

**ARLINGTON COUNTY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION FORM**

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name:       **Dawson House**  
Other names:       **Rio Vista, Dawson Bailey House**

**2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

Street and Number:   **2133 North Taft Street**  
                                  **Arlington, Virginia**

County                   **Arlington County**  
State, zip code       **Virginia 22209**

**3. TYPE OF PROPERTY**

A.    Ownership of Property

\_\_\_ Private  
**X** Public  
**X** local  
\_\_\_ state  
\_\_\_ Federal

B.    Category of Property

**X** building(s)  
\_\_\_ district  
\_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_ structure  
\_\_\_ object

C.    Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u><b>1</b></u>	<u><b>1</b></u>	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
<u><b>1</b></u>	<u><b>1</b></u>	Total

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places

Yes  No

**4. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic Functions: **Private Residence**

Current Functions: **Community Center and Park**

**5. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

Architectural Classification: **Two story, stone I-House with interior gable end chimneys. There is a five bay, front porch. There is a modern addition at the rear of the historic property.**

Materials:	Foundation:	<b>Stone</b>
	Walls:	<b>Stone</b>
	Roof:	<b>Asphalt Shingles</b>
	Other:	<b>Two Stone/Brick, Gable End Chimneys</b>

**6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

A. Applicable Designation Criteria as described in Section 31A of the Arlington County Zoning Code and the adopted Bylaws of the HALRB

**The Dawson House meets all three of the designation criteria as listed in Section 31A of the Arlington County Zoning Code.**

**See Attached Preliminary Information Form for additional information.**

B. Areas of Significance

**The Dawson House is significant as the only surviving stone structure from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries in the County. The areas of significance include Architecture (design and construction materials), the Civil War, and social/community development in Arlington County.**

C. Period of Significance

**Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

D. Significant Dates

**1859**

E. Significant Person

**Thomas B. Dawson**

F. Cultural/Social Affiliation

**Civil War and Antebellum History**

G. Architect/Builder

**Thomas B. Dawson**

H. Narrative Statement of Significance

**Dawson Terrace is the only stone house in Arlington County from either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and the only other modest 18<sup>th</sup> Century house in Arlington, the Ball-Sellers House is an example of frame construction. Stone was not the common construction material of the English settlers along the Potomac, but the Potomac Palisades provided an abundant, nearby source of stone. The Dawson House contains the only know portion of a tenant house remaining in Arlington. It also is the only building standing, which was within Arlington's many Civil War fortifications. Most of the other farmhouses along the river were destroyed by the northern soldiers to make way for the forts (Defenses of Washington). Fort Bennet was constructed on a portion of the original estate of Rio Vista. Any other surviving buildings have since disappeared. In suburban, and increasingly urban, Arlington County, Dawson Terrace is a unique, recognizable, and tangible piece of Arlington's past.**

**Please see attached Preliminary Information Form for information on historical significance.**

I. Significant Features

**The significant features of the site include the stone house and its immediate surroundings. Priority for preservation will be maintaining the integrity and character of the original structure. Secondly, preservation of the open character of the area around the original structure.**

J. Areas exempt from Designation

**The most significant area of the site is the main house and the area directly surrounding it. The rest of the site is significant because there are no buildings interrupting the viewshed of the main house. In preparing guidelines for the site, consideration will be given to the fact the primary focus of the designation is to maintain the original house. Landscaping**

**changes to the rest of the property would not have to be reviewed, only new structures in the adjoining area would need to be reviewed.**

Designation Criteria

**The Dawson House meets all three designation criteria as cited in Section 31A of the Arlington County Zoning Code, which include historical significance, suitability for preservation or restoration, and education value. In addition, the nomination meets criteria one, four, six and seven as listed in the adopted Bylaws of the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board.**

- One:** Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.
- Four:** Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, or method of construction.
- Six:** Its embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that tender it structurally or architecturally significant.
- Seven:** Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature.

Conclusion

**The Dawson House is a significant historic site in Arlington County. It is the oldest existing example of stone architecture in the County and may be one of the oldest structures as well. Its integrity and character are good, and the structure meets many of the County’s established criteria for local historic district designation.**

**7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. McCoy, Bruce Gregory. Dawson Terrace. Student Thesis, October 25, 1988.
2. Netherton, Nan and Ross. Arlington County in Virginia: A Pictorial History, The Donning Company, 1987.
3. Templeman, Eleanor Lee. Arlington Heritage: Vignettes of a Virginia County, privately published, 1959.

**8. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property	<b>Less than 1 acre</b>
RPC Number	<b>16004090</b>
Verbal Boundary Description	

The proposed boundary is the current area owned by the Arlington County Board. It includes the historic structure and the accompanying lot.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary is the current area owned by the Arlington County Board and includes the historic house and the recreation center.

**9. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/title **W. Dale Waters, Historic Preservation Coordinator, Arlington County and Robert Johnson, Historic Preservation Planner, Arlington County**  
Organization **Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board Arlington County Historic Preservation Program**  
Date **February 25, 1998**  
Address **2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 701, Arlington, Virginia 22201**  
  
Telephone **(703/ 228-3760)**

**10. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

**See Attached Preliminary Information Form and Dawson Terrace for more information.**

**11. PROPERTY OWNER**

Name **Arlington County Board, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources**  
Address **2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201**