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An Architectural Walking Tour of Alexandria, Va.

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Although it is most famous for its 18th-century landmarks, the Old Town area of Alexandria is overwhelmingly 19th-century in character. Alexandria was founded as a Potomac River port in 1749 and had a population of 2,758 by the first census in 1790. Its first building "boom" occurred between then and 1810, when the population had risen to 7,277. A second period of major building activity ensued between 1850 and 1860, when the population rose from 8,734 to 12,652. By 1900, when 14,528 people resided here, Alexandria had a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential structures. Fine dwellings, modest wooden or brick row

houses, and noisome manufactories were intermingled in an unzoned welter, as in most American cities of the period. The gentrification of Old Town began in the second quarter of the 20th century.

Our tour begins at the **Friendship Firehouse**, now a museum, at **107 S. Alfred Street**. Alexandria's oldest fire company, established in 1774, originally faced Royal Street on Market Square. The first firehouse on the present site burned and was rebuilt in 1855. In 1871, a steeple was replaced by the present belfry (note the charming weather vane), and, more important, a new pressed brick front was

erected. The style of the facade, like that of many structures built during the first years of economic recovery after the Civil War, is retardataire. The molded brick cornice, elegant cast-iron neo-classical lintels (which may have been reused from the earlier front) and glazing pattern are all typical of the 1850s. The original doors were solid, not glazed. The capitals of the pilasters flanking the entrance are derived (remotely) from the Tower of the Winds order.

Proceed south one-half block, passing **Morrison House** at No. 116, a recent "Colonial" building vastly larger than anything built in Alexandria in the 18th century.

Turn left and stop at **819-817 Prince St.** The 800 block is a typical example of the stylistically mixed character of Old Town as a whole. These two houses at the corner, constructed circa 1803 by lumber merchants Leonard and Thomas Cooke, are small but very attractive examples of the Federal style. The house at number 819 was restored in 1932.

Numbers **813-815 Prince Street** were built in 1895, a variant of the Romanesque style popularized by Henry Hobson Richardson. The eclectic mingling of Richardsonian Romanesque carved stonework and round arched openings, molded brick, metal cornices, tile roofs and dormers with Colonial Revival Adamesque swags in the attic dormer lintels betoken the work of a builder, rather

than that of an architect. In 1895, Joseph Rodgers built these two houses at 815-813 Prince Street for Frank King.

Note the Italianate house at **811 Prince St.** That splendid house was built between 1849 and 1854 and sold in 1855 for \$18,000, a vast sum for the time. It is one of the few Alexandria houses with a high stoop and English basement. Note the crested roof of the conservatory on the east side. The interior has three large rooms en suite separated only by triple arches with pendant bosses. Lavish plaster cornices and centerpieces, marble mantelpieces and three matching 12-light Cornelius & Sons chandeliers adorn the interior. The three "Eastlake" chandeliers date from the 1870s and replaced earlier fixtures. Fine chandeliers were then regarded as furniture, not fixtures, and were often removed when houses changed ownership.

Turning right (east), note the house at **806 Prince St.** number 806 was built shortly after 1850 for the Rev. James T. Johnston, Rector of St. Paul's Church. This five-bayed Italianate house with central hall plan is a rarity for the 1850s in Alexandria. Almost all had side hall plans. The brownstone trim is also rare here. Note the cast-iron balconies and fence, and the bracketed cornice. The "flat" (i.e., monopitch) roof is standard for the mid-19th century. The vertical muntins of the windows have been cut extra wide to make sash windows

resemble French windows.

Looking north across the street, note **805 Prince St.**, built in 1895. Trim around the upper fenestration is composed of stamped metal, a ubiquitous sheathing around the turn of the century. Dr. and Mrs. William Seale, the present owners, have preserved the house with great care to keep its original ambiance. Continuing east past **804 Prince St.**, built circa 1815-20, note the particularly fine Federal style leaded glass entrance transom. The parapeted gable end of 804 Prince St. between two chimneys is typical of early 19th-century houses here, as elsewhere.

As you walk east across S. Columbus St. look south (right) to see the large cupola of **302 S. Columbus St.** (corner of Duke St.). That skymark crowns an Italianate building enlarged by 1859 for a private school, later (1888), housing St. John's Military Academy. Now made into ample dwellings, the building retains its 1850s exterior.

Note also the rich panoply of molded terra cotta and ornamental brickwork of the late 19th-century Queen Anne house at **719 Prince St.** Just beyond, at **711 Prince St.**, originally a two-story house built by 1808, note the Colonial Revival Palladian window, fanlighted entrance, and rectangular portico probably dating from around 1900 but once attributed to Charles Bulfinch.

The **Swann-Daingerfield House** at **706 Prince St.** has a complex building history. The east three fifths of the main block, and the east wing, date from circa 1803, and their interiors retain Federal style details. The western portion of the main block was originally Greek Revival circa 1850, as evidenced by an exterior panel of the bay window, and numerous interior details. Around 1870, the exterior and front hall and other interiors were restyled in an interpretation of the French Second Empire. In 1906 St. Mary's Academy added the large rear wing. Later the building served as Carter Hall, a nurses' residence for the Alexandria Hospital. The building now contains luxury apartments. Note the encaustic tile floor of the arcaded porch, the rope molding and elaborate brackets of the entablature, and the arched dormers of the mansard roof.

The **Lyceum** at **201 S. Washington St.** was built in 1839 and was probably designed by Benjamin Hallowell, who supervised brick and stonemason James Philips and carpenter-builders William H. McKnight and David Price. One of the two outstanding Greek Revival buildings left in Alexandria, the Lyceum was saved from threatened demolition and restored (after many vicissitudes) in 1974. The new interior lacks the bold effect of true Greek Revival work. The building now serves as the History Museum for the City of Alexandria.

Looking across S. Washington St. at the N.E. corner, note the former **George Mason Hotel** of 1925-26 by W.L. Stodderd, a New York City architect. Once deemed "Colonial" in spite of its bulk and shape, it demonstrates that "style" had come to mean superficial detail, not structure. At the S.E. corner stand the **U.S. Courthouse** and (former) **Post Office**, built in 1930-31. The Colonial Revival style was specifically required by the government because of the "historic" locale, actually the site of Ammi B. Young's Italianate U.S. Custom House of 1857-58. The former **Virginia Public Service Co.** building at 117 S. Washington St. (across Prince St. from the Lyceum) by Frank D. Chase, a Chicago architect, was remarkably avant garde for its date of 1929-30 in Alexandria. Note the elegant Art Deco detail, especially around the entrance. The vertical frosted lights flanking the entrance were probably a subtle reference to the service provided by the company, namely, electricity.

