



**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property Category of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply) (Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** 1  
(already contributing within a historic district)

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	multiple dwelling

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions) **Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate	foundation	Brick
Classical Revival	walls	Wood
	roof	Metal
	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.)

Property is:

- 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 fifty years.

**Areas of Significance** SOCIAL HISTORY

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Significant Person** N/A

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Period of Significance** 1922

**Significant Dates** 1922

**Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(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: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 0.08 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 642840 4049260      2

\_\_\_ 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 J. Daniel Pezzoni  
organization Landmark Preservation Associates date September 26, 2005  
street & number 6 Houston St. telephone (540) 464-5315  
city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

**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 Lady Astor Preservation Trust (contact: Mrs. Patricia Maurakis)  
street & number PO Box 3518 telephone (434) 791-2256  
city or town Danville state Virginia zip code 24543

**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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

#### **Summary**

The Langhorne House, located at 117 Broad Street in downtown Danville, Virginia, was built ca. 1874 as a one-story center-passage-plan dwelling with ell. A second story with an Italianate bracketed and paneled cornice was added ca. 1878. In 1921 the house was moved back a short distance from its original site facing Main Street, further enlarged and converted to four apartments, and attached to a three-story apartment building that was built at the former location of the house. A two-tier porch and multiple entries were created on the new east front elevation facing Broad Street. Exterior finishes include a brick foundation, weatherboard siding, and a metal-sheathed low-pitched hip roof. The interior has features from the 1870s through the 1920s including an early twentieth century “colonnade” (opening framed by columns and pilasters) and a 1921 stairway. The house underwent a number of changes in the mid-twentieth century but it was restored in 1990 to essentially the appearance it had during Lady Nancy Langhorne Astor’s famous visit to the house, her birthplace, in 1922. The 1990 restoration returned the first floor to a single family dwelling plan but retained the two upstairs apartments. The house occupies virtually all of its small (0.08-acre) lot. There are no landscape features. The Langhorne House is surrounded by historic buildings and modern parking lots.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### Description (continued)

#### House: Exterior

The Langhorne House retains the basic appearance it achieved in 1921 when it was converted to four apartments. The salient architectural feature of the converted house is its 1921 two-tier front porch. The porch is supported by fluted Doric columns and has dentil cornices, turned balusters on the first tier, and low solid railings on the second tier. As originally constructed the porch had a continuous second tier, and there is a 1922 photograph of Nancy Astor addressing a crowd from the now missing middle section of floor. Probably in the 1920s, definitely by 1937, the second tier was split into two sections and the entry that formerly opened onto it at the center of the second story was converted to a window. The windows to each side in the three-bay elevation were converted to entries to provide access to the divided second tier. Evidence for these alterations is visible in seams and altered fabric associated with the porch cornices, window, and entries.

The first-story east (front) elevation has three entries. The center entry, which opens into a stairway that serves the two upstairs apartments, has a glass panel door, a transom, sidelights, and symmetrically molded trim. The flanking entries, which opened into the downstairs apartments, have glass panel doors and transoms. The aforementioned second-story center window, which has sidelights in line with those of the entry below, appears to be the 1870s window formerly located in the center of the second story of the south elevation. The three-bay south elevation retains a number of features associated with its former status as the front elevation of the house. The center bay has paired windows that fill the spaces formerly occupied by the original front entry, which was presumably of the transom-and-sidelights form (it may survive as the center entry on the east elevation), and the sidelighted window above (apparently moved to the east elevation). The flanking bays have single windows. All six window openings have plywood covers at their tops and wrapping part way down their sides; these may cover gaps left by former cornices, perhaps with sawn brackets as was common in the 1870s. The south elevation had a porch (apparently one story in height) in the nineteenth century, although little trace of it is now visible.

At the top of the east, south, and west elevations are Italianate cornices with sawn brackets and panels outlined with molding strips between the brackets. The brackets were paired at the corners of the house and ell and were positioned singly over the corners of the windows. A number of brackets survive at their original locations; others, such as most on the west elevation, are missing or have been reused to ornament the top cornice of the 1921 porch. The house has a mix of 6/6, 6/1, and 1/1 windows, most with simple fillet-molded trim. Many windows retain hardware associated with former screens and, possibly in a few instances, shutters. The irregular north elevation, which is the product of frequent alterations and additions from the 1870s through 1921, has an entry with a 1990 wood handicap ramp. At the southwest corner of the house is a 1921 two-story connector to the adjacent three-story apartment building. It has a brick foundation and weatherboard siding like the rest of the

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### Description (continued)

house and a rear entry with wood steps. There are basement entries at the south and north ends of the house. Asbestos siding added in the mid-twentieth century was removed in the 1990 restoration. cursory examination of paint layers on the revealed weatherboards suggested white, yellow, and olive green were earlier wall colors. Oral history suggests the house was a dull yellow in color with off-white trim in the 1920s, and this scheme is evoked by the present paint colors.

### House: Interior

The interior preserves features from the 1870s such as plaster-and-lath wall and ceiling finishes, four-panel doors, and symmetrically molded door and window surrounds. The house originally had a center passage plan. The passage and its extension in an early rear addition are still evident and in fact were made more evident by the removal in 1990 of a 1921 partition that bisected the passage. The 1870s stair probably rose along the east wall of the passage (structural evidence in the floor underneath may relate to its former presence). Between the south end of the passage and the first-floor southeast room is a colonnade with a dentil cornice above fluted Doric columns and half-round pilasters on paneled plinths. The colonnade, which replaced a chimney at the location, may have been created in 1921 or it may date to earlier in the twentieth century. A floorboard seam and structural evidence in the northeast corner of the room suggests the former existence of an angled corner fireplace that took the place of the chimney that was removed. It too was removed, probably in 1921. Another chimney was located between the southwest room and the inner ell room. This chimney was also removed, probably in 1921, although its former presence and the presence of hearths are indicated by floorboard seams and evidence in the floor understructure. A late nineteenth century pilaster and frieze mantel from another house has been installed in the southwest room at the location of the former fireplace (Nancy Astor was born in the room, which is furnished in her memory). Some first-floor spaces have chair rails and picture moldings, and in addition to the four-panel doors there are some five- and six-panel doors, some with crystal door knobs. The stairway inside the east elevation center entry has a two-run stair with square newels and balusters, tread brackets with guttae-like details, and winders. The first and second floors of the connector are used as kitchens and have base and wall cabinets dating to the mid-twentieth century, some perhaps as early as 1921. Bathrooms throughout the house have 1921 hexagonal white and black tile floors and some have tile wainscots.

The basement retains considerable evidence related to its own evolution and to the evolution of the house above, despite the fact that the brick walls date no earlier than 1921 when the present foundation was built. Changes in ceiling joists and subflooring testify to now vanished features such as chimneys and stairs. When the new basement was created, board partitions were created from scavenged lumber as a way of subdividing the space into work and storage areas. The provenance of

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### Description (continued)

this lumber cannot be determined, although it is possible that some of it was reused from the original basement. The boards are painted olive drab over light green, possibly the original color. A water closet under the northeast corner of the ell is partitioned off from the surrounding space by unpainted beaded tongue-and-groove boards set vertically. Each of the two 6/6 windows on the west side of the basement retain interesting and somewhat enigmatic features. The south window has a wooden sash catch of elongated teardrop form screwed to the stile. This window is painted dark gray over white; olive drab appears to be another paint layer. Set into the stile of the north window parallel with and almost touching one of the panes is a diminutive iron rod with four bulbous flarings along its shaft and a short section of spring between the last flaring and the stile. The fixture may have formed part of some patent window shade device. Or it simply may have served as a cleat for tying a window shade cord, although the spring suggests a more active mechanical function. Visible sections of the original heavy circular-sawn sills reveal at least one pegged mortise-and-tenon joint and a pegged splice at the mid-point of the original rear wall. On the underside of the sill at this location and elsewhere are whitish stains that might be from mortar, presumably evidence for what was likely originally a brick foundation.

### Integrity Statement

The Langhorne House possesses good integrity from the period of significance, 1922. Through retention of 1920s features and through a professional restoration of the house according to plans by architect Joseph Dye Lahendro, the house has the same basic appearance it had at the time of Lady Astor's visit. One subsequent change was the removal of the middle section of the second tier of the front porch, although the survival of the rest of the porch and the retention of its basic historic character mitigates this loss. The interior possesses character-defining historic features such as the colonnade, 1921 stair, and door and window trim. Some changes to the plan were made in 1990 such as the removal of an apartment partition to enhance the museum function of the downstairs and the removal of a bathroom and short hallway partition from the first-floor southwest room where Lady Astor was born.

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

The Langhorne House is the birthplace of Lady Nancy Langhorne Astor, the first woman to sit in the British Parliament. The National Register significance of the property, however, stems from its association with Lady Astor's homecoming visit to Danville in 1922, a celebrated event in the city's history. The original section of the two-story Italianate house was built in the 1870s for Lady Astor's parents, Nancy and C. D. Langhorne, and it was here that Nancy Langhorne was born in 1879. Nancy Langhorne married Waldorf Astor, heir to one of the world's largest fortunes, and was elected to the House of Commons in 1919 to fill a seat vacated when her husband moved to the House of Lords. Meanwhile in Danville, Lady Astor's birthplace was converted to apartments and given a Classical Revival front porch in 1921. It was from the new porch that Astor addressed a crowd of 5,000 people on May 5, 1922, during an American tour to promote women's causes and the Anglo-American relationship. Astor's emotionally charged visit was reported in newspapers nationwide, and then as now Danville took great pride in its famous daughter. The association of the house with the early lives of Astor and with her sister Irene Langhorne Gibson, a celebrated beauty and model for her husband Charles Dana Gibson's artistic creation "The Gibson Girl," led to the purchase of the property by the Lady Astor Preservation Trust in 1988 and its subsequent rehabilitation. The first floor of the Langhorne House is now dedicated to interpreting the lives of Astor and Gibson.

#### Applicable Criteria

The Langhorne House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of social history for its association with Lady Astor's 1922 visit to Danville, a heavily reported event which evoked feelings of civic pride that remain strong to the present day. The property is located in the Danville Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 1973. No inventory or list of contributing resources was prepared for the district, but the Langhorne House met the age and integrity requirements for contributing status at the time the district was listed and therefore may be regarded as a contributing building. The 1870s core of the Langhorne House was moved in 1921 to its present location next door to its original site, but this move preceded the period of significance for the property (1922), therefore Criteria Consideration B does not apply. Criteria Consideration C applies since the Langhorne House is the birthplace of Nancy Astor, although its status as her birthplace is not the basis for its significance. The period of significance is the year 1922. The Langhorne House is eligible at the local level of significance.

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

#### Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted with the preparation of the nomination. The owner of the Langhorne House, the Lady Astor Preservation Trust, sponsored the nomination. Mrs. Patricia Maurakis with the Trust served as the sponsor's contact and assisted the project in a number of ways. The Trust also sponsored the report that is a principal source for the nomination, "The Langhorne Legacy: A Historical and Architectural Analysis" by J. Daniel Pezzoni (2005), which documents the architectural evolution of the house and the Langhorne family's history in Danville. Danville historian Gary Grant assisted with the preparation of the initial report. Assistance was also provided by Michael Pulice, Jean McRae, and Marc Wagner with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

#### Historic Context

The Langhorne House was built for Nancy Witcher Keene Langhorne (1848-1903), who purchased the undeveloped house lot in September 1873, and her husband Chiswell Dabney Langhorne (1843-1919). C. D. Langhorne's principal calling during the years he lived in Danville was as a tobacco auctioneer, although he also bought and sold real estate and he operated a farm with the aid of a tenant. Tax records indicate the original section of the house was built by the end of 1874, and a jump in value suggests the addition of the second story in 1877 or 1878. Nancy and Chiswell's third surviving child, Irene, who was born on June 5, 1873, apparently moved to the house as an infant, whereas Nancy, the future Lady Astor, was born in the first-floor southwest room on May 19, 1879. Nancy Langhorne did not live in the Langhorne House for long. In 1881 the family moved to Richmond where C. D. Langhorne eventually built a lucrative career in railroad contracting. The Langhorne family's Danville residence was apparently rented out in succeeding decades. A private school operated in the house during the early twentieth century. Rice Gwynn purchased the house in 1909 and in 1921 he remodeled it as the Gwynn Apartments.<sup>1</sup>

After the move to Richmond the Langhorne family achieved national and international fame. Irene Langhorne debuted in high society circles during the early 1890s, promoted by her publicity-savvy father as the quintessential Southern Belle. She married commercial artist Charles Dana Gibson and was an inspiration for his artistic creation the "Gibson Girl," a popular feminine icon of the era. Following an unsuccessful first marriage, Nancy Langhorne married Waldorf Astor, heir to one of the world's largest fortunes, and as Lady Astor she served as the United Kingdom's first woman Member of Parliament (1919-45). As an MP Astor championed women's causes in Great Britain, America, and around the globe. She also promoted the Anglo-American relationship, one of the key alliances of modern world history. In 1922 the *New York*

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

### Statement of Significance (continued)

*Times* observed, "Americans see in her a symbol and pledge of good relations with England and greet her with unforced affection and pride as 'Our Nancy.'" British biographer A. L. Rowse wrote of Astor: "She was a symbol of two historic themes: first, of the emancipation of women and their political rights; second, of the *rapprochement* between Britain and America, indispensable to Britain's survival in the two German wars of our century, and of Anglo-American friendship."<sup>2</sup>

In the spring of 1922 Lady Astor accepted an invitation to address the National League of Women Voter's third annual convention in Baltimore. Women's issues and fostering Anglo-American friendship were important themes of Astor's 1922 American visit, which evolved into a multi-city tour with visits to President Harding, Vice President Coolidge, and the U.S. Senate. Astor made public appearances in New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Chicago, and other cities, and everywhere audiences in the thousands went to hear her speak. According to the *New York Times*, at her speech to the National Press Club in Washington "the walls of the clubrooms fairly bulged." Astor was front-page news for weeks, and on her visit to Richmond on May 3, 1922, the *Richmond-Times-Dispatch* reported "'Our Nancy,' Takes City by Storm."<sup>3</sup>

Lady Astor was also invited to Danville. She arrived there the evening of May 4, 1922, spent the following day in Danville and vicinity, and left for Lynchburg on May 6. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* headline read "Lady Astor Is Given Royal Welcome By City of Her Birth." Her first appearance was at a specially convened meeting of the city council, where she was presented with an ordinance dedicating a street in her name, Lady Astor Street. Astor next visited the Langhorne House where she addressed a crowd of 5,000 from the second tier of the porch added in 1921. According to the Richmond paper:

Her talk was full of epigrams given with a ready wit. Prohibition was touched on tactfully. She realized that prohibition could not succeed in one generation. Child welfare, a subject close to her heart, was referred to also and she urged women to play a greater part in the problems of their own community and to awaken to the realization of what the new feminine sphere really means and the opportunities for service it offers . . . She said also a word for Great Britain, declaring that when people heard England "run down," they should remember that the civilization that makes America what she is was engendered in England.

In an article headlined "Lady Astor Speaks on Old Home Porch," the *New York Times* noted the electrifying effect of Astor's visit, and quoted a childhood friend who introduced her as "the sweetheart of two nations."<sup>4</sup>

According to Danville historian Gary Grant, a child whose parents rented the apartment that included the room where Nancy Langhorne was born recalled as an adult that Nancy toured the

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

house, and that the room was pointed out to her by Irene Gibson, who was accompanying her sister. During the afternoon Astor addressed three thousand school children at the Sutherlin Mansion, the "Last Capitol of the Confederacy." She presented two thousand rose bushes to the children, instructing them, according to historian Patricia Brachman, that the mind "is a sort of garden and it must be cultivated with pure thoughts." Descendents of the "Lady Astor Roses" can still be found in Danville gardens. A tea hosted by the city's women's clubs followed, and the day concluded with a dinner attended by relatives who "came from all the surrounding parts."<sup>5</sup>

In 1988 the Langhorne House was threatened with destruction to make way for a parking lot. The late Mrs. Stuart James Grant, publisher of the *Danville Register and Bee*, purchased the house and the Lady Astor Preservation Trust was formed for its preservation. Restoration architect Joseph Dye Lahendro prepared plans for the restoration of the house, which was carried out in 1990. The Langhorne House presently houses museum rooms interpreting the lives of Nancy Astor and Irene Gibson on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor.<sup>6</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Pezzoni, "Langhorne Legacy," 2-3, 8-9, 11. Danville city records state that Nancy Langhorne was born May 17, 1879.
2. Pezzoni, "Mirador;" *New York Times*, April 22, 1922; Rowse, *Memories of Men and Women*, 25.
3. Pezzoni, "Mirador;" *New York Times*, April 26, 29, 30, 1922.
4. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 6, 1922; *New York Times*, May 6, 1922. Lady Astor Place in Danville is also named after Astor (Patricia Maurakis personal communication).
5. Brachman, *Lady Astor & the Rose Bushes*, 17-18; *New York Times*, May 5, 6, 1922.
6. Lady Astor Preservation Trust, "Preserving the Langhorne Legacy."

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Danville, Virginia

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Va.

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated area corresponds to City of Danville Block 11 Parcel 6 (tax account no. 26559).

### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated area encompasses the resource that is the focus of the nomination—the Langhorne House—and the city lot on which it stands.

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Langhorne House  
Danville, Virginia

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**All photographs are of:**

**LANGHORNE HOUSE**

**Danville, Virginia**

**DHR file no. 108-0064**

**J. Daniel Pezzoni, Photographer**

DATE: May 2005

VIEW OF: East (front) elevation. View looking west.

NEG. NO.: 22140:25

PHOTO 1 OF 4

DATE: May 2005

VIEW OF: West (rear) elevation. View looking east.

NEG. NO.: 22140:27

PHOTO 2 OF 4

DATE: May 2005

VIEW OF: First-floor southeast room colonnade.

NEG. NO.: 22140:30

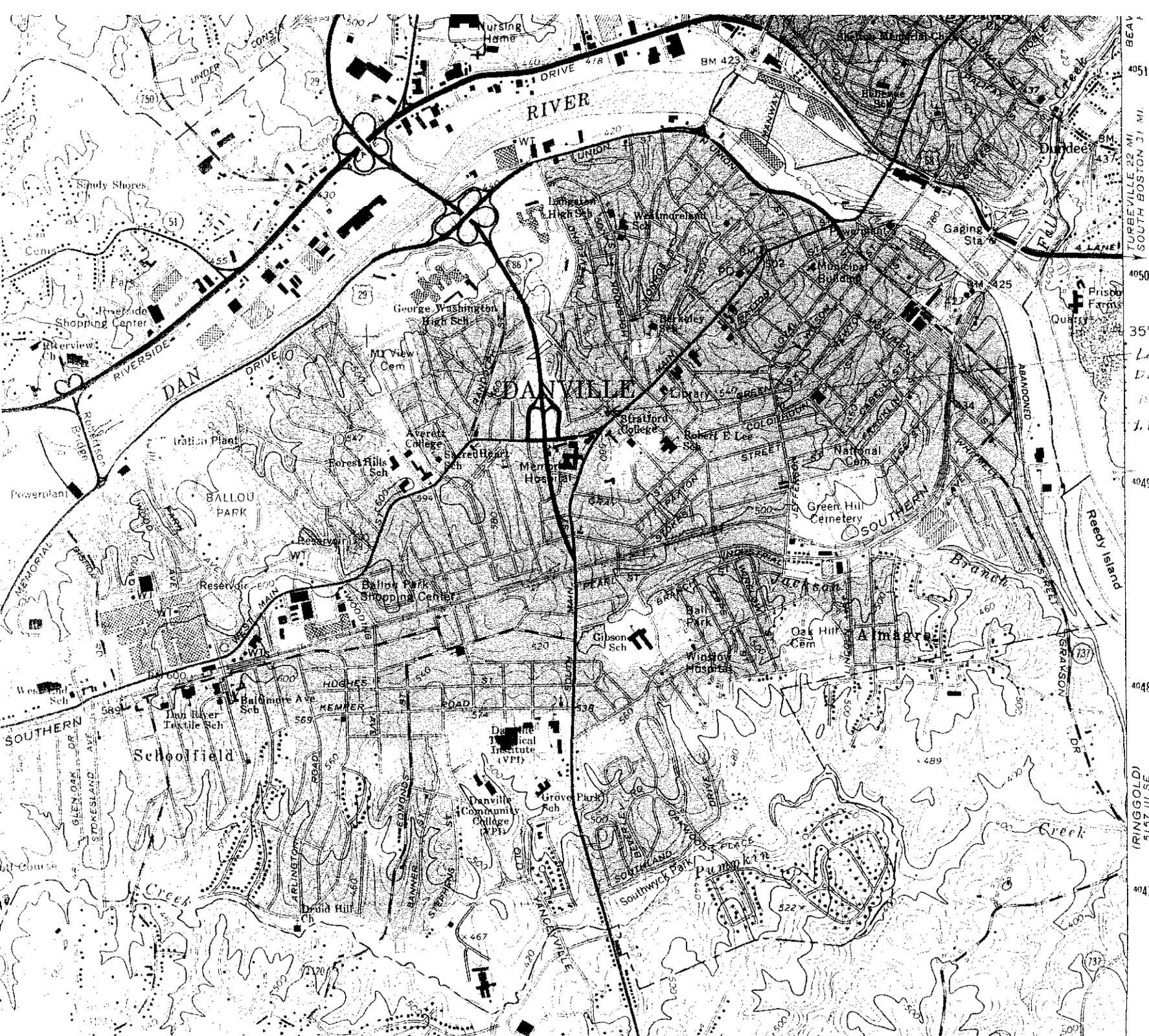
PHOTO 3 OF 4

DATE: May 2005

VIEW OF: Second-floor north apartment living and dining rooms.

NEG. NO.: 22140:34

PHOTO 4 OF 4



4051  
TURBEVILLE 22 MI  
SOUTH BOSTON 31 MI  
4050  
35'  
4049  
4048  
4047  
(RINGGOLD)  
5157 III SE

*Laughlons House  
Danville, Va.  
17M vet. (zone 17)  
J. EG42540 114049260*