

**NORTH PARKWAY LLC PROPERTY
(532 N. WASHINGTON STREET),
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

**A DOCUMENTARY STUDY AND
ARCHEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Report Summary by John Mullen

INTRODUCTION

Documentary research and archeological investigations were conducted in anticipation of the planned construction of a two-story L-shaped addition to the west and south elevations of the existing commercial office building located at 532 N. Washington Street, within the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., conducted the study, following a Scope of Work written and approved by Alexandria Archaeology. One new archeological site, 44AX0213, was identified within the project area. The designation as 44AX213 represents this site as the 213th archeological site (0213) recorded in the City of Alexandria (AX) in the Commonwealth of Virginia (44).

The city block bounded by Pendleton, N. Washington, Oronoco and N. Columbus Streets was previously owned by prominent Alexandria families including Charles Alexander, Jr., John Dundas, and Henry Daingerfield. The study property is located within the northeast corner of this block, where historic maps and lithographs depict the Dundas family house, which was later referred to as "Castle Thunder".

PROPERTY HISTORY

The project area was originally part of the 1669 Howson patent purchase by John Alexander. Alexander and his descendents owned portions of the original patent lands

(including the study area) well into the eighteenth century. The study area passed out of the hands of the Alexander family at the end of the 18th century, when Charles Alexander (II) sold the entire 2 acre city block on which the project area is located.

Charles Alexander (II) was a prominent late 18th century landowner in Fairfax County, who resided at Preston Plantation on land inherited in 1764 from his father, John Alexander III. Charles and his wife Frances sold portions of their real estate holdings as early as the 1770s. In 1795, the couple leased two acres of ground (including the project area) to John Dundas, a merchant in Alexandria. Dundas agreed to make a first payment of 66 2/3 silver dollars by 1 January 1797, followed by an annual rent of 133 1/3 silver dollars. On his part, Charles agreed to lay out the streets around the perimeter of this block, except for Oronoco Street which had been laid out by a prior Act of Assembly, and to keep the streets open for use by John Dundas and other Alexandria inhabitants.

John Dundas was the son of James Dundas and Elizabeth Moore, both of Scottish descent. John Dundas moved to Alexandria, Virginia and married Agnes (Nancy) Hepburn around the 7th of April, 1785. He was appointed a Justice of Peace from 1794-1796 and, in 1798, was elected mayor of Alexandria. In 1801, he served on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Alexandria, and was also appointed as Overseer of the Poor in that year.



Portion of 1863 Bird's Eye View of Alexandria Showing the Dundas Estate.

John and Agnes Dundas had at least eight children: James, Nancy, Elizabeth, Sophia, William, John Jr., Henry and Edward. Land tax records between 1795 and 1797 revealed that John Dundas occupied four different properties around town; however by 1804, personal property taxes list his residence on "One Square" – presumably the square leased from Charles Alexander in 1797.

John and his eldest son James were enumerated in the 1808 Alexandria census, along with eight other individuals and eight enslaved African Americans. The family was residing in a two-story house in Ward 3 - presumably on the corner of Pendleton and Washington Streets – with two fire buckets. By law, each homeowner was required to maintain fire buckets with the capacity to hold 2.5 gallons for each story of the building.

Shortly after his marriage, John Dundas formalized his business relationship with his new father in law, William Hepburn, creating the partnership of Hepburn and Dundas. Hepburn & Dundas were successful merchants and invested in local real estate. In 1787, they owned four properties along King Street, two each along Queen and Princess Streets, as well as properties on Pitt and Union Streets. They also owned tobacco inspection warehouses along Oronoco and Water Streets and unsuccessfully tried to block the establishment of new inspection warehouses that would cut into their profits. Advertisements for merchandise imported from Europe or properties for rent by Hepburn & Dundas were common in the Alexandria Gazette during the late eighteenth century. The partnership of Hepburn and Dundas was dissolved in 1803.

AS JOHN DUNDAS and COMPANY intend to move their Store on the 1st of next month to the late dwelling-house of Mr. William Hepburn, the Store, with a neat well finished counting room and bed room (which may answer for a small family) a good loft and a cellar under the whole, which they now occupy, and has lately been completely repaired, will be to rent at that time.—Also, the DWELLING-HOUSE and Garden thereunto adjoining, now in the tenure of Mr. Patrick Murray; possession of which will be given on the 1st of November.

