

VLR - 8/18/93 NRHP 10/14/93

43-68

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 an 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 Mankin Mansion

other names/site number Irvin Place Brickworks VDHR file no. 43-68

2. Location

street & number 4300 Oakleys Lane N/A not for publication

city or town Richmond vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Henrico code 087 sip code 23223

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date 9/3/93

Virginia Department of Historic Resources State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

Horizontal lines for signature and date input.

Mankin Mansion  
Name of Property

Henrico County, VA  
County and State

**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	
5	0	buildings
1	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
8	0	Total

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

N/A

**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/secondary structures  
LANDSCAPE/garden  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structures  
LANDSCAPE/garden  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
walls brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof slate  
other wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Mankin Mansion  
Name of Property

Henrico County, VA  
County and State

**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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Industry

**Period of Significance**

1924 to c. 1933

**Significant Dates**

1924

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Mankin, Edward Thurston (c. 1863-1951)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/BUILDER**

Mankin, Edward Thurston

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: papers in possession of:  
owners: Rhonda J. Allen and Philip C. Licking  
descendant: Edward I. Mankin



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**MANKIN MANSION  
HENRICO COUNTY, VA**

## 7. Description

### Summary Description

Mankin Mansion is a one-story brick Georgian Revival house sited in the midst of a complex containing four additional contributing buildings and two contributing structures set within landscaped, walled grounds. The house and its dependencies are a personal expression of the brick-making and brick-building crafts, constructed by Edward Thurston Mankin (c. 1863-1951), owner of E. T. Mankin, Inc. brick company, as his family's residence. Located immediately to the northwest of the site of Mankin's brick manufacturing works, Mankin Mansion is about 2.2 miles east of the limits of the City of Richmond. The complex stands on a level site of 2.458 acres on Oakleys Lane, with 1.58 acres on the southwest side of the road and .878 acres on the road's northeast side. Mankin Mansion and its dependencies stand on the larger piece of acreage, with the house facing northeast onto Oakley's Lane. The property is in good condition overall. It has had minimal alteration since the house's construction in 1924, and the completion of the outbuildings and landscaping between the mid-1920s and mid-1930s.<sup>1</sup>

### Architectural Analysis

The design of Mankin Mansion presents an idiosyncratic personal expression of the Georgian Revival. The house is a rambling dwelling with a hipped roof, and an irregular plan comprised of wings extending from a central core of formal rooms topped by a hip-roofed belvedere. In essence Mankin Mansion follows the Georgian Revival style, but it has Queen Anne-style elements and an undertone of the Arts and Crafts ethos apparent in its hand-built irregularities.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin (grandson of Edward T. Mankin), Henrico County, VA, 29 March 1993.

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### MANKIN MANSION HENRICO COUNTY, VA

The walls of Mankin Mansion are two brick courses thick, set upon a raised foundation built of concrete-plastered brick walls that enclose a partial basement. The outer walls are constructed of deep red brick laid in running bond. Irregularly-spaced pilaster-like forms pattern the walls. Around the house's central section the walls have recessed panels with hound's tooth cornices between the pilasters. The house's many windows have brick sills. Slate covers the roof, which is edged by a boxed wooden cornice above a wooden frieze board with dentils. Four tall chimneys (two interior and two half-exterior), featuring ornate brickwork that includes recessed panels and corbelled caps, rise around the belvedere. The chimney on the southwest wall was given a partly cantilevered stack, curved shoulders, and a recessed arch at its base containing a projecting shelf rendered in brick. The hipped roof of the belvedere is supported by Ionic pilasters, which stand under a dentilated cornice. Between the pilasters are bands of double-hung sash windows over recessed panels. Two hipped roof dormers project from opposite sides of the roof, with one each on the southwest and northeast sides.

Mankin Mansion is extensively fenestrated, having seventy-one wooden-mullioned windows, which include twenty-six double-hung sash windows and forty-five French casement windows with transoms. The windows have diamond-shaped panes divided by wide wooden mullions, with either diamond-paned transoms or transoms with seven lights consisting of a central rectangular pane surrounded by six panes radiating outward. The house's main entrance, in the northeast wall of the central block, is topped by a round arch with a brickwork triangular pediment above it. The entrance contains a diamond-paned, round-topped double door. In the central section the southwest- and southeast-facing windows are paired, or appear to each side of French doors, while windows in the circulation spaces in each wing are combined in pairs or in sets of three. On the northwest wall, the southwest wall, and the northeast wall there are single, double-hung sash windows. The diamond-paned windows and the use of casements and French doors recall the Queen Anne style, and give an idiosyncratic quality to Mankin Mansion.

Mankin Mansion's irregular plan contains three formal rooms in the central section, from which wings extend out to the northwest and the southeast. These wings contain the dining room, the kitchen, bedrooms, and baths, and display less

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### **MANKIN MANSION HENRICO COUNTY, VA**

elaboration than the central formal rooms. The house's primary entrance opens from a small courtyard, formed by the dwelling's wings, into a hall almost square in plan. Adjoining the hall to the southeast is a music room, rectangular in plan and only slightly larger than the hall. Both the hall and the music room open into the living room, a rectangular space that extends along the southwest side of the house's central section. The walls between these three rooms are almost completely voided by wide openings with Georgian Revival surrounds. These feature shallow paneled knee walls topped by fluted Corinthian pilasters, which were originally paired with fluted Corinthian columns. Entablatures with dentilated cornices cap the door openings. Above the entablatures are centrally-placed cartouches, flanked by S-curves with relief carving and pineapple finials. The cartouche-and-S-curve motif is repeated over the other doorways and the window openings in the three rooms. Classical Revival elaboration is also featured in the decoration of the fireplace mantelpiece, placed in the center of the living room's southwest exterior wall. The mantle consists of a wooden shelf with a molded edge, resting upon large consoles. Above the shelf were columns that have been removed; fluted pilasters, missing their capitals, remain. The mantelpiece is topped by a deep broken dentilated pediment, with a central cartouche carved with the letter "M". A large bevel-edged mirror with a multi-pane border serves as the central feature of the overmantle. All of the woodwork in the formal rooms is painted white, as it was traditionally.<sup>2</sup>

