

c. 1812 Bon Aire

Architecture With a Presence of Its Own



Virginia Landmarks Register
National Register of Historic Places

1843 Cabell Road
Wingina, VA 24599





Bon Aire



An Enduring Virginia Story

Bon Aire does not reveal itself all at once. It lingers, in the symmetry of its Federal façade, the quiet grace of its rooms, the sweep of the countryside beyond the hill, and the morning mist that rises above the trees to mark the hidden course of the James River.

Built circa 1812 for Dr. George Cabell, Jr., Bon Aire belongs to an extraordinary chapter of early Virginia architecture. Its graceful three-part Palladian form, Flemish-bond brickwork, pedimented center block, and flanking wings reflect the classical ideals taking hold in Virginia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its National Register documentation describes a house both diminutive and imposing, rooted in the architectural traditions of its time yet distinctly adapted to the Virginia landscape.

More than two centuries later, much of what gives Bon Aire its character remains. Arched openings and original woodwork, late-Federal mantels and beautifully proportioned rooms speak quietly of craftsmanship and permanence. Outside, the land opens to dramatic panoramic views, while mature trees now veil the river that once lay clearly below the house.

But Bon Aire is more than the sum of its architecture and history. It is the feeling of arriving somewhere that has endured—the stillness of an old house on a hill, the changing light across the landscape, the knowledge that generations have stood in these same rooms and looked out across this same Virginia countryside.

To live at Bon Aire is not simply to own a historic house. It is to enter a story more than two centuries in the making and to become part of what comes next.





Wingina, Virginia



Quietly Removed, Yet Within Reach

Wingina is less a town in the conventional sense than a landscape, a quiet corner of Nelson County shaped by the James River, old farms, winding country roads, and long stretches of uninterrupted countryside. There are no stoplights and little passing traffic. It is a place chosen for privacy and breathing room, where the absence of convenience on every corner is part of what preserves its character.

Bon Aire belongs naturally to this landscape. Life here is intentionally removed from the pace of town, yet everyday needs remain manageable. Lovingston, the Nelson County seat, is approximately 14 miles away, with groceries, a pharmacy, restaurants, and local services. Scottsville, with its historic streets and James River setting, is approximately 17 miles away. Charlottesville is roughly 37 miles to the north, while Lynchburg lies approximately 41 miles to the south.

Medical care is also within reach. Blue Ridge Medical Center is approximately 16 miles from Wingina, while Charlottesville offers UVA Health's University Medical Center, a major academic hospital and Level I Trauma Center. Nelson County residents also look to Lynchburg for comprehensive hospital and specialty care.

Living at Bon Aire asks for a little forethought, but what it gives in return is increasingly rare: mornings shaped by mist and birdsong, evenings beneath dark country skies, and a landscape still governed more by nature than by traffic and schedules. For the person drawn here, Wingina's distance is part of its appeal.



Virginia, 1812



When Bon Aire was completed, Virginia was still part of a young republic. James Madison occupied the White House, the country was entering war with Great Britain, and Thomas Jefferson had returned to Monticello, where his ideas about architecture and the Virginia landscape continued to take shape.

Nelson County itself was only five years old. Along the James River, the Cabells had already put down roots that would influence the region for generations. And on a high piece of their land above the river, a new brick house was taking form—balanced, Palladian, and unmistakably Virginian.

More than two centuries later, Bon Aire still stands within the landscape that gave it meaning.





Bon Aire in the Nelson County Landscape



Bon Aire sits within a sheltered grove, with the ho use, outbuildings, and drive gathered beneath mature trees. Beyond, the scenery opens into broad fields, a pond, and long wooded ridges stretching toward the horizon.

The view places the house in its larger landscape—quietly settled, agricultural in character, and unmistakably part of the Nelson County countryside.



The View from Bon Aire



From the entrance hall, tall windows and broad paneled doors frame the countryside beyond. Across the stone terrace, fields fall away toward distant woods and the long Nelson County horizon.

Sunlight moves across the wood floors, and the landscape remains quietly present within the room—a view that has belonged to Bon Aire for generations.



The Entry Hall



Bon Aire's entrance hall preserves much of the architectural character of the early nineteenth-century house. Paneled doors, substantial woodwork, fluted pilasters, and carefully framed openings give the interior its formal order. Beyond the hall, a barrel-vaulted passage and a succession of arched openings draw the eye through the center of the house—details that reflect the refined classical tradition in which Bon Aire was built.



The Parlor



The parlor retains the generous proportions and restrained ornament characteristic of Bon Aire's Federal design. Tall windows bring light deeply into the room, while the period mantel, original woodwork, and strong architectural trim give it structure and permanence. More than two centuries after the house was built, the room still reads much as it was intended: gracious, balanced, and closely connected to the surrounding landscape.



The Dining Room



The dining room retains the proportions and architectural restraint of Bon Aire's Federal interior. Tall windows bring the Nelson County light across the original wood floors, while the mantel and surviving woodwork give the room its strong, composed character. Through the open doorway, the long view back through the house remains visible—a reminder that at Bon Aire, the rooms were conceived not in isolation, but as part of a carefully ordered whole.



The Passage



Bon Aire was built to unfold slowly. From the entrance hall, broad paneled openings lead through the center of the c. 1812 house, with the stair rising alongside and rooms appearing one beyond another. Original wood floors, substantial early woodwork, and the deeply framed openings remain remarkably present. The passage gives a close view of the craftsmanship that distinguishes Bon Aire—and of the quiet formality carried throughout the house.



The Kitchen



The present owners created a new kitchen for Bon Aire—generous, practical, and warm, while remaining at ease within the historic house. Wood cabinetry and broad work surfaces are set beneath a beautifully finished wood ceiling, with a Viking range at the center of the room and windows bringing in abundant natural light.

At the far end, a small table beside the window looks out across the Nelson County countryside. It is a distinctly modern chapter in Bon Aire’s long life, designed for the way the house is lived in today.



The Covered Kitchen Porch



Just beyond the kitchen door, a long covered porch follows the brick wall of Bon Aire. Exposed rafters, substantial timber framing, wide boards, and simple painted posts reveal the construction rather than conceal it, giving this side of the house a quieter, more informal architectural character. Beneath the deep roof, the old brick remains close at hand while the porch opens toward mature trees and the landscape beyond—a sheltered place where the materials and age of the house can be felt as much as seen.



The Primary Suite



The primary bedroom remains unmistakably Bon Aire. Tall windows gather light from the surrounding landscape, while the wood floors, substantial trim, and finely detailed mantel preserve the character of the c. 1812 house.

The present owners renovated the adjoining bath with the same consideration they brought to the kitchen, adding a spacious shower, new cabinetry, and updated finishes. Together, the rooms offer something particularly appealing in a house of this age: the architectural presence of Bon Aire combined with the comfort of a thoughtfully renewed private suite.



The Upper Hall at Bon Aire



The upper hall reveals the quiet discipline of Bon Aire's architecture. Wide wood floors lead around the stair opening, where turned balusters, newel posts, paneled doors, and carefully proportioned trim give definition to the passage. Tall windows and the glazed door draw daylight deep into the center of the house, while the adjoining rooms open naturally from the hall. More than two centuries after Bon Aire was built, this remains an interior shaped by proportion, craftsmanship, and the simple beauty of wood, light, and order.





The Upper Floor Rooms



On the second floor, Bon Aire's architecture becomes more intimate. Sloping ceilings follow the roofline, wide wood floors continue through the rooms, and fireplaces remain strong architectural features. The level includes two bedrooms, one currently used as a den. The bathroom carries the same simple character, with a freestanding clawfoot tub, tall window, and deep green trim framing the room. An unfinished vaulted-ceiling room, now serving as a hobby room and office, offers a large, informal space beneath the upper reaches of the house.





The Working Rooms of Bon Aire



The terrace level preserves some of Bon Aire's most evocative working spaces. The former english kitchen is anchored by its broad fireplace. Brick floors, thick masonry walls, and heavy exposed timbers reveal the substantial construction of the house. It is a room where the architecture remains close to its original purpose, shaped by fire, work, and the practical rhythms of daily life.

Nearby, the garden room has a sink, generous work surfaces, and windows that bring in natural light, creating a useful place for flowers, plants, and projects brought in from the garden. A separate laundry room completes this practical level of the house, where the working history of Bon Aire remains unusually visible.



