While the entry trim appears to be early, the four-panel door hung on butt hinges is a later replacement, similar to and probably contemporary with that of the front entry. The five-panel storm door probably was installed sometime in the mid 20th century; it appears to be a recycled interior door of early 20th-century date. Early 20th century photographs reveal that this entry had a one-bay porch with wooden floor deck and steps and a simple shed roof supported on plain brackets, which appeared to be structurally unsound at the time the photographs were taken. A c. 1915 photograph depicts a slightly different shed porch roof supported by slender square posts. The exact chronology of these two previous porch treatments has not been determined. The present two-bay, flat-roofed porch exhibits Colonial Revival influences in its molded cornice, square posts with molded caps and square-spindled railing; it probably was added around 1930. Also of note is the broken stone embedded in the ground at the base of the southwest porch steps. The flat, sedimentary stone, broken in two, bears the crudely carved inscription: "[V]oorhies 188[?]." While obviously having some association with the family who bought the property

in 1901, whether or not it commemorates when the Voorhies first occupied the house or was brought from elsewhere is unknown.

The main block of the house has three rear or north entries, which now open into the shed appendage, along with a hatch cellar entrance. The middle entry retains its original trim with quirk-beaded inner edge, five-light transom and paneled Dutch door. While the four panels of the larger upper leaf have been replaced with panes of glass, the lower leaf has two panels, recessed with a small edge molding on the outer face and set flush with a quirk-bead molded edge on the inner face. The door is hung on strap hinges with spade-shaped ends and retains a Suffolk latch with spade-shaped cusps. The east rear entry, noticeably shorter than the center entry, features an early batten door hung on strap hinges, Suffolk latch with bean-shaped cusps, quirk-beaded trim and a narrow transom; paint analysis suggests that the transom sash was removed and the opening covered by a board at an early date.[9] The entry's wooden screen door is 20th century. The west rear entry has a flush-bead-panel door of the vertical-two-panel Greek Revival type popular c. 1830-60. The door is hung on butt hinges and retains a Norfolk lift latch, as well as an early cast-iron rim lock mounted on the inside face. The door seemingly represents an early replacement or alteration, and the doorway itself may be a replacement of an early window, as suggested by its awkward location directly above a cellar window. Furthermore, there is little precedent for early houses having an exterior door in three adjoining rooms, especially on the north elevation which would have been exposed to northeast and northwest storms. One of the north entries might have provided a direct connection to the "kitchen and shed" referenced in James Vail's 1850 estate inventory.[10] A hatch cellar entry is located just east of the middle entry, concealed by a shed-roofed, clapboard-clad hatch (whose construction suggests that it is contemporary with the rear shed appendage). Within this hatchway can be seen what appears to be the ghost of an earlier gabled hood or porch cover on the rear wall of the main block above the cellar entry.[11]

The shed appendage has three windows and two entries that appear to be contemporary with its late 19th/early 20th century construction (photo #3). The east end-wall features a single 2/2 sash window with plain trim, On the north side are two windows, trim-less openings cut in the wall, one larger the other, but both fitted with a fixed six-light sash, that probably have been recycled (possibly taken from the altered east and west windows). The entry in the west end has a batten door with plain trim, cross garnet hinges and a lift latch. The wider north entry has a batten sliding door.

Construction

Supported by coursed rubble-stone foundation, the dwelling's main block is of traditional mortise-and-tenon construction, utilizing a mix of hewn and sawn timber and employing –to judge from the small portions

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[9] The Vermeule-Mundy House, Green Brook, NJ Interior Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 5.
[10] New Jersey Wills, 3223R.
[11] Although few early cellar hatch covers appear to have survived, an example documented by the Historic American Building Survey, the gabled cellar entry of the Ten Broeck House in Columbia County, New York [HABS NY 357], provides an idea what the cellar entry at the Vermeule-Mundey House may have looked like.

of the frame that are exposed to view– traditional English box framing techniques.[12] In accordance with English traditions, the frame features large hand hewn vertical posts at corners and bay divisions, joined with horizontal members –sills, girts and plates– at the first, second and attic floor levels and stiffened with diagonal braces. Smaller sawn intermediate studs fill the spaces between the major posts, and wall cavities are in-filled or "nogged" with brick, perhaps a vestige of traditional half-timbering that may have provided some insulation. An unusual construction feature is what appears to be a double sill, consisting of two horizontal hewn members separated by one course of brick. The purpose of this construction is not understood.[13]

In the cellar and attic portions of the dwelling floor and roof framing are exposed to view. The first-floor frame consists of a large hewn summer beam, supported by the brick wall, running east/west midway between the north and south walls with smaller saw cut perpendicular joists, except under the middle rear room (Room 104) where the joists parallel the summer beam and are joined to larger members that aligned with the north/south room partitions above. Larger members were also used for the joists under the middle third of the main block's south range. A portion of the second-floor framing is visible in Room 104, where the planed and painted north/south joists were intended to be exposed to view, as were those in Room 105, now covered with a plaster ceiling. The attic floor seems to have been similarly framed with an east/west summer beam with perpendicular joists. A small section of the framing is visible in the northeast corner of the Room 207 ceiling, whose plaster ceiling evidently is a later alteration. The roof is framed with hewn timber and mortise-and-tenon joinery. A mix of hewn and sawn timber was employed for the rafters, some of which have been notched to receive lath strips to create a level surface for shingle roofing. Rafters are joined at the peak with pegged lap joints, without a ridgepole.

Except for the cellar, most interior partitions are of stud construction, at least some of which, like the exterior walls, have been in-filled with brick, to which the plaster has been applied directly.[14] Lath, where used on walls and ceilings, appears to be rough sawn boards (with a slightly fuzzy texture) that have been split, a form of wooden lath that began to replace hand-split or riven lath around 1800.[15] Where examined, the lath has been attached with cut nails. A few minor partitions and staircase enclosures are constructed of vertical, hand-planed, tongue-and-groove boards with quirk-bead molded edge.

The chimneys, two in each gable end, are constructed of brick. The two east-end chimneys and the southern west-end chimney are supported by brick barrel vaults carried on brick piers. The base of the northeast is double vaulted, although only one of the vaults is located directly under the chimney; the other vault to its north may have served as a buttress (photo #s 6 & 7). The fourth base, that of the northern west-gable chimney, is a solid mass of brick masonry, triangular in section, as is the fireplace above. The four chimneys are carried

[12] There was a sawmill nearby on Eder Vermeule's property that was in existence at least by 1777. [Holly Jean Dunbar, Joann Kohler, Bruce Ryno, and Norma Schneider, *Looking Back: A History of North Plainfield*, North Plainfield, NJ: Blue Hills Historical Society, 1985, p. 15.]

[13] One example of a double sill has been documented in a Franklin Township, Somerset County, house, but there the feature appears to represent a later modification to increase ceiling height by jacking up the building and inserting a new sill [Oral communication, Alex Greenwood, NJ Barn Company, 2/24/10].

[14] Nogging was found in the east and west walls of Room 206.

[15] Garvin, p. 66.

up separately to the level of the attic floor, above which the two in each gable are corbeled inward toward the roof ridge below which they joined into one stack, a holdover practice from the colonial period, still seen in houses showing early signs of the coming Federal style. There are five fireplaces (four on the first story and one on the second). All conform to the Rumford type that became popular in the late 1700s as a more efficient heating design, and feature angled jambs and a shallow firebox with sloping rear wall.[16] The two west chimneys on the second story feature pipe thimbles, evidence stoves were used to provide heat in adjoining spaces which lacked fireplaces, although it is unclear if the thimbles represent an early feature or an alteration. Stoves subsequently might have been installed (a common practice) in rooms with fireplaces, as suggested by a curious thimble in the hearth of the Room 208 fireplace.

The rear shed extension is lightly framed with mostly saw-cut lumber, but incorporating some hewn members, using both cut and wire nails instead of mortise and tenon joinery. Its vertical siding also is fastened to the frame with wire nails. The wire-nailed construction is evidence that the shed appendages dates no earlier than the late 19th century.

Interior

Cellar

Retaining much of its original character, the cellar constitutes one of the dwelling's most significant features (photo #s 6, 7 & 8). It is comprosed of a large open area with access from the exterior and the first story, and four store rooms that appear to have been designed for several specific purposes, with brick and/or slatted partitions and heavy slatted wood doors hung on strap hinges and fitted with locks (or evidence of locks). The strength and security of these escutcheons are obviously an important factor of their construction. The wide stone steps located on north wall would have provided convenient direct access to the rear yard, as well as to the out kitchen or kitchen wing extant in 1850. The open wooden stair to the first floor appears to have been reworked. The cellar's rubble-stone walls bear evidence of whitewashing in some areas, as do the slatted partitions and doors and ceilings. The framing of the first-story is exposed, except in one storeroom (Room 005), which has a plaster and lath ceiling. Rooms 005 and 006 have brick floors; the remainder of the cellar has an earth floor, but, evidence survives of what may have been an early clay or clay/mortar floor installed on top of the earth, now in very friable condition. Buried in the earth beneath the stairs is a ceramic vessel, which reportedly was part of a cellar drainage system.[17]

The two store rooms at the west end of the basement, Room 005 & 006, appear to have been designed as cold rooms, with brick floors and masonry walls providing insulation, and whitewashed walls and ceilings, suggestive of food preparation and storage. The northwest storeroom, Room 006, has a slatted east partition slatted door with wooden lift latch, as well as a grilled exterior north window, which would have facilitated airflow.

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[16] Count Rumford published his first essay on fireplace improvements in 1796 in London. Rumford included instructions and illustrations for altering existing fireplace [Henry J. Kauffman, *The American Fireplace: Chimneys, Mantelpieces, Fireplaces & Accessories*, NY: Galahad Books, 1972, p. 231].

[17] The drain function was described by Gilbert Mundy to Tom Buckingham.

The southwest storeroom, Room 005, seems to have been designed as perhaps the most sanitary and secure cold room, with masonry walls, plaster ceiling, and slatted door with a heavy iron lock. A louvered opening in the brick partition provided air circulation to that room. The two remaining storerooms (#s 002 and 003) appear to have been intended for less specialized secure storage. Both have earth floors, slatted partitions and doors that have been fitted with staples and chains for padlocking.

In 1806, the Vermeule household consisted of five family members and at least four slaves, one male and three females. The division of slave labor is not known, although presumably the male slave would have worked outdoors and the female slaves would have been involved in food production and household operations. An estate inventory provides hints about use of the cellar space. Vermeule ran a productive farm, with stores of flax, hay, lumber, corn, rye, wheat, a wheat mill and sundry "implements of husbandry." The farm had a barrack, a granary, and corncribs for grain storage. [18] According to the inventory, Vermeule also had cattle, sheep and hogs. Farm products such as milk, cheese, butter, and cured meats would likely have been stored in the cellar cool rooms. In addition, the inventory mentioned an undisclosed number of casks apparently for preserved pork and beef and presumably cider, too. These also would have been stored in the cellar.

While the Vermeule's cellar storerooms were undoubtedly more extensive than most and represent a rare survival, examples of similar arrangements have been documented. The use of brick floors, slatted walls, plaster and whitewash suggest that the storerooms were designed to assure proper sanitation, and at the same time the locks indicate an important factor was to prevent pilfering by unpaid servants. The 1813 estate inventory of Bedminster resident Henry Vanderveer mentioned both a "Lock cellar" and a "Milk cellar."[19] Both the Vermeules and the Vanderveers were slave owners, and the presence of slaves or other unpaid servants may have been a reason for the secure storage areas. A storeroom in the Hendrick Hendrickson House, an 18th-century Dutch farmhouse in Monmouth County, has a slatted cellar door with pad lock.[20] Evidence so far suggests that the locked storerooms may have been more frequently associated with Dutch houses.[21]

First Floor

The first floor of the main block retains what appear to be its original plan and much early fabric, along with evidence of subsequent alterations and anomalies that will require additional investigation to explain. The front door, for example, a replacement that reverses its predecessors swing, is not centered within the hallway, and is missing the right half of its architrave (photo #9). As originally installed, presuming both hall walls are original, the door would have had to be opened almost ninety degrees in order for anyone to observe who was

[18] New Jersey Wills, 1612R.
[19] New Jersey Wills 1563R.
[20] HABS NJ-55.
[21] A recent survey of Dutch vernacular architecture of the Hudson Valley/northeast NJ/Long Island region noted, "a special type of door used for ventilation purposes in cellar," but recorded only two examples, both in the Hudson Valley. [John R. Stevens, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830*, pp. 79 & 90] The non-Dutch Aaron Wills House near Rancocas in Burlington County, NJ, rebuilt in 1786, has a small cellar "closet" with a partially slatted board wall. [HABS NJ 541] The 1838 William Hasbrouck House in Newburgh, Orange County, NY, has a series of locked slatted storage areas, indicating these structures continued to be constructed well into the 19th century. [HABS NY 6255]

outside. Whether or not this was the motivation, changing the door swing would have provided space for the owner to peer out without opening the door completely. Limited probes have not revealed any conclusive evidence that the west hall wall was a later partition, but this possibility is worth further investigation.[22]

Despite its small size, the hall is finished like the adjoining front rooms with tongue-and groove flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, molded baseboards, architrave door trim and a molded chair rail that is continued up the stairwells as a reflected hand rail (photo 9). While the floorboards remain unfinished, the stair treads have been painted, although how early this was done is unknown. The architrave trim and doors of the hall and flanking rooms incorporate delicate moldings typical of the Federal style (photo #9). The trim and six-panel doors resemble prototypes to be found in Asher Benjamin's seminal 1797 architectural handbook, which was intended to be "particularly useful to Country Workmen."[23] The stepped architrave trim features a quirk-bed inner edge and small ogee outer molding. The door panels are recessed with a small edge molding on the outer face and set flush with a quirk-bead molded edge on the inner face. The doors are hung on early butt hinges, but their iron rim locks with porcelain knobs are Victorian replacements. On several doors can be seen what appears to be the ghosts of earlier rims locks and lift latches. One unexplained anomaly is that the trim of the doors between the front hall and flanking rooms, along with the trim in Room 102, is miter jointed at the upper corners, while the trim of the front door and the other doors and windows in Room 106 exhibits butt joints, the more typical practice throughout the region.

