

### III. SPRING HILL: HISTORIC THEMES

The subdued eclectic ornamentation of the William Elliot House and the Andrew Jackson Williams House forms an interesting contrast to the formal architectural motifs displayed on Spring Hill, the third property impacted by the proposed Route 41 improvements. Spring Hill, an early nineteenth-century structure that documents the remodeling of dwellings and landscapes following Colonial Revival stylistic motifs during the 1930s, most strongly relates to the historic theme Architecture, Engineering & Decorative Arts in the period 1880-1940 +/- . Originally a reaction against the excessive ornamentation of Victorian era architecture, the Colonial Revival style borrowed design elements from America's colonial (pre-1840) heritage and reinterpreted them in modern construction.<sup>45</sup> Colonial Revival structures are characterized by accentuated front doors with overhead fanlights and sidelights, and symmetrically balanced bays, doors and wings. A principal subtype of Colonial Revival exhibits hipped or gable roofs with a full width porch supported by classical columns.<sup>46</sup> Spring Hill also relates to the historic theme Suburbanization in the period 1880-1940 +/- . Spring Hill was one of the first dwellings built in the early nineteenth-century suburban development "The Cedars" and was originally owned by one of the suburb's developers. During this era, Wilmington's suburban dwellers relied on horse-drawn and electric trolleys to carry them to jobs located in the city. Because transportation was so closely connected to suburban development, the theme Transportation & Communication in the period 1880-1940 +/- relates to Spring Hill as well.

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<sup>45</sup> For an excellent examination of Colonial Revival see Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), especially Kenneth L. Ames' introduction. Also see David Gebhard, "The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (Summer/Autumn, 1987): 109-145.

<sup>46</sup> McAlester, pp. 320-26.

## Architecture, Engineering & Decorative Arts

### Architectural Description

Spring Hill is located at the northeast corner of Newport Gap Pike and Washington Avenue (2311 Newport Gap Pike) in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. Built circa 1902, Spring Hill is a Colonial Revival style house with Federal-style ornamentation. The house sits on a small bluff overlooking a large yard which contains 3.15 acres. The grounds are terraced and thickly planted, with numerous hedges, gardens, and small groups or rows of trees visually dividing the lawn areas. Several walkways lead down the terraced slopes to Washington Avenue and to the outbuildings, lawns, and pond.

Spring Hill is a two-and-a-half-story, five-bay, double-pile dwelling with one-story wings on the west and east sides of the main block and a rear three-story addition on the north end of the house (Plate 7). The overall dimensions are 38 feet by 61 feet. The exterior walls are sheathed with wooden weatherboard painted white. The siding contrasts with the smooth, plain wood surfaces between the two-story, projecting, hexagonal bay windows on the first floor. The white walls contrast in color with the dark green shutters which adorn most of the windows on each side of the house. In the projecting bays on the first floor, there are three six-over-six light sash windows without shutters, each topped by crossetted architraves and cornices of cyma recta moldings. The second-story bay windows consist of one-over-one sash windows with green shutters. Two similar sash windows without shutters occupy the space between the second-story projecting bays.

The six-paneled front door on the south (main) facade features Federal Revival ornamentation (Plate 8). The door is surrounded by a segmental arch with a centrally placed wooden keystone. An elliptical fanlight and two sidelights have cast iron mullions ornamented with bellflowers and rosettes. Flanking the sidelights are two small, six-pane windows. An open, one-story porch with six Doric columns connected by a short balustrade extends the length of the main block. The porch is reached by two wooden steps with a wooden handrail supported on "Tuscan-like" balusters. Brick piers, which have been concealed by wooden lattice-work, support the weight of the porch.



PLATE 7: South elevation of Spring Hill (Photograph by David C. Bachman, 1985. Reprinted with permission of DELDOT)



PLATE 8: Detail of front door of Spring Hill (Photograph by David C. Bachman, 1985. Reprinted with permission of DELDOT)

The two one-story wings at either side of the structure are accentuated with wooden quoins penciled to resemble stone. In most cases, Federal-style quoins are laid so that their faces are alternately large and small, but these quoins sit evenly on top of one another. An eight-over-eight light window, flanked by two four-over-four light windows, is on the west and east end wall of each wing. Above these windows on both the second-story and the third-story of the main structure are two sash windows. To the rear of the west wing is a glassed-in conservatory which has a window on its western wall that once served as an outdoor window for the house. Behind the west wing addition of the house is a small exterior porch that is connected to the living room by a wooden six-paneled door. This porch has two coupled "Tuscan-like" columns which rest on small plinths and support a pent roof. To the right of the porch is a library with a tripartite bay window fronting the side porch, and one sash window on the north wall providing additional light for the library.

On the north end of the house two pedimented dormer windows pierce the roof and flank a centrally placed square dormer window. Below each pedimented dormer is a sash window on the second floor. Between the windows is a two-and-a-half-story addition containing a rear staircase lighted by a sash window on the second floor landing and another sash window on the first floor landing. On the northeastern corner of the house is a one-story kitchen addition with a pent roof. A tripartite window consisting of three sections of six-light sash admits morning light. The kitchen has one exterior door opening. Another exterior door, which is west of the kitchen door, provides access to the basement from the outside.

The gable roof on the main structure rises above a boxed cornice and is pierced by a brick chimney stack on the west end. Pyramidal roofs top each two-story projecting bay on the south facade. A mixture of shed and pent roofs top other additions to the house creating an irregular roofline. All of the roof surfaces have been covered with asbestos shingles.

The interior plan on the first floor of the house is divided into formal and informal living space (Figure 11). A living room and a dining room with a large entrance hall between them serve as a screen for the family rooms to the rear of the house. The interior walls of the house are of plaster applied over wood lath nailed to the balloon-frame structural system.

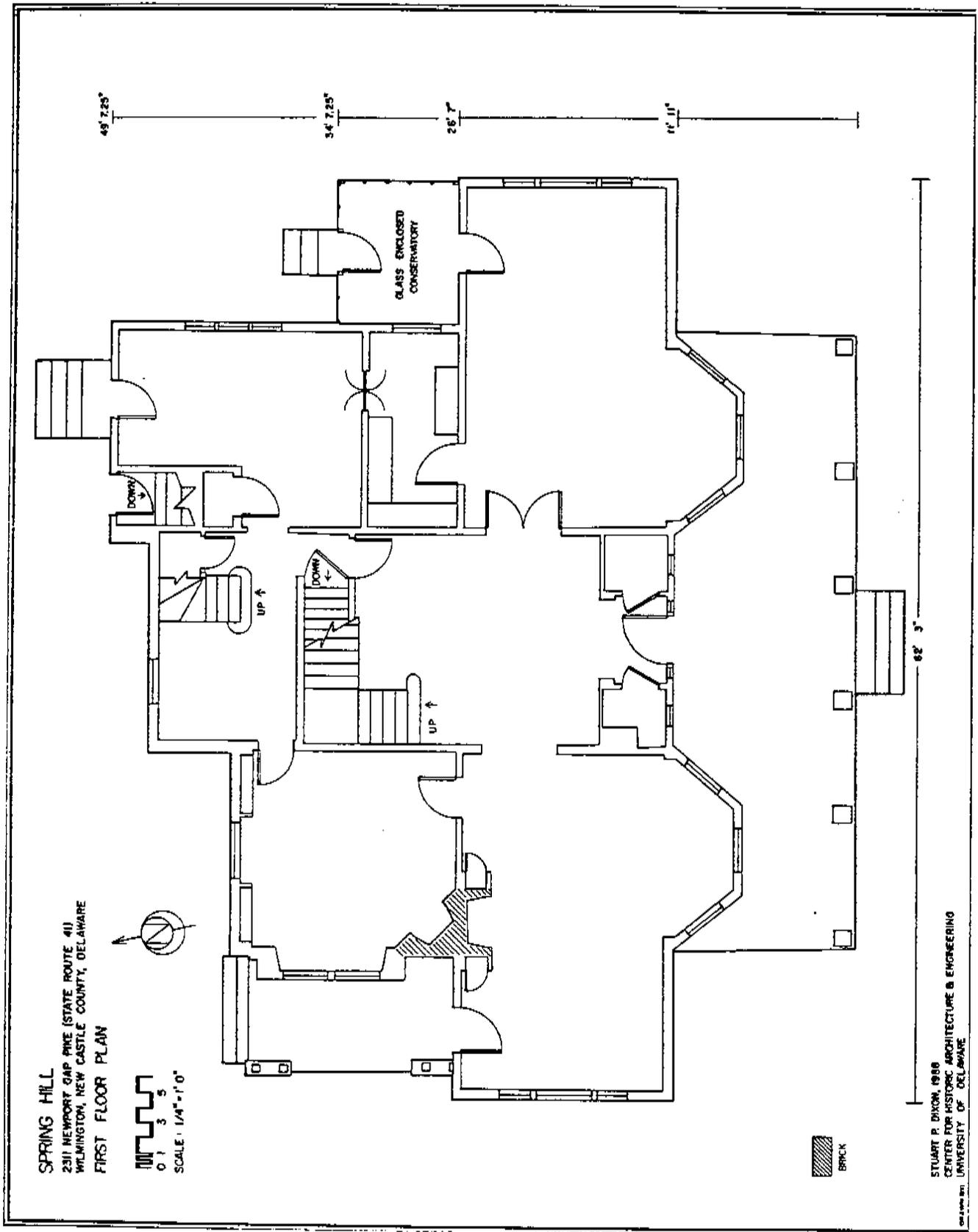


FIGURE 11: Floor Plan of Spring Hill (Drawn by Stuart Dixon)

The main doorway on the south facade leads into a formal vestibule with a small closet to the left of the door and a powder room with a lavatory to the right. The vestibule is one step below the main hallway. The elliptical arch motif on the exterior of the house is echoed on the interior. A round-arched doorway with a raised, paneled embrasure and a console in the surround opens into the formal entrance hall. The north wall of the hall has raised, wooden paneling that is painted white. On the northwest wall of the entrance hall is a staircase which rises and makes a 90 degree turn at the second floor landing (Plate 9). The staircase has round, wooden balusters with elongated plinths and capitals which are painted white. The handrail and newel are of mahogany. A round-arched paneled door on the northeast wall opens into the private quarters of the first floor. The remaining wall space is finished with wainscot and stylized, maroon floral wallpaper over the plaster walls.

