

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Keeling House (Additional Documentation)

Other names/site number: "Adam Keeling House", "Dudlies"; VDHR #134-0018

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 3157 Adam Keeling Road

City or town: Virginia Beach State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national X statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B X C ___ D

 _____ Signature of certifying official/Title:	<u>2/24/2025</u> _____ Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
_____ Title :	_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL: Postmedieval English

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: weatherboard; BRICK; STONE: slate

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Keeling House (VDHR #134-0018; NRIS No. 73002297) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1973. The original nomination focused solely on the historic one-and-a-half-story, brick dwelling, which was identified as “one of Virginia’s best-preserved small, pre-Georgian brick manor houses” with fine brickwork and interior woodwork; however, the nomination did not discuss other resources on the property. This Additional Documentation provides descriptions and evaluation of all resources located on the nominated property (some of which were added after the 1973 nomination) and additions and alterations made to the house; confirms the boundaries of the nominated property; provides a refined date of construction; and provides an expanded historic context to include discussion of the historically enslaved population on the Keeling farm.

The additional resources included in this update are a one-and-a-half-story frame garage constructed about 1938 (a contributing building), which stands north of the house near the driveway entrance; a mid- to late-twentieth-century frame garden shed (a non-contributing building); a twenty-first-century in-ground swimming pool (a non-contributing structure); and an archaeological site (44VB0065) (a contributing site), which was excavated by Virginia Department of Historic Resources archaeologists in 1997. The original nomination stated that the house “probably was erected between 1695 and 1714,” and the house was long-thought to have dated from the late 1600s. In 2006, a dendrochronological study of the house’s framing resulted in a more accurate assessment of the dwelling’s construction date (ca. 1734), which is included as part of this update. Additional research undertaken for this update also supports an expansion of the property’s period of significance to include the rehabilitation of and addition to the house in

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1938 by architect Mary Ramsay Brown (see Section 8). Another resource, the Keeling family burial ground, which was not discussed in the original nomination, is located on a separate parcel northwest of the historic dwelling and is under separate ownership. The cemetery contains seven marked graves of members of the extended Keeling family, several of whom lived on the historic property, and, for this reason, information linking these two historically related resources is included in this update.

The Keeling House, which has been privately owned and occupied since its construction, is a rare surviving Colonial-era dwelling that retains a very high level of historical integrity. The current owners, who purchased the property in 1997, have conscientiously maintained the house and the surrounding landscape. The present 1.15-acre parcel includes five resources consisting of the previously listed historic dwelling, one additional contributing building, a contributing site, a non-contributing building, and a non-contributing structure.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The Keeling House, located at 3157 Adam Keeling Road, stands approximately one-half mile west of North Great Neck Road in the northern section of the City of Virginia Beach. The 1.15-acre property is near the west end of the Great Neck peninsula on one of the long fingers of land that extends from the neck into the Lynnhaven River. Great Neck is bounded by the Lynnhaven River on the west, Long Creek on the north, and Broad Bay on the east.¹ Great Neck is approximately equidistant (5 miles) from Cape Henry to the east and Little Creek to the west. The modern-day route of North Great Neck Road (S.R. 279) extends north-to-south through the neck connecting to Shore Drive (U.S. Route 60) on the north and Virginia Beach Boulevard (U.S. Route 58) on the south.

The subject parcel is on the south side of a paved, 50'-wide roadway (Adam Keeling Road) and is accessed by a gravel-surfaced driveway. The house, which stands about 13' above water level, is situated near the southern end of the parcel and overlooks a cove to the southwest that leads to the Lynnhaven River. The Lynnhaven Inlet, lying just 1.5 miles from the property by water, opens to the Chesapeake Bay. The area around Lynnhaven Inlet and Lynnhaven River was labeled on maps as far back as 1675, although the water bodies themselves were depicted on even earlier cartographic renditions of Chesapeake Bay.² Like other manor houses of the period, the Keeling House was placed on the highest ground with a sloping yard around it and with water at the front.³

¹ South of the Keeling House property, the Lynnhaven River diverges to the southwest and southeast into Western and Eastern Branches. The main channel that leads to the eastern branch of the Lynnhaven River is known as the Keeling Drain. The waterways were often cited in deed records as property boundaries.

² Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), *Lynnhaven River Shoreline Management Plan* (April 2013), 3. Prepared for City of Virginia Beach and Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. Prepared by VIMS, College of William and Mary, Gloucester Point, VA.

³ Sadie Scott Kellam and Vernon Hope Kellam, *Old Houses in Princess Anne, Virginia* (Portsmouth, VA: Printcraft Press, Inc., 1931), 9.

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The house site, advantageous since colonial times, provides protection from storms yet affords quick access to major waterways (Figure 1).

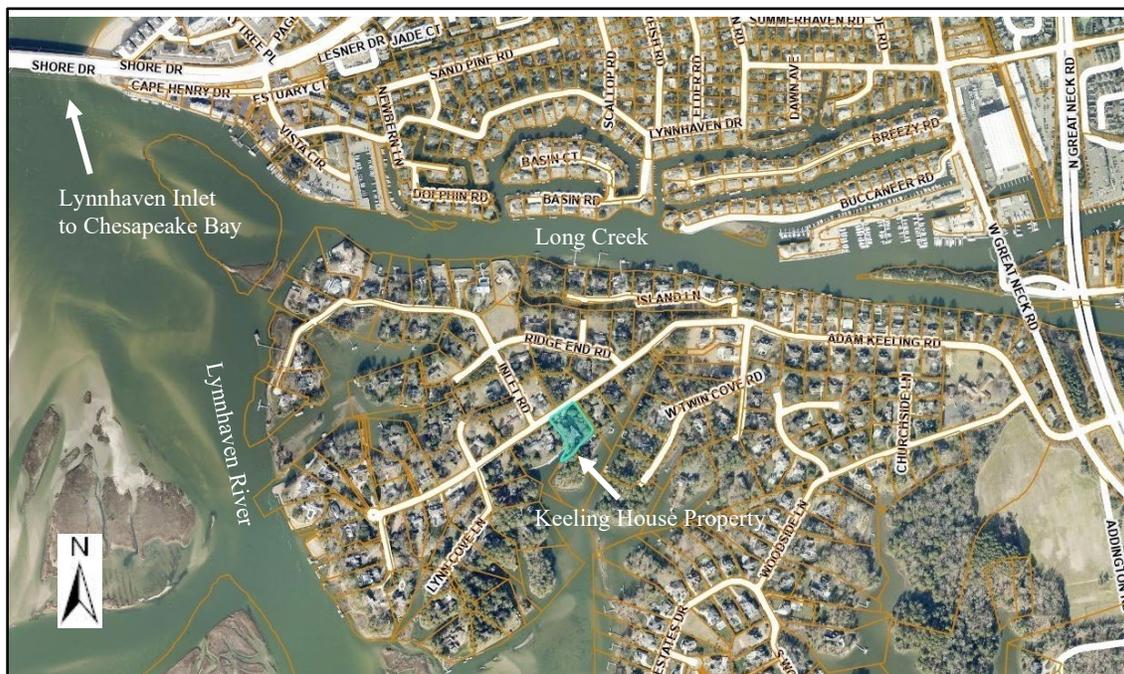


Figure 1. Location of Keeling House, 3157 Adam Keeling Road, Virginia Beach, VA. City of Virginia Beach GIS.

The property is heavily landscaped and retains a secluded feeling despite the surrounding twentieth-century residential development. A tall, manicured hedge partially screens the house from the street; a low brick wall extends along part of the northern property line (street side) and brick piers topped by lanterns mark the driveway entrance. The lot is characterized by formal and informal planting beds with mature trees (holly, magnolia, oak, pecan) and shrubs (azaleas, camellias, boxwood).

A garage (ca. 1938) and garden shed (ca. 1950) stand north of the house (see enclosed sketch site plan). A brick walkway lined by mature boxwood leads from the gravel drive to the east entrance of the house, and another brick walkway leads from the garage to a brick patio and the west entrance. Prior to construction of the patio (1997), archaeologists dug test units in the vicinity that produced historic artifacts. In the early twenty-first century, an in-ground swimming pool with a concrete surround was added to the southwest side of the house. A retaining wall reinforces the bank and concrete steps lead down to a wooden boat dock at the edge of the cove.

Beginning in the late 1940s, George Syer, then-owner of much of the historic Keeling landholdings, subdivided the former Keeling land and sold the lots for residential development. Divided into 25 lots on three plats (Syer Tracts 1, 2, and 3), the parcels were approximately one-acre in size and arranged along curving 50'-wide roads (Additional Documentation 1). A few parcels were landlocked, but most were edged either by coves, Long Creek, or a canal accessing

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Long Creek.⁴ This section of the Great Neck neighborhood retains Syer's street pattern and parcel divisions, though a few of the larger parcels have been re-subdivided.

Property Boundaries

The current boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the boundaries established by the 1961 subdivision of the house property into three parcels, which was undertaken by then-owners Leon and Caroline Manees (Additional Documentation 2) On the 1961 plat, the house lot, designated as Lot A, encompasses a small sliver of land purchased by the Maneeses from James P. Sadler, who owned the adjoining parcel on the west, to provide better waterfront access for the historic house lot.⁵ Although the subdivision plat indicates that the house lot contains one acre, subsequent conveyances note that the property was "approximately" one acre. More recent surveys and City of Virginia Beach records indicate that the parcel encompasses 1.15 acres. No alterations have been made to the property boundaries since 1961, indicating that the present parcel boundaries are the same as when the property was originally nominated in 1973. The original nomination lacked definitive tax parcel boundaries, gave the approximate acreage of the property simply as "less than ten acres," and included a detail of the 1964 "Cape Henry, Virginia" U.S.G.S. topographic map with the house footprint encircled. A current tax parcel map showing the boundaries of the nomination property is submitted with this Additional Documentation form. The latitude and longitude coordinates for the nominated property remain the same as the coordinates submitted in 1973.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Inventory

Single dwelling, 1734/5, Colonial: postmedieval English (pre-Georgian), contributing building

Garage, ca.1938, no style, contributing building

Shed, ca.1950, no style, non-contributing building

Swimming pool, 2001, no style, non-contributing structure

Archaeological Site, Contact Period, Domestic, contributing site

Single dwelling (1734/35)

Exterior

The Keeling House is a one-and-a-half-story, single-pile, brick dwelling with a rectangular footprint (48'3" x 20'2") is covered by a steeply pitched (12/12 pitch or 45°), side-facing gable roof with gable-roofed dormers on both slopes and interior end brick chimneys laid in stretcher bond with three-step corbeled caps. The interior chimneys permit the use of decorative glazed brick header chevrons on the gable ends. At present, the roof is covered by flat, asbestos shingles (formerly, wooden shingles). Dormers on both sides of the gable roof are clad with weatherboards laid in a diagonal orientation and hold four-over-four wooden sash windows.

The house has a brick water table laid in English bond, which is parged in some areas, with a beveled brick cap and screen-covered rectangular vents. All four elevations of the house are laid

⁴ Princess Anne County Map Book 24:46, September 1949, and Map Book 24:85, December 1949.

⁵ Princess Anne County Deed Book 571:406, December 4, 1958, James P. and Susan F. Sadler to Leon J. and Caroline S. Manees; Princess Anne County Map Book 46:23, approved December 8, 1958.

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in Flemish bond with glazed headers, tooled joints, and corner closers (Figure 2). (Closers, used to facilitate the bond coursing, are also present beside most window and door openings.) Historical photographs and physical evidence suggest that portions of the east and west elevations may have been whitewashed prior to the early twentieth century.

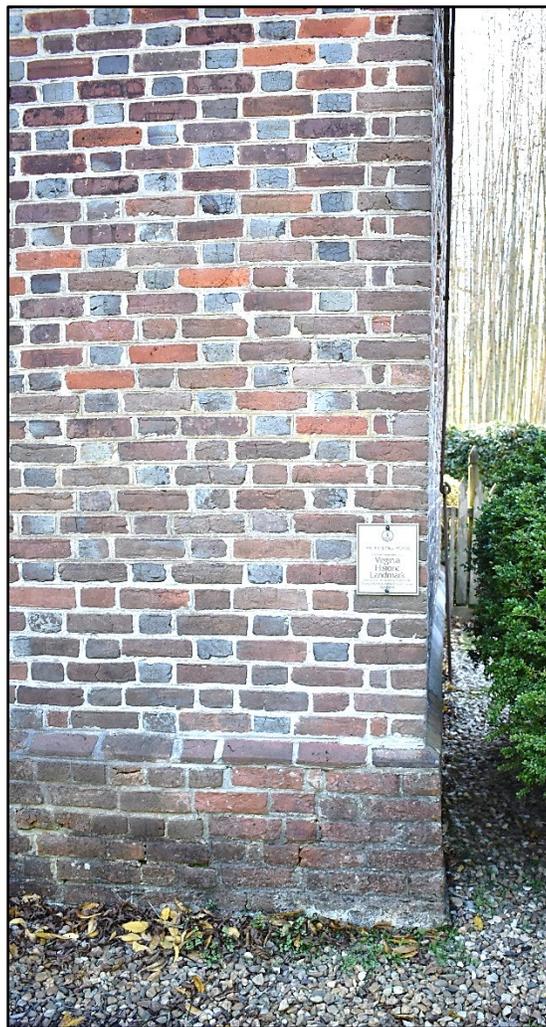


Figure 2. Detail of the brickwork on the east elevation of the Keeling House showing English bond water table, beveled cap, and Flemish bond with glazed headers above. Note closers at corner of wall.

The west (water side) elevation, which originally served as the primary entrance elevation, features a centrally located entrance bay topped by a brick double-rowlock segmental arch (partially of glazed headers). The four-paneled wooden door is accessed from a brick stoop; the opening is protected by a glazed wooden storm door. Changes in the brick and segmental arch suggest that this opening has been enlarged (Figure 3). Two window openings flank the entrance on the north and one opening is set in the southernmost end bay of the elevation. The window openings in the end bays are detailed with brick jack arches that are plastered and scored. The other window

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opening lacks adornment. Windows are nine-over-six wooden sash with simple wooden surrounds and



Figure 3. West entrance door showing alteration to segmental arch.

Note brick closers to right of opening.

were likely installed about 1938. The modillion cornice on the west elevation is original. There are two, widely spaced, gable-roofed dormers on the west slope of the roof.

The east (land side) elevation, which currently serves as the primary entrance elevation, is five bays wide featuring a centrally located entrance bay flanked by two window openings on the north and south.⁶ The entrance, accessed from a brick stoop, consists of a single-leaf wooden door with six raised panels. The original rectangular transom above the door was filled with brick by the

⁶ Dell Upton's evaluation of the Keeling House (1976) noted that the window opening second from the south end on the east elevation lacks brick closers. His analysis suggested that the window opening was inserted later, since most original openings had closers to facilitate the Flemish bond patterning of bricks.

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early 1930s; during a 1976 renovation, the transom was reopened and a two-row, 12-pane transom was installed (Figure 4). The transom and door openings are deeply recessed; the solid door is protected by a glazed storm door. The flanking windows are nine-over-six wooden sash, identical

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*Figure 4. Detail of east side entrance (replacement door), re-opened transom.
Note closers on both sides of the entrance bay and the rubbed and gauged brick arch above.
The modillion cornice appears to be an early-twentieth-century modification.*

to those on the west elevation. Each of the east side window openings and the transom opening are detailed with a brick jack arch of gauged and rubbed bricks. The arch above the opening in the northernmost bay is plastered and scored to simulate stone. The modillion cornice is an early-twentieth-century addition that replaced the original, unadorned cornice. Three dormers, equally spaced and approximately located above the intervals between the windows on the first-floor level are identical to those on the opposite elevation.

The north and south end elevations are presumed to be identical, although additions have obscured all but a portion of the gable end of the south elevation. On both end walls, glazed headers were used to create concentric rows of chevron patterns that parallel the rake of the roof. A projecting,

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two course, Flemish bond brick belt course, which stops short of the cornice stop, further embellishes the end elevations. The north elevation holds two small (12" x 22"), four-pane, wooden-frame, casement windows on the first-floor level that light the closets in the parlor. Similar windows are present in the gable ends at the half-story level; those openings are further detailed with rowlock lintels. The openings are original and, although the present frame and sash are not original, they are of historic age dating to at least the early twentieth century. A wrought iron lightning rod extends along the center of the wall and above the chimney. The precise date of the rod is uncertain, but it appears in early twentieth century photographs and may date to the late nineteenth century.⁷

The visible portion of the south end elevation exhibits several rows of brick chevrons and one small window opening (Figure 5). The belt course is not visible, but was documented in historical photographs and measured drawings created prior to the construction of the 1938 addition.



Figure 5. Detail of south gable end showing glazed header chevron patterning. View to northeast. See Figure 18 for a historical image showing the chevroning pattern.

⁷ Kellam and Kellam, 60. The Kellams stated that the rod was an “old blacksmith-made wrought iron lightning rod.” See Figure 15 for a historical image showing the lightning rod.

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Interior

Floor plan

The Keeling House has a center passage floor plan with a hall (now dining room) on the south and a parlor (now living room) on the north (see enclosed sketch floor plan). The center passage is 8' wide, the parlor is 17'7" wide from the interior wall to the fireplace, and the hall measures 12'10" wide from the interior wall to the fireplace. The rooms are 17'8½" deep and ceilings are 9'10". The depth of the closets flanking the fireplaces in both the hall and parlor is about 4'6". The exterior brick walls of the house are 13½" thick. The half floor above reflects a similar plan though the spaces are slightly smaller. The north chamber (bedroom) is 18'1½" wide by 14'3¼" deep and the south chamber (bedroom) is 13' wide by 14'3¼" deep. Both rooms have fireplaces on the end walls, though they are not in use, and were furnished with closets to either side of the fireplace. The attic space, which was not accessible during the current study, is described below from an earlier survey completed in 1976. The Keeling House, unlike other nearby early-eighteenth-century dwellings, was built without a cellar.

