

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 4 1977

DATE ENTERED

SEP 16 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME** HISTORIC

Belair

AND/OR COMMON

Belair Mansion

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

South side of Tulip Grove Drive, west side  
of Belair Drive

CITY, TOWN

Bowie

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Fifth

STATE

Maryland

CODE  
24

COUNTY

Prince George's

CODE  
033**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

 DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
 IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

 OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
 YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

## PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE  
 COMMERCIAL  
 EDUCATIONAL  
 GOVERNMENT  
 INDUSTRIAL  
 MILITARY  
 MUSEUM  
 PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 RELIGIOUS  
 SCIENTIFIC  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Bowie, c/o Mrs. Audrey C. Scott, Mayor

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Tulip Grove Drive

Telephone: 301-262-6200

CITY, TOWN

Bowie

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 20715

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prince George's County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

STATE

Maryland 20870

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1936

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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

Belair is located on the south side of Tulip Grove Drive west of Belair Drive in Bowie, Prince George's County, Maryland. It is a large, brick mansion of five parts which began with the central block, built circa 1740. The one and two-story, two-part wings were added in the early 20th century.

The principal or garden facade faces south and is seven bays in length. The central three bays are set in a 2½-story, pedimented pavilion which has a bull's-eye window set within the pediment. The north facade has a pediment, but no projecting pavilion. All first and second floor windows have segmental arches of alternating header and stretcher brick and contain 6/6 sash. Between the two floor levels a brick belt course with molded cap extends around all four elevations.

The north, west and east elevations are laid in English bond while the south facade is of Flemish bond with glazed headers. The watertable is laid in English bond on all elevations. There is a heavy modillion cornice on all elevations; roof pediments at both the front and rear facades display the same treatment. The roof plan is a hip-on-hip; there is a hip-roofed dormer window on both side elevations and one on each side of the pediment on the south facade.

The house is set high on a brick foundation, and the watertable has a chamfered top course. The chimneys at the east and west ends are contained within the walls but project slightly from the outside surface of each.

The entrance door of the south facade has a pediment supported by scroll brackets and trimmed with dentil molding and is framed by fluted pilasters. The main entrance of the north facade has a simple frame with fluted pilasters, but is sheltered by a fine pedimented portico with dentil cornice supported by tapered columns with Ionic capitals.

The entire interior of the main block was renovated in the early 19th century; all detail (including architraves, stairs, doors, cornices, mantels, jambs and sash) is of the Federal period. The floor plan has remained largely unaltered as the partition walls are of brick. Two central halls, the smaller north one containing the stairs, are flanked by a livingroom on the west and a diningroom and study on the east (see floor plan). The halls, separated by a large arch, have chair rail, plaster cornice and paneled window jambs and shutters. There is a plaster medallion from which is suspended a crystal chandelier in the south hall. The other rooms have similar, simple treatment with variations in mantels and cornice.

See continuation sheet #1

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Horse Racing
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The central (original) portion of Belair is characteristic of a transitional period in Georgian architecture. The plain, segmental-arched windows and the absence of a portico suggest earlier work. However, Belair's low-pitched, hip-on-hip-roof and projecting central pavilion are typical of later Georgian buildings.

Home of two Maryland governors and a home of American thoroughbred racing, Belair also boasts some intact falls (south side) and early plantings, mainly trees, including the magnificent Tulip Grove approach. The trees at Belair include tulip poplars, hollies, American elms, eastern redcedars, a bur oak, a white oak, an American beech, a cucumbertree and an ailanthus. The ailanthus is the state champion and the cucumbertree, a type of magnolia, is the national champion.

Belair was built between 1742-1746 by Benjamin Tasker Sr. for Samuel Ogle, fourth proprietary Governor of Maryland following the restoration of the proprietary government in 1715. The architectural evidence supports a building date of this period. The style and construction detail at Belair can also be observed in other Georgian houses with documented building dates as early as 1740 (e.g., St. Thomas Manor House, 1740, Charles County, Maryland).

The land on which Belair stands was patented to Robert Carville of St. Marie's City in August 1683 as "Catton". (Patents, Liber SD#A: folio 39) having done nothing to develop the tract, Carville, in 1698, sold it to Colonel Henry Ridgley. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber TL 2: folio 673 (1699-1707)) By the time the latter died in 1710 he had erected a substantial house on "Catton" (Inventories and Accounts, Liber 32A: folios 68-73) which he willed to his widow, Mary Ridgley. (Wills, Liber 13: folio 89 (1710)) When she married the Reverend Jacob Henderson sometime before 1713, that gentleman gained ownership of the estate.

