

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **AUG 31 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Foster/Bell House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 205 East ^{5th} ~~Fifth~~ St. _____ not for publication

city, town Ottumwa _____ vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Wapello code 179

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> 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

name Mr. Walter Heady

street & number Route #2

city, town Batavia _____ vicinity of state Iowa 52533

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Wapello County Courthouse

city, town Ottumwa _____ vicinity of state Iowa 52501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title n/a has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes _____ no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

7. Description

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

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Foster-Bell house is a fine example of Tudor revival architecture from the early 1920's. The large (52' by 96') building represents the "mansion" aspect of that style, often called "Stockbroker Tudor." All the major characteristics of the style are seen on the exterior. Today the original interior of the house reflects its historical association with its builder, Thomas D. Foster, while the altered exterior represents the changed tastes of his daughter, Ellen Foster Bell.

Located on a large, well landscaped terraced lot at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets, it is high on a hill overlooking the downtown area and the Des Moines River valley. Nineteenth century Ottumwans referred to this area as "the bluff", and it was The prestigious neighborhood in the community. A number of large residences are located along Fifth Street, but the Foster/Bell house is the dominant building due to its size and its placement at the top of a sloping lot.

This two and one-half story house was originally built by Thomas D. Foster in 1893 from designs drawn by Ottumwa architect Ernest Koch. The building was basically rectangular in plan and neo-classical in design, with Adams Revival style decorative elements on both the interior and the exterior. In 1923 the exterior was completely remodeled into the then popular Tudor revival style. The architect for the renovation project has not been determined. The exterior reflects the major characteristics of Tudor revival: first floor of random ashlar red sandstone, upper stories of simulated half-timber construction, slate roof, and paired gables with vergeboards. The vergeboards on the primary facade have a foliate rinceau pattern executed in stucco.

The interior was untouched by the 1923 remodeling and reflects the original 1893 design. Woodwork throughout is of oak. The first floor is notable for the baronial great hall with beamed ceiling, panelled walls and imposing two run open staircase at the end which has a tri-partite stained glass window on the landing. The mantel is flanked by pilasters featuring a foliated rinceau relief. Three other fireplaces on the main floor have smaller Adams Revival style mantels. The second floor is totally Adams Revival style in detailing with a particularly nice mantel in the front bedroom.

Recently converted into apartments, the only major alterations are those necessitated by fire code and are reversible. The present owner respects the integrity of 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 1923 **Builder/Architect** Ernest Koch (original house)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Foster/Bell house is a very good example of Tudor revival architecture from the early 1920's, executed on a large scale. The exterior is unaltered from the 1923 original design and exhibits the major characteristics of the style. The structure is of interest locally because it was built by Thomas D. Foster (1847-1915). The remodeled exterior negates the historical significance which linked Foster with the original house, as only the scale of the residence and the interior remain from this period. The location and size of the house comment on the social and economic importance of the Foster and Bell families in the community.

Thomas D. Foster was the chairman and general manager of the John Morrell and Company (meat packing firm) from 1893 until his death in 1915. In 1877 he selected Ottumwa as the site of the main (nationally) John Morrell and Company plant. Morrell's was Ottumwa's largest employer until it closed in 1973. A civic leader, Foster helped establish the East End Presbyterian Church (for his plant workers), the local Y M C A, and was a longtime trustee and benefactor of Parsons College in Fairfield, Iowa. Foster Hall on the former Parsons College Campus (now Maharishi International University), is named for Foster.

Foster's daughter, Ellen Foster Bell, was the owner during the 1923 renovation. She shared her father's civic and humanitarian goals. The house remained in the family until 1953 when it was purchased by the Ottumwa Community Schools for use as Board of Education offices. In 1982 it was purchased by the present owner and converted into apartments.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Ottumwa North

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A	1 5	5 4 9 8 2 0	4 5 4 0 9 0 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

Lot 10 and the N.W 49' 1/5" of Lot 9 in One-Half Block 2, Original Plat. (these lots run from southwest to northeast) 198' depth by 128' width.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date 24 August 1983

street & number Historical Building
E 12th & Grand Ave. 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 Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 8/25/83

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register date 9/29/83

J. Melorus Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Flowers, Fred G. Descriptive Illustrated Review of Ottumwa, Iowa.
Ottumwa, IA: 1890, p 42.

Meagher, Glenn and Munsell, Harry. Ottumwa: Yesterday and Today.
Ottumwa, IA: 1923, p 87.

Montgomery, R. Ames. Thomas D. Foster (1847-1915): A Biography.
Privately printed, 1930.

Ottumwa Courier. 14 July 1892 p 7 c 3 (names architect)
23 Feb 1937 no page (obituary Ellen Foster Bell)
Mar 1982 classified advertisement "For Sale"

Ottumwa: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Issued under the auspices of the
Christian Endeavors of the City, in the interest of the Fifteenth
Annual State Convention of the Iowa C.E. Union, September 25-27, 1900.
Ottumwa, IA: 1900, p 7.

Parsons, Willis Edwards. Fifty Years of Parsons College. Privately
printed, 1925.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Ottumwa: 1897 (p 11); 1925 (p 15).

Waterman, H.L. A History of Wapello County, Iowa. Cjicago:
S.J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1914, Vol 2, pp 30-1.

PHOTOGRAPH

Photograph taken from tower of "new" Wapello County Court House (1892)
showing Foster/Bell under construction. Private collection of
Mrs. Richard Hofmann, Ottumwa, IA.

INTERVIEWS

Mary Alcinda Sharp, 6 May 1980

Marjorie Myers, 21 April 1981

Walter Heady, 16 February 1983.