First Floor

Center Passage

The following description commences from the east elevation, which is the current primary entrance. The six-panel wooden entrance door opens onto the center passage which holds the staircase to the second floor on the south wall, and original four-panel wooden doors to the parlor on the north and to the hall on the south. The door on the west end of the passage opens to the water side of the property. Due to the return of the stair above it, the west door is foreshortened. Finishes in the passage, and other spaces in the house, include a wooden floor, plastered walls and ceiling, and no wall moldings. Wrought iron H- and L-shaped hinges are used throughout the house and include both historic (though not original) and late-twentieth-century replacement units. Door openings are simply detailed with flat surrounds. Documentation undertaken in 1934 and 1976 identified all interior doors as original, excepting the entrance doors in the passage.⁸

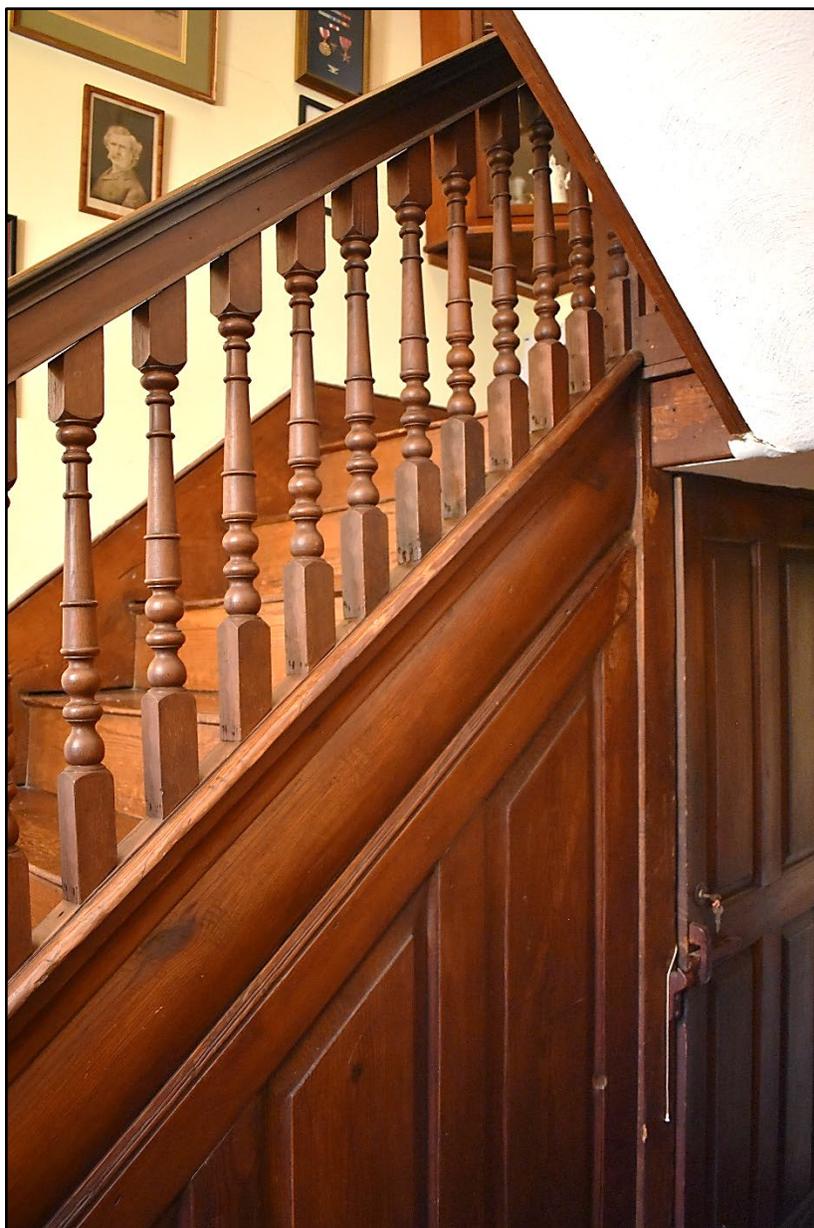
The staircase (approximately 3' wide) is notable for its fine woodwork including turned walnut balusters comprising beads, reels, and spindle; a shaped poplar handrail that is butted against the square newel post; a plain wall stringer; and a paneled passage-side wall, which is detailed with raised panels that are mitered at the top to fit the angle of the stair. A wide bolection molding extends between the tops of the panels and the bottom of the stringboard. A small closet, located beneath the stair's return landing, is accessed on the north by an original four-paneled wooden door (Figure 6). The stair has a closed stringer and square poplar newel posts with molded pine caps. An analysis of the balusters in 1986 identified the upper balustrade as oak, possibly suggesting an economy of resources that used the more impressive walnut wood on the lower level

⁸ Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), District No. 6 Norfolk Area, Philip N Stern, District Officer, Field Party: Finlay F. Ferguson, Washington Reed, T. E. Heindsmann, and George A. Snyder, "The Keeling House, Princess Anne County, Virginia, Survey No. 11-17," Feb-March 1934; Dell Upton, Notes on "Adam Keeling House, 3157 Adam Keeling Road (134-18), Virginia Beach with Camille Wells," April 12, 1976. Manuscript on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond.

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balustrade.⁹ The well-worn treads feature a molded nosing and an elegant newel drop extends from the bottom of the second floor newel post. The dog-leg stair rises to a landing where the run returns on itself and continues to the second-floor hall. The balustrade along the upper level hall is similar to balusters on the first rise, but the upper level baluster spindles are more attenuated, resulting in a taller balustrade (3'1¼" versus 2'6").



⁹ Wood designations are provided in the HABS drawing notes and Harry Bradley, "Adam Keeling House Section Through Second Floor Handrail," June 23, 1986. Copy provided by current owner.

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Figure 6. View of Staircase showing balusters and handrail, bolection molding, paneled side wall, and closet beneath the stair.

Living Room (Parlor)

The most richly finished room in the Keeling House is the living room (formerly the parlor), located north of the passage. The room is finished with random-width pine floors, wooden baseboard, and plastered ceiling and walls, and the fireplace wall is fully paneled. The woodwork exhibits the same skill and detail as the woodwork found on the passage stair. The fireplace, centrally located on the wall, is flanked by pilasters detailed with seven flutes and entasis that stand atop paneled bases. The mantelpiece consists of a wide center panel flanked by more narrow (vertically oriented) panels, a projecting molded mantel shelf, and four rectangular panels below. Historical photographs and drawings indicate that by the early twentieth century, the mantel shelf had been moved from its current (and original) position to a lower, and less elegant, position below the rectangular panels (Additional Documentation 2). The size of the fireplace opening also has been altered over time; at present, the segmentally arched firebox opening is faced with a stucco-covered brick surround. Closets on either side of the fireplace are enclosed by four-panel wooden doors with a wooden panel above the opening. Two-part paneling between the door and the side walls mirrors the proportions of the fluted pilasters and bases. A multi-step molded cornice extends across the width of the entire fireplace wall (Figure 7).



Figure 7. View looking north in parlor (living room). Note fireplace surround, mantel shelf,

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fluted pilasters, closet doors, and cornice, which reflect the influence of the Georgian style and its classical elements.

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Dining Room (Hall)

The dining room (formerly the hall), located on the south side of the central passage, is a much less ornate room than the parlor with few notable features other than the large fireplace on the south wall. The large, brick firebox is approximately 6' wide and about 4' high with a molded wooden shelf extending from the wooden lintel. The opening has been altered and the shelf is a twentieth-century addition, although the lintel is original. The former closet on the west side of the fireplace is now a pass-through that accesses the sunroom addition on the west side of the house. Originally, the opening east of the fireplace was an exterior door; it then became a pass-through door into the kitchen addition and continues to serve as an entrance to that space (Figure 8). The door, with six flush panels, is of historic age but is not original. There is one window opening on the west wall and two on the east wall in the dining room. The door openings have simple, molded trim, and a narrow baseboard has been added to the room.

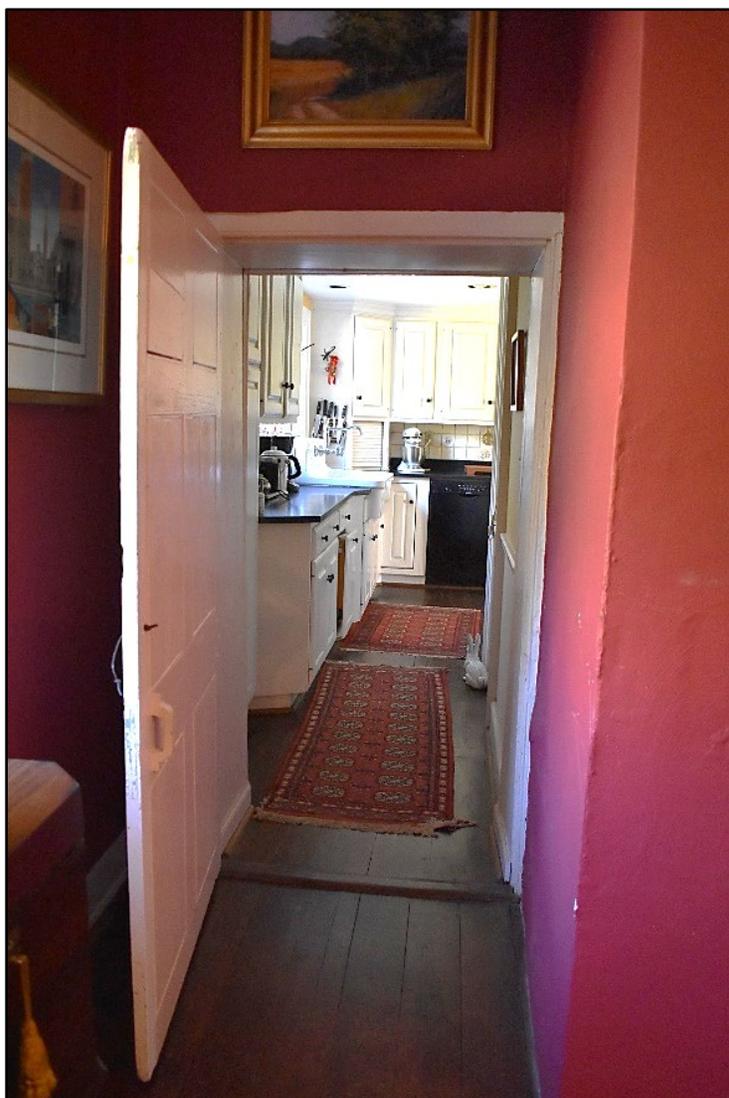


Figure 8. View looking south from the dining room into the kitchen addition (1938).

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Upper Level

Hall

The transverse hall at the top of the staircase originally measured about 8'4" deep and 7'5" wide; the late-twentieth-century installation of a bathroom on the east side of the hall now occupies a portion of the space (Figure 9).

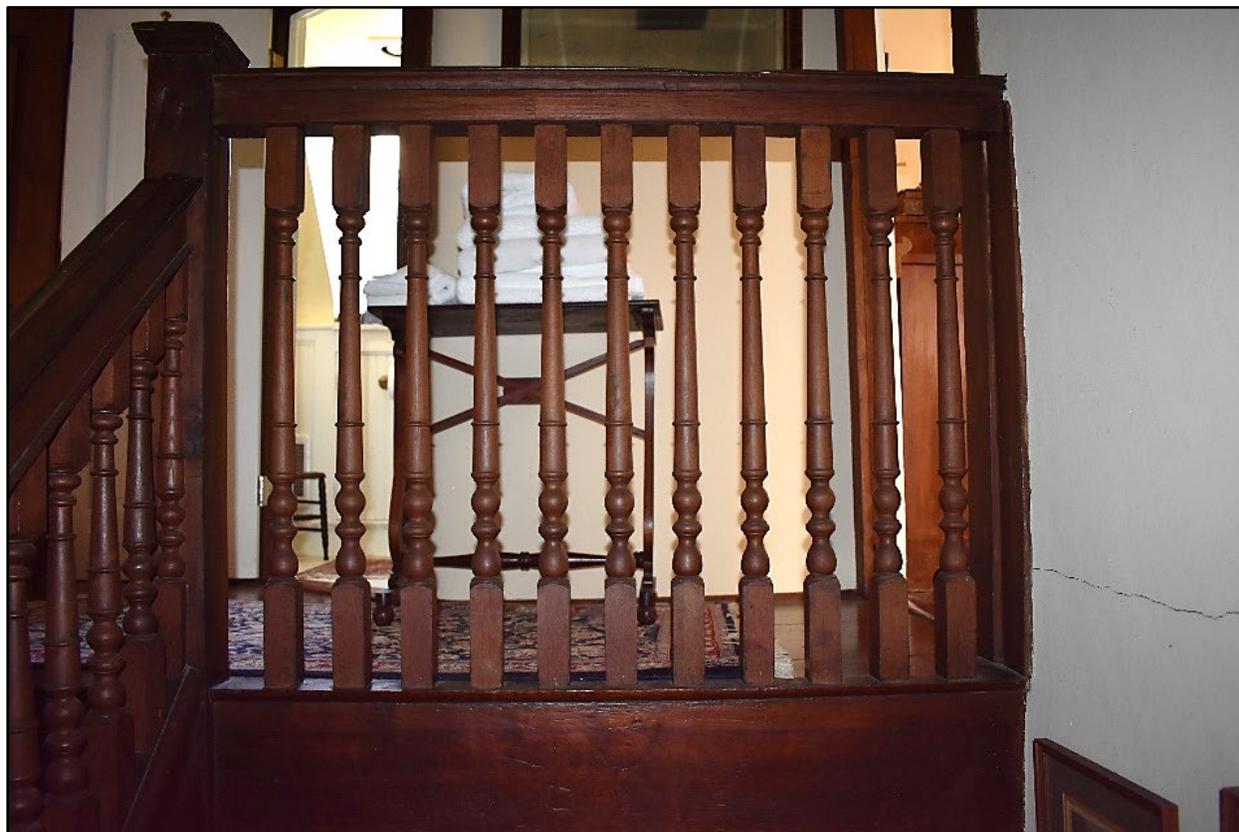


Figure 9. View looking east at the upper level hall.

North Bedroom (Chamber)

The bedroom on the north side of the hall, which is the larger of the two upstairs rooms, features a sloped, plastered ceiling (6'8 3/4") punctuated by the deep recess of the dormer windows on the east and west. As with the rooms on the first floor, the flooring is random-width pine and the walls and ceiling are plastered. A recessed niche on the north end wall denotes the location of the former fireplace, the flue of which has been enclosed. A large wooden lintel (manteltree) remains extant on the opening, which is flanked by short (5'4"), four-panel wooden doors that open into closets. Notches in the trim around the door openings denote the breadth of the former mantel shelf, which was depicted on 1934 HABS drawings but is no longer extant. The outside edges of the closet door trim are truncated by the slope of the roof.

South Bedroom (Chamber)

The south bedroom is similar to the north room, though smaller by about 5' in width. The opening for the former fireplace on the south end wall is covered by wooden paneling, but was likely similar

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to the fireplace in the north chamber. Notches in the closet door trim on either side of the fireplace opening suggest that a similarly sized mantel shelf was in place. The room is lighted by the dormer windows on the east and west sides. A closet on the west side of the fireplace retains its four-panel door; the east side closet door was converted to a pass-through door into the upper level of the 1938 addition.

Attic

The attic, which presently holds equipment for the central heating and cooling system, was not accessible during the current study. In 1976, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Architectural Historian Dell Upton examined the Keeling House. He recorded a common-rafter roof system with planed and hewn rafters set 2' on center with collar ties that are half-lapped and pegged. Bracing lath is affixed with wrought iron nails.¹⁰

Alterations, Additions, and Renovations

Photographs taken of the Keeling House in the early 1930s show that a one-and-a-half story, frame, likely one-room addition had been constructed to the south end of the house (Additional Documentation 4). Its condition suggests that it was an old addition by that time. The space is assumed to have been a kitchen and may have had a garret above, but there were no roof dormers. The addition was set back from the west side of the historic dwelling, but was flush to the east side, and the peak of the side-facing gable roof reached just to the bottom of the small window on the upper floor of the brick house. The addition, which was replaced in 1938, had an interior connection to the historic house through the former exterior door on the south wall of the dining room. The most notable features of the historic house's south end elevation—the small four-pane windows, projecting brick belt course, and the glazed header chevrons—remained clearly visible in a 1930 photograph (Additional Documentation 5).

As described above, most interior doors in the house are original, although the front and rear entrance doors are replacements. Door hinges appear to be a mixture of historic (though not original) wrought-iron and in-kind replacement pieces. Material changes on the house include replacement of wooden roof shingles to asbestos shingles. Window sash are replacements, but all are of historic age. The 1934 HABS documentation and historical newspaper articles note that the wooden paneling in the parlor was previously painted (Additional Documentation 6). The HABS report states that the paneling was “originally painted a dull grayish blue over a heavy brown under coat” and that the stair was “originally painted a dull blue over a brown under coat.”¹¹ One newspaper account notes that during the Syer-era renovations in 1938, the paint was scraped from the paneling and the wood was finished with a waxed finish; however, another newspaper article states that when the Maneeses purchased the property, the woodwork was

¹⁰ Upton, 1976. The common-rafter roof remained the primary type of roofing system in “Chesapeake construction” through the nineteenth century. Willie Graham, “Timber Framing” in *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg*, Cary Carson and Carl R. Lounsbury, eds. (Chapel Hill, NC: Published in association with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 226.

¹¹ HABS, 1934.

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painted “a garish white,” which is shown in photographs.¹² Both the Maneeses and the Breedens (1976 owners) refinished the wood with a dark stain.

1938

In 1938, George Syer, then-owner of the Keeling House, engaged Portsmouth architect Mary Ramsay Brown to complete designs for a renovation of the house and to replace the south end frame addition.¹³ Although Brown’s drawings for the work have not been located, it appears that she rehabilitated the interior of the house, perhaps installing new window sash and replacing the entrance doors at the time. The addition that she designed, which was slightly larger than the then-existing frame addition, extends the depth of the original house, has a nearly square footprint, and is taller at a story-and-a-half (Figure 10, cf Figure 18). The 1938 addition stands on a brick foundation, is clad with beaded board siding, and is covered by a side-facing gable roof with gable-roofed dormers on the east and west slopes. The three-sided bay window on the east elevation was added in the 1950s and replaced an earlier sash window in the same location that is visible in historical photographs.¹⁴



¹² “Keeling House 300 Years Old,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, April 21, 1957, 5-E; Dorothy Watson Greene, “At Keeling House: Solid Comfort Hand in Hand with Antiques,” *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, April 25, 1954, Part 6-Page 3.

¹³ “Ancient Princess Anne Houses,” *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* April 3, 1938, 16.

¹⁴ Dr. Glenn Carwell, the current property owner, concurred that he believes the three-bay window was put into place by the Maneeses during their ownership. Personal communication, November 25, 2024.

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Figure 10. View looking northwest at Keeling House showing original brick house to right and 1938 frame addition to left. A portion of the 1950s bedroom wing is seen at far left.

The 1938 addition holds the kitchen on the first floor, which is accessed from the dining room and also opens onto the sunroom addition to the west. A portion of the first floor is a storage room. There is a narrow, enclosed stair in the northwest corner that leads up to a bedroom, which is lighted by the dormer windows, and a small bathroom.

1950

Syer's 1938 kitchen wing remained the sole added space to the Keeling House until the mid-1950s. In 1953, retired Rear Admiral Leon J. Manees and his wife, Caroline, purchased the property and soon constructed a one-story, shed-roofed sunroom (solarium) on the west side of the kitchen. The sunroom connects to the existing building through an enlarged door opening on the west side of the kitchen, and connects to the historic house by an opening made into the former closet on the east side of the dining room fireplace (Figure 11). The former closet is used as a small butler space fitted with a Dutch-door on the dining room side and a door opening on the west side (through the original brick wall).

