

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES STYLE SHEET

This style sheet is based on the style sheet developed by Susan Foard, copy editor for the 4th edition of the *Virginia Landmarks Register*. Calder Loth, Senior Architectural Historian with VDHR, has added a number of Virginia idioms and land mines one should keep in mind. DHR staff updated the style sheet in 2012.

Style sheets can be subjective but they are necessary to maintain consistency in publications. This style sheet is recommended for all DHR staff and for nominations of Virginia's historic properties. It is important for us to try to use the same terms, forms, and spellings in all our professional writing. Suggestions for additions and amendments to this style sheet are welcome.

Terminology Checks

Battle

battle, as in second battle of Manassas; but Yorktown Battlefield
battle of Manassas (Confederate designation); battle of Bull Run (Union designation for same battle)
Southerners use nearest town, Northerners use nearest creek or river for name.

Century

the 18th century (noun); built in the mid-18th century; the late 18th century; 18th-century mantel;
mid-18th- century mantel; early 18th-century mantel (“mid” requires a hyphen whether used with a noun
or an adjective. It's okay to use numerals instead of spelling out the number of the century if you need to
save space.

Chamber

historic term normally used for a bedroom, not synonymous with room. The generic “dining room
chamber” means the bedroom over the dining room; “porch chamber” means the bedroom or chamber
over the porch.

Church

the Anglican church (general); the Episcopal church in Virginia; First Baptist Church in the city of
Richmond.

Include denomination name to avoid confusion-- St. Paul's Episcopal Church; St. Paul's Roman
Catholic Church. Not necessary to add denomination name when the historic church name is very
individual: Pohick Church, Aquia Church, Falls Church.

Commas

three-bay, two-and-one-half-story town house; small, mid-19th-century country church; his wife, Maria
Fletcher, moved.

Always use commas after and in a series: smokehouse, dairy, icehouse, and privy

Complement vs. compliment

A full complement of outbuildings is extant. The outbuildings complement the manor house.
He complimented her carpentry skills.

Decades

Many writers use 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, 1900s to refer to the entirety of the seventeenth, eighteenth,
nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, while other writers use the same terms to refer to the first decade of

those centuries. To compare – During the 1600s, European settlement repeatedly was stymied by factors ranging from armed conflict to disease to natural disasters. During the 1900s, Craftsman emerged as a nationally popular style. To avoid confusion, it is best to spell out which century is being discussed – During the seventeenth century, European settlement in Virginia became firmly established – and to specify which decade of a century is being discussed – By the early 1900s, most cities had established municipal water systems; during the 1910s, electrical cooperatives also proliferated.

Façade

A building has only one façade as a human has only one face. It is redundant to say the front façade; it is incorrect to say the rear façade or side façade. You may say rear elevation or side elevation. In rare cases, as in colonial plantation houses such as Wilton, where the river front and land front are nearly identical or are of equal architectural importance, one might call each main elevation a façade, but it is best to refer to them as land front and river front.

Garden

Use instead of backyard where appropriate: The pergola was the crowning architectural accent of the garden. NOT: The pergola was the crowning architectural accent of the backyard. Also note that backyard is usually one word not two.

Hyphens

Use for adjectival phrases:

- curved-span bridge
- large wood-frame smokehouse
- center-passage house
- garden-city planning concept
- low- and middle-income residents
- double-pile plan
- common-rafter roof system
- two-room-plan dwelling
- two-and-one-half-story house (or 2½-story house, but never 2.5-story house)
- shed-roof porch
- gable-roof dwelling

Modern

“Modern” is meaningless when used to refer to period of construction as it is too broad and ill defined to indicate specific characteristics. “Modern shed,” “modern windows,” “modern development,” etc. should not be used. Rather, use an estimated date – “ca. 1980 shed,” “replacement sash installed after World War II,” “development that began during the 1960s.” Or use the term “non-historic” in lieu of “modern.” On the other hand, referring to Modern architecture is fine when discussing New Formalism, Neo-Expressionism, Brutalism, Post-Modern, Wrightian, Miesian, or any of the architectural idioms associated with the Modern movement.

Modernist/Modernism

Very generally, a “modernist” is a person (usually an architect) who eschews traditional design, especially classicism. The term “Modernist” can also be a catch-all adjective for any contemporary building that avoids any hint of traditional design. e.g. “It’s a modernist house, not a colonial.”

