

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

For NPS use only

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

received OCT 31 1984

date entered NOV 29 1984

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

**1. Name**

historic  BEECHWOLD

and/or common Beechwold

**2. Location**

street & number 500 East Stephen Foster Street  not for publication

city, town Bardstown  vicinity of

state Kentucky code county Nelson code

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 checked="" 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"/> na in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> na being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. & Mrs. V. Richard Heaton

street & number 500 East Stephen Foster Street

city, town Bardstown  vicinity of state Kentucky

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Nelson County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town Bardstown state Kentucky

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980 (Site #NE-B-125)  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

**Beechwold** is an early 20th century Colonial Revival mansion estate located at 500 East Stephen Foster Street in the Nelson County community of Bardstown, Kentucky. Nelson County is in the western reaches of the outer Bluegrass region approximately 45 miles southeast of Louisville. Bardstown, the county seat, was settled in 1780 and has long been a major economic, social and business center for the residents of the region. The county's economy is supported by farming, light industry and tourism, Bardstown being the major tourist attraction.

Of the 639 National Register properties in Nelson County, 395 of them are in Bardstown including two of Kentucky's most famous historic sites, Wickland and Federal Hill ("My Old Kentucky Home"). **Beechwold** faces Federal Hill across U.S. Highway 150 and sits on land that was part of the original Wickland Farm. The Wickland house is less than 1/4 mile to the rear of **Beechwold**.

The seven and one-half acres that comprise **Beechwold** are wooded with many large beech trees from which it derives its name. The large-scale, Georgian-Colonial Revival residence sits at the end of a tree lined 150 yard drive toward the rear of the lot and faces south. Built in 1903 by an unknown architect, it is a two-story, five-bay, common bond brick structure with a hipped roof. The original, double pile, block of the house (approximately 40' X 40') has large central hallways on both the ground and second floors, with eight large rooms and twelve feet ceilings. A two-story, projecting central element on the front, or south facade, has a gable end roof with a half circle fanlight and four doric columns. The resulting porch covers an entrance topped with an elliptical fanlight and sidelights. The same configuration provides the entrance to the second floor porch from the upstairs hallway.

The windows throughout are 9/9 presently but early photographs reveal that they were originally 1/1. They retain flat jack arches. The hipped roof has a single gable dormer centrally placed on both the east and west facades with 6/6 windows.

A one-room, shed roofed, frame porch on the rear, or north, facade was enclosed by the present owners in the 1950s to accommodate a 1/2 bath and T.V. room. The original porte cochere on the east facade was partially screened at that time as was the second floor porch on the front, or south, facade.

The interior woodwork is typically Colonial Revival with chair rails and fluted ionic columns on one of two fireplaces. The vertical passage at the rear of the center hall is three part with two landings. It has straight square balusters and larger square newels.

It was altered in 1935 by the addition of a sympathetic two-story brick, 14' X 40' extension on the west wall by the local builder Ray Parrish. Although not originally heated, a central heating furnace was added in 1935 as well.

The house is the only remaining structure of what was once a 15-acre farm that extended primarily to the rear, or north, of what today is **Beechwold**. That additional property included a 32-stall horse barn and a small residence. Small ranch houses were built on the north border of present **Beechwold** when the property was auctioned in 1950. They are obscured from view by the heavy tree cover.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1903/1925 Builder/Architect Original Unknown/Modifications

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The house, **Beechwold**, is a classic example of the Colonial Revival style that was a major stylistic movement in the early 20th century. It is one of the prime representatives of its period in the city of Bardstown and in the edges of the outer Bluegrass region of central Kentucky. Since its construction, **Beechwold** has always made an important contribution to the heritage of the area, an area rich in architectural resources.

Built in 1903 by an unknown builder, it was the best alternative that Joshua B. and Madge (Nickols) Bowles had after they had been denied the sale in 1902 of Federal Hill across the road. The land for **Beechwold** was purchased from J.C.W. Beckham, Governor of Kentucky, from what was the Wickland estate. The stone was quarried and the bricks fired on the property. A pit remained in the southwest corner of the property until filled in in the 1950s. The Bowles wintered in Florida and so they did not install a heating system. The estate also included a 32 stall horse barn and a small residence in its original 15 acres. After passing to the hands of Thorn and Mary Donnelley (of the Donnelley Printing Company, Chicago) it was again sold in 1935 to Sam and Catherine (Kentucky Democratic National Committeewoman) Conner. During this ownership the house gained a central heating system and a side addition. For the first time it was used as a year round residence. In 1943 it was sold to Harriet and William Culhane, a whiskey broker from Chicago and then again in 1950 to Virginia and Thompson Willett. It was in the 1950s that the slight modifications of enclosing a rear porch and screening the second floor balcony and part of the porte cochere were made.

The house takes its comfortable and convenient open plan from that of the American Foursquare. Its box like shape allows for an arrangement of rooms that provide free flowing movement and a very livable space. The classical revival ornamentation that was so prevalent in Colonial Revival styles is particularly evident in the two-story collonaded and gabled portico. The triangular pediment with fanlight, doric columned porch and heavy cornice molding are all elements of the Colonial Revival period. The hipped roof with gabled dormers and symmetrical placement of the windows contribute as well. **Beechwold** is a good example of the blending of these two styles, the Foursquare and Colonial Revival, that were both so popular between the 1890s and 1920s. Its large-scale massing is, however, drawn from the opulent building patterns of the southern mansion plantations. The fact that it has had so relatively few changes in 81 years can be attributed, in part, to its original size—functionally appropriate for a wide variety of uses. In keeping with the other major residences of Bardstown, although not nearly as early as many, **Beechwold** is an imposing structure in stature and style.

It clearly documents the important Colonial Revival stylistic tendencies abundant during the turn of the 19th century and clearly reflects the geographic location of its size as a southern mansion.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Smith, Sarah B. Historic Nelson County.  
 Hall, David H. "Birth and Evolution of a Landmark, "Beechwold" ", 1984.  
 Personal interviews with David H. Hall & Thompson Willett.  
 Survey of Historic Sites of Kentucky - NE-B-125.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7.5  
 Quadrangle name Bardstown, Kentucky

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point on U.S. 150 1000 feet west of the intersection of U.S. Highways 62 & 150, the southwest corner of the property; moving to the north 534'; then turning roughly 20° northeast and continuing 340' to Sylvan Drive; then turning east 120' along the south side of Sylvan Drive; then turning 90° south for 654' to U.S. 150; then 553' along the highway to the point of origin.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary C. Breeding, Senior Historian

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date September 1984

street & number 12th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David L. Morgan

Executive Director, Kentucky Heritage Council  
 title and State Historic Preservation Officer date October 12, 1984

For NPS use only

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

J. Alvarado Byer date 11-29-84  
 Keeper of the National Register

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

Chief of Registration

'BEECHWOLD'  
BARDSTOWN  
NELSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY  
1984  
FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE



MAP 2

