

Manassas, Va.

REFERENCE



Ben Lomond manor house

Historic Ben Lomond Added To Virginia Landmarks Register

By SUSAN BIZZARO
JM Living Editor

The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission announced last week the addition of Ben Lomond to the Virginia Landmarks register and its subsequent nomination to the National Landmarks register.

The stately stone manor house located on Sudley Manor Drive, across from Ben Lomond Community Center, joins the 850 Virginia properties deemed worthy of preservation by the state landmarks commission since its creation 1966.

According to Frances Jones, who authored the letter of nomination, the fact that the manor house is now an official landmark ideally should preserve and protect it from any adverse impact

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Supervisors by the Manassas Historical Commission," notes Jones who is working on a survey of Prince William in her position as architectural historian-surveyor for the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission.

"The landmark honor used to mean more," she admits. "It used to mean qualification for grants and tax incentives, but that has been discontinued."

Still, according to Jones, it is an honor for property to be recognized by the commis-

house, according to a 1933 auction brochure obtained by Manassas Museum curator Wren Conner, was built by slave labor in 1837 with locally quarried red sandstone rubble. The owner of the property at the time of construction was Benjamin Tasker Chinn, great-grandson of Robert "King Carter" who in 1724 patented the 6,730 acre lower Bull Run tract of which Ben Lomond was a part. The Ben Lomond estate comprised 1,642 acres of the vast property.

Ben Lomond, named for

throughout. There are also three stone outbuildings reportedly once used as dairy and meat houses as well as slave quarters. Those who refute the slave quarters rumors feel that in addition to their use as dairy and meat houses, one of the structures served as a horn moon cottage for Benjamin Chinn during the construction of the manor house.

Ben Lomond, along with other historically landmarked Liberia on Centreville Road, is one of two remaining Carter houses in the area which once included the 8th and 19th century plantations of Portici, Pittsylvania, Hazel Plin, Mountain View, Elmwood, Sudley and Woodland - all reported to be finer quality dwellings than either of the remaining two.

Virginia Landmarks Register

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According to Frances Jones, who authored the letter of nomination, the fact that the manor house is now an official landmark ideally should preserve and protect it from any adverse impact such as roads or sewer lines.

But, according to Manassas historian R. Jackson Ratcliffe Sr., Ben Lomond does not have historical zoning and "could be torn down tomorrow."

"The application for historical zoning has been submitted to the Board of

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The property is owned by Manassas Associates, an affiliate of Weaver Brothers of Maryland who are developing the Sudley subdivision. The historic structure is now used as Manassas Associates offices.

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Ben Lomond, named for the mountain overlooking Loch Lomond in central Scotland, contains impressive interior woodwork, including three federal-style mantels, fluted and reeded moldings, a molded round arch in the stair hall, dining room wainscoting and paneled window jambs

throughout. There are also three stone outbuildings reportedly once used as dairy and meat houses as well as slave quarters. Those who refute the slave quarters rumors feel that in addition to their use as dairy and meat houses, one of the structures served as a honeymoon cottage for Benjamin Chinn during the construction of the manor house.

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"Even though the whole county was an armed camp during 1861 and 1862, Ben Lomond managed to escape the line of fire and was used as a hospital," explains Ratcliffe.

As Jones writes in the letter of nomination, on the wall opposite the stair on the first floor of the house are written the last wills and testaments of soldiers who were hospitalized during the First and Second battles of Bull Run.

According to Jones, "It is important to preserve these historic houses as a reminder of the area's past."