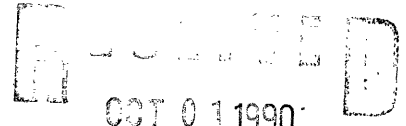


1693

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Dickerson Potato House other names/site number CRS#-6903

2. Location

street & number Road 494, Box 285 city, town Delmar state Delaware code DE county Sussex code 005 zip code 19940

NA not for publication x vicinity

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: x private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: x building(s), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing N/A buildings, sites, structures, objects. Total NA. Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0.

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Daniel P. ... - SHPO, Date: 9/25/90, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

In my opinion, the property does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: NA, Date.

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: x entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper: Patrick Andrus, Date of Action: 11/15/90

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/processing, storage

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/storage

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Other: Potato House

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls wood/weatherboard

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roof asphalt, (wood shingle in situ)other concrete (ground floor)

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The potato house of the Dickerson complex is a fine example of the building type and is one of the few surviving full two story examples in Little Creek and Broad Creek Hundreds. It is located west of Laurel, Delaware at the intersection of Roads 494 and 498 having buildings on northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of the intersection. The potato house rests on the southeast corner. It measures 30 feet 4 inches by 23 feet 3 inches. The surrounding environment consists of numerous outbuildings including corn cribs, a wash house, barn, cart shed, school house and barn. The potato house stands alone on its corner of the intersection separated from the rest of the complex by Road 494. Cultivated and uncultivated fields surround the complex. The land is very flat and the present day crops are Indian corn and soy bean.

The Dickerson Potato House was built in the early 1900s. It is a balloon frame, gable fronted structure and retains its original narrow width, milled siding and interior brick chimney. The whole rests upon a brick foundation.

Fenestration of the front gable end is altered slightly (two windows and double sliding door added) but remains original on the lateral sides and rear gable end. On the front and rear gable ends, original fenestration included centrally placed first, second, and third (attic) story loading doors, and centrally placed first and second story windows on lateral sides of the building. Rear gable end and lateral side fenestration remains in its original arrangement. Tightly fitting hatches cover all windows and doors.

The interior condition is unknown though storage bins have been removed for equipment storage.

The roof is of modern asphalt shingles over original wood shingles.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1915-1937

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

~~██~~ unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Dickerson Potato House is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an excellent example of an architectural reflection of a broad historical trend and as a significant architectural type. The potato house as a functional type relates to the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan's Study unit III under the 1880-1940 period and is an example of that plan's property type 1B reflecting major economic and cultural trends relating to agriculture.

The broad historical pattern to which the potato house is directly linked is the modernization of agricultural practices in southern Delaware during the first half of the twentieth century including the emergence of truck farming, the growth of perishable produce crops, and the development of modern agricultural marketing. The growth of sweet potato cultivation in southern Delaware was one of the major manifestations of these changes in production practices and crop choice. The potato house is the remaining physical evidence of this important trend in Sussex County's agricultural history when the sweet potato was "king".

Sweet potato cultivation dominated the region particularly in the years between 1910-1940, and was one of the first crops to benefit from truck farming and modern agricultural marketing. The long (eight month) and multi-phased process of sweet potato production impacted the culture and economy of the rural community in Sussex County during the years of its prominence as one of the area's cash crops.

The potato house is significant as an architectural type. It was essential

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Delaware Agricultural Statistics, Historical Series 1866-1974, Bul. no. 419, Newark: University of Delaware, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1986.

Hancock, Harold B. The History of Sussex County, Sussex County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Herman, Bernard and Siders, Rebecca, The Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, prepared for the Delaware State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1987.

Oral History Interviews with retired sweet potato farmers of Sussex County, Delaware. August 1986. Tapes with the Center for Historic Architecture & Engineering, Univ. of DE.

Scharf, Thomas. History of Delaware, 1609-1888, Philadelphia: L. J. Richards and Co., 1888.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property .035 acres (716 square feet)

UTM References

A 

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4	2	6	6	8	5	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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Tax Parcel Map #: 4-32-6, 40

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the site is a rectangle surrounding the potato house and extending five feet from the roofline of the building on all sides (a ten foot extension from the building would extend into Roads 494 and 498).

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary is justifiable because this nomination asks for the consideration of only the potato house. The property and additional outbuildings with which the potato house is associated are not included in this nomination and therefore a boundary which encompasses additional structures is not relevant to this nomination.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Judith Quinn

organization Center for Historic Architecture & Engineering date December 23, 1987

street & number Urban Affairs, University of Delaware telephone 302-451-2394

city or town Newark state Delaware zip code 19716

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

CRS#-6903

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to the process of sweet potato production in both curing and storage capacities and was developed as a distinct building type to provide the functional needs required for a successful, saleable sweet potato crop. Potato houses share common construction elements and are recognizable on the landscape as belonging to this specific property type. The Dickerson Potato House is an excellent example of the property type retaining elements characteristic of potato house construction and function. These elements include; multiple sheathing, gable end orientation, interior chimney, and closely fitting window hatches.

