

VLR-9/17/74 NRHP-11/8/74

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA
COUNTY: MIDDLESEX
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
LANS DOWNE

AND/OR HISTORIC:
ARTHUR LEE HOUSE

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Virginia Street at Upton Lane

CITY OR TOWN:
Urbanna

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First (Thomas N. Downing)

STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51** COUNTY: **Middlesex** CODE: **119**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Military Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. James Forcum

STREET AND NUMBER:
607 North Carolina Avenue, S.E.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D.C.

CODE:
11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Middlesex County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Saluda

STATE:
Virginia

CODE:
51

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: **1959** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D.C.

CODE:
11

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Lansdowne is a two-story T-shaped early-Georgian mansion with gable roofs and interior end chimneys. The original or front portion of the building is approximately 52 feet long and 25 feet deep. The centrally located rear wing, projecting to the north, is approximately 36 feet long and 18 feet wide. This wing was added within a decade following the completion of the original section and matches the original portion in style and detail. The two-story frame wing attached to the northwest corner of the rear wing was added around 1880. A one-story brick wing was added to the west end of the front section prior to 1804, and a matching wing was added to the east end between 1805 and 1811. Both of these wings were removed sometime after the Civil War.

Lansdowne's walls are laid in very fine Flemish bond with glazed headers. Although marred in places by alterations, paint and repairs, the walls are generally in a good state of preservation. Notable brickwork details include a beveled water table, a three-course rubbed-brick belt course, rubbed-brick jambs and corners, and gauged-brick flat arches. The gauged-brick arches of the south elevation openings were stuccoed in the late-eighteenth century.

The five-bay wide south elevation is dominated by a tall pedimented portico projecting from the center bay. The portico was added in the late-eighteenth century, but its two tiers of posts were replaced around 1900 by two pairs of fluted Corinthian columns. These columns were removed within the past three years when the original two-level configuration of the portico was restored. The house's original semi-circular stone steps survive at the base of the portico. The portico roof as well as the roof of the rest of the house is covered with standing-seam sheet metal. The house was originally covered with rounded wooden shingles, and a section of the original roofing survives in a nearly perfect state of preservation in the attic of the rear wing where it joins the front portion. The original modillion cornice survives on both the front section and the wing.

Lansdowne's front door is stopped by a rectangular transom and opens into the wide center hall. The main stair was originally located in this hall, but it was removed when a new stair was built in the rear wing around 1800. To the east of the center hall is a parlor that originally was divided into two rooms, each having a corner fireplace. The parlor was given its present appearance in the colonial period as its paneling matches that in the rest of the house. To the west of the hall is a spacious, fully paneled drawing room ornamented with thirteen full-height fluted Doric pilasters. The fireplace facing in this room, like those in all the principal rooms, is of imported marble. Beyond the north end of the hall (in the south end of the wing) is the present stair hall, and to the north of that is the dining room. The south end of the dining room was partitioned off in the eighteenth century to form a serving pantry. The dining room and the large bedroom above it are fully paneled. The pairs of bedrooms on either side of the paneled second-floor hall in the front portion have only paneled corner chimney breasts.

The house underwent a considerable remodeling around 1900. Most of the changes were confined to the interior. The only major exterior change was the addition of the Corinthian columns mentioned earlier. Inside, the original wide pine-board flooring was covered with the present narrow, tongue-and-groove oak boards. The plaster ceilings were removed and replaced with tongue-and-groove boarding, and molded ceiling beams were installed in the dining room and east parlor. The chimney closets in the west parlor or drawing room were enlarged into wide, paneled recesses. A similar recess with intermediate

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slender columns was installed in the east parlor. The doorway at the rear end of the center hall was framed by a thick entablature supported on Ionic columns. The heavy, square newel on the stair dates from the remodeling as do the second-floor baths and closets.

Although Lansdowne originally had considerable acreage, its only land at present is its spacious yard. The yard has large trees and provides the house with a handsome setting. A family graveyard, which contains the grave of Arthur Lee, is located in the rear of the yard.

