

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED JUN 19 1979 AUG 24 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** Wooddale Historic District  
HISTORIC Delaware Iron Works

AND/OR COMMON Wooddale Historic District (Preferred)

**2 LOCATION** NW of Newport on  
STREET & NUMBER Wooddale Road

CITY, TOWN Newport VICINITY OF One  
STATE Delaware CODE 10 COUNTY New Castle CODE 002

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY OWNERSHIP STATUS PRESENT USE  
 DISTRICT  PUBLIC  OCCUPIED  AGRICULTURE  MUSEUM  
 BUILDING(S)  PRIVATE  UNOCCUPIED  COMMERCIAL  PARK  
 STRUCTURE  BOTH  WORK IN PROGRESS  EDUCATIONAL  PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE  ENTERTAINMENT  RELIGIOUS  
 OBJECT  IN PROCESS  YES: RESTRICTED  GOVERNMENT  SCIENTIFIC  
 BEING CONSIDERED  YES: UNRESTRICTED  INDUSTRIAL  TRANSPORTATION  
 NO  MILITARY  OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME (Multiple) - see Continuation Sheet

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE  
VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City and County Building

STREET & NUMBER 800 French Street

CITY, TOWN STATE  
Wilmington Delaware

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Delaware Cultural Resource Survey; N-4092

DATE 1978  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN STATE  
Dover Delaware

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Delaware Iron Works is situated approximately five miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, at Wooddale. It is approached by one road off State Route 263, which runs southwest from Route 259. The access road crosses Wooddale Covered Bridge (N-296), which is one of only two in Delaware and is already on the National Register. The other bridge, Ashland Covered Bridge, is only a few miles upstream at Ashland. On the west side of Red Clay Creek the road divides. The left road leads to the mill site and the four workers' houses which are still standing. The right road leads up a wooded hill to the Alan Wood House. All the houses are constructed of stone and face the creek. Their very situation emphasizes the importance of the creek in the daily life of the ironworks.

Old maps of the site show only one road, running northwest, which curved around to the east where the mill owner's house is situated. The present road which runs up the hill may be comparatively recent. The land surrounding the site is heavily wooded. Across the creek the terrain rises up in a thin wooded hill. The first three workers' houses stand on a low plain of land which stretches from the base of the hill, on which the owner's house stands, to the creek. The mill was also located on this level, south of the mill race which cut diagonally through the property from the northeast to the southwest.

Overlooking the complex from the crest of a hill is the Wood family house (N-4092.1). Built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the house was laid out on a center-passage, single-pile plan with a one-roof, two-story el containing a large segmentally-arched cooking fireplace with an adjacent bake oven. The main block is two-and-a-half-stories in elevation with two gabled dormer windows, and of uncoursed rubble fieldstone construction originally whitewashed and later covered with a stucco finish. The interior trim includes simply-executed, federal-period mantels, with fluted stylized pilasters carrying a full entablature with projecting center element. The stair is finished with a simple molded rail, two stick balusters per tread, and scalloped-edge sawn work spandrels. Subsequent additions in the twentieth century have enlarged the house to its present appearance without encroaching upon the original fabric.

Behind the house is a small one-story bank outbuilding (N-4092.1a) of lightly-stuccoed rubble fieldstone construction and covered with a modern wood shingle roof. Adjacent to the outbuilding is a stuccoed colonial-revival garage (N-4092.1b) of tripartite design with a central pedimented shingle-style cross gable containing a single round arched window.

From the principal facade of the house a lane of planted trees lead down to the workers' row and the power house of the mills.

