

VLR-6/19/90 NRHP-2/27/92

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name BLOOMSBURY

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number N/A N/A not for publication

city, town Orange vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Orange code 137 zip code 22960

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private (checked) public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Date: 2 Jan 1992

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets (unchecked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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):

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single DwellingDomestic: Secondary structureFunerary: Cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single DwellingDomestic: Secondary structureFunerary: Cemetery**7. Description**Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Colonial: Southern Colonial; Georgian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Wood: Weatherboardroof Wood: Shingleother Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

Bloomsbury is large tract in rural Orange County about two miles west of the town of Orange. The focal point of the property is a medium-sized frame colonial farmhouse that was doubled in size around 1797. Largely unaltered since the early 19th century, and carefully restored in the mid-1960s, the house now serves as a private museum. The one-and-a-half-story original section features an unusual floorplan on both main- and second-story levels that incorporates a U-plan stairway of a form unknown elsewhere in Virginia. This unit retains nearly all its original late-Georgian interior detailing, including panelled chimney breasts and turned-baluster stair railing. The two-story Federal-period addition stands at right angles to the original block and is flanked by early shed-roofed end wings. It too retains most of its original interior and exterior detailing. The only major elements not original to the building are two wooden porches, both restorations of the 1960s. The nominated area contains approximately 377 acres. This includes the open fields and pastures surrounding the house and yard, as well as the view line to a wooded ridge to the north and west of the house. The nominated area includes a contributing 19th-century smokehouse, a contributing 18th-century cemetery, a contributing garden site, one modern noncontributing dwelling, one noncontributing structure, and one noncontributing cemetery.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance
c1720-1820

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Much of the land that comprises the present-day Bloomsbury plantation was patented in 1722 by Col. James Taylor, Sr., a Tidewater planter who was among the first to acquire lands in the area now encompassed by Orange County. Taylor family tradition holds that the original part of the present house at Bloomsbury was built about 1722 for Taylor, and that Taylor gave the property to his son, James Taylor, Jr., in 1727. The original section of the Bloomsbury plantation house is the oldest unaltered dwelling in Orange County and among the earliest houses of its size in Piedmont Virginia. The original one-and-a-half-story frame unit is distinguished by its unique floorplan and unusual stair. Doubled in size by a two-story unit added around 1797, Bloomsbury is a superbly preserved example of an early Virginia planter's house, retaining most of its original interior and exterior detailing as well as its unspoiled rural setting of broad fields and wooded hills. Bloomsbury's many distinctive architectural features make it an important source for the study of Virginia architecture of the late colonial period. The house served as the focal point of a one- to two-thousand-acre farm from the mid-18th century to the late 19th century, being owned and inhabited by only three families of long tenure: the Taylors, Quarles and Jerdones. The present owner, a Taylor descendant, carefully restored the building in the late 1960s. Encompassing 794 acres, the property also includes a 19th-century smokehouse, an 18th-century cemetery, and the vestiges of a rare early terraced and sunken garden.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

VA Department of Historic Resources
221 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 377 acres

UTM References

A

17	757880	4238710
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

17	757990	4237500
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

17	758320	4237900
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

17	756400	4237900
Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at point A on an unnamed creek delineated by UTM coordinate 17/757880/4238710; proceed south south-east along said creek approximately 3000' to point B delineated by UTM coordinate 17/758320/4237900; then proceed southwest approximately 4500' to point C delineated by UTM coordinate 17/757000/4237500; then proceed northwest approximately 2400' to point D delineated by UTM coordinate 17/756400/4237900; thence approximately 2300' across the summit of Jerdone Mountain to point E delineated by UTM coordinate 17/756750/4238540; then

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated acreage (377 acres) is part of a larger 794-acre tract presently associated with the property. It includes agricultural land that has been part of Bloomsbury plantation since the 18th century, and that has been farmed continuously since the main house was built. In order to protect the dwelling's important rural vistas—views that are currently threatened by intrusions on adjoining properties—the nominated acreage includes the surrounding lowland visible from the main house, as well as the wooded slopes of Jerdone Mountain overlooking the domestic complex to the northwest.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey M. O'Dell, architectural historian

organization Virginia Department of Historic Resources date 1 June 1990

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city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Setting

The house at Bloomsbury stands on level ground feet amid broad, gently rolling fields. The approach is via a mile-long dirt lane running in a straight line north from State Route 20. Jerdone Mountain, a wooded ridge 500 yards northwest of the house, reaches maximum elevations of about 850 feet, some 300 feet higher than the fields surrounding the dwelling. The original section of the dwelling faces east and west, while the later section has a north-south orientation. A large frame smokehouse stands about twenty yards west-northwest of the dwelling. The brick-walled Taylor-Quarles Cemetery is located about 100 yards southeast of the house and the smaller Jerdone Cemetery is located about the same distance northwest. The yard on the west side of the dwelling features a level rectangular green measuring 80' x 150' in area, excavated to a depth of about four feet below grade. This marks the site of an 18th- or 19th-century garden and bowling green. A few small trees and tall box bushes surround the house, but the yard's general ambience is one of openness. From the house, the viewer enjoys long, uninterrupted vistas of the rural countryside.

General Form and Evolution of the House

Built for the Taylor family, the original unit of the house is a one-and-a-half-story double-pile structure measuring roughly 34' x 26' (including the integral full-length west porch). Though a documentable date of construction is not known, Taylor family tradition assigns a date of 1722 and architectural evidence suggests a date no later than the middle of the eighteenth century. Its steep gable roof is pierced by a pair of small, symmetrically-placed dormers on either slope.

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The building's weatherboarded heavy-timber box frame rests on a raised English-bond brick basement. The two major first-floor rooms are heated by a ten-foot-wide exterior end chimney serving corner fireplaces. This chimney, constructed of brick laid in English bond, is articulated by two sets of sloping side weatherings. The symmetrical three-bay east front of the house features a central door flanked by tall windows with nine-over-nine-light sash. Unlike the two-bay west facade, it has no porch, and probably never had more than a stoop. The west facade, in contrast, is sheltered by an original full-length shed-roofed porch or "piazza" framed integrally with the main roof. 1 This porch was restored and its foundations reconstructed in the 1960s. A basement-level passage extends under this porch. It is entered via steps at ground level at the south end of the porch, and runs along the west wall of the original cellar, giving access to the basements of both sections of the house.

The dwelling's second major unit was probably erected shortly after long-term owner William Quarles bought Bloomsbury in 1797. Measuring about 28' x 18', this unit is a full two-story structure with conventional side-passage plan and Flemish-bond end chimney. It stands on a slightly elevated rubblestone basement and is covered by a gable roof containing an unfinished third-floor loft. This unit joins the original house at right angles at its northwest corner. Until the 1960s, there was no interior communication between the two sections of the house at any level. The only access was outside, via the old section's piazza, whose north end terminates on center with the doorway leading to the passage of the Federal addition.

Unit II probably originally had a porch on its north facade; the present single-bay, one-story shed-roofed porch sheltering the north entry is a conjectural reconstruction from the 1960s. The two flanking lean-tos on this unit are early, but their dates are uncertain. The lean-to at the west end of the house may be original. It is entered via an exterior door at grade on the south side of the house. A small ground-level room or entry on this side of the lean-to provides access via

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a short ladder stair to the main room of Unit II. The remainder, or north side, of this unheated leanto forms a closet or small chamber entered via the main-floor chamber.

The leanto at the opposite, or east end of the house was probably added shortly after the main block was erected. It is heated by a chimney rising outside the frame of the two-story block. Displaying an upper stack of stretcher-bond brick, this east chimney blocks the original center window in the main block's east attic gable, suggesting it was added after this unit was built. Since the interior detailing of the leanto closely matches that in the rest of Unit II, it appears to be a very early addition, probably before 1820.

Virtually no later additions obscure the lines of the house as it stood around 1820. Bloomsbury's complex and irregular massing is typical of many gradually enlarged colonial Virginia farmhouses. It illustrates the frankly additive method used by Virginia builders to expand a house, one in which separate, geometrically distinct units were appended, often at corners and at right angles, to earlier units. This method of expansion, detailed in Glassie's Folk Housing in Middle Virginia, contrasts with the newly imported Georgian aesthetic, which strove for a more balanced and symmetrical effect. ² Bloomsbury's original unit does make a nod toward the Georgian style in its double-pile massing and in the pattern of its east front, whose openings are arranged with rigorous symmetry, belying the irregular room arrangement within. None of the building's other facades, however, including those of the additions, are symmetrical, and its general L-shaped plan evidences concern for utility over formal aesthetics. It is worth noting that Bloomsbury's overall plan and massing offers an important benefit lacking in the more compact, original Georgian-style house: its rambling, extended form permits better ventilation, a key consideration in the hot Virginia climate.

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Room Configuration And Use

Following a deep-rooted vernacular building tradition, Bloomsbury's conservative character is also evident in the arrangement of its internal spaces. Though the first- and second-floor plans of the original unit are unique, they nevertheless conform to patterns of room use and spatial disposition common to houses of the period. Since Bloomsbury grew and evolved over the course of a half-century or more, it also illustrates many of the general changes Virginia farm dwellings underwent during this period, changes that illuminate fundamental social trends of the late colonial and early republican eras.

The main room of the original James Taylor house was the east, or largest room. This room, heated by a corner fireplace and containing the stair, measures roughly 14 1/2' x 28' (including the stair, which occupies the room's entire north end). This large, formal room was probably originally called the "hall," the traditional designation for the main public or social space in colonial Anglo-American houses. 3

Originally Bloomsbury's hall would have served as the main room for entertaining and family socializing. Although its general function as the main reception and sitting room appears to have remained the same for a century and a half, its name changed over time. An 1836 inventory, for example, calls it the "Drawing Room," while an 1875 inventory refers to it as the "Parlor."

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Like the somewhat more private dining room--the other main room adjoining it to the west--the hall is carefully detailed. A commodious room with eleven-foot-high ceilings, it features a full dado, heavy cornice, paneled chimneypiece, and stair with turned balusters. The unusual stair, displaying a form unlike any other known in Virginia, is partly the product of the room's

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elongated shape, which would have precluded placing it elsewhere. Occupying the entire north end of the room, the stair rises via a straight run of five steps, makes a 90-degree turn and rises via four wedge-shaped steps to a 4-1/2-foot-wide landing. This landing, fully visible from the room below, extends about eight feet before terminating at another set of five wedge shaped risers leading directly to the second floor. The landing, with its decorative turned-baluster railing, forms a kind of gallery. According to longstanding oral tradition, this landing was used occasionally during the dwelling's early history as a "musicians' gallery." ⁵ Wide enough and long enough to accommodate three or more musicians, it is possible the stair was designed with such a function in mind. Indeed, an unusual small cupboard within reach of the landing is referred to in family legend as the "double violin cupboard," being just deep enough to accommodate a traditional double-violin case. ⁶

Another unusual feature of the main-floor plan is the two large closets under the stair landing. Made possible by the odd stair configuration, they measure roughly 4 1/2' by 5'. Each is equipped with built-in wall shelves and is lighted by a six-over-six sash window. Such small windowed closets opening off the hall or dining room were commonly used in the 18th century for storage. At least one of those at Bloomsbury may have been used for storing liquor. (The 1875 inventory notes that one of these closets contained "Jars, Bottles & Sundries.")⁷ According to Taylor and Jerdone family tradition, the east closet under the stair landing was called the "wig powdering room" and the closet to the west was referred to as the "spirit room."

