

## **IX. HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY**

The following discussion presents the results of field investigations and data analysis of the Historic Architectural survey of the Camp Wright project APE conducted September 2006.

All above-ground properties within the APE were examined. Each resource was evaluated, making note of its approximate age, condition, function, construction materials, and architectural details. Thirty-five (35) mm and digital photographs were taken of facades showing elevations, lateral views, and details for each building on the property. Each property identified as fifty years or older was evaluated for its ability to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

Property Identification Form (CRS-1) was completed for Camp Wright. The Main Building Form (CRS-2) for the Gatehouse, Arts & Crafts/Bunk House, Kitchen/Dining Hall, Bunk House #1, Gawthrop Hall, Bunk House #2, and Caretaker's House. The Secondary Building Form (CRS-2) was completed for the Medical Building, Spring House, Washroom, and Shed. The Structure (Building Like) Form (CRS-5) was completed for the Swimming Pool and Basketball Court. The Map Form (CRS-9) and the Potential District Form (CRS-14) were also completed.

### **A. Historic Architectural Assessment**

Camp Wright is set on an approximate 7.483± acre wooded lot in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County. The camp site is situated in a wooded glen surrounded by residential development to the north, west, and south. The Camp Wright complex is composed of eleven buildings, including residential quarters, administrative buildings, and support facilities, dating from the early to mid twentieth century. Additions to the camp include a swimming pool, basketball court, and washroom. An asphalt driveway extends south from the camp entrance along Mill Creek Road. The asphalt driveway extends through the center of the camp, passing over Mill Creek, and provides access to the core of the camp facilities.

The Gatehouse is located at the entrance to the camp along the west side of the asphalt driveway. The Gatehouse is a three-bay, single-story, frame structure with a German siding wood board exterior. Two wood paneled doors are located along the south elevation, along with a six-over-six window. A shed roof addition, with concrete foundation and modern one-over-one windows, is located along the west elevation. The Gatehouse sits upon a concrete block foundation. Two ca. 1925 stone piers flank the entrance to the camp.

The camp Swimming Pool is located north of the gatehouse. The Swimming Pool is surrounded by a chain link fence and includes a single-story concrete block structure on the

north side of the pool. The Swimming Pool was constructed during the late twentieth century and is no longer in use.

The one-story, frame Medical Building is located along the east side of the asphalt driveway and south of the Gatehouse. The Medical Building is a four-bay, side gable structure sheathed with German siding. Six-over-six windows with wood sashes are found throughout the structure. The Medical Building includes a wrap around porch with wood posts along the west and south elevations. The building rests upon concrete block piers.

A ca. 1830 stone Spring House is located to the north of the Medical Building. A brick arch is located above the door along the west elevation. The gable-front Spring House has a brick cornice. The Spring House is believed to have been associated with the original farm property.

A modern Shed with a vinyl siding exterior and wood paneled door is immediately north of the Medical Building. The Shed was used to store the camp's ceramic kiln equipment.

The main concentration of Camp Wright structures is located along the west side of the asphalt driveway south of the Medical Building. The Arts & Crafts/Bunk House (used primarily as a bunk house) and Bunk House #1 are near identical in construction and design. Both buildings have horizontal wood board exteriors, side gable roofs, and full width, one-story porches. The Arts & Crafts/Bunk House includes a wrap around porch extending along the north elevation. A ramp is also located along the north elevation of the Arts & Crafts/Bunk House. Both structures have been raised and sit upon concrete block piers. The interiors of the Arts & Crafts/Bunk House and Bunk House #1 are similar, with each opening to central foyers. Washrooms are located directly opposite the main entrances. Living quarters are located immediately north and south off the foyer. The Arts & Crafts/Bunk House includes a small room along the south end of the building, the actual arts and crafts area.

The Gawthrop Hall is a one-story, side gable, frame structure. Metal double doors are centrally located along the east elevation. One-over-one windows are found throughout the structure. The gable ends are sheathed with vertical board and battens, while horizontal wood board is used along the east and west elevations. The Gawthrop Hall rests upon a combination of concrete and stone piers. The Gawthrop Hall, along with the Kitchen/Dining Hall, were the first two structures built as part of Camp Wright. During the late nineteenth century, Gawthrop & Brothers Company operated a plumbing and fixtures company on North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Wilmington, Delaware. Alfred Gawthrop was president of Gawthrop & Brothers Company ([www.distantcousin.com/Directories/DE/Wilmington/1889/Pages.asp?Page=237](http://www.distantcousin.com/Directories/DE/Wilmington/1889/Pages.asp?Page=237)). Mr. S. McGill Gawthrop (1915-2004), a banker, served as president and a board member of both the West End Neighborhood House and Family Services of Northern Delaware.

The Kitchen/Dining Hall is a one-story, four-bay frame building with extensions along the east and west elevations. The Kitchen/Dining Hall has a wood German siding exterior and an asphalt shingle roof. A three-bay extension is located along the east elevation and

includes several sets of paired six-over-six windows. A shed roof addition is located along the rear of the building and includes an exterior brick chimney.

A mid twentieth century one-story concrete block Washroom is located to the west of the Kitchen/Dining Hall. The Washroom has a set of concrete steps and a wood paneled door at the southeast corner.

A macadam basketball court is located to the east of the Kitchen/Dining Hall.

The Caretaker's House is located at the base of a steep embankment, north of Bunk House #2. A staircase extends between the Caretaker's House and Bunk House #2. The Caretaker's House is a one-story, frame building partially sheathed with board and batten and partially with German siding. The gable-front structure is five bays deep and rests upon concrete block piers. Horizontal board siding is found within the gable ends, along with louvered windows for ventilation. One-over-one windows are found throughout the building. The asphalt shingle roof includes exposed rafter tails.

The Bunk House #2 is similar in design and construction to the Arts & Crafts/Bunk House building and Bunk House #1, except it includes only a narrow partial width, one-story frame porch. Bunk House #2 also includes a shed roof addition along the south elevation. The building is located at the top of a steep embankment overlooking Mill Creek with access provided by a wood staircase.

Representative views of Camp Wright and its associated structures are located in **Appendix III: Plates 1 through 35**.

The Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Cultural Resource Survey Forms are located in **Appendix IV**.

## **B. Historic Architectural Camp Context**

The organized camping movement in the United States is regarded to have begun in 1861. In that year Frederick William Gunn, founder of the Gunnery School for Boys in Washington, Connecticut, established a two-week outdoor camping program as part of the school's curriculum (Shivers 1971). Gunn established trips to nearby Milford, Connecticut, where students practiced camping skills, including hiking, boating, fishing, and sailing. The school incorporated the outdoor curriculum well into the 1870s. Frederick William Gunn is regarded as the originator of recreational camping in the United States, an industry which presently includes over 7,000 resident and 5,000 day recreational camps.

The origin of recreational camping can be traced in part to the summer vacation programs of the nineteenth century. The summer vacation programs, begun around 1875, consisted of day trips to rural locations for picnics and other forms of recreation. Eventually entire week vacations to rural settings, usually a contracted farm, were started. These "country weeks" were immensely popular and eventually led to the idea of permanent summer camps for

disadvantaged youths from urban centers. Eliza Turner, of the Newark, Delaware chapter of the New Century Club, organized the first country week program for Delaware in 1875.

During the 1870s progressive individuals and civic-minded organizations began to develop summer vacation programs for inner city women and children, to provide an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of country life. The Fresh Air movement supported summer vacation programs as a means to counter the perceived unhealthy effects of urban living. Reformers also believed that the city environment was conducive to delinquency among the working class and poor. The Fresh Air movement promoted the belief in the moral, physical, and mental benefits of country life. The Fresh Air movement was largely confined to industrialized and urban centers along the East Coast of the United States, places including New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, but could be found throughout the nation.

