

Site Name: Woodland Beach Schoolhouse

CRS Number: K-0000

Location: East side of Delaware Avenue, approximately 400 feet south of its intersection with Woodland Beach Road
Bombay Hook vicinity
Duck Creek Hundred
Kent County, Delaware

Date of Fieldwork: October 1999

Type of Documentation: Level II: Partial Intensive
Annotated field notes (1 sheet)
Measured drawings--CAD (1 sheet)
Black and white 4" x 5" photographs (4)
Architectural data narrative

Threat: The Woodland Beach Schoolhouse faces no immediate threat.

Significance: Constructed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Woodland Beach Schoolhouse is significant as one of very few one-room schoolhouses surviving intact in Delaware.

Description: The Woodland Beach Schoolhouse is located on the east side of Delaware Avenue, approximately 400 feet south of its intersection with Woodland Beach Road. The building is situated on a property encompassing 1,275 acres, with no visible development in the immediate area save for several prefabricated storage sheds. Facing southwest, the schoolhouse sits perpendicular to the road and is set back approximately 30 feet from Delaware Avenue. The surrounding terrain is rolling and grassy and immediately surrounded by open land. Dense woods are situated to the northeast and east and the Delaware Bay is visible to the northeast.

The one-room schoolhouse is a simple block, measuring approximately 21 by 16 feet. A typical late nineteenth-century schoolhouse, the one-story frame main block features an end-gable roof and clapboard sheathing. The corrugated metal roof is pierced at the center ridge by

an interior, parged concrete chimney. The building rests upon brick piers, lifting the floor fourteen inches above the ground. Fenestration consists of single, six-over-six-light double-hung sash set in rectangular openings with molded wood lintels and simple wood sills.

The southwest elevation contains a single bay. Centered on this gable elevation is a single, six-panel wood door topped by a molded hood with simple wood surrounds. The southeast elevation is symmetrically divided into two bays. Each bay contains a single, six-over-six-light sash window. The northeast, or rear, elevation is essentially featureless, with no openings. The northwest elevation is symmetrically divided into two bays. Each bay contains a single window concealed by narrow vertical wood, tongue and groove shutters.

The door opens into a single large room measuring approximately 19 by 16 feet. Interior features include wood floorboards and lath and plaster walls. The northeast corner of the room contains a small closet. A stovepipe hole is located in the ceiling, near the center of the room.

History: According to historic maps, the Woodland Beach Schoolhouse stands on land that was undeveloped in 1859.³⁸ Between 1859 and 1868, a farmhouse was constructed on the site.³⁹ The earliest known occupant of the farmhouse, and likely its builder, was William S. Hayes.⁴⁰ According to an 1872 tax assessment, William S. Hayes owned a two-story frame dwelling, a barn, and a stable.⁴¹ Subsequent tax assessments did not refer to a schoolhouse.

Visual inspection of the schoolhouse indicates a construction date in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but documentary evidence strongly suggests that it originally stood at another location. A 1921 map of one-room schools in Kent County does not show any buildings in the Bombay Hook vicinity.⁴² Placement of Kent County School #116, identified in 1924 as the school on Bombay Hook, is unclear.⁴³ Listed as one of the schools within the state that was

³⁸ A. D. Byles, *Map of Kent County, Delaware, 1859*.

³⁹ Pomeroy and Beers, *Map of the State of Delaware, 1868*.

⁴⁰ Kent County Recorder of Deeds, Book A5, Page 403.

⁴¹ Kent County Tax Assessment, Duck Creek Hundred, 1872.

⁴² Richard Watson Cooper and Hermann Cooper, *The One-Teacher School in Delaware: A Study in Attendance* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1925), 71.

⁴³ *What Do You Know About the Public Schools in Delaware?* Volume VI, No. 2, Wilmington, Delaware: Service Citizens of Delaware, [1924].

more than 50 years old at the time, this reference would date the structure to at least 1874 and support the late nineteenth century construction date of the Woodland Beach Schoolhouse.

According to the present owner, Edgell Construction Company, the building has stood on its current site since November 1961. Therefore, it is clear that the Woodland Beach Schoolhouse was not constructed on its present-day site, but rather moved there some time during the mid-twentieth century. The Edgell Construction Company continues to use the schoolhouse for storage purposes.

