

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 for individual properties and 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 any 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 from 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 Rose Valley Historic District
other names/site number NA

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Ridley Creek, Woodward Road, Providence and Brookhaven Roads and Todmorden Lane within Rose Valley Borough. not for publication N/A
city or town Rose Valley Borough vicinity N/A
state PA code PA county Delaware code 045 zip code 19063 and 19086

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby 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

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register _____

(See continuation sheet).

determined eligible for the National Register _____

(See continuation sheet).

determined not eligible for the _____

Register

National

removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

105 30 buildings

7 0 sites

10 0 structures

1 0 objects

121 30 Total

(Rose Valley historic District)
(Delaware County, PA)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
1 Thunderbird Lodge

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
Domestic	Single Family
Domestic	Secondary structures
Social	Meeting Hall
Government	Government office
Education	School house
Religion	Church
Recreation & Culture	Theater

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
Domestic	Single family
Domestic	Secondary structures
Social	Meeting hall
Government	Government office
Education	School house
Religion	Church
Recreation & Culture	Theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Pennsylvania vernacular
Colonial: Georgian
Late Victorian: Gothic Revival
Early 20th Century American: Arts & Crafts
Modern: other

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: stone
roof clay tile, asphalt
walls stucco; stones
other Mercer tile

(Rose Valley historic District)
(Delaware County, PA)

page #4

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

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.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction 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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

Community Planning

Period of Significance 1780 – 1950

Significant Date(s) 1901
1906
1923

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) William L. Price

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Price, William L.; Price, Walter F.; Shay, Howell Lewis; Purcell, William Grey; Barney, W. Pope

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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: Athenaeum of Philadelphia, PA; Winterthur Library, Greenville, DE.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 171

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

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1. 18	E 0466287 N 4416542	2. 18	E 0466781 N 4417099
3. 18	E 0467294 N 4416991	4. 18	E 0467834 N 4416137
5. 18	E 0467207 N 4415361	6. 18	E 0466687 N 4415765

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
organization CivicVisions date 12 May 2009; last revised Jan. 2010
street & number 2029 Walnut Street, telephone 215-563-1555
city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19103

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 _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 the 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 form 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Rose Valley Historic District
Delaware County, PA

Section 7 Page 1

Summary Paragraph:

The Rose Valley Historic District is entirely located within Rose Valley Borough in Delaware County, Pennsylvania in an area formed by the Vernon Run valley that flows into the larger valley of Ridley Creek. The spine of the district is Rose Valley Road that connects north to Media and south-east via Providence Road to Chester. Secondary roads and minor streets, some little more than small lanes provide access to a collection of modest vernacular 18th, 19th, and 20th century buildings on the east side of Rose Valley Road with larger properties on the west side. The buildings are typically built of rubble stone with protective stucco, in the regional vernacular while later buildings use modern materials including hollow tile with stucco. Most of the buildings were adapted by the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community after 1901. The 60 or so buildings of the arts and crafts community received characteristic design touches, tile roofs, Mercer tile panels, that link them together and emphasize a strong sense of place. After World War I, the domestic architecture of Rose Valley shows the continuing evolution of regional modern architecture with an important example of the Prairie School, and several California bungalow and International Modern designs coupled with a dozen or more historical revivals. The roughly 120 buildings and structures represent Rose Valley's multiple manifestations from agriculture to mill town, to arts and crafts utopia and eventually to artistic suburb after World War I, and continuing into the 1950s. While primarily residential, the district contains an early church, the mill that became the Hedgerow Theatre, itself a landmark in American theater history, the School in Rose Valley, and finally the mill ruins and borough offices. The landscape counterpart to the buildings is the open space made accessible by an informal path system that crosses property boundaries and connects houses to important community resources such as the swimming hole, the Guild Hall, and the mills. Because of its separate identity, first as the arts and crafts community and later as a distinct borough created in 1923, Rose Valley's citizens have made an effort to keep their community largely rural in character with few evidences such as sidewalks and tract housing that typify the more conventional regional suburban developments that surround the borough. These developments are characterized by conventional suburban houses that differ from the highly individualized character that sets Rose Valley apart. As a result of the community's strong sense of identity, Rose Valley retains a remarkable degree of integrity with the vast majority of its original buildings surviving and with few significant intrusions. The period of significance of 1780-1950 and the use of three applicable National Register criteria will be justified in the following narratives.

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Narrative Description:

The Rose Valley Historic District is entirely located within the borough of the same name to the south of Media in Delaware County. Its name expresses its confinement in the valley created by Ridley Creek and by the smaller tributary valley carved by Vernon Run. Most of the early buildings are located near the principal roads, Rose Valley Road that connects to the county seat of Media via Manchester Road and Brookhaven Road that aims toward the Providence Quaker meeting. The same roads continue to the south to the old county seat at Chester. A web of smaller roads provides evidence of the gradual infill development of the district in the 20th century.

The valley was initially farmed and later was developed by millers who took advantage of the water-power sources for milling. The earliest buildings that are now a part of the Rose Valley historic district are located near Rose Valley Road between Ridley Creek and Brookhaven Road. Mainly agricultural in purpose, several date from the early-to-late 18th century but examples continued to be built into the mid-19th century (Inv. # 27, 41, 79, 125). These share a common architectural vocabulary and palette of local materials with their forms rooted in the late Georgian vernacular. They are characterized by right-angle-square framed gabled roofs, moderate sized, small-paned sash windows set into deep stone walls built of the local stone rubble and stuccoed with cements made of the local yellowish creek sands giving the early buildings a characteristic warm yellow-hued color that unifies the district. A significant alternative is the handsome late eighteenth-century Georgian house, "Tod morden" (Inv.#125) that is built of carefully cut local green serpentinite stone with richly detail wood cornices and large window openings infilled with small-pane sash.

The farmhouses, springhouses, and barns of the early village are typical of the eastern Pennsylvania agricultural land uses. The Rose Valley barns are moderate in size unlike the giant barns of central Pennsylvania. Barn examples include the late 18th century stone-ended bank barn, now converted to a residence, that is the Todmorden barn (Inv. # 123); a smaller, stone-ended early 19th century barn of the Chester County type with round columns supporting the forebay became the studio wing of the Alice and Charles Stephens house (Inv. # 82, on NR); the frame barn on stone foundations that was the home of the Kite family has been adapted as apartments (Inv. # 134). These farm buildings are typically located in the centers of land parcels as opposed to being immediately on the major roads – because as agricultural buildings, their

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focus was on the land as work-place. In addition there are three largely intact eighteenth century houses in the district, the previously mentioned "Tod Morden" farm house, Vernon house with its broad gable front facing Rabbit Run (Inv. # 79) and the so-called Bishop White house (Inv. # 27, fig. 7) on Old Mill Lane.

Another early building is the Union Methodist Church (Inv. #112, fig. 15) which stands just north of the intersection between West Rose Valley Road and West Brookhaven Road. It is a vestige of the early farming community that began with an 1813 building and remains a focus of community activity to the present. When the industrial population grew with the mills, it was replaced by the present rubble stone building that was built in 1835 and renovated in the 1870s.¹ Its shallow gable roof proportions are not unlike the early mills but tall lancet windows along its sides and a short tower with Gothic crenellations at its top reflect its religious purpose. The building has been enlarged in the 20th century with a parish hall in the same vocabulary to the rear and is now surrounded by parking lots that contrast with its graveyard setting.

Chronologically following the initial agricultural buildings are the vernacular-influenced water-powered mill buildings that are interspersed with the agricultural buildings and became the heart of the arts and crafts community. The earliest is the medium-sized water-powered Hutton's mill (Inv. # 90, fig. 6). (now Hedgerow Theatre) which faces Rose Valley Road. Though altered to serve its role as the guild hall and later theater, it retains the scale and proportion of the mill building. The mill structures, like the agricultural buildings were built of local rubble stone with modest-sized windows and doors set into simple rectangular openings in deep masonry walls. Again stucco made from the local yellow creek sands was used to weatherproof the buildings, continuing the visual unity of the valley. Shallow wood trusses with iron ties span the interior and carry the roof. It was altered by William L. Price who adapted the building as the community Guild Hall with an added front porch carried on round rubble stone columns derived from the design of local barns to carry a concrete arch canopy roofed with tile. The Guild Hall was used as a gathering place, art studio and theater by the arts and crafts community and later became the Hedgerow Theatre, a use which continues to the present. The building suffered a significant fire in 1985 that resulted in new roof trusses, new interior seating and a contemporary stage that are incorporated within the original walls. This new work was undertaken by another resident

¹ Ashmead, p. 656.

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architect, Richard Meyer. Fortunately, the entrance lobby, ticket window, side waiting room with its Wharton Esherick table and chairs survived the fire. Interiors are stucco over rubble of the original mill stone walls.

Hutton's Mill was powered by Vernon Run, a small water source that fed a mill pond uphill of the mill. Mills typically included their water source in their property and this was no exception with the mill pond and the tall rubble dam (Inv. #46) across the narrow point of the valley pat of the property that was sold to the community in 1901. The mill pond became a swimming hole for the community and its site remains one of the focal points of the network of paths of the community. The area of the former mill pond is now the site for the community's Rose Valley Swim Club (Inv. #43a, b, c) with three pools, tennis courts, and changing building and toilets. The small buildings that serve this complex were built in the 1940s and share the local stone with sloping roofs of other buildings of the region. The original rubble stone dam remains (Inv. # 46, image # 26a) and is accompanied by the remains of a water-powered pump that W. L. Price used to force water from the creek up hill to his house and its water tower.

Mill housing was located just to south of the Guild Hall / Hedgerow Theatre where a mill lane (now Old Mill Lane) branched off Rose Valley Road to the larger Rose Valley Woolen Mill site (Inv. 31) on Ridley Creek. These houses were constructed by Antrim Osborne to attract a workforce to the Rose Valley Woolen Mill.² They are of two types, a three-story row block of six units on the east side of Rose Valley Road that was converted by the Rose Valley Association into a Guest House (Inv. # 94, #96, #98, fig. 10, historic view #1a) where visitors and potential community residents could live. It was stuccoed and ornamented with panels of Mercer tile and embellished with large wood porches with mortised and tenoned joinery. Across Rose Valley Road are three pairs of small twin houses (Inv. #92, #93, #98, fig. 11) that after 1901 became homes for workers in the Rose Valley arts and crafts workshop. The twin houses appear older than the row block, probably c. 1860, but both they and the row are of the local rubble stone protected by stucco. The southernmost of these houses was originally built in 1847 as a one-story one-room school house for the mill-worker's children (Inv. # 99). According to Ashmead it was abandoned for a larger regional school, and fell into ruins. The ruins were later enlarged and

² They appear in the Ernest Hexamer *General Surveys, Volume 13*, Rose Valley Woolen Mills; Plate: 1173 (1877?); Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia; the houses appear in the .G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Delaware County*. (Philadelphia, 1870) pl. 47.

