

VK 3/8/6
NHP 5/2/6

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Tower House

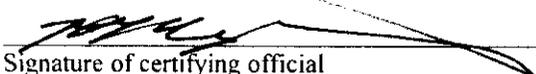
other names/site number: Edgewater; Marsland on the Potomac; DHR #029-0151

2. Location

street & number 9066 Tower House Place N/A not for publication
city or town Alexandria X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Fairfax code 059 Zip 22308

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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~~ nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

3/21/06
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Tower House
Fairfax County, Virginia

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.): N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
 RELIGION Other (Administrative Headquarters of Religious Society)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne
 LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
roof STONE: Slate
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
windows WOOD

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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.
- 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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1888 – 1901

Significant Dates 1888
1900-1901

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other (Private research collection of Brian Pohanka)
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.2 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>1</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>320250</u>	<u>4286580</u>	<u>2</u>		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kathryn Gettings Smith and Evelyn D. Causey
Organization: History Matters, LLC date December 12, 2005
street & number: 2605a P Street, NW telephone 202.333.8593
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20007-3063

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name M. Cricket Bauer and Brian Pohanka (deceased)
street & number 9066 Tower House Place telephone 703.360.3930
city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22308-2758

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Tower House
Fairfax County, Virginia**

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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Located in southeastern Fairfax County on a 1.2-acre parcel, the two-and-a-half-story, frame Tower House is a transitional Queen Anne–Colonial Revival-style residence that features a steeply pitched hipped roof and a prominent, semi-circular corner tower. Originally erected in 1888 as a two-story, frame Italianate-style villa, the house took its present form in 1900-1901 when new owners greatly expanded and remodeled it. The 1901 corner tower expresses the lingering influence of the Queen Anne style, while the profusion of classical ornament and the formal arrangement of the main block characterize the budding Colonial Revival style. Portions of the original 1888 Italianate villa remain at the rear. Despite its many owners, the house's numerous decorative features, both interior and exterior, are remarkably well preserved and closely reflect the stylistic trends of the turn of the twentieth century. In 2002-2003, the current owners restored many of its missing and damaged features. One non-contributing shed is also located on the property.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Site Description

Located in southeastern Fairfax County, approximately eight miles south of the City of Alexandria and approximately two miles north of Mount Vernon, the Tower House stands on a 1.2-acre property. Now located on a cul-de-sac within a residential subdivision that is situated just off of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the property once encompassed 111 acres that extended south to the Potomac River. The house now occupies a standard suburban lot and is surrounded by residences constructed in the 1990s and early 2000s. The property incorporates an open, half-acre lot to the rear of the house. The house lot includes a landscaped front lawn, a paved concrete driveway that extends around the west side of the house to the rear, and stone and concrete path with steps that lead from the roadway to the front porch.

While most of the historic landscape elements no longer exist, a series of imprinted concrete stepping stones (installed between 1946 and 1949) as part of a fundraising effort by its former owners, the World Wide Baraca Philathea Union, have been preserved in place or reinstalled around the residence. The stones, which are located at the front stoop and along the east side of the house, bear the initials and names of those who worked for or donated money to the organization.

Exterior

The frame Tower House stands atop a low brick foundation and features narrow wood weatherboard cladding and a prominent, slate-shingled hipped main roof. The main block of the house consists of a two-and-a-half-story, four-bay-wide structure with a prominent two-story, round tower at the southeast corner. The tower is capped by a conical, slate-shingled roof. A full-width, one-story, wrap-around frame porch dominates the facade; the porch takes a semi-circular form as it extends around the corner tower. The main entrance is centered on the hip-roofed main block and is emphasized by a classical portico that extends from the porch and covers the porch stairs. The window openings contain nine-over-one-light, double-hung, wood sash windows. The corner tower incorporates the same windows, but they are bowed to conform to the structure's curved walls.

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The Queen Anne/Colonial Revival-Style House (1900-1901)

Built in 1900-1901, the main section of Tower House occupies the front two-thirds of the building. Designed in a transitional Queen Anne – Colonial Revival style, the house is the product of a major expansion and remodeling of the Italianate-style house that was originally erected in 1888.

The house's asymmetrical facade and corner tower reflect the influence of the Queen Anne style, while the formal treatment of the entry and the stacked central elements on the second and third stories reflect the Colonial Revival influence. The façade includes a number of other strong Colonial Revival elements such as wood Tuscan porch columns that support a banded classical frieze capped by a dentil course and crown molding. The porch also features a beamed ceiling; the beams form a square grid with turned drops at the beam junctions. The porch's projecting portico takes the form of a classical pediment adorned with Neo-Classical Revival ornamental woodwork and supported by wooden Tuscan columns.

On the south, east, and west elevations of the main block, the walls terminate in an elaborate entablature that features a banded frieze topped by bed molding, a dentil course, and scroll-like modillions. Another Colonial Revival-style element is the molded cornice that forms the window lintels. All of these decorative elements add to the Colonial Revival character of the house.

The classically styled main entrance, second-story central window, and centered front dormer also exemplify the early Colonial Revival style. The main entry displays a Palladian composition that incorporates a double-leaf door flanked by large sidelights and crowned by an elliptical fanlight. The entry is framed by fluted, engaged Ionic columns and a molded architrave. The sidelights and fanlight contain decorative lead tracery. The sidelights terminate approximately three feet above the porch floor; the intervening space contains wood panels adorned with applied wreath elements. A pair of full-light outer doors open onto elaborately carved wood doors that feature arched leaded glass lights framed by a carved classical frame that includes a broken pediment and drops.