“Modernism” is normally thought of as a historic style, more or less synonymous with the International Style, popularized in the 1920s and continued into the 1960s with Meis van der Rohe and his

contemporaries. It can also include Art Deco. Be aware that the terms are still used very loosely and others may have their own ideas of what they mean.

Names

Alexander Jackson Davis; Andrew Jackson Downing; Edgar Allan Poe (never Allen); Minard Lafever; Philip (Christian name--not Phillip) William B. Phillips, Jeffersonian mason; a National Monument (NPS designation) Booker T. Washington National Monument; but: Jamestown National Historic Site; Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site; Appomattox Court House National Historical Park; Manassas National Battlefield Park; Petersburg National Battlefield; Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park. [Congress is never consistent in nomenclature when making these designations—always double check]

Nobility and Titles

Knighthood: Sir Dudley Ward or Sir Dudley; never Sir Ward
Lady (title of wife of a knight or a peer): Lady Grafton to refer to the wife of the Earl of Grafton , but Lady Alice Grafton or Lady Alice when referring to the daughter of the Earl of Grafton . Lady Astor was married to Lord Astor; Lady Diana was the daughter of Earl Spencer. The wife of Sir Peyton Skipwith is Lady Skipwith, not Lady Jean.

The Chicago Manual of Style says to lower case titles: the duke of Gloucester. It's really okay (actually better taste) to upper case them: the Duke of Gloucester; the Marquis de Lafayette.

Numbers

Use numerals for numbers higher than 100: approx. 30,000 years; more than 14,500 people; nearly 250,000 fragments; the first 10,000 years; over 300 people.
For numbers less than 100, write out: twenty-five trees.
Combine numbers and writing out for very large numbers – 3 million miles.
For precise measurements, use numerals – 6.1453 miles
Combine numerals, symbols, and writing out for very large numbers – \$20 million.

Passage

term preferred over hall for colonial houses, e.g. stair passage, center passage, center-passage plan.

Pennsylvania German, or Pennsylvania Deutsch; not Pennsylvania Dutch (they are Germans).

Periods

Paleo-Indian; Archaic; Woodland; Late Woodland; Early Woodland artifacts; contact-period; colonial period; Federal period

Plantation

Using plantation in a name is redundant – Westover; Shirley; never Westover Plantation or Shirley Plantation.

Railroad (American usage)/ Railway (British usage)

Norfolk and Western Railway Co. (official name) but also can use Norfolk and Western railroad. Always double-check the official names of railroad companies; they are not consistent as to whether they are railroad or railway companies. Also remember the Seaboard Air Line Railroad!

Regions in Virginia

Capitalize regions when they are being described as distinct entities, but don't capitalize when they are used as approximate geographic locations. E.g., the Piedmont; the Piedmont counties; Piedmont Virginia; Southside Virginia; Tidewater; Southwest Virginia; Northern Virginia.

Traffic delays in Northern Virginia are well known, but Southside Virginia hasn't experienced the same phenomenon.

Richmond is located in central Virginia, while Highland County is on Virginia's western border.

Resource Types in National Register Nominations

The National Register recognizes five resource types: building, structure, site, object, and district. Each has a specific meaning when used in a nomination, and each type should be used consistently.

"Building" and "structure" cannot be used interchangeably.

Reverend

the Reverend Mr. Smith (Episcopal priest); Reverend Smith (protestant preacher)

the Rev. Mr. Smith can be used also

the Right Reverend James Smith (Episcopal Bishop)

the Most Reverend James Smith (Catholic Bishop): both addressed as Bishop Smith.

Mr. Smith (Episcopal priest)

Ms. Smith (female Episcopal priest)

Father Smith (Catholic priest or high-church Episcopal)

Pastor Smith, Reverend Smith, or Dr. Smith (Protestant preacher)

Scots-Irish and Scottish

Scots-Irish is becoming more preferred but Scotch-Irish can be used.

Scotch is a whiskey; better to use Scottish as in Scottish influence; not Scotch influence.

Significant

"Significant" and "significance" have specific meanings in National Register nominations. Avoid using the word "significant" unless referring to an aspect of a property or historic district that helps illustrate its historic or architectural significance. The word "significant" can be synonymous with other words, such as "major" or "extensive," but in nominations, we prefer not to use "significant" in these cases when another word will work. For example, instead of "Along the southern edge of town, significant recent development has taken place that is dissimilar to the central core," rephrase as "Along the southern edge of town, extensive recent development is not in keeping with the historic character of the central core."

