
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2017

Revised: 2/2026



Dover Green

First State National Historical Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information.

The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Dover Green
Resource Classification:	Cultural Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	976054
Parent Landscape:	976054
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	First State National Historical Park
Alpha Code:	FRST
Park Organization Code:	4542
Park District:	FRST
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

Dover Green is a small one-acre park located in the heart of Dover, the capital city of Delaware. The park is a unit of First State National Historical Park (NHP), originally established in 2013 as a National Monument to protect and manage significant sites related to the settlement of the region by the Swedes, Finns, Dutch, and English; the role that Delaware played in the establishment of the Nation; and the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Brandywine Valley. On December 7, 1787 at the Golden Fleece Tavern on the Dover Green, the Delaware convention ratified the Constitution of the United States, earning Delaware the accolade of “the First State.” Though the tavern no longer exists, Dover Green is the central area of the Dover Green Historic District that signifies this event and many others, including the mustering of a Continental Regiment during the American Revolution and the reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Green has long served as a public gathering place for community assembly, public discourse, and passive recreation.

Dover Green was part of the town layout developed in 1683 by William Penn and implemented in 1717 by Dover's early settlers. Since 1849 the Green itself has been a rectangular-shaped area landscaped with mowed lawns and tall deciduous trees set out in a loose grid pattern. The space is bisected into east and west parcels by the two-lane State Street, which runs north-south through the city of Dover and is lined with brick sidewalks. The Green itself is ringed by a one-way, paved perimeter road named The Green. Facing the road and providing the Green's enclosure are numerous one- to three-story civic, commercial, and residential buildings that chronicle the town's eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth-century development. The most prominent buildings are the Old State House, built in 1792 on the east side of the Green, and the Kent County Court House, constructed in 1873-75 on the south side of the Green. The cupola towers of both brick buildings are focal points for the Green. Other features on Dover Green include non-permanent benches, replica light posts, directional and parking signs, and a stone memorial dedicated to Revolutionary War soldiers.

In addition to Dover Green, First State NHP contains six other noncontiguous sites: the John Dickinson Plantation, also in Dover; Fort Christina and Old Swedes Church in or near Wilmington; New Castle Court House in New Castle; the Ryves Holt House in Lewes; and Beaver Valley five miles north of Wilmington.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The origins of the Colonial era design, location, and use of Dover Green are entwined with the evolution of governmental institutions and land use regulation in the future state of Delaware. In 1683 William Penn issued a warrant to survey a court town to be named Dover, which was designed as a grid of streets around three central squares. These squares contained the first reference to the public green that would become Dover Green. However, it was not until 1717 that settlers chose the location for the town of Dover, near a simple court house constructed twenty years earlier, and laid out the town in accordance with Penn's warrant. By 1722 a new brick Court House was built and the court house square was established, the present day Dover Green. By the mid-eighteenth century, Dover was the seat of government for Kent County and growing in population. The Green served as a market place, a rough open patch of shorn grass and dirt surrounded by workshops and residences, with the brick Kent County Court House standing at its eastern end.

During the Revolutionary War, when the Delaware State Assembly moved from New Castle to Dover, Dover Green became significant as a setting for important events in American history, including the first state ratification of the United States Constitution. In 1792 a new combination State House/Courthouse was constructed on the same site as the earlier 1722 building. The two-story Federal style building featured brick construction and a cupola tower. For the next eighty-three years the county and state shared space in this building.

As the nineteenth century progressed, business and homeowners constructed buildings in many different styles of American architecture along the street that ringed Dover Green. In 1849 the Green was graded and redesigned as a landscaped park with grass and elm trees. Following the Civil War, iron cannons were placed on the Green to memorialize fallen soldiers. In 1874, the 1792 State House/Courthouse building was redesigned in an ornate Second Empire style, which added a third floor, mansard roof, tapered square tower, front portico, and stucco façade. The following year, a new three-story brick Court House with a tower was constructed in a Queen Anne style on the south side of the Green. The state government took over the 1792 building on the east side of the Green, which became known as the State House.

In the early 1900s the Dover government and citizen groups worked together to return the Dover Green and its surrounding buildings its former Colonial period appearance. In 1909 the State House building was redesigned again, which included the replacement of the mansard roof with a gambrel roof and installation of a tall cupola. A substantial two-story brick building and covered porch with columns was built on the south side of the building for the State Supreme Court. In 1918, the 1875 Court House was also altered to reflect a Colonial Style appearance, despite the fact it did not exist during the Colonial period. Work on this building included removal of the entire third floor, a redesign of the tower, and the addition of a large entrance with Doric columns. In the years after the State House and Court House projects, other buildings surrounding the Green were altered to reflect the popular design styles. Historic photographs show that by 1898 sidewalks and curbs were installed along the north-south street bisecting the Green, which by this time was named State Street. Other photographs from around the turn of the century show additional trees and curbing at the Green.

In 1933, with the construction of a new Statehouse complex several blocks east of Dover Green, most governmental functions were relocated. As technology and design tastes changed, different styles of light standards and benches were added and removed. Ancient elm trees that succumbed to Dutch Elm disease were replaced with new trees, primarily deciduous species. Despite all of these changes, throughout its history this expanse of open space has served as a setting for civic buildings and private residences, as well as venue for public gathering.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Dover Green is significant under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C, reflecting broad patterns of history and landscape design. Under Criterion A, the property is significant at the state level in the area of Exploration/Settlement for its association with the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century development of Dover, the court town for Pennsylvania's Lower Counties in the future state of Delaware; at the national level in the area of Politics/Government for its roles in the ratification of the United States Constitution, the formation of Delaware as the first state, and as a site of public gatherings and debates on important topics and events in the country's history; and at the state level in the area of Community Planning and Development for William Penn's placement of the Green in his 1683 plan for the court town of Dover and its implementation in 1717. Under Criterion C, the property is significant at the state level in the area of Landscape Architecture for the 1849 redesign of the court house square and market area into Victorian-era landscaped park of lawns and shade trees.

The period of significance begins in 1717 when the court town of Dover was laid out according to a 1683 survey warrant issued by William Penn, and ends in 1933 when the focus of state government was relocated to a new statehouse complex east of the Green.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The physical integrity of Dover Green is evaluated by comparing the landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1717–1933) with those of the existing landscape as assessed in 2016. Though the landscape has evolved over time, many of the Green’s historic landscape characteristics and features are intact and help to maintain its appearance and use as a public open space within the city of Dover. The existing boundaries of the Green, and its location within the grid of Dover’s streets, reflects the town layout developed by William Penn in 1683 and implemented by Dover’s early settlers in 1717. The surrounding streetscape, lined with buildings that reflect diverse architectural styles prominent during the period of significance, preserves the Green’s historic spatial organization and setting. Existing roads that bisect and border the Green itself retain their historic alignments, with only minor alterations having taken place, as do the sidewalks that parallel State Street. While the majority of vegetation growing on Dover Green does not date to the period of significance, the lack of understory vegetation, the broad expanses of turf, and the use of large-scale deciduous trees, is in keeping with the original character of the Green and its mid-nineteenth century design.

The condition of Dover Green is “good.” There is no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The property’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

First State National Historical Park contains seven sites; Beaver Valley five miles north of Willington; Fort Christina and Old Swedes Church in Wilmington; New Castle Green, Court House and Sheriff’s House in New Castle; The Green and John Dickinson Plantation in Dover; and the Ryves Holt House in Lewes. For the purposes of the Cultural Landscape Inventory, First State National Historical Park contains three noncontiguous landscapes: Beaver Valley, the New Castle Court House Green, and the Dover Green.

Landscape Type:

Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name:	The Green, Dover	Other Name Type:	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	Dover Green	Other Name Type:	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	Court House Square	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	Brother’s Portion	Other Name Type:	Historic

Site Plan



Site plan for Dover Green, 2017. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP)

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	09/20/2017

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Jennifer Hanna and Eliot Foulds, Historical Landscape Architects with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, made a site visit to the Dover Green in November 2016. The team conducted a field inventory at the site, and archival research at the Delaware Public Archives in Dover and the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington. In addition the team met the Superintendent of First State National Historical Park, Ethan McKinley. Superintendent McKinley is the primary contact for the park. He can be reached at ethan_mckinley@nps.gov or at 215-341-0032.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Dover Green
First State National Historical Park

First State National Historical Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Dover Green, including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

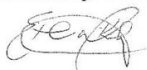
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Dover Green is hereby approved and accepted.



Date: 2017.09.20
14:53:14 -04'00'

Superintendent, First State National Historical Park

Date

Park concurrence form, September 20, 2017.

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Updates Certification Form
2026**

First State National Historical Park
Dover Green
New Castle Green

First State National Historical Park certifies the CLI updates for Dover Green and New Castle Green, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good – Dover Green
 Good – New Castle Green

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI updates for the sites listed above at First State National Historical Park are hereby approved and accepted.

JOSHUA BOLES Digitally signed by JOSHUA
BOLES
Date: 2026.02.10 09:53:11 -05'00'

Superintendent, First State National Historical Park

Date

Park concurrence form, February 10, 2026

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	02/10/2026	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2026 update to the Dover Green CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:**State**

Delaware

Delaware

County

Kent County

New Castle

Size (Acres): 0.98

Land Tract Number(s)

ED05-077.09-05-27.00, .458 acres

ED05-077.09-04-64.00, .523 acres

Boundary Description:

Dover Green, a public open space in the city of Dover and within First State National Historical Park in Kent County, Delaware, is approximately one acre in size. The rectangular-shaped unit is bisected by State Street, north to south, resulting in two rectangular parcels with rounded corners. The western parcel is 0.523 acres in size and the eastern parcel is 0.458 acres. A perimeter road, named The Green, surrounds the landscape on all sides.

The land of the Dover Green is owned in fee simple by the City of Dover. The National Park Service holds a conservation easement on the property, acquired when Dover Green became part of First State National Historic Monument on March 23, 2013 (now designated First State National Historical Park). A concrete curb at the intersection of the grass of the Green and the perimeter road forms the easement boundary. No roads are included within the easement boundaries, and there are no private inholdings within the unit.

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
		39.156555	-75.523286	
		39.156166	-75.523119	
		39.155906	-75.524267	
		39.156301	-75.52439	

Location Map:



The Dover Green is located in the city of Dover, in the state of Delaware.

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Dover Green lies within the Coastal Plain physiographic province, which underlies the region's gently rolling hills and valleys. The St. Jones River flows approximately one third mile east of the Green. The landscape is comprised of a flat, green sward punctuated with large to medium-sized deciduous trees planted in a loose grid pattern. The soils of the Green range from medium-textured to moderately coarse loam, with a subsoil of sandy loam or sandy clay loam. Prior to European settlement the area of the Green was heavily wooded with a variety of trees including oak, hickory, poplar, walnut, and ash (Ames et.al. 1989: 34, as quoted in Edwards 2003: 2).

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

In the early eighteen century, Dover Green served as a court house square for the town of Dover, which was the center of government for the three "Lower Counties" of Delaware. The form of the town, as a rectangular grid of streets surrounding the central court house square, was designed by William Penn in 1683 and laid out in 1717. With the establishment of state government on the eve of the Revolutionary War, Dover's court house square gained added significance as the location of the State Assembly for the newly formed Delaware State. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century the court house square was developed as a public park. From the early eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, the development of buildings surrounding the Green reflected popular movements in American architecture.

Dover Green is nestled within the urban fabric of the city of Dover, and surrounded by eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth-century buildings between one and three stories high. Areas north of the Green are comprised of commercial, civic, religious, and residential buildings. Areas east of the Green are devoted to civic uses, including the State Capitol, the Biggs Museum of American Art, and the expansive open green of Legislative Mall. The blocks south of the Green include commercial buildings, a church and its associated cemetery, and at grade parking lots. A commercial district is located west of the Green.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Dover Green is located within the City of Dover, in Kent County, Delaware. Approximately one-acre in size, the rectangular property is bisected by a two-lane city street, State Street, running roughly north to south. The property served as the town court house square, and was the center of both county and state governments until 1933 when the core of state offices moved to a new statehouse complex a few blocks east of the Green.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/20/2017

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Dover Green Unit of First State National Historical Park meets criteria for the “Must Be Preserved and Maintained” management category because the preservation of the property is specifically legislated. Presidential Proclamation 8944 of March 23, 2013, established First State National Monument, which encompassed approximately 1,108 acres and included Beaver Valley (Woodlawn), New Castle Green, and Dover Green. An Act of December 19, 2014 (P.L. 113-291, Section 3033) redesignated the monument as First State National Historical Park to include the former national monument and, upon acquisition, additional historic sites: Fort Christina, Old Swedes Church, John Dickinson Plantation, and the Ryves Holt House.

According to the 2013 Presidential Proclamation:

“Sites within the State of Delaware encompass nationally significant objects related to the settlement of the Delaware region by the Swedes, Finns, Dutch, and English, the role that Delaware played in the establishment of the Nation, and the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Brandywine Valley. A national monument that includes certain property in New Castle, Dover, and the Brandywine Valley, Delaware (with contiguous acreage in the Township of Chadd’s Ford, Pennsylvania) will allow the National Park Service and its partners to protect and manage these objects of historic interest and interpret for the public the resources and values associated with them.

