

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received SEP 16 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic George Farmhouse

and/or common

2. Location E of Smyrna off DE 6

street & number Route 6 NA not for publication

city, town Smyrna X vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 01

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (confirmed at Kent Co. Board of Assessment 5/21/82)

name William H. George, Jr.

street & number 379 Lake Drive

city, town Smyrna vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Kent County Administration Building

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey K-4007 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, Old Statehouse

city, town Dover, state Delaware

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	NA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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 George farmhouse stands surrounded by fields, facing south at the head of a long lane north of Route 6, two miles east of Smyrna. The overriding impression is of the Queen Anne style, for the two-story frame structure is visually dominated by a three-story tall, offset, tent-roofed tower at left front. On closer inspection, however, it is apparent that the two-story, front-facing gable roofed section to which this tower is appended is itself a projection from the middle three bays of a standard five-bay Delaware farmhouse. The side-facing gables, eave returns and interior end chimneys of this earlier house are clearly visible on either side of the Queen Ann addition. At left rear on the older section is a small gable-roofed kitchen wing, still with a standing seam metal roof and a small cross-gable lighting its shallow attic. A running porch set flush with the outer edges of the earlier main block surrounds the Queen Anne section, turning the corners at right angles and squaring the house in plan. Another, two-bay porch spans the west kitchen entrance and a rear side rear door into the five-bay block. Both front and side porches date with the Queen Anne section, and are supported on wooden columns with Ionic capitals molded in terra cotta. The entablature under the boxed cornices of the porches is freely and thickly denticulated, as well as enriched with a heavy ogee molding. Other unusual fabric on the house is tin pressed to simulate shaped shingle, on the turret roof and within the small cross-gable marking the front porch entrance, and stained glass windows in the Queen Anne section. The most noticeable compromise to the exterior integrity of the structure has been the veneering of the original weatherboard siding with aluminum, and the loss of some trim in the process. The house still clearly conveys its historic stylistic qualities, however; first, because the extremely distinctive massing which is its most significant feature is intact, and so is much of the detail; second, because the synthetic material was chosen and applied with some sensitivity. The aluminum clapboards are narrow, which preserves the general texture of the original siding. Also, according to the tenant who saw the new siding applied several years ago, most of the obscured detail on the upper turret is still intact underneath it. The deterioration of the terra cotta capitals is perhaps a more serious threat to the integrity and interest of the house than is the siding, and could eventually be a less reversible one.

The picturesque tower which dominates the composition appears to be hexagonal in plan and three stories in section. Actually it is cantilevered over the porch, and does not affect the first floor spaces. The tented roof, which surely once carried a finial, is flared at the eaves. The boxed metal cornice probably conceals decorative detail. The four free sides of the upper room are penetrated by mitred-arch windows with projecting gabled heads. The base of this upper level is also flared, and the corbel table beneath it is also presently masked. The second story tower room is lighted by four ordinary, one-over-one sash windows. Though the tower is not part of the first floor plan, its picturesque qualities are carried down by the use of stained glass lights on the walls beneath it: square on the front elevation, diamond-shaped on the side, both

