

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 87002434

Date Listed: 01/26/88

Poplar Hall  
Property Name

New Castle  
County

DE  
State

Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick W. Andrews  
69 | Signature of the Keeper

1/26/88  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Agriculture chosen as area of significance to correspond with Criterion A. Nomination documents that property is significant for association with historic patterns of agricultural development in Delaware.

Confirmed in conversation with Steve DelSordo of Delaware SHPO office on 1/26/88.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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CERTAIN MINOR TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS WERE MADE TO THE COVER FORM FOR POPLAR HALL, NEW ~~CASTLE~~ CASTLE COUNTY, DE AFTER THE FORM WAS SIGNED BY THE CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE CLG. ACCORDINGLY, THE ORIGINAL FORM WITH THE ORIGINAL SIGNATURE IS ALSO SUBMITTED TO SHOW THE APPROVAL OF THE NOMINATION BY THAT OFFICIAL. THE CHANGES WERE MADE WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE NOMINATION PREPAROR AND WERE MINOR IN NATURE IN THAT THEY PERTAINED TO THE PROPER USE OF NPS CODES

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name POPLAR HALL  
other names/site number N-6199

2. Location

street & number 3176 DENNY ROAD (COUNTY ROAD 396)  not for publication  
city, town NEWARK  vicinity  
state DELAWARE code 10 county NEW CASTLE code 002 zip code 19711

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

John K. Chen 11/30/87  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Rita Justice 6/22/87  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

County Executive, New Castle County  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action



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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name POPLAR HALL other names/site number N-6199

2. Location

street & number 3176 Denny Road (County Road 396) city, town Newark state Delaware code 10 county New Castle code 003 zip code 19711

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes sub-rows for Contributing and Noncontributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: NA Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 11/30/87 Director, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: [Signature] Date: County Executive, New Castle County

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet. [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet. [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register. [ ] removed from the National Register. [ ] other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Patrick W. Andrews Date of Action: 1/26/88

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ single family

Agriculture/storage

Agriculture/animal facility

Agriculture/agricultural outbuildings

Agriculture/processing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

Agriculture/agricultural outbuildings

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular Georgian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Stone

roof Asphalt

other Wood

## Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Poplar Hall is located in Pencader Hundred just north of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal about 2.5 miles west of Route 896 on Denny Road; and approximately .5 miles east of the Maryland state line.

The eighteenth century brick dwelling with its stone wing and five associated outbuildings are situated on a 180 acre farm. The house sits in a crook of the road facing southeast with the gable end parallel to the road. The outbuildings are arranged in a "Z" configuration and largely date from the late nineteenth century.

Poplar Hall was built in the late eighteenth century probably by James Boulden the Younger, and was substantially remodeled in the mid-nineteenth century in a more ornate Greek Revival style. The dwelling is a two and one-half story, gable-roofed, brick building with a two and one-half story, cobble stone, gable-roofed wing on its northeast gable end.

The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingle which lie over wood shingles. Roof trim consists of a box cornice with shallow returns, broad cyma moulding and a large strip of bed moulding. On the gable ends are wide, heavily moulded verge boards. There is a large, rectangular, brick, interior chimney on each gable end, as well as a square interior chimney on the wing gable end. The northeast chimney on the brick house has a rectangular chimney added to it. The original chimney has a corbelled cap and intrudes into the stone wing.

The main house is totally brick with a 5-1 common bond foundation and a moulded water table approximately five feet from the ground. From the water table on up, the wall is flemish bond. The northwest and northeast elevations are also 5-1 common bond.

Poplar Hall's fenestration features a five bay facade with a center bay entrance. The windows are double hung sash with 6/6 lights, and trimmed with a beaded timber frame and a large timber sill. Louvered shutters flank the second story windows, and paneled shutters are on the first story. Shutter dogs are in the form of a clam shell. The one-half circle arch at the top and bottom. The panel is defined by a large moulded edge. Trim consists of a large four light transom and three light side lights over flat panels.

Poplar Hall is laid out in a center stair hall, single pile plan. The chambers flanking the stair hall are very large and may be the result of an alteration of an eighteenth century plan. The stair hall is typically plain for the area with a two

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1785-1900  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Poplar Hall is a late eighteenth century dwelling which was considerably reworked during the mid-nineteenth century rebuilding phenomena that occurred in southern New Castle County. The house is in excellent condition and the interior is an outstanding example of the Greek Revival style popular during this period.