The significance of Dover Green is specifically addressed in the Presidential Proclamation:

“At the Golden Fleece Tavern on the Dover Green, a Delaware convention ratified the Constitution on December 7, 1787, earning Delaware the accolade of “the First State.” Though the Tavern no longer exists, Dover Green is the central area of the Dover Green Historic District that signifies this event and many others, including the mustering of a Continental Regiment during the American Revolution and the reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: Other

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

The National Park Service holds a conservation easement on the property with the city of Dover, which owns the site in fee simple.

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: None - Local Government Owned

Narrative: Dover Green is owned by the City of Dover. As stated in the 2013 Presidential Proclamation that established the park, the city has donated to the United States a conservation easement for the protection of and access to the Dover Green.

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are lands beyond the cultural landscape boundary, either inside or outside the park boundaries, which contribute to the significance of the site. Adjacent lands contribute to the integrity and significance of the Dover Green's cultural landscape. The historic streetscape surrounding the rectangular green on four sides contains buildings dating to the period of significance, including numerous civic, commercial and residential structures. These buildings help visually define the open space of the Green within the urban fabric of the city. Conversely, the Green serves as a setting and focal point for these historic structures. In addition, due to its proximity to the adjacent civic buildings, Dover Green has historically served as a space of public gathering and discourse during pivotal periods in the history of Delaware and America.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

First State National Historical Park (NHP) was established as a National Monument on March 25, 2013, and then established as a National Historical Park on December 19, 2014. Historical units of the national park system, such as National Historical Parks, are automatically listed on the National Register of Historic Places by law as required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. As such, all physical components of the park are considered "listed" in the National Register whether or not they are identified in a National Register nomination. Although no park wide documentation of historic resources has been completed at First State NHP, several resources in the park have been previously listed in the National Register.

On February 24, 1971, the Old State House on the east side of Dover Green was listed in the National Register for its long association with Delaware's seat of government. The nomination form identified significance in the areas of Politics/Government and Architecture for the eighteenth-twentieth centuries. The specific period of significance was listed as 1787-1792, the years when the building was constructed on the site of an earlier court house. The building stands on "The Green, centrally located in the Colonial portion of Dover," which was described as a "tree-shaded grass plot."

On May 5, 1977, Dover Green was listed in the National Register as part of the 50-acre Dover Green Historic District. The nomination form identified the district's significance at the local level in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning, Education, Industry, Politics/Government, Social/Humanitarian, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Archeology-Prehistoric. The form did not include a period of significance. The form noted that the district, "centered around the Green...the best known part of the district" was itself "an important specimen of the Victorian ideal of a formal town square" established in 1722 and landscaped since 1849. The form also enumerated and described forty-five historic buildings in the district, twenty-four of which surrounded Dover Green, including the 1792 Old State House (Map #11) and the 1875 Kent County Court House (#7).

On March 6, 1985, an amendment to documentation for the Dover Green Historic District was listed in the National Register. The boundary and area of the district remained unchanged from the original documentation. The update revised descriptions for several buildings that were altered since 1977 and identified new buildings in the district. The nomination form identified the same areas of local level significance as the 1977 documentation, but deleted Education as an area of significance. The form identified the period of significance as the eighteenth through twentieth century, but did not provide specific dates. The form also enumerated and described 111 contributing and noncontributing buildings in the district, twenty-five of which surrounded Dover Green and were evaluated as contributing, including the Old State House (Map #71) and the Kent County Court House (#67).

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the major resources that contribute to the significance of the Dover Green have been listed and described in the National Register. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the Dover Green is considered "Entered-Documented."

Eligibility: Eligible - Keeper

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 05/05/1977

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: Site

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The Dover Green is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Exploration/Settlement, Politics/Government, and Community Planning and Development for the central role it played as the location and setting of Delaware's State House and Kent County's Court House, and as the original settlement area, central market, and court house square for the city of Dover. Dover Green is also significant under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture for its mid-nineteenth-century landscape design. The Green's graded lawn lined with elm trees reflected Victorian era tastes, as did the architectural styles of buildings constructed around the Green. The period of significance, 1717–1933, begins when the court town of Dover was laid out according to a 1683 survey warrant issued by William Penn, and ends when the focus of state government was relocated to a new statehouse complex east of the Dover Green.

CRITERION A

Exploration/Settlement:

Dover Green is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement for its association with the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century development of Dover, the court town for Pennsylvania's Lower Counties in the future state of Delaware. In 1683 William Penn issued a warrant for the survey of a court town named Dover in Kent County. The design of the town, which included a grid of broad avenues surrounding three public squares, was similar to Penn's plan for Philadelphia. In 1717, Dover's streets, squares (including the court house square) and lots were laid out around a simple court house that was constructed twenty years earlier. In 1722, a new court house was built to replace the old building on the east side of the Green. The Green fronting the court house served as a public gathering and market space until it was redesigned as a public landscaped park in 1849. Community greens were often incorporated into in seventeenth and eighteenth century colonial towns and were commonly used for animal grazing, public gathering, and troop mustering. Dover Green, as a space of public gathering, gained historical significance when it became the setting for establishment of Delaware's state government during and following the Revolutionary War.

Politics/Government:

Dover Green is significant at the national level under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its roles in the ratification of the United States Constitution and the formation of Delaware as the first state, and as a site of public gatherings and debates on important topics and events in the country's history. Dover Green was laid out in 1717 as the court house square for Kent County, one of Pennsylvania's three Lower Counties. As such the Green served as a center of government within what would become the state of Delaware. On July 1, 1776, the Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to debate and sign the Declaration of Independence, which was signed the following day by delegates from Delaware, ensuring its unanimous passage. On July 29 colonists gathered on the Dover Green to hear a reading of the Declaration of Independence. In 1777 the Delaware State Assembly was moved to Dover and into the various taverns and private homes, including the Golden Fleece Tavern on the north side of the Green, where on December 7, 1787 it approved the newly written American constitution unanimously, earning Delaware the accolade of "the First State" in the new nation to ratify the document.

In 1792 a new State House/Courthouse was built on the east side of the Green, and for the next eighty

years served as the center of both the state and county governments until 1875 when a new Court House was built on the south side of the Green, allowing the state to fully occupy the old court house building. Because of the Green's proximity to these prominent civic buildings, it served as a venue for public gathering, discourse, and dissent throughout the period of significance, including rallies in May 1920 when suffragists held rallies on the Green in an effort win over a majority of the Delaware legislature to approve the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Civic uses on Dover Green diminished in 1933 when the core of state government functions relocated to a new Colonial Revival-style statehouse complex a few blocks to the east.

Community Planning and Development:

Dover Green is significant at the state level under Criterion A in area of Community Planning and Development for William Penn's placement of the Green in his 1683 plan for the court town of Dover, and its implementation in 1717. Unlike Boston and New York, which developed organically during seventeenth century with narrow, rambling streets and mixed land use, Dover was laid out like Philadelphia, according to Penn's preconceived plan. The plans for both Dover and Philadelphia incorporated grids of broad streets linking residential lots with a central market or court house square near commercial and religious land uses. These community plans were also physical manifestations of Penn's religious beliefs, aesthetic ideals, and economic values. As a young man in 1662, Penn embarked on a grand tour visiting Europe's leading cities, and understood the devastation caused by contagious illness and fire in tightly packed, poorly-planned cities. Penn's plans established an orderly hierarchy of public and private space, and reinforced the importance of commerce in creating a prominent public squares linked by established transportation.

William Penn's 1683 warrant specified the width of streets, the location of the court house and jail, and the formation of the court house square. Between 1697 and 1699 the first Kent County Court House was built at the site of the current day Dover Green, at the present day Kent County Court House, though no reservation of public land for a court house square was noted. With the construction of the Court House, Dover became central to the government of the Lower Counties, for court houses were used to record all land transfers and settle all legal disputes. In 1717 Penn's design for the town of Dover was laid out around the existing court house. A new court house was constructed in 1722 nearby on slightly higher ground. The court house square, now Dover Green, served as both the setting of government and as public market space for more than one hundred years until the Green was redesigned in the mid-nineteenth century as a public park.

CRITERION C

Landscape Architecture:

Dover Green is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for the 1849 redesign of the court house square and market area into Victorian-era landscaped park. In the mid-nineteenth century as the impacts from the War of 1812 receded and technology advanced trade networks, the economy of Dover expanded and building increased in the blocks around the Dover Green. In 1849 an act passed in the state assembly provided for the grading of the Green and for the planting of grass and trees, including many elms. The elm trees, with their high branching habits, were planted in the spring of 1849 by Francis Barbour Harper, a Kent County farmer and botanist, in a row or rows around the perimeter of the Green's open space.

Although no plan for the Green had been found, its formal yet simple design of broad expanses of grassed open space and ring of statuesque elm trees, was characteristic of many town greens during the second half of the nineteenth century. The design provided a large open area to allow for public gatherings and created a formal setting for the surrounding civic, residential, and commercial structures. In time this formality was reinforced with the development of a road encircling the Green itself, and through the installation of curbs along the Green's edges and sidewalks along both sides of State Street, which had bisected the Green from its initial creation.

Following the Civil War, public greens also provided a stage for the memorialization of Union and Confederate soldiers. On Dover Green, this memorialization took the form of iron military cannons placed across from the State House/Courthouse by 1880. In 1912 a monument to the Revolutionary War officers and soldiers of the Delaware Line was erected on the Green. In subsequent years, additional trees were

added to the perimeter rows of elms. Despite the loss of several elms to disease and age, and the introduction of lower branching deciduous tree species, the design of the Green as a grassed rectangular space dotted with large deciduous trees remains intact today.

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criterion A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criterion C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1717 - CE 1775

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Peopling Places	Colonial Exploration and Settlement	Dutch Exploration and Settlement	
Peopling Places	Colonial Exploration and Settlement	English Exploration And Settlement	
Peopling Places	Development of the Colonies	Physical Development	

Time Period: CE 1775 - CE 1787

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Shaping the Political Landscape	The American Revolution	The Declaration Of Independence	

Time Period: CE 1849 - CE 1933

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	Urban Planning In The Nineteenth Century	

Time Period: CE 1909 - CE 1933

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	Regional Planning	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Exploration - Settlement

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Community Planning and Development

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	FRST/Dov
Other Name:	Dover, Brother's Portion
Primary Certification Date:	05/05/1977
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
NRIS ID:	FRST/Dov
Other Name:	Dover, Brother's Portion
Primary Certification Date:	05/05/1977
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	K00394
Name:	Dover Green Historic District
Listed Date:	05/05/1977

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1681	Land Transfer	William Penn acquires approximately 45,000 square miles of land from King Charles II, including what would become the Dover Green Unit of First State National Historical Park.
CE 1683	Planned	William Penn issues a warrant for a survey for a new court town in Kent County to be named Dover, including details for the design of the town. The location of the future town is not specified in the warrant.
CE 1694	Planned	Provincial judges, William Clark of Sussex County and Edward Black and Richard Hallowell of New Castle County consult with the magistrates, grand jury, and others in Kent County and decide that the County Courts should be "held on some part of ye land belonging to William Southerby, situate on the south side of the Head of Dover River, which is next adjoining unto David Morgan's land."
CE 1697 - 1699	Built	The first Kent County Court House is constructed near what was to become Dover Green, though there is no record of a green being constructed at this time. It was located at the site of the present day Kent County Court House
CE 1717	Platted	The town of Dover is laid out and platted near the existing Court House in accordance with William Penn's 1683 design.
CE 1722	Built	The second Kent County Court House is constructed near the circa 1699 Court House, on the east side of the Green (present location of the existing Old State House). The 1697 Court House is sold and changed into a tavern in 1723.
CE 1777	Moved	The Delaware State Assembly is moved from New Castle to a public tavern on the north side of Dover Green.
CE 1787	Established	Delaware is the first state to ratify the United States Constitution.
CE 1792	Built	The third Kent County Court House is built as a combination State House/Courthouse building on the same site as the former 1722 Court House. The two-story Federal style building is constructed with brick and includes a tower. The State Assembly utilizes portions of the new building.
CE 1793	Built	A whipping post is constructed east of the State House/Courthouse.
CE 1835	Altered	The state or county builds a wing on the back side of the 1792 State House/Courthouse.
CE 1849	Graded	An act is passed in the State Assembly authorizing the grading of the Dover Green, which is completed in March 1849.
CE 1849	Planted	An act is passed in the State Assembly authorizing the planting of turf and elm trees on the Dover Green.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1856	Built	The county builds an Italianate style office building, designed by Alonzo Reynolds, at the northeast corner of the Green and just north of the 1792 State House/Courthouse.
CE 1860	Built	Gas lights are installed on the Green around this time.
CE 1865 - 1880	Memorialized	Iron cannons memorializing the Civil War are placed on the Green near the State House/Courthouse sometime between these dates.
CE 1868	Built	A historic map indicates a road encircling the Green by 1868. Its exact construction date is unknown.
CE 1874	Altered	The 1792 State House/Courthouse is redesigned in an ornate Second Empire Style. Alterations include an addition of a third floor, replacement of the original tower with a tapered square tower, installation of a mansard roof, front portico, and a stucco façade.
CE 1875	Built	The fourth Kent County Court House is constructed of brick in a Queen Anne Style on the south side of Dover Green, alongside State Street. It is a three-story building. The state government takes over the 1792 State House/Courthouse building, which becomes known as the State House (now called the Old State House).
CE 1896	Altered	The state builds a second wing at the rear of the State House.
CE 1898	Built	By this time curbing and sidewalks are present along State Street.
CE 1909	Altered	The State House undergoes an extensive alteration aimed at restoring the building to its Colonial era appearance. Work includes the replacement of the mansard roof with a gambrel roof and tall cupola.
CE 1909	Built	A substantial two-story brick addition and covered porch with columns is built on the south side of the State House for the Supreme Court (at the site of the former Chew Mansion).
CE 1910	Built	A historic photograph shows curbing around a portion of the Green near the State House.
CE 1912	Memorialized	A rough cut granite memorial to Revolutionary War soldiers is placed on the Green, opposite the State House.
CE 1918	Altered	The 1875 Court House is altered to resemble a building constructed in the colonial period (even though it was not present at that time). The building's entire third floor is removed, the tower is redesigned, and a large entrance with Doric columns is added.
CE 1925	Built	A separate three-story annex building is constructed for the state government offices to the east of the Supreme Court Building.
CE 1930	Removed	Dutch Elm disease begins to infect elm trees leading to the eventual removal of many in subsequent decades.
CE 1933	Built	A new Statehouse complex is built several blocks to the east of the 1792 State House. Most state governmental functions move to the new complex. The 1792 building becomes known as the Old State House.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1957	Established	The “Historic Old Dover District,” is established, to maintain the architectural character of the Green and the streets leading to it.
CE 1977	Established	The Dover Green is identified as a contributing resource in the fifty-acre Dover Green Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
CE 2013	Established	First State National Historic Monument is established.
CE 2014	Established	First State National Historical Park is established.

