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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Woodlawn is a two-story brick mansion built in the late-eighteenth century form of a five-part plan with a central block, end pavilions and hyphens; the dairy and smokehouse are placed beyond the main unit, attached visually by walls. The facade of the main block is five-bays wide with a central cross gable, round headed arches over the central bay openings, and rectangular panels between the stories; the east front has a one-story entrance portico. The gable roof has jerkinheads and four interior end chimneys. The end pavilions are perpendicular to the main axis with oval lights in the gable ends and large, round-headed windows facing the valley on the east.

The plan features a central hall with a graceful curving stair and large well-proportioned rooms, some with imported marble mantels in the refined detailing of the period. The confinement of trim to door and window framings and cornice enhances the light and airy atmosphere.

Originally part of a two thousand acre estate, the property has been reduced to about 160 acres and is divided by United States Route 1. The house stands on a hill overlooking Dogue Creek; the site was chosen by Washington himself for its view of Mount Vernon and the Potomac.

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George Washington presented Woodlawn Plantation to his ward Eleanor Parke Custis, granddaughter of Martha Washington; following her marriage in 1799 to his nephew Major Lawrence Lewis, son of Fielding and Betty (Washington) Lewis of Kenmore. The gift included two thousand acres of the Mount Vernon estate, a mill and a distillery. Washington's friend, Dr. William Thornton, designed the mansion which was erected between 1800-1805. The Lewis family maintained the property until the 1840's when it was sold to a group of Quakers from Philadelphia. The house passed through several hands before its acquisition by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the 1950's.

In addition to its historical value, Woodlawn is significant for the fact that its architect was Dr. William Thornton, first architect of the United States Capitol as well as Tudor Place and the Octagon in Washington, D. C. Woodlawn has been marred somewhat by alterations to the wings, but the building remains as a nationally famous example of Federalist architecture.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES



