

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The J. Spear Farmstead, surrounded by open fields and farm land along County Road 30, is an agricultural complex comprised of a circa 1860 farmhouse, a re-built 19th century shed/garage, and several early 20th century outbuildings. The U-shaped placement of these structures essentially forms a courtyard which is accessed by a farm lane to the west of the house.

The farmhouse is a 2 1/2-story, 5-register, T-shaped dwelling with a central gable. Its form and applied details were common to the eastern half of the United States from the mid to late 19th century, popularized in part by treatises such as Andrew Jackson Downing's guide for rural residences. Constructed of frame, the house is remarkably well-preserved with its original clapboarding, porch, entrance, fenestration, and trim. The central three registers of this symmetrical central hall house are fronted by a porch supported by chamfered posts on new bases. Jigsaw brackets and a bracketed cornice ornament the porch which shelters the paneled, round-arched double doors with sidelights. Windows are 2/2 double hung with paneled shutters at the first floor and louvered shutters above. The integral rear kitchen wing is fenestrated by replacement 1/1 double hung sash. A bracketed cornice with cyma reversa moldings outlines the asphalt-shingled gabled roof which is pierced by interior end chimneys.

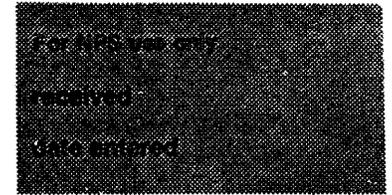
In plan, the house is organized in the traditional I-house plan of hall/central passage/parlor, here with a kitchen wing extending to the rear. The stair has slender turned balusters and turned newel. Walls are of plaster, except for the west room which has been paneled; of note in this room is the surviving built-in paneled closet adjacent to the chimney breast. The east room or parlor features an original Renaissance Revival wooden mantel. The second floor contains a bedroom on either side of the center hall and a third bedroom over the kitchen wing. A simple entablature mantel remains in the west bedroom, a bracketed mantel shelf in the east one. Throughout the house, molded baseboards and milled surrounds are generally in good condition.

Across the farm lane from the house is a late 19th century frame shed, now used as a garage. Dated 1881 on the interior south wall, that is possibly when this peg constructed structure was reassembled. Moving in a clockwise direction, to the west is a modern frame and metal hay and machinery barn, to the northeast of which is a 1920s frame dairy barn sided with vertical boards. That barn has a hoist at the gabled peak of its corrugated metal roof for lifting hay into the second floor storage area; a CMU* dairy stands to its side, a metal silo, to its rear. A

*CMU refers to concrete masonry unit construction throughout this document.

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vertical board-sided granary, also dating from circa 1920, is positioned adjacent to the barn and dairy. Behind this cluster is a mid-20th century shed and trough for cow feeding. To the east of the granary is a modern frame carriage house and machinery shed, built on a CMU base and roofed with corrugated metal. A vertical board-sided tool shed stands between it and the farmhouse. A wire corn crib is located towards the rear of the complex.