Walk south a few paces past the Lyceum to see the **Downtown Baptist Church**, the only extant example of the pre-Richardson phase of the Romanesque Revival in Alexandria. The front, with its corner towers, Lombard corbel tables, round-arched windows, and tall octagonal spire, was built in 1858-59 from plans by the Providence, Rhode Island architect Thomas Telft. The recent resurfacing lacks its ashlar scoring. The houses south of the church from number 220 S. Washington St. to

the corner of Duke St. were built in 1812 and have been known as **Lloyd's Row** since John Lloyd bought them in 1816.

Cross S. Washington St. at Prince St. and walk north a few paces past the former George Mason Hotel to see the **Washington Street Methodist Church** at number 109. Completed in 1851 as a Greek Revival building, the church was extensively altered and given its neo-Baroque front capped by molded zinc finials in 1876 by local architect John Lambdin.

Walk east on Prince St. to **South St. Asaph St.**, noting numbers 605-607, a very urban appearing Italianate pair of houses circa 1855. Their mastic ("stucco") facades are scored to resemble ashlar. The window lintels are cast-iron. The former **Second Presbyterian Church** at the N.W. corner of Prince and S. St. Asaph Streets was built in 1840 in the Greek Revival style. One can still see pilasters along the west wall. In 1889 architect Glenn Brown altered the church, giving it a Romanesque look that reflected the changed taste of the period. The capitals at the entrance and the colonettes above are stamped out of sheet metal. The building has been reworked for office use.

The white wooden house at the N.E. corner (517 Prince St.) dates from around 1775 and is probably the least altered 18th-century dwelling in Alexandria. It was originally a farmhouse. At the S.E. corner, number 520 Prince St.

with another entrance at 202 S. St. Asaph St. was built before 1796.

Walk south on S. St. Asaph St. Note the light colored finely molded brick of number **206 S. St. Asaph St.**, typical of the early 1900s. Number **208** was built in 1870 by carpenter-builder William H. McKnight as his residence. It is unusually restrained in design for its period. The sash were originally two-over-two-light. Across the street, numbers **209** and **211** once had identical fronts. Number **211** was probably built around 1810 and was altered to match 209 when the latter was built in 1852. In 1960, 211 was again altered, that time to approximate its original appearance. The inner transom of 209 retains its fine mid-century stained glass.

At **212 S. St. Asaph St.**, note the molded consoles supporting the first-floor window caps. There was once an elaborate carved cresting crowning the entrance lintel. The paired plate glass doors replaced earlier louvered doors around 1900. The molded brick roof cornice of this 1855-56 house is ubiquitous on first-rate Alexandria houses of the 1850s. The parlor of number **212** has a pair of original chandeliers, still gas-lit, splendid plaster cornices and centerpieces, and carved marble mantelpieces.

The **Benjamin Dulany House** at **601 Duke St.**, (N.W. corner of Duke & S. St. Asaph Streets) was built in 1783 and retains a remarkably intact original interior. Justly regarded as

"one of the choice examples of early American elegance," the house has recently been successfully purged of layers of inappropriate paint applied to the exterior brick. The **Lawrason House** at **302 S. St. Asaph St.** (S.W. corner) was built in 1815-16 and may well have been regarded as the finest residence in town when it was lent to the Marquis de Lafayette in October, 1824. It has since been known as the "Lafayette House." Note the unusual concentric fanlight ornamented with fifteen stars for the then extant states, and the paneled and balustraded parapet. Many Alexandria houses once had such parapets, but few have survived.

Walking south on S. St. **Asaph St.**, note numbers **305-307**, built circa 1785. The third story of 307 is an 1854 addition, and the entrance is a restoration of 1957 which reused a doorway designed by Thomas Tileston Waterman for the restoration of the later demolished St. Paul's rectory. A fire in 1862 left the house uninhabitable until 1866. The **Carlin House** at number **311** was built in 1874-75 by Alexandria builder-architect Alexander Lyles, who went with Carlin "to Chester, New York to get plans of a much admired building in that city as the model for the new house." This is perhaps the most distinguished Alexandria house in the Second Empire style. Note the incised carving of the stone lintels, the detailing of the porches, and the patterned slate of the mansard roof. The "flounder" (i.e., half-gable) houses at numbers **317** and **321 S. St.**

Asaph St. may date from the early 19th century. Number 317 has been extensively remodelled and enlarged. Number 319 was built in 1854. Note the molded brick roof cornice. The brick was not originally painted. Number 323 dates from 1852 and was built by George L. Seaton, a local carpenter-builder. Note the restrained late Greek Revival detailing typical of the 1850s.

Walk a few paces east on Wolfe St. to see the **Smith-Vowell House** at 510 Wolfe St. Built in 1854, this great three-story Italianate mansion is the finest surviving 1850s house in both scale and grandeur in Alexandria. It looms tall among its neighbors, as the first-floor rooms are sixteen feet high. The balcony above the entrance was originally railed. Observe the bracketed eaves and the splendid cast iron fence. Formerly there was an equally fine towered Italianate villa on the adjoining site to the east, sacrificed around 1960 for undistinguished pseudo-Colonial townhouses. Curiously, the two mansions stood only a block from a tannery and a foundry in the 19th century. Zoning came later.

Note the enlarged white wooden house at 322 S. St. **Asaph St.** The victim of a relatively recent "Colonial" treatment, it was originally an attractive example of the mid-century bracketed manner. When the local historic preservation ordinance was passed in 1948, buildings "100 years or older" were protected. That was

interpreted to mean structures built before 1848. Developers, naturally, supported that interpretation, and it was not until fairly recently that a sliding scale protecting any building 100 years old was enacted. Now retrace your route north along S. St. **Asaph St.** to **Duke St.**

Walking east on **Duke St.**, note number 518, built in 1852, and 516 which has been stylistically backdated, an all too common practice here. Number 512 is one of the few freestanding Queen Anne houses in Old Town Alexandria. Observe the terra cotta insets, stained glass transoms, and corner tower. Curiously, the face brick of the street elevation (which should not have been painted) was not continued into the tower. Across the street, the small wooden houses at numbers 513-519 **Duke St.** date from 1786 through the 1790s. On the south side again, the front of number 504 remains unaltered from the 1850s. Number 500 (S.W. corner) dates from around 1852 with a mansard roof added after 1864. On the N.W. corner, the house dates from around 1779. Washington dined there in 1795.

Walk north on **S. Pitt St.** as far as numbers 204-210, a row built in 1852-53. Note the fine cast-iron window grilles. Number 212, a pristine freestanding example with dormered gable roof, English basement and fine granite steps, was built in the 1840s.

