



January 21, 2021

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Arlington, VA 22210
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Arlington Historical Museum
1805 S. Arlington Ridge Rd.

Ball-Sellers House
5620 Third St. S.

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Dear Members of the Arlington County Board,

Over the past 150 years, the Febrey-Lothrop Estate has graced the Upton Hill neighborhood of Arlington. Despite war, twentieth-century alterations, and major development of the neighborhood, the manor home and grounds remain a proud, historically significant, Arlington landmark. Arlington Magazine dubbed the mansion “a rare piece of local history,” and a 2009 architectural tracteries report stated, “the property is recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.”

The original John Febrey home was built before the Civil War. During the struggle, Union encampments dotted the property and two future presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley, bivouacked and trained there. The building housed a signal tower and served as a hospital.

After the war, the estate became the residence of several prominent individuals including Alvin Lothrop, co-founder of Woodward & Lothrop Department Store, Howard Hughes, and developer, Randolph Rouse and his wife, actress Audrey Meadows of *Honeymooners* fame. It was during the Lothrop era, in the late 1890s, that the rear ell and two-story addition of the original home were incorporated into a grand colonial revival structure. Most probably, portions of the original Febrey house remain part of the building today.

Given the historical significance of the Febrey-Lothrop House, the Arlington Historical Society (AHS) believes the property must be saved for future generations. AHS understands that the HARLB has asked the Historical Preservation Projects and Planning Office to research the property, a process that could take up to six months to complete. With requests for demolition permits already in the pipeline, AHS feels an urgent need to prevent harm coming to the Estate.

The Officers and Board of Directors of AHS support the preservation of the historic Febrey-Lothrop Estate, located at 6407 Wilson Blvd. We respectfully request that:

- 1) The Arlington County Board and Manager issue an immediate “cease and desist” on all applications for demolition permits for this property;
- 2) The Historic Affairs and Landmarks Review Board immediately vote on and approve the pending application for Local Historic District (LHD) designation for the property; and
- 3) The HALRB immediately forward its recommendation for LHD designation to the County Board; and
- 4) The Arlington County Board immediately vote on and approve the LHD designation.

Over the past 15 years, Arlington has lost many historically and architecturally important buildings to the wrecking ball. Let’s not let another gem go unprotected.

Respectfully,

Cathy Bonneville Hix
President