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adapted as a cottage in the early 20th century.³

The present Old Mill Lane leads to the site of the Rose Valley Woolen Mill (Inv. #31, fig. 8), built initially in the eighteenth century as a snuff mill and later adapted and rebuilt in 1862 and again in 1886 after a fire to process woolens by Antrim Osborne. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the mill was in ruins after another fire. Within the ruins were constructed the first furniture shop of the Rose Valley Association (since replaced by the Rose Valley borough office and the Old Mill Social Hall, now owned by the Rose Valley Folk). This site incorporates the conserved ruins of the mill that are incorporated into a garden together with a water tower designed in the local stucco over rubble by Price's son, William Webb Price and his partner, another community resident, Will Walton. To the rear of the Old Mill, running parallel to the creek in a part of the community's parkland that frames "the Old Mill" and includes the Long Point nature center is evidence of the mill race from Ridley Creek and its dam that powered the original mill on the site (Inv. 35).

On the lane leading to the mill from Rose Valley Road is a handsome Georgian-proportioned house (Inv. #27, fig. 7), probably built in the late eighteenth century by members of the Vernon family and perhaps serving the miller because of its proximity to the water source. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 it served as the home of Bishop William White, Chaplain of the Continental Congress, who named "Rose Valley" for its wild roses. This house is the typical center hall plan, five-bay house, of local stone and stucco with small-paned sash. It was augmented by Price with the tile roof of the Arts and Crafts community and a stone-piered front porch. It has a stone spring house (Inv. # 27) in its foreyard. Near the "Bishop White house" is a small borough-owned park on the south side of Old Mill Lane that contains two small stone bridges (Inv. # 32, 33) that span the course of Vernon Run. The larger bridge that carries Old Mill Lane across the run has stone Turks heads on either side above the stone arch that were carved by community resident John Maene.

The construction of the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad (later a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad) in 1853 connected Rose Valley to Philadelphia and Media and made properties near the station attractive for suburban houses. Two of these houses are within the

³ Ashmead, 657.

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district, the largest being "Gothwold," built for Charles Huhn Bean house and later the home of borough founder John G. Pew (Inv. # 113, image 13a), an 1890s sprawling Gothic revival house with quarry faced ashlar walls and limestone detail that anchors the north end of the district.⁴ A second Victorian house to the south is the slightly earlier, more cubic stone dwelling (Inv. # 83, fig. 4, 18a) that was partially modified by William Price in his characteristic manner as his own home between 1903 and 1916 just to the south of the Bean house on the property now bordered by Price's Lane.

Seventy-five acres of land and the agricultural and milling buildings thereon were acquired by the Rose Valley Association in 1901 and soon were augmented by numerous new buildings that were added to the community during the early 20th century arts and crafts period. Together the adapted buildings and the new buildings form the largest cluster of structures in the district. Evidence of this transformation is first apparent at the north end of the district near the train station in the pair of tile-capped rubble stone gate-posts (image 12a) that were moved c. 1990 from the former drive to the Rose Valley Improvement Company houses to what is called Pew Park, a triangle where South Ridley Creek Road joins Rose Valley Road, near "Gothwold."⁵ Because they were moved they are not listed as contributing and the border of the district excludes them. Other pairs of gateposts are scattered through the community including those with the inscription in Mercer Tile, "Roylencroft" (1909, Inv. #115, images 14a, 15a) that frames the drive to the large house for Roy Jackson (Inv. #114, images 7a, 16a), the brother-in-law of Martin Hawley McLanahan, Price's architectural partner and a principal investor in the community. Another pair of gate posts that stood at the Rose Valley Road entrance to the Stephens / Osborne property were replaced with replicas during the development of Traymore in 2006 (Inv. #82 on NR). Another pair frame Porter Lane and provide access to the Rose Valley Improvement Company development (#54, 1910). A final pair sets off the entrance to 123 Rose Valley Road (Inv. # 107, built for the "Orchard house" #38). They are all characteristic of the Rose Valley architecture that Price and his followers created in their use of local materials, the rubble stone and the warm yellow creek-sand-based stuccoes, accented by Mercer tile panels and red tile copings.

⁴ Moses King, *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians*, (New York, 1901), 99.

⁵ These are the earliest of the gateposts that became characteristic of the community, appearing on Price's drawing of the Old Mill Lane in *The Artsman* (1:9, June 1904, 320).

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Over the fifteen years between the purchase in 1901 and Price's death in 1916, Rose Valley architecture largely reflected the unifying palette of materials that embodied the cultural values of the democratized lifestyle of the arts and crafts community. Contemporary with the Guest House was the new front porch with its tile roof that was added to the Guild Hall, the adaptive reuse of Hutton's Mill that became the community center (Inv. # 90). The following year Price began using the same vocabulary on several larger houses on the opposite side of Rose Valley Road on properties that were acquired by Price's partner, M. Hawley McLahanan and his father-in-law, Charles Schoen. Their ownership gave the west side of Rose Valley Road the characteristic of large houses on large tracts. Each was a custom commission by the Price and McLanahan firm.

The earliest surviving example of the large houses is the 1905 adaptation of the cubic, hipped-roofed mid-19th century house of Antrim Osborne on the opposite ridge above Old Mill Lane for Charles Schoen. (Inv. #24, 2 Old Mill Lane, fig. 9, images 4a, 5a, 6a). Price enlarged and ornamented the house with a large service wing to one end and a projecting gabled wing with large windows and references to contemporary California Spanish design as a part of a nearly total rebuilding of the structure. This became another example of Price's Rose Valley architecture using the local materials of rubble stone and creek sand stucco, ornamented with red roof tile and ornamental panels of Mercer tile, but at the larger mansion scale that reflects the relatively greater resources of the Schoen family. A water tower (Inv. #25, fig. 9, images 5a, 6a) accented with half timber and brightened by red roof tile contained an office below the water tank that was cooled by evaporation. The tower is joined to the house by a pergola and forms a handsome feature of the main garden along the side of the house. This house has recently been restored and supplemented with a garage wing at the end of the service wing.

The Schoen property also includes a Price-designed stone Gothic out-building (Inv. #22) with tile roof overlooking Old Mill Lane that served as an office for Schoen. A large hall ending with a stone fireplace is the principal feature. Like the main house, it has been recently restored to its early 20th century appearance. It is dramatically sited on the edge of the hillside above the road to the mill and was clearly intended as a masculine retreat with great interior hall and a dramatic stone fireplace at its end.

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Important pieces of the Schoen tract along Ridley Creek were donated to become a part of the community's Long Point wildlife preserve (located in the hairpin bend of the Ridley Creek) and the Saul Wildlife Preserve located on the creek's north shore. Recently another portion of the former Schoen property was subdivided into an additional grant to the Wildlife Preserve as a part of the recent "Traymore development." These areas are related to the community's narrative as part of the places that W. L. Price and his friends explored and that brought them back to Rose Valley in the early 20th century. A separate portion of the property contains the principal Price buildings, the house, the water tower, and the office. The remaining portion of the property contains approximately 40, smaller, attached houses. The new houses have been carefully sited to minimize their impact on the views of the larger houses and are designed to reflect the regional character in color and scale. They are excluded from the district.

A third McLanahan / Schoen related house (Roylencroft, Inv. #114, images 7a, 14a, 15a, 16a), also on the west side of Rose Valley Road is the large arts and crafts-styled residence to the north of the Stephens house built for Schoen's other son-in-law, Martin R. Jackson. It stands at the end of Roylencroft Lane and from its inception was intended as a grand residence. Still, like the other buildings of this community, it shared the palette of materials, the local stucco over a hollow tile structure, red tile roof and Mercer tile accents. Its front yard was sold off in the second half of the 20th century for several modest suburban houses. These are set back from the main drive and do not interfere with the principal views.

Separate from the Schoen group by reason of ownership, but similar in scale is the home of two significant regional artists, Charles and Alice Barber Stephens (1858-1932), "Thunderbird Lodge" (1904, NR, Inv. #82). This house is individually listed on the National Register. Near this house is the later Cotswoldy cottage designed by the Stephen's son Owen (1895- 1937) and his wife Lucie creating a small family complex (not included in the NR, Inv.# 118).

To the south of the Schoen holdings is another large house that formed a part of the milling community and bears the name "Orchard House" (Inv. #38, 5 Orchard Lane, image 33a). It was the home of Samuel Bancroft during the years that he ran the Tod Morden Mills to the south of Rose Valley on the Ridley Creek. This mill became one of the largest woolen mills in

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the nation.⁶ Bancroft's house was a large center hall residence of the sort long associated with milling. Early in the 20th century, W. L. Price modified the house along the lines of the Rose Valley work covering it with a coat of the creek sand stucco and Mercer tile bands and ornament and a tile roof, but the original cubic mass and regular pattern of punched windows of the house shows through.

If the Schoen / McLanahan / Jackson or west side of Rose Valley Road was characterized by relatively large buildings on large tracts of land, the land to the east of Rose Valley Road is largely typified by tiny cottages that represent the different economy of the artist side of the Arts and Crafts community. Two pre-existing buildings are larger, an early 19th century house called "Rose Hedge" (Inv. #84, fig. 3) that was adapted by W.L. Price's brother, Walter (1857-1951), an architect who also joined the community, and William L. Price's own house, (Inv. #83, 44 Rose Valley Road, image 18a). "Rose Hedge" began as a farm house (its barn became the studio wing of Thunderbird Lodge, Inv. # 82) but was overlaid in a more conventionally Italianate mode with horizontal roofs of tile accenting flat stucco walls reflecting Walter Price's love of the Italian Piedmont. It shares the local stucco over rubble stone of the evolving regional style.

W. L. Price adapted an existing grey stone, four-square Victorian house that came to be called "Carmedeil" set back from Rose Valley Road as his own house (Inv. #83, image 18a). This was built c. 1880 as a cubic Victorian house of small grey granite ashlar block under a large hipped roof, presumably fronted by a porch that was later removed. Several of the interior rooms show Price's characteristic stucco and tile fireplaces but the architect's impact on the exterior was modest. The most telling exterior feature is the dining room bay window set into a stucco over tile wall that is accented with his characteristic art nouveau-influenced segmental muntin across the sash.

Price had a larger impact on the setting of his own house because he framed it by a narrow lane, now called Price's Lane, which provided access to a cluster of small cottages that surrounded his house on the south side and rear. Several of these houses were for relatives including "Aunt Bess" Warrington's house (Inv. # 59, image 3a, 19a) and the double house (Inv.

⁶ University of Delaware, Special Collections Department; Samuel Bancroft and Joseph Bancroft and Sons, Records, 1869 - 1913 (<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/bancroft.htm>).

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#66, #70) that gradually grew out of the water tower for Price's own house and housed his cousin Herbert Walton (1879-1950) and later after his death, Will's wife and daughter. Most of these houses again share the common architectural materials of the community, local stone, yellow stucco, bits of tile, but by virtue of their size, they lack the architectural individuality of the larger houses. Just to the north, facing Rose Valley Road, is the frame house built by Price's draftsman, John Bissegger. Its wood brackets and vertical sheathing have given it the nickname, "Chalet House" (Inv. # 81).

