NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018

SG 2770

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280
JUL – 2 2018
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Homestead Hall
Other names/site number: DE CRS # N03907
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 362 Grears Corner Road
City or town: Townsend State: DE County: New Castle
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___B X C ___D

DE SHP Officer June 26, 2018

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 8/13/18

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Homestead Hall
Name of Property
New Castle County Delaware
County and State
NR Reference Number

Section Number 3 Page 1

Agency Certification
Certified Local Government

In my opinion, Homestead Hall X meets/ ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

[signature] May 22, 2018

County Executive Date
New Castle County, Delaware

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
		sites
	3	structures
		objects
	6	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE: Agricultural Outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COLONIAL/Georgian
MID-19th CENTURY/Vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Homestead Hall is a two-and-a-half-story, hall-parlor, Georgian-influenced, single-pile brick building constructed c. 1773, located at 362 Grears Corner Road, Townsend vicinity, Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. Homestead Hall is one of a small number of historic brick houses situated in a rural area locally known as "The Levels." Homestead Hall faces southeast, and has a side-gable roof with an exterior chimney on its southwest gable end and an interior chimney at the northeast gable end. The original portion of the dwelling, constructed c. 1773, is a single-pile, four-bay building, with regular and symmetrical fenestration. There are two identical doors in the two middle bays. The brickwork on the façade is Flemish bond, while the other three walls are common bond.

The original four-bay brick dwelling was enlarged several times throughout its history to accommodate the needs of its original and subsequent owners. These additions include a two-story brick addition on the northeast gable end (circa 1846), a new one-story frame rear shed-roof addition behind the nineteenth-century wing, and a one-story frame sunroom addition, built on the southwest gable end of the main block, in 2002. All four sections have standing-seam,

metal roofs. North of the dwelling are six agricultural outbuildings, built between 1986 and 1992. Homestead Hall retains a high level of integrity for its location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials. The exterior of the c. 1773 section of Homestead Hall maintains distinctive architectural features, such as identical paired door openings on the main façade, and a raised, four-row brick belt course. Original interior features include crossette-moulding around the windows and doors, and original flooring.

Narrative Description

Homestead Hall is situated in a rural area of southern New Castle County known locally as "The Levels." It is the oldest among several brick farmhouses in the area. The next oldest brick house in the area is Brook Ramble, also known as the James Crawford House (CRS# N00101; listed in the NRHP in 1992—# 92001137), which was constructed c. 1810 and was designed as a vernacular Georgian/Federal, double-pile, side-hall house.

Homestead Hall was enlarged several times to suit the changing needs of its original and subsequent owners. These alterations include a two-story brick addition on the northeast gable end, constructed circa 1846; a one-story shed-roof addition built onto the rear elevation of the two-story brick addition during the early twentieth century; and a one-story frame sunroom addition built onto the southwest gable end of the main block in 2002. All four sections have standing seam metal roofs. North of the dwelling are six agricultural outbuildings, built between 1986 and 1992.

Homestead Hall is a two-and-a-half-story, Georgian-influenced, single-pile brick building. The original section of the house was constructed c. 1773 as a side-gable, three-room plan, with a four-bay façade. The center two bays of the façade are matching doors with cros-moulded trim. The dwelling is set back nearly 600 yards from the public road (Grear's Corner) and is accessed by a gravel driveway. The driveway makes a ninety-degree turn upon reaching the house, continuing as a dirt driveway along the side of the house to a cluster of twentieth-century agricultural outbuildings behind the house. Tall deciduous trees line the unpaved portion of the driveway. There are also three large pine trees in front of the dwelling, a large maple tree in front of the sunroom, and a line of evergreen trees along the southwest and northwest edges of the backyard. The property currently includes twelves acres.

Exterior

The majority of the windows on the c. 1773 main block and its additions are modern, metal-wrapped wood, double-hung sash windows with vinyl jambs and wood trim. Most of them have vinyl grilles of six-over-six or six-over-one. Photographs from the early- to mid-twentieth century show that the majority of the windows were two-over-two double-hung sash wood windows.

Main Façade-Main Block

The four-bay, southeast-facing façade of the c. 1773 main block features Flemish bond brickwork with glazed headers and a four-row brick belt course that demarcates the first floor

from the second. The bricks below the belt course are lighter than the bricks above, indicating that the lower portion of the wall was once whitewashed. From the base of the front doors to the ground, the brick bond is five-course common bond rather than Flemish bond. The center two bays of the façade feature matching six-panel wood doors with crossette-moulded wood trim, which constitute one of the most distinguishing features of Homestead Hall. While both the doors and trim were installed as part of the renovations following a 1982 fire centered in the kitchen ell, the double door pattern appears to be original, and therefore has served as a distinguishing feature of Homestead Hall throughout its history.[1] Two windows, with operable paneled wood shutters, flank the doors. On the second floor, which features only two openings, two matching windows with operable louvered wood shutters sit directly above the first floor windows. Only a wooden board deck, accessed by two steps, spans the two front doors, although there is evidence on the façade of three different rooflines of previous covered porches. Several photos from the mid-twentieth century show a hipped roof porch supported by posts, with stairs on its southeast and northeast sides.

Rear Elevation-Main Block
The northwest (rear) elevation of the c. 1773 main block is laid in six-course common bond brickwork. Its three first-floor windows have operable, paneled wood shutters. The space between the second and third windows contains the ghost line of a filled-in door. The two second-floor windows have operable louvered wood shutters.

Gable Wall Elevations-Main Block
The southwest elevation of the main block features an exterior chimney. The chimney's brickwork is not tied in with that of the gable wall. This pattern, in addition to the fact that one of the main block's chimneys is an interior chimney and the other is an exterior chimney, suggests that this chimney was added after the house was first completed. Physical evidence in the attic and basement also suggests it was a later addition. However, the chimney's bricks match those of the main block in terms of color, texture and patina. This suggests the bricks came to the property at the same time as the bricks used to build the main block, and were reused for this chimney.

At the first floor level of the southwest elevation, a window and an open doorway flank the chimney and face into the twenty-first century sunroom. The open doorway was added when the sunroom was constructed in 2002. Prior to then, there was a window in this location. At the second floor level, there are two windows with operable louvered wood shutters. The gable features two four-light wood casement windows on either side of the chimneystack.

On the opposite (northeast) gable wall elevation, there is one matching casement window in the gable, to the southeast of the chimneystack. A second casement window was filled in, probably when the nineteenth-century kitchen addition was constructed.

[1] A sketch map from an 1846 Orphans' Court document includes a drawing of Homestead Hall, which is roughly sketched but nonetheless includes the double doors. New Castle County Orphans' Court Proceedings, February 20-21, 1846, T1: 164-170.

The Nineteenth-Century Kitchen Addition

The kitchen addition to the northeast of the main block is two stories, but its first and second floor levels sit below those of the main block. Built circa 1846, the three-bay main façade is laid in eight-course common bond, with a corbelled, three-step brick cornice, and symmetrical fenestration. The center door is wood with nine lights over a cross-buck panel, fronted by a wooden storm door with an open Chippendale pattern on the lower half. There is a cantilevered pediment over the door, which was added since the mid-twentieth century. The pediment has a moulded cornice, asphalt shingles, and square-edged wood brackets. Flanking the door are double-hung sash windows with six-over-one vinyl grilles. The first-floor windows and door are trimmed in flat casing. On the second floor, there are two double-hung sash windows with moulded wood trim directly above the first-floor windows. The second-floor window to northeast has a six-over-six vinyl grille.

The rear elevation of the nineteenth-century kitchen addition features a pair of three-by-two-light casement windows. To its right is the ghost of another window, which is narrower than the double window. Between the first and second floors, a line of tar traces the roofline of a former shed roof structure. On the second floor, the left window does not have a sill or a lintel. Instead, the window opening extends down to the shed roof addition, and up to the corbelled brick cornice. The right window has a lintel but no sill and is slightly lower than the left window.

The gable wall of the kitchen addition is laid in common bond with variably spaced header courses ranging between seven-course and nine-course. It also features an exterior chimney. On the southeast side of the chimney, there is a four-over-four, metal, double-hung sash window at the first floor level.

There are several differences in construction style between the c. 1773 main block and the mid-nineteenth-century kitchen addition to support the theory that the kitchen addition was built several decades later. First, while the façade of the main block is laid in Flemish bond, the façade of the kitchen addition has eight-course common bound constructed of darker and more uniform bricks. Additionally, the pointing on the main block is neatly flush with the bricks and scored with a thin line, while the pointing on the kitchen addition covers the edges of the brick faces in some places, indicating repointing. Third, the façade of the main block has a wood box cornice with a strip of crown moulding on the façade, while the nineteenth-century kitchen addition has a corbelled, three-step brick cornice.

The fact that the main block has an exterior, gable-end chimney on its southwest elevation and an interior gable-end chimney on its northeast elevation may also be a result of the later addition of the nineteenth-century kitchen addition. The two different chimney types make the main block asymmetrical.

The Rear Shed Roof Addition

The one-story shed roof addition is attached to the rear of the nineteenth-century kitchen addition. It is clad in vinyl siding imitating beaded clapboard. The addition has one bay in each of its three elevations. The northeast elevation features a fifteen-light metal door, fronted by a

wood Chippendale storm door matching the one on the primary façade of the nineteenth-century kitchen addition. Above the door is a pediment with asphalt shingles and a beaded vinyl clapboard tympanum. Two square wood columns support the pediment, and form part of the square-edged wood railings on either end of a brick step in front of the door. The shed roof addition's other two elevations contain one window each.

The Sunroom Addition
The sunroom, attached to southwest elevation of the main block, is a one-story, three-bay frame addition clad in beaded vinyl clapboard, with a shallowly pitched shed roof. The southeast and northwest elevations are identical. They each feature two full-length, vinyl, double-hung sash windows flanking a central fifteen-light metal door. A single-pane vinyl transom sits above each opening. The southwest elevation of the sunroom contains five windows of the same kind.

Interior
Much of the interior fabric of Homestead Hall's main block is original, including the flooring and a large proportion of the moulding. Following the 1982 fire, most of the chair rail on the first floor of the main block was removed. The fire also did significant damage to the kitchen, located in the 1846 section which now features modern fixtures and finishes. However, the second floor of the kitchen ell retains its nineteenth-century floorboards and some of the moulding and chair rail.

The Cellar
There is an unfinished cellar under the main block only, accessed through a bulkhead door on the northwest (rear) elevation. At the northeast gable end, there is a large brick supporting arch—the base of the original chimney. The supporting arch features a large wood mantel, with soot stains on its underside, indicating that this space was used for cooking, likely before a separate, aboveground kitchen had been built. To the left of the supporting arch, at the east corner of the main block, there is a wood board winder stair leading to the first floor. It lies directly underneath the winder stair boxes to the second floor and attic. To the right of the supporting arch, at the north corner of the main block, there is evidence of a former bulkhead entrance that opened on the northeast gable end. The nineteenth-century kitchen addition covered the aboveground portion of this entrance. However, the fact that the cellar's original exterior access was from the northeast gable end suggests that an earlier detached kitchen and other domestic outbuildings would have been located in this direction relative to the house.

The center of the cellar floor is laid in brick with concrete on top. The rest of the floor appears to be an unfinished dirt floor. In the middle of the southeast (front) wall, there is a line formed by an edge of whitewash, indicating that there was once a partition wall extending from the front wall. The ceiling is composed of exposed joints, with the undersides of the first floor floorboards visible between them. The cracks between the floorboards are covered in most places with battens.

The First Floor-Sunroom Addition
Inside the sunroom, the doors and windows have fluted wood trim and bullseye corner blocks, except for the window next to the chimney, which has moulded wood trim and operable paneled

wood shutters. The floor of the sunroom is made of bricks laid in a basket weave pattern. Three wood steps with triple-bead cove moulding lead up from the brick floor of the sunroom to the living room in the c. 1773 main block.

The First Floor of the Main Block

The first floor of the main block consists of two rooms connected by a wide, open doorway in a partition wall. The southwest room is used as a living room and connects to the sunroom addition through the open doorway mentioned above. The northeast room is used as a dining room and connects to the nineteenth-century kitchen addition. Both rooms feature original pine floorboards. The floorboards have straight cut edges and are dotted with small rectangular holes from countersunk nails. The floorboards in the living room and dining room look to be of the same age and construction technique. However, they differ in that the living room floorboards are slightly narrower on average, ranging between four and six inches, compared to a range of six to eight inches in the dining room. The ceiling height in both rooms is about seven feet and ten inches. A chandelier hangs from the center of the dining room ceiling.

The living room and dining room also both feature a fireplace. The living room fireplace has a brick hearth trimmed with wood moulding. Its mantel frames about one-and-a-half feet of brick facing on either side of the firebox. The dining room fireplace has no hearth and is shallower and wider than the living room fireplace, and has narrower brick facing. Photographs from around 1982 show the fireplace covered by a blank wall. When this fireplace was reopened after 1982, a modern wood mantel with a dentil course was installed. To the left of the dining room fireplace is a closet enclosed by a six-panel wood door with L-shaped hinges. On the right side of the fireplace is the passageway to the kitchen addition. To the right of this passageway, in the east corner of the main block, is a winder staircase to the second floor. The staircase features a beaded wood baseboard and simple cove moulding.

The partition wall between the living room and dining room also divides the two front doors, but falls much closer to the front door in the dining room. In the dining room, there is only one inch of space between the trim of the other front door and the partition wall. In the living room, there is about five inches of space, which is spanned by a piece of chair rail. This is one of two small sections of chair rail on the first floor of the c. 1773 main block. The other piece is located on the living-room-side of the partition wall, where it meets the northwest (rear) wall. A photograph taken when repairs were underway following the 1982 fire show chair rails throughout the living room. There is still chair rail installed throughout most of the second floor.

This door is the only opening on the first floor of the main block that does not have chair rail trim. The one-inch gap between the door trim and the partition wall is filled in with mortar, which is flush with the trim. This mortar also appears above some of the windows, between their lintels and the ceiling, on both the second and first floor. It only appears on those windows with very narrow (one- or two-inch) gaps. Only some of the windows feature such a narrow gap because most of the windows through the main block vary slightly in terms of the height at which they are placed on the wall, and their overall length. This same variability is present on the

second floor. On the first floor, the windows with narrow, mortar-filled gaps above them are the living room's front (southeast) and rear (northwest) windows.

In addition to these differences in sizing and placement, the dining room's front (southeast) window also differs from the other first floor windows in terms of trim. First, while the rest of the windows feature aprons with a beaded edge, this window has a plain, flat apron. Second, the apron is cut off in one corner by the baseboard of the winder staircase. This cut corner was also present in a photograph taken after the 1982 fire. Finally, the trim around this window has fewer coats of paint. These differences suggest that this window's trim was replaced more recently. This would make sense because this window lies closest to the doorway to the kitchen, and therefore may have received more damage than the other openings in the main block.
On the dining room side of the partition wall doorway, there are three breaks in the moulding. Two of the breaks are only about four inches apart, suggesting that the small stretch of moulding between them is a replacement piece, possibly replaced following the 1982 fire.

The floorboards of each of the main block's two rooms terminate at the partition wall, creating a seam across the length of the wide doorway. On either side of the seam are many small nail holes. There is also a patch of newer floorboards in the center of the doorway. The nail holes indicate that the partition wall once covered more of the opening. However, the patch of newer floorboards make it impossible to tell how much of the opening was covered by the partition wall. Additionally, a break in the baseboard on the dining room side of the partition wall, towards the front door, reinforces the theory that the door pattern in this partition wall has been altered significantly.

Two additional patterns of nail holes in the floorboards provide additional clues that the first floor plan originally featured more partition walls. A line of nail holes located about five feet from the front wall in the dining room indicates a partition wall that would have created an unheated front stair passage, as the stairs are located in the east corner of the main block. This stair passage contained the dining room's front door and window, and doorways to one or more of the other first floor rooms. Prior to the construction of the nineteenth-century kitchen addition, there likely would also have been an exterior door through the northeast gable wall, where the passageway to the kitchen is currently located.

The fact that the same crossette moulding exists throughout the first floor of the main block (except for around the dining room front door) suggests that it was installed after the main block was first completed. It was a common practice in this period to create a hierarchy of architectural finishes among rooms based on their functions. This hierarchy of architectural finishes still exists at Homestead Hall between the first floor and second floor.

The opening up of the first floor plan and the installation of the crossette trim likely occurred in the 1840s, when William Wilson inherited the house from his mother. The exterior chimney was added to the southwest gable end prior to Wilson's inheritance—as it is depicted on the Orphans Court plot when Lydia Wilson's land was divided in 1846.

The Passageway between the Dining Room and Kitchen

The dining room connects to the nineteenth-century kitchen addition by a short hallway containing four steps with a landing in the middle. Alongside the stairs is the door to the winder stairs leading to the basement. The bottom right corner of this doorway is cut out so that it fits around the second step down. The closet door is made of beadboard, with L-shaped hinges. Part of the hallway ceiling reflects the shape of the winder stairs above it.

The First Floor of the Nineteenth-Century Kitchen Addition

The kitchen has been remodeled with modern fixtures, following the 1982 fire, which started in the kitchen and destroyed most of its historic material. The ceiling is about seven feet high, the floors are laminate wood, and the window trim is flat, stained wood. The one original component of the kitchen area is the fireplace on the northeast wall, although its hearth is made of new bricks and it is surrounded by modern moulded wood trim rather than a traditional mantel. Unlike the fireplaces in the main block, this fireplace has sidewalls that splay inwards, and an arched rather than a straight soldier course, supported by an arched iron bar.

The Rear Shed Roof Addition

A door in the northwest wall of the kitchen connects to the one-story rear shed roof addition. A pantry and a powder room occupy the southwest end of the shed roof addition. The pantry door is a four-panel wood door, and the powder room door is vertical two-panel wood door. A photograph likely taken in the 1970s show that the southeast wall of the shed roof addition had a doorway to a narrow staircase to the second floor of the nineteenth-century kitchen ell, which ascended southeastwards towards the front of the dwelling. Due to the location of this staircase, the section of wall on the opposite side of the stairway entrance wall, in the kitchen, sloped steeply upwards towards the front of the dwelling.

The Second Floor of the Main Block

The winder stair in the dining room, in the east corner of the main block, leads up to the second floor. At the top of the stairs, four doorways face onto a passageway. To the left of the top of the steps, on the northeast wall, is the stairbox door for the winder staircase that leads to the attic. The door in the northwest wall leads to a room used as a study. There is a wood threshold across this doorway. The door in the southwest wall leads to a room used as a guest bedroom. There is no threshold on this doorway. Instead, there is a seam where the floorboards of the two rooms meet. All four doors are six-panel wood doors with L-shaped hinges. Three of the doors have beveled-edge panels, while the guest bedroom door has squared-edged inset panels.

The closet in the guest bedroom has a four-panel wood door. There are four one-inch-wide metal loops protruding from the guest bedroom ceiling. One is inside the closet in the east corner of the room, two more are in the north and south corners of the room, and the fourth is by the center of the northeast wall. A ghost line formed from a slightly convex strip of ceiling plaster runs from the northeast to the southwest wall, bisecting the room. This ghost line suggests that a partition wall once divided this room into two rooms.

The study has an exposed brick northeast wall, which contains the only fireplace on the second floor. It connects to the chimneystack in the northeast gable end of the main block. The fireplace has a brick hearth and no mantel. Its firebox is deeper than the dining room firebox below it. The floorboards throughout the second floor of the main block are original wood floorboards ranging in thickness between six and ten inches.

The Second Floor of the Nineteenth-Century Kitchen Addition

The second floor of the nineteenth-century kitchen ell sits about five steps below the second floor of the c. 1773 main block. A passageway was opened up between the two second floors in the 1940s. There is a doorway off the stairs at this level, but the stairs provide no landing for the doorway; instead, the stairs cut across the bottom of doorway. The side of the doorway that faces into the main block features moulded wood trim, while there is no trim on the other side. This doorway opens onto a passageway that provides access to a bedroom and a modern bathroom. This passageway provides the only view of the kitchen addition's original floorboards, which are about four to six inches wide.

The ceiling height on the second floor of both the main block and the kitchen addition is six feet and ten inches. A wood chair rail also runs throughout the second floor, except on the brick fireplace wall and the bathroom walls.

The Attic

The winder stair leading from the main block's second floor to its attic features exposed brick on the two exterior walls. At the top of the stairs, one row of brick is missing from the inside of the walls, creating a one-brick-wide shelf upon which the substructure of the attic floor rests. The attic's floorboards are the widest in the house, at about one foot wide. The mortise-and-tenon joints of the original, four-by-six-inch roof rafters are locked into place with wooden pegs. Some of the rafters have carpenter's numbers cut into them. There are long wooden lintels inset in the bricks above the three existing casement windows and above the former fourth window, which is filled in.

Integrity of the Dwelling

Homestead Hall's c. 1773 main block has a high level of physical integrity both inside and out. The building possesses integrity of location and setting because it has not been moved from its original location and is still surrounded by farmland, as well as a wooded area on the southern edge of the property. It retains integrity of feeling and association because it is still part of a working farm, and the wide-open surrounding landscape evokes the opportunities for success that agricultural reformers of New Castle County's rural elite found in the Levels.
The main block retains integrity of design in its representation of the transition between earlier hall-parlor floorplans on the one hand and the later emphasis on symmetry that came into fashion in the eighteenth century on the other hand. Additionally, the dwelling displays a hierarchy of decorative finishes between the public, formal rooms of the first floor and private, informal rooms of the second floor, which was another major feature of the homes of the rural elite during the period of significance. It also retains integrity of workmanship in the details of its brickwork

and fireplaces, the crossette trim around the front doors and in the first floor rooms of the main block, and the mortise-and-tenon roof rafters held together with wood pegs. It retains integrity of materials in its original floorboards, ceiling joists, gable casement windows, and its mid-nineteenth-century moulding.

Agricultural Outbuildings

To the west of the dwelling is a cluster of six agricultural buildings built in the late twentieth century. The driveway that runs along the northeast side of the dwelling extends about two hundred feet beyond the house, ending between two large, side-gable, double-height frame sheds built in 1992. The sheds are sheathed in standing seam metal with standing seam metal sliding doors facing onto the driveway. The southwest shed has a shed roof addition spanning its rear (southwest) elevation. The sheds have gravel floors and three skylights on each roof slope, near the roof ridge. Off the northwest side of the southwest shed, there are three large grain bins sheathed in horizontal corrugated metal, and a three-wall frame structure sheltering a grain hopper sheathed in standing seam metal that matches the sheds. The grain hopper shelter was constructed in 1986 and the grain bins were constructed in 1986, 1989 and 1992.

Integrity of the Outbuildings

The six agricultural outbuildings are noncontributing buildings and structures due to their construction well after the period of significance. However, the silos and grain hopper enclosure also do not detract from the integrity of the property as a whole—as they support the setting and feeling of the site as an agricultural complex. The sheds have a more obtrusive visual impact due to the size and uniformity of their standing seam metal walls and because they are closer to the dwelling.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1773-1882

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Homestead Hall is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C. It represents key wealth management strategies among affluent agriculturalists in a region of Delaware known as The Levels---including extensive land ownership, agricultural tenancy, and rebuilding of dwellings and agricultural outbuildings during the nineteenth century. Architecturally, Homestead Hall represents a transitional moment between traditional design and the Georgian style during the eighteenth century, as well as a conservative renovation approach

during widespread nineteenth-century rebuilding efforts in the region, making it a rare eighteenth-century survivor in The Levels. Its period of significance spans from 1773, the approximate build year of the house, to 1882, when the property was sold out of the family.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A - Agricultural History

The construction of Homestead Hall (c. 1773), and its expansion during the nineteenth century, represents a series of changes in the agricultural economy of The Levels from the 1770s through the early 1880s. This small section of central Delaware produced an elite class of landowners who capitalized on the high quality of local soils, empirically-proven farming methods (stemming from the agricultural reform movement), and enslaved labor. Multiple generations of these wealthy families shaped and reshaped the landscape, relying on the culture of agricultural tenancy to manage their landholdings and produce significant income. Homestead Hall, as the "home place" of the Rothwell and Wilson families, provided the initial capital for an agricultural empire that occupied most of The Levels. Over time, the dwelling evolved in its function, serving first as a home for the builder, then periodically as a familial tenant farm, a second home, and again as a primary home place.

Wealth, Land Holdings, & Building in Brick in The Levels

During the period between 1770-1830, prosperous farming conditions in central Delaware, resulting from rich agricultural lands, innovative farming methods, and reliance on slave labor, allowed an elite class of farmers to emerge.[2] The influx of wealth coming to this affluent agriculturalist class (in the upper twenty percent of taxable persons) resulted in a larger proportion of houses constructed of permanent materials, such as brick and stone, which replaced frame and log construction. Unlike the majority of the taxable population, they typically owned extensive landholdings—frequently multiple properties and parcels. Their lands were often located both in town and in the countryside and were treated as investments, often rented out to tenants or farm managers.[3]

Thomas Rothwell III (1742-1807), the builder of Homestead Hall, was a prosperous farmer during his lifetime and is representative of the emerging elite agricultural class. He inherited 208 acres from his father in 1773, along with the financial resources to quickly erect a new two-story brick dwelling, Homestead Hall.

[2] "Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central, Delaware, 1770-1830+/-", Section E, page 1.

[3] "Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central, Delaware, 1770-1830+/-", Section E, page 1.

Rothwell's construction of Homestead Hall with brick was highly significant. As Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman point out, in the Delaware Valley, brick was "the most expensive and labor-intensive building material used during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" and was "associated with elite housing."[4] While we do not have statistics for The Levels for the 1770s, in neighboring St. Georges Hundred, even forty years later, in 1816, only 5% of dwellings were constructed in brick. Almost all other houses were constructed of less permanent, and less prestigious, log or frame.[5] Ownership of brick houses was directly associated with wealth and prosperity. Of the owners of brick houses in St. Georges Hundred, 90 percent possessed more than 100 acres of land; 93 percent were among the richest 20 percent of the population.[6]

After constructing Homestead Hall, Rothwell worked over several decades to further expand his wealth and property holdings. The 1797 New Castle County Tax Assessment for Appoquinimink Hundred assessed Rothwell for $15,173, which, at the age of 55, placed him in the wealthiest ten percent of the taxable population of the hundred.[7] He owned two separate farmsteads, called Homestead Hall and Hill (or Hell) Island Farm,[8] each with a brick dwelling, totaling 709 acres of land. Additionally, he owned $331 worth of livestock, and eight enslaved persons.[9] By the time of his death in 1807, Thomas Rothwell III had amassed one of the largest estates in Appoquinimink Hundred, owning a total of at least 1,732 acres.

Thomas Rothwell's landholdings clearly established him as one of the wealthiest landholders in The Levels. For comparison, the 1816 tax assessment for Appoquinimink Hundred reveals that the average farm size in the area was about 175 acres, and to own land, at all, was an indicator of above-average economic status. In 1816, in Appoquinimink Hundred, only 38.2% of the taxable population owned land, and by 1860, that number had slightly decreased to 34.8%.[10]

Thomas Rothwell's other assets reveal the extent of his wealth, generated through agricultural activity. When he died in 1807, at the age of 65, he owned goods and furniture characteristic of the wealthiest class of people, including silver teaspoons, a mahogany breakfast table, a walnut table, a mahogany clock, and an old walnut clock case. Additionally, he owned four slaves (all were freed between 1808 and 1817). Also at the time of his death, Thomas held $6000 in financial notes documenting debts owed to him either through loans or court judgements.

---

[4] Lanier and Herman, 98.

[5] Herman, *Rural Life in Central Delaware*, 112.

[6] "Dwellings of the Rural Elite," Section E, page 12.

[7] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1797), cited in Bernard L. Herman, Rebecca J. Siders, and Max Van Balgooy, "Hill Island Farm," National Register Nomination (Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, College of Urban Affairs, University of Delaware, 1992).

[8] Hill Island Farm (also known as Noxontown Farm) is located near Townsend, Delaware.

[9] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1797).

[10] In Appoquinimink Hundred, 354 farms occupied 63,187 acres. See Rebecca Siders, Bernard Herman, et al. "Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1770-1900 +/-: A Historic Context," July 1991 (University of Delaware), p. 29 and 48.

Combined, his real and personal estate totaled $15,569--clearly establishing Rothwell's status as one of the wealthiest landowners of Appoquinimink Hundred at the time of his death.[11] Rothwell's heirs built aggressively on his legacy, continuing to expand their landholdings and wealth. Rothwell's only surviving child, daughter Lydia Ann Wilson (c. 1775-1845), inherited his entire estate. Her husband, Edward Wilson (d. 1817), controlled the property, first as executor of the estate, and then legally as the husband of the sole heir. He moved quickly to build on the resources left by Rothwell to further expand the family's landholdings. With five young children to provide for, he clearly believed that land made the best investment. Prior to the inheritance, in the 1804 Tax Assessment, Edward Wilson owned no land; he was only taxed for his personal property and his person.[12] Yet by 1816, the local tax assessment listed seven properties in his name in Appoquinimink Hundred (2,341 acres valued at $44,264) as well as a house and lot in Middletown. The Wilsons still resided at Homestead Hall, which the family considered to be their "home" place.[13]

By the time of his death in 1817, Edward Wilson had become the wealthiest person in all of Appoquinimink Hundred.[14] The 1817 tax assessment for Appoquinimink, conducted shortly after Wilson's death, reveals that his estate included 2,341 acres (divided among seven properties), $370 worth of livestock, and eight enslaved persons. These additional household members supplied the labor needed to run the house and the extensive farm. The farms were described as follows:

1. "Home" farm containing 312 acres on the Levels va. at $30 per acre totaling $9300--264 acres improved with a good brick dwelling, barn, stables, and other out buildings, 48 acres woodland. [Homestead Hall]
2. 417 acres of land called the "Rasin" farm at $24/acre totaling $10,008--251 improved acres with a small wooden dwelling, 166 acres woodland.
3. 760 acres of land in the tenure of P. Lynch or called "Heath" farm at $16/acre totaling $12,610--326 acres improved with a wooden dwelling & stables.
4. 176 acres of land in the tenure of W. Wells at $8/acre totaling $1,408.
5. 350 acres of land Noxontown farm in the tenure of John Eliason at $12/acre totaling $4,200--255 improved with a good brick house, wooden barn, stables, and other outbuildings, 95 acres woodland. [Hill Island Farm]
6. 50 acres of good wood land at $30/acre totaling $1,500.
7. 276 acres of land on Blackbird Creek at $18 totaling $4,968--100 improved acres with a log dwelling, 176 woodland and cripple.[15]

[11] NCC Probate Record, *Rothwell, Thomas, III, 1807-1810*: "Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of Thomas Rothwell decd., February 29, 1808".

[12] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1804) for Edward Wilson.

[13] U.S. Federal census, Appoquinimink Hundred, Delaware (1810) for Edward Wilson.

[14] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1816-1817); cited in Bendler, 11.

[15] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1816-1817); cited in Bendler, 11.

Furthermore, in St. Georges Hundred, Wilson was taxed for a "house and lot" in Middletown, along with another six slaves, and 20 ounces of plate (this property was valued at $2,123).[16] Edward Wilson, the wealthiest man in Appoquinimink Hundred in terms of taxable value in 1817 (totaling $46,487), like many other members of the elite in The Levels region, owned multiple farms, tenanted his land to others, constructed brick buildings, relied on slave labor, and owned properties in both town and country.

Keeping the "Home" in Homestead Hall: The Beginning of 'Familial Tenancy' (1817-1846)

The farm complexes in The Levels, especially those from the nineteenth century, can be divided into three historically defined categories, according to the National Register of Historic Places nomination for The Levels Historic District: family groupings, individual farm holdings, and extensive tenant farm groupings. Homestead Hall, while part of an extensive tenant farm grouping after 1817, was arguably a hybrid of the last two types -- a tenant-occupied property, with the occupant being a family member (or "familial tenant").

After Edward Wilson's death, Lydia Wilson appears to have moved the family to the house in Middletown. In 1818, prior to marrying Joseph Whitby, she transferred five of the seven parcels listed in the 1817 tax assessment to her children, retaining just Homestead Hall and the house in Middletown for herself. After Lydia Rothwell-Wilson-Whitby was widowed again in 1820, she married for a third time, sometime between 1825 and 1828, to Philip Lecount --- and with that marriage, she returned to live at Homestead Hall.[17] In the 1830 U.S. Federal Census, Philip and Lydia resided at Homestead Hall along with seven free colored persons, likely representing the labor needed to run the farm. Philip Lecount, one of the ten wealthiest people in Appoquinimink Hundred, was assessed in the 1834 tax assessment for 1 brick dwelling, 1 barn, and outbuildings on 280 acres of land.[18] After 1834, it is unclear if the Lecounts lived at Homestead Hall. Evidence suggests that they moved to Middletown, to a house purchased by Lecount from his stepdaughter, Sarah Wilson-Stanard. From 1834 to 1846, Philip Lecount operated a mercantile store at the corner of Broad Street and Main Street in Middletown, in a building rented from Lydia's daughter and son-in-law Richard and Mary Lockwood.[19] In the 1840 U.S. Federal census, the Lecounts appear to be residing with the Lockwoods in Middletown.[20] During this transitional period, Lydia and Philip retained Homestead Hall as the ancestral "home" place --it was, after all, the location of her father's grave -- but probably relied on a familial tenant to run the farm.

[16] NCC Tax Assessment, St Georges Hundred (1816-1817) for Edward Wilson.

[17] Philip LeCount's probate inventory lists a silver watch, silver tablespoons, a walnut desk, a mahogany bureau, a looking glass and a lot of books, as well as two enslaved children (NCC Probate Record, *LeCount, Philip, 1846-1854*: "Inventory Philip LeCount Sept. 24, 1847.")

[18] NCC Tax Assessment, Appoquinimink Hundred (1834); cited in Brizzolara, "Mayfield." Section 8: 4.

[19] NCC Probate Record, *Philip Lecount, 1846.*

[20] U.S. Federal Census, St. Georges Hundred, Delaware (1840), for Richard Lockwood.

Relying on tenant farmers, in general, was a common practice in Delaware. In The Levels, tenancy rates ran as high as 75%.[21] While tenancy may not today carry a cachet of elite social prestige, tenancy was practiced by a range of social classes during the mid-nineteenth century in central Delaware, including families of social distinction. Tenancy offered certain advantages to both landlord and tenant. The landlord profited from the contractual improvement of depleted agricultural lands and offered a solution to the shortage of seasonal farm labor. The tenant gained access to larger, more productive farms, and the chance to acquire more livestock and farming equipment. Such capitalization represented the first step toward the leap into the landowning class. While tenants and landlords typically formalized arrangements by lease, the individual terms and situations varied. Tenancy represented social as well as economic circumstance. Tenants contracted themselves for varying length of time, regardless of their age or social status. Tenants came from all walks of life--some owned their own livestock and/or slaves, and some even owned land that they rented to others. It was not unusual for a tenant to occupy more than one piece of land, particularly if one was mostly arable, or cleared, land, and the the other was woodland. As tenants and landlords strove to maximize yields and profits, agricultural tenancy contributed to the success of agricultural reform methods in the Upper Peninsula zone and the accompanying rise in farming production. In short, Delaware agriculture dependent upon tenancy for its survival from the colonial period to the present.[22] Familial tenancy could be a beneficial approach for all involved, allowing closer supervision and cooperation of satellite properties, while keeping the agricultural operations (and wealth) inside a family.

Lydia Wilson's son William may have been a familial tenant at Homestead Hall. Lydia and Philip died within a year of each other, in 1845 and 1846 respectively. After Lydia died intestate, her children petitioned the New Castle County Orphans Court to divide the Homestead Hall property. Her son William Wilson and son-in-law Robert Lockwood (married to Mary Wilson) each received 159 acres (137.1 of which were improved and the rest of which was woodland). However, William's plot of land included Homestead Hall and was worth $7,300, while Lockwood's land contained no structures and was valued at $5,300.[23]

While the Wilson-Lecounts continued to view Homestead Hall as their familial home during this period of ownership, they relied on a combination of familial tenancy and unfree slave labor to work and manage the property. The house was undoubtedly important to the Wilson-Lecounts, but like other wealthy landowners at the time, they chose to live in the city rather than on the farm.

The Rebuilding Period (1850-1880): Transformations at The Levels & Homestead Hall

William Wilson (Lydia and Edward's youngest son) was most likely responsible for the "rebuilding" of Homestead Hall, both agriculturally and architecturally. He added the two-story

[21] "The Levels" National Registered Historic District nomination draft, section 7, page 14, 1993.

[22] "Agricultural Tenancy,"p. 3.

[23] New Castle County Orphans' Court Proceedings, February 20-21, 1846, T1: 164-170.

brick service wing to the house, and also carried out interior renovations in the original block (still seen today at Homestead Hall) shortly after he inherited the property in 1846. The architectural details and construction techniques match that of William Wilson's own dwelling, Mayfield (constructed circa 1839), and another brick tenant house he constructed circa 1854, Middlesix. Certain architectural features are similar across the three dwellings, including the corbelled brick cornices and the seven course common bond, indicating Wilson as the builder of the two-story kitchen addition at Homestead Hall. Also of significance is the architectural style employed by Wilson at the three dwellings. Instead of opting for newer architectural styles like his neighbors in The Levels, such as Greek Revival or Italianate design, he built his new buildings in a conservative Georgian style, similar to the historic core of Homestead Hall.[24] This style choice created a harmonious and cohesive aesthetic across Wilson's properties.

Wilson's ownership of the property coincided with a "rebuilding" phase on farms throughout central Delaware. Between the 1830s through the 1860s, "much of the domestic and agricultural architecture of the area was, in the words of contemporary witnesses, 'rebuilt,' 'renewed,' and 'improved.'"[25] These rebuilding efforts were tied to increased agricultural prosperity, following an extended period of decline in agricultural production due to soil exhaustion during the 1820s. As a result of the decline, an agricultural reform movement emerged in New Castle County, centered on scientific principles that promoted, among other things, crop rotation cycles and improved fertilization. As farm owners began to adapt these new principles, the agricultural lands recovered their fertility, and a subsequent wave of wealthy landowners began reshaping the agricultural landscapes of The Levels. The economic means for these renewals derived from an extended prosperity based primarily on the cultivation of grains and the production of butter and other dairy products. With surplus income, farmers proceeded to consolidate and enlarge their land holdings, invest in farm machinery, and commission new houses and barns.[26]

This period of intensified rebuilding was not restricted to The Levels alone--in fact, it occurred throughout Appoquinimink and St. Georges Hundreds, as well as in the northern portions of Kent County. However, there was a distinct difference between the rebuilding approach common in The Levels versus other nearby areas. In St. Georges Hundred, existing dwellings were often modified--but not entirely rebuilt, like in The Levels. Here they remodeled existing dwellings, often by incorporating service wings into the main dwelling, and replaced and rebuilt outbuildings.[27]

Yet at The Levels, most of the surviving historic landscape today represents a more intensive rebuilding effort, with little of the eighteenth-century landscape surviving. Homestead Hall, with its incorporated brick service wing, is a rare local example of the more modest "rebuilding" approach that occurred in other parts of central Delaware. Only two eighteenth-century dwellings

[24] Bendler, "Homestead Hall," p. 14.

[25] "The Levels" National Registered Historic District nomination draft, section 7, page 4, 1993.

[26] "The Levels" National Registered Historic District nomination draft, section 7, page 4, 1993; "The Levels" section 8, page 1.

[27] "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, 1850-1880" National Register Multiple Property Nomination, 1984.

survive in The Levels--Homestead Hall and an adjacent property, Brook Ramble. With this in mind, Homestead Hall's survival is likely due to the fact that it was the ancestral seat of the Rothwell and Wilson families, since it may have been retained for sentimental reasons.

William Wilson certainly had the means to construct whatever fashionable new dwelling he may have wanted. By the time of his inheritance of Homestead Hall in 1846, he had already established an agricultural empire. He owned tracts of land all over Appoquinimink Hundred, and west into Cecil County, Maryland. The 1852 Tax Assessment indicates the extent of his wealth. By then he had become one of the largest landowners in Appoquinimink Hundred. William Wilson owned the following assets:

1. 231 acres, brick dwelling, barn, and outbuildings $10,395 [Mayfield]
2. 140 acres, brick dwelling, $4200
3. 159 acres, brick dwelling and barn, $7155 [Homestead Hall]
4. 120 acres, frame dwelling and barn $3600
5. 200 acres, frame dwelling acres, and a barn $4000
6. 150 acres, woodland, $3750
7. 150 acres, frame dwelling and outbuilding $1500

Wilson additionally owned six slaves valued at $700, $1500 worth of livestock, and silver plate. His total estate was valued at $37,200. In J. Thomas Scharf's *History of Delaware*, an biographical entry for William Wilson names his tracts of land. His estate "Mayfield," entry one on his tax assessment, was occupied and managed by his son John T. Wilson starting in the 1860s. He also owned "Middlesix" (also a brick dwelling), "Homestead Hall," "Heath Mansion," "Brick Store Landing," and "California," all farms in Delaware. In Cecil County, Maryland, he owned the "Barnes" tract, "Foard" farm, "Painter's Rest," and "Oregon" farms. He also owned ten dwellings, a carriage shop, machine shop, and some other vacant lots in Warwick, Maryland.[28]

William Wilson relied heavily on slave labor and a strategy of familial tenancy. During most of his life, Wilson resided only at his estate called Mayfield -- and as such, successful management of his vast estates, and accumulation of additional wealth, was dependent on a combination of on-site tenants, managers, and an extensive labor pool.[29] Like his mother, Wilson likely kept a particularly close eye on the family farm, Homestead Hall, by installing a tenant who he could trust and closely supervise--his son, William Naudain Wilson.

William Wilson was also a shrewd farmer and investor--he quickly adapted to the changes in agricultural practices in the mid-nineteenth century, and by doing so, he was able to successfully capitalize on his extensive landholdings. A passage from Scharf, which notes that Wilson "devoted himself to agriculture, and made it the business of his life," describes Wilson's farming successes:

---

[28] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware 1609-1888* (Philadelphia, PA: L. J. Richards and Company, 1888), 1017-1018..

[29] Scharf, *History of Delaware,* p. 512.

> He received a considerable quantity of land from his father's estate, but it had been much impaired in value by the exhausting methods of farming which then prevailed. With wise sagacity and untiring energy he devoted himself to the work of recuperating the land and enlarging his domain. He was so successful that years before his death he was the possessor of about thirty-five hundred acres of the choicest land in the [Delmarva] Peninsula....Mr. Wilson's lands were chiefly devoted to the growing of cereals, but, when the culture of fruit gave such encouraging promise as one of the profitable industries of the State, he became interested in it, and, at one time, had as many as thirty-five thousand peach trees in bearing. This interest was profitable from the first, and continued so until after the death of Mr. Wilson, when "the yellows" affected his trees as unfavorably as it had other orchards.[30]

Wilson's farming history, as described by Scharf, is a familiar story in The Levels. In the 1840s and 1850s the principal crop grown was cereal grains. However, by the 1860s and 1870s, peaches became the cash crop. By the mid-1850s, groups of farmers and businessmen had successfully lobbied for a railroad that ran north-south in Delaware, connecting Wilmington to Seaford, which was laid along the western portions of the state and completed by 1856.[31] This new railroad connected the farmers of The Levels to larger, more distant markets, and allowed them to diversify into new areas of agricultural production such as orchard and dairy products, helping to fuel the agricultural economy during the rebuilding period.

The dramatic change in wealth brought on by the change in crops (grains to peaches) can best be understood through William Wilson's wealth from different decades. In 1850, his estate was valued at $34,000 (a similar number to the Tax Assessment taken in 1852). However, by the 1860 U.S. census--a year he was producing orchard crops--his real estate was worth a staggering $154,000, with his personal estate being valued at an additional $10,000.[32]

The agricultural censuses between 1850 and the 1880s provide us with thorough documentation of what types of agricultural production Wilson was engaged in. In the 1850 Agricultural Census, Wilson farmed 580 acres of land, 430 of which were improved (valued at $13,000). He raised a variety of livestock, including 11 horses, 35 sheep, 9 cows, and 27 swine. Among his crops were 1000 bushels of wheat, 2,500 bushels of Indian corn, 600 bushels of oat, 300 bushels of white and sweet potatoes, and orchard produce worth $50. He produced 500 pounds of butter, and slaughtered $200 worth of livestock. Wilson was clearly dairying and also raising animals for slaughter.

---

[30] J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware,* p. 1017-1018.

[31] Rebecca J. Sheppard, "Making the Farm Pay," University of Delaware, 2009, pp.233-234.

[32] U.S. Federal Census manuscript returns 1850, 1860 for William Wilson in Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware.

By 1860, when the farms were enumerated separately, Wilson had 180 of the 312 acres at Homestead Hall under cultivation.[33] This land had grown in value to $20,000. Wilson was still producing grains like wheat and corn, but had shifted much of his acreage to orchard produce, which contributed an income of $400. He also continued to raise animals for slaughter. Clearly, Homestead Hall was a part of Wilson's agricultural diversification and his capitalization on the growing peach market.

After 1880: Decline in The Levels & the End of Homestead Hall as Ancestral "Home"

After a peak year in peach production in 1875, the orchard economy of The Levels entered a period of rapid decline. The draft National Register nomination for The Levels Historic District cites a number of compounding factors for this decrease: "First, overcropping took place as many farmers planted orchards and expanded productions. Second, trees bore well for perhaps fifteen to twenty years, after which yields declined, and the trees became liable to a blight known as the 'yellows,' for which no remedy was known. Third, peach growers were plagued with transportation difficulties. Delayed trains and excessive rates were common complaints of the farmers."[34] By this time, a heavy dependence on peach production in The Levels resulted in devastating financial impacts for many local agriculturalists.

This rapid economic decline in The Levels very much impacted William Wilson and the operations at Homestead Hall. William Wilson's probate indicates that his lands and agricultural products were hit hard by the peach blight. He grew three primary crops on his farms, including wheat, corn, and peaches. In 1880, the value of his wheat far exceeded the amount that the peaches were sold for.[35] William Wilson had not diversified his agricultural products as much as his neighbors in The Levels, who had developed more robust dairying operations. Unfortunately, as a result, William died $33,000 in debt.

Homestead Hall was finally sold out of the Rothwell/Wilson family line in 1882. After William Wilson's death in 1879, his son William Naudin Wilson continued to farm the land at Homestead Hall, while his other son John T. Wilson resided at Mayfield. Yet, to settle William Wilson's debts, much of his agricultural empire was sold off -- including Homestead Hall. Even though court records indicate that William Wilson was residing at the "homestead" on The Levels at the time of his death, the family homestead could not be retained in the face of such large debts. Interestingly, prior to the sale of Homestead Hall, a portion of land, which contained the familial burial ground--the last resting place of Thomas Rothwell III, his wife Mary, Edward Wilson, Philip Lecount, Lydia (nee Rothwell) Wilson-Whitby-Lecount, Edward and Lydia's children, Lydia Whitby, William Wilson, and Sarah Stanart--was carved out and retained by the family. The headstones of this cemetery are still visible today on a wooded knoll west of the house, though it is overgrown.

---

[33] Bendler conjectures this valuation is only for the farm at Homestead Hall, as opposed to one of his many other farms.

[34] "The Levels" National Registered Historic District nomination draft, section 8, page 12-13, 1993.

[35] Susan Brizzolara, "Mayfield, New Castle County, Delaware" National Register Nomination (1997), section 8, page 11.

The arc of Homestead Hall's history, from 1773 to 1882, is one that emphasizes the choices made by various family members to fit their changing economic and social circumstances. Throughout the entire 110-year period, four generations of the Rothwell and Wilson families maintained a close relationship with the family homestead, so that even as a tenant farm it was usually occupied by a family member. Changes to the house largely reflected periods when a new generation took ownership and modified the structure to make it more suitable to their needs, while still retaining its original character.

Criterion C: An Architecture of Transition

Homestead Hall is also significant under Criterion C as an example of transitional, hybrid architecture—featuring an adaptive, Georgian-influenced exterior that was devised to fit a conservative, yet also transitional, variation of a hall-parlor interior. Both the inside and outside designs of Homestead Hall represent a negotiation between traditional and newly-emerging forms. In both its interior arrangement of living space and its exterior aesthetic, the builders of Homestead Hall broke from long-persisting traditions while not wholly adopting the influential and transformative high-style Georgian mode. The current architecture of Homestead Hall also represents building trends, and spatial rearrangements, that were common during a significant rebuilding phase that occurred in central Delaware during the mid-nineteenth century.

Homestead Hall: Part of a Transitional Moment in the Delaware Valley

This hybrid, transitional approach, both on the inside and outside of Homestead Hall, places it squarely in a transitional time period identified not only by Bernard Herman in Delaware, but more broadly in the Mid-Atlantic by Henry Glassie. In his "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in the Delaware Valley Folk Building," Glassie identifies the third quarter of the eighteenth century as a "time of extensive and intensive innovation" in building in the Mid-Atlantic region."[36] The primary catalyst for this accelerated period of change, according to Glassie, was the "insertion of the Georgian house type into the awareness of builders in the middle of the eighteenth century."[37]

Symmetry was a hallmark of Georgian style architecture, and in fact, architectural historian Gerald Foster suggests that "the main ingredient of Georgian design is symmetry—as much as can be worked into both the elevations and floor plans."[38] Georgian-era mansions often reflected this balance and proportion in their depth and height, as well, as many high-style dwellings were double-pile (or two rooms deep) and almost always two-stories high—creating a wide footprint and heavy massing that conveyed balance, sturdiness, and permanence. This symmetry and

[36] Henry Glassie, "Eighteenth-Century CUltural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," in Dell Upton and John M. Vlach eds., *Common Places: Readings in Vernacular Architecture,* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1986), p. 400.
[37] Glassie, 400.
[38] Gerald Foster, *American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 68.

geometrical balance was echoed on the inside of more formal Georgian-era houses, which typically featured a central stair hall, flanked by equal-sized parlors on each side.
The speed of design innovation, however, could be uneven between the interiors and exteriors of buildings. Glassie observes that "the skins of houses are shallow things that people are willing to change, but people are most conservative about the spaces they must utilize and in which they must exist . . . Build the walls of anything, deck them out with anything, but do not change the arrangement of the rooms or their proportions."[39] Glassie attributes this resistance to change of interior space, even when significantly altering exterior design, to a collective psychological comfort with the familiar. Thomas Rothwell III's particular motivations for creating a hybrid architecture at Homestead Hall cannot be known for certain, but Glassie's general suggestions of psychological comfort and familiarity seem intuitively reasonable, especially in Delaware, long recognized as an architecturally conservative state.

The Interior Floorplan: A Mix of Old and New

Homestead Hall's interior arrangement featured a variation of the hall-parlor plan, placing it within a transitional moment in Delaware's architectural history. The hall-parlor plan was common among wealthy agriculturalists in Delaware during the first half of the eighteenth century. The traditional arrangement of hall-parlor plans consisted of two side-by-side rooms on the first floor, roughly equal in size—a "hall" and a "parlor." The primary room, or the "hall," often contained a large fireplace and a stair or ladder to the second story. The exterior doorway was also usually found in the hall, and more often than not, the hall featured both a front and back door, usually directly aligned with one another. The second room—sometimes called a "parlor," "inner room," or "sitting room"—commonly contained a fireplace, which was usually smaller than the hall's fireplace. As the various names imply, these second rooms typically housed more formal activities than the hall, including entertaining. Yet the second, inner rooms were not always parlors—they sometimes did not contain a fireplace, and they were frequently used as ground-floor sleeping chambers, rather than serving as formal sitting or entertaining spaces.[40] In other words, the hall-parlor plan, though fairly standard in its two-module form, varied in how individual families utilized the separate spaces.

Homestead Hall's variation of the hall-parlor floorplan included a *third* space on the first floor—an unheated stair passage in front of the hall, entered directly from the outside. Today, the floorboards of the current dining room feature a distinct row of nail holes running laterally across the room, demarcating the location of a nailing strip for the partition wall. This wall would have, in essence, cut off the front third of the parlor in order to create a hallway with doors to the hall, the parlor, and the stairs.

Homestead Hall thus joined in a significant architectural movement in central Delaware. Bernard Herman suggests that the gradual emergence of these stair halls, first starting in the 1740s, resulted in a new "family" of floorplan types that were "oriented around an entryway—an

[39] Glassie, 407.

[40] Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 16-19.

unheated passage opening into the principal rooms of the house and containing a stair."[41] As some builders began to incorporate an unheated stair hallway that provided entry to the other first floor rooms, "the conceptual pool of possibilities was dramatically altered" and expanded—offering even more flexibility in the usage of space and, perhaps more importantly, increased control of interior traffic flow. Since stair passages are a feature generally associated with emerging Georgian sensibilities, their appearance in Delaware during the mid-eighteenth century signaled changing social norms—including evolving conceptions of privacy and comfort. Thus, the inclusion of stair passages in Delaware, though an incremental change, was a significant break from long-entrenched conceptions of spatial usage embodied by direct-entry hall-parlor type plans. The incorporation of a stair passage entryway, regardless of location, created the general impression, as Herman argues, "of a new domestic order."[42] Those who adopted the stair passage were typically "the same individuals most concerned with expressing their social separation from the community at large."[43] Thomas Rothwell III thus made a statement with Homestead Hall, embracing "a new domestic order" that created a layered hierarchy of social spaces.

Still, the stair hall at Homestead Hall was not the grand, central hallway that was a hallmark of large Georgian homes. These axial stair halls were typically entered from a central bay, and ran the depth of the house between two (or four) equally sized rooms on either side—creating a more or less symmetrical floor plan. Homestead Hall, while a transitional plan, does not achieve the balanced interior symmetry of most high-style Georgian homes.

Exterior

Even more so than their interiors, Georgian exteriors—especially their facades—emphasized symmetry, balance, and order. The prototypical five-bay Georgian mansion featured a central entry door, flanked on both sides by two regularly-spaced windows, with second-story openings aligned perfectly with those below. These facades presented an even rhythm in their spacing and fenestration. Dwellings with a hall-parlor plan, on the other hand, typically featured an asymmetrical exterior, commonly the result of a slightly off-center doorway entering the hall. This arrangement, due to central location of the interior wall that divided hall and parlor, almost necessarily created a visual imbalance on the exterior fenestration of a hall-parlor dwellings. Since Homestead Hall featured a more traditional floor plan, it could not have a central Georgian entryway--due to the interior partition wall dividing the hall and parlor rooms. The entry door would, by necessity, need to flank the center partition wall, sitting off-center either to the left (into the large "hall" room) or to the right (into the stair passage hallway). The builders at Homestead Hall overcame this aesthetic problem on the exterior by adding two central entry doors--thus achieving a harmonious and balanced facade. While not quite achieving a conventional Georgian exterior, to be sure, Thomas Rothwell III's incorporation of symmetrical, paired entry doors at Homestead Hall accomplished a more forward-looking Georgian

[41] Bernard L. Herman, Architecture *and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 26.

[42] Herman, *Central Delaware,* 26.

[43] Herman, *Central Delaware,* 28.

sensibility, somewhat masking the transitional (and still somewhat traditional) interior floorplan.[44]

This aesthetic strategy---employing paired, double entry doors to create a symmetrical facade, despite conservative interiors---was a solution seen elsewhere in the Delaware Valley. At least one other extant house in central Delaware features a similar four-bay façade with paired center doors. The Heller House (HABS # DE-114, DE CRS# N00126.117), built circa 1785, is a two-story plank and frame dwelling in Odessa that similarly achieves Georgian balance on the façade, while masking a tradition hall-parlor interior. As Glassie has shown, this variation also appeared among Pennsylvania Germans, who disguised transitional, three-room flurkuchen floorplans with more stylish exteriors (see figures 3 and 4). These houses were "pierced by four rather than five openings in order to accommodate the three-room plan inside," and often featured a second door, though "rarely used," in "a stab at symmetrical arrangement."[45] He points out that the symmetry was sometimes imperfect, a "sham," due to inexact spacing forced by interior considerations---but "if the viewer rumbling by on the road does not look too critically, he thinks he is seeing the latest word, a Georgian with a formal hall."[46]

The Georgian fixation with symmetry and order was part of a broader formalizing of architectural aesthetic that occurred during the eighteenth century, when, as Carole Rifkind put it, "principles began to govern pragmatism."[47] In central Delaware, even among builders who were sensitive to the Georgian aesthetic, symmetry in the *interior* may have been less important than on the exterior. A stylish appearance, especially on the exterior of a dwelling, sometimes trumped practical considerations of functional purposes. Clearly, the symmetrical placement of the twin doors on the exterior of Homestead Hall presented challenges to the interior design—the doorway to the stair hall was positioned so close to the medial wall (between the hall and the parlor) that there was little room for wood trim. Yet Thomas Rothwell III was willing to make this sacrifice to achieve visual balance on the exterior---making a clear statement with Homestead Hall's facade, while at the same time consciously rejecting the more academic expressions of Georgian exterior design.

Other exterior architectural features at Homestead Hall also nodded to the more sophisticated Georgian design aesthetic. Bold horizontal lines between stories was a common Georgian feature, and Homestead Hall displays a projecting, four-row, brick belt course between the first and second stories, and there seems to have originally been a pent roof spanning the façade at a

[44] One other unusual feature of Homestead Hall's façade is the second floor only has two window openings. These openings align with the two windows on the first floor—but over the two centered doorways no windows were ever constructed. While the placement of these two windows provides a symmetry and balance to the exterior, it is not a Georgian feature. One other house in Delaware only has two second floor windows over a three-bay first floor façade, the John Ashton House (HAB # DE-240, CRS # N03888) near Port Penn. Constructed sometime in the first quarter of the eighteenth-century, the dwelling is a two-story, brick, hall-parlor plan, with a pent roof. The John Ashton House represents the early wave of permanent buildings traditions, and the style of architecture Homestead Hall was slowly transitioning away from.

[45] Glassie, p. 406-407.

[46] Glassie, p. 407.

[47] Carole Rifkind, A *Field Guide to American Architecture,* (Plume, 1980), p. 18.

similar height. There is also a projecting brick water table demarcating the line between the first floor and the cellar. The massing of Homestead Hall is wider than many traditional houses, which often featured just two- or three-bays, while still not fully achieving the full, five-bay-wide massing typical with high-style Georgian homes. Thus, in its massing, like so many of its other design features, Homestead Hall signals a hybrid, transitional, betwixt-and-between architecture that straddled traditional and Classical-inspired design ethics. It is notable that Rothwell more fully realized the Georgian style a decade and a half later, at his Hill Island Farm, where he remodeled a brick, three-bay, side-hall house into a more classic five-bay, center-hall Georgian dwelling---this time with a symmetrical interior plan (with parlors flanking an axial stairhall) (see figure 2).

Rebuilding Period

While the exterior of the dwelling still projects Georgian sensibilities of harmony and symmetry, the interior of the dwelling and the mid-nineteenth century kitchen addition represent a subsequent architectural trend in central Delaware—that of rebuilding. The act of "rebuilding" as identified by Bernard Herman, et al., in the multiple property nomination for "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred," falls into one of three categories: the improvement of standing buildings, the replacement of standing structures, and the development of new sites.[48] The rebuilding of Homestead Hall falls into the first category. William Wilson also reconfigured the interior plan—opening up the hall-parlor partition wall to create one large space, removed the stair passage wall, replaced the interior trim with the dog-earred, crossette mouldings, and added the two-story brick kitchen addition.

This rebuilding in central Delaware redefined social and domestic relationships through the reorganization of interior space.[49] The appearance especially of attached service wings illustrates a fundamentally different usage of space from the mainstream domestic architecture in the same region prior to 1820.[50] The previous model of arrangement of spaces relied on an organizational system that separated usage through the creation of separate structures—each with their own set of distinct functions (i.e. free standing kitchens). With the rebuilding period "old expressions were erased or masked, and the new order became one where unity of work became literal as manifest in complex services ells, and multi-functional outbuildings."[51] Wilson demolished the previous kitchen, and incorporated a brick, two-story, one-room plan, end gable addition to the northeast of the house. In combination with the removal of the interior hall-parlor partition walls, and the incorporation of a new service ell, Wilson tapped into the prevailing sensibilities of a new domestic order. Likely, the renovations were done not for Wilson himself, but as a way to keep the familial homestead up to date with new architectural fashions. The persistence and adaptation of Homestead Hall during a time of massive rebuilding can best be attributed to the reverence the Rothwells and Wilsons gave to their familial home place.

---

[48] "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred" National Register Multiple Property nomination (1984), Section 8, page 1.

[49] "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred," Section 8, page 1.

[50] "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred," Section 8, page 1.

[51] "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred," Section 8, page 5.

Homestead Hall can best be understood as a rare survival of an eighteenth-century building that was modified and adapted to best reflect the needs of the owners. This is evident in the transitional exterior Georgian style, as well as the rebuilt and reorganized mid-nineteenth century interior plan.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Ames, David L., Andrea L. Marth, Nancy Van Dolsen, Gabrielle M. Lanier, Susan M. Chase, Bernard L. Herman, Leslie D. Bashman, Rebecca J. Siders, Margaret H. Watson, and Elizabeth M. Bellingrath. "Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware, 1700-1900+/-: A Historic Context," July 1991. http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/1522.

Bendler, Bruce. "A Very Good Tract of Land: The Levels, 1680-1850." Unpublished Paper. June 29, 1993.

Bendler, Bruce. "Homestead Hall, Appoquinimink Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware." Student Paper. Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware, December 11, 1990.

Bensinger, Trish, and Hubert Jicha. "Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred," 1984. http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/3797.

Bernal, Dolores M. "Some Residents Disappointed That Old Mansion on U.S. 301 Will Be Demolished." *Dover Post*. March 3, 2016. http://www.doverpost.com/news/20160303/some-residents-disappointed-that-old-mansion-on-us-301-will-be-demolished.

Brizzolara, Susan. "Mayfield." National Register Nomination, April 1997.

Brooks, Brad, Hubert Jicha, and Bernard L. Herman. "The Levels Historic District." National Register Nomination. Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, College of Urban Affairs, University of Delaware, July 29, 1985.

Delaware, New Castle County, 1870 United States Census, population schedule.

Foster, Gerald. *American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

Glassie, Henry. "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," published in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture.* University of Georgia Press: Athens, GA, 1986.

Herman, Bernard L. *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Herman, Bernard L., Gabrielle M. Lanier, Rebecca J. Siders, and Max Van Balgooy. "Dwellings of the Rural Elite in Central Delaware, 1770-1830 +/-," December 1989. http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/1524.

Herman, Bernard L., Rebecca J. Siders, and Max Van Balgooy. "Hill Island Farm." National Register Nomination. Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, College of Urban Affairs, University of Delaware, 1992.

Lanier, Gabrielle M. and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

New Castle County Deeds, 1760-1959.

New Castle County Orphans' Court Proceedings, February 20-21, 1846. T1: 164-170.

New Castle County Probate Record, *LeCount, Philip, 1846-1854.*

New Castle County Probate Record, *Rothwell, Thomas, 1752-1757.*

New Castle County Probate Record, *Rothwell, Thomas, III, 1807-1810.*

New Castle County Register in Chancery, August 24, 1825-February 25, 1826. A: 25-43.

New Castle County Tax Assessments, Appoquinimink Hundred; 1797; 1803-1804; 1816-1817; 1822; 1834.

Petition of William Rothwell of Appoquinimink Hundred to the Justices of the Peace of New Castle County, May 18, 1778.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Delaware 1609-1888*. Philadelphia, PA: L. J. Richards and Company, 1888.

Sheppard, Rebecca J. "Making the Farm Pay: Persistence and Adaptation in the Evolution of Delaware's Agricultural Landscape, 1780-2005" (doctoral dissertation). University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, 2009.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
_X_ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Delaware CRS# N03907_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 12_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.395397 Longitude: -75.735385
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundaries of this property coincide with the boundaries of New Castle County Tax Parcel #1401500196. This parcel is surrounded by Parcel #1401500001. The shape of the nominated parcel includes a leg that contains a driveway leading from the center of Parcel #1401500001 out to southwest side of Grears Corner Road.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
These boundaries were selected because they coincide with the New Castle County Tax Parcel that contains Homestead Hall.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Catherine Morrissey, Assistant Director; Michal J. Emmons Jr., Architectural Historian; Gemma Tierney, Historic Preservation Specialist; and Rebecca Sheppard, retired Director
organization: Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), University of Delaware
street & number: 331 Alison Hall
city or town: Newark state: DE zip code: 19716
e-mail: cmoriss@udel.edu
telephone: (302)-831-8097
date: 6/30/2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

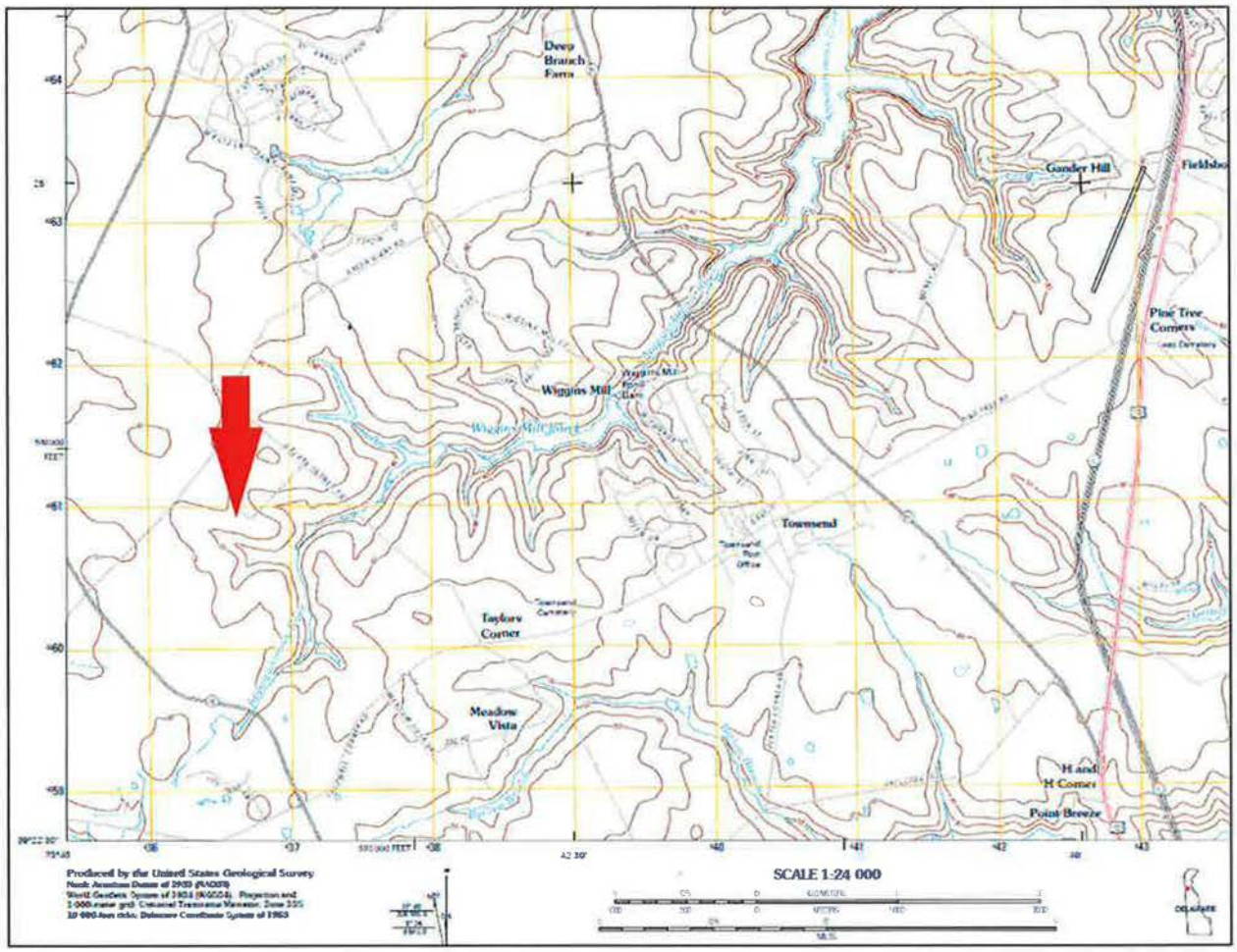
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey Information

Time Period: 1770-1830± Early Industrialization

Geographic Zone: Upper Peninsula

Historic Period Themes(s): Agriculture, Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes, and Architecture, Engineering and Decorative Arts