The first worker's house (N-4092.<sup>4</sup>2), which is presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Dorsey, has been considerably altered. Originally, it was an L-shaped uncoursed fieldstone structure. The section nearest the road and perpendicular to it consists of two floors and an attic. It has a two-bay facade with the door to the right of the window. Both are set into the wall 11 inches (measured from the interior) with curved reveals. There is one interior end chimney on the gabled end wall nearest the road.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 8 1979
DATE ENTERED

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

- N-4092.<sup>3</sup>: Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Dorsey  
.34.4 Wooddale Road  
4.8 Newport, DE 19804
- N-4092.<sup>5</sup>: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Oggenfuss  
.6 Wooddale Road  
Newport, DE 19804
- N-4092.<sup>6</sup>: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Peoples, Jr.  
.4 Wooddale Road  
Newport, DE 19804
- N-4092.<sup>4</sup>: Judge John Biggs, Jr.  
.14.5 P. O. Box 2048  
Wilmington, DE 19899

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 9 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 24 1979

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The other section of the original structure is parallel to the road. It is attached so that its side wall abuts the end wall on the far side of the one-room structure. The major part of this section extends out from the facade and its right end. This second section is only two stories without an attic. The entire house is set into the side of the hill in such a manner that the second floor of the back section is at ground level in the rear.

The interior of the original structure has remained relatively intact. Although the floorboards on the first floor appear to be replaced, those on the second may be original. On the first floor the ceiling beams are exposed and chamfered. Both the first and second floors of the three-story structure contain an end wall fireplace with corner stairs to its left. On the second floor the stairway continues from the first rise up to the attic. On both floors the windows are six-over-six sash with beaded trim. The facade window and the window directly across from it on the back wall have spaces in the wall below them cut out to accommodate radiators. This was most likely altered in the 1920's, when the extensive restoration was carried out. The second floor windows have the same alteration.

The second floor room is presently a bedroom. It does have one unusual feature. A small window is set into the back end wall the customary 11 inches, but the pane of glass is only 3 x 6 inches. The sill is 3 feet from the floor. Its placement is very near the juncture of the adjacent two-story structure.

The first floor of the two-story section contains a modern kitchen. The second floor is a study with two large closets which have been recently added. On both floors these rooms must be reached by way of two steps up from the three-story structure.

The major portion of the present house is a 1920's addition. This is appended to the two-story section of the earlier building. The addition gives the house a modified U-shape. Like the original, the exterior walls are constructed of uncoursed field-stone. A large new front door, with side lights which face the road, reorients the structure.

The Dorsey's house differs greatly from the two adjacent workers' houses which will be described below. It is more similar to the one-room-plan house which stands on the hill at the end of the road. For this reason, this house will be described before the two which lie in between.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 9 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 24 1979

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The worker's house (N-4092.<sup>7</sup>~~5~~) on the hill is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Peoples, Jr. Like the Dorsey's, it is a one-room, two-bay, three-story structure. The original is now encased in a larger modern structure, so that only part of the second and third floors are visible from the exterior. It is constructed of uncoursed fieldstone which has been stuccoed over and painted white. Third floor dormers, possibly original, are still intact.

The original front door leads into the present front hall. Its sill is a large stone slab. The first floor had a dirt floor until approximately thirty years ago, when it was tiled over. On the west wall of the room is a large cooking fireplace and to its left a corner stair leading up to the second floor. The fireplace wall is 4 feet thick. In other places the walls are only 2 feet thick. The ceiling height is approximately 8 feet.

On the third floor there is a door which appears to be original, or at least contemporary with the house. It is cross-pannelled with what appears to be early hardware.

In total, the original core contains four rooms - one on the first floor, one on the second, and two on the third. Although a date of 1740 has been attributed to the structure, at the present it is not possible to verify or disclaim this from the existing material.

The first of the two other workers' houses (N-4092.<sup>5</sup>~~4~~) in the row is also constructed of uncoursed fieldstone which has been painted over. It is three bays with a center door and appears to be two stories plus an attic. Because of the single door, this was most likely intended as a one-family dwelling. It appears to be only one-room deep. Like the Dorsey's, it is set into the hill, but not as deeply. The back of the house has only two windows on the first floor which are evenly spaced on the wall. There are two brick interior end chimneys on the gable ends.