St. Paul's Church at 222 **S. Pitt St.** was built in 1817-

1818 and is an extremely rare pre-Gothic Revival example of the Gothick phase of that style. Benjamin Henry Latrobe provided the design for the front and advised on the treatment of the flanks.² Latrobe complained that changes made by the Vestry cheapened and ruined his design. The front was derived (remotely) from Litchfield Cathedral's three great west front arches. The steeple proved unstable and was removed not long after its erection. The interior retains original narthex trim, clustered piers, and gallery parapets, and there are 27 stained glass windows by W.W. Vaughan installed in 1878. A chancel by Emmett C. Dunn, a local architect was added to the north flank of the church in 1897-99. The front of Norton Hall was demolished when the present parish buildings by H. Delos Smith were built in 1956. The resurfaced exterior and flanking modern additions have greatly compromised Latrobe's intended effect. His entrance trim and blind rose window motifs above the arches remain. Extensive restoration was commenced in 1996.

Turn east on Duke St., noting the fine row at the S.E. corner at **414-418 Duke St.**, built in 1854-55. The molded brick roof cornices already mentioned appear here again. Note the Gothic railing fronting the parlor windows of number 416. At **407 Duke St.**, observe the Lambert house of 1872 by local architect Benjamin Franklin Price. Along with the Lyles's Carlin house at 311 S. St. Asaph St., Price's Lambert House may

surely be accounted one of the two best Second Empire houses in Alexandria. The shell motif of the architraves, a favorite Price feature, also appears on his own house at **111 S. Columbus St.** Much interior trim can be traced to specific mill's trade catalogs.³ The west wing was added before 1885. Note the bay window and arcaded and galleried east porch as well as the polychromed slate of the mansard roof. Before turning south on S. Royal St., look east on Duke St. to see **St. Mary's Lyceum** of 1888 by Philip N. Dwyer at **313 Duke St.**

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church on S. Royal St. was built in 1827. In 1894-95 the present stone front and tower were added by local architect Philip N. Dwyer (1860-1897). St. Mary's is the oldest Roman Catholic parish in Virginia.

Passing through the parish buildings' gate facing S. Royal St., walk into the **Presbyterian Churchyard**, viewing the tower as you proceed. Passing the south flank of the Presbyterian Meeting House, you will arrive on S. Fairfax St. Just south of the Meeting House, at number **323 S. Fairfax St.**, note the handsome freestanding central hall plan house built around 1844. It was featured in Vol. XII, Number 4, of the White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs where the "lightness of scale, simplicity and delicacy" of the entrance double stairway was remarked upon.⁴

The original **Presbyterian Meeting House** was built in 1775

and overseen by merchant John Carlyle. It was a true meeting house in form, an almost square preaching room 50 by 60 feet with a pyramidal hipped roof that eventually supported a belfry and spire. That structure, planned according to Calvinist tenets rejecting the sanctity of buildings, burned in 1835, leaving nothing but parts of the brick walls. A date of 1775 for the present building, erected in 1837, is sometimes erroneously given. The classically proportioned bell tower of the gable-roofed 1837 Meeting House was added in 1843, and the one-bay deep simple and dignified front block containing gallery stairs was added in 1853. In 1929 architect Clarence Harding restored the galleried interior to its original quiet elegance.

Walking north on S. **Fairfax St.**, note the store at number 300 (S.E. corner). Old Town formerly abounded in small neighborhood corner stores like this example dating from the last quarter of the 19th century. The house at 227 S. **Fairfax St.** (N.W. corner) was built in 1852. The modern Federal entrance conceals a genuine late Greek Revival entrance with rectangular transom and sidelights that was intact except for the doorknob and its escutcheon. Why the Board of Architectural Review permitted the change remains a mystery. The house had remained almost totally unchanged since 1852, even to an original gas chandelier in the parlor, until an owner, deceived into believing the house was 18th century,

scrapped the original interiors for elaborate pseudo-Georgian work. Unfortunately, no law controls what owners may do to vandalize their interiors.

Fragments of number 217 S. **Fairfax** date from around 1786, but such extensive modern reconstruction and addition has been committed that what remains can hardly be called old, let alone original. Parts of 207-209 S. **Fairfax St.** may date from the 18th century, but the building, which was a coach building shop in 1833, was probably either rebuilt or even entirely replaced when sold in 1842. This Greek Revival double house certainly appears to date wholly from around 1842. Note the original door with Greek moldings at number 207. Front doors of that vintage have rarely survived in Alexandria. Across the street number 200 S. **Fairfax St.** (S.E. corner) was originally **Green's Steam Furniture Factory**. Thirty years ago, it was an automobile repair shop. It has now been gentrified into a group of luxury condominiums. Factories were a frequent source of devastating fires in the last century. The intermixture of residential and industrial properties here persisted well into this century.

Turn east on Prince St. The north side of the 200 block of **Prince St.** contains the finest 18th century row in Alexandria at numbers 207-215. Known as "**Gentry Row**," the group ranges in date from around 1783 into the 1790s. The water tables, belt courses, splayed lintels, enriched cornices and arch-windowed

dormers are typical of the period. Number 207 was the residence of Gay Montague Moore, who pioneered the rehabilitation of Old Town when this neighborhood was decidedly dubious. The **200 block of S. Lee St.** contained houses of ill repute, and the 100 block of Prince was condemned as unfit for human habitation. The rescue was none too soon. The mansion at **200 Prince St.** (and **201 S. Lee St.**) was built as a single dwelling around 1780. The paneling of the great parlor on the second floor is now installed in the City Art Museum in St. Louis. Unfortunately, the museum cut down the height somewhat to fit the paneling in a basement space. A reproduction of the paneling is on display at the Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

At **201 Prince St.**, (N.W. corner), is the other major Greek Revival building in Alexandria. It was built as the **Old Dominion Bank** in 1851-52, replacing a large wooden warehouse. It was named the **Athenaeum** (spelled correctly with the diphthong) at his suggestion when Denys Peter Myers was Director of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association in 1964. The NVFAA still owns the building. A photograph of Union officers taken on the portico in 1864 shows that the columns were then unfluted. Recently (1994) repairs revealed that the brick beneath the coating and the cast-iron capitals were designed for fluting. The photograph taken a scant twelve years after the building was finished seemed to suggest that the fluting was never carried

out. However, the fluting was "restored," and one can hardly object to the felicitous result.

The 100 block of Prince St. is known as "**Captain's Row.**" (The legend that the cobblestone pavement was laid by Hessian prisoners of the Revolutionary War is unsubstantiated.) Lots were being sold around 1784, but most of what had been built was destroyed by a major fire in January, 1827. Most of the 28 extant houses are modest in scale compared with those in "Gentry Row." Number 114 had attic frieze windows which have been incongruously altered into dormers. That change should not have been authorized by the Board of Architectural Review. The warehouse at **100 Prince St.** sustained major damage and was rebuilt after the 1827 fire. It was converted to a residence in 1966.⁵

Walk north on **S. Union St.** to King St., noting the use of salvaged cast-iron Doric columns at number 121, the large new post modern Italianate building at number 110, and the circa 1785 warehouse at the N.W. corner of Prince and S. Union St.. King St. forms the dividing line between the north and south cross streets.

At the **S.E. corner of King and S. Union Streets**, note the warehouse, now a long-established restaurant, built circa 1780 for Washington's Aide-de-Camp, Col. John Fitzgerald. In 1801 it was advertised as having "...a Sail Loft above the upper story

seventy-three feet in length and forty-two feet wide upon the floor all under one roof ...⁶

Number **100 King St.** (S.W. corner) was designed by local architect Benjamin Franklin Price and built in 1871-72 as the **Alexandria Corn and Produce Exchange**. The Exchange hall on the second floor was "25 feet high with a gallery and an arched ceiling, beautifully ornamented."⁷ This large building was an enterprising undertaking for a period of recovery from the effects of war. The style (Italianate) was a bit retardataire, which was usual for conservative Alexandria. The soft brick was originally coated in "mastic," i.e., stucco.

The **Torpedo Factory** at the N.E. corner of King and N. Union Streets was built by the U.S. Government in 1919 and provided naval arms during World War II. It was slated for demolition about twenty years ago, when better counsels prevailed. Now serving as a major arts and crafts enclave, it is the largest adaptive use project ever carried out to completion in Alexandria. The colorful art deco details date from the rehabilitation: the factory was strictly utilitarian.

Walk west on **King St.**, noting the late-18th century to early-19th century warehouses on the north side of the street. Observe the Gothic upper windows of numbers **107** and **109**, and the random stone base and large upper loft doors of number **115 King St.** In the

200 block, note the cast-iron lintels and entrance cheeks of the warehouse at number **201** (N.W. corner of King and S. Lee Streets), built in 1851 for William Bayne. Number **205**, a one-bay shop with dwelling above, is surely the narrowest such building in Old Town. Across the street, numbers **202-204** and **206-208 King St.** were completed in 1798 for Bernard Chequire and Colonel George Gilpin, respectively. The great four-bay-long second-floor front parlor of the Chequire House still has its magnificent Rococo plaster ceiling and fine paneling. Those merchants lived well above their shops. The Rococo style was already out of fashion elsewhere in America by the 1780s. Typically, Alexandria was a bit behind the times.

The **Ramsay House** at **221 King St.** (N.W. corner of King and N. Fairfax Streets), although often called "the oldest house," is an almost completely new building reconstructed in 1956 on the basis of old photographs and fragmentary remains. Some of the siding under the east-facing porch appears to be old. William Ramsay bought the lot on July 11, 1749 and is reputed to have had the house rafted up the Potomac from another site.

At **100 S. Fairfax St.** (S.E. corner), note the **Burke** and **Herbert Bank**, a good early-20th-century example of the Beaux-Arts manner. The signs below the cornice are unfortunately placed, as they interfere with the triglyphs and metopes of the entablature

frieze. Walk a few paces south to view the **Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop** at number **105 S. Fairfax St.** Now a museum and antiques shop, it was built between 1774 and 1785 and first by occupied by Edward Stabler in 1796. The shop fronts were restored on sound evidence including curved shutters found in the attic. The interior of the southern half contains an extremely rare circa 1845-50 shop fitted up in the Gothic style. Walk north across King St., and continue on N. Fairfax St. Numbers **113-115 N. Fairfax St.** were built around 1796-97. Note the splayed lintels with keystone motifs, and the brick roof line cornices.

The **Carlyle House** at number **121 N. Fairfax St.**, is (and always was) the finest mid-18th century house in town. This stone mansion was built in 1751-53 (just after Alexandria was founded), probably by John Ariss for John Carlyle, although Carlyle himself may have dictated the design, which is close to Craighall by William Adam in Midlothian, Scotland. Certain features were based on books by James Gibbs. By the 1850s the house and its dependencies had been concealed by a hotel, demolished in 1974, when the Northern Virginia Park Authority engaged architect J. Everette Fauber, Jr. to restore the house. The original roof structure and front entrance had long since vanished, and only the paneled N.E. corner room remained of the interior. That room had been preserved for its historical importance as the site of the conference of Colonial Governors who

planned Braddock's campaign and its financing which led to the Stamp Act. Much of the restoration is conjectural including the east Palladian window lighting the new staircase.

The **Bank of Alexandria** at **133 N. Fairfax St.** (S.E. corner of N. Fairfax and Cameron Streets) had also been part of the now demolished hotel. Captain Richard Conway supervised the construction of the Bank during 1803-07 and was quite possibly its architect. Now restored, the banking room contains much fine trim ornamented by compo moldings equal in quality to those in the Octagon House owned by the American Institute of Architects in Washington, D.C. Walk west on Cameron St. to see the **City Hall** and four buildings on the north side of the street.

Number **305 Cameron St.** began life as **Duvall's Tavern** and was built by 1783, when Washington was entertained there. The center hall plan appears to have been more usual for public houses than for private residences in 18th-century Alexandria. The water table is typical for the period, but the lack of a belt course is less so. Note the Italianate upper windows of the mid-19th century paired loft buildings at numbers **315-317 Cameron St.**, and the Gothic second floor windows (finer than those at 107 and 109 King St.) at Number **319**, built circa 1845-55.

The **Alexandria City Hall**, built in 1871-73 by Adolph

Cluss, (1825-1905) Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, occupies the south side of the 300 block of Cameron St. with wings extending part way along N. Fairfax St. and N. Royal St. to form an originally U-shaped building. The courtyard facing south was enclosed by a "Williamsburg Colonial" wing in 1961. The east portion housed police headquarters and the municipal courtroom. The central pavilion under the largest mansard roof in Northern Virginia contained the Mason's Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 and Museum, not dedicated until February 24, 1874. The west portion replaced the 1817 Market House and City Hall that burned in 1871. The previous building had been surmounted by a tower with clock and spire attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The northwest section sheltered market stalls on the ground floor with city offices and hall above, as in mediaeval English practice. The old tower had been held in such affection that donors commissioned Benjamin Franklin Price to build a new tower the size and shape of the old one, completed in 1873. Cluss provided galvanized iron cornices and cast-iron trim in an effort to render his brick building fireproof. Almost nothing remains of the original interiors.

After viewing Price's tower on the west wing of Cluss's City Hall, observe the two adjoining buildings on the S.W. corner of S. Royal and Cameron Streets, now known as **Gadsby's Tavern**. Parts of the

smaller building may date from 1766. In 1782 owner John Wise either replaced or enlarged and altered an earlier structure. The Flemish bond, water table and belt course, splayed and keystoneed lintels, and pedimented dormers are all typical Georgian features. The entrance trim and roof cornice date from 1782. This building was originally known as the Coffee House. The larger City Hotel at the corner built in 1792, contains a second-floor ballroom. In 1917 the Metropolitan Museum of Art bought the front entrance and ballroom trim. Col. and Mrs. Charles Beatty Moore (Gay Montague Moore) recovered the front entrance but not the ballroom from the Met. in 1949. A replica of the original in the Metropolitan's American Wing now graces the Gadsby's Tavern ballroom. Recent restoration of the Coffee House was by J. Everette Fauber, Jr.

