

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 Bridge at Falling Creek

other names/site number V D H R File No. 20-135

2. Location

street & number US 1/301 at Falling Creek not for publication N/A
city or town Richmond vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Chesterfield code 041 zip code 23234

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Julie Masnik Signature of certifying official/Title 8/25/95 Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official 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
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ___ private
___ public-local
x public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ___ building(s)
___ district
___ site
x structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register ___0___

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

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Road-related (vehicular)
RECREATION AND CULTURE Outdoor recreation

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Outdoor recreation

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls
roof
other STONE: granite

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

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

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)

TRANSPORTATION
ENGINEERING

Period of Significance ca. 1823-1941

Significant Dates ca.1823
1931
1934

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder Carter, William

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

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(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 Transportation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 18, 284180, 4146210, 2. Row 2: 3, 4.

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James Christian Hill
organization Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources date April 1995
street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804-786-3143
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

Additional Documentation

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)

Property Owner

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

name/title David R. Gehr, Commissioner--VDOT
street & number 1221 East Broad Street telephone
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

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.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Nestled between the busy north- and southbound lanes of US Route 1/301, the Bridge at Falling Creek sits placidly within one of Virginia's earliest waysides as thousands of motorists pass by on either side each day. The grace of its form and strength of its materials attest to the important role accorded the bridge in the early establishment of the north-south route of the Manchester-Petersburg Turnpike. Built about 1823 or 1824 of rough uncoursed granite, the bridge's two semicircular arches supported a section of roadway nearly 24 feet wide and 148 feet long and constituted the first permanent crossing of what was then regarded as a substantial chasm--the bed of Falling Creek.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Bridge at Falling Creek is built of rough-cut, uncoursed granite that was very likely quarried in the immediate vicinity, given the problems the builder would have faced in transporting stone any distance. The bridge is carried by two semicircular barrel arches with voussoirs of rough-finished granite. The parapet is laid in coursed granite with large capstone coping rectangular in section.

The arches are founded on solid rock and spring from just above water level to a height of some 12 feet above the creek. The intrados is of roughly-coursed granite. Together the arches span 48 feet of the bridge's current 134-foot length. The base of the pier between the arches has been encased in formed concrete as a stabilizing measure sometime between 1920 and 1945.¹ The pier was constructed without a dolphin and there is evidence of the pier's having been buffeted in times of high water by flotsam carried forcefully in the swift current.

The width of the bridge deck between the parapets is 20 feet 6 inches, while the total width of the bridge including the parapets is 24 feet. A metal tie-bar runs above the arches, below the deck of the bridge, presumably connected by tie-rods to counteract the spreading force of the earth-infill of the roadbed. The entire length of the bridge's 148 feet is no longer apparent due to the build-up of earth on the approaches to the bridge to accommodate the nearby lanes of US 1/301. The wing-walls that flank the bridge's approaches flare to accommodate a 47-foot-6-inch approach width. The north end of the west wing-wall ties in to a granite retaining wall necessitated by the construction of the southbound lane of US 1/301 in the early 1930s.

The north- and southbound lanes of US 1/301 pass just several yards away on either side of the bridge and at a slightly higher grade. The northbound lane dates from 1941 and replaced an earlier crossing that first took northbound traffic off the stone bridge. In 1977 the current southbound lane replaced the 1931 span that retired the stone bridge from service.² Some evidence of earlier twentieth-century crossings remains visible below the northbound lane of US 1/301.

¹Susan Smead, VDHR Survey Form, Falling Creek Bridge, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, June, 1995.

²Virginia Department of Transportation, Route 1, Falling Creek, Plans and Drawings, Richmond District Files, VDOT, 1931-1977.

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**Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia**

The Virginia Wayside established to preserve and to permit pedestrian access to the bridge is a grassy area under a pleasant canopy of shade trees with a few smaller understory trees dotted about. Macadam paths lead from the south parking areas to the bridge. A dirt path leads down to the south bank of Falling Creek and another continues north of the bridge to the businesses located further north between the lanes of US 1/301, but shielded from view within the wayside by dense tree growth. A scattering of picnic tables and trash receptacles invites the traveler to discover what the site has to offer. A four-foot-high granite marker erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1933 commemorates the naming of this portion of the former turnpike the "Jefferson Davis Highway" and is a contributing object.

