

VLR 9-12-01  
NRHP-5-16-02

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 The Grove  
other names/site number Walnut Grove VDHR #095-0021 The Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol/Washington County, Virginia, Inc. at Preston's Grove

#### 2. Location

street & number 14071 Lee Highway not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Bristol vicinity X  
state Virginia code VA county Washington code 191 Zip 24209

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_\_\_ nomination X 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] March 29, 2002  
Signature of certifying official 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  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_



U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

     Greek Revival \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation      Brick \_\_\_\_\_  
roof      Metal \_\_\_\_\_  
walls      Brick \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other      Wood \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.
- X   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 \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance Ca. 1857-1864

Significant Dates 1857

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Preston, John

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

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(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 # 191-95

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: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.16

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

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 17 400690 40555320 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: Paul Hardin Kapp, AIA

Organization:  Kapp & Robbins Architects date  3 May 2001

street & number:  107 West Grayson Street telephone  (540)-236-7775

city or town  Galax state  VA zip code  24333

**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  The Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol/Washington County, Virginia, Inc.

street & number  2681 Lee Highway telephone  (540)-645-5867

city or town  Bristol state  VA zip code  24209

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**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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 1

**7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

**Summary**

The Grove in Washington County, Virginia, lies off the Lee Highway, U.S. Route 11, eight miles southwest of the town of Abingdon, Virginia and only five hundred feet northeast of the city limits of Bristol, Virginia. It was built in 1857 by Colonel John Preston, one of the first judges in Washington County, as his retirement home. It was the second "manor" house built on the Walnut Grove Plantation. The first house was the home of John Preston's father, Colonel Robert Preston, the first land surveyor of Washington County. It still stands, approximately one quarter of a mile from The Grove and it is known as "Walnut Grove." The original plantation tract covered the acreage southwest of Abingdon to what is now the city line of Bristol, Virginia and Bristol, Tennessee.

The Greek Revival-style house is a brick masonry structure with a two-story wood framed front porch. It is approximately 4,500 square feet in size with a low roofline and deep eaves. On the east side of the main block, it has a one-story kitchen wing attached by a small porch.

The house was abandoned in 1972 and fell into a general state of decay, suffering extensive vandalism. Currently The Grove is being carefully and substantially rehabilitated to become the new offices of the Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol/Washington County, Virginia, Inc.

**Setting**

The Grove stands on the crest of a knoll and faces southwesterly toward Hall Bottom and the Great Knobs of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Bristol. This view has been extensively altered with the construction of Interstate 81 and all of the commercial development adjacent to it. The Grove is surrounded on its north and west sides by Sugar Hollow Park, which is an earthen dam and drainage basin for Beaver Creek and is owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The park is rural by nature and is comprised of two baseball fields, the dam, nature preserves and trails. The Grove property site is 4.16 acres in size with rolling hills and stands of trees at the west and north side of the house. The remnants of a walnut grove is situated on the east side of the structure, while two large catawba trees are located at the north east side of the building. These two trees date back to the period of the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 2

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)**

construction of the building and are said to have been given as seedlings to Colonel Preston from an admirer from Ireland. There is also the remnant of a carriage trail in front of the house on the south side of the structure. Beaver Creek defines the south boundary of the site.

**House Exterior**

The brick masonry of both the main block and the kitchen wing is laid in American bond pattern with every fourth brick course being a header course. The main block is three bays wide. The center bay has a front door with sidelights and a transom. Over the center bay is a second floor porch door which has only sidelights. Both the front door and the upstairs front porch door have carved rails and pilasters that incorporate Italianate details and accents. Two triple-hung windows on the first floor flank the front door; there are double-hung windows above them. All of the sash in the entire house have light configurations of six over six.

The porch is two-stories in the center and one-story on either side of the center section. The porch is supported by brick piers and has four-inch square posts with a diamond-pattern wood lattice in both the post supports and the railings. Both the upper porch roof and the lower porch roof have low pitches and are covered with standing seam. The upper porch roof is gabled ended with a decorative motif in the tympanum.

The roof of the main block of the house has a low pitch and deep eaves. The cornice is simple with a simple square stock frieze and a shallow cove molding. The roof is covered with standing seam metal. There are four chimneys in the main block that serve eight fireplaces. These chimneys are simple in form with corbeled caps. The rear or north side is similar in configuration to the front, it is comprised of three bays with double-hung sash flanking a central entry which appears to have had a small porch over it at one time.