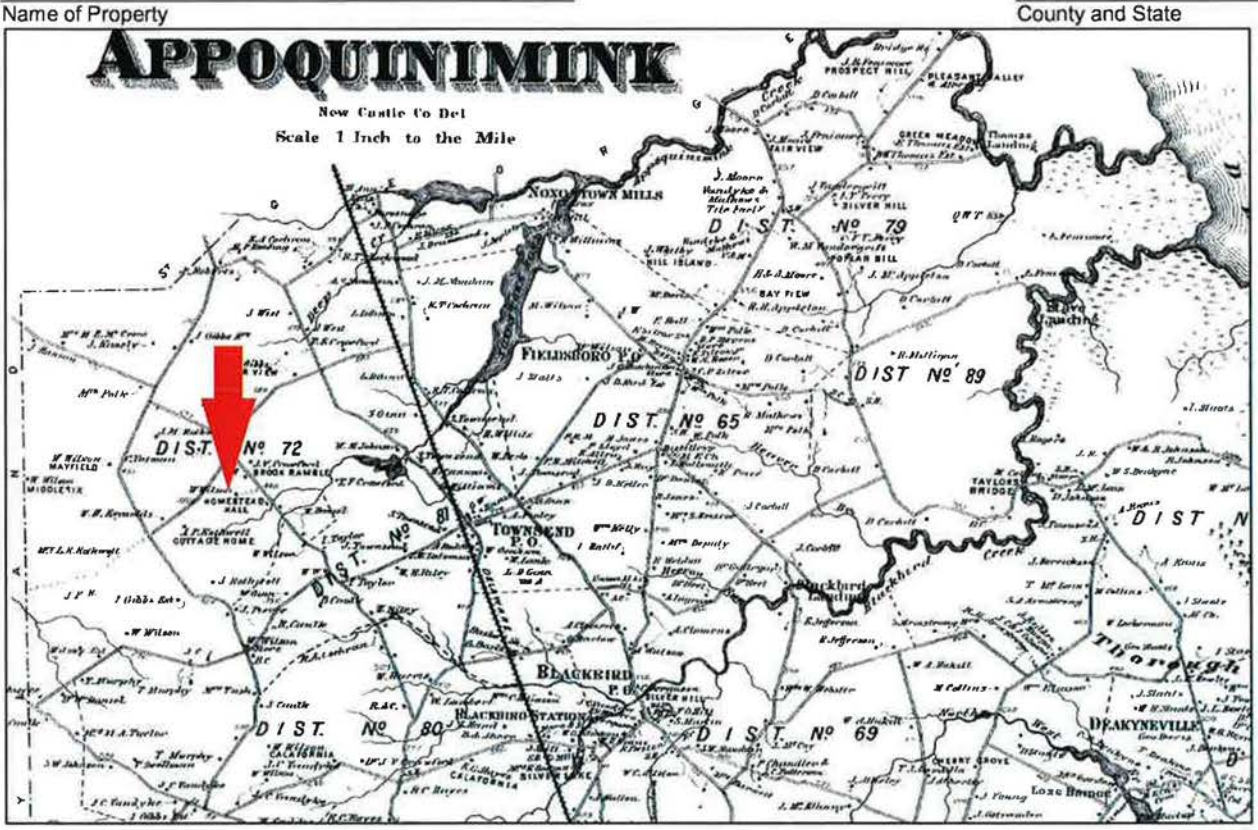


USGS 7.5 Minute Quad Map: Latitude: 39.395397 Longitude: -75.735385

New Castle County Tax Parcel Map

Homestead Hall | New Castle, Delaware

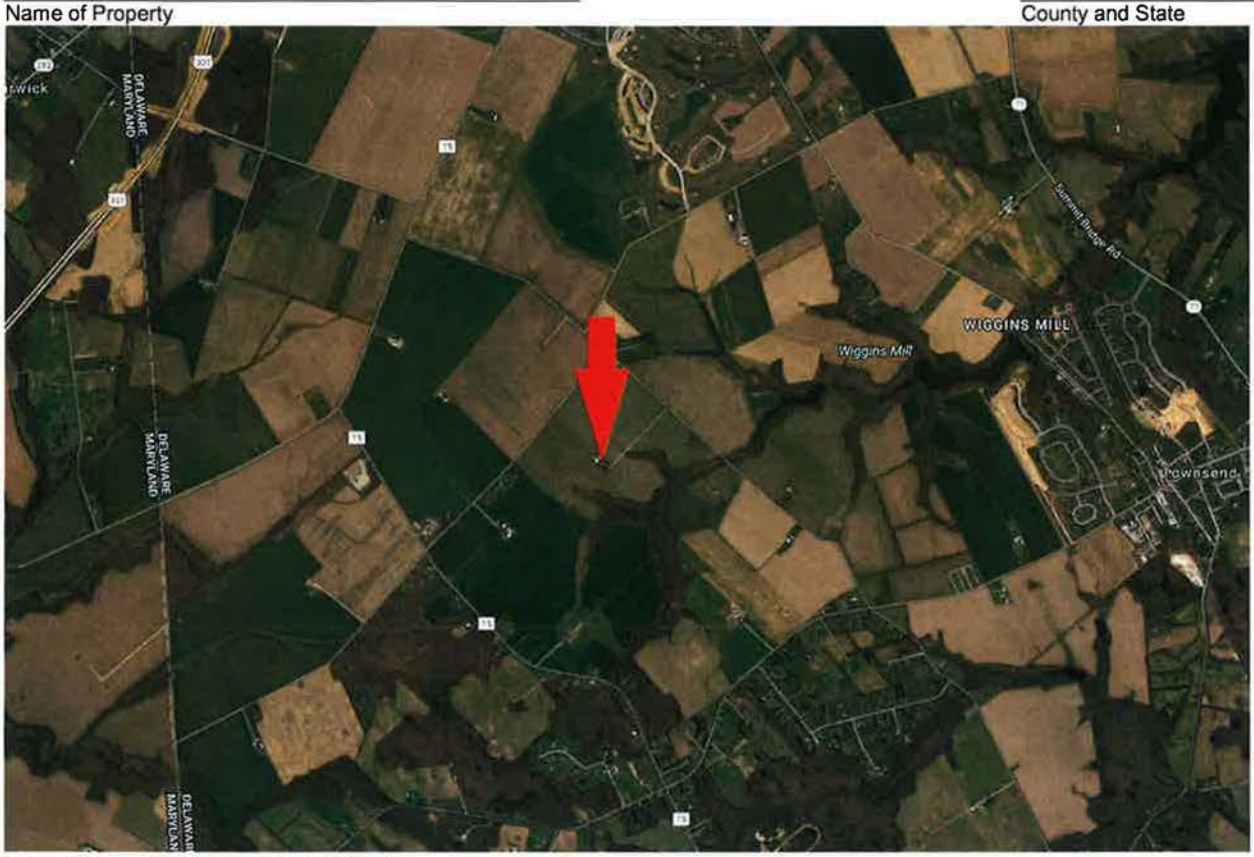
Name of Property | County and State



Pomeroy and Beers Atlas of 1868, Appoquinimink Hundred

Homestead Hall
Name of Property

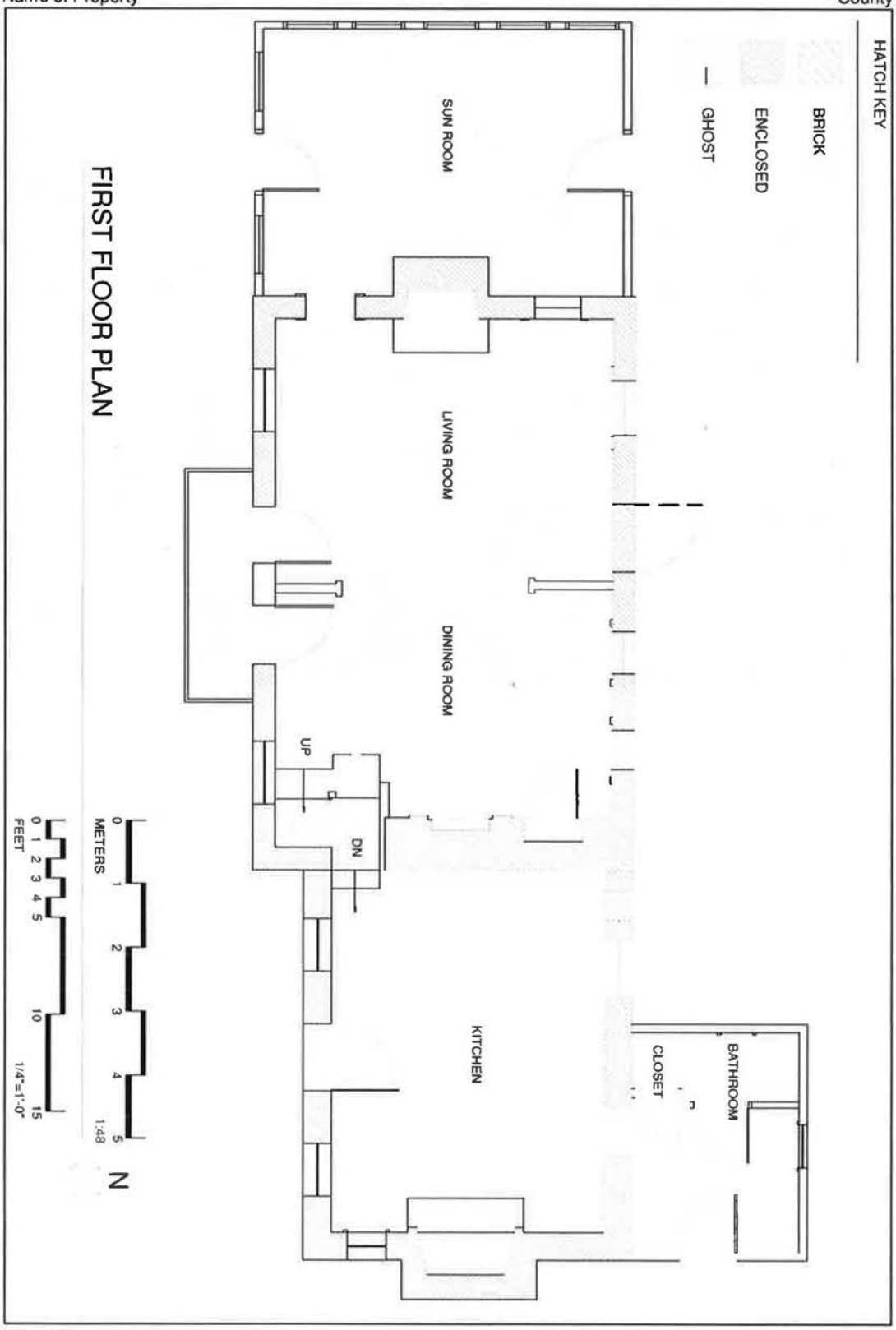
New Castle, Delaware
County and State



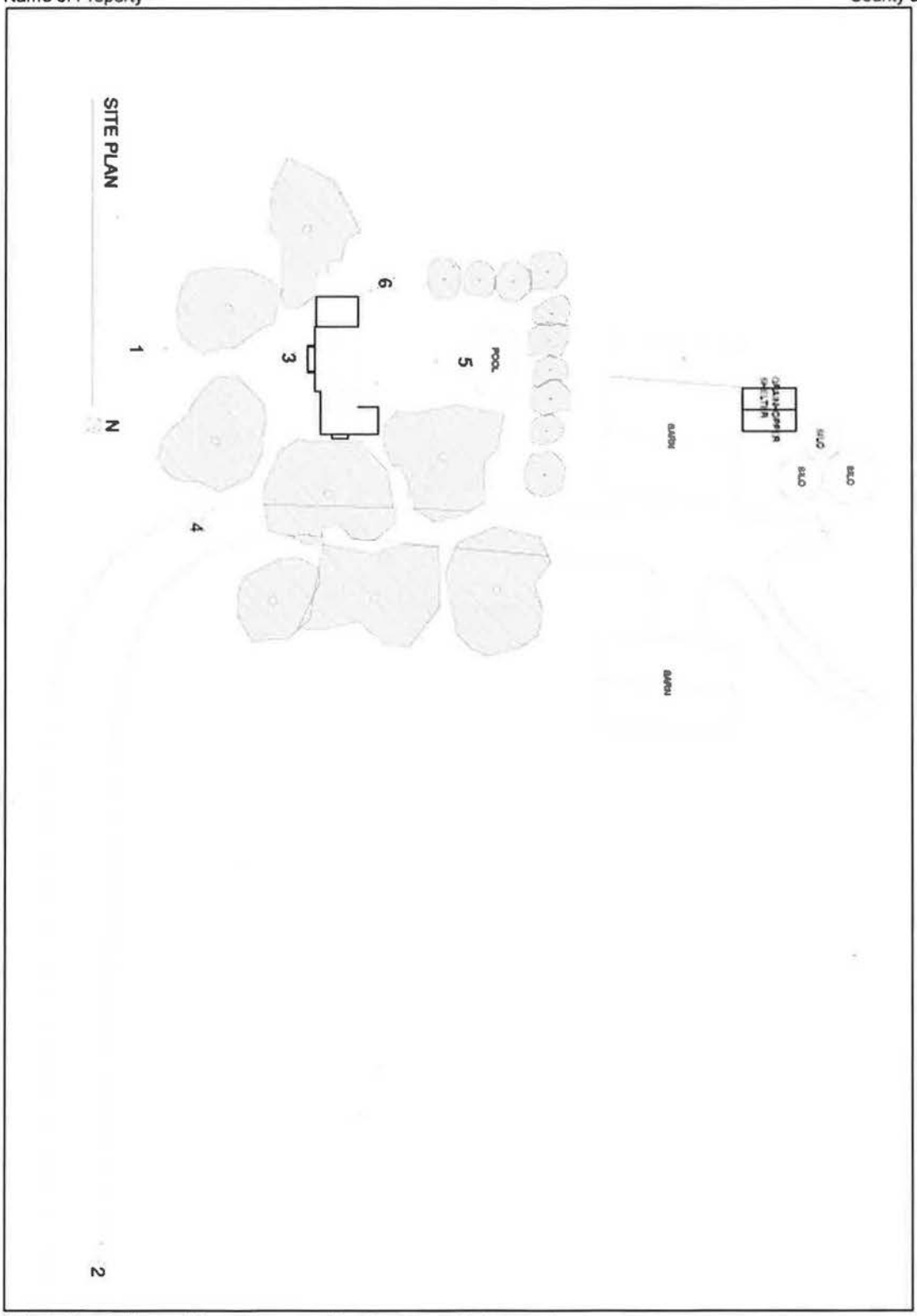
2017 Google Maps Satellite Image

Homestead Hall
Name of Property

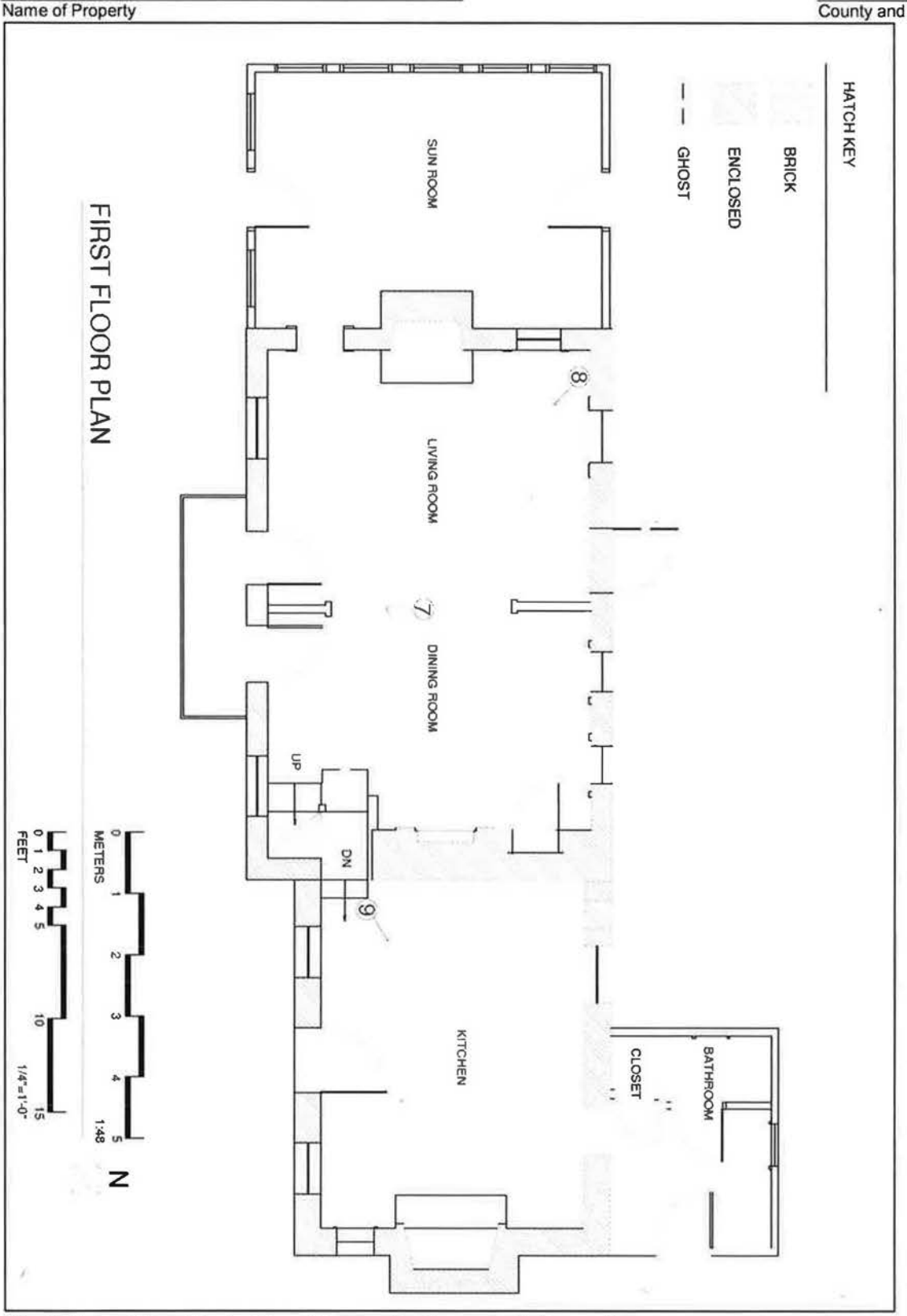
New Castle, Delaware
County and State



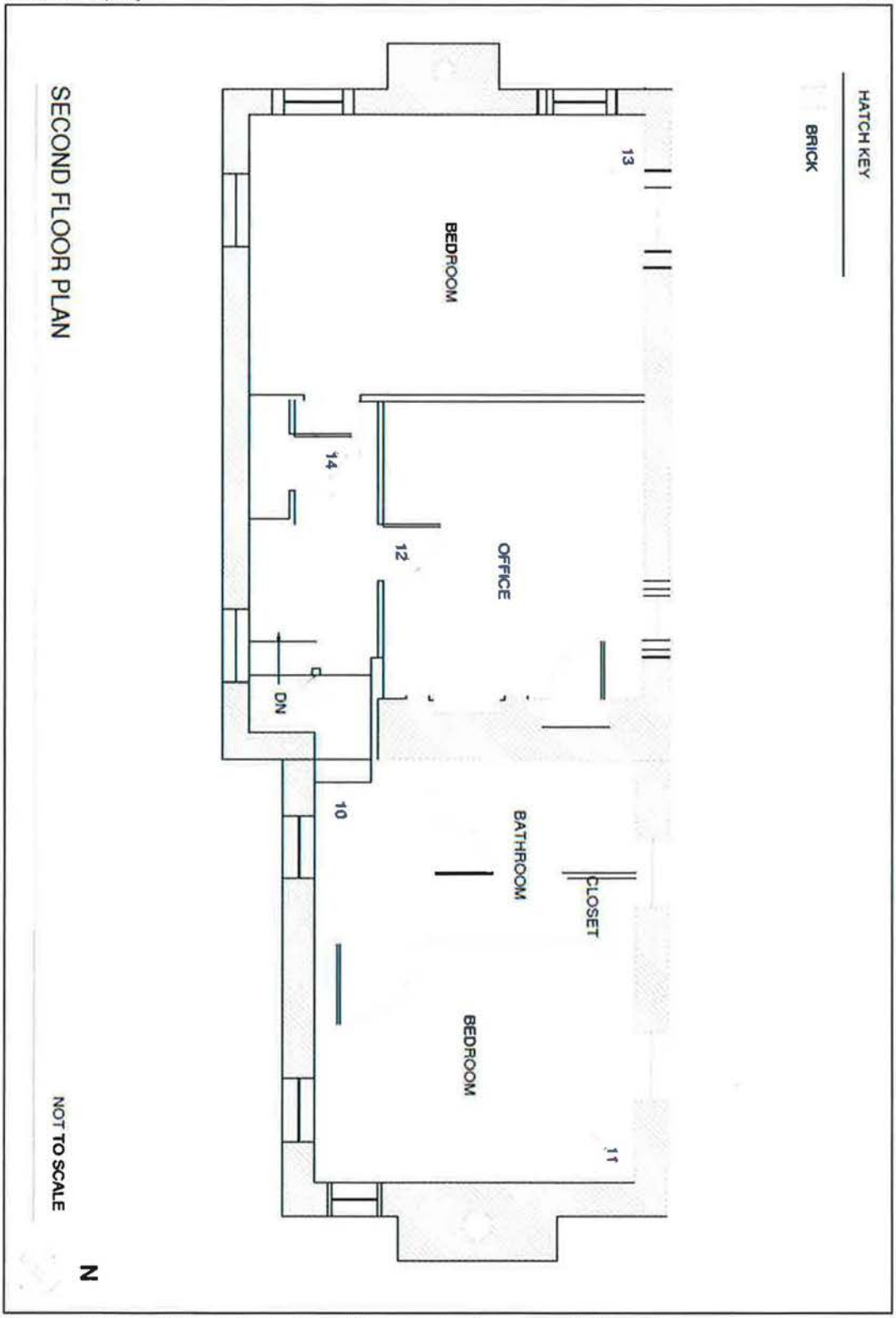
First Floor Plan (Drawn by Lauren Johnson)



