

A Guide to the Alexander Jackson Davis Architectural Drawings, 1859-1870 MS.0276

Alexander Jackson Davis architectural drawings
1859-1870

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS.0276

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/624

Unit Date

1859-1870

Language

English

Creator

Davis, Alexander J. (Alexander Jackson), 1803-1892

Extent

27 items

Physical Location

Oversized case 9

Repository

Virginia Military Institute Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

There are no restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892), a notable 19th century American architect, designed VMI barracks, professors' residences, and other Institute buildings during the 1850s and 1860s. Davis was born in New York, and studied at the American Academy of Fine Arts and the National Academy of Design. He helped to popularize the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate styles, and his many important projects included private residences as well as public buildings.

Davis has long been recognized by historians as the most significant American practitioner of the "secular gothic," and VMI was the first American college planned entirely in the Gothic Revival style. This style incorporates towers, turrets, and other design elements first used in medieval castles and cathedrals.

Davis's association with VMI came about as a result of his design work for Philip St. George Cocke, a wealthy Virginia planter and member of the VMI Board of Visitors. Cocke, an impassioned advocate of the Gothic style, employed Davis to design "Belmead," the Cocke residence in Powhatan County, Virginia. Cocke became Davis's patron in the state, and when VMI began its building program in the late 1840s, it turned to Davis to create a comprehensive plan for the Institute.

During the period between 1850 and 1861, a significant portion of the barracks, a Porter's Lodge, mess hall, the Superintendent's residence, and several faculty residences were constructed using Davis' designs. Davis' dream of completing the barracks quadrangle was interrupted by the Civil War and VMI's post-war financial problems, and his work for the Institute ended in the 1870s. It was not until the early 20th century that his vision for the Parade Ground facade of barracks was realized, based on a Davis-inspired design by another noted architect, Bertram Goodhue.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 27 architectural drawings by Alexander Jackson Davis executed for VMI between 1859 and 1870. Included are designs for barracks, the Superintendent's residence, and faculty residences. The bulk of the drawings are ink and wash plans.

Related Correspondence

Correspondence between Alexander Jackson Davis and VMI's Superintendent Francis H. Smith is available in the Superintendent's official correspondence files of the period.

Keywords

Architecture—Virginia

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Architecture

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Virginia Military Institute—History—19th century

Historic buildings—Virginia—Lexington

Architectural drawing

Online Access

This collection is available online

Description of Subordinate Components

Superintendent's residences

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2014

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent 10 items

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Front elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/5433

Unit Date circa 1859

Language English

Extent Pencil, ink and wash drawing; 18.5 inches x 12 inches

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Second floor plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2024

Unit Date circa 1859

Language English

Extent Ink and wash plan with section and elevation views in pencil; 18.5 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

Includes section and front elevation views.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"Dwelling House and Offices for the Superintendent," plan view and front elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2019

Unit Date 1859

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 16.5 inches x 10.5 inches

Scope and Contents

"Dwelling House and Offices for the Superintendent at Va. Milit. Institute. Oct 1859. A. J. Davis, Archit."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"Dwelling House and Offices for the Superintendent," detail view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2023

Unit Date 1859

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 16.5 inches x 10.5 inches

Scope and Contents

"Dwelling House and Offices for the Superintendent at Va. Milit. Institute. Oct 1859. A. J. Davis, Archit."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

First floor plan and detail view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2020

Unit Date 1859

Language English

Extent Ink and wash plan and detail; 18.75 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

Drawing also includes front and rear elevations, and a parlor window detail.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"Plan No. 2, Principal Floor," plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2018

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 18.75 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"Plan No. 2, Principal Floor, adopted for the Executive Mansion, Va. Military Institute, Lexington, Va. 1860."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"Plan No. 3. Chamber Floor," plan and section view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2025

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent Ink and wash plan view with ink section view; 18.5 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"Plan No. 3. Chamber Floor, Adopted for the Executive Mansion, VMI, 1860."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"Executive Mansion," front elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2017

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 18.75 inches x 13.5 inches

Scope and Contents

"Executive Mansion, Va. Military Inst., Lexington, Va. 1860."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

First floor plan view, drawing "A"

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2021

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 18.75 inches x 12 inches

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

First floor plan view, drawing "B"

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2022

Unit Date 1860

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 18.75 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

Drawing includes front and back elevations.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residences

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2015

Unit Date circa 1851-1852

Language English

Extent 8 items

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, plan view and south elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2027

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 14 inches x 17 inches

Scope and Contents

"First Study, A, for Professor's house, Va. Mil. Inst." Plan view "Principal Story No. 2" (A1). South elevation "South Front" (A3).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2028

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing with rendered elevation; 11 inches x 14 inches

Scope and Contents

Plan view (C1) and elevation (C4).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, second story plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2029

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing with pencil; 14 inches x 17 inches

Scope and Contents

Second story plan view (No. 3, A2) and elevation "Entrance front" (5A).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, second story plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2030

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 14 inches x 17 inches

Scope and Contents

Plan view of "Second story 3" (B3) and elevation (B4).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, first and second story plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2031

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 14 inches x 17 inches

Scope and Contents

"First A and second study B for the V.M.I.; principal floor enlarged." Plan view (B2) and elevation (B5).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, basement plan view and west elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2032

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 14 inches x 17 inches

Scope and Contents

Basement plan view (No. 1, B1) and west elevation (B6).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Faculty residence, "Upper Story" plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2033

Unit Date circa 1851

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing with rendered elevation; 11 inches x 14 inches

Scope and Contents

"Upper Story" plan view (C2) and elevation (C5).

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

"River Front," plan view and elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2026

Unit Date circa 1851-1852

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 24 inches x 19 inches

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Barracks

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2016

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent 10 items

Claytor Hall, elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2034

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing, mounted; 13.5 inches x 9.25 inches

Scope and Contents

"Claytor Hall - Va. Milit. Inst. Gen. Fr. H. Smith Supn'dt - Lexington, Virginia. - A. J. Davis, Arc't." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Cross section and south elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2035

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing, mounted; 13.5 inches x 9.25 inches

Scope and Contents

"Claytor Hall, No. 5. Cross section; and Center, south front. 1870." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Plan view with overlay

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2036

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; plan view 23.5 inches x 19.5 inches; overlay 11 inches x 5 inches

Scope and Contents

"Barracks of the Virginia Military Institute" with overlay "Plan on the Floor of Museums, No. 3." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Octagonal auditorium, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2037

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 23.5 inches x 18 inches

Scope and Contents

Detail working drawing of octagonal auditorium. Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Memorial Chapel, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2038

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 11 inches x 9 inches

Scope and Contents

"Study for No. 3, Memorial Chapel." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Basement, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2039

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 35 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"Basement No. 1. By A. J. Davis architect, 1870." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Entrance floor, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2040

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash plan with architect's notes; 35 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"No. 2, Principal or Entrance Floor." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Chapel and museum floor, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2041

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash plan with architect's notes; 35 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"No. 3 Chapel and Museum Floor." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Attic and ceilings, plan view

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2042

Language English

Extent Ink plan with stairway overlay; 35 inches x 10 inches

Scope and Contents

"Attic and Ceilings, Va. Mil. Inst., No. 4."

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.

Claytor Hall, long section elevation

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/2043

Unit Date 1870

Language English

Extent Ink and wash drawing; 35 inches x 12 inches

Scope and Contents

"No. 5, Long Section, Claytor Hall." Unexecuted design for expansion of barracks.

Keywords

Architectural drawing

Gothic revival (Architecture) -- Virginia -- Lexington

Virginia Military Institute—Buildings, structures, etc.