During the 1870s Horace Greeley and John Ames Mitchell organized the Fresh Air Fund, a program to provide summer vacations for women and children from urban areas. The Fresh Air Fund, established in 1877, provided summer vacations for New York City school children. Camp Hidden Valley was created by the Fresh Air Fund to provide for children with polio related disabilities. Fresh Air Fund related camps, still in operation, include Camp Algonquin, organized in 1907 by the United Charities in Chicago, and Incarnation Camp, Inc., established by the Episcopal Church in 1886. Mitchell later established camps in Branchville, Connecticut, and Sussex County, New Jersey, during the 1880s. Trail Blazer Camp was originally established by John Ames Mitchell, editor of *Life Magazine*, in 1887. During the mid 1940s land was acquired in New Jersey and permanent camp facilities were established. Trail Blazer Camp continues to operate and provide camping opportunities to inner city youth, supported by the private and public financial support.

During the 1870s and 1880s, other attempts were made to establish recreational summer camps. During this period for-profit and special needs camps were created. Joseph T. Rothrock organized a camp in 1875 for young boys with health problems. The camp, established near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, failed for lack of financial support. George W. Hinckley established a religious affiliated camp in Maine, and Ernest B. Balch started Camp Chocorua in New Hampshire, for the children of wealthy families, during the 1880s. Balch, an alumnus of Dartmouth College, started the camp as an alternative for children who normally accompanied their parents to the upscale resorts of the era. Non-profits, including the Boy Scouts of America, Camp Fire Girls, labor unions, and religious institutions, also formed camps throughout the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sumner F. Dudley, associated with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), established a camping program in 1885. The camp was later renamed Camp Dudley in 1897 (Shivers 1971). The first Boys' Club camp was established in Salem, Massachusetts in 1900. By 1930 there were over sixty Boys' Club summer camps.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century camps were generally divided by gender. The first camp established exclusively for women was organized by the Philadelphia chapter of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). The first camps were often referred to as vacation projects. The efforts were designed to give young women employed in urban manufacturing plants the opportunity to enjoy rest and recreation in a rural setting. The early

vacation projects generally consisted of acquiring space at a boarding house or farmstead. The YWCA's first camp was established in 1874 at Asbury Park, New Jersey, and was known as Sea Rest.

Paradise Farm Camp is an example of an early resident camp that continued operation throughout the twentieth century. Paradise Farm Camp, located in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, had its origins as a vacation summer camp in 1875 by Eliza Turner of the New Century Club of Newark, Delaware. The farm was purchased by camp promoters in 1912, and the summer camp was established. Originally, the farmhouse and outbuildings were used by summer camp attendees, although later cabins and supporting structures were constructed. Over the years mid-to-late twentieth century additions were made to meet the changing needs of camp attendees and camp operations. Several original early twentieth-century buildings are retained as part of the facilities, although most structures are modern. The camp is operated by Children's County Week Association (CCWA), which continues the principles of the country week programs of the 1870s.

Recreational camping in Delaware began with the summer vacation programs of the 1870s, notably the New Century Clubs' efforts. Associated Charities established country weeks during the 1880s. Camp Wright is the oldest extant recreational camp established in Delaware. The camp was constructed in 1921 and operated until the 1990s under the auspices of several aid societies, including Associated Charities. Recreational camping opportunities in Delaware have been supported by government agencies, civic groups, religious institutions, and other groups. The Children's Beach House, established in 1936, provides recreation for children with speech and hearing deficiencies (Sargent 1962). Following World War II numerous camps were established in Delaware, including Camp Barnes, Camp Quoowant, and Camp Arrowhead. Camp Barnes, established in 1947-48, was organized by the Delaware State Police and was named in honor of Delaware State Police superintendent Colonel Herbert Barnes. The camp continues to operate and provide educational programs. Camp Quoowant was organized by the YMCA in 1958. The YMCA operates numerous summer camp programs for the youth of Delaware. Camp Arrowhead, located in Lewes, was established by the Episcopalian Church in 1956.

