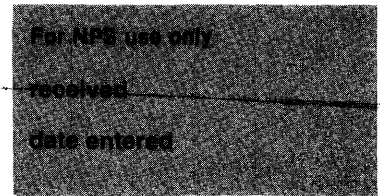


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K-1636:

Property Name: N. C. Downs House

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

DR 1412

The N. C. Downs House is located on the west side of Road 1412, half-way between Road 94 and Road 140. The entire farm occupies approximately 176 acres. The nominated property includes the house, a modern outbuilding, and a plot of land around the house to protect the historic relationship of this farmstead with the land. The plot is a square, with its eastern edge being Road 141. It extends north and south of the driveway 750 feet in both directions. It extends to the west 1,500 feet. The total area is 51.65 acres.

Owner: Theodore Paul Bobola, Jr.
R. D. 2, Box 326-A
Dover, De 19901

Description:

The N. C. Downs House is a 3-bay, 2-story brick dwelling constructed about 1820. The facade is laid in Flemish bond, while the other three walls are done in seven-course common bond. It has a corbelled brick cornice and interior gable-end chimneys. Four dormers have been added to the roof since the house was originally built. There are two on each roof face. Evidence of a central pent roof exists on the front facade. The openings on the first floor are six-over-nine, double-sash windows and a recessed door with transom. On the second floor the openings are six-over-six. Because of landscaping that was done over the years, the house sits somewhat higher than as originally constructed. This exposes part of the foundation, which is laid in a seven-course common bond.

There are two frame additions to the house. The first is a 1½-story wing built on the west gable end. It is a 3-bay structure with a central door. It has an interior gable-end chimney and sits on a brick foundation. It has weatherboards under asbestos siding and functioned as the kitchen wing for the

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house. There is a small 1-story wing attached. On the rear of the core is a short wing that occupies the central portion of the house.

Historical Background:

The 1868 Beer's Atlas of Delaware lists the owner of this farm as N. C. Downs. Downs acquired the land in 1865, at the death of James D. Wilds. At his death, Wilds owned extensive tracts of land in the portion of Kenton Hundred that were part of Duck Creek. A glance at Byle's Atlas of Kent County, published in 1859, indicates that Wilds owned almost ten separate farm sites. Most were in the area northwest of the town of Kenton and west of the area known in 1859 as Wild's Corner, but now known as Underwood's Corner at the intersection of Route 42 and Road 94. The Orphan's Court records and survey done to settle the estate show the N. C. Downs house as Tract 5 and known as "Walnut Row." It included all the land between Roads 94 and 140, west of Road 141. Road 141 did not exist at the time and entrance to the farm was from the south road. It contained 167 acres and was worth \$10,065. The records do not contain a description of the land.

Statement of Significance:

The N. C. Downs House is an important addition to understanding the conservative nature of building traditions in Kent County. In plan and in most of its building techniques, the house is very similar to brick buildings put up in the early- to mid-eighteenth century. The builder, however, was sufficiently aware enough of current decorative trends by adding the relatively new, for the time, corbelled brick cornice. This makes the strong statement that, while the basic size, shape and overall appearance of a dwelling is somewhat rigid, the builder is allowed freedom to change decorative items that add to the appropriate scale and massing of a structure, but do not obscure its basic design. Because of the strong statement that this dwelling makes, it is being nominated under Criterion C.