

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 7 1985
date entered SEP 5 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Peter S. Faucett House

and/or common The Hitchens House

2. Location

street & number West Laurel Street _____ not for publication

city, town Georgetown _____ vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county Sussex code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Elizabeth Hobbs Hitchens

street & number West Laurel St.

city, town Georgetown _____ vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sussex County Recorder of Deeds Office, The Courthouse

street & number The Circle

city, town Georgetown _____ vicinity of state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey S-2845 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Dover _____ vicinity of state Delaware

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	A portion of the present house was
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	moved to the site & attached to the
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date existing structure in the late 1800's
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Peter S. Faucett House is a two-story vernacular structure characteristic of many of Georgetown, Delaware's older houses situated on the edge of one of the town's oldest neighborhoods two blocks from the center of the town. It is situated at the northwest corner of West Laurel Street and what appears as Love Lane on the 1791 plot of the town (although the lane now stops on the southeast side of the street and does not extend past the house). In its present form the Faucett House is a two-story, single-pile, wood frame and shingle structure six bays in width with a victorian gothic cross gable at the center of the front roof plane. The house has a two-story rear wing, one room deep, with one-story lean-to additions on each side. This wing extends from the rear of the southwest portion of the front core, giving the structure a modified "L" shape. The exterior of the house is a typical vernacular structure dressed up with a mixture of Greek revival, Italianate and victorian gothic design elements (probably added at a time after construction of the earliest section of the house).

The structure consists of an original two-story, three-bay house with a two-story rear wing to which a separate and distinct two-story, three-bay house of approximately the same age was later added (to the northeast end of the front section). This addition was moved from an unknown location, probably elsewhere in the Town of Georgetown, and attached before 1868. While it is clear that the builder sought to unite the two separate elements into a stylistic whole, this effort was only partially successful, because of the uneven placement of window and door openings in the front facade, a common problem in such "moved" buildings. The uniting elements are the corner pilasters, the heavy moulded box cornice, with frieze board and ornamental sawn brackets and the center cross gable with lancet window, all of which almost certainly date from the period of the addition of the moved building, at which time a new roof was built over the entire structure. The present "center hall", front entrance and stairway were all probably part of the moved building, though the front door and its decorative trim may date from the period of the move. The one-story lean-to additions on each side of the rear wing are of varying ages. The one on the southwest side was in place at least as early as 1885 and may be original to the first period of the house. That on the northeast side was not added until after 1910.

At present the Faucett House is sided with early 20th century sawn wood shingles, painted a dark gray hue. The exterior is dominated by heavy corner pilasters typical of Greek Revival and Italianate structures in the area, and by moulded box cornices over a simple frieze with ornamental sawn brackets. All decorative trim and shutters are white. The door and window openings on the front facade are off-balance with five openings (four windows and a central door) on the first floor and six openings on the second. Nor are the six window openings on the second floor balanced in their placement relative to each other. All windows have six-over-six double-hung sash units. First floor windows have panelled shutters while those on the second floor have louvered shutters. The front door is of mid-19th century design with two arched panels at the top and two rectangular panels at the bottom. The door surround is mid-19th century in style with a two-light transom and four-light sidelights flanked by pilasters. A moulded lintel extends across the top of the entry. All windows in the house have simple board trim. A four-light lancet window is located in the cross gable at the center of the front roof plane. The roof is presently covered with asphalt shingles over earlier wooden shingles, the underside of which are visible in the attic.

