



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 156-5200

1. General Property Information

Property name: Old Saunders Place

Property address: 310 Waterloo Street

City or Town: Warrenton

Zip code: 20186

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Fauquier County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 0.56 acres (originally 6.5 acres in 1869 deed)

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town X Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The property at 310 Waterloo Street is a .56-acre attractively landscaped lot within .5 mile of the Old Fauquier Courthouse and the center of Warrenton's Main Street commercial and historic districts to the east and bordering the Garrett Street and Routes 29/211 commercial districts to the west. Once a 6.5-acre mini-farm and farmhouse in the country just outside town corporate boundaries, it became surrounded by a variety of architecturally eclectic, suburban-style homes built after World War I. With a generous front porch, the stately house sits farther back from the street than neighboring younger homes, echoing an earlier era when horse-drawn carts traveled the dusty Waterloo Pike from Free State farms delivering their bounties to Warrenton 'markets. Shaded by large tulip popular and loblolly pine trees, the front bricked walkway intersects a front lush lawn just beyond a semi-circular flintstone wall, evoking an earlier era when visitors pulled up to the front walkway, hitching their horses and buggies along the street. In the back there are two very old black walnut trees shading the original smoke house and sheltering the original rock foundations of two additional outbuildings used now as a raised, ivy-covered planter and composting receptable in a less rural landscape.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Victorian Vernacular, Arts and Crafts

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1870

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Although it was divided and used as rental apartments at various times in the 1960s through the 1980s and was likely built as two separate buildings in 1870, it is currently a combined 3,360 square foot, single-family home with 4 bedrooms, 4 full bathrooms, 2 sun porches, a parlor, music room, formal dining room, kitchen, laundry, and sunken den (former garage). The circumstances of the Thomas E. Saunders family in the 1865-1870 period indicate that the house was constructed quickly to accommodate younger Saunders children, as well as two who had reached maturity, one of which had a daughter of her own who needed shelter, and likely domestic servants, as well. These circumstances could explain the need for "separate" dwellings in close proximity.

The front section of the main house was built as a detached four-room structure (two rooms up and two rooms down) with an unusual central chimney (four fireplaces) and a hall running the length of the front with a stairwell tucked on the right side of the long hall. There is a particularly handsome solid walnut Italianate-style newel post and hand railing, which are considered original. Previous owners have thought it possible that this front structure is older than 1870 but that has been difficult to verify. A court-ordered announcement of the sale of the property in an 1884 issue of Warrenton Virginian states simply that the dwelling and outbuildings were, "Built in 1870." Details in the chancery lawsuit *Alexander v. Saunders* (1878) seem to support this date, as well.

Most windows (both floors), interior window trim (second floor), doors (second floor), and door trims (second floor) are presumed original in this front section. Older doors are pine--two large panels over two smaller panels. Older trim is unpainted pine and windows are unpainted pine side-by-side, four-over-four (or two-over-two) single-hung sashes with the exception of the upstairs middle bay which is wider with a combination of a central four-over-four flanked by two two-over-two single-hung sashes. This distinct central window breaks up the uniformity of the front, providing a handsome central focal point from the street. All of these window pairs are mullioned together by 7 inches of pine trim and are unusually tall thereby giving the house a simple, stately look although the tops are not arched or ornamented as in the more ornamented Italianate style. While the 3-bay front structure appears to be symmetrical (traditional colonial) from the street, it is actually a few feet longer on the right side to accommodate the stairwell. The hall landing and bedrooms on the second floor have much of the original wide heart pine flooring, which had to be replaced in downstairs rooms due to deterioration. Although covered in c. 2010 with marble and granite tiles to embellish them, the original solid wood mantle pieces were retained underneath with their elegant but simple shapes still visible.

Extensive decorative crown moldings were added throughout the house c. 2010. A second, separate building was built 8-10 feet behind this front structure likely around the same time. It was eventually formally

connected by an enclosed breezeway and porches in the middle. Unfortunately, it is impossible to get to the back bedrooms without passing through the front left (east) bedroom indicating that the structures were not initially intended to be connected. The first bathroom was added in the downstairs front hall in 1926.

The second structure that was eventually annexed ("the annex") to the first contains similar construction and materials including side-by-side, four-over-four, single-hung sashes with the exception of the second floor, which contains mostly double casement windows with four panes each. The roofline of the annex is much shorter than the front section. There was likely an interior staircase in this section to the right of the fireplace as evidenced by pieced in, wide heart pine flooring on the second floor and the addition of a butler's pantry closet below. It is possible that "the annex" was either all sleeping quarters or contained a kitchen downstairs with sleeping quarters above. Eventually, a flat-roofed garage (present den) was added to the back giving the annexed addition a long, shot-gun appearance.

Of note, "the annex" contains a (likely) original one-room rock cellar that could have previously been a root cellar under an older unattached outbuilding. Both front and back original structures rest on (limestone?) rock foundations; red bricks cover the front walk, the front porch, and five fireplaces; both the front and annex contain original wood timbers, balloon framing, and cedar siding; the hip roof is covered with a modern raised seam, metal roof; and the cornice is bracketed with simple ornamentation. It also has a flagstone side patio likely added in the 1940s during the Walter Chrysler, Jr., renovations, which included the addition of bathrooms on the second floor with original "period" porcelain tile flooring. Chrysler also likely added the breeze-through on the lower level and a sun porch on the upper level to connect the two original structures. Bruce Hutchinson, now in his late 80s and a long-time Warrenton resident who grew up across the street, recalls Chrysler's blue New Yorker parked occasionally on the street and has memories of having to "go outside to reach the second structure and upper floor rooms on the back" when visiting the home as a boy. At some point, a gas furnace that circulates hot water to radiators was added and a new furnace (same radiators) installed in c. 2020.

Unfortunately, most of the plaster was removed in a c. 2000 renovation when insulation, new plumbing, new electrical, and central AC were added. However, plaster still exists in the stairwell and the ceilings of the second-floor front rooms. The Trapps, who owned the home during this significant renovation, have left extensive photo evidence of work done c. 2000 and earlier in the 1980s when rotting sill plates were replaced by the Kilby-Ryans using wood salvaged from a Richmond tobacco warehouse that had been razed. At some point after 1982 but prior to 2000, the first-floor side porch was closed in (upper porch was already closed in) and is now used as an office. The current owners experienced a fire in 2023 that required gutting and upgrading the c. ca. 2010 renovated kitchen, converting a powder room to a laundry, and gutting and refinishing the den, which had been converted from a garage c. 2010. The back bedroom above the kitchen was gutted, however, wood floors, original windows, window trim, doors, and door trim were saved and refinished or repainted. Fortunately, most of the older framing on both floors was spared, cleaned, and reinforced. Fire damage was minimal. However, exterior cedar siding on the driveway (west) side and on the second story (south) side were replaced to facilitate both smoke remediation and aesthetic uniformity of materials.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Smoke House (c. 1870)- good condition, but not on original foundation
- Foundations for c. 1870 spring house and chicken coop nearby and behind the smoke house

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The Saunders House, referred to locally as "The Old Saunders Place," was built just after the Civil War in 1870 overseen by both Thomas Edward (age 48) and his eldest surviving son William Edward (age 24). It is symbolic, perhaps, of the remarkable resilience of a typical, middle-class southern family struggling to stay together and rebuild their lives after facing defeat and financial ruin post-Civil War. The property was originally deeded in July 1869 (DB 61/387) by the son William as a "gift" to his mother Mary "feme sole" held in trust as an attempt to avoid post-war creditors in pursuit of both Confederate Saunders men. The construction of the house happened subsequent to the July 1869 deed as evidenced by the 1878 chancery suit record of "Alexander v. Saunders," which refers to misplaced priorities given by William (and his father Thomas) to "expensive improvements" subsequent to William's purchase of the lot, choosing shelter for the large extended family rather than immediate repayment of debts owed creditors and necessitating William's hasty retreat from town by 1872 due to the "embarrassment" of his debts. By 1884 the court would decree that the following announcement appear in the local paper (May 15 issue of the *Warrenton Virginian*) as a result of the debt collection suit begun in 1878 against Thomas: "By virtue of a decree... 6 ½ acres-situated on the Waterloo Turnpike in the suburbs of the town of Warrenton. The land is well improved and in a high state of cultivation; fruit of all kinds, and best varieties in abundance. DWELLING and OUIBUILDINGS, complete and commodious. Built in 1870." Thomas would eventually clear all debts on the property in 1898.

