

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Springhill Historic District 2016 Update and Corrections

Name of Property Richmond, VA

County and State Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Introduction

The Springhill Historic District was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 10, 2014. Since that time, research and review conducted by independent researchers Richard Helm, Lyle Browning, William Trout and Scott Williams have provided evidence of errors in the original nomination and significant documentation of the multiple-layered evolution of two properties within the historic district: the location of the former Manchester Waterworks and the location of a late 1970s high-rise apartment building for the elderly. This additional documentation is being submitted to correct the original nomination’s numerous errors concerning these two properties and, more importantly, to provide a fuller understanding of the historic district’s significance in the areas of Industry and Community Planning and Development.

The district’s historic boundaries and areas of significance *have not changed* as a result of this update. The original nomination included an erroneous entry for 1920 Stonewall Avenue (DHR No. 127-6180-0062/ 127-0284) which was listed as having two contributing and two non-contributing resources. The resource referred to as an “aqueduct” in the original nomination in fact was a brick cellar and, moreover, was demolished during the 1970s. Therefore, the inventory entry for 1920 Stonewall Avenue has been corrected to show that the property has the contributing site of the water tower associated with the Manchester Waterworks, a non-contributing high-rise apartment building, and a non-contributing shed. Construction dates for two resources, the Manchester Waterworks on Riverside Drive (DHR #127-6180-0060) and the dwelling at 620 W. 20th Street (DHR #127-6180-0036), also have been corrected.

The district’s original two periods of significance *have changed* as a result of this update. The argument to define 1814-1834 as a period of significance for the district was based on misinterpretations of historic records and resultant faulty conclusions. Therefore, this period of significance *has been removed* from the historic district. The district’s second original period of significance, 1870-1961, has been refined to begin in 1873 and end in 1961, beginning when residential development of Springhill is known to have commenced and ending with construction of the most recent contributing resources.

The following pages provide detailed narratives to update and correct the Springhill Historic District nomination, keyed to the numbered sections of the original nomination form that are changing as a result of the update. The additional research by Helm, Browning, and Trout has demonstrated that, while today it is an exclusively residential area, Springhill Historic District’s quiet streets belie its history as a site for a Civil War-era fortification and a 19th-century municipal waterworks. The narratives below provide corrected descriptions and summaries of the resources associated with these historic events.

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Section 5. Classification

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>75</u>	<u>29</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>78</u>	<u>29</u>	Total

Section 7. Description

Summary Paragraph

In the original historic district nomination, Springhill was described as a compact residential neighborhood on the south side of the James River, approximately one mile from the central business district of the City of Richmond, Virginia. The district is bounded by Riverside Drive and Springhill Avenue on the north; the alley running parallel to Semmes Avenue on the south; the rear property line of the houses facing West 19th Street on the east, and West 22nd Street on the west. The buildings in the neighborhood are all residential, with most houses ranging in date from circa 1900 to 1930, and a smaller number of houses and three apartment buildings dating from the World War II period through about 1964. The majority of housing stock was initially occupied by professionals and laborers employed in industries south of the James River. About one-third of the houses were rental properties in 1920. The Craftsman and Colonial Revival architectural styles prevail with numerous houses representing either the Bungalow or American Foursquare sub-types. A conceptual plan of the neighborhood was first published in 1848 when the area represented a small section of a larger planned town, Spring Hill. Legal plats depicting the present-day block-and-street-grid plan of the district were filed in Chesterfield County in 1862 and 1873. The earliest documented construction date of contributing dwellings within the district is 1873.

Narrative Description

The original historic district nomination indicated that the dwelling at 620 W. 20th Street (DHR #127-6180-0036) dates to ca. 1850, but further examination of the building and its setting suggests a more likely ca. 1900 construction date. The diminutive, one-story cottage has a painted brick foundation, board-and-batten siding, a metal clad roof, and replacement 6/6 window sash and multiple-light front door. The original nomination also stated that this dwelling is situated in close proximity to (above) a principal lock of the “James River Manchester Canal.” Although such a canal was proposed, it was neither constructed nor placed into operation. According to the notes from a survey of the proposed

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canal route, by 1819 a dam and guard locks had been constructed, but those structures were part of a private industrial waterworks development by three individuals – William Bowden, George Winston and William Wardlaw. Part of the ca. 1819 guard lock is still standing on the shore of the James River, below the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks, near 21st Street (Figure 1). Although this location is physically proximate to the Springhill Historic District, the structure is not within the district boundaries due to the steep change in grade between the district and the river.



Figure 1. Portion of the ca. 1819 Guard Lock Constructed by Bowden, Winston & Wardlaw.

The original nomination further stated that the dwelling at 620 W. 20th Street is close to the site of a “brick aqueduct” and “water-control” tower that were related to the “James River Manchester Canal” and “extensive waterworks” developed on the south bank of the James River in the “early-nineteenth” century. As previously stated, the proposed canal was never constructed and the waterworks were built ca. 1888, not during the early nineteenth century. In fact, the house *is* situated near the site of the ca. 1888 water tower that was constructed as part of the Manchester Waterworks; it may be the small building shown to the left of the water tower in a 1913 photo (see Figure 6 below). It is not known if the dwelling ever functioned as part of the waterworks, although its proximity lends credence to the possibility. The Manchester Waterworks and the “aqueduct” are discussed in greater detail below.

It should be noted that there are no photographs earlier than 1888 depicting the Manchester Waterworks. A Civil War era photo possibly indicating a tower standing on Spring Hill has been determined to show a smoke stack, possibly of the Haxall Mill, in the vicinity of the Mayo Bridge in Manchester. Furthermore, Civil War era images that do clearly show the south bank of the James River (as seen from the ruined piers of the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad Bridge in Richmond) provide no evidence of any brick structure in the vicinity of Spring Hill. Because the line of the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad passed immediately to the east of Battery No. 13 on Spring Hill, one would expect that a large brick structure would be evident in the extant photography (Figure 2). Arrow in red showing location of Spring Hill on the south side of the James River.

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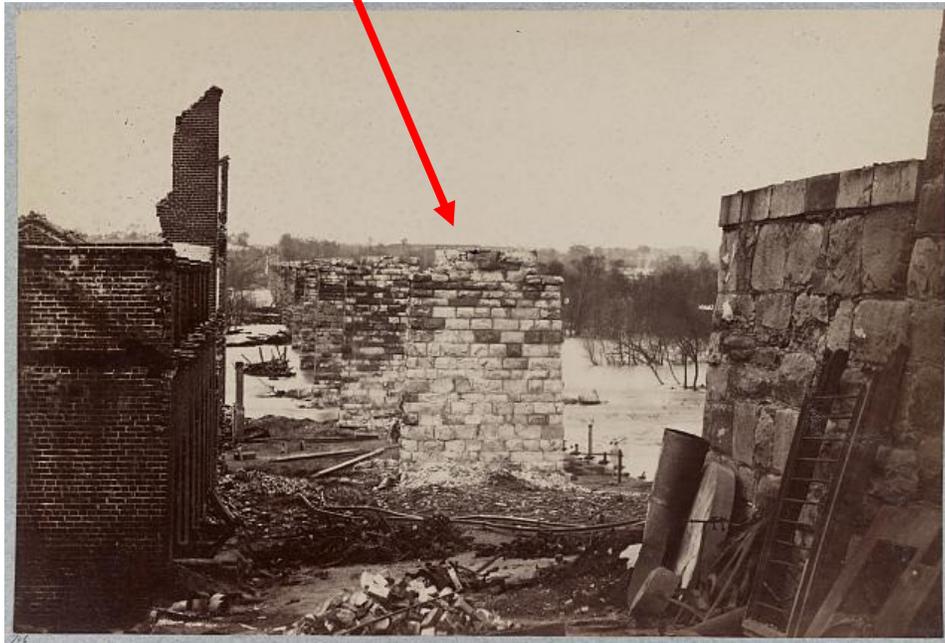


Figure 2. Ruins of Richmond and Petersburg Railroad Bridge, James River, Richmond, Va.
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 Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Arrow in Red showing location of Spring Hill on the south side of the James River.

Historic Structures and Site

The original historic district nomination provided a narrative description of three resources associated with the Manchester Waterworks: the site of the waterworks themselves, the site of a water tower, and a brick “aqueduct.” Misinterpretations of historic records resulted in erroneous descriptions of each resource, particularly the “aqueduct,” which in fact was an antebellum dwelling’s brick cellar. The following paragraphs correct the misinterpretations and provide an accurate explanation of each resource’s historic use.

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Manchester Waterworks (Structure)

In the original nomination, at the foot of West 22nd Street, stone foundations were correctly attributed to the Manchester Waterworks, but their construction commenced circa 1888 (not 1820 as originally stated). The stone foundations (DHR #127-6180-0060) are located at the north end of West 22nd Street, just east of Canoe Run (creek) near a parking lot for the City of Richmond's James River Parks.

The Manchester Waterworks complex was built around 1888 for the City of Manchester (Figures 3-8). By the turn of the twentieth century, the waterworks complex included two round settling basins, a sluiceway, two one-story, gable-roofed buildings, and a two-story-high smokestack. The settling basins were built below the highest elevation point of Springhill and the water was pumped via an underground pipe uphill to the water tower, which stood at Springhill's apex. From the tower, the water flowed by gravity into Manchester's water mains. The original nomination incorrectly assigned an 1820s construction date to the settling basins and sluiceway; they were actually contemporary to the rest of the ca. 1888 waterworks complex.

The waterworks' main building and smokestack were demolished in 1948 but the foundations remained, and subsequently the property was used as a pipe storage facility by the City of Richmond's Department of Public Utilities. During the 1970s, the site was incorporated into the James River Park System.

