

Abingdon Church  
Whitemarsh Vicinity  
Gloucester County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-~~68~~ 182

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Richmond, Va.

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Major Eugene Bradbury, District Officer  
210 East Franklin St., Richmond, Va.

ABINGTON CHURCH  
Near Whitmarsh, Gloucester Co., Virginia.

Owner: Episcopal Church.

Date: c. 1750-55

Builder: Not known, perhaps Richard Taliaferro

Condition: good

Description: Abington Church is built of local salmon pink brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers which vary from gray-white to sea green in color. The corners of the building and the window jambs are of rubbed vermillion brick. The window arches, water table and door trims are of vermillion gauged brick.

In plan the building is cruciform, the chancel and transepts being equal in projection and the nave slightly longer. There is a major entrance in the end of each arm except in the chancel where a minor, and probably later entrance occurs. The nave has two windows in each side wall but in the chancel and transepts there are single windows in the side walls and a pair in the end, or east, wall.

In elevation the walls are quite high and are capped by an intersecting gable roof. The gable ends are treated as pediments in spite of the fact that the roof pitch is  $45^{\circ}$ . The cornice and rake are fully moulded and are treated with modillions. The tympana are brick laid as below. The features of the west, north and south elevations are the doorways. The two latter are similar of square headed openings with broad wood trim inside facings of gauged brick below angular pediments. The doors are double, each leaf containing three panels, two verticals below a horizontal. The west door is more elaborate and shows similar doors below a half round arched tympanum. The wood panel here takes the form of engaged Doric pilasters supporting a moulded archivolt. This arched opening is framed by pilasters of gauged brick supporting a segmental pediment.

The windows are all arched with half round heads. The wood frames match that of the front door, a unique condition in the writers observation. The sash is sixteen over sixteen with six light transoms. some of the sashes are old with broad muntins and some are modern replacements. Until recently all exterior trim had its old red paint, but recently this has been changed to white.

The interior has been much changed. The old box pews have been either removed or cut down and a tongue and grooved wagon ceiling has been installed. The transept galleries, gallery stairs, reredos

and part of the communion rail and pulpit are old. The galleries are composed of simply paneled fronts supported on turned posts and furnished with pine benches. The stairs have paneled balustrades, a peculiarity of the county, which match the gallery fronts. The communion rail is probably modern as to its present elliptical form but the balusters are mid-Georgian and of unusual distinction. Each is  $2 \frac{3}{8}$ " in the square and is richly turned with a tapered shaft, moulded at top and bottom above an elaborately turned vase. Some similar balusters may be seen in the stair of a dilapidated 19th century farm on the road to Rosewell.

The reredos is one of the most elaborate in Virginia. It is fourteen feet long and eighteen feet high. On moulded pedestals stand four Corinthian pilasters, separating groups of panels. There are four tiers of these, composed of a dado panel below a square panel, above which is a long panel containing one of the tablets of the Law. All are framed by narrow architraves worked with a Greek key pattern. The pilasters support a full entablature, most of the mouldings of which are carved. The end mould of the cornice has a dentil band between an egg and dart and head and billet, and a water-leaf. The crowning feature is a broken pediment displaying a large urn finial. There are also remains of cut down box pews.

*— Curves & Waterwork —*

*Apr. 25 '41*