

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form4/17/90
VLR1/17/91
NRHP

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 Fairfax-Moore House
other names/site number Fairfax House

2. Location

street & number 207 Prince Street N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town Alexandria N/A ☐ vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Alexandria city code 510 zip code 22314

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber 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 ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

9. Major Bibliographical References

Auditor of Public Accounts. Land Tax Books. Alexandria City. 1787-1790. Archives Branch, Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Va. (VSL&A).

Auditor of Public Accounts. Land Tax Books. Fairfax County. 1782. VSL&A.

Cox, Ethelyn. Historic Alexandria Virginia, Street by Street. Alexandria, 1976.

Moore, Gay Montague. Seaport in Virginia: George Washington's Alexandria. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1949.

☒ 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 Dept. of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 1, 8 3, 2, 2, 6, 2, 0 4, 2, 9, 6, 7, 2, 0
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Fairfax-Moore House is recorded on Alexandria city tax map number 7501, block number 07, lot number 15.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the Fairfax-Moore House.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Calder C. Loth, architectural historian/ John S. Salmon, historian
organization Va. Department of Historic Resources date 30 March 1990
street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804-786-3143
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic : Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Sandstone porch, wood porch,
sandstone doorframe

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Fairfax-Moore House is located at 207 Prince Street in the heart of the Alexandria Historic District. It is a classic example of an eighteenth-century Georgian, side-passage-plan dwelling. With its three and a half stories and long service wing, it exemplifies the type of home enjoyed by the city's most affluent citizens. The house is attached on its west wall to a row of town houses of similar configuration. On the east is a geometric boxwood garden beyond which is the Athenaeum, an individually registered Greek Revival bank building. In excellent condition, the house retains much of its early woodwork except for the front parlor, which has Georgian Revival trim to replace the original lost through early alterations.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Forming the end dwelling of a stately row of eighteenth-century town houses erected at various times, the Fairfax-Moore House is a three-bay, three-and-a-half-story dwelling of white-painted brick. The house underwent various minor nineteenth-century modifications and was returned to its eighteenth-century character following its purchase by Gay Montague Moore in 1929. It is currently being excellently maintained, precisely as Mrs. Moore had it until her death in 1988. As such the house is also a document of American taste in restoration and furnishing typical of the middle part of the twentieth century.

On the exterior, the facade is laid in Flemish bond with string courses of two bands of stretchers between the floors. The basement is marked by a water table with half-round water table bricks. The entrance has an Aquia stone frontispiece of fluted pilasters and fluted frame around the lunette transom. Such stone doorways are characteristic of the finest Alexandria houses. The entrance is approached by a set of stone steps with rusticated spandrel and decorative wrought-iron railing. The windows are surrounded by architrave trim with molded sills. The original sash was lost in early renovations; the present small-pane sash was installed by Mrs. Moore. Marking the eaves is the original modillion

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cornice with wall-of-Troy bed molding. The dormers, with their open-tympanum pediments, are exact reproductions of the originals, as shown in old photographs, which were destroyed by a windstorm about 1913.

The east side of the house is marked by a pair of semi-exterior-end chimneys between which is a single opening on each level except for the attic level, which has a pair of small windows. The first-floor opening is a restoration, the original having been removed when a conservatory was put on the side sometime in the nineteenth century. The east side of the rear service wing had undergone numerous modifications prior to Mrs. Moore's purchase of the property. She first added a one-story veranda across the east wall, and in the 1950s put a second level on the veranda and modified the roofline of the ell. In 1934 Mrs. Moore erected a colonial-style guest cottage attached to the rear wall of the service ell. The handsome boxwood garden extending to Lee Street, behind the Athenaeum, was added then. The walled garden to the east of the house, accented by a reproduction privy with a bell-cast roof, was installed by Mrs. Moore in the 1950s.

On entering the house, the stair, located toward the end of the passage, is framed by a handsome elliptical arch. The arch, of a type characteristic of finer Alexandria houses, is supported by reeded pilasters supporting the arch. An inner arch is set against the soffit of the main arch, and is supported on half-round reeded pilasters sent against the jambs of the pilasters. The stair has rounded railing, square balusters, and boldly scrolled end brackets. Both arch and stair apparently were installed in the late eighteenth century, probably after the property was purchased either by John Harper or William Hodgson.