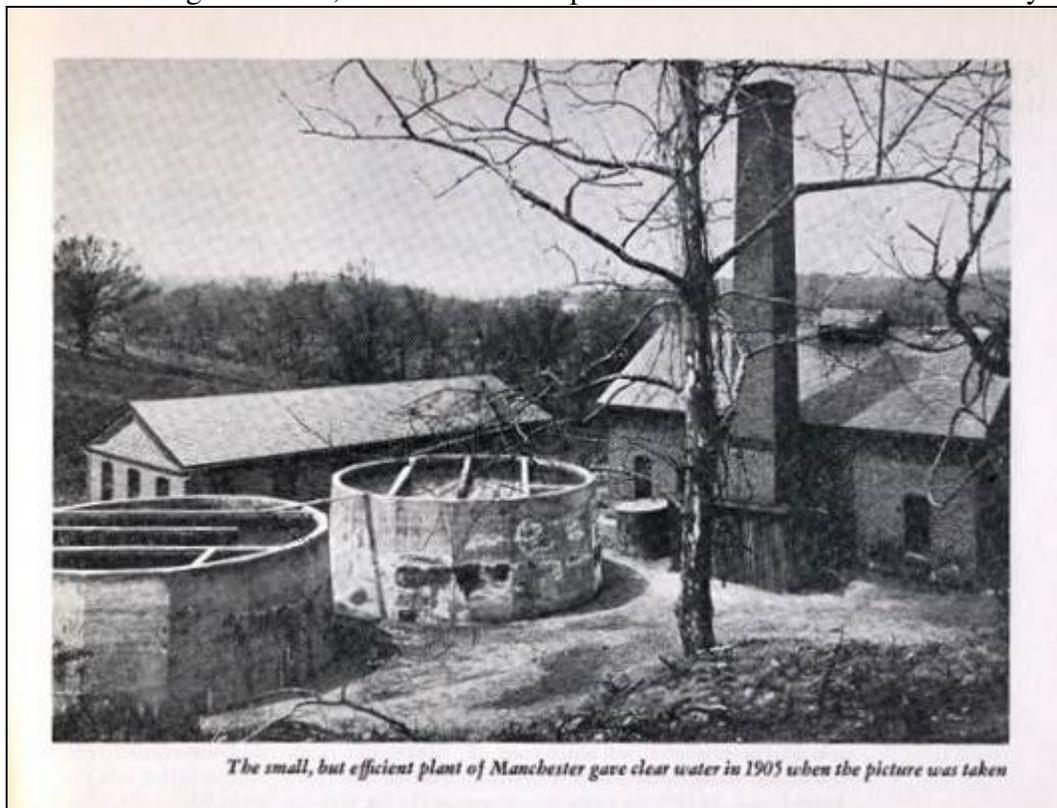


Figure 3. 1905 Photograph of the Manchester Water Works, Located Near the End of 22nd Street Beside Canoe Run. Image provided by Richard Helm.

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Figure 4. 1937 Aerial Photograph Showing the Location of the Abandoned Manchester Waterworks (the settling basins are circled in red). Image and annotation provided by Scott Williams.

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Water Tower (Site)

A water tower associated with the Manchester Waterworks once stood near the intersection of West 19th Street and Stonewall Avenue, on property currently designated as 1920 Stonewall Avenue. The water tower was demolished around 1912 but its site (DHR No. 127-6180-0062) is a short distance from the high-rise apartment building constructed at 1920 Stonewall Avenue after 1976.



Figure 5. 1888 Photograph of the Manchester Waterworks' Water Tower. Image provided by Richard Helm.

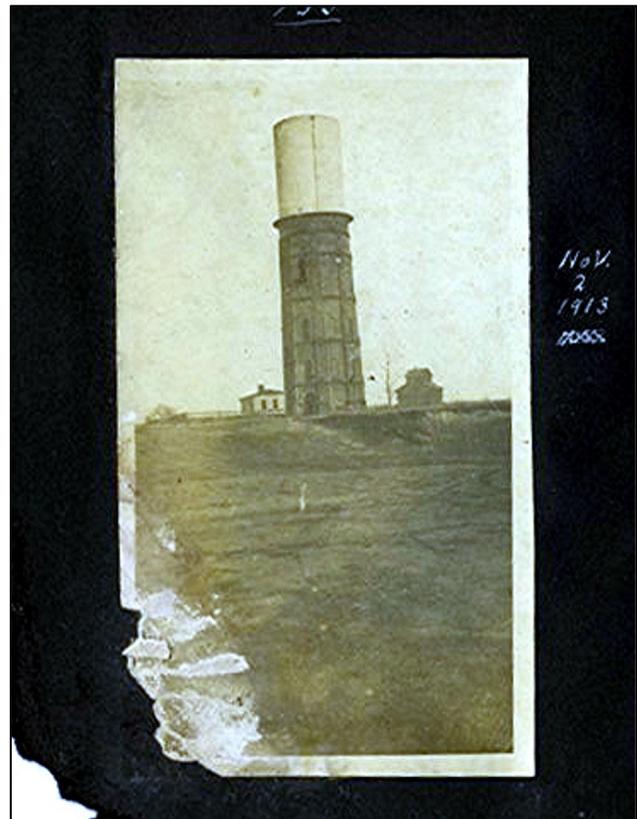


Figure 6. 1913 Photograph of the Manchester Waterworks' Water Tower. The small building immediately to the left of tower may be the dwelling at 620 W. 20th Street (DHR #127-6180-0036). Image provided by Richard Helm.