Another tier of small houses stand to the rear of the Price's Lane houses. Few are individually of architectural consequence but together as an ensemble they represent Rose Valley's democratic goal and express the remarkable variety of private economies that give Rose Valley its variety of residents. These houses and the paths connecting to each are visible in the 1907 map of Rose Valley published in the *Artsman*.⁷ They epitomize another significant aspect of the form of the community, the remarkable system of informal walking paths that connect across property lines to the various houses and to important community centers such as the Guild Hall on Rose Valley Road and the recreational features, such as the mill pond up Vernon Run that served as the summer swimming hole and now has been adapted as the Rose Valley Swimming Pool (Inv. #43). As a consequence of the Rose Valley Association's idea of shared access to the community for all, there are few fences to interrupt open movement. Instead the path system remains actively used today by community residents who have learned the routes some of which even cross front porches as they have for more than a century. The community continues to build paths as opportunities become available. One of the more recent paths follows the route of the early 20th century trolley line (Inv. # 45, image 24a) that ran along the north edge of the district until it was abandoned as cars took over regional transit in 1938. A new path has been constructed from the open space at the entrance to the Old Mill Lane up into the hillside below the Schoen house near its outdoor amphitheater (Inv. # 23). An early recognition of the importance of the paths is the Pennsylvania state-sponsored Minquas Path monument (On the NR Thunderbird Lodge property, Inv. # 82) along Rose Valley Road south of the Stephens house with its beaver by Philadelphia sculptor Albert Laessle (1877-1954) and its bas relief by Charles Stephens (c. 1864-1940) that was erected in 1926 to commemorate the great Native American path between the Schuylkill and the Susquehanna River. It is now also marked by a PHMC

⁷ "The Plot Plan of Rose Valley, Drawn by Harry Hetzel," *The Artsman* vol. 4 # 2, (January 1907), 240-241.

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roadside marker (also on Thunderbird Lodge property, NR, Inv. # 85).

The largest group of small houses of the arts and crafts community are found in the Vernon Run valley above the Hutton's Mill (Hedgerow Theatre). These are accessible from Vernon Lane and Chestnut Lane off of Woodward Road. The largest is a 19th century frame Pennsylvania barn (Inv. #134, image 28a) that originally housed W. L. Price's sister and brother-in-law Nathan Kite and continues to house multiple families. This complex structure has been used at various times to house actors from Hedgerow Theatre, and has been adapted over time into multiple flats and apartments while retaining its barn form and proportions. Other buildings of note in the same valley are the tiny studio and forge (Inv. #62, image 22a) for Herbert Walton (1885-1938), a Price cousin and the builder of many of the W. L. Price-designed houses in Rose Valley, and the expert ironworker whose work appears in many of the houses.

Another small family cluster of Rose Valley houses is found off Tulip Lane between Hilltop Lane and Rose Valley Road. There master carver John Maene, an early member of the Rose Valley community, built his own house (Inv. # 130) and later added multiple small dwellings (Inv. # 129) that contained his extended family as well as his own tiny studio with large windows. Many of these buildings have been extended and enlarged in the provisional manner that characterizes these inexpensive building but the core structures are readily determinable.

In addition to the clusters of buildings of the initial arts and crafts community, there are several later groups of houses of note. Porter Lane off Possum Hollow Road leads into the five houses of the Rose Valley Improvement Company, a group of houses designed by W. L. Price in 1911 to help pay off the Association mortgage that had been taken over by the Schoen / McLanahan family. These are medium sized, modern, stucco-clad hollow tile houses, accented with local stone at their bases and Mercer Tile on their upper levels that were designed as speculative houses by Price. These were designed as two pairs of houses with a single larger house in the center. Those at the entrance (Inv. # 53, # 55, 209, 213 Possum Hollow Road, images 8a, 9a, 10a) recalled McKim, Mead & White's iconic Low house in Jamestown, RI with its broad triangular front as the main façade; 213 was modified in the 1920s with an additional bedroom on the second story, altering one half of its profile. At the far end of the road are another pair of mirror-image twins (Inv. #48, #49, 2, 4 Porter Lane, fig. 13, image 11a) recalling

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the mid-19th century Italian villas in their massing. In the middle is the so-called "Butterfly" house with its W plan and handsome pergola in the front that was the largest and most individualized of this group (Inv. # 47. 1 Porter Lane, image 11a).

With the post- World War I rise of automobile suburbs around Philadelphia and the renown of Rose Valley as an arts and crafts community, tracts of the original association holdings opposite Porter Lane were sold off for houses for people attracted to the idea of Rose Valley. Many were artists and architects whose work has added to the variety of the community architecture; most shared in the open space and path system; and they voted to be a part of the borough when it was carved out of the surrounding Nether Providence township. The most interesting of the buildings in continuing the progressive architectural character of the community was a house at the corner of Possum Hollow Road and Rabbit Run (Inv. # 72) that was built in 1918 by well-known Prairie School architect William Gray Purcell (1880-1965, image 31a) for his wife and himself. Unlike the still tightly massed houses of Price's Rose Valley, Purcell designed a cruciform structure that recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's more open western house plans of the previous decade. This scheme had the advantage of creating maximum exposure to the outdoors that incorporated the house into its wooded setting. Large sliding glass doors further open the building to its site. The more recent addition of a second story at the intersection of the two wings was handled carefully using the original vocabulary of oversized planks that emphasize the horizontality of the composition. Another artist's house is an early (1921) Ritter and Shay design for Elenore Abbott at 205 Possum Hollow road (Inv. # 51, image 27a) which adhered to the stucco and tile vocabulary of the arts and crafts community but adds a handsome terrace on the side toward the valley.

Rose Valley became an independent borough in 1923. The decision to create the borough in 1923 led to additional development around the perimeter of the community because it assured that the aesthetic character would remain Rose Valley's identity rather than becoming a more conventional suburb. One group of these new houses were designed by the well-known Philadelphia architect Howell Lewis Shay who was simultaneously in the process of building his own house (Inv. # 56) in a prominent site on Possum Hollow Road between the Guest House and the Rose Valley Improvement Company houses. The Shay house is the largest and most architecturally ambitious house of the Valley, a splendid pile of local stone with brick and tile accents, detailed in a rural Gothic mode and surmounted by a slate roof in the thick tiles of the

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English Cotswold district. The house set the stage for the other houses that Shay designed along Hilltop Road (Inv. # 13, # 15, # 16, #17, fig. 14 as well as the Volkening house, Inv. # 50) that are similarly historically derived, reflecting the popular Norman and English styles that represent the Anglo-Norman fashion of the 1920s in such regionally important firms as Mellor, Meigs and Howe. The Hilltop Road houses are universally picturesque in design with towers, and projecting wings and gables using a variant of the regional palette of materials but with a much more identifiable architectural style (image 32a).

Other architects joined the community and left their trace as well. W. Pope Barney (1890-1970) designed a group of houses on Wychwood Lane off of Rose Valley Road.⁸ The largest was a modern Gothic house (Inv. # 139) of the local stone and with the steel and leaded glass windows of contemporary Gothic design. Its neighbors, also by Barney including his own house are more colonial in style (Inv. # 141, #142) and reflect the influence of R. Brognard Okie's houses that were designed to look as if they had grown over time with stone and frame elements. Barney also designed the double Tudor style house for sisters on Rabbit Run in the 1920s (Inv. # 73).

The last significant element that was added to the community was the School in Rose Valley (Inv. #120, 121, 122, fig. 1), erected on what is now called School Lane beyond the Stephens house. It continued the architectural and cultural theme of Rose Valley in its community-generated character. In 1929, when the educated people who resided in Rose Valley found that the local schools did not meet their expectations, they followed the community pattern of creating a new institution and when the Depression occurred, they designed and built the first building using their own community members as designers and carpenters (1931). It is an economical, low, frame structure of oversized planks with large windows of small paned sash. The school has retained this provisional character in its later buildings, all of which look more like the houses of the community than the typical institutional school.

Scattered through the community are other buildings that are part of its heritage of innovative architecture. Even before World War II, a modest, ornamentless stucco house with a flaring overhanging roof was built on the edge of Price's Lane (Inv. # 65, image 21a). After

⁸ *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, v. 47, n. 20, p. 158 (5/18/1932)

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World War II, H. L. Shay built himself a low, modern house of local stone and stucco (Inv. # 86, image 17a) that replaced the house that he had lost in the Depression (Inv. # 56). Nearby is an avowedly International Modern house that was built on School Lane (Inv. #116, 1 School Lane). It was conceived as an experiment in energy efficiency with flat roofs, south-facing solar exposure of large plate glass windows, and for a time used a salt system of energy storage that eventually failed and was removed. Further along School Lane is the 1950s modern house of Lou DeMoll (b. 1924, Inv. #119), the lead architect in the Ballinger office in the 1950s and a late son of Carl DeMoll (1871-1958) whose first wife, Mary, was W. L. Price's sister. His house celebrates the continuing innovation and openness to new design ideas that characterize 20th century Rose Valley. Another interesting modern house (1940s) in the southwest corner of the borough was designed as his own residence by Alec Ewing (Inv. # 42), chief of another important regional modern, architectural firm. Ewing's house with its large beams carrying a shallow pitched roof is more California in inspiration but again carried on the experimental nature of the community.

Since 1950 Rose Valley has continued to evolve and has seen the construction of some of the simplified Colonial revival houses that are part of the development patterns of suburbs in the Philadelphia orbit. Most of the intrusions are concentrated on the northern end toward the railroad tracks and on the east side near Orchard Lane and Rose Valley Road. Together these constitute less than 20% of the overall number of buildings and structures and because they are generally scattered, they do not impact the general unity and the visual integrity of the community. Moreover, because of the strong community identity, care has been taken so that the original houses have survived and many have been restored. Despite the recent loss of "Cheerie Acres," the McLanahan house on Pee Wee Hill and the demolition of the Schoen Barn, and a few other elements, Rose Valley retains the visual integrity of workmanship, material, setting, design that characterized the early buildings and was an important aspect of the unity of character desired by the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community. With its path system Rose Valley retains the open access to the land intended by its creators. It is a remarkable survival that expresses the aesthetic character of the Arts and Crafts community as it has continued to the present. Although they have been designed to reflect the regional architectural character, the modern cluster of houses has been added along Traymore Lane are outside of the historic district boundary and their impact is modest against the larger unity of Rose Valley.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph:

Rose Valley's buildings and landscape began as an early agricultural and water-powered milling community in the Philadelphia hinterland that in 1901 became the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community. The community incorporated the early structures of its agricultural and industrial past and gained renown as one of the most important American examples of an intentional community. Together the buildings and the landscape express the ideals of Rose Valley's creators, the important American architect, William L. (W. L.) Price and a circle of artists and architects who used Rose Valley to develop modern design strategies suited to the eastern environment as opposed to the better-known Prairie style while simultaneously exploring new community forms that went against the economic stratification of recent railroad suburbs and offered a democratic approach that mixed large and small houses in close proximity. Reinforcing the idea of the shared access to the natural setting shared by the community are the paths and walkways that cross property boundaries and are open to all of the residents but not to the general public. The borough itself was created in 1923 to reinforce the separate identity of the community from the surrounding township. It followed the same democratic principles of the original community when it included those who wished to be a part of the new political subdivision because they cared to continue the responsible self-government and the independence of design that is a hallmark of Rose Valley. The underlying democratic and individualistic values of the community attracted artists such as Alice Barber Stephens (Inv. # 82) and Elenore Abbott (Inv. # 51, image 27a) and made this an artists' colony of note. It also drew traditional architects such as H. L. Shay (Inv. # 56, 86) and W. Pope Barney (Inv. #142) and modern architects among them Prairie-schooler, William Grey Purcell (Inv. # 72, image 31a) and Philadelphia modernists Alec Ewing (Inv. # 42) and Carl DeMoll (Inv. #119) who built important domestic commissions as their homes. The period of significance chosen incorporates the buildings of the agricultural community and the abandoned milling communities that were acquired by the Rose Valley Association in 1901, continues through the establishment of the Borough in 1923 and ends in 1950 reflecting Rose Valley's receptivity to important contemporary architecture that sets Rose Valley apart from the suburbs and villages of SE Pennsylvania. As a premier example of the utopian response to industrialization that continues to attract adherents to the present day, Rose Valley meets Criterion A for community planning and for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; it meets Criterion B as the home of its founder William Price, whose most innovative experiments in domestic architecture are in Rose Valley; and it meets Criterion C,

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architecture, for its significant group of residential buildings beginning with Price's Rose Valley Architecture and then continuing with important architect-designed houses into the 1950s.