The living room and the dining room are arranged on either side of the entrance hall, thus creating a symmetrical plan in the formal area of the house. The doorways to both rooms consist of round-arched openings with wooden trim crowned by a console in the center of the arch. All doorways in the main hall are of similar design with one exception. The doorway to the dining room includes three paneled, double doors as well as a carved wooden sunburst motif in the semi-circular area above the doors (Plate 10).

The dining room has its original 1930s wallpaper. The wallpaper consists of a brightly-colored, floral pattern with daisies, bluebells and chrysanthemums arranged on a black background. Below the wallpaper is paneled wainscot and above a cornice of cyma recta molding. All wood trim is painted white. Behind the dining room is a butler's pantry that has glass-panned cupboards over enclosed cupboards areas with a sink on the east wall and a window overlooking the conservatory. The kitchen is behind the pantry.

The influence of Colonial Revival can be seen in the living room wallpaper, which was installed in 1938.<sup>47</sup> Pastoral scenes with men and women dressed in colonial costume occupy a landscape of buildings resembling the colonial city of Williamsburg. One building, in particular, depicts a stylized version of the Governor's Palace at Colonial Williams-

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<sup>47</sup> Gebhard, p. 116.



PLATE 9: Main Staircase in Spring Hill (Photograph by Cheryl Powell, 1987)

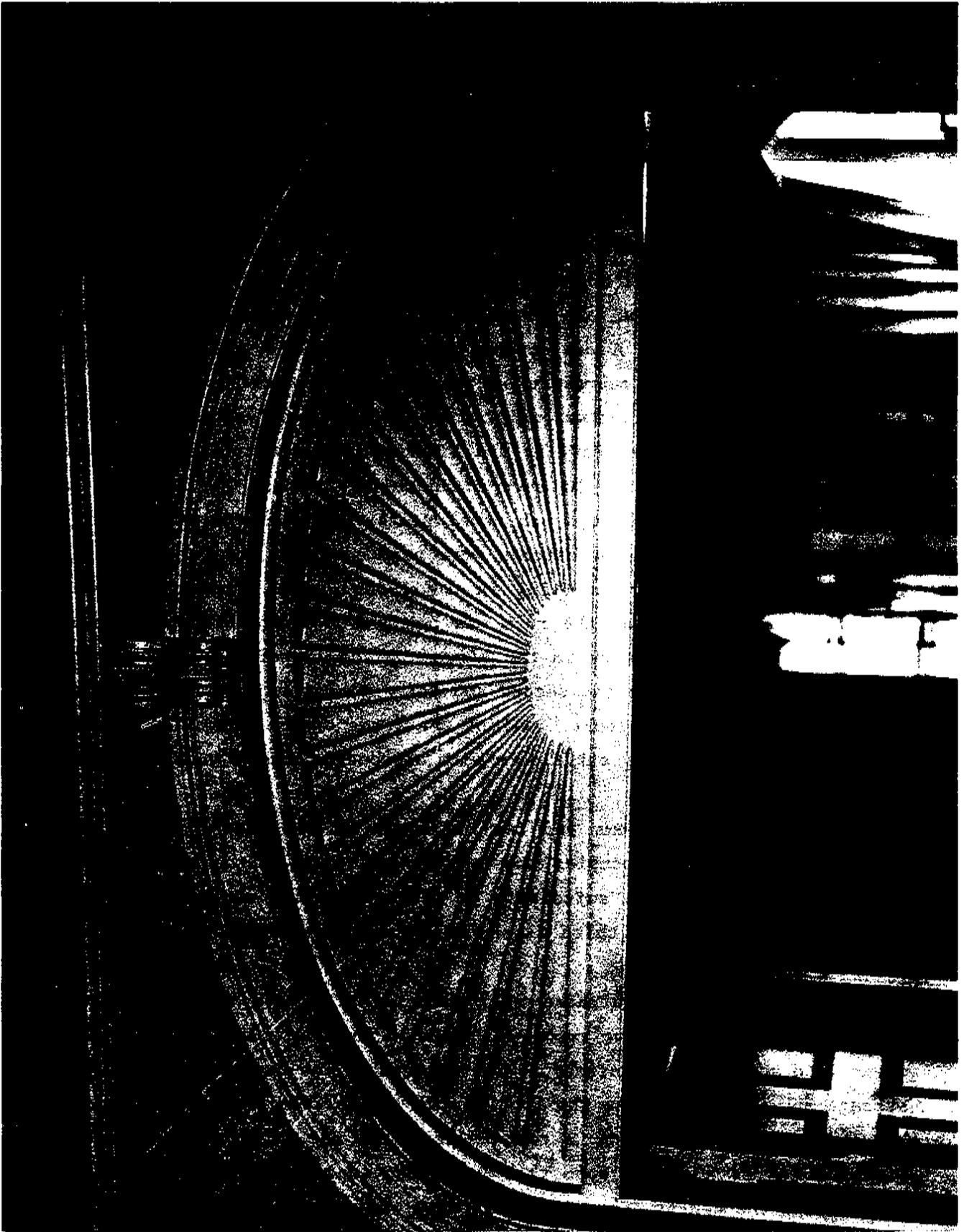


PLATE 10: Sunburst archway in Spring Hill (Photograph by David C. Bachman, 1985. Reprinted with permission of DELDOT)

burg. The restoration activities at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s were a primary source for Williamsburg-inspired interior design.<sup>48</sup>

A fireplace located on the northern wall of the living room is Adamesque in style (Plate 11). It has a crossetted architrave with a reeded, central tablet and reeded, doric pilasters on each side of the black marble facing. Two closets with paneled doors are built into the chimney jambs behind the fireplace wall. A dentil cornice surrounds the room.

In the northwest room, or the library, is a corner fireplace with a crossetted architrave. A projecting, square bay window on the west wall with a raised, paneled embrasure on the west wall provides a view of the west lawn. The entire room was painted an "antique gold" after 1959.

To the east of the library is the breakfast room with a stairway that makes a 90-degree turn to the second and third floors. The stairway has carved oak pendants and round oak newel posts. Beneath the stairway is a closet. This room and the kitchen were painted white and tangerine with lively colored, floral stenciling in the 1960s. The kitchen's linoleum floor was installed after the room was painted. There are wood paneled cabinets and a small pantry in the kitchen. The library, breakfast room, kitchen and the rooms on the second and third floors have molded surrounds with bulls' eye corner blocks. All of the rooms on the first floor except the kitchen have matching oak floors with baseboards capped with cyma recta moldings.

There are four bedrooms and two bathrooms on the second floor. The master bedroom, which occupies the entire west side of the second floor, has been arranged into a suite with an office area and a private bathroom attached to it. On the third floor there are two bedrooms, bath, storage room and cedar closet.

Between the formal entrance hall and the breakfast room is a small hallway connecting the two rooms. A door on the west wall of the hallway opens into an interior stairway to the basement. The basement is used as a storage and work area. At the foot of the stairs from the interior of the house is a door leading to a root cellar. To the right of the stairway facing north is a shower room that was added in the early 1930s. In the area behind the center stair is a well that was covered up when the kitchen

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<sup>48</sup> Gebhard, p. 117.