Backing on the hall is the dining room, which was probably so called from the beginning. The term "dining room" is of mid-18th-century origin, and refers to a room that often served purposes other than dining. In late colonial Virginia, dining rooms were also used for storage and sleeping. The dining room was always considered a somewhat more private room than the hall, and was often less formally decorated.

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The dining room at Bloomsbury is 10 1/2 feet wide by 22 1/2 feet long, and like the hall is heated by a corner fireplace. During renovations of the 1960s, when plaster was removed from the wall dividing the hall and dining room, a blocked doorway formerly linking the two rooms was revealed. This doorway, roughly centered on the wall dividing the two rooms, was plastered over and replaced by the present doorway probably at the same time a board partition was added at the north end of the dining room. 8 This partition, since removed, created a five-foot-wide passage shielding the dining room from traffic between the piazza, the pantry and the hall. Besides affording the dining room greater privacy, this small passage blocked off winter drafts. Later, probably in the late 19th or early 20th century, the partition was removed. Its date of installation is uncertain. The passage Evidence suggests the passage may have been created either during or soon after the house was constructed. However, it could have been installed as late as the first half of the 19th century, a period in which passages came into near-universal use in larger Virginia farmhouses.

Opening off the dining room is a small 4 1/2' x 10 1/2' room probably original to the house but of uncertain purpose. Its size and proximity to the dining room suggests that it served as a pantry, or a place to store serving utensils and prepare food after bringing it in from the outside kitchen. This room equipped with an original window, but there is no evidence it ever possessed an exterior door. 9

The second or loft story of the original house is divided into four rooms of unequal size, all accessible from a narrow passage parallel with and directly below the roof ridge. All partitions appear to be original. The unusual disposition of rooms was determined, to large extent, by the unconventional shape of the dwelling as a whole, as well as its stair and chimney placement. The upstairs rooms no doubt served as bedchambers originally, but only one is heated: the south or largest room, which lies at the far end of the passage against the chimney wall. This room

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occupies the entire width of the loft, being lighted by two dormers, one on either side of the roof. The adjoining east room, lighted by a single dormer, is about half the size of the south chamber. Slightly smaller is the west chamber on the opposite side of the passage. This west room, also lighted by a dormer, once connected to an even smaller room to the north, revealed when wall plaster was removed in the 1960s. This roughly six-foot-square room, with its sloping ceiling and narrow window with two-over-two-light sash, may originally have been a secondary bedroom, nursery or storage room accessible only via the central west chamber. It seems likely that the present door connecting it to the passage was installed later, probably when the room was converted to a bathroom in the early part of this century. Probably at the same time, the original doorway connecting the two west rooms was blocked.

The two-room basement in the original unit also displays an unusual plan. Rather than being entered through a bulkhead, as was the usual practice, it is entered via a sunken passage running beneath the west piazza. The piazza, which is raised on brick arches to a height of five feet above grade, provided ample light to the walkway below. Indeed, servants may have used this cool semi-subterranean passage as an alternative workspace during the hot summer months.

The single exterior doorway to the original basement is positioned about six feet from the bottom of the steps leading to the sunken passage. Entered by a single door, the outermost basement room is long and narrow, having plain brick walls and two low windows just above grade. This room, in turn, gives access to the inner or east room, which is divided from it by a brick bearing wall. The inner room is entered by either of two identical doorways placed symmetrically along the bearing wall. Each doorway, closed by a heavy vertical-board door, is wide enough (50 inches) to have allowed large casks or barrels to be rolled into the room. Oddly, there is no structural evidence of a partition having divided this room. The presence of the two doors, however, indicates that some form of divider must have once existed: either a

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board partition, a row of bins for storing vegetables, or more likely, a rack for holding casks of cider and spirits. However this room was divided, it almost certainly was used for storing liquor and other food items. The absence of a fireplace in either room indicates that domestic chores such as cooking, laundering or drying did not take place here. (The unaltered brickwork of the chimney bases show no signs of ever having contained a fireplace or bake oven.)

The second major section of the house, built ca. 1797 for William Quarles, follows a simpler and more conventional floorplan than that of the original dwelling. The main floor of the two-story block is divided into a stair passage and a chamber. The eleven-foot-wide passage gives independent access to the main-floor chamber, to the upstairs passage and rooms, and also to the original house via the west piazza. (It will be recalled that there was never any direct interior communication between the two sections of the house until the 1960s.)

This passage, which is slightly wider than usual for a house this size, has a small enclosed winder stair in its southwest corner and a double-leaf doorway at either end. Originally--as was the case in most Virginia houses of the period--the passage was unheated. The present chimney and fireplace were added only when the east leanto was built, giving this unit its overall central-passage plan. During the 19th century--both before and after the fireplace was installed--the passage probably served as a sitting room as well as a thoroughway, especially in the warm months of the year, when the doors at either end of the passage could be thrown open to create a draft and admit cooling breezes. The multiple uses this passage served is suggested by the 1836 Quarles inventory, which lists a desk, tables, and bookcase there.

The main room of this unit no doubt functioned as a bedchamber during the 19th century, but it may also have been used as a secondary parlor or sitting room, perhaps accommodating part of an extended family (for example, elderly parents or a young son and his family). The room,

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which measures about seventeen feet square, is lighted by two opposing windows. A double-leaf doorway leads into the passage, while a pair of single-leaf doors flanking the fireplace lead to two small unheated rooms in the west lean-to.

The west lean-to may be original to this unit of the house; if it is an addition, it is an early one. The lean-to, which may have begun as a porch, is remarkable for its split-level configuration. It is divided into a grade-level entry room on the south side, and a larger room at main-floor level that opens into the main chamber. Neither of these rooms were ever heated by fireplaces. The entry room was probably a pass-through and storage room, and the other room may have served as a small bedchamber. (The 1875 inventory specifically refers to the "Entry," which then contained a refrigerator. Unfortunately, the other room cannot be identified from examination of either of the two surviving 19th-century inventories.)

The single-story lean-to at the opposite or east end of the house is almost certainly an early addition. Measuring roughly 13 1/2' x 18', it is heated by the same added chimney that serves the passage. The room is amply lighted by three windows, and until recently had only one entrance: the door opening onto the passage. (The present south door in this room, connecting directly to the original section of the house, was cut in the 1960s.)

The second floor of the ca. 1797 unit contains two bedchambers: a large heated room coterminous with the chamber below, and a small unheated room in the southeast corner of the unit. The stair leading from the main-floor passage leads to a roughly 7' x 8' landing lighted by a north window. An original enclosed winder stair here leads to the unfinished attic. This large space, called the "Garrett" in the 1875 inventory, was probably used for both storage and sleeping. 10 In 1875 it contained a chest filled with bed coverings, and old trunk, a "lot of small brooms," and "2 old [fire] fenders." The garret was divided from the start into two

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unsheathed rooms divided by a board partition. It is lighted and ventilated by two small four-light casement windows in the west end, flanking the chimney, and by a larger window with six-over-six-light sash in the east gable.

The original basement of Unit II extended only under the main block, not the lean-to wings. (A cellar probably original to the east leanto is entered via an exterior bulkhead, and does not connect to the main unit's basement.) The basement of Unit II is entered via the same porch passage that gives access to Unit I. A wide door opens into a single large room amply lighted by grade-level windows. (Originally there were four windows, two each on the north and south facades, but in the 1960s renovation one of these was discovered to have been blocked.) The basement room was equipped with a fireplace apparently from the beginning. Oral tradition indicates that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries this room was used as a winter kitchen and was referred to as the "modern kitchen" by the Jerdone family. Originally it probably served as a drying room and general work area, with cooking being carried out entirely in the now-vanished detached kitchen.

House Size, House Form and Room Use: Bloomsbury in Perspective

The foregoing room-by-room description of the house has attempted to show how the various rooms were used and how they evolved over time. Bloomsbury was not a grand or formal dwelling comparable to such surviving plantation houses in the region as Salubria (1760s) and Farley (ca. 1801). These, however, were exceptional structures. Bloomsbury was far more representative of the now mostly vanished houses belonging to wealthy planters of the late colonial period. Indeed, the original section of Bloomsbury was large for its time, and by the beginning of the 19th century the house had evolved into an even more substantial dwelling. By

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then, the main floor contained a large hall, or sitting and entertaining room; a dining room; a pantry; two closets; two other chamber/sitting rooms, and a small secondary chamber or closet. It also contained a utilitarian entry room (in the west lean-to), a large central stair passage connecting two porches, both of which served as additional living space in the summer. Upstairs, there were three or four bedrooms in the original unit and two in the newer, plus a garret sometimes used for sleeping. The basement, in turn, extended under both main blocks, providing four commodious storage and work rooms.

All together, including the piazza and garret, the house contained roughly 4800 square feet of usable space by the beginning of the 19th century. This included 2000 square feet of basement and attic space, and 2800 square feet of finished indoor living space, about two-thirds of which was originally heated by fireplaces. This may be contrasted with the typical middling planter's house of the period, which contained between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet of living space. Bloomsbury's exceptional size is even more apparent when compared to the one-room-plan dwellings that housed between seventy and ninety percent of the white rural families of the region in the early 19th century. These humble dwellings contained only 250 to 600 square feet of living space, roughly a tenth that contained by Bloomsbury. 11

Relatively large and complex, Bloomsbury's floorplan as it existed in the early 19th century provides a classic example of the changes in room use and arrangement characterizing Virginia farmhouses of the late colonial and federal periods. The most conspicuous difference between the two main units of Bloomsbury, built a generation or two apart, is their different ways of articulating space and their different degrees of concern for individual privacy.

First let us examine how space is arranged in the two units. The original section of Bloomsbury

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employs a double-pile plan, one that was more popular for houses its size in the 18th century than in the 19th. The general proportions of the plan are unusual, featuring a squarish main block divided into two very long, average-width rooms set back-to-back. A similar but simpler double-pile plan with two rooms set front-to-rear was a popular minority plan-type in late 18th- and early 19th-century Virginia. Referred to as a "hall-and-rear-chamber plan," it represented a variation on the common hall-and-parlor plan. In contrast to the hall-and-parlor plan, which featured two main-floor rooms organized side-by-side along a longitudinal axis, the hall-and-rear-chamber plan presented a squarish front main room or hall backed by a shallower rear room or chamber. A single exterior end chimney serving corner fireplaces was almost universally employed on houses of this plan.¹²

Bloomsbury is among the earliest houses of this general plan-type recorded in Virginia. It may be a rare surviving example of a once-common mid-18th-century type, but more likely it was an anomaly in its own time. Whatever its origins or rarity, its double-pile, single-chimney, passage-less form relates it to the standard hall-and-rear-chamber type that later gained wide currency in the eastern half of the state.

Another typically colonial feature of the original unit is its use of corner fireplaces, popular in English houses of the late 17th century and widely used in Virginia houses through the 18th century.¹³ Corner fireplaces fell out of favor in the early 19th century, however, and were rarely used in houses after 1820. Another feature characteristic of the colonial period is Bloomsbury's use of pantries and small rooms or closets to provide specialized storage space. Both these features lost popularity as Enlightenment (or "Georgian") ideas of symmetry, balance and regularity came to dominate house plans and massing.

The floorplan of the original unit of Bloomsbury is a highly individualized one, unique in form

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among surviving Virginia houses. Its very oddity makes it representative of a period in which builders experimented widely with house plans. While the vernacular Virginia builder always adhered to a given set of basic geometric rules, those rules allowed him to produce a broad range of individual houses.

