

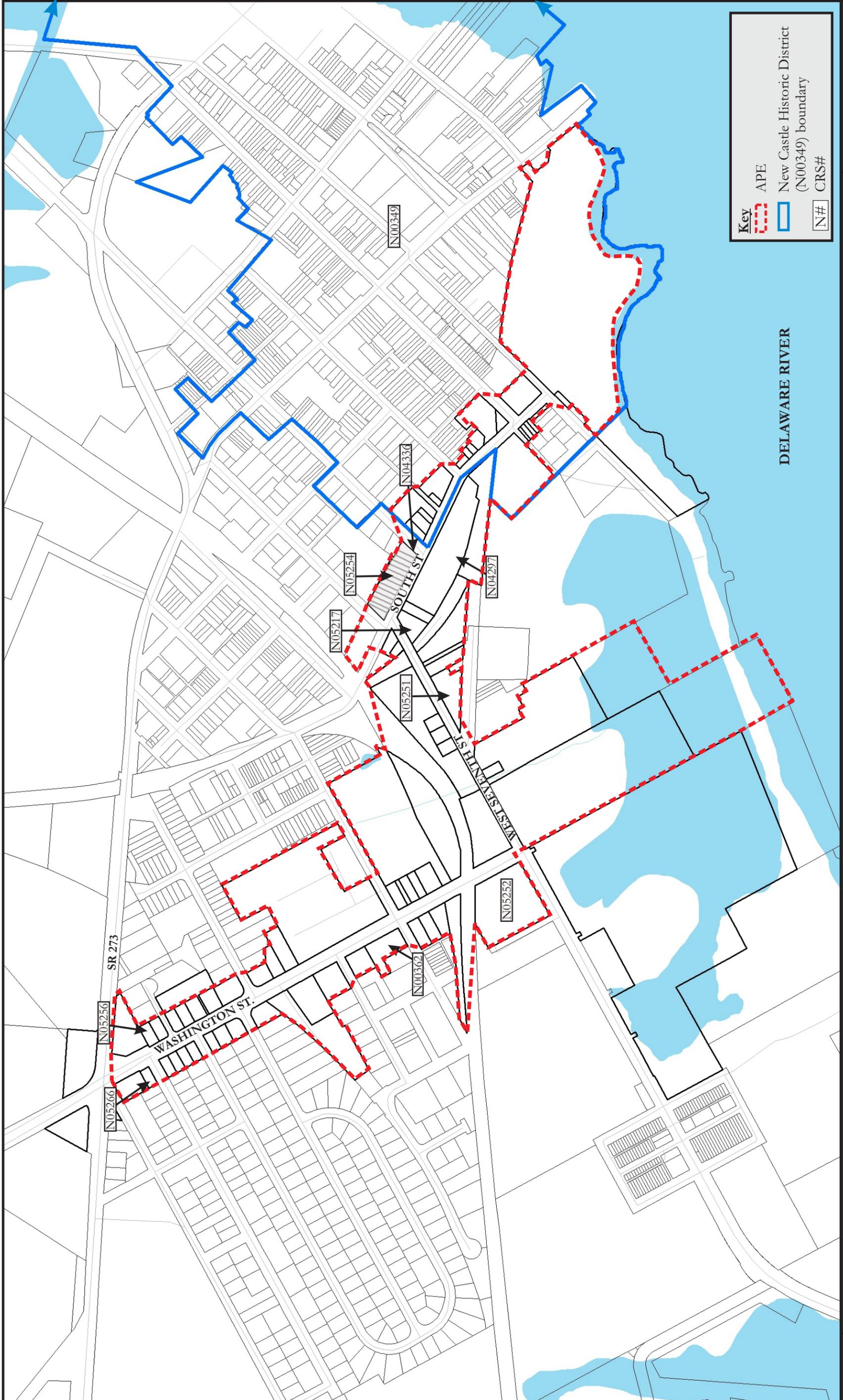
SECTION 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

A reconnaissance-level historic architectural survey was conducted in April 2010 and submitted to DE SHPO in May 2010 (Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. 2010). The survey consisted of the identification of all resources more than 50 years of age within the APE. Based on the results of the reconnaissance survey, recommendations for the intensive-level survey effort were developed in consultation with DelDOT Cultural Resources Staff and the DE SHPO. These included: 1) evaluation of properties in the APE lying within the New Castle Historic District to determine their National Register status (i.e. contributing or noncontributing); 2) documentation of Stonum on CRS forms and reevaluation of its eligibility in light of any changes that might have occurred since its National Register listing; 3) completion of CRS forms for seven additional properties in the APE (Eliason Lumber Yard, South Street Garden Townhouses, Gambacorta Motors, Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company, 614 South Street, 1113 Washington Street, and 1300 Washington Street); and 4) evaluations of National Register eligibility for five properties in the APE (Eliason Lumber Yard, South Street Garden Townhouses, Gambacorta Motors, Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company, and 614 South Street).

The intensive-level historic architectural survey was completed in September 2010. In addition to the properties identified in the reconnaissance-level survey for documentation on CRS forms, it was determined in consultation with DelDOT staff that an existing stone wall on South and Sixth Streets with historical associations to the National Register-listed Lesley-Travers Mansion should also be surveyed and recorded on CRS forms; however, an evaluation of its National Register eligibility was determined to be beyond the scope of the current project.

Based on consultation between DelDOT Cultural Resource Staff and DE SHPO, only those individual properties that would reasonably experience an effect under the project undertaking as defined under 36 CRF 800.16(i) were included in the intensive-level historic architectural survey. This scope effort would include individual building descriptions, historic context development, and an assessment of significance and integrity for a National Register eligibility recommendation. This intensive-level survey has been conducted in accordance with the DE SHPO Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Surveys (1993) and *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service 2002).

Table 4.1 summarizes the architectural properties surveyed for this report, Figures 4.1, 4.2a, and 4.2b shows the locations of all properties surveyed. CRS forms for all properties are included in Appendix A.



Key	APE	New Castle Historic District (N00349) boundary	N#	CRS#

Feet

0 450

Figure 4.1:
Map of Surveyed Architectural Resources.



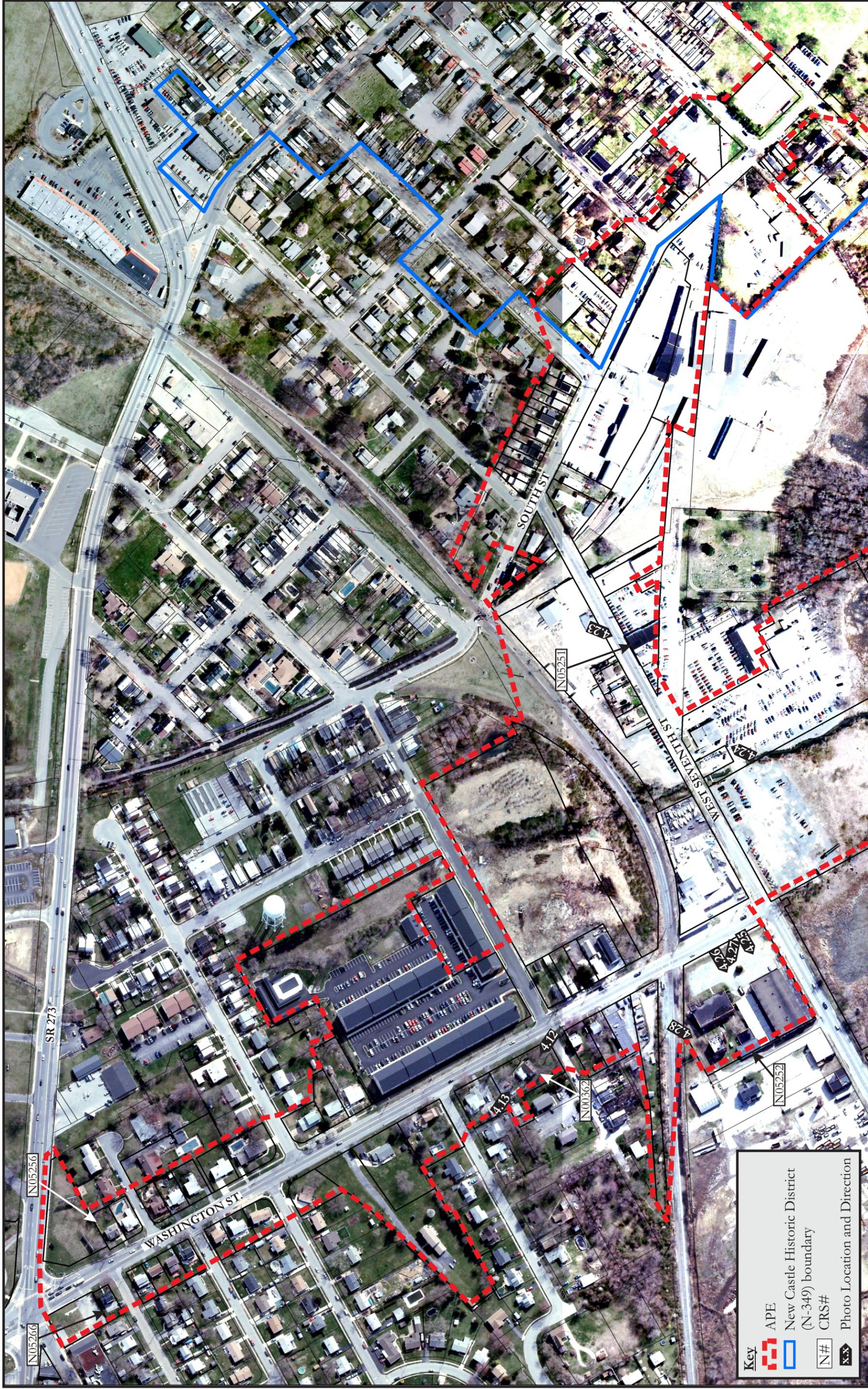


Figure 4.2b:

Aerial Map showing photo locations (Plates 4.12-4.13 and Plates 4.23-4.28).

Table 4.1: Summary of the historic architectural survey.

CRS #	Property Name/ Address	Tax Parcel	UTM	Acreage	Property Type	NR* Recommendation
N00349	New Castle Historic District	Multiple	Multiple	135	District	NR: 12/24/1967, amended 11/8/1984; NHL: 12/24/1967
N00362	Stonum 900 Washington Street	2101400143	450549.8E, 4390217.43N	0.52	Residence	NR: 11/7/1973; NHL: 11/7/1973
N04336	Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall and Gate South and Sixth Streets	Multiple	451144.18E, 4390172.87N	n/a	Wall	Potentially eligible
N04297	Eliason Lumber Yard 508 South Street	2101400390	451195.59E, 4390115.25N	2.24	Lumber yard	Not eligible
N05254	South Street Garden Townhouses 603-629 South Street	2101400386- 2101400373	451097.52E, 4390202.17N	0.86	Residences	Not eligible
N05217	William A. Campbell House 614 South Street	2101400392	451039.15E, 4390186.13N	0.34	Residence	Not eligible
N05251	Gambacorta Motors 423 West Seventh Street	2101400405	450910.36E, 4390120.22N	0.59	Auto showroom	Not eligible
N05252	Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company 700 Washington Street	2101400163	450606.32E, 4390002.87N	2.20	Manufacturing facility	Not eligible
N05256	1113 Washington Street	2101400165	450410.41E, 4390575.73N	0.14	Residence	Not evaluated
N05266	1300 Washington Street	2101400020	450354.59E, 4390579.08N	0.11	Residence	Not evaluated

*NR= National Register of Historic Places; NHL= National Historic Landmark

4.1 New Castle Historic District (CRS #N00349)

Description

The New Castle Historic District (CRS# N00349; NR: 12/24/1967, boundary expansion 11/8/1984; NHL: 12/24/1967) contains the historic core of the City of New Castle and is roughly bounded by the Delaware River on the east and south; Penn Street and South Street on the southwest; Sixth Street on the northwest; and Cherry Street, Fourth Street, and the Broad Dyke on the north. The district is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A for its historical associations with early settlement on the Delaware River; its position as an early trading, shipping, and government center; and its role as a critical link in the regional transportation network. The district is also significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture for its collection of more than 500 well-preserved buildings erected over a period of almost three centuries (Jett and Cesna 1984). Its period of significance begins with the first settlement in the area by the Dutch in 1651 and ends in 1930.

A portion of the APE lies within the southwestern section of the New Castle Historic District, as shown on Figure 4.3. A total of 24 properties in the APE lie within the district boundaries, including Battery Park and properties abutting South Street between Third and Sixth Streets (see Table 4.2). Eleven (11) of the 24 properties were identified as contributing resources in the National Register documentation for the New Castle Historic District. Buildings in this area are predominantly residential in character, and most were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No contributing buildings have been demolished since the district boundary was expanded in 1984; however, two new buildings have been constructed, one on a formerly vacant lot, and another on a subdivided lot. The new buildings employ context-sensitive designs and are compatible in size, scale, and materials with the surrounding district. Plates 4.1-4.4 illustrate the portion of the APE lying within the New Castle Historic District.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Exploration and Frontier Settlement, 1630-1730±; Intensified and Durable Occupation, 1730-1770±; Early Industrialization, 1770-1830±; Industrialization and Early Urbanization, 1830-1880±; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±

Evaluation

The intensive-level survey included a reevaluation of the National Register eligibility of all properties in the APE lying within the historic district boundary. Present conditions were noted in the field and documented with photographs; the data were then compared against the architectural descriptions included in the 1984 National Register documentation to determine whether significant alterations had occurred since listing and, if so, the impact of the alterations on the property's eligibility. Based on the available documentation, only three of the 11 properties previously identified as contributing resources have been altered: 314 South Street (CRS# N00349.335), 316-318 South Street (CRS# N00349.336), and the Booker T. Washington School (322 South Street; CRS# N00349.338). The house at 314 South Street formerly had asbestos siding on the exterior; this siding has since been removed to reveal the historic clapboard (Plate 4.5). As a result, the integrity of materials for the building has improved, and its contributing status has not been affected. The semi-detached dwelling at 316-318 South Street was previously described as having aluminum siding on the "right half" (presumably the north dwelling, #318) and clapboard and asbestos shingles on the "left half." The current survey revealed that the clapboard and asbestos on the south dwelling (316 South Street) has been replaced with vinyl siding (Plate 4.6). The replacement of original siding has diminished the building's integrity of materials; however, it retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Thus, despite the loss of original materials, the building retains sufficient integrity to remain a contributing resource within the New Castle Historic District.