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Graphics associated with this section are located at the end of each historic period.

PRE-EUROPEAN CONTACT

The earliest archaeological evidence of human habitation on the Delmarva Peninsula dates to the Paleo-Indian cultural period (12,000 BCE–6500 BCE). As the Wisconsin glacial ice sheet receded, the cold wet climate characteristic of this period moderated. With the drying and warming climate, the patchwork of grasslands, and deciduous and boreal forests dominated by spruce and pine, became increasingly mixed with hardwoods, particularly oak. The Archaic Period (6500 BCE–3000 BCE) was wet and warm with oak-hemlock forests dominating the landscape (Coleman et.al. 1985: 7). During this time, native peoples hunted game and gathered resources in a mobile society. In the Woodland I Period (3000 BCE–1000 CE) rising sea levels caused by the warming environment began to stabilize and the climate became drier. Riverine areas stabilized and supported seasonally predictable populations of fish, resulting in increased human population. These people adopted a cyclical lifeways characterized by repeated and seasonal reuse of campsites and small village sites along waterways. The oak and pine forests evolved into mixed vegetation of grassland, oak, and hickory forests, supporting smaller game (Versar, Inc. 2011: 4-3).

During the Woodland II Period (1000 BCE – 1600 CE) the Lenni Lenape, a loose affiliation of matrilineal kinship bands within Algonquin language group, lived within floodplains of major streams and tributaries over a large portion of the Mid-Atlantic region, including central Delaware. In what would become Kent County, the first permanent settlements or camps were established around 1000 CE (Griffith 1976: 45). The Lenape constructed large, oval-shaped long houses of wood and practiced hunting, gathering, fishing, and limited subsistence agriculture. The English called the Lenape the Delaware (SRS-EA 2008: 20). Conflict over the fur trade, coupled with European diseases caused catastrophic upheaval among the Lenape and other indigenous people of the region. By 1670, the Lenape had almost completely abandoned their traditional practices and most had moved westward in search of greater freedom and safety (Emory 2007: 22).

COLONIAL AND EARLY FEDERAL PERIOD: 1637–1792

The origins of the design, location, and use of Dover Green are entwined with the evolution of governmental institutions and land use regulation in the future state of Delaware. These changes, though slow in advancing, impacted the physical development of the Green over one hundred years from its initial design by William Penn in 1683 to the close of the Revolutionary War. Penn's design for Dover, with its central court house square, was laid out on a landscape of rough fields and woodlands in 1717, in a location chosen by settlers around a simple court house they had built years earlier. By the time of the Revolutionary War, the Green was a central, public open space, surrounded in part by brick residences, taverns, government buildings, workshops, and a jail. The two main roads through Dover likely crossed through the Green east to west and north to south, producing dusty and muddy conditions reflective of the dry summers and wet springs and autumns. The Green's location adjacent to colonial Dover's prominent civic and commercial buildings—two taverns and the Kent County Court House later used as the State House—ensured its importance as a gathering place for public discourse during the early years of the country's formation.

Although the English established colonies in the early seventeenth century in the Chesapeake to the south and New England to the north, the Dutch and Swedes first settled the Mid-Atlantic. At the time of first contact with Europeans, much of the Delmarva Peninsula and the future town of Dover was forested except where tribes had cleared small fields and burned brush to grow subsistence crops (Levy 1992: 126). In 1631, Samuel Godyn, a Dutch financier in partnership with other investors, established the first settlement near present day Lewes in what would become the state of Delaware. These landholders, or patroons, were given land and manorial rights within the Dutch colonies and were loosely affiliated with the West India Company, financing settlement in new territories in exchange for profits from the colonies they created. Godyn purchased land in lower Delaware from the Cinconicin, an Algonquin group, according to early records, written as the Sickonese Indians. Settlers in Swandendael (or Zwaanendael) were encouraged to engage in whaling and farming exclusively, for the West India Company restricted fur trade to protect its business interests in the north. Within a year the settlers of Swandendael had a misunderstanding with the Cinconicin, and all in the colony were killed, victims of Cinconicin's revenge. Though the Swandendael settlement endured for only one year, it spurred Dutch supported resettlement of the lower Delaware Valley, and in the mid-seventeenth century was used to support William Penn's legal entitlement to the lands of Delaware.

In the 1630s, Sweden established Fort Christiana, a new settlement on the western bank of the Delaware River near present day Wilmington. In 1655, New Sweden became a part of the Dutch territory of New Netherland. Settlers in New Netherland included Swedes, Finns, Germans, Dutch, and enslaved Africans, and were diverse due to the government's religious tolerance. Yet population growth was slow and the patroon's profits were limited. In 1656 the West India Company deeded part of New Netherland, containing the present day town of New Castle, to the city of Amsterdam and it became known as New Amstel. Three years later, New Amstel had grown to support one hundred and ten houses, but its settlers, comprised mostly of artisans from Amsterdam, had difficulty sustaining themselves in the new territory. With funding from Amsterdam, however, the colony grew to one thousand people by 1663. By the mid-seventeenth century, New Netherland stretched from the Delmarva Peninsula north to present day Albany, New York (SRS-EA 2008: 31-33).

Political and power dynamics in Europe, however, were changing. The Thirty Years' War, in which Europe's Protestant powers fought Catholic powers, helped to stabilize relations between the Dutch and English in the Colonies. The Dutch and the English governments, both Protestant, were allies. Following the ending of the war in 1654, however, the English sought to diminish the Dutch commercial trade through the passage of Navigation Acts in the 1650s and 1660s. The Navigation Acts imposed duties and required shipments from the colonies to be made on English vessels. The acts contributed to three Anglo-Dutch Wars between 1652 and 1674 in which the territory that included modern Delaware was disputed (Taylor 2002: 258).

In October 1664 English warships threatened New Amstel. King Charles II, consolidating his hold on power, had claimed the colonies and named his brother, James Duke of York, proprietor of much of

the North American territory, including New Netherland. He was prepared to take it from the Dutch by force if necessary, but both New Amsterdam to the north and New Amstel (today New Castle) surrendered. The French and the English were threatening much of the enormous Dutch empire, but when weighed against their sugar and slave trading colonies, the small outposts on the coast of America were a minor concern for the Dutch. In contrast, English conquest of the Mid-Atlantic colonies provided a dual opportunity for the Crown. In addition to pushing back the Dutch and gaining trade prominence, England was eager to show strength to the English colonists who were already laying a possible foundation for independence through the establishment of strong charters in the north and governing assemblies in the south (Taylor 2002: 247).

With the acquisition of the middle colonies, the English controlled the entire seaboard from Spanish Florida to French Acadia. The Duke of York governed the territory that would become Delaware as part of the New York colony, with courts for the southern section of the territory established in Whorekill, today's Lewes, in Sussex County, Delaware. The Dutch briefly regained control of the colony between 1673 and 1674, but it reverted back to the English when a peace treaty ended the Third Dutch-Anglo War and the Dutch exchanged the colony for Surinam, Dutch Guiana, which was critical to the Dutch sugar trade (Taylor 2002: 246).

Between 1664 and 1673 little changed for settlers of the former Dutch colony. They were able to retain their former legal system, which included rights of inheritance and property ownership for women, religious tolerance, and economic independence. The English, however, reasserted their dominance in 1673 and settlers were required to take an oath of allegiance and follow English law. Women became legally "covered" by their husband's identity, and lost many of the rights they formerly enjoyed (Taylor 2002: 263). Yet New Netherland continued to be quite independent, with a strong current of religious toleration and little direct governance from the Duke of York until the territories were ceded by the Duke of York to William Penn in 1682.

Territorial disputes between the Dutch and the English and conflict with indigenous peoples, slowed settlement of the southern Delmarva Peninsula. On April 15, 1671, the New York Provincial Council considered a report of Captain Carr, conveying "ye desire of many families to come and settle below New Castle at Appoquinimy and Bombay's Hook" (Scharf 1888: 1028). Following resolution of the last Anglo-Dutch War in 1673, the lands of southern and middle part of the future state of Delaware were settled. By 1680 twenty six families, approximately seventy two people, had settled on the land that would become Dover. The settlers, many from Maryland, lived on tidewater plantations of approximately two hundred to 1,300 acres with fertile fields and river access. Tobacco cultivation was quickly established in southern Delaware, as in Maryland, and settlers brought enslaved Africans to use in production (Hoffecker 2004: 55). The former Dutch settlement of Whorekill was the court town, forty miles south of the future Dover and reachable only by water (Scharf 1888: 1028). In 1680 area settlers petitioned Governor Andros, the colonial representative of the Duke of York, for a "court to be held in St. Jones Creeke" because of the difficulty of reaching the "Whorekill Court".

"In all humble manner show unto your Honor the great grievances, Hazards and perils both by land and water that we undergo in going to the Whorekill Court, not only the distance being to some of us 50, some 60 miles, want of accommodations of man or beast there, but the unpassable, dangerous ways by reason of perilous creeks...your honor...will be graciously pleased to order, authorize, constitute and appoint a Court to be held in some convenient place in St. Jones Creeke, at such time and upon such days as your Honor in your wisdom shall think fit (quoted in Scharf 1888: 1029).

The petition was well received. By June 1680 St. Jones County, future Kent County, became an independent territory with its own court established at Towne Point, approximately nine miles southeast of what would become Dover. The court was held at the residence of Edward Pack at the mouth of Jones Creek until about 1689 or 1690 (Scharf 1888: 1029). As this area increased in population, New Castle gained prominence as a secondary capital to New York, but the town of Dover was yet to be established (Taylor 2002: 270).

In 1681 William Penn, a wealthy English Quaker, sought from King Charles II the territory between New York and Maryland on which he might establish a settlement supportive of Quaker theology. In England, Charles II was ruling unilaterally without Parliament and prospects for religious freedom seemed poor. Earlier, in 1676, Penn and eleven Quakers had purchased the proprietary rights to

land in New Jersey. Their colony attracted diverse settlers encouraged by promises of religious freedom, but Penn and his partners struggled to govern the ethnically and religiously diverse settlement. Encouraged by his brother the Duke of York, a Catholic who liked Penn though disapproved of Quakerism, Charles II agreed to Penn's request and granted him approximately 45,000 square miles of land. The grant repaid a loan of sixteen thousand pounds made to the Crown by William Penn's deceased father, formerly an admiral in the Royal Navy. The land was called Penn's Woods or Pennsylvania. The grant encompassed lands between the 39th and 42nd degrees north latitude and from the Delaware River westward for five degrees of longitude. King Charles II, not wanting to encroach upon land owned by the Duke of York, determined that the southern boundary of Pennsylvania would be twelve miles from New Castle (Taylor 2002: 265-266).

