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The original portion of The Falls Church is a rectangular (60'x40') structure of brick with two tiers of windows. The brick is laid in Flemish bond above a molded water table with English bond below. Rubbed brick appears around the arched windows of the top tier and the rectangular windows of the lower tier, as well as at the corners of the building. The west doorway is set off by a molded brick pediment supported by guaged brick Tuscan pilasters. The centered south doorway's wooden pediment and flanking pilasters replace a stone enframement very similar to the western doorway of Pohick Church. This stone enframement very similar to the western doorway of Pohick Church. This stone treatment with its pediment, pilasters, and rusticated surround appears in an 1862 Matthew Brady photograph.

The structure is covered by a hipped roof at the base of which is a modillion cornice which is probably original. The roof timbers are said to be the original, although the wooden shingles specified by the builder have long been replaced by slates. Most of the wooden portions and lights of the upper tier windows appear to be original while the lower tier of windows has been largely restored. The windows as well as the masonry of the east wall were demolished in 1959 for the addition of a greatly enlarged chancel. This addition also necessitated the removal of the exterior modillion cornice on that wall. The interior of the new chancel is trimmed in colonial style wood work which unfortunately is more Philadelphia than Virginia in feeling. Also included in the 1959 alteration was the erection of the gallery around three walls of the interior. A gallery was specified in James Wren's plans for the church, but it was never built. The original interior arrangement of the church was similar to that of Pohick Church, having the pulpit centered on the north wall opposite the south door. In the present arrangement the entire early part has become the nave for the new chancel.

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Although the neighborhood of The Falls Church has become quite urbanized, the shady churchyard creates an appropriate setting for the building. The yard contains a number of markers, but no colonial ones remain.

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TATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The first church building at Falls Church was a frame structure erected in 1733 just south of the existing building. The structure was built by Richard Blackburn of Rippon Lodge whose daughter married Bushrod Washinton. This church served as the upper church for Truro Parish until 1765 when it was included in the newly created Fairfax Parish. The first reference to the edifice being called The Falls Church appears in the vestry book entry for November 28, 1757.

At a meeting held at The Falls Church on March 28, 1763, the vestry men (one of whom was George Washington) came to the opinion that the wooden church was "rotten and unfit for repair" and resolved that it should be replaced by a new brick church. On March 20, 1764, George Washington and George W. Fairfax, the recently appointed church wardens, advertised in the <u>Maryland Gazette</u> for persons willing to undertake the construction of the new church. By June a plan for the church submitted by a local resident, Colonel James Wren, was accepted by the vestry; construction was begun in 1767 and completed by December, 1769. Wren's detailed specifications for the building are preserved in the vestry book.

During the Revolution The Falls Church served for a time as a recruiting station for American forces. After the Disestablishment the church was abandoned but was returned to service in 1839. As with nearly every Virginia colonial church, the building's fabric suffered great damage from the hands of Federal troops during the Civil War, being used first as a hospital and later as a stable. After the war the Federal government awarded the church some \$1300 in reparations to repair the damage. Further repairs were made to the building during an extensive restoration project promoted by the National Society of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America in 1905. In 1959 the architectural integrity of the church was seriously compromised when the east wall was demolished in order to erect a large two-story chancel, causing the original portion to become simply a nave.

Despite the building's recent and somewhat drastic alteration, The Falls Church's architectural significance is enhanced by its kinship with two other significant colonial churches: Christ Church in Alexandria and Pohick Church. The former was also designed by James Wren, while the latter can almost certainly be attributed to Wren. As originally built, all three churches were quite similar in form and concept.

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Form 10-300e (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

## INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

## (Continuation Sheet)

		7
STATE		1
Virginia		[
COUNTY		1
Falls Church	(in ci	t.)
FOR NPS USE O	NLY	1
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	]
		1
		1

(Number	elf	entries)

- 8. Intimately associated with the history of Northern Virginia, The Falls Church has become the focal point for a rapidly growing independent city which took its name from the venerable structure.
- Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory 1958 Federal Library of Congress Washington, D. C. Code: 08

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #110-1 1969 State Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building Richmond, Virginia Code: 45

