

PRESENT CONDITIONS REPORT



Bel Air

Prince William County

DHR Easement File No. 076-0001_ep

**Prepared by:
Megan Melinat, Easement Program Architect**

**PRESENT CONDITIONS REPORT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

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The attached Present Conditions Report describes the character and condition of the above property under historic preservation easement with the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. This report accurately reflects the character and condition of the property subject to the easement referenced above as of the date of inspection. This report contains documentation that will serve as reference in future monitoring of the easement.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES:

By: _____
Megan Melinat
Easement Program Architect, DHR

Date: _____

By: _____
Gillian Bearn
Easement Program Stewardship Counsel, DHR

Date: _____

OWNER:

By: _____
William Naedele

Date: _____

Present Conditions Report (PCR)

Property: Bel Air	County: Prince William	Acres: 21.0132
DHR Easement File No: 076-0001_ep	Co-Holder: none	
Property Features and Current Use:		
<p>Bel Air is a one and a half story pre-Georgian house of brick construction. Built circa 1740, reportedly over the basement of an earlier house, it features a high stone foundation/ basement and two end chimneys, one exterior and one interior. Its interior features a wooden partition wall, complete with paneling and chair rail and glazed casement windows, between the southwest room and the hall which is seemingly removable to create a larger room. Originally 1500 acres, the house is nestled within the current parcel, which is just about 21 acres, amid several large black walnut trees. Formal gardens are located southwest of the main house. Other features on the property include wells, a brick shed, storage garage, two pole barns and a family cemetery. A portion of a retention pond serving the surrounding contemporary residential development falls partially on the property at the far east end of the parcel. A significant portion of the property is in wooded cover with clearing at the curtilage and in two fields to the east.</p> <p>Access to the house is via a single width driveway that is paved at its intersection with the residential road, but transitions to unpaved before entering the curtilage. The drive is marked at the road by a Prince William County historical marker. The property is currently used as a residence, but its sale at auction is anticipated on April 18, 2012.</p>		
Statement of Public Benefit/Conservation Value:		
<p>Bel Air is listed in the Virginia Register and the National Register of Historic Places for its significance under Criterion B. It is believed to have been built by Captain Charles Ewell, a close relative of the family of George Washington's mother, Mary Ball Washington. It was also the home of the first biographer of George Washington, Mason Locke Weems, author of the famous cherry tree story. Weems is buried in the family cemetery on the property. The historic preservation easement on the property protects the manor house and its surrounding acreage from the persistent development pressures of Prince William County.</p>		
Existing Principal Buildings, Structures, and Sites:		
<p>The following buildings, outbuildings, and structures exist as of the date of this report. Those in bold are specifically protected by the easement provisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manor House 2. Wells (3) 3. Privy (brick shed) 4. Garage/storage/office building 5. Pole Barn #1 6. Pole Barn #2 7. Family cemetery 8. Retention Pond for adjacent residential development 		
Existing Exterior and Interior Architectural Features of the Main Historic Resource:		
<p>Roof: Gable roof covered with asbestos shingles. Minor replacement of individual shingles with slate tiles. There is minor moss growth present. There are three smaller dormers on each side of the gable. The dormers are sided in clapboard; each contains a four-over-four double hung window. The flashing appears to be well-seated and no signs of deterioration were reported or observed.</p>		
<p>Exterior: The house fenestration pattern is asymmetrical. The construction material is brick laid in Flemish bond and it is in excellent condition. Some vine and ivy growth on the masonry was observed.</p>		