The southern New Castle County rebuilding cycle was related to a general period of rebuilding in the mid-Atlantic states. In Delaware, rebuilding activity occurred in different areas at different times. For instance, in northwest Delaware, the rapid replacement of log buildings by stone buildings in the first quarter of the nineteenth century has been documented. Rebuilding cycles have been linked with social changes as well as economic changes.

In southern New Castle County, social and economic changes were the results of responses to an agrarian depression that occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although the soil was rich and the terrain was level, poor farming techniques led to the exhaustion of soil fertility. Following a period of poor harvests, depopulation and depressed land values occurred. In the wake of this depression one of the first agricultural societies in the country was formed in 1804 in New Castle County. This reform movement advocated scientific farming techniques such as crop rotation, the use of fertilizers and the use of innovative farm machinery. An equally important tenet of the reformers in New Castle County was the reconsolidation of farmland. During this period of depressed land values, wealthier farmers were able to acquire substantial amounts of land and were able to realize, in the words of one essayist, the formation of an estate.

The agricultural reform movement, reconsolidation of land and economic revival had a number of repercussions in southern New Castle County. Contractual labor replaced slavery, already a diminishing institution in the eighteenth century. Farms continued to be run individually although now by managers who farmed on a crop share basis. Also associated with the rise of large estates was the restructuring of the architectural landscape. Prior to 1820, houses were constructed on a hall-parlor plan with outbuildings for domestic service functions. The nascent renewal began with the remodeling of older homes in the 1820's and 1830's. Remodeling was advocated in the mid-nineteenth century by popular periodicals and agricultural journals of the day.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA  
 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 # NA  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering  
 Record # NA

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:  
 State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
 Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 21.85

UTM References

A 

18	4313	61010	43718	81210
Zone	Easting		Northing	

  
 C 

18	433	450	43718	420
Zone	Easting		Northing	

B 

18	4313	81010	43718	41310
Zone	Easting		Northing	

  
 D 

18	433	390	43718	6210
Zone	Easting		Northing	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses enough land to contain the dwelling, outbuildings and acreage to retain integrity of setting

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Hubert F. Jicha, III/Assistant Historic Preservation Planner  
 organization New Castle County Department of Planning date May 1987  
 street & number 2701 Capitol Trail telephone 302-366-7780  
 city or town Newark state Delaware zip code 19711

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flight, open well stair that has a turned newel post and grained and turned balusters. Other trim is more elaborate.

The exterior of the house has changed somewhat since its construction. The main features are the same, the flemish bond facade and southwest gable end with a moulded water table which runs on all elevations except the northeast gable end. The clean finish of the water table course indicates that this was originally intended. From this evidence it must be assumed that the builders had planned for a gable end addition, perhaps a shed. This addition would have been replaced by the current stone wing. Other changes include the removal of three dormers on the facade pitch, and the removal of single bay porches with benches from the front and rear elevations. Evidence is extant for both of these alterations. In the latter case, scars are evident in the brick adjacent to the entryways. The scars on the facade have been foreshortened by the widening of the facade entry. The current porch is from the period of extensive remodeling. It has three bays and paneled, battered columns.

The cellar reflects the original late eighteenth century, three room, center hall floor plan. Brick bearing walls define a similar center space with doors leading into the corresponding chambers. In the northeast section is a triangular shaped chimney base which supported the non-extant corner fireplaces on the first floor. On two sides of the base are indented chimney relieving arches. The southwest chamber has a rectangular base with one large chimney relieving arch supporting the single hearth above.

Small, grilled window openings, now glazed, formerly ventilated the cellar. Doors to the outside are located in the gable ends. The northeast door opens into a stairway that ascends to the stone wing.

The cellar also reveals construction features. Floor joists consist of vertically sawn planks which are tenoned into drop mortises on two hewn summer beams, each spanning longitudinally from the gable ends to the respective bearing walls. These walls extend a full two stories. Brick bond on the interior is five course common bond.

The first and second stories were extensively altered in the mid-nineteenth century. No woodwork survives from the period of construction on these two stories.

The northeast chamber of the first story is the more subdued of the two extant chambers. It has moulded baseboard that is at least 12 inches broad. Door and window trim are alike with peaked lintels and stepped side trim. The windows have corbelled wood sills reflecting elements of Egyptian Revival. The corner fireplaces and partition wall have been removed. The only evidence of a partition wall is a remnant connecting the chimney to the ceiling, perhaps left to give additional support to a summer beam spanning the room. A rectangular hearth is now centered on the end wall. The marble hearth mantel is trimmed with plain pilasters, a mantel shelf and a shallow pointed arch

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frieze. A door was added on the southeast section of the northeast wall for access to the stone wing.