Rose Valley history:

Rose Valley is constructed on an armature of the old roads that were part of the network between the old county seat of Chester to the south and the village of Providence and the later county seat, Media to the north. As such it represents parts of the early development of the Philadelphia hinterland showing the characteristic regional sequence from agriculture cluster to mill village to railroad suburb and eventually to automobile-based community. The agricultural remnants are scattered but include several significant farm houses and barns many of which were later altered to serve the needs of the Arts and Crafts Community.

Rose Valley's milling history had its beginnings in the eighteenth century when its water sources on the edge of the piedmont above the coastal plain made it a center of small water-powered mills. Mill operators' houses were common near their mills and Rose Valley has four such buildings (Inv. # 24, 27, 38, 125). As industry grew, it required housing for its additional workforce resulting in the mill workers' houses scattered along the roads that connected the village to Providence on the north (later renamed Media when it became the county seat) and Chester to the south. These connections made the village a part of the regional milling culture that stretched from Wilmington, DE to Manayunk, PA. According to Henry Ashmead, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884), most of the area that is now the community of Rose Valley was acquired by Antrim Osborne around the Civil War.⁹ He operated the village's largest mill complex after the Civil War. As water power gave way to steam and as labor concentrated in Philadelphia's Manayunk and Wilmington, DE's Bancroft Mills where multiple jobs were available, the Rose Valley Mills lost out and by the beginning of the twentieth century, the mills were closed and Osborne was bankrupt.

The industrial heritage is still apparent in Hutton's mill on Vernon Run facing Rose Valley Road that was the community Guild Hall and is now Hedgerow Theatre (Inv. # 90).

⁹p. 659-661. Ashmead provides a clear history of the evolution of the site beginning with a mill and dam built in the 1780s that is probably the approximate date of the so-called Bishop White house that would have been the miller's house.

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Hutton's mill retains its water powered source, the nearby mill workers' housing (Inv. # 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, and 98, image 1a), and the larger mill owners' houses (Inv. # 24, 38, 4a, 5a, 6a, 33a), while ruins of the larger mid-nineteenth century Rose Valley Woolen Mill remain on the Borough property that is now known as the Old Mill (Inv. # 31). That site incorporates the borough offices and a community meeting room amidst the fragments of the mill. Traces of the millrace and dam can still be seen upstream in the streambed and along the banks of Ridley Creek (Inv. # 35). These are connected to Rose Valley's arts and crafts heritage because they were an area in which in his youth, William L. Price and his friends built a cabin in what they called the S.A.K (Seekers After Knowledge) Glen (Inv. # 29).

In the early 20th century when William L. Price learned that the mill community of his youthful explorations was to be auctioned, he put together a financing scheme with several previous clients under the name of the Rose Valley Association. The association purchased Hutton's Mill and its water-power site, and the adjacent 75 acres including a number of mill workers' houses, the ruins of the Rose Valley Woolen Mill on Ridley Creek, as well as barns, farm houses and other structures that were scattered within the property. Price moved himself and his family first to the Rose Valley Guest House (Inv. # 94, 96, 98) and later to his own house, "Carmedeil," (Inv. # 83, image 18a) and would live there for the last fifteen years of his life. Rose Valley became the site of an experimental community which Price and his cohorts modeled on William Morris's "News From Nowhere." Most of the houses and several of the agricultural buildings were adapted as residences by members of the Arts and Crafts community while a rowblock of six units at the corner of Rose Valley and Possum Hollow roads was adapted as a small "Guest House," following the model of William Morris's *News From Nowhere*. Hutton's mill (Inv. # 90) was adapted as the community Guild Hall, where the community could meet, discuss and debate its goals and which also served as a studio for artists with a kiln on the rear for potter William Jarvis.

These existing building were soon augmented by numerous new buildings including a new workshop for the production of fine furniture and wood carving that was constructed in the ruins of the Rose Valley Woolen Mill (Inv. #31). Over time these buildings marked an important architectural departure for Price who left the late Victorian roots of his teacher, Frank Furness (1839-1912), and moved toward the simplifications that could be found in vernacular architecture which became an international counter to late Victorian decorated architecture.

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Initially Rose Valley represented Price's critique of railroad suburbs in which each house took a different style that was about individual ownership but not about its connection to a place. Rose Valley soon came to incorporate his new theories about design and place. By adapting the local regional palette of materials and applying them to all new buildings, Price could express the democratic principles of the community with a unifying architectural vocabulary that was shared by large and small houses alike but which also referenced the regional vernacular which he had begun to appreciate for its expression of its place. This became the subject of an article, "The Value and Use of Simple Materials in Homebuilding" in which Price noted first their economy – "they are cheap, readily obtainable, and third, they are beautiful." Then, recalling the ideas of the era's great naturalist John Burroughs, he added, "Burroughs says somewhere that a house should be built of materials picked up at hand and in a large degree he seems to me to be right. Not only for sentimental and practical reasons but because it tends to produce types – tends toward a pleasing homogeneity in local style that is altogether good."¹⁰ This idea would be developed in large mansions on the Schoen family side of the valley, in small houses on the artists' side and most remarkably in the five houses of the Rose Valley Improvement Company (Inv. # 47, 48, 48, 53, 54, 55, images 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a).

The community continued past Price's death in 1916 with new residents moving into the Rose Valley Improvement Company Houses that had been constructed to help eliminate the community's mortgage debt incurred at the original 1901 purchase. After World War I, Rose Valley was threatened by loss of identity as generic suburbanization of Nether Providence Township first followed the trolley line and later the automobile. With the community's identity about to be subsumed in Nether Providence, community residents John G. Pew (1870-1954, the owner of Gothwold, (Inv. # 113, image 13a, son of the founder of Sun Oil Company, and the president from 1919 – 1950 of Sun Ship in Chester) and Maurice B. Saul (d. 1974) the successor to art collector and Philadelphia power lawyer John G. Johnson who led the creation of their own Rose Valley borough in 1923. The borders of the new borough were determined by vote with those who wished to participate being included and others excluded according to their wishes.

In the same decade as the foundation of the borough the community continued to expand

¹⁰ William L. Price, "The Value ..." *House and Garden* 8, no. 3 (October 1905) 103-115, reprinted in *The Artsman* "The Use and Value of Common Materials in House Work," *The Artsman*, (September, 1905), Vol. 2 p. 385 ff. ..

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its identity welcoming Jasper Deeter's revolutionary repertory theater company at Hedgerow in the renamed Guild Hall in the 1920s. In the 1930s Rose Valley became the home of the School in Rose Valley, an important experiment in community-run education (Inv. #120, 121, 122, fig. 1). Rose Valley's continuing vitality is reflected in domestic architecture produced by such original designers as Prairie School architect William Gray Purcell (Inv. # 72, image 31a), Philadelphia skyscraper architect Howell Lewis Shay (Inv. # 56, 86, image 17a), and after World War II, Philadelphia regional modernists such as Carl DeMoll (Inv. # 119) and Alexander Ewing (Inv. # 42).

The Founder: William L. Price

The founder of the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community, William L. Price (1861-1916) forms the intellectual bridge between the architecture of his teacher Frank Furness (1839-1912) and the later architects who shaped American mid-century architecture. Price came from a Quaker family headed by James Price who worked for the Provident Life and Trust Company during the years when the company hired Frank Furness in 1876 for its landmark offices at 4th and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia's business district. That project provided entrée into Furness's office for two of James' children, Francis (Frank, c. 1855-1919) and William. Francis became the project manager for the bank project during the last parts of its construction, managing the payouts to the contractors and initialing a workbook for the project, "F.L.P" and later "F. L. Price." After Frank departed to open his own office, Will remained for an extra year until 1881 where he presumably had an experience not unlike Louis Sullivan's earlier in the decade.¹¹ In the next decade the brothers formed a partnership as F. L. and W. L. Price and built an extensive practice of suburban houses for middle class families in developments sponsored by the Drexel Company at Wayne, and the Philadelphia suburbs of Overbrook and Mount Airy while also capturing many of the commissions for the great mansions of the industrial barons of the region, most notably that of steel manufacturer, Alan Wood in West Conshohocken (1891), Alan Reed, son of clothing retailer Jacob Reed, financier John G. Gilmore, and so on. An important hotel commission, the Kenilworth Inn, in Asheville, NC exposed the brothers to the large scale of resort architecture and by the 1890s they were also working in Atlantic City.

¹¹ George E. Thomas, *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 44-47.

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As the century ended, Frank fell victim to mental illness and Will formed a second partnership with another brother, Walter (1857-1951) that lasted until 1902. In the meantime he had encountered the English arts and crafts founder William Morris and C. R. Ashbee as well as the American political activists centered on Joseph Fels and the American Single Tax movement. This led him to begin to explore radical lifestyles, represented in the foundation of Rose Valley, PA and Arden, DE both in 1901. In 1902 he formed a new architectural practice in partnership with an architect and developer, Martin Hawley McLanahan (1865-1929) who pushed the new firm into large scale projects characterized by reinforced concrete construction that was newly systematized by the American Society for Testing Materials, in Philadelphia.

Over the next fifteen years the firm of Price and McLanahan designed railroad stations for the Pennsylvania Railroad from Allegheny west of Pittsburgh, to Chicago, with their western masterpiece the Chicago Freight Terminal along the Chicago River (1915, demolished). So much mid-west work came their way that the architects opened an office in Indianapolis which they could reach by overnight train, do a day's work and return the following night to Philadelphia. In Indianapolis, they designed a major modern addition to the Pennsylvania Railroad terminal (1915) as well as a cluster of houses for important industrialists. One group of clients were makers of car parts and founded the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as a sales tool for their products. They retained the Price and McLanahan office as their architects for multiple projects in Miami which they envisioned as an automobile resort.

