



# VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

## HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY FORM

File No. 104-130  
Negative no(s). 7218

Page 1 of 2

Street address 1703 Grady Ave. (should be 1700)  
Town/City Charlottesville

Historic name Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House Common name same

**Material**

wood frame (siding:  weatherboard,  shingle,  aluminum,  bricktex,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 brick (bond:  Flemish,  stretcher,  \_\_\_\_\_-course American,  possibly chinking over concrete block)  
 stone ( random rubble,  random ashlar,  coursed ashlar,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 log (siding:  weatherboard,  shingle,  aluminum,  bricktex,  \_\_\_\_\_)  
 stucco  cast iron  
 concrete block  terra cotta  
 enameled steel  glass and metal  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Stories	Roof Type	Roof Material
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 1/2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 1/2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> mansard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> pediment <input type="checkbox"/> parapet <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> flat <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> slate <input type="checkbox"/> tile <input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle <input type="checkbox"/> pressed tin <input type="checkbox"/> composition <input type="checkbox"/> not visible <input type="checkbox"/> standing seam metal <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Dormers	Number of bays — Main facade
<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 front <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pedimented <i>main block</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 w/ wings <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> _____

Porch	Stories	Bays	General description
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (center) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (side) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	

**Building type**

<input type="checkbox"/> detached house	<input type="checkbox"/> garage	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
<input type="checkbox"/> detached town house	<input type="checkbox"/> farmhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (office)	<input type="checkbox"/> school
<input type="checkbox"/> row house	<input type="checkbox"/> apartment building	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (store)	<input type="checkbox"/> church
<input type="checkbox"/> double house	<input type="checkbox"/> gas station	<input type="checkbox"/> railroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>fraternity house</u>

Style/period Colonial Revival Date ca. 1930\* Architect/builder \_\_\_\_\_

Location and description of entrance Central door surrounded by sidelights and pierced pediment with fanlight in tympanum.



Miscellaneous descriptive information (plan, exterior and interior decoration, cornice/eave type, window type and trim, chimneys, additions, alterations)

This rather standard Georgian Revival house features triple-windows on the main floor, two front dormers, and inset 1 1/2-story side wings. Originally the lower windows had multi-paned sash (see 1954 Corks & Curls photo).

Historical information

This house was built to house Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, whose Virginia Omicron Chapter was founded at the university in 1858.

*Possibly built as early as 1927.*

Ch'ville City Directories;  
Ch'ville Real Estate Dept.; Alexander Gilliam interview  
Source Corks & Curls, 1954 and 1968; Sanborn maps;

Surveyed by Jeff O'Dell, VHLC Date 4-83; 9-83



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Page 2 of 2

Street address 1703 Grady Ave.	
Town/City Charlottesville	
Historic name	Common name

