

Documentation in New Castle County

Site Name: Mansion Farm Tenement

CRS Number: N-0000

Location: Located at the east end of Mansion Farm Road
Glasgow vicinity
St. George's Hundred
New Castle County, Delaware

Date of Fieldwork: November 1999

Type of Documentation: Level II: Partial Intensive
Annotated field notes (3 sheets)
Measured drawings--CAD (3 sheets)
Black and white 4" x 5" photographs (4)
Architectural data narrative

Threat: Scheduled to be demolished shortly following documentation, the Mansion Farm Tenement stood as the last remaining historic resource associated with the Mansion Farm complex. The complex was demolished to accommodate new residential development on the east side of Route 896.

Significance: Constructed in the mid nineteenth-century the Mansion Farm Tenement was a rare survivor of an unusual building type, the double agricultural tenement.

Description: The Mansion Farm Tenement is located on the east side of Route 896, roughly two miles south of the Route 40 intersection. The property is not visible from the road, as it is concealed by modern residential development. The dwelling faces south and is set up on a rise, overlooking the modern housing development.

The building is composed of two main sections: a two-and-a-half-story, five-bay, brick main block (measuring 19 by 39 feet) constructed *circa* 1850 and a modern two-story frame addition off the east elevation (measuring 28 by 22 feet). Annotated field notes were made only for the main block, or Period I section.

A gable roof covers the Period I block, with two gable-end interior chimneys. The dwelling rests on a fieldstone foundation and the walls are constructed in seven-course, common-bond brick. The roof is covered in standing seam metal and terminates in a decorative corbelled cornice. Fenestration consists of one-over-one-light and six-over-six-light double-hung sash with simple brick lintels and wood sills.

The main (or south) elevation was originally divided asymmetrically into five bays, with two primary entrances in the second and fourth bays. The eastern door was later bricked over. The remaining primary entrance is recessed and contains a single, six-panel wood door with simple wood surrounds. Six-over-six-light windows fill the other three bays. The second floor is visually separated from the first floor by a simple brick belt course. The second floor contains three one-over-one-light windows aligned above the first-floor windows.

The west elevation of the main block has one window on the first floor, located in the northern bay. The single window on the second floor is not aligned with the first-floor window, but is located in the southern bay. Two square windows light the attic and flank the interior chimneystack.

The rear, or north, elevation is divided asymmetrically into four bays. The rear entrance is no longer in use and is concealed by a plastic membrane. A one-over-one-light window to the east and two one-over-one-light windows to the west flank the covered entrance. The second floor contains three one-over-one-light windows aligned over the first-floor windows. The east elevation of the tenement is largely concealed by the modern addition. A bulkhead projects from the south corner of the elevation, providing access to the cellar.

Originally the doors on the south elevation opened into two rooms completely separated by a partition wall. The remaining door on the elevation opens into the western room. The partition wall stands immediately to the east of the entry door, with a modern door at the south end of this wall opening into the eastern room. The western room measures approximately 17 by 16 feet, with a modern fireplace centrally placed against the west wall. An enclosed winder stair occupies the northeast corner of the room. A simple vertical wood door with a porcelain knob provides access to the stairs, with one step extending beyond the stair box into the room. A cabinet is built into the southwest corner of the room, abutting the fireplace. The split cabinet

features wood panel doors and an iron knob. Three windows in splayed openings light the room, one on each of the south, west, and north walls.

The eastern room, which measures approximately 17 by 15 feet, has been highly altered and features largely modern materials. A fireplace is centrally located on the east wall, the face of which has been renovated. A winder stair with a closet underneath fills the southeast corner next to the fireplace. A modern hollow-core door provides access to the stair box. A second stair, located in the northwest corner under the stair box for the western room, leads down to the cellar. Four windows in splayed openings light the room, two on the north wall and two on the south wall. Modern architectural features include narrow wood floorboards, ceiling beams, and wood paneled walls.

The second floor is divided into three rooms across the front of the dwelling, with a hall along two-thirds of the rear wall. The two rooms to the west are accessed from the winder stair in the western room, which opens onto a small landing in the hall. The westernmost room is the largest of the three second-floor rooms, measuring 18 by 12 feet. A door from the hall opens into the room through the eastern wall and a fireplace is centered on the western wall. A single window on each of the north, west, and south walls light the room.

The central room on the second floor, also originally accessed from the landing at the top of the winder stair, has been subdivided into two modern bathrooms. This room measured 10 feet by 10 feet in its original configuration. Between the central room and the eastern room a straight stair rises to the attic. Originally two doors across the rear hallway controlled access from the two sections of the tenement to the attic, allowing both sets of tenants access to the attic but not to the other's private space.

