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The Pearl Buck Dairy Farm is situated on a gently rolling parcel of approximately 10 acres along Morris Run in a rural region of Hilltown Township, Bucks County. The buildings, all located within a hundred feet of a narrow country road, are oriented to the south at an angle to the roadway and include the following: an early-19th century stone farmhouse with a mid-19th century addition; an early-19th century stone and frame bank barn; and a collection of 20th century dairy buildings. Together the buildings reflect the evolution of a Bucks County farmstead over 150 years.

The dwelling is a 2½ -story stone house built in two sections. The original portion, or west end, was built circa 1800 and is four-bays long and one-pile deep with internal end chimneys and gable roof with slate shingles. The south façade has two central entryways with transoms and late-19th century four-paneled doors. The east door's upper panels have been replaced with glass. Double hung, six-over-six windows with simple wooden surrounds and shutter hardware are also employed. A metal standing-seam shed roof porch runs the length of the façade. The porch dates to the 1940s and most likely replaced one of similar design. The rear elevation has only two vertically ranked openings on each story. One of the first-floor windows has been replaced in recent years with a doorway. Other changes to the exterior of the original section include the rebuilding of the west chimney in brick, removal of the east chimney above the roof line, the addition of gable roof returns and new roof raking, and the changing of the window and door trim. The changes to the roof and window and door trim possibly occurred at the time stucco was added (subsequently removed) in the mid-19th century.

The one-pile-deep house originally had two rooms on each floor, with each room approximately 16 feet square. Random-width floors and low ceilings with exposed chamfered or lamb's tongue beams are found in both rooms. Fireplaces were once found at both ends of the original house, but today only the west-end fireplace remains, retaining a simple mantel. The east-end fireplace, located in the northeast corner of the east wall, has been enclosed for the furnace. It had originally been a larger cooking fireplace. To the south of the cooking fireplace are original or old built-in raised paneled cupboards. Changes to the floorboards in the west room suggest that the room may have once contained a stairway to the upper floors. Today, walls on the upper level have been changed, but the rooms retain most of their old floors and woodwork.

The eastern wing of the house appears to have been built between 1820 and 1850 and is also 2 ½ stories high, constructed of stone, and was originally stuccoed. This section is flush with the original dwelling on both its south and north elevations. A two-bay-wide south side has a west-bay entryway similar to those of the earlier section that dates to the late-19th century. Windows on this section are also double-hung, six-over-six sash but are slightly wider than those of the other section. The east and

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north elevations are both two-bays wide with symmetrically placed windows. Two small attic windows with four panes flank the interior end chimney on the east gable end. The gable roof on this wing has simple roof raking and returns that appear original.

The interior of the later section is one room per floor. A straight run staircase is found along the west interior wall and today serves as the only stairway to the upper floors.

The early-19th century barn, measuring approximately 48 by 32 feet, is found about one hundred feet south of the house along a steep slope. It is a Pennsylvania bank barn with a projecting forebay facing the barnyard. A gable roof, faced with composition shingles, tops the three-story building. The building has a massive stone foundation with cut stone laid at the corners, and a frame, two-story upper section. The south and west elevations also have stone facades. The south façade is entered by way of an earthen ramp centrally located. This central bay is frame and is flanked in the stone sections on the first floor by one simple window opening to the west and two to the east. Typically, these window openings would have had louvered blinds. In this barn, they have been replaced by single-light windows. The upper floor has two window openings per side. The west elevation at the bottom of the slope is stone only to the bottom of the gable. The gable is wood frame. The lower level, originally for animal stabling, was converted for dairy use in the 20th century and has a stable door and two metal-framed six-paned windows. The main floor retains a large central threshing floor, rising two stories, plus flanking bays. The upper floor above the bays served for hay storage.

With the introduction of modern dairy farming in the 1940s, the barn's north elevation was altered when the area under the frame forebay was enclosed across the barn's entire length. Attached at a right angle to the northwest corner of the forebay is a new L-shaped west wing of two stories with a small central section measuring 20 by 32 feet and a west-end measuring 20 by 70 feet. The additions used elements similar to those found on the original barn, including a stone foundation and frame upper level. Roofs are gabled with slate shingles, and windows are metal-framed with six panes. A large concrete and metal silo was also built at this time along the southeast corner of the new wing. A small milk house was constructed off the original barn's northeast corner. This one-story frame and stucco building has a slate gable roof and a four-bay north elevation. It measures approximately 20 by 25 feet.

Two additional buildings were also constructed for the dairy operation, including a one-story, gable-roofed, frame and stucco machine shed measuring approximately 30 by 50 feet; and a frame and stucco 25 by 90 feet birthing and bull barn.

