

Introduction

Prominently located at the western edge of Flemington Borough in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, the Case-Dvoor Farmstead is an important historic resource eligible for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Located on almost 43 acres of preserved open space, the Farmstead is a beautiful site with important farmland resources, wildlife habitat areas and stream corridors. Its location so close to the county seat in this rapidly developing Route 12 corridor makes it a particularly important preserved open space site.



Current Aerial

In addition to its value as preserved open space and farm land, the Case-Dvoor Farmstead has important historic resources. Considered significant in the categories of architecture and agriculture and retaining its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, the property is an important historic resource in the region.

The site features an impressive complex of buildings that range in date from the late 18th (the stone main house) to the mid 20th century, illustrating the evolution of the region's farm culture and building practices during that period.

This site was preserved through a combination of Green Acres and county and local open space funding and is now owned by the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance (HLTA), a not-for-profit, 501C3 organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the county's scenic beauty, and its environmental and historic resources; to providing for the permanent preservation of farmland and to support and foster agricultural viability; and to promoting the conservation and appropriate management of woodlands and open space. Similar to other preserved, historic farms around the state, there are apparent conflicts between the requirements for open space and farmland preservation



Historic View

on the one hand and the preservation of the historic structures on the other. This has resulted in a kind of logjam at many sites, leading to the slow deterioration of important historic resources. One of the primary goals of the Hunterdon Land Trust is to find a way to preserve all aspects of this important site (the open space, the farmland and the historic structures) while balancing the needs of preservation with financial feasibility. If successful, the preservation of the Case-Dvoor Farmstead could help serve as a model for other sites in the region.

The Site: Site Description

The lands of the Case-Dvoor Farmstead have a long and interesting history. It was originally part of a 374 acre purchase from the son of William Penn by Johan Philip Kaes, a German immigrant. Today, the site includes almost 43 acres of deed protected open fields, stream corridor, farm complex and a mature hardwood grove. The land was preserved through the Green Acres program, along with funds from Hunterdon County, Raritan Township, Flemington Borough, the NJ DOT, Citizens for Parkland, South Branch Watershed Association, Citizens for Parkland and various private sources. In 1999, the site was acquired by the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance, a not-for-profit land conservation organization based in Flemington. The HLTA now manages the property.

Due to its proximity to the Route 12/CR 523 circle, the farm building complex is one of the most recognizable places within Hunterdon County. Its collection of residential and agricultural buildings is punctuated by the horse barn that still bears the words “Dvoor Mine Brook Farm” painted boldly on its gambrel roof. This area of the farm is served by existing driveways and informal, paved parking areas. Access to future uses within the site will incorporate these existing access elements where feasible.



Overall Site

The overall site’s most important features include three open fields, a hardwood forest, the Walnut Creek corridor and the Farmstead. The largest field, or North Field, is almost 20 acres of rolling pasture land located along Shields Avenue. One of the smaller fields is located along Old Croton Road and totals less than two acres. It is adjacent to the Mine Brook Park playing fields. Forming the southern border of this field is a mature hardwood grove, containing a mix of large oak, beech and ash trees, some in need of significant care. Beyond this grove, along the southern edge of the site and bordering Route 12, are another field and the complex of farm and residential structures. The two smaller fields, the farm buildings and the hardwood grove are effectively separated from the North Field by the Walnut Brook Corridor, an area formed by the confluence of several streams that come together north of the farm complex. The stream corridor is in the process of being restored. This restoration includes some re-grading, as well as the removal of non-native, invasive plant species. This project will not only restore the stream’s native habitat, but it will improve flood control and help groundwater recharge.



The farm building complex or farmstead is prominently located on the north side of the Mine Street Circle with fenced pastures to its east and west. Set back approximately 50 feet from the road, the house is surrounded by low evergreen foundation plantings. A path, flanked near the road by tall evergreens, leads to the front steps. This treatment dates to the second half of the 20th century, replacing a picket fence-enclosed dooryard with large shade trees recorded by historic photographs (figures 5

and 6). The grassy lawns extend to the west of the house in front of the office and to the east, the latter area featuring a number of mature trees, as was the case in the 1930s. A low, probably early, stone retaining wall topped by a 20th-century, iron, pipe-rail fence connects the northeast corner of the frame rear appendage to the southeast corner of the workshop. A small area adjoining the rear door is paved with large rectangular stones, which are an early, if not original, feature. The asphalt-paved, U-shaped driveway to the west of the house conforms to the unpaved alignment depicted in the 1930s photograph, but has been extended to create a paved parking area between the house and barns. A portion of the area between the two barns is paved with gravel. Two overgrown shrubs flanking the office probably were planted in the second half of the 20th century.

Historic photographs reveal that wire fencing enclosed the pastures and fields before the construction of the Mine Street Circle and that white horizontal-board fencing was installed after World War II (figures 5, 7, 10 & 11). Several types of fencing are now present. The horizontal board fencing enclosing the south side of the barnyard may survive from the post-world war II work. The split-rail fence along the property's road frontage presumably is a more recent replacement, as is the wood-post and wiring fencing enclosing the pastures east and west of the farmstead. The metal gates are recent replacements.



View of Farm Complex from Route 12