

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Kirnan (China Hall)

Other names/site number: VDHR #096-0013

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: 498 Zion Church Road

City or town: Hague State: VA County: Westmoreland

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

**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 at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide   X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

    A     B   X   C     D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b> <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u></p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structures

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Early Classical Revival

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### Materials:

(enter categories from instructions.) BRICK; WOOD/Weatherboard; ASPHALT

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Surrounded by fields and enveloped by cedars at the end of a sandy lane in the rural community of Hague in Westmoreland County, Kirnan (originally known as China Hall), is a late-eighteenth-century, one-story, frame dwelling, which was enlarged in the early nineteenth century. The house is exemplary of the domestic aspirations of leading families in Virginia's Tidewater region at the end of the eighteenth century. The original section of the house is a 42-by 26-foot block that was built in 1781.<sup>1</sup> Documents suggest that the original owner was George Garner, a veteran of the American Revolution who later became a county justice and a representative in the Virginia General Assembly. Garner named his new Westmoreland County home China Hall. Prior to his death in 1809, George and his wife, Anne Garner, embarked on an expansion of their home with one-story additions to the north and south that created a long cross-axial orientation.<sup>2</sup> By the early 1820s, the Garners' China Hall had passed into the hands of John Campbell, a member of another substantial Westmoreland family, who rechristened the property Kirnan after an ancestral home in Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> Dendrochronological testing of the original section of Kirnan was undertaken by Camille Wells as part of her long-term study of domestic architecture in the Northern Neck. See W. J. Callahan, E. R. Cook, and C Wells, "Final Report: Dendrochronology for the Colonial Virginia House," unpublished report prepared for the Jessie Ball DuPont Religious, Charitable, and Educational Fund, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Westmoreland County Land Tax Records, 1807 – 1814. Prior to George Garner's death he was taxed \$251 for 617 acres, land and buildings. In 1814, the tax amount paid by George Garner's estate was \$625.60, land and buildings, indicating that improvements had been completed and the property reassessed. There were no additional increases in the tax for the buildings under Campbell's ownership (1824-1842).

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Kirnan remains today in excellent condition with many original architectural features with high integrity from both periods of construction. Locally significant for its architecture, the house is the only contributing resource remaining on the property. Two small non-contributing early and mid-twentieth century wood-frame sheds are included in the nominated 83 acres. Historic documents, including early twentieth century aerial photographs, along with the recollections of former owners, indicate a variety of domestic and agricultural outbuildings were present on the property during the nineteenth and early-mid-twentieth century, making the potential for intact archaeological deposits high.

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### **Narrative Description**

Kirnan (China Hall) is located in a region of Virginia known as the Northern Neck, a five-county peninsula that is bounded on the north by the Potomac River, on the south by the Rappahannock River and the east by the Chesapeake Bay. Kirnan sits on what is considered to have been the main road from Montross-Hague-Kinsale-Northumberland (Rt. 710). The house faces north and is centered in 83 acres of timberland and farmland. A long dirt lane leads up to the house from Route 611 (Zion Church Road). Kirnan was built on a level site and oriented toward the road that connects Sandy Point Neck with more inland parts of Westmoreland County. Behind the house, the terrain falls away gradually toward a branch of Bonum Creek. The site also includes a 1-acre pond. In addition to the main house, there are two non-contributing outbuildings. One is a frame granary barn with painted weatherboard and metal roof to the left rear of the house that has been present on the site since the 1920s. A modern garage, ca. 1970, sits just southeast of the main dwelling.

Kirnan currently has 10 rooms for a total of approximately 2,713 square feet. The house achieved its current configuration primarily from two major building campaigns herein described as period I (1781) and period II (early nineteenth century).

#### **Period I (1781)**

The period I section of the house is wood frame, is clad with 10-inch beaded cedar weatherboards, stands on a continuous English bond brick foundation above a full brick cellar, and has a gabled roof. With two large gable-end Flemish bond chimneys, the plan consists of a center stair passage flanked on the west by a large heated room and a smaller unheated space and on the east by two rooms with corner fireplaces that share a 9 ½-foot wide chimney. Upstairs, in the garret, are two heated chambers. Solidly built and finely finished, when built the house featured a large entertaining room with a raised panel chimneypiece, a smaller ground-floor public room (perhaps a dining parlor), and a more private bedchamber at the back, with two additional bedchambers in the garret. A portion of the small unheated space now contains a modern bathroom, accessed from the center passage.

There is an unfinished, dirt-floored, brick-walled cellar beneath the period I house. Access to the cellar is currently gained through an exterior stair that is covered with a gable-roofed frame

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addition on the southwest corner of the house. From the interior, the cellar can be accessed through a door cut into the floor under the stairwell closet. The cellar walls are English bond and the heavy hewn, post and beam construction of the underside of the house is clearly visible.

The walls of the house are post and beam frame construction. Several years ago, the exterior siding repair process revealed numerous vertical and horizontal joists carved with roman numerals to number the lumber for construction. The house is clad with 10-inch beaded cedar weatherboards. Surviving eighteenth features on the exterior of the period I house also include six-paneled wood doors with period hardware and windows with nine-over-nine, glazed, vertical sliding wood sash.