<p>Gutters and Drainage: Copper gutters protect the main entrances only. Some typical debris accumulation was noted at the time of the site visit.</p>
<p>Foundation: The stone foundation is three feet thick and is topped with an English bond water table. The stone foundation forms the exterior walls of the basement level living spaces. No major cracks, bulges or other indications of instability were observed. Mortar pointing is appropriate and in good condition.</p>
<p>Chimneys/Flashing: One interior chimney (on the north end) and one exterior brick chimney (on the south end). The exterior chimney is 21 feet wide at its base. Both chimneys appear sound and no major cracks, tilts or bulges were observed. Mortar joints are sound and use appropriate mortar</p>
<p>Porches/Portico/Balconies: A staircase leads to the entrance stoop at the main level on both the front and rear elevations. Both stoops are lined with a metal railing at the perimeter and corresponding handrails at the steps.</p>
<p>Windows/Window Frames/Shutters: Window placement is asymmetrical on the elevations. On the east elevation, there are two to the south end of the entry and one to the north. They are double-hung, nine-over-nine wooden sash windows. On the west elevation, the main level windows are also not evenly-spaced from one side of the entry to the other. The glass lights in the windows remain intact and in the appropriate configuration. The sashes are screwed shut for security purposes. No warped or split wood was observed. The dormers were added to the rear of the house in the 1940s-50s to provide more natural light to the second level.</p>
<p>Doors and Door Frames: Main entrance on the east elevation is a paired wooden door, with a rectangular twelve-light transom. The entry on the west elevation is a single six-light wood door. The interior doors are largely wood panel doors. The exception is in the basement, where the exterior doors are vertical board with Z-bracing on the interior. There is a twelve-light transom over the interior door between the Red Room and Guest Bedroom. All of the doors are properly hung and operable with historic hardware remaining throughout the property.</p>
<p>Interior Woodwork, Wainscoting, Trim: Much of the original woodwork was lost to scavengers in the 1930s and was replaced in the 1940s-50s with those that exist now. They include varying designs of crown molding in the public rooms, traditional chair rails throughout the house and multiple instances of built-in shelves and bookcases. The bedroom is the only room on the main level without crown molding. The cabinets in the basement were relocated from a 1800s house in Farmville, Virginia.</p>
<p>Walls and Ceilings: The plaster walls are intact and in excellent condition. No cracking was observed.</p>
<p>Flooring: The pine wood floors are in excellent condition and appear to be original. There is some tilt at the second level, but the owner has monitored this regularly and remains stable. The basement floors are brick and ceramic tile. These were installed in the 1940s-1950s over the original hard-packed dirt floor.</p>
<p>Stairs/Staircases: Main stair between the main and second level is a wood stair with scrollwork, turned balusters and a turned newel post. There are two balusters per tread. The handrail is not believed to be the original due to inconsistencies in the design (as related to the construction period of the house), but is, nonetheless historic. Both the stair and railing appear sound, with no instabilities observed. A second stair is found underneath the main stair and provides access to the basement level. This stair is carpeted and enclosed with walls. A third stair, the historic service stair, is extremely steep and connects the dining room with the basement.</p>
<p>Mantels and Fireplaces: Wood mantels are in place at all fireplace locations. The eight fireplaces are unused, as some require liners to function safely. All remain uncapped.</p>
<p>Basement: Rough fieldstone construction with red-tinted mortar. The entire level is almost completely above ground. The flooring is brick and ceramic tile. No signs of water infiltrations were observed or reported.</p>

