

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Item number N-541

Page 1

INVENTORY FORM: HISTORIC RESOURCES OF CENTREVILLE

2. A. Property Name - The Carpenter-Lippincott House - N-541  
5620 Kennett Pike  
Wilmington, Delaware 19807

B. Location and Verbal Boundary Description - The area to be nominated totals approximately 9.75 acres and is situated on the west side of Kennett Pike (Route 52), approximately 100 feet south of Center Meeting Road. This irregular parcel fronts Kennett Pike for approximately 715 feet, with a maximum depth of 1,020 feet.

C. Owner - Mrs. Elizabeth Lippincott  
5620 Kennett Pike  
Centreville  
Wilmington, Delaware 19807

D. Property Description

A superb and well preserved example of the Italianate style, this three-story, stuccoed stone structure was originally constructed around 1840. Consisting of two, well-defined rectangular blocks, the main block is surmounted by a square cupola on its low-hipped roof with projecting eaves. The windows on the third floor, approximately two-thirds the size of those on the second, are framed by paired brackets, while those on the second floor have louvered shutters. Surrounding the first floor is an enclosed porch with cast iron lattice work. A one-story frame garage with novelty siding, and standing seam metal roof stands just behind the house and is included in the nominated area.

Justification of Boundaries

The nominated area includes all but a portion of the legal parcel. The boundaries were drawn to include all historic elements related to the house.

Historical Background

Owned by the Carpenter family until 1900, this structure was built by James Lancaster Carpenter (1817-1898), an early Centreville landowner and gentleman farmer. Occupying a hilltop, surrounded by stately trees, this residence commanded a view of the Kennett Turnpike, as well as the vast land holdings of its owner. Mr. Clement Lippincott, owner of Wilmington's largest and finest department store in the early decades of the twentieth century, bought this residence in 1900, and descendants of the family still reside there.

E. Significance

The Carpenter-Lippincott House is the largest and grandest building in the Centreville area. It is equally significant as the only example of the

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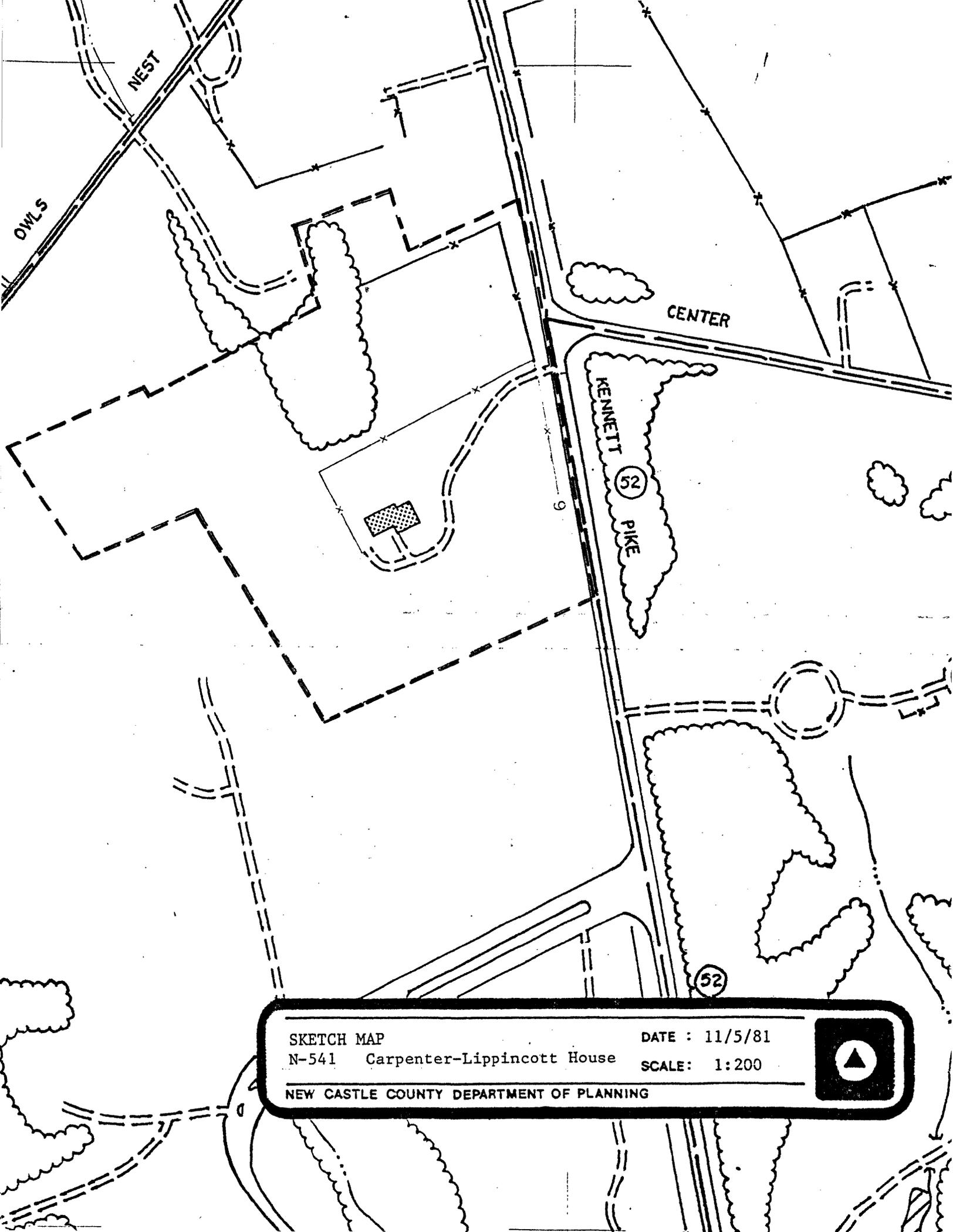
Page 2

INVENTORY FORM: HISTORIC RESOURCES OF CENTREVILLE

Italianate architectural style in the Centreville area. The Carpenter-Lippincott House is nominated to the National Register on the basis of criterion C as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Because of its association with James Lancaster Carpenter, an especially prominent farmer, it is also significant under criterion B, for its association with persons significant to the local past.

At the time James Lancaster Carpenter erected this imposing residence, he owned extensive property on both sides of the roadway. He was active in the Odd Fellows Lodge, the Grange, various civic affairs and at mid-nineteenth century was also among the wealthiest citizens of Centreville. His personal fortune was surpassed only by the prosperous merchant/farmer, James Delaplaine. The house James L. Carpenter constructed on a slight rise overlooking the Kennett Pike is tangible evidence of that fortune.

The Italianate style of architecture was frequently employed for the dwellings of prosperous landowners during the decades of the 1840's, 1850's and 1860's. It was particularly popular in lower New Castle County, especially in those areas flanking the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, where combination with Federal and Greek Revival details produced the "peach house," a reference to the agricultural prosperity brought about by the peach business. In scale, form and massing, the Carpenter-Lippincott House is related to such peach houses as the brick Cochran Grange (NR 1973) or the frame Rumsey Farm (NR 1978), both in lower New Castle County in the Middletown vicinity. There are related examples in northern New Castle County, for instance, the Granite Mansion (N-5319) in Newark and the Dilworth House (N-512), less than a half mile from the Carpenter-Lippincott House. Nevertheless, the Carpenter-Lippincott House is clearly the most impressive and best preserved of the related examples in northern New Castle County.



SKETCH MAP

N-541 Carpenter-Lippincott House

DATE : 11/5/81

SCALE: 1:200

NEW CASTLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