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Overall, the buildings retain their architectural integrity. The changes to the exterior of the dwelling, for the most part, date to the mid-19th century and are compatible with the original appearance and fabric. The home, originally stone, was stuccoed later in the 19th century, and this material was removed to reveal the original stonework.

Today the barn complex is in the process of being converted for use as a bed and breakfast. Plans call for retaining the exterior appearance and original interior features as much as possible. New window openings in frame sections of the barn and the installation of handicap-accessible ramps and exterior stairways for fire requirements were added but do not detract significantly from the overall historic character of the buildings.

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The Pearl Buck Dairy Farm is locally significant under criteria A and C for the areas of architecture and agriculture. The farm is a representative example of typical early- to mid-19th century farmstead construction in central Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Similar to other yeoman farmsteads in the area, the original house and barn employed regional characteristics that emphasized function and comfort rather than style and show. Changes and additions to the house and farm buildings later in the 19th century and into the mid-20th century continued to draw from local architectural practices. Today the buildings reflect the evolutions of both farmstead architecture and agricultural practices in Bucks County over the past 150 years. The period of significance is 1800-1950 and represents the period during the nineteenth century when agricultural practices in Bucks County were based largely on the growing of grain for market and subsistence farming for everyday life.

The Derstines and Hunsbergers most likely produced wheat, rye, corn, and other grains and raised livestock, such as pigs and cattle, and grew fruits and vegetables for family use. Areas left in meadow could be used as hay for livestock, and woodland provided lumber and firewood. Over the years, the land had been passed down in the family most likely due to its productivity. Generations lived and died on the farm and ownership seldom changed, usually only upon the death of the farmer.

But by the late-19th century, the farm was most likely too small to be productive for the common farmer. The division of the property in the 1840s meant there was less land for crops and livestock, and providing a living for a family became increasingly difficult. Also by the 1890s farming had changed in Bucks County with the small, self-sufficient farm replaced by specialized farming, most notably large-scale dairy operations. For the next 50 years the farm declined and underwent a succession of owners, with little evidence of building activity.

In 1942, the farm underwent a rebirth with its purchase by Pearl Buck, who combined it with an adjacent 39 acres for use as her personal dairy farm. Buck, the first woman to win the Nobel Prize for literature for her 1931 novel *The Good Earth*, lived at nearby Green Hills Farm. Her dairy farm was state-of-the-art for its time. During the early years of her ownership she added to the original bank barn and constructed new farm buildings. The house remained, for the most part, unchanged and was used as a tenant farmer's house. By 1964 Buck decided to relocate and sold the farm. The acreage was soon thereafter subdivided for rural residential purposes. Today the buildings remain much as they did at the end of the Buck ownership and are situated on approximately 10 acres of the original 75-acre property.

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Building practices used in the construction of the house and barn are typical of the Bucks County area. Most features employed in these buildings are found in the majority of early- to mid-19th century farmsteads. Stone construction was the most preferred building method in the region in the late-18th and 19th centuries. These early stone houses had single pile plans with internal end chimneys and were oriented in a southern direction to take advantage of the sun. These facades generally had symmetrical fenestration. The opposite side of the house would typically be less formal in the placement of windows and with fewer window openings to protect from the north wind and cold.

Paired façade entryways were also a common element, especially in the German communities of central and upper Bucks County. One door led directly into the kitchen and the other into a parlor. This style of house has had hall and parlor plans with low ceilings, often exposed with chamfered beams as seen on the subject house. Simple molded door and window surrounds and raised paneled cupboards and doors were also prevalent and were among the more decorative features. Unlike more high-style architecture of the period, elaborate moldings and decorative elements were rarely employed.

Later additions to the house also reflect Bucks County's 19th century architectural tradition. The construction of porches, especially on the south elevation to protect from the sun, was common in the region and continued to be built for protection and shelter with no decorative features. The new wing added laterally to the main elevation was also more common of area dwellings than rear wings. This section also provided its own exterior access to the new first-floor room as seen at most area farmsteads. The new wing also reflected the new style of architecture found in later homes of the 19th century. Symmetrically placed windows and doors on all sides are found in virtually all area homes constructed in the 1830-1850 period. By the beginning of the second half of the century, slate roofing and simple roof raking with gable roof returns were found on many of these buildings. These elements reflected the influence of Greek Revival architecture even on simple farm dwellings.

The large, early-19th century bank barn not only shows regional architectural influences, but also reflects agricultural practices of its period. Just as farming in the period involved various tasks, from crops to livestock, the barn had many purposes. Its large central threshing floor and ramp, common to other area barns, shows the importance of grain and hay production in the 18th and early-19th century. The area above the threshing floor was used for storage, and the lower level built into the bank provided animal shelter and maximum protection from the elements.

