1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Eyre Hall

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior March 2, 2012

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 3215 Eyre Hall Drive Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Cheriton Vicinity: X

State: Virginia County: Northampton Code: 131 Zip Code: 23316

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing		**Noncontributing**	
buildings	4	buildings	11
sites	3	sites	0
structures	1	structures	3
objects	0	objects	0
Total	8	Total	14

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ 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 ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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): _____

Signature of Keeper Date

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Sub:
Domestic	Single dwelling
Domestic	Secondary structure
Funerary	Cemetery
Agriculture	Processing
Agriculture	Agricultural fields
Agriculture	Greenhouse
Landscape	Garden
Landscape	Forest
Landscape	Unoccupied land

Current:	Sub:
Domestic	Single dwelling
Secondary structure	Domestic
Funerary	Cemetery
Agriculture	Agricultural fields
Agriculture	Agricultural outbuildings
Landscape	Garden
Landscape	Forest
Landscape	Unoccupied land

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Colonial (Georgian); Early Republic (Federal)

Materials:

Foundation:	Brick
Walls:	Frame
Roof:	Wood shingles
Other:	Brick (chimneys)
	Stone (porch floors)

Summary

Eyre Hall's national significance under National Historic Landmark Criterion 4 lies in the exceptional character and preservation of its historic architecture and landscape. It is a rare example of a vernacular, Chesapeake architectural ensemble of the Colonial and early Federal period. This Georgian house, expanded and improved in the Federal period—combined with its surviving original hardware, furnishings, books, silver, and family portraits, as well as extant outbuildings and gardens—tells a rich story of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century material culture and the society that produced and utilized it. Occupying much of its original acreage and surrounded by the marshes and watercourses that have characterized the Eastern Shore for centuries, the landscape at Eyre Hall still preserves the carefully sequenced spaces that helped visitors, guests, and slaves understand their relationships within a hierarchical domestic and production community. Taken as a whole, Eyre Hall embodies and conveys the wealth, status, and architectural choices made by a single family over many years. These choices reflected the local and more expansive milieus of the Chesapeake Bay region.

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance[1]

Eyre Hall plantation is located in Northampton County, Virginia, approximately 3.2 miles south of the county seat of Eastville. The property lies on the bayside of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, generally bounded by the waters of Cherrystone Creek on the west; Eyreville Creek on the north; and Eyre Hall Creek on the south. U.S. Route 13 forms the eastern boundary of the nominated property. The 467-acre tract includes eight significant contributing resources, most of which are located in the immediate vicinity of the main house, and include: a large Georgian-era frame house with Federal and twentieth-century additions, three historic outbuildings, a historic family cemetery, a large well-preserved eighteenth-century garden, and a largely intact eighteenth-century landscape, all set in an unaltered context of water and wetlands. Most of the noncontributing resources are positioned singly or in small groups at various locations around the edges of the district boundary.

Landscape (contributing site)

A curved brick and picket gateway built in the mid-twentieth-century marks the entrance to Eyre Hall. A mile-long lane, running roughly east-west, divides the property, leading past the residential complex and farmstead and continuing west towards Cherrystone Creek. Between the entrance and the residential complex, the lane passes a caretaker's house, then proceeds through tilled fields, as it did historically. An allee of cedar and crape myrtle lines the roadway. Beyond the residential complex, the lane continues through open fields until it reaches the woodlands bordering Cherrystone Creek. At the end of the lane, near Eyreville Creek, is a 1930s one-and-one-half story frame guesthouse with adjoining dock.

The residential complex and farmstead lie to the north of the entrance lane, surrounded by a three-rail white board fence, which also encloses an open lawn. Within the larger fenced area, a second decorative Federal-style wood fence defines the residential complex itself, consisting of the main house, two historic outbuildings, the ruins of an 1818 orangerie, the family graveyard, and a large walled garden. The farmstead, with its attendant stable, sheds, and garage, is located to the east of the residential complex. Behind the farmstead, outside the board fence, is a recent office. The historic slave quarters were located to the east of the office across a branch of Eyreville Creek near a noncontributing, twentieth-century stable (Stable #2).

A wide path through thick oak, poplar, pine, and holly woodland continues the axis of the garden to the north. The path leads to Eyreville Creek, with a view toward the house at Eyreville, another plantation owned by members of the Eyre family in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early-twentieth centuries; a bridge across the

[1] This description relies heavily on materials prepared by Michael Bourne, Restoration Consultant, as part of a 2004 Historic American Buildings Survey recording project for Eyre Hall. See the bibliography in Section 9 of this nomination.

creek once connected the two properties.[2] At the head of Eyreville Creek is the site of a former gristmill. There are three noncontributing tenant houses in the woods bordering the creek; the caretaker's house is located at the edge of the woods north of the lane, not far from the entrance.

A historic brick 1½ story overseer's house, built in 1798 and modernized and expanded in the late-twentieth century, is located south of the entrance lane at the headwaters of Eyre Hall Creek. Not far away is the site of the slave cemetery, as well as a barn and another tenant house. A large pasture surrounded by board fencing lies opposite the main house. Near the pasture is the site of a former icehouse.

Residential Complex

The main house faces south across the lawn and consists of three sections representing at least four building campaigns. Littleton Eyre bought 700 acres of land on Cherrystone Creek in 1754–55 and the gambrel-roofed main block of the house was completed shortly thereafter. Adjoining to the east, but set well back from the line of the main block, is a two-story gable roof frame east wing built by John Eyre, the grandson of the builder, who inherited Eyre Hall in 1789. Three insurance policies, dated 1796, 1805, and 1807, document the complex construction history of this wing. The earliest portion, shown in the 1796 and 1805 policies, consisted of a small, one-story frame addition; the 1807 policy shows that the original addition has been expanded and raised to a full two stories, its current configuration. Aligned with the east end of the nineteenth-century addition is a gable-roofed one-story hyphen leading to a tall gable-roofed one-story frame service wing set perpendicular to the rest of the house. The hyphen and the service wing were built in the early 1930s at the same time that the historic house was restored. In 1990, the east end of the hyphen, originally an open breezeway, was enclosed and the interiors of the 1930s addition were remodeled.[3]

East of the mansion, within the residential complex, are two small frame historic outbuildings, a ca. 1760 dairy and an 1807 smoke house.[4] North of the main house is a large parterre garden with its main axis running perpendicular to the house. An early-nineteenth century brick and picket fence encloses the garden. To the west of the garden are the ruins of an 1818 orangerie. To the north of the orangerie is the walled family graveyard.

House (contributing building)

Main Block: Exterior

Exterior: The original double-pile one and one-half story main block of the house measures 40 feet square. The raised brick foundation is laid in Flemish bond with grapevine joints. Beaded weatherboard siding is attached to the studs with rose-head nails. The lower slope of the gambrel roof is unusually steep and the whole roof is covered with fish-scale wood shingles. A cornice of classical crown and bead moldings and undercut modillions is located where the roof meets the wall, and another simpler cornice is located between the upper and lower

[2] Fanny Fielding, "Southern Homesteads, 'Eyre Hall'" *The Land We Love* 3 no. 6 (October 1867), 506; US Coastal Survey, 1876. The bridge is clearly visible on the map.

[3] Littleton Eyre is known to have moved to his newly-acquired Eyre Hall plantation in 1759. A dendrochronology analysis conducted in 2002-3 confirmed the ca. 1759 construction date for the main block and the 1807 date for the second addition but was unable to collect any testable material to establish the construction date for the first addition. Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, "ODL Interim Report 2003/8, Eyre Hall, Cheriton, Northampton County, Virginia," computer generated report accessed April 30, 2004 (in the possession of Michael Bourne, Chestertown, Maryland), 2; Mutual Assurance Society, "Form of the Declarations for Assurance Nº. 123" (Eyre Hall), 1796; Revaluation of the Buildings Insured per Declarations Nº. 123" (Eyre Hall), 1805; "Revaluation of the Buildings Insured pᵉʳ. Policy Nº. 278" (Eyre Hall), 1807, microfilm available at the John D. Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA.

[4] The 1807 insurance policy shows the dairy and the smokehouse in their current position; in the 1796 and 1805 insurance policies they are reversed. The 2003 dendrochronology report suggested that the dairy was constructed during the original building campaign and moved in 1807 but cautioned that it might have been rebuilt in 1807 reusing old timbers. Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, "Interim Report," 3.

roof slopes. The two extremely tall inside chimneys on the east gable dominate the house. A screened two-story, Federal-style porch is centered on the west façade facing Cherrystone Creek. The early foundation and original exterior door opening on the upper level suggest that there was a two-level porch here originally. The insurance policy of 1796 shows porches on all four elevations. John Eyre enlarged and partially enclosed the east porch between 1805 and 1807 and may have rebuilt the others at the same time. The present east porch was probably built in the 1930s based on the surviving porches on the other elevations.

The **front (south) elevation** of the main block is divided into three bays. On the first floor the westernmost bay contains the main entrance under a one-story hipped roof porch; large 9/9 sash windows fill the two bays to the east. The three bays on the second floor, set within the lower slope of the gambrel roof, contain shallow hipped roof dormers with smaller 9/9 sash windows. The cornice of the dormers is a continuation of the upper roof cornice. The entrance consists of a very large eight-panel door set into a massive frame. The lion-headed brass doorknocker was brought here in 1870 from Old Castle, the home of Margaret Parker Eyre, the second wife of Severn Eyre III.[5] The door is protected with a recent storm/screen door. The door and the window frames are original. As is the case for most of the windows in the main block, the original Georgian window sash, with wide 1¼″ muntins, was replaced with the present Federal-style sash, with slender ¾″ muntins, by John Eyre in the early nineteenth century. Louvered blinds protect all openings on the first and second floor. Windows with original iron bars fill the two eastern bays in the brick foundation.

The south porch rests on a solid brick foundation and is reached by a short flight of steps. Two pairs of slender turned Doric columns support the low-pitched hip roof, with corresponding half columns again the wall. The porch cornice does not align with the main cornice and differs from it in profile. A balustrade of turned Doric colonettes encloses the porch and forms the backs of two benches flanking the door. The porch floor is covered with square white and gray marble pavers set in a gray marble surround. The marble steps have molded edges and flare outward as they descend to the lowest step, which is finished with volutes. There is a marble carriage step a few feet in front of the steps.

The **west elevation** is divided into three bays. The two end bays contain 9/9 light Federal windows. The doors in the middle bays on the first and second floors are slightly off-center, but this asymmetry is disguised by the symmetrical placement of the two-story portico. Because the west elevation is a gable, it rises a full two and one-half stories high. The sash of the single small attic window at the third-floor level was not replaced in the early nineteenth century and retains the original wide muntins. Very boldly shaped bargeboards cover the eaves of the lower slope of the roof and the ends of the cornices. The foundations, weatherboard, and windows have the same details as the south façade. Four original cellar windows are symmetrically placed in the foundation. The west portico is supported on a brick half vault that differs from the foundations of the other porches and appears to date to the original construction. The west portico resembles the south porch in materials and details; the second-floor columns are considerably shorter than the first, reflecting the lower ceiling heights of the second story inside the house. Full cornices are located between the first and second floor of the portico and define the pedimented gable; the tympanum is filled with beaded shiplap boards.

The **north elevation** consists of four bays, plus a small window added at the east end in the 1930s.[6] A one-story porch covers the entrance, located in the westernmost bay. The cornice on the front of the porch is original, but on the sides, the original moldings have been replaced. There are original basement windows in the two

[5] Family tradition states that the lions' head knocker, a symbol of Britain, was brought over from the Parker family home in England when Old Castle was constructed in 1746.

[6] According to the owner, this window was installed in 1933, replacing a door that led to an early twentieth-century bathroom addition removed in the restoration.

easternmost bays. Otherwise, the siding, windows, roofing, and cornice are identical to those on the south elevation.

The two-and-one-half story **east elevation** resembles the west elevation in materials and details, including the distinctive bargeboards. Originally, it contained four bays, but the two-story east wing now covers the northernmost bay. The 9/9 sash in the southernmost window of the first floor is original to the 1760s house, as is the 4/4-pane sash in the two windows at the third-floor level. The remaining windows contain Federal period sash. There are no windows in the foundation, but a gable-roofed bulkhead entrance to the basement is located in the southernmost bay. The stacks and corbelled caps of the two chimneys rise above the roof on this elevation. A 1990 storm knocked down these character-defining features, but they were immediately rebuilt in kind.

Between 1805 and 1807, part of the area occupied by the east porch shown in the 1796 insurance policy was incorporated into an enclosed "porch room" that was created to provide indoor access to the east wing, apparently for the first time.[7] The present open porch, rebuilt in the 1930s, resembles the north and south porches, but is only about five-feet deep. The large eight-panel door is identical to the other exterior doors of the house. The narrow south elevation of the porch room contains a single, tall 12/9-pane Federal period window. A small windowless lean-to connects the porch room with the first floor of the east wing.

Main Block: Interior:
Most of the interior finishes in the main block appear to date from the original construction of the mid-eighteenth century. In his renovations of the old house in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, John Eyre hung elaborate French scenic wallpaper in the stair hall and installed fine Federal style mantels in the downstairs rooms. Changes made in the course of the 1930s restoration appear to have been confined to converting two small second-floor rooms to bathrooms, stripping paint from the woodwork in the library and the upstairs hall, and replacing the original plaster in all the principal rooms. The first- and second-floor rooms all exhibit high-quality workmanship, but there is a clear hierarchy of finishes, which helps identify how the rooms were intended to be used. In eighteenth-century gentry houses, the public rooms, particularly those used for entertaining, received the finest finishes. The doweled and blind-nailed flooring in the first-floor rooms is exceptionally fine. Most finishes on the second floor are relatively simple, but the same fine flooring found on the first floor appears here as well. This unusual feature suggests that in Littleton Eyre's house the demands of gentility extended to private rooms as well as public ones.

First Floor
The first floor of the main block consists of three large rooms: a wide passage running the full depth of the house with two smaller rooms to the east. A wide elliptical arch divides the passage into a very elaborate **entry hall** and a less finely finished **stair hall**. The fully paneled entry is the most elaborately finished room in the house. Bold fluted classical pilasters rising from plain pedestals are located on the north and south walls near the corners of the room. The pilasters are exceptional in that they not only taper but also have entasis. The five-part Ionic cornice is approximately 19″ deep. The heavy-fluted keystone over the south door indicates its importance as the main entrance to the house. This keystone, the keystone at the center of the arch, and the pilasters are expressed through all the elements of the cornice. The baseboard retains original marbling.

Two deeply-molded eight-panel exterior doors lead from the entry onto the south and west porches; an interior door on the east wall leads to the parlor. The doors are hung on original blind-mounted brass butterfly hinges. The west door has iron staple keepers for a wooden security bar, probably surviving from the 1760s. All doors of the main block and several in the 1807 wing are fitted with what appear to be original brass mortise locks

[7] The description of Eyre Hall in the 1850s refers to this room as the "porch-room;" Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 508; Mutual Assurance Society, Policies for Eyre Hall, 1796, 1805, and 1807.

with exceptional fretwork escutcheons. One window is located on the west wall. Because the entry cornice is so deep, the elaborate three-piece window trim "breaks" into the architrave.

The **stair hall** is more simply finished than the entry. The south wall flanking the arch is fully paneled, but the remaining three walls are plastered above the paneled dado and the cornice is somewhat shallower than the one in the entry. Littleton Eyre may have planned to install wallpaper here, but scenic French wallpaper installed by John Eyre in the early nineteenth century currently covers the walls.[8] Like the entry, the baseboard retains original gray marbling. Within the 4′-2″ depth of the arch, paneling extends up to the impost of the arch. From there, the soffit is plaster. A shallow display cabinet or closet is set into the west interior face of the arch. A pair of doors above the chair rail opens to reveal curved display shelves with flanking fluted pilasters. The doors are fitted with a key-operated lock and the stationary leaf has a handsome brass dead bolt with foliated ends.

The stair hall contains one exterior door opening onto the north porch, an interior door into the library on the east, and a small door on the south leading to the basement stairs. The hardware appears to be largely original. One window is located on the north wall and another on the west wall.

The open string stair rises along the east wall to a landing, then turns and ascends to the second story within the depth of the arch. The balustrade has three turned balusters per step and ends with a bold single-revolution volute. The profile of the handrail is typical of the pre-Revolutionary period and ramps up before terminating into the south wall. A half rail on the east wall mirrors the handrail; the dado beneath the half rail is paneled. The spandrel beneath the balustrade and the walls of the landing and upper flight are also paneled.

Like the entry, the **parlor** is fully paneled. All four walls are covered with bold fielded paneling, but the moldings of the parlor are slightly less elaborate than those in the entry. Pairs of classical fluted pilasters flank the door to the entry on the west wall and the fireplace on the east wall. Like the entry, the deep six-part cornice breaks out above the pilasters. Three eight-panel doors match the moldings of the panels. The west door leads to the entry. The other two doors flank the fireplace on the east wall. The door to the right of the fireplace opens into a small closet; the door to the left probably provided access to a small service lobby originally. It now leads to the "porch room" created in 1807 to provide interior access to the east wing. The elaborate brass hardware on the doors is probably original. The two windows on the south wall have Federal period sash. Here, too, the baseboard retains its original dark grey marbleizing.

Littleton Eyre's inventory of 1769 suggests that the parlor may have been the finest room in the house. The inventory includes seven "large looking glasses." Two of these may be the very expensive "gilt pier Glasses" that appear in Severn Eyre's inventory of 1774, only five years later. Although the 1774 inventory is not room-by-room, it suggests that the pier glasses were in the same room as a "Chimney" glass.[9] In addition, a description of the house in the 1850s refers to the "mirrored walls" of the parlor. The presence of three or more large mirrors in this room would have transformed an already elaborate space into a remarkably impressive one, especially by candlelight.[10]

[8] The inventory taken at Littleton Eyre's death shows a "parcel of stamped paper for hanging," which may refer to wallpaper, often used in stair halls in the eighteenth century. "An Inventory of the estate of Colonel Littleton Eyre deceased," 1769, Northampton County Wills and Inventories No. #24, 1766-72, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA (microfilm available at the Library of Virginia, Richmond), 224. The current wallpaper was made by the French firm of Dufour around 1816 and is called *Les Rives du Bosphore* (The Banks of the Bosphorus).

[9] Chimney glasses were normally found in the finest room in an eighteenth-century house.

[10] "Littleton Eyre Inventory," 224; "An Inventory and Appraisement for the Estate Severn Eyre Es^{q}. deceased taken 27th February 1774," Northampton County Wills and Inventories. No. 25, 1772-77, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA (microfilm available at the Library of Virginia, Richmond), 391; Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 508.

Centered on the east wall is a Federal period mantel of exceptionally fine proportions, probably added by John Eyre during his renovations. The mid-eighteenth century paneling around the fireplace was altered slightly when the mantel was installed. The light grey marble surround stands on plinths that may date to the original house. The firebox walls have plaster cheeks between the grey marble and older limestone walls. The hearth is also made of marble.

The **parlor closet** was not affected by the 1930s restoration and retains much original material. The plaster in this space is original, hung on riven lath and in poor condition. The edge-grain flooring is pegged and blind nailed. As it is in every case where there is a juncture between the flooring in a main room and an adjoining space, the seam is carefully finished with a half lap rather than a butt joint. The single window retains its original Georgian sash. The inner side of the door retains nineteenth-century graining. Four original shelves are located on the north wall; the shelves on the opposite wall have been cut out for ductwork. Boards added in front of the east window provide additional shelving.

The **library** and its finishes are simpler than any of the other major first-floor rooms. The walls are plaster, with paneled dado and a five-part cornice. The original paneled chimneybreast was modified when the black marble mantel was installed in the early nineteenth century, but the outline of the original bolection molding is still visible. All of the paint was stripped from the paneling in this room during the 1930s restoration. There are two original windows with Federal sash on the north wall and a door leading to the stair hall on the west wall. Two additional doors flank the chimneybreast on the east wall. The north door leads to a closet converted into a lavatory in the 1930s. The present small window in the lavatory replaced a narrow doorway leading to a bathroom addition built ca. 1915 and removed in the 1930s. Originally, the south door likely opened to the same small service lobby accessed by the north door in the parlor; it now leads to the porch room and, through it, to the east wing.

The **porch room**, created between 1805 and 1807, has the same doweled, blind nailed edge-grain yellow pine flooring as the rest of the first floor. The dado and cornice resemble those in the library, but the panels of the dado on the north and south walls have been converted to doors opening into shelved storage cabinets. One window with Federal period sash is located on the south wall. This small room is full of doors: two on the west wall leading to the parlor and the library, a huge original door opening onto the east porch, and, on the north wall, an arched opening and short passage ending at the door to the east wing. The trim on the arched opening is pieced together, possibly indicating that it has been altered. The passage has paneled dado but no cornice and the ceiling is low and asymmetrically arched to conform to the shed roof above.

Second Floor

The second floor of the main block was originally divided into five bedchambers arranged around a central stair hall. The two northwest chambers were converted into bathrooms in the 1930s restoration. The **second-floor stair hall** now contains seven doors opening to the two bathrooms to the north, three bedrooms on the east and south, the upper level of the two-story portico, and the stairs to the attic respectively. All doors except the one leading to the portico are paneled, with original brass hardware. Originally, all interior doorways had three-pane stationary transoms to let light into the hall, which had no exterior window.[11] The original portico door, probably also solid, was replaced in the nineteenth century with the present glazed door, hung on cast iron hinges. Like the principal chambers on this floor, the stair hall has plaster walls and ceiling (dating from the 1930s), original paneled dado, cap, baseboard, and cornice, and the same fine, edge-grain, blind-nailed, and pegged flooring found on the first floor. Tack holes suggest that the floors throughout the second floor were carpeted in the nineteenth century. A large bronze grill from an early heating system is set into the floor

[11] The door to the northeast bathroom is a replacement. Above the door to the attic stairs is a single board surrounded by beaded trim. Apparently a transom was unnecessary above this door, as there was natural light from the attic.

opposite the top of the stairs. All woodwork in the stair hall, including the balustrade around the stairwell, was stripped of its original paint in the 1930s restoration.

The chimneybreast in the east wall of the **southeast (master) bedroom** is paneled, but otherwise this room retains the same paneled dado, cap, baseboard, and cornice as the stair hall. The chimneybreast has two horizontal raised panels above the three-part trim surrounding the fireplace. Two tall, vertical panels separated by a bolection chair rail flank the chimneybreast. The paneling in this room and in all the remaining rooms on this floor is painted, as it was historically. The black marble fireplace surround screens a segmentally-arched fireplace opening. At the back of the firebox is a large cast iron fire back bearing the name B. Grymes and the date Nov. 5, 1758. Because the windows on the north and south sides of the house are dormers, the two 9/9 windows in this room are deeply set in the vertical interior wall. Like all the other dormers, they have raised panel jambs/shutters and window seats, very carefully joined. Two original closets are located on either side of the chimneybreast. Each of the closets has a single small window with 4/4-pane sash and simple ogee-molded trim. The flooring in the closets is face nailed. The interiors of the closets were completely remodeled in the 1930s.

The **southwest (yellow) bedroom** has the same finishes as the other bedrooms, but there are no closets and there is no fireplace. At some point, a bronze supply grill under the west window was installed to provide heat to this unheated space; the grill is still in use. The dormer window on the south side has the same paneled window seat and jambs as the windows in the southeast bedroom. The window on the west wall is not a dormer, so its splayed jambs are shallow.

The **master bathroom** and the adjoining **blue bathroom** were originally two small equal-sized chambers. When the two rooms were converted into bathrooms, the wall separating them was moved to the east, to give more space to the master bathroom. At the same time, the door to the master bathroom was moved to the east. The two original chambers were as well finished as the other bedrooms, with paneled dado and window seat, cornice, and eight panel doors. The dado in both rooms was removed and re-used in the dining room during the 1930s restoration, but the original paneled window seats and cornices remain in place. Some of the bathroom fittings in the master bathroom were replaced in the 1990 remodeling; the fittings and some of the finishes in the blue bathroom date to the 1930s. The 1930s flooring in both bathrooms has been replaced.

The **northeast (blue) bedroom** is smaller than, but otherwise closely resembles, the master bedroom in its paneled dado, cap, baseboard, and cornice. Like the other dormer windows on the second floor, the dormers in this room have paneled window seats and jambs. The chimneybreast, centered in the east wall, is paneled. The marble fireplace surround differs from that in the master bedroom. Its wood trim contains a back band with Greek Revival detailing, like the arches in the back hall downstairs; both date from the early nineteenth century. Two closets flank the fireplace. The south closet contains a heat supply. Each closet originally contained a small window; the window in the south closet remains, but the window in the north closet was replaced with a door when the closet was converted in the early-nineteenth century into a passage leading to the second floor of the east wing.

The finished **attic** is divided into two sections. The eastern half is a single, undivided space. The western half contains the stairwell, a smaller room, and a walk-in closet. The original board and batten door to the west room survives. The walls and ceilings of the rooms retain their original plaster, which is applied to split oak lath. Wrought rose head nails attach the lath to the studs and joists. The west room has been whitewashed only once. The Georgian window sash in the attic dates to the period of original construction. Stabilizing trusses and tie bars were added during the 1930s restoration. Original exterior siding on the main block, covered when the

second floor of the east wing was built in 1807, is visible through an opening in the cuddy area under the eaves on the north side.[12]

The **cellar** under the main block of the house is divided into four spaces that correspond roughly with the rooms above. The two spaces on the west side of the house, under the entry hall and stair hall, retain their original dirt floors. The walls are laid in English bond and retain a single row of putlog holes. Most of the framing is oak, some showing evidence of having been reused in the original construction; the northwest room was at some point damaged by fire.[13] Framing for the doors has been removed, leaving only openings in the masonry. Original window frames remain, but the window sash was replaced in the 1930s restoration. Two girders running east west, one original and one added in the 1930s, are located near the partition separating the two rooms. Pipe columns provide additional support for both girders. The joists are carefully arranged to allow all the flooring on the first floor to run in the same direction. The original brick arch supporting the fireplace in the library above survives, as do the two windows on the north wall. The girder framing the enclosed stair leading to the first floor is original, but the remaining fabric of the stair appears to date to the twentieth century. There are two openings in the east wall on either side of the fireplace arch; both currently hold modern ductwork. Much historic fabric survives in the southeast room, including portions of brick flooring and windows with original iron security bars. A small storage space, apparently once covered with a framed door fitted with trefoil hinges and a mortise lock, fills the alcove to the north of the chimney arch; its function is unknown. All doors in this space have been removed, but surviving nailing blocks indicate that there was once trim around the door leading to the northeast room. The door to the southwest room was altered in the 1930s restoration, which also added a diagonal reinforcing girder supported by a brick pier in the center of the room.

East Wing: Exterior

The east wing was built in two stages. A single one-story frame block measuring approximately 24′ x 20′ was completed by 1796. The second addition, dating from about 1807, raised the first addition to a full two stories and extended it to a total length of 57 feet. Beaded weatherboard siding and the simple cornice of the combined structure are continuous, as is the brick foundation, which was rebuilt in 1807. The brick is laid in Flemish bond, using bricks that are smaller than those used in the main house. Originally, occasional bricks were left out to provide ventilation for the crawl space under the wing. These were filled in during the 1930s restoration and replaced with wood-framed barred vents.

A tall brick chimney centered on the gable roof marks the end of the first, one story addition. The single window on the first floor is trimmed with a Greek ogee backband molding. The **north elevation** of the first addition consists of two symmetrical bays filled with the same large windows as the south wall. In the second 1807 addition, the first floor of the **south elevation** contains a narrow, central double door flanked by windows. On the second story, there is one window over each of the first-story openings, all dating to 1807. On the **north elevation**, there are two windows directly above those on the west end, but the remainder of the north elevation is asymmetrical. Each floor contains two bays but the windows in the eastern bay do not align vertically. There is no door on this side of the wing. All of the windows in the second addition are smaller than those in the first and their trim is simpler. Approximately half of the windowless **west elevation** abuts the original house. A chimneystack rises above the roof at the **east end** of the wing. Part of the east elevation is covered by the one-story 1933 hyphen, but there is a single window north of the chimney on each floor.

East Wing: Interior, First Floor

The east wing shows the same kind of hierarchy of finishes found in the main block. The first addition is more elaborate and more finely finished than the second addition and within the latter levels of finish decline from west to east. The single large room in the first addition is used as a **dining room**, as it probably was originally.

[12] The 1760 siding was undercut where it was applied to the studs; the 1807 studs were cut to receive the full-thickness siding.
[13] Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, “Interim Report,” 2.

In the 1930s restoration the original edge-grain yellow pine flooring was carefully marked, taken up, and re-laid after the sills and joists had been stabilized—doweled and blind nailed as it had been originally. Tack holes indicate that the room was carpeted at some point. Two 14″ x 20″ bronze heating grills in the floor on the north side of the room date from the 1930s renovation. Paneled dado was moved here from the main block in the 1930s. Window trim on all three windows shows Greek Revival influence. Wood Greek revival molding with corner blocks is mounted flat on the ceiling. Trim around the two doors resembles the window trim. The west door leading into the main block resembles those in the ca. 1760 house; the east door, leading to the 1807 addition, is a double-action Greek Revival door. The fine Federal-style mantel was made and installed in the 1930s.[14]

A long, narrow **back hall** runs the length of the first floor of the second addition, connecting the dining room with the 1930s kitchen in the hyphen. The flooring in the hall is butted together and face nailed with "T"-headed nails. There is no cornice and the trim is simpler than in the dining room. Details and finishes are finer at the west end of the passage next to the dining room, than they are at the east end adjacent to the kitchen. The west door trim has a Greek ogee molded back band while the east door has the same simple molding found on the windows. The chair rail at the west end has a cove molding under the cap whereas the east end has none. Of the two doors on the north wall of the back hall, the door to the pantry on the west is a finer door than the one to the den on the east.

A steep staircase leading to the second floor is located directly opposite the exterior door at approximately the mid-point of the back hall. Both the stair and the passage show evidence of having been carpeted. Two semicircular arches flanking the stair and double door divide the passage into three sections and help disguise its length. The section to the west of the stairs contains a single window on the south wall and doors to a closet (probably installed in the 1930s) and to what is now the pantry on the north. The middle section contains the double-entrance doors on the south and the back stairs to the north. The double doors are original. Some of the hardware has been altered or replaced, but original staples for a wooden security bar remain. The section to the east of the stairs contains a single window on the south wall with two openings to the north: a door to what is now the den and a small closet door added in the 1930s. The hardware on the den door has been altered but it is simpler than the pantry door. There are staples for a security bar on the hall side of the den but its purpose is unknown.

The room now used as a **pantry** was historically a storeroom, as indicated in the description of Eyre Hall in the 1850s.[15] The pantry retains original door and window trim and a small piece of chair rail, but the other finishes and fittings date from the 1930s. There is a safe in the northwest corner of the room.

The **den**, located east of the back stairs and adjoining the 1930s kitchen, was the housekeeper's room, according to the 1850s description. "Aunt Nanny Parker," sister-in-law of Severn Eyre III, later occupied it. Tack holes in the original face-nailed yellow pine flooring indicate that the room was carpeted in the nineteenth century. Original window and door trim, chair rail, and baseboard survive, but much of the north wall is covered by modern floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. The fireplace opening appears to have been modestly reworked. A single door under the stairs on the west wall opens into a closet that was retrofitted for arranging flowers in the 1930s restoration.

East Wing: Interior, Second Floor

The entire second floor of the east wing dates to ca. 1807. The finishes here closely resemble those on the first floor of the second addition and show the same gradation in quality from west to east. There were originally three bedrooms connected by a narrow upstairs back hall on the north, but in the 1930s the space occupied by

[14] Evidence in the crawl space indicates that the size of the fireplace in this room was reduced when the 1807 addition was built.
[15] Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 508.

the central chamber and an adjacent closet was converted into two bathrooms. Trim throughout the second floor consists of baseboards, chair rails, windows, and doors, with no dados and no cornices, and all the flooring is tongue-and-groove yellow pine, face nailed with "T" head nails.

The **west (purple) bedroom** corresponds to the dining room. The flooring is generally unbroken for the length of this large room. Wallpaper presently covers the plaster walls. The baseboard and chair rail in this room resemble the ones at the west end of the passage. The fireplace has been reworked. The single window on the south wall and the two windows on the north are original, as are the three doors, though one of them is not in its original location. Their hardware has been altered or replaced. The single door on the west wall leads to the northeast bedroom in the main block. The door at the north end of the east wall leads to the upstairs back hall, the one on the south end to a bathroom created in the 1930s.

The **west (purple) bathroom** was originally part of the middle bedchamber. It retains two features from that period: the window on the south wall and the fireplace with mantel. The simple trim for both appears to be original, although the black marble surround and hearth may be a more recent addition. The remainder of the room dates to the 1930s; the period wall tile and fixtures are lavender. A hatch in the closet ceiling provides access to the garret.

The yellow pine flooring in the **upstairs back hall** is rougher than that in the west bedroom, with wide grain and knots. The baseboard and chair rail have the same moldings as those at the west end of the back hall on the first floor. An original window with simple two-part trim is located on the north wall. On the south is a pair of double doors to a closet created when the center bedroom was converted into a bathroom. Doors at each end of the hall lead to the west and east bedrooms.

The flooring in the **east (green) bedroom** is tongue-and-groove yellow pine, face nailed with narrow "T"-headed nails. The door and window trim, baseboards, and chair rails are extremely simple. There are two doors on the west wall, one leading to the back hall and the other to what is now a bathroom but formerly a closet. The doors are original. Single original windows are located on the north, south, and east walls. The firebox on the interior chimney on the east wall has been patched and its grey and white marble surround and hearth are not original. The simple surround matches nothing else in the house; there is a crude mantelshelf above. A built-in cabinet fills the entire space between the fireplace and the south wall.

The **east (green) bathroom** includes space taken both from the original middle bedroom and from a former closet and has a window on the south wall. The wall tile, floor, and fixtures are green. Like the west bathroom, this room is a very good, intact example of 1930s bath design.

