

VLR-4/17/90 NRHP-2/26/92

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 16). 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 SENTRY BOX
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 133 Caroline Street N/A not for publication
city, town Fredericksburg N/A vicinity
state Virginia code Va county Fredericksburg (cite code 630) zip code 22401

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>2</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	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 does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Heidi C. Miller
Director, Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

Date 30 Nov 1990

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

Date _____

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonia: Georgian

Late 19th & Early 20th Century Revivals:

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls wood weatherboard

roof wood

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Sentry Box is a large framed, weatherboarded single-family dwelling located at 133 Caroline Street in the historic district of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Built in 1786, the house has a two-story, central-passage plan with Greek Revival and Colonial Revival details. Over the course of its long history, the Sentry Box has sustained numerous additions and alterations. In addition to the house, there is one contributing structure on the site: a late eighteenth-century icehouse. On the original site of the kitchen dependency is a modern noncontributing guest house. There is also a noncontributing prefabricated building used for social gatherings by the owners and the community.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Named by its first owner, General George Weedon, the Sentry Box is located on the east side of Caroline Street on a ridge overlooking the Rappahannock River in the historic district of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The setting of the property is unusually spacious for the surrounding neighborhood. Of particular interest is the terraced lawn that extends to the river and the view across the river toward Ferry Farm in Stafford County.

The construction of the Sentry Box can be followed by studying General George Weedon's account book, which covers the period between 1734 and 1793. The account book indicates that Weedon began purchasing material and hiring workmen in January 1786. By 25 April 1786, Weedon had spent L1,847 on the construction of the house. This includes the purchase of 48,500 shingles for L57, an event which may indicate the completion of the outer shell. The accounts suggest that construction was completed by 14 December 1786, at a total cost of L2,185.¹

The home that George Weedon constructed, a large wood framed house measuring 61' x 47' is set over a full basement. This five-bay, two-

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

Politics/Government

Period of Significance
1786-1910

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
Weedon, General George

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sentry Box, built in 1786, is a significant Fredericksburg residence built in the Federal style for General George Weedon, a prominent citizen both before and after the Revolution. Sentry Box is a good example of the type of house that was characteristic of the moderately wealthy leading class in Virginia during the early Federal period.

Sentry Box is eligible under Criterion C as a good example of a Federal residence that has evolved over the years to meet a variety of architectural tastes and styles. Early in this century the house received some Colonial Revival embellishments and the current owners have added a new layer of classical revival details. None of these additions or alterations have affected the original form of the house or involved the removal of significant portions of original materials.

In addition to its architectural significance, Sentry Box is eligible under Criterion A for its association with Weedon, an important Fredericksburg resident who contributed significantly to the success of the revolutionary war and played an active role in the beginnings of post-war government and commerce in his community.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Sentry Box was constructed in 1786 by General George Weedon. He was born in about 1734 in Westmoreland County but he spent much of his youth in Stafford County at his uncle's plantation, Pine Hill.¹ Weedon entered the military as an ensign during the French and Indian War at the age of twenty-one, when he recruited twelve men and marched them to George Washington at Williamsburg.² Weedon went on to serve as a captain in the Virginia militia in the same war.³

In 1763--at the close of the French and Indian War--Weedon settled in Fredericksburg and married Catherine Gordon. At about the same time Dr. Hugh Mercer married Isabella Gordon, Catherine's sister.⁴ Through their

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dabney, Virginius. Bicentennial History and Roster of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia 1783-1983. Richmond, 1983, p. 92.

Fredericksburg Deed Book T, p. 53; Book W, p. 462; Book BB, p. 356 (plat p. 358); Book EE, p. 87; Book FF, p. 361; Book FF, p. 359; Book FF, p. 365; Book 48, p. 549; Book 50, p. 21; Book 120, p. 100.

Historic Foundation of Fredericksburg, Inc. files.

King, George H.S., "General George Weedon," William and Mary Quarterly. Series 2: 20 (1940).

