

VLR- 3/15/00 NRHP- 5/11/00

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Decatur O. Davis House (127-0177)

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 1001 East Clay Street not for publication N/A

city or town Richmond vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Richmond (Independent City) code 760 zip code 23219

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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  
 nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

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

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the court)

- private
- 5 public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

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

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
VACANT/MOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>BRICK</u>
walls	<u>BRICK</u>
	<u>STONE: Granite</u>
roof	<u>STONE: Slate</u>
other	<u>METAL: Cast Iron</u>

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1879 - 1917

Significant Dates

1879

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Albert Lawrence West

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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#

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:
Valentine Museum

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Approximately one-tenth of an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>285,160</u>	<u>4,157,560</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>N/A</u>	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>	

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kimberly M. Chen

organization Kimberly M. Chen & Associates, Inc. date 4 January 2000

street & number 2701 East Broad Street telephone (804) 225-9560

city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23223

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Valentine Museum (Bill Martin, Director)

street & number 1015 East Clay Street telephone (804) 649-0711

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Decatur O. Davis House (127-0177)  
1001 East Clay Street  
Richmond, VA

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Decatur O. Davis House, built in 1879, was designed by the architect, Albert Lawrence West, for his niece Alice Tyree and her husband Decatur Oswyn Davis. The three-story, Second Empire-style house is constructed of brick with granite and iron ornamentation. Of particular note is the rare rinceau cast-iron fence. The Davis House, located at 1001 East Clay Street, was built in the once fashionable Court End district of the city. Along with its neighbors, it forms one of the most attractive streets in downtown Richmond, the only intact residential scale block to survive in Court End.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

#### SITE

The Decatur O. Davis House is situated on the southeast corner of East Clay and North 10<sup>th</sup> Streets in the heart of downtown Richmond. The north and south sides of the 1000 block of East Clay Street are residential in scale. This former residential area is surrounded by large-scale institutional buildings associated with the Medical College of Virginia to the north, south and east and city offices to the west.

The house is set on an urban lot, fifty feet wide by one hundred fifteen feet deep. The lot slopes to the east and south and is enclosed by a stone retaining wall and iron fence on the north and west sides. Brick sidewalks laid in a herringbone pattern with granite curbs and regularly spaced iron grates and street trees extend along the retaining wall and the west side of the rear wing. To the east, a narrow strip of land planted with mature Photinia and a white pine tree separates the Davis House from the Bransford-Cecil house. A carriage house once stood in this side yard near the southeast corner of the dwelling. On the south is a paved parking lot belonging to the Valentine Museum.

A granite ashlar retaining wall extends from the northwest corner of the rear wing, enclosing a small yard on the west and north sides of the house. The wall is capped with a rinceau iron fence. This handsome fence has a geometric pattern at the base and a twining vine of trumpet

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flowers above. The rectangular posts have arched tops with rosettes above a Tuscan order cornice. Below the cornice, the posts are fluted with three bands of vertical beading on the wide face and a single band on the narrower side. The entire composition is set on a Tuscan order base. Mary Wingfield Scott, in her book *Old Richmond Neighborhoods*, notes the vine fence at 1001 East Clay Street as an example of the beautiful ironwork once found in Court End.<sup>1</sup> Large chamfered, granite posts with corbeled caps stop the fence and retaining wall at both sides of the steps that lead up to the narrow front yard. The granite wall turns and forms the cheeks for five granite steps that ascend from the brick sidewalk to a granite walk leading to the house. The fence continues along the top of the retaining wall, flanking the steps, and terminates in decorative posts that support the iron scrollwork gates with lyre motifs. There are two more granite steps up to the porch.

### EXTERIOR

The main block of the Decatur Davis House is three stories in height with an offset, two-story wing to the south (rear). The house is constructed of brick with granite and iron accents. It is crowned with a mansard roof clad with octagonal slate shingles in contrasting bands of light and dark green. At the eaves is a richly decorated cornice. Below the crown molding and soffit, paired modillion blocks alternate with elongated, sawn brackets. There are dentils between each bracket on the fascia and a bed molding at the wall. At the top of the mansard roof is a simple cornice and plain fascia. The cornice on the rear wing is simpler with widely spaced modillions and dentils below the crown molding.

The facade, constructed of pressed brick in a stretcher bond pattern, is dominated by a cast-iron porch with a low, hipped roof. The paired columns are delicate and richly ornamented with fluted bases, tapered shafts with decorative panels and "twisting" and Composite capitals. The paired columns are joined at the base by a decorative baluster. Above the capitals are octagonal shafts that support floral motif brackets. The brackets support a geometrically patterned frieze. Panels of the same geometric pattern fill the space between the octagonal posts at the top of the columns. Small, decorative iron brackets project from the frieze line at the top of each column and follow the porch roof soffit. There is a band of iron cresting at the leading edge of the porch roof and a second band at the ridge.

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The facade is organized into three bays with the entrance on the west. The entrance has an arched, granite lintel with an exaggerated keystone above a paneled alcove. The exterior double-leaf, arched doors have been removed and replaced with a pair of paneled doors with lights and an arched transom above. The interior set of double-leaf doors is original. These paneled wood doors have arched panes of etched glass and a semicircular, etched glass transom. The floor- to-ceiling, two-over-two, double-hung sash windows have arched granite lintels with exaggerated keystones, granite sills and molded architraves. The three, two-over-two, double-hung windows in the second story have granite, shouldered, segmental arches, granite sills and molded architraves. The two dormers have crossetted, segmental arched heads with diminutive brackets below the crossettes. The windows are two-over-two, double-hung sashes.

