

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received JUL 27 1982  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Spring Garden

and/or common Lewis Homestead

2. Location

*NE of Laurel, MD*

street & number Delaware Avenue Extended N/A not for publication

city, town Laurel, ~~Delaware~~ *vic.*  vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Sussex code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> government
			<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military

4. Owner of Property (information obtained 1/5/82 from Sussex Co. Tax Records)

name Mr. and Mrs. William F. North

street & number Delaware Avenue Extended (Rural Route One)

city, town Laurel  vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. The Sussex County Courthouse

street & number The Circle

city, town Georgetown state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey-S-373 has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Hall of Records

city, town Dover state Delaware

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<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

Spring Garden is situated on the north side of Delaware Avenue extended near the town of Laurel on the southernmost edge of Broad Creek Hundred. This impressive residence reflects several periods of architecture, ranging from the Georgian style through Federal and Victorian Gothic, and remains in a relatively unaltered state today. The imposing brick main core stands as one of the least altered early examples of a double-pile, central-hall plan house in Sussex County. The post-Civil War frame wing and a smaller early-nineteenth-century rear kitchen wing are equally representative of their respective periods and in an equally fine state of preservation.

The earliest section of Spring Garden is the large brick main core, built shortly after the Revolutionary War. It is a two-and-a-half-story, double-pile, center-hall plan structure with a three-bay facade, and is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond, presently painted white. The entrance is centrally located and is a large wooden door with six raised panels; it has a simple architrave trim and a segmental arch above it. A brick water table rises to approximately one-and-a-half feet above ground level; from the top of this water table to the sub-ground level the wall is five brick courses thick. From the top of the water table to the chair rail level on the second floor the wall is three courses thick; from that point up it is two courses thick. The asphalt shingled gable roof has a simply-molded box cornice, small partial returns, and dentil trim. At some date after the original construction two gable-roofed dormers with six-over-six sash windows, architrave trim, and full pediments were added in front. Both the east and west gable ends of the brick section have two large interior end chimneys (one on each side of the center ridge); the flues of these chimneys are visible within the attic and are V-shaped. An unusual feature is the fact that while the fireplaces of the west end are diagonally situated, unlike those on the east end, the chimneys of the west end are symmetrically located to mirror the chimneys on the east. The brick section has four fireplaces, two on each floor; these fireplaces are buttressed by segmentally arched supports beneath the house. All windows on this brick section are six-over-six or -nine lights and have segmental brick arches and simple molded architrave trim.

At some time prior to the Civil War, a much smaller frame structure was added to the north rear. Apparently it originally served as a summer kitchen, and therefore follows a much more utilitarian and vernacular style of architecture. This wing is a one-and-a-half-story, single-pile structure and has an asphalt shingled gable roof with a fascia board cornice. The exterior walls of this kitchen wing are covered with aluminum siding over weatherboard. A stuccoed chimney is located on the north interior end. A small single-pile single-story addition extends toward the west from the west side of the summer kitchen, thus forming an ell. This smaller addition is not connected to either the brick main core or the later Victorian Gothic wing in any way.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History
<b>Specific dates</b>	Ca. 1782	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown	

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of Spring Garden rests on its importance to the architectural history of Sussex County and on its association with a succession of prominent local citizens. The original brick main block of the house is the finest surviving example of an eighteenth-century mansion house in Delaware's southernmost county. The two later additions, a pre-Civil War service wing in a local vernacular style and post-war Victorian Gothic wing, are less important than the brick core but are equally representative of their respective periods. Further, the property has been associated with the lives of a series of prominent Sussex Countians, both before and after the construction, ca. 1792. Most important of these was Dr. Warren Kendall Lewis, who was born and raised in the house in the late nineteenth century. Dr. Lewis was a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and returned there to teach. During the course of his long career, he was one of a small group responsible for the development of chemical engineering as a separate profession, and is now generally known as "the father of chemical engineering." The house is nominated to the National Register, therefore, primarily on its architectural significance under criterion C, as embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction; and secondarily under criterion B, as associated with persons significant to the local past.

Brick architecture of any period is relatively rare in Sussex, where available resources made frame construction the rule. Historical evidence indicates, however, that there may once have been as many as twenty-five or thirty eighteenth-century brick houses in the county. Of these, no more than a dozen have survived, and Spring Garden is almost certainly the least altered of them. By virtue of materials alone, it was something of a study in ostentation in its day. The masonry and the marbling of the interior woodwork probably required the importation of skilled craftsmen from Maryland. The mixture of Georgian and Federal styles, enhanced by such unusual features as the two sets of double-end chimneys and the particularly fine heart pine wainscot panelling, all contribute to the significance of the house.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Sussex County deed, will, and Orphan's Court records.

Scharf, J. Thomas, HISTORY OF DELAWARE, 1609-1888. Phila.: L.J. Richards & Co., 1888.

