

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **AUG 13 1979**  
DATE ENTERED **SEP 24 1979**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

John Lewden House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

E.  
107 East Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Christiana

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Delaware

VICINITY OF  
CODE

10

COUNTY

New Castle

CODE

002

**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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. Thomas B. Bowling

STREET & NUMBER

107 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Christiana

VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Public Building

STREET & NUMBER

Rodney Square

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

STATE

Delaware

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey; N-197

DATE

1979

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN

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 John Lewden House is located on the east side of Delaware Route 7 about two hundred yards south of Christiana Creek which borders the crossroads village of Christiana in New Castle Hundred, of New Castle County, Delaware. The house is sited on the edge of the meandering Christiana Creek flood plain and faces Delaware Route 7. The terrain in the general vicinity is characterized by gently rolling countryside and marks a transitional zone between the piedmont and the narrow coastal plain bordering the Delaware River some five miles to the southeast. Much of the surrounding countryside is cultivated, interspersed with patches of woods. The house faces west, with a two-story brick carriage shed (c. 1800) off the southeast corner of the main house.

Erected in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the John Lewden House was originally built as a two-story, brick, center-hall, one-room-deep plan plantation house. The facade is characterized by a five-bay, center-door fenestration and brick walls laid in plain Flemish bond resting on a single course molded brick stretcher water table and three course common bond foundation. The first floor windows have been restored with twelve-over-twelve pane, double hung sash windows with solid raised-panel wooden shutters and wrought iron shutter dogs finished with scrolled terminals. On the second floor the windows are twelve-over-eight pane sash with louvered shutters. The first floor openings are supported by the pegged mortise and tenoned window frames, while the second level windows are capped with plain white-washed beam lintels. The central element in the facade is the doorway entering into the central passage. Composed of raised panels on the exterior and vertical board battens on the interior, the door is accented on the exterior by a classical surround defined by two Roman Doric columns with exaggerated entasis and resting on squared and offset granite plinths. The columns, in turn, carry a full entablature with an architrave finished with five symmetrically placed blocks of guttae, a frieze infilled with five triglyphis above the guttae and a cornice with a Wall of Troy molding below the fascia. The entire entablature is covered with a shallow shed roof. Although the principal facade expresses the Georgian values of tripartite bilateral fenestration, the overall effect in the Lewden House is skewed by the non-symmetrical relational placement of the openings.

Late-nineteenth-century photographs of the Lewden House illustrate the former presence of a two-bay full gable wing. A family inventory from 1841 describes the wing as a store containing such goods as farming implements and agricultural produce. When the wing was demolished in the twentieth century, the original gable end wall was finished with studs and sheathed with Colonial-revival beaded edge weatherboard.

On the interior, the Lewden House retains much of its original woodwork in the parlor and hall. The parlor visually focuses on the projecting interior gable end chimney pile elaborately paneled with a crossetted architrave surmounted by a broken cornice entablature supported at either end by a single pulvinated block and containing in the frieze a raised central block. Above the mantel shelf is a single-panel overmantel with crossetted and molded exterior surround and rectangular interior surround. The entire room possesses a heavy wooden cornice finished with a Wall of Troy molding identical to that found in the exterior door surround and

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) : <b>Local History.</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1770

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Attributed to Robert May

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Lewden House near Christiana is significant to the architectural history of Delaware as a good example of the domestic architecture constructed by prosperous Quaker merchants in the era of the American Revolution. Successive generations of the Lewden family dominated the economic life of Christiana for more than 175 years as farmers, tanners, storekeepers, ship owners and traders. Sited just south of the Christiana Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the Lewden House is an important historical and architectural adjunct of the village.

Though the wings of the Lewden House have been altered and adapted for modern domestic purposes, the Georgian, two-story, center-hall principal block retains a large measure of architectural integrity in terms of its original eighteenth-century plan, massing, materials, and classical detailing. It is one of a very few houses constructed in Delaware during the eighteenth century that can be attributed to a particular architect or builder. In a study of the Corbit House in Odessa, Delaware, entitled Grandeur on the Appoquinimink, John A. Sweeny of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum has noted several architectural similarities between the Lewden House and other buildings thought to be the work of carpenter-architect Robert May of Head of Elk, Maryland. Sweeny has also noted connections of family, occupation and commerce between the Lewdens and builders of several other buildings attributed to Robert May. In recognition of the Lewden House's prominence in the history of the New Castle County, in 1967 it was designated as a "Delaware Heritage Building" by the Historic Areas Committee of the Greater Wilmington Development Council. A lozenge-shaped bronze plaque mounted adjacent to the front entrance attests to the recognition.

