

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input 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

The focal point of Norwood Plantation is its stately dwelling house, a two-story brick structure surrounded by an informally landscaped park. An impressive vista focusing on the house's south front is obtained through the park from Powhatan County Route 711, old James River Road connecting the plantations lining the south bank of the Upper James. The north front of the house commands a panoramic view of the plantation's broad pastures which stretch down to the river. Terminating the view to the north are the rolling hills of Goochland County.

The northern corners of the park are defined by two dependencies, both of them one-story brick structures covered by shallow hipped roofs. The western building is an office; the eastern one is a much-deteriorated plantation kitchen. Just to the north of the kitchen is a frame privy.

The main house was built in the late eighteenth century and was considerably enlarged and remodeled in 1835. The original core is two stories on a high basement with a five-bay facade and a single-pile plan. The whole is laid in very even Flemish bond with gauged-brick jack arches over all of the windows. An interior chimney is at either end. A fancy, provincial Adam-style frontispiece sets off the south entrance. It consists of fluted pilasters supporting an entablature ornamented with a central fluted patera in the frieze and an H-fret in the cornice. The frontispiece dates from the 1835 remodeling, but its sheltering porch with its coupled Ionic columns, marble paving, and granite steps is apparently a mid- or late nineteenth-century replacement of an earlier porch. The north porch appears to belong to the 1835 period and has been somewhat disfigured by the addition of crude extensions to either side.

The major undertaking in the 1835 remodeling was the addition of the two-story flanking wings and the two-story extension of the north front covering the original north wall. The brickwork of these addition was laid with the same consistent quality exhibited in the original section, so that the whole forms a visually uniform architectural composition. The original core may have had a hipped roof, but the present hipped roof dates from the remodeling. The present shallow bracketed cornice with ornaments in the soffit also appears to date from the remodeling as it continues unbroken around the entire house. The eight-over-eight sash windows on the wings are slightly wider than the six-over-six sash windows on the original section, but all the windows on the present north wall correspond in size to the original openings.

Any eighteenth-century trim in the house's interior apparently was removed in the 1835 remodeling since all of the existing woodwork is consistently early nineteenth century in character. Outstanding among the interior features are the elaborate provincial Adam-style mantels in the parlor, dining room, and the first-floor bedroom in the west wing. The three mantels are nearly identical and consist of coupled columns supporting a deep entablature. Each frieze is ornamented with a central fluted patera and flanking fluted roundels. The roundels are framed by tiny Ionic columns. On the blocks at the end of the frieze are carved pineapples. The second-floor bedrooms have mantels of similar character but with much less elaboration.

(see continuation sheet # 1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian:	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	osophy	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Norwood is one of the principal historic plantations of the Upper James region and is distinguished by its stately red brick manor house. The house dates from the late eighteenth century and was enlarged and remodeled in 1835. In its present form, it exhibits an interesting and harmonious blending of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architectural forms. Its outstanding features include its handsome proportions, fine brickwork, and elaborate provincial Adam-style mantels. The house and its dependencies are set in an informally landscaped park surrounded by broad pastures stretching to the James River to the north. Together with a rare complex of mid-nineteenth-century brick farm buildings in the field to the west, a memorable picture is formed of rural antebellum gentility.

The present plantation is part of a much larger tract owned by the Harris family for most of the eighteenth century. The place was known as Norwood when it was the home of John Harris (died 1751), a descendant of Thomas Harris, a member of the London Company in 1607. John Harris's son, John Harris, Jr., a member of the Cumberland County Committee of Safety in 1775-76, built the original portion of the present house sometime after 1770. The Harris family sold Norwood to Harry Heth in 1812. Heth's daughter, Lavinia, was married to Beverley Randolph with whom Heth operated the Midlothian coal mines in nearby Chesterfield County. To connect the mines to the James River at Richmond, around 1831 Heth and Randolph built the Chesterfield Railroad, one of the nation's earliest gravity railroads.

Norwood passed to his daughter and son-in-law at Heth's death. Beverley Randolph died in 1839 leaving the plantation to his son, Dr. Charles H. Randolph. Charles Randolph died the next year and the property passed to his sister, Nancy, wife of William H. Kennon of Mecklenburg County, a lieutenant in the U. S. Navy. The present owner of Norwood is the great-grandson of Lieutenant Kennon.

CL & MTP

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

NORWOOD, POWHATAN COUNTY, VIRGINIA

(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE	Virginia
COUNTY	Powhatan
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

Items 6, 7, 10 - Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION

All of the other principal trim such as door and window surrounds is composed of symmetrically molded trim with turned corner blocks. A handsome curving stair with round handrail and slender square balusters, all of walnut, ascends in the northwest corner of the lateral hall on the north side. This stair replaces an earlier one that was located in the center passage of the original section. Other interesting interior features are the bookcases built in on either side of the parlor mantel. Their upper portions have natural-finished muntins, rails, and stiles. The top panes are finished off with Gothic arches. The large first-floor room of the east wing is now used as a kitchen. The whole interior is filled with a remarkable assemblage of family furnishings, portraits, and memorabilia.

In the field to the west of the house are three notably fine examples of antebellum brick farm buildings: a stable, a barn, and a long storage shed. Until recent years Norwood was used as a large dairy farm, but farming activities are now reduced to a minimum.

CL

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries have been drawn to include the main house, early outbuildings, and tree-dotted park between the house and road. To the north of the house, the boundary extends to the 200' contour line to preserve the vista from the house to the James River.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

10.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

thence following about 1600' SE along said contour; thence extending about 1000' SW to N side of 711; thence extending about 600' NW along said side to point of origin.