The central window bay on the facade's second story aligns with the entrance below and reinforces the Colonial Revival influence on the overall house design. This bay acts as a frontispiece, incorporating a central oval window that is flanked by narrow, double-hung sash

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windows with multiple, diamond-shaped lights in their upper sash. The whole window bay is framed by four fluted pilasters that carry a plain entablature with a broken pediment set above. The oval window opening, which contains a stained-glass window, is capped by a projecting wood keystone and surrounded by vertical bead board.

The facade's emphasis on a series of vertically stacked elements terminates with the Colonial Revival-style dormer that is centered on the steeply pitched slate roof. The gable-roofed dormer contains a Palladian window and features a raking cornice, cornice returns, dentil molding, and paired fluted pilasters at the corners.

Italianate House (1888)

The rear or north elevation of the Tower House contains the remaining exterior portions of the original Italianate-style house that was built for Isaac B. Jones in 1888. A historic photograph of the original house shows that it was a two-story, six-bay, single-pile, frame house with a low-pitched hipped roof that was capped by a prominent, pyramid-roofed cupola. A wide, one-story veranda wrapped at least three sides of the building, and incorporated an open second-story balcony.

The north and west elevations of the rear wing of the house preserve the walls, cornice, windows, and door openings of the 1888 house. Five bays remain across the rear elevation, which was originally the front of the house. In contrast to the narrow weatherboard on the 1901 expansion, the walls are clad with wood German siding. The windows contain their original two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash and the rear entrance retains its original configuration although the doors were replaced during the 1901 expansion; they match the design of the front entrance doors.

Although rebuilt, the rear porch closely reflects the design of the original veranda. The porch was rebuilt in segments; a screened, two-bay portion remains on the west elevation of the rear wing. The cornice on the rear wing also reflects the earlier period of construction. It features wide overhanging eaves, scroll-like modillions and intermittently placed Eastlake-style, scroll-sawn brackets.

At the time of the 1901 expansion, the roofline of the original house was altered to align with the new Colonial Revival-style addition. A steep, slate-shingled, hipped roof was built to cover the

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remaining portions of the original house, which essentially became a rear wing of the newly expanded building. This new roof features a pair of elaborately ornamented, Colonial Revival-style dormers, each displaying dentil moldings, cornice returns, paired, fluted pilasters at the corners, and a round-headed window with a prominent keystone.

East Wing (circa 1895)

Prior to the 1901 expansion and remodeling, Jones constructed a two-story frame wing at the northeast corner of the house. Probably used as servants' quarters, the east wing connected to the original 1888 house via a one-story hyphen that was later raised to two stories. At the time of the 1901 expansion, steeply pitched, slate-shingled, hip-roofed structures were added to both the northeast wing and to the connecting two-story hyphen. The original wood-shingled, gable roof of the wing remains intact under the 1901 hipped roof.

Interior

The interior of the Tower House is a remarkably well preserved example of an early Colonial Revival decorative scheme. Portions of the original 1888 interior remain with only minor historic additions. The elaborate Colonial Revival-style interiors of the 1901 expansion are also well preserved. Unlike the exterior, the interior décor is almost purely Colonial and Neo-Classical Revival in its inspiration. As is often the case in residences, the decoration is more elaborate on the first floor and in the "public" entertaining spaces than in the private second-floor rooms. The Tower House's current owners undertook a major restoration and rehabilitation of the exterior and interior in 2002-2003. Their work included stripping paint on the decorative woodwork, replacing select portions of rotted wood flooring, and adding period-appropriate decorative painting.

The first floor has six main rooms: a central stair hall, a dining room, a parlor, a library, a study, and a kitchen. The central stair hall includes a small vestibule that is separated from the stair by a pedestal colonnade that features fluted Ionic columns. The dining room is located to the east of the central stair hall and incorporates the semi-circular tower in its southeast corner. A sizable and ornate parlor opens on the west side of the hall. A Neo-Classical Revival pedestal colonnade fills the opening between the stair hall and the parlor. The two rear rooms, the library and the study, and the corridor that separates them, are located in the original 1888 portion of the house. Two rooms and a corridor from the 1888 house also remain on the second floor. The

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kitchen occupies the first floor of the circa-1895 wing and the pantry is located in the hyphen.

The first floor features elaborate Colonial Revival-style decorative elements in the stair hall, dining room, and parlor. In the library and study, some Italianate decorative elements remain from the 1888 house. Throughout the first floor of the house, the floors incorporate various parquet patterns, the ceilings are finished with Adamesque decorative plaster moldings, cove cornices border the ceilings, and the doors and windows are cased with molded trim and cap trim. The cap trim on the doors and windows includes applied wreath and swag moldings rendered in gold leaf.

The stair hall features a quarter-turn, open stringer staircase with a curved balustrade and a volute newel. The stair has spiral-turned balusters, molded handrails, and an electric light post mounted atop the first-floor newel. The stringer is adorned by carved brackets and raised panels. The stair hall incorporates other Colonial Revival-style features, including parquet floors (repaired in places), paneled wainscoting, and applied ceiling moldings that are punctuated by rosettes. A segmental arch set on carved corbels separates the front portion of the stair hall from the 1888 rear section of the house.

Measuring approximately 20 by 24 feet with a semi-circular alcove approximately 15 feet in diameter, the dining room is located at the southeast corner of the first floor. The room is dominated by elaborate, Neo-Classical Revival ceiling moldings rendered in geometric patterns that align with the shape of the room. A central rosette medallion adorns the ceiling and holds a crystal chandelier that may be original to the house. A deeply coved cornice frames the ceiling ornament. The patterned maple floors also reflect the room's shape. A rectilinear pattern adorns the central section, and a central parquet pattern occupies the semi-circular alcove. Other Colonial Revival-style decorative elements in the dining room include stained, paneled wainscoting and Neo-Classical embellishments on the cap trim around the doors and windows.

