

4.3.3 K-02739. Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex
4657 Barratts Chapel Road
SM-00-122.00-02-27.00

Description: This 116.25-acre property is located on the north side of Barratts Chapel Road, east of Buffalo Road. The farmstead is comprised of a ca. 1930 farmhouse with attached garage and 10 outbuildings (Figure 16). An in-ground swimming pool is located immediately to the rear (north) of the house. Access to the property is *via* a paved driveway that extends past the west side of the house. An unpaved lane leads to an equipment storage shed (.011) at the rear (north) edge of the parcel. The property is bordered by agricultural fields to the west, north, and east, and Barratts Chapel Road to the south.

The farmhouse (.001) is a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay, I-house built ca.1930, with a concrete block foundation. A large one-story front (south) addition with enclosed porch and three one-story rear (north) additions, including a two-car garage, were constructed prior to 1980. The house is sheathed in aluminum siding. The main block has an asphalt shingle side gable roof and the additions have flat, shed, and front gable roofs.

The resource contains numerous outbuildings. The shed (.002) immediately north of the attached garage was built ca. 1940. It has a front-gable roof made of standing seam metal and the elevations are sheathed with aluminum siding and vertical board panels. The front (west) elevation consists of four sliding barn doors.

East of the shed (.002) is a former chicken coop (.003) built ca. 1920. The coop has a side-gable, standing seam metal roof and the elevations are sheathed with aluminum siding. The front (south) facade consists of two nine-light fixed windows and one wood pedestrian door.

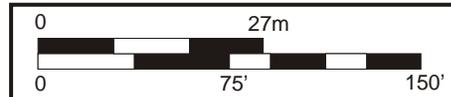
To the east of the coop is another shed (.004) built ca. 1930. This shed has a side-gable, corrugated metal roof, with a shed roof at the rear. A small cupola with weathervane sits at the ridgeline. The elevations are covered with aluminum siding and vertical groove plywood panels. The front (south) elevation has one wood pedestrian door.

Northwest of the shed (.002) is a former machine shed (.005) built ca. 1975. The structure has a shed roof of standing seam metal, covering an enclosed area and an open area. The elevations are sheathed with plywood panels. A tall steel lattice tower stands to the southeast of the shed. The front (south) elevation has one sash window.

West of the former machine shed is a garage (.006) built ca. 1970. The structure has a side-gable roof of standing seam metal; an addition on the south elevation has a shed



SOURCE: MICROSOFT 2010



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	
BARRATTS CHAPEL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS S.R. 1 TO MCGINNIS POND ROAD KENT COUNTY	
K-02739 FARMSTEAD IN 2010	
FIGURE - 16	SKELLY and LOY Inc. CONSULTANTS IN ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY ENGINEERING - PLANNING

roof. The garage has a concrete slab foundation and ridged metal siding. The front (east) facade has one pedestrian door to the left and an overhead double garage door at center.

At the northern edge of the building cluster are two recent storage sheds (.007 and .008) built *ca.* 1985 and *ca.* 1992, respectively. Both are prefabricated structures, with front-gable, standing seam metal roofs. Both are clad with standing seam metal. Shed .007 has an open, one-story, shed roof addition on the east side and an enclosed, one-story, shed roof addition on the west side.

