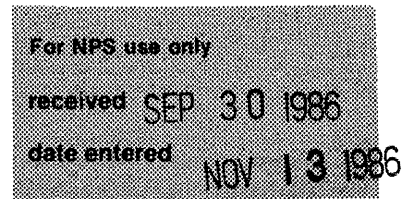


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N-10,909

Property Name: A. Armstrong Farm

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The A. Armstrong Farm is located on the northeast side of Old Wilmington Road (Road 275) 0.2 mile west of its intersection with Brackenville Road (Road 274). The site boundaries coincide with Parcel Number 08-008.40-038, which contains 5.44 acres. The boundaries are delineated on the attached map titled, New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985.

UTM Reference: 18/442240/4404050

Owners: Ronald Paloni and Nazzareno Paloni, Jr.
R.D.1, Box 176
Hockessin, Delaware 19707

Description:

The A. Armstrong Farm contains two contributing buildings: a log house with a circa 1830's stone addition, and an 1830's frame barn. The twentieth century mushroom house is a non-contributing building.

The log section of the house is three bays wide, with a center door. Because the logs are not exposed, no details of construction can be discussed. The log walls were discovered recently when a new window was installed in the south wall. No further investigation has been accomplished. The exterior is stuccoed on the facade and covered with novelty siding on the other elevations. A stuccoed interior end chimney rises from the north endwall, and a plain box cornice edges the gable roof. The windows are six-over-six sash.

The two story, two bay stone wing is connected to the north endwall of the log wing. Its exterior walls are stuccoed. The windows in this section are also six-over-six sash, and the gable roofline of the log wing is continued on this section. Decorative elements include a raised and molded five-panel facade door with a four-light rectangular transom, a corbeled brick cornice, and a brick arch in the north gable that once contained a datestone. A brick, interior end chimney rises through the north endwall. A shed-roofed porch with six chamfered posts extends across the facades of both wings.

The circa 1835 A. Armstrong barn is a tri-level, or double decker, frame structure with an original straw shed and bridge house on an uncoursed fieldstone foundation. The stable wall faces in a northeasterly direction. On the southeast gable end is a two level, shed-roofed addition which was built in the late nineteenth century.

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The Armstrong barn has a tripartite plan. It is divided into three equal bays with a center bay entrance, entered via the bridge house up a retained ramp. The center bay is a raised driveway that extends through the hay shed, with a sunken hay mow on either side and space beneath for chambers.

The principal timbers are hewn: posts, plates and girts; and secondary timbers are vertical sawn: rafters, rails and studs. Floor joists are face-hewn log over two longitudinal girders, except for the joists beneath the driveway which are vertical sawn planks on edge.

The bents have four posts, which on all bents extend the full two levels to the hay mow floor. The end posts are flared and notched and carry the plate over the girts. Mortise and tenon joints have a single pin. A different feature from other barns is the presence of a diagonal rail on the inner bents framing the walls beneath the driveway to which the studs are spiked with cut nails.

The gable roof has bridled common rafters on principal purlins supported by braced, non-flared struts off the girts. Apparently there are only two scarf joints, one joining sills and one on the southwest plate. Both are plain, square lap joints, the latter over a post. An interesting brace unique to this barn, but used in other areas of the country are two horizontal braces in the bridge house crossing the two front corners between the front girt and plate.

The barn is sided with vertical sawn, vertical board spiked with cut nails, and is roofed with wood shingles.

Significance:

The A. Armstrong site is significant under Criteria A and C because it represents, vividly, the transformation of the architectural landscape from one of impermanent log buildings to one of durable stone buildings during the early decades of the nineteenth century in Mill Creek Hundred. The rebuilding occurred as an expression of confidence and pride in the prosperous agricultural and industrial based economy which provided the means for such a transformation.

The A. Armstrong site, as a late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century log dwelling with an 1830's stone wing, is the perfect representation of that change. The Armstrong dwelling is a rare survival of a log house. The number of log dwellings diminished rapidly after the second decade of the nineteenth century. An important detail is that the log section was stuccoed to disguise its construction materials. The barn was built at roughly the same time as the stone wing on the house and represents the multiple purpose farm building.

The original straw shed indicates an understanding of the need for additional space for fodder and beasts, and an acceptance of this form.