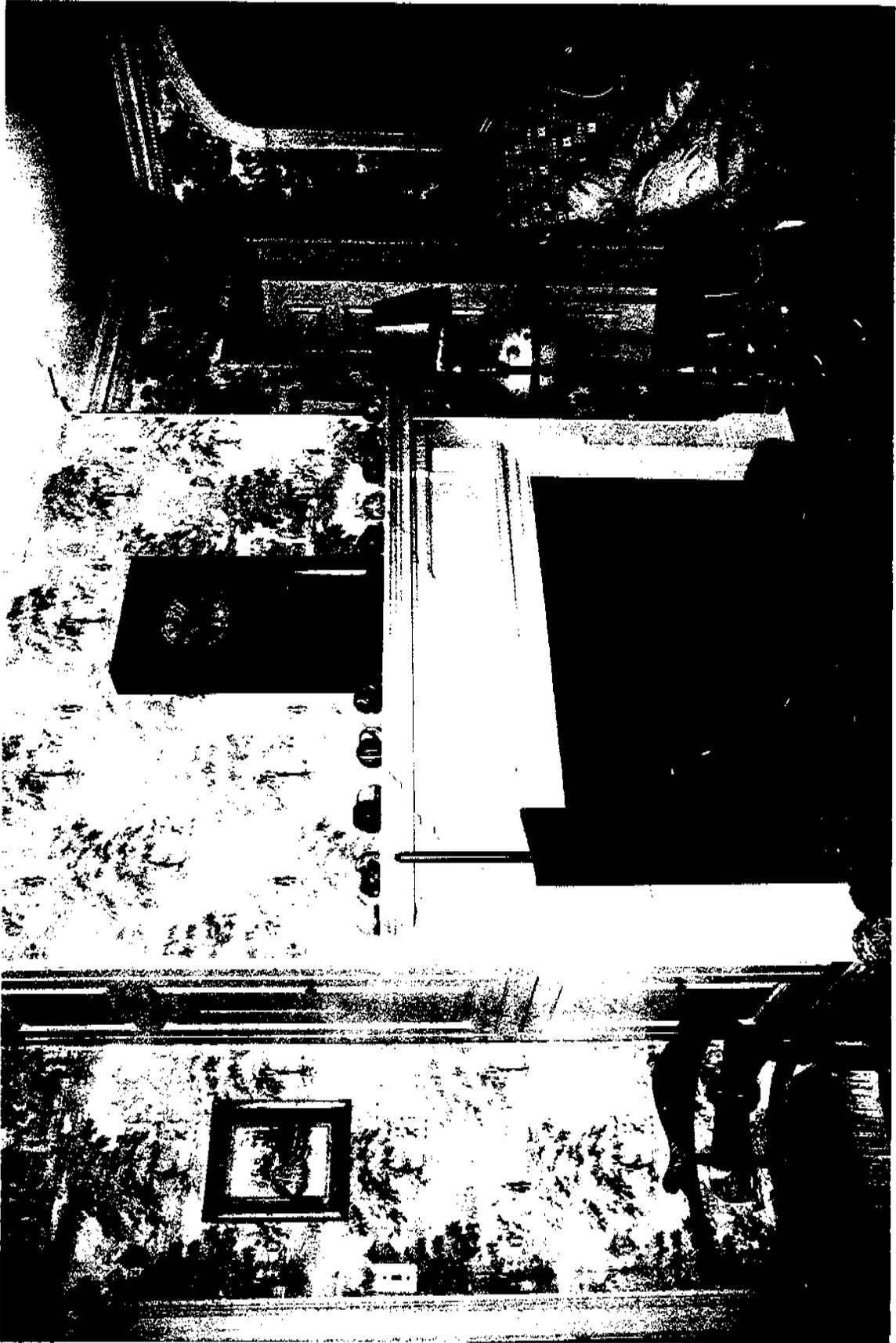


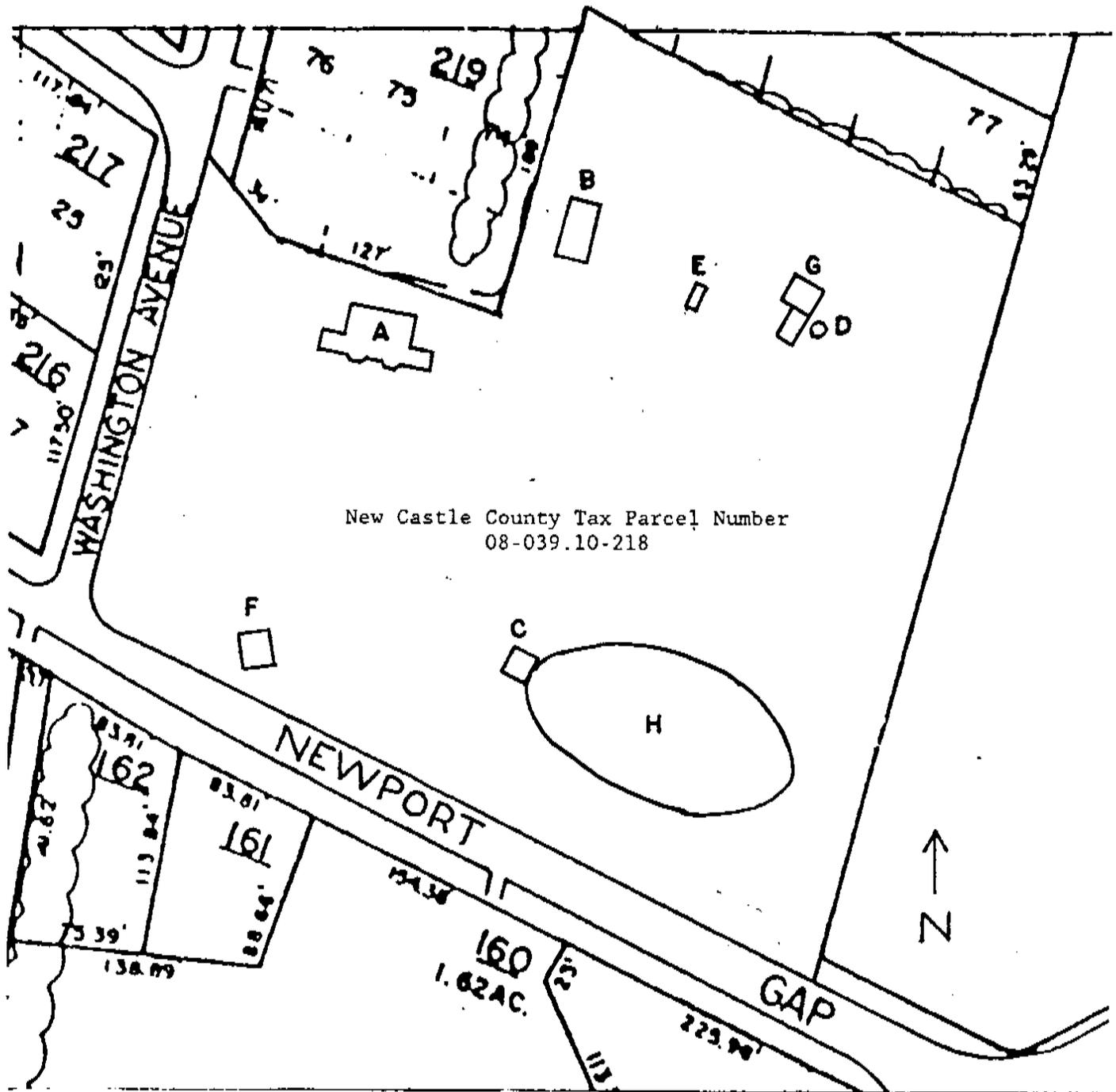
PLATE 11: Living room mantel, Spring Hill  
(Photograph by Cheryl Powell, 1987)

was enlarged in 1937. The fieldstone foundation in the basement measures 26 feet by 38½ feet. Three large brick piers in the basement provide additional support under the center as well as at the east and west ends of the house. All first floor joists visible from the basement are circular sawn. New joists were installed to support the rear and wing additions to the house in the 1930s.

Several early twentieth-century outbuildings surround the house, including a two-story frame carriage house, a rectangular wooden gazebo by the pond, a 6-foot diameter wooden octagonal chicken brood shed, and a wooden corn crib. South of the house, close to Newport Gap Pike, is a nineteenth-century stone springhouse (Figure 12).

### Landscape Architecture

A variety of trees and shrubs have been planted around the house and outbuildings, including Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*), White Fir (*Abies concolor*), Northern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Magnolia (*Magnolia campbellii*), Azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*), Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*), American Sycamore (*Plantanus occidentalis*), Sweet Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), English Elm (*Ulmus campestris*), Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*), Northern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), Mock Orange (*Philadelphus inodorus*), Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*), Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), Pear tree (*Pyrus*), Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), Mockernut Hickory (*Carya tomentosa*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Meta Sequoia (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Beauty Bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*), Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), Giant honeysuckle (*Lonicera hildebrandiana*), Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*), Dewberry (*Rubus hispidus*), Royal Paulownia (*Paulownia tomentosa*), Multiflora Rosa (*Rosa multiflora*), Viburnum (*Viburnum dilatatum*), Wild Grape (*Vitis*), Fleabane Daisy (*Erigeron philadelphicus*), Goldenrod (*Solidago*



Scale: 1 inch = 83 feet

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| A: Main House         | E: Corn Crib    |
| B: Carriage House     | F: Spring House |
| C: Gazebo             | G: Shed         |
| D: Chicken Brood Shed | H: Pond         |

FIGURE 12: Site Map of Spring Hill

*altissima*), Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*), Seaside Alder (*Alnus maritima*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Mimosa (*Acacia*), and Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*). Figure 13 illustrates the locations of the various species.

### Spring Hill Prior to 1930

There is evidence that a dwelling was on the property currently encompassed by Spring Hill as early as the mid-1800s (Figure 14). The name, "D. Justice," appears on the Rea and Price map of 1849.<sup>49</sup> David Justice purchased the property in 1832, and the location of this building was very near or on the same site as Spring Hill. John Robinson acquired the farm in 1855, and buildings are shown on his property in the Beers Atlas of 1868 and in the Baist Atlas of 1894 (see figures 8 and 10, pp. 34 and 37).<sup>50</sup> Although there could have been a house on the property when the Crooks' purchased their land, the present structure supports an early twentieth-century construction date.

