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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Historic Resources of Red Lion Hundred

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 31

13. A. Property Name - N-5048 - Fairview

B. Location and Verbal Boundary Description - Fairview is located east of Route 13 on the north side of Cox's Neck Road, a mile and a half west of Delaware City, Delaware.

C. Owner - ~~Donald and Mary Jo Figgatt~~
~~R. D. 1, Box 164~~
New Castle, Delaware 19720

George and Judith Blumer
701 Cox Neck Road

D. Property Description

This 1822 brick structure is a standard rectangular, two-story, five-bay plan with a central hall flanked by one room. In header bricks on the west gable appear the large initials A. H. and the date 1822. Frank Furness retained and incorporated this earlier brick structure in his adaptation of Fairview. Furness raised the roof of the 1822 house to add a third story, which is corbeled and shingled in wood. In the west end, the 1822 gable line is retained beneath the corbeling, breaking an otherwise too high plain facade and accenting the date and initials of the original builder. The eaves of the roof extend somewhat below the tops of the windows, except those with shed dormers, making the house appear less tall. To avoid having paired gables, the east end of the 1822 structure, and the west end of the 1880 addition are semi-hipped or hipped on one side and intersecting the slope of the adjoining roof on the other side. The four chimneys, one at either end of the 1822 main block, one in the center of the 1880 addition, and one at the north end of the kitchen are massively corbeled. Seen from the east, the massing of the house is pleasing in its irregularity and variety of forms.

Furness created a modified double barred "T" floorplan; both the bar and the stem of the "T" are a series of indentations to the east. This plan allows the entrance hall of the 1822 structure to open out into a large space containing an open well hardwood staircase reaching to the third floor, and a large dining room. Behind these are the kitchen and servants quarters.

The interior of Fairview gives the impression of simplicity. Cypress is used throughout for baseboards, doors, window frames, panels between windows and the staircase. The floors on the ground floor are alternating light and dark boards about three inches wide. This is

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the only color variation in the woodwork. The rooms next to the entrance hall have wide double doors which slide into the walls. The open porch across the front of the house, originally had elaborate wrought iron posts with floral designs. This was removed in the 1970's and replaced with a brick porch.

Inventory of Outbuildings

N5048 a. Wooden shed; corrugated metal gable roof.