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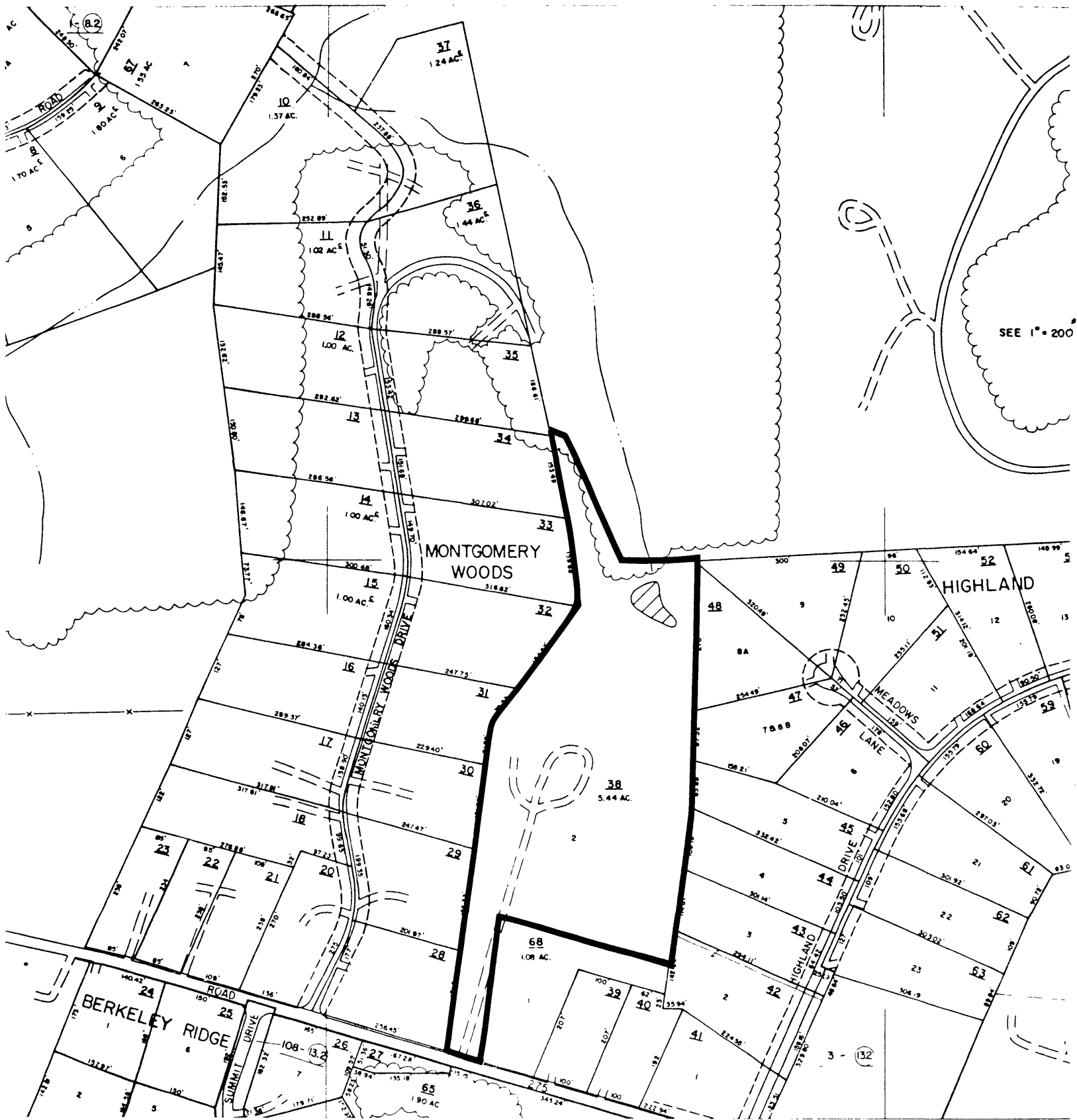
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The significance of the Armstrong barn is that, like the R. Walker barn (N-10,266), it is a transitional example still using the notched flared posts but in a slightly different way from the earlier barns. With the plate over the tie, it would have been possible to raise the bent as a unit. During this period, builders were experimenting with various bent schemes, some retaining the traditional tie beam lap-dovetail assembly, but others, such as the builders of the J. McCormick barn (N-1613) and the J. McDaniels barn (N-10,099), were trying different framing methods. The outcome of this experimentation was the standardization of the bent form to four posts framed with the slotted post head assembly.



N-10,909 A. Armstrong Farm
 New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985
 Parcel Number 08-008.40-038