

VLR-6/2/70 NRHP-9/15/70

Form 10-200  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Isle of Wight	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

Old Isle of Wight Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Isle of Wight County Court House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

NE corner of Main St. and Mason St.

CITY OR TOWN:

Smithfield

STATE

CODE

COUNTY:

CODE

Virginia

45

Isle of Wight

093

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work In progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	Meeting room	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities

STREET AND NUMBER:

2705 Park Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE:

Virginia

CODE

45

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Isle of Wight County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Isle of Wight

STATE

Virginia

CODE

45

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:

1937, 1940

Federal

State

County

Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D. C.

CODE

08

STATE: Virginia	COUNTY: Isle of Wight	FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER		
DATE		

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Erected in the mid-eighteenth century as a one-story, hipped roof structure with rear apsidal ell, the Isle of Wight County Court House was extensively altered around 1812 when it was converted into a private residence. At that time the T-shaped plan was retained, but an upper story was added with gable roof and dormers.

Now restored to its original appearance, the Main Street (south) facade consists of a full-length, five-bay arcaded porch with rooms behind, covered by a hipped roof. The gable roof on the rear ell ends in a conical shape to follow the curve in the wall below. The brick is laid in Flemish bond above, and English bond below, the beveled brick watertable. The porch arches and segmental arches of the side and rear windows are constructed of gauged, rubbed brick. Tall brick chimney stacks rise from either end of the Main Street rectangle and are set partially into the wall, interrupting the wooden modillioned cornice. The interior walls and reveals of the arcaded porch are plastered. The only adornment on the inner wall is the Federalist doorway, erected when the court house was converted into a residence in 1812 and allowed to remain as a part of the restoration. During the restoration the evidence for the present arcade was discovered as was the original framing for the hipped roof.

The interior plan consists of one large courtroom, now a meeting room, running the full length of the building, front-to-back, with the former judge and jury rooms to either side of the courtroom, immediately behind the arcaded porch. The circular end of the courtroom was once the location of the judge's bench; the lower half of the wall in this end is paneled, and a turned baluster railing defines this semi-circular area. Elsewhere in the room, a simple chair rail and deep architrave door framings are the only accents. The two small rooms have original window framings with paneled reveals.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |                                        |                                       |                                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)** 1750

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- |                                                  |                                                 |                                              |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |                                              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                                 |                                              | _____                                    |

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

In 1752 the town of Smithfield was incorporated, and the county seat transferred there from its previous location on the Glebe Farm, two miles west of Smithfield. Three brick buildings were erected: the court house, jail, and clerk's office, all of which remain. In 1800, it was decided to move the court house to the center of the county and here the present county seat, Isle of Wight, was established.

After the county seat was transferred to Isle of Wight, the former court house in Smithfield was converted into a residence (about 1812). Restoration work was begun in 1938 by the newly-formed Isle of Wight Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. By 1961 the old court house had been completely restored. The structure's porch arcade and T-shaped plan place it in the unique group of eighteenth-century Virginia court houses, including those in Hanover, King William, Charles City, and Richmond counties.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Boddie, John Bennett, Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight County, Virginia, (Chicago, 1938).  
 Morrison, Col. E. M., Isle of Wight County, 1608-1907. (Published for Jamestown 300th Anniversary Celebration).  
 Whiffen, Marcus, "The Early County Courthouses of Virginia", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XVIII, No. 1 (March 1959), 2-10.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		36 ° 58 ' 54 "	76 ° 137 ' 57 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: March 18, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 45

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman  
 Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

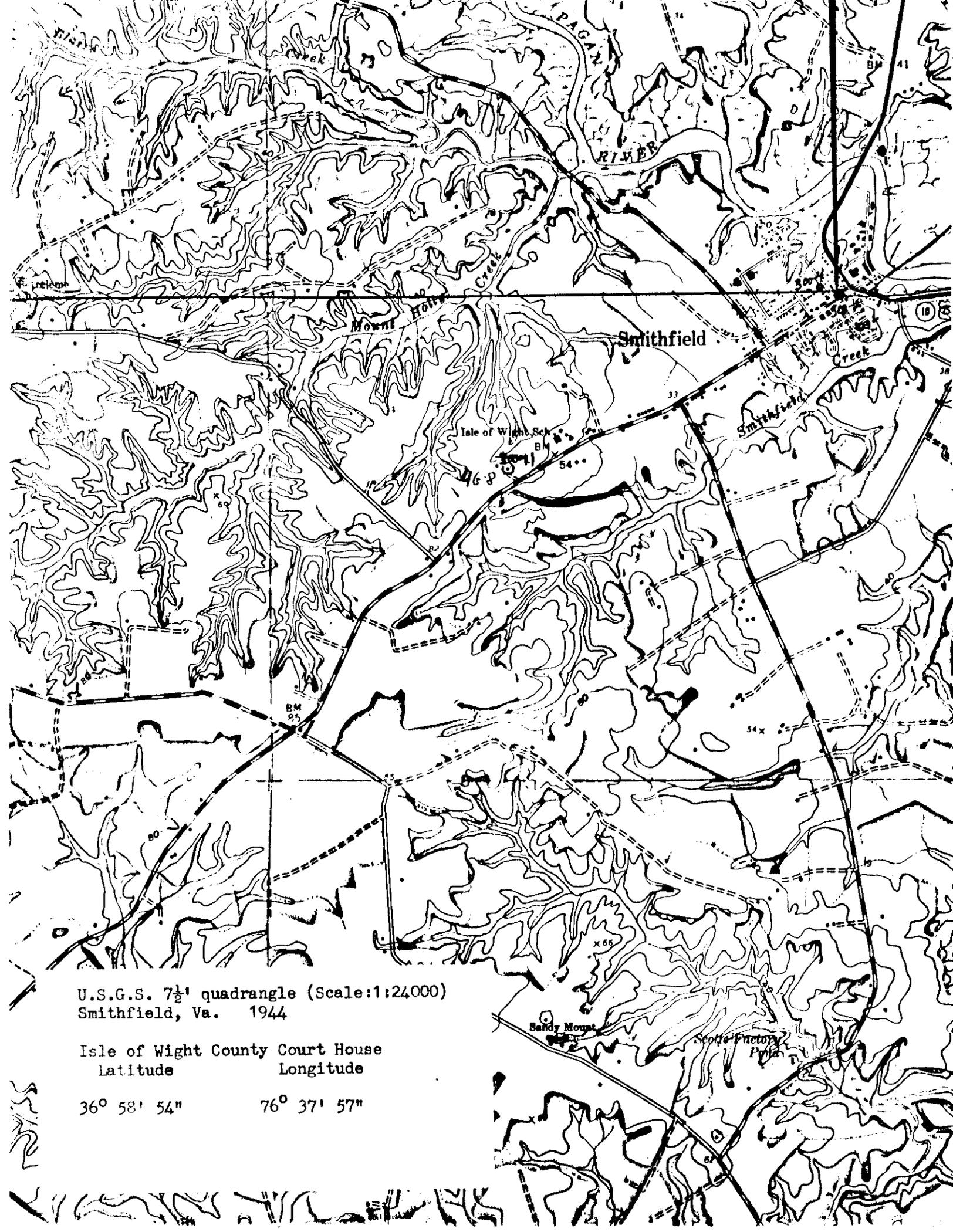
Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24,000)  
Smithfield, Va. 1944

Isle of Wight County Court House  
Latitude Longitude

36° 58' 54" 76° 37' 57"