

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 16 1982

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Woodlawn

and/or common The Thomas England House

2. Location SE of Smyrna on US 13

street & number Route 13 NA not for publication

city, town Smyrna X vicinity of congressional district

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 01

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (confirmed 5/21/82 at Kent Co. Board of Assessments)

name Robert Fagan, Woodlawn, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 363

city, town Smyrna NA vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Kent County Administration Building

city, town Dover state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title HABS/Del. Cultural Resource Survey - K-156 has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1960/1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	NA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Woodlawn presents itself as a monumental temple-fronted Greek Revival house, facing west toward State Route 13 about a mile south of Smyrna: two stories high, five bays wide behind a giant portico in pure Doric order. Behind the portico and the first tier of rooms is a second tier representing an earlier single-pile house, itself built in several stages. The end-chimneyed side-facing gables of this rear section are clearly visible in oblique views of the structure. At right is a one-story kitchen wing, with a forward extension added at the same time as the temple front, the whole of the wing is now covered with a low hipped roof. Both gable and hipped sections are roofed with standing seam metal. Overall exterior integrity of the house is good. The massing and the fabric and detail of the principle architectural features are intact, despite remodeling of the stoop, some veneering of original fabric on the secondary elevations, and the addition of a modern restaurant kitchen across the rear. Interior integrity has been affected by modern adaptations and use, but considerable original fabric remains.

The temple front and the rooms behind it, plus the forward extension of the kitchen wing, date from 1853. They are of frame construction. The plain planked pediment with its deep raked cornices and corona sits over a full and correct entablature: architrave trimmed with guttae, frieze of triglyphs and metopes with mutule blocks. They are supported on six fluted, baseless, convex, hollow wooden shafts with proper Doric capitals. A small square rib vault containing corbels, bosses, and a large round attic light is cut into the roof of the center bay of the portico, directly over the entrance.

The grounds are probably considerably less elaborate than they were in the nineteenth century, but the expanse of lawn, mature trees and circle driveway convey something of the earlier ambience. There are three octagonal granite hitching posts with iron rings. The original open veranda has been modified with parapeted steps and metal railings which channel restaurant traffic directly to the front entrance. This is the most conspicuous alteration on the facade, but it is not irreversible, and is in any case overshadowed by the unaltered aspect of the whole.

The entrance itself is double-doored, with side lights and transom. It has a low-peaked lintel matching those of the shuttered six-over-six-light sliding sash windows. The facade is framed by broad, unembellished pilasters formed of narrow boards. The surface of the wall is finished with planks incised with deep, beveled "rusticated joints," and painted with sand-textured paint to simulate coursed ashlar masonry. In contrast to this historic fictive material is the aluminum clapboarding of the side elevations and the kitchen wing. The kitchen wing boasts, on its facade, a peculiar window treatment: a round-arched sash with pointed-arched exterior shutters, set in an elliptical-arched surround. There are two horizontal rectangular attic lights just under the cornice of this section on the front elevation, and three on the side.

(see continuation sheet)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1853 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Woodlawn, with its giant pedimented portico, is the most literal and monumental expression of the Greek Revival style in Delaware domestic architecture. In fact, it was very likely the most literal and monumental expression of this style among nineteenth-century Delaware buildings of any functional type. Old College at the University of Delaware was built with a temple front in 1834, but its pediment was then supported on unfluted columns and an unembellished frieze; these details were not added until 1917. The archaeologically correct if somewhat tardy temple-fronting of Woodlawn, which occurred in 1853, in effect false-fronted an earlier and more typical Delaware house. Thus, for all the importance and uniqueness of its direct quotations from classical Greek architecture, Woodlawn is solidly in the conservative Delaware tradition of judicious conversion to new forms, and judicious retention of old ones. For these illustrative stylistic qualities, and for its effectiveness in conveying the lengths to which a nineteenth-century merchant of means, George Cummins, might go to express his status, Woodlawn is nominated to the National Register on the basis of criterion C for significance; that is, as it embodies in the Delaware context the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

