NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

LISTED ON:	
VLR	09/19/2013
NRHP	12/24/2013

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Robinson House

Other names/site number: The Grove, Main Building, Fleming Hall; DHR No. 127-0741

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 200 North Boulevard

City or town: Richmond State: Virginia County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national _X__statewide _X__local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A ___B _X_C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

_entered in the National Register

_determined eligible for the National Register

_determined not eligible for the National Register

_removed from the National Register

_other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: ☐

Public – Local ☐

Public – State ☒

Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☒

District ☐

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Institutional Housing
GOVERNMENT: Government Office: Administration building
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
WORK IN PROGRESS: Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD; METAL: Copper

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Robinson House is located in Richmond, Virginia, on the present-day campus of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) and on property that also bears the designation of the R. E. Lee Camp Confederate Memorial Park. The three-bay brick building, measuring 7,900 square feet, is Italianate in design with Victorian-era embellishments. It features three stories, a basement, and an attic with access to a belvedere. Constructed initially as a modest summer dwelling for Anthony Robinson Jr. and his wife, Rebecca, the house was likely begun in the late 1840s. Family history indicates that construction continued and the dwelling grew incrementally (architect unknown) until it was completed sometime between 1855 and 1859, after which the Robinsons commenced year-round occupancy[1]. The resulting two-story residence featured characteristics of the Italian Villa style popularized by Andrew J. Downing in the mid-19th century. In 1884, the Robinsons' son Channing sold the house and surrounding acreage—then referred to as The Grove—to the R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans, to become a home for indigent and disabled former soldiers. Modified for institutional use by the R. E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home (hereafter Soldiers' Home or Home), the building gained a third floor in 1886. Renamed Fleming Hall after Robert I. Fleming (1842-1907)—the Washington, D.C., architect who funded and designed the renovation—the building housed offices, living spaces for veterans, and a war museum over the subsequent half century. Visual evidence of the building's first two phases of physical development and history—as the country seat of a prominent 19th-century Virginia family and as the distinctive administration building of a nationally acclaimed soldiers' home—is still intact. The stylistic synthesis of architectural elements—Italianate and Victorian—makes Robinson House one of the most unusual, architecturally evolved buildings in Richmond.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Design and form

Period photographs reveal that the exterior of Robinson House still closely resembles its appearance during the Soldiers' Home era (1885-1941) and—with the exception of the third-floor addition—the earlier Robinson family era (ca. 1855-1884). This marriage of Italianate detailing with late Victorian additions gives this 19th-century brick building an unusual form. Its design is strongly symmetrical, with a footprint laid out in rectilinear units. The building's primary three-bay elevation faces generally south and steps out into a projecting central bay. The side elevations, east and west, step in slightly at the center of the main body of the house. The rear elevation, to the north, features a centrally positioned one-bay ell.

Horizontal masonry patterning defines three main levels: a low basement topped by a water course and a simple stringcourse that separates the first and second floors from the third floor addition. The water course does not continue along the rear and ell elevations, while the upper course extends to the rear but is not included on the back ell. In examining the building's exterior walls, the addition of the upper level is evident with changes between the texture, pattern, and quality of bricks. There are several types of bond work. The primary façade exhibits some randomly spaced courses with alternating header and stretcher bricks. The side and rear elevations feature areas of three- and five-course American Bond. The wider courses (five course) appear in the upper parts of the walls.

The blocky, near-square presentation of Robinson House gives it the appearance of solidity (photo 1). At the same time, vertical design elements provide visual height through fenestration patterns, four tall chimney stacks, and the soaring belvedere at the center of a low hipped roof. This verticality is emphasized on the front (southern) façade by the projecting central bay that extends through all levels. It is topped by a gable housing a pediment (semi-circular vent in tympanum), directly above the cornice. Subtle decorative masonry gives special emphasis to the bay's third story by means of shallow projecting brickwork that frames the upper paired windows. On either side, vertical pilasters terminate at projecting blocks resting on the stringcourse, with two subtle steps below the line. These are joined above the windows by a plain architrave. Immediately above, on the cornice molding, strategically placed brackets align with the bottom corners of the gable pediment. The resulting visual effect suggests a temple at the upper level. The motif resonates with the first-floor portico with flanking paired columns, positioned directly below at the building's main entrance.

The four prominent tall chimney stacks reiterate the building's symmetry. Each is positioned interior to the walls and projects approximately four to six feet above the roof. The corbelled chimney tops are substantial, with a five-step transition into the widest section of the stacks. Each features inset vertical panels—two on the long side, one on each end—and presents a smooth surface toward the belvedere.

Windows

The primary (southern) elevation of Robinson House exhibits the more sophisticated design elements, particularly in the treatment of windows. In keeping with prevailing 19th-century Italianate characteristics, this façade features paired windows: two in the central bay, arranged one above the other on the second and third levels, and two on the first level, flanking the entry portico. The panes of these narrow windows are configured four-over-four. All first floor windows are tall; windows in the upper stories are shorter in height (with the exception of the paired windows on the façade's central bay, second level). The panes in the shorter, single windows have a six-over-six arrangement.

The windows on the front and on both side elevations exhibit window surrounds in a Renaissance revival pattern: a flat wide board with modeling edge and ears (crossets) at side, top, and bottom.[2] This trim is slightly more detailed on the building's central block; the rear moldings on the side elevation windows are less curvilinear and have one less molding line of the outer edge. The single windows have two decorative blocks under the sills that read as guttae; the paired windows have three. Among the building's most notable features are freestanding crests (seen in photo 2) positioned on hoods above the primary façade's paired windows on the first and second levels. These wrought iron elements feature pierced Renaissance revival arabesques and, as documented in a ca. 1880 photograph of the house, date to the Robinson family residency.[3]

Windows on the rear (northern) elevation and projecting ell have simple moldings without ornamental embellishments. Many of the window sashes on all elevations date to the period of significance; some replaced during a 2001 rehabilitation replicate the historical sash and pane configuration.

Wooden Trim

The building's roof extends into an overhang of about one to two feet. The fascia board has simple molding, and the gutter system is interior to the roof with down spouts placed at or near corners. On all sides, widely space brackets (photo 3) of restrained Italianate design support a cornice comprised of two wooden strips that rest on a stepped-out brick course. The cornice measures a generous two feet and provides good visual termination at the roof line. The cornice frieze is decorated with applied rectangular panels, an Italianate motif that is sometimes emphasized by different trim color.

Roof and Belvedere

The low hipped roof, clad in standing-seam metal, was replaced by VMFA during renovations in 2001. A ca. 1908 photograph of Robinson House (fig. 11) indicates that this was the roofing treatment during the Soldiers' Home era.[4] The belvedere (photo 4), with its commanding silhouette, dates to the 1886 addition. Centrally placed on the roof, it is square in plan, features casement windows with two double units on each side (panes arranged in a two-over-two configuration), and supports a steep pyramidal roof that flares out about a foot at its base. The belvedere's slate roof exhibits a Victorian mixed pattern of alternating bands of

diamond and square edge shingles. The ca. 1908 photograph indicates that it once supported a tall weathervane, now missing.[5]

Porches and doorways

On the primary (southern) façade of Robinson House, the front porch is set on a masonry deck several steps above the high basement. One enters the building through an ornate portico (photo 2) with flanking, double square columns with chamfered edges and, to the rear against the brick wall, half-width engaged columns. The deep porch eaves are supported by thin brackets with Italianate profiles; above them, the porch's metal roof features a low deck railing in a block and open-cross bar pattern. The front door is a late 20th-century replacement, and the original surrounding lights—pictured in period photographs—are now covered.

Directly opposite, connected by the building's main corridor, is the house's rear (northern) entrance (photo 5). This porch is set on a masonry deck several steps above the high basement. The portico is a smaller, simplified version of the front and echoes the delicate Italianate style. It features single square columns to the front, engaged half-columns against the brick wall, and a cornice devoid of brackets. Presently, the rear entrance opens onto a large masonry deck with metal railings that were added in the second half of the 20th century. There is a third entrance on the rear elevation, west of the central ell. That doorway does not have a porch or decorative trim.

Images from early photographs, postcards, and Sanborn Company fire insurance maps reveal that the house's rigid symmetry was broken during the Robinson and Soldiers' Home eras by one-story porches on the sides of the building of differing design and dimensions.[6] A four-bay porch, with its roof supported by five square columns, stood along the east side of the house (photo 6; original porch visible fig. 11). Missing guttae on the 2nd floor windows and "ears" on the lower level, bottom right window surround attest to its former position. On the west elevation stood a two-bay porch with roof supported by three ornate oversized brackets (visible fig. 8). Each of the side porches had railings in a block and open-cross bar pattern. The porches were removed sometime in the second half of the 20th century. Only slight changes in the brick walls give evidence of these former features.

Today the building's west elevation (photo 7) has fewer windows due to the installation of a modern-era metal fire escape tower that serviced all three floors.[7] Comparisons with period images indicate that the window openings on the second and third levels on this side, once the same dimensions and positioned level with the remaining windows, were altered to accommodate the lower-set fire escape doorways. The metal doorways remain, but the outside landings and stairways were removed from the unoccupied building during the 2001 rehabilitation.

There is a basement light/entrance well on the building's eastern perimeter, and basement windows appear on the south, east, and west sides—but not on the rear (because of the solid deck). There are three subterranean doorways to the basement, accessed from the east.

Interior

Robinson House includes a basement, three primary floors, an unfinished attic, and a small stairwell that ascends into the rooftop belvedere. The first two floors still exhibit the symmetrical center-hall scheme of the original floor plan, which accommodates four rooms—two on each side of the north-south corridor and stairs. Each room on these levels has its own fireplace; several of the Robinson-era carved marble mantelpieces are extant. The plan of the 1886 third-floor addition positions interior load-bearing walls above most of those on the lower floors. However, it deviates from the earlier building by introducing a large room, running east-west, across the front of the building.

In the decades following the Soldiers' Home era (post-1941), a few rooms on all levels were altered by the removal of some walls and the addition of others—some specific instances noted in the survey of floors below. Currently, throughout the interior spaces, there are also later fixtures and finishes from various periods in the second half of the 20th century: lighting devices, toilets and wash basins, doors, plastic baseboards, dry wall, asbestos tile floors, and dropped ceilings. Some of the later walls and ceilings cover historic fabric, but these alterations are reversible.

Basement

The basement has no internal stairwell that communicates with the upper levels. Currently, there are three subterranean basement entrances accessed by stairs on the east side. One at center enters a small east-west corridor in the basement and intersects with a central north-west transverse hall. A second exterior door, a few feet away at the northeast corner of the building's central block, leads into a single enclosed room that houses an old furnace boiler. A third staircase descends behind the rear ell and enters the north end of the basement's central hall, which leads to three corner rooms (southeast, southwest, and northwest) within the building's central block. These basement rooms are moderately lit from perimeter well windows. This main corridor also leads to two spaces that are outside the footprint of the historic building: beneath the front stairs and the rear deck. The concrete block walls in each were installed in 1964, with the larger northern room intended to house a kiln for museum pottery classes.[8]

First Floor

The first floor room retains a recognizable center-hall double-parlor plan. The central corridor runs north-south. There is a decorative marble mantelpiece in each of the two rooms on the west side of the hall (photo 8). The fireplaces have iron firebox inserts, likely for coal. The front room in the southeast was made into two spaces by a wall added sometime in the 20th century.

A significant amount of period wood trim survives throughout the first floor—mostly on windows and interior door moldings (photo 9). The stairs are located at the rear (north) end of the center hall and feature a fine newel post, consistent with styles popular in Richmond during the third quarter of the 19th century. There is a dark-stained wooden handrail, well crafted with

turned balusters, that ascends without break up the staircase on all three levels (photo 9). It likely dates to the 1886 renovation.

The rear ell extension at the north end of the central corridor features two small storage spaces to the east and west.

Second Floor

The second floor plan also features a central north-south transverse hall. The west side still retains a double parlor plan, while the east side was altered in the post-1950 decades. An original wall was removed between the two rooms, and new walls were added, resulting in one larger and two smaller rooms. The south end of the hallway has a smaller room that is centered on the paired windows above the front porch (photo 10). All fireplaces/fireboxes are encased by drywall. Some historic window trim is evident.

The rear ell, accessed by a small 4-step staircase, contains two small lavatories to the east and west.

Third Floor

Built more than thirty years after the original residence was completed, the plan for the third floor deviates considerably from the lower levels. The north-south transverse hall is only half the length of the lower level hallways. This upper corridor runs south from the landing and connects into an east-west transverse hall. Adjacent to this is the large room, noted earlier, that extends east-west across the front of the building (photo 11). Within that space is a parallel corridor set apart by a long wall with two doorways into the front room—perhaps an addition from the second half of the 20th century. At the rear section of the third floor, there is one room in the northwest corner and two in the northeast. The rear ell, accessed by a small staircase, contains two small lavatories to the east and west.

There is a significant amount of extant historic fabric on the third level of Robinson House: baseboards, windows, and door trim. There are three four-panel doors, two moderately simple and one with more sophisticated trim, appearing to be Italianate in style. Unlike the lower floors, the door systems on this floor feature transoms.

Attic Landing and Attic

A small staircase at the center of the third floor provides access to the attic level. The stair area is finished in vertical paneling, and one of the two structural tie rods extends across the small stairwell, cut through the wall. A small door, on the east side of the landing room, leads into the attic. That space is unfinished with simple board decking across joists in the east side. There are two large parallel tie rods with turn buckles that extend near the center of the space. These rods, which are bolted into rafter ends, are bowed downward and extend into the base of the belvedere above. These appear to help support the weight of the belvedere and stabilize potential wind-driven twisting motion. Roof rafters, plates, joists, and brick work are visible in this space, which promises excellent opportunity for studying the history and evolution of the building. Visible rafters and joists appear to be cut from circular saws and measure approximately 2 to 3 inches by 8 to 10 inches.

Belvedere

The stairs that access the attic continue upward into the belvedere. The interior of the viewing room is finished very plainly (photo 12). The walls are constructed of vertical paneling, identical to the attic landing area. Casement windows provide views in three directions; the windows on the fourth side (east) are missing and have been replaced with Plexiglas. There is a simple wooden panel ceiling with access to the interior of the roof framing. The wood framing inside the belvedere appears to have slightly smaller dimensions that the rafters in the main roof.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

[X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

[ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[ ] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1855 - 1941

Significant Dates
ca. 1855 - 1859 – construction of Italianate dwelling
1885 – official R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Soldiers' Home opening
1886 – addition of 3rd story and belvedere; installation of museum, administrative offices, and barracks for Soldiers' Home

Significant Person
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Fleming, Robert I. (1842-1907), architect
Jarvis & Glinn Company (active 1876-1895), builder
Glinn, Peter D. (1835-1911), builder
Jarvis, George W. (ca. 1831 - ?), builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Robinson House has multifaceted significance through its distinctive architecture and its compelling social and cultural history. Constructed in the mid-19th century as the country seat of a prominent Richmond banker and landowner, the building gives evidence of the growing taste of Virginia's antebellum elite for Italianate architecture—exemplified by its characteristic fenestration, window trim, bracketed cornice, and decorative porches. Following the house's acquisition and transformation to a three-story dwelling in the mid-1880s by the R. E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home, these Italianate elements were complemented by tall, heavily corbelled chimney stacks and a lofty belvedere with a steep pyramidal roof, features indicative of the more pronounced Victorian mode of the late century. This physical transformation signaled the building's important transition from private residence to institutional headquarters for the nation's first successful and oldest operating Confederate veterans' home. Beforehand, the dwelling witnessed the domestic lives of Anthony Robinson Jr., his wife, Rebecca, their children, and numerous enslaved African American laborers who attended their owners' personal needs and worked the land of the country estate. After 1861, the widowed Rebecca and her dependents endured the strains and deprivations of the Civil War, and at its end, the challenges of Union occupation of the grounds and house. In the postbellum era, her son mitigated financial difficulties by sale of the property in 1884. For fifty-six years thereafter, Robinson House—renamed Fleming Hall—served as a barracks, administrative center, and museum for the Soldiers' Home. The building's role as the literal and symbolic center of the large residential complex transformed the building into a visual icon of the Lost Cause and a long-standing, important site for collective commemoration, remembrance, and reconciliation.

While over thirty buildings and structures once stood on the grounds of the large Soldiers' Home, only Robinson House and the Confederate Memorial Chapel (listed, National Register 1972) remain. Each is a contributing resource in the Boulevard Historic District (listed, National Register 1986); in fact Robinson House has been identified as the oldest residence in the district. Now owned and maintained by VMFA, under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Robinson House is individually eligible at a statewide level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History and at a local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The property's period of significance begins about 1855, when construction commenced to transform the Robinsons' modest summer dwelling into a fashionable Italianate manor house for year-round residency,[9] and ends in 1941, when the Soldiers' Home officially closed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context – The Robinson Era, 1855-1884

Anthony and Rebecca Robinson – the antebellum years

At the time his manor house at The Grove was completed in the late 1850s, Anthony Robinson Jr. (1792-1861) enjoyed the privileges that came with his gender and race, as well as from substantial business connections, social standing, property, and wealth. The seventh-generation Virginian descended from a prominent York County planter family and, in the early 19th century, gained entry into the inner circles of Richmond's business elite as a Cashier for the Bank of Virginia. On the night of December 26, 1811, Robinson found himself among the fortunate survivors of the tragic Richmond Theater Fire.[10] The following year, he married Rebecca Webb Couch (1796-1879) and, in the next decade, began purchasing large contiguous tracts of land in the new undeveloped town of Sydney, just west of Richmond (comprising much of today's Fan District). By the end of the 1840s, Robinson's suburban landholdings totaled close to 160 acres, including a stand of old-growth oaks where he built a summer house for his growing family—eleven children, ten of whom achieved adulthood.[11] Robinson also cultivated the fields around The Grove, no doubt relying on the labor of numerous enslaved African Americans, who were recorded as his property on decennial slave schedules for Henrico County. While the "peculiar institution" had long been a tradition in the Robinson family, slave owning was new to Rebecca at the time of her marriage. Her parents, who migrated to Goochland County, Virginia, from Philadelphia and converted to the Quaker faith, manumitted their slaves in 1794, two years before her birth.[12] By the late 1850s, however, as the Robinsons' new country mansion entered final stages of construction, Rebecca had close to four decades of experience owning and managing enslaved workers. Slave labor likely helped build Robinson House, as well.

Architecture: A Cottage-villa in The Grove

The couple's granddaughter, Elizabeth Overton Robinson, noted that the residence was "built by degrees" and "occupied the year round only a few years before" Anthony's death at age 69 in 1861. Its appearance likely changed little in the following two decades before a ca. 1880 photograph that pictures members of the Robinson family gathered around its front portico (fig. 1). Census and tax records confirm that the aging couple traded city residency for The Grove before 1860, bringing with them four of their children.[13] The Robinsons (figs. 2 a & b) no doubt took pride in their fashionable Italianate mansion—a style then deemed most suitable for country living. For its design, the dwelling's unknown architect likely referred to Andrew J. Downing's well-known *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Homes* (1850). Describing Design V, "A Cottage-villa in the Bracketed Mode" in *Cottage Residences*, Downing—a renowned New York architect and theorist—suggested that the style, with its porches and wide eaves, was especially suited to southern climates. Some features in the plates for this particular design resemble forms and elements employed in the original two-story Robinson House.[14]

Several of the couple's Richmond contemporaries also embraced the Italianate style for their homes. The Bolling M. Haxall house at 211 East Franklin Street, completed in 1858, exhibits a similar plan with projecting center bay, portico with double columns, three paired windows on the façade—two on the lower level and one at center above—and decorative window trim. (It also features an elaborate belvedere—anticipating the Late Victorian addition yet to come to the Robinson residence.) The dwelling that most resembled Robinson House, however, was the William Ritter house at 821 West Franklin Street before its 20th-century remodeling. As Drew Carneal points out in *Richmond's Fan District*, both residences featured a bracket-supported central gable, a porch supported on ornate double square columns, and paired windows at the first floor and under the central gable, all with crested hoods and Renaissance revival window surrounds. The similarity between the two suggests the possibility that the same designer or craftsmen may have been involved in both projects.[15]

The Civil War years and afterwards

Anthony Robinson Jr. died on June 28, 1861, two months after the commencement of the Civil War. His will, signed and witnessed the previous day, bequeathed to his widow and executrix forty-eight acres, along with the "mansion and other buildings," household belongings, crops "growing and severed," farming implements, livestock, and slaves. He left the rest of his property—over a hundred acres—to be divided in equal shares between his children.[16] A detailed 1865 map (figs. 3 a & b), produced by a Union surveyor immediately after the war, depicts the location of Robinson House as it stood within a rectangular park of oaks. The mansion, accessed by a long straight driveway from Grove Road (now Avenue), occupied the northeast corner of the woods, and three other buildings—likely the two slave dwellings noted on the 1860 Slave Schedule and a free-standing kitchen—stood several yards away to the west.[17] Not indicated on the map was the fact that Rebecca's dower tract was four times the size of the oak grove, with fields to the north and east.

Various notes and receipts found in surviving family papers reveal that the war years brought both activity and anxiety to Rebecca and her family. Daily life was occupied with the tasks of farming The Grove and satisfying the late Anthony's creditors.[18] Grown sons Samuel, Starkey, and Edward served the Confederate military in differing ways; and for the duration of the war, daughters Margaret and Mary remained in the North with their husbands and children, having married Philadelphia business partners in the previous decade. Son Channing, in his late teens, became his mother's primary helpmate at home. Exempted from military service by an injured arm, he also performed clerical work for the Confederate War Department.[19] In the first year of the war, the Confederacy conscripted some of the Robinson slaves.[20] On November 14, 1861, an ad in the *Daily Dispatch* offered a reward for one of them, John Davis, who ran away from a battery encampment in Manchester. Two other notices, posted by Channing in 1863 and 1864, announced additional runaways. The first sought out a thirteen-year-old named Ben, and the second described John, Rebecca's carriage driver, for whom Channing offered a $75 reward. After the fall of Richmond and the end of the war in April, 1865, Union soldiers encamped nearby began making exploratory forays into the mansion, a situation later described by Rebecca's granddaughter as dangerous and intolerable. "My sister," Elizabeth Overton Robinson wrote, "recalls seeing our grandmother dispatch a manservant to the Commanding General with

a request that he establish his personal quarters in the home.... The request was granted and indoor order was restored."[21]

During the war and the decade to follow, the family fortunes dwindled due to currency inflation, the loss of an enslaved work force, a broken economy during Reconstruction, and a severe national financial downturn in 1873. When Rebecca Robinson made out her will the following year, she noted the long-term sacrifice made by Channing, who not only assisted her with running the estate but also "used his patrimony on discharging debts for me." For his dedication, she left him The Grove.[22] Rebecca died on July 4, 1879 and was buried next to Anthony in Richmond's Shockoe Hill Cemetery.