The walls in the hall and the living room are unusual in that they are of brick. The brick is deep red in color, setting off the white woodwork, and it has been laid up to incorporate various patterns that appear somewhat sporadically as interruptions in the overall running-bond construction. Predominant among these patterns are vertical rows of bricks set atop each other to form stacks of stretchers, a row of headers placed on edge to form a rowlock course level with the base of the doorways' entablatures, and a row of stretchers set on end above to form a soldier course at the level of the cornices. At the base of the walls is a row of bricks laid on end in a

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<sup>2</sup> Photographs of Mankin Mansion, in possession of owners (negatives at Dementi Studio, Richmond, VA).

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soldier course to create a visual "baseboard", flush with the wall surfaces. In the hall and living room the ceilings are treated alike, with a grid of paneled wooden crossmembers.

The interior finish of the music room sets it apart from the other two formal rooms at Mankin Mansion. It features paneled walls with a wooden baseboard, a chair rail molding, and a cornice molding. Fluted Corinthian pilasters on paneled bases divide the walls into sections, each section containing molded frames with convex curved corners. Above the cornice molding is a coved ceiling, decorated with plaster ornaments in the Adam style that were carried out by the Richmond artisan Ferruccio L. Legnaioli.<sup>3</sup> Swags and lyres pattern the coved portion, while the flat portion of the ceiling is surrounded by a rectangular border with an oval border contained inside, and a central medallion from which a glass chandelier hangs. This light fixture replaces the original simple Art Nouveau chandelier. The walls and the ceiling background are painted white (as they originally were), while the plasterwork ornaments are now painted a dark bronze shade (they were originally gilded). Overall the music room presents a lighter, more delicate interior than the two other formal rooms. The floors in the three formal rooms are oak hardwood, as are most of the floors throughout the house. In the music room and the hall the floors are patterned with wood inlay, culminating in the name "Irvin Place" inset in the hall floor just inside the entrance.<sup>4</sup>

Through the northwest and southeast walls of the living room, doors open into passages that serve as circulation spaces in Mankin Mansion's wings. The southeast wing contains three bedrooms, a room that was originally divided into two maid's rooms, two bathrooms, a utility room, and a small room that was originally a telephone room, outfitted with a phone and coat hooks, and accessible from the music room.

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<sup>3</sup> Legnaioli also painted a mural in an upstairs room at Mankin Mansion, and built furniture custom-designed for the house's interior (interview with Edward I. Mankin).

<sup>4</sup> Irvin Place is the name given to Mankin Mansion by Edward T. Mankin, in honor of his son Irvin, killed in 1917 in combat during World War I.

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This small room is now a kitchenette. The three bedrooms and the former maid's rooms are set side-by-side in the center of the wing, with circulation space around them on three sides. Between the bedrooms and the music room the circulation space is in the form of a narrow corridor, but on the southwest and southeast sides there are long galleries with large three-part casement windows in the exterior walls. The bedrooms contain windows that open into the galleries. In Mankin Mansion's northwest wing the same arrangement has been carried out. From the living room another door opens onto a short flight of stairs leading to the northwest wing's gallery. This gallery is wider than the similar space in the southeast wing, and it contains an inglenook sitting area with a built-in paneled oak bench next to the short flight of stairs from the living room. Both of the galleries have oak floors, and picture moldings level with the top of the window openings. Four bedrooms, including Mankin's bedroom, are ranged along the northwest gallery. Mankin's room in turn connects to a small entrance vestibule giving access to the grounds on the northwest side of the house. All of the bedrooms are fairly small in size with minimal elaboration, consisting of diamond-paned double-hung wooden sash windows and picture moldings.

The northwest wing also contains the dining room, the kitchen, a sun porch or breakfast room, and a stairway leading to the belvedere. The stairway is located in a narrow hallway between the northwest wing's circulation space and the house's entrance hall. It features square panelled newel posts and turned spindles. The dining room, northeast of the stair hall, is a rectangular space with two doors leading to the northwest wing's circulation space and the breakfast room. In the dining room the ceiling is patterned with a gridwork of paneled crossmembers, repeating the ceiling treatments in the entrance hall and living room. The walls are broken by chair rail and picture moldings, connected with vertical molding strips to outline rectangular planes. On the northwest wall the moldings have been removed. Two windows open from the dining room into the breakfast room, located to the northeast, although the diamond-paned double-hung sash originally in these openings have been removed and used elsewhere in the house.

The breakfast room walls feature diamond-paned casement windows, and a pair of French doors opening through the northeast wall to the outside. Northwest of

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the breakfast room is the kitchen. The present kitchen has been formed by combining the original kitchen, a nearly square space, and a service area to the northeast which was originally brick-floored, and connected the kitchen and breakfast room. This area also gives access outdoors at the north corner of the house. The former service area has an angled northeast wall, conforming to the shape of the house's site where it abuts Oakley's Lane. The kitchen retains its original stove hood, skirting the chimney on the southeast wall. Two doors that gave access from the kitchen have been closed: one led from the kitchen's southwest wall through a passage to the garage, connected to the house at its north corner, while the other opened from the kitchen to the dining room.

