

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 100-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Brittingham Commercial Strip

other names/site number Delaware CRS #S-11239

2. Location

street and number 418 DuPont Highway (U.S. Route 113) not for publication

city or town Georgetown vicinity

state Delaware code DE county Sussex code 005 zip code 19947

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain).	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Brittingham Commercial Strip
Name of Property

Sussex County, Delaware
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

c. 1960

Significant Dates

c. 1960

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Brittingham Commercial Strip
Name of Property

Sussex County, Delaware
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one (.37)

UTM References (NAD 83)

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18N</u>	<u>465224</u>	<u>4283192</u>	3	<u>18N</u>	<u>465280</u>	<u>4283202</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>18N</u>	<u>465231</u>	<u>4283167</u>	4	<u>18N</u>	<u>465285</u>	<u>4283176</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas C. McVarish/Principal Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date March 2008

street & number 1216 Arch Street, 5th Floor telephone 215-561-7637

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware**

Narrative Description

This property, located on the east side of U.S. 113, includes a one-story, c.1960 commercial building that includes multiple tenant spaces and a larger modern office building. It is set in a large asphalt parking lot.

The commercial building is constructed of concrete block with a flat roof. The front (west) façade has brick facing and a series of three commercial glass doors, each flanked by large aluminum-framed, commercial store-front windows. The brick facing wraps the north and south corners of the building in a quoining pattern. A small projecting flat roof is cantilevered on thin tapered brackets from the face of the building to shade the windows. Recessed lighting with decorative covers on the underside of this roof provides illumination at night. Signage for the various tenants is supported atop the brick faced wall. The south wall is painted concrete block with four buttresses spaced along its length. The east side is also concrete block and has metal back doors for the tenant spaces within. The northern end of the east side is extended farther to the east with a concrete-block portion and vinyl-sided addition. There is a concrete-block chimney on the exterior of the south side of the small concrete-block portion, and another chimney interior to the building, near the southeast corner. The south side of the vinyl-sided addition has regularly spaced, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows and a door, which opens directly on grade to the asphalt parking area that covers the immediate site on the south and east sides of the building. The north side of the building is also sided with vinyl siding and has a single one-over-one, vinyl-clad double-hung sash window.

The owner, Ira B. Brittingham, indicated that only minor alterations have occurred, most notably the construction of a rear addition in 1984. The building retains its original storefronts, entry doors, and canopy and retains a remarkable degree of original fabric for a building of its age. It conveys all aspects of integrity.

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Brittingham Commercial Strip Sussex County, Delaware

Statement of Significance

The Brittingham Commercial Strip is significant under National Register Criterion A for its role in the early highway commercial development of Georgetown, Delaware. The architecture of this property is that of an early, small, highway commercial strip with mid-twentieth-century modernistic elements such as an “airplane wing” awning, streamlined plate glass windows in aluminum frames, and decorative light covers. Although the building retains much of its architectural integrity, the development of a historical context for modernistic architecture in Sussex County would be necessary to establish its eligibility under Criterion C.

Historic Context

As Chester Liebs indicated in his study of American roadside architecture, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, development such as the Brittingham commercial strip, was typical of commercial development along the highway outskirts of existing communities in the post-World War II period:

Soon farms, fields, and open lands that once brought pastoral solace to legions of Sunday drivers disappeared into tract developments of hundreds of look-alike developments of hundreds of look-alike houses. Like the taxpayer strips before it, the nearby approach strip became the logical location for businesses serving these new communities. Supermarkets, auto dealers, and a wide range of other retailers, from hardware stores and dry cleaners to clothing outlets and florist shops, intermixed with older hot dog stands, filling stations, produce stands, souvenir booths, and motor courts...[T]he newcomers adopted the same site plans as many of their older roadside neighbors...[S]etbacks became the rule. Customers now arrived in cars, not by foot by trolley. Large and convenient parking lots became more of a commercial bonus than an attractive shop window (Liebs 1985:28).

The property is associated with the development of retailing in the DuPont Highway corridor as businesses moved out to the highway or were established along it to take advantage of the growth of automobile traffic.

