

VLR-12/2/69 NRHP-2/26/70

110-1

Form 10-300  
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Falls Church (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	2/26/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
The Falls Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
The Falls Church

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
115 E. Fairfax Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Falls Church

STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45      COUNTY: (in cit.)      CODE: 610

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

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

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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 type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
Vestry of The Falls Church

STREET AND NUMBER:  
115 E. Fairfax Street

CITY OR TOWN: Falls Church      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Fairfax County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Fairfax

CITY OR TOWN: Fairfax      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 4.5 acres

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936      Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Washington

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 08

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Falls Church (in cit.)
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original portion of The Falls Church is a rectangular (60'x40') structure of brick with two tiers of windows. The brick is laid in Flemish bond above a molded water table with English bond below. Rubbed brick appears around the arched windows of the top tier and the rectangular windows of the lower tier, as well as at the corners of the building. The west doorway is set off by a molded brick pediment supported by guaged brick Tuscan pilasters. The centered south doorway's wooden pediment and flanking pilasters replace a stone enframement very similar to the western doorway of Pohick Church. This stone enframement very similar to the western doorway of Pohick Church. This stone treatment with its pediment, pilasters, and rusticated surround appears in an 1862 Matthew Brady photograph.

The structure is covered by a hipped roof at the base of which is a modillion cornice which is probably original. The roof timbers are said to be the original, although the wooden shingles specified by the builder have long been replaced by slates. Most of the wooden portions and lights of the upper tier windows appear to be original while the lower tier of windows has been largely restored. The windows as well as the masonry of the east wall were demolished in 1959 for the addition of a greatly enlarged chancel. This addition also necessitated the removal of the exterior modillion cornice on that wall. The interior of the new chancel is trimmed in colonial style woodwork which unfortunately is more Philadelphia than Virginia in feeling. Also included in the 1959 alteration was the erection of the gallery around three walls of the interior. A gallery was specified in James Wren's plans for the church, but it was never built. The original interior arrangement of the church was similar to that of Pohick Church, having the pulpit centered on the north wall opposite the south door. In the present arrangement the entire early part has become the nave for the new chancel.

Although the neighborhood of The Falls Church has become quite urbanized, the shady churchyard creates an appropriate setting for the building. The yard contains a number of markers, but no colonial ones remain.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

*[Faint, illegible text at the bottom of the page]*

8. 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)

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/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>				
		Music	<input type="checkbox"/>				

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The first church building at Falls Church was a frame structure erected in 1733 just south of the existing building. The structure was built by Richard Blackburn of Rippon Lodge whose daughter married Bushrod Washinton. This church served as the upper church for Truro Parish until 1765 when it was included in the newly created Fairfax Parish. The first reference to the edifice being called The Falls Church appears in the vestry book entry for November 28, 1757.

At a meeting held at The Falls Church on March 28, 1763, the vestry men (one of whom was George Washington) came to the opinion that the wooden church was "rotten and unfit for repair" and resolved that it should be replaced by a new brick church. On March 20, 1764, George Washington and George W. Fairfax, the recently appointed church wardens, advertised in the Maryland Gazette for persons willing to undertake the construction of the new church. By June a plan for the church submitted by a local resident, Colonel James Wren, was accepted by the vestry; construction was begun in 1767 and completed by December, 1769. Wren's detailed specifications for the building are preserved in the vestry book.

During the Revolution The Falls Church served for a time as a recruiting station for American forces. After the Disestablishment the church was abandoned but was returned to service in 1839. As with nearly every Virginia colonial church, the building's fabric suffered great damage from the hands of Federal troops during the Civil War, being used first as a hospital and later as a stable. After the war the Federal government awarded the church some \$1300 in reparations to repair the damage. Further repairs were made to the building during an extensive restoration project promoted by the National Society of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America in 1905. In 1959 the architectural integrity of the church was seriously compromised when the east wall was demolished in order to erect a large two-story chancel, causing the original portion to become simply a nave.