Table 4.2: Surveyed Properties in the New Castle Historic District.

CRS #	Property Name/Address	Date of Construction	Historic Function	Alterations	Previous Determination	National Register Recommendation
N00349.174	106 West Third Street	c. 1880	Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.273	Good Will Fire Company/ 70 West Fourth Street	1958	Fire station	Addition 2009	Noncontributing	Noncontributing
N00349.316*	425-427 South Street	2007	Residence	New construction on lot subdivided from N00349.316	None	Noncontributing
N00349.334	James T. Eliason House/ 80 West Fifth Street	1899	Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.335	312 South Street	c. 1890	Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.336	314 South Street	c. 1890	Residence	Asbestos siding removed; clapboard exterior	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.337	316-318 South Street	c. 1890	Residence	Vinyl siding replaced clapboard on south half of façade (316 South Street)	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.338	Booker T. Washington School/ 322 South Street	1923	School	Addition to west elevation employs context-sensitive design	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.340	419 South Street	c. 1890	Residence	n/a	Noncontributing	Noncontributing
N00349.436	Battery Park/200 South Street	c. 1950	Park	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.444	305 South Street	c. 1950	Tennis courts	n/a	Noncontributing	Noncontributing
N00349.448	525 South Street	c. 1925	Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.449	527 South Street	c. 1925	Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.450	123 West Sixth Street	c. 1900	Store/Residence	n/a	Contributing	Contributing
N00349.451	113-115 West Sixth Street	1968	Office	n/a	Noncontributing	Noncontributing
N00349.552	West Third Street	n/a	Vacant lot	n/a	Vacant lot	Vacant lot
N00349.555	South Street	n/a	Vacant lot	n/a	Vacant lot	Vacant lot
N00349.564	81 West Fifth Street	2006	Residence	New construction	Vacant lot	Noncontributing
N00349.567	515 South Street	1994	Garage	New construction	Vacant lot	Noncontributing

*CRS# assigned to 79 West Fifth Street. At the time of listing, the lot included frontage on South Street, which has since been subdivided for construction of the semi-detached dwellings at 425-427 South Street.



Figure 4.3:

New Castle Historic District. The identification of contributing and noncontributing resources was limited to properties within the APE, as shown.





Plate 4.1:

New Castle Historic District. View along West Third Street, west of South Street and opposite Battery Park. The contributing dwelling at 106 West Third Street (CRS# N00349.174) is visible at left.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.2:

New Castle Historic District. View along South Street between West Third and West Fourth streets. Contributing properties at 312-318 South Street (CRS# N00349.335-337) are visible at left in photo; at right, noncontributing tennis courts (CRS# N00349.444) built after the district's period of significance.

Photo view: North

Photographer: Sharon D. White

Date: May 18, 2010



Plate 4.3:

New Castle Historic District. View of east side of South Street between West Fifth and West Fourth streets. Noncontributing buildings on this block include new construction at 81 West Fifth Street (CRS# N00349.564) and 425-427 South Street (CRS# N00349.316).

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.4:

New Castle Historic District, intersection of South Street and West Sixth Street. The store and residence at the corner (123 West Sixth Street; CRS #N00349.450) marks the northwestern corner of the historic district.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.5:

312-314 South Street (CRS# N00349.335-336).

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.6:

316-318 South Street (CRS# N00349.337).

Photo view: West

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010

The Booker T. Washington School (Plate 4.7) is a two-room, Colonial Revival-style schoolhouse that was constructed in 1923 to serve New Castle's African-American community. After years of disuse, the school reopened in 2005 as the New Castle Senior Center with a large addition on its west elevation (Plate 4.8). Although the addition more than doubled the size of the school, it employs a context-sensitive design that includes a glass-enclosed breezeway connecting the addition to the historic school, clearly distinguishing the original school from the new addition. The one-story addition has a gable roof and brick exterior and is compatible in size, scale, and materials with the historic school. The addition's placement at the west end of the original building, away from the road, also minimizes its impact on the school and the surrounding historic district. The Booker T. Washington School retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association and is therefore remains a contributing resource in the New Castle Historic District.

Battery Park (CRS# N00349.436) is an 18-acre passive recreation area with a paved walking path along the riverfront, picnic tables and benches, and a playground with modern play equipment (Plates 4.9-4.10). The park also contains the New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad Ticket Office (1832), which was moved to the southeastern section of Battery Park in the 1950s. A small, asphalt-paved parking area is located at the southern terminus of South Street, adjacent to the APE. Historically, the park was the site of the city wharf, and railroad tracks were laid down South Street and through the area that now comprises Battery Park during the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the traffic generated by the railroad and wharf, the western section of the Battery Park area had assumed recreational uses by the early twentieth century and was known briefly as Ocean Beach Park. After the railroad abandoned tracks through the area, the Trustees for the New Castle Commons purchased the Battery for use as a city park in 1939. The area was subsequently filled and the park developed by the City of New Castle around 1950. The National Register nomination noted:

Formerly the area where railroad spurs extended to the various wharves, Battery Park is now a recreational city park. Although this area has been stripped of its railroad tracks, it is important to include the park [within the district boundaries] because it preserves the waterfront (Jett and Cesna 1984:7-4).

The park is recommended as a contributing resource within the New Castle Historic District. The transformation of Battery Park from a transportation center to a recreational facility predates the National Register listing and, as noted in the nomination, the park provides an important link to the Delaware River. Battery Park has not been significantly altered since its listing on the National Register and therefore remains a contributing resource within the New Castle Historic District.



Plate 4.7:

Booker T. Washington School, 322 South Street (CRS# N00349.338).

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.8:

Modern addition to Booker T. Washington School (CRS# N00349.338).

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.9:

Battery Park parking area, located at the terminus of South Street.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.10:

Battery Park (CRS# N00349.436). View toward Delaware River from near parking area at South Street.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010

The survey revealed that the tax parcel for one contributing property, 79 West Fifth Street (CRS# N00349.316), was subdivided in 2005, with the frontage on South Street sold off for construction of two semi-detached dwellings. Although they employ a context-sensitive design, the new dwellings at 425-427 South Street (see Plate 4.3) are noncontributing resources within the New Castle Historic District because they were constructed after its period of significance. The dwelling at 79 West Fifth Street remains a contributing resource.

The intensive-level survey additionally reevaluated all of the noncontributing resources within the APE to determine their current status. The vast majority of the noncontributing properties were constructed after the period of significance for the district; only one was built within the historic period but heavily altered prior to the district's nomination to the National Register. The status of all noncontributing properties was confirmed.

The National Register documentation for the New Castle Historic District identified four vacant lots within the APE. Each lot was reevaluated to determine whether changes had occurred affecting its status. The lots at the northeast corner of West Fourth and South Streets, adjacent to the Good Will Fire Company, and at the southwest corner of West Third and South Streets, at Battery Park, remain vacant. The formerly vacant lot at 81 West Fifth Street (CRS# N00349.564) contains a new two-story dwelling (see Plate 4.3); although it employs a context-sensitive design, it was constructed after the period of significance and therefore is a noncontributing property. The vacant lot on South Street identified as CRS# N00349.567 (515 South Street) contains a garage built circa 1940, after the period of significance (see Plate 4.11); therefore, this parcel was also identified as noncontributing.

Table 4.2 contains a summary of properties within the APE that lie within the New Castle Historic District and indicates their National Register status. Figure 4.3 illustrates the location and contributing/noncontributing status of all surveyed properties.

4.2 Stonum (900 Washington Street; CRS# N00362)

Description

Stonum is a two-and-one-half-story, brick Georgian-style dwelling constructed circa 1750 (see Plates 4.12-4.13). The house has a side gable roof with pedimented dormers and a wood cornice with modillions. The east side elevation is covered with stucco, and the brick has been painted on the remaining elevations. The south-facing front is four bays wide, with an offset door and 9/9 wood sash windows in plain wood surrounds; the windows have operable shutters, paneled on the first floor and louvered on the second story, with shutter dogs. Interior end brick chimneys are located



Plate 4.11:

515 South Street (CRS# N00349.567). This lot was identified as vacant in the National Register nomination for the New Castle Historic District, although the existing building appears to predate the 1984 survey.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.12:

Stonum (CRS# N00362).
Photo view: Northwest
Photographer: Jennifer Leynes
Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.13:

Stonum (CRS# N00362), rear elevation. The wing at left in photo was identified in the National Register nomination as predating the main block but may in fact be contemporary; at right is a mid-nineteenth century addition.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010

at the southeast and northwest corners. A full-width porch with flat roof and rusticated concrete block foundation and supports was added circa 1920. An original rear wing is located at the northeast corner of the main block, and a circa 1850 addition adjoins the wing on its west elevation (see Plate 4.13). An exterior stair and deck have been added on the west side of the addition to provide access to a second-floor apartment.

Stonum is located on the west side of Washington Street in a residential area of New Castle. At the time of its construction, the house was a country retreat, located outside of the developed area of the city and possessing frontage on the Delaware River to the south. Today, the property is surrounded by mid- to late-twentieth century residential development. A privet hedge extends along Washington and Ninth Streets; this hedge appears on a historic photograph of the property published in 1915 (see Figure 4.4). Mature hardwoods, shrubs, and perennials comprise the landscape around the house. A driveway at the rear of the house extends from Washington Street to a mid-twentieth-century, gable-front garage located at the property's northwest corner. The property is illustrated on Figure 4.5.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Intensified and Durable Occupation, 1730-1770±; Early Industrialization, 1770-1830±

Evaluation

Stonum was listed on the National Register and named a National Historic Landmark in 1973. The property is listed under Criterion B for its association with George Read, an important Delaware politician of the Revolutionary War period and signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. According to the statement of significance, Read owned the house as a country estate from the late 1750s until 1769; it is unclear whether he built the main block or if it was present at the time of purchase. The nomination suggests that Stonum is “the most significant structure commemorating” the life of Read, a nationally significant political leader.

The National Register nomination states that, “The oldest portion of Stonum, the part to the right-rear which is now occupied by the kitchen, dates from around 1730” (Post 1973). Visual evidence suggests that the main block and rear wing may have in fact been constructed simultaneously; the shed roof on the two-story wing is a common treatment for a rear wing, but unusual for a main block.



Figure 4.4:

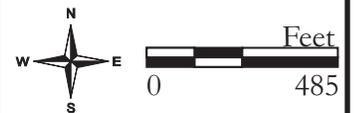
Stonum, 1915 (from New Castle Board of Trade 1915).





Figure 4.5:

Aerial Map, Stonum (from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).



The earliest photograph of the house found during the course of research is a circa 1915 view (see Figure 4.4), which depicts a Victorian-era full-width, hipped roof porch with sawtooth trim on the eaves (New Castle Board of Trade 1915). The building then had a standing seam metal roof. Two outbuildings are visible at the rear of the house on the right side; one of these was depicted on the 1907 Sanborn insurance map of New Castle, and at least two outbuildings are evident in an aerial photograph taken in 1925 (Dallin Aerial Survey Company 1925b; Sanborn Map Company 1907). Neither outbuilding has survived. Also evident in both photos is a low hedge extending across the south (West Ninth Street), west, and east (Washington Street) sides of the property. A privet hedge is extant in that location along the property's south and east boundaries.

Stonum was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1936 (see Appendix B). As shown on Figure 4.6, the Victorian-era porch had been replaced with the existing concrete porch by this date. The accompanying documentation noted that the building was in a “Very good state of preservation [but] some departures from original conditions are to be deplored, such as [the] concrete porch on river front (South) and painted exterior” (HABS 1936). Interior features worthy of note reportedly included the staircase in the east corner room and fireplaces with “wood mantels of good design” (HABS 1936). The photo depicts a portion of the circa 1850 northwest wing, which then had a one-story, flat roof porch at its north end. An insurance map of New Castle published in 1923 and revised 20 years later, shows a one-story frame shed at the approximate location of the existing garage (Sanborn Map Company 1943).

Photographs accompanying the 1973 National Register nomination for Stonum indicate that relatively little change had occurred since 1936. The standing seam metal roof was then intact, as was at least one outbuilding at the rear of the property. The porch at the north end of the northwest wing had been removed by this date. A picture of the rear elevation (see Figure 4.7) indicates that there was then a one-story, frame entry vestibule with shed roof attached to the north end of the northeast wing. This addition has since been removed. The nomination indicated that the interior was intact, with corner fireplaces, detailed woodwork, and elegant mantles (Post 1973).

The exterior of Stonum has sustained few alterations since its listing on the National Register. As noted previously, the small entry vestibule at the rear, itself an addition, has been removed, and several windows on the side and rear elevations have been replaced. The most significant changes have resulted from its conversion from a single-family residence into apartments, which probably occurred during the mid-1980s. A modern wood deck was constructed on the west elevation of the rear wing to provide exterior access to a second-floor apartment around that time. It is unknown to



Figure 4.6:

Stonum, 1936 (from HABS 1936).



George Read House, "Stonum," New Castle, Delaware

NPS Photo 1973



Figure 4.7:

Rear elevation of Stonum, 1973 (from Post 1973).

what extent original interior features have been altered to accommodate the change in use, as no attempt was made to contact the property owner or enter the dwelling.

Based upon the available information, the intensive-level historic architectural survey confirmed the National Register eligibility of Stonum. The property's significance results from its association with George Read, a nationally significant political leader during the American Revolution. Stonum is reportedly the only surviving building associated with Read. The replacement porch, which predates the National Register listing, has arguably had the most detrimental effect on the property's integrity; later exterior changes have had minimal impact on its integrity of materials, workmanship, and design. The extent of interior alterations is unknown. Stonum's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association remain high. Because of Stonum's historical significance and the limited nature of alterations since its listing, the property's eligibility for the National Register is confirmed.

4.3 Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall and Gate (South and Sixth Streets; CRS# N04336)

Description

The Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall extends along the east side of South Street from its intersection with Seventh Street southward to Sixth Street, then curves eastward to follow the north side of Sixth Street to a point west of its intersection with Tremont Street. As shown on Plate 4.14, the rough-hewn, copestone wall has piers at regular intervals. An iron gate (Plate 4.15) is located roughly midway down Sixth Street. The easternmost section of the wall on Sixth Street, near the Tremont Street intersection, was demolished circa 1940. The portion of the wall on South Street has fill behind it, with staircases built circa 1948 during construction of the existing townhouses (Plate 4.16). The Wall and Gate are depicted on Figure 4.8.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Industrialization and Early Urbanization, 1830-1880±; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±

Evaluation

The Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall and Gate is historically associated with the Lesley-Travers Mansion, which was built in 1855. The Gothic Revival-style dwelling was designed by architects Thomas and James M. Dixon of Baltimore for physician and State Senator Dr. Allen V. Lesley. The Lesley-Travers Mansion is listed on the National Register under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a Gothic Revival-style dwelling (Rogers and Troy 1972).

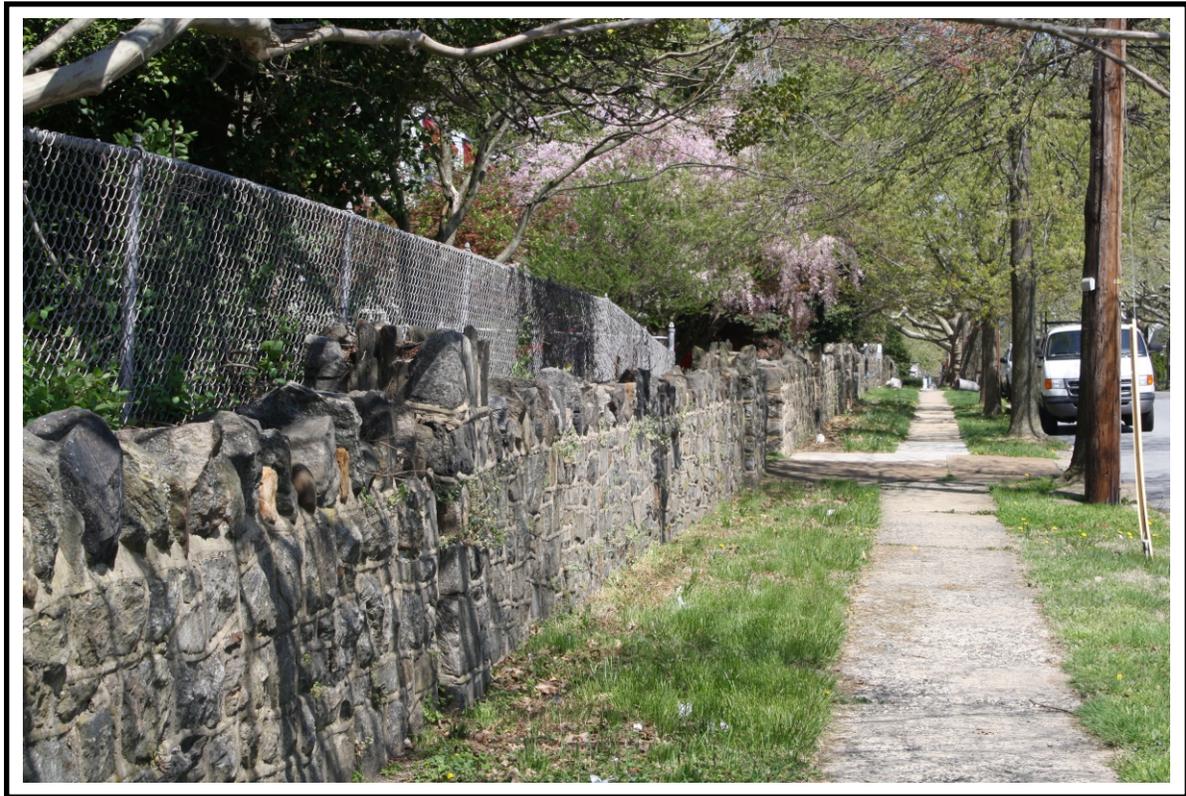


Plate 4.14:

Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall (CRS# N04336). This section is located on West Sixth Street, near its intersection with South Street.

Photo view: Northeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.15:

Lesley-Travers Mansion Gate (CRS# N04336). The gate is located on West Sixth Street.
Photo view: Northwest
Photographer: Jennifer Leynes
Date: September 23, 2010

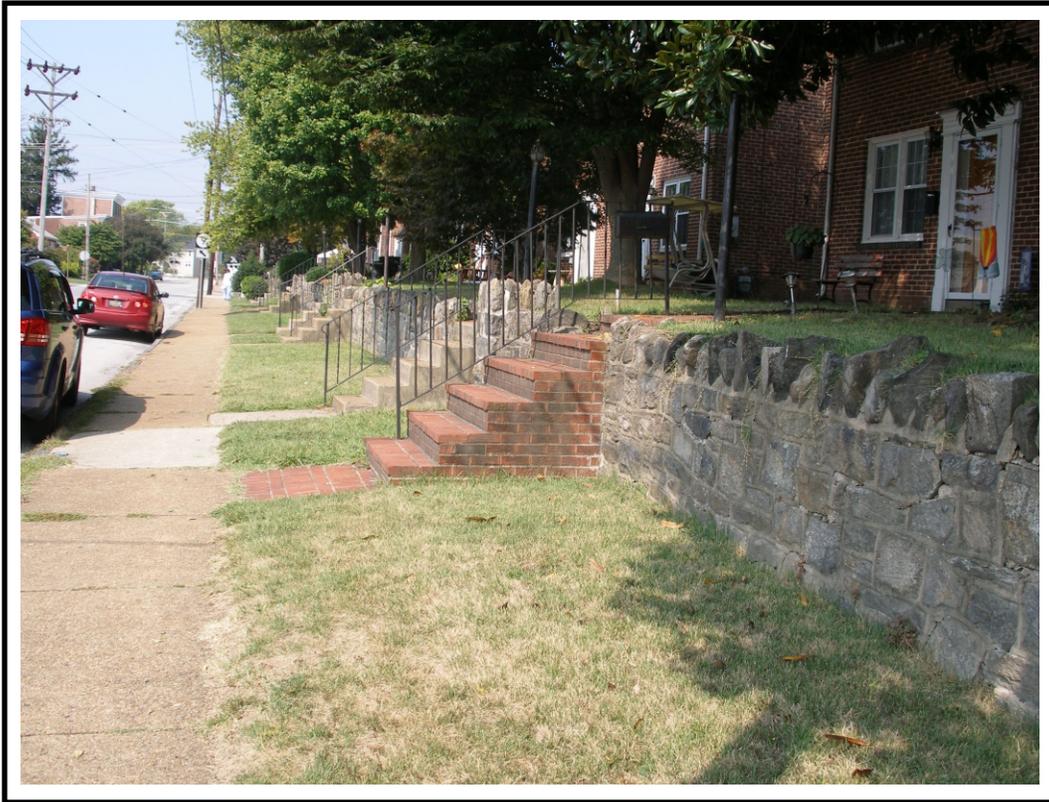


Plate 4.16:

Staircases in Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall (CRS# N04336). The staircases are located on South Street, in front of the South Street Garden Townhouses (CRS# N05254).

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010

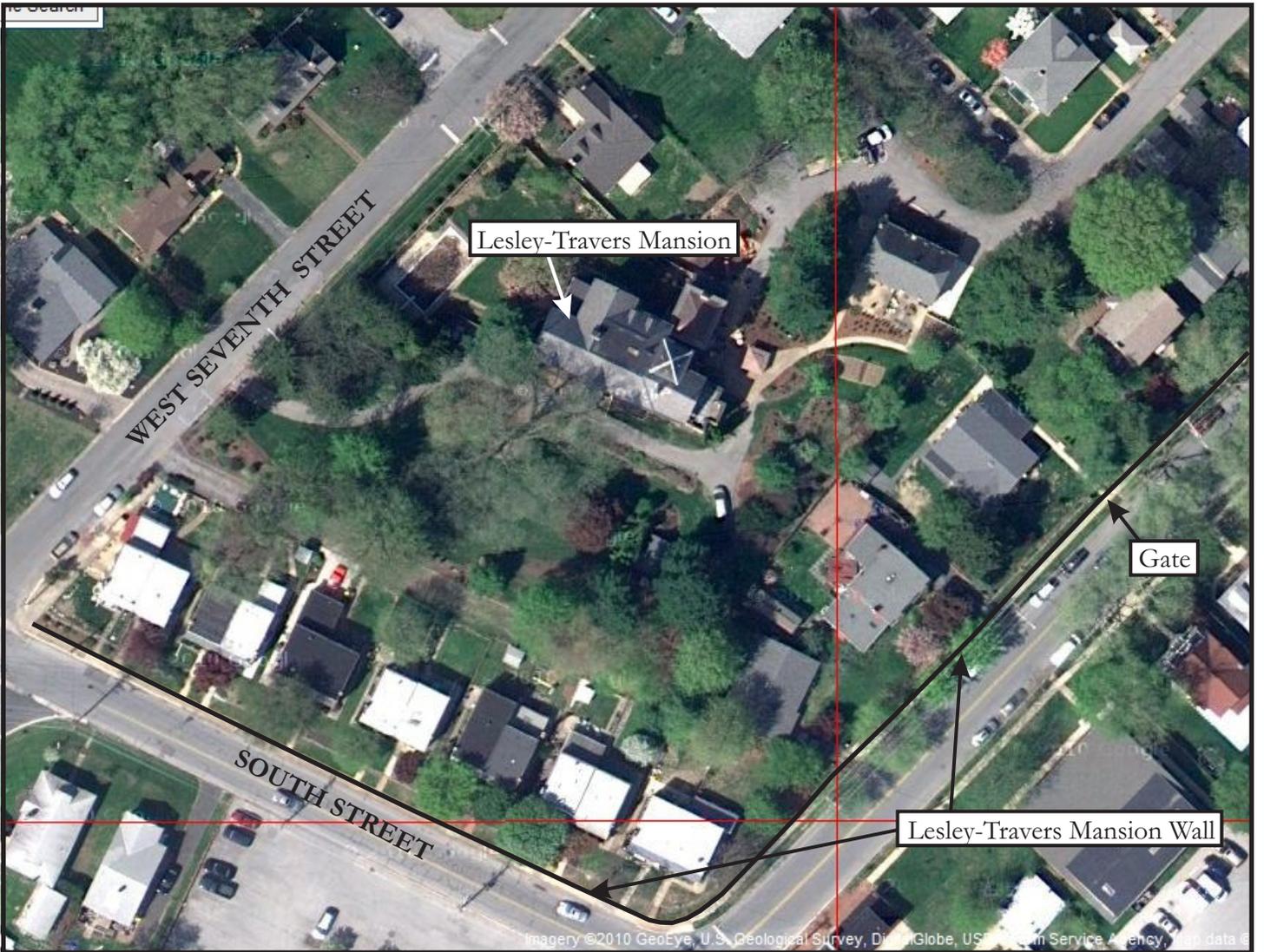


Figure 4.8:

Aerial Map, Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall and Gate
 (from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).



The National Register documentation for the Lesley-Travers Mansion does not reference the existence of the stone wall on South and Sixth Streets, probably because the mansion property fronting both of these streets had been subdivided and developed during the early- to mid-twentieth century. As a result, residences line both streets, in-between the wall and the mansion. An historic aerial photograph from 1925, included as Figure 4.9, predates most of this development, as well as the construction of Seventh Street east of South Street. The picture shows a gate and driveway at the approximate location of Seventh Street, with a hedge extending to the north and the subject stone wall, to the south along South Street. The wall turns at Sixth Street, continuing along that road past a number of early twentieth-century houses, apparently as far as the Tremont intersection (Dallin Aerial Survey Company 1925c). Piers are evident at regular intervals along the length of the wall. The presence of trees behind the wall on South Street suggests that the ground originally sloped upward toward the mansion and was later backfilled during construction of the existing townhouses circa 1948 (see Section 4.5).

The date of construction for the wall and gate is unknown. Lesley occupied the mansion from its construction in 1855 until his death in 1881; after that time, the house was maintained by a series of caretakers before being acquired in 1903 by Selden S. Deemer and his wife. Mrs. Major N. Travers, Jr., owned the property at the time of its listing on the National Register (Rogers and Troy 1972). The Deemers reportedly developed the grounds during their tenure, suggesting the possibility that the wall was constructed during this period (Delaware Federal Writers' Project 1936:97). The wall may be contemporary with the William A. Campbell House, a circa 1920 bungalow at 614 South Street (CRS# N05217), which has similar stonework, including a copestone apron wall on the front porch; however, historic deeds for the Campbell House do not include mention of the Lesley-Travers property (see Section 4.6). A full historical study of the wall was outside the scope of this project. Within the APE and along the South Street Garden Townhouses (see Section 4.5), the Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall and Gate are not recommended as individually eligible for the National Register. The wall alone in this area (APE) lacks historical significance and is out of historic context, with infill development and alterations in functional elevation with breaks in the copestone, fill behind the wall, and various staircases with railings affixed. However, the wall and gate at the Lesley-Travers property or in proximity to other surrounding blocks may be contributing to the National Register-listed Lesley-Travers Mansion. An evaluation of the contributing or noncontributing status of the Wall and Gate in relation to the Lesley-Travers Mansion was outside the scope of this project.

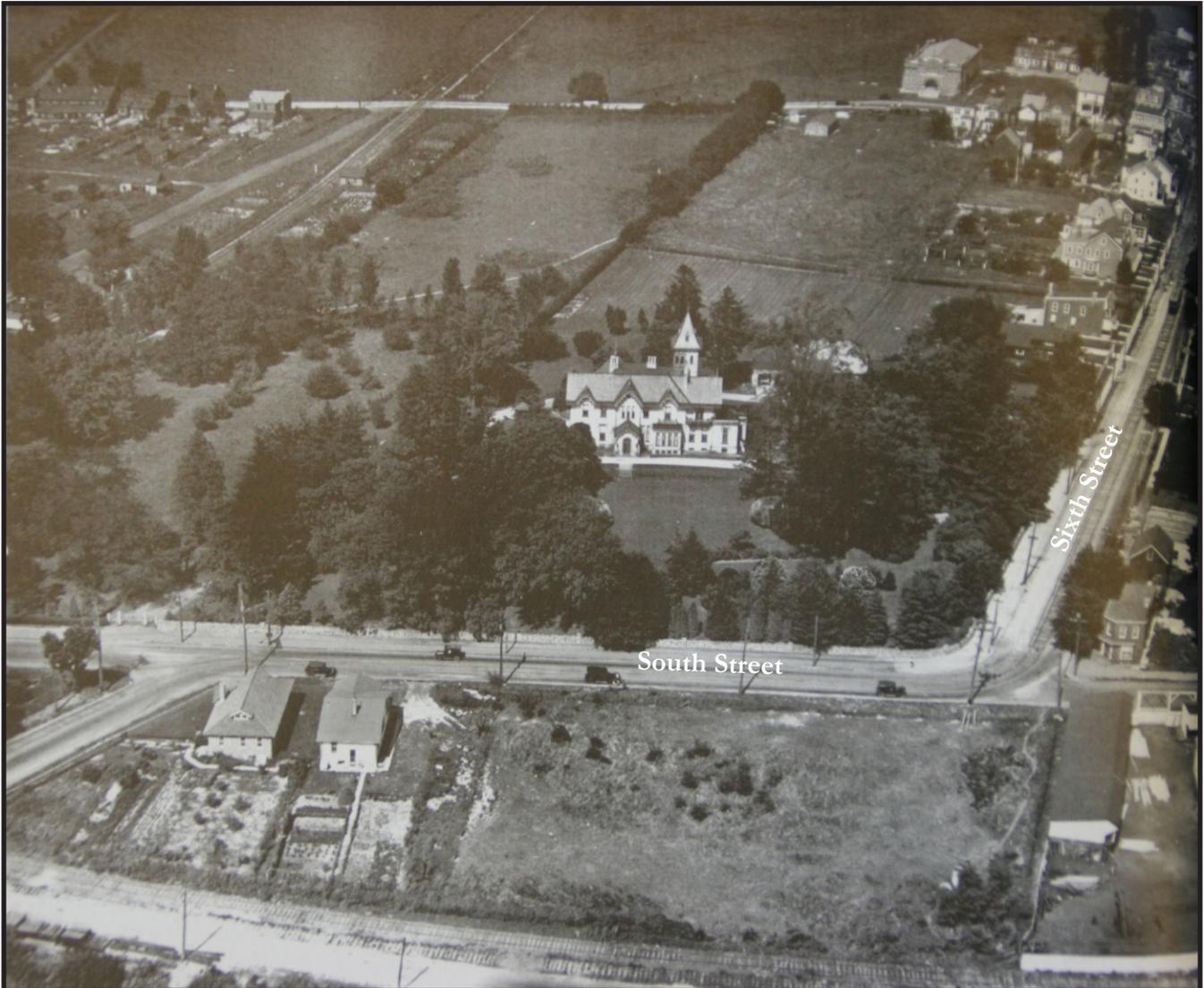


Figure 4.9:

1925 Dallin Aerial Survey Company, Deemers Residence [HagleyID 70.200.00965].
The Lesley-Travers Mansion is at center in photo, and the stone wall can be seen extending along South and Sixth Streets (Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware).



4.4 Eliason Lumber Yard (508 South Street; CRS #N04297)

Description

Established in the early 1880s, the Eliason Lumber Yard is comprised primarily of buildings dating from the mid- to late twentieth century. The complex includes a brick-faced retail store and office, six lumber sheds, a gatehouse, and a modern retail store with attached concrete block garage. The oldest of these is the circa 1940, brick-faced retail store and office, which is located at the southeastern end of the parcel, adjacent to South Street (see Plate 4.17). The one-story building has a flat roof with parapet; the former display windows have been enclosed, and modern metal windows replace the original transoms. An addition to the south elevation, circa 1950, is also faced with brick. On the north elevation, the building is connected to a one-story wing with a side gable roof and vinyl siding exterior (see Plate 4.18); this north wing has no openings on the South Street façade.

The lumber yard is located northwest of the retail store and office and is surrounded by a chain link fence. As a result, the buildings and structures located within the yard could not be documented in detail. Historic aerial photographs indicate that all of these buildings were constructed after circa 1960. On the southern half of the lot, two cinder block storage buildings are located behind the retail store and office (Plate 4.19). The nearest is two stories with a flat roof; west of and parallel to the first is a two-story, gabled building, with a shed attached to its west elevation. An open lumber shed with a gable roof is located at the southwestern corner of the parcel. On the north end of the lot, a modern retail store with metal siding is set back from South Street behind a large asphalt-paved parking area with planting island. A concrete block garage that faces west into the lumber yard is attached to the store's north elevation. A large, gabled storage building with metal siding is located behind the modern retail store. A small frame gatehouse is located at the yard entrance between the two retail stores. The Eliason Lumber Yard is depicted on Figure 4.10.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±

Historical Overview

The Eliason Lumber Yard was established during the early 1880s by James T. Eliason and his brother, Lewis E. Eliason. The two, operating as the J.T. and L.E. Eliason Company, appear to have originally leased the South Street property from the estate of Dr. Allen V. Lesley, who owned the large Gothic Revival-style mansion (Lesley-Travers Mansion) on the opposite side of South Street. The Eliasons leased the lumber yard property for six years before purchasing the land in 1887. The property, which contained about one and a half acres, fronted on South Street for 370 feet and was



Plate 4.17:

Eliason Lumber Yard Retail Store and Office (CRS# N04297).

Photo view: West

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.18:

Eliason Lumber Yard Retail Store and Office (CRS# N04297). View showing north wing.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Sharon D. White

Date: May 18, 2010



Plate 4.19:

Eliason Lumber Yard (CRS# N04297). The small building at left is the gatehouse, and the north wing of the retail store is located immediately behind the gatehouse. The two cinder block buildings at center were constructed circa 1960; the lumber shed in the background was added around 1980.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Figure 4.10:

Aerial Map, Eliason Lumber Yard
(from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).



bounded southwesterly by the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, northwesterly by proposed Sixth Street, and southeasterly by Fifth Street (NCCRD 1887:DB X-13:338). Four generations of the Eliason family were associated with the business, which remained in operation at this site for approximately 126 years.

Prior to establishing the lumber yard, James T. Eliason's first business venture was that of a general store owner in Summit Bridge, located 11 miles southwest of New Castle. In addition to dry goods and groceries, Eliason sold various farm related merchandise, such as agricultural implements, grain, lime and phosphates. Around 1872, Eliason entered into a partnership with Jacob Boys, merchant and nurseryman, and the two started a coal dealing business. By 1874, Eliason had relocated his business ventures to New Castle, where he established a grocery and dry goods store on Delaware Street, across from the New Castle Court House. Shortly thereafter, his youngest brother, Lewis E. Eliason, became a partner in the business. The two initially operated under the name of J.T. Eliason and Brother, wholesale and retail dealers in dry goods, notions, groceries and provisions (Edwards 1880:166; Johnson 1981).

The Eliasons grew up in St. George's Hundred, the sons of Andrew Eliason. In addition to their business, both were actively involved in New Castle's civic matters. Lewis E. Eliason served as a clerk for the city during the 1880s and also was a member of the New Castle School Board of Directors from at least the late 1880s into the early 1890s. In 1891, James T. Eliason is known to have been a director of the Farmer's Bank of New Castle (Keighton Printing House 1891:69-70; Scharf 1888:862, 878, 984-985). The brothers were both residents of New Castle, living in neighboring Victorian-era houses on Fifth Street near the lumber yard (Travers 2005:121).

In 1881, the same year the Eliasons opened their South Street lumber yard, they moved their general store operations to the recently completed Opera House building, also located on Delaware Street. Shortly afterward, they placed their nephew William Rothwell in charge of the general store, while the Eliason brothers focused on the lumber yard business. The general store was eventually closed in 1886 (Johnson 1981).

By 1891, the J.T. and L.E. Eliason Company was formed. In that year, they were featured in *Delaware's Industries* as dealers in farm implements, coal, and lumber. The business was described as:

the largest and most important establishment of this character in this vicinity. A special siding from the railroad furnishes the best facilities for the receipt and shipment of products. The stock comprises of farming implements, machinery and tools, grain, lumber, coal, wood, posts, rails, fertilizer, building hardware, cutlery, and tools (Keighton Printing House 1891:69-70).

During the mid-1890s, the company became an agent for several fire insurance companies located in Philadelphia and Wilmington. The vast majority of the policy holders, which were both residential and commercial, resided within the limits of the City of New Castle. A photograph of the lumber yard dating from 1899 is included as Figure 4.11.

Over the next 20 years, the company's focus gradually shifted from agrarian merchandise to building and construction materials. Grain sales and agricultural implements were virtually phased out by 1918, replaced by the sale of various construction materials, such as millwork (doors, window casings, moldings, etc.), sand, brick, cement, tar paper, putty, and terra cotta pipe (Johnson 1981). Figures 4.12-4.13 illustrate the Eliason Lumber Yard as it appeared during the early twentieth century. Building materials, including hardware and paint, continued to be the main products of the company throughout the twentieth century.

James T. Eliason died in 1916 at 72 years of age. Upon his death, his financial interest in the family business was inherited by his son, James T. Eliason, Jr. A year later, the J.T. and L.E. Eliason Company was incorporated. Around this time, Lewis E. Eliason retired and sold his shares in the company to a nephew, Andrew Eliason. In addition, Frank L. Hewlett, an area businessman, also joined the firm (Johnson 1981). Lewis E. Eliason enjoyed a brief political career after his retirement: he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Delaware in 1916 but died in May 1919, midway through his term (Delaware Bureau of Vital Statistics, Dover, Delaware [DBVS] 1919; Pickett 2010).

Between 1926 and 1928, the J.T. and L.E. Eliason Company expanded the lumber yard to the northwest (to its present size, Tax Parcel # 2101400390) by acquiring an additional 270-foot frontage on South Street (NCCRD 1926:DB Z-33:206; NCCRD 1928:DB Q-35:554). Around 1940, a new brick-faced store front was erected at the far southeastern end of the property, at the intersection of South Street and Fifth Streets (see Figure 4.14). Most, if not all, of the buildings in the lumber yard complex up until this time consisted of frame buildings, which included a main store/office building, a warehouse and several sheds (Sanborn Map Company 1912).

In 1966, the company merged with the Brosius and Smedley Lumber Company of Wilmington to form the Brosius-Eliason Company (Immanuel Episcopal Church 1967:39; The News Journal 2008). In 1997, the majority of the company stock, 52 percent, was held by James T. Eliason, III, and his sister, Sarah E. Englehart. Members of the Brosius family owned about 37 percent of the company shares, with the remaining 11 percent held by Frank L. Hewlett, Jr. (FindLaw 2010). Englehart's son, James E. Englehart, was the fourth generation member of the Eliason family to be associated



Figure 4.11:

Eliason Lumber Yard, 1899 (from Wolf 1899).



Figure 4.12:

Eliason Lumber Yard, 1915 (from Johnson 1981).

