



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Governor William H. Ross House, in Sussex County, Delaware, reference number 77000399, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 10/28/1977, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of Tuesday, February 7, 1978, Part II, Vol.43, No. 26, page 5185. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.


Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

9/2/2005
Date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Governor William H. Ross House

AND/OR COMMON

The Ross Mansion

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Market Street Extended

CITY, TOWN

Seaford

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Delaware

VICINITY OF
CODE

10

COUNTY

Sussex

One
CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Vacant.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Delaware Trust Company (in trust)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sussex County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

The Circle

CITY, TOWN

Georgetown

STATE

Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey; S-197

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSDivision of Historical & Cultural Affairs;
Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Hall of Records, 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
<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 brick William H. Ross villa stands in a park to the east of the Conrail tracks north of Seaford. The surrounding park, laid out in the picturesque style popular during the middle nineteenth century, is deteriorated through neglect, but the planting scheme may still be discerned. The entire 11.83-acre property is scheduled for restoration upon acquisition by the Seaford Historical Society.

Three main two-story blocks of the house form an H-shaped plan, with a three-story tower in the central space. A frame wing on the back and a brick garage to the east have been added.

The principal facade, the south, displays the gables of the two side sections, with round-headed windows. The main entry is through the tower which, together with a three-bay verandah, fills the south arm of the H.

A large verandah to the west has been replaced by a concrete-slab porch with iron railing. On the front, the canopy over the first-floor windows on the west wing, the balcony over the front door, and the cover over the balcony, have been removed. The scrollwork spire that once topped the tower has been replaced with a weathervane on a plain lightning rod.

Inside, the house retains its plaster mouldings, its Victorian trim, doors, and original inside shutters. Mantels in several rooms, however, have been replaced with large brick fireplaces.

To the rear of the property are several farm outbuildings which are included in the property to be nominated.

FORM 75 SUBMITTED TO O.A.H.P.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1859 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Governor William H. Ross (1814-1887) built his brick Italianate villa north of Seaford, along the railroad he helped to establish. The house is notable as a well-preserved example of the Italianate style.

As governor, Ross encouraged legislation that finally achieved the funding of the Delaware Rail Road Company, which had struggled for years to get started. He served on the company's board during the construction period, representing the state. His successor, Governor Peter Causey (also a Sussex peach grower), presided at the opening of the completed line at Seaford in 1856.

The railroad brought western Sussex County in touch with the eastern markets. Western Sussex had never been able to market its produce competitively, since it was largely landlocked. Naturally, Ross was one of the farmers who would benefit.

Ross was one of the first extensive growers of peaches in Sussex County, having more than 800 acres under cultivation at one time. He was a founder of the first state agricultural society in 1849. Ross served as a Sussex County director of the Farmers Bank of the State of Delaware for ten years from 1876 to 1886.

Governor Ross had a brief political career; the governorship was his only elective office. During this period in Delaware history, peach growers frequently occupied the state's highest office. After his retirement in 1855, Governor Ross built his villa by the tracks, where he died in 1887.

The Italianate villa Governor Ross built around 1859, has often been illustrated as an important example of the style. An engraving, most recently reprinted in John Maas' Gingerbread Age, shows the house with balconies, a spire, and a side porch that no longer exist. Even stripped down, the house contains the elements of the style.

Andrew Jackson Downing and his partner, Calvert Vaux, did much to popularize the Italianate or bracketed style of architecture. Governor Ross, or his unknown architect, clearly was a student of these designs, for the Ross Mansion closely follows the plate on page 232 of Vaux' book Villas and Cottages, which illustrates a Downing and Vaux design. In isolated rural Sussex County, such stylish architectural innovation was certainly unique at the time.

FORM AS SUBMITTED TO OAHZ

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

John Maas, The Gingerbread Age. New York: Bramhall house, 1957.

Calvert Vaux, Villas and Cottages. Reprint of the 1864 edition. New York: Dover Books, 1970.

J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware. Philadelphia: L. J. Richards, 1888.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 11.856

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

Latitude Longitude

A. 38°39'26" 75°36'54"

B. 38°39'09" 75°36'52"

C. 38°39'09" 75°37'13"

D. 38°39'28" 75°37'18"

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at a concrete monument on the northeasterly Right-of-Way line of Delaware Road No. 543, said point of Beginning being distant the three following courses and distances measured along the said northeasterly Right-of-Way line of Road 543, from a concrete monument, at a corner for lands known as Hurlay Heights: (1) northwesterly along a curve to the right, having a radius of 542.96 feet, an arc distance of 87.51 feet, to a monument set at the point of tangency of said curve; (cont.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Edward F. Heite, Historic Registrar

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

May 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Hall of Records

TELEPHONE

(302) 678-5314

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Lauren [Signature]

