

**Knopp House, 4608 Streetsboro Road,
Richfield, OH**



**CLEVELAND
RESTORATION
SOCIETY**

LOCAL PARTNER

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Knopp House,
4608 Streetsboro, Richfield, OH**

An building analysis by the
Cleveland Restoration Society
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The information in this publication is the opinion of the Cleveland Restoration Society at this time.

Additional research may provide more insight and correct certain assumptions made here.

2012

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Introduction

The Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS) was asked by the Village of Richfield Ohio Department of Planning and Zoning to look at 4608 Streetsboro and to analyze its architectural style and conduct a thorough architectural investigation of the property, identifying the architectural style and extant character-defining features; to conduct archival research to supplement that provided by the Village (Jim Fry report) in order to determine a likely date of construction and to document any changes that may have occurred to the property; to write a report detailing the condition of the property and its architectural and historical significance; to examine the context of the subject neighborhood and the significance of the property in contributing to the architectural and historical character of the surrounding district; to examine the potential viability of the property given its physical condition, location, and marketability; and to identify a treatment plan for the property following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

This report is the result of that effort. The Village will use the document to help guide future decisions about the Knopp House—whether to demolish it, relocate it to another site in order to expand the Richfield Common, or to rehab it in place.

The report was completed by a staff member with a Master's Degree in Historic Preservation and over fifteen years of experience in the field, including work with museum properties with a State Historic Preservation Office.

About the Cleveland Restoration Society

Founded in 1972, the Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS) is the largest non-governmental regional historic preservation organization in Ohio and a Local Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Society has an operating budget of \$1.06 million, an engaged board of trustees, 12 staff positions, and a headquarters in Cleveland. CRS practices the American version of heritage conservation, commonly known as historic preservation.

CRS's mission is to use the powerful tool of historic preservation to revitalize our diverse communities, strengthen the regional economy, and

enhance the quality of life in northeastern Ohio. We focus on the following strategies:

- Creating vibrant, high-value neighborhoods in key historic areas
- Encouraging the preservation of Cleveland's greatest landmarks
- Advocating for preservation-friendly public policies
- Celebrating and communicating the positive role of preservation



Architectural Analysis of the Knopp House

In order to determine the date of construction of a structure, one can look at a number of things; architectural style, materials used, methods of construction (such as framing, how lumber was milled as seen in saw marks), stylistic details (the numbers of panes of glass in a window or the style of moldings and finishes). One can also consult archival sources, such as maps, directories, and so forth.

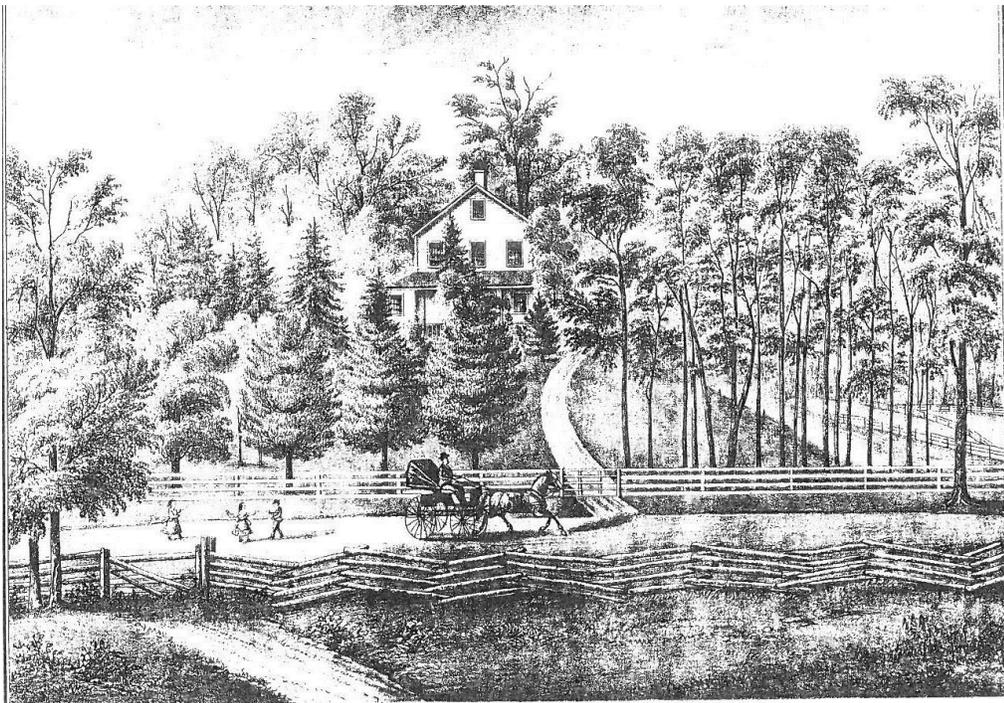
At first appearance, 4608 Streetsboro is somewhat confusing. The exterior siding is covered with Insulwood (wood fiber, tar, and crushed stone). The front door has a simple bracketed canopy instead of the front porch one would expect. And yet, the entire structure has tall, narrow four-over-four windows. This is a detail that makes it clear that this is a structure built in the mid-19th Century.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, glass was expensive as it was hand-blown. This is known as “bulls-eye” glass as the process of blowing glass left a hole in the center of the blown section, leaving only a small pane that could be cut for use. By the mid 19th Century, two-over-twos were the most common style and by the late 19th Century, one-over-ones. In the early 20th Century, multiple panes began to be used again as the Colonial Revival style became popular, but these were typically six-over-six or six-over-one.

