

VLR-9/20/88 NRHP-4/3/87

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

HISTORIC SITE FILE: PARK GATE PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

1. Name

historic Park Gate

and or common Park Gate

2. Location

street 8 number 11508 Park Gate Drive N/A not for publication

city, town Nokesville N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Prince William code 153

3. Classification

Table with 5 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use, and other. Includes checkboxes for building(s), private, occupied, etc.

4. Owner of Property

name Dean F. and Gail D. Niedernhofer

street & number 11508 Park Gate Drive

city, town Nokesville N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22123

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince William County Courthouse

street & number 9331 Lee Avenue, P.O. Box 191

city, town Manassas state Virginia 22310

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title SEE CONTINUATION PAGE #1 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 85% unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Park Gate is located on _____ acres on Park Gate Drive (VA Route 653) about two miles southeast of Nokesville, Prince William County, Virginia. It is one of the few pre-Revolutionary homes remaining in Prince William County. Park Gate is a one and one-half story dwelling with a steep (56 degrees) gabled roof and external end chimneys. There are three dormers in the front and in the rear. The roof breaks out "lean-to fashion" over front and rear porches. This type of architecture has been called "Tidewater Style" by some authorities, after those very early (circa 1650) vernacular houses in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The significant feature of the Tidewater house is that the cedar shingle roof dominates the front and rear elevations. The exterior clapboard siding is very wide, and beaded at the bottom. The house is two rooms wide and two rooms deep. Upstairs, via a "turn-around" staircase at the rear, there are four rooms off of a central hall. The rear porch was enclosed about 1800, to provide two additional rooms. A small addition that conforms to the roof line was added off the rear of the enclosed porch about 1913. The woodwork is original except in the living and dining rooms where newer fluted woodwork was overlaid on the door and window casings in the early 1800s. At the same time, the original wide random-width floors in these rooms were covered with T&G red pine to mask termite damage. During restoration, the rudimentary kitchen was updated to modern requirements. Plumbing, electricity, central heat and air conditioning, as well as a downstairs and upstairs bathroom were installed.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The exact date when Park Gate was built is not currently known. Historians have variously cited 1734 and 1750 as dates of construction. The exact date has been difficult to trace because during the Civil War, the Prince William County Court-house was moved five times and many records were lost due to fires.

Park Gate faces south and sits approximately 200 feet from Park Gate Drive. The house is 36-0 by 30-0. Additionally, a 12-0 front porch extends across the full width of the house. In back, a similar porch has been enclosed. An 8-0 by 14-0 washroom was added in the early 1900s. A small vestibule provides outdoor access to the cellar entrance on the east side. It is a full cellar, with steel barred, above-grade windows. Another important exterior feature is the stone foundation mortared with mud and whitewashed, which raises the house about three feet above ground level. Each of the two massive end chimneys is approximately 10 feet wide and more than 40 feet high and detached from the structure 6 or more inches. The east chimney provides for two fireplaces and is constructed in Flemish Bond with glazed headers. The west chimney provides for three fireplaces and is constructed of English Bond in the Garden Wall pattern. From the front porch, there is a separate door with three-light transom entering each of the two front rooms. Windows throughout are six-over-six lights. All doors throughout the house have six raised panels. All windows, except those of the dormers, have raised paneled shutters.

SEE CONTINUATION PAGE #2

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1750;1830;1913;1976 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Park Gate is a well-maintained, preserved example of Tidewater style domestic architecture and exhibits a high degree of historical and material integrity. As such, the properties interpretive importance---physical links with the Brents, Washingtons and Lees---is substantially intact and demonstrates a progression of significant historic ownership. Park Gate has long been recognized by the general public, regional and county historians and historic preservationists as a property of unique architectural and historical significance. The property is registered with the Prince William County Historical Society as one of the County's thirty historic properties and has also been identified by, and is included in, the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings inventory. This structure is representative of a period and class of historic architecture that because of its age, location, and continued development activities in the Mid-Atlantic states, has been greatly diminished. Park Gate is one of the few remaining 18th century examples of the Tidewater class of architecture.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Colonel Thomas Lee, eldest son of Richard Henry Lee, signer of the Declaration of Independence, resided at Park Gate from about 1790 to 1805. There are stories that the young Col. Lee played a heroic role in the Revolutionary War. First he acted as a courier of secret documents between Arthur Lee, our envoy in France, and his father, Richard Henry Lee, and other principals in America. Later, he was aide-de-camp to General Washington during several campaigns. An illness acquired during one of the latter battles prompted his early retirement at Park Gate, and led to his early death. Colonel Lee's first wife was Mildred Washington, eldest daughter of George's brother John Augustine. Her brother Bushrod inherited Mount Vernon. George Washington is said to have "dined and afterwards visited and drank Tea" with the Lees. After the death of Mildred, Col. Lee married Eliza Ashton Brent, Daniel Carroll Brent's daughter.

Newly-found information builds a case along two separate tracks for an earlier date of construction for Park Gate. Additional historical material, as well as architectural material, raises the possibility of a seventeenth century construction date. Historically, R. Jackson Ratcliffe writes about Park Gate in his book This Was Prince William (1978 Potomac Press), "It is one of the few remaining pre-Revolutionary homes in the County, having been built about 1750 on an estate of 800 acres, a part of the Brent Town grant." Ratcliffe is a recognized local authority, who is a land surveyor and historian, and who devoted a great deal of

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.65 acres

Quadrangle name Nokesville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	118	2718	31315	412	814	01315
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

B						
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

C						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

D						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

E						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

F						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

G						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

H						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET # 6

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dean F. Niedernhofer; B.S.M.E., M.S.A.E.

organization _____ date June 1986

street & number 11508 Park Gate Drive telephone 703/594-3254

city or town Nokesville state Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

	TITLE	DATE
FEDERAL:	Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) VA-555	1937
	HABS, W. B. Morton, III	1959
STATE:	HABS VA-555	1937
	Virginia Research Center for Archeology No. 44PW71	1979
COUNTY:	Prince William County Historical Commission	1977

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

FEDERAL: United States Library of Congress
James Madison Building, Room 339
Washington, D.C. 20540

STATE: Virginia Historical Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, VA 23219

COUNTY: Prince William County Historical Commission
Mavis Stanfield, Secretary
Prince William County Planning Office
James McCoart Building
1 County Complex Court
Prince William, VA 22192-9201

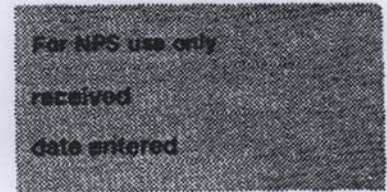
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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The framing of the house is of hand-hewn, heavy walnut timbers. Major timbers often measured as much as 12" by 12" and as long as 30-0. Where timbers were joined, each piece was identified with Roman numerals and the joints were wood pinned. Corner braces are keyed and wood pinned into corner posts. The rafter construction of Park Gate shows unique similarity to the rafter construction of of Susquehanna House, in Henry Ford's Greenfield Village Museum, in Dearborn, Michigan. The joists extend over the plate. The rafters rest on a 1" by 8" false plate at the overhang, but are also supported by 3-0 studs which create a knee-wall on the second floor. There are no purlins between rafters. Horizontal stringers across the rafters provide stability for the rafters and a nailing base for the cedar shingle roof.

On the first floor, the studs are keyed into the floor joists and nailed in place with large hand-wrought nails. The southwest room, currently the living room, is 21-0 by 21-0. The southeast room, currently the dining room, is 21-0 by 15-0. The two rooms are connected by large double doors measuring 7-0 by 8-0, each with 8 raised panels. The window casings extend to the floor, with a large raised panel below the window. Fluted casings around the windows and doors were overlaid on the original casings in an update during the early 1800s. (Dating was established through analysis of handwrought nails.) Square corner blocks with inset circular moldings were part of this update. Removed at that time were the original chair rail and panelling below the chair rail, although the 10" beaded, quirked baseboard remains. The windows are six-over-six light sashes, with the top sash stationary. The sashes were duplicated during the 1976 restoration, using much of the original glass. The fireplaces in the living room and dining rooms are similarly sized at 5-0 high by 7-6 wide, and built of brick with stone hearths. The mantel in the living room is supported by Doric columns at each end with a raised panel between. From the dining room, there is a three light transom above the door leading to the hallway. Measuring 4-0 by 12-0, the hallway leads to the bathroom on the east. It measures 7-0 by 8-0 and was formerly a holding room for serving food to the dining room. The walls and ceiling of the bathroom were finished with red fir T&G in horizontal over vertical, with chair rail, similar to earliest bathroom styling. The hallway leads on the west to the study, which measures 8-0 by 15-0. The ceilings in these four rooms are 9-0. The door casings have a quirked bead at the inside, and an applied quirked molding at the outer edge. This is the original pattern of woodwork and it is used throughout the remainder of the house. Original casein paint on the woodwork was similar to Williamsburg's Campbell's Tavern Charcoal Brown and complemented the rough white plaster of the walls. The only closet in the house is under the stairway in the hall. Traces of the very earliest whitewash trim remain on the woodwork in this closet. From the rear of the hallway, a door leads to the kitchen, 13-6 by 17-6, part of the enclosed back porch. To the west, off the kitchen, is the

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

family room, which is 13-6 by 15-6. The rooms are finished with random-width, beaded T&G, in a horizontal over vertical pattern, with chair rail. The rudimentary kitchen has been updated to include all modern appliances. The ceiling height in these rooms is 7-6. Quirked molding has been duplicated for the door and window casings. The small addition provides a laundry room, 8-0 by 14-0. A vestibule which duplicates the cellar vestibule, has been added to the exterior kitchen during the current restoration,

The turn-around stairway rises out of the hall to a second floor hallway. The stairway measures 3-2, with 15 treads and chair rail trim. On the second floor, the center hallway measures 3-7 by 20-9. Second floor ceilings are 10-6. Immediately noticeable upstairs is the very wide, heart pine T&G flooring. Some of the boards are 16" wide. Upstairs woodwork is identical to the original on the first floor. The northeast bedroom is the master bedroom, measuring 15-6 by 16-0. Each of the bedrooms has the advantage of cross ventilation from a dormer window and a gable window. The brick fireplace, with brick hearth measures 4-8 high by 6-3. Simpler in design, the fireplace mantel has a frieze with the same graduated entablature of the downstairs mantels. During the current restoration, a bathroom, 7-6 by 7-6, was built in the northwest corner of the master bedroom. The northwest bedroom measures 13-9 by 15-6. The fireplace and hearth are brick, exposed to a height of 4-0, where a shelf mantel is attached. The two northern bedrooms have a kneewall 3-0 high. The southwest bedroom is 12-0 by 15-6. It has a fireplace and mantel similar to the northwest bedroom. The southeast bedroom is 9-0 by 15-6. Many of the interior studs on the second floor were hickory trees with the bark still on. They had been hewn flat on their wall surfaces to attach the laths.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

effort during his eighty-odd years to locate the elusive "Brent Town Tract". Recorded on July 13, 1687, by William Fitzhugh in Stafford County court, the Brent Town Grant provided Captain George Brent with one quarter of a 30,000 acre land grant, purchased from Lord Culpeper. From Tyler's Quarterly Magazine, it is seen that Captain Brent joined the grant partnership as its "resident partner". In George Brent's will of 1694, he bequeaths to his brother Nicholas, "my new dwelling house" and also "the 5000 acres of Brent Towne not disposed of". It is evident that the dwelling referenced is Park Gate, because George Brent had been firmly established as previously living at Woodstock. After descending through several generations of Brents, Park Gate passed into the hands of Daniel Carrol Brent, in the late eighteenth century. Shortly after, Daniel Carroll Brent sold Park Gate to his brother-in-law, Colonel Thomas Lee. The Park Gate tract became a 3000 acre working plantation.

The second track which indicates an earlier origin for Park Gate is based on architectural similarities with Susquehanna House, a Tidewater house built in St. Mary's County in 1650 and moved to Greenfield Village, Dearborn Michigan, in 1942. Architectural drawings, sketches from the moving of Susquehanna House and a visit to the house, showed almost total similarity—from the architectural style, through construction details such as framing, woodwork, and materials used. Because age verification is also based on this same list of components, it is important to mention them as they were found collectively at Park Gate: hand-hewn timber; wood pinned mortise and tenon joints; straight sawn (pit-sawn) joists, posts and boards; riven laths; plaster composed of ground oyster shells, animal hair, sand and mud; whitewash and casein paint; early glass; hand-wrought nails, hardware, and screws; hand-fabricated doors and woodwork; handmade bricks; wide clapboard siding with bead; and hand split cedar shingle roof.

Additional features enhancing the Park Gate property are architectural and archaeological remains in the form of slave-quarters and a cemetery, located 100 feet to the rear of the house. The slave-quarters was where all of the food was cooked for the house. The slaves tended all the needs of the main house and lived in the two-story structure. Currently the stone chimney, with fireplace, measuring 8-0 by 4-6 and 22 feet tall, is all that is standing. Several hundred feet to the north and east, there is an iron-fenced cemetery of approximately 30-0 by 50-0. There are no remaining, visible markers, but records established that the cemetery is the final resting place of Thomas Lee, Mildred Washington Lee and their infant son. This cemetery has been recognized as historically significant by the DAR.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Farrar, Emmie Ferguson and Emilee Hines, OLD VIRGINIA HOUSES ALONG THE FALL LINE (New York: Hastings House Publications, 1971).

Ratcliffe, R. Jackson, THIS WAS PRINCE WILLIAM. (Virginia: Potomac Press, 1978)

Templeman, Eleanor Lee and Nan Netherton, NORTHERN VIRGINIA HERITAGE. (Virginia: Private publication, 1966)

Templeman, Eleanor Lee, VIRGINIA HOMES OF THE LEES. (Virginia: Private Publication, 1975)

Unknown Author, "SUSQUEHANNA", A MARYLAND HOUSE IN MICHIGAN. (Maryland: Maryland Historical Magazine, June 1947)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being bounded on the east by the line of partition in the deed of partition and survey dated December 22, 1972, attached hereto and recorded in Deed Book 671 et seq., among the land records of Prince William County, Virginia, also known as 11508 Park Gate Drive, Nokesville, Prince William County, Virginia. S4°21'00"W, on the south bounded by a line extending from the intersection of the aforementioned line of partition, N84°04'30"W for 210", adjoining Route 653; on the West bounded by a line to run parallel for 550' to the aforementioned line of partition, N4°21'00"E; on the North bounded by a line to run parallel for 210' to the aforementioned southern boundary to the intersection of the aforementioned line of partition, S84°04'30"E; thence southerly along the eastern boundary to the beginning.

Note: The parcel described above does not include the 1380 square feet in the cemetery, which lies on the east boundary at the north corner of the parcel described above.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the approximately three-acre parcel included in this nomination encompasses the historic environment of the property and are derived from clear visual edges. On two sides the boundaries are defined by roadways: on the south by Park Gate Drive, a county road, and by a driveway on the east. The remaining boundaries consist of plantings (an old orchard and trees and shrubs) to the north east corner and on the west. The remaining western boundary is an extension of the tree line forward from the orchard to the county road. On the north, the boundary is an extension of the trees and shrubs on the northeast corner in the cemetery, to the northwest corner. These boundaries define the vista from Park Gate Drive north to Park Gate sitting amidst old trees and landscaping in an open field and framed to the rear by woods.

National Register Nomination: Park Gate, Prince William County