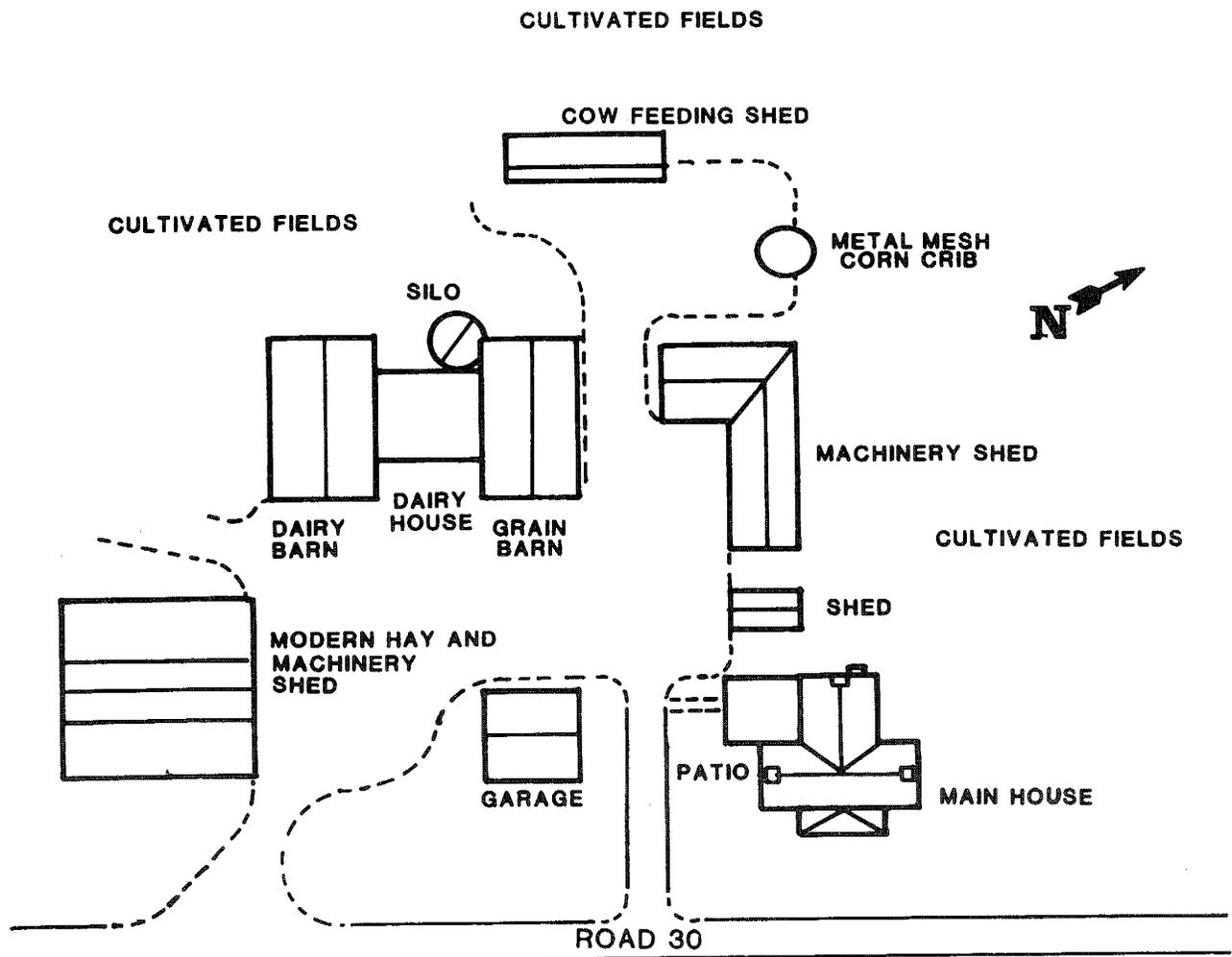
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Not to scale.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1936	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates c. 1860 farmhouse
early 20th century
outbuildings

Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

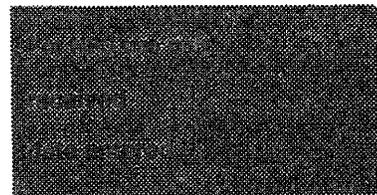
The J. Spear Farmstead is significant as a well-preserved representative of a mid-19th century vernacular farmhouse and as a monitor of trends in southern New Castle County's agricultural history. Because of these associations the farmstead appears to be eligible for the National Register under Criteria C and A.

The circa 1860 farmhouse stands as the property's only surviving landmark from the period of significance associated with John C. Spear. Although updated with Victorian trim and finishes, the house is laid out in the traditional I-house plan which was derived from 18th century forms. This one-room deep, hall/center passage/parlor plan remained a predominant house form throughout the United States, unchallenged in popularity until the Queen Anne opened up house plans into a-symmetrical and irregular shapes. Also in keeping with traditional forms, the Spear farmhouse has an integral kitchen wing extending to its rear. While the original farmhouse is well-preserved, 20th century outbuildings have replaced all the original sheds and barns. This occurrence is common in agricultural properties as farming needs and practices changed over time. A detailed interpretive and historical account of the J. Spear farmstead has been prepared by Gary E. Baker (1981) and filed with the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Based upon this study, it appears that John C. Spear, Sr., owned the property, formerly called Woodstock, from 1851 until his death in 1866, however, clouds on the title suggest that he would not actually have erected his farmstead on the west side of County Road 30 until 1856. Earlier deeds referenced buildings on the property, a fact which is confirmed by the 1849 Rea and Price Atlas that indicates J. Brown's cluster of buildings on the east side of County Road 30; some of these structures appeared as late as 1893 on Baist's Atlas of New Castle County, but do not survive today.