The form of the home is a vernacular form called “Upright and wing,” generally associated with the New England-Great Lakes building tradition. This form was popular between 1830 and 1890. The form is characterized by two units: a taller unit that is either a two story or one and one-half story upright and a shorter story of one or one and one-half stories. One gable end of the wing is under the eaves, perpendicular to the upright. The Knopp House has three bays in the upright, including the front door. After 1850, the upright was often only two bays wide and the main entry was placed in the wing, off of a partial or full length porch. This indicates that the Knopp house pre-dates 1850, in keeping with the evidence seen in the window design.

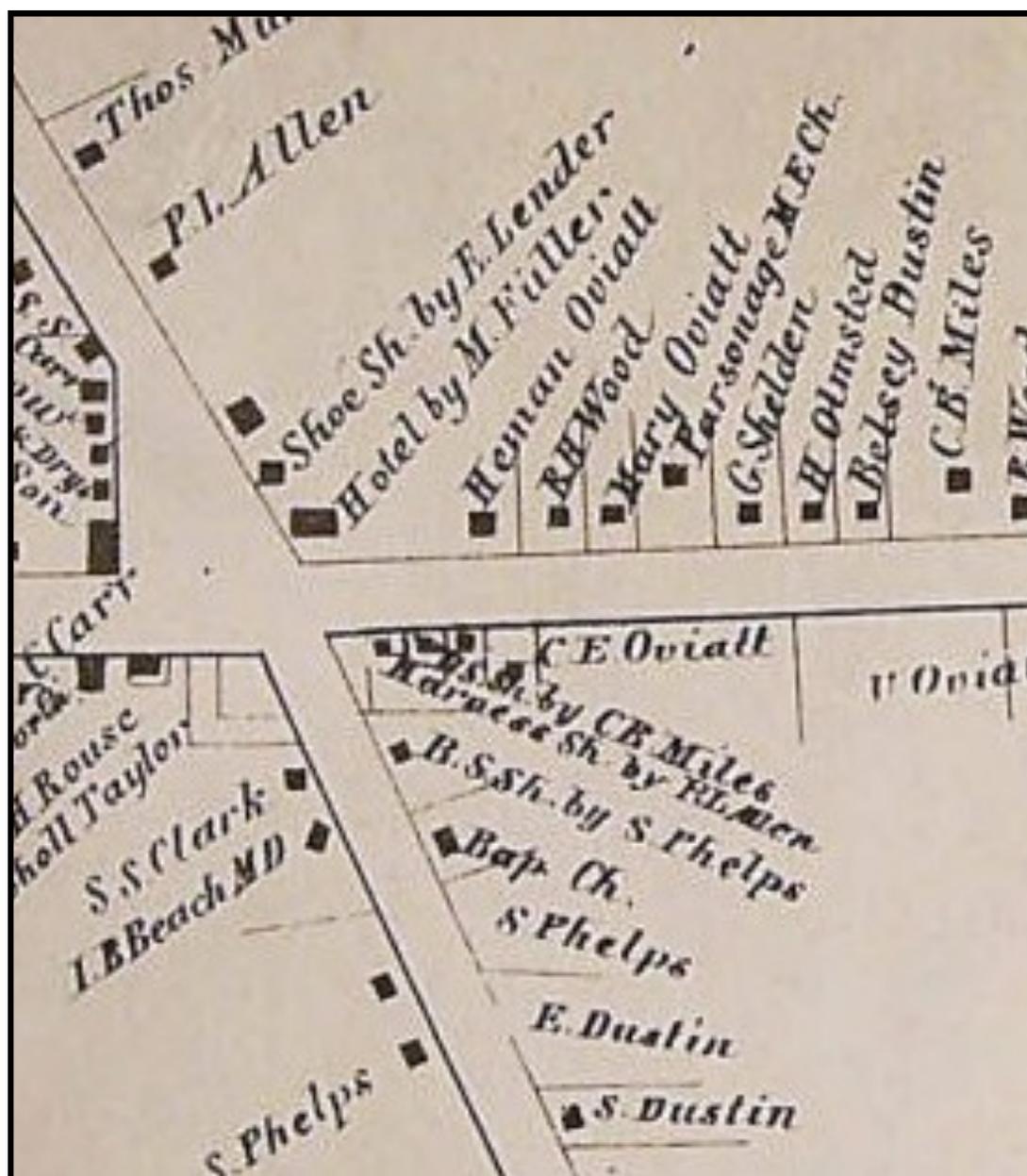


The bracketed canopy seems out of place on a folk structure such as this. This canopy could date to the craftsman-era of the early 20th Century or, due to its simplicity, could have been added much later. An Upright and wing may have not been built with a porch or could have had a porch added later, similar to this structure in Richfield, the Walnut Grove Farm of William R. Townsend, from *History of Summit County* (Baskin & Battey, 1881)



WALNUT GROVE FARM OF W. R. TOWNSEND

The Map of Summit County, by Hosea Paul, Civil Engineer and Surveyor (Philadelphia, 1856) confirms that the Knopp House was constructed prior to 1856, as it is shown. It appears next to the blacksmith shop of C.B. Miles, but is unlabeled.



The Interior

On the interior, the Knopp House displays changes in fashion over a one hundred and thirty year period. The staircase features a faceted newel post and spindles, popular in the 1850s. Much of the rest of the first floor interior is obscured by wood paneling, resilient flooring and other finishes of the mid- to late-20th Century.

Some of the first floor has beautiful oak woodwork dating from the early 20th Century, and the light fixture in the Living Room is of a style popular in the teens and twenties.

As is often the case, the second floor has seen less remodeling. Here, wide plank floors, popular in early and mid-19th century homes, often of poplar, are visible beneath the vinyl flooring. All of the doors on the second floor also date to the mid-19th century. Many still have original hardware: rim locks and milk glass doorknobs.