The most ostentatious room in the house is the southwest chamber, the formal parlor. The baseboard has a raised panel, and the windows are trimmed with a beaded surround, pilasters, and capped with ogee moulding. The windows sit over moulded recessed panels. The centerpiece of the room is the marble mantel, a strikingly large and ornate mid-nineteenth century work. The mantel consists of two large, squat, chamfered pilasters supporting an entablature with paneled spandrels and a bevel-edged shelf. The hearth opening features two double ogees on the top edge. Just beneath the shelf, between the spandrels, is a projecting, polygonal ornament. The room is lit by two opposing windows on the long elevations as well as two equally large windows flanking the hearth on the gable end.

The two flight center hall stair is lit by a window at the landing and ascends to the second story. The plan of the second floor consists of three bed chambers, an additional room in front of the stairs and a closed stair to the attic. The southwest chamber is one large room echoing the parlor below. This room is less ostentatious than the parlor. The trim is identical to the first story northeast chamber with its broad, moulded baseboard, windows with peaked lintels and stepped side trim and corbelled sills, and paneled doors. The door reveals are paneled. This trim runs throughout the second story. The hearth in the southwest chamber is frame and takes up only 2/3 of the chimney pile. The trim is identical to the first floor fireplace in the northeast chamber.

There are two unequally sized chambers on the northeast side of the second floor. The larger of the two is on the northwest side and it contains the hearth. The smaller southeast chamber contains a door on the northeast wall which leads to the stone wing. Both chambers have diagonal scars on the floor and ceiling indicating where the corner fireplaces formerly stood.

A small chamber is located at the head of the stair and has been converted into a bathroom. This room is sometimes referred to in contemporary records as the "little room over the entry."

Adjacent and parallel to the second story stair is the attic stair. The closed, two flight, closed-well stair leads to the garret. The two chamber garret is unfinished except for the center stair corridor and the stair itself which has plastered walls, a moulded handrail and a moulded wood cornice with original green paint. The partition walls were built with rough, beveled-edged vertical boards spiked with hand headed nails. Only the southwest door is extant and it consists of two large vertical boards with one center bead and two battens clinched with cut T-headed nails. The door is hung on H-hinges with rose-headed nails and is trimmed with a beaded surround.

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The open, unfinished garret reveals a roof construction of pinned common rafters seated on board false plates. The backs of some rafters have been trenched to receive and level shingle lath. Also revealed are the positions of three non-extant dormers removed in the 1940's.

A two story stone wing is on the northeast gable end of the larger brick house, apparently added in the mid-nineteenth century. The semi-coursed stone walls are constructed of large cobble stones. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and is trimmed with a plain box cornice, bed moulding and a flush verge with a plain verge board. There is an interior chimney with a replaced top on the northeast gable end. The square chimney on the northeast gable end of the brick house intrudes into the southwest end of the stone wing.

The fenestration on the southeast facade is an asymmetrical three bays, but the northwest elevation fenestration is symmetrical with a center bay entrance. The double hung, sash windows vary in size with one 2/2 light window and others with 6/6 lights. The windows are finished with a pinned timber surround, applied moulding, and a large timber lug sill. The off center door of the southeast facade has four recessed panels with ogee moulding. It is finished with a large timber lintel and a beaded interior and exterior surround. The wing does not have a basement although there is access to the cellar of the brick block.

The first story has two unequally sized rooms. The northeast chamber is the larger and it contains a very large cooking hearth on the end wall. The hearth is trimmed simply with a plain mantel shelf supported by small triangular brackets. On either side of the hearth are closets. One of the closet doors is hung on H-L hinges. In the east corner is a box winder stair which ascends to the second story. The door on the stair is beaded board and batten with clinched hand headed nails. On the northeast wall is a four panel door to the exterior.

The smaller southwest room has a door on the southeast wall, and a blocked door shared with the brick house in the southwest gable end. In the west corner are two boxed winder stairs--one ascending to the second story and one descending to the cellar of the brick house.

The second story consists of three chambers irregularly spaced, additional space around the stairways and a large closet in the south corner. The rooms are partitioned by beaded vertical board walls. The only heated room is the north chamber which contains the stone chimney pile rising undiminished from the first story. Within the pile is a small, shallow unornamented hearth. All the doors have four panels with quirked ogee moulding. A door shared with the brick house is located on the southwest wall. The attic is entered by box winder stairs in the east corner.