The most elaborately adorned space in the house is the parlor or living room. Located to the west of the central stair hall, the parlor measures approximately 20 by 30 feet and is entered through an elaborate Neo-Classical Revival pedestal colonnade that incorporates wooden grilles with applied wreaths. Like the swag moldings of the colonnade, these are rendered in gold leaf. An inoperative fireplace with an ornamental mantel stands opposite the opening from the hall.

Set on a projecting wall breast, the vertically oriented mantel incorporates paired, engaged Ionic

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columns on either side of the firebox, and an ornate entablature with ornamental plasterwork that includes oval rosettes and figures holding festoons. The large overmantel is dominated by a beveled mirror that is framed by an elaborate cornice that sits atop paired pilasters. The cornice also features applied plaster ornament that incorporates drops on each of the four pilasters, egg-and-dart molding, a central vase motif, and more figures holding festoons. The firebox opening is faced with gray marble, and the slate hearth is enclosed by a decorative metal fender.

The parlor's other decorative elements include a patterned parquet floor with a mahogany border, and Neo-Classical Revival ceiling ornaments including an oval panel and a central rosette with wheat sprigs. The window and door trim in the parlor match those throughout the 1901 section of the first floor.

The library and study incorporate some decorative elements that are original to the 1888 house. These include elaborate parquet floors with geometric borders rendered in contrasting woods, and original, molded window and door casings. The study retains its original faux marble, Italianate mantel. A series of Neo-Classical Revival bookshelves and a glass-fronted china cabinet were added to the library sometime in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The fireplace in the library, which also reflects a later remodeling, features an arched brick firebox and simple wooden mantel shelf.

The second floor contains a central stair hall surrounded by two large bedrooms, three small bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The decorative woodwork, door and window casings, and ceiling designs are less ornate than those found on the first floor of the house. Notable second floor features include a stained-glass skylight that hangs above the staircase, square newelposts, and a split-level hall that reflects the lower floor of the original 1888 house. The two small bedrooms at the rear of the house were part of the 1888 house and retain their original window and door casings. The western bedroom also retains its late-nineteenth-century, faux-marble, Italianate mantel. Also of note on the second floor are the two remarkably well-preserved, early-twentieth-century bathrooms; both incorporate original wall tile and historic bath, sink, and toilet fixtures.

The attic space on the third floor is accessed by a separate, enclosed stair that leads from the north side of the second-floor hallway. The stair appears to incorporate portions of the balustrade of the original 1888 dwelling. The attic space was historically unfinished.

In 2002-2003, noted ornamental painter Patrick Shields, executed elaborate decorative painting

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throughout the first and second floors of the Tower House. The colors and patterns were selected to correspond to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century design of the house.

Secondary Buildings

The 1.2-acre property includes a single outbuilding, a circa 1990, one-story, pre-fabricated, gambrel-roofed frame shed that stands at the western edge of the property.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tower House stands as a rare and well-preserved example of the stylistic transition in residential architecture from the Late Victorian Queen Anne style to the early Colonial Revival style in Fairfax County, Virginia (National Register Criterion C). It combines iconic elements of both styles. While displaying the asymmetrical form and layout of a Queen Anne style house, the Tower House prominently features classically derived decorative elements on its main façade. In addition, the house possesses one of the best-preserved early Colonial Revival-style interiors in Fairfax County.

This transitional period that spanned the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, witnessed the grafting of essentially classical architectural motifs drawn from what were then considered “Colonial” American examples onto organic Victorian house forms. This free combination of styles developed as a “modernization” of the traditional Victorian house.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Property History

From the late nineteenth century until World War II, a succession of upper middle-class individuals owned the Tower House. Many of the owners attained local or national prominence; however only two owned the property for ten years or more. The longest period of individual ownership was that of James A. and Ethel Marsland Drain's sixteen-year tenure (1920-1936). Between 1941 and 1994, a religious organization, the World Wide Baraca Philathea Union, owned the property and occupied the house as their international headquarters. Previously known as "Edgewater" and "Marsland-on-the-Potomac," the house took its present moniker - "Tower House" - when the religious group purchased it in 1941.

During much of the eighteenth century, the land on which the Tower House now stands was part of George Washington's "River Farm" property. By 1850, John Young, a Maryland-born farmer, owned 460 acres of the former River Farm, including the Tower House tract. John Young died in 1871, and in 1875, his youngest son Lewis took possession of 90 acres of his father's estate. Until the late 1930s, this 90-acre parcel, which had frontage on Little Hunting Creek and the Potomac River, formed the core of the Tower House property.²

In 1887, Isaac B. Jones purchased the property from Lewis Young. The son of a Washington, D.C. printer, Jones was first a printer, but later became a real estate investor. Like his father and several of his brothers, Jones was active in horse-racing. He served as president of the Old Dominion Jockey Club and owned and managed the Benning Race Track in Washington, D.C.³

In 1888, construction began on "a handsome club house" on the 90-acre parcel that Jones purchased from Lewis Young. This house was an Italianate dwelling with a prominent, pyramid-roofed tower and a one-story, wrap-around porch.⁴ Portions of this dwelling remain as the rear wing of the Tower House.

Jones named his estate on the Potomac "Edgewater." He kept horses on the property, including several thoroughbreds, and by 1896, he also kept a boat there. Personal property records show that Jones owned little farming equipment. The estate likely served as his summer vacation house, one that was easily accessible from his primary residence in Washington, D.C.⁵

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In 1897, Jones sold Edgewater to James H. Meriwether, an African-American lawyer and real estate broker. By 1898, Meriwether had failed to make the requisite payments to Jones and had defaulted on a loan that he took out on the property. After protracted legal proceedings, a Fairfax County judge ordered the property to be sold at auction.⁶

In 1899, Jones re-purchased Edgewater, then quickly re-sold it to two real estate investors, James D. Yeomans of Washington, D.C. and F. D. Stout of Iowa, who apparently took little active interest in the property. James D. Yeomans had served in the Iowa State Senate from 1890 until 1894, when President Grover Cleveland appointed him to the Interstate Commerce Commission.⁷

After moving to Washington, D.C. to take up his post as commissioner, Yeomans made several real estate investments in northern Virginia. Yeomans sold Edgewater in 1902, just three years after purchasing it and just one year after completing a substantial addition to the main house.⁸ His quick sale of the property suggests that he purchased it primarily as an investment rather than as a residence.