Throughout the years spanning the end of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, the Lewdens occupied a position of prominence in the village community of Christiana which lay at the head of the tidewater navigation of the Christiana River. Patents to land in the vicinity were issued to members of the family as early as 1669. The land on which the present Lewden House stands is referred to as the "Fishing Place" in several early Lewden documents. Prior to the construction of the Quaker Meeting House at Stanton, meetings were held in the Lewden House. The trading firm of Lewden and Duhammel, based in Christiana, conducted a vigorous grain trade with the West Indies after the American Revolution. The company operated a warehouse and office in Cap Francois on the island of Santo Domingo when the town was burned and pillaged during the infamous slave insurrection of 1802. Many of the French plantation owners, forced to flee during this rebellion, came to Wilmington on Lewden-chartered ships.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

New Castle County Deeds, Wills, Inventories.

John A. Sweeny, Grandeur on the Appoquinimink, University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1959.

Harold D. Eberlein and Cortlandt V. D. Hubbard, Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware, Public Archives Commission, Dover, Delaware, 1962.

J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware: 1609-1888. Reprint Ed., Port Washington, N.Y.: Kenikat Press, 1972

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Newark East

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 4,4,3,7,4,7 4,3,9,0,3,9,8  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION : The bounds are determined by present day property lines with the exception of the east bound which is drawn to exclude a landscaped area containing a swimming pool and modern bath house to the rear of the house. (Continued)

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 Dr. Bernard Herman, Lecturer, Univ. of Del. American Studies Program  
Dean E. Nelson, Historian

ORGANIZATION Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs DATE June 1979

STREET & NUMBER Hall of Records TELEPHONE (302) 678-5314

CITY OR TOWN Dover STATE Delaware 19901

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL X

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.

DEPUTY  
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Daniel R. Griffith

TITLE Chief, Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation DATE 8/9/79  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William H. Aronham DATE 9-24-79  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Emma Jane Saxe DATE 9-21-79  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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mantel shelf. Adjacent to the hearth is an architectural cupboard consisting of two sets of raised-panel double doors hung on HL hinges. The shelves in the upper portion of the cupboard display butterfly-edged profiles with central projecting display areas. The remaining three walls in the room retain a plain raised-panel dado over an un-elaborated baseboard.

The central hall, somewhat modified during restoration of the 1930's and 1940's, contains an open-string stair leading in a straight run to an intermediate landing. Each tread contains two heavy turned balusters and sawn-work spandrels. The newel post exhibits the same use of the Roman Doric order as found in the columns making the exterior doorway. Below the stair string is a single, large, raised panel circumscribed by receding plains of variously molded profiles. Directly under the landing stands a raised four-panel door opening down into a fully excavated granite-walled cellar. The whole of the stair passage is further finished with a molded wooden chair rail continuing up the stairs and paralleling the sweep of the stair rail.

The present-day dining room was significantly altered during the demolition of the store wing and subsequent restoration. Of note, however, are the fine federal-revival mantel complete with flattened, engaged, and reeded pilasters and a plain entablature and a heavy wooden cornice with the same Wall of Troy molding reflected elsewhere in the house.

In addition to the gable end store wing, the Lewden House received a series of els off the rear facade. Erected in brick laid in common bond and local granite these aglutinations have been repeatedly modified through the needs of succeeding occupant generations.

Adjacent to the dwelling property is a brick and stone barn which has been altered to a three-car garage with an overhead apartment. The original fabric of the barn suggests the use of the ground level as a carriage house and stable and the second floor and loft as a continuation back room and granary. The gable and rear walls of the barn were laid in mixed common bond and the gables fenestrated with single-brick lozenge ventilators.

Immediately behind the house and not included within the bounds of the nomination are a modern swimming pool and pool house.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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1

Contributing to the historical significance of the Lewden House is an important early-nineteenth-century oil painting of a Lewden family member in the collection of the Historical Society of Delaware. The portrait is of a John Lewden, either the namesake son or grandson of the builder of the Lewden House. Both descendants successively owned the Lewden House and resided in it during the nineteenth century. In the left hand of the sitter is a blade of wheat, a pictorial tribute to the source of the Lewden family historical and architectural legacy.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