The front parlor, having been modified during the course of various changes in its use, received its present Georgian-style woodwork in 1952. It was designed by Milton Grigg, a noted restoration architect, and was executed by Smoots, a local woodworking company. The second parlor, now the library, retains its early trim and features a chimneypiece flanked by fluted Doric pilasters and a crosseted overmantel. The wall between the rooms had nineteenth-century pocket doors that were removed by Mrs. Moore. The dining room, located in the ell, has simple paneled woodwork and relatively low ceilings. The original kitchen fireplace opening in the room beyond the dining room is preserved but currently holds built-in cabinets.

Much of the early woodwork survives in the front rooms of the second and third floors, including mantels, door and window frames, doors, and cornices. Some modification of the plans of both floors has occurred to accommodate closets and bathrooms, but the later work is harmonious with the character of the early trim. An impressive library room has been installed in the center of the upper level of the ell. A fireplace towards the south end has an original mantel that may or may not always

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have been in this location. An enclosed original stair leads to the attic, which has finished rooms used for storage.

The modern guest cottage (1934) attached to the rear of the service ell is a two-and-a-half-story structure with a garage on the lower level. The east side is fronted by a two-level gallery that overlooks a handsome boxwood garden leading to Lee Street. The garden contains one noncontributing structure, a small brick garden house built in the early 1950s.

Calder C. Loth

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

Conservation: Historic preservation

Period of Significance

ca. 1785-1940

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

The large Alexandria town house known as the Fairfax-Moore House is significant under criteria C (architecture) and A (conservation, in particular the American historic preservation movement).

Located at 207 Prince Street, in the heart of the Alexandria Historic District, the Fairfax-Moore House has long been a focal point of one of America's most historic cities. With its refined proportions, three-and-a-half-story elevation, side-hall plan, and service ell, it symbolizes the sophistication of Alexandria's late-eighteenth-century urban domestic idiom. Constructed on a lot originally owned by George William Fairfax, friend of George Washington and son of William Fairfax of Belvoir, 207 Prince Street is part of the finest block of dwellings in the city. From 1929 until her death in 1988, Gay Montague Moore, Alexandria historian and preservationist, made the Fairfax-Moore House her home. Mrs. Moore's purchase and restoration of the house signaled the beginning of the preservation movement in Alexandria and a focus on Virginia's historic urban neighborhoods. Her attention to this and many of the other historic and architectural resources of Alexandria contributed to its historic district being named a National Historic Landmark in 1966. The Fairfax-Moore House can thus be regarded as a landmark of the American preservation movement.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Local tradition associates the Fairfax-Moore House with George William Fairfax, who between 1749 and 1771 owned the lot on which it stands. It is probable that a dwelling was constructed there during the period of his ownership because lot owners in Alexandria were required to build structures on their property. The architectural evidence, however, suggests a later construction date for this particular building--most likely the mid-1780s, when the lot was owned and developed by John

☒ See continuation sheet

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Harper. It is possible, of course, that the present structure incorporates an earlier dwelling. The available documentary sources thus far consulted, unfortunately, are of little help in fixing a date of construction; perhaps further research can resolve the issue.¹

George William Fairfax was the eldest son of William Fairfax, first of the Fairfaxes to settle in Virginia, coming to the colony via Massachusetts, in 1734. The elder Fairfax established his seat at Belvoir, south of Alexandria on the bluffs of the Potomac, where he built a brick mansion that stood until gutted by fire in 1783. Fairfax served as land agent for his first cousin Thomas Fairfax, sixth Baron Fairfax of Cameron, who held title to some five million acres in Virginia. While growing up at Belvoir, George William Fairfax became close friends with his young neighbor, George Washington, and it was Washington whom the Fairfaxes hired to survey the family's vast holdings. George William Fairfax and his father purchased property on Prince Street in Alexandria in 1749 including lot 57 where the present house now stands. It is uncertain whether the house first erected there was built by father or son; in any case, George William Fairfax took possession of lot 57 in 1752, by which time a square dwelling most likely had been erected in accordance with the town ordinances. In 1771, Fairfax, with the expectation of inheriting family lands and titles in Britain, returned to the mother country. He sold his Alexandria property, including lot 57 with all "Houses, buildings, orchards, ways, waters, water courses," to a local businessman, Robert Adam. Adam held the property until 1773 when he sold it with buildings and improvements to John Harper, a Philadelphia sea captain. Upon settling in Alexandria Harper became an enterprising real estate developer and used this and other property in the 200 block of Prince Street to construct an elegant range of dwellings echoing the rows of tall, three-bay town houses typical of his native Philadelphia. The Fairfax house was thus replaced by or transformed into the dormered dwelling standing today.

