

VLR-9/20/77 NRHP-9/20/79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Yellow Sulphur Springs

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET-NUMBER

Just W of State Route 643, between state routes 642 and 723;  
approximately one mile E. of U. S. Route 460.

...NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Christiansburg

 VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth (William C. Wampler)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Montgomery

CODE

121

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS   | PRESENT USE  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT               | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED   | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE              | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH               | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS      | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE                   | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE            | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT                 | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS         | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED       | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC                    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED      | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                |
|   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO         | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: None          |

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Charlsic C. Lester

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Yellow Sulphur Springs

CITY, TOWN

Christiansburg

 VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia

24073

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Christiansburg

STATE

Virginia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1958

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE  
D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                          |  | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD      | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR      | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED               |   |   |

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Yellow Sulphur Springs resort complex occupies a sloping, sheltered site in the intersection of three wooded hollows among several hills in Montgomery County. The complex is the product of several building campaigns over the course of the nineteenth century, and although several of the structures have been removed the surviving buildings comprise one of the oldest and most extensive complexes of early resort buildings remaining in Virginia.

The main building, the oldest surviving structure in the group, is a two-story, eight-bay frame hotel building set upon a full basement. Common-bond chimneys stand at either end, and a two-story portico with square Roman Doric piers stretches the length of the weatherboarded structure. Presently its plan consists of four large rooms on the first floor and a series of smaller guest rooms connected by a passage along the front of the building on the second. Reputedly an enlargement of a ca. 1810 structure (of which no visual evidence remains), the present form of the hotel including the chimneys and porches is a result of work undertaken in the 1840s.

Behind the hotel to the north is the proprietor's cottage. This is a story-and-a-half, L-shaped frame structure built in the 1870s. Set on a stone basement and altered with a shed addition, its bracketed cornice and the pinnacle on its gable are its only exterior decoration.

Aligned with the proprietor's house, but in front of the main hotel, is an octagonal gazebo. Built in the late nineteenth century, it has octagonal columns and a bracketed cornice.

On the sides of the three hills which converge at Yellow Sulphur Springs are three rows of cottages formerly denominated the Petersburg, Memphis, and Spring Hill rows. The western of these rows is the most complete. It consists, like the others, of a series of closely set one-story, six-unit frame buildings with full-length front porches and plain Greek Revival details. The northeastern and southeastern rows each lack two of their four buildings which were destroyed for fire insurance reasons. Behind the western building in the southeastern row survives a small one-story, frame, double servants' cottage built to accommodate the slaves of the main rows' occupants.

At the east end of the complex is a plain, one-story, frame carriage house built in the nineteenth century and converted to a garage in the present century. Between it and the other buildings stood the enormous late nineteenth-century hotel, a two-and-one-half story turreted, Shingle Style building which was destroyed in the 1940s.

At the northern end of the complex, up another hollow and next to the site of a man-made lake stands the nineteenth-century bowling alley. This long, low, gable-roofed frame building is missing much of its cladding, but the two original alleys, ball-return track, and spectators' seating survive in remarkably good condition.

DU

### Justification of Acreage:

The approximately 60 acres being nominated encompass all the buildings and the springs which are associated with the former spa.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| PREHISTORIC                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN                               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                                    |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>Resort Architecture |  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |  |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Yellow Sulphur Springs, situated in the intersection of three hollows or ravines in the rolling hills of Montgomery County between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, is a remarkable survivor of the spas for which western Virginia was renowned in the nineteenth century. Despite the loss of its late nineteenth-century hotel building and several smaller cottages, the surviving original hotel, cottage rows, gazebo, proprietor's house, and rare nineteenth-century bowling alley make this famous resort one of the earliest and most complete of such complexes in Virginia. As a whole, it presents an intriguing picture of the upper middle-class leisure-time and therapeutic pursuits of the mid-Victorian era.

Yellow Sulphur Springs became known to seekers after health and refreshment early in the nineteenth century; accounts of the 1870s and 1880s asserted that by that time the springs had been in use for 60 or 70 years. In fact, a letter to the editor appearing in the November 23, 1810 Richmond Enquirer from "Viator" (possibly a pseudonym of Episcopal Bishop James Madison) described "Taylor's Spring", or "The Yellow Spring" in great detail. "The climate," wrote the author, "is exceeded by no other in point of salubrity; and the accommodations, in every respect, are comfortable and agreeable..." The water was "between 54 and 55 F" and was directed into wooden channels for its users' convenience. Experiments had been made upon the water; drinkers discovered that it checked the pulse and acted as a diuretic, purgative, and whetter of the appetite. Furthermore, Viator believed that it had a therapeutic effect upon sores, ulcers, cutaneous disorders, "obstruction of the Viscera," and "billious complaints."

