

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main house at Belmont is an architecturally sophisticated five-part Federal mansion with notably handsome proportions and detailing. The house is in a good state of preservation, and except for modifications made during a 1907 remodeling and modernization, the building remains essentially unchanged from its original appearance. The dominant feature of the composition is the center section, a five-bay, two-story structure some fifty-seven feet in length. It is covered by a gable roof with modillion cornices and interior end chimneys. The center bay is treated as a relatively wide pedimented pavilion. The openings in the pavilion consist of a lunette in the pediment; a fine Palladian window on the second floor, with stone lintels and intersecting tracery; and a double doorway on the first floor flanked by sidelights and topped by an exceptionally large fanlight. Sheltering the entrance is a refined tetrastyle portico with fluted Doric columns, modillion cornice, and a frieze ornamented with alternating geometric patterns. The rest of the facade openings have six-over-six sash and are topped by stone lintels with keystones.

Flanking the center section are three-bay hyphens with round-arch windows containing intersecting tracery. The hyphens originally had flat roofs but were given gable roofs during the 1907 remodeling. Connected to the hyphens are three-bay, gable-roofed terminal wings. Each of these wings originally had four bays, but during the 1907 remodeling, the center two bays were incorporated into the present single-bay pavilion topped by an open-tympanum pediment. The wings' concrete lintels were also added then; the original lintels were brick. The 1907 remodeling further included the conversion of the kitchen wing to the west into a guest suite and the office and schoolroom wing on the east into a library.

All the principal walls of the house are laid in exceptionally handsome Flemish bond with narrow tooled joints. The brickwork survives in an excellent state of preservation. The present roof covering throughout is slate. Old photographs show a standing-seam metal roof; the original covering was wood shingles.

The center section of the house was originally built with a T plan, the rear wing measuring 44' X 25'. This wing was removed in 1907, except for the portion containing the stair hall, and was replaced by a wing the approximate width of the facade. As a result of this remodeling, the new dining room, located behind the stair hall, is flanked by a "living porch" on the east and by a kitchen and service areas on the west. The whole is topped by a hipped roof with dormers, except for the center two bays of the rear, or south, wall which are incorporated into a shallow pavilion topped by an open-tympanum pediment.

The interior of the front portion of the center section remains essentially unchanged. The first floor consists of a wide center hall with two large reception rooms on either side. At the end of the hall is a wide elliptical arch supported on fluted Doric piers which frame the stair. The stair ascends against the hall's south wall, perpendicular to the center hall. The doorways leading from the hall to the reception rooms are elegantly treated. Each is topped by a dentiled cornice and deep frieze containing a delicate beaded festoon. On the projecting blocks at either end of the frieze are beaded ovals framing foliated medallions. The hall, like the rooms to either side, is ornamented with a pedestal-type, paneled wainscot. (See Continuation Sheet #2)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES
1799 - 1802

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Belmont, the splendid northern Virginia estate established by the Lee family, is significant for its architecturally outstanding residence and for the several noted people who have lived there. Historically the estate symbolizes the late eighteenth-century resettlement of many of Virginia's prominent Tidewater families in the more fertile northern and western areas of the state.

Belmont's elegant house was erected 1799-1802 by Ludwell Lee (1760-1836), son of Richard Henry Lee, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Although practically unknown to most architectural scholars, the house is one of the most refined expressions of Federal-style plantation architecture in the Middle Atlantic region. Laid out in the popular five-part plan, it is architecturally akin to such notable houses as Woodlawn, Dumbarton House in Washington, D. C., and the mansions of Annapolis. The sure handling of its proportions and the beautiful craftsmanship of its details indicate the involvement of an architect and craftsmen of talent. Unfortunately no names have yet been associated with either the design or construction. It seems likely, however, that the builders worked in the Alexandria area, since Belmont's ornamentation and masonry details are similar to examples on many Federal-period houses in the old port city.

The house's first owner, Ludwell Lee, was born on his father's plantation, Chantilly in Westmoreland County. He acquired the Belmont property through his first wife (and first cousin), Flora Lee, who inherited the land through their common grandfather, Thomas Lee of Stratford. Thomas Lee had patented the Belmont tract in 1728.

Ludwell Lee served as aide-de-camp to General Lafayette during the campaign of 1781. Like most of his kinsmen, he went into public service and became a member of the Virginia General Assembly. However, being a staunch Federalist, his political career passed into oblivion when the Jeffersonian Republicans became the dominant political force in Virginia. Lee thus passed the rest of his life as a prosperous planter and genial host. When Lafayette made his triumphal tour of America in 1825, he was lavishly entertained by his old friend at Belmont.

