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A look at preservation easements

In 1962, the Virginia Legislature charged the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission with administering historic preservation easements within our city. The Virginia General Assembly didn't establish Virginia's Easement Program until 1966, the same year Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act.

Preservation easements protect properties with historic, architectural and archaeological significance. The easements can also preserve open space and natural resource values as recorded legal agreements between landowners, government agencies and land trusts that perpetually protect the conservation values of a property. In Alexandria and the rest of Virginia, the goal is to protect historically significant buildings, structures and sites from destruction or inappropriate change.

Even before the founding of the AHRPC in 1962, historic preservationists successfully lobbied for the Old and Historic District, established in 1946. Preservation-

ists founded the Historic Alexandria Foundation, a non-profit that administers historic and open space easements, in 1954.

The Historic Alexandria Foundation also runs the Historic Plaque Program, started in the 1960s to raise public awareness of early buildings still standing in downtown Alexandria. The combination of rapid urban renewal in the 1960s and the desire to emphasize Alexandria's history as the bicentennial celebrations approached in 1976 increased interest within Alexandria to preserve its historic buildings and open spaces.

In cooperation with the Board of Architectural Review, the AHRPC uses the tool of historic preservation easements to preserve historically significant buildings both inside and out. The Commission also grants easements to landowners to save historic open spaces. To date, the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission holds 39 preservation easements.

Highlights include the Lord Fairfax House on Cam-



A 1930s Historic American Buildings Survey photo of the General Daniel Roberdeau House.

PHOTO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

eron Street and the General Daniel Roberdeau House on South Lee Street. A Victorian house on Royal Street shows that homeowners can grant an interior easement on their property while still remodeling kitchens and bathrooms to have the conveniences of modern-day life.

Not all historic preservation easements protect the spectacular. If you live in a historic home and are interested in the benefits of a preservation easement, including

maintaining an interior or exterior element for perpetuity, please visit: alexandriava.gov/historic-preservation/preservation-easements.

For more information on Historic Preservation in Alexandria, please visit alexandriava.gov/Preservation. For tickets to the Peeling Back the Layers Tour at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, please visit shop.alexandriava.gov.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.