The interior of the structure has been altered in recent years by the application of modern panelling to the original plaster walls of the original parlor and by the construction of a modern colonial-revival fireplace surround and mantel in the same room. The kitchen, located in the rear wing, has also been substantially altered. The other first floor front room (in the moved portion) and three second-floor chambers

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 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 type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates N/A **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Peter S. Faucett House is significant under Criterion "C" as a well-preserved example of a major building trend in the 19th century architecture of Sussex County, Delaware - the moved building, as well as being a good example of the manner in which local builders added design elements of later styles to earlier vernacular buildings. The main section of the Faucett House consists of two separate early 19th century houses joined together to form a single larger structure. In the period after 1840 the prevailing vernacular house type in Georgetown shifted from a three-bay plan to a five-bay center hall plan. For a variety of reasons, including the extremely flat topography and a generally depressed economy, the moving of houses or portions of houses and their joining together in new configurations was extremely widespread in Sussex County from the early 19th century onward. Field surveys in recent years have revealed several examples of structures consisting of two separate three-bay houses joined together. The Faucett House is one of the best surviving examples of this phenomenon. Its significance is further heightened by strong architectural evidence indicating that its front section is composed of two earlier two-story structures, where in most cases of this sort a one-story structure was moved to a site. The original section of the house appears to have been built in about 1830. It is known that the lot on which the house stands was vacant as late as 1827. A two-story rear wing attached to that portion of the house appears to be of about the same period. The "new" front section of the house may be just as old, based on the interior details, though this is uncertain. The structure is also a good example of the manner in which earlier vernacular buildings were later made more fashionable in appearance by the addition of later stylistic elements. It is believed that local merchant Peter S. Faucett, who acquired the house in the 1860's, added the moved house though this is uncertain. He is responsible for having brought the house to its present appearance with the addition of a victorian gothic cross gable and bracketing under the box cornice. The extremely eccentric appearance of the house, caused by the irregular placement of window and door openings, is minimized somewhat by the addition of the cross-gable. Faucett's status in the community is also of interest in the sense that he was solidly of the middle class: he operated a merchantile establishment with his father. An uncle manufactured tin and sheet iron ware. A brother was a blacksmith. Faucett held minor political positions for short periods of time. His status was similar to that of others known to have lived in structures composed of moved buildings (two other good examples in the same community were owned by a lawyer and a doctor). Thus, the phenomenon was not confined to less affluent members of the community. The addition to the house occurred at a time when the Town of Georgetown was experiencing its first period of prosperity. The Faucett House stands as a vernacular representation of increasing affluence in a middle class which was still affluent only in respect to the general poverty of the surrounding region.

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are relatively little altered. Most interior trim and decorative detailing remains. Interior doors are of early 19th century design with four recessed panels. Original interior trim throughout the house is quite simple. Door and window surrounds in the earliest section of the house have a one-inch raised strip around the outer edges with small raised corner blocks. Those in the moved section are completely plain. Window seats with raised panels along the inset sides flank the enclosed fireplace in the first floor room of the original section. The windows of the parlor in the added section have moulded panels beneath them extending to the baseboards. The fireplaces in that room and in the second-floor bedchamber of the original section are now enclosed, having been adapted for use with stoves at some point in their history. They have very simple mantelpieces and surrounds. The second floor bedrooms, including that in the rear wing, have random-width floorboards averaging a foot or more in width. The open-string staircase in the center hall has two runs of stairs joined at a landing. The balustrade has square balusters, a plain handrail and a simply-moulded round newel post.

To the rear, southeast corner of the lot is a small detached garage which was erected between 1910 and 1930 and is of frame construction. The surrounding neighborhood is relatively unaltered and most other structures are similar in overall style and design to the Faucett House.

The garage is a contributing element of this nomination which consists of two contributing buildings.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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3. Sussex County Deed Records, Assessment Records & Orphan's Court Records.
Recorder of Deeds Office and Register in Chancery Office
4. Georgetown, Del. Fire Insurance Maps for the years 1885, 1891, 1897, 1904,
1910 and 1930. New York: The Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Ltd.
(from copies in the collection of the Delaware State Archives, Hall
of Records, Dover, Delaware)

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	10	4

BC on attached plot), 61.5 feet wide across the rear of the lot (Line CD on plot) and 127 feet along the southwest side of the lot to the point of beginning. The total area of the nomination is 8066.2 square feet.

This area is the lot on which the house presently stands. Originally it was situated on Lots 85 and 86 of the original plan of the Town of Georgetown. In the early 20th century, however, the southwestern side of the two lots was parceled off, creating a new lot of the dimensions stated above.