In the second half of the 18th century social and religious customs in Virginia changed fundamentally, and this affected house design. Room uses and terminology changed, and builders experimented with new floor plans. Social historian Rhys Isaac and others have argued that Virginians of the period became increasingly imbued with a sense of individualism. This, compounded by an array of other social changes, created a preoccupation with privacy and control of one's physical surroundings. The old communal ethic of the post-medieval period gave way to a more rationalistic mentality that saw the world as an array of discrete parts to be ordered and manipulated. This new world view and its attendant need to define roles led to increasingly formalized codes of behavior that were reflected in the built environment. 14

In an attempt to increase privacy and define or limit social interaction, Virginians of the mid 18th and early 19th centuries built dwellings incorporating passages and a greater number of porches and private rooms. Passages controlled circulation and shielded inhabitants from the intrusion of servants, visitors and other family members. Individual bedchambers provided privacy at night and a place to withdraw during the day, while porches served to mediate between the private realm of the dwelling and the more public realm of the yard, the domain of servants. All these features--passages, private bedrooms and sitting porches--were incorporated into a small repertoire of standardized floorplans used again and again in Virginia from the late 18th through the late 19th centuries.

Erected at two different stages during this era of change, Bloomsbury graphically illustrates

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Virginians' increasing preoccupation with privacy. In James Taylor's time, visitors approached the house at its east, or formal facade, which was distinguished from the rear elevation by its symmetrical openings and lack of a sitting porch. Entering the house, they found themselves in the large, well-appointed hall, where they conducted business with household members or joined the family in conversation. Small closets opening off the hall served as storage spaces. Not all guests were admitted to the more private dining area beyond the hall, where the family dispensed its hospitality. Behind the dining room, the long piazza overlooked the garden and service buildings. Acting as an intermediate space between the detached kitchen and the dining room, the piazza was an informal area where family members worked or relaxed during the warm months of the year. It was also a space through which servants passed, bringing food to and from the dining room.

The second floor of the house could be reached only via the U-plan stair at the north end of the hall. Family members and the select visitors invited to ascend this stair found themselves in a narrow passage that provided direct, independent access to three of the four small bedchambers. The main floor, on the other hand, lacked a passage originally, but it did receive one later, perhaps before the original building campaign had been completed. By inserting a simple board partition at one end of the dining room, the owner created a throughway or entry that controlled the movement of servants and others, thus affording privacy to the dining room. The basement of Taylor's house, on the other hand, was the domain of servants. As a storage space, it had no need for communication with the living spaces above, and accordingly was entered from the back yard, via a sunken passage under the rear piazza.

Several decades later, when William Quarles doubled the size of the house, he chose a standardized floorplan that incorporated a wide passage as its principal feature. Later, he expanded it to a central-passage plan by adding a one-room lean-to on its east gable end. Each

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room on both main floors (except the west leanto, which may originally have been a porch) was entered independently, via a passage. Even the garret was approached via passages and an enclosed stair. And, as in the original Taylor house, the basement, where servants worked, was entered via the exterior passage under the back porch. 15 Most telling of all, Quarles' addition offered no direct internal communication with the original house. In order to avoid passing through one room to get to another, he instead used the piazza of the old house to link the main-floor passages of both old and new units.

It is clear that while control and privacy was an important consideration to the builder of the original house at Bloomsbury, it was even more important to the later generation that expanded the house. James Taylor experimented with a new and perhaps unique house form that offered limited circulation controls, whereas William Quarles employed a standardized, proven plan that provided its inhabitants with a high degree of privacy and control.

The two sections differ in other, less socially revealing ways as well. For example, the original house follows the form of its 17th- and early-18th-century predecessors, having 1- 1/2-story elevations, while the addition follows the new fashion, with full two-story elevations. Similarly, the corner fireplaces and double-pile configuration of the original house were superseded by the single-pile plan and separate end chimneys of the Quarles addition. While each of the two units is representative of its time and place, together they provide a revealing glimpse of how domestic space on a Virginia plantation evolved over time. Moreover, together these two unaltered units reflect, in wood and masonry, many of the underlying social and psychological currents that reshaped Virginia society between the first half of the 18th century and 1820.

The Main House: Exterior and Interior Detailing

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While Bloomsbury is most interesting for what it conveys about the use of domestic space in 18th- and early-19th-century Virginia, it is also significant because both its exterior and interior fabric has remained largely intact. Moreover, the house displays a number of uncommon interior details that express the domestic needs and tastes of the period.

Like most 18th- and early-19th-century Virginia farmhouses, Bloomsbury's exterior lacks obvious embellishment. However, such details as beaded weatherboards, round-butt roof shingles and panelled shutters give the house the high degree of finish typical of better-built dwellings of the period. Both sections retain much of their original weatherboarding, most of it attached with wrought nails. All exterior cornices are boxed in typical Virginia fashion. Wall corners are finished with vertical beaded boards, and gables with molded and tapered rakeboards. Window sills are molded on the original section of the house, and window frames are embellished with simple moldings. The roof is covered with modern round-butt shingles that replace the previous metal sheathing. The brick- and stonework is of high quality and is in good condition, but was repointed throughout in the 1960s.

The brick chimney of the original section, together with the foundations, is laid in English bond, a pattern seldom used in Virginia except for foundations after the mid-18th century. The chimney stack above the shoulders was rebuilt to its original form in the 1960s using the old brick. The unaltered west chimney of Unit II is laid in Flemish bond, and the visible portion of the later east chimney is laid in stretcher bond. The basement and foundations of the ca. 1797 unit are of local rubblestone. The brick ground gutters are modern; originally Bloomsbury probably had, if anything, wooden eaves gutters.

Windows on the principal floors of both major units contain nine-over-nine-light sash. Those in the dormers and lean-tos contain six-over-six sash, while the windows in the second story of

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Unit II have six-over-nine sash. Tall, narrow four-over-four sash light the north gable of the original unit, and smaller four-light casement windows pierce the west attic gable of Unit II. Most sashes are of Federal vintage (none are 18th-century), and glazing is mostly 19th-century. Both basements retain their original vertical window grates. A few original shutter catches remain, but most of the wrought-iron shutter hardware is modern, based on surviving originals. The present panelled shutters are also modern; they are appropriate to the 18th-century section, but the Federal section probably had louvered shutters.

Exterior doors are in most cases original. One exception is the pair of double-leaf doors at the east front of Unit I, which replace an original paneled single-leaf door. Raised-panel doors occur throughout the house, except in the basement and west leanto, which feature heavier and more utilitarian vertical-board doors.

Both porches are modern restorations. The full-length veranda or piazza on the west front of Unit I retains its original integrally-framed roof structure and original floor framing, but the brick underpinnings and chamfered wooden posts are conjectural reconstructions. This porch had been partially enclosed in the early 20th century, and a 1930s photo shows that surviving (probably replaced) posts were round in section, with rudimentary turned Tuscan capitals. The porch's arched underpinnings date to the 1960s; originally it was probably supported on plain brick piers. 16

Before the late 1960s restoration, the east front of the original unit had been sheltered by a tetrastyle Greek Revival portico probably erected around 1850. Documented in 1960s photographs, this porch was removed and replaced by the present set of three-sided brick steps. Originally, this facade probably had only a simple stoop and wooden steps like those presently leading to the west piazza.

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The shed-roofed single-bay porch on the north front of Unit II is entirely conjectural, but of a form appropriate to the house. An unusual detail at this north entry is the matching set of tall, narrow four-over-four-sash sidelights flanking the doorway. Another feature worth noting is the flush beaded-board sheathing covering those portions of exterior wall defined by the porches. This kind of horizontal sheathing--rather than lapped weatherboards--was commonly used on the porches of better-built houses in antebellum Virginia. Since porches served as alternate living spaces during the warm months of the year, their wall surfaces were finished in a way that resembled the smooth plaster or board sheathing on the dwelling's interior.

Like its exterior detailing, Bloomsbury's interior finish is typical of houses its size and period, being neither unusually elaborate nor unusually spare. Virginia house builders of the period designed detailing to fit a hierarchy of room use, with public rooms receiving more embellishment than those serving more mundane functions. Bloomsbury is no exception. In the original unit of the house, the hall and dining room have the finest finish, the principal bedchambers the next degree of detailing, and secondary bedchambers, closets and servants' workspaces the least.

Detailing in the hall and dining room is of similar quality. Both rooms have raised-panel dados with pedestal caps, and the ceilings are defined by bold, handsome wooden cornices. Doors and windows are enframed by architrave trim with classic cyma moldings. Doors, including closet doors, are constructed with raised panels. (All panelling in this portion of the house, both upstairs and down, features filleting at the inner edge of the raised panels, a refinement found only on high-quality colonial houses.)

Both hall and dining room have panelled chimney breasts, but the panelling over hall fireplace extends to the ceiling, while that in the dining room stops about two feet short of it. Both

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fireplaces have plastered openings and segmental-arched heads framed by bolection moldings. (Fireplace moldings were protected in both rooms for over a century by later Federal-style mantels.) 17 In both hall and dining room the fireplace opening is off-center in relation to the angled chimney breast; the extra space to one side is filled by a narrow vertical panel.

In the dining room, the chimney breast above the fireplace is finished with a single large panel with a narrow vertical panel to one side. In the hall, the upper part of the chimney breast features a single large horizontal panel extending clear across the angled wall. Above this, four equal-sized panels fill the space beneath the elaborately molded cornice.

The stair provides the other main focus of decoration in the hall. The area below the stair, which contains two lighted closets, is treated as a panelled wall, having a regular arrangement of vertical panels on both the doors and intervening wall spaces. The closed-string stair, previously described, rises in two flights divided by a broad landing overlooking the room. The steps and landing are fitted with a continuous railing comprised of square-section newels with molded caps, a broad molded handrail, and crisply turned balusters of a style popular in the third quarter of the 18th century. The landing, which forms a kind of gallery, is lighted by a vertical, four-over-four-light sash window. The closets beneath the stair are fully plastered, being equipped with beaded baseboards and plain wall shelving.

The rooms on the second floor of the original house have somewhat simpler detailing than those on the main floor. The only upstairs fireplace is that in the east, or largest room. It is housed in a slightly projecting chimney breast that stops about two feet short of the ceiling. The fireplace surround, with bolection moldings, is nearly identical to those on the main floor. A single large horizontal panel fills the space above the opening, and a cornice with cove molding caps the chimney breast.

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The upstairs dormers, which appear to be original, are treated in an unusual manner, being defined by raised-panel bibs and featuring slightly projecting window seats. (The small wooden cupboards in the kneewalls of these rooms were installed in the 1960s with paneling designed to duplicate the original.) The only major modern additions on this floor are the bathroom fixtures in the smallest, or northwest room.

Detailing on the main floor of Unit II is somewhat less elaborate than that in Unit I, perhaps because the older part of the house continued to function as the main reception and entertainment area. None of the rooms in this unit were originally equipped with cornices, and the dado with pedestal chairrail is comprised of plain flush horizontal boards rather than panelling. Moreover, the stair in the passage is utterly plain, being of standard enclosed winder form.

The most elaborate chimney treatment is that in the main chamber. Here a standard architrave surround is surmounted by a plain frieze with plain entablature blocks supporting an elaborately molded and denticulated shelf. Above the high shelf are two small cupboards built into the chimney. Closed with raised-panel doors flanking an identical stationary panel, these cupboards are twelve inches deep, being equipped with a single central shelf.

