

IV. ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

A. Introduction

The APE for the proposed improvements was defined as consisting of the three properties lying adjacent to the bridge location. A review of Delaware SHPO survey files found one previously inventoried architectural resource, the John C. Spear Farmstead (N-6315), which had not been listed in or found eligible for the National Register. A Delaware SHPO CRS Update form was completed for the Spear Farmstead. The update photography of individual outbuildings on the property that would normally be conducted in accord with Delaware SHPO survey guidelines was not undertaken because access was denied by the property owner and the buildings were not fully visible from the public roadside. The dwelling situated at the front of the farmstead was photographed, however, and it was possible to make a visual survey of the house for changes since the earlier inventory. It was also possible to ascertain whether any outbuildings had been destroyed or received major alteration since the property was surveyed in 1981. No additional architectural resources more than 50 years old were identified during field survey of the project area. Figure 5 indicates the location of the Spear Farmstead. The result of its evaluation is summarized in Table 1 at the end of this chapter. The CRS Update form for the Spear Farmstead is presented in Appendix A, along with the forms completed during previous surveys.

B. John C. Spear Farmstead (N-6315) Constructed circa 1860 Tax Parcel: 15-022.00-075 Plates 1-3 (CRS forms in Appendix A)

Description: This property, on the west side of Paddock Road south of Bridge 463, consists of a circa-1860 dwelling situated at the front of the homestead and facing east toward Paddock Road, a group of 11 outbuildings of varying twentieth-century dates positioned to the rear and to the south side of the house, and an extensive tract of agricultural land. Most of the outbuildings are situated in a courtyard arrangement around an open space located to the southwest of the house. A front lawn shaded by mature trees intercedes between the house and the public road. The property encompasses 208.5 acres within its boundary. The general setting of the property is rural, with some exurban residential properties present. The recently constructed Route 1 limited-access highway runs along the southwest edge of the property, passing about 700 feet southwest of the farmstead architectural complex. Two houses less than 50 years old, situated on roadside lots, stand across Paddock Road from the Spear Farmstead.

The John C. Spear Farmstead was intensively surveyed during 1981 by Gary E. Baker, then a fellow in the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. The following description draws on Baker's apparently thorough account of the farmstead's physical characteristics, on file in the Delaware SHPO inventory of cultural resources (see Appendix A). The dwelling is a two-story, L-shaped, cross-gabled frame structure of vernacular design, its main block an example of the center-passage single-pile house type. The main block and rear ell were built concurrently, judging from the seamless and uniform construction of the foundation. Baker asserted that the balloon-frame technique was employed for the house, based on the use of two-by-six-inch boards for floor joists, the relatively narrow six-inch width of the exterior walls, and the apparent absence of corner posts. The attic had been refinished with plaster board by 1981, preventing observation of the roof construction. The building's principal or east facade is of symmetrical five-bay design with the front entry in the center bay. The cross gable is also positioned centrally, over the front entry, and is fitted with an additional window. The house is set on a foundation of brick masonry, clad in weatherboard, and