Mankin Mansion has a basement space under the southwest end of the northwest wing. The basement can be accessed from stairs under the stairway leading to the house's belvedere, and from an exterior door in the southwest wall. Five rooms and a corridor make up the finished basement space, from which crawlspaces extend to the southeast and the northeast. The rooms include a furnace room, and a family room that was given a false fireplace front of yellow brick (this is apparently the only place where yellow brick was used in construction on the Mankin property). This room was intended to function as a pool room, but instead an electric train was set up there.<sup>5</sup>

Located in the central section of Mankin Mansion, between the first floor rooms and the belvedere, is a child's bedroom designed in memory of Edward Mankin's son Irvin, who was killed in combat during World War I.<sup>6</sup> This room has two dormers, one to the northeast and one to the southwest, at the end of narrow openings leading from the bedroom to the roof, that cut through the unused space surrounding the room. The most significant feature of the bedroom is a mural that extends around the upper

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

<sup>6</sup> Originally this room was nearly square in plan, with closets flanking the top of the run of stairs from the first floor. Presently there is an enclosed landing at the top of the stairs with a doorway into the bedroom, that was created from part of the bedroom.

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half of the southwest, southeast, and northeast walls. Depicted in the mural are landscape scenes containing exotic animals, marching and battling soldiers, and a farmstead. The farmstead scene, apparently imaginary, shows an ornate brick country house with a gabled front facade, a large fountain ringed by a drive in the front yard, and various farm animals to the side. The mural was probably painted by Ferruccio Legnaioli, the artist and craftsman who carried out the plaster work in the music room and built several pieces of furniture custom-designed for the interior of Mankin Mansion. Another unusual feature in this room, now missing, was a religious print that had been affixed to the ceiling. The subject of the print was Jesus, and it bore the prayer, "suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The print was attached to the ceiling to be read by children as they lay in their beds in the nursery. Apparently the room was not actually used as a bedroom by the Mankin children and grandchildren, and it instead functioned as a play room.<sup>7</sup>

A second flight of stairs leads from the landing outside the memorial bedroom to the belvedere. This room is rectangular in plan, with diamond-paned double-hung sash windows lining the walls. Edging the stair well is a wooden balustrade, that now has horizontal wooden members, but originally contained vertical wooden spindles. As in most of the house's other rooms, the floor is of oak. Originally the belvedere was used as a radio room, and was outfitted with a large floor model radio, Windsor-type wooden chairs, and a wicker settee.

The design of Mankin Mansion exhibits the personal tastes of its builder, Edward Mankin, through its idiosyncratic interpretation of the Georgian Revival style on the house's exterior and interior, and in its unusual arrangement of interior spaces. There is no evidence that an architect assisted Mankin in the design of the house, but it is possible that Mankin drew upon design ideas presented in architectural books and periodicals.<sup>8</sup> Certain characteristics of Mankin Mansion - the central core of formal

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

<sup>8</sup> Edward T. Mankin had a collection of architectural books, which his grandson Edward I. Mankin recalls he often read in the evenings, although it is not known what books he owned. He routinely worked with intricate architectural drawings as well as executing his own designs (interview with Edward I. Mankin).

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rooms with highly-ornamented interiors, the sprawling lay-out of rooms, the use of well-lit and airy galleries as circulation space for accessing the bedrooms, the extensive fenestration, the use of transoms throughout the house, the memorial bedroom, and the belvedere (added by Mankin primarily for architectural effect)<sup>9</sup> - are illustrative of Mankin's taste and of the functions he expected the house to perform. Mankin Mansion served as a commodious family home adjoining his place of business, as a monument to his deceased son, and an expression of the use of the bricks his company produced.

Grouped around Mankin Mansion are four other contributing structures. These are a gardener's cottage, a barn (also known as the summer house), a farmer's cottage, and a detached garage. They are all of brick, but they vary in form and design. Most unusual of the four outbuildings is the gardener's cottage, a small two-story structure west of the main house where an employee responsible for garden and grounds maintenance lived during Mankin's time.<sup>10</sup> Its entrance is in the southeast wall, which is three bays wide with a centrally-placed door topped by a single-light transom. It is also three bays deep. Most of its windows are four-over-four double-hung wooden sash, but in the northeast and southwest walls there are single fixed windows with fifteen lights. Also, tall, narrow, six-over-four double-hung wooden sash windows light the north corner. Behind these windows on the interior of the gardener's cottage is a high-ceilinged room with comparatively small floor dimensions, well-lit by the two oversized windows. This space was included in the cottage by

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Richmond Art Company was called in for the decoration of Mankin Mansion's interiors. In the secondary rooms, the walls were painted a light hue, with white woodwork, and the radiators originally had covers (interview with Edward I. Mankin; photos of Mankin Mansion).