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The wing attic is an undivided and unfinished space. The roof structure consists of vertical sawn common rafters pinned at the apex. The gable of the brick house is visible on the southwest end and it reveals that the exterior portion of the square chimney has been removed from the gable on down.

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Associated with the dwelling are five outbuildings. All outbuildings contribute to the significance of the property.

Immediately northeast of the dwelling is a late nineteenth century, frame smoke house. The gable-roofed building is brace-framed with circular sawn members including rails and down-braces. The common rafters are butted and nailed. Siding consists of vertical sawn vertical board. Windows were added on the side elevations sometime in the twentieth century.

Northwest of the smoke house and due north of the house is a late nineteenth century gable-roofed frame dairy. The building is constructed with circular sawn scantling, sided with vertical boards, and roofed with corrugated metal. Beaded tongue and groove boards line the interior walls and ceiling. On the southeast elevation is a twentieth century concrete block lean-to. Directly behind the house, due northwest, is a string of buildings connected in a roughly Z-shaped configuration. Although this configuration has the appearance of a single unit, it is to be considered three buildings.

The oldest building, located adjacent and parallel to the road, is a two and one-half story crib barn built c. 1850. The rectangular building has large double doors on each gable end which are hung on long strap hinges. Siding consists mainly of vertical slats on the side elevations for the corn cribs, and vertical board elsewhere. The interior on the side elevations for the corn cribs, and vertical board elsewhere. The interior is divided into three longitudinal bays consisting of a center bay driveway flanked by corn cribs. A stairway in the east corner leads to the upper story which formerly contained grain bins. One bin is extant and is located in the south corner. The crib barn is of brace-framed construction with hewn principal and vertical sawn secondary timbers. The large joists of the granary are face-hewn log. Some of the joists also serve as girts and are square hewn on a four foot section on each end which corresponds to the width of the corn crib. Girts are additionally secured with U-shaped straps. Girts and rails are tenoned into seated mortises. The roofing system consists of common rafter with their apexes butted and nailed. Sometime in the twentieth century variably placed board collars were spiked on. Attached to the northeast elevation of the crib barn is an implement shed which is also attached to the cow barn. This building is being considered as an addition to the crib barn. It has a shed gable roof and is constructed with earthfast poles. Although nineteenth century in form and origin, this building was largely rebuilt in the mid-twentieth century and so cannot be considered as an independent contributing building.

The implement shed is also attached to the southwest gable end of the late 19th century cow barn. The cow barn is a large, gable-roofed, four by two bay, frame buildings, rectangular in plan and oriented perpendicular to the crib barn. The cow barn rests on a fieldstone foundation and is sided with board and bat-

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tern. The interior plan consists of a low ceiled first story with segregated sections for horses and cows, and a large open loft for hay and straw. The barn is brace-framed with circular sawn timbers, spiked up-braces, and plank joists. Girders are additionally supported by pipe posts with timberpillows. Concrete throughs with metal stanchions are extant.

An L-plan nineteenth century implement shed is attached to the northwest elevation of the cow barn. This implement shed has a gable roof and is constructed with earthfast poles and rails. There have been some repairs to it during the twentieth century. The shed shows the continuity of earlier building techniques through the use of earth fast poles.

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Generally, the farmers of this area preferred to build anew, either on the site of the old house or on a new site altogether. These new houses were often accompanied by long entrance lanes and landscaped gardens. The architectural style which emerged featured an unheated stair passage, and combined Gothic, Italianate and Greek Revival styles expressed in a rather subdued manner. Domestic functions, formerly relegated to outbuildings, were incorporated into the dwelling in the form of a service wing, lending to the building an L-configuration.

Popular Hall was probably built sometime in the late eighteenth century by either James Boulden the Elder (D.1783) or James Boulden the Younger (d.1826). Determining an exact construction date for Poplar Hall is problematical, as it is with other buildings, due to regional variations and individual idiosyncrasy. However, certain characteristics of Popular Hall when compared to dated house types and known construction techniques point to a construction date sometime in the late eighteenth century. The Flemish bond on the facade and southwest gable end, both visible from the public road, is generally considered an eighteenth century feature. The Five course common bond was also used in the late eighteenth as well as the early nineteenth centuries.