Walk west on Cameron St. The somewhat conjectural reconstruction of **Washington's town house** at number **508 Cameron St.** was built in 1960. The original was built in 1769 and demolished in 1855. Note the attic frieze windows of number **511 Cameron St.**, built around 1850. Windows of that Greek Revival type are typical of the 1840s. Number **511** and number **516**, where there is yet another 1850s molded brick roof cornice should never have been painted. Their hard face brick was designed to withstand weather indefinitely.

Note the roof parapet at number **604 Cameron St.** Many early to mid-19th-century

Alexandria houses had parapets, but almost all have perished through neglect. The pair of houses at numbers **609-611 Cameron St.** were commenced in 1795 by the local carpenter-builder John Bogue. Number **611** was Bogue's own residence, and numerous original interior features remain there. It was subsequently occupied in 1810-1811 by General Henry Lee ("Light Horse Harry"). The corner house at **131 N. Washington St.** was built before 1824 and enlarged and restyled in 1870. The entrance at **618 Cameron St.** is a 20th century pseudo-Federal addition. Note the somewhat ponderous window architraves of 1870, and the elaborate east porch, complex brackets and iron-crested mansard roof of the same date. If the outer doors on Washington St. are open, inspect the marble vestibule floor and lavish paneling of the inner doors, all dating from 1870.

Number **607 Cameron St.**, the **Yeaton-Fairfax House** was built by William Yeaton to his own design circa 1802. Thomas, Ninth Lord Fairfax resided in the house from 1830 to 1846. William Yeaton (1761-1853) who was from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, produced the finest, as well as the most unusual, house of the Federal period in Alexandria. Before entering, note the delicate moldings of the circa 1802 entranceway. The interior contains superb molded composition ornament and plaster work and a beautiful spiral staircase.

Cross North Washington St. and walk through **Christ**

Churchyard, noting the 1950 "Williamsburg Colonial" Parish House to the south, and the monumental obelisk by Robert Mills, a memorial to Charles Bennett, an early town benefactor. Ahead, numbers **116-130 N. Columbus St.** may be dismissed as a new example of "instant quaint," but those houses, called "**Church Square**," are a vast improvement on the barren parking lot extending clear to Alfred St., a concentration camp for automobiles, that disfigured the neighborhood for over forty years.

Christ Church is one of Virginia's most notable colonial churches with its quoining, bell tower erected in 1818 and its magnificent palladian window. Designed by James Wren in 1767, the church was constructed by undertaker [contractor] James Parsons who failed to finish the project. Col. John Carlyle completed the edifice, and it was accepted by the vestry on February 27, 1773 as "finished in a workmanlike manner."⁸ The galleries were added in 1818 at the same time as the tower. Shortly after the Civil War, the interior was revised to provide a Gothic Revival east end that was removed when architect Glenn Brown restored the original appearance of the interior in 1891. George Washington and Robert E. Lee both attended Christ Church and their pews, although altered, may be seen today.

After viewing **Christ Church**, proceed north along the **200 block of N. Columbus Street**. The row of houses at

201 through 211 N. Columbus St. was constructed as a speculative venture in 1871 by the German American Building Association. As in the case of the Friendship Firehouse the style is retardataire. The house at **201** has its original cellar grille, but numbers **203-205 N. Columbus** do not have their original brick or window trims. An original stoop for these dwellings survives at **209-211**.

The houses at **215-219 N. Columbus St.** were designed by Glenn Brown, Alexandria's first professionally trained architect and Secretary of the American Institute of Architects. Numbers **215-219**, an early example of the Queen Anne style, were built in 1886. Number **215** has been mercilessly mauled, but number **219** retains most of its original appearance.

Across the street from **215-219 N. Columbus Street** is the **Odd Fellows Hall**. Originally one story, it housed Virginia's oldest female free school in 1812. The building also served as a site for an African American Church, the Hamiltonian School, an Odd Fellows Lodge, a Civil War prison and St. John's Academy. In 1888 the Odd Fellows added the building's front block now containing a lavish townhouse."

The **Muir House** at **228 N. Columbus St.**, also by Glenn Brown, was constructed in 1893. The stone ground floor of the balanced front elevation was inspired by the work of H.H. Richardson. After viewing **228 N. Columbus Street** turn right

and walk east on the 700 block of Queen Street. On the north side, at **717 Queen St.**, is the **Barrett Branch** of the **Alexandria Library**. Its front block was constructed in the Colonial Revival style in 1937 at the same time that Perry, Shaw & Hepburn were designing Williamsburg. The library was designed by architect Frederick Tilp. The dwellings at **714-718 Queen Street** were constructed as typical row houses in the 1890s.

Proceed to the S.W. corner of Queen and North Washington Streets. The **Lloyd House**, **220 N. Washington St.**, is one of Alexandria's finest late Georgian dwellings. Built in 1797 by John Wise, its beautiful pedimented doorway, splayed lintels and modillioned cornice are outstanding features of this central hall plan dwelling. It lacks a water table and belt courses, which are characteristic of pre-Revolutionary work. Refurbished for adaptive use in 1974, the edifice now houses the extensive historical and genealogical collections of the Alexandria Library.

Cross to the N.E. corner of N. Washington and Queen Streets. Numbers **301-307 N. Washington St.** are four wooden houses built in 1853 by Robert Brockett. The attic frieze windows are typical of the 1840s. The doorways, with the exception of **305**, which has its original rectangular transom, have been "improved" by fanciful backdating.

Across the street at **300 North Washington Street** is a

massive building constructed in 1961. This overpowering behemoth caused the Alexandria City Government to establish height limitations in the Old and Historic district.

Walk north to **323 N. Washington Street** which was constructed the 1870s. This delightful gem is built in running bond of hard faced brick and is ornamented with trim of admirable restraint and delicacy. Note particularly the cast-iron lintels, sills, and entablature grilles, and the side porch with its jigsawn railing.

Further north on Washington Street at **329** is the **Mandell/Gregory House**. Mandell purchased the lot for \$400 in 1821, and in 1829 he advertised a two-story house for rent at this location. It was William Gregory, the proprietor of a dry goods store, who acquired the dwelling in 1832 for \$4,000 and subsequently added the third floor. Unlike 307 S. St. Asaph Street, the added third story was carried out in the Flemish bond of the lower story instead of the running bond of the mid century.

