

3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE APE

3.1 Claymont Overview

Claymont is an unincorporated town within Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, located along the Delaware River. Claymont is traversed by two railroad lines and the old King's Highway (now known as Philadelphia Pike). Development in Claymont began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with inns and taverns serving travelers along King's Highway between Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Washington, D.C. Within the APE, the Grubb House, now the Holy Rosary convent, was built in 1783 by A.A. Grubb of the prominent family that established Grubb's Landing along the Delaware River just south of the project area. Not much is known of A.A. Grubb, but the family, primarily through the activities of John Grubb and his descendents, included notable landowners in the early history of Brandywine Hundred.

In the mid-nineteenth century, wealthy businessmen from Philadelphia and other cities began to construct summer homes in Claymont. Claymont was named in 1856 after the family home of Mrs. Clemson, wife of the Episcopal Church pastor at the time. During this period, the APE contained only a few scattered houses. Based on late-nineteenth-century mapping, it appears that the A.A. Grubb property may have been under the ownership of Thomas Kimber. Kimber owned several properties in the vicinity, although it is not clear on which property he lived. Kimber is best known for his relationship with the Society of Friends; in 1866 he donated land for the construction of the Claymont Methodist Episcopal Church, located just north of the APE on Philadelphia Pike (Scharf 1888).

The Claymont area remained relatively rural to the end of the nineteenth century. The trolley extended into Claymont in 1898 and connected it to the cities of Pennsylvania and Wilmington, stimulating substantial growth of that area's suburbs. Homes in Claymont began to be constructed as full-time dwellings rather than as seasonal respites from the city. The early twentieth century brought not only residential growth to the area but also industrial growth as several large industries settled along the railroads and river to the east of Claymont. The General Chemical Company, National Aniline Chemical Company, and Worth Steel constructed plants near the Delaware and Pennsylvania state line in the early decades of the twentieth century (Schiek and Hester 2000).

3.2 Overlook Colony, 1918 to 1924

The General Chemical Company was formed in 1899 from a conglomeration of 12 existing chemical companies across the United States. The company headquarters were based in New York, New York. The company was quite successful in the early twentieth century and had production plants and warehouses all across the country. In 1912, General Chemical Company opened their large Delaware Valley Works in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania. Although a successful enterprise, the Marcus Hook plant soon began to have problems with labor relations as a shortage of workers led to a high employee turnover. The Marcus Hook area was quickly becoming a prime industrial location for the time, as several industries established plants along Philadelphia Pike near the Delaware River. This influx forced the multiple manufacturing interests to compete for laborers from the nearby communities. In addition, the outbreak of

World War I removed many of the working men from their jobs to serve overseas in the military while concurrently increasing the demand on American manufacturers for war supplies. The company had to take the initiative in ensuring a healthy workplace and a desirable life overall in order to retain good workers (General Chemical Company 1919:75-77).

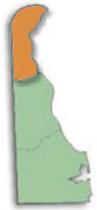
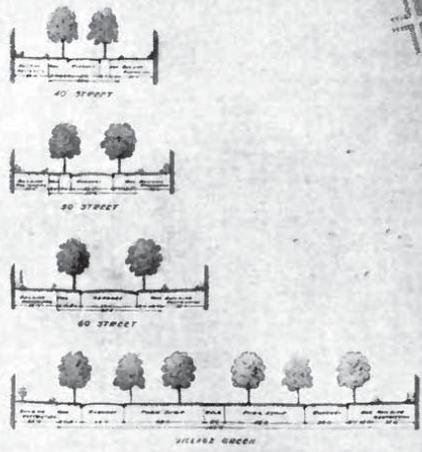
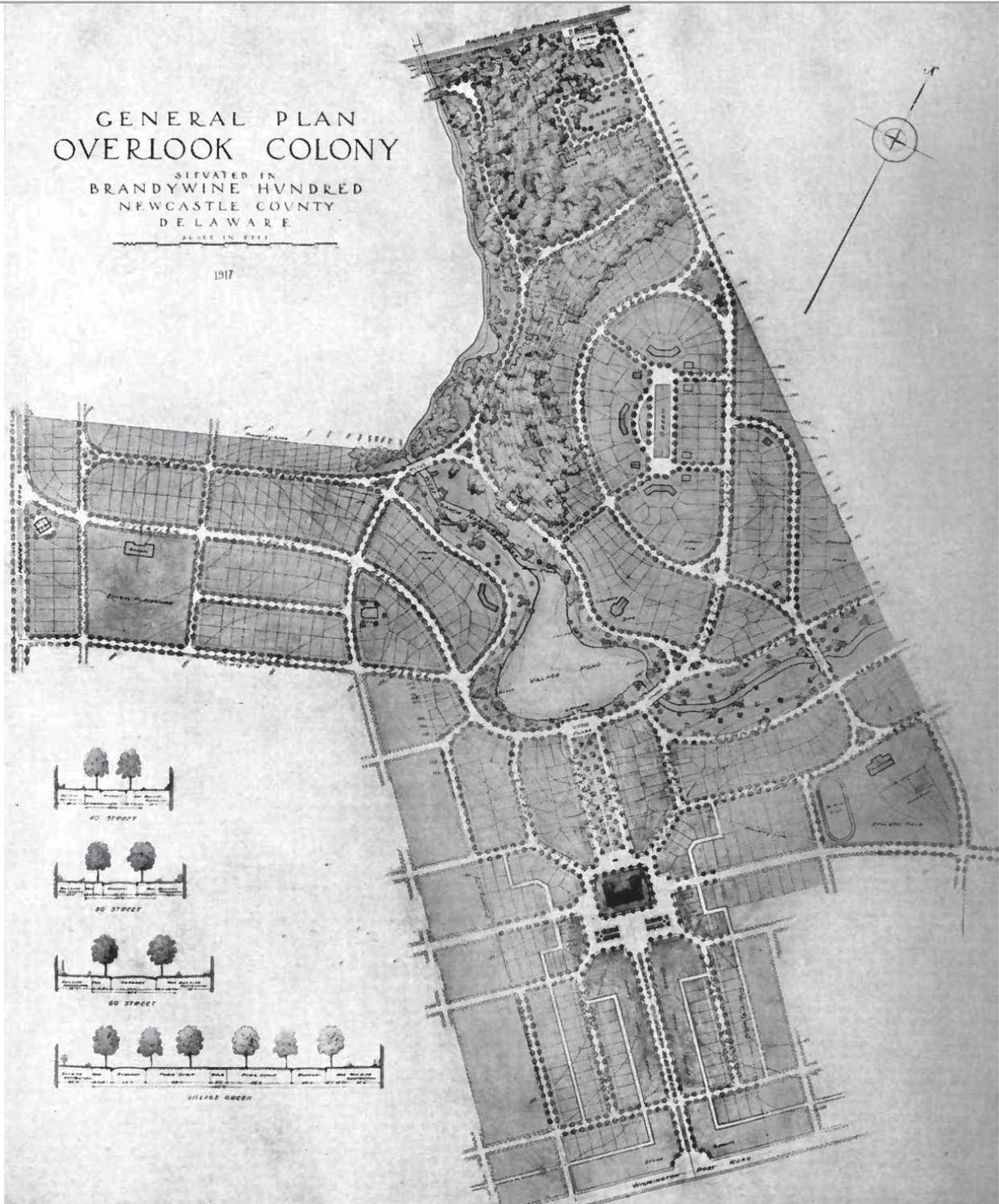
At first, the General Chemical Company provided temporary housing options to meet the immediate needs of workers, but it quickly became clear that the problem was too big for makeshift solutions and that a permanent housing solution was necessary. The companies were left with the option to either provide housing in existing communities or to develop their own communities. After careful consideration, the General Chemical Company decided to found a new community with modern facilities and ample recreational space. The company development also provided the opportunity for the residents to take part in the development of educational, recreational, and governmental facilities. Given the option, the employees favored a location removed from the plant in order to separate their work from their home and enjoy a more rural lifestyle. In April 1916, the company acquired a tract of 213 acres approximately 1 mile away from the Marcus Hook plant. It was estimated that the development would house about 5,000 persons. The development was named Overlook Colony because the site was particularly picturesque and the high elevation of the land offered a view of the Delaware River, which was approximately 0.5 mile away from the development (General Chemical Company 1919:75-77). By the time construction began on the development in 1918, Claymont Terrace and Claymont Center subdivisions were already implemented off of Philadelphia Pike near Overlook Colony and in proximity to the streetcar line (Schiek and Hester 2000).

The tract slated for the development of Overlook Colony was wooded and had a creek running through the property. The land was undulating and contained several rocky areas, which presented interesting challenges in developing the land. The character of the property resulted in a great variety in lot sizes and shapes and required creativity in the planning of streets; placement of lots; and construction of shops, public buildings, and dwellings. The company hired well-known planner John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to design the Overlook Colony. Nolen designed similar industrial communities in several locations across the country, and his peers praised Overlook Colony as a successful and beautiful piece of work, turning what seemed to be handicaps in the landscape into valuable assets in the design (Figure 3; May 1918). John Nolen's office produced over 25 plans for company towns across the country; however, less than one-third were built and even fewer stayed true to plan. Nolen's Cambridge office was one of the largest planning firms in the country between 1915 and 1925, creating plans for anything from gardens to entire city plans (Crawford 1995).

Nolen enlisted architect H. Errol Coffin of New York City for the design of the buildings. The overall design of Overlook Colony was inspired by English Garden villages with Tudor Revival cottages, which were constructed in rows along winding streets in a park-like setting (Nolen, Coffin and Coffin 1922). The Tudor Revival and English cottage influence of the buildings in Overlook Colony are of a typical design for industrial communities.

While the company may have initially wanted a community of single family detached homes, the expense of materials and labor during World War I constrained construction everywhere. Instead, blocks and rows of one-and-one-half- to two-story units were planned in groups of four

Figure 3
1917 Plan of Overlook Colony
 Claymont Improvements Project
 Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware



Not to Scale

X:\Graphics\Projects\1095B\mapping\Phase II Historic Architectural Survey Figure 1.indd

to 39 houses. The houses were built of concrete, hollow tile, brick, and steel frame, and had slate roofs of various colors. The buildings in the community were heated by a central station and were constructed of materials that were both economical to maintain and fire resistant (Nolen, Coffin and Coffin 1922).

While the dwellings were economically designed, the company did not scrimp when providing amenities for their workers. Space was laid out for playgrounds, schools, and public buildings, and a community center was added as a place to show movies and hold community meetings. For single men, a boarding house and dormitory was built with units for anywhere from one to three men. The local school board also became involved, designing a 12- to 16-room schoolhouse for the community on Green Street (Radu 1998). The General Chemical Company provided a complete system of sewer, water, gas, electricity, and telephone service, as well as sufficient yards or community gardens for each resident. Commonwealth Avenue was designed as the primary thoroughfare, and the intersection with Philadelphia Pike was designed with an entrance feature to emphasize the main entrance to Overlook Colony. A community garage was built to house the vehicles used in the jitney service provided by the company to transport the workers between Overlook Colony and the General Chemical works. The community was also located on the streetcar line and railroad connecting to major urban centers; for these reasons, individual transportation was generally not necessary (General Chemical Company 1919:75-77).

The overall cost to complete Overlook Colony was estimated at \$2,000,000. The houses were rented to the employees of the company for relatively low amounts, resulting in only a modest rate of return on their investment and no direct income. The company felt the investment was worthwhile as it would lead to the attraction and retention of the best workers and would contribute to their health, happiness, and efficiency in the workplace (General Chemical Company 1919).

Construction started in 1918 with the section of the community closest to existing development bound by Green Street to the north, Second Avenue to the east, Philadelphia Pike at the south, and Fourth Avenue to west. Within nine months, the first section of streets and parks was laid out, utilities were installed, and construction had been completed on 186 dwellings, a community building, a garage, and a boarding house on approximately 30 acres of land (Unknown Author 1924b). However, like many of the industrial communities designed by Nolen and others in this time period, Overlook Colony was never fully completed (Radu 1998).

In 1921, General Chemical merged with several other companies to form the Allied Chemical and Dye Corporation (General Chemical Group, Inc., 2010). After the consolidation of Allied Chemical and the end of World War I, the need for industrial housing at Overlook Colony decreased severely. Although maps from the period show the entire street layout, only the first phase of the development had been completed by 1924, which included open space and gardens along Philadelphia Pike and Commonwealth Avenue, the entrance feature at the intersection of the two roads, the community building and boarding house flanking the entrance (outside of the APE), and row houses designed by Coffin as worker housing along Second, Third, Fourth, Brandywine and Court avenues (outside of the APE; Sanborn Map Company 1927).

3.3 The “New” Company Town

Company towns were common in the nineteenth century; however, the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century movements that sought to programmatically and physically improve the standard of living for the working class ultimately led to the evolution of the new company town of the 1910s and 1920s. The followers of the English Garden City and Progressive movements believed that poor living environments for workers led to social inequalities and poor health, which ultimately led to a reduction in effectiveness of the company. In the 1910s, many large companies invested in welfare activities in order to attract the best workers and increase production and success for the company; this included the construction of comprehensive communities that would provide a higher quality of living for their employees (Crawford 1995). The welfare movement combined with a decreasing supply of healthy workmen during World War I led to widespread construction of worker housing in industrial areas during this period. In Claymont alone, three industrial communities were established along Philadelphia Pike around 1918: Worth Steel constructed the Worthland and Hickman’s Row communities (outside of the APE), and General Chemical Company established Overlook Colony (Cartier 2007). In the greater Wilmington area, several additional industrial communities were established, including the DuPont Company’s Carney’s Point Village in 1917 and Union Park Gardens, which was created for the Emergency Fleet Corporation in 1918 (Radu 1998).

More than 40 new industrial towns were constructed throughout the country between 1909 and 1920, increasing the standard of living for industrial workers and providing single family units that were larger, of higher quality, of higher architectural design, on larger lots, and combined with access to services such as recreation and transportation. These new company towns were typified as:

- Complete communities, including housing, shops, services, public facilities and recreational facilities
- Physically and conceptually separate from their industrial purpose
- Utilized limited access and provided aesthetic vistas through the use of curvilinear or axial street patterns
- Involved a hierarchy of development in streets, lots, and house types
- Used a variety of styles and forms of affordable dwellings
- Provided parks and extensive landscaping
- Involved the collaboration between architects, planners, and landscape architects
- Laid out to be compatible with the topography and natural features. (Crawford 1995)

The new company town was short-lived as men returned from the war and industrial profits leveled out. In the mid-1920s, company housing faced an overall decline through a change in management styles as pension plans, personnel departments, and employee representation or unions replaced housing and welfare programs. The availability of automobiles to the general population also reduced the worker’s dependence on the employer, as the employees were not forced to live within walking distance or near public transportation. The year 1929 marked the official end of the company town. After that point, employers did not generally provide housing

for their employees, depending on the construction industry and individuals to meet those demands. Most of the company towns constructed during the 1910s and 1920s were sold to individuals and private interests outside of the industrial community in the 1920s and 1930s (Crawford 1995).

In the vicinity of Overlook Colony, both Worthland and Union Park Gardens are National Register-eligible industrial communities designed in 1917 to 1918. As they were of simpler designs than Overlook Colony, both of these communities were almost entirely completed. All three developments were professionally designed, funded by corporations for the housing of their workers, and included not just dwellings but also open space and community functions. Worthland and Union Park Gardens retain a higher level of integrity than Overlook Colony, illustrating the key features of the new company town and aesthetics of the English Garden village (Radu 1998).

Worthland, now known as Knollwood, is located off of Philadelphia Pike in Claymont, just northeast of Overlook Colony and outside of the APE for this project. Built by the Worth Steel Company in 1917 as rental housing for its workers, Worthland includes approximately 160 dwellings and two company office buildings. Worthland included a variety of housing styles, variable setbacks, community services, and open space. The community was designed with a hierarchy of buildings and streets as well as a separate development for the African-American workers called Hickman's Row. The site of Worthland was buffered from adjacent development by natural features and had limited access to its primarily linear street pattern. Worth Steel retained ownership and thereby control of Worthland until 1963, when it was sold to private investors (Unknown Author n.d.).

Union Park Gardens was designed by John Nolen in 1918 to house workers of the Emergency Fleet Corporation. Comprised of approximately 58 acres, Union Park Gardens was located in the outskirts of the City of Wilmington. The completeness of the project before it was sold to private interests in 1922 resulted in only a small area of later development and the retention of the original design that illustrates many of the key features of John Nolen industrial communities (Radu 1998). The design for Union Park Gardens included dwellings, community buildings, and a school, as well as a grand boulevard entrance providing controlled and aesthetic views, sidewalks, a hierarchy of streets, curvilinear streets, shared open space, extensive landscaping, and a variety of residential architecture. The development was buffered from adjacent uses by park land and a cemetery. The plan also included adjacent blocks to avoid intrusions from incompatible development. The only portions not completed to design are the block at the corner of Lancaster Avenue and Union Street, which was later developed into row homes; and the lots along the northwest boundary, which were developed into additional housing instead of a playground and community building. Although the community buildings were not constructed within Union Park Gardens by the time of the 1922 redevelopment, a school, park, and community center were later erected nearby, meeting those needs of the community. Union Park Gardens retains a high level of integrity and maintains its community character. The dwellings, like those of Overlook Colony, were constructed primarily in rows, designed to reflect English cottage or Tudor Revival architecture. Unlike Overlook Colony, the buildings were almost entirely constructed of brick and hollow tile, and have undergone few changes over the years (Nolen 1927). The retention of integrity may be due to the decreased maintenance for masonry

buildings, a larger number of owner-occupied dwellings in Union Park Gardens than Overlook Colony, or the overall attractiveness of Union Park Gardens resulting from its park-like setting and close proximity to downtown Wilmington.

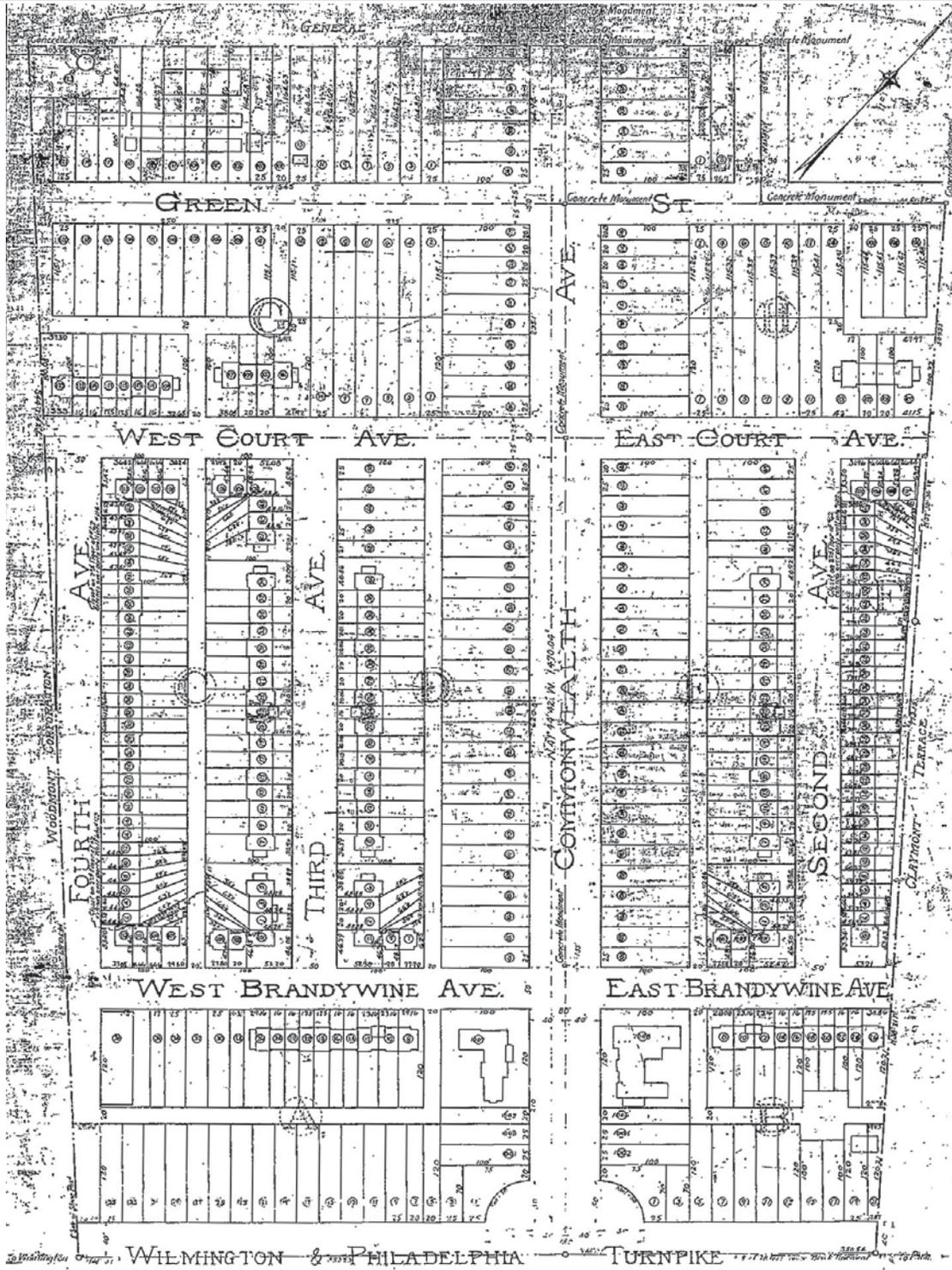
3.4 Residential Development in Claymont, 1920s to 1950s

After the brief trend of industrial communities, residential subdivisions continued to flourish in Claymont. Within the APE, the Stockdale Corporation formed a subdivision on the southeast side of Philadelphia Pike, just northeast of Overlook Colony in 1921, and in 1924 the remaining land of Overlook Colony was sold to private investors for redevelopment. Once the war was over and the Progressive movement was on a decline, General Chemical Company decided to release control of Overlook Colony, apparently with the intention of enabling their workers to become homeowners independent of the company. Overlook Colony was auctioned for less than one-third of the original cost to real estate brokers Young and Company. Representing Hugh B. Eastburn of Bristol, Pennsylvania, Young and Company purchased 30 acres of the community for only \$455,000. Eastburn immediately put the property up for sale, although he did offer current tenants preferential terms if they wished to buy their homes. Only approximately 20 percent of the residents purchased their homes; the remaining tenants were given notice to vacate or pay a 40 percent increase in rent (Unknown Author 1924a).

Not long after the auction, Eastburn sold the community to Claude Banta, who subdivided the property into narrow lots for individual sale (Radu 1998). Banta filed a new plan for Overlook Colony in 1924 that was significantly smaller in scale, completely severing the connections to the north and west spokes of the development (Figure 4). The plan was confined to the small area bounded by Green Street, Fourth Avenue, Philadelphia Pike, and Second Avenue. Even within the small portion of the original community, the new plan abandoned the few picturesque features constructed based on John Nolen's design, such as the park, pond, community open space, and diagonal streets leading to the focal point at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Green Street. The only landscape features retained under the 1924 plan were the central median and the entrance feature to Commonwealth Avenue from Philadelphia Pike. Banta's plan utilized alleys only where buildings had already been constructed and straightened and extended Court Avenue to form a grid system of streets, eliminating the planned vistas. The C. Banta plan of 1924 included new lots measuring 25 feet by 100 feet in what was once formerly open space on Commonwealth Avenue, Philadelphia Pike, and Court Avenue (Nolen, Coffin and Coffin 1922).

The vacant lots within the redeveloped Overlook Colony were sold to individuals and small developers and included restrictions for development to preserve the residential character, such as restricting the development to Caucasian residents, setting a minimum cost of new construction, and prohibiting changes to the physical design of existing buildings (Radu 1998). The open lots in the redeveloped Overlook Colony were promoted in advertisements in local papers that emphasized city conveniences and beautiful country home sites. The lots maintained permanent deed restrictions, and the company offered affordable prices and financing to potential homebuyers. The convenient location on Philadelphia Pike provided accessibility to transportation in 1924, as it was on the Philadelphia trolley line, the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the Red Arrow bus line from Wilmington to Marcus Hook. In addition, the development was

Figure 4
1924 Plan of Overlook Colony
 Claymont Improvements Project
 Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\IP1095B\mapping\Phase II Historic Architectural Survey Figure 1.indd



Not to Scale

located near the multiple industries still active in Marcus Hook, including the General Chemical Company and the Worth Brothers Plant and Silk Mills (Unknown Author 1924c).

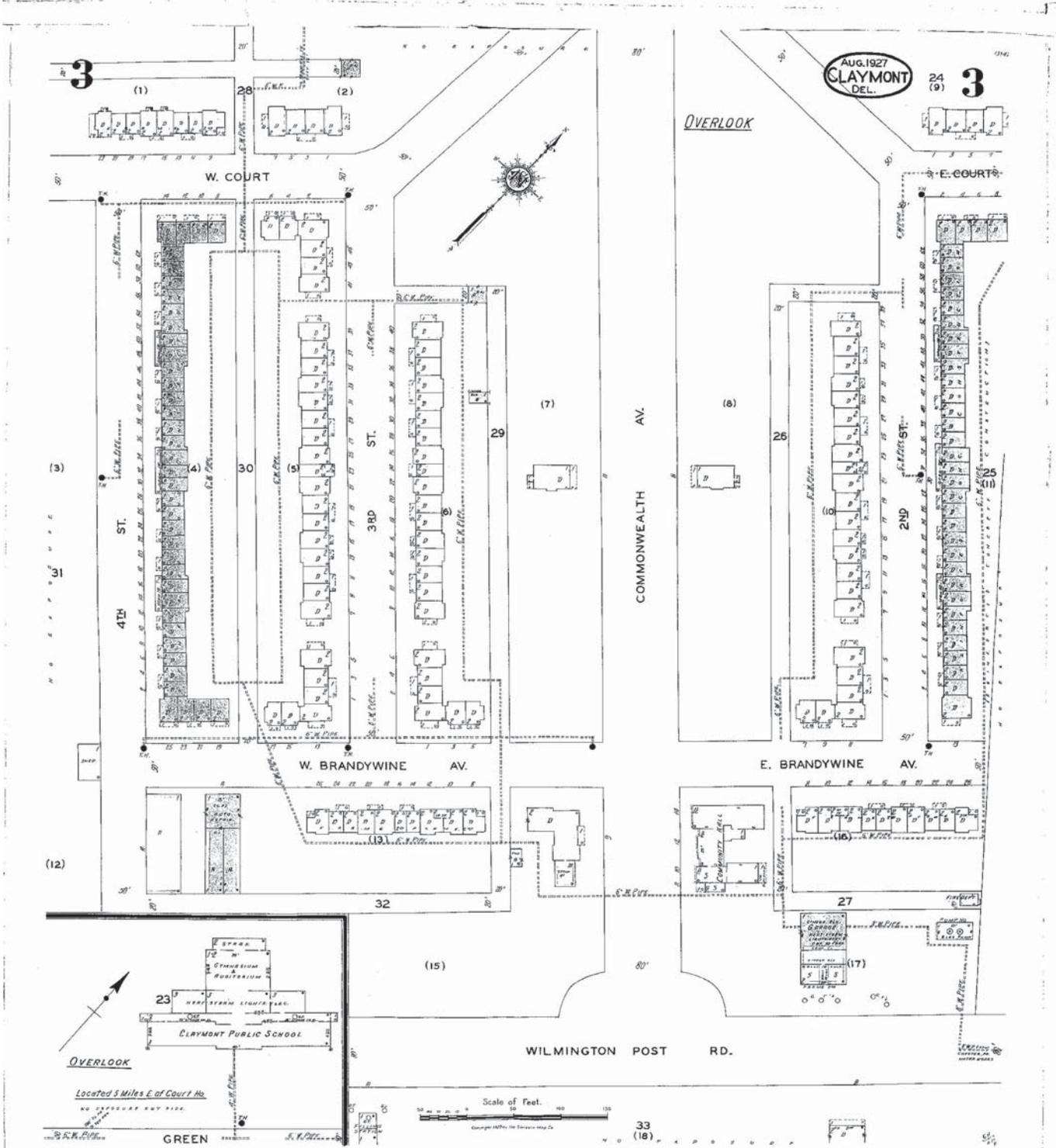
Even with all of the attractive features of Overlook Colony, it took several years for buildings to occupy the remaining lots along Commonwealth Avenue and Philadelphia Pike. By 1927, only two dwellings had been constructed on Commonwealth Avenue (outside of the APE), and one service station was opened on Philadelphia Pike (Figure 5; Sanborn Map Company 1927). The original design for Overlook Colony called for the land along Philadelphia Pike to serve as open space, and then as residential lots. However, given its proximity to the busy highway, Philadelphia Pike soon developed a commercial identity separate from the rest of Overlook Colony. Commercial interests began to purchase multiple lots on Philadelphia Pike, and a string of service stations opened in the 1920s and 1930s (Figure 6; Sanborn Map Company 1936). The same trend was seen in other nearby subdivisions, including the Stockdale development. While many of the interior lots of Stockdale were developed, only one dwelling, 3220 Philadelphia Pike (N09544), had been constructed along Philadelphia Pike by the 1940s. The dwelling was associated with the adjacent Sunoco station, being under common ownership and serving as dwelling space for the owners of the station. The multiple service stations, including three within the APE, indicate the prevalence of automobiles during this period and the status of Philadelphia Pike as a major thoroughfare in northern Delaware.

A 1939 photograph shows that within Overlook Colony, only a portion of Commonwealth Avenue south of Court Avenue had been built upon, and three more service stations opened on Philadelphia Pike on lots redeveloped for residential use (Figure 7). The west side of the arc-shaped entrance feature at Commonwealth Avenue and Philadelphia Pike was utilized by the Gulf Station as a parking area and for access to the gas pumps (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 1939).

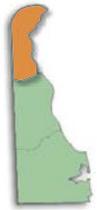
3.5 Twentieth-Century Commercial Development along Philadelphia Pike

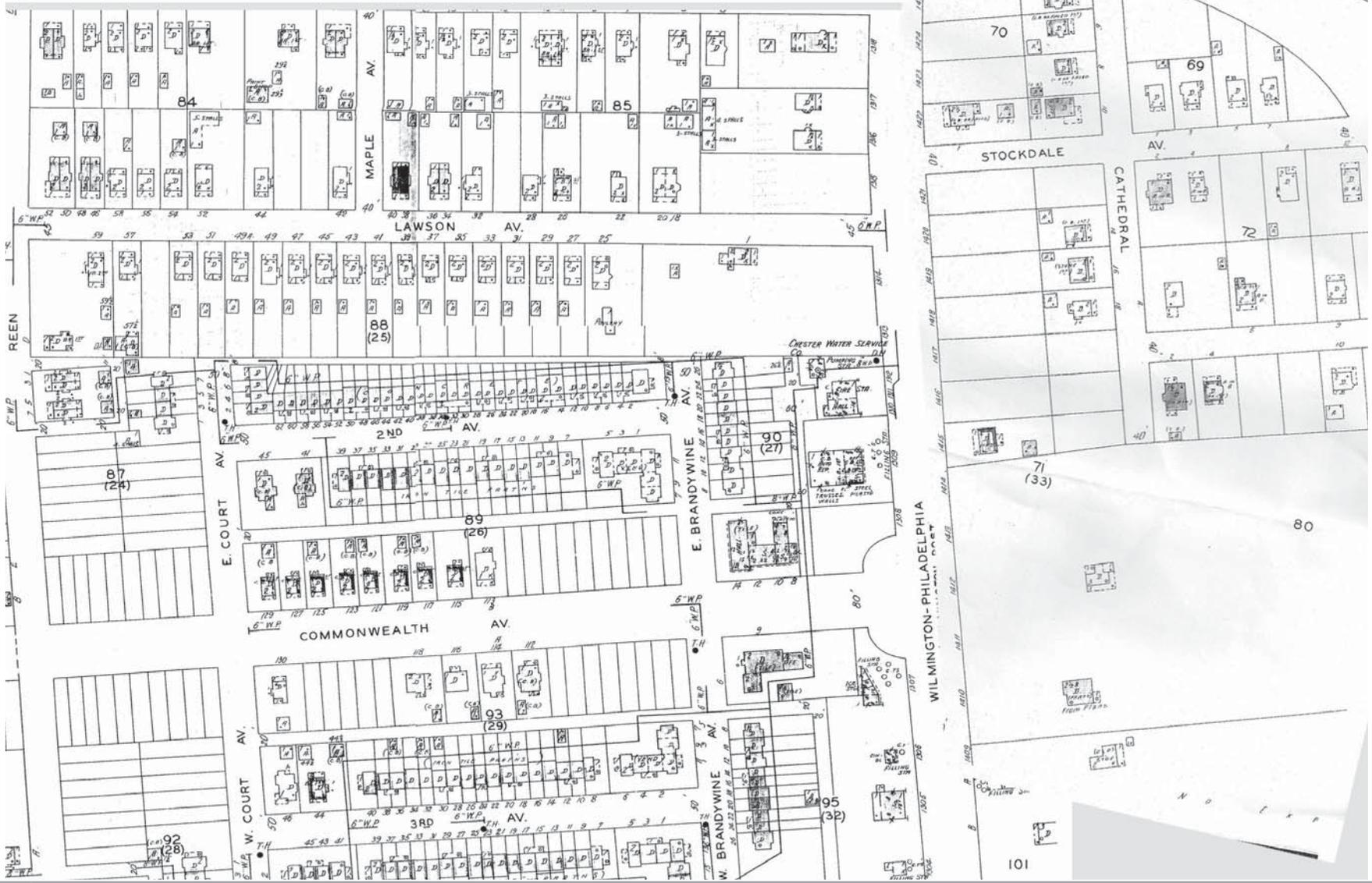
While homes occupied the inner lots of Overlook Colony and other residential subdivisions, commercial properties were erected along the major thoroughfare of Philadelphia Pike. In 1926, James McNulty and Edward Herley bought lots 7 through 13 of Section B of Overlook Colony from Claude Banta, the developer of the subdivision (New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1926). Soon after, they constructed the two-story concrete block service station that stands within the APE at 3207 Philadelphia Pike (N09455), just northeast of the intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. When it opened, the service station had several gas pumps, a vehicle showroom, and upper level apartments. The 1927 Sanborn map shows no other properties along the northwest side of Philadelphia Pike, and shows at least one other filling station on the southeast side of the road on what is now the Holy Rosary Church property (Figure 5; Sanborn Map Company 1927). A 2007 survey of Philadelphia Pike in Brandywine Hundred prepared by CHAD at UDel and a pictorial history of Claymont by Schiek and Hester states that the Gulf Oil Company indicated the service station at 3207 Philadelphia Pike is the longest continuously operating Gulf station in America (CHAD UDel 2007; Scheick and Hester 2000:93). The Gulf Oil Company formally purchased the property in 1932 through a sheriff's sale for the debts of James McNulty. Gulf Oil maintained ownership until 1949, at which time the company sold the station to brothers Joseph and Anthony Vassalotti. The Vassalottis formed a partnership called

Figure 5
1927 Sanborn Map of Overlook Colony
 Claymont Improvements Project
 Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\1095B\mapping\Phase II Historic Architectural Survey Figure 1.indd





Scale in Feet

Figure 6
1936 Sanborn Map of Overlook Colony
 Claymont Improvements Project
 Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware

Figure 7
1937 Aerial Photograph
Claymont Improvements Project
Claymont Improvements, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\1095B\mapping\Historic Architecture_maps&aerials1.indd



Joe & Tony's Service in 1957. Ten years later, the Vassalottis sold the service station property to Michael DeCostanza. In 2010, Michael DeCostanza and his brother, John DeCostanza, continue to operate the service station under the name Joe and Tony's Service Station (New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1932, 1949, and 1957).

Only about three years after the 1927 opening of the Gulf Station at 3207 Philadelphia Pike, another service station was erected on lots 1, 3, and 5 of the Overlook Colony subdivision Section A, which is located at the west corner of Philadelphia Pike and Commonwealth Avenue. The Diamond Ice and Coal Company purchased the lots in 1930 and formed a partnership with Gulf Oil Company for the operation of the Claymont Service Station (New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1930). The Art Moderne service station provided gas from tanks in the front portion of the lot, offered two service bays for auto servicing, and sold ice out of a vestibule in the base of the central tower, which was a characteristic feature of contemporary Gulf stations. The tower had back-lit glass block extending almost the entire height. Neon letters spelling out "Diamond Ice" were installed vertically along the feature, and a neon Gulf sign lit the top of the sign. In 2010, the neon signage has been removed. The windows at the office of the service center were full-length plate glass and included a curved window at the north corner of the building, which is now a flat angle (Rickowski 2010b). Brothers Howard and Clarence Kuhn managed the station from the 1930s into the 1990s, and kept the station in the Kuhn family into the 1990s. Diamond Ice sold their interest in the Claymont Service Station to Gulf Oil in 1957, and Gulf Oil sold their interest to Ken Kuhn and his wife Caroline in 1974. Under Ken Kuhn's ownership, the station was expanded into the adjacent vacant lots 1001, 1003, and 1005 of Section A of the Overlook Colony subdivision, which he purchased from the estate of Douglas Davidson in 1974. When the station was expanded, Kuhn also replaced the canopy, covered much of the glass block in the tower, enclosed the ice vestibule, and shortened the display windows of the office. The Kuhns sold the service station to Stephen Reed in 1995 (New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1957, 1974, and 1995). When the current owner, Ken Rickowski, took over the station in 2006, he made additional alterations to the building, such as reducing the office windows, bricking in the corner window of the office, and renovating the interior (Rickowski 2010b). The Claymont Service Station no longer sells gasoline or ice but remains in use as a service station under the auspices of AAMCO.

After the service stations were constructed in the 1930s, other commercial buildings were erected in the vicinity of the APE, such as the building at 3101 Philadelphia Pike (N14541), which is now used for a liquor store (Figures 7 and 8). Around 1950, Joe & Tony's expanded their interests, constructing a second building on the two lots at the north corner of Philadelphia Pike and Commonwealth Avenue that they rented out for various commercial uses. The two corner lots remain under common ownership with Joe & Tony's Service Station, but the building space is now leased as a tax services office, barber shop, and a dry cleaner. Also within the APE, members of the Yetter family constructed a commercial building to the west of the service station at 3111 Philadelphia Pike. The establishment, known as Yetter's Discount Liquors, originated as a small restaurant around 1950 and expanded several times in the 1950s and 1960s before it reached its current footprint. The restaurant eventually closed and the entire building is used as a discount liquor store.

Commercial properties continued to develop along the Philadelphia Pike corridor through Claymont into the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Some of the earlier

Figure 8
1954 Aerial Photograph
Claymont Improvements Project
Claymont Improvements, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\P1095B\mapping\Historic Architecture_maps&aerials1.indd



Project Location

commercial buildings have undergone modern alterations while others have been removed and replaced, such as the former service station in the location of the Dunkin' Donuts at 3220 Philadelphia Pike (just outside of the APE).

3.6 Holy Rosary Church

The Holy Rosary Catholic parish was formed in 1920. Mass was initially held in a Worthland home (in Claymont, northeast of the APE), and the first parish mass was held in the Overlook Community Center. Quickly outgrowing the community center, the congregation constructed a small frame chapel near the intersection of Seminole Road and Philadelphia Pike (northeast of the APE) in 1921 (no longer extant). The property also included a two-story bungalow that was used as the rectory (Unknown Author 1921). In 1930, the parish acquired 6.6 acres of land on the southeast side of Philadelphia Pike from Josiah and Elizabeth Bacon (New Castle County Recorder of Deeds 1930). The property included a three-story stone house directly across from Commonwealth Avenue and a filling station adjacent to the roadway (Sanborn Map Company 1936). In 1936, the current rectory, which was originally used as a school, was constructed on the new church property (Schiek and Hester 2000:114). The parish constructed the current school in 1949 to 1950, demolishing the three-story house near the intersection of Philadelphia Pike and Commonwealth Avenue. Eight rooms of the school were used for classes, while the remaining area was used for worship. The Sisters of St. Joseph taught classes at the Holy Rosary School, and in 1952 the parish purchased the adjacent property, which contained the former A.A. Grubb House, for use as a convent. The A.A. Grubb House had been occupied by Edward H. Worth, president of Worth Steel, from the 1910s until his death in 1952. Prior to moving into the Grubb/Worth House, the nuns resided in a house on Cathedral Street in the adjacent Stockdale subdivision. The former Grubb/Worth property was comprised of approximately 25 acres of land at the time of purchase. The portion of the lot with the house and garage was consolidated into the church property, and the remaining lands were sold to private interests for development (Unknown Author 1952). Between 1958 and 1965, the school was expanded, the addition to the rectory was constructed, and the present Holy Rosary Church was built on the property (Schiek and Hester 2000). The church, dedicated in May 1960, was built in a Latin Cross form and included the chapel, a basement, and meeting rooms. Once the church opened, the former worship areas in the school building were converted into additional classroom space (McConomy 1960). The school closed recently and is being leased for use as a charter school. The convent has also been reused as a retreat house by the parish.

3.7 Claymont and Overlook Colony, 1954 to Present

Construction continued in Overlook Colony and other nearby residential developments into the twenty-first century, infilling remaining vacant lots and expanding and altering earlier buildings. Between 1954 and 2010, additional landscape, use, and vista alterations occurred in the project area, most noticeably in Overlook Colony (Figures 8 to 13). By 1954, the trees on the north side of the entrance feature of Commonwealth Avenue were removed, eliminating the physical and visual separation between the entrance feature and the adjacent commercial properties (Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service [ASCS] 1954). By the 1970s, traffic lights and curbing were added at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Philadelphia Pike. Curbing was installed within both sides of the entrance feature and down the center of

Figure 9
1961 Aerial Photograph
Claymont Improvements Project
Claymont Improvements, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\P1095B\mapping\Historic Architecture_maps&aerials1.indd

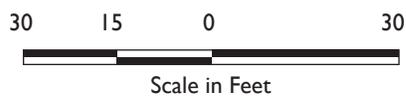


Project Location

Figure 10
1968 Aerial Photograph
Claymont Improvements Project
Claymont Improvements, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\P1095B\mapping\Historic Architecture_maps&aerials.i.indd



 Project Location

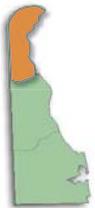
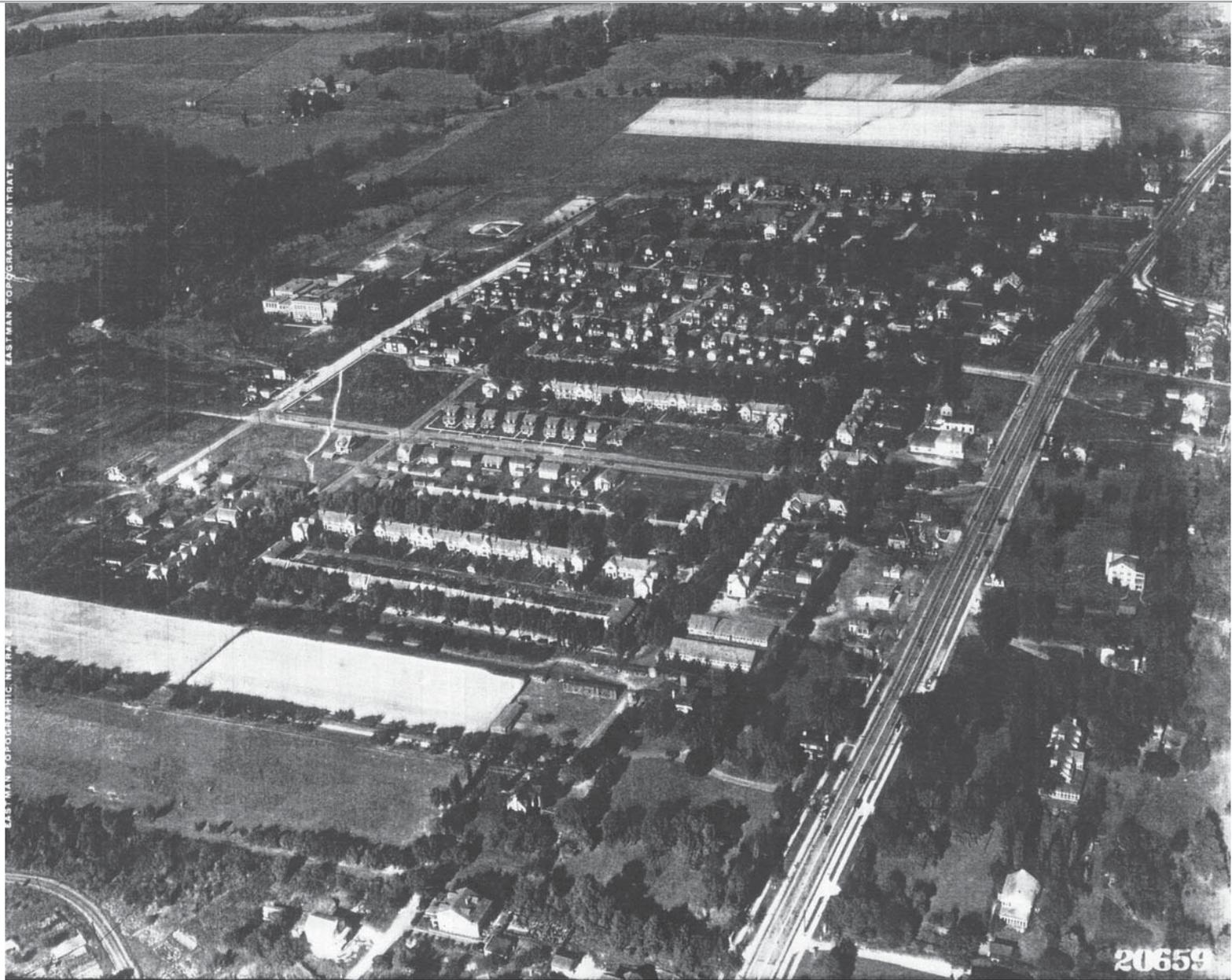


Figure 11
1939 Bird's Eye View of Overlook Colony
Claymont Improvements Project
Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware

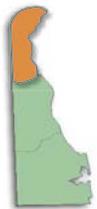
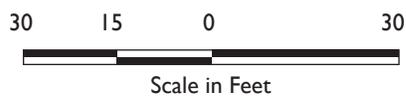


Figure 12
Circa-1975 Bird's Eye View of Portion of Overlook Colony
Claymont Improvements Project
Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware

Figure 13
1997 Aerial Photograph
Claymont Improvements Project
Claymont Improvements, New Castle County, Delaware



X:\Graphics\Projects\PI095B\mapping\Historic Architecture_maps&aerials1.indd



 Project Location

Commonwealth Avenue to separate traffic into four separate lanes, used for turns, an entrance, and access to the flanking properties (Rickowski 2010b). The remaining trees along Commonwealth Avenue, south of Brandywine Avenue, were removed in the 1980s, and street trees throughout the community died and were not replaced, altering the streetscape and viewsheds (Lamb 2010). The entrance feature is now a paved area with a concrete median at the center flanked by curbing to separate traffic into turn lanes at the traffic light. Devoid of vegetation, the two sides of the entrance feature are used as entrances to the adjacent commercial properties and as additional parking for these properties.

Commercial growth began to sprawl along Philadelphia Pike following World War II and increasing use of the automobile, further increasing traffic. The lack of space between the earlier commercial buildings and roadway traffic resulted in the absorption of sidewalks and other adjacent areas, such as the entrance feature to Overlook Colony, in order to provide parking spaces for area businesses. The constant traffic also made the area less appealing for residential life. Traffic levels were further exacerbated by the nearby construction of I-95 in ca. 1965. Beginning in the 1930s and 1940s, Overlook Colony was inhabited by recent immigrants and lower-income families, with many dwellings serving as rental units. As a result, the residential buildings of the community began to suffer due to a lack of capital necessary for the upkeep. This trend continues to 2010 with a low number of homeowners or long-term residents within the community.

Interest in the renewal of Claymont and specifically Overlook Colony has increased in recent years. Beginning in 1988, the Interfaith Housing Development Corporation completely rehabilitated the row of dwellings on the east side of Second Avenue for low-income housing. There has been a noticeable increase in individual rehabilitation projects throughout the community. The Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation has been actively planning the redevelopment of the community, and in 2008, Overlook Colony and nearby properties were selected as a Blueprint Community. Blueprint Communities are sponsored by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh and are provided with training, monetary, and technical assistance in project implementation and access to a network of funding sources (Claymont Business Owners Association 2008).