











## Continuation Sheet

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#### **Main House Interior**

The house's main block has a two-over-two plan; each floor has two rooms divided by the center passage. On the first floor, the passage features an open-stringer stair with turned newels, drop finials, and two square balusters per step, running in three flights from the basement to the garret. The east and west rooms have identical trim, typical of illustrations from pattern books of the day, including the works of Minard Lafever and Asher Benjamin. The windows have plain, Greek Revival-style surrounds with pilaster-like jambs and entablatures with square corner blocks and a small crown molding. The doorways have contrasting pattern-book-derived Greek Revival surrounds with heavy tapered jambs and crosstetted corners, topped by a simple cornice. The parlor door casing is enhanced with a ramped hood indicating its importance. The plastered walls and ceilings of the two rooms have been altered in recent years by the addition of Colonial-style crown molding. The parlor and dining room retain original Greek Revival mantels.

On the second floor, two bedrooms with original mantels open from the center hall. Similar to the first floor plan, each of the rooms in the main block has a single window opening in the north and south walls. A later partition encloses a bathroom on the north wall. An early-20th-century second floor addition to the orangery encloses a bedroom and a bathroom at the east end of the second floor. The chimneys on the first and second floors have plain Greek Revival-style mantels with pilasters and square shelves.

The stair leading from the first floor's central passage to the basement level is enclosed with a plaster partition, an alteration of the original configuration. In the basement below the west half of the house is a large room that author Elie Weeks labels as the dining room (*Goochland County Historical Society Magazine*, page 34). Dining rooms were commonly located in basements in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Virginia. In winter they were often warmed by an adjacent kitchen; in summer they were cool as a separate summer kitchen in a dependency was often used. Elie Weeks labels the east side of the basement as the "old kitchen." Both the east and west rooms originally had plastered walls and ceilings. The former kitchen space (now the furnace room) has a door leading to a space Elie Weeks labeled "cold room storage," which is also consistent with its traditional historic use. This "cold room storage" space would have sheltered the orangery and root cellar from the cold north exposure.

#### **Landscape**

The house is surrounded by mid-20th-century and modern gardens, terraces, and hedges. What appears to be an historic elliptical driveway on the south front encircles two old linden trees that frame views of the entry. The posts marking the driveway entrance and inscribed with the dates 1842 and 1956 were installed by the family of Malvern Hill Omohundro (1866-1960), who lived at Brightly for forty-five years and "whose care for the property made it a showplace in the courthouse area in the mid-20th century" (Worsham, p. 111). While most of the flower gardens, paths and brick terraces that exist today were the work of the present owner, the long privet hedges that screen the property from the public road, and that separate the yard from the pasture were probably planted by the Omohundro family. Clumps of old American and English box bushes also mark the front yard. Horizontal board fences that define the back yard and the paddock are modern; those that delineate the yard follow the lines of old hedges and fences.

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Fencing in the immediate vicinity of the house is whitewashed, while fences at the barn and paddock are unpainted. Manmade ponds near the northeast corner of the property have recently been dredged to ensure their continued viability.

### Secondary Resources (listed in chronological order)

Brightly's historic secondary resources are loosely organized by a cross-axis that parallels the north and east edges of the back (north) yard of the main house. Aligned in a north-south axis along the farm road is a row of outbuildings dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that were formerly used as a four-seat privy, a granary, and a chicken house. Continuing this north-south row are the non-contributing modern aviary, and a large, ca. 1920 frame barn with modern additions at each end. Along the less-clearly defined east-west axis is a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century two-story secondary dwelling (formerly a farm manager's house and now a guest house) and extending eastward are a ca. 1930 well house and adjacent windmill, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century aviary (non-contributing), a pair of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century slave houses with a shared chimney, and a 1980s aviary (non-contributing). A small non-enclosed cemetery with a single late-19<sup>th</sup>-century grave stone is located west of the barn. Other buildings known to have existed within the complex, but which are now demolished) include a grain mill (west of the secondary dwelling) and a wood shed (west of the privy).

