

VLR- 3/17/81 NRHP- 11/24/82

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 105-107 S. Fairfax Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Alexandria N/A vicinity of congressional district (Stanford E. Parris) Eighth

state Virginia code 51 county (in city) code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Landmarks Society of Alexandria, c/o Mrs. Nicholas I. Paul

street & number 2016 Fort Drive

city, town Alexandria N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22307

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alexandria City Hall

street & number N/A

city, town Alexandria state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

title (1) Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1934, 1938-41 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop is located in the center of Old Town Alexandria and incorporates 105 and 107 S. Fairfax Street. Each building stands 3½ stories with three-bay facades above shop fronts. Both buildings have molded brick cornices and gable roofs. The front slope slate roof of 107(south) and that of the asphalt shingle roof of 105 (north) are pierced by a single gabled dormer respectively. Restored in 1936-38 by Thomas T. Waterman, the 107 shop front contains its original curved glazed doors and paneled shutters. The rounded, multi-paned shop windows were designed by Waterman to conform to the shape of the original window shutters. Also designed by Waterman is the intersecting tracery transom, reeded pilasters which divide the entrance door and windows, and the plain entablature with its curved ends. The shop front in the adjacent building also dates to the 1936 restoration and replaces a mid-Victorian design. Multi-paned shop windows flank the double doors set into a deep reveal lit by an intersecting tracery transom. Fenestration in the upper stories of each building consists of 6/6 double-hung sash. The openings in 107 have brick jack arches, while those in 105 have stone lintel-type arches with turned corner blocks set below the ends of the lintels. All the windows have architrave trim and stone sills.

The south building (107), constructed ca. 1775, housed the shop. The north building (105), constructed ca. 1815, was purchased by Edward Stabler in 1829 and served as the shop's warehouse. The plan of each building consists of one room per floor with trade conducted on the first floor. The first-floor room of 107 is carried out in the Gothic Revival style dating to 1835. A double modillion block cornice decorates the room. Open shelves with trefoil arches divided by clustered columns with carved capitals extend along the north and south walls. The columns rest on a base with multiple concave-curved mahogany drawers finished with tongue-molded edges and brass or wood pulls. A narrow aisle separates the shelves from the counters which also run the length of the room. Incised double-pointed arches separated by clustered colonettes with double modillion block cornices decorate the counter fronts. Two marble tiles set into the south counter were used for mixing medicine. An apothecary's cage raised on a paneled podium with a rail of turned balusters also is located at the southeast corner of the counter.

A broad segmental arch is at the rear of the room. Centered beneath the arch is a late 19th-century apothecary cage resting on a podium with inscribed mirrored glass. Paired semicircular windows with Gothic tracery are set into the rear wall. Mirrored glass similar to the pharmacist's cage has been placed in the openings. The room is furnished with the collection of Stabler-Leadbeater pharmaceutical equipment.

The second floor of 107 also contains its original appointments. Wooden boxes hand lettered with numbers and names of medicinal supplies such as herbs and drugs line the walls and center shelves. Tins and handblown bottles for supplies also are stored in the room. Some shelving and early equipment also are retained on the third floor. Both the rooms in the upper stories have exposed brick walls and ceiling beams and plain trim.

The north building is connected to 107 by a single door in each story. The first-floor room of 105 is matchboarded on its side and rear walls and ceiling. Early open shelves on the side walls are the only other adornment. The rooms above, similar to the south building, have exposed brick walls and plain trim. A windlass is housed in the attic story.

At present 107 is open as a museum with a consignment shop operated from 105.

MPM

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
— prehistoric	— archeology-prehistoric	— community planning	— landscape architecture	— religion
— 1400-1499	— archeology-historic	— conservation	— law	— science
— 1500-1599	— agriculture	— economics	— literature	— sculpture
— 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	— education	— military	— social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	— art	— engineering	— music	— humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	— commerce	— exploration/settlement	— philosophy	— theater
— 1900—	— communications	— industry	— politics/government	— transportation
		— invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) mercantile, medicine

Specific dates 1775, 1792

Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary at 105-107 S. Fairfax Street in Alexandria is among the oldest preserved apothecaries in the United States and is the only apothecary in Virginia to operate continuously from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Built ca. 1775 by Philip Dawe, a silver- and coppersmith, and adapted for use as an apothecary shop by Edward Stabler in 1796, the building at 107 is the more architecturally significant of the two and remains in an excellent state of preservation. Not only does the exterior display notable brickwork, but the interior retains such original appointments as storage boxes, tins, and handblown bottles, all of which help to interpret the role of the apothecary in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Its fanciful early Gothic shelves and counters, added in 1835, are outstanding examples of the style in America. The adjoining building at 105 was built ca. 1815 and served as Stabler's warehouse. Patronized by George Washington, George Mason, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster, the apothecary also is significant as the place where J.E.B. Stuart presented Robert E. Lee official orders to proceed to Harper's Ferry to quell John Brown's insurrection. Following the death of Edward S. Leadbeater in 1933, the shop was purchased by the Landmarks Society of Alexandria and was restored in 1936-38 by Thomas T. Waterman to serve as a museum.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

105-107 are situated on the lot numbered 53 in the 1749 plat and survey prepared by John West, Jr. This lot originally was purchased by George Mason of Gunston Hall on March 28, 1752, from Directors and Trustees of the Town, William Ramsay, and John Pagan.¹ In July 1762, George and Ann Mason sold the property to Richard Arell, a merchant.² How the property was used by Arell is not known, but it is interesting that while he controlled this property, he also was licensed to operate an ordinary.³ The lot was subdivided by Mr. Arell. His 1774 agreement with Philip Dawe, a silver- and coppersmith, provided for an annual ground rent of 17 dollars and refers only to that portion of the lot which begins 70' distance from the corner where Fairfax and King streets intersect.⁴ Benjamin Shreve's lease of 1773, on the other hand, refers to the portion extending 70' on Fairfax from the corner where Fairfax and King streets intersect. Due to the subdivision of this property, a separate discussion of 105 and 107 is appropriate. Detailed discussion is hampered somewhat by the unavailability of early tax records which lie uncatalogued in the attic of the Fairfax County Courthouse. Unfortunately too, no early fire insurance records exist prior to 1775.

It generally is agreed that Philip Dawe erected the present building at 107 sometime between 1774 and 1775, for in August of this latter year he advertised for rent a 3-story brick house on Fairfax Street.⁵ The Thomas T. Waterman report for the restoration of the building also suggests the 1770s as the period of construction. While Deed Book N-39 for Fairfax County is missing, the courthouse does have an index of its contents which indicates

9. Major Bibliographical References

Alexandria Circuit Court, Deed Book S, Vol. 50.

Alexandria, Va., Lloyd House Library. Fire Insurance Policies, 29-A.

Christian, William Edmund. "An 18th Century Drug Shop," Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, Vol. 60, no. 8, August 1926, pp. 465-472.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ acre

Quadrangle name Alexandria, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Boundary coincides with city lot occupying 105-107 S. Fairfax St., Tax Map 75.01, Block 08, Lot .04, measuring approximately 45' x 55', with the former indicating frontage on S. Fairfax St.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #2)

name/title (1) Mrs. Nicholas I. Paul

organization Landmarks Society of Alexandria, Inc. date March 1981

street & number 2016 Fort Drive telephone (703) 765-4933

city or town Alexandria state Virginia 22307

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

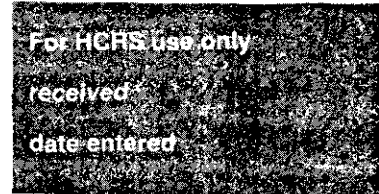
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop, Alexandria, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 6,7,8

Page 1



6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1958-59 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.
- (3) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1968, 1980 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated boundaries correspond with the limits of the city lot of 105-107 S. Fairfax Street.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

that Philip Dawe conveyed the property to William Patton and Jonathan Butcher sometime between 1778 and 1783. Although Edward Stabler paid these two families for the property in May 1805, it is known that he advertised his business from this address in 1796.⁶ The business operated under the Stabler name until 1852, when John Leadbeater, Edward Stabler's son-in-law, became proprietor. The only alteration known to have occurred to the interior of this shop was in 1835, when Gothic-style counters and shelves were installed to give a "modernized" appearance. The shop windows were "Victorianized" ca. 1860 but later were returned to their earlier style by Mr. Waterman. As evident from current photographs, little else has been disturbed.

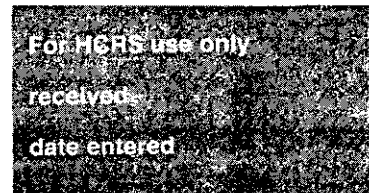
A fire insurance policy of June 8, 1796, issued to Benjamin Shreve, shows only wooden structures on the site of the present brick structure at 105.⁷ In 1807 Shreve's executors conveyed the property to John Watts. It is thought that he built the present structure, because an insurance policy of 1815 refers to a brick house and numerous frame buildings. Although tax records for 1829-1833 show Samuel Harper, an apothecary and druggist, as the tenant, Edward Stabler is known to have purchased this property in 1829. Its acquisition reflected the expansion and diversification of the family-operated business in the 19th century.

In 1933 the shop was sold at public auction. The entire contents -- stock, equipment, and records -- were bought by friends of the American Pharmaceutical Association for a museum. The buildings were purchased by the Landmarks Society as an early preservation measure, since they represented the only shop of the period still in much of its original condition. The two organizations eventually reached an agreement, and one of the finest collections of antique drugstore furnishings and medicinal bottles in America remains in its original setting. After restoration by Mr. Waterman, the shop officially opened as a museum on April 15, 1939. The museum is supported by voluntary contributions and by consignment sales in the adjoining shop at 105, which the Society operates.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop, Alexandria, Virginia



Continuation sheet #2

Item number 8,9,11

Page 2,1,1

8. SIGNIFICANCE

¹Liber C, No. 1, p. 297, Fairfax County.

²Deed Book E, pp. 102-109, Fairfax County.

³Seven requests for a license dating from 1763-1773 are recorded in Court Minutes of Fairfax County now in the Huntington Library in California.

⁴Liber L, No. 1, pp. 317-319, Fairfax County.

⁵Notes used by Ethelyn Cox, Historic Alexandria Virginia Street by Street (Alexandria, Va.: Historic Alexandria Foundation, 1976).

⁶Deed Book S, Vol. 50, Alexandria Circuit Court.

⁷29-A, Fire Insurance Policies, Lloyd House Library, Alexandria, Va.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Fairfax County, Deed Book E.

Liber C, L.

Horner, E. Marcia. "Sesquicentennial of an Alexandria Apothecary 1792-1942." National Historical Magazine (National Society of DAR), August 1942, pp. 624-626.

Voges, Nettie Allen. Old Alexandria Where America's Past is Present. McLean, Va.: E P M Publications, Inc., 1975, pp. 74-77.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

March 1981
(804) 786-3144

