

THEME: ARCHITECTURE

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Independent City
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARK

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Kenmore

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Kenmore

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1201 Washington Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Fredericksburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
007

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Independent City CODE: 630

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Kenmore Association, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1201 Washington Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Fredericksburg

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Clerk, Circuit Court

STREET AND NUMBER:  
800 block of Princess Anne Street

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 488

CITY OR TOWN:  
Fredericksburg

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia  
COUNTY: Independent City  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE  
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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Millbrook was built by Fielding Lewis in about 1752 for his bride Betty Washington, sister of George Washington who laid out the original survey of Fredericksburg where the house is located. Its name was changed in 1859 to Kenmore.

A fine period house of two-storeys with jerkinhead roof and a pair of stack chimneys at either end, the transcending importance of Kenmore derives from its extremely rich interior decoration and, to a lesser extent, from its superbly executed dwarf portico at the east front. It has been surmised that since it is one of the few Virginia mansions without a trace of either rubbed or gauged brick, it might have been intended to be stuccoed. According to Morrison, the group of plastered rooms at the ground level of Kenmore are, as a group, unparalleled anywhere in the country for their richness. They were executed ten to twenty years following the construction of the house, and tradition has it that they were done by itinerant French craftsmen, although all but one can be traced directly to the English pattern book by Batty Langley, Treasury of Designs, published in 1740.

The four stucco duro ceilings and overmantels at Kenmore are decidedly late-Georgian in style and may profitably be compared with the ceilings executed for George Washington at Mount Vernon. The latter are the earliest examples of the new style following the designs of the Adam brothers, and are markedly more attenuated, delicate, and light. The Kenmore comparison shows those, on the other hand, to be much heavier, thereby illustrating the development of taste in the middle of the century. Assuming that the decoration within is roughly contemporary with the house, Kenmore represents the first time that a Virginia mansion appears with its major rooms plastered.

The superb design of the great room ceiling has a center plan of ovals. A medallion of leafage is bordered by circular patterns formed of rosettes, in which each small circle contains baskets of fruit and flowers. The design outside the circles is covered with ornament of vines and leafage in an intricately graceful form. In the corners outside the frame are four spandrel panels with cornucopiae, leaves and ribbons. The ceilings in this room, according to Waterman, in beauty of design and execution, may perhaps be the very finest piece of American plaster-work.

The library ceiling is also closely related to that of the Drawing room, with a leaf medallion in the center, bordered by a series of circles formed of rosettes and enclosing baskets of fruit and flowers. These circles are tied to the design by concentric festoons of husks and pendants. The design of the motif was derived from Langley's plates in Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs. The corner compartments display plant symbols of the four seasons: palms for spring, grapes for summer, acorns for fall, and mistletoe for winter.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) c. 1752

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kenmore was erected about 1752 and contains probably the most richly decorated plaster interiors of any Georgian house in the country. Curiously, this superb elaboration is contained within a house of modest proportions and considerable restraint, although it is of such a standard to suggest that it was designed, rather than simply built. The extraordinary richness of the rooms on the ground floor are without peer in 18th century American architecture. The dwarf portico too on the East facade is executed with a superb sense of proportion and beauty.

Millbrook was built for Fielding Lewis and his wife Betty, the sister of George Washington who had laid out the original survey of Fredericksburg, about 1752 when Lewis acquired 861 acres of land at that site. The 53 X 41 foot house is a handsome period structure with jerkin-head roof, brick string course, and well proportioned modillion cornice among its more interesting architectural features. After a succession of owners, Kenmore (so-called since 1859) became available for sale in 1922 and through the efforts of a special chapter of the D.A.R., was purchased by the newly-organized Kenmore Association. The dependencies to the North and South were reconstructed on original foundations by the Association, while the gardens were restored and a brick wall built around the property by The Garden Club of Virginia.

The house is maintained by the Association in excellent condition and is open to the public daily. The site itself suffers seriously today from a highly-intrusive brick block building being built in the front yard.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Thomas T. Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia (Chapel Hill, 1946).  
 Thomas T. Waterman, The Dwellings of Colonial America (Chapel Hill, 1950).  
 Edith T. Sale, Interior of Va. Houses of Colonial Times (Richmond, 1927).  
 Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952).  
 Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (New York, 1922).  
 Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes-South (New York, 1956).  
 Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition and Americans (New York, 1955).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		UTM	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "		18.284300	4241220	
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
James Dillon Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Historic Landmarks, Landmark Review Project DATE: 10/17/74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1100 L. Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Landmark  
 Designated: Apr. 15, 1970 date

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 Boundary Certified:  
Cornelius Thine 6-20-75 date

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Sect. & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST:  
 Boundary Affirmed:  
[Signature] 11/2/75 date  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

STATE	Virginia	
COUNTY	Independent City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description second page

Finally, the Dining room ceiling is a net of strands formed of leafage and circles of daisies framing a nimbus radiating from a sculptured face. There is a concentric series of circles enclosing rosettes, forming a band, then a field of interlacing festoons beyond which the circles and rosettes reappear as a border.

The decoration of the mantels at Kenmore is in wood, except in the two north rooms which again are in stucco duro, or decorative plasterwork. The drawing room overmantel is famous as containing the bas-relief of Aesop's fable of the fox, the crow, and the cheese.

Kenmore is located today within an entirely developed residential area of Fredericksburg, on two lots of land owned by The Kenmore Association. Only this minute portion of a once extensive holding remains around the house, unfortunately. The Association added a pair of flanking dependencies to the house during the 1920's, based upon the original foundations. Today they contain, respectively, a kitchen in which to prepare gingerbread for the tourists, and the offices of The Association. They were executed in a manner of Georgian-Revival architecture not out of character with the house, although they are in very close proximity to the house. On the other hand, under construction now, in the very front-yard of Kenmore, is a museum and visitor center-- a brick block-like building, without windows, of two storeys, one of which is below ground. It is of such a size and location to seriously compete with and distract from the Landmark:

Fortunately, the essence of the Landmark status at Kenmore lies with the interiors, which are of unparalleled quality and true national significance for this period. The East elevation too may be experienced without intrusion, including the delicate and beautiful dwarf portico there. The only reasonable boundary for the Landmark today is that of the ownership lines of the Kenmore Association. Extending from the corner of Washington and Fauquier Streets 331 feet south, then 209 feet east, then 65 feet north, then 94 feet 6 inches east, then again north 28 feet, and then 110 feet 8 inches east, then 237 feet North, and finally 412 feet 3 inches to the starting point at Washington and Fauquier Streets. A sketch map is attached with this form to illustrate those lines.