**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

*(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)*

1. **NAME**

   **COMMON:** Matthew Lowber House

   **AND/OR HISTORIC:**

2. **LOCATION**

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** East of Main Street, north of the intersection

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Magnolia, South Murderkill Hundred

   **STATE:** Delaware

   **CODE:** 10

   **COUNTY:** Kent

   **CODE:** 001

3. **CLASSIFICATION**

   **CATEGORY (Check One)**

   - District
   - Site
   - Building
   - Object

   **OWNERSHIP**

   - Public
   - Private
   - Both

   **PUBLIC ACQUISITION:**

   - In Process
   - Being Considered

   **STATUS**

   - Occupied
   - Unoccupied
   - Preservation work in progress

   **ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC**

   - Yes:
   - Restricted
   - Unrestricted
   - No

   **PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

   - Agricultural
   - Government
   - Park
   - Private Residence
   - Religious
   - Scientific
   - Transportation
   - Other (Specify)
   - Exhibition
   - Vacant
   - Planned
   - Vacant planned

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**

   **OWNER'S NAME:** State of Delaware - Public Archives Commission

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** Hall of Records

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Dover

   **STATE:** Delaware

   **CODE:** 10

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

   **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:** Kent County Court House, Recorder of Deeds

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** The Green

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Dover

   **STATE:** Delaware

   **CODE:** 10

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

   **TITLE OF SURVEY:**

   **DATE OF SURVEY:**

   **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

   **STREET AND NUMBER:**

   **CITY OR TOWN:**

   **STATE:**

   **CODE:**
### DESCRIPTION

<table>
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<th>Fair</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
<th>Ruins</th>
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

The Matthew Lowber House at Magnolia is a two story and attic, three bay brick house, one room deep, erected in 1774, with a frame addition at the north end built about 1855. The older portion has excellent panelling, the original wide floor boards, and other good woodwork along with much of the original hardware. Each of the two ground floor rooms in the brick portion has its own front door and winding enclosed stairway. The brickwork, now painted, features a belt course, watertable, and the owner's initials with the date in black headers near the peak of the southeast gable.

Before the doorway is a pair of great sycamores, doubtless bride and groom trees planted by the builder and his wife when they first occupied the new home. It was then an isolated farmhouse. The present Town of Magnolia has grown up around it, beginning about 1845.
### SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

#### PERIOD
- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [X] 18th Century
- [ ] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

#### SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

- **1774**

#### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [X] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [X] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Matthew Lowber House is of architectural value as an exactly dated example of a small but comfortable country home of the later eighteenth century which has had amazingly little alteration. The builder was a fourth generation descendant of a Dutch immigrant who reached New Amsterdam by 1677 and was in Kent County by 1681. Members of his line in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were comfortably well-to-do landowners and craftsmen, usually Friends. In the colonial years they were not officeholders. The children and grandchildren of Peter Lowber, the immigrant (d.1698) are the progenitors of many modern Kent County families. Another Lowber House, built around 1750 by Matthew's father, also named Matthew, is still standing in Frederica.
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY
OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .55

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Leon deValinger, Jr., State Archivist

ORGANIZATION: Public Archives Commission

DATE: Jan. 28, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: Hall of Records

CITY OR TOWN: Dover

STATE CODE: Delaware 10

12. STATE LIASON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National □ State X Local □

Name: Leon deValinger

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: January 29, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

APR 16 1971

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

MAR 18 1971
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME
HISTORIC Matthew Lowber House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
North Main Street (Route 113A)
CITY. TOWN Magnolia
STATE Delaware
VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Mag Safe CODE Congress

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE

PRESENT USE
- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- TRANSPORTATION
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME Mr. & Mrs. Joseph P. Eberly
STREET & NUMBER Box 42
CITY. TOWN Manokin,

VICINITY OF
STATE Maryland 21836

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Kent County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
The Green
CITY, TOWN Dover

STATE Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE On Continuation Sheet
DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
The Lowber House is located in the rural Kent County crossroads town of Magnolia, comprised of about seventy-five frame residences, ranging in date from the third quarter of the nineteenth century to the present, which lines the town's two principal streets. Most of Magnolia's houses lie adjacent to the edge of the roadway and are typically set close to one another on small to medium-sized town lots. The center of town, formed by the intersection of the Barker's Landing Road and the Dover-Frederica Road, is today dominated by the modern brick fire station of the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company.

In February of 1980, the Lowber House was moved from its original location between the fire house and the Magnolia Post Office to a new location on the same side of North Main Street, approximately one hundred yards to the northwest. At present, it rests on a cinderblock foundation that will receive a veneer of original bricks salvaged in the move as stabilization of the houses progresses.

As initially constructed, the Lowber House was a brick, hall-parlor-plan plantation house of two stories with a basically symmetrical three-bay facade laid in Flemish bond. With the addition of a two-story, two-bay frame wing to the north gable end in the mid-nineteenth century, the building assumed its present configuration. In an attempt to retain symmetry on the facade in this transformation, the original doorway was converted into a window and a new entrance cut into the brickwork closer to the new vertical axis of the house. The simple bed-moulded box cornice of the original block's gable roof was extended to the frame addition and further embellished with an applied foliated serpentine-shaped sawnwork bargeboard. The shingled roof was later covered with ribbed tinned sheet, and the facade of the house is now covered by a peeling gray paint. The two facade cellar windows, aligned beneath the flanking bays of the principal block, feature segmental arches. The first-floor windows with brick flat arches and projecting key bricks, now feature mid-nineteenth-century wooden shutters mounted on cast iron pintles screwed to the inner edges of the architraves, replacing earlier wrought iron driven pintles.

The upper windows have operable louvered shutters, also of the mid-nineteenth century. Most of the scrolled wrought iron shutter dogs with flattened terminals are missing. Removed from their framing and presently stored in the building are several original single-hung window sashes. The first-floor windows originally held nine-over-nine pane sashes and the shorter, upper-story windows held six-over-nine sashes. Visible in the brickwork adjacent to the bricked-in doorway are the sockets for the top rails and seats of now-missing porch benches.

The south gable end features excellent glazed header Flemish bond brickwork, in this instance quite unusual since it is the only exterior wall of the Lowber House so constructed. The header bricks on the facade and rear elevations are without glazing. Worked into the patterning at attic level are the initials "M L" and "1774", and the lower portion of another letter, probably an "L" for Lowber, mostly obscured by parging on the apparently rebuilt chimney. The roofline of an earlier wing, depicted in an 1818 Orphan's Court Plot of the property, is clearly defined on this gable. A segmentally-arched cellar entrance
The Matthew Lowber House is of paramount importance to the architectural history of Delaware as a largely unaltered, tightly dated, pre-Revolutionary War brick plantation house containing one of the most intact interiors of that period in the state. In recognition of its architectural merit, the Lowber House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1971. The re-siting of the Lowber House within the town of Magnolia has not diminished the architectural qualities that brought it to the National Register in 1971.

The Lowber House is one of only three known houses in Kent County bearing a pre-Revolutionary War construction date in glazed headers in the gable end wall. The architectural integrity of the others has been comprised to such an extent that their eligibility for the National Register on architectural significance alone is doubtful. The Presbyterian Manse, near Garrison Lake, south of Smyrna is dated "1774" on its western gable end. Unfortunately, its extensive interior paneling, architectural cupboards, and staircase have been robbed in the last decade. The brick mansion known as "Tomahawk," dated "1772," has been disassembled and re-erected on another site.

Given the circumstances of the state's financial inability to restore the Lowber House and the fire company's valid needs for its lot, there was no feasible alternative for its preservation. Every effort was made to re-establish its historic orientation, immediate setting, and general environment. The Lowber House was moved intact to its new siting, one hundred yards north of where it was built and is positioned facing the street much as it has since 1774. Though the building's specific relationship to the rest of the town has changed, its general orientation remains the same. The streetscapes of Magnolia remain largely as before and it is arguable that the unique architectural qualities of the Lowber House can be better appreciated on its new site than when it stood in the shadow of the fire station.

Prior to the move, it was determined by the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation that the proposed siting held no archaeological significance and that the move would have no adverse effect on other buildings potentially eligible for the National Register. The one-acre lot where the Lowber House stood when listed on the National Register in 1971 does not possess archaeological significance sufficient to warrant listing and should, therefore, be removed from the National Register.
Historic American Building Survey; Matthew Lowber House

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nomination includes only the building itself.

REVISED - FOR RESUBMISSION - See Continuation Sheet

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE 10/10/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 4-5-82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Matthew Lowber House

Historic American Building Survey
1975
Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey K-113
1975
State
Hall of Records
Dover, Delaware 19901
The interior of the Lowber House boasts some of the finest and most complete eighteenth-century woodwork in Delaware. The parlor end wall, composed of raised, fielded panels, is divided into three principal sections. The central portion covers the chimney breast and fireplace with a crossetted architrave and later, simple bracketed board mantle shelf. Flanking this central element are the right and left sections of the end wall panelling, which protrude into the room; the right contains a cupboard (perhaps added) with panelled doors and crossetted architrave, and the left section boxes a stairway to the cellar. The interior walls of the parlor, as in the remainder of the original block, are of plaster-over-lath and a chair rail and baseboard complete its treatment. In the southeast corner of the parlor is a short open-string staircase with a turned newell and two turned balusters per tread, which leads to an enclosed winder staircase to the second floor chamber, also with fully panelled end walls. The attic is unfinished, except for wide board flooring.

The frame mid-nineteenth-century addition appears to have been a kitchen and it contains a sizeable cooking hearth.

The Matthew Lowber House was acquired by the State of Delaware in 1969 for the purpose of preserving its architectural character and presence in Magnolia. However, the state lacked the finances necessary to restore the building and put it to productive use. At the same time, the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company, operating in a fire station immediately adjacent to the Lowber House, increasingly found it necessary to expand their facilities essential to the health, welfare, and safety of the area's residents. As a consequence of this situation, House Bill No. 955 was introduced and subsequently passed in 1978 by the 129th General Assembly, conveying the Lowber House and lot to the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company. Under provisions of the bill, the house was to be sold by the fire company and moved by the purchaser to a new location under the supervision and control of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. This transaction and resiting has taken place and the house is currently being stabilized on its new site, prior to restoration as a private residence.
8. As first submitted after the relocation of the Lowber house in 1980, the nomination included only the historic structure itself. The thought behind this conservative setting of boundaries was that, since the new lot had no historical or archaeological significance specifically relating to that of the property being nominated, no significance should be claimed for it. In response to comments by National Register staff, however, and in view of the particular appropriateness of the new setting which is described in paragraph three of item eight of the original statement, the boundary description has been revised to include the tax lot on which the building is now approximately centered.

10. (Revised v.b.d.) The nomination includes the Matthew Lowber house and the parcel on which it stands: tax lot #32 (135'x130') Magnolia, Kent County, Delaware.