Mechanical Systems (HVAC and Other):		
Central air conditioning (spiracle system) is installed in the main house, as are hot water radiators heated by gas. The property is connected to municipal water, sewer and gas heat.		
Fire Prevention & Security:		
The house is regularly occupied by the property owner. Smoke detectors and extinguishers are present throughout the building. A security system with motion sensors is also installed and operational.		
Well		
There are three wells within the curtilage of the Bel Air property. Two of them feature hand water pumps above ground. The third is adjacent to the formal garden space and is covered. The house is now connected to the municipal water system.		
Privy/ Brick shed		
The easement identifies the brick shed as a privy. It features a wood shake gable roof, two panel wood door and three-light windows. It is currently used for storage.		
Garage/storage/office building		
This building is a former World War II barrack that was cut in half and relocated her, where it was placed atop its concrete block foundation. It features painted horizontal wood siding and six-over-six double-hung windows spaced at regular intervals along its length. The windows on the south side are covered in siding from the exterior, but remain in place and are visible from the interior. The building is currently used as a garage and workshop.		
Pole Barn #1 (Cattle Barn) and Pole Barn #2 (Hay Barn)		
Outbuildings both constructed of vertical wood board siding, which is painted. The roof is 5v metal corrugated. Both are in very good condition.		
Family cemetery		
The family cemetery is located north of the main house. The headstones were stealthily removed in the 1930s at the direction of the then-listing realtor. The current owner's family attempted to locate the headstones to have them reinstalled to no avail. The unmarked stones currently in place mark locations that are believed to be graves, based on ground undulations. The cemetery is still in use by the family.		
Public Access Reported Since Previous Site Visit:		
The house has been listed for sale for quite some time. Of late, it is shown in advance of the sale auction by appointment to interested purchasers.		
Photo Documentation for Future Monitoring to Include:		
Exterior elevations		
Outbuilding elevations		
Interior features detailed above		
All new construction (after date of easement) on the property		
Any deteriorated features or features otherwise requiring attention including accumulation of trash or debris		
Ground Disturbance		
Conservation Purpose:		
Historic Preservation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Listed on Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register
Open Space/Scenic Resources:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Forrestal Use:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Agricultural Use:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation/Public Access/Trails:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Water Quality/Watershed Protection:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wildlife Habitat/Rare Species:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Riparian Buffer Zones:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In Chesapeake Bay Watershed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Documentation Information:		
Site Visit Date: 03/07/2012	Staff: M. Melinat, G. Bearns	
Photographic Documentation Completed: 03/07/2012		
Previous Staff Site Visit: 11/04/1994 by W. Crosby		
Maps in File:	Survey/Plat: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tax: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topo: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aerial: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parcel ID Number: 8091-78-9128	Easements Recorded: 6/24/1988 and 5/15/1990	
Virginia Landmarks Register: 12/02/1969	National Register of Historic Places: 02/26/1970	
Property Information:		
Property Address: 14513 General Washington Drive, Dale City, Virginia 22193		
Directions: From Richmond, go north on I-95 to Exit 152B and merge onto VA-234N/ Dumfries Road (go 4.0 miles); turn Right onto Spriggs Road (1.4 miles); turn Right onto Minnieville Road (0.6 miles); then Left onto General Washington Drive. Property is a mile ahead on the right.		
Owner Mailing Address: Mr. William Naedele, 14513 General Washington Drive, Dale City, Virginia 22193		
Phone: 703-618-1245	Email: bel_air_plantation@msn.com	
Notes/Additional Information:		
<p>The building is scheduled to be sold at auction in April 2012. Subsequently, the contents will be auctioned in lots. The owner hopes to arrange for temporary storage/ guardianship of the artifacts directly relating to Bel Air Plantation until the transfer of ownership is secure.</p> <p>There is a stone foundation located below grade, south of the new house, under the canopy of the existing magnolia tree. It is marked above grade by stones. A second stone foundation reportedly exists immediately adjacent to the north end of the main house.</p> <p>Thunderbird Archaeology completed a comprehensive historic report on the property.</p>		
Attachments:		Notes:
Photographic Documentation (attach to report):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
National Register Nomination:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Maps (photo point map, survey, aerial map):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Copy of Easement Deed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Prepared by: Megan Melinat, Easement Program Architect, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architecture.		

ATTACHMENTS



Photo 1: West elevation, Main House, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 2: North elevation, Main House, (well house in the foreground), Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 3: East elevation, Main House, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 4: South elevation, Main House, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 5: West entry door, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 6: Main Hall, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 7: Main Stair, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 8: Dining Room, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 9: Washington's Study, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 10: Partition wall between Red Room and Hall, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 11: Red Room, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 12: Bedroom, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 13: Second floor landing, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 14: Northeast Bedroom, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 15: Center Bedroom, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 16: Southeast Bedroom, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 17: Southwest Bedroom, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 18: Basement, looking southeast, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 19: Basement, looking north, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 20: Basement, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 21: Exterior basement door, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 22: Basement kitchen fireplace, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 23: Basement dining area, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 24: Brick storage building/ privy, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 25: Garage/ storage/ office building, north elevation, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 26: Garage/ storage/ office building, west elevation of south end, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 27: Pole Barn #1, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 28: Pole Barn #2, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photos 29 and 30: Family cemetery, Bel Air, 03/07/2012





Photo 31: Stones marking below-grade foundation, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