With the introduction of large-scale dairy farming in central Bucks County, many early barns

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underwent a transformation. Often, as is the case at the subject barn, the lower stabling area was converted for milking use. New complimentary buildings necessary for the production of milk and other dairy products emerged including silo, milk house, machine sheds and bull and cow pens for fertilization and birthing. In this instance, these changes were made during the ownership of Pearl Buck, whose nearby home has been declared a National Historic Landmark for its association with the noted author and humanitarian.

Historical Background:

Early deed records for the property indicate that the land was part of a large tract of 580 acres owned by Lawrence Growden in the mid-1700s. This property, like much of the land in Hilltown Township, was owned by a handful of wealthy land speculators from Philadelphia. The land changed hands and remained undeveloped until the late-18th century. On November 21, 1791, the entire tract was purchased by Cadwalader Evans Jr., a surveyor from neighboring Montgomery County, who immediately divided the property. Eight days after his purchase, Evans sold 75 acres to Abraham Derstine. Derstine's new land was ideally located along the Dublin Road laid out in 1772 and along a good creek known as Morris Run. The Derstine family farmed this 75 acres and soon constructed a house and other farm buildings.

Abraham Derstine was among the wave of German immigrants who settled central and upper Bucks County in the 18th century. An early tax record of inhabitants of Hilltown Township list Derstine as one of only 146 men in 1774. Although no record of his birth or death was found, a large number of Derstines were members of the German Mennonite Church, and it is likely that Abraham Derstine belonged to this community. Tax records indicate that by 1784 Abraham Derstine owned a tract of 139 acres of land in Hilltown prior to his purchase of the subject property. The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 notes him as owning 175 acres with a single stone house measuring 30' by 26', a 36' by 18' old log barn and 30' by 18' hay house. It is unclear whether these buildings were found on Derstine's original farm or the subject property. The 75-acre farm may have remained unsettled until his son Michael moved to the property.

A house was built on the 75-acre tract prior to Abraham Derstine's death. Bucks County Orphans' Court records state that Abraham Derstine died prior to 1818, leaving a widow, Hester, and 11 children, including, Jacob; Michael; Abraham; Sarah, wife of Valentine.

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In June 1818, the Orphans' Court awarded the 75-acre plantation to Abraham's second son, Michael. A note regarding the parcel reveals the existence of a dwelling erected on the site. The note reads: "Michael Derstine, one of the sons of deceased, who has put the following improvements thereon under a promise of his father to be allowed for the same. Viz; a stone Barn, a squared log Hogsty, a Piazza in front of the House, a pale fence around the Garden, a planted Orchard of sixty young Apple Trees. All which improvements the Inquest have valued and appraised on their oath and affirmations aforesaid at the sum of \$975."

Michael Derstine most likely made other improvements to the house and farm. Mortgage records show he mortgaged the property several times, first in 1820 for \$1,600, then in 1822 for \$245 and in 1831 for \$766. It is probable that the wing at the east end of the house was constructed under Michael Derstine's ownership.

Bucks County cemetery records indicate that Michael Derstein [sic] died on May 25, 1841, and was buried at the Blooming Glen Mennonite Cemetery. An 1842 Orphans' Court record for Michael Derstine states he left a widow, Anna, and seven children including: Hannah, wife of Jesse Springer; Catharine, wife of John Lacey; and Elizabeth, Abraham, Henry, Joseph and Anna. The Orphans' Court awarded Derstine's 75-acre plantation to his son-in-law, John Lacey, and daughter Catharine. The Lacey family retained the farm for only six years, selling 49 acres, including the buildings, to William Beck on August 19, 1848. Beck resold the property a few days later. The remaining acreage came into the possession of Catharine's sister Hannah, and her husband, Jesse Springer, prior to that date. Dividing the property at this time may have been related to the construction of the Bypass Road laid out and recorded in Bucks County Road Book 6, Page 435, on May 14, 1847. The road was constructed along a portion of the eastern property line only a few feet east of the house and farm buildings, but it also divided the 49 acres from Springer's 26-acre tract.

John H. Hunsberger purchased the buildings and 49 acres on August 31, 1848. John Hunsberger was born in 1806 and died on March 16, 1871. Like the Derstine family, Hunsberger was of German lineage and a member of the German Mennonite church. He is buried at Blooming Glen Mennonite cemetery. He may have been the son of an adjoining property owner, Abraham Huntsberger, or even related to the Derstine family—possibly the son of Catherine Derstine and her husband, Henry Huntsberger. At the time of his death, John Hunsberger left a widow, Magdalene, and four daughters including: Esther, wife of Jacob Bishop; Christiana, wife of Reuben Albright; Sarah; and Emma. During his ownership the property had again been divided, now with a small out-parcel of

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approximately one acre at the corner of Dublin and Bypass roads. The Orphans' Court conveyed the remaining 48-acre farm to his daughter, Christiana, and son-in-law, Reuben Albright, who retained the property until 1893.