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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Department of Public Utilities Howard (Overbrook) Road Facility
other names/site number VDHR # 127-6184

2. Location

street & number 1307, 1321, 1315, 1317, 1319 Overbrook Road not for publication NIA
city or town Richmond vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Richmond (Independent City) code 760 zip code 23220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 6/14/07
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register Signature of the Keeper _____
___ See continuation sheet
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register Date of Action _____
___ other (explain): _____

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: GOVERNMENT Sub: public works

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS
Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof STONE: Slate
walls BRICK, CONCRETE
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance 1925 - 1957

Significant Dates 1926

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Kenneth M. Adelstein

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 2.35 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing									
18	283249	4160197	18	283365	4160185	18	283365	4160030	18	283234	4160033

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Kimberly M. Chen and Hannah W. Collins

organization Johannas design Group date 28 February 2007

street & number 1901 West Cary Street telephone 804.358.4993

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

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Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner
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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Rodney M. Poole, Seven Hills School, Inc.

street & number 4901 Dickens Road telephone 804.355.6669

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23230

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the

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Section 7 Page 1

Department of Public Utilities Howard (Overbrook) Road Facility (127-6184)
Richmond (Independent City), Virginia

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Summary Description:

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Howard Road Facility is located northwest of Richmond's central business district on the south side of Overbrook Road, formerly known as Howard Road. Interstates 64 and 95 run along the western edge of the property and the immediate area is commercial in nature with large warehouses and light manufacturing facilities. There are small residential developments to the north and east that are surrounded by large commercial buildings and Virginia Union University to the south.

During the early twentieth century, the demand for gas and water service rose sharply as the city expanded its boundaries and commercial and residential development accelerated. As a result, the DPU required more space for material storage, repair facilities and offices, thus construction was begun on the Howard Road facility in 1926 to consolidate DPU's operations. The DPU complex consists of three brick and concrete buildings, a two-story stucco building and a row of metal and brick storage sheds arrayed along the rear (southern) property line. The two-story stucco building at the northeast corner was constructed by Virginia Electric and Power Company in 1925 and later incorporated into the DPU complex. The expressed concrete structural frame used in conjunction with traditional brick warehouse construction incorporated in the DPU meter repair building was a pioneering concept during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Buildings like the meter repair building are representative of the type of buildings that inspired Le Corbusier's theories of modern architecture and his affinity for American buildings designed by engineers who emphasized form and function rather than a strict adherence to prevailing architectural styles. There are eight buildings on the property, all of which are contributing with the exception of a late twentieth century metal storage building that is non-contributing.

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Department of Public Utilities Howard (Overbrook) Road Facility (127-6184)
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Detailed Description:

Site Description

The Department of Public Utilities is located northwest of the central business district between Hermitage and Brook Roads. The complex is located on the south side of Overbrook Road to the east of the Interstate 64/ 95 overpass. To the west, between the interstate and Hermitage Road, is a large commercial area with warehouses and light industrial buildings. To the north, directly across Overbrook Road from the DPU complex, is a row of 1 ½-story and two-story, ca. 1940, predominately brick Colonial Revival-style dwellings. These houses are set back from the street atop a low embankment contained by brick and concrete retaining walls. To the east is a similar row of frame houses that face onto Langston Avenue. The rear yards abut the property line of the Department of Public Utilities complex. Abutting the property to the south is a small apartment development that faces onto West Graham and Cecil Roads, directly across from the campus of Virginia Union University.

The Department of Public Utilities complex is situated on 2.35 acres on the south side of Overbrook Road. The property is composed of two parcels – Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO) occupied a slightly less than one acre parcel to the east and DPU occupied the larger parcel on the west. Arranged on the north edge of the property starting at the east end is the two-story, stuccoed VEPCO building, directly west is the meter repair building, and at the western end of the property is the auto repair shop. Directly south of the auto repair shop and set back from Overbrook Road is the storehouse. The metal and brick storage buildings are aligned along the south property line and separated from the main buildings by an open yard. There are granite curbs and concrete sidewalks along Overbrook Road with curb cuts on both sides of the meter repair building. There is a cobble stone driveway on the east between the meter repair building and the VEPCO building and an asphalt driveway with a concrete median between the meter repair building and the auto repair shop and the storehouse. Along the north edge of the VEPCO parcel is a low stone retaining wall that separates the grassed area around the building from the public sidewalk. The stone retaining wall terminates at the eastern property line and at the driveway on the west, and edges the concrete sidewalk that approaches the building. The sidewalk in front of the meter repair building is separated from the curb by a narrow