In 1901, Yeomans oversaw the construction of an early Colonial Revival-style expansion and remodeling of the main house at Edgewater. The house was more than doubled in size with the addition of a large dining room, entry hall, and parlor on the south side of the original dwelling. The addition incorporated a Queen Anne-style semi-circular corner tower with a conical roof; however, the remainder of the addition reflected the fashionable early Colonial Revival style.

Over the next eighteen years, between 1902 and 1920, the house changed hands several times. Percy Cranford, whose family owned a successful paving business, owned the house from 1902 to 1903, when he sold it to Alonzo O. Bliss. During the Civil War, Bliss served with the 10th New York Cavalry. After the war, he started a successful pharmaceutical business; among his products was "Bliss Native Herbs," which promised to cure constipation, rheumatism, and indigestion. He also owned significant real estate investments.⁹

In 1909, Bliss sold the property to Leo Simmons, a Washington, D.C. attorney and real estate speculator who likely used the house as a summer retreat. Simmons leased the property to William B. Champion, who managed the property in the owner's absence. A veteran of the Spanish American War, Champion worked as a civil engineer for the D.C. government. In 1917, Simmons sold the property to Elizabeth B. Nourse and her husband Clarence, who owned the

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property until 1920.¹⁰

From 1920 to 1936, James A. Drain (1870-1943) and his wife, Ethel Marsland Drain, owned the property, which they re-named "Marsland on the Potomac." At the time that they purchased the property, the Drains and three of their five children resided in Washington, D.C.¹¹

Born in Illinois, James A. Drain spent much of his adult life in Spokane, Washington. When the Spanish American War broke out in 1898, he formed and led a company in the Washington State National Guard and later served as its adjutant general (1901-1907). During World War I, Drain served for a time as ordnance officer on the staff of General John J. Pershing. By 1918, when he was appointed U.S. commissioner to the Anglo-American Commission, he had attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. As commissioner, he worked with the British on tank production.¹²

During the time that he resided at Marsland (now Tower House), Drain worked as a lawyer in Washington, D.C., and from 1924 to 1925, he served as National Commander of the American Legion. In 1930, the Drains sold approximately nine acres of land to the United States government and donated another 13 acres for the construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.¹³

A newspaper article written in 1935 indicates that by that year, the Drains had handed over control of Marsland to William Ray Baldwin, who was president of Automatic Guns, Inc. of Washington, D.C. In 1935, he led a group of gun enthusiasts in an unsuccessful effort to establish a gun club on the Drain estate. By 1936, Baldwin had purchased the Drain property, which he planned to make use of as a summer residence. In 1938, he defaulted on his loan and the estate was repossessed and sold at public auction. The First National Bank of Alexandria acquired the 90-plus-acre property for \$20,000 and proceeded to sell parcels of it to various private interests. In 1941, the bank put the house and remaining five acres up for auction.¹⁴

At the auction, an interdenominational Christian organization, the World Wide Baraca Philathea Union, purchased the property for \$22,500. Between 1941 and 1994, the Baraca Philathea group owned the property and used it as their administrative headquarters. They renamed the building "Tower House" for its prominent corner tower. The building housed their offices, guest rooms, and a prayer room on the second floor.¹⁵

The staff of the administrative headquarters at Tower House organized annual conferences, distributed literature to member groups, and held daily prayer meetings in the Tower Room, the

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second-floor, front bedroom that acted as the chapel. The Union also rented rooms to members and guests, some of whom were tourists visiting Mount Vernon and Washington, D.C. Initially, the northeast wing was rented to military families. After the bus line along the George Washington Memorial Parkway altered its schedule in 1952, Tower House became less accessible and the stream of visitors declined. New forms of revenue were required, so starting in the 1950s, the Tower House was opened for use by area churches for retreats, conferences, parties, luncheons, and teas. In addition, Tower House hosted many private weddings and receptions, as well as housing honeymooners.¹⁶

Shortly after the Union purchased the property in 1941, state groups adopted rooms in the Tower House and paid for their furnishings and maintenance. Plaques identifying the sponsoring states can still be found on many doors in the house. For instance, New York State adopted the dining room and dedicated it to the movement's founder and New York native, Marshall Hudson. They furnished the room with a large oil portrait of Hudson, and in 1949, installed a hand-carved, Jacobean-style oak dining room set from "one of Buffalo's lovely old homes" and made repairs to the plaster-on-canvas ceiling ornamentation.¹⁷ Today, the dining set is still in use.

Between 1955 and 1957, the residential development known as "Stratford Landing" was built near Tower House, ushering in an era of rapid suburban development that would eventually surround the building. By 1994, the World Wide Baraca Philathea Union could no longer afford to maintain the Tower House, so the group sold it and the surrounding six acres to James D. and Beverly H. Turner.¹⁸ The Turners subdivided the property and the adjacent three acres into 17 residential lots, leaving the Tower House on a 0.6-acre lot with an adjoining 0.6-acre lot. Today custom homes constructed in the 1990s and early 2000s surround the property.