Harper sold the Prince Street house in 1788 to William Hodgson, a native of Whitehaven, England, and an outspoken sympathizer with the American cause. Hodgson, after spending two years in London's Newgate Prison for his republican beliefs, settled in Alexandria where he had rented 207 Prince Street before purchasing it. The first floor of the house was used by Hodgson for his dry goods business and the upper floors served as his residence. Hodgson became friends with George Washington and other prominent men, and in 1799 he wedded Portia Lee, daughter of William Lee, of Green Spring. William Lee had worked with his brother Arthur Lee on various diplomatic missions in Europe where Portia was born. Hodgson sold 207 Prince Street to 1816 to John Gardner Ladd, a merchant. It later became the home of Lewis MacKenzie who owned it until 1891. Mrs. Moore purchased the house in 1929 from the Knight family, during whose ownership many modifications had been made to the interior.

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Gay Montague Moore was born June 27, 1891, at Pepper Hill, her mother's family home, in King and Queen County, Virginia. Her father, Andrew Jackson Montague, served as Virginia attorney general (1897-1901) and governor (1902-1906), and as a congressman (1920-1937). First married to Landon Carter Wellford, Gay Montague was soon widowed. In 1920 she married Charles Beatty Moore, of Texas. With the purchase of 207 Prince Street, she became the first person to restore a historic house in Alexandria, making fashionable what had become a decaying neighborhood. Her efforts in promoting the preservation and restoration of historic buildings in the city led her to become a founder in 1932 of the Alexandria Association. She later initiated the annual tour of Alexandria's historic houses. Her restoration efforts led her into historical research and resulted in the publication in 1949 of Seaport in Virginia: George Washington's Alexandria, a highly acclaimed history of Alexandria's most noted historic buildings. She also served on the board of trustees of both the Historic Alexandria Foundation and the Alexandria Historical and Restoration and Preservation Commission. As a life member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, she became closely involved with many of the association's projects, including the restoration of Alexandria's Gadsby's Tavern and the furnishing of Bacon's Castle. In 1963 she received the Certificate of Recognition Award from the City of Alexandria for her work in promoting the city's architectural and historic resources. In 1976 she given the Mary Mason Anderson Williams Award by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities for her lifetime of work in historic preservation, most notably that in Alexandria. The preservation of the Fairfax-Moore House was assured in 1979 when Mrs. Moore granted an easement on the property to the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

Calder C. Loth/John S. Salmon

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ENDNOTES

1. The best argument for the association of this house with George William Fairfax is presented by Gay Montague Moore in her book, Seaport in Virginia. She considers primarily two factors: 1) the requirement that lot owners quickly construct houses upon their lots; 2) the phrase "houses, buildings, orchards, ways, waters, water courses" that appears in the 1771 deed from Fairfax to Adam, as well as in other deeds. Her first argument certainly is valid, but it often took some years of nagging by the authorities before some lot owners finally complied; not everyone did what was expected. Concerning her second argument, the phrase she quotes was a standard piece of legal jargon often used in deeds of the time. Its presence in a deed is neutral as far as proving anything stood on a lot. The eighteenth-century plats of Alexandria that show streets, creeks, and the Potomac River (but not buildings) do not note any "orchards, ways, waters, or watercourses" on lot 57. If these features did not exist on the property--despite the use of the phrase in the deed--one cannot assume that buildings did exist.

The earliest available land tax books for Alexandria date to 1782. John Harper was credited with one lot valued at £200. Other single lots in town ranged in value from £20 to £200. The high value of Harper's lot may mean that a building stood upon it, or it could merely reflect its proximity to the town's booming waterfront. Unfortunately, there is a gap of four years (1783-1786) in the land tax books. In 1785, however, a report was made to the governor on the numbers of whites, dwelling houses, and other buildings in each county in the state. The report that includes John Harper, who owned the lot at the time, credits him with seven whites (his wife and children), one dwelling, and four other buildings. This is the earliest clear documentary evidence for a building on lot 57.

Harper next appears in the 1787 Alexandria land taxes. The tax records for this period give not only the name of the lot or house owner, but the street name, the name of the person occupying the property, and the amount of rent that the property was worth. By 1787 Harper was credited with eighteen properties: one on Fairfax Street, one on Wolf Street, one on Union Street, and fifteen on Prince Street. All of these properties were rented to others; he himself leased and "occupied" four other properties, one on Fairfax Street and three on Gibbon Street. Probably one of these was his dwelling and the others were business properties. In 1788 and 1789 Harper both owned and occupied only a lot on King Street; the properties he rented to others amounted to nine, mostly on Prince Street.