The following summer, the U.S. Census enumerator found a small enclave at Robinson House: Channing and his unmarried sister Anne, their niece Rebecca who had served as her late grandmother's companion, and an African American cook and her son, Alberta and James Johnson.[23] It was around this time that the photograph was made of the two-story residence, with several family members gathered out front (fig 1).[24] The dutiful Channing finally married in 1883 at age 40. And, in November the following year, he sold The Grove (Robinson House and surrounding acreage) to a newly formed Confederate veterans' organization.

Historic Context – The Confederate Soldiers' Home Era

R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans

In early 1883, a handful of Confederate veterans met in Richmond to discuss the dire circumstances of some of their former comrades who had become indigent, disabled, and unable to provide for themselves. Beyond rendering temporary assistance to help keep them out of the city almshouse, the concerned Richmonders decided to form R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Southern Veterans (soon changed to Confederate Veterans), for the primary purpose of establishing a soldiers' home. In following months, the organization grew and drafted by-laws articulating its mission:

> *[T]o perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades...to minister as far as practicable to the wants of those who were permanently disabled in the service; to preserve...that sentiment of fraternity born of the hardships and dangers shared in the march, the bivouac and on the battlefield.... and to extend to our late adversaries... courtesies, which are always proper between soldiers, and which in our case a common citizenship demands.*[25]

Very quickly, R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1 (hereafter Lee Camp) launched an intense fundraising campaign, aided by a surprising yet steadfast ally in the form of Phil Kearny, Post 10, Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), of Richmond, Virginia.[26] As later recounted for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, the Union veterans of the Kearny Post not only contributed to the Soldiers' Home fund, but also persuaded the Virginians to send a plea to every G.A.R. organization nationwide. The positive response from former enemies was immediate and generous, with funds coming in from posts as far away as Montana. The circular, signed by commanders of both northern and southern organizations, was also reprinted widely in newspapers, prompting donations from across the country. In the spring of 1884, well-publicized

fundraising benefits were held in the New York region, including a "Testimonial Entertainment" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music featuring an address by Henry Ward Beecher, a performance of *Richard III* at the Metropolitan Opera House, and a mass rally at the Cooper Union highlighting speeches by former Confederate and Union officers. Altogether, $8,000 was raised nationwide for the Richmond facility, including a reported contribution of $500 from Ulysses S. Grant. Lee Camp added these funds to an additional $24,000 raised in Richmond during a twenty-two day Confederate Soldiers' Home Fair held at the First Regiment Armory. The Union veterans of Kearny Post marched along with the Confederate veterans of Lee Camp in the event's opening parade.[27]

Architecture: Robinson House becomes Fleming Hall

The following fall, on November 8, 1884, R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans, purchased The Grove from Channing Robinson and his wife, Judith, for $14,000—a transaction that included thirty-six acres and the manor house.[28] (For comparisons between the original Robinson property and the final Soldiers' Home tract, see figs. 4 a-d.) Immediately afterwards, "improvements were added," and "on January 16, 1885...a few of the most needy were placed in the Home"—meaning in Robinson House, or the Main Building, as it was called.[29] The Soldiers' Home publically announced it would receive applications for residency in early March and held its official dedication with pomp and ceremony on May 20th. By June, the Superintendent informed the Home's Board of Visitors that the Main Building had approached its capacity of sixteen inmates, as the residents were called.[30]

A photograph taken from Clover Street (now the Boulevard) in the fall of 1885 (fig. 5a) provides the earliest image of Robinson House in its new role as the main building at the Soldiers' Home; a tripod flagpole flies the Lee Camp banner overhead.[31] Close inspection (detail, fig. 5b) reveals several of its residents clustered near the house's eastern porch. Towering oaks still define the property, but the trees have been thinned to accommodate the installation of a new driveway. Still entering the grounds as a single lane coming north from Grove Avenue, the new configuration divided to form an oval, with Robinson House at its farthest end. On axis with the gate, the building was clearly meant as the foremost edifice on the grounds (fig. 6). The plan resembles other formal entryways into the grounds of Victorian-era residential institutions, especially school campuses or religious retreat complexes.

More obvious in the 1885 photograph (fig. 5a) are other important developments: three residential cottages had been built to the west of the oval and the handsome new Mess Hall (later named Pegram Hall) to the northeast of Robinson House. The same March 9th board meeting that approved the excavation of the loop drive also authorized the construction of these buildings based on plans submitted by former Confederate Captain Marion J. Dimmock (1824-1908). A later entry in the board minutes mentions Dimmock's "Style D" plan, suggesting that the prominent local architect provided at least four cottage variations, and, indeed, the frame shingle-style dwellings varied in appearance.[32] The Mess Hall, completed in August 1885, stands out prominently in the period photograph. With its broad three-gabled façade and tall, narrow cupola, the shingle-style dining hall visually dominates the scene.[33] Dimmock's best known contribution to the Home would come in 1887—the carpenter-Gothic Confederate Memorial

Chapel. That graceful church once greeted visitors just as they turned into the Soldiers' Home property from Grove Avenue. Today, it still stands at the corner of Grove and Sheppard Street.

Dimmock is likely also the artist who provided the one other extant view of the Soldiers' Home in its first year (fig. 7). Reproduced as a wood engraved illustration for a feature story in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, August 22, 1885, the image carries the credit line: "Virginia—The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers and Sailors at Richmond. From Sketches and Architect's Drawings."[34] Rendered with a draughtsman's skill, the picture promotes a vision of the Soldiers' Home as an urban park where the old veterans mingle and promenade with visiting townspeople. The new cottages beckon through oak trees on the left, while the picturesque Mess Hall stands out at right. Recognizable at center is Robinson House, exhibiting slightly skewed proportions but textbook Italian Villa characteristics. Despite the visual appeal of the new buildings, it clearly served as the compound's Main Building, in name and fact.

Little is known about arrangements inside the building in those early months when the two-story Robinson House *was* the Soldiers' Home. Some of the formal first-floor spaces, such as the parlor and dining room, were likely occupied by the Superintendent and his assistant, while the other spaces were set up as quarters for veterans—perhaps including the basement as the building reached the reported capacity before the cottages became available. Initially, lighting came by way of kerosene lamps and heat through coal burned in fireplaces and/or standing stoves. In 1885 and '86, minutes and papers of the Soldiers' Home Board of Visitors noted two water wells on the grounds, a windmill pump and tank, and payment for extensive plumbing work in the Main Building. This raises the possibility of running water in the house and a water closet or two in building's rear ell (pictured in the 1885 pre-expansion photograph). The developing technology for flushing toilets coincided with the Robinson era. In fact, water closets are described and pictured by Downing in the chapter regarding the "Cottage-villa in the Bracketed Mode" in *Cottage Residences*.[35]

Within the first year of the Home's founding, Lee Camp explored options for the compound's signature building, including the possibility of razing Robinson House and erecting an expensive new edifice.[36] The question was resolved in early 1886 when architect Robert I. Fleming of Washington, D.C., came forward with a $2,500 donation and building plans for renovating the old brick residence. The Goochland County native, who served with distinction in the Confederate Army, trained in the Richmond City Engineer's office in the immediate postwar years.[37] After relocating to Washington in 1867, he steadily gained renown as a designer and builder of high-style Victorian residences and institutions.[38] A founding member of the Confederate Veterans Association in Washington, Fleming also raised money in that city on behalf of the Soldiers' Home in Richmond—for which Lee Camp rewarded him with a special gold membership badge. In May of 1886, as construction on the new third-floor addition to Robinson House was underway, Fleming hosted Lee Camp members at the National Hotel in Washington, where he introduced each one to President Grover Cleveland.[39] On July 29th, the "Fleming addition" was dedicated with a ceremonial handing over of keys by Fleming to Governor Fitzhugh Lee, the former Confederate General who was also, by chance, then serving as president of the Soldiers' Home Board of Visitors.[40] At that point, the old Robinson residence took on a new name: Fleming Hall.

Fleming's expansion is conservative and bold at the same time. To satisfy the pressing need for space, his primary task was adding the third floor, but he kept its contours within the footprint of the earlier residence and retained the original porches. In an attempt to make the new upper level appear concurrent with the extant building, he followed precedent and employed nearly identical fenestration patterning and Italianate motifs. His new cornice varies slightly; still featuring wide eaves, it is punctuated with far fewer and simpler brackets. It is at the rooftop level where Fleming exercised his creative impulses based on prevailing late-Victorian practice. Earlier site visits no doubt convinced him of the importance of creating a more commanding presence for the building, especially now that Dimmock's new Mess Hall, with its eye-catching cupola, competed visually. In response, Fleming emphasized verticality with the corbelled chimney stacks and central pediment, both taller than their predecessors on the Robinson residence. But Fleming's ultimate flourish is the striking belvedere, with its broad, glazed base and tall, steeply pitched roof. Literally above all, that lofty viewing tower provides an additional sense of soaring height to the entire building.[41] Using a tall, pyramidal profile for dramatic effect was not new to the D.C. architect, who as a builder in the 1870s placed a similar pitched roof on the central tower of the Charles Sumner School for African American Children (listed, National Register 1979). And during the same year as his Soldiers' Home expansion, Fleming was including attenuated, pyramidal gables on the mansard roofs of residences he was designing for Judge T. J. Coffey and Senator John McPherson.[42]

Fleming Hall: residence, headquarters, museum

Although the newly christened Fleming Hall was officially dedicated at the end of July 1886, interior work on the expansion continued until October. Noting the building's completion in his monthly report to the Board of Visitors, Superintendent W. R. Terry added: "The upper story is used for a Hospital and one room on the lower floor for the most helpless of those paralyzed which arrangement I think is in the interest of economy and health."[43] At least for a while, the benefits of the new third floor and refurbished spaces and plumbing were granted to the Home's most infirm residents. The house's large, upper-floor room that extended across the front probably served as a medical ward until a separate hospital building was built in 1892 and afterwards as a multi-resident quarters.

Unfortunately, Terry's report in the fall of 1886 offers the only specific description of the building's room usage found in a survey of extant papers, reports, and minutes of the Soldiers' Home staff and board—as well as those of its parent organization, Lee Camp. However, an 1896 report from the board's Buildings and Grounds Committee confirms that Fleming Hall continued to function as a residence for some of the old soldiers: "Steam radiators have been placed in the main building, replacing the old system of pipes, thereby very naturally adding to the comfort of the Veterans quartered in the building." Over time, sporadic committee references to maintenance updates and repairs provide glimpses of the building's condition and fixtures, including mention of periodic whitewashing and the addition of a bath tub "with hot and cold water." In 1899, the entire Soldiers' Home compound benefited from the installation of an "electric light plant" complete with dynamo, engine, boiler, and wiring—a crucial capital improvement because "use of kerosene oil lamps by veterans...had become absolutely

dangerous."[44] After 1919, when the Home's census began to decline steadily, the necessity of having to billet any veterans in Fleming Hall decreased.

Fleming Hall always housed the offices of the Home's administrative staff, which included the Superintendent (alternatively called the Commandant) and his assistant, the Adjutant.[45] Until the new hospital came available, the third top administrator, the Surgeon (primary physician), may have also kept an office in the main building. These leadership positions were typically filled by veterans of note, and through the Home's semi-military culture that enforced deference to rank, the building gained a mantle of authority. In a 1904 letter, for instance, resident Benjamin J. Rogers referred to the imposing building as "Headquarters," and indeed, as a ca. 1900 photograph reveals (fig. 8), the building was outfitted with two flagstaffs for ceremonial occasions on the roofs of its front and western porches. The green space in front of the building served as an assembly ground for residents and staff to "fall in" for announcements or inspection. They were likely summoned to gatherings and meals by the large bell suspended from the west side of Fleming Hall from the rear window, second floor, also pictured in the period photograph. A chain or rope was pulled from inside the building.

The installation of a small museum also transformed Fleming Hall into a popular cultural attraction. Before the establishment of the Museum of the Confederacy in the former Jefferson Davis residence in 1896 and the Confederate Memorial Institute (Battle Abbey) on the lot adjoining the Soldiers' Home in 1912, Fleming Hall became a repository for Civil War relics, artwork, and memorabilia. An early circular printed by the Home solicited contributions and loans from the public, noting that their treasures would be preserved for coming generations in a special "Room in the Brick Building at the Home, arranged with glass cases, securely locked [and] under guard."[46] Shortly after the building's dedication, the minutes of Lee Camp record one of the early gifts, a blanket from General Robert E. Lee's headquarters wagon to be placed "in the museum at the Home."[47] By the time the museum closed and its contents were dispersed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the collection was described as containing "portraits of Confederate generals, battle flags, sabers, uniforms, rifles, paintings, cannon balls, canteens and an anachronistic display of medieval armor."[48]

The museum's most celebrated relic was also its first acquisition: Little Sorrel, the beloved warhorse of General T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Called Old Sorrel in his later years, the decrepit thirty-six year-old gelding came to live at the Soldiers' Home in late summer 1885, courtesy of Jackson's widow. By mid-March the following year, the famous beast had died and was on its way to a taxidermist to have its hide mounted over a hollow clay form for exhibition.[49] Little Sorrel returned to take its place in a custom built case in Fleming Hall (fig. 9). For more than a half-century, it thrilled first-time tourists and regular visitors alike. When penning memoirs of a Richmond childhood in the 1930s, James Boehling recalled that he frequently wandered over to the building to see the warhorse, located "just inside the main entrance."[50]

There is additional evidence of other activities on the first floor of Fleming Hall. The ca. 1900 photograph (fig 8) showing a three-quarter view of the building's façade reveals a sign marked "Guard Room" hanging from lower-level porch on the west elevation. Perhaps the sentry watched over both the building and museum from that southwest corner room. Last, a library

was likely located close by. In early 1887, board minutes record a vote to confer the rank of Sergeant on the librarian of the Home (likely a volunteer resident).[51]

"A home . . . for the old boys"

As accommodations, offices, and the museum were being assembled in Fleming Hall in late 1886, a total of five residential cottages had been completed to the west of the oval driveway. In coming years, five more would join them, built as funding from private contributions came available.[52] Each house was occupied immediately on completion, as requests for admission typically outpaced bed availability into the early 20th century. Eventually, the picturesque frame houses (including the northernmost dwelling that billeted the Superintendent), stretched the length of the grounds, side by side in a slight arc, until they met with the Confederate Memorial Chapel near the gate. By 1918, when the Home approached its highest census of nearly 300 veterans, it also housed residents elsewhere, including in spaces in Pegram Hall (Dimmock's earlier dining hall, repurposed and renamed when a new brick Mess Hall went up in 1892) and Cooke Hall, a large dormitory-style barracks built along the Boulevard in the 1890s. A Sanborn Company insurance map of 1925 (fig. 10) delineates the final configuration of the Soldiers' Home compound. In addition to Fleming Hall, the cottages, chapel, and the buildings mentioned above, other buildings included Randolph Hall (recreation), a 100-bed hospital that gained an adjoining wing, a cottage for orderlies, steam heating plant with smoke stack, laundry, kitchen, and assorted outbuildings.[53]

Funding the operations and maintenance of the large complex proved a constant challenge. As early as 1886, it became clear to Lee Camp that the cost of running the Soldiers' Home was too great to be sustained by private funding, and there was no expectation of any support from the United States government. That year, the Home's Board of Visitors solicited the Virginia General Assembly and received state financial support for the next twenty-two years, with an annual per-capita contribution capped at $10,000. Rapidly increasing enrollment at the Home led to a second request in 1892, to which the state responded with a subsidy increase capped at $30,000. This time, however, the General Assembly included the stipulation that Lee Camp relinquish the deed to the Soldiers' Home property to the Commonwealth "when it ceases to be used for present purposes" and that, in the meantime, several state officials be seated on the Board, *ex officio*. Over the next four decades, the Act of 1892 was revisited and amended several times to increase funding and delay the property transfer as long as there were veterans in residence. By 1918, the Commonwealth had provided more than 80% of all funds spent on the Home and its upkeep.[54] In his 1925 annual report, Superintendent W. C. Herbert argued that it was money well invested:

> *I believe that all the Veterans are more than appreciative of what is being allowed them by the State of Virginia and our Board of Visitors. They are visited daily by tourists from all over the country, and our registry in the Museum will show an average of more than five hundred visitors per month, which I believe to be a small percentage of those who actually visit this Home, and when one considered the type of men here and the location and beauty of our grounds makes this Home the greatest advertisement for the State of Virginia, and for this reason I do not believe that this Commonwealth can do too much for the Veterans.*[55]

Despite the increasing number of buildings (reaching thirty-five) and growing density of population, the Soldiers' Home remained surprisingly park-like through the years, fulfilling in some ways the bucolic vision of the earlier *Frank Leslie's* illustration. No longer surrounded by countryside and farmland, the property—eventually annexed by the City of Richmond in 1906—became an island of green space in a rapidly developing urban neighborhood. With approximately eight wooded acres remaining at central grounds, walkways, benches, and a formal parterre garden just east of Fleming Hall (fig. 11), the site became "one of the most attractive places about Richmond," an 1892 *Richmond Dispatch* article enthused, "the picture of restfulness and peace" with "everything is as neat as a pin."[56] In a 1904 letter to a friend, resident Benjamin J. Rogers expressed similar sentiment from inside the facility, noting the "fine groves of forest trees," flowers, shrubbery, and "elegant building(s)....taken all in all [this] is an ideal spot for an old Confed to spend his declining years at."[57]

Rogers's first-person account provides compelling glimpses of life at the Home and its semi-military routines and regulations. Dining at the Mess Hall with 200 other veterans, he observed, required a Sergeant posted at each table to ensure order, and cottage living entailed daily housekeeping chores and inspections:

> *Our rooms are furnished with two single iron bedsteads . . . a good mattress, bureau, washstand, pitcher and bowl, and two chambers. We are required to sweep them out every morning and carry out our slops. . . . They give us a hat, over coat, full suit of uniform, four pair shoes a year, soap, tobacco, chewing or smoking . . . undershirts and drawers, top shirts . . . socks, towels and color handkerchiefs.*

Comparing the social diversity in the Home to what he experienced in the army, Rogers described his comrades as ranging from the "Gent to the rascal who will steal your purse." Though he expressed concern that the sight of so many declining veterans would eventually become unbearable, he also described getting away on furlough and noted that leave passes were granted with more frequency to those proving themselves responsible. Despite the drawbacks of such regimented group living, Rogers affectionately deemed the place "a home in the true sense of the word for the old boys."[58]

A monumental site

In his descriptive letter about life at the Soldiers' Home, Rogers also noted, "We have hundreds of visitors here from all over the country." While it wasn't the first such facility (a southern veterans' home opened in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1881 but closed two years later), the Soldiers' Home in Richmond enjoyed a long-held reputation as the nation's premiere Confederate veterans' home.[59] Images of it were featured in period postcards and stereoscopic photographs. This renown was due to several factors: Lee Camp's widespread marketing campaign for start-up funds in the mid-1880s; the Home's location in the former Confederate capitol; and its much-publicized support by Union veterans.

The "noble institution" soon became a must-visit site on tourist circuits for those wishing to pay homage to all Confederate veterans. "In none of her monuments erected since the war," stated the *Richmond Dispatch* in the fall of 1892, "more than in Lee Camp Soldiers' Home, does Virginia teach the reverence she bears those who stood by her in her hour of sorest trial." Four

years later, in anticipation of thousands of visitors flocking to Richmond to attend the sixth annual United Confederate Veterans reunion, the same newspaper published a special edition noting events and the region's most important sites. Featured prominently in a montage illustration (fig. 12 a & b) titled, "Some of the Most Conspicuous Richmond Memorials," is a bird's-eye view of the Soldiers' Home, with Fleming Hall's distinctive profile in prominent view. The Home is pictured alongside such notable places as Richmond's Washington Monument, the Lee Monument, and the Confederate Pyramid at Hollywood Cemetery.[60] Over the next three and a half decades, Richmond would host four more national UCV reunions and myriad small gatherings of veterans, with the Soldiers' Home serving as an ideal venue for musters, picnics, photographs, speeches, and the sharing of wartime remembrances. Integral to these visits was interaction with the Home's residents.

"Living Monuments" to the Lost Cause

At its most basic level, the Soldiers' Home functioned as a charitable relief organization, providing shelter, food, medical care, and clothing to impoverished and disabled Confederate veterans who had few to no other options. To this end, the Richmond facility was enormously successful, caring for approximately 3,000 veterans from thirty-three states during its fifty-six years of existence. The Soldiers' Home also served simultaneously as an artificial city, military camp, museum, and a shrine, where—as historian R. B. Rosenburg points out—the gray-clad old soldiers served as "Living Monuments" to the Lost Cause.[61]

In the post Civil War decades, white southerners initially sought relief from the pain of defeat by reasoning that they lost the war primarily because of the overwhelming strength and numbers of northern troops—a concept popularized in the writings of Confederate General Jubal A. Early and the Southern Historical Society. By 1880, however, retrospection began to focus less on the causes and issues of the war and more on the soldiers who sacrificed life and limb for the Confederacy. By fighting and losing heroically, it was reasoned, the men who went to war ultimately vindicated the honor of the South. The last quarter of the 19th century witnessed the founding of the central institutions of the Lost Cause: veterans' groups, memorial societies, ladies' auxiliaries, and sons and daughters organizations. Their individual and joint efforts, increasingly celebratory in nature, raised monuments, published histories, and sponsored commemorative events. Rituals of remembrance honored not only the war dead but also the living veterans for their service.[62] This swelling sentiment helped Lee Camp—a self described "remnant of the soldiers of the 'Lost Cause'"—secure both private and public funding to establish and operate the Confederate Soldiers' Home. And while the destitute veterans found true refuge there, they also became significant relics in their own right. Like Little Sorrel, ensconced in its glass case—the "old boys" were visited, photographed, and sketched by generations of southerners who wished to connect to a heroic past.[63]

A place for reconciliation

The recognition and celebration of the valor of all soldiers, whether Union or Confederate, played a role in the commencement of "Blue and Gray" reunions in the 1880s. The first joint encampment of former enemies brought members of a Carlisle, Pennsylvania, G.A.R. post and ex-Confederates of the Valley of Virginia together at Luray, Virginia, in the summer of 1881. This was followed in October by the attendance of several veterans' organizations from

both North and South to the Yorktown Centennial, where they celebrated their common American heritage together. Throughout the next decade, dozens of combined reunions and reciprocated visits by veterans' groups fueled a movement toward reconciliation between the former foes—and, by example, toward reunification of the country. Both sides found appeal in Lost Cause sentiment. In focusing on the common experiences and challenges faced as soldiers and celebrating military distinction, there was no need to dwell on the raw violence or divisiveness of the war.[64]

Lee Camp, having as one of its founding missions the extension of "courtesy between soldiers" to former adversaries, elected the commander of the local Phil Kearny G.A.R. Union veterans' organization as a contributing member and hosted several northern groups visiting Richmond. A three-day "fraternal visit" of 189 members of the Lincoln Post, No. 11, Newark, New Jersey, in October 1884 resulted in a detailed accounting by the Union veterans that described a lavish banquet given by the Confederate veterans in their honor. The "Blue and the Gray" the writer noted, "each deserved from the other the respect which is always due valor. Add to this the fact that all are citizens of the common country...the conclusion is unavoidable, that each must rejoice in the glory of the other."[65] Lee Camp took a leadership position in the national reconciliation effort—a stance that also brought them crucial funding and advocacy from G.A.R. posts in the establishment of the Soldiers' Home. Northern contributions helped with the purchase of the Robinson property and initial operating expenses, and gifts from Union veterans also arrived for special purposes, like the provision of crockery for the Mess Hall, prompting Lee Camp to issue a resolution of gratitude that deemed the Aaron Wilkes Post, G.A.R., Trenton, New Jersey, a "band of brothers."[66] In July, 1887, dozens of members of the Lander Post, No. 5, G.A.R., of Lynn, Massachusetts, arrived in Richmond as guests of Lee Camp in time for Fourth of July festivities and to donate an organ for the new Confederate Memorial Chapel. This visit was documented by a group photograph of jocular Confederate and Union veterans and ladies posing together outside the east side of Fleming Hall (fig. 13).[67] In the half-century to follow, the Lander Post organ would provide musical accompaniment for countless popular entertainments, religious gatherings, and approximately 1,700 funeral services for the old soldiers.[68]

The crucial financial assistance of Union veterans was noted in speeches and literature from Lee Camp and the Soldiers' Home Board of Visitors, newspaper and magazine articles, and in ceremonial speeches at dedications of the Home and the new addition of Fleming Hall—each attended by sizeable G.A.R. contingencies invited as guests of honor. In fact, as board president N. V. Randolph noted in an address given in 1886, northern donations to the Home tallied far above those from southern states outside of Virginia. In the same year, when urging passage of the first state appropriation bill for the Soldiers' Home, Senator William Lovenstein acknowledged the G.A.R. contributions and noted the mutual visits between Lee Camp and various northern posts, stating that "they had done much to break down the bitter prejudices of the past and to restore an era of good feeling in all sections of the country."[69]

This open fraternization with Union veterans set Lee Camp and other United Confederate Veteran camps apart from the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia (AANVA), the dominant Confederate veterans' fraternal organization in the mid-1880s. Founded in Richmond fifteen years earlier, that group and leaders like Jubal A. Early espoused ongoing sectionalism.[70]

However, this faction lost influence after the founding of the Soldiers' Home and with the burgeoning new version of Lost Cause sensibility that permitted celebration of the Confederacy while re-establishing a New South within the broader national identity.[71]

Decline and Closing

Despite the Soldiers' Home's high profile as a locus of Civil War remembrance and celebration, funding problems remained a constant issue. By the turn of the 20th century, private donations dwindled as patrons from the Civil War generation aged or died and younger Americans turned their focus to the Spanish-American War and the start of a new century. Unfortunately this drop in contributions coincided with the swelling enrollment of increasingly needy veterans. An 1896 board report observed, "This Institution is fast becoming a large hospital. The men received are generally broken in health or suffering from wounds, which with advanced age, renders them incapable of caring for themselves." That year, of the 245 inmates, one fifth had been hospitalized.[72] After 1919, enrollment began a natural and steady decline. In 1925, the board reported 167 residents, with an average age of 82 ½ years; by 1930, there were sixty-two, half of them hospitalized. The number dropped to nine residents in 1938. That year, when Governor George Peery proposed closing the Soldiers' Home as an economic move, two of the veterans addressed the General Assembly, pleading for the opportunity to live out their remaining days there. The Commonwealth conceded, and the final veteran, John Wesley "Jack" Blizzard, died on January 29, 1941.[73]

By that time, the physical condition of the Soldiers' Home buildings had deteriorated drastically. Unlike veterans' homes in the North, which received Federal subsidies with the ongoing commitment of serving veterans of all American wars, Confederate facilities had a finite mission, population, and tenure. As the old soldiers aged at the large facility in Richmond, so did the buildings. The 1925 Board of Visitors' report pointed out the difficulties: "Considering that all our buildings but one [Fleming Hall] are of frame construction and averaging over twenty-nine years in age, the maintenance necessary to keep them in serviceable condition is therefore extremely high." The Home's healthier residents, not confined to long-term care in the hospital or in the newly designated ward for the "feeble minded" in Cooke Hall, grew less ambulatory. In the late 1920s, they were relocated to rooms in a few buildings on the north end of the compound to be closer to meals and medical care, leaving a string of unoccupied cottages behind them. Concerned about fire hazard and the cost of insurance, the Soldiers' Home board voted to raze most of them; demolition began in the fall of 1935.[74] A month after the death of the last old soldier in 1941, the Board announced it would no longer accept new residents in anticipation of the Commonwealth's assuming the property. After further demolition and the relocation of two buildings elsewhere, three buildings remained of the former Soldiers' Home: Fleming Hall (Robinson House), the Confederate Memorial Chapel, and a small service shed.[75]

Property parcels granted to other organizations

The rest of the surrounding property was not vacant, however, as a 1937 aerial photograph gives evidence (fig. 14). Earlier, in 1911, Lee Camp and the Commonwealth granted several acres on the north end to the Confederate Memorial Association, which built "Battle Abbey" the following year as a Confederate shrine and archives. In 1946, the association merged with the Virginia Historical Society, which assumed the property in 1959. Designed by the

Philadelphia architecture firm, Bissell and Sinker, the bold neoclassical style building was enhanced by a formal garden at the rear, designed by Warren A. Manning.[76]

In 1932, the monumental limestone building to the west of the Soldiers' Home cottages was built as a residence for poor and infirm female relatives of Confederate veterans. Funded through private donations and state support, the Home for Confederate Women (listed, National Register 1985) was designed by architect Merrill Lee, of Lee, Smith, and Vandervoort, to emulate the neoclassical lines and motifs of the White House. Its soaring Ionic portico faces Sheppard Street. After relocating the home's final residents to a nursing facility in 1989, the Commonwealth designated the building as a memorial to the women of the South and transferred the property to VMFA. Today the renovated and renamed Pauley Center houses museum offices and meeting rooms. [77]

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) was built in 1936 on the southeast corner of the Soldiers' Home property. Designed by Peebles and Ferguson, the original building was one of Richmond's finest examples of neo-Georgian architecture; the primary façade is still visible today from the Boulevard. In negotiations with Lee Camp to build the state-sponsored art museum, the Commonwealth agreed in 1934 to maintain the former Soldiers' Home grounds as the R.E. Lee Camp Confederate Memorial Park—a designation that remains today on the VMFA campus.[78] With public-private initiatives and funding, the state-owned museum has undergone five expansions, the latest being the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin wing in 2010. Today VMFA is considered one of the top-ten comprehensive art museums in the United States[79]

In 1955, at the former site of the Soldiers' Home hospital and steam plant fronting the Boulevard, the United Daughters of the Confederacy built its national headquarters Memorial Building (listed, National Register 2008). This monolithic, marble-clad design was the work of the firm of Ballou and Justice.[80]

Through the dramatic changes associated with the closing of the Soldiers' Home, Fleming Hall—then approaching its centennial year—stood steadfast with its small museum intact. In the early 1940s, the Commonwealth offered the building to the Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which declined it. However, by that time, the UDC did own the museum's contents, deeded to the women's association by the handful of surviving veterans of Lee Camp. In 1948, upon learning that the state would be leasing the building to a non-profit science institute, the UDC sent the relics and artworks to be displayed at Blue's Armory (Richmond) and donated Little Sorrel to the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, where the old warhorse remains on view today.[81]

Historic Context – 1941 to the present

The stated period of significance in this nomination spans the transition of Robinson House from family residence (1855-1884) to institutional office, barracks, and museum for the R. E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home (1885-1941). However, to better understand the present physical appearance and condition of Robinson House, one must take into account its history and modifications made over the subsequent seventy years. Under the ownership of the

Commonwealth—which named the building Robinson House for its original owners—the building also underwent sequential renovations for offices and labs for the Virginia Institute for Scientific Research (1949-63) and offices, art studios, and galleries for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (1964-93). The Commonwealth transferred the care of the building from the Department of General Services to VMFA in 1993. With slight interior modifications, the offices were subsequently leased to the Virginia Association of Museums (1995-96). With state appropriations, Robinson House underwent extensive repair in 2001 during which the roof and windows were replaced, lead-based paint was removed from exterior brick, foundation walls excavated and repaired, and foundation drains installed. Unoccupied since 1996, the building has provided storage space for the art museum.

At present, VMFA is preparing to embark on a major rehabilitation of Robinson House in order to 1) stabilize its structure; 2) reclaim extant interior historic fabric; and 3) repurpose the building for use as a gallery dedicated to the historic interpretation of the site (occupancy by the Robinson Family and the R. E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home); as a regional tourism center; and as administrative offices. In early 2013 the General Assembly approved funds necessary for the museum to begin planning this endeavor. With the recent selection of an architectural firm with extensive historic building rehabilitation experience, design development will commence this year and the construction phase is slated to begin early 2014.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 127-0741_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 37.557087 Longitude: -77.474475

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary of Robinson House is shown as a dashed line on the attached map entitled "Robinson House, Richmond, Virginia, Boundary/Sketch Map."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Robinson House is located on a small portion of Tax Parcel No. W0001286001, which is an 11.222-acre parcel owned by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA). The VMFA campus includes historic and non-historic buildings and a landscape design that dates from the mid-2000s. Therefore, the historic boundary for the Robinson House is drawn to encompass the immediate setting of the dwelling, which includes a small grassy yard bounded on all sides by poured concrete sidewalks.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Elizabeth L. O'Leary, Ph.D., art historian for VMFA; Marc Wagner, architectural historian and Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, Ph.D., historian for Virginia Department of Historic Resources
street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23221
e-mail: _____
telephone: 804-482-6099
date: July 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photo Log

Name of Property: Robinson House

City or Vicinity: Richmond

County: Independent City State: Virginia

Photographers: Travis Fullerton, David Stover, and Elizabeth O'Leary

Dates Photographed: Fullerton (April 2011), Stover (July 2013), O'Leary (June 2013)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 Robinson House, south elevation, camera facing northeast. (Fullerton)

Photo 2 Robinson House, south elevation, detail of portico, camera facing north. (O'Leary)

Photo 3 Robinson House, east elevation, detail of cornice and brackets, camera facing northwest. (O'Leary)

Photo 4 Robinson House, south elevation, detail of belvedere, camera facing northwest. (Fullerton)

Photo 5 Robinson House, north elevation, camera facing southwest. (O'Leary)

Photo 6 Robinson House, east elevation, camera facing west/northwest. (O'Leary)

Photo 7 Robinson House, west elevation, camera facing east/southeast. (O'Leary)

Photo 8 Robinson House, first floor rooms, west of center hall, camera facing northwest. (Stover)

Photo 9 Robinson House, first floor staircase showing newel post, camera facing northeast. (Stover)

Photo 10 Robinson House, second floor paired windows, center bay, camera facing south. (Stover)

Photo 11 Robinson House, third floor, large room facing south, camera facing south. (Stover)

Photo 12 Robinson House, belvedere interior viewing room, camera facing southwest. (Stover)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

ENDNOTES

[1] Elizabeth Overton Robinson, undated letter (ca. 1950), Valentine Richmond History Center (hereafter VRHC). The appearance of the two-story residence is documented in three early images: "'The Grove,' Home of Anthony Robinson Jr.," ca. 1880, photograph 50.88, VRHC; "Confederate Soldiers' Home," 1885, photograph X60.8.6, VRHC; "Virginia—The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers and Sailors at Richmond," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (22 August 1885), woodcut illustration, p. 5.
[2] For a similar but simpler version of the window surround, see Fig. 122 "Italian Window—dressing plain" in A[ndrew] J[ackson] Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 289.
[3] "'The Grove,' Home of Anthony Robinson Jr.," ca. 1880, photograph 50.88, VRHC.
[4] Detroit Publishing Co., "Confederate Soldiers' Home, Richmond, Va.," ca. 1908, photograph LC-D4-71007, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.
[5] The photograph indicates that the original weathervane featured the letters "CSH" (for Confederate Soldiers' Home) cut out on the fin.
[6] For images of these now-removed porches, see: (east elevation) Detroit Publishing Co., "Confederate Soldiers' Home, Richmond, Va.," 1908, Library of Congress; (west elevation) "R. E. Lee Camp Soldiers' Home at Richmond," ca. 1900, Cook Collection, VRHC.
[7] Brian Haggard, Capital Outlay Manger, VMFA, 28 April 2008, e-mail correspondence with Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

[8] Carole Kass, "Robinson House is Example of What Renovation Can Do," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (15 March 1964): D-4.
[9] More physical investigation is pending to find possible extant evidence of foundations or walls of the earlier summer dwelling within the larger building.
[10] Elizabeth Overton Robinson, undated letter, VRH. Anthony Robinson Jr. held membership at Monumental Episcopal Church, built on the site in tribute to the theater fire victims. Robinson's paternal line: Starkey (1760-1815), Anthony (1737-1776), Anthony (1711-1737), John (1685-1736), Anthony (1662-1727), and John (1615-1688), who immigrated to Virginia from England in the 1650s. He grew up at Poplar Vale, the Henrico County plantation of his uncle, John Robinson (1773-1850), which eventually became a large portion of Byrd Park. Genealogical information is found in "Robinsons of 'Hewick' Near Urbanna, in Middlesex County, Va.," *Richmond Standard*, 26 March 1881, p. 1; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* 4 (1915; repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 80-81; and the Robinson Family Papers, VRHC. Within the latter is the aforementioned letter from Anthony's granddaughter, Elizabeth Overton Robinson, with firsthand remembrances of The Grove. "Miss Lizzie" gained acclaim in Richmond for establishing the city's first kindergarten, 1889-1904.
[11] 1860 property tax receipt from Henrico County sheriff lists 159.5 acres. Robinson Family Papers, 1836-86, LVA, in Virginia Dept. of the Treasury, Division of Unclaimed Property, Lot 255, Folder 2.The specific Sydney property owned by Robinson is indicated by lot numbers in an 1863 lawsuit drawn up by his son, Starkey, against the other members of the family. Robinson Family Papers, 1732-1921, VHS, Section 4, Mss1 R5685 d 273. For discussion of Robinson's role in Sydney land speculation, see Drew St. J. Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District* (Richmond: Council of Historic Richmond Foundation, 1996), p. 41. Carneal mistakenly includes the life dates and image of Anthony Robinson (1770-1851), uncle to the owner of the Robinson House—an easy error as both used the suffix "Jr."
[12] 1830 U.S. Census, Henrico Virginia, p. 325 (lists 10 slaves, 3 below the age of 10); 1850 U.S. Census, Western District of Henrico County, p. 31 (lists 6 slaves, 1 below the age of 10); 1860 U.S. Census, Western Division of Henrico County, Va., p. 77 (lists 12 slaves, 5 below the age of 10). National Archives databases accessed through Ancestry.com. For information about Rebecca's parents, Samuel and Anne Quigg Couch, see Joseph Lyon Miller, *The Descendants of Capt. Thomas Carter of 'Barford,' Lancaster County, Virginia, 1652-1912"* (1912), p. 347, and the manumission notice, 9 June 1794, Richmond City Hustings Court, Deed Book 2, p. 123, transcribed: www.freeafricanamericans.com/virginiafreeafter1782.htm.
[13] 1850 U.S. Census, Western District of Henrico County, Va., p. 31; 1860 U.S. Census, Western Division of Henrico County, Va., p. 77. Henrico County tax records for 1859 indicate Robinson's ownership of two parcels of land, 139.5 and 32 acres, and note improvements to the property that year. Henrico County Land Tax Records, 1859-60, microfilm 1782-1879, reel 469, Library of Virginia (hereafter LVA). A receipt dated 27 September 1860 from auctioneers Goddin & Apperson for selling a house and lot suggests that the Robinson's city residence was located on the southeast corner of Franklin and Madison Streets. Robinson Family Papers, 1836-86, Library of Virginia, Lot 255, Folder 2.
[14] A[ndrew] J[ackson] Downing, *Cottage Residences*, 4th revised edition (New York: Wiley & Halstead, 1856), pp. 92-101, illustrations Figs. 36, 37, 40, and 41.
[15] Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District,* pp. 56-57. The earlier version of the Ritter House is illustrated, Fig. 35a, p. 56. The Bolling Haxall House has been owned by the Woman's Club of Richmond since 1900.
[16] Copy of will of Anthony Robinson Jr., 27 June 1861, Robinson Family Papers, LVA, Lot 255, Folder 2. By this time, his eldest son Fayette (1818-1859), a noted author and linguist, had died in an accident in New York City and son Anthony (1831-1862) had been committed to the Richmond Lunatic Asylum. The 1860 U.S. Census valued Robinson's land and personal estate at $69,000—approximately $2 million at present-day rates. Inflation calculator: www.westegg.com/inflation.
[17] "Richmond, Virginia, 1865," drawn by Capt. Peter S. Michie, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and published in 1867 by N. Michler, reproduced as a facsimile in 1965 by the Civil War Centennial Committee, Richmond, Map G3884.R5S5.1965.M5, LVA.
[18] Robinson Family Papers, LVA, Lot 255, Folder 2.

[19] Samuel Couch Robinson (1822-1872), an arms manufacturer, held the rank of Major in the Confederate Nitro and Mining Bureau; Starkey Robinson (1826-1915), a farmer, enlisted in the Confederate Army as a private in the Botetourt Light Artillery Regiment; and Edward Trent Robinson (d. 1895), a pharmacist, helped organize the Shocco [sic] Artillery, a local defense militia and served as a hospital orderly. In the mid-1850s, the Robinson sisters Margaret (b. 1828) and Mary (1829-1905) married, respectively, Charles Bullock and Edmund A. Crenshaw, owners of the prominent Philadelphia wholesale pharmaceutical firm Bullock & Crenshaw. E. T. Robinson, "Robinson Family History," unpublished manuscript, 1935, copy in Robinson House file, Freeman Library, VMFA. *American Civil War Soldiers*, database, Provo, Utah, accessed through Ancestry.com; Janet B. Hewett, ed. *The Roster of Confederate Soldiers 1861-1865* XIII (Wilmington N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1996), pp. 248, 260; "Wanted Recruits," *Daily Dispatch* (12 September 1861): 1.
[20] Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District*, pp. 60-61.
[21] "Ranaway.--$100 Reward.," *Daily* Dispatch (20 November 1861); "Twenty five dollars Reward.," *Daily Dispatch* (12 August 1863), and "Runaways.," *Daily Dispatch* (14 May, 1864). Elizabeth Overton Robinson, undated letter, VRHC. A search of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies yields no mention of the house.
[22] Copy of will of Rebecca W. Robinson, August 1874, Robinson Family Papers, LVA, Lot 255, Folder 2.
[23] 1880 U.S. Census, Tuckahoe District, Henrico Co., Virginia, p. 28. Rebecca C. Robinson, age 21, was the daughter of Starkey, who farmed his estate in Buchanan County.
[24] "'The Grove,' Home of Anthony Robinson Jr.," ca. 1880, photograph 50.88, VRHC.
[25] United Confederate Veterans, Lee Camp, No. 1, Records, 1883-1936. Virginia Historical Society (hereafter Lee Camp Records, VHS), Minutes, Vol. 1, 27 April, 1883, p. 6.
[26] "The Soldiers' Home," *Richmond Dispatch* (12 January 1886): 2; George L. Kilmer, "A Note of Peace," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 36 (July 1888): 440.
[27] "The Blue and the Gray," *The Florida Mirror* (19 April 1884): 1; "The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers and Sailors at Richmond, VA., *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (22 August 1885): 5; "The Blue and The Gray in Unison," *New York Tribune (*19 April 1884): 5; "Testimonial Entertainment in Aid of the Southern Veteran Soldiers' Home," flyer, in Robert E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home, Board of Visitors Papers, 1884-1900, Accession 27991, State government records collection, Library of Virginia (hereafter Board of Visitors Papers, LVA); "The Visiting Veterans. Warmly Welcomed by All," *Daily Dispatch* (14 May 1884): 1. The Union veterans of Kearny Post contributed over $5,000 to the Soldiers' Home. Lee Camp Records, VHS, Minutes, Vol. 1, 16 July 1884, p. 164-65.

