

LATHAM HOUSE  
(Reade-Latham House)  
1200 North Quaker Lane  
Alexandria  
Independent City-County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1368

HABS  
VA  
7-ALEX,  
183-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
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183-

LATHAM HOUSE  
(Reade-Latham House)

HABS No. VA-1368

- Location:** 1200 North Quaker Lane  
Alexandria, Virginia 22306
- Present Owner  
and Occupant:** Episcopal High School
- Present Use:** Currently used as mailroom and until recently served as faculty lounge  
and offices.
- Significance:** While lacking in historical or architectural significance, Latham House  
is early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture in the  
original section and late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture in the  
second section, the frontispiece.

**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History:**

- 1. Date of erection:** Built in three parts, only the most recent wing can be  
definitively dated. The rear wing was constructed in 1947-1948. The  
architectural drawings are dated June 4, 1947, the project was approved at a  
building committee meeting in 1947, the addition appears on the 1948 Sanborn  
map, and faculty member Joe Shelor, who was a student from 1947-1952 and  
later lived in the house remembers its going up in 1947-1948. (Architectural  
drawings and committee meeting records are in the EHS archives. Sanborn  
map copied in Tellus Report at EHS archives and also at Special Collections,  
Alexandria Library.)

The frontispiece was built between 1857 and 1894 and most likely between  
1873 and 1878. In 1857, Bishop William Meade's *Old Churches, Ministers  
and Families of Virginia* was published and opposite page 488 of volume 2 is  
a view of Episcopal High School, which shows a partial gable end behind the  
attached, one story building north of the main administration building. It is  
assumed that this gable is Latham House's middle section but it is impossible  
to prove definitely because (1) of substantial alterations to the buildings in the  
print it is impossible to replicate the artist's viewpoint, (2) this gable might be

of a larger building farther west of Latham, and (3) it is also possible that the delineator took artistic license. If this gable is that of the middle section of Latham House, it means that the frontispiece which blocks that gable must have been erected after 1857. (It is assumed that the illustration was prepared for the publication and prepared that year (1857) as earlier installments of Meade's text published in the Southern Churchman were not illustrated.)

As the school closed for the Civil War and has been described as being in bad condition when Launcelot Minor Blackford became principal in 1870, it is unlikely that the frontispiece was added before 1870. According to John White, "The new Principal found the School in disarray and immediately set out to restore it to physical and spiritual health..." (p. 67, *Chronicles of the Episcopal High School in Virginia, 1839-1989*). Richard Pardee Williams, Jr. in *The High School: A History of the Episcopal High School in Virginia at Alexandria*, was more specific than White. Williams wrote "Except for repairing the ravages of the War, there were few changes in the appearance of the School between 1840 and 1870." (p. 19)

Three photographs dated to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century show the frontispiece. The latest photograph was published in The E.H.S. Annual for the 1893-1894 and it is assumed that the photograph was taken at that time for the publication. The second photograph is entitled "The School of the Seventies", published in Arthur Kinsolving's *The Story of a Southern School: the Episcopal High School of Virginia*. The third photograph is entitled "Episcopal High School, 1878" and was published in E.H.S. News for Summer 1948 and a cropped version, without Latham House, was published in Williams's history. It appears that the second photograph is later than 1878 because the attached house south of the administration building is two stories and the porch of the administration building is not the same as depicted in the 1857 illustration cited earlier, while the 1878 photograph shows the house as one story and the same main porch as in the 1857 illustration. Also, the 1878 photograph identifies the people in the front of the buildings suggesting that it was dated and labeled at the time it was taken. Therefore, the photograph labeled school in the 1870s probably dates to approximately 1879 to 1882 based on Williams's book: "Originally, the Principal's residence was flanked by one-story, two-room wings, connected to it by arcades. During the 1870's, these wings were supplanted by two-story houses for faculty members. And in 1882 the houses were enlarged to five rooms and a front porch..." (p. 19) According to Williams, White, and Kinsolving, Principal Blackford's efforts to improve the physical plant when he arrived on campus in 1870 seemed to first address improving conditions in the main academic and dormitory erected in approximately 1840 behind the original house. Therefore, Latham House's front addition was probably erected closer to 1878 than 1870.

To further narrow the date of the front section is the evidence of rim locks found on the front door, an upstairs door, and on a table in the upstairs. All three locks appear identical. The unattached lock was scrapped to expose a patent date of March 25, 1873. Based on this evidence, it is logical to conclude that the front section was erected between winter 1873 and 1878.

