

demolished 9/77

123-52

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
William H. Bowers House

AND/OR COMMON  
McGee's Drug Store

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
254 N. Sycamore Street

CITY, TOWN  
Petersburg

STATE  
Virginia

VICINITY OF  
Fourth (Robert W. Daniel, Jr.)

COUNTY  
(In City)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fourth (Robert W. Daniel, Jr.)

CODE  
51

CODE  
730

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Historic Petersburg Foundation

STREET & NUMBER  
244 N. Market Street

CITY, TOWN  
Petersburg, Virginia

STATE

VICINITY OF  
c/o Mr. John E. Franklin, President

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Petersburg City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Petersburg

STATE  
Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)**

TITLE  
(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE  
1939

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN  
Washington

STATE  
D. C.

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory  
1959 Federal  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D. C.
  
- (3) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1967, 1977 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
Richmond, Virginia

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Constructed between 1828 and 1829, the William H. Bowers House is an exuberant expression of the late Federal style, rising three-and-one-half stories above the corner of Sycamore and Bank Streets. The imposing brick structure ranks among the most sophisticated examples of the Federal-style commercial/residential structures in the state.

The rectangular building measures 23'7" x 50'. The principal facades along Sycamore and Bank Streets are laid in Flemish-bond brick. The three-bay front, although altered by the addition of an incompatible storefront at the first-floor level, is remarkably intact above. The windows diminish in height from the second to the third floor, measuring 6' 11" and 5' 7", respectively. All of the window openings employ six-over-six sash and are ornamented by stone lintels and sills. The lintels have incised square corner blocks. Between the second and third floors, in line with the window openings, are rectangular, recessed, plastered spandrel panels, bordered with applied wood moldings. Above the third-floor windows are smaller elliptical panels. The front wall terminates in a wood Doric cornice with mutules. A beaded molding is used beneath the cornice.

Now covered with tin, the roof originally was covered with slate. Two oversized dormer windows project from the east slope of the roof. The round-arched windows are flanked by fluted Roman Doric pilasters. The pilasters rest on stylized bases and terminate in Doric capitals. Above this rises a full entablature decorated with a sunburst above the pilasters and a guilloche-type molding applied at the uppermost part of the frieze. The dormers culminate in a modillion cornice, which rises in a pediment above the window openings.

A parapet, now removed, spanning between the chimneys rose above the north wall and was capped with stone. The front of the parapet was faced with stone panels with rectangular incised decorations.

A Gothic Revival "marble front", installed in 1859 but later removed, extended three bays along Sycamore and one bay on Bank. Each bay was dominated by a lancet arch which sprang from impost blocks with a quatrafoil design. Trefoil arches simulated an entablature above the openings.

A facade equally fine in detail and proportion as that on Sycamore is the 50' facade along Bank Street. The first-floor openings have been partially obscured by a large billboard. It can only be assumed that the openings correspond to those above. The rhythm is interrupted in the far right-hand bay, which is occupied by a typical window opening and an entrance giving access to the stairs to the living quarters. The existing door is not original.

The central bay of the side wall carries the most striking features of this facade. Triple sash windows grace both the second and third floors. The central window is flanked by           sidelights. (See Continuation Sheet #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE

1

7. DESCRIPTION

The window at the second floor measures 10' 0" high, the third-floor window measures 7' 11". The mullions separating the main windows from the sidelights terminate in bull's-eye blocks. The stone lintels above both windows have the incised square corner blocks as do the other windows, however, the center of the lintels is decorated with a rectangular incised panel.

Below both windows are elliptical, wrought-iron balconies. The primary motif is oval and elliptical. Whether these are products of a Petersburg or Richmond foundry is not known. They are, in any case, outstanding examples of mid-nineteenth-century ironwork.

Flanking these central windows to either side on each floor are two windows identical to those at the front, including the stone lintels and sills. Rectangular recessed panels like those of the front occur between each floor. A larger rectangular panel is employed above the central window between the third and fourth floors.

A Palladian window occupies the middle bay of the fourth floor. It is topped by a gauged-brick jack arch of darker brick than that of the walls. The jack arch over the sidelights is splayed. A stone keystone with an incised decoration surmounts the window. The central window is flanked by single round-head windows. These, too, have dark gauged-brick jack arches springing from rectangular stone impost blocks and are topped with keystones, which employ the same decorations as those of the other windows.

Above the fourth floor were twin chimney stacks connected by a parapet. A rectangular recessed panel was employed above the Palladian window. Flanking this was an unusual arrangement of two elliptical openings set at an angle of 45°. From the chimneys the parapet wall descended at an angle of 30° before leveling off and returning to the faces of the front and rear walls. Inverted L-shaped stone blocks defined the ends of the parapet. The chimneys and the parapet were capped in stone. Unfortunately, all of this trim including the chimneys and parapet, along with the two south chimneys, has been removed.

The rear wall is two bays wide. Its windows are identical in size and treatment to those at the front. The window at the first-floor left bay appears to have been closed, as the stairs to the living quarters rise behind it. The pedimented dormer windows at the rear possess a modillion cornice, however, the pilasters and other decorative trim have been omitted.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

#3

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE

3

7. DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Bowers House is subdued in comparison to its elaborate exterior. The basic plan is a hall or passage along the south wall which connects the three rooms on each floor. A principal chamber occupies the front of each floor encompassing the three front bays and two bays along Bank Street. The chambers on the second and third floors measure 20' 7" x 18' 5". There is a variation of the plan on the second floor due to the access from Bank Street, along the rear wall, which creates a transverse hall occupying the rear of the floor. At the head of this simple flight of stairs is the most spectacular feature of the interior: a spiral staircase turning 180° and connecting the second and third floors. Scrolled brackets adorn the ends of the treads. The newels rise from simple, square bases to form slender columns, terminating in half-round balls on concave necks. The handrails are simple, rounded elements supported on rectangular balusters. Parts of the railing and balusters are broken and missing. Access to the fourth floor is gained by a straight run of stairs along the south wall of the passage.

The architraves of the doors and windows on the second floor have deep recesses or flutes with bull's-eye corner blocks. The mantle in the second floor, front chamber has pilasters flanking the fireplace opening, again employing three deep recesses. These pilasters support an entablature which is unadorned except for plain elliptical designs in the frieze above the pilasters. A large, plain ellipse adorns the center of the frieze. The chair rail of this room is a simple two-section member. The architraves used on the third and fourth floors are simple, undecorated members.

Original paint remains on several doors and door and window architraves on the fourth floor.

The first floor, the original, commercial floor, has been completely remodeled. No trace of original design is visible at this time.

The full basement is now used for storage. Window openings at the front have been bricked up. There is evidence this floor was used frequently. Nailing blocks exist for a chair rail, while a fireplace on the west wall has been closed. Whether this was originally a stock room or service area for the house is not known. Evidence exists of a serious fire in the basement. At present there is no direct access to either street from the basement.

JFY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Between 1828 and 1829 William Bowers constructed the most elaborate, combination commercial residential building in Petersburg. It remains today perhaps the finest structure of its kind in the state and reflects the culmination of the Federal style in Virginia commercial architecture.

Bowers purchased lots 3 and 4 from William Clark, Jr., in 1827. The lots had been laid out on November 19, 1814, by William Wynn, a civil engineer. Bowers began construction of this house in 1828 and completed it in 1829 according to the landbooks for those years in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Petersburg. A Mutual Assurance Society policy of March 3, 1829, insured the building for \$11,000, an unusually large sum, indicating the quality of the structure.

Bowers apparently did not enjoy his imposing new residence for very long. His extravagant tastes seem to have kept him in continual financial difficulty, according to extant court records, and forced him in 1829 to enter into an agreement with John F. May and the New York firm of Howlands. Howlands agreed to "act as his correspondent plus endorse his notes." For this Bowers put his "corner properties" in trust. Seven months later Howlands entered into an agreement with Bowers and May and accepted the house as payment in full for Bowers' indebtedness to them.

An ornate Gothic Revival "marble front," the finest of its kind in Petersburg, was added during the ownership of Goodman Davis in 1859. The building was known for many years as "The Marble Front." This unique feature was unfortunately removed just prior to World War II, although its appearance was recorded in drawings by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

From 1916-1977 a drug store was operated on the first floor. In June 1977 the Historic Petersburg Foundation purchased the building.

The Bowers House, although stripped of its twin chimneys and parapet on the north wall and denuded by the removal of "The Marble Front" remains an exceptional Federal-style building.

JFY

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biallas, R. J. and John M. McRae, "William H. Bowers House," Historic American Buildings Survey, July, 1968.  
 Mutual Assurance Society policy Reel 10, Vol. 78, No. 3683, March 3, 1829.  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	2, 8, 6, 6, 3, 0	4, 1, 2, 3, 9, 7, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

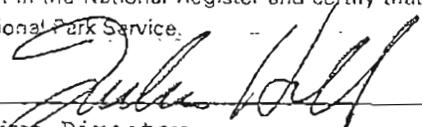
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE



TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUL 19 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

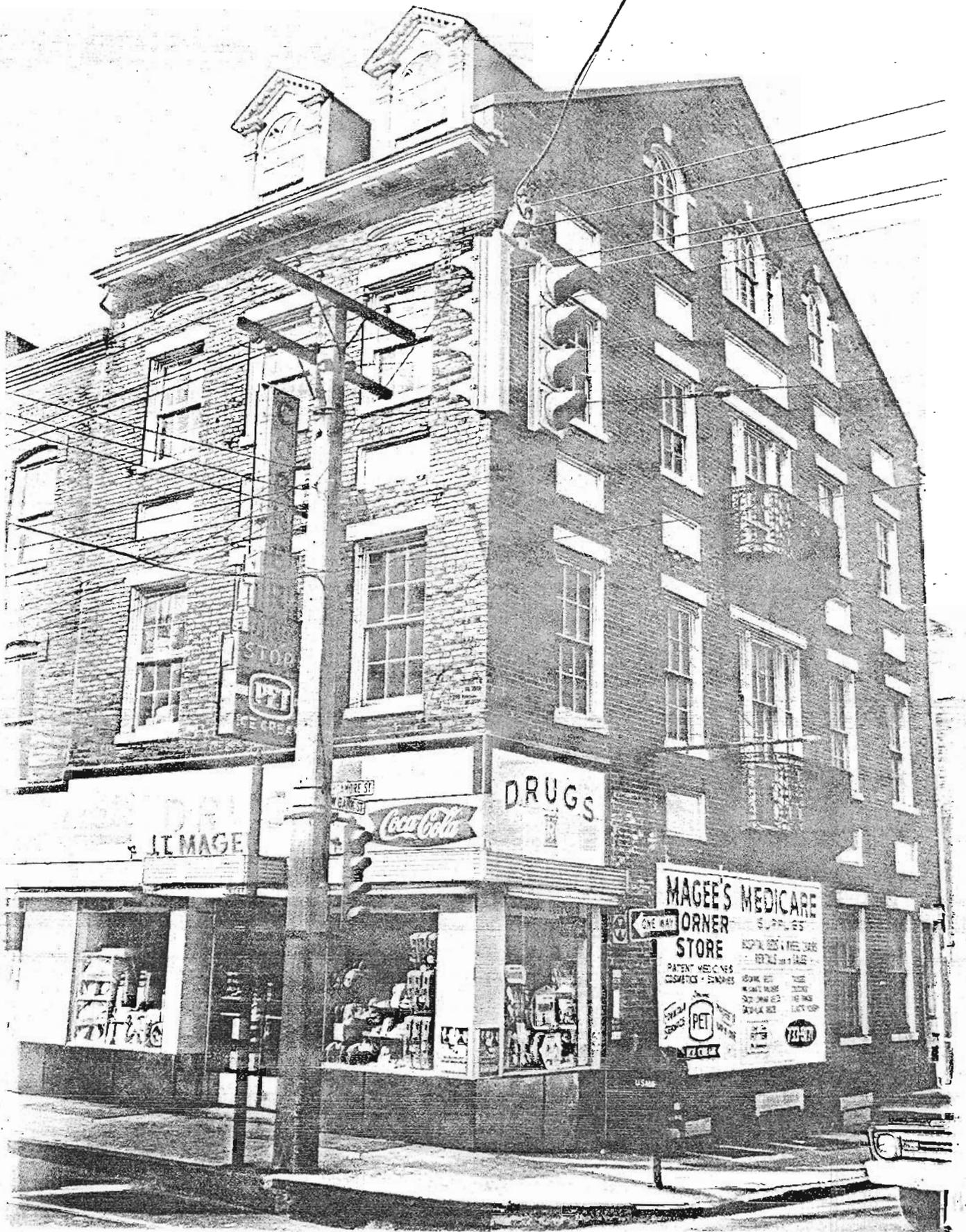
Virginia Landmarks Register

DATE

ATTEST: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



STOP  
PET  
RECREATION

WIRE ST  
BANK ST

MAGEE

Coca-Cola

DRUGS

MAGEE'S MEDICARE  
CORNER  
STORE  
PATENT MEDICINES  
COSMETICS • ETC.

HOSPITAL BEDS & FUEL TANKS  
REPTILES and SNAKES  
LIVING BIRD  
PLANT BIRD  
DOG BIRD  
ATLANTA BIRD

THESE  
CANNOT  
BE TAKEN  
ANYWHERE

PET  
RECREATION

733-9707

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

WILLIAM H. BOWERS HOUSE, Petersburg, Va.  
Credit: Va. Historic Landmarks Commission  
1967  
Negative Filed: Va. State Library, Richmond VA

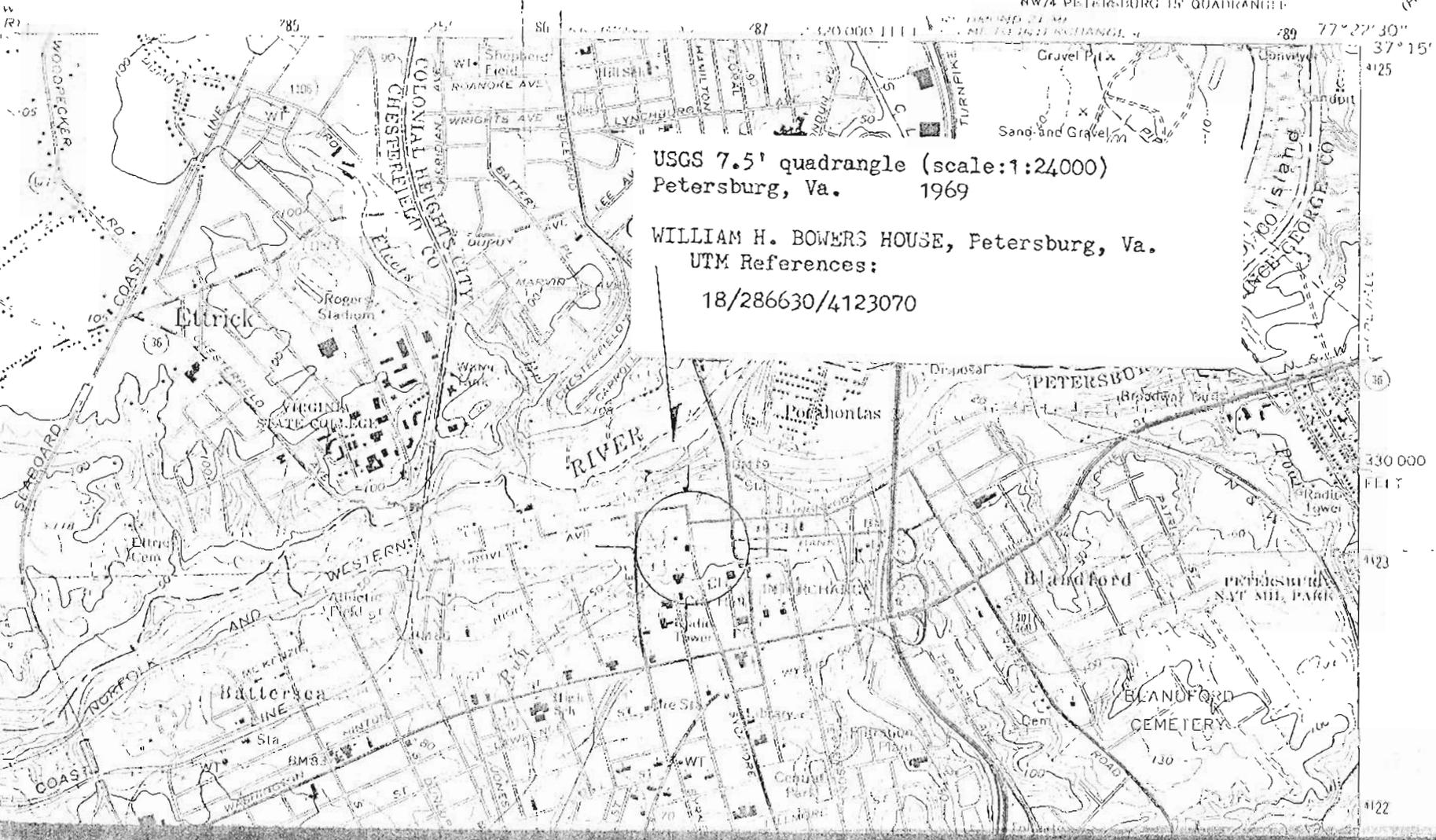
Exterior View from NE

1 of 1

PETERSBURG QUADRANGLE  
VIRGINIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 PETERSBURG 15' QUADRANGLE

18° 14' 52" SE  
(HOPEWELL)



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Petersburg, Va. 1969

WILLIAM H. BOWERS HOUSE, Petersburg, Va.  
UTM References:

18/286630/4123070