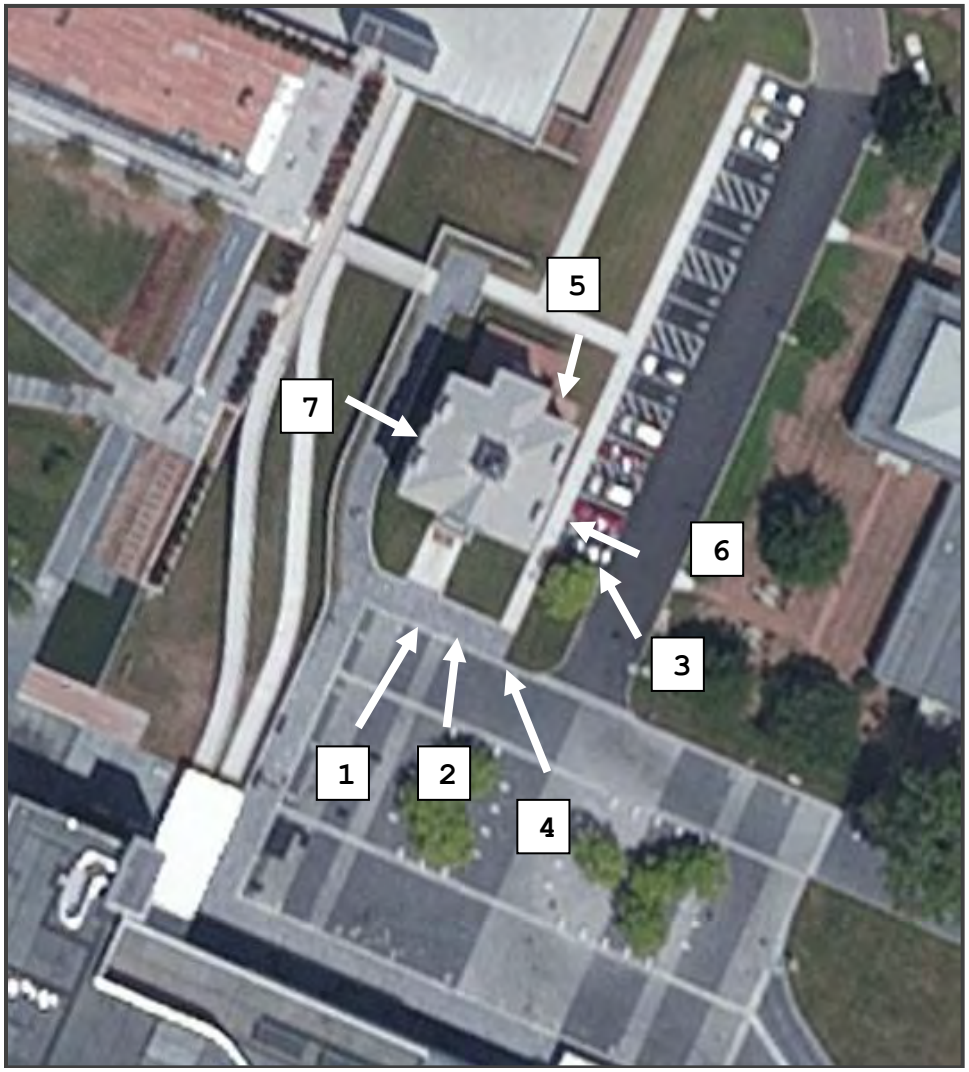
At the time of Grant's death in July 1885, the *Richmond Dispatch* noted a contribution of $500 for the Soldiers' Home from the former general and President. Oddly, a survey of extant Lee Camp and Solders' Home minutes and papers make no mention of such an important donation during the previous year of fundraising. The timing was difficult for the ailing Grant; by the first of May 1884, he had become embroiled in a national scandal when a Ponzi scheme instituted by a banking partner, Ferdinand Ward, unraveled, sending Grant into bankruptcy by the end of that month and Ward eventually to jail. "Grant and Lee Camp," *Richmond Dispatch* (24 July 1885): 4; *New York Tribune (*19 April 1884): 5; "The Blue and The Gray in Unison," *New York Tribune (*19 April 1884): 5; "Editorial Paragraphs," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 12 (May 1884): 238; "The Great Crash," *Daily Dispatch (*10 May 1884): 3; "Editorial Paragraphs," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 12 (May 1884): 238; "The Great Crash," *Daily Dispatch* (10 May 1884): 3; Kilmer, "A Note of Peace," p. 442.
[28] Deed, Channing M. Robinson &c to R. E. Lee Camp No. 1, Copy C, in Lee Camp Records, VHS, Box 42. The deed specifies lots in the Town of Sydney bounded by Grove, Mulberry, Foushee (now Sheppard), and Kensington. The Lee Camp board voted almost immediately to sell the lots east of Clover Street (now the Boulevard) for extra income, reducing the grounds of the Soldiers' Home to 24 acres.
[29] "The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers...," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (22 August 1885): 5.
[30] Robert E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home, Board of Visitors' Minutes, 1884-1930, Accession 24736. State government records collection, The Library of Virginia (hereafter Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA), Vol. 1, 9 March 1885, p. 11; "The Veterans' Home. Its Formal Dedication," *Richmond Dispatch* (21 May 1885): 4; James Pollard, Superintendent's report, June 1885, Board of Visitors Papers, LVA.

[31] "Confederate Soldiers' Home," photograph X60.8.6, VRHC. A donor's inscription on the photograph notes that it pictures "Sorrel," Stonewall Jackson's famous warhorse that died at the Soldiers' Home in March 1886. This, with the two-story appearance of the house and full tree foliage, suggests that the photo was taken in the fall of 1885. The waving banner, which pictures a word beginning with a large "L," resembles the one shown in the illustration of Lee Camp's new headquarters building on Broad Street. "New Home for Lee Camp at Richmond," *Confederate Veteran* 3 (October 1895): 312.
[32] Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA, Vol. 1, 9 March 1885, p. 11; 11 June 1885, p. 15.
[33] Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA, Vol. 1, 1885: 9 March, p. 11; 11 May, p. 14, and June 11, p. 15.
[34] "The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers...," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (22 August 1885): 5. Lee Camp reprinted copies of the image to distribute as gifts to donors and to circulate with fundraising appeals. Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA, 17 August 1885, p. 18. See one of the circulars in Confederate Soldiers' Home file, VRHC, 52.38.3. In 1886, the illustration began appearing on the back of the Soldiers' Home official letterhead. See examples in Board of Visitors Papers, LVA.
[35] Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA, Vol. 1, 11 May 1885, p. 15; W.R. Terry, Superintendent's reports, October 1885 and 14 September 1886, Board of Visitors Papers, LVA; Downing, *Cottage Residences*, pp. 100-101.
[36] Giving evidence of a possible competition for new Soldiers' Home building in Richmond are a lithographic print, "*Ex-Confederate Soldiers Home, Richmond,"* 1884, designed by J. W. Marshall and J. W. Walker, architects, and a letter, 28 June 1884, from Martin Thomas McMahon in support of a design submitted by Thomas Ustick Walter. Both items, collection of The Library of Virginia.
[37] Fleming entered the army as a private and, having participated in thirty battles, rose through the ranks to Lieutenant Colonel in the Richmond Fayette Artillery. See biographical surveys in "Energy and Thrift," *Washington Critic* (13 September 1887): 4; "Robt. I. Fleming Dead," *Evening Sun* (11 Nov. 1907): 1-2; and "Robert I. Fleming," *Confederate Military History* 4 (1899; repr. Wilmington NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 871-74, portrait opposite p. 871.
[38] For notice that Fleming donated both the renovation funds and the expansion plans, see "Personal Points," *Richmond Dispatch* (28 March 1886): 8, col. 4. Among Fleming's prominent career projects were the Charles Sumner School for African American children, All Soul's Church, The Department of Justice Building, and residences for Judge T.J. Coffey, Senators John McPherson and F. W. Palmer, and the Kellogg Office Building at 1410 F. Street NW, where he maintained his studio.
[39] "Robert I. Fleming," *Confederate Military History*, p. 874.
[40] "Robt. I. Fleming Dead," *Evening Sun* (11 Nov. 1907): 1; "Local Matters. The Fleming Addition to the Confederate Solders' Home," *Richmond Dispatch* (30 July 1886): 1. For the addition on Robinson House, Fleming retained local contractors, George W. Jarvis and Peter Glinn (Jarvis & Glinn Co.), active in Richmond 1876-1895. "Personal Points," *Richmond Dispatch* (28 March 1886): 8, col. 4.
[41] The impression of imposing verticality was heightened in recent years with the excavation and lowering of ground level around Robinson House to accommodate a new parking deck and entrance plaza installed in 2010 by VMFA.
[42] "Charles Sumner School," http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/79003150.pdf; "Handsome new Houses," *Washington Post* (20 June 1886): 2.
[43] W.R. Terry, Superintendent's report, 10 October 1886, LVA.
[44] Report of the Board of Visitors, Lee Camp Soldiers' Home, sent annually to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Several of these small, bound documents are in the collection at VHS. See the following years: 1895, p. 9; 1899, p. 8; 1902, p. 7; 1904, p. 9.
[45] Cole, "Life in the Lee Camp Soldiers Home...," p. 470.
[46] "War Relics and Antiquities," circular, Lee Camp Records, VHS, Box 45.
[47] Lee Camp Records, VHS, Minutes, Vol. 1, 13 August 1886, p. 94.
[48] "Little Sorrel Heads for VMI Bringing Controversy to End," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (2 April 1949): 2.
[49] Lee Camp Records, VHS, Minutes, Vol. 1, p. 62.
[50] James W. Boehling, "When the museum was built, as remembered by a neighborhood boy," unpublished manuscript, September 1994, pp. 2-3, VMFA Library. Period photographs suggest that Little Sorrel stood in the southeastern room, located by turning right once inside the doorway.

[51] Board of Visitors Minutes, LVA, 8 February 1887, p. 58.
[52] The names of the cottages, standing north to south: J.E.B. Stuart (aka Superintendent's House); Mosby (aka Babcock); Appleton (aka New York); Downey (aka Virginia); Union; Stonewall; Smith; Pickett; Sons of Confederate Veterans; and Bosher. The donors of the cottages were, respectively: James Pace, A.G. Babcock, W.H. Appleton (the New York publisher), Mark Downey, W.W. Corcoran, Lewis Ginter the children of Gov. William "Extra Billy" Smith, Pickett Camp Confederate Veterans, and Sons of Confederate Veterans. The Soldiers' Home administration made partial contributions to the Pickett and Sons of Confederate Veterans cottages; it paid in full for the last residence, Bosher Cottage.
[53] "Into Its New Home. Lee Camp to Move into Its Splendid Headquarters Friday Night," *Richmond Dispatch* (12 January 1896): 14; Sanborn Map Company, "Richmond, Virginia," 1925, VHS, microform, ss10: no. 286 reel 13. For a good survey of the Home and residential life, see Emily J. Williams, "'A home...for the old boys': The Robert E. Lee Camp Confederate Soldiers' Home," *Virginia Cavalcade* 29 (Summer 1979): 40-47.
[54] For good summaries of the history of state funding and property ownership of the Soldiers' Home grounds, see James Latimer, "Dead's Bivouac Replaces Soldiers' Home Here," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (23 February 1941): IV-1; Louise Ashby Almond, *Confederate Soldiers' Home Grounds: A Report* (Richmond: the author, 1975); and Robert Edmond Hill, *John Edmond Graves and the Lee Camp soldiers' Home* (Richmond: the author, 1997).
[55] Report of the Board of Visitors, 1925, VHS, p. 12.
[56] "The Soldiers' Home, Richmond, Virginia. The Origin and History of This Noble Institution," *Richmond Dispatch* (27 November 1892): 12.
[57] Rogers's letter is reproduced in Howson W. Cole (ed.), "Life in the Lee Camp Soldiers Home: A Letter of Benjamin J. Rogers, December 27, 1904," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 70 (October 1962): 470.
[58] Cole, "Life in the Lee Camp Soldiers Home...,"pp. 468-70.
[59] Altogether, there were sixteen Confederate soldiers' homes that served the needs of an estimated 20,000 veterans. The great majority of infirm and disabled former soldiers were cared for by families. R. B. Rosenburg, *Living Monuments: Confederate Soldiers' Homes in the New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 5-7, 9; R. B. Rosenburg, "'Empty Sleeves and Wooden Pegs': Disabled Confederate Veterans in Image and Reality," in David A. Gerber, ed., *Disabled Veterans in History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 216.
[60] "The Soldiers' Home, Richmond, Virginia," *Richmond Dispatch* (27 November 1892): 12; "Some of the Most Conspicuous Richmond Memorials," *Richmond Dispatch* (31 May 1896): 3.
[61] Rosenburg, *Living Monuments,* p. 3; Williams, p. 43.
[62] Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 5-8, 53, 91-103; Gary W. Gallagher, *Jubal A. Early, The Lost Cause, ad Civil War History: A Persistent Legacy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), p. 23.
[63] The self reference appears in a resolution drawn up by Lee Camp in 1886 eulogizing the death of Father Abram Ryan, noted Confederate poet. Lee Camp Records, VHS, Minutes, Vol. 1, undated clipping, p. 70. In the 1920s and 1930s it became especially fashionable for local debutants to have their pictures taken with the grizzled veterans. Rosenburg, *Living Monuments,* p. 15; illus. p. 151; Martha E. Kinney, "'If Vanquished I Am Still Victorious": Religious and Cultural Symbolism in Virginia's Confederate Memorial Day Celebrations, 1866-1930," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 106 (Summer 1998): illus. p. 244. Among the artists to sketch and paint the Soldiers' Home residents was Margaret May Dashiell (1869-1958), whose work is represented in the collection of area museums, including VMFA.
[64] Kilmer, "A Note of Peace," pp. 440-41; Foster, pp. 67, 196; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press, 2001), pp. 202-19, 211.
[65] Cornelius Henry Benson, *"Yank" and "Reb"* (Newark, N.J.: M.H. Neuhut, 1884), p. 9.
[66] See listing of numerous reunions in which Lee Camp participated or hosted in Kilmer, "A Note of Peace," 440-42; Foster, p. 94; Board of Visitors Papers, LVA, August 1885.

[67] On their arrival, the Massachusetts vets were treated to pomp, ceremony, and a parade. "Grand Army Visitors," *Richmond Dispatch* (29 June 1887): 1. Photograph: Library of Virginia.
[68] Ulrich Troubetzkoy, "The Confederate Memorial Chapel," *Virginia Cavalcade* 10 (Winter 1960-61): 28.
[69] *Address Delivered by Comrade N. V. Randolph before R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, C. V. December 3, 1886*," (Richmond: Johns & Co., 1887), pp. 14-15; "The Soldiers' Home," *Richmond Dispatch* (12 January 1886): 1.
[70] Gallagher, *Jubal A. Early,* p. 23.
[71] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, pp. 53, 91.
[72] Report of the Board of Visitors, 1896, VHS, pp. 3-4; Report of the Board of Visitors, 1925, VHS, p. 10.
[73] Williams, 44, 46; Latimer, "Dead's Bivouac...," *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* (23 February 1941): IV-2.; Ulrich Troubetzkoy, "Home Here is Vacant," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (16 January 1955): F-3.
[74] Report of the Board of Visitors, 1925, VHS, pp. 11-12; Latimer, "Dead's Bivouac...," p. 2; "Eight Houses at Soldiers' Home May be Razed Soon," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (22 September 1935): 1-2.
[75] Latimer, "Dead's Bivouac...," p. 2; Troubetzkoy, "Home Here is Vacant," p. F-3; "Confederate Home to Be Shut Pending Operation as Park," *Times Dispatch* (14 February 1941). Union Cottage was relocated to 2715 Broad Rock Blvd., Chesterfield County, and the second (brick) Mess Hall was moved to 5514 Lakeside Ave., Richmond.
[76] John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997), p. 32.
[77] Wells and Dalton, p. 251
[78] Almond, pp. 7-14.
[79] Wells and Dalton, p. 350.
[80] Wells and Dalton, p. 18.
[81] "Little Sorrel Heads for VMI Bringing Controversy to End," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (2 April 1949): 2; Latimer, "Dead's Bivouac...," p. 2.