Thomas Saunders was evidently a respected life-long resident and merchant-farmer of Fauquier County, a lineal descendent of Rev. Robert Saunders, who in 1776 was licensed to preach by, and subsequently became pastor of the historic Broad Run Baptist Church in the New Baltimore area of Fauquier (from obituary for eldest daughter in *Fauquier Democrat*, Volume 27, Number 1646, 30 January 1932). He was a cobbler by trade who owned and operated a shoe factory where the old Fauquier Democrat Offices are now located on Culpeper Street. He had previously owned the old Physician's Hospital lot and traded his house there for Bellevue, further west on present-day Wilson Road, which he farmed and sold to Major General (CSA) L. Lindsay Lomax after the end of the war in 1866, prior to acquiring the 310 Waterloo property. Scheel reports in his 1985 book that in 1862 Thomas E. Saunders was part of the Home Guard force patrolling Warrenton and vicinity, captained by Hamden A. White, another local merchant. Apparently, the mission of such "special police" groups included making every effort to disrupt the activities of the Underground Railroad. His obituary in the January 18, 1906, issue of *The Baltimore Sun* states that at the time of his death in January 1906 he was "one of the oldest residents of this place" and "died at his home last night, in his eighty-sixth year." *The Warrenton Virginian* (Volume 16, Number 28, 5 January 1893) identifies "T.E. Saunders" as an appointed overseer of the "Poor House" for his magisterial district under the superintendency of J.C. Pearson and along with fellow overseers U.A. Jeffries, A.C. Pierce, John Mcconchie, and Mortimer Rines.

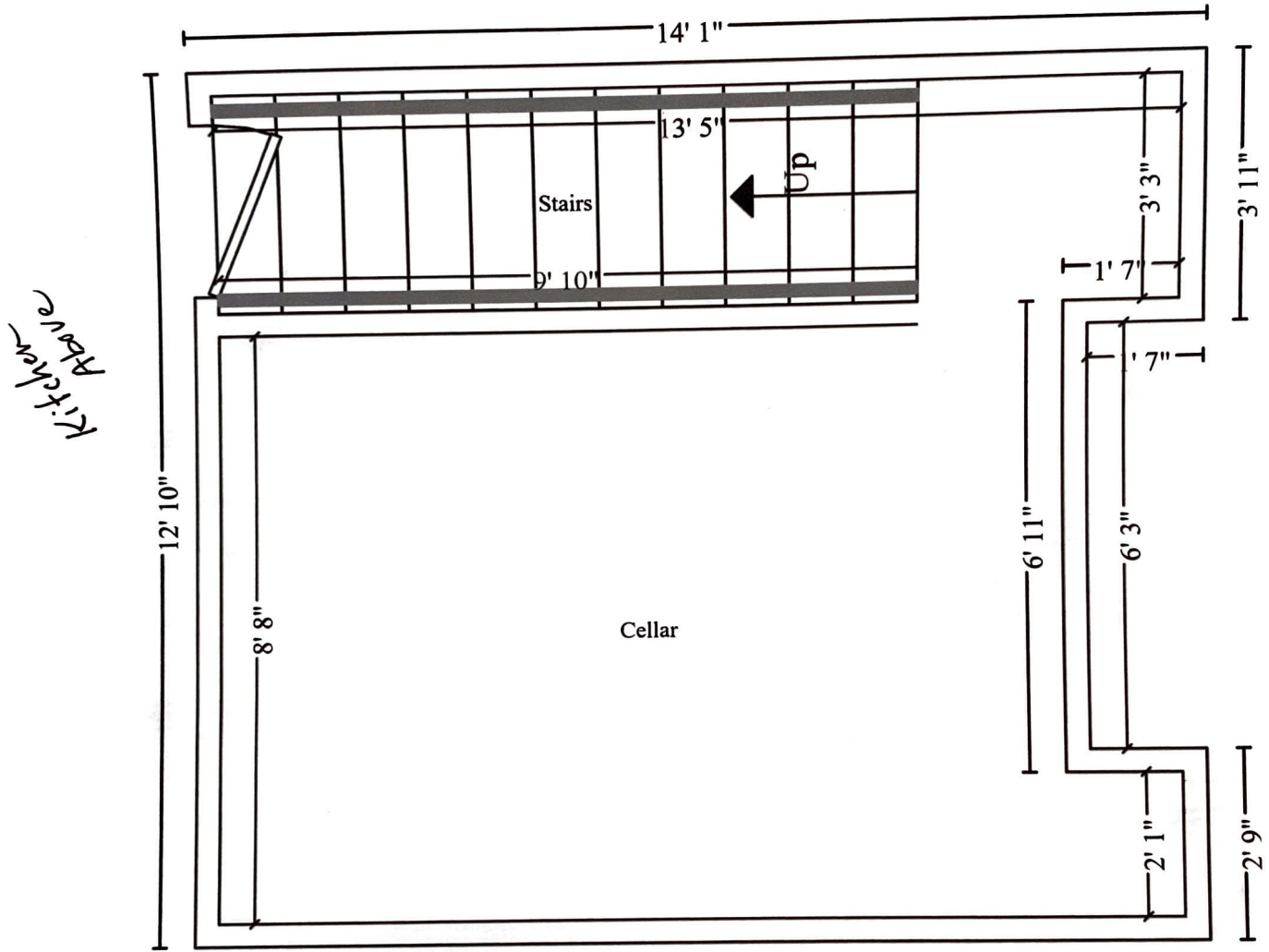
William E. Saunders II, who helped his family acquire the Waterloo property, volunteered to serve the CSA at age 16 enlisting in Company D, 43rd Battalion, Calvary, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of Colonel John S. Mosby. According to the language in the 1868 deed referring to his father's pre-existing debts, William was trying to shield the family from financial ruin so that his mother Mary would not lose the property in any court action demanding its sale for repayment of Thomas' debts. While it is unclear what the exact nature and extent of the father's debts were in 1868, it was clear by 1872 that both Saunders men had faced not only the sting of losing the war but the tragedy of failed personal business interests, which would play out publicly in the Fauquier chancery law suits known as *Atwood v. Caldwell* (1872) and *Alexander v. Saunders* (1878).

The Saunders' 1870 house on Waterloo Pike was built on a foundation of desperate circumstances upon which Thomas and William were, nevertheless, trying to provide shelter and stability for Mary and the four younger siblings. In 1872 after doing what he could to get the family house built, William left Fauquier to rebuild his own life and credit in Bryan (Brazos County), Texas, where he would be hailed as one of their most notable citizens at his death on March 1, 1935, just short of his ninetieth birthday. An historic marker in Bryan City credits him with founding the city's commercial club and for banding "together for the common good and progress of their city and state." Somehow, despite unimaginable debt and odds, Thomas and Mary managed to eventually satisfy pre-existing liens uncovered against the property in chancery, as well as, side-stepping a decree requiring debt satisfaction through private sale, or public auction of the property from the steps of the courthouse. Sadly, Mary would die in 1877 before final debts were cleared on the property. The property passed from the last Saunders family in 1919 when it was purchased by John A. and Blanche Coons. Coons was a successful undertaker and furniture salesman, and after his death the property was purchased in 1945 (DB 157/111) by Walter Chrysler, Jr., who acquired it and renovated it for the foreman working on his nearby North Wales estate. In 1951 Chrysler sold it to the self-made financier Robert Winmill, who had left Fauquier as a young man to seek his fortune in New York City and thereby support his mother and siblings after his father's untimely death. He married Viola Townshend, the New York debutante, who would move with him to Fauquier and become a well-known local equestrienne. They owned the property for one year in 1951 (DB 174/225) likely as a temporary refuge for their eldest daughter Viola "Olie" Duffy and her children, who were going through difficult personal circumstances awaiting the completion of a new home on Lee's Ridge Road.

- Fauquier Deed Books (DB 58/51, DB 59/754, DB 61/387, DB 62/116, DB 78/129, DB 82/361, DB 157/111.
- Fauquier Chancery Records Index Number 1887-033 (Virginia Memory, Library of Virginia website, old.Iva.virginia.gov).
- "Valuable Real Estate" in *Warrenton Virginian*, Volume 7, Number 50, 15 May 1884 (Virginia Chronicle, Library of Virginia website @ virginiachronicle.com).
- Scheel, Eugene. *The Civil War in Fauquier County*. Warrenton, VA: Fauquier National Bank, 1985.
- "Last Brazos Confederate Buried Today" in *Bryan Daily Eagle* from March 2, 1936.
- "Confederate Veterans in Bryan City Cemetery." Historic Marker Database (marker number 16933), <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=170303>

Cellar

SKETCH1 (ROBERT_SWIFT_&_STEV2) - Basement



Basement

SKETCH1 (ROBERT SWIFT & STEV2) - Main Level



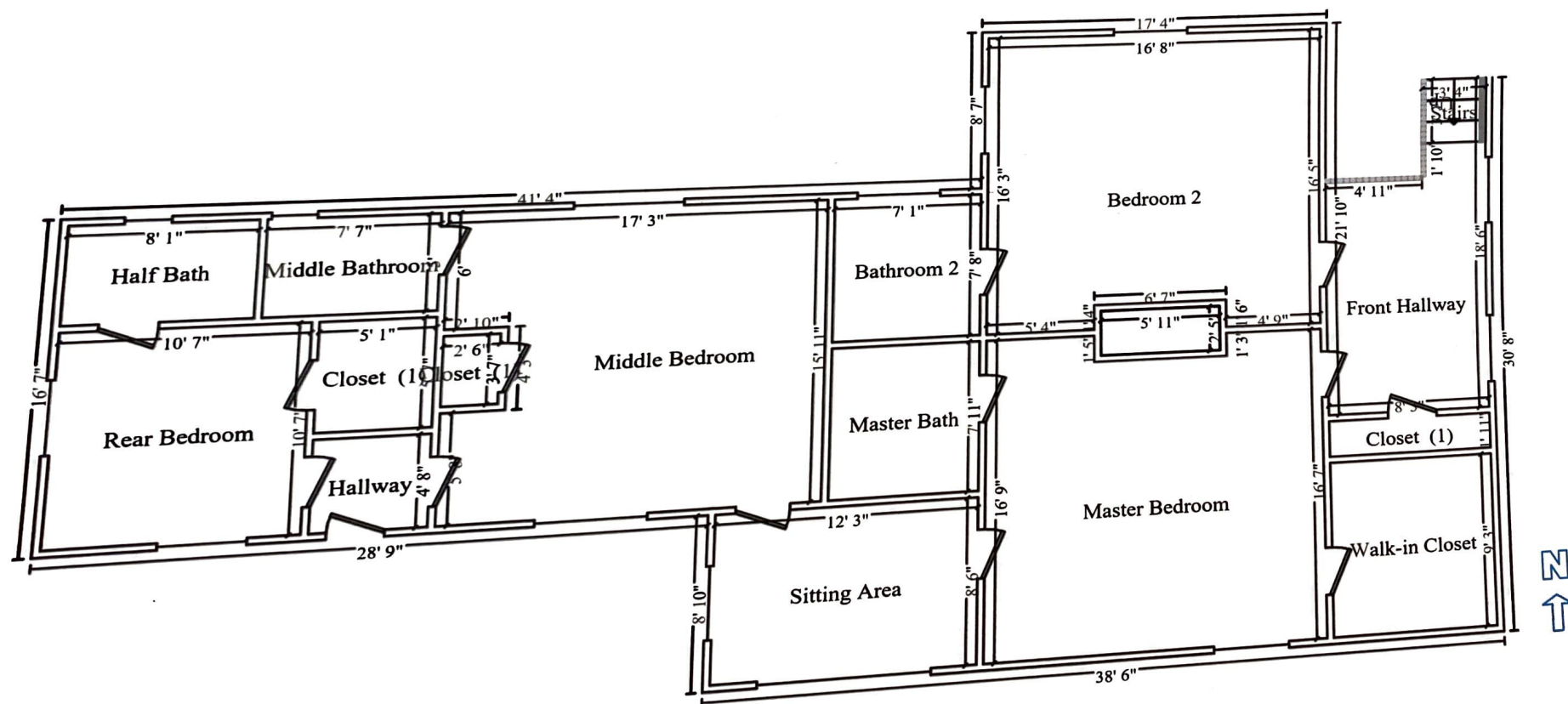
ROBERT SWI $\mathbb{R}$ _STEV2

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11/30/2023

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SKETCH1 (ROBERT_SWIFT_&_STEV2) - Level 2



PIF BOUNDARY MAP

Saunders House
Warrenton, Fauquier County, VA
DHR ID# 156-5200

 Proposed Boundary

0 50 100 150
 Feet



PIF AERIAL-VICINITY MAP

Saunders House
Warrenton, Fauquier County, VA
DHR ID# 156-5200

 Proposed Boundary

0 150 300 450
 Feet





