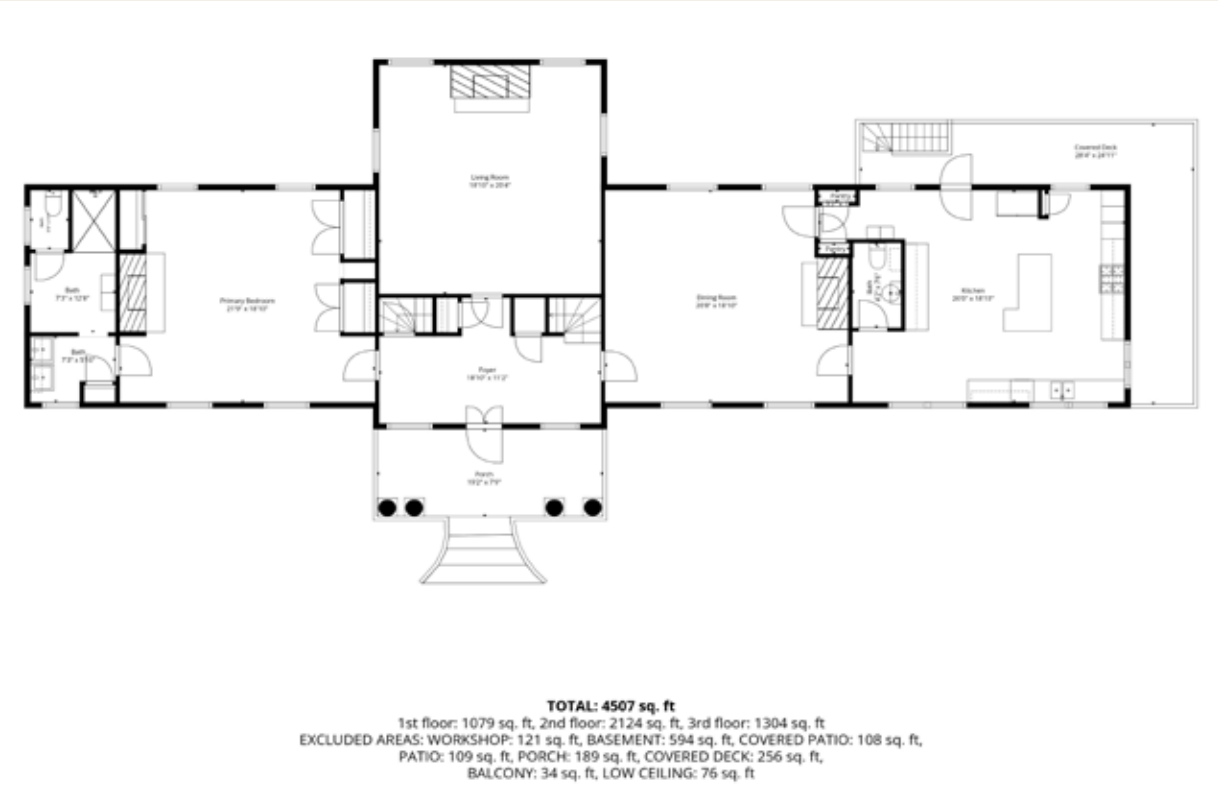
The Plans of Bon Aire



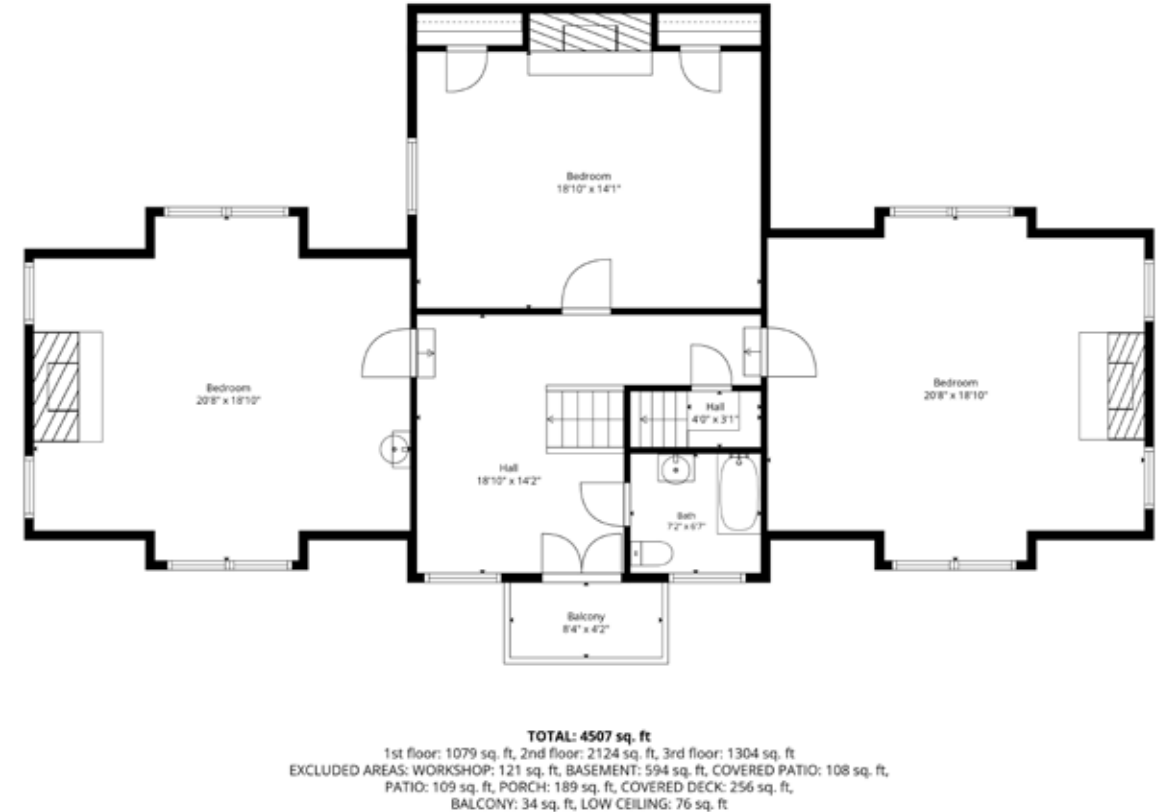
The floor plans reveal the underlying order of Bon Aire: a c.1812 house shaped by symmetry, proportion, and a clear relationship between its principal rooms and more practical spaces. They show how the formal rooms connect through the center of the house, how the upper floor is arranged around the stair hall, and how the terrace level accommodates the former english kitchen and other working rooms.

Seen together, the plans make the architecture easier to understand—not simply as a collection of rooms, but as a house whose circulation, scale, and hierarchy have evolved while its historic structure remains remarkably legible.