The gable roof was originally of a jerkin-head or clipped-gable configuration, which was altered during the early-nineteenth-century modifications. It is punctuated by five dormers, two on the north (front) slope and three on the south (rear) slope. The two gable-roofed dormers on the north slope have fine classical detailing including broken pediments with the windows flanked by pilasters topped by an architrave cornice. The two original dormers on the south (rear) slope are much simpler with minimal classical adornment. The middle dormer on the south (rear) slope is set lower than the original two and was added in the twentieth century. The wood cornice and decorative rope molding date to period II. All roof areas for both period I and period II are clad with asphalt shingles.

Exterior to each gable-end wall is a chimney made of Flemish-bond brickwork with regular patterns of glazed headers up to the level of the stacks. Each chimney has two sets of shoulders with tiled weatherings and corbelled chimney caps.

Interior walls, approximately one-foot thick, are drywall over horsehair plaster and hand-split lath. Pine flooring is throughout the house. The stair, located in the center passage, is a closed string staircase with turned balusters, fluted newel posts, and molded handrail.<sup>3</sup>

Eighteenth-century woodwork survives in the northwest room. A handsome paneled overmantel would once have been centered on the west wall of a room that was later partitioned to create two small, unheated rooms in the southwest quadrant of the main story. Although this dwelling retains much of its original eighteenth-century interior finishes, like many other surviving houses on the Northern Neck, Kirnan was given Federal-style retrimming at the time of the early-nineteenth-century expansion. Twentieth-century alterations to the house not already mentioned include a small window on both the east and west facades of the 1781 core house, just to the right of the chimney.

### *Period II Alterations (early nineteenth century)*

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed study of Kirnan and other early houses in the region, see Camille Wells, "Social and Economic Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Housing in the Northern Neck of Virginia," unpublished dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1994.

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At the front of the house, builders constructed a 14½- by 16-foot gable-front, frame, three-bay addition. On the interior, this unheated parlor room was generously lit by four nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows and a transom with delicate sunburst motif tracery. The original paneled, narrow, double-leaf entrance doors were moved to the entrance of this new space that now comprised the formal entrance to the house. The entrance is accessed by five wooden steps rising to a minimal wooden stoop. This section has a front gable roof with a full pediment. Locally known as the “Port Royal plan” and popular during the Federal period, the front addition created a variation of the center-passage form and adds rich Tidewater regional architectural context as well as demonstrating the cultural importance of entertaining and hospitality among the landed gentry of the time.

Also during period II, builders added a low, one-story 8- by 8 ½-foot covered way at the back of the original passage, situating it a couple of steps lower than the floor level in the front of the house. This covered way had an exterior doorway on the east side and was connected at the south end to a 19-foot-square, heated room under a separate gabled roof. It is not clear how this spacious back room at the back of the house was used, but it may have served as the principal bedchamber or possibly a dining room. Because of the quality of its finishes and its arrangement, it seems highly unlikely that it was built as a new kitchen. Above this space is an unfinished attic that does not appear to have been originally accessed from the interior by a staircase. An enclosed winder stair was added in the early twentieth century. This space became the kitchen c. 1960 and has remained in this use.

At the same time the period II additions were made, the roof of the original part of the house was altered from a clipped gable or jerkin head to a full gable, and a new cornice with a decorative rope molding was added to match that of the new additions. The trim around all the windows, upstairs and down, inside and out, and some of the door architraves were changed to match the neoclassical moldings in the new front and rear rooms. The present chimneypiece around the corner fireplace in the northeast front room of the Period I house may have been installed at this time if not slightly later.

The precise date of the period II alterations is not known, but technological and decorative evidence, along with the land tax records, suggests that they were most likely carried out sometime between c. 1810 and c. 1830. The exposed timbers in the unfinished attic in the rear wing and on the fireplace wall where the plaster has been removed reveal that all the framing elements were hewn and pit sawn, which does not narrow down their date range since sawyers prepared timbers with hand tools in such a manner from first English settlement until the Civil War. However, the nails used to secure the cripple studs in the two roof gables of the wing and the half-lapped collar beams into the common rafters are mature, machine-made cut nails. Manufactured framing nails with square-shaped heads came into widespread use in the Tidewater region of Virginia in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Their presence here to secure the framing members means that the wing could not date any earlier than this decade. Any notion that this wing may have been an earlier element that was reused and placed on new foundations is precluded by the presence of fasteners produced by this new nail technology. The

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ceiling and walls of the rear wing have had only one set of plaster laths and the nails that secure these split laths to the framing members are also cut nails.<sup>4</sup>

The brickwork of the exterior on the south gable end of this rear wing also indicates an early nineteenth century date. Although the bonding pattern of the 6-foot, 6-inch-wide chimney is Flemish, matching the bond of the two gable end chimneys of the 1781 original section of the house, there are two features that date the new chimney to the early nineteenth century. The shoulders of the chimney are stepped rather than sloped and paved with bricks or tiles as was customary practice in the eighteenth century and is evident on the two chimneys on the original (period I) part of the house. More telling, the mortar joints are finished with a pointed V-shape profile. Throughout the colonial period and into the first couple of decades of the nineteenth century, exposed decorative brick joints were decorated with a scribed line indentation made by an iron tool to give the brickwork an illusion of regularity, especially since many of the joints were a half-inch or more in thickness and the edges of the bricks irregular. This pattern declined in popularity in the Tidewater in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, supplanted by the V-joint. The earliest V-joint recorded by author Carl Lounsbury in the region is on a chimney in a section of Hanover Tavern said to have been built in 1791. This is something of an outlier, as the next dated example is on the back side of the Ghequiere House, an imposing townhouse erected in Alexandria in 1797. However, by the first decade of the nineteenth century, the V-joint became very common throughout eastern Virginia and remained the most common finish joint for the next four decades.

