

VLR 9/6/6
NRHP 2/13/7

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kite Mansion
other names/site number Kite House DHR #082-5408

2. Location

street & number 17271 Spotswood Trail not for publication N/A
city or town Elkton vicinity N/A
state VA code VA county Rockingham code 165 zip code 22827

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] January 3, 2007
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| <u> 2 </u> | <u> 0 </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> 0 </u> Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling
 DOMESTIC secondary structure

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: meeting hall

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS
 Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1948

Significant Dates 1948

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) _____

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder William Edgar Kite

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.79 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 17 | 709028 | 4253167 | 2 17 | 709137 | 4253304 | 3 17 | 709223 | 4253312 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------|---------|------|--------|---------|--|--|--|
| 4 17 | 709256 | 4253208 | 5 17 | 709180 | 4253117 | | | |
|------|--------|---------|------|--------|---------|--|--|--|

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Scripps

organization Frazier Associates date 4/19/06

street & number 213 N. Augusta Street telephone 540.886.6230

city or town Staunton state VA zip code 24401

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Elkton, Dennis Donarchy – Town Manager

street & number 173 W. Spotswood Avenue telephone 540-298-9480

city or town Elkton state VA zip code 22827

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 1

=====

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Kite Mansion, completed in 1948, sits in a commanding position to the rear of a five-acre lot facing south onto U.S. Route 33 in the town of Elkton, Rockingham County, Virginia. A gently upward sloping site of verdant lawn, punctuated with mature boxwood and evergreen trees, rises to meet the residence. It provides an appropriate setting for this mid-twentieth-century amateur architect's rendition of the Colonial Revival style set among the mountainous backdrop of the Shenandoah Valley. The Kite property is composed of a main two-story, five-bay block with one-story wings set back on either side, as well as a contributing greenhouse. A Neo-classical-style, two-story portico, with a full entablature, triangular pediment and white Ionic columns, dominates the façade. This center-hall-plan house is constructed of concrete block clad with running bond brick. Composite-shingle-clad, side-gable roofs cap each of the three sections.

SITE

An elliptical driveway follows the property line to the west and east of the house curving to the front of the house. This driveway frames the gently sloping lawn that extends from the road frontage to the front of the house. Two retaining walls parallel to the house and highway provide more formal flat stretches of lawn near the house. Boxwood and evergreen trees frame the house. A cross rail wooden fence painted white and lined with a variety of evergreen plantings further delineates the property line on the west and north sides of the property. A flat lawn extends across the rear of the house, punctuated by a single deciduous tree behind the west hyphen. Near the rear fence line, vestiges remain of an earlier walkway curbed in concrete and lined with mature boxwood. Beyond the fence line, a grove of deciduous trees provides a natural backdrop to this orderly landscape.

EXTERIOR FAÇADE – PORTICO

A three-bay, centrally placed, full-height entry portico dominates the main (south) façade. Four masonry Tuscan columns with Ionic capitals, capped by a wooden entablature, support a gable-roofed classical pediment, all painted white. A poured concrete stoop provides the foundation for the portico, which is elevated from the ground-level entry walk by two poured concrete steps that extend the width of the portico. This concrete form also provides piers that extend from in front of the two outside columns to form low walls to either side of the steps. The portico foundation is clad in brick on its vertical faces and paved in terra cotta tiles. An upper level extends from the second floor,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 2

=====

supported by the house and the columns, with a low fretwork wooden balustrade spanning the area between the columns and returning to meet the wall of the house. Ceilings on both levels are coffered.

EXTERIOR FAÇADE – SOUTH ELEVATION

On both the first and second levels of the symmetrically arranged, five-bay main block, the central bay opening is a door. Fluted pilasters with base and capital, supporting a cornice with applied dentil molding, frame the six-panel front door. Upstairs, the door is fully glazed with a large rectangular central pane, square panes to each corner and narrow panes to each side, and is framed by simple architectural moldings. The remaining openings on each level are eight-over-eight, wooden, double-hung sash windows capped by brick flat arches. Full-height, five-brick-wide pilasters protrude the depth of one brick on each end of the main section as well as where the portico engages the house. The one-story, five-bay wing to the west consists of two two-bay, partially glazed, multi-paneled garage doors and a single opening with paired small six-over-six windows. The eastern wing consists of five smaller bays with a central six-panel door and two eight-over-eight windows to each side. Exterior chimneys with corbelled caps, visible on this elevation, are centrally located on the gable ends of both the main block and each wing.