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

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Edward Mankin for use as his drafting room; however, he apparently rarely employed the room for its intended purpose, preferring instead to use a drafting table permanently set up in his bedroom. Most of the remaining space on the first floor of the cottage originally contained brick-floored work areas, while the second floor was finished with hardwood flooring.<sup>11</sup> The brickwork in the gardener's cottage is a modified common bond. Each facade is defined by frames created from vertical and horizontal rows of stretchers on each floor. A row of vertically-placed stretchers in a soldier course tops the second floor, and a brickwork cornice capped by a parapet with raised corners and raised center elements on the side elevations tops the building. Over the entrance and the windows flanking it is a shallow brick hood. A large square chimney with a corbelled cap rises from the center of the structure. To the northeast of the gardener's cottage are the remains of the foundation of a gable-roofed green house and hot beds. The outline of the greenhouse roof can still be seen on the northeast wall of the cottage, and the structure is depicted in the Dementi Studio photo of the gardener's cottage.

Southeast of the gardener's cottage stands the barn. The two buildings are linked by a raised brick patio, from which a brick walk leads to the entrance in the southeast wall of the barn. This building is one story in height, gable-roofed, and rectangular in form. A small lower-height hip-roofed wing extends from the middle of the barn's southeast wall. Punctuating the walls are large windows added in about 1974, consisting of six-over-six double-hung wooden sash, and eight-light wooden casements grouped in sets of three. The windows have wooden lintels and brick sills. The barn's brickwork, which has undergone some repair, consists of rows of stretchers uninterrupted by headers. The gables in the barn are frame, with vertical board cladding. The building's roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

Immediately southeast of Mankin Mansion stands the farmer's cottage. It is sited between the main residence and the tract of land where the brickworks were located. The farmer's cottage housed an employee who tended to the livestock that

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

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Mankin kept on his land until about the mid-1930s.<sup>12</sup> The brick walls of the farmer's cottage are laid in a modified common bond. Standing one story in height, the cottage has a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles, an interior brick chimney, and a boxed wooden cornice. It has an L-shaped plan with a hip-roofed porch in the angle of the "L". The entrance porch, protecting the cottage's transomed doorway, has two bays divided by square brick piers. Across the southwest wall is a three-bay hip-roofed porch with brick piers and a brick half-wall. Two doors with three-light transoms lead from opposite ends of the porch into the cottage. The cottage's windows are four-over-four double-hung wooden sash. Surrounding the cottage is a small yard enclosed by a brick wall. Immediately to the southwest of the cottage is a rectangular yard, also enclosed by a brick wall, while in front of the cottage, to the northeast, stands the garage. Three bays wide and one story tall, the garage is constructed of bricks laid in running bond. It has a flat roof surrounded by a parapet, marked by raised corners and raised sections along each wall. There is a cornice with modillion and dentil forms rendered in brickwork.

The site upon which the Mankin Mansion complex is situated is patterned with brick walls, brick walks, fountains, formal plantings, and a brick pergola. Across Oakley's Lane from the house and its dependencies there is a man-made pond with a natural bottom, an adjoining reservoir, and a terraced area giving access to a pump room and to the pond's edge. The grounds around Mankin Mansion and its dependencies are divided into formal and informal zones.

The areas that were originally utilitarian are centered around the gardener's cottage and the barn, and southwest of the farmer's cottage. The formal garden areas lie to the northwest and southwest of Mankin Mansion. These are separated from the informal zones to the southwest by a brick walk, edged by brick walls. In

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin. Edward T. Mankin kept cows, pigs, mules, and horses (the latter were used exclusively for work animals, not for riding), partly to create a farm atmosphere and for productive purposes. By the mid-1930s purchasing produce and meat products proved cheaper than maintaining home production, so the operation of a small farm at Mankin Mansion was discontinued.

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front of the barn the walk passes under an arbor, then continues on to its termination behind the farmer's cottage. Connecting brick walks running northeast provide access to the yards lying northwest and southwest of the house. A lawn tennis court encircled by a brick walk and a nearby raised area, meant to become the foundation of a second pergola that was never built,<sup>13</sup> dominate the yard northwest of Mankin Mansion. To the northeast and southwest ends of the raised area are brick-walled parterres, and pairs of brick benches are set along semi-circular sections of the encircling brick walk. The southeast edge of this yard is defined by a brick walk that connects to the rear walkway in front of the barn, and leads to the edge of Oakley's Lane next to the attached garage. A brick pergola dominates the southwest section of the yard, which also features two fountain sites located northwest and northeast of the pergola. The fountains stood in brick-paved circles (now used as planting beds), that interrupt brick walks leading from the pergola to the northwest yard and to a rear entrance into Mankin Mansion.

The pergola is a long, narrow, one-story, three-part structure built in running bond brickwork. Each end section is capped by slate-clad roofs. The end sections terminate in semi-circular walls punctuated by five round-arched openings, with entrances located in the center openings. Brick gables rise at the inner wall of each end section. The pergola's center section is a three-part unit constructed of square brick piers that support pergola roofs. There are five wide rectangular openings on each side of the central section, which has been given structural emphasis around the center bay. A brick walk passes through the center bay of the pergola, traversing the yard to connect the rear brick walk with the house's rear entrance.

In front of Mankin Mansion there is a small formal area, comprised of a parterre along Oakley's Lane, and a small brick-walled court with a central fountain at the house's entrance. Access to the court from Oakley's Lane is through a round arched opening with paired iron gates, capped by a broken dentilated pediment on pilasters,

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin. This raised area has the dimensions of a bocce court, but it is not known that it was ever used as such.

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### MANKIN MANSION HENRICO COUNTY, VA

all rendered in brick. The court is brick-paved, and connects to a brick walk that extends around the front (northeast), southeast, and southwest walls of Mankin Mansion to the rear entrance.