With direct access from the front hall, the two front rooms, Room #s 102 & 106, were the most public rooms, and have more formal finishes than do two of the three rear first-story rooms, which evidently had service functions (photo #s 10 & 11). Room 102, the southwest front room (identified as the "sitting room" in the 1850 inventory) features woodwork resembling that of the hallway, along with a Rumford-type brick fireplace with simple Federal mantel and a small cupboard in the south side of the chimney breast. Closely resembling a plate in Asher Benjamin's 1797 architectural handbook, the mantel has an architrave surround, plain frieze and molded cornice.[24] The cupboard's one-panel door retains an early ring pull. All of the door and window trim is miter-jointed. Splice repairs in the trim on the left side of the exterior door adjoining the fireplace evidently relate to the removal of the original hinges when the extant replacement door was hung on the right jamb. Although the reason for the provision of an exterior entrance is unknown, it is possible that the room served as Dr. Vermeule's office. On the north wall of the room, two doorways of slightly different heights provide access to Rooms 103 and 104, the northwest and middle back rooms; what appears to be an uneven area in the plaster on the left side of the Room 104 door may represent an alteration or repair. The flooring's varnish is probably a 20th-century treatment. Typical of contemporary practice, the floorboards probably were unfinished originally and kept bare or covered with strip "wall-to-wall" carpeting. One of the "2 New carpets" listed in Dr. Ver-

[22] Architectural historian Gabrielle M Lanier and Bernards L. Herman have identified several examples of plans characterized by direct access from the outside into a heated room containing a stair. For example, the c. 1790 Mount Jones, a four-bay, four-room plan [Gabrielle M Lanier and Bernards L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic*, page 25]. A nearby example can be found at the J. King house, a two-story, five-bay house in western Bernards Township.
[23] Asher Benjamin, *The Country Builder's Assistant*, Plates I and XII, XVII. As described on its title page, this seminal handbook of carpentry and architecture designs was intended to be "particularly useful to Country Workmen."
[24] Ibid., Plate XVII.

meule's 1814 estate inventory quite likely was installed in this room.[25] That the floorboards used for the floor are slightly wider than those used in middle rear room, Room 104, may be another indication that the more formal spaces were intended (speculation?) to be carpeted. Walls are covered with 20th century wallpaper, but materials analysis provides evidence that early on the plaster was pigmented a deep red color. Paint samples taken from the wood document blue as the first color, followed by creams and greens.[26]

In the southeast room, Room 106, which originally must have been the best room or parlor, the mantel and baseboard are more elaborately detailed than the others in the house (photo #11). An exuberate folk interpretation of English Adamesque design, the mantel features attenuated colonettes flanking the firebox and gouge carved frieze with patera and fan motifs.[27] Judging by the fact that it is slightly too wide for the chimney breast, the mantel may have been made for another location and recycled, perhaps installed some years after the house was first occupied by the Vermeules.[28] The reeded baseboard does not match any other in the house, and the fact that it does not extend behind the built-in cupboard next to the fireplace could be evidence that it postdates the cupboard's installation, although paint analysis suggests that the opposite is the case.[29] The cupboard, nevertheless, appears to be an early, if not original feature. Resembling a sideboard, it has two single-panel doors below a drawer, and the walls within the shelving area were painted with a "deep red distemper paint" subsequently covered by a "rag paper printed with green distemper" presumably added by the mid 19th century.[30] This treatment is absent on the plaster wall behind the cupboard's drawer, evidence that it is not a wall treatment predating the installation of the cupboard. Unlike the other door and window trim in this portion of the house, the surrounds of the room's two windows incorporate an ovolo outer molding; the reason for this anomaly is unknown. There is no evidence that the room ever had a chair rail. The floor, unfinished except for a painted perimeter band, presumably was unfinished originally and covered by carpeting.[31] Materials analysis has documented multiple layers of distemper paint on the wall plaster, the earliest colors including cream, a "vibrant ochre yellow," and a blue-grey; paint samples from woodwork exhibit differing chronologies that suggest that various elements may have been recycled, installed at different times.[32] The difference might also result from a polychrome decorating scheme.

Room #103 was extensively remodeled upon its 20th-century conversion into a kitchen with built-in cabinets, modern appliances and linoleum flooring, presumably installed over wooden flooring (photo #12).

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[25] New Jersey Wills, 1612R.
[26] Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 1.
[27] The mantel is based on a style first introduced into England by architect Robert Adam, who was inspired by the mid 18th-century archaeological finds at the ancient Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and later became popular in America during the late 18th and early 19th centuries
[28] Paint analysis conducted for this report found that the mantel retained paint sequences that might reflect its use at another location or possibly a different treatment than other woodwork in the room [Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 8], Such Adamesque mantels were popular throughout the first quarter of the 19th century, and perhaps more common after 1810, rather than before, in rural New Jersey.
[29] Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 7
[30] Ibid.
[31] New Jersey Wills, 1612R
[32] Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, pp 1 & 7.

Nevertheless, it retains some early fabric, most notably a corner fireplace and paired chimney breast cupboards, as well as door trim and vestiges of chair rail. Paint samples taken from the cupboard suggest that this element had a faux wood graining as its earliest finish.[33] In James Vail's 1850 estate inventory, the room is referred to as the "room back of sitting room," and contained "crockery & furniture," although originally it may have served as a first-story bedroom. Certainly, the Rumford-type fireplace was not designed for cooking, and its mantel is slightly more elaborate than the one in Room 102, featuring fluted end blocks on its frieze. The fireplace's brick stretcher lintel is supported by an iron band, despite which the lintel has failed. A recycled Victorian cast iron stove plate has been installed on back wall of the fireplace where it serves as a fireback. The exterior rear door may be a mid-19th century alteration of an earlier window; in which case its trim was recycled or copied from other doors in the room.

The two other back rooms, Rooms 104 and 105, have simpler, more utilitarian, finishes that reflect their function as service rooms (photo #s 12 -16) . Both rooms, for example, originally featured exposed ceiling beams, a conservative old-fashioned treatment for the early 1800s, which remains exposed to view only in Room 104. Batten doors are present, along with a few panel doors, and several doors are hung on strap hinges, whose use for interior doors was falling out of favor in the period of the dwelling's construction. Door and window trim feature a quirk-beaded inner edge, as well as an ogee outer molding dissimilar to that used in the front portions of the house. This molding appears to have been added subsequently, judging from the presence of paint beneath it on one door surround in room 105, although determining the extent of this embellishment awaits further investigation. Other early features include tongue-and-groove flooring, plaster walls and bead-molded baseboards, along with the enclosed rear staircase in Room 104 and a cooking fireplace in Room 105.

Room 104, the middle back room, is a congested, utilitarian space, serving as a hallway with an exterior door, doors connecting with the flanking back rooms and the southwest front room, access to the back stairs and stairs to the cellar, and a tall, built-in cabinet. The boards used for the floor are slightly narrower than those used in the front rooms, and are painted, although when this was first done is unknown. The exposed ceiling beams are hand-planed with chamfered edges, and, along with the planed underside of floor boards above, have been painted, probably an early treatment. Horizontal board wainscoting is present on two walls, and the stairways and northeast corner closet are enclosed with vertical boards. Hand-planed, bead edge boards were used for these partitions. A paint sample taken from the wainscot had red as the first color, followed by pale blue.[34] Both panel and batten doors were used in this room. The stairway doors and the door to Room #102 have no trim; while the other three doors have butt-jointed trim with an outer molding, probably subsequently added. Most of the doors in this space are hung on strap hinges and have Norfolk latches; the spike tip of the top hinge pintle of Door 105-1 is visibly poking through the trim, a rather crude installation. The built-in cupboard in the northeast corner of the room is constructed of hand-planed vertical boards. The six-panel cupboard door has been cut down, suggesting it was recycled. The cupboard is certainly an early feature, although perhaps not original. The presence of chair rail inside the closet, which serves as a shelf support, suggests that the closet was a later addition. A storage cupboard beneath the front stairs is accessible via a door within the cellar stairway. Within the cellar way can be seen the date "1799", inscribed in pencial or chalk in an 18th-century habd Visible

[33] Ibid., page 8.
[34] Ibid., page 8.

on the back of a riser of the stairs to the second floor. While the meaning of this inscription can not be definitively established, it probably relates to the construction of the house. The north end of the room was partitioned to create a half bath at some point during the 20th century. The partitioning and plumbing fixtures have been removed.

Room 105, located in the northeast corner of the first story, evidently had some kitchen function, judging by its brick fireplace, slightly larger than the others in the house, but more importantly once fitted with swing crane whose eyehook mounts survive embedded into the south jamb (photo #16). Nevertheless, the fireplace was not large in comparison to other cooking fireplaces in contemporary regional farmhouses. Most cooking and messy household chores probably were done in another kitchen, presumably the one documented by the 1850 estate inventory, which also establishes that by that time the room was used as a bedroom.[35] The fireplace mantel, more simply detailed than the other on the first story, features an architrave surround, plain frieze and molded cornice; a small cupboard with panel door in locate on the north side of the chimney breast. The room's extant plaster and lath ceiling probably date to the mid/late 19th century, or perhaps somewhat later; it covers the original exposed beam ceiling, resembling that of Room 104, which appears to have been painted a dark reddish color, probably the utilitarian Spanish brown. Dark olive green and red were the earliest paint lawyers found in samples taken from woodwork in this room.[36] The narrow tongue and groove floor appears to be a mid 20th century alteration; early flooring probably survives beneath it. Walls are covered with 20th century wallpaper. Two doors (D105-1 and D105-2) are of board and batten construction and hung on strap hinges. While both evidently had butt-jointed trim with inner bead molded, the outer molding of D105-1, which resembles that of the room 104 doors, is a later addition, judging from the paint which survives beneath it. The surrounds of the two windows are 20th century, evidence that those windows were extensively reworked.

Second Floor

The floor plan and finishes of the second story also reflect a hierarchy between front "family" rooms and rear services rooms for servants and storage, with clear physical segregation between the two areas. The front hall (Room 201) provides direct access to two front rooms (Rooms 202 and 208), as well as the northeast room (Room 207), which appears to have served originally as store or work room. The back hall (Room 204) similarly accesses two rear rooms (Rooms 205 and 206) and the southwest front room (Room 203), which is isolated from the other front rooms. Direct communication between the two areas is limited to a surprisingly narrow doorway between Rooms 206 and 207, which might represent a later alteration. There is little evidence of altered partitions except for the removal of a partition that subdivided the west end of Room 207 into a narrow, hall-like space. It seems clear that the rear rooms were intentionally segregated and their plainer features imply that the rooms were intended either for storage (Room #207) or for occupation by servants. The second story retains much early fabric, as well as evidence of subsequent alterations, and in general the better finishes and details are to be found in the front rooms. Early features include random width flooring, walls and ceiling plaster, vertical plank partitions, panel and batten doors, and molded woodwork. Only one room, Room 208, had a

[35] New Jersey Wills, 3223R. James Vail's 1850 estate inventory makes reference to the "Bed, bedding and furniture in East back room" on the first story, the same description used for the upstairs rooms.,
[36] Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 8.

fireplace; although pipe thimbles in the other chimneys indicate that stoves were employed for heating elsewhere. Additional research and investigation will be necessary to understand more fully the functional and/or social reasons for the second-story's rather idiosyncratic plan, as well as to explain other anomalies and alterations.

In contrast to its enclosure on the first story, the front staircase is open in the hallway above (Room 201), the stairwell protected by a simple railing with slender tapering square newel posts resembling Hepplewhite style furniture legs, square spindles and simple oval handrail (photo #17). Four iron staples driven into the ceiling above the stairwell, presumably enabled furniture and boxes to be hoisted upstairs. The woodwork in Room 201, along with much of the trim in the other second-story front rooms, resembles that of the front rooms below. The six-panel doors feature butt-jointed trim composed of a stepped architrave with an ogee outer molding. They retain their original butt hinges; the cast-iron rim locks with porcelain knobs are Victorian replacements. The molded baseboard and chair rail match those in the lower hall, and the chair rail makes right turns to continue under the windows forming their sills.

Located at the southeast corner of the house, Room 208 is the only second floor room with a fireplace, which distinguishes it as the "best chamber," a status confirmed by the value of its furnishings in 1850, at $70 more costly that those of any other room in the house (photo #18).[37] The Rumford-type fireplace retains a typical early Federal style mantel comprised of an architrave surround, paneled frieze and molded cornice. Framed by reeded end blocks, the frieze features three slightly recessed panels, the middle one oval and the flanking two rectangular with quarter-round corners. Paint ghosts on the surround's base blocks indicate that elements may have been removed. The heavily worn hole through the brick hearth might have served as a stove pipe thimble, although there is no evidence of its passing through the ceiling below. Two closets flanking the fireplaces are 20th century additions. The floor boards have been painted.

Across the hall, Room 202 is a rather narrow room without a fireplace or chimney access for a stovepipe. While it is possible that the room may have been partitioned from Room 203, no physical evidence has been found to support that supposition. The room was in existence by 1850, when it was listed in James Vail's estate inventory as the "middle front room upstairs," and was furnished with "bedding & furniture." The baseboard features a simple bead molding, and the chair rail is somewhat simpler that that of Rooms 201 and 208, but also returns under the window to form the window sill. The architrave window trim incorporates a large ogee outer molding, unlike others in the house. The floor has been painted.

Although not accessible from the front stairs, Room 203 is clearly a "front room" (photo #21). Its chair rail, baseboard and butted window trim match those found in Room 208. Its unfinished floor boards suggest that it may have been carpeted. Heat was furnished by a stove vented to the southwest chimney.

Room 207, located in the northeast corner of the second story, was originally two rooms of unequal size, as documented by ghosts left in the floor and ceiling after the partition between them was removed (photo #19).

[37] New Jersey Wills, 3223R. The furnishings of this room were worth almost three times more than those of any other bedroom, and considerably more that the furnishing of the two front rooms below.

In that configuration, the east room was apparently a windowless space with utilitarian finishes, suitable for a work or store room. A probe in the northwest corner has revealed that the attic floor joists and floorboards were originally exposed to view, and that the present ceiling is a later installation.[38] Lath subsequently was installed and a base coat of plaster crudely applied. The walls exhibit a similarly crude coat of base plaster, applied directly to the brick nogging, but leaving the ghost of framing members. Considering its lack of heat and windows, the space was likely used for storage. The function of the small west room/hall in the earlier configuration is not clear. The partition was probably removed by the time of James Vail's inventory in 1850, when the "east back room" was being used as a bedroom.[39] The trim of the room's single window appears to be 20th-century fabric, an indication that window has been reworked.

Room 206, converted into a bathroom sometime in the 20th century, is likely the "middle back room" in the 1850 inventory, at which time it was used as a bedroom. The presence of brick nogging in its east and west walls confirms that its original configuration has been retained, although it is unclear if the narrow doorway between Rooms 206 and 207 was a later alteration. While the northwest room, Room 205, was not mentioned in the 1850 inventory, physical evidence suggests that the vertical plank partition forming its south wall is early fabric, despite presence of a chair rail on the west wall that is unpainted where abutting the plank partition.[40] The partition is constructed of hand-planed, tongue-and-grove boards with quirk-beaded edge; similar boards were employed for the enclosure of the attic staircase. A cupboard under the attic staircase can be accessed by a small door within the well of the first-floor staircase, an awkward, but evidently original feature, that was somewhat ameliorated by a small hatch subsequently cut in the south wall of Room 206.[41] Doorways associated with these partitions have batten door hung on butt hinges, lift latches and, in some cases, trim with a quirk-beaded inner edge. The plaster walls in Rooms 204 and 205 have beaded baseboards, molded chair rails and architrave door and window trim (photo #20). The chimney in Room 204 retains a stove pipe thimble and a stove in this location would have been the only source of heat for the adjoining small rear chambers, Rooms 205 and 206.