As a result of a resurvey granted to Henderson in 1718, the tract was enlarged from 500 acres to 1,410 acres and, in a new deed issued to Henderson in 1721, its name was changed from "Catton" to "Belair." (Patents, Liber CE 1: folio 356) In March 1737 Henderson sold Belair for 500 Pounds to Samuel Ogle and Benjamin Tasker, Sr. as partners. A few months later, in August, Ogle paid Tasker 250 Pounds for his half and became the sole owner. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber PL 8: folios 490, 539, 1731-1737).



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 4 1977
DATE ENTERED	SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

As stated above, the wings were added early in the 20th century, probably toward the end of the first quarter. The wings are three bays long and two stories high with a hip-on-hip roof. A single chimney is enclosed in the exposed end of each. Although slightly lower in height than the central block, these wings are also set on high brick foundations. Architectural detail displayed on the exterior of the main block has been repeated on the two wings, i.e., the watertable, belt course and cornice. However, the three windows at the first floor level are set in semi-circular, arched, recessed panels. The one-story hyphens connecting the wings to the main block are one bay in width and have A-frame roofs. The interior detail of these additions was copied from that of the main house.

At present the building is being used as offices for the City of Bowie. No permanent alterations have been made in renovating the building for its present adaptive use; all new materials introduced can be easily and completely removed.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 4 1977
DATE ENTERED	SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Samuel Ogle came to Maryland as governor in 1731. He served three non-consecutive terms in that office before his death in 1752. Tasker, who held at one time or another many positions in the provincial government, served as interim governor from May 1752 until the arrival in the province of Horatio Sharpe in August 1753.

Ogle married Tasker's daughter Anne in July 1741 when he was 47 and she was 18. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber EI3: folio 338 (1737-1744)) The couple spent from early 1743 until early 1747 in England and apparently during their absence the central rectangular section of Belair, under the guidance of Benjamin Tasker Sr., was built. Upon their return the Ogles added a detached two-story, 40 ft. square, brick building, for use as an office and kitchen, near the east end of the mansion. (Chancery Court, Liber 13: folios 59-114)

On Ogle's death in 1752, the two Benjamin Taskers, senior and junior, were named as executors of his estate and guardians of his minor son, Benjamin. (Wills, Liber DD 7: folio 330 (1751-1754)) His widow Anne and their three surviving children spent a couple of years at Belair immediately following Ogle's death. Benjamin Tasker Jr., however, was managing the estate and after the four Ogles moved back into Annapolis he assumed full possession. (Chancery Court, Liber 13: folios 59-114)

Tasker Jr., also active in the political life of the province, was one of Maryland's delegates to the Albany Congress of 1754, the first attempt on the part of the colonists to deal jointly with a common problem. There he served on a committee - with Benjamin Franklin, among others - which was charged with the task of drawing up a plan for a central government of all the colonies. At the adjournment of the congress the plan adopted was submitted to the various legislatures for approval. While it met with rejection, 33 years later echoes of its provisions surfaced again at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. (Proceedings of Commissioners from 6 Provinces met at Albany ANNO 1754 ON INDIAN AFFAIRS - Manuscripts of Sir William Johnson, pp. 317-360)

Through their association on the committee, Benjamin Tasker, Jr. and Benjamin Franklin became friends and, when the latter came to Annapolis in the spring of 1755, he made a visit to Belair. Governor Horatio Sharpe was also a guest in the mansion on a number of occasions.

See continuation sheet # 3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 4 1977
DATE ENTERED SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

During his tenure Tasker Jr. initiated wide-spread improvements on Belair, i.e., he sank a well, added the gutters and downspouts (the crown on one of the latter bears the initials "BT" and the date "1757"), built a new barn, cider mill and milk house and made extensive plantings including the avenue of tulip poplars which still stands. (Chancery Court, Liber 13: folios 59-114)

Although Tasker Jr. had been in charge of Belair since Ogle's death, it wasn't until 1757 that the property was deeded to him. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber BTL: folio 247 (1756-1759) When he died in 1760 his father took over the reins at Belair. A deed drawn up in 1765 gave Tasker Sr. title to the estate. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber DD 3: folio 520 (1763-1765) At his death in 1768 his will directed that his real estate holdings be sold for the benefit of his widow and his daughters. (Wills, Liber 36: folio 482)

By 1770 young Benjamin Ogle had reached his majority and he requested the return of Belair from the heirs of Benjamin Tasker, claiming it was rightfully part of the inheritance from his father, Samuel Ogle. His contention was that the Taskers had drawn up only deeds of trust and that they had intended that he, Ogle, should eventually have the choice of taking the money involved in the transactions or the possession of Belair. To press his claim he brought suit in the Court of Chancery against his mother, his two aunts and their husbands. The case extended over several years' time but his efforts were finally successful. The Court decreed that Belair was legally his in 1774.