The documentary evidence, then, is inconclusive. Was there a house on Lot 57 before the mid-1780s? Probably, given the requirement that owners

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quickly build on their lots. Was there at least one house, probably more, on lot 57 by 1785? The documentary evidence would support that statement. Was there a house on the lot as early as the 1750s? It is impossible to tell from the available records; the deeds as quoted in Mrs. Moore's book are not conclusive one way or the other. And finally, assuming there was a house on the lot in the 1750s, is the house now standing at 207 Prince Street that structure? Unfortunately, this is the essential question that the records cannot answer.

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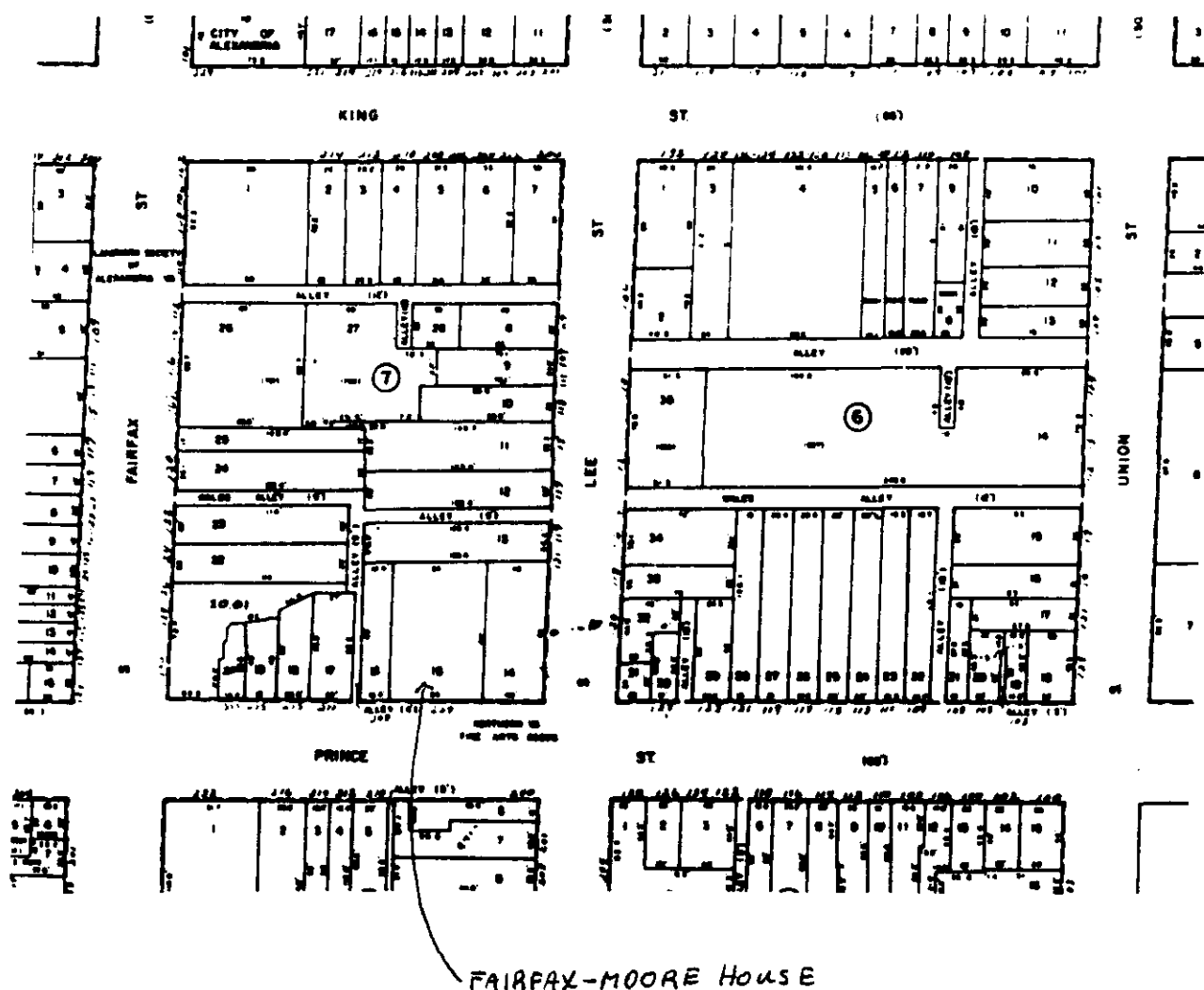
Office of the Governor. Letters Received. Lists of Inhabitants and
Buildings. 1782-1785. VSL&A.