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lansdowne was the home from 1791 until his death in 1792 of Arthur Lee, a major diplomatic figure from the Southern Colonies during the War for Independence. In 1770, through the influence of Samuel Adams, he was chosen as agent of Massachusetts in London in case of the absence or death of the regular agent, Dr. Benjamin Franklin. In the period 1770-1775, Arthur Lee and his mercantile brother, William, were engaged in British politics, and for a while Arthur hoped that he might become a member of Parliament. In October 1776 he was appointed along with Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane of Connecticut as commissioners to negotiate a treaty with France and solicit aid. He joined his colleagues in Paris at the end of December only to find that he was not needed there. He then went to Spain in February 1777 and did succeed in obtaining some aid from the Spanish Government. He next journeyed to Berlin where he failed in obtaining aid. Lee returned to Paris, and on October 17, 1777, treaties of alliance and of amity and commerce were negotiated with France and signed by the three commissioners on February 6, 1778.

In September 1780 Lee returned to America, and in 1781 he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates. He was also elected to the Continental Congress in 1782, serving until 1785. He was one of the commissioners who negotiated the Indian treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort McIntosh, and in July 1785 he was appointed by the Congress to the treasury board. He held that office until November 1789. He opposed the adoption of the Constitution. Lee moved to the village of Urbanna in 1791.

The house Lee chose to make his home was erected circa 1740-1750, with the large rear wing added a few years after the completion of the front section. It survives as a major example of Virginia's Georgian architecture, exhibiting all the best features of the style. The brickwork is notable and the interior paneling is a remarkable achievement of colonial craftsmanship and design. The several later alterations and additions have not detracted significantly from the house's original character.

The house was originally owned by Ralph Wormley IV (1715-1790) of nearby Rosegill, who used it as a secondary residence. Wormley sold it in 1763 to James Mills, a Scottish merchant settled in Urbanna. Mills' wife was Elizabeth Beverley, daughter of William Beverley of Blandfield, Essex County. Mills died in 1782, leaving the house to his brother-in-law Robert Beverley, who in 1791 sold Lansdowne to Arthur Lee. Born at the Lee family plantation, Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, Lee was the younger brother of Richard Henry Lee. Lee acquired Lansdowne upon his retirement from public life, hoping to establish himself as a planter there. He added nearly 1000 acres to the property and named it Lansdowne-on-the-Rappahannock in honor of his friend, William Fitzmaurice, Marquess of

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Lansdowne, a supporter of the American cause. Lee died before he had a chance to develop his property, leaving it to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, who at his death in 1794 left Lansdowne to his son, Francis Lightfoot Lee.

Francis Lightfoot Lee retained ownership of Lansdowne until 1803 when it was sold to Dr. Robert Beverley Spratt. Spratt willed the property to his brother George Daniel Spratt, who took possession in 1806. Upon his death in 1807 it descended, under the terms of Robert Beverley Spratt's will, to Robert Beverley Fife. In 1817 Fife conveyed the property to James Doswell. In 1829 Paul Doswell deeded it to Thomas R. Street. Lansdowne remained in the Street family until the 1880s when it was purchased by Benjamin Upton. In 1967 Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Robbins purchased the property from the estate of John Upton, to whom it passed in 1935. The present owners acquired the house with approximately an acre of land from the Robbinses in 1968.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bailey, Thomas A. A Diplomatic History of the American People. New York, 1947, pp. 9-18.
 Commager, Henry S. and Richard B. Morris. The Spirit of Seventy-Six, Vol. II. Indianapolis and New York, 1958, pp. 982-986.
Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XI, pp. 96-98.
 Lee, Mrs. Marguerite Dupont. Arthur Lee, Diplomat, 1740-1792. Washington, 1936, pp. 263-285.
 Middlesex County Deed Books
 Thacher, James, M.D. American Medical Biography of 1818. New York, 1967 (published first Boston, 1828), pp. 356-357

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37° 38' 12"	76° 34' 37"	37°	38'	12"
NE					
SE					
SW					

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One-half acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

ORGANIZATION: **VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION** DATE: **September 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: **RICHMOND** STATE: **VIRGINIA** CODE: **51**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 Title Commission

