

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

22

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

## 1. Name

historic Otwell

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Otwell Road  not for publication

city, town Oxford  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Talbot code 041

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. John E. Jackson

street & number Otwell

city, town Oxford  vicinity of state Maryland 21654

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Courthouse

street & number Washington Street

city, town Easton state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust  
Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland

# 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
( good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
fair	___ unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The brick house is composed of two major parts, the first constructed around 1720-1730, and the other part around 1800-1810. The earliest portion of the building consists of the westerly gambrel roofed structure with a T-shaped plan. At the base of the T, at the east gable end of the earlier part, are appended three small sections with varying roof lines, constructed in the first decade of the 19th century. Beginning with the top of the T (west elevation), the building is three bays long with three windows on the first story and two dormers, asymmetrically placed above. Both the north and south gable ends are two bays deep with two windows on each story and a flush chimney rising between the pairs; on the south gable the pairs of windows are aligned exactly while the north gable windows on the second story are placed slightly closer together than their first story counterparts. Each gable end features, in addition, jack arch lintels over the windows and two symmetrically placed ventilators (grouped openings in the brickwork) on either side of the corbel-capped chimney just under the eaves line. On the east side of the head of the T, flanking the stem, are two dormer windows, the northernmost of which tops a window in the first story. The sash consists of 12/12 panes in the first story fenestration and 6/6 in the dormers and gables. The interior retains the original floor plan but the decorative detailing was extensively restored following a fire in 1958.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Otwell is situated on the end of the neck of land located between Goldsborough Creek and Trippe Creek off the Tred Avon River near Oxford in Talbot County, Maryland. The house features views over both Goldsborough Creek and the river.

The principal entrance to the earlier portion of the house occurs on the north facade (on the stem of the T) and is characterized by a handsome sheltering portico (gable roofed, with two turned supports, two half-posts at the wall and an architraved pediment) flanked by a large window to the east and a small nine-paned casement located high in the wall to the west. Dormers are located above the windows. The gambrel roof is covered with wood shingles as in the T. An enclosed chimney with corbelled brick cap occurs in the east gable.

The south facade of the earlier portion is partly covered by a modern shed-roofed enclosed porch, but on the original facade is a door with two windows on the east and a window to the west later replaced by an entrance to a lavatory addition. Dormers are located above the three windows.

On the east gable end of the earlier T-shaped portion described above, three adjoining wings were added during the first decade of the 19th century. They are linearly successive and consist of a two-story, one bay wide, stairhall; a two-story square structure three bays across each side on the first story and one on the north facade second story and two on the south second story; and a concluding 1 1/2 story, two-bay brick structure. These three sections appear to date from the same period as they all feature the same type of brickwork and are bonded together.

United States Department of the Interior  
 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
 Inventory--Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 1

Otwell  
 Oxford vicinity  
 Talbot County, Maryland

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The two-story center section possesses more refined woodwork and taller windows than the easternmost wing, with 9/9 pane sash on the first story and 9/6 on the second story pair of windows which are symmetrically placed but not aligned with the first story fenestration on the south facade. The north facade of the center section features a central entrance (sheltered by a modern shed-roofed porch) flanked by 9/6 pane windows on either side on the first story and a central 6/6 window on the second story. On the east gable end of the central section, two widely spaced 6/6 second story windows occur on either side of the juncture of the east wing's roof, and on either side of the flush chimney at eaves level are two small rectangular covered vents. Both the central section and east wing feature corbelled brick cornices typical of the early 19th century.

The east wing's south facade is articulated by an entrance door flanked to the east by a 6/6 window and to the west by a small, modern bathroom window on the first story and two modern, gable-roofed dormers are placed above the door and easternmost window. On the north facade, two windows occur on the first story with a modern, centrally placed dormer protruding from the shingle roof. The east gable end is marked by two small attic windows on either side of the flush chimney.

On the interior of the earlier T-shaped portion are situated two parlors in the west part separated from the dining room by a squarish stairhall which is accessible from the outdoors via the principal entrance on the north facade. This floor plan itself has not changed appreciably since it was constructed.

