National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form For NPS use only

received date entered

See instructions in *How to* Complete *National* Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Nam	e complete applicable s	ections		
historic "Ma	aple Hall"	File No. 81-41)	a resource	
and or common	N/A			
2. Loca	ation			
street 8 number	Intersection of	U.s. 11 & Inte	rstates <u>81&64</u> <u>N</u>	<u> </u>
city, town Lex	ington	X vicinity of	ALC: L	
state Virgin	nia. code	s 51 county	Rockbridge	code 163
3. Clas	sification			
Category district X building(s) structure site object	Ownership public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered N/A	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible X yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture x commercial educational entertainment government industrial, military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Propei	rty	12 8 3	
name Mr. &	Mrs. Peter M. Me	redith, Sr.; Pe	ter M. Meredith,	Jr.; Richard P. Meredith
city, town	Norfolk	N/A vicinity of	state	Jirginia 23527
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courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Count	y Clerk's Offic	e, Rockbridge Co	unty Courthouse
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city, town	Lexington		state	Virginia 24450
6. Repi	resentation	in Existing	Surveys (see	continuation sheet #6
title 1. HABS	SI	has this pro	operty been determined elig	gible?yes 🔀 no
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7. Description

Condition Check one Check one X excellent deteriorated unaltered X original site good ruins X altered moved date N/A	
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

"Maple Hall," located approximately four miles north of Lexington in Rockbridge County at the intersection of U.S. Highway 11 and Interstates 81 & 64, is a two-story Greek Revival brick house with "ell" raised on an English basement. Its interior woodwork gives evidence that its owner and/or master craftsman had a thorough knowledge of Asher Benjamin's The Practical House Carpenter. The main block of "Maple Hall" can be dated to 1855. Adjacent to the main house are two ancilliary structures, a two-story brick building which probably dates from the 1820's and which has one extant Federal chimney-piece, and a small log outbuilding of indeterminate date. The 1820's Federal-style building was apparently first used as a dwelling and later as a service building, although it is commonly referred to as "the Slave Quarters." The nomination consists of three contributing buildings and the non-contributing brick addition of 1985.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The "Maple Hall" property contains three structures: 1) "Maple Hall" itself, the main house built about 1855 in the Greek Revival style with an "ell" addition, 2) an earlier building (c. 1820's) commonly called "the Slave Quarters", and 3) a 17' x 17' log outbuilding which was transported some years ago from a site elsewhere on the farm to one between "Maple Hall" and "the Slave Quarters."

"Maple Hall" consists of a 48' x 40', three-story (two main floors with English basement), hipped roof structure with an adjoining 20' x 30', two-story "ell" under a low-pitched gable roof. The main block has a four-room, central passage plan with a two-room, two-story "ell" addition.

The exterior of the main block of "Maple Hall" reflects the enthusiasm for the Greek Revival style which was prevalent in the area in the 1840's and 1850's. The east or front elevation has a two-story pedimented portico supported by paired, giant Doric columns of stuccoed brick. Wooden engaged pilasters run the full length on either side of the two-story portico. The railing on the first floor of the portico is composed of simple pickets; the second floor gallery, however, has a railing featuring a motif of diamond shapes cut from a single board. The first floor entrance is reached by opposing wooden stairways which rise from the ground in a straight run allowing thus for easy access to the ground-level entry door for the English basement.*

The entrance door for each of the three floors is surrounded by six sidelights and wooden panels all of which could be removed to increase ventilation. The entry door on the first floor and the door leading to the second floor gallery also had removable transoms consisting of 15 rectangular panes of varying size set in a pattern identical to that found in plate 27 of Asher Benjamin's The Practical House Carpenter. (This and all subsequent references to Benjamin refer specifically to the 1830 edition of The Practical House Carpenter.)

(continued on continuation sheet #7-1)

^{*} The exterior staircase was rebuilt in 1984, following the plan of the original.

8. Significance

 agriculture X architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlemen industry invention	politics/government	science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
*1*2*3 1820's/ <u>1855</u> /1859?		ot known	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Maple Hall," one of the most imposing ante-bellum residences in Rockbridge County, displays a sophisticated rendering of the Greek Revival style not exceeded in any other home in the county. Especially noteworthy is its fine interior trim which its builder-craftsman modelled after plates from Asher Benjamin's The Practical House
Carpenter, the only known instance in Rockbridge County where Benjamin was so literally copied. "Maple Hall" and its ancilliary log and brick outbuildings, when considered as a unit, represent vernacular and high-style architecture as they were practiced in the Valley during the first half of the nineteenth century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Maple Hall" was built in 1855 for John Beard Gibson (1806-1890) who, as owner of several farms in northern Rockbridge County and the proprietor of milling and distilling operations at Timber Ridge and at Jordan's Point near Lexington, was one of the county's more well-to-do residents. Gibson's wealth was accumulated during the course of his life-time; in 1834, he purchased from the Kinnear family the tract of land on which some twenty years later he was to erect "Maple Hall." At the time of Gibson's purchase of the Kinnear tract, the property included at least one two-story Federal brick dwelling later used by Gibson as an outbuilding for his Greek Revival manor house. According to local tradition, Gibson delayed erecting "Maple Hall" until his financial condition permitted him the luxury of building a home which surpassed in size and splendor any other residence in the Timber Ridge area.

"Maple Hall" is one of three significant examples of Greek Revival architecture produced by the Timber Ridge community in the decade prior to the Civil War. In addition to Gibson's home, the Timber Ridge Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of which Gibson was a member, and "Church Hill," the home of the Rev. Horatio Thompson, pastor of the A.R.P. Church, were constructed in the 1850's in what the Timber Ridge community obviously then considered the only proper style. The A.R.P. Church has an in antis portico and is similar to many other Presbyterian churches (such as Tinkling Spring, New Providence, and Warm Springs) of the same era in western Virginia. The Thompson manse was an older dwelling which was remodelled with a plain wooden cornice and one-story entrance portico during the burst of construction activity in Timber Ridge in the 1850's. While all

^{* 1) &}quot;the Slave Quarters"

^{* 2) &}quot;Maple Hall"

^{* 3) &}quot;Ell" on "Maple Hall"

9. Major Bibli	ographica	l Refere	nces		
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name/title David W. C	offey				
organization N/A			date 30 Dec	ember 1985	
street & number 625 Sout	h Main Street	7 2 1	telephone (70	3) 463-9529	
city or town Lexingto	n		state Vir	ginia 24450	
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Chief of Registration		···			

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(c'td.) ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The brickwork of the main block is Flemish bond. It is capped with a plain wooden cornice and a wide, unadorned and simple stucco frieze which wraps around all four sides of the main block. in the three-bay front are 10/10 with each window divided into a tripartite arrangement achieved by widening the two vertical muntins closest to the jambs. The tri-partite format echoes the three-bay front and doorway treatments. The lintels of the windows on the front elevation are extended beyond the width of the window-frame to include protruding corner blocks.

The fenestration of the remaining three elevations is more simple. The 6/6 windows do not have the extended lintels or wider muntins of those of the main facade. The windows on the side elevations are not symetrically placed, the central positions having been pre-empted by the four chimneys which, rising within the walls, do not protrude past the plane of the exterior wall.

The moldings, mantels and other interior trim of "Maple Hall" were largely derived from the work of Asher Benjamin, specifically his volume entitled The Practical House Carpenter.

There are two rooms on either side of the 10-foot wide central hall on each of the three floors of the main block of "Maple Hall". The staircase which rises from the ground floor to the first floor does so in a single run and is partially enclosed. The main staircase from the first to second floors rises in two runs and has a nicely turned but rather simple handrail of walnut. The newel is of a simplified urn variety as are the balusters set at the points where the railing makes a 90° turn. The other balusters are of a simple picket style (two per riser).

