THEME: Architecture

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Form 10-300 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Rev. 6-72) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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7.	DESCRIPTION								
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Adam Thoroughgood House, possibly started as early as 1636-40, but more likely erected at some date between 1646 and 1660, is a notable early example of the small two room plan of medieval origin, often used in Maryland and Virginia in the seventeenth century. The small brick farmhouse (22'x45') features massive end-chimneys, a steeply-pitched medieval roofline, small leaded casement windows, and interesting brickwork.

Adam Thoroughgood came to the Virginia Colony in 1621 as an indentured servant but quickly worked off his indenture and became one of the civic leaders of the colony. By 1629, he was a member of The House of Burgesses, and upon his death in 1640 at the age of 35, he was one of the colony's largest landholders, owning at the time 7,000 acres. The 5,350 acre tract he purchased in 1636 included the site where the Adam Thoroughgood House is located near Lynnhaven Bay in Virginia Beach. His will of 1640 describes his house, and some controversy still exists as to whether the description fits this house. It may actually have been built some time before 1660 by his son Adam Thoroughgood II. In any event, it is genuinely of seventeenth century character and workmanship.

The house was altered in 1745 when larger Georgian windows replaced the casement ones, dormers were added, plaster was put on the walls covering the exposed beams, and panelling was added. In restoration projects in 1923 and 1957, these elements were changed in an effort to recreate the seventeenth century effect.

The huge end-chimneys are of two types, the north one being imbedded in the wall, the south one being stepped back from the wall. The exterior chimney is eleven feet at the base, tapering dramatically to the slender stacks high above the roofline. The south room served as the kitchen, the north as a parlor/dining area. Sleeping quarters were in the two rooms in the garret. A major portion of the ventilation of the house came from the center hall, since otherwise only the small leaded windows opened to the outside.

The brickwork at the Adam Thoroughgood House is interesting in that three walls are laid in English bond, the fourth in Flemish, with a number of interesting details, e.g. a row of glazed headers echoing the eavesline. The overall effect today suffers seriously from a series of untidy repointing jobs.

Boundary Information

The Adam Thoroughgood House sits on the last remaining $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of the original 5350 acre tract, which has been seriously eroded by large-scale real estate development. Even with only this small bit of land left, however, the Adam Thoroughgood Foundation has itself recently built, immediately to the north of the house, another of the ubiquitous "visitor's centers." The accompanying sketch map illustrates that building and the site as a whole. A small garden is kept immediately east of the house, while a pair of privately-owned structures are located further east.

(Continued)

SIGNIFICANCE			and the second s
PERIOD (Check One of More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	🔀 17th Century	19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 1636 (?)	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	ck One or More as Appropri	ate)	
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Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
☐ Historic	Industry	losophy	
☐ Agriculture	☐ Invention	Science	
🔀 Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture	
☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
☐ Commerce	Literature	itarian	
☐ Communications	Military	☐ Theater	
☐ Conservation	Music	Transportation	
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

Although rather obviously restored and impinged upon by real estate development, the Adam Throughgood House remains one of our best remaining illustrations of a seventeenth century Virginia plantation house. What appears today to be only a small brick farmhouse was one of the finest houses of the period. It embodied the ambitiousness of Adam Thoroughgood who rose from the status of an indentured servant in 1621 to a freeholder of one of the largest pieces of land in the colony, by 1640. Stylistically, the Adam Thoroughgood House exemplifies a very simple plan (end chimneys. two rooms to a floor separated by a ten foot stair hall) and an exterior of massive and vertical proportions typical of the English late-medieval period. The house was altered in the 18th century and restored in 1923 Its massive end-chimneys, its steep gabled roof, its small leaded windows, and its plan are its most important architectural features. While unusual in the American colonies, this type of brick farmhouse is of a type very common in the English countryside during the seventeenth century.

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				(NATIONAL FISTORIC LANDMARKS)						
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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Independent City	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number	all	entries)

7. Description: (1)

The Adam Thoroughgood House

The North-South boundary of The Adam Thoroughgood House extends from the northern edge of Country Club Circle to the southern edge of Thoroughgood Drive. The East-West boundary runs from the eastern edge of Parrish Road to a line running north-south, located approximately 40 yards east of the house and marked by a fence and a line of trees. The house is surrounded by development and any boundary larger than this would spill over into privately owned property. In any event, the surrounding land is not a critical factor today in the appreciation of what the Adam Thoroughgood House has to offer.

Owned by the City of Norfolk and operated by The Adam Thoroughgood Foundation through the Chrysler Museum, the house is well maintained and regularly open to the public.