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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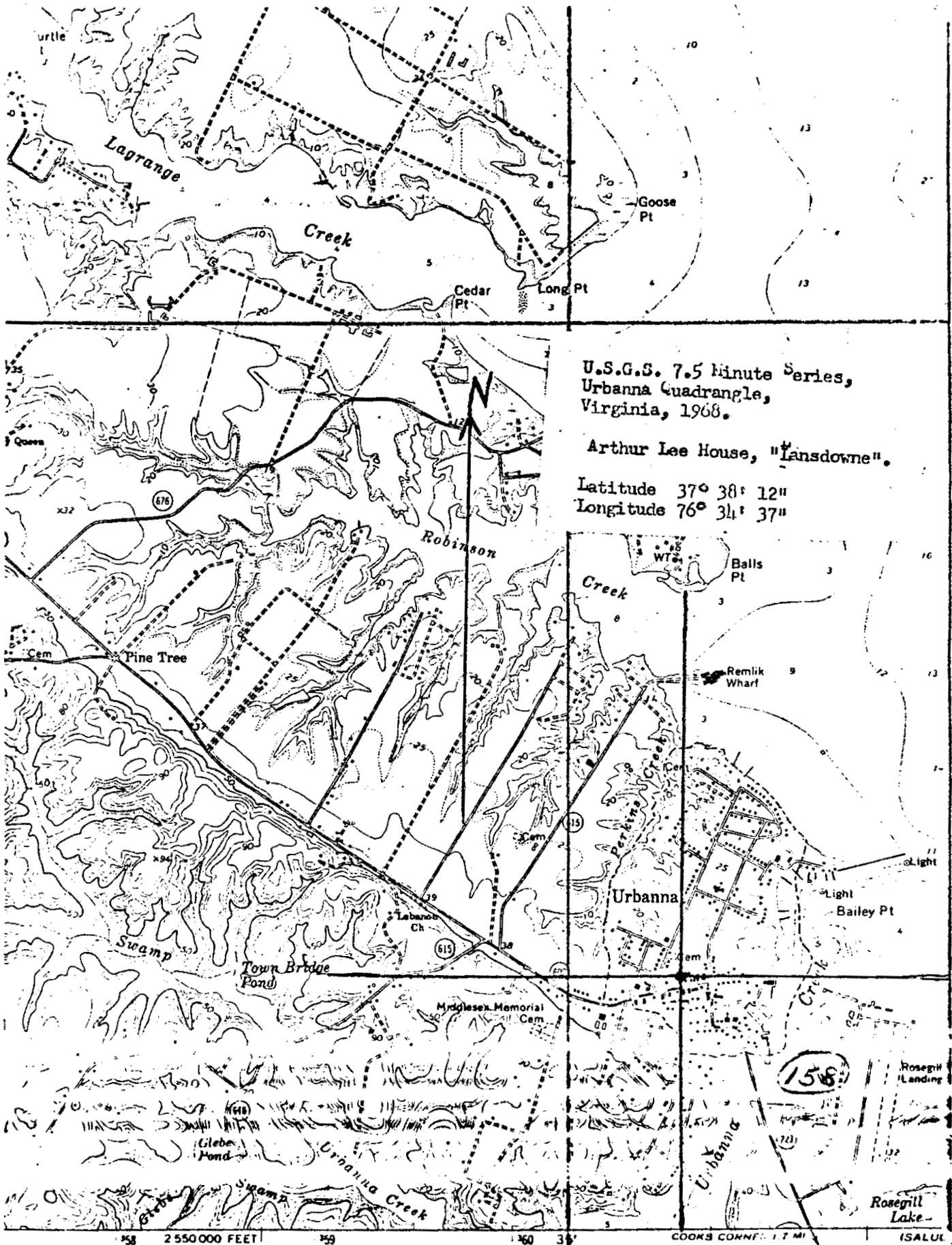
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Tyler, Lyon G., "Arthur Lee-A Neglected Statesman," Tyler's Historical and Genealogical Quarterly, Vol. 14, (1932-1933), pp. 65-77, 129ff.
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives-References and Unpublished Materials.



U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Series,
 Urbanna Quadrangle,
 Virginia, 1968.

Arthur Lee House, "Hansdowne".

Latitude 37° 38' 12"
 Longitude 76° 34' 37"