The west elevation is pressed brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. The three-story portion of the house has a three-sided projecting bay in the first story. The bay has a brick foundation and a paneled wooden base below the one-over-one, double-hung arched windows. Above the windows are a bracketed cornice, slate, hipped roof and cresting. A pair of windows with granite, shouldered, segmental arches are centered over the projecting bay and above these windows is a single dormer similar to those found on the facade. To the north of the bay window is a chimney with recessed brick panels and a decorative corbeled cap that rises above the cornice in front of the mansard roof. To the west of the bay window, the rear wing steps out one bay to the west. This two-story projection has stacked two-over-two, double-hung sash windows with granite, shouldered, segmental arches.

The west elevation of the rear wing originally had three rows of six windows each (six windows per story). The basement windows are fixed, two-light sashes with flat granite lintels and sills and molded architraves. The first- and second-story windows resemble those on the facade with granite, shouldered, segmental arches, granite sills and molded architraves. Three new windows, one on each story, were added, circa 1917, in the second bay from the north end. The basement windows match the existing in size and light configuration but the first- and second-story windows are about two-thirds the length of the original windows. They have similar granite lintels and sills. A door was added, circa 1917, to the southern most bay in the first story. The roof line of the rear wing steps down after the second bay and a central, interior chimney with a corbeled cap can be seen at this juncture.

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The south elevation is common brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern. On the main block of the house, this elevation is dominated by a two-story porch. The first story of the porch has been enclosed with three sets of eight-light casement windows and lap siding. Three of the original square wood posts are visible at the ends and in the center of the new exterior wall. The second story of the porch is open with a simple balustrade of square pickets. The cornice of the porch matches the cornice of the rear wing in height and design – crown molding with a band of dentils and a plain fascia. A wooden fire escape has been erected from the third-story dormer to the roof of the two-story porch then down to the roof of the one-story porch on the east elevation of the wing and hence to the ground. The first- and second-story windows on the rear of the house are floor-to-ceiling height with brick jack arches. The south elevation of the rear wing is common brick laid in a seven-course American bond pattern. It has no windows or doors, and above the roof line, centered in the wall, a chimney with a corbeled cap is visible.

The east elevation is common brick laid in a five-course American bond pattern. The main block of the house has a single window in the first story and two windows in the second story. The windows are placed on either side of the wall that separates the two parlors and have brick jack arches and molded architraves. There are two dormers in the third story, similar to those on the facade, placed between two brick chimneys with recessed panels and corbeled caps that rise above the cornice in front of the mansard roof. The east elevation of the rear wing is nine bays long. All of the windows and doors have brick jack arches and molded architraves. Leading from the porch into the hall, on both the first and second stories, is a single-leaf, paneled door with sidelights and a transom. To the south are two windows and then two doors with a window in between. This door and window combination is unified by a one-story, three-bay wide porch with square posts and Doric capitols. The porch roof has a plain, unornamented cornice. The fire stair from the third story stops at the north side of this porch and a second run of steps ascends from the south end of the porch to the ground. To the south of the porch are three more windows. The southern-most window in this grouping is smaller and was added after the 1951 renovations to the house.

### INTERIOR



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The interior of the Davis House has been altered on at least five occasions. The first alterations took place in 1917 when the house was purchased by the United Medical Chemi Hospital (City of Richmond Building Permit Number 6273). This was the most extensive building campaign and converted the building from a residential to an institutional use. The building was altered again in 1951 for use as a Nurse's Dormitory for the Medical College of Virginia. Minor alterations were made in 1967 and 1972. In 1987, another more substantial (\$40,000) set of alterations were made.<sup>2</sup>

A basement is located under the northern end of the rear wing with crawl spaces under the main part of the house and the remainder of the wing. This is a purely utilitarian space housing the mechanical systems for the house.

The house has a traditional side hall arrangement with double parlors to the east and a wing to the south (rear). The house is entered from the porch through a pair of anterior doors into a paneled vestibule and then through another set of double doors into the hall. The hall extends the full depth of the house with a bay window and stair on the eastern wall. The stair rises in a straight flight for eighteen steps to a landing at the north end and then turns back on itself for three more steps to the second story. The newel post has an octagonal base with a tapered octagonal shaft and two carved cap pieces. There are no intermediate newel posts so the handrail and turned balusters curve around at each transition point. In the hall there is a molded plaster cornice composed of a crown mold, a frieze decorated with a twining vine and a bed mold. There is also a molded, plaster ceiling medallion at the base of an original gas fixture that has been electrified. The semi-circular globe of the light fixture is suspended from the ceiling on three chains and there are three bell-shaped down lights equally spaced around the edge of the globe.

To the east of the hall is the front parlor. Originally, the front parlor would have been separated from the hall by a pair of doors or pocket doors. This opening has been enlarged and the doors removed creating a wide cased opening. A partition was added down the center of the front parlor that divides the room in half east to west. The small room that projects to the west at the rear of the stair hall is believed to be the original water closet. The mantels have been removed, Georgian Revival architraves and base moldings installed where openings and walls were changed, and a wall constructed below the stringer of the stair.