JOHN DUNDAS.

Alexandria, June 7, 1785.

☞ The said John Dundas and Co. have for sale at their Store, a neat assortment of MERCHANDISE, suitable to the present season, which they will sell for cash, country produce, or on short credit.

Hepburn & Dundas,
Have just imported in the Brig Peggy,
from Glasgow,

A VERY neat and general assortment of MERCHANDISE, suitable to the approaching season.—They also expect a further assortment by the Cefar, hourly looked for here, from London,—all which they will sell on very reasonable terms for Cash or Country produce.

Alexandria, September 20, 1787.

☞ They have also for sale a quantity of excellent Lisbon wine in quarter-casks, Currants, Porter, Gloucester cheese, &c.

**THE PARTNERSHIP OF
HEPBURN & DUNDAS**

Being by mutual consent dissolved, all persons indebted to them are earnestly requested to make immediate payment, or they will be under the necessity of bringing suit against every delinquent, and all those who may have claims against them are desired to bring them in that they may be paid.

Wm. HEPBURN,
JOHN DUNDAS.

Alex. May 12.

†2366

Advertisements in the Alexandria Gazette from Dundas, June 16, 1785 (top), Hepburn & Dundas, September 27, 1787 (center), and Hepburn & Dundas, June 10, 1803 (bottom).

Hepburn & Dundas were taxed in 1787 for three individuals over 21 (William Hepburn, John Dundas and George Darling), one white male between the ages of 16 and 21, four blacks over 16 years and two below 16 of age, one horse, two cattle and two carriages. John Dundas and William Hepburn individually, and together as a firm, owned enslaved African Americans. Dundas placed several newspaper ads for runaways. On 16 October 1809, Dundas offered a reward for the return of Andrew Johnson, who had "a wife at Mrs. Fendall's farm in Fairfax County"; the reward was fifteen dollars if brought to town but only five dollars "if taken within Alexandria & Fairfax" Counties. Likewise, he offered \$20 for the return of Betty to Alexandria (she ran away twice within a seven month period) but only \$10 if he had to go pick her up in the neighborhood of Falls Church.

Dundas and his partner not only owned enslaved African Americans, but released them at the end of their service, as recorded by Timothy Dennee in his compiled slave manumissions taken from Alexandria land records. On 8 January 1803, William Hepburn and John Dundas freed Jack, who had been purchased from Henry Bennett in 1789 and had served his 14 year term. A few months later on the 3rd of May, they emancipated Doll, "the daughter of one of the former slaves of John Colville of "Cleish", Fairfax County, Virginia," who has been sold for £31.13s to Hepburn & Dundas. Doll was released before her 7 years of service was fulfilled, likely spurred by the dissolution of the partnership.

John Dundas died on 30 August 1813 at the age of 55, "after a severe and tedious sickness, which he sustained with becoming submission". He was remembered in the Alexandria Gazette as "amiable in domestic life, reputable as a merchant, and a useful


citizen". At the time of his death in 1813, Dundas owned four enslaved African Americans: Andrew (above 40 years of age), Betty, Clara and Ann. The Dundas dwelling was presumably inherited by either his wife, or Nancy Keene, his daughter; no deed conveying the property from the estate could be located. His wife Agnes, died on 23 May 1820. Again, no deed of conveyance or mention in the will concerning the Dundas House was located, although we know that Nancy [Dundas] Keene was residing there when she died in 1850.

Nancy married Newton Keene of Alexandria; historic documentation shows them residing in the Dundas house on Pendleton Street. Newton was elected to a directorship for the Columbian Insurance Company in 1822, served on the committee to work for the retrocession of Alexandria back to Virginia. Newton died on 21 September 1841 and his wife Nancy, died on 9 September 1850.

On 5 February 1851, the Dundas estate was advertised for sale in the Alexandria Gazette, and was purchased by Henry Daingerfield in 1852. Following his death in 1866, Daingerfield's estate was divided among his widow and three of his children. By 1870, Eliza Daingerfield, Henry's widow, inherited several lots within Alexandria - including "Plat No. 9, being a square of ground, bounded Washington, Columbus, Oronoco, and Pendleton streets". It is unlikely that Henry and Eliza ever lived within the house; it was more likely leased to tenants.