Bevan, Wilson L., HISTORY OF DELAWARE, PAST AND PRESENT. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1929. Lewis family papers in the possession of Mr. George

McIlvaine; Salem, VA.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.42 acres

Quadrangle name Laurel

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References Lat./Long.: 38° 33' 52" Lat.; 75° 34' 02" Long.

A 

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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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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundaries follow the exact lines of the metes and bounds description for the parcel of land on which the nominated structure sits. The description is recorded in Sussex Co. deed book 435, page 163. The parcel is illustrated on Sussex Co. Tax map no. 2-32-12-19, Parcel No. 125.

**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 Richard B. Carter, Historical Preservation Planner; Phyllis A. Hastings, Assistant

organization Sussex Co. Preservation Planner's Office date 1981

street & number Old Courthouse, S. Bedford St. telephone (302) 856-7701, Ext. 361

city or town Georgetown 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Daniel R. Griffith*

title Deputy/State Historic Preservation Officer date 7/15/82

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8/26/82

*Andrew Byron*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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The second major phase of construction at Spring Garden occurred with the building of the large Victorian Gothic wing, dating from about 1880. This addition is a two-story frame structure which rests on a high brick foundation and is attached to the west gable end of the original brick section. The axis of this wing runs north-south, in contrast to the east-west axis of the brick main core; therefore, the Victorian Gothic wing has a gable-end south facade. This south end extends out several feet beyond the brick section's facade; on the rear, however, the brick section extends out about two feet beyond the Victorian Gothic wing. This gives the house a modified L-shaped plan. The exterior walls of the Victorian Gothic wing are covered with white aluminum siding over weatherboard. It has an asphalt shingled gable roof; both the north and south gable ends have full returns and elaborate sawn gable end trim characteristic of this style. The cornice of this wing has a concave soffit, the underneath of which is decorated by sawn cut-outs and supported by brackets.

The interior of the brick section of Spring Garden is a classic example of a center-hall-plan house. The first floor originally had two rooms in front with a smaller room behind each; a hallway running from the front of the house to the back separated these halves. At some unknown date the westernmost wall forming the hallway was removed from the front section; the present owners removed the easternmost hall wall, thus forming one large room in the front portion. The scars of these two walls remain, so the effect of the center-hall-plan is still visible. The rear half of the brick portion has retained the partitioning walls.

The most obvious feature of the main room is the heart pine wainscot panelling, a typically Georgian feature. This panelling has large recessed panels with a detailed molded chair rail. The walls above this are plastered and a molded cornice with dentil-like trim rims the ceiling. Originally, all of the wainscot panelling on the interior was marbleized; the present owners removed this finish to expose the natural wood grain. The recessed panels of the wainscot are repeated in the decorative panelling of the door and window jambs and headings; these surfaces are rather wide due to the thickness of the brick walls. Architrave trim surrounds the door and window openings of this brick section.

One of the two fireplaces in this large room is located in the east end wall. It is larger and more embellished, indicating that the room at this end was the more formal of the two original front rooms. The other fireplace in this room is diagonally placed in the northwest corner. It is less fancy, though still decorative, with a simple molded mantel, perforated dentil trim and molded surrounds. This would seem to indicate that the room on this end, before the destruction of the partitioning walls, was the one used for regular family life. A doorway on the west end of this large room leads to a nineteenth-century stairhall, located in the Victorian Gothic wing. This wooden door has a tracery transom in the Federal style.

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A hall with a narrow enclosed staircase leading to the second floor is one of the characteristically Georgian details in the house. Two large wooden doors, with six recessed panels in each, lead from the rear of the brick section to the present-day dining room in the small frame early-nineteenth-century kitchen wing.

The second story of the brick main core of Spring Garden has three rooms. One large room is located on the east end, with two small rooms (one of which is smaller than the other and presently used as a storage closet) on the west side of a hall which runs from the front to the rear. This upper floor and hall were originally only reached from the enclosed staircase on the first floor, but the nineteenth-century staircase in the Victorian Gothic wing has become the main passageway.

As stated above, the exterior walls are three courses thick on the first floor and narrow to two courses thick on the second floor. This occurs approximately one-and-a-half to two feet above the floor surface of the upper floor, rather than between the two stories. Where this occurs, a ledge is created on the inner face of the wall; chair rail molding with a wide sill at the top has been applied to this ledge to form a shelf. All of these outer walls with ledges have been plastered, while the inner walls of this brick section are panelled with beaded vertical heart pine planks.

Both the first and second floors of the Victorian Gothic wing of Spring Garden have two rooms located on the west side of a relatively large hall which houses the present-day main staircase. It has a walnut turned balustrade with a simple molded rail. The interior walls of the Victorian Gothic wing are papered and have simple wooden baseboards.

The walls of the small early-nineteenth-century frame wing to the rear of the brick section have wainscot panelling of vertical beaded planks with a simple molded chair rail; the flooring is of wide hardwood planks. The smaller, later frame addition attached to this wing houses the present-day kitchen.