G. W. Cummins was the son of a successful Smyrna merchant who owned boats to bring goods from Wilmington and Philadelphia, and wagons to distribute them from Smyrna Landing to the villages and farms of the central peninsula. Cummins joined his father's firm at an early age, and prospered on the basis of that advantageous beginning. In the late nineteenth century he was one of the wealthiest men in Kent County; his landholdings were reported to total 2500 acres. His brother David was a large landowner too, and the name of Cummins is one of the most frequently appearing ones among the owners identified on the 1868 Beers' Atlas of Delaware. It was this kind of local eminence that was given tangible form in the self-consciously named estates "Glen Fern" and "Woodlawn." The first estate David Cummins remodeled from an eighteenth-century house previously owned by their father; the second George Cummins remodeled, far more monumentally, from a house he acquired by deed of his cousin Elizabeth Morris.

Although it seems to have been left to Cummins to take it to these lengths, the Greek Revival style was certainly not absent in nineteenth-century Delaware. For all the infrequency of its literal application, none of the nineteenth-century picturesque styles can be said to have had much wider effect. Perhaps the clean lines, balance, and edifying associations were particularly congenial to a conservative population which never went all out for the flamboyantly picturesque. In any case, where mid-nineteenth-century Delaware vernacular houses

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers' Atlas of Delaware, Philadelphia, 1868  
 Eberlein, Harold D., and Cortlandt Hubbard, Historic Houses & Buildings of Delaware, Dover, 1962  
 Caley, George, Footprints of the Past, Smyrna, Delaware 1978.  
 Scharf, John Thomas, History of Delaware.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre  
 Quadrangle name Smyrna Quadrangle scale 7.5

### UMT References

A	1 8	4 4 8 6 5 0	4 3 4 8 8 8 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** As noted in item No. 7, justification of boundaries, the north, west, and south boundaries are coterminous with the property lines of the 83'x122' parcel on which Woodlawn stands. The east boundary is 40 west of and parallel to the east property line.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	NA	code	county	code
state	NA	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Wright, Historian

organization Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Pres. date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number Old State House, The Green telephone 302-736-5685

city or town Dover, state Delaware

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Patricia Wright* date 9/10/82

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Melva Byers* Entered in the National Register date 10/19/82  
 for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Woodlawn

Item number 7

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The rear tier of rooms in the main block, like the temple-fronted addition which matched it in width, is one ample room wide on either side of the central hall. The rear part of the house has been described as a five-bay brick, but it appears to have a more complicated history than that. The northern bays are of brick construction, but the two on the south are wooden. Further, the present owner has had occasion to break into the wall separating the front and back rooms on the south side of the house--that is, the original exterior wall of the wooden section--and encountered log construction. On the second story south end, braced framing is still exposed. A surmise as to the building order, therefore, might be a log house, raised to two floors with a frame upper story, enlarged to five bays with a two-story brick addition, the whole eventually deepened to double-pile plan and monumentalized with an archaeologically correct Greek Revival portico.

The central entrance opens into a small vestibule enclosed in this century, and thence to the hall which originally passed straight through the house. (It now passes back to the restaurant kitchen). The curving stair in the rear hall rises in two flights to the second story, with a stained glass window at the landing, and in two more to the attic. The delicate turned balusters and end paneling appear to date from the early-nineteenth century. The front section hall is open; the archway between the two is corbelled with plaster busts of classicizing appearance. There is a niche for statuary at right, in a beveled wall that marks the narrowing of the width of the new hall to that of the old one. This arrangement is repeated on the floor above, although there the corbeling device is a simple scroll-shaped bracket.