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grassed strip. A concrete walk leads from the curb to the front entrance, subdividing the grassed strip and the two grassed areas in front of the meter repair building. Concrete sidewalks connect the public sidewalk with the two entrances on the east and west sides of the meter repair building. The auto repair building is constructed at the edge of the public sidewalk and there is no grassed strip between the sidewalk and the curb. The entire site is enclosed by a chain link fence. At the northern edge the fence returns from the stone retaining wall to the east and west corners of the VEPCO building. The fence extends down the western property line of the former VEPCO parcel to a double automobile gate at the southern edge of the meter repair building. The fence connects the southern edges of the meter repair building and the storehouse, with double automobile gates at the driveway between the two buildings, and the southern edge of the Storehouse and the fence at the western property line. The fence connects to the northwest corner of the auto repair building, thus enclosing the entire property. Railroad tracks, that are currently visible, entered the property on the west and extended into the large paved area that was used for pipe storage. The entire site is paved except for the two grassed areas in front of the VEPCO building and the meter repair building.

Meter Repair Building

The north elevation or facade of the meter repair building fronts Overbrook Road. It is a nine-bay, two-story reinforced concrete building with Flemish bond brick panels between the expressed concrete-structure. The exposed concrete frame organizes the facade vertically into three sections (three bays each) and three horizontal sections that correspond to the floor lines. The building has a front gable roof covered with slate shingles. The gable ends have corbelled brick cornices below the roof line, terra cotta coping, and a copper finial at the apex. There is a central one-bay, poured concrete stoop with concrete steps with stepped cheek walls, and a metal pipe railing. A metal awning shelters the three doors that open onto the stoop. The eastern most door-opening is filled with a fixed parged-panel; the central and western openings have metal doors with single lights. The central door has a decorative brick entablature composed of soldier courses on the sides and top with parged blocks at the corners. The two outer sections of the facade, on the first story, are composed of aluminum windows with a fixed upper light and an operable lower hopper that flank door openings filled with fixed parged-panels. The doors openings have brick surrounds identical to the central opening from the stoop and the

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windows have soldier course lintels and row lock sills. On the second story of the facade there are three, nine-light industrial steel sash windows in each of the three sections -- the lower six lights of the steel sash pivot. In the center bay of the third story, six-light windows flank a pair of louvers topped by a semi-circular steel fan light.

The east and west elevations are divided vertically into seven bays by the articulated concrete structure. The horizontal concrete structure is also expressed on the east and west elevations. Like on the facade, the first story windows are aluminum with a fixed upper light and an operable lower hopper. On the second story, each bay is filled with a three-part, steel window with twelve lights in each section -- the upper and lower six-light panels pivot to open. There are brick rowlock sills and the lintels are formed by the exposed concrete framing. A concrete loading dock extends the full length of the west elevation and wraps around the south end of the building. There is a one-story, one-bay entrance vestibule that projects out onto the loading dock with an aluminum hopper window in the west elevation and bricked in openings on the north and south elevations.

The south elevation of the meter repair building is divided into three vertical and three horizontal sections like the facade. The outer most bays on the first and second stories have three-part, twelve-light steel windows. The center bay on the first story has two doors flanking a central rolling overhead door that provides exterior access to the elevator. There are three twelve-light windows on the second story. There is a single twelve-light window in the center bay of the third story and six-light windows in the flanking bays. A concrete loading dock extends the full width of the south elevation.

Architectural drawings from 1926 and photographs from 1929 survive and make it possible to discuss the alterations to the building. The primary alteration has been the replacement of the first story windows. There were twelve-light steel sash on the facade and three-part, twelve-light steel sash windows on the east and west elevations. There was also a three-part, twelve-light steel sash window in the west elevation of the entry vestibule. The doors on the facade have also been altered. There were wood and glass loading doors in the flanking bays where the parged panels are and wood and glass doors in the flanking openings of the center bay; the center opening had no door. Door ways have also been in-filled in the north and south elevations of the entry vestibule on the west elevation. Other than these modifications the building appears much as it did when constructed in 1927.