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

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 less than one acre

UTM References

A 18 285380 4241220
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Sentry Box is shown as the solid red line on the accompanying tax map of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The Sentry Box nomination consists of less than a half acre with legally recorded boundaries that represent the domestic core of the 1.5 acre tract conveyed to George Weedon and Hugh Mercer from Roger Dixon and his wife Lucy by deed dated October 1, 1764. The land is extensive enough to include the surviving outbuilding and the archaeological remains associated with Sentry See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Haring date 1/10/90
 organization Center for Historic Preservation, MWC telephone 703-373-5515
 street & number Mary Washington College city or town Fredericksburg state VA zip code 22401

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story structure has a gable roof with two brick interior end chimneys on the northwest and northeast ends, and one brick exterior end chimney on the southeast end. The plan of the house has been altered considerably from the original single-pile, central-passage plan to the current massed plan, although the central passage has been retained. The alterations indicate changing architectural styles and, even though the original Federal-style embellishment has been altered to suit a variety of architectural tastes in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the house has not lost its original architectural appeal. Instead, it has gained detail and space over the course of its two-hundred-year history.

The house sits on a Flemish-bond brick foundation. The exterior is covered with beaded weatherboarding. The windows have narrow wooden sills. The windows of the first floor have nine-over-twelve double-hung sash and all but one of those on the second floor have six-over-nine double-hung sash. The central window over the entrance porch has six-over-six sash. All the windows have paneled wooden shutters.

The eaves of the roof are distinguished by a dentiled cornice. The present roof shingles are molded to resemble the original wooden ones. The southwest porch that shelters the main entrance appears to be original to the house. It has classical detailing with dentils on a triangular pediment and four slender wooden Tuscan columns with pronounced entasis. The columns rest on hexagonal blocks on a slate base accessible from three slate steps. The main doorway has three-paneled double doors that are probably similar in design to the original doors. There is a glazed transom and the door is flanked by vertical wooden panels which were once sidelights.

The basement has a central-passage plan and may have once been used as servants' quarters. It now contains a family room and a bedroom with a bathroom, and a bar in the central passage. The back foundation walls are exposed on the interior. In the central passage, the original joists are also exposed.

The first floor of the Sentry Box has a wide central passage with one room on each side and one at the end of the hall opposite the entrance. The passage is broad and has the original wood floors. The double-run stair is located on the southeast wall at the end of the passage. The cornice in the passage is supported by a plain frieze with triglyphs but no metopes and the chair rail is molded with a symmetrical design. The southeast room or dining room is accessible through a plain door frame with double doors. The simple cornice and chair rail of the dining room are unlike those of the other principal rooms in the house and probably conform more closely to the design of the original woodwork. The

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fireplace is surrounded by a plain wooden mantel that is Federal in style. Entry into the northwest room or parlor is through a large, wooden arch with strong classical details including an exaggerated keystone. This arch is not original to the house. The wooden cornice and chair rail in this room are identical to those in the passage, while the mantel is similar but not identical to that of the dining room. Of particular interest in the parlor are the large, arched windows with classical details that flank the fireplace. These windows were probably added sometime after 1908.² It is most likely that these windows and the arched doorway were added at the same time, as the details are identical. The northeast room--now the living room--is accessible at the end of the passage through an archway identical to that which opens into the northwest room. The cornice and chair rail are identical to those in the parlor but the mantel more closely resembles that of the dining room. This room is probably not original to the house, although it was added sometime before 1795, when an insurance policy records its existence. What makes this room imposing is its relationship to the passage--at the end and opposite the main entrance. A copy of an eighteenth century portrait of General George Weedon, which hangs above the fireplace also adds distinction to the room. Other additions on the main floor include a storage area and bathroom on the northwest side of the living room. The nineteenth-century bedroom on the southeast side of the living room has been converted to a modern kitchen and breakfast room, and the nineteenth-century sleeping porch on the northeast elevation is now enclosed for use as an office and gun room. There is also a twentieth-century utility room on the southeast end of the house, and a twentieth-century enclosed porch on the northeast elevation. A deck recently added to the northeast end of the enclosed porch overlooks the river.