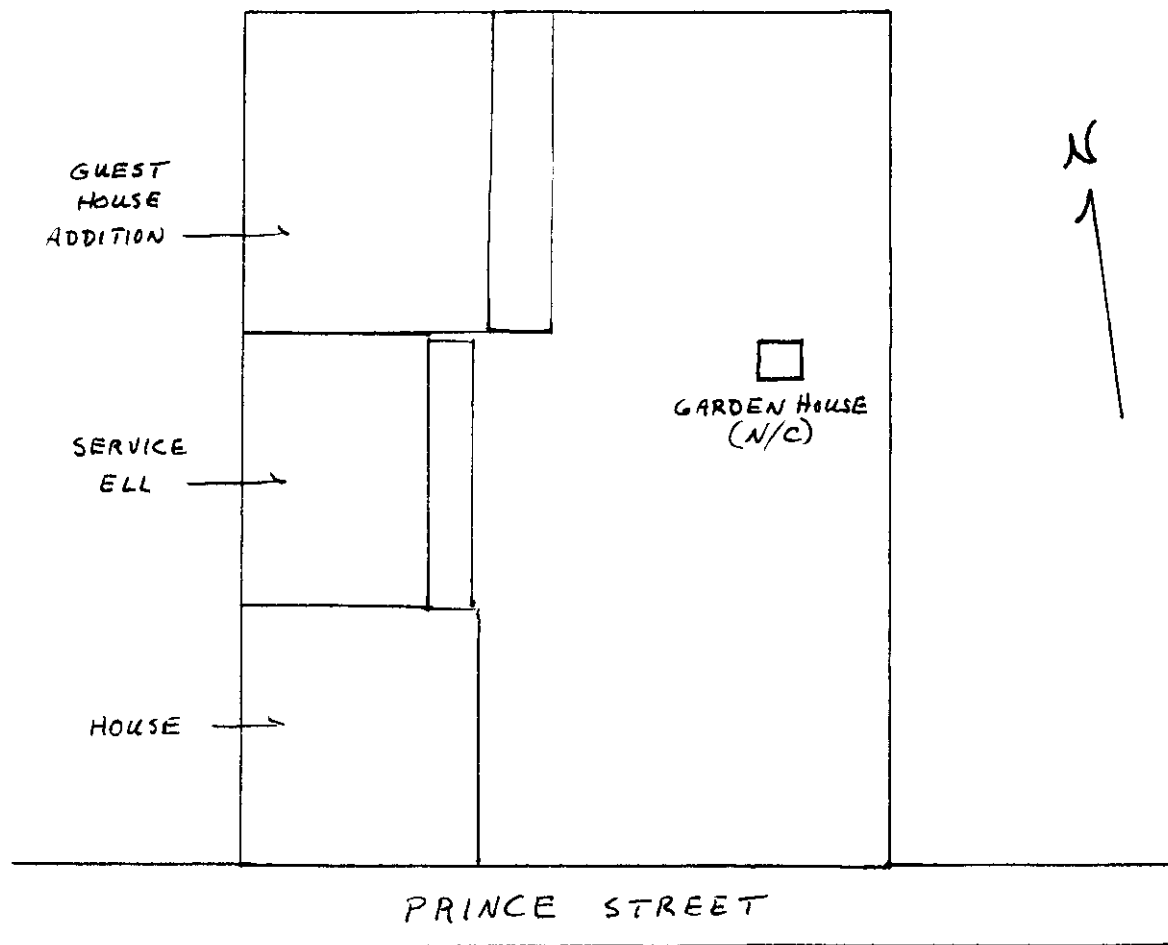
Smith, William Francis, and T. Michael Miller. A Seaport Saga: Portrait
of Old Alexandria, Virginia. Norfolk: Donning Co., 1989.