All the doors throughout the house are walnut with four recessed, beveled panels. Family tradition maintains that these doors were installed some years after the construction of the house, replacing the original doors which were not of such fine wood,

Of the ground floor rooms the most elaborate mantel is that of the northwest room (the summer dining room). It is plain and rectilinear save for a triangular extension above the mantel shelf which is surmounted by three oblong caps, one in the center and one on either side above the flat pilasters. This room has three windows along the fireplace wall; the paired windows to the right of the fireplace were apparently a later insertion with a wider sill but with the same beveled architrave which matches that of the doors and other window. This room also contains a built-in china-press with rectangular-paned glass doors. It too is surrounded by the beveled molding.

The main floor has four rooms entered from the central hall. The architraves of the doors along the central hall are identical (fluted with plain corner blocks) but vary on the other side within The front two rooms have architraves identical to the four rooms.

(continued on continuation sheet #7-2)

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ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS (c'td.)

that labeled "F" in Benjamin's Plate 48 (<u>i.e.</u>, they have a central beveled portion which is paralleled by two receding rectilinear grooves). The two rear rooms have architraves similar to the fourth example in Benjamin's Plate 46 (<u>i.e.</u>, instead of a beveled central panel, the central panel is flat).

The most notable mantel on the first floor is in the southeast room (presumably the formal parlor). With its fluted Doric columns and Greek fretwork "key" motif on the panel under the mantel shelf as well as the rectilinear carving with corner blocks which surround the fireplace opening, this mantel is a direct copy of Benjamin's Plate 51.

The other three mantels on the first floor are not as ornate, the simplest being the purely rectilinear one in the northeast room, a room which according to family tradition was used as an informal family parlor. The windows in both parlors (the northeast and southeast rooms) are placed above wooden panels which descend to the floor.

Two of the second floor mantels are, like the formal parlor chimneypiece, direct copies of Benjamin prototypes. In the southwest chamber is a mantel in which the two triple-fluted pilasters are topped with a single "Greek key" fret. In the center of the panel under the mantel shelf is a raised rectangular block. This mantel matches Benjamin's Plate 50. The other Benjaminesque mantel (a copy of Plate 49) on the second floor is located in the northwest room. Here the chimneypiece pilasters and the panel under the mantel shelf are adorned with raised rectilinear panels of decreasing size affixed to one another as they protrude forward.

The brick "ell" attached to the main block of "Maple Hall" is a two-story, gable-roofed structure of brick laid in five and six-course American bond. It has a single brick chimney which rises outside the wall. The most notable feature of the "ell" is its molded brick cornice, a design characteristic of well-built but vernacular buildings in the Valley during the first decades of the 19th century.

The construction date of 1855 can with reasonable certainty be assigned to the main block of "Maple Hall." The 1856 Land Book tax records for Rockbridge County indicate a nearly \$900 increase in the valuation of the buildings on Gibson's property, specifically on the Kinnear tract. Prior to 1856, the value of the structures on this part of Gibson's farm had remained relatively stable at between \$450 and \$600. Moreover, a comparison of the census records for 1850 and 1860 shows a 150% increase in the census-taker's estimation of the value of Gibson's real-estate between those two years (from \$20,000 to \$50,000). And certainly, a date of 1855 is not inconsistent with the Greek Revival style for a Valley house.

Dating the "ell" presents a somewhat more difficult problem. It is certain that the "ell" was not built simultaneously with the

(continued on continuation sheet #7-3)

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ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS. (c'td.)

main block, for the brick work of the two sections was not interlaced. Family tradition has it that the "ell" was built prior to the main block and the presence of a molded brick cornice gives credence to that belief. Yet there is also evidence that it may have been built after the main block was put up in 1855. Land Tax records indicate an increase of \$188 in the value placed on Gibson's buildings in 1859, the reason for the increase being indicated as the construction of an additional building. Moreover, the unusually low pitch of the roof on the "ell" may have been the result of a desire not to block the second-story window of an already existing main block, and the insertion of an extra pair of windows in the ground floor dining room (the northwest room of the main block) may have been an effort to compensate for a loss of a window or door at the rear of the room which construction of the "ell" blocked up. The presence of the molded brick cornice on the "ell," which was almost anachronistic by the mid-1850's, could be explained as an attempt to relate the "ell" to the already existing service building ("The Slave Quarters") nearby, and also perhaps as the reaction of a conservative masne against the more voguish Greek Revival wood cornice on the main block.

