

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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JAN 12 1983

Continuation sheet

Deer Park Farm

Item number 8

Page

26

F. Significance:

The Deer Park Farm fulfills National Register selection Criteria B and C as the home of James S. Martin, the man who was responsible for some of the major building projects in Newark during the 1840's and 1850's, and as an example of the type of Greek Revival dwelling most commonly built in Delaware during the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Greek Revival style as popularized in Delaware relied most often on a three-story, five-bay, center-hall-plan with a shallowly-pitched roof, and Neo-Classical moldings and porches. Examples of this house form are found elsewhere in the state, most notably in southern New Castle County as the homes of wealthy agriculturists.

James Martin was an active member of the Newark community and contributed significantly to the town's building history. Not only was his own home on the Deer Park Farm one of the more impressive estates around Newark, but several of his other activities resulted in direct benefits for the town.

As a vestryman of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Martin was involved in choosing the design of the church, Newark's first example of Gothic Revival architecture. When construction costs exceeded the budget, he made completion of the church possible by donating \$740.00. In 1841, he had Depot Road cut and trees planted alongside it. This road connected Main Street to the train depot three quarters of a mile south of town. Now called South College Avenue, this road still serves as the major north-south axis of the town. In 1845 he had Linden Hall, a ladies seminary, built. The Deer Park Hotel, the last of Martin's public projects, has continued to serve the Newark community up to the present day. In 1851, the Delaware State Journal said of Martin, "Newark owes him much for his spirit of improvement; he has...spent more than one hundred thousand dollars in improvements, etc. in and about the place."

Thus, this dwelling not only relates Newark to stylistic developments in architecture current in other areas of the state, but is also associated with events that made a significant contribution to the development of Newark.

G. Bibliographical References:

Mary Pat Fraher, "The Deer Park Farm, 1841, to 1976," unpublished History Paper, University of Delaware.

Photographs of Deer Park Farm, University of Delaware Archives.

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Continuation sheet      Deer Park Farm      Item number 8      Page 25

The two-story wing contains the dining room and the kitchen on the first floor and four small rooms on the second floor. Unusual features in this wing are the walk-in safe in the dining room and the water closet on the second floor that gravity-fed water to the kitchen. The holding tank has been removed from the closet, but the well in the basement and the openings in the floor that allowed the bucket and pulley system to pass through illustrate the basic principles involved in this early plumbing system. The kitchen also contains a large brick fireplace on its north wall.

The one-story library wing, which contains only one room, still has one of the pair of bookshelves that were built into the east wall.

The basement under the main block has stone foundation walls and brick partitions. The two partition walls divide the basement into three oblong spaces and actually rise the full three stories of the house at the walls of the center hallway.

Changes to the exterior of the house include the removal of the first and second floor shutters, the cast iron balcony railings and the matching cast iron grilles for the third-floor windows. This railing and a couple of the window grilles are in the possession of the current owner who plans to have them repaired and put back in place. The facade porch previously had a triglyph frieze. Since the stucco has been on the building since at least circa 1890, it should be considered a part of the historic fabric of the building.

E. Historical Background:

The Deer Park Farm was purchased by James S. Martin, a Philadelphia merchant, from Henry Whitery in 1840. The property, costing \$16,250, included 263 acres of land and a stone house (see Anderson House 8. N-5995). Martin may have lived in the stone house until his Greek Revival home was completed in 1841.

The farm was sold at sheriff's sale in 1862. The property passed through several individual owners in the ensuing years and in 1883 was sold for \$20,000 to Justin J. Pie, a French immigrant who had established a successful boiler factory in Pennsylvania.

In 1909, the property was sold to the Improved Order of Redman, a fraternal organization, who used it to provide a home for retired Red Men and their wives. Soon after, the property was divided and the stone house was sold off as a separate property. The surrounding tract of land was not developed until the 1930's, when residential neighborhoods began expanding to this area of town.

In 1953, the house was sold to Theta Chi Fraternity and then, subsequently, to two other fraternities. The Newark Center for Creative Learning located there in 1971 and 1975; it was bought by John Presley, the current owner.