Architectural Context:

The Queen Anne –Colonial Revival Transition in Residential Architecture

The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a stylistic transition in American domestic architecture from the high Queen Anne Victorian to a more classically-influenced mode. This new mode is known as the Colonial Revival style because it grew out of a renewed interest in America's colonial past and its colonial architecture. In the Late Victorian era, Colonial Revival-style elements began to appear on essentially Victorian structures in the form of classical detailing, more restrained ornament, and a tendency toward greater symmetry in

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house design.

In high-style, architect-designed residences, this transitional period lasted from the mid-1870s through the mid-1880s.¹⁹ However, this eclectic phase took longer to permeate the vernacular housing market and in some areas continued in popularity through the first decade of the twentieth century. The transition from the Victorian to the Colonial Revival in domestic American architecture witnessed the grafting of essentially classical architectural motifs drawn from what were then considered “Colonial” American examples onto organic Victorian house forms. This free combination of styles developed as a “modernization” of the traditional Victorian house.

The various manifestations of the Colonial Revival movement reflect a fascination with early American life that spread throughout the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and other celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence sparked widespread interest in American history, architecture, and decorative arts of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Writers, historians, and artists of the late 1800s and early 1900s depicted the colonial and revolutionary eras as representative of core values that united and defined the United States as a nation. These founding myths appealed to many Americans as they struggled to re-establish national unity in the aftermath of the Civil War (especially so in Virginia) and tried to define a national identity as large numbers of immigrants made the population increasingly diverse. Faced with increasing mechanization and commercialization, many looked back with nostalgia to an idealized pre-industrial era in which food and goods were made by hand, people were believed to have lived in harmony with each other, and life was thought to be simpler.²⁰

While the 1876 Centennial Exposition first brought popular attention to the nation’s colonial past, other expositions held across the nation in the 1880s through the 1910s helped popularize and spread the Colonial Revival style that was so closely associated with the nation’s new-found interest in its antecedents. Yet, until circa 1890, the style remained the exclusive property of the very rich who hired well-known architects to design both city and rural residences. By that time, vernacular residential builders and architects began to adopt elements of the Colonial Revival style. As with most stylistic transitions, vernacular builders were essentially conservative and reluctant to embrace the new style in its entirety. Instead, the style begins to appear as decorative elements grafted on to essentially Victorian-era houses.

During the 1880s and 1890s, two strains of the Colonial Revival style emerged: what

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architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson identifies as innovative adaptations of Colonial buildings and the more historical recall or replication of Colonial models. The Isaac Bell House (1881-1883) in Newport, Rhode Island, is the best-known example of the innovative adaptation method. Designed by the New England architecture firm of McKim, Mead, and White, leaders in the burgeoning Colonial Revival movement, the house displays features and forms derived from McKim's 1874 photographic study of seventeenth century New England houses, but combines these features with the organic massing and diverse foreign sources of the Queen Anne style. The result is what contemporary architectural critic, George William Sheldon, identified as "modernized colonial" and what today is termed the Shingle Style.²¹ Tower House is an example of this innovative adaptation of Colonial American architecture.

While Tower House's 1901 makeover may have been designed by a as-yet unidentified architect, it followed the essentially eclectic dictates of the period by combining Colonial Revival-style elements with an organic and asymmetrical Victorian house form. As redesigned in 1901, a prominent semi-circular tower with a conical roof dominates the Tower House's façade. This quintessential Queen Anne form is the most distinct of the house's Victorian features. However, the underlying house form consists of a symmetrical, hip-roofed structure with a centered entrance and stacked decorative features that emphasize the house's central bay. Composed of classical motifs, such as the Palladian window and pediments, these central decorative features and the house's symmetry identify the underlying structure as a full-fledged, early Colonial Revival design. The interior of the house, however, adheres more directly to the Colonial Revival and Neo-Classical Revival styles. Organized around a central hall, a key Colonial Revival feature, it is rife with classical references. An elaborate Federal Revival-style staircase dominates the central stair hall and the entry between the stair hall and the parlor features a classically ornamented screen wall, complete with a Neo-Classical Revival pedestal colonnade adorned with festoons and swags. The ceilings throughout the first floor incorporate Adamesque decorative plaster moldings and cove cornices. The parlor fireplace features an ornamental mantel that incorporates paired, engaged Ionic columns on either side of the firebox, and an ornate entablature with ornamental plasterwork that includes oval rosettes and figures holding festoons.

Fairfax County and the Development of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood, 1859-1900

Just before and following the Civil War, Fairfax County, an essentially rural and agrarian county located south of Washington, D.C. experienced an influx of northern transplants and investors

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who purchased large tracts and established farms or estates. These newcomers took advantage of the low land prices and the local demand for cash to set up successful farming enterprises. By 1879, Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture reported that approximately 600 families from northern and western states had moved to Fairfax County since the end of the war.²²

This trend is evident in the vicinity of Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate on the banks of the Potomac River in southeastern Fairfax County. Starting as early as the 1850s, northern Quakers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York began to purchase and settle on farms carved out of George Washington's original 7,600-acre property.²³ The trend continued after the Civil War when land prices fell and many long-time landholders were forced to sell. In 1888, a syndicate of "Western capitalists" known as the New Alexandria Land and River Improvement Company built an electric railway that connected Alexandria's steamboat and railroad depots to Mount Vernon. Their intent was to promote the development of a 1,600-acre tract south of Hunting Creek between Alexandria and Mount Vernon.²⁴

The completion of the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway attracted a number of other development schemes, including William H. Snowden's subdivision of seven lots and construction of a station named "Arcturus" on the trolley line just north of where Isaac Jones built his country estate the same year that the rail line was finished. To promote the area and his subdivision, Snowden wrote a guidebook that included historical sketches and information on local landmarks. Ultimately, the development failed to thrive; Snowden sold only a few of its seven lots. Another more successful development occurred at Wellington Station, just north of Snowden's Arcturus. It was established in 1912 by the heirs of David Frost who was a member of a three-man northern syndicate that had purchased 820 acres of the former Mt. Vernon estate in 1866. Wellington Station grew into a popular summer resort colony with its own trolley station.²⁵

Originally erected in 1888 for local businessman Isaac Jones, Tower House originated as part of the late-nineteenth-century development of the Mount Vernon vicinity. With the completion of the railway, the neighborhood became attractive as both a summer resort community and later as a bedroom community where professionals could settle and commute to jobs in Washington, D.C. In 1901, when Yeomans and Stout expanded and restyled the Tower House, they capitalized on the area's growing desirability as a premier location for country estates for wealthy Washingtonians.