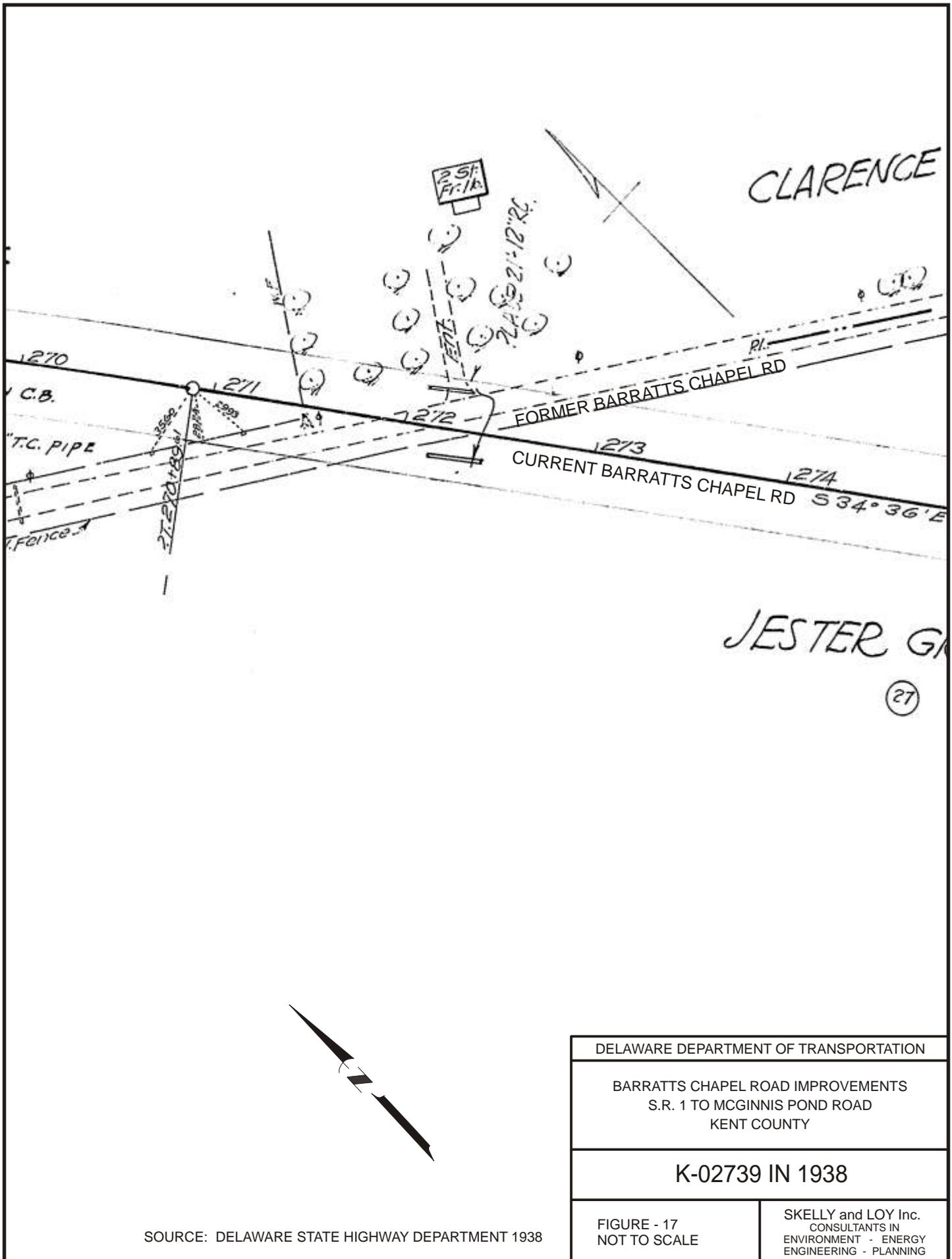
To the east of the in-ground pool is another storage shed (.009) built *ca.* 1990. The structure has an asphalt shingle shed roof and vertical board and board-and-batten siding. The front (west) facade has a door.

Another shed (.010) stands beyond the tree line to the northeast of the cluster of buildings. The structure, which was built *ca.* 1985, has a shed roof of corrugated metal and plywood panel siding. There is one large opening on the front (south) facade.

Northwest of this shed (.010), also separated from the cluster of buildings with the farmhouse, is an equipment storage shed (.011) built *ca.* 1990. The structure has a shallow front-gable roof of corrugated metal and the elevations are partially open or covered with plywood panels.

Applicable Historic Context(s): Upper Peninsula Zone; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization (1880-1940±); Agriculture; Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes; Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts; Other Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Houses.