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Figure 11. View from 1950s sunroom into the former dining room closet. The opening was cut into the historic brick wall to allow passage between the addition and the historic dwelling.

The sunroom (20'8" x 14') is distinguished by a large picture window flanked by fixed windows with awning windows below and a gold-colored slate floor. Another window is located on the south elevation of the sunroom and an entrance is on the north side elevation.

In the late 1950s, the Maneeses added a bedroom wing (33' x 17') to the south end of the sunroom and kitchen. On the interior, the wing is accessed through a door on the south end of the sunroom that opens to a hall with closets on the east side. The hall leads to a large bedroom with a fireplace on the south end wall and a bathroom at the northeast corner. On the west side of the room, a set of sliding doors opens to a patio. The bedroom wing, like the kitchen wing, is clad with beaded board siding, has nine-over-six wooden sash windows, and is covered by a side-facing gable roof of composition shingles. A semi-exterior brick chimney with corbelled cap rises from the south end of the wing.

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The Maneeses are credited with adding to the informal landscaping and plantings on the property. They also added the brick wall along the north property edge and brick piers with electric lanterns.¹⁵ When the large hackberry tree at the northeast corner of the house fell in a storm, Mrs. Manees had its large branches cut and trimmed and placed in the dining room fireplace, where they remain at present.¹⁶

1976

In 1976, former Virginia State Senator Edward L. Breeden, Jr., and his wife, Virginia, purchased the Keeling House and embarked on a restoration of the house. The Breedens replaced termite-damaged and rotted floor joists in the dining and living rooms, but retained the historic wooden flooring. The wrought iron H- and L-hinges on the doors and box locks were replaced where needed with appropriate units made in England. In addition to repairing the exterior brickwork, they also had the east side door transom reopened and fitted with a two-row, multi-light transom window. The Breedens updated the systems in the house, replaced radiator heating with electric heat, and installed central air conditioning. The missing newel drop on the center passage stair was recreated using the measured drawings from the 1934 HABS documentation.¹⁷

1997 to present

The current owners, Glenn and Lynn Carwell, purchased the Keeling House property in 1997 and have continued its maintenance at a very high level. New heating and cooling systems were installed in the house. On the exterior, a new French drain was constructed around the historic dwelling and a brick patio and walkways were installed. In 2001, an in-ground swimming pool was added, along with a wooden dock at the waterfront. The grounds remain well tended with mature shrubs and trees throughout.

Secondary Buildings and Structures

The original nomination for the Keeling House focused solely on the historic dwelling and did not identify or discuss the garage or shed that stood on the property at the time. The swimming pool had not yet been constructed and the archaeological site had not yet been identified. These four additional resources are included in this update to provide a complete inventory of the property.

Garage (ca. 1938, contributing building)

The one-and-a-half-story, frame garage located north of the historic dwelling was constructed around 1938 during the ownership of George Syer. While no conclusive documentation has been found, it is assumed that Portsmouth-based architect Mary Ramsay Brown designed the garage since she was also the architect for the renovations to the historic house from the same period. The two are similar in materials and general character, strongly suggesting that they were from the same designer. The building is discreetly set near the street entrance, but out of view of the

¹⁵ Greene, 1954; Suzanne Holden, "Historical Home Regains Elegance After Time's Toll," *The Virginian-Pilot, The Beacon*, September 13, 1978, 13; Frances G. Taylor, "Retired Admiral's Home in County Continuously Inhabited Since 1680," *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*, April 19, 1957.

¹⁶ Lynn Carwell, owner, personal communication, July 1, 2024.

¹⁷ Nell Kraft, "Keeling House is a Step Into the 1600s," *The Virginian-Pilot* September 8, 1977, D1; Holden, 1978, 13.

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dwelling. In the same way that Brown displayed her sensitivity for preserving the historic character and appearance of the property through her tactful design of the frame wing on the house, her placement of the garage ensured that the main dwelling was not obscured by this addition to the property.

The garage stands on a brick foundation, is clad with beaded board siding identical to that used on the presumed-simultaneous addition to the house, and is covered by a front-facing gable roof of composition shingles. The front (east) pedimented gable end holds a four-pane wooden window, and the top of the gable is boxed. Wooden knee braces support the overhanging eave (Figure 12). Overhead doors, likely late-twentieth-century replacements, enclose the east ends of the two vehicular bays. An open-sided, shed-roofed carport, also probably added in the late twentieth century, extends from the south side of the garage. On the rear (west) elevation, two four-pane windows are present in the gable end, but the eave is flush to the wall. Windows on the side elevations are six-over-six replacement sash. A glass conservatory has been added to the northwest corner of the garage. Other details on the garage include corner boards and batten shutters.



Figure 12. Garage (ca. 1938), detail of knee brace.

In 2021, the current owners hired Virginia Beach architect Richard G. Poole to undertake renovations on the garage. The original gable-roofed dormers on the north and south slopes of the garage roof, which echoed the dormers on the Keeling House, were replaced with larger shed

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dormers to provide additional space in the upper-level living quarters. The rear door that accesses the upstairs space is placed between the two four-pane windows and is accessed from a wooden stair and deck. The present dormers are clad with beaded board siding and hold six-over-six wooden sash windows. At one time, the space was used as a maid's quarters. Because this building is presumed to have been designed by Mary Ramsay Brown and it was built during the period of significance, it is a contributing resource. Although the alteration to the dormers changed the size and roof type of that element, the garage retains its overall appearance, form, and use.

Shed (ca. 1950, non-contributing building)

A one-story, single-spaced, frame garden shed stands northwest behind the garage. The building's character is similar to the garage, but is not known to have been constructed at the same time. The shed is clad with beaded weatherboard siding and is covered by a front-facing gable roof. A pair of swinging doors is present on the south end of the building. Side windows are six-over-six wooden sash. Because this building was built after the identified period of significance, it is a non-contributing resource.

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Swimming Pool (2001, non-contributing structure)

The current owners installed an in-ground pool west of the 1959 bedroom wing addition and overlooking the waterfront. The owners state that the pool's proportions, underwater steps, and other features were based on classic ones seen in Santorini and other Greek islands.¹⁸ The blue-gray interior color is a reflection of the glazed brick headers of the main house's Flemish bond brickwork. The surround is formed by limestone blocks with a brick walkway. The pumps are placed at a distance from the pool, down an embankment. Because this structure was built after the identified period of significance, it is a non-contributing resource.

Archaeological Site (44VB0065, contributing site)

In 1982, an archaeological site on the Keeling House property was recorded in Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) inventory files, but it does not appear that any test units were excavated or that artifacts were recovered.

In 1997, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (now, VDHR) archaeologists visited the Keeling House and excavated two test units on the west side of the house—one in front of the doorway where a patio was scheduled to be installed, and the other in the yard in front of steps leading down to a terrace. The following narrative is from the inventory form description:

The first test unit was 2' x 2' in front of the steps leading into the house on the water side of the house. Some fill had already been removed in this area during the installation of the French drain. Approximately 4" below present grade in this area the remains of a brick walk or patio were encountered. Handmade bricks were dry laid with their long axes perpendicular to the long axis of the house. Some shell mortar was visible on at least one of these brick. The bricks were laid flush with one another forming lines parallel to the house at their ends. Probing suggested the width of the path might have been about 5' wide (not measured). These brick are different from those in the existing stoop to the house which are hard fired and appear to be 19th or 20th century. No more work was done here.

Unit two was 30' west (the house is oriented with its long axis on a roughly NW-SE axis) of the adjoining addition to the SE. The unit is about 6.5' away (NE) from brick steps leading down from this terrace to the next terrace adjacent to the creek. Considerable brick was probed in this area seemingly at a uniform depth. A layer of random brick, although several were lying flat, was encountered at a depth of 11". This layer was perhaps 5" thick (a little higher in the NE corner). A smaller section of the unit was excavated in the NE corner after approximately 12" of fill without brick, another brick rubble layer was encountered.¹⁹

The deposits were identified as a Euro-American, Contact Period (1607-1750), domestic site. Because the artifacts date to the period of significance, the archaeological site is an additional

¹⁸ Dr. Glenn Carwell, Personal Communication.

¹⁹ David Hazard, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archaeologist, Archaeological Site Record, 44VB0065, "Keeling House," October 9, 1997.

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contributing resource to the property. Despite the presence of known archaeological deposits, the significance and extent of these deposits have not yet been evaluated by archaeologists. For this reason, the site is considered contributing, but does not qualify the property for listing under Criterion D.

Integrity

The Keeling House retains a very high level of physical and historical integrity. Although the property no longer includes the expansive acreage that once surrounded the house, the current parcel retains the historical location and setting of the house on a high point of land overlooking a protected cove leading to the Lynnhaven River and the Chesapeake Bay beyond. The siting of the house is an important aspect of the property's significance, and its orientation allowed inhabitants to enjoy cooling breezes that help to alleviate the warmth of the Tidewater climate. The historic dwelling, which has been privately owned and occupied since its construction, retains a very high level of integrity with regard to materials, design, and workmanship. The house retains its original Flemish bond exterior walls with glazed headers and tooled joints, its English bond water table, and the original water side (west) modillion cornice. The land side (east) modillion cornice was added later, but has attained historic age and is part of the evolution of the dwelling. The interior, likewise, retains the vast majority of its original material including floors, doors, stair elements, and the full fireplace wall paneling in the parlor. Window sash on the brick house are replacements of historic age, and only a few openings have been slightly altered. The center-passage plan with two rooms on the first floor and two on the second, remains intact, as well. The original workmanship of the exterior brickwork, the interior paneling, and stair trim are maintained at a very high level. The combination of these physical aspects ensures that the Keeling House retains integrity of feeling and association, reflecting the property's aesthetic qualities, character, and association with the Keeling family and their social status in Lower Norfolk County and Princess Anne County history. Additionally, the sensitive, but obviously differentiated, twentieth-century kitchen addition to the historic house reflects the deft hand of the architect (Mary Ramsay Brown) and her understanding and appreciation of the historic construction. Brown and her client chose to replace an earlier wing utilizing the same former exterior door to connect the wing, and chose to use a starkly different cladding material (beaded weatherboard versus brick) to differentiate it from the historic house. Brown's designs for the freestanding garage also featured gable-roofed dormers that had similar proportions to those on the historic dwelling, reflecting a clear intent to subtly link the two buildings visually.

As the original nomination noted, the 1950s addition to the south end of the house is discreet in appearance and reflects the traditional form of a telescoping building wing. The frame addition is differentiated from the historic brick dwelling in materials, and is shorter than the 1938 wing. On the water side (west), the addition of the 1950s sunroom projects from the 1938 wing, but its placement on the current rear side of the house does not significantly detract from the primary appearance of the historic Keeling House and does not obscure any of the significant architectural elements that qualify the dwelling for listing in the NRHP. The Keeling House, despite the introduction of modern comforts, retains the feeling of an early-eighteenth-century dwelling.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1734-1735

1938

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Channel, Mary Ramsay Brown (1907-2006)

Poole, Richard G. (2021, garage renovations)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

1973 Statement of Significance

The original nomination for the Keeling House identified the resource as “one of Virginia’s best-preserved small, pre-Georgian brick manor houses” and “Architecture” was selected as the only Area of Significance. The nomination stated that the house “probably was erected between 1695 and 1714 for Thomas Keeling on a tract known as “Dudlies”, which he inherited in 1683 from his father, Adam Keeling.” Based on the available research, the “17th Century” was selected as the house’s period of significance.

The following Statement of Significance and the accompanying Justification of Criteria narrative corrects the record with regard to the dwelling’s date of construction (per dendrochronological study), refines information on the historical ownership of the property, and expands the argument for significance under Architecture by comparing the Keeling House to extant, contemporary dwellings. The updated nomination also illustrates the significance of the 1938 rehabilitation and additions undertaken by architect Mary Brown Channel, Virginia’s first licensed woman architect. The period of significance has been revised to include the period of Channel’s association with the property in 1938.

Expanded Statement of Significance

The Keeling House at 3157 Adam Keeling Road in the northern section of the City of Virginia Beach is one of a handful of extant early-eighteenth-century brick dwellings constructed in the Chesapeake region.²⁰ The Keeling House was listed in the NRHP in 1973 at a statewide level of significance in the area of Architecture (Criterion C). The house retains its statewide significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Keeling House is perhaps the finest surviving example of the improved gentry housing of the lower Chesapeake region that began to emerge in the first decades of the eighteenth century. The one-and-a-half-story, brick dwelling is covered by a steeply pitched, side-facing gable roof with interior end chimneys. Under private ownership since its construction, the house has been well-maintained and retains the significant architectural features of its exterior Flemish bond pattern brick walls with glazed headers that are used to create chevron patterning in the gable ends, its center-passage plan, and its fine interior woodwork. When compared to the Adam Thoroughgood House (NHL 1960; NRHP 1966/1972/2008, VDHR #134-0033) or the Lynnhaven House (Wishart-Boush House, NRHP 1969/1975, VDHR #134-0037), dated to ca. 1719 and 1724/5 respectively, the Keeling House stands out as a larger, more refined house that illustrates a transitional step from the early one- and two-room Chesapeake houses built by English immigrants, to the grander two-story, double-pile, brick mansions of the gentry after the mid-eighteenth century. Early and mid-twentieth century additions to the Keeling House have been sympathetic in scale and form, and do not detract from the historical appearance or character of the house. As a result, the Keeling House retains a very high level of historic integrity.

²⁰ In 1691, Princess Anne County was created from Lower Norfolk County, which had been formed in 1637 from land formerly part of Elizabeth City, one of the original eight shires in Virginia (1634). In 1963, Princess Anne County merged with the City of Virginia Beach.

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The 2006 dendrochronological study of the house determined that harvesting of framing timbers began by the summer of 1734 and continued through the spring of 1735, when the exterior brickwork began.²¹ The dating of the house corresponds to the ownership period of Adam Keeling, the great grandson of Thomas Keeling, English immigrant. With this information, the period of significance has been refined to "1734-1735."

The revised period of significance has also been expanded to include 1938, when sensitive renovations and additions were completed by Mary Ramsay Brown, Virginia's first licensed woman architect. Ms. Brown's work on the Keeling House is important as one of her earliest professional commissions for a significant historic property and illustrates her proficiency in Colonial detailing and her preservation sensibility.

When constructed, the Keeling House was a fine manor house set upon a large plantation that reflected the social, political, and economic status of its owner—a prosperous and influential planter and slaveholder. Historical records show that in order to maintain its large agricultural landholdings, the Keeling family held slaves from at least the early eighteenth century and up to the Civil War. The Keeling House incorporates a center-passage floor plan, which facilitated social stratification with designated spaces for family and guests and the enslaved population. Historically, the Keeling property would have contained numerous domestic and agricultural outbuildings, and slave houses that sheltered those who labored on the farm and in the house. The reduced acreage of the property over time has resulted in a loss of those associated buildings, and possibly archaeological deposits related to them. Although this update includes a discussion of this historical association, there are no extant resources, other than the existing house, that visibly reflect that association.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Justification of Criteria

Criterion C: Architecture

The Keeling House exhibits notable interior features that tie it to the Chesapeake tradition, but also reflects the influence of a new architectural style. The house's center-passage floor plan is a significant evolutionary step of the Chesapeake region houses that related to the economic prowess of the owner, as well as the social stratification that developed during the eighteenth century between owner-slaveholders and their enslaved populations. While earlier houses often consisted of a hall and parlor, and sometimes a chamber in the attic space, the Keeling House was built with a dedicated center passage that extends the depth of the house with openings on both ends. The Thoroughgood House also adopted the center passage floor plan, but the Lynnhaven House retained the two-room (hall-parlor) plan (although a third room was added to the rear of the house—another evolutionary step in colonial housing, though a different one). Such separation of public-private spaces has its roots in the early seventeenth century "cross-passage" houses erected by some Virginia colonists that

²¹ Dr. D. W. H. Miles, FSA, and M.J. Worthington, Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, "The Tree-Ring Dating of the Adam Keeling House, Virginia Beach, Virginia." Interim Report 2006/57. [With assistance from Willie Graham and Dr. Ed Cook.] Copy on file Department of Historic Resources, Archives, Richmond.

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archaeological excavations have shown provided designated spaces for masters/house owners and indentured servants/slaves. In the early houses, the spaces were divided through use of an H-shaped, interior chimney.²² The adoption of a center-passage plan further enforced the hierarchy of spaces that were considered public (passage and hall) and private (parlor, chamber) and defined the social status between the White inhabitants, their White visitors, and the Black enslaved workers. The center passage provided a third space of limited social engagement and the increased specialization of the other rooms in the house.²³

The Keeling House is an important example of a postmedieval English/pre-Georgian brick dwelling constructed during the third decade of the eighteenth century for a member of Virginia's emerging gentry class. The house is a forerunner of the larger and grander two-story, double-pile houses that were built in the mid-eighteenth century and reflects some older traditional building practices while incorporating more forward-looking elements. The original NRHP nomination (1973) cited the house as "one of Virginia's best-preserved small, pre-Georgian brick manor houses."²⁴ Extensive field study and documentation over the years have provided detailed scholarship on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century housing constructed by English immigrants to Virginia's Chesapeake region.²⁵ Through architectural and archaeological investigation, it is clear that most houses of that period were of frame construction and consisted of one room or one room with a loft space. Dendrochronological studies place the construction of the Keeling House at 1734/35, indicating that the fourth generation of the Keeling family to live in Virginia had obtained sufficient means to construct a brick dwelling. The house's design and details reflect the emergence of the colonial plantation class that had the resources to express its social and economic status in built form. The use of Flemish bond brickwork on all four elevations, the center-passage floor plan and elegant classically inspired woodwork (fluted pilasters, raised panels, bolection moldings, modillion cornice, turned spindle balusters) point forward to the full Georgian houses that were built in Virginia by 1750. The staircase detailing, in particular, make the Keeling House "one of the most up-to-date" of the small group of similar houses in the area.²⁶

The Keeling House is an interesting transitional house in that it incorporated both traditional practices commonly seen in Chesapeake houses and up-to-date features, and stands as a pre-cursor to the Virginia Georgian mansions of the mid-eighteenth century such as Pembroke Manor (VDHR #134-

²² See Cary Carson, "Plantation Housing" in *The Chesapeake House*, Carson and Lounsbury, ed., 2013, 88-99.

²³ See discussion of center passage plan in Virginia B. Price, "Addendum to Historic American Building Survey, Thoroughgood House (Adam Thoroughgood House)," 2014:5-6.

²⁴ Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff (VHLC) [Calder C. Loth], "Keeling House," National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1973.

²⁵ Among these studies are Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 17, No. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1982), 95-119; *The Chesapeake House*, edited by Cary Carson and Carl R. Lounsbury (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press in association with Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2013); and other reports published by historians at Colonial Williamsburg, including Willie Graham, Mark Wenger, and Dr. Lounsbury. These studies complement and refine the information collected in the early twentieth century by Sadie Scott Kellam and V. Hope Kellam, Thomas T. Waterman, the Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South, the Virginia Historical Inventory, and the Historic American Buildings Survey.

