

5201 12TH STREET, SOUTH (LUSTRON HOUSE)
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1414
VA-1414

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
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HABS
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- Location:** Dismantled in 2006 and is currently in storage in Arlington County, the dove grey Lustron House once stood at 5201 12th Street, South, in the Virginia Heights neighborhood of South Arlington, Virginia.
- Significance:** Conceived, promoted, and manufactured by the Lustron Corporation out of Ohio and built only for a short time, between 1948 and 1950, in the United States, Lustron houses were one answer to the post-war housing shortage. Lustrons were intended to be affordable and to elevate the standard of living for middle-class American families. Advertisements pitched the duality of porcelain-enameled steel structures, with the “beauty of porcelain” meeting the “strength of steel.” They came in four colors (examples of each were in Arlington: dove grey, surf blue, maize yellow, and desert tan), and featured open floor plans with built-in cabinetry and appliances. The houses were priced below \$10,000, a cost comparable to conventionally-built dwellings at the time.
- One of eleven Lustrons built in Arlington County in 1949 (this one’s building permit dates to May 4, 1949), the dove grey Lustron has a factory serial number of 549 and was erected by Construction Associates, Inc. All eleven of Arlington’s Lustrons were the Westchester Deluxe 02 model which featured two bedrooms and a single bathroom. Living space was confined to 1085 square feet, but was maximized by various built-ins and storage units. The house was donated to the county, and preservationists dismantled the Lustron - working backwards through the company’s assembly manual - to move it to another site. It currently is in storage awaiting re-construction.
- Sources:** Fetters, Thomas T. *Lustron Homes: The History of a Postwar Prefabricated Housing Experiment*. NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002.
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