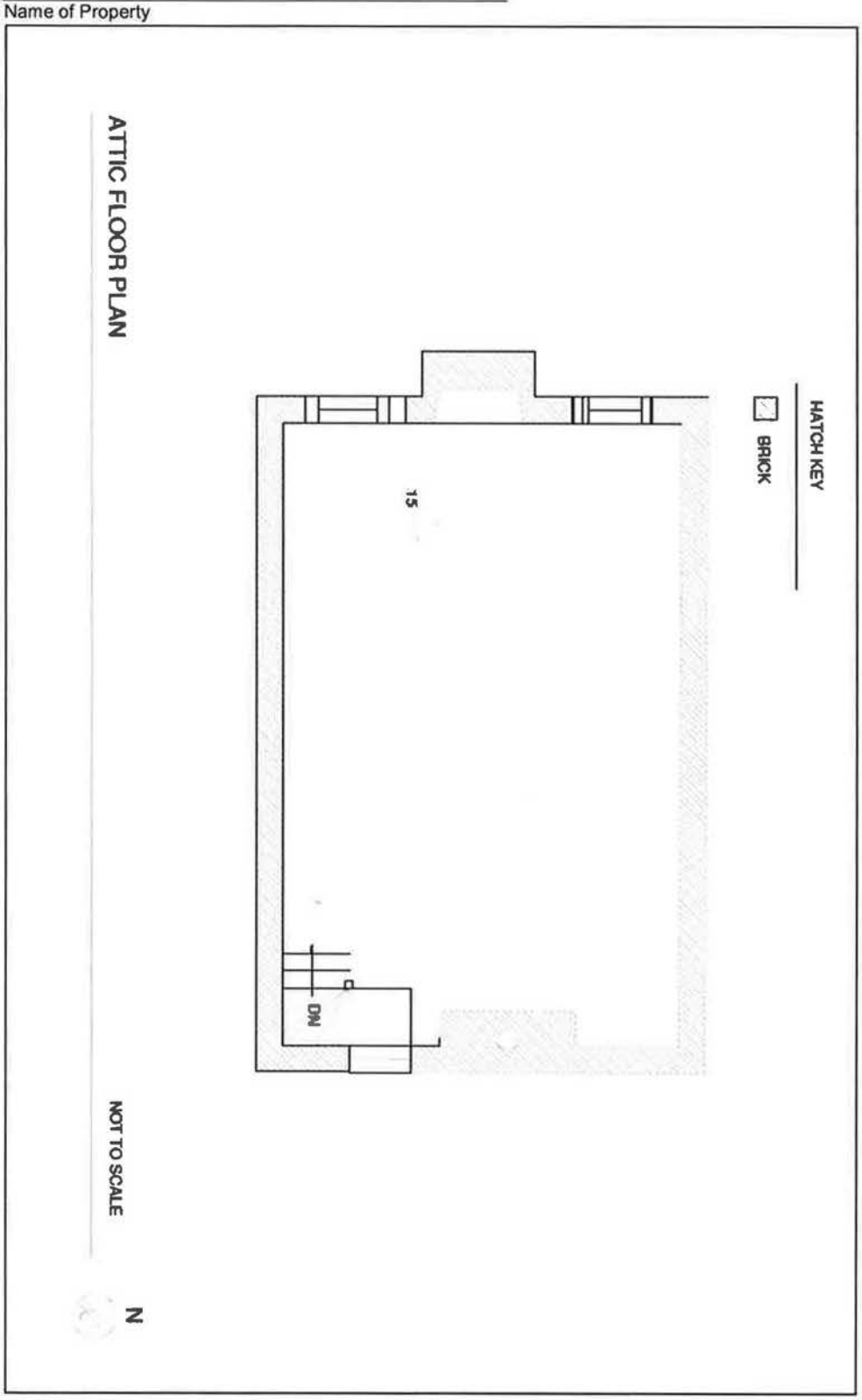
Site Plan Photo Key (Drawn by Lauren Johnson)



First Floor Plan Photo Key (Drawn by Lauren Johnson)



Second Floor Plan Photo Key (Drawn by Lauren Johnson)



Attic Photo Key (Drawn by Lauren Johnson)

Additional Items

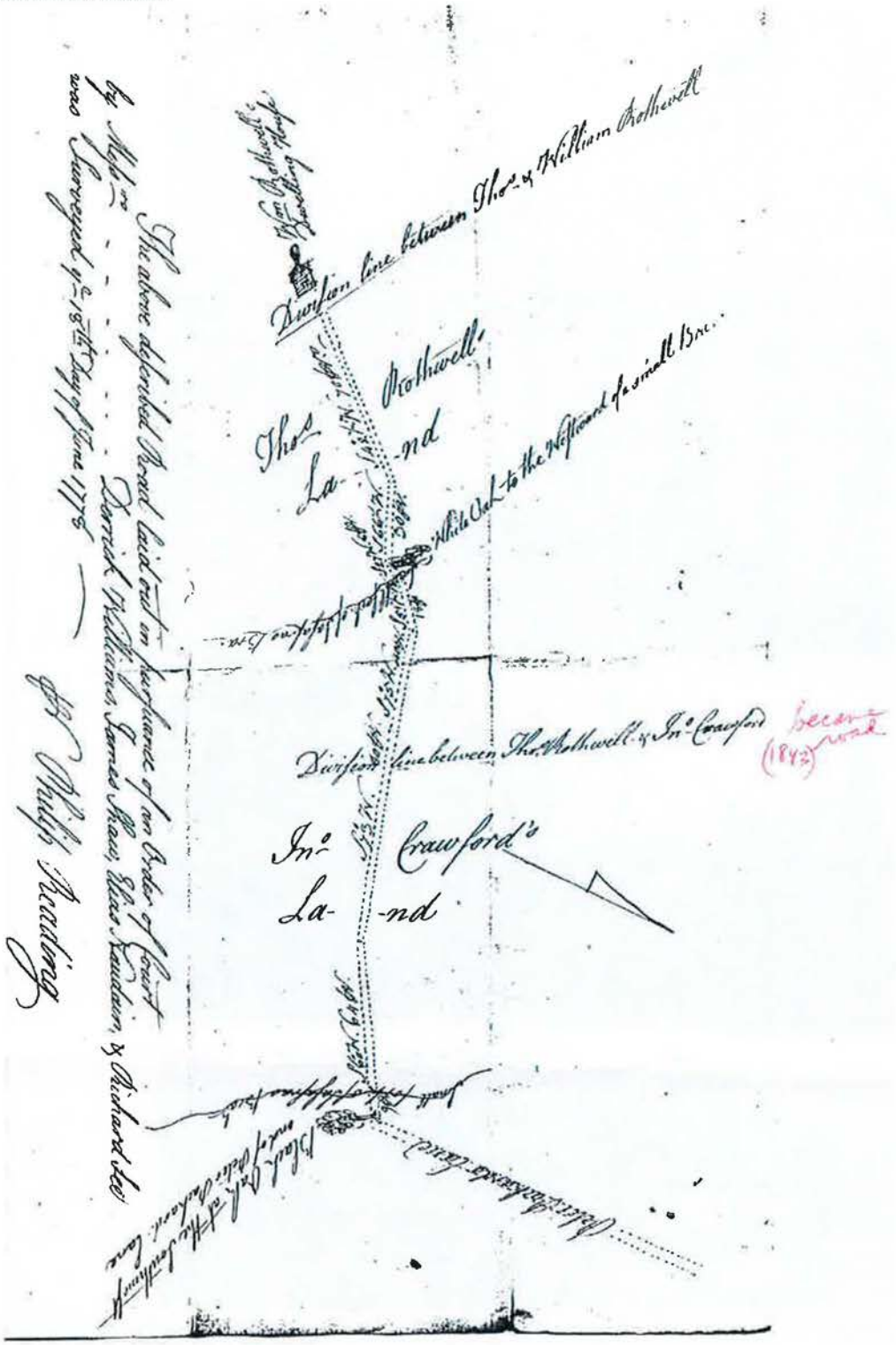


Figure 1. Survey Map for Proposed Road from Petition by William Rothwell to the New Castle County Justices of the Peace, June 18, 1778.

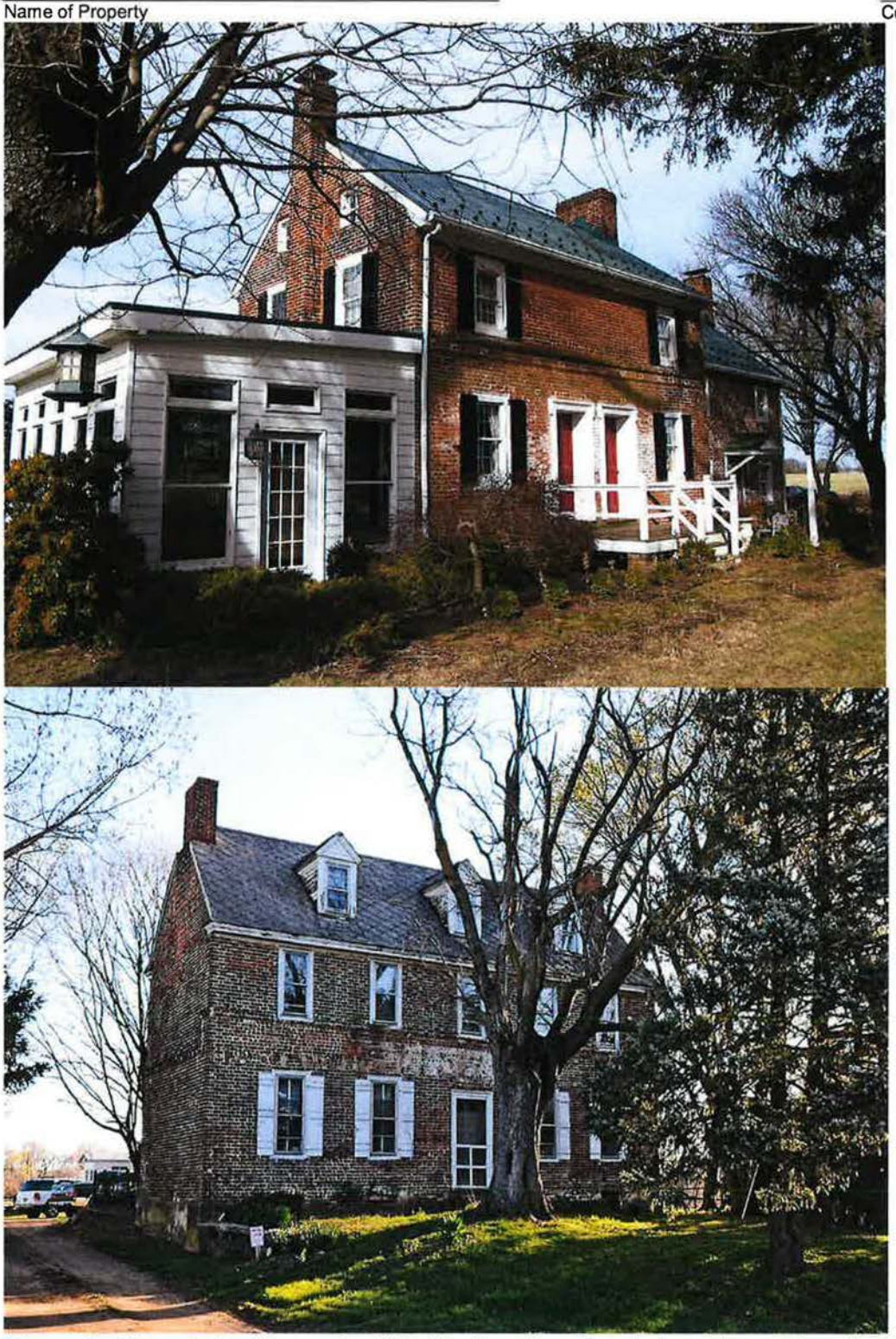


Figure 2: Top photo: Homestead Hall's four-bay front elevation with paired entry doors. Bottom photo: Hill Island Farm (Noxontown Farm), Thomas Rothwell III's later five-bay Georgian dwelling with central entry door and stair hall.