At the time of Viator's writing Yellow Sulphur Springs was the property of Charles Taylor. The land tax books indicate that there were few improvements on the land at the time, but the comfortable accommodations noted by the letter writer may have included the original section of the old hotel building now standing on the property. In 1841 Taylor transferred the "Taylor's Springs Tract" to Armistead W. Forrest who held the property for twelve years. The land tax books support the probability that the cottage rows were erected during the Forrest tenure. His successors, Thomas H. Fowlkes, Charles B. Gardiner, and James P. Edmunds, made considerable improvements to the property as well.

Yellow Sulphur Springs, as it was called by then, enjoyed a boom in popularity spurred by the construction of the railroad. Visitors to the Springs during this period included Edmund Ruffin, Henry A. Wise, Jr., Jubal Early and P. T. Beauregard. Individuals were allowed to build private cabins--Early's stood until 1943--and, if drawings by Lewis Miller and Edward Beyer published in 1856 and 1857 respectively

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Lotts, David and Worsham, John Gibson. "Yellow Sulphur Springs Today and the History of the Spa". Christiansburg News Messenger. July 29, 1976.
- Montgomery County Deed Books; Land Tax Books.
- Montgomery County, Virginia, Jamestown Exposition Souvenir. (n.p.), 1907.
- Moorman, J. J. Mineral Springs of North America. Philadelphia, 1873.
- Pollard, Edward A. The Virginia Tourist. Philadelphia, 1871.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 60 acres

### UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |         |       |          |     |       |      |         |       |          |     |     |       |
|---|------|---------|-------|----------|-----|-------|------|---------|-------|----------|-----|-----|-------|
| A | 1,7  | 5,5,3   | 5,8,0 | 4,1      | 1,4 | 8,6,0 | B    | 1,7     | 5,5,3 | 7,1,0    | 4,1 | 1,4 | 3,6,0 |
|   | ZONE | EASTING |       | NORTHING |     |       | ZONE | EASTING |       | NORTHING |     |     |       |
| C | 1,7  | 5,5,3   | 6,0,0 | 4,1      | 1,4 | 2,0,0 | D    | 1,7     | 5,5,3 | 2,5,0    | 4,1 | 1,4 | 4,9,0 |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The approximately 60 acres comprising the Yellow Sulphur Springs property are bounded by a line beginning at a point (A) on the W side of State Route 643, a little over .2 mile S of the intersection of state routes 642 and 643; thence running approximately 2300 feet S following W side of State Route 643; then extending approximately 900 feet NW in a straight line following tree line; then extending 400 feet WNW in a straight line following tree line; then running approximately 1700 feet generally NW following tree line for first 900 feet; then running approximately 600 feet NE in a straight line following tree line (See continuation sheet # 1)

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

### NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

### ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

### DATE

September 1977

### STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

### TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

### CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

### STATE

Virginia 23219

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 20 1977

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Yellow Sulphur Springs, Montgomery County

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6,9,10 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1967, 1968, 1977 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Rasmusson, Karen. "Zoning Amendment Raises Local Concerns". Radford News-Journal, October 24, 1976.  
Richmond Enquirer. November 23, 1810.  
Robertson, Jenkins M. "The Springs Revisited". Context. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute magazine), V. 7, Autumn 1972.  
Worsham, John Gibson, Jr. "'A Place So Lofty and Secluded': Yellow Sulphur Springs in Montgomery County". Virginia Cavalcade, XXVII (Summer 1977).  
Yellow Sulphur Springs in Montgomery County. (n.p., n. d.), ca. 1976.  
Information packet in files of VHLC.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

and cutting across tree-covered area last 300 feet; then running approximately 600 feet E in a straight line following tree line; then extending approximately 500 feet S in a straight line following tree line; then running approximately 500 feet E in a straight line following tree line to intersection with W side of State Route 643 and point of origin.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Yellow Sulphur Springs, Montgomery County

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

1

8. SIGNIFICANCE

are accurate, the original main building was enlarged during that time to accommodate the increased clientele.

