

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bland House (c.1910) is a two story frame Colonial Revival structure located on the periphery of the Alexandria central business district. Despite a few alterations, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

It is the current owner's belief that the Bland House is a remodeled and enlarged c.1870 structure. This could well be the case; however, the only visible evidence from an earlier period is a pair of arched Italianate windows set in the gables of the attic. In any event, this application is concerned only with the building's present appearance. The exact date of construction, or remodeling, is not known, although Sanborn maps at least narrow it down to the 1909-1921 period. Given the local history of the Colonial Revival style, the State Historic Preservation Office is using c.1910 as the official date for this nomination.

The Bland House is two rooms wide and two rooms deep with a rear wing; there are no hallways. There are two front doors off the front gallery and a second story balcony set on brincaded consoles.

The principal feature of the house is its gallery which takes the form of a colossal Tuscan pedimented portico. Despite the grandeur of this feature, the proportions are rather attenuated. The tympanum contains a vent shaped like a Palladian window motif. Each capital is ornamented with molded leaf forms.

The interiors are fairly plain, with twelve foot ceilings and large plate glass windows. The only noteworthy feature is the Arts and Crafts style staircase with its heavy square newel posts.

Integrity:

Since c.1910 the following major changes have been made in the house:

- (1) The single central chimney has been removed and the two mantels it served have been lost.
- (2) In the 1950's a small single story rear addition was built, and the rear wing gallery was enlarged and glazed in.

Despite these changes, there is no doubt that the house retains its identity as an example of the Colonial Revival style. Moreover, it retains the portico which is the source of its architectural significance.

NB: The Bland House is currently undergoing rehabilitation under the Economic Recovery Tax Act Program. The balcony balustrade and the front doors are presently being repaired and will be reinstalled shortly. In addition, clapboards on various portions of the rear are being replaced at the time of this submission.

Specific dates 1910
Builder/Architect uncertain

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The Bland House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a landmark in the domestic Colonial Revival architecture of Alexandria. The Louisiana Historic Structures Survey has identified 3,182 50+ year old buildings within the City of Alexandria, most of which date from the early twentieth century. The Colonial Revival is well represented among this group, at least numerically. But most of the examples are galleried cottages or boxy pyramidal roof houses. There are very few two story examples. The survey reveals that the Bland House is one of twenty-one examples which feature colossal order columns. Of these twenty-one, it is one of only seven with a pedimented portico. From among these seven, it is one of only three examples whose porticoes have a full four columns. (The others have only two columns, which looks rather awkward.) In addition, the Bland House portico is distinguished among the other columnar porticoes because its columns are equally spaced rather than grouped in pairs at the ends. This produces a more stately effect.

Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Historic Structures Survey, Rapides Parish.

Sanborn Insurance Co. Maps, Alexandria, 1896, 1900, 1904, 1909, 1921.