Although the upper part of one of the chimneys collapsed on the roof of the east wing in a 1990 storm, the **garret** shows no evidence of serious damage. The rafters are currently covered with beaverboard. The tie beams are dovetailed into the rafters and secured with wrought rose-headed nails.

The **crawl space** under the dining room provides additional evidence supporting the building sequence of the main house. The foundation of the west wall of the addition stops at the foundation of the original block, which shows clear evidence of having been exposed to the elements before the wing was constructed. The joists in the first addition are large; the sills were replaced in the 1930s restoration. The joists in the crawl space under the 1807 addition are somewhat smaller and are partially hewn and partially sawn; the western part of the crawl space is inaccessible.

1930s Wing: Exterior

During the 1930s restoration, a small nineteenth-century frame kitchen was removed and replaced with a modern one-story addition consisting of a frame three-bay hyphen and a four-bay brick-ended service building set perpendicular to the rest of the house.

The south elevation of the **hyphen** is divided into three bays, each within an elliptical arch. The brick foundation also consists of a series of three arches. The two bays on the west are filled with beaded shiplap siding and contain single windows. The east bay was originally an open breezeway; in 1990, its arch was filled-in with a glazed exterior door and sidelights. The north elevation is similar, with the same elliptical arches; single windows fill the two western bays, but the former breezeway now contains three windows which mirror the south side.

The **service building** is a tall, one-story rectangular block, standing on a high brick foundation and covered with random-width shiplap siding. A large outside chimney built with old brick is located on the south elevation. Small four-pane casement windows are located in the gable on either side of the chimneystack. The west elevation, facing the main block, is divided into three irregular bays containing, from north to south, a high, small window serving a lavatory, a standard single window, and a large door at grade leading to the furnace room. The same green louvered blinds found throughout the house protect all openings. The east elevation is symmetrical; two sets of two windows flank a central blank wall softened by a large wall-mounted trellis. There are two windows on the north elevation.

1930s Wing: Interior

The kitchen occupies the western two thirds of the hyphen; the remaining third is a breakfast room, created by the enclosure of the former breezeway in 1990. All finishes in both rooms date to the 1990s remodeling. The north end of the service building originally contained a servants' dining room, a laundry room/pantry, and a bathroom. The dining room was converted to an office in 1990. To the south, at ground level and accessible only from outside, is the furnace room. There is a small lavatory in the furnace room.

Dairy (contributing building)

Dendrochronology suggests that the frame dairy, measuring 10′ square, was built ca. 1759 and moved to its present location ca. 1807.[16] The north (front) elevation stands on a continuous brick foundation, while brick piers support the back of the building. Beaded weatherboard covers the lower part of the walls. Vents with vertical closely-set strigil-shaped slats fill the area between the weatherboard and the plaster cove cornice. There is a turned finial at the center of the hipped roof. A millstone step on the north side leads to a reproduction paneled door dating from the 1930s but set in the original frame and hung on original cross garnet hinges.

The original framing for the dairy is exposed on the interior and consists of four corner posts, intermediate posts flanking the door and centrally placed on the other three walls, with down braces that extend from beneath the eaves to the sill below the flooring. Because none of the original plaster survives, the back of the weatherboards is visible on the interior. They are mounted in the same way as the weatherboards that are visible in the attic of the ca. 1760 main block of the house. Vents in the wall were once fitted with closing devices of some sort. A king post resting on the center of the three joists supports the peak of the pyramidal roof. The ceiling and roof structure may have been rebuilt in the 1930s. Two tiers of original shelves, or "dressers," are located on the east, south, and west walls, supported by chamfered diagonal brackets.

[16] See n. 4, above.

Smokehouse (contributing building)

The frame smokehouse stands about 58′ to the north of the dairy, with which it is aligned. According to the dendrochronology report, this building dates to 1807; it is identified on the insurance policy of that year as a "pantry." It measures about 12′ square and stands on a low brick foundation. The walls are beaded weatherboard, but many coats of whitewash have obscured the detail. A wide, board-and-batten door centered on the west elevation is secured inside by a wood box lock and outside by a diagonal iron bar and staple. Slits cut into the soffit and the second weatherboard below the cornice allowed smoke to escape. The roof, like that of the dairy, is pyramidal.

Because smoke has blackened the interior, it is difficult to see the framing. Posts at the corners and on either side of the door are the principal vertical members. Studs are set about 9½″ apart, not unusual in meat houses. Down braces are located on the inside of the studs. The studs provide support for the weatherboards, which are mounted in the same way at the siding of the 1807 addition to the house. A three-foot square brick hearth is set in the center of the floor, which is made up of pine boards ranging from 8″ to 17″ wide. The roof framing is composed of three east-west joists overlapping the top of the wall plates with three outriggers on the other sides. The north and south wall plates extend beyond the wall and support the rafters for the pyramidal, hipped roof. Between the rafters and joists is a 12″-wide false plate. Two large salt tubs (2′-10″ wide by 10′-11″ long by 1′-6″ high) located on either side of the hearth fill almost the entire depth of the building. Each tub was made from two large hollowed-out pine logs joined together.

Orangerie (contributing structure)

The Eyre Hall orangerie is a one-story brick structure measuring a substantial 30′ x 30′ and located about 90′ to the north of the main block of the house. It probably dates to ca. 1818.[17] Although the orangerie is now in ruins, the walls are largely intact and much of its original design and plan can still be discerned. Two brick chimneys are located on a substantial full-height brick partition that runs east west through the center of the building. A door on the east wall leads to a long conservatory space in the south half of the building. The conservatory floor is currently dirt, but was probably brick originally. Nothing survives of the original wall of windows facing south, but the ductwork that carried hot air from the stove in the northwest room is still visible in the thick brick walls. The northern half of the building was divided into two small rooms. One of the two fireplaces in the northwest room was designed to hold a heat source, probably a six-plate stove. The northeast room has a single fireplace and may have been living quarters. Both rooms have exterior doors on the north and single windows on the sidewalls. There is a small four-pane casement window in the west pediment and an hourglass-shaped vent in the east pediment indicating that there was an attic; the location of joist pockets in the south brick partition provides confirmation. The exterior of the building was clearly designed to be an ornament within the plantation landscape. The brickwork was plastered and scored to imitate ashlar masonry. A balustrade once linked the two chimneystacks. Both broad gable ends were pedimented and featured prominent semi-circular lunettes.[18]

Garden (contributing site)

The garden is located north of the house and measures approximately 380′-deep by 170′-wide. A large, old boxwood defines a central north-south path forming the main axis, with a cross axis somewhat less than halfway down the length of the garden. The southern part is divided into four roughly equal square parterres. The northern part is more irregular. The surviving boxwood defined six rectangular beds of different sizes. There are two large beds west of the central path and four smaller ones to the east, separated by a second north-

[17] The orangerie is not shown in the insurance map of 1807.
[18] The lunettes in the gables are false, created in the interest of symmetry.

south path. A path next to the west wall aligns with the north entrance to the main block and runs the full length of the garden. A low brick and picket wall built by John Eyre after 1800 surround the garden. The wall also forms the east and south walls of the cemetery. It consists of tall square piers set approximately 13′ apart; the panels between the piers consist of wood pickets resting on brick walls. Gates are located on the north, east, and west walls.

While both its position on an axis with the original block and its geometric layout suggest that Littleton Eyre may have established the garden, nothing is known about how it was planted. It certainly would have been functional; it may or may not have been ornamental as well. A description of the garden in the 1850s mentions its "timely-clipped hedges of box and dwarf-cedar, its flowerbeds of delicious aroma and beautiful hue." The garden presently includes large crape myrtles and magnolias in addition to the old box, now grown to enormous size. Although many of the extremely fine current plantings are modern, the Garden Club of Virginia described it in 1997 as an extensively preserved traditional eighteenth-century garden.

Cemetery (contributing site)

The Eyre family graveyard measures approximately 30′ x 45′ and lies very close to the orangerie. It is surrounded by the same kind of brick and picket wall as the garden and abuts the garden on its east and south sides. Low brick table monuments mark most of the twenty-one closely-spaced graves. The earliest burial in 1760 was that of Sarah, one of Littleton Eyre's daughters. All but one of the owners of Eyre Hall are buried here, the exception being the Severn Eyre who died in 1773. He is buried in Norfolk, where he died. One child's grave has only a simple head and footstone. John Eyre and his wife Margaret are buried in taller table monuments with carved stone panels on the sides. The small headstone that marks the grave of James Marshall, a professional musician who lived at the house for many years caring for the musical instruments and playing the violin for entertainments, lies in the northwest corner of the cemetery. He is the only non-family member buried in the Eyre Hall graveyard.[19]

Farm Complex

Garage (noncontributing building): This 1940 one-story frame building, measuring approximately 30′ x 24′, rests on a brick foundation. The floor is concrete. Two garage doors are located on the south elevation. The west gable end contains a pedestrian door with a large boarded window above; the east end contains only a window.[20]

Stable #1 (noncontributing building): This 40′ x 12′ one-story frame building dates from 1940. The asymmetrical roof provides a wide overhang over the two garage-door-size openings and the two stall doors on the south elevation. An exterior stair on the east elevation provides access to the attic.

Wood Shed (noncontributing structure): Measuring approximately 16′ x 9′, this low frame structure covered with vertical boards rests on brick piers. Its south side is open and sheltered by the overhanging side gable roof.

Machine Shed (noncontributing structure)

This late twentieth-century structure consists of a substantial gable roof standing on tall piers. The floor is concrete and, except for a small, enclosed area in the northwest corner, the shed is entirely open.

[19] Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 508-509.
[20] The garage stands on the site of a combined eight-stall stable and carriage house that burned in 1940.

Stable #2 (noncontributing building)

This frame twentieth-century building measures approximately 30′ x 12′. Three large bays are located under the wide overhang of the gable roof. The central bay is open, with stalls for horses in the two end bays.

Office (noncontributing building)

This one- and one-half story frame Colonial-style building was completed in 2003. The front (south) elevation is divided into five more or less symmetrical bays. A single, gable roof dormer window is centered between the two windows on the west. The central door and the two east windows are sheltered under a shed roof porch; a full-width shed roof porch on the north looks towards Eyreville Creek. There is a brick chimney on the west gable.

Entrance (noncontributing structure)

The design of the two low curving walls that frame the entrance from the highway was based on the garden wall. They were built in the late 1930s, and reconstructed when the highway was widened ca. 1960.

Overseer's House (contributing building)

According to a dated brick in the chimney, the earliest part of this brick and frame one and one-half story house was constructed in 1798. Like most overseers' houses, the building is located some distance away from both the main house and the slave quarters. It began as a one-room dwelling; a visible line in the brickwork identifies a second room added soon thereafter. The walls are set in Flemish bond over a double-stepped water table. A single door is located on the north elevation of the original (east) part of the house, with a gabled dormer above. There is a single small double-hung window on the western section. The semi-exterior chimney and a small window lighting the garret are located on the east elevation. On the south elevation, the original section contains a small window and a door; a gable roof dormer is located above the door. The western section contains another, larger window and a second dormer. The west elevation is covered by a modern one-story frame hyphen that connects to a one-story brick addition set perpendicular to the original house. The hyphen and addition date from 1982. The house is presently the residence of Mary Eyre Baldwin Peacock, owner of the land south of the lane.

In addition to being a relatively rare surviving example of a once common building type, the overseer's house is significant as the only physical evidence explicitly related to the large slave labor force at Eyre Hall. According to John Michael Vlach, white overseers occupied a difficult position. Their task was "to coerce efficient, profitable labor from reluctant slave gangs while simultaneously adhering to their employers' warnings not to abuse the slaves by pushing them too hard." Its location reflected that ambiguity. According to Vlach, the overseer's house at Eyre Hall was a "superior" example of its type, probably because it was built of brick.[21]

Barn (noncontributing building)

This early twentieth-century barn, originally part of the caretaker's complex, was moved to its present location in 1980. The main elevation contains a variety of large and small doors under a highly asymmetrical roof. There is a single barn door under the center gable and a door to what is probably a haymow set into the gable roof to the right.

[21] John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 135-140.

Peacock Tenant House (noncontributing building)

This small, one-story concrete block building was constructed on a concrete slab around 1980. It replaced an earlier house that burned.

Guest House (noncontributing building)

This house was constructed as a three-bay, one-and-one-half story frame building in the Colonial Revival style in 1938. Two additions and a hyphen have been added, the most recent dating to the late 1990s. The house is located overlooking Cherrystone Creek to the west of the main house; the Eyre Hall dock is located in front of the house.

Tenant House #1 (noncontributing building)

This small one-story frame gable roofed building was constructed in 1999 on a concrete slab. The front elevation is divided into three bays: two single, double-hung windows and a door. The entrance is sheltered by a shed-roofed screened porch. The side elevations contain two double-hung windows, with a small ventilator in the gable end above. The house contains two bedrooms.

Tenant House #2 (noncontributing building)

This one-story frame gable roofed building resembles Tenant House #1, but contains three bedrooms. It was built in 2000. Its front elevation is four-bays wide. There is a pair of double-hung windows next to the door under the shed roof porch and one of the other two windows is also double. The side elevations are three-bays deep, each with a double-hung window, and there is a small, double-hung window in the gable, suggesting that there is a usable space on the second floor.

Tenant House #3 (noncontributing building)

The easternmost tenant house is the home of "Georgie," the retired cook of the late Mrs. H. D. Baldwin. The building began (in the late nineteenth century) as a small flat-roof structure, but several additions made over the years have compromised its integrity.

Caretaker's House (noncontributing building)

Located north of the lane near the entrance gates, the caretaker's house is a five-bay, one- and one-half story frame building in a simplified version of the Colonial Revival-style later popularized by the Colonial Williamsburg Restoration. It was built in the late 1920s.

Statement of Integrity

The period of significance for this nomination ends ca. 1818, the approximate date of the construction of John Eyre's orangerie. The association between the plantation and the family of the man who created it, however, has continued unbroken for 250 years. Littleton Eyre acquired Eyre Hall in 1754. After John Eyre's death a century later in 1855, the plantation passed to another Severn Eyre, the grandson of John's younger brother William. Severn Eyre owned the property for fifty-nine years. He took good care of the house, adding little. His impact on the historic fabric was apparently limited to building a frame kitchen at the end of the east wing and the one-story porch along the wing's south elevation. After his death at Eyre Hall in 1914, the house and its surrounding acreage passed to his granddaughter, Margaret Eyre Taylor (1898–1979).[22] In the early 1930s, she and her

[22] Margaret Eyre Taylor was the daughter of Grace Eyre (1873–1910) and Richard B. Taylor.

husband, Henry duPont Baldwin, hired the architectural firm of Victorine & Samuel Homsey, of Boston and Wilmington, Delaware, to design a new service wing and to restore and modernize the old house.[23] An analysis of surviving plans shows that she rejected many changes that would have compromised the integrity of the house.[24] Since her death in 1979, H. Furlong Baldwin, her son and Littleton Eyre's five times great-grandson, has carefully preserved the house and grounds.

Because of this exceptional continuity of ownership, Eyre Hall possesses remarkable integrity. Approximately 95 percent of the original materials in the main block survive, in spite of the replacement of almost all of the plaster in the 1930s. All of the rooms have their original, yellow pine pegged and blind nailed flooring, paneled wainscot, and chimneybreasts with flanking closets. The entry hall and the parlor retain their fully paneled walls. Most of the fine hardware throughout the house is also original. On the second floor, the creation of the two bathrooms involved the removal of the original wainscoting and the installation of asbestos or vinyl flooring. Even here, however, the original paneled shutters and window seats belonging to the chambers that once occupied the space remain, as does the cornice. The fixed-glass transoms over the second-floor doors are also original, excepting the one over the attic door; the glazed door opening to the second-story porch is also a later addition.

The 1807 wing also retains 90 to 95 percent of its original fabric, including floors, doors, windows, trim, and most hardware. Alterations include some replacement of the plaster and the reconfiguration of the second floor. The new bathrooms still contain 1930s fixtures, cabinetry, and asbestos floor tiles. Under the sway of the Colonial Revival, the dining room underwent more changes than any other room in the house. Original paneled wainscoting, removed from the small, second-floor bedrooms, was relocated to this space. The Federal fireplace mantel was also installed during this period, but the original window and door trim survive in place. The applied Greek Revival ornamentation on the ceiling appears to date to the 1930s restoration, though it may replicate a period detail. The original pine flooring was taken-up and carefully reinstalled in its original configuration.

The formal, staged landscape at Eyre Hall, which helped visitors, guests, and slaves know exactly where they belonged within the hierarchical plantation community, also survives largely intact. It includes the approach road, the unusual oblique location of the main house, to the side of the approach road and fully visible only on near approach, and the series of barriers that visitors had to traverse before they reached the entrance to the house. Features that reflect the more private genteel landscape created by John Eyre in the early years of the nineteenth century also survive: the walled garden, with its formal parterres still partially defined by huge old boxwoods, and the elegant neoclassical orangerie, although the latter is now in ruins.