In 1900 The Cedars Land and Development Company acquired the farmland formerly owned by Robinson.<sup>51</sup> It was probably Richard W. Crook, one of the developers of The Cedars, who built Spring Hill for his private residence shortly after his wife, Carrie, purchased twenty-four lots from The Cedars Land and Development Company for \$1000 on May 5, 1902.<sup>52</sup> In the 1903 *Wilmington City Directory* there is a "Crook, R. W." listed as a general manager living in the "Cedars," a term that describes the development rather than a particular house. Crook is listed as living in The Cedars subdivision until 1916.<sup>53</sup>

In 1913 Mrs. Crook sold twelve lots to William Stewart Allmond for \$7500 which included the lots numbered 15 and 16 where Spring Hill is located

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<sup>49</sup> Samuel Rea and Jacob Price, *Map of New Castle County, Delaware, from Original Surveys* (Philadelphia: Smith and Wister, 1849).

<sup>50</sup> D. G. Beers, *Atlas of the State of Delaware* (Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868); William G. Baist, *Atlas of the State of Delaware* (Philadelphia: William G. Baist, 1894).

<sup>51</sup> NCC Deed Book: K-18-451; NCCRD.

<sup>52</sup> NCC Deed Book: Z-18-401; NCCRD.

<sup>53</sup> *Wilmington City Directories, 1903-1916*. On file at Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware. Hereafter referred to as HSD.

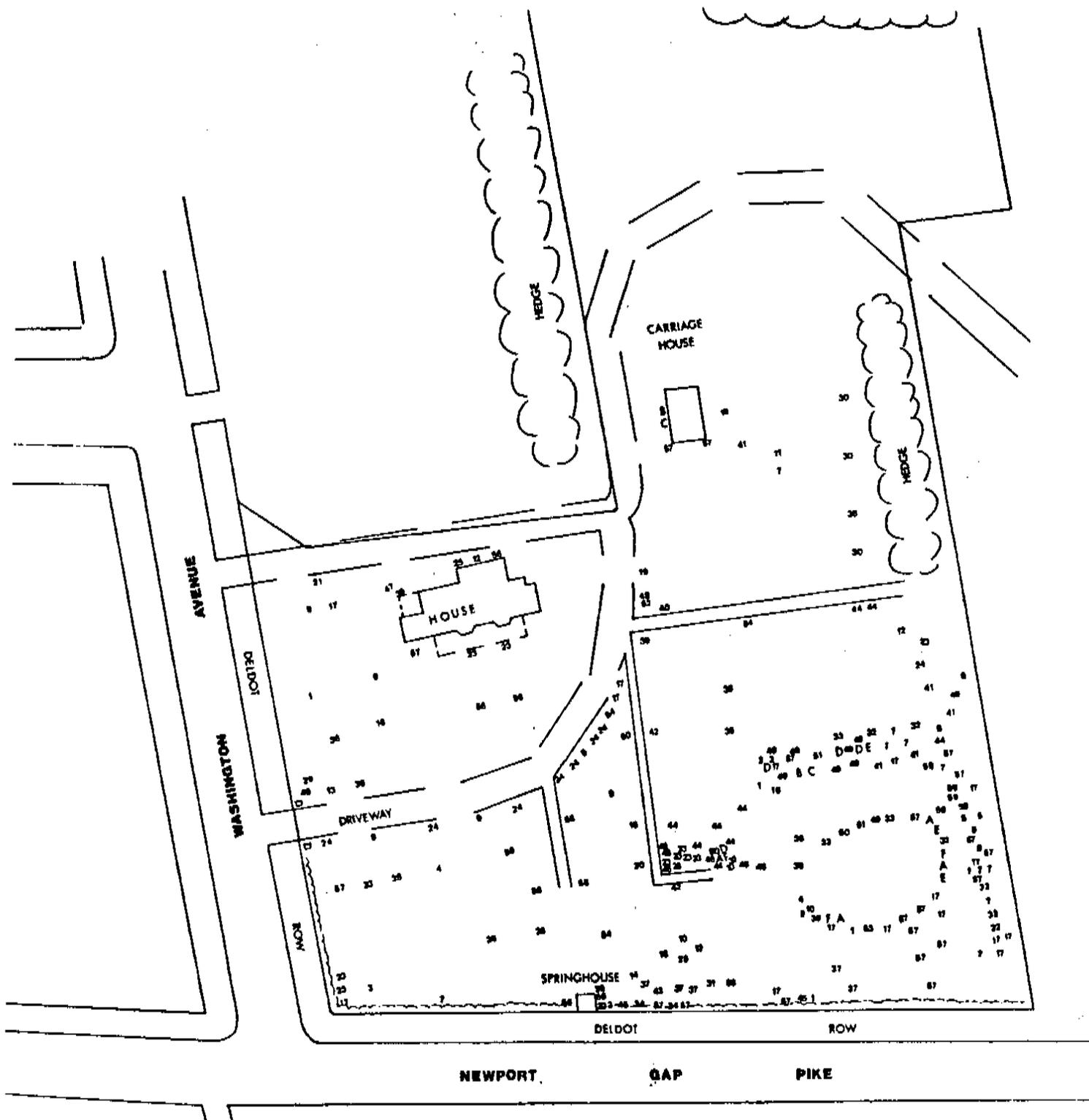


FIGURE 13: Landscape map, Spring Hill (Drawn by Kathleen Valimont and Laurence Kalkstein. Please see key pp. 160-161)

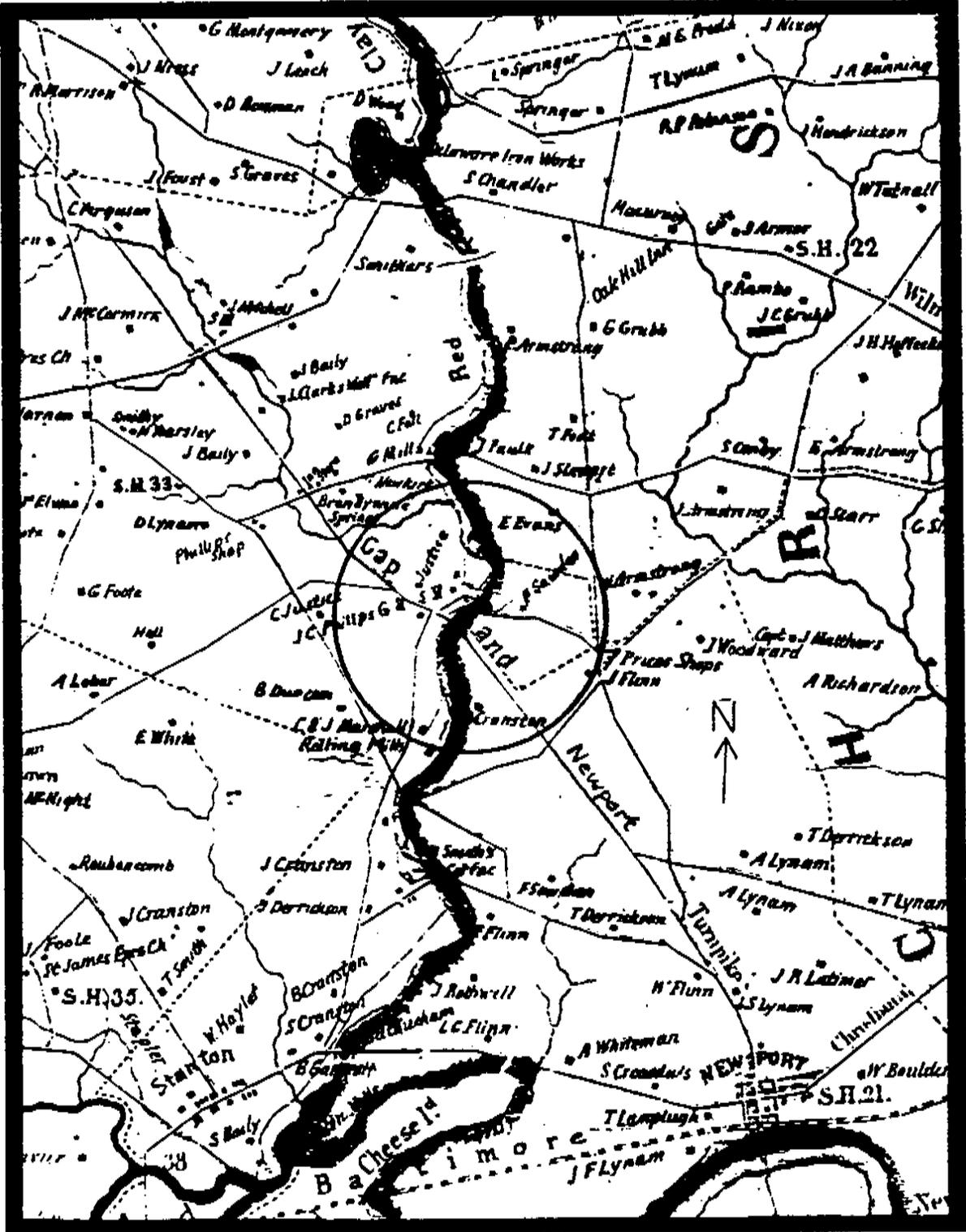


FIGURE 14: Detail from Rea & Price's Map of New Castle County, Delaware, 1849

(Figure 15).<sup>54</sup> In 1913 William Stewart Allmond was listed in the *Wilmington City Directory* as living in The Cedars.<sup>55</sup> He was a treasurer for the Delaware Terra Cotta Company, but he was also the son of John P. Allmond, president of People's Railway Company. William Stewart Allmond died intestate in 1919, and in 1920 his heirs sold his property for \$14,000 to Elizabeth Samuel, the wife of physician Meredith I. Samuel. She increased the property in size by buying lots 1, 2, 9, 10, and parts of lots 3, 11, 69, 70, and 71 for \$700 from William L. and Isabella H. Betta in 1922. Elizabeth Samuel died on February 25, 1929, and her entire property in The Cedars was sold to James R. and Claire R. Morford in 1930.<sup>56</sup>

Little is known about the house during the period when the Allmonds and the Samuels lived at Spring Hill. There may have been some alterations to the house, but it was James R. Morford who would give Spring Hill its Federal Revival style detail and make many changes in the size and plan of the house.