The extensive alterations made to Kirnan in the early nineteenth century is evident in the decorative details. Neoclassical moldings that were common throughout America in the period between the 1790s and c. 1840 appear throughout the house—in the doors, architraves, and mantels in the original section and the newer additions. They are quirked Greek moldings, meaning that they have a recessed channel at the point where the curvature of the molding reaches its apex. Instead of stopping at the tangent point, the molding curves downward into a small crevice or channel, which is called a quirk. The curved parts of the molding itself are oval rather than circular. On older moldings of the colonial period, the ovolo is a quarter of a quadrant of a circle and a cyma is a compound of a concave and convex quadrant that forms an ogee or “s” shape. These forms had their origins in ancient Roman architecture, which was the precedent for the forms of eighteenth-century moldings in Anglo-American joinery. All the original moldings in Kirnan, are based on these ancient Roman profiles. None are quirked, and the arcs of the cyma moldings meet tangentially to the adjacent part of the moldings.<sup>5</sup>

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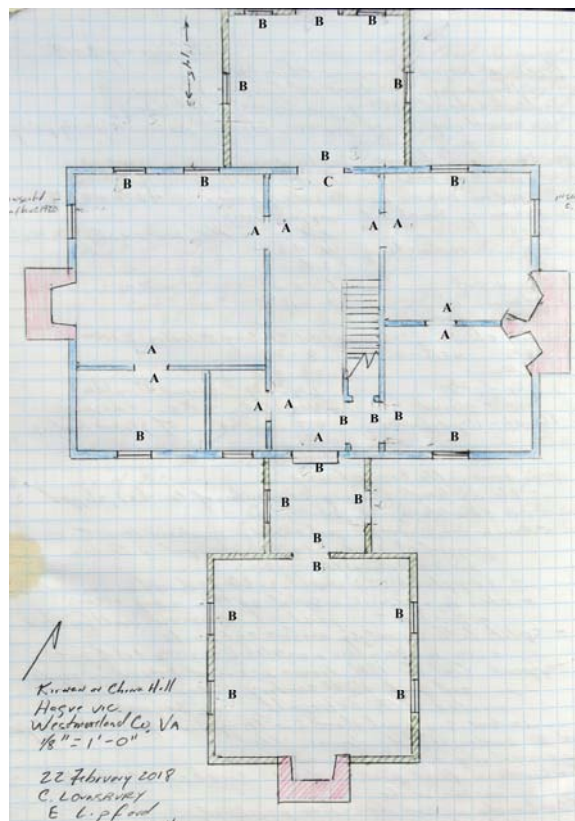
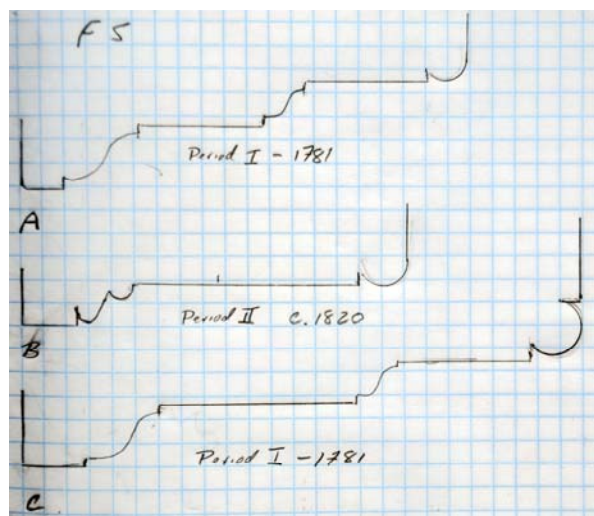
<sup>4</sup> The smaller cut lath nails with square heads appear slightly earlier in Virginia than the larger framing nails. Advertisements for the smaller nails appear in Virginia newspapers as early as the mid-1790s.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of moldings in the region, see “DNA in Moldings,” in *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg*, edited by Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 348-355.



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*Floor Plan and Molding Profiles by Carl Lounsbury, March 2018  
Department of Historic Resources Archives, File # 096-0013*

Classical Roman-inspired moldings were gradually displaced throughout the United States in the early republican period by the quirky neoclassical moldings based on ancient Greek prototypes. Although some of these neoclassical forms [in the Kirnan later additions] appeared as early as the late 1780s in cosmopolitan places such as New York and Philadelphia, they did not appear in Virginia until the very end of the eighteenth century. By the middle of the first decade of the nineteenth century, the new moldings became increasingly popular as carpenters and joiners replaced their old colonial molding planes with new ones with blades shaped with neoclassical profiles. By the middle of the 1810s, they had become common and remained popular through the mid-1830s before they were supplanted by larger Greek moldings with flatter profiles in the 1830s and 1840s.

The quirky ovolo with astragal (a tiny half circle at one end of the molding) found throughout Kirnan is perhaps the strongest diagnostic feature that anchors the changes made to the house to the period between the 1810s and 1830s. Except for the twentieth-century changes made to the house (the two gable windows in the period I section of the house and the doors in the rear wing), all the window architraves, inside and out, reveal just how extensive the alterations were to the house when the period II additions were added to the front and back. Only the doorways in the original section of the house retain their original Roman moldings. The fact that there are

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none of the larger and flatter Greek moldings of the antebellum period in the house is another piece of evidence that would argue that the revamping of Kirnan did not occur after 1840.