Historical Overview: The present owner dates construction of the main block of the K-02739 farmhouse to the 1930s (Caulk, personal communication 2008). The date is consistent with the architectural style of the house and the concrete block used in its foundation. The additions at the front and rear of the house are from the late twentieth century. In 1937, land expanding the size of the farm was sold to Clarence and Elvira Postles. The house could date from the period after that conveyance. The house appears on as-built plans for improvements to Barratts Chapel Road prepared the following year, although it is not drawn to scale or in the proper configuration (Delaware State Highway Department 1938) (Figure 17). Occupation of the parcel, however, can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century.



SOURCE: DELAWARE STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT 1938

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	
BARRATTS CHAPEL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS S.R. 1 TO MCGINNIS POND ROAD KENT COUNTY	
K-02739 IN 1938	
FIGURE - 17 NOT TO SCALE	SKELLY and LOY Inc. CONSULTANTS IN ENVIRONMENT - ENERGY ENGINEERING - PLANNING

The 1859 map of Murderkill Hundred shows a house owned by T. Bell at the approximate location of this farm (French and Skinner 1859) (see Figure 3), and nineteenth century deeds refer to the property as the Bell Farm. Thomas Bell was a member of Murderkill Hundred's large free African American population. In 1850, he was credited with owning 15 acres of land, all of it improved. Compared to his White neighbors, Bell was a poor subsistence farmer. His land was valued at only \$300 and his farm implements and machinery at another \$20. His livestock included one mule, one milk cow, and one other head of cattle. The cow and head of cattle undoubtedly produced milk, butter, and beef for home consumption. In an exception to his subsistence farming, Bell also owned 12 swine, with a market value of \$95. Swine would not have to be penned but could forage, making it economical for Bell to keep and sell them. His crops featured small but diversified yields and included 22 bushels of wheat, 180 bushels of Indian corn, nine bushels of Irish potatoes, five bushels of sweet potatoes, four bushels of buckwheat, 20 pounds of butter, two tons of hay, and five dollars worth of unspecified orchard products (U.S. Census 1850a).

By 1860, Bell's economic position had improved, but he was still significantly poorer than his White neighbors. He owned 25 acres of land valued at \$700. The total value of his implements and machinery had not grown appreciably (\$40 versus \$20 in 1850), so his crop yields were still low compared to his neighbors. Bell now owned a horse rather than a mule as well as three beef cattle, but no swine. His crop yields had increased in all cases. Bell produced 40 bushels of wheat, 250 bushels of Indian corn, 25 bushels of oats (perhaps for his horse), 20 bushels of Irish potatoes, nine bushels of sweet potatoes, and four bushels of buckwheat. He also harvested two bushels of peas and beans. Bell was still a subsistence farmer, but somewhat better off than he had been (U.S. Census 1860a). The 1860 tax assessment for Murderkill Hundred listed on his property a one-story frame dwelling, kitchen, shed, stable, and smokehouse, all in tolerable repair, as well as a one-story frame tenant dwelling house and a log kitchen in bad repair and unoccupied (Kent County Tax Assessments 1860).

In 1862, Bell and his wife, Ann, lost the farm over a debt of \$194.88 that they were unable to pay. It was purchased by neighboring property owner William Townsend. The deed specified that the property included a one-story frame dwelling, a stable, and a corn crib. It made no mention of the kitchen and smokehouse referenced in the 1860 tax assessment. The old dwelling, listed as a tenant house in the 1860 tax assessment, was now being used as a barn (Kent County Deeds 1862). In 1868 the farm, listed as 26.5 acres, was purchased by James M. Haswell for \$1,192.50 (Kent County Deeds 1868b).

Haswell's 1868 tax assessment noted only one building on the property, a single-story frame dwelling in bad repair and "idle" (Kent County Tax Assessments 1868). It is assumed this means that the house was vacant and not in use, and that the remaining buildings may have been removed.