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The 1926 floor plans show that there were two offices at the north end of the building on the first floor that were accessed by the east and west doors from the stoop. The offices were not interconnected and opened into an east-west corridor to the south which exited onto the loading dock on the west side of the building. The south wall of the corridor separated the offices from the warehouse space on the south side of the building. The warehouse space was accessed by the doors on the north and south sides of the projecting vestibule on the western loading dock and by the two doors flanking the elevator on the south loading dock. The floors are concrete decking with concrete beams supported by square concrete columns placed on a regular grid. Today, the first floor is accessed by the western door from the stoop. The first floor is divided into two sections by a central north-south corridor with rooms opening to either side. The perimeter walls are painted brick and gypsum wall board. The corridor walls and the walls between the rooms are concrete block. The first floor has dropped acoustical tile ceilings and carpet over the concrete floors. The basement is accessed from the first floor by a concrete stair on the west side of the building. The basement is a utilitarian space with columns placed on a regular grid, concrete beams and concrete floors. The second floor is accessed by the center door on the north stoop and an enclosed concrete stair. It is an open space with a few interior partitions formed by metal panels. There is a large room at the northern end with sliding fire doors. A brick elevator shaft is located in the center of the south wall. While some modifications have been made to the building, it retains its architectural integrity. Its original use as an open plan warehouse and repair facility is clearly identifiable.

Auto Repair Shop

The auto repair shop is a one-story Flemish bond brick building with a slate gable roof that is located at the northwest corner of the complex. The north and south elevations are nine-bays long and the east elevation is three-bays wide. The two bays at the west end of the building have gable roofs that are lower in height than the main block and the elevations are stepped back on the south side. The bays on the north and south elevations of the main block are defined by engaged brick pilasters with corbelling at the top of each bay between the pilasters. On the south elevation, there are aluminum widows in alternating bays with single leaf flush metal doors in two of the bays and a metal over head door in the western most bay. The opening in the first recess bay has been altered and infilled with brick and in the second recessed bay there is a flush metal door with a four light transom.

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On the north elevation, three windows flank an infilled opening and the window openings in the two western bays have been infilled. The east elevation has expressed pilasters at the corners and a center door opening flanked by windows. There is a decorative plaque with the Department of Public Utilities logo above the filled door opening and a rectangular metal louvered vent above the logo. There is a corbelled brick cornice in the gable and terra cotta copping on the parapet. All of the windows are aluminum sash with a fixed upper light and an operable lower hopper. The door and window openings are outlined by a slightly projected soldier (stretcher) course of brick.

Photographs from 1929, show that the north elevation originally had a rolling overhead door in the center bay, flanked by three, sixteen-light steel sash windows on each side. The south elevation had four, sixteen-light steel sash windows alternating with rolling, overhead doors. Originally there was a rolling, overhead door on the south elevation of the western wing and two windows in the north elevation. On the east elevation, sixteen-light windows flanked a central paneled wooden door with four upper lights. The gable ends had semi-circular fan lights where there are now square louvers.

The interior perimeter walls are painted brick. The interior partitions are concrete block and prefabricated metal panels. There is a dropped acoustical tile ceiling in some parts of the interior that covers the steel trusses and tracks for a system of industrial hoists that are no longer in use. The floors are concrete covered with carpet and vinyl tile. The building is structurally sound and retains vestiges of its former function as an automobile repair facility.

Storehouse

The storehouse sits to the south of the auto repair building on the west side of the complex. The two-story, gable-roofed building is constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern. The east and west elevations have three bays and the north and south elevations have five bays each. The bays on the north and south elevations are organized by two story engaged pilasters with corbelled brick work between the pilasters. The east bay on the first story of the north elevation has a three-part steel window. The other four bays have a combination of single leaf doors and window openings. There is a combination of aluminum windows and single leaf doors on the south elevation. There is an exterior stair

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enclosed with corrugated metal on the west side of the south elevation. The facade, or east elevation, has a central door with a cast concrete architrave of engaged pilasters and a classical lintel. The single leaf metal door is flanked by two, three-part steel windows, with twelve-lights in each section. The windows throughout the building have molded concrete sills and soldier course architraves with concrete corner blocks. The front gable roof has slate shingles. The east and west gable ends have semi-circular louvers, below a corbelled brick cornice at the parapet with terra cotta coping.