### *Secondary Buildings*

In addition to the dwelling, there is a 1920s granary barn and a 1970s particle-board clad garage. The granary barn is a true two- by four-inch frame building with red-painted, six-inch cedar weatherboard siding and is built on poured concrete piers. The interior has rough-cut oak plank flooring. A raised seam tin roof covers the original building, which measures sixteen by twenty-four feet. It has two twenty-four- by twenty-four-inch window openings. There are two openings on the east and west sides, and one on each of the sixteen-foot ends. On the west side, there is a six- by three-foot door. Although the exact date of the building is unknown, it was constructed with cut nails. A 1922 auto license plate was nailed to an exterior wall, which may be indicative of the date of construction. A covered nine-foot by twenty-four-foot overhang addition with a galvanized sheet metal roof was added sometime in the late 1970s, probably around the same time as the garage was constructed. The granary was used as a cow feed barn during the operation of the working farm under the Bowie/Taylor family, from 1920 into the 1940s and is present in a 1945 aerial photograph of the property. The 1970s two-car garage measures twenty-four by twenty-four feet and is of two- by four-inch framed construction over a poured concrete floor. It is clad in T-111 siding composed of four- by eight-foot sheets, and has an asphalt roof.

Neither of the outbuildings is related to Kirnan's architectural significance nor do they date to the property's period of significance, and therefore are noncontributing.

### *Integrity Analysis*

Kirnan retains a high level of architectural integrity from both period I and period II. On its original location, set in a rural area that is still primarily agricultural, it exhibits high integrity of **location** and **setting**, compromised only by the loss of earlier secondary outbuildings. The dwelling's original **design** features from the period of significance are almost completely intact in plan and detailing, except for the partitioning of the first floor's historically unheated space to accommodate a small bathroom. The bathroom and closet on the second floor of the Period I house have been added discreetly with minimal interruption to the primary spaces. The installation of a modern kitchen in the period II addition has covered some original features such as the pine spline flooring and the original fireplace opening, however, they remain intact behind modern materials. Original **materials** and **workmanship** are well displayed in both the exterior and interior structural members and finishes, most notably, heavy timber framing, beaded weatherboard siding, brick chimneys, wooden sash windows, interior trim, doors, mantels, and staircase. Kirnan, which has remained a single-family dwelling, has many of the original spaces still being utilized as originally intended, therefore, retaining a high degree of historic **feeling**. The property's integrity of **association** as a late-eighteenth-century Northern Neck dwelling with early-nineteenth-century additions is readily apparent in the fine quality of the architectural finishes and limited intrusion of more recent materials.

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## 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1781-ca 1830

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1781

ca. 1810

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Kirnan, formerly China Hall, constructed in 1781 and expanded during the first decades of the nineteenth century, is an excellent example of early republican period architecture that clearly reflects the wealth and status of the Garner family, an early and prosperous family in Westmoreland County, Virginia. The original center-hall plan, with three heated rooms on the first floor and two in the garret above, represents a level of sophistication available to only a small percentage of landowners in Tidewater Virginia at the close of the eighteenth century. Several decades after construction, George Garner and his wife, Anne, expanded the house with additions that were reflective of the stylish configurations of space and detailing for the early nineteenth century, including the addition of a Port Royal parlor on the primary façade. The Port Royal plan, a variation of the center-hall plan popular in the Federal period, is important and adds rich Tidewater regional architectural context as well as demonstrating the cultural importance of entertaining and hospitality. Kirnan is a significant and fascinating example of how these newer variations in function of space and decorative detailing were integrated into an older house form. Locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, Kirnan's period of significance begins in 1781, when the house was constructed, and extends to ca. 1830, by which time all significant alterations to the house had been completed. Significant dates include 1781, the year of initial construction and ca. 1810, the time when a substantial remodeling of the house got underway.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### *Historic Background*

The owners of Kirnan (China Hall), the Garner and Campbell families, were locally prominent families in Virginia's Northern Neck. The Garners descended from a 1663 initial land grant and the Campbells were early Scottish immigrants, arriving in Virginia in 1745. The original property name was "China Hall" under the Garner family, and changed to "Kirnan" when it was sold to John Campbell in 1822.

The Garner family of Northumberland and Westmoreland counties owned this property from around 1663, when Susanna Keene Garner's family obtained an assignment of an 875-acre patent to land which includes the Kirnan property. For nearly 150 years, the Garners were among the top of the "lesser gentry" of this part of Westmoreland County. The chain of title to the Kirnan land, (then known as China Hall) is, from 1663 Keene grant, to Henry Garner in 1706, to Thomas Garner in 1741, to James Garner ca. 1757, then in 1796, 115 acres to George Garner.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> White, Edward (of Kinsale, Va). Garner property research, Garner family chapter of a yet unpublished work.