The easternmost room on the second floor measures approximately 14 by 11 feet. A single window on the south wall lights the room. The winder stair leading to the first floor is located at the southeast corner of this room. A closet occupies the northwest corner of the room, making use of the space located underneath the attic stair.

The attic is an undivided space with a roof joined by mill-sawn, pegged rafters marked with carpenter's marks. The rafters are whitewashed, indicating that the space was used either

for food storage or as a living space. There are no visible partitions, but studs from a knee wall remain. Nails are machine-cut with square heads.

The cellar is also an undivided space, measuring 16 by 34 feet. The floor of the cellar is dirt while the walls are stone. Relieving arches stand against the west and east walls. The west arch contains two shelves. A summer beam extends east to west across the ceiling and terminates at the top of the arch stacks. A straight stair runs along the north wall to access the eastern portion of the first floor, while a second set of steps in the southeast corner of the cellar mark the exterior bulkhead entrance. The joists, summer beam, posts, and walls are whitewashed and sash-sawn. There is no visible evidence of partitions in the cellar, nor was there access to the cellar from the western portion of the tenement.

History: David Foard (or Ford) owned the 200-acre farm known as Mansion Farm from at least 1849 until his death in 1877.⁶³ He is most likely the owner responsible for the construction of the double tenement. Agricultural census records and an 1877 probate inventory document David Foard as a successful farmer with one farm property.⁶⁴ He grew wheat, oats, and Indian corn in substantial amounts, and also kept a small herd of dairy cows and hogs. His probate inventory confirms that he did not live in the tenement, as it describes a hall-parlor plan dwelling with an attached kitchen. The occupants of the tenement were most likely white or African-American families who worked as agricultural laborers for Foard and other local farmers. In 1850, 1860, and 1870, the population census manuscript schedules listed several families of laborers living near the Foard household.⁶⁵ For example, Henry Loans, a 30-year-old black laborer, and his family of four appeared right after Foard in the 1850 schedule. Ten years later, five families of laborers (four black or mulatto, one white) appeared on the list just before Foard. It is likely that two or more of these families occupied the tenement.

⁶³ Rea and Price, *Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware, 1849*; Pomeroy and Beers, *Atlas of Delaware, 1868*; Hopkins, *Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware, 1881*.

⁶⁴ New Castle County Probate Records, David Foard, 1877; United States Agricultural Census Manuscript Schedules, Pencader Hundred, 1850, 1860, 1870.

⁶⁵ United States Population Census Manuscript Schedules, Pencader Hundred, 1850, 1860, 1870.