The basement has seen more change, as the basement was dug at a later date—evidenced by the change in material. Much of the foundation has been parged and is not visible. There are saw marks evident on some of the visible floor joists. The fact that this is not visible and has been changed is unimportant as the evidence is so clear otherwise that this structure dates to the mid-19th century.





While much of the interior of the first floor of the Knopp House has been covered in finishes of the late 20th Century (wood paneling and vinyl flooring), there is still much historic material left, including a beautiful staircase of the 1850s and woodwork and light fixtures of the early 20th Century. The National Park Service considers these features that are fifty years old or older to be historic or to have gained historic significance. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* says in Standard 4: *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.* Thus, the vinyl flooring and wood paneling has not attained historic significance

The Second Floor



The floorboards that are exposed on the second floor are consistent with those found in mid-19th Century houses. Wide floor boards of poplar or pine were popular throughout the 19th Century.

By the 1890s, boards would have been more narrow and by the mid-1890s, were often oak.

Other than the floor covering, there has been little alteration to the Second floor in one hundred and fifty years. The simple paneled doors are mid-19th Century. Many of these doors still have original early Victorian hardware.

Rim locks are surface mounted iron boxes that were popular from about 1840 until the early 20th Century. These locks help refine the date of construction of the Knopp House. Had the house been built prior to 1840, these doors would have likely had what are known as Norfolk latches. From about 1870 on, most doors had “mortise” locks (which are mortised into the door itself) like those we are accustomed to today. Rim locks continued to be used throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century, especially in rural houses.