The entrances into and between the pairs of rooms on either side of the hall have now not been altered; in fact, of the downstairs rooms only the right rear, which has been turned into a bar, has seen very substantial alteration. It is evident that the woodwork and matelpieces in both front and rear sections was installed to match in 1853. The doorways and windows have shouldered architraves, and in the hallway and in the north rooms culminate in ornamented ogee moldings. The opening between the north rooms is triple-wide. The corresponding opening on the south is the width of an ordinary door. The woodwork is simpler here. The doorway enframement with its plain shouldered architrave and battered profile has an Egyptian Revival quality. The mantelpieces on the north side are white marble, the opening finely cut in the form of a shouldered depressed arch; those on the south are of dark stone. This

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reinforces the impression that the rooms to the north, with their big communicating doorway and their distance from the kitchen, were the formal rooms.

The detail of the former kitchen wing is interesting, with its large hearth and oven and brick floor, and its presently exposed beams. One early hewn beam is visible, and there is a bit of simple early paneling intact to the right of the fireplace. The woodwork of the main rooms upstairs is simpler than those down, and may not all date from the 1853 remodeling. The mantelpiece in the north room of the earlier section, for example, uses a bundled reed motif which could date from the earlier period. In the south room of this section, which contains the upstairs bar, the pegged braced framing of the house has been uncovered and left exposed, infilled with plaster.

A utilitarian addition at right rear, behind and to the left of the original kitchen wing, is of uncertain, though certainly twentieth-century, vintage. Because of its position it is relatively inconspicuous. It probably dates from a period when the house was cut into apartments; it is now used for upstairs restroom and downstairs utility purposes. The modern kitchen was added by the present owner. It also is relatively inconspicuous from the principal angles of view, though it does obscure the rear elevation. It is one story in height, and does not exceed the width of the original building.

Justification of Boundaries

The north, west, and south boundaries of the nominated property were set at the property lines of the 83' X 122' parcel on which the house now stands; the east boundary was set at a line 40 feet west of the rear or east property line. These boundaries preserve the relationship of the house to the highway and the open, landscaped yard between. They exclude, however, the rear parking area and the small modern home of the owner, which is set behind a screen fence in the northeast corner of the lot.