The 1868 map of South Murderkill Hundred (Beers 1868) showed a house labeled "Mrs. Bell" at the approximate location of K-02739. This could mean that Ann Bell continued to live on the property as a tenant even after she and her husband lost ownership of the farm. To the southeast of Mrs. Bell's house is a house labeled "J.R. Haswell." James R. Haswell is listed in the 1868 tax assessments as the owner and occupant of a neighboring 61-acre farm with a two-story frame dwelling and a smokehouse in tolerable repair (Kent County Tax Assessments 1868). In 1869, James M. Haswell, then a minister in Philadelphia, gave James R. Haswell power of attorney over his 26.5-acre farm (Kent County Deeds 1869b). In 1877, James R. Haswell lost his and James M. Haswell's combined properties at a sheriff's sale to satisfy a debt of \$1,500. The 80-acre parcel was conveyed to Wesley Ponzio in the same year, although Ponzio did not appear to own the property free and clear until 1891 (Kent County Deeds 1877, 1892). The deed listed Ponzio as "colored." In the lexicon of the time, that meant that Ponzio was either African American or of mixed blood. Neither the Haswells nor Ponzio appeared in the 1870 or 1880 agricultural censuses for South Murderkill Hundred, meaning that the land may have been in tenure.

Ponzio died intestate ca. 1892, and his 80-acre parcel was sold to Elizabeth Fleming for \$860 to satisfy Ponzio's debts. The sale price was low despite the presence on the property of a two-story frame dwelling, barn, stable, and other outbuildings (Kent County Deeds 1892). Fleming sold the parcel four years later for the substantially higher price of \$2,000 (Kent County Deeds 1896). This either indicates that Fleming made improvements, or that she originally bought the farm at a discounted rate. When sold again in 1901, Purnell Postles paid \$1,200 for the property (Kent County Deeds 1901). K-02739 was most likely a tenant farm during Purnell Postles's ownership. When he conveyed the land in 1912 to Clarence and Elvira Postles, Purnell "reserved...the rents from said farm for all crops grown on said lands" during 1912 (Kent County Deeds 1912). In 1937, Purnell Postles sold to Clarence and Elvira Postles adjacent land, bringing the total acreage of the farm up to approximately 120 acres, about the size it remains today (Kent County Deeds 1937a).

In 1938, as-built plans were prepared for improvements to Barratts Chapel Road. The improvements removed many curves from the road, and re-routed a portion of the road

through Clarence Postles's land. The plan shows only the Postles's farmhouse (Delaware State Highway Department 1938) (see Figure 17). A contemporary aerial photograph (1937) shows the farmhouse and other buildings. An aerial photograph from 1954 is too indistinct to be of much use. Aerial photographs from 1961 and 1968 also provide limited detail. The aerial photograph from 1992, however, is high quality and shows that many outbuildings were constructed between 1968 and 1992. An aerial image from 2002 shows that two new large storage sheds (.007 and .008) were added to the farmstead (Delaware DataMIL 2008).

Clarence Postles sold the property in 1952. In 1977, it became the property of George Wallace and Barbara B. Caulk. It remains in the Caulk family today and is known as the Caulk Buffalo Run Farm (Kent County Deeds 1977).

Evaluation: The Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex is evaluated for NRHP eligibility as an agricultural complex from the Urbanization and Early Suburbanization Period (1880-1940±) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The farmhouse is also evaluated as an example of an early twentieth century I-house.

An agricultural complex is composed of dwelling(s) and agricultural outbuildings. An agricultural complex also encompasses the utilitarian and non-utilitarian spaces and features directly associated with these buildings, such as agricultural fields, woodlots, marshes, ditches, landscaped lawns, yards, gardens, drives, lanes, paths, and trash and other waste disposal areas and features (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992). An eligible agricultural complex must have the ability to convey information or exhibit trends concerning national, state, or local agricultural development. Primary and secondary source historical documentation is used to substantiate the significance of an agricultural complex. The principal historic components of the complex, the dwelling(s), domestic outbuildings, agricultural outbuildings, and utilitarian and non-utilitarian landscapes must convey strong associations with the farm's period of significance. Changes to active farms are expected and will not preclude NRHP eligibility. However, the major buildings, including dwelling(s) and barn(s) should retain much or all of their historic exterior fabric. In addition, to remain eligible, new construction must not dominate the old.