The grounds across Oakley's Lane are almost completely taken up by the pond. This was used for swimming and boating by the Mankin family, while providing water for the brickworks<sup>14</sup> and serving as an aesthetic landscape feature. Around the pond the land is wooded with medium-sized deciduous trees. Northwest of the pond, between it and Oakley's Lane, Mankin constructed a reservoir that stands above ground level. This water supply also served the Mankin Mansion complex and the brickworks; however, drinking water was provided by a well contained within the main residence.<sup>15</sup> A grass-covered terrace stands southeast of the reservoir, with steps that lead from it up to the reservoir and down to the edge of the road. Adjoining the terrace is a third flight of brick steps leading to a pump room situated under the terrace, and to the edge of the pond. Brick walls define the terrace and stairways, and act as retaining walls around the terrace and the reservoir. A brick wall borders the pond along Oakley's Lane, echoing the brick wall across the road fronting the house and its dependencies. These walls terminate in brick piers flanking Oakley's Lane at each end of the Mankin Mansion property.

Taken altogether Mankin Mansion, its dependencies and grounds present a tour de force in brickwork. Countless variations in construction and decorative detail mark the buildings, the brick walls, walks, structures, and objects that pattern the yard, creating a medley of settings and visual experiences comprised from the display of the brick maker's and brick mason's crafts. Mankin Mansion's grounds provide a suitably complex, brick-dominated setting for the idiosyncratic house and its dependencies.

Susan E. Smead  
Preservation Associates of Virginia

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Statement of Significance

The Mankin Mansion complex is significant under criteria B and C, as the architectural creation and residence of Edward Thurston Mankin, owner of E. T. Mankin Inc. brick company. Mankin Mansion, constructed in 1924, with its dependent buildings and landscaped yard defined by brick walks, walls, and structures, presents a complex exercise in brick making and brick masonry. The house manifests Edward T. Mankin's idiosyncratic interpretation of the Georgian Revival style, while the brickwork throughout the complex displays samples of Mankin's brick manufactures and construction work from 1924 through the early 1930s. Edward T. Mankin's brick production facility was established in 1903 on a site immediately south of his residential complex, and was kept in operation by Mankin until his death in July 1951. The bricks produced at Mankin's facility gained widespread regional recognition, as they were used for several buildings in the Richmond area, for restoration work at Williamsburg and other of Virginia's historic sites, and for many other diverse construction projects primarily in the mid-Atlantic and northeast.

### Historical Background

Edward T. Mankin set up a brick manufacturing facility on Oakleys Lane about 2.2 miles east of the City of Richmond in 1903. Shortly after 1900 Mankin had formed a partnership with George Burroughs, who was already in business. Burroughs died not long after the partnership was established, and Mankin bought out the Burroughs family's interest in the business. Mankin set up the brick manufacturing machinery that had been ordered for the partnership venture, and carried out production under the name E. T. Mankin, Inc. "Manbur", an appellation formed from the two men's last

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names, was the name assigned to the brickyard's railroad siding by the Southern Railway Company.<sup>16</sup>

Edward Mankin had been running a general contracting business in Richmond since the age of twenty-one, before joining forces with Burroughs in brick manufacturing. With his brother Herbert, Edward Mankin came to Richmond in his late 'teens from Riverton, in Warren County, where he was born about 1863. Edward and Herbert Mankin set up residence on Cary Street in Richmond, where Edward remained until moving to the house he built for his family on Oakleys Lane in 1924.<sup>17</sup> After forming the partnership with Burroughs, Mankin developed a strong commitment to the craft of brick-making. He built up the level of production to about twenty-five million bricks a year, most of which were machine-made, and had two separate brick works on the Oakleys Lane site, where about eight round kilns and four to six square kilns were kept busy.<sup>18</sup>

Mankin, who remained intensely involved in his brick-making business throughout his career and routinely kept long hours at the brickyard, stayed during the week at his plant on Oakleys Lane in a two- to three-room brick building, complete with a concrete tub built into the cement floor. The difficulty of commuting daily from his work place into Richmond with early twentieth-century modes of transportation was rendered nearly impossible by the fact that Mankin never learned to drive an

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<sup>16</sup> The name "Manbur" has been given to an area east of Mankin Mansion, centered on the intersection of Oakleys Lane and Holly Avenue. This name probably came from the original name for the railroad siding.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin; Ulrich Troubetzkoy, "Better than Nebuchadnezzar's [sic] Bricks," undated typescript in possession of Mankin Mansion's owners; "E. T. Mankin Dies at Home in Henrico," 9 July 1951 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

Edward T. Mankin was the son of Oscar and Ella Henry Mankin (Ella Henry Mankin was a descendent of Patrick Henry's brother). He married Olive Branch Jones, who was probably also from Warren County (interview with Edward I. Mankin.)

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin. The square kilns pre-dated the round kilns.

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automobile.<sup>19</sup> Mankin's commitment to his work, centered where rich clay deposits made the site ideal for brick manufacturing, undoubtedly brought about his decision to establish his family's residence immediately adjacent to his brickworks.

