

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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K-1320

Property Name: "Deer Park" - (Benjamin) Blackiston House

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The house is located at the end of a long farm lane that comes from the west side of Road 131 about one-half mile south of Route 6. The Delaware-Maryland border is about one mile to the west. The nominated property includes just the house and a ten-foot border around the house.

Owner: Thomas and Helen Kolakowski  
Road 1, Box 95  
Clayton, DE 19938

Description:

The Blackiston House was built soon after 1760 as a 3-bay, 1½-story, frame house on a raised brick foundation. Built as a "Penn Plan", a 3-room dwelling, it was later enlarged to 6 bays with an east gable addition. Architecturally, it is similar to many vernacular buildings erected in the eighteenth century in the upper Delmarva Peninsula.

The core has a full basement with arched supports for the interior gable end chimneys. The east support is for the adjoining corner hearths and single stack that serves the two east rooms. The decorative elements in these two rooms are plain. It consists of simple chimney breasts and minor trim at the floor and ceiling and a chair rail. The great room has a fully-panelled end-wall, chair rail and heavy crown cornice. By 1803, the panelling had been modified with a more modern mantel and lighter cornice moulding. On the exterior, Federal-style dormers had been added by 1803.

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Benjamin Blackiston's will, probated in 1803, gives an excellent description of the house. It was "a frame dwelling house about 36 feet by 18 feet divided into 3 rooms with 2 brick chimnies and 3 fireplaces with breast work in good order, the whole of the house is plaistered and in good order... the house weatherboarded with pine in good repair, cedar roof in but bad order, and dorman windows in the roof want repairing a cellar under the whole house in good order. There was also a loged Kitchen about 20 feet by 18 feet and 2 storie high associated with the house."

By 1842, a 2-story, 3-bay frame service wing had been added to the east gable end. This wing does not have a basement. In the early twentieth century, a series of 1-story sheds were added to the rear. The entire house was covered in brick, patterned asphalt shingles as a siding material and the roof was covered with metal sheeting.

The house is presently vacant and in a somewhat deteriorated condition in that many of the windows have been removed and, in other openings, lights have been removed. Also, portions of the brick foundation have lost the outer layer of brick. The inner layer of the brick foundation is intact. As it stands now, the Blackiston House could be restored and brought back to its former appearance.

**Historical Background:**

The Blackiston family landed in Maryland in the latter part of the seventeenth century and settled near St. Mary's City. In the early-eighteenth century, the family moved across the Chesapeake Bay to Queen Anne's County, Maryland and established a plantation there called "Boxley." In 1733, Benjamin Blackiston, then of Kent County, Maryland, was given a 2,255-acre tract of land in Kent and Queen Anne's County, Maryland called "Deer Park."

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When Blackiston made his will in 1758, he divided his "Deer Park" estate among five of his six children and three grandchildren. A small portion of the land was also sold to non-family members. Grandson Benjamin II was eventually assigned the tract of land on which the Benjamin Blackiston House sits. The estate papers record dwellings on only a few of the tracts. Benjamin Blackiston II most likely built the house soon after inherited the land, after the estate was probated in 1760.

In 1765, the border between Delaware and Maryland was finally agreed to by both parties involved and, according to the agreement, extensive portions of the "Deer Park" tract were then located in Kent County, Delaware. Benjamin II died in the 1780's and his land went to his children. Son William received the Blackiston House and, in turn, his son Benjamin III received the land. By 1859, the original 200-acre tract given in 1760 to Benjamin II had been expanded to include a tract of about 400 to 500 acres and three separate house sites. Over the next century, the farm remained a large tract and was a Blackiston family farm until 1924.

**Significance:**

The Benjamin Blackiston House, "Deer Park", is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C, as an excellent example of a 1½-story, Penn-Plan house. This plan, which was once very common in the eighteenth century, has not often survived into the present century. In addition, the plan was often built as a full, 2-story dwelling. This house reflects its first owner's background and familiarity with vernacular building traditions associated with the Chesapeake Bay area. This particular building is on the edge of the vernacular region for this building type, and is not commonly found in the form as erected in the Blackiston House.