The two-acre square bounded by Washington, Pendleton, Columbus and Oronoco was sold by the heirs of Henry Daingerfield in 1891 to J.K.M. Norton, C.C. Carlin and John D. Hooe. The square was then subdivided into 42 lots in a plan made by H.C. Graves, Civil Engineer. Lots 1, 2 and 3 of the 1891 subdivision (including the

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE.—The subscriber offers for sale the following valuable property, in the town of Alexandria to which he would invite the attention of those persons who may feel disposed to make a desirable investment.

That substantial and spacious two story  **BRICK DWELLING HOUSE** and lot of ground, late the residence of Mrs Nancy M. Keene, bounded by Washington Pendleton, and Columbus streets. The main house contains two parlors on the first floor with a spacious passage running between them and the chambers and rooms in the second story are in the best order. The lot fronts on Washington street, one hundred and twenty-five feet, on Pendleton street the entire distance of the square, and on Columbus the same distance, as on Washington street. The garden grounds are in a high state of improvement and the fruit and ornamental trees and shrubbery, were laid off and arranged in tasteful style by the original proprietor, the late John Dundas, esq. There is also attached to the premises, a two story Carriage house, and Stables, and other out houses; also, a well of good water in the yard.

TERMS OF SALE—One-third cash, and the residue to be paid in payments of one, two, and three years, with interest. **WM. N. MILLS,** oct 2-60?w&2awtf Agent for the Heirs.

Advertisement from the Alexandria Gazette from February 5, 1851 proclaiming the sale of the Dundas House following the death of Nancy Keane (Dundas).

project area) were sold to Harry Kirk on 17 February 1914. Harry Kirk transferred the deed to John Rusin on 21 May 1921. In 1925, John Rusin sold a portion of his property along Washington (between Oronoco and Pendleton) to Lillie May Phillip and in 1966, sold the remainder of the property. The project area, as it exists today, was deeded to F. Preston Pullium and David F. Oyster on 28 November 1966, and was described as a parcel of ground known as 532 North Washington Street.

In 1967, Pullium and Oyster demolished the frame garage and made repairs and improvements to the exterior and interior of the house. In 1968, the owners were issued a certificate of occupancy for use of the former residential building at 532 North Washington Street as commercial office space. This usage continues at the present time.

CASTLE THUNDER

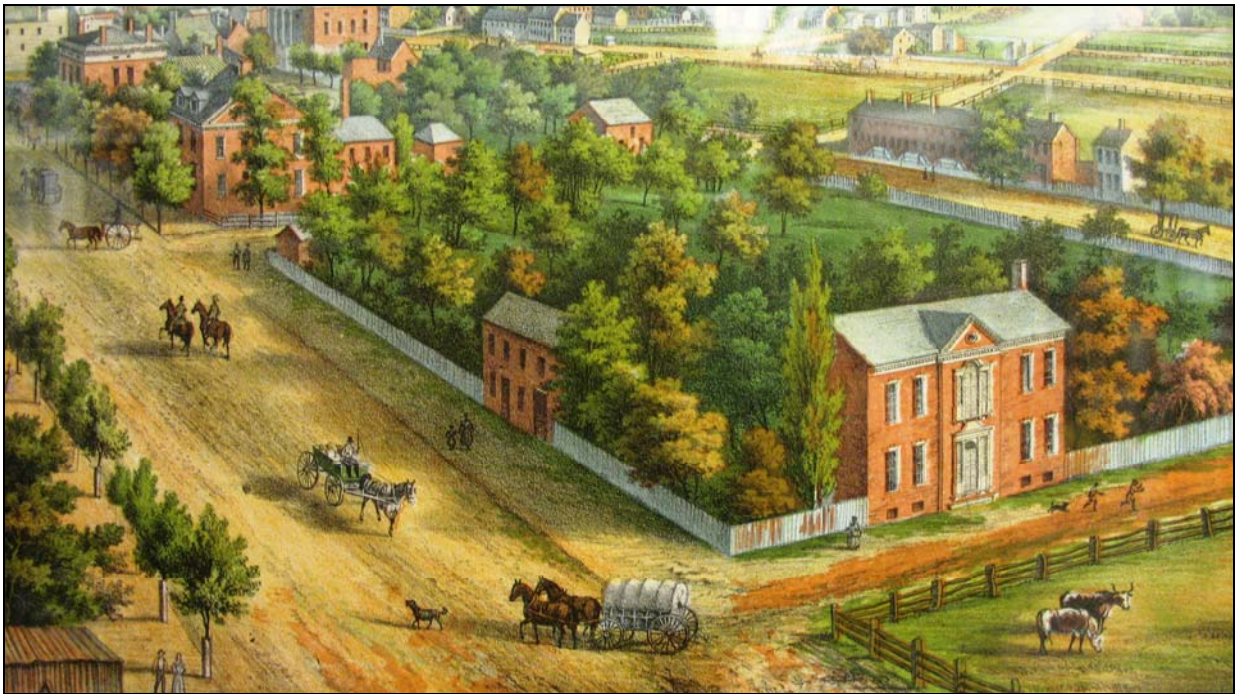
Although some accounts list a construction date of between 1785 and 1790 for the Dundas House, documentation supporting this date was not located. It is known, however, that the house was standing by 1813 as the building was also mentioned by George Gilpin in his survey journal on improvements to Alexandria streets. Fortunately, the house and lot are beautifully depicted in the Palmatary Lithograph that was originally published in the Alexandria Gazette in 1853.