The Meredith family, the current owners of "Maple Hall," have converted the house to a country inn and this new function has necessitated some changes. In the main block all but one of the twelve rooms will be used as guest rooms and each of these eleven rooms has had a bathroom installed in the corner closest to the center of the structure. For energy conservation purposes and to facilitate the installation of modern electrical, plumbing, and other mechanical services, the interior walls have been furred out beyond the original wall plane and some ceilings have been slightly lowered. Also, a chair-rail and crown molding have been installed throughout. The ground floor hardwood floors which had deteriorated beyond repair in all but the center hall and northeast room have been replaced by poured concrete floors covered either with wall-to-wall carpeting or vinyl tile in a simulated slate pattern. The Merediths have also constructed an approximately 30' x 30' two-story, brickfaced addition at the rear of the house and south of the "ell". addition contains offices for the inn and modern kitchen space.

The brick, two-over-two, three-bay dwelling which tradition indicates was once a "slave quarters" was probably never that. Rather it began its existence as a simple hall-parlor dwelling with enclosed stairway and served as such until superceded by "Maple Hall" next door. Then it was used as an auxiliary service building (laundry, kitchen, etc.).

This 20' x 30' structure has a Flemish bond main facade with the other three elevations being laid in an American bond which varies from four to six courses. It rises over a cellar constructed of

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ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS (c'td.)

coursed random ashlar and has paired, opposing corbelled brick chimneys at the gable ends. This building, like the "ell" of "Maple Hall," has a molded brick cornice. The fenestration is entirely on the front and rear (east and west) elevations and consists of 6/6 double-hung windows arranged two over two. The entry door has a three-paned transom, but no sidelights.

To preserve a maximum floor space for the four rooms originally within this small building there is no stair-hall per se; rather, the stair rose in a straight-run from the front door to the second floor and was enclosed on either side by partitions of vertical tongue-and groove boards which also served as the interior partitions for the rooms. (The stair may have originally run from back to front as it did when the Merediths purchased the property in 1984, but there is evidence that the stair was reversed when a bathroom was installed some years ago in the northwest corner of the first floor.) The north room to the right of the entrance contains a large fireplace suitable for cooking and other domestic uses.

The most notable interior feature is a chimney-piece in the second floor north room which is typical of late Federal second-floor mantels with its narrow mantel shelf surmounting a row of dentils and recessed panel. The molding around the fireplace opening is decorated with a row of hand-punched circles (rather crudely executed). The shadow on the wall in the other upstairs room indicates that it once had a matching mantel.

The existence of one Federal mantel in situ and the evidence for the existence of a second, plus the use of the molded brick cornice would give good evidence for dating this building to the 1820's. The hall-parlor plan also points to an early 19th century origin. The similarities between this building and the "ell" of "Maple Hall" (namely, the molded brick cornice, identical dimensions, and nearly identical plan) would normally point towards a conjecture that the "ell" was built at the same time, the 1820's. However, there are differences between the two in roof pitch, brick bonding, and interior trim (the mantels in the "ell" being of the 1850's and not Federal like those which were in "the Slave Quarters") which counterbalance the similarities. Most significant perhaps is the unlikelihood that two such diminutive structures would have been erected within such close proximity (75') and at right angles to each other some thirty years before the main house was constructed.

To make "the Slave Quarters" compatible with its new function as additional lodging for guests of the "Maple Hall Inn," the current owners have added a "T" to the back of this building to allow for the installation of bathroom facilities. They have also reversed the staircase direction (once again?) so that it runs from front to back as it presumably did when installed in the 1820's.

