

VLR 4/18/73
NRHP 4/15/69
NHL 4/15/70

Site of National Significance

Christ Church (Alexandria), Virginia*

Location: Southeast corner of Cameron and Columbus Streets,
Alexandria, Virginia.

Ownership: Fairfax Episcopal Parish, 118 N. Washington Street,
Alexandria, Virginia.

Statement of Significance

Christ Church, Alexandria, designed by James Wren and erected in 1767-73, is probably the finest surviving and least-altered example of the type of the small rectangular two-story brick church that was utilized in Virginia during the last third of the 18th century. Although Christ Church has been somewhat enhanced by the additions of galleries and a tower in the period 1785-1818, the structure has never been abandoned or had its interior completely stripped as is the case with the other extant examples of this late-Georgian type of church.

History

In 1765 Truro Parish was divided and Fairfax Parish, containing the congregation in Alexandria, was laid off. In 1765 the Vestry of the new parish decided to build two new churches, one at Alexandria and the other at Falls Church. The architect selected for both churches (and in 1769 he also did the plans for Pohick Church) was Colonel James Wren. James Parson served as the first contractor for Christ Church in Alexandria. Construction began in 1767, but he was unable to finish the structure. The Vestry then gave the second contract to John Carlyle and the church was accepted as completed on February 23, 1773. Total cost of the two contracts was \$820.

Built on a new rectangular plan, with two tiers of windows, Christ Church is about 60 feet long and 50 feet wide. The walls, 28 feet high, are laid in Flemish bond. The facades, five-bays long and three-bays wide, are symmetrically composed with rectilinear windows below and arched windows above. Stone quoins, painted white, emphasize the corners of the building and similarly painted keystones accent the flat-arched

*This church should be compared with Pohick Church, Virginia. Both are of the same general plan and type.

to the Old Dominion (American Guide Series) (New York, 1940), 179-181, 202; Stephen P. Dorsey, Early English Churches in America, 1607-1807 (New York, 1952); Deering Davis, Stephen P. Dorsey, and R. C. Hall, Alexandria Houses, 1750-1750-1830 (New York, 1946), 70-71; Historic American Buildings Survey: (13 sheets, 1958; 51 photos, 1958, and 4 data pages, 1958).



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NPS Photo 1969



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