The style of the door, however, along with the rim locks, clearly indicate a mid-19th century date of construction.



The Basement

Typically, basements are helpful in determining the date of construction of a structure. The basement of the Knopp house has seen much change in the last half of the 20th Century, such as parging of the basement walls and covering much of the framing. It is likely this is when this basement was dug (indicated by the change in foundation material and the “ledge” in the basement). There are joists that have visible saw marks. These appear to be circular saw, which came into use in most locations after 1840, again supporting other evidence that the Knopp was constructed between 1840 and 1850.



The ledge shows the original and added foundation walls. These hewn beams show circular saw marks, indicating how early the house could have been built rather than how late (after 1840). In the attic, original wood shakes are seen through the roof boards. *These photos courtesy of Jim Fry, The Museum of Western Reserve Farms and Equipment, Richfield Township.*



Oral History

Local historian Jim Fry of the Museum of Western Reserve Farms and Equipment, has done extensive research on the Knopp House, including oral history with members of the Knopp family. He has published this research in “Knopp House: A home at the center of Richfield...and the families that lived there.” This publication has added greatly to our understanding of this property and confirms many of our conclusions through architectural investigation. He writes that “originally the home had no basement, just a tall crawl space. There was also a full front porch early in its history.” This porch is seen in a photograph Fry has collected, although, as related in our discussion of upright and wings, this porch may be original or may have been a late 19th Century addition.

Fry says the basement was dug in the 1940s and that the paneling and other finishes, including the Insulwood siding, were added in the 1970s.

He gives a list of owners from 1850s on:

Martin Luther Starr—1850-1919

Fry got this name from the 1874 Summit County Plate book.

Alexander Ruple—1881—1922

Irving and Mary Sapsford—1922-1940s

Elmer and Ruth (Sapsford) Knopp-1949-1987

Mell Knopp sold the property to the Village of Richfield in 2000.



Ray Sapsford by the front porch of the Knopp house. Note that the spindles are sawn rather than turned. Photo undated, courtesy of Jim Fry, The Museum of Western Reserve Farms and Equipment.

Neighborhood Context

It is obvious to the most casual observer that the Knopp House is part of an important crossroads at the center of the Village. The house appears next to a blacksmith shop in the 1856 map.

In the “Western Reserve” region in the early 19th Century, immigrants from the east, accustomed to compact villages, often oriented themselves into “occasional” centers serving religious, political, social, and economic needs. It appears that this is the case with the Knopp house with the township hall, blacksmith, and church being nearby. Again, Jim Fry has documented the neighboring institutions well in his work and that does not need to be repeated here. Many of these buildings—the carriage shop, tavern, and township hall—still exist and are a reminder that this was the crossroads at the center of the community. The removal of the Knopp House, or even its relocation, would not only harm the historic resource, but would change this context, which is so important to the history of the Village.



Proposed Treatment Plan

The Knopp House at 4608 Streetsboro is a unique property and is worthy of preservation. The most appropriate treatment method, following the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* would be restoration.

The four treatment approaches are Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. Different treatments may be used, depending upon the situation.

The first treatment, **Preservation**, places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.

Rehabilitation, the second treatment, emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but more latitude is provided for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work. (Both Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character.)

Restoration, the third treatment, focuses on the retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.

As discussed earlier, some of the changes in this property are now historic, others are not. Except for the most recent changes made in the 1970s—the Insulwood siding and the paneling and late 20th Century finishes inside—the house as it is today would be consistent with the purchase by the Sapsfords in 1922. The fact that the house came into the ownership of the Knopps by marriage into the Sapsford family also makes this important. If

the building is restored, it could be restored to that date by removing the Insulwood and 1970s interior finishes.

The Village of Richfield might look for a non profit partner to maintain the house. The City of Lakewood owns both the “Oldest Stone House” in Lakewood Park and the Nicholson House on Detroit Avenue, but the Lakewood Historical Society raised funds for the initial restoration and manages day to day maintenance, splitting the cost of major maintenance with the City. The Oldest Stone House is a museum property, while the Nicholson House is rented out for weddings, showers, and other events.

The City of Independence has a similar relationship with an arts group and the Independence Historical Society for two historic properties near their Village Common.