The second major eighteenth century feature is the three room plan with a center stair passage. Bernard Herman, in his book, Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900, defines such a plan as a variation for pre-1820 floor plans without stair passages. Corner fireplaces were also generally used to heat houses of this type.

A third eighteenth century feature are the scars adjacent to the entries. These indicate that porticos with built-in benches had been present at one time.

Primary documents also help to date a building.

The tax assessments of 1797 and 1804 list James Boulden and describe his estate in terms of acreage and buildings. The 1797 assessment lists two dwelling houses, one kitchen and one barn. The 1804 assessment lists a two story brick house, kitchen, barn. The very specific description in the latter assessment testifies to the peculiarity of a mansion the size of Poplar Hall during a time when a common house would be log and perhaps 20 by 26 feet in diameter.

The evidence for the mid-nineteenth century remodeling is equally numerous. The presence of exaggerated moulding, recessed panels and corbelled and stepped trim are indicative of the influence of the various "Revival" styles such as Greek and Italian Revival and in this particular case, Egyptian Revival. The evidence for the two chambers on the northeast side and the removal of two corner hearths has already been examined. The result of these alterations was to balance spatially the interior to reflect the exterior. The exuberance and ostentation of the parlor, a room the size of many contemporary houses, powerfully conveyed the degree of wealth and style of the

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Bouldens to the community. The clean linearity of the later trim contrasts with the convoluted moulding found in the attic.

The stone wing probably dates to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This was a period when service wings began to be added to existing buildings, incorporating functions which were previously housed in separate structures. The stone addition is an excellent example of this phenomena of an incorporated kitchen which was yet separate and distanced from the formal living spaces of the house.

The Boulden family, also spelled Boldin, Boulding and Bouldin (up until the mid-nineteenth century), moved to Delaware from Maryland in the mid-eighteenth century. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the extended Boulden family became substantial landholders in western Pencader Hundred and Cecil County, Maryland. The farm was willed to James Boulden the Younger from his father in 1784. In 1826, upon the death of James the Younger, the house and estate were willed to James Boulden (III), the son of a nephew, Jesse Boulden. The farm then remained in the hands of the third James Boulden until 1889. The wealth of the Bouldens was fairly substantial. James the Elder willed a plantation each to sons James the Younger and Thomas, plus an additional forty acres. Over 300 pounds (currency) was willed to various grandchildren. Elizabeth Boulden, upon her death in 1785, willed additional money to her grandchildren, as well as household items, including pewter, to her daughter. James the Younger died without children and directed that the farm be given to his nephew-once-removed after his wife's death. To another nephew's son he willed blacksmith and wheelwright shops and houses, plus woodland in Cecil County, Maryland.

The outbuildings represent the continuation of the agricultural tradition at Poplar Hall. The earliest building, the crib barn, represents a building type which materially expressed the idea of efficiency and the consolidation of functions in its design. This building type evolved and became ubiquitous in central Delaware. The farmers in this area never completely embraced the idea of the total consolidation of functions in one building as indicated by the sparse number of bank barns. The large livestock barn represents a continued reliance on mixed farming in the late nineteenth century. Mixed farming has dominated agricultural practice in this area since the eighteenth century. Grains and dairy products were the traditional cash crops except for a brief period in the mid-nineteenth century when peaches were grown as a market crop for export to large eastern cities. The Agricultural Census of 1850 and 1860 shows that James Boulden (III) raised substantial amounts of wheat and butter for cash crops, Indian corn and oats for animal fodder, and other staples for home consumption. Conspicuously absent from the 1870 Agricultural Census is any mention of orchard products. A majority of farmers in this area had invested heavily in peach orchards, some of whom made substantial profits, before being forced back to traditional crops by market glut and blight. James Boulden (III) was either unable or unwilling to make the capital investment needed to participate in this speculative type of agriculture.

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The Tax Assessments of 1797 and 1804, and the Population Census of 1820 reveal the continuation of slave holding on this farm. In 1797 there were twelve slaves, in 1804 six, and in 1820 seven. The 1826 will of James Boulden the Younger stipulates that two slaves be given to his wife and that they remain in service until they are 25, at which time they were to be freed. This fact of slave owning in the face of social and economic disincentives, the reluctance to participate in speculative agriculture, and the preservation of the family mansion highlights a conservatism which perhaps can be expected from an old landed family.