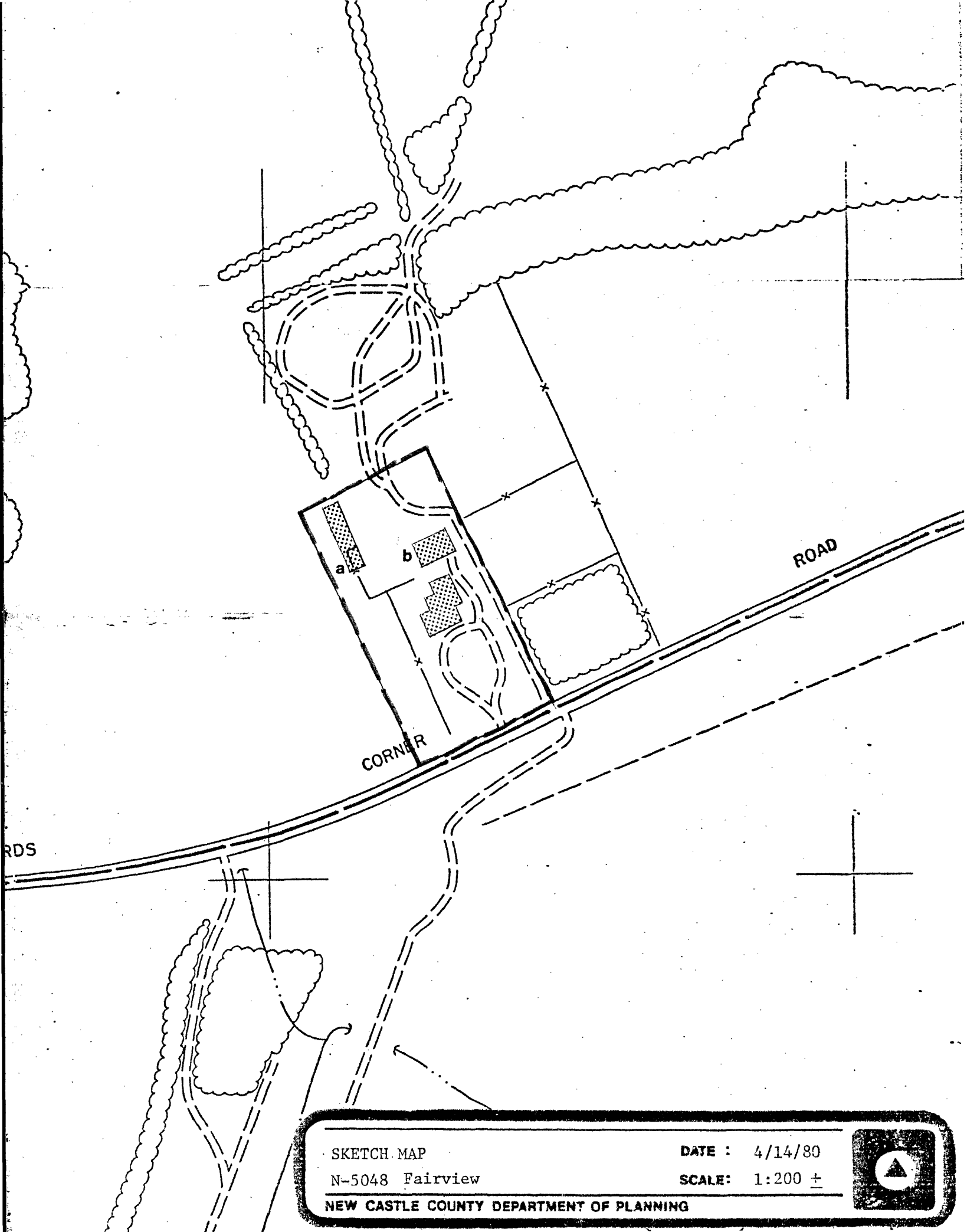
N5048 b. Intrusion; modern concrete block gable roof garage.

Historical Background

Anthony Madison Higgins, son of an Irish immigrant who migrated to America between 1750 and 1760, built a brick house called Fairview on the paternal estate in 1822. A. M. Higgins never lived there; however, because he gave it to his eldest son. In 1880, Fairview came into the possession of John Clark Higgins, the grandson of Anthony M., a gentleman farmer, importer and breeder of Guernsey cattle, leader of the Delaware Grange and later United States Consul to Dundee, Scotland. The former engaged Frank Furness, a Philadelphia architect, to enlarge and improve the house during the year 1885 to 1886.

E. Significance

Fairview is significant not only because it was home to one of the Hundred's most important families, the Higgins, but also because of reasons essentially architectural. When John C. Higgins decided to enlarge and improve his home, he engaged one of America's most important architects, Frank Furness of Philadelphia. Fairview is the only domestic structure in Delaware known to have been designed by this prominent architect. Additionally, Furness' ingenious solution to the problem posed by the juxtaposition of radically dissimilar architectural styles allows a unique opportunity to, at once, visually comprehend the strict formality of the Georgian mode and the extraordinarily personal style of Frank Furness. The survival of Furness' plans and elevations for this successful adaptation of late nineteenth century eclectic architectural elements to a traditional building form reinforces Fairview's value as an indicator of accumulating wealth and shifting taste in Red Lion Hundred between the first and last quarters of the nineteenth century.



SKETCH MAP

N-5048 Fairview

NEW CASTLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

DATE : 4/14/80

SCALE: 1:200 ±