The most important work that the firm undertook was a cluster of hotels on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, overlooking the ocean (all demolished). These began with the Marlborough House, a gigantic steel-framed shingle style hotel (1902) that was extended by the extraordinary pleasure dome of the Blenheim Hotel (1905). It was built of reinforced concrete and changed the image of the beach resort toward modern, large scale construction that made the resort "the city by the sea." The following year in 1906, the architects built the first wing of the Traymore Hotel across Park Place from the Marlborough-Blenheim complex. In 1914, the architects were given the opportunity to own the Traymore and design their own building from foundations to tea service, cocktail shakers and furnishings. Using a lawyer, L. Stauffer Oliver who would become a resident in Rose Valley, the firm took the chance, signed the contracts the night before World War I broke out in Europe, and designed a building that more than any other set off the American 1920s "vertical style" or Art Deco. In 1930, George Howe, himself a former veteran of the

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Furness office, described three great American modern architects, "Wright, Sullivan and Price [who] were among the first to grasp the architectural possibilities of the new life and the new means of construction."¹²

Rose Valley was the constant in Price's life during this adventurous period and may be said to have been the place where Price envisioned the modern world. In its small houses, Price had the opportunity to break away from historical forms while building a community with his partner, McLanahan. This community also provided him the connection to regional artists George Harding and N. C. Wyeth, both of the Brandywine School who worked with him on the decoration of the Traymore Hotel. Near his childhood home in neighboring Wallingford in what is now Nether Providence Township, it combined the familiar with the opportunity to push into new realms of design that played a major role in shaping American architecture before World War II.¹³

Rose Valley Arts and Crafts Colony and the Arts and Crafts Movement

On 29 April 1901, the Osborne estate was sold at sheriff's sale to Price and his associates including soap maker Joseph Fels and financier John Gilmore. They intended the creation of a shared production community that would be governed by the Rose Valley Association, which was incorporated by Pennsylvania statute on 17 July 1901 with the stated purpose of "the manufacture of structures, articles, materials and products involving artistic handicraft."¹⁴ To that

¹² George Howe, "What is This Modern Architecture Trying to Express," *American Architect*, 157 (May 1930), 24.

¹³ Price's career is described at length in George E. Thomas, William L. Price: Builder of Men and of Buildings (University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. dissertation, 1975) and *William L. Price: From Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000) particularly chapter 3.

¹⁴ Rose Valley Association records, quoted, William Ayres, "A Poor Sort of Heaven; A Good Sort of Earth": A Chronology of the Arts and Crafts Community," *A Poor Sort of Heaven A Good Sort of Earth: The Rose Valley Arts and Crafts Experiment*, exhibition catalog, Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, PA, ed. William Ayers, (Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, PA 1983) 15. The 80 acres assembled were recorded in Delaware County Deeds,

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end, Price and his fellow associationers constructed a new furniture workshop in the ruins of the Rose Valley Mills on Ridley Creek where water power could be captured to run the machinery and created a community of artists and artisans who would share in the experiment.¹⁵

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community was one of several intentional communities across the nation that became nationally known as responses to conflicts inherent within the industrial age. Rose Valley was among the best known because of the prominence of its founder, the architect William L. Price who was joined by other architects including his brother, Walter Price (Inv. # 84) and John Bisegger (Inv. #81), writers including Horace Traubel (1858-1919), literary executor of Walt Whitman, designers and artists, including photographer Henry Troth (, 1860-1945; Inv. # 67), potter W. Percival Jervis (1850 – c. 1910), Alice Barber Stephens and her husband Charles Stephens (Inv. # 82) and others who were drawn into this project. With its own literary journal, *The Artsman*, its distinctive architectural style rooted in the regional vernacular, and its artistic production including furniture, pottery, and fine art, Rose Valley found an international audience.

Rose Valley had its beginnings in the social unrest triggered by the market crash of 1893 that signaled the rise of trusts and capitalist agglomeration.¹⁶ In Philadelphia, beginning even earlier in 1885, progressive activists had formed the Ethical Culture Society, a group that brought together soap manufacturer and philanthropist Joseph Fels (1853-1914), tract writer and Walt Whitman's editor, Horace Traubel, industrialist and financier and William L. Price's future client John Gilmore and others who sought the means to ameliorate the effect of industrial capitalism through such programs as Settlement Houses. Together they explored the ideas of Henry George (a former Philadelphian), whose *Progress and Poverty* (1879) had become the best-selling attack

Book F #10, p. 1102; Book M #10, p. 223.

¹⁵ Water powered tools running off leather belts from water-wheel powered drive shafts had the advantage of being much quieter, permitting workers to talk and interact while the later electric tools put each worker in a cocoon of their own sound.

¹⁶ Arthur P. Dudden, *Joseph Fels and the single-tax movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971) 34-39. ¹⁶ For a history of Arden, DE see Eliza Edwards, "Arden: The Architecture and Planning of a Delaware Utopia," masters' thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Program in Historic Preservation, 1993).

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on capitalist landholding. George made the case that land should be held in common by the community and that community income should be raised by a “single-tax” on land use, giving the social movement its name. In 1896 and again in 1897 Philadelphia architect Will Price joined in the attempt to make Delaware a “Single-Tax” state following George’s precepts. With the support of Fels, Price was able to acquire property and build the community buildings for a local demonstration of the Single Tax at Arden DE in 1901.¹⁷ In the same year, again with the backing of Gilmore, Fels and others, Price formed the Rose Valley Association and began the transformation of an old mill village on Ridley Creek in Delaware County into an Arts and Crafts colony.

The Arts and Crafts movement’s roots reached back to the middle of the 19th century in Great Britain where the first responses to industrialization were taken in word by John Ruskin, most particularly in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and later *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3), and in deed by William Morris whose Red House, built outside of London at Bexley Heath in 1853-1861 in association with architect Phillip Webb, led to a revival of craft values and practice that countered the culture of cheap and mass production. By 1876 the nascent Arts and Crafts movement had reached the United States in a variety of guises. As John A. Kouwenhoven pointed out in *Made in America* (1948), Europeans came to the Centennial Exhibition and saw the power of the machine and the new industrial and engineering processes and took those ideas back to Europe to become the basis for the Bauhaus; Americans simultaneously rediscovered the luxury of craftsmanship in the work that Europeans exhibited.¹⁸ Two regional results were the formation of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum that collected the crafts of the Centennial Exhibition and the foundation after the Centennial of the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art where craftsmanship was taught to improve the

¹⁷ Fels’ career, see the introduction to the finding aid for “collection 1953 Joseph and Mary Fels Papers,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, www.hsp.org/files/findingaid1953fels.pdf. Fels early membership in the Ethical Culture Society provides a connection to Horace Traubel, later the editor of the Rose Valley organ, *The Artisan* and then the editor of *The Conservator*, the publication of the Ethical Culture Society in which Will Price would publish many of his more philosophical pieces.

¹⁸ John A. Kouwenhoven, *Made in America* (New York: Garden City. 1948) particularly chapter 3, “Two Traditions in Conflict.”

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skills of the Philadelphia workingman.¹⁹ Among the students of the Museum School was William L. Price, and among its faculty was Charles Stephens (1864-1940), later a member of the Rose Valley community.²⁰

In the United States, the arts and crafts movement often took the form of local societies centered in various cities from Boston and New York on the east coast, to Chicago and Minneapolis in the Midwest, and on to Pasadena on the west coast.²¹ These societies sponsored annual exhibits and competitions but largely promoted individual craftsmen and women who provided craft objects for wealthy families. Over the last quarter of the 19th century, various craft-centered associations and businesses were formed (Tiffany's Associated Artists, New York, 1879; Rookwood Pottery, Cincinnati, 1880; Minneapolis Arts and Crafts Society, founded 1895; Chicago Arts and Crafts Society, founded 1897; first major Arts and Crafts exhibition and founding of Boston Arts and Crafts Society, 1897). Also in 1897 Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930) of Doylestown, PA began his first experiments in tile-making that led the following year to the establishment of the complex that became the Mercer Tile Works.²² Gustav Stickley's furniture company was founded outside of Syracuse, NY, in 1898, while Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft venture began at the same time outside of Buffalo in the suburb of East Aurora.

Another community form of the movement was a type of company town led by a single entrepreneur such as Hubbard and Stickley. They typically followed the industrial practices of

¹⁹ The history of the Commercial Museum is treated in Stephen Conn, *Museums in American Intellectual Life: 1876-1926* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1998). The Museum School became the Philadelphia College of Art and is now the University of the Arts.

²⁰ Stephens was a cousin of Frank Stephens, co-founder of Arden, DE with Price and was noted for his work in the American west with a specialty with the Blackfoot Indians.

²¹ Many of these organizations are listed in the pages of the *Artsman* (1903-1907) which maintained correspondence with the various American associations. A chronology of related subjects, associations and organizations is included at the beginning of Robert Judson Clark, ed. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America: 1876-1916*, exhibition catalog, Princeton University Art Museum, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) p. 10.

²² Cleota Reed, *Henry Chapman Mercer and the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

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the day, albeit with an overtone of ethical production and design.²³ Thus Stickley's complex outside of Syracuse and Hubbard's Roycroft Inn and plant in East Aurora near Buffalo, NY were work-centered communities of the sort that were common across America in the late 19th century as for instance Pullman, Illinois, or Hershey in Pennsylvania. Others arrived at the idea of an intentional community where workers shared in the creative process and where production was personal and valued. Price's 1901 community at Rose Valley and Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead's (1854-1929) Byrdcliffe Colony founded 1902, outside of Woodstock, New York, are examples of the latter.²⁴ These made the transition from the work-place and the private fashion of the individual home to a more integrated community that celebrated the fusion of craftsmanship and the artistic life. Byrdcliffe is best remembered for its splendid rambling central Whitehead house, called White Pine, that was part Adirondacks lodge, part California modern, with surrounding smaller camps, kilns, and shops.²⁵ There, unlike Rose Valley, the scale of Whitehead's house and his ownership of everything made it clear that he was the center, the principal designer with others executing his schemes.

From the beginning Rose Valley differed from Stickley's and Whitehead's communities in its broader array of leaders including Will Price, his future business partner M. Hawley McLanahan (1865-1929) and the latter's father-in-law, the American industrialist Charles Schoen (1844-1917, Inv. # Inv. 22, 23, 24, 25)), as well as Walter Price (1857-1951), Will's brother and an important architect in his own right, and eventually artists Charles and Alice Barber Stephens (respectively 1864-1940 and 1858-1932). Each brought their own identity and values to the community as did several of the craftsmen, draftsmen from the Price firm and others who are remembered in the pages of *The Artsman*. In part this was certainly a reflection of the shared

²³ Leslie Greene Bowman, *American Arts and Crafts: Virtue in Design* catalog for the Los Angeles County Museum, (Los Angeles County Museum, 1992).

²⁴ At the end of Janet Kardon, ed. *The Ideal Home 1900-1920: The History of Twentieth Century American Craft* (New York: Harry Abrams & Co. 1992) is a list of intentional communities most of which were formed around the same date, pp. 253-254. Their common founding date suggests a millennial overtone as well.

²⁵ Edward S. Cooke, "Arts and Crafts Furniture: Process or Product," in Kardon, op cit, p. 67; also George E. Thomas, "William L. Price's Arts and Crafts Colony at Rose Valley, Pennsylvania," 127.

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regional cultural heritage of the Quaker value of the individual.