²⁶ Miles and Worthington, 2006.

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0026, built in 1764). The Keeling House is 48' wide, which is about 5' wider than the Thoroughgood House (1719), but retains a 20'2" depth, which was the standard seventeenth-century construction practice in the region that accommodated "the common rafter roof which was a mainstay of Chesapeake framing techniques well into the nineteenth century."²⁷ The use of a steeply pitched roof was a common practice from the seventeenth century, but the Keeling House appears to have lacked the tilted false plate observed at the Thoroughgood House and the Lynnhaven House, and instead used a classically inspired modillion cornice to box in the ends of the framing members. A plain cornice was used on the land (east) side of the house. Because of the use of cornices, it does not appear that the Keeling House incorporated the seventeenth-century practice of corbelled brick cornice stops; however, the northwest corner cornice does appear to have had a couple of projecting bricks, while the northeast corner was fitted with a frame boxed corner (Figure 13). The latter was altered, likely in 1938, when a modillion cornice was added to the east elevation.



Figure 13. View of north gable end comparing corner blocks. Left image shows condition in 1934 (HABS), note wooden corner block at northeast eave (left). Right image shows current condition (2024), note that bricks have replaced the wooden block.

The brickwork at the Keeling House is of high quality, exhibiting glazed header bricks, tooled joints, and brick corner closers. The house stands on a water table laid in the structurally stronger English bond pattern (alternating courses of headers and stretchers) with a beveled cap. The house differs from other period examples since all four elevations are executed in Flemish bond (alternating headers and stretchers in each course). Use of the Flemish bond was an aesthetic choice that became more fashionable for dwellings in the early eighteenth century and reflected the influence of Georgian architectural design in the colonies. By comparison, the Thoroughgood House (1719) has Flemish bond on its front elevation and English bond on the other three, enforcing the hierarchy of the primary elevation, while at the Lynnhaven House (1724/5) all four elevations are laid in English bond. In the English bond pattern, glazed headers were used randomly, while in the Flemish bond the headers became a significant effect of the pattern. Corner closers, and closers at window and door openings,

²⁷ Virginia B. Price, "Addendum To: Historic American Buildings Survey, Adam Thoroughgood House, HABS No. VA-209," 2014, 5.

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were irregular, smaller sized bricks that were used to prevent vertical alignment of the joints, thus ruining the impact of the alternating sequence of bricks. As Dr. Lounsbury notes, in Colonial Virginia, brick was a status material used only by wealthy landowners or in government or institutional buildings (e.g., courthouses, jails, parish houses). The permanence of such buildings has often led to the erroneous presumption that the majority of Colonial buildings were masonry. Dr. Lounsbury notes that “at no time during this period did brick-walled structures constitute anything more than a small presence in the countryside.”²⁸

The incorporation of interior end chimneys at the Keeling House, rather than the massive, multi-shouldered exterior brick chimneys seen at the Thoroughgood House (which also has one interior-end chimney) and the Lynnhaven House, resulted in very visible end gables that were enhanced by the decorative use of glazed headers. Placing the headers in a chevron pattern, that is, in concentric rising rows of headers that follow the rake of the roof, gives the Keeling House a distinctive appearance. The original NRHP nomination noted that at the time (1973) “less than a half-dozen structures employing this distinctive late-seventeenth century decorative device remain in the state.”²⁹ A few extant eighteenth-century examples of brick diapering, featuring glazed bricks laid to create diamond- or lozenge-shaped designs in the brickwork, remain in Virginia. The end wall of the now-ruinous Malvern Hill in Henrico County (built about 1700, burned in 1905, VDHR #043-0008) features two concentric diamond shapes, and the chimneystacks of Brooke’s Bank in Essex County (built 1751, VDHR #027-0007) are detailed with lozenge-shaped designs. The most comparable chevron designs to those found on the Keeling house, however, are found on the small, frame yeoman’s cottage known as Pear Valley (NHL 2013, VDHR #065-0052), located on Virginia’s Eastern Shore and constructed about 1740. The brick north end wall of the cottage is laid in Flemish bond and detailed with rows of chevron pattern along the raking gable that closely resemble those at the Keeling House (Figure 14).³⁰

²⁸ Carl R. Lounsbury “Brickwork” in *The Chesapeake House*, Carson and Lounsbury, ed., 2013, 255.

²⁹ VHLC, 1973.

³⁰ See Carl R. Lounsbury “Brickwork” in *The Chesapeake House*, Carson and Lounsbury, ed., 2013, 246 for a discussion on seventeenth and eighteenth-century examples of chevrons and other decorative brick patterns, and Calder C. Loth, “Notes on the Evolution of Virginia Brickwork from the Seventeenth Century to the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1974), 91-93.

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Figure 14. Detail of brick chevron patterning in north gable end of Pear Valley, Northampton County, Virginia. Source: VDHR.

Another decorative device exhibited in the Keeling House brickwork is the use of gauged (shaped) and rubbed bricks above the door and window openings on the east and west elevations. The central door opening on the west elevation is topped by a double segmental arch of glazed header bricks, but most other openings are detailed with jack arches of rubbed and/or gauged bricks, though there is little space between the top of the openings and the cornice above. Several of the arches are further embellished with a stucco finish that has been scored to imitate the use of stone.

The exterior of the Keeling House also reflects the influence of Georgian architecture in its use of symmetry. Although at present the east and west elevations differ in the number of openings (four on the west and five on the east), Dell Upton noted that the window opening south of the east entrance door, which lights the hall (dining room), appears to have been an addition since no closures are present on the sides of the opening. If so, the house originally would have been four bays wide on both elevations. The proportion of the elevations, likewise, reflects the classical division of base (water table), primary story, and eave. Although the symmetry and proportion of the Keeling House may be imperfect, it does reflect a period of acceptance and introduction of these concepts—thoroughly classical and Georgian ideas—to Virginia’s colonial architecture.

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The above architectural elements exhibited at the Keeling House “position this dwelling as a precursor of the grander, two-story, two-rooms deep, polite houses of the mid-eighteenth century and less a hold-over of the Virginia house framing system.”³¹ The brick masons and carpenters responsible for the work at the Keeling House are not known, although similarities between eighteenth-century houses in the Tidewater region may be observed.

In 1938, George W. Syer purchased the Keeling House and commissioned Mary Ramsay Brown (Channel) to oversee restoration work on the house and to design a new addition. Channel, a native of Portsmouth, Virginia, graduated from Cornell University’s architectural program in 1933 and returned to her hometown to embark on her architectural career. In 1935, Channel passed the Virginia Examining Board’s licensing exam and became the first licensed woman architect in Virginia. Though other women are known to have been engaged in designing buildings at or prior to this date without licensure, Channel holds the historical distinction of obtaining the first state license.

No drawings or specifications for Channel’s work at the Keeling House have been located, but historical photographs show the work underway, and a newspaper account connects her to the work.³² Because the house was only occasionally occupied for many years, its condition was poor at the time Syer purchased it. Although the work was largely restoration, it may have been at this time that the modillion cornice was added to the east side of the house. The then-existing south end frame addition, likely built in the late 1800s, was removed and replaced in Syer’s renovation effort with a larger frame addition that held a kitchen and living space above. It was clad with beaded weatherboards and covered by a side-facing gable roof of wooden shingles with gable-roofed dormers on the front and back. Channel’s work appears to have included construction of a two-car garage, which she sited north of the house near the street entrance. The one-and-a-half-story frame garage, vernacular in form and detailing, included a living space above the vehicle bays.

The restoration and additions to the Keeling House property represent a significant early project in the notable architectural career of Mary Ramsay Brown Channel. At the time (1938), she was a newly licensed architect, but more than aptly met the challenge of working on one of the most historic dwellings in the Tidewater area. In 1937, Channel had designed a house for George Syer in the Waterview neighborhood of Portsmouth, so he turned to her when he came into the possession of the Keeling House. Like many architectural practitioners of the time, Channel was acquainted with the restoration work at Williamsburg ongoing at the time and her work at the Keeling reflects a sensitivity towards the preservation of the dwelling’s notable features, while also meeting the client’s expectations of a livable house. Although the exact nature of the relationship is not known, Channel’s papers indicate that she knew Orrin Bullock, who had photographed the Keeling House for the Williamsburg restoration as an example of intact Colonial-era architecture, and she had copies of the HABS measured drawings for the Wishart House (Lynnhaven House) executed by Finlay Ferguson.

³¹ Willie Graham as quoted in Virginia B. Price, National Historic Landmark Nomination, “Pear Valley,” 2013, 26 n90.

³² “Ancient Princess Anne Houses,” 1938; Charles Borjes, photographer, “Adam Keeling House, 1938, Virginia Beach, Virginia,” March 31, 1938. Photographs taken for *The Virginian-Pilot*. From the Virginian-Pilot Photograph Collection, FN000353, Norfolk Public Library (Va.), Sargeant Memorial Collection.

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Such associations and materials suggest that Channel studied Colonial-era buildings in an effort to produce correct details at the Keeling House, which itself had served as inspiration for the Williamsburg restoration team.

Much of Channel's residential work, which made up the bulk of her career, was completed for sites in Portsmouth. The majority of her commissions were for new construction, making the Keeling House project notable as her earliest rehabilitation designs for a historic house. In 1940, Channel completed the rehabilitation and additions for the historic Portsmouth dwelling known as Abigarlos (VDHR 124-0052). In 2019, Abigarlos was listed in the NRHP as a rare surviving example of an early nineteenth-century rural dwelling and for the Colonial Revival-style updates completed by Channel. As that nomination noted, Channel's "designs were generally pragmatic with sensitivity to aspects of interior design and domestic functionality."³³ At present, Abigarlos is the only NRHP-listed property representative of Channel's architectural work, making the Keeling House an important addition to understanding and appreciating her contributions to Virginia architecture.

Historical Documentation

The Keeling House's reputation as a well-preserved Colonial-era dwelling is attested to by previous professional recordation efforts that sought to photograph and measure authentic seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings. The earliest photographs located in institutional repositories were produced by Orrin M. Bullock, Jr. (1905-1994), FAIA, who was a Harvard-trained architect and one of the original members of the restoration team working at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s. The photographs, housed in the Special Collections of the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, were produced as part of Bullock's fieldwork to study extant eighteenth-century buildings in Williamsburg and the surrounding area. Bullock's exterior images of the Keeling House are views looking south, southeast, and southwest at the building. The image looking south (Figure 15) shows the well sweep west of the house and a small frame outbuilding, possible a privy, near the edge of the tree line on that end of the property.

A very old tree (hackberry?) stands on the west side of the house, and the first iteration of a one-story, frame addition is extant on the south end of the house. The view looking southwest shows the waterfront of the property and the well sweep (Additional Documentation 7). A post-and-wire fence was present at the time on both the west and east sides of the property. These images are dated "1920 or 1921" but may date to about 1929 when Bullock joined the restoration team in Williamsburg.³⁴ Bullock's work helped inform the work of the Colonial Williamsburg restoration team, which continued throughout the 1930s. The historians and architects referred back to the Keeling House, an authentic and intact eighteenth-century dwelling, to help them in recreating details such as window configurations, window sill profiles, doors, fluted pilasters, and bolection moldings.³⁵

³³ Mary Ruffin Hanbury, "Abigarlos (VDHR #124-0052)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2019. The author is indebted to Ms. Hanbury for her previous research on Mary Brown Channel's career and for providing assistance with research for this nomination update.

³⁴ "Orin Miles Bullock Jr. Photograph Collection, AV2010.2" John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation website. Accessed July 11, 2024, at <https://rocklib.omeka.net/collections/show/43>.

³⁵ Review of the historical reports created by Colonial Williamsburg's architectural restorers shows that the Keeling House served as an authentic example for elements at the Mary Stith Tin Shop, the Prentis House, the

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Figure 15. Orrin M. Bullock, Jr., "Adam Keeling House, Bull-002," Orrin Miles Bullock, Jr. Photograph Collection, AV2010.2. Used by permission of Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

In 1931, Sadie Kellam and V. Hope Kellam documented the Keeling House as part of their book *Old Houses in Princess Anne, Virginia*. Not long afterwards, as part of the Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South, photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston produced images of the exterior and interior of the Keeling House. Johnston's photographs, likely taken about 1934, show the exterior elevations, including the one-story, south-end frame addition, the well sweep, and the waterfront. The interior photographs show that the fireplace wall paneling and the stair side wall were painted a light color. An image of the staircase shows that part of the plaster had fallen from the lath, but the second-floor ornament was still intact (Figure 16). It is unclear whether the house was occupied, though the images were taken during the ownership of E.C. Hathaway and Col. Consolvo, who likely used the house as a hunting club. Johnston's photographs are in the Library of Congress (LOC) collection.

Dr. Barraud House, Brafferton Hall, the Mary Stith Shop, and The Kings Arms Tavern. Reports can be found on the Rockefeller Library, Digital Collections online catalog at <https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/research-reports/>.

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Figure 16. Frances Benjamin Johnston, “Keeling, Virginia Beach vic., Princess Anne County, Virginia,” [between ca. 1930 and 1939], Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017891258/>

About the same time Johnston photographed the house, W. Harry Bagby also produced exterior and interior photos in support of the National Park Service’s Historic American Building Survey (HABS), which also are housed at the LOC. Bagby’s images, taken in March 1934, show the dwelling as quite forlorn and apparently vacant. One image provides a useful detail showing the connection between the one-story frame addition and the south end of the original house (see Additional Documentation 5). At the same time, a team of HABS architects, who estimated the house was built “circa 1700,” produced measured drawings of the house that have proven invaluable over time for restoration of the house (Additional Documentation 8). Thomas T. Waterman, a member of the HABS team that recorded the Keeling House, produced a final image of the house in 1938 showing the yard heavily overgrown and the house lacking some roof shingles and missing window panes. The same year, Daisy Lawrence completed a report for the Works Progress of Virginia Historical Inventory on “The

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Home of Thomas Keeling.” The brief report gave the condition of the house as “poor” and estimated the constructed date “prior to 1681.”³⁶

In 1938, a new owner, George Syer, commissioned Portsmouth-based architect Mary Ramsay Brown to oversee restoration work on the house and to replace the existing frame addition with a new, larger addition. Photographs taken by a local newspaper documented the restoration efforts, which also provide useful information concerning the evolution of the house’s appearance (Additional Documentation 9).

Dendrochronology

As noted, the original nomination for the Keeling House stated that the house “probably was erected between 1695 and 1714,” and the house was long-thought to have dated from the late 1600s. The dendrochronology study at the Keeling House has resulted in a more accurate construction date, clarifying previous inferences made based on the information available at the time. The revised construction date more accurately places this house in a stronger chronological context with other houses in the region (such as the Thoroughgood House, Lynnhaven House, Francis Land House, Pembroke Manor, and others) and helps to illustrate the chronology and evolution of this type of architectural resource over time. The accurate date also allows historians to assign the construction to the individuals most likely to have had the work completed.

In 2006, the City of Virginia Beach with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation commissioned a dendrochronological study of the Keeling House to assess the physical evidence of the house’s framing members to determine a more accurate construction date. Samples were taken from suitable original timber members found in the transverse summer beams (ground floor) and fireplace lintels (upper floor). Four samples were oak wood and six samples were tulip-poplar wood. Researchers determined that the oak wood from the mantel beams was felled in the summer or autumn of 1734 and the floor beam was felled during the winter of 1734/5. Dates from the tulip-poplar also produced a felling date of winter 1734/5. The laboratory’s conclusion was:

Thus these dates demonstrate that the latest felled trees used in the construction were cut in the spring of 1735. Dating of various framing timbers suggest that material preparation began by the summer of 1734, at which time at least some of the fireplace lintels were cut. By the winter of that year and following into the spring, framing was cut for both the first-floor and the roof, suggesting that brickwork was not being laid until spring of 1735 at the earliest, but the masonry was likely underway sometime during that year.³⁷

³⁶ Daisy Lawrence, “The Homes of Thomas Keeling,PRA-20” Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory (VHI), February 24, 1938.

³⁷ Miles and Worthington, 2006.

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Mary Ramsay Brown Channel (1907-2006)³⁸

In 1907, Mary Ramsay Brown was born in Portsmouth. Her mother, the former Mary Ramsay, was taken ill and institutionalized when her daughter was a child. Mary and her older brother, William, were raised by their father the Rt. Rev. William A. Brown, Sr., who was rector of St. John's Church, Portsmouth, from 1904 to 1938. In 1938, Rev. Brown was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia, a post he held until 1950. The children often spent summers with their aunt, Violet Brown, who lived in Danville.³⁹

Miss Brown attended Wilson High School and graduated in 1925 from Chatham Hall, a girls' boarding school in Pittsylvania County not far from Danville. She then attended Randolph Macon College Woman's College in Lynchburg where she majored in mathematics and drawing. After graduating in 1929, Brown says she and her roommate "came to the conclusion that being an architect would be a nice thing."⁴⁰ Brown said she wanted to follow her brother to the University of Virginia, where William was studying to become a doctor, but the School of Architecture did not yet admit women. She instead enrolled in Cornell University's College of Architecture and Fine Arts, which had admitted women since the 1880s. "I went to Cornell because it was one of the few places that took women. I guess I could have gotten into Penn or Columbia but not in Harvard or Yale or any of the others."⁴¹

Brown distinguished herself while at Cornell becoming the first woman to win the school's Baird Prize Competition in her senior year (1933). Brown won one of two gold medals placing second (out of 50 entries) in the six day competition to design a monumental aeration fountain for a city reservoir. She was also a member of the Sigma Kappa sorority, and in 1934, she was inducted as an alumna member to the newly formed Cornell chapter (Eta) of Alpha Alpha Gamma, a national honorary

³⁸ The author is indebted to Susette Newberry, Ph. D., Art, Art History, Visual Studies, & French Studies Librarian, and Eisha Neely Research Services Librarian, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections 2B Carl A. Kroch Library Cornell University for their assistance in providing access to Mrs. Channel's "Deceased Alumni Folder" and articles and records pertaining to her time at Cornell.

³⁹ Warren W. Channel, son of Mary Channel, personal communication, June 18, 2024; "Brief biography of Mary Brown Channel," International Archive of Women in Architecture, Mary Brown Channel Architectural Collection, 1936-1978 (Ms2007_030), Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

⁴⁰ Ada Kay Jordan, "Meet State's First Woman Architect," *The Virginian-Pilot*, November 23, 1983:13. The roommate may have been Janet Berkeley, with whom Brown traveled through Europe for two months during the summer of 1925.

⁴¹ Jordan, 1983. Brown was listed in the Cornell yearbook as a graduate student; however, her degree was a Bachelor of Architecture. Cornell was the first Ivy League university to become coeducational. The University of Virginia's (UVA) School of Architecture graduated its first female student, Evalina Magruder, in 1935 after she first completed undergraduate work at the Parsons School in Interior Design. Two additional women graduated from UVA's program in the 1940s and 1950s. The school became co-educational in 1970. K. Edward Lay, *History of the A-School, A School Built Upon the Foundation of Mr. Jefferson's Principles of Architecture* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia School of Architecture, 2013).