Attic

The large attic is unfinished and was apparently never partitioned (photo #22). The tongue-and groove flooring is original, based on the evidence of the double-struck heads of its nails, a characteristic of the cut nails with hand hammered heads in use in the late 1700s and early 1800s. A chimney fire has caused minor damage to the west gable; it reportedly occurred during the 1970s.[42] Though attics were frequently used for grain storage, the presence of gable end windows suggest the attic may have been used as household workspace, such as

[38] Removal of a small portion of the existing ceiling has revealed that the wall plaster extends above the level of the present ceiling between the attic floor joists to the underside of the attic floor boards.
[39] New Jersey Wills, 3223R.
[40] Paint Color Investigation and Plaster Analysis, page 9.
[41] Three walls on the inside of the cupboard was covered with wallpaper of unknown provenance, the fourth (north wall) is unpapered.
[42] Interview with Tom Buckingham, February 2010.

would have been required for domestic linen production, for example.[43] James Vail's will mentions "new linen not made up," which was among the highest valued items in the subsequent estate inventory.[44] The name of James Vail's daughter, "Martha P. Vail," is inscribed on the underside of the roof's wood shingles near the head of the stairs.

Other Resources

Brick pavement: **(feature #2 on the site map**

Of the surviving features, perhaps the most intriguing is the small area of brick pavement recently uncovered behind the house. Adjoining the dwelling's central rear entry and cellar hatch, the pavement probably constitutes the brick floor of a lost outbuilding or addition – possibly the kitchen mentioned in an 1855 inventory. The paving, not all of which has been exposed to view, is constructed of rectangular and square bricks, apparently hand-made and laid in a basket-weave pattern.

The pavement is part of a contributing site.

Capped well: **(feature #3 on the site map)**

The concrete-capped well to the west of the house reportedly was dug in the mid-20th century.

The well is a non-contributing resource.

Wood shed: **(feature #4 on the site map)**

The small frame woodshed located approximately fifty feet northwest of the house can be dated to the late 19th/early 20th century based on its construction. It has a wide, clip-cornered opening on its south side and is covered with vertical plank siding. The frame is crudely built, assembled with a mix of cut and wire nails from what appears to be a variety of recycled material, mostly saw cut lumber and round posts.

The shed is non-contributing.

Workshop: **(feature #5 on the site map)**

The small gable-roofed built in constructed of field stone set with Portland cement. It has a gable roof and several small windows and doors. It purportedly was built in the middle of the 20th century, a date consonant with its construction.

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[43] Cohen provides several examples of this use in New Jersey, and quotes Frederick Banfield Hanson: "[T]he number of spinning wheels and the amount of wool and flax in garrets indicates the importance of that area as a work room. . . . Since the garret was dry, that area was the usual place to produce thread and yarn." [Cohen, p. 61]
[44] New Jersey Wills, 3223R.

The shop is a non-contributing building. (photo # 4)

Foundation remnants: **(feature #6 on the site map)**

The remnants appear to consist of the poured concrete foundations of several buildings, including foundations that survive from a barn that burned during the 1960s.

The remnants constitute part of a non-contributing resource.

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations
(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] **B** removed from its original location.
- [ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] **D** a cemetery.
- [ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- [ ] **F** a commemorative property.
- [ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1787 – 1850

Significant Dates

1806

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data

- [ ] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository:

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

A landmark from Green Brook's rural past, the Dr. John Vermeule House is a well-preserved expression of domestic building practice of the East New Jersey culture during that period, reflecting a blend of English and Dutch traditions as well as Georgian and Federal style influences. The dwelling's symmetrical center-entry Georgian façade, for example, masks a "folk" floor plan that exhibits both New England and Dutch antecedents, reflects social divisions between family and servants and provides appropriately detailed space for household work and "polite" activities. The house retains a number of notable early features, in particular the elaborately carved parlor mantel, an exuberant "folk" interpretation of high style Adamesque designs, and the extensive assemblage of secure, well-ventilated cellar store rooms, a rare, if not unique survivor, evocative of the food production/storage arrangements of early rural household of central New Jersey, as well as the relationship between masters and slaves or other servants. The property's period of significance extends from c.1787, the earliest year in which its construction, based on dendrochronological analysis, could have occurred, and 1850, by which year estate records and physical evidence establish that the main block had achieved its present appearance. Late 19th and 20th century alterations are relatively minor and are insufficient to compromises the dwelling's architectural integrity. The house meets Criterion C, with local significance in architectural history. In addition, archaeological resources relating to the property's 18th and 19th-century material culture may be present, particularly around the house, where a small area of brick pavement may be associated with a long-lost detached kitchen or kitchen wing whose existence has been documented by 1850 estate records, and in the vicinity of the former complex of outbuildings at the northwest corner of the lot.

Historic Architectural Context:

From the exterior, the fashionable five-bay double-pile house would have suggested a simple four-room plan with central passage, a layout popularized by the Georgian style during the 18th century. Although the interior of the Vermueles' house was appointed with stylish Federal mantles and other details, its floor plan differed noticeably from the typical Georgian plan, which is characterized by centered front and rear entries leading into a stair passage, or central hall, connecting all of the rooms in the main block of the building. The absence of a center hall and the presence of multiple exterior doors in the rear suggest compromises were made between the desire for a fashionable exterior appearance and the need for an interior layout that would accommodate traditional routines and the presence of servants. In rural areas, numerous Georgian plan houses were really traditional folk houses with stylistic features such as the symmetrical five-bay front façade grafted onto them. Or, in the words of Henry Glassie, "[The] skins of houses are shallow things that people are willing to change, but people are most conservative about the spaces they must utilize and in which they must exist."[45]

Research so far indicates that the original first floor plan consisted of the present five rooms (two front rooms and three back rooms) and two enclosed stairs. The front hall provided direct access to the two front rooms. The rear range of rooms consists of a rear entry hall with enclosed staircase and flanking rooms. There is no direct access between the front entry and rear hall. Presently, each of the three back rooms has direct access to the outside; however, there is some physical evidence to suggest that the western-most entry was a later addi-

[45] Henry Glassie, "Eighteenth Century Cultural Process," p. 407.

tion, perhaps a replacement of a window. While it is not clear that this plan was associated with a particular cultural group, when the Minnie Schenck House was constructed at Manhasset Long Island around 1730, it consisted of two large front rooms and three smaller rear rooms, suggestive of a possible Dutch cultural link.[46] Yet some similarity can also be seen in the double East Jersey Cottage plan of the nearby Vail-Trust House, particularly in the interconnections between rooms. The plan also has some resemblance to plans of central-chimney New England houses, and may reflect influences from the region, as New Englanders moved into New Jersey. While room sizes are certainly spacious, there are several indications that the floor plan had to be made to fit the dimensions of the house: The front stairs are unusually narrow for their more formal use; and due to space constraints, three doorways along the centerline of the house (D101, D104-1, and D207-3) are missing half of their architrave molding.

The small entry hall and narrow enclosed stairs, one of the most distinctive features of the Dr. John Vermeule House, appears to be an original feature of the house and represents a little studied and/or poorly-documented variant of the double-pile plans associated with the east Jersey culture region that probably reflects cultural traditions. While a number of early houses without full center halls exist in the vicinity, it is interesting to note that two nearby Vermeule houses, the c. 1777 Eder Vermeule House and the c. 1784 Cornelius Vermeule Jr. House, both have center halls, and, in contrast to the subject house, the Cornelius Vermeule Jr. House had a "wide gradual stairway."[47] The Henry Alward House in Bernards Township and the Benjamin Shotwell House in Raritan Township are five-bay dwellings with small front entry halls, though both houses became five-bay houses by means of lateral additions. The Vermeule's choice of a small entry/stair hall seems neither clearly Dutch nor English in origin, nor was it a widespread plan in the region; it appears it may have been a plan of choice, rather than simply a persistent custom.

James Vail's 1850 estate inventory provides the earliest documentary information about the floor plan of the house. Five rooms are mentioned on the first floor, the "east front room," which contained sofa, tables, chairs, etc. was apparently the parlor or "best" room," while the west front room, called the "sitting room," was evidently for everyday use, containing "tables, chairs, carpet, crockery & other furniture." The "room back of the sitting room," i.e., the northwest room, had crockery and unspecified furniture. The "east back room" was furnished with a bed, bedding and furniture and the "back hall" had a "secretary stand." Although the use of at least some of the first floor rooms changed over the years, the layout appears to have changed little. The inventory reference to the "kitchen and shed" implies that the kitchen was in a separate building. The discovery of a buried brick floor behind the house suggests that an out kitchen was attached to or convenient to the cellar entrance, which was organized into what appears to have been specialized store rooms for food or agricultural products.

On the second floor, the 1850 estate inventory listed bedding and beds in five rooms: three front bedrooms and the east and middle back rooms. There was no mention of the implied west back room. The existence in 1850 of five bedrooms on the second floor and one on the first floor cannot not easily explained by the num-

[46]David Steven Cohen, *The Dutch-American Farm*, NY: NY University Press, 1992, p. 53. The house was modified c. 1765 giving it a Georgian floor plan.
[47] Dunbar, p. 45.

ber of occupants: The 1840 census listed two males and two females in the house while the more detailed 1850 census listed seventy-two-year-old James Vail, his wife, Maria, age forty-nine, their daughter, Martha, age twenty-six, and her husband, Alfred Vail, age twenty-seven. The presence of a first floor bedroom may be explained by a penchant among rural residents for a convenient room that could be used during illness, old age, etc.

As regards the dwelling's finishes, there is evidence that the carpenter(s) attempted to replicate fashionable designs for interior features. Many interior doors are six-panel styles that can be found in Plate XII of Asher Benjamin's 1797 *The Country Builder's Assistant*. Considered the first American architectural handbook, it was a seminal handbook of carpentry and architecture designs intended as "particularly useful to Country Workmen." [48] A simple mantle depicted in Plate XVII of the same book resembles the mantles in Rooms 102 (photo #10) and 105, while the fluting on the mantel in Room 103 (photo #12) may well have been influenced by Benjamin's design in Plate XVIII. The dwelling's most elaborate fireplace mantel represents an exuberant folk interpretation of the Adamesque style that was popular in the first decades of the 19th century.[49]

A wide variety of hardware is also is also found in the house, which can in part be characterized according to location in more formal versus less formal spaces. The first floor front rooms feature doors fitted with more up-to-date butt hinges, and a variety of rim locks while doors in the back rooms feature Suffolk or Norfolk latches and a variety of wrought iron strap hinges. The Suffolk latch was common until around 1800, when the Norfolk latch superseded it in popularity.[50] The variety in hardware was likely driven by cost, with more expensive hardware used in the public rooms, as well as the availability of improved types. No doubt, some of the variety also reflects changes over time.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:

Located on the northern bank of the Green Brook, a Raritan River tributary, the site of the Dr. John Vermeule House was within the bounds of Middlesex County when it was created within East Jersey in 1683. The site formed part of a large parcel of land purchased by Deputy Governor Gawen Lawrie for the Proprietors of East Jersey from the Lenape Indians in 1684 and became part of Somerset County when that new county was set off four years later.[51] According to Schedule No. 3 in the Elizabethtown Bill of Chancery, published by James Parker of New York in 1747, Sir Evan Cameron, a Scottish nobleman and land speculator, acquired a

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[48] Asher Benjamin, *The Country Builder's Assistant*, Reprinted by Applewood Books, Bedford, MA, 2002.
[49] The mantel is based on a style first introduced into England by architect Robert Adam, who was inspired by the mid 18th-century archaeological finds at the ancient Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and later became popular in America during the late 18th and early 19th centuries
[50] Garvin, p. 82.
[51] Peter Wacker, *Land and People*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1975, pages 347-8; John P. Snyder, *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries, 1606-1968*, Trenton, NJ: Bureau of Geology and Topography, 1969, p. 221. Early land titles in the area were contested. The Elizabethtown Associates had an overlapping claim for land that included the subject site as part of their 1664 grant from Colonel Richard Nicolls. Common law, as well as equity in the land, supported most claims of Elizabethtown Associates claims in eastern Somerset County [Thomas L. Purvis, "Origins and Patterns of Agrarian Unrest in New Jersey, 1735-to 1754," *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, Vol. 39, No. 4, Oct., 1982, pp. 600-627.]

2,000-acre tract (Tract "56") encompassing the homestead site in 1690.[52] Although its devolution over the first half of the 18th century remains obscure, the Cameron tract, like other large parcels in the Raritan Valley, presumably was subdivided into farms as the neighborhood was settled by pioneer agriculturists of Dutch and English origins in those years. However, when and by whom the homestead site was first occupied remains unknown.

While no contemporary deeds have been found, later estate and property records establish that the homestead site formed part of an approximately 116-acre tract of land in recently created Bernards Township owned by John Laing in 1768, and sold by him to Cornelius Vermeule in that year.[53] Writing in the early 20th century, local historian Cornelius C. Vermeule reported that John Laing, a Quaker, acquired part of Lawrie's purchase in 1713.[54] Quaker records from 1721 documenting John Laing's request to hold a meeting at his home near present-day Plainfield indicate that he was living on the south bank of the Green Brook by that date.[55] Cornelius Vermeule and his older brother, Frederick, were also early settlers. Of Dutch ancestry, the brothers emigrated from Bergen County perhaps as early as 1735.[56] Their father, Adrian Vermeule, emigrated from Holland in 1683 and first settled in Harlem, New York.[57] He subsequently moved to Bergen, New Jersey, where he was town clerk in 1708.[58] The earliest known document that places **Cornelius Vermeule** (1716-1784) in the vicinity is a 1746 deed conveying land at the bottom of the mountain from Thomas Pound to Cornelius and Frederick Vermeule, which mentions in its metes and bounds description other lands owned by the Vermeules.[59] The plantation settled by the two brothers, known as Blue Hills, purportedly was as large as 1,200 acres by the time of the Revolutionary War and extended north and south from the Green Brook. A sketch map (Fig. 3) based on one said to have been drawn in 1778 by Captain Cornelius Vermeule shows the location and boundaries of the

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[52] James P. Snell (ed.), *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881, page 562.

[53] Cornelius Vermeule's 1783 will makes reference to "all my land which I purchased from John Laing situate on the northerly side of Green Brook," which he bequeathed to his grandson John Vermeule. [NJ Wills 729R] An 1823 mortgage given by the latter's son, John J. Vermeule, references the "Farm where I now live which said lands were given to me by the Last Will & Testament of my father Doc. John Vermeule . . . with allowance for variation from the year seventeen hundred & sixty eight containing 116.75 acres." [Somerset County Mortgages, Book J, page 140] In describing the same parcel, a second mortgage given by John J. Vermeule in that year references the same lot, noting "a variation to be allowed from the year one thousand seven hundred & sixty eight at which time the said premises were purchased by Corn. Vermeule dcd from John Laing." [Somerset County Mortgages, Book J, page 164] The boundary description in the first 1823 mortgage indicates the property was located on the west side of present-day Rock Avenue, the 18th century road through Quibbletown Gap to the Mount Bethel Meeting House, extending northwards from the Green Brook to the mountain. Bernards Township evidently was established sometime between 1758 and 1763 [Snell, page 740].

[54] Cornelius C. Vermeule, *Pioneers of the Raritan Valley*, Digital Antiquaria, 2006, p. 11. Originally published as "Settlement of the Raritan Valley," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, July 1928. Cornelius C. Vermeule was a descendent of Cornelius Vermeule, the Green Brook settler.

[55] Plainfield Burial Ground website, http://plainfieldfriends.tripod.com/cemap.htm. Laing's son, John (1718-1800) and grandson, also John (b.1750) apparently remained in the area. [Ambrose M. Shotwell, compiler, *Annals of Our Colonial Ancestors and their Descendants*, Lansing, MI: Robert Smith & Co., 1895-7, p. 14]

[56] According to family genealogist Cornelius C. Vermeule, Adrian Vermeule, father of Frederick and Cornelius, "bought a plantation at the Blue Hills, now near Plainfield, for his two sons," just before his death in 1735. [Cornelius C. Vermeule, "The Family DuMoulin-Vander Meulen-Vermeule," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, New Series, Vol. XII (1927), p. 355]

[57] "Earliest American Ancestors of Somerset Families," *Somerset County Historical Quarterly* (*SCHQ*), VI, 1917, pp. 81& 82.

[58] Vermeule, 1927, p. 355.

[59] Unrecorded deed at Rutgers University Alexander Library Special Collections, Indentures Collection Accession #38.

Vermeules' landholdings, which are the largest in the neighborhood.[60] The Vermeules were members of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Raritan, and like many Dutch in Somerset County, they were slave owners.[61] Cornelius Vermeule and his four sons, Adrian, Gerrity, Eder, and Frederick, were ardent patriots. Cornelius was a member of the first Somerset County Committee of Observation and later served a member of the Continental Congress while all four of his sons rendered service during the war.[62] **Adrian Vermeule** (1741-1777), who served as a scout and dispatch rider, was wounded and captured in January 1777. He was taken to New York where he died two months later as a prisoner of war in the notorious sugar house prison in New York, leaving a wife, a son, and two daughters.[63]

Adrian Vermeule's marriage to Elizabeth Field of Bound Brook occurred in 1767, their first child John was born the following year, and it is possible that Cornelius purchased the Laing property to provide for his son and his new family.[64] Describing the large landholdings owned by a few Dutch families in the Raritan Valley like his own ancestors, family historian Cornelius C. Vermeule observed that "[S]ome of these plantations were really worked by a father and several sons, each with his own home and family on the plantation. Usually these large Dutch farms had 6 to 8 slaves apiece. They produced almost everything needed by the owners."[65]

While Adrian Vermeule may have farmed the Laing property, he does not appear to have lived on it. A map prepared for the use of the Continental Army in 1778, the year after his death (Fig. 2), included nothing on the site of the present homestead, but does depict a dwelling on the opposite or east side of the Quibbletown Gap road (Rock Avenue) identified as the residence of the "Widow Vanmeulin."[66] Cornelius Vermeule also owned land on the east side of the road, and his 1783 will mentions a "dwelling house & orchard," on land he had acquired from Joseph Hull, which later conveyances indicate was located in the vicinity of the house shown on the army map.[67] Thus, Cornelius evidently owned the house occupied by his son's widow. Adrian may well have occupied this dwelling with his family while he farmed the property on the west side of the road. Adrian died without a will, and his wife, Elizabeth, was appointed Administratrix. Elizabeth was remarried to Jeremiah Clark by February 1780, when she signed documents relating to Adrian's estate as Elizabeth Clark.[68]

After Adrian Vermeule's death in 1777, it is reasonable to presume that his three minor children, John, Mary and Elizabeth, continued to live with their mother, Elizabeth Vermeule, in the house owned by her father-

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[60] Cornelius C. Vermeule's early 20th century map of North Plainfield is purportedly a copy of an original map made during the Revolutionary War by Cornelius Vermeule's son, Captain Cornelius Verneule.
[61] Cornelius Vermeule was an elder of Raritan Church. [Cornelius C. Vermeule, "The Revolutionary Camp Ground at Plainfield, New Jersey," an address delivered before the Continental Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, January 9, 1923]; Vermeule slave ownership is documented in Bernards and Warren Township tax rolls, beginning in 1784.
[62] In addition, during the winter of 1776-1777 Colonel William Winds and his staff were quartered at the Vermeule homestead and an encampment or "fort" was established on the south bank of the Green Brook. [Vermeule, 1923]
[63] Vermeule, 1923.
[64] Genealogical Society of NJ (GSNJ), Record #4619.
[65] Vermeule, 1928, p. 17
[66] Robert Erskine, "Road from Mount Bethel Meeting House to near Quibbletown and from Quibbletown to Brunswick. No 70, D."
[67] NJ Wills, 729R. The 8-acre property was described in an 1823 mortgage as "the old orchard on the east side of the road from the dwelling house where the old house formerly stood." [SC Mortgages, Book J, p. 190.
[68] An account was made on February 5, 1780 by Elizabeth Clark, "formerly Elizabeth Vermeule." [*Calendar of Wills, 1771-1780*, p. 556].

in-law on the east side of the road, at least until she was remarried to Jeremiah Clark, c. 1780.[69] And while they may have resided there for some years thereafter, neither Elizabeth Vermeule's name nor that of her new husband appears on any surviving Bernards Township tax roll until 1791 and 1792, when Jeremiah Clark was assessed for ten acres.[70] Clark presumably was on good terms with Cornelius Vermuele, as evidenced by his selection in 1783 to witness Vermuele's will, and it is possible that the Clarks occupied the house on the east side of the road throughout the period.[71]

In his will dated August 1, 1783, Cornelius Vermeule directed that his real estate be divided as equally as possible among his three surviving sons, Frederick, Eder and Cornelius, and his fifteen-year-old grandson, Adrian's son, John Vermeule. The latter's share included all of the land "purchased from John Laing situate on the northerly side of Green Brook," as well as an adjoining ten-acre-parcel and the eight-acre "dwelling house & orchard [lot]. . .on the easterly side of the mountain road." The will stipulated that John Vermeule should be entitled to the "benefit of the premises" when he reached the age of twenty, which would occur in 1788. Cornelius Vermeule, Sr., died on March 15, 1784, and his will was probated three months later.[72]

While **John Vermeule** (1768-1813) presumably began to receive the "benefits" of his inheritance in 1788 in accordance with his grandfather's will, there is nothing that suggests his occupancy of the property until nearly a decade later. His name first appeared on a surviving Bernards Township tax roll in 1797, when he was assessed for eight acres – no doubt the eight-acre house and orchard lot he had inherited from his grandfather.[73] In the interim, he evidently pursued medical studies and started a family. John married Sarah Freeman, daughter of Matthew Freeman, a Presbyterian living in the Metuchen section of Woodbridge Township (about eight miles from Green Brook).[74] Their marriage probably occurred no later than early 1793, since the first of their

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[69] This may be Lt. Jeremiah Clark (1844-1803), apparently from New Providence (which was part of Essex County at that time), who served as a lieutenant in the Essex County Militia and was probably encamped on Cornelius Vermeule's plantation during the winter of 1777. [DAR ID No. 55422; Vermeule, 1923]

[70] Bernards Township Tax Ratable, 1791 and 1792. In those two years, and the next two only one assessed property in the township contained 116 acres (almost the exact acreage of the plantation on the west side of the road), which was assessed to Christopher Misner, and it is possible that he rented the property during those years. Bernards Township tax records survive for the years 1778, 1782 (summary only), 1784-1794, 1797, 1802, 1803 and 1805. Township ratable lists during the period indicate Frederick and Cornelius, Jr. (who was known as Captain Cornelius Vermeule) operated large, prosperous farms usually with one or two slaves. Most of Eder Vermeule's land was south of Green Brook, in Middlesex County. Only one Frederick Vermeule is listed in the tax records between 1784 and 1794, and it is not clear whether this Frederick is the brother or son of Cornelius Vermeule, Sr. Frederick Vermeule, the unmarried brother of Cornelius, Sr., died in 1794, leaving his lands to be divided among his three surviving nephews. [*Calendar of Wills*, XXXVIII, p. 389]

[71] *Calendar of Wills – 1781-1785*, p. 421.

[72] NJ Wills, 729R. Cornelius Vermeule appointed Luke Covert, Eder Vermeule and Frederick Vermeule executors, and his will was witnessed by Daniel Whitehead and Jeremiah Clark, who had married Adrian Vermeule's widow. An inventory conducted then shows that, despite Cornelius's prominence and large landholdings, his personal estate consisted of only £100 cash and £135 of household goods.

[73] Bernards Township Tax Ratables, 1797.

[74] Jay W. Thornall, "The Freeman-Thornall Connection in the Woodbridge-Metuchen area of Middlesex County, N.J." 1984, pp. 102-106. According to an often repeated account, the earliest Freeman to immigrate to America arrived "in company with William Penn's first Colony, June, 1681, and was drowned in the Delaware River in the act of landing his chattels; and from his family originated the New Jersey Freeman." [Gustave Anjou, Daniel Freeman and Theodore Frelinghuysen Chambers, *Freeman Genealogy*, Los Angeles, C. E. Bireley Co. Press, 1901, p. 29]

four known children was born in October of that year.[75] Where John studied medicine is unknown; one possibility is that he did so under Dr. Melanthon Freeman, his father-in-law's first cousin and Metuchen neighbor, with whom his mother evidently was acquainted.[76] In any case, by 1797, John appears to have established his residence in the old family home on the east side of the Quibbletown road, where tax records suggest that he continued to reside until 1805, the 1803 tax roll identifying him as "Doc. John Vermeule."[77]

In late 1805 or early 1806, Dr. Vermeule evidently moved across the road to the farm he had inherited from his grandfather, where he resided until his death in 1813. In 1806, the year in which Warren Township was created from the southern portion of Bernards Township, he no longer was levied for taxes on the eight-acre property. Instead, he was assessed on the new township's September tax roll for two lots, one with 116 acres and the other with ten-acres (undoubtedly the two other properties that he had had inherited from his grandfather), as well as for one slave, two horses, six head of cattle, one covered wagon, one riding chair and a dog.[78] Relatively little is known about John Vermeule, and it is impossible to say with any certainty what precipitated his move; but it seems clear that the thirty-eight year old physician finally found himself in a situation that warranted a new residence. Perhaps by 1806, Vermeule's medical practice had grown to a point where he could afford a new house that would symbolize his standing in the community.

While it is reasonable to assume that a tenant farmer had been leasing and even living on the 116-acre farm, it is doubtful that a tenant would have built for himself such a substantial dwelling as the subject house. The date "1799" inscribed in the cellar way beneath the main stairs certainly suggests that the house was erected around that time. However, construction may have taken some years, and perhaps the dwelling was not ready for occupancy until 1806. All that can safely be concluded is that around 1806 John Vermeule and his family moved across the road where, in addition to conducting his medical practice, he assumed operation of his farm, practicing the general agriculture typical of New Jersey during the period.[79]

The Vermeules' prosperity was reflected in their well-furnished house as well as the fashionable "riding chairs" that they were taxed for in 1803. In addition to an "English cupboard" brought to the marriage by Sarah Vermeule, the Vermeule household possessions included a cherry dining table, a secretary bookcase, a mahogany tea table and stand, twelve dining chairs, a rocking chair, a kettle, shovel, tongs and andirons all of brass,

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[75] Their first child, a daughter, was born October 31, 1793, but she did not survive infancy. Margaret was born in February 1796, Susan in November 1799, and John in December 1801. GSNJ, Record #4618, Rutgers University Alexander Library, Special Collections. A different date of birth, August 1800, appears for John in GSNJ Record #4618, but in view of the number of months between November 1799, when Susan was born, and August 1800, the December 1801 date seems more realistic.

[76] Thornall, pp. 80 & 106. In the accounts made by Elizabeth Field Vermeule, as administrator of her late husband Adrian's estate, is an entry dated March, 1778 for "cash paid to Melanthon Freeman £1.4.0" ["Accounts of Elizabeth Vermeule, administrix of Adrian Vermeule," Unrecorded Estate Papers, NJ Wills]

[77] Bernards Township Tax Ratables, 1797, 1802, 1803 &, 1805. In 1802, John Vermeule was assessed for 8 acres, 1 slave and 3 head of cattle; in 1803, "Doc John Vermeule" was assessed for 8 acres, 1 slave and two riding chairs (identified as a "Lind chair" as well as a "Windsor chair," both of which were fashionable styles of riding chair); in 1805, John Vermeule was assessed for 8 acres.

[78] Warren Township Tax Ratables, 1806.

[79] John Vermeule Inventory, January 18, 1814. The inventory documents that Vermeule grew wheat, oats, flax, rye, corn and hay, and kept horses, horned cattle, sheep and hogs. [SC Wills, 1612R]

carpets, window curtains, ample china, flatware, table linens, beds, bed linens and bed curtains, along with an unknown number of books, including Dr. Vermeule's medical books.[80]

However, the doctor was seriously ill by October 1813, when, "being not in a very good state of health, but of a perfect mind and memory," he wrote his will.[81] Vermeule was only forty-five when he died, leaving his wife, Sarah, and three minor children. His will included detailed bequests and instructions: In lieu of dowry, his wife was given the use and benefit of the farm for one year, after which she could have use of two rooms of her choosing in the house; she was expected to "decently support" the children while they were single, and, if the opportunity presented itself, "send such as need to school." In addition to furnishings, a horse of her choice, and his new "Top Chair" and harness, Sarah was given the use of Vermeule's "Negro Girl Sook," until the slave was thirty years old, at which time she should be freed. Vermeule also instructed his executors to invest $800 out of the estate and pay the interest to Sarah. In addition, he gave the use of Matthew Freeman's Woodbridge farm to Sarah.[82] Vermeule gave his two daughters generous money bequests, each her own cow, and bedchamber furnishings.

Vermeule's son, "John M.," was to inherit all his father's land ("the farm below the mountain together with a lot of land I purchased of John Marselis on the top of the first mountain") which would be his when he reached twenty-one. In the interim, the farm was to be leased to "careful prudent persons," who would be permitted to take only sufficient firewood "reasonable for one small family," and were prohibited from taking any stone from the farm. The doctor also gave his son all his medical books and histories among other bequests. Vermeule's other female slaves, Jane and Mary, were to be sold with the provision that they would be free when they each turned thirty, and a male slave, Sam, was to be sold until he reached thirty-two. Vermeule named his "Trusty Friend Richard Field" and his uncle or cousin Frederick Vermeule, Esq., as his executors. The will also provides the first brief details about the farm, which included a granary, one or two barracks, two corncribs – one each for white and yellow corn – and a hog pen. Vermeule instructed his executors sell at public sale what remained of his personal estate after bequests.

In June 1818, John G. Cooper, guardian of Susan Vermeule, filed papers in Orphans Court demanding that Frederick Vermeule and Richard Field, executors of John Vermeule's will, furnish an accounting of the estate. The accounting, which indicated a remaining balance in the estate of $2,054, was filed in June 1819 along with a sworn statement signed by Frederick Vermeule. There was no item in the accounting for any rent received from leasing the farm as called for in Dr. John Vermeule's will, although it is possible that rent may have been paid directly to the widow and children. An independent audit was conducted in 1822, which restated the 1819 balance to $1,947. The reasons for these financial reviews are unknown.

The community on the north bank of the Green Brook developed slowly. According to early 20th century local historian Cornelius C. Vermeule, there were two mills on the Vermeule Blue Hills plantation at the time of

[80] SC Wills, 1621R.
[81] SC Wills, 1612R.
[82] The will indicates that Freeman had given the farm to his daughter "by deed or will" and that Vermeule was under obligation to pay Matthew Freeman a yearly sum during his lifetime. However, research revealed a deed for the property that postdated Dr. John Vermeule's death.

the Revolutionary War, although no mills are shown on Erskine's 1778/78 map.[83] A road return from 1785 records a new two-rod road from "the road that leads from the mountain to Quibbletown [Warrenville Rd.] . . . to the road that leads from the mountains Southerly through the lands of the Vermule's [Rock Ave.]," i.e. a portion of Greenbrook Road.[84] A 1799 petition to the State Legislature by "Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Easterly parts of the Townships of Bernard and Bridgewater" calling for a new township suggests that residents believed the population warranted its own municipality. "Fred'k VerMeule, John VerMeule, Cornelius VerMeule, Cornelius VerMeule Jun." were the first four signers.[85] The residents' request was not approved until 1806, when Warren Township was organized. The new township extended from the hamlet of Mt. Horeb at the western boundary to North Plainfield at the eastern end. Frederick Vermeule served in 1806 as one of the first Freeholders to represent Warren and then served until 1815 on the new Warren Township Committee.[86] A post office was established at nearby Plainfield in 1806.[87]

Having attained his majority and control of his inheritance, **John M. Vermeule** (1801-1833) married Mary Ann Ackor in January 1823, and over the course of that year, evidently in urgent need of money, executed four mortgages on his inherited property.[88] Four days after their wedding, John and Mary conveyed a two-year mortgage on the 116.75-acre portion of the farm to Eden Laing in the amount of $800.[89] In May, the Vermeules took out another mortgage, also for $800, this time to James Vail of Essex County.[90] In addition to the 116.75-acre farm, the couple also mortgaged the 10-acre lot left by Cornelius Vermeule and a 4-acre meadow lot. Four months later, a third mortgage was conveyed, also to James Vail, for $600, for the 116.75-acre farm, the ten-acre lot, the four-acre meadow lot, and a lot on the east side of the road called the old orchard, "where the old house formerly stood supposed to be ten acres," which must have been the house of the "Widow Vanmeulin" depicted on the 1778 map.[91] A fourth mortgage in December, this time to John Giles of Middlesex in the amount of $705, was for the 116.75-acre farm, the old orchard, the four-acre meadow, and a twelve-acre property on top of the mountain. None of the mortgages were cancelled, and by the end of 1823, the Vermeules owed $2,905.

Apparently unable to pay their debts, on March 11, 1824, John and Mary Vermeule conveyed via a quit claim deed "all the farm and plantation whereon the said John J. Vermeule now lives" totaling 138 acres to James Vail and Eden Laing for $100, bringing an end to Vermeule ownership of the land.[92] In April of the fol-

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[83] Vermeule, 1923. Erskine, No. 70D.
[84] SC Road Returns.
[85] Warren Township Historical Society website, www.warrennj.org/wths/pages/census.
[86] Snell, pp. 854-855.
[87] Snell, p. 860.
[88] *SCHQ*, "Somerset County Marriage, 1795-1879," p. 303. In his will, Dr. Vermeule referred to his son as "John M," and family bible records confirm that his middle name was Marselis; however, later real estate documents inexplicably use "John J. Vermeule." [GSNJ, Record #5534]
[89] SC Mortgages, Book J, p. 140.
[90] SC Mortgages, Book J, p. 164.
[91] SC Mortgages, Book J, p. 190. The old orchard is described in this mortgage as "supposed to be ten acres," which is evidently an error.
[92] SC Mortgages, Book L, p. 120. The 138 acres must refer to the 116-acre farmstead, the 10-acre adjoining lot, and the 4-acre meadow on the west side of the road, and the 8-acre "orchard" on the east side.

lowing year, Laing sold off his half interest in a 21.81-acre lot subdivided from the property to David Boice, a neighboring farmer.[93] On the same day, Laing also sold off his one-half interest in an 18.51-acre subdivided lot to Daniel Shotwell.[94] On August 19 of the same year, Laing sold his half of the property, which was described as "the homestead farm of John Vermule, dec'd." to James Vail for $1,500.[95] The next day, Vail conveyed his half interest in the parcels Laing conveyed the previous April to Daniel Shotwell and David Boice. Vail retained ownership of the remainder farm property, which at that point comprised just less than ninety-eight acres, having invested a total of $2,950.

James Vail (1773-1850), a Quaker, was one of ten children of Abraham and Margaret Fitz Randolph Vail. Abraham Vail's father, John Vail (1708-1754), emigrated from Westchester County, New York to Plainfield, New Jersey, where Abraham Laing (1744-1824), a son of John Vail's first wife, Margaret Laing, was born.[96] John Vail settled on a large tract on the north bank of the Green Brook, slightly east of the Vermeule plantation, which he subsequently divided among several of his sons. James married Maria (or Mariah) Jackson of Long Island, and they had one child, Martha Parker Vail, who was born in 1823, a year before Vail's acquisition of John Vermeule's farm.[97] The death of James' father, Abraham, in 1824 may have provided James with the means to acquire the Vermeule farm. Little is known about James Vail, other than he was living in Essex County (which then included all of present day Union County) at the time of John Vermeule's second mortgage in May 1823. By the time he moved to the farm, he was already fifty years old. In 1830, the Vail household included James, his wife and two girls, at least one of which was a daughter.[98] In 1840, the household consisted of James, his wife and daughter, and an unidentified male in his twenties.[99]

The Green Brook neighborhood continued to develop at a relatively slow pace during the second quarter of the 19th century. Historical geographer Peter O. Wacker has observed that the Dutch "generally avoided agglomeration. . . . If one were to view agglomeration and dispersal as a continuum, New Englanders would be at one end of the scale and the Dutch at the other," a tendency that may explain the lack of development in the Green Brook neighborhood of a hamlet or service center.[100] A description of Warren Township published in 1834 mentioned that "the village of Green Brook" was within a mile of several mines, which were thought to contain veins of copper ore "apparently very rich and said to be valuable not only for the copper they contain but also for their gold."[101] Although some mining efforts had been undertaken by 1834, none had proved successful. However, the completion of the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad to Plainfield in 1839 created a new potential for economic growth. Chartered in 1831, with a route along the southern bank of the Green Brook, the railroad bolstered business in Plainfield, but ultimately had little impact on the growth of the com-

[93] SC Deeds, Book L, p. 663. The deed does not mention the fact that Laing is conveying only his half interest in the property.
[94] SC Deeds, Book L, p. 662. This deed also fails to mention that Laing is conveying only his half interest in the property.
[95] SC Deeds, Book M, p. 26.
[96] Ambrose M. Shotwell, compiler, *Annals of Our Colonial Ancestors and their Descendants*, Lansing, MI: Robert Smith & Co., 1895-7, pp. 243-245. It is quite possible that James Vail and Eden Laing were cousins.
[97] *The Friend*, Vol. 26, June 1853, Philadelphia, PA. Although this reference does not include parental information, the information corresponds with other facts about James Vail's daughter.
[98] U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Warren Township, 1830.
[99] U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Warren Township, 1840.
[100] Peter O. Wacker, "Dutch Material Culture in New Jersey," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. XI, Spring 1977, pp. 948-957.
[101] Thomas F. Gordon, *A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey*, Trenton: Daniel Fenton, 1834.

munity north of the brook. An 1850 county map shows a tannery on the east side of the mountain road just north of "J. Vail," and a schoolhouse a short distance south, but there is no evidence of a neighborhood commercial center.[102] Six other Vails lived nearby on Greenbrook Road.

According to the 1850 Agricultural Census, John Vail conducted a relatively modest farm operation. He reported seventy-three acres of improved land and thirty acres of unimproved land for a total value of $6,000.[103] In addition to the seventy-two-year-old farmer, the household included his wife, Maria, age forty-nine; his daughter, Martha, age twenty-six; and twenty-seven-year-old Alfred Vail, who presumably was a cousin and possibly had married Martha by that time.[104] James Vail died on June 28, 1850. He had written his will seven years earlier, at which time he devised to his wife the use of all personal and real estate until Martha reached the age of twenty-one, after which he instructed all property to be divided equally between them. An interesting clause stipulated that if Martha should marry and die without issue, leaving a husband, then that husband should inherit all Martha's share.

Vail's 1850 estate inventory provides the first glimpse of the interior layout of the house, as well as some clues to how the rooms were used. "Bed, bedding and furniture" were inventoried in six rooms: The front room upstairs; the middle front room upstairs; the west front room upstairs; the middle back room upstairs; the east back room upstairs; and the east back room on the first floor, whose fireplace crane might suggest some cooking function for the room. The east front room was furnished with "furniture, including sofa, tables, chairs, etc." while the west front room, called the sitting room, held tables, chairs, carpet, crockery and other furniture. The room behind the sitting room also had crockery and furniture. A secretary and stand stood in the back hall. "Stoves and kitchen furniture" were in the kitchen and shed, and tools and lumber were inventoried in the "kitchen chamber," suggesting there was a 1½- or 2-story out kitchen with an attached shed. Hogsheads barrels were stored in the cellar. In addition to the implied out kitchen the inventory mentions a barn, a "barrick" (presumably a hay barrack), and a carriage house.

Martha Parker Vail died three years after her father. She is undoubtedly the "Martha P. Vail" whose name is inscribed in the attic.[105] Although the exact date of the inscription cannot be determined, it was likely done before her death in 1853. Two years later, in 1855, Maria Vail and Martha's husband, Alfred Vail, sold two lots – an 84.27 acre-parcel (which encompassed the remainder of the Vermeule property and included the eight-acre orchard lot) and 10.287 acre lot elsewhere – to Morris Cohen of Hoboken, New Jersey.[106] On the same day, Maria Vail also took a mortgage from Cohen for $2,700.[107]

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[102] J.W. Otley and J. Keily, *Map of Somerset County, New Jersey*, Camden, NJ: Lloyd Vanderveer, 1850.
[103] U.S. Census, Agricultural Census, Warren Township, 1850. Details of the Agricultural Census are found in the Chronology.
[104] U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Warren Township, 1850.
[105] In an interesting coincidence, Tom Buckingham, chair of CHHP, discovered James Vail's cousin, Emmor K. Vail, had a daughter, also Martha P., who was born in 1853. However, unless her family rented the farm at a later date, she would have been too young to inscribe the shingle in the attic while the property was still owned by the Vails.
[106] SC Deeds, Book V2, p. 457. The purchase price is illegible in the recorded copy.
[107] SC Mortgages, Book S, p. 221.

Morris Cohen was born in Poland about 1810, and presumably immigrated to America sometime before 1840, when he married Ann Maria, a New Yorker.[108] Although Ann Maria's last name is unknown, her given names certainly suggest she was not Jewish, as Morris Cohen most likely was. The Cohens had seven children by 1853, all of which were born in New York.[109] The family was living in Hoboken at the time they purchased the farm in Green Brook. Cohen listed himself as a farmer in the 1860 census, with real estate valued at $8,000. The agricultural schedule of the 1860 census listed Cohen as the proprietor of a farm with eighty acres of "improved land" and twenty acres of "unimproved land," valued at $8,000. Livestock included horses, milk cows, cattle, and swine. Farm products the previous year included rye, corn, oats, buckwheat, hay, small amounts of peas and beans and an impressive 450 pounds of butter.[110] That same year, Cohen sold off 17.97 acres from his 84.27-acre farm to his neighbor, Freeman Shotwell, for $1,257.90.[111]

A map of the Green Brook neighborhood from 1860 shows the area was still rural, with little evidence of commerce (Fig. 4).[112] Along the one and a half miles of Greenbrook road between Rock Avenue and Warrenville Road, there were about ten dwellings, a carpentry shop, a schoolhouse, and a hat shop. Visible on the map are family names of many of the earliest Green Brook settlers: Shotwell, Vail, Randolph, Boice, and Cadmus. The home of the last Vermeule in the immediate area, that of C.F. Vermeule on the north side of the east end of Greenbrook Road, was now occupied by J. Staats, a descendant of another early Dutch settler. The name of M. Cohen stands out not only for being new but also for representing a new cultural tradition in the neighborhood. Morris Cohen's move to a New Jersey farm was an uncommon one for Jews before the 1880s.[113]

By the end of the decade, the rural neighborhood began to change as capitalists and builders sought to take advantage of its proximity to the new railroad. In 1868, the Central Railroad of New Jersey sold three hundred acres that lay immediately south of Cohen's farm to a development company that laid out the new town of Dunellen; evidence that the Green Brook vicinity had become attractive for residential subdivisions that would offer convenient commuting to New York. The potential for development was enhanced by plans for a new competing railroad, the National Railway, whose proposed route ran on the north side of the Green Brook, barely a quarter of a mile north of Cohen's farm. In March of that same year, Morris Cohen sold the remainder of his farm property to Michael F. Marcley of New York City and Martin M. Thorn of Plainfield, for $12,000 subject to a $2,700 mortgage still held by Maria Vail, making a considerable profit on the investment.[114]

In May 1868 came the announcement of plans for "Washington Park," a residential subdivision less than a mile east of Cohen's farm that was described as a "complete real estate development with 'villa' sites for the

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[108] U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Warren Township, 1860.
[109] U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Warren Township, 1860.
[110] U.S. Census, Agricultural Census, Warren Township, 1860.
[111] SC Deeds, Book H3, p. 277.
[112] S. N. Beers and D. J. Lake, *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia and Trenton*, Philadelphia: C. K. Stone and A. Pomeroy, 1860.
[113] The well-documented and very successful Jewish agricultural colonies is southern New Jersey were not founded until the 1880s. [Ellen Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey, 1882-1920*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. JSTOR]
[114] SC Deeds, Book W3, p. 258. Morris Cohen subsequently moved to Jersey City, according to census records for 1870, where he and his son Bennet were engaged in "preserving and pickling." [U.S. Census Population Schedule, Jersey City, 3rd Ward, 1870]

well-established personages of the New York business world."[115] Articles appeared in local newspapers encouraging New York City dwellers to consider the "serenity of the beautiful development of the Washington Park section for commuters' residences.[116] Around this same time, the street grid of the planned "village" of North Plainfield – a residential subdivision – was laid out over former farms near Washington Park. A description written several years later summarizes the attraction for land investors and developers:

> North Plainfield is a regularly laid out village, and is practically a part of the city of Plainfield, though outside its corporate limits. . . . It has therefore all the advantages of the city without the expense of supporting a city government. The place has been laid out on the lands of the farmers, and has been largely settled by people from New York, or those who do business in that city. The houses are, many of them, new, and constructed with more or less architectural elegance, the grounds being ornamented with flowers and shrubbery, and everything presenting a neat and tasty appearance.[117]

Marcley and Thorn then sold their property at a profit in July 1869 to John Kennard and Theodore F. Hay of Jersey City, for $18,000 subject to the $2,700 mortgage held by Maria Vail and a $5,000 mortgage held by Morris Cohen. Both Marcley and Thorn had moved to Warren Township by the time they sold in 1869, but it is not known whether either lived on the farm.

In 1872, the new township of North Plainfield, which included the entire Green Brook neighborhood, was formally set off from Warren Township. Its new name capitalized on its proximity to bustling Plainfield while at the same time distinguishing itself from that city. An atlas from 1873 documents the dramatic changes in the Green Brook neighborhood since 1860 (Fig. 5).[118] Dunellen's planned grid of streets borders the south edge of Kennard and Hay's new property. "G. Hay" – likely a relative of Theodore F. Hay – is shown living in the former Dr. John Vermeule house. The proposed route of the National Railway is depicted just north of Greenbrook Road and the gracious new Washington Park district, with its distinctive road pattern, appears just west of the North Plainfield village grid. A currier's shop, in the location of the early tannery, is the single commercial business remaining in the old Green Brook community.

A series of mortgages and deeds during 1871 and 1872 document the financing arrangements of Kennard and Hay. In addition to getting releases from their several mortgagers, the pair also subdivided and sold a 7.91-acre parcel from the former Cohen farm for $3,100.[119] Then, in March 1873, Kennard and Hay sold their remaining land – which totaled fifty-nine acres – for $8,000 to Helen M. Morgan of Brooklyn, one of their mortgage holders, subject to three mortgages totaling $19,700.[120] Mrs. Morgan, whose husband, Nathan Deni-

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[115] Holly Jean Dunbar, Joann Kohler, Bruce Ryno, and Norma Schneider, *Looking Back: A History of North Plainfield*, North Plainfield, NJ: Blue Hills Historical Society, 1985, p. 19.
[116] Dunbar, p. 21.
[117] Snell, p. 862.
[118] F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Somerset County, New Jersey*, New York: Beers, Comstock, and Cline, 1873.
[119] SC Deeds, Book L4, p.445.
[120] SC Deeds, Book O4, p. 436. The remaining balances on the three mortgages at the time of the sale are not specified in the deed. The verbal description of the property conveyed at this time is repeated in subsequent mortgages, and the acreage is finally specified in a November 9, 1939 deed. [SC Deeds, Book 624, p. 207]

son Morgan, was founder and president of the North American Insurance Co., may well have been engaging in some land speculation.[121] Unfortunately for her, the following September a chain reaction of bank failures resulted in an economic depression that lasted until 1879. In 1881, she sold the property to George R. Brown, also of Brooklyn, for $1.00, subject to a total of five mortgages.[122] Brown owned the property until 1891, when he sold it back to Michael F. Marcley, who with his partner Martin M. Thorn had purchased the property from Morris Cohen in 1868.[123] In 1868 Marcley and Thorn had paid $12,000, subject to a $2,700 mortgage. Twenty-four years later, Marcley paid $6,000 subject to $4,500 yet due on two mortgages. In 1868 Marcley lived in New York City. He had moved to Warren Township by 1869, and was living in Plainfield in 1891 when he acquired the property for the second time.

In 1885, the eastern half of North Plainfield Township, which included the Washington Park section and the village grid, separated to form North Plainfield Borough with the centerline of Rock Avenue forming the municipal boundary. The event reflected what had become an economic disparity between the still-rural western half and the suburbanized eastern half of the former municipality, which also included valuable stone quarries in the hills above the residential developments.

During the last three decades of the 19th century, when the property was owned by a succession of land speculators, the farm was most likely rented, though no records to confirm this have been uncovered. According to the 1891 deed, the "several parcels" were "known as the Trock [?] farm," which may be a reference to the name of an unidentified individual who was leasing the farm.[124] However, **Abram Pool Voorhies** (1845-1912), the son of a carpenter and bridge builder from Griggstown in Franklin Township, was evidently living on the property by 1900, when he is listed in the North Plainfield census as a tenant farmer.[125] Voorhies, a widower, was a resident of North Plainfield in 1880, according to the census that year. Sometime between 1880 and 1890 Voorhies married Caroline ("Carrie") Vail Pound, the daughter of Silas D. Pound, whose land bordered the farm.[126] It is certainly possible that Voorhies leased the property as early as 1880, or at least prior to 1900.[127] A broken step stone with the inscription "Voorhies 188-" that was found next to the house provides some support for this speculation.

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[121] "Nathan Denison Morgan," *New York Times*, September 22, 1895.
[122] SC Deeds, Book E7, p. 439.
[123] SC Deeds, Book F7, p. 438.
[124] SC Deeds, Book F7, p. 438.
[125] Florence A. Christoph, *The Van Voorhees family in America*, North Haledon, NJ: Van Voorhees Assn., c. 2003, p. 246; U.S. Census, Population Schedule, North Plainfield Township, 1900. The family name was variously spelled as Voorhees, Voorhies, Vorhees, etc. For purposes of this report, the spelling "Voorhies" will be used except for direct quotes from primary sources.
[126] While Caroline Pound's middle name was "Vail," a connection to the Vail family has not been established; however the maiden name of her mother, Elizabeth, is not known. Voorhies was first married to Rachel Line by whom he had two children, James and Maggie. In 1870, Abram, Rachael, and James, their older child, were living in Piscataway, were Abram was a farm laborer. [U.S. Census Population Schedule, Piscataway Township, 1870; Christoph, p. 880] Pound is referenced in SC Deeds, Book W3, p. 258.
[127] According to Mundy family members, Carrie Pound Voorhies moved to the Rock Avenue dwelling as a new bride. [Interview with Tom Buckingham, CHHP, March 4, 2010]

Voorhies acquired ownership of the property in 1901 from Michael F. Marcley's executor.[128] A topographic map from 1887 shows that no further subdivision had occurred in the area (Fig. 6).[129] The rapid delivery of agricultural products to the city provided by the railroad fostered the development of the fluid milk industry, and by at least 1909, Voorhies had begun to specialize as a dairy farmer, according to the Plainfield City Directory from that year, which lists his occupation as "milk."[130] The dairy farm was large enough to require two employees according to the 1910 census, which lists Abram and Carrie living with their two daughters, Rachel P., age twenty, and Florence, age sixteen, along with hired man Joshua Seaman and his wife, Jeba, both age seventy-nine, and Winfield Mott, age fifty-nine, also listed as hired man.

Abram Voorhies died in 1912, and in his will he bequeathed "use, interest and income from real and personal estate" to his widow, Carrie. Upon her death or remarriage, the estate would then be divided equally among his four children: James G. Voorhies and Maggie L. Penover, children from his first marriage, and Rachel P. Voorhies and Florence C. Voorhies, his children with Carrie. Mrs. Voorhies continued to operate the farm according to a 1914 directory; her daughter Rachel was married by 1915.[131] Florence married Arthur I. Mundy several years later, and in 1930 the couple and their nine-year-old son Irving A., were living on the farm with Mrs. Voorhies, along with Steve O'Niel, an unmarried farm laborer.[132] The death of Carrie Voorhies in 1939 resulted in conveyance of the property to the three surviving heirs of Abram Voorhies: Margaret Pennoyer, Rachel V. Gould and Florence C. Mundy.[133] Margaret and Rachel conveyed their interest in the property to Florence on November 9, 1939.[134]

A highway map published in 1940 depicts State Highway Route 29, which opened in 1930 just north of Greenbrook Road, and documents the further suburbanization of the Green Brook neighborhood, where a new subdivision had materialized west of Washington Avenue (Fig. 7).[135] The map also depicts Fairfield Manor, owner of twenty-six acres of the original 138-acre farm, and incorrectly locates the holdings of Gertrude Shapiro on the site of the subject property. An aerial photograph from about 1953 shows cultivated fields extending from Greenbrook Road to the Green Brook. Medium density residential development is visible on the North Plainfield Borough east side of Rock Avenue (Fig. 14). By this time the Mundys had begun to subdivide, beginning in 1951 with a small lot conveyed to their son, A. Irving Mundy and Dorothy, his wife.[136] This was followed in 1955 by a much larger sale of nearly fifty acres to Rockview Terrace, Inc., including most of the southern part of the tract and a portion of the northern end.[137] In 1972, four years after the death of Arthur I.

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[128] SC Deeds, Book N9, p. 384.
[129] H.M. Wilson, 1900, in Maser Consulting, "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment," May 2, 2007.
[130] *1909 Wand's City of Plainfield, Borough of North Plainfield, Westfield, Mountainside, Dunellen, Fanwood and Scotch Plains Directory*, Wand Directory Co., 1909, p. 282.
[131] *Farm and Business Directory of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties*, p. 171; Deed of Easement, dated April 20, 1915, in GBHS file.
[132] U.S. Census, 1930 Population Schedule, North Plainfield Township.
[133] Abram's son, James G. Voorhies, died in 1932.
[134] SC Deeds, Book 624, p. 207.
[135] *Hagstrom's Street, Road and Property Ownership Map of Somerset County,* New Jersey, 1940.
[136] SC Deeds, Book 764, p. 378.
[137] SC Deeds, Book 851, p. 548.

Mundy, Florence C. Mundy sold a parcel of 5.594 acres at the north end of the tract to Edgewood Realty Corp.[138]

A. Irving Mundy inherited the property following the death of his mother, Florence, in 1973, and he and his wife subsequently created a living trust in 2000.[139] Gilbert I. Mundy acquired the property in 2003.[140] A. Irving Mundy died March 16, 2006, at the age of 85.[141] In 2007, Green Brook Township entered into a contract to purchase the farmhouse and remaining acreage. At that time, an inventory of outbuildings identified a collapsed 19th-century corn crib; a mid-20th century chicken house; an early 20th century brick wall remnant (possibly a milk house); an early-to-mid-20th century stone milk house; a mid-19th century piggery; a mid-19th century woodshed; and a 20th century coop.[142] In addition, concrete footings remained from a barn that burned during the 1960s. The acquisition, which was completed in December 2008 utilizing Green Brook Township Open Space Trust Fund, also included a collection of 19th and 20th century furniture and other items in the house that presumably were owned by the Voorhies and Mundy families, and perhaps earlier property owners.

[138] SC Deeds, Book 1270, p. 713.
[139] SC Deeds, Book 1290, p. 171.
[140] Green Brook Township files.
[141] *Home News Tribune*, March 17, 2006.
[142] Memorandum from Kathryn R. Kitchener to Green Brook Township Committee, November 1, 2007.

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Green Brook Historical Society Files and Website
http://greenbrooknj.com/

Plainfield NJ Friends Burial Ground Website,
http://plainfieldfriends.tripod.com/cemap.htmUnited States Census

Dr. John Vermeule House
Name of Property

Somerset Co., NJ
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.199 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	545490	4495350	3			
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann Parsekian, Dennis Bertland, Janice Armstrong,

organization Dennis Bertland Associates date July 2010

street & number P.O. Box 315 telephone 609-397-3380

city or town Stockton state NJ zip code 08559

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Township of Green Brook

street & number 111 Greenbrook Road telephone 732-968-1023

city or town Green Brook state NJ zip code 08812

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this from to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes the two contiguous lots in Green Brook Township: tax block 89, lot 24.01 and tax block 89, lot 24.02, which encompass the house and all of the site features. The boundary of the nominated property follows those of these two lots as depicted on the township tax map which accompanies this nomination. The boundary of the nominated property begins at the southeast corner of block 89, lot 24.01 on the west side of Rock Avenue and proceeds west, north and east along the south, west and north sides of lot 24.01 to the northeast corner of that lot, also the northwest corner of lot 24.02. From that point the boundary proceeds east along the north side of lot 24.01 to that lot's northeast corner on the west side of Rock Avenue. From that point the boundary proceeds south along the east side of lot 24.01, also the west side of Rock Avenue to that lot's south east corner, also a northeast corner of block 89, lot 24.01, and continues south along the east side of lot 24.01 and the west side of Rock Avenue to the place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property encompasses the two lots which constitute the remainder of the acreage historically associated with the Dr. John Vermeule House and owned by the Township of Green Brook.

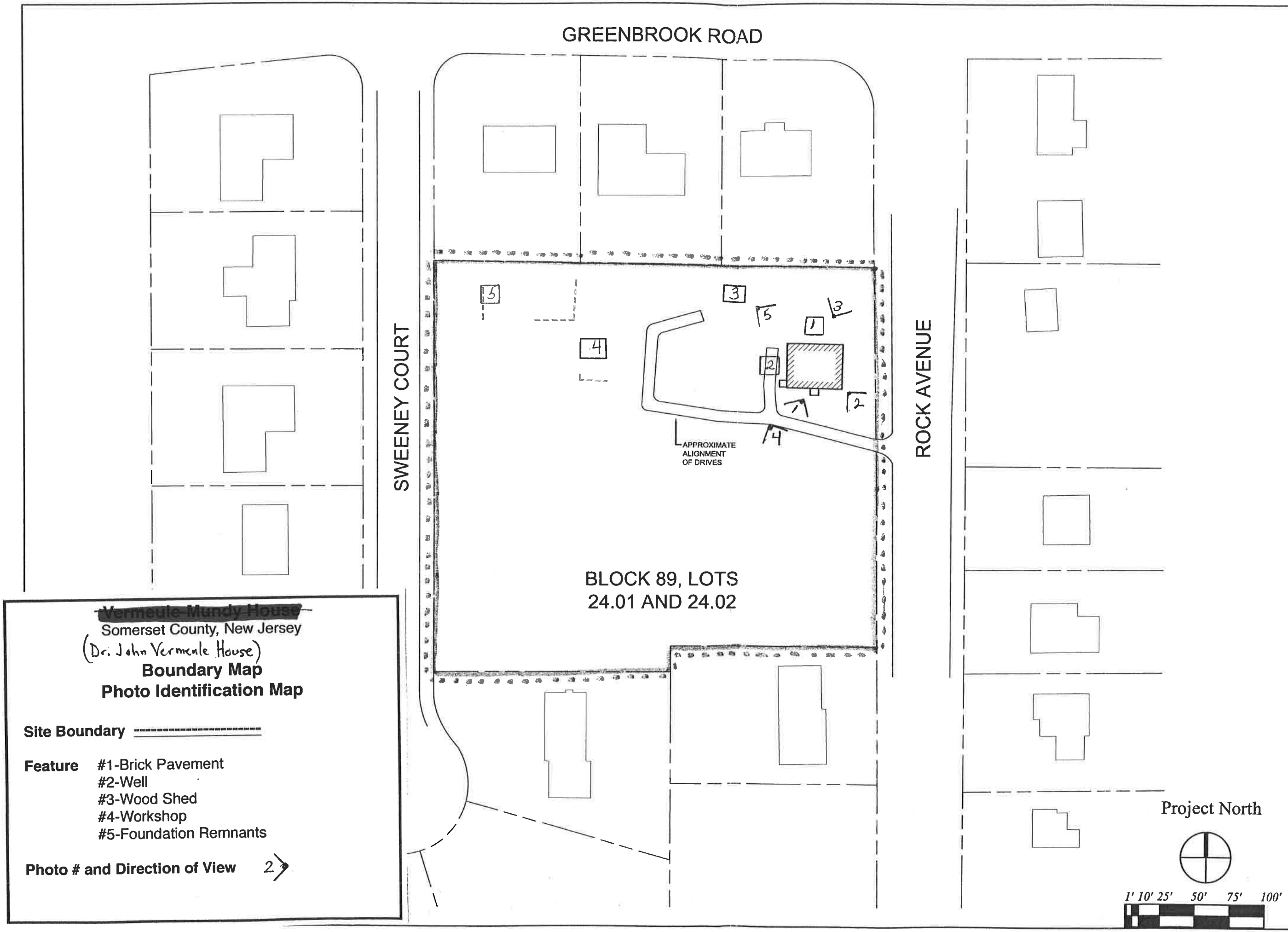
PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION:

The following information is the same for all of the photographs submitted:

Name:	Dr. John Vermeule House
Location:	Greenbrook Township, Somerset Co., NJ
Photographer:	Ann Parsekian
Date of photographs:	February 2010
Digital repository:	Dennis Bertland Associates PO Box 315,Stockton, NJ 08559

Photograph direction of view:

#1 House, northeast view.
#2 House, northwest view.
#3 House, southeast view.
#4 Context shot, outbuildings, northwest view.
#5 Feature # 3, wood shed, northeast view.
#6 House, basement room 005, southwest view.
#7 House, basement room 001, northeast view.
#8 House, basement rooms 001/004, doors to rooms 002 & 003, southeast view.
#9 House, 1st floor, room 101, south view.
#10 House, 1st floor, room 102, southwest view.
#11 House, 1st floor, room 108, southeast view.
#12 House, 1st floor, room 103, southwest view.
#13 House, 1st floor, room 104, southeast view.
#14 House, 1st floor, room 104, northwest view.
#15 House, 1st floor, room 106, southeast view.
#16 House, 1st floor, room 106, fireplace detail.
#17 House, 2nd floor, room 201, northeast view.
#18 House, 2nd floor, room 208, southeast view.
#19 House, 2nd floor, room 207, northeast view.
#20 House, 2nd floor, room 204, southeast view.
#21 House, 2nd floor, room 203, southwest view.
#22 House, attic, east view.



~~Vermeule Mundy House~~
Somerset County, New Jersey
(Dr. John Vermeule House)
Boundary Map
Photo Identification Map

Site Boundary ----------

Feature #1-Brick Pavement
#2-Well
#3-Wood Shed
#4-Workshop
#5-Foundation Remnants

Photo # and Direction of View 2

Revisions & Submissions Date

A 01

Dr. John Vermeule House
The ~~Vermeule-Mundy House~~
223 Rock Avenue
Green Brook, New Jersey
Township of Green Brook, Owner

Site Survey

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENNER R.A. NJ# AI 13776
MICHAEL CALATATI R.A. NJ# AI 09029

Historic Building Architects, LLC
312 West State St. Trenton, NJ 08618 TEL 609 393 3999 FAX 609 393 4333
Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2012

Scale: 1:768

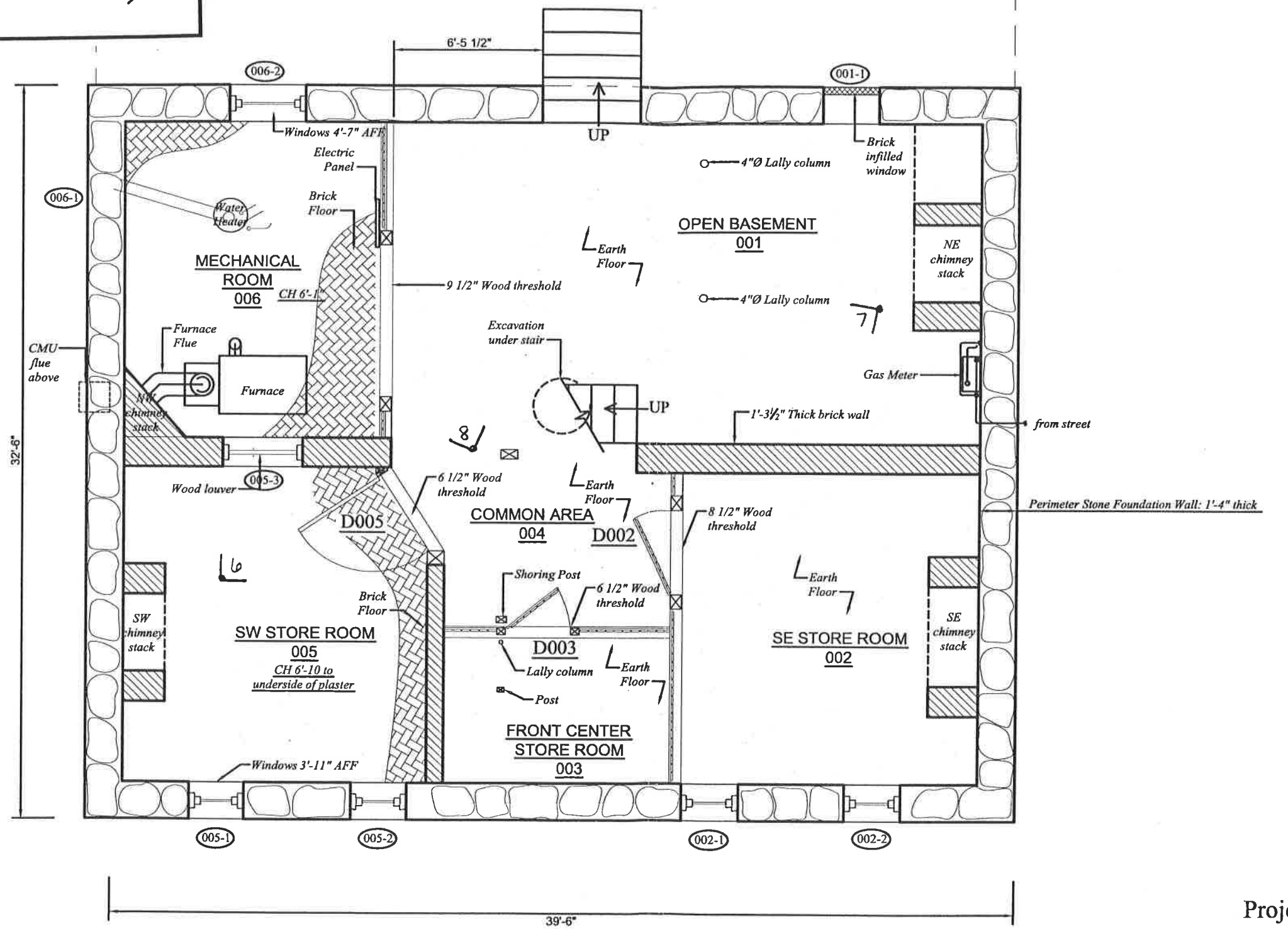
Drawn by: CC/CB/MS

Date: 4/9/2010

Dr. John Vermeule House
[redacted]
Somerset County, New Jersey

Photo Identification Map

Photo # and Direction of View 2



Project North

0 1' 5' 10'

Revisions & Submissions Date

A10

Historic Structure Report for
The [redacted] House
223 Rock Avenue
Green Brook, New Jersey
Township of Green Brook, Owner

Basement Plan

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENKER R.A. NJ# AI 13776
MICHAEL CALAFATI R.A. NJ# AI 09027

Historic Building Architects, LLC
312 West State St. Trenton, NJ 08618 TEL 609 393 3999 FAX 609 393 4333
Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2012

Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

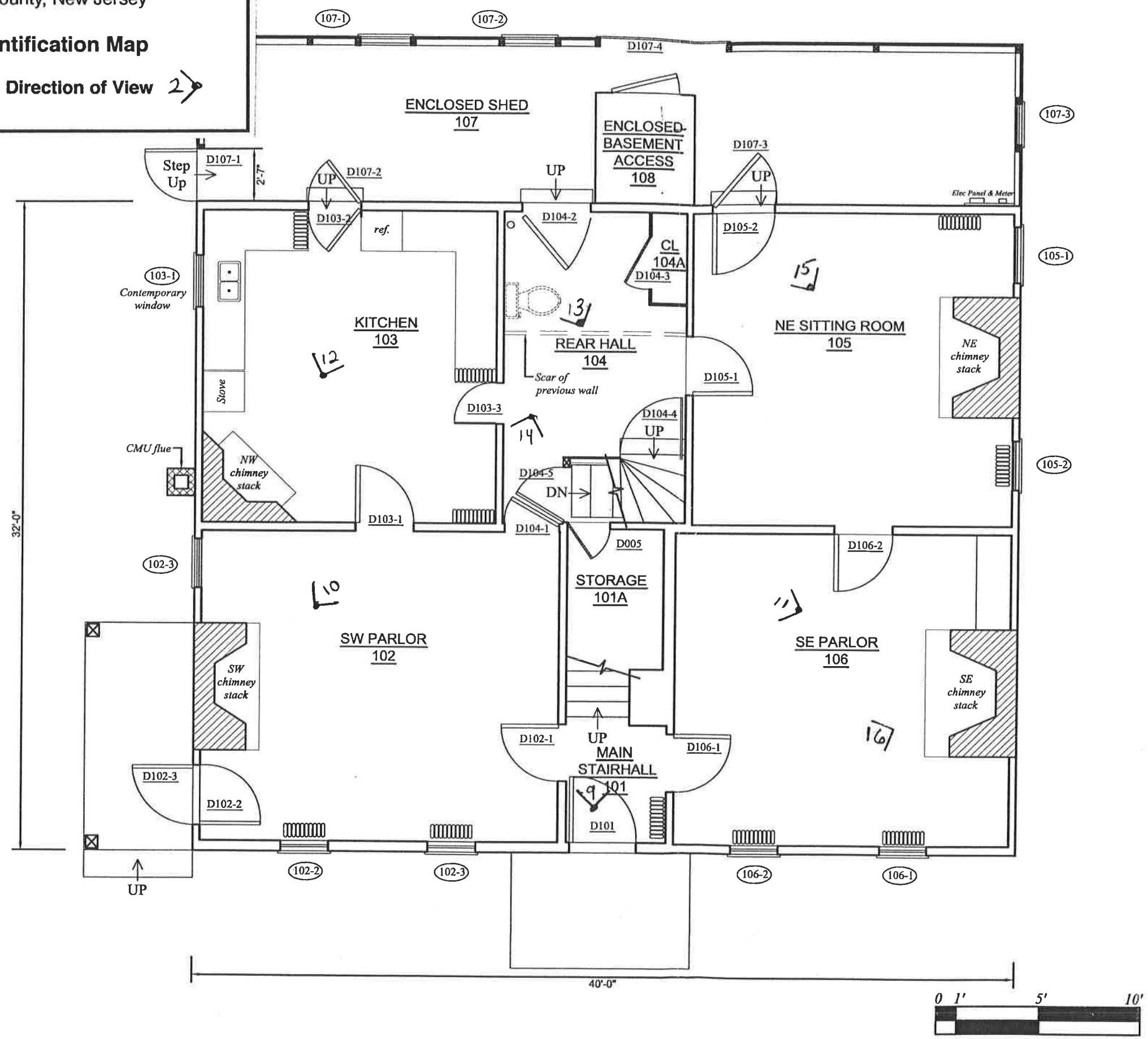
Drawn by: CC

Date: 2/17/2010

Dr. John Vermeule
[redacted]-House
Somerset County, New Jersey

Photo Identification Map

Photo # and Direction of View 2



Project North

Revisions & Submissions Date

A11

Historic Structure Report for
Dr. John Vermeule
[redacted]-House
223 Rock Avenue
Green Brook, New Jersey
Township of Green Brook, Owner

First Floor Plan

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENNER R.A. NJ# AI 13776
MICHAEL CALAFATI R.A. NJ# AI 09529

Historic Building Architects, LLC
312 West State St. Trenton, NJ 08618 TEL 609 393 3999 FAX 609 393 4333
Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2012

Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

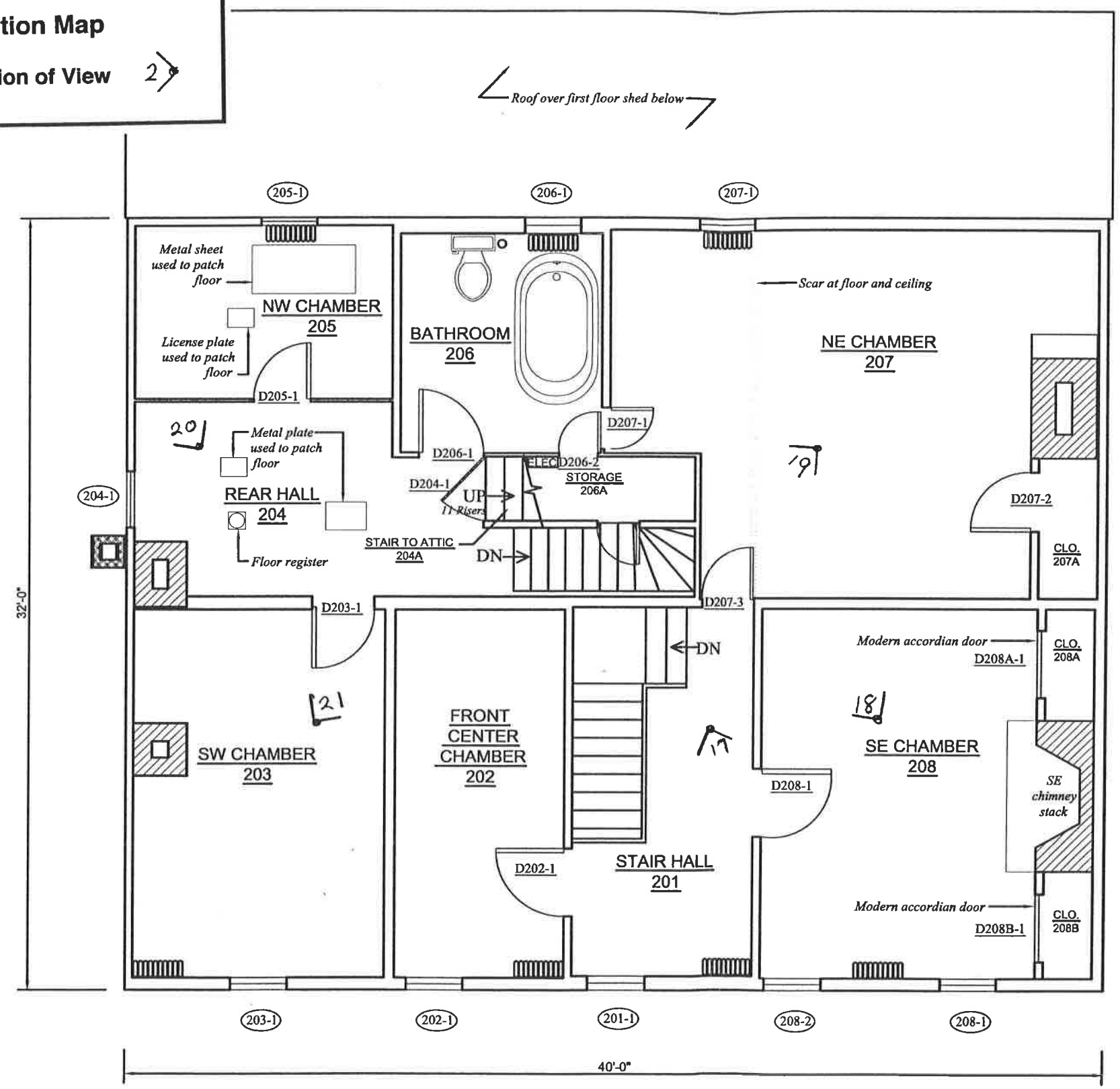
Drawn by: CC

Date: 3/5/2010

Dr. John Vermeule
~~Vermeule-Mundy~~ House
Somerset County, New Jersey

Photo Identification Map

Photo # and Direction of View 2



Project North

0 1' 5' 10'

Revisions & Submissions Date

A12

Historic Structure Report for
The Dr. John Vermeule ~~Vermeule-Mundy~~ House
223 Rock Avenue
Green Brook, New Jersey
Township of Green Brook, Owner

Second Floor Plan

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENNER R.A. NJ# AI 13776
MICHAEL CALAFATI R.A. NJ# AI 09029

Historic Building Architects, LLC
312 West State St. Trenton, NJ 08618 TEL 609 393 3999 FAX 609 393 4333
Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2012

Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

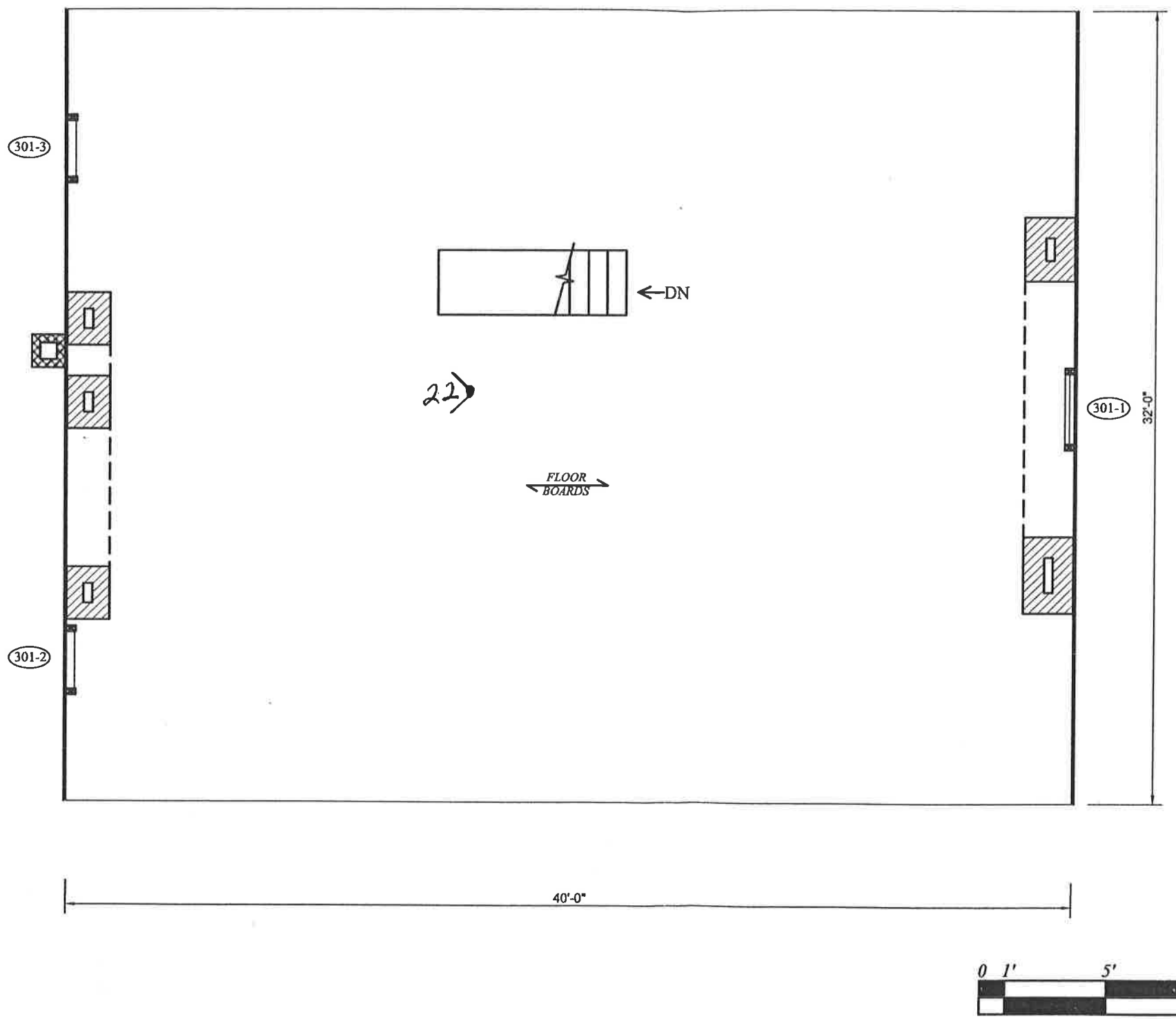
Drawn by: CC

Date: 2/1/2010

Dr. John Vermeule
[redacted] House
Somerset County, New Jersey

Photo Identification Map

Photo # and Direction of View 22



Project North

Revisions & Submissions Date

A13

Historic Structure Report for
The Dr. John Vermeule [redacted] House
223 Rock Avenue
Green Brook, New Jersey
Township of Green Brook, Owner

Attic Plan

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENNER R.A. NJ# AI 13776
MICHAEL CALAFATI R.A. NJ# AI 09029

Historic Building Architects, LLC
312 West State St. Trenton, NJ 08618 TEL 609 393 3999 FAX 609 393 4333
Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2012

Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"

Drawn by: CC

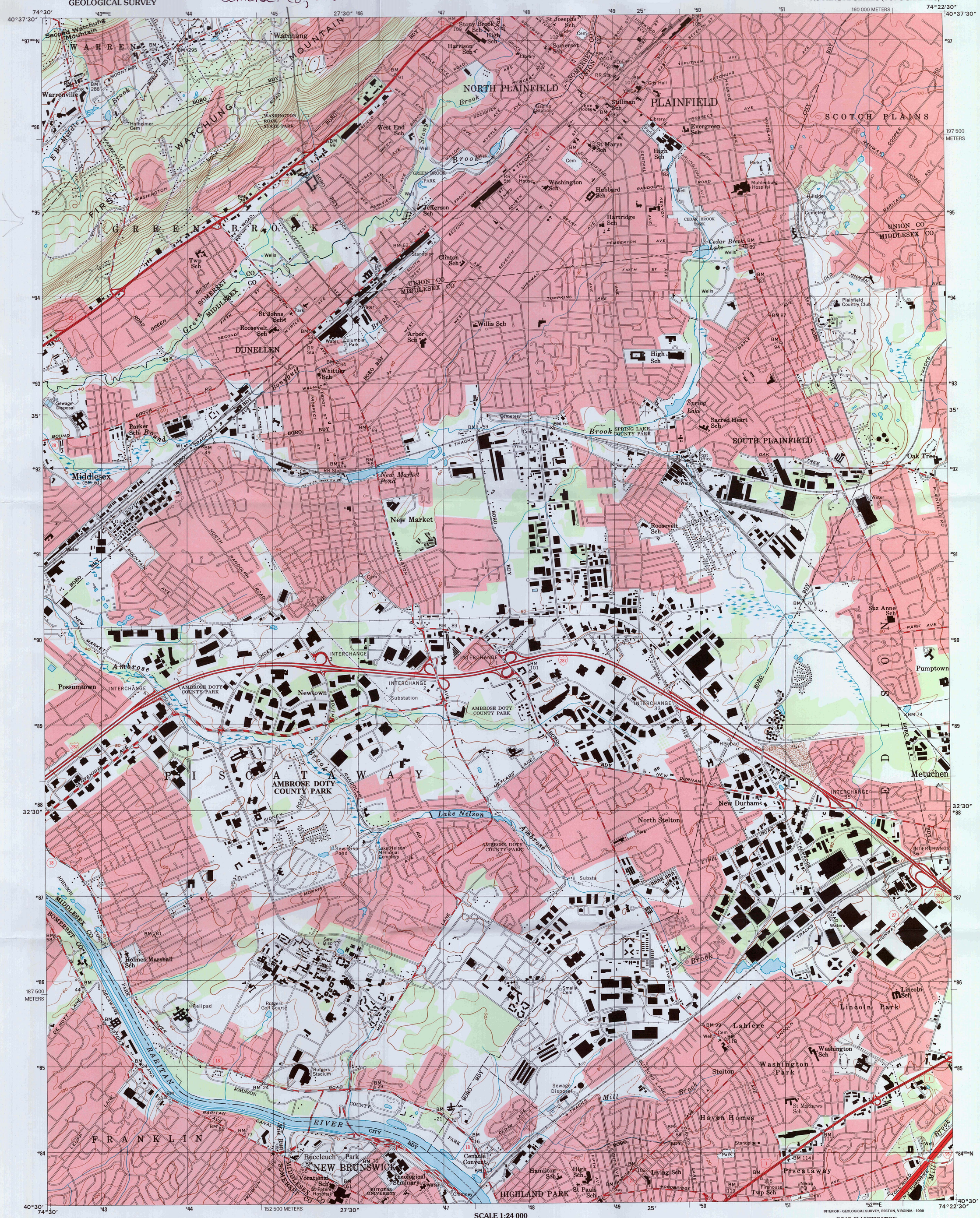
Date: 2/15/2010

Z=18, E= 595490
N= 4495350

Vermeule - Mundy House
Somerset Co, NJ

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PLAINFIELD QUADRANGLE
NEW JERSEY
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)


74°30′
40°37′30″
74°22′30″
40°37′30″
40°30′
74°30′
40°30′
74°22′30″
32′30″
35′
27′30″
25′
160 000 METERS
197 500 METERS
187 500 METERS
152 500 METERS
WARREN
WATCHUNG MOUNTAIN
Second Watchung Mountain
Warrenville
NORTH PLAINFIELD
PLAINFIELD
SCOTCH PLAINS
FIRST GREEN BROOK
DUNELLEN
SOUTH PLAINFIELD
Middlesex
New Market
Possumtown
Newtown
PISCATAWAY
AMBROSE DOTY COUNTY PARK
Lake Nelson
North Stelton
New Durham
Metuchen
Pumptown
Oak Tree
Lincoln Park
Lakiere
Stelton
Washington Park
Haven Homes
Piscataway
FRANKLIN
NEW BRUNSWICK
HIGHLAND PARK
Holmes Marshall Sch
Buccleuch Park
Rutgers Golf Course
Rutgers Stadium
Cenacle Convent
Theological Seminary
Vocational Sch
St Peters Hospital
Hamilton Sch
High Sch
St Pauls Sch
Irving Sch
Twp Sch
Washington Sch
Lincoln Sch
Suz Anne Sch
Muhlenburg Hospital
Plainfield Country Club
Hillside Cemetery
Sacred Heart Sch
Spring Lake
SPRING LAKE COUNTY PARK
Cedar Brook Lake
CEDAR BROOK PARK
Evergreen Sch
Stillman Sch
St Marys Sch
Hubbard Sch
Hartridge Sch
Washington Sch
Jefferson Sch
West End Sch
Clinton Sch
Willis Sch
Arbor Sch
Whittier Sch
Roosevelt Sch
St Johns Sch
Twp Sch
Parker Sch
Harrison Sch
Stony Brook Sch
St Josephs Sch
Somerset Sch
Sewage Disposal
Hohelmer Cem
WASHINGTON ROCK STATE PARK
GREEN BROOK PARK
Columbia Park
Water
Standpipe
Substation
Helipad
Sew Disp Pond
Lake Nelson Memorial Cemetery
Smally Cem
Sewage Disposal
Chimney
Cemetery
Post Office
City Hall
Library
Fire House
Gasing Station
RR Sta
INTERCHANGE 1
INTERCHANGE 2
INTERCHANGE 3
INTERCHANGE 4
INTERCHANGE 33
INTERCHANGE 35
INTERCHANGE 36
4 TRACKS
Ambrose Brook
Green Brook
Stony Brook
Bound Brook
New Market Pond
Spring Lake
Cedar Brook Lake
Lake Nelson
Mill Brook
RARITAN RIVER
SOMERSET CO
MIDDLESEX CO
UNION CO
MIDDLESEX CO
SOMERSET CO
MIDDLESEX CO
SOMERSET CO
UNION CO
MIDDLESEX CO
SOMERSET CO
MIDDLESEX CO
SOMERSET CO
MIDDLESEX CO
SOMERSET

WARNING!

GLASS LAMPS
#03325
WAFFLE IRON
INSECT VAPORIZER
#03325
CHRISTMAS
SEWING/CRAFTS/HOBBIES
#03325
PUZZLES/TOYS
#03325
PUZZLES/TOYS
#03325
PLATES/BOWLS/VASE
#03325
#03325
SMALL APPLIANCES
#03325
KITCHEN
SWS
CHINA SET
#03325
SOAP
#03325