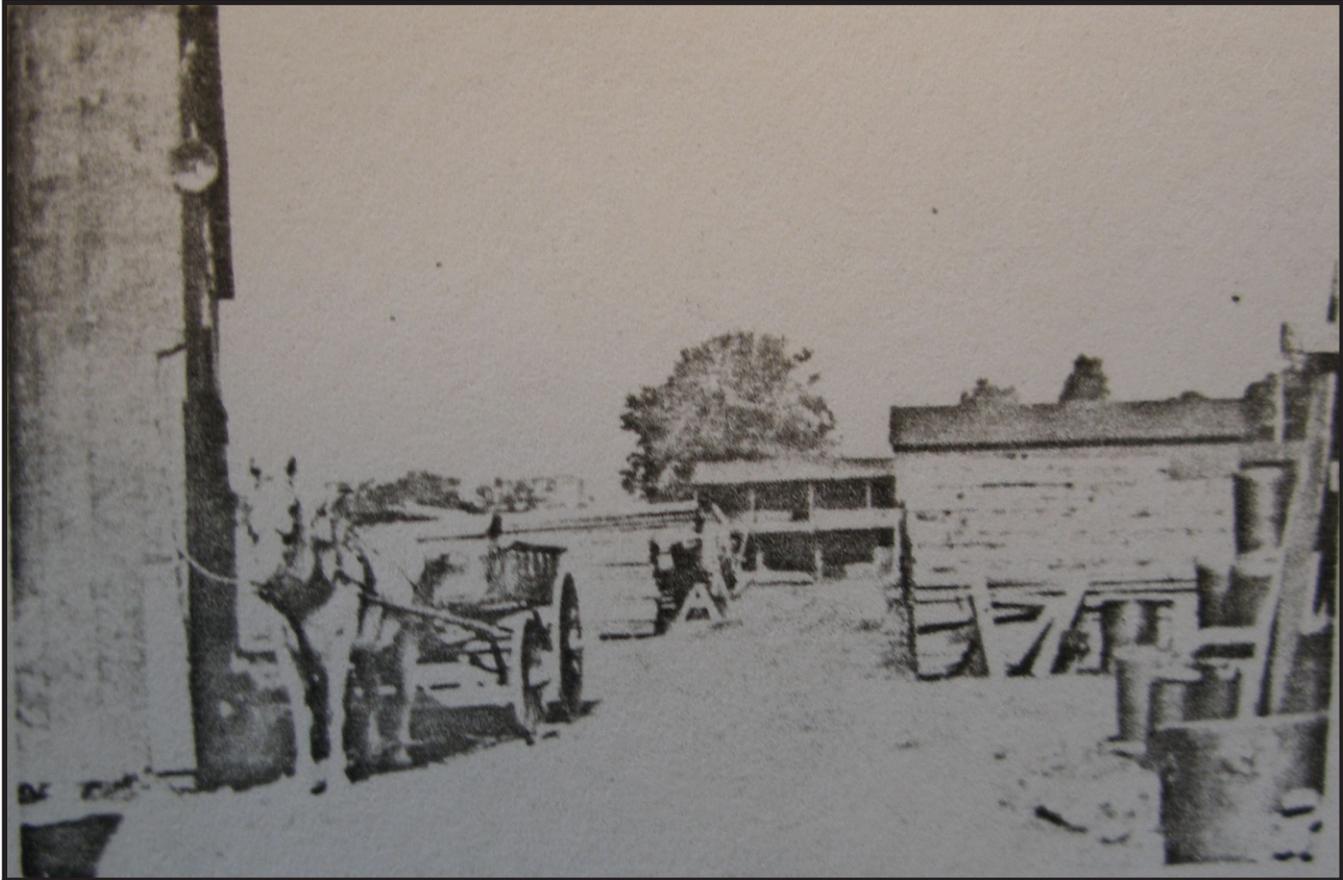


Figure 4.13:

Eliason Lumber Yard, 1919 (from Johnson 1981).



Figure 4.14:

J.T. and L.E. Eliason Retail Store, circa 1940 (from New Castle Historical Society, Eliason Lumber Yard Collection, New Castle, Delaware).

with the business. In 1995, he was serving as the secretary and treasurer of the board of directors (Rivera 1995).

After 126 years of operation, the Brosius-Eliason Company closed the Eliason Lumber Yard business in 2008 due to a decline in the house building market. It also closed its three other Delaware home and garden retail stores located in Wilmington, Glasgow and Claymont (The News Journal 2008). The title history is summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Title History, Eliason Lumber Yard (Tax Parcel # 2101400390).

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
May 14, 1863	James Kennedy of New Castle County	Allen V. Leslie, M.D. and his wife, Jane L. of New Castle County	New Castle Co. Deed T-7:228	Parcel of land containing 5.5 acres bounded southwesterly by the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, northeasterly by South Street, and southeasterly by Fifth Street.
May 28, 1887	Estate of Allen V. Leslie, late of New Castle County	James T. Eliason and Lewis E. Eliason both of New Castle City	New Castle Co. Deed X-13:338	Parcel of land described as the "Lumber yard Property" bounded southwesterly by the railroad, northwesterly by proposed Sixth Street, northeasterly by South Street, and southeasterly by Fifth Street.
April 1, 1926	William A. Campbell and his wife, Katherine both of New Castle City	J.T. L.E. Eliason, Inc.	New Castle Co. Deed Z-33:206	100-foot addition to lumber yard to the northwest.
August 16, 1928	William A. Campbell and his wife, Katherine both of New Castle City	J.T. L.E. Eliason, Inc.	New Castle Co. Deed Q-35:554	Additional 171-foot addition to lumber yard to the northwest. In 1928, lumber yard property increased to present Tax Parcel # 2101400390
August 10, 2010	Brosius-Eliason	508 South Street LLC	New Castle Co. Deed 20100830 0044943	Tax Parcel #2101400390

Evaluation

Historical research anticipated the presence of retail establishments built during the period 1880-1940 within the APE and outside of the New Castle Historic District. Commercial buildings of this era vary in size and style, but typically have large display windows and masonry facades. They are subject to frequent alterations and additions to accommodate changes in merchandise and modernization of facilities. In order to be eligible for the National Register, these properties must have historical associations with commerce in New Castle (Criterion A) and/or associations with

significant New Castle businessmen (Criterion B), or must possess distinctive characteristics or construction methods of an architectural style or type of commercial architecture (Criterion C). These properties will not have significance under Criterion D because they are of common materials and building construction techniques. No new information on construction approaches or building materials could be obtained because it is readily available.

The Eliason Lumber Yard meets the first of these criteria. As a locally-owned and operated business with its origins in the late nineteenth century, the Eliason Lumber Yard was an important commercial enterprise in New Castle until its closure in 2008. Its product line evolved with the surrounding community's needs, shifting from provision of agricultural implements during the 1880s and 1890s to supply of building materials in the early 1900s. Its long association with the locally prominent Eliason family also assigns some significance to the enterprise. The property does not have significance in the area of architecture, as the existing buildings lack distinctive characteristics and date predominantly to the mid- to late-twentieth century. The property is not eligible under Criterion D or any other Criteria Consideration of the National Park Service.

Despite its significant historical associations, the Eliason Lumber Yard is recommended not eligible for the National Register because it does not possess integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or feeling. The Eliason Lumber Yard evolved continually from the time of its founding in 1881 until its closure in 2008. No buildings dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries remain on the site; the oldest building is the circa 1940 retail store and office, which fronts South Street. This building has been significantly altered by the enclosure of the display windows and replacement of the original transoms and doors. As such, it has lost its key identifying features and does not retain its historic character. The remaining buildings on the site were all constructed after circa 1960. As a result, the property has the appearance of a late twentieth-century building supply business rather than a historic lumber yard.

4.5 South Street Garden Townhouses (603-629 South Street; CRS #N05254)

Description

The South Street Townhouses are comprised of 14 semi-detached or twin, two-story Colonial Revival-style dwellings constructed in 1948-1949 (Plates 4.20 and 4.21). As constructed, the townhouses were identical in design; some now have rear additions and/or replacement materials. The buildings are clad in brick veneer and have modified gable roofs with a central cross gable; each dwelling is two bays wide, with the doors located near the center of the façade and paired windows in the outer bays. The entries have wood surrounds with pilasters supporting a wide band of trim



Plate 4.20:

South Street Garden Townhouses (CRS# N05254). The townhouses in the foreground, 603-605 South Street, are located at the intersection of West Sixth Street. The Lesley-Travers Mansion Wall (CRS# N04336) is visible in the foreground.

Photo view: North

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.21:

South Street Garden Townhouses (CRS# N05254). The dwellings at 423-425 South Street are in the foreground.

Photo view: East

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010

with scalloped edge; original doors were wood panel with four small square lights at the top, some of which survive. Similarly, original 6/6 wood sash windows remain in some units, but many have been replaced.

The townhouses face west onto South Street and are at a higher elevation than the street; a copestone retaining wall is located along the sidewalk. The wall is historically associated with the Lesley-Travers Mansion property, from which the townhouse lots were subdivided (see Section 4.3). Staircases of concrete or brick are cut through the wall in front of each dwelling unit, and a concrete sidewalk extends from the staircase to the front door. The South Street Townhouses are depicted on Figure 4.15.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; 1940-Present.

Historical Overview

The property that contains the site of the South Street Townhouses, once part of the estate of Dr. Allen V. Lesley, who came to practice in New Castle during the mid-1840s. Lesley, who was also a Delaware State Senator and Speaker of the State Senate in the early 1870s, resided in the Gothic Revival-style mansion that bears his name from the time of its construction in 1855 until his death in 1881 (Conrad 1908:265, 270; J.M. Runk and Company 1899:181, 1382). Lesley's house was vacant for nearly 25 years after his death before it was purchased by Selden S. Deemer, a New Castle Steel manufacturer (Delaware Federal Writer's Project 1936:97). The property at this time was bounded on the north by Deemer Avenue, east by Sixth Street, south by South Street, and west by Seventh Street. Deemer owned the property until his death in 1934. In 1940, it was acquired by James V. Campbell (NCCRD 1940:DB C-42:370). Campbell subdivided the land in 1948 and conveyed that portion of the property containing the site of the South Street Townhouses to Aldo Gibellino and Guido DeAscanis (NCCRD 1948:DB I-48:25, T-47:598, M-48:75).

Aldo Gibellino was a carpenter by trade and initially worked for Giuseppe Bellanca Aircraft Corporation. Guido DeAscanis, a mason, began his career by repairing sidewalks and rehabilitating old homes in New Castle. Following World War II, the two formed a partnership to build the South Street Townhouses (Meek 2008a). They subdivided their South Street property into 14 building lots with 12 of them (607-629 South Street) having a shared driveway extending across the northern portion of the lots. Title records suggest that the townhouses were constructed over a two-year period: 629 South Street was completed by November 1948, while 617 South Street was erected by June 1949 (NCCRD 1948:DB K-48:418; NCCRD 1949:DB D-49:378). The title history of 629 South Street is summarized in Table 4.4.



Figure 4.15:

Aerial Map, South Street Townhouses
(from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).

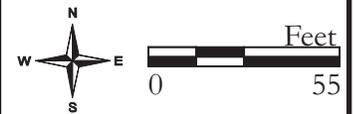


Table 4.4: Title History, 629 South Street (Tax Parcel # 2101400373).

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
March 6, 1948	James V. Campbell and his wife, Anna M., both of New Castle City	Aldo Gibellino and Guido DeAscanis both of New Castle City	New Castle Co. Deed T-47:598	Parcel of land containing sites of present-day 619-629 South Street.
November 8, 1948	Aldo Gibellino and Guido DeAscanis both of New Castle City	Joseph B. Duffy and his wife, Ruth L., both of Wilmington	New Castle Co. Deed K-48:418	629 South Street. Present-day Tax Parcel # 2101400373.
April 12, 1956	Joseph B. Duffy and his wife, Ruth L., both of New Castle Hundred	William Eugene Octavio, Jr. and his wife, Dorothy, both of New Castle Hundred	New Castle Co. Deed O-57:110	629 South Street. Present-day Tax Parcel # 2101400373.

The Gibellino and DeAscanis partnership was dissolved following the completion of the South Street Townhouses project, and each formed their own custom home building companies. Guido DeAscanis and Sons are known to have built two housing developments within the City of New Castle: Washington Square (1959 into the 1960s) and Van Dyke Village (started around 1967). Gibellino and Sons was responsible for Penn Acres (1957 into the 1980s), located just outside the city limits (Immanuel Episcopal Church 1967:28; Meek 2008a). By the early 1980s, Ronald Gibellino had taken over management of the Gibellino home-building business, while Francis, Emmett, Joseph and Guido DeAscanis, Jr. were running the DeAscanis’ family business (Meek 2008a). The two families are still involved in the home construction business today: the DeAscanis Construction Company’s office is located in New Castle, while the Gibellino Construction Company has its main office in Newark, Delaware.

Evaluation

Historical research identified post-World War II housing as an expected property type within the APE. Residential development from this era is predominantly characterized by suburban tract housing located outside of the urban center (Chase et al. 1992:60). Because of the nature of these residential subdivisions, they are more appropriately evaluated as districts rather than as individual buildings. In order to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, the subdivision must fit within the historic context of suburban growth outside of the urban core of New Castle during the postwar period. Eligibility under Criterion B requires an historical association with a significant developer of residential properties in the New Castle area. Finally, in order for a subdivision to be eligible under Criterion C, it must retain its original layout and dwellings and be characteristic of its period of development.

The South Street Townhouses are not recommended eligible for the National Register. The dwellings represent post-World War II residential development in New Castle and are among

numerous dwellings constructed on the property that formerly comprised the Lesley estate; however, they are atypical of postwar residential development because of their location near the urban center of New Castle and their townhouse form. As such, they represent common infill construction rather than characteristic suburban development. These semi-detached or twin townhouses more closely resemble earlier row houses in the city center than the tract housing typical of contemporary residential development during the period. Although both Gibellino and DeAscanis had prolific careers, they only worked together on this project. Their later individual work involved phased construction of larger and more typical suburban developments in the area. Considering that this trend is common throughout the country and with most housing development, this is not significant. As a result, the South Street Townhouses do not have significant historical or architectural associations under Criteria A, B, or C and are recommended not eligible for the National Register.

