



**2015 Resident Curator Program
Fairfax County Historic Property
Site Candidate
Abbreviated Property Overview**



Fairfax Arms House



**Fairfax Arms - Fairfax Arms Historic Site
10712 Old Colchester Road
Mount Vernon Supervisory District
Owner: Fairfax County Park Authority**





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Resident Curator Program for Fairfax County Virginia and Properties of the Fairfax County Park Authority

Site Summary Purpose:

The Resident Curators program was approved for a feasibility study in 2013-2014 for future implementation based on Virginia state and Fairfax County legislation. The purpose of this site summary is to give potential curators a brief overview of the current property with available background information. All improvements/restoration of the properties proposed by curators will adhere to the specific guidelines of *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for historic Properties*.

In January 2011, the General Assembly amended Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306 authorizing localities to develop resident curator programs. Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306(A)(4) enables localities to create, by ordinance, "a resident curator program such that private entities through lease or other contract may be engaged to manage, preserve, maintain, or operate, including the option to reside in, any such historic area, property, lands, or estate owned or leased by the locality."

At the direction of the Fairfax County Board, staff in the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Park Authority have worked with the History Commission to evaluate the potential costs and benefits that might result from the implementation of a resident curator program. John Milner Associates prepared a report for the County that examines how states and localities across the country have implemented resident curator programs as a way to foster the maintenance and preservation of publicly owned historic properties. The report also provides recommendations for the establishment of a resident curator program in Fairfax County. The report was provided to the Board and was presented at the September 30, 2014 meeting of the Board's Development Process Committee.

Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306(A)(4) requires resident curator programs to be established by ordinance.

The program was approved in 2014 and Chapter 125, Resident Curator Program Ordinance, to *The Code of the County of Fairfax, Virginia* and establishes a resident curator program. This program, designed to preserve and maintain historic properties owned or leased by the County, will lease historic properties to individuals or businesses subject to regulations established by the County Executive or his designee. Such regulations will require that resident curators maintain and improve the leased properties according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 36 CFR Part 68 (2013), as amended. Additionally, all leases for historic properties included within the resident curator program will provide for public access consistent with the historic property's nature and use.

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- 1. Summary of the Resident Curator Program Overview as of January 2015**

By definition, a resident curator (RC) program enables an individual, a

group of individuals, or an organization, to serve as the caretaker (or "curator") of a property. A RC program is intended to reduce the public costs associated with the care and preservation of the properties by enabling groups or individuals to take over the responsibility. In addition to caring for the day-to-day management of the property, the curators are responsible for the rehabilitation and continued maintenance of the property. Generally, properties that are included in RC programs are deemed historically significant and meet established criteria of eligibility for curatorship. This report focuses on properties, and existing programs, which include a preservation component.

Chosen through a pre-defined application process, the selected curator signs a lease which includes the agreed-upon work plan outlining the rehabilitation of the historic resource. The work associated with the rehabilitation process is funded by the curator, who in turn has the privilege of occupying the building and using the associated grounds as determined by the lease. Depending on specific guidelines or regulations applicable to the establishment or management of the program, and the historic significance, integrity, and function of each property, RC programs can be established to accept proposals including a variety of functions. In addition to residential curators, non-profit organizations and businesses can serve as curators.

2. Historic Curator Program Basics – Rehabilitate, Reuse and Maintain

See guidelines and John Milner study (Resident Curator Program Study Final Report John Milner Associates, Inc. 2014.)

[Program information, scope and parameters \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://fairfaxcounty.gov)

3. Property name address, location area, brief history

Fairfax Arms Historic Site, 10712 Old Colchester Road, Lorton, Virginia

The Fairfax Arms property occupies Lot #21 of the original town of Colchester, an approximately one half-acre parcel that edges Old Colchester Road near the Occoquan River, a tributary of the Potomac River in eastern Fairfax County, Virginia. U.S. Highway 1 and Interstate 95 are located to the northwest of the property, while the town of Lorton is located due north.