The history of the Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex dates to at least the mid-nineteenth century, but the farmhouse dates to the early twentieth century and most outbuildings date to after 1962, the cut-off date for this architectural resource survey. To be eligible under NRHP Criterion A, an agricultural complex must be significant in association with local, statewide, or national trends in agriculture in the early twentieth century, and it

must be able to convey those trends. The Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex does not meet this requirement. There is nothing in the historical record to indicate that this property was significant in agricultural history. Also, the farmhouse is altered and late twentieth century construction dominates the complex. Even if it were historically significant, it could not convey that significance.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion B, a property must be associated with a person of demonstrable significance; it must be associated with that person's productive life; and it should best reflect that person's historic contributions. There is no record that any of the historic owners or occupants of the farm were demonstrably significant.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion C for architecture, the principal historic components of the agricultural complex must be present and must convey strong associations with the farm's period of significance. Buildings and structures should also retain integrity of materials, design, feeling, and workmanship. The Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex does not do so. The main building of the complex, the farmhouse, is highly altered. Originally, the farmhouse was a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay dwelling. Subsequently, a large one-story addition was placed on the front and three one-story additions were appended to the rear. Four small and undistinguished outbuildings from the early and mid-twentieth century remain. Agricultural buildings from the late twentieth century dominate the farmstead. The alterations to the farmhouse and the farmstead compromise the ability of the agricultural complex to convey important historic information about the layout and design of early twentieth century agricultural complexes.

To be eligible under NRHP Criterion D, the complex must have the ability to yield important information on agricultural history and it must be the principal source of that information. The farmhouse is an altered example of early twentieth century construction and the majority of the buildings are non-historic. It does not have the ability to yield important information, which is not available through other sources.

The Postles/Buffalo Run Farm farmhouse is also evaluated individually as an example of an early twentieth century I-house. I-houses are not an uncommon property type in Murderkill Hundred or Kent County. To be eligible for architecture under NRHP Criterion C, an I-house must retain its original form and massing. The best examples also should contain elements of the architectural styles current at the time the house was built. The house should exhibit integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, association, materials, and workmanship. Unsympathetic additions, alterations, or renovations that obscure the original side gable I-house form compromise integrity and make the resource ineligible for listing.

Unsympathetic additions and alterations characterize the Postles/Buffalo Run Farm farmhouse. It has been extensively altered, compromising its ability to convey significance under NRHP Criterion C. The house is also not likely to yield information on early I-house construction not available from other sources. By the early twentieth century, framing and construction techniques were well known and well documented. For this reason it is not eligible under NRHP Criterion D.

The Postles/Buffalo Run Farm Agricultural Complex is not eligible for NRHP listing, either as an agricultural complex or as an example of an early twentieth century I-house.