In summary, Spring Garden represents several periods and styles of construction. The Federal-style brick main core with its Georgian details and the large Victorian Gothic wing, are both clear examples of their respective periods and characteristic features.

Boundary Justification for Spring Garden

Though Spring Garden was once the "mansion house" for a very large farm, the original expanse of land has long since been divided and subdivided to form much of eastern Laurel. The boundaries of the nominated area of 1.42 acres follow exactly the boundaries of the parcel of land on which the house sits today.

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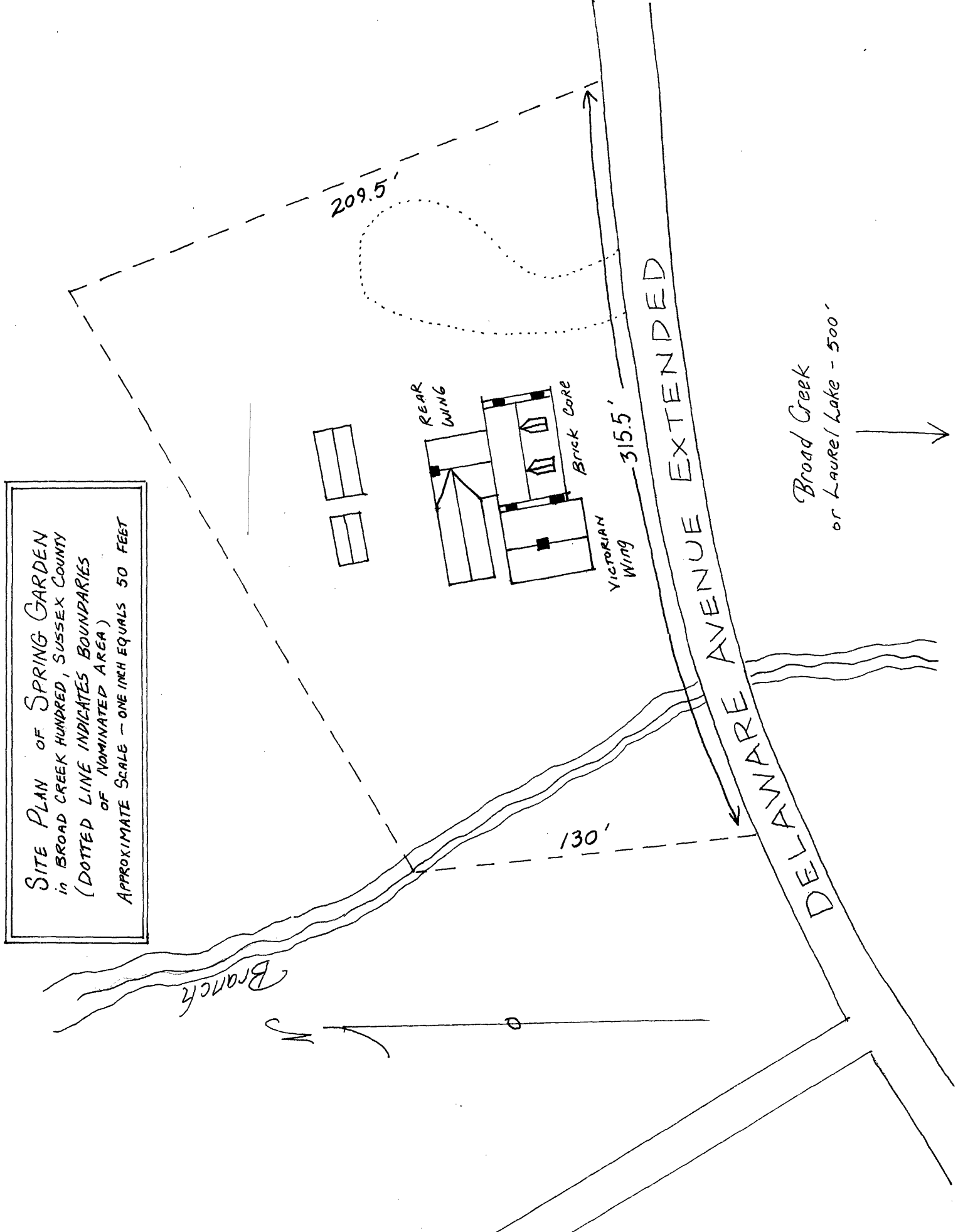
Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical Ref.

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Lewis family papers in the possession of Mr. George McIlvaine; Salem, VA.

SITE PLAN OF SPRING GARDEN  
in BROAD CREEK HUNDRED, SUSSEX COUNTY  
(DOTTED LINE INDICATES BOUNDARIES  
OF NOMINATED AREA)  
APPROXIMATE SCALE - ONE INCH EQUALS 50 FEET



Broad Creek  
or Laurel Lake - 500'