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/ 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1915-20 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George Farmhouse is an astonishing expression on the Delaware landscape, several decades late, of a flamboyant late Victorian style that would have been startling there even in its heyday. The Queen Anne in Delaware is not a country style. The turreted house rising above the wheat or corn is very rare. To the extent that it occurs in the towns, it is generally an 1890s phenomenon. The George house may have been built as late as 1920; it could therefore be expressive of the optimistic economic climate of post-war Delaware, as well as of the prosperity and decided tastes of the family who built it. Also, because it was built out from the core of an earlier and itself very interesting frame farmhouse, it expresses in an especially exuberant manner a habit of additive building which is a recurrent theme in the architectural history of the state. The retardataire stylistic quality is especially noticeable where a manner we consider quintessentially Victorian is encroaching upon a period we begin to feel is modern. But it is very typical of Delaware. Similarly, the conservation of materials and styles is as common on the Delaware landscape as the occurrence of such a flamboyant farmhouse is idiosyncratic. This remarkable remodeling, then, combines the archetypal and the unique, and both aspects are illuminating to study of the architecture of the state. The George house is therefore nominated to the National Register under criterion C for significance, as it embodies in unusual ways the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The archetypal aspects of this building are embodied in the earlier frame farmhouse and kitchen wing, and in what has been done with them. They are archetypal because their forms--at least their exterior forms--are extremely common in the Delaware countryside. They are archetypal also because they themselves almost certainly represent an additive building process, and because they eventually became units in a later, whole-hog remodeling. This too is extremely common in Delaware. The man who counted this farm among his tenanted landholdings in the late-nineteenth century, G. W. Cummins, undertook a similarly ambitious remodeling in his inflation of his residence Woodlawn from a five-bay, single-pile dwelling, to a double-pile structure with a full temple front. Such recycling is conservative of money and materials, even when it is not conservative in style. Usually, it is both. The builder of Woodlawn in 1853 was not too much more behind the first wave of the Greek Revival than the builder of the George house was behind the Queen Anne.

The date of construction of the Queen Anne section is not certain, though there appears to be no question that it was built by Edmund and Linnie George, who in 1908 bought what had once been Cummins' "Carroll Farm". William H. George, Jr., grandson of this couple and present owner of the farm, was born there in

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kent County Land Records, Recorder of Deeds, Kent County Administration Building, Dover.
Kent County Tax Records, State Archives, Hall of Records, Dover.
Interviews with William H. George, Jr., May, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Smyrna

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A

1	8	4	5	2	5	8	0	4	3	5	1	2	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries of the nominated area are indicated by the rectangle on the attached USGS map. They are drawn to establish a figure linking the house and barn and providing a 50' clearance on the free sides--that is, to the north and south, and to the east of the house and the west of the barn.

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

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Wright, Historian

organization Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Pres.

date 5/24/82

street & number Old Statehouse, The Green

telephone (302) - 736- 5685

city or town Dover

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

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/10/82

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 10/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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George Farmhouse

Item number 7

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bordered with small square panes. There is also a round light with webbed muntins on the side wall to the left of the second floor of the tower, and stained glass transom lights over the two windows to the right of the front entrance. The entrance itself is transomed; the door is wooden with a molded frame, ornamental swags and a full-length light. The porch is presently screened, with the screening fabric fastened to a light wooden frame erected in front of the columns. The front-facing gable of the Queen Anne section contains a pair of plain sash windows at attic level. They are identical to the second story windows below them, except that these are spaced to correspond to the windows on the front room of the first floor.

As noted above, the nineteenth century section of the house is single-pile in plan, five bays in width, with rather deep eaves through which interior end-wall chimneys punch. It is two stories in height, but its ridgebeam is pitched four or five feet lower than that of the Queen Anne section. Both gables contain small square four-light windows on either side of the chimney stacks at attic level. The chimneys, now stuccoed, retain matching corbeled shapes. The east end wall also has a modern block exterior chimney, but is otherwise blank. The west wall contains a door and window on the first floor, a window at right front on the second. These more exposed windows are one-over-one sash like those on the Queen Anne section. The windows on the rear elevation are two-over-two, as would be expected on a mid-nineteenth century house.

The one-story and attic kitchen wing may be the oldest section of the house, or it may have simply been a kitchen with attic servants' quarters. It is clear both from the patch on the roof and the pair of separated attic lights on the free north end that there was once an operative chimney stack there; inside, a box winder to the attic is still intact, though the fireplace has been removed. If this wing was originally an independent dwelling house, the cross gable on its front elevation may have been added when at the same time as the five-bay block. The two-over-two windows are consistent with that possibility. There is now an enclosed, shed-roofed porch across the rear of the kitchen wing.

The interior spaces of both the older and the newer sections of the George farmhouse contain surprises. The single large room of the Queen Anne section is dominated by an elaborate stair which leads to the landing in one long and two short flights of steps. The top of the landing gives access to the second story tower space and to a single good-sized bedroom. But the top story of the tower is now accessible only through the attic of the rear part of the house.