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ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS (c'td.)

The log outbuilding is a simple 17' x 17' structure of squared logs laid with V-notching as were most 18th and 19th century log buildings in the Valley. There is only one opening which serves as a door. There is no chimney or evidence that there ever was one so almost certainly this small building was a storage-house of some sort. Its gable roof, now covered with tin, is formed with rafters made of untrimmed logs sawn in half. This building was once located elsewhere on the farm and was moved to its present location between "Maple Hall" and "the Slave Quarters" some twenty-five years ago. It is a well-preserved example of an outbuilding type which once dotted the Valley landscape.

"Maple Hall" and its ancilliary buildings sit on the crest of a hill which dominates the some 5% acres of land which remain of the Gibson family's original home plantation. The land drops off rather precipitously on all sides giving the buildings a prominence as seen from either of the two adjoining highways, U.S. 11 and Interstates 81 & 64 (which superceded the Old Valley Turnpike and the Great Valley Road, respectively). The present owners of the property have transplanted the numerous large English boxwoods which once dotted the land around "Maple Hall" to create a hedge which screens a brick terrace off the ground floor dining room on the north side. A gravel drive has been created which encircles the main house and split-rail fences have been erected to delineate the boundaries of the lawn area. The remainder of the acreage will be kept in its natural, undeveloped, uncultivated state.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

JUSTIFICATION (cont'd.)

The acreage nominated is a fraction of the 218 acres originally owned by John B. Gibson who built Maple Hall and encompasses land originally farmed by Gibson as part of the Maple Hall plantation. VBD:

Beginning at a point at the NE corner of the intersection of US 11 and Interstate 81/64; thence extending approx. 2400' ENE following N side of US 11; thence approx. 2100' NW to a point on the E side of Interstate 81/64; thence approx. 1900' SSW following E side of Interstate 81/64 to point of origin.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (c'td.)

three of these Greek Revival buildings employ wooden cornices and the Doric order, neither "Church Hill" nor the A.R.P. Church shows the elaborate Greek Revival interior detailing of "Maple Hall." If Gibson's goal was to create in "Maple Hall" the grandest, largest, and most stylistically sophisticated structure in his neighborhood, he certainly accomplished it.

The three Greek Revival structures of the 1850's at Timber Ridge were all closely tied to the Timber Ridge A.R.P. congregation. was the church building itself, and another the home of its minister. The Gibsons of "Maple Hall" had long been active in the A.R.P. Church and played an active role in the sequence of events which led to the termination of an agreement between the Associate Reformed and regular Presbyterians which had allowed the two congregations equal access to the 1756 stone meeting house they had shared since the original congregation divided in the late 1700's. The Gibson's daughter Maggie is renowned for having crawled through a window to open the door of the old stone meeting house after it had been locked at the height of the controversy in the early 1850's to prevent the A. R. Presbyterians from gathering there any longer. The disagreement between the two Presbyterian factions culminated in the construction of a separate building nearby for the A.R.P. Church, and the Gibsons provided the bricks for the new edifice, using the same kiln that was used during the construction of "Maple Hall."

Upon the death of John Beard Gibson in 1890, his son, John Alexander Gibson (1833-1906) inherited "Maple Hall." The younger Gibson, a lieutenant-colonel in the Confederate army, had resided with his parents prior to 1890, assisting in the family agricultural and commercial enterprises. He had also been a deputy sheriff of Rockbridge County and was active in the political life of the county, serving for many years as chairman of the Rockbridge County Republican Party organization.

Upon the death of Col. Gibson in 1906, "Maple Hall" descended to his children and, subsequently, through the Lyles (descendents of "Maggie the Window-Opener") to Torquil McCorkle. In 1984, the property was purchased by the present owners, the Merediths, and after substantial restoration and renovation was opened recently by them as a country inn.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

2. Division of Historic Landmarks Survey File No. 81-41 1968, state Division of Historic Landmarks 221 Governor Street Richmond, VA 23219