The other two main-floor fireplaces in this unit were added in the early 19th century when the east chimney was erected to serve the east leanto. The passage fireplace features a very tall plain frieze topped by a high molded cornice. The fireplace on the opposite side of the chimney, in the east leanto, is exactly the same, but here the entire chimney breast is panelled. One of the most interesting features in this section of the house is the series of original cupboards built onto the south side the chimney breast. The south flank of the chimney is framed out about a foot from the brick stack, creating space for a series of shelves enclosed by two tall upper doors. A wide drawer about waist-height separates the upper cupboard from that below. On the opposite,

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or north chimney flank a single small 14" x 18" cupboard has been carved out of the brick chimney itself.

Detailing on the second floor of Unit II is similar in character to that on the main floor. The large west bedchamber features flush-board dado and panelled chimneypiece extending to the ceiling. The smaller chamber contains a plain dado but no fireplace. The landing or upstairs passage linking the two rooms has similar detailing, with paneled doors opening to both the winder stair to the attic, and to the closet beneath.

The basement of Unit II is better lighted than that in the original section of the house, having large windows with three-over-six-light sash. It too has plain, whitewashed walls, and half the brick flooring is original. The fireplace is unadorned, but probably at one time had a simple mantel. As in Unit I, ceiling joists are exposed.

The only sections of the house where other framing is exposed are the attics of the two main units. Judging from inspection of the attics, together with 1960s photos showing parts of both units when plaster had been removed from the walls, it would appear that the entire house was constructed using standard Virginia framing techniques of the period. Both feature a heavy-timber frame joined by mortice-and-tenon construction. In addition, the walls of Unit II are filled with brick nogging, a technique often used to provide insulation and discourage rats and mice from nesting in the walls. 18

Interior walls throughout the house on both first and second floors were originally plastered. This plaster was replaced in the 1960s when the house was equipped with electric wiring, heating and plumbing. Wide random-width pine flooring appears throughout the building; all is original except that in the main passage, where it was deteriorated and had to be replaced. Hardware

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throughout the house--including wrought-iron HL hinges, Carpenter locks, butterfly locks, and brass doorknobs and drawer pulls--is mostly original, having been removed, cleaned and replaced in the 1960s. Similarly, most woodwork was stripped, sanded and repainted during restoration. Two paint colors, both based on interpretation of early colors discovered during renovation, are used on all woodwork: gray-blue (in most rooms) and salmon pink (upstairs in Unit II).

Outbuildings, Landscaping and Cemeteries

Two 19th-century inventories as well as early 20th-century oral tradition indicates the main house was once surrounded by a number of service and secondary buildings. Unfortunately, the only outbuilding that survives is a gable-roofed frame smokehouse dating to the first half of the 19th century. Measuring about fourteen feet square and covered with beaded siding and new wooden roof shingles, the smokehouse was partially disassembled and moved about twenty feet west of its original site in the 1960s. **19** The restored building rests on new brick foundations and incorporates some new roof timbers; otherwise, it retains its original features. The building has close-studded walls (3" x 4" studs spaced on eight-inch centers), a characteristic of many Virginia smokehouses of the period. This form of framing, generally seen only on meathouses, smokehouses or storehouses, was probably intended to keep thieves from entering a building by simply detaching weatherboards.

An 1836 inventory lists a weaving house and lumber house on the property, but no doubt many other buildings surrounded the main house then too, including a detached kitchen, which must have been associated with the house from the beginning. An 1876 inventory lists a (detached) kitchen, two smokehouses, a "bags house," meal house, corn house and carriage house. **20** Barns, servants' dwellings and other secondary buildings must have stood on the property at the

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time but are not mentioned in the inventory.

Oral tradition dating from the early part of this century indicates that several other secondary buildings--including two very unusual ones--once stood at Bloomsbury. Unfortunately, no photos of them are known to exist, and only archaeological testing can confirm their exact forms and locations. These included two long buildings flanking the former circular turnaround in the east yard. The northern building was a two-story frame structure containing an office and schoolroom at ground level, linked by a latticed breezeway. Upstairs were two rooms, one of average size said to have served as the schoolmaster's chamber, and another, known as the "long room," which served as a boys' dormitory. A tall one-story brick building opposite it, on the south side of the east lawn, was comprised of three units. At the east end was an orangerie or greenhouse with one long wall mostly of glass; in the middle was a combination wellhouse and dairy, and at the west end was a bathhouse or sauna with a brick chimney. **21** This latter room, which was apparently used as early as 1900 or before, is said to have contained hot rocks on which bathers poured water to create steam. Members of the Jerdone family are said to have used it for its therapeutic value. Finnish saunas are all but unknown to the region; why such a building was constructed at Bloomsbury is a question that invites further research.

The detached kitchen stood about sixty feet southwest of the original house, and a small frame privy stood about fifty feet northwest of the house at one corner of the garden. A street of outbuildings was located northwest of the house, more or less on line with the Jerdone cemetery. These included a loom- or weaving-house, a blacksmith shop, a dovecote and probably a carriagehouse. Opposite this street, south of the garden and further from the main house, stood a row of slave houses. The location of the early barns, granaries and other farm buildings at Bloomsbury is not known.

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According to oral tradition, a series of brick walkways led from the main house to several of the outbuildings. In the front or east yard a pair of brick paths made diagonal cuts across the yard from the original part of the house to the office/schoolhouse and orangerie/dairy. A section of early brick paving still forms a semicircle in front of the dwelling's east steps. A circular drive--perhaps originally approached from the Swift Run Gap Turnpike, which passed only a few yards from the house--wrapped around a circular section of lawn on the dwelling's east side. Beyond were two artificial ponds filling the low land to the east of the house.

The most interesting landscape feature at Bloomsbury is the large sunken garden and bowling green to the west of the dwelling. Aligned with the house, it measures roughly fifty-two yards from north to south and twenty-seven yards from east to west. The base of the sunken area, which is almost perfectly level, averages about four feet below the level of the slightly undulating yard. At its west end the ground steps up in a series of four terraces, each about five yards deep and thirty-six yards long. According to oral reports, arbors once ran along some of these terraces, and a "half-moon"-shaped pergola or summerhouse stood on the highest terrace. In the early part of this century the sunken area was planted with flowers, herbs and shrubs at its corners and edges, leaving a horseshoe-shaped lawn for bowling in the center. Protected from view and equipped with benches, each corner of the garden formed a private place of retreat. Formerly, steps led to the sunken garden from a walkway extending to the main house. Today the only vestiges of early plantings are the large American boxwood bushes that dot the west yard and form a screen across the front of the east yard. 22

On either side of the house stand two family cemeteries. The earliest, the Taylor-Quarles Cemetery, was established in the 18th century and continued to be used until at least the 1850s. Nominated to the Register as a contributing site, it is located about one hundred yards southeast of the house, surrounded by a four-foot-high wall of Flemish-bond brick reconstructed in the

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1960s. The entry is framed by a pair of original six-foot-high granite posts with chamfered granite caps and Gothic-style cast-iron gate. The cemetery contains a number of early unmarked graves, including those of James Taylor (d. 1784) and his three wives. (Four badly deteriorated early headstones marked the sites of these graves until the late 1960s, when they were removed by a farmer to simplify the task of plowing the adjoining field.) Remaining stones, all dating from the 1830s to 1850s, mark the graves of Quarles family members. They include one upright sandstone headstone with curvilinear top, two white marble slabs, and one white marble obelisk. The obelisk, about seven feet high, is signed by Richmond stonecarver J. W. Davis, who also supplied the obelisk at nearby Montpelier plantation marking the grave of President James Madison.

The Jerdone cemetery, established after Francis Jerdone bought the property in 1842, was used until at least the second decade of this century. Unwalled, but marked by tall box trees, it stands at the northwest corner of the sunken garden, about eighty yards northwest of the house. Only two inscribed stones stand here, one dating to the postbellum period, and one to the mid-20th century. In the late 1960s, Jerdone family members removed most of the gravestones as well as the remains of those buried there. Because the Jerdone Cemetery has been so heavily compromised, it is listed as a noncontributing site.

The only noncontributing elements on the property are two modern structures located at the turn in the drive about seventy-five yards west of the main house. These include a metal-clad mobile home inhabited by tenants, and a nearby concrete-block shed used to store farm implements.

Since the yard--including the sites of numerous outbuildings as well as the sunken garden--remains largely undisturbed by plowing or other activity, it may well have archaeological potential, but this has yet to be proven by test excavations.

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Bloomsbury's rare garden landscaping deserves further examination and study. While the house is outstanding in itself as a largely unaltered example of early vernacular domestic architecture, its value is greatly enhanced by both its immediate and overall settings. Because of the importance of Bloomsbury's rural, agricultural landscape, and because the present owner plans eventually to open the property to the public, the Register nomination includes a large surrounding acreage. This includes the farmland visible from the house on all sides, as well as the wooded hills to the north overlooking the complex.

Jeffrey M. O'Dell

ENDNOTES

¹ According to the present owner, two specialists from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation visited Bloomsbury when it was undergoing restoration in the late 1960s. They examined the entire house, including the then-exposed framing, and were particularly interested to find that the shed roof of the west piazza was original to the house. (Mrs. J. E. Taylor, interview with author, Orange, Va., February 22, 1988.) Unfortunately, no records on Bloomsbury exist in Colonial Williamsburg's architectural archives, and the porch roof framing is no longer accessible to view.

² Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville, 1975), chs. 4 and 5.

³ Dell Upton discusses changing patterns of room use and terminology in "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia", *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17, pp. 95-119.

⁴ Orange County Will Book 15, pp. 40-44 (reel 479), Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Va.; OCWB 13, pp. 388-90 (reel 478), VSL&A. A partial transcript of these inventories is in file 68-5, "Bloomsbury," Division of Historic Landmarks archives, Richmond, Va.

⁵ Mrs. J. E. Taylor stated that she heard this story repeatedly as a child from her grandmother, Sally Sears Taylor, in the 1920s and early 1930s. According to Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. John Davis, the last member of the Jerdone family to live at Bloomsbury, heard this same story during her own childhood, as did Mrs. Taylor's cousin and late husband Jaquelin E. Taylor of Richmond. (Interviews with author, February 22 and March 22, 1988.) John Hendricks wrote in 1936, based on interviews with Misses E. M. and L. A. Jerdone, that "On festive occasions, musicians sat on this landing and played for dancing." ("Bloomsbury," *Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory*, Orange County, Dec. 3, 1936.) At the turn of the century William Kyle Anderson heard this same legend; in a lengthy description of Bloomsbury's past, much of it embellished by imagination, he wrote that "musicians were seated on the gallery" during frequent festivities at the house. (*Donald Robertson...and Commodore Richard Taylor...*(Detroit, 1900), p. 232)

⁶ This cupboard, which appears to be original, is built into the space behind the kneewall of the northeast upstairs chamber. Its panelled door with small brass knob has no lock, and opens at about shoulder-level for an adult of average height standing on the landing. Family tradition maintains that the cupboard was so positioned to keep the violins beyond the easy reach of children. (Taylor interview, February 22, 1988.)