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The original plan of the rear section is obscured by the Queen Anne remodeling, but it appears quite curious. Though the equivalent of five bays in width, the existing plan is that of an unusually wide hall and parlor, with fireplaces and winder staircases at either end. There is no evidence of there ever having been a central stairhall. There is a basement excavated only under the smaller of the two rooms; the hewn sills and joists with vertical saw kerfs suggest the possibility of at least an early nineteenth century date.

The outbuilding set is almost completely eroded. A small hip-roofed, balloon-frame carriage house/garage, recently remodeled and veneered with aluminum, and a frame pumphouse are all that are left of the domestic utility buildings. Frame machine sheds, granary and dairy barn have all been taken down in recent years. However, an exceptional stock barn survives in only superficially bad repair. This very large braced-frame structure is six broad bays wide, with the center bay left clear as an aisle; the open, mortice-and-tenoned framing of the interior is very impressive. A large ornamental cupola lost its tall hipped roof in a hurricane and is in severely deteriorated condition.

Justification of Boundaries

The boundaries of the nominated property were drawn to include the farmhouse and barn, with a buffer of at least 50' on all sides each to provide environmental review protections in the unlikely event of direct effects upon either structure. While the surrounding fields are visually important in relation to these significant structures, no logical means of delimiting them for purposes of nomination suggested itself.

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the late 'twenties; he repeats a family story that his grandfather saw something he liked on his way to Florida one winter, and that is what he decided to build. This can hardly have been earlier than the early 'teens, at which point the assessed value of the Georges' land remained less than the \$9,000 they had paid for it. It may well have been as late as 1920, after which time the value of the 194-acre farm rose to \$12,000; it would rise no higher in the next several decades. Kent County tax records for the 'teens are unfortunately in a fragmentary state, which makes it impossible to date the house more precisely on the basis of them.