J. Spear's farmstead dramatically rose and declined in value, reflecting agricultural trends in Appoquinimink Hundred (Blackbird Hundred was formed out of Appoquinimink in 1875). According to Baker (1981), the

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mean value of farms in the Hundred more than doubled between 1850 and 1870, reaching their peak values for the 19th century. From 1870 to 1880, mean farm values more than halved. The J. Spear farmstead illustrates this pattern: Spear purchased the 255-acre property for \$6,002.00 in 1851, then his heirs sold it to Joseph W. Vandegrift for \$27,451.39 in 1868, an increase that more than compensated for Spear's improvements and additional acquisition of 20 acres. That price for the farmstead was not again obtained or even approached until 1976, reflecting the changed nature of farm values after the state's boom period of agricultural growth.

GO86:20:11

9. Major Bibliographical References

Baist, G.W. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia: 1893.

Baker, Gary E. J. Spear Farmstead, Blackbird Hundred: A Documentary and Artifactual Study. A paper prepared for WPEAC, 1981. Filed with Delaware BAHP.

Pomeroy & Beers. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia: 1868.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 7.83

Quadrangle name Smyrna

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	4	7	5	7	0	4	3	5	2	8	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

see continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol A. Benenson, M.S.

organization KKFS, Inc.

date December 1986

street & number 1316 Arch Street

telephone 215-561-1050

city or town Philadelphia

state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state -x- local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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date entered _____

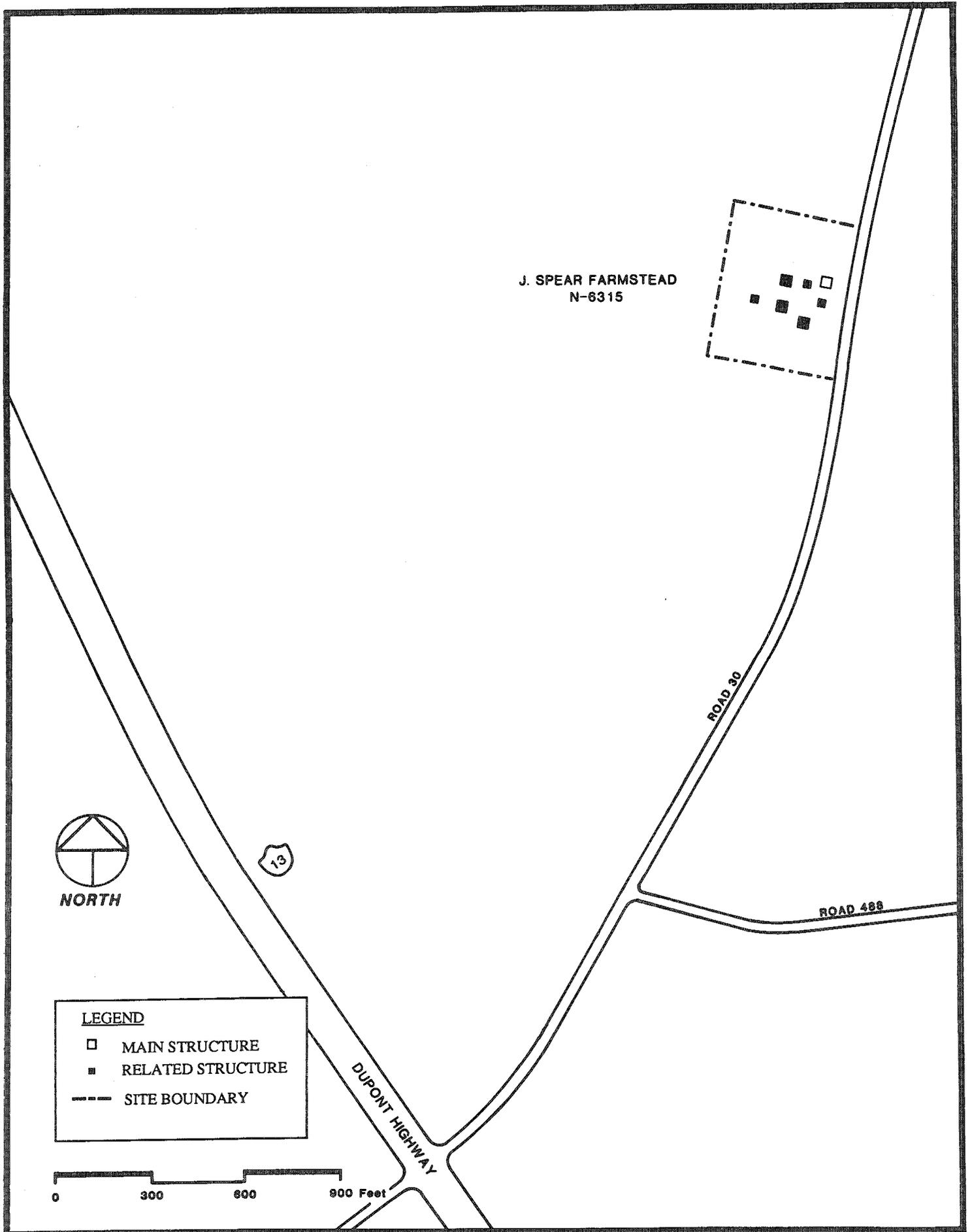
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Continuation sheet J. Spear Farmstead Item number 10 Page 2

10. Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point along the westerly side of Road 30 at a distance of 1,875 feet from the intersection of Road 30 and Smyrna Landing Road (Road 485); thence extending southerly along the right-of-way of Road 30 a distance of 650 feet; thence, at 90° extending westerly a distance of 525 feet; thence, at 90° extending northerly a distance of 650 feet; and thence, at 90° extending easterly a distance of 525 feet to the point of beginning.

The proposed historic boundary contains sufficient acreage to preserve the historic setting of the farmhouse, outbuildings, and immediate surroundings.

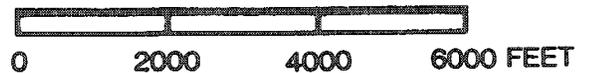




△ J. SPEAR FARMSTEAD (N-6315)

Co. Rd. 30
 New Castle Co., Del.
 UTM: 18.447570.4352890

SOURCE:
 USGS SMYRNA QUADRANGLE
 Delaware
 7.5 Minute Series



NORTH



Fig. 2-44. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Main (south) elevation

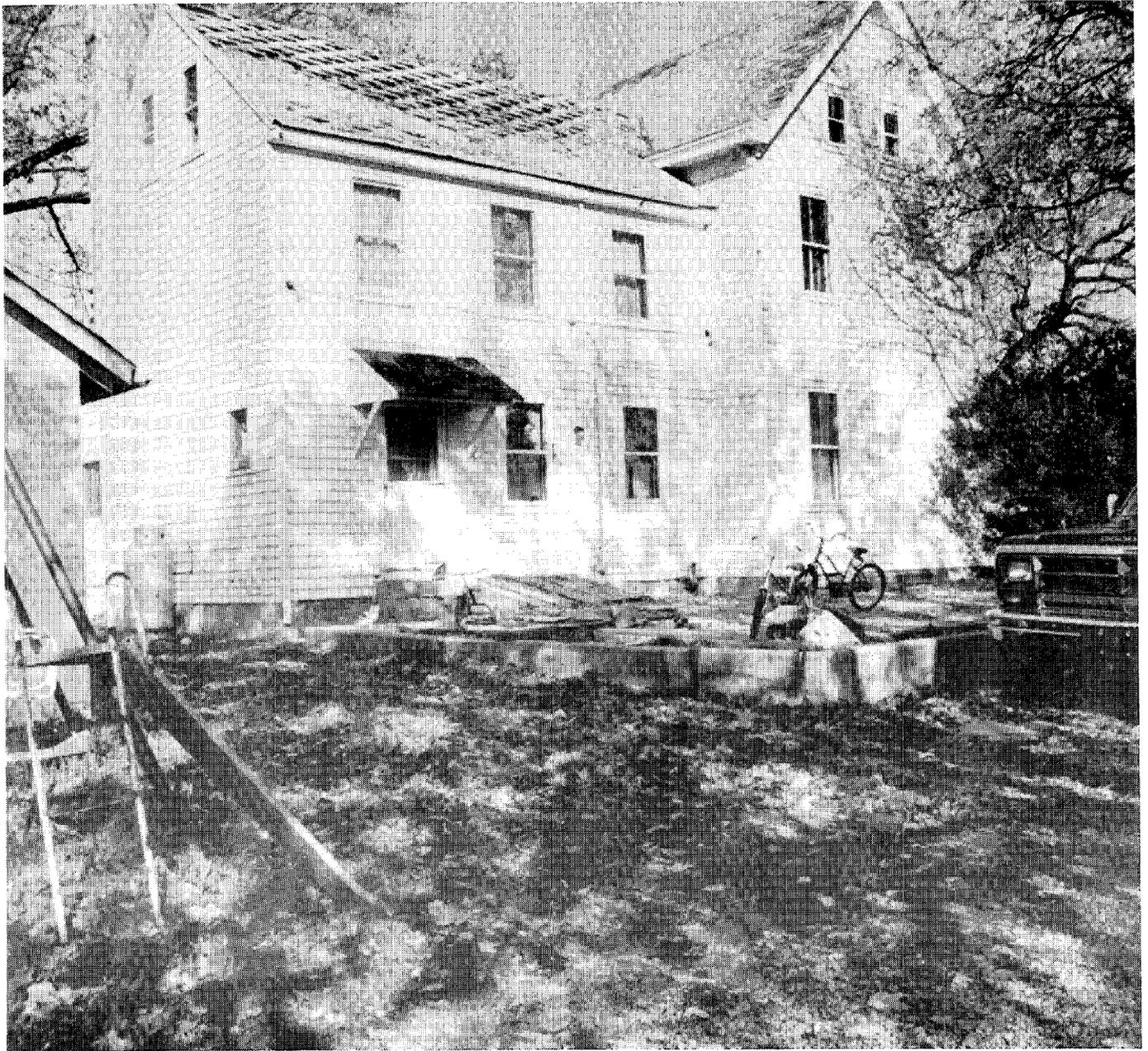


Fig. 2-45. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), West side and rear elevations.



Fig. 2-46. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Detail of stair.



Fig. 2-47. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), West parlor.



Fig. 2-48. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Second floor west bedroom.



Fig. 2-49. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Interior of late 19th century shed/garage.



Fig. 2-50. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Dairy barn, dairy, and granary.