The exterior form was apparently altered in the early 19th century. Based largely on the presence of a water shed course on the north gable end chimney, located below the present roof, it appears that Otwell was originally a 1½ story dwelling with a gable roof rather than a gambrel. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax lists ten windows on the first story, eight dormers, four small gable windows, and the small window which lights the stair. Even in early photographs, the number of windows does not correspond to the tax list, possibly indicating that the roof change occurred after 1798, or that some of the windows were altered at a later date.

Other reasons for assuming such alterations to the earlier T-shaped portion are that the northwest corner of the stem of the T, the north gable end and the intervening wall are constructed of Flemish bond with glazed headers above a plain water table. The west and south and southeast corner of the stem of the T are laid in common bond with smaller brick and no water table. From structural evidence in the basement, the entire cellar appears to have been constructed at one time, even though the cellar floor was lowered and the walls underpinned around 1946. One curious feature exists near the north gable where the floor level is higher and the chimney base is off center, but a similar situation occurring at Troth's Fortune (T-50) may explain it.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory--Nomination Form

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

Otwell  
Oxford vicinity  
Talbot County, Maryland

## DESCRIPTION (Continued)

There the cellar extends only under a portion of the house, and the off center chimney suggests that there was a secondary stair in the northwest corner of the dwelling. Another early feature of the building which has parallels with other Eastern Shore buildings is a ground-level basement entrance (as occurred at Cloverfield, QA-2) beneath the small window adjacent to the north entrance.

In the mid-twentieth century, Otwell underwent two periods of restoration. In 1946 the interior of the west wing was remodeled, but most of this burned in a severe fire in 1958. A window was added in the first story of the north gable, and paneling was installed in the dining room. Post 1958, some of the brickwork of the west portion was relaid, the center door on the west facade was filled in to create a window, and the north fireplace was removed and a second window installed on the north gable. On the interior the dogleg entrance stair with intermediate landing was carefully replicated in the westernmost stairhall, using fragments from the original woodwork such as one surviving step-end panel carved with an inset tulip motif. Portions of the original dining room paneling were retained and the ceiling with its exposed beaded joists was reworked and reinstalled. The dining room features a commodious cooking fireplace on the east wall, with trammel still in situ. The surrounding fielded panel wall, though retouched and repaired, replicates its former state. The 16/16 pane windows lighting the south side of the room feature original canted and beaded surrounds, with occasional members of this treatment replaced.

Some woodwork from the early nineteenth century survives on the second floor of the two story center section of the three eastern additions. The eastern bedroom of that center section features a mantel with corner blocks and a similarly plain central panel projecting from a flat frieze with finely carved shelf above and a beaded surround. The windows in this bedroom also retain their original canted reveals and beaded surrounds.

In the first floor bedroom of the east wing, the east end fireplace is elaborated by an original multi-molded shelf atop a plain fascia and beaded surrounds. Nineteenth century tongue and groove panneling occurs along the west wall, and one batten entrance exhibits handsome strap hinges.

The post-fire restoration of 1958 was undertaken by the late Ian McCallum, AIA. Prior to the disaster, his firm had a complete set of drawings made to document extant woodwork and decorative features when remodelling took place in the late 1940s and mid 1950s. McCallum then reused these drawings for reconstruction of damaged and destroyed woodwork in the earlier, T-shaped portion of Otwell.

A twentieth century non-contributing masonry garage stands to the right of the house. No other buildings stand on the property being nominated.

# 3. 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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: C

## SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Otwell is architecturally significant for its early eighteenth century T-shaped plan, quite sophisticated for its 1720-1730 period of construction; most other contemporaneous buildings of similar scale and materials were constructed in an L-plan, such as characterizes Hampden and Boston Cliff, also in Talbot County. (Otwell's plan is comparable to Harriton, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, built in 1704 by a Marylander; other early examples of this type may exist in greater numbers but they have yet to be identified.) The three early 19th century additions are unusual in that they were built concurrently and strung out in a line to simulate the agglomerative telescope house form popular on the Eastern Shore. (The first function of these newer rooms is uncertain, but apparently they were not intended as service rooms except for possibly the small room at the east end.) The exterior with its finely detailed brickwork retains a majority of its early 18th century and early 19th century fabric; the interior exemplifies a meticulous mid 20th century reproduction of the original with every attention paid to pre-fire configuration details, and materials. Otwell maintains its important water-oriented location amid 37 acres consisting of landscaped hedgerows on the landward (east, northeast) side of the building and continuously cultivated farmland (excepted from) once part of the original 500-acre tract.