According to the owner of the property, Ira Brittingham, his father purchased the land in 1949. The building was built by the Brittinghams in 1960; Ira Brittingham, Sr., was a plumbing contractor, and he was directly involved in the design and construction of the building, which has three commercial spaces. The first three businesses to occupy the spaces were *Stork & Junior*, a infant and toddlers clothing store owned and operated by his mother; *Dallas Store*, a shoe store; and, *Selective Insurance Company*. Over the years, the tenants have changed. The only alteration to the building since the time of its construction has been the attachment of a rear addition, completed in 1984.

Mr. Brittingham felt confident in declaring that this was the first building of its kind (mid-twentieth-century commercial strip) built in Georgetown along the Dupont Highway during this particular time period (Brittingham 2006).

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Brittingham Commercial Strip Sussex County, Delaware

Statement of Significance (cont.):

Historic Overview (cont.)

Deed research shows that the 3.65-acre property on which the Brittingham Commercial Strip sits represents the consolidation of portions of three formerly separate parcels. The first parcel, which originally measured 10 acres, was acquired by the Brittingham family in 1959 from the County Seat Motor Company (Sussex County Deed Book 502:493, April 13, 1959). Partial ownership of the property was transferred to Ira B. Brittingham, Jr., from his parents in 1977 (Sussex County Deed Book 862:200, September 27, 1977).

The second parcel, measuring 33,000 square feet, was acquired by the Brittinghams in 1949, also from the County Seat Motor Company (Sussex County Deed Book 384:537, May 26, 1949). As with the first parcel, partial ownership of the property was transferred to Ira B. Brittingham, Jr., from his parents in 1977 (Sussex County Deed Book 862:200, September 27, 1977).

The third parcel, measuring 63,610 square feet, was not acquired by the Brittinghams until 1979, when they purchased it from Robert F. Rider (Sussex County Deed Book 941:56, March 15, 1979). Ira B. Brittingham, Jr., was listed on the transaction with his parents. Ira B. Brittingham, Sr., died in August 1994. The combined parcels, measured at 3.65 acres, are now owned by Anna Mae Brittingham and Ira B. Brittingham, as co-trustees (Sussex County Deed Book 2113:219, March 22, 1996).

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Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware

Major Bibliographical References

Brittingham, Ira B.

2006 Current property owner. Oral interview on 14 November 2006 with Courtney L. Clark, John Milner Associates, Inc. Notes on file, John Milner Associates, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

Liebs, Chester H.

1985 *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*. Bulfinch Press, Little Brown and Company, Boston

Sussex County Deeds

Office of the Recorder of Deeds. Administration Building, Georgetown, Delaware.

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**Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware**