Walk north beyond the Gregory house and note the handsome Victorian doors at **411-413 N. Washington Street**. Most Alexandria entrance doors of the 1850s had octagonal panels. These two Italianate townhouses were built by John Lambdin for Messrs. Emanuel Downham and Henry Green in 1874. They have "large bracketed cornices while the windows are given a simple pedimental treatment and the

segmental pediments over the centered entrances are restrained."¹⁰ Heavy bay windows embellish the flanks of the paired dwellings.

All stylistic indications are that the house at **417 N. Washington Street** was designed by architect Glenn Brown. The various subtly balanced elements of the front display the skill of an accomplished architect and the influence of Henry Hobson Richardson upon him. An eyebrow window on the section of roof above the entrance bay has, most unfortunately, been recently obliterated which disturbs the original rhythm of the design.

At the S.E. corner of Washington and Oronoco Street is the **Lee-Fendall House**. It was initially constructed circa 1785 but was so thoroughly rebuilt in 1850-52 for Louis Cazenove that it is now overwhelmingly a late Greek Revival house. It was the home of various members of the Fendall and Lee families and was occupied by the labor leader John L. Lewis from 1937 to 1969.

West of the Lee-Fendall House at **428 N. Washington Street** is the **Edmund Jennings Lee House**. Construction was commenced in 1791 for Beale Howard, a local butcher. The dwelling was subsequently finished for Edmund Jennings Lee, who purchased the property in 1801. Edmund Jennings Lee was Robert E. Lee's uncle and mayor of Alexandria from 1815 to 1818. The house is laid up in Flemish bond with an outstanding pedimented doorway

trimmed with finely detailed molding. The modillioned cornices are equally fine.

On the north side of **Oronoco Street** at **609-607** are the handsome twin houses constructed by John Potts in 1796. They are laid up in Flemish bond with splayed lintels, water tables and slightly projecting pedimented central pavilions, which were characteristic of late Georgian architecture in the middle colonies. The planter William Fitzhugh of Ravensworth Plantation in Fairfax County purchased 607 in 1797 for his townhouse. Following Fitzhugh's death in 1808, the dwelling was resided in by young Robert E. Lee from 1811 to his departure to study at West Point in 1825.

Our last stop on the tour is the large 4 1/2-story white-painted brick building on the S.E. corner of N. Washington and Pendleton Streets. It was built in 1847 as the **Mount Vernon Cotton Factory** and employed "upwards of 150 hands, mostly industrious females," at \$12.00 to \$17.00 a month for 11-hour days. In the 1930s it was converted into apartments. The Corinthian portico and broken "Georgian" pediment with

pulvinated frieze are an all too familiar Colonial Revival motif. The cupola, however, is striking, and its recently installed gilded eagle weather vane is a welcome skymark along North Washington Street.

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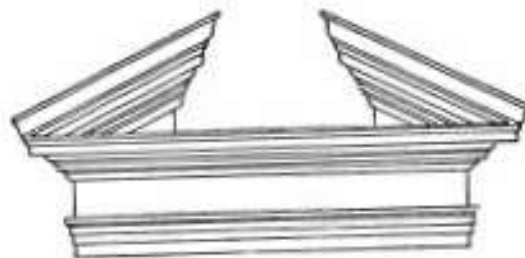
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ENDNOTES:

1. Cited from the February 21, 1874 *Alexandria Gazette* on p. 34 of Penny Morrill, *Who built Alexandria? Architects in Alexandria 1750-1900* (Northern Va. Regional Park Authority, 1979).
2. A deposition provided by the Rev. Wm. H. Wilmer in the 1823 legal suit of *Robert Brockell, Jr. vs. the Vestry of St. Paul's Church* states that Benjamin H. Labroze merely furnished the plan for the Church's facade. Whether Labroze performed additional work is being reviewed. [Anne S. Paul]; See Alexandria Library, Lloyd House microfilm No. 00028.
3. Penny Morrill, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
4. Edith Cox, *Historic Alexandria, Va. Street by Street* (Historic Alexandria Foundation), p. 46.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 118; 6. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
7. Morrill, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; 8. Morrill, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
9. Roland M. Fryc, Jr., "The History and Architecture of the Building at 218 N. Columbus Street, Alexandria, Virginia" in *The Fireside Journal* (May 1990), p. 58.
10. Penny Morrill, *op. cit.*, p. 9.



broken pediment

A Glossary of Architectural Terms

by Denys Peter Myers

- Adamesque -- derived from or inspired by the Neo-Classical style of the brothers Robert (1728-1792) and James Adam (1732-1734, British architects)
- Arcade--a series of arches supported by columns or piers
- Art Deco--a style of "modern" ornament initiated in 1925 by a Paris exhibition
- Architrave -- the finish surrounding a door or window
- Ashlar--regularly coursed blocks of rectangular stonework
- Balustrade--a railing supported by balusters
- Baroque--a lavishly ornamented style originating in 17th-century Italy
- Bay--a section of wall containing a single opening
- Beaux Arts Architecture--a formal style based upon earlier precedents taught during the last century at the Ecole-des-Beaux Arts in Paris
- Belt Course--a slightly projecting string course banding a building
- Blind Window--a blocked up window motif
- Boss--a circular ornament terminating a downward projecting element
- Bracket--an ornamental support element
- Bracketed Eaves--eaves supported by a series of spaced brackets
- Brick-face--a hard baked brick used primarily for front elevations
- Brick-molded--brick with a low relief ornamental outward surface
- Brick-pressed--analogous to molded brick; machine made brick in Alexandria after 1840
- Broken Pediment--a triangular pediment interrupted before the apex
- Brownstone--a sandstone easily carved but subject to spalling
- Capital--the upper most element of a classical column or pilaster
- Central Pavilion--the projecting middle portion of a formal elevation usually crowned by a pediment
- Classical--derived from or using elements of ancient Greek or Roman architecture
- Colonial Revival--architecture after the American Centennial of 1876 using elements of colonial architecture
- Colonette--a small column
- Compo--a mixture of whitening and glue ornamentally molded and applied to a surface
- Console--a form of bracket
- Corinthian--the most elaborate of the three Greek orders--also used by the Romans
- Cornice--a molded projection at the top of the wall. a crowning element
- Conservatory--a glassed in space containing plants
- Corbel Table--an element composed of a run of arched motifs
- Cresting--ornamental trim on a roof
- Cupola--a roofed element glazed on all sides straddling a roof ridge
- Doric--the simplest of the Greek orders--also used by the Romans
- Dormer window--a window structure projecting from the surface of a roof and lighting an attic
- Eastlake--a style promulgated by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (1793-1865), an English art critic
- Eaves--the projecting edge of a roof
- Encaustic Tile--patterned tile, the colors composed of paint and wax set by heat
- English Basement--a raised basement almost a full story above ground level
- Entablature--the horizontal element spanning columns or a wall in classical architecture composed of an architrave, frieze and cornice
- Escutcheon--the metal plate surrounding a key hole
- Eyebrow Window--a low window on a roof surface contained in a continuously flowing frame
- Fanlight--a semicircular or elliptical window above an entrance
- Federal Style--American architecture built between circa 1780