The house also retains many of its original furnishings, silver, and books. The rarity of Eyre Hall's continuous ownership by one family and the high degree of integrity in the house and landscape are all the more poignant since only a handful of mid-eighteenth-century Virginia plantations survive in the stewardship of the families that built them. The few that have survived in the same families have changes to their historic fabric that Eyre Hall has escaped. Mount Airy (Richmond County, patented 1682) is home to the descendants of the builder, John Tayloe; however, the interior of Tayloe's five-part Palladian villa, modeled on English pattern books, were rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1844. Sabine Hall (Richmond County) still belongs to the descendants of Robert "King" Carter, who willed the property to his son Landon in 1723, but each succeeding generation has affected changes to the inside of the historic house. The exterior at Carter's Grove was dramatically altered during the Colonial Revival period to resemble a five-part Palladian house.

The 1807 smokehouse at Eyre Hall is intact, although the roof support system in the dairy, in place by 1807, may have been replaced in kind during the 1930s restoration. A comparison of the current overseer's house with

[23] The firm was still in existence in Wilmington, Delaware, in 2002. Mrs. Homsey was Mr. H. D. Baldwin's cousin.

[24] Michael Bourne, "Eyre Hall, Northampton County, VA: An Analysis of Drawings for Rehabilitation," typescript, n.d. Copy provided by the author.

a photograph taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1960 reveals that the modern addition did not compromise the exterior integrity of the historic building.[25]

Because of Eyre Hall's exceptional continuity of ownership, the possibility of archeological remains providing important archeological information is present. Only cursory archeological study of these remains has been undertaken and this document does not include any comparative context or evaluation for understanding significant information potential at the local, state, or national level, thus this documentation cannot address eligibility under Criterion D for the National Register or Criterion 6 for NHL status. Eyre Hall's potential to answer important research questions about plantation life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, is compelling. Kelly Ladd, an archaeologist from Colonial Williamsburg, has investigated surface deposits in an area under the east porch of the original block. She identified many high-status artifacts dating from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Archeology also has the potential to answer many questions about Eyre Hall's slave labor force. According to family tradition, based on the memories of both owners and former slaves and servants, there were four slave quarters located to the northeast of the main house and yard, ranged along a small inlet running north to Eyreville Creek. There may have been another group of four slave quarters located further east, along the perimeter of the woods bordering the creek. A single, two-story frame "kitchen quarter," demolished by the present owner in 1954, was located to the east of the site of a former detached kitchen. Archeological investigations of slave quarters at other plantations have shown that material found at these sites can reveal important information on how slaves lived their day-to-day lives and how they created communities for themselves, even within the coercive system of plantation slavery.[26]

The site of the original kitchen, located within the yard, also has the potential to yield important information. The insurance policies taken out by John Eyre show a one-and-a-half story brick kitchen located between the dairy and smokehouse.[27] In addition to housing domestic activities, the kitchen would have likely provided living space on the second floor for slaves working in the kitchen or elsewhere in the house or yard. Similar slave accommodations were located at Godlington Manor, Kent County, Maryland. Although the kitchen was demolished in the 1930s, its foundation apparently survives below ground. Trash and other deposits around buildings like this can provide important evidence of the work and the daily lives of both the owners and the slave labor force.

A comprehensive archeological investigation would add to existing physical and documentary evidence about the construction sequence of the house and reveal new and important information about the evolution of the landscape, changing diets, everyday life, and about the relationship between the Eyre family and the plantation's enslaved African community. It could confirm the locations of the original kitchen, the slave quarters, and the slave cemetery. Additionally, the likelihood of finding prehistoric remains on the property, close to the Chesapeake Bay and virtually undisturbed, is excellent. While remains like those described above may be eligible under another context, they do not contribute to this nomination.

Fanny Fielding, a woman who had known Eyre Hall before John Eyre's death in 1855, described the "grand old homestead" in one of a series of sketches of "Southern Homesteads" that appeared in *The Land We Love*, a journal published by former Confederate General D. H. Hill, in the late 1860s:

[25] Vlach, Back of the Big House, 130.

[26] M. D. Bograd and J. A. Singleton, Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas in Historical Archaeology, Columbian Quincentenary Series, Guides to the Archaeological Literature of the Immigrant Experience in America; Race and the Archaeology of Identity, ed. Charles E. Orser, Jr., vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2002).

[27] Mutual Assurance Society, policies for Eyre Hall, 1796, 1805, and 1807.

> The situation is picturesque and the improvements in unexceptionable taste. The lawn in front, comprising sixty acres of smooth, green turf, with interesting avenues, is studded with patriarchal oaks, hollies, maples, and feathery acacias. These form an alluring perspective from the riding-in, and afford, at the same time, tantalizing glimpses of the bold blue Cherrystone, crescent-like engirdling the lawn, the garden in the rear, and the adjacent grounds. The immediate vicinity gives a *coup d'oeil* of almost an island, and it would be such but for the connection formed by the carriage-road, which, after you leave the avenue leading to the lawn gate, is flanked on either side by broad fields in a high state of cultivation.
>
> A semi-circular road leads in from the gate above-mentioned, to the front door, defined by ornamental chain-work in iron, the posts supporting it bearing each a lamp for hospitable illumination on festal occasions.
>
> In the garden with its timely-clipped hedges of box and dwarf-cedar, its flower-beds of delicious aroma and beautiful hue, stood the green-house (on the left hand entering from the house), its inmates "laughing at the storm" in winter and in summer blending their rich breath with the garden-flowers. Tall geraniums in their varied bloom mingled with the silver and gold of orange and lemon fruit and blossom…. [For Mr. Eyre] the cultivation of rare fruits and ornamental trees may be named as a favorite recreation.
>
> But now for the house. The broad hall of entrance is painted with English hunting scenes[28]…. Down the right hand wall, about mid-way, stands an immense organ which plays forty tunes…. In the corner is an ample lounge, and I can almost see its occupant, some luxurious sojourner, courting the breeze in this airy nook and loitering over a volume from the finely-stocked library.
>
> In the apartment appropriated as just mentioned, stands above the chimney piece in all the attraction of boyish beauty, a life-size portrait, by Benjamin West, of the grandfather of Mr. John Eyre, painted when its original was only 19 years old, …. From hence opens an entry (in the rear, for the library opens on the hall also) and here stands a pair of patent scales…. Leading from this entry is the dining-room, and on another hand the drawing-room…. The little "porch room," convenient to the *salle-a-manger* holds uncounted pieces of massive plate, and also of the antique India china, with its burnished "E" on each piece…. The housekeeper's room and commodious store-rooms are beyond the dining-room.[29]

A visitor to Eyre Hall in the early-twenty-first century would recognize much of this description, even to the portrait in the library and the organ in the passage.

The preservation of Eyre Hall and its remarkable landscape is due to the careful stewardship of the family over two-and-one-half centuries. This continuity of ownership is responsible for the high level of integrity found in the house, outbuildings, and surrounding grounds. The Georgian house, expanded and improved in the Federal period, combined with surviving original hardware, furnishings, books, silver, and family portraits, tells a rich story of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century material culture. Eyre Hall still occupies much of its original acreage, and the same marshes and watercourses that have characterized the Eastern Shore for centuries, surround it.

[28] The author has confused the landscape wallpaper at Eyre Hall with the painted hunting scenes in the passage at Elkington, built about 1800 in Eastville and closely modeled on the earlier building.

[29] Fanny Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 504-508.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A__ B__ C X D__
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
NHL Criteria:	4
NHL Theme(s):	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
Areas of Significance:	Architecture
Period(s) of Significance:	ca. 1759–ca. 1818
Significant Dates:	ca. 1759; ca. 1796; ca. 1805; ca. 1807; ca. 1818
Significant Person(s):	N/A
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	Unknown
Historic Contexts:	XVI. Architecture B. Georgian (1730–1780) C. Federal (1780–1820)

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Eyre Hall's national significance under National Historic Landmark Criterion 4 lies in the exceptional character and preservation of its historic architecture and landscape. It is a rare example of a vernacular, Chesapeake architectural ensemble of the Colonial and early Federal period. Sustained through two-and-a-half centuries of ownership within one family, Eyre Hall presents an extremely rare combination of historic fabric and period furnishings in the house and, beyond the house, of historic outbuildings and garden. Eyre Hall plantation retains exceptional integrity to its period of significance (ca. 1759–ca. 1818). Contributing elements include the mid-eighteenth-century main block with its early nineteenth-century additions, three outbuildings, a family cemetery, a large garden, and a largely-intact eighteenth-century landscape. The period of significance begins with the construction of the main block, ca. 1759, and ends in ca. 1818, the approximate date of the construction of the orangerie, the last known change made by John Eyre.

The house that Littleton Eyre built ca. 1759 and the expanded and updated building created by his grandson John Eyre in the early nineteenth century shared an architectural vocabulary with their less affluent neighbors. Commonalities in domestic use, in construction materials like wood clapboards, and in form, such as the gambrel roof and the three-room side-hall plan, reinforced similarities between the Eyre's and their neighbors, while its almost monumental scale, elaborate woodwork, and other fine interior finishes simultaneously sharpened distinctions. The builder-owners' sophistication, as well as their social and economic status, was reflected in the evocation of classicism in the dwelling's aesthetics, refinement, and proportions, which stands in contrast to the fact that the laborers and many of the skilled craftsmen responsible for its construction would have been slaves. The spatial hierarchies of agricultural fields, garden, outbuildings, and house mirrored those of the Chesapeake's patriarchal society, supported by slavery, with Eyre Hall and its successive masters at the center of the layered landscape they built and oversaw. It is through this symbolic gesture, the melding of house and owner that this exceptionally intact architectural artifact offers exceptional insight into Chesapeake culture, with all the social distinctions and racial separation that characterized and sustained it from the Colonial period into the antebellum era.

The Plantation

Littleton Eyre, a wealthy merchant-planter at the economic, social, and political center of gentry society on Virginia's Eastern Shore, acquired the land that became Eyre Hall in 1754. The gambrel-roofed main block of the house was completed shortly thereafter. Littleton Eyre's grandson John, who inherited the property in 1789, began to add onto the house in the late-eighteenth century. The initial one-story addition was subsumed in a later building campaign, one that saw the completion of the existing two-story, gable-roofed wing to the east of the main block by 1807. Like his grandfather, John Eyre was an extremely wealthy man, supplementing his income from slave-based agriculture with other sources. He also occupied much the same position at the center of local society. By the time he died in 1855, the Eyre family had successfully weathered a century of political and economic change. Throughout this period, Eyre Hall was the physical embodiment of the family's wealth and status. The plantation was so closely identified with the family that as each owner died his heir immediately moved into the old house, even when he already had an establishment elsewhere. Today, Littleton Eyre's five-times, great-grandson cares for the plantation in the twenty-first century.

When Littleton Eyre (1710–1769) bought the Eyre Hall property in 1754, his family had been on the Eastern Shore since 1623. Littleton Eyre's purchase of the Eyre Hall land increased his total land holdings to more than

3000 acres. The new plantation was clearly intended to be the mark of his success; he moved into his new house as soon as it was completed.[30]

Like many of his large landholding neighbors, Littleton Eyre was a merchant-planter whose farms were worked by slaves:

> These men usually owned large riverside agricultural estates along with the servants or slave labor force to operate them. They participated in the lucrative tobacco culture of the period, but it is clear they diversified relatively early, marketing excess grains, cured pork, and livestock, as well as native stands of timber and lumber products. They shipped their own products to British ports, but handled their neighbors' export crops and raw materials as well. In exchange for these exported products, they brought home manufactured European goods, which they sold to local residents. Much of this exchange was conducted on a credit basis due to the scarcity of gold or silver currency.[31]

Rising prices for tobacco and grain caused a substantial increase in per capita wealth throughout the Chesapeake in the years before the American Revolution. By this time, Eyre, like most of his neighbors on the Eastern Shore, had largely abandoned tobacco to concentrate on the cultivation of wheat, but he clearly shared in the prosperity of the mid-eighteenth century. When Littleton Eyre died in 1768, his personal estate was not evaluated, but it showed that he had more than enough money to participate actively in the mid-eighteenth-century "consumer revolution." The many pieces of silver, the carriages, the mahogany furniture, the large looking glasses, and the tea and coffee services recorded in the inventory were items that typically characterized the inventories of the gentry. Men like Littleton Eyre probably constituted no more than 3 percent of all Virginia landowners.[32]

Littleton Eyre was part of the interlocking gentry network of parish, plantation, and courthouse that controlled politics and shaped life in colonial Virginia. He represented Northampton County in the Virginia Colony's House of Burgesses for almost twenty years (1742 to 1761). He was lieutenant commander of the local militia and a member of the vestry of Hungar's Parish from 1758, the date of the earliest records, until shortly before he died in 1768. Eyre served as county sheriff from 1735 to the early 1760s and was a justice of the Northampton General Court from the 1750s until his death.

Eyre's thousands of acres of land and 105 slaves identified him as a member of the Colonial Virginia elite, but documented evidence of the presence of the slave labor force that created his wealth, cultivated his fields, and probably did most of the work building his new house, is scarce. What does exist is, in general, more implied than direct. The wills and inventories of Littleton Eyre, his son, and grandsons, include direct references to enslaved individuals, some by name, but their invaluable role in the construction of the house and outbuildings and in the maintenance of the plantation must largely be deduced.

Littleton Eyre's will of 1769 provides the first specific reference to the existence of a slave labor force at Eyre Hall; he bequeathed 105 slaves to his only son, Severn. This number is small by the standards of the great Virginia tobacco plantations east of Chesapeake Bay. Wheat is a much less labor-intensive crop than tobacco and requires a much smaller labor force. By this time, Littleton Eyre owned in excess of 3,900 acres, divided

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[30] Ralph T. Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern Shore: A History of Northampton and Accomack Counties*, George Carrington Mason, ed. (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1951), 71-72; Littleton Eyre, Will, Northampton County Wills, #24, 1766–72, 174-5, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA.

[31] Paul Baker Touart, *Somerset: An Architectural History* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical Trust; Princess Anne, MD: Somerset County Historical Trust, 1990), 20.

[32] Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture for the, 1986), 128.

between several plantations. The inventory taken after his death later that year listed, by name, only seventy-six slaves. The discrepancy in these numbers in all likelihood reflects the fact that Littleton deeded his nearby Hungars Plantation and thirty slaves to Severn between the writing of his will and the inventory.[33]

Eyre's inventory makes only one other specific reference to his slaves: "12 pr. negro shoes." The rest of the inventory must be analyzed to understand the activities of the slave labor force on this large and complex plantation. Snuffers, kettles, pots and pans, and looms document the variety of domestic work in the main house and outbuildings. Livestock and farming tools noted in the inventory were vital both to the internal, domestic economy of the plantation community and to the production of cash crops for sale elsewhere in the region or for export to Europe. The many cattle, sheep, and hogs required men to herd, to tend and, eventually, to slaughter them. The inventory testifies to the presence of cooks, laundresses, house maids, spinners, weavers, gardeners, tanners, shoe makers, shepherds, herdsmen, firewood cutters and splitters, and field hands. There would have been slaves to paddle the two canoes in the inventory as well as sailors to maintain, and possibly navigate, the *Betsy*, the schooner co-owned by Eyre and John Bowdoin, his business partner.

While many plantation owners kept thorough records regarding the construction of their houses, often including a list of those who actually did the work, no known record of this type exists for the construction of Eyre Hall. Because no values were assigned to the workers identified there, it is impossible to know whether one of those men was sufficiently skilled to have served as architect for the main house. Still, the inclusion of "1 set Carpenters tools," "1 sett brick moulds," "12 files & rasps," "2 augers and 1 drawing knife," and a "½ cask 10d nails and ½ cask 4d nails" in the inventory, as well as saws, axes, wedges, blacksmith tools, and bars of iron, suggest the presence of sawyers, carpenters, masons, brick and shingle makers, and others skilled in the building trades among Eyre Hall's labor force. These slaves also would have constructed fences, sheds, barns, other farm structures, as well as their own housing. This labor force might have also generated cash resources for the Eyres. Historian Philip Morgan has explained that in the Chesapeake white artisans would frequently "pay for the services of slaves whom they instructed;" skilled enslaved artisans contributed towards the self-sufficiency of a plantation economy and could also be hired out for additional income.[34]

Littleton Eyre died in 1768, at fifty-eight years of age. He willed all of his land holdings, including the 1,500-acre Eyre Hall plantation and most of his slave labor force, to his only son, Severn. Severn Eyre suffered from a serious medical condition, possibly tuberculosis. He died on January 25, 1773. His 1774 inventory lists sixty-nine slaves at Eyre Hall and an additional seventeen at nearby Town Fields, a plantation a few miles to the south.[35] Only thirty-seven years old at the time of his death, he left his widow, Margaret, with six children under the age of thirteen. His will mentions by name four slaves bequeathed to his wife: Cate, Rose, Jack, and Abel. An unspecified number of slaves were to work on one of his other plantations and the remainder, along with the rest of his property, was to be divided between his four sons, Littleton (II), Severn (II), John, and William, the last less than a year old.[36] He left the 1,500-acre Eyre Hall plantation to Littleton II, his eldest son.