Ogle lived mainly in Annapolis and in June 1781 he was commissioned a third Lieutenant in Captain Samuel Harvey Howard's Independent Company of Militia in that city. (Archives of Maryland - Volume XLV, p. 479) His name was also on the Prince George's County list of persons taking the Oath of Fidelity in 1778.

From 1798 to 1801, Ogle served three terms as Governor of Maryland. Prior to that time, however, by deed of gift in 1796, he had turned Belair over to his son, Benajmin Ogle II. (Provincial Court Deeds, Liber JG4: folio 285 (1796-1797) Governor Ogle died in July 1809 and was buried on his farm near Annapolis. (Maryland Gazette, 12 July 1809)

See continuation sheet # 4

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 4 1977

DATE ENTERED SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The son, Benjamin II, died at Belair in 1844 and was interred in the family burial ground located a short distance from the mansion. By his will, his widow was to have control of his real property but, at her death, Belair was to be divided into two parts, his son, George C. Ogle, to receive the portion on which the mansion stood. (Prince George's County Wills, Liber PC: folio 256) That division was made in April 1855. (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber EWB 1: folios 163, 258)

During the mid and late 1800's times were hard in Prince George's County. Several times it was necessary for George C. Ogle to mortgage Belair as security for his debts. When he was unable to make payment on one of those mortgages, the heirs of its holder sued. A decree of the Prince George's County Court ordered Belair sold and at a sale on 16 May 1871, Thomas Mumford and Henry A. Tayloe were the successful bidders. (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber HB 5: folio 180)

Under provision of Benjamin Ogle II's will his daughter Rosalie had been granted a room in the mansion for life, as long as she remained single. Since Tayloe and Mumford lived in Virginia they permitted their overseer and his family to occupy the main house. When she found she could no longer stay there alone with such "disagreeable people" Rosalie moved out and joined her brother in Baltimore. There she sued the new owners for an annual allowance to provide a room comparable to the one she had relinquished. Tayloe and Mumford, claiming they had never asked Rosalie to leave, won the verdict. (Prince George's Equity Case #884)

The remainder of the 19th century provided a series of owners for Belair; Edward Rutter in 1877 (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber HB 12: folio 639); Jasper C. Shriner in 1890 (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber JWB 14: folio 13); Christian Bachmann Herr in 1892 (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber 21: folio 173); Benjamin Hardisty in 1896 (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber JWB folio 36).

The now famous Woodward era began in 1898 when James T. Woodward purchased the mansion and 371.4 acres from Benjamin Hardisty for \$10. and an undisclosed balance. (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber JB 2: folio 402) Acquisition of Belair by the Woodwards began a reign of Maryland horse racing history that lasted for over

See continuation sheet # 5



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 4 1977

DATE ENTERED SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

half a century.

Belair is recognized as the only great colonial estate where breeding for the course has been carried on during three centuries. As a symbol of that rich and illustrious association, the Belair Stable, built around the turn of the 20th century, has been placed on the National Register.

James T. Woodward was responsible for the construction of the hyphen and wing added to the west end of the original house. Never having married, when he died in 1910, he left his extensive fortune to his nephew, William Woodward Sr. (Annapolis Evening Capital - 18 April 1910) Sometime before 1914, William carried out some alterations which resulted in the hyphen and wing now standing at the east end of the mansion, thus completing its evolution into a Maryland five-part house.

Following Woodward Sr.'s death in 1953, Belair passed to his son, William Woodward Jr. (Baltimore Evening Sun, 7 October 1953) It was only two years later that the younger Woodward died tragically. To expedite settlement of his estate and to establish trust funds for his two minor sons, Belair was placed on the market. Eventually the historic 2,280 acre estate was sold to Levitt & Sons, one of three bidders, who donated the house to the City of Bowie in 1964 for use as city government offices. (Prince George's County Deeds, Liber 3059: folio 578)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 4 1977
DATE ENTERED	SEP 16 1977

Belair Mansion  
Bowie,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 6

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

"Belair Mansion." Folder published by the City of Bowie by the Rev. Ralph Welsh and Shirley Baltz.

Hammond, John Martin. Colonial Mansions of Maryland and Delaware. 1914.

Rinn, David. A Survey of Existing 17th and 18th Century Buildings in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Report by J. Richard Rivoire (1973) and inventory form by Michael Bourne (1968) for Belair (PG-18).

Files of the Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis.

Original research in the Maryland State Hall of Records, Annapolis, and the Prince George's County Court House, Upper Marlboro.

History of Belair, by the Bowie Bicentennial Committee  
(Publication Pending).