The Mankin Mansion residential complex and the brickworks were interrelated on both aesthetic and practical levels, beyond serving as a demonstration of brick-making and brick-building. The house and its dependencies utilized coal for fuel, as did the kilns in the brick yard. The man-made pond across Oakleys Lane from the Mankin residence was created by removing clay for brick-making. This pond and the reservoir beside it served as a water source for Mankin's business, while the pond was also an aesthetic and recreational feature enjoyed by his family. There was a tree buffer between the residential complex and the brickyard, which was located about five to six hundred feet to the southwest across Gilley's Creek. Around the Mankin property, most of the land was wooded and sparsely populated. Oakleys Lane was a minor road in the early twentieth century, only partly hard-surfaced by 1931. The brick company's transportation needs were more readily met by rail in the first quarter of the twentieth century. A spur from the Southern Railway provided means for shipping orders of bricks, which were sent out in box cars, while allowing for the delivery of coal to fuel the kilns and heat the buildings. From 1925 until the late 1930s a fleet of five Mack trucks made local deliveries of brick.<sup>20</sup>

By the 1920s Mankin had become intrigued by the manufacture of hand-formed wood-mold bricks, and began to specialize in this type. He supplied this "colonial" type of brick, made according to colonial brick-making techniques, for the restoration of Williamsburg and for Jamestown Church, and he matched the existing bricks at Stratford Hall, Carter's Grove, and other colonial houses in Virginia for repair work. Mankin also supplied hand-formed brick for Silliman College at Yale University and for

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin. Mankin maintained an office and showroom at 527 East Main Street in Richmond, but he apparently spent most of his time at the brickyard.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin.

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the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Other buildings known to have been constructed of Mankin brick include the original Virginia Museum of Fine Arts building, and the Medical College of Virginia, both in Richmond; buildings at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville; Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, New York; and Oldfields, a residence in Oyster Bay, New York.<sup>21</sup> E. T. Mankin, Inc., had two mid-Atlantic product representatives: Mr. Ketchum in New York City, and Mr. McCloskey in Philadelphia. Mankin bricks were used locally by W. D. Duke, a Richmond contractor who employed Mankin's products over a period of twenty to twenty-five years, and by the architect William Lawrence Bottomley. Mankin had competitors in the production of hand-formed brick, including Locher Brick Company in Glasgow, Virginia, but Edward Mankin had come to be considered an artist in the craft of brick-making. He gained a reputation as a harsh task-master, and as an absolute perfectionist who refused to sell bricks that he found unsatisfactory or to compromise in order to accommodate a potential client.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See the attached copy of an advertisement for E. T. Mankin, Inc., which lists many of the buildings for which the company supplied brick.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin; Troubetzkoy, "Better than Nebuchadnezzar's Bricks"; Troubetzkoy, "In the Tradition of Nebuchadnezzar: Bricks Are Handmade", 8 July 1951 Richmond Times-Dispatch; "E. T. Mankin Dies at Home in Henrico"; William B. O'Neal and Christopher Weeks, The Work of William Lawrence Bottomley in Richmond (Charlottesville: University of Press of Virginia, 1985) p. 150, 170; interview with Harry Nelson, Henrico County, October 1992 (brick mason and former employee at E. T. Mankin Inc.).

Mankin did do limited advertising (a simple ad appeared in Richmond Magazine in the early 1930s, giving only the company name, E. T. Mankin, Inc., and listing "Building and Face Brick" as the products offered; he also ran a larger ad listing projects completed - see attached copy), but it is likely his reputation was known locally and regionally among builders by the time he focused on hand-made bricks.

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Mankin's skill in the production of custom-made bricks was enhanced through experiments that he carried out to achieve specific colors of brick. By using different shades of sand and clay, apparently dug from the Oakleys Lane property, and by changing the fuel employed for firing, Mankin was able to create bricks in various colors. Mankin usually used coal for baking his bricks, but he did sometimes use wood, and even experimented with utilizing tires as fuel for the kilns. Controlled variations in the kilns' temperatures also effected the appearance of Mankin's bricks, and Mankin became adept at regulating the degree of heat without thermostats. Mankin is known to have preferred the meticulous and demanding work of creating custom bricks for restoration projects to the large-scale production of bricks. His company also crafted special forms in brick, sometimes using wooden molds constructed by a cabinetmaker.<sup>23</sup>

A suggestion of the variety of bricks produced by E. T. Mankin, Inc., is evident throughout the Mankin residential complex. Mankin's house and its dependencies were constructed of medium- to deep-red-colored bricks, as were the brick walls, pergola, and benches that pattern the grounds. The brick walks were laid with rectangular bricks, and with large square paving bricks. Decorative effects were achieved by manipulating bricks to form curves, recessed panels, and architectural details including cornices, pilasters, pediments, arches, parapets, and contrasting brickwork borders. The dependencies around Mankin Mansion have varying degrees of ornamentation ranging from the fairly elaborate gardener's cottage to the farmer's house and the barn, but in each building it appears that Mankin developed the design

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin; Troubetzkoy, "Better than Nebuchadnezzar's Bricks" and "In the Tradition of Nebuchadnezzar." Mankin took out patents in both the United States and Canada for his innovations in the use of heat in kilns (Troubetzkoy, "Better than Nebuchadnezzar's Bricks"). At Mankin's brickworks, the kilns were connected by tunnels to transfer heat from kiln to kiln, and thereby minimize heat loss (interview with Edward I. Mankin).