Price's desire to create a community of association by interests that would draw artists as well as friends and relatives was very different than the English model industrial towns such as Port Sunlight (c. 1885-1915) built by William Lever, later Lord Leverhulme, to house his soap manufacturing workers on the border of Wales. Where Port Sunlight was connected to giant industry and was highly paternalistic, Rose Valley was on the one hand at least in part an extended family but it was also largely making itself up as it went along. How personal it was is evident in the early listing of residents who had joined the "Folk Mote" as they called their community government. These were listed in the "Chronicles of the Folk Mote" in the meeting for 12 December 1901 and included "freeman W. L. Price," "Dr. Caroline Smith, First Chairman, Susanna M. Price, teacher [Will's sister], Josephine DeMoll, mother of children; Carl DeMoll, her son, craftsman, Mary his wife, skilled in growing flowers [another of Will's sisters]; Clara Merrick, skilled in household economy and lover of children [a member of Will's wedding party and housekeeper for the Price family]; Will Walton who sings and draws houses with his hands to the satisfaction of freeman Price [and Will's cousin, working in the architectural office], Francis Day, artist, children's portraits; Mrs. Day; Walter F. Price, architect of renown and sketcher of promise [Will's brother and at the time his architectural partner], Mrs. E. W. Price, wife of W. L., raiser of children; Anna Margaret Kite, lover of children, kindergarten [another of Will's sisters and wife of Nathan], Nathan Kite, tiller of the soil [and with his wife, operator of the Rose Valley Guest House]."

It is telling that at the beginning of the community, only the family members and close associates were listed as members of the association even though there were other residents including the workforce at the furniture mill. Over time however, numerous artists joined the community including artists and illustrators Charles and Alice Barber Stephens (Inv. # 82) and Elenore and her husband Charles Abbott (Inv. # 51, image 27a), photographer Henry Troth (Inv. # 61), instructor in manual training, Harry Hetzel and others who gradually built houses and became active members of the community. Alice Barber Stephens for example designed the posters for the various musical performances; Troth provided a photographic record of the community; and John Bisseger, a draftsman in the Price office, did many of the drawings for *The Artsman*. Notably too, as the initial activities of the Arts and Crafts community concluded in the last issue of *The Artsman* a map of the community included the craftsmen such as John Maene

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(Inv. # 129, 130), and T. Terjussen (the European craftsmen mentioned by Price in the article on the mill), who remained a part of the community after the closing of the mill.²⁶ Members of many of the original families remain in Rose Valley to the present marking the ultimate social fusion of the community.

Thus in a sense, Rose Valley began as an extension of Price's own family but it also reflected Price's mid-1890s English trip where he met William Morris and several of the Arts and Crafts architects of the next generation, including C. R. Ashbee who would later visit Price in Rose Valley. This encounter energized Price and led him to try various forms of community activism over the next generation ending with his attempt with Fiske Warren, another utopian activist for whom Price had designed a house, to create a single-tax country in Andorra in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain. Begun in 1916 just before Price's death, it foundered in the war but remains connected to its Single-Tax roots as a low tax zone in modern Europe.²⁷

The Intellectual Roots of Rose Valley:

Rose Valley was shaped by Price's encounter in the mid-1890s with the English founder of the arts and crafts movement, William Morris whose utopian novel *News From Nowhere* (1890) envisioned late 20th century communities where work and nature were valued in an ever-greener and more natural world. Morris's tale describes populations moving to the country in villages with social centers called, as in Rose Valley, the "Guild Hall" and "Guest House." These buildings were unified in design, again like Rose Valley, with a consistent palette of materials including local stuccoes, red tile roofs and tile ornament, and the creation of places for shared experiences. Where buildings were built new or were largely rebuilt, the designs began to reflect the simplifications, broader surfaces and expression of materiality that characterized the simultaneous work of Charles Voysey and C. R. Ashbee in London and Charles Renie Macintosh

²⁶ Price described the problem of finding a workforce in "The Attitudes of Manual Training to the Arts and Crafts," *Proceedings of the Eastern Manual Training Association, 1904* (Philadelphia: by the Association, 1904) 15-18.

²⁷ "American Single Taxers Invade Tiny Andorra; Fiske Warren Carries Their Gospel to the Republic Hidden for Twelve Centuries in the Pyrenees Between France and Spain," *New York Times* April 16, 1916, Magazine 5

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in Glasgow.

The historical record demonstrates that Rose Valley was more than just the acting out of Morris's *News From Nowhere* because it was also intended to combat both the social isolation of the railroad suburb and the impact of Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management on the workforce that had been centered in Philadelphia in the 1890s where Price had seen its results. With the failure of the water-powered industries at Rose Valley at the end of the nineteenth century as steam engines and small electric motors changed the tone and noise-level of shops, Price and his colleagues saw the opportunity to rethink how products were made and to reassert the value of the workman as a creator – the core of the idea was to make a place where a person's work could become a focus of his life. Such a person was an "Artsman." This name became the name of the community journal that was published from 1903-1907. The physical setting of the Rose Valley community met the goal of providing workplaces with proximate housing in a beautiful place while also making it possible for those with jobs in Philadelphia to commute by rail to the city.

Rose Valley took a different form than Price and Frank Stephens' slightly earlier utopian community, Arden, just across the Delaware state border. Arden was based on Single-Tax theories that held that all land should be held in common for the common good and owners were taxed on the size of their land rather than on the type or value of their use. Like Arden, Rose Valley began as a large property held by an association but the Rose Valley community was quickly forced toward more conventional real estate practices to pay off a short-term mortgage that was backed by Swarthmore College.²⁸ As a result Rose Valley was less polemical, contrasting with the single-tax focus and more politically radical Arden that attracted Mother Bloor, the American Communist, Scott Nearing, the University of Pennsylvania professor whose demand for accountability for child-labor abuses by businesses operated by Penn trustees

²⁸ Swarthmore College became involved with Rose Valley perhaps through the connection of their philosophy professor Jesse Holmes who was Price's brother-in-law. See An Inventory of the Jesse Herman Holmes Papers, 1905-1973. Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College. [/www.swarthmore.edu/library/friends/ead/5064holm1.xml](http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/friends/ead/5064holm1.xml). Financial records of the association are at Winterthur Library, Greenville, DE, in the "Rose Valley Collection" Joseph Downs Collection which includes related papers of M. Hawley McLanahan, Box 1 and Box 2.

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resulted in his firing from the Penn faculty, and later Upton Sinclair who used the royalties from *The Jungle* to build a cottage that he called "the Jungalo." Price intended Rose Valley as a place to develop a society where creative work was central, attracting successful artists and architects, potters, and bookbinders, wood carvers and other skilled craftspeople.

The different goals of the two communities resulted in different architectural characteristics. Because of the Single-Tax basis of Arden, the single tax on land meant that lots were tiny and houses tended to be inexpensive, often beginning as tents on platforms and then expanding as the personal economies of the families permitted. When Joseph Fels determined that Arden should be more permanent and less provisional, he commissioned Price to design a few houses that have the appearance of the new Rose Valley buildings but they are typically smaller and stand out against the rest of the community. Notably there are no large buildings of the sort built by Rose Valley's wealthier members, the Schoens, Jacksons, McLanahans, and Alice Barber and Charles Stephens. Thus Arden was true to its Single Tax values – but it is notable that both communities shared the idea of open access to the land for all. Arden for example included large open greens in the center of residential neighborhoods and preserved its creek valleys as natural zones without buildings. Rose Valley does the same and adds the overlay of the shared path system that ensure that the owners of tiny houses would have access to the beauties of the Ridley Creek Valley.

The second focus of Rose Valley was the workshop that was constructed adjacent to the ruins of Osborne's Mill. This was modeled on William Morris's "banded workshop" that relied on craftsmen working together "in the traditional manner," meaning in the manner before Taylor reshaped the manufacturing process into discrete steps that could be adapted to modern machinery. Traubel wrote:

Rose Valley is a cross between economic revolution and the stock exchange Rose Valley is not shutting one door and opening another Rose Valley connects in the open with industrial fact It is not a break It is an evolution Rose Valley is not altogether a dream or wholly an achievement It is an experiment It is also an act of faith. It is not willing to say what it will do It is only willing to say what it is trying to do Rose Valley pays a first tribute to labor. Labor is the social base. Our modern world had quarreled with this disposition of values. And many who do not share its quarrel still shrink from making a concession to labor Rose Valley knows and acknowledges the situation. Rose Valley is

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not under any illusions. It does not think it is doing singlehanded a work which is at last winning intercontinental allies. It is one figure in a movement much more portentous than any individual instance of devotion could shape or weigh. The carver carving wood is at work scripting the daily life of man. To make the joint of a chair what it should be is an act as holy as hymning an abstract creed. Rose Valley does not say any contradicting formula is wholly wrong. It does not assume that its formula is wholly right. It is undertaking to prove to itself first of all that work may be made holy through the freedom of its workman. Rose Valley may fail. But its faith cannot fail.”²⁹

William Ayres published a report on Rose Valley from the United States Bureau of Labor that described the workshop with large windows on one side of the shop toward the view and with a

“drafting table, and a power hand saw, circular saw, and mortising machine. Four men are employed in the furniture shop on a wage basis, Mr. Price believing that the essential end of cooperation can be attained better under the wage system than under any communistic system. The opportunity to work under pleasant surroundings is much appreciated by the men. An attempt is being made to develop individuality of execution among them. The result is a product as different from the so-called “mission” furniture as the latter is from the product of the ordinary factories. Glue is very little used, and is never depended on for strength.... The result is handsome and expensive furniture, the prices depending upon the time employed in making particular pieces.”³⁰

Several points are important in that description. First, unlike the purely craft tradition, Price and his associates accepted the value of the machine as tool to lessen labor so long as it was directed by the craftsman “... tools with which a thinking man may work, shaping the product with his own volition.” This would make it possible to “sense humanity” in the production.³¹ In this Price was in accord with Frank Lloyd Wright who had arrived at a similar position as recounted in his slightly earlier lecture, “The Art and Craft of the Machine” given at Hull House in Chicago in

²⁹ David Krasner, *Horace Traubel: His Life and Work* (Egmont Arens, NYC, 1919) 81.

³⁰ William Ayers, “Rose Valley Furniture,” *Rose Valley: A Poor Sort of Heaven, a Good Sort of Earth* (Chadds Ford: Brandywine Conservancy, Inc. 1983) 51.

³¹ William L. Price, “Do We Attack the Machine.” *Artsman*, 1, no. 5 (Feb. 1904) 169-174.

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March of 1901.³² The shop's products were well received at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis and produced the decorative finishes for many of the major Price houses of the period, but within a year, the requirement to pay off the mortgage held by Swarthmore College and labor unrest in the shops led to the ending of the initial workshop / production phase of the Arts and Crafts experiment.