⁷ Small windowed closets—either in the hall, parlor or dining room—often occupied the space on either side of interior chimneys in Virginia houses of the 18th and early 19th centuries. In a similar fashion, those at Bloomsbury take advantage of the otherwise unusable space under

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the stair. For other examples of lighted closets, see Upton, *Domestic Architecture*, figs. 2, 4, 9, 15, 21, 25, 27 and 28. According to Taylor and Jerdone family tradition, the east closet under the stair was called the "wig powdering room" in colonial days. The closet to the west of it was referred to as the "spirits room", "liquor closet" or some similar appellation. Like the term "musicians' gallery" (see note 5 above) this information was conveyed before ca. 1930 to at least three different persons, all separated geographically: Mrs. Davis (nee Jerdone) of Washington, D.C. and Orange County; Helen Marie Taylor of Waco, Texas, and Jaquelin E. Taylor of Richmond (Taylor interview, March 22, 1988).

⁸ The present owner says that when the carpenters uncovered this original central doorway linking the front and rear rooms, it seemed to them that it had never actually been used, but rather sealed up soon afterward, being replaced by the present doorway toward the north end of the wall. (Taylor interview, March 22, 1988.)

⁹ The 1836 inventory (op. cit.) refers to this as the "Closet adjoining dining room." The contents are not enumerated, but simply assigned a lump-sum value of \$50. Taylor and Jerdone family members traditionally called this room the "pantry" or "butler's pantry." The present north doorway connecting this small room with the east leanto of Unit II was cut during the 1960s renovation. (Taylor interviews, February 22 and March 22, 1988.)

¹⁰ In this century members of the Jerdone family or visitors to the house sometimes slept in the garret. When the present owner acquired the house, there were two bed frames in the attic. (Taylor interview, February 22, 1988.)

¹¹ House size in the late 18th-century Chesapeake is treated in Gregory Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty* (Baltimore, 1977), p. 58, and in Jeffrey M. O'Dell, *Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites* (Chesterfield, Va., 1983), pp. 98-104, 131-136.

¹² The hall-and-rear-chamber plan-type is discussed in O'Dell, *Chesterfield County*, pp. xvi and xxiv. Only two surviving houses in Orange County are known to employ this plan: Green Level near Unionville (third quarter 18th century), file 68-110, DHL archives, and Windsor (late 18th/early 19th century) on the Rapidan River in northeastern Orange (Ann Miller, personal communication, March 1988.)

¹³ Marcus Whiffen, *The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, Va., 1960), p. 101. Of the 18 plan drawings of dwellings in this book, fully one-half show houses with corner fireplaces. None of these houses, however, have a hall-and-rear-chamber plan; those having a similar configuration all include an original side passage.

¹⁴ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, 1982), pp. 302-305. See also Glassie, *Folk Housing*, pp. 180-182; Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living* (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 116-117, and Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1971).

¹⁵ When workmen removed floorboards in the passage of Unit II during the 1960s renovation, they found indications that a stair had once connected the main floor and basement. If Bloomsbury was typical of most Virginia farmhouses of the period, this stair would have been added long after the house was built, probably after the Civil War.

¹⁶ Views of this porch as it was before the 1960s restoration appear in John Wayland, *Historic Homes of Northern Virginia...* (Staunton, Va., 1937), p. 404; in photographs taken by George Worthington III in his report "Bloomsbury," Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory, 1957, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and in ca. 1966 photos taken by Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Taylor during renovation of the house (copies in file 68-5, "Bloomsbury," DHL). These photos all show the porch was supported by tall brick piers. Architect Thomas Craven says that Mr. Taylor chose the arched underpinnings for their aesthetic appeal. (Interview with author, March 30, 1988).

¹⁷ A photo of the main room showing the former Federal-style mantel there appears in William K. Anderson, *Donald Robertson...*, pp. 225-234.

¹⁸ It is not known whether nogging was used on the second as well as the first floor. Photos from the late 1960s show the nogging in the two main rooms of Unit II; no nogging was used in Unit I. (File 68-5, "Bloomsbury," DHL archives).

¹⁹ The smokehouse was moved because a large tree the owners wished to save was blocking the door of the building. Photos taken in the late 1960s show the building with rafters being replaced. See file 68-5, "Bloomsbury," DHL archives.

²⁰ The 1836 and 1875 inventories (which do not list all outbuildings) confirm the oral tradition of the weaving house, office, and carriagehouse. The 1875 inventory lists the contents of the "Meal House" as "2 Chests for Meal & Salt (/) 2 Bbls Hominy Corn." The "Bags House" is a term unfamiliar to the writer; this building contained "Lot Barrel(s), Keg(s), Band iron(,) vinegar &c." (OEDB 15, p. 390).

²¹ The dates of these outbuildings not known. At least parts of them--if not the entire buildings--were probably erected in the 19th century. They were still standing in the early part of this century, but no photos of them are known to survive. For more detailed descriptions, see

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author's notes in file 68-5, "Bloomsbury," DHL archives.

²² No other sunken garden of this type is known in eastern Virginia. Based on the author's detailed description, Kent Brinkley, landscape architect with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, said the sunken and terraced garden at Bloomsbury could very well be a colonial landscape feature. Sunken lawns were popular in 18th-century England, being used to play the games foursquare and pall-mall. A level, slightly sunken lawn (only about 8" below grade) exists at the Red Lion Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg. Brinkley said that archaeological testing should be able to determine the garden's approximate date. (Interview with author, March 29, 1988.)

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Bloomsbury, Orange Co., VA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bloomsbury tract was assembled in the second quarter of the 18th century by Col. James Taylor, Sr., who was a great-grandfather of presidents James Madison and Zachary Taylor. 1 Taylor (ca. 1674-1729), formerly of Caroline and King and Queen counties,

was a large landowner who served as an official surveyor in several counties. A member of Governor Alexander Spotswood's famous 1716 expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains, he was one of the first settlers in what is now Orange County. In 1722, Taylor patented 8500 acres near the present town of Orange. This huge parcel, known as the Taylor Patent, was soon subdivided. The present Bloomsbury tract includes part of this 8500-acre Taylor patent. 2

Longstanding family tradition maintains that the present house at Bloomsbury was erected for James Taylor, II, in 1722, and several published sources support this claim. 3 However, the exact date of the house has not been determined, and some architectural evidence suggests it may not have been completed until the third quarter of the 18th century, when the property was owned and occupied by his son and namesake, James Taylor, III (1710?-1784). 4 James Taylor III acquired the present land both by purchase and inheritance around 1727, but may not have moved to Orange County permanently until the late 1750s. 5

The master carpenter who designed and built Bloomsbury remains unidentified, but the dwelling's high architectural quality and unusual form attest to his skill and ingenuity. Relatively large for its time and place, the house has an unusual main-floor plan featuring two elongated principal rooms heated by corner fireplaces, and three small unheated rooms or closets. The stair, characterized by a wide balustraded landing resembling a gallery, overlooks the main room or hall, and is known in Taylor family tradition as "the musicians' gallery."

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Bloomsbury, Orange Co., VA

James Taylor III (designated hereafter as James Taylor), was a prosperous farmer, owning forty slaves and 2660 acres in Orange County in 1782. ⁶ Apparently a man of considerable local influence, he represented Orange in the House of Burgesses intermittently between 1760 and 1776. Entering the heated debates concerning American grievances against Britain, he also served as a delegate to the first four of Virginia's five revolutionary conventions. ⁷

Taylor died in 1784, leaving 2250 acres, including the Bloomsbury house and tract, to his son and namesake James Taylor (known also as James Taylor IV). The 1785 Orange County list of tithables shows that Bloomsbury was then the residence of seven white inhabitants, and that besides the main house at least six major outbuildings and agricultural structures stood on the property. ⁸ James Taylor IV, who appears to have maintained his principal residence in nearby Caroline County, sold Bloomsbury to William Taylor of Fredericksburg a few months after acquiring it. The following year William Taylor and his wife Fanny deeded 1275 acres of the tract, including the main house, to Elizabeth Langham of Fluvanna County. In 1797, Langham, who was then living in distant Berkeley County, deeded the tract to William Quarles of Bedford County. The property remained in the Quarles family until 1842. ⁹

William Quarles probably expanded the house to its present form shortly after acquiring it. ¹⁰ Curiously, the two-story addition was erected without providing any interior communication with the original dwelling, suggesting that the house may have sheltered an extended family of younger sons, aunts, uncles, or elderly parents.

A decade or so after Quarles purchased the property, the newly-incorporated Swift Run Gap Turnpike Company constructed a turnpike along a route running a few yards south of the house. An 1842 plat of the property clearly shows this turnpike, and even today traces of it remain on the property, being defined by tree- and fence-lines. Later, in the 1840s, the Swift Run Gap

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Bloomsbury, Orange Co., VA

Turnpike was supplanted by the Fredericksburg and Valley Plank Road, which closely parallels the roadbed of present State Route 20 about a mile south of the house. 11

William Quarles (1765-1834) was a prosperous farmer and large landholder, owning another Orange County farm of 1001 acres called "The Cottage," as well as property in Spotsylvania County. 12 An inventory taken after his death in 1834 shows he was the owner of 39 adult slaves. An 1836 inventory of his personal possessions suggests that Quarles and his family lived well. The "Drawing Room," for example, held a sideboard, china press, settee, and tables, as well as prints, maps, curtains, and other accouterments. The "Passage" contained a clock, desk, tables, carpets and book case. 13 The numerous books, maps and prints listed in the inventory suggest that Quarles was a well educated man. While not so wealthy as fellow Orange County planters President James Madison and Governor James Barbour, both of whom had recently built or expanded grand neoclassical mansions, Taylor no doubt ranked among the wealthiest one or two percent of freeholders in the county.

William Quarles' widow Lucy continued to occupy Bloomsbury until her death in 1841. The following year her executors sold the farm at auction to Francis Jerdone of New Kent County for \$15,653. The high price (about \$11 per acre, when ordinary land brought \$5 per acre or less) suggests that it was prime agricultural acreage enjoying a high level of maintenance. Its substantial improvements, together with the fact it adjoined the "Great Mountain Road," contributed to its high value. 14

The Jerdone tenure at Bloomsbury continued for the next 112 years. Francis ("Frank") Jerdone (1846-1923) and his wife Talitha Catherine (1850-1926) held the farm through the Civil War and the economically difficult times following, a period when many other Piedmont farms changed hands in rapid succession. 15

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Bloomsbury, Orange Co., VA

During the war, in the winter of 1863-1864, General Robert E. Lee's army camped at and around Bloomsbury. According to family letters, Lee enjoyed the Jerdone family's hospitality on numerous occasions during his encampment there. In addition, Confederate President Jefferson Davis spent three nights in the south chamber at Bloomsbury that same winter while reviewing the troops at Orange. 16

The Jerdone family probably erected some of the outbuildings that are known to have stood on the property in the early part of this century. These may have included the two long structures standing parallel to one another in the east yard (According to Taylor and Jerdone family tradition, these were built by Col. James Taylor). One contained an office, schoolroom and boys' dormitory, while the other housed an orangerie, a dairy and a bath house or sauna. The Jerdones also established a family cemetery near the terraced garden on the west side of the house, separate from the earlier Taylor-Quarles family graveyard to the east of the dwelling.

The last members of the Jerdone family to occupy the house were Francis Jerdone's granddaughters, Misses Letna and Mayo Jerdone and their sister Mrs. John J. Davis of Washington, D.C. During the last forty years of the Jerdone tenure the house was leased to members of the Carpenter family, who farmed the land. The house remained unmodernized, with only rudimentary plumbing and a primitive kitchen, when Jaquelin E. Taylor of Richmond purchased it in 1964. Taylor, a direct descendant of Col. James Taylor II, the patentee, bought the house and 794 acres as a wedding present for his bride and cousin Helen Marie Taylor of Waco, Texas and New York City. The Taylors, who established their main country residence at nearby Meadowfarm, carefully restored Bloomsbury in the late 1960s. 17 Furnished with 18th- and early 19th-century antiques, the house has since served as a private museum, being opened for occasional tours for family members and others by special arrangement.