**Material**

<input type="checkbox"/> wood frame (siding: <input type="checkbox"/> weatherboard, <input type="checkbox"/> shingle, <input type="checkbox"/> aluminum, <input type="checkbox"/> bricktex, <input type="checkbox"/> _____) <input type="checkbox"/> brick (bond: <input type="checkbox"/> Flemish, <input type="checkbox"/> stretcher, <input type="checkbox"/> ____-course American, <input type="checkbox"/> _____) <input type="checkbox"/> stone ( <input type="checkbox"/> random rubble, <input type="checkbox"/> random ashlar, <input type="checkbox"/> coursed ashlar, <input type="checkbox"/> _____) <input type="checkbox"/> log (siding: <input type="checkbox"/> weatherboard, <input type="checkbox"/> shingle, <input type="checkbox"/> aluminum, <input type="checkbox"/> bricktex, <input type="checkbox"/> _____) <input type="checkbox"/> stucco <input type="checkbox"/> concrete block <input type="checkbox"/> enameled steel <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> cast iron <input type="checkbox"/> terra cotta <input type="checkbox"/> glass and metal
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<b>Number of Stories</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2½ <input type="checkbox"/> 1½ <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ____	<b>Roof Type</b> <input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> mansard <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> pediment <input type="checkbox"/> parapet <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> flat <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	<b>Roof Material</b> <input type="checkbox"/> slate <input type="checkbox"/> tile <input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle <input type="checkbox"/> pressed tin <input type="checkbox"/> composition <input type="checkbox"/> not visible <input type="checkbox"/> standing seam metal <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
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<b>Dormers</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ____ <input type="checkbox"/> pedimented	<b>Number of bays — Main facade</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> ____
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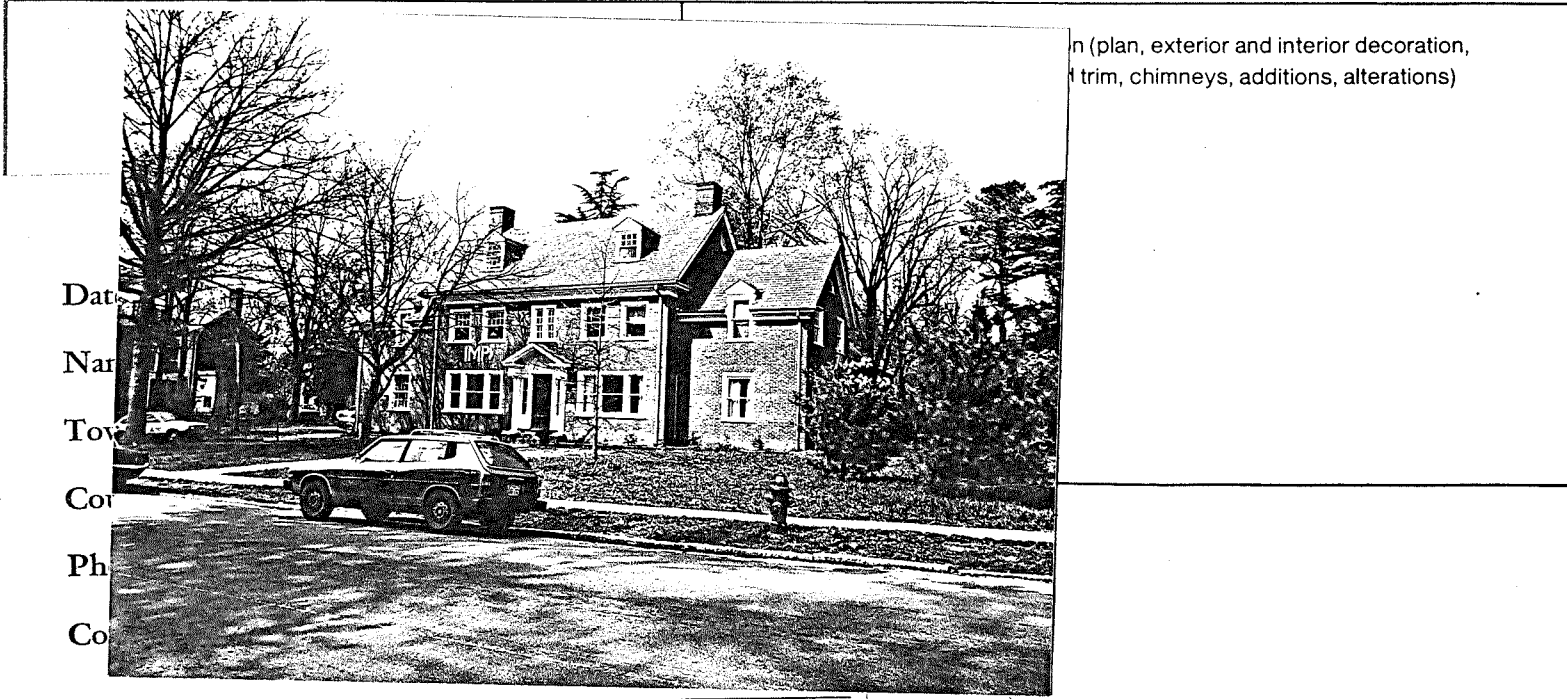
<b>Porch</b> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<b>Stories</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ____	<b>Bays</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (center) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (side) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ____	<b>General description</b>
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**Building type**

<input type="checkbox"/> detached house	<input type="checkbox"/> garage	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
<input type="checkbox"/> detached town house	<input type="checkbox"/> farmhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (office)	<input type="checkbox"/> school
<input type="checkbox"/> row house	<input type="checkbox"/> apartment building	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (store)	<input type="checkbox"/> church
<input type="checkbox"/> double house	<input type="checkbox"/> gas station	<input type="checkbox"/> railroad	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Style/period	Date	Architect/builder
--------------	------	-------------------

Location and description of entrance



Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town \_\_\_\_\_  
 County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Washington D.C. 20240

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION  
APPLICATION—PART 1

Instructions: Applicant should read the instructions carefully before completing application. No certification may be made unless a completed application form has been received. Use typewriter or print clearly in dark ink to complete the application form. If additional space is needed to complete Part 1, use the reverse side or a separate plain sheet of paper clearly indicating the owner's name and mailing address. Part 1 of this application may be completed and sent to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer at anytime during the year.

PART 1 EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Name of property: Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House

Address of property: 1703 Grady Avenue

City Charlottesville County \_\_\_\_\_ State Virginia Zip Code 22903

Name of historic district in which property is located:  
Rugby Road-University Historic District (Nomination Pending)

Check here if request is for:

- certification (structure contributes to significance of the district)
- decertification (structure does not contribute to significance of the district)
- easement qualification (for donation of easement on structure or land for conservation purposes).

2. Description of Physical Appearance:  
(see instructions for map and photograph requirements-use reverse side if necessary)

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon House is a simple Colonial Revival building. It consists of a two-story, three-bay central block flanked by 1 1/2 story single bay wings. Walls are veneered with brick

3. Statement of Significance:  
(use reverse side if necessary)

Sigma Alpha Epsilon was one of the first national fraternities to establish a chapter at the University of Virginia. The Omicron Chapter is now 125 years old, and for 61 of these years

Date of construction (if known): 1920  Original site \_\_\_\_\_  Moved  Date of alterations (if known): 1936-38

4. Name and Mailing Address of Owner:

Name Virginia Omicron Chapter House Corporation

Street 2250 Old Ivy Road, Suite 5

City Charlottesville State VA Zip Code 22901

Telephone number (during day): Area Code (804) 293-5154

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I am owner of the property described above.

Signature  Date \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number Pending

For office use only

The structure described above is included within the boundaries of a Registered Historic District and  contributes  does not contribute to the character of the district.

The structure  appears  does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6) and  will likely  will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with the Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60).

The structure is located in a district which  appears  does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6) and  will likely  will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60), and  appears  does not appear to contribute to the character of said district or  will likely  will not be recommended for certification as substantially meeting National Register criteria.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer

2. Description of Physical Appearance:

laid in stretcher bond.

All sections of the building have steep gable roofs covered with slate. There is a capped interior end chimney at each end of the central block. The small gable-roofed central entrance porch originally had two Tuscan columns. There are sidelights and a blind half-round fan in a palladium motif at the entrance door. Windows were originally eight-over-eight light. In each side bay of the facade of the central block, there is a tripartite window at the first level and two separate windows at the second level. Two widely spaced dormers are on the facade of the central block (none on the rear elevation) and a single wall dormer on the facade of each wing, all with gable and six-over-six light windows.

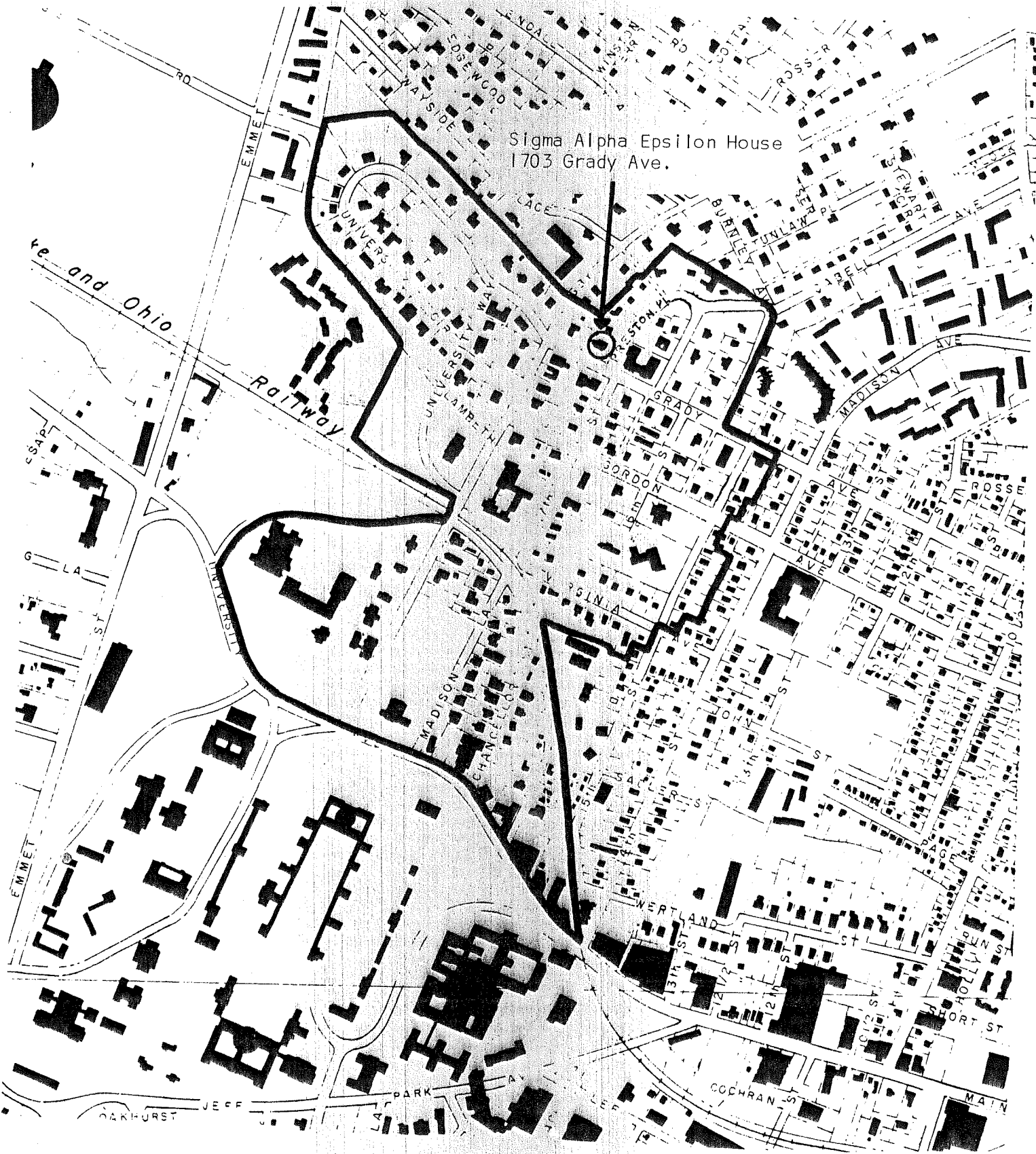
As with most fraternity houses at the University of Virginia, little of the original interior fabric of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon House remains due to heavy use and constant alterations over the years.

3. Statement of Significance:

it has occupied this house. The central portion of the house was built by W. A. Rinehart in 1920 and was probably a private residence for two years before Sigma Alpha Epsilon purchased it in 1922. Apparently, the two flanking wings were added around 1936-38. The architect of the house is unknown, but it is a good example of the Colonial Revival Style. The palladian arched entrance and the small Tuscan portico are quite nice and highlight the simply detailed facade.

PROPOSED RUGBY ROAD - UNIVERSITY CORNER  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

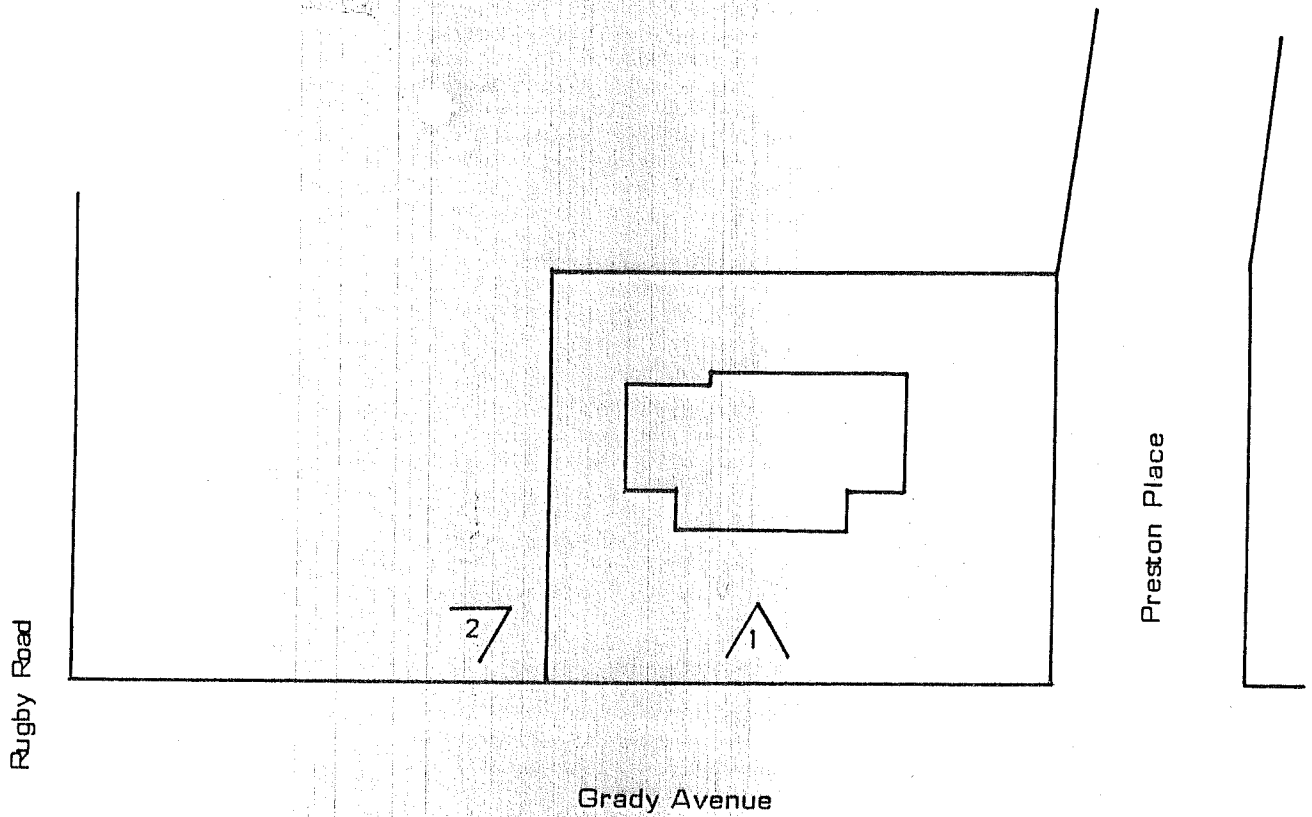
Sigma Alpha Epsilon House  
1703 Grady Ave.



Scale 1"=800'

DCD

SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON FRATERNITY HOUSE  
1703 Grady Avenue



Rugby Road

Preston Place

Grady Avenue

Numbered arrows show locations  
where photographs were taken





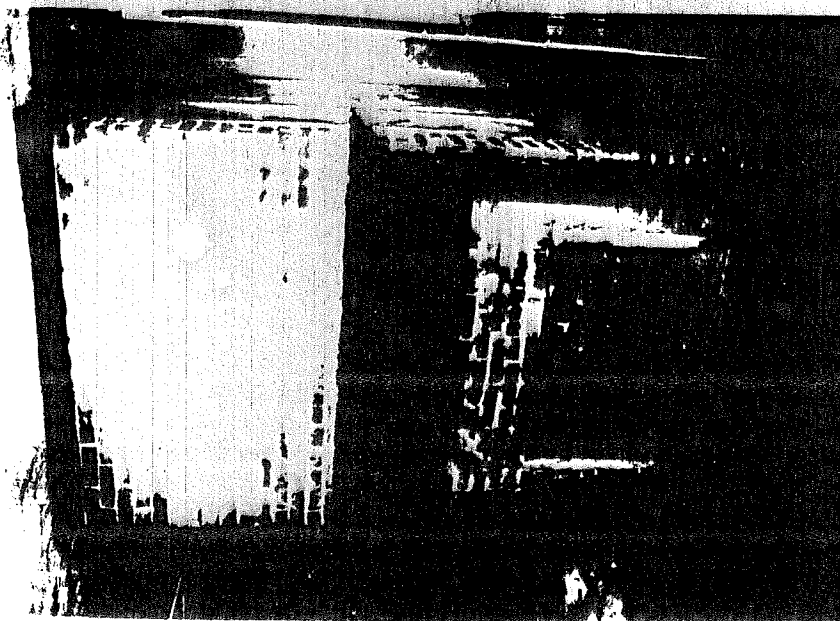


Photo #1  
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House  
1703 Grady Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

South facade, looking north from Grady  
Avenue

Photo #2  
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House  
1703 Grady Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

South facade, looking north-east from  
Grady Avenue

Photo #3  
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House  
1703 Grady Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Interior view of east parlor fireplace



5-125- 1703 Brady Ave - JAE

Va. Emerson Chapter  
Home Assoc.

1 1/2, 2 1/2 s, 0 basement, 12 rooms  
built 1920, good const  
1977 - alterations  
commercial kitchen  
1-room frame cottage

Bishop: not mentioned, ; not built by fraternity?

1942  
questionnaire: "remodeled 1938" - when bought???

Sanborn: c. 1930

City Dir: 4 1927?

1970 booklet: UVA ~~shop~~ <sup>shop</sup> estab 1858 - Don't that an early one?

Cocks & Cocks: not this house in 1923

imp: <sup>(1)</sup> built for fraternity; <sup>(2)</sup> shop estab early  
no

E A E

90-35 deed of trust to enlarge + remodel house  
1936 at corner Wyndhurst Cl + Bradys Ave  
same as 40-56, 4/1922, for WA Rinehart II

40-56 #20,250  
L 6 Preston Place plat 34-478  
possession 7/1/22  
same as 36-187, 1920, for Preston PL Corp

36-187 Preston PL Corp -> Frank Thornton -> Rinehart

1921

W A Reinhardt II

L 6 PA

800 + 8200 - 9000

Old added

~~1923~~

~~W A Reinhardt II~~

.. "

" "

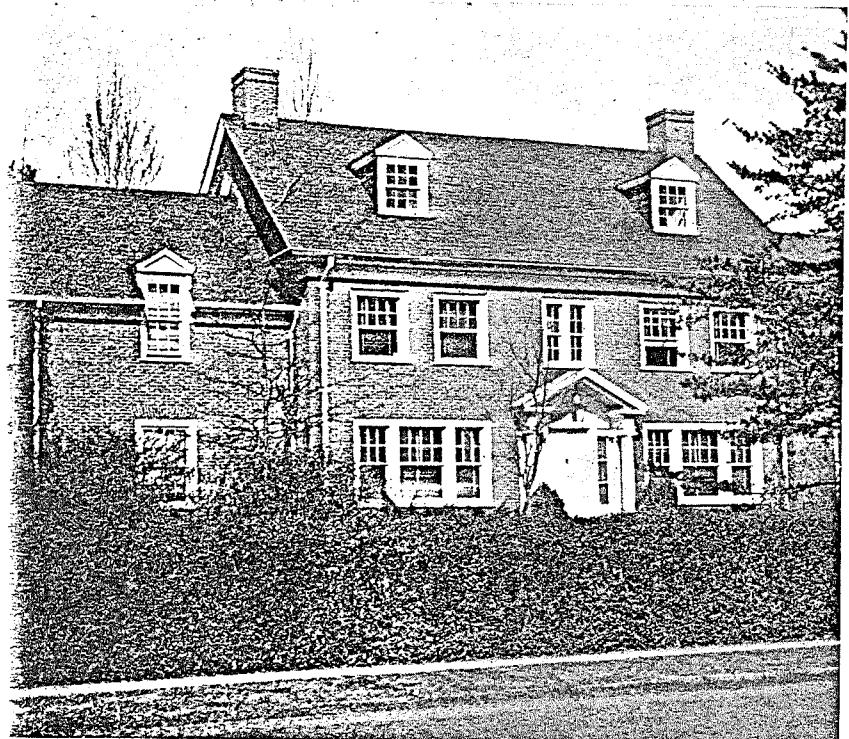
SAE

undistinguished in front  
sheep guarding



# SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON

*Founded at University of Alabama in 1845. Established at the University of Virginia in 1858.*



## FRATRES IN FACULATE

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Clinton J. Davisson | James Mullendore |
| Atcheson Hench      |                  |

## FRATRES IN URBE

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Marshall Black       | Charles Moran       |
| Judge C. Brooks      | Robert Osborn       |
| Alan Cromwell        | John Papit          |
| Pierre Collins       | Frank T. Parker     |
| William Dudley       | John B. Simms       |
| William Earle        | Gilbert J. Sullivan |
| Raymond Lorryng, Jr. | Al York             |

## ACTIVES

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Lawson F. Apperson     | Carlton M. Luck       |
| Robert R. Bailey       | Joseph W. May         |
| Frank C. Bedell        | Frederick M. Moyer    |
| Herbert L. Boatwright  | Benjamin K. Phipps    |
| Richard K. Brantley    | Robert E. Pogue       |
| George R. Browner      | Thomas R. Price       |
| John S. Childress      | John M. Oakey         |
| William B. Clarke      | Michael F. O'Brien    |
| William M. Cochran     | Paul P. Raulet        |
| A. Jones Cox           | Nathaniel F. Remick   |
| William B. Creech, Jr. | Melvin E. Roach       |
| Harold G. Dixon        | Bernard A. Schwab     |
| John B. Frye           | Robert Smithwick, Jr. |
| Benjamin S. Gill       | Thomas E. Stark       |
| Richmond E. Guthrie    | Jack L. Thompson      |
| Henry E. Harris        | Stanley M. Titus      |
| William P. Harris      | Reidar A. Trosdal     |
| Walter C. Hartridge    | Cecil E. Underwood    |
| Herbert R. Hartwell    | Theodore J. Viars     |
| Theodore H. Hoffman    | Jesse S. Vogtle       |
| L. David Horner        | Bertrand L. Warren    |
| C. Ronald Jenkins      | John C. Weaver        |
| Charles C. Jett        | Charles F. Young      |
| Crawley F. Joyner      | William L. Young      |
| Melvin S. Krause       |                       |

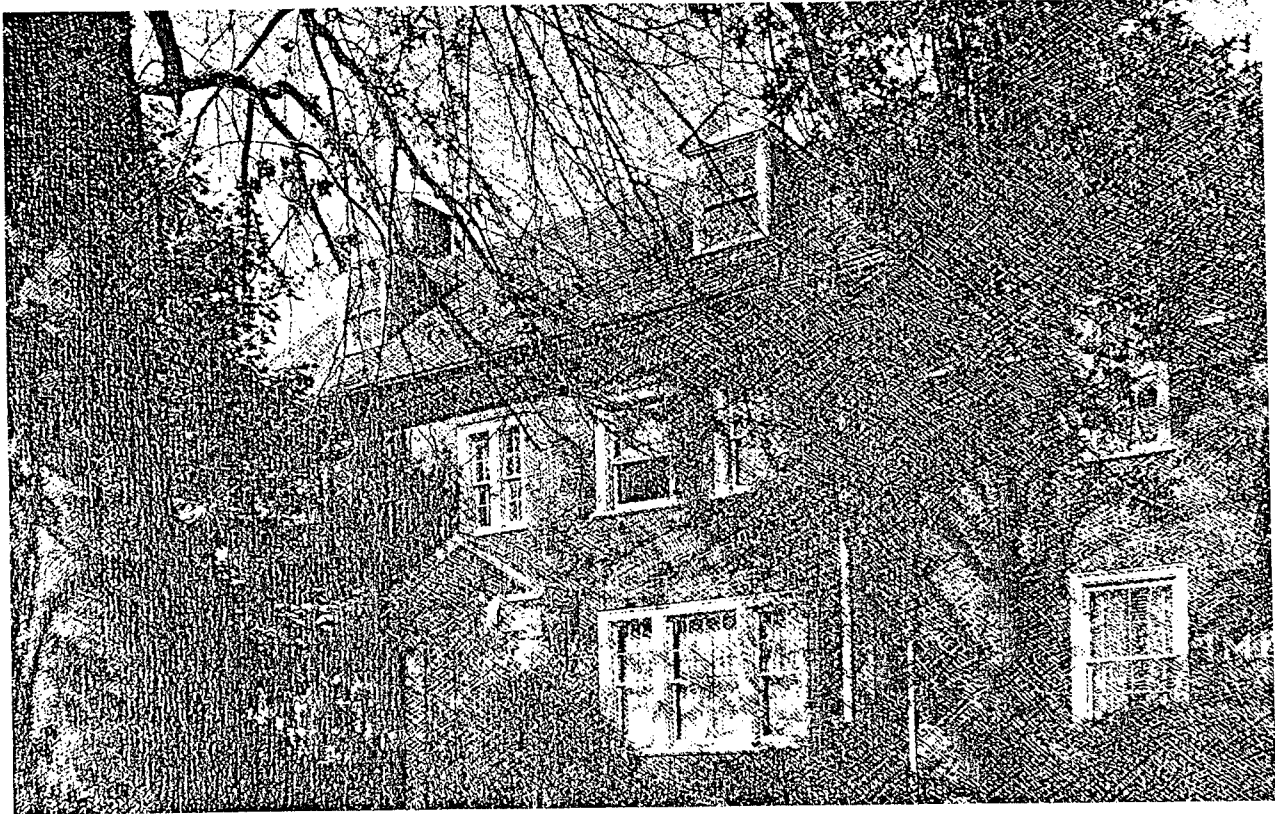
## INACTIVES

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Donald H. Alexander    | Thomas F. Johnston      |
| Marion S. Boyd, Jr.    | Thomas G. Milstead, Jr. |
| Frederick N. Cole, Jr. | Foster H. Pettit        |
| Donald C. Hannah       | Frank F. Smith, Jr.     |
| Stuart H. Harris       |                         |

VIRGINIA OMICRON CHAPTER



1954 GTC



**FIRST ROW:** D. Broyles; T. Smith; H. Harbin; M. Krebs; R. Howe; C. Baker; F. Frankfort; D. Mintz; J. Henderson; J. Burton. **SECOND ROW:** D. Bowlin; M. Barrow; V. Krebs; P. Pettit; T. Moore; H. Williams; D. Pushkin; G. Webb. **THIRD ROW:** I. Currie; R. Patterson; J. Averitt; K. Donovan; K. Wunderlich; S. Harvey; J. Adams; F. Miller; L. Wilhelm; B. Barksdale; R. Crawford; M. McKee; C. Vaughn; R. Cabanis; G. Hodges; H. Doggrell; R. Hickman; J. Mathieu; B. Hollis. **MISSING:** T. Slayton; R. Snoddy; H. Thomas; V. Shepard; E. Finch; P. Saul.

ER OF SIGMA ALPHA  $\Sigma$  A E EPSILON ESTABLISHED 1858;

SAE  
1960



## ② Description of Physical Appearance

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon House is a simple Colonial Revival building ~~typical~~ typical of many ~~built~~ in the Rugby Road - Univ. Corner Historic District during the first ~~three~~ half of this century.

It consists of a two-storey <sup>3-bay</sup> central block ~~flanked~~ flanked by 1½-storey single-bay wings.

Walls are veneered with brick laid in stretcher bond. All sections of the building have steep gable roofs covered with slate. There is a capped interior end chimney at each end of the central block.

There is a small ~~central~~ gable-roofed central entrance porch, <sup>originally</sup> with two Tuscan columns. The entrance door has sidelights & a blind half-round fan, in a Palladian motif. Windows were originally 8-over-8 light. ~~A tripartite window occupies the two side~~

~~bays at the first level of the facade~~

There are two <sup>widely-spaced</sup> dormers on the facade of the central block (none on the rear elevation) and a single wall dormer on the facade of each wing, all with gable roofs and 6-over-6 light windows.

In <sup>each</sup> ~~the~~ side bay of the facade of the central block, there is a tripartite window at the first level & two separate windows at the second level.

## ⑤ Statement of Significance

Sigma Alpha Epsilon was one of the first national fraternities to establish a chapter at the Univ. of Virginia. Omicron chapter was installed in 1855. The chapter is now 125 years old, & for 61 of those years, it has occupied this home at 1703 Brady Ave. The central portion of the house was built by W. A. Rinehart II in 1920 (Ch'ville DB 36-187) & probably was used as a private residence for two years before SAE purchased it in 1922 (DB 40-56).

Apparently the flanking wings were added c. 1936-38 when the fraternity obtained a construction loan to enlarge & remodel the house (DB 90-35).

The architect is unknown, but the house is typical of the many Colonial Revival houses built in the early 1900's which <sup>make up the fabric</sup> ~~contribute to the character~~ of the Rugby Road / Univ. Corner Hist. Dist. Although not ~~one~~ of the more ~~grand~~ one of the more spectacular buildings, it is none the less important to the streetscape.

The ~~z~~ Palladian arched entrance & small Tuscan portico are quite nice & highlight an otherwise rather simply detailed facade.



Progress photo by Matt Gentry

**The Virginian has been serving up meals on the University Corner for seven decades.**

# Landmark restaurant closes unexpectedly

By REX BOWMAN  
Daily Progress staff writer

The Virginian — the University Corner restaurant where generations of college students have enjoyed their first beers, first romantic dinners and first discussions of the meaning of life — has closed indefinitely, leaving employees looking for other work and patrons simply looking astonished.

"It's so sad — this is an institution," said a disappointed Harriet Moore, who had dropped by

Monday evening for dinner. "I first came here when I was a student in the '50s. My son was a night manager here years ago."

Employees said they were told early Monday by the restaurant's business manager, Jake Ford, that the restaurant, which first opened in 1921, was closing indefinitely. No reason was given, employees said. The restaurant did not open for business Monday. Neither Ford nor owner James F. Scott could be reached for comment.

See VIRGINIAN, Page A6

## Virginian

Continued From Page A1

"I didn't really get a straight answer," said Tom Coffey, a cook for seven years who was at the Monday morning meeting. "But I was told to look for other work."

About 40 people worked at the restaurant at 1521 University Ave. Several said they were given no notice of the closure.

"It was a really great place," said Lisa Coffey, a waitress at the restaurant and Tom Coffey's wife. "You had people coming in there who came in 50 years ago. They'd order something and say, 'I remember coming here 50 years ago. The place hasn't changed all that much.'"

With its wooden chairs and small, intimate booths lit by dim wall lamps, the hole-in-the-wall establishment always drew big crowds of University of Virginia students and alumni. Patrons also had the occasional chance to rub elbows with such celebrities as actors Sam Shepard, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek, singer Mary Chapin Carpenter, former heavy-

weight champion Muhammad Ali, Republican U.S. Sen. John Warner and NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw.

On Monday, Mike and Susan Neilson of Alexandria suffered mild shock as they looked at the sign posted on the restaurant's door: "The V.A. is closed until futher (sic) notice."

The Neilsons had lived in Charlottesville seven years ago, when he was a law student at the University of Virginia and she was a free-lance graphic artist. They said they were visiting in Sperryville and decided to come to Charlottesville to once more eat at the Virginian.

"We were just talking on the way over here, wondering what the enchilada of the day was," Mike Neilson said. "I'm shocked. I don't know what happened. It was always crowded. The booths were always full."

According to employees, Scott bought the restaurant three years ago. Having made a fortune in the natural gas field, they said, Scott was visiting Charlottesville when he asked someone where he could find a good cup of coffee. Someone recommended the Virginian, Scott

liked the coffee and bought the restaurant.

Employees said they think Scott hasn't spent enough on maintenance of the restaurant. They also said they understand he has turned down offers to sell it because the sums offered were less than what he paid. Business, meanwhile, had steadily declined under Scott's absentee ownership style, according to employees and Mark Lorenzoni, spokesman for the Corner Merchants Association.

"There are many of us who feel very loyal to the restaurant," said Debra Sours, a waitress for seven years. "This is a shame. It would be nice if somebody bought the restaurant."

While employees are dealing with the shock now, students returning to the university this fall will have their own chance to be surprised. "People really liked coming there, and it's an institution," said waitress Tish Riley. "It'll be missed."

However, patrons' affections for restaurants can't be readily gauged. On Monday, someone had posted a note for a friend on the door of the Virginian. The note read: "See you at Kafkafe!"

# Corner legend closes its doors indefinitely

*The Virginian lost due to lack of experience*

By **JULIE HONG**

Cavalier Daily Senior Writer

As Beverly Runge walked to get her daily breakfast of coffee and a cup of soup, she stopped in her tracks when she noticed a sign that read, "The Virginian is closed until further notice."

The Virginian Restaurant, known for its timeworn atmosphere and unchanging face, closed indefinitely Monday for unknown reasons.

Runge, a University employee who patronized the restaurant almost every day for the last five years and during her graduate school days in the 1950s, said she was "very unhappy, but not too surprised because I understood it wasn't doing too well."

"The Virginian has been in trouble since the first six months it operated under James Scott," said Mark Lorenzoni, a spokesman for the Corner Merchants Association.

Employees of The Virginian said Scott, a natural gas tycoon, had no restaurant experience and did not know what he was getting into when he purchased the restaurant three years ago. Scott decided to buy the Virginian one day because he liked the coffee there, they said. Scott made many managerial mistakes while at the helm and did not put much back into the restaurant, they added.

Lorenzoni said problems arose because the owner did not have a hands-on style of doing business.

He said the previous owners of the restaurant, Maggie Cox and Mary Ann Parr, were

renowned for their hands-on style that made The Virginian a success.

"The reason why they sold The Virginian to Scott was because he offered them such an insane amount of money," Lorenzoni said.

Forty employees lost their jobs Monday with no prior notice and no explanations. Both the restaurant's business manager Jake Ford and owner Scott refused to comment.

"It was a great place to work. I'm going to miss a lot of the customers who have come to the restaurant for many years," said Lisa Coffey, a waitress at The Virginian.

Coffey's husband Tom, who was a cook for the restaurant for seven years, said he heard the reason Scott could not sell the restaurant was because "he was asking too much money."

Employees said Scott turned down offers to sell it because the prices offered were far lower than what he had paid.

Since it opened in 1921, students, faculty and alumni frequented the landmark restaurant.

The Virginian was voted the best restaurant in Charlottesville several times in the mid-1980s.

The Virginian, a cornerstone of student life at the University, was one of the few places on the Corner that did not succumb to commercialization, recent graduate John Wright said.

"The Virginian had a lot of character. It was one of the last places for old-style traditional college life," Wright said.

# Return of the Virginian

## Littlejohn's owner plans to buy closed Corner restaurant

By **TINA ESHLEMAN**  
Daily Progress staff writer

People who have been hankering for the Virginian's eggs Benedict, grilled cheese sandwiches and pecan pie since the landmark Charlottesville restaurant closed in July soon may be able to satisfy their appetites.

John Crafaik, owner of Littlejohn's New York Delicatessen at 1427 W. Main St., said he plans to buy the nearby Virginian and reopen the restaurant with the same menu in about 30 days.

The Virginian's business manager, Jake Ford, would not comment on the sale.

"We're not saying anything because we have not done a deal yet," said Ford, who works for James F. Smith, owner of the Virginian for about three years.

Crafaik said that he has been negotiating

with the Virginian's owner since the restaurant closed and that he expects the transaction to be completed today, but he would not disclose a price.

News of the pending sale came as a surprise to Mark Lorenzoni, spokesman for the Corner Merchants Association.

"That's great," he said. "I'm very excited, because when we heard it was closing this summer, we were all upset. It's been a cornerstone down here. We hate to see any business close up, especially one that's been there for years."

The Virginian, a University Corner institution since 1921, has been a popular gathering spot for University of Virginia students and alumni for generations.

Crafaik said he intends to keep the restaurant very much like it was, with the same food, same furnishings and many of the same employees.

See EAT, Page A6

## Eat

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"We won't change anything that's not broken," he said, but added, "We'll try to improve on the consistency of food and service."

Crafaik, owner of Littlejohn's since 1976, has also operated other restaurants in the University Corner area, including Graffiti's, at the site now occupied by the Biltmore Grill, and Margarita's and the Jazz Club, both of which were upstairs from Littlejohn's.

Crafaik said he operated Graffiti's successfully for about five years before selling it in 1985. Margarita's, a Mexican restaurant he ran for about six or seven years,

**"We won't change anything that's not broken."**

**John Crafaik  
Littlejohn's owner**

was very successful until he tried to convert its menu to "Tex-Mex," an idea that never really took off, Crafaik said.

After that, he opened the Jazz Club in the same spot. That idea fizzled, he said, because the space was too small to attract big-name groups and students weren't willing to pay a cover charge to hear

jazz music.

"Good idea, wrong location," said Crafaik, who now uses the upstairs space for private parties, receptions and catering. He said he hopes to open another restaurant there by next fall.

Until then, Crafaik said he'll have his hands full getting the Virginian reopened and running Littlejohn's. He expects to have some help from his son, Michael Crafaik, who graduated from UVA in the spring.

"We'll try to make it a family operation," he said.

Crafaik said he expects to start work Thursday at the Virginian, polishing up the place and checking supplies and equipment in preparation for a target opening date of Oct. 15.