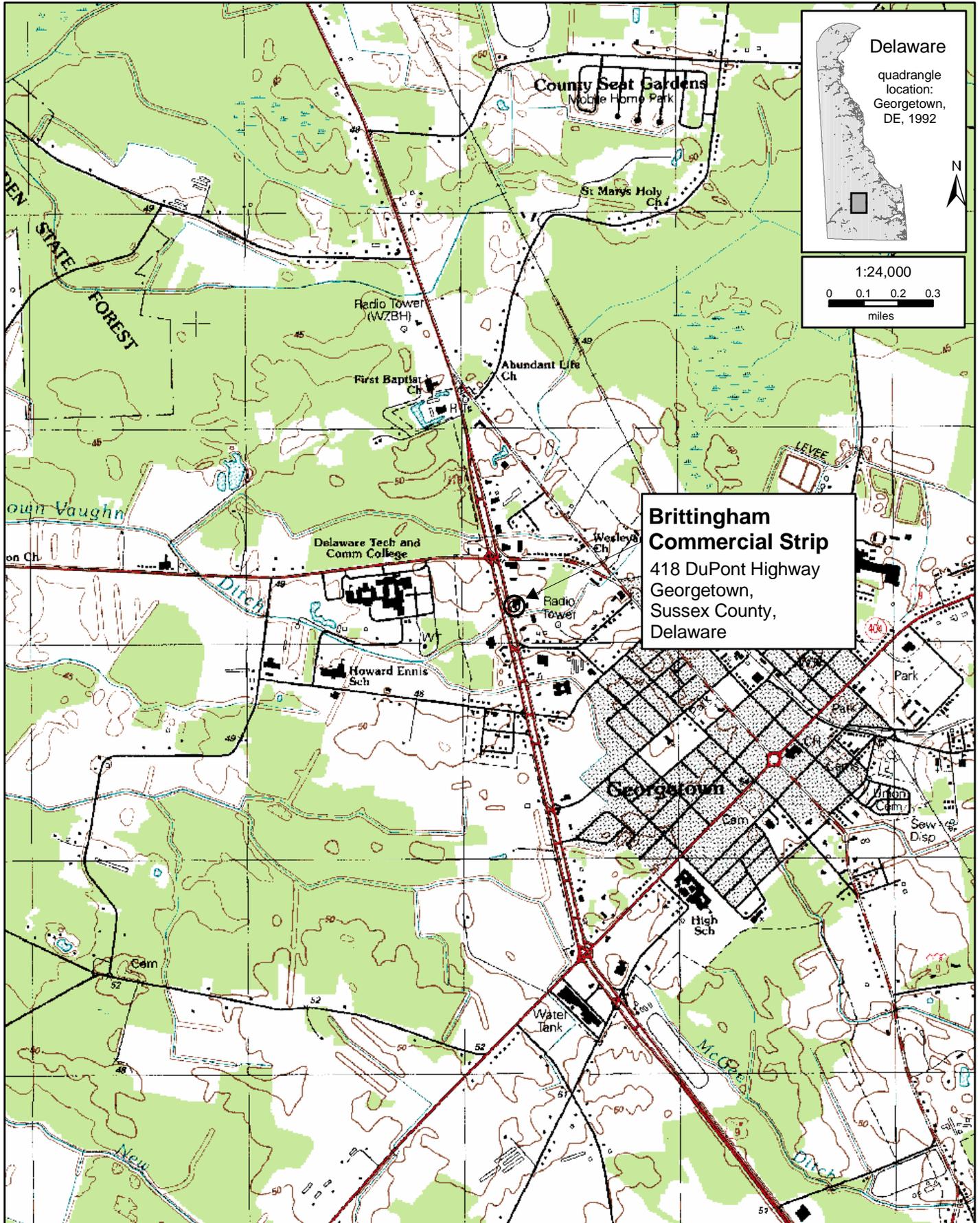
Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary for the Brittingham Commercial Strip is an approximately .37-acre polygon in the northwest corner of Sussex County tax parcel 135-14.15-54.00 that encompasses the footprint of the building and the parking lot between the building and the western lot line. From the northwestern corner of the tax parcel, the boundary extends 190 feet easterly along the northern parcel line, then 85 feet southerly, 182 feet westerly, and 87 feet northerly along U.S. Route 113 to the point of beginning.