Jeffrey M. O'Dell

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ENDNOTES

¹The origin of the name "Bloomsbury" is not known. The earliest mention of it yet found is in an early-19th-century court record. (Ann B. Miller, personal communication, February 1988).

²Land Office, Patent Book 11, p. 149, Archives Branch, Virginia State Library and Archives (VSL&A), Richmond, Va. James Taylor's Bloomsbury plantation may have included part of the adjoining Sylvania tract to the east, patented by Robert Taliaferro in 1726 (Patent Book 13, p. 8.) Ann B. Miller, research historian with the Orange County Historical Society, is currently trying to define these boundaries, working with both the original records and Ulysses P. Joyner's reconstructed patent maps at the Orange County Historical Society. (Personal communication, Ann Miller, February and March, 1988).

³Taylor interview, 22 February, 1988. The 1924-1926 Year Book of the Taylor Family Association, p. 17, states that Col. James Taylor erected Bloomsbury ca. 1720-22. John W. Wayland repeats this family tradition, writing in 1933 that Bloomsbury was "built early in the 18th century by James Taylor II [i.e., James Taylor, Sr.] and his wife Martha Thompson, great-grandparents of President Zachary Taylor." (Historic Homes of Northern Virginia, Staunton, Va., 1937, p. 404). This same tradition is repeated in John C. Hendricks' WPA report of 1936.

⁴James Taylor, Jr. of Bloomsbury was the third generation of his line in America, being sometimes referred to as James Taylor III by genealogists. Based on examination of detailed photographs, drawings and architectural description of the house, Edward A. Chappell, Director of Architectural Research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, stated that in his opinion the house appears to date to the third quarter of the 18th century. (Letters to author, February 19 and March 14, 1988)

⁵Ann B. Miller has found that the Orange County court records seldom mention James Taylor of Bloomsbury before the 1750s. In the 1730s through early 1750s, Taylor seems to have spent only brief periods in the county while managing his properties there. However, by the late 1750s his name appears frequently in the local records, and in 1760 he represented Orange in the House of Burgesses. His sudden assumption of such a prominent role suggests he had already gained considerable political experience elsewhere--probably in Caroline County. (Ann Miller, personal communication, March 1988.) As late as 1754, a deed involving a boundary agreement on the Bloomsbury tract mentions that Taylor was living in Caroline County. (Orange County Deed Book 12, p. 227.)

⁶Orange County Tithables, 1736-1782 (Reel 564, image 486), "Taxable Articles in the Precinct of Capt. Z. Herndon's Company of Militia for 1782; VSL&A; Orange County Land Tax Books, 1782-1805B, Reel 224, VSL&A. Four parcels of 945, 390, 400 and 225 acres then comprised the Taylor tract later known as Bloomsbury.

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Bloomsbury, Orange Co., VA

⁷ James Taylor of Orange County succeeded William Taliaferro in the October, 1760 session. He served in the 1761-1765 session, but not the 1766-1768 or 1769-1771 sessions. He succeeded Z. Burnley in the 1774 session and continued to serve in the 1775-1776 session. Cynthia M. Leonard, comp. The General Assembly of Virginia, July 30, 1619-January 11, 1978. Richmond, 1978, pp. 89, 93, 14, 106, 111, 113, 115, 118. The unpublished Diary of Francis Taylor, 1786-1799, also notes that James Taylor of Bloomsbury was a burgess. The fact that several James Taylors were living in Orange and nearby counties in the mid to late 18th century makes it difficult to determine what other local civil or military offices may have been held by James Taylor of Bloomsbury. A letter of from statesman Edmund Pendleton dated June 20, 1774, provides a revealing characterization of one James Taylor, burgess, but the context implies he was referring to another James Taylor, one living in Caroline County. (David John Mays, ed. Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton, 1734-1803, Vol. I. Charlottesville, 1967, p. 94.) A James Taylor served on the Orange County Committee of Safety in 1774-1775, but this seems to have been James Taylor of Bloomsbury's nephew James Taylor (ca. 1738-1808), who served most of his adult life as clerk of the Orange County court. The younger Taylor was the son of James Taylor of Bloomsbury's brother George Taylor, who represented Orange as a burgess between 1748 and 1758. (Ann B. Miller, personal communication, February and March 1988.)

⁸ Orange County Land Tax Books, 1785. VSL&A. Executive Papers, Lists, Inhabitants and Buildings, 1782-1785, James Madison's list of White People and Buildings, 1785, VSL&A. James Taylor and his three wives are said to be buried at Bloomsbury, but the grave markers were removed by a tenant farmer in the 1960s. Taylor's first wife was Alice Thornton Catlett, with whom he had at least two sons: Francis Taylor, a major in the French and Indian War, and James Taylor, Jr. of Midway plantation in Caroline County. Taylor's other wives were Mrs. Elizabeth McGrath Lewis and a Mrs. Gregory. (William Kyle Anderson, Donald Robertson . . . and Commodore Richard Taylor of Orange County, Virginia, Detroit, 1900, pp. 229-234.)

⁹ Ann B. Miller, Bloomsbury: A Title Trace, unpublished typescript, 1988, Orange County Historical Society, Orange, Va.

¹⁰ Miller, Bloomsbury Title pp. 1-2. The Orange County land tax books show no significant change after 1820, the first year buildings are valued separately from land. Thus 1820 is a terminus post quem for major improvements at Bloomsbury. The short tenure of those owners holding Bloomsbury prior to Quarles and the fact they lived in other counties suggests that they simply held the land, adding no major improvements. This documentary evidence, moreover, is supported by architectural evidence suggesting an early 19th-century date for Unit II. Moreover, local oral tradition indicates the Quarles family built Bloomsbury's two-story addition. Wayland wrote in 1933 that "The other part of the house--the second house--was erected about 1820 by the Quarles family." Unfortunately, no Mutual Assurance Society policies exist for property held by William Quarles during this period. (Historic Homes, p. 404)

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¹¹The plat (see illus. in this report) and accompanying text appears in Orange County Deed Book 38, pp. 394-97. This road is referred to as "the Great Mountain Road" in the 1842 deed conveying Bloomsbury to Francis Jerdone. The Fredericksburg and Valley Plan Road was formally established in March, 1848, and the old turnpike was purchased in 1852. (Acts of Assembly, 1847-1848, p. 206, and Board of Public Works, Oct. 14, 1852, p. 24).

¹²Miller, Bloomsbury Title, p. 1.

¹³This room-by-room inventory appears in Orange County Will Book 15, 1836-1906 (Reel 479) VSL&A.

¹⁴Miller, Bloomsbury Title, p. 1.

¹⁵According to Jerdone family tradition, one of the Jerdone sons was an engineer involved in the design of the first Pullman railway cars. Many of his drawings and notes survived in the attic at Bloomsbury until the 1960s. He said to be buried in the Jerdone family cemetery at Bloomsbury. (Taylor interviews.)

¹⁶Taylor interviews; and Hendricks, "Bloomsbury," WPA. Hendricks includes the transcript of a letter from R. E. Lee to Miss Mary Jerdone, posted "Near Petersburg, Jan. 8th '63." [sic; the date was actually January 1964] Lee writes: "I am much gratified to find that I am still remembered by you. I am very grateful for your pretty New Year's gift. It will be useful. I require nothing to remind me of my camp near Bloomsbury. I can think of nothing to send in return but the accompanying photograph. It may serve to scare away those cavaliers who were so fond of bearing you off on horse back...." Probably relying on oral testimony from the three Jerdone sisters, Hendricks states that "General Lee wrote a letter to Mr. Jerdone asking him to entertain a distinguished visitor, Jefferson Davis. President Davis was entertained here for three days, and General Lee rode over each morning, escorting him from "Bloomsbury" to the Army Camp, and returned with him each night, and while President Davis was at "Bloomsbury," part of General Lee's bodyguard was stationed around the house."

¹⁷The architects for the 1960s restoration were Johnson, Craven and Gibson of Charlottesville, Va.; Thomas W.S. Craven was the supervising principal. Jaquelin Taylor, the owner, took a close personal interest in the project, suggesting the design of such architectural details as the arched porch underpinnings. Taylor also designed some modern interior detailing, including the Colonial-style doors, cabinets and trim in the bathroom of the west leanto. Taylor continued to supervise the project after Craven left midway through construction. The original blueprint drawings remain at the offices of Johnson, Craven and Gibson. Photographs taken during renovation are in the possession of Mrs. Jaquelin Taylor of Meadowfarm, Orange, Va. Some of these, reproduced by the author, are in file 68-5, "Bloomsbury," in the Dept. of Historic Resources archives.

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3. Basement plan of house
4. 1875 plat of Bloomsbury with elevation drawing of dwelling. Property survey by J. P. Walters, Sept. 1875 for the estate of Francis Jerdone
5. Bloomsbury site plan
6. Sketch plan of property showing angles of view of photographs
7. Nominated NRHP boundaries, Rapidan 7.5-minute USGS quad

Fig. 1 Bloomsbury Main Floor Plan

Bloomsbury, Orange County, Va.
 Main-Floor Plan
 Original drawing by Carrol C. Curtice
 Additions and annotations by J. O'Dell,
 DHL, 3/88.

- cl = closet
- fp = former partition
- fd = former doorway
- m = modern construction
- mp = modern partition
- md = modern doorway