The first floor interior has partitions constructed of concrete block and acoustical tile ceilings. A metal and concrete stair is located at the east entrance and provides access to the second floor. A central corridor opens to offices on both sides. The partitions are gypsum board and there are dropped acoustical tile ceilings and carpeting and vinyl tile over concrete floors. There are a series of rooms to the west of the building on the first floor that are accessed from exterior doors on the north elevation.

Architectural drawings from 1930 and photographs from 1929 reveal that the original windows, with the exception of the two steel windows on the facade and a first story window on the north elevation, have been replaced with smaller aluminum windows with a large fixed upper light and a lower hopper. The molded concrete sills have been removed and the openings filled with brick.

VEPCO Building

This building was originally constructed by Virginia Electric and Power Company and sits to the east of the meter repair building on the northeast corner of the site, fronting on Overbrook Road. The VEPCO building is a two-story, two-bay a stuccoed brick building with a shed roof that is enclosed by a parapet on four sides. The north and south elevations have two bays and the east and west elevations have four bays. The north elevation has a single leaf metal door in the west bay that is accessed by a poured concrete stoop with metal steps and a pipe rail balustrade. There is a window opening in the east bay of the first story and two window openings on the second story. All of the window openings have been infilled. The south elevation has a similar configuration to the north elevation with a door in the eastern bay and a window opening to the west and two window openings on the second story. All of the openings on the south elevation have

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been infilled. On the west elevation, there is a single leaf metal door in the second bay from the south that is accessed from a concrete stoop that is protected by a copper canopy attached to the building with tie rods. There are three single fixed-light aluminum windows on the first story and four identical windows on the second story. There are four fixed-light aluminum windows on both stories of the east elevation with the exception of the north bay on the first floor, which has a blind panel window opening. A brick soldier course encircles the building below the top of the parapet. The parapet is topped with metal coping. The first floor interior has concrete floors. The outer walls are concrete and the interior partitions are sheetrock. The structure that forms the first story ceiling and second story floor is poured concrete reinforced by steel I-beams. Both floors have a large central room with two smaller rooms to the south. There are vinyl tile floors, metal door frames and dropped tile ceilings throughout the building.

Photographs from 1956 and City of Richmond tax assessment records show that the building was a brick structure with nine-light steel windows in the openings that now contain aluminum windows or have parged blind panels.

Brick Outbuilding

This one-story building sits at the southeast corner of the site and is the eastern-most structure in a series of sheds and outbuildings that runs across the southern property line. The building has a corrugated metal side gable roof and is constructed of brick laid in six-course American bond. The north façade has a central overhead door flanked by nine-light steel fixed windows. Most of the window glass is missing or broken. The door and window openings have single rowlock brick surrounds. There is an interior end brick chimney on the east end of the roof and a metal vent in the center of the gable line. The interior of the building has one large room.

Storage Sheds (3)

A series of sheds runs along the southern property line. At the far west end is a modern prefabricated metal shed (NC). Next to this, to the east, is a small metal shed with steel supports, corrugated metal walls, and a standing seam metal roof. Extending from this,

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and connecting to the brick outbuilding on the far east end, are two elongated sheds, considered one resource because there is one continuous corrugated metal gable roof over the entire twelve-bays. The first section is a long metal shed with metal walls, sliding metal doors with a diagonal cross pattern, metal supports, and a wide fascia. The second section has metal walls that have steel supports with a Y-shaped structure near the ceiling. There are two boarded over metal sash windows on the north elevation, and a metal fascia on a portion of the sheds.

Inventory:

Meter Repair Building, Stories: 2, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1927

This is a two-story, nine-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern and an articulated concrete structure.

Building – Contributing

Auto Repair Shop, Stories: 1, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1927

This is a one-story, three-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern.

Building – Contributing

Storehouse, Stories: 2, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1933

This is a two-story, three-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern.

Building – Contributing

VEPCO, Stories: 2, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1925

This is a two-story, two-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of stuccoed concrete block.

Building – Contributing

Brick Storage Building, Stories: 1, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1930

This is a one-story, three-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of brick laid in a 6-course American bond pattern.

Building – Contributing

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Metal Storage Building, Stories: 1, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1930

This is a one-story, two-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of corrugated metal. **Building – Contributing**

Metal Storage Building, Stories: 1, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1930

This is a one-story, twelve-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of corrugated metal. **Buildings – Contributing**

Metal Storage Building, Stories: 1, Style: Vernacular Industrial, Condition: Good, ca. 1975

This is a one-story, three-bay, Vernacular industrial building, constructed of corrugated metal. **Building – Noncontributing**

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Department of Public Utilities Howard (Overbrook) Road Facility (127-6184)
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Statement of Significance:

The Department of Public Utilities Howard Road Facility is significant because it is associated with the period of rapid development and expansion of the City of Richmond in the early to mid twentieth century. The infrastructure for gas and water service was built and maintained by DPU and this facility was their base of operations. As the Howard Road Facility continued to meet the demands of a growing city, it expanded, incorporating adjacent parcels and buildings into the 1980s.

Representative of innovations in early twentieth century industrial architecture, the design of the Meter Repair building and the influence that buildings of this type had on the development of modern architecture is also significant. The incorporation of a visible structural grid with a masonry curtain wall was a new type of construction and is representative of a new direction in modern architectural design during the first part of the twentieth century.

The Howard Road Facility is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A (planning and development) and C (architecture), with a period of significance from 1925 (the construction of the VEPCO building) to the fifty-year cut-off, 1957 (continued into the 1980s).

Historic Background:

The earliest water supply in Richmond was a series of spring-fed creeks known as runs. Wooden pipes constructed at private expense carried water to central collection points and communal wells were dug at street intersections. After the Revolutionary War, Richmond was incorporated as a city by an act of the newly formed Virginia Assembly. A part of this act stated that the governing body of the city "shall especially have power to cause wells to be sunk and pumps provided."¹ The city entered a period of industrial expansion and its population continued to grow considerably over the next 30 years. The city struggled to keep up with the manic pace of development but it lacked sufficient infrastructure and public services to adequately accommodate the rapid pace of growth. Flour milling and tobacco processing were among the top industries in Richmond, and both required a dependable water supply, access to transportation and other infrastructure. In April of

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1828, a petition was submitted to the Richmond Common Council to construct a public water system that would provide water from the Turning Basin to surrounding areas through iron pipes. Construction was authorized by the General Assembly in 1829.² Demand rose significantly in the 1830s and a petition system was instituted to request water service be provided to a neighborhood only if 2/3 of property owners on a street submitted a request. A public water supply system was completed in 1832 at a cost of approximately \$83,000 and the Richmond Water Works was created to manage the new system. The rapid expansion of industry in the decades preceding the Civil War would have been slowed without the provision of a dependable public water supply.

A flat fee system was instituted in which each customer was charged the same amount regardless of actual water usage. This practice encouraged large amounts of waste and contributed to a deficit in the operating budget of the Water Works. An investigation of water supply problems in the 1870s found that 2/3 of pumped water was wasted.³ The results of this investigation prompted the construction of a new reservoir and better pumping systems, but no attempt was made at the time to regulate water usage by individual customers.

Charles Bolling took the post of Superintendent of the Richmond Water Works in 1885 and began to advocate for the installation of meters to regulate water usage by individual customers. In 1883, the city installed water meters to measure the distribution of water pumped from city reservoirs. In 1894, 167 million gallons of water were pumped daily from city reservoirs. The city made its first large appropriation for individual meters in 1897 and the measure proved very effective. By 1890, the city had two reservoirs but there was no water purification system in place until 1909. At the turn of the century, only thirty-six out of the 106 miles of streets in Richmond had sewer service.⁴

In 1849, the Richmond Common Council authorized the construction of a Richmond Gas Works on Cary Street between 15th and 16th Streets and by February 1851, the main streets were lighted with gas fixtures. From the beginning, individual gas usage was measured by meters and the Gas Works did not experience the same financial challenges of the Water Works. An additional facility was built at Rocketts Landing, east of the city, to accommodate the high demand for service.

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The 1910 merger with the town of Manchester, on the south bank of the James River, and the annexation of additional areas in 1914 increased the area of Richmond dramatically. Further, access to streetcar lines accelerated the development of these new suburban areas and increased the demand for city utilities which led to a period of extensive construction of new gas and water lines in the City during the first part of the twentieth century.

The installation of new mains and lines to serve annexed areas of the city required large stores of materials and a sizeable workforce to keep up with demand. As new houses were constructed at a rapid pace and existing houses were upgraded with gas, water and electric service, the functions of the Department of Public Utilities expanded. The Progressive Era ushered in beliefs proliferated by promotional campaigns that a safe and healthy environment was a key element to a better citizenry and national competitiveness in the newly emerging global theatre.