As a result of the financial and labor crisis in 1906, the shop closed and the original lands were sold off. The west side of Rose Valley beyond Rose Valley Road including the property for the shops had already been entirely purchased by Price's architectural partner, M. Hawley McLanahan and his father-in law, Charles Schoen, a wealthy industrialist who had made a fortune in Western Pennsylvania, first with the invention of the steel box-car and later with the steel tire for cast iron railway wheels; the east side was sold off in smaller parcels to the community residents leaving only the Guild Hall and its water way as a communal asset. The community continued its shared activities including its shared recreational facilities on Ridley Creek and later its swimming pool (Inv. # 43), its theatrical programs at the Guild Hall (Inv. # 90) centered on the Rose Valley Chorus that began in 1907 with a performance of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado* (starring Price as the Mikado) and continuing thereafter on a yearly basis, as well as art exhibits and efforts to maintain the arts and crafts base, but the banded workshop for all intents and purposes no longer functioned. These activities continue to the present as evidenced by the ongoing theatrical productions of the Rose Valley chorus and the activities of the Rose Valley Folk who continue to own the borough hall.

Rose Valley Architecture:

If Rose Valley began as a comment on work, it also had as its purpose a comment on the new railroad suburbs that were springing up across the United States including Philadelphia's suburbs, several of which including Wayne, Overbrook and Pelham were largely designed by Price.³³ Modeled on Bedford Park outside of London, Philadelphia suburbs such as Wayne, Overbrook and Mt. Airy typically became monocultures appealing to a single economic class

³² Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Art and Craft of the Machine," lecture, Hull House, March 1901, republished in various sources.

³³ George E. Thomas: "Wayne Tract Development," *William L. Price Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000) 262.

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who could afford their large houses and the commute and time to work. Price and his colleagues intended to create a different type of community where different property sizes would be available to those with differing resources but shared interests. This idea is central to Price's article "Is Rose Valley Worth While?" in the first issue of the Rose Valley journal, *The Artsman*, where he proposed that "... our fitness to associate together upon simple human terms should not be gauged by our incomes." Instead of the usual modern suburb Price and his cohorts intended the creation of a community that could incorporate the wealthy, the middle class, and the low-paid artisan, "writers, musicians, craftsmen, art workers, and those who think the simple life with some human touch worth more than the strain and show and haphazard of your ordinary communities. Here the tiniest cottage may be built side by side with a more spacious neighbor."³⁴ Incorporating the workers in the mill as well as rich industrialists, draftsmen from Price and McLanahan's office as well as the principals in the firm, Rose Valley has remained true to its values to the present.

The visual expression of the social values was an architectural idea that Price described in an article "Choosing Simple Materials for the Home," where he argued for the creation of regional vernaculars using local materials so that houses would fit into their setting while eliminating the economic competition of suburbs. This vocabulary began with the stucco and Mercer tile ornamental panels of the Guest House that C. R. Ashbee, the great English arts and crafts architect, and friend of Will Price called "Rose Valley Architecture."³⁵ It continued in a more subtle manner by incorporating rough bits of the local stone, rising toward greater abstract forms in stucco and tile on the gate posts scattered around the community.

Will Price's Rose Valley work also includes larger houses for the families on the west side of Rose Valley Road. In these he moved toward greater simplicity and connection to the landscape, making the houses very much parts of their setting in the choice of materials as well as in their shapes. Of these, McLanahan's house, "Cheerie Acres," is demolished, the Schoen house (Inv. # 22, 23, 24, 25) has recently been restored; the Stephen's house has been previously placed on the National Register (Inv. # 82) and RoyLenCroft (Inv. # 114) remains and is in largely original condition. It shared a feature with other large residences by Price of a broken axis

³⁴ William L. Price, "Is Rose Valley Worth While?" *The Artsman*, 1, no. 1 (October 1903) 10-11.

³⁵ C.R. Ashbee, "Memoir, 3 (1908),"ms. Victoria and Albert Museum collections.

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just off the center that differentiated the family zones of the house from the support side. Its large canopy at the entrance and broad arched openings that open onto the landscape mark Price's beginning efforts at creating a larger scale modern house that he would explore across the country in the next decade.

Price's personal style reached maturity in the five houses of the Rose Valley Improvement Company (Inv. # 47, 48, 49, 53, 54, 55). Where most of his earlier houses in Rose Valley were adaptations of existing structures, these were intended as contemporary designs and were made of more permanent materials that would attract those who were outside of the web of relationship and ideology of the initial community and would instead bring in new residents. Because they were not for specific clients, Price was free to design them in a more abstract mode resulting in a remarkable group of modern but modest scale houses that contrasts with contemporary modern ventures such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie houses that were usually much larger and for wealthier clients. In these houses Price sought to create for people of modest means an whose style would "point the way to the accomplishment of a plastic art whereby perhaps an indigenous expression, typically American is to become established."³⁶

In part because of its architectural innovation and its open spatial qualities that denoted its open society, the community continued to be attractive to artists. Just before the end of World War I, William Grey Purcell, the noted Prairie School architect, and his wife, Edna, acquired a property off Possum Hollow Road and constructed the first Prairie School house (Inv. #72) in Pennsylvania.³⁷ It is a remarkable, low, sleek house whose deep brown paint links it to its Pennsylvania woodland site while its sliding glass panels connect it to the landscape. It is perhaps the most successful Prairie School house in Pennsylvania, demonstrating that the style was more adaptable than it might ordinarily seem.

In the 1920s other architects joined the community and built houses including W. Pope

³⁶ Price and McLanahan, "Group of Houses at Moylan, Rose Valley, Pa., *The Brickbuilder*, 20, no. 9 (September 1911), 185.

³⁷ See University of Minnesota Libraries, William Grey Purcell Purcell Archives, "Edna S. Purcell Summer residence, Rose Valley, PA Job Number JN368, photos 1-19; <http://special.lib.umn.edu/manuscripts/digital/pursearch.html>.

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Barney who built a cluster of houses on Wychwood Road including his own house (Inv. # 142), and Owen Stephens, the son of Charles and Alice Barber Stephens, who designed a cotswoldy house (Inv. #118) for his own family near his parents. The most remarkable of the architect's residences is the immense Gothic "cottage" with rough slate roof and masses of chimneys (Inv. # 56) that was designed in 1926 by Howell Lewis Shay of the noted Philadelphia skyscraper-design firm of Ritter & Shay.³⁸ Shay's splendid house is near the intersection of Rose Valley Road and Possum Hollow Road. In many ways it was at odds with the simplification of life of the original village, though its aggrandizement of country life was clearly intended to fit into the community. It represented Shay's income from the design of half a dozen skyscrapers in Philadelphia in the 1920s. The Depression and the end of the building boom of the 1920s caused Shay to sell his house but he remained in the valley and later built a second more contemporary house for himself in the 1940s (Inv. # 86) that reflected his awareness of the new horizontality of contemporary design while avoiding historical convention. In the 1920s Shay had also designed a cluster of handsome cotswoldy houses (Inv. # 13, 15, 16, 17, 50) on Hilltop Road across Possum Hollow from the Improvement Company houses. This was the last important group of buildings in the community but over the next generation additional buildings have been fit into the community, varying between modern and historically based styles in a way that is visually effective. These include the handsome modern residences of architects Alec Ewing (Inv. # 42) and Carl DeMoll's house on School House Land (Inv. #119) but also the early attempt at an energy-efficient house on the same street (Inv. # 116) as well as a very stripped contemporary house at the bend of Price's lane built in the 1940s (Inv. # 65, image 21a).

Rose Valley thus contains the homes of half a dozen architects who together shaped much of Philadelphia twentieth century architecture and with the arts and crafts community largely designed by Will Price and his cohorts, is one of the most comprehensive collections of important twentieth century houses. In this it rivals Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill with its houses by Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, and Mitchell / Giurgola and other suburbs such as Bryn Mawr, but with a higher percentage of architect designed buildings because of Price's involvement with the early community.

³⁸ Shay's career is summarized in George E. Thomas, "Howell Lewis Shay," *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, ed. Darrell Sewell, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976) 532-3. See also Pennsylvania Architectural Biography website, "Ritter & Shay".

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Landscape counterpart to the architecture

The landscape counterpart of the idea of the small cottages mixed with large estates is the open landscape of the community that is best represented by the path system that follows English models in the use of overland paths rather than being shaped by sidewalks along streets as in most suburbs. Here a network of informal paths connect clusters of houses to community resources with little regard to property boundaries or ownership (images 20a, 23a, 24a, 25a). These are well-known within the community and are taken by walkers who follow the paths instead of roads whenever possible. Their use require local knowledge because one route until recently crossed a porch and cut through hedgerows with efficiency but little regard to privacy. One result has been the general lack of fences that denote private land while the counterpart is the general lack of sidewalks that characterize the typical suburban developments beyond Rose Valley. New paths continue to be made and residents continue to cross each others property with abandon.

The communitarian side of Rose Valley has continued to the present as well. In 1923, the principal community asset, the Guild Hall (Inv. # 90), was sold to New York-based theater director Jasper Deeter who was attracted to Rose Valley by the availability of the Guild Hall, the strong community tradition in theater and its access to Philadelphia and New York. Deeter adapted the building to serve a repertory theater company that attained national renown over the next half century while relying on the actors and performers of the original Rose Valley performers including Will Price's own son, William Webb Price, who became a member of Actor's Equity. Others came to work and study and lived in various buildings including the Hedgerow House, an 1870s Victorian house on Rose Valley Road (Inv. # 111) as well as in the Kite barn (Inv. # 134). Hedgerow Theatre provided a connection to another erstwhile craftsman, Wharton Esherick (1887-1970) who had worked for a time in another Fels-based single tax community at Fairhope, Alabama. Esherick's wife came to be associated with Dr. Ruth Deeter, Jasper Deeter's sister. This in turn brought Esherick to the Hedgerow Theatre where he used readily obtainable ash axe handles to create chairs for the theater lobby while also making the immense table in the lobby. The Hedgerow Theatre Company continues to the present and remains an anchor of the community.

The sale of the Guild Hall precipitated the shift to a borough form of government which

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was established in 1923 under the leadership of residents John G. Pew (by then living at Gothwood. Inv. # 113, and son of the founder of Sun Oil and himself the manager of Sun Ship in nearby Chester, PA) and the famed attorney Maurice B. Saul who had purchased the Schoen property (Inv. # 22, 23, 24, 25) and was himself the successor in the legal practice of John G. Johnson. Saul and Pew organized the vote for borough status and simultaneously organized the community to renovate the ruins of the old mill and furniture shop as the new borough meeting hall. This survives to the present as the "Old Mill" (Inv. # 31) which includes a large social meeting hall and the borough offices owned by the Rose Valley Folk, the successor to the original Folk Mote of 1901. This building with its picturesque tower adjacent to the ruins of the original mill buildings was designed during the Depression by Price's son William Webb Price and Will Walton, both veterans of Will Price's office and long-time partners in the firm of Price and Walton. It continues as an important social space for the community and continues the pattern of self-government to the present.