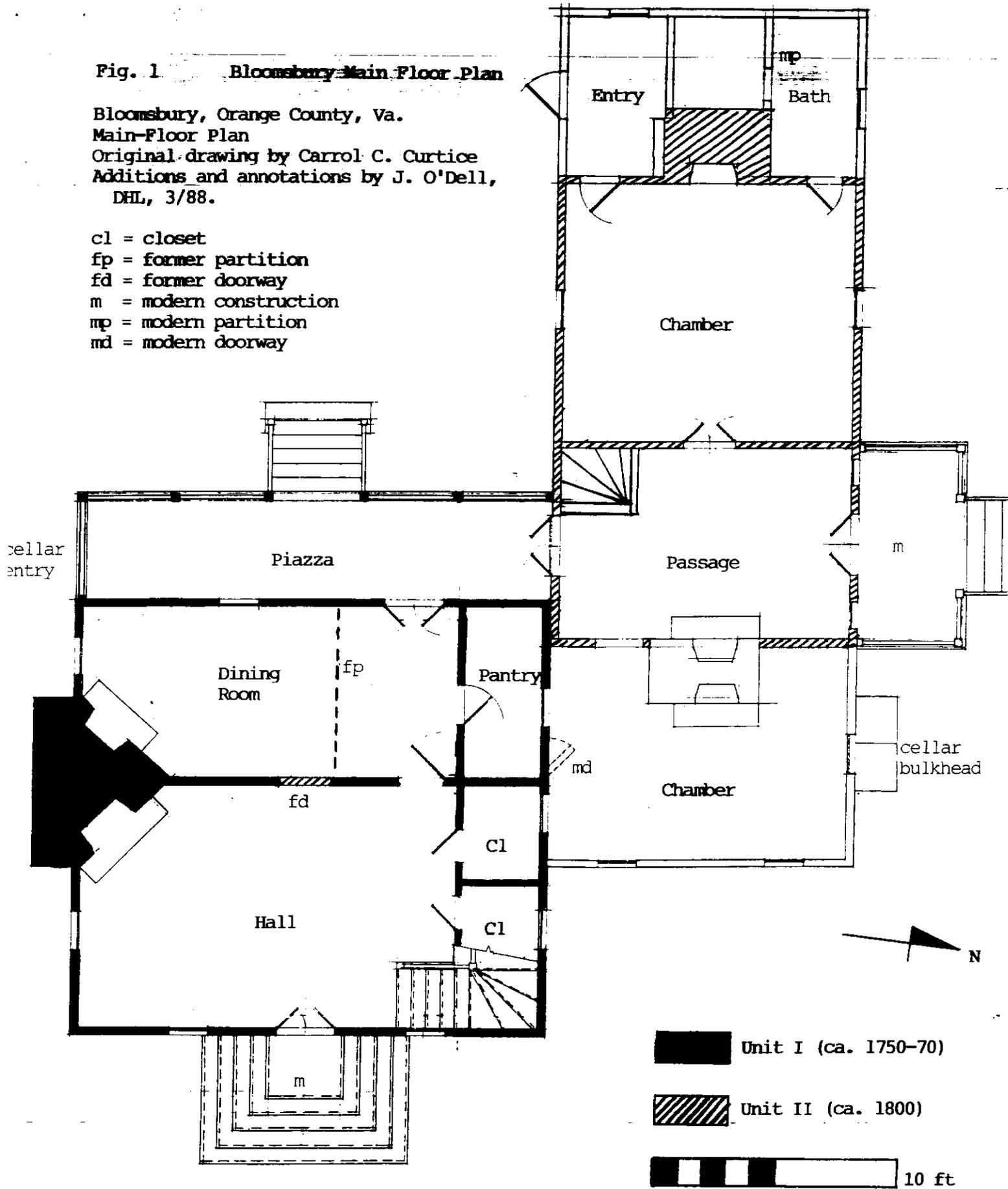
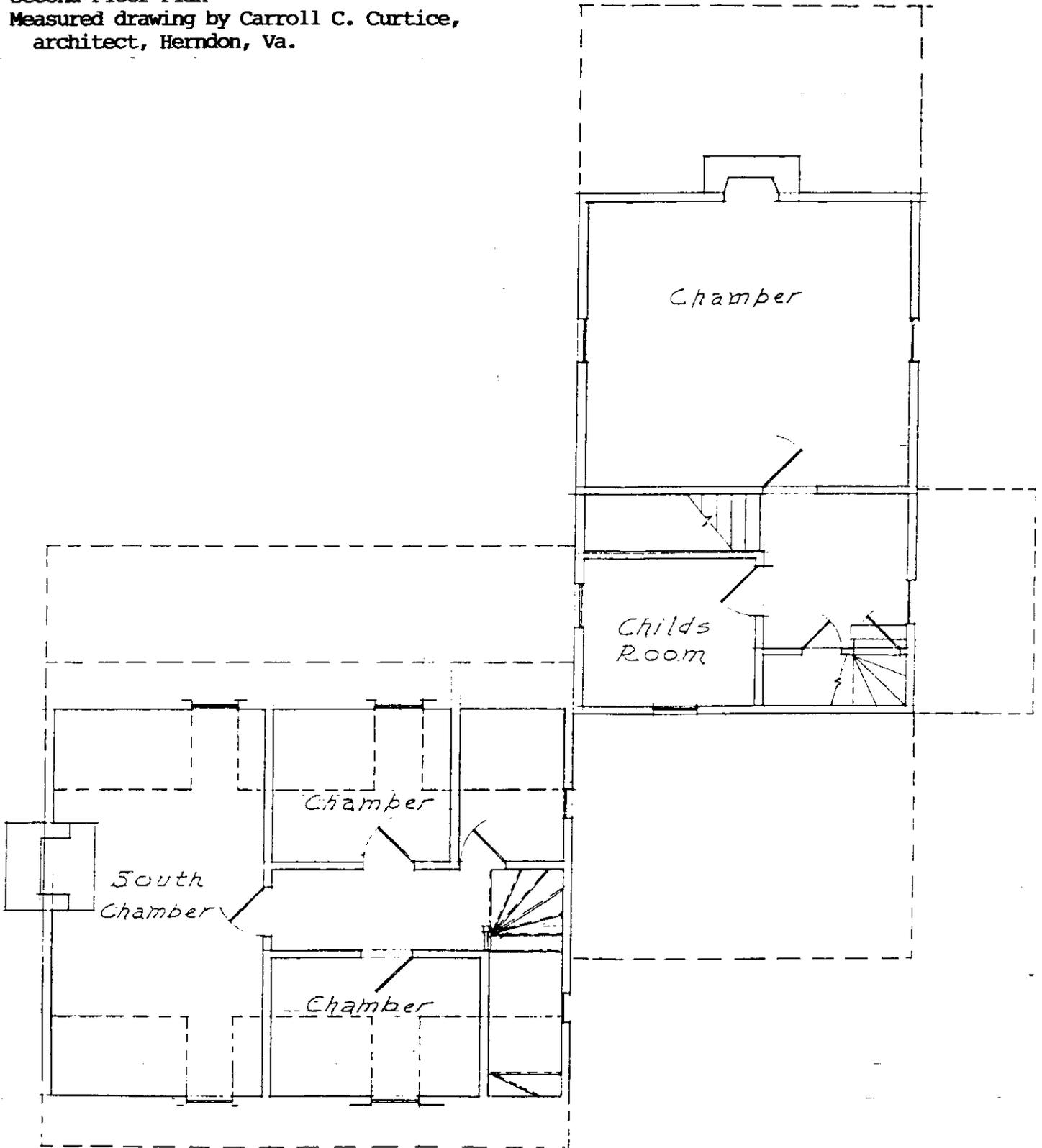
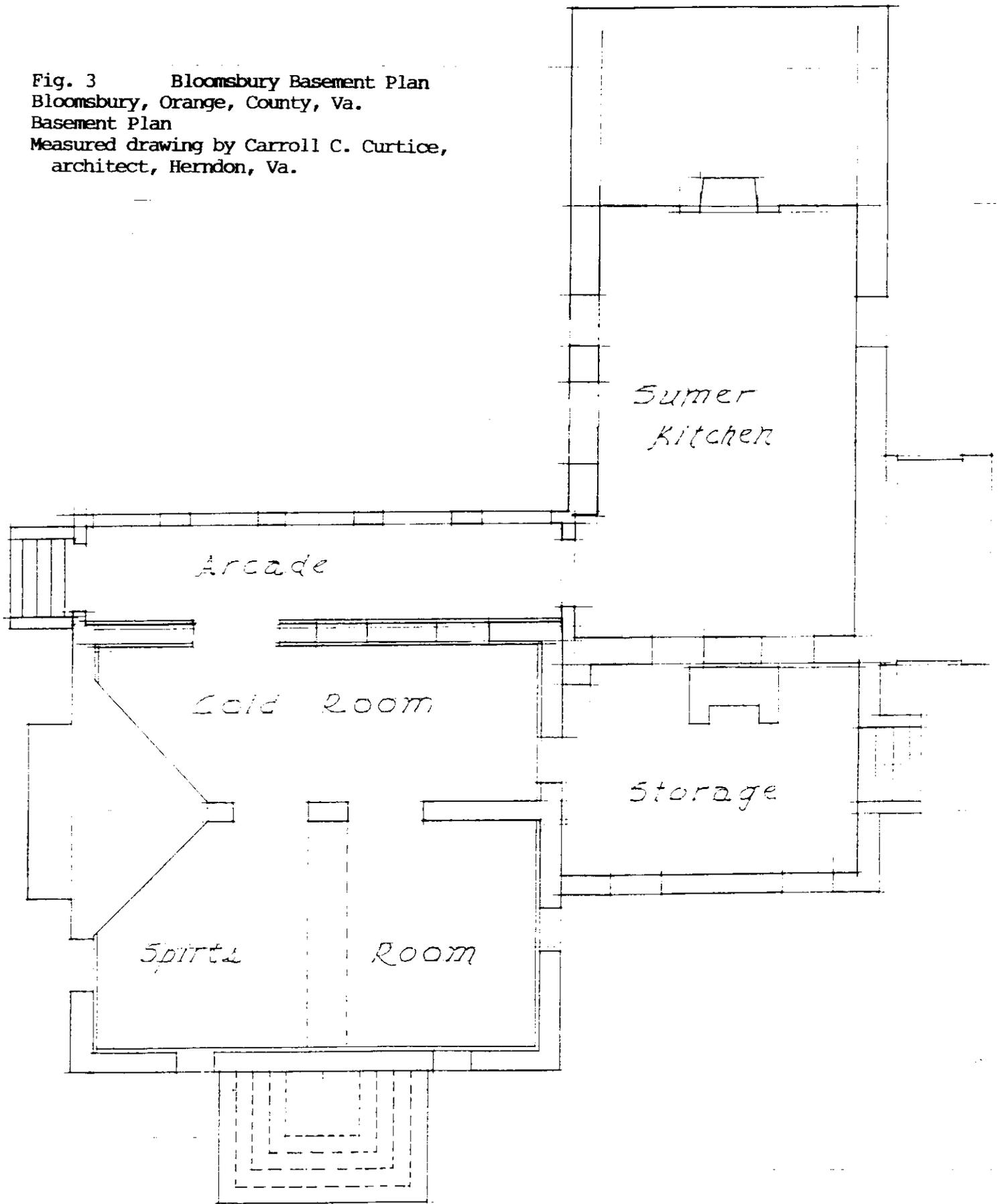


Fig. 2 Bloomsbury Second Floor Plan
Bloomsbury, Orange County, Va.
Second Floor Plan
Measured drawing by Carroll C. Curtice,
architect, Herndon, Va.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Fig. 3 Bloomsbury Basement Plan
Bloomsbury, Orange, County, Va.
Basement Plan
Measured drawing by Carroll C. Curtice,
architect, Herndon, Va.