Upon arrival, Penn's agents realized that the new province of Pennsylvania did not include a guaranteed shoreline right-of-way to the Atlantic. The land encompassed by the twelve-mile arc around New Castle was critical to Penn so that he could control the riverbank as far south as possible to provide for future port facilities. Therefore Penn petitioned the Duke of York to add what was called the "Lower Counties" to his patent: New Castle County; St. Jones County, renamed Kent County and the future location of Dover; and Sussex County. Both petitions were granted in 1682. With the addition of the Lower Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex to the Pennsylvania patent, Pennsylvania had two colonial assemblies. One was for the "Upper Counties," originally Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, and one for the lower (SRS-EA 2008: 19). This dual structure would contribute to the drive for independent governance by the settlers of the Lower Counties and the prominence of the Green in Dover in political events.

William Penn arrived in America in October 1682, landing in New Castle on the ship *Welcome*. That same year he authored a "Frame of Government" for the colony that would leave himself and his successors "no power of doing mischief, that the will of one man may not hinder the good of a whole country" (quoted in Ryerson 1994: 1). Penn was a member of the elite, well-educated, and well-traveled, with the Enlightenment's value of design and the separation of religion and governmental policy. He was also a religious radical, a "Friend of God" or Quaker, with religious values based in what were for their time, somewhat egalitarian views of human rights. At the same time, he believed social hierarchy was crucial to a successful society.

Unlike Boston and New York, which developed organically over decades with narrow, rambling streets and mixed land use, Philadelphia was laid out in 1682 according to Penn's preconceived plan, a grid of broad streets linking large residential lots with a central market square near commercial and religious land uses. The residential areas were laid out in four equal gridded quadrants, each containing a central public park space. The city was a physical manifestation Penn's religious beliefs, aesthetic ideals, and economic values. The simple rectilinear plan allowed for shared park spaces and the development of estate properties with gardens and orchards. Penn expected relatively affluent settlers to develop those lots into estate homes surrounded by gardens and orchards.

As a young man in 1662, William Penn had embarked on a grand tour visiting Europe's leading cities. He also understood the devastation that could occur in these tightly packed, rambling cities. In 1666 he studied law in London during the height of the plague, and after living in Ireland, he returned to London shortly after the Great Fire in 1667. Indeed he may have been familiar with the plan for rebuilding London, a gridiron design submitted by Richard Newcourt, for a competition held by Charles II. Though never built, the design's series of gridded squares and central public open spaces are very similar to Penn's designs for Philadelphia, and later today's City of Dover (Weighly 1982: 10). In creating a prominent public squares linked by established transportation routes, Penn also reinforced the importance of commerce.

In 1683 Penn issued a warrant to establish and survey Dover, a new court town for the Lower Counties. Like the design of Philadelphia, Penn established an orderly hierarchy of public and private space in Dover's plan, with a similar grid layout and shared commercial and civic space. The warrant contained the first reference to a court house square, Dover's public green:

"I hereby order thee to lay out or cause to be laid out in ye land appointed for ye Town of Dover in ye County of Kent one high street one hundred and fifty foot wide and two back streets each sixty six foot broad to run from ye water side through and one cross street one hundred and fifty foot broad

where ye high road crosseth ye said Town Land; and to lay out ye lotts in he said town so as each may contain one acre and a half of land and to grant to any person ye shall make application to thee for a lott, one lott in ye said town, they building forthwith on ye same, and paying unto be as a ground rent, yearly one bushel of good winter wheat or four shillings and I do also order that ye court house and prison be built in ye cross street of ye said town” (William Penn to William Clark, Surveyor, June 11, 1683)

Penn specified the width of streets, the location of the court house and jail in reference to the streets, and the formation of a court house square, along with two other squares. He did not, however, specify the location of the town, leaving this to those more familiar with the local terrain (Scharf 1888: 1031). As a result, Dover was not platted until 1717, thirty-four years after Penn’s warrant. At the time of Penn’s acquisition of the Lower Counties, there were less than two thousand people settled in coastal areas. There were only two towns, New Castle to the north and Lewes to the south (Hoffecker 2004: 7). Perhaps there was no impetus or funds to develop Dover. Nonetheless, the Provincial Council debated the best location for the new county seat, but no court house was constructed for more than ten years. In the meantime functions of the court were held at Town Point, the estate of Edward Peck (Scharf 1888: 1030).

In 1694 provincial judges William Clark of Sussex County and Edward Black and Richard Hallowell of New Castle County, after consultation with the magistrates, grand jury members, and others in Kent County, decided that the County Courts should be “held on some part of ye land belonging to William Southerby, situate on the south side of the Head of Dover River, which is next adjoining unto David Morgan’s land” (as quoted in Scharf 1888: 1031). Delegates Richard Wilson and William Morton purchased the land on November 23, 1694 from William Southerby. The tract consisted of two hundred acres of the eight hundred-acre tract called “Brother’s Portion, which had been purchased in 1683 by John and Richard Walker from Petequoque, Chief Sachem of the Lenni Lenape. One year later John Walker sold the entire tract to William Southerby, and on February 4, 1695, the land was conveyed to the inhabitants of Kent County for twenty-five pounds. Between May 1697 and May 1699, the county’s first court house was constructed at the site of the present day Dover Green, though no reservation of public land for a court house square was noted at this time (Scharf 1888: 1032). With the construction of the Kent County Court House, Dover became central to the government of the Lower Counties and spurred subsequent development.

In the colonial era, legal disputes and property transfers were settled and recorded through purchase and inheritance at court houses. For most of the eighteenth century, the Assembly for the Lower Counties dealt mainly with sectional and political issues, serving as colonial representatives of the provincial government. For much of the eighteenth century, the Assembly for the Lower Counties met in New Castle, not Dover, but the evolution of the Assembly impacted the development of Dover Green.

In 1704, after more than twenty years of lobbying from representatives from the three Lower Counties, Penn allowed the Assembly of the Three Lower Counties to meet independently. This enabled the Lower Counties to regulate courts independently and eventually led to Delaware’s establishment as separate state. Many factors contributed to the Lower Counties’ dissatisfaction with their representation. In establishing a dual assembly, Penn had hoped that settlers of the Lower Counties would believe that they were equally represented in a fair system of government. Yet strong ethnic and religious differences between the Upper and Lower Counties led to discontent in the system, especially by those in Kent and Sussex Counties. Pennsylvania and the Upper Counties to the north were settled primarily by Quakers from England and Wales who arrived in the late seventeenth century. The Lower Counties to the south were populated by immigrants arriving from diverse places including Sweden, Finland, and Holland. While some of settlers of the Lower Counties were Quakers, most were not. Slavery was also a divisive issue. The largest minority group in the lower Counties was African, mostly enslaved. By the late seventeenth century, many of the north’s Quaker population had embraced abolition (Hoffecker 2004: 47). During the previous few decades, many settlers in Kent County had come from Maryland under Lord Baltimore. The border between Maryland and the Lower Counties would be disputed until settled by the establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line in the 1760s (Edwards 2003: S2 2).

In addition, during the 1690s French privateers attacked towns and farms in Sussex County, including the court town of Lewes. Assemblymen of the Lower Counties requested that the Provincial government provide protection and stop the attacks. They took no action. In time, colonists in the both the Upper and Lower colonies questioned Penn's authority, citing his cronyism and apparent hypocrisy in the way lands were granted (Taylor 2002: 270). Though this opposition contributed to Penn's accumulation of debts leading him to English debtors' prison in 1705, his design for Dover and its central green created a communal space where these and other beliefs were expressed for the next two hundred years.

In 1717 the streets, lots, and squares in Dover (including Court House Square, the future Dover Green) were laid out in accordance with William Penn's prior order of 1683. One hundred and twenty five acres were surveyed for the town: fifty acres were consigned in cross streets, greens, and public lots, while seventy-five acres were left for future division. There is record of only one lot sold at the time of establishment. The streets were specified to be at right angles across King's Highway, the main road from Philadelphia to the court town at Lewes. A cross street was laid out so that the court house that had been built in the late 1690s stood on the southeast corner of the present day court house tract. The north-south street in the cross was named King Street (today's State Street). The east-west cross street ran from St. Jones Creek westward, passing in front of what is now the current Kent County Court House. In 1722 a new Court House was built on the east side of Dover Green (present day site of the Old State House). The old 1690s Court House was sold in 1723 to John Lindsay who established a tavern (Del Sordo 1985: 10).

By the mid-eighteenth century Dover was established as the seat of Kent County and growing in population, expanding to serve the growing Atlantic coastal trade (Emory 2007: 27). After the governmental separation from the Upper Counties of Pennsylvania, the three Lower Counties enjoyed relative autonomy. They had no official name, were not quite royal or proprietary, and unlike all the other colonies, the laws they adopted did not need to be sent to England for approval (Hoffecker 2004: 21). Dover's location near St. Jones Creek, navigable by most shallow-draft boats of the day, provided easy access to Philadelphia. The King's Highway, or present-day State Street, passing directly through Dover Green was the only overland route on the Delmarva Peninsula to Philadelphia (Sammek 1967: 13).

In Dover, as in many small colonial towns, the commercial, residential, and political realms were woven together. The physical environment supporting this amalgamation, the Dover Green and its surrounding buildings, reflected this diversity. Coopers, weavers, and joiners (carpenters) shared the Green with domestic activities, as well as several inns and taverns, and the occasional peddlers who came into town. The Green was a utilitarian, a flat plot of land partially cleared with the 1722 Court House standing on its east end and the north-south and east-west streets crossing directly through it. While most of the buildings from this time have since been lost, two that remain illustrate opposite ends of the spectrums of eighteenth-century architectural types and building uses. The modest workshop of a tradesperson is located at the southeast corner of the Green. This small, two-bay, one-and-a-half-story wood timber frame structure is typical of those that lined the Green during the mid-eighteenth century. Architectural investigation suggests the building was constructed prior to 1743. The other building is the Parke-Ridgely House (7 The Green), a five bay brick, residential structure, a portion of which was built circa 1728 by Thomas Parke. The building was purchased by Charles Ridgely in 1767 and remains in the Ridgely family, which in the early twentieth century added Colonial Revival-style elements to the façade of the building. Other extant buildings include the Rodney House (26 The Green) that incorporates the eighteenth-century home of the Rodney family at its core, and the Saulsbury-Miller House (18-20 The Green) that was constructed around the middle of the eighteenth century (Del Sordo 1985: 3).

As the eighteenth century progressed, the Pennsylvania Assembly attempted to regulate land use in Dover and throughout the Lower Counties. In 1742 Benjamin Franklin published a summary of laws passed by the Assembly entitled *Laws of the Government of New Castle, Kent and Sussex upon Delaware*. The laws dealt with four main areas; governmental procedures including the setting up of courts, laws of crime and punishment, laws relating to the regulation of enslaved people and free blacks, and laws that dealt with land and environment. In the realm of land use, the Assembly governed draining of marshes, building highways and bridges, and restricting the use of fire to clear

land. A bounty was offered to encourage the killing of wolves. Perhaps illustrative of settlement advancement, by the 1760s a bounty was offered for squirrels (Hoffecker 2004: 29). Farmers were required to erect post-and-rail fences to protect their fields from roaming animals. Fence height and construction was prescribed in detail, and in spring "fence viewers" judged the sufficiency of all fences, levying fines on those that did not meet requirements.

In 1742 the Assembly also passed legislation to establish a market square in Dover on or near the present Dover Green (Elterich 1993: 21).

"Whereas the want of regular markets in the towns of Dover and Lewes is attended with great [inconveniencies] as well as to the inhabitants as to persons offering provisions to sale in the said towns: for remedy whereof.

"Section 2. Be it enacted by the honorable George Thomas Esq. by and with his majesty's royal approbation, Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, and the province of Delaware, by and with the advice and consent of the Representative of the freemen of the said counties in General Assembly met and by the authority of the same that from and after the publication of this act, no person or persons whatsoever, shall presume either to buy or sell any kind of provisions (fish, milk and bread excepted) on market days within any part of the said town of Dover but in such part of the market square as by the Justices of the said county of Kent, or the majority of them, shall be appointed, until there shall be erected a market house in the said town and after the building of a market house, shall not sell the same in any other place than the said market house; under penalty of forfeiting both by the buyer and the seller all such provisions so sold or bought or the value thereof to be levied together with costs, by the Clerk of the Market of said towns respectively, by distress and sale of the offender's goods and chattels respectively, by warrant under the hand and seal of any on Justice of the Peace of the respective county and to be applied to the sue of the poor of the same county (Laws of Delaware, Chapter XCIXa 249-252 as quoted in Elterich 1993: 23).

The bill attempted to regulate trade in the court house square and to separate land use, governmental from commerce and commerce from residential. However, years later a specific location for trade on the court house square was still not established. In 1751 a new act "authorized and required with all convenient speed three trustees to lay out a square plot of ground in or near the middle of that part of the town of Dover, commonly called the court house square, which said plot of ground, when so laid out, shall be called the market square."

"Whereas many peddlers and petty cheapmen, recommended and licensed to sell goods within this government, do frequently (especially at court times) set up stalls or booths in the town of Dover, for exposing their goods to sale, which for want of proper regulations, do not only too much encumber some part of the town, but also often produce frays and disorders (Laws of Delaware 304 as quoted in Eltrich 1993: 26).