Poplar Hall is one of the few remaining eighteenth century buildings on the landscape in southern New Castle County. Perhaps because of its size and its history as the ancestral home of his namesake, the third James Boulden did not go to the extent of other landowners in demolishing the building. However, his alterations of the interior and exterior, and the addition of the peculiar stone wing testify to the participation of James Boulden (III) in the rebuilding frenzy of the mid-nineteenth century. The ostentation of the interior trim, especially the unique second story door reveals and ornate parlor mantel, show that James Boulden was making a strong statement as to his social and economic standing in the community.

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Poplar Hall illustrates several themes identified in the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation plan. It is located in the Upper Peninsula zone but sufficiently close to the Pennsylvania Piedmont so as to be effected by agricultural and cultural patterns in northern Delaware, Southeast Pennsylvania and northeast Maryland. The agriculture use of the land illustrates the increased use of scientific management techniques utilized during the nineteenth century after the overuse of the land by earlier generations. The numerous out-buildings erected and used throughout the nineteenth century reflect a tradition in the upper peninsula zone to favor numerous farm buildings rather than the consolidation of activity in one large buildings that was popular in the more northern positions of Delaware. The stone wing and the retrimming of the house in the nineteenth century reflect a large scale rebuilding of northern Delaware dwellings in order to maintain a fashionable appearance in the community.

The specific historic contexts that cover Poplar Hall are the 1770-1830 and 1830-1880 periods with landscape being the principal cultural concept. Economic and cultural trends also applies.

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

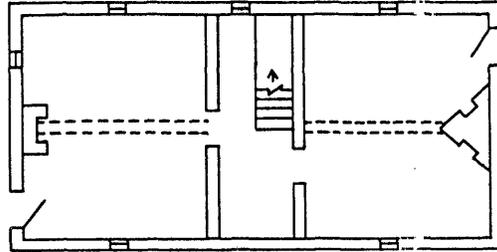
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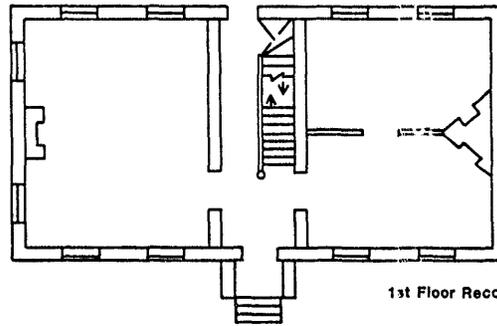
The boundary of the nominated property lies within the legal parcel as indicated on the attached sketch map which is referenced: New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985, parcel number 11-045.00-003. The portion nominated is a polygonal piece with Denny Road defining two sides, a field line as indicated on the parcel map as the southeast side, and a line connecting the two.