and 1830
 Fenestration--pertaining to windows
 Finial--a top ornament
 Flank--the side of a building
 Flemish Bond--brick laid in each course in alternating headers and stretchers
 Flounder House--a half gable house
 Fluting--vertical channeling on a column or a pilaster
 French Window--a window composed of two hinged sections instead of sliding sash
 French Second Empire--a style featuring Mansard roofs inspired by architecture under Napoleon the Third (1851-1870)
 Frieze--the middle section of an entablature
 Gable Roof--a roof with two slopes of equal pitch
 Gallery--balcony
 Galvanize--iron or steel treated with rust-resistant zinc
 Gentrify--to rehabilitate neglected dwellings, raising them to a higher standard of convenience and safety. Sometimes used invidiously to price former inhabitants out of their neighborhoods
 Georgian--the style prevalent during the reigns of King George I through King George IV (1714-1830); In America, primarily from 1714-1776.
 Gothic Revival--a style based more or less upon the pointed arch architecture of the Middle Ages from the late 18th century onward
 Greek-Revival--a style using ancient Greek elements. Flourished from 1820s until the 1850s.
 Grille--open ironwork, often ornamental
 Italianate Style--a style using Renaissance motifs. Flourished during the 1850s and 1860s.
 Jigsawn Railing--a railing supported by boards sawn into ornamental patterns by a jigsaw
 Keystone Lintels--lintels with keystones motifs at their center
 Leaded Glass--glass supported by ornamentally patterned lead supports
 Lintels--elements bridging the top of door or window openings
 Lombard -- North Italian
 Louver--a slated opening
 Mansard Roof--a roof of two slopes on all sides, the lower slope

steeper than the upper
 Mastic--a stucco like coating over brick often scored to resemble ashlar masonry
 Metopes--the spaces between triglyphs in a Doric frieze
 Modillioned Cornice--a cornice supported by closely spaced flat brackets
 Muntins--the dividers separating glass in a sash
 Narthex--the vestibule chamber at the entrance of a church
 Obelisk--a tall four sided stone shaft ending in a pyramidal tip
 Order--one of the Classical modes of architecture which include the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite
 Palladian Window--a tripartite window with an arch headed central section named for Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), sometimes called Venetian windows -- See the east window of Christ Church for example
 Paneled and Balustraded Parapet--see parapet above the eaves of the LaFayette House, 301 S. St. Asaph Street
 Parapet--a low wall, usually wooden crowning the eaves
 Parapeted Gable--a low brick parapet straddling a gable between two chimneys -- See 804 Prince Street
 Pedimented Dormer--a triangular headed dormer with a double pitched roof
 Pilaster--a flat vertical element composed like a column
 Plan-Central Hall--a dwelling with a hall in the middle flanked by equal rooms on either side
 Plan-Side Hall--a dwelling with entrance and stair hall flanked by rooms on only one side
 Polychromed--multi-colored
 Portico--an open shelter usually at an entrance supported by columns
 Pre-Richardsonian phase of the Romanesque Revival--Romanesque Revival architecture of the 1840s and 1850s (The Smithsonian Castle is a major example.)
 Pulvinated Frieze--a frieze with an outwardly swelling curved profile
 Queen Anne Style--an eclectic, picturesque architectural style derived from the work of

English architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). The style had nothing to do with architecture dating from the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714). Queen Anne style was popular in the 1880s and 1890s.

Quoining--projecting ashlar blocks emphasizing the corner of a structure

Retardataire--old fashioned, conservative, backward looking

Richardsonian Romanesque Style--a style derived from the work of Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), a leading American architect of the 1870s and 1880s. He was famous for Trinity Church in Boston and the Alleghany County Buildings in Pittsburgh, PA among others. The old Post Office Building at Pennsylvania Avenue and 12th St. in Washington, D.C. by Willoughby J. Edbrooke is an example of Richardsonian style.

Rococo--a lavishly ornamental curvilinear style of French origin that flourished circa 1715 to 1760

Romanesque Style--The Medieval rounded arch style that preceded pointed Gothic style

Rope Molding--molding turned or carved to resemble rope

Romanesque Revival--A style based on Romanesque precedents that flourished circa 1845 to 1855 and from 1875 to 1895 (Second or Richardsonian phase)

Rose Windows--circular windows subdivided by ornamental tracery

Running Bond--brick laid with several courses containing no headers. The courses of all headers usually occur every 7th course.

Sash--window frame containing glass usually double hung with at least lower sash moveable

Scoring--indented markings in stucco or mastic to imitate ashlar blocks

Second Empire Style--see French Second Empire Style

Segmental Pediment--a pediment with a continuously curved top instead of a triangular gable

Sidelight--narrow vertical windows flanking a door

Splayed Lintel--a lintel wider at the top than at the bottom

Stoop--entrance steps with top

platform

Stucco--a cement exterior finish or plaster interior finish

Swags--garland motifs

Terra Cotta--ornamentally molded, unglazed, fired clay

Tower of the Winds--a 1st century A.D. clock tower in Athens. The order of its two columned portico was frequently copied during the American Greek Revival period.

Transom--the horizontal window, usually rectangular above an entrance door. Interior transoms are rare in Alexandria.

Triglyphs--the triple grooved motifs alternating with metopes in a Doric frieze

Two-Over Two Light--sash containing two panes in the upper sash and two in the lower

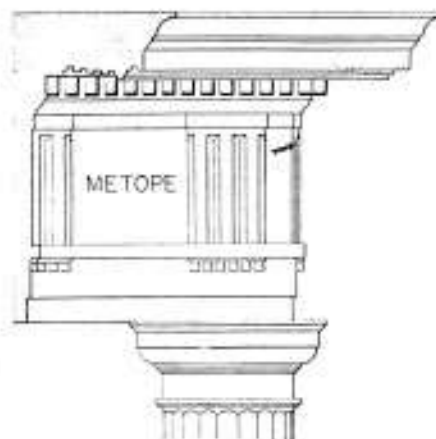
Vestibule--an enclosed entrance chamber

Water Table--a projecting base usually capped by rounded brick to deflect rain, terminating the upper portion of a basement wall