The two main types of organized recreational camps in the United States are resident camps and day camps. Resident camps are known for their permanent facilities at fixed locations. Camp attendees reside at the facilities and are provided with all the necessary requirements for their time at the camp. A day camp is a recreational camping experience where participants commute from their private residence to the camp. The camp may be permanent or seasonal in design and construction. Additional camps include special interest camps and pioneer camps. The special interest camp is noted for its dedication to a single field of interest, which can vary from catering to individuals with special needs to specific interests, such as art, athletics, education, technology or others. A pioneer camp is dedicated to self reliance, or "roughing it." The common characteristic of the pioneer camp is its remote location and dedication to the development of survival skills.

Generally, camp design during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries developed standardized concepts, and the arrangement of camp facilities was based upon military theory

(Shivers 1971). Uniformity and concentration of structures were desired. Planning concepts included the construction of administrative and medical facilities near the main entrance and centrally located kitchen/dining halls. Decentralized camp plans were promoted during the mid-to-late twentieth century to conform to camping changes which emphasized choice and freedom among campers, rather than uniformity. Decentralized camping focused on providing individualized, comprehensive learning opportunities for small groups. Camp design reflected this philosophical change in the decentralized camp layout. In decentralized planning, living quarters were often dispersed throughout the camp in isolated locations (Shivers 1971).

While each camp is composed of facilities specifically geared to the programs and philosophies of the individual camp, many of the structures are standard to resident camping. Administrative buildings (camp superintendents, counselors housing, medical buildings, maintenance, etc.), dining and kitchen facilities, arts and crafts buildings, recreational structures (archery, tennis courts, swimming pools, baseball fields, basketball courts, etc.), and living units (bunk houses, cabins, dormitories, etc.), were required for the functioning of the resident camp. During the late twentieth century special interest structures were frequently added to camps. Special interest structures could include equestrian facilities, conference centers, gymnasiums, and other buildings.

Camp Wright is presently owned by New Castle County, which acquired the property in 2005. Camp Wright is located at 3850 Mill Creek Road, Hockessin, Delaware. The camp is located along the west side of the intersection of Mill Creek Road and Graves Road. The camp is approximately two miles south of Hockessin in Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County. The camp is set on a 7.483± acre wooded lot, situated in an area composed largely of late twentieth century suburban development. Mill Creek passes through the center of the camp setting. A concrete slab bridge carries an asphalt walk over Mill Creek. An early nineteenth century stone dwelling is located at the southwest corner of the lot. A ca. 1830 stone spring house is located in the northeast corner of the camp and is buried into a hillside abutting Mill Creek Road. The Camp Wright complex is composed of eleven buildings, including residential quarters, administrative buildings, and support facilities, dating from the early to mid twentieth century. The structures at the camp are generally single story, frame buildings with wood board exteriors. Most of the buildings are located on raised piers. Additions to the camp include a swimming pool, basketball court, and washroom. A gatehouse is located at the entrance to the camp. An asphalt walk extends south from the entrance of the camp along Mill Creek Road. The asphalt walk extends through the center of the camp and provides access to the core of the camp facilities.

### **C. Recommendations**

Camp Wright was evaluated according to the criteria set forth in *National Register Bulletin 15*: “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” Camp Wright is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Camp Wright is significant under Criterion A as a good example of an early twentieth century recreational resident camp established for the benefit of inner city youth. The camp site was acquired in

1921 with the support of Associated Charities, the leading community supported charitable aid society in Delaware, and was intended to provide summer excursions for inner city youth. The camp was created as a result of the Fresh Air movement of the mid nineteenth century. The program was precursor to the YMCA and similar summer camp organizations of the mid twentieth century. Camp Wright serves as a distinctive example of the transition from the country week programs established during the 1870s and the growth of commercial recreational camping programs of the post World War II era. Camp Wright is among the earliest remaining camp sites organized in Delaware. Camp Wright retains a strong degree of integrity and sufficiently conveys design concepts of early twentieth century recreational summer camps. Camp Wright is not recommended eligible due to any association with any individuals of local, state, or national significance. Camp Wright has not experienced the introduction of modern camp structures. Evaluated under Criterion C, the structures constituting Camp Wright lack overall architectural distinction.