[33] Littleton Eyre, Will, 174-5; Littleton Eyre, Inventory, 224.

[34] Phillip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), 227, for quote. For more on skilled enslaved laborers, see also Susan Kern, *The Jeffersons at Shadwell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 99-101.

[35] Severn Eyre (I), Inventory, 391.

[36] James Handley Marshall. Abstracts of the Wills and Administrations of Northampton County, Virginia, 1632-1802 (Camden, ME: Picton, 1994).

In 1782, when the children were still minors, Margaret Eyre is listed in the property tax records as the owner of 170 slaves.[37] Only twelve when his father died, Littleton II was dead himself in 1789 at twenty-eight. He had never married and, upon his death the Eyre Hall plantation passed to his twenty-one-year-old brother John Eyre.

He also left his slaves to John, provided that he divide them with William.[38] Severn II, who died in 1786, had already given his share of the "plantation negroes" to William, with the exception of two boys bequeathed to friends.[39] By the end of the eighteenth century, the Eyres' slave labor force was divided between John Eyre of Eyre Hall and William Eyre of neighboring Eyreville. The 1800 personal property tax records show that John and William owned and were taxed on thirty-four and thirty-two slaves, respectively. By 1818, John owned twenty slaves over twelve years of age and William's estate was taxed for twenty-nine slaves.

John Eyre (1768–1855) owned Eyre Hall for sixty-six years. He carried it through the prosperous years of the first decade of the nineteenth century, through the depression of 1819, and up to the eve of the American Civil War. He and his enslaved laborers updated the Georgian house and the landscape he inherited from his grandfather to the architectural standards of the Federal period. Like his father and grandfather, John Eyre was a planter who supplemented his earnings from agriculture with a variety of other sources of income. Although no inventory was taken after his death, it is clear that he was an extremely wealthy man. The epitaph on his gravestone in the Eyre Hall cemetery refers to his "ample fortune" and an obituary written after his death calls him a "man of fortune." An account of his financial affairs taken shortly before his death in 1855, shows that he owned $29,000 in stock and held bonds worth over $40,000. His will included specific cash bequests of more than $60,000.[40] The first two decades of the nineteenth century were probably the most prosperous period in Eastern Shore history. Like most of his neighbors, John Eyre abandoned tobacco entirely, replacing it with other cash crops. He also supplemented his income with a variety of non-agricultural activities.[41]

John Eyre's 1855 financial accounting includes a list of ninety individuals and partnerships to whom he had loaned money. The list shows that he was charging interest on these loans. Many of the names on the list are relatives and neighbors; amounts owed ranged from $6.50 to $2,800. Although most of these bonds date to the 1850s, the earliest debt goes back to 1840. According to historian T. H. Breen, almost all of the colony's freemen were involved in a network of local credit in the eighteenth century. These were:

> usually oral agreements, expressions of trust probably sealed with a handshake. The great planter entered the sum in an account book—sometimes he did not even bother to do that—in expectation that the debtor would eventually repay his obligation. The overwhelming majority of these debts were small, no more than a few pounds. When such sums were involved, a gentleman rarely demanded interest. In fact, a spirit of friendship—albeit between unequal parties—appears to have governed these transactions. On this local level, credit represented a personal favor, a kind of patronage that great planters were expected to provide to worthy neighbors whom they

[37] Northampton County Personal Property Tax Records. This number is far higher than comparable figures in any other year. The reason for this discrepancy is unknown.

[38] Littleton Eyre (II), Will, Northampton County Wills and Inventories, Liber 27, 21 May 1787, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA.

[39] Severn Eyre (II), Will, Northampton County Wills, Liber 28, fol. 135, 20 Apr. 1785, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA.

[40] Touart, *Somerset*, 34; John Eyre, Will, Northampton County Wills, Book 39, 1854-1897, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA; Lafayette Harmanson, "List of Bonds, etc. Due John Eyre, May 9, 1855," manuscript in collection at Eyre Hall, Cheriton, VA.

[41] Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, 43.

> encountered at church, the county courthouse, or militia training…. Though the great planters occasionally pressed local debtors, they were usually willing to carry these accounts for years.[42]

These debts also played a social, and to some extent, a political role. As Rhys Isaacs remarks, "the gentry's ability to secure deference and compliance were reinforced by their share in the social power that was inherent in the control of credit."[43] John Eyre's account book suggests that these networks survived well into the nineteenth century.

John Eyre played much the same role in the elite of Northampton County as his grandfather. He served on the vestry of Hungar's Parish, even though the Anglican Church was disestablished with independence. He served as a magistrate in Northampton County and in the Virginia Senate. He stood for election to the U.S. House of Representatives, but was defeated because he "did not agree in politics with a majority of his district," according to an obituary written by Henry St. George Tucker.[44]

John Eyre married late and had no children. On his death in 1855, all of his property, including his enslaved labor force, went to Severn Eyre III, the 24-year old grandson of his youngest brother William. John's will provided that his "aged servants Nat and Nancy shall be permitted to reside in a house on the Eyre Hall estate; that the said aged servants be not required to perform any service; and in the event of their standing in need of any of the ordinary comforts of life, I request that the same shall be furnished by my [heir]." He added that, "so long as the said servants Nat and Nancy may live, they shall be considered as attached to and pass as heirlooms of the said Eyre Hall Estate." Even an owner making such arrangements for elderly slaves saw them as "heirlooms," as property, not people.[45]

Eyre Hall and Vernacular Architecture

Eyre Hall is significant on a national level as an exceptional example of vernacular architecture that represents over a century of gentry culture in the Chesapeake, the physical and financial creation of which occurred through the work of an enslaved labor force. The initial decisions made by Littleton Eyre with the design and construction of his house demonstrated that he both understood expectations for how members of the ruling class should be living while also acknowledging and embracing the region's standing building traditions. At a time when his wealthiest peers on the Western Shore were constructing expansive, two-story brick houses with center halls flanked by pairs of rooms, Eyre remained influenced by established Chesapeake building traditions and built a three-room side hall plan in wood with a gambrel roof.

No one would have mistaken his house for a yeoman's, however, as its scale, high quality of construction, and capacious and elegant public rooms would have immediately conveyed the existence of great wealth, sophistication, and power. By placing the cubic mass of the house up on a raised basement, Eyre's house was set off from the surrounding landscape, highly visible, and imposing. For those people having enough status to be invited inside, Eyre expressed the utmost in refinement through the generous hallway, divided by a broad elliptical arch into an entry hall and stair hall, and a parlor—all with elaborate woodwork and paneling. Willie Graham, Curator of Architecture at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, has commented about the quality of the interiors, stating: "The scale of rooms and the scale and refinement of the moldings put this in a class with

[42] T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 95-96.

[43] Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1982), 133.

[44] *Vestry Book*; Fanny Fielding, "Eyre Hall," 511. The glebe house is still standing. The political party Eyre represented is unknown.

[45] John Eyre, Will, Northampton County Wills, Liber 39, folio 22, 1 February 1855, Northampton County Courthouse, Eastville, VA.

places like Carter's Grove, but within a modest, frame exterior. Everything inside the 1750s [house] is first class."[46] As an aggrandized, high-style version of a common Chesapeake house type having a three-room, side-hall plan and a gambrel roof, Eyre Hall, perhaps uniquely among eighteenth-century survivors, showed fluency in the local vernacular while also understanding the forms and purpose of incorporating high-style elements and features. Succeeding generations of Eyres, most notably John Eyre, continued to update the house in ways that demonstrated comprehension of changing taste and social needs and expectations, making Erye Hall an invaluable resource, a three-dimensional lesson in the blending of high-style and vernacular forms and elements.

Eyre Hall is of utmost importance to the study of American history because of what it can tell us about how the emergence of the early American economy, based on trade networks, agricultural production, and enslaved labor, and the political and social systems of the Chesapeake shaped the architectural spaces of the mansion house complex during the Colonial and early National periods. Investigations of vernacular architecture also enable scholars to understand the house, and its environs, in the context of family life. As such, vernacular architecture is virtually inseparable from its authors, emblematic of their cultural choices and often the only testimony remaining for analysis. The examination of material culture, of which the vernacular is a part, begins with the dwelling and through the architectural artifact reaches outward to the unseen forces that influenced its creation, determined its use, and gave it meaning over time. Eyre Hall was a deliberate, careful expression of its builder, Littleton Eyre. As a wealthy merchant and planter from a family long-based on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Eyre was aware of the trans-Atlantic taste for classically-inspired buildings. He also was cognizant of how a mansion could dominate the surrounding landscape, symbolically locating the plantation owner at the heart of the progressively cultivated fields, lawns, and gardens.[47]

Most eighteenth-century observers and modern historians agree on the near obsession of colonial Virginia gentry with maintaining their status as gentlemen and demonstrating that status through the landscapes, architecture, and furnishings of their plantations. Beginning in the early-eighteenth century, Anglo-Americans in the Chesapeake took advantage of high prices for their grain and tobacco—the profits of which were greatly increased through enslaved labor—and the easy availability of credit to dramatically increase their "procurement and use of new *things*—matched sets of china, chairs, pictures, and such—and investment in conspicuously superior domestic architecture."[48] Artifacts and architecture were tools for gaining political, social, or economic advantage. As Lois Green Carr and Lorena Walsh commented:

> The culture of gentility became a means of emphasizing social differences and fueling social competition. Members of the seventeenth century planter elite had signified their positions with large holdings of land and labor, the sources of their wealth, and these remained basic elements of hierarchical distinctions. But near the turn of the [eighteenth] century colonial men of wealth and power began to signal their rank through elegance in lifestyle. By the 1760s the social position of anyone could be gauged not just by wealth or offices held but by their dress, household arrangements, and social ceremonies.[49]

Littleton Eyre was aware of the tenets governing architecture, a code his predecessors had begun in the seventeenth century as they adapted familiar construction techniques to the materials, conditions, and

[46] Willie Graham to James Jacobs, electronic correspondence, 11 April 2007, copy in NHL file.

[47] Camille Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 1-32.

[48] Edward Chappell, "Housing a Nation," in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century,* Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 215.

[49] Lois Green Carr and Lorena Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," 61.

circumstances of Virginia. The building he created on his new plantation represented choices from a variety of available options: choices in construction techniques, building materials, design elements, floor plans, and furnishings, choices between London fashions and local traditions. Although they all loved wealth and said they disapproved of ostentation, no two planters defined the appropriate "accommodations for a comfortable and gentile living" in exactly the same way.

The Eastern Shore was in many ways the cradle of the early American economy. Those who could patent large swathes of land there and tended to build substantially. In the 1660s, when planters first began to erect brick houses outside of Jamestown, the first Arlington, John Custis II's dwelling on the Eastern Shore, was one of the most notable examples. Other examples include Joseph Bridger's large dwelling at White Marsh in Isle of Wight County on the south side of the James River and John Page's dwelling at Middle Plantation (now Williamsburg). Archaeological evidence gleaned from Arlington suggests that it anticipated the eighteenth-century polite house, with a two-room deep plan and either a lobby entry or central passage.[50] It was not until the 1720s that Virginians began erecting houses with a central passage, one-room or two-room deep, plan in earnest. Many of those long thought to be of seventeenth-century origin actually date to this decade. Most of Virginia's large, gentry houses that remain *in-situ* were started in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Eyre Hall shares this distinction, as well as a sophisticated arrangement of interior space that accommodated the Eyre family's public and private social needs.

Littleton Eyre was undoubtedly aware of Arlington, located only a short distance to the south. With his many years of service in the House of Burgesses, he would have also known about the great houses of the Byrds, Carters, and Lees. The choices he made were different from theirs, but his aim was the same—to build something uniquely representative of himself, yet recognizable both to his peers and to those below him in the social hierarchy. His new house combined some elements apparently based on fashionable British precedents, some looking back to earlier buildings in Virginia, and some derived from the vernacular traditions that emerged in response to the conditions of the Chesapeake and its evolving societal distinctions.

The house built ca. 1759 combined an elaborate, fashionable, high-quality Georgian interior with a "vertical and cubical form and a Classical yet fashionably flat façade" that looked back to an Anglo-Dutch building tradition first expressed in the Governor's Mansion, begun in Williamsburg almost fifty years earlier.[51] The generous scale of the original house, the tall chimneystacks dominating the landscape, the elaborate, fully-paneled main rooms, even the exceptionally fine flooring would have immediately marked it as the residence of a sophisticated and extremely wealthy man. On the other hand, his house was built of wood, rather than of brick or stone masonry. At 40 feet square, it was relatively small when compared to other elite houses of the period on the western shore of Virginia. Although it was two rooms deep, it was only one-and-one-half-stories high under its gambrel roof. None of the four elevations was symmetrical. Its front façade, finely crafted, but originally relatively plain, contrasted sharply with the elegance and extravagance of those at Mount Airy (1758-62; NHL, 1960) and Westover (ca. 1750; NHL, 1960). As at Gunston Hall (1755-59; NHL, 1960) and Tuckahoe (1733, 1740; NHL, 1969), the disparity between the simplicity of the exterior and the elaborate Georgian paneling in the main interior rooms was the result of conscious choice. Significantly, Eyre and his unknown builder chose not the double-pile center-hall plan of the "Colonial Mansions of Virginia," but rather a traditional three-room side-hall plan. They enlarged and embellished the plan to bring it up to current standards of gentility, establishing the house among the Eastern Shore's most elaborate.

[50] Willie Graham, Carter Hudgins, Carl Lounsbury, Fraser Neiman, and Jim Whittenburg, "Inheritance, Adaptation, and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 64, no. 3 (July 2007): 451-522.

[51] Charles Brownell, Calder Loth, William M. S. Rasmussen, and Richard Guy Wilson, *The Making of Virginia Architecture* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1992), 13; quotation, page 8.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Eyre Hall's gambrel roof was popular throughout the Chesapeake, but was relatively unusual for the houses of the richest men, at least of those dwellings that survive today. Most gambrel-roofed dwellings were small farmhouses. One of the earliest known instances of the gambrel roof is found in Rural Plains in Hanover County; dendrochronology has dated this house to 1725.[52] Field observations by Colonial Williamsburg's Paul Buchanan, a leader in the study of vernacular architecture until his death, put the construction of most gambrel-roofed structures in the second half of the eighteenth century. Buchanan's hypothesis is born out by the many examples of dwellings with gambrel roofs surveyed by Richard Rivoire in Charles County, Maryland: Statehall (ca. 1745), Port Tobacco, Wicomico, Maxwell Hall (by 1768), Mt. Tirzah, and the Exchange (ca. 1778), and those recorded by Henry Chandlee Forman in Northampton County, Virginia: Westover, Cherry Grove, Park Hall, Pleasant Prospect, Old Castle, Poplar Grove, Pembroke, and Cugly. Forman concluded that gambrel-roofed Oak Grove was the oldest of the lot. A number of these gambrel-roofed houses were clustered near the Northampton County seat of Eastville, not far from Eyre Hall. Forman also documented a number of gambrel-roofed houses in Accomack County, Virginia, including the Joseph Conquest and Bloxom houses.[53]

The gambrel roof coexisted alongside the more common side-gable roof form in urban areas, such as examples in Williamsburg. Small in scale, and all built of wood frame construction, Williamsburg's gambrel houses include the Nicholson House, Travis House, and Ewing House. These had a central-hall floor plan. Others, that share Eyre Hall's roof type and side-hall floor plan but not its scale, were the Lightfoot House, Orrell House, and Powell-Hallam House. Its closest contemporary is the Tayloe House, the most spacious of Williamsburg's gambrel-roofed dwellings.[54] Eyre Hall's gambrel roof was a common enough form in the Chesapeake, but notable in its use for such a grandly-scaled house.

In addition to choosing a gambrel-roofed form, Littleton Eyre also used a less expansive three-room plan. Houses with three-room plans, common in towns, were also found on Chesapeake plantations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[55] Many of these houses featured rooms aligned one next to the other in a row, so the interior was but one-room deep. Others had two rooms as a suite on the same side of a hall (passage) running back to front, as at Eyre Hall. The old Accomack glebe house, dating to the 1740s, had a side-hall plan; so, too, did West View in Accomack town.[56] Double-pile houses, featuring rooms arranged two deep, proliferated throughout Virginia's Eastern Shore by the early eighteenth century. Perhaps the best-known example is Arlington, which had a double-pile plan. Another example was a dwelling called Winona, erected around 1725. Winona was heated by the triple-stack chimneys in the artisan-mannerist style popular in the seventeenth century, like the one preserved at Bacon's Castle (1665; NHL, 1960) across the bay.[57] The alignment of the east side rooms, the parlor, and library, in Eyre Hall along the passage running front to back places the house within this oeuvre.

Guiding Littleton Eyre's decisions about his house was an evolving regional language of architecture, one that was an expression of traditional forms and academic adaptations incorporated in varying measure into

[52] Edward R. Cook, William J. Callahan, Jr., and Camille Wells, "Dendrochronological Analysis of Rural Plains, Mechanicsville, Hanover County, Virginia," Report, January 2007.