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Kirnan owner George Garner (1750-1809), was of the fourth generation Garners, and third born of ten children. He was born and died in Westmorland County. George married Anne Middleton on March 31, 1790, in Westmoreland County. She was born in 1766 in Westmoreland. George Garner served in the military during the American Revolution as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in Captain Daniel Morgan's militia company. Representing Cople Parish in Westmoreland County, he was named as a vestryman in 1785, named as Coroner by the Governor of Virginia on September 25, 1792, and was employed as a justice of the peace in 1794. From 1799-1803, George Garner served as Westmoreland's representative in the Virginia General Assembly.<sup>7</sup>

Kirnan is the only house owned by the Garners which still stands. That the Kirnan house was a Garner property is well known. The intersection of Routes 611 and 710 is called Cary's Corner and before that was called Garner's Shop. The property record timeline and the dendrochronology dating of the house to 1781 is supported by George Garner's 1801 Mutual Assurance Society insurance policy for a house with the existing dwelling's dimensions. "Covered structures, valued at \$1900 include a wooden dwelling house underpinned with brick footing, a wooden kitchen, a wooden bard and a wooden smokehouse." As was the case with most of Tidewater Virginia's prosperous families, their economic success was due in part to reliance on an enslaved workforce of African American. Based on historic records, it appears that Anne Middleton brought some of these persons to the marriage as part of her dowry. In 1787, George Garner paid taxes on 45 enslaved people, who at that time were treated as personal property under the law. Garner's other assessments included 9 horses, 51 head of cattle, and a two-wheeled carriage. By 1808, George Garner owned a total of 903 acres, placing him in the county's top tier of landholders.

By 1808, he would have been under fifty-nine years of age when he deeded all of "his land and the negroes he received from his wife Anne" to William Wright, her nephew. It is clear that in deeding China Hall to his wife, George was trying to insulate it from his creditors. He died not long after in 1809. In 1819, Anne Middleton Garner made a will and conveyed her interest in the property to William Wright, son of her nephew William Wright. The tax rolls for 1815 and 1819 show Anne owned 200 acres adjacent to property owned by "Murphy" and 100 acres adjacent to Nathaniel Oldham. In 1822, this three hundred acres of real estate was sold at auction in Hague to John Campbell for \$300, a low value that could reflect a distress sale. Another deed, this time from James Wright to John Campbell for 200 acres for \$1,500, was executed in 1827 and stated it was the property given to Anne Garner by her husband.<sup>8</sup>

When he purchased China Hall in 1822, John Campbell (1775-1827) renamed the dwelling to Kirnan, after the Campbell ancestral home in Scotland. Campbell was a wealthy and distinguished lawyer, a Commonwealth's attorney, and a judge of the Superior Court of the district including the Northern Neck. He also served as Westmoreland's Representative in the Virginia General Assembly from 1803-1806 and in the Virginia State Senate from 1809-1817,

<sup>7</sup> *Westmoreland County Virginia 1653-1983*, Edited by Walter Biscoe Norris, Jr., Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, Montross VA, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> White, Edward. *Lands and Lesser Gentry of Eastern Westmoreland County, VA 1650-1840s*. Thomas Shore, Inc. Dexter, Michigan. 2014

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and represented Washington Parish in one of the constitutional conventions. Campbell was named one of the school commissioners of Westmoreland County in 1823. The school commission was a result of a bill in 1818 that provided the legal basis for a limited public education system in Virginia until 1870.<sup>9</sup>

John's father, Archibald Campbell (1708-1774), was one of the early Scots immigrants to Westmoreland County and was the well-known minister/rector of Washington Parish from 1745-1774. Parson Campbell's contributions are documented, and he is honored at St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Oak Grove) as a "hero" in the Northern Neck. His portrait also hangs in the Westmoreland County Museum in Montross, Virginia. Rev. Campbell was the uncle of the famous English poet Thomas Campbell and thus John Campbell was the first cousin of the famous poet who wrote to and about his American cousins. When John Campbell died in 1827, a court-appointed surveyor assigned to Campbell's widow, as her dower, two of her husband's plantations, including Kirnan, which was "the place at which she has resided ever since the death of Mr. Campbell."

Elizabeth Campbell remained at Kirnan until she died in 1839. The neighbors who agreed to appraise her personal estate identified one of the front two rooms as "the parler [sic]," furnished as a formal sitting room with a "sopha [sic]," two cane-bottom settees, and a dozen other cane-bottom chairs. The other north room was used as a dining room with sets of dining tables and tea tables as well as a china press, sideboard, and safe where Mrs. Campbell kept her substantial assemblage of china and silver. Upon leaving the dining room, the appraisers abandoned their strategy of naming rooms, but the inclusion of beds, washstands, and hearth tools suggests that the other heated room on the main floor was Mrs. Campbell's chamber. At least one of the southwest rooms and one of the rooms in the garret were also furnished for dressing and sleeping.<sup>10</sup>

In 1842, John and Elizabeth Campbell's five daughters sold Kirnan to Walter Bowie. From 1843 forward, Kirnan descended by inheritance from Walter Bowie to son Edwin Bowie, then to nephew Walter Bowie Taylor, and then to youngest daughter, Genevieve Taylor, wife of John Morrow, Jr.

The Bowie family, too, relied on enslaved African Americans to generate their wealth. Walter Bowie Sr. is notable for keeping records of the enslaved African American women along with their offspring from 1831-1850; these materials are now housed at the museum at Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County. Although it can be assumed that some of these women and children lived and worked at Kirnan between 1843 and outbreak of the Civil War, Bowie did not indicate where people lived on his massive holdings, which included most of the land at Coles Point in addition to Kirnan. The 1850 Federal Census recorded that Walter Bowie Sr. owned 61 enslaved individuals of various skill, gender, and age. Bowie was also at one time sheriff for Westmoreland County. His gravestone, which survives in a cemetery near Coles Point, records

<sup>9</sup> Lohrenz, Otto. "Clergyman and Gentleman: Archibald Campbell of Westmoreland County, 1741-1774," NNVHM 39, p.4432- 4455; *Westmoreland County Virginia 1653-1983*.

<sup>10</sup> Westmoreland County Will Book.