Dating the original block, which is flanked on the front by the 1870s addition and on the side (i.e., enclosed porch) and rear by the 1947-1948 addition is much harder and depends on the less precise tools of very limited documentation, and stylistic and building techniques analysis. In the Southern Churchman of Nov. 15, 1839, a drawing showing the layout of Episcopal High School, with an accompanying text was published. The illustration and some of the text were reprinted in the 1840-1841 "Catalogue of the Episcopal High School of VA." Flanking the site of the main building are buildings C, described as "two out-buildings of two stories and capable of being divided into four rooms each." (Southern Churchman, p.3 of that issue). The building C north of the main building is assumed by most people to be the original section of Latham House. The north building C's location on the map and its relationship to the original house and its attached buildings appears to correspond to the location of the core of Latham House. The Southern Churchman article gives dimensions for the important buildings on the map and by comparing those dimensions to the sizes of the buildings on the map, it appears that building C was approximately 17 to 20 feet across the front and approximately twenty-two to twenty-five feet deep. These dimensions are consistent with the middle section of Latham House. It should be pointed out that neither map has a scale, but both seem to have been drawn with some care, and assuming one inch equals 40 feet on the Southern Churchman map then the dimensions given in the text are fairly close to the depictions on the map. In short, it is reasonable to assume that the current middle section or core of Latham House was there by 1839.

The only earlier graphic or textual description of the main house (now the administrative building) and outbuildings dates to 1808 when Eliza P. Law, the granddaughter of Martha Washington, advertised her mansion house, other buildings and land for sale. She stated that she had erected the mansion house and that was nearly finished. After a fairly detailed description of that building her advertisement listed a "neat cottage" for laborers, stables, carriage house, and ice house. It has been suggested by a few people at Episcopal High that the "neat cottage" is the core of Latham House. But substantial differences between the original section of Latham and the administrative building (Law's mansion house) indicate they were built at different times. The mansion house lacks the sawtooth cornice as well as the full basement of the core of the Latham House. It is not logical to assume that a more modest support building erected at the same time as the architecturally ambitious mansion house (with its elaborate mantels) would have a basement while the main house has merely

a crawl space, nor that the more modest house would have had a decorated cornice while the main house did not.

Alexandria-based historian William Seale, and historic architect Richard Bierce, AIA have suggested that the center core was early 19<sup>th</sup> and might even be late 18<sup>th</sup> century, based on the vernacular quality of the building as reflected in details such as the roof rafters and floor boards, the primitive second floor fireplace surround, some of the windows, and the saw-tooth cornice. In Mr. Bierce's letter of July 11, 2001 he stated that "surviving 6/6 dh sash with a few early panes, are thin frames with mortise and tenon joints with thin dowels or pins, typical of sash manufacturing techniques and profiles found in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The fireplace surround on the second floor reads very strongly as consistent with profiles and assemblies typical of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> c. Federal period vernacular style. The mantel and surround found on the main floor are consistent with a more generic vernacular vocabulary which could represent anytime from ca. 1840 to 1870." Bierce noted that "The foundation walls are brick, unusual in an Alexandria house of the early 19<sup>th</sup> c., but not unknown... Clad in a very rough stucco coat, the only visible feature of the original masonry shell is the sawtooth cornice, typical in early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. vernacular houses, including some here in the City." Mr. Seale, in a letter of June 21, 2001 wrote "The middle house looks to me to be early 19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly late 18<sup>th</sup>, but I'm more comfortable with about 1800-1810. The molded brick cornices which this house has, are characteristic of Alexandria building at that time and in fact, from 1790s until about 1850.... The original fireplace stack is the most interesting on the second floor, with its early mantel that could be 18<sup>th</sup> century with ease, while the downstairs room below it has the remains of a later Greek Revival mantel."

Neither Mr. Bierce nor Mr. Seale note that the mantelpiece of the patched and well worn second floor fireplace surround extends beyond the chimney on the north side. This anomaly suggests the fireplace surround is not original to that chimney and has been removed from another chimney in another building and at some point in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century attached to that chimney. The extensive patching and difference in the detailing of the pilasters also suggest not simply wear, but that this is a reconstructed fireplace taken from another building.

That dating a house based on limited stylistic evidence and woodworking techniques is more art than science is reflected in Mr. Seale and Mr. Bierce's different interpretation of the vertical wainscot in the stairhall. Mr. Seale wrote that "Most of the beaded wainscoting I think was added in the middle 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a means of covering up water problems." Mr. Bierce wrote that the wainscot is original: "The original half-winder staircase is partially encased with vertical boards which have a very fine beaded edge. The boards are original as well, as they frame to the undercarriage which as a plastered

soffit laid upon riven lath.” Mr. Bierce is correct as evidenced by the original wooden blocks in the wall along the stair to which the backing for the wainscot is attached. If the wainscot is original as established by the physical evidence, but dates to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century as suggested by Mr. Seale who is an expert in interior decorations, than the core of Latham cannot be early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(That Mr. Seale and Mr. Bierce are dating the features of the Latham House in the context of Alexandria architecture raises the question of whether it can be assumed that artistic tastes and building techniques in rural areas evolved as quickly as those in urban areas. As pointed out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Episcopal High School publications, the school was not in Alexandria but three miles west of it and three miles over dirt roads, subject to fallen trees, reduced to muddy trenches or flooded by rain storms, and made impassable by snow or ice, was not a insignificant distance. Granted there have always been sophisticated, high style country estates erected by wealthy merchants and plantation owners and by woman such as Eliza Law, *who most often also lived part of the year in cities*, but to assume that tastes and building techniques evolved in rural, no doubt poorer, less sophisticated, less culturally ambitious areas as quickly as tastes and techniques did in cities seems overly optimistic.)

