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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Evan F. Ellis Farm House (1912-13) is an example of the Sears and Roebuck pre-cut "Honor Bilt Modern Homes." The simple features of the house emphasized the nature of the low cost "pattern book" house. The original Sears blueprints, which still exist, were followed closely by the builder. Its rural setting is unusual for a pre-cut house, as the parts had to be transported some distance.

The house is rectangular on plan (26' by 46' without porch), two stories in height, and has a hipped roof with projecting and wall gables. The combination of different sizes of gables, the irregular window layout, and the chamfered front facade with the off center front door give the house a pleasing eclectic appearance. The narrow clapboard and the trim is painted white, and the visible foundation is of concrete blocks. The complete lack of ornamentation and the use of single sash windows are features of a low cost pre-cut house.

The south or front facade is dominated by the front porch which is supported by three simple, "colonial" columns. Interesting features include the chamfered bay on the first story and the mismatched dormers on the second story. The larger, projecting dormer on the southwest corner stands above the large bay on the first story and gives the facade a focal point. It is balanced visually by the front door and the small dormer on the south east corner. This facade corresponds closely to the original Sears and Roebuck blueprints, the chief difference being the replacement of the open porch deck with a solid foundation of concrete blocks. The owner intends to replace the front porch railing.

The east and west facades of the main section are large masses with different sizes of windows in an irregular pattern. There is no differentiation between stories; the upper windows extend up into the gables. Since no differentiation was called for in the original blueprints, this style is probably a function of the low cost pre-cut house as well as being indicative of a trend away from excessive ornamentation. The east and west facades of the rear addition are single story, with shed roofs extending down both sides from the main part of the two story addition. The east side addition contains a window and door, the west side only a window.

The north (rear) facade consists of the two story addition flanked by the single story rooms; the first story is as wide as the rest of the house. There are two first story windows and one small upstairs window placed off to the side of the gable.

The exterior of the main section has undergone few changes. The lack of decorative trim has probably been the reason for this. In 1983, the house was extensively renovated and restored. The siding was repaired and painted, and a new roof put on. The main chimney was torn down and replaced with a metal one, with some negative visual impact. Most of the changes have been made on the rear addition. The downstairs bathroom and a back porch were added by the original owner as he could afford it; this was finished by the 1930's. In 1983 the back porch on the east side was replaced by a full room. This and the bathroom received new shed roofs replacing the older hipped ones.

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

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

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Continuation sheet physical appearance Item number 7 Page 2

The interior of the house follows the Sears blueprints, except that bathroom was deleted, the stairs have two square landings rather than triangular steps, and there was a room built over the kitchen in the rear addition. The first story floor does not have a hallway; the living room serves as the main passage way. Off of the living room is a private parlor, a semi-public bedroom/sickroom, and the dining room. Sliding doors separate the living and dining rooms, giving some space flexibility. The kitchen is placed to the back of the house, evoking an older style of rural house. Upstairs there are three bedrooms off a north-south central hall. All woodwork and floors are of pine and fir.

Changes to the interior have taken place in the single story parts of the rear addition. The downstairs bathroom was added later to the west side. The back porch on the east side was also added later, enclosed in the 1930's and converted to a full room in 1983. There have been no other significant changes to the interior.

The Ellis house stands on the extreme southwest corner of a 120 acre farm one mile north of the town of Bussey. It fronts on a gravel road, but a driveway circles to the back door. The various outbuildings are of no historical or architectural significance. Several large trees and some shrubs surround the house.

## 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** 1912-1913

**Builder/Architect**

unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Evan F. Ellis Farm House (1912-13) is an example of the Sears and Roebuck pre-cut "Honor Bilt Modern Homes." The simple features of the house emphasized the nature of the low cost "pattern book" house. The original Sears blueprints, which still exist, were followed closely by the builder. Its rural setting is unusual for a pre-cut house, as the parts had to be transported some distance.

Evan F. Ellis (1876-1949), the original owner and builder of the house, was born in Galesburg, Illinois. In 1897 he married Bertha A Bonnett and they had two daughters, Mary Pearl (1899-1974) and Marion Armenta (1901-1982). In 1909 they bought a 120 acre farm one mile north of Bussey, Marion County. The cellar of the Sears house was dug in the fall of 1912 and it was assembled, apparently by the owner, in early 1913. In the following years the Ellis family built up a diversified farm, selling both crops and beef cattle. Large gardens and orchards provided the family with much of their food.

After Evan Ellis died in 1949, Bertha and Mary carried on with the help of tenant farmers until the death of Bertha, in 1959. Mary continued to farm until her death in 1974. Ownership of the farm remained within the family, but tenants occupied the house until 1983. At that time, the granddaughter of Evan Ellis, Bonnie Vanderlinden Noah, and her husband Jack, began restoring the house. They plan to move in soon.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet 9-2

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lovilia

Quadrangle scale 7.5'

### UTM References

A 

1	5	5	0	9	3	1	1	0	4	5	6	2	9	1	0	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing								

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

C 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

D 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

E 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

F 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

G 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting						Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

From starting point at southeast corner of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  section 11 Township 74 the boundary runs north along the section line for 90' thence west for 75' thence south for 90' to northern edge of right of way of county dirt road east for 75' to the starting point. The nominated property includes only the house.

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

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Garrison

organization Iowa State Historical Department date 11-15-84  
Office of Historic Preservation

street & number East 12th and Grand telephone (515) 281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

# 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 William C. Garrison

title Executive Director, Iowa State Historical Department date 11/19/84

### For NPS use only

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

for Melissa Byers date 1-3-85  
Keeper of the National Register

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

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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

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Continuation sheet bibliography

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