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that Bowie “departed this life at Kirnan his residence” in 1853. According to the Taylor family research and records, Walter’s wife, Mary Bowie, survived him by at least 7 years. In 1870, their son Edwin and daughter Mary Julia were living at Kirnan, and retained ownership until at least 1912. Edwin Campbell remained a bachelor all of his life, farming and taking care of his mother and sisters.

From the 1920 to the 1950s, Walter Bowie Taylor and his wife Genevieve (Brown) Taylor were operating a diversified farm with cattle, pigs, chicken houses, and a dairy processing facility. Dairy products such as milk, eggs, and cream, cheese, were taken to Warsaw, picked up for the Tucker Hill Store, and sold to the Washington Dairy Company. During Kirnan’s ownership by the Bowie/Taylor family, the property was listed among Virginia’s Century Farms, a designation for farms in operation for at least 100 consecutive years and in the generations of a single Virginia farm family. In 2011, William H. and Leigh Ann Miller purchased Kirnan from Genevieve (Taylor) and John Morrow. The associated acreage remains in active use, with open lands currently leased for ongoing farming under the Millers’ ownership.

### *Criterion C, Architecture*

#### *Period I*

A dendrochronological study done at Kirnan under the direction of Camille Wells dates the period I house to 1781.<sup>11</sup> Ms. Wells states in a July 2001 letter to the Morrrows (who owned Kirnan at the time), “The structural wood for Kirnan was cut in 1781. This date was derived from oak members with bark edge in both the cellar and the attic, and as we know that colonial builders invariably worked with green wood—did not cut or shape timbers until they were ready to build—this means the house was framed up—if not completely finished out within during that year.” Wells included a further detailed description in her dissertation:

“Kirnan is the carefully planned, well built, and expertly finished result of an expensive building campaign that few eighteenth-century Virginians could afford. Kirnan is a wood-framed and weatherboarded house built to one and a half stories with a gable roof that originally had clipped ends. The house faces north. Set on a low English-bond brick foundation above a full cellar, Kirnan has no seam in the foundation and no punctuation in the roof structure. It thus appears that Kirnan was originally planned to enclose two rooms on the east side of the passage and one large room on the west side. The four-bay elevation is one clue that such an arrangement was originally intended.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Dendrochronological testing of the original section of Kirnan was undertaken by Camille Wells as part of her long-term study of domestic architecture in the Northern Neck. See W. J. Callahan, E. R. Cook, and C Wells, “Final Report: Dendrochronology for the Colonial Virginia House,” unpublished report prepared for the Jessie Ball DuPont Religious, Charitable, and Educational Fund, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Wells, Camille. “*Social and Economic Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Housing On The Northern Neck of Virginia*,” unpublished dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1994.



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This detailed study by Wells confirms Kirnan as one of the few surviving dwellings of the land-wealthy gentry of the late eighteenth century in Westmoreland County. It is set apart from the larger and earlier dwellings that are most notable for the Northern Neck region, such as the National Historic Landmarks of Stratford Hall, Sabine Hall, Mount Airy, and Menokin, to name a few, in that it is not nearly as large and opulent. However, Kirnan's fine craftsmanship and sophisticated detailing are indeed indicative of the tastes and philosophy of a wealthy landowner and prominent citizen.

The dwelling, in its original configuration, is representative of a small majority of land-holders in the area. George Garner built his China Hall on a large parcel that had been in the Garner family for generations, making them one of the top land-holding families in Westmoreland County. For comparison purposes, a study of land ownership from 1773 in the neighboring Northern Neck County of Lancaster, revealed that less than 10 percent of the landowners owned more than 600 acres.<sup>13</sup> This finding, likely to be similar in Westmoreland County, provides insight to Garner's probable place in the hierarchy of landownership. Garner, paying taxes on his China Hall tract in 1789, was taxed on 763 acres. By 1808 his total tracts numbered 903 acres, possibly pushing him closer to the top 5 percent of landowners.

Furthermore, it is important to note that by the end of the eighteenth century, many of the household functions had been removed from the main dwelling to separate secondary buildings, thus negating the need for a larger house to accommodate all of the domestic functions of a self-sufficient plantation under one roof. Often quoted by scholars, such as Wells,<sup>14</sup> in their studies of colonial period Tidewater architecture is German traveler Johann David Schoepf's observation that, "a plantation in Virginia, and also in the lower parts of Maryland, has often the appearance of a small village, by reason of the many small buildings, which taken all together would at times hardly go to make a single roomy and commodious house."<sup>15</sup> Evidence of the original China Hall adhering to this trend is seen in the 1801 Mutual Assurance Policy's inclusion of three outbuildings: a kitchen, a smokehouse and a barn. This does not preclude that there were not any other support buildings, only that these three were worthy of insuring against loss by fire. Likely, there were other simpler frame structures, including quarters for Garner's enslaved workers, throughout the property.<sup>16</sup>

The Lee, Carter and Tayloe families of the Northern Neck who built the grand estates of Stratford Hall, Sabine Hall, Mount Airy and Menokin respectively, represent a very small percentage of what excessive wealth and landownership could achieve in the architectural realm of colonial-era Virginia. Built of brick and stone, they reflect a type of family dynastic tradition that few reached in the early centuries of the colony. That these properties survive is a testament to the statement of permanence that was intended in their design. Yet it must be realized that these significant architectural examples are homes to but a few. Therefore, to fully understand

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<sup>13</sup> Wells, Camille, *Material Witnesses: Domestic Architecture and Plantation Landscapes in Early Virginia*. Pp. 39.