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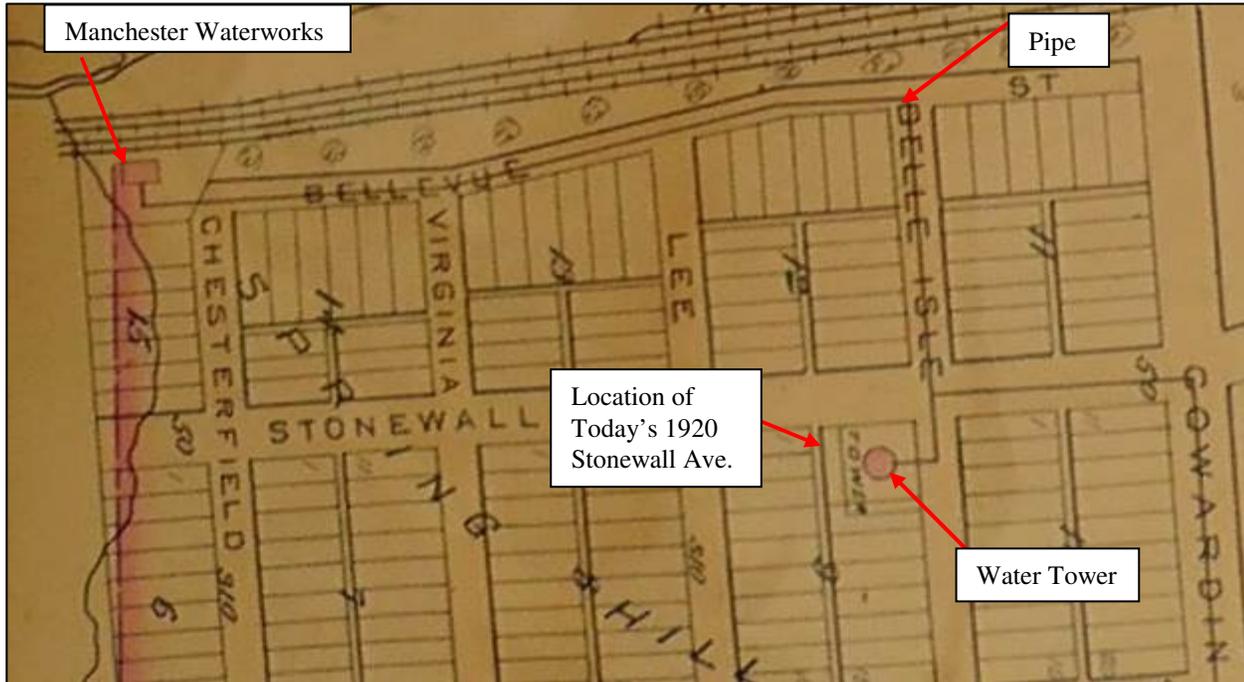


Figure 7. The 1889 Baist Atlas of Richmond Shows the Location of the Waterworks, Underground Pipe, and Water Tower. Image and annotations provided by Richard Helm.

According to the original nomination, an “aqueduct” was near the site of the Manchester Waterworks’ water tower, close to the intersection of West 19th Street and Stonewall Avenue, on property currently designated as 1920 Stonewall Avenue (DHR #127-6180-0062). The nomination further erroneously notes that the structure was extant at the time of nomination and it was listed as a contributing resource in the historic district’s inventory. In fact, the structure was demolished ca. 1976. Rather than being an “aqueduct,” the structure has been demonstrated by further research to have been the “huge underground powder magazine,” described by local historian Francis Earle Letz in 1956 and also detailed by David Pulliam in 1900 in the *Richmond News* newspaper (see Section 8 below). This structure, which admittedly is not like most Confederate dug-out bomb proofs and magazines, but more like a casemate, was contained within the Civil War-era Battery No.13. It possibly also incorporated a cellar constructed as part of the 18th-century Wardlaw Mansion that was destroyed by fire ca. 1851, and which was documented in 1900 as being the source for the brick used in the construction of portions of Battery No. 13.

The late-18th-century house Wardlaw Mansion is the dwelling noted on an 1818 plat map (Figure 8) at “the Dwelling house lot,” which, in the original nomination, erroneously was called the location of the ca. 1900 dwelling at 618 W. 20th Street (DHR #127-6180-0036). There is no physical or documentary evidence to indicate that the cellar/magazine ever had anything to do with the water tower’s historic function as part of the Manchester Waterworks. This resource has been removed from the historic

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district's inventory, and the entry for the property with which it was associated (1920 Stonewall Avenue) has been corrected below. The property's true history is explained in greater detail in Section 8.