The next house (N-4092.<sup>6</sup>~~5~~) up the road is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Oggenfuss. Originally a duplex, it has been converted into a single-family dwelling <sup>by</sup>cutting a door through the wall between the two front rooms on all three floors and knocking down the wall to two back rooms on the first floor. This back section (now one room) may have been added as it is only one-story.

These two rooms had corner fireplaces sharing an interior chimney which have now been converted into one large fireplace with mantle flat to the wall. The front rooms have remained fairly unaltered. The corner stairs in both rooms are still functioning. In the left front room there is the entrance to the new frame addition on the northwest wall. The doors appear to have been changed but the windows may be

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 11 1979

DATE ENTERED AUG 24 1979

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

original. They are six-over-six sash hung and are set into the wall 1 foot, 2½ inches. There is no trim as the stone reveals curve into the window frames.

The power house (N-4092.2) adjacent to the Dorsey property is a flat-roofed, common bond structure supported on steel girders straddling the mill race just below the race gates. The structure is physically sound and integral to the Wooddale District as the single extant industrial structure relating to the complex, and its preservation has been insured through its adaptive use as a garage.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As it stands today, the Wooddale Historic District is the surviving remnant of a mill complex, which was physically typical of early rural industries but the scene of major industrial advances in the production of quality iron for the international market of the mid-nineteenth century.

The Delaware Iron Works, started in 1826, played an important role in the nineteenth-century iron industry. The operations developed under the guidance and proprietorship of Alan Wood and the factory became a major manufacturer of shovels.

Alan Wood described the mill and its operation in response to a questionnaire sent out by the U. S. Government in 1832. At this time he was operating with ten men at one dollar a day, twelve hours a day, ten months a year. By 1831, two tenant houses had been added to the site. From this point, when workers began to inhabit the place in which they worked, the industry took on a new scope. It was no longer simply a factory. It had become a small industrial community.

In 1842 Alan Wood, in recognition of his contribution to American iron manufacturers, received a silver medal from the Franklin Institute for his efforts towards making an American equivalent of Russian "planished" sheet iron. Although Wood was also operating the Conshohocken mill outside of Philadelphia at this time, he chose the Delaware Iron Works for the site of much of the experimentation with this revolutionary development. His experiments were so successful that in 1861 his son's company, W. Dewees Wood Company at McKeesport, Pennsylvania, captured the market from the Russians using the discoveries. Dewees had managed the Delaware Iron Works for his father after a panic in 1857 caused him to shut down his own company. He stayed at Wooddale for four years before returning to McKeesport in 1861. The Delaware Works continued to use the new process as well, securing bars for rolling from the Conshohocken mill.

The Delaware Iron Works was also an important link in the early transportation system of that area. In 1871, the Wilmington and Western Railroad was laid through the Red Clay Creek Valley running from the Marshall Paper Mill at Yorklyn to Woods Rolling Mill at Wooddale within a distance of no more than four miles; this branch served seven mills. The railroad was helping the mill owners and the mill owners were returning the favor. In 1872, Alan Wood and Company bought thirty-seven shares in the Wilmington and Western. However, Alan Wood personally purchased two hundred shares. Mr. Wood was also a member of the first board of directors, as was William

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Rea and Price Atlas 1859, Historical Society of Delaware.
- Beer's Atlas 1868, Historical Society of Delaware.
- Baist's Atlas 1891, Historical Society of Delaware.
- Waste Book from Delaware Iron Works 1833, Historic Society of Delaware.