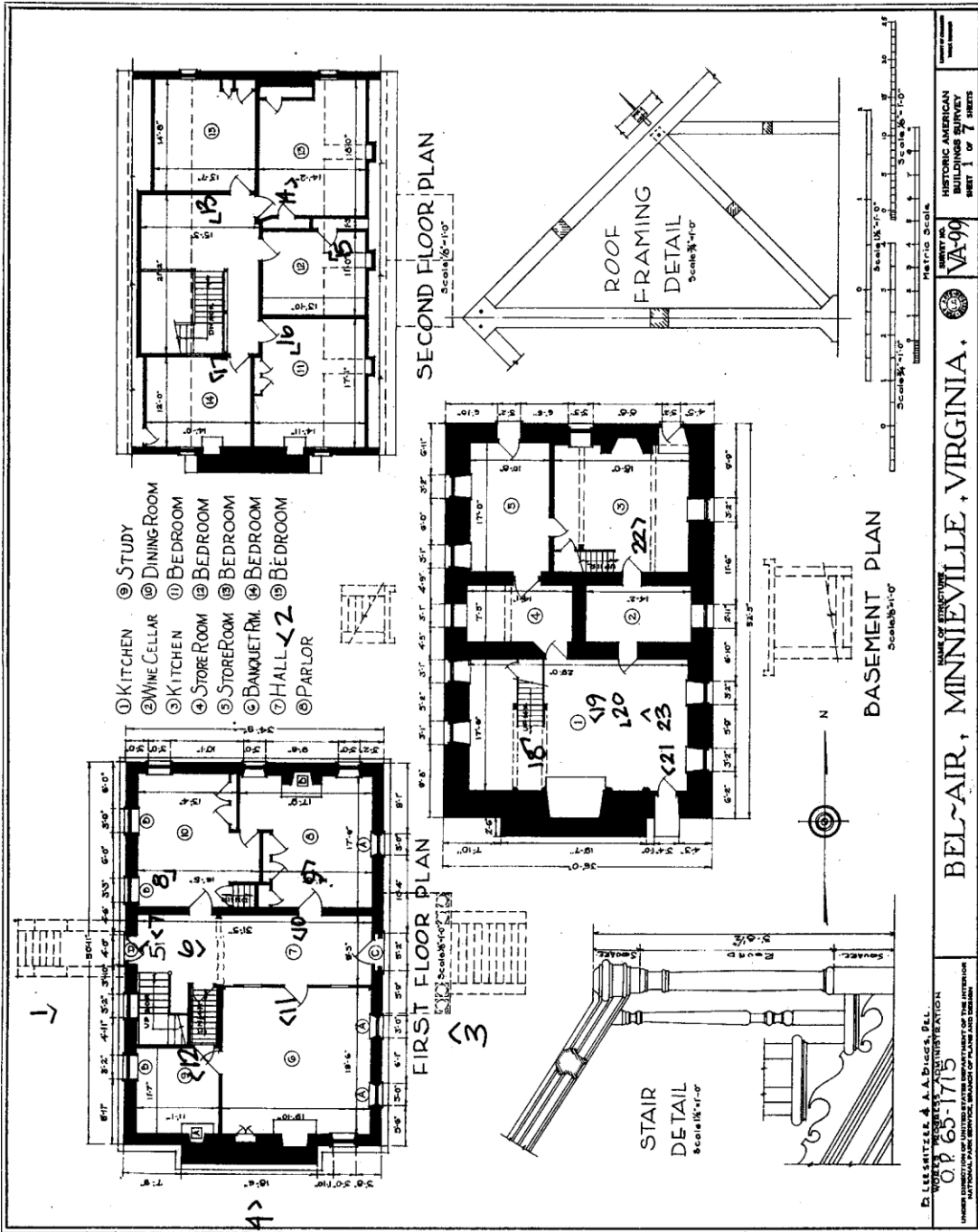
Photo 32: Open field, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 33: Former road bed surrounded by wooded cover, Bel Air, 03/07/2012



Photo 34: Adjacent neighborhood retention pond (partially on easement property), Bel Air, 03/07/2012