Photo Key
Robinson House
Richmond, Virginia
DHR #127-0741

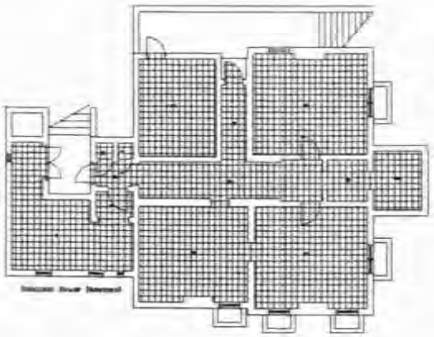


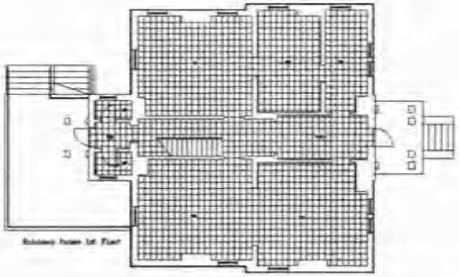
EAST ELEVATION

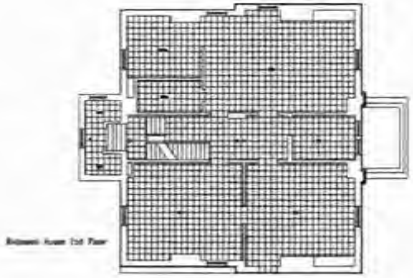
NORTH ELEVATION

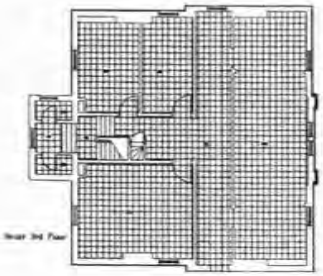
South Elevation

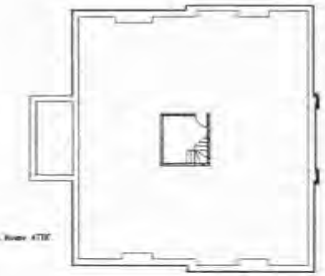
WEST ELEVATION

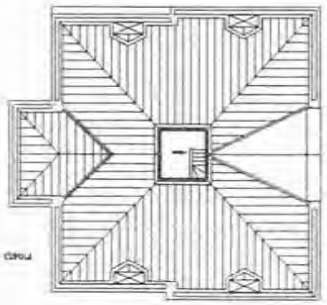


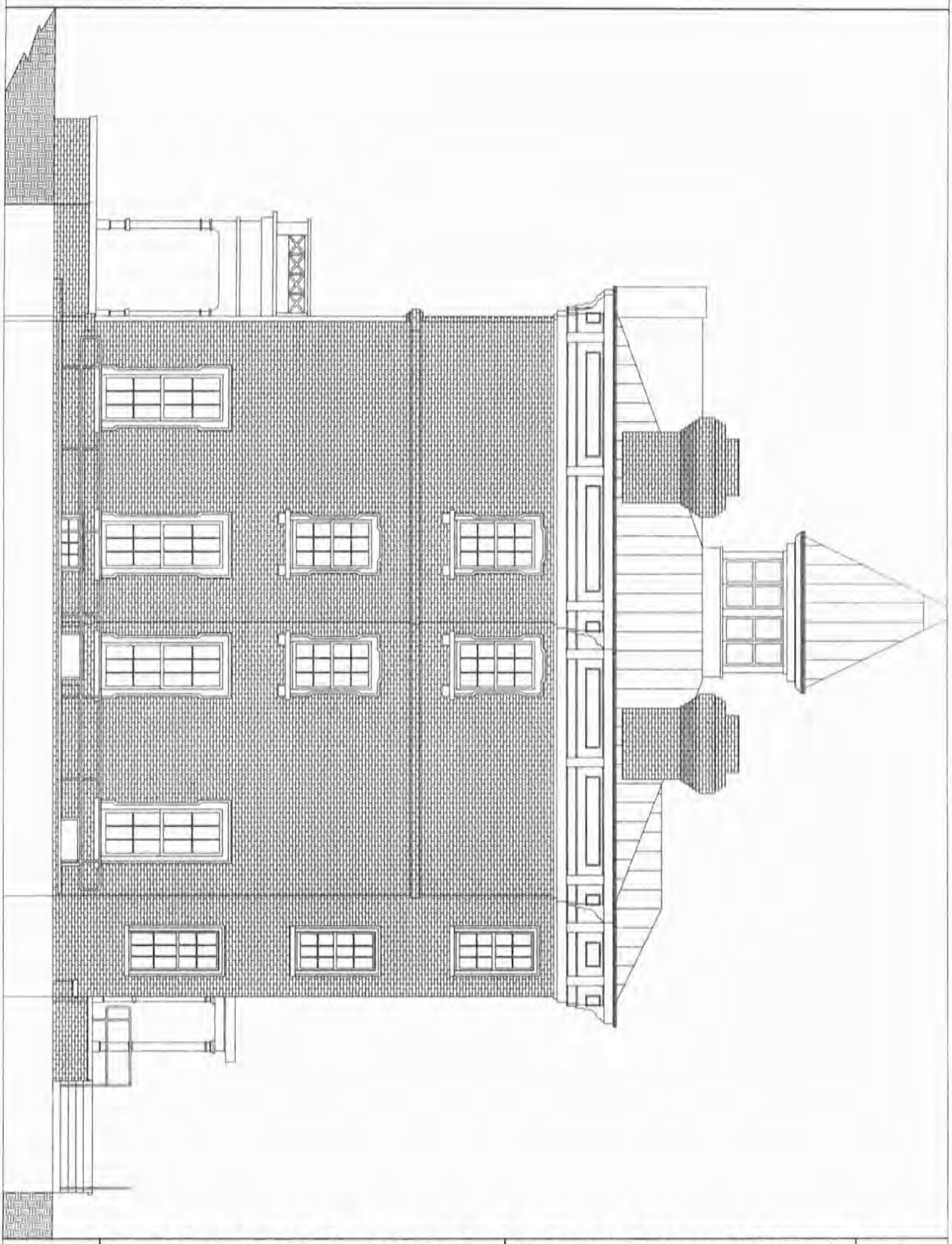




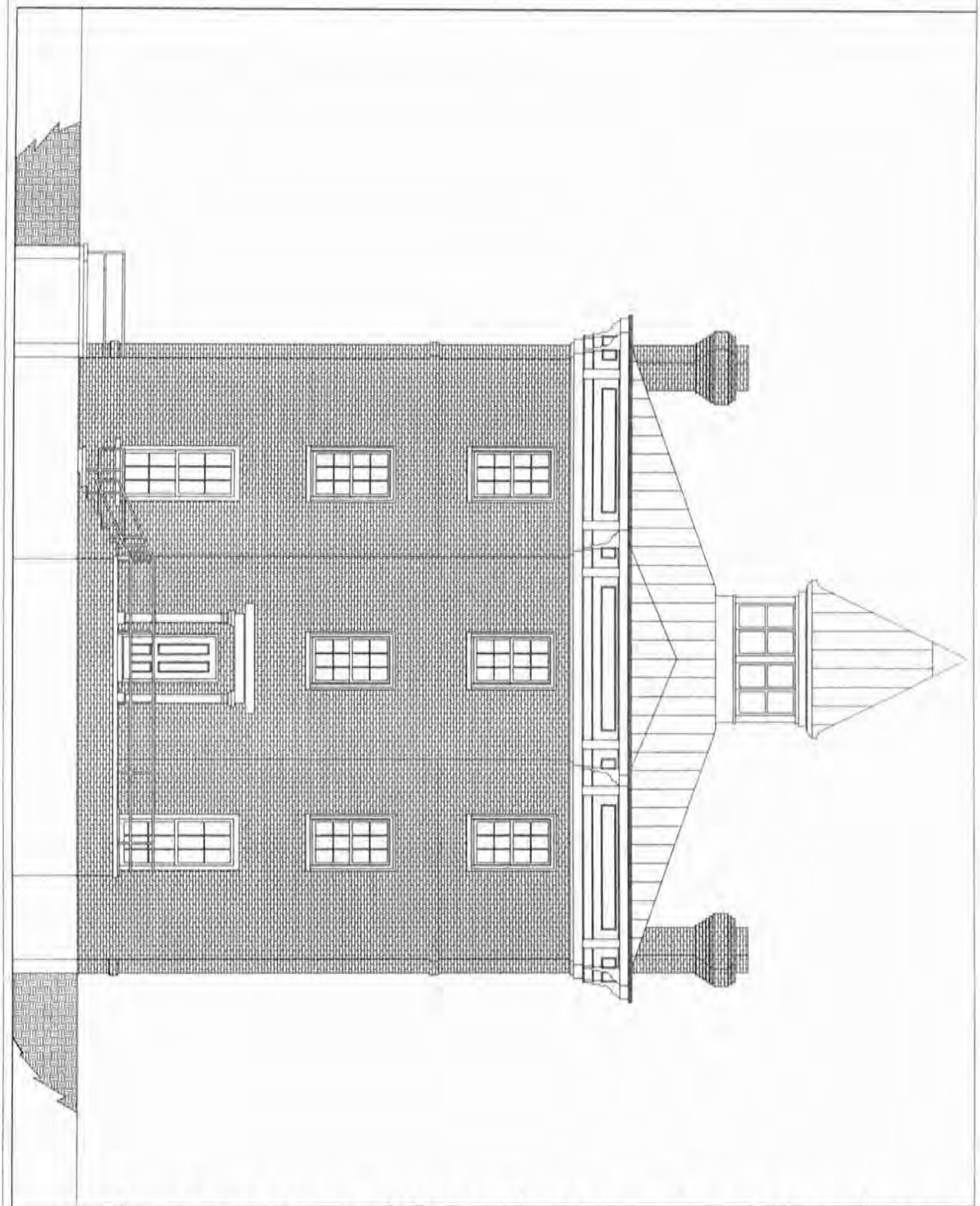








R.8	ROBINSON HOUSE	East Elevation	7/8/2003



R.9	ROBINSON HOUSE	North Elevation	7/8/2003

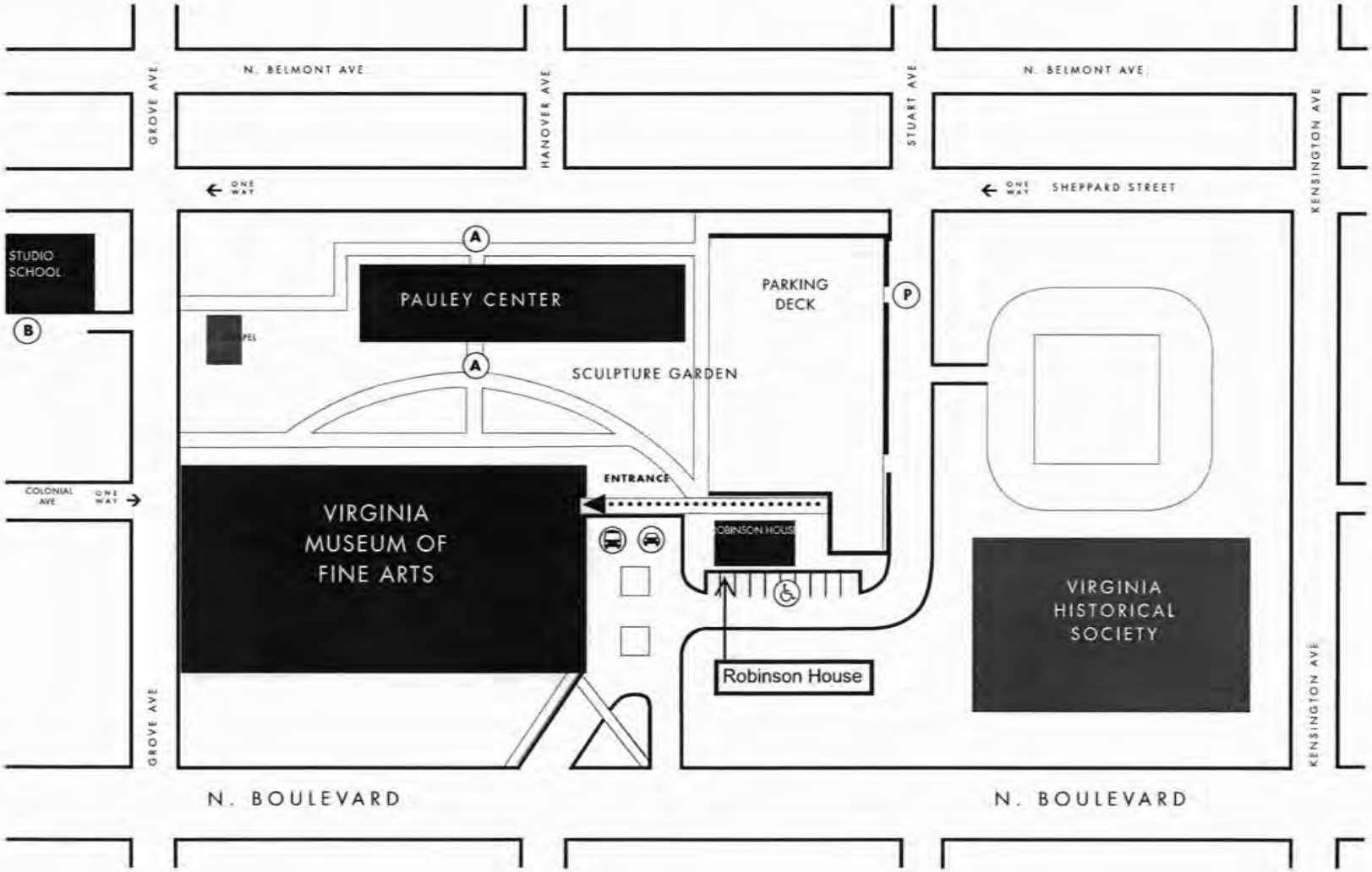
Robinson House, on the campus of the Virginia Fine Arts Museum, Richmond, Virginia
DHR No. 127-0741

Not to Scale

MAP KEY

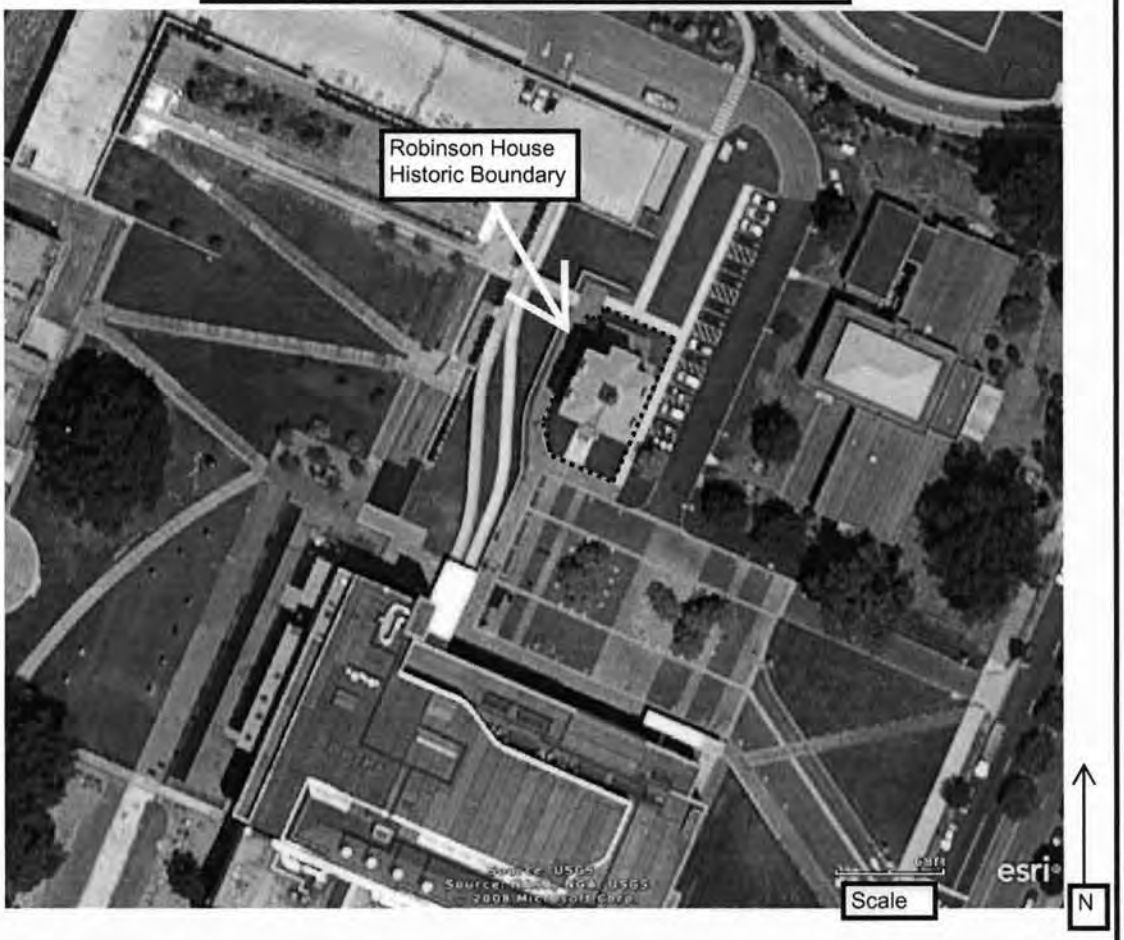
- (A) Pauley Center entrance
- (B) VMFA Studio School entrance
- (P) Parking Deck entrance
- Handicapped parking
- Bus/oversized vehicle drop off and/or pick up
- Passenger vehicle drop off and/or pick up
- Walkways
- Main walkway from parking

Campus Map

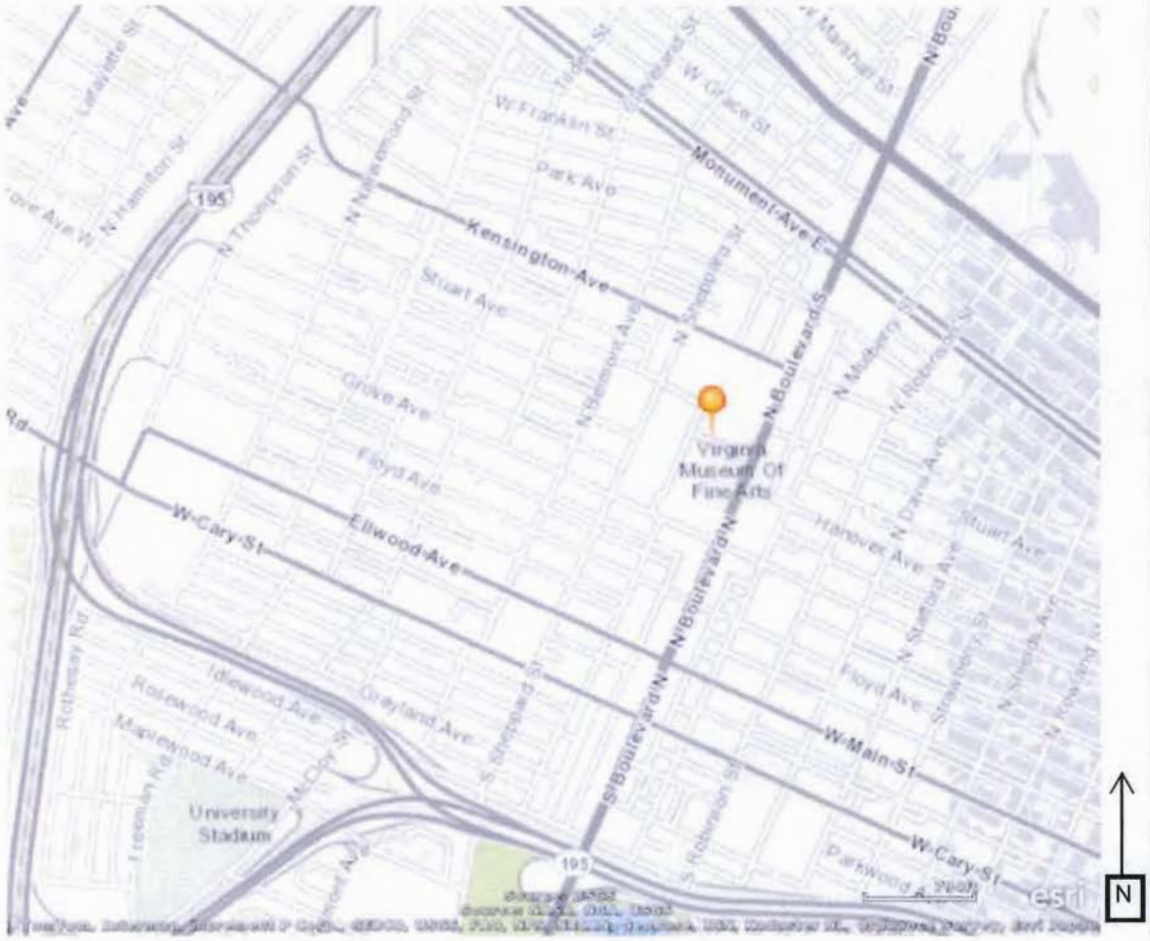


Aerial View and Historic Boundary
Robinson House
City of Richmond, Virginia
DHR No. 127-0741

Robinson House Aerial View and Historic Boundary



Robinson House, Richmond, Virginia



Location Map
Robinson House
City of Richmond, Virginia
DHR No. 127-0741

Latitude: 37.557087

Longitude: -77.474475

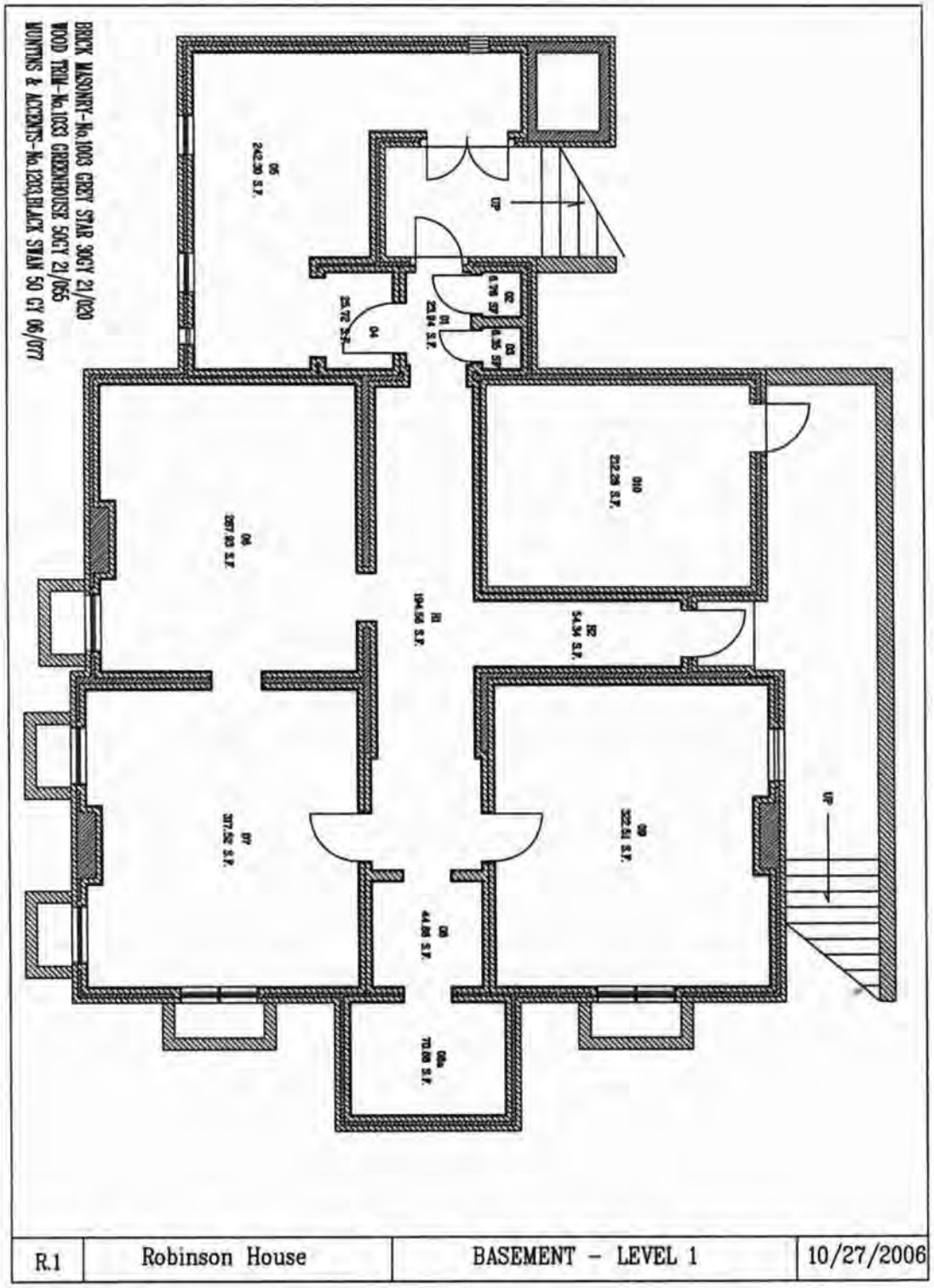


Fig. 1. Floor plan, basement level. Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library VMFA.

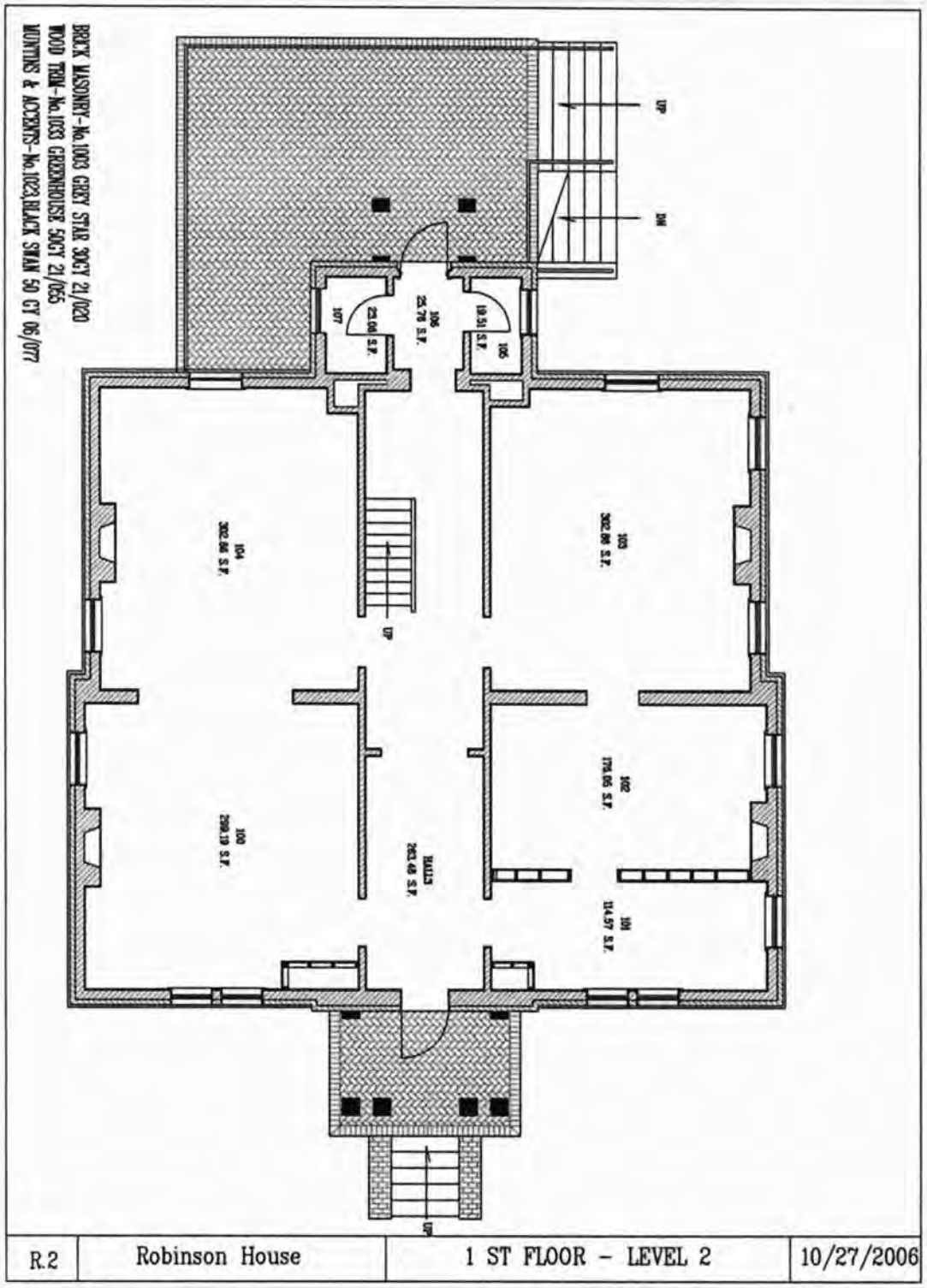
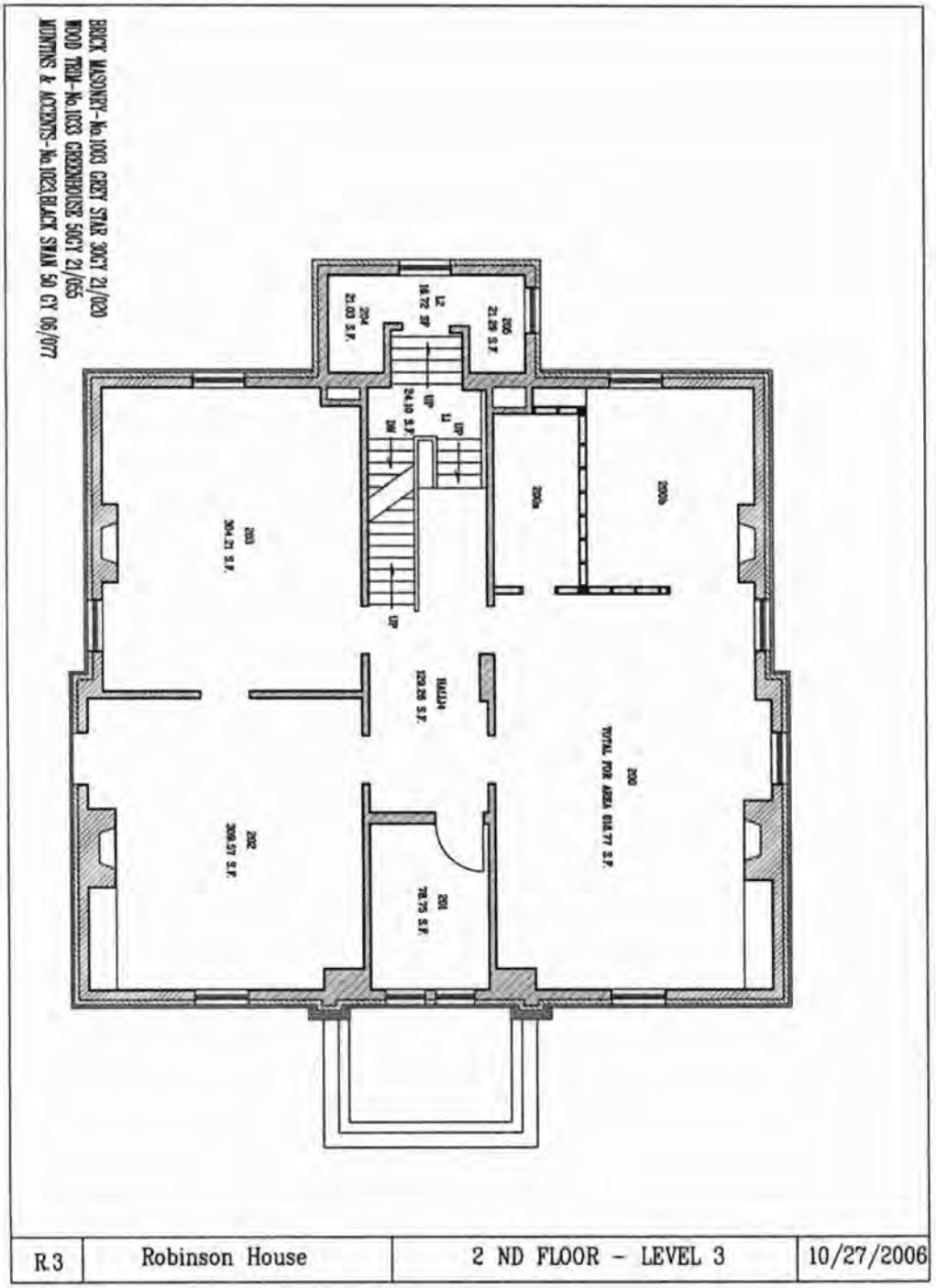


Fig. 2. Floor plan, first floor. Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library VMFA.



R.3	Robinson House	2 ND FLOOR - LEVEL 3	10/27/2006

Fig. 3. Floor plan, second floor. Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library VMFA.

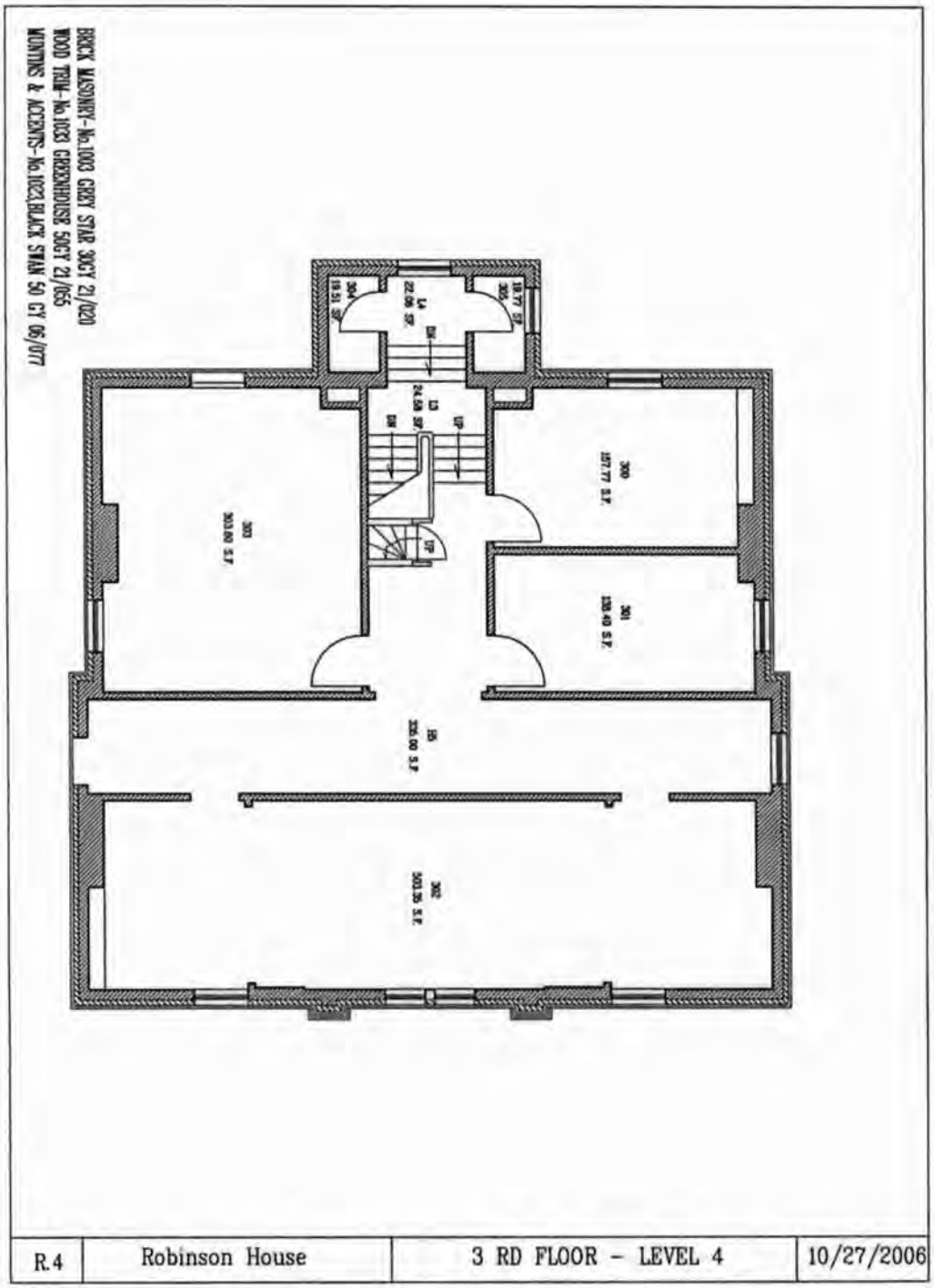


Fig. 4. Floor plan, third floor. Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library VMFA.

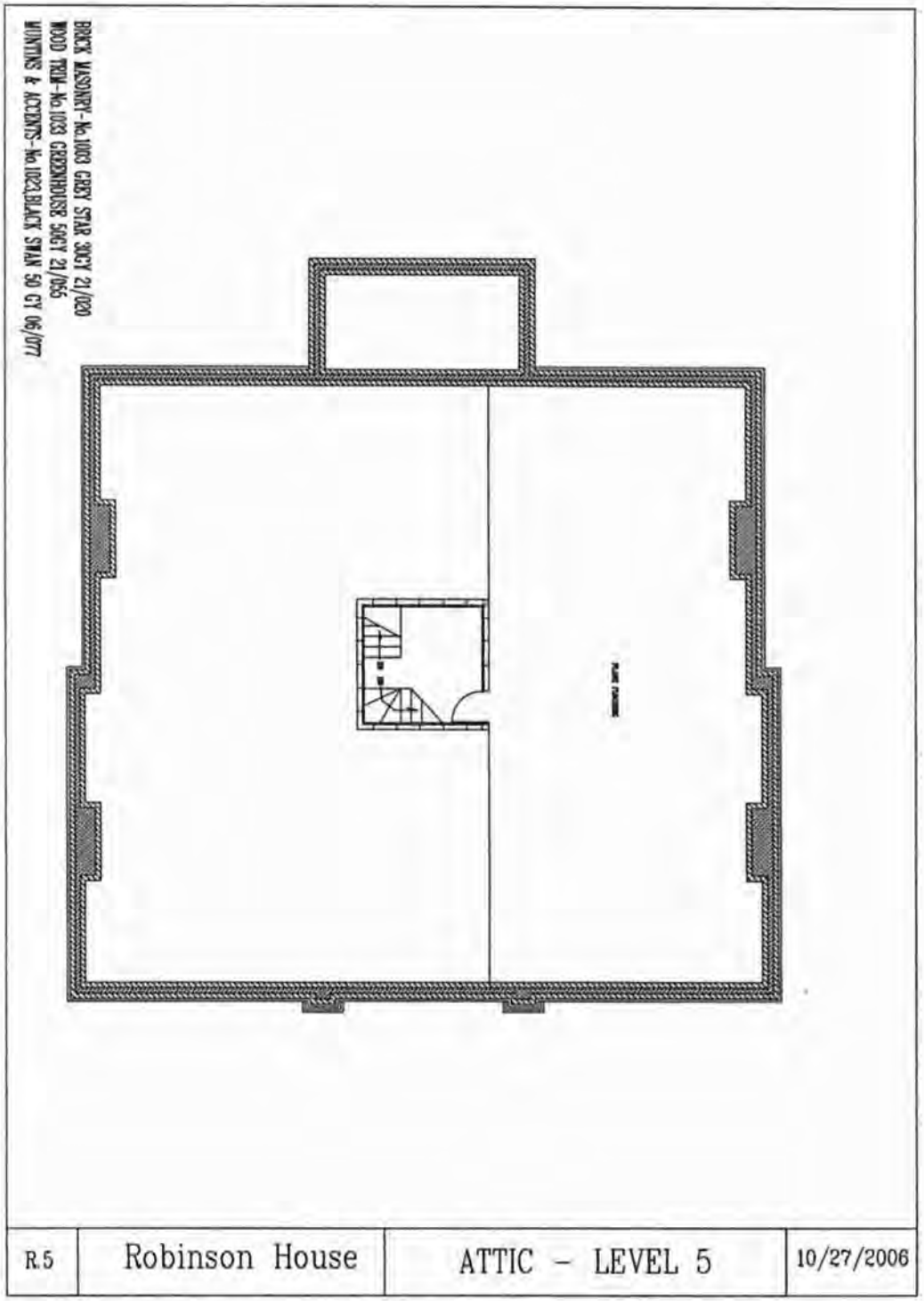


Fig. 5. Floor plan, attic level. Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library VMFA.

Fig. 6. "The Grove"—home of Anthony Robinson Jr. and family, ca. 1880. Photograph: Valentine Richmond History Center.

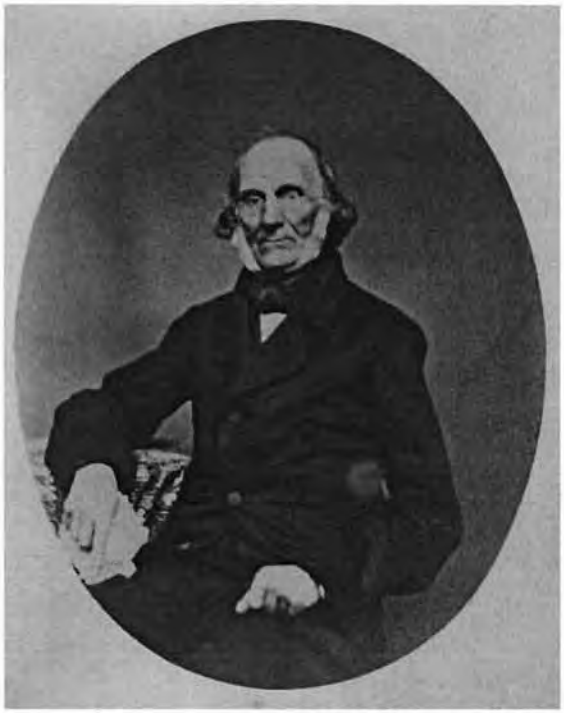


Fig. 7 a & b. Anthony Robinson Jr., ca. 1850s., and Rebecca Webb Couch Robinson, ca. 1860s. Photographs: collection of descendent Edward Robinson Justice and his daughter, Eddie Justice Zimmerman, Shreveport, La. Shreveport, La.

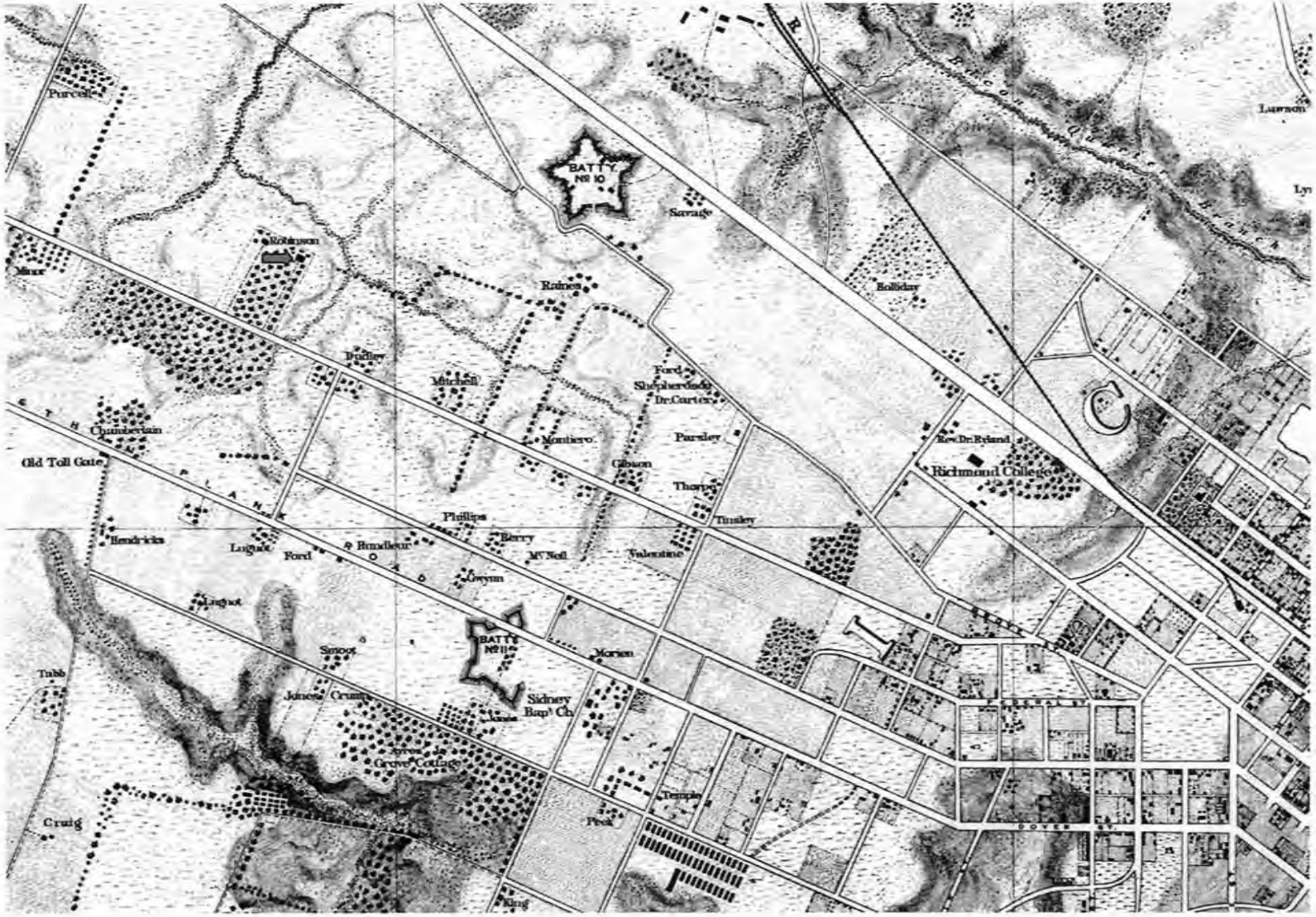


Fig. 8a. Robinson House (designated by arrow) as pictured in detail of map "Richmond, Virginia, 1865," drawn by Capt. Peter S. Michie, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and published in 1867 by N. Michler, reproduced as a facsimile in 1965 by the Civil War Centennial Committee, Richmond, Map G3884.R5S5.1965.M5, Library of Virginia.

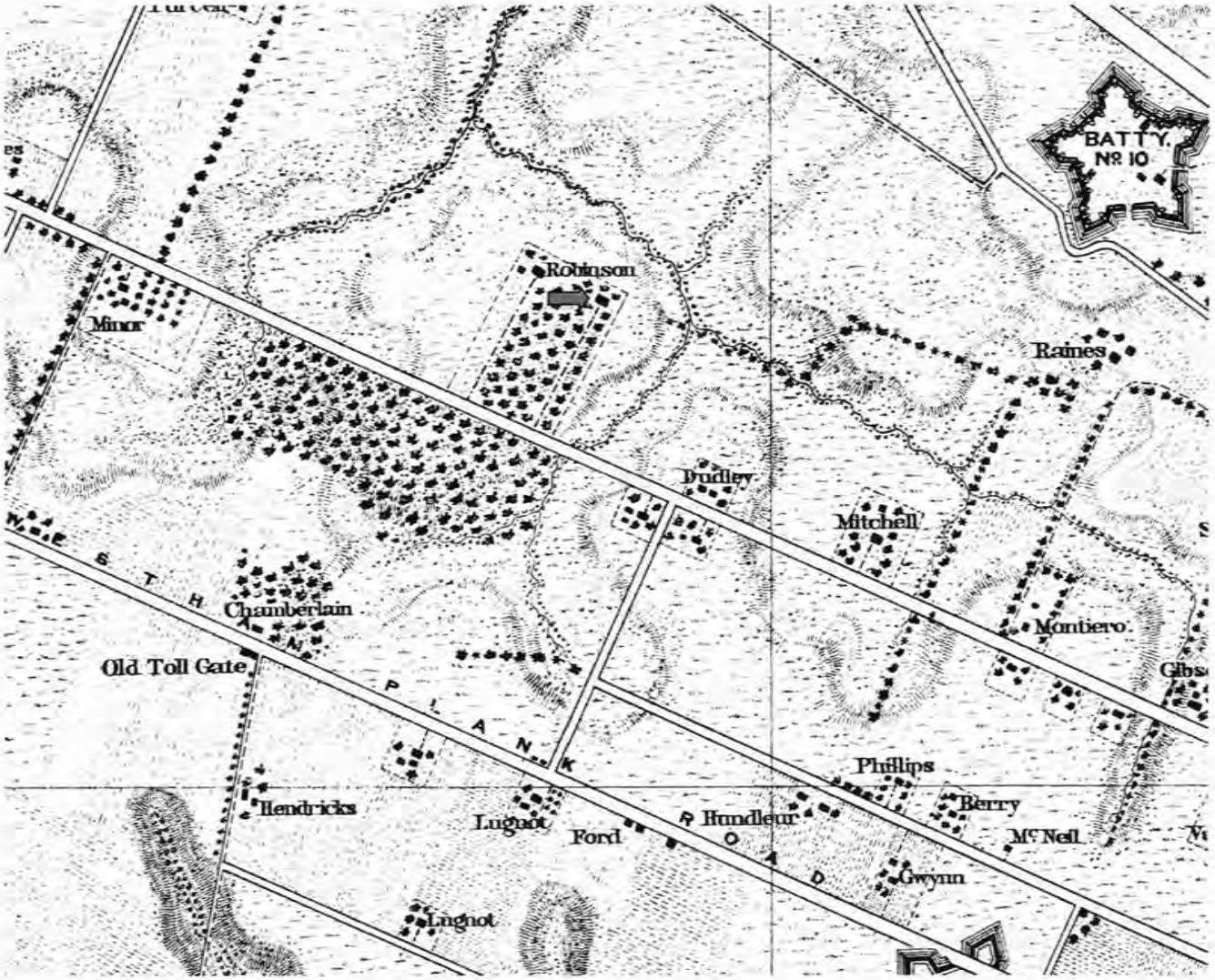


Fig. 8b. Detail of Michie map. Note acreage of oak trees, through which Grove Road runs, and three structures indicated to the west, likely the kitchen and slave houses. Westham Plank Road, to the south, is today's Cary Street.

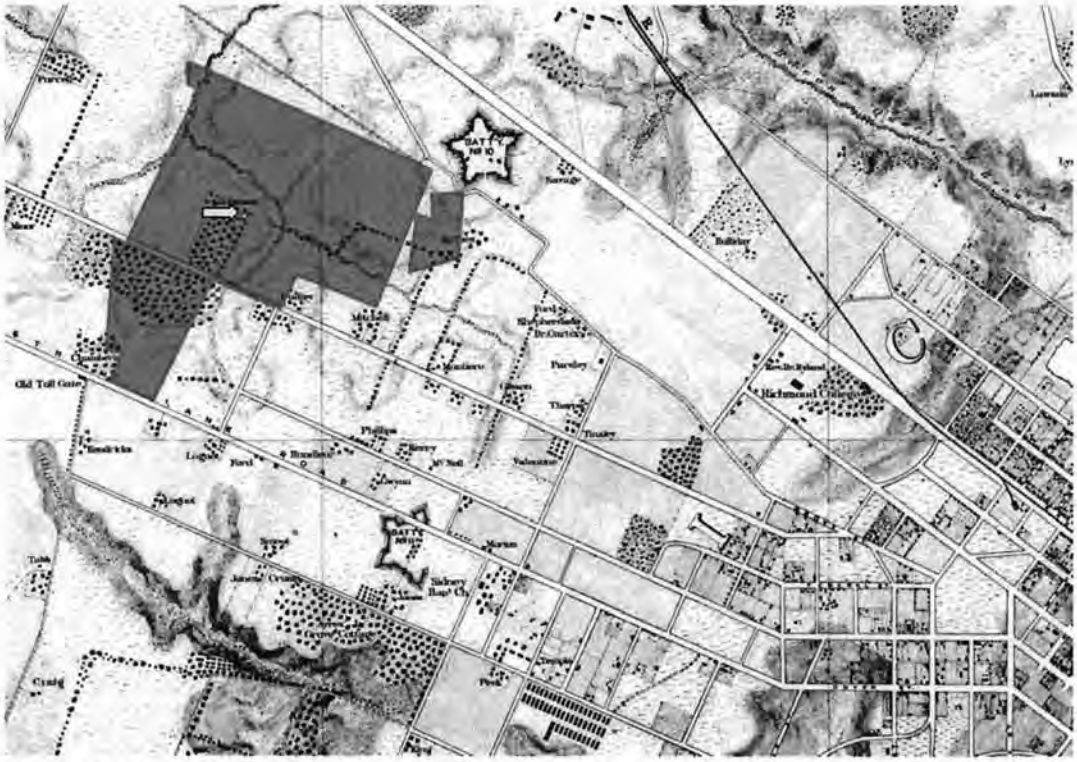


Fig. 9a. Property (red) in Sydney, apprx. 136 acres, belonging to Anthony Robinson Jr. at the time of his death, 1861. Arrow indicates location of Robinson House.