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 25 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Kennett Square, P. - Del.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 | 44,50,0,0 | 4,40,18,5,0

B 1,8 | 45,00,0,0 | 4,40,20,0,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 | 44,55,6,0 | 4,40,20,0,0

D 1,8 | 44,54,7,5 | 4,40,17,7,0

E 1,8 | 44,53,5,7 | 4,40,17,0,0

F | | | | | | | | | |

G | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The district is situated in Mill Creek Hundred of New Castle County and is bounded on the west by longitude line 75°38'32" and on the north by latitude line 39°46'1", and on the east and south by the boundary of Mill Creek. (see Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura Jean Fickett

ORGANIZATION

American Studies Program, Univ. of Delaware

DATE

12/14/78

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

738-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Newark

STATE

Delaware

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

Deputy  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Laura Jean Fickett*

TITLE Acting Director, Div. of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

6/11/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*John Charles Shull*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8-24-79

ATTEST: *Christine Jane Saxe*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION  
Regional Coordinator

DATE

8-24-79



FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 3 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 24 1979

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Garrett of the Garrett Snuff Mill and William Phillips Mill below Wooddale at Newport. These early mill owners were thus helping to insure the financial and organizational stability of the new transportation system which would in turn, they hoped, be an economic boom to their industries.

Delaware Iron Works today consists of four workers' houses and the owner's house and the archaeological remains of several industrial structures and water courses. Architecturally, the houses are not unique. The two one-room-plan dwellings are traditional house plans for either agrarian or industrial structures. The other two dwellings are similar in plan to those at nearby Auburn, Brandywine Village in Wilmington, or Providence in Cecil County, Maryland. Kept simple, they provide comfort without extravagance thereby stressing the importance of the mill itself. Although the houses have been enlarged in varying degrees since their initial construction they, and the Wood family house, retain most of their original character and the district retains a genuine sense of time and place through the spatial relations of buildings and environment.

The complex is also an example of the mixing of agriculture and industry in the early rural mill operations. Not only was there a farm at Wooddale, but there is evidence of nearby farmers employed as piece workers for the mill as in the case of a Samuel Graves. His father, Thomas Graves, was the owner of a sizeable farm in Mill Creek Hundred. This demonstrates the mill owner's eagerness to integrate himself and his business into the existing community. The increased employment opportunities were no doubt appreciated by the farmers in slower times.

The Wooddale Historic District derives a large measure of significance as an undisturbed archaeological site. During the late nineteenth century, northern Delaware was one of the important ironworking centers in the United States. Of all the nineteenth-century ironworks in northern Delaware, the site of the Delaware Iron Works is the only one which has escaped modernization and reuse. This works was involved in important technological innovations and has the potential to reveal much otherwise-unobtainable information concerning early industrial process in regards to iron manufacturers in the Delaware Valley. The Alan Woods works, because it was only used for a relatively short period of time and has been completely abandoned, represents a closed context, the most valuable kind of archaeological situation for site-specific studies.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	11/10/78
DATE ENTERED	

DELAWARE IRON WORKS

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Documents relative to the manufacturers of the United States, collected and re-submitted to the House of Representatives, in compliance with a Resolution of January 19, 1832, by the Secretary of the Treasury, in two volumes (Washington, 1833):

Carroll W. Pursell, Wooddale.

Frank D. Taylor, History of the Alan Wood Iron and Steel Company 1792-1920, Eleutherian Mills Historical Library.

Alan Wood and Company, selected Papers 1825 - c. 1847, Eleutherian Mills Historical Library.

Early records of James Wood, James Wood and Son, Alan Wood and Brother, 1825 - c. 1847, Eleutherian Mills Historical Library.

Harleston R. Wood, Alan Wood: A Century and a Half of Steelmaking - Address at Philadelphia to the Newcomen Society, published in The Newcomen Society in North America, N. Y., N. Y. 1957 Eleutherian Mills Historical Society.

JUN 19 1979

Wooddale Historic District  
N-4092 SKETCH MAP

- 1. Alan Wood House
- 2. Wooddale Covered Bridge (N-296)
- 3. power plant, converted to garages
- 4,5,6,7. workers' houses
- 8. site of the iron works

Longitude 75°38'32" W

Latitude 39°46'1" N

