

Noble Presence Services

Historic Preservation • Architectural Consulting
Building Investigation • History and Research

July 30, 2004

Ed Price
The Millbrook Society
P.O. Box 506
Hatboro, PA 19040

Re: The "Tennent House"

Dear Ed:

It was a pleasure meeting with you and the other interested parties to inspect the building on the Christ's Home for Children property. The discussions were lively and very interesting. There seems to be a wide array of opinions regarding the age and original configuration of the house. Based on my brief site visit, I certainly cannot offer any conclusive information on the building but can offer some discussion of the building based on my experience with old structures.

Obvious changes and additions have obscured the early materials and form of the building. 19th century extensions, additions, trim and finishes are apparent throughout the structure and have led some previous investigators to conclude that the building is of 10th century

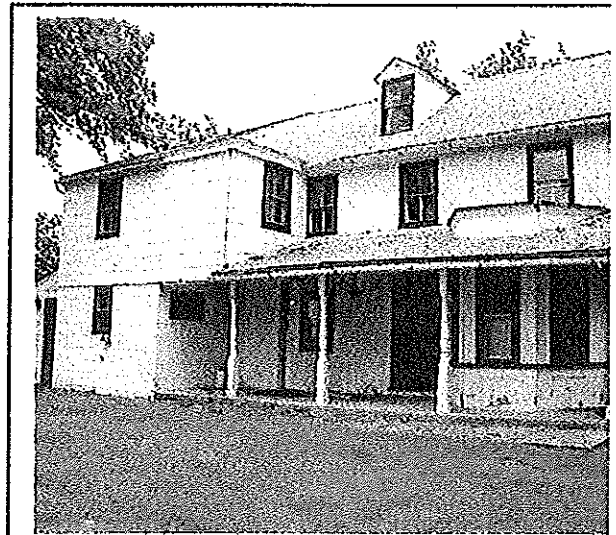
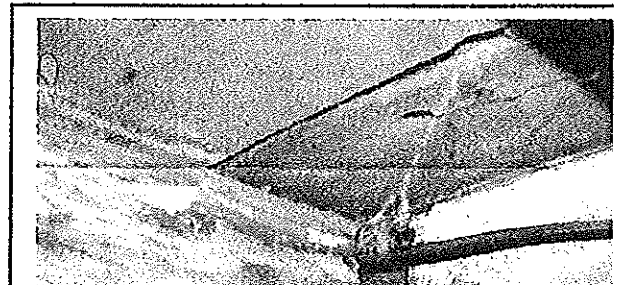


Figure 1. Looking northwest at the primary



Ed Price
 The "Tennent House"
 July 30, 2004
 Page 2 of 3

The timber framing of the portion of the building that is visible on the rear façade is, in my experience, a very rare and possibly unique, method of construction in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region. While only a small portion of the frame is exposed, it appears that the upright posts are mortised and pegged into the sill plate and are spaced approximately 2' plus on center. Each of the visible posts extends above the level of the window head and appears to extend above the level of the first floor ceiling. Because the stucco conceals the upper wall, the upper wall plate was not observed. Without removal of additional stucco (or possibly infrared photography) to expose more of the frame, it is impossible to determine if the building was originally two stories in height or if the posts terminate in an attic space where they may have framed a knee wall.

Additional mortises with double peg holes are located along each side of the posts documenting that the frame was joined with intermediate horizontal rails to form framed panels. The panels were infilled with stone and mortar, and considering the rough hewing of the framing, the walls were likely covered with some sort of cladding material.

The timber frame resembles a variation



Figure 3. View of exposed frame at the rear building. Note mortise in left post.

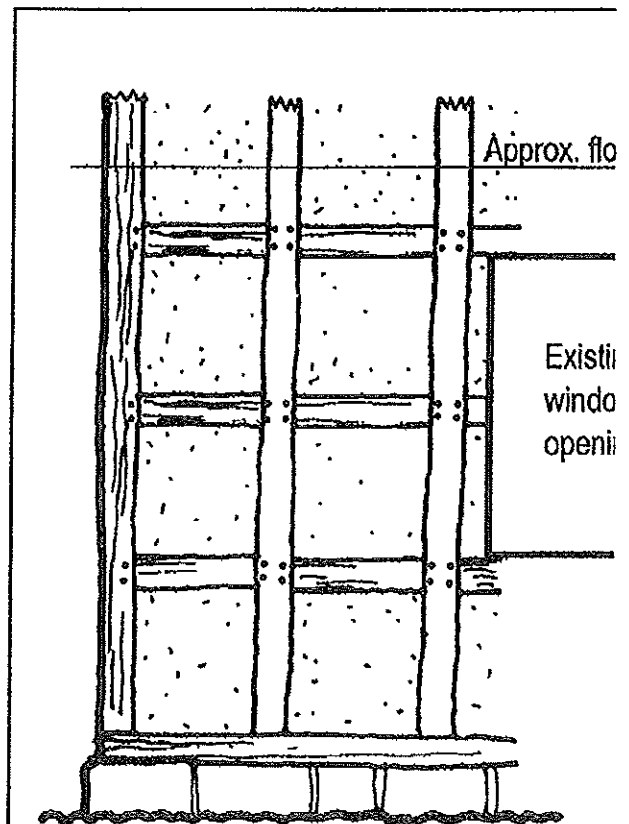


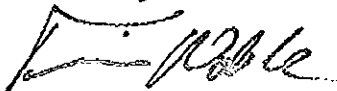
Figure 4. Hypothetical drawing of visible timber frame.

Ed Price
The "Tennent House"
July 30, 2004
Page 3 of 3

constructed prior to or during the Tennent family's occupation of the site in tl
Considerable research and additional building investigations would be require
existing structure to the original owner/builder. The building merits consider
additional study and is of exceptional interest to the vernacular architecture c
Research and historical documentation in the form of a National Register non
a comprehensive Historic Structures Report are warranted to more fully unde
building and its long history. I urge the Millbrook Society to move forward t
preservation of the building and to continue your studies to learn more about
history and configuration of the building.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,



Tim Noble