

VI. PRIORITIES AND GOALS FOR AGRICULTURAL TENANCY

The historic preservation planning process in Delaware is divided into three general stages (Figure 42). I. Establishing the Planning Framework, II: Identifying the Historic Resource Base, and III: Establishing Preservation Goals for the Historic Resources. The planning framework is formed by a fully developed historic context. The elements of a historic context were listed in Chapter 1 (Definition of the Historic Context) and help to formulate the organization of this report: Goals and objectives for the identification of the historic resource base (Phase II) are derived from the historic context and its associated property types. Phase II includes four major preservation planning activities: 1) the identification of historic resources; 2) the evaluation of those resources in relationship to the historic context and National Register Standards; 3) the registration of resources deemed eligible for the National Register; and 4) the listing of all resources and property types related to the historic context (in the case, agricultural tenancy).

This chapter will set forth goals and priorities for the agricultural tenancy historic context and its property types with the following steps:

- 1) place the context within the priorities of the Delaware Plan,
- 2) present goals and objectives, derived from this historic context and its associated property types, for the identification, evaluation, and registration of historic resources related to agricultural tenancy, and
- 3) discuss issues raised by the historic context for the preservation of resources related to agricultural tenancy.

Agricultural Tenancy and the Goals and Priorities of the Delaware Plan

The Agricultural Tenancy historic context is a subtheme of the major historic theme of "Agriculture" in the Historic Context Matrix. It also relates to the historic theme of "Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes." The Delaware Plan has set priorities among the 18 major historic themes for Delaware and related these priorities to the five chronological periods and five geographic zones within the state.

The highest priority for preservation in the Delaware Plan is on agricultural historic resources built during the chronological periods of 1770-1830+/- and 1830-1880+/- in the Upper Peninsula, Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp, and Coastal zones. The plan concluded

