

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Pope Villa
other names/site number F AE 1140; Pope, Senator John and Eliza, House
Related Multiple Property NA

2. Location

street & number 326 Grosvenor Avenue

NA
NA

 not for publication
city or town Lexington vicinity
state Kentucky code KY county Fayette code 067 zip code 40508

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title Craig Potts/SHPO Date _____

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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 _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
0	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic – Single Dwelling

Work-in-progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Early Republic: Federal

foundation: Stone
walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt

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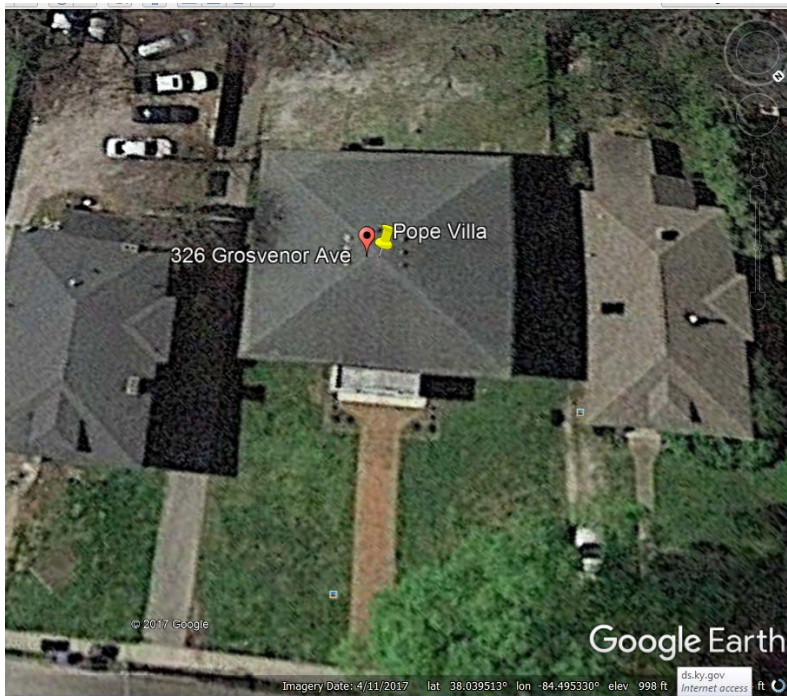
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Narrative Description

Summary

This nomination proposes individual listing for the Pope Villa (FAE-1140), Benjamin Henry Latrobe's "most fully documented" extant house—one of only three in the United States and the only suburban villa now standing.¹ Located at 326 Grosvenor Avenue in Lexington, Kentucky, the Pope Villa (also known as the Senator John and Eliza Pope House; (FAE-1140) is within the locally designated Aylesford Historic District, and was listed in the National Register in 1984 as a contributing building within the Southeast Lexington Residential and Commercial District (NRIS 84001415). The property is being interpreted for its architectural significance and for its information potential with respect to the interaction of architects and builders in the early days of this country. The area proposed for listing is approximately 1/3 acre, with one contributing building.

Note on in-text images: Photos and figures appear in the text for the reader's convenience and understanding. Most of the in-text photos and figures are identified by number. Those numbers appear below the image, as captions. Those photo and figure numbers do not correspond with the numbers assigned to the images on the nomination's official image disc.



Pope Villa, Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky

Longitude: 38.039492° Latitude: -84.495793°

Toward the end of 1810, Benjamin Henry Latrobe began designs for the Pope's brick house as a two-story federal-style suburban villa, which was completed in 1812.² Dates of major renovations correspond to changes in ownership: ca. 1843, 1865, 1914, and ca. 1960. A major fire burned through house on October 22, 1987.

¹Michael W. Fazio and Patrick A. Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 389.

²*Ibid.*

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After the fire, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation purchased the property to prevent its demolition and to restore it. As a part of the restoration process, the firm of Phillips and Oppermann was hired in 1990 to produce a historic structures report which collected a great deal of architectural evidence and confirmed that the building corresponded to Latrobe's design.³ This evidence guided the restoration of Pope Villa's exterior and will inform future interventions, now led by Mesick, Cohen, Wilson, and Baker Architects of Albany, New York.

Given the successive periods of rebuilding, the fire, and the restoration of the exterior walls undertaken for the Bluegrass Trust, the building that exists today as the Pope Villa relays two messages. Its restored exterior attempts to be faithful to Latrobe's design and presents a façade close to the house's first incarnation; on the interior, it exhibits a mix of Latrobe's original plan and that created by the 1840s alterations.

Character of Setting and Property; Changes over time and development of the surrounding neighborhood)

The Pope Villa originally stood as one of the first ring of early nineteenth-century suburban dwellings surrounding the city. Less than a mile from Lexington's central business district, the front gates of the Pope Villa opened onto High Street.⁴ The Popes' original property boundaries extended to High Street on the north; to VanPelt (Rose) Street on the west; to Maxwell Street on the south; and finally to an adjoining property on the east, forming a 13-acre trapezoidal-shaped lot.⁵ Although the present site preserves the immediate domestic yard associated with the historic property, very little of the original site is left. Currently, the house sits on approximately .3 acres, with the rest of the original surrounding tract fully developed in the early twentieth century.



Pope Villa in its Neighborhood Context

³ Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann, Preservation Architects, "Investigation of the Senator John Pope House: Progress Report Prepared for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation" (1 April 1991).

⁴Clay Lancaster, "Through Half a Century of Palladianism in the Bluegrass," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th series (25 June 1944), p. 353.

⁵ Lexington, Kentucky, Fayette County Deed Book 7, pp. 79-80. Deed between John Maxwell and John Pope April 26, 1814.

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According to Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon, the deed was not written until 1814, although the Popes, in fact, bought the site in 1810 or 1811.⁶ Authors Jeffrey Cohen and Charles Brownell questioned whether Latrobe had a specific site and orientation in mind when he drew up the house plans.⁷ Patrick Snadon credits the Popes themselves with choosing a northwest orientation overlooking a gentle slope down toward the picturesque Town Branch, which has long since been covered over.⁸ Consequently, by establishing the orientation of the house, the Popes saw to it that the villa benefitted aesthetically from its view of the creek and practically from its convenient access to downtown Lexington.⁹

Senator John and Eliza Pope did not live in house for very long. Eliza died in 1818 and John Pope apparently did not return to the house afterward. He rented it until 1836, when he sold the property to Catherine Barry. She, in turn, leased it to Captain Henry and Elizabeth Johnson. The Johnsons purchased the house and grounds in 1843 and undertook a major remodeling. But the biggest impacts to the villa's setting took place after 1865, when Joseph Sowyel Woolfolk, a prosperous Kentucky businessman and farmer and Mississippi plantation owner, and his wife Lucy bought the Pope Villa as a summer residence. Not only did the Woolfolks hire the Lexington architect Thomas Lewinski to update the house in the popular Italianate style, but in 1900, they also divided the site into 40 lots.¹⁰ The Pope Villa now sits within a suburban neighborhood of early twentieth-century houses and apartment buildings, locally known as the Woolfolk Subdivision. The house occupies the subdivision's lot number 44, which is approximately 80 feet by 175 feet in dimension.¹¹ The building's primary façade now faces Grosvenor Avenue, a street that in the early twentieth century was cut through the former Pope estate.¹²



⁶Fazio and Snadon, p. 392 and p. 732, n. 50.

⁷Jeffrey Cohen and Charles Brownell, "The Neoclassical, the Picturesque and the Sublime of Latrobe's Architecture," in *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The Architectural and Engineering Drawings*, Series 2, vol. 2, Pts. 1-2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977 for the Maryland Historical Society), p. 13.

⁸ Fazio and Snadon, p. 399 and 732, n.50. The authors note that the only one of Latrobe's "rational house" theories not met by the Pope Villa was one of orientation—the architect recommended that the main façade face north and that the house accord with the cardinal points, p. 733, n. 67.

⁹Fazio and Snadon, p. 732, n. 52.

¹⁰Fazio and Snadon, p. 438-440.

¹¹ Woolfolk Subdivision Plat located at the Fayette County Clerk's office, Cabinet E, Slide 183, 1914.

¹²Fazio and Snadon, p. 732, n. 52 The house is actually oriented at an almost 45 degree diagonal to the cardinal compass points. This means that "north" is actually northwest, "south" is actually southeast, "east" is actually northeast, and "west" is actually southwest. For narrative purposes, the diagonal orientation is ignored and the cardinal directions are used to describe the site orientation and façades.

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1907 Sanborn Map of the Property

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View of Property Today

Exterior Description of the Pope Villa

The Pope Villa's stone foundation rests on unexcavated earth. The central mass of the building measures 54 feet on each side, making it square in form. The bonding pattern of the masonry walls is Flemish, though some common bond sections have been identified.¹³ The original slope of the roof, as constructed, followed the specifications of Latrobe.¹⁴ Today, the house is covered by a hipped roof with a very low slope, narrow eaves, and asphalt shingles. This new roof was constructed in 1988 to protect the house's interior; it does not follow the original roof line which will be replicated in a later phase of restoration. The four original interior chimney stacks have not yet been restored, nor have the balustrade and oculus that were indicated in the original Latrobe designs and built in 1812.



Photo 3

The principal three-bay, two-story façade is a flat, austere masonry wall pierced by a door and two smaller windows on the first level and three large windows on the second level (photo 3). Latrobe's surviving elevation drawings show that his intention was that the lower story would measure 9 feet 6 inches high and the upper would measure 13 feet; the Popes and their builder altered this plan by making the first story 10 feet in height and the upper story 13 feet.¹⁵ The lower-story windows mark the center of their bays, but their midlines do not align with the midline of the upper-story windows. The lower-level window openings are six-over-six double-hung sash with brick jack arches. The main entrance is located in the center and is marked by the portico, which was restored based upon the original architectural drawings, surviving physical evidence at the building, and the archaeology of the site.

Photo 4

Fazio and Snadon discuss at length the one-story portico that appears on Latrobe's drawings for Pope Villa. It is crowned with an unadorned cornice, projects outward from the façade and forms a screen of arches, with two

¹³Phillips and Oppermann, p. 25.

¹⁴Phillips and Oppermann, p. 24.

¹⁵Fazio and Snadon, p. 421-422.

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round Tuscan columns in the center. While there is no record of appearance of the portico that was actually built, whatever its specific appearance, it survived no later than the middle of the nineteenth century, likely having been altered in the 1840s under the Johnson family ownership.¹⁶ An archaeological excavation of the portico area provided evidence of four equally-spaced brick piers; Fazio and Snadon believe that the piers' "lightness" indicates that the portico superstructure was wood.¹⁷ Behind the portico is a masonry-arched and recessed entrance. The original 1812 door has been replaced by a solid wooden door flanked by sidelights. The current door appears to date to the 1840s renovation and is slightly taller than the original.¹⁸ The upper-story fenestration consists of three Venetian wooden windows. The central portion of each window is a nine-over-nine double-hung sash flanked by a window with a three-over-three double-hung sash. Each Venetian window has engaged pilasters separating the three parts and is surmounted by a jack arch. These large windows take up a large proportion of the façade's entire surface area; thus they announce the second story as the principal floor and the first level as essentially a raised basement.

The principal façade has been carefully restored to its imagined original appearance based upon detailed forensic examination of surviving physical evidence and the evidence provided by Latrobe's drawings. The façade restoration involved stripping old layers of paint from the brick, repairing the masonry, developing a design for the windows based on existing physical and archival evidence, and reconstructing the windows as accurately as possible. The conjecturally reconstructed portico, based on ambiguous archeological evidence as well as Latrobe's drawings, is meant only to approximate the design of the original.¹⁹ Modern materials, including stainless steel and tempered glass, are utilized in places both to signal the interpretive nature of the new portico and to allow visitors to view some of the forensic clues unearthed by archeological excavations (photo 4). The portico thus represents the effort of the Blue Grass Trust to interpret, in materials, the intellectual conundrum presented by the existing evidence.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Less conjecture has been necessary on the remaining façades, which have been restored to their original 1812 appearance using existing architectural evidence and Latrobe's scaled drawings. The upper-story central

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Fazio and Snadon, p. 735, n. 99. For the archaeological evidence of the underground piers see W. Stephen McBride and Kim A. McBride, "Preliminary Archaeological Investigations at the Pope House 15FA205, Lexington, Kentucky," *Report No. 246, Program for Cultural Resource Assessment* (Lexington: 24 May 1991), pp. 5 and 11-24. Also, see Phillips and Oppermann, R100.

¹⁸Phillips and Oppermann, "Progress Report," p. 25.

¹⁹According to Fazio and Snadon, p. 422, the "lightness" of the piers suggest that the builder, Asa Wilgus, might have built the portico as designed by Latrobe but substituted wood for the masonry indicated in the architect's original drawings. Other design changes to the portico have been credited to the builder as well.

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windows on the east and west façades of the main block of the house are original. All other windows on the east, west and south façades have been reconstructed based on that original. The south (rear) façade experienced the most alteration over the course of the building's life. This included a one-story service ell added in the 1840s and a rear veranda attached during an 1865 renovation by architect Thomas Lewinski (figure 1). After the Woolfolks, who had commissioned the Lewinski renovation, sold the building in the early twentieth century, it was converted into an apartment building with four units (figure 2). At that time, a new two-story wing was added to the back of the house, replacing the one-story ell of the 1840s. Following the fire, the Blue Grass Trust removed all remaining rear additions in order to restore the south façade. Even with the successive alterations, the original openings of Latrobe's design remained intact and visible and were re-established in the restoration. Evidence for the restoration of the rear door and sidelights included markings visible in the masonry and original headers.



Photo 5: Rear (south) elevation

Photo 6: east side

Photo 1: front facade

No drawings by Latrobe of the house's side and rear elevations are known to survive. Thus, the architect's plans for these must be deduced from floor plans that indicate three-bay configurations on the sides of the house and three bays with the central doorway on the back (photos 5 and 6; see also photo 1).²⁰ As built, second-story windows—though not as wide as the Venetian style windows on the front—are significantly taller than the first story windows. One clear departure from Latrobe's original floor plan exists in the form of a door on the east side of the villa which opened into the kitchen. While this was a practical device which perhaps allowed delivery of supplies directly to the kitchen, it did disrupt the symmetry of the east façade. The symmetry of the rear façade is underscored by a central doorway.

In restoring the Pope Villa, every effort has been made to maintain original materials. For example, preservation has included pulling scarred bricks and reversing them, analyzing original mortar for replication, and storing the original bricks to be used for chimney restoration. Study of the building has also shown that the original façades had stenciled mortar joints that were painted white.

Interior Description of the Pope Villa

“At the Pope Villa, Latrobe ingeniously segregated the spaces and circulation of different ‘populations’ of the house: family, visitors, and servants.”²¹ Certainly, it was not the custom in Kentucky, nor in the American south, for any architect, as Latrobe had in this design, to place all the “services within the main block, in a low first story, with the major public rooms above in the second story.”²² Thus, the plan for the house featured informal family spaces and service areas on the ground floor, which were hidden from the exterior and from the

²⁰Fazio and Snadon, 422 and 424; Phillips and Oppermann, R201 and R202.

²¹Fazio and Snadon, p. 416.

²²Fazio and Snadon, p. 402.

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interior public areas, and public spaces, including a drawing room, dining room, and Latrobe’s innovative rotunda, on the second floor (figure 3).

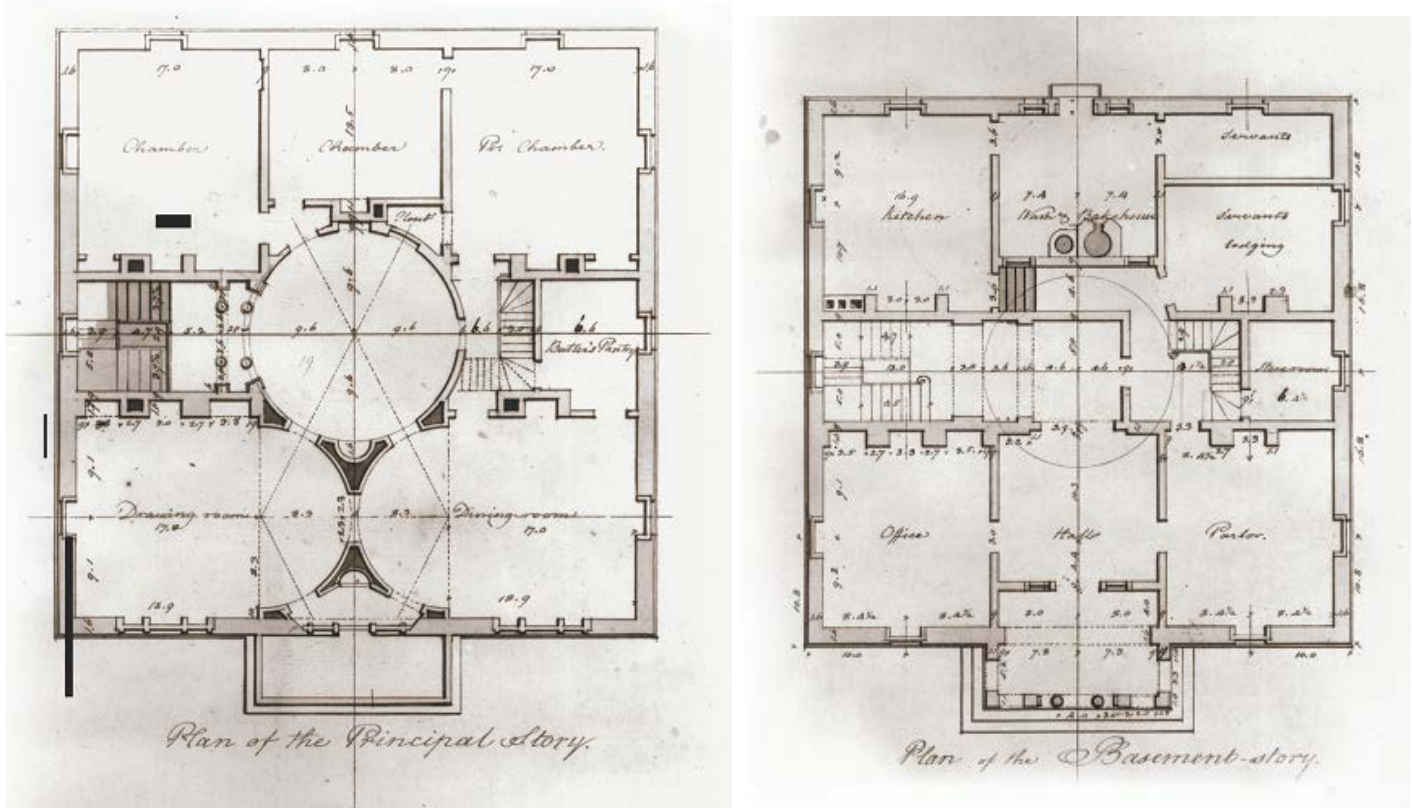


Figure 3: Upper floor plan and first floor (Basement-story) plan.

When entering through the recessed porch on the north facade, the visitor now encounters a central rectangular passage that runs from front to back entrances (figure 4; photos 7 and 8).



Ground floor model



Looking North toward center of house

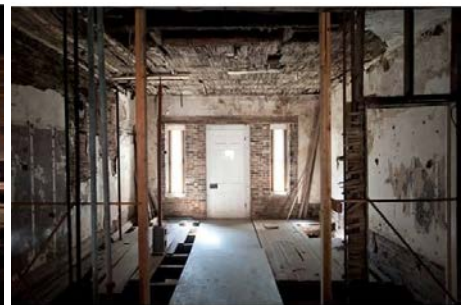


Photo 8

A major feature of the Johnson renovations of ca. 1843, the passage violates Latrobe’s plan to separate, by means of an east-west *dégagement*, the service sections at the back of the ground floor from the family’s informal spaces in the front.²³ In Latrobe’s plan, one moved from a square entry hall into a smaller square space located at the center of the house. A cross passage containing the main stairway intersected this small square. The masonry walls that enclosed this space on the south and west sides, as well as an extension of masonry walls on the north side, have been partially restored based on existing architectural evidence. In the original

²³Fazio and Snadon, p. 439.

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Latrobe plan, informal family spaces flanked the entrance: to the east is a space intended as an office for Senator Pope that still exists; to the west, is a room labeled on the Latrobe plan as a “Parlor,” that might have been utilized by Eliza Pope as the headquarter from which she ran the household (photos 9 and 10). Evidence for this function is that this Parlor’s south wall originally contained a doorway that connected the room with the ground floor service space behind. To the east of the central passage created ca. 1843, a short cross-hall stair hall which leads to the main stairway. Though the original stairs no longer survive, a temporary stair is currently in this position and still leads through a series of lighted and shadowed spaces to the central rotunda on the second floor (photos 11, 12 and 13). While the original stairs were removed during one of the building’s renovations, ghost marks of a former rise of stairs remain on the brick walls in this location to permit reading and perhaps reconstruction of the original stair configuration.



Photo 9

Photo 10

Photo 11

On the west side of the square circulation space located in the center of the house, Latrobe’s plan shows a doorway giving access to the service spaces of the lower level. This doorway was restored as part of the brick walls in the rear hall (photo 14, next page). Beyond this door, the service spaces occupy nearly half of the ground level. Evidence of the service stair and a brick wall separating it from the storeroom were located during the architectural investigation of the Pope Villa; these two features take up the balance of the central west side.²⁴ The remaining third of the ground level is situated along the south side of the house. These spaces include the servants’ quarters on the west side, the wash/bake room in the center and the kitchen on the east side (photos 15, 16 and 17). Though currently the historic servants’ quarters exist as a single room, the Latrobe design called for two non-communicating rooms in this space. Ghosts in the surviving plaster reveal that a partition wall did exist in accord with Latrobe’s design.²⁵ A service passage connects the three service spaces and runs from west to east between the servant quarters and the kitchen. The wash/bake room was originally separated from this corridor by a brick wall (see photos 14 and 17). The foundation of this wall has been documented and conforms to the Latrobe plan.²⁶ By introducing the central hall, the 1843 renovation eliminated the wash/bake room chimney. The kitchen on the east side retains its historic configuration.

Along with the with the insertion in 1843 of the central hall that “broke through the *dégagement* on the first floor, the Johnsons further disrupted Latrobe’s rational plan which separated the servants’ spaces from the family by adding a kitchen ell to the back of the house. Thus their remodeling of the Pope Villa “brought the house closer to Kentucky domestic traditions by reversing many of the unusual features of Latrobe’s original plan.”²⁷

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Phillips and Oppermann, p. 19.

²⁷Fazio and Snadon, p. 439.

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Photo 14

Photo 15

Photo 17

The second story of the Pope Villa was designed by Latrobe to be the principal floor, containing both public spaces and the Pope family's private quarters. One reached the second floor by way of the main stair, and moved toward the rotunda (19 feet in diameter and approximately 22 feet in height) through a planned "double screen of columns with responding pilasters against the walls (photos 18 and 19)."²⁸ The rotunda is the heart of the original Latrobe plan, serving as both the formal public receiving space as well as the circulation hub for the second level. The dome of the rotunda was severely damaged in the 1987 fire, though a section of it has been salvaged along with structural ribs that survived the blaze. Despite this loss of fabric, the rotunda as a space is surprisingly intact, as is an original niche on the north side. Access to the dining room on the west side and to the drawing room on the east is provided through doorways on the north side of the rotunda (see photo 13, above). Both of these spaces were intended as public spaces. According to the Latrobe design, the dining and drawing rooms had semi-circular walls that adjoined each other, and created a third, closet-like space along the north wall that was accessible from both rooms. While these curved walls are not intact, remnants still stand on the south sides of the dining and drawing rooms (photo 20). Along the front (north) wall of the building, both the original shape of these semi-circular walls and the size of the closet formed by them are apparent from a door that remains in place between the dining room and closet, and mortise holes in the floor along the northern edge of the drawing room's curved wall (photo 21). These features indicate that the dining and drawing room walls were constructed according to Latrobe's original plan.²⁹



Photo 18

Photo 19

Photo 20

Photo 21

The servants' stair and butler's pantry on the west side of the house are behind the dining room and can be entered either through a doorway on the south wall of that room or directly from the rotunda through a door in its west side. The original door between the rotunda and butler's pantry remains intact. The private chambers for the Pope family are located along the upper story's back or south side. The western chamber, believed to have been the Popes', is entered through a small vestibule from the rotunda (photo 22). This deviates slightly from the Latrobe plan, where the vestibule led to the central chamber. The central chamber is believed to have functioned as a nursery, and this function may be the reason the doorway was placed in a location different than

²⁸Fazio and Snadon, 428.

²⁹Ibid.

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that indicated in Latrobe's plan. Forensic investigation of the building indicates that a niche that was at one time on the south wall of the rotunda was later removed to provide access to this central room. The door currently in this location is thought to be the original front door modified to fit the opening (see photo 16). The eastern chamber, thought to have been used as a guest room, is also accessed through the vestibule (photo 23).



Photo 22



Photo 16



Photo 23

Due both to later renovations or the 1987 fire, not all of the finish original to the 1812/Pope period of the house survives. On the south wall of the drawing room is a former niche later cut through to serve as a doorway, around which survives the largest sample of original formal interior finish (photos 24, 25 and 26), which features beaded moldings, reeding, keystones and punch work. The intact chair rail in the rotunda exhibits more of the punch work, creating small sunbursts and swags (photo 27). Fazio and Snadon argue that this finish would not have "suited Latrobe's reductivist taste." Rather, the decorative work "displays some of the finest woodcarving to survive from the Federal period in Kentucky..."³⁰ In the ca. 1843 renovation, the Johnsons recast the paired dining and drawing rooms into "Greek Revival-style double parlors with matching black-marble mantelpieces," and Fazio and Snadon speculated that the Greek Revival detailing added at this time was closer to Latrobe's original intent than that originally installed in the house.³¹ Though not all the interior finish survives, either owing to later renovations or the 1987 fire, a sufficient amount of these decorative details, samples of original paint and wallpapers remain intact to provide at least one example of almost every piece of missing woodwork and wall covering.

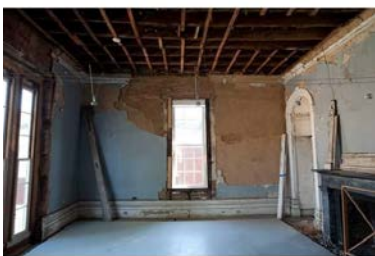


Photo 24
Latrobe's design intention and beyond



Photo 25



Photo 26



Photo 27

Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon concisely summarize the reasons for differences between Latrobe's original ideas and what was actually built:

³⁰Fazio and Snadon, p. 433.

³¹Fazio and Snadon, p. 439 and p. 737, n. 123.

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As the final construction drawings that Latrobe gave to the Popes and those that he may have sent directly to Lexington do not survive, we cannot know exactly how the house as built compared with his final plans. But the house itself may be compared to the surviving Library of Congress drawings (probably Latrobe's penultimate designs retained as his office records). Some differences are apparent between the house as built and the drawings. These differences may be attributable to any of four circumstances: first, to changes that Latrobe himself may have made between the surviving ('penultimate') drawings and the final drawings that arrived in Lexington; second, to the fact that some of Latrobe's detailed construction drawings may have arrived after John Pope and Asa Wilgus had carried the building too far to use them; third, to changes that the Popes may have suggested to their builder during the construction process; fourth, to changes that the builder may have made on his own initiative. Most of the changes attributable to the Popes and their builder are evident, for they vary from Latrobe's practices and preferences.³²

The Pope family occupied the Pope Villa for only five years.³³ After Eliza Pope died in 1818, Senator John Pope apparently did not return to the house and leased the property out until 1836 when he sold it to William T. and Catherine Barry.³⁴ Two years later, the Barrys rented the house to Captain Henry and Elizabeth Johnson, who in turn purchased it in 1843. Not only did the Johnsons give the house updated Greek Revival finish, but more importantly they tore through the wall separating the service space from the entry hall to create a central passage plan. They also constructed a one-story rear service ell at the east side behind the old kitchen and moved the household's spaces for domestic work to it (figures 16 and 17, above). The old kitchen then most likely became a dining room at this time. In creating a double-pile, central passage plan with rear service ell, the Johnsons thus made the house into the sort of "frying pan" Latrobe particularly disliked.³⁵ By reversing the more unusual features of Latrobe's rational house plan, the renovation of ca. 1843 "brought the house closer to Kentucky domestic traditions," so that the Pope Villa conformed with local taste and spatial practice.³⁶

Later, beyond the period under consideration here, major changes were undertaken in 1865 when the then-owner Joseph Woolfolk hired prominent Lexington architect Thomas Lewinski to update the exterior in the Italianate style. The roof form was altered to include cross gables on each façade, and wide brackets were added along the eaves. Additional changes include a cast-iron porch added to the front façade, the enlargement of lower-story windows, arches added to the upper-story windows, and bay windows added to the east and west facades (see figure 1, above).³⁷ The Blue Grass Trust's restoration of the house's exterior removed these bay windows.

The house remained a single-family dwelling into the beginning of the twentieth century, though the majority of its original 13-acre lot was subdivided by the Woolfolk family into 40 lots – the Woolfolk Subdivision. New streets were added, including Grosvenor and Arlington that now bound the Pope Villa property.

In 1907, the house still retained the 1840s ell, as well as approximately six outbuildings (see map 2, above).³⁸ In 1914, the Woolfolk family sold the property to J.A. Wyant and Mrs. Lottie Watkins.³⁹ According to city

³²Fazio and Snadon, p. 420

³³For an excellent history of Pope Villa ownership see Fazio and Snadon, pp. 438-442,

³⁴Deed Book 12, p. 399, June 7, 1836.

³⁵Allen Freeman, "A Burnt Offering," *Preservation* 53, no. 2 (March/April 2001): p. 54.

³⁶Fazio and Snadon, 439

³⁷Ibid, 440.

³⁸Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Lexington, KY 1907, Sheet #78.

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directories, the Pope Villa was then subdivided into four apartments. The main stair was removed and a new stair was constructed that ascended into the center of the rotunda. Partition walls divided the rotunda into corridors. Two-story brick-pier porches were added to the principal façade (see figure 2, above).⁴⁰ Sanborn Maps of 1934 and 1958 show that the property remained apartments during this time. The original ell was demolished at some point and a new two-story addition was put in the same place.⁴¹ By the 1960s, the building had been further subdivided into ten apartments, and a two-story wing was constructed on the rear façade.⁴²

Ownership of the Pope Villa by the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation

A fire took place at the Pope Villa on October 22, 1987. Starting in a first floor apartment, it spread through the walls to the attic. Although the fire destroyed a majority of the roof structure and portions of the interior finish, it did not completely devastate the property.⁴³ As Fazio and Snadon noted, “The fire had performed dual functions of destruction and revelation” in that it actually destroyed much of the twentieth-century materials, and revealed historic fabric that had been concealed for more than a century.⁴⁴ After the October 1987 fire, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation purchased the property and immediately covered the building with a temporary canvas roof. Within seven months of the fire, the organization had raised funds to replace the temporary roof with a more permanent one. It also hired the architectural firm of Phillips and Oppermann to begin thorough architectural investigations of the Pope Villa.

These investigations, which involved comparing Latrobe’s original drawings with the extant building, resulted in a historic structures report in 1991. Phillips and Oppermann were able to identify numerous Latrobe-designed elements that had long been obscured by the later modifications. These include many of the original walls and wall openings, the mortise holes for the semicircular framing of the ends of the drawing and dining rooms, the foundation of the masonry walls that divided the service area from the entry hall, the location of the brick wall that separated the wash/bake room from the back service hall, and a shadow of the original wall that separated the two servant rooms.⁴⁵

This architectural evidence showed not only the basic fidelity of the house to Latrobe’s plans, often down to the quarter inch, but also important deviations in the building from the surviving “penultimate” Latrobe plans discussed above. To investigate these fascinating problems, the Blue Grass Trust removed the twentieth-century interior finishes and partitions.⁴⁶ Additional work has included the partial reconstruction of the masonry wall around the central square hall on the first floor -- a wall that was essential to the support of the major rooms on the second floor -- as well as the restoration or reconstruction of all four facades. The restoration approach adopted by the Blue Grass Trust was to restore only the elements that can positively be identified as associated with the Latrobe-Pope period. In cases where no such architectural evidence is documented, the Blue Grass Trust has refrained—and will continue to refrain—from conjecture. Instead, it has retained historic fabric from

³⁹Deed Book 174, p. 283-284, May 12, 1914.

⁴⁰Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky* (Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), p. 137.

⁴¹Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Lexington, KY 1934, Sheet #27.

⁴²Phillips and Oppermann, p. 29.

⁴³Phillips and Oppermann, p. 9.

⁴⁴Fazio and Snadon, 444.

⁴⁵Phillips and Oppermann, p. 18.

⁴⁶Phillips and Oppermann, p. 19.

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the later periods of renovations. This restoration approach carefully retains fragile and significant historic fabric, while recognizing that replacing a majority of missing materials would impact the overall integrity of the house.⁴⁷

At the same time Pope Villa represents a “relatively high degree of fidelity to Latrobe’s plans and intentions,” certain departures from Latrobe’s design, “including the splendid interior detailing and decoration represent” the Popes’ taste and that of Asa Wilgus, their local builder.⁴⁸ At Pope Villa, Latrobe’s “avant-garde” design announced the mind of a cosmopolitan architect and clients, fused with the “richness of a local, vernacular tradition.” Fazio and Snadon credit Eliza Pope for many of the changes made to Latrobe’s original plans as construction of the house was imminent and then underway; she oversaw construction and dealt directly with the architect. Based on a letter from Latrobe to John Pope, Fazio and Snadon observe that “the high quality of Latrobe’s ultimate design...is in part attributable to Eliza Pope.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷Fazio and Snadon, pp. 445-446

⁴⁸Fazio and Snadon, p. 434.

⁴⁹Fazio and Snadon, p. 395.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 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. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | D | Property has yielded or is likely to yield, information in prehistory or history |

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1812, ca. 1843

Significant Dates

1812

Ca. 1843

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A Owned by a religious purposes.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Latrobe, Benjamin Henry (architect)
Wilgus, Asa (builder)

Criteria Considerations N/A

Property is:

- 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 last 50 years.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.

Period of Significance:

The Period of Significance is two years, the original construction in 1812 and ca. 1843, when the house was substantially changed. The changes in 1843 give us important insight into the reception of Latrobe's design from a generation before. Those changes enable us to recognize that the house's original design was a product of a nationally significant architect who was subject to local interpretation by its builders and by its users. Pope Villa's value comes from its revealing of this democratization of the design process on one significant building.

Criterion Considerations: NA

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Summary Paragraph

The Pope Villa (FAE-1140, otherwise known as the Senator John and Eliza Pope House) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 1, 1984 as a contributing element of the Southeast Lexington Residential and Commercial Historic District (NRIS 84001415). This nomination proposes individual listing for the property due to its national architectural significance and its potential to convey important information about building design and construction during the early national period. More specifically, the Pope Villa meets National Register Criteria C and D in the Area of Architecture. Designed by America's "first professional architect," Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820), it is nationally significant for two periods, 1812 and ca. 1843. The property meets the second and third clauses of Criterion C: it is both the work of a master, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and possesses high artistic values as the zenith of Latrobe's domestic design philosophy. While the house provides many insights into national and international avant-garde design concepts of the early nineteenth century, its actual physical data, particularly changes in the 1840s, help us to wrestle with questions about the interplay between national building ideas and the local implementation of those ideas. With respect to Criterion D, the Pope Villa has the potential to convey important historical information about architectural practice during America's early national period, at the time that artisan designer/builders were confronted with the ideas and practices of professionally trained architects.

The house's significance under Criterion C is realized through an understanding of both the historic context "Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Domestic Architecture in the United States, 1796 – 1820," and the nature of domestic architecture in Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky, ca. 1800 – 1850. Completed in 1812, Pope Villa is the work of a master and possesses high artistic value. Successfully integrating the three major themes of Latrobe's domestic design philosophy, "the rational house, the rotunda villa, and the scenery house," Pope Villa is the culminating achievement of his domestic practice and is "perhaps Latrobe's most important house."⁵⁰ However, many of Latrobe's houses "were so original and unconventional that they virtually begged for remodeling or demolition."⁵¹ This was especially true of the Pope Villa, the house most successfully incorporating all of Latrobe's avant-garde domestic design ideas. Shortly after the Pope Villa was sold to Captain Henry Johnson in 1843, Johnson and his wife Elizabeth undertook a major remodeling of the house. Their rebuilding campaign "brought the house closer to Kentucky domestic traditions by reversing many of the more unusual features of Latrobe's rational-house plan."⁵² Most importantly, it "eliminated Latrobe's concealed service *degagement* on the first story to create a traditional, central hall; [and] ... removed the kitchen to a rear service wing." As a result of these changes, by the end of the 1840s Pope Villa "became what Latrobe had most resisted: a conservative, center-hall house with an attached service ell."⁵³

Pope Villa's significance under Criterion D derives from the building's potential to convey important information about architectural design and construction practices in America's early national period. The house

⁵⁰ Michael W. Fazio and Patrick A. Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 389.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 575.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 439.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 576.

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provides many instances of a fundamental tension existing between the sophisticated and cosmopolitan design for the house and its more conservative and traditional local context. On one hand are artisan designer-builders, who adhered to local building practices, technologies and preferences, and on the other are trained architectural professionals, whose knowledge of international architectural trends, desire to innovate, and aspirations for professional recognition led them to distinguish their design from local construction traditions.⁵⁴ Because Latrobe sent various drawings and letters detailing his plans for Pope Villa, but never visited the construction site, the Popes and their builder, Asa Wilgus, had to interpret Latrobe's intentions to at least some degree. Moreover, Wilgus and the Popes apparently decided to do a few things differently than Latrobe indicated or instructed.⁵⁵ After the 1987 fire burned away the majority of fabric that had been added to the house during the late nineteenth and twentieth-century renovations, early nineteenth-century materials were carefully removed where necessary and warehoused.⁵⁶ With the house not yet finished on the interior, many construction details remain visible. Between the architectural fabric visible in place and that warehoused, further investigation at Pope Villa affords a significant opportunity to learn about the decisions made as the building was under construction. It thus has the potential to convey valuable information about the role played by artisans in the design process. In this analysis, the Pope Villa promises to help us understand more honestly the architectural authorship of the building.⁵⁷

Research Design

Evidence in support of this application includes Latrobe's original designs for the villa; the architectural historian Clay Lancaster discovered a nearly full set of drawings in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The drawings and letters from Latrobe to Senator Pope and Asa Wilgus in Latrobe's Letterbooks, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore attest to the varied adaptations of and changes in those plans by Eliza Pope and by the local builders and artisans who worked on the house under the direction of the Kentuckian Asa Wilgus.⁵⁸ Changes made in the 1840s to the original Latrobe plans are clearly evident in the present building.

This application addresses National Register Criteria C and D in that it covers the Pope Villa's unique value as a masterwork by Benjamin Latrobe. This nomination also acknowledges that the novelty of his design led to the house's alteration by the first owners after the Popes (Criterion C). The nomination also outlines the house's potential to convey information about the practices and processes of building design and construction in the early nineteenth century (Criterion D)—especially its ability to shed light on the interactions and relationships between local artisan builder/designers and trained professionals.

The information set out here derives from the historic structures report by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann (1991), and the monumental text *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* by Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon (2006). The arguments for significance rely both upon these works and

⁵⁴ See Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800 - 1860," in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, No. 2/3 (1984), 107-150.

⁵⁵ Fazio and Snadon, 417-419. Phillips and Oppermann, P.A., "Progress Report: Investigation of Senator John Pope House, Lexington, Kentucky," 1991. Prepared for and on file with the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation.

⁵⁶ Phillips and Oppermann, 2.

⁵⁷ Carl Lounsbury, "The Design Process," in *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigations by Colonial Williamsburg*, Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury, eds. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 66-67.

⁵⁸Fazio and Snadon, p. 731, n. 37.

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secondary sources by scholars such as Catherine Bishir, Bernard Herman, Clay Lancaster, Carl Lounsbury and Dell Upton. These secondary sources provide a national scope by which to frame the complex dynamic of building authorship which emerged between a local artisan designer-builder and a formally trained architect such as Latrobe.

Historic Context: Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Domestic Architecture in the United States, 1796-1820.

The massively researched and authoritative book by Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon on Latrobe's domestic architecture has clearly established the significance of the Pope Villa both within the corpus of Latrobe's other domestic designs and in a national and even international context. The main argument of this foundational book, which won the Book of the Year award from the Society of Architectural History in 2008, is that it was B. H. Latrobe, not Frank Lloyd Wright, who first set out self-consciously to design a novel house type for the new American Republic. He called this new type of residence "the rational house." As explained below, Latrobe has a good claim to be the most important architect practicing in America of his time, and perhaps over the entire first half of the nineteenth century. In the opinion of Fazio and Snadon, the Pope Villa was the fullest embodiment of Latrobe's ideal of the rational house, incorporating brilliantly his house "scenery," a rotunda, and the insertion of service spaces within the main block of the house. The authors go on to explain the most important characteristics of Latrobe's "rational house" and the importance of the American context to its development:

Latrobe conceived of his rational house plan as a logical response to environmental, functional, and social requirements. He distributed his principal rooms along the south side of a wider than deep plan, leaving the north side for entries, stairs, servants' rooms, and storage. He preferred to have three contiguous principal rooms to facilitate entertaining and preferred to locate them on the principal story above a ground or basement story that housed the kitchen directly beneath the dining room. [...] He preferred interior stairs for safety in bad weather and provided the most up-to-date technology from iron firebox liners or "stoves" to Argand lamps and water closets. [...] He worked out intricate systems of internal circulation that separated servants from guests and family in the manner of French *dégagement*. In sum, Latrobe's rational house would not have been possible without broad Enlightenment thinking, but since all architecture is ultimately local, it was also a creation of empiricism and must be judged according to standards established by pragmatic Americans.⁵⁹

As Snadon wrote in a more recent publication where he summarized his findings: "...the Pope Villa ...is the most avant-garde house designed in America in the Federal period....[The Popes'] Lexington house represents the fullest realization of the architect's domestic planning theories and is one of the most exceptional buildings in America of its date."⁶⁰

⁵⁹Fazio and Snadon, p. 529. See two favorable reviews, one by Jeffrey A. Cohen in *Buildings and Landscapes; Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, vol. 15 (fall 2008), pp. 93-97; and another by Ptolemy Dean in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 66, No. 4 (December 2007), pp. 535-536. Dean calls the Pope Villa "perhaps the most memorable" of Latrobe's houses; "this building is of international significance." (p. 536)

⁶⁰Patrick Snadon, "Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Neoclassical Lexington," in *Bluegrass Renaissance: The History and Culture of Central Kentucky, 1792-1952* edited by James C. Klotter and Daniel Rowland. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2012), p. 299.

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He concluded that,

“Beyond its regional context, however, the Pope Villa is among the most important buildings created in federal-period America. It is the best surviving example of Latrobe’s domestic planning theories, with which he aimed to create a new, American house type and show the world how the citizens of a new, democratic republic might live. It is, in this respect, a building of international significance.”⁶¹

Latrobe was born in England, where he learned and practiced architecture at the firm of noted neo-classicist Samuel Pepys Cockerell who, in turn, had studied and then worked with the distinguished classicist Sir Robert Taylor.⁶² In addition, several letters have made it clear that he also trained under the “most celebrated engineer of the age,” John Smeaton.⁶³ Latrobe also clearly absorbed the English classical school called the “plain style”—buildings that were simply ornamented, relying on the geometry of proportion among the various parts to hold the design together. Not least, he “studied significant buildings” on the continent, later writing that he travelled in France, Germany, and Italy, spending time especially in Rome and Naples.⁶⁴

With these experiences as a foundation, Latrobe began a practice of his own in the new nation in 1796. He had left behind “a construction industry in the midst of a sea change” in which tradition-bound men—“mechanic and the gentleman, artist, or craftsman designer”—gave way to a new category of professional designers and builders, the architect and the engineer.⁶⁵ Trained by both architect and engineer, Latrobe arrived in America as a new professional and he “struck out [in] a bold new stylistic direction, more Greek than Roman, a direction that Cockerell had ignored.” Certainly, Latrobe subscribed to Cockerell’s prevailing neoclassical forms but with a penchant for Greek over Roman models. In that sense, his work was a precursor to the Greek Revival style that would dominate American architecture from the 1830s to the Civil War. The Greek Revival itself found further definition in the works of Latrobe’s students, William Strickland and Robert Mills.

Now in the United States, Latrobe described himself to a friend as “the father of Architecture on this side of the Atlantic, having been the first who pretended to more than a mechanical knowledge of the Art.” Important commissions included the Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (1798); an engineering project, the Philadelphia waterworks (completed 1801); and the Baltimore Cathedral (begun 1804) (NHL, 1971). Latrobe served as Surveyor of Public Buildings in Washington, D.C., from 1803-1812 and 1815-1817, and is best remembered today for his work on the United States Capitol.

Significant Sources for Latrobe’s Domestic Planning Theories

Though noted for his public buildings, Latrobe also designed dozens of domestic properties; indeed, Fazio and

⁶¹Snadon, p. 308.

⁶²Fazio and Snadon, p. 9.

⁶³Fazio and Snadon, p. 8. For a comprehensive discussion of Latrobe’s scientific interests, see Darwin H. Stapleton and Edward C. Carter II, “I have the itch of Botany, of Chemistry, of Mathematics...strong upon me’: the Science of Benjamin Henry Latrobe,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128, no. 3 (1984): pp. 173-192.

⁶⁴Fazio and Snadon, p. 8.

⁶⁵Fazio and Snadon, p. 4.

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Snadon cite more than sixty of the architect's American residential house projects and argue that "he was amongst the best in his time and place at what he did."⁶⁶ Historian Leonard K. Eaton agreed when he wrote that "Benjamin Henry Latrobe, of all the architects in Federalist America, was unquestionably the most articulate on the subject of house design."⁶⁷

Latrobe subscribed to the idea that classical antiquity was the foundation for architecture, and sought ways to adapt these classical forms to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conditions. At the same time, he was also imbued with British Romantic ideas of landscape.⁶⁸

As a "freestanding urban villa", the Pope Villa "synthesized" three of Latrobe's major themes: the "rational" house, the rotunda plan, and the scenery house. An avant-garde notion to Americans, the rational house "internalized service functions," locating them on the first story with public rooms on the second.⁶⁹ Fazio and Snadon argue that,

the Pope Villa is Latrobe's most completely achieved rational house, as it represents the first time he persuaded American clients to place all the services within the main block, in a low first story, with the major public rooms above in the second story."⁷⁰ Latrobe drew upon the French design principle of *dégagement* to address the integration of service spaces into the interior. This method also kept service spaces concealed from public spaces of the house while maintaining a connection to the private family quarters.⁷¹

Resting on Palladian antecedents and revived in eighteenth-century England, the rotunda plan featured a central domed space. Although Latrobe quoted Palladian and English antecedents, such as the Villa Rotonda in Vicenza, Italy and Lord Burlington's Chiswick House, the Pope Villa departed from traditional, classical plans in two ways. First, the rotunda is not visible on the main façade of the villa; thus it surprises the visitor when entering the house; and second, on the interior, classical symmetry was subverted by the stairway, placed in a cross passage to the left of the central axis, leading to the rotunda.⁷² These elements of surprise were among the devices that created the "scenery house."

The idea of the scenery house was founded on the late eighteenth-century British Romantic aesthetic practice known as the "picturesque," an ordered system that mediated between two extremes found in nature. Defined by William Gilpin, an originator and chief exponent, as "the happy union of simplicity and variety" and "richness" and "contrast," the picturesque fused Edmund Burke's ideas of the Beautiful, with its qualities of smoothness, regularity, and order, with the Sublime; that which evoked awe, terror, and power.⁷³ Translated into Latrobe's architectural practice, picturesque principles created "interior scenery" in which individuals moved through a procession of contrasting spaces from light to dark, symmetry to asymmetry, rational expectation to surprise and visual interest. As a result, the public route through the house traversed multiple

⁶⁶Fazio and Snadon, "Preface," n.p.

⁶⁷Leonard K. Eaton, *Houses and Money: The Domestic Clients of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Peterborough, New Hampshire: Bauhan Publishing, 1988), p. 13.

⁶⁸Cohen and Brownell, "The Neoclassical, the Picturesque and the Sublime of Latrobe's Architecture," in *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, The Architectural and Engineering Drawings*, Series 2, vol. 2, Pts. 1-2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 5 and 13.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰Fazio and Snadon, 402.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²Fazio and Snadon, pp. 402-403.

⁷³William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and On Sketching Landscape: To Which Is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting*, 2nd ed. (London: Blamire, 1794), pp. 6, 21-22, and 25.

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spaces, crossing thresholds of classical forms. This procession infused rational neoclassical elements with surprise, all in a careful “picturesque” ordering.

Latrobe’s Domestic Works

Credited with more than sixty residential projects during the course of his professional career in the United States, only three of Latrobe’s houses survive: Adena (1807), a country house in Chillicothe, Ross County, Ohio (NRIS: 70000515; NHL, 2003); Decatur House (1818), an urban townhouse in Washington, D.C. (NRIS: 66000858; NHL 1960); and the suburban Pope Villa.⁷⁴ Each of these extant Latrobe designs offers critical insights into the domestic planning philosophies of Latrobe. Each is distinct in its physical manifestation and was constructed at a different time in Latrobe’s professional career.

A majority of Latrobe’s clients, including doctors, lawyers, and politicians, were from the emerging patrician class of the new nation.⁷⁵ Latrobe envisioned creating a new house type, his “rational house,” that would be suitable for the American political and social landscape. And of “all Latrobe’s houses, the Pope Villa came closest to the ideal of the ‘rational house’ for America.”⁷⁶ Latrobe himself termed his domestic ideal “the rational house,” because it responded to “...the pragmatism and desire for economy felt by many of his American clients, [which] led him to a domestic architecture of unprecedented plainness and elegant austerity.”⁷⁷

Latrobe apparently had a scheme for the “rational” house in mind when he apparently sketched a plan for John Tayloe of Washington, D.C. With the exception of placing the dining room on the first floor and the drawing room on the second, this plan includes “a room distribution found subsequently in all of Latrobe’s ‘rational’ houses.” The house, however, was never built by Latrobe. Sometime later, John Tayloe built a house in Washington, D.C., now known as the Octagon, designed by William Thornton.⁷⁸

Latrobe described his plans to create a rational house in 1805 to his client William Waln in Philadelphia.⁷⁹ In the Waln design, Latrobe chose to incorporate the kitchen and service spaces within the lower level of the house while the public spaces were situated on the main level, a scheme known in England as the English Basement House.⁸⁰ He justified this decision in a letter to Waln: “Business, domestic intercourse, and the visits of friends for purposes to which a private house is required to be adapted...so that the parts devoted to each of these uses shall not interfere, Though they will communicate with each other.”⁸¹ While in the end, the Walns did not fully accept Latrobe’s design for their house, his design for them explored elements of the “rational house” and prefigured some of Pope Villa’s “rational” qualities.⁸² The Waln House no longer survives.

Further expressions of the rational house preceded the full realization of Latrobe’s ideas in the Pope Villa, and can be found in house plans for the Philadelphia merchant John Markoe and his wife Mehitabel, which were sketched by Latrobe in 1807 and more clearly defined in 1808. The house was constructed in 1811. As is

⁷⁴Allen Freeman, “A Burnt Offering,” *Preservation* 53, no. 2 (2001): p. 52.

⁷⁵Eaton, pp. 16-17.

⁷⁶Fazio and Snadon, 389.

⁷⁷Fazio and Snadon, 524.

⁷⁸Fazio and Snadon, 247.

⁷⁹*Ibid.* For a full discussion of the Tayloe House see pp. 246-254.

⁸⁰*Ibid* and Freeman, p. 52.

⁸¹Stuart D. Hobbs “Adena, National Historic Landmark Nomination Form,” 2003, p. 17.

⁸²For a detailed description of the design process undertaken by Latrobe for the Walns, see Fazio and Snadon, pp. 324-331.

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the case with the Waln house, the Markoe House is no longer standing.⁸³ Like the Pope Villa, the Tayloe, Waln, and Markoe houses were all were designed with the neoclassical geometries favored by Latrobe. Façades were relatively devoid of ornamentation and relied on smooth, planar surfaces to guide the exterior design.⁸⁴

Latrobe also initiated the two other major elements, the rotunda and scenery (picturesque) schemes, in earlier house designs: Fazio and Snadon describe the Tayloe House as “an emerging Rational House with a Picturesque Garden.” The design that Latrobe proposed for the Tayloe House incorporated a rotunda space on the second floor; though unlike the Pope Villa, this floor did not contain major public spaces but private chambers.⁸⁵ The design of the Markoe House features the elements of his interior scenery concept. This is especially marked in the back-to-back apse-shaped dining and drawing rooms, also seen at the Pope Villa.⁸⁶

In Latrobe’s two other extant houses, Adena, the “frontier country seat” in Chillicothe, Ohio, and Decatur House in Washington D.C., one finds two very different types of houses from the suburban Pope Villa.⁸⁷ Though both embrace elements of Latrobe’s designs that are realized in the Pope Villa, their plans respond to different requirements. Adena, a house in the country, and Decatur House, a house for the nation’s capital, met different needs than those imposed by “suburban” Lexington. Taken together, the three demonstrate the architect’s virtuosity and daring design.

Pope Villa

The Pope Villa is the most sophisticated embodiment of Latrobe’s domestic planning philosophies through a successful merging of his design ideas into a built form. The house was designed while Latrobe was Surveyor of Public Buildings in Washington, D.C.; by this time, he had developed a prominent national reputation.

The first modern documentation that the Pope Villa was designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe appeared in 1938. An article by Ferdinand C. Latrobe II listed the Lexington property along with thirty-five other domestic properties that had been designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe.⁸⁸ The architectural historian Clay Lancaster, who identified previously unlabeled drawings by Latrobe in the Library of Congress as the Pope Villa, provided further concrete evidence of the Latrobe attribution, and Fazio and Snadon mount the most recent and complete analysis of the house in their massive study of the architect’s domestic works.⁸⁹ Despite Lancaster’s discovery of Latrobe’s plans for Pope Villa, concern that the Popes did not faithfully execute Latrobe’s design persisted, since the building had been altered over time. This concern was assuaged after the October 1987 fire. It was at this time that a thorough architectural investigation was conducted, revealing that the original design was intact.⁹⁰

⁸³ Fazio and Snadon, “Tayloe House,” pp. 246-254 and the “Markoe House,” pp. 332-355.

⁸⁴Eaton. This assessment is based on photographic evidence.

⁸⁵Eaton, p. 105.

⁸⁶Cohen and Brownell, “The John Markoe House,” p. 509.

⁸⁷For comprehensive analyses of Adena see Fazio and Snadon, pp. 301-314 and for Decatur House, pp. 481-508.

⁸⁸Ferdinand C. Latrobe, II. “Benjamin Henry Latrobe: Descent and Works,” *Maryland Historical Society* 33, no. 3 (September 1938), p. 258.

⁸⁹Fazio and Snadon, pp. 389-446.

⁹⁰Fazio and Snadon, p. 444. The authors trace in detail the remarkable extent to which the Pope Villa adhered to Latrobe’s plans, pp. 402-437. Talbot Hamlin in his early Latrobe biography alludes to the uniqueness of the house in the area west of the Alleghenies, but at the time did not believe that Pope Villa had been constructed according to Latrobe’s original plans. See Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 105.

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In a recent essay, Patrick Snadon declared the house the “fullest realization of the architect’s domestic planning theories and is one of the most exceptional buildings in America of its date.”⁹¹ Latrobe wanted his rational house to respond to the environmental and social contexts of the United States. The Pope Villa embodies these principles in its form and spatial sequences. Jeffrey A. Cohen and Charles E. Brownell, authors of *The Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, and editors of Latrobe’s *Architectural and Engineering Drawings*, state that:

For Senator and Mrs. John Pope of Lexington, Kentucky, Latrobe proposed one of the most imaginative houses of his career. Within a cool, understated but highly disciplined exterior he devised a marriage of the neoclassical and the picturesque that balanced incident and order. At the same time this design was one of the fullest reflections of his convictions regarding domestic planning, here with an above ground basement story accommodating most of the subsidiary functions of the house.⁹²

Senator John and Eliza Pope

John Pope had moved his legal practice to Lexington in 1804. He rose up through the political ranks in Lexington, eventually being elected to the United States Senate in 1806. He then became the President Pro Tem of the Senate in 1810.⁹³ It was also during this time that Pope married his second wife, Eliza Johnson, whose sister had married John Quincy Adams. Eliza had been an ardent supporter of Thomas Jefferson and together, the Popes were involved in the upper echelons of Washington D.C. political life.⁹⁴ Pope most likely met Latrobe during the formulation of the Gallatin Plan, a comprehensive canal and road transportation plan encouraged by Jefferson. Both Pope and Latrobe are associated with the Gallatin Plan development.⁹⁵ Pope’s political future looked bright at the time he enlisted Latrobe to design his Lexington residence.⁹⁶

The location of the Pope Villa in early twentieth-century Lexington, Kentucky is also significant. Lexington had become the social and cultural center of the land west of the Alleghenies, and at the time was often called the “Athens of the West.” As the city developed, a wealthy class of citizens began constructing villas and mansions near Lexington.⁹⁷ The desire of the Popes to construct a Senator’s residence of some stature and distinction is underscored by the Lexington setting, and their villa’s “suburban” location a mile outside town, places it in a class with a number of other elite houses built between ca. 1810 and 1830.

Senator John and Eliza Pope were interested in a house that could serve as their summer home when Congress was not in session. The program required that there be spaces for entertaining due to Senator Pope’s political career. Eliza Pope would manage the household and arrange social functions.⁹⁸ Fazio and Snadon believe that Eliza Pope was especially instrumental in formulating the design, based on the correspondence from Latrobe to Senator Pope. “The enclosed plans were ready on Monday [December 31, 1810]...I should be glad to explain them to Mrs. Pope, to whose ideas I have endeavored to conform them, very much to the improvement of the

⁹¹Snadon, 299.

⁹²Cohen and Brownell, “The John Pope House” p. 529.

⁹³Eaton, p. 33.

⁹⁴Eaton, p. 2.

⁹⁵Eaton, p. 3.

⁹⁶For a concise biography of John and Eliza Pope see Fazio and Snadon, pp. 390-392.

⁹⁷ John E. Kleber, “Fayette County,” in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), p. 311. **The extraordinarily sophisticated cultural scene in Lexington is described in detail in Klotter and Rowland, *Bluegrass Renaissance*.**

⁹⁸Fazio and Snadon, pp. 390-391.

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taste and convenience of the building.”⁹⁹ Indeed, the authors maintain that “the high quality of Latrobe’s ultimate design for the Pope Villa is in part attributable to Eliza Pope.”¹⁰⁰

Latrobe’s Design for Pope Villa and the traditional architecture in Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky

As described above, Latrobe’s domestic philosophy led to several innovations. He rejected the double-pile central passage plan, incorporated domestic work and servant residential spaces within the body of the house, and located the most formal public spaces of dining and drawing rooms on the second floor. Since Senator John Pope and his wife Eliza planned their Lexington villa as “an elegant facility for seasonal occupancy; with a large capacity for public entertaining – a combined house and entertaining pavilion, Pope Villa was a house that, at least in part, had a public function.”¹⁰¹ That public’s expectations were shaped by the local architectural context, which is thus an important part of Pope Villa’s meaning and significance. The relationships, and especially the spatial differences, between Pope Villa and contemporary elite houses in Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky, are critical to grasping the house’s reception and to understanding both why it was significantly altered by the family who owned it in the 1840s, and the nature of those alterations. As Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon put it, “Latrobe’s houses perhaps suffered most of all from their own design and planning. They were so original and unconventional that they virtually begged for remodeling or demolition.”¹⁰² An understanding of the local architectural context between ca. 1810 and 1845, establishes the parameters for comprehending the 1840s renovation of the house still apparent on its interior and assists in justifying the inclusion of a second significant date, ca. 1843, in Pope Villa’s Period of Significance.

By about 1800, “the booming agricultural economy of the Inner Bluegrass made...Lexington the commercial and industrial capital of western America.”¹⁰³ As the economic boom attracted a variety of entrepreneurs, the attendant building activity enticed artisans to the area.¹⁰⁴ By the time Lexington’s first city directory was published in 1806, an array of artisans and craftspeople had begun to erect the early nineteenth-century townscape. Fifteen percent of the 266 individuals and partnerships enumerated in the directory were involved in the building trades. Asa Wilgus, who is credited as builder of Pope’s villa and with whom Latrobe corresponded about its construction, is not among them.¹⁰⁵

Those who settled and developed Lexington and Fayette County during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came predominantly from the lower middle Atlantic and Chesapeake regions, with some also from North Carolina. Their architectural traditions included fabrication in both log and timber frame, as well as

⁹⁹Fazio and Snadon., p. 395.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Michael W. Fazio and Patrick A. Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 392.

¹⁰² Ibid, 575.

¹⁰³ Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 129; 124 - 149

¹⁰⁴ Francis D. Pitts III, “The Making of a Kentucky Architect and Entrepreneur: Insights into the Life of Matthew Kennedy,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, vol. 103, no. 3 (Summer 2005), 499.

¹⁰⁵ Asa Wilgus was, however, mentioned in various early nineteenth-century sources in relation to advertisements, land purchases and court cases. Records of the Fayette County Court report his involvement as an overseer for road construction. See Volume 4, 1805-1810. Although clearly involved in Pope Villa’s construction and knowledgeable about the building trades, it may be that Wilgus did not identify himself as a builder because his other activities placed him in a social category other than “tradesman.” He may have acted more as supervisor or general contractor for construction projects, and/or could have served as Pope’s representative in Lexington.

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masonry. Not only were central Kentucky's settlers familiar with brick construction, but those of Scots-Irish origin and descent who moved southward down the Great Valley were experienced with dry stone masonry. The timing of central Kentucky's settlement and Lexington's founding in the last decades of the eighteenth century meant that once the frontier period had passed, the city's rapid and intensive early development included simultaneous construction of houses in log, joined frame, stone and brick. Some were built with open hall and hall/parlor plans, while others boasted closed plans incorporating an unheated circulation passage.

Lexington's 1806 city directory listed 104 brick, 10 stone and 187 wooden houses, conflating frame and log construction. Nearly two-thirds of the houses in Lexington in 1806 were built of wood. That proportion was rapidly changing, however, as masonry gained favor as the nineteenth century progressed. A letter written in 1806 by Josiah Espy described Lexington's character and burgeoning growth:

Lexington is the largest and most wealthy town in Kentucky, or indeed west of the Allegheny Mountains... I would suppose it contains about five hundred dwelling houses [it was closer to three hundred], many of them elegant and three stories high. About thirty brick buildings were then raising, and I have little doubt but that in a few years it will rival, not only in wealth, but in population, the most populous inland town of the United States ...

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By 1810, the year that Benjamin Henry Latrobe began designing a villa for Senator John and Eliza Pope, Lexington's population approached 4,200, surpassing Washington, D. C., St. Louis, Louisville and Cincinnati, and making it the largest urban center in the old American West.¹⁰⁷ In 1815 the *Niles Register* predicted Lexington would be the "greatest inland city in the western world," and the city's population had increased to a number between 6,000 and 7,000.¹⁰⁸ Three years later, Dr. Horace Holley, who had come to Lexington to assume the presidency of the acclaimed Transylvania University, observed: "The town and the vicinity are very handsome. The streets are broad, straight, paved, clean, and have rows of trees on each side. The houses are of brick almost universally, many of them in the midst of fields and have very rural and charming appearance..."¹⁰⁹ Thus during the period ca. 1805 to 1820, Lexington saw not only rapid construction and growth, but also a major rebuilding, by which the town lost its frontier appearance and the majority of its wooden buildings, to become a polished and urbane "Athens of the West."

Many of the newer houses were built on a plan that had become a symbol of urbanization in cities on America's eastern seaboard during the late eighteenth century.¹¹⁰ These "townhouses" had a side-passage plan in which the entry door occupied one end of a three-bay façade. This entry gave access to an unheated circulation and stair passage that formalized and guided movement within the house. In Lexington, side-passage plan houses were built in large numbers between ca. 1790 and 1850. A few of the earliest examples were log and are only one room deep, but most had two rooms located to one side of the passage, one behind the other. Typically, these rooms functioned as a shop with living space behind it, or a parlor and dining room. A large number of

¹⁰⁶ Quoted by the National Park Service in "Athens of the West." Lexington, Kentucky: the Athens of the West – A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1780-1930*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1959), 18-22 and 49-53.

¹⁰⁸ *Niles Register* (28 January 1815); quoted in Wade, p. 49.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted by Judge Charles Kerr in "An Historic Dinner," *Lexington Herald* 15 April 1917.

¹¹⁰ Marcus Binney, *Townhouses: Evolution and Innovation in 800 Years of Urban Domestic Architecture*. (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1998), pp.58-61, 70-71, 74-83, 86-98; also Bernard L. Herman, *Townhouse: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780 – 1830*. Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2005).

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the side-passage townhouses built in Lexington before ca. 1815 had kitchens located in cellars that were inaccessible from inside the house.¹¹¹ This was one means of segregating domestic work from family living spaces.

The Isabella Lake House is Lexington's earliest surviving example of this form. It was built around 1800 on one of the city's major north-south thoroughfares, now North Limestone Street, with two rooms to the side of a full-depth passage. These functioned originally as a parlor and dining room, and the kitchen was located below grade. At some time before the middle of the nineteenth century, the house gained a rear ell. The ell most likely took shape from two distinct additions, beginning with a kitchen and smokehouse in a detached outbuilding, with a dining room later constructed to connect the outbuilding to the main block of the house (figure 5).¹¹² The Isabella Lake House is a contributing element of Lexington's North Limestone Commercial District and was listed in the National Register in 1983 (NRIS 83003652). Similar side passage townhouses are important contributing elements to several of Lexington's National Register-listed and locally-designated historic districts, including Gratz Park, South Hill, and Western Suburb.



Figure 5

Most scholars of vernacular architecture agree that the side-passage plan is an adaptation of the "Georgian ideal," which consisted of a two-story house utilizing a central-passage-plan, two rooms deep. Such houses had been constructed in England beginning in the seventeenth century and in America since the early eighteenth century. The type was often the house type of choice for wealthy merchants inhabiting cities on the Atlantic seaboard during the colonial period, and for Virginia's eighteenth-century Tidewater planters. Many Americans, however, felt little need for so large a house, and so artisan designer/builders modified the form to create the side-passage and single-pile central passage plans.¹¹³ While the side-passage townhouse was associated with urbanization, the single-pile central-passage plan house, or "I house," became the type that symbolized rural

¹¹¹ This and other information on early Lexington's architectural landscape and socio-economic geography is taken from unpublished work generated during a University of Kentucky, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation research seminar on central Kentucky's urban landscapes before 1830; Anthony Rawe, "The Double-Pile, Side Passage House," unpublished paper, University of Kentucky Historic Preservation Program, 1999.

¹¹² Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture*, 67-68.

¹¹³ Henry Glassie, "Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 7 (1972), 35-47; Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio* vol. 17 (1982), 95-119.

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agrarian prosperity.¹¹⁴ It became the most commonly built house type “from the old Tidewater, across the Southern Mountains, out through the Bluegrass and into the lower Midwest,” throughout the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵

At the same time, some Lexingtonians chose side-passage plan houses on the city’s in lots, others, including Senator John and Eliza Pope, built larger houses on urban out lots and at the city’s edge.¹¹⁶ By the 1830s, approximately 15 dwellings were scattered within three miles of Lexington’s center, occupying sites ranging in size from five acres on the out lots to twenty at the city’s edge.¹¹⁷ While the double-pile central passage plan or ideal “Georgian” house was too large for most in lots, it could be executed on Lexington’s out lots and on suburban sites. A common central Kentucky variation on this type exhibits a tripartite mass, which includes a one-and-one-half-story symmetrical five-bay central unit with a double-pile central passage plan, flanked by subsidiary wings. Two examples of this type, both built at essentially the same time as the Pope Villa, are the William “Lord” Morton House (1810) on out lot #76 (NRIS 75000750) (figure 6), and Rose Hill (1812), built for John Brand shortly after he purchased out lot # 60 (NRIS 74000868) (figure 7). The houses, which still stand diagonally across the street from one another at the corner of Limestone and Fifth Streets, both contain unheated, half-depth central entry passages and narrow cross halls. Public spaces, including a dining room, drawing room and parlor, as well as a chamber, occupy the ground floor of both houses.¹¹⁸



Figure 6: William Morton House plan

Figure 7: Rose Hill

Lexington’s three-part houses closely resemble Virginia’s pavilioned dwellings, which Marlene Heck argues symbolized the rural elite.¹¹⁹ The central blocks of most three-part houses in both central Kentucky and Virginia made use of central passage plans, two rooms deep. In Virginia examples, the social organization of spaces usually worked along a horizontal line running the depth of the house and dividing it into public and

¹¹⁴ Warren Hofstra, “Private Dwellings, Public Ways, and the Landscape of Early Rural Capitalism in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 5, Gender, Class and Shelter (1995), 211-224.

¹¹⁵ Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 89. See also Fred Kniffen, “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion,” in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* Eds. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

¹¹⁶ Rawe, “The Single-Pile, Side Passage House”; Jan Jennemann, “Establishing Urban Out lots in Three Early Kentucky Towns,” unpublished paper, University of Kentucky Historic Preservation Program, 1999.

¹¹⁷This number is based upon Clay Lancaster’s descriptions of pre-1830 architecture in the vicinity. See *Antebellum Architecture*, 126-211; and *Vestiges of the Venerable City*, 28-42.

¹¹⁸ Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture*, 145 - 147

¹¹⁹ Marlene Elizabeth Heck, “Building Status: Pavilioned Dwellings in Virginia,” in *Shaping Communities: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, VI. Edited by Carter L. Hudgins and Elizabeth Collins Cromley (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 46-59.

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private halves, while the public rooms of Kentucky examples tended to be located in the center of the house and more private spaces in the wings.¹²⁰

A few of Lexington three-part villas may have incorporated a kitchen in one of their wings. However, most of the city's early nineteenth-century houses completely segregated both kitchens and other spaces for domestic work from formal public rooms and chambers by treating them either literally or figuratively as outbuildings. Before ca. 1815, the kitchens serving many of Lexington's numerous double-pile side passage townhouses were in basements and not accessible from inside the main house, as at the first period version of the Isabella Lake House. While a below-grade such a kitchen was not actually in a distinct structure, it was segregated from the main living spaces and like an outbuilding in that it could only be entered from outside the house. Another option was to locate the kitchen in an actual outbuilding, detaching it entirely from the house. In some cases such a kitchen might be situated to one side of the house, and accessed from a door in the main house's gable end, but increasingly after ca. 1810 and more commonly in urban contexts, detached kitchens were located behind the house. The rear of the out lot occupied by John Brand's Rose Hill (ca. 1813), for example, resembled the domestic courtyard behind a central Kentucky's farmhouses, with its collection of outbuildings including a combination kitchen/laundry/worker house, a smokehouse, a privy, a stable, and other outbuildings.¹²¹ As spatial preferences changed over the first half of the nineteenth century, the unbuilt area between a detached rear kitchen and the main block of a house might be filled in, so as to create a rear ell. This is what apparently happened at the Isabella Lake House. Originally built with a basement kitchen, the lot on North Limestone Street gained a detached kitchen ca. 1820, which was eventually connected to the main body of the house ca. 1840 (see figure 5, above).¹²²

Shortly after the Pope Villa was completed in 1812, the John Wesley Hunt House, also known as the Hunt-Morgan House, was built in 1814 on a two hundred-foot-square portion of one of Lexington's out lots. The two-story three-bay brick house was unusual for Lexington in having its gable end oriented to the street. Like Pope Villa, its main block was of cubic mass, two rooms deep. Like Pope Villa, the Hunt House had three spaces across the front, including a broad entry hall flanked by an office and unheated stair hall. Unlike Pope Villa, the dining and drawing rooms were on the first floor, located behind the array of front rooms and completing the spaces in the cubic main block of the house. Behind this cubic mass, is a four-room rear unit that contains two chambers, a service or family dining room, and a service hall containing the back stair.¹²³ At first, the kitchen was located in the cellar, and according to local tradition, the household workers lodged there as well. A detached two-story brick house for the property's workers was constructed behind the rear wing around the middle of the nineteenth century, and attached to the rest of the house later. The Hunt-Morgan House is a contributing building in Lexington's Gratz Park Historic District (NRIS 73000796).

¹²⁰ Public rooms include entries, parlors, drawing rooms and dining rooms. For a discussion of a Virginia house with public and private halves see Dell Upton's treatment of Mount Airy (1762) in *Architecture in the United States*. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29. Upton provides a more detailed description of Mount Airy's spatial organization, and the "processional landscape" of which it was part, in *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: the MIT Press for the Architectural History Foundation, New York, New York, 1986), 206 – 210.

¹²¹ Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, 147, and figure 8.26.

¹²² Ibid, 67 – 68. These trends are similar to those discussed by Bernard Herman for elite houses along America's east coast. *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780 – 1830* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2005), 123 – 137.

¹²³ Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture*, 131 – 134.

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In many English townhouses and perhaps American ones as well, domestic workers lodged in attic rooms.¹²⁴ Fieldwork in Kentucky has documented at least one instance of this arrangement at the Paxton Inn in Washington, Kentucky, a small community in Mason County a short distance south of Maysville (Limestone) on the Buffalo Trace/Limestone Road.¹²⁵ But most of the people working in Lexington's early nineteenth-century elite households were enslaved people of African descent. While personal servants typically slept close to their charges, and other domestics likely lodged in kitchens and other domestic work spaces, many owners in Lexington and throughout central Kentucky preferred to house their workers in buildings other than those in which the owners lived. Behind the house at Rose Hill (1812) a single detached multipurpose building included the kitchen and sheltered slaves.



Hunt Morgan House



Hunt Morgan House plan

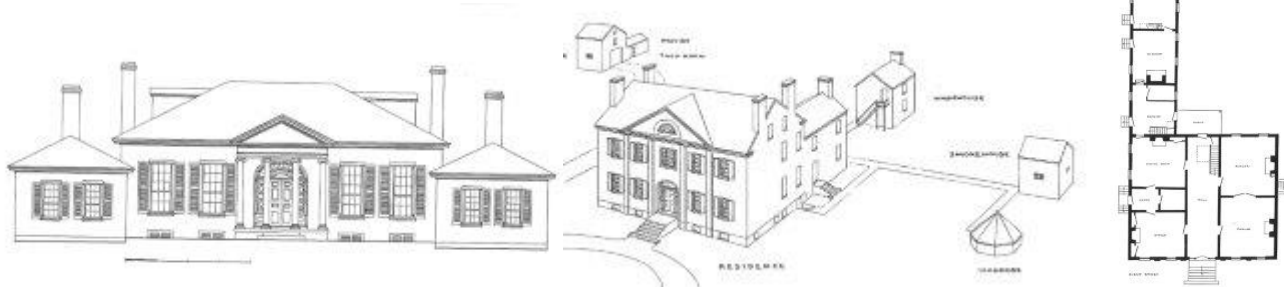
The Matthew Kennedy House (NRIS 73000797) was constructed in 1816 on a North Limestone Street lot. The two-story house utilizes a standard central passage plan, two rooms deep (figure 9). To the left of the passage are a parlor, with an office behind it; and to the right are a drawing room and dining room. Attached to the rear of the double-pile main block of the house is a slightly shorter two-story ell, which contains a service stair and kitchen on the ground floor.

¹²⁴ Herman, *Town House*, 137 – 143.

¹²⁵ Fieldwork conducted during a University of Kentucky research seminar on Kentucky's early urban architecture and landscapes, 1999.

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Rose Hill

Grassland

The Meadows

Two other local houses, Grassland (1823; NRIS 78001322; figure 10) and the Meadows (early 1830s; figure 11) are very much like the Matthew Kennedy house. Both houses exhibit variations on the double-pile, central passage theme. The ground floor plan of Grassland, built for Major Thomas Hart Shelby, son of Kentucky's first Governor, Isaac Shelby, contains an unusual central stair passage that ends in a semi-circular wall behind an elegant curved stair, with a short, rear service passage behind it; while the Meadows has a standard full depth central passage, its interior symmetry disrupted only by a short cross passage to one side of the central one. Both houses have rear ells which contain their kitchens.¹²⁶

After the turn of the nineteenth century and through the mid-1820s, dwellings in Lexington and throughout central Kentucky were finished with Federal-style woodwork. Characterized by elegance and restraint, the finish of this period includes symmetrical composition, flat plains, and narrow moldings, and often features geometric forms and standard motifs like with sunbursts, along swags, garlands and urns. Principal rooms often have chair rail and delicately ornamented mantels. In the houses of the local elites, Federal-style finish was typically refined, though in some cases, artisans executed more vernacular interpretations of the style, like the punch work present in Pope Villa's rotunda and drawing room.

The sources of inspiration for this finish is unknown, though it is likely that at least some local builders got ideas from one of the builder's handbooks available at the time. The architectural historian Clay Lancaster documented those builder's guides available in Lexington during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through advertisements in the Lexington paper, *The Kentucky Gazette*. Local bookshops carried a number of these handbooks, including Abraham Swan's titles – *The British Architect* and *A Collection of Designs in Architecture* – and William Pain's volumes – *The Builder's Pocket-Treasure* and *Practical Builder* – as well as John Norman's *The Town and Country Builder's Assistant*, the first builder's handbook created in America (ca. 1786). While these eighteenth-century handbooks offered designs initiated by British architects, around 1805 Owen Biddle advertised that his new volume, *The Young Carpenter's Assistant*, contained designs adapted to conditions in the United States.¹²⁷ The local builder Mathias Shryock owned a copy of Asher Benjamin's handbook, *The Builder's Assistant* (1800), which he passed on to his son, the better-known local architect, Gideon Shryock.¹²⁸ Concerning the relationship between the designs illustrated in these publications and those actually implemented in and through local buildings, Lancaster concluded that “close parallels

¹²⁶ Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture*, 170-172.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 106-107. Abraham Swan was the author of both *The British Architect* (published in London in 1745, issued in Philadelphia in 1775, and reprinted in Boston in 1794), and *A Collection of Designs in Architecture* (London, 1757). Pain wrote *The Builder's Pocket Treasure* (London 1763; Boston 1794) and *Practical Builder* (London 1774; Boston 1792).

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 108.

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between imported design and Kentucky execution are the exception rather than the rule, as applied woodwork was usually fashioned according to the taste and manner of local craftsmen.”¹²⁹

During the 1830s and 1840s, Lexington experienced another phase of rebuilding. Not only were many new buildings constructed at this time, but older structures, including the Pope Villa, were updated to become more symmetrical, include unheated circulation spaces, and display fashionable Greek Revival finish. For example, a house initially built on West Second Street for the industrialist Thomas January in the early nineteenth century received updates around 1846 and in 1848, after it was purchased by Tobias Gibson (NRIS 74000862; figure 12, next page). The house originally had a three-part massing, with a three-bay two-story central section, flanked by one-story wings which continued toward the rear to create a courtyard. It gained a two-story portico and a larger entrance hall in the first renovation, while in the second, both the original one-story flanking wings and a rear ell were raised to two stories.¹³⁰

While the mid-nineteenth-century remodeling of the January/Gibson house eliminated its original three-part massing, the Francis Key Hunt House, demolished in 1953, was a mid-nineteenth-century interpretation of that form. It consisted of a double-pile central passage main block, flanked by two recessed wings, which continued toward the back of the house to create a rear ell on each side of the building (figure 13). While one of these wings/ells contained the kitchen and laundry, behind it was a detached outbuilding incorporating a smokehouse, slave housing and the privies.¹³¹

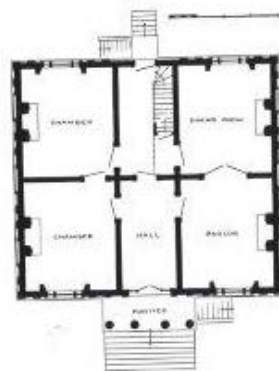


Figure 12: January/Gibson House

Figure 13: Francis Key Hunt House

Figure 14: Mansfield

The local architect Major Thomas Lewinski, who was responsible for the second round of renovations at the Pope Villa around 1865, designed Mansfield for Thomas Hart Clay, son of Henry Clay, in 1845. Mansfield contained a standard double-pile central passage plan on a raised basement, with a parlor and dining room to one side of the passage and two chambers on the other (figure 14). Although it was a suburban house, the kitchen and service rooms were in the basement.¹³²

¹²⁹ Lancaster, *Vestiges of the Venerable City*, 273-274.
¹³⁰ Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture*, 209-210; *Vestiges*, 76-77.
¹³¹ *Ibid*, 213-216; Lancaster, *Vestiges*, 68-71.
¹³² *Ibid*, 215-216; *Vestiges*, 71.

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While Latrobe's designs showed elements of the Greek Revival style from the time he arrived in America, it did not become the prevailing fashion until later in the eastern states and the mid-1830s in Kentucky. Greek Revival ornament continued to appear on central Kentucky's buildings until after the Civil War and even later in some parts of the state. In contrast to the delicate refined Federal style, the Greek Revival is comparatively heavy and bold. Interior architectural finish in particular, is thicker. Baseboard moldings are taller, and chair rail goes out of fashion to the point where it is often ripped out in period redecorating. In mantels, the delicate side columns of the Federal style are replaced by massive, flat pilasters with ordered capitols. The marble mantles inserted in Pope Villa's drawing and dining rooms during the ca. 1843 renovation are a good example of the type.

While Lancaster argued that Federal-style woodwork in Kentucky followed "the taste and manner of local craftsmen,"¹³³ he found that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the artisans who created Greek Revival-style finish relied much more on builder's guides. In his book, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, he discussed instances of Kentucky building details modeled on John Haviland's *The Builder's Assistant*; Edward Shaw's *Civil Architecture*; Asher Benjamin's *The Practice of Architecture, The American Builder's Companion*, and *The Practical House Carpenter*; and Minard Lafever's *The Modern Builder's Guide, The Young Builder's General Instructor*, and *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.¹³⁴

By the time the Johnsons remodeled the Pope Villa in the 1840s, local elite houses exhibited symmetry, closed plans, and segregation between public, private and work spaces. Most contained a variation of a double-pile, central-passage plan, as houses like the Matthew Kennedy House, Grassland, the Meadows, the Francis Key Hunt House, and Mansfield attest. To open a central passage and visually connect the front and back entrances of the house, the Johnsons had to subvert Latrobe's "rational" plan. By altering Latrobe's plan, they in turn sacrificed some of his expressions of the picturesque within the house. Eliminating the small square room at the center of the house on the ground floor, for example, altered Latrobe's scenic progress from Pope Villa's entrance to its rotunda and public rooms on the second floor by removing the moments of visual interest and darkness it provided. Movement through the house became simpler, more direct, and more customary than it had during the Popes' occupation, when Latrobe's wall between the family and service portions of the ground floor remained intact and there was no service ell. By creating a traditional double-pile, central passage house from one that may have felt spatially awkward to them, the Johnsons gained a house that conformed to local spatial expectations by including important public rooms on the ground floor and segregating domestic work and workers in a rear service ell. The Johnsons' changes to Pope Villa's interior spaces evidences the power of long-established design impulses, since they created a house type and plan which had been built in England since the seventeenth century and in colonial America since the early eighteenth. Ironically, the nature of the Johnson's ca. 1843 renovations at Pope Villa testifies to the singularity, creativity and ingenuity of Latrobe's design for the house.

Evaluation of the Architectural Significance of the Pope Villa within the historic context Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Domestic Architecture in the United States, 1796-1820

The Pope Villa is the most sophisticated representation of Latrobe's domestic planning philosophies through a successful merging of his design ideas into a built form. Architectural historian Patrick Snadon calls the Pope

¹³³ Ibid, 274

¹³⁴ Ibid, 183-189

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Villa “Perhaps the best domestic plan Latrobe ever created; it’s certainly his most exciting surviving design.”¹³⁵ The building fully realizes Latrobe’s design ideal in bricks and mortar. As a response to upper-middle and upper-class domestic life in the new nation, Latrobe ordered his spaces as he defined them in the rational house, the rotunda, and the picturesque—the Pope Villa embodies these principles in its form and spatial sequences.

Indeed, for John and Eliza Pope, Latrobe proposed one of the most imaginative houses of his career.¹³⁶ Within a cool, understated but highly disciplined exterior, he devised a marriage of the neoclassical and the picturesque that balanced incident and order. At the same time, this design was one of the fullest manifestation of his convictions regarding domestic planning.¹³⁷

Latrobe’s circulation pattern throughout the Pope Villa ingeniously separated guests from the service spaces, an interpretation of *dégagement*, a design tenet that he believed was essential for the rational house. This arrangement did away with the popular central-hall plan of the federal period which Latrobe apparently deplored, referring to it as a “turnpike” and a “common sewer.”¹³⁸ The idea of bringing service spaces into the main house eliminated the standard American service ell that extended service spaces away from the main block of the house. Latrobe felt that the “frying pan” arrangement created by the service ell sullied the view of the yard and was inefficient as well.¹³⁹ The house is significant for executing the plan more completely on Pope Villa than on any of his other residential projects.

On the second floor, at the center of the villa, Latrobe situated his top-lit rotunda so as to communicate with the drawing and dining rooms at the front of the house with three bedchambers at the back. “The public spaces of dining room, drawing room, and rotunda constitute a compact ‘circuit’ of three public rooms...for ‘entertaining company.’ The rotunda serves as the central architectural feature of the house, as well as defines the circulation pattern of the principal floor. Latrobe was able to successfully fuse the rotunda villa with his rational house plan in the Pope Villa.

The element that linked this unique arrangement of spaces was Latrobe’s processional sequence of “interior scenery.” This idea was inspired by the English picturesque park design that utilized classical pavilions to create changing experiences.¹⁴⁰ In the Pope Villa, this was achieved through a series of public spaces marked with classical forms: the entrance hall is characterized by a Greek prostyle temple; the rotunda on the second floor recalls the Roman Pantheon; and the Roman Basilica is referenced in the back-to-back drawing room and dining room with apsidal ends.¹⁴¹ This interior scenery created a dramatic procession through the public spaces of the house, while resolving the unusual circulation pattern created by housing public spaces on the second floor. Latrobe scholars Cohen and Brownell note that the emergence of the picturesque in Latrobe’s domestic planning is a significant element in the Pope House: “Not until the visitor reached the upper floor would he have so much as a clue that Latrobe had composed a rotunda house, as the domed space emerged scenographically from beyond the double screen columns. An element of surprise had entered into Latrobe’s domestic planning.”¹⁴²

¹³⁵Arnold Berke, “Kentuckians Revive Rare Gem by Latrobe,” *Preservation News* (June 1990): p. .

¹³⁶Snadon, 299.

¹³⁷Cohen and Brownell, “The John Pope House,” p. 529.

¹³⁸Snadon, p. 300.

¹³⁹Fazio and Snadon, p. 403.

¹⁴⁰Cohen and Brownell, “The Neoclassical, the Picturesque and the Sublime of Latrobe’s Architecture,” p. 13.

¹⁴¹Fazio and Snadon, p. 412.

¹⁴²Cohen and Brownell, “The John Pope House,” p. 530.

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It is in these architectural features that the inherent significance of Latrobe's Pope Villa is found. Taken together, they present a culmination of Latrobe's rational house design. The Pope Villa design incomparably expresses Latrobe's principal theories concerning domestic living in the United States.

Certainly, these ideas were in play in his previous domestic designs, though had yet to come together in singular design; and, as "America's first architect," Latrobe's influence was not limited to federal-era America, but reaches to the current day. It is Latrobe who first sought to create a new American house type, "respond[ing] quite consciously to the specifics of the American social and physical context and had, as a result, invented such a new house form for the nascent, democratic, American republic. Latrobe made a conscious effort to develop this new domestic type, and his houses [in particular the Pope Villa] present extremely condensed and focused evidence of his originality as a designer."¹⁴³

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Pope Villa

In accord with the second term of Criterion C, the Pope Villa is significant as the work of a master, Benjamin Henry Latrobe – this country's first professional architect – and represents a key example of his domestic work. The integrity analysis here clarifies the basic threshold of integrity: discernment of the physical aspects of any Latrobe-designed house that must be retained so that the significance of his design can be realized.

Our understanding of the significance of Latrobe's domestic design theories relate to his creation of the rational house and its particular parts. Because the novelty of Latrobe's design ideas meant that his houses were often demolished or altered over time, and because only three of his domestic works survive in the United States, an example of Latrobe's domestic design need not have ideal integrity of design, materials and workmanship, but rather must provide an ability to clearly perceive and understand Latrobe's vision for private residences. From this integrity analysis, the Pope Villa stands as an important example of Latrobe's domestic work in the United States because it retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that we can experience its architectural merits.

The Pope Villa experienced numerous changes to both its exterior and interior over its long history, as did both of Latrobe's other identified surviving domestic works, Adena and Decatur House. Nonetheless, using the guidelines established here, the Pope Villa can be said to possess a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, and association, a good level of integrity of design, acceptable integrity of materials and workmanship, and poor integrity of setting.

While the amount of property associated with the house had dwindled, the Pope Villa still sits on the same site on which it was constructed and has not been moved. It thus possesses a high degree of **integrity of location**.

At the same time, when completed in 1812, the Pope Villa occupied a 13-acre tract that overlooked Lexington's town branch. Neither the street on which it currently sits nor the houses that surround it were present at either of the property's significant dates, 1812 and ca. 1843. The Woolfolk family, which owned the property in the early

¹⁴³Fazio and Shadon, p. xiv.

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twentieth century, sold off most of the original 13-acre tract for subdivision. Pope Villa thus has poor **integrity of setting**.

Latrobe's domestic planning theories took distinct avenues in his residential projects and in his writings. According to Latrobe's design goals, the elements of the rational house should be clearly read through the spatial organization and relationships in the residence. A Latrobe-designed house in the United States will be said to have **integrity of association** if the structure maintains its design and layout as specified in plans and construction documents. Latrobe's design intent is still evident at the Pope Villa. Thus, the Pope Villa offers a strong association between Latrobe's conceptual ideals and a realized architectural form.

A Latrobe-designed residence in the United States will be said to have **integrity of design** if alterations typically made in the course of the last two hundred years do not obscure the house's original footprint, roofline, or other defining elements such as exterior proportions and placement of the windows. Alterations to these features that contribute to the overall exterior composition should be minimized. The interior spatial relationships that Latrobe intended for the rational house must be intact. This includes maintaining the historic spatial relationships and circulation patterns that separated spaces and routes of movement for the family, their servants, and their visitors. Interior scenery features that Latrobe used in his designs along the circulation route should also be discernible. The overarching impression of a domestic work by Latrobe possessing an integrity of design should be that of a rational house, which consists in a basement story and principal story; separated but internalized service spaces; and interior scenery features. While the ca. 1843 remodeling of the house disrupted some elements of Latrobe's rational house plan and the attendant scenery, sufficient physical evidence remains that these elements are visible. This physical evidence allowed Michael Fazio and Patrick Sandon to interpret Pope Villa as the penultimate example of Latrobe's rational house idea and would permit restoration of the original plan in the future.

Though the Pope Villa has experienced alterations over time, the principal spatial relationships and organization remain intact. The basement floor and principal floor are clearly expressed on the exterior and the interior. The organization of window openings on the principal façade suggests the hierarchical importance of the principal floor over the ground floor. Three large Venetian windows have been restored on the upper level, while the smaller window openings were restored on the basement floor according to the forensic architectural evidence. The form of the house has been retained as a perfect square.

Latrobe's rational house plan is quite evident on the interior through the historic arrangement of spaces on both levels. The original walls separating the service spaces from the rest of the house have either been restored or their locations suggested based on historic documentation and forensic evidence. The pavilions and niches that serve as "interior scenery" along this route are still evident, especially in the rotunda and the public spaces of the dining room and drawing room. Overall, the elements of Latrobe's design dating to the Popes' occupation are sufficiently intact so as to be readable, and thus property thus has good integrity of design.

Latrobe's writings on design offer no clue that he regarded materials as integral to realizing the rational house. Thus, a Latrobe-designed house in the United States will be said to have **integrity of materials** if the preponderance of the materials used in the construction of the house, particularly those that contribute to the house's design, are still intact. This would include the brick-and-mortar structure and principal interior partitions of the house. Much of the original plasterwork and flooring remain intact. For the decorative interior finish, there remains sufficient physical evidence to restore missing pieces. There is at least one of every type of finish, which allows restoration based upon sound physical evidence.

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The remaining decorative finish at the house is sufficient to continue guiding restoration. The Blue Grass Trust has devoted great attention and resources to the study and conservation by T. K. McClintock of original wallpapers, so that much of the finish that would have been experienced by a visitor to the house during the Popes' ownership can be restored. In addition, Jeffrey Baker of Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects has made a careful study, with detailed drawings, of each molding profile found in the house. Latrobe did not specify interior finishes for the Pope Villa, instead apparently leaving those decisions to the local contractor, Asa Wilgus, and the Popes.

Since Latrobe never visited the building site and Pope Villa was executed by local artisans -- of whom we can identify the contractor/builder, Asa Wilgus -- the workmanship apparent in the building will necessarily represent the local time and place more than the designer. Sufficient materials remain at Pope Villa to positively identify the house that stands in Lexington as the building Latrobe designed for Senator John and Eliza Pope, which is depicted on the plans curated at the Library of Congress; as well as to restore or recreate finish that was lost over time or in the fire. Pope Villa's integrity of materials thus conveys sufficient **integrity of workmanship** identify the house as the product of the early nineteenth century. The wooden elements of the building have been worked with hand tools and joined with mortice and tenon, and in places, square nails. Plaster and mortar are of period composition, while architectural finish is ornamented in ways consistent with Pope Villa's two significant dates.

Of the three integrity factors most important to significance under Criterion C, design, materials and workmanship, Pope Villa's integrity of materials has understandably been the most affected by the passage of time, the building's multiple phases of alteration, and the 1987 fire. Fortunately, the materials that remain are those that comprise the most significant features of Latrobe's design.

Moreover, the integrity of surviving materials within the Pope Villa must be considered within the context of other Latrobe houses. Although the house may have less surviving original material than many American houses of its period, the Pope Villa is one of only three surviving Latrobe houses. Latrobe designed roughly 57 other houses; many of them were built. But having been demolished, these have no physical presence today to represent Latrobe's achievements in domestic design. As mentioned above, the building's owner, the Blue Grass Trust, has carefully investigated, retained, and conserved as much original fabric as possible. This nomination concludes that despite the alteration and loss of some original fabric, in the balance, the material that remains at Pope Villa is sufficient to claim an integrity exists between our sense of the house's significance and its material presentation.

A Latrobe-designed house in the United States will be said to have **integrity of feeling** if the integrity of design and materials are at a high enough level for a visitor today to experience the building in much the same way as a visitor during the period of significance would have. As discussed at length above, Pope Villa is sufficiently intact to permit its reading as an example of a Latrobe-designed rational house and for scholars such as Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon to interpret it as one of the culminating works of the architect's domestic oeuvre. Latrobe's plan for the dwelling, as indicated on the surviving plans, is clearly visible at the house, and despite some loss of material, his scenic route through the house remains fairly intact. The workmanship visible at Pope Villa signals that it was built in the early nineteenth century and modified a generation later. Though Latrobe left interior finishes to the local contractor, these are nonetheless early nineteenth century in character. Not only do they contribute to conveying an excellent integrity of feeling, but also attest to the important relationship between Latrobe as architect, Asa Wilgus as builder, and Eliza Pope as client.

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To summarize, the Pope Villa possesses excellent integrity of location, feeling, and association, a good level of integrity of design, acceptable integrity of materials and workmanship, and poor integrity of setting. While design, materials and workmanship are the aspects of integrity most critical to conveying architectural significance under Criterion C, these are present in sufficient degree that the building is clearly of Latrobe's design and an important example of his ideas about a rational house for America. That very few of Latrobe's American houses survive and that all were significantly altered over time, mitigates the loss of materials and workmanship Pope Villa has suffered. The originality and singularity of Latrobe's designs meant that this sort of loss is typical among his surviving houses, and a part of their history. In the balance, the Pope Villa is recognizable as a nationally significant work of Benjamin Henry Latrobe.

Historic Context: Architectural Design and Construction in Early Nineteenth-Century America

Pope Villa is significant at the national level under Criterion D because it has the potential to convey important information about the practices and processes of building design and construction during the early nineteenth century. Given the circumstances of its production – i.e., the building's design and specifications for construction were communicated by English-trained Benjamin Henry Latrobe through drawings, letters and other documents to John and Eliza Pope and their local contractor, Asa Wilgus – and because as built, the house differs in some respects from the plans Latrobe documented, further investigation at Pope Villa can specifically make a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationships and interactions between artisan designer/builders like Wilgus and trained architectural professionals such as Latrobe, who sought to distinguish design from construction.¹⁴⁴ With fabric dating from the early nineteenth century carefully exposed or removed and warehoused where necessary, and the house's interior not yet restored, many construction details remain visible and afford a unique opportunity to learn about the decisions made as Pope Villa was under construction. Knowledge of these decisions ultimately has the potential to help us gain a better understanding of complex architectural design dynamics. The Pope Villa provides an important case for analyzing three forces that stand in tension, and collaborate to produce the constructed building. That analysis will reveal the architect's original design intent, the builder's input in the construction process, and the power of local architectural preferences, both at the original construction, and later, when the building is changed.

As Carl Lounsbury noted in his analysis of the design process in the early Chesapeake, much architectural history characterizes design and architectural change as a top-down activities, "tracing the introduction of design precedents through architectural innovators such as Latrobe or through the medium of prints and books and assessing their eventual reception in provincial cities and remote corners of British America...."¹⁴⁵ Such analyses pose questions about the source of design ideas, but not about their reception. They result in a good deal of knowledge about the practices and preferences of designers like Latrobe, but contribute little to our understanding of artisans like Asa Wilgus, also overlooking the possibility of interactions between the two groups of professionals. Lounsbury argued that during America's colonial and early National periods, the design process:

¹⁴⁴ Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800 - 1860," in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, No. 2/3 (1984), 107-150;

Fazio and Snadon, 417-419. Phillips and Oppermann, P.A., "Progress Report: Investigation of Senator John Pope House, Lexington, Kentucky," 1991.

Prepared for and on file with the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Carl Lounsbury, "The Design Process," in *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigations by Colonial Williamsburg*, Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury, eds. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 66.

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... was a collective endeavor that involved numerous individuals who had the ability to shape the form of a structure at various stages during the construction of a building, from initial discussions to the final coat of paint. Rather than a static method whose source emanated from an architect's drawings and set of written specifications, the conceptualization and execution of a building's design from its plan to its ornamentation was far more fluid as clients, contractors, and craftsmen played important and often variable roles in the process.¹⁴⁶

In other words, with the possible exception of large public commissions during the late eighteenth century and beyond, most of the buildings constructed in America before the middle of the nineteenth century did not have a single "author."

Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon point out that in England, where Latrobe trained under Samuel Cockerell, building design and construction was handled differently than in America.¹⁴⁷ Architecture began to professionalize in England during the middle of the eighteenth century, which meant in part that "... the distinctive accomplishments by a sizable group of practitioners over a period of time" had been recognized.¹⁴⁸ Latrobe's surviving letters indicate that he continually struggled in the United States to gain similar respect and recognition. In an 1806 letter to Henry Ormond, Latrobe wrote that he was "the first, who, in our Country has endeavored and partly succeeded to place the profession of Architect and Civil Engineer on that footing of respectability which it occupies in Europe."¹⁴⁹

Latrobe indicated that a professional architect should control and supervise the entire process of design and construction, and proposed accomplishing this by retaining control of his drawings, and by not permitting any changes to his design without his knowledge and consent.¹⁵⁰ As his experiences with both the Pennock House (Norfolk, VA) and Pope Villa attest, he was rarely able to accomplish this ideal.¹⁵¹ This was likely because in American practice,

The source of design did not originate solely from architectural drawings or from decisions made by an architect or even a client. In fact, drawings did not command a preeminent position in the transmission of architectural ideas in early America but only supplemented or clarified other ways of communicating intention, including the reliance upon the expertise of craftsmen. Often what was not expressed in drawings or written specifications remained in the domain of the builder to resolve during construction.¹⁵²

This is precisely the sort of interaction that Fazio and Snadon document having taken place between Latrobe and Wilgus in the construction of the Pope Villa.

¹⁴⁶ Lounsbury in *The Chesapeake House*, 65.

¹⁴⁷ Fazio and Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 192-193; Also Carl Lounsbury in *The Chesapeake House*, 64-85.

¹⁴⁸ Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800 - 1860," in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, No. 2/3 (1984), 113. Upton's essay presents a convincing argument about the professionalization of architecture in the United States, and Latrobe's role in it. See page 107 and especially 112-114. See also Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 247-252.

¹⁴⁹ BHL to Henry Ormond, November 20, 1806. in *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of BHL*, John C. Van Horne, Jeffrey A. Cohen, Darwin H. Stapleton, Lee W. Formwalt, William B. Forbush III, and Tina H. Sheller, eds., 3 vols. (New Haven and London, 1984-88), ii, 680.

¹⁵⁰ Latrobe to Robert Mills, July 12, 1806. *Ibid*, 239-245.

¹⁵¹ Fazio and Snadon, 211-213; 395-396; 417-419.

¹⁵² Lounsbury, 66.

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As research into the practice and processes of artisan-led design and construction has shown, things not specified in drawings or building agreements were typically those things taken as understood by both the client and builder, by virtue of their participation in the same society and culture.¹⁵³ So long as traditional artisan designer/builders were constructing traditional house forms and finishing them in familiar ways, the formality of contracts and drawings was unnecessary. But during the late colonial period, a growing “specialization of room functions and building types and the increasing elaboration of finishes” led to the need for more detailed building agreements and instructions, which in turn fostered the elaboration of building contracts and increased reliance on drawings to communicate unfamiliar architectural ideas.¹⁵⁴

The design process in which artisan designer/builders engaged has been the subject of theoretical work among vernacular architecture scholars eager to demonstrate that vernacular (or folk) architecture is not “undesigned.” Essays by the folklorists Henry Glassie and Bernard Herman, and the architect Thomas Hubka, theorize that rather than striving for novelty and innovation, as do most design professionals, artisan designer builders worked within traditional limits and accommodated change.¹⁵⁵ As Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach put it in their introduction to Hubka’s essay, “Just Folks Designing,” the professional designer creates something new by combining elements from various sources, while the traditional designer conceptually disassembles existing models and then reassembles the parts into something new.¹⁵⁶ Artisan designer/builders “operate in a narrow, culturally defined field of possibility that is structured by tradition. This field consists largely of the existing building examples available to each builder and the design repertoire contained within each builder’s particular tradition.”¹⁵⁷ The traditional repertoire of artisan designer/builders is not unchanging, since they also conceptually disassemble new architectural models into their component parts and select for inclusion in the reassembly process only those parts relevant to the local context. In this way, vernacular architecture scholars argue, traditional designers generated side passage and single-pile, central passage forms from the double-pile, central passage “Georgian ideal.”¹⁵⁸ The advantage of this design process is that it accommodates slow architectural change, while at the same time rarely producing a building that is uncomfortably different than the local norm.

This body of theory primarily addresses architectural form, having much less to offer to our understanding of traditional processes for designing structure and finish. Investigations of the preferences and practices of individual artisans are more informative in this regard, but optimally require extensive evidence from both the archive and the field. In the book *Architects and Builders in North Carolina*, Catherine Bishir and her co-authors provide a history of the state’s building practices, from its settlement through the twentieth century.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Lounsbury, in *The Chesapeake House*; Catherine Bishir, “Good and Sufficient Language for Building,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 4 (1991), 44-52; Catherine W. Bishir, Charlotte V. Brown, Carl R. Lounsbury and Ernest H. Wood III, *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill and London: the University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 48-129.

¹⁵⁴ Lounsbury, *ibid.*, 77.

¹⁵⁵ Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: a Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975); Henry Glassie, “Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building,” in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 394-425; Herman, Bernard L., *The Bricoleur Revisited*. In *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison, ed. (University of Tennessee Press, 1997), pp. 37-63; Hubka, Thomas, “Just Folks Designing: Vernacular Designers and the Generation of Form, in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 426-432.

¹⁵⁶ Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach in the introduction to Hubka, “Just Folks Designing,” 426

¹⁵⁷ Hubka, “Just Folks Designing,” 429.

¹⁵⁸ Glassie, “Eighteenth-Century Cultural Process,” 401-409; *Architects and builders in North Carolina : a history of the practice of building* Authors [Catherine W Bishir](#), J. Marshall Bullock, William Bushong, Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, Creation Date: c1990

¹⁵⁹ Catherine W. Bishir, Carl Lounsbury, William Bushong and Charlotte Brown, *Architects and builders in North Carolina : a history of the practice of building*. (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

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Bishir's in-depth study of Jacob Holt, a designer/builder who worked in both Virginia and North Carolina during the middle of the nineteenth century, provides valuable perspective on one individual artisan's response to resolving "popular and traditional forces" and accommodating "aesthetic and practical" demands.¹⁶⁰ While Holt was apparently more architecturally adventurous than most of those in his community, he simultaneously seems to have introduced new ideas and encouraged their acceptance. That Holt typically built traditional single-pile, central passage houses embellished with fashionable ornament is not surprising, given the popularity and tenure of the form; thousands of similar dwellings were constructed during the nineteenth century across the eastern United States and their numbers attest that most other designer/builders reached comparable solutions. Holt and other artisans like him were simultaneously agents of "architectural change and a source for the continuity of older house plans."¹⁶¹

In undertaking the construction of the Pope Villa, Asa Wilgus was confronted with making a different accommodation: he was tasked with building an unusual plan but was apparently able to finish the house as he chose. While little is known of Wilgus, Michael Fazio and Patrick Sandon documented that "by the first two decades of the nineteenth century, he had developed diverse business interests, including real estate ownership (perhaps related to speculative building), road construction, and hotel and tavern management." They go on to conclude that at least with respect to his work on Pope Villa, Wilgus was likely more a "construction supervisor and "general contractor" than merely a carpenter.¹⁶²

Architectural design and construction in early nineteenth century America involved interactions and interplay between professional design and international inspiration on the one hand, and traditional processes and practices based in local or regional models on the other. During this time, professional designers like Latrobe began to shape architectural design and construction through builder's handbooks, style guides, contracts, drawings, and specifications. Though the traditional manner of building meant that change would be slow, craftsmen learned to read architectural drawings and eventually came to respect designers' expertise.¹⁶³ The Johnsons' ca. 1843 modifications to the house created by Latrobe, Wilgus and Senator John and Eliza Pope in 1812 is evidence that the process of architectural change and professionalization did not proceed toward an inevitable goal, but occurred in fits and starts. Built during this period of change, with an innovative plan and traditional finish—in reverse of the usual pattern—Pope Villa has the potential to convey important information about architectural design and construction in early nineteenth-century America.

Evaluation of the Architectural Significance of the Pope Villa within the Historic Context Architectural Design and Construction in Early Nineteenth-Century America

Pope Villa's significance under Criterion D derives from the building's potential to convey important information about architectural design and construction practices in America's early national period. The house provides many instances of a fundamental tension existing between the sophisticated and cosmopolitan design for the house and its more conservative and traditional local context. After the 1987 fire burned away the majority of fabric that had been added to the house during the late nineteenth and twentieth-century renovations,

¹⁶⁰ Catherine Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt: An American Builder," *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 448.

¹⁶¹ Bishir, "Jacob W. Holt," 447-481; 447.

¹⁶² Fazio and Sandon, 417.

¹⁶³ Lounsbury, 85.

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early nineteenth-century materials were carefully removed where necessary and warehoused.¹⁶⁴ With the house not yet finished on the interior, many construction details remain visible. Between the architectural fabric visible in place and that warehoused, further investigation at Pope Villa affords a significant opportunity to learn about the decisions made as the building was under construction. It thus has the potential to convey valuable information about the role played by artisans in the design process. In this analysis, the Pope Villa promises to help us gain a more nuanced understanding of architectural authorship of the building.¹⁶⁵

The following research questions outline the specific ways in which the Pope Villa has the potential to convey significant information about architectural design and construction in early nineteenth-century America:

How does Pope Villa as built differ from what Latrobe designed?

Despite intensive investigation, questions remain about the original design of the dome, main stair, and entry to the rotunda. Further investigation of and the solutions to these puzzles will illuminate the relationship between the house as Latrobe designed it, and the house as built, thus furthering our understanding of architectural practice at the dawn of architecture in America. Three specific aspects of the building raise important questions that have yet to be answered.

Regarding the stair hall (and series of stair cases) and the entry from the stair hall into the rotunda, Patrick Snadon (personal communication May 11, 2017) has pointed out the extraordinary importance of the stair, since Latrobe's all-important sequence of spaces (i.e., Latrobe's "house scenery") required visitors to rise to the second and principal story, a requirement unnecessary for virtually all other American houses of the time. Patrick estimated that there had been approximately ten different stair configurations to accomplish this goal, none probably precisely following Latrobe's existing drawings. Working out the history of these several staircases will illuminate the fraught process by which Latrobe's ideas took different shapes over time, as local skills and tastes, plus the requirements of new owners, made themselves felt.

The entry into the rotunda presents a similar puzzle, with similar value for the study of architectural practice. Snadon has drawn a reconstruction of that transitional space as Latrobe designed it, and has also drawn a hypothetical reconstruction of that feature as actually built. But Jeff Baker thinks he can find more evidence, and he likely will. Again, this new evidence will tell us a lot about the conversation between Latrobe's drawings and local tastes and practices.

The third important question has to do with the servants' living spaces as shown on the right rear of the first floor in Latrobe's plans. If, as we suspect, these servants were enslaved African-Americans, then placing their living quarters inside what is really a quite modestly-sized house was a revolutionary move. Were these two rooms built exactly as Latrobe designed them? Is there any surviving evidence for how they were used? What was the function of the smaller, outer room versus the larger inner room? More generally, how did the geography of the house as built function to regulate social relations, both gender relations and slave/master relations? Here again, any deviations from Latrobe's surviving drawings will help to reveal how this extraordinary arrangement was carried out in practice, and how it changed over time.

¹⁶⁴ Phillips and Oppermann, 2.

¹⁶⁵ Carl Lounsbury, "The Design Process," in *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigations by Colonial Williamsburg*, Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury, eds. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 66-67.

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To what degree did Latrobe influence the architectural finish of the house?

While Fazio and Sandon wrote that Latrobe had limited influence on the Pope Villa's interior finish, recent discoveries raise questions about that conclusion. Specifically, there are several molding profiles that Jeff Baker believes originated with Latrobe since they are unusual and not found in other contemporary houses. In addition, a two-piece mantel surviving in one of the second-floor chambers precisely matches the nail holes behind the black marble mantel added to the dining room in the ca. 1843 renovation. The swag motif on this mantel is similar to swags in both the dining room wall paper and the drawing room plaster. What is the source of these motifs?

How much first-period (1812) fabric was re-used in the ca. 1843 remodeling of the house?

Both forensic investigations of the Pope Villa have indicated that the door currently in place between the rotunda and vestibule leading to the chambers at the rear of the second story is the door that was originally the main entry door, having been cut down to fit the second-floor opening during the remodeling of the mid-nineteenth century. Recently, Jeff Baker discovered that one of the mantles originally in the dining room had been moved to one of the chambers. Would careful examination of the other material in the house and that removed and warehoused reveal additional material that has been re-used in a similar way?

Evaluation of the Integrity of Pope Villa according to the terms of Criterion D

The Pope Villa is nationally significant under Criterion D for its potential to convey important information about architectural design and construction practices in America's early national period. The house provides many instances of a fundamental tension existing between Latrobe's sophisticated and cosmopolitan design for the house and its more conservative and traditional local context, so that ongoing investigation will potentially provide information about Latrobe's, Wilgus' and the Popes' contributions to the design and construction processes. These findings will inform not only our understanding of the design of Pope Villa, but can enlarge our awareness of the early design-build process nationally as a revealing case study.

The lengthy integrity analysis above establishes that the Pope Villa can be said to possess a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, and association, a good level of integrity of design, acceptable integrity of materials and workmanship, and poor integrity of setting. Since traces of the processes and practices of architectural design and construction are expressed in a structure's physical fabric, a building must have enough integrity of design, materials and workmanship that important information can be abstracted from it.

While the Pope Villa experienced numerous changes to both its exterior and interior over its long history, sufficient original material remains and remains visible, to answer the research questions posed above and to generate others in addition. Although there have already been intensive investigations of the house, the architect has continued to discover new things about its design and construction, as described in the evaluation section above. Since Pope Villa has the integrity to reveal its close adherence to Latrobe's plans and his rational house ideal, it also has enough integrity to convey important information about the execution of his design in the hands of an artisan designer/builder.

Pope Villa
Name of Property

Fayette County, Kentucky
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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 # _____
- 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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): FAE 1140

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0 acres (already listed)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 719765 4212974
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Pope Villa
Name of Property

Fayette County, Kentucky
County and State

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

Being all of Lot 44 of the Woolfolk Subdivision in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, as shown by map or plat there of record in Plat Cabinet E, Slide 183 in the Fayette County Clerk's office; improvements thereon being known as 326 Grosvenor Avenue.

The boundary described is the legal boundary of the site owned by the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation recorded in Deed Book 1465, page 175, December 30, 1987.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the 0.3-acre remainder of the 13-acre parcel historically associated with Senator John and Eliza Pope. This portion of the original, larger parcel is that which historically contained the house, and which, in addition, was not later developed in the Woolfolk Subdivision.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Julie Riesenweber, Daniel Rowland & Nancy Wolsk; with contributions from Cynthia Johnson and Jason Sloan

organization University of Kentucky; Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation date October 1, 2017

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city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40507

e-mail jriesen@uky.edu; hisdan@uky.edu; nwolsk@transy.edu; sofferrell@bluegrasstrust.org

Photographs:

Pope Villa
Name of Property

Fayette County, Kentucky
County and State

PHOTO LOG

Pope Villa
326 Grosvenor Avenue
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

Name of photographer: Nancy Wolsk
Date of photographs: February 15, 2018
Location of original digital files: Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation
210 North Broadway
Lexington, KY 40507

- Photo 1 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0001)
Pope Villa in setting
- Photo 2 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0002)
Pope Villa, front (north) and left (east) elevations; looking northwest
- Photo 3 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0003)
Pope Villa, front (north) elevation; looking south
- Photo 4 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0004)
Pope Villa, view of interior of portico; looking northeast
- Photo 5 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0005)
Pope Villa, rear (south) elevation; looking north
- Photo 6 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0006)
Pope Villa, portion of rear (south) and east elevations; looking northwest
- Photo 7 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0007)
Pope Villa, right (west) and portion of rear (south) elevations; looking northeast
- Photo 8 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0008)
Pope Villa, interior; ground floor looking north toward center of the house and front door
- Photo 9 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0009)
Pope Villa interior; ground floor looking south toward center of house and rear door
- Photo 10 (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0010)
Pope Villa interior; ground floor; Eliza Pope's office ("parlor"), looking northeast toward the front of the house

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- Photo 11 {KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0011}
Pope Villa interior; ground floor; Eliza Pope's office ("parlor"), looking south through service stair to service spaces at the back of the house
- Photo 12 {KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0012}
Pope Villa interior; ground floor; looking northeast from center of house showing cross hall for main stair and current temporary staircase
- Photo 13 {KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0013}
Pope Villa interior; second floor; view of the rotunda looking west; door on the left leads to chambers (bedrooms), that at the center to the butler's pantry upstairs, and that to the right to the dining room
- Photo 14 {KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0014}
Pope Villa interior; second floor; view of the rotunda looking north toward dining and drawing rooms; showing back of niche
- Photo 15 {KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0015}
Pope Villa interior; ground floor; looking west toward "servants' lodging room" from service passage originally located behind a wall separating family from service spaces; the placement of this wall is indicated by the low structure of bricks extending from the restored doorway in front of it that originally led to the service stair
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Pope Villa interior; ground floor; view of former kitchen looking toward the southeast corner of the house
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Pope Villa interior; ground floor; view of original servants' lodging rooms, looking southwest
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Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking east from the rotunda to the staircase and through the arch at its articulation with that space
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Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking south toward the curved walls at the juncture of the dining and drawing rooms; showing the back of the niche that is in the north wall of the rotunda

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Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking north at triangular closet enclosed by the semi-circular ends of the dining and drawing rooms
- Photo 23: (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0023)
Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking north to hearth wall in the western chamber; doorway to the second-floor butler's pantry at left
- Photo 24: (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0024)
Pope Villa interior; second floor; view of eastern chamber looking southeast
- Photo 25: (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0025)
Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking south southeast to the drawing room hearth wall
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Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking south to drawing room hearth wall; showing first period trim around former niche and marble mantel inserted with ca. 1843 renovation
- Photo 27: (KY_FayetteCounty_PopeVilla_0027)
Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking south for a detail view of the first-period trim at the drawing room niche
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Pope Villa interior; second floor; looking west for detail view of rotunda chair rail with punch work

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326 Grosvenor Avenue
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky**

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Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation
street & number 210 North Broadway telephone (859) 253-0362
city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40507