

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

*Historic Sites File  
(Rockledge)*

# Rockledge

## PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY



ROCKLEDGE

PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY

JUNE 24, 1982

Prepared by:

The Joint Cooperation of  
Prince William County Park Authority  
Prince William County Historic Commission

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## I. FOREWORD

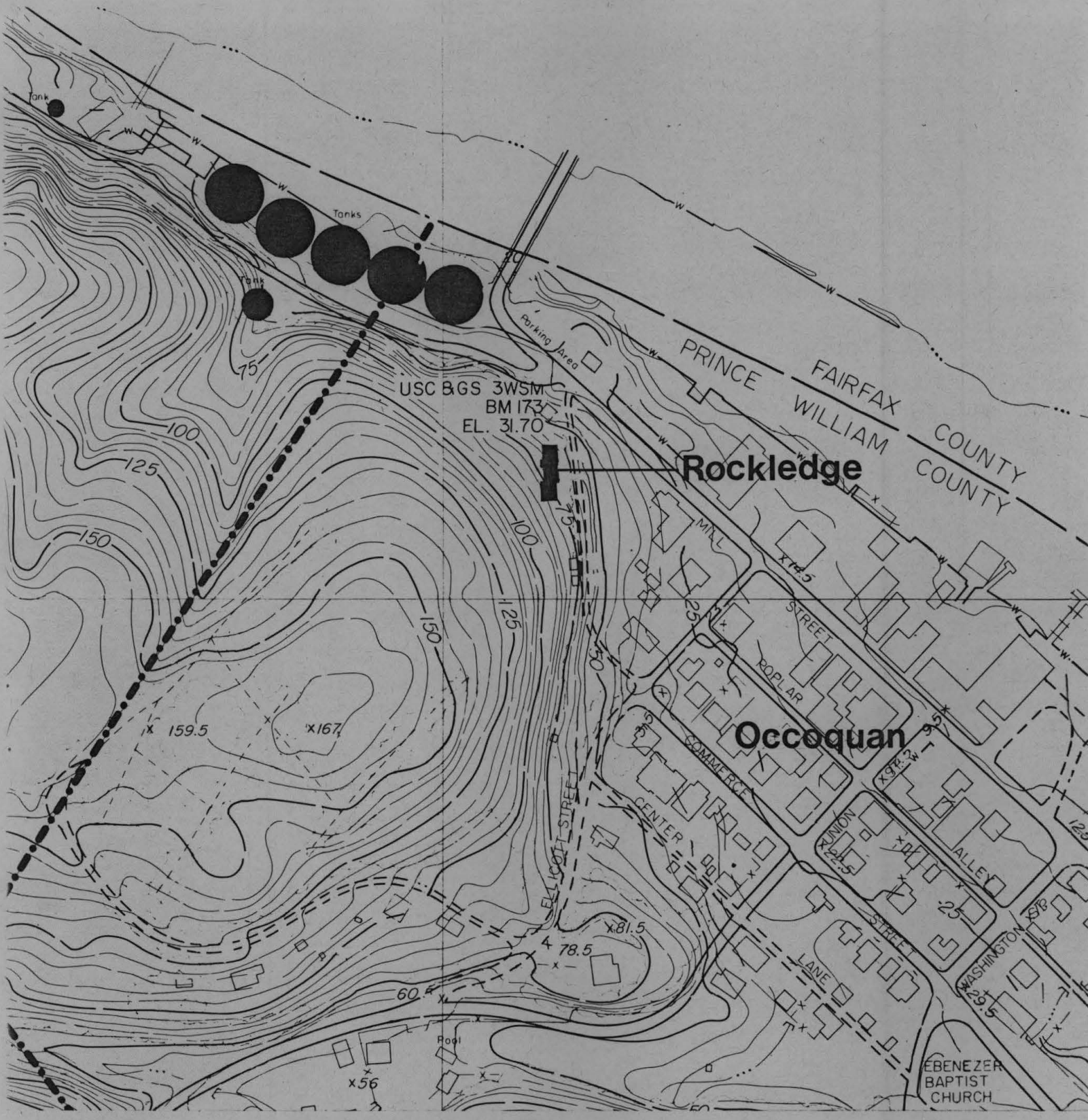
This report has been prepared by a joint effort of the Historic Commission and the Park Authority of Prince William County and is submitted pursuant to the directive of the Board of County Supervisors. The charge of the directive was to prepare a feasibility study and cost estimates of the structure of Rockledge and make recommendations for rehabilitation.

## II. BACKGROUND (HISTORY)

Rockledge was built in 1758 by John Ballendine, the founder of Occoquan, under the supervision of Architect Matthew Buckland.

The two-and-one-half-story structure is constructed of stone quarried nearby. The house itself occupies a "rock ledge" overlooking the Town of Occoquan and the Occoquan River.

Although Rockledge is 225 years old, it has had only five owners during this time. The present owner is Donald Sonner. Mr. Sonner rehabilitated the interior and exterior of the house, with the restoration being completed in late 1979. A tragic fire two months later destroyed a major portion of the center of the house. Since that fire, the house has been uninhabited and is falling victim to vandalism and deterioration.



locator map

### III. NEED STATEMENT

There is a great need in Prince William County for community use spaces. These spaces serve such activities as cultural arts, recreation, civic groups, historic education, libraries, and day care, to name a few.

The validity of this project is indicated by the need to preserve a historic structure (Rockledge) and to provide community space for the use of the citizens of Prince William County.

Rockledge has the potential to provide community services within the walls of a historic structure.

### IV. FEASIBILITY STUDY

It is not the intent of this feasibility study to draw conclusions at this time. More research must be completed to adequately address all facets of the project. This study primarily addresses the economic feasibility of the project. All recommendations and cost estimates were generated from an on site visit by a private consultant.

### V. SITE SYNTHESIS

#### A. ZONING

This 2.37-acre property is currently zoned R-1. The area which surrounds and includes the property is within a historic district. However, the restrictions and boundaries of the zone are somewhat unclear.

## B. SURROUNDING LAND USE

Presently, surrounding land use is mixed, comprised of residential and commercial.

## C. TOPOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

Rockledge is located 70 feet above mean sea level. The house itself is located on an east facing slope overlooking the Occoquan River below. Slopes on the site are steep with average grades between 10-20%. Terracing immediately around the house itself provides some level areas.

## VI. STRUCTURAL SYNTHESIS

### A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

An on site inspection to determine the extent of fire damage and the structural integrity of Rockledge was conducted on June 11. Involved in this investigation were: Mr. Robert J. Burns, Jr., Architect; Mr. Anthony Beale, Structural Engineer; and Mr. Randy Herbst, Fire Damage Restoration Consultant.

The inspection of the house by the architect, engineer, and fire damage consultant revealed that the following conditions exist:

1. The house has suffered major fire damage in the central portion of the house.
2. The central stairway and floor area will require complete reconstruction.
3. The entire roof of the main portion of the house, including rafters, will require replacement.

4. The existing load bearing exterior walls are structurally sound, although there are many areas requiring repointing.

B. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the opinion of the team of consultants that although Rockledge has sustained major fire damage, it is structurally sound and can be adequately renovated and repaired.

Upon reaching this conclusion, a plan for interior and exterior renovation was prepared by the architect. The interior and exterior plans were based on input from the Historic Commission and the Park Authority. This plan calls for the exterior of the house to be restored to its former facade, maintaining the historic integrity of the facade of the house. The interior of the house is to be reconstructed in a more functional modern sense. Conventional building techniques such as drywall, instead of plaster, will be used to reduce costs. Decorative mouldings and woodwork will also be kept to a minimum.

The floor plan included in this report represents one possible method of development and use for Rockledge. Located on the main level of the house is a main room, or great hall. This room will have a two-story ceiling and could be used for large group meetings or events. At one end of this room a balcony will overlook the room from the second floor. An



alternative plan for this area is to reconstruct the existing second floor of this area, thus providing extra square footage to the building.

Located adjacent to the great hall is a smaller community room which could house smaller activity groups, such as crafts, recreation or civic meetings.

A reception or entrance area is also located to the left of the community room. This room could serve as a waiting room, display room, or craft sales shop.

In the upper level of the house are located restrooms and other large open spaces for various activities. Because of code regulations and inaccessibility, the attic or third level will be left unused.

#### C. COST ESTIMATES

The following cost estimates are based upon site inspection of the building and drawings prepared by the architect.

A general breakdown of costs is as follows:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Cleaning, and painting                 | \$10,566  |
| Windows, doors, trim, floors           | 21,899    |
| Drywall, and plaster                   | 24,877    |
| Insulation, HVAC, electrical, plumbing | 35,282    |
| Hauling and demolition                 | 18,082    |
| Framing                                | 23,743    |
| Stone and brickwork                    | 10,111    |
| Roof, gutter, exterior trim            | 24,720    |
|  | <hr/>     |
| TOTAL                                  | \$169,280 |

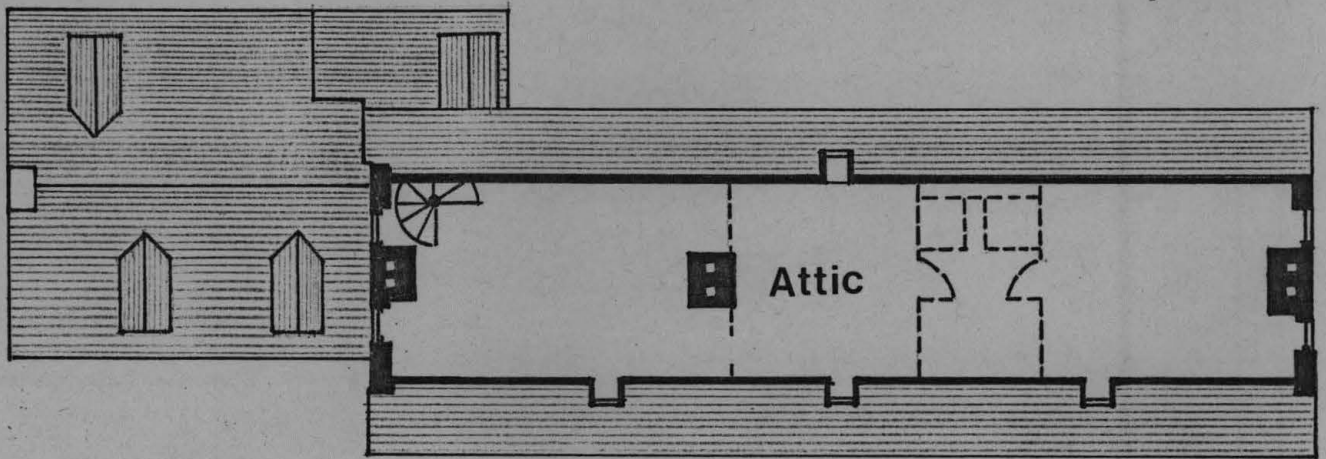
Alternate cost to extend the second floor  
across the entire central portion of the building 5,000

Total with alternate \$174,280

(Exterior Costs) roof, windows, stonework, TOTAL 60,920  
provide watertight shell

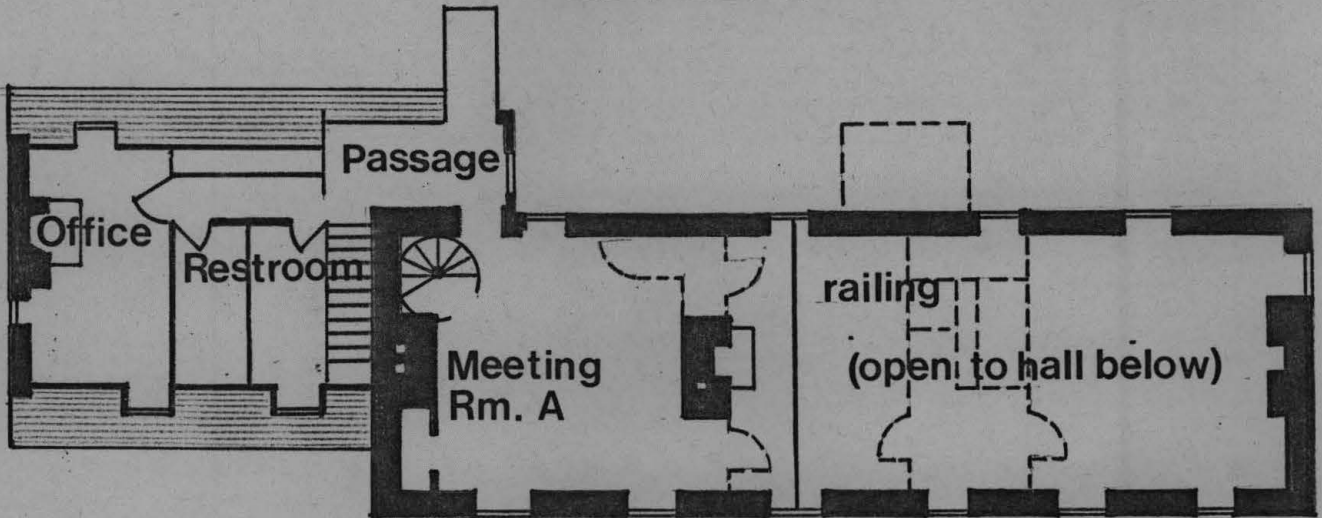
(Interior Costs) finished walls, ceiling, TOTAL 108,360  
including heating,  
plumbing, electrical

# floor plan



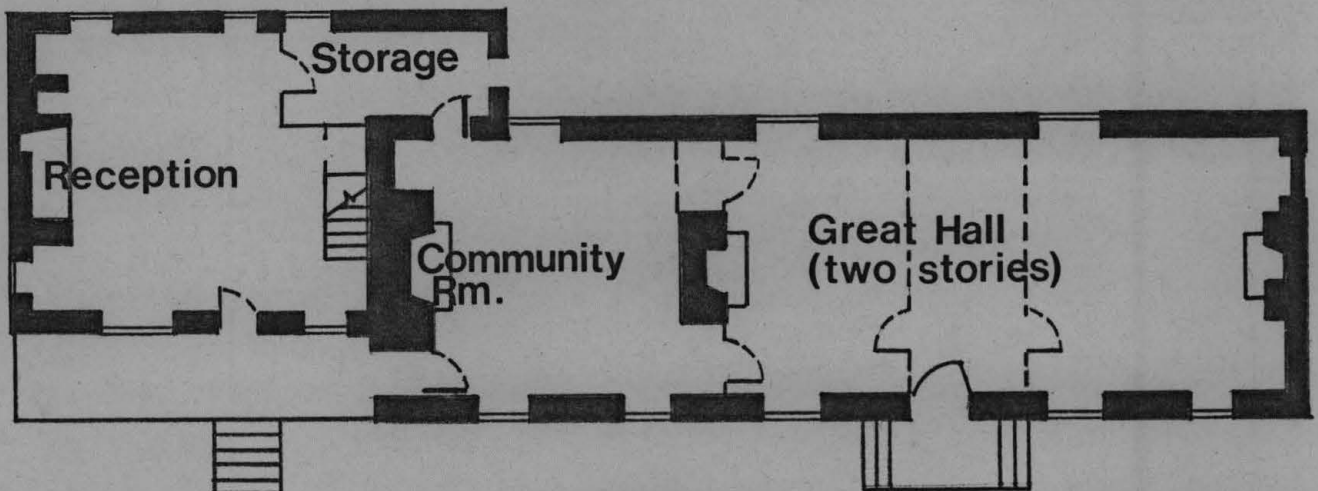
**LEVEL 3**

879 sq. ft.



**LEVEL 2**

1,794 sq. ft.



**LEVEL 1**

1,912 sq. ft.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

If, after reviewing the economic feasibility of Rockledge, The Board of County Supervisors consider that this project warrants further study, this report recommends the following:

- A. That a study committee be formed to evaluate all areas of this project such as: acquisition plans, programming, administration, project funding, operation and maintenance plans, and building plans;
- B. This committee solicit public input on the project;
- C. The study committee be comprised of members and staff from: the County Planning Office, the Historic Commission, the Town of Occoquan, and the Park Authority;
- D. That the committee have the authority to engage consultants in the development of grant fund search, conceptual plans, and further engineering study.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

It is the conclusion of this report that the rehabilitation of Rockledge can be worthwhile and beneficial to the citizens of Prince William County, providing services within a historic context.

This report does not overlook the fact that several major obstacles exist, such as funding for rehabilitation and acquisition of the property. However, it is hoped that the data and information included in the report will provide the Board of County Supervisors a strong basis on which to make decisions as to the future of this project.

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