

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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received

date entered

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

DRAFT

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic CHAMBERLIN HOTEL (PREFERRED) (VHLC FILE #114-²⁰⁰⁶~~114~~)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Ingalls Road - Fort Monroe N/A not for publication

city, town Hampton N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county (city) code 650

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Chamberlin Hotel Company, /
Mr. Vernon E. Stuart / U.S. Department of the Army

street & number Ingalls Road, Fort Monroe

city, town Hampton N/A vicinity of state Virginia 23651

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hampton Courthouse

street & number 101 King's Way

city, town Hampton state Virginia 23651

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
title File #114-114 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Chamberlin Hotel is a multi-bay, four-story, concrete frame, brick veneer structure situated on Old Point Comfort, south of Fort Monroe, on Ingalls Road. Roughly U-shaped in plan, 120 meters long and 40 meters wide, the building was designed in a Colonial Revival style. Two towers articulate its southern facade while projecting pavilions enliven the north facade.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Designed as a planar mass with projecting central and corner pavilions, the main (north) facade of the hotel faces north onto Ingalls Road. The lower two stories serve as a plinth for the setback tower. The ground floor, remodeled in the 1960s to accommodate auto traffic, is articulated as a simple brick facade with unadorned window openings. The central bay projects outward one bay and serves as the main entrance. A simple hall with elevator provides vertical circulation to the next, or main floor. A stone string course delineates the division of the ground and main floors.

The main floor of the north facade is articulated as an arcade whose openings, save the last to the east, are filled with round-arched windows whose muntins outline a Palladian motif. Flanked by paired Tuscan pilasters, each arch is distinguished by stone voussoirs and carved keystones. The keystones rise to touch a stone entablature which runs the length of the six-bay ground-floor facade. To the west the entablature is topped by a blocking course while the rest of the arcade is topped by a metal balustrade with stone supports arranged symmetrically with paired pilasters below. Flanking the central pavilion, and on axis with the center of the side pavilion of the six-story hotel block set behind it, two pediments en ressaout with swagged and wreathed tympani are supported by pairs of triple pilasters. The two bays flanking the center pavilion project one full bay and are articulated by single and paired round-arched windows. The central bay of the ground floor projects another full bay and is capped by another pediment en ressaout.

The major seven-story mass of the hotel is stepped back from the main floor and is generally massed as a tripartite grouping of pavilions. Arranged in an alternating 1, 3, 1 rhythm on the two end pavilions and 2, 3, 2 in the central pavilion, the double-hung windows provide horizontal relief to the incessant verticality of the structure. In the central bay, the three center windows formally allude to the motif of a serliana.

The remaining mass contains evenly spaced windows. Two balconettes located in the central bays of the seventh floor of the end pavilions enliven the Flemish-bond facade. At the level of the window sills of the eighth floor, a heavy stone string course girdles the tower section while a modillioned entablature and horizontal cornice encircle the hotel at the top of the eighth floor. Horizontal rectangular-shaped windows pierce this entablature. Above the eighth floor the two pavilion ends are capped with a brick and stone blocking course to the east and a stone balustrade to the west. The central pavilion and its adjacent wings continue upward, articulated by round-arched windows with carved keystones. The central bay continues the previously

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) entertainment

Specific dates 1928 **Builder/Architect** Marcellus Wright, Sr./Warren and Wetmore
Associated

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chamberlin Hotel, completed in 1928, is the work of a prominent Richmond architect Marcellus Wright, Sr. who also designed the John Marshall Hotel and Mosque Auditorium in Richmond, Virginia. Wright's Chamberlin, an example of a Beaux-Arts interpretation of the Georgian mode, reflects the English colonial heritage of the Peninsula area and the influence of the associated firm of Warren and Wetmore, prominent early 20th-century Beaux-Arts architects. The Chamberlin not only served as the only resort hotel on the Chesapeake Bay for many years, but served also as housing for military officers and their families during World War II. The replacement of the pair of ornate Neo-Georgian cupolas on the Chamberlin's towers with anti-aircraft batteries provided for air defense of Fort Monroe. The Chamberlin maintains its importance as a hotel for those visiting Fort Monroe, but it more importantly represents an excellent example of the Georgian-style American resort hotel of the late 1920s.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The present Chamberlin Hotel is the fourth in a series of resort hotels originally housing visitors to Fort Monroe. The first Hygeia Hotel, dating to 1821, was demolished during the Civil War. During the 1860s the second Hygeia Hotel was constructed. In 1887, a resolution of Congress authorized John F. Chamberlin, a prominent Washington, DC entrepreneur, to build the first Chamberlin. Smithmeyer and Pelz, architects of the Library of Congress, designed the hotel in the Queen Anne style. The Chamberlin was opened to the public in 1894, but was completely destroyed by fire on March 7, 1920.

On September 14, 1922, the United States government leased to Richmond Hotels, Inc. the land on which the hotel stands for a fifty-year period. Construction of the present Chamberlin began in 1927 and was completed on April 7, 1928. It officially opened the following year as the Chamberlin-Vanderbilt Hotel; the Vanderbilt family through its hotel company had provided some financial backing for the hotel's construction.

Marcellus Wright, Sr. was the progenitor of the design of the hotel, but the Vanderbilt concern wanted to ensure the design maintained the high standards set by the Commodore Hotel in New York City, the flagship of the company. Consequently, they arranged for the employment of Whitney Warren, of the firm of Warren and Wetmore, as associate architect. Warren would occasionally visit Wright's office, review the design, and make suggestions when he felt it necessary.

Wright, a student of Paul Cret's, was a successful local architect, producing dozens of designs for prominent Virginia buildings. The planarity of the decoration in the hotel can perhaps be attributed to Cret's influence on Wright and his emphasis on a stripped classicism as the new universal style.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #3)

- "A City In Itself, Chamberlin Provides Varied Facilities." Daily Press, 2 November 1949.
(Newport News)
- Fulgham, Matthew. "The Chamberlin." The Commonwealth, 1951, pp. 28-30.
- "Historic Chamberlin Dates Back Over 130-Year Period." Daily Press (Newport News) 1 May 1949.

10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of nominated property Approx. 6 acres

Quadrangle name Hampton, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	3	8	3	1	9	0	4	0	9	5	5	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the point of intersection of the inside or W side of the sidewalk on the W side of Ingalls Rd. and the inside or S side of the sidewalk on the S side of Fenwick Rd.; thence, along the inside
(See Continuation Sheet #3)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

(2)

name/title (1) Pamela J. Clodfelter & VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

organization VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION date August 1984

(1) 1800 Jefferson Park Ave., #92 (1) (804) 979-9308

street & number (2) 221 Governor Street telephone (2) (804) 786-3144

(1) Charlottesville (1) Virginia 22903

city or town (2) Richmond state (2) Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *H. Bryan Mitchell*

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director

title VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION date October 16, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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CHAMBERLIN HOTEL, HAMPTON, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

established alternating rhythm with the exception that the central three windows now closely resemble a serliana. This penthouse level is capped by a single entablature with a full pediment over the central pavilion. The tympanum is enlivened by an oculus wreathed and swagged in a Georgian manner. This pediment is topped by a stepped attic which hides a gable roof.

The east facade ground floor is explicated as a series of brick piers whose intervening eight bays have been filled with glass shopfronts. Save for round-arched windows, the vocabulary of architectural elements established on the main floor of the north facade is reiterated on the main floor of the east facade. Slight variations do occur, however. The arcade is no longer enclosed, but windows designed in a Palladian manner separate the interior from the building proper. Pedimented bays occur every third bay, the northernmost of which provides an entry up to the arcade by means of a three-dimensional stair. The tower repeats the eight-bay rhythm, lacking any other articulation until the eighth floor is reached. There a limestone string course, windows, and cornice repeat the articulation established on the northern facade.

The end pavilions of the structure protrude on the southern side to create a U-shaped structure. The southern ends of the southeast pavilions are articulated in a manner similar to their counterparts on the northern facade with the exception that the open arcade of the east facade wraps around the building along the southeastern section of the south facade.

The central portion of the south facade has retained its three-way stair, leading to a pedimented center bay, which continues the vocabulary established on the north facade. The central portion of the south facade varies from the north in the inclusion of two three-bay towers en ressaout, each two bays distant from the end pavilions. At the ninth story these are adorned with pediments whose tympani are decorated with stone festoons and shields. A quoined tower rises above each pediment to a cornice with heavy modillions. Each tower is topped by a brick and stone parapet. An oculus decorates the wall between the pediment and cornice on three sides of each tower.

At the lower level the west facade completes the belt of arched windows framed by pilasters, while a low brick pediment hides the gabled roof of the dining room. In the setback tower area the eight-bay-wide area continues the previously established rhythm and vocabulary of architectural elements. At the ninth-floor level the setback gable roof of the penthouse is articulated as a pediment decorated with oculus and festoons. A large chimney stack rises along the tower section of the west facade.

The interior spaces have, for the most part, been altered; but the dining room to the south facade on the main floor has retained its original character. At the basement level the indoor pool retains its vaguely Art Deco decorations. The western dining area has been substantially remodeled.

The upper floors consist of double loaded corridors of hotel rooms which have recently been modernized. The grounds retain an outdoor pool, tennis courts, and wharf leading out into the Chesapeake Bay.

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Continuation sheet #2

Item number 8

Page 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

The choice of the Georgian style was a natural outgrowth of the building's location in an area rich in Colonial architecture, the almost simultaneous development of Colonial Williamsburg by the Rockefeller interests, and the Vanderbilts' own demonstrated interest in the Georgian (the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York City, 1910-12, by Warren and Wetmore is also in the Georgian style). The building follows the accepted solution to the problem of the Georgian high-rise which was to concentrate ornament on the top and bottom stories while the middle areas were generally neglected. The Georgian was considered to project a relaxed air of hominess and family character, an image that a resort hotel on the Chesapeake Bay would be most eager to cultivate.

In 1930, the name changed to the Chamberlin Hotel after a local hotel company bought out the Vanderbilt interest. With the onset of the Depression in the 1930s, the hotel passed through several owners. In 1942, the Navy Department took over the Chamberlin to house officers and their families. The two decorative cupolas were taken down at this time to prevent enemy pilots from using them as sights to bomb the fort. They were replaced by anti-aircraft batteries. In 1947 Richmond Hotels, Inc. (a subsidiary of Noland Company) acquired the Chamberlin Hotel from the Navy.

Many of the Chamberlin's guests in the 1930s and 1940s arrived by steamship or by train. The Baltimore Steamship Wharf was located at the end of Ingalls Road behind the hotel and the C & O Railroad made the Chamberlin its eastern end on the line. Thus the hotel was easily accessible to northern travelers from Washington, DC, Baltimore, and New York City. Being the only resort hotel on the Chesapeake Bay for many years, these convenient forms of transportation contributed to the Chamberlin's self-containment. The hotel provided lavish dining facilities and numerous leisure activities such as indoor and outdoor pools, a health club, a bar, and small concerts. The hotel additionally had its own bakery, ice-manufacturing machines, and laundry facilities. The Daily Press (Newport News) stated (on November 2, 1949) that "...the Chamberlin is almost a city all by itself, and a resort city at that."¹

About 1960, the C & O Railroad discontinued its line to the Chamberlin, and in 1961 the Baltimore Steamship Wharf was demolished. With decreasing patrons and the construction of the nearby Interstate 64, the hotel was forced to compete as a motor hotel. At this time a motor entrance was built on the ground level eliminating the grand stairs which had once led to the main public area of the lobby (now the Federal Room). Business continued to decline, leaving the upper floors unoccupied and the Chamberlin completely closed during the weekdays in the winter months. In 1979 Vernon E. Stuart purchased the hotel and began extensive renovations, especially of the upper levels.

The Chamberlin Hotel has always been used by the community for such activities as "Beauty contests, dog shows, water shows, swimming meets, musical presentations..., dances..."² Two Broadway plays have been produced in the Chamberlin Arena Theater (Roof Garden). In addition, this hotel was the site of the All-Peninsula Art Show in 1962. Furthermore, it is growing into a convention center (having about 60% convention guests), thus serving local, state, and national organizations. Well-known people who have stayed in the hotel include President John F. Kennedy, who visited when he was a senator in the early 1950s.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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CHAMBERLIN HOTEL, HAMPTON, VA

Continuation sheet #3

Item number 8, 9, 10

Page 2, 1, 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

Since World War II, the hotel has maintained its importance to Fort Monroe as a vacation resort for officers and their families by providing lodging to military guests and meeting rooms for conferences and office space. Although the Chamberlin continues to expand its uses, especially to the military, its urban atmosphere and the grandeur of its open spaces and unique decor continue to make it an important example of an early 20th-century resort hotel on the Virginia seaboard.

PJC/SMB

¹"A City In Itself, Chamberlin Provides Varied Facilities," The Daily Press (Newport News), 2 November 1949.

²Ibid.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Hotel Manager's Dilemma." Times-Herald, 8 June 1970.

Norris, Arnie. "Dining in the Hampton Room at Hotel Chamberlin." The Tidal Times, August 1982, p. 9.

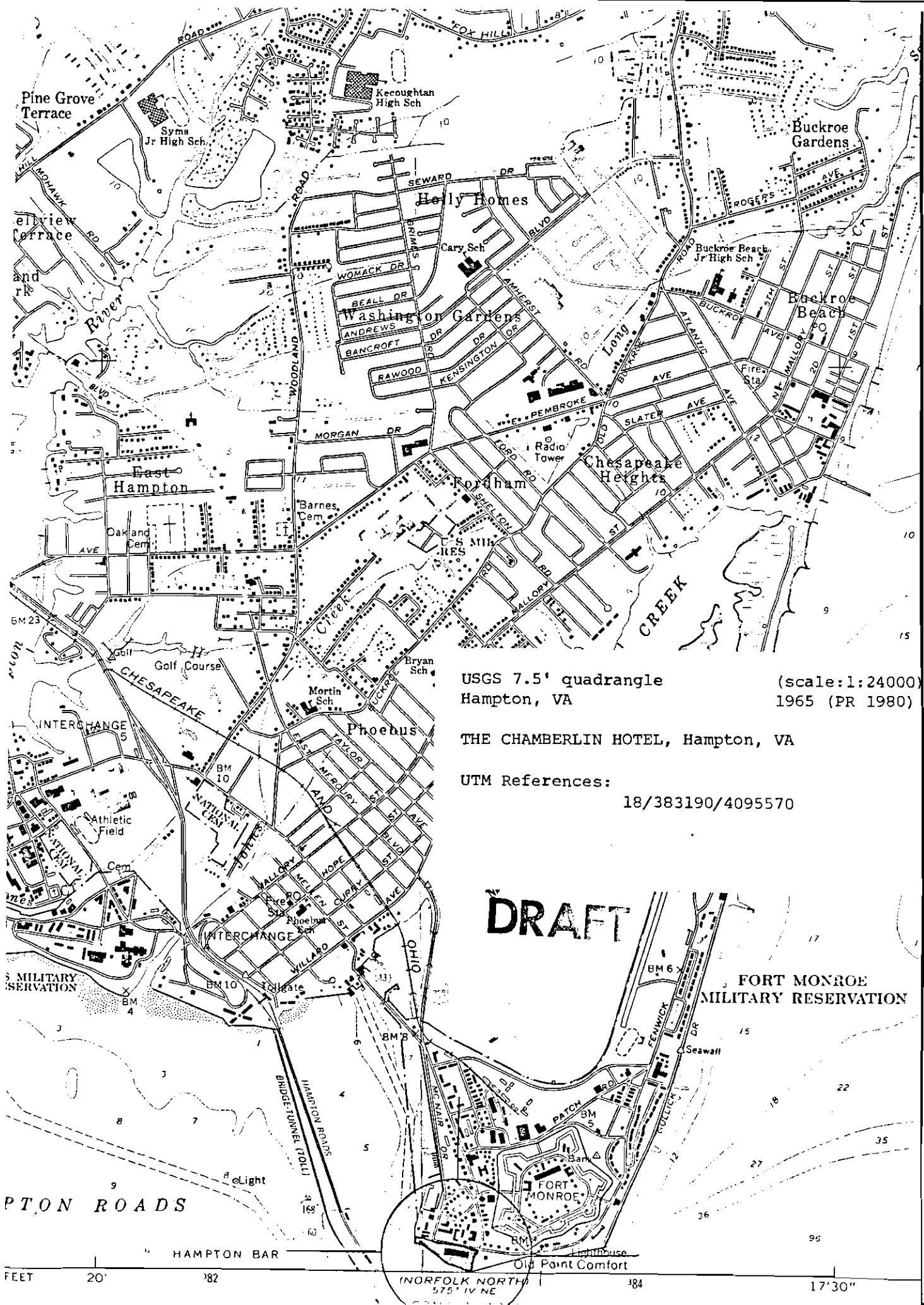
Rhodes, W.T. "The Colonial Revival." Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1974.

Whiffen and Koeper. American Architecture: 1607-1976. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description & Boundary Justification

of the sidewalk on the S side of Fenwick Rd. westerly to the NW end of the seawall; thence, southerly, southeasterly, northeasterly, and again southeasterly along the seawall to the inside or W side of the sidewalk on the W side of Ingalls Rd.; thence along the inside of the sidewalk on the W side of Ingalls Rd. northerly to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification: The boundary conforms to land sold to The Chamberlin Hotel by the federal government. It does not include adjacent parking lot to the north.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Hampton, VA 1965 (PR 1980)

THE CHAMBERLIN HOTEL, Hampton, VA

UTM References:
 18/383190/4095570

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FORT MONROE
 MILITARY RESERVATION

PTON ROADS

HAMPTON BAR
 FEET 20' 182 184 17'30"

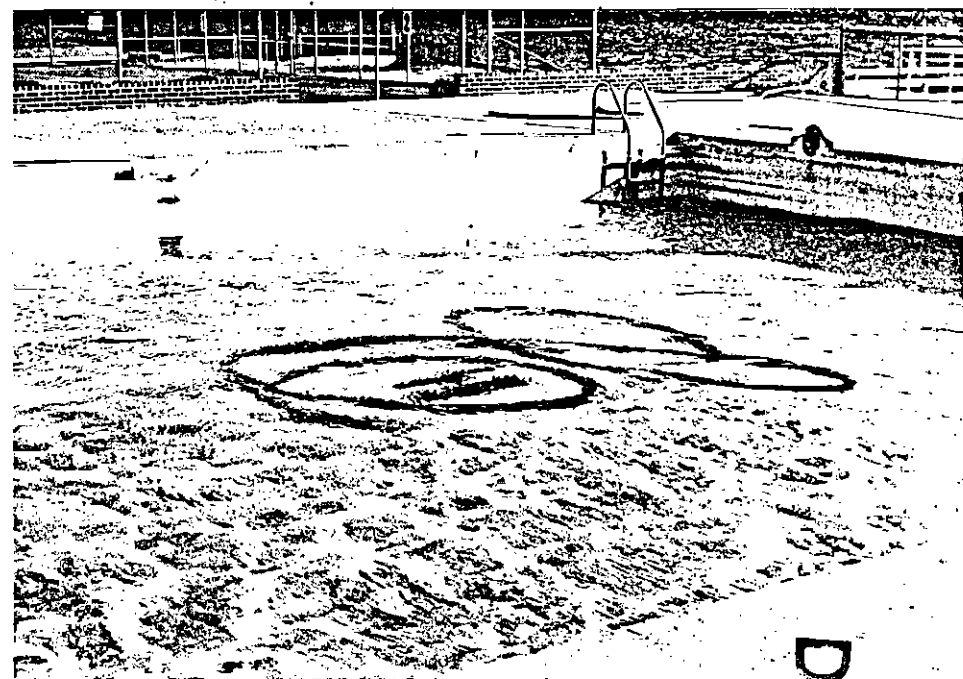
INORFOLK NORTH
 575' IV NE

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Detail of south elevation



Outdoor pool on south side

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