4.6 William A. Campbell House (614 South Street; CRS #N05217)

Description

The William A. Campbell House at 614 South Street is a one-and-one-half-story bungalow with stone exterior built circa 1925 (Plate 4.22). The building has a hipped roof with a wide overhang and exposed shaped rafters. Both the front (east) and rear elevations have a central gabled dormer with paired 6-light awning windows, shaped rafters, and wood shingle siding. The east-facing front has a central door flanked by 1/1 double-hung sash windows; both window and door openings have stone lintels with keystones. The engaged porch is supported on stone columns and has a copestone apron wall with piers flanking the central concrete stairs. The north elevation has a one-story bay window with a gable roof and an interior stone chimney. Windows on the side elevations occur singly and in pairs.

The building is located on a rise above street level; a concrete sidewalk with stairs extends from South Street to the front steps of the former dwelling, which is now used as a clubhouse for the New Castle Sailing Club. Part of the original hedge remains on the northern (West Seventh Street) perimeter of the property, and a wooden fence encloses the backyard. A modern boathouse has been constructed at the rear of the property. The Campbell House is illustrated in Figure 4.16.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±



Plate 4.22:

William A. Campbell House, 614 South Street (CRS# N05217).

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Figure 4.16:

Aerial Map, William A. Campbell House
(from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).



Historical Overview

The one-story stone bungalow at 614 South Street was erected during the early 1920s, while the property was under the ownership of the Campbell family. James V. Campbell acquired the property on which the dwelling stands in July 1921 (NCCRD 1921:DB P-30:325). In the following October, he conveyed the property to his brother, William A. Campbell (NCCRD 1921:DB U-30:3). Shortly thereafter, William is believed to have had the stone bungalow built as his residence. The house was extant by 1925, as it is visible in a photograph of the Lesley-Travers Mansion (see Figure 4.7) taken in that year (Travers 2005:52). Also evident in the photograph is a stone wall extending around the Lesley-Travers Mansion property, then owned by Selden S. Deemer; the apron wall on the bungalow's front porch mimics the stonework of the wall (see Section 4.3).

James and William Campbell were the sons of John Francis and Mary M. Campbell. Their father, a New Castle fireman, died in 1903 (United States Bureau of the Census [US Census] 1900; Campbell 2010). In 1920, just prior to acquiring the South Street property, the brothers were living with their mother on West Fifth Street in New Castle; both were then employed as barbers (US Census 1920).

In 1922, around the time 614 South Street was built, William Campbell married Catherine M. Toner (DBVS 1922). The Campbells raised their two sons, John W. (b. 1924) and Charles Campbell (b. 1929), in the South Street residence (US Census 1930). William continued to work as a barber, operating a shop on Delaware Street, three blocks from the center of town (Meek 2008b). He died in 1957 at 60 years of age. Upon his death, the bungalow was inherited by his two sons. Six years later, they conveyed the property to George B. Cannon and his mother, Mary S. Cannon (NCCRD 1963:DB I-72:19). The Cannons owned the property for the next 20 years before selling it to its present owner, the New Castle Sailing Club, in 1983 (NCCRD 1983:DB F-124:284). The title history is summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Title History, 614 South Street (Tax Parcel # 2101400392).

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
July 7, 1921	Railway Storage Battery Car Company	James V. Campbell of New Castle City, New Castle County	New Castle Co. Deed P-30:325	Parcel of land bounded on the northeast by South Street, northwest by Seventh Street, southwest by the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, and southeast by Sixth Street.

Table 4.5; cont.

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
October 20, 1921	James V. Campbell of New Castle City	William A. Campbell of New Castle City	New Castle Co. Deed U-30:3	Same Parcel of land bounded on the northeast by South Street, northwest by Seventh Street, southwest by the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, and southeast by Sixth Street.
January 18, 1957	Estate of William A. Campbell late of New Castle City	John William Campbell and Charles P. Campbell	See New Castle Co. Deed I-72:19	Same Parcel of land bounded on the northeast by South Street, northwest by Seventh Street, southwest by the New Castle and Wilmington Railroad, and southeast by Sixth Street.
August 7, 1963	John William Campbell of Columbus, Ohio and Charles P. Campbell and his wife, Dorothy V. both of New Castle City	George B. Cannon and his mother, Mary S. Cannon	New Castle Co. Deed I-72:19	Property known as 614 South Street. Present Tax Parcel # 2101400392.
October 20, 1983	George B. Cannon and his wife, Doris, both of New Castle City	New Castle Sailing Club, Inc.	New Castle Co. Deed F-124:284	614 South Street

Evaluation

Historical research identified single-family residences as an expected property type within the APE. These houses reflect popular architectural styles and building types of their period of construction. In order to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, the dwellings must be associated with the urban growth of New Castle around the turn of the twentieth century as part of a larger neighborhood or district. Eligibility under Criterion B requires that a significant individual resided in the house during his or her productive lifetime. Dwellings eligible under Criterion C must be outstanding examples of their type, and/or the work of a significant architect.

The stone bungalow at 614 South Street is not recommended eligible for the National Register. The house is located outside of the New Castle Historic District in an area of mixed residential and commercial development. Neighboring houses include a contemporary bungalow, townhouses constructed in 1948-1949, and suburban tract houses from the 1950s and 1960s. As such, the stone bungalow is not part of a larger historic district with significant associations to the development of New Castle. Additionally, the house is not associated with significant individuals; the house was owned during the historic period by William Campbell, a barber. Although a good example of a bungalow, the dwelling is a common type and does not possess any outstanding characteristics deserving of National Register listing. Under Criterion D, the building is of common materials and

building construction techniques. No new information on construction approaches or building materials could be obtained because it is readily available. As a result, the property is recommended not eligible for the National Register under Criteria D or any other Criteria Consideration of the National Park Service.

4.7 Gambacorta Motors (423 West Seventh Street; CRS #N05251)

Description

Gambacorta Motors is a one-story, concrete block garage constructed circa 1930 with multiple late twentieth-century additions and alterations (Plates 4.23-4.24). The original, gable-front building had a rectangular footprint; additions to the rear and east have flat roofs and have more than doubled the size of the building. The brick-faced façade has a parapet wall and an irregular fenestration with large display windows; the doors are plate glass. Garage bays are located on the east and south elevations. The building fronts West Seventh Street and was constructed for use as an automobile dealership. Gambacorta Motors is depicted on Figure 4.17.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±

Historical Overview

Gambacorta Motors was founded by Giovanni (John) Gambacorta around 1937. Born in 1899 in Poggio San Vittorino, Province de Terramo, Italy, Gambacorta emigrated to the United States in 1923. He initially settled in Wilmington, working first as a laborer for the Pennsylvania Railroad and then with Union Park Motors. While employed with Union Park Motors, Gambacorta learned the trade of the used car business. Around 1928, he left the company and moved to New Castle (Fiero 1967).

After brief stints as a self-employed produce hauler and as a cement finisher with the Delaware Highway Department, Gambacorta took a job with the Rayon Silk Mill in 1929 (Fiero 1967). In that same year, he acquired two small adjoining tracts of land located on the south side of West Seventh Street at the intersection of present-day Gray Street (formerly the New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad right-of-way), as well as a lot on the 800 block of Clayton Street (NCCRD 1929:DB P-36:147, Q-36:4, Q-36:258). By 1930, Gambacorta, his wife Edith DiSantis, and their family were living on Clayton Street, which was located within the Italian-American community established in the northwestern section of the city of New Castle around 1920. By 1950, this community had expanded to include the area roughly bounded on the north by Tenth Street, east by Delaware Street, south by Seventh Street, and west by Gray Street (US Census 1930; Ianni 1988; Meek 2008a).



Plate 4.23:

Gambacorta Motors (CRS# N05251). The original section of the building, erected in 1937, is located at far right in the photo. The brick façade was added circa 1970, around the same time that the northeast addition (at left) was built.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Plate 4.24:

Gambacorta Motors (CRS# N05251), view showing west and south (rear) elevations. The original gabled section of the building, erected in 1937, is in the foreground.

Photo view: Northeast

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: April 8, 2010



Figure 4.17:

Aerial Map, Gambacorta Motors
(from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).



Shortly after acquiring the property on West Seventh Street, Gambacorta erected a four-car garage with the assistance from a local Italian mason, Guido DeAscanis. Gambacorta reportedly built the garage from concrete blocks that he had made on the property. He rented the garage for about seven years before starting a used car business on the property in 1937. The following year, Gambacorta obtained a franchise for the Willys-Overland Motor Company, which was best known for the production of military and civilian jeep-based vehicles (Fiero 1967, Gambacorta Motors, Inc. 2009). In 1939, Gambacorta quit his job at the rayon mill to devote all of his time to his new business venture. Less than a decade later, he added a Kaiser-Frazer franchise. The Kaiser-Frazer Corporation bought the Willys-Overland Motor Company in 1953, operating thereafter as Willys Motors; Gambacorta continued to hold the Willys franchise until 1960 (Willys-Overland Motors 2008). In 1956, he also started a Chrysler franchise on West Seventh Street. By the 1960s, Gambacorta's successful auto dealerships had amassed between \$40,000 and \$50,000 working capital (Fiero 1967).

Operating concurrently in New Castle with Gambacorta Motors were two other American-made auto dealers: Nelson C. and Robert J. Quillen established a Ford dealership on Sixth Street in the 1920s, and Major N. Travers, Sr. started a Chevrolet dealership on Chestnut Street in the 1940s. During the 1960s, both of these establishments moved out of the city to the DuPont Highway (Travers 2005:44, 67). The movement of auto dealerships out of the urban center to the commercial districts then developing along major highway corridors followed a general trend in Delaware and throughout the nation; however, Gambacorta opted to remain in the city, expanding his West Seventh Street property holdings during this period (Louis Berger Group 1992:10). In 1964, he purchased an additional six acres located on the southwest side of Gray Street, building a new office and service building for his Chrysler franchise on the property (NCCRD 1964:DB L-73:561). The original garage (present 423 West Seventh Street), which had been added to over the years, was expanded to its present size by the mid-1960s (NETR 1963, 1970). During the 1960s, Gambacorta also transferred all of his West Seventh Street property holdings to the Gambacorta Motors Corporation, which was formed by 1957 (NCCRD 1957:DB R-59:389; NCCRD 1967:DB T-79:413). Gambacorta's sons Vincent (aka James), Henry, and Anthony were all involved in the operations of the corporation (Gambacorta Motors, Inc. 2009).

Between 1970 and 1992, Gambacorta Motors erected additional buildings on its property southwest of Gray Street for a new Buick franchise (DataMIL 1992; NETR 1970; P.E.L.S.A. Company, Inc. 2002). Giovanni Gambacorta died in 1986, and his wife Edith, in 1998 (Meek 2008a). Around the turn of the twenty-first century, Gambacorta Motors made plans to relocate the business to the southwest corner of the DuPont Highway and Frenchtown Road. Following the construction of their new dealership, the West Seventh Street property was subdivided into three lots in 2004. The

lot that contains the original garage building (present 423 West Seventh Street, Parcel # 2101400405) and is currently owned by Anthony Gambacorta, Sr. A small portion of the building is leased to an independent automotive repair business, while the majority of the building is leased to the Touch of Master’s Hand Ministries. The title history is summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Title History, Gambacorta Motors (Tax Parcel # 2101400405).

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
June 12, 1929	Margaret A. Mahoney of New York City	Giovanni Gambacorta and his wife, Ida, both of New Castle City	New Castle Co. Deed Q-36:4	Parcel of land containing site of 423 W. Seventh Street. Approximate central portion of present Tax Parcel # 2101400405.
October 30, 1967	Giovanni Gambacorta and his wife, Ida, both of New Castle City	Gambacorta Motors, Inc.	New Castle Co. Deed T-79:413	Two tracts of land containing site of 423 W. Seventh Street. Approximately the western half of present Tax Parcel # 2101400405.
December 5, 2000	Gambacorta Motors, Inc.	Clare Realty Company	New Castle Co. Deed 2938 56	
May 25, 2004	Clare Realty Company	Anthony Gambacorta, Sr., Henry Gambacorta, and Vincent A. Gambacorta	New Castle Co. Deed 20040609 0063276	
May 26, 2004	Anthony Gambacorta, Sr., Henry Gambacorta, and Vincent A. Gambacorta	Anthony Gambacorta, Sr.,	New Castle Co. Deed 20040609 0063277	Tax Parcel # 2101400405.

Evaluation

Historical research anticipated the presence of retail establishments built during the period 1880-1940 within the APE and outside of the New Castle Historic District. Commercial buildings of this era vary in size and style, but typically have large display windows and masonry facades. They are subject to frequent alterations and additions to accommodate changes in merchandise and modernization of facilities. In order to be eligible for the National Register, these properties must have historical associations with commerce in New Castle (Criterion A) and/or associations with significant New Castle businessmen (Criterion B), or must possess distinctive characteristics or construction methods of an architectural style or type of commercial architecture in the area (Criterion C). Because the subject property was constructed as an auto garage and showroom, it can additionally be evaluated under the historic context of commercial roadside architecture in Delaware (Louis Berger Group 1992). This context recommends eligibility: 1) under Criterion A for properties associated with development patterns that occurred in response to the automobile (for example, commercial districts that developed outside of traditional Main Street areas); 2) under Criterion B for properties associated with individual(s) who were significantly involved in the

development of roadside architecture; 3) under Criterion C for properties that “embody the architecture of the automobile era”; and 4) under Criterion D for properties that possess information potential about construction technology that could not be gleaned from other sources.