<sup>14</sup> Wells, pp. 41-41.

<sup>15</sup> Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation [1781-1784]*, trans. and ed. Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), 2:32-33.

<sup>16</sup> Personal property tax records reveal 45 enslaved persons under the ownership of George Garner in 1787.

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the architectural aspirations and achievements of the land-owning gentry, what can be considered the “next tier” of domestic architecture, as seen in the period I dwelling at Kirnan (China Hall), holds a significant place in the study of late-eighteenth-century regional architecture in the Northern Neck.

*Period II Plan: Function of the Additions*

Descriptions, inventories, and other documentary material may shed some light on the intentions of the owner who constructed the additions onto the old house. Their arrangement and finishes reveal a conscious effort to upgrade the old house to fit modern notions of comfort, privacy, and style. These alterations can be placed in context to what was happening in the Tidewater in the early nineteenth century. Many older one-story houses received one-and-a-half- and two-story additions either to the side or in front of and at right angles to the earlier house. These additions provided more space for additional bedrooms and formal entertaining rooms.

At Kirnan, the rear wing may have been constructed to provide a more private space for a chamber. It is buffered from the front of the house by a low, square, covered way at the end of the original passage two steps below the floor level of the old house. The old rear double-door opening was retained but the door leaves were removed and not replaced, providing a visual continuity from the front of the house. A new architrave was installed on what had been the outside of the original back door and, above it, a slender horizontal decorative raised panel with a bead molding. A door on the east wall opens to the outside. The covered way has its own gable roof whose ridgeline runs north to south. The east wall entrance is protected by a low shed roof.

At the south end of the covered way is a doorway into the back room. The molded, six-panel door with quirked Greek moldings originally provided the only access into the room. The room is square with a fireplace on the opposite south gable-end wall. The splined pine floorboards are secret or blind nailed rather than faced nailed as would have been more common in a service space such as a kitchen. The walls and ceilings were plastered from the beginning and the room lit by two, eighteen-light windows on each of the east and west side walls. Like the other period II improvements, they are set off by single architraves with quirked ovolos on the inside and exterior. Originally, the fireplace opening, which measures a little more than four feet in width, was trimmed with a chimneypiece, which was removed when the room was altered in the twentieth century.

This back room was removed from the rest of the house, buffered by the covered way, which provided the nearest exterior access. It was well finished, well lit, and had a fireplace to keep it warm. It is easy to imagine that with the changes to the front of the house, this room was designed to be a more private and larger principal bedchamber. This is the most logical function for the room, although not the only possible one. Alternatively, it could have been constructed to create a more spacious dining room. The doorway in the covered way would have provided communication with the detached kitchen. Because of the quality of its materials and details, the complement of windows, small fireplace opening, and lack of exterior access, the room was not

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set up to function as a new kitchen. There are very few examples of integrated kitchens in rural Tidewater Virginia in the early nineteenth century and none with such refinement.

A small enclosed winding staircase now rises in the northeast corner of the large room, but this feature dates to the twentieth century (there is a ceiling joist that was cut back to create the stair well opening). The stair rises along the north wall to an unfinished attic. It is not evident if there was an earlier hatch in the ceiling to provide access to this space, which had no windows until one was installed in the south gable on the west side of the chimney stack, probably at the same time as the staircase.

The unheated 14½-foot by 16-foot room added to the north front of the house functioned as a new unheated parlor room. The front wall made for an impressive entrance into the house with a pediment with flush-board tympanum above a transomed double door, which was flanked on each side by eighteen-light windows. The panes of the transom were held in place by arched and radiating muntins with more delicate circular tracery on the inside. The door leaves have raised panels. There is an inscribed "Carpenter & Co. Patentee" English iron rim lock on the inside of the west door leaf. A window on each side of the projecting enclosed porch provided additional light to this space and the old passage beyond. The interior walls and ceiling are plastered and the 5- to 7-inch wide floorboards are blind nailed. Removal of the original exterior doors meant that this new space was not cut off from the original passage but functioned as a continuation of the old central corridor. It is a well-finished, genteel sitting parlor with four windows providing light, air, and views of the landscape.

This form of enclosed porch has a provenience in this region of Virginia. First recognized in houses in Port Royal, Virginia, this extension either at the back or the front of the central passage appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the Rappahannock River town of Port Royal, the two-story 1778 Brockenbrough House with a plan similar to Kirnan's, had a one-story enclosed 14- by 14-foot room erected on the back side of the house around 1810 (now demolished). In a nearby lot, the original section of Townfield, a one-story, single pile house, was built in the last decade of the eighteenth century and had a one-story 12- by 12-foot enclosed entrance room added by 1817. The pedimented front wall is enhanced by a modillion cornice above a central double door flanked, as at Kirnan, by eighteen-light windows on either side. In addition, there are two rather than a single window on each of the side walls, providing an extraordinary flood of light and cross ventilation in this sitting room that looked out on gardens at the back of the house.

The grandest and earliest of these houses with a Port Royal room is Nanzatico (NRHP 1969), an imposing two-story dwelling erected in 1801 in King George County overlooking the Rappahannock River. A 16- by 16-foot, one-story Port Royal room projects from the landside front of the house. Like at Townfield (NRHP 1994), it has an impressive pedimented front façade with a blind D-window in the flush board tympanum and is trimmed with a modillion cornice, a double door with transom, and eighteen-light windows flanking the central entrance. The side walls have a pair of similar sized windows. Inside, it appears that the Port Royal room extension was planned as an integral part of the house. A segmental arch opening spans most of

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the space where the wall between the room and the central passage would have been. The staircase to the second floor is not in the broad passage but opens off it and runs parallel to one of its side walls. Thus, there is a broad uninterrupted space running from front entrance to back riverside doorway that makes the Port Royal room part of an integrated composition with an airy and well-lit corridor that bisects the house.

Whoever was responsible for the alterations to Kirnan in the early nineteenth century was cognizant of this local form as well as broader trends in house planning that responded to the growing desire for comfort and privacy and the consequent need for more rooms arranged in a manner that satisfied those requisites. The house is a fascinating example of how these currents were integrated into an older house form. It makes Kirnan even more intriguing and with its rich complement of original and early fabric a suitable candidate for listing on the National Register.

### *Archaeological Potential*

The property has good potential for the presence of archaeological resources. The current owners have found artifacts while gardening and walking on the property. The 1801 Mutual Assurance Society Insurance policy includes three outbuildings identified as a wooden kitchen, wooden barn, and wooden smokehouse. From a 1945 aerial photo, the location of barns, chicken houses, and other outbuildings are known from the Bowie/Taylor/Morrow era. A 2013 Google Earth aerial showed anomalies in a field. A path used by generations to walk to Yeocomico Church, four-fifths of a mile north-northeast, is visible in a field despite plowing. An icehouse near the pond during the Bowie era and a cemetery associated with the Garner family are said to exist on the property.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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**rootsweb.ancestry.com – Garner family, Campbell family & Westmoreland County history.**

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Taylor Family records, provided by Bill Taylor, Jr.

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<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/century/westmoreland.shtml>.

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**Westmoreland County Land Tax Records.**

**Westmoreland County Deed, Will and Inventory Records.**

White, Edward J. *Lands and Lesser Gentry of Eastern Westmoreland County, VA 1650-1840s.* Thomas Shore, Inc. Dexter, Michigan. 2014.

Wolfe, Thomas A., editor. *Historic Sites in Virginia’s Northern Neck and Essex County.* University of VA Press. 2011.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

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     Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** VDHR #096-0013

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property**     83.4    

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:                     

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.062080 | Longitude: -76.623670 |
| 2. Latitude: 38.065510 | Longitude: -76.618260 |
| 3. Latitude: 38.063580 | Longitude: -76.614550 |
| 4. Latitude: 38.060040 | Longitude: -76.613030 |
| 5. Latitude: 38.058950 | Longitude: -76.614180 |
| 6. Latitude: 38.059450 | Longitude: -76.620290 |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

#### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary encompasses a single 83.4-acre parcel identified as "Kirnan Tract," T.M 48, parcel 50, as surveyed May 13, 2011, by Edward G. Holsinger, Land

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Surveyor and as recorded by Westmoreland County. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Location Map and Aerial View. The property is located in the Cople Magisterial District of Westmoreland County. The boundary includes the main house, two noncontributing outbuildings, a pond, cultivated fields, and wooded areas. The north boundary is Zion Church Road (State Route 611). The western boundary is Lowe Drive (State Route 710) and the eastern boundary follows the meander of a small unnamed stream. The south boundary extends partially to Lowe Drive and is also bounded by various parcels under separate ownership.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the remaining single-parcel of 83.4 acres from the original acreage acquired by George Garner in 1780 and subsequently owned by the Garner and Campbell families during the period of significance. Historically part of a large agricultural tract, the inclusion of the remaining cultivated fields and woods contributes to Kirnan's historic associations, location and setting, and encompasses all known historic resources.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Leigh Ann Miller, Camille Wells, Carl Lounsbury, and Elizabeth Lipford

organization: Owner: Miller

street & number: P.O. Box 92

city or town: Sandy Point state: VA zip code: 22577

email: lanniemiller50@gmail.com; camillewells1@gmail.com; carllounsbury@gmail.com; elizabeth.lipford@dhr.virginia.gov

telephone: 703-472-4663

date: May 2019

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs



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to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Kirnan (China Hall)

City or Vicinity:

County: Westmoreland State: VA

Photographer: Leigh Ann Miller

Date Photographed: Spring/Summer 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17: Dwelling, exterior, north façade, camera facing southeast

2 of 17: Dwelling, exterior, east façade, camera facing southwest

3 of 17: Dwelling, exterior, west façade, camera facing north

4 of 17: Dwelling, exterior, south façade, camera facing northwest

5 of 17: Dwelling in setting, exterior, north façade, camera facing southeast

6 of 17: Approach driveway from exterior north façade, camera facing northwest

7 of 17: Granary, exterior, northeast façade, camera facing south

8 of 17: Dwelling, interior, stair hall, camera facing southeast

9 of 17: Dwelling, interior, stair hall, camera facing northwest

10 of 17: Dwelling, interior, stair detail, camera facing east

11 of 17: Dwelling, interior, northwest parlor, camera facing south

12 of 17: Dwelling, interior, north "Port Royal" parlor, camera facing northwest

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13 of 17: Dwelling, interior, northeast dining room, camera facing northeast

14 of 17: Dwelling, interior, southeast chamber, camera facing north

15 of 17: Dwelling, interior, south kitchen, camera facing northeast

16 of 17: Dwelling, interior, second floor, west bedroom, camera facing southwest

17 of 17: Dwelling, interior, second floor, east bedroom, camera facing northeast

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.