

Slave Housing Data Base

Building Name: Caretaker's Cottage

Evidence Type: Extant

Historical Site Name: Belmont House, Caretaker's Cottage

City or Vicinity: 225 Washington St., Fredericksburg, VA

State: VA

Investigators: Douglas W. Sanford

Institutions: University of Mary Washington

Project Start: 7/1/13

Project End: 7/1/13

Additional Investigators: Dennis Pogue

Institutions: University of Maryland [Stafford County Survey]

Project Start: 3-19-15

Project End: 3-19-15

Summary Description:

The Belmont caretaker's cottage is a highly evolved timber frame structure that incorporates a building that is believed to have functioned originally as a quarter for enslaved workers on the Belmont plantation. The earlier one-story, side-gable-roofed, four-bay duplex cabin, is supported on a stone foundation, measuring roughly 34 by 16 feet. The symmetrical façade faced the Belmont house approximately 400 yards to the south, with doorways for each of the roughly equal-sized downstairs rooms, and two regularly spaced double-sash windows in between. Ladder stairs positioned in the front corners of the rooms led to the unheated garret spaces above, which mirrored the ground floor layout; a small sash window was likely positioned in each gable. A central chimney stack served the fireplaces positioned back to back on the first floor on either side of the medial partition.

The building continued to be used as housing for Belmont workers, which necessitated a number of changes over time. It has been raised by one-half story, outfitted with two-bay shed dormers on the front and back, and expanded with a first-floor shed addition along the rear, and open porches attached to each end wall. The fenestration of the façade has been altered by replacing the western doorway with a window; a doorway was inserted in the partition, and both ladder stairs were removed, with the one to the east replaced with a more gracious winder staircase. The year of construction for the original cabin is currently unknown, but based on historic context, comparative analysis, and building form and materials, a ca. 1840s date is likely.

The first documentary reference to Belmont consists of a notice that appeared in the December 17, 1823, issue of the Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald* newspaper, advertising the sale of a "large and well-finished dwelling house, and every necessary outhouse, all in good repair." Any early land records pertaining to the property were destroyed during the Civil War, so all that is known is that Belmont had been owned by Susannah Knox, until her death served as the catalyst for the sale in 1823. Joseph B. Ficklen, a prominent

local businessman, purchased the tract and made it his home, expanding the existing house in the 1840s to meet the needs of his growing family. The character of the original portion of the cottage, and the types of nails and other details of construction, suggest that this outbuilding was erected at that time. Although Ficklen acquired additional land adjacent to the original tract, Belmont was never a significant agricultural enterprise, and the cottage is likely to have accommodated enslaved servants for the Ficklen household in the main house, located just a few hundred yards distant.

References:

Byrd, Leslie

Historic Structure Report: The Belmont Caretaker's Cottage, Stafford, Virginia.

University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA, 2012.

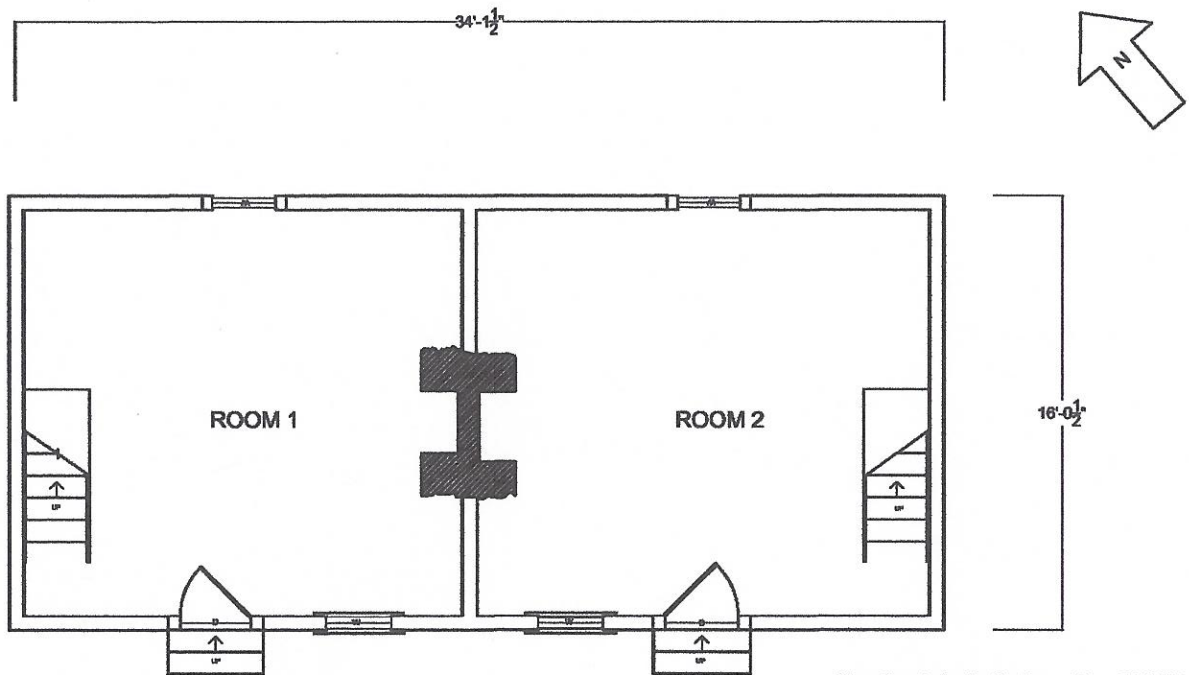
Pogue, Dennis J.

Slave Housing in Stafford County, Virginia: A Survey (2018)

Principal Construction Type: Frame

One Story with Garret

Period 1 Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 4

- Dimensions:**
- (1) First Floor: North Room: 16'6" x 15'6" x 8'5" 1/4
 - (2) First Floor: South Room: 16'8" 1/4 x 15'6" 1/2 x 8'5" 1/4
 - (3) Second Floor: South Room: 16'8" x 15' 3/4 x 7'9" 3/4
 - (4) Second Floor: North Room: 16'3" 1/2 x 15' 1/2 x 7'11" 3/4

Doors: 6

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Type:	Upper portion: 4 paned (glazed) Lower portion: 3 paneled (unglazed)	4 paneled door (unglazed)	- 4 paneled door (unglazed) - Cross framing
Dimensions:	Width: 2'8" Height: 6'8"	Width: 2'7" ³ / ₄ Height: 5'6" ³ / ₄	Width: 2'7" ¹ / ₂ Height: 6'4"
Hardware:	-Modern lock and knob -Butt-hinges with modern screws (20 th century)	-Wire nails - Pintles into floor board and lintel door frame	- Earlier butt-hinges on other side of door frame -Hanging on modern hinges with modern screws
Swing:	Into First Floor North Room	Into Shed Addition	Into First Floor South Room
Replacement:	-Expected to be a later insertion	-Later insertion -Suspected window location (Phase 2)	-Later Insertion

	(4)	(5)	(6)
Type:	Unglazed 4 paneled door, cross framing	Unglazed 4 paneled crossed framed door	Unglazed 2 paneled door
Dimensions:	Width: 2'8" Height: 6'4" ¹ / ₂ Thickness: 1" ¹ / ₄	Width: 2'8" Height: 6'9" Thickness: 1" ¹ / ₂	Width: 2'2" ¹ / ₂ Height: 6' Thickness: 1"
Hardware:	-Modern butt hinges with modern screws - 20 th century stock lock	-Modern butt hinges with screws -Wire nails for framing -Stock lock with modern ceramic knob	-Modern butt hinges
Swing:	Interior swings into Room 2	Interior swings into Room 2	Interior swings into Room 2
Replacement:	- Later insertion - Perhaps an original window there	-Modern dimensional timber framing	-Later addition, located next to the fireplace -Modern dimensional timber framing

Windows: 7

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Type:	Double hung sash, 6x6 pane window	Double hung sash, 6x6 pane window	Double hung sash, 6x6 pane window
Dimensions:	Width: 2'4" ½ Height: 3'9"	Width: 2'4" ½ Height: 3'9"	Width: 2'4" ½ Height: 3'9"
Hardware:	No hardware	No hardware	No hardware
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	Shutters on the exterior	Shutters on the exterior	Shutters on the exterior

	(4)	(5)	(6)
Type:	6x6 double hung sash window	6x6 double hung sash window	4x4 single hung sash window
Dimensions:	Width: 2'2" ¾ Height: 3'8" ¾	Width: 2'3" ½ Height: 3'8" ¾	Width: 1'7" ¼ Height: 3'7" ½
Hardware:	None	None	None
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	None	Shutters on the exterior	None

	(7)
Type:	4x4 double hung sash window
Dimensions:	Width: 1'7" ¾ Height: 3'8"
Hardware:	None
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	None

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Continuous Masonry: Stone (Sandstone – River Rocks)

Thickness: @ NE corner: 10”

Height: @ NE corner: 17”-19”, @ SW corner 7” ½

Mortar Type: Unknown

Repaired: Yes (repaired/rebuilt with Portland cement and cinder block)

Shed/Porch: Yes

Location: Rear shed; open porch on west end wall; screened porch on east end wall (all additions)

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable; the original does not exist as the structure was raised from 1 to 1.5 stories

Walls:

Frame:

Material: Timber framed

Cladding: Horizontal – Weatherboard/lapped

Beaded: Yes – The structure has bead board on a portion of the East shed addition and South porch addition.

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1):

Material: Brick

Location: Interior – Center

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Timber; exposed Period 1

Wall Finish: Lathe and Plaster, late 19th century to 20th century; whitewashed Period 1

Fireplace (1): Center

Fireplace Material: Stone (suspected of original brick lined hearth)

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: Width: 5’1” ½, **Length:** 1’5”

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: Width: 2’7”, **Height:** 2’6” ½

* 8 courses of modern brick infill then 2 courses of older brick infill below the modern rows of bricks.

Hearth Material: Not Visible

Fireplace (2): Center

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: Width: 5'1", Length: 1'7"

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: Width: 2'7", Length: 2'5" ½, Depth: 1'4"

(slanted)

- Metal lintel under brick hearth
- Three courses of older brick above lintel bar

Hearth Material: Brick

Stairs: Yes (modern dimensional lumber with machine cut nails and wire nails for the banister – may have been repaired over time); replaced original stairs in both SE and SW corners

Period 1:

Type: Ladder

Stairwell Dimensions: For Period 1 SW stair: @ 1'7" by 6'5"

Existing Stair:

Number of Treads: 4 stair tread leading to the landing and then 10 treads leading to the second floor.

Stair Tread Dimensions: 3'0" ¾ x 9" ¾ x 7" ½

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood (Later replacement on the first floor)

Floorboards Dimension: First Floor: 3" ½ wide boards

Second Floor: (original) 8" – 1'3"

- Whitewash bottom of boards
- Mixed with replaced circular sawn boards

Dating:

ca. 1840s

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Joists hewn and pitsawn

Nails: Mature cut nails

Comments:

The cottage is situated in an area of well-maintained park land, just north of Washington Street, facing the Belmont house several hundred yards to the south. Although in relatively good condition, the building is currently unoccupied and is used for storage. The building was included in the survey of Stafford County slave-associated sites in 2015.