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primarily in answer to the building's functions.<sup>24</sup>

E. T. Mankin, Inc.'s pace of brick-making slowed in 1933-34 as a result of the Depression, and less than a decade later, during World War II, the company experienced limited demand for its products. Instead of purchasing new machinery, Mankin kept a minimal level of production going with old machinery, and continued to specialize in custom work. Following the war Mankin produced custom bricks exclusively, and made bricks in limited numbers. After Edward T. Mankin's death in 1951, three businessmen, Matt Anderson, Elam Featherston, and Eugene West, bought Mankin Mansion and the brickworks. These owners did not have experience in brick-making, and their venture was not successful. The brick kilns were demolished in the 1960s, while the Mankin residence passed through the hands of two other owners, Mr. Lively and Mr. Creasy. The Mankin Mansion residential complex subsequently was sold four more times before its purchase by the present owners. Through these changes in ownership, the property has been little altered, only experiencing updates in the heating system and the loss of some decorative details from the house's interior.<sup>25</sup>

Mankin Mansion, its dependencies, and its setting are the manifestation of Edward T. Mankin's personal architectural design ideas, and his achievements in

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin. A brick well and a brick well house, which no longer stand, were constructed in the early 1930s about 400 ft. west of the wall that surrounds the property.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Edward I. Mankin; interview with Rhonda J. Allen and Philip C. Licking, owners of Mankin Mansion, 26 April 1992. The furnace was changed to a fuel oil-fired unit from a coal-burning furnace by the trio of businessmen who bought the property after Mankin's death. The decorative details now missing are columns that stood in the door openings between the entrance hall, music room, and living room, along with columns and pilaster capitals that formed part of the living room fireplace overmantle.

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brick-making and brick construction. The house's idiosyncratic interpretation of the Georgian Revival style incorporates unusual design ideas while maintaining a slightly regional flavor. Mankin's resolute, aggressive and individualistic personality, which determined the course of his professional career, is also evident in the Mankin Mansion complex. Mankin chose the architectural design ideas that he found appealing, elaborated upon them to suit his needs, and executed them in a virtuoso display of brick construction.

Susan E. Smead  
Preservation Associates of Virginia

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9. Major Bibliographic References

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Mankin Mansion photographs, Dementi Studios, Richmond, VA.

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possession in Mankin Mansion's owners.

\_\_\_\_\_. "In the Tradition of Nebuchadnezzar: Bricks Are Handmade." Richmond Times-  
Dispatch 8 July 1951.

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**MANKIN MANSION  
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### 10. Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description

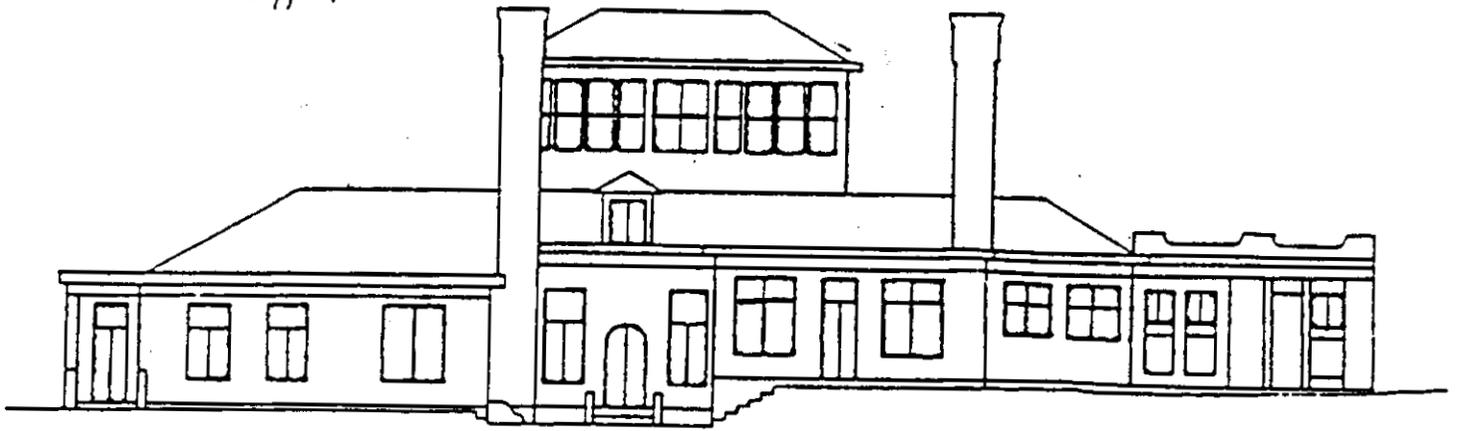
Lot 16, Section 11 of Henrico County Tax Parcel Map. Accompanying copy of Deed of Bargain and Sale and Assumption, dated 8 August 1986 for meets and bounds.