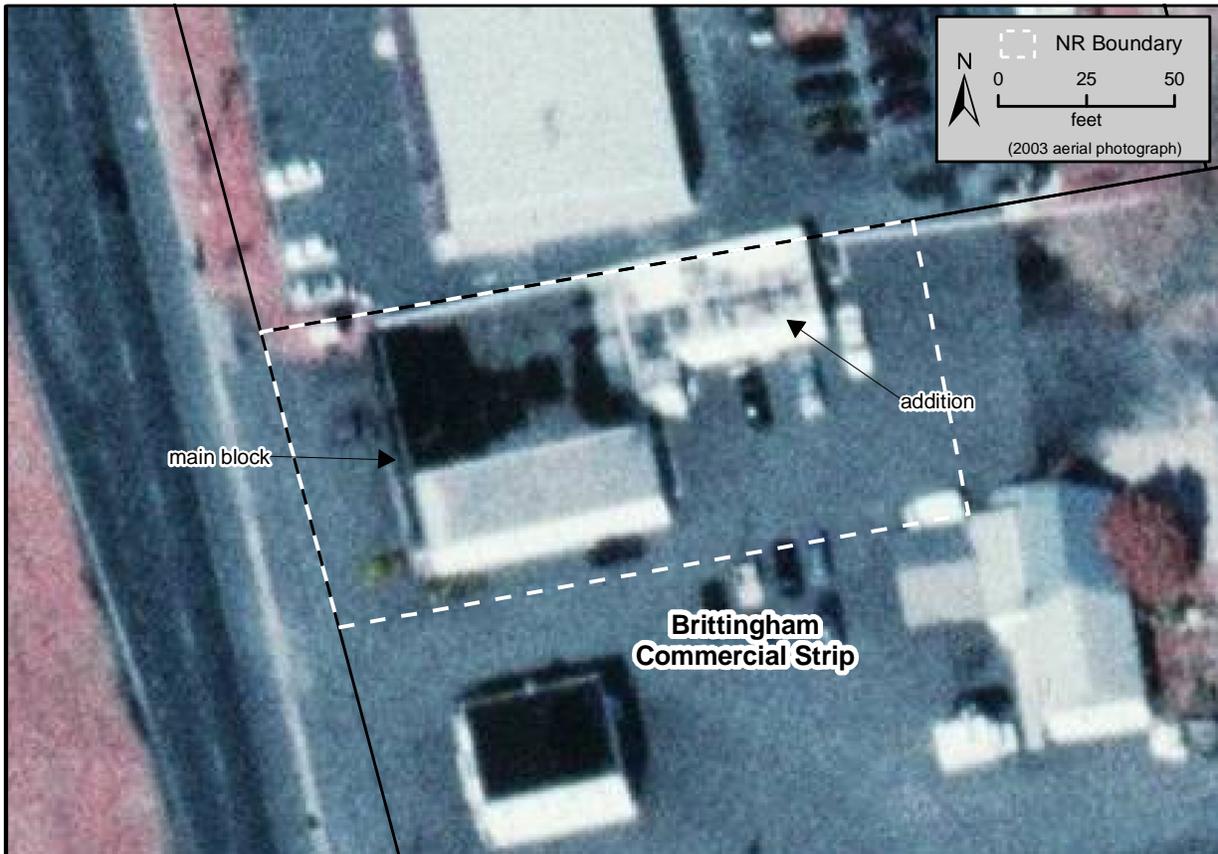
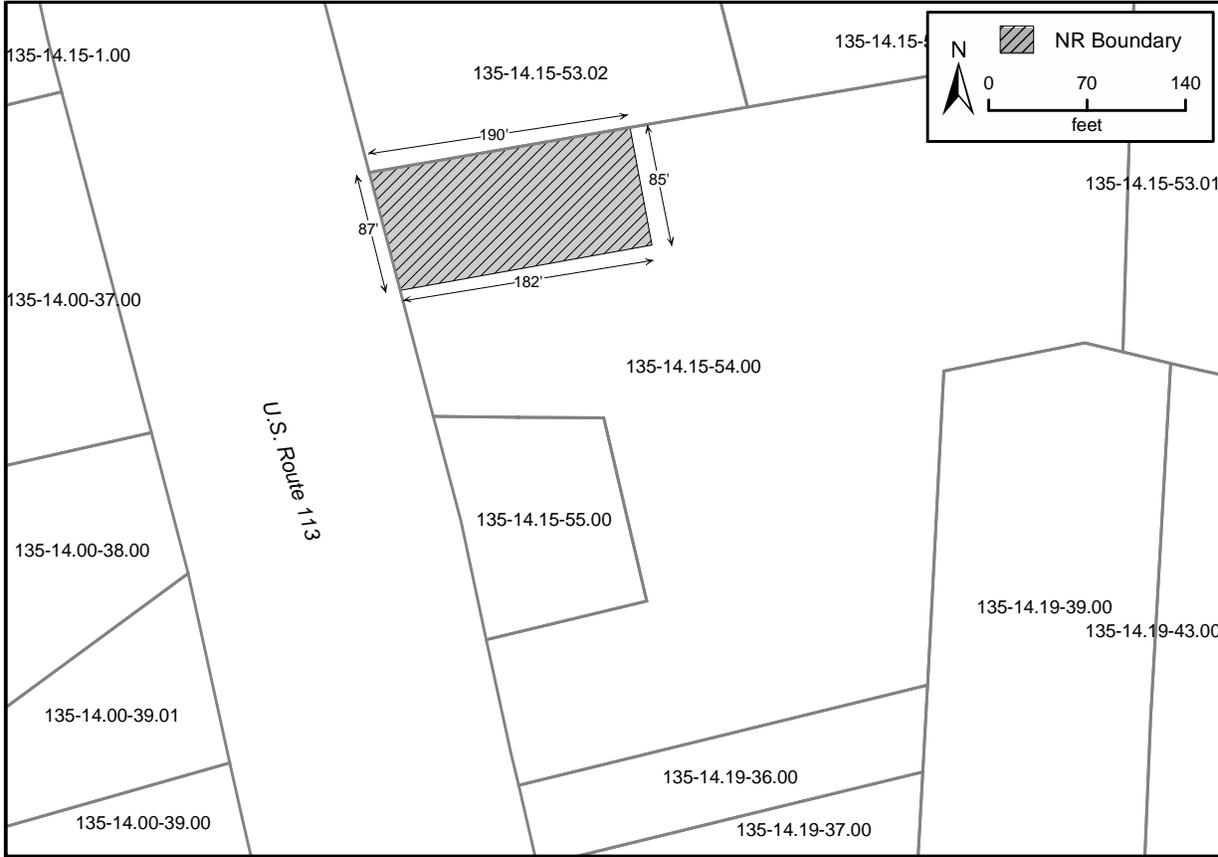
Boundary Justification