In the absence of documentary or physical evidence that would permit precise dating of the original section of Latham House, a document prepared by former headmaster Richard P. Thomsen is tantalizing. Entitled “Older buildings at Episcopal High School”, prepared sometime after 1970, he dated Hoxton House as “begun c. 1805, completed c. 1808?”, main building “1840 (the west ell was added in 1929)... South Wing of Hoxton House: two -story structure appears in photo taken in the 1870s. North wing of Hoxton House: 1882 (two-story structure is on foundation of original one-story wing, which was shown in the 1870s photo)...” While Mr. Thomsen fails to note that the south wing of Hoxton was originally one story and that both wings dated to the original main building, he was clearly trying to be scholarly and precise as demonstrated in his dating of Hoxton House. He listed the Reade-Latham House as “1832 (appears in 1870s photo).” Mr. Thomsen attributed the 1832 date to Richard Yarborough, then EHS Business Manger and now treasurer. Recently both gentlemen were asked about this date attribution. Mr. Yarborough did not recall his source for that date. But Mr. Thomsen thought that Mr. Yarborough found the date in a court document. From 1831 to 1834 the wife of Reverend Joseph P. B. Wilmer --- who in 1837 called for the creation of an Episcopal High School --- conducted a school, called Howard, on this property. It is an intriguing possibility that the main section of Latham House was indeed erected in 1832 to serve, perhaps as a classroom building, for the short-lived school.

2. **Architect:** The only known architect associated with this building was the

Baltimore firm of Taylor and Fisher, which designed the rear wing. The firm no longer exists, according to Baltimore architect and member of Baltimore Historic Architects' Roundtable, James Woolen, AIA.

**3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:**

July 18, 1805	Francis Peyton conveyed to Elizabeth Law	\$5500
	Liber G2: page 178	
Nov.23, 1809	Elizabeth Law to William Robertson (subsequently Robinson)	\$10,000
	Liber J2: page 381	
Feb.26,1835	William Robinson to William Alexander	\$3,000
	Liber B: page 410	
June 26,1839	William Alexander to Trustees of Protestant Episcopal Seminary of Virginia	\$5,000
	Liber E3: page 333	

Note: Until 1923, the trustees of the Seminary were also the trustees of Episcopal High School. In that year separate boards of trustees were created. Also, each deed contains the same legalese so it is impossible to tell what structures if any stood at the time of conveyance, although Peyton did convey a brick kiln to Law. For a more complete history of ownership of the parcel see 1991 Tellus report, "A Background Documentary Study for the Episcopal High School and The Adjacent Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia", in the EHS archives.

As note above, Eliza (or Elizabeth) Law built the main house and lived on the property. It is not known if other owners lived there.

In 1843 a fire "mostly consumed the mansion house, according to the Alexander Gazette, October 5, 1843.

During the Civil War, the Union Army turned the adjacent seminary and school into a military hospital and erected temporary buildings in front of the main seminary buildings. It is claimed that poet Walt Whitman served as a nurse at this site, among others. Contemporary records detail what occurred at the seminary, but are silent concerning the high school and it is assumed that the large academic and dormitory building behind the mansion building was turned into hospital wards.

Episcopal High School used Latham House as a residence for faculty from

approximately the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Willoughby Reade and his family lived there through June 1987 when the last occupant, Rev. Rod Brown left. Reade joined the faculty in 1893 and it is assumed that he and his family moved into Latham at that time. The use of the building prior to that is unknown.

Until very recently the house served as faculty lounge and offices and school mailroom.

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** None known.
5. **Original plans and construction:** None known.
6. **Alterations and additions:** The building has had several alterations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century , some done at the time of the additions, some done at other times. For example, when Mr. Shelor and his family moved into the house in 1970 the business manager Cooper Dawson told him the building was to be demolished in five years and therefore money for alterations was limited.

The addition of the frontispiece in the 1870s substantially altered the appearance of the building, as the elongated proportions of the doors and windows gave the house from the front the attenuated vertical emphasis, typical of the period. Changes consistent with the architectural tastes of the 1870s were also made to the original block, such as replacing small window panes with large panes in one of the windows.

Between 1902 and 1907, according to the Sanborn insurance maps, a one story wing was erected at the rear of the house. It stood until the 1947-1948 rear addition was built.