[53] Henry Chandlee Forman, The Virginia Eastern Shore and its British Origins: History, Gardens and Antiquities (Easton, MD: Eastern Shore Publishers' Associates, 1975).

[54] Marcus Whiffen, *The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: An Architectural History* (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston for Colonial Williamsburg, 1960).

[55] Famous examples of houses in Tidewater with three-room plans include Governor Sir William Berkeley's Green Spring house; that building originally had a U-shaped plan to which Berkeley added the three-room entertainment suite. It was only one-room deep, however. Similar to the Green Spring wing was Robert Carter's Corotomon.

[56] Ralph Harvard, personal communication with Virginia Price, 2008. Harvard observed that West View dates to the 1760s and was re-trimmed around 1800. The parlor was removed and installed in MESDA.

[57] Ralph Harvard, personal communication, 2008.

individual houses. That Eyre chose to erect a house, seemingly modest on the exterior with its wood frame and gambrel roof, in the same architectural language as his peers did in the capitol city speaks not only to his taste and ambition, but also to his awareness of where he lived. Eyre Hall was the personification of who he was, of what he accomplished. It was a visual link to the wider Chesapeake world Eyre inhabited, the physical embodiment of Eyre himself, the public servant and gentry planter. It was also in keeping with his neighbors' dwellings, and his family's roots on the Eastern Shore going back to the 1640s, although Eyre's house was larger and better made than those of his neighbors and predecessors.

His business partner John Bowdoin made different choices. Bowdoin's ca. 1770 house was made of brick, two full stories high, and considerably longer than Eyre Hall. It mirrored his aspirations to social and political prominence though the flanking dependencies and connecting walls that created a forecourt not unlike that at the Governor's Palace. Yet the carefully chosen exterior vernacular of Eyre Hall belied the refinement of the woodwork within, and the stair tucked behind the archway exposed the depth—and breadth—of Eyre's understanding of the polite house: what it required, and what he required of it. For instance, the monumental scale, seen in the width of the hallway, lent the house a grandeur matched by its fluted pilasters and paneling. The recessed stair, behind the arch, pulled circulation patterns out of the principal rooms, facilitating the needs of the family and their guests.

The importance of vernacular building traditions in the Chesapeake—such as the use of wood even in more grandly proportioned houses like Eyre Hall—persisted into the nineteenth century. Richard Rivoire's study of "traditional domestic architecture" in Charles County demonstrated that even in sophisticated examples like Oak Grove and Waverly the vernacular prevailed. Many planters in southern Maryland relied on the contents of their houses, rather than the architecture, to convey wealth and status. The furnishings at Eyre Hall did the same, but here these consumer goods were displayed in large and elaborately decorated public rooms. Rivoire's look at 125 houses revealed that in Charles County, where the shift from tobacco to grain came later than it did on the Eastern Shore, merchant-planters could not afford to raise mansions comparable to Eyre Hall until after the American Revolution. The increase in prosperity coincided with an influx of building materials imported from Baltimore and the availability of builder's guides. Rivoire attributes the appearance of side-passage, three-bay house plan in Charles County, perhaps as early as 1790 (Timber Neck), to these changes, combined with the metropolitan influence of Baltimore.[58]

Littleton Eyre also established the character of the Eyre Hall landscape. A visitor to Eyre Hall in the eighteenth century would have passed through a carefully-planned sequence of spaces. He first would have noticed the contrast with the surrounding countryside, where the majority of even successful planters still lived in one- or two-room frame houses on a few hundred acres. He would have traveled along a long entrance road surrounded by acres of cultivated fields worked by enslaved laborers, testimony to the large landholdings and labor force that were still the primary indicator of gentry status and the basis of extreme wealth. Because the house was located to the side of the road, rather than directly at the end, it would have been visible only in glimpses through the trees. Its almost cubical mass, set high on its raised basement and without additions to soften its contours, would have been a striking demonstration of the power of Littleton Eyre himself. To anyone sailing up Cherrystone Creek, the view of the house, with its two-story portico and towering brick chimneys, was equally dramatic.

Visitors to Eyre Hall would have climbed the steps and passed beyond the imposing front door of the house into the passage. This fully-paneled room was designed to demonstrate the wealth, power, and taste of the owner. Most people probably got no further. Only favored guests and family members would continue into the parlor.

[58] J. Richard Rivoire, *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland* (La Plata, MD: Southern Maryland Studies Center, Charles County Community College, 1990).

At Eyre Hall, the high level of finish in the entry hall suggests that this space combined the functions of entertaining space and informal summer living room. The paneling in the parlor is slightly less elaborate than that in the entry, but if the parlor was hung with mirrors, as the inventories suggest, it would have been the most formal room in the house and likely also would have served as the dining room—center of the hospitality for which Virginia was famous. The forty-six earthenware plates, fifty-nine pewter ones, the twenty-one silver spoons, the cases for knives and forks (just coming into use in the mid-eighteenth century), the silver and china punch bowls, the twenty tea cups and twenty-one saucers, and the thirty-eight table cloths in Littleton Eyre's inventory indicate that the house was intended for large-scale entertaining.

Visitors in the 1760s would have seen the house as the center of a village-like complex of outbuildings, including the present dairy, a large one and one-half story brick kitchen, and other buildings and structures that have not survived. The family cemetery and the very large garden were in all likelihood also part of the mid-eighteenth-century landscape.[59] Most gentry families avoided the open overcrowded cemeteries of the churches, preferring to bury their dead at home, where the burials could be protected by fences or walls. Gardens, with vegetables and medicinal and other herbs, were necessary to the plantation's operations, although they often contained ornamental elements. The garden would almost certainly have been fenced against wandering animals, although the existing wall dates from the early nineteenth century.

The changes and additions made by Littleton Eyre's grandson at the dawn of the nineteenth century are equally important evidence of changes and continuities in gentry culture during the period spanning the early years of the new republic. These years were the Eastern Shore's most prosperous decades. John Eyre needed to adapt his grandfather's dwelling to fulfill altered perceptions of personal privacy, social entertainment, and public duty. He rebuilt or remodeled the two-story portico on the west and the three smaller porches on each of the other elevations in the fashionable Federal style. He fitted the old fireboxes with marble mantels. He replaced the heavy Georgian window sash with new sash whose larger panes and thinner muntins let in more light. The changes he made were so convincing that even experienced twentieth-century architectural historians concluded, incorrectly, that the original block of the house was actually built during the Federal period.[60]

His expansion of the original block to the east, first for a large room probably used as a dining room, and then again after the turn of the century for a full, two-story wing, is representative of the trend among the gentry to isolate their private, family life while maintaining an active, public role in society. In many cases, the creation of a separate dining space was the visual expression of the old order reasserting itself despite challenges to conventions of deference posed by the disestablishment of the Anglican Church and political concessions made to sustain the Revolutionary War effort. This reassertion was expressed in creating two houses in one at Tuckahoe and in building new additions, as at Mount Vernon and in Thomas Jefferson's plans for the Governor's Palace.[61] With changing expectations about the relationship between servants and served, enslaved laborers' presence in the main house came to be increasingly restricted. In the 1770s, the Carters at Shirley (1723–38, 1770s; NHL, 1970) constructed a porch for servants to wait to be summoned. In the nineteenth century, genteel dwellings (including Eyre Hall) were fitted with call bells or other mechanical means of

[59] Littleton Eyre and his wife were buried in the cemetery and Eyre's inventory included a garden roller.

[60] Forman, Virginia Eastern Shore and its British Origins, 109.

[61] Camille Wells, "Virginia by Design: The Making of Tuckahoe and the Remaking of Monticello," *ARRIS* 12 (2001): 44-73; Michael A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2006); Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*; Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," in *Perspectives of Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Camille Wells, vol. 2 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 137-49; Mark R. Wenger, "Eighteenth-Century Bedchambers" (unpublished manuscript, September 2000); Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman, vol. 3 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989): 149-59; Mark R. Wenger, "Jefferson's Designs for Remodeling the Governor's Palace," *Winterthur Portfolio* 32 (Winter 1997): 223-42.

summoning help from kitchens or other segregated spaces only when needed. Taken together, the alterations and additions John Eyre made to his grandfather's house reflected changes in architectural fashion, in the still greater importance of dining and entertainment, and in the relationship between public, private, and service spaces.[62]

Eyre was not alone in remaking venerated family seats in the early Federal period. After the American Revolution, changes in the interpretation of public and private spheres within the household accelerated even as new venues appeared for social, political, and legal events outside of the plantation house. Social segregation had long influenced the arrangement of domestic space. In the seventeenth century it contributed to the emergence of the two-room, lobby or porch entry plan in houses heated by exterior end chimneys and the expulsion of service functions from the dwelling into subsidiary structures—outbuildings—arranged on the landscape in deference to the main house. In the eighteenth century, it prompted the creation of a central passage and rooms dedicated to specific uses, such as dining rooms, drawing rooms, and bedchambers. Chambers, in particular, were either removed from the first floor altogether, tucked behind a series of public spaces, or, if left *in-situ*, isolated by circulation patterns like that at Shirley where the public rooms opened into one another from the hall. The architectural treatment of the interior trim in the 1770s also helped make this distinction, linking the social space visually.[63]

At Eyre Hall, the renegotiation of the domestic space resulted in the addition of a separate dining room, as well as a reorganization/realignment of the outbuildings beyond the house proper.[64] The addition of French wallpaper inside and an orangerie was further confirmation of John Eyre's deliberately opulent statement of his coming into his inheritance in the 1790s and his continued success at the apex of Eastern Shore society into the 1820s. Taken altogether, these alterations and additions reflected changes in architectural fashion, in the still greater importance of dining and entertainment, and in the relationship between public, private, and service spaces. Little changed because of the Revolution, but the nagging insecurities of the leading gentry families, whose authority rested in patriarchy and on the slave system, persisted. Questions of status, and the resulting tensions, manifested themselves in house plans and additions, and later in legalities that tightened the slave code after 1806.[65]

John Eyre built the existing overseer's house and smokehouse and probably moved the mid eighteenth-century dairy to its present position. He continued to make improvements to the Eyre Hall property well into the nineteenth century. He added the expensive French wallpaper in the stair hall sometime after 1816. At about the same time, he built a large orangerie next to the family cemetery. In the late eighteenth and particularly early nineteenth centuries, a number of the Tidewater's richest planters built heated orangeries where they protected exotic plants, primarily orange and lemon trees, during the winter. In the warm months, the trees and other plants were moved out into the garden. The orangerie at Eyre Hall was also intended to be an ornament in the landscape.[66]

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[62] The Early Architecture of Tidewater Virginia: A Guidebook for the Twenty-Third Annual Virginia Architecture Forum Conference (Williamsburg: Architectural Research Department, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2002), 75-77.

[63] Regarding Shirley, Early Architecture of Tidewater Virginia, 75-77.

[64] This kind of realignment occurred at Mount Pleasant (ca. 1760) in Surry County as well; the grandson of the builder added onto the house and built a new line of dependencies, just as John Eyre did to *his* grandfather's estate. Mount Pleasant's resources are primarily archaeological, however.

[65] See for example, McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, in which he explores the concessions the established gentry—the patriots—had to make to lower-class whites in order to garner, and sustain, their support during the war. Also, Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial, Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[66] Dennis J. Pogue, "Greenhouses/Orangeries/Hothouses: A Survey of Chesapeake Forms and Functions," Paper presented at the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference, March 2003 (rev. April 2003), 7-9.

As the home of the richest man in Northampton County, Eyre Hall seems to have influenced a number of surviving local gentry houses constructed later in the nineteenth century. A number of these feature exterior porches on all principal elevations, for instance. Interestingly enough, the feature most often copied was Littleton Eyre's arrangement of the stair in the side hall. Although constructed of brick masonry, nearby Brownsville (ca. 1806) has the same three-room side-hall plan, with the stairs rising along the side wall of the stair hall and then turning and crossing within the arch that separates the stair hall from the entry. It also has some notable woodwork. Ralph Whitelaw, in *Virginia's Eastern Shore*, described End View (ca. 1775) as having a hall with wainscoting, an archway in the center, and a stair set back to the side.[67] The Sally Wescott House was constructed seventy years after Eyre Hall, yet still adopted the same two-room deep, side-hall, gambrel roof architectural form. Elkington, also in Northampton County, shares all of Eyre Hall's distinctive architectural features except the gambrel roof. A full two stories high under its side-gable roof, it has Federal porches on its three principal elevations, a two-story porch on the long side elevation, a staircase in the passage that turns to cross through the arch, decorative wallpaper in the stair hall, though this is painted, rather than printed, and even the odd awkward shed-roofed lean-to that connects the main block and the dining room.

Eyre Hall in a National Context

Although Eyre Hall is small by the standards of the mid-eighteenth-century Tidewater elite, its combination of vernacular forms and sophisticated finishes ties it to some of Virginia's greatest and most important houses. The almost cubical mass of the ca. 1759 main block shares the highly personal and almost brazen silhouette of the big gentry houses of the 1720s and 1730s, like Rosewell (ca. 1725), Stratford (1730-38; NHL, 1960), and Shirley (1723-38, 1770s; NHL, 1970). Its extraordinary interior finishes link it to the more sedate interpretations of classicism in the mid-eighteenth century that produced dwellings like Sabine Hall (1738; NHL, 1970); Westover (ca. 1750; NHL, 1960); Gunston Hall (1755-59; NHL, 1960); and Mount Airy (1758-62; NHL, 1960). Gunston Hall shares Eyre Hall's dramatic contrast between a relatively modest exterior and an elegantly detailed, classically inspired interior, in this case designed by William Buckland. Buckland also created the interiors for John Tayloe's Mount Airy in the 1760s. These were destroyed in a fire in 1844, but were probably as elaborate as the exterior, which survives.[68]

At Sabine Hall, Landon Carter's craftsman tucked the fine staircase, with its turned balusters and carved spandrels, away in a side passage. An archway overhead articulated its importance further.[69] The stair likely was intended to draw initiated, invited guests up to the wide, second-floor central passage. In the same way, a select group could drink tea with the family in the beautifully finished best bedchamber on the second floor at Eyre Hall. An archway also set the stair apart and called attention to it at Carter's Grove (1740-53; NHL, 1970), outside of Williamsburg. The use of the same architectural motif in houses as different in plan, materials, and exterior appearance as Sabine Hall (dendrochronology-dated 1738) and Eyre Hall suggests a common understanding of building forms and social space throughout the Chesapeake. The quality of the interior woodwork and stair archway found in Eyre Hall is also reminiscent of the exceptional paneling at Carter's Grove, executed by Richard Bayliss.[70] That the woodwork of Carter's Grove and Eyre Hall is recognized as the very best speaks to the significance of what Littleton Eyre's carpenter-joiner accomplished. Unfortunately, the name of the craftsman responsible for Eyre Hall's exquisite woodwork remains unknown.

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[67] Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, 487.

[68] On Buckland, see: Luke Beckerdite, "William Buckland and William Bernard Sears: The Designer and the Carver," and "William Buckland Reconsidered: Architectural Carving in Chesapeake Maryland," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 8, no. 2 (November 1982): 6-88, as well as studies by Carl Lounsbury on the Prince William County Courthouse. Still others have examined buildings in Annapolis, like the Hammond-Harwood House (NHL, 1960), for more evidence of Buckland's craftsmanship.

[69] Early Architecture of Tidewater Virginia, 28-33.

[70] Unlike Eyre Hall, the exterior at Carter's Grove was dramatically altered during the Colonial Revival period to resemble a five-part Palladian house.

Eyre Hall resembles Shirley in more than its near cubical mass. Both family seats were reworked, with the original Georgian-period materials updated in the early Federal era. The stair of Carter's house at Shirley likely dates to the 1730s. The remaining interiors were added in the 1770s under Charles Carter's oversight; the workmanship is of the caliber expected of houses like Eyre Hall, erected for the leading gentry of that generation. The alterations at both houses also reflected the evolving interpretation of public and private spheres within the household and the development of venues for social, political, and legal events outside of the plantation house after the American Revolution.

The closest parallel to Eyre Hall, however, is probably Tuckahoe Plantation (1733, 1740; NHL, 1969), near Richmond, with its H-shaped house, fine interiors, and eight surviving outbuildings. Dendrochronology has dated the addition to Tuckahoe to 1741. Tuckahoe and Eyre Hall are both formalized vernacular house forms elevated to the highest gentry status by elaborate interiors and exceptional workmanship. Both are representative of the very best houses of their era, built for the same purposes yet with distinctions arising from their localities. Spatial hierarchies characterized the early Tuckahoe, as they did at Eyre Hall. This is particularly evident in the detail of the carving on the stair. As space became more private in both houses, it became less showy.

There are other, large houses on the Eastern Shore that resemble Eyre Hall in their use of pilasters and paneling in the principal rooms, such as Shepherd's Plain (ca. 1760) and Corbin Hall (ca. 1787) in Accomack County, and Maryland's Beverly (1773) in Worchester County and Radcliffe Manor (1757) in Talbot County. These houses postdate Eyre Hall, however, and resemble it only in their ornamental interiors. Their significance rests in the level of detail that both their builders and Littleton Eyre wanted their houses to have.

