

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

AUG 2

1979

SEP 20 1979

DATE ENTERED

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Captain Ebe Chandler House

AND/OR COMMON

Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Northwest corner of Main and Reed Streets

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Frankford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

One

STATE

Delaware

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

10

COUNTY

Sussex

CODE

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
___DISTRICT	___PUBLIC	___OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE	___MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL	___PARK
___STRUCTURE	___BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE S
___SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	___ENTERTAINMENT	___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT	___SCIENTIFIC
	___BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL	___TRANSPORTATION
		___NO	___MILITARY	___OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. William W. Stevenson, Jr.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

R.D. 2, Box 91 A

CITY, TOWN

Dagsboro

 VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sussex County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

The Circle

CITY, TOWN

Georgetown

STATE

Delaware

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey (S-277)

DATE

1974

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE 1918

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Captain Ebe Chandler House is a two-and-a-half story, six-bay, double-pile, gable-roofed Victorian Gothic structure distinguished by the addition of elaborate carpenter gothic and eclectic detailing at a late date (1918). It is situated on a lot of about one-half acre at the northwest corner of Main and Reed Streets in the town of Frankford, Delaware.

The basic structure dates from 1880, as do three small, gable-roofed outbuildings on the same property situated at the rear of the house. In addition to the numerous alterations made to the house in 1918 by Captain Chandler, the house has been converted in recent years to two duplex apartments. That conversion did not affect the outside appearance of the house which is its most important feature. It involved the conversion of one first floor room to a second kitchen and of a second floor room to a bathroom, as well as the temporary closure of four doorways.

The exterior decoration of the house, most of which was added by Captain Chandler, is the most elaborate in lower Delaware, if not the entire state. It is the most distinctive feature of the house and remains almost completely intact. The Chandler House is generally symmetrical in design, although the placement of windows and doorways on the first floor front is not symmetrical. The front of the large gable roof is broken by two massive cross gables placed at regular intervals. They are not technically full cross gables since each extends only from the ridge of the main roof to the front of the house. Each gable end is pierced by two lancet windows and each of the front cross gables has one lancet window. All the lancet windows are double lancets in the sense that each large window contains two smaller lancets. The windows are surrounded by large, lancet-shaped surrounds. The gables are crowned by pendant peak ornaments. The cross gables are further ornamented with cut-out panels above the lancet windows.

The placement of the two-over-two double-hung sash windows on the second floor is symmetrical. A bracketed frieze, with cut-out scroll brackets extends along the tops of the second floor windows. Above the frieze is an ornate moulded cornice which is inset slightly beneath the cross gables. The effect is that the cross gables appear to have full returns. Each of the six windows across the second-floor front and the four windows in each gable end on both first and second floors have simple board trim and louvered shutters. The one-story porch extends across all six bays of the front and halfway back along each side. Beneath the moulded cornice of the porch roof are turned spindles. Each turned porch post has three elaborately scrolled brackets at the top, supporting the cornice and the spindled decoration. The porch railings have turned balusters.

The corner gazebos, located at each of the front corners of the porch, are the most unusual feature of the Chandler House. They are octagonal in shape and duplicate the turned posts, scrollwork, and spindle decoration of the porch. The octagonal tent roofs of the gazebos, which are covered with wood, diamond-shaped shingles, are crowned with tower finials. Each panel of the roofs contains a tiny gable dormer, each with a small, three-paned lancet window. Each pane contains a different color of glass. Captain Chandler reportedly had the windows lit from inside at Christmas time each year.

(CONTINUED)

# 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 checked="" 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 Built 1880; Renovated 1918 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Captain Ebe Chandler House is primarily significant as the final exuberant flowering in Delaware of the late 19th century love of architectural excess. From its initial construction in 1880 until the house was purchased and remodeled by Captain Ebe Chandler in 1918, it appears to have been a relatively restrained and conventional example of the Victorian Gothic style. When Captain Chandler had finished, the structure was a unique monument to his eclectic instincts.

Chandler spent his younger adult life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a successful sea captain. In his early 60's, he retired from the sea and came back to his home town of Frankford with the obvious intention of establishing himself as one of the town's principal citizens (and, as it shortly became evident, one of its principal eccentrics). After carrying out his remodeling of the house in 1918, he lived there as a local politician, civic leader, and, more surprisingly, as a spiritualist medium. According to family members, the captain was in the habit of conducting his seances in one of the large, third-floor rooms lit by double lancet windows. He lived to the age of 98 before dying in the early 1950's.

In 1918, when he acquired the house, Chandler had the structure moved back from its original location near the front property line. He proceeded to transform it into what, by local standards, is a wildly flamboyant eclectic dwelling possessing numerous touches of carpenter gothic and what some observers have called "Steamboat Gothic" detailing in addition to its original Victorian Gothic. Captain Chandler's crowning glory is the front porch extending across the full width of the house and along each side. It is set off by the addition of grandiose circular gazebos at each corner.

Chandler made few structural changes in the house, the most important of which was the addition of a second-floor bathroom, said to be the town's first example of modern indoor plumbing. He devoted most of his efforts to exterior trim. As a result, the interior is quite sedate by comparison.

The structure has been well maintained since Chandler's death. In the 1960's, the lower two floors were divided into two large duplex apartments. Except for the conversion of one room into a second kitchen and of another room into a second bathroom, the change has not permanently altered the interior arrangement. The house and the three small outbuildings behind it are among the finest statements of the eclectic style in Delaware. The fact that most of the detailing didn't occur until 1918, well after such exuberance had fallen out of style, makes the Chandler House even more significant.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Information about Captain Ebe Chandler and details of the 1918 renovation as well as original construction date are based on discussions with Chandler's grandchildren, Mrs. Virginia Wimbrough of Berlin, Md., and Mr. James McCabe of Teaneck, N.J.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One-half Acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Frankford, Del.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 479620 4263000

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The area being nominated is bounded on the south-southwest by Main Street; On the north-northeast by the rear property line; on the west-northwest by the property line, and on the east-southeast by Reed Street. (Continued)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Dick Carter, Sussex County Historical Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION Sussex County Planning and Zoning Department DATE Oct. 26, 1978

STREET & NUMBER The Courthouse TELEPHONE 302/856-7701

CITY OR TOWN Georgetown STATE Delaware

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE X 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...* DATE 7/26/79

TITLE Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William H. Abraham* DATE 9.20.79  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
*Chana Jane Sapp* DATE 9-19-79  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION  
Regional Registration

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Captain Ebe Chandler House

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
DESCRIPTION (Continued)	7	1

At the center of the porch is a gable-roofed entry extending outward about two feet from the porch. It is set off by a turned, half-sunburst design in the gable end over the front steps, and by scroll brackets at the front and both sides.

The foundation of the house, which evidently dates from the 1918 move, is of early, irregularly surfaced concrete block. The house does not have a basement. At the rear of the main house is a shed-roofed one-story wing with rectangular false board ends. Rising up from the center of the rear wing is Captain Chandler's one-bay second floor bathroom addition, lit by one one-over-one double hung sash window with stained glass. The bathroom has a flat roof. All siding is narrow weatherboard.

The interior of the house has fully finished first, second, and third floors with a crawl space above the third floor. The interior is not particularly distinguished. An earlier Victorian Gothic fireplace surround was removed by Captain Chandler who installed in its place a Colonial Revival. The earlier surround is affixed to a wall in a rear breakfast room. The interior trim is generally a mixture of the original 1880 work and details dating from Captain Chandler's 1918 remodeling. There are four large rooms in the main part of the house on the first floor with a central hallway running back to the kitchen in the rear shed-roofed wing. The rear wing also contains the small breakfast room, a pantry, and a small corner room which may have served as an office. Side doors are located in the "false front" end walls of the rear wing, and a rear door is located at the center of the back wall of the wing.

At the rear of the house are located three small outbuildings which appear to date from the original construction of the house. All are of frame construction with weatherboard exterior siding and vergeboards of a simple sawn zig-zag design in the gable ends. The building nearest the house was converted by Captain Chandler into a furnace room and has a brick chimney with corbelled top. A concrete covered conduit runs from the building to the rear of the house to carry hot water pipes for the radiators inside. Also situated just to the rear of the house, though several feet farther back, is a small shed which appears to have been used as a storage shed. Farther back on the property is a gable-roofed privy (three-hole) with the same trim as the other two structures. The gable end, which extends out over a small porch, is decorated with diamond-shaped wooden shingles. The structure has small, single-pane casement windows in the side walls. All three outbuildings and the main house are now roofed with asphalt shingles which probably cover over an earlier cedar shingle roof.

The Main and Reed Street sides of the Chandler property have decorative Victorian iron fences of uncertain vintage, though they probably date from the 1880s. Evidence remains of a large garage or barn at the rear of the property which has been demolished.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION	10	1

The Main Street property line is 113 feet long. The Reed Street Property line is 155 feet long. The north-northeast (rear) property line is 129 feet long. The west-northwest (side) property line is 160 feet long. The total area is 19,057.5 square feet, or just under one-half acre.