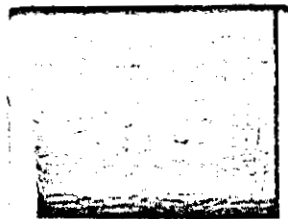
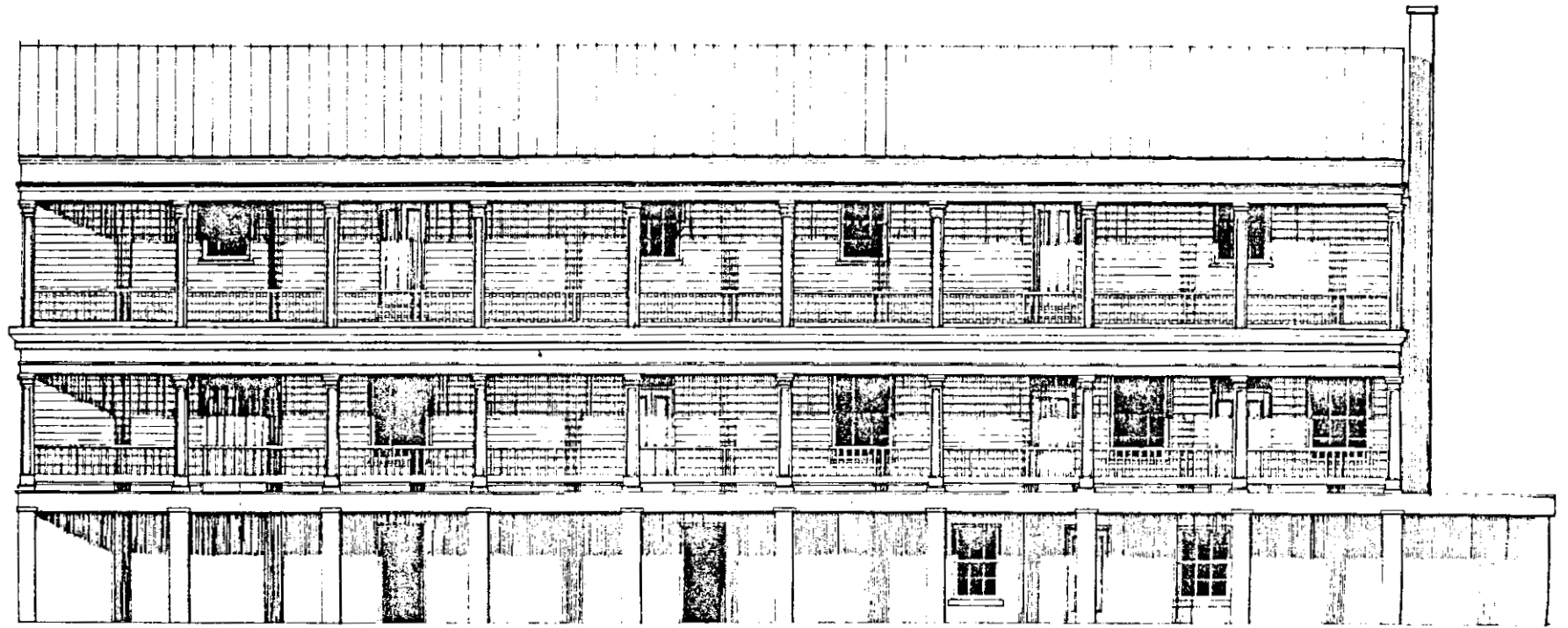
Yellow Sulphur Springs was closed during the War Between the States but was reopened and back in operation by 1869. In 1871 it was purchased by L. J. and I. Wade for \$25,000. The new owners added the galleries to the cottage rows, put in new baths, built a new mansarded hotel, and refitted the still-surviving bowling alley. A year later they constructed a new spring house. During this prosperous period the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, now known as the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, was organized by trustees meeting at the Springs.

A disastrous fire destroyed the new hotel in 1883, and Yellow Sulphur Springs underwent a period of decline which ended with the purchase of the property in 1886 by Ridgeway Holt. Holt built the large Shingle-Style hotel which stood until the 1940s, and the Springs again enjoyed an era of popularity which lasted until 1923. Promotional literature on Montgomery County which was published for the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 acclaimed the spa's "every facility for comfort or pleasure," its "excellent ballroom," and its "well ventilated bowling alley."