The location of the jail, next to the Court House and near the market area may have also proved disruptive, for another act that year required the purchase of a lot for erecting a new jail, and an in later years, prohibited the sale of strong liquor to prisoners (Elterich 1993: 27).

Taverns were central in social and political life in the eighteenth century, and two taverns were important to the development of the Green, though neither remains today. The Sign of King George (later the Sign of George Washington and then Liberty Tavern) was located on the Dover Green and owned by the John Bell family who ran the tavern through most of the eighteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Golden Fleece Tavern, owned by French and Elizabeth Battell and located on the north side of the Green, had become a center of governmental and community activities as well. The tavern would play an important role in the months leading up to the Revolutionary War.

In 1765 after the conclusion of the French and Indian War, the English Parliament, eager to help recover the costs of the expensive conflict, passed the Stamp Act, requiring colonists to use official stamped papers bought from the English government for all newspapers and legal documents. The colonists resisted, believing that England had no inherent right to tax the colonists. The Lower Counties dispatched two delegates to a meeting in New York to protest the Stamp Act, one of whom was Caesar Rodney Junior, who lived in a house at the corner of the Green and Bank Lane, a portion

of the original cross street through the Green. As noted earlier, the Rodney House survives, in part, within a later structure. Like the Ridgleys, the Rodneys were influential figures in the history of the development of the Green. William Rodney, Caesar's grandfather had come from England at the same time as William Penn and settled in Kent County. He was not a Quaker, belonging to the Church of England and an owner of slaves. William and his wife Sarah had a son, Caesar Rodney Senior who had a son, Caesar Rodney Junior in 1728. Elected to the Assembly at the age of thirty-three, Caesar Rodney Jr. became a leader in the government of the Lower Counties and in the fight for American independence (Hoffecker 2004: 32).

The Stamp Act was repealed in 1767 but in its place a new tax act was passed, the Townshend Duties, which taxed imports from England such as glass, paper, and tea (Hoffecker 2004: 79). The colonist boycotts of these imports impacted English revenues, forcing the British Parliament to remove all the Townshend Duties save one, the tax on tea. In 1773 Parliament removed the tax on British tea imported by the East India Company, hoping to undercut colonial smugglers and divest of a large stock of tea accumulating in warehouses. With lower tea prices, the British believed the colonists would continue to buy it, but the colonists refused, seeing the tax as an infringement of their freedom. In Boston, colonists boarded the ship that brought the tea from England and threw the tea overboard. Another ship headed toward the Delaware River did not dock in Boston out of caution. As punishment for these rebellious acts, the English government closed the port of Boston and placed the English army in charge of the government of Massachusetts. These "Intolerable Acts," so named by the Colonists, were condemned widely in the Delaware Assembly, although many colonists of the Lower Counties maintained loyalty to England (SRS-EA 2008: 36).

The people of Kent County, as well as in other American colonies were sympathetic to those in Massachusetts. Caesar Rodney, who by this time was Speaker of the Assembly in the Lower Counties, helped to organize meetings in all three Lower Counties to protest the harsh English laws. In New Castle on August 1, 1774 the Lower Counties chose three delegates, Caesar Rodney, Thomas McKean, and George Read to represent them at the First Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia. Shortly after the second Continental Congress in March 1775, fighting broke out between British soldiers and Colonial militia in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. That June, Congress voted to authorize and establish a Continental Army out of local militia units surrounding Boston under the leadership of General George Washington. After attempting to negotiate with the Crown to avoid war, on June 1776 Richard Henry Lee, a Virginia delegate, introduced a resolution for independence in the Continental Congress. Colonial Delegates were then encouraged to go home and consult with their respective legislatures. As Delegate Rodney said, "Continuing to swear Allegiance to the power that is cutting our throats...is certainly absurd" (Votes and Proceedings 195-109, as quoted in Hoffecker 2004: 41). The Assembly of the Lower Counties met on June 15, 1776 in New Castle and voted to sever ties with the Crown, and until such time as a government was formed, all business should be directed by the three Lower County representatives rather than in the name of the king. Thereafter June 15, 1776 was the official birth date of the "Delaware State" (SRS-EA 2008: 38).

On July 1, 1776, the Continental Congress reconvened in Philadelphia to debate and ratify the Declaration of Independence. Initially attending from Delaware were representatives Thomas McKean and George Read. McKean, who believed in the quest for independence, was ready to sign the document, but Read, as a conservative, was not prepared to commit to what might become a long war before the United States had a proper government in place. Rodney, the third delegate and a brigadier general of the Delaware militia, was south in Sussex County working to disband a group of loyalists who had gathered under arms. On July 1, Rodney rode through the night and arrived in Philadelphia on July 2. With his vote Delaware ratified the resolution for independence, which resulted in the Declaration of Independence just a few days later on July 4. (SRS-EA 2008: 39, Review comments, S. Zimmerman).

Colonists gathered on the Dover Green on July 29, 1776 to hear a reading of the Declaration of Independence. According to historical accounts, a Committee of Inspection marched two by two around the square "followed by the Light Infantry in slow time with music" and led by a drummer bearing a portrait of the King. They formed a circle around a fire burning in the middle of The Green (Sammek 1967: 14). The same year, the King George Tavern (where the Kent County Court House

now stands) painted over King George on its sign a portrait of George Washington (Sammek 1967: 15). However, there remained in Delaware deep divisions of opinion on the merits of independence. According to one study of 36,000 colonists in the Lower Counties, 17,000 might be classified as loyalists more or less actively supporting the Crown; 7,000 were pacifists or uncommitted to either side, and only 12,000 supported the revolution. In Kent County the proportion of loyalists was even higher. Despite these divisions, on October 28, 1776, the General Assembly of the Delaware State held its first inaugural meeting in New Castle (Sammek 1967: 15).

In September 1777, after the British defeat of Washington at the Brandywine north in Pennsylvania, a British contingent rushed to Wilmington and seized John McKinly, newly elected President of the Delaware General Assembly. He along with state funds and all the state records had been placed on a ship on the Delaware River in an effort to secure them. The capture highlighted New Castle's vulnerability to British attack, and in December 1777 the assembly moved from New Castle to Dover. Following the Revolutionary War in September 1787, when the newly written American constitution was sent to the states for consideration, thirty delegates were elected to review the document. Though the General Assembly had been in Dover for ten years, no official building existed for their meetings. Instead they met in a room at the Golden Fleece Tavern located on the north side of the Green. In early December the delegates approved the constitution unanimously. Delaware became the first state in the new nation to ratify the United States Constitution, Pennsylvania was the second, and New Jersey the third. The new national government was inaugurated in 1789 (SRS-EA 2008: 26).

As Dover's population grew through the late eighteenth century, the General Assembly, having been reorganized as a bicameral Senate and House of Representatives, continued to regulate public and private space around the Dover Green. As described by the writer William Winterbotham, Dover was quite prosperous at this time and consisted of:

"about 100 houses, principally of brick. Four streets intersect each other at right angles whose incidences form a spacious parade, on the east side of which is an elegant statehouse of brick. The town has a lively appearance and thrives on a considerable trade with Philadelphia. Wheat is the principal export. The landing is five or six miles from the town of Dover (Winterbotham 1819: 463).

In 1775 a vested authority over land use on Public Lots 27, 30 (the jail), and 33 (the Court House) was appointed. Trustees included prominent Dover landowners Samuel Chew, Caesar Rodney, Charles Ridgely, William Killen, and Jacob Stout. All except Stout had homes on the Dover Green. These men oversaw use of the Court House and public offices at the east side of the Green, as well as land uses elsewhere on the Green. For instance, when a public alley, known as Court House Alley, running along the south side of the Green disturbed the private use of the Chew family's property directly south of the public alley, the alley was relocated to the north to run between the jail and the Court House. This alley remained open until the late twentieth century (Elterich 1993: 34).

In December 1787, the same month that the delegates ratified the Constitution, the original 1722 Kent County Court House was deemed too small. The building was dismantled, and by 1792 a new combination State House/Courthouse was completed on the same site on the east side of the Green. The two-story Federal-style building featured brick construction and a tower. The State Assembly, needing a place to meet, commandeered two rooms in the new county building, but the majority of space was used for court proceedings and administering punishment. A pillory and whipping post were constructed on the east side of the State House/Courthouse the following year, out of the view of the Chew and Ridgely family residences on the Green. The Chew House was located just south of the State House/Courthouse (no longer extant, now site of the Supreme Court Building) and the Ridgely House was situated to the northwest (extant) (Hoffecker 2004: 61).

As the Federal period came to a close, the development of the Dover Green mirrored the development of community greens in many New England towns. As open land defined by residential, commercial, religious and governmental structures, greens were utilitarian spaces used for grazing animals, market exchange, community assembly, and public discourse. Their physical development was driven almost entirely by function, not aesthetics, and their dominant characteristic was openness, or lack of development, so that they could be used for many purposes. Perhaps the Green was covered in lawn, natural grass kept short by scything or grazing, or perhaps heavy use

discouraged plant growth. Regardless, the Green as communal open land in Dover gained distinction from the typical town green because of the relocation of Delaware state government at the dawn of the Revolutionary War. As such it became a setting of important events in the birth of the new nation. Many decades later these events would be commemorated as Dover Green developed into a public park reflective of the mid-nineteenth century's romantic and transcendental movements.

FROM MARKET SQUARE TO PUBLIC PARK: 1792–1909

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the town of Dover, like much of Kent County, remained rural with an economy rooted in sustenance farming and grain exports. The legislative record provides insight into the limited development of the Dover Green during the first decades of the nineteenth century. An 1829 act incorporated the town and provided for the yearly election of five “resident freeholders” as commissioners. One of their first responsibilities was to resurvey the town to “ascertain and fix the boundaries and limits of the same; to regulate the streets, lanes and alleys now open within said town; and to give conclusive evidence of the boundaries of the said town of Dover.” Through the act, the town commissioners were prohibited from extending Dover’s northern and southern boundaries beyond eighty perches, or about 1500 feet, from the center of the Green, illustrating the intent of the legislation to maintain the centrality of the Green in the layout of Dover (Laws of Delaware 454, as quoted in Elterich 1993: 51).

The five commissioners were further empowered to identify and facilitate tangible public improvements, on both private and public property, including Dover Green. For instance, the act authorized commissioners to require the laying of “pavements” in front of private residences throughout the town with costs borne by property owners. Pavement may have been laid in front of the State House/Courthouse at this time. Commissioners were also authorized to “direct the planting of ornamental trees...in such places and at such distance from each other, as they deem meet and proper.” Both public and private land was included, and owners had three months to comply with tree planting and pavement laying, or face confiscation of personal goods or property. The commissioners directives were beyond dispute. Indeed, in 1832 a supplement was made to the 1829 act that empowered commissioners to call upon the Kent County Justice of the Peace and his constables to suppress all “riotous, turbulent, disorderly or noisy assemblages or gatherings of negroes, mulattoes or other persons in the streets, lanes, or on the public square” upon the request of any one commissioner and to arrest any such persons without further warrant. It also prohibited the firing of guns, and bonfires on the Green.

In the 1840s the development of the Dover Green again reflected broader trends in American urban design. As economic impacts from the War of 1812 receded, technology advanced trade transportation networks. Concurrently, landscape design theory grew from the foundations of romantic and transcendentalist movements. In 1847 word “neighborhood” was first used in Dover’s legislation and hinted at the physical development of the town. Similar to the evolution in bounties from wolves to squirrels in the eighteenth century, in the early nineteenth century the General Assembly moved from regulating bonfires and guns on the Green to regulating unpleasant odors and cleanliness:

“all buildings, enclosures or pens... which occasion annoyance to the neighborhood generally or to any family, by reason of the purposes to which they are applied, or of the noisome and offensive smells proceeding there from...shall by order be cleansed...or removed to another place...(Laws of the State of Delaware Vol X 2/26/1847, 220, as quoted in Elterich 1993: 61).

In 1849 the transformation of Dover Green began, changing it from a dusty square used for selling everything from liquor to eggs into a landscaped Victorian park. An act passed in 1849 provided for the grading of the Green and for the planting of grass and trees, including many elms. The elm trees were planted by Francis Barbour Harper, a Kent County farmer and botanist, in the spring of 1849. The trees were hauled to Dover by ox cart from Harper’s farm near Leipsic, known as the “Wheel-Of-Fortune” farm, and planted by Jim Reece, Harper’s slave (Dover Green Trees Receiving Treatment, 24 July 1931). The market stalls were moved to another location, and at least a portion the Green was surrounded by a paling fence to prevent roaming animals from damaging the young trees. The fence remained for about ten years. According to oral history collected in the early twentieth century, two pumps on each side of the Green supplied water. At this time the grass grew into the streets as the edges were not yet bounded with curb stones (Watson n.d.: 1). Around 1860, the commissioners were authorized to acquire and light public lamps on the town’s streets, and it is likely gas lights were installed around Dover Green at this time. A historic map indicates a road encircling the Green by 1868, but it was likely developed concurrently with the improvements described above (Figure 1).