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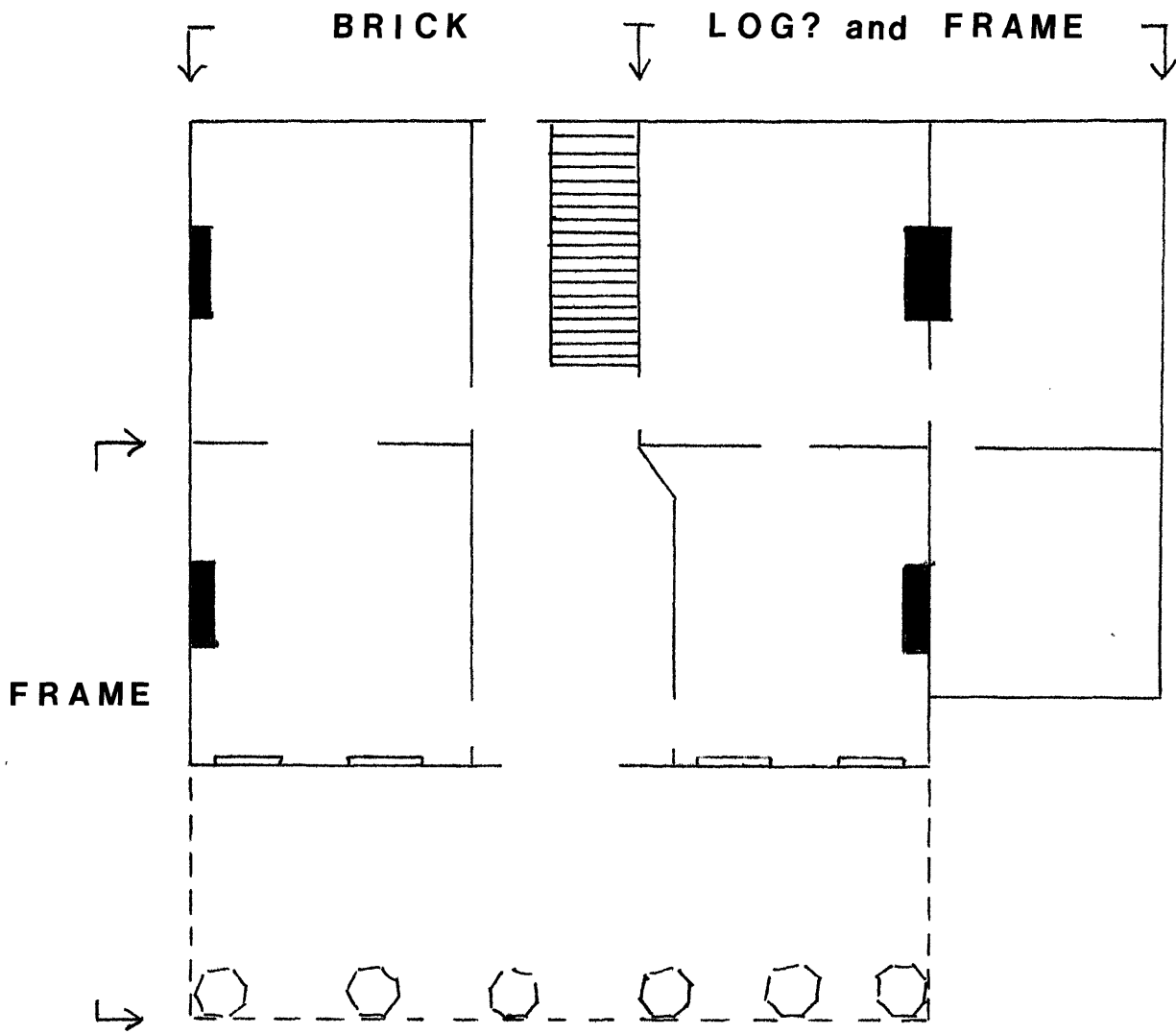
were ornamented at all it was likely to be with a bit of Green Revival detail--most often with a set of eave returns. Greek Revival hybridized with late Federal and early Italianate to form a regional variant referred to as the "peach house" type. And there are a dozen or so examples of "higher-style" architecture which make use of the vocabulary of Greek Revival if not of its syntax. Examples are the Robinson House at Naamans, with its chunky Doric portico fronting a side-facing gabled roof, or Cochran Grange west of Middletown, with the squared two-story columns it has in common with several south Delaware houses.

Why the Cummins house alone is so literally Greek, among these Delaware survivors of the Greek Revival, is impossible to say. Whatever the original associations of the style, by the 1850s it had been pressed into many services. It probably meant something different in the north than in the south, for example, and to guess what it meant to a wealthy merchant in a border state, we would have to know more than we do about George Cummins. Again, by the 1850s Greek Revival was only one of several picturesque options. It may simply have looked stable and grand.

Cummins' adaptation, of course, was of a house which had already gone through a complex building history. A suggestion as to a possible building order is offered in the section seven description. Log, frame, brick, and frame again, passing through at least three and possibly four permutations of plan: it is remarkable that the house in its final state possesses the interior unity that it does. The extra tier of rooms; the determined revision of the existing woodwork and hearths; the slight, somewhat awkward widening of the new entrance hall in an attempt to bridge the gap between exterior and interior scale--these are evidences that the builder appreciated the visual problems inherent in the attachment of a monumental portico to an existing single-pile house. These special problems of recycling an old building are over and above the more basic difficulties, mentioned by virtually every writer on the Greek Revival style, of attempting to convert a monumental form to domestic use. The plucky resolution of the special problems of re-use makes the building that has been called the "Greekest in aspect" among Delaware houses, peculiarly and satisfyingly Delawarean.

Level of Significance

Because Woodlawn is so monumental and so stylistically unusual among nineteenth-century Delaware buildings, the level of significance checked in item 10 is state.



**WOODLAWN**