#### Colonial Revival Remodelling at Spring Hill

Mr. and Mrs. James R. Morford, who lived at Spring Hill from 1930 to 1959, made many alterations and additions to the house between 1937 and 1938. With the help of the prominent local architectural firm Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning, the Morfords remodelled their home following Colonial Revival stylistic motifs with Federal Revival detailing. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur A. Baum, the present owners of Spring Hill, have made very few changes to the property, and the house is essentially unaltered from its 1938 appearance.

James R. Morford had been a member of the law firm of Marvel and Morford since 1928. He served as assistant city solicitor of Wilmington from 1935 to 1938, as the Attorney General of Delaware from 1939 to 1943, and on the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association from 1943 to 1946. Morford was a very successful man when he owned Spring Hill, and this is reflected in the manner in which he created a suburban estate. In fact, he

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<sup>54</sup> NCC Deed Book: X-23-492; NCCRD.

<sup>55</sup> *Wilmington City Directory*, 1913. On file at HSD.

<sup>56</sup> NCC Deed Books: V-29-174, Z-28-504, G-31-480 and F-36-370; NCCRD.



FIGURE 15: Detail of the Cedars subdivision from the New Castle County property map for Mill Creek Hundred

was called the "squire" of the neighborhood.<sup>57</sup>

Morford commissioned the architectural firm of Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning to assist in the remodeling of his home. According to a former employee of Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning, the firm was formed in 1932. Before World War II their offices were located at the corner of 9th and Market Streets in the Equitable Security Trust Company building (now the Bank of Delaware). Most of their commissions were for housing design, especially in developments such as Wawaset Park and Westover Hills. They also designed and remodeled other large homes and small commercial structures in the Wilmington area. The firm disbanded in 1942 but reunited in 1946. Robinson, Stanhope and Manning returned to the same office, but their commissions changed to encompass mainly elementary schools, high schools, hospitals and nursing homes throughout the Delaware and Cecil County, Maryland. Ray Robinson died in 1951, and Burton Stanhope died in 1957. William Manning joined the architectural firm of Dollar, Bonner, Blake, and Street in 1958. Manning took all of the architectural plans by Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning with him, and the plans are stored with this firm (now called Anderson, Brown, Higley, and Funk).<sup>58</sup> The architectural drawings commissioned by Morford represent a unique look at the desires of a successful man to create a colonial estate.

The original floor plan of Spring Hill is outlined by the fieldstone foundation in the basement. The plan consisted of a central hall flanked by a parlor and a library on the west side of the hall and a dining room and a kitchen on the east side. The second floor originally had five bedrooms and one bath. On the third floor an attic was used for storage. There was a hipped roof with a hipped dormer window on each of the four sides of the roof. Two chimney stacks were on either side of the roof, with one leading to a fireplace in the parlor and the other to a fireplace in the dining room.

A 1937 drawing of the first floor plan by Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning shows that a "Victorian-style" veranda surrounded three sides of

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<sup>57</sup> Mrs. James R. Morford, Jr. Telephone interview by Cheryl Powell. Wilmington, Delaware, November 12, 1987. Notes located at CHAE.

<sup>58</sup> John Bue. Telephone interview by Cheryl Powell. Wilmington, Delaware, December 30, 1987. Notes located at CHAE.

the house, including its main facade (Figure 16).<sup>59</sup> The front porch on the south elevation is unaltered and is composed of an open, one-story porch with six Doric columns connected by a short balustrade. Two bays project on this elevation. The west and east porches project four feet less than the front porch and differed stylistically. Two coupled Tuscan columns rested on small plinths with three columns at the southeast and southwest corner of the porches. A small porch behind the living room has not been removed and is part of the original three-sided "Victorian-style" porch construction.

The first major alterations were made to the house around 1935.<sup>60</sup> Morford added the breakfast room with a staircase leading up to the third floor attic. In the central hall he placed a vestibule at the entrance with a closet on the west end and a powder room on the east end. The two six-pane glass windows on either side of the front door sidelights were then added. On the exterior the main doorway was replaced with Federal Revival ornamentation. The original oak front door was removed to install a six-paneled door surmounted by a segmental arch with an elliptical fanlight and two side lights ornamented with floral elements. The elliptical arch was repeated in the vestibule interior. A round-arched doorway with a raised, paneled embrasure and a console in the surround opened into the formal entrance hall.

The staircase in the entrance hall was originally in the center of the room, but it was removed and replaced with a staircase on the west wall that makes a 90-degree turn on the northern wall to the second floor landing. This creates an appropriate screen for the rear room additions on the first floor as well as making the staircase the most elegant feature in the house. The additions provide more private living space for the family, and the first floor of the house becomes clearly divided into formal and informal space. The idea of dividing family rooms from public rooms is a Victorian one that had long been considered out-of-style.<sup>61</sup>

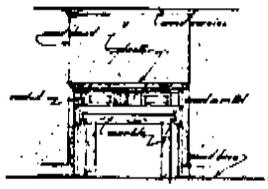
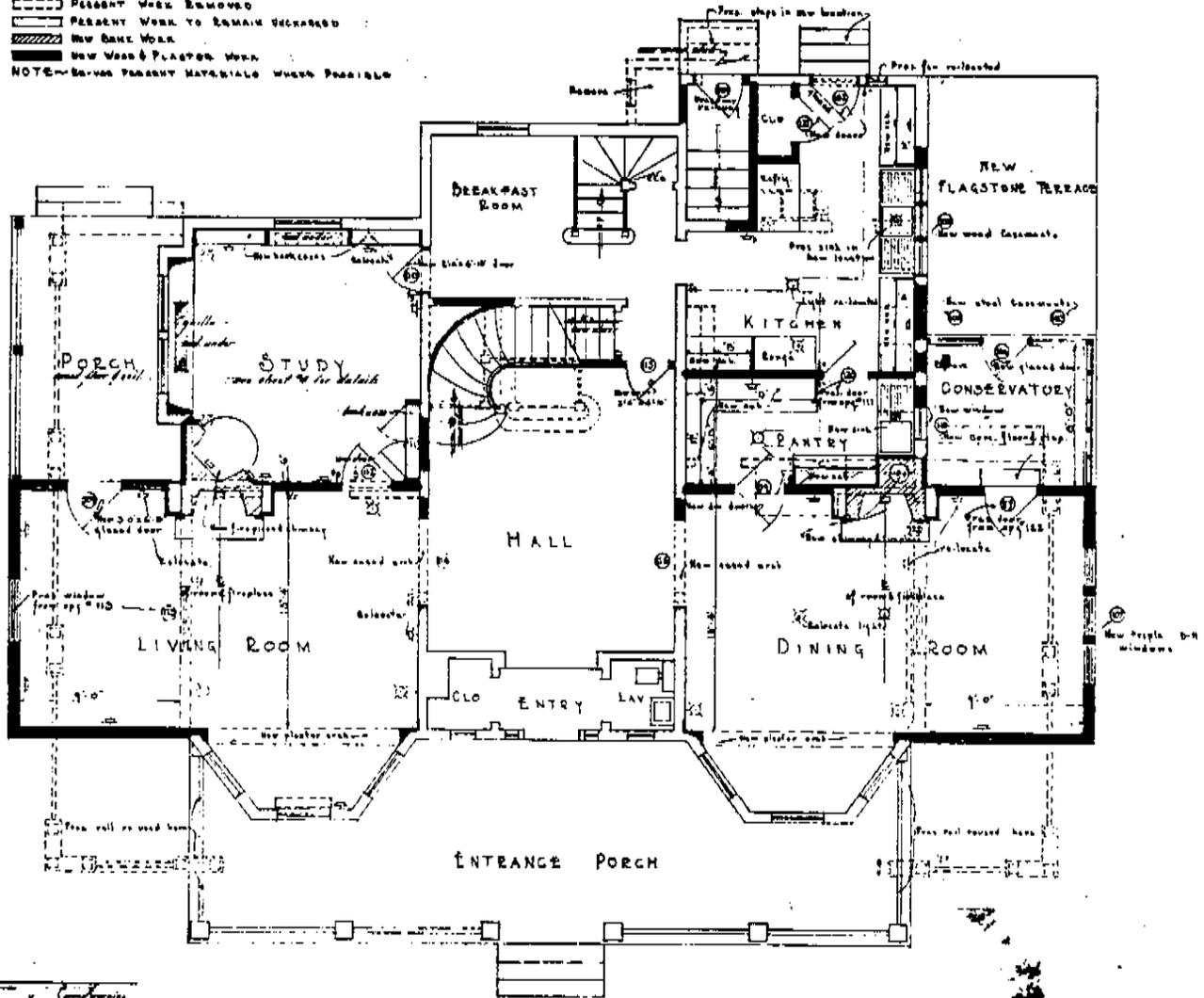
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<sup>59</sup> Architectural plans currently located at CHAE.

