

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 27 1982

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Norwood House

and/or common Same

2. Location

SW of Lewes DE 9

street & number Delaware Rte. 9 (3000' w. of Rt. 1 intersection) n/a not for publication

city, town Lewes n/a vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Sussex code 005

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

(information obtained 1/5/82 from Sussex Co. tax records)

name Arthur W. Norwood heirs c/o George Norwood

street & number Rt. 4, Box 69-B

city, town Millsboro vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sussex County Courthouse

street & number The Circle

city, town Georgetown state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey-S has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good            | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

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

The Norwood house is located on the north side of County Route 9 approximately one-quarter mile west of State Route 1, in the community of Belltown in the central portion of Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred. It is frame, two stories, single pile, with a rectangular plan and a brick foundation. The exterior walls are weatherboard with cornerboards; they are presently unfinished, although small areas around the cornice seem to have been painted yellow at one time. The wood-shingled gabled roof has a very simple closed cornice rather than a box cornice or exposed rafter ends. The east and west interior gable ends each have a corbelled brick chimney.

The south facade has three symmetrically spaced bays. The first and second floor each have double-hung sashes of two-over-two lights, two on the first floor and three on the second. The windows have flat surrounds and simply molded drip caps. The entrance is central and the door seems to be a replacement. The present door is wooden, painted white, with a large square light; two small recessed panels are above the light, nine recessed panels below. The entrance, like the windows, has plain trim. Both the east and west gable ends have two single-light casement windows at the attic level. The north rear of the main two-story section has two double-hung sashes with two-over-two lights on the second floor. All of these windows, like those on the facade, have plain trim and simple drip caps.

A single story section extends down the entire length of the north rear of the two-story main house; it also is of frame construction and apparently dates from the same period. Its shed roof is wood-shingled and has exposed rafter ends; the exterior walls are of weatherboard. The west end of this section has a more modern double hung sash window with two-over-two horizontal lights and a modern wooden door with three horizontal lights above molded trim. Both the north side and east end have window openings that are boarded up.

An earlier one-story section is located on the north rear. It is of frame construction on a foundation of brick piers. The exterior walls are of wide rough-cut horizontal planking; the gable roof is covered with wood shingles and has a fascia board trim. The north exterior end has a simple exterior brick chimney. Both the east and west sides have single sash windows of six-over-six lights with plain trim. The north gable end has a simple door of vertical boards to the east of the chimney and a similar attic window shutter to the west.

The only outbuilding associated with the Norwood house is a small privy. It is square in shape, has a corrugated metal shed roof and walls of vertical boards. It is in relatively poor condition.

### Boundary Justification - Norwood House

The boundaries of the Norwood House enclose a trapezoidal lot containing two acres, the entire acreage of the parcel on which the house is situated. In view of the fact that no other buildings occupy the parcel, it is felt that the entire lot should be included.

# 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/<br>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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)<br>minority history |
| <b>Specific dates</b>                         | Ca. 1850– ca. 1902                               | <b>Builder/Architect</b>                        | Unknown/E. Johnson                              |   |

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Norwood house is architecturally and historically significant as a virtually unaltered survivor of Belldown, a nineteenth-century "free colored" community which is of unusual importance to our understanding of early Delaware and which is otherwise much changed. The house is sturdily built in an unembellished vernacular mode. It exhibits the original two-story massing and such elements as an outdoor privy and a rear kitchen which was evidently originally a detached early dwelling. It retains its original fabric, including weathered clapboards, multi-light fenestration and corbeled brick chimneys. As a result of this unusual integrity, the house stands as a striking architectural image of the community of which it was a part. The Norwood house is typical of the sort of homes occupied by the more affluent members of the community. It belongs to the second and third generations of Belldown residences; however, the older buildings as well as the contemporary and later ones are by now greatly altered. The Norwood house is therefore not only significant under N.R. criterion C, in embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; it is also significant in terms of criterion A, in its association with events that have made a contribution to the broad patterns of our history. It is the primary architectural symbol for the earliest geographically independent Sussex County community to be developed by and for racial minorities, during a period when suffrage was not permitted them and a large percentage of American Blacks remained enslaved.

Belldown was founded about 1840 by Jacob Bell, a "free colored man." Under Delaware law, a person of color was one identified as being of one-sixteenth or more non-European stock. This included not only Blacks and persons of racially mixed ancestry, but Native Americans; the Norwoods of Indian River, to whom the Norwoods of Belldown were related, are Nanticoke Indians. Although nearby Lewes, the oldest town in Sussex County, had its own clearly defined minority neighborhoods, Belldown represents the first successful effort to create a separate community. Most of the residents of Belldown were dependent upon the nearby town for their livelihoods. Some, however, including the Norwoods, have been substantial landowners and the heirs of families who have owned their own farms at least since the early nineteenth century. William D. Norwood's 78-acre home farm on the edge of Belldown was acquired in 1855; the two-acre plot with one-story house was acquired in settlement of a bad debt in 1861. This property Norwood referred to as his homestead and left to his grandson Arthur in a will dated 1898 and probated 1902. The two-story section was erected shortly thereafter in a traditional vernacular form by a local builder, T. Johnson.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Eckman, Jeannette. Delaware, A Guide to the First State, New York: Hastings House Publ. Co., 1938.

Beers, D.C. Atlas of Delaware. Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868.  
interview with Harry H. Northwood, April 8, 1982

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2 acres

Quadrangle name Fairmount

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

### UMT References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 8 | 4       | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6        | 0 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundaries for the property follow the exact lines of the parcel on which the nominated structure is situated. The parcel is illustrated on Sussex Co. Tax map 3-34-5, parcel 121. It is a slightly irregular rectangle 210 Ft. X 419.1.ft X 210 Ft. by 410 ft. According to Sussex Co. tax records (1/8/82) no metes and bounds descriptions for this parcel has been found.

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 Richard B. Carter, Phyllis A. Hastings

organization Sussex Co. Historical Pres. Planner's Off. date December 1981

street & number Old Courthouse, S. Bedford St. telephone (302) 856-7701, ext 361

city or town Georgetown state Delaware

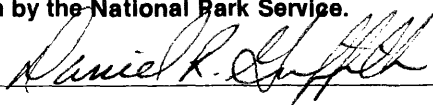
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature




title Deputy/State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/15/82

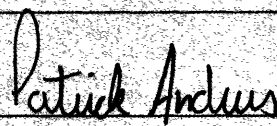
For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

date 10/25/82

Attest:   
Chief of Registration



date 10/19/82

NORWOOD HOUSE  
BELL TOWN, LENOX & REHOBOTH HUNDRED  
SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE  
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