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SITE PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)
FAIRFAX-MOORE HOUSE
ALEXANDRIA, VA

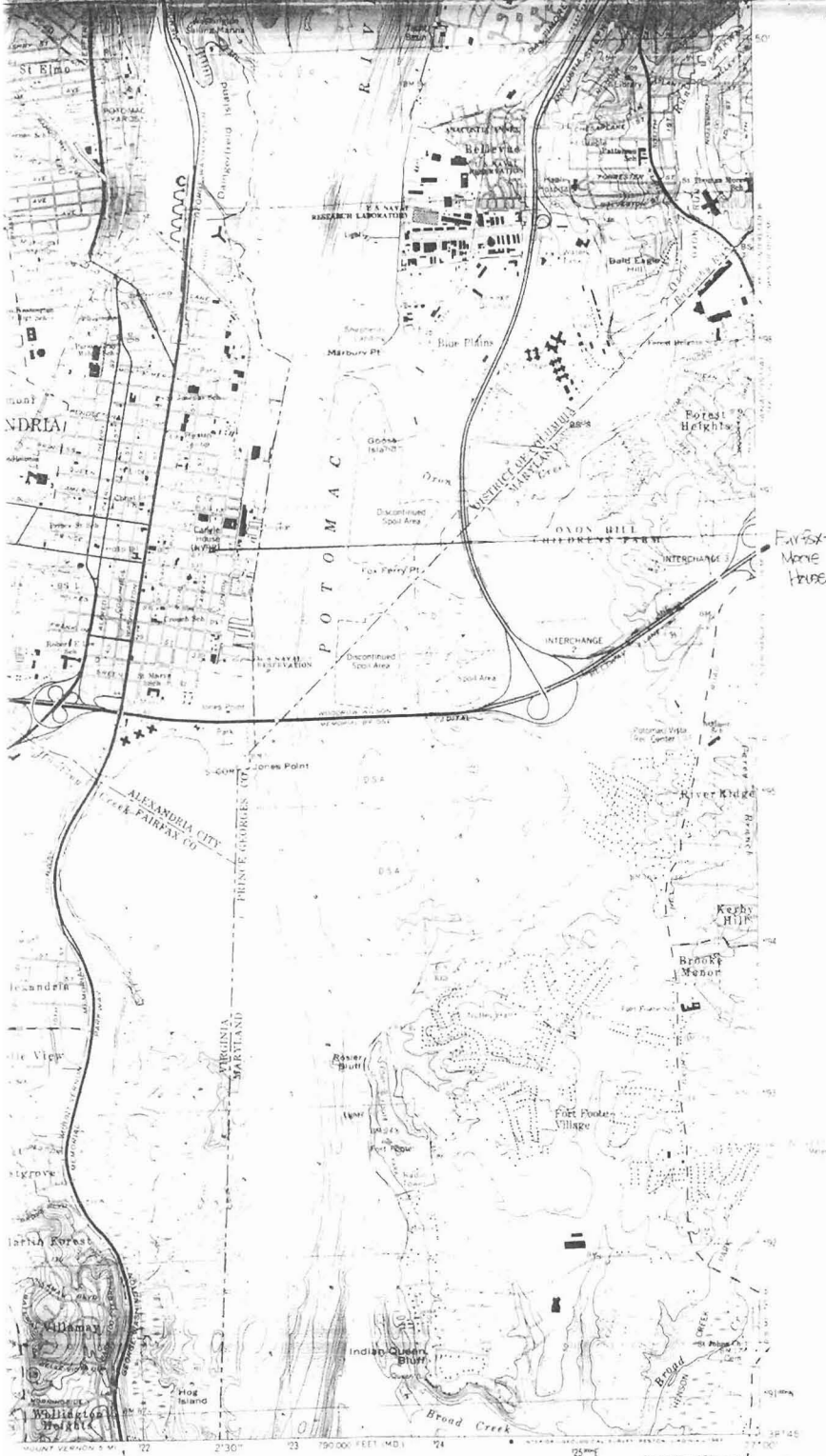
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PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

1. Fairfax-Moore House
Alexandria, Virginia
Calder C. Loth, photographer
November 1989
Negative on file: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.
View of south (front) elevation
2. View of service ell, looking southwest
3. View of guest house addition, looking northwest
4. View of entrance door and steps, south (front) elevation
5. View of south (front) parlor, looking south
6. View of north (rear) parlor/library, looking east
7. View of dining room in service ell, looking south
8. View of kitchen in service ell, looking northeast
9. View of stair hall, looking north
10. View of library in service ell, second floor, looking southeast
11. View of north (rear) bedroom, second floor, looking east



1. Contour interval, 20 feet
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ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route