The second-floor plan is similar to the first, except that the wide central passage has been narrowed to allow room for bathrooms and storage, and only the enclosed nineteenth-century sleeping porch has a second floor. All other nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions are only one story high. The ornament is similar to that of the first floor and there is access to the attic through a trap door in the central passage.

To the west and slightly north of the main house is the partly reconstructed icehouse. The icehouse is fourteen-feet-square with a pyramidal roof. From the south, only the roof is visible because the icehouse it is mostly underground. The view from the north shows three feet of the frame. The brick foundation is original. Today, the icehouse is used as a shed, and it is the only contributing auxiliary structure on the site.

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An insurance policy written in 1795 indicates that a 28' x 16', one-story, wood-framed study was located to the northwest of the house. Also depicted on the policy is a fifteen-foot-square, one-story, wood-framed meat house and a 28'x16', one-story, wood-framed kitchen. Neither the meat house or kitchen survive; the only extant outbuilding is the icehouse which is counted as a contributing building.⁵ The current owners have constructed a guest house to the southeast of the main house which is on the site of the original kitchen. A portion of the kitchen's brick foundation still exists, but the new guest house covers it and does not exactly match the original kitchen in plan. Close to the river and below the terraced lawn is a twentieth-century prefabricated rectangular building used for social events. Northeast of this building is a small basketball court.

Notes

¹Geroge Weedon Account Book, 1734-1793, Book E, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

²There has been some question as to the date of these windows and whether or not they are original. An interview was conducted on 31 March 1963 with a Mrs. Wood (92 years old) who lived at the Sentry Box from approximately 1871 to 1900. She indicated that these windows existed during her residency. A copy of a letter regarding this interview is on file at the Historic Foundation of Fredericksburg, Inc. The History of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia by S. J. Quinn, published by Hermitage Press, Inc. in 1908, shows a picture of the Sentry Box on page 102 and it does not appear that the windows existed in 1908. Furthermore, on 20 May 1785 General Weedon wrote in response to James Monroe's request about the housing in Fredericksburg:

My dear Colo.:

Since my return home have fully investigated Gallaway's House as also the expence of a Lott and a snugg Sentry Box, two story high with a Cellar the whole length of the House Bricked 7 feet from the Foundation. An inside Chimney, with two closets, the whole compleated in the best and most workeman like manner with all Materials sound, the whole to cost you L500 Lott included...

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This letter is at the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library (Box 64) in Fredericksburg. It could be inferred from this letter that the spaces flanking the fireplace where the windows in question are, were originally closets.

³Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia policy for Weedon House, Fredericksburg, Virginia, 31 March 1796 (Reel 1, Volume 3, Page 24).

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wives and sisters-in-law, Weedon and Mercer became friends and business partners. Among other ventures they jointly sought the opportunity to purchase several Fredericksburg lots in Roger Dixon's lottery in 1764. Weedon and Mercer were able to purchase lots 203, 240 and 250, all for £75. The Sentry Box now stands on Lot 250.

Catherine Weedon inherited lots 25 and 26 in Fredericksburg.⁶ These lots contained a tavern formerly run by Catherine and Isabella Gordon's mother and known as "Mrs. Gordons Tavern." From 1764 until the Revolution, George Weedon operated this tavern on the corner of William and Main streets (Main is now Caroline Street), and it became the social center of Fredericksburg's wealthy planter class.⁸ In preparation for the Fredericksburg Fair in 1766 the Virginia Gazette on 16 September announced that horses to be raced at the fair were to be "entered, shown, and measured, at Captain George Weedon's on, the Monday preceding the races."⁹ Also in the Virginia Gazette of 14 July 1764, Weedon was mentioned as one of the "Gentleman Directors" of a lottery intended to raise £450 for a new church.¹⁰ The tavern became a meeting place for Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Hugh Mercer, George Mason, John Marshall, Richard Henry Lee, Gustavus Browne Wallace, William Woodford, George Washington, and other well-known patriots. According to one Fredericksburg historian, the Washington Diaries refer many times to Washington's presence at Weedon's tavern:

- March 8, 1769 - Evening at Weedon's at the Club.
- July 2, 1770 - Met officers of the First Virga. Troops at Captains Weedon's where we dined and did not finish until Sun set.
- March 28, 1772 - Spent the evening at Captain Weedon's.
- November 23, 1772 - Attended the meeting of the officers at Weedon's.
- November 24, 1772 - On some business all day at same place.