The façade of the two story Georgian style house faced Pendleton Street. A smaller two story building, less than 100 feet behind the house and fronting Washington Street, was identified as the carriage house by several deeds, but appears to have contained living quarters on the second story.

Finally, a third building is depicted in the 1853 lithograph near the corner of Washington and Oronoco Streets. The rest of the lot was a mosaic of wooded and grassy areas and was enclosed in its entirety by with a picket fence.

An undated drawing of the 71st New York Regiment in Alexandria depicts the Civil War soldiers resting on a vacant lot of land northwest of Mt. Vernon Cotton Factory, which was located on Washington and Pendleton Streets, opposite the Dundas House.

The Dundas House is depicted in the background, obscured by a few [catalpa] trees. The house looks similar to the 1853 Palmatary depiction, but a dormer window is piercing the western roofline (the matching eastern dormer is obscured by trees).



Portion of 1853 Lithograph Depicting Dundas House (right foreground).



Undated Lithograph Showing 71st New York Regiment and Dundas Estate.

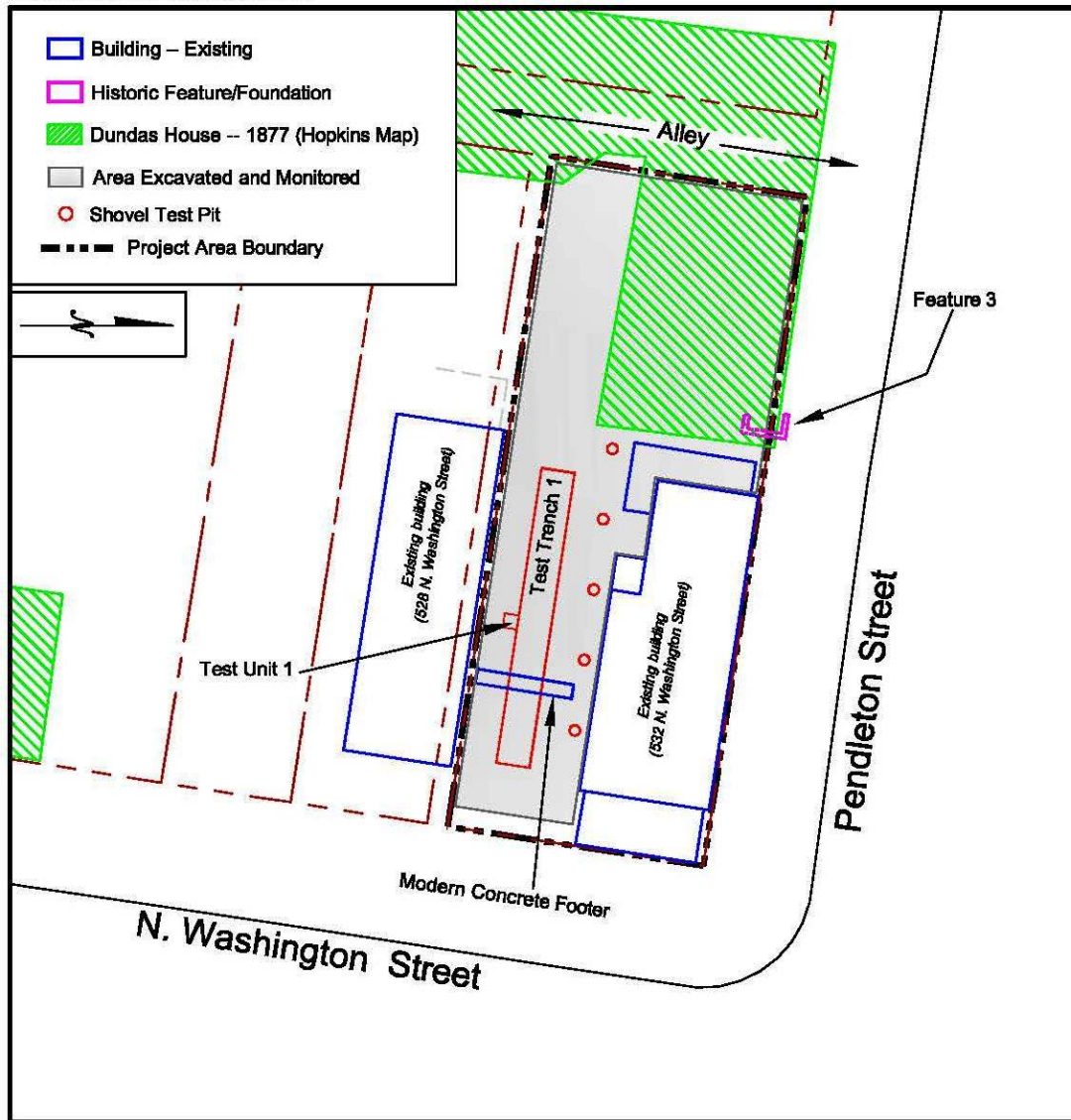
The two-story ell addition to the house is also visible. The lot where the soldiers are resting, known as the "Catalpa Lot", had apparently been used by the military for decades prior to the Civil War. In 1821, an announcement in the Alexandria Gazette called for the "light infantry to attend drill on the usual muster ground north of Mrs. Dundas' house". Also, the Alexandria Guards were reported to have paraded on this ground north of Dundas House in summer uniform.

ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The archeological investigations were initiated in anticipation of the planned construction of a two-story L-shaped addition to the west and south elevations of the existing commercial office building.

Following a Scope of Work from Alexandria Archaeology, archeological testing was conducted within the property. One new archeological site (44AX0213) was found during the investigation that contained a brick foundation and artifacts associated with the late 18th/early to mid 19th century domestic occupation at the Dundas Estate.

A buried ground surface was identified during the excavation of Trench 1 across the southern portion of the property. A test unit was excavated into the buried plow zone and artifacts from the late 18th to mid 19th century were recovered. The artifacts included mostly ceramics, pre-1864 window pane fragments, bottle glass and post 1790 nails. The majority of the recovered ceramics were pearlware sherds, which roughly date



Map Showing Archaeological Investigations with Overlay of 1877 Buildings.

between 1780 and 1830. The artifact assemblage is most likely related to the Dundas family occupation (1795-1852) of the site.

Only an isolated remnant of the buried ground surface was located within the south central portion of the property. The buried plow zone was also truncated; an unknown portion of the ground surface had been removed. The remnant surface was also surrounded by disturbances related to the

construction and occupation of the two adjacent buildings.

Structural remains that may date to the Dundas occupation were also included within the site limits. A brick feature was discovered along Pendleton Street in the northwestern portion of the property. The feature consisted of at least three foundation walls, but the easternmost wall unfortunately was partially damaged during the current basement excavation. The feature also



Northern Portion of Feature 3 beneath the Sidewalk, Pendleton Street.

appeared to have been disturbed prior to the present excavation, and only a small portion of the intact feature was located within the project area; the remaining portion was left intact beneath the sidewalk along Pendleton Street.

The location of the brick feature aligns closely with the map-projected location of

the northeast corner of the Dundas Mansion, although it could be associated with the later occupation of the property. No artifacts were observed or recovered in association with the brick foundation wall. No other significant archeological resources were identified within the property and no further archeological work was recommended.