History Overview:

The Fairfax Arms is the only original structure still standing in the town of Colchester. This port town, chartered in 1753, was located at a strategic point on the main road between Alexandria and points south. At Colchester, the road crossed the Occoquan via a ferry which began operation during the 1690s. Benjamin Grayson purchased the lots upon which the building now stands in 1756 from the Trustees of the town of Colchester. Grayson's deed specifically states that he must erect "one house of brick stone or wood well framed" within two years, or forfeit the lot back to the Trustees (D-1, 331). The lots were advertised in 1767 as having a dwelling "suitable for an ordinary or private

family." It appears that the structure originally served as a dwelling and was converted to a tavern later.

During its period of operation, the Fairfax Arms was probably a center of activity in Colchester. It appears that the County Court for Fairfax County, as well as the Vestry of Truro Parish, may have met at the ordinary during the 1760s. John Davis, a writer during the colonial period, praised the Arms' owner, "Enter but his house with money in your pocket, and his features will soften into blandishments of delight!" The structure was known to have been used as a tavern as late as 1800. Modern owners have been sensitive to the historic value of the house, and have done surprisingly little to alter the original structure. Until 1927 the cellar housed the kitchen and had a dirt floor. The Gillinghams added a bathroom and plumbing and heating after their 1927 purchase. Sometime after 1934 they replaced the original high front entry stoop with the present porch.

A.R. Roberts, who purchased the house in 1941, installed the oak flooring on the first floor. The old flooring had been covered with linoleum. The original floorboards may still be underneath. The Duncans installed a new kitchen and built a swimming pool in 1971. In 1988 a large addition was added to the northeast end of the house. This addition faithfully replicates the look of the original block and is appended to it with a hyphen. [A note on this addition: some DPZ sources indicate a "1970s" construction date. Most claim 1988. It may be that something was added in the 1970s and something else in 1988.] The foregoing information is based on "Colchester: Colonial Port on the Potomac" by Edith Moore Sprouse, and "Historic Houses of the Potomac Path" by Michael Bohn.

4. Tax map/ Zoned/ Land use

Tax Map: 1133 01 0025

Zoned: R-1(Residential 1 DU/AC), Residential, 1 dwelling unit per acre.

Land Use: Single-family, Detached

This property is zoned residential. Any other uses would need to be authorized by the County of Fairfax.

5. Square Footage

Approximately 2,229 square feet of finished space

6. Property Description

- Utilities: Electricity/ Gas utilities/ Water/ Sewer
 - Electric Connected
 - Well Water
 - Septic

- Gas Available
- Number of rooms or description/ Bathrooms/ Construction type
 - 4 bedrooms
 - 2.5 bathrooms
- Garage or Parking Spaces
 - The main driveway is gravel. It enters the property to the southwest of the house through an opening in the wooden post and rail fence that edges Old Colchester Road.
 - An extension of the driveway to the rear of the house features a two-track of stone laid in a running bond pattern.
- Other structures on site
 - Pool

7. Conditions assessment performed

2022 Historic Structures Report available from FCPA Heritage Conservation Branch.

8. Current use/ past use

- Vacant/Residential

9. Historic Status

- National Register of Historic Places Listing
 - [National Archives NextGen Catalog](#)
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources
 - [DHR – Virginia Department of Historic Resources » 029-0043 Fairfax Arms](#)
- Inventory of Historic Sites- Fairfax County (IHS) Listing

Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites Report

Fairfax Arms (Colchester Inn) (NRHP)

Location and Existing Information

Tax Map Numbers : 113-3(1)25

Street Address 10712 OLD COLCHESTER RD
/ General Location:

Acreage 2.29

Existing Use Residence

Zoning R-1

Comprehensive Plan NA

Supervisor District MOUNT VERNON

Planning District Lower Potomac



Preservation Status

REGISTRATION	EASEMENT	OWNERSHIP	ACCESSIBILITY
X National Register	Open Space	X Private	Accessible, Unrestricted
X Virginia Register	Preservation	Public	X Accessible, Restricted
County Historic District	Conservation	Both	Inaccessible
Standing Structure	Other		
X County Inventory	X No easements		

Listed on NR May 21, 1979;
029-0043. Listed on Inventory
1969.

Historic Information

Original Use Dwelling

Original Owner Benjamin Grayson

Date Constructed 1756 - 1758

Historic Significance

The Fairfax Arms is the only original structure still standing in the town of Colchester. This port town, chartered in 1753, was located at a strategic point on the main road between Alexandria and points south. At Colchester, the road crossed the Occoquan via a ferry which began operation during the 1690s. Benjamin Grayson purchased the lots upon which the building now stands in 1756 from the Trustees of the town of Colchester. Grayson's deed specifically states that he must erect "one house of brick stone or wood well framed" within two years, or forfeit the lot back to the Trustees (D-1, 331). The lots were advertised in 1767 as having a dwelling "suitable for an ordinary or private family." It appears that the structure originally served as a dwelling and was converted to a tavern later.

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9/5/2007

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Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites Report

Fairfax Arms (Colchester Inn) (NRHP)

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Significant People:

Significant Dates /Events:

1753 : Town of Colchester chartered.
5/29/1927 : R.R. and Lida Gillingham; add bathroom, plumbing, heating.
1934 : Sometime after this year, Gillinghams replace front stoop with present porch.
6/15/1955 : Robert and Marion Duncan purchase.
1971 : Duncans remodel; install new kitchen, build swimming pool.
9/1/1976 : Marion Kelly purchases.
1988 : Addition to house.

Site / Structure Information

Condition	Excellent	Site Features
Integrity	Significant Changes	2 Standing Structures
Building Style	Georgian	0 Landscape Features
Architect/Builder	Unknown	0 Archaeological Features
		0 Other Site Features*

Site Description:

Fairfax Arms is at the front end of a lot that slopes gently towards Old Colchester Road. The house is quite close to the road. There is a shed or outbuilding to the rear, and the property is surrounded by a white post-and-rail fence. The house is approximately 800 feet from the Occoquan River, to the southwest.

Architectural Description:

The Fairfax Arms Tavern is a modest, mid-eighteenth century, one-and-a-half-story frame dwelling with corner boards. The house is situated adjacent to Old Colchester Road. Originally a dwelling, but converted for use as a tavern, the house has twin entrances on its primary (southeastern) elevation.

The rectangular original dwelling is approximately 25 feet by 32 feet. The longitudinal axis runs southwest-northeast, parallel to the road. Due to the sloping site, the house has a high stone basement exposed on the south side. Exterior stone chimneys flank the original section of the house. Above the first floor, the southwest chimney is constructed of brick laid in English bond. The lower portion is stone. The northeast chimney is all stone. The upper sections of both chimneys are freestanding. The cap of the west chimney was rebuilt about 1937. It was around this time that a concrete porch extending almost the full width of the house was added, replacing the earlier wood entry stoop. This is faced in stone, and has a wrought iron railing. Two square four-light windows on the front of the porch give light to the cellar. The small vestibule at the rear door is a modern addition. The asphalt shingled roof, gutters, and drain pipes also date from the modern period. Each face of the gable roof has two dormers with nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. The six-panel wood entry doors are flanked by nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. A sympathetic addition is connected to the original structure by a hyphen on the northeast wall.

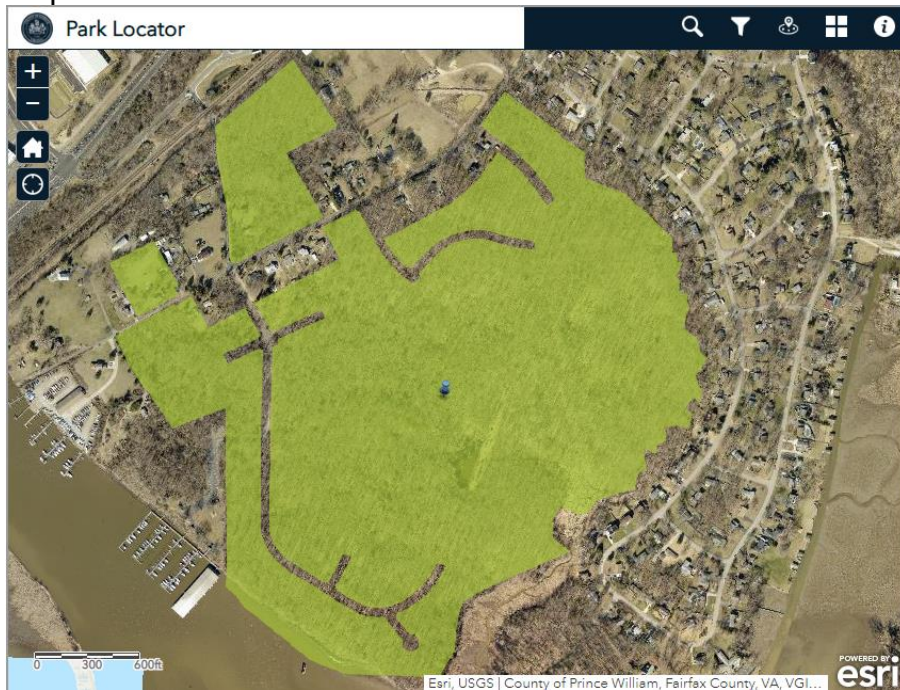
The original Fairfax Arms has four rooms on the first floor, and three chambers on the second floor. Upstairs, one bedroom accommodated the innkeeper's family and women guests, while the men bunked together in a communal sleeping area. There are four fireplaces on the first floor of the building, and two on the second floor; these are original to the house. In addition, the house has a cellar. It is said that the one of the two front doors was used by men to enter the inn's bar, and the other was used by women for entrance into the ladies parlor. No dependency buildings associated with the Fairfax Arms have survived, but there is a stone-lined well in the backyard. For a detailed architectural description of the original building, see "Colchester: Colonial Port on the Potomac" by Edith Moore Sprouse.

10. Developmental plans or restrictions/maps and land use Adjacent Conservation, Conservation/Water Quality, and Storm Drainage/Stormwater Management easements.

- Map of larger area



- Map of Park Area



- Aerial/GIS of Property Location in Park



11. Supplemental

Historic Structures Report with recommendations and treatment plan was created by Wiss, Janney, and Elstner Associates, Inc in 2022. Report available from Fairfax County Park Authority

12. Appendices

- Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding (MOAs or MOUs)
 - None existing.
- Park Policy Statements – Cultural Resources, Countywide Archaeology, Historic Preservation
 - [2023 Policy Manual | Fairfax County Park Authority](#)

Policy 203	Title: Cultural Resources
Date Approved: 2/22/2023	Last reviewed: 1/24/2018
Objective: <u>Natural and Cultural Resources</u> Ensure the long-term protection, preservation, and sustainability of natural, cultural, and park resources in accordance with adopted park standards and adherence to natural and cultural resource management guidelines, policies, and related plans.	
Purpose: Consistent with the Fairfax County Park Authority's cultural resource stewardship mission, the Park Authority shall preserve and protect cultural resources on parkland in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Park Comprehensive Plan (2011), Objective 3.	

Policy Statement: In order to carry out its role as the primary steward of Fairfax County's cultural resources, it shall be the policy of the Park Authority to identify, evaluate, document, preserve, and interpret cultural resources located on parkland, as well as on countywide archaeological sites (as discussed in Policy 204), according to federal, state, and local laws and regulations, Park Authority policy and regulations, the Cultural Resource Management Plan, and approved park plans. Cultural resource management will be conducted using current professional standards and guidelines and best practices.

