

Nomination Synopsis: Amended Milton Historic District
Sussex County – Milton, Delaware

Amended Nomination:

This amended legacy nomination was prepared by the University of Delaware’s Center for Historic Architecture and Design in collaboration with the Town of Milton’s Historic Preservation Commission. Funding was provided by the National Park Service through a Historic Preservation Fund Grant Sub-grant awarded to a Certified Local Government (Town of Milton) and managed by the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. Milton’s Historic Preservation Commission officially approved the amended nomination on March 13, 2020 and the Delaware State Review Board for Historic Preservation is scheduled to review this nomination on October 21, 2020.

In compliance with current National Park Service nomination standards, the Center authored this 2020 amended historic district nomination by conducting a comprehensive resurvey of previously-listed resources, surveying 36 new properties, conducting extensive research, developing an enhanced historic context, recalculating estimated acreage cited in the 1982 nomination and verifying accurate acreage using current land assessment records.

The Center’s enriched analysis and comprehensive research justified the following: reaffirmed the district’s “local” level of significance, expanded of the period of significance from 1763 to 1962, differentiated “contributing” and noncontributing” resources, retained “architecture” as an area of significance by selecting National Register Criterion: “C” in support of Milton’s distinctive architecture, variety of well-preserved property types, and character-defining features.

Therefore, revised statistics represent the inclusion of 233 properties (199 contributing and 34 noncontributing properties), an accurate boundary calculation of 76.4 acres.

National Park Service Glossary:

Amendment documentation: new registration form for a property already listed in the National Register officially changing the significance, boundaries, name, or other aspect of the listing.

Architectural significance: importance of a property based on physical aspects of its design, materials, form, style, or workmanship, and recognized by criterion C.

Area of Significance: aspect of historic development in which a property made contributions for which it meets the National Register criteria (general standards by which the significance of a historic property is judged).

Contributing resource: a building, site, structure, or object adding to the historic significance of a property.

District: a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

Integrity: authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic or prehistoric period.

Local significance: importance of a property to the history of its community, such as a town or county.

National Park Service Glossary (cont.):

Noncontributing resource: a building, site, structure, or object that does not add to the historic significance of a property.

Period of Significance: span of time in which a property attained the significance for which it meets the National Register criteria.

Legacy Nomination Summary:

In 1982, a well-written 47-page historic district nomination for the Town of Milton was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. That legacy nomination, compliant with standards of the time, provided an estimated total of 87.21 acres within its boundaries, contained a general community history which also referenced names of distinguished community leaders, as well as a 40-page inventory describing architectural styles reflective of local building trends associated with its residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings constructed between the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Amended Nomination Particulars:

Level of Significance: Local

National Register Criteria: C – architecture (vernacular interpretations of Federal, Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, American Foursquare, Bungalow/Craftsman, and Ranch style architecture.)

Period of Significance: 1763 (date town was founded) to 1962 (construction of a mid-century modern A-Frame building)

Statement of Significance:

(Excerpts from Section 8 pages 103 and 104)

The Milton Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level, under Criteria C, for its residential and commercial architecture, reflecting local, regional, and national trends during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The period of significance begins in 1763, when the town of Milton was founded, and ends in 1962, when the Goshen United Methodist Church moved from its downtown location and built a new church towards the periphery, in a mid-century modern A-Frame style (the only mid-century architectural building in the district), signaling an end to the town’s nineteenth century architectural traditions.

The commercial downtown reflects an era of rebuilding after a devastating fire occurred in 1909. These buildings were all of masonry construction and reflect popular commercial designs of the time. Utilitarian domestic outbuildings, like garages, barns, and summer kitchens are interspersed throughout town. The architectural significance of the Milton Historic District is closely tied to the commercial growth that the city experienced in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as an industrial center of Sussex County which specialized in shipbuilding, milling, canning, button making, garment manufacturing, and holly production.



Correlation with Delaware’s State Historic Preservation Plan: “Partners in Preservation: Planning for the Future 2018 – 2022”

Goal 1: Strengthen/Expand Delaware’s Core Federal/State Historic Preservation Program.

Strategy 7: Address gaps and biases in the state’s inventory of historic properties.

Actions 7b: Identify partners to work on amending or providing additional updated information for 5 National Register nominations that do not meet current National Park Service standards, including defining contributing and noncontributing resources