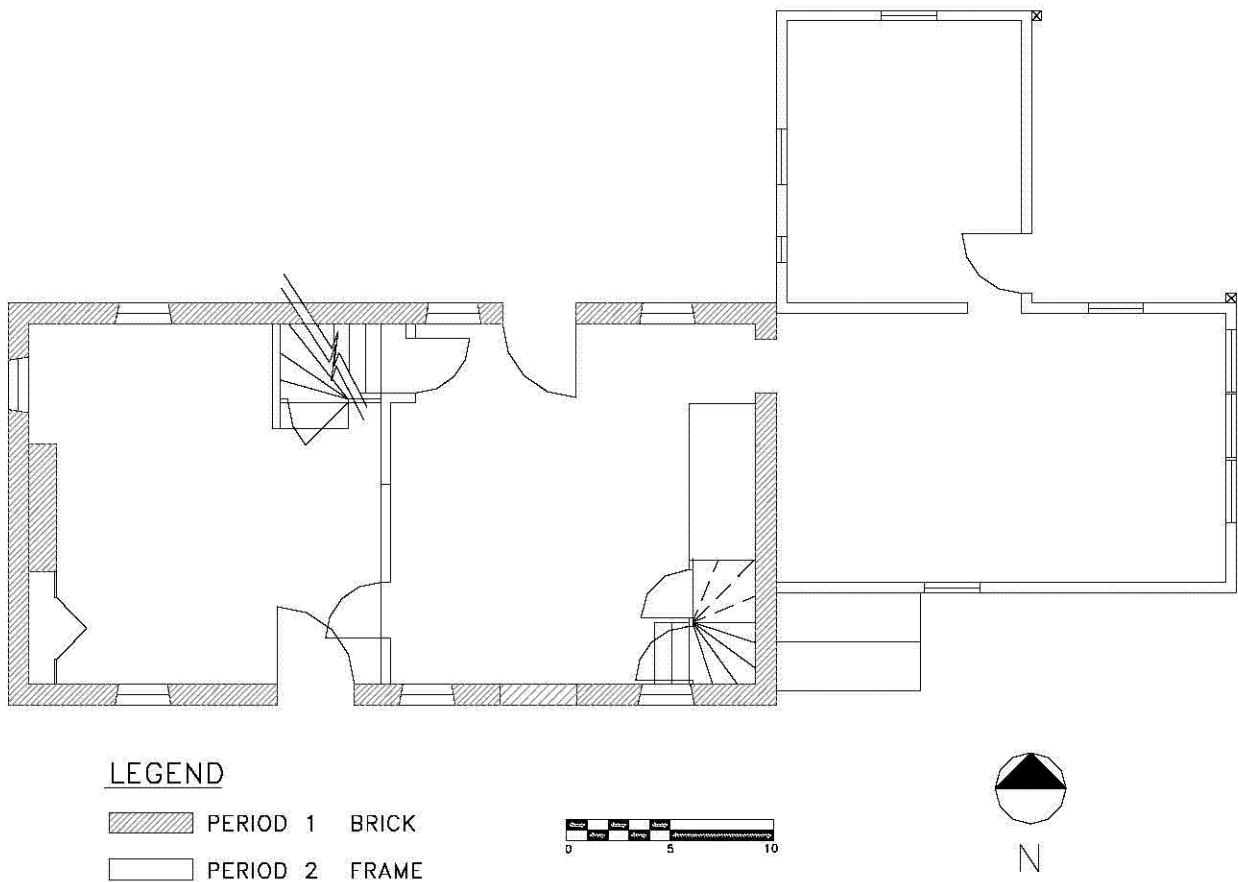


Figure 68: Mansion Farm Tenement, first floor plan.

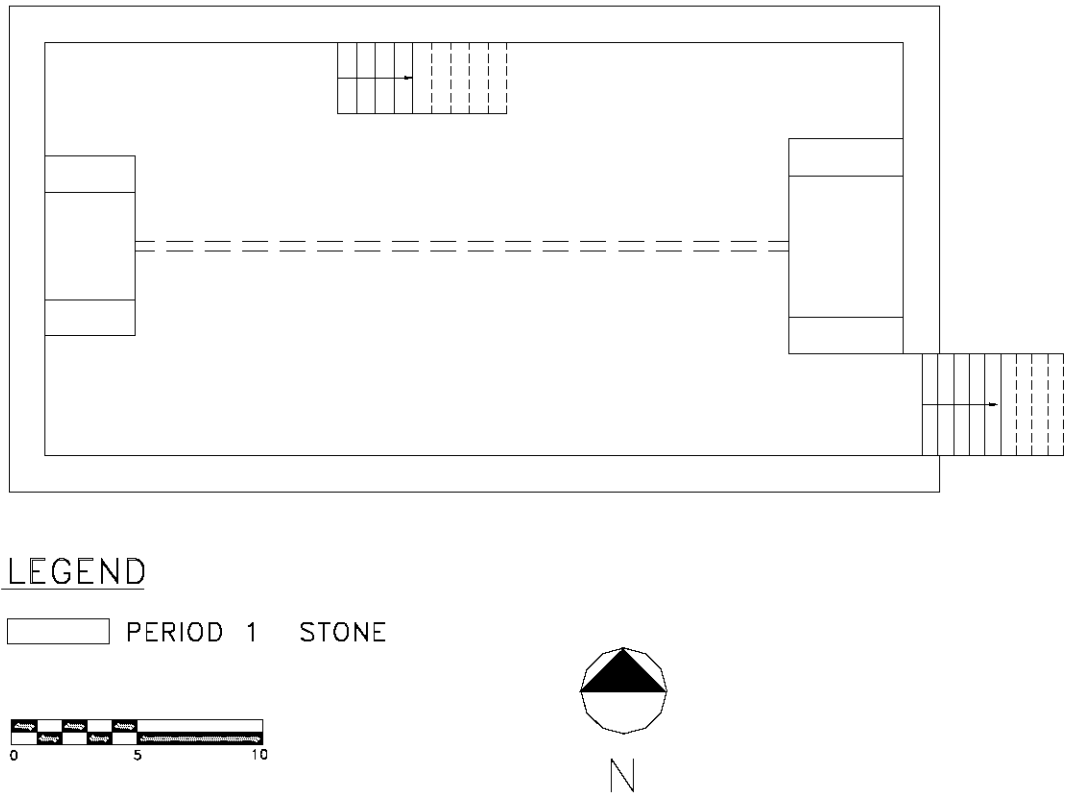


Figure69: Mansion Farm Tenement, cellar plan.