The outbuildings at Eyre Hall are also rare and significant survivors. Dendrochronology dates the smokehouse to 1807, the same year it shows up in an insurance policy, which described it as a "pantry." The saltbox and the fire pit, together with paving along the exterior, make this a particularly important National Era outbuilding.[71] The dendrochronology report indicates that the dairy, recorded in the 1796 insurance policy, was constructed of logs felled around 1757 and suggests that it was moved to its present location in 1807. If that analysis is correct, it is the earliest known, extant dairy in the Chesapeake. The surviving shelving is apparently unique and has been extensively studied by Colonial Williamsburg's Architectural Research Department, as has the whole dairy.

Although a number of orangeries were constructed during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the intact greenhouse at Wye House (NHL, 1970) in Talbot County, Maryland, is the only eighteenth century example to survive. Although the orangerie at Eyre Hall is in ruins, it shares with the one at Wye House a complexity of design, especially with its underground flue system and dampers, rarely found in early greenhouses. Eyre Hall has one of only four largely intact early nineteenth-century orangeries to survive, the others being at Dumbarton Oaks, in Washington, DC; Oatlands, in Loudoun County and Battersea, in Petersburg, both in Virginia.[72]

All planters with an enslaved labor force of thirty or more needed an overseer and the overseer's house must have been common features of plantation life at the turn of the nineteenth century. Most of these buildings seem to have been modest frame houses that have not survived. Although it only contained one room with a loft

[71] Archaeological work at Mount Pleasant in Surry County, Virginia, uncovered similar paving around what is thought to be a ca. 1803 smokehouse. This outbuilding was constructed as part of John Hartwell Cocke II's alterations to the landscape and redistribution of buildings associated with his expansion of the mansion house from 1802 to 1809. For a synopsis of the Mount Pleasant complex, see Nicholas Luccketti, "Mount Pleasant (Architectural and Archaeological Complex)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2007).

[72] Pogue, "Greenhouses/Orangeries/Hothouses," 6-7.

above when it was built in 1798, the brick overseer's house at Eyre Hall was unusually fine. Its brick construction probably insured its survival as a rare example of a once common building type.[73]

The Eyre family's investment in their homeplace as an expression of themselves, their wealth, and their refinement also linked them to the broader British Colonial Atlantic world. The material culture of the Chesapeake elite shared a language of gentility with those affluent and influential residents in the British colonies' urban centers of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Outside of Philadelphia, botanist John Bartram initially built his fine stone house (NHL, 1960) in the 1730s, and expanded it twice before 1770, and Benjamin Chew built Cliveden (1763–67; NHL, 1961). William Hamilton began the neoclassical reshaping of his ca. 1770 Georgian mansion, The Woodlands (NHL, 1967) in 1786. Hamilton, like his contemporary John Eyre, used The Woodlands as his primary residence. He endowed it with the finest and most fashionable features he could afford, tempered by his experience living in both Philadelphia and London and by his personal and familial ambitions.

The South Carolina Lowcountry is probably the closest parallel to the rural Chesapeake. Like their urban counterparts, the Chesapeake elite and the owners of the great rice plantations on the Ashley and Cooper Rivers sought to demonstrate their wealth and social and political power through the built environment. The two southern regions also shared a refined way of living that was made possible by and dependent upon enslaved labor. The principal difference between the two areas lay in the presence of Charleston, one of the largest urban centers in British North America during the colonial period. Lowcountry planters first augmented their city houses and then tended to their great plantations on the rivers. Stylish plantation houses and Charleston townhouses were two sides of the same coin—both sought to display cultural authority.

The brick house at Drayton Hall (NHL, 1960) was built on the Ashley River between 1738 and 1742. It exemplifies Georgian-Palladian architecture and, with Virginia's Mount Airy, is one of only two surviving houses known to be based on published architectural pattern-book designs. Like Eyre Hall, Drayton Hall benefited from continuity in ownership. Home to seven generations of the family that built it, it is a well-preserved and well-cared-for artifact of the eighteenth century, standing in one of the most significant unaltered historic landscapes in the country. Only one wing of nearby Middleton Place house, probably built about the same time (NHL, 1971), survives, but its historic gardens are extant. Middleburg Plantation (NHL, 1970) on the Cooper River, possibly built very late in the seventeenth century, shares Eyre Hall's frame construction. The unique silhouette of Mulberry Plantation house (NHL, 1960), with its distinctive corner pavilions with their high bell-cast roofs, makes it an instantly recognized landmark on the river. The house was erected around 1714 for a royal governor and—as happened at Eyre Hall—was updated in the late eighteenth century. The interiors of Mulberry were redone at that time; they were restored about 1917, during the Colonial Revival period. The frame house on the Chicora Wood rice plantation in Georgetown County, built around the time John Eyre was expanding Eyre Hall, would be another comparable example.

Conclusion

Eyre Hall's national significance under National Historic Landmark Criterion 4 lies in the exceptional character and preservation of its historic architecture and landscape. It is a rare example of a vernacular, Chesapeake architectural ensemble of the Colonial and early Federal period. The Georgian house, expanded and improved in the Federal period—combined with its surviving original hardware, furnishings, books, silver, and family portraits, as well as extant outbuildings and gardens—tells a rich story of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century material culture and the society that produced and utilized it. Occupying much of its original acreage and surrounded by the marshes and watercourses that have characterized the Eastern Shore for centuries, the

[73] Vlach, Back of the Big House, 135-138.

landscape at Eyre Hall still preserves the carefully sequenced spaces that helped visitors, guests, and enslaved laborers understand their relationships within a hierarchical domestic and production community. Taken as a whole, Eyre Hall embodies and conveys the wealth, status, and architectural choices made by a single family over many years as it simultaneously negotiated the local and more expansive cultures of the Chesapeake Bay region.

Littleton Eyre's house, built ca. 1759, and the expanded and updated building created by his grandson John Eyre in the early nineteenth century, is a unique bridge between the large, brick Georgian houses of the family's peers throughout the Chesapeake and the architectural vocabulary used by its less affluent neighbors. While the house's gambrel form, side-hall plan, and wood clapboarding speak to the local domestic vernacular, its scale, fine proportions, and elaborate interior paneling and finishes, speak to a world of refined aesthetic taste and high social standing. The broader spatial hierarchies encompassing the tract as a whole—its agricultural fields, garden, outbuildings, and house—are significant physical remnants of the Chesapeake's patriarchal society, and all the social distinctions and racial separation inherent to its function from the Colonial era through the Antebellum period.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register: NR# 69000265, Listed 11/12/1969
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
X Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No. VA-809 (2004)
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record:

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
X Other (Specify Repository): Virginia Historical Society, H. Furlong Baldwin Family Records

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 467.3 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	412710	4130760
B	18	414110	4130250
C	18	414810	4129580
D	18	414460	4129110
E	18	413380	4129140
F	18	412240	4129540

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary for the nominated property is shown on the Site Map. It encompasses parcels 3, 4, and 5 of the division of Eyre Hall Farm shown on a 1981 plat recorded in Plat Book 8, page 91, in the Office of the Circuit Court of Northampton County, Virginia. The property also includes that portion of parcel 2 that lies west of US Rt. 13.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the entire neck between Eyreville Creek on the north and Eyre Hall Creek on the south, Cherrystone Creek constitutes the western boundary and US Rt. 13 the eastern boundary. It contains the significant buildings, structures, and sites associated with the plantation during its period of significance. It also includes the surviving historic plantation landscape.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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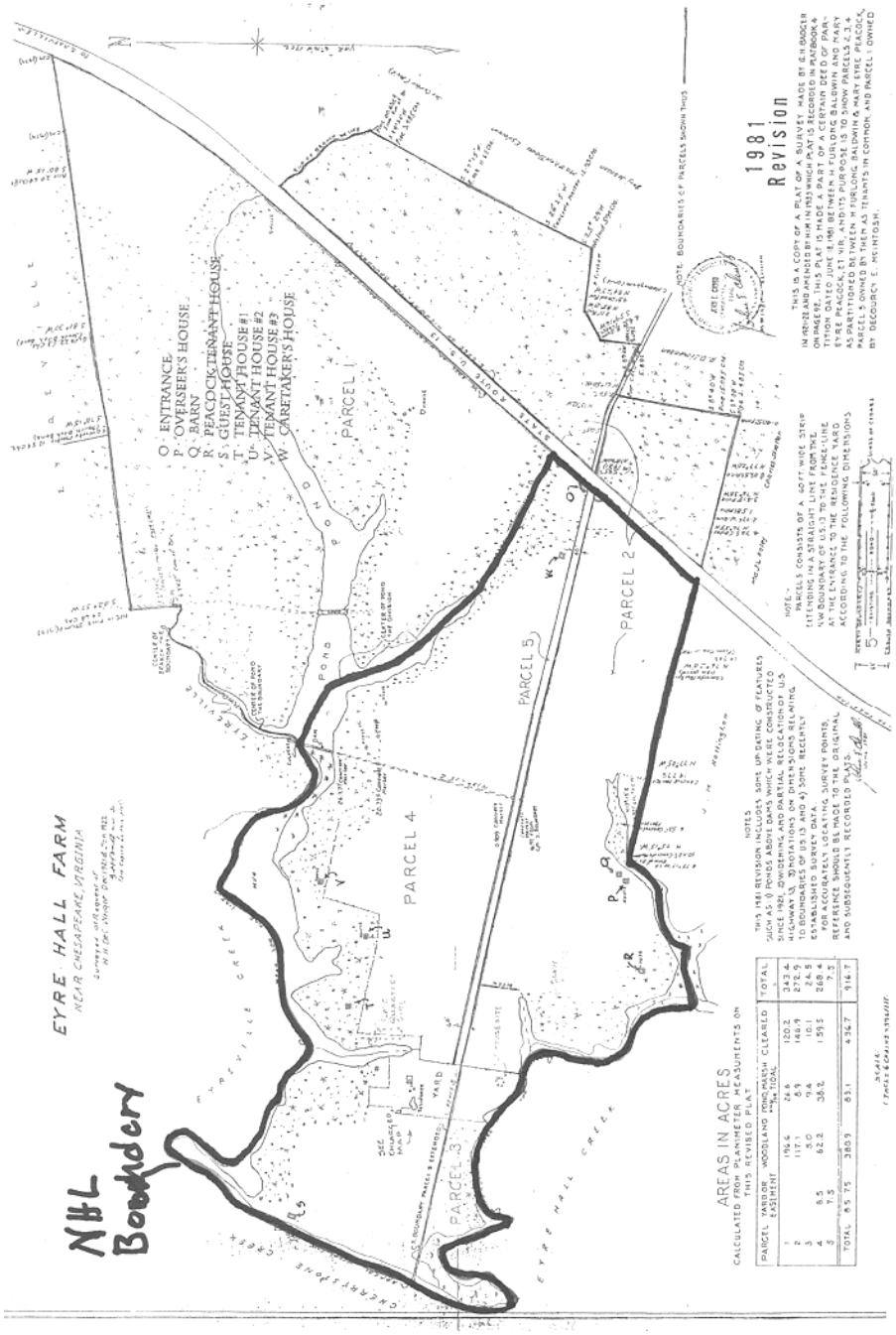
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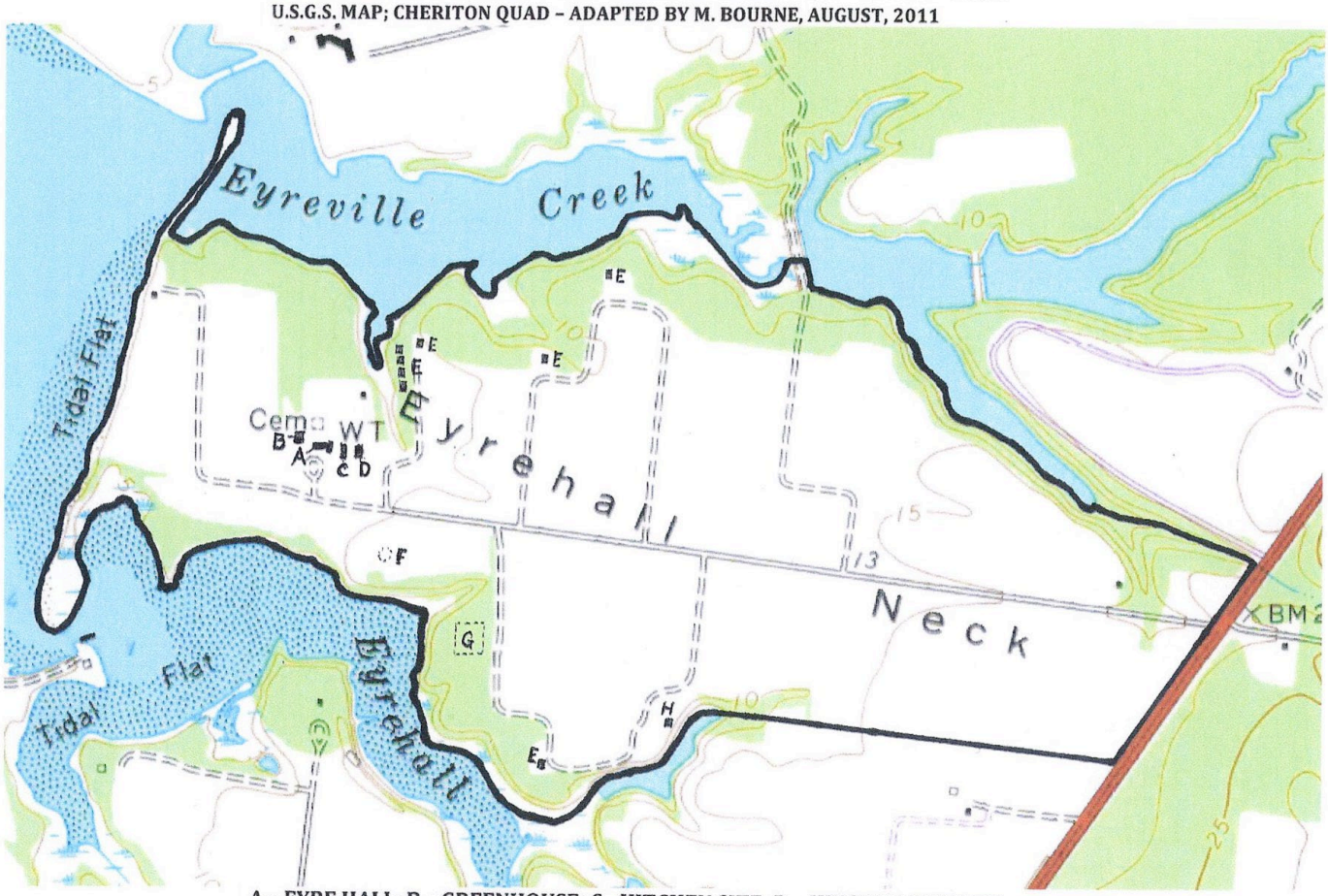
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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
March 2, 2012