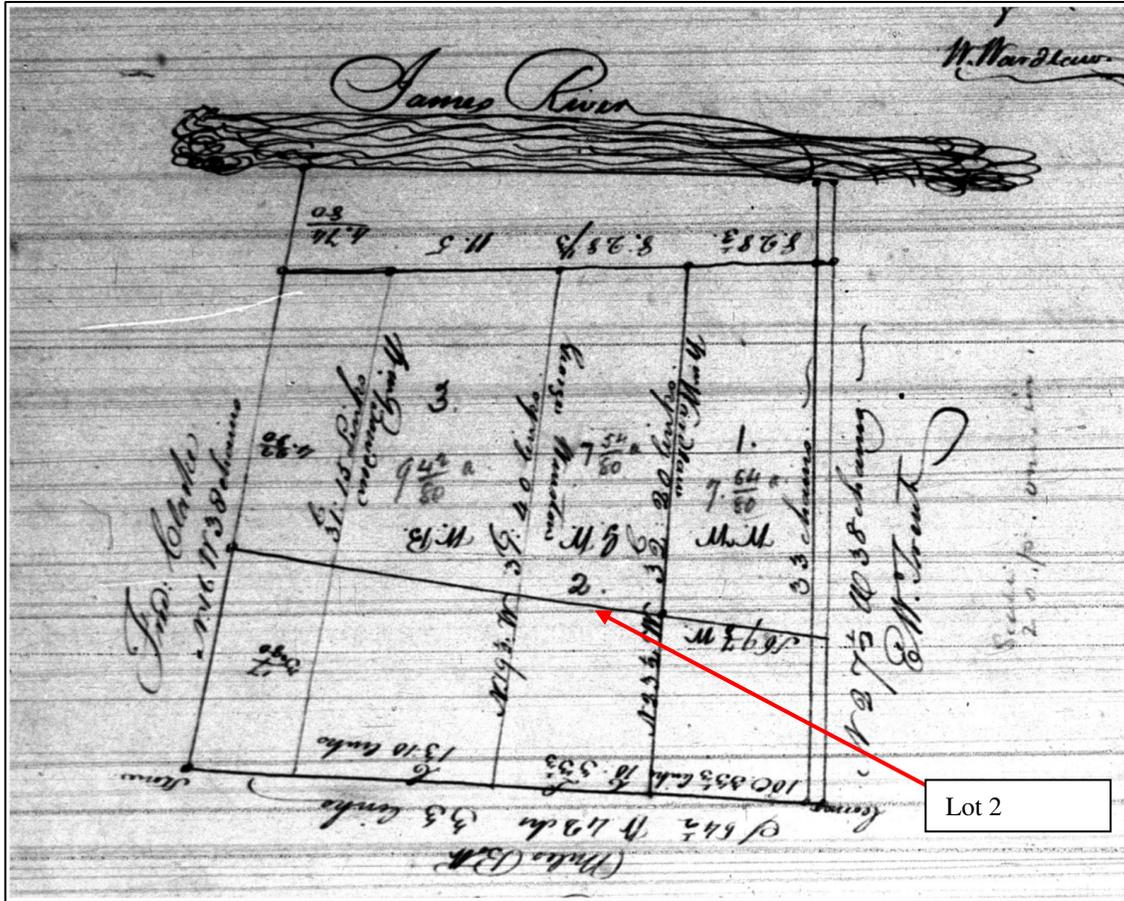


Figure 8. 1818 Plat Showing the Location of Lot 2 where the Wardlaw Dwelling was Constructed. Image and annotation provided by Richard Helm. The dwelling's location within the lot is not known.

Inventory

Following are the corrected inventory entries for the properties affected by this additional documentation.

20th Street, West

618 20th Street, West 127-6180-0036

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Vernacular, Ca 1900** (corrected construction date)

Contributing Total: 1

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Riverside Drive 127-6180-0060

Riverside Drive 127-6180-0060

Primary Resource: Manchester Waterworks (Structure), Stories , Style: Other, Ca. 1888 (corrected construction date)

Contributing Total: 1

Stonewall Avenue

1920 Stonewall Avenue 127-6180-0062 Other DHR Id#: 127-0284 (corrected resource list and count)

Primary Resource: Water Tower (Site), Stories , Style: Other, Ca. 1888

Contributing Total: 1

Secondary Resource : Apartment Building (Building) Non-contributing Total: 1

Secondary Resource : Shed (Building) Non-contributing Total: 1

Section 8. Statement of Significance

Period of Significance

1873-1961

Significant Dates

1888

Summary Paragraph

The Springhill Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The district is associated with late-nineteenth-century industrial development on the south bank of the James River. The site of the water tower and the foundations of the Manchester Waterworks are associated with an important historic trend in the development of industrial and residential waterworks in the City of Manchester (which later was annexed by the City of Richmond). Springhill also still is the earliest documented streetcar suburb in the greater Richmond metropolitan area, and preserves locally significant examples of late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth-century domestic vernacular dwellings showcasing the design, building materials, and construction techniques characterizing a streetcar suburb.

The original historic district nomination included two periods of significance for the Springhill Historic District. However, subsequent research proved that the site and structure associated with the Manchester Waterworks date to the late nineteenth century, not the 1820s as originally presented. No extant resources associated with the historic district predate 1873. Therefore, the historic district has one period of significance, beginning in 1873 when residential development of Springhill commenced and ending in

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1961 with construction of the most recent contributing resources. An additional significant date, ca. 1888, is applicable as this marks construction of the Manchester Waterworks.

Furthermore, in the original nomination, information about the historic district's industrial development prior to 1873 is based on erroneous conclusions about canal transportation on the south side of the James River and not only is wholly inaccurate but also *is not relevant* to the Springhill Historic District significance in the areas of Industry and Community Planning & Development. Endnotes in the original nomination referring to the "James River Manchester Canal" as a completed operational navigation canal also are in error; the original nomination's endnote #8 includes some of the work conducted or authored by Browning and Trout, but the information presented in their findings directly conflicts with the remainder of the endnote's contents.

The following update to the statement of significance provides the basis for the district's significance in these areas. This update is based on new research that included consultation of a broad range of historic documents as well as the expertise of the independent researchers Helm, Browning, Trout, and Williams, in documenting this and other aspects of industrial development and canal construction on the James River as it flows through Richmond.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Manchester Waterworks

Independent historian Richard Helm discovered that, according to an 1843 *Richmond Compiler* newspaper article, Manchester's first water supply was from a pump and pipe located near today's Mayo's Bridge across the James River, leading to an uphill reservoir. The reservoir was later located at Eleventh and Bainbridge Streets. Manchester became an independent city in 1874. In 1878, Manchester annexed the Springhill area, primarily to improve its municipal water system. According to Francis Lutz's *Chesterfield – An Old Virginia County*, "Settling basins were built below Spring Hill and the water was pumped into a standpipe [water tower] on the high elevation and then flowed by gravity into the city mains."

The waterworks pumped water to a tower that was located on the hilltop. A December 8, 1900, *Richmond News* article, "The Haunted House," mentioned, "In 1888, the city of Manchester acquired a portion of the tract, precisely where the 'Haunted House' stood, and on it was erected the tall and picturesque 'Water Tower' which now adds a new beauty to the landscape..."

The Manchester waterworks lasted until the consolidation of Manchester with Richmond in 1910. A 20-inch water main was laid from the Richmond reservoir under the James River and Belle Isle to Manchester. Subsequently, the Manchester water tower was dismantled ca. 1913, and the waterworks complex entirely abandoned a year later. According to a *News Leader* article dated 9 April 1948, the buildings eventually were demolished that spring, although the foundations remain.

