

**Former Schweizer Dwelling, 704 South West Street
Tax ID ED-05-077.13-1-31.03; Triangular shaped parcel
Vacant Lot**



Description:

This property is now a vacant lot owned by the State of Delaware (DelDOT). The triangular shaped lot was purchased in 2005 for \$100,000 in anticipation of the Dover Transit Hub Transportation Project. It was purchased directly at an appraised value from Roger S. Brown and Carol S. Brown (husband and wife) of Camden, Delaware. As of late February, 2009 the transit hub involving this lot is part of a federal American recovery and reinvestment act stimulus package (ARRA) that is now subject to

Section 106 coordination and review.

The vacant site has 308' linear feet frontage on the west side of West Street. The site varies between 27.65' at the northern boundary and 86.92' deep at the southern boundary and has an area of 16,814 square feet or 0.386 acres. The property's western boundary is defined by the Norfolk Southern rail right of way. This is an active freight rail that dates back to the late 1850's.

Beyond the rail line on the west, the circa 1749 Eden Hill Farm of Henry Ridgely and the Ridgely family lies. This is a National Register listed property (K-125) and remained as a longtime farm and family who revolutionized early state government, the legal system, and the financial industry of colonial Delaware. The family is also well established as far as the number of early land holdings in Dover and within Kent County. Although most of the original farm is being actively developed into office uses and mixed value of residential homes, a large chunk (approx. 14 acres) of the Eden Hill Farm is owned and preserved by the State of Delaware for historic preservation and adaptive use. Preserved or set aside for adaptive re-use, the original tree lined entrance way of Eden Hill is immediately adjacent to this lot on the north and west and stops at the rail line.

The subject property reportedly had a house constructed on it at one time. Its exact footprint is unknown – see below for more detail. It is possible that the alleged dwelling could have been situated south of this lot since the southern parcel was once part of the larger plot. However, at the surface (today) there is no evidence that a dwelling or structure was situated on either lot. The area is grassy with some smaller construction debris placed on the lot.

The area surrounding the subject property is service commercial and is also surrounded by office use, industrial, and a few residential lots to the east along Water Street. The plot of land to the south is also vacant. The lands in this area are considered the westernmost portion for the central business district of Dover.

History of the Property:

Formally the lands and/or premises were conveyed from Roger S. Brown and Carol S. Brown (husband and wife) of Camden, Delaware to the State of Delaware in 2005. Prior to the Brown deed transfer, Brown acquired the property from Alan E. Schweizer and Robin R. Schweizer, his wife, dated September 20, 1991 (M50-112). The Schweizer's originally obtained title to the property by deed of John D. Farguson and Jeanne M. Farguson, his wife, dated January 9, 1988 (E46-116).

The deed summary continues:

- The Farguson's acquired deed title on February 15, 1963 from Harvey Johnson (widower) who was said to be from the Town of Smyrna (E23-208). This deed indicated that "premises" were evident.
- Harvey Johnson originally had title to the property under Kent County Deed I10-154 beginning October 10, 1912. He acquired deed title from Walter H. Peterson and Florence V. Peterson, his wife, for \$1,200.
- Walter H. Peterson and Florence V. Peterson, his wife, gained title to the property on or about April 4, 1912 by said lands or deed trust of Samuel M. Harrington who was Trustee by deed poll F10-393.
- Samuel M. Harrington was a trustee (or Town of Dover) for James H. Peterson and Ellen Peterson, his wife. Under deed C9-281 and recorded 1/24/1905, James H. Peterson and Ellen, his wife, directed Harrington, in living trust, to convey the two parcels of land upon both their natural death. The first parcel (no. 1) described is the subject property with parameter dimensions of 136', 486', 24', and 486'.
- Under deed F7-362, James H. Peterson and Ellen (wife) acquired the lot (no.1) from James T. Carrow on October 25, 1890.
- Remaining deeds pre 1890 are confusing with James T. Carrow. Between James T. Carrow and James H. Peterson, the land dates back to Ann R Smith Y5-141 and V5-164, who is widowed from John her former husband.
- Beers mapping (year 1868) has a J.B. Smith listed as a property owner and with a dwelling located at the far south end between the rail line and West Street. The lot does originate from this parcel, but the pre-1868 dwelling is not situated on our subject property.



Based on the aerial photography and maps of the area, there does appear to be a building on the subject parcel from the 1992 aerial. From the 1936, 1954, 1961, and 1968 DataMil collection of aerials, it is difficult to specifically determine whether the same 1992 spotted dwelling might have been present on the current lot. However, the 1963 deed of Farguson (E23-208) indicates that "premises" were evident.

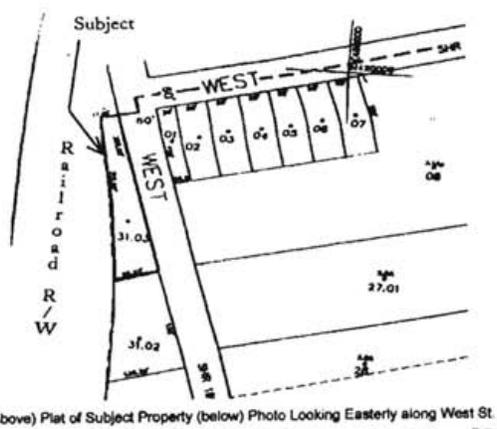
A dwelling at this location could have served or functioned as an entrance or gateway building for Eden Hill (K-125). The original access onto Eden Hill runs north along this parcel. Most of the lands in this area were owned or originate to Henry Ridgely.

According to DeIDOT Real Estate personnel (Ms. Debbie Cottrell) who manages the remaining Eden Hill property for the State/DeIDOT, when the State/DeIDOT was approaching acquisition of the property, members of the Ridgely family were interviewed. Having provided the Department with a 1950's photograph of the area (see above), information indicates that a gate house was situated at the end of an access way. Locations and specifics were really uncertain. Whether or not this one and one-half brick dwelling originates from south end of original property and dates back to J.B. Smith (which might have originated from Henry Ridgely) is uncertain. It is also uncertain whether or not the dwelling as present in the 1950's was actually sited on the subject lot and closer to the original Eden Hill entrance. For documentation or verification needs, more information is needed. This effort is only historic information for an architectural assessment. Nothing is or was extant prior to and during the State of Delaware's (DeIDOT's) acquisition of the property.

Evaluation and Recommendations:

This is a vacant lot with deed and photographic verification that former buildings or structures were evident. The number of past buildings on the lot and activity on the property is uncertain. However, the buildings and occupation would have been limited to a confined area because of the small lot size. However, this lot does originate from the southern adjacent lot from which the John B. Smith dwelling was located within the 1868 Beers Atlas. A cultural resource survey inventory form is not needed for this architectural evaluation. No further action is necessary. However, the property should be property assessed for potential historic archaeology using this information and elaborating on it further.

Parcel location

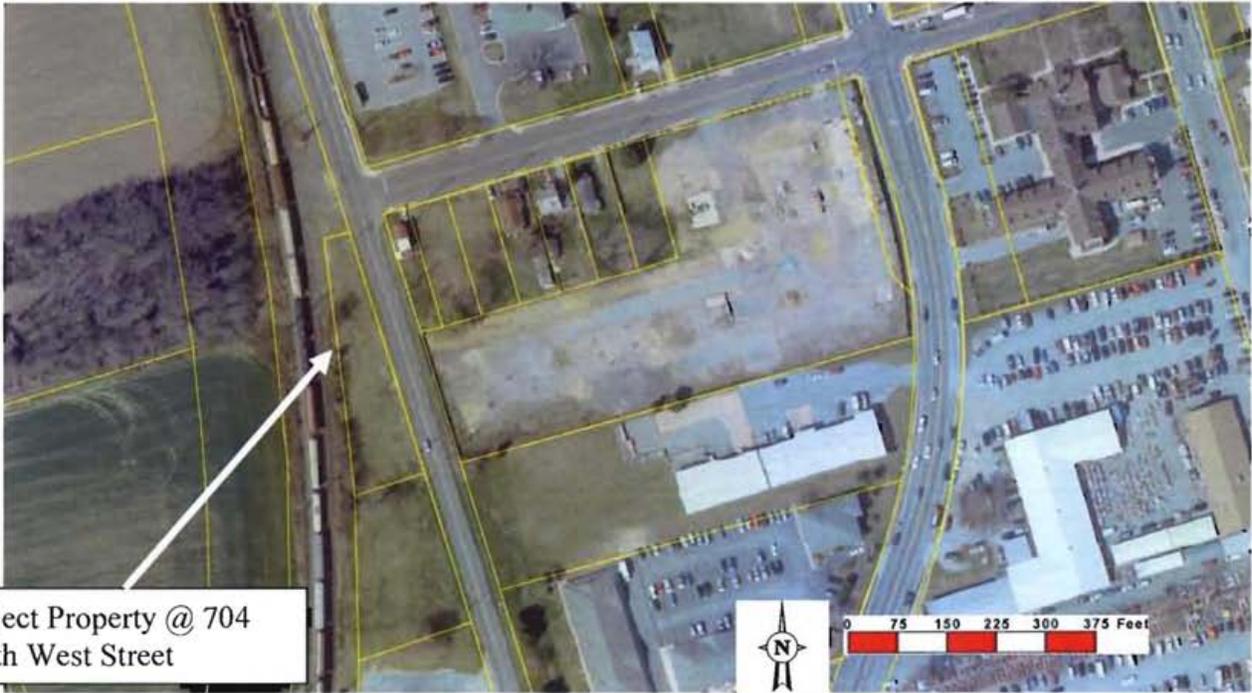


(above) Plat of Subject Property (below) Photo Looking Easterly along West St

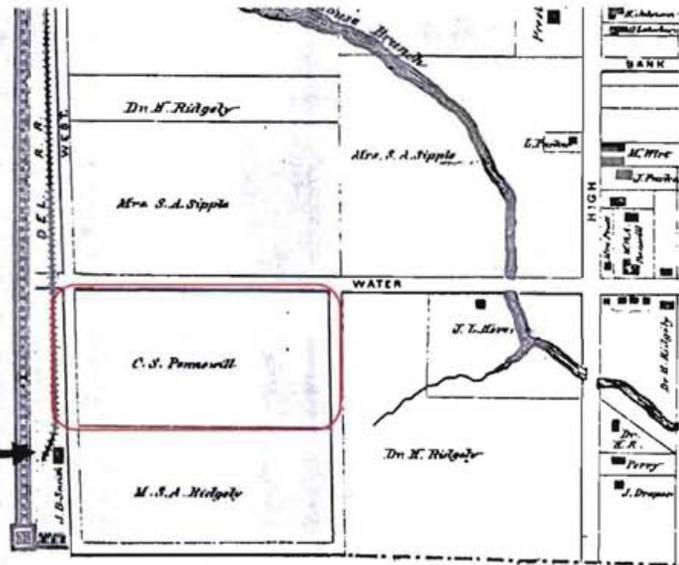
Vacant parcel looking south



2007 Digital Orthophotography



Subject Property @ 704
South West Street



J.B. Smith dwelling on Beers
Atlas 1868. Circled area in
red indicates the Dover
Transit Hub study area.