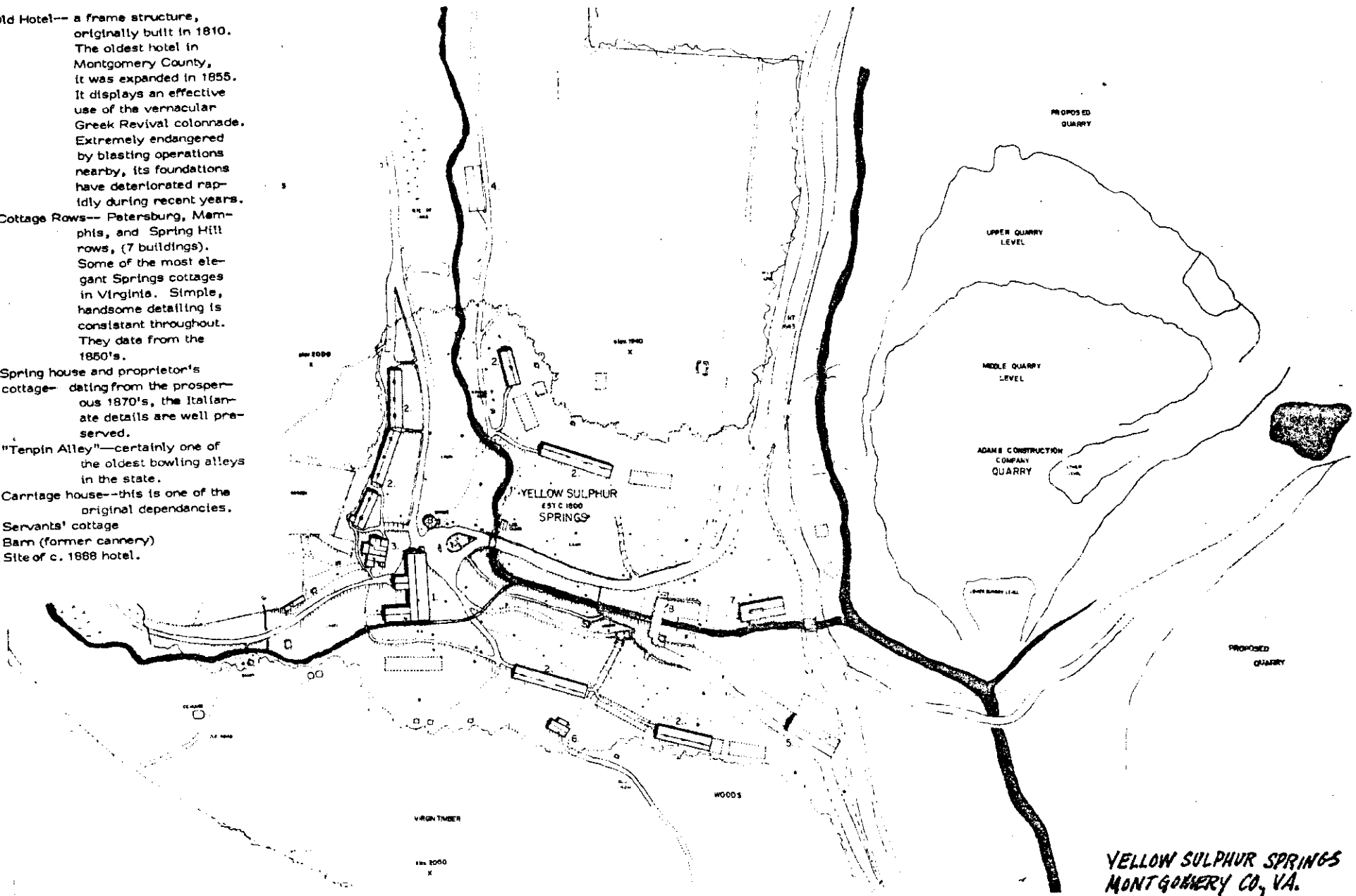
Though Yellow Sulphur Springs has suffered years of neglect and the loss of several buildings, its present owner is interested in its preservation and revitalization.

DU/MTP

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VA.  
DRAWING OF HOTEL  
BY G. WORSHAM, 1976.



1. Old Hotel-- a frame structure, originally built in 1810. The oldest hotel in Montgomery County, it was expanded in 1855. It displays an effective use of the vernacular Greek Revival colonnade. Extremely endangered by blasting operations nearby, its foundations have deteriorated rapidly during recent years.
2. Cottage Rows-- Petersburg, Memphis, and Spring Hill rows, (7 buildings). Some of the most elegant Springs cottages in Virginia. Simple, handsome detailing is consistent throughout. They date from the 1850's.
3. Spring house and proprietor's cottage-- dating from the prosperous 1870's, the Italianate details are well preserved.
4. "Tenpin Alley"--certainly one of the oldest bowling alleys in the state.
5. Carriage house--this is one of the original dependencies.
6. Servants' cottage
7. Barn (former cannery)
8. Site of c. 1868 hotel.



YELLOW SULPHUR SPRINGS  
 MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
 SITE PLAN  
 APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1" = 200'



USGS 7.5' quadrangle  
Blacksburg, Va.

(Scale: 1:24,000)  
1965 (PR 1970)

YELLOW SULPHUR SPRINGS, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.

UTM References:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A - 17/553580/4114860 | B - 17/553710/4114360 |
| C - 17/553600/4114200 | D - 17/553250/4114490 |
| E - 17/553080/4114910 | F - 17/553330/4115080 |