In order to meet increasing demand for utility service and to streamline operations, the City's Water Works, Gas Works, the Electrical Plant and the Electrical Inspection Department were consolidated into the Department of Public Utilities. Edward Trafford was appointed Director of the newly formed agency. After consolidation, many improvements to utility infrastructure were made in the 1920s. A new water filtration plant was completed in 1924. Nearly all of the City's gas manufacturing facility was rebuilt between 1919 and 1924 at a cost of \$800,000.⁵ The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities began construction on the storage and operations facility on Howard Road, currently Overbrook Road, in 1926. The Howard Road facility was seen as a great advance in efficiency. It provided space for the storage of materials required for repair and installation and served as a central facility for the department. The area was a corn field before it was purchased by the city. The lot was subsequently graded and graveled and 1,700 feet of roads were constructed. The site also had 1,350 feet of railroad track by 1927. Besides the main meter repair facility, an auto repair shop and a storage building were constructed on the site. The facility served as a center of operations for the linemen who installed the gas and water mains and all other workers not directly engaged at one of the production plants in the city.

The first building constructed on the site was the auto repair shop. It was in operation by 1927.⁶ The meter repair facility and warehouse, a two-story general storehouse measuring

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56 x 100 feet and constructed of concrete with brick curtain walls, were constructed soon after. This facility housed the foreman's office, tool shops, and a meter repair shop on the upper story and store rooms. A steel garage measuring 30 x 240 feet was also in operation at this time. An additional concrete and brick storage facility was constructed in 1933.⁷ The Virginia Electric and Power Company constructed a building on an adjacent parcel ca. 1925. This building became part of the Department of Public Utilities complex in the 1980s and remained an electrical substation. An additional building was constructed in 1957 at 1405 Overbrook Road, on the other side of the interstate, to meet the demands presented by the continued growth of the city. The set of buildings reveals the complex operations of the Department of Public Utilities during a period of extensive growth. It is significant in the context of the development and general expansion of Richmond and is representative of the role that municipal government and city utility services played in the city's economic progress.

The meter repair building was designed by engineer Kenneth M. Adelstein, an employee of the City of Richmond Department of Public Works from 1921-1927. Adelstein was a Smithfield, Virginia native and an alumnus of the Virginia Military Institute. He served in the Army Air Service during World War I, retiring after 15 years of service with the rank of Captain. His early career as an engineer focused on building construction. Adelstein later expanded his scope of work to include bridges and other infrastructure. As Chief Engineer for the Public Works Department, Adelstein was responsible for the construction and repair of infrastructure including the Shockoe Creek Sewer, city garages, streets, and recreational facilities as well as the meter repair facility on Howard Road for the Department of Public Utilities. Adelstein was later employed by other firms including Carneal, Johnston and Wright, the Chesapeake and Ohio, the Virginia Central, and the Seaboard Air Line railways, as well as the Federal War Department. He was involved in the planning and construction of many bridges and buildings in Virginia. As a design engineer for Seaboard Air Line Railway from 1933-1934, he was responsible for the design of the James River railroad bridge still in use today.⁸

The meter repair facility is aesthetically unique amongst Richmond's industrial buildings. Only a few buildings in Richmond share similar design elements with those at the Howard Road Facility. The expressed concrete frame and brick curtain walls are evident in a select number of buildings, but the combination of this structure and a gable roof is unique to the Howard Road Facility. The Cheek-Neal Warehouse at 201 Hull Street and the Cauthorne

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Paper Company building were both constructed circa 1920. These buildings were constructed on a larger scale than that of the two-story warehouses at the Howard Road facility and have flat roofs. Both of these buildings have similar visible reinforced concrete support system and brick curtain walls and metal. Both of the Hull Street buildings were designed by the firm of Carneal & Johnston, where Adelstein was later employed. The building on East 2nd Street that is currently occupied by Caravati's is also of similar construction. This building is on a scale more comparable to the Howard Road building with only two stories, but it has a flat roof like the others. A large building at 115 S. 15th Street, also designed by Carneal & Johnston, has a similar appearance and structure as its counterparts on Hull Street. This multi-story building was originally constructed for W.H. Harris, a Richmond grocer.