When undertaking any project that results in ground-disturbing activity, the Park Authority shall consider the effects on potentially significant archaeological resources. Such resources shall be documented and, if feasible, protected. If there is no prudent and feasible alternative to disturbing these resources, mitigation measures shall be developed and implemented. Storage of the resulting archaeological artifacts, associated documentation, and reports must comply with federal, state, and American Alliance of Museums (AAM) standards for collections facilities (as discussed in Policy 206). These collections include materials generated by county staff, university programs, and other professional archaeologists, including those from federal and state agencies and archaeological consultants. As well, staff should develop and implement a range of public outreach activities and electronic and printed media to educate county residents and visitors about the history and archaeology of the county as part of the larger stewardship education initiative.

Policy 204	Title: Countywide Archaeology
Date Approved: 2/22/2023	Last reviewed: 1/24/2018
Objective: <u>Natural and Cultural Resources</u> Ensure the long-term protection, preservation, and sustainability of natural, cultural, and park resources in accordance with adopted park standards and adherence to natural and cultural resource management guidelines, policies, and related plans	

Purpose: To support the County's and Park Authority's Archaeological needs, in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Fairfax County Heritage Resource Management Plan, the Park Authority's Cultural Resource Management Plan, state and local regulations and following best practices.

Policy Statement:

1. Serve as the countywide representative to ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances and best practices, which are meant to identify, evaluate, document and/or preserve archaeological resources as part of the development review process both on parkland and countywide.
2. Protect, conserve, and where feasible, recover threatened archaeological resources not otherwise protected by federal, state, regional, or county laws, guidelines or ordinances through an active partnership with

- volunteers, friends' groups, students, and avocational and professional archaeologists.
3. Serve as the central repository for all archaeological collections recovered for Fairfax County, including artifacts, supporting documentation, and reports. Storage of these materials must comply with federal, state, and American Alliance of Museums (AAM) standards for collections facilities (as discussed in Policy 206). These collections include materials generated by county staff, university programs, and other professional archaeologists, including those from federal and state agencies and archaeological consultants.
 4. Develop and implement a range of public outreach activities and electronic and printed media to educate county residents and visitors about the history and archaeology of the county as part of the larger stewardship education initiative.

Policy 205	Title: Historic Preservation	
Date Approved: 2/22/2023		Last reviewed: 1/24/2018
Objective: <u>Natural and Cultural Resources</u> Ensure the long-term protection, preservation, and sustainability of natural, cultural, and park resources in accordance with adopted park standards and adherence to natural and cultural resource management guidelines, policies, and related plans.		

Purpose: The Park Authority's Historic Preservation Policy is to ensure its mission of appropriate stewardship for Fairfax County's historic resources on parkland.

Policy Statement: The Park Authority shall:

1. Conduct historic preservation studies in accordance with federal, state, and local standards, guidelines and policies, and the Cultural Resource Management Plan.
2. Perform treatment of historic properties following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
3. Establish and administer a resident curator program whereby the Board of Supervisors may enter long-term lease agreements with private entities. The objective is to continue the preservation and maintenance of historic properties on Fairfax County Park Authority parkland in accordance with established treatment standards.

These principles apply to all historic landscapes, buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties states:

There are Standards for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties--preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

- a) Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of the property's form as it has evolved over time. (Protection and stabilization are included in this treatment.)
- b) Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.
- c) Restoration depicts a property at a particular time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.
- d) Reconstruction recreates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

References:

Park Comprehensive Plan

[Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan | Planning Development](#)

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

[The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties - Technical Preservation Services \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes

[Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes \(nps.gov\)](#)

Virginia Department of Historic Resources Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resources Survey in Virginia

https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SurveyManual_2017.pdf

Cultural Resource Management Plan

[Cultural Resource Management Plan \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

VDHR Collections Management Standards

https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/Collections%20Mgmt%20Standards%20June2011.pdf page 162

Fairfax County Heritage Resource Management Plan (Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1988).

On file with the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning

Virginia Code Ann. § 15.2-2306(A)(4) (2012) and as amended. (37-14-125.):

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter22/section15.2-2306/>

Fairfax County Resident Curator Ordinance

[Municode Library](#)