

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

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

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9. (N-5408):

A. Property Name: Bell Farmhouse

B. Location & Verbal Boundary Description: The Bell Farmhouse is located at 401 Nottingham Road. The property being nominated includes the farmhouse, smokehouse and land upon which they are situated with a north frontage of 149.28 feet on Nottingham Road and a depth of 274.84 feet along Radcliffe Drive (Property Tax Map, City of Newark, no. 12, lot no. 162). Approximate acreage is .94

C. Owner: Edward H. and Katherine P. Berg, 401 Nottingham Road, Newark, DE, 19711

D. Property Description:

The Bell Farmhouse, constructed in the 1840's, is a two-story, gable-roofed brick dwelling designed on a three-bay, center-hall-plan, with an original two-story ell to the rear. Italianate scroll braces were added to the cornice in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Some early-twentieth-century renovations include the addition of a massive, Doric-columned, wrap-around porch and the insertion of two windows with diamond-shaped panes on the east endwall.

The walls are laid in seven-course common bond. Six-over-six sash windows with plain wood lintels and sills light all elevations. Molded two-panel shutters frame the first-floor windows, while louvered shutters flank the windows on the second floor.

The main block has a symmetrical, three-bay facade with a transom-topped center door. Two brick interior end chimneys rise through each endwall; however, all but two of the fireplaces have been blocked. Originally a double-pile-plan, the room partitions on the first floor have been removed creating one large room on either side of the center hall.

The rear wing, although two stories high, is slightly lower than the main block. It has been repartitioned on the interior; however, the corner winder staircase in the southwest corner has been retained. A brick interior end chimney rises through its south endwall.

The basement, which only exists under the main block, has brick partition walls that echo the center-hall-plan above. In addition, a barrel-vaulted wine cellar occupies the northeast corner, several feet below the level of the rest of the basement.

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Three outbuildings are situated to the rear of the house - A brick smokehouse possibly dating to the same period as the house, a late-nineteenth-century frame carriage house, and a late-nineteenth century frame shed.

The smokehouse is a small brick building laid in seven-course common bond. It has a hipped roof with a plain box cornice, and a batten door with strap hinges. The interior is whitewashed, and ventilated on its west side by an open pattern in the brickwork in the shape of a small cross.

The carriage house is a square, two-story building with a pyramidal roof, its frame is mortise and tenoned, and is sheathed with a weatherboard and a subsequent layer of asbestos shingles. A one-story shed wing has been added to its north wall.

The shed is a one-story, gable-roofed building with the doorway located in the north endwall. Its frame is mortise and tenoned and is sheathed with vertical board siding. Like the carriage house, it has recently been covered with asbestos shingles.

**E. Historical Background:**

Between 1838 and 1840, Reverend Samuel Bell, a Presbyterian minister and teacher in a female seminary, bought a total of 134 acres of land on the outskirts of Newark from James and Delia McCullough. The farm property included this site on Nottingham Road. An 1849 map of New Castle County indicates a house on this site owned by S. Bell.

In 1855, the farm was sold to Andrew Donnel by the heirs of Samuel Bell for \$7,500. It remained in the Donnel family for 29 years.

A barn, privy and a tenant house were torn down in the 1950's, when the majority of the property was subdivided and sold off to be used for a housing development.

**F. Significance:**

The Bell Farmhouse is significant as an example of the double-pile Georgian House form, common in the Newark vicinity. Introduced to the area in the latter half of the eighteenth century, this plan remained popular until the mid-to-late nineteenth century. This building fulfills National Register selection Criterion C as a late example of the Georgian plan.