## HISTORY AND SUPPORT

"Otwell" was surveyed in 1659 for 500 acres, and the tract was granted to William Taylor. In 1662 a court for Talbot County convened "at the house of William Taylor" which must have stood on the property before the present dwelling. From this point, the plantation was conveyed to Taylor's son Samuel who sold it to Colonel Vincent Lowe, a Province Deputy, in 1687. From Lowe, the property passed to distant relative Foster Turbutt, who was a Justice or Commissioner for Talbot County. Foster Turbutt's will, probated in 1721, left "my now dwelling plantation" to his daughter Sarah who married Nicholas Goldsborough, III around 1720.

Nicholas and Sarah Goldsborough were the probable builders of Otwell's original T-shaped section. They were a socially prominent and wealthy family in the county. Nicholas served as a member of the General Assembly, and as a local magistrate and representative over much of his career. The Maryland Gazette reported his death at a very advanced age in 1766. His son Nicholas, IV had been living for many years at Boston (T-145), another ancestral home of the Goldsboroughs, and until the marriage of grandson Nicholas, V in 1787, Otwell was probably uninhabited, accounting for the following description in the 1783 Tax Assessment: 850 acres and one brick dwelling house "in bad repair", as well as a frame kitchen, three tobacco houses, a fowl house, a milk house and three logged dwelling houses, "all mostly in bad repair".

United States Department of the Interior  
 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

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

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3

Otwell  
 Oxford vicinity  
 Talbot County, Maryland

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Nicholas Goldsborough, V bequeathed Otwell to his son Nicholas, VI who made a politically astute marriage in 1811 to Elizabeth Tench Tighlman, wealthy daughter of Colonel Tench Tighlman (aid-de-camp to George Washington throughout the Revolutionary War). During the first years of their marriage, Nicholas and Elizabeth expanded the original Otwell with the three additions to the east gable end of the T-shaped portion to accommodate their prosperous and growing family. Goldsborough descendants kept control of house and farm until 1928, when the property was sold intact, out of the family.

ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

Otwell is situated on the end of a neck of land located between Goldsborough Creek and Trippe Creek off the Tred Avon River near Oxford in Talbot County, Maryland. The tract of land on which it stands was surveyed in 1659 at 500 acres and granted to William Taylor. The thirty-seven acre parcel which comprises this nomination included the house and pertinent landscaping (boxwood and other hedges to the north, northeast of the dwelling and bordering a brick wall along the drive and the drive itself) in addition to acreage still being farmed and bounded by Goldsborough and Trippe Creeks at the end of the aforementioned peninsula. The thirty-seven acre parcel represents an adequate setting for both the historical vista of the house itself and the view towards the water and farmland from the dwelling.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

T-164

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 37 acres

Quadrangle name Oxford

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 8	4 0 0 8 4 0	4 2 8 3 4 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 8	4 0 0 9 6 0	4 2 8 4 0 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 8	4 0 1 1 6 0	4 2 8 4 0 6 0
---	-----	-------------	---------------

D	1 8	4 0 1 2 5 0	4 2 8 3 7 3 0
---	-----	-------------	---------------

E	1 8	4 0 1 2 5 0	4 2 8 3 4 8 0
---	-----	-------------	---------------

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
---	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries are delineated on the attached map labeled "National Register boundaries".  
Acreege justification is found on Continuation Sheet #3.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Cox

organization Maryland Historical Trust date December 1980

street & number 21 State Circle telephone 269-2438

city or town Annapolis state Maryland

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCERS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory--Nomination Form