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women's architectural society (Figure 17). The society noted that, while she was a student, it had been Brown's idea to establish the chapter.⁴²



Figure 17. Mary Ramsay Brown, 1933. Photograph of the Sigma Kappa Sorority, *The Cornellian* (Vol. 65).

After her graduation, Brown returned to Portsmouth where she sought work as an architectural intern before gaining licensure. Brown stated that she found it difficult to break into the field of architecture, due, in part, to the economic effects of the Great Depression, but also likely because she was a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field. She initially worked for more than a year with no pay with architect Benjamin F. Mitchell and the firm of Rudolph, Cooke, and VanLeeuwen, who were completing the Art Deco-style federal courthouse and post office building in Norfolk. She then worked as a draftsman with contractor A.O. Ferebee, who paid her to design houses, and also worked for E. Bradford Tazwell, Sr. (whose son became an architect). In 1935, Brown passed the Virginia Examining Board's licensing exam and became the first licensed woman architect in Virginia. She first appears in the State Board's *Roster of Professional Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors* in 1936. Although there were other women in Virginia who were working as architects at the time, including Ethel Bailey Furman (1893-1976), who was a Black woman architect in Richmond, and Amaza Lee Meredith (1895-1984), also a Black woman, who also was on the faculty at Virginia State University, Brown was the first to receive state licensure.⁴³ Between 1939 and 1941, Brown operated

⁴² "Many Students Awarded Prizes By University," *The Cornell Daily Sun*, June 16, 1933:9; "Miss Brown Wins Prize at Cornell," *The Virginian-Pilot* (published as *The Virginian-Pilot and The Norfolk Landmark*), March 9, 1933:7; "New Architectural Sorority," in *Cornell Alumni News*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 25 (Ithaca, New York), April 26, 1934, 292.

⁴³ Dreck Spurlock Wilson, ed., *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 162-164. Furman's father, Madison J. Bailey, was the second licensed Black contractor in Richmond. As a young woman, Ethel accompanied him on job sites and began drafting for him; she later received formal architectural training from a private tutor in New York. See also John E. Wells and

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her own practice and completed numerous designs for houses, commercial buildings, and churches throughout the greater Tidewater area.⁴⁴

In 1941, Brown married Warren Henry Channel, whose family was in the retail furniture business. Mrs. Channel continued her architectural career until the birth of her first child in 1944; afterwards, she confined her practice to residences and churches. Channel maintained her license until 1990, when she was 83 years old. She was active in community affairs serving on the Portsmouth Planning Commission, the Old Towne Architecture Review Board (she designed the first walking tour of Old Towne), and the Portsmouth Historic Society. Channel's designs were executed in a variety of styles including Colonial Revival, Modern, and Gothic Revival (for churches and parish halls, including her father's Portsmouth church, St. John's).

As noted, in 1938, George W. Syer commissioned Brown to oversee restoration work at the Keeling House. It is likely Syer knew Ms. Brown through Juliet Hawkes, who was Syer's aunt and a family friend of the Browns.⁴⁵ Earlier, in 1937, Brown had designed a frame dwelling for Syer to be built in the Waterview area of Portsmouth. The house was a simple one-and-a-half story, frame cottage with gable-roofed dormers, an exterior end chimney, and a classically detailed pedimented entry portico. She also designed a one-and-a-half story, three-bay, freestanding garage for Syer's property that contained a second level living space, similar in form and detail to the garage at the Keeling property.

Channel's architectural drawings exhibit a command of stylistic details and a sensitivity for accurate scale and proportion. Although she had grown up in Virginia, was familiar with many historical sites, and had traveled to Europe, it appears that her interest in the history of architecture began during her studies at Cornell. In a 1988 survey conducted by a Cornell student, Channel provided her memories of certain faculty members who were teaching during her time at the College of Architecture. She stated:

[Professor Albert C.] Phelps was instructor in the History of Architecture. He had many many slides which I expect are still in the College. I never cared for history until I had his class, but the slides and architecture gave me something to tie general history to. Now I find I want to know more and more about my own area.⁴⁶

Reflecting on her career, Channel figured she had designed about 35 houses in the Portsmouth and Norfolk area. She also designed a new office and showroom for the family's Channel Furniture

Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997). Amaza Lee Meredith's Virginia work is recognized in the NRHP by the listing of her 1939 home and studio Azurest South (VDHR #020-5583, listed 1993).

⁴⁴ See Project List, International Archive of Women in Architecture, Mary Brown Channel Architectural Collection, 1936-1978 (Ms2007_030), Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

⁴⁵ Warren W. Channel, personal communication, June 18, 2024.

⁴⁶ Christian Ricardo Nielsen-Palacios, "Architectural Education at Cornell: 1928-1950, Between Modernism and Beaux-Arts," Master's Thesis, Cornell University, August 2018, Appendix D (Selected Alumni Responses to Author's Letter), 211.

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business. Given her work at the Keeling House, it is notable that she stated that she was “inclined toward [the] Georgian” architectural style. “I tried to design what a person wanted. They were fixing up Williamsburg at the time I had the office, so there was a tendency back to that era.”⁴⁷ Channel’s place in Virginia architecture is ensured by her being the first woman licensed to practice in the state, but is reinforced in her designs tailored to her clients’ needs and reflecting popular architectural styles. The sensitive and historically accurate restoration work Brown completed at the Keeling House was an important early commission on one of Virginia’s most important colonial-period dwellings. Entrusted with this notable job, her work was sensitive and appropriate and successfully rehabilitated the property after a period of vacancy.

Historical Narrative

Keeling Ownership

In 1626, Thomas Keeling emigrated from England to the Virginia colony aboard the ship *Hopewell* as one of 105 headrights transported by Adam Thoroughgood. Thoroughgood (also seen as Thorowgood) had come to the colony in 1621 as an indentured servant before returning to England where he wed Sarah Offley, the daughter of Robert Offley, Jr., who was a leading member of the Virginia Company. For his efforts in transporting the 105 additional settlers over a period of years, Thoroughgood was awarded a patent for 5,350 acres in the shire of Elizabeth City (later known as Lower Norfolk County, then as Princess Anne County) that was bounded on the north by the Chesapeake Bay and lay to the west side of the “Chesopean” River (Lynnhaven River). It was on the western shore of the river that Thoroughgood built his frame dwelling and where, in 1719, his great-grandson, Argall (II), would start construction on a fine brick dwelling that would be completed by his widow, Susannah (VDHR #134-0033). The settlers Adam Thoroughgood assisted in immigrating comprised the nucleus of the Lynnhaven Parish in Lower Norfolk County. Thoroughgood would eventually hold nearly 7,000 acres, which conveyed to his wife upon his death in 1640.⁴⁸

Thomas (I) Keeling (1608-1664) and his wife, Anne, were among those who settled near Thoroughgood’s land in the Lynnhaven area. In 1635, Thomas Keeling was awarded 100 acres in Elizabeth City for the transportation of two headrights, and in 1640 he served as a vestryman in the parish. Thomas also received patents in 1643 (200 acres) and 1651 (700 acres) for transporting additional headrights. Names of those transported are only legible in the records for the latter patent and all appear to be White, free (not indentured) immigrants.⁴⁹

Historical records indicate that the Keeling family continued to amass property in the Lynnhaven area of Princess Anne County, as well as in other areas, that was the foundation for the family’s generational land ownership and wealth. The Keelings acquired the property known as “Dudlies” through the marriage of Thomas’ son, Adam (1639-1683), to Ann Martin, daughter of John Martin. After her father’s death, and the subsequent death of her brother John Martin II, Ann inherited the

⁴⁷ Jordan, 1983.

⁴⁸ Nell Marion Nugent, abs., *Cavaliers and Pioneers; Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1800, Volume 1* (Richmond, Press of the Dietz Print Co., 1934), 22-23; Kellam and Kellam, 37, 41. According to the Kellams, the Thoroughgood family referred to this award in later court records as the “Grand Patent.”

⁴⁹ Nugent, 174, 220.

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former Martin property, including that part of Dudlies that John Martin purchased from John Brumfield about 1665. The land, which was part of a 550-acre grant to Thomas Allen, was owned by Richard Dudley from about 1647 to 1661 and, thus, the land became known as “Dudlies.”⁵⁰ Once inherited by Adam and Ann Martin Keeling, the land remained in the Keeling family for the next two hundred years.

Adam Keeling is said to have overseen the excavation of a passage from the Lynnhaven River to the Chesapeake Bay that was later known as Lynnhaven Inlet.⁵¹ The passage, which has since become a major marine transportation route, would have provided Keeling and others living on Lynnhaven River direct access to the bay and Atlantic Ocean beyond and would have facilitated maritime trade and fishing. The inlet, over time, was widened by storms and more recently is maintained through dredging.

In Adam (I) Keeling’s will of 1683, he left to his wife Ann and, after her death to his son Thomas, the home plantation (“the plantation I now live on”). In addition, he left his son, Thomas, “a parcel of land commonly known by ye name of Dudlies joining upon [land] of my brother Adam Keeling being neare four hundred acres.”⁵² The latter is identified as the property on the eastern shore of the Lynnhaven River on which the present Keeling House stands, and which was inherited from John Martin. Thomas, only 9 years old at the time of his father’s death, obtained title to the land once he reached the age of 21.

Thomas (II) Keeling (1674-1714) married Elizabeth Carraway Lovett (1678-1769) and in his will of 1714, he left to his son Adam (II, 1698-1771) “all the land I now live on which my father Adam Keeling left me.”⁵³ Although Thomas stated that he lived on the property at the time, dendrochronological dating of the present Keeling House suggests that it was during his son Adam’s ownership—the great grandson of the original immigrant Thomas Keeling—that the brick house was constructed (1734/35).

⁵⁰ The author thanks Ms. Jorja Jean (Personal Communication with Mr. Mark Reed and Mr. Austin Walker, December 25, 2024, via electronic mail) for noting that ownership of “Dudlies” passed to Adam Keeling through his father-in-law, John Martin, rather than from an inheritance from his father, Thomas. Details of the ownership of the land from Thomas Allen through Adam Keeling, and more information on Richard Dudley, is found in *Phase I Archaeological Survey of Twelve Acres and Phase II Archaeological Significance Evaluation of 44VB240, 44VB241, and 44VB242 at the Great Neck Point Disposal Area, City of Virginia Beach, Virginia.*, prepared by Bradley M. McDonald, Project Archaeologist, and Dr. Matthew R. Laird, Principal Investigator, 1996:19-24.

⁵¹ W. Paul Treanor, “The Chesapeake Shore,” *The Chesopiean*, Vol. 38 (2000): 7-14; Christopher Pieczynski, “The “Pleasure House,” A Research Study Submitted to the Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission,” June 30, 2020, 12.

⁵² Lower Norfolk County Will Book 4:155, Deed of Adam Keeling, written April 25, 1683 (proved December 17, 1683). The name “Dudlies” has been traced to Richard Dudley, who owned the land south of Long Creek in the mid-seventeenth century. See Alice Granberry Walter, *The 17th Century Families of John Martin and Thomas Keeling of Lower Norfolk County, Virginia (“Linhaven Pish”, Princess Anne County, Virginia” and The Original Owners and Chain of Title to the Land Called “Ye Dudlies,”* 1974. Typed manuscript, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

⁵³ Princess Anne County Deed Book 3:116, Will of Thomas Keeling, December 4, 1714.

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The brick Keeling House was witness to military activities in the area during the American Revolutionary War. In 1779, the home was the temporary residence of Major William Galvan, who was a French officer assigned as the personal messenger of George Washington in communicating with the French fleet at the time of Benedict Arnold's planned operation against American troops at Cape Henry.⁵⁴ The protected, but convenient, location of the Keeling House was ideal and provided easy water access to Cape Henry.

The house and property continued to be willed through generations into the nineteenth century. In 1822, a chancery suit between Adam (III) Keeling's (1754-1805) heirs was brought to provide for Solomon S. Keeling, a minor, who was not yet born at the time of his father's death and therefore was not provided for in his will. The suit resulted in a division of the 550-acre Lynnhaven estate between brothers Adam (IV), and Solomon S. Keeling (1805-1881). As shown on a plat accompanying the suit, Adam was awarded a 261 $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre parcel with the brick house on it, Solomon was awarded a 108-acre parcel south of Adam, and their brother, John L., retained the remainder to the east (Additional Documentation 10).⁵⁵ Later, Solomon Keeling purchased Adam's property and reunited the two parcels.

In 1881, John Avery, of Ontario, Canada, purchased the 304 $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre parcel from Solomon S. Keeling's heirs for \$6,000.⁵⁶ The property was conveyed in two tracts: "The Home Tract," which was bounded by Long Creek on the north, by land of Col. Edward James, decd., on the east, by Robert Woodhouse's land and the river on the south, and by the Lynnhaven Inlet on the west; and "Tract No. 2," known as Hog Pen Island. With Avery's purchase, the property fell out of the Keeling family ownership for the first time since the seventeenth century.

The conveyance provided an exception for the "Burial Ground attached to the Home Farm," retaining rights of ingress and egress to the family. This cemetery, located northwest of the Keeling House, is extant but is on a separate tax property. Nine burials are recorded in the cemetery and include Solomon Keeling Sr., his wife Martha, and several children and Keeling relatives.⁵⁷ Current research has not located information on where enslaved laborers may have been buried on the Keeling property.

African Americans on the Keeling Property

⁵⁴ Christopher Pieczynski, "The Skirmish at James's Plantation, A Research Study Submitted to the Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission," February 1, 2019, 52, Appendix B.

⁵⁵ Princess Anne County Will Book 2:262, Adam Keeling's will proved May 6, 1805; Princess Anne County Chancery Book 1:260, Keeling v. Keeling (1824-027).

⁵⁶ Princess Anne County Deed Book 55:328, Keeling Heirs to Avery, July 15, 1881. The conveyance to Avery noted that the property was subject to a mortgage held by the Female Orphan Asylum, suggesting that the family had experienced financial difficulties and mortgaged the property. Such difficulties may have been a result of the economic impacts of the Civil War and the loss of an enslaved labor force.

⁵⁷ "Keeling Family Cemetery," (Cemetery ID 2527693), Find a Grave Website, accessed at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2527693/memorial-search?cemeteryName=Keeling%20Family%20Cemetery>.

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Current research shows that the Keeling family were enslavers in the early part of the eighteenth century, and possibly before that time. Unfortunately, many of the enslaved individuals are unnamed in census records, where they are represented solely by an age range, color, and gender. In some cases, first names of individuals are provided in deeds, wills, and estate inventories.

Two wills that convey the Keeling House property between generations help identify a few names of the enslaved population held by the Keeling family. In his 1714 will, Thomas Keeling gave his son Adam (I) the land on which the brick house was later built, and other land to his sons Thomas, John, and William. The 1714 will also stated, "I give and bequeathed my negro woman Moll and her four children to be equally divided among all my children with all the increase she shall or may bring to them and their houses for ever." Such language illustrates the violent and sudden manner by which enslaved families were torn apart through slavery, even if they remained in possession of the owners' extended family. To his widow, Elizabeth, Thomas willed "my negro Sam to work for her during her natural life and then to return to my son Adam Keeling and his heirs for ever" and a "negro one woman named Rose."⁵⁸ The 1771 will of Adam Keeling (second Adam Keeling, the above-named son of Thomas, and presumed builder of the brick house) conveyed to his heirs "the Negroes America, George, and Africa...a Negro boy named Jasper...a Negro boy Cato." Others named in the will include Bob, Guinea, and Europe and several others whose names are difficult to discern.⁵⁹ In addition to enslaved persons, these wills and other documents detail lands, livestock, and personal belongings that illustrate the Keelings' generational accumulation of wealth, as well as their continued reliance on enslaved laborers to work in the fields on their various landholdings and in their houses.

The 1778 list of tithable individuals for Princess Anne County show Adam Keeling (III) (grandson of the second Adam) in the Lower Precinct of the Eastern Shore as owning six enslaved people, although that number is reflective only of those individuals who were 16 age or more and able to work. The 1782 list of Property Owners shows Adam Keeling with 260 acres of land, 250 acres of marsh land, and owning 12 slaves by that time.⁶⁰

Federal censuses and slave schedules throughout the early nineteenth century list the owners of the Keeling House, and their extended families, as holding slaves through the onset of the Civil War. In 1860, Adam (IV) Keeling (son of third Adam and then-owner of the house tract) held 17 enslaved people and his brother Solomon, on the adjoining property, held 16. The Keeling family members were not among the largest slaveholding families in Princess Anne County, and appear to have been among the vast majority of those who enslaved fewer than 50 individuals; however, it appears that from their earliest settlement in the colony, they were part of the institution of slavery that depended on enslaved labor to work their lands, which in turn, produced the wealth that supported the family's lifestyle.

⁵⁸ Princess Anne County Deed Book 3:116, Will of Thomas Keeling, presented in court January 3, 1714.

⁵⁹ Princess Anne County Deed Book 12:184-6, Will of Adam Keeling, 1771.

⁶⁰ Edward Wilson James, ed., "Land and Slave Owners Princess Anne County, 1778," 3; and "Property Owners, Princess Anne County, 1782," 127, in *The Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary* (Baltimore, MD: The Friedenwald Co., 1902).

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The manner in which the enslaved population navigated in the Keeling House is largely speculative, but can be assumed that, with the presence of the center passage, they were most likely present in the hall (dining room) where the large cooking fireplace stands. In its original iteration, the door on the east side of the fireplace opened to the exterior of the house, which would have allowed any domestic laborers to enter and exit the house without engaging White inhabitants. Earlier two-room houses also had this exterior arrangement, but at the Keeling House (and at the Thoroughgood House) the introduction of a center passage provided an added space of hierarchy that explicitly separated owners from laborers; the passage also might be as far as a White guest or unknown visitor would be received into the house, depending on his social status. The hall became the domain of the owner and his family for eating (a proper dining room), as well as for entertaining guests, and the parlor took on a more private aspect. Sleeping chambers for the family, formerly provided in the parlor or the hall, were moved to the upper floor level—even further segregating the inhabitants and laborers. In later gentry houses, the hall was widened and became a seasonal space of its own, occupied in the warmer months and naturally cooled by breezes. (Even the narrow 8’ hall of the Keeling House affords a pleasant, air-cooled sitting area when the end doors are opened.) As these changes occurred in the main house, domestic slaves were moved out to work in separate kitchens and housed in frame houses or other outbuildings. Their presence in the main house, thus, would have been highly regulated and controlled by the layout of the house and the spaces into which enslaved workers had access.⁶¹

Research for this project has not located records indicating that any Keeling slaves were manumitted or given freedom, though recent scholarship by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has connected Joanna “Juggy” Owens (b.ca.1766-[1840]) with her descendant Dana Owens (b.1970), also known as Queen Latifah an American Rap musician and actress. Documentation for Free Negroes identified Juggy Owens as a Free Black midwife living in Princess Anne County in 1836. Further research determined that Juggy had been enslaved on the Keeling property, and probably born into slavery, but in 1792 was manumitted by Mary Old, a neighbor who had come into possession of Juggy. Such scholarship demonstrates how the Keeling House property can connect to the “very powerful genetic lineage” of not only the White owners and inhabitants, but also of the enslaved population, to tell the complicated story of Virginia’s historic plantation system.⁶²

Twentieth Century Ownership

At the beginning of the twentieth century, much of the land in the northern section of Princess Anne County was still in agricultural use; however, real estate speculators were taking notice of the bayside area for potential residential and recreational development. Initially developed for seasonal use, year-round residents soon began to purchase property in the area as improved transportation routes were developed. Great Neck remained largely undeveloped into the 1930s, with only a few dwellings appearing on historic maps and aerial photographs. The Keeling House has survived such development pressures due, in large part, to the property’s owners who recognized and valued the historical character of the building.