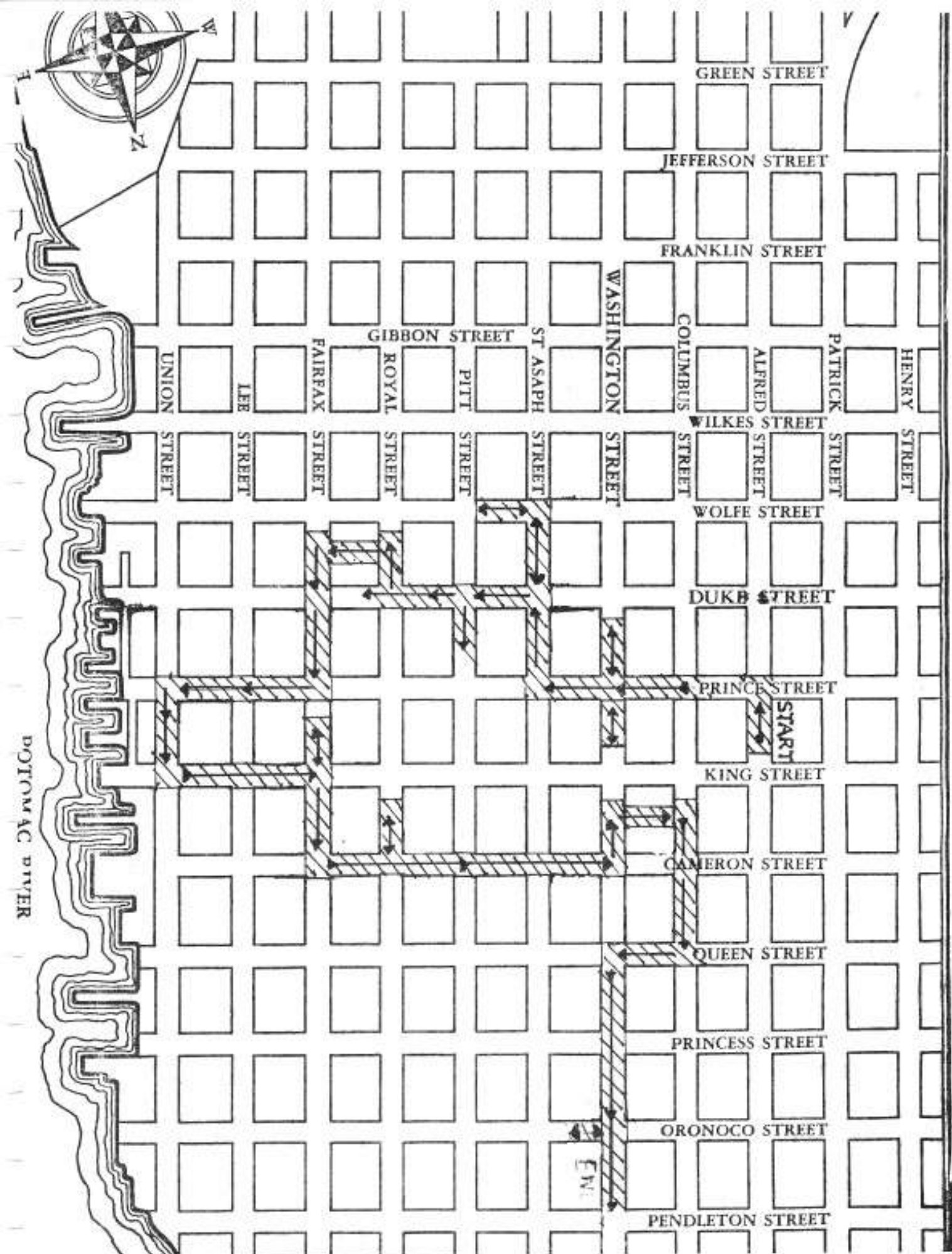
Williamsburg Colonial--Colonial Revival architecture derived from archaeological research at Williamsburg, Virginia

Window Caps--projecting molding above windows

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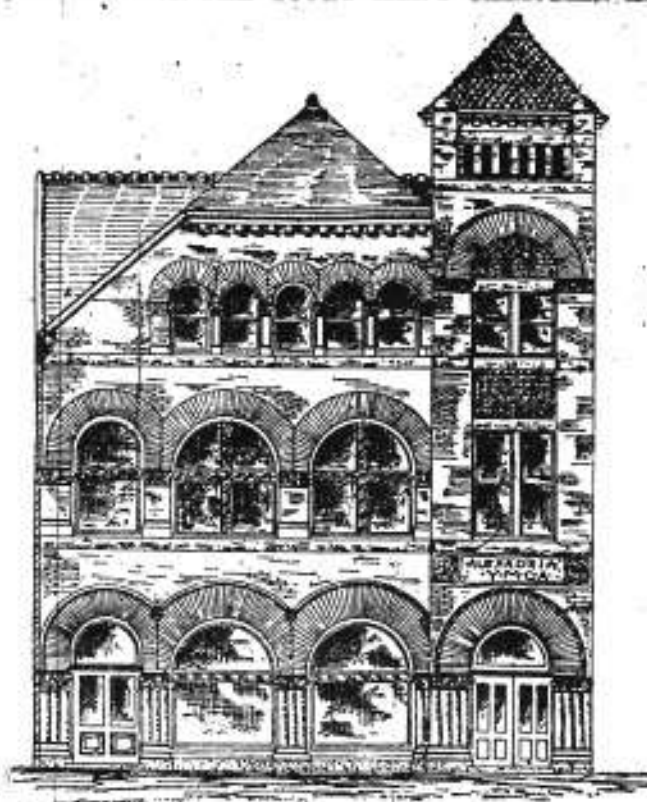


An Architectural Walking Tour of Alexandria, Virginia



PROPOSED BUILDING FOR THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Young Men's Christian Association at its monthly meeting in February decided that the time had arrived when the young men of Alexandria should have an attractive place of healthful resort. A building committee was appointed consisting of G.R. Hill, Thomas Leadbeater, D.N. Rust, Worth Hulfish, R.F. Tucker, W.T. Emerson, N.S.



Greenaway and W.L. Hatch. This committee at once instructed Mr. Glenn Brown, architect, to prepare plans, and the above represents the front elevation of the proposed building, to cover a lot 43 x 102 feet. The rear will contain a large and well-equipped gymnasium, together with running track, bowling alley 60 feet long, baths, lockers and swimming pool. Over the gymnasium will be a lecture hall, with a seating capacity of about 500. The front part of the building will contain on the first floor two handsome stores; on the second floor will be the reception room, parlors, men's reading room and library and boys' reading room; on the third floor class room, committee rooms, play rooms and kitchen; on the fourth, or attic, floor boys' rooms and janitor's room. Over \$1,000 towards the cost of this building has been subscribed by members of the association. ...The people of Alexandria are expected to give their hearty support and co-operation as the building will be an ornament to the city. Alexandria Gazette: 3/30/1889 [Probably due to a shortage of capital, this building was never constructed in Alexandria--T.M. Miller]



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