The City of Cleveland Heights has a similar relationship with the Cleveland Heights Historical Society for the management of The Superior Schoolhouse and the City of Berea contracts with an arts group to operate the Little Red Schoolhouse in Berea.

The City of Bay Village owns historic property at Cahoon Park operated by the Bay Village Historical Society. Many of these groups have been able to collaborate to get Certified Local Government funds through the Ohio Historic Preservation Office as well as Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission funds to restore and maintain these structures. The Village of Richfield would not be eligible for these funds if the structure is moved, as it would no longer maintain its historic integrity.

A similar relationship could be undertaken with a private business. The Bay Arts Center in Bay Village contracts with a wine bar and coffee shop in their historic buildings.



The Nicholson House (1836), the oldest frame house in Lakewood, Ohio is maintained by the Lakewood Historical Society, which has its office and museum in The Oldest Stone House in Lakewood Park. Likewise, the Independence Historical Society maintains the old fire hall, while a community arts group is located in the former town hall next to the Common in the center of Independence.



Adaptive Use of Residential Properties

There are many good examples of adaptive use of residential properties within northeastern Ohio and throughout the country. These homes are often adapted because the streets they are located on develop into commercial corridors. Sometimes small street-car era commercial areas expand into neighboring residential areas. The streets where streetcar lines once ran have often become busier commercial areas. These examples are meant to illustrate that houses can provide exceptional office and retail space, providing a unique sense of place that cannot be easily duplicated.

Larchmere

Larchmere is a commercial area on Cleveland's east side, on the border of the City of Shaker Heights. A small street-car era commercial area has changed somewhat with some mid-century infill. The area is very popular because of its antique shops, restaurants, and clothing shops.



Both the restaurant Felice and the wine bar/coffee shop Vine & Bean Café take advantage of the ambience of being in former residences. Both also have nice patios in the back, as patrons park on the street in the walkable neighborhood.

Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville Tennessee is a thriving city that attracts a number of tourists because of its association with the music industry. Among Nashville's most popular neighborhoods are areas where shops have located in formerly residential buildings. Many of these areas suffered abuse and poor zoning during the Urban Renewal era, but have reinvented themselves as funky, walkable neighborhoods.



Conclusions

The Village of Richfield Planning and Zoning Commission “In considering a request to demolish or move a building or other structure located within the C-H Historic Commercial Districts...shall consider the following factors in making the decision to approve or disapprove the request:

1. The architectural and historic significance of the subject building or structure;
2. The significance of the building or structure in contributing to the architectural or historic character of its environs;
3. The relationship between the location of the subject building or structure and its overall significance (in the case of a request to move a building or other structure);
4. The present and potential viability of the subject building or structure, given its physical condition and marketability.”