While the Dover Green was undergoing improvements, criticism of the 1792 State House/Courthouse was growing. Records from a meeting of the General Assembly in 1855 express dissatisfaction with the 1792 building (referred by the assembly as the State House): "Whereas it is apparent to this General Assembly that the State House is wholly insufficient for the accommodation of the Legislature, and is not such a building as the capitol should be" (Elterich 1993: 63). However, decades passed before any upgrades were made.

In 1854 the Delaware Railroad was chartered as a subsidiary of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad. By 1860 a depot was constructed and town boundaries were extended to the northeast and northwest toward the proposed lines of the railroad (Edwards 2003: 2-3). With the coming of the railroad, Dover experienced an economic surge. The new wealth generated by the railroad and advancing technology of the industrial age generated a building boom in Dover. As such, much of the mid-Victorian architecture that presently characterizes the edges of Dover Green dates from this period. In the 1850s the Farmer's Bank replaced its former quarters with a large brick building on the west side of the square. The county building and its near neighbor, the Kirk Building, were built at this time. In 1856, the county built a new Italianate style office building, designed by Alonzo Reynolds, north of the State House/Courthouse (Del Sordo 1985: 2). With the outbreak of the Civil War, however, most building activity on the Green, and elsewhere in Dover, ceased.

Delaware was considered a border state, a state that allowed slavery and did not join the Confederacy. However, the institution of slavery was rare in Delaware except in the southern portion of the state, in western Sussex County. Delaware was deeply divided on the issue of slavery, and in the decades leading up to the Civil War, the Dover Green again became a locus of social discourse. In 1841 Lucretia Mott, a prominent Quaker abolitionist leader spoke the steps of the State House/Courthouse overlooking the Green. Accounts of her oratory state she had to be protected under arms, and when housed in the Ridgely home on the north side of the Green, a mob gathered outside the walls (Sammek 1967: 33). Arguments between supporters of abolition and slavery's supporters also occurred regularly in the legislature. In 1862 Republican William Cannon won the Governorship of Delaware by a slim margin. Federal troops had been called up to guard the polls during the vote and later crowds gathered on the Green to witness Cannon's inauguration. After speaking to the Assembly of majority Democrats (supporters of slavery) on the importance of supporting the Union, the Assembly voted to condemn Governor Cannon's speech and soon thereafter established laws severely restricting the rights of free blacks to attend political meetings, possess guns, and to gather together on the Green or elsewhere. As a border state, Delaware was one of only four former slave states that had the freedom to reject the Reconstruction Amendments to the United States Constitution; the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Delaware rejected the amendments by a thin margin and did not ratify them until 1901 (Hoffecker 2004: 110).

In the 1870s the economy of Delaware was growing again and the General Assembly made plans for improvements in Dover (Figure 2). The Federal style of the 1792 State House/Courthouse had become out of fashion aesthetically and outmoded functionally. In 1874 an extensive redesign embellished this building in an ornate Second Empire style: a third floor with a mansard roof was added, a new tapered square tower and formal entryway were added, and the brick façade was sheathed in stucco (Figure 3). In 1875 a new three-story Court House with a steeple and tower was constructed of brick in the new ornate Queen Anne style, on the south side of Dover Green and on the east side of State Street (Figure 4). This allowed the state government to take over the entirety of the 1792 building, which became known as the State House (now Old State House) and was expanded with an addition to the east in 1896. In the years following the State House and Court House projects, other buildings surrounding the Green were altered to reflect the popular design styles, including the First National Bank (Del Sordo 1985: 2). Historic photographs show that cannons commemorating the Civil War were located in front of the State House by 1880 and sidewalks and curbs were installed along the north-south street bisecting the Green, at this time named State Street, by 1898. Other photographs show plantings of new trees on the Green (Figures 5 and 6).

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Delaware's population growth and economic development lagged behind the rest of the nation. The state remained overwhelmingly rural. Increased agricultural competition from newly settled western territories, decreased land fertility, and

high freight charges on the newly expanded Delaware rail systems diminished farmer's profits. The state also suffered from an outdated state constitution that encumbered State Assemblymen with many petty duties, including regulating private drainage ditches and approving divorces. It was also a time of political corruption and infighting (Hoffecker 2004: 124).

By the turn of the century, however, the Progressive Movement was gaining support in Delaware and once again, the Dover Green became Delaware's public stage for arguing the merits of these changes. The state constitution was rewritten in the 1890s, allowing Delaware's United States Senators to be elected directly by the voters, instead of appointed by the members of General Assembly. During the early decades of the twentieth century, social welfare legislation followed, supported by a newly imposed state income tax

Between 1890 and 1920, almost every aspect of Delaware social and economic fabric underwent profound changes. Advancements in transportation, education, government, and welfare systems were altering the community of Dover. On a national level such profound changes helped catalyze design ideas generated through the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and the City Beautiful Movement. In Dover, community improvement initiatives were advanced by Mrs. Mabel Lloyd Ridgely (1872-1962), a long-time resident of the Dover Green and leader in the growing women's suffrage movement. In Dover she used her community organization skills with others to convince the government to restore Dover's historic buildings that had been redesigned during the previous generation. In doing so, Ridgely worked to bring back the eighteenth-century glory days of Delaware while launching Dover firmly into the twentieth century.

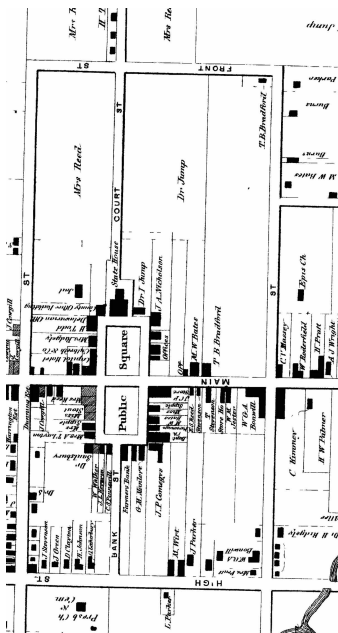


Figure 1. Detail of the 1868 Pomeroy & Beers map of the State of Delaware. The 1792 Court House/State House building is located on the east side of the Dover Green, labeled here as “Public Square.” (Delaware Public Archives)

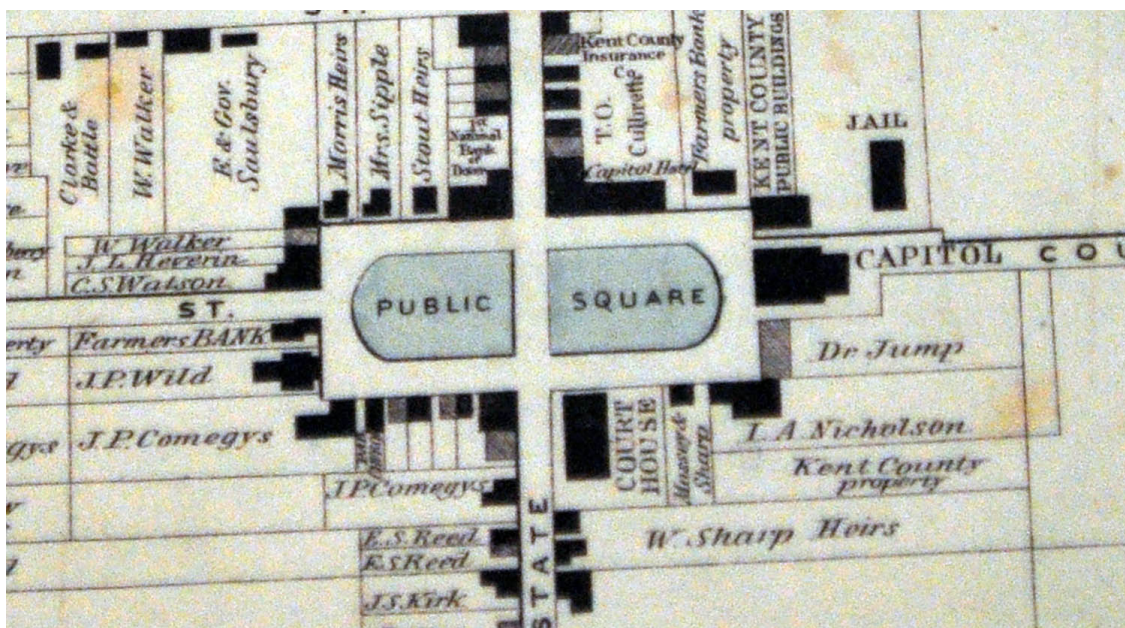


Figure 2. Detail of an 1877 Map of Dover, showing the 1792 State House building on the east side of Dover Green and the 1875 Court House building on the south side of the Green. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 3. View looking east from the east half of Dover Green to the west facade of the 1792 State House building, circa 1888. Note the cannon in the Green's lawn. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 4. View looking southeast from State Street at the center of Dover Green toward the north and west facades of 1875 Court House building, circa 1898. Note the curb and sidewalk along State Street. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 5. View looking southeast from the west side of Dover Green, circa 1898. The 1875 Court House building is at image right and the 1792 State House building is at image left. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 6. View looking east across Dover Green from its southwest corner, circa 1905. The 1792 State House building is visible in the background. (Delaware Public Archives)

COLONIAL REVIVAL IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: 1909–1933

Dover's attitude towards its Victorian heritage was expressed in a line from a 1949 Saturday Evening Post article on Dover. Citizens of Dover "carry on a ... campaign to preserve whatever moldering landmarks may still be saved from decay, and seek to repair the damage done in the flush times of the 1870s when many Doverites desecrated their simple old colonial houses by dressing them up

with fancy mansard roofs, shiny face brick and rambling piazzas hideous with jigsaw scrolling” (as quoted in Del Sordo 1985: 7). These sentiments had become prevalent more than forty years earlier (Figure 7).

In 1909, the restoration of the State House initiated a twenty year movement in which the Dover government and citizen groups worked together to return the Dover Green and its surrounding buildings to a shared conception of its former colonial appearance. Erected in 1792, the State House had undergone extensive alteration through a Second Empire style remodel in 1874, which as noted earlier added a third floor, square tower, mansard roof, front portico, and stucco façade (Figure 8). In the early twentieth century, plans were in development to demolish the State House and replace it with a modern fireproof building. Opposition by the Colonial Dames of America, led locally by Mrs. Ridgely, halted the demolition and persuaded the legislature to fund the restoration of the building. Supervised by New York City architect Edward L. Tilton, the work included the removal of the third floor, replacement of the mansard roof with a gambrel roof, and replacement of the square tower with a taller circular tower as an interpretation of the original 1792 tower. A substantial two-story brick wing and covered porch with columns was built on the south side of the State House/Courthouse for the State Supreme Court, at the site of the old Chew House that was demolished for the addition (Figure 9). A separate three-story annex was built to the east of this building in 1925 for more space.

Several changes also occurred in the Dover Green itself around this time. A historic photograph from 1910 shows curbing around the Green in areas beyond State Street (see Figure 9). In 1912 a monument to the Revolutionary War officers and soldiers of the Delaware Line was erected on the Dover Green. The monument was an imposing rough cut stone block set with a bronze plaque and located at the east end of the Green, directly across from the redesigned State House (Figure 10). The monument was moved in 1932 to the Lockerman Street Plaza near Dover City Hall, but was returned to its original location in the 1970s. It is the only monument on the Green today.

The favorable response to the finished State House project encouraged community leaders to undertake a redesign of the 1874 Kent County Court House, even though this particular building did not exist in the Colonial period. In 1918, the building’s entire third floor were removed, a large entrance with Doric columns and full classical entablature was added, the rooftop tower was redesigned, and the original Romanesque windows were replaced with eight over eight sash windows (Figure 11) (Del Sordo 1985: 29).

The dramatic changes made to the State House and the Court House spurred additional building projects of a similar style and scope. Just after the Court House work was being completed, a four-square plan dwelling was erected across State Street to the west. The three-story Allee Building, constructed between 1919 and 1929, was designed to be a duplicate of Philadelphia’s Graff Building, the hotel in which Thomas Jefferson stayed when writing the Declaration of Independence (Del Sordo 1985: 2-3).

The Dover Green had long been the scene of public discourse, but perhaps no event focused more of the nation’s attention on Dover than the women’s suffrage movement. In March 1920 the General Assembly was called back into special session to consider the proposed amendment to the Constitution allowing women the right to vote. Congress had passed the amendment two years earlier but one more state was necessary to add the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. For weeks the hotels surrounding the Green were filled to capacity, and leaders of the movement held rallies, hanging purple, gold and white banners from the old elms on the Green (Figure 12). National newspapers followed the story intently. In May 1920, suffragists set up a speakers’ platform and held rallies on the Green in a desperate effort win over a majority of the Delaware legislature. The Senate approved the amendment; however the House of Representatives refused to vote on the measure and adjourned, sine die. Two months later, Tennessee, not Delaware, became the state that gave all women the right to vote (Hoffecker 2004: 167).