Slant

use hyphen instead; builder-architect; teacher-clergyman; not builder/architect. If referring to more than one person, "and/or" can be used, as in, "The builder and/or architect emphasized classicism."

Street addresses

Write out-- 202 North Granby Street; West Franklin Street; 2801 Kensington Avenue.

Ninth and Grace streets; not Ninth and Grace Streets

For numbered streets, check the locality – Twenty-fifth Street would be used in some places; others use ordinals – 25th Street.

Styles

Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Late Gothic Revival (when referring to the Gothic style after High Victorian Gothic), Greek Revival, Second Empire, High Victorian Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, Beaux Arts classicism, Renaissance Revival, Georgian Revival, classical-style building, Federal-style building, Beaux Arts-style building, Jacobean, Romantic Revivalism, mid-Georgian house, late Georgian house, Colonial Revival, Adamesque, Rhenish, Italian Villa style, classical, neoclassical Jacobean baroque style, the cottage style, the chalet style, neo-Palladian, Jeffersonian Classical style, Bungalow-Craftsman style, International style, Bungalowoid mode, bungalow style houses, the American Country House movement, Moderne, Roman classicism.

Unique

A resource should not be described as “unique” unless documentation exists that it is truly the one and only of its kind (such as Monticello).

University

Capitalize u only when in full title, such as the University of Virginia or University of North Carolina. But: a student at the university in Charlottesville; and never “The University” in reference to UVA.

Vernacular

The NPS does not consider “vernacular” by itself to be an architectural style because it doesn’t describe specific characteristics. In Section 7 of nomination forms, for a resource with no discernible style, refer to the type or form as follows – “Other: split-level dwelling”; “Other: office building”; “Other: I-house”. For a resource that features minimal stylistic characteristics that reference one or more popular national styles, use “Other: vernacular Queen Anne/Colonial Revival”; “Other: vernacular Craftsman”; “Other: vernacular Moderne.”

In text, describe the characteristics of the resource, for example:

An I-house dwelling with Colonial Revival stylistic ornamentation is located at the intersection.

The cul-de-sac features a collection of ca. 1960 split-level dwellings.

The front porch is embellished with mass-produced decorative elements, including a turned railing and spindled brackets, that are typical of vernacular Queen Anne houses built during the late nineteenth century.

Spelling and Grammar Checks

Decades

1920s, not 1920's

A

Abingdon (never Abington)

Accomack (county)

Accomac (county seat)

accommodate (never accomodate)

aedicule

Afro-American (scholarly term)

African-American (preferred term)

air-conditioning

Albemarle (not Albermarle or Albamarle)

Allegheny Mountains

Alleghany County

architrave: the lower member of an entablature

Arlington County (Arlington is a county, not an independent city)

&: Hopkins & Bros. Store

B

bateaux (plural)

bathhouse

bargeboard

baseboard

belt course

Berkeley: name of colonial governor & plantation (not Berkely)

best-preserved (adj.) among the best-preserved houses of its type

bed and breakfast

Belmead (A. J. Davis-designed mansion in Powhatan Co.—never Bellmead, Belmeade, or Bell Mead)

Beverly: Virginia family; Beverley Street, Staunton

Beverly: girl's name

Beverly Hills, California (named for Beverly, Mass.)

boathouse

bottomlands

boys' school; girls' school

brickwork; brick-ended; Flemish-bond brick walls; rubbed-brick arches; gauged-brick lintels;

glazed-header Flemish bond; molded-brick doorway

bull's-eye window

C

ca. for circa; built ca. 1788

campus (do not use when referring to U.Va.—it's the U.Va. grounds, not campus)

canalboats

cannonballs

Cary (Virginia family name—not Carey)

cemetery (never cemetary!)

Central European

chair rail (two words; never chairrail)

campaign: the Peninsula campaign (lc)

Carpenter's Gothic

cast-iron façade (adj); built of cast iron (noun)

cast-metal cap

the Chesapeake Bay (never Chesapeake Bay)

chiefdom (lc)

chimneypiece

chimney stacks

Clarke County (not Clark)

clapboard, clapboarding (these terms are not synonymous with weatherboard and weatherboarding)

classical, neoclassical; Classical Revival

clipped-gable roof

closed-string stair

CSA (Confederate States of America)

coastal plain Indians

colonnettes

cookhouse

courthouse (building): the Hanover County courthouse;

Court House (town) i.e., Hanover Court House – some county seats: Fairfax, Gloucester, Amelia, and Prince George, among them, no longer use the suffix Court House.

cross: Latin-cross plan

colonial-period

color: dark red brick building

common-rafter roof system

Commonwealth's attorney

council: the governor's council (lc)

county seat; county-seat village; the Albemarle county seat

courthouse vs. Court House – when used generically, courthouse is a single word (i.e., “the county courthouse has the land records.” In Virginia, communities that were county seats often included “Court House” as part of their formal name, such as Appomattox Court House.