Changes to the rest of the house made in 1947/8 time included covering the floors in new wood strips, replastering some walls and ceilings, adding and removing partitions, and cutting openings for interior doors, redoing or adding bathrooms, along with other changes to the layout and fabric of the building. The building was given a new coat of stucco, blending the three building sections together, at least visually. The older stucco, which is identical to that on the north side of the administration building, is visible on what was the outside wall of the west end of the original section. That wall can be observed by going into the small attic to the 1947-1948 addition. Although the 1870s and 1894 photographs show the building as light in color, and it is assumed that Latham and the main buildings were stuccoed, a photograph of the 1900/1901 monitors standing on the porch of Latham shows the exposed and painted brick, without any evidence of stucco. It should be noted that the stucco on Latham House differs in texture (pebble), color (more brown), and thickness (greater) than the stucco on the main administrative building and wings. (The photograph of the monitors is on display in Bryan Library.)

**B. Historical Context:**

Episcopal High School has occupied the site for 162 years, since October 1839, although the school closed twice, in 1844 and 1861-1865.

It is telling that in the three published histories of the school, the only reference to Latham House is in the context of the Willoughby Reade's occupancy. In John White's *Chronicles of Episcopal High School in Virginia, 1839-1989*, Dick Daniel wrote:

The old house to the northwest was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Reade and their daughter, Mary Willoughby. My recollection of the living room is the number of stringed musical instruments scattered around, mandolins, guitars, ukeles, etc. and also Ouija and backgammon boards. In addition there was a pantry and study on the first floor with bedrooms and a bath upstairs. One of Mr. Reade's older daughters, Stella, had contracted tuberculosis. In accordance with the standard practice of the time a separate room with bath was built on to the west end of the house where she could be isolated. (pp 145-146)

This is the one story addition seen on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sanborn maps.

Whether the Reades enjoyed living there is unknown, but Richard Yarborough said that faculty families he knew did not as its location offered no privacy, and that parents living there with young children feared they would fall down the stairs. From reading the histories of the school, along with other recollections and materials, one concludes that the important associations for students, former students, faculty, and administrators are tied to other buildings and the playing fields, but not to the essentially unrecorded Latham House.

**PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**A. General statement:**

- 1. Architectural character:** The front of Latham House faces east and is defined by the tall porch, the tall door with transom window, and two tall segmental headed windows, with large panes of glass. The elongated proportions of these features are characteristic of post Civil War architecture, more specifically the 1870s. Therefore, the building reads as building of that

period and the first floor windows of the north side, especially in the first and second bays, reinforce this vertical emphasis. The flat expanse of the north facade further pulls the viewer's eye up to the roof line, where the three intersecting gables and two chimneys, one capped with two arched opening, all strengthen that vertical orientation. In sum, the building on the exterior appears to be entirely of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and at best an another example of vernacular architecture of that period.

While Latham shares a superficial resemblance to the mansion building and its flanking buildings due to the use of porches and stucco surfaces, the other buildings have a horizontal rather than vertical emphasis, especially in Hoxton House (the mansion or main administrative building) with its long frontage. Also the blind arches of Hoxton House and the flanking buildings and the Federal Period door treatment of the main building suggest the earlier date of these buildings, in contrast to the front facade of Latham House. Less obvious differences such as in the color and surface of the stucco and the columns (although not old) on the administrative building and its flanking buildings as opposed to those of Latham House further the visual distinction between this grouping of historic buildings and Latham, which is set back from them.

The interior of Latham House consists of undistinguished spaces that awkwardly relate to each other. The vertical wainscot and fireplace surrounds are not of high style or high craftsmanship, merely the few vernacular attempts at architectural taste in a largely undecorated house, and seems unlikely that the second floor fireplace surround is original to this house. The door and window surrounds are extensively reworked, offering a variety of common treatments; some are downright clumsy.

2. **Condition of fabric:** Poor. The bricks being out of plane, rot of the porch entablature, extensive cracking in the stucco including a two story crack on the north facade, deterioration of roof and cornice, interior rot, and separation between floors and walls are but superficial suggestions of the compromised condition of the building.

## **B. Description of Exterior:**

1. **Overall dimensions:** The building is two stories tall with the front (east) facade being three bays wide. The north facade consists of five bays, with the first bay being the 1870s addition, the next two bays the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century original section, and the last two bays being the 1947-8 addition. The rear (west) facade is four bays wide, with the most northern bay being an entrance on the first floor, with the other bays being window bays, with an another entrance below grade. The south facade is the one that reads most clearly as three sections. The east and west sections extend south beyond, and therefore, flank the two stories of the center section. (The one story enclosed porch of

the center section does not extend as far as the 1947/8 addition, but it actually extends slightly beyond the 1870s addition.) Looking from the main building north towards Latham House, it appears U-shaped. North section is one bay, center section is two, and east bay is two. (For actual dimensions see the measured drawings.)

- 2. Foundations:** The porch is supported by square brick piers, while the east addition and original section have brick foundations. A small slab of poured concrete of unknown use is also beneath the porch. The west addition has a concrete block foundation, except for the east wall is original brick and concrete block. The space under the east addition is only a crawl space so presumably the brick foundations, which appear to be a single brick (wythe) deep, only go down less than five feet. The original or middle section has a full height basement with brick foundations laid in an inconsistent common or American bond pattern. The foundation of the original section is 13-14 inches thick, consisting of a header (approximately 4 ½ inches thick), a stretcher (approximately 8 ½ inches thick), and mortar. The foundation of the west addition is one concrete block thick. Also poured concrete foundations were laid under the side porch, now enclosed space, according to the 1947 architectural drawings. As steam pipe lines and numerous other utility lines run from south to north through the basement of the middle section, a substantial cut was made in the south wall. Other cuts for wires and two ventilation wholes, with grills, are along the north and south foundation walls. Along the east wall of the middle section are two openings that were obviously once windows. One of them (southern window opening) is partially blocked by the foundation of the chimney in the east addition. Along the west foundation of the middle section is the arch for the chimney above, and north of it the wall has been rebuilt in concrete block with a cut out for a door leading to the west addition. Along the north foundation of the middle section where it joins the east addition is a bulkhead with brick foundations. There are cold joints between the bulkhead foundations and those of the middle section of the house, meaning that the bulkhead foundation was not constructed at the same time as the house foundation.
- 3. Walls:** A dark, thick ( approximately 1 1/8 inches in some places) pebble stucco was applied to the building in 1947/48 when the west wing was added. No doubt the stucco was applied to conceal the fact that the building was erected in three distinct periods as reflected in the differences in brick, mortar, and surface planes, and to visually link this building to Hoxton House and its two wings. The earlier stucco (more gray, no pebble and not as thick) is visible inside the attic of the west addition, along the east wall. The original or main section and the east (frontispiece) addition are brick beneath the stucco, while the west section is concrete block beneath the stucco. It is not known when the first coat of stucco was applied to this building, but a 1900/1901

photograph shows the brick of the front exposed. In earlier photographs, it is impossible to tell if the structure is finished in stucco or whitewash.

- 4. Structural system, framing:** The walls are load bearing and the roof consists of rafters sitting on the north and south walls for the middle section, while the rafters for the east addition, which run perpendicular to those of the middle section sit on the top of the east wall of the addition and the east wall of the middle section. The rafters for the west addition, which also run perpendicular to those in the middle section, sit on the west wall of the addition and on a plate running along the west side of the west wall of the middle section. It appears that when the east addition was built, the gable of the east wall of the original section was cut down to provide a surface to support the west rafters of the addition. These rafters sit on the inside rather than outside edge of the west wall. Furthermore, the rafters on the west side of the east addition having partial sheathing (for roof tiles). On first blush, this method of framing the east addition suggests that it is the oldest part of house, but clearly the pegged rafters (without ridgepoles) in the middle section are older than the rafters in the east addition and the evidence of building evolution seen in the second story west wall of the east addition clearly establishes that the middle section was built first. Along that west wall, after punching some holes, it is visible where the southeast corner of the original, middle section was and where that wall was extended south when the 1870s addition was built..
- 5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads:** The porch on the front of Latham House is an entirely wooden porch sitting on brick piers. The wooden front steps have been removed. The four square columns across the front and two pilasters support an entablature and vaguely Chinese lattice balustrade. The entablature has serious deterioration at the northwest corner where it intersects the building. The ceiling of the porch is covered in tongue and groove sheeting. The low hip-like roof is covered in painted metal panels. The bulkhead on the east end of the middle section is supported by brick walls and has two hinged wooden doors. On the north side of the west (rear) facade, concrete steps lead up to the landing for the rear door. Immediately south of this landing/step combination is another two concrete steps which, after rotating 45 degrees to the south, lead down concrete stairs to the basement entrance. This stairwell as well as the stairs and landing to the rear door have a metal railings. A very low wall runs along the west and south sides of the basement stairs. On the south side, the middle section, which was before the 1947-1948 work a porch, has stairs and railing up to an entrance with a flat or slightly sloped roof above, supported by triangular shaped latticework.

6. **Chimneys:** Two chimneys straddle the east-west roof ridge. The chimneys are brick and the east chimney appears recent, probably dating to the 1947-1948 addition and renovation. That chimney has a slightly projecting cap. The west chimney is the more interesting of the two as it is capped by two arched openings. Both are coated in stucco.
  