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Cellar/Magazine (Structure – Demolished)

Independent historian Richard Helm conducted extensive research of land records and newspaper archives to document the early history of 1920 Stonewall Avenue (DHR #127-6180-0062), which is the property that historically included the cellar/magazine described in Section 7 of this additional documentation. By the time the cellar/magazine was professionally documented in 1976, it had been greatly altered and possibly at least partially demolished and reconstructed first in ca. 1862 during the Civil War as part of Battery No. 13 and again ca. 1916 when a dwelling was built on the lot and connected to the cellar (Figures 9-11).

According to Craig Rose's report, "The Industry of Water and Power Along the James River," the 40-acre property was purchased by William Bowden in 1812, and was quickly converted into a partnership property owned by William Bowden, George Winston and William Wardlaw. In 1817 a deed of trust issued between the partners claimed that "it is the intentions of the parties to improve and thereupon to trust machineries to considerable extent." Their plans were to construct water-power facilities and machinery along the James River. As detailed in the notes of a proposed canal route survey, by 1819 the three businessmen had constructed a dam and guard locks for their private industrial venture. Part of a guard lock is still standing on the shore of the James River, below the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks, near 21st Street (Figure 1). But in 1818 the partners had divided most of the property into parcels – one for each partner. George Winston received lot number 2, called "the Dwelling house lot."

The plat that accompanied the deed is the earliest primary source found for a dwelling on the hilltop. In 1820, when the value of buildings was first added to local property tax books, the 40-acre "Dwelling Lot 2" had \$4,000 in buildings value, indicating the presence of at least one substantial building. According to Craig Rose's report, "Later records show that the building of value was located on the property of George Winston and was probably the 'Dwelling House' rather than an industrial structure."¹ In 1841, the buildings value on this lot had dropped to \$500, and by 1851 the property tax book showed no value for buildings on this lot. The location of this dwelling on the hilltop is shown on two maps of the area in 1836 and 1848 (Figures 9 and 10).

¹ Craig Rose, "The Industry of Water and Power Along the James River: Independent Study in Industrial Archaeology," Farmville, VA, n.d.

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On December 8, 1900, a lengthy article by David Pulliam in the *Richmond News* newspaper, entitled “The Haunted House” described the dwelling’s history, at least as the reporter had discovered it to be. According to Pulliam, the house was built by a Mr. Wardlaw sometime before the American Revolution, and was a large, square, brick, central-hall dwelling built on a basement and with large porticos on the front and rear elevations. Despite its grand style, Wardlaw only occupied the property for a short time. The dwelling was vacant until about 1798, when an unknown family occupied the house for just three years. It is possible that the second owner of the mansion site was the son of Alexander Trent, who in 1798 sold several parcels of the nearby Trent Estate land. It could be that the tract with the Wardlaw house was sold during the same year and the new owner came to restore the mansion and grounds and live on his new property. Pulliam explained that the house’s occupants vacated it without notice and left all their belongings behind. Over subsequent decades, the house was stripped of its furnishing and finishes until finally, in 1851, a fire destroyed what remained of the interior; the same year, local tax records show a considerably lowered value of buildings on the property.

As for what happened next with the mansion ruins, the 1900 article further relates:

“In 1862, its [the house’s] ruined walls were torn down, and the brick used to make the magazine built on its site by the Confederate States Government, in the centre [sic] of the splendid ‘Battery’ that frowned from this commanding eminence. The remains of the old war-time magazine are still there, but the fort has been levelled, and its last vestige is rapidly disappearing.”

An 1867 post-Civil War map shows the location of Battery 13 in this location. It is clearly depicted being on the hilltop (Figure 11). The brick basement appears to have been left undisturbed, but its configuration may have been adapted to function as part of the “magazine”.

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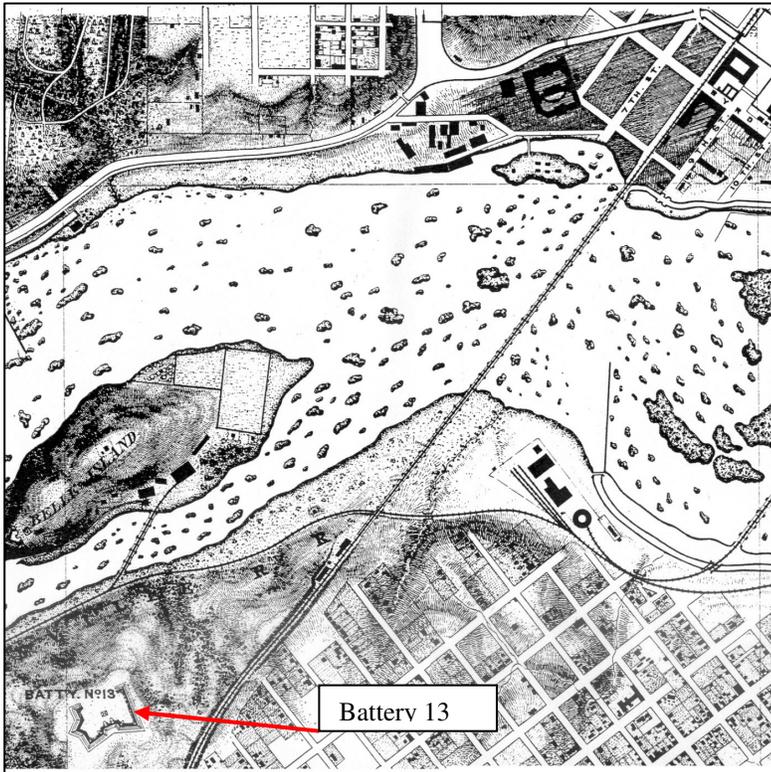


Figure 11. Maj. Nathaniel Micheler's 1867 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map of Richmond. Image and annotation provided by Richard Helm.