The linear organization of Brightly's outbuildings recalls the outbuildings at Tuckahoe Plantation. While Tuckahoe's plantation street and outbuildings are more formal than Brightly's, the deliberate organization of an interior street with a row of wood frame service buildings is common to both properties. As John Michael Vlach notes in *Back of the Big House*, "The planters' landscapes were laid out with straight lines, right-angle corners, and axes of symmetry..."(page 5). The purpose was to create a clear architectural hierarchy that reflected the rigid social hierarchy inherent in plantation society.

**Slave Quarters (2 contributing buildings):** A pair of frame slave quarters is located to the east of the barn. The two are joined by a chimney. The fireplaces and stair arrangement suggest that each building housed two families. The quality of interior finishes, combined with the site near the main house, suggests that these quarters were for house servants. Vlach observes that in a typical two-story double-pen slave quarters, "four different slave families could be quartered in such a building, one in each of the four rooms" (*Back of the Big House*, p. 5). In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Malvern Hill Omohundro used the slave quarters as his office.

The two-story western unit is probably the earlier and may date from the 1840s. At the ground floor this quarters has a door and a six-over-six window. Two more windows occupy the same positions on the north elevation. The second floor is lit by two narrow awning windows and a tall window on the south side of the chimney. Its exterior walls are sheathed in early weatherboard, the roof is a gabled standing-seam metal, and the foundations are stone piers. A door was added at the north side of the fireplace to access a small shed addition connecting the two houses. A two-bay shed-roofed porch with square columns and narrow pilasters (one pilaster remains in place) once sheltered the entry. An exterior brick chimney (which may have been replaced) laid in running bond is centered between the two slave quarters.





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and is sheathed in prefabricated metal roofing. It is sited downhill and east of the slave quarters.



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Harris of

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Goochland and David Bullock of Richmond, trustee. John L. Harris is shown in the land tax books for 1820 and 1830 to have owned 461 acres on the James River with a house and other buildings worth \$1,000, the starting value for a substantial dwelling at that time. He added a house in 1833 worth \$600.

The property at Brightly became the home of John L. Harris's son, George L. Harris, a successful county doctor. By 1840-1844 records show that George W. Harris owned a 100-acre tract with buildings worth \$1,500, about right for a brick house of this scale (a slightly larger house called Rose Retreat was worth \$2,100 in the previous decade). In 1850 the buildings were worth \$900. After 1851, the improvements were valued at \$1,500. The house on the tract is said to have burned in 1840 and to have been completely rebuilt by Dr. Harris within two years. On the basis of this history, most historians believe that the main house at Brightly was constructed ca. 1842. In 1872 the 120-acre property was sold by an appointed trustee in order to satisfy Harris's debts, which mounted in the post-Civil-War years with the loss of cash income from Harris's medical practice.

After two decades of brief ownership and resale by several parties, the property, now identified in deeds as "Brightly," was purchased at auction by William Nairne in 1892. The house was acquired by Malvern Hill Omohundro in 1915 after other owners held the property in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Omohundro, who was responsible for major renovations to the house, owned Brightly with approximately 120 acres until his death in 1960. He moved the driveway entry to the property and marked it with new gateposts. He used the former slave quarters as an office, where he wrote a 1200-page genealogy of the Omohundro family that was published in 1951. Subsequent owners sold off portions of the property, reducing the tract to less than 15 acres. The current owner, Harriet Phillips, acquired Brightly in 1994 and adapted it as a small horse farm and a bed and breakfast inn.



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**Section Photographic Data Page 10**

**Photo List**

Photographer: Gibson Worsham

Date: Photographs taken 08/22/2003 in Goochland, VA

Negatives: Located at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

<b>Photo Number</b>	<b>Negative Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
Photo 1	20832	Outbuildings
Photo 2	20832	Brightly, Main House, rear elevation
Photo 3	20832	Secondary Dwelling
Photo 4	20832	Barn
Photo 5	20832	Garret of eastern store house, looking west
Photo 6	20832	Brightly, Main House, façade
Photo 7	20832	Slave Houses from south
Photo 8	20832	1 <sup>st</sup> floor of western slave house, looking east
Photo 9	20832	Main House, Main Entry Hall
Photo 10	20832	Main House, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, east room
Photo 11	20832	Barn interior, looking southwest