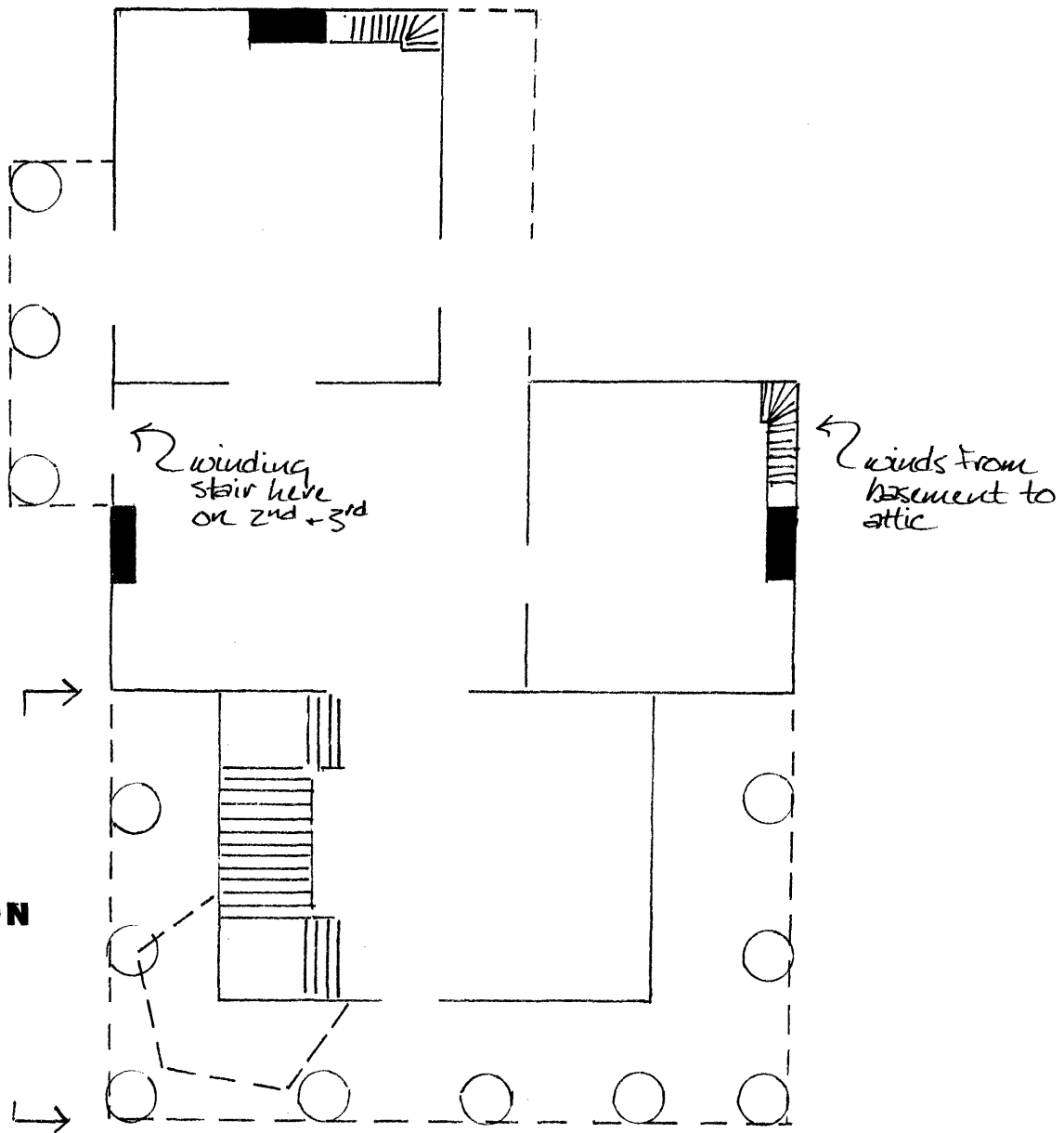
In any case, the house is sufficiently late to be considered a minor survival of the Queen Anne style. Buildings of this adamantly asymmetrical and eclectic character were of course appearing by 1880. Such local examples as the splendid Richardson house in Dover or the Phillips building in Smyrna date ca. 1890. The George house shows its lateness, or the lateness of its model somewhere on the route to Florida, in its classicizing tendencies: the use of details such as Ionic columns, the tendency to firm up and reign in the asymmetry of the facade. These are qualities generally characteristic of the late Queen Anne, as it responded to an increasing taste for restraint and simplification near the beginning of the twentieth century. The advanced date of the house is evident too in such details as the very angular, Prairie-style ornament of the leaded glass panels above the living room windows, and in a certain dryness of composition which suggests an attempt to copy an imperfectly remembered, imperfectly familiar form.

More striking than the use of the style in the twentieth century, however, is its use in the open landscape. Queen Anne architecture never really took in Delaware, especially downstate Delaware, to the extent that it did in other places. The more balanced picturesqueness of the Greek and Gothic Revivals, Italianate and Second Empire, appear to have been more appealing. Examples of Queen Anne do share Victorian Delaware streetscapes with representatives of these other styles, but it is streetscapes, not landscapes, that they share. And while picturesque houses of any description are somewhat unusual in rural Delaware, a full-blown Queen Anne farmhouse is a truly striking exception. The result is that the George house makes an exceptionally striking architectural statement on the landscape of Duck Creek Hundred.

Level of Significance

The level of significance checked in item 10 is local. Delaware's architectural survey data is not yet organized by style, and, further, has not yet approached completion for the northern and southern counties. Though it is clear that examples of rural Queen Anne architectural are most unusual in New Castle and Sussex counties, at least isolated instances have been found. Since the significance of the George house rests largely in its uniqueness as an architectural form, its importance is most clearly demonstrated with the Kent County context, where a virtually complete survey has shown it to be without peer.

QUEEN ANNE SECTION



GEORGE FARMHOUSE

- drawn by FW 6/10/82
- not to scale