<sup>60</sup> Mrs. Ann Benethum. Telephone interview by Cheryl Powell. Wilmington, Delaware, November 24, 1987. Notes located at CHAE.

<sup>61</sup> Clifford Edward Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 132.

**LEGEND**  
 [---] PRESENT WORK REMOVED  
 [---] PRESENT WORK TO REMAIN UNCHANGED  
 [---] NEW BASE WORK  
 [---] NEW WOOD & PLASTER WORK  
 NOTE - SAVE PRESENT MATERIALS WHERE POSSIBLE



DETAIL LIVING ROOM WINDOW  
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

ROBINSON, STANHOPE AND MANNING ARCHITECTS		
WILMINGTON	DELAWARE	
ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS - RESIDENCE - MR. JAMES E. MOFFORD - CROSS - MARSHALLTOWN - IOWA		
CONC.	DRAWN BY JES	DESK.
R75	CHECKED BY: [Signature]	2
	SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"	
	DATE: 5-18-37	

FIGURE 16: First floor plan of Spring Hill (Drawn by architectural firm of Robinson, Stanhope and Manning, 1937. Reprinted courtesy of the architectural firm Anderson, Brown, Higley and Funk)

On the first floor, the living room and the dining room were both expanded to include the area formerly containing the side porches. The kitchen was enlarged to almost twice its original size (it took over the space of a shed to its rear), the butler's pantry was built in a space occupied by the kitchen, and a glass-enclosed conservatory was added to the western wall of the house, hiding an original exterior window. Morford turned his bedroom area on the second floor into a suite (Figure 17). He added a private bath, a dressing room, and an office. A door that once opened between the office and the southeast bedroom was closed in to allow him more privacy and is presently covered with wallpaper. By removing the hipped roof and replacing it with a pitched roof pierced by two pedimented dormer windows and a square dormer window in the middle, the third floor attic was enlarged to make room for more living space. Two bedrooms, a bathroom, a cedar closet, and a storage area were installed in it (Figure 18).

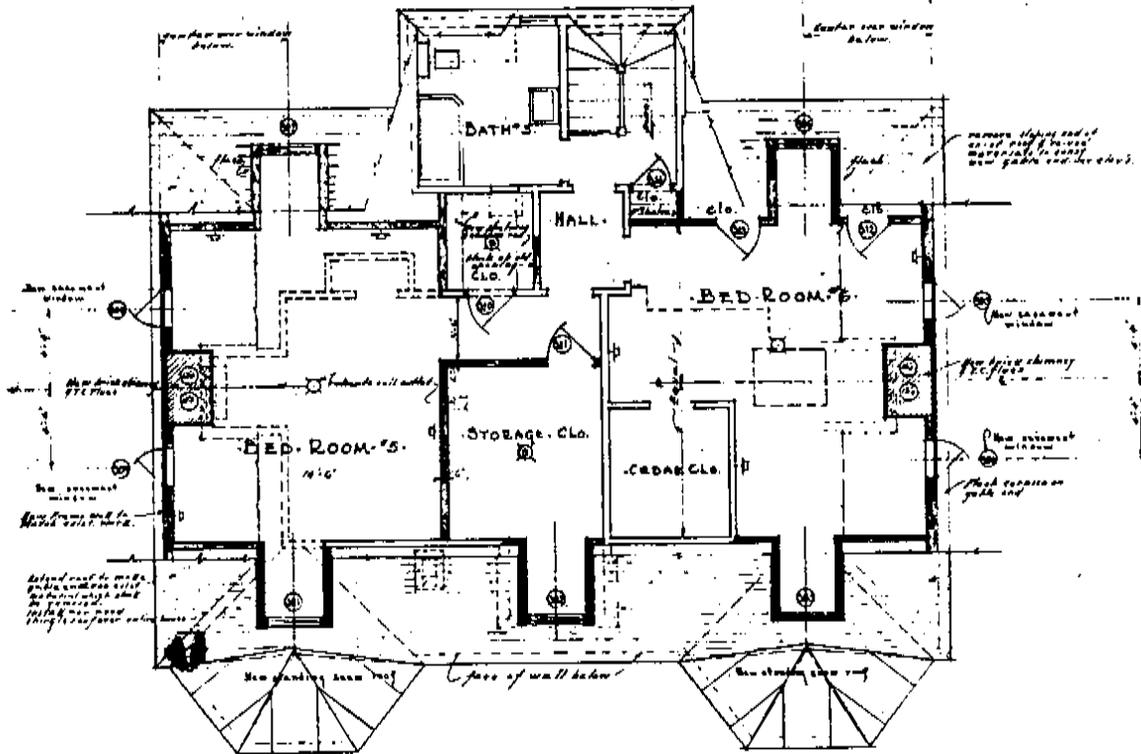
Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning had designed the replacement of the hexagonal, pointed roofs on the two-story projecting bays of the main south facade for much lower roofs so that three pedimented dormer windows could be placed on the south side of the main roof (Figure 19), but these plans were never carried out. The roof over the main block was to have been covered with wooden shingles and the other roofs with metal. All of the roof surfaces are now covered with asbestos shingle.

In the basement, Morford intended to provide room for entertainment and utilities, but these plans were also not executed. In the small passage from the formal entrance hall to the breakfast room, a door with a stairway to the basement was added to provide an interior entrance, and a separate exterior entrance was made for the basement (Figure 20).

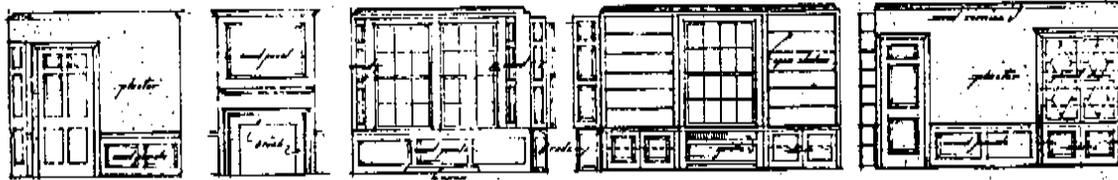
Federal Revival detailing was added in the formal rooms on the first floor to match the entrance on the main elevation. In the entrance hall a round-arched six-paneled door to the right of the staircase opened into the private quarters on the first floor. The doorways to both the living room and the dining room consisted of round-arched openings, with wooden trim crowned by a console in the center of the arch, and were added to match the front door and the arch in the vestibule. Other Federal Revival ornamentation included the addition of paneled double doors as well as a carved wooden sunburst in the semi-circular area above the doors to the dining



Legend  
 Existing work removed  
 New brick work  
 New wood or plaster walls  
 Existing wood unchanged  
 NOTE - Glass work shown without all other materials where possible on 2nd floor.



THIRD FLOOR PLAN  
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



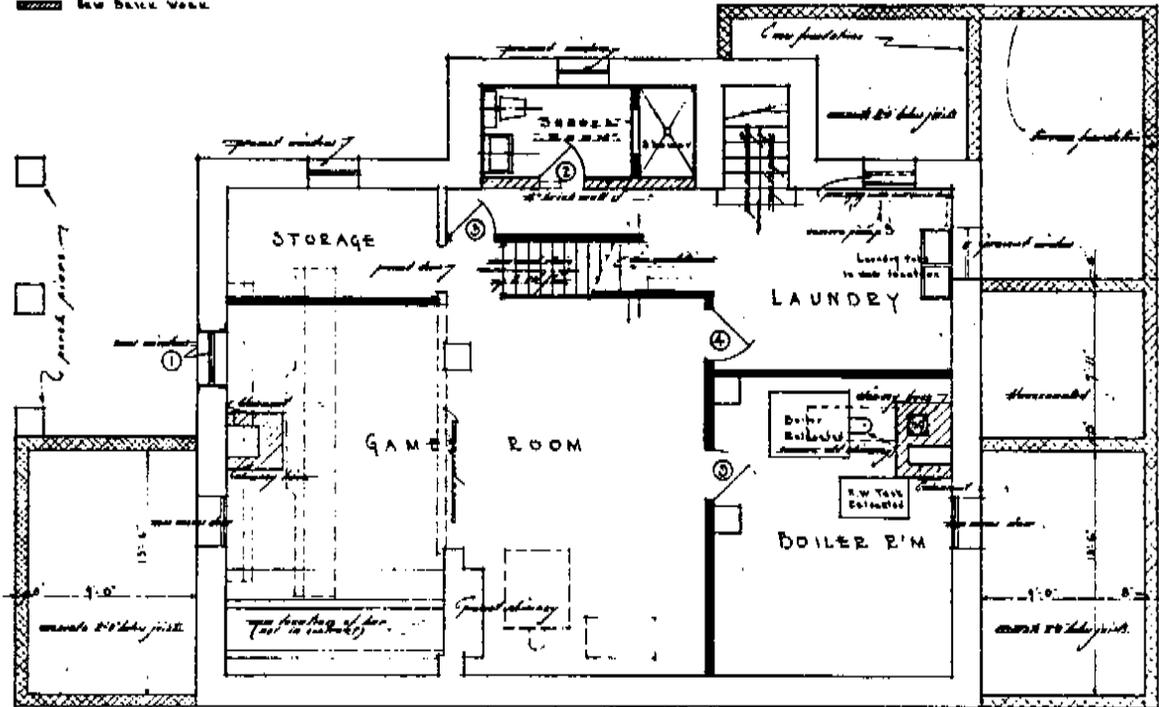
DETAILS OF WOODWORK IN FIRST FLOOR AND STUDY

ROBINSON, STANHOPE AND MANNING ARCHITECTS INCORPORATED		WILMINGTON DELAWARE
ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS RESIDENCE MR. JAMES E. MORFORD		
CONTR.	DRAWN BY T. E. S.	DATE
2-75	CHECKED BY	4
	SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"	DATE 5-18-37

FIGURE 18: Third floor plan of Spring Hill (Drawn by architectural firm of Robinson, Stanhope and Manning, 1937. Reprinted courtesy of the architectural firm Anderson, Brown, Higley and Funk)

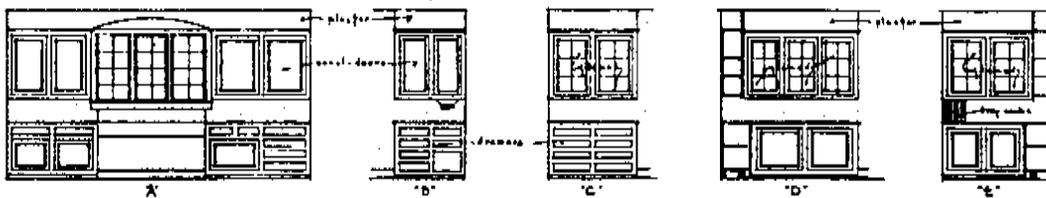


- LEGEND**
-  PART WORK REMOVED
  -  PART WORK TO REMAIN UNCHANGED
  -  NEW WOOD & PLASTER WORK
  -  NEW BLOCK WORK
  -  NEW BRICK WORK



*Note: Partitions here shown as wood studs, no mill finish, per A.C. spec. floor (see det. 95)*

**BASEMENT PLAN**  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



KITCHEN CASES

PANTRY CASES

ROBINSON, STANHOPE AND MANNING ARCHITECTS		
WASHINGTON	DELAWARE	
ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS		
RESIDENCE		
MR. JAMES E. MOYFORD		
CELANO	MARGALUM, DEL.	
OWNER	DRAWN BY: Y. L. S.	DIV.
2.75	CHECKED BY: [Signature]	1
	SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"	
	DATE 3-10-37	

FIGURE 20: Basement floor plan of Spring Hill (Drawn by architectural firm of Robinson, Stanhope and Manning, 1937. Reprinted courtesy of the architectural firm Anderson, Brown, Higley and Funk)

room. The dining room wallpaper with its brightly colored, foliated pattern of daisies, bluebells, and chrysanthemums arranged on a black background was purchased locally.<sup>62</sup> The original fireplace in the dining room was removed to create more room for the butler's pantry behind the north wall of the room.

A "Sheraton-style" sideboard made by the Charak Furniture Company in Boston in 1937 still remains in the dining room today. It was one of many pieces of Federal style furniture that Mr. Morford purchased for his home. The company is now out of business, but one of its advertisements appeared in a 1940 issue of *Arts and Decoration*.<sup>63</sup>

The December 1938 issue of *The New Delawarean* published a photograph of the house highlighting the staircase in the entrance hall from the dining room door (Plate 12). The article featured photographs of staircases in the Wilmington area that had been recently redecorated. Noticeable in the photograph is the floral wallpaper and elliptical arch opening in the dining room as well as the elaborately paneled staircase. Except for the furniture seen in the photograph, the scene is unchanged today.

The wallpaper with scenes of colonial people and Williamsburg, the dentil cornice, and the fireplace on the north wall of the room were part of the Federal and Colonial Revival designs that were placed in the living room. The fireplace, which has a more Adamesque design, features a cross-setted architrave with a reeded tablet in the center with reeded doric pilasters on each side of the black marble facing. The wall between the living room and the library was fitted with a sliding door which was later removed for the addition of a corner fireplace. Bookcases were also added to the library at this time. Morford replaced all of the floors on the first story, except the one in the kitchen, with matching oak planking.

### Changing the Landscape

While Morford was remodeling Spring Hill, he was also extensively altering the grounds surrounding the house. The Morfords carefully maintained their landscaped gardens with the help of a full-time gardener, who lived near or on the property until World War II. A neighbor, Mrs. Roberta

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<sup>62</sup> Benethum Interview. November 24, 1987. Notes located at CHAE.

<sup>63</sup> *Arts and Decoration* 52 (May 1940): 42.

# Stairways

Continued from page 11

Whether the stairway be simple, or imposing and of intricate design, is determined to some extent by the simplicity or the elaborateness of the house for which it is designed.



*Upper Right*

Even Thomas Jefferson, who believed in tucking the stairway in a side hall, would have consented to bringing out into the open the beautiful stairway in the Greenville home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Haskell. (Robinson, Stanhope & Manning)

*Upper Left*

In the James R. Morford home at the Cedars, just outside of Wilmington, the balustrade is light in feeling and is capped by a walnut handrail.

(Robinson, Stanhope & Manning)

*Lower Right*

The beauty of Chinese Chippendale, decorated with exquisite detail, is apparent in this stairway in the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Bacon in Westover Hills, Wilmington.

(Pope & Kruse)

*Lower Left*

A glimpse of the stairway in the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Cooling on Weldin Road, Wilmington, shows spindles amazingly delicate, with simply carved brackets under the ends of the treads.

(Robinson, Stanhope & Manning)



PLATE 12: Detail from "Stairways" in *The New Delawarean*, 1938 (Reprinted courtesy of the Historical Society of Delaware)

Davis, remembers that the pond was the first swimming pond that she had ever seen, and she says that Morford also added an orchard and tennis courts.<sup>64</sup>

A landscape plan for the area around the pool has been found, but there is no mention of a landscaping firm or date anywhere on the plan. The front cover of the booklet says that the plan was made for Mr. James R. Morford. Mrs. Ann Benethum remembers the planting that took place around the pond in the late 1930s. The plan does differ from the foliage that exists around the pond today. Among the plantings indicated along the southwest edge of the pool, which created a screen along the highway are Lombardy Poplar, White Pine, Hemlock, Birch, Dogwood, Magnolia, Oxydendron, Forsythia, Vibernum, Willow, and Shade bush. On the east side of the pond, there are Pine, Dogwood, Cherry, Red Bud, Vibernum, Varnish Tree, and Witch Hazel. On the north side of the pond the plan called for Hemlock, Pine, Flowering Crab, Rhododendron, Laurel, and Azalea. Fern, Grass, Japanese Iris, Weeping Pink Cherry, and Jasmine were planned for the north and south sides of the pond.

Robinson, Stanhope, and Manning designed an elegant masonry gazebo topped with a birdhouse cupola. This gazebo was part of the overall plan made for the house in 1937-38, and the drawing for the design still exists. It was never executed, but a more modest wooden structure was built on the west end of the pond.

#### The Colonial Revival in America

The Colonial Revival style became the dominant architectural type for housing in America at the turn of the nineteenth century. The word "colonial" loosely means the period in this country before 1840. Virginia and Lee McAlester define Colonial Revival in their book, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, as a style which:

refers to the entire rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard. The Georgian and Adam styles form the backbone of the Revival, with secondary influen-

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<sup>64</sup> Although the location of the tennis courts and orchards are uncertain, Mrs. Ann Benethum, Mrs. James R. Morford, Jr., and Mrs. Roberta A. Davis all mentioned them in their interviews. Mrs. Roberta A. Davis. Telephone interview with Cheryl Powell. November 21, 1987, Wilmington, Delaware. Notes located at CHAE.

ces from Postmedieval English or Dutch Colonial prototypes. Details from two or more of these precedents are freely combined in many examples so that pure copies of colonial houses are far less common than are eclectic mixtures.<sup>65</sup>

The purpose of the style was not to attempt to transcribe buildings from the past and to reproduce them in an accurate archaeological fashion, but rather to use design elements from the American colonial past and interpret them for modern construction methods. Stylistic elements such as accentuated front doors with fanlights and sidelights, symmetrically balanced bays, doors, and wings, hipped and gabled roofs, and full width porches with classical columns are among the most common architectural features associated with the style in the period between 1890 and 1940. With the sophisticated developments in technology at the turn of the century, many of the Colonial Revival-style ornamental details could be easily mass-produced for the general public.<sup>66</sup>

The reasons for the popularity of the Colonial Revival style in this country are very complex.<sup>67</sup> The negative reaction to the excessive ornamentation that had become associated with Victorian architecture created a desire to return to the simple classical forms which predated the Victorian style. With vast numbers of immigrants arriving in America at this time, there were subtle nativist yearnings to preserve America's colonial past. Architectural design seemed an appropriate method for expressing the strong feeling of nationalism sweeping the country. Neo-classical architectural forms such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and George Washington's Mount Vernon became symbols of our cultural heritage and archetypes for the Colonial Revival style in architecture.<sup>68</sup> The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s created a new interest in American historic preservation efforts, and in 1936 the American Institute of Architects held its annual convention in Colonial Williamsburg.

A variety of publications were important for spreading the popularity of

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<sup>65</sup> McAlester, p. 324.

<sup>66</sup> Frederick M. Wells, "Houses Inspired by American Colonial," *Arts and Decoration* 52 (May, 1940): 7; Gebhard, p. 110.

<sup>67</sup> Axelrod, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Gebhard, pp. 109-110.

the Colonial Revival style. *Good Housekeeping*, *American Home*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *House and Gardens*, *House Beautiful*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Arts and Decoration*, *Town and Country*, and *Country Life*, magazines geared toward middle- and upper-middle-class households, began to focus on the colonial tradition. National architectural drawing competitions sponsored by these magazines and the construction of numerous demonstration houses all over the country helped to promote Colonial Revival architecture. Professional journals, such as *Architectural Record*, *Pencil Points*, *Architectural Forum*, and *American Architect*, and house pattern books, like Rexford Newcomb's *Colonial and Federal House: How to Build an Authentic Colonial House*, published measured drawings and general interior and exterior photographs of American colonial architecture. An increasing number of picture books and historical studies were devoted to colonial architecture and prompted attention to the New England area. Samuel Chamberlain produced four editions of his guidebook, *Open House in New England*, between 1937 and 1941. He also published several photographic essays of historic New England cities and towns.<sup>69</sup>

During the Great Depression a trend developed towards remodelling existing dwellings in the Colonial Revival style. The Federal Revival style became one of the popular forms of Colonial Revival architecture. David Gebhard states in his article, "The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s," that the Federal Revival:

as a colonial type was thought of as a nearly perfect combination of three ideals of the time: the sense of returning to the colonial past; the desire to be suave and sophisticated via a highly refined version of classicism; and the urge to have an image that could, through its plain surfaces, two-dimensional detailing, and simple volumetric forms, be responded to as modern.<sup>70</sup>

Colonial Revival architecture was also popular in the state of Delaware. Some of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places including: Public School #111C, first quarter of the nineteenth century (N-5258); Harmon School, 1920 (S-165); Old Fire House, 1925 (K-1692); Governor William Watson Mansion, 1906 (K-1693); Wright House, 1922

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<sup>69</sup> Gebhard, pp. 111-112.

<sup>70</sup> Gebhard, p. 132.

(N-5786); Aetna Fire Station #12, 1922 (N-5747); Wilmington New Century Club, 1892 (N-1136); and Buena Vista which has a ca. 1930-32 Colonial Revival ballroom addition by the architect R. B. Oakie (N-219).

### Summary

If Richard W. Crook had built his country estate as a symbol of his new status in the community, James R. Morford was attempting to accomplish the same goal thirty years later with his Colonial Revival remodeling of the house and the extensive landscaping of the property. Spring Hill still maintains its lofty presence in The Cedars, and no other house in the neighborhood can match its character or prestige. In an article from the Wilmington newspaper, *The Morning News*, on May 9, 1920, the author states that Colonial Revival houses "are growing more and more popular, no doubt largely because of their charming simplicity and haunting dignity."<sup>71</sup> This description remains true for Spring Hill, which fully captures the eternal Colonial Revival ideal in the Federal Revival manner.

### Suburbanization and Transportation & Communication

The historic theme Suburbanization during the period 1880-1940 +/- also relates to Spring Hill. During this era population growth was dramatic in the urban area of Wilmington where employment opportunities were great. One effect of this growth was a movement of upper- and middle-class residents out of the city into less congested and cleaner rural areas. An important facet of this migration was the availability of dependable transportation networks that would allow suburban residents to continue their urban employment. In the mid-nineteenth century horse-drawn trolleys of the Wilmington City Railway Line began conveying passengers from the business district along Front and Market Streets to less developed areas along Delaware Avenue. This area subsequently became a residential district for Wilmington's elite. Suburban development and transportation networks were so closely related during this period that any discussion of suburbanization cannot be divorced from transportation. In this manner the

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<sup>71</sup> See Charles S. Sedgwick, *The Morning News*, Wilmington, Delaware, May 9, 1920.

historic theme Transportation & Communication relates to Spring Hill and heavily influenced the development of The Cedars as a suburb.

### The Cedars

In 1900 The Cedars Land and Improvement Company was incorporated with Richard W. Crook as president. Shortly thereafter the company bought approximately eighty-five acres of land along Newport Gap Pike. This land was subsequently subdivided into 229 lots. Crook and the other investors intended to create a streetcar suburb for Wilmington's middle class. On a high bluff between Red Clay Creek, Hyde Run and the Brandywine Springs Amusement Park, the land encompassed by The Cedars was a pleasant residential area outside of the increasingly dirty industrial center of Wilmington. The further subdivision of The Cedars in 1913 by the J. G. Justis Company illustrates the attraction of the area as a suburban residential district.<sup>72</sup>

Between 1903 and 1913 there were about 68 land transactions in The Cedars.<sup>73</sup> By the early 1930s most of the lots had single-family dwellings built on them. These houses were not constructed by The Cedars Land and Development Company. Most families used independent contractors or built the houses themselves with the help of neighbors or family. According to the 1910 Census, there were 45 heads of families listed as living in The Cedars, and the majority of these residents were painters, carpenters, laborers, and tradesmen.<sup>74</sup>

Suburban real estate was viewed as an excellent investment (especially among the middle class) in the late nineteenth-century United States. In *Streetcar Suburbs* urban historian Sam Bass Warner described the variety of available short-term mortgages and title covenants designed to help protect investment by stipulating lot size and architectural style. These covenants usually forbade multi-family homes as well as the establishment of factories, saloons, and stables within the boundaries of the development. Deed transactions for The Cedars, for example, forbade the sale of alcohol

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<sup>72</sup> Thompson, pp. 27-34.

<sup>73</sup> NCCRD, 1901-1914.

<sup>74</sup> Davis Interview. December 30, 1987; Benethum Interview. December 30, 1987; Thompson, pp. 29-30. Notes located at CHAE.

and spirits. The major necessary characteristic of a suburb was proximity to a streetcar or electric trolley line.<sup>75</sup>

### Trolleys and Streetcars

Electric trolley lines facilitated the opening of suburbs in the Wilmington area. In 1912 there were three major trolley routes providing transportation from Wilmington to Brandywine Springs, Elsmere, New Castle, and Chester, Pennsylvania. Suburban settlements along these trolley routes varied according to several factors. Carol E. Hoffecker in her book, *Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century*, points out that:

People moved from houses in the center city [of Wilmington] to new ones along the trolley lines in a discernible pattern that reflected factors such as socioeconomic status, place of work, and ethnicity.<sup>76</sup>

As proprietor of the local trolley line that ran from Wilmington to Brandywine Springs, Crook was ideally situated to promote the development of a suburban area.

Richard W. Crook had been the general manager of Brandywine Springs Amusement Park since 1886. Brandywine Springs, just north of Hyde Run, had been for most of the nineteenth century a resort and amusement park. A succession of owners, including the Fell family of the Faulkland spice mill, had operated a hotel at Brandywine Springs, a chalybeate mineral spring (waters impregnated with salts of iron) popular during the early nineteenth century. Crook began operating an amusement park at the site in 1886. He leased the existing resort hotel in the park for his residence.<sup>77</sup>

In order to satisfy the demand for transportation to the park and surrounding area, a number of trolley line companies extended their service in the Brandywine Springs vicinity. The Wilmington and Western Railroad had proved to be unsuitable for the needs of the park. By 1895 passengers

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<sup>75</sup> Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs, The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978).

<sup>76</sup> Carol E. Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 27.

<sup>77</sup> Thompson, pp. 13-14; C. A. Weslager, *Brandywine Springs* (Wilmington, Delaware: Hambleton Co., 1949), pp. 19-21.

between Wilmington and the park had to transfer from the Wilmington and Elsmere Electric Railway Company to the Wilmington City Railway. The need to transfer was eliminated in 1897 when Crook was able to convince Wilmington City officials and the Elsmere Company that promoting easy passage between Wilmington and Brandywine Springs Park would increase fares for both trolley companies.

When the Wilmington City Railway Company began to develop Shellpot Park as a rival amusement park, Crook's backers, the Brandywine Springs Company, obtained approval to operate a trolley line in Wilmington. The Wilmington and Brandywine Springs trolley line opened the next year with Crook's brother as president. Land later encompassed by The Cedars was purchased by the Wilmington and Brandywine Springs Trolley Line Company in 1898. In 1900, Crook obtained a charter for the Peoples Railway Company to build an electric trolley car line. With Crook serving as general manager, the Peoples Railway built a line from Wilmington that ran west on Capitol Trail through Prices Corner and up present-day Washington Avenue. There the passengers would disembark and walk to the Brandywine Springs Amusement Park. This route opened in 1901 and finally gave Crook control of a line that ran between downtown Wilmington, Brandywine Springs and The Cedars.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> John T. Mullins, *Souvenir of Peoples Railway Co.* (Wilmington, De.: John T. Mullins, 1901); Francis A. Cooch, *Little Known History of Newark, Delaware, and Its Environs* (Newark, De.: The Press of Kells, 1936), pp. 27-33; Weslager, p. 76; Thompson, pp. 22-31; Hoffecker, *Corporate*, pp. 12, 19-28.

No information provided for this page.