K-02739 Photographs



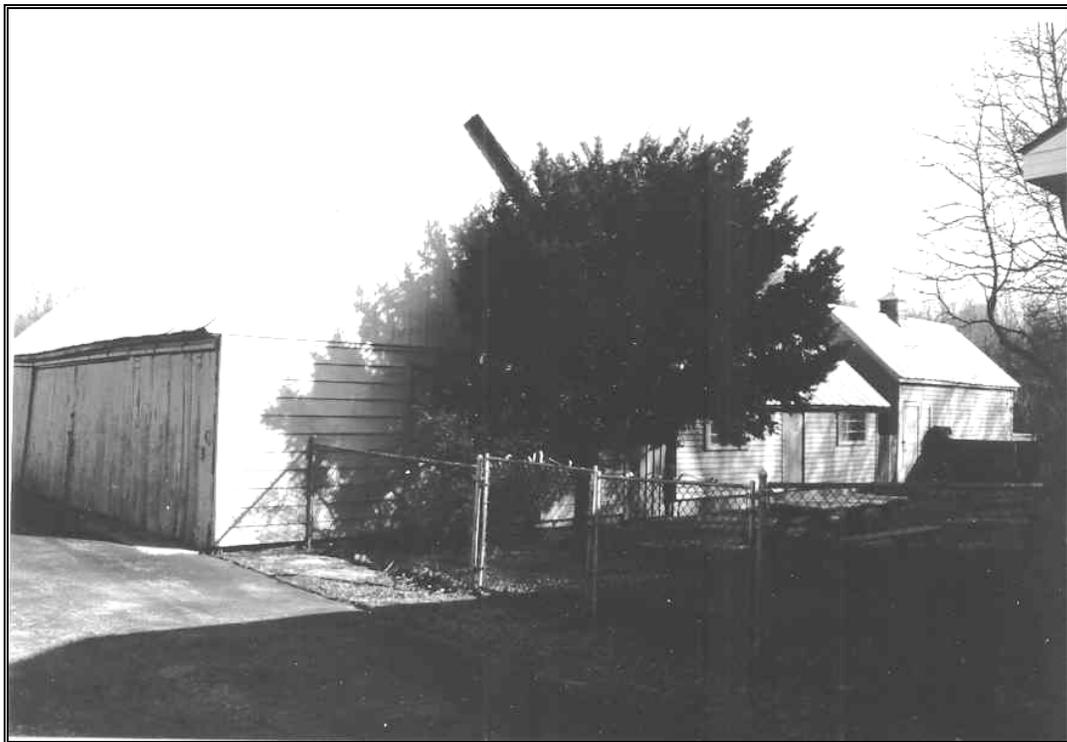
Farmhouse (.001), west and south (front) elevations, facing northeast.



Farmhouse (.001), south (front) elevation, facing north.



Outbuildings (.005, .002, and attached garage .001), west and south elevations, facing northeast.



Outbuildings (.002, .003, and .004), west and south (front) elevations, facing northeast.



Outbuildings (.006, .008, .005, and .002), south and east elevations, facing north.



Outbuildings (.007 and .008), south elevations, facing north.



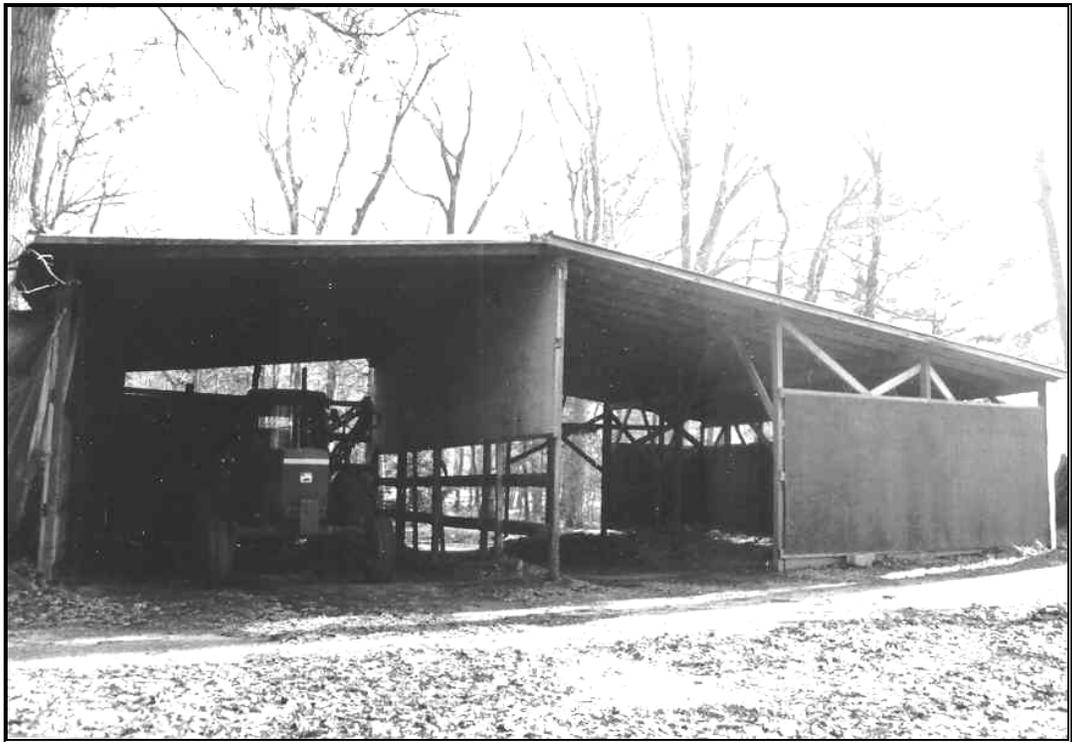
Outbuildings (.008 and .007), south and east elevations, facing northwest.



Farmhouse (.001) and outbuildings (.009 and .004), east and north (rear) elevations, facing southwest.

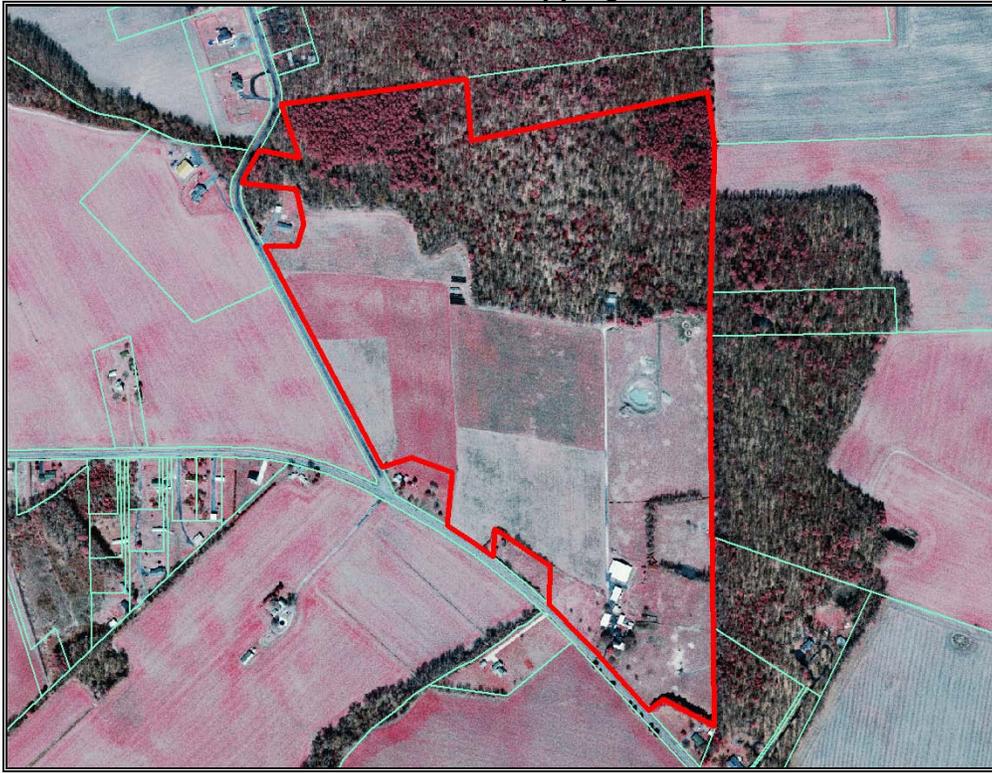


Outbuilding (.010), west and south (front) elevations, facing northeast.



Outbuilding (.011), west elevation, facing southeast.

K-02739 Mapping



K-02739 tax parcel on 2002 aerial photograph (Delaware DataMIL 2008).



K-02739 tax parcel on 1937 aerial photograph (Delaware DataMIL 2008).