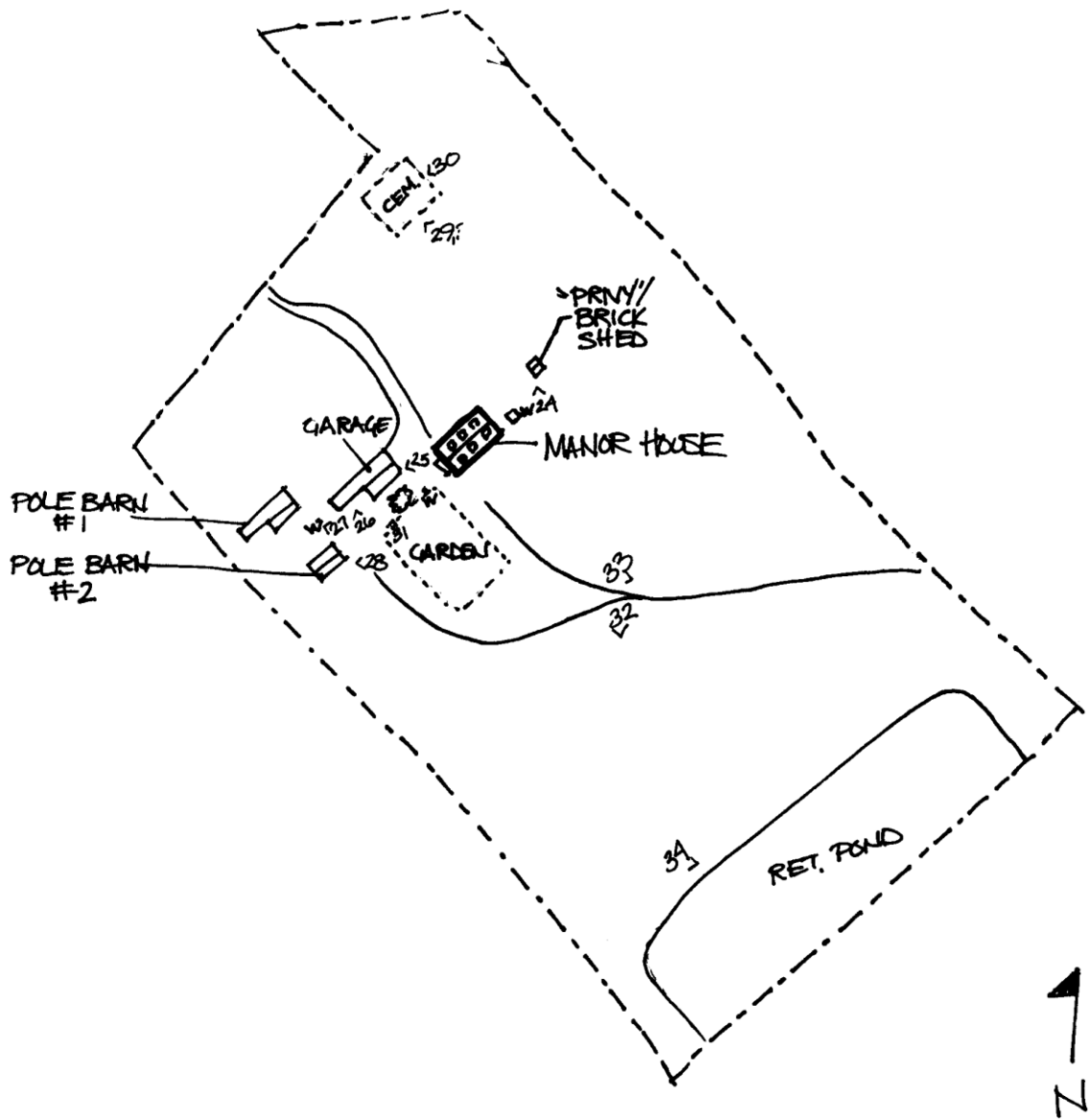


LESBITZER & A.A. BIGGS, DEL.
 ARCHITECTS
 608 S. BROAD ST., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004
 PHONE: 202-638-1715
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NAME OF BUILDING: BEL-AIR, MINNIEVILLE, VIRGINIA.
 HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET 1 OF 7 SHEETS

3/7/2012

PHOTO POINTS



BEL AIR PHOTO POINTS
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

016-0001-ep
 NO SCALE