8/30/77

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

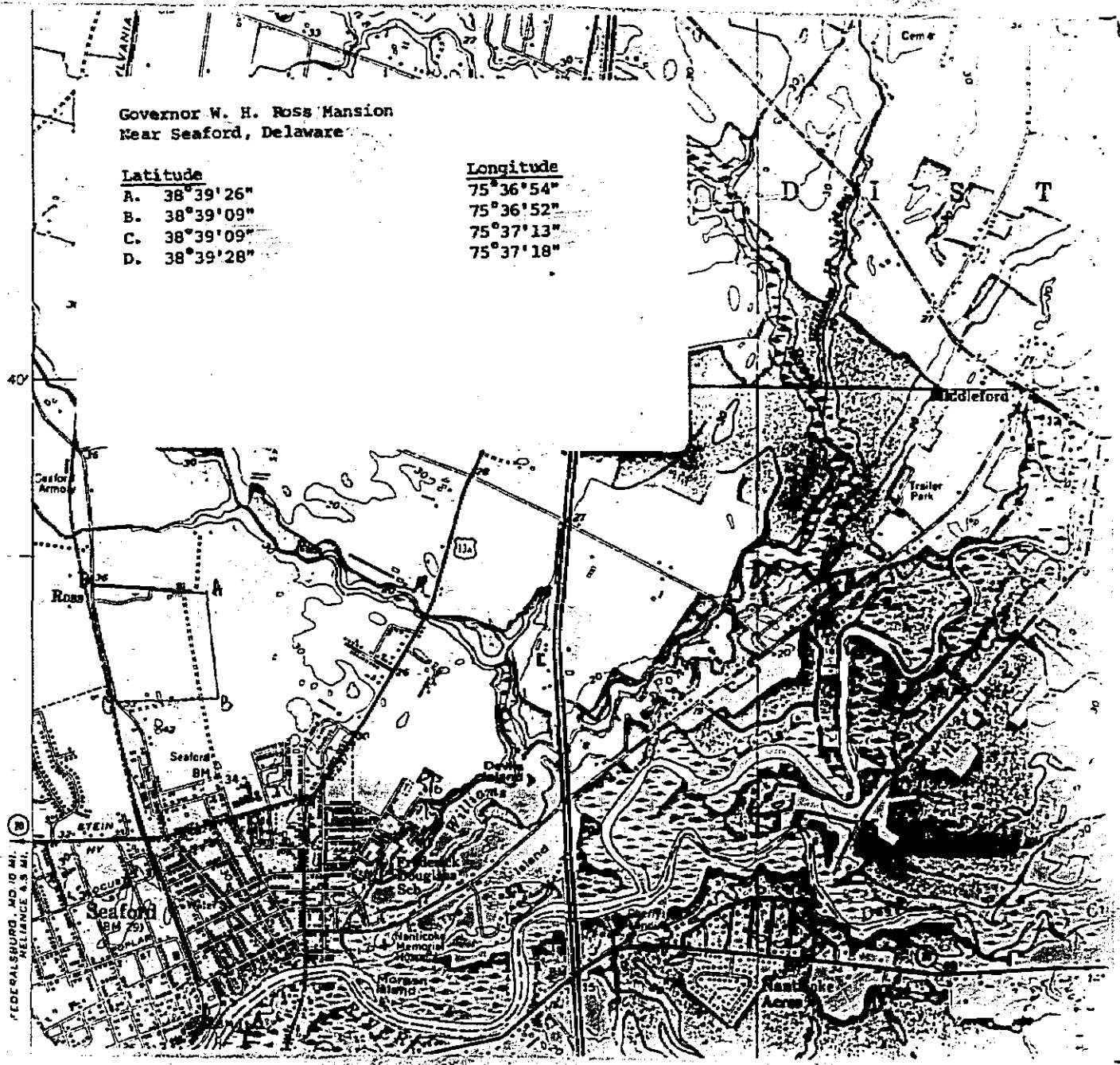
(2) North $13^{\circ}04'30''$ West, 1442.58 feet to a monument set at a point of curvature; and (3) northwesterly along a curve to the right, having a radius of 1402.40 feet, an arc distance of 41.64 feet to said point of Beginning; thence from said point of Beginning, and still along the said northeasterly Right-of-Way line of Road No. 543, the two following described courses and distances: (1) northwesterly along a curve to the right, having a radius of 1402.40 feet, an arc distance of 298.99 feet to a monument set at the point of tangency of said curve, set point being distant by a chord of North $05^{\circ}16'00''$ West, 298.42 feet from the said point of Beginning; and (2) North $00^{\circ}50'30''$ East, 79.81 feet to a concrete monument; thence along the lines of other lands of the E. C. Davis Estate, the seven following described courses and distances: (1) South $86^{\circ}16'40''$ East, 1247.49 feet to a concrete monument; (2) North $50^{\circ}09'50''$ East, 146.96 feet to a concrete monument; (3) South $86^{\circ}25'10''$ East, 267.40 feet to a concrete monument; (4) South $03^{\circ}48'45''$ West, 290.52 feet to a concrete monument; (5) North $88^{\circ}32'55''$ West, 651.22 feet to a concrete monument; (6) South $03^{\circ}02'00''$ West, 151.21 feet to a concrete monument; and (7) North $86^{\circ}49'50''$ West, 921.46 feet to a concrete monument on the said northeasterly Right-of-Way line of Road 543 and the point and place of BEGINNING.

FORM AS SUBMITTED TO OAK

Governor W. H. Ross Mansion
Near Seaford, Delaware

<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
A. 38°39'26"	75°36'54"
B. 38°39'09"	75°36'52"
C. 38°39'09"	75°37'13"
D. 38°39'28"	75°37'18"

SEAFORD EAST QUAD



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

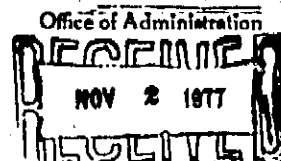
STATE DELAWARE

Date Entered OCT 28 1977

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church	Seaford Sussex County
Ross, Governor William H., House	Seaford vicinity Sussex County

Also Notified

Hon. William V. Roth, Jr.
Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Hon. Thomas B. Evans, Jr.



COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

INTL 2950-75