Following Ludwell Lee's death, Belmont was sold to Miss Margaret Mercer, daughter of a former Maryland governor, who operated a school in the house. The property was acquired from Miss Mercer's heirs in 1851 by George Kephart, who also owned Coton, the plantation of Ludwell Lee's cousin, Thomas Ludwell Lee, located across the Leesburg Turnpike from Belmont. In 1887 Belmont was bought by Frederick M. Staunton, a former governor of Kansas. Mr. and Mrs. John Scott Ferguson of Pittsburgh acquired the place from Mr. Staunton in 1907. They found the house in deteriorated condition and thus engaged the Pittsburgh architect T. Kent Roberts to modernize the building. His work resulted primarily in the enlarging of the rear wing, the remodeling of the

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Christian, F. A. and S. W. Massie, eds. Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia. Richmond, Virginia, 1950.
- Slater, Kitty, "Belmont," in Spur of Virginia, Vol. III, No. 4, May 1968.
- Templeman, Eleanor Lee. Virginia Homes of the Lees. Arlington, Virginia, 1973.
- Wayland, John W. Historic Homes of Northern Virginia. Staunton, Virginia, 1937.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 70 Acres E. 18/284520/4327900

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	28,4	8,7,0	4,3	2,7	6,6,0	B	1,8	28,4	5,4,0	4,3	2,7	1,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,8	28,4	1,6,0	4,3	2,7	0,7,0	D	1,8	28,4	1,3,0	4,3	2,7	3,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The 70 acres comprising the Belmont property are bounded by a line beginning at a point on S side of State Route 7, .4 mile NW of intersection of state routes 7 and 641 and approximately 50' E of private drive; thence extending approximately 1,800' SW (paralleling private drive along E side); thence extending approximately 550' SSE (partially along E side of treeline); thence extending approximately 1200' WSW (extending across dirt road); thence extending approximately 950' NNW; thence extending 700' ENE; thence extending approximately 1,800' NNE to S side of State Route 7; thence extending approximately 1,400' SW along S side of said route to point of origin.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

July, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3143

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

James R. Fishburne, Jr.

RESUBMITTED:

December 3, 1979

TITLE Julius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 21 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 22 1977

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

BELMONT, Loudoun County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6, 7 PAGE 1, 2

#6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1968, 1974, 1975 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION - Justification of Acreage

The boundaries are drawn to include the sweeping vista and long, curved, tree-lined drive from Route 7 to the north. This area, focusing on the house, is treated as an informally planted park and is an important original design element for the estate. The boundaries also include the immediate yard of the house, the family cemetery, and the modern farm buildings to the west.

The boundaries are legally defined in an easement established on the property by I. B. M.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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BELMONT, Loudoun County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET # 2

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

#7. DESCRIPTION

The outstanding feature of the reception rooms is the elaborate mantel in each. There is a persistent tradition that the mantels were given by Lafayette when he visited Belmont in 1825. Stylistically, however, the mantels belong to the period of the house's construction date, and they appear to be no more than better-than-average Adam-style mantels as one would expect to find in a house of quality. The east mantel, the more elaborate of the two, contains a central panel with the profile of a Classical male in relief, framed by garlands of foliage. Flanking it in the frieze are swags of drapery tied with bows. The mantel's supporting pilasters and the sections of entablature above are decorated with urns, foliated medallions, and straight stalks of foliage growing out of urns. The mantel in the west room contains a central panel ornamented with a swag of flowers overlaid by an ornamental urn. On either side of the panel are delicate festoons of flowers. Supporting the entablature are stop-fluted Doric columns, and in the frieze above each column is a perched eagle in relief.

Belmont's stair has a molded handrail and thin, square balusters, three to a step. At the end of each step is a scrolled bracket. Upstairs, the center hall has been made into a large, somewhat elegant bathroom. The principal bedrooms on either side have simple but well-proportioned Federal woodwork. The rest of the second-floor rooms date from the 1907 restoration.

The house is located in a spacious park dotted with large trees and shrubbery. It is sited near the edge of a gentle ridge overlooking the Potomac Valley to the east. At the foot of the ridge, but a comfortable distance from the house, is the old Leesburg Turnpike (Route 7). The house is approached by a tree-lined drive coming up from the highway in an impressive sweeping curve. Behind the house are broad, level fields. Of the early outbuildings, a stone smokehouse survives; numerous modern farm buildings are located to the west of the house. Near the farm buildings is a walled cemetery containing the grave of Ludwell Lee.

CL

The seventy-acre tract on which Belmont is set is the last surviving intact parcel of the land originally inherited by Ludwell Lee through his first wife.

(see Continuation Sheet #1)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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BELMONT, Loudoun County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #3

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

#8 SIGNIFICANCE

terminal wings, and the improvement of the physical plant. The success of the project is borne out by the fact that the house has required little major work since.

The next owners of Belmont were Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. McLean, who purchased it in 1915. Mr. McLean was the son of the owner-publisher of the Washington Post. Mrs. McLean (Evelyn Walsh) is best remembered as being an owner of the famous Hope Diamond. During the McLean ownership, Belmont became noted as a fine horse farm. The distinction was short-lived; the Depression caused the horses to be auctioned in 1931; and in the following year, the whole estate was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Patrick J. Hurley. Mr. Hurley had served as Secretary of War during the Hoover administration. The Hurleys sold Belmont and its contents in 1943 to the late George C. Clarke, a Washington, D. C., attorney, who in 1969 sold the estate to the International Business Machines Corporation. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke retained a life interest in the house and a portion of the property, but this interest was given up when the widowed Mrs. Clarke vacated the house in 1974.

CL

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
Sterling, Va.-Md. 1965

BELMONT, Loudoun County, Virginia

UTM References:

A-18/284870/4327660

D-18/284130/4327360

B-18/284540/4327110

E-18/284520/4327900

C-18/284160/4327070

4330
4329
G
WINCHESTER 40 MI.
LEESBURG 42 MI.
4327
4326
SABZ II SE
(LEESBURG)

MAC
ISLAND

Ashburn
Junction

BM 921

BM 327

BM 227

BM 285