

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 7 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic JOHN M. VOSHELL HOUSE

and or common

2. Location

E of Smyrna

street & number Route 9, Duck Creek Hundred not for publication

city, town Smyrna vic, X vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Michael T. and Patricia C. Scuse

street & number R.D. 1, Box 131

city, town Smyrna X vicinity of state DE 19977

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Kent County Courthouse

street & number Federal Street

city, town Dover state DE 19901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Historic Site Survey (K-3980) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state DE 19901

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Voshell House was built sometime after 1848 as the mansion house of John M. Voshell, a local landowner. The house is located in eastern Duck Creek Hundred, Kent County, Delaware on the west side of Route 9 about 4 miles north of Leipsic. The land in the area is mostly flat and it is devoted to agricultural activities. The only exception to this is the land that is part of the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is located on the east side of Route 9 and extends to the east for 4 miles to the Delaware Bay. The land is mostly wetlands.

The house is located on a 90-acre farm. Because the original outbuildings have been replaced by modern structures, the nomination includes only the house. The dwelling is a 5-bay, 2-story brick house with an attached rear wing. The house faces south and is L-shaped. The plan is a traditional one that includes a center hall with public rooms located on either side. The rear wing houses service functions. The entire house is laid in 9-course common bond. The windows are six-over-six sash type. The main entrance is plain and Federally influenced with a 4-panel door and transom. The gable roof and facade porch are influenced by Classic-Revival styles that became popular in Delaware during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The porch is a vernacular interpretation of the Greek-Revival with square columns with recessed panels. The porch roof is flat and unadorned except for the display of the various parts of the cornice.

The roof is very heavy in appearance due to the Italianate features incorporated into its design. The heavy cornice and wide overhang are typically found on roofs from this time period, but it lacks the brackets found on roofs in the towns of central Delaware. This roof type was most popular in the towns and not all that common in the rural areas.

The building is basically unaltered from its construction date. The only change is that an enclosed 1-story porch has recently been added in the space created by the "L." This porch is not visible from either road that passes to the south and to the east of the house.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1850 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John M. Voshell House is an excellent example of the type of dwelling that was erected in Duck Creek Hundred during the end of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Once a common feature in this prosperous farmland, most houses of this style and date have either been destroyed or so altered that they no longer convey a sense of the past. Therefore, this house is being nominated under Criterion C as a representative expression of its type.

From the 1800's until the end of the 1840's, most of Delaware had been in the midst of a depression caused by poor agricultural practices and a generally weak national economy. During this period, the state's population did not increase significantly and there was a migration of residents to lands to the west in the new states. Not until the late 1840's did general economic prosperity return for the broad mass of the population. As a result of the change in the economy and the return of better times, those with available cash or credit were able to acquire farms for reasonable prices and establish themselves as gentlemen farmers. Voshell was such an individual. He was a minor Smyrna merchant and was able to acquire this farm and one across the road for a small amount of money from the Ridgely family estate, as that land was sold by the heirs of Henry M. Ridgely.

Soon after Voshell bought this land in 1847 he constructed this house. Up to this time his principal residence was in Smyrna. The design of the house is very much controlled by the traditions of local vernacular architecture. In rural central Delaware, the various revival styles of the mid-nineteenth century were not totally accepted. The preferred style was a plain unadorned house with perhaps the use of some elements of the Gothic-Revival as decorative features. The influence of current architectural style in Voshell's house is evident in the use of the Italianate roof and the Greek-Revival porch. This was most likely the result of his close association with Smyrna where the use of the Italianate was very popular.

The land associated with the house was used as farmland. The 1850 U.S. Census of Agriculture records that Voshell had 200 acres of improved land and 100 acres of unimproved or fallow land. The principal crop was corn, but he also grew wheat, oats and potatoes. In addition, he produced 350 lbs. of butter which was significantly higher than most of his neighbors. His agricultural practices were similar to most farmers in central Delaware. Voshell's land was not recorded in the later agricultural censuses.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers' Atlas of Delaware (1868)
Byles' Atlas of Kent County, Delaware (1859)
Scharf's History of Delaware (1888)
U.S. Census of Agriculture (1850)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.43

Quadrangle name Smyrna

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	5	5	2	8	0	4	3	5	0	1	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen G. Del Sordo, Historian

Bureau of Archaeology and

organization Historic Preservation

date May 1983

street & number Old State House, The Green

telephone 302-736-5685

city or town Dover

state DE 19901

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Daniel R. Stoff

title

date 8/31/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

entered in the
National Register

date 10/6/83

Melora Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet

John M. Voshell House

Item number 10

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The boundary for the John M. Voshell House is a small square defined by the access lane that runs from the road along the west side of the house to the barns behind the house and then proceeds behind the house and passes along the east side of the house back to Road 83. The square is 250 feet on a side. The total acreage is 1.43 acres.