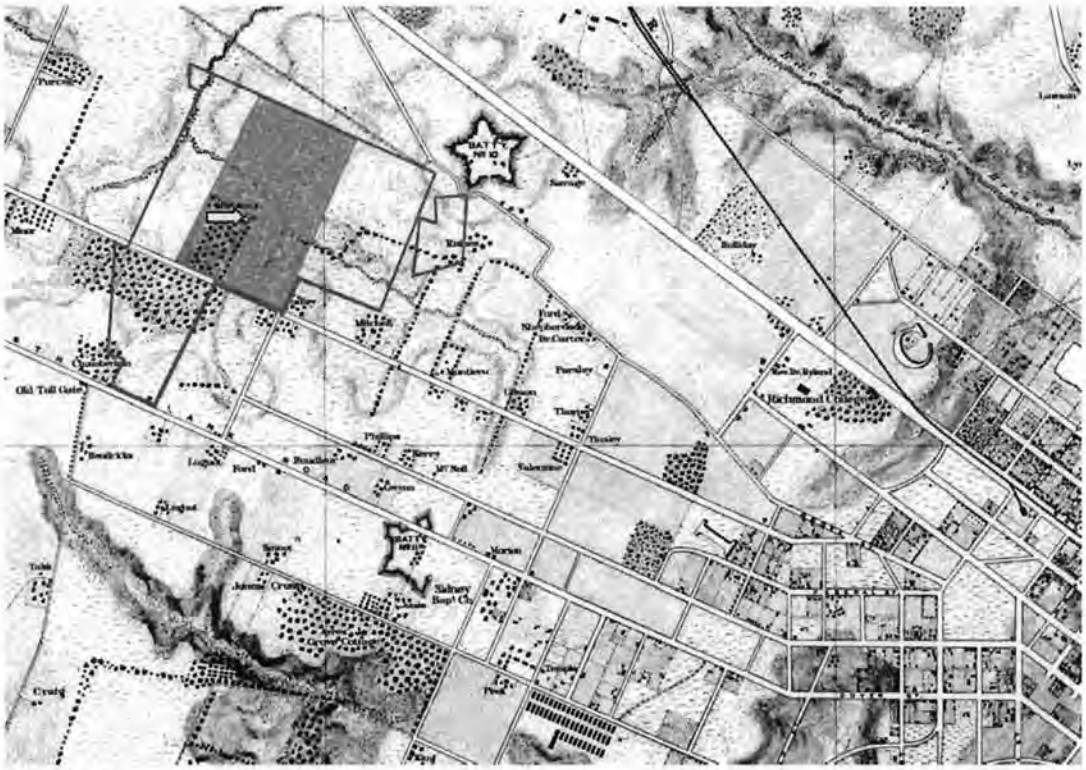


Fig. 9b. Property (green) as dower tract, 48 acres, bequeathed to Rebecca Robinson in Anthony's will, 1861. The remaining land within red boundaries bequeathed to Robinson children. Arrow indicates location of Robinson House.

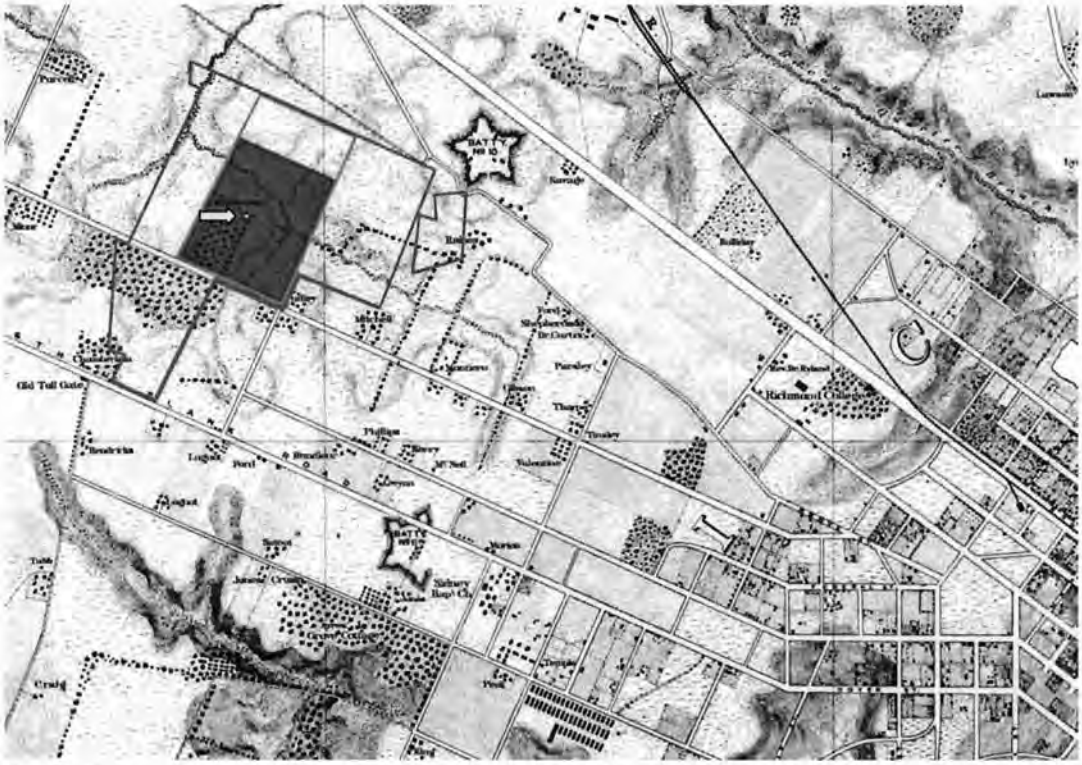


Fig. 9c. Property (blue), 36 acres, sold by Channing Robinson to R.E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans, 1884. Arrow indicates location of Robinson House.

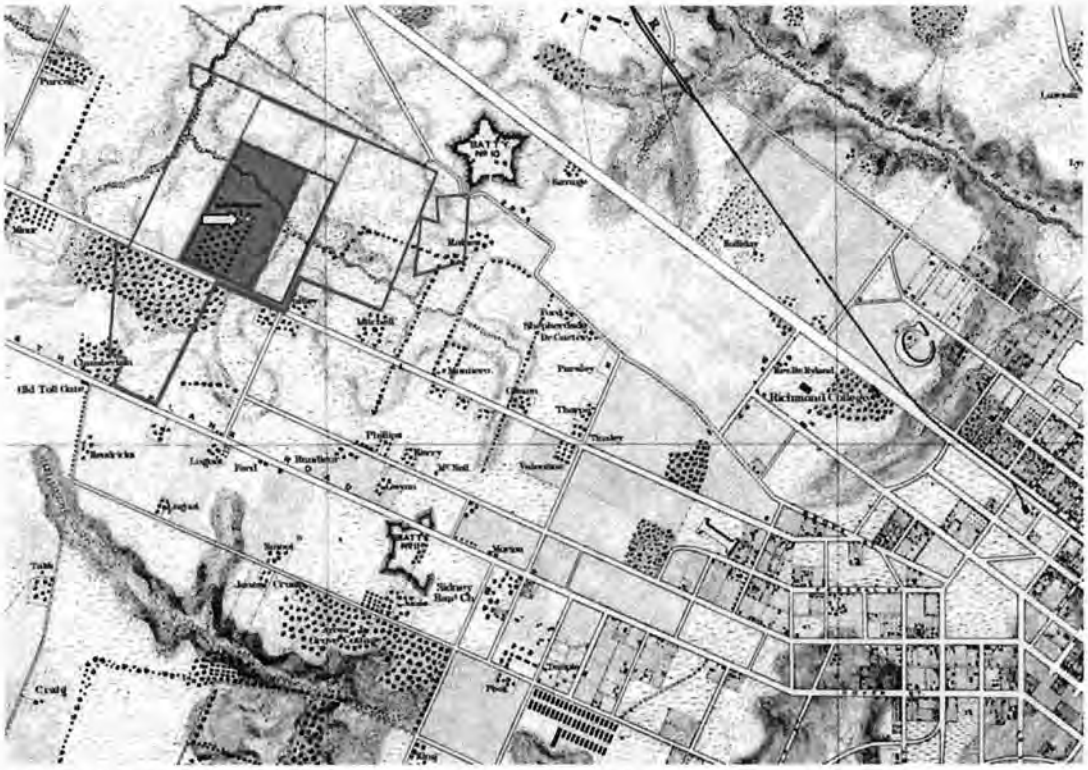


Fig. 9d. Property (purple), 24 acres, comprising Soldiers' Home grounds at time of its dedication, May 20, 1885. Arrow indicates location of Robinson House.

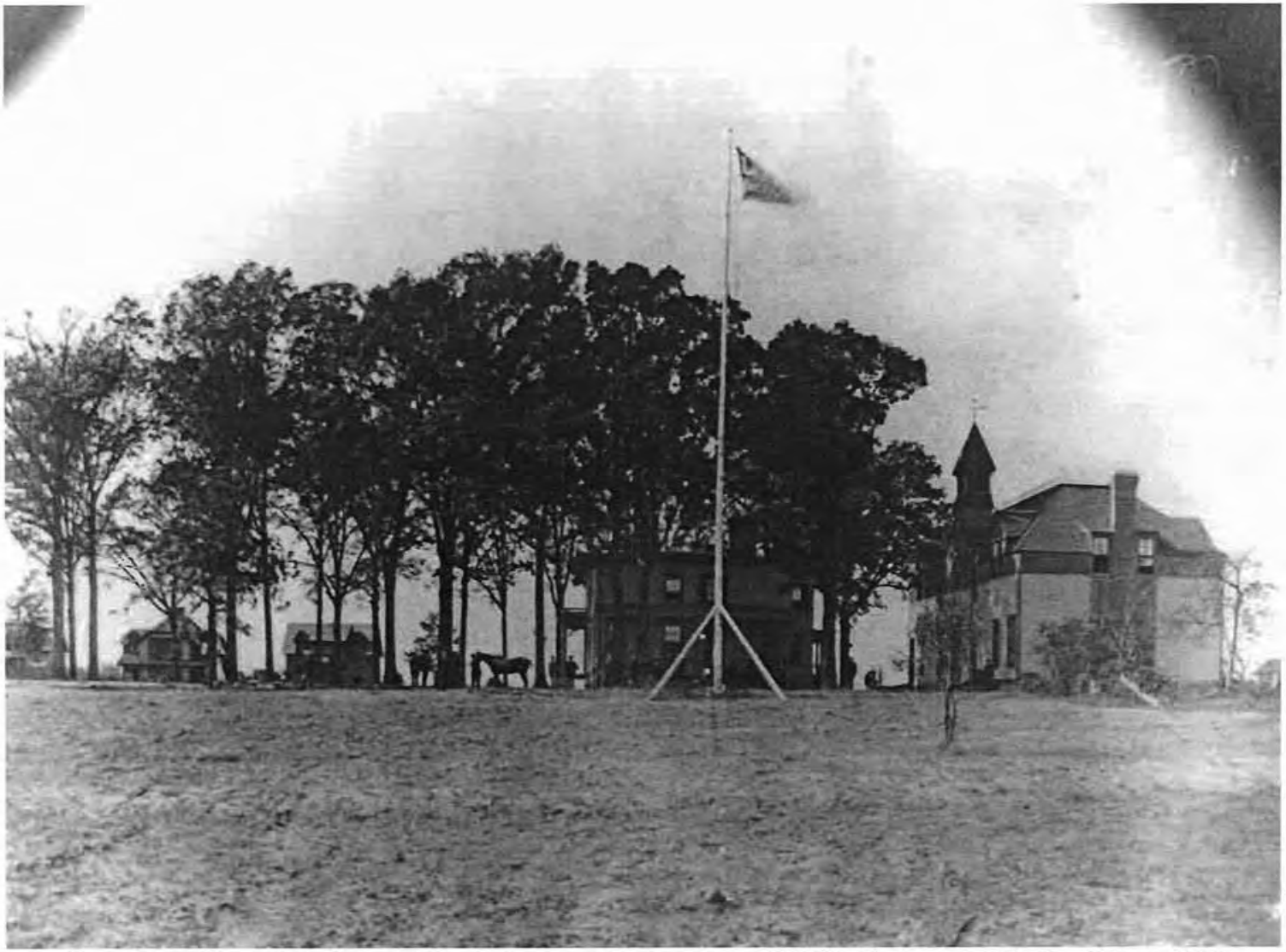


Fig. 10a. Robinson House, just after acquisition by Lee Camp Soldiers' Home, fall 1885. Photograph: Valentine Richmond History Center, X60.8.6

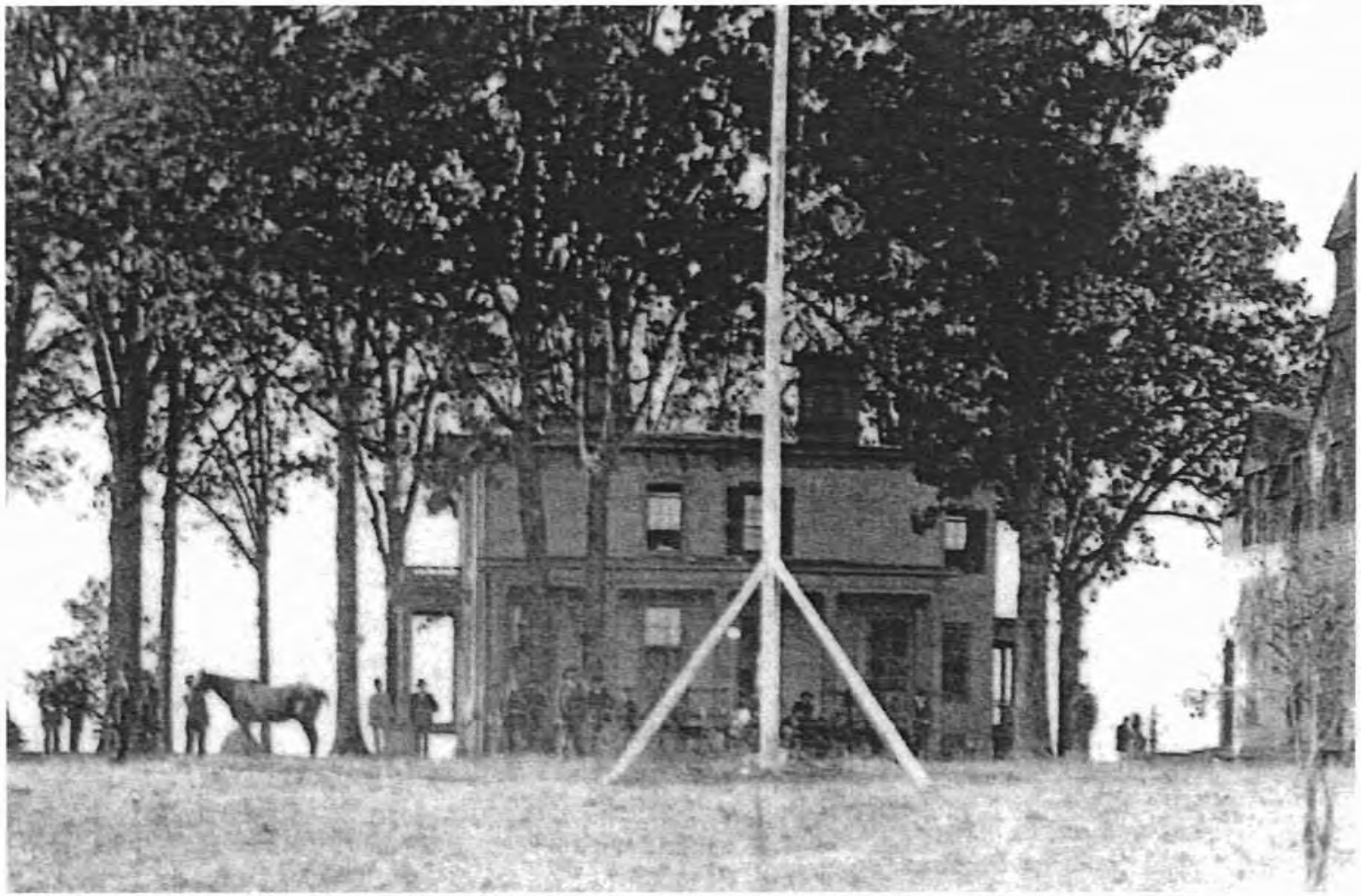


Fig. 10b, detail of previous image. Robinson House fall 1885. Photograph: Valentine Richmond History Center, X60.8.6

Fig. 11. View through the gated entrance to the Soldiers' Home pictures the gated entrance, the loop split, and Robinson House on axis at the driveway's far end. Published as postcard by J. Murray Jordan, Philadelphia, early 20th century. VCU, James Branch Cabell Library, Special Collections.

Fig. 12. Illustration probably by Marion J. Dimmock, "Virginia.—The Home for Ex-Confederate Soldiers and Sailors at Richmond," woodengraving,published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 August 1885, p. 5.

Fig. 13. Fleming Hall (Robinson House), Soldiers' Home, ca. 1900. Photograph: Valentine Richmond History Museum.

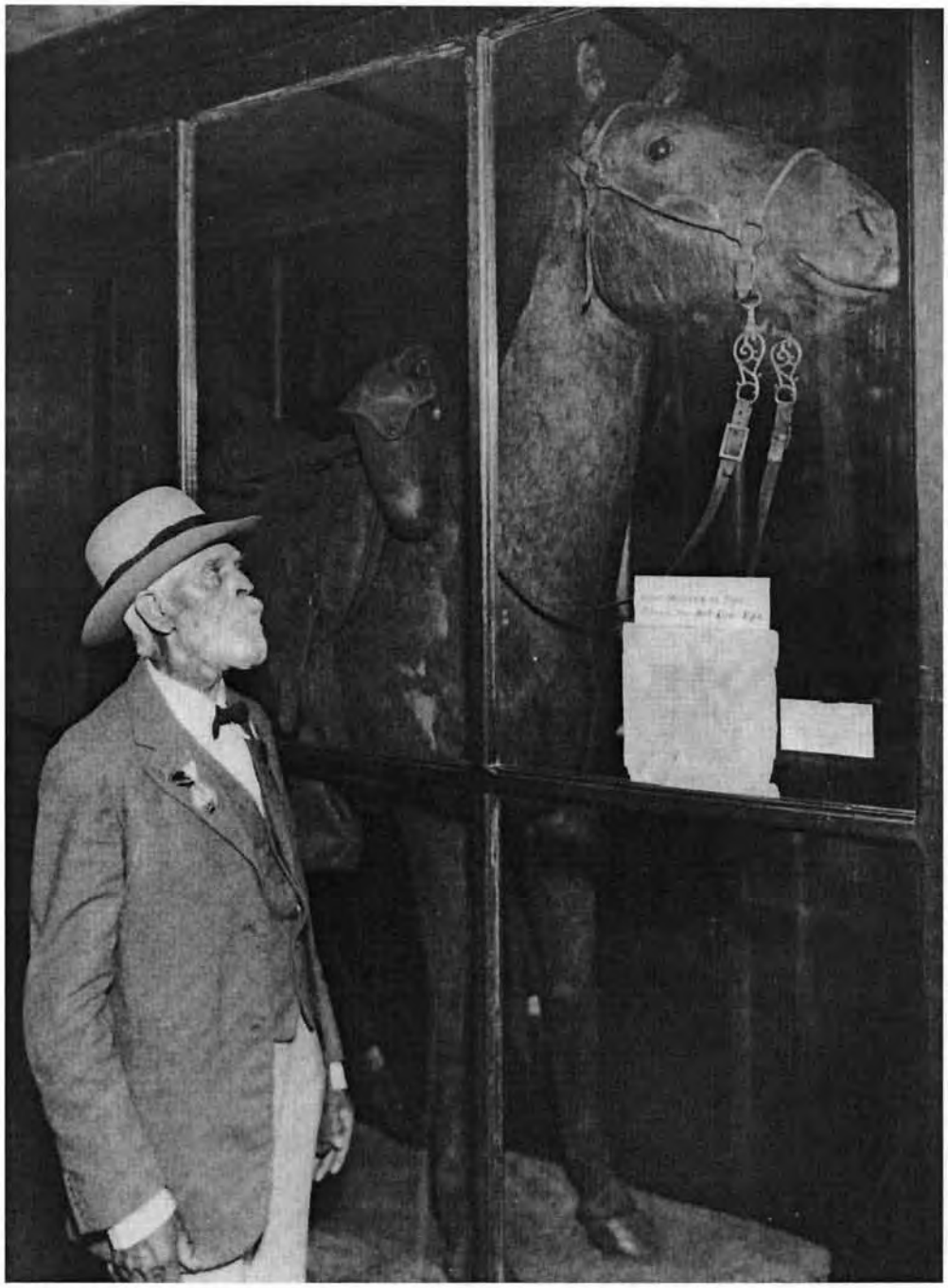


Fig. 14. Confederate veteran visiting Little Sorrel, Confederate Soldiers' Home Museum, ca. 1930s. Photograph: Dementi Studio.

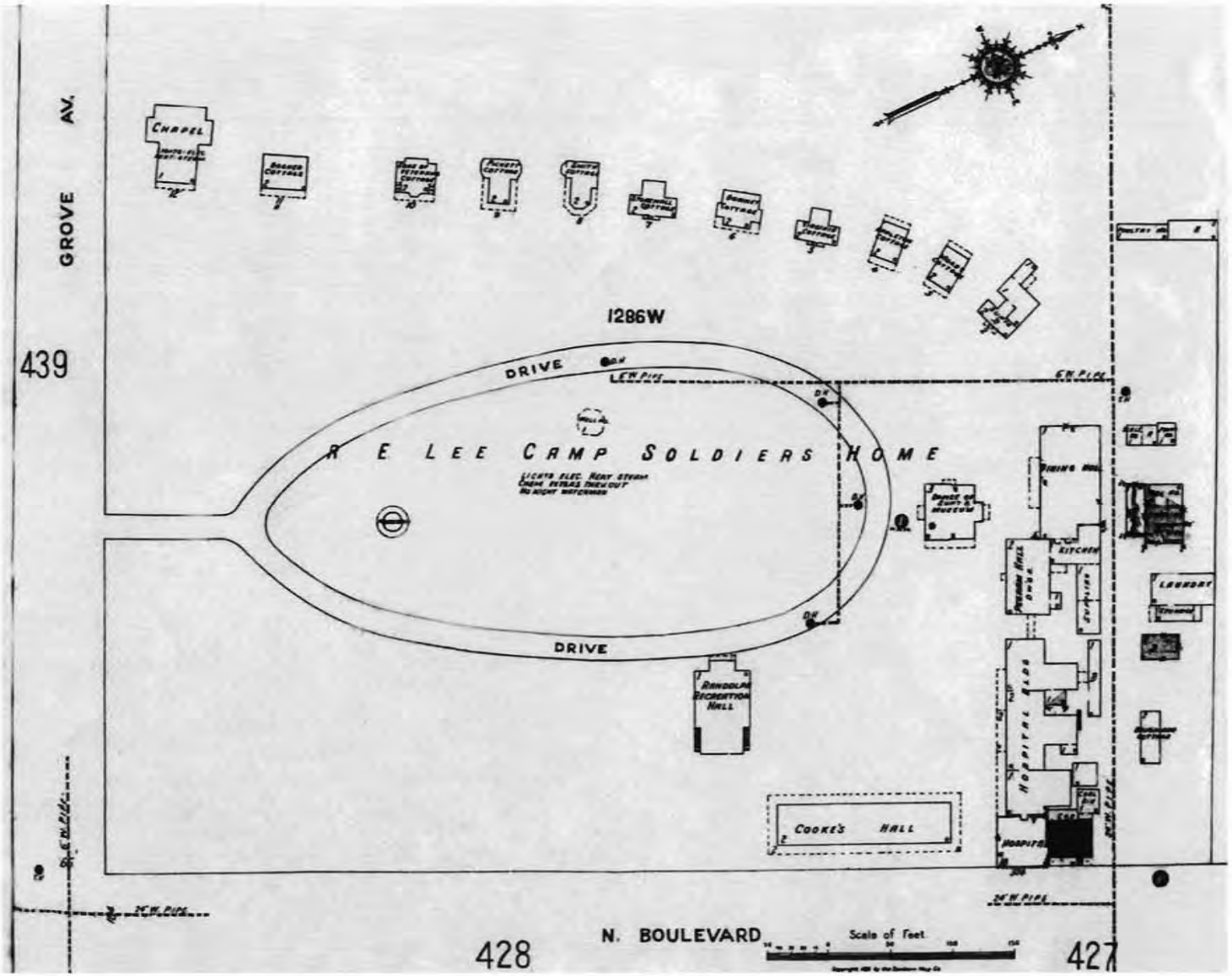


Fig. 15. Sanborn Company, fire insurance map of Soldiers' Home grounds and buildings, 1925. From microfilm, Virginia Historical Society.

Fig. 16. Detroit Publishing Co., "Confederate Home, Richmond, VA," ca. 1908. Photograph: Library of Congress.

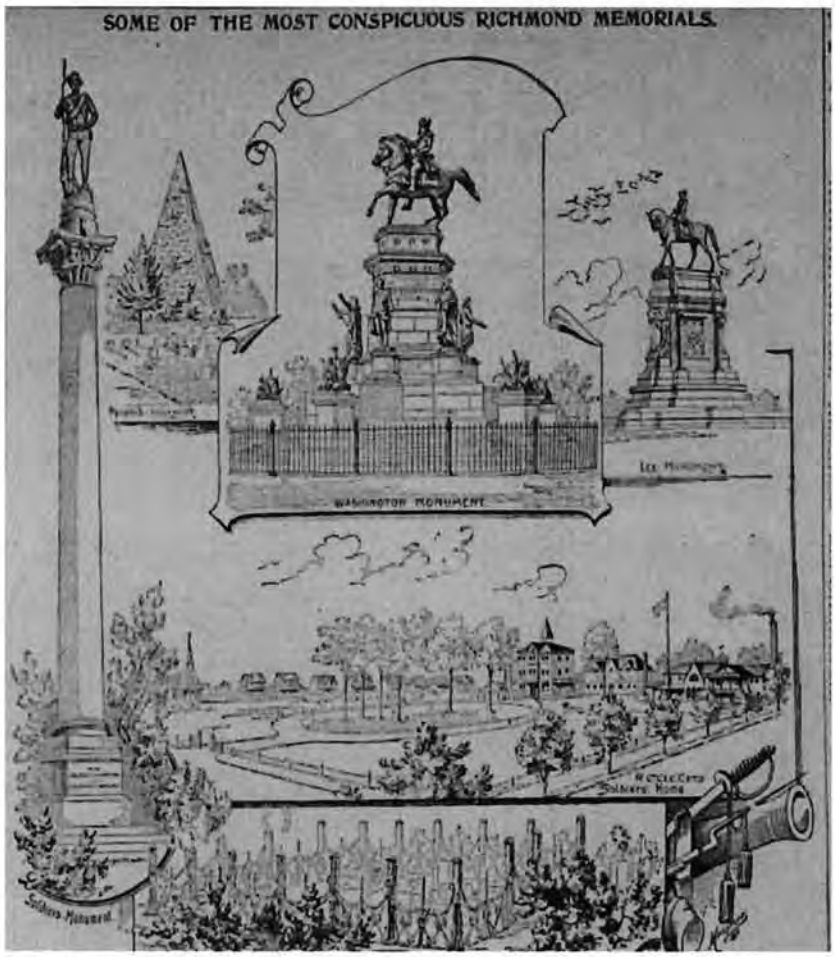


Fig. 17a. "Some of the Most Conspicuous Richmond Memorials," *Richmond Dispatch,* 31 May 1896, p. 3.

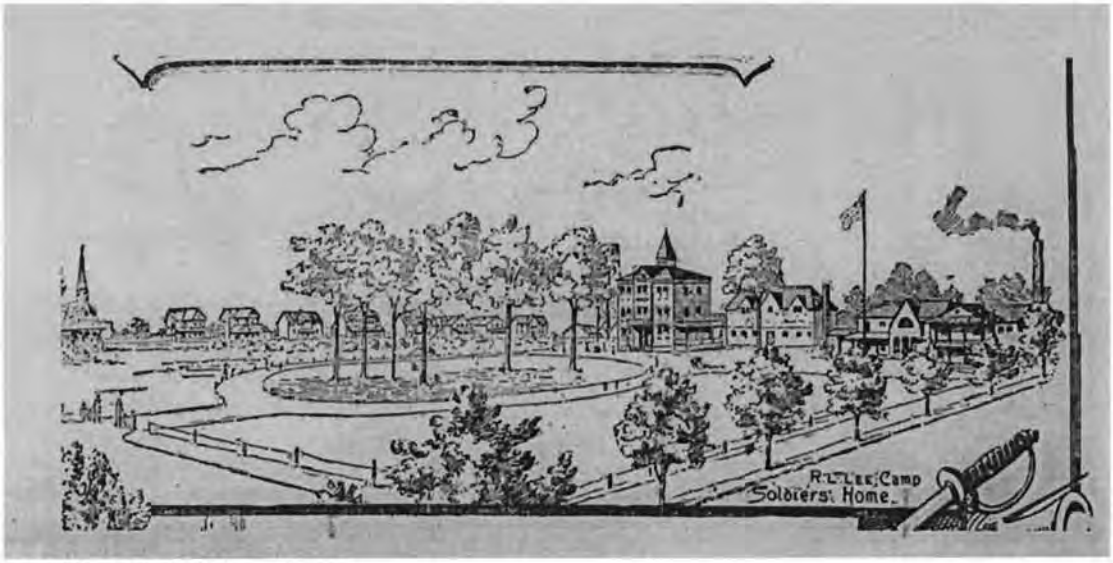


Fig. 17b. Detail of above image.

Fig. 18. One of the many visits by Union (G.A.R.) veterans' groups to the Soldiers' Home. The east façade of Fleming Hall (Robinson House) is in view.

Fig. 19. Aerial view of the Soldiers' Home, 1937, Dementi Studio. Robinson House (arrow) emerges from the stand of oaks, still thick in central grounds. Note the addition of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts on the southeast corner of the property, the Home for Confederate Women along the western perimeter (facing Sheppard Street), and the Confederate Memorial Institute (Battle Abbey) with its formal gardens on the right. Most of the cottages and Cooke Hall are already demolished. Photograph: Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library Archives, VMFA.

Robinson House, on the campus of the
Virginia Fine Arts Museum, Richmond, Virginia
DHR No. 127-0741

Not to Scale

MAP KEY

- (A) Pauley Center entrance
- (B) VMFA Studio School entrance
- (P) Parking Deck entrance
- Handicapped parking
- Bus/oversized vehicle drop off and/or pick up
- Passenger vehicle drop off and/or pick up
- Walkways
- Main walkway from parking

Campus Map

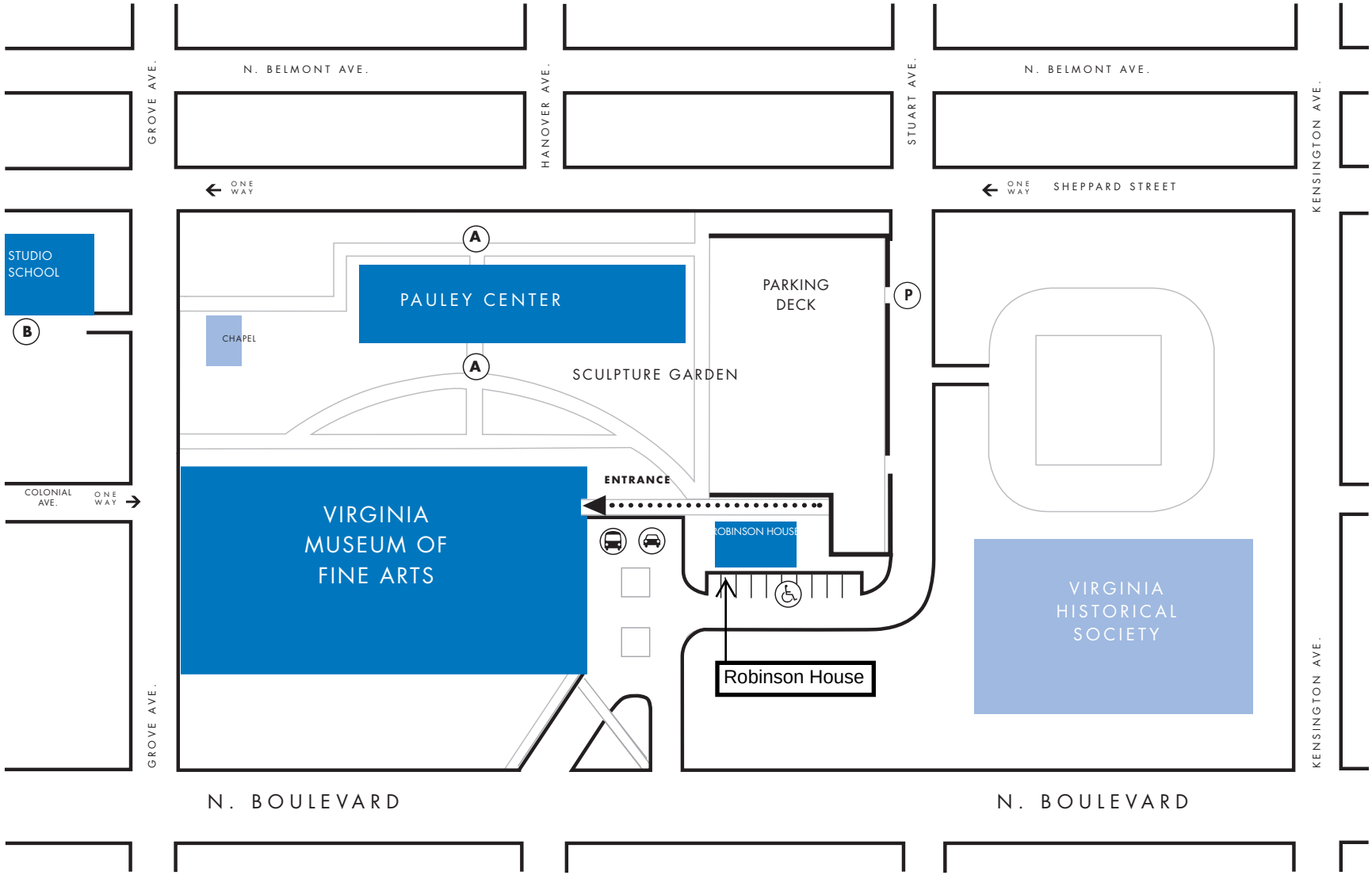
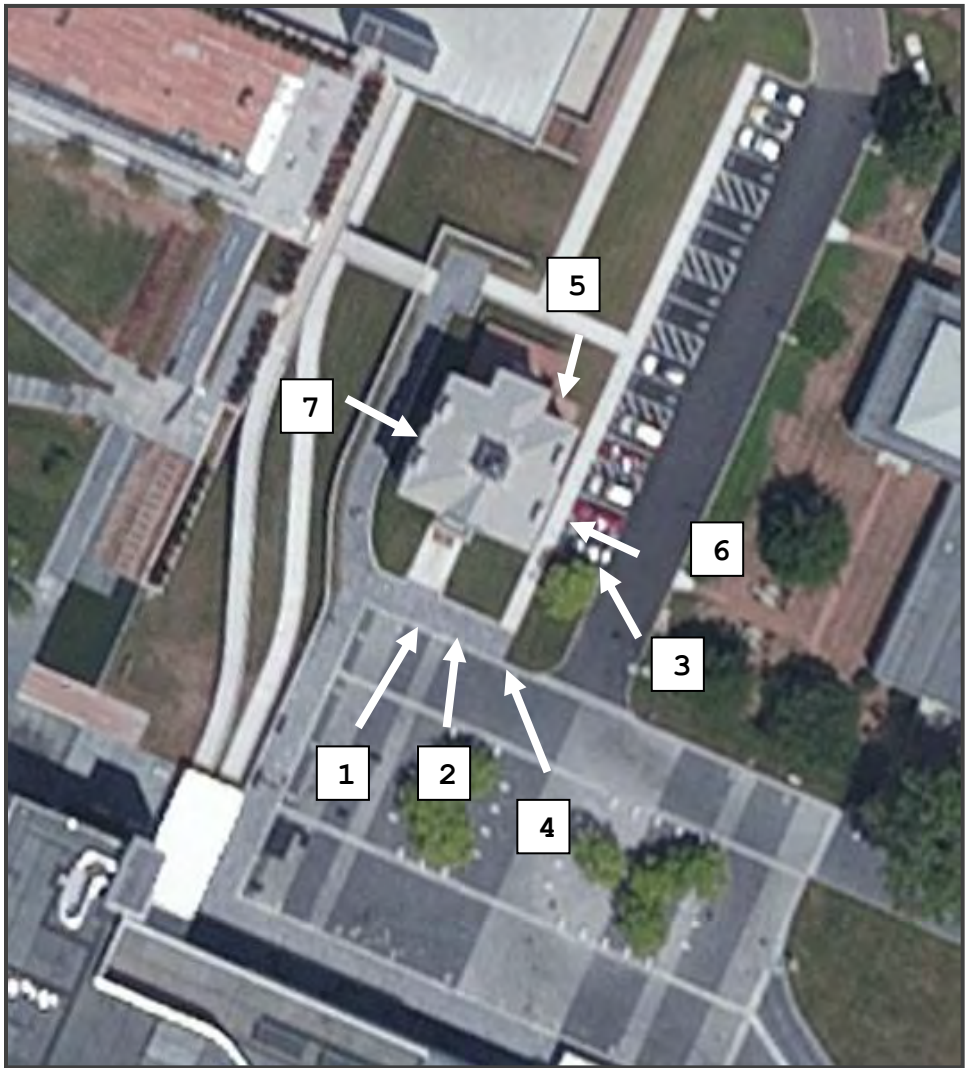
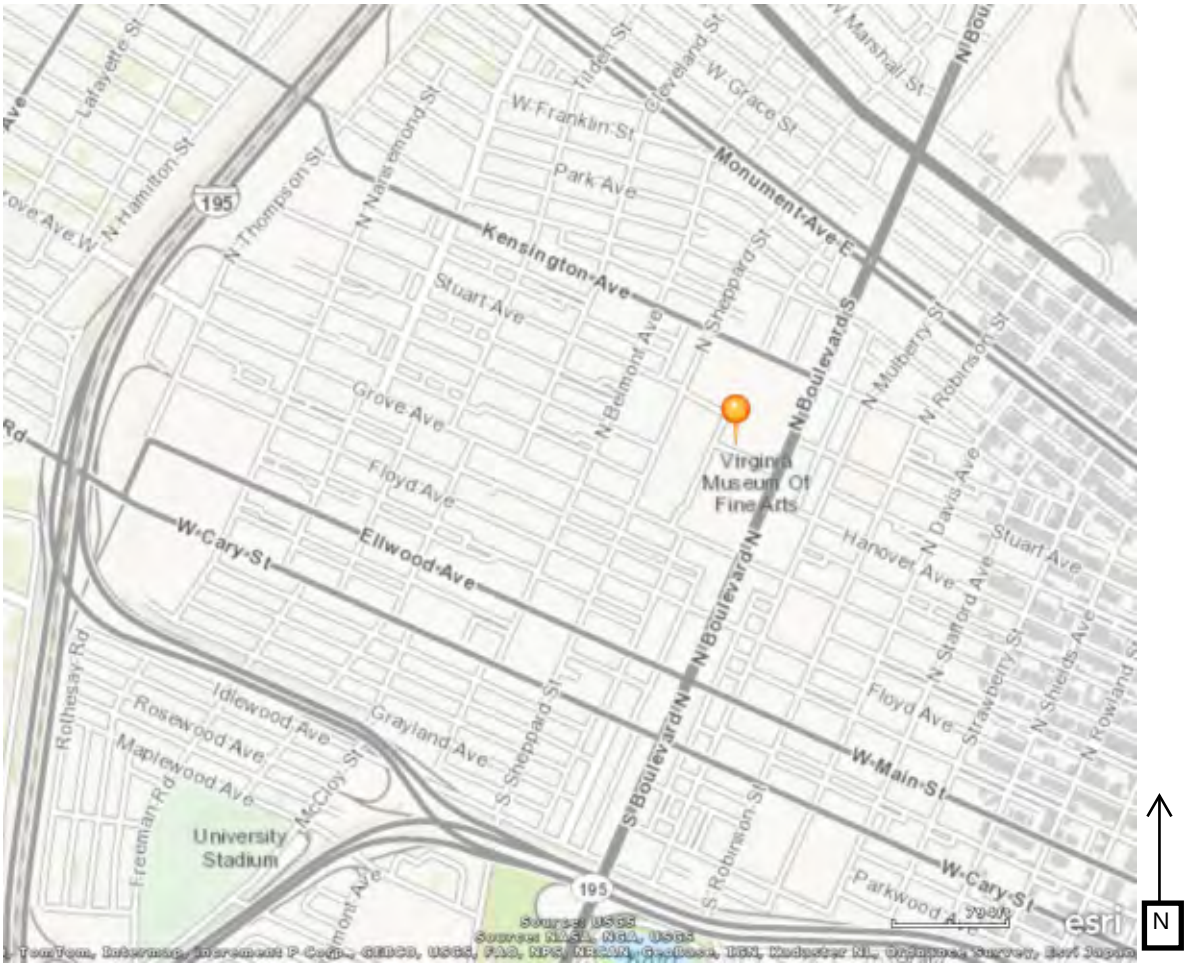


Photo Key
Robinson House
Richmond, Virginia
DHR #127-0741



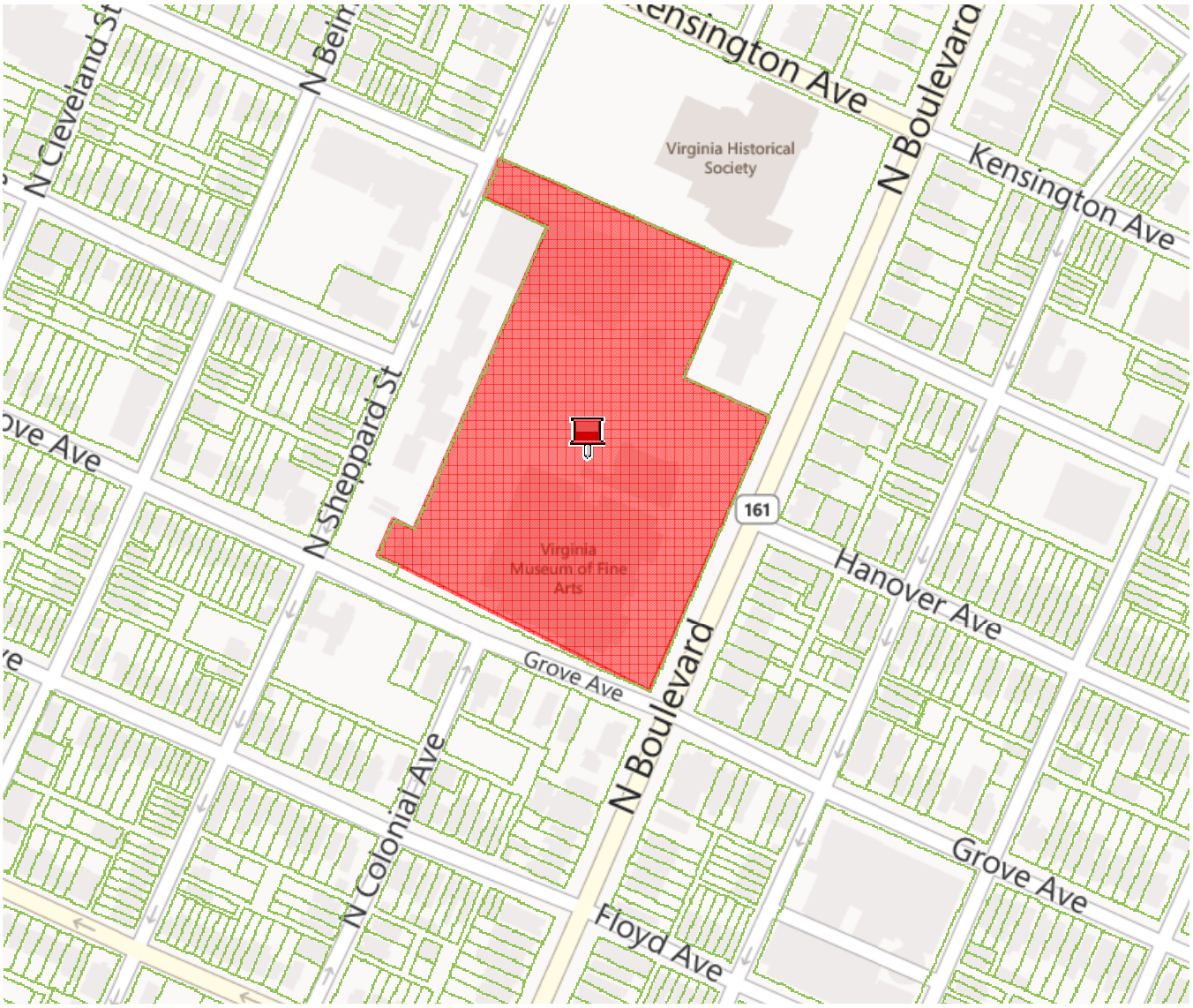
Robinson House, Richmond, Virginia



Location Map
Robinson House
City of Richmond, Virginia
DHR No. 127-0741

Latitude: 37.557087

Longitude: -77.474475



150 yds

lon: -77.47425556182863 lat: 37.5589692234996

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