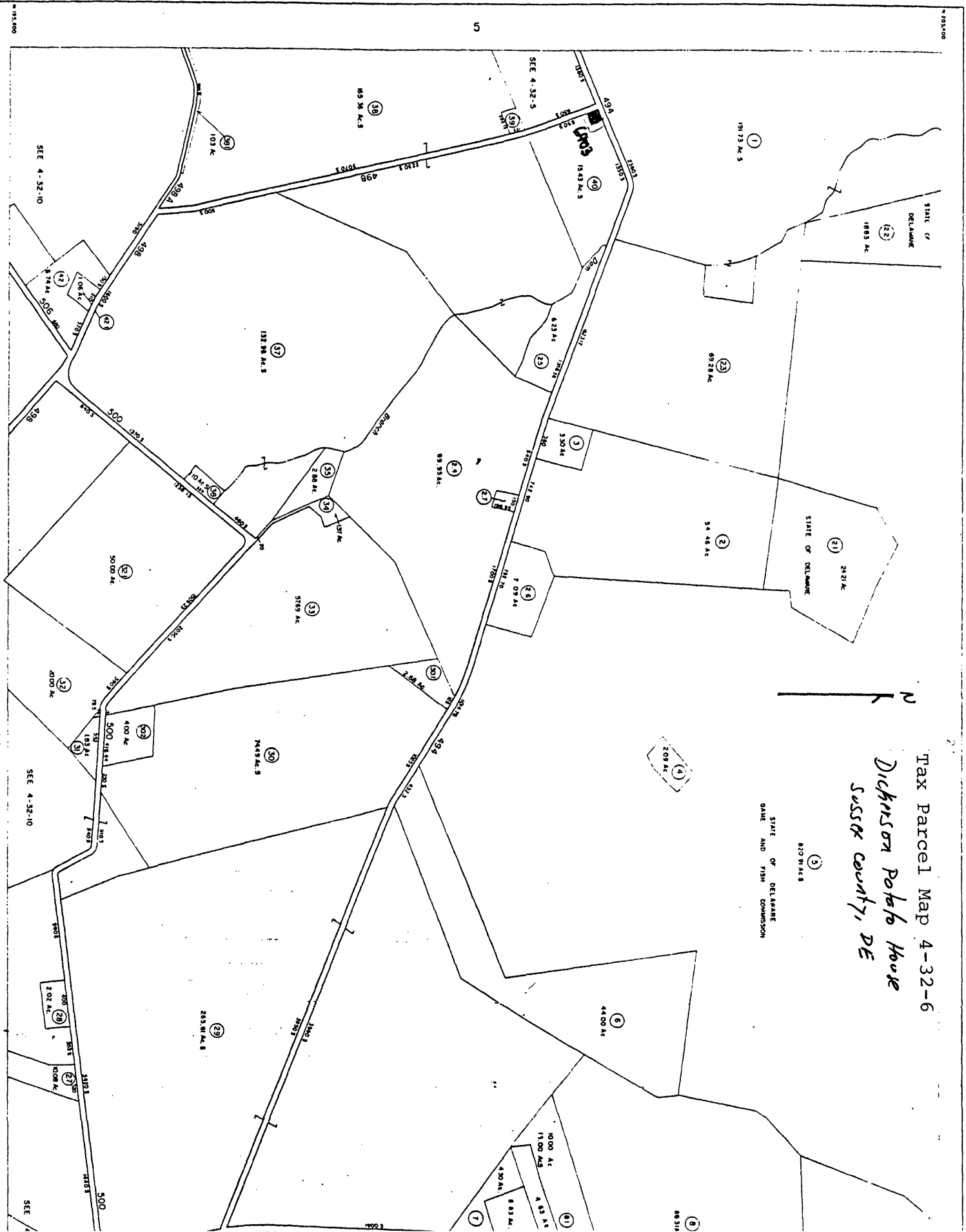
The significance of the Dickerson Potato House lies also in its excellent condition and unusual size. It retains the exterior integrity while its full two story size indicates that the sweet potato crop and subsequent storage was a primary concern for the Dickerson agricultural complex.

The Dicerson Potato House has integrity of location , design, materials, workmanship, and association.

Tax Parcel Map 4-32-6

Dickerson Roberts House  
Sussex County, DE

STATE OF DELAWARE  
GAME AND FISH COMMISSION



AERO SERVICE  
Production Permit No. 19135

DATE OF REVISION

SUSSEX COUNTY  
DELAWARE

LEGEND