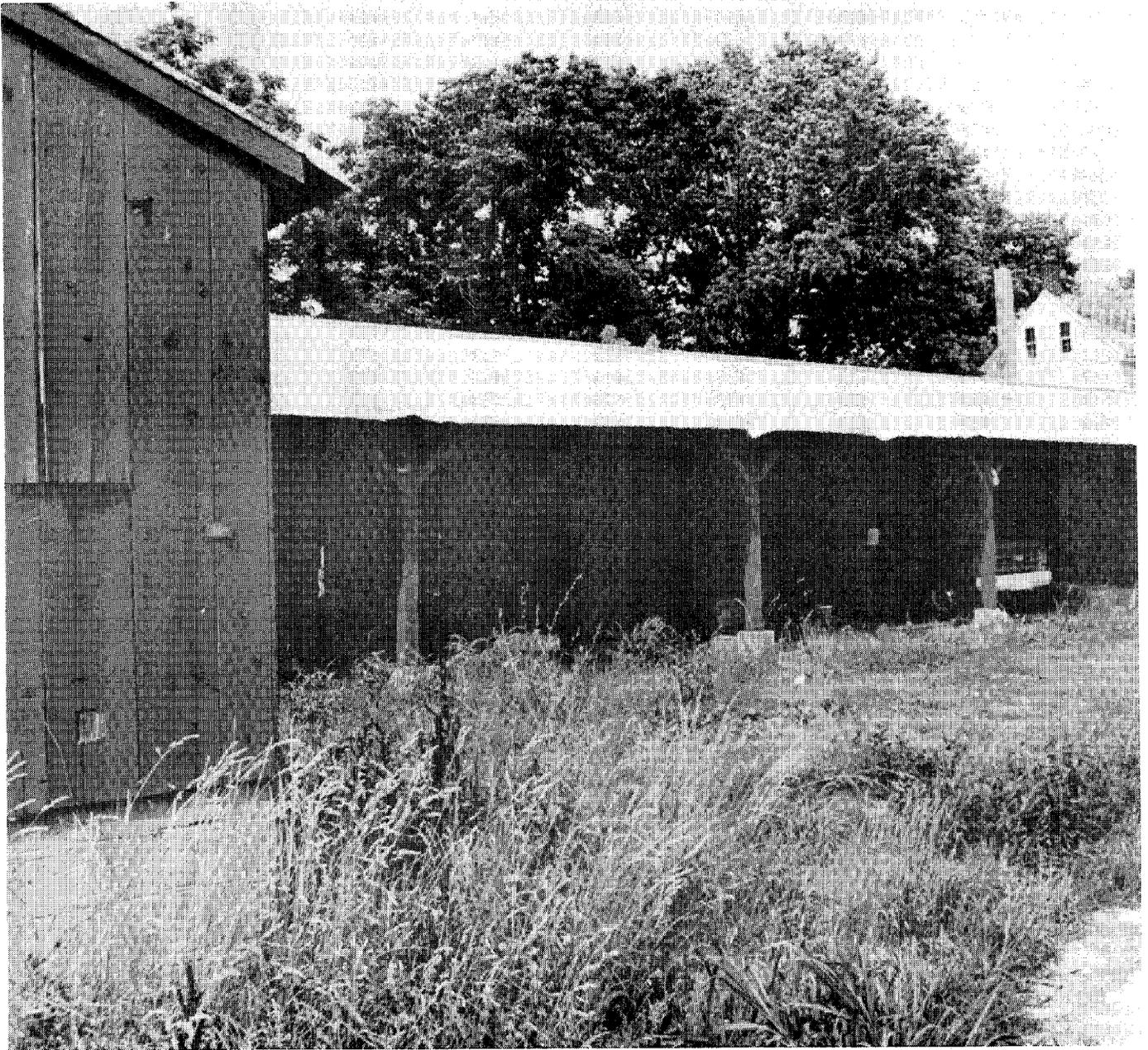


Fig. 2-51. J. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), Carriage house and machinery shed.

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic George N. Short Farm Complex

and or common

2. Location

street & number 912 S. Dupont Highway not for publication

city, town Duck Creek Hundred X vicinity of Smyrna

state Delaware code county Kent code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Harry Benfield

street & number 912 S. Dupont Highway

city, town Smyrna vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Kent County Courthouse, The Green

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey K-3837 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated close to the DuPont Highway is the farm complex built by the Short family in the mid 1930s. The house and outbuildings are approached by a farm lane. The Colonial Revival style house is two and one-half stories in height, constructed of frame and sheathed with clapboards above a rusticated cast stone basement. The west facade facing the highway is formally composed with a central single leaf glazed door with sidelights framed by a one story portico with Tuscan columns and pedimented entablature. The windows are tripartite at the first floor and paired at the second floor; the sash is modern metal replacement 1/1 double hung. The north and south facades have one story porches supported by Tuscan columns with molded entablatures and low pitched roofs covered with tin. The south porch is enclosed with its original multiple light glazing. Centered on the south facade of this porch is a multiple light door with a segmented hood supported by Tuscan columns. The roof of the main block is gabled with a molded box cornice with returns and molded soffit in the gabled ends. The chimneys are centrally placed on the exterior walls and are finished with simple brick lips. The west slope of the roof has a central gabled dormer with glazed fanlight. Both gables have two quarter-circle lunettes flanking the chimneys. The roof is covered with modern asphalt shingles.

