

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

One of the goals of the current project was to determine through field examination, research, and evaluation which properties containing historic-period buildings appeared eligible for listing in the National Register. Properties were largely evaluated for significance using contexts developed for the US 113 North/South Study (McVarish et al. 2005, 2006). Only one recognized property type, residences, or residential dwelling types are expected and represented within the APE. Eligibility criteria for this property type follow.

3.1 RESIDENCES

The residential development in the project area historically evolved as portions of former agricultural properties were subdivided into smaller residential lots stemming from the birth and development of a small town. The residential development closest to the heart of the town(s) often reflects common architectural styles, plans, and detail popular during its development. Styles and plans of houses reflect the lifestyles and economic levels of the residents, as well as the influence of the media, including architectural and general interest periodicals and plan books. Other influences include the predilections of local builders and the availability of prefabricated houses manufactured by companies such as Sears Roebuck and Aladdin.

Post-World War II residential construction in the APE, as elsewhere, reflected the influence of widespread economic and cultural trends. Economic trends that resulted in housing construction included public and private financial assistance; increased mobility due to improved roads and increased ownership of automobiles; general post-war economic prosperity; relocation of jobs away from city and town cores; and economic transition away from agriculture and toward manufacturing and service jobs.

Cultural trends that resulted in residential development included an increased desire to own land; increased dissemination of a suburban ideal of independent ownership of a single-family home; changing living patterns; availability of new materials for home construction; and economic and racial segregation.

Several trends characterize the adaptations of post-World War II housing in Delaware. High style residences are not as common as simpler, small versions. Among the multiple reasons for this trend are economic conditions resulting in the need for rapidly built affordable housing. Within the APE, traditional suburban development appears later than in the more urbanized areas of Dover and north. This may be due to the prevailing rural character of Sussex County and due to the erection of houses along linear corridors and narrow, subdivided portions of farm tracts.

Residences built within the APE represent many of the common house types chronicled in architectural guidebooks and in specialized guides such as *Common Houses in America's Small Towns: The Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi Valley* (Jakle et al. 1989).

Among the house types and forms present in the APE are vernacular I-houses, gable-front double-pile houses, Bungalow/Craftsman houses, Cape Cod cottages, and minimal traditional/ranch houses. The high-style origins of many of these designs began during the mid-nineteenth century by the wealthy. More affordable versions of the house types were erected using existing plans disseminated through periodicals and plan books, as well as plans obtained by builders and, in some cases, distributed through lumber yards or financial institutions. These designs received regional or national notoriety and distribution.

Most of the house styles/types and forms in the APE represent common nineteenth- and twentieth-century designs. For this reason, most examples, even those that retain a high degree of integrity, do not possess the requisite level of significance to be eligible for their architecture. The following registration requirements define characteristics that must be present to convey significance.

Because of the number and pervasiveness of recent house styles, such as the ranch or minimal ranch, only those examples unchanged from their original design are considered to retain integrity. For older residences, some degree of alteration is to be expected. In these house types, integrity is dependent on the presence of diagnostic features and the conveying of strong associations with the original period of construction.

3.1.1 I-House (early 19th–early 20th centuries)

As Jakle, et al. indicate (1989), during the nineteenth century, the I-house symbolized affluence born of the land. The strength of the form as a status symbol was maximized when the façade faced the public road projecting an impressive front elevation. This association of the house with prosperity and respectability was common among farmers and businessmen and professionals in villages and towns. Much of the rural affluence could be attributed to the rise of commercial agriculture associated with the development of regional railroad networks and regional markets (Jakle et al. 1989:121).

The central hall I-house is one of the more noticeable traditional house forms in the rural eastern United States (McAlester and McAlester 1984:96; Noble 1984:52-55). In form, it is essentially a hall and parlor house with an added central hallway serving a centrally positioned front door. The form is one room deep with single rooms on either side of the hall. It is two full stories high with a gable roof. Fenestration is characteristically symmetrical with three, four, and five bay patterns common. Many I-houses have additional space in a perpendicular, two-story rear ell (Jakle et al. 1989:120-121; Wyatt n.d.:33).

Registration Requirements: The I-house must be two stories in height and with three or five front façade bays. The main core of the dwelling typically measures two rooms wide by one room deep. The roof should be of average pitch and the lineation hipped or side-gabled. Porches across the front and ells to the rear are not uncommon. The entry door should be centralized, leading to a central passage and chimneys generally placed on either or both gable-end wall(s).

The construction date of the house is important in assessing its eligibility. Due to rarity, an eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century I-house may be eligible under Criterion A as exemplifying the early settlement history of the area or an early example of this house form in the area. In general, to possess significance under Criterion A, the residence must exemplify an important historic trend or event. The historic association must be conveyed by the building's current appearance. Eligibility under Criterion B requires association with the productive life of a historically significant individual. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that the house be a notable example of a type or period of construction possessing its original diagnostic façade arrangement and interior plan and retaining a large proportion of original or historic exterior fabric. Eligibility under Criterion D requires that either the building fabric possesses information potential or that the property possesses archeological potential. Few of the houses of this form in the project area are expected to meet any of these eligibility criteria.

To possess integrity, the house must retain a preponderance of original or historic fabric, including siding, windows and doors, roof profile and structure, chimney(s), and porch components. Residing in aluminum or vinyl siding precludes eligibility. Additions, especially to the rear of the dwelling, may not compromise the integrity, provided these additions are in keeping with the massing of the original block. Eligible I-houses may or may not have exterior front or side porches and/or rear or side ell additions,

depending on their original form and function and evolving usage. Screened-in porches do not compromise integrity, but infilled porches that date from after the period of significance usually render the property ineligible.

3.1.2 Gable-Front Double-Pile Houses (late 19th-early 20th centuries)

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century gable-front houses are commonly seen in cities where they were particularly well-suited for the narrow lots of the urban northeast. This house form is less commonly found in small towns and rural areas. By the early twentieth century, the gable-front house was widely available as both a stock builder form and a prefabricated catalog house.

While typical urban houses have a narrow, tall façade the few examples in the project area are wider than these urban examples, allowing more interior space (McAlester and McAlester 1984:90). Because of the larger size than most other house types of the period, these houses were probably erected for relatively prosperous early twentieth-century Delawareans.

In this house type, the gable faces the street and the building could rise to a height of two or two-and-one-half stories (Figure 37). It is two rooms wide and two or more rooms deep. Nineteenth-century versions of this form usually feature a side hall serving a front door set to one side of the gable. Gable front twentieth-century houses have irregular bungalow-like room arrangements (Jakle et al. 1989:143).

Registration Requirements: To possess significance under Criterion A, the residence must exemplify an important historic trend or event. The historic association must be convincingly conveyed by the current building appearance. Eligibility under Criterion B requires association with the productive life of a historically significant individual. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that the house be a notable example of a type or period of construction. As a modern vernacular house type, gable front, double-pile cottages rarely meet the eligibility requirements of Criterion C. Eligibility under Criterion D requires that either the building fabric possesses information potential or that the property possesses archeological potential. Few, if any of the houses of this form in the project areas are expected to meet any of these eligibility criteria.

To possess integrity, the gable front, double pile cottage must adhere to standards of simplicity similar to the side-gable cottage. It must be one or one-and-one-half stories in height and constructed with two or three bays. It should be oriented so that the roofline is perpendicular to the street, and the gable forms the façade of the building. The roof must have an average pitch and may be broken with a modest cross-gable dormer. The entry door should be sheltered by a front porch (Chase et al. 1992:63).

3.1.3 Bungalow/Craftsman (1910s-1930s)

According to architectural historian Anthony King, the bungalow is America's first "distinctively national type" of house. It was one of the first common house ideas in the United States to break regional boundaries and gain acceptance almost everywhere. Based upon Arts and Crafts ideas, it enabled an inexpensive house to be built with open flowing spaces that appealed to Americans of modest means.

The bungalow grew in popularity as a result of prefabricated houses and the national media. The prefabricated houses, offered by Sears, Roebuck and Company, departed substantially from Arts and Crafts ideas. While William Morris and Gustav Stickley and others encouraged hand craftsmanship, the bungalow became the epitome of machine-made housing. The national media, including such magazines

as *The American Architect*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Architectural Record*, *Country Life*, and *Ladies Home Journal* provided both photographs and floor plans of bungalow designs (Jakle et al. 1989:172-173).

Bungalows began to be built in the United States at about the turn of the twentieth century, became popular during the 1910s and remained popular through the 1930s (Noble 1984:146-147). Characterized by low silhouettes and low pitched overhanging roofs with inset front porches, bungalows were constructed both in the suburbs of the northern portion of the state and in more rural areas of Kent and Sussex counties. Bungalows were viewed as economical dwellings with easily built designs that appealed to both urban and rural residents. It was not uncommon for some, if not all, of the building materials to come from local mills (Mulchahey et al. 1990).

Bungalows in Delaware are typically three-bay, one- or one-and-one-half-story houses of wood-framed, brick, stone, or concrete-block construction, or a combination of these materials. Wood-framed bungalows are often shingled, although clapboards are also frequently used as exterior cladding. A common feature of the bungalow is its low-pitched shallow roof with deep overhanging eaves supported by substantial brackets. The roof may be oriented with its ridge line either parallel with or perpendicular to the street. Exposed structural members, such as rafter ends, are also typical. A deep porch with flared base nearly always extends across the façade and is supported by corner pillars. Pillars are often battered and may be constructed either of the same material as the dwelling or of a contrasting material, such as stucco or concrete. The porch roof may be cross-gabled or pyramidal but is most typically shed (Lanier and Herman 1997:179-180).

Gable-front “box” bungalows are usually one-and-one-half stories in height with a full-width, usually hip-roofed, front porch. In some less elaborate, vernacular examples, the porch roof may take a shed configuration. This porch extends from the front wall of the house rather than being recessed as is often the case with side-gabled bungalows. Craftsmen elements may include exposed rafter tails, brackets, and battered wood box columns, often elevated on high plinths. Sometimes these dwellings may incorporate side cross gables.

Other examples of bungalows are more elaborate, drawing elements from classic California bungalows. These examples may include contrasting materials, such as wood shingles and rubble stone, one of more cross gables, partial-width front porches, exposed rafter ends at unboxed eaves, and knee-braced exposed beams at the gables. Fenestration may use three-over-one, four-over-one, six-over-one, or eight-over-one windows, as well as casement windows.

Bungalow plans often included fireplaces with rustic hearths. Plans also frequently included such built-in furniture as cupboards, buffets, bookcases, and window seats. Mulchahey et al. reported that a sampling of house plans published between 1910 and 1924 indicated that the average bungalow had five or six rooms, including living room, dining room, kitchen, two or three bedrooms, and a bath. Half had built-in buffets, while about a third had built-in window seats or bookcases (Mulchahey et al. 1990:8-8). Because interiors of dwellings were not viewed during the current survey the character of furnishings and interior woodwork was unable to be assessed.

Most bungalows constructed in rural settings often adapted suburban design elements. At times, they were constructed on small lots along the roadway, often with sidewalks leading to the front doors and hedges marking property boundaries. Builders often treated rural roads as if they were streets and constructed an architectural form that followed a suburban, rather than a rural, pattern in size, orientation, and use of space. There was a clear contrast with neighboring farm houses which were generally set back further from the road and surrounded by domestic and agricultural outbuildings (Mulchahey et al. 1990).

Registration Requirements: To possess significance under Criterion A, the bungalow must be representative of an important historical trend. A development of bungalows that represents the first suburban neighborhood in an area or region may be eligible. Individual eligibility requires that innovative building technology be present on the exterior or interior, or that the building exemplify important achievements of architecture/engineering. Eligibility under Criterion B requires association with the productive life of a historically significant individual. To be eligible under National Register Criterion C, a house must be a notable example of the architecture of its time, often an architect-designed example of this house type, possessing diagnostic elements of the Craftsman style, such as a shallow-pitched roof; overhanging eaves; a wide porch extending across the façade; squat, often battered, porch posts; contrasting materials; exposed rafter ends; eaves brackets; and multi-light, double-hung sashes. The significance of the dwelling is enhanced if the eaves are supported by brackets and if its design includes a bay window. The covering of original siding materials with historic replacement siding, such as clapboards or cement-asbestos shingles, may be acceptable if the building maintains its original design, materials, workmanship, and massing. Open or enclosed front and rear porches are integral components of a bungalow. To be eligible, a bungalow should retain its original porch(es). Replacement windows may have been installed. However, the original fenestration pattern should remain. Bungalows should retain the original door placement if not the door(s) itself/themselves.

The interior plan of a bungalow is characterized by a compact, informal arrangement of adjacent rooms with spaces that flow together (Lanier and Herman 1997:48). Bungalows often included fireplaces with rustic hearths, as well as built-in furniture such as cupboards, buffets, bookcases and window seats (Mulchahey et al. 1990:8-8). The interior plan and interior furnishings of an eligible bungalow will be basically unchanged. Because building interiors were not included in this survey, the applicability of these interior criteria to bungalows of southern Sussex County could not be assessed.

Eligibility under Criterion D requires that the property possess information potential in the existing building fabric. Few, if any, of the bungalows in the APE are expected to meet any of these eligibility criteria.

Changes in use do not automatically disqualify a bungalow from eligibility. However, to be eligible, a bungalow must still retain integrity and distinctive exterior stylistic elements. Because of the commonness of the bungalow type throughout much of the United States, National Register eligibility requires more than retention of integrity.

3.1.4 Cape Cod (1930-1950s)

In basic form, the Cape Cod is a simple, side-gabled cottage with diagnostic attic dormers. It represented a more affordable version of most Colonial Revival types. In this way, it represented a successor of the bungalow and appealed to the same demographic group, providing a small, economical, yet old fashioned house. The Cape Cod received national publicity through books such as *Houses for Homemakers* by Boston architect Royal Barry Wills.

The Cape Cod house came to its greatest popularity in the 1940s and 1950s as GIs returning home sought to buy houses for their families. Plans for Cape Cod homes by Wills and other architects were circulated nationally through the “House of the Month” scheme, which distributed plans and models to banks and savings and loans all over the country. In addition, planned developments such as Levittown, New York featured Cape Cod houses (National Association of Realtors n.d.).

This one-and-one-half-story dwelling is typically three bays wide with a steep side-gabled roof. A distinctive feature is the presence of two or sometimes three, gabled dormers that pierce the front roof

slope. The Cape Cod is most frequently of wood-framed construction with a clapboard exterior, although brick and stucco are also used. The dwelling is usually symmetrical with a central entry flanked by a pair of windows on either side. The entry is frequently ornamented with a pediment and pilasters and occasionally a transom and sidelights (Chase et al. 1992:50). In less elaborate examples, the main entry is sheltered by a gabled hood. Another Colonial Revival detail present on some examples is a dentilled cornice.

Registration Requirements: A Cape Cod must be characterized by a side-gable orientation with a steeply pitched roof pierced by two or three gabled dormers. The eligibility of a house of this style under Criterion C is strengthened if the dwelling is symmetrical in design, has traditional classical decoration around the door, and has ornamental shutters at the windows (Chase et al. 1992:63).

To possess significance under Criterion A, the house must exemplify an important historical trend or event. The historical associations must be convincingly conveyed by the current appearance of the building. Eligibility under Criterion B requires association with the productive life of an individual important in the history of a community or area. Eligibility under Criterion C requires architectural distinction. An eligible Cape Cod will be better preserved than the average Cape Cod in a particular area and will exhibit the diagnostic elements of its building type. These elements include elaborated entrances, often with pilasters and a patterned transom, symmetrical fenestration with multi-light, double-hung sash windows, ornamental shutters, and symmetrical, often pedimented, front dormers. Eligibility under Criterion D requires that the property possess information potential in the existing building fabric. Because most Cape Cods in southern Delaware are inexpensive vernacular residences, few, if any, of the Cape Cods in the APE are expected to individually meet any of these eligibility criteria. Individual Cape Cods in a group of similar dwellings may be eligible as components of a historic district.

To be eligible for the National Register, a Cape Cod must possess integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and association. All of the original diagnostic elements of the type must be present and unaltered, including ornamental shutters. The house must not have been re-sheathed unless the re-sheathing occurred more than 50 years ago. Additions, if present, must not have been made to the primary elevations of the house. Any addition must be substantially smaller in scale than the main house block.

3.1.5 Minimal Traditional (1946-present)

The minimal traditional style was a simplified form of the pre-war popular Tudor style that flourished during the 1920s and 30s. Like the Tudor, most minimal traditional constructions adopted the noticeable front gable and massive chimney. High roof pitches were lowered and the façade was simplified. A big picture window was added to show off newly purchased furniture, but the size of other windows was reduced to preserve the illusion of privacy. Aspects of the interior, such as the attic, were reduced to little more than a crawl space. In many areas, these nondescript “ranchettes” followed one another in an endless stretch of nearly identical houses. Well known post-war developers such as William Levitt largely contributed to the nationwide boom of this style of construction and sought to build good, low-cost housing for the millions of people who wanted to own their first house in the postwar economic boom period (McAlester and McAlester 1984:477; Split Level.net 2004).

Like the standard ranch, the minimal traditional is a simple, single-story, rectangular house. Unlike the standard ranch, garages are not attached or integrated, but are self-standing structures when they exist. A small dwelling of five rooms or less, the minimal traditional resembles an elongated double-pile cottage. Window treatment, especially the use of picture windows or horizontal bands of double-hung windows, conveys the ranch allusion. The minimal traditional has a side-gabled roof and little or no overhanging eave (McAlester and McAlester 1984:478; Jakle et al. 1989:187).

Registration Requirements: To possess significance under Criterion A, the residence must be representative of an important historical trend. A development of houses that represents the first suburban neighborhood in an area or region may be eligible. Individual eligibility requires the presence of innovative building technology on the exterior and/or interior, or important achievements of architecture/engineering. Eligibility under Criterion B requires association with a historically significant individual. To be eligible under National Register Criterion C, a house must be a notable example of the architecture of its time, often an elaborate, architect-designed example of a house type. However, the nature of this property type, as a simple, rapidly built, inexpensive dwelling, precludes this. Eligibility under Criterion D requires that the building fabric possesses information potential. Because of the number of remaining properties of this type, individual examples are generally not eligible for the National Register under any of the four criteria. Instead, groups of similar houses may be eligible as a historic district if their historical significance can be documented.

To possess the requisite integrity to be National Register-eligible, all original exterior details must be present. The form of the house is typically rectangular, slightly more elongated than the World War II-era cottage. The one-story houses can have hipped or side-gabled roofs. The windows generally include a single picture window and ribbons of double hung windows. Original fenestration and sash patterns of all bay openings must be maintained and retain their original character. To retain integrity, no additions may have been made to the façade of the house. An addition to another side must be clearly subsidiary to the main block of the house.