Washington also wrote that he played cards at Weedon's and "lost as usual" and that he thought those Fredericksburg fellows were "too smart" for him.¹¹

As tensions increased prior to the Revolution, Weedon must have joined in many political discussions. In his Tour of the United States, J. F. D. Smith recounted that, during his visit in Fredericksburg in 1774, he stayed "at an inn or public house kept by one Weedon, who is now a general officer in the American army, and was then very active and zealous in blowing the flames of sedition."¹²

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When Revolutionary troops started to assemble in 1775, Weedon closed his tavern and immediately became a captain in the Spotsylvania Independent company under colonels Hugh Mercer and Alexander Spotswood.¹³ Weedon advertised in the Virginia Gazette on September 6, 1775:

The subscriber intending to quit publick business after the first day of January next, would rent his house and lot in this town upon reasonable terms, which would suit any person inclinable to keep TAVERN, it being situated in the centre of the town, and has been long accustomed by the first gentlemen of this and the neighbouring colonies. It is large and commodious, there are all convient outhouses, including a storehouse on the main street, an exceeding good garden, a well of fine water within a few steps of the door, a billiard table &c &c. Any person inclining to rent the same shall have... all the best liquors on hand, consisting of best Madeira wine, old arrack, port wine, and spirits with any part of the household and kitchen furniture; they giving bond, with approved security, for payment of the same.

All persons indebted to me are desire to settle their accounts, and give bonds for such as they cannot conviently discharge; and those who have any demands against me will be pleased to make them known.
George Weedon.¹⁴

Weedon did not remain a captain for long. By 13 February 1776, he was a lieutenant colonel of the Third Virginia Regiment; he was promoted to colonel on 13 August 1776. On 20 February 1777 he was acting adjutant general to George Washington and seven days later became a brigadier general in the Continental Army.¹⁵ Most notably, Weedon served in the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, and "greatly aided General Lafayette in his pre-Yorktown campaign" and was present at Cornwallis' surrender.¹⁶

After the war Weedon resumed his position as a prominent Fredericksburg citizen and entered into the politics of the city under the new government. He was elected councilman in 1782, alderman in 1783, recorder in 1784, and mayor in 1785.¹⁷ He was also a trustee of the Fredericksburg Academy. When the Society of the Cincinnati was first established in Virginia in 1783, Weedon was President pro tem and later held the position of president from 1786 to 1802.¹⁸

In late 1786 or early 1787, Weedon moved with his wife into the newly constructed Sentry Box on lot 250.¹⁹ Since Hugh Mercer had been killed during the war, the Weedon household also included Isabella Gordon Mercer

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and the Mercer children. Since Weedon was childless, he took an active role in raising the Mercer children. Weedon died at the Sentry Box in late December 1793.²⁰ He left all of his property to his wife and, after her, to his niece and nephews.²¹ By 1800,²² John Mercer and Hugh Mercer, Jr., were paying taxes on the Sentry Box.

On 27 July 1859, the executors of Colonel Hugh T. W. Mercer's estate sold the Sentry Box to Charlotte Thornton for \$4,950.²³ During the Civil War, Confederate Captain Roy Mason, a grandson of Charlotte Thornton's was living in the house with his family. According to local tradition, Mason and Union General Burnside were friends and Burnside tried to spare Mason's house during the Battle of Fredericksburg.²⁴ The Sentry Box did survive the heavy shellings although it sustained some damage.²⁵

In 1887, the large lot on which the Sentry Box had been built was first subdivided. Subdivisions and sales continued through 1915.²⁶ The remaining portion of the original lot 250 was sold to Mr. and Mrs. George W. Heflin on 11 June 1917.²⁷ The Heflins resided in the Sentry Box until August 1962, when they sold the property to the current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McDaniel.²⁸

Notes

¹George H. S. King, "General George Weedon," William and Mary Quarterly, series 2, 20 (1940), p. 240. Harry M. Ward, Duty, Honor or Country General George Weedon and the American Revolution, (Philadelphia, Americal Philosophical Society, 1979), p. 4.

²Ward, p. 4. From the George Washington Papers.

³Spotsylvania County Court Order Book 1774-1782, p. 252.

⁴Ward, p. 24.

⁵Spotsylvania Deed Book F, p. 462.

⁶Spotsylvania Deed Book H, p. 545.

⁷Ward, p. 23.

⁸Ibid., p. 24. The tavern was at the present site of Woolworths. It was destroyed in the Fredericksburg fire of 1807.

⁹Virginia Gazette 16 September 1766.

¹⁰King, p. 244.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 244, 245.

¹²Quoted in Ward, pp. 41, 42; King p. 245. These are just two of the many sources. It should be noted that, while the quote is in meaning the same in every source, it is worded in a variety of different ways.

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- 13 Ward, p. 43.
14 Virginia Gazette 6 September 1775.
15 King, p. 246.
16 George Weedon Letters--selected correspondence, Mary Washington College. King, p. 246.
17 Ward, p. 245.
18 Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser 12 June 1788, and 22 September 1791. Virginus Dabney, Bicentennial History and Roster of the Society of the Cincinnatti in the State of Virginia 1783-1983, Richmond, 1983, p. 92.
19 Ward.
20 Ward, p. 252.
21 Will of George Weedon, Fredericksburg Will Book A, p. 148.
22 Historic Foundation of Fredericksburg, Inc. files on the Sentry Box. File prepared by George H. S. King.
23 Fredericksburg Deed Book T. p. 53.
24 Historic Foundation of Fredericksburg, Inc. files.
25 Ibid.
26 Fredericksburg Deed Book BB, p. 356; Book EE, p. 87; Book FF, p. 361; Book FF p. 359; Book FF, p. 365; Book 48, p. 549.
27 Fredericksburg Deed Book 50, p. 21.
28 Fredericksburg Deed Book 120, p. 100.

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Spotsylvania County Court Order Book 1774-1782, p. 252.

Spotsylvania Deed Book H, p. 545.

Virginia Gazette, 16 September 1766; 14 July 1768; 6 September 1775.

Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser 12 June 1788 and 22 September 1791.

Ward, Harry M., Duty Honor or Country: General George Weedon and the American Revolution. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979.

Weedon, George to James Monroe, Letter dated 1785, on file at the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

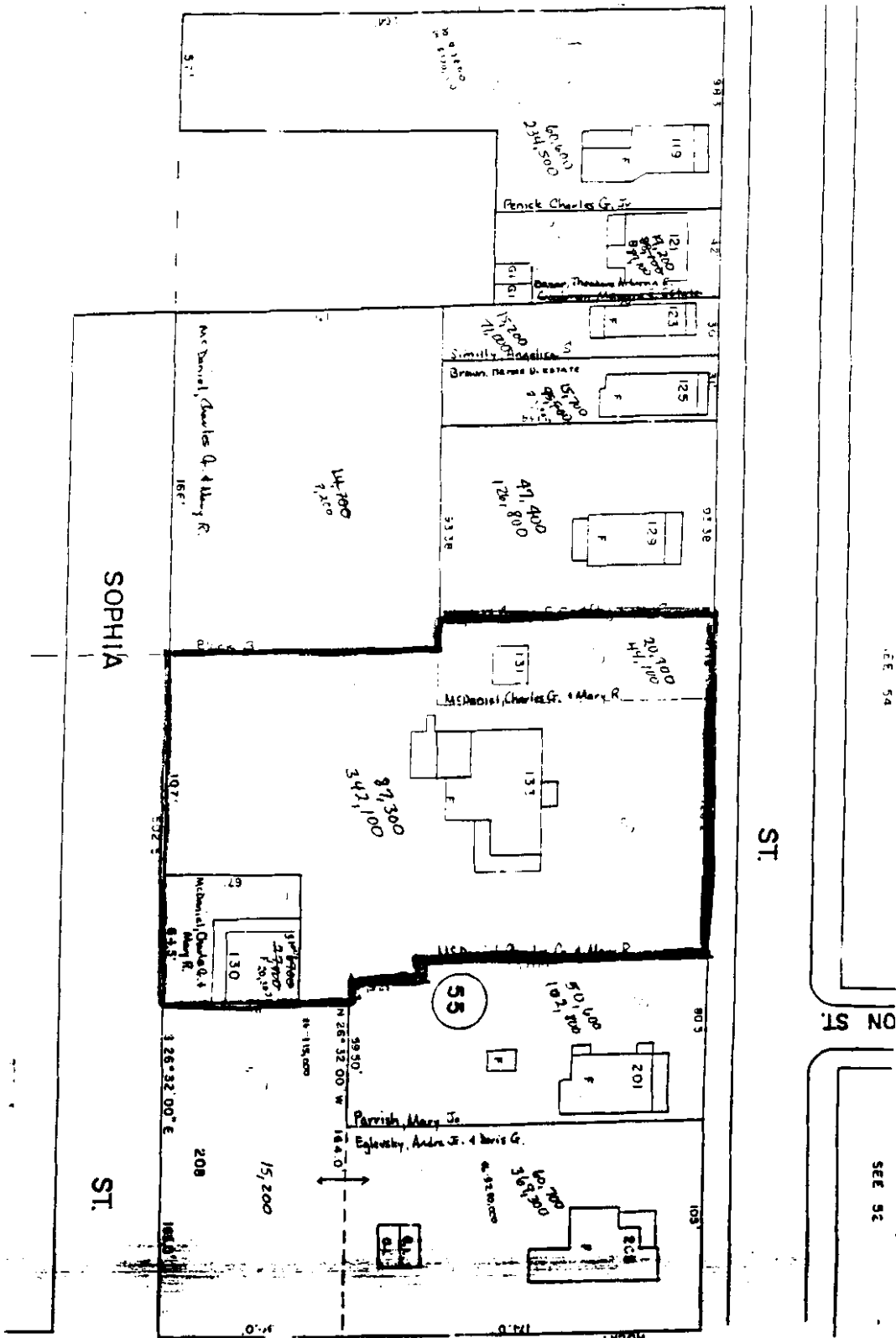
Weedon letters--selected correspondence, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Weedon, George, Will. Will Book A (1782-1817) p. 148.

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SEE 54

SEE 52

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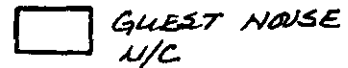
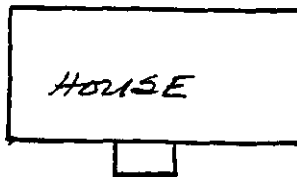
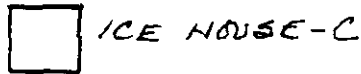
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SITE MAP

SENTRY BOX
FREDERICKSBURG, VA

not to scale



CAROLINE STREET

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PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Sentry Box
Fredericksburg, Virginia
Laura Haring, photographer
October 1989
Negatives on file at VA State Library and Archives

1. View of front elevation
Photo 1 of 7
2. View of north end elevation showing added windows
Photo 2 of 7
3. View of added rear porch
Photo 3 of 7
4. View of dining room mantel
Photo 4 of 7
5. View of stair, first floor
Photo 5 of 7
6. View of parlor mantel
Photo 6 of 7
7. View of icehouse
Photo 7 of 7

R1
4244
4242
4241
4240

5460 1 SE
(SALEM CHURCH)

17'30"

Sentry Box