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Section 8 Page 3

Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bridge at Falling Creek is one of only twelve known masonry-arched turnpike bridges in Virginia. Its construction in 1823 as a component of the Manchester-Petersburg Turnpike illustrates one of the ways the citizens of the young republic of the United States approached the issue of meeting local transportation needs. Not only is the bridge a fine example of an infrequently-surviving bridge type for its period, but its preservation within an early Virginia Wayside on US Route 1/301 represents the introduction of aesthetic amenities to regular highway design, as well as an appreciation for the importance of historic preservation in the developing tourism industry. The bridge is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its association with the development of the major North-South travel corridor for the eastern seaboard and Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a fine example of an early-nineteenth-century masonry-arched bridge.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bridge at Falling Creek was built to serve travelers on the Manchester and Petersburg Turnpike. In the early 19th century travel between Richmond and Petersburg was very arduous. The number of intervening streams and creeks made for a very long and inconvenient trip. The quickest land route was through Henrico County on the north side of the James River to a point opposite the town of Osbornes in Chesterfield, where, after a ferry crossing, travelers continued south to Petersburg. This journey took five hours if everything went well.³

In response to the demand for a more direct and expedient route the Manchester and Petersburg Turnpike was chartered in 1816. The company sold \$76,000 worth of shares, \$8,000 of which was owned by the Board of Public Works, and work began on the twenty-mile roadway. By 1822 the northern section was completed and surfaced with gravel.⁴ In his report to the Board of Public Works (received 31 July 1824), Dr. James Henderson, president of the company, was able to state:

Five bridges have been built, namely over Falling Creek, Kingsland Creek, Proctor's Creek, Old Town Creek, and Appomattox River.⁵

The south and central sections of the turnpike were still not completed by the end of 1824, although it was possible to travel the entire length of the turnpike and toll collection began in July of 1824.⁶

³Francis Earle Lutz, *Chesterfield: An Old Virginia County*, William Byrd Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1954, p. 170.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁵John S. Salmon, compiler, *Board of Public Works Inventory*, "Manchester and Petersburg Turnpike, Correspondence, Reports, Etc., 1824-1838," Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, 1823 Report.

⁶Lutz, p. 171.

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Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia

After the turnpike had been in operation for five years, Henderson described the bridge in greater detail in an 1829 report to the Board of Public Works:

The bridge over Falling Creek is considered in this part of the world to be a structure of some elegance. It consists of two twenty foot arches, springing from a pedestal of four feet, is twenty-four feet wide outside the parapets, and is founded on a solid mass of rock. It extends together with the wing walls one hundred and forty eight feet, and fills up to a level with adjoining ground a deep chasm occasioned by the bed of the creek. This as well as all the other stonework on the first six miles of the road, was built by the late William Carter of Richmond, a very faithful workman. It cost \$2,043.26.⁷

(The name of Col. Claudius Crozet is associated with the turnpike, but the nature of his association is not clear. O'Dell credits Crozet with the design of the turnpike and the supervision of its construction⁸ while Lutz states that the engineer was not brought on board until 1826 to assist with securing necessary rights of way. Lutz acknowledges that Crozet is often given credit for the entire project but holds that supposition to be in error.⁹)

The bridge served countless travelers over the years as this principal north-south route along the fall-line of the eastern seaboard grew in importance. In the late 1920s an awareness began to build of Virginia's scenic and historic heritage and that economic advantage could result from its appeal to a newly mobile generation of touring Americans. In 1926, his first year in office, Governor Harry Flood Byrd appointed William Carson head of the newly-created Virginia Conservation and Development Commission. In outlining the direction the commission was to take in moving Virginia forward, Carson was able to clarify the "seemingly contradictory title of the commission" with a plan to "develop Virginia by conserving it--using the state's scenic and historic wonders to attract tourists and, indirectly, industry."¹⁰

By 1926, principles of parkway design had been set forth both in theory and practice, but the application of these high standards was limited. Parkway design standards had not yet found their way into the design of regular state highways. In 1933 the U. S. Congress indicated in the National Industrial Recovery Act that work done with funds granted through the Act should include landscaping along a certain amount of mileage. While not every project under the act was carried out with a high degree of aesthetic merit, the demonstrated effect of beautification was sufficient to excite a previously non-existent public support for "landscaping and roadside

⁷Salmon, compiler, *Board of Public Works Inventory*, 1829 Report.