In plan, the house has a large central living room area that encompasses the ramped stair which features a simple stick balustrade that terminates with a single twist and turned newel. French doors open from the living room to the sun porch on the south and to the dining room on the north. Except for the sun porch which has been paneled, rooms throughout the house have original plaster walls, and simply molded baseboards and surrounds. Each of the three main first floor rooms--living room, sun porch and dining room--has a massive brick mantel of a distinct shape.

Contemporary with the house are several 1930s outbuildings, most prominent of which is a gambrel-roofed, vertical board-sided dairy barn topped by a circular metal ventilator. Built on a concrete foundation, the barn is fenestrated by 9-light sash and entered through sliding and divided doors on its front gambreled end and side elevations. Accompanying the dairy barn is a free-standing rusticated cast stone dairy fenestrated by 3-light metal sash and topped by an asphalt roof. The farm also has a pyramidal-roofed, German wood-sided shed and a gable-roofed vertical board-sided garage with 6-light fixed sash. A silo was removed in the 1980s.

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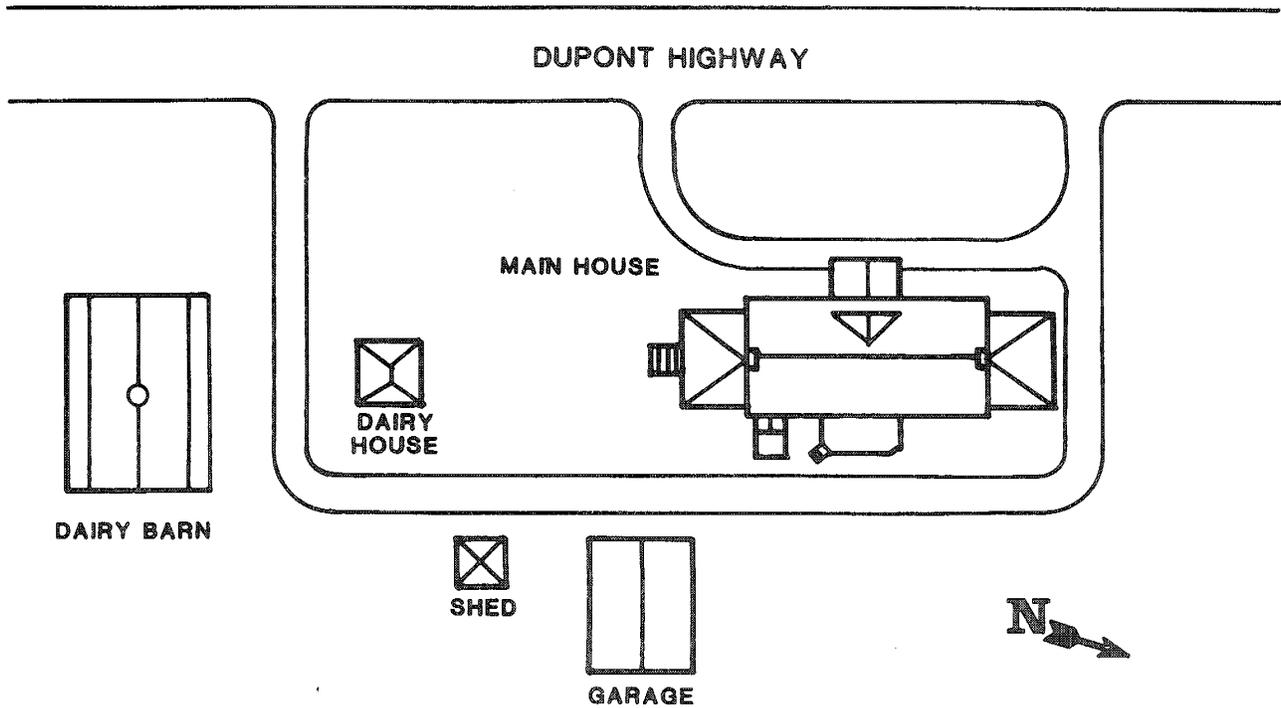
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Continuation sheet George N. Short Farm

Item number 7

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