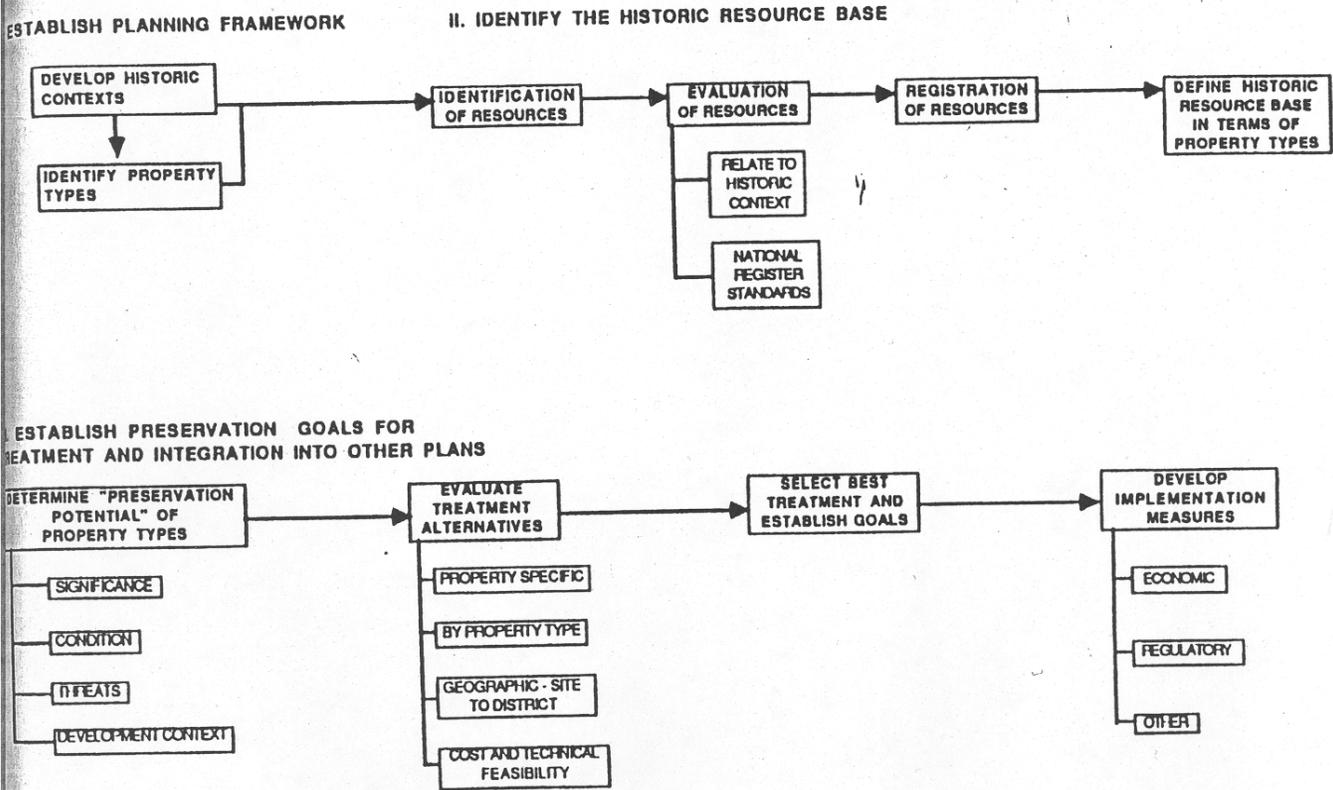


Figure 42: Three Stages of Preservation Planning
 Source: Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, p. 56.

That the most threatened and fragile historic resources in the state are those related to agriculture historic resources, built from 1770 to 1880 in the Coastal Zone.

In the past four to five years, extensive research has been completed on the statewide' agricultural historic context and its associated property types resulting in the identification, evaluation, and registration on the National Register of Historic Places of a number of historic properties related to the agricultural tenancy historic context.105 From this work tenancy has emerged as an important dimension of the agricultural economy of Delaware, and one whose nature suggested that it should be have high priority for historic context development.

Goals for Identification Activities

Based on criteria developed in the historic context, identification activities are undertaken for the purpose of locating all of the historic properties related to the context, in this case agricultural tenancy. Identification activities include, but are not limited to, archival research, informant interviews. Identification activities include, but are not limited to, archival research, informant interviews, cultural resource survey and analysis. Normally, the field surveys are the primary identification activity.

Because few distinctive physical property types were found to be associated with the agricultural tenancy historic context, we recommend that identification activities for tenancy be incorporated into all the identification activities and evaluation criteria related to properties in the larger historic context for agriculture. Documentary research would form the primary identification activity.

Research. Design. Identification activities are essentially research activities for which a statement of objectives or research design should be prepared. Within the framework of comprehensive planning the research design provides a vehicle for integrating the various activities performed during the identification and for linking those activities directly to the goals of the historic context.

Limiting the geographical area of the agriculture tenancy historic context to three hundreds in the Upper Peninsula Zone was based partly on the need to examine tenancy in greater depth than could be done on a zone- or state-wide basis. There was an underlying assumption that the findings of this context would be applied to identification and evaluation activities on a statewide basis as part of the overall historic context for agriculture. At the time the research was begun it was not known that the context would not yield specific

property types.

We have developed three specific goals for identification activities related to the agricultural tenancy historic context

- 1) To conduct an intensive level survey and nomination of the potentially eligible sites identified in Appendix A of this report. This goal should be promptly addressed and we recommend that it be accomplished within three years. This project will be highly labor-intensive since it will require both intensive-level field work and extensive archival research on each property.
- 2) To conduct a reconnaissance and intensive level survey of agricultural tenancy sites in other hundreds throughout the state using the research design for reconnaissance survey discussed in Appendix A. Any sites identified as potentially eligible should be added to the thematic or multiple resource National Register nomination developed above. Since it would be impossible to undertake this level of survey for the entire state in a one-year project, it is our recommendation that it be split according to the geographic zones identified in the Delaware Plan. All of the zones should be addressed within six years. These projects will also be highly labor-intensive.
- 3) To review the potential eligibility of all agricultural properties reviewed for National Register eligibility for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy context. The linkage of a farm with tenancy would be established during the course of developing a documentary history of the resource. It is our recommendation that all evaluations of the significance of agricultural properties would have to establish the history of tenancy of the property and relate it to the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context. The research design for identifying and evaluating tenancy would be that used in the agricultural tenancy historic context. Over time, the evaluation and registration process would result in a series of properties known to be part of the agricultural tenancy historic context. This goal would be addressed on an on-going basis with no particular schedule.

Outreach as an identification activity. To facilitate the understanding of the significance of tenancy in the Delaware agricultural history, we are recommending that a short summary of the historic context be written and published for a professional audience of planners, as well as historical society members and the general public. This publication would provide a tenancy checklist so that individuals would be guided to the appropriate archival sources for determining whether the property they were interested in was ever a tenant farm and whether it might relate to the historic context.

Integrating Identification Results into the Comprehensive Plan. The results of these identification activities and the agricultural tenancy historic context would be integrated into the *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary* volume of the Delaware Plan as part of the plan's five-year update.

Goals for Evaluation

The primary goal for evaluation is that any resource identified through survey activities related to the agriculture context shall be evaluated for potential inclusion in the Agricultural Tenancy Context. Second, all existing National Register nominations for sites that are potentially eligible for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy context should be upgraded to include a thorough discussion of tenancy and its relationship to that particular site. Third, we recommend that a comprehensive review be carried out of all National Register nominations for agricultural complexes and properties fitting the description of house and gardens in order to determine whether they are candidates for inclusion in the agricultural tenancy historic context. Fourth, based on the results of the above evaluations, we recommend that the evaluation criteria for associative property types be further expanded. Fifth, survival rates for tenant farms at specific points in time should be developed from the survey and evaluation. Sixth, the property type *house and gardens* should be explored in further detail, particularly in other parts of the zone and the state; it is important to locate some of these properties for field evaluation and to establish better documentation of patterns and links to different part of the community. Lastly, this entire context should be tested against other zones in the state.

Goals for Treatment and Integration Into Other Plans

In Phase III of the preservation planning process, once the pool of specific properties and property types related to the historic context have been defined, goals are established for the actual preservation and treatment of these resources. Under the standards of the Secretary of Interior, a goal is a statement of "preferred preservation activities...to provide the greatest possible protection of properties within the historic context. Establishing preservation goals is the last element of a complete historic context under the National Park Service guidelines and the Delaware Plan.

Under the Delaware plan, goals for preserving a specific historic resource take place in four steps after the resources have been evaluated. First, the "preservation potential" of property types is determined based on their significance, condition, threats and development context; second, a range of feasible treatment or preservation alternatives are evaluated; third, and "best" treatment alternative is selected and fourth and finally actual implementation measures for protecting the resource are designed.

Threats to Resources Related to Agriculture and Agricultural Tenancy

Since tenant farms are a part of the larger agricultural historic contexts, they are by definition subject to the same type and geographical distribution of threats described in the Delaware Plan. Since such a large percentage of nineteenth century farms were tenanted at

one time or another, a significant number of these resources will be lost due to development of agricultural land and abandonment of smaller farmsteads through agricultural holdings. Therefore it is important to determine which farms are most representative of agricultural tenancy and to undertake at least interim treatment actions to preserve them in some manner.

General Treatment Alternatives for Agricultural Historic Resources

The most fundamental agricultural historic recourse is the historic agricultural landscape itself of which farmsteads and their individual buildings are a part. The most desirable treatment goal is to maintain the agricultural landscape in continued use as much as possible. Maintaining an agricultural landscape under development pressure intact requires an agriculturally productive landscape in which the goals of historic preservation can be combined with those of other planning goals such as agricultural land preservation and environmental management. Such preservation is undergirded by both regulation and controls as well as incentives.' Such a preservation treatment plan has yet to be developed for the Agricultural Historic Context for Delaware. Until such a landscape-based policy is in place, treatment efforts can only focus on farmsteads and individual buildings.

Selection of properties for preservation treatment. The fact that tenancy *is* a changing characteristic of individual farms, and that the desired way of preserving farms is to maintain them in continued and productive use suggests that the primary means of treatment and preservation of agricultural tenancy will be through documentation especially through visual documentation of the Historic American Building Survey and the Threatened Building Survey of Delaware. Although tenancy is a changing characteristic of farms, farms that are good representatives of the agricultural tenancy historic context should be identified on the basis of the following criteria: 1) meeting the evaluation criteria for the historic context and/or specific property types; 2) being examples of property types that survive in low numbers, particularly African-American tenant farms and low-end tenant housing; and 3) having been occupied by tenants during a significant period in Delaware's agricultural history. Selection of these properties will result from the identification and evaluation activities described earlier.

Identification of Tenant Farms to Be Documented from the Agricultural Tenancy Historic Context. It is our recommendation that from the farms identified by this context, two be selected for documentation according to Historic American Buildings Survey standards and at the intensive level in the Delaware Threatened Buildings Survey protocol. This will insure that a minimum number of tenant farms have been documented at a high level. Our second recommendation is that the associative and physical property types identified for agricultural tenancy be added to the list of priorities for documentation under

the Delaware Threatened Buildings Survey.

In the long range, candidates for additional documentation should be identified as part of the five-year plan update in which all registered resources related to agricultural tenancy are evaluated.