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways, doors, and windows:** The former main entrance is located in the south bay of the front facade and consists of a transom window (single pane, with segmental arched head) above a wooden door with two recessed panels. A storm door is mounted in front of the door. The two bays north of the door have double hung sash windows of two tall lites each, divided by a mullion, with wooden lintels. The opening of the window head is a segmental arch. Three segmental, two/two sash lites are on the second floor. These five windows are the only ones with (louvered) shutters, but these are metal shutters nailed to the wall. These front windows have plates, mounted on the sill, with holes for rods to the shutters, suggesting that originally the degree to which the shutters were open could be varied.

The first and second story windows in the first bay of the north facade also have the same arch head, two tall lites/sash and are also double hung. In the middle or original section of the north facade, the windows have flat heads. The first floor window in the first bay of the middle section is two tall lites/ per sash, but the other first floor window in the middle section has nine/nine lites, while the second floor windows are six/six lites, as are the four windows in the north facade of the west addition. The lintels in the front addition and middle section were wooden and one second story lintel has fallen or rotted out. The lintels in the west addition are concrete. A louver is mounted in the gable end of the 1870s addition.

The rear facade (the west facade of the west addition) has a kitchen door, which is a wooden door with two panels below six lites in the top of the door. The fenestration of that facade is irregular with only the middle bay windows vertically aligned. All windows are six/six sash with a smaller kitchen window with the same number of lites to the right of the door. The basement door is six lites over a single panel, and flanked by two small casement windows of two vertical lites each.

Continuing clockwise to the south facade, six over six windows, with concrete lintels, are in the two bays of the 1947-1948 addition, with another six over six window on the second floor of the east side of the west addition, while the center bay has the porch door (with storm door) and three windows, also six over six. The first floor window has a stone lintel.

The windows on the south facade of the 1870s addition have the same two over two double hung sash of the other windows on this addition, with segmental arch heads. These windows as well as those on the second floor of the middle section have wooden sills. Beneath the west addition and central section are two vertical lite casement windows in the basement, in half-round brick window wells.

**The most interesting window** is the first floor window of the third bay (from the east) of the north facade as that window is pegged at the corners where the jambs and head are joined, suggesting that it is older than the other windows.

**8. Roof:**

- a. **Shape, covering:** The front gable runs north-south, the middle gable runs east-west, and the rear gable runs north-south. They are at about the same height, but the ridge of the middle gable is slightly higher than the ridge of the front gable. All are covered in badly worn and deteriorating composition shingle, most likely dating to the 1947-1948 renovation and enlargement. Three ventilators are mounted on the roof, and a large fan was once mounted in the roof behind the louver on the gable of the 1870s addition on the north facade.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** The only cornice treatment of note is the sawtooth (angled bricks coated in stucco) of the middle section of the building, north and south facades. There is a slight ovolo or quarter-round molded cornice on the 1870s addition, east facade and west facade (which projects south from the facade of the middle section). The south facade of the 1870s addition has a short, raking metal sheet cornice, while the north facade of the 1870s addition has a taller wooden raking cornice. Neither one is well done or in good condition. The raking cornices of the west addition are also undecorated wooden strips. Hanging gutters with downspouts are along the eaves.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** none

**C. Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor plans:** The entrance from the front porch opens directly into a library in the 1870s addition (designated as living room on 1947-48 plans). That room connects to the stairhall of the main section and the stairhall opens into the lounge (dining room on 1947/8 plans) and the enclosed porch. At the far (west) end of the enclosed porch is the 1947-1948 addition consisting of a

study, kitchen, and small support rooms. This space is also accessible through a door cut in the south end of the west wall of the lounge. On the second floor, above the sitting room is an office (formerly a bedroom), then the stair landing and a bathroom added in 1947/8, then an office with the fireplace and beyond that the hall of the west addition and bedrooms converted to offices and a closet (with hatch to west addition attic). As previously mentioned the basement is only fully excavated in the middle section, which was unusable because of the numerous pipes running through it, and in the west addition which was the laundry room and another room probably used for storage.

The floors of the 1870s addition are eight inches below the floors of the middle and 1947/8 addition.

2. **Stairways:** The main stairway runs primarily along the east wall of the main section, starting with a short run along the south wall. The four walls of the stairhall, as well as the partition enclosing the space beneath the stairs is finished in a beaded vertical boarding. Along the stairs, the boarding is capped by a flattened handrail, while along the other walls of the stairhall, the boarding is capped by a small, plain board. The enclosed space beneath the stairs is accessed by two paneled doors. The 1947/8 addition has a stairway to the basement in the addition and above that stairway is one to the second floor. These stairways are in the south side of the addition.
3. **Flooring:** As part of the 1947-8 enlargement and renovation all existing floors, including stair trends, were recovered in wooden planks, running in the same direction as the original flooring. The direction in which the narrow panel floor boards run is apparent in the photographs. The floor in the kitchen is covered with linoleum tile. In the basement the two excavated spaces have poured concrete floors.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** With the exception of the vertical wainscot in the stairhall and built-in book shelves in the first floor sitting room the walls and ceilings are plaster. In the lounge, later plaster coats were obviously added on the south wall as the wall is flush to the edge of the door surrounds. Also some ceilings, such as in the stairhall, have added additional coats of plaster added. The lounge's walls are covered in wallpaper. The only cornice is in the library, which is in keeping with its Federal Revival style decoration, dating to the 1947/8 renovation. All rooms have a common baseboard, approximately eight inches to nine high, with a cyma recta cap. The lounge has a simple chair rail, of approximately four inches in height, mounted approximately 28 inches above the floor.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Most interior doors have been removed. However,

the cuts for hinges and strike boxes for rim locks are still visible on several doorway frames. There is a door between the lounge and the west addition as well as doors in the middle section of the second floor, which appear to be late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most doorways that were once exterior doorways show evidence that there were doors swinging out (perhaps screen doors) and doors opening in. The doorway frames on the lounge have a series of thick, half-round molding, characteristic of early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The other doorway frames display trim nearly devoid of decoration, with the exception of an occasional beaded edge jamb, or raised outside edge. The doorway from the lounge to the enclosed porch is approximately 11 to 12 inches thick, while the doorway from the library to the stairhall is approximately 14 inches thick. The latter doorway has a two part jamb, consisting of a thick, plain jamb (on the west side of the opening) and a thin jamb with a beaded edge (on the east side of the opening). The thickness of the opening and the two part jamb suggest that the opening penetrates two walls, the east wall of the original section and the west wall of the east (1870s) addition. While the jambs mostly abutted each other originally, there is now a slight gab between them.

**b. Windows:** Consistent with the door surrounds, the window surrounds are simple, vernacular and occasionally an extremely awkward accumulation of pieces added at different times. The stairhall window with its stuck-on corner blocks is a good example of how crude some of the window surrounds are. At the earliest, some windows surrounds appear mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**6. Decorative features and trim:** Decorative features and trim are extremely limited and without distinction, consisting of the stairhall wainscot, and the fireplace surrounds. The wainscot has been described above. The first floor fireplace surround consists of pilasters, with slight capitals, surrounding the fireplace opening and supporting an entablature of beaded architrave and cornice, with plain frieze, capped by an undecorated mantelshelf with angled edges. The fireplace is lined with metal sheeting, covering the brick cheeks, rear, and head. The chimney stack projects 12 inches into the room and the fireplace opening is 24 inches wide and 37 inches tall. The upstairs fireplace surround is a series of patched and damaged sections, e.g., the raised edge is partially missing on the pilaster on the right side. The heads of the nails or pegs which hold together the fireplace surround are visible, but covered by multiple layers of paint. The mantelshelf, supported by a cornice of built-up half round beading, extends beyond the chimney on the north side. That the shelf is too long for chimney breast, and the composite nature of the surround strongly suggests that neither the mantelshelf nor the surround is original to this chimney. Cheeks and rear are masonry in the upstairs fireplace. The chimney stack projects 12 inches in the room, and the fireplace opening is 29 inches wide and 26 inches high. Both hearths are mid-20<sup>th</sup> century brick laid on sand.

7. **Hardware:** A few late 19<sup>th</sup> century hinges are in place on second floor door jambs. As mentioned earlier, a 19<sup>th</sup> century rimlock, patented March 25, 1873, is sitting on a table in the second floor main section, and the same rim lock is mounted on the front door, and another door
  8. **Mechanical equipment:**
    - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The house was heated by steam radiators, many of which are still in place. Electric baseboard heating has been added in some rooms, such as the lounge.
    - b. **Lighting:** No historic lighting remains. The building is lit by fluorescents or modern chandeliers, such as in the lounge.
    - c. **Plumbing:** Plumbing dates to 1947/48.
    - d. **Electrical:** Electrical seems to be the one element updated since the 1947/8 addition. Electrical, telephone and computer connections have been added by running conduits on the surface of the walls, and as seen in the first floor closet off the enclosed porch, a large boxed conduit runs from the closet up through the stairhall ceiling into the second floor bathroom.
  9. **Original furnishings:** none
- D. **Site:** In G.M. Hopkins's 1878 map of Alexandria and Northern Virginia, Episcopal High School is not identified. Instead it is marked as a large building within the Fairfax Theological Seminary grounds, slightly north of the complex of buildings that was and is the Seminary (proper title is Protestant Episcopal Seminary of Virginia, but commonly known as the Virginia Theological Seminary). Two roads lead up to the seminary, one from Seminary Road and one from N. Quaker Lane (but neither road is labeled). For Episcopal High School, one road leads to the school from Braddock Road, but none from North Quaker Lane. Yet, eleven years later, the school's "Old Boys" erected stone gates, for the school's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, flanking the road from N. Quaker leading to the main administration building. This reorientation of the approach to the grounds of Episcopal High School from Braddock to N. Quaker was also reflected in the addition in the 1870s and 1880s of columns and porches to the main administration building and flanking buildings, along with Latham House, all of which faced N. Quaker Lane. This east-west orientation to the campus, with the axis through Hoxton House and the main building behind it was further reinforced by buildings erected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that had an east-west organization. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and post World War II buildings and circulation paths have