Despite the building's recent and somewhat drastic alteration, The Falls Church's architectural significance is enhanced by its kinship with two other significant colonial churches: Christ Church in Alexandria and Pohick Church. The former was also designed by James Wren, while the latter can almost certainly be attributed to Wren. As originally built, all three churches were quite similar in form and concept.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Brock, Henry Irving. Colonial Churches in Virginia. Richmond: 1930.  
 Rawlings, James Scott. Virginia's Colonial Churches: An Architectural Guide. Richmond: 1963.  
 Rose, Harold Wickliffe. The Colonial Houses of Worship in America. New York: 1963.  
 Steadman, Melvin Lee, Jr. Falls Church by Fence and Fireside. Falls Church: 1964.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 52' 51"	77° 10' 17"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission      DATE: September 17, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman  
 Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date 12/2/69

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 2/26/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

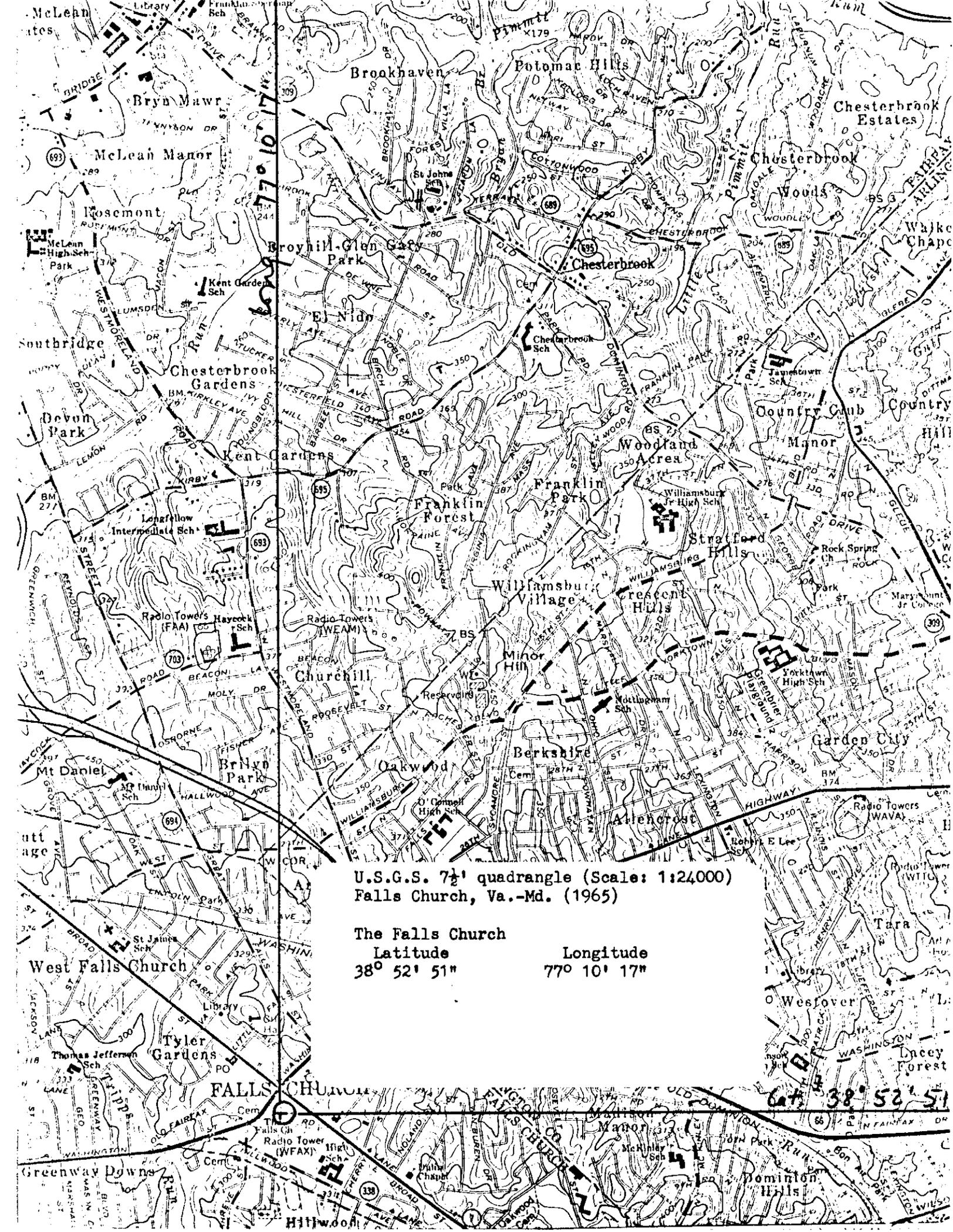
STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Falls Church (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Intimately associated with the history of Northern Virginia, The Falls Church has become the focal point for a rapidly growing independent city which took its name from the venerable structure.

6. Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory  
1958 Federal  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D. C. Code: 08

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #110-1  
1969 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building  
Richmond, Virginia Code: 45



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale: 1:24,000)  
 Falls Church, Va.-Md. (1965)

The Falls Church  
 Latitude  $38^{\circ} 52' 51''$  Longitude  $77^{\circ} 10' 17''$

Lat.  $38^{\circ} 52' 51''$