⁶¹ Carson and Lounsbury, ed., 98-99, 125-126.

⁶² Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Finding Your Roots: This Land Is My Land,” Season 6, Episode 4 (2020). Staff members at the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Beach Public Library contributed to Dr. Gates’ research.

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In 1910, E.C. Hathaway and Charles Consolvo purchased most of the former Keeling land from Laura A. Avery, John's widow, and W.G. Avery, their son. The purchase totaled 246 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres and included the historic brick dwelling (Additional Documentation 11). E.C. Hathaway was the general manager of the Norfolk Electric Railway and Light Company and Charles Consolvo, known as "Col. Consolvo," was a well-known hotelier who owned the Monticello Hotel in Norfolk and the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. The businessmen appear to have occupied the house infrequently, using it as a recreational lodge for hunting and fishing. The surrounding property remained rural, but the dwelling, over the years, fell into some disrepair (Figure 18). It was during their ownership that the Kellams recorded the Keeling House in 1931 and lamented, "Maybe some time soon, before it is too late, Col. Charles Consolvo, the present owner, may restore to all its former beauty the home of the Keelings..."⁶³

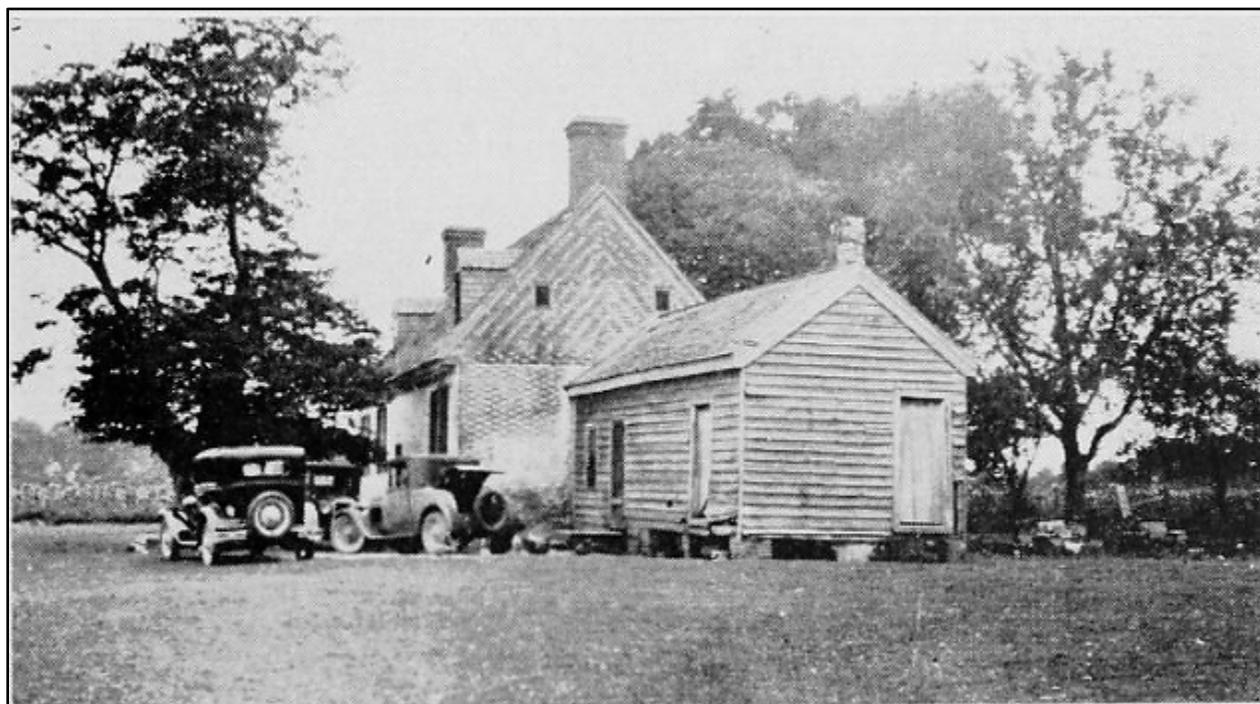


Figure 18. Keeling House, view looking northeast, taken ca. 1931 for Kellam book and at the time of the Hathaway-Consolvo ownership. Note one-story, frame addition that was replaced in 1938. Source: Kellam and Kellam, 1931.

In 1938, Hathaway and Consolvo sold all the Great Neck property that was formerly a part of the Keeling landholdings to George W. Syer, a Tidewater real estate developer. Syer, who lived in Portsmouth and later Virginia Beach, undertook the first rehabilitation of the brick dwelling. It does not appear that Syer lived at the house full time, but he and his family may have occupied it as a second or seasonal home. Beginning in the late 1940s, Syer began selling parcels of the land as he platted the area for large-acreage residential development. It was during this period that the house lot acreage was reduced and the former farmland was subdivided.

⁶³ Kellam and Kellam, 62.

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Several conditions and restrictions were attached to conveyances made by Syer, most of which were aimed at the quality and appearance of buildings in the new neighborhood. The lots were intended for residential development only, dwellings were required to have a 30' setback, and for 20 years after the sale, the parcels could not be sub-divided into units less than one acre. The initial restriction, however, was a prohibition of the sale or occupation of the property by anyone who was not White. A deed made by Syer in 1950 stated: "The said property, or any part thereof, shall not be sold to, or owned or occupied as owners or tenants, by any person not of the Caucasian race."⁶⁴ Deeds of the period recorded in other Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach neighborhoods, and areas throughout Virginia, included such bluntly stated racially restrictive covenants prohibiting sale to specific ethnic and/or religious groups. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the enforcement of racially restrictive clauses, yet such practices continued. It was not until the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act) that housing discrimination based on "race, color, disability, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin" was outlawed (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq., 1968). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, however, real estate practices and prejudiced policies of White-owned financial institutions continued the racial segregation of neighborhoods. The deeds reviewed concerning the Keeling property did not repeat Syer's initial covenants of 1950, but the neighborhood has historically been majority White ownership.

In 1948, Syer sold the Keeling House parcel and an adjacent parcel to F. Leslie White, who retained it for just a few years before selling it in 1952 to Rear Admiral Leon J. Manees, USN (Ret.), and his wife, Caroline.⁶⁵ Adm. Manees, who served with the U.S. submarine force during World War II, was active in the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Retired Officers Association and was the first president of the Princess Anne County Historical Society (1961-1962).⁶⁶ As described above, the Maneeses added the sunroom and bedroom to the south end of the house; they also devoted much attention to the landscaping around the house and opened the house for the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week and other historical tours. It was during the Maneeses' ownership that the house was placed on the NRHP.

In 1961, the Maneeses divided the property into three parcels and in 1976, they conveyed the historic house and its surrounding land (designated as Lot A on the subdivision plat) to former State Senator Edward L. Breeden, Jr., and his wife, Virginia.⁶⁷ The present parcel retains the boundaries of that transaction. The Breedens undertook the most significant rehabilitation of the brick house since

⁶⁴ Princess Anne County Deed Book 270:226, George W. Syer and Jane T. Syer to John Wesley Murphy and Annette M. Murphy, February 1, 1950.

⁶⁵ Princess Anne County Deed Book 250:346, Syer to White; Princess Anne County Deed Book 304:47, White to Manees. The Maneeses also purchased a small sliver of land at the southwest corner of the property from then-neighbors James P. and Susan F. Sadler that provided improved waterfront access. Princess Anne County Deed Book 571:406, 1958.

⁶⁶ The Princess Anne County Historical Society (now Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society) formed in 1961 in reaction to the loss of many of the historical properties documented by the Kellams in the 1930s. The society, whose aims are education, interpretation, and preservation, is the custodian for the NRHP-listed (1975) Upper Wolfsnare (VDHR #134-0034), a two-story, brick Georgian house constructed in 1759 in Princess Anne County.

⁶⁷ Princess Anne County Deed Book 1582:300 Manees to Breeden, 1976.

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George Syer and Mary Brown's efforts in 1938. The new owners replaced rotted flooring joists, repaired brickwork, re-opened the transom above the east side entrance door, and replaced missing interior elements such as the staircase newel drop.⁶⁸ In 1985, Perry and Bunny Morgan purchased the property and added numerous native plants to the landscape. At the time, Mr. Morgan was editor of *The Virginian-Pilot* newspaper.

The current owners, Glenn and Lynn Carwell, purchased the Keeling House property in 1997. Dr. Carwell, a cosmetic and reconstructive surgeon, currently serves on the Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission, and Mrs. Carwell, a real estate agent, has been involved with the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society, is a past member of the Virginia Beach Historical Review Board, and currently serves on the Board of the Virginia Beach Public Library. The Carwells added the swimming pool to the property in 2001, and in 2021 undertook a renovation of the 1938 garage.

During the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the current Keeling House property was reduced in size and the house was enlarged with small, discreet additions. Yet, the historic character, materials, interior spaces, and architectural details of the historic house have been maintained, while continuing to serve as a family home. In 1956, *The National Geographic Magazine* featured the Keeling House in an article about the Garden Club of Virginia's annual house and garden tour. Adm. Manees, then owner, welcomed the article's author to the house and conveyed the sentiment that most, if not all, of the post-Keeling owners of the property appear to have ascribed to:

Perhaps it would be more accurate to call us the custodians, not the owners, of this house...After all, it's been here 300 years, and we hope it'll stay another 300. Personally, we'd like to think that, if the house could talk, it would say the Maneeses treated it kindly.⁶⁹

Comparable Properties

As mentioned in the architectural discussion, the Keeling House belongs to a small group of early-eighteenth-century, one-and-a-half-story, brick dwellings constructed by notable families associated with the earliest Colonial English settlements in the present Virginia Beach area. The houses, which include the Thoroughgood House and the Lynnhaven House, represent a significant evolution in the adaptation of traditional English construction techniques to the Chesapeake region, and exhibit changes in residential floor plans that reflected the reality of hierarchal spaces between property owners—the emerging gentry class—guests, unknown visitors, and enslaved workers.

The Keeling House has been called “a particularly fine example of this building type given its superb brickwork, centre-passage plan, and refined woodwork.”⁷⁰ The latter notably includes the closed-string staircase with molded stair nosings and bolection molding, a proportioned handrail, classical balusters, and the full-height paneling of the parlor fireplace wall. The Keeling House exhibits

⁶⁸ Kraft, 1977.

⁶⁹ Howell Walker, “History Keeps House in Virginia,” *The National Geographic Magazine* Vol CIX, No. 4 (April 1956), 444.

⁷⁰ Miles and Worthington, 2006.

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influence of the nascent Georgian-style architecture that would come to maturation in the mid-eighteenth-century brick mansions built by Virginia's plantation class, which featured a center-passage, double-pile plan, and extensive classically inspired detailing. A nearby example of the mature Georgian style is the National Register-listed Pembroke Manor (VDHR #134-0026), built in 1764 as a two-story, five-bay, double-pile dwelling featuring symmetrical elevations, fine brickwork, and original interior woodwork.

The Thoroughgood House (VDHR #134-0033), designated an NHL in 1960, has been determined through dendrochronology to have been built around 1719 by Argall Thoroughgood (II), great-grandson of the immigrant Adam. The house, in its restored appearance, features Flemish bond on the front elevation and English bond on the other three sides. The house features a massive, exterior brick chimney with tiled shoulders on the south end and an interior chimney on the south; both chimneys have staggered stacks. Window and door openings are topped by segmental arches; metal-framed, diamond paned windows were installed as part of the house's restoration. The interior features a center passage with a hall to one side and a parlor to the other, and two chambers above accessed by the passage stair. The Thoroughgood House, however, lacks the classically influenced details of the Keeling House such as the detailed woodwork of the first floor.

In 1969, the Lynnhaven House (VDHR #134-0037) was listed in the NRHP at a national level of significance and has been determined through dendrochronology to date to about 1724/5—a decade before the Keeling House. The Lynnhaven House retains several elements of the earlier Colonial-era houses including the use of English bond on all exterior walls, massive exterior end chimneys, the use of exposed rafters and a tilted false plate and a two-room floor plan. The interior ceiling joists were originally unplastered and planed, and the corner stair featured symmetrical balusters. Most notably, the Lynnhaven House incorporated a rear third room accessed from the parlor that was an early adaptation of a dedicated dining room in gentry houses.

Eastwood (VDHR #134-0010, also known as the Smith Estate), constructed about 1740 and now demolished, stood on the same side of Great Neck Road as the Keeling House, and to the south about halfway to Virginia Beach Boulevard (Figure 19). Although smaller than the Keeling House, the two houses were similar in general appearance.

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Figure 19. Eastwood (now demolished), Princess Anne County, VA. HABS VA-242, photograph, 1934, LOC.

Eastwood was a one-and-a-half story house with an English bond water table, exterior walls of Flemish bond with glazed headers, and a side-facing gable roof with shed-roofed dormers and interior end chimneys. The house was only three bays wide and lacked the glazed header chevroning present at the Keeling House. On the interior, Eastwood retained the older two-room (hall-parlor) floor plan with a closed stringer stair in the larger, south end room.⁷¹

Archaeological Potential of the Keeling House Property

As described in Section 7, archaeological site 44VB0065 was recorded on the west side of the Keeling House and produced domestic artifacts dating to the Contact Period (1607-1750), and within the property's NRHP period of significance. The 2018 *Archaeological Assessment of The Northern Portion of The City of Virginia Beach, Virginia* identified the Great Neck section of the city as having a high probability of intact archaeological deposits. The report noted that although much of the area has been developed into twentieth-century residential neighborhoods, many of the houses, such as the Keeling House, "feature large yards where minimal grading likely took place during construction. As a result, intact archaeological deposits are likely present even in the residential neighborhoods."

⁷¹ Thomas T. Waterman, "Eastwood, HABS VA-242," 1940. At the time of the HABS recordation, the house was in ruinous condition and was missing its window sash and mantels. The Kellams also recorded the house in *Old Houses in Princess Anne, Virginia* (1931). At that time, the house was vacant and the Smiths lived in a "new" house on the property that was built about 1900.

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In addition, the location along the western shore of the Lynnhaven River gives Great Neck “high potential for containing both historic and prehistoric sites.”⁷²

Recovery of artifacts from the above noted site attests to the presence of such deposits. The 2018 *Assessment* noted that a total of 22 archaeological sites have been recorded in the area extending from Chesapeake Beach to Virginia Beach Boulevard and from N. Great Neck Road on the east to Little Neck Road on the west (denoted as Area C in the *Assessment*). Artifacts retrieved from those sites have demonstrated that, despite extensive twentieth-century development, there is high potential for intact archaeological deposits and features within the undeveloped and/or undisturbed portions of the area. In addition, the present owners are in possession of numerous historic and prehistoric artifacts that have been picked up in the surrounding house yard and planting beds (Additional Documentation 12). These retrievals have been incidental finds and are without further documentation, but they provide evidence of the potential for future discoveries that could contain components related to the prehistoric occupation and use of the land from the Woodland and Middle Woodland periods, and/or the historic settlement dating from the early eighteenth century through the twentieth century.

⁷² Joseph R. Blondino, Mike Klein, and Curtis McCoy, *Archaeological Assessment of the Northern Portion of the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia*. Prepared for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Historic Resources. June 2018:48, 109-110.

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Norfolk Virginian-Pilot

The Virginian-Pilot

The Virginian-Pilot Beacon

Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch

The Cornell Daily Sun

Personal Communication

Glenn and Lynn Carwell, current owners, Keeling House.

Warren Channel, son of Mary Brown Channel.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # VA-11-17

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources; Library of Congress
(HABS, Survey No. VA-11-17)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR #134-0018

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.15

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.900600 | Longitude: -76.079060 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary coincides with the boundaries of the tax parcel (GPIN 14990674560000). The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Tax Parcel Map, which was obtained from the City of Virginia Beach, VA, Geographic Information System mapping website on June 26, 2024.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The original nomination stated that the property was “less than ten acres,” but did not specify the acreage of the property and provided a single UTM point for the location. The house footprint was circled on an accompanying U.S.G.S. topographic map (1964, Cape Henry, VA quadrangle). The Virginia Department of Historic Resources online database (Virginia Cultural Resource Inventory System) depicted the property as a rectangular parcel, which did not correspond to the current parcel boundaries.

The property acreage has been refined in this update to reflect the current, and accurate, acreage of 1.15 acres. No alterations have been made to the property boundaries since the original nomination in 1973. The same latitude and longitude coordinates recorded with the 1973 nomination are confirmed in this update. The parcel encompasses land associated with the

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historic dwelling and associated buildings and structures. The present parcel retains the immediate setting of the historic dwelling, including the surrounding yard and part of the waterfront bank at the head of a cove accessing the Lynnhaven River. All known associated historic resources have been included within the historic boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Debra A. McClane/Architectural Historian
organization: Debra A. McClane, Architectural Historian
street & number: 4711 Devonshire Road
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23225
e-mail: dmcclane1@verizon.net
telephone: 804/233-3890
date: August 19, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

FIGURES

- Figure 1. Location of Keeling House, 3157 Adam Keeling Road, Virginia Beach, VA. City of Virginia Beach GIS.
- Figure 2. Detail of the brickwork on the east elevation of the Keeling House showing English bond water table, beveled cap, and Flemish bond with glazed headers above. Note closers at corner of wall.
- Figure 3. West entrance door showing alteration to segmental arch.
- Figure 4. Detail of east side entrance (replacement door), re-opened transom.
- Figure 5. Detail of south gable end showing glazed header chevron patterning. View to northeast.
- Figure 6. View of Staircase showing balusters and handrail, paneled side wall, and closet beneath the stair.
- Figure 7. View looking north in parlor (living room). Note fireplace surround, mantel shelf,
- Figure 8. View looking south from the dining room into the kitchen addition (1938).
- Figure 9. View looking east at the upper level hall.
- Figure 10. View looking northwest at Keeling House showing original brick house to right and 1938 frame addition to left. A portion of the 1950s bedroom wing is seen at far left.
- Figure 11. View from 1950s sunroom into the former dining room closet. The door opening was cut into the historic brick wall to allow passage between the addition and the historic dwelling.
- Figure 12. Garage (ca. 1938), detail of knee brace.
- Figure 13. View of north gable end comparing corner blocks. Left image shows condition in 1934 (HABS), note wooden corner block. Right image shows current condition (2024), note that bricks have replaced the wooden block.