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Since its original construction in 1888, Tower House has mainly served as the residence or summer retreat of wealthy, politically connected families with ties to local and national politics and business. The house's original picturesque setting, stylish architecture, and convenient access to transportation made it a logical location for these wealthy and powerful families.

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ENDNOTES

¹ This history relies heavily on primary and secondary research conducted by the late Brian Pohanka, co-owner of the Tower House. Pohanka was a Civil War historian who wrote several books and served as advisor for the Arts & Entertainment Network and History Channel's *Civil War Journal* series and for several feature films. In his research on the Tower House, he consulted local records, including deeds, personal property and real estate tax records, as well as census, map, and aerial photo resources. He also conducted extensive newspaper research, collected biographies on each owner of the Tower House, and gathered historic photographs and oral histories from former residents. Whenever possible, we have given the primary source citation for Mr. Pohanka's research source; however, where we could not discern the origin of specific references we have cited the "Private research collection of Brian Pohanka, Alexandria Virginia."

² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1850; Fairfax County Land Book, Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives, 1860; *Alexandria Gazette* 6 May 1871; Fairfax County Deed Book O-4, p. 430; Fairfax County Deed Book T-4, p. 480.

³ Fairfax County Deed Book G-5, p. 339; *Washington Post* 8 August 1916; *Washington Post* 12 January 1895; *Washington Post* 10 May 1904.

⁴ *Washington Post* 21 April 1888; *Fairfax Herald* 14 September 1900, p. 6.

⁵ Fairfax County Person Property Tax Assessment, 1896.

⁶ Fairfax County Deed Book X-5, p. 643; Grayson & Cain vs. James H. Meriwether, Fairfax County Chancery case file no. 122-B (1899), Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives, Box #1899-058; Private research collection of Brian Pohanka, Alexandria, Virginia.

⁷ Fairfax County Deed Book D-6, p. 564; *Washington Post* 1 November 1906; *Washington Post* 22 July 1906.

⁸ Fairfax County Deed Book J-6, p. 558.

⁹ *Ibid.*; Fairfax County Deed Book N-6, p. 563; *A History of the City of Washington* (Washington, DC: Washington Post Company, 1903), pp. 330-332; *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290; *Washington Post* 25 July 1905.

¹⁰ Fairfax Deed Book C-7, p. 628; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1910; Private research collection of Brian Pohanka, Alexandria, Virginia; Fairfax Deed Book E-8, p. 316; Fairfax County Deed Book P-8, p. 399. During the Nourse's tenure, local tradition holds that the house was used as a convalescent home for soldiers who were wounded in World War I.

¹¹ Fairfax County Deed book P-8, p. 399; *Washington Post* 16 July 1924; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Washington, DC, 1920.

¹² Despite the loss of his lower right arm in a hunting accident, Drain was a proficient golfer and captain of the U.S. rifle team at the 1908 Olympics. He was also active in the National Rifle Association, serving as its president from 1907 to 1908. Jonathan Edwards, *An Illustrated History of Spokane County, State of Washington* (San Francisco: W.H. Lever, 1900), pp. 402-403; *Washington Post* 31 May 1943, p. B10; *New York Times* 31 May 1943, p. 17.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1930; *Washington Post* 31 May 1943, p. B10; Fairfax County Deed Book S-10, p. 548; Fairfax County Deed Book M-10, p. 359.

¹⁴ *Washington Post* 5 December, 1935; *Washington Post* 19 March 1937, p. 3; During World War I, Baldwin served as a major in the Ordnance Department where he may have served with Drain (Private research collection of Brian Pohanka, Alexandria, Virginia). *Washington Post* 1 November 1936, p. R7; Fairfax County Deed Book B-12, p. 277; Fairfax County Deed Book L-12, p. 85; Fairfax County Deed Book C-13, p. 252; *Washington Post* 21 September 1941.

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¹⁵ Organized in 1910, the World Wide Baraca Philathea Union formed as an outgrowth of the late-19th century adult Bible class movement. Marshall Hudson (1850-1926), founder of the movement, was a successful Syracuse, New York businessman who started the first men's Bible study group (Baraca) in 1890. Hudson's eldest daughter, May Hudson, formed the first women's Bible study group (Philathea) three years later. "Baraca" comes from the Hebrew word "beracha" which means "blessedness" or "happiness." "Philathea" is a Greek word that means "lover of truth." By the early 1900s, Baraca and Philathea groups operated within most major Protestant denominations throughout the United States, and in Canada, Italy, England, India, and Japan. At its height in the early 20th century, the Union had one million members. Its focus was on facilitating evangelism through Bible study. The umbrella organization provided charters to local church groups, produced literature, and provided administrative guidance to the groups, who in turn supported the organization through annual dues. See Ann Elizabeth Olson, *A Million For Christ: The Story of Baraca Philathea* (South Hamilton, MA: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2004); Fairfax County Deed Book R-15, p. 195; *Washington Post* 6 October 1941.

¹⁶ Olson, pp. 137-141, 150-161.

¹⁷ Quoted in Olson, p. 153.