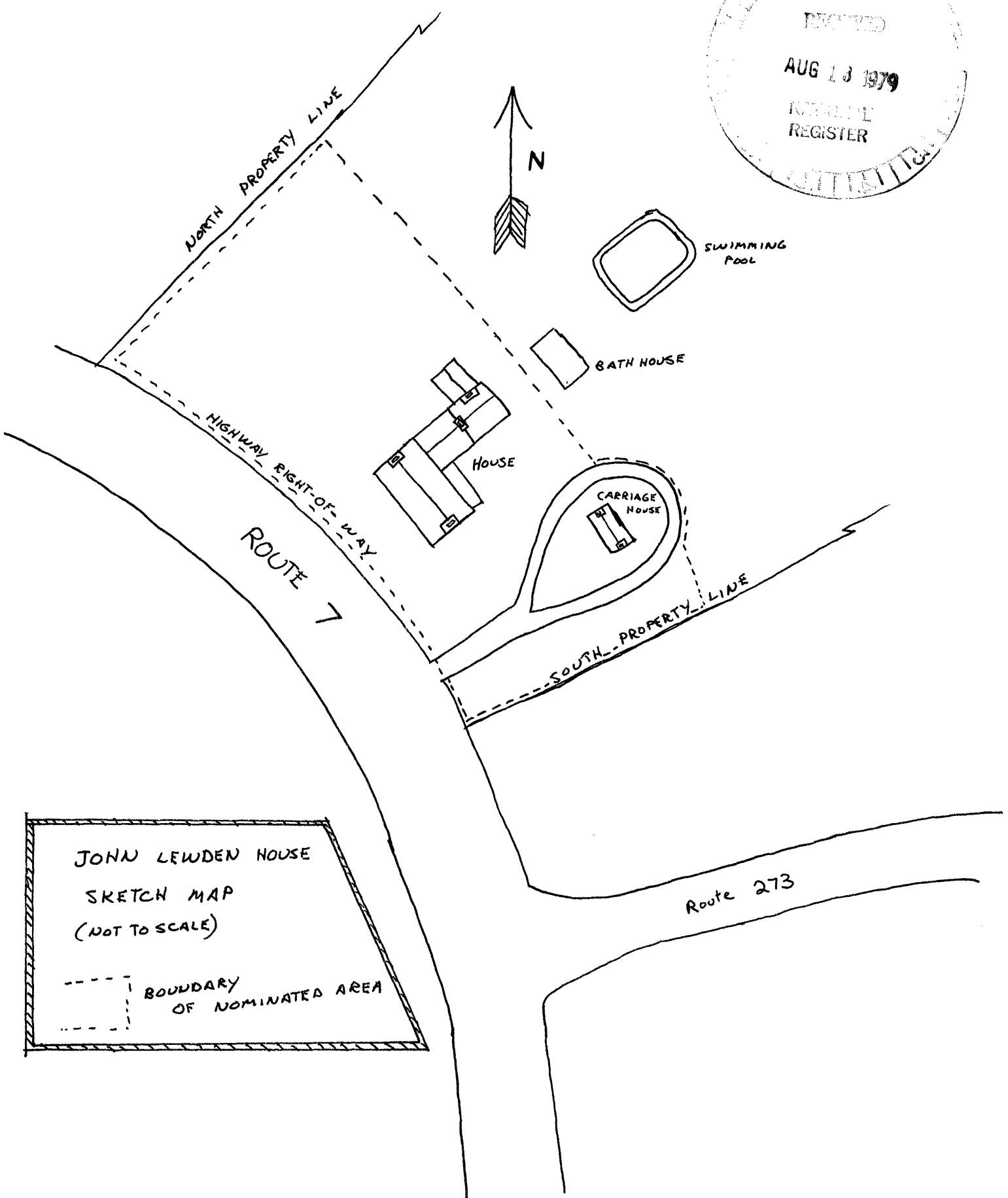
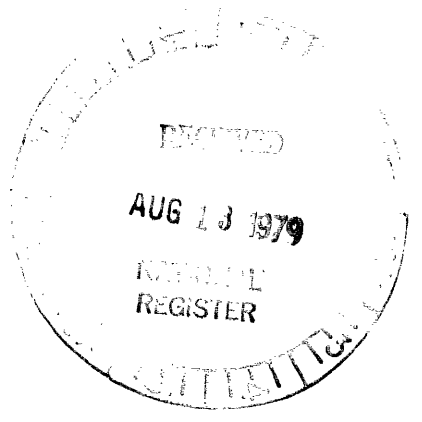
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The area included in the nomination is bounded on the north by the north property line and is bounded on the west by the highway right-of-way for the east side of Delaware Route 7, and is bounded on the south by the south property line and is bounded on the east by an imaginary line situated mid-way between the rear wing of the Lewden House and a modern bath house and which parallels the west boundary line, except where the east boundary line bulges eastward to follow the outer edge of a paved driveway encircling the carriage house.



JOHN LEWDEN HOUSE  
SKETCH MAP  
(NOT TO SCALE)

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BOUNDARY  
OF NOMINATED AREA