Cradock (historic district in Portsmouth—never Craddock)

The Virginia Constitution; the constitution of 1902

Culpeper (not Culpepper)

D

dates: January 15, 1998, not 15 January, 1998

day-care center

Deep South

Democratic party

dimensions: use 24 X 43 feet (not 24' X 43')

district: Yorktown Historic District, commercial district

dogtrot

doorknobs

double-hung sash

double-pile plan

dovecote

Douglas (surname and Christian name)

Douglass: Frederick Douglass (African American leader)

Dulany (old Alexandria family, never Dulaney)

duck house

Drs. Smith and Jones

dressed-stone gate post

Dupont (name of company; also DuPont; also Du Pont; also E. I. Du Pont De Nemours, Inc.); du Pont and duPont (family name): rarely consistent even among family members. Sometimes even Dupont; i.e. take your pick and stick with it.

E

East Coast

Edinburg (town in Shenandoah Co.)

Edinburgh (city in Scotland)

Executive Mansion (official name for Governor's Mansion—it's ok to say Governor's Mansion but should use the former as the formal term)

Emancipation

end post

era: Federal-era mantels; Revolutionary-era cannon; Progressive era

the Evacuation Fire

exuberant

F

fall line

farmland

the Jones farm

farmhouse

far-western

Federal-period house

federal government

ferryboat

ferry-house

fine-quality linen

five-part house

flush-board siding

Fort Monroe (current name) Fortress Monroe (19th century name used in advertisements; not an official name)

furnace: single-stack, hot-blast charcoal furnace

freestanding column

Friends meeting

Friends' meetinghouse

G

gambrel; gambrel-roof rear wing

Gay Mont (estate in Caroline Co., not Gaymont)

Gen. Robert E. Lee; Capt. Douglas Harnsberger; Confederate general Robert E. Lee; *use Gen. Philip Sheridan (not Maj. Gen. or middle initial)

generals Lee and Grant; General Grant

General Assembly

glebe house;
greenbelt
Green Springs (historic district in Louisa Co.)
Green Spring or Greenspring (historic site in James City Co.)
grid plan; grid-plan street pattern
gristmill
guesthouse
guttae (pl.) gutta (singular) [a peg-like motif on a Doric entablature]

H

hall-parlor; not hall/parlor. The house has a hall-parlor plan.
Hampden-Sydney College (never Hampton-Sidney)
Hampton University (no longer Hampton Institute)
handrail
Hanover (Virginia County)
Hannover (German principality)
H-L hinges
high-style: high-style woodwork
hipped roof (better than hip roof); hipped-roof dormers
historic: “a historic house” is American usage; “an historic house” tends to be seen as British
historical marker (as in highway historical markers)
historic marker (a marker that is historic in its own right; the 1748 milepost is a historic marker)
horse breeding
house: the Branch house; the Nelson house (lc house) not The Branch House;

I

I-house: the I-house is big; the I-house plan
icehouse
Immanuel Episcopal Church (historic church in Hanover Co.); Emmanuel Episcopal Church (historic churches in King George Co. and Powhatan Co.); many other examples of this inconsistency, be careful.
in antis (antae pl.)
in muris
in situ
Indian (acceptable, Native American is preferred term)
Interstate Highway 66
ironmaking (n.) pig iron

J

jailer
jerkinhead roof

K

keystone
king-post truss

L

Lafayette: not La Fayette, la Fayette or LaFayette
land-use planning

lifestyle
Light-Horse Harry Lee
like: cottagelike
lock-keeper's house
loom house
Loyalist
long: three century-long period
Loudoun County (never Loudon, although it is sometimes spelled that way in Scotland)
limestone
lock no. 4
longhouse
long-term goal; longest-term tenure

M

millennium
midcentury
“Main Street”; typical “Main Street” architecture
mile-long
middle-class: the person was middle-class; middle-class neighborhood
manor house
mansard roof
Mansfield (historic landmark in Dinwiddie Co.)
Mannsfield (historic site in Spotsylvania Co.)
mantel (fireplace surround)
mantle (a cloak); Mickey Mantle
marbleizing; marbleized
Marshall (family name—John Marshall)
Marshal (military title—Marshal Foch)
Massacre (do not say the Great Indian Massacre of 1622; use Great Indian Uprising of 1622.)
medium-size house
Mathews County
Mathew Brady
St. Matthew
Matthew Jones house
meetinghouse (generic) but sometimes two words in formal name: Hopewell Friends Meeting House
metope (s)
the mid-1930s
milepost
millowner
molding (American spelling—The mantel has carved moldings.)
mold (to form, also fuzzy green stuff)
moulding and mould (British spelling—don't use)
much-altered

N

Nanzatico: historic estate in King George Co.
Nanzattico; Indian tribe on Northern Neck
National Park Service (not National Parks Service)
nicknames: Robert (“King”) Carter

northerners, southerners

O

old-fashioned house
once-important
open-string stair

P

pattern book (two words are better) pattern-book illustration
pavilion (not pavillion – this is French spelling)
pilaster-framed
pipestem
plasterwork
plate-glass windows
Pocahontas (not Pochontas)
porticoes
pro-military
public school facilities
pre-Revolutionary War; Revolutionary-era house
principal-purlin roof

Q

quoin
quoins

R

right-of-way for singular – A VDOT-owned right-of-way crosses the southern parcel.
rights-of-way for plural – three rights-of-way are along the battlefield boundaries, with two owned by VDOT and one by Dominion Virginia Power.
riverbank
riverboat
river port; river town
the Rives papers
rock-faced house
county route 616
English romantic landscaping
Romantic Revivalism
the romantic informality
roof deck
round-arch window
rubblestone
run-down

S

St.: better St. Paul's Church than Saint Paul's Church
Saint Paul (historic figure)
Philip St. George Cocke

saloon: the Anglicized version of the French word salon. It can mean a very grand drawing room or parlor, not a honky-tonk western bar.

sawn-work

schoolhouse

Scotsman, a Scot

Scottish Baronial style

Stick-style

servants' house

Seven Days' battles

shipbuilders

set-back

side-passage-plan dwelling

silver-plated knob

slave labor force

soapmaking

small-town: Bridgewater has a small-town character.

stair hall

stair-hall arch

stepped-gable

Stirling (plantation in Spotsylvania Co.; easement property—from Stirling Castle, Scotland)

Sterling Park (Northern Va. suburb, also a type of silver)

strap hinge

“Southern” image

stained glass (noun)

stained-glass windows (adj.)

streetscapes

Spotswood, Alexander (colonial governor; not Spottswood)

Stanardsville (not Standardville or Stannardsville)

Stonewall Jackson ok; don't have to use “Stonewall” Jackson

storefront

Strasburg (town in Shenandoah County)

Strasbourg (city in France)

Sunday school

Surry County, Virginia

Surrey County, England

T

theater (not theatre unless official name: Byrd Theatre)

town house (not townhouse – unless referring to the semi-detached dwellings that started being built in the mid-20th century in suburban residential developments)

town-house development

town hall

traceries

traveler (traveller is British spelling, don't use)

Traveller (Lee's horse)

trashpit

trompe l'oeil

tollhouse

Tuscan-porticoed

Three-Notched Road (or Three-Chopt)
through-truss bridge
Truxtun (historic district in Portsmouth—never Truxton)

U

U. S. brigadier general – she was a U.S. brigadier general.
U. S. Geological Survey
U. S. Census
U. S. Coast Guard
Union army
upper South – Virginia is located in the upper South.
Union brigadier general – he served as a Union brigadier general until his retirement.

V

V-notching
VMI
VPI (okay for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
veranda (American spelling)
verandah (British spelling—best not to use)
visitors' center
a visitor attraction

W

walkway
wainscoted; wainscoting
Waverley & Waverly (some places use the final e, some do not, always double-check)
weatherboards; weatherboarded
Westend (historic estate in Louisa County—not West End)
white-painted joints
windows – when describing windows, maintain consistency in terminology. For instance, if describing light patterns, don't refer to a 6/6 pattern in one place and a nine-over-nine pattern in another place.
wood frame (n.) wood-frame plantation house
wood graining
wood-shingle house
worshipers
workers' houses
wraparound porch
wrought-iron bridge; bridge made of wrought iron

X

Y

Y-plan
Y-tracery

Z