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date entered

Continuation sheet Deer Park Farm

Item number 8

Page 24

The exterior walls are laid up in seven-course common bond with a wide belt-course between the second and third stories. The walls were stuccoed at an undetermined date, painted yellow and then later painted pink. Subsequently, the walls were given a rougher coating of stucco and whitewashed. Dating of the various color schemes is unclear; however, it is known that the building was stuccoed by the last decade of the nineteenth century and that it was pink by the early part of the twentieth century. Both of the wings have received this same progressive wall treatment. The west wall of the two-story wing was never stuccoed, but it was always painted the same color as the house.

The interior of the main block has a wide center-hall on all three stories, grand twelve-foot ceilings for the ballroom and living room on the first floor, lesser proportion in the bedrooms, and two added bathrooms on the second and third floors.

The ballroom, located on the east side of the house, extends the entire width of the building from the facade to the rear wall. Its molded door and window surrounds have rosette corner blocks. Other ornamentation includes wide, molded baseboards, molded plaster crown molding, and paneled pilasters set at the corners and every several feet along the walls. A narrow space at the midpoint of the room between the two pilasters indicates that there may have been sliding doors there to temporarily divide the room. Two arched niches in the east wall, although now empty, originally held stoves. Shadows of the flue openings are discernible and the marble platforms that supported the stoves and the ash traps below them are still intact.

The woodwork in the center-hall is similar to that in the ballroom. The living room, however, is somewhat simpler. It is smaller than the ballroom due to the staircase being located directly behind it. In addition, scars on the walls and ceiling reveal that the living room was once partitioned. The walls are plain, but the room does have plaster-crown moldings and molded door and window surrounds accented with corner blocks. A projecting fireplace with a plain marble surround is located on the west wall. The matching fireplace at bull's-eye the other end of the same wall has been removed.

The four bedrooms on the second floor are each equipped with a small fireplace that has an ash dump at the back of the hearth. The shutes to these ash dumps lead down to the basement. Decorative woodwork on this floor consists of molded door and window surrounds with bull's-eye corner blocks.

The door and window surrounds on the third floor are much narrower and simpler than those found on the lower levels. The five bedrooms on this floor each have a very small fireplace, the opening measuring approximately two-feet square.

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 23

13. (N-5999):

A. Property Name: Deer Park Farm

B. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Deer Park Farm is located at 48 West Park Place on the north side of the street between the intersections with Orchard Road and Indian Road. This nomination includes the building and the property around it. The lot has a frontage of 220.16 feet on West Park Place and a depth of 241.78 feet on Indian Road. (Property Tax Map, City of Newark, No. 26, Lot No. 37) (1.2 acres).

C. Owner: John Presley, 48 West Park Place, Newark, Delaware 19711

D. Property Description:

Dating from 1841, the building known as the Deer Park Farm is a three-story, brick, Greek Revival dwelling built on a center-hall, double-pile-plan. Two original brick wings extend from the rectangular main block - the two-story wing on the west endwall contains the dining room and kitchen; the small one-story on the east endwall may have been used as a library.

The facade of the flat-roofed main block has a symmetrical five-bay arrangement and a full length, one-story porch. Its central entrance consists of a pair of doors, two molded panels each, framed by a tracered transom and sidelights. A pulley system allows the transom to be swung open; the interior shutters on the sidelights have been removed. Six fluted Doric columns support the flat-roofed porch, which displays a full entablature. The ornate cast iron railing that once edged the cornice line allowed the porch roof to be used as a balcony for the second floor. The windows on each of the three floors differ in height. Those on the first floor are six-over-six sash, while the second floor has six-over-twelve, and the third floor three-over-three. The second-story windows are actually pocket windows that allow both sash to be raised above the window frame. This feature is necessary because these eight foot floor-to-ceiling length windows are the only access to the balcony.

The windows on the side and rear elevations are six-over-six sash at the first and second-floor levels, and three-over-three sash at the third-floor level. Several of these openings on the east endwall and the rear elevation are false windows that are actually only indentations in the wall that were covered with permanently-closed shutters. These maintained the exterior symmetry when windows were not desired at those locations on the interior.