The Pennsylvania Farmhouse Type. This is an orderly and elegant nineteenth-century example of the synthetic Georgian-Germanic house; other examples can be seen in Figs. 9, 12, 14, 23, and 27. It is located south of Wellsville, York County, Pennsylvania. (Photo, the author.)

Figure 3: Illustration of a four-bay Pennsylvania German exterior, with paired entry doors on the façade, from Henry Glassie's "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building."

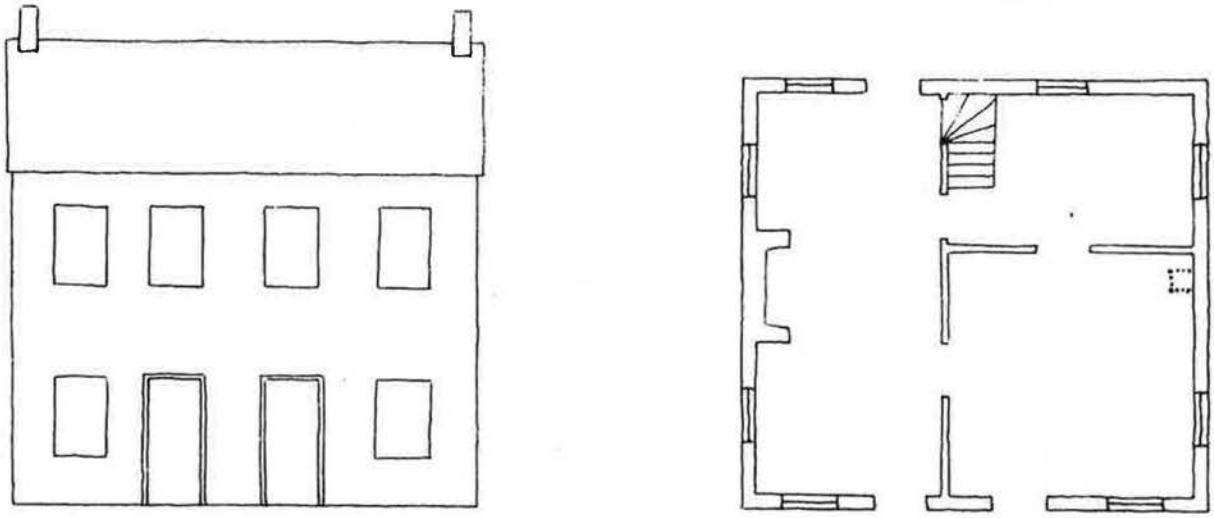


Figure 4: Illustration of a typical four-bay Pennsylvania German exterior and transitional three-cell interior floorplan, from Henry Glassie's from "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building."

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Homestead Hall

City or Vicinity: Townsend

County: New Castle State: Delaware

Photographer: Kaitlyn Raker

Date Photographed: January 11, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_001)
View of southeast elevation, looking northwest.

2 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_002)
Environmental view of northeast elevations of dwelling and outbuilding, looking southwest from Grears Corner Road down driveway.

3 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_003)
Detail of doors on southeast elevation, looking northwest.

4 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_004)
Perspective view of southeast and northeast elevations, looking west.

5 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_005)
View of northwest elevation, looking southeast.

6 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_006)
Perspective view of northeast and northwest elevations, looking south.

7 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_007)
Interior, first floor, view of the southwest wall, showing the paired double entry doors, looking southwest.

8 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_008)
Interior view of the hall and parlor, showing crossette surrounds, looking northwest.

9 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_009)
Interior, first floor, view of the Period II kitchen addition, remodeled after the 1982 fire, looking north.

10 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_010)
Detail view of the original winder staircase taken from the Period II addition looking into the Period I second floor landing, looking southwest.

11 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_011)
Interior, second floor, view of the Period II chamber above the kitchen, showing period trims, looking southeast.

12 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_012)
Interior, second floor, view of the Period I chamber above the modern dining room, looking north.

13 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_013)
Interior, second floor, view of the Period I chamber above the modern living room, looking east.

14 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_014)
Interior, second floor, view of the Period I hall, showing the attic staircase and the passthrough to the Period II addition,

15 of 15 (DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_015)
Interior, attic, view of Period I attic, looking northeast.

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_001.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_002.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_003.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_004.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_005.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_006.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_007.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_008.JPG

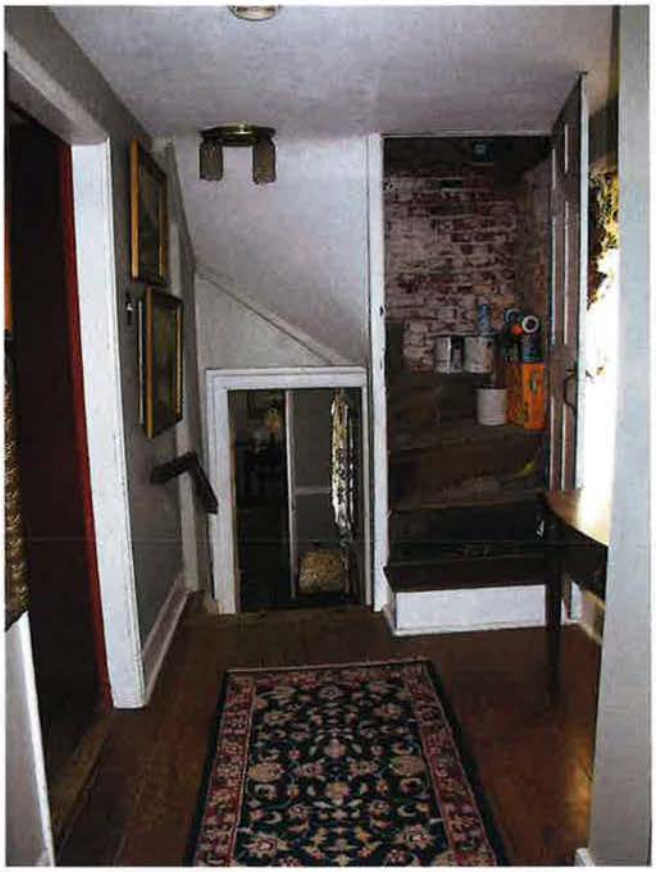
DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_009.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_010.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_011.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_012.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_013.JPG



DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_014.JPG

DE_New Castle County_Homestead Hall_015.JPG

Additional Agricultural Context

The geographic area known as *The Levels* is real estate situated on the west side of Appoquinimink Hundred, a political subdivision created by William Penn when he became proprietor of the "Three Lower Counties" of Pennsylvania in 1682. As part of the land disputed between the Calvert and Penn families, it was ceded to Pennsylvania in 1767 and ordered resurveyed by Governor John Penn in 1776. However, during the early years of the American Revolution, the Three Lower Counties declared their independence from Pennsylvania and by September 17, 1776 adopted a state constitution and styled itself the Delaware State.

Throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, land patents were granted to individuals in Appoquinimink Hundred that generally ranged in size from 200 to 800 acres. This area was sparsely populated but contained a variety of farms, woodlands, and marshlands especially in the eastern portion. The water table for farms located in *The Levels* was fed by two major rivers – the Appoquinimink River in Delaware and the Sassafras River in Maryland, and was therefore recognized as some of the state's most fertile land which produced high crop yields. A New Castle Court County Orphans Court case file dated 1818-1826 references that property including Homestead Hall was surrounded by cultivated fields, arable land, and tilled fields. This rich land continued to be farmed and became even more productive with the introduction of new agricultural concepts including crop rotation and application of lime, manure, and other fertilizers during the nineteenth century.

Agriculture remained a major industry throughout eighteenth century Delaware with corn and wheat being the principal crops. While a few peach and apple orchards were occasionally mentioned, peach production would not become a cash crop until the nineteenth century. Tenants and property owners who engaged in agricultural activities in *The Levels* used the local waterways and overland routes to transport their produce to Wilmington and nearby communities in both Delaware and Maryland.

Changes in Transportation Networks

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New Castle County experienced significant development in the regard to transportation networks. Specifically associated with *The Levels* was the creation of several roads constructed between 1778 and the 1850s. One of the earliest-known road surveys depicted a road with a north-south orientation that divided acreage owned by William Rothwell including Homestead Hall. It was issued by the New Castle County Justices of the Peace on June 18, 1778 and is known today as Grears Corner Road. Many of the thoroughfares which survive today were among those constructed and/or expanded with either north-south or east-west orientations between the early 1800s and 1850s. In addition to roadways, two specific rail lines, the Delaware Railroad (1832) and the Queen Anne and Kent Rail Road (c.1870), crossed Appoquinimink Hundred in close proximity to Homestead Hall. Adopted use of this new innovations enabled farmers to transport their produce and dairy products throughout Delaware, Maryland, and to major cities such as Philadelphia.

United States Department of the Interior
Here
National Park Service

Homestead Hall
Name of Property
New Castle, DE
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Appendix

Agricultural Transitions

Historic tax assessment records created during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provide a glimpse into the story of land management. Specific percentages of land were typically cleared; wealthier farmers raised livestock mainly horses, cows, oxen, sheep, pigs, and apple and peach orchards were noted in assessments of the gentry. Labor intense crops such as tobacco had significantly faded from the landscape prior to the American Revolution though 8,700 pounds of tobacco continued to be grown in New Castle County as late as 1860 according to U.S. Census data. Slavery decreased throughout the nineteenth century in Delaware with 1,780 enslaved individuals in the entire state, 254 of whom resided in New Castle County. A large free colored population, many of whom resided and worked on farms throughout the state, increased from 3,889 in 1790 to 19,829 by 1860.

Delaware's earliest comprehensive tax record, regulated by the Delaware General Assembly in 1797, established values for personal and real estate tax along with buildings, livestock, and slaves. Analysis of the 1797 Appoquinimink Hundred tax assessment, which includes Homestead Hall, identifies a total of 436 taxables. Dwellings were primarily constructed of log and frame with only a few identified as brick. Outbuildings referenced included kitchens as well as a very limited number of agricultural support buildings/structures such as corn houses, barns, stables. During the nineteenth century, additional outbuildings were mentioned in tax assessments including corncribs, carriage houses, granaries, meat houses, milk houses, sheds, smoke houses, and wagon sheds thus reflecting the adoption of new agricultural concepts and changes in agricultural practices and activities.

Access to Agricultural Information

Though not specifically site-related, it is also important to note that the country's first agricultural society, The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, was established in Philadelphia in 1785 which was located approximately sixty miles northeast of Homestead Hall. Period journals and letters written throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries verify that prominent Delawareans had multiple business and family connections with Philadelphia. General information and business issues are frequently addressed in personal letters. Likewise, weekly newspapers published in Delaware such as the *Delaware Gazette* (1785), the *Dover Herald* (1800), the *Delaware State Journal* (1831), the *Delawarean* (1859), and the *Middletown Transcript* ((1868) provided their readers with a variety of information including advertisements regarding the sale and/or lease of farms, sources from which farm implements could be purchased, and updated information about agriculture. John Spurrier, a former Englishman who became a resident farmer in Brandywine Hundred in New Castle County, wrote and published a book titled The Practical Farmer: Being a New and Compendious System of Husbandry, Adapted to the Different Soils and Climates of America in Wilmington, Delaware in 1793. This subscription publication contained a lot of information about agriculture as well as mechanical, chemical, and philosophical information and would have been accessible to gentlemen farmers such as the Rothwell and Wilson families associated with Homestead Hall.

Innovative Farming Methods

Research suggests that the Rothwell and Wilson families, owners and residents of Homestead Hall, may have utilized a variety of new innovations designed to advance agricultural practices. In addition to crop rotation practices, introduced in the late eighteenth century and practiced throughout Delaware, these families owned a variety of newly invented machines. Probate inventories note implements such as cradles and scythes, developed in the 1790s, which would have been essential tools used in the production of crops such as wheat. By the nineteenth century, cultivators replaced harrows to break up the soil for planting. Concave plows were developed to enhance methods of planting seeds. A state-of –the art Buckeye-Mower and Reaper iron-frame farm machine, manufactured in Canton, Ohio in 1869 were all among the implements listed in the 1879 probate inventory of William Wilson.


Delaware Valley College
of
Science and Agriculture


PLANTS
UP
UP
THIS SIDE UP

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Homestead Hall

Multiple Name:

State & County: DELAWARE, New Castle

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
6/28/2018	7/20/2018	8/6/2018	8/13/2018	

Reference number: SG100002770

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	X CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __8/13/2018__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: AOS: Agriculture and Architecture, POS: 1773-1882, LOS: local

Recommendation/ Criteria: Criteria A & C.

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239 Date 8/13/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

HCA
DELAWARE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
21 The Green, Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

June 26, 2018

Ms. Julie Ernstein, Acting Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C Street, N.W. Mail Stop 7228
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Ernstein:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for Homestead Hall to the National Register of Historic Places. This historic property is located in New Castle County, Delaware and is being nominated under Criterion A for its association with agricultural history and Criterion C for architecture.

If there are any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Madeline E. Dunn, National Register Coordinator and Historian for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office at madeline.dunn@state.de.us or 302-736-7417.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Slavin, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs