1. **NAME**
   - Historic: Eastern Lock of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET & NUMBER:** Battery Park
   - **CITY, TOWN:** Delaware City
   - **STATE:** Delaware
   - **CODE:** 10
   - **COUNTY CODE:** New Castle 003

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - **CATEGORY:** 
     - X DISTRICT
     - BUILDING(S)
     - STRUCTURE
     - SITE
     - OBJECT
   - **OWNERSHIP:** 
     - X PUBLIC
     - PRIVATE
     - BOTH
   - **PUBLIC ACQUISITION:** 
     - IN PROCESS
     - BEING CONSIDERED
   - **STATUS:** 
     - OCCUPIED
     - UNOCCUPIED
     - WORK IN PROGRESS
     - ACCESSIBLE
     - YES: RESTRICTED
     - YES: UNRESTRICTED
     - NO
   - **PRESENT USE:** 
     - AGRICULTURE
     - COMMERCIAL
     - X PARK
     - EDUCATIONAL
     - ENTERTAINMENT
     - GOVERNMENT
     - INDUSTRIAL
     - MILITARY
     - OTHER:

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   - **NAME:** Mayor and Council of Delaware City
   - **STREET & NUMBER:**
   - **CITY, TOWN:** Delaware City
   - **STATE:** Delaware

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:** Recorder of Deeds
   - **STREET & NUMBER:** Public Building
   - **CITY, TOWN:** Wilmington
   - **STATE:** Delaware

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - **TITLE:** Survey of Delaware Historic Sites and Buildings
   - **DATE:** 1975
   - **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Hall of Records
   - **CITY, TOWN:** Dover
   - **STATE:** Delaware
The lock at Delaware City is a stone structure, resting on wooden underpinnings, with a wooden floor. It stands near the mouth of the old C&D Canal, at the east end of the former cut. The lock gates no longer exist.

The short section of canal between the east end of the lock and the river has been filled, to provide parking. Westward from the lock, the old canal remains navigable for small pleasure boats.

The original canal locks were a hundred feet long and twenty-two feet wide. When the canal was originally built, the Delaware City lock had a lift of six to eight feet, and provided ungated passage on a high tide. From Delaware City to St. George's, a distance of 4.39 miles, the canal maintained a level of 7.66 feet above mean low water. Between 1851 and 1854, during a general improvement of the canal facilities, the locks were enlarged to 220 feet by twenty-four feet.

Even with enlarged facilities, the canal soon reached the limits of its capacity. As early as 1871, proponents of a ship canal were agitating for a sea-level waterway across the Delmarva isthmus. Other routes were considered, but in 1919 the federal government obtained title to the C&D Canal and began digging a sea-level cut along its route. The new canal was finally opened to oceangoing traffic, without locks, in 1927.

When the sea-level canal was built, all the locks were destroyed except the one at Delaware City. This lock survived because the new route entered the Delaware River by a new mouth at Reedy Point, two miles south.

Today, the old cut at Delaware City serves as a harbor for small boats. Since the entrance lock is blocked by an earth berm, small boats must travel south from this anchorage into the canal, in order to enter the river.
The eastern lock of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in Delaware City is the last remaining lock structure on the old canal. At Chesapeake City, the western terminus, a pumphouse has been preserved.

In 1829, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal first opened for traffic, culminating a half century of negotiations, proposals, false starts, and failures. Although the canal was only about fourteen miles long, it was a vital link in the all-water transportation system envisioned in Albert Gallatin's 1808 report to Congress.

Until it became federal property in 1919, the lock navigation was operated by a private corporation chartered in Delaware and Maryland, but backed by Philadelphia business interests. The original work was expanded during the early 1850's, when larger locks were installed and the cuts were deepened. The surviving lock and the pumphouse at Chesapeake City date from this expansion. Between 1854 and 1919, the canal's physical plant was little altered.

Battery Park in Delaware City was the eastern terminus of the canal navigation. This public open space remains virtually as it appeared during canal days. Mounted on a pedestal in the park is a diving bell, which was built to enable workmen to repair underwater equipment. West of Battery Park was a basin, now filled, which could accommodate several boats at a time.
Major Bibliographical References


Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: less than one acre

U.M. references

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Verbal boundary description

The lock is bordered on the northeast by Delaware River, on the southeast and southwest by the Chesapeake and Delaware branch canal, and on the northwest by Battery Park.

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Dir. Date: 3-27-75

For NPS use only

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

Director, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Keeper of the National Register