Another communal activity was the founding of the School in Rose Valley in 1929 (Inv. #120, 121, 122, fig. 1). The school first met in the cottage on Vernon Lane called "Little Chestnut," (Inv. # 131) before moving to its present location in 1934. As could be expected, members of the community sought schooling that was as progressive as their lifestyle and ended up founding a school that was based on John Dewey's model of learning by doing. When the school needed new facilities during the Depression, its families applied the values of the school by designing and constructing the buildings (Inv. 127). The result is a complex of large windowed but small-paned, economical buildings that are a direct expression of the continuing communal values of Rose Valley.³⁹

More than a century after its founding Rose Valley remains a vital and active community whose commitment to its original ideals is reflected in its architectural fabric which was largely constructed during the period of the Rose Valley Association, its system of paths that still connects houses through the countryside of the valley, its shared institutions including the Hedgerow Theatre, the community's Old Mill, the Rose Valley Swim Club, and its continuing community activism. The architectural and planning characteristics of the original community

³⁹ Grace Rotzel, *The School: A Parent Venture in Education* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

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values remain reflected in the houses, walkways and paths of the community and the vast majority of the original industrial and Arts and Crafts era buildings remain. As an example of an American intentional community centered in the Arts and Crafts movement, Rose Valley meets criterion A; as the home and creation of William L. Price, one of the principal early twentieth century American architects, it meets criterion B, and as the best surviving example of Price's experimental community and design, with numerous other important houses by significant 20th century architects, it meets criterion C for architecture. In consequences of these characteristics Rose warrants being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Description of Rose Valley Historic District Boundary

The district is bounded by properties beginning at the West, North and East property lines of 13 Valley View Road (39-00183-00); then follows along the East property lines of 10 Applebough Lane (39-00001-00); 14 Applebough Lane (39-00002-00); 22 Applebough Lane (39-00003-00); 25 Applebough Lane (39-00004-00); 23 Applebough Lane (39-00005-00); then continues down the Center line of Pool Lane to the center line of Possum Hollow Road; then along the North property line of 2 Rabbit Run (39-00074-00); then continues along the North property line of 6 Rabbit Run (39-00104-00) and 10 Rabbit Run (39-00103-00); then along the East property line of 10 Rabbit Run to the center line of Rabbit Run. It then follows the West, North, and East property line of 26 Rabbit Run (39-00100-00) to the center line of Rabbit Run. It then follows the East property line of 23 Rabbit Run (39-00111-00) and 20 Hilltop Road (39-00119-00) to the North property line of United Methodist Church Cemetery; it then follows the East and South property line of 152 Rose Valley Road (39-00152-00) to the East and South property lines of 146 Rose Valley Road (39-00149-00) to the South property lines of 138 Rose Valley Road (39-00148-00) and 134 Rose Valley Road (39-00147-00) the along the center line of Rose Valley Road to the Center line of Orchard Lane to the North, East, and South property line of 8 Orchard Lane (39-00067-00) then along the Center line of Orchard Lane to the East property lines of 23 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-07); 24 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-10); 4 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-00) and 2 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-39). South property line of 2 Todmorden Drive property line (39-00187-3). It then continues along the East, South, West and North property line of 6 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-40) and then continues along the West property lines of 4 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-00), 24 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-10) and 23 Todmorden Drive (39-00187-0). It then continues along the South property line of 21 Orchard Lane (39-00069-00) to East property lines of Vacant Land owned by the Borough (39-00001-62-00). South and West property lines of Vacant Land owned by the Borough (39-00-00022-23) to crossing of Ridley Creek South and West boundary of Long Point Nature Preserve to South bank of Ridley Creek Cross Ridley Creek at site of Old Mill Dam ruins; it then follows the mill race ruins in the Saul Wildlife Preserve to the North property line of 9 Old Mill Lane (39-00007-00), then Continues along the Center line of Old Mill Lane to the Southwest property line of 5 Old Mill Lane (39-00008-00) the continues along the Southeast, Southwest and Northeast property line of 2 Old Mill Lane (39-00161-00) to the Center line of Traymore Drive (the former Saul Estate driveway) and continues to the Northeast property line of 2 Old Mill Lane (39-00161-00) then continues along the Southwest property line of 2 Old Mill Lane (39-00161-00) across Traymore Lane to Southeast property lines of borough property then along the side and rear of 51 Rose Valley Road (39-00160-00) then along the South, West and North property lines of

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School in Rose Valley 20 School Lane (39-00187-00; 39-00161-01); it then continues along the Center line of School Lane to the West property line of 9 School Lane (39-00182-00) and then along the South, West and North property lines of 1 Roylecroft (39-00153-000 to the center line of Rose Valley Road. It then follows the West property lines of 1 Buttonwood Way (39-00125-08); 2 Buttonwood Way (39-00125-07) and along the West, North & East property lines of 173 Rose Valley Road (39-00125-06) to the East property line of 2 Buttonwood Way (39-00125-07) to the center line of Buttonwood Way; it then continues along the East property line of 1 Buttonwood Way (39-00125-08) to the North and east property lines of 32 Rose Valley Road (39-00127-00) to the North property lines of 32 Price's Lane (39-00094-00) and 31 Price's Lane (39-00092-00) and 5 Arbor Lane (39-00090-00) then along the West corner of 119 Vernon Lane (39-00205-01) and the South and West property line of 12 Chestnut Lane (39-00019-00) and then along the West and North property line of 8 Chestnut Lane (39-000-20-00) and the West, North and East property line of 3 Chestnut Lane (39-00020-02) Then it continues along the North property line of 115 Vernon Lane (39-00205-00) to the West, North and East property line of 18 Vernon Lane (39-00202-00). It then concludes at the North property line of 10 Applebough Lane (39-0001-00) at the boundary of the initial property, 13 Valley View Road (39-00183-00).

Boundary justification:

These boundaries are entirely within the borough of Rose Valley and were selected to incorporate all of the Rose Valley Arts and Crafts community era buildings and the antecedent structures that were part of the original site purchase by the Rose Valley incorporators together with later buildings of residents that chose to be in the Rose Valley Borough at the time of its creation and are part of the social network of the community while avoiding as many non-contributing buildings as possible. The use of the borough line as the principal boundary reflects the historical goal of the original borough organizers who stated "In 1923, in order to control their own destiny as a local community, the 250 residents of Rose Valley petitioned the Court of Quarter Sessions to establish a Borough. The petition was approved on December 23, 1923. It created a separate municipality of 410 acres of which 363 had been in Nether Providence and 47 across the creek in Middletown Township." "Rose Valley History," Rosevalleyborough.org/history.htm

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Section: Photographic Labels

Photographs:

City or Vicinity: Rose Valley borough

County: Delaware

State: Pennsylvania

Photographer: George E. Thomas

Date Photographed: June 2008

Negatives at CivicVisions, 2029 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103

35mm archival processed negatives, processed by Lewis Tanner, 8305 Cadwalader Ave. Elkins Park, PA, 19027

1. School in Rose Valley, School Lane, original building looking west with Esherick Horse in foreground.
2. Minquas Path marker, Rose Valley Road at Traymore Lane
3. "Rose Hedge," Rose Valley Road and Price's Lane main front looking north across lawn.
4. "Camardeil," Price's Lane and Rose Valley Road, Will Price's house, looking across lawn to northeast from Price's Lane.
5. Troth Bungalow, Price's Lane, rear of Camardeil, looking northeast.
6. Hedgerow Theater, Rose Valley Road below Price's Lane, main façade looking northeast.
7. "Bishop White house," from Old Mill Lane, with spring house in foreground.
8. "Old Mill," borough offices and mill ruins, end of Old Mill Lane.
9. Schoenhaus, Charles Schoen house and water tower with pergola from Traymore Drive.
10. Rose Valley Guest House, Rose Valley and Possum Hollow Roads, looking southeast.
11. Workers' cottages, Rose Valley and Possum Hollow Roads, looking southwest.
12. H. L. Shay house, Rose Valley and Possum Hollow Roads, looking east.
13. Rose Valley Improvement Company houses, end of Porter Lane looking north.
14. Hilltop Road house, Hilltop Road looking southwest.
15. Union Methodist Church, West Brookhaven Road looking north.
16. Union Methodist Church, detail of main façade, West Brookhaven Road, looking north

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Supplemental views:

Historic Views:

All copy views from collection of George E. Thomas, purchased at Freeman's Auction, 1969, now deposited in the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

- 1a. Worker's Village, Rose Valley Road from west, Henry Troth view, 1901 at time of purchase of Rose Valley
- 2a. Craftsmen building fireplace in Guest house, 1901 or 1902.
- 3a. "Warrington" house, Inv. #59 in 1903, viewed from Price's Lane.
- 4a. Osborne House, now Schoen House, inventory # 24, at time of purchase of community in 1901.
- 5a. W. L. Price perspective of proposed renovations to Osborne house for Charles Schoen, 1905, pencil on paper.
- 6a. Schoen house after completion of project, c. 1905
- 7a. Roy-Len-Croft, Inventory #115, looking north, c. 1909.
- 8a. Site plan of Rose Valley Improvement Company, 1910, from *The Brickbuilder*, (20, no. 9, Sept. 1911).
- 9a. Details of Rose Valley Improvement Company houses, 1910, from *The Brickbuilder*, (20, no. 9, Sept. 1911).
- 10a. Rose Valley Improvement Company houses, from Possum Hollow Road, 1910.
- 11a. Rose Valley Improvement Company houses, from Rose Valley Road looking up drive, 1910.

Modern views:

All views, November 2009, George E. Thomas, photographer, files at 2029 Walnut Street, Philadelphia

- 12a. North end of Rose Valley, gateposts moved from Old Mill Lane, c. 1990 looking south toward Rose Valley Road
- 13a. Inv. # 113, "Gothwood", 173 Rose Valley Road, looking south across main drive
- 14a. Inv. #115 Roy-Len Croft gateposts, at 1 Roy Len Croft Road, looking north
- 15a. Detail of Inv. #115, Roy Len Croft gateposts,
- 16a. Inv. #114, "Roy-Len-Croft, 1 Roy-Len-Croft Road, looking north
- 17a. Inv. # 86, 51 Rose Valley Road, H. L. Shay house looking south from main drive
- 18a. Inv. # 83, "Carmedeil," W. L. Price house, looking NE from Price's Lane
- 19a. Inv. #59, "Aunt Bess" Warrington house, 7 Price's Lane, from path to 5 Price's Lane, looking North
- 20a. Inv. # 58, The Studio, 5 Price's Lane looking south from Price's Lane
- 21a. Inv. # 65, 25 Price's Lane looking east.
- 22a. Inv. # 62, detail of "Squirrel's Tail Rafter end, Walton's Forge, 15-19 Price's Lane
- 23a. Inv. # 44, "Price Memorial Bridge: looking west toward path to Price' Lane
- 24a. Inv. # 45 Path along abandoned trolley line near pool, looking west
- 25a. Inv.# 46, path over rubble stone Hutton Mill dam toward Abbott House (Inv. # 51).

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- 26a. Inv. # 46, Hutton Mill dam from below with bridge for path system looking North
- 27a. Inv# 51, Abbott house from Pool lane looking southeast
- 28a. Inv. # 134, "Good Intent" barn, adapted by Nathan Kite, 26 Vernon Lane looking north
- 29a. Inv. #135, "Fireproof House" 30 Vernon Lane, looking southeast
- 30a. Modern, non-contributing houses outside of district on Vernon Lane, looking north.
- 31a. Inv. # 72, 2 Rabbit Run, Purcell house from driveway looking north
- 32a. Inv. # 16, 12 Hilltop Road looking north
- 33a. Inv. # 38, 5 Orchard Lane looking southwest from road
- 34a. Inv. # 123, 2 Tod Morden Lane, 1787 barn looking north
- 35a. Inv. # 125, 6 Tod Morden Lane, looking north