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Name of Property

County and State

- Figure 14. Detail of brick chevron patterning in north gable end of Pear Valley, Northampton County, Virginia. Source: VDHR
- Figure 15. Orrin M. Bullock, Jr., "Adam Keeling House, Bull-002," Orin Miles Bullock, Jr. Photograph Collection, AV2010.2. Used by permission of Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library,
- Figure 16. Frances Benjamin Johnston, "Keeling, Virginia Beach vic., Princess Anne County, Virginia," [between ca. 1930 and 1939], Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017891258/>
- Figure 17. Mary Ramsay Brown, 1933. Photograph of the Sigma Kappa Sorority, The Cornellian (Vol. 65).
- Figure 18. Keeling House, view looking northeast, taken ca. 1931 for Kellam book and at the time of the Hathaway-Consolvo ownership. Note one-story, frame addition that was replaced in 1938. Source: Kellam and Kellam, 1931.
- Figure 19. Eastwood (now demolished), Princess Anne County, VA. HABS VA-242, photograph, 1934, LOC.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

1. Plat for Syer Tract (Plat 3), 1949.
2. Plat for J. L. Manees Property (subdivision), 1961.
3. Image of Keeling House parlor, 1934.
4. Keeling House looking southeast, 1934
5. Keeling House, south end elevation, looking north, 1937.
6. Keeling House, Parlor, 1934
7. Keeling House, looking southwest, ca. 1920 [1929?]
8. Keeling House, Measured Drawing, 1934
9. Keeling House, west elevation, looking northeast, 1938
10. Chancery Suit Plat, 1823.
11. Plat showing Part of Keeling Property conveyed from Avery to Hathaway and Consolvo, 1910
12. Prehistoric and historic artifacts collected by property owners on Keeling property.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Keeling House
City or Vicinity: Virginia Beach
County: Independent City State: VA
Photographer: Debra A. McClane
Date Photographed: December 14, 2023; July 1, 2024

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Name of Property

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0001
East Elevation looking West
- 2 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0002
East Elevation looking South-Southwest
- 3 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0003
Oblique view looking Southeast
- 4 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0004
West and North Elevations looking Southeast
- 5 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0005
Detail, West Elevation
- 6 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0006
South End Additions, East Elevations
- 7 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0007
Detail, East Elevation, 1928 Kitchen Wing
- 8 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0008
West Elevation, 1959 Bedroom Wing
- 9 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0009
Looking South at 1950 Sunroom Addition
- 10 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0010
General view looking northeast at west side of house
- 11 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0011
Detail, closet window, north end elevation
- 12 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0012
Detail, modillion cornice added to east elevation
- 13 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0013
Garage, looking west-northwest
- 14 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0014
Garage, south side elevation
- 15 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0015
Shed, looking northwest
- 16 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0016
View of pool with cove beyond
- 17 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0017
View of entrance piers from street
- 18 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0018
View from driveway looking toward street
- 19 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0018
Brick walkway on east side of house, looking north
- 20 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0019
Center passage, looking west
- 21 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0021

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)

Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

- Center passage, looking east
22 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0022
Parlor door
23 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0023
Parlor, fireplace wall, looking north
24 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0024
View from parlor toward center passage and stair
25 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0025
View looking up stairs
26 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0026
Detail, stair balusters
27 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0027
Detail, balustrade and newel post
28 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0028
Detail, newel drop
29 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0029
Dining room looking south
30 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0030
North bedroom, looking north
31 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0031
South bedroom door
32 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0032
South bedroom looking southeast
33 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0033
Enclosed stair to kitchen
34 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0034
Sunroom, looking west
35 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0035
View from sunroom toward hall into bedroom wing; door to kitchen at left
36 of 36 VA_CityofVirginiaBeach_KeelingHouse_2024_0036
Bedroom in bedroom wing, looking southeast

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

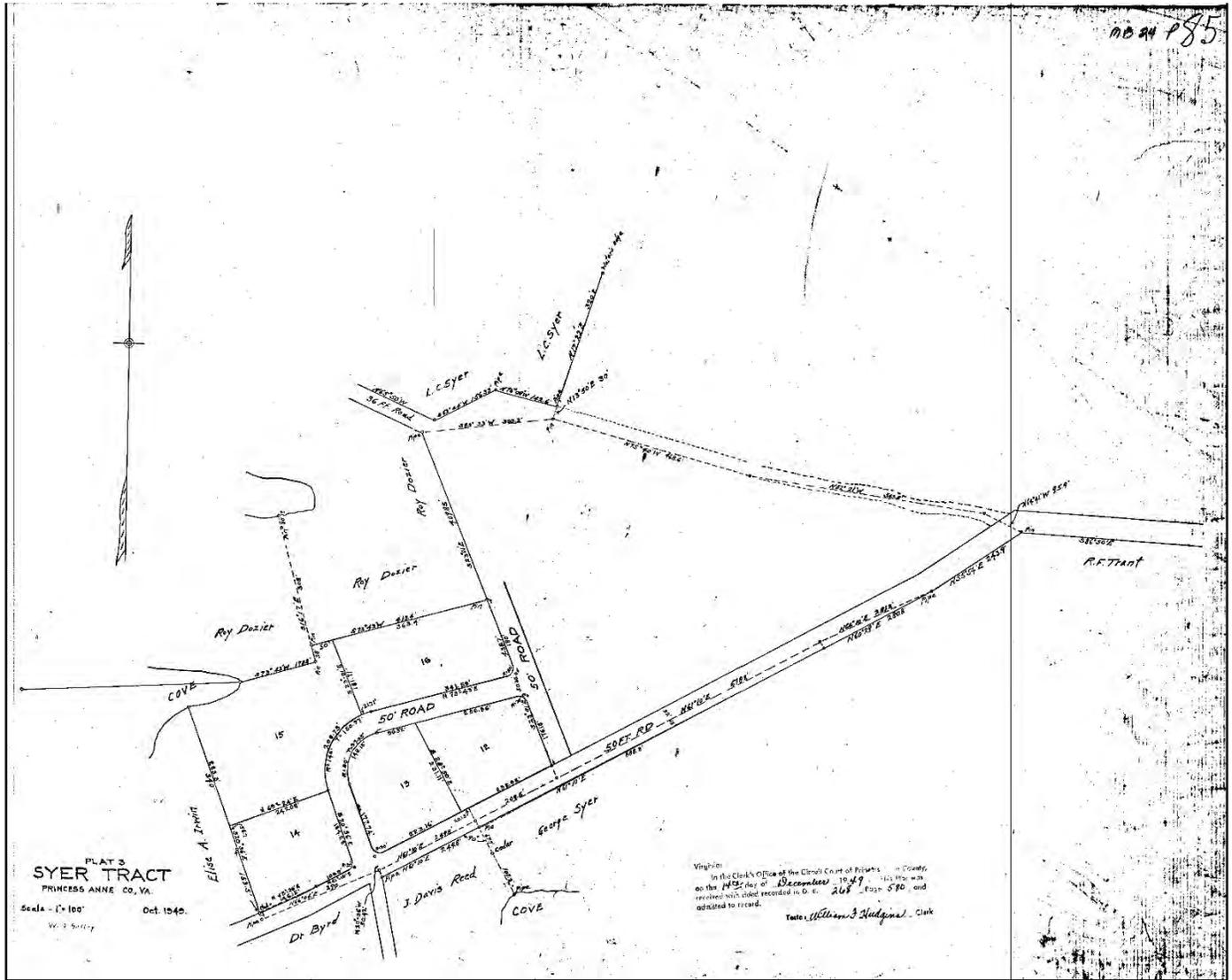
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 1



1. Plat for Syer Tract (Plat 3), 1949, showing subdivision of former Keeling Farm by George W. Syer. Note location of historic Keeling House is at lower right on property marked "George Syer." Historic Keeling Cemetery located on parcel at upper left marked "Roy Dozier" and fronting onto road. Virginia Beach Map Book 4:121.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional
Documentation)

Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 3



3. Image of Keeling House parlor, 1934, showing mantel shelf in moved location. Harry Bagby, HABS, LOC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 4



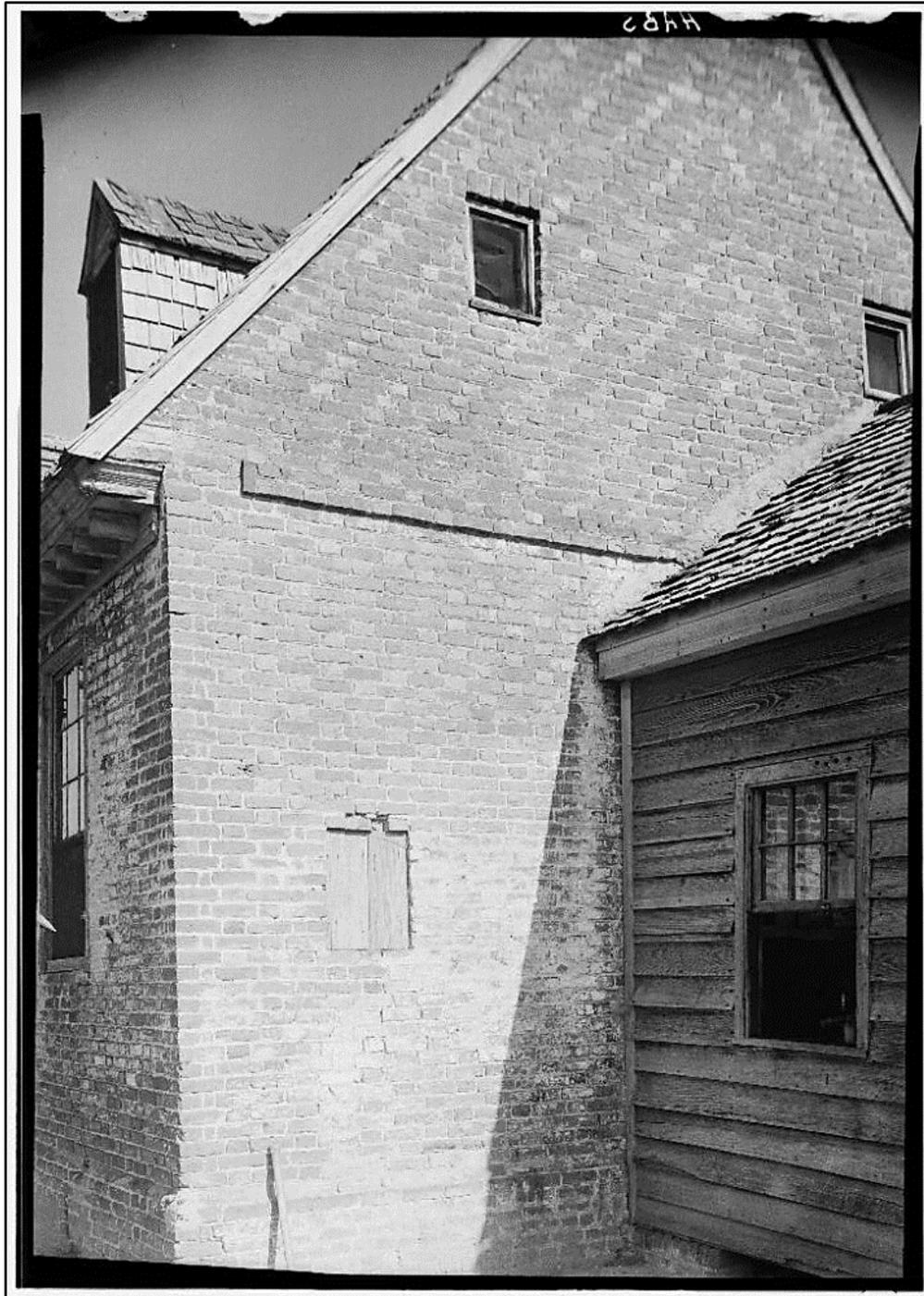
4. Keeling House looking southeast, showing the one-story, frame addition to the south end.
Frances B. Johnston, 1934, LOC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 5



5. Keeling House, south end elevation, looking north, 1937. First frame kitchen addition to right. Note small closet window (boarded) on first floor level, projecting belt course, and chevrons in gable end. Thomas Waterman, HABS, LOC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 6



6. Keeling House, Parlor, 1934, showing painted woodwork. Frances B. Johnston, LOC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 7



7. Keeling House, looking southwest, ca. 1920 [1929?], showing post-and-wire fence and animal hutch in east yard, and another fence and the west sweep in the west yard. The view takes in the cove and the Lynnhaven River beyond. Orrin M. Bullock, Jr., "Adam Keeling House, Bull-001," Orin Miles Bullock, Jr. Photograph Collection, AV2010.2. Used by permission of Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

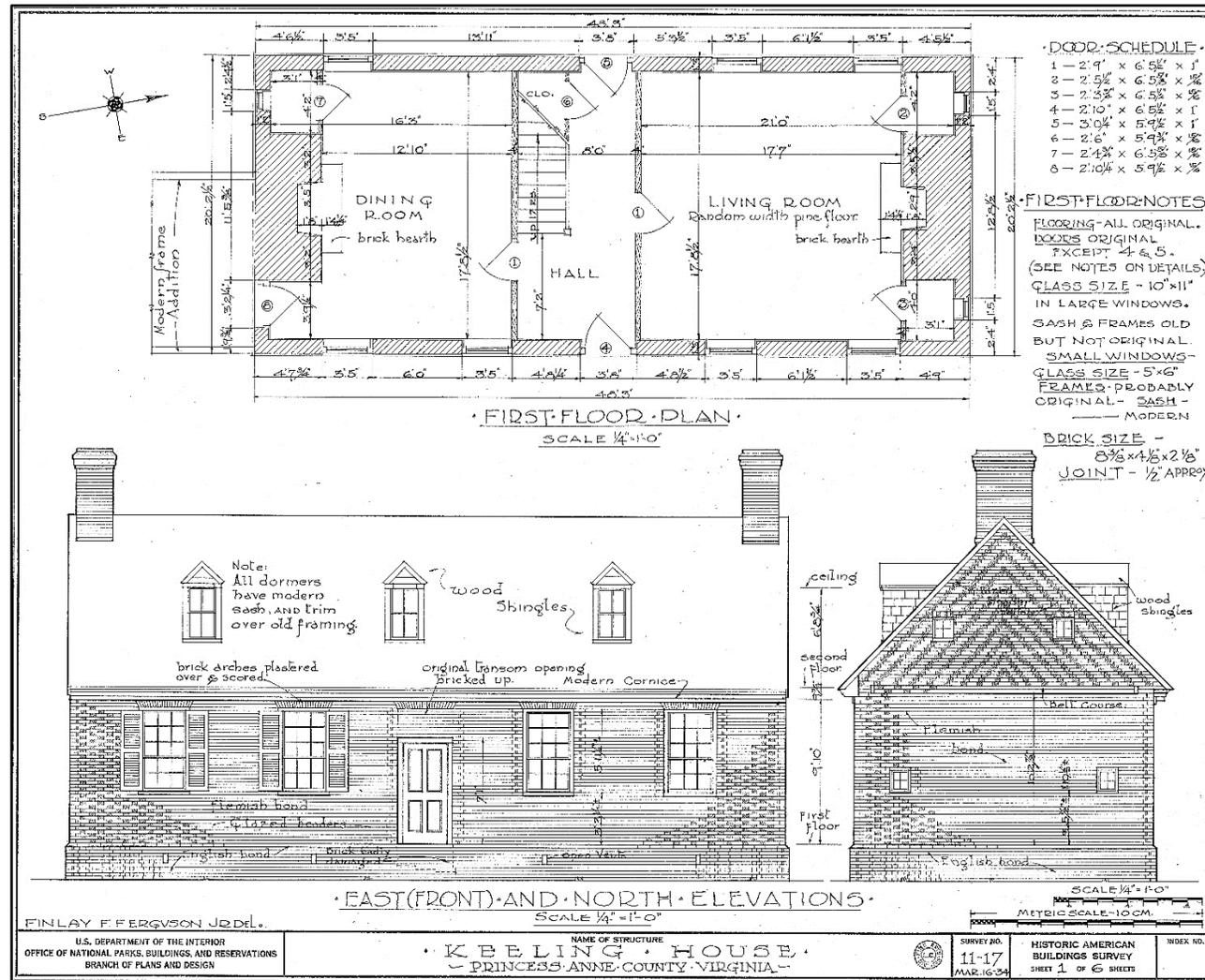
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)

Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 8



8. Keeling House, Measured Drawing, 1934. HABS, LOC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 9

Keeling House
(Additional
Documentation)

Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if
applicable)



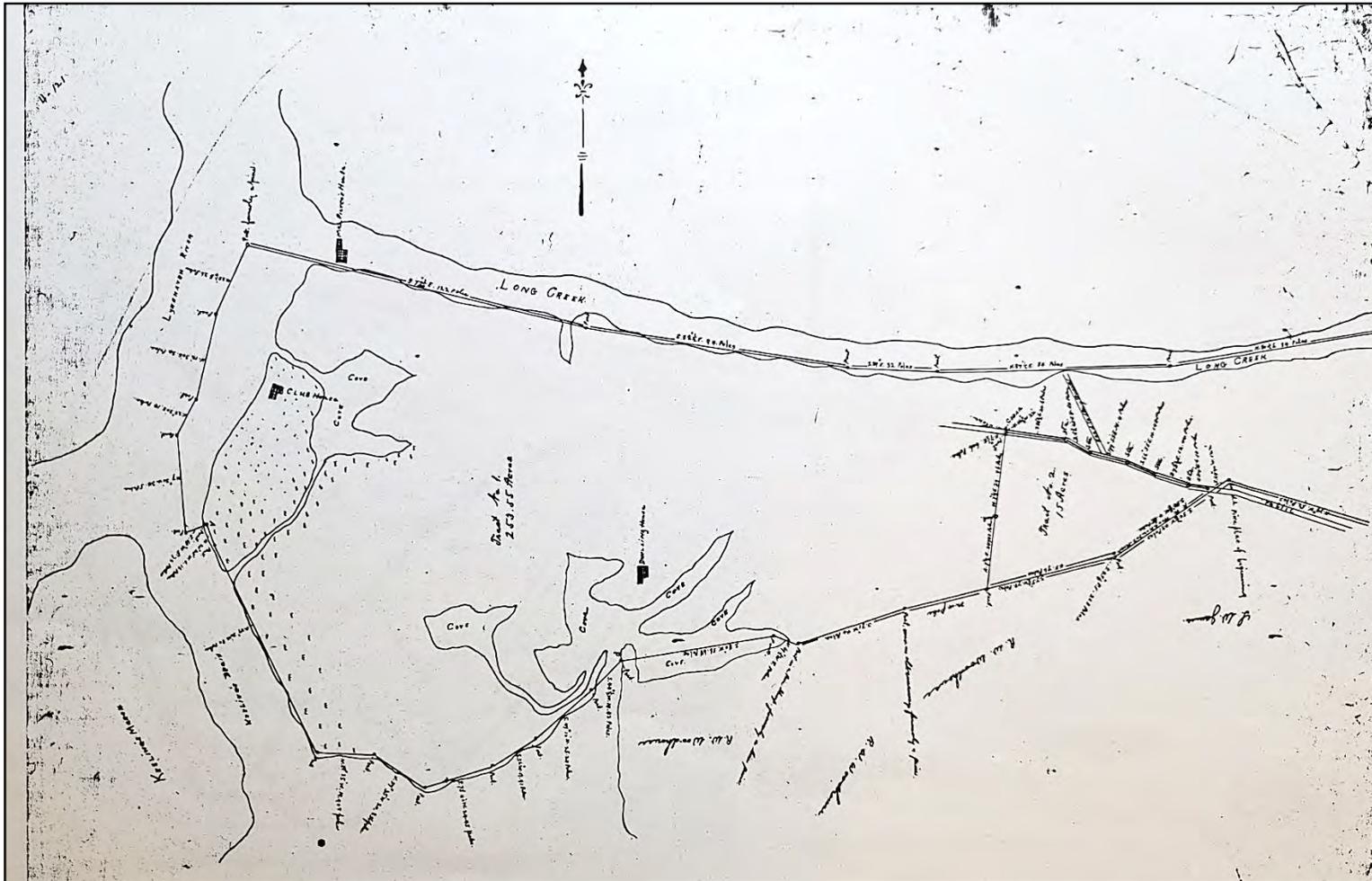
9. Keeling House, west elevation, looking northeast, 1938. Image shows south end frame addition, designed by Mary R. Brown, under construction. Charles Borjes, photographer, The Virginian-Pilot Photograph Collection, FN000353, Norfolk Public Library (Va.), Sargeant Memorial Collection.