T-164

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

4

Otwell  
Oxford vicinity  
Talbot County, Maryland

BIBLIOGRAPHY

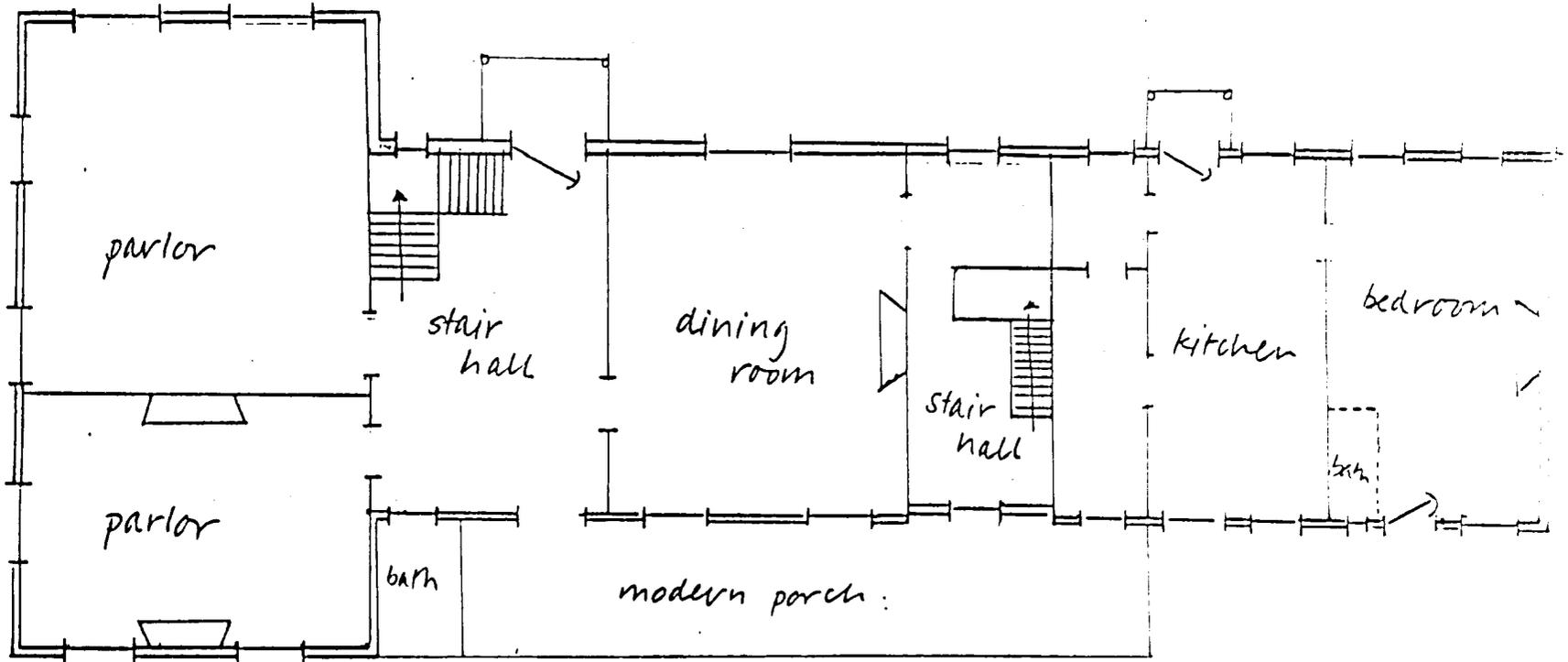
Forman, H. C. Early Manor and Plantation Houses, 1934, pp 178-179.

Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory: Talbot County (T-164).  
Michael Bourne, surveyor, 1976.

Talbot County Land Records, Courthouse, Easton, Maryland.

Wilson, E. B. Maryland's Colonial Mansions, New York, A.S. Barnes, 1965, p. 70.

T-164



OTWELL, T-164  
First floor plan (not to scale)

OTWELL  
Talbot County, Maryland  
National Register boundaries  
1"=600' 1980

T-164

JOHN E. JACKSON  
343/74  
495.25 A.  
P.40

NR boundaries

NR boundaries

otwell

GOLDSBOROUGH CREEK

ROGER M. KELLY, ETAL  
434/330  
507/306  
74.83 A.  
P.43

MARY MORLEY MILLS ETAL  
472/160  
74.09 A.  
P.72

S.244  
J.006

