

Collections • Farmhouse

# Rouse To Restore A Farmhouse Near Church Farm School

By Melinda Deanna Anderson, Special to The Inquirer Staff writer Curtis Rist contributed to this article

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Over 195 years, the Benjamin Jacobs House on Ship Road has been home to a judge, to farm families and to boarding students from the Church Farm School, which used the house as a dormitory.

The house would take on still another identity under plans by Rouse & Associates, which has proposed restoring the structure for use as project headquarters during the development of 1,325 acres adjacent to the Church Farm School.

Rouse, which has an agreement to buy the acreage from Church Farm, presented restoration plans for the Jacobs house on Monday during a conditional-use hearing by the West Whiteland Board of Supervisors. A decision on the application will be made at a later date.

The first inhabitant of the house, built in 1793, was Benjamin Jacobs, a surveyor and lawyer who was an associate judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Chester County in the latter part of the 18th century.

After many years as a farmhouse and as a Church Farm School dormitory, the house recently has been vacant. On Monday, Gregory M. Walters, representing Rouse, told the board that the house has been repeatedly vandalized.

To restore the structure, Walters said, Rouse has hired historical architects John Milner Associates of West Chester.

Although some improvements are planned, Walters said, the intention is to retain the original architectural design, restoring the doors, shutters and multipaned windows. The planned improvements include replacement of the roof and plumbing as well as the installation of central air conditioning.

The West Whiteland Historical Commission has responded favorably to the

plans, saying in a letter to the board that it was pleased that John Milner Associates would be performing the restoration. The commission suggested, however, that Rouse also should consider preserving the trees and shrubs on the ground surrounding the property.

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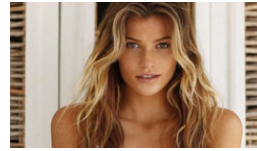
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