

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number K-1693

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6. K-1693:

Property Name: THE GOVERNOR WILLIAM T. WATSON MANSION

Location & Verbal Boundary Description:

The Governor Watson Mansion is located at 600 N. Walnut Street, on the west side, almost opposite N. Walnut Street's intersection with N. W. Sixth Street. It sits on a 5.1-acre lot, almost square in shape.

Owner: Warner P. Portz, 600 N. Walnut Street, Milford, DE. (obtained 12/8/81 at Kent County Board of Assessments).

Property Description:

The Governor William T. Watson Mansion, built in 1906, is a brick building with a number of Neo-Classic features. In plan, it is a 2-story, 5-bay, center-hall building. The foundation is raised to increase the massive appearance of the house. This effect is continued upward with the full front porch, with wings to each side. The porch roof is supported by massive round wooden Doric columns, with contrasting square wood balusters. The porch roof has a slight pitch, while the wings have hip roofs with extended overhangs and plain soffit and drop. The roof is pierced with four dormers, while the chimney extends past the roof ridge. The entrance is flanked with pilasters, sidelights, and a transom. The central section on the second floor has an early-twentieth-century interpolation of a Palladian window, with a full-size, one-over-one window flanked by half-size, one-over-one windows.

William T. Watson became the forty-ninth governor of the state in 1895, upon the death in office of the previous governor (since he was the Speaker of the Senate).

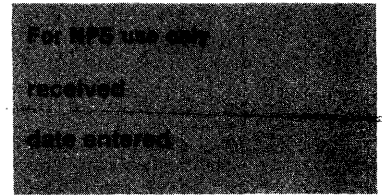
He was a grandson of William Tharp, governor from 1847 to 1851. Governor Watson had been active in Milford's business and political affairs and was elected to the State Senate in 1893. He served as governor until 1897. Contemporary accounts of his term in office indicate that he showed independence and good judgment in his appointments and that he had strong administrative qualities.

Historical Background:

This section of North Milford was developed late in Milford's history. The Bailey's 1885 Pictorial Atlas, as well as earlier atlases, indicate this as almost vacant land. The Lofland House (K-239) was built to encourage development of this area, but the development occurred mostly to the east of that house. Governor Watson built this house complex in 1906, about nine years after he left office.

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THE GOVERNOR WILLIAM T. WATSON MASON CONTINUED

Property Significance:

The Governor William T. Watson House is an excellent example of a well-preserved, early-twentieth-century estate site, with its outbuildings still intact and is eligible under Criterion C. These include a brick carriage house and servant's quarters, and brick laundry including a stable with board and batten siding. Being in a less-developed area of Milford, it has not received the same development pressures as has the rest of the town; thus, its original layout has not been altered.

Also on the property are outbuildings built to serve the main house. They include a brick carriage house and servant's quarters on the northwest portion of the property, a frame stable to the rear of the property behind the house, and a brick laundry between the house and stable.

170'

60'S

30'S

32'S

58'S

50'S

40'

108'

45'

60'

60'

60'

143.5'

N — 50 — WALNUT — ST —

1.3A
1.5Ap
15

K-1693

51A

K-1693 The Governor Wm. T. Watson Mansion

CHURCH OF GOD
5.1Ap

MILFORD SPECIAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

10.7Ap
18

2

CHARLES
R.B. W.S.

MILFORD SPECIAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

12

392'

109.5'

10

382.1'

11

2

3

13

12

62
51
36