

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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N-5181

Property Name: Elm Grange (J.M. Vandegrift, 1868); Evergreen Acres (1984)

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

Elm Grange is located on the east side of route 13 approximately one mile north of McDonough. The nomination contains one acre including the house and none of the extant agricultural buildings.

Owner: Evergreen Acres, Inc.

R.D. 2, Box 546

Middletown, Delaware

19709

Description: Elm Grange is a two-and-a-half story brick dwelling built on an L shaped plan joining a two-story brick service ell to the center-passage plan main block. The brick walling, now painted hot pink, rests on a rubble stone foundation. The house is finished with a gable roof with boxed cornice, machine made Italianate brackets, and interior gable end chimney piles. The five bay facade is fitted with later two over two sash windows set in timber frame architraves and furnished with cast iron floral work shutters.

The main entry consists a single door having a large central light over two raised octagonal panels and a two light transom with matching sidelights. The front of the building is further distinguished by a classically inspired tetra-style porch with fluted columns. The service wing to the rear of the house appears to be original to the present structure and contains a dining area and a kitchen. The wing is further provided with its own exterior entry opening onto the lane leading to the agricultural complex behind the house. The entry is presently sheltered under a one-story lean-to porch.

The house is currently being used as a series of apartments and the interior is unavailable for examination.

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Historic Background and Significance

The Elm Grange farmstead dates back to at least 1849 when Rea and Price locate William Bowman at that place. James M. Vandegrift acquired the farm sometime before the 1860 agricultural census was compiled as his name replaces Bowman's. Vandegrift resided at Elm Grange for at least the next 30 years as his name appears on the 1893 atlas compiled by Baist. Over forty years of occupation and farming as documented by the agricultural census reveals the grain based economy of Elm Grange and the surrounding area, and documents the devaluation of land and goods. Indian corn, wheat and oats were the staples of Bowman and Vandegrift's income, although oats in the latter two decades declined in importance. The production of butter continued to be an important part of Elm Grange's income economy and similar to surrounding farmsteads. Average numbers of livestock were kept except for the presence of sheep. At that time the sheep as livestock were considered to be an experimental type of area. In 1880, Elm Grange produced two hundred pounds of wool. Large amounts of hay were produced (25-30 tons) for livestock consumption and marketing. William Bowman in 1850 had a substantial amount of money invested in machinery, these being valued at \$1,000. Vandegrift could only match this in 1870. The post-war depression is evident in the declining of land and livestock values. In 1880 Elm Grange lost 1/3 of its value; down to \$16,000, very near the 1850 valuation of \$15,000. Despite this devaluation, Elm Grange continued to prosper in grain and livestock production. This is evident in the rich, architectural trim of the dwelling, and the surrounding agricultural complex (not included in nomination) which reflect the extensive rebuilding period of southern New Castle County in the late nineteenth century.

Nomination by Trish Bensinger and Bert Jicha

Elm Grove
N-5181