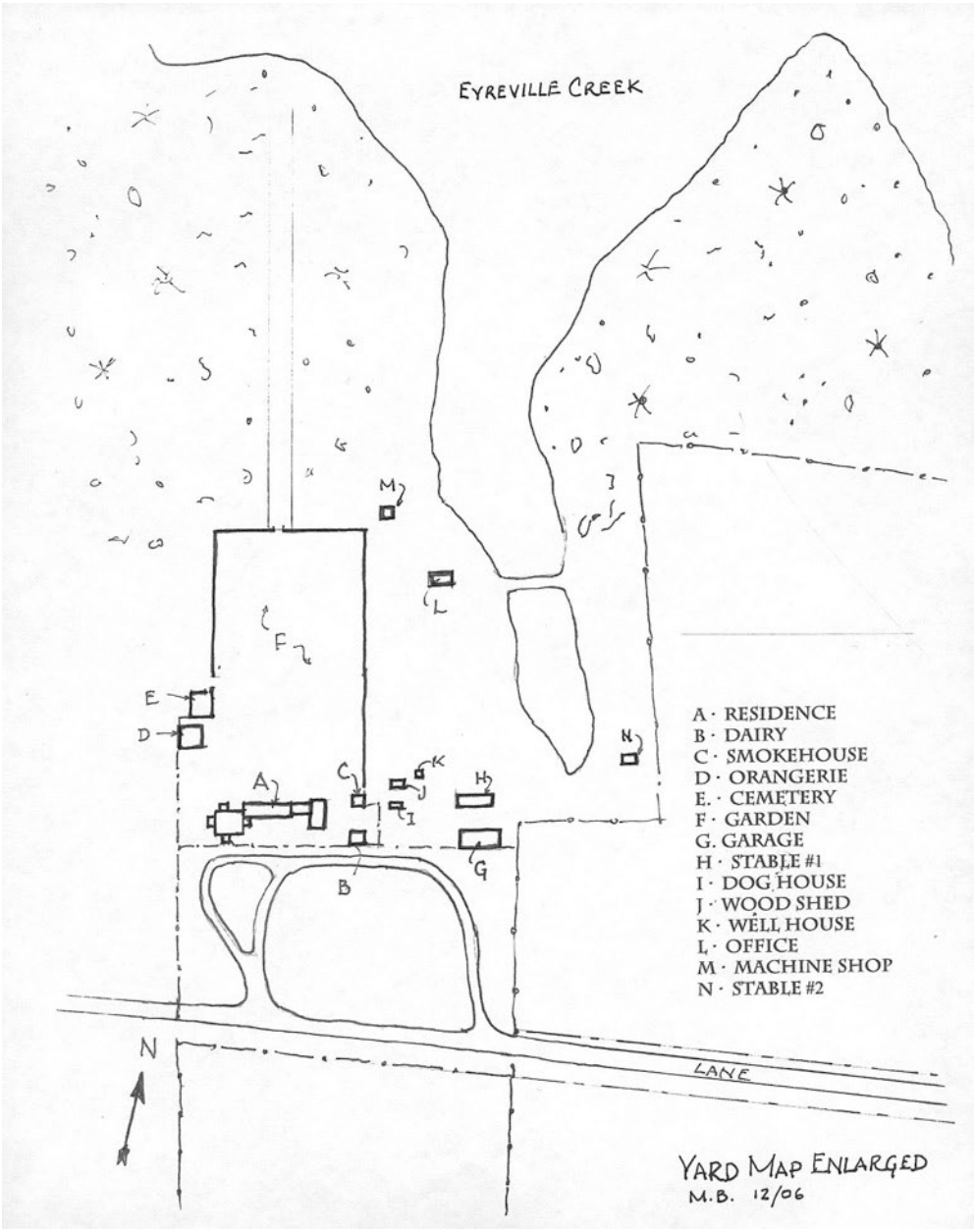


Eyre Hall, site plan and NHL boundary
Marilyn Harper, 2008

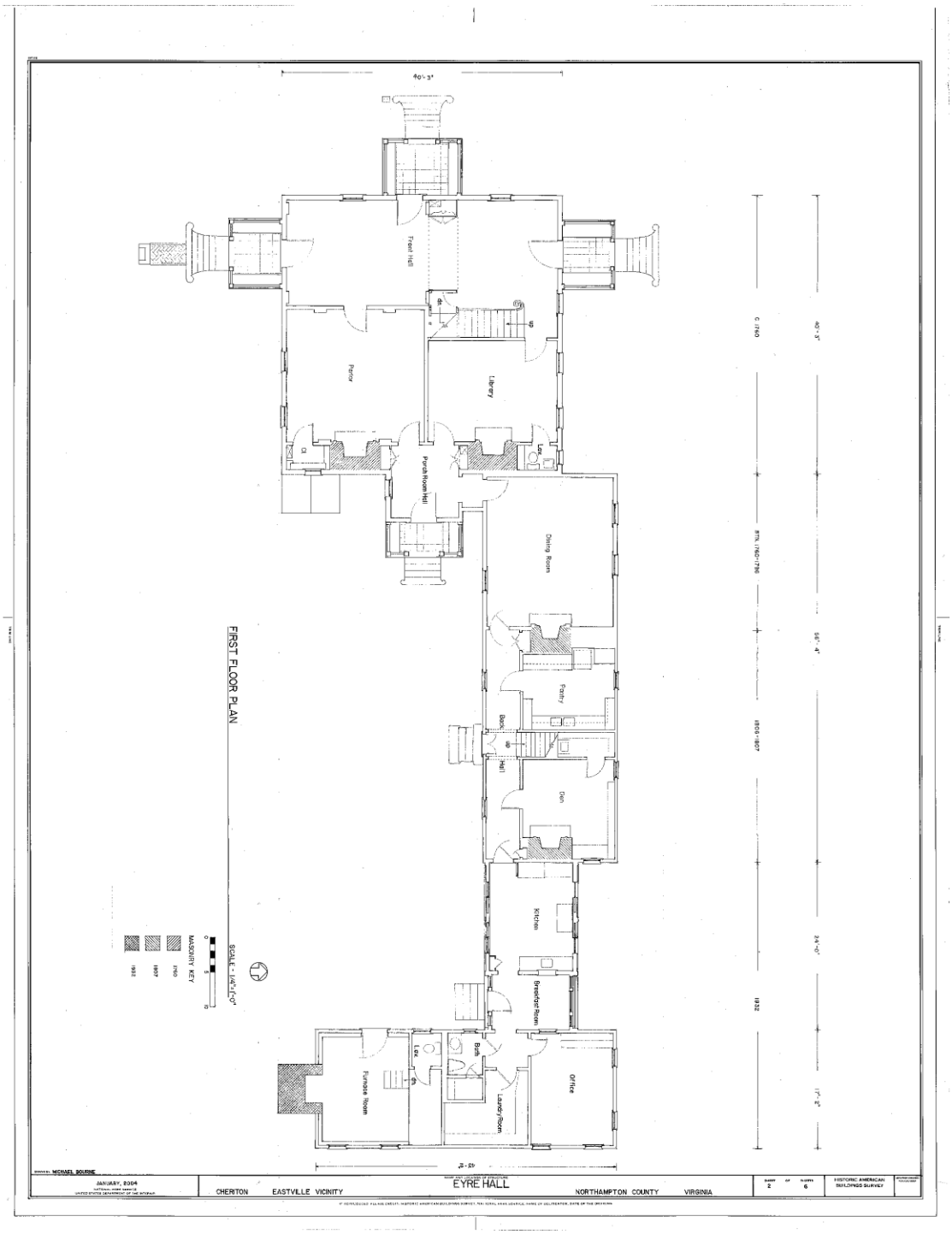
EYRE HALL – SITES PERTAINING TO SLAVERY – 1754 – 1855
U.S.G.S. MAP; CHERITON QUAD – ADAPTED BY M. BOURNE, AUGUST, 2011



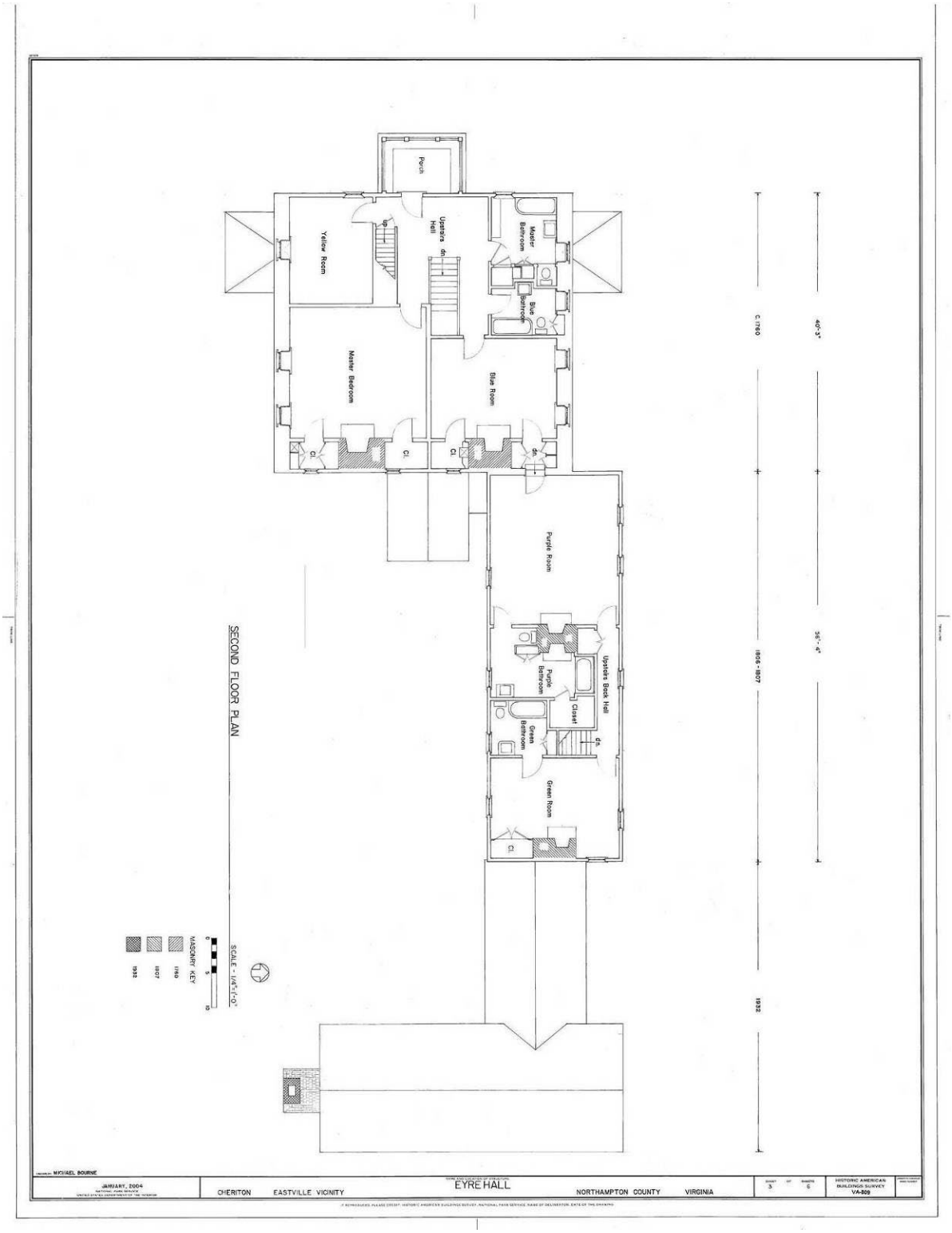
A – EYRE HALL; B – GREENHOUSE; C - KITCHEN SITE; D – KITCHEN QUARTER
E – QUARTERS SITES; F – ROUND ICE HOUSE; G – SLAVE CEMETERY;
H – OVERSEER'S HOUSE



Yard Map
Michael Bourne, 2006



Eyre Hall, first-floor plan of house
Michael Bourne for the Historic American Buildings Survey, 2004

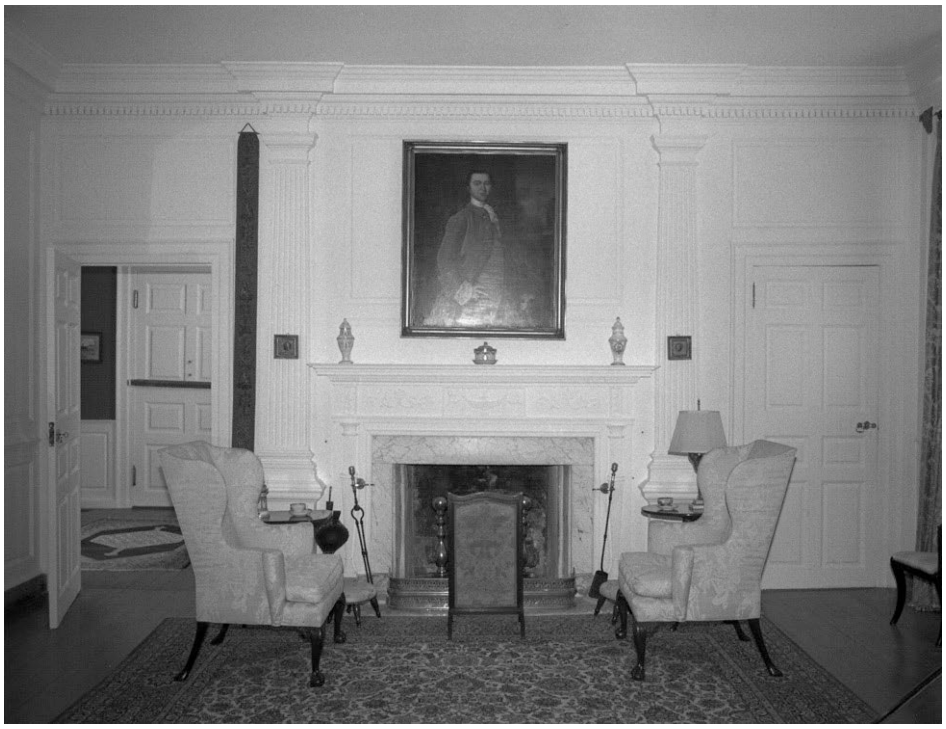


Eyre Hall, second-floor plan of house
Michael Bourne for the Historic American Buildings Survey, 2004





Eyre Hall, south elevation (top) and west elevation (bottom) of house
Michael Bourne, 2006 and 2005



Parlor, east wall
Michael Bourne, 2000



Stair hall, east wall
Michael Bourne, 2004



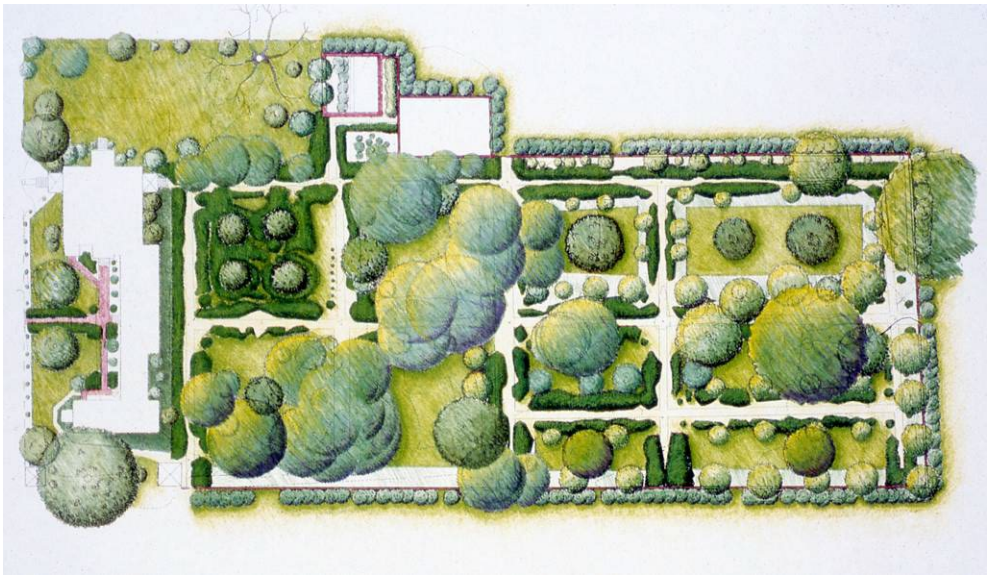
Dairy, looking northwest
Michael Bourne, 2004



Smoke house, looking northeast
Michael Bourne, 2004



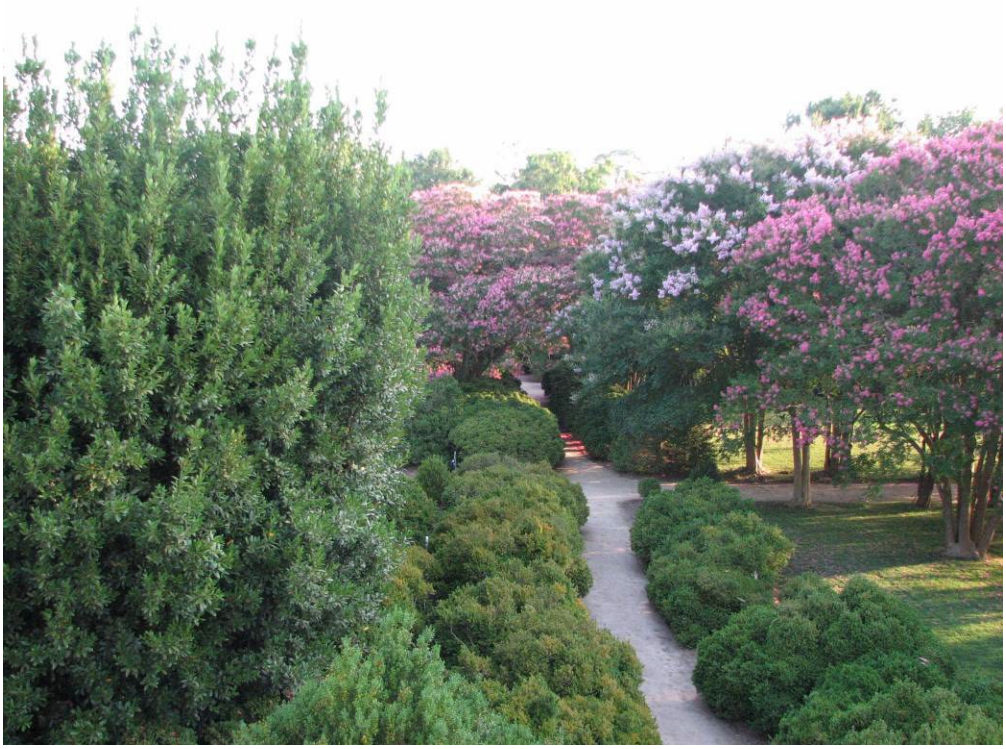
Orangerie, west elevation
Michael Bourne, 2004



Eyre Hall gardens, schematic plan
Darrin R. Alfred for the Garden Club of Virginia, 1997



East gate in garden wall
Michael Bourne, 2006



Garden, view looking north along center path
Michael Bourne, 2006



Garden, looking west on north side of house
Michael Bourne, 2006



Cemetery, looking west towards orangerie
Michael Bourne, 2006