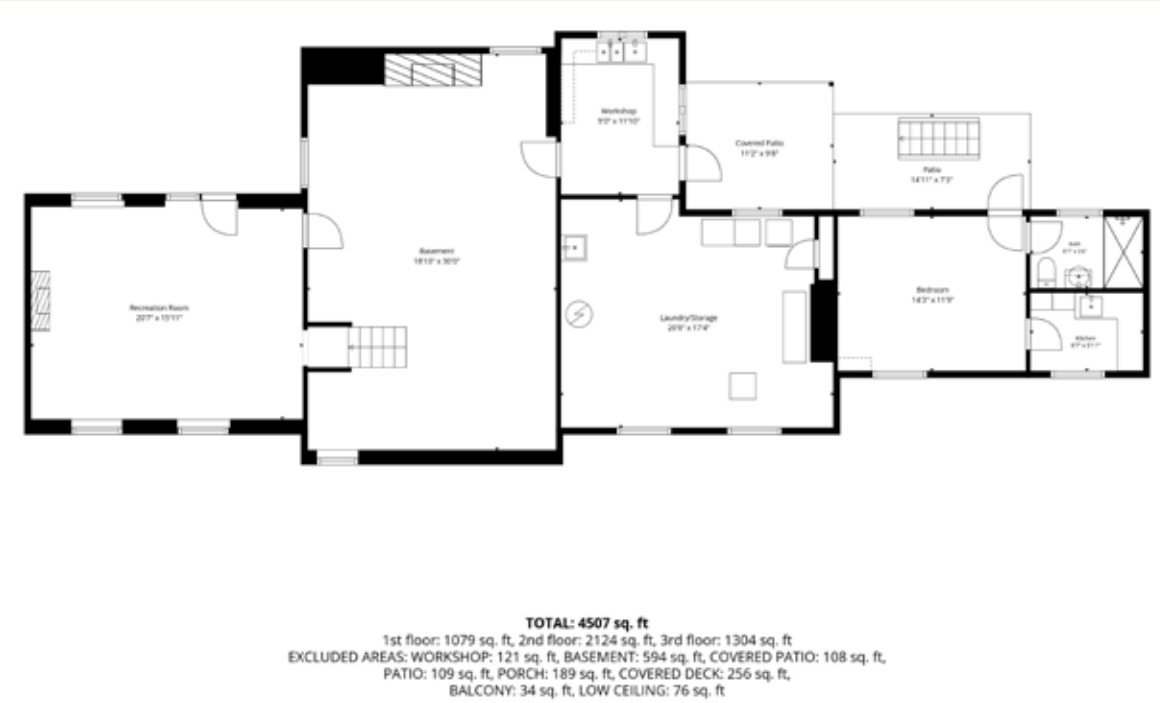
The First Level



The Second Level



The Terrace Level





The Guest Apartment at Bon Aire



A separate guest apartment adds a more private dimension to Bon Aire, with its own bedroom, kitchenette, and full bath. With a private entrance, the space is comfortably removed from the principal rooms of the house while remaining closely connected to it.

Simple, practical, and self-contained, the apartment works well for visiting family and friends and is currently also used for short-term guests. Its separate arrangement allows Bon Aire to accommodate extended stays without altering the rhythm of daily living in the main house.









The Cottage at Bon Aire



Built in 1965 and completely renovated, two bedrooms and one bath, 1,985-square-foot cottage offers a comfortable second residence within the property. Exposed ceiling beams, warm wood floors, a substantial brick fireplace, and a woodstove give the main living spaces warmth and character.

The renovated kitchen and baths are thoughtfully updated, with generous natural light throughout. A long covered porch extends the living space outdoors, overlooking the lawn and distant landscape. Four new mini-split systems provide efficient, individually controlled heating and cooling throughout the cottage.

Separate from the main house yet closely connected to Bon Aire, the cottage is well suited for guests, extended family, or as a rental. If the land were returned to active agricultural use, it could also serve as a farm manager's residence.





The Workshop Barn



The old barn has become one of Bon Aire’s most useful working buildings. Its heavy timber framing, broad interior spaces, and straightforward construction have adapted naturally to use as a workshop, with room for tools, benches, materials, and ongoing projects.

Much of the renovation work at Bon Aire was carried out here, giving the barn a direct connection to the restoration of the property itself. Today it remains a substantial, practical space—part workshop, part record of the craftsmanship that has gone into caring for Bon Aire.





The Chicken House

The Outbuildings at Bon Aire



The Log Building

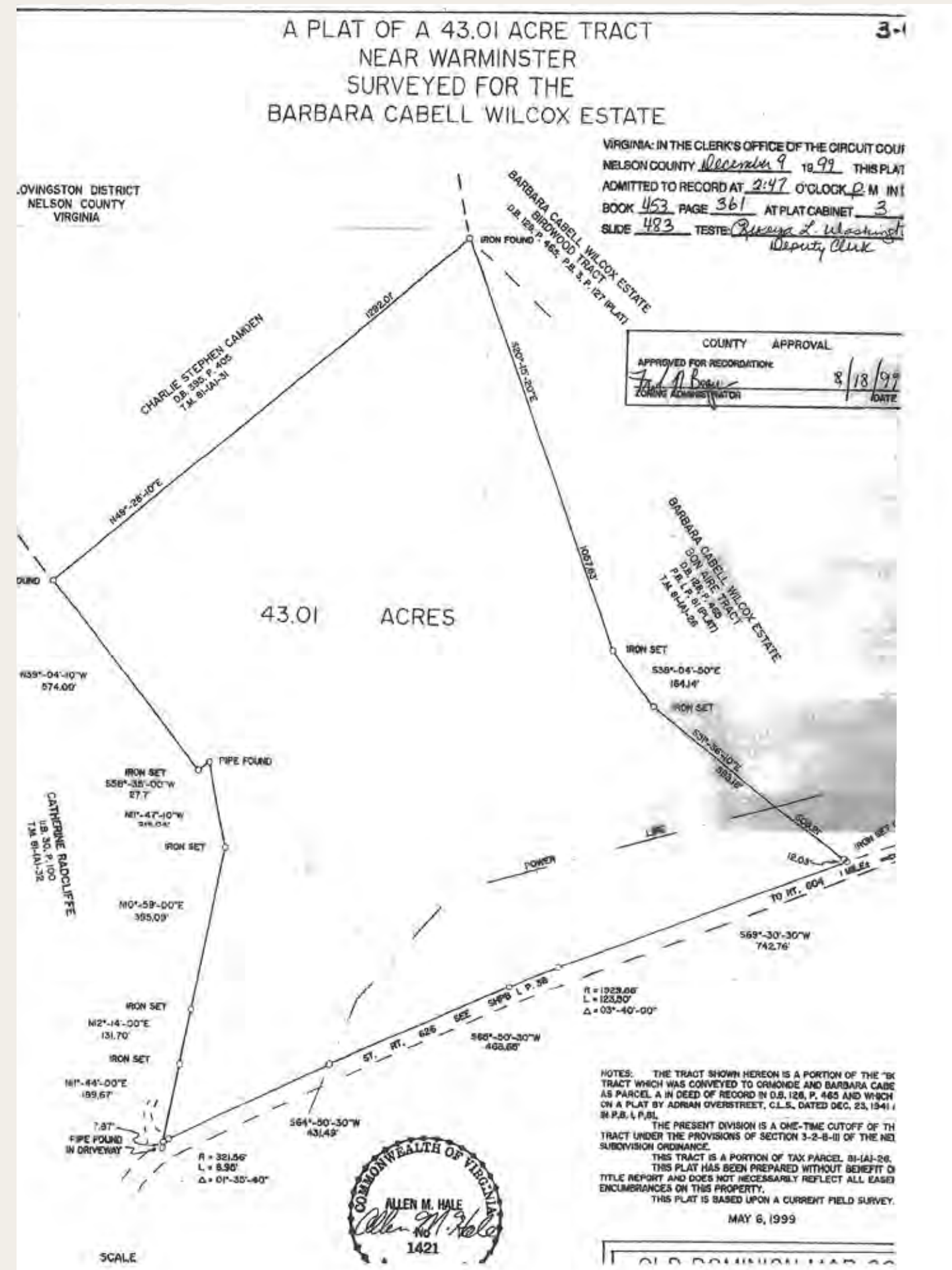
The surviving outbuildings belong to a quieter, more utilitarian side of Bon Aire. The weathered chicken house, small log building, and red-painted frame outbuilding are simple structures, shaped by use rather than ceremony. Their timber walls, metal and shingle roofs, and modest scale recall the working life that once surrounded a rural Virginia house.

An 1812 insurance policy records earlier dependencies at Bon Aire, including two large offices, a meat house, a well, and a dairy. None of those original structures is known to survive. The buildings seen today belong to later periods, preserving another chapter in the long history of the property.



The Frame Outbuilding





Thoughtful Stewardship & Improvements



The Main Residence

Throughout their ownership, the sellers have approached Bon Aire with respect for its historic character, repairing and restoring original elements where possible while making carefully considered improvements for everyday living.

Main Level

Entrance Hall

Floors were refinished and plaster carefully repaired, with two door pediments added to complement the architectural character of the hall.

Parlor

Refinished floors and a new chandelier refresh the room while preserving its original character and sense of proportion.

Dining Room

Floors were refinished, plaster carefully repaired, and shoe molding added to finish the baseboards while respecting the room’s historic character.

Kitchen

Thoughtfully renovated with cherry cabinetry and granite countertops. The ceiling was raised, new raised-panel detailing added, and the room further improved with a tiled backsplash, dishwasher, disposal, new lighting, and additional storage.

Powder Room

A new half bath was added to the main level for convenience.

Primary Suite

Floors were refinished, a closet system added, and a chandelier installed, enhancing the room while preserving its gracious character.

Primary Bath

Thoughtfully renovated with a new vanity area and shower, heated tile flooring, new toilet, and updated lighting.

Second Floor

Bathroom

Renovated with updated shower plumbing and thoughtful improvements for everyday use.

Two Bedrooms

Plaster was repaired and bedrooms freshly painted.

Bonus Room

The ceiling was raised and new lighting installed, creating a more open and useful workspace.

Terrace Level

Historic English Kitchen

Years of accumulated debris were removed and the room was carefully brought back to a period-appropriate appearance, allowing this evocative part of Bon Aire’s history to be appreciated once again.

Mechanical Room

Updated with new flooring, the former shower and enclosure removed, and a utility sink added for greater function and ease of use.

Private-Entrance Apartment

Updated as a comfortable, independent living space with a renovated tiled shower, new sink, bamboo flooring, cabinetry, mini refrigerator, wall paneling, and a mini-split system.

The Cottage

Kitchen

Updated with new cabinetry, countertops, appliances, vent hood, lighting, wallboard, and trim. Electrical wiring was replaced, along with new switches and outlets.

Bedroom

Updated with two new closets, new flooring, and fresh paint, creating a more comfortable and functional retreat.

Bathroom

Renovated with a new shower, vanity, toilet, and flooring, creating a fresh space.

Den

Two sliding glass doors were removed and replaced with three windows, bringing in natural light while giving the room a more finished, traditional character.

Thoughtful Stewardship & Improvements Continued

THE MAIN HOUSE

EXTERIOR & SYSTEMS

Chimney

The upper third of the west chimney was rebuilt, preserving the historic profile while addressing needed structural work.

Septic System

A new septic system was installed. Water lines from the expansion tank and associated wiring were replaced, along with the sewer line from the mechanical room to the exterior.

Main House Septic Location: The main house septic system is behind the red barn
The main house had a new septic, distribution box and drain field installed close to when we moved in 2022.

Water

A cistern is located at the West edge of the property fed by an underground spring. It has a new submersible pump, a spare one as a backup and new wiring inside of conduit that runs to the barn where the pressure tanks and pressure switch is located. There is a booster pump in the basement, a 5 micron pre filter, UV light filter. and a whole house sediment filter. GPM is 37.

Roof

A new synthetic slate roof was installed with all-new copper flashing and new gutters. Damaged soffits were replaced, while the kitchen’s metal roof was power-washed, primed, and painted.

Heating & Cooling

New dual-fuel heat pump with propane backup, and new mini-split systems added for additional comfort and efficiency.

Propane & Generator

Separate 75-gallon propane tank dedicated to the main house standby generator. It will run the kitchen refrigerator, internet, basement lights, primary bedroom, primaty bath, primary mini-splllits, and selected parlor outlets.

Heating & Cooling

New dual-fuel heat pump with propane backup, and new mini-split systems for additional comfort and efficiency in the main house.

UTILITIES

Electricity

Central Virginia Electric Co-op

Fiber-Optic Internet

Firefly high-speed fiber-optic internet service.

Propane - Tiger Fuel

In the main house, th propane serves the kitchen range/oven and wall-mounted space heater. The dining room and primary bedroom fireplaces are equipped for gas logs. The 5-ton HVAC heat pump also uses propane backup heat. There is a second propane tank that is dedicated to the generator.

Propane tanks for house rented at \$74.71 per year.

THE COTTAGE

Heating & Cooling

Four new mini-split systems were installed, providing efficient, individually controlled heating and cooling throughout the cottage.

Propane & Generator

New whole-house standby generator with a dedicated 500-gallon propane tank, providing reliable backup power for the cottage. The cottage propane tank is owned.

Septic

The cottage septic system is in the field to the left of the cottage. It was last pumped 2.5 years ago.

Water

A cistern is located at the West edge of the property fed by an underground spring. It has a new submersible pump, a spare one as a backup and new wiring inside of conduit that runs to the barn where the pressure tanks and pressure switch is located. There is a a 5 micron pre filter, UV light filter. and a whole house sediment filter. GPM is 37.

A Personal Chapter in Bon Aire's Story



Gill and I have always felt a deep appreciation for historic architecture and the craftsmanship of earlier generations. Homes like BonAire are more than structures, they are living pieces of history that deserve thoughtful stewardship. After selling our 1935 home in Norfolk, Virginia, in February 2021, we spent the remainder of that year carefully considering where we wanted to continue that stewardship. While we explored building a custom home, post-COVID supply cost increases made that option unrealistic. Instead, we began intentionally searching for a historic property that combined architectural integrity, a meaningful setting, and long-term preservation potential.

In February 2022, we first visited BonAire. Although the home had been vacant for approximately ten months and showed signs of deferred maintenance, its craftsmanship and historic character were immediately evident. Equally compelling was the setting: the home sits on a knoll, providing natural summer breezes and weeping, uninterrupted views. The surrounding properties are owned by neighbors with no plans to sell to developers, giving us confidence that the rural character and views would remain protected. BonAire is located just a few miles from the James River and the James River Management Area, offering abundant recreational opportunities, while also being within an hour of several cities with multiple universities and situated in a well-established winery and brewery district.

For personal reasons, we chose to step away temporarily. After viewing another historic property that required restoration beyond what we could responsibly undertake, we returned to BonAire in April. Seeing the home in spring, surrounded by blooming daffodils and a reawakened landscape, revealed a warmth and beauty that had been hidden during our winter visit. After carefully evaluating the scope of restoration and our budget, we made an offer and, approximately two months later, secured an acceptable contract. We closed in mid-September 2022.

At closing, it was clear the property needed immediate intervention to prevent further deterioration. The home had effectively sat unused for nearly eighteen months, and the basement, cottage, and barn still contained belongings that required removal. From September through December 2022, we focused on stabilizing the home and addressing major structural and livability concerns. This included replacing the failing slate roof with synthetic slate designed for longevity, refinishing floors, repairing plaster, and removing debris, which required multiple construction dumpsters. Because of the scale of exterior and upper-level work, we purchased a used man lift, which has since allowed us to safely complete restoration work that might otherwise have been delayed or cost-prohibitive. We also purchased tractors to begin reclaiming the land from heavy overgrowth.

We moved into the home on Christmas Eve 2022, committed to restoring it while living within it. At the same time, we renovated the on-site cottage so Gill's parents could relocate from North Carolina and live close to us. In January 2023, we completed a full renovation of the cottage, including kitchen, bathroom, flooring, paint, and structural improvements, allowing them to move in shortly thereafter.

Throughout 2023, we worked steadily to restore and preserve both the home and surrounding property. This included exterior restoration and painting, re-glazing over 40 historic windows, repairing structural wood elements, removing invasive plant overgrowth, and restoring long-observed views across the property. Inside the home, we approached restoration room by room, completing the parlor, creating a shared office space, redesigning the kitchen using gifted cherry cabinetry, and adding a half-bath off the kitchen in a way that respected the home's historic flow.

In 2024, we focused on creating a private guest suite in the basement and restoring the dining room. The guest suite was designed to be fully self-contained while remaining consistent with the home's character, including a private entrance, kitchenette, and updated bathroom. The dining room restoration included plaster repair, historically appropriate paint restoration, trim work, and custom window treatments.

From January through September 2025, we completed restoration work on the upstairs guest room and bathroom, restored the master bedroom, and completed a full master bathroom renovation. The master bathroom required a complete rebuild, including updated electrical, heated tile flooring, a customer shower, and a redesigned layout that balanced modern function with the historic structure of the home.

Much of this restoration was completed hands-on by us, drawing on Gill's earlier experience in home remodeling and our shared commitment to preserving historic spaces with care and respect. Restoring BonAire has been the culmination of a lifelong dream for Gill, to restore a historic property with his wife, and has become a defining chapter of our lives together.

Now, after years of careful restoration, stabilization, and preservation, we feel BonAire is ready for its next steward. While this home will always hold a special place in our hearts, we believe it is time for us to move into our next season of life, knowing we have helped preserve and revive this remarkable historic property for the future.

With appreciation for this remarkable place,

Gill & Laurie





c.1812 BON AIRE



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