In addition to her leadership in the women’s suffrage movement and restoring colonial characteristics to the Dover Green’s public architecture, Mrs. Ridgely also restored her family’s property on the Green. The Ridgely House had been the family seat since the mid-eighteenth

century and was first occupied by Mrs. Ridgely and her husband, Henry, in 1896 (Figure 13). In 1909 Mrs. Ridgely employed the architect of the State House restoration, Edward Tilton to make some exterior changes to her house, removing the brown paint from the bricks, designing a new front portico and roof projection, and shifting of the middle dormer to a more central location (Figure 14, see also Figure 12).

In 1926, the Ridgely family bought the Capitol Hotel on the north side of Dover Green, which had been present since 1835 on the site of the Golden Fleece Tavern operated by the Battell family. Through the nineteenth century, the hotel was enlarged and finished in an Italianate style. A fire shortly before the Ridgely's purchased the property gutted the hotel, giving Mrs. Ridgely the opportunity to redesign the building to appear as three separate buildings, referencing the massing, heights, and cornices of colonial buildings. She tore down the block of the building adjacent to her home, leaving the lower walls for incorporation into a Colonial style boxwood garden. According to previous historic research by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, remnants of a much older boxwood garden of indeterminate date, is located between the Dr. James Sykes House and the Supreme Court Building. Mrs. Ridgely also established the Friends of Old Dover and was a founder of the Public Archives Commission (Del Sordo 1985: 2-3).

In 1929 the town of Dover was incorporated as a city, and continued to grow in size with the addition of major industries including International Latex Corporation, General Foods, and the National Cup Company, as well as Dover Air Force Base in 1941. Much of this industrial and residential growth occurred at the edges of the city (Edwards 2003: 2-3). As such, the Dover Green and surrounding streets in central Dover were protected from the demolition many inner cities experienced in the later twentieth century (Figure 15). Strong community preservation groups, founded by Mrs. Ridgely and others in the early twentieth century, also helped to preserve the Green and its surrounding structures, especially through community engagement activities held on the Green, such as Old Dover Days begun in 1933. Following World War II, the Colonial Revival style first introduced to the Dover area through changes to buildings adjacent to the Green, became the most popular style in the city. Many new commercial and civic buildings were designed in this style, including a new Statehouse complex constructed to the east of the Green and dedicated in 1933 (Figure 16) (Del Sordo 1985: 29).



Figure 7. View looking east from the east half of the Green towards the 1792 State House building and the 18th century Chew House, circa 1900. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 8. View looking east from the perimeter road at the 1792 State House building prior to its restoration, circa 1898. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 9. View looking east from the perimeter road, at the 1792 State House building after its 1909 restoration and the new State Supreme Court Building, circa 1910. Note the stone curbing along the Green. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 10. View looking east from the east half of the Green, showing the monument to Revolutionary War Soldiers (image center), circa 1920. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 11. View looking south at the north facade of the 1875 Court House building after its 1918 remodel, 1984. (National Register Nomination for Dover Green Historic District, Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 12. Captioned photograph, "And What of Delaware's Children," looking north from the east side of Dover Green, circa 1920. The Parke-Ridgely House is at image left. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 13. View looking north from the west half of the Green toward State Street and the east half of the Green., circa 1898. The Ridgely House is third from image right. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 14. View looking southwest from the northeast corner of the Green, circa 1925. The Ridgely House is in the background. (Delaware Public Archives)

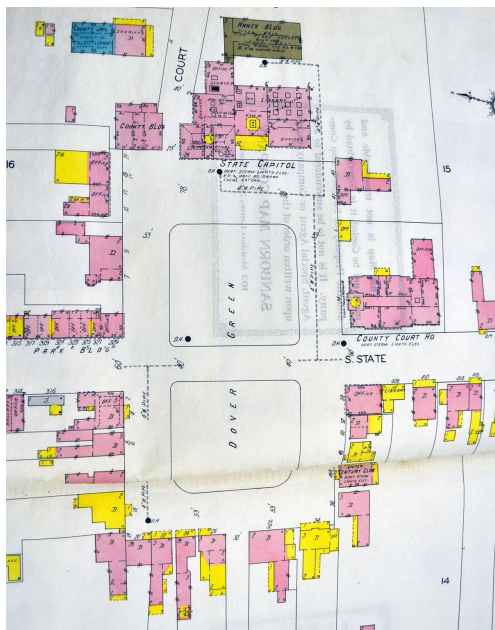


Figure 15. Detail of 1929 Sanborn Map of Dover. (Delaware Public Archives)



Figure 16. View looking at Dover Green, including 1792 State House and 1875 Court House, c. 1931. A new State House Complex would be built a few years later to the east, just beyond baseball field. (Hagley Museum and Library, Delaware Public Archives)

PRESERVATION OF THE GREEN: 1933–2017

With the completion of the new statehouse complex, official legislative functions moved out of the 1792 building at Dover Green, which hereafter became known as the Old State House. In 1957, a city ordinance established the “Historic Old Dover District,” which was designed to maintain the architectural character of the Green and the streets leading to it. The ordinance stipulated that no buildings in the area could be constructed, modified, or remodeled without first submitting detailed plans and specifications to the City Council, which was empowered to deny a building permit if the proposed appearance or style was not in keeping with those of adjacent buildings.

On Dover Green itself, relatively few changes occurred. As automobiles became more common the physical separation of the Green’s lawn areas and the perimeter road became more defined with installation of additional cut stone curbing. This inevitably led to the presence of parked cars, which alternated over time between parallel and perpendicular orientations along both sides of the perimeter road (Figure 17, see also Figure 16). As styles changed, benches and light fixtures were added and taken away, and added again.

By the 1930s, the old elms planted in the 1840s and those added in later decades were being treated for Dutch elm disease. By the 1950s many of the elms were enormous, but by the 1970s many had succumbed to the disease. New trees of diverse varieties were planted both within the open spaces of the Green and along its edges, in a loose grid pattern. Sidewalks on the east side of the Green were changed in response to building alterations and changing government use patterns, and vehicular access to Court Street was ended.

Over the last fifty years, Dover Green itself has remained relatively static, a rectangular level expanse of grass, divided by State Street, dotted with trees and enclosed by buildings that trace American styles of architecture from 1790 to the 1930. Refurbishments addressing vegetation, signage, and lighting have for the most part been minor. The Dover Green was identified as a contributing resource in the fifty-acre Dover Green Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 5, 1977. Dover Green itself became a unit of the National Park Service when the property was included in First State National Monument on March 25, 2013. First State National Monument became First State National Historical Park on December 19, 2014. The City of Dover has donated to the United States an easement for the protection of and access to the Dover Green.



Figure 17. Post card looking northwest from the Court House to west half of the Green, c.1955. Note newer lower branching tree species compared to older higher branching trees. (Hagley Museum and Library, also in collection of Delaware Public Archives)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Landscape	Plaza/Public Space (Square)	Assembly Area	Yes	No	No
Government	Capitol	Capitol	Yes	No	No
Commerce/Trade	Business	Concession	Yes	No	No
Government	Courthouse	Courthouse	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Plaza/Public Space (Square)	Urban Park	No	Yes	Yes
Landscape	Plaza/Public Space (Square)	Urban Park	Yes	No	Yes

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Currently there is unrestricted access to the landscape of Dover Green.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Landscape characteristics identified at the Dover Green include natural systems and features, land use, spatial organization, circulation, topography, vegetation, views and vistas, and small-scale features. Though there are no buildings or structures on Dover Green itself, a discussion of this characteristic is included because the buildings and structures surrounding the Green contribute to the spatial organization of the Green and impact views and vistas to and from it. Many characteristics have associated features that contribute to the site's overall significance and integrity, as well as features that do not contribute.

The physical integrity of Dover Green is evaluated by comparing the landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1717–1933) with those of the existing landscape as assessed in 2016. Though the landscape has evolved over time, many of the Green's historic landscape characteristics and features are intact and help to maintain its appearance and use as a public open space within the city of Dover. The existing boundaries of the Green, and its location within the grid of Dover's streets, reflects the town layout developed by William Penn in 1683 and implemented by Dover's early settlers in 1717. The surrounding streetscape, lined with buildings that reflect diverse architectural styles prominent during the period of significance, preserves the Green's historic spatial organization and setting. Existing roads that bisect and border the Green itself retain their historic alignments, with only minor alterations having taken place, as do the sidewalks that parallel State Street. While the majority of vegetation growing on Dover Green does not date to the period of significance, the lack of understory vegetation, the broad expanses of turf, and the use of large-scale deciduous trees, is in keeping with the original character of the Green and its mid-nineteenth century design.

INTEGRITY

According to the National Register of Historic Places, integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance through physical resources. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Retention of these qualities is necessary for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven aspects must be present for a property to retain integrity.

The form and layout of Dover Green is reflects the original design intent of the court house square of William Penn's 1683 warrant. The layout of the Green, as a rectangular grassed open space enclosed by an urban streetscape punctuated by public civic structures, is similar to that of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Some characteristics of the Green, however, have been altered over time. Dutch Elm Disease in the mid-twentieth century led to the loss of many early elm trees. These trees were replaced with deciduous specimens primarily, but the distinctive vase shape and high branching pattern of the elms were difficult to emulate with the species available at the time of replanting. The loss of small scale features such as stone curbing and original light standards has impacted the integrity of the Green dating to its late nineteenth century appearance, though thoughtful design of modern lighting standards mitigates this affect. When considered in aggregate, enough remains of the historic cultural landscape of the Green to retain its overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where an historic event occurred. Dover Green is the public square laid out in 1717 by Kent County settlers, and based on William Penn's 1683 design for the town of Dover.

Design:

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property. The existing location and boundaries of Dover Green reflect the public square's early eighteenth-century layout. Portions of the road system surrounding and bisecting the Green date to William Penn's original design for the town. Minor modifications have been made to the circulation system, but the existing system reflects its mid-nineteenth century development. Although few individual trees on the Green date to the period of significance, the design of a graded public square landscaped with grass and dotted with large deciduous trees dates to the

mid-nineteenth century. The current layout of the public square, as two rectangular plots of similar size dates to as early as 1868.

Setting:

Setting is the physical environment of a property and the general character of the place. Dover Green is set within an urban environment, surrounded by blocks of one to three story buildings dating to the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. The historic mix of commercial, residential, and governmental use has been retained. The physical relationship between the lawns and trees on the Green and prominent civic buildings, including the Old State House and the Kent County Court House, remains today.

Materials:

Materials are the physical features that were combined or deposited during the period of significance in a particular pattern or configuration to give form to the property. Some of the trees in Dover Green date to the mid to late twentieth century. The curbs that define the Green itself, the brick walks and light standards along State Street, lawns, and other trees are not historic materials but do not detract from the historic scene. Rather, they gesture to materials that were present in the nineteenth century.

Workmanship:

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts and methods of construction used during the specified period of significance. The physical relationship between Dover Green and the surrounding streets and city blocks illustrates the workmanship of William Penn in his 1683 design for the Green as the central square for the town of Dover.

Feeling:

Feeling is the expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a property's historic character. Dover Green retains its historic relationship to the surrounding streetscape and circulation systems. Contemporary intrusion is limited and sightlines emphasize the connection between important civic buildings and the Green. However, the relocation of primary state government functions from the east side of the Green to the new statehouse complex has somewhat diminished the historic feeling on the Green.

Association:

Association is the direct link between an important event or person and the property. The association of the Dover Green with important developments in community planning and in government and politics is retained through the relationship of the open space to the surrounding city blocks and important eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings. The eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth-century civic, commercial, and residential structures reveal the development of the surrounding community, as well as the importance of the Green in political discourse.

Landscape Characteristic:

This section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1717–1933), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. Graphics associated with this section are located after their respective landscape characteristic

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Natural systems are the natural aspects that influence the development and physical form of the landscape including, physiography, geology, and vegetative communities. Prior to European settlement, the area that was to become the City of Dover was almost entirely covered by forest and marsh. During the seventeenth and early eighteen centuries the area was cleared for agriculture. At the time Dover's court house square was most likely a semi-cleared rectangular plot of land of roughly shorn meadow grasses and exposed soil. What remained of the Green's natural systems was replaced in 1849 by a graded landscape of mown turf and cultivated elm trees. Today, the approximately one-acre green is located entirely within an urban environment. The landscape is comprised of mown turf and medium to large deciduous trees planted in a loose grid pattern.

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Condition (to 1933):

Spatial organization refers to the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in a landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. The spatial organization of the Dover Green was defined by William Penn's grid plan for Dover in 1683 and platted in 1717. King Street (now State Street) bisected the Green north to south, as did an east-west cross street until around the mid-nineteenth century when it was replaced by a perimeter road. The focal point of the rectangular-shaped green was likely the second Kent County Court House building, situated on the east side of the Green in 1722, and the third State House/Courthouse building constructed on the same site in 1792, which featured a tall cupola. The construction of the fourth Court House building, which also featured a tower, in 1875 on the south side of the Green added a second focal point.

In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, there was little physical or visual enclosure around the Green because there were fewer trees within the utilitarian public square and fewer buildings around its sides. A sense of enclosure began to take hold in the mid-nineteenth century with a wave of construction that gradually added one- to three-story buildings facing the Green and filling the side streets. This was reinforced with the installation of vase-shaped elm trees around the edges of the Green itself in 1849 and curbing beginning in the late 1800s. As the decades passed, additional deciduous trees of various varieties were added to open spaces on the Green. Because there were few understory plantings, views into and out of the Green reinforced the spatial connections with the adjacent building forms.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Dover Green currently retains much of its original spatial organization, as it remains a relatively flat rectangular plot of maintained lawn dotted with deciduous trees and bordered by a perimeter road and one- to three-story buildings, two of which still feature cupola towers. As during the period of significance, there are no understory plantings or shrubs on the Green, but the introduction of low branching deciduous trees creates more enclosure than the vase-shaped, high-branching elm trees prevalent in the mid to late nineteenth century. The north-south cross street, State Street, still bisects the open space of the Green.

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Land use describes the principal activities in a landscape that form, shape, and organize the landscape as a result of human interaction. During the Colonial and Federal periods, Dover Green served as a market space for coopers, weavers, carpenters, and occasional peddlers, as well as a gathering space. State and county government offices, several inns and taverns, and residences of prominent citizens occupied the buildings facing the Green. The Green's use as a market space likely ended after 1849 when it was redesigned as a landscaped public park. This change emphasized the use of the Green as a setting for the surrounding civic buildings, as a place of public gathering, political discourse, and community engagement, and as a landscape for passive recreation and memorialization. The historic use of the Green for passive recreation, as well as public gathering and community engagement, continued through the twentieth century, and continues to the present day.

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Topography is the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by slope and orientation. Historically, the Green was flat with little grade change. Whatever topographic variations existed were removed in 1849 when the Green was graded in preparation for planting grass and trees. The installation of curbing around the boundaries of the Green in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century slightly changed the grade. No grade changes have occurred since. The site currently features slight slopes, less than two percent, to assist with drainage. The eastern parcel slopes slightly to the northwest corner, while the western parcel slopes to its southwest corner.

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Condition (to 1933):

Vegetation includes managed individual specimens and masses of deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers and herbaceous materials, both indigenous and introduced. The exact composition of vegetation on the Green in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is unknown.

Though the Delaware General Assembly legislated the planting of trees in Dover in the mid eighteenth century, no reference has been found to the planting of trees on the Green prior to 1849.

The Green may have been covered in a mixture of native grasses, as a meadow, scythed short with scattered trees.

In 1849 the General Assembly passed a law authorizing the grading of Dover Green and the planting of turf and elm trees. The design of the planting is unknown. However, photographs from the late nineteenth century suggest the elm trees were installed in single rows around the edges, and the east and west sides of State Street. By the 1880s and 1890s, additional trees were added, including a willow tree near the front of the State House and a Kentucky coffee tree in the northwest corner of the Green. A 1924 photograph shows what appears to be a cedar tree on the Green, one of the few instances of evergreen plantings. This tree is no longer extant.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

During the years following the period of significance, many of the historic elms on Dover Green succumbed to Dutch Elm disease. Storms also impacted the trees, including an event in 1954 which caused extensive tree damage. Though individual trees have changed in the one hundred and sixty year period since the original planting of elms, there are some consistencies in the design of the vegetation on the Green. First, turf has served as the only planted groundcover. Second, there is little documentary evidence of understory plantings, including shrubs and perennials. Third, almost all of the trees historically planted on the Green were deciduous, primarily high branching, large scale trees, most likely to preserve views into and out of the Green and to provide open space for gathering.

Today, the vegetation of Dover Green is a mixture of deciduous trees planted in a loose grid pattern and spaced between fifty and sixty feet apart. This grid pattern is first visible in aerial photography dating to the 1960s, but may have been established earlier. The current roster of tree species includes sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), and Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*). One of the American elms and the Kentucky coffee tree are Delaware state champion trees (Figures 18 and 19). There are no shrub or perennial plantings, and the entirety of the Green is grass.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
State Champion American Elm	182597	Contributing					No
State Champion Kentucky Coffee Tree	182599	Contributing					No
Mature Shade Trees	182601	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 18. View looking east from the western end of Dover Green, at the loose grid pattern of tree planting. The Old State House and Supreme Court Building are in the background. (OCLP 2016)



Figure 19. View looking east from the western end of Dover Green, at the loose grid pattern of tree planting. The Old State House and Supreme Court Building are in the background. (OCLP 2016)

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Condition (to 1933):

Circulation is comprised of the spaces, features, and materials that make up the network facilitating pedestrian and vehicular movement. While no streets are included within the park unit boundary of Dover Green, the surrounding network of city streets defines the Green and places it in the context of the plan developed by William Penn in the late seventeenth century. When the court house square was first laid out in 1717 according to Penn's 1683 design for Dover, two streets bisected the public space north to south and east to west. The east-west cross street ran from St. Jones Creek westward, passing in front of what is now Kent County Court House. It was laid out so that the first court house built in the 1690s stood on the southeast corner of the modern day court house tract. The north-south street in the cross, named King Street (today's State Street) divided the Green into east and west sections. By the late eighteenth century, the east-west cross street was much narrower than King Street.

The exact construction date of the perimeter road encircling the Green is unknown, but it may have been developed concurrently with the 1849 grading project and installations of turf and trees in the Green. A historic map shows the perimeter road was in place by 1868. The 1868 map also shows two east-west streets: Bank Street, roughly on the alignment of the eighteenth-century east-west cross street, extending westward from the west end of the Green to Governors Avenue; and Court Street extending eastward from the east end of the Green around the State House/Courthouse building and extending to Front Street. The 1868 map indicated the north-south King Street was renamed Main Street, while an 1877 map labeled it as State Street. Historic photographs show paved sidewalks and curbs along both sides of State Street were in place by the late nineteenth century.

Curbs were installed around the remainder of the Green sometime in the early twentieth century. The corners of the two rectangular east and west sections of the Green were curved to allow the movement of automobiles around the perimeter road. In the early twentieth century, perpendicular and parallel parking was located on both sides of the perimeter road. Historic photographs suggest asphalt paving was in place on the perimeter road and State Street by the mid-1920s.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Except for the closure of Court Street in the early twenty-first century, the circulation system surrounding Dover Green dates to the period of significance. State Street, formerly King Street and Main Street, still bisects the Green into two sections, east and west. Between 1920 and the 1950s, brick paving was installed on the sidewalks lining State Street. Today, State Street is paved in bricks and the perimeter road is paved in asphalt, while the brick sidewalks along State Street feature a herringbone pattern. Contributing features are limited to those located on land tracts in which the National Park Service has a legal interest (Figure 20).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Brick Sidewalks along State Street	182603	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 20. View looking north from the south side of the perimeter road, at the brick walks along State Street. Note the light fixtures that resemble old gas lamps. (OCLP 2016)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Buildings are elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activity in the landscape, while structures are elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity. No buildings or structures were located on the Green itself, either historically or in the years following the historic period. However, the buildings and structures that face the Green are integral to its purpose and history. Although the CLI can only evaluate features located on lands in which the National Park Service has a legal interest, a brief summary of the development of buildings and structures surrounding the Green is included below.

Prior to the grading and planting of turf and elm trees in the mid-nineteenth century, there may have been temporary structures such as market stalls on Dover Green, but to date no evidence has been found. The form and purpose of the Green as it exists today reflects the important relationship it has with the surrounding buildings. The Green is surrounded by twenty-six structures constructed between 1728 and 1929. Construction and modification of these structures occurred in three general phases. The first phase occurred in the eighteenth century, but only a few of the many structures that likely ringed the Green during that period remain today. Extant buildings include a one-story timber frame workshop at the southeast corner of the Green known as the John Bell House (43 The Green), the 1792 State House/Courthouse (now Old State House) (25 The Green), the Parke-Ridgely House (7 The Green), a row of three residences (18-22 The Green) that includes the Saulsbury-Miller House, and the Joshua Fisher House (36 The Green). In addition, the Rodney House (26 The Green) incorporates an eighteenth century structure within its walls. These buildings reflect in part a Federal or Georgian style of architecture, although all have been altered since their original construction.

The next phase of construction represented within the streetscapes bordering the Green occurred in the mid-nineteenth century, between 1826 and 1885. Structures dating from this period represent fifty-eight percent of the buildings surrounding the Green and are characterized by Queen Anne or Second Empire architectural styles popular in the Victorian period. Following the redesign of the Green in 1849, private homes were remodeled to reflect the prevalent Italianate, Queen Anne, and Second Empire styles, including among others the Dr. James Sykes House, the Joshua Fisher House, and the Henry Stout House. The 1792 State House/Courthouse was extensively remodeled in the Second Empire style in 1874 and became known as the State House (now Old State House).

In 1875 a new Kent County Court House was constructed in a style that conformed to modern Victorian tastes.

The final phase of construction represented in the buildings facing the Green is exemplified by the 1909 restoration of the 1792 State House (now Old State House) and the 1918 redesign of the Kent County Court House. These efforts changed two Victorian style civic buildings to reflect a Colonial Revival style of architecture popular at the time. The Colonial Revival style continues to influence the design of both private and governmental buildings in Dover today.

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Views are the panoramic or expansive prospect of a broad range of vision, which may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. Vistas are controlled aspects of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived. Views and vistas into and out of Dover Green historically provided, and still provide, an important visual connection between the open public land of the Green and the surrounding civic and residential structures. The Green originally provided a grand setting for the Kent County Court House, later converted to the State House, reinforcing a sense of the government's prominence and authority in the social fabric of the colonies and the newly formed state. Other buildings facing the Green revealed a broad range of building traditions and architectural styles, from Georgian through Colonial Revival. Over time these design styles were subtly reflected in the treatment of the Green, especially in 1849 when it was redesigned as a public park with broad lawns and stately trees.

The vegetation planted on the Green impacted views and vistas. The vase-shaped forms of mature elms allowed extensive views into and out of the Green while providing welcomed shade. In subsequent years additional trees, including evergreens and deciduous tree species with lower branching patterns, were planted on the Green, constricting some of the views into and out of the space (Figures 21, 22, and 23).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View East toward the 1792 Old State House	182605	Contributing					No
Views from Interior of the Green to Buildings Facing the Green	182607	Contributing					No
View of State Street from South Side of Green	182609	Contributing					No
View of State Street from North Side of Green (includes 1875 Court House)	182611	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21. View looking east from the east half of the Green to the Old State House. (OCLP 2016)



Figure 22. View looking west from the eastern half of the Green to the surrounding buildings. (OCLP 2016)



Figure 23. View looking south from the east half of the Green to the north facade of the Kent County Court House. (OCLP 2016)

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Small-scale features include minor built elements that provide aesthetic detail and function, such as benches, light standards, and other outdoor furnishings. The only historic small-scale feature on Dover Green today is a granite stone memorial dedicated to Delaware's Revolutionary War soldiers in 1912 (Figure 24). Originally placed on the eastern half of the Green opposite the State House, it was moved in 1932 to the Lockerman Street Plaza near City Hall. The monument was returned to its original location in the 1970s. Light fixtures and iron cannons present during the historic period are no longer extant. The current light standards, signs, and benches post-date the period of significance. The current light fixtures resemble gas lamps that were present during the nineteenth century (Figure 25, see also Figure 20).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
1912 War Memorial	182613	Contributing					No
Light Standards	182615	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Teak Wooden Benches	182617	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Small Wooden Fence/Screen	182619	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Fire Hydrant	182621	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 24. View of the east face of the 1912 Monument to Revolutionary War soldiers. (OCLP 2016).



Figure 25. View looking northwest at a moveable bench and part of the wooden fence located in the east half of the Green. (OCLP 2016)

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 5

Next Assessment Due Date: 02/10/2031

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 02/10/2026

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/20/2017

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the landscape of Dover Green is “good.” There is no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The property’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Diminished Soil Fertility

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Some of the vegetation on site suffers from diminished soil fertility

Date Identified: 09/25/2017

Type of Impact: Disruption/Loss of Plant Species

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Dutch Elm disease continues to impact many of the historic elm trees.

Date Identified: 09/25/2017

Type of Impact: Soil Compaction

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Soil compaction impacts the health of the turf on the site in some areas.

Date Identified: 09/25/2017

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Undetermined

Treatment Completed: No

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

No park planning documents regarding the treatment of the Dover Green landscape yet exist. The 2013 Presidential Proclamation that established First State National Monument (redesignated as First State National Historical Park in 2015) identified the Dover Green as one of the “object of historic interest,” and charged the National Park Service and its partners “to protect and manage these objects of historic interest and interpret for the public the resources and values associated with them.” The Presidential Proclamation also noted that for the purpose of establishing a national monument, “the City of Dover donated to the United States an easement for the protection of and access to the Dover Green.”

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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