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The rear wing is accessed through a large, arched opening at the end of the stair hall. The rear stair, which has been removed, was possibly located in an alcove to the right as one passed through the archway into the original dining room. To the left in this transitional space is a door with transom and sidelights which leads to the rear porch. Much altered, the dining room originally had a single window centered in the west wall, two windows in the east wall, and a fireplace with flanking doors on the southern wall. The windows have paneled dados below the sills. *The remainder of the rear wing was functional space, housing the kitchen and other service areas.*

It is believed that the original arrangement of the second floor consisted of the stair hall on the east, a small chamber in the northeast corner and two large bedrooms on the west side. The stair hall has not been altered over the years. The stairs ascend from the first floor to a landing at the southern end of the hall and then turn to the north along the western hall wall for three more risers to the main hall. The staircase to the third floor then rises along the eastern wall above the run from the first floor. The handrail and baluster form a graceful oval as they follow the treads. There are no newel posts on the upper floors. From the landing you access the toilet area to the west in the small projection and the rear wing to the south. The floor plan of the rear wing that was once occupied by bedrooms has been altered.

Today, the third floor consists of two rooms, but originally there would have been three rooms – a small chamber in the northwest corner and two large rooms to the east. The small chamber in the northwest corner has a curved wall, a clever design trick because a straight wall would have bisected the dormer window. The partition between the two large rooms has been removed and a wall enclosing the staircase has been constructed.

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Decatur O. Davis House  
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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Decatur O. Davis House qualifies for National Register listing under criterion C because it is illustrative of the work of Albert Lawrence West, a prominent Richmond architect and typifies his focus on Second Empire style buildings near the end of his career. Built in 1879, this fine dwelling was the home of Decatur Davis and his family until 1917, when the residence was sold and converted to a hospital. Since 1917, the building has been used for many non-residential purposes. The edifice was purchased in 1988 by the Board of Trustees of the Valentine Museum and plans are underway to rehabilitate the house for use as museum offices. The Davis House is representative of the development of the Court End district of the city of Richmond from the 1780s to 1870s and the later conversion of the neighborhood from residential to institutional uses. This change in use resulted in the demolition of many early buildings in the Court End district so the survival of the residential-scale 1000 block of East Clay Street is significant. In addition to containing several fine buildings of various dates and architectural styles, the 1000 block of East Clay Street is representative of the prolific use of architectural ironwork in Richmond during the nineteenth century, including the unusual cast-iron rinceau fence found at the Davis House.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### Court End

When it was decided to erect the Capitol on Shockoe Hill the plateau to the north and west, bounded roughly by Broad, Leigh, Eighth and College streets, became the logical location for new development. Known as Court End, this neighborhood was the site for eight antebellum churches, the City Hall designed by Robert Mills, numerous hotels and inns, and the residences of some of Richmond's most influential citizens. As was typical throughout the city, the earliest dwellings, built in the eighteenth century, were mostly frame and occupied an entire block surrounded by a variety of outbuildings. Typical of these urban plantations was the Harvie-Wickham House, built before 1795 and demolished around 1852. This complex was located in the 1000 block of Clay Street, near the site of the Davis House. In the early nineteenth century, houses were more substantial, often constructed of brick, and while still accompanied by many outbuildings the lots were rarely more than a quarter of a block. By the 1840s and 1850s, many of the early frame dwellings had been replaced by brick row houses.

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The 1000 block of East Clay Street is an excellent representation of how much of Court End must have appeared in the late nineteenth century and of the notable persons who resided there. The two earliest houses on the block are the Wickham-Valentine House, 1015 East Clay Street, and the Benjamin Watkins Leigh House, 1000 East Clay Street (ca. 1812-1816). The neo-classical style Wickham-Valentine House was designed by Alexander Parris for John Wickham in 1812. In 1882, Mann S. Valentine II purchased the house and upon his death in 1892, Mr. Valentine left the house and an endowment to serve as a museum for his collections of books, manuscripts and Indian artifacts. John Wickham was responsible for the construction of the second oldest house on the block, the Benjamin Watkins Leigh House, completed in 1816. The house is "representative of a type of house fairly common in the early nineteenth century - big and square, built right up to the street, made for use rather than with any interest in novelty or charm of outline."<sup>3</sup> Italianate details were added to the house during the 1850s by John M. Gregory, a former governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The house was sold in 1932 to Sheltering Arms Hospital and is now part of the Medical College of Virginia complex.

The next two houses, the Bransford-Cecil House, 1007 East Clay Street, and the Maupin-Maury House, 1016 East Clay Street were built elsewhere and moved to their present locations. Frederick Bransford, a commission merchant and tobacconist, built this imposing Greek Revival style house around 1840 at 13 North Fifth Street. The Valentine Museum purchased the house in 1954 and moved it to its present location to prevent its demolition. The Maupin-Maury House was built in 1846 at 1105 East Clay Street by Dr. Socrates Maupin, a distinguished physician and educator. The Greek Revival style house was purchased by the Medical College of Virginia, in 1924, and later moved to its present site to make way for the expansion of the hospital.

In 1857, William H. Grant, a noted tobacco manufacturer, built an Italianate-style mansion at 1008 East Clay Street. "While the Grant mansion dates from a period of tobacco prosperity rather than artistic taste, it is imposing, especially placed as it is in the middle of the block. There are curves everywhere, over the windows and over the porch. The heavy 'eyebrows' above the windows are of iron, painted to look like elaborate plasterwork. The paneled effect of the front and the frank bigness of the house give it a certain imposing quality that makes it very suitable for a public building or institution."<sup>4</sup> The building served as the Sheltering Arms Hospital from 1892 until 1965 when it was purchased by the Medical College of Virginia. The houses at 1009 - 1013 East Clay Street, known as the Granville Gray Valentine Houses, were

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built in 1869 by James G. Brooks as investment properties on the site of the Wickham stables and other dependencies. The Davis House was the last house built in this block and one of the last houses built in Court End.

### Owners

The builder and first owner of the house was Decatur Oswyn Davis. According to his grave stone in Hollywood Cemetery, he was born on the first day of October in 1839. Little is known of his early years, but he is believed to be a native Richmonder and the son of Archibald and Irene T. Bell Davis. Decatur served in R. M. Anderson's Virginia Light Artillery Company 1, the Richmond Howitzers, during the Civil War. The Richmond Howitzer Company saw action in most of the major battles of the war. Davis entered the service in 1861 as a private and was discharged in 1865 at the rank of sergeant. On May 5, 1869 he married Sarah Alice Tyree, the daughter of Martha E. West and William Tyree. Martha West Tyree was the sister of Albert L. West, the architect who designed the Davis House.

Decatur Davis died on October 6, 1911. According to his obituary published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch on Saturday, October 7, 1911, he was a director of the Virginia Fire and Marine Insurance Company and the First National Bank and a member of First Baptist Church. For much of his professional life, Davis was a partner in Brown, Davis and Atkins, wholesale grocers and liquor dealers. Their warehouse was located at 1323 -1328 East Cary Street in Shockoe Bottom. "Mr. Brown was the 'Co.' of the house of William B. Jones & Co., this firm's predecessor, which was established in 1861. The house is, therefore, now in its thirty-second year. Mr. Davis was an employee of the original firm, and acquired his interest twenty-seven years ago."<sup>6</sup> During the 1870s T. William Pemberton was a partner in the firm, which is variously listed as Brown, Pemberton & Company and D. O. Davis & Company.<sup>7</sup> Brown, Davis & Atkins traded in all of the southern states east of the Mississippi and had an annual business of \$500,000 and "carried stock worth \$100,000, embracing all the staples of the grocery trade and the finest of imported and domestic liquors."<sup>8</sup>

Decatur Davis' will dated June 27, 1900 named Elizabeth Bell Davis and the Virginia Trust Company as executors of his estate. The Virginia Trust Company acting for the estate of Decatur O. Davis sold the house to the United Medical Chemi Hospital Inc. for \$8,250 on June 7, 1917. On October 4, 1922, all of the assets of the United Medical Chemi Hospital Inc. were

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conveyed to John J. Wicker for the purpose of paying the corporation's debts. This included the property at 1001 East Clay Street and all of the furniture and fixtures there in. The Davis House was sold December 10, 1923 to the Virginia Mechanics Institute for \$12,500. In 1943 the Virginia Mechanics Institute conveyed all of its assets to the city of Richmond which included property at 10<sup>th</sup> and Marshall Streets and 1001 East Clay Street. While owned by the City, the Davis House was used for a Venereal Disease Clinic, a Nurses Dormitory for MCV and the City Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Annex.<sup>9</sup> The City owned the property until June 9, 1988 when the Davis House was conveyed to the Board of Trustees of the Valentine Museum.

### Albert Lawrence West

Albert Lawrence West, a self-taught architect was the first Virginia member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and eventually became a Fellow of the AIA. He was born May 10, 1825 at Laurel Grove, or The Grove,<sup>10</sup> in Chesterfield County, Virginia. Albert was the youngest son of John S. West and Martha (Patsy) Satterwhite West Jones. West began his career in Petersburg in the 1840s as a carpenter. By 1850 he had moved to Richmond and was working as a builder, advertising "all kinds of carpenters' work done in the best manner."<sup>11</sup> By 1855, he advertised himself as an "architect and measurer."<sup>12</sup>

One of West's first major architectural commissions was Woodside in Henrico County, designed for Littleton Waller Tazewell Wickham in 1858. While Woodside is a Greek Revival dwelling, Italianate-style churches would dominate the several years of his career. In 1859, West received three major church commissions – Broad Street Methodist Church, East Broad at 10<sup>th</sup> Street (demolished 1968), Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, 2000 E. Broad Street (completed in 1875), and Clay Street Methodist Church, 16 W. Clay Street (altered to the Gothic Revival style ca. 1890). These three churches established his reputation as "a master of ecclesiastical architecture, a branch of the business admitted by the profession as, next to the construction of a fine theater, one requiring more through understanding of architecture, practical and artistic, than any other."<sup>13</sup>

While serving as an architect for the Ordnance Department of the Confederate States of America in Augusta, Georgia, from 1862 to 1865, West designed four buildings all in the Gothic Revival style.<sup>14</sup> He also designed equipment and machinery. Upon his return to

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Richmond, West continued to design in this style as seen in the facade at Centenary Methodist Church (1874). Duncan Memorial Chapel for Randolph-Macon College, in Ashland, Virginia is a more refined version of the Gothic style and lacks the crenelation seen in his earlier works. The Duncan Memorial Chapel also incorporates a Mansard roof and begins the next phase of West's architectural evolution and the use of the Second Empire style.

During the late 1870s and 1880s, West began to design in the Second Empire style. Stephanie Jacobs, in her study of West, observes that unlike West's Gothic Revival buildings, the Second Empire works are not a "venture into a new style but the continued development of West's Italianate style. The decorative motifs used in the Second Empire are almost identical to those used in the Italianate. The main difference between the two styles is the use of the Mansard roof. Albert did work in both styles at the same time"<sup>15</sup> The Decatur O. Davis Residence at 1001 E. Clay Street; the William Ashby Jones Residence at 604 W. Franklin Street (demolished); the William R. Trigg Residence at 714 W. Franklin Street (demolished); and the W. S. Forbes Residence also known as the White-Blanchard House at 806 W. Franklin Street, exemplify West's use of the Second Empire. While speculative, the Gunn-Bird House at 820 West Franklin Street, built in 1886 may also have been designed by Albert West. This house bears a striking resemblance to the Davis and Forbes houses including the repetition of the rinceau fence found at the Davis House. West also designed the Pace Block, a massive Second Empire style commercial building that once stood at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Main streets.

Examples of West's Italianate buildings from the 1870s and 1880s include the Robert S. Boshier Residence at 2 E. Franklin Street; the Buford House at 922 West Franklin Street; the Randolph Paper Box Factory and the Valentine Meat Juice Works Building, both of which have been demolished. Another late Italianate building that might be attributable to Albert West is the commercial block at 1325 - 1327 East Cary Street. Built in 1872 or 1873, by Decatur O. Davis, this tripartite block with a central pediment is similar to the Randolph Paper Box Factory and the Valentine Meat Juice Works Building. Given the similarities between the buildings and West's relationship to Decatur Davis it would not be impossible that West designed this commercial block. However, documentation to substantiate this attribution has not been identified.

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Near the end of his career Albert West designed three residences in the Richardsonian style – the Wirt E. Taylor House at 925 West Grace Street (demolished in 1966), and the Thomas E. Stagg and George B. McAdams houses located at 912 and 914 West Franklin Street, respectively. Albert West died on September 27, 1892, after a year of constant medical care. His funeral was held on September 29, 1892 at Centenary Methodist Church and he was buried in the West Family Plot in Hollywood Cemetery.

### Ironwork

The earliest known use of ironwork in the city is the fence at the Wickham-Valentine House (1812). This is a one-of-a-kind design with geometric panels and iron pickets. Equally unique is the cast-iron rinceau fence at the Davis House which is one of only four fences of this type found in Richmond. The rinceau design is directly related to various classical architectural styles where panels and friezes were often carved with a ribbon of undulating vines with foliage and often with fruit or flowers. This design was adapted for metal by French and English Renaissance craftsmen. The expense of this elaborate design limited its use in Richmond. The earliest example of a rinceau fence is seen at the Bolling Haxall House, 211 East Franklin Street, built in 1857. The fence at the Bolling Haxall House is extremely ornate with a geometric meander at the base, a rinceau motif in the middle, and a running ornament of circles with a floral motif above. Cresting completes the fence that is supported by posts in the form of decorated pedestals with finials. The second example of a rinceau fence is that at the Decatur Davis House, built in 1879. While simpler than the fence at the Bolling Haxall House, the Davis fence also combines the classically inspired meander and rinceau forms. The third fence at the Gunn-Bird House (820 West Franklin Street), built in 1886 for Thomas H. Gunn, is identical to that at the Davis House. The only other example of a rinceau iron fence is a lighter version found in Hollywood Cemetery.

The manufacturer of the Davis House fence has not been identified but it is believed to be of local origin. The Bolling Haxall fence has been attributed to Francis J. Barnes. "While members of the family (Barnes) manufactured many different objects ranging from axes to fire engines, their major emphasis was placed on ornamental architectural ironwork."<sup>16</sup> The Barnes family and their many partnerships played a major role in the manufacture of decorative metal work in the city between 1840 and 1890. By the mid-nineteenth century, Richmond was the most important manufacturer of iron in the South. It was the third leading



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industry in the city, following tobacco and flour. Richmond had scores of foundries and ironworks but only a small percentage manufactured architectural metalwork. Tredegar Ironworks dominated the industry with a handful of smaller concerns coming and going through the years. "The Tredegar Ironworks and its associated firms emphasized major industrial castings and armaments. Architectural metalwork played a comparatively minor role in the firms, although the Tredegar produced cast-iron storefronts at the end of the century."<sup>17</sup> A group of foundries associated with the Barnes family placed an emphasis on the manufacture of ornamental architectural ironwork. The Phoenix Foundry, operated by Francis J. and Louis L. Barnes, was a major antebellum producer of ornamental ironwork. William B. Cook, an orphan raised by the Barnes, eventually became the owner of the foundry and perpetuated the Barnes patterns into the late nineteenth century. The foundries associated with Asa Snyder were also major producers of decorative ironwork. Asa Snyder came to Richmond in 1851 and with J. A. Bowers established the Richmond Stove Company, the first company to manufacture iron stoves in the south. He also operated Asa Snyder and Company that manufactured elaborate cast-iron trim, railings, and storefronts. In 1874 that firm, now known as Synder & Irby, and a foundry operated by William B. Cook were the only two out of eight ironworks in the city engaged in the manufacture of architectural metalwork. An 1884 advertisement for Snyder & Irby states "lately the entire business has been the manufacture of vault doors, elevators, fence and balcony railings, verandahs, skylights and architectural castings for all kinds of building purposes, together with varied and beautiful galvanized iron products, artistic and light, but strong and durable for cornices, steeples, window work and buildings of all kinds."<sup>18</sup> The development of steel in the late nineteenth century and the depletion of the iron mines in western Virginia eventually led to the demise of Richmond's ironworks.

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### ENDNOTES

A debt of gratitude goes to Stephanie A. T. Jacobs for her research on the Decatur O. Davis House and Albert Lawrence West.

1. Mary Wingfield Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods (Richmond: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1984), p. 118.
2. Stephanie A. T. Jacobs, Unpublished Research, 1999.
3. Mary Wingfield Scott, Houses of Old Richmond, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1941), p. 124.
4. Ibid, p. 304.
6. Andrew Morrison, Editor, The City on the James: Richmond, Virginia, (Richmond: George W. Engelhardt, 1893), p. 218.
7. City Directories 1871, 1877, and 1879.
8. Morrison, The City on the James, p. 218.
9. Jacobs, Unpublished Research, 1999.
10. Jeffrey M. O'Dell, Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites, (Chesterfield County, 1983), pg. 187.
11. John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, The Virginia Architects, 1835 - 1955: A Biographical Dictionary, (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997), pg. 496.
12. Ibid, pg. 469.
13. Wells and Dalton, pg. 470.

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14. Stephanie A. T. Jacobs, "Albert Lawrence West (1825-1892) and Style in Virginia Architecture", (A Project Prepared Under the Direction of Dr. Charles Brownell, Department of Art History, Virginia Commonwealth University, Summer 1999), p. 4.

15. Ibid, pg. 10.

16. Robert P. Winthrop, Cast and Wrought: The Architectural Metalwork of Richmond, Virginia (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1980), pg. 84

17. Ibid, pg. 91

18. Ibid, pg. 86.

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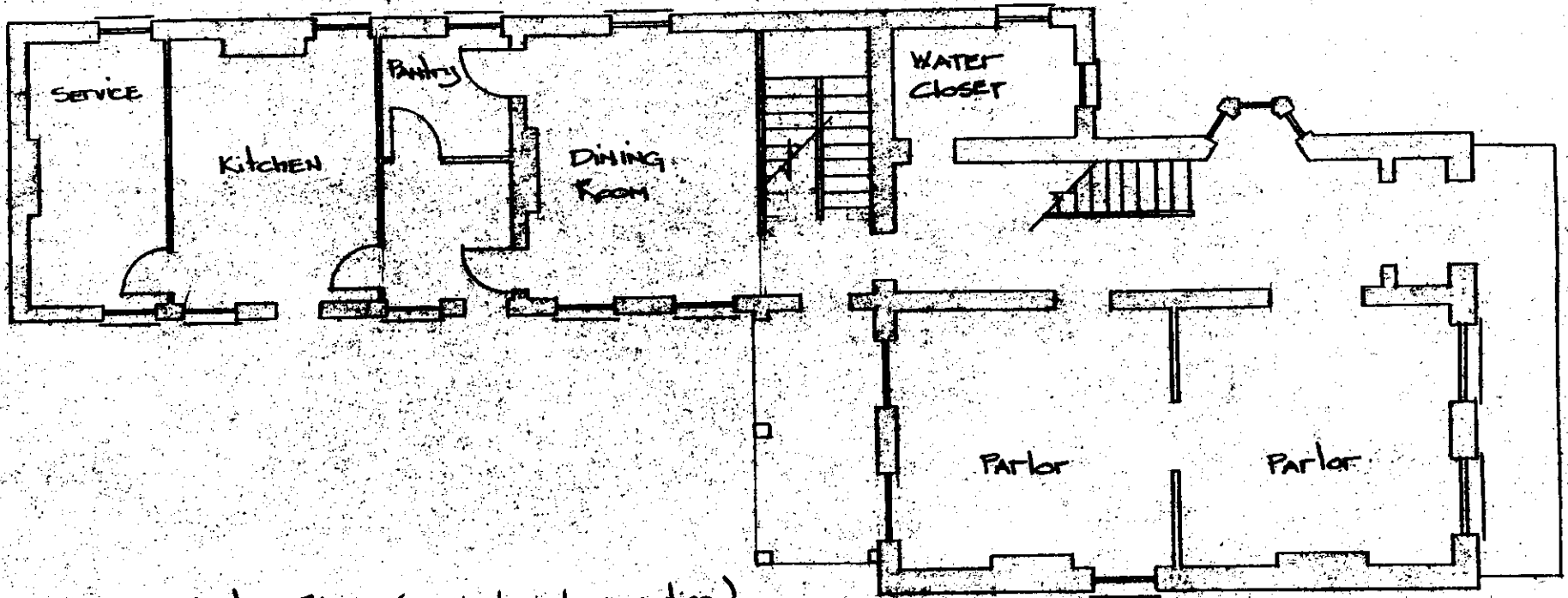
### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City of Richmond parcel number E000-0206-001, described as follows:

ALL that certain lot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon and appurtenances thereto belonging, containing 5,150 square feet, more or less, known, numbered and designated as 1001 East Clay Street, situate, lying and being at the southeast corner of the intersection of East Clay Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, fronting 50 feet, more or less, on the south right of way line of East Clay Street and extending southerly 115 feet, more or less, along the east right of way line of 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and having a depth of 85 feet, more or less, abutting the property of the Valentine Museum, lying to the east, shown shaded on plan on file in the office of the Department of Public Works of the City of Richmond, marked drawing No. N-21828, entitled: "Conveyance of City Property at the Southeast Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Clay Streets", dated March 1, 1988, and a copy of which is attached to the draft of Ordinance No. 88-82-83, adopted April 11, 1988.

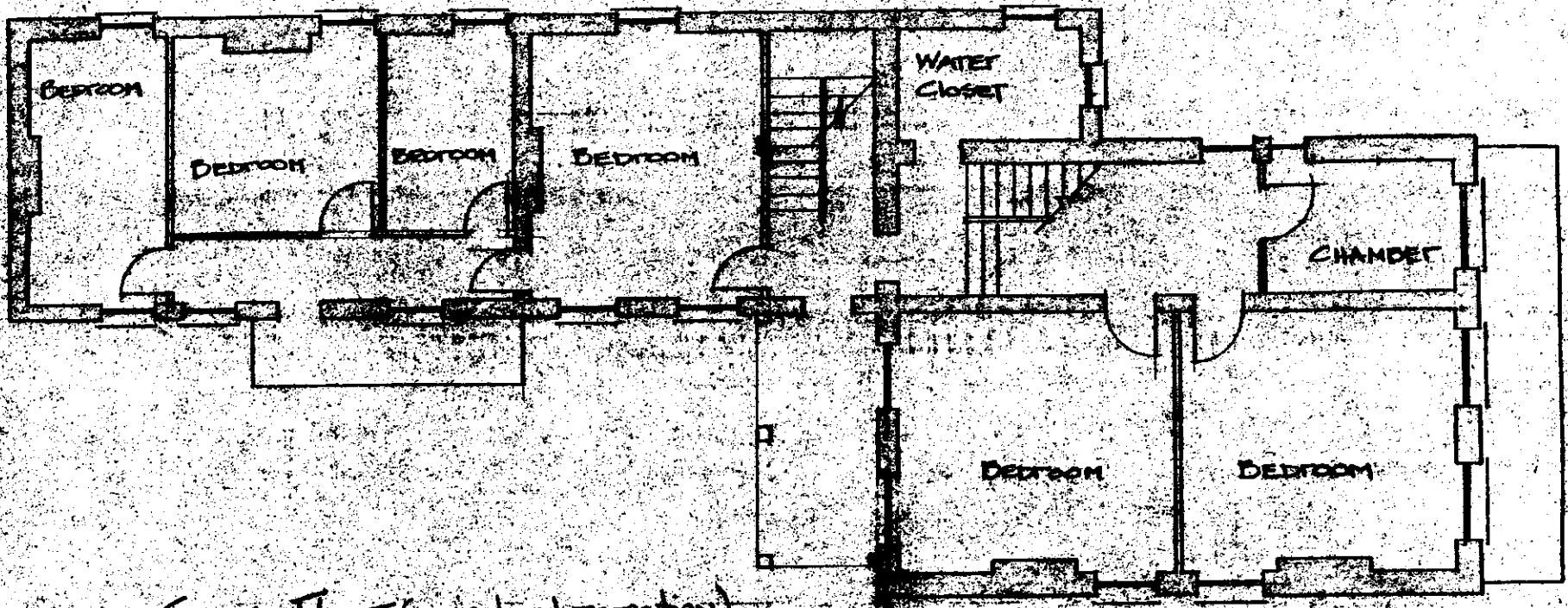
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is limited to the parcel designated as 1001 East Clay Street, City of Richmond parcel number E000-0206-001.



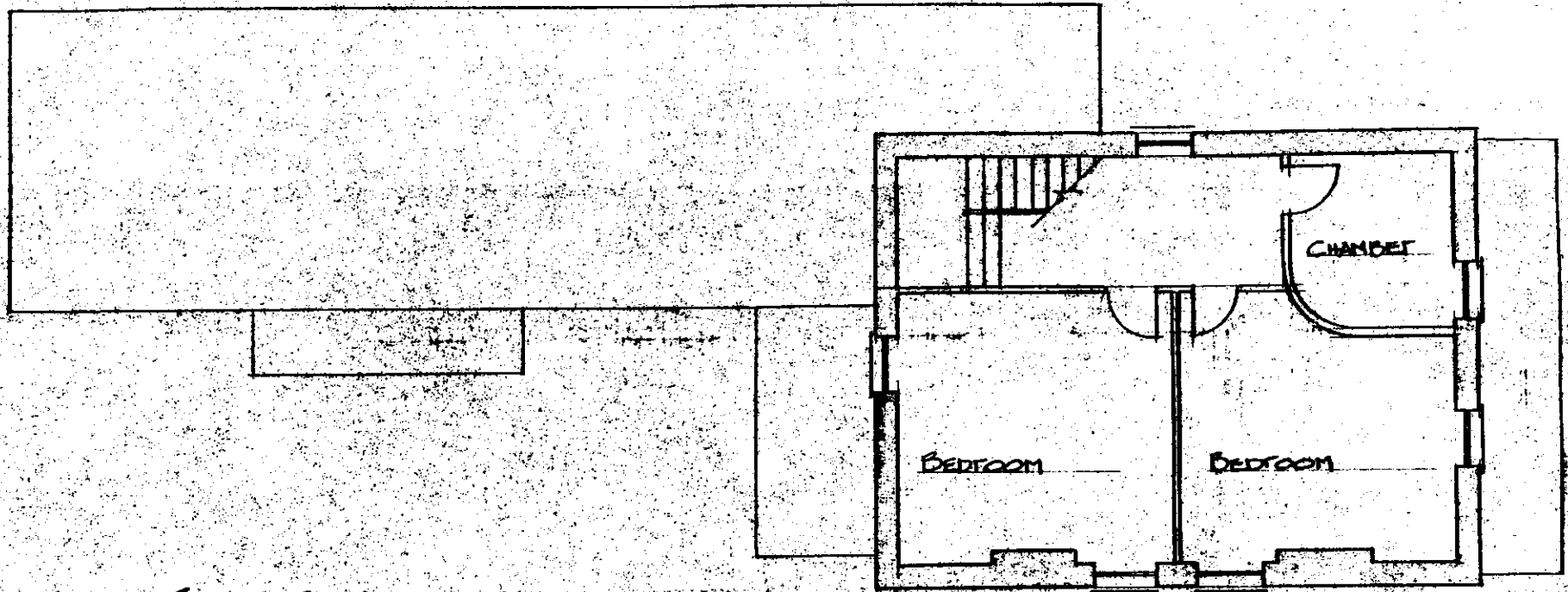
First Floor (conjectural recreation)

Decatur O. Davis House  
1001 E. Clay St.



Second Floor (conjectural recreation)

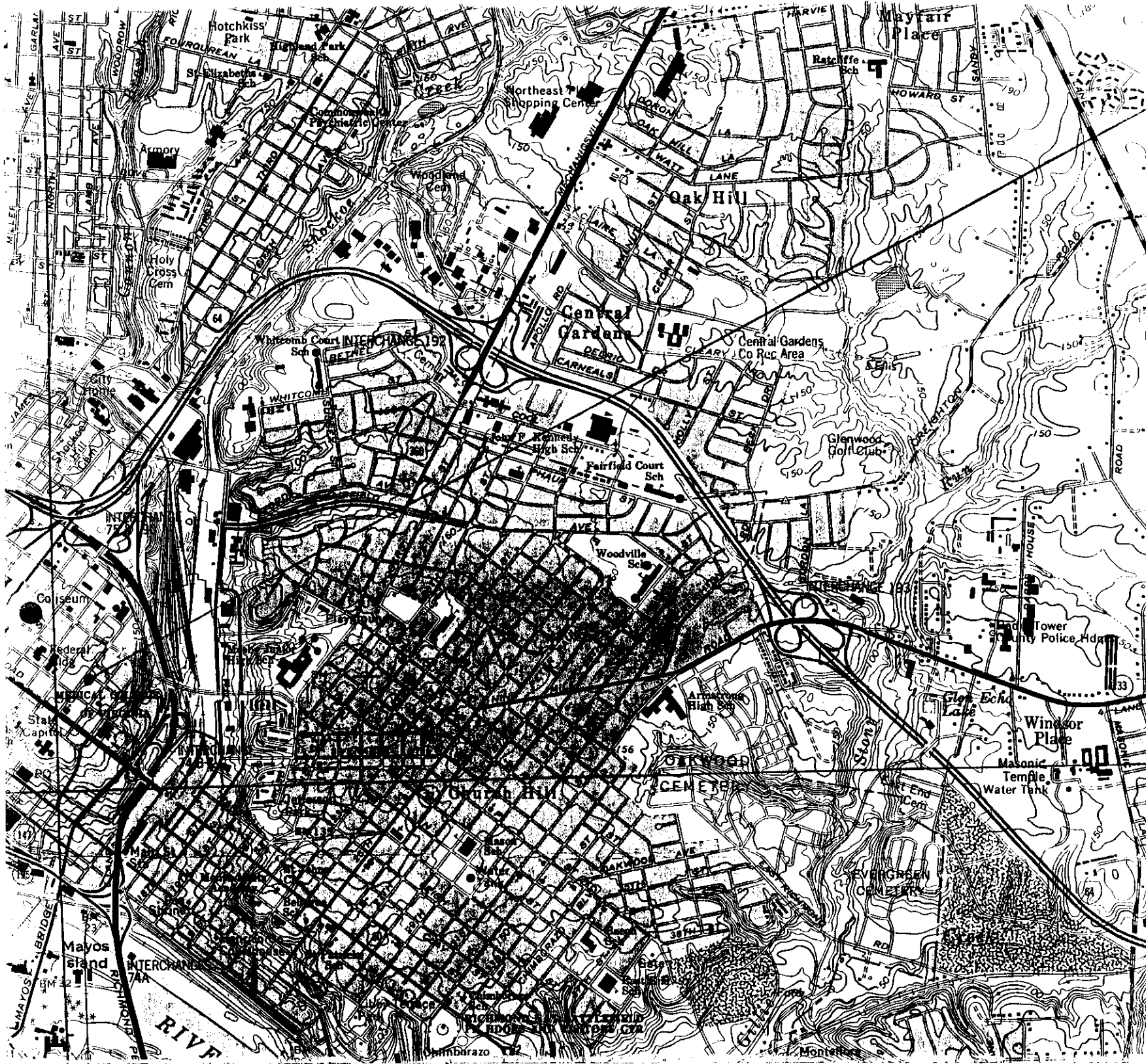
Deatur O. Davis House  
101 E. Clay St.



Third Floor (conjectural recreation)

Decatur O. Davis House  
1001 E. Clay St.





Davis, Deakin O.,  
 Home  
 Richmond, VA  
 121 0177  
 Zone 18  
 E: 285.16c  
 N: 4157.560

4160  
 (SEVEN PINES)  
 5559 III SE  
 1.1 MI. TO VA. 33  
 4158  
 32'30"  
 HIGHLAND SPRINGS 29 MI.  
 WEST POINT 34 MI.  
 INTERCHANGE 195  
 HANGE 238) 43 MI.