The type of industrial buildings that were built in the United States varied from region to region and could be considered a vernacular form, because there was no strict adherence to a particular style. This vernacular appropriation eventually became somewhat of a style itself, which in turn became material for local parlance. The use of flat roofs in industrial buildings was prevalent in many areas. As the new modes of construction radiated out from larger centers, designs were modified to suit regional preferences. While flat roofs were common in larger mill towns, the Colonial Revival aesthetic that prevailed in Richmond may have been responsible for the use of gabled roofs at the Howard Road Facility.

The style of twentieth century American industrial buildings was one of the earliest instances of American influence on the architecture of other nations. While most of these buildings were engineer-designed and had little merit individually at the time, the vernacular warehouses and depots of America exerted a collective influence on European Modernism and the International style. The design of American industrial buildings was functional and reflected practical concerns about space and operation. Some of the symbology used in the International Style was consciously selected from the lexicon of American industrial architecture. Le Corbusier wrote in 1931, "The engineers of to-day make use of the primary elements and, by co-ordinating them in accordance with the rules, provoke in us architectural emotions and thus make the work of man ring in unison with universal order."⁹

The use of flat roofs, the exposure of structural elements, and the use of common and inexpensive building materials were the characteristics most often borrowed. These characteristics served as an available iconography through which the revolutionary ideals of

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modernism could be given physical form. American industrial architecture became a signifier of sorts for the innovation that was so highly valued in European Modernism.¹⁰ The simple structural forms of American industrial buildings appealed to the Modernist demand for honesty and transparency of structural expression.

The Howard Road complex was owned, until recently, by the City of Richmond and the buildings used for storage and offices for Richmond Public Schools. The complex has been purchased by Seven Hills School and will be rehabilitated for use as their education facility.

Endnotes:

¹ Peters, Margaret, *Richmond Department of Public Utilities: 175 Years of Service*, 3

² Peters, 5

³ Peters, 22

⁴ Peters, 24

⁵ Peters, 31

⁶ Adelstein, Kenneth, *Architectural Drawings for Proposed Reinforced Concrete Storehouse and Testing Laboratories*, July 1927

⁷ *Architectural Drawings for Building at Howard Storage*, Department of Public Utilities, Richmond, VA, 5 November 1952

⁸ School and Alumni Records for Kenneth Adelstein, Virginia Military Institute Archives

⁹ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*

¹⁰ Banham, Reyner, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture 1900-1925*, 7

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Photographs of Howard Road Facility, Office of City Records, Richmond, VA, 1929-1959

Record of Service in the World War of V.M.I. Alumni and their Alma Mater, 1920

Richmond Times Dispatch, Death Notice for Kenneth Adelstein, 19 March 1974

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, 1919 and 1925

School and Alumni Records for Kenneth Adelstein, Virginia Military Institute Archives

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Department of Public Utilities Howard Road Facility is described as City of Richmond tax parcels N0001012020 and N0001012013.

Boundary Justification

These are the two parcels historically associated with the Department of Public Utilities Howard Road Facility.

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Photographic Index

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property: Department of Public Utilities Howard Road Facility
Location: 1309 -1319 Overbrook Road, Richmond, Virginia
Photographer: Kimberly M. Chen
Date: 24 July 2006
Photographs File: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia

Photograph Number:

- 1 Northern Side of Site, Looking Southwest
- 2 Northeast Corner of Site, Looking Southwest
- 3 Meter Repair Facility, North and West Elevations
- 4 Meter Repair Facility, South and East Elevations
- 5 Storehouse and Auto Repair Facility, Looking Southwest
- 6 Auto Repair Facility, East and South Elevations
- 7 VEPCO Building, Looking Southeast
- 8 Metal Storage Sheds, Looking Southwest
- 9 Brick Outbuilding, Looking Southwest
- 10 Metal Storage Sheds, Looking Southeast
- 11 Meter Repair Facility, Second Floor Interior
- 12 Meter Repair Facility, First Floor Interior
- 13 Storehouse, Interior
- 14 Auto Repair Facility, Interior

DEPT OF PUBLIC
UTILITIES -
HOWARD ROAD
RICHMOND, VA
127-6184
UTM ZONE 18

1. 283249E
4160197N
2. 283365E
4160185N
3. 283365E
4160030N
4. 283234E
4160033N