1956, Francis Earle Lutz wrote about Battery No. 13 in his book, *Chesterfield – An Old Virginia County*. The battery’s guns were trained on the Danville and Petersburg rail lines as well as a Union prisoner of war camp on Belle Isle in the James River. Lutz noted that, “Connected with the fort was a huge underground powder magazine whose presence was forgotten nearly half a century until it was discovered in 1916 during excavations for basements for a residential development on Spring Hill.”² The “powder magazine” (included a tunnel-like brick structure with an earthen floor that was possibly adapted from the remains of the cellar of the Wardlaw dwelling), was retained when a two-story frame dwelling was constructed on the battery’s site around the turn of the twentieth century. An entrance to the cellar was marked with an iron hatch, and the dwelling was constructed so that the hatch entry was situated adjacent to the house’s rear entry (Figure 12). The cast iron hatch was stamped with the name “Cruickshank Ironworks” (erroneously noted as “Tredegar Ironworks” in the original nomination).

² Francis Earle Lutz, *Chesterfield – An Old Virginia County* (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1956), p. 234-235.

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Figure 12. 1976 Photographs of the Cellar's Entry Hatch. Images provided by DHR.

In 1976, the early twentieth dwelling and the brick cellar were among the buildings planned to be demolished to make way for a high-rise apartment building for senior citizens. This building is a secondary resource located at 1920 Stonewall Avenue (DHR #127-6180-0062; 127-0284); due to its date of construction, the apartment building is a noncontributing resource within the historic district. The site of the aforementioned water tower also is at 1920 Stonewall Avenue and is a contributing site in the historic district.

Prior to its demolition, the cellar was documented as a brick structure with arched tunnels and a large room. Bob Swisher of the Department of Historic Resources prepared a rough drawing of the cellar (Figure 13) and described it as follows:

“Battery Thirteen, strategically located on a hill overlooking the James River and Belle Island, was one of the inner defense positions which encircled Richmond during the War Between the States. Today all that remains is a subterranean munitions storage room and its entry corridor. The surface structure was probably destroyed when an early twentieth-century frame house was built directly over the storage facility. Entry into the storage room (there may have been others) was through a surface hatch and descending ladder.

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The hatch is today just outside the house by the backdoor. An owner of the house created an [interior] entrance into the old storage room by cutting into its ceiling and placing a stair. The subterranean rooms are brick with barrel vaulted ceilings and earth floors. They are in good condition except where the stairway was cut through, where another part of the vaulting was cut for a furnace, and where one end of the corridor caved in. The house and property are now owned by the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority who will raze the house this summer and prepare the land for the construction of a high-rise for the elderly.”³

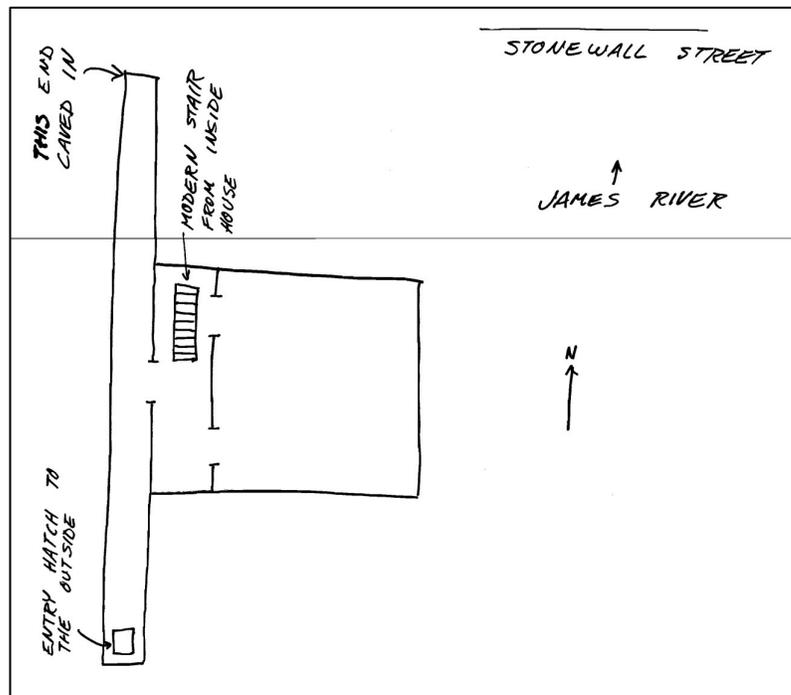


Figure 13. 1976 Sketch of the Antebellum Brick Cellar and Civil War-Era Powder Magazine. Image provided by DHR

³ Bob Swisher, Department of Historic Resources, Survey of Battery 13 (DHR #127-0284).

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Swisher's photographs of the subterranean structure demonstrate that it was of considerable size and built with a notable level of craftsmanship.

