

VLR-7/6/71

NRHP-1/7/72

09-7

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| STATE: VIRGINIA | |
| COUNTY: BEDFORD | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
FANCY FARM

AND/OR HISTORIC:
FANCY FARM

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
W side of Rt. 43, .1 mi. N of intersection with Rt. 682

CITY OR TOWN:
(Bedford vicinity)

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| STATE VIRGINIA | CODE 51 | COUNTY: BEDFORD | CODE 019 |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | _____ | _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. Eric Fessel

STREET AND NUMBER:
Fancy Farm, R F D 2, Box 79

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| CITY OR TOWN: BEDFORD | STATE: VIRGINIA | CODE: 51 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURT BOOK, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
BEDFORD COUNTY COURT HOUSE

STREET AND NUMBER:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| CITY OR TOWN: BEDFORD | STATE: VIRGINIA | CODE: 51 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

STREET AND NUMBER:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| CITY OR TOWN: WASHINGTON | STATE: D. C. | CODE: 11 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|

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7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

FANCY FARM, BEDFORD CO.

Fancy Farm was originally a plantation of over a thousand acres, however it now includes only 15 acres, taking in the house and remaining outbuildings. The house was completely restored in 1969-1971 under the direction of architect J. Everette Fauber of Lynchburg, Virginia, and now serves as the residence of the present owners.

The house and its outbuildings are set on a small hill behind Kelso Mill. The immediate yard is dotted with very large oaks, and from it is obtained a magnificent panorama of the famed Peaks of Otter. The gracefully proportioned two-story, five-bay brick dwelling is a competent essay in Late-Georgian architecture. The comparatively small-size bricks of its walls are laid in Flemish bond on all four walls both above and below the water table. Simple jack arches are over all the windows. Crowning the structure is a metal covered gable roof out of which projects two interior end chimneys with corbeled caps and cement bands. Surrounding the base of the roof is a modillion cornice which extends across the base of both gables to form pedimented gable ends. The central three bays on each front project slightly and the cornice above breaks accordingly -- suggesting that pediments were originally intended to crown these projections. There is, however, no documentary or structural evidence to indicate that such pediments were ever in place.

During the restoration a later porch was removed from the south front to reveal the very handsome original doorway. This doorway features a pediment with open tympanum supported on Ionic pilasters. The semi-circular transom above the door is ornamented with serpentine tracery. Before the north front was remodeled during the restoration, a small, single door serving as a main entrance, was located at ground level directly below the central first floor window. In the restoration this doorway was widened to a double door so that now the window above it appears as a very tall transom. Also, the two "blind" windows on either side of this window were glazed after being covered with permanently closed louvred shutters. In the rest of the windows all of the old 6-over-6 sash was removed and replaced with 12-over-12 sash.

The original interior woodwork of Fancy Farm is one of the chief glories of the house. In the drawing room a full entablature supported on fluted Ionic pilasters set on bases extends around all four walls. The projecting chimneypiece has an Adamesque mantel with carved urns and an over-mantel flanked by scrolled volutes. On either side of the chimneypiece are recessed arches topped with keystones. Like the mantel, the door opposite the chimneypiece is ornamented with urns as well as swags and rosettes. Beyond the drawing room is a less ornate dining room. The northeast room has been converted into a kitchen and the northwest room is now fitted with bookshelves and serves as a library.

One of the most curious features of the house is the arrangement of the stairway. One enters the stair hall from the exterior at ground level and then proceeds either up or down only a half story to reach the first floor or the basement levels.

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FANCY FARM (Bedford Co.)

7. Because of the location of the wall between the northeast room and the stair hall the short run to the first floor is over ten feet wide. The stair from the first to the second floor is a "Flying" or invisibly supported stair vaguely similar in scheme to the famous stair in Shirley, Charles City County, Virginia. The stair is fitted with molded hand-rail, turned balusters, and scrolled stair ends. The second floor, like the first, retains nearly all of its original woodwork, however some readjustments for modern convenience have been made in several of the rooms.

Fancy Farm's remaining outbuildings are generally in poor or ruinous condition, although there are plans to renovate them. The outbuildings include a brick storehouse, a frame kitchen with a stone chimney, and a frame quarters also with a stone chimney.

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

FANCY FARM (History)

Fancy Farm stands as one of the finest Late Georgian houses in Virginia. The architectural interest of Fancy Farm is enhanced by the fact that a house of its quality should have been built in what was almost frontier territory. It can be said that the house's elegant drawing room vies as one of the most beautiful and sophisticated rooms of its period in the Commonwealth.

The builder of Fancy Farm, Andrew Donald, was a Scotsman by birth and apparently came to Bedford County sometime before the Revolution. He was one of several Scottish merchants who settled around the Bedford town of New London in that period. He was the only son of William Donald, a wealthy merchant of Greenock, Scotland, who left his son his entire fortune in 1788. With his inherited wealth, as well as his income from his own enterprises, it is not surprising that Donald should have established for himself such an elaborate seat as Fancy Farm. The house, erected in the 1780's, was hardly the typical pioneer farmhouse of its time and place, but an elegant expression of a man with taste and refinement. Apparently because the place stood in such contrast to the rest of the area, its owner was moved to give it its unusual name.

Donald died in 1806 and his estate was left to his two children, Benjamin and Geils, who in 1817 sold the farm to Thomas Dillard. At Dillard's death in 1820, the place went to Issac Otey, one of Dillard's executors. Otey, in turn, sold the property to his son-in-law, Paschal Buford, and in 1823 Buford sold it to John D. Scott. Scott kept the farm for ten years and then sold it to Robert N. Kelso. That same year (1833) Kelso sold Fancy Farm to Robert Kelso of Prince Edward County. The property remained in the hands of the Kelso family for eighty-eight years, the longest period of single family ownership yet recorded for Fancy Farm. During their tenure the Kelso's operated a mill near the house and the small settlement that grew up around the mill came to be known as Kelso's Mill.

During the War Between the States the Kelso family was temporarily forced to vacate Fancy Farm while it was used as the headquarters of Union General David Hunter in his Lynchburg campaign. Colonel David M. Strother, Chief of Staff to General Hunter and better known by his pen name "Porte Crayon", took note of Fancy Farm in the June 15, 1864 entry in his journal when he wrote, "We took headquarters in the house of one Kelso, an old-

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FANCY FARM (History)

8. fashioned brick house handsomely located in a grove of oaks with a full view of the Peaks of Otter."

In 1921 Fancy Farm was purchased from the Kelso family by the late Sir George Reresby Sitwell, Baronet, of Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire, England, for his nephew, Captain Herbert Cecil Fitz Roy Sitwell. Captain Sitwell's father had come to America and settled in Bedford County, sending his son to Virginia Military Institute. During World War I, while Captain Sitwell was convalescing in England after being gassed, Sir George offered to buy a farm for his nephew wherever he wanted. Sitwell chose Fancy Farm and the property was bought by his uncle and owned by Sitwell for the rest of his life. Following Sitwell's death the place was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Miller Overstreet, and from them it was purchased by the present owners.

