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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Matthew Lowber House at Magnolia is a two story and attic, three bay brick house, one room deep, erected in 1774, with a frame addition at the north end built about 1855. The older portion has excellent panelling, the original wide floor boards, and other good woodwork along with much of the original hardware. Each of the two ground floor rooms in the brick portion has its own front door and winding enclosed stairway. The brickwork, now painted, features a belt course, watertable, and the owner's initials with the date in black headers near the peak of the southeast gable. Before the doorway is a pair of great sycamores, doubtless bride and groom trees planted by the builder and his wife

when they first occupied the new home, It was then an isolated farmhouse. The present Town of Magnolia has grown up around it, beginning about 1845.

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PERIOD (Check One of More as	Appropriate)		
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The Matthew Lowber House is of architectural value as an exactly dated example of a small but comfortable country home of the later eighteenth century which has had amazingly The builder was a fourth generation little alteration. descendant of a Dutch immigrant who reached New Amsterdam by 1677 and was in Kent County by 1684. Members of his line in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were comfortably well-to-do landowners and craftsmen, usually Friends. In the colonial years they were not officeholders. The children and grandchildren of Peter Lowber, the immigrant (d.1698) are the progenitors of many modern Kent County families. Another Lowber House, built around 1750 by Matthew's father, also named Matthew, is still standing in Frederica.





9. MAJOI	R BIBLIOG	RAPHIC	AL RE	FERENCES								
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME HISTORIC Matthew Lowber House AND/OR COMMON 2 LOCATION STREET & NUMBER North Main Street (Route 113A) NOT FOR PUBLICATION CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Maqnolia VICINITY OF One STATE CODE COUNTY CODE 001 Delaware 10 Kent **CLASSIFICATION** 3 CATEGORY OWNERSHIP STATUS **PRESENT USE** DISTRICT ___PUBLIC __OCCUPIED __AGRICULTURE ___MUSEUM ___BUILDING(S) X PRIVATE X_UNOCCUPIED ___COMMERCIAL PARK ___STRUCTURE ___вотн X__PRIVATE RESIDENCE __WORK IN PROGRESS ___EDUCATIONAL __SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE __ENTERTAINMENT __RELIGIOUS ___OBJECT X_YES: RESTRICTED __IN PROCESS ___GOVERNMENT __SCIENTIFIC ___BEING CONSIDERED ___YES: UNRESTRICTED __INDUSTRIAL ___TRANSPORTATION __NO __MILITARY __OTHER: **4 OWNER OF PROPERTY** (ownership and address confirmed 12/3/81, Kent County Board of Assessments) NAME Mr. & Mrs. Joseph P. Eberly STREET & NUMBER Box 42CITY, TOWN STATE Maryland 21836 Manokin, VICINITY OF LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Kent County Courthouse STREET & NUMBER The Green CITY, TOWN STATE Dover Delaware **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS** TITLE On Continuation Sheet DATE __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lowber House is located in the rural Kent County crossroads town of Magnolia, comprised of about seventy-five frame residences, ranging in date from the third quarter of the nineteenth century to the present, which lines the town's two principal streets. Most of Magnolia's houses lie adjacent to the edge of the roadway and are typically set close to one another on small to medium-sized town lots. The center of town, formed by the intersection of the Barker's Landing Road and the Dover-Frederica Road, is today dominated by the modern brick fire station of the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company.

In February of 1980, the Lowber House was moved from its original location between the fire house and the Magnolia Post Office to a new location on the same side of North Main Street, approximately one hundred yards to the northwest. At present, it rests on a cinderblock foundation that will receive a veneer of original bricks salvaged in the move as stabilization of the houses progresses.

As initially constructed, the Lowber House was a brick, hall-parlor-plan plantation house of two stories with a basically symmetrical three-bay facade laid in Flemish bond. With the addition of a two-story, two-bay frame wing to the north gable end in the mid-nineteenth century, the building assumed its present configuration. In an attempt to retain symmetry on the facade in this transformation, the original doorway was converted into a window and a new entrance cut into the brickwork closer to the new vertical axis of the house. The simple bed-moulded box cornice of the original block's gable roof was extended to the frame addition and further embellished with an applied foliated serpentineshaped sawnwork bargeboard. The shingled roof was later covered with ribbed tinned sheet, and the facade of the house is now covered by a peeling gray paint. The two facade cellar windows, aligned beneath the flanking bays of the principal block, feature segmental arches. The first-floor windows with brick flat arches and projecting key bricks, now feature mid-nineteenth-century wooden shutters mounted on cast iron pintles screwed to the inner edges of the architraves, replacing earlier wrought iron driven pintles.

The upper windows have operable louvered shutters, also of the mid-nineteenth century. Most of the scrolled wrought iron shutter dogs with flattened terminals are missing. Removed from their framing and presently stored in the building are several original single-hung window sashes. The first-floor windows originally held nine-over-nine pane sashes and the shorter, upper-story windows held six-over-nine sashes. Visible in the brickwork adjacent to the bricked-in doorway are the sockets for the top rails and seats of now-missing porch benches.

The south gable end features excellent glazed header Flemish bond brickwork, in this instance quite unusual since it is the only exterior wall of the Lowber House so contstructed. The header bricks on the facade and rear elevations are without glazing. Worked into the patterning at attic level are the initials "M L" and "1774", and the lower portion of another letter, probably an "L" for Lowber, mostly obscured by parging on the apparently rebuilt chimney. The roofline of an earlier wing, depicted in an 1818 Orphan's Court Plot of the property, is clearly defined on this gable. A segmentally-arched cellar entrance

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
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1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X-1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
X 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1774

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

The Matthew Lowber House is of paramount importance to the architectural history of Delaware as a largely unaltered, tightly dated, pre-Revolutionary War brick plantation house containing one of the most intact interiors of that period in the state. In recognition of its architectural merit, the Lowber House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1971. The re-siting of the Lowber House within the town of Magnolia has not diminished the architectural qualities that brought it to the National Register in 1971.

The Lowber House is one of only three known houses in Kent County bearing a pre-Revolutionary War construction date in glazed headers in the gable end wall. The architectural integrity of the others has been comprised to such an extent that their eligibility for the National Register on architectural significance alone is doubtful. The Presbyterian Manse, near Garrison Lake, south of Smyrna is dated "1774" on its western gable end. Unfortunately, its extensive interior paneling, architectural cupboards, and staircase have been robbed in the last decade. The brick mansion known as "Tomahawk," dated "1772," has been disassembled and re-erected on another site.

Given the circumstances of the state's financial inability to restore the Lowber House and the fire company's valid needs for its lot, there was no feasible alternative for its preservation. Every effort was made to reestablish its historic orientation, immediate setting, and general environment. The Lowber House was moved intact to its new siting, one hundred yards north of where it was built and is positioned facing the street much as it has since 1774. Though the building's specific relationship to the rest of the town has changed, its general orientation remains the same. The streetscapes of Magnolia remain largely as before and it is arguable that the unique architectural qualities of the Lowber House can be better appreciated on its new site than when it stood in the shadow of the fire station.

Prior to the move, it was determined by the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation that the proposed siting held no archaeological significance and that the move would have no adverse effect on other buildings potentially eligible for the National Register. The one-acre lot where the Lowber House stood when listed on the National Register in 1971 does not possess archaeological significance sufficient to warrant listing and should, therefore, be removed from the National Register.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Matthew Lowber House

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CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER ⁶ PAGE ¹

Historic American Building Survey 1975 Federal Library of Congress Washington, D.C.

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey K-113 1975 State Hall of Records Dover, Delaware 19901 Continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



is also located here. The rear elevation of the main block has been stuccoed.

Item number

7

The interior of the Lowber House boasts some of the finest and most complete eighteenth-century woodwork in Delaware. The parlor end wall, composed of raised, fielded panels, is divided into three principal sections. The central portion covers the chimney breast and fireplace with a crossetted architrave and later, simple bracketed board mantle shelf. Flanking this central element are the right and left sections of the end wall panelling, which protrude into the room; the right contains a cupboard (perhaps added) with panelled doors and crossetted architrave, and the left section boxes a stairway to the cellar. The interior walls of the parlor, as in the remainder of the original block, are of plaster-over-lath and a chair rail and baseboard complete its treatment. In the southeast corner of the parlor is a short open-string staircase with a turned newell and two turned balusters per tread, which leads to an enclosed winder staircase to the second floor chamber, also with fully panelled end walls. The attic is unfinished, except for wide board flooring.

The frame mid-nineteenth-century addition appears to have been a kitchen and it contains a sizeable cooking hearth.

The Matthew Lowber House was acquired by the State of Delaware in 1969 for the purpose of preserving its architectural character and presence in Magnolia. However, the state lacked the finances necessary to restore the building and put it to productive use. At the same time, the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company, operating in a fire station immediately adjacent to the Lowber House, increasingly found it necessary to expand their facilities essential to the health, welfare, and safety of the area's residents. As a consequence of this situation, House Bill No. 955 was introduced and subsequently passed in 1978 by the 129th General Assembly, conveying the Lowber House and lot to the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company. Under provisions of the bill, the house was to be sold by the fire company and moved by the purchaser to a new location under the supervision and control of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. This transaction and resiting has taken place and the house is currently being stabilized on its new site, prior to restoration as a private residence.

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

REVISION MATERIAL - MATTHEW LOWBER HOUSE (submitted 10/10/80, returned for clarification 2/13/81)

8. As first submitted after the relocation of the Lowber house in 1980, the nomination included only the historic structure itself. The thought behind this conservative setting of boundaries was that, since the new lot had no historical or archaeological significance specifically relating to that of the property being nominated, no significance should be claimed for it. In response to comments by National Register staff, however, and in view of the particular appropriateness of the new setting which is described in paragraph three of item eight of the original statement, the boundary description has been revised to include the tax lot on which the building is now approximately centered.

10. (Revised v.b.d.) The nomination includes the Matthew Lowber house and the parcel on which it stands: tax lot #32 (135'X130') Magnolia, Kent County, Delaware.