¹⁸ Fairfax County Deed Book 09059, p. 1460.

¹⁹ Richard Guy Wilson, "The Great Civilization," in *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1979), pp.63-64.

²⁰ Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), 10-14 and *passim*; William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35 (1976): 239-254; Wilson, 118; Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, *passim*.

²¹ Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), pp. 36-44.

²² Patrick Reed, "Fairfax: Phoenix or Failure - 1870-1900," in *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978), pp.408-409.

²³ *Ibid*, pp.410-411.

²⁴ Patrick Reed, "The Electric Connection - 1900-1925," in *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, VA: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978), pp. 477-479.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 477-479.

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Archival and Private Collections

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Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives, Fairfax, Virginia.

Newspapers

Fairfax Herald (Fairfax, Virginia)

Alexandria Gazette (Alexandria, Virginia)

Washington Post (Washington, DC)

The New York Times (New York, New York)

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GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The 1.2-acre property being nominated encompasses the 0.6-acre parcel upon which the Tower House stands and the adjacent 0.6-acre lot which is currently vacant. In Fairfax County tax records, the house parcel is designated Map no. 1111-22-0012B. The vacant 0.6-acre parcel is designated Map no. 1111-22-0013.

Boundary Justification

The Tower House's National Register boundary encompasses the remaining 1.2 acres associated with the original 90-acre tract upon which Isaac Jones erected the first house in 1888. The current owner intends to legally combine the two parcels to form a single 1.2-acre parcel.

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The following is the same for all photographs:

Tower House, Fairfax County, Virginia, VDHR File no. 029-0151

Photographer: Kathryn Gettings Smith for History Matters, LLC

Date of Photographs: April 27, 2005

Negatives filed at Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Photo 1 of 8

View: Exterior, View looking north from Tower House Place.
Negative No. 22492:4

Photo 2 of 8

View: Exterior, View looking SE from the backyard.
Negative No. 22492:26

Photo 3 of 8

View: Exterior, View looking NE from driveway.
Negative No. 22492:8

Photo 4 of 8

View: Exterior, Detail view of main entrance (south elevation) and SE corner tower.
Negative No. 22492:34

Photo 5 of 8

View: Interior, Stair hall looking north.
Negative No. 22492:13

Photo 6 of 8

View: Interior, Parlor looking SE from NW corner.
Negative No. 22492:12

Photo 7 of 8

View: Interior, Detail of parlor mantel.
Negative No. 22492:16

Photo 8 of 8

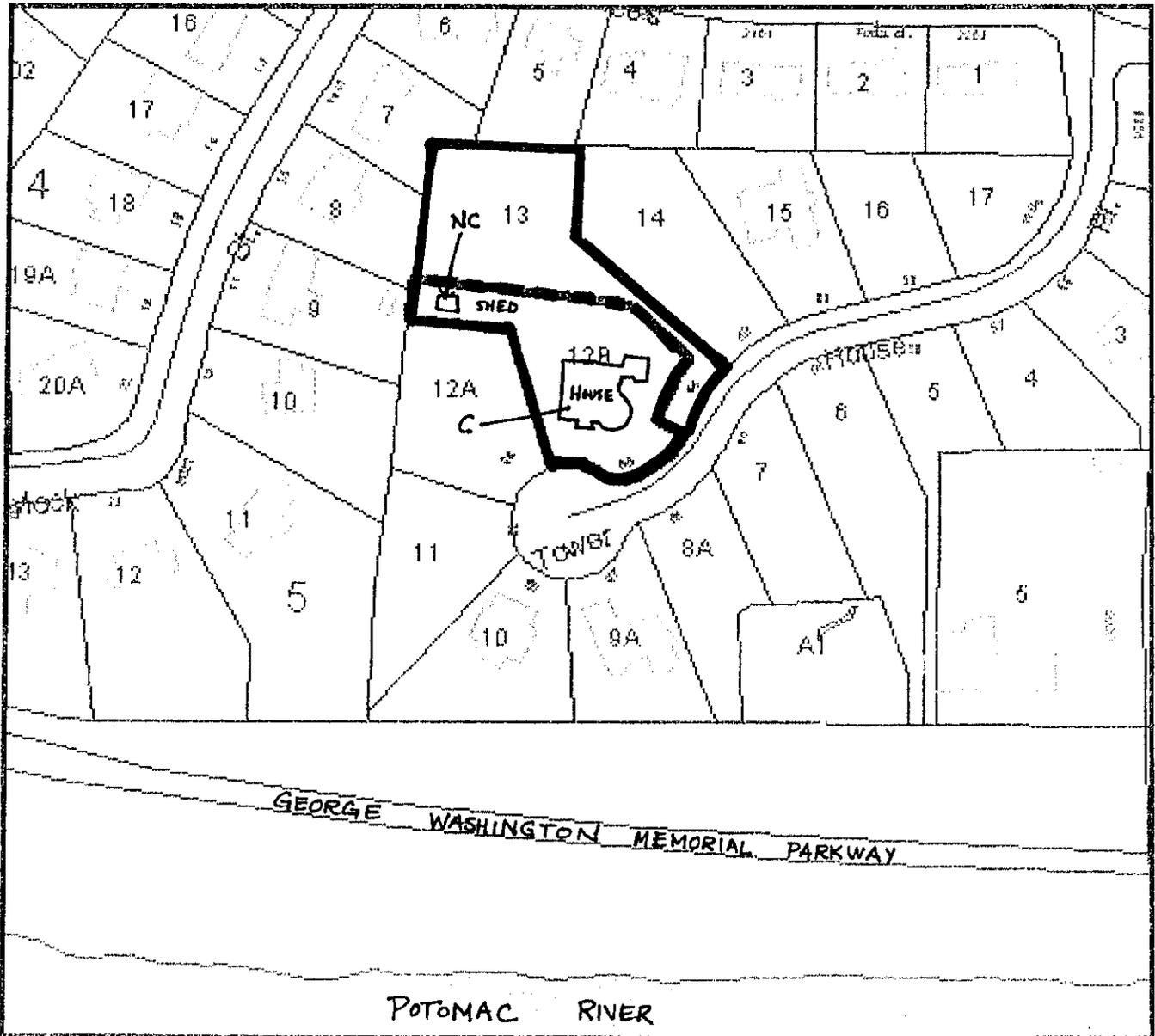
View: Interior, Second floor bathroom looking east.
Negative No. 22492:24

LOCATION MAP

1111 22 0012B

9066 TOWER HOUSE PL

POHANKA BRIAN C



Aerial Imagery © 2002 Commonwealth of Virginia
Fairfax © 2003



Source: Fairfax County Department
of Tax Administration, Real Estate Division.

* NC = NON CONTRIBUTING
C = CONTRIBUTING

Tower House
Fairfax County

SITE PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)

1-STORY
FRAME
SHED
(NC)



CONCRETE DRIVEWAY

CONCRETE
NAME PLAQUES

1-STORY
FRAME
ADDN.

CONCRETE
NAME PLAQUES

CONCRETE
NAME PLAQUES

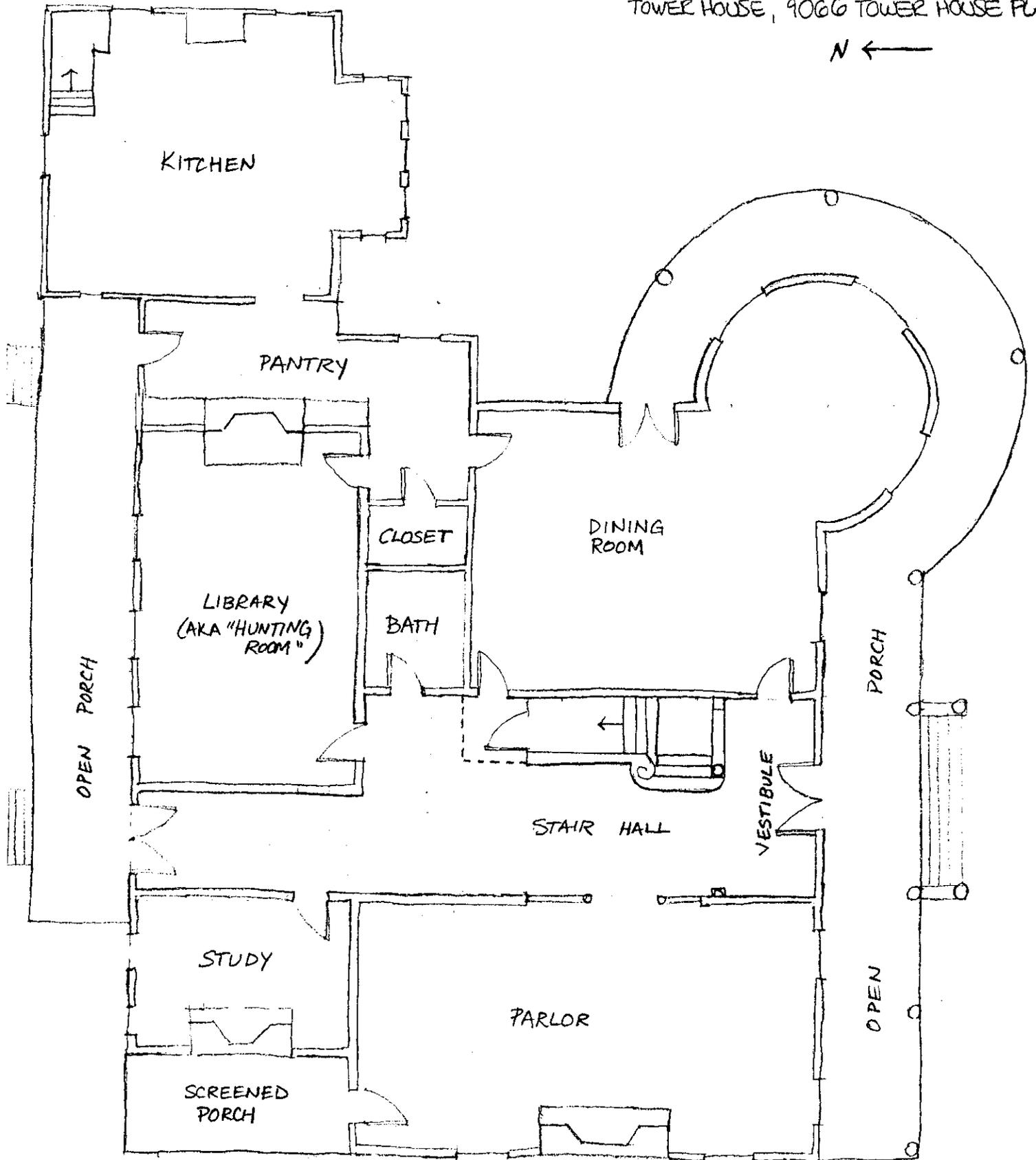


TOWER HOUSE, Fairfax County
9066 TOWERHOUSE PLACE
DHR # 029-0151

TOWER HOUSE PLACE

DHR # 029-0151
TOWER HOUSE, 9066 TOWER HOUSE PLACE

N ←



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Not to Scale

Tower House
Fairfax County

Tower House. Fairfax County, Virginia

Mount Vernon, VA - MD Quadrangle

UTM 18 320250 4286580



Tower House Alexandria (Fairfax County), Virginia

Mount Vernon, VA - MD Quadrangle

UTM 18 320250 4286580

