

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mermaid Tavern

and or common Mermaid Tavern

2. Location

street & number Delaware Route 7 not for publication

city, town Milltown vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county New Castle code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Sarah Pennington Evans and Helen P. Pennington

street & number Route 7

city, town Milltown vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Public Building

street & number Rodney Square

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mermaid Tavern, a colonial establishment, is located almost exactly at the geographical center of the Mill Creek Hundred. It has served not only as a tavern, but also as a polling place and as a post office. The old liquor cabinet, money drawers, postal cabinet and ballot box remain in the house. The house itself is a two-story stone structure with a frame addition. A log house was rebuilt in stone around 1725 to form the first section of the building and was enlarged circa 1750 and in the early nineteenth century. The exterior stone has been covered with stucco, giving the house a modern appearance. The interior retains many early features, such as floors, woodwork, and mantels.

The older two-story stone section is composed of two bays, with irregular fenestration. This section has been extended by a three-bay frame wing of similar proportions. To the rear is a frame lean-to wing that extends the roofline of the main structure. Most of the windows are glazed with six-over-six sash, except in the south end wall where each sash is single-pane.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

When public accommodations were first available on Limestone Road is unclear. A deed dated 1718 is said to convey a farm, with a hotel license. A tavern at the Mermaid was licensed much later, in 1830, but an inn may have been kept there nearly a century before.

The tavern was the polling place for Mill Creek Hundred until May 15, 1891 when Mill Creek was divided into three election districts. For many years the Democrats held primaries in a room above the blacksmith shop across the road from the Mermaid. The election of 1862 sparked the "Battle of the Mermaid". Democrats tried to prevent soldiers from Mill Creek Hundred, members of the Fourth Delaware Regiment, from voting. The soldiers were stationed at Camp duPont, near Greenville, and the objection was that they had left the Hundred. The incident seems to have concluded with several objectors were jailed for a few days. The soldiers voted.

During the same period, beginning in 1844 or 1845, and continuing until 1882, the Mermaid Tavern served as a post office. Mail was kept in a glass-front case, near the one that held the finer wines and liquors.

The tavern business closed in 1869.

According to tradition, the tavern early in its history served as a way station for Presbyterians who stopped Saturday nights on their way to Sabbath services at Polly Drummond Hill.

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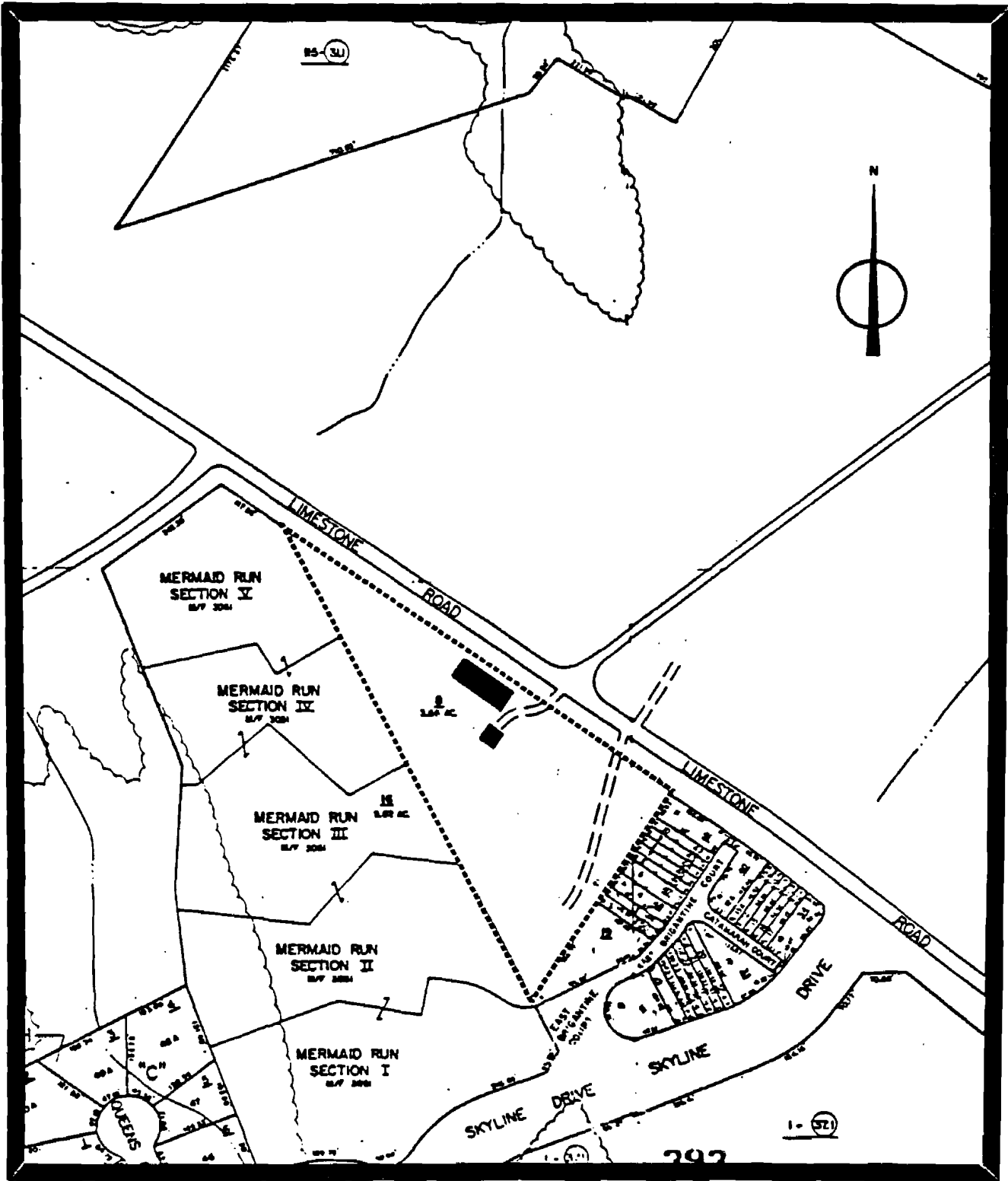
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

Mermaid Tavern (CRS #N-242): The boundaries of this property, listed in the National Register in 1973, conform to those of the legal parcel #08-030.4/031.4-008, consisting of 3.66 acres. This parcel is all that remains of what were once extensive landholdings on both sides of Limestone Road. However, nearly all of these tracts have been sold for commercial or residential development, resulting in the effective obliteration of the Tavern's historic "crossroads community" environment. Although the Tavern has significance for its historical associations, the structure's historic environment is no longer discernable. The legal parcel does contain the architectural element from which the property also properly derives significance, as well as those contributing landscape elements and that frame the Tavern on the rear and north sides. No architectural or landscape features contributing to the significance of the resource are excluded by the boundaries of the legal parcel.



MERMAID TAVERN (N-242)
 New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985
 Parcel Number 08-030.4/031.4-008

