

Form No. 10-300

VLR- 9/21/76 NRHP- 4/13/77  
(Rev 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATE ENTERED APR 13 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Cornwell Farm  
AND/OR COMMON  
Cornwell Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
9414 Georgetown Pike

CITY, TOWN  
Great Falls

STATE  
Virginia

XX VICINITY OF  
CODE  
51

NOT PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Tenth (Joseph I. Fishes)  
COUNTY  
Fairfax  
CODE  
059

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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Opstad

STREET & NUMBER  
9414 Georgetown Pike

CITY, TOWN  
Great Falls

X VICINITY OF

STATE  
Virginia 22066

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC  
Fairfax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Fairfax,

STATE  
Virginia 22030

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (see continuation sheet #1)

TITLE  
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE  
1958  
XX FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN  
Washington, D.C.

STATE

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER

6

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1974; State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia

## 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

Cornwell Farm's residence is a handsomely proportioned two-story, brick house of unusually refined craftsmanship. Although erected in the period when the Greek Revival style was in vogue, the house is architecturally conservative having an outline more Georgian in character. Contributing to this earlier appearance is the broad hipped roof with its long ridge. Also Georgian in feeling are the regular five-bay facades with their minimum use of architectural elaboration.

One of the most outstanding features of the exterior is the superb Flemish-bond brickwork on the south or main facade. Ranking with the most refined brickwork of its type in the state, the carefully tooled joints have an almost mathematical precision. The side and rear walls, on the other hand, are laid in three-course American bond of no particular distinction. The house is given a somewhat provincial quality by the use of a houndstooth brick cornice rather than a more academic molded cornice of wood. The cornice, however, is an interesting example of masonry decoration. Other brickwork details include the splayed brick arches over the windows on the north facade and the basement. The bricks in the arches are ordinary ones --not gauged as one would expect to find in an eighteenth-century house. The facade and west side windows are distinguished by their deep wooden lintels and turned corner blocks. Repointing around the lintels suggests that the lintels may have been an early alteration, however it could be mere repair. All the windows of the first and second floors have six-over-six sashes and have very simple, molded trim.

The outside dimensions of the house are 50 feet by 33 feet. It is entered through similar doorways on either front; both have rectangular transoms and sidelights. The transom on the north side is false because of the crossing of the stair landing at the transom level. The ornamental porch sheltering the south entrance is not original but is in keeping with the architectural style of the house. The only other significant exterior change is an addition on the east side. The  $1\frac{1}{2}$  story addition consists of a gambrel-roofed hyphen connecting a gabled terminal wing set perpendicularly to the main house. The addition, like the south porch, was added in 1936-37 when the house was restored under the supervision of Washington architect Theodore W. Dominick. It was intended that a matching wing be added to the west side making the house a fairly grand five-part dwelling, but this scheme was never carried out. The restoration did include, however, the rebuilding of the west wall which was in a state of near collapse.

The interior is remarkably well preserved considering that the house had stood abandoned for a number of years prior to its restoration. The first floor has a center-passage plan with two rooms on the east side and a large parlor on the west. The graceful stair rises against the hall's west wall and has three square balusters to a tread, and a flattened oval handrail. The turned newel post is made distinctive by its large, bun-like top turning. The doorways in the hall, as well as in the adjacent rooms, have symmetrically molded trim

(see Continuation Sheet #2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

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7. DESCRIPTION

with paneled corner blocks. The parlor mantel, with its carved eagle and carved jugs, is of the period of the house but was taken from a tavern located near Fort Ticonderoga, New York, and was installed in the house during the restoration.

The second floor originally had four bedrooms (each with its own fireplace) and a central hall. The plan was modified somewhat during the restoration for the installation of bathrooms, closets, and a dressing room. The mantel in the northwest room, a fine example of a provincial Federal mantel, was installed during the restoration.

Despite the considerable development of Fairfax County during recent years, Cornwell Farm retains a pleasant rural setting. Passing in front of the house is the Georgetown Pike, the first road in Virginia to be designated a Virginia By-way by the State Highway Department. The house is set in a grassy yard bordered by wooden fences and informally planted shrubbery and large trees. To the north of the house is a broad, level lawn beyond which are open fields.

CL

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) (scenic)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1831

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cornwell Farm residence survives as a well-preserved example of northern Virginia antebellum plantation architecture. It is scenically important in that it is the major architectural element to be seen along the historic Georgetown Pike, the first road in the state to be designated a Virginia By-way. Built in 1831 the house, with its Georgian outline, displays the architectural conservatism characteristic of the region. Despite its backward-looking aspect, the house is well-crafted--its Flemish-bond brickwork is exceptionally fine, being of a quality comparable to the finest townhouses of Georgetown or Alexandria.

Cornwell Farm was established on land that was originally part of Lord Fairfax's Great Falls Manor. Sections of this land were bought and made into a farm by John Jackson as early as 1801. Thirty years later Jackson began construction of the present house to serve as a home for his daughter, Julia Jackson Davis (Mrs. Charles M. Davis). The house apparently was considered a high-quality building in its time, for its first insurance valuation, \$1850.00, was a comparatively high figure. At the time the house was constructed, the property was known as the Mine Ridge tract. It was later called Fairview and it acquired its present name after the War Between the States when the property was purchased by B. F. Cornwell.

During the War Between the States Union soldiers bivouacked on the property. Prior to the restoration the names of soldiers in companies from New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and other northern states remained inscribed on the whitewashed plaster walls. The house stood abandoned until 1936 when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thompson Pell. Mr. Pell, a career foreign service officer, was of the Pell family of Fort Ticonderoga, New York. The Pells engaged Washington architect Theodore W. Dominick to restore the house and make additions. The present owners of Cornwell Farm, which now includes 8.562 acres, are Mr. and Mrs. Donald Opstad.

CL  
MTP

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Cornwell Farm," in Yearbook, Fairfax County Historical Society, Inc., Vol VII.  
Fairfax, County of. "Historic Landmarks Survey". June 30, 1971.  
Fairfax County Land Tax Books, 1795 - 1836; Will Book S, p. 495 (1838).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8.562 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 303250 4318080  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C         

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

August 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3143

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

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

TITLE Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 21 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

Virginia Landmarks Register

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

VIENNA QUADRANGLE  
VIRGINIA-MARYLAND  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

55002 (11 SW  
(ROCKVILLE))