The remaining parking area and newer commercial buildings are excluded from the recommended boundary because they do not contribute to the significance of the strip under National Register Criterion A. The diagonal parking spaces adjacent to U.S. Route 113 were added after 2002 and are outside the current tax parcel. The original parking configuration (as seen on a 1961 aerial photograph) included a semi-circular grassy island along U.S. 113, punctuating two driveways into the lot. The strip parking within U.S. 113 right-of-way does not contribute to the significance of the property and is not included within the National Register boundary. This recommendation is in accordance with guidelines published by the National Park Service, which stipulate that boundary should excluded additional, peripheral areas that do not directly contribute to the property's significance.



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Additional Documentation Page 2

Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, DE

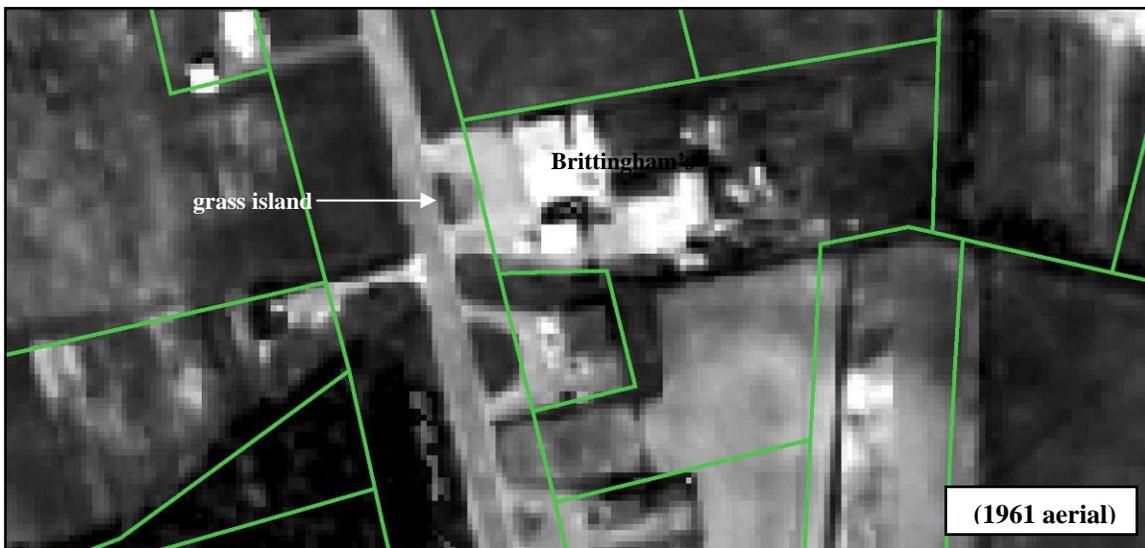


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Additional Documentation Page 3

Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware



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Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware

Photographs

Photograph 1 of 4. View of façade and parking area, camera faces east. (10/2008)

Photograph 2 of 4. Façade detail, camera faces north. (10/2008)

Photograph 3 of 4. View of façade and south side, camera faces northeast. (11/2005)

Photograph 4 of 4. View of rear and south side of main block and addition, camera faces northwest. (11/2005)

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Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware

Photograph 1 of 4:



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Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware

Photograph 2 of 4:



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**Brittingham Commercial Strip
Sussex County, Delaware**

Photograph 3 of 4:



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Sussex County, Delaware

Photograph 4 of 4:

