



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Preservation Easement Program

POLICY #4

Documentation of Easement Properties

The baseline documentation for each property is evidence of the condition of the features and conservation values that are the subject of the easement. That is, the features that make the property worthy of protection in perpetuity must be recorded as part of the permanent file for the property so that its condition can be monitored over time.

As new easements are negotiated, staff will compile information on the history and significance of the property from various sources including the National Register of Historic Places, the archives of the Department, and the property owner.

In addition to the existing materials, other information will be collected as part of the easement process. Plat maps, topographic maps, and other information available will be collected, and detailed photographic documentation will be undertaken. Floor plans, insofar as they are available, will be included. If these are not available, staff will prepare sketches of floor plans, identifying significant features and to assist with the identification of features in photographs (photo point maps). Photographs (head-on) of each elevation and each feature identified as character-defining in nomination, and important non-historic features will be taken. The location from which the photos were taken will be noted on a plan. Natural features, to the extent that they contribute to the overall character and feel of the property should be photographed as well. All features of the property that are particularly vulnerable to deterioration will be documented.

The baseline documentation will be collected following the Board of Historic Resources meeting where the property is considered and as close as possible to the date that the easement is expected to be recorded so that the condition of the property at the time the easement is recorded is reflected in the baseline documentation. Even in cases where the existing property file located at DHR is relatively complete, photographs documenting the condition at the time of donation will be taken.

The property owner must acknowledge the accuracy and completeness of the baseline documentation by signing the cover sheet and returning it to DHR.

For all existing easements, the staff will examine the files prior to conducting a regularly scheduled easement inspection to determine the adequacy of the baseline documentation.

In cases where the baseline documentation is found to be deficient, a Present Condition Report will be prepared during the site visit. This report will be provided to and signed by the property owner and serve as baseline documentation from that point forward.