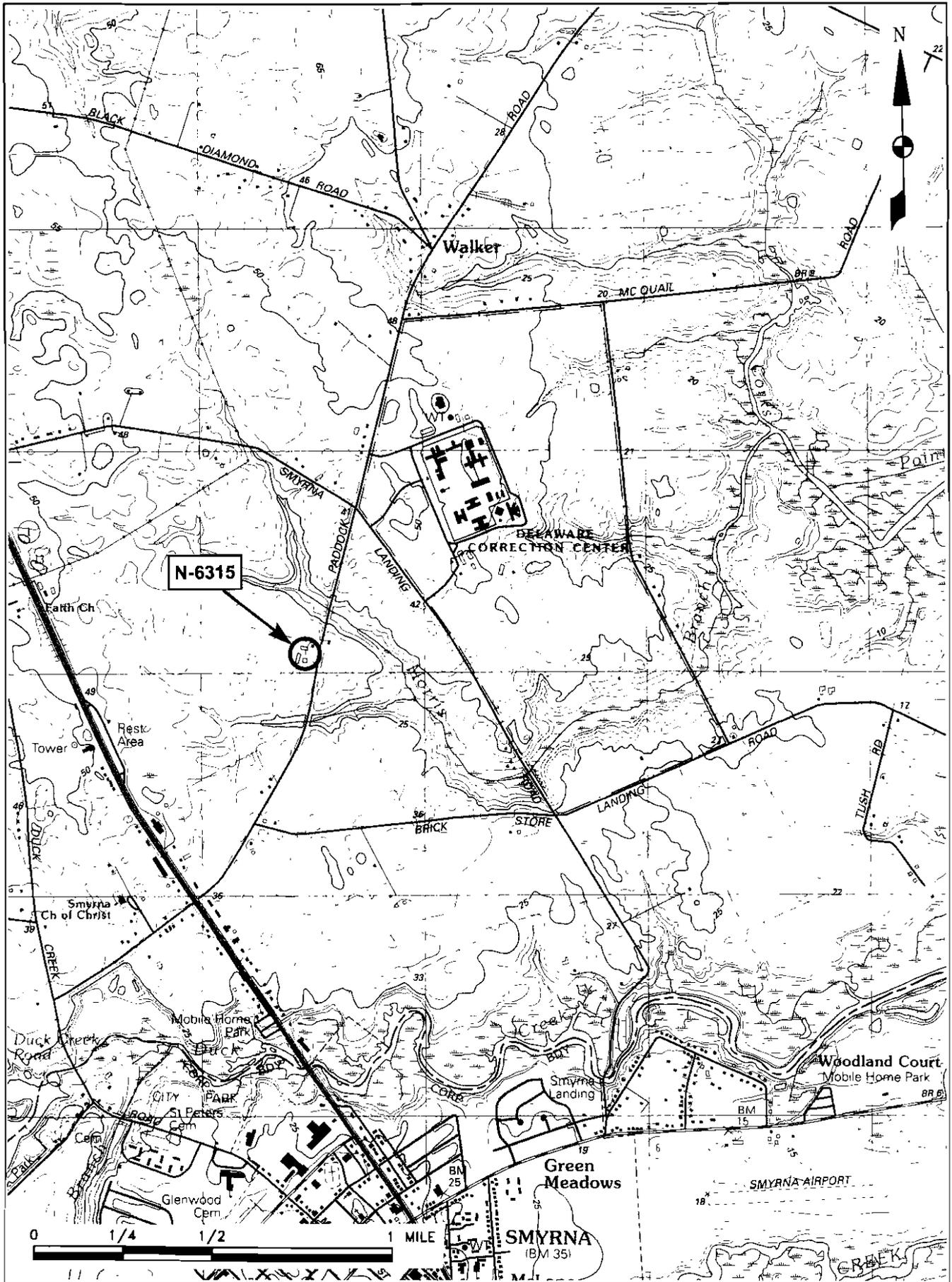


FIGURE 5: Architectural Resources Identified in the Area of Potential Effect

SOURCE: USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle, Smyrna, DE 1993



PLATE 1: John C. Spear Farmstead, View in Context, Looking North



PLATE 2: John C. Spear Farmstead, House, Looking Northwest



PLATE 3: John C. Spear Farmstead, House, Looking West

roofed with asphalt shingle. The foundation wall encloses a crawl space beneath the main block, but the rear ell is underlain by a full basement (Baker 1981).

The window sash on the main block of the house is composed of the two-over-two double-hung wooden type, each piece of sash surmounted by a simply molded cap. Wooden shutters remain in place on the main block. The shutters are designed with panels for the first-story windows and louvers for those above. The front entry is arranged with a double-leaf doorway flanked by three-light sidelights over panels. A elliptical fanlight spans the doorway. The door leaves are of three-panel design. The hip-roofed front porch is supported by four squared wooden posts. A molded box cornice trims the eaves for both the main roof and the front porch roof. Brick chimneys rise in interior end positions at either end of the main block. The ornate scroll-cut brackets that supported the cornice on both roof and porch, observed in earlier surveys, have been removed (Baker 1981).

The rear ell was extensively renovated circa 1970, as Baker was informed in 1981. This alteration work consisted of replacement of all of the windows with modern sash, construction of an enclosed porch along the north side of the ell, changes of position for the doorway and windows on the first story of the south elevation of the ell, replacement of most of the weatherboard on the ell with new weatherboard, and thorough redesign and refinishing of the kitchen on the first floor. The second floor of the ell was formerly occupied by two chambers, but the necessary partition was removed in the renovation and a modern bathroom installed in a corner of the second-floor space. The work extended to the south first-floor room of the main block, evidently historically the dining room, as it adjoined the kitchen. The fireplace mantel was removed, the fireplace was faced with modern textured brick, and the walls were sheathed in synthetic pine paneling (Baker 1981).

According to the intensive survey of 1981, each floor of the main block is organized with a center stair passage with a room to either side, these rooms being of equal size. The north rooms on both floors, which had evidently survived essentially unaltered at the time of Baker's survey (apart from repainting), were apparently originally fitted with stoves for heating. Unbroken baseboard extended across the base of the mantelpiece in the first-floor room, and in the second-floor room there was a mantel-like shelf rather than a full mantelpiece. The spaces below the mantel shelves in both rooms were marked by patched-over circular openings in which stove pipes had once been fitted. Baker did not enter the south second-floor room. In the stair passage he observed a finely detailed staircase. In all of the main block rooms that he entered, Baker noted traces of well-executed graining decoration on the woodwork, although all of this woodwork has subsequently received layers of paint (Baker 1981).

The outbuildings include three domestic outbuildings, consisting of a privy, a tool shed, and a car garage, and eight agricultural outbuildings, consisting of a pole barn, a cattle barn with milk house and silo attached, a horse stable, a wagon shed, two granaries, and two corncribs. The privy and tool shed are situated immediately behind the house. The privy, according to Baker's description from 1981, is a frame structure built circa 1960. The tool shed, also of frame construction and built circa 1950, is clad in vertical board with its gable roof covered with asphalt shingle. The garage is located near the driveway entry south of the house, standing so as to divide the driveway into two drives that then proceed separately until they enter the large courtyard-like space around which most of the outbuildings are grouped. The garage is a frame structure that was apparently taken down, probably in the 1970s, and then reconstructed, from its own and other buildings' salvaged material. Baker based this assessment on the rough, unworkmanlike nature of the construction, the substitution of roofing metal for cladding board in some areas, the presence of arabic numerals painted on the framing elements at every joint, and the presence of framing mortises with no function. Concrete-block piers support the structure (Baker 1981).

The most recently built of the agricultural buildings, erected circa 1990, is the large metal-clad pole barn situated at the southeastern corner of the farmstead architectural complex with its long lateral wall facing

the public road. This structure is so large that it visually dominates the rest of the farmstead complex. The other farm buildings are ranged around the farmstead yard that adjoins the pole barn to the northwest. The granary to the west of the pole barn is a frame structure that is said to have been constructed circa 1950 in the form of an earlier granary, which it replaced. It has been reclad in metal siding, however, and has received the addition of two lean-tos, one during the 1970s and the other probably during the 1990s. The frame of the granary was also rebuilt in the 1970s, with removal of several posts and heavy bracing fitted along the exterior walls, so that the building could function as an equipment garage (Baker 1981).

Four of the farm buildings, the horse stable, the cattle barn, another granary, and the wagon shed, are arranged to form an L-shaped row that constitutes the north and west sides of the farmyard. At the south end of the row, at the southwest corner of the yard, is the horse stable, probably built circa 1930. It is a shed-roofed frame building with concrete-block foundation and vertical-board walls, constructed partially of reused timbers. The cattle barn, probably built circa 1910, is a gable-roofed frame structure placed with its gable end facing the farmyard and its lateral wall facing the horse stable. Its foundation is composed of poured concrete, its walling of vertical board. The barn was enlarged circa 1930 with a poured-concrete silo and concrete-block connecting section to the rear or west, and a concrete-block milk house adjoining the east end of the barn's north wall. To the north of the barn, built concurrently with the barn's original section judging from the two buildings' evident siting as a pair, is the older of the farmstead's two granaries. This granary is a front-gabled frame structure clad in vertical board. It is supported mostly by piers of poured concrete, but also employs two brick-masonry piers that probably survive from an earlier building on that site. The long wagon shed extends from next to the wagon house to a position a few feet from the tool shed, to provide the north side of the farm buildings' courtyard-like arrangement. Probably erected circa 1930, it is a frame building clad in vertical board on a foundation of concrete block. To the rear of the main farm building grouping are the two corncribs, one of wood frame, the other of wire construction (Baker 1981).