EXTERIOR – WEST SIDE ELEVATION

The west elevation of the main block of the house features eight-over-eight windows on the first and second levels to the south of the chimney and smaller six-over-six windows in the gable end on either side of the chimney. There are no windows to the north of the chimney on this elevation due to the attachment of the wing. The west elevation of the wing repeats the window placement of a single eight-over-eight window to either side of the chimney on the gable end. A boxed cornice adorned with a dentil molding frieze trims the gable ends of both the main block and the wing. Cornices return to the same depth as the full-height brick pilasters at each corner.

EXTERIOR – NORTH (REAR) ELEVATION

On the rear (north) elevation, there is less symmetry than on the previous elevations. Paired windows on the rear elevation of the garage wing echo the size and placement of those found on this wing's south elevation, while a six-panel door (screened) providing entrance to the garage is found in the middle bay to the west of the windows.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 3

=====

The rear elevation of the main portion of the house shows for the first time that the house is not symmetrical in plan. A one-bay by one-bay, cross-gabled, two-story, brick ell constructed concurrently with the rest of the house intersects at the west edge of the main block. The rear walls of the west wing and the ell are in the same plane. A one-story enclosed porch spans the remainder of the main block of the house, and meets the east hyphen. This porch or sunroom is constructed on a poured concrete slab faced in brick, on which sits wood wainscoting with three-and-a-half pairs of sixteen-light metal casement windows to each side of a fifteen-light door. The door is framed by pilasters and four-light casements windows to either side. On the second level, above the porch, are eight-over-eight windows in the center and easternmost bays; placed at differing heights as one provides light to an interior stair landing.

The rear elevation of the east wing continues the plane established by the west wing, ell, and sunroom. The only opening on this elevation is a centrally located two-bay garage door of the same design as those found on the front elevation.

EXTERIOR – EAST SIDE ELEVATION

The eastern elevation of the one-story east wing repeats the detailing found on the other elevations of the house. There are two eight-over-eight windows on the first level with smaller six-over-six windows to either side of the chimney in the gable end. Fenestration on the main block of the house is comprised of a single eight-over-eight window on the first floor to the south of the chimney, centrally placed eight-over-eight windows to either side of the chimney, and a small six-over-six window just to the north of the chimney on the second level, with six-over-six windows to either side of the chimney in the gable end.

INTERIOR - FIRST LEVEL

Organized by a center-hall plan, large rooms used by the Kite family for entertaining guests dominate the first level. These rooms are primarily located or entered from the front of the house. The entrance foyer, hall, and stair comprise the central axis for the house that terminates at the back porch. Radiating from this core are the dining room and living room, with access to the library and bathroom/water closet/coat closet. Service-oriented rooms are located to the interior and include the butler’s pantry, food pantry, and kitchen. Crown molding is applied in all rooms and closets, and many original finishes are evident throughout.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 4

=====

ENTRANCE FOYER

The front door opens into the first of the public spaces, a formal entrance foyer. Pilasters capped with a dentil-molded cornice frame the front door. The level of detail established here is carried throughout the remaining public rooms. From the oak tongue-and-groove floors, rise wainscoted walls composed of framed, recessed panels resting on simple baseboard and capped by a molded chair rail. Above the wainscoting, painted walls extend to the ceiling where heavy crown molding accents the wall-ceiling junction. To the west, east and north framed, arched openings lead into the dining room, living room and hall, respectively. Twenty-five-inch-deep interior walls between these rooms are clad in recessed panels that echo the wainscoting and add depth to each of these openings. Doric pilasters that rest on plinth bases and are capped by simple entablatures with stepped cornices frame each of these openings. Each arch is framed by simple molding that is highlighted at its apex by a carved keystone. These trim details are repeated in each room. Eight-over-eight, double-hung, wooden-sash windows with simple board trim and bull-nose sills flank either side of the front door.

HALL

Located directly north of the entrance foyer is the main hall of the house. Wainscoting wraps the walls of this room as in the other public rooms. At the southernmost end of the east and west walls are symmetrically placed six-panel doors. To the west, the door opens to reveal a large ladies lounge with sink, with a water closet and coat closet entered from within. Period wallpaper in the lounge area depicts anthropomorphized poodles in a variety of scenes. To the east, the door opens to a closet. Continuing along the west wall past the lounge, the main staircase rises along the west wall before turning to create a landing along the back wall of the house. Centered under this landing and on the same axis with the front door, is a door that opens to the back porch and repeats the design elements of the front door. Along the rear wall, a secondary hall provides a cross-axis connecting on the east to the living room and on the west to the library. The main staircase for the house begins on the west wall of the main hall on the first level, turns at a right angle onto a landing that follows the north wall of the house, at the end of which is a door leading to the attic, before turning at a right angle again to continue to the upstairs hall. Wainscoting lines the west and north walls of the stair but does not continue past the attic door. The open string stair has oak treads, dark-stained handrails, and turned balusters and risers, both painted white.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 5

=====

LIVING ROOM

The living room extends the full depth of the main block of the house and is entered from either the eastern arch of the entrance foyer or a door at the back of the main hall. There are windows on the south and east walls. Baseboard, wainscoting and chair rail, as described above, adorn all walls. Centrally located on the east wall is the only fireplace in the house. Resting on the square, terra cotta-tiled hearth, paired Doric pilasters support a classically detailed entablature adorned with delicate egg-and-dart molding, ellipses, and central foliate carving, and capped by a mantel shelf.

DINING ROOM

Located in the southwest corner of the main block of the house, the dining room is entered from the western arch of the entrance foyer or via a swinging door leading to the butler's pantry. Wainscoting skirts all walls of this room below the chair rail. Flanking the framed arched opening above the wainscoting, arched niches are tucked into the wall the dining room shares with the foyer. These framed openings are a simplified version of the trim found on the large arched opening. This room retains original period wallpaper in a scenic pattern of a stylized European landscape depicting a castle accessed by a bridge over a stream in a grove of trees all framed by a wreath of flowers.

BACK PORCH

Entered from the formal interior space of the main hall, this room provides a transitional area between the house and the backyard. The familiar wainscot trim repeats on the outer wall of this room, with the other walls being formed by the exterior of the main house and wings and, therefore, retains its characteristic unpainted brick appearance. The concrete floors are painted and radiators are prevalent throughout this space. Additional doors connect from this room to the office behind the living room and to the outside, while a plate glass window looks in on the library in the northwest corner of the house.

LIBRARY

To the west of the back porch, the library continues the architectural vocabulary of oak floors and paneled wainscoting found throughout this level. A more private room, it is entered from the butler's pantry behind the dining room, from the back hall, and through the coat closet off

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 6

=====

the ladies lounge. Like the lounge and dining room, this room retains the original wallpaper, a mid-nineteenth-century block-printed scenic landscape. Floor-to-ceiling bookcases span the south wall of this room, with additional bookshelves below the chair rail on both walls of the room's northwest corner.

SERVICE AREA

The service core of the Kite House is comprised of the butler's pantry, food pantry, and kitchen. The pantries are located in the west central section of the main house between the dining room and the library. The kitchen occupies the eastern third of the western wing. In a rare modification to the original appearance of this house, the original flooring in the pantries and kitchen was replaced with sheet vinyl in the late twentieth century.

PANTRIES

The butler's pantry is a narrow north-south passage that connects the dining room to the kitchen. The exterior western wall continues the wainscoting found elsewhere while the eastern wall is spanned by the original white-painted base cabinets, a double-bowl porcelain sink, and yellow Formica countertops edged in stainless steel banding. Wall cabinets are shallow, with four sliding plate-glass doors. At the northern end of the butler's pantry, an arched opening provides the transition into a small square hall that contains entrances to the kitchen (west), library (north), and food pantry (east). The food pantry parallels the butler's pantry and is lined with full-height shelves to the west and east.

KITCHEN

With the exception of the replaced flooring mentioned above and updated appliances, the Kite House kitchen maintains its original appearance. The mustard yellow Formica with stainless steel edge banding found in the butler's pantry is repeated here. Simple wood base and upper cabinets line the west, south, and east walls, while a u-shaped inglenook is positioned under the paired windows on the north wall.

WEST WING

The west wing contains the garage and a staircase on the western wall that leads to a storage space above. Access to the garage is from the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 7

=====

two garage doors on the south elevation, the kitchen, or the rear of the hyphen. This is an unfinished space with cement block and concrete as the predominant materials.

EAST WING

The east wing contains the workshop and is an unfinished space consistent with the west wing. It can be entered via a door from the back porch or via a garage door from the rear elevation. There is no accessible space above the workshop.

INTERIOR - SECOND LEVEL

The stairs open onto a central hall that provides access to four bedrooms and a sitting area. Crown molding, base molding, and window trim of the same profile as downstairs are found in all upstairs rooms. The oak tongue-and-groove floors seen downstairs are replaced on this level by tongue-and-groove pine. The general arrangement of the rooms on this level includes a bedroom in each corner of the house, with en-suite bedroom between front and back bedrooms. The main stair occupies the space between the back bedrooms, while the sitting area is centrally positioned between the front bedrooms and opens on to the front porch/portico balcony.

BEDROOMS

The bedrooms in the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners are relatively similar, with one window on each exterior wall and two closets, little differentiated by more than their wallpaper. The exception to this is the master bedroom found in the northwest corner that extends from the main portion of the house into the ell which houses the kitchen below. This extension doubles the space of this bedroom allowing a closet to be built out into the room between the hall and en-suite bathroom doors and a small private bathroom to be tucked into the interior space between the bedroom and stair wall. Across the room from the entry to this bathroom, a door to the storage area over the garage balances the openings in this room.

BATHROOMS

There are three bathrooms on this level and all retain their original fixtures, black-and-white tile, and linoleum.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 7 Page 8

=====

BASEMENT

There is a full unfinished basement under the main section of the house. The floors are poured concrete and the walls are a mix of painted and unpainted concrete block. The original coal boiler sits disconnected in the main/mechanical room, replaced by its modern counterpart. Other rooms on this level are empty except for an occasional workbench.

ATTIC

The attic runs the length and width of the main portion of the house, with the accessible area floored in unfinished tongue-and-groove boards. Cross-bracing reinforces the rafters holding thick, wide, pine boards that serve as the roof's underlayment.

SECONDARY BUILDING – GREENHOUSE

A rectangular, white-painted, concrete block greenhouse capped by a hipped roof with a picket fence crest rail is located to the northeast of the residence along the rear property line. Two large plate-glass windows span the southwest elevation and face the rear of the house. Entrance to this structure is via a partially glazed door of six lights over three recessed panels on the southeastern elevation. To the east of the door is a fixed, sixteen-light, metal window flanked by two four-light vertical operable casements. There are no openings on the northeastern elevation and a small four-light fixed metal window to the northwest. The interior is unfinished and the floor is of dirt.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 8 Page 9

=====

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

SUMMARY

The Kite Mansion is locally significant under Criterion C for architecture as the finest example of the mid-twentieth-century Colonial Revival style in the Elkton area and for its visual prominence as a local landmark. Deeply set back from U.S. Route 33 by a terraced lawn and framed by evergreen shrubs and trees, the two-story brick Kite Mansion dominates its site. The house is the work of a studied amateur architect, William Edgar Kite, whose ancestors were among the original settlers in Elkton. The most notable exterior feature of the Kite Mansion is the two-story classical portico reminiscent of the Early Classical Revival in Virginia and based on Roman precedents as interpreted by Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia.¹ The Kite Mansion is also significant for its intact original interior finishes, including the woodwork, bathrooms and kitchen, as well as period wallpaper throughout the house.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For over two hundred years the Kite family has been associated with the history of the Town of Elkton in Rockingham County, Virginia. A large land grant to William Kite in 1801 included what is now the center of this small town.² Through his early-nineteenth-century marriage into the Harnsberger family, Kite owned land holdings along Elk Run, the Shenandoah River tributary after which the town is named, which increased to include the Lithia (Elkton/Kite) Spring and the land upon which the Kite Mansion now stands.³

During the Civil War, Confederate troops camped on the land of Captain Hiram Kite's farm, Maple Grove, located on the north side of Elk Run near the spring. As the Shenandoah Valley rebuilt after the Civil War the Kite family, whose tannery on Elk Run and woolen mill on the Shenandoah River outside of the current town limits had both been burned by Union troops, leased the spring rights to the Elk Lithia Water Company, who bottled the water from the spring and used newly available rail transportation to ship the product to market. By the turn-of-the-century, the company was defunct and the spring was back in the control of the Kite family. In the 1920s, the Kite family sold the water rights for the spring to the Town of Elkton to improve the local water supply.⁴

The builder of the Kite Mansion was William Edgar Kite (1894-1965), the grandson of Hiram Kite of Maple Grove.⁵ Mr. Kite was a pharmacist who operated a drugstore in town.⁶ His appreciation for the architecture of the Early Republic is expressed in the plans he thoughtfully drew for the Kite Mansion, which was erected in 1948. Drawing inspiration from the Early Classical Revival, Mr. Kite

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 8 Page 10



chose to emulate the style of architecture most commonly associated with Virginia, and more particularly with Thomas Jefferson. His design of a two-story, five-bay, double-pile brick dwelling with wings is a form well-suited to this style.

In his amateur interpretation of the Colonial Revival style, the house is identified by its full-height, classical portico, with triangular pediment embellished by a lunette, and supported by four evenly spaced columns. Family tradition attributes the column design to that admired by Mr. Kite at Monticello, although the columns at Monticello lack the Ionic capitals found on the Kite Mansion interpretation. More likely, the overall portico design is a simplified derivation of Pavilion II at the University of Virginia, which in turn takes its stylistic cue from the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome.⁷ In the Neo-classical style, the Kite House uses a restrained cornice with a narrow row of decorative dentils.

The Kite Mansion was not a pure copy of any particular building or architectural style. Instead, Mr. Kite sought to blend classical Virginia plantation architecture, the Colonial Revival style, and local forms. The plan for the main block of the house, with its original ell, was a vernacular norm in the antebellum Shenandoah Valley. The arrangement of the house exterior, absent the front portico, resembles that of the 1827 Miller-Kite House located in Elkton, a property that remained in the Kite family until 1984.⁸

The interior of the Kite Mansion continues to blend classical traditions with those of the Shenandoah Valley. Although a modern concession was made on the exterior by the appearance of the two-car garage on the primary façade, once inside, the balanced composition of interior spaces hides most modern necessities from public view. Recessed original wainscoting, a dominant feature in the majority of rooms on the first level of the Kite Mansion, is also noted as a distinguishing characteristic of the Miller-Kite House.⁹ This simple paneling is accentuated in the entry hall by three highly detailed, arched openings that, according to the Kite family, take their stylistic cue from the stair hall at Carter's Grove. Upon visual inspection, a similarity is noted, although changes were made to the scale and level of detail to adapt to modern scale and building materials.⁹ The mid-twentieth century is represented by decorative features throughout the house. The original wood cabinets of the kitchen and butler's pantry retain period yellow laminate countertops with stainless steel edge banding and bathrooms throughout the house retain original fixtures and tile. The walls of many rooms remain clad in mid-century wallpaper designs including romantic scenic landscapes, large-scale floral designs, and in the first floor bathroom, a scenic wallpaper on black background depicting poodles in a number of anthropomorphic pursuits.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 8 Page 11

=====

Although an amateur architect, Mr. Kite was able to blend the earlier stylistic elements he found most pleasing into a simply, yet thoroughly detailed, Colonial Revival style dwelling outfitted to his family’s mid-twentieth-century lifestyle. The Kite Mansion stands as a monument to its amateur architect, the vernacular and high style architecture of Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley, and local craftsmanship. It has been a local landmark on U.S. Route 33 since the mid-twentieth century and under the ownership of the Town of Elkton, who purchased it from the family in 2001, should remain so for years to come. The Kite Mansion is currently used by the Town as a community meeting space.

ENDNOTES

1. The Architecture of Thomas Jefferson. <http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/wilson/uva/pavilionII/descript.html>
2. Town of Elkton website. www.elktonva.gov/PDF%20Files/Business%20welcome%20Letter.pdf
3. Kite Mansion Preliminary Information Form
4. Town of Elkton website. www.elktonva.gov/PDF%20Files/Business%20welcome%20Letter.pdf
5. Kite Mansion Preliminary Information Form
6. Kite Mansion Preliminary Information Form
7. The Architecture of Thomas Jefferson. <http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/wilson/uva/pavilionII/descript.html>
8. Miller-Kite National Register nomination
9. Rothery, Agnes. *Houses Virginians Have Loved*, 277.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section 9, 10 **Page** 12

=====

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brownell, Charles; Loth, Calder; Rasmussen William M.S.; and Wilson, Richard Guy. *The Making of Virginia Architecture*. Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts with Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

Billhimer, Casey. Interview with author, February 23, 2006.

Kite Mansion Preliminary Information Form 2005, Intensive Level Survey 2005. DHR File #082-5408

Miller-Kite House National Register Nomination, 1978. DHR File #216-5063

Town of Elkton website. www.elktonva.gov/PDF%20Files/Business%20welcome%20Letter.pdf

Rothery, Agnes. *Houses Virginians Have Loved*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1954

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

“Portion of DB 1665/28, Tract 1” as shown on attached map “Boundary Survey of a 4.805 Acre Parcel” plus a one acre portion of the “Residue of DB 1665/28, Tract 1” to include that land which is bounded by the fence line for the nominated property as depicted in the accompanying aerial photograph. Deed Book records are located in the Rockingham County Courthouse, Harrisonburg, Virginia and the aerial photograph is available online at <http://rockingham.gisbrowser.com/viewer.htm> or through the Town of Elkton GIS.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the house, greenhouse, and surrounding land that provides the setting for and is historically associated with the Kite Mansion and retains its landmark setting as viewed from U.S. Route 33.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Kite Mansion
Rockingham County, VA

Section PHOTOGRAPHS Page 13

=====

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

The Kite Mansion

Town of Elkton, Rockingham County, VA

DHR File: #082-5408

Photographed by: Beth Scripps, 2006

ELECTRONIC IMAGES STORED AT VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES,
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

- Photo 1 of 14. View of Kite Mansion from U.S. Route 33, looking northeast
- Photo 2 of 14. View of south (front) elevation, looking northeast
- Photo 3 of 14. View of west (side) elevation, looking southeast
- Photo 4 of 14. View of north (rear) elevation, looking south
- Photo 5 of 14. View of east (side) elevation, looking northwest
- Photo 6 of 14. View of entry hall, looking north
- Photo 7 of 14. View of Dining Room arch/niche/wainscoting, looking east
- Photo 8 of 14. View of Butler's Pantry, looking north
- Photo 9 of 14. View of upstairs hall, looking south
- Photo 10 of 14. View of Master Bedroom, looking south
- Photo 11 of 14. View of Master Bathroom, looking north
- Photo 12 of 14. Central portion of front elevation with classical portico, looking northeast
- Photo 13 of 14. Side view of portico, looking west
- Photo 14 of 14. Setting behind house, looking northeast

KITE MANSION
Rockingham County, VA

UTM Reference:

- 1. 17/709028 E
4253167 N
- 2. 17/709137 E
4253304 N
- 3. 17/709223 E
4253312 N
- 4. 17/709256 E
4253208 N
- 5. 17/709180 E
4253117 N