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
 Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 11



11. Plat showing Part of Keeling Property conveyed from Avery to Hathaway and Consolvo, 1910. Brick house is depicted near center of property; 15 acre property to right is land that was conveyed by Avery's to their son, and is included in the conveyance. Virginia Beach Map Book 4:121.

expiration date 03/31/2026

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Keeling House (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property
Virginia Beach, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION Page 12



12. Prehistoric and historic artifacts collected by property owner on Keeling property.



LOCATION MAP

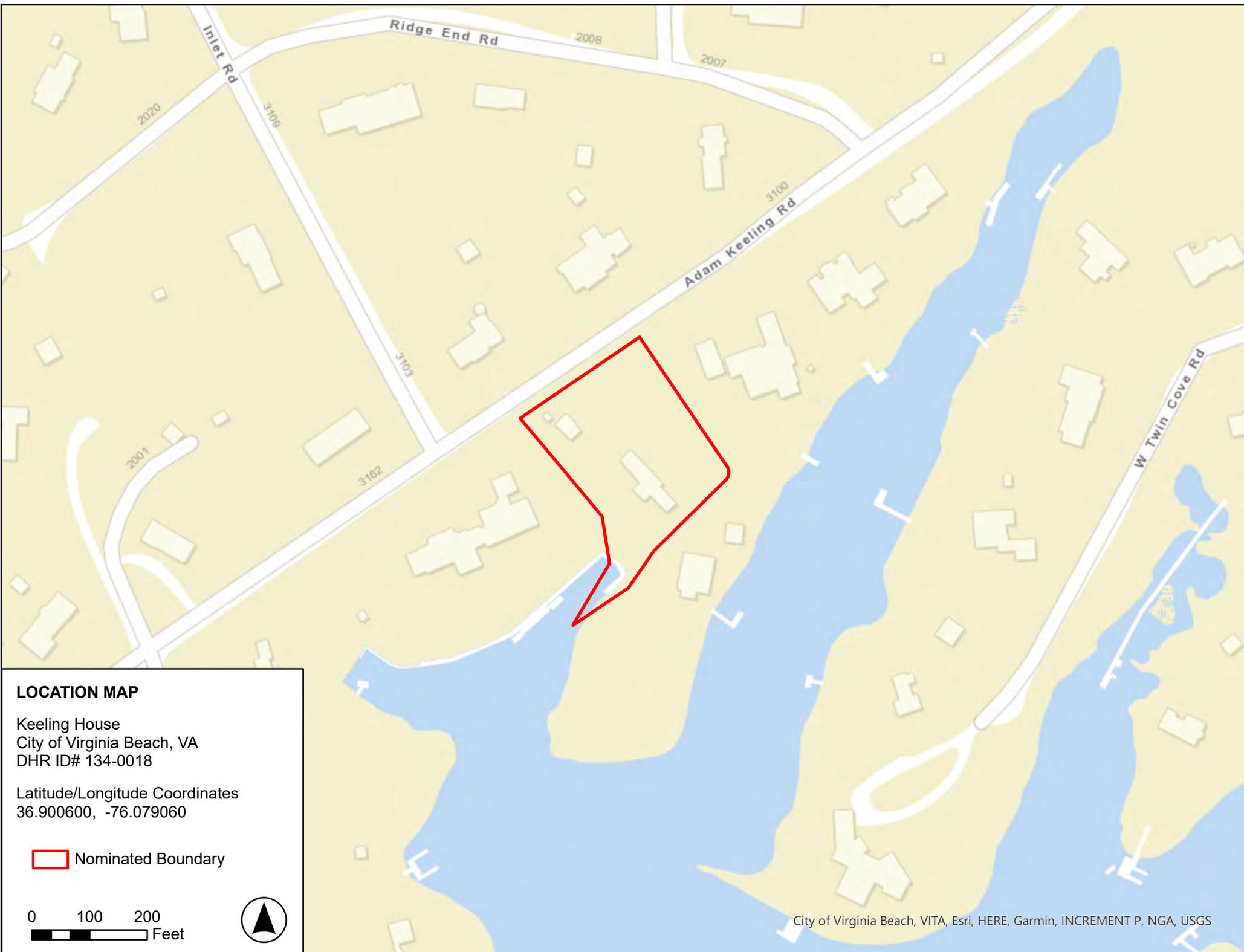
Keeling House
City of Virginia Beach, VA
DHR ID# 134-0018

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
36.900600, -76.079060

 Nominated Boundary

0 100 200
 Feet





LOCATION MAP

Keeling House
 City of Virginia Beach, VA
 DHR ID# 134-0018

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
 36.900600, -76.079060

 Nominated Boundary

0 100 200
 Feet



Photo Location Map

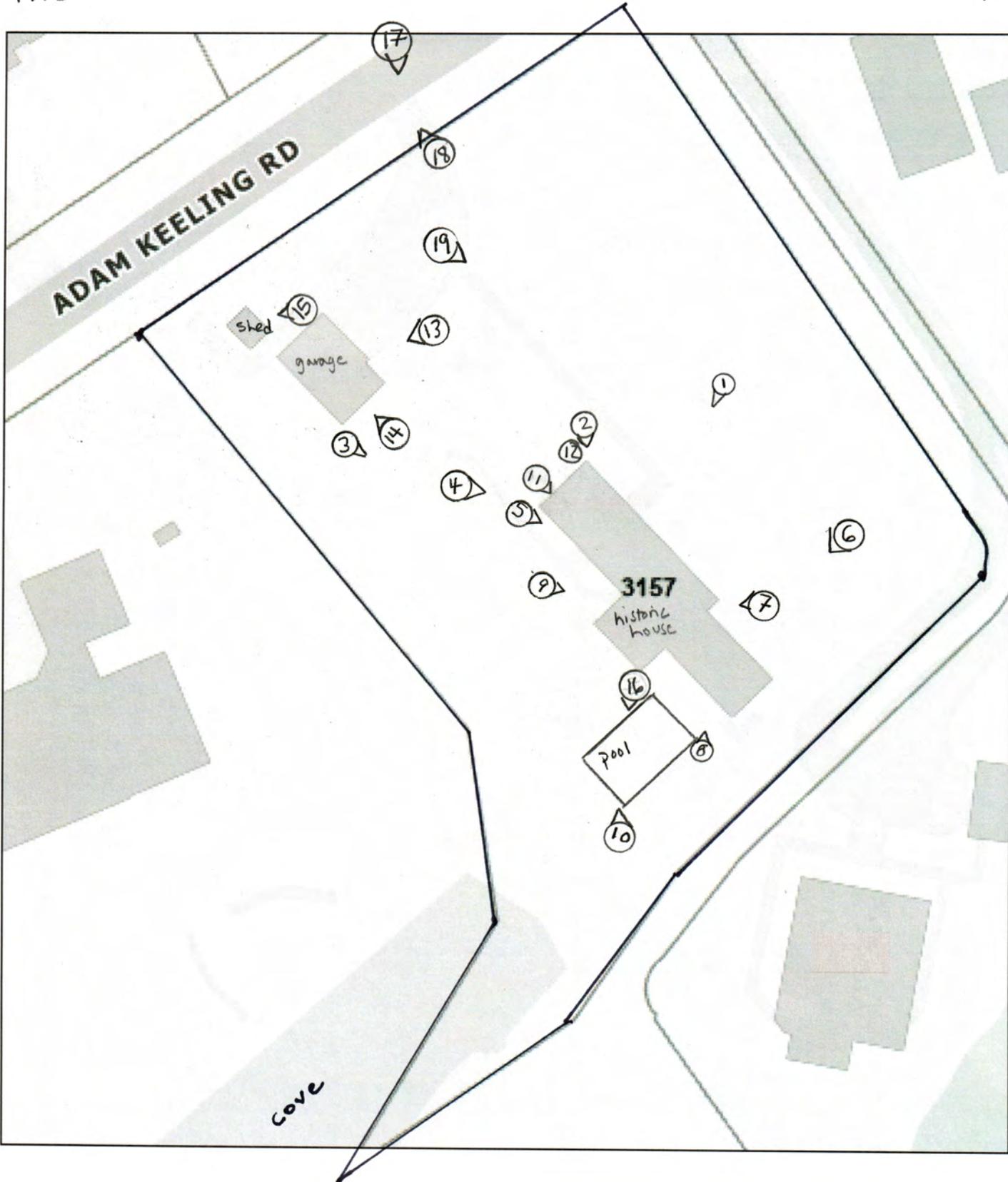
Resource Name: Keeling House

VDHR #134-0018

Location: 3157 Adam Keeling Road, Virginia Beach

07/2024

NTS



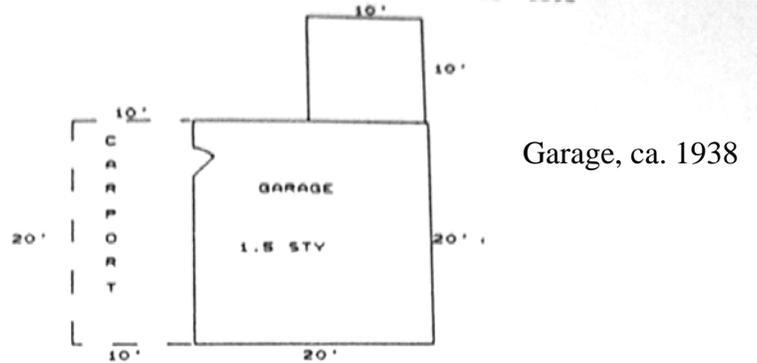
Sketch Floor Plans

Resource Name: Keeling House

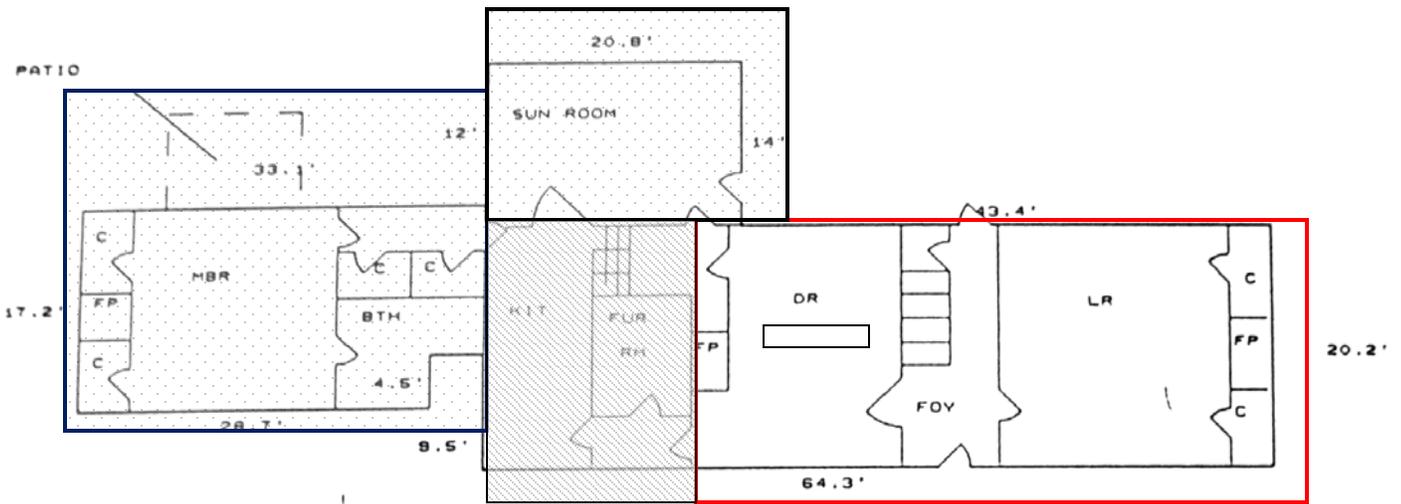
VDHR #134-0018

Location: 3157 Adam Keeling Road, Virginia Beach

07/2024

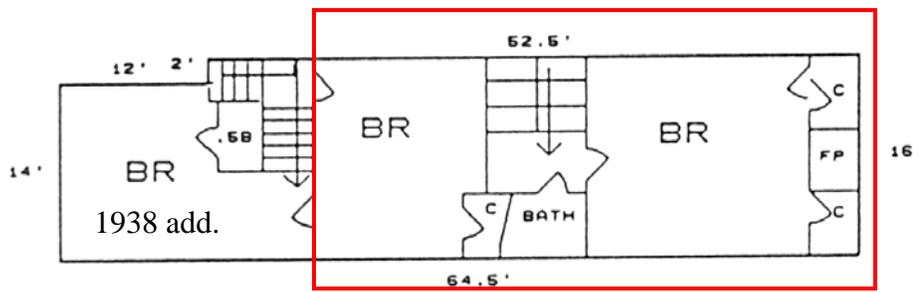


Garage, ca. 1938



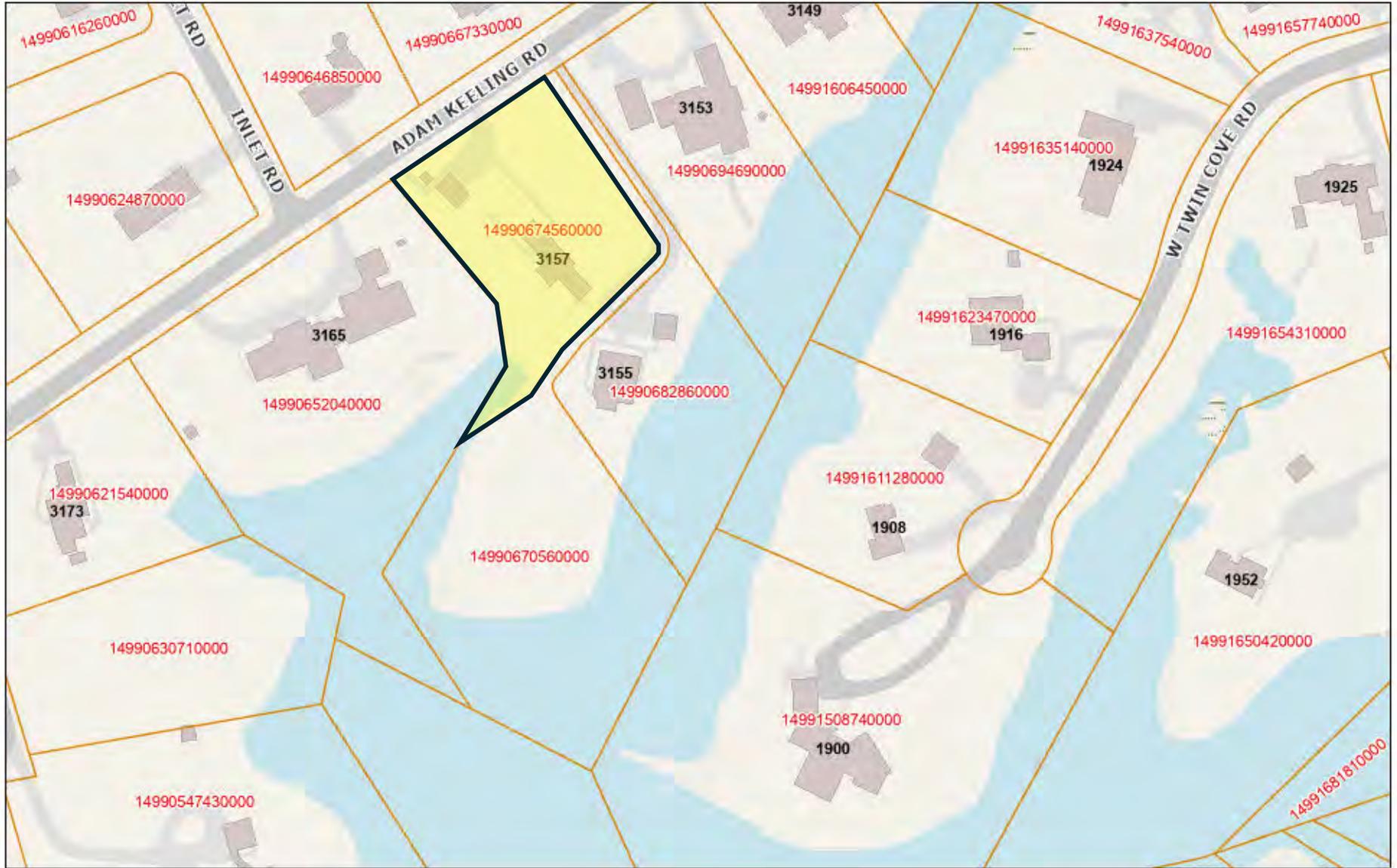
First floor plan

Original dwelling
 1938 addition
 1950s additions



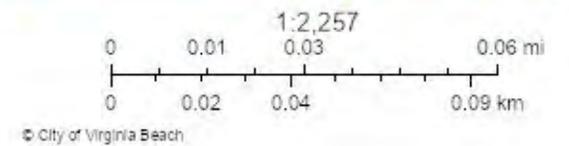
Upper, half floor plan

Keeling House (VDHR #134-0018), Virginia Beach, VA



6/26/2024, 2:03:18 PM

- Recorded Parcels
- Parcels
- City Boundary
- Primary Address Point Label



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