created a series of cross-axes. Although Latham House is set back slightly from Hoxton House and its flanking buildings, Latham House reinforces this original axial orientation because of its gable end frontispiece with porch facing east. Whether Latham House had this strong an east-west orientation before the erection of the 1870s front addition is less definite as its middle section had two outside doors on the south facade and perhaps one on the east facade. But it did, prior to the 1870s, have an east-west orientation of its rectangular shape, topped by a gable running east-west. Bushes are set close to the building, but original landscaping, if any, is unknown.

### **PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. Architectural drawings:** In June 1947 the architectural firm Taylor and Fisher prepared plans for an addition to and renovation of Latham House. Not all changes indicated, such as changes to the first floor windows and adding an entrance on the north facade of the middle section, were made. Also the drawings of the second floor east room and adjacent bathroom call for closing a passageway and creating a new one, yet neither an old passageway or a new one are visible in the building. Original blueprints at Episcopal High School archives.
- B. Early views:** Copies of all early views cited are available at Episcopal High School archives. They are also available at the adjacent Va. Theological Seminary, which has the Southern Churchman on microfilm, in addition to numerous Seminary minutes, records, and publications which discuss Episcopal High School, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- C. Interviews:** Joe Shelor, teacher at Episcopal High School (9/17/2001); Dick Yarborough, EHS Treasurer (on several occasions); Richard Thomsen, former headmaster (9/25/2001); Carroll Johnson, EHS development officer (October 2001); Laura Vettner, EHS archivist, several meetings and conversations; Julia Randle, VA. Theological Seminary, archivist, two meetings; Cooper Dawson, former business manger (Sept. 25,2001); James Woolen and Peter Kurtze concerning Taylor and Fisher; historians Peter Smith, Virginia Price, Tom McCord, T. Michael Miller, Wanda Dowell, Edith Spruse, Ann Wass, Margaret Law Callcott and Camille Wells; and archivist George Combs.
- D. Bibliography:**
- 1. Histories of the school :** Charles Wertenbaker, *Before They Were Men*, (1973, EHS); John White, *Chronicles of the Episcopal High School in Virginia, 1839-1989* (1989, W.L. Bauhan); Richard Pardee Williams, *The High School, A History of the Episcopal High School in Virginia at Alexandria* (1964, Vincent-Curtis); Arthur Barkdale Kinsolving, *The Story of A Southern School, The Episcopal High School of Virginia* (1922, The Norman Remington Co).

2. **Publications, minutes and other records of Episcopal High School and Va. Theological Seminary:** Student, alumni, and official publications, including literary publications, newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks, some starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are at the EHS archives. Minutes of board meetings and numerous photographs are also at the EHS archives. The archives also has the diaries of Headmaster Launcelot Blackford. The Va. Theological Seminary, in addition to having numerous publications pertaining to the Seminary and the Episcopal Church in the Va. has microfilm of the Southern Churchman, and trustee meetings reports which discuss the high school.
3. **Other Publications:** Bishop Wm. Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, (1857, J.B. Lippincott & Co) has the earliest drawing of the buildings at Episcopal High School; Rev. A.R. Goodwin, DD, *History of the Theological Seminary in Virginia and Its Historical Background*, (1923/1924, The DuBois Press); John E. Booty, *Mission and Minority: A History of Virginia Theological Seminary* (1995, Morehouse Publishing).
4. **Unpublished sources:** Special Collections, Alexandria Library has vertical files on Episcopal High School and Va. Theological Seminary, which include articles on Hoxton House, along with microfilm of newspapers, insurance maps and books, and real estate tax books; Virginia Room, Fairfax County Library has materials on Fairfax county history ( and the school was part of Fairfax until annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1952); Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives for deeds; Maryland Historical Society Library for papers pertaining to Eliza Law , see Margaret Law Callcott, editor, *The Mistress of Riversdale: The Plantation Letters of Rosalie Stier Calvert, 1795-1821*, (1991, Johns Hopkins) for the relevant letters; T.B. McCord, Jr. and Tellus Consultants, "A Background Documentary Study for the Episcopal High School and the Adjacent Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va." (1991).

#### **PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Episcopal High School retained architectural historian and architectural photographer William Lebovich to prepare the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation and large format photographs of Latham House. The school retained architect Dean Ventola to prepare measured drawings. Patrick Andriuk, EHS Director of Facilities, managed the project, and F. Robertson Hershey, EHS Headmaster, was also directly involved.

Prepared by:  
William Lebovich  
October 2001