#### Boundary Justification

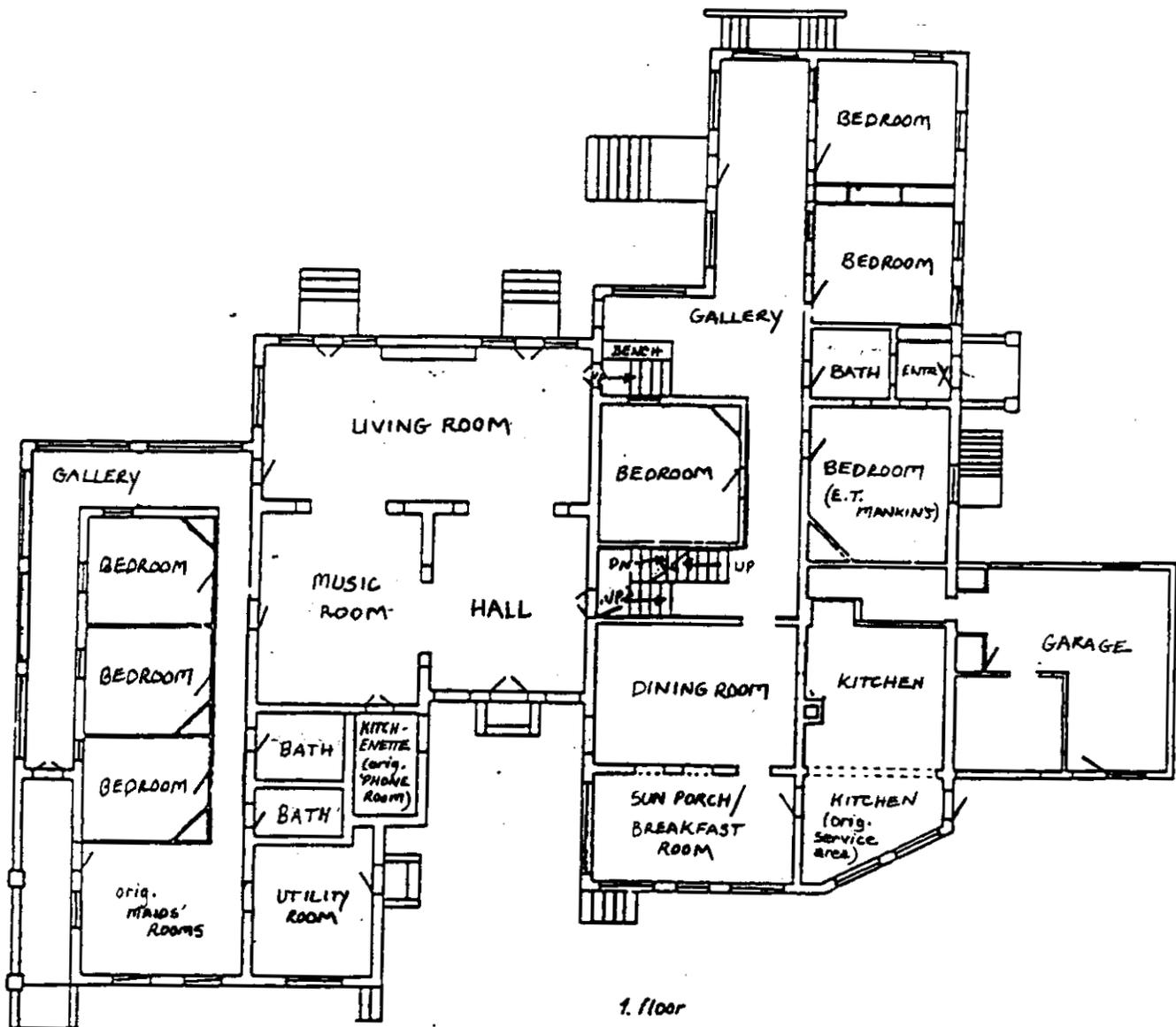
The boundary includes the main house, outbuildings, garden walls and structures which currently lie within the property described above, and have historically been part of the Mankin property. The adjacent site where the brickworks once stood is not in the possession of the owners of Mankin Mansion, and retains little integrity, as the brick kilns have been demolished and an industrial concern is in operation on the property.



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FRONT ELEVATION



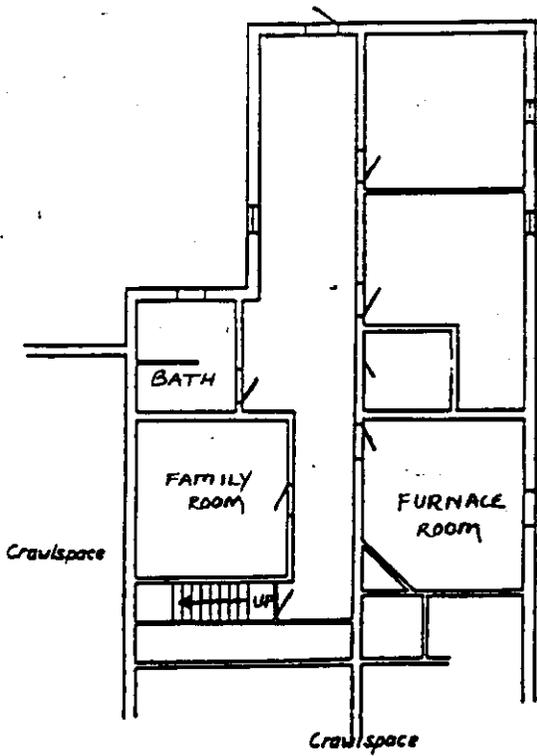
1. floor



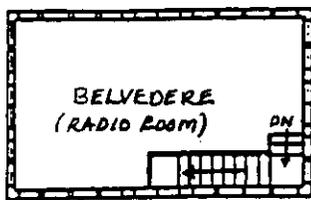
MANKIN MANSION  
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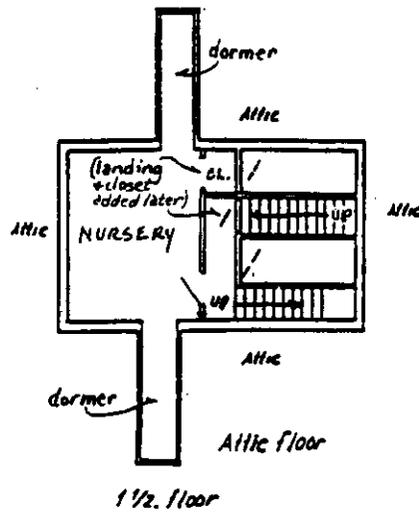
REAR ELEVATION



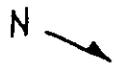
Basement



2. floor  
2nd floor



1 1/2. floor



N. T. S.