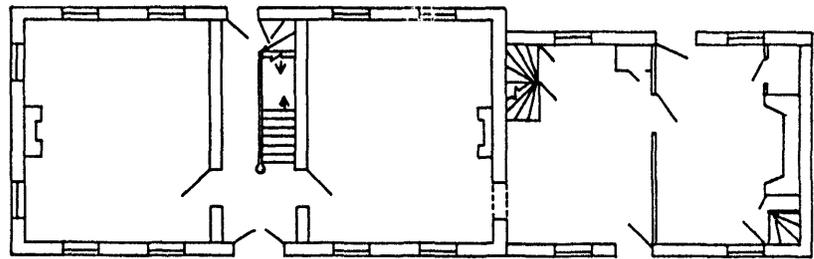




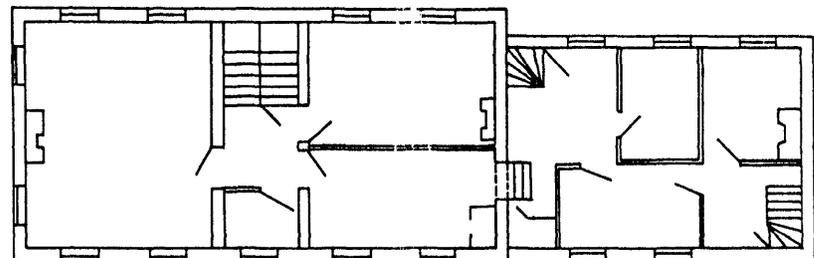
Cellar



1st Floor Reconstructed



1st Floor



2nd Floor

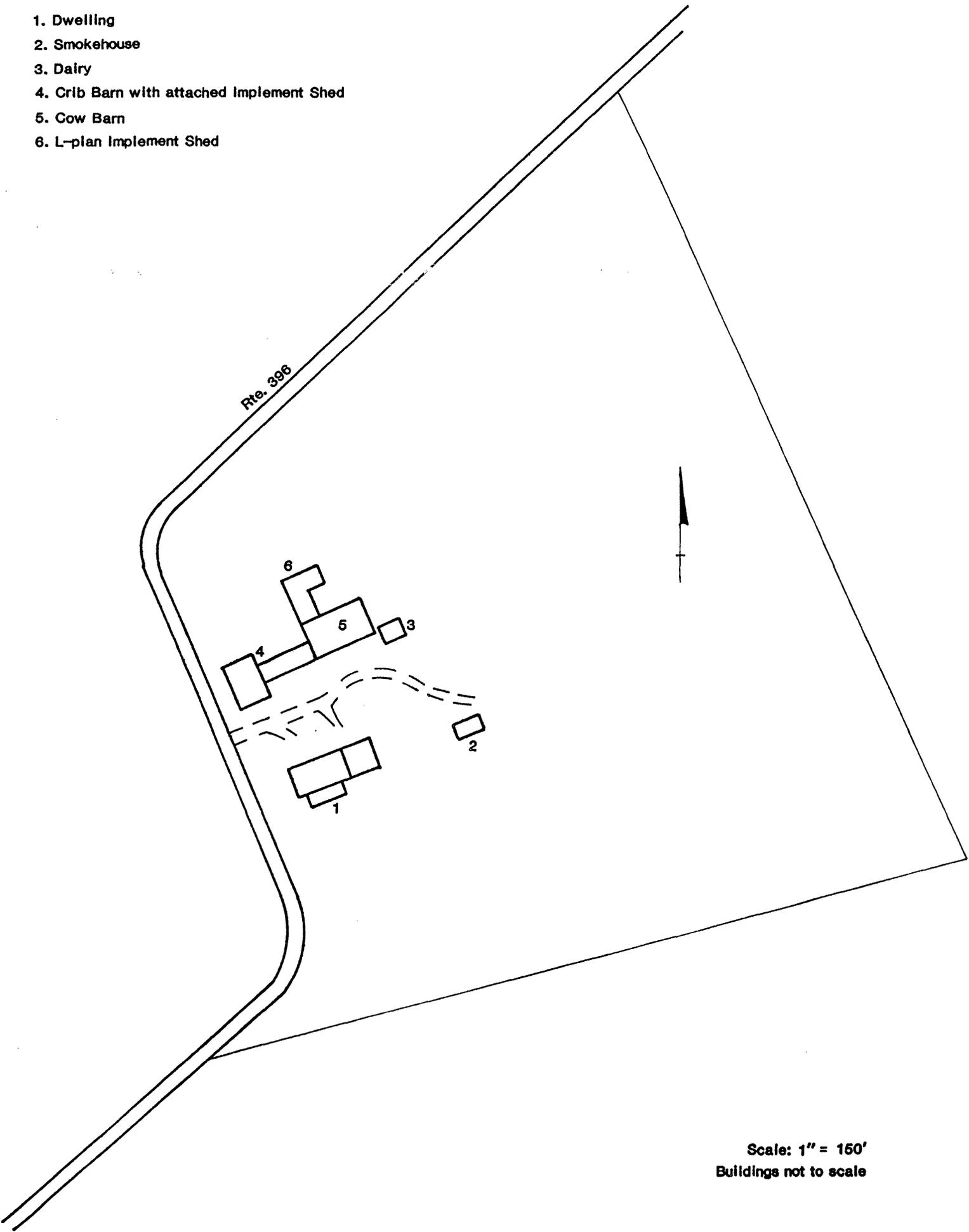
N-6189 POPLAR HALL

not to scale

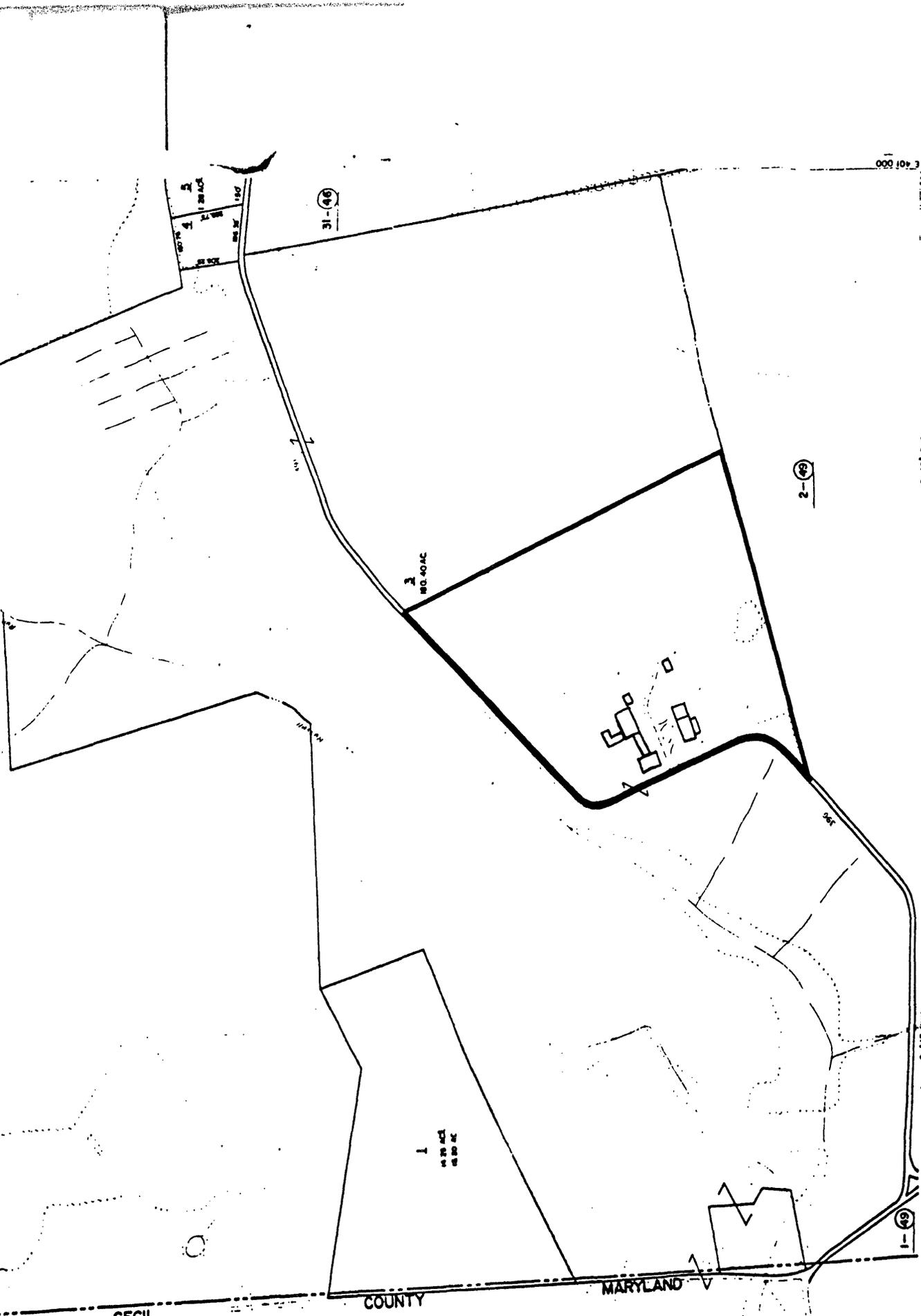
**KEY**

**Poplar Hall N-6199**

- 1. Dwelling**
- 2. Smokehouse**
- 3. Dairy**
- 4. Crib Barn with attached Implement Shed**
- 5. Cow Barn**
- 6. L-plan Implement Shed**



**Scale: 1" = 150'**  
**Buildings not to scale**



CECIL

COUNTY

MARYLAND

**SKETCH MAP**  
 N-6199  
 Poplar Hall  
 New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985  
 Parcel Number 11-045.00-003  
 1 inch = 400 feet

OUTLINE  
 ▭ PARCEL LINE  
 --- MOOR  
 --- NUMBER  
 --- ASSEMBLED ACREAGE  
 --- CALCULATED ACREAGE  
 --- PARCEL & CONTROL MAP #1  
 --- SUBDIVISION LOT #2



REVISIONS	DATE	BY
1	1-2-85	...
2	2-2-85	...
3	...	...
4	...	...
5	...	...
6	...	...
7	...	...
8	...	...
9	...	...
10	...	...

PROPERTY MAP  
 NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE  
 HILNORED PENCADER  
 MAP # 45  
 SCALE 1" = 200'  
 DATE OF FILING 08-08  
 DATE COMPILED MAP #0  
 GRID SYSTEM COORDINATE SYSTEM

1:400,000 N 365,000

31-46

2-49

1-49