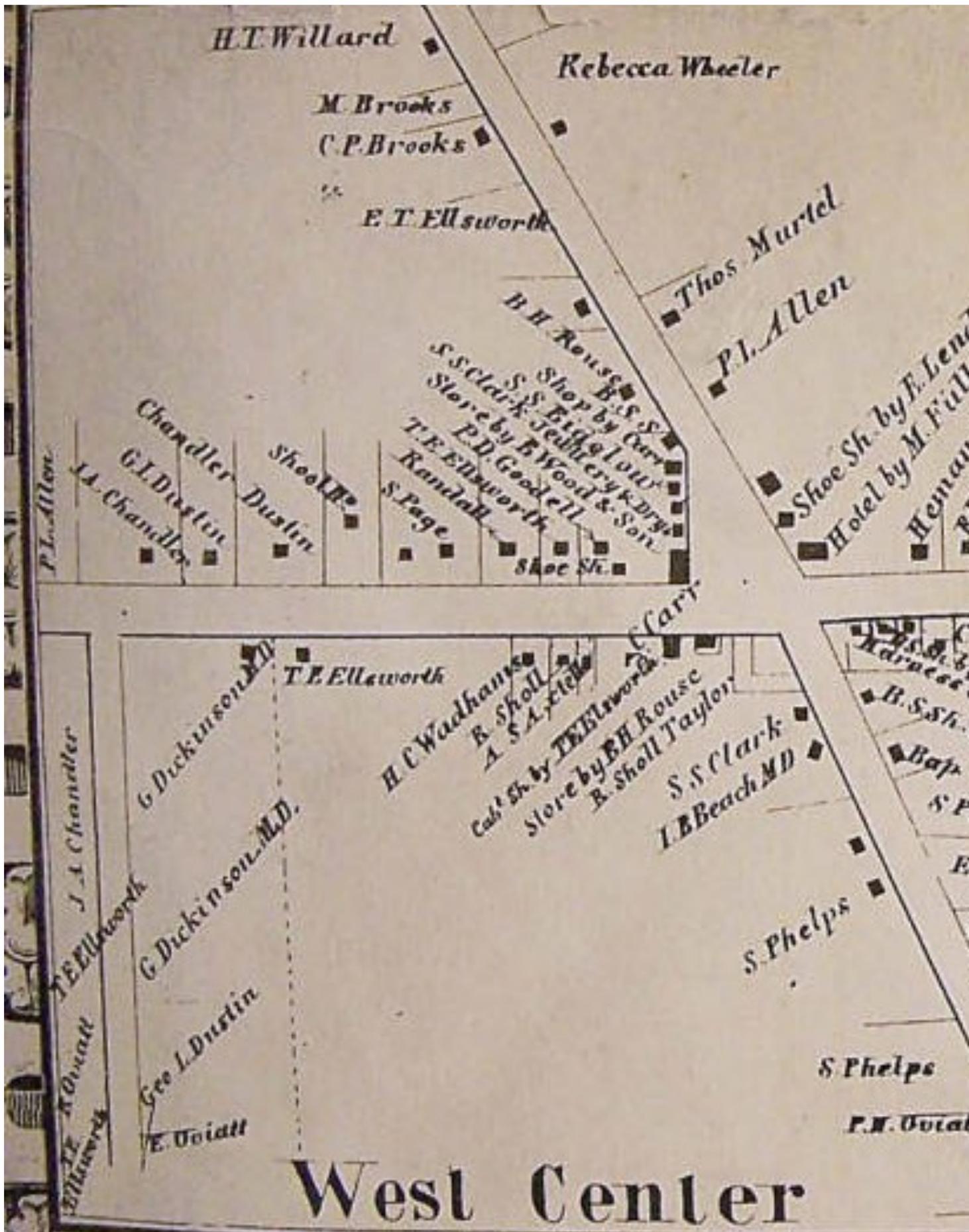
Significance—4608 Streetsboro—The Knopp House—is an important historic resource in the Village of Richfield. Although there have been changes made to the structure, such as the introduction of Insulwood siding and some late 20th Century interior finishes, much remains of the original structure. The house appears on the 1856 Map of Summit County (Philadelphia, 1856) and the four-over-four windows, unusual faceted newel post and staircase balusters, second floor doors and hardware, and wide plank floors all support a construction date between 1840 and 1850.

Environs & Significance—The setting of the Knopp House at the heart of the community facing the main crossroads is also important. The National Park Service recognizes a property’s

integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The loss of another building from this intersection would change the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood. It would no longer be evident that this was the commercial and civic center of the Village. Moving the Knopp House from its original location would make it ineligible for listing on the *National Register for Historic Places*. Moving the structure would also likely make it ineligible for State Certified Local Government or Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission funds and grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Viability—Although the Knopp House obviously needs to be rehabbed to make it viable, there does not appear to be any structural issues with the house. The removal of late 20th century interior finishes, addition of handicapped accessible restrooms and a kitchen or kitchenette, and restoration of remaining mid-19th to early 20th Century finishes would make the Knopp House an attractive location for a commercial, civic, or non-profit use. The exterior restoration should include removal of Insulwood, repair and painting of wood siding and windows, and a new architectural shingle roof that replicates the look of wood shakes. The front porch could be restored using the historic photo as a guide or left as it is today with a canopy (repaired and painted).

The Knopp House is an important piece of Richfield Village history and should be preserved.



West Center

RICHFIELD

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er.
Oviatt
Wood
Mary Oviatt
Parsonage M.E.Ch.
G. Sheldon
H. Olmsted
Betsy Dustin
C.B. Miles
B. Wood

Academy

Q10v

E Oviatt
C.B. Miles
sh. by R. Men
by S. Phelps
Ch.
Phelps
Dustin
S. Dustin

Oviatt

J Weld

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Rev. H. Smith