Gambacorta Motors is not recommended eligible for the National Register under the statewide historic context of commercial roadside architecture. The property is not associated with development patterns in New Castle occurring in response to the automobile because it is not located on a new highway (Criterion A); West Seventh Street was extant from at least the mid-nineteenth century, and development along its route has included residential, commercial, and industrial uses throughout its long history. The construction and development of Gambacorta Motors did not attract other commercial development to the area. The property also lacks associations with individuals significant in the development of roadside architecture (Criterion B). The building itself is nondescript in design and lacks the architectural embellishments common to auto showrooms of the era, most notably the streamlined façade (Louis Berger Group 1992:21). As a result, it is not eligible under Criterion C. Under Criterion D, the building is of common materials and building construction techniques. No new information on construction approaches or building materials could be obtained because it is readily available. Therefore, the property is not eligible under Criterion D or any other Criteria Consideration of the National Park Service.

The property possesses limited local significance for its associations with Gambacorta Motors, an early automobile dealership in the City of New Castle, and with Giovanni Gambacorta, a successful local businessmen during the mid-twentieth century; therefore, it is not recommended eligible under the context of commerce in New Castle. Furthermore, multiple additions and alterations to the building have diminished its integrity of design, rendering its original form indistinguishable. The property’s current appearance resembles a late twentieth-century auto dealership rather than a 1930s showroom or sympathetic additions reflecting growth of the business. Most of the alterations and additions are severe and discernibly are not reversible without considerable damage to the historic fabric. As a result, Gambacorta Motors is recommended not eligible for the National Register.

4.8 Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (700 Washington Street; CRS #N05252)

Description

The Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (Wilmington Fibre) is comprised of four buildings constructed between 1922 and circa 1940. The company’s offices are housed in Building No. 3, at the north end of the lot near the railroad right-of-way; materials processing occurs in Building No. 1, located at the southwestern corner of the lot, and in Building No. 2, near the center of the parcel. Building No. 4 represents a former power plant of the facility and is located at the rear of Building

No. 1. The property has a large paved parking area in front of the buildings along Washington Street. The entire parcel is enclosed by a chain link fence. The Wilmington Fibre plant is illustrated on Figure 4.18.

Constructed in 1922, Building No. 1 is a one-story brick building with a flat roof (Plate 4.25). An original wing, lower in height than the main block, extends along its south elevation, adjacent to West Seventh Street. The east-facing façade is covered with stucco; at the time of its construction, this wall was flush with the brick wall of an earlier mill building, since demolished. As a result, the wall has no window openings; doors are located at either end of the façade. The attached south wing has a central loading bay with overhead door on its façade and large window openings that have been enclosed with concrete block on its south elevation. Both the main block and wing have similarly enclosed window openings on the rear elevation, and the main block has a stepped parapet at rear. Continuous steel pivot windows are located under the eaves of the main block. The north elevation shares a party wall with Building No. 2, a gable-front building with two rear additions erected in 1922 (Plate 4.26). Like Building No. 1, the façade has been covered with stucco and has only one opening, a central entry; the side and rear elevations are brick. Window openings on the north elevation have brick relieving arches; some are covered, and others contain 2/2 wood sash windows. The additions extend north from the rear section of the building.

Building No. 3 is a two-story, flat roof building constructed in 1922 (Plate 4.27). At the time of its construction, the first floor east-facing façade was flush with an existing brick mill building; as a result, the second floor has paired steel pivot windows, but the lower level has two doors and no windows. A gabled porch has been constructed at the main entry, which contains a plate glass door. An elevator shaft rises above the roof at the northeast corner. Side and rear elevations are brick. Steel pivot windows survive on both stories of the rear elevation and the second floor of the south elevation; other openings have been enclosed with brick or wood. At the rear of Building No. 3 lies the circa 1940 power house, a brick structure with a flat roof, parapet wall with metal coping, and three bays of tall, enclosed windows on each side (Plate 4.28). The bays are separated by brick pilasters, and doors are offset on the east and west elevations. A circular brick smokestack is located adjacent to Building No. 4 on its south side.

Applicable Historic Context

Coastal Zone; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization, 1880-1940±



Figure 4.18:

Aerial Map, Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company
 (from New Castle County eParcelView Map 2008).





Plate 4.25:

Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (CRS# N05252), Building No. 1.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.26:

Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (CRS# N05252), Building No. 2.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.27:

Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (CRS# N05252), Building No. 3.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jennifer Leynes

Date: September 23, 2010



Plate 4.28:

Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (CRS# N05252), Building No. 4.
Photo view: Southwest
Photographer: Jennifer Leynes
Date: September 23, 2010

Historical Overview

In 1873, James G. Knowles built a woolen factory on Washington Street at its intersection with Seventh Street, east of the railroad (New Castle, Delaware 1873). Knowles, formerly a partner of James Shaw in the Triton Mills, operated the mill individually and as the James G. Knowles Woolen Company for a number of years. An 1878 insurance map of Knowles' mills, included as Figure 4.19, depicts a long, rectangular brick building (Building 1) located at the north end of the lot, parallel to Washington Street, with a perpendicular wing comprised of four units (Buildings 2, 3, 4, and 5) at its south end. A one-story building with monitor roof (Building 6) was located south of and parallel to the wing (Hexamer General Surveys 1878). Knowles then employed 90 hands in his New Castle Mills.

The New Castle Mills burned in 1878 and again in 1884 (Cooper 1907:122). An 1886 insurance map (see Figure 4.20) shows the plant as it was reconstructed after the fires. Building 1 was rebuilt on the same footprint, as was the wing. A new, one-story brick building, Building 3 was constructed parallel to Building 1, adjacent to Washington Avenue. The former Building 6 was gone, replaced by several smaller structures at the south end of the parcel (Hexamer General Surveys 1886). A year later, Knowles replaced these smaller structures with a large, two-story Building 4, which extended from the wing southward to Seventh Street. Also depicted on the 1886 site map is a brick office (Building 5) on Washington Street (Hexamer General Surveys 1886). Employment in the mill increased along with the physical plant, from 125 to 175 hands (Hexamer General Surveys 1885, 1886). The woolen mill was described in 1888 as "one of the largest and probably the best arranged and most thoroughly equipped [mills] in the State" (Scharf 1888:865).

The rapid expansion of the mills during the mid-1880s was followed a decade later by financial troubles for their owner, Knowles, and subsequent reorganization of the company. In 1898, the New Castle Woolen Mills was incorporated by Knowles, Shaw, and J.G. Dugan with capital of \$150,000 (*Fibre & Fabric* 1898; *Equitable Guarantee & Trust Co. et al. v. Knowles et al.* 1907). The 1901 Sanborn insurance map of New Castle labels the woolen mill as the "New Castle Woolen Mills, occupied by James G. Knowles Woolen Company" (Sanborn Map Company 1901). A year later, the James G. Knowles Woolen Company was declared bankrupt, and in 1903 Knowles reorganized again, this time as the Fort Casimir Woolen Mills (Cooper 1907:122). This new company was short-lived, however, and by 1904 the property had fallen into receivership. The Equitable Guarantee and Trust Company offered the plant at public auction in October 1905. An advertisement for sale of the woolen mills described the property:

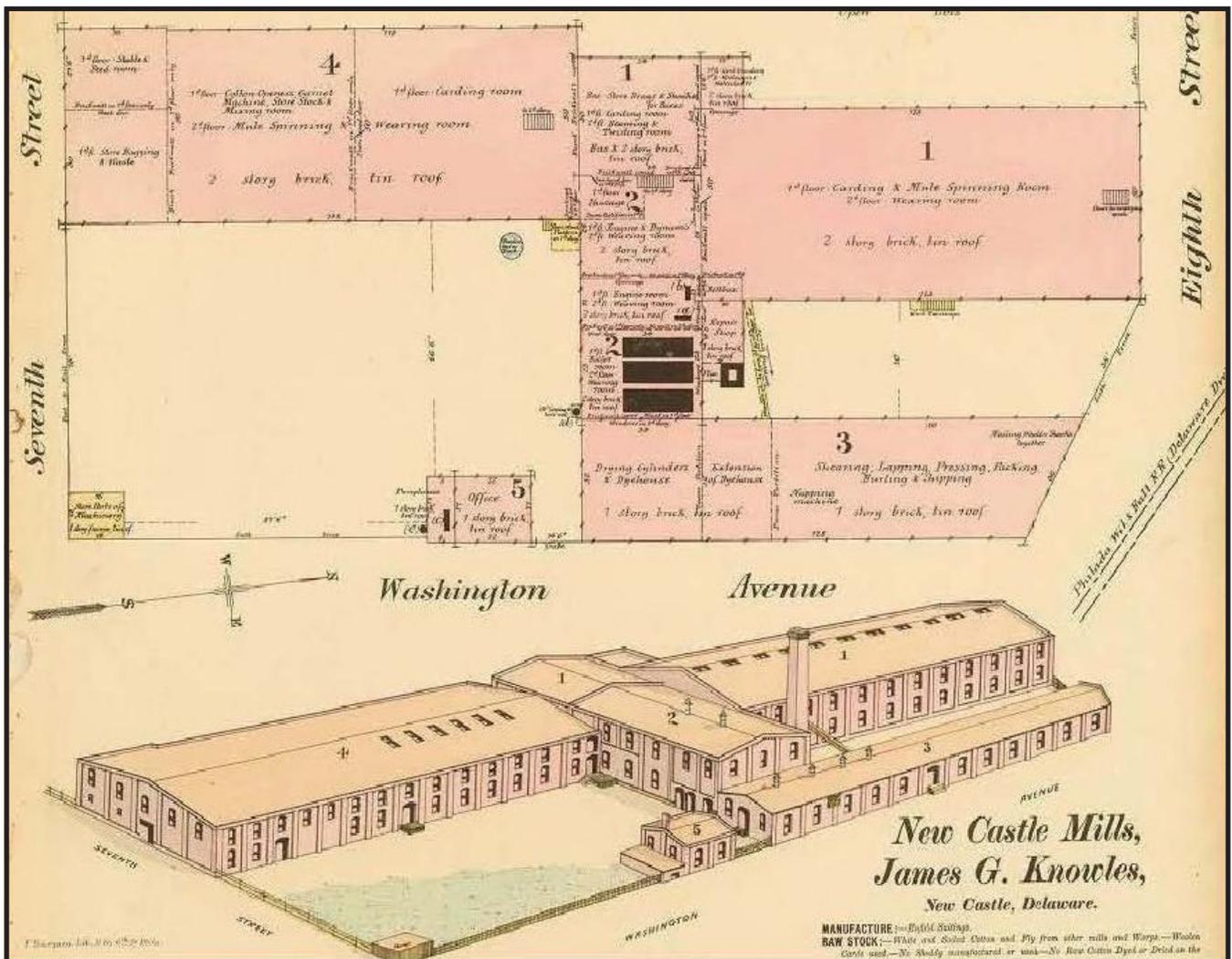


Figure 4.20:

1886 Hexamer General Surveys, Insurance Map of New Castle Mills.

The mills are built of brick, and consist of three buildings all connected; 13 inch walls with pilasters every ten feet.

No. 1.—Main building is 300 feet long by 47 feet wide. It is two stories high... The floors are cemented...

No. 2.—This building is 32 feet wide and 128 feet long...

No. 3.—This building is 53 feet wide and 94 feet long... and has an office and stable joining this building...

Size of Lot—135 feet by 300 feet, with frontage on railroad (Equitable Guarantee and Trust Company [1905]).

The buildings as described correspond to those shown on the Hexamer survey of 1886, with No. 1 representing a combination of the buildings previously referred to as Buildings 1 and 4. Building No. 2 was located adjacent to Washington Street, and Building No. 3, at the southeast corner of the lot. The latter building was comprised of several additions to the circa 1886 brick office (Sanborn Map Company 1901). In addition to the factory buildings, the sale included the looms, boilers, and other equipment within the mill, and the ad noted that “the whole plant can be purchased at about one-half the cost of the buildings alone” (Equitable Guarantee and Trust Company [1905]).

Melville Gambrell purchased the mills at auction for \$10,000, with plans to continue production of cotton duck (Manufacturing in Pennsylvania 1905:10; Cooper 1907:122). His namesake company was incorporated and began business in 1907, but by 1910 J.C. Parker & Sons Company of Middletown was making plans to manufacture textile fibre at the mill (J.C. Parker & Sons Company 1910). Parker & Sons apparently leased the property, as Gambrell was still the owner in 1912, when the Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company acquired the property. The deed described the property as “having thereon erected a large Brick Factory Building used for a fibre plant, together with a one-story office and stable” (NCCRD 1912:DB W-23:177).

Wilmington Fibre was incorporated in 1904 in New Castle County to “manufacture, buy, sell, and deal in hard and soft fibre and other fibrous substances... also to carry on the business of manufacturers and dealers in electric motors, dynamos, and other electrical machinery, appliances, and plants” (NCCRD 1904:Incorporations Book [IB] A-2:403). At the time of its incorporation, the business had a capital stock of \$1,000, held by William E. Frank, Joseph M. Pusey, and Nehemiah J. Connelly, all residents of Wilmington.

Although not named on the Certificate of Incorporation, John Wesley Morris of Wilmington was reportedly among the company’s founders (Morris 2010; Sunday Morning Star 6 January 1946:10A). Born in Pennsylvania in 1876, Morris was the eldest son of William T. Morris and his wife Jennie Dawson (US Census 1880). Around 1885 the family moved to Wilmington, where John graduated from the public high school (US Census 1900; Every Evening 10 October 1928:1). In 1900 he

married Laura Edna Walters of Baltimore, Maryland; the couple made their home in Wilmington, where their only child, John Wesley Morris, Jr., was born in 1903 (Delaware Marriage Records 1900; US Census 1910, 1920; Delaware Vital Records 1903).