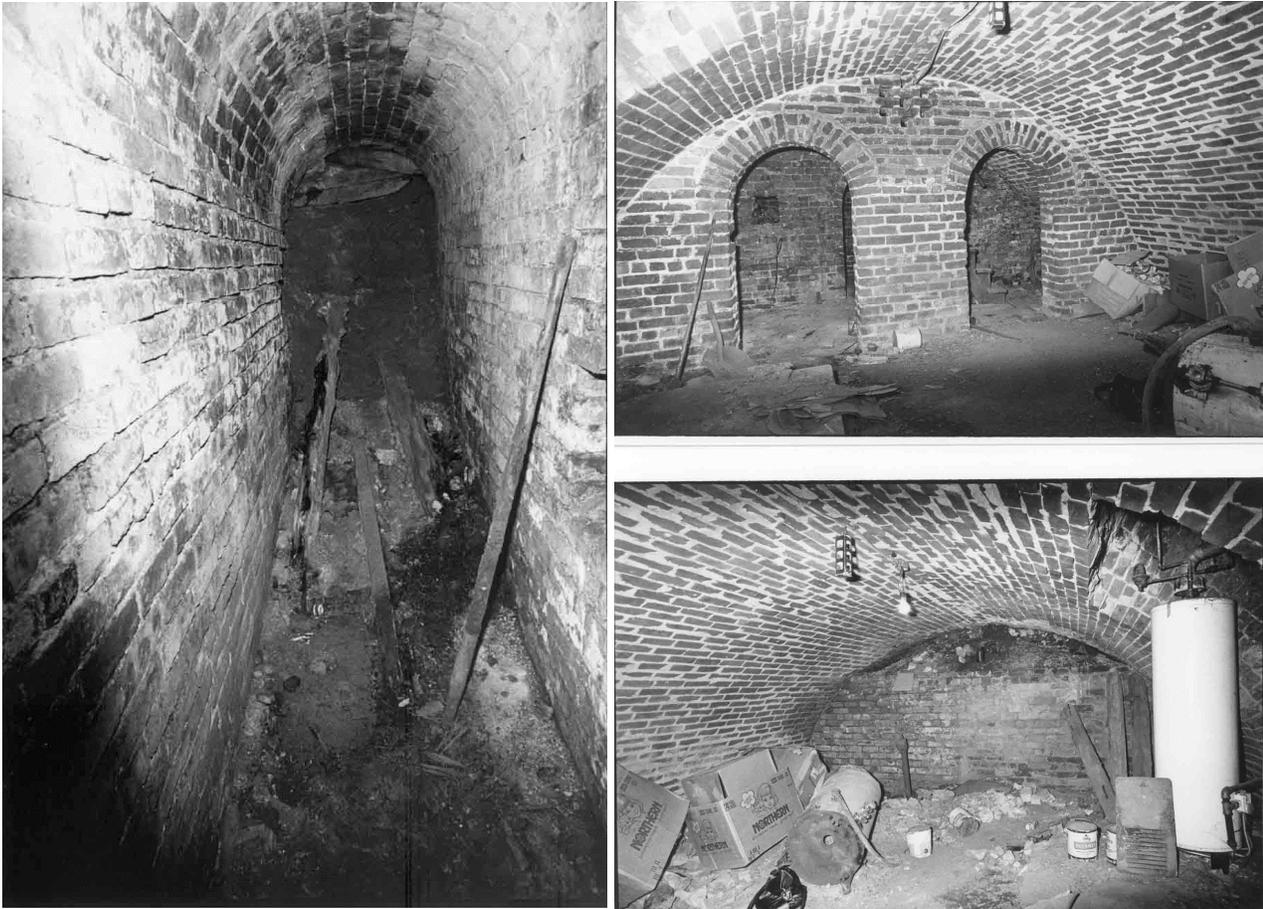


Figure 14. Bob Swisher's 1976 Photographs of the Brick Cellar Associated with the Wardlaw Dwelling and Battery 13. The photograph at left was included with the original district nomination, but erroneously labeled as an "aqueduct." Images provided by DHR.

As part of site preparation prior to the construction of the extant high-rise apartment building at 1920 Stonewall Avenue, the brick cellar/former magazine was demolished, as well as several dwellings in the immediate vicinity. Additionally, the lot was graded to remove the knoll where the dwelling had stood. Although no physical trace remains of the historic-period buildings and structures, this lot's history has been at the center of the Springhill neighborhood throughout its history. It was the location of the first documented dwelling in the vicinity, the site of Battery 13 during the Civil War, the site of the ca. 1888 water tower associated with the Manchester Waterworks, and the site of an early twentieth century dwelling. These events combine to tie this lot closely to the Springhill Historic District's areas of significance in Industry and Community Development and Planning.

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Springhill Historic District 2016 Update
and Corrections

Name of Property
Richmond, VA

County and State
Historic Residential Suburbs in the United
States, 1830-1960

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section 9. Major Bibliographical References

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“The Haunted House,” *Richmond News*, 8 Dec. 1900, page 3 col. 1. LVA

“High Rise Apartment for Elderly” plots provided by City of Richmond.

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Rose, Craig, “The Industry of Water and Power Along the James River: Independent Study in Industrial Archaeology,” Farmville, VA, n.d.

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Map of Richmond, Maj. Nathaniel Micheler, 1867

Archival Repositories and Online Sources

The Library of Virginia is the repository for deeds, newspaper articles, surveys, most maps and Lutz

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pages.

Civil War maps were obtained from online sites.

Property line maps and aerial photos were provided by Chesterfield County's Environmental Engineering GIS Analyst.

Section 11.

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date: March 2016

Additional Documentation

The caption for the first figure included in the original nomination as Additional Documentation is corrected as follows:

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View of: Cellar recorded as VDHR #127-0284, 1976.

Figure: 1 of 3.