Applicable Historic Context: Upper Peninsula Zone. Industrialization and Early Urbanization 1830-1880 ±; Urbanization and Early Suburbanization 1880-1940 ±. Settlement Patterns; Agriculture; Architecture.

Evaluation: Gary E. Baker compiled a title history for the property, tracing its ownership from 1837 to 1981, for his intensive survey (Baker 1981). Prior to 1851 the property was usually operated as a tenant farmstead, with the original homestead located across the road from the present homestead's location and approximately 300 feet farther south, as indicated on the 1849, 1868, and 1893 maps. No architectural element of this earlier homestead survived into the late twentieth century. In February 1851 John C. Spear, Sr., purchased the property, then 255 acres in extent and referred to by the name "Woodstock," from Jonathan Brown. Spear apparently established the homestead on the present location for the use and future ownership of his son, Andrew, constructing the surviving dwelling at some date between attaining a clear title in 1856 and his death in 1866. The house is the only building extant from the homestead's early years. Subsequent owners included Joseph W. Vandegrift (beginning 1868), Andrew Spear (regaining his inheritance, 1876), Austin Harrington (due to Spear's financial insolvency, 1890), Mark G. Lofland (1894), Harry B. Grieves (1904), Harry M. Grieves (by inheritance, 1941) and Dwight S. Meyer (1975). As of October 1999, the Spear Farmstead was owned by James and Cheryl Knotts (Baker 1981).

Apart from the periods of Spear family ownership (1851-1868 and 1876-1890), it appears that the farmstead has generally served as a tenancy, or at least not as the owner's primary place of residence or business. Harry B. Grieves, who owned the property for nearly four decades during the first half of the twentieth century and who made a considerable investment in rebuilding the farm building complex, was the proprietor of a livery stable in Smyrna. Andrew Spear's economic difficulties in the 1880s, combined with the extended intervals of absentee ownership during the late nineteenth century, may have resulted in poor upkeep of the original farm buildings, thereby requiring their replacement by Grieves. Based on the property history and on the farm buildings' physical construction characteristics, Baker surmised that Harry B. Grieves built the original

section of the cattle barn and the older of the two extant granaries within a few years after he acquired the property in 1904. Probably two decades or so later, Grieves added the wagon shed, the horse stable, and the silo and milk house additions to the cattle barn. His son, Harry M. Grieves, and the succeeding owners, Dwight Meyer and James Knotts, have done additional building and rebuilding of farm buildings, and have also carried out alterations to the house (Baker 1981).

The John C. Spear Farmstead does not meet the criteria for National Register eligibility. Many, if not most, of the several buildings were built too recently to satisfy the age qualification for National Register eligibility. The farmstead architectural complex does not present significance relating to events or trends in the history of agriculture, of settlement patterns, or of other aspects of the American heritage, and therefore does not meet Criterion A. The farmstead is not known to have been directly associated with any person of significance in American history, and therefore does not meet Criterion B. With regard to Criterion C, under which criterion resources are significant for their distinctive qualities in architecture and engineering, the Spear Farmstead does not distinctively embody the characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor does it represent the work of a master or high artistic values. The house as well as those outbuildings more than 50 years old are relatively ordinary examples of types common in central Delaware, and several of the buildings, including the house, have been so altered as to lack historic integrity. Consequently, the farmstead does not meet Criterion C.

Table 1

Architectural Resources Located in the Area of Potential Effect

Resource Number	Name	Context	Property Type	Integrity	Recommendation
N-6315	John C. Spear Farmstead	Settlement Patterns; Architecture	Farmstead	Poor-Fair	Not eligible