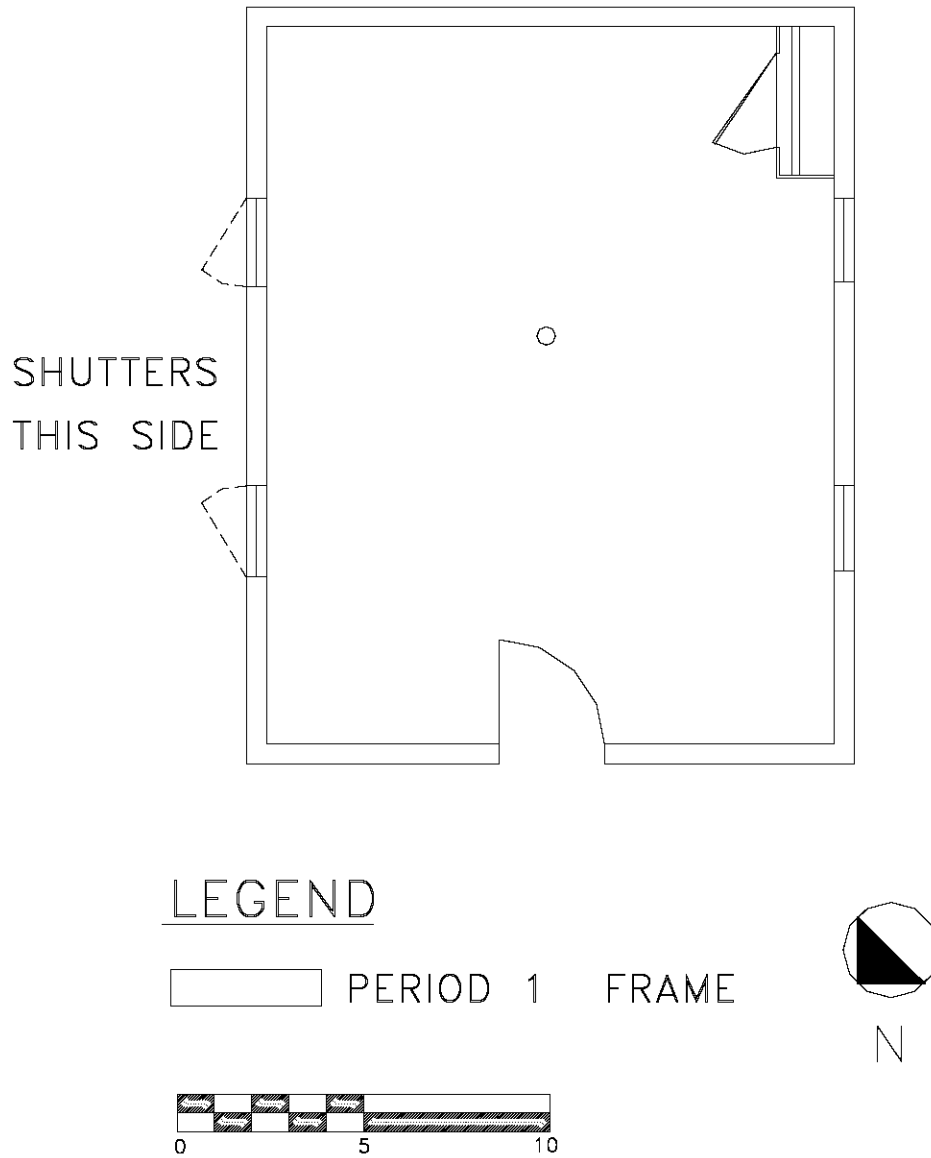


Figure 43: Woodland Beach School, floor plan.

MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Woodland Beach Schoolhouse
Southeast side of Woodland Beach Road
Bombay Hook vicinity
Duck Creek Hundred
Kent County, Delaware

DE CRS No. K-0000

Photographer: David L. Ames

October 1999

- K-0000-1 Perspective of the southwest and southeast elevations looking north
- K-0000-2 View of the southwest elevation looking northeast
- K-0000-3 Perspective of the southwest and northwest elevations looking east
- K-0000-4 Perspective of the southeast and northeast elevations looking west