The kitchen wing is located on the east end of the building. It is a story-and-a-half brick masonry structure laid in an American bond pattern. It is attached to the main block with a small porch. The kitchen wing has a large chimney on its east side, which appears to have been built before the brick walls of the kitchen were constructed. The kitchen has one window on both the north and south sides. The roof has a medium pitch, deep eaves and is covered with standing seam metal.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section 7 Page 3

### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)

#### House Interior

The first floor of the interior of the main block has a center hall with a grand stair. It is flanked at the front with two large rooms. The east room was originally a library while the west room was a parlor that is adjacent to another large parlor on the north side. A large double door opening connects both parlors. North of the east room there is a small hallway with a secondary staircase. Behind this hallway there is another large room which is believed to have been the original dining room. Behind the central staircase there is a small room.

The grand staircase leads up to a landing. The inside face of the stair curves as the staircase winds up to the second floor. At the outside face of the stair at the landing there are two sets of smaller stairs. Those at the northeast corner lead directly to the second floor northwest bedroom. On the other side, the small stair leads to the secondary hall. The stair has decorative panels applied to the face of the carriage; the pickets are simple and approximately 1 ½ inches square in size. The railing was a three-quarter round walnut railing approximately 3 inches in diameter and the newel post was turned and was approximately 8 inches in diameter.

The plan of the second floor is similar to the first floor. It has four distinct bedrooms at each corner of the main block. Similar to the first floor there is a central hall and a secondary hall on the east side. The secondary hall has a set of narrow stairs, which lead up to the unfinished attic. Behind the central hall and the stair there is a small room on the north side, while on the south side of the central hall there is the door to the second floor porch.

All of the rooms in The Grove have high ceilings. On the first floor the ceilings are 11'-0" while the second floor ceilings are 9'-0" in height. All four first-floor rooms and all four bedrooms have fireplaces. All of the fireplaces have shallow fireboxes and simple mantles with deep friezes with small cove moldings, which supported shallow mantle shelves. The northeast and the northwest bedrooms have small closets located adjacent to the fireplaces while the south bedrooms do not have closets.

The baseboards on the first floor are tall and heavy 2-by-12 members with an ogee or cyma recta base cap. The second-floor baseboards are also heavy, comprised of a beaded 2-by-12 member. The door and window casings are simple in form. They are comprised of beveled ¾-inch boards and 1-

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

**Section   7   Page   4**

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (continued)**

½ inch square back bands. The front door and the door to the second-floor porch are more elaborate, with carved posts and entablatures with flanking sidelights. The front door also has a large transom over both the door and the sidelights.

Both first and second floors have heart pine wood floors. Underneath the east parlor there is a small cellar that is accessed by an outside set of steps. The interior walls of the building are all nine-inch brick masonry walls with the exception of a small section of wood framing beneath the central stair landing.

The kitchen wing is a simple room with a large cooking fireplace with a small modern closet on its south side. There is a small winding stair in the kitchen wing. It is entered from the connector porch and leads one up to a small room in the rafter space of the second floor. This room also has a small fireplace that is flanked by two small single-sash windows.

The building was abandoned in 1972 and suffered extensively from vandalism from 1972 to 2000. Windows, doors and the stair railings were removed from the building and dispersed throughout the house or the site that was covered with debris and rubbish. These members were found on site and documented and will either be restored or used to construct new members matching the existing in form and material. A rehabilitation of the building is currently underway.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 5

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

The Grove is a mid-nineteenth century private residence in Washington County, Virginia. It is significant in local architecture for its distinctive design. The dwelling is predominantly Greek Revival in style with Italianate features applied to it, most notably, its front porch. It was built by Colonel John Preston, one of the first judges of Washington County, a captain in the Virginia Militia during the War of 1812, and a colonel of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Virginia Militia. Colonel Preston was also a member of the Preston family of Virginia who played an important role in the settlement of western Virginia. The Grove was the second house built by the Preston family on the Walnut Grove Plantation. Colonel Preston built it as his retirement home after he retired from the Washington County Bench in 1854. The style of the house suggests that Colonel Preston followed new architectural trends of the day in the design of his home.

**Justification of Criteria**

The Grove is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a significant example of Greek Revival architecture in Washington County, Virginia. Its form, detailing and use of materials demonstrate the level of sophistication of architecture and craftsmanship in the southwestern Virginia region. It is eligible at the local level of significance.

**Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to thank Mr. Marc Wagner and Dr. John Kern of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for their research and assistance with the preparation of the nomination. The author would also like to thank local Bristol historian, Mr. Bud Phillips, and the Washington County Historical Society for their research assistance. Finally the author would like to thank Mr. Larry Kirksey, Mr. Larry Clarke, Mr. David Wallace and Ms. Kay Kovacs of the Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol/Washington County, Virginia, Inc. for all of their support and commitment to this project.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section 8 Page 6

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)**

Historical Background

Personal History of Colonel John Preston, 1781-1864

The Grove, the John Preston House, is the second residence built on the Walnut Grove Plantation. It was built by Colonel John Preston, the son of Colonel Robert Preston who was the first surveyor of Washington County. Robert Preston was a cousin of Colonel William Preston of Smithfield Plantation in Montgomery County, Virginia and a native of Londonderry, Ireland. He came to Virginia in 1770 and learned his land-surveying trade under William Preston. Robert Preston came to what is now Washington County in 1777 and became the surveyor of the newly formed county the following year. It was during this period that he obtained a land patent of seven hundred and seventy-two acres of land southwest of the Town of Abingdon that he named Walnut Grove<sup>1</sup>.

John Preston was born at Walnut Grove on July 8, 1781. He graduated from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1799 and studied law under Henry St. George Tucker at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia from 1801-1802. He married Margaret Brown Preston, the youngest child of William Preston and a cousin of John's, on October 5, 1802 at Smithfield Plantation. Soon after their marriage the couple returned to Washington County. John Preston served as a captain in the Virginia Militia during the War of 1812 and later became the colonel of the 105<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Virginia Militia. He was appointed justice of Washington County on January 17, 1804 and became presiding judge of Washington County in 1820, a position he held for thirty-two years<sup>2</sup>.

John and Margaret Preston had five daughters and nine sons. Two of their sons gained notoriety in their own right. Colonel Thomas Marshall Preston served on the staff of Confederate General Albert Sydney Johnston and was killed at the Battle of Shiloh. Walter Eugene Preston settled in Phillips County, Arkansas, and served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1848-1851<sup>3</sup>.

Upon retiring as the judge of Washington County, John Preston built The Grove as his retirement home in 1850. He gave his father's house, Walnut Grove, to his son, Robert F. Preston. From 1852 until his death in 1864 John Preston concentrated on raising cattle and farming at the Walnut Grove Plantation<sup>4</sup>.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 7

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)**

During the Civil War, a skirmish between Confederate and Federal troops occurred near The Grove. On September 25, 1863, Federal troops coming from Kingsport, Tennessee, were stopped by the Thirty-seventh Virginia regiment. John Preston participated in the skirmish, fighting for the Confederate forces. He died at The Grove in 1864.

History of The Grove, 1864-2000

John Preston's youngest son, Henry Preston inherited The Grove in 1864 and lived there until his death in 1899. At that time The Grove was known as "the Mansion House" and it was inherited by six unmarried daughters of Henry Preston<sup>5</sup>.

In 1916, Henry Preston's grandson, Percy J. Preston, inherited The Grove and lived there until his death in 1940. His daughter, Elizabeth Preston Farris, inherited it and lived there until her death in 1972. Her heirs sold the house and its belongings at a public auction in 1972. Bristol, Virginia businessman, C. Richard Campbell, purchased The Grove with the intention of remodeling it into his home. Campbell's business dealings soon failed and he abandoned the remodeling idea and allowed the house to become abandoned and fall prey to vandals who damaged the finishes and architectural components<sup>6</sup>.

In June 2000, the Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol/Washington County, Virginia, Inc. purchased The Grove and is currently rehabilitating it for their new offices. The Children's Advocacy Center's mission is to combat sexual and severe child abuse by coordinating services for child victims and their families and to provide a child-friendly environment during the whole course of a child abuse case.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section 8 Page 8

ENDNOTES

1. Dorman, John Fredrick, The Preston's of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia. Louisville, KY: General Printing Co., p. 68.
2. Ibid. p. 73.
3. Summers, Lewis Preston, "Walnut Grove, Now a Business Center Once was Preston Domain, Washington County News, March 4, 1971, p. 2C and p. 8C.
4. Summers, Lewis