⁸Jeffrey M. O'Dell, *Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites*, Chesterfield County Planning Department, Chesterfield, Virginia, 1983, p. 479.

⁹Lutz, p. 179.

¹⁰John F. Horan, Jr., "Will Carson and the Virginia Conservation Commission," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, October 1984, p. 395.

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Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia

improvement." State highway departments soon realized the additional benefit of these funds for improved grading and erosion control. The Hayden-Cartwright Act of 1934 provided \$200 million in emergency road funds to the states with the stipulation that 1% of the apportionment be used for roadside improvements. As a result, many state highway departments began to apply these improved standards of highway design to their current projects.¹¹

These actions at the national level are the backdrop for the preservation of the stone bridge at Falling Creek and the establishment of the Falling Creek Wayside. The wayside was partly developed in 1934 with Federal Aid funds with the cooperation of the Chesterfield Garden Club for the purpose of protecting and preserving the bridge. The wayside area was purchased from C. C. Bowles in 1941 as part of a right of way acquisition.¹² The Richmond District of the Virginia Department of Transportation has a copy of an early but undated drawing of a ambitious landscaping plan for the wayside. Although the plan does not appear to have been fully implemented, elements of the plan survive to the present day.

The bridge was retired from service shortly after 1931 upon the completion of a span to carry the southbound traffic of US 1/301 over Falling Creek. (This 1931 span was subsequently replaced in 1977.) The northbound traffic had been taken off the stone bridge some years earlier by a span that was replaced in 1941 by the current northbound span. Some evidence of earlier twentieth-century crossings remains visible below the northbound lane of US 1/301. Brick footings visible below the northbound span on the south bank of the creek appear to have served a crossing for the Richmond-Petersburg Streetcar.¹³

Today, the bridge and this early wayside are often overlooked as travel has shifted to the interstates and the convenient, though largely indistinguishable, rest areas they provide. The surprisingly similar philosophies that are responsible for the establishment of the Manchester and Petersburg Turnpike and Virginia Wayside--as well as the modern interstates and rest areas--may be summed up in this statement of Governor Byrd in 1930, "America is now on wheels and Virginia is now awake to the dollar value of tourist traffic."¹⁴

¹¹United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *America's highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976, p. 133.

¹²Virginia State Department of Highways, Landscape Division, *Wayside*, unpublished, 1949, p. 1.

¹³Virginia Department of Transportation, Route 1, Falling Creek, *Plans and Drawings*, Richmond District Files, VDOT, 1931-1977.

¹⁴Horan, p. 396.

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Bridge at Falling Creek
Chesterfield County, Virginia

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Horan, John F. Jr., "Will Carson and the Virginia Conservation Commission," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 4, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, October 1984
- Lutz, Francis Earle, *Chesterfield: An Old Virginia County*, William Byrd Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1954
- O'Dell, Jeffrey M., *Chesterfield County: Early Architecture and Historic Sites*, Chesterfield County Planning Department, Chesterfield, Virginia, 1983
- Salmon, John S., compiler, *Board of Public Works Inventory*, "Manchester and Petersburg Turnpike, Correspondence, Reports, Etc., 1824-1838," Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia
- Smead, Susan, VDHR Survey Form, Falling Creek Bridge, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, June, 1995
- Spero, Paula A. C., *A Survey and Photographic Inventory of Concrete and Masonry Arch Bridges in Virginia*, Virginia Highway & Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville, Virginia, May 1984
- United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *America's highways, 1776-1976: A History of the Federal-Aid Program*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976
- Virginia Department of Transportation, Route 1, Falling Creek, Plans and Drawings, Richmond District Files, VDOT, 1931-1977
- Virginia State Department of Highways, Landscape Division, *Waysides*, unpublished, 1949

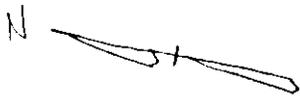
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated area are described in the records of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Chesterfield County as Tax Parcel 53-11-(1)-11.

