

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Nance-Major House and Store
Charles City County, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 1

Summary Description

The Nance-Major House and Store complex is located on an elliptical-shaped lot defined by Route 5 to the north and Route 664, also called Courthouse Road, to the south. The house and store face south across Courthouse Road toward the circa 1750 Charles City Courthouse. Both the house and store are situated on a parcel of land long associated with the Charles City Courthouse and the Courthouse Tract, among the earliest politically significant sites in the history of the Commonwealth. The store may be constructed on the site of a tavern that operated near the courthouse before the Revolutionary War.

The circa 1872 Nance-Major Store is a three-bay, gable-front frame building, supported by a brick pier foundation. The store is two stories high. A one-story, shed-roofed wing extends the full length of the east elevation. The post-and-beam frame is sheathed with painted weatherboard on the south and east elevations. The north and west walls are covered with vertical board siding. The weatherboard at the first story of the facade is parged with cream-colored stucco. The most prominent feature of the facade is the full-width, hip-roofed porch. The main block displays a moderately steep gable roof, which is covered with standing-seam metal. One interior brick chimney extends above the ridgeline. There is an exterior brick chimney on the north wall. The porch is supported by substantial square, chamfered columns. The framing and tongue-and-groove-style wood ceiling of the porch roof are exposed.

The Nance-Major House is L-shaped, composed of two principal rectangular blocks. The original block, circa 1869, is a two-and-one-half story, post-and-beam-frame dwelling covered with painted horizontal weatherboard. The main block exhibits a steeply-pitched, front-gabled roof. Attached to the northeast corner of the original block is a late nineteenth-century, two-story, single-pile balloon-frame wing, also with gable roof. The facade is dominated by a two-story, three-bay, full-width porch. A one-story, one-bay wide porch with hipped roof, covered with standing seam metal, shelters a secondary entrance on the facade of the east wing. Four early-to-late-twentieth-century additions are attached at the north elevation.

Four additional historic buildings are situated to the north and east, behind the house and store. The contributing buildings include a smokehouse, a grain barn, a tool shed, and a garage. One non-contributing metal storage building is also located on the parcel. The Nance-Major House and Store complex retains a high degree of historic fabric and architectural integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Nance-Major House and Store
Charles City County, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 2

Site Description

The Nance-Major House and Store complex occupies a 7.7 acre lot defined by Route 5 to the north, Route 644, also called Courthouse Road, to the south, Route 155 to the east, and Route 643 to the west. The site is level and grassy, dotted with a variety of mature trees that tower above the buildings. The lush vegetation contributes to the pastoral character of the complex which appears untouched by modern development. From the porch of the store, the view across the road to the courthouse is unobstructed, but the privacy of the house is protected by a dense stand of enormous boxwoods. The boxwoods are laid out in a "U"-shaped configuration around the front of the house, creating a peaceful and private front yard.

The Nance-Major property faces the Charles City County Courthouse complex. In addition to several modern municipal buildings, the county-owned acreage preserves a circa 1750 brick courthouse, a circa 1901 clerk's office, and a monument erected in 1900 to commemorate the Confederate soldiers of Charles City County. The historic buildings on the county-owned property and the historic buildings on the Nance-Major property were once part of the Courthouse Tract. This historic tract, the political and geographic center of Charles City County in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was one of the most important rural crossroads in colonial Virginia.

Architectural Description

Nance-Major House

The Nance-Major House is L-shaped, composed of two principal rectangular blocks. The original block, circa 1869, is a two-and-one-half story, post-and-beam-frame dwelling. The main block is approximately twenty-five feet by forty feet in plan. It is covered with a steeply-pitched front-gabled roof. Attached to the northeast corner of the original block is a late-nineteenth-century, two-story, single-pile balloon-frame wing. The wing is approximately fifteen feet by twenty feet in plan. The east wing also exhibits a steeply-pitched gable roof. The exterior building fabric conveys a pleasantly unified appearance: white painted weatherboard; standing-seam metal roofing; six-over-six-light, double-hung wood windows; and operable, louvered wood shutters. The facade is dominated by a two-story, three-bay, full-width porch. Porch details include four evenly spaced square columns at each level; railing with rectangular pickets and molded cap; and a low-pitched, hipped roof with standing seam metal sheathing. Decorative scroll-sawn trim adorns the porch and side eaves and the front gable. The front entrance has a four-panel, wood door; narrow flanking sidelights, each with a recessed wood panel at the bottom and four lights above; and a two-light transom. There is a secondary entrance on the façade of the east wing. The entrance is sheltered by a one-story, one-bay wide porch. The porch has a hipped roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.