In 1900, Morris reported his occupation as “electrician” on the United States Census. Two years later, he incorporated the Morris Electric Company, which by 1905 was advertising its hard fibre cleats for sale to the telephone industry. The Morris hard fibre cleats were smaller than the porcelain and wooden cleats they replaced, allowing for greater concealment of telephone wiring in a building’s interior (New Style Hard Fibre Cleats 1905). The “hard fibre” used to produce the cleats was presumably vulcanized fibre, a material possessing important electrical insulating properties. Invented in 1859 by Thomas Taylor, vulcanized fibre is a laminated paper product that is lightweight, strong, resilient, durable, and easily fabricated for a variety of uses. Taylor came to the United States in the 1870s and began manufacturing vulcanized fibre in Wilmington in 1873 (Northam 1934). By 1900, there were only three companies in the world manufacturing vulcanized fibre, and all were located in Delaware (Sieber 1945).

Morris’s relationship to Wilmington Fibre during its formative years is not entirely clear, but by 1915 the Morris family controlled the company stock. In that year the company’s Certificate of Incorporation was amended, with J. Wesley Morris as president and his brother Alvin H. Morris, secretary. Stockholders included William T. Morris and E.W. [Edna?] Morris (NCCRD 1915:IB I-6:107). The company then had plants in Norristown and in Wilmington, at Tenth and Walnut Streets (Evening Journal 1 July 1915:3).

Wilmington Fibre purchased the former woolen mills at Washington and Seventh Streets in New Castle, as well as an adjacent, undeveloped lot to the west, in 1912; however, the plant apparently was not occupied until 1915 (NCCRD 1912:DB W-23:177, U-23:406). On July 1, 1915, the *Evening Journal* of Wilmington reported that:

The thirty carpenters who are remodeling the fibre plant of the Wilmington [Fibre] Specialty Company are hurrying so that the new mills can be operated... As fast as the plant at Tenth and Walnut streets, Wilmington, and the fibre plant in Norristown are dismantled, the machinery is being installed in the plant here. The new fibre mills will employ about 75 girls and 75 men in the manufacture of fibre and fibre specialties (Evening Journal 1 July 1915:3).

The newspaper also noted that a new railroad siding had been constructed for the plant (Evening Journal 1 July 1915:3).

A photograph of Wilmington Fibre published in 1915 shows the large, two-story brick factory building on Washington Street, adjacent to the rail line (Figure 4.21). Also apparent in the picture are the office and stable buildings to the south (New Castle Board of Trade 1915). It is unclear whether the tall brick smokestack in the background of the photo was associated with Wilmington Fibre or the neighboring Edgar Allan American Manganese Steel plant.

In January 1918, a fire destroyed part of the Wilmington Fibre plant in New Castle (Iron and Steel Construction News 1918:39). Aerial photographs of the plant taken less than a decade later (see Figures 3.10 and 4.22) indicate that Building 1 was razed and replaced between 1915 and 1925, suggesting the possibility that it was damaged or destroyed in the fire (Dallin Aerial Survey Company 1925e, 1925f; Sanborn Map Company 1912). The new building did not extend all the way to the railroad, as the previous building had, and it had a distinctive elevator shaft rising above the roofline at its northeast corner. A new one-story, gabled structure connected the new building to the existing mill on the east (Dallin Aerial Survey Company 1925e, 1925f).

A 1935 insurance map of Wilmington Fibre (Figure 4.23) illustrates the plant as it was then laid out. The former woolen mill buildings were labeled Nos. 5-9 and oriented around a small yard with access to Washington Street. On the north half of the lot, Building No. 3 replaced the structure destroyed in the fire, and No. 4 is the one-story connector to the old mill building on Washington Street. To the west, Buildings No. 1 and No. 2 were also new construction, erected in 1922 (Associated Factory Mutual Fire Insurance Company [AFMFIC] 1935; New Castle County Assessment Office n.d.). The east elevations of both buildings were flush with the existing woolen mill.

Although at least one source suggests that Wilmington Fibre was involved not in the manufacturing of vulcanized fibre but rather in its fabrication for resale, family members indicate that the firm was in fact a manufacturer of the material (Sunday Morning Star 6 January 1946:10A; Jeff Morris, personal communication 2010). The fire insurance maps appear to confirm that the manufacture of fibre was, in fact, taking place in the plant. The map key described the various functions of the buildings: Buildings No. 1 and No. 7 were used for fibre soaking and rolling, while No. 2 housed the dry rooms (AFMFIC 1935). These functions represent the core processes used in manufacturing vulcanized fibre, which was created from cotton rag paper. The paper was first soaked in a bath of zinc chloride, then pressed together to bond the multiple thin layers into the desired vulcanized fibre thickness. Once the bonding was complete, the zinc chloride was leached out by placing the vulcanized fibre into successively less concentrated baths, with overhead cranes

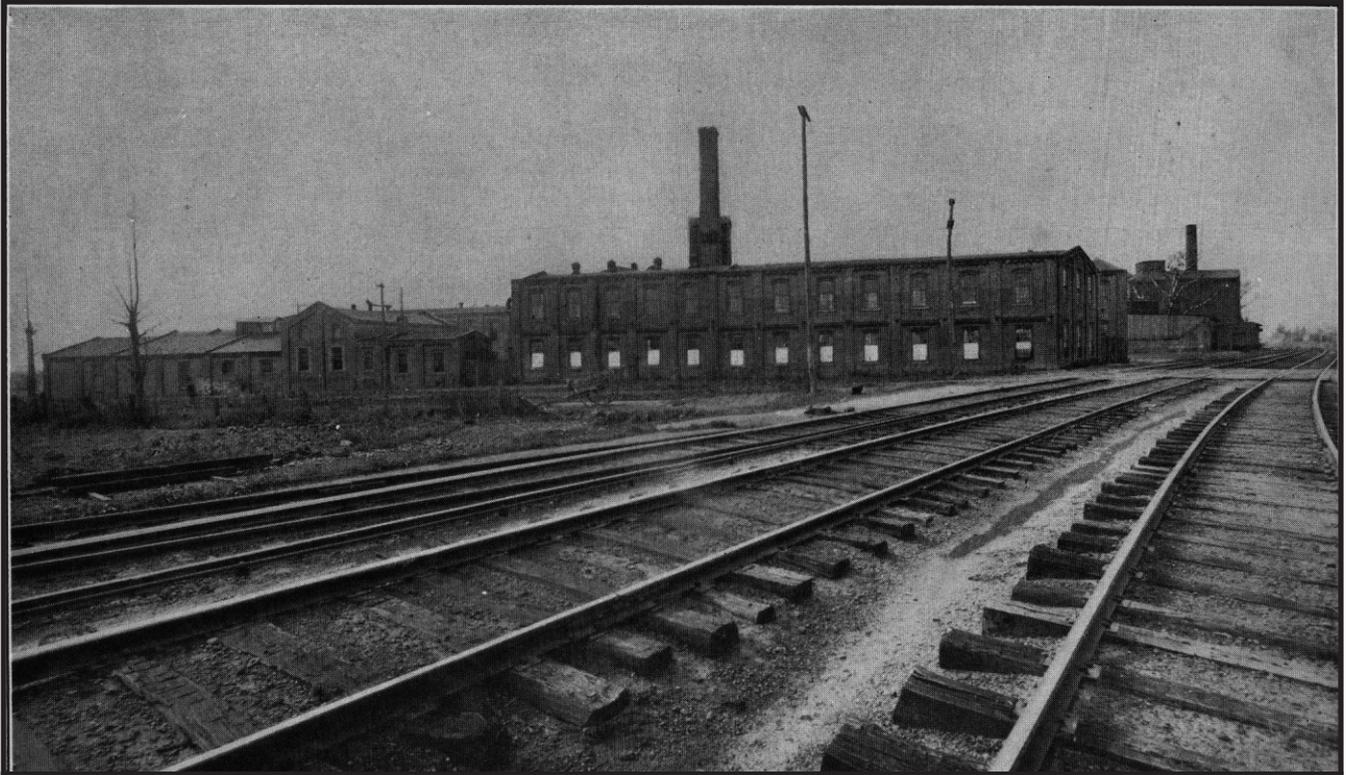


Figure 4.21:

Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company, 1915 (from New Castle Board of Trade 1915).



Figure 4.22:

1925 Dallin Aerial Survey Company, Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company
[HagleyID 70.200.00962] (Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware).

transporting the materials between vats. Depending upon the thickness of the material, the process could take up to two years to complete. Finally, the fibre was dried, pressed flat, and made into sheets or rolls (Snyder 2008; Macadam 1956).

Most of the other buildings in the Wilmington Fibre complex were used for storage and/or fabrication of finished products. Sawing and punching were among the methods used to work the fibre into tubes, rods, washers, gaskets, disks, and a variety of other products (AFMFIC 1935; Bernhard 1921). These finished goods found a variety of uses, from the electrical industry to agriculture, aviation, munitions, and marine (Farm Implement News Company 1916; Implement and Tractor Trade Journal 1922; Rudder Publishing Company 1920; Williams 1921). Among the products manufactured by Wilmington Fibre were Fyberoid, the trade name for the company's insulating paper, and Knu-Canopy, the trade name for its insulators (Bernhard 1921:309, 410).

John W. Morris served as president of Wilmington Fibre until his death in 1928 at the age of 52. According to his obituary, Morris also owned the Delaware Ice and Storage Company of Wilmington. He was reportedly involved in community affairs in Wilmington and New Castle and served as a director of the Citizens Savings Bank (Every Evening 10 October 1928:16). After his death, his son John W. Morris, Jr., assumed management of the company, serving as president through the mid-twentieth century (American Aviation Publications 1963). The Morris family leads Wilmington Fibre to the present, with B. Scott Morris and his brother Jeff Morris serving as president and finance executive, respectively (Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company 2010).

The Morris family oversaw the growth of the company during the early to mid-twentieth century, despite competition from a proliferation of vulcanized fibre companies in the Wilmington area and the later consolidation of many of those companies into larger corporations. National Vulcanized Fibre (NVF) was perhaps the largest of these; the Continental Diamond group was another (Hunter Research, Inc. and Heite Consulting 2003: 4-9). Wilmington Fibre's survival as an independent manufacturer was noteworthy and likely made possible by its diversification during the late 1950s and early 1960s into the fabrication of plastic parts (Morris 2010). In the 1970s, the company ceased manufacture of vulcanized fibre and the old woolen mill buildings adjacent to Washington Street were torn down. According to Jeff Morris, "Since then the company has relied solely on the fabrication of non-metallic specialty parts. Today the primary business is plastic fabricating and new products include guitar picks, drumstick tips, and several other non-metallic specialty products" (Morris 2010). The title history for the property is summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Title History, Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company (Tax Parcel # 2101400163).

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument Book and Page	Comments
March 16, 1912	Melville Gambrell of Wilmington	Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company	New Castle Co. Deed W-23:177	Parcel of land containing a “large brick factory building used for a fibre plant.” Approximately the easterly half of present Tax Parcel # 2101400163.
August 13, 1912	Selden S. Deemer and his wife Kate, both of New Castle city	Wilmington Fibre Specialty Company	New Castle Co. Deed U-23:406	Approximately the westerly half of present Tax Parcel # 2101400163.

Evaluation

As a result of the historical research, industrial complexes dating from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries were an expected property type within the APE. Eligibility for the National Register within the historic context of New Castle’s industry under Criterion A required a property to have historical associations with one or more of the city’s industrial pursuits during this period. Properties eligible under Criterion B have significant associations with individual(s) important to the history of industry in New Castle and/or to the development of a particular industry in the state or nation. In order to be eligible under Criterion C, an industrial complex must be a good example of a building type used in the manufacture of a product or products, or must be the work of a significant architect. Eligible properties should retain a majority of the buildings that historically comprised the plant in order to possess sufficient integrity of design, materials, setting, feeling, and association.

The Wilmington Fibre complex possesses significant associations with local industry in New Castle as a producer of vulcanized fibre during the early to mid-twentieth century, and its survival as an independent manufacturer during a period of consolidation in the industry is notable. Further, the Morris family’s long association with the company connotes some degree of significance, particularly in the life and contributions of company founder John Wesley Morris. Despite its local historical significance, however, the Wilmington Fibre complex is not recommended eligible for the National Register because it lacks integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. All of the original buildings located on the property and associated with John Wesley Morris when Wilmington Fibre purchased the former woolen mill in 1912 were removed in the 1970s. These buildings were actively used by the company to produce fibre from at least 1915 until circa 1970, and they represent the oldest and most architecturally distinctive elements of the property. The buildings remaining and evaluated on-site date to circa 1922 or later. With the exception of the power plant, these were constructed adjacent or as part of building additions. As a result, the east-facing facades of Buildings No. 1 and No. 2 lacked window openings altogether, and only the

second floor of Building No. 3 had windows. These blank facades were stuccoed when the adjacent buildings were torn down. The side and rear elevations, particularly of Building No. 1, have been altered by the enclosure of original window and door openings.

Because the majority of the remaining complex represents only a small portion of the plant that once operated on-site, the integrity of the complex has been greatly diminished. Therefore, Wilmington Fibre no longer retains significant historical associations with the vulcanized fibre industry or industry in New Castle (Criterion A) or with industrialist John Wesley Morris (Criterion B). It also does not meet Criterion C for architectural significance. The property is not recommended eligible under Criterion D because equipment and other vestiges of the fibre production process have been modernized or removed for contemporary production of non-metallic products. This cannot obtain new or undocumented information.