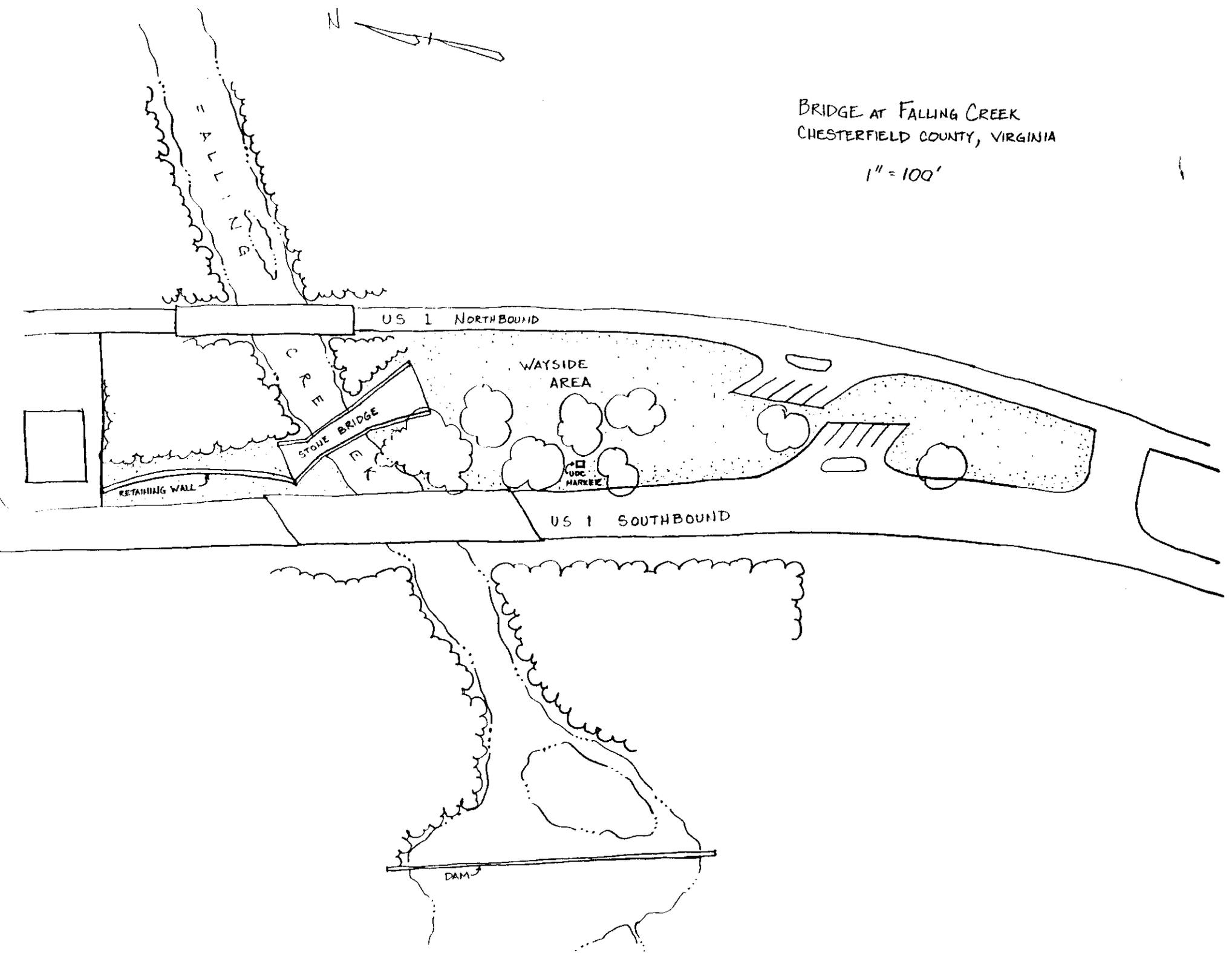
Boundary Justification

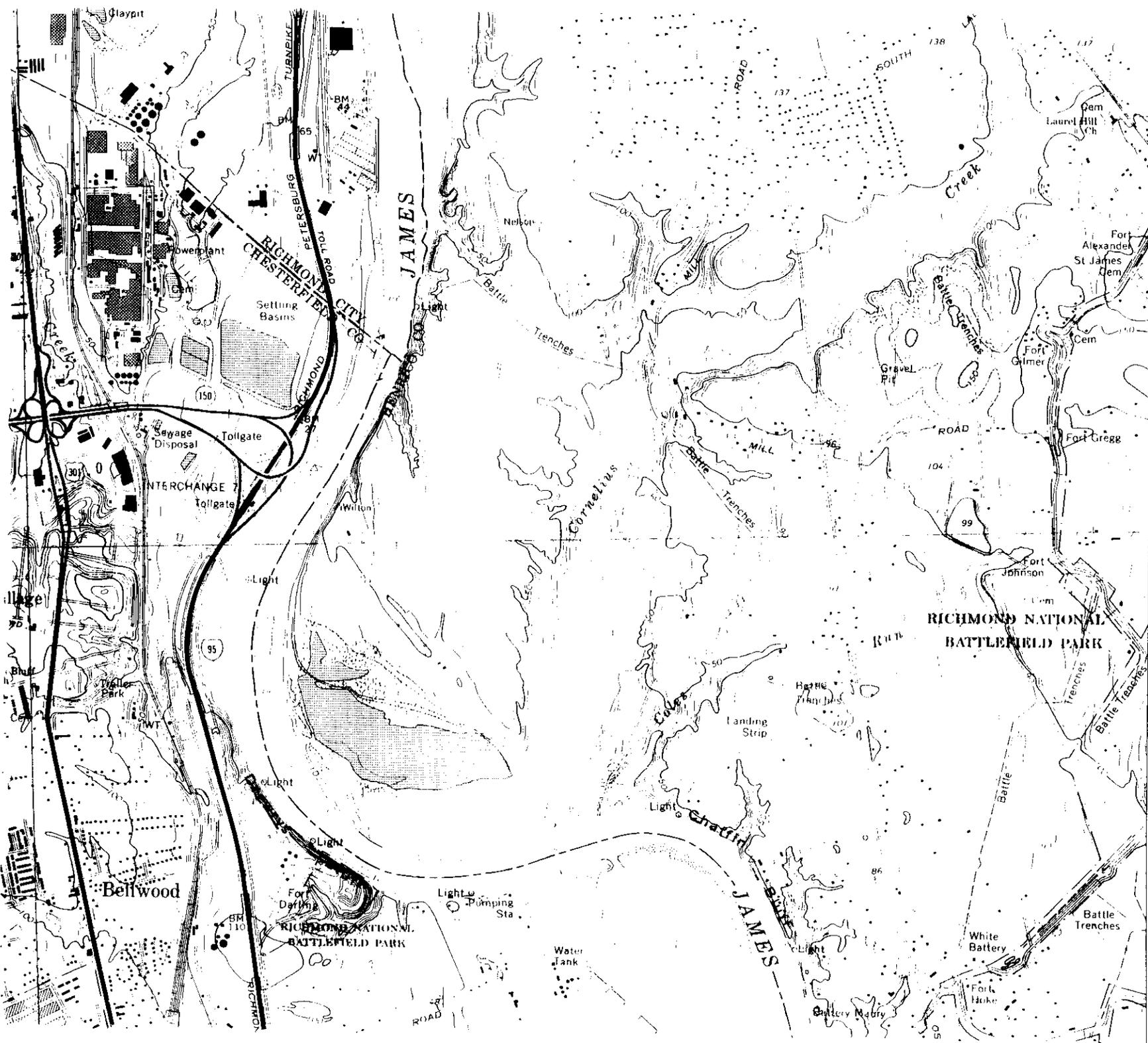
The boundaries include the historic bridge and the portion of the historic wayside that retains historic integrity.



BRIDGE AT FALLING CREEK
CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

1" = 100'





27'30" 4148
 4147
 4145
 4144
 25'

BRIDGE AT
 FALLING CREEK
 CHESTERFIELD COUNTY
 18 | 284180 | 4146210

(DUTCH GAP)
 5558 IV NE