BASEMENT

Fig. 5 BLOOMSBURY SITE PLAN

NRHP Designations

- (CB) = contributing building
- (CS) = contributing site
- (CSr) = contributing structure
- (NB) = noncontributing building
- (NS) = noncontributing site
- (NSr) = noncontributing structure

BLOOMSBURY, ORANGE COUNTY, VA.
 Site Plan, J. O'Dell, DHIL.,
 March, 1988



Key: Structures and Sites

- d1 = dwelling, Unit 1
- d2 = dwelling, Unit 2
- J = Jerdone Cemetery site
- mh = mobile home
- ms = modern shed
- o/s = office/schoolhouse site
- r.o. = row of outbuildings (sites)
 (weave house; blacksmith shop;
 dovecote; carriagehouse)
- sg = sunken garden
- s = smokehouse
- ss = former smokehouse site
- s.h. = slave house sites (approx.)
- s/d/o = sauna/dairy/orangerie site
- t = terraces
- T-Q = Taylor-Quarles Cemetery
- k = kitchen site

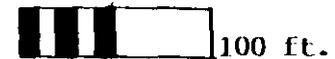
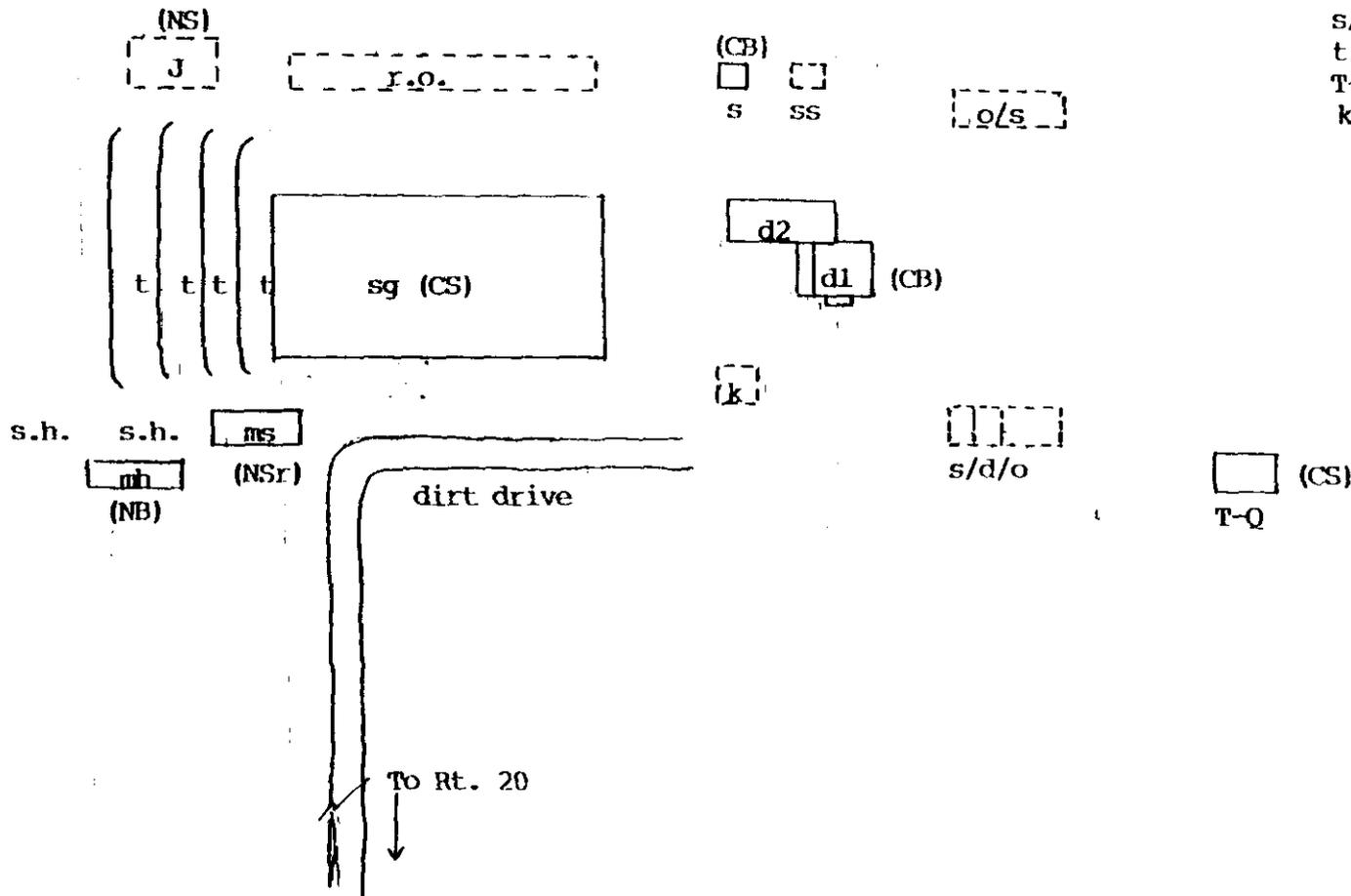
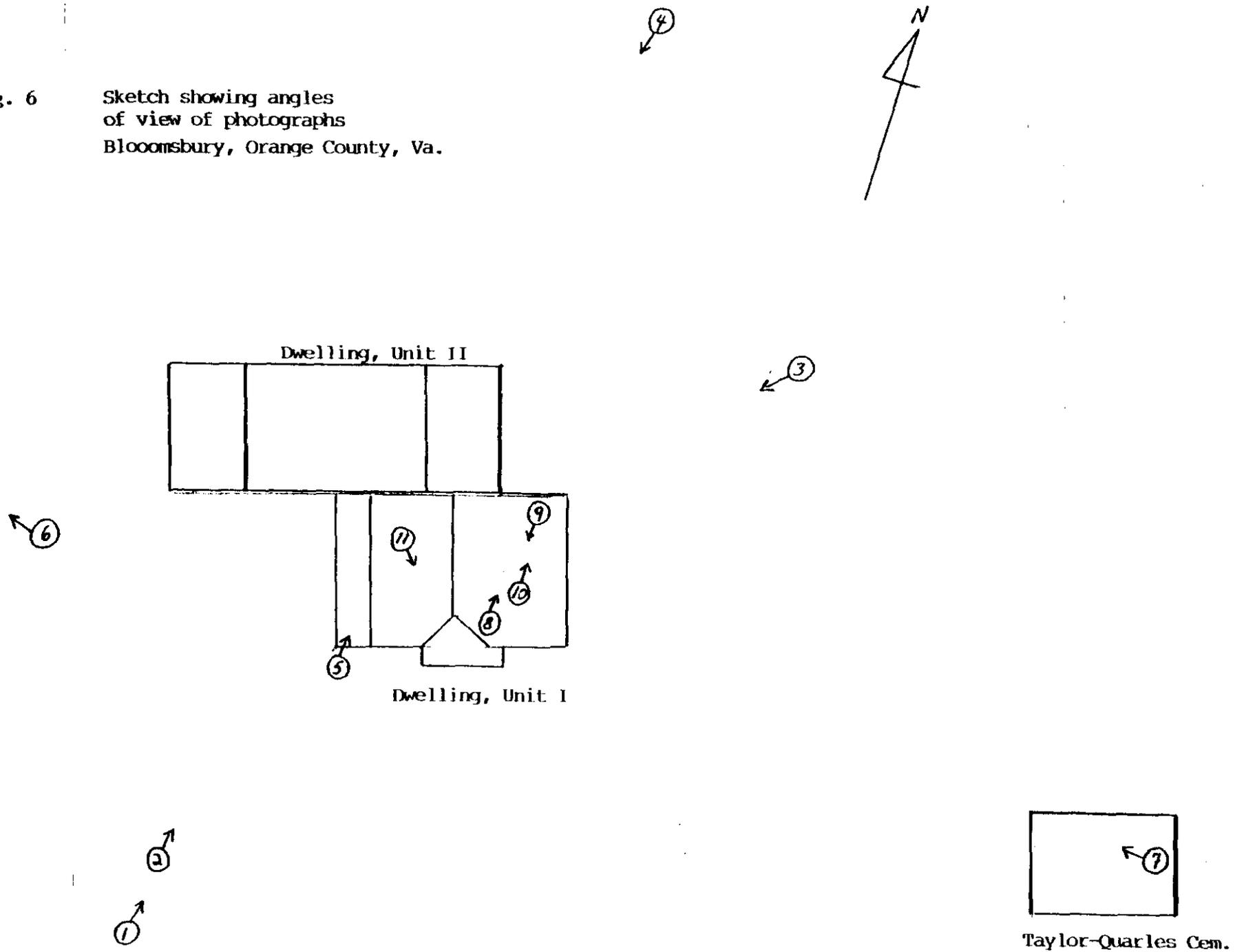
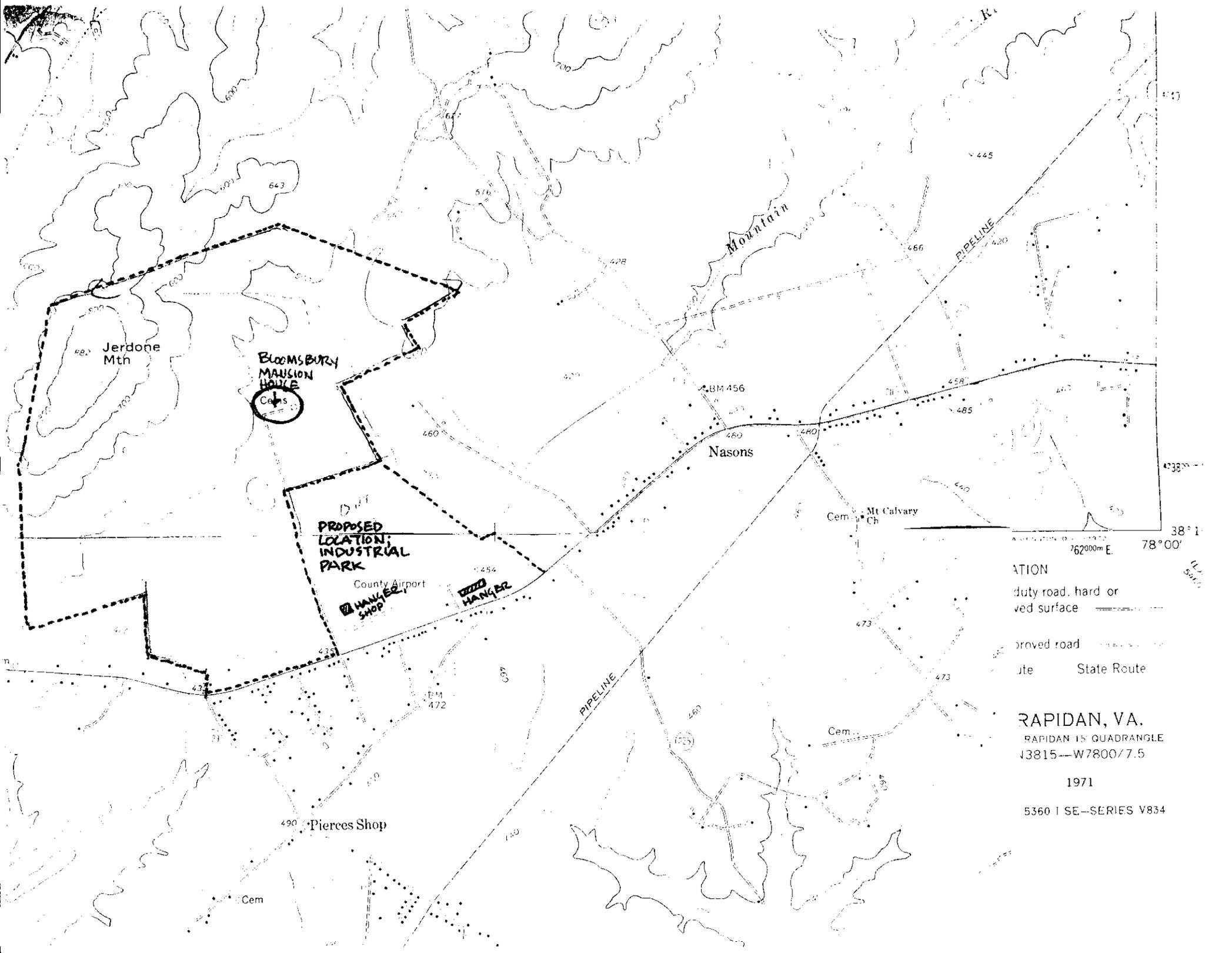


Fig. 6

Sketch showing angles
of view of photographs
Bloomsbury, Orange County, Va.





BLOOMSBURY
MAUSION
HOUSE

PROPOSED
LOCATION
INDUSTRIAL
PARK

County Airport
WANGER
SHOP

PIERCE
SHOP

Nasons

Cem Mt Calvary
Ch

Pierces Shop

- duty road, hard or paved surface
- - - - - improved road
- State Route

RAPIDAN, VA.
RAPIDAN 15 QUADRANGLE
J3815—W7800/7.5

1971

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