

VLR - 4/18/72, NHRP - 11/03/72

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	VIRGINIA	
COUNTY:	ACCOMACK	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON: WHARTON PLACE

AND/OR HISTORIC: WHARTON PLACE

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: .3 mi. N of Rt. 762, .4 mi. S E of intersection with Rt. 679.

CITY OR TOWN: Mappsville vicinity (Thomas N. Downing, First District Congressman)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Virginia	51	Accomack	001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Charles R. Busch

STREET AND NUMBER: 207 Heywood Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Orange

STATE:	CODE
New Jersey	34

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Accomack County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Accomack

STATE	CODE
Virginia	51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Building Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1940

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE:	CODE
D.C.	11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

VIRGINIA  
STATE:  
ACCOMACK  
COUNTY:  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wharton Place stands in an isolated location at the end of a neck on the ocean side of the Eastern Shore. The house and its immediate grounds are surrounded by broad, flat fields and pine woods, and just to the north are the marshes of Assawaman Creek. From the roof of the house can be obtained a broad prospect of the coastal wetlands, Wallops Island, and the distant ocean.

Wharton Place's front or east yard is informally planted with shade trees and shrubbery. On the west side is a somewhat formal flower garden with boxwood borders. Located in a corner of the garden is a cemetery containing the graves of John Wharton and his wife. On the house's north side are various frame outbuildings, among which is an early smokehouse.

The house itself is a two-story rectangular structure divided into five bays on each front and covered by a deck-on-hip roof. Projecting from the roof are two interior chimneys, and surrounding its base is a deep cornice ornamented with pairs of brackets. All four walls are laid in very even Flemish bond with thin white mortar joints, and are in good repair. All the windows in the house, including the basement windows, are topped with white marble splayed flat arches; marble is also used for the east and west entrances, and for the treads of the steps on each front. Unornamented whitewashed wooden panels are located between the first and second floor windows on all four sides. The small pane sashes on the second floor were removed in the late nineteenth century and replaced with two-over-two sash. The original sashes were located during the 1945 renovation, however, and returned to their former positions. Also during the renovation, a Victorian-style one-story front porch was removed from the east front. The handsome frontispieces of the east and west doors are nearly identical, and feature a pediment with open tympanum supported on half-round columns. Extending into each tympanum is a lunette ornamented with tracery of a simple but unusual pattern, consisting of segments of circles. Projecting from the house's north side is a one-story kitchen and service wing. Because of the similar brickwork, this wing appears to be an original feature of the present house and not an earlier structure.

Wharton Place's interiors, embellished with the present owner's fine collection of antiques, are surely among the most beautiful in the state. The first floor plan consists of two small, uneven size rooms with a large stair hall between them on the east side, and two larger uneven size rooms on the west. The handsome stair, with turned balusters, molded hand-rail, and intricate scrolled and carved end bracket, ascends around an open well to the attic. The small office to the south of the stair hall, and the larger room on the north, have simple, but pleasingly proportioned Federal-style woodwork. The southwest and northwest chambers, on the other hand, give a feeling of superb richness. The mantels in both rooms are embellished with a variety of Wellford composition ornaments such as garlands, swags, urns, flower baskets, and classical figures. Also, both mantels are lined with King of Prussia marble. Wellford ornaments are likewise employed in the paneled wainscoting and in the cornices over the doors. The ceilings in both rooms are decorated with simple geometrical designs in the plaster. Furthermore, the baseboards are marbleized and the doors are grained and have painted inlay. It should be noted that until the house was acquired by the present owner, the interior retained its original paint; and during the renovation all the original colors were faithfully reproduced.

SEE IN

See continuation sheet

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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7.

The plan of the second floor is similar to the first floor except that a narrow hall divides the southwest and northwest chambers. The second floor trim is also less elaborate than that on the first, although the two signed Wellford mantels are located there. Both these mantels, like the ones in the rooms below them, are decorated with swags, urns, garlands, flower baskets, and classical figures. The plainly evident signatures are located just below the central figures in each example.

The area under the roof contains two windowless bedrooms. The roof deck is reached by a very steep stair ascending from the third floor hall.

CCL

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATES (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |   |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     | osophy                                  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wharton Place was built by John Wharton (1762-1811), a prosperous maritime merchant and native of Accomack County. The exact construction date has not been established, but it is believed that the house was put up within a few years after Wharton purchased the surrounding 164 acre tract from William H. Beavans in 1798. Wharton made his new home the headquarters for his various business interests, and maintained a landing for his ships on Assawaman Creek, within sight of the house.

Wharton apparently was quite successful in his various ventures, for he spared little expense in obtaining the finest materials and best workmanship for his residence. With its graceful exterior proportions, its lavish use of marble trims and its rich interior woodwork and plaster decoration, Wharton Place ranks among the most architecturally sophisticated Federal houses in the state. Much of the architectural interest of the house centers around its four beautiful Federal mantels richly embellished with the composition ornaments of Robert Wellford of Philadelphia. Wellford was one of the country's most noted manufacturers of Adam-style ornaments. His name appears in the Philadelphia Directories from 1801 to 1839 and his designs were used throughout the Eastern seaboard. The presence of Wellford's signature on the central figures of two of the mantels provides invaluable evidence for identifying other examples of this significant artisan's work. There are several other mantels with Wellford's ornaments in other Eastern Shore houses, but none are signed, and none are as elaborate and well preserved as the Wharton Place examples.

Few other Virginia houses of the quality of Wharton Place survive in as good a state of preservation, and with as little alteration to either the original design or fabric. Through careful renovation begun in 1945 by the late owner, Mr. Charles R. Busch, a noted industrial inventor, and his widow, the house, in its dramatic and lonely setting overlooking marshy Assawaman Creek and the distant ocean, appears much as it did when first lived in by "Captain Jack" Wharton.

CCL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Busch, Mr. & Mrs. Charles R., "Wharton," n.p., n.d.

Whitelaw, Ralph T., Virginia's Eastern Shore, vol. 2, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	37° 51' 11"	75° 32' 24"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	37° 51' 11"	75° 31' 33"				
SE	37° 50' 27"	75° 31' 33"				
SW	37° 50' 27"	75° 32' 24"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 160 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission      DATE: March, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: James W. Moody, Jr.  
Title: Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date: APR 18 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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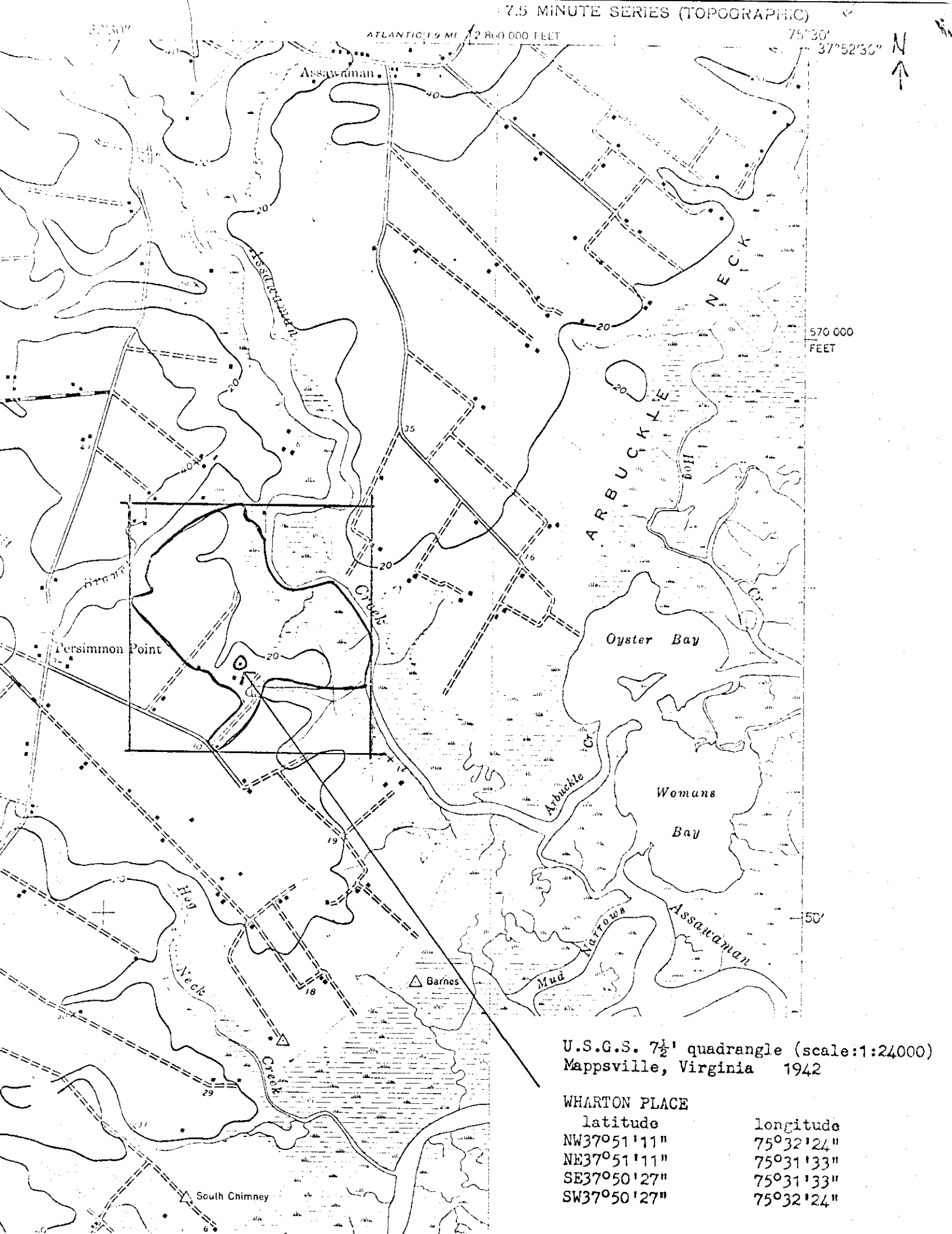
(Continuation Sheet)

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6.

Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory  
1958 Federal  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D. C. Code: 11



570 000 FEET

U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Mappsville, Virginia 1942

WHARTON PLACE	
latitude	longitude
NW37°51'11"	75°32'24"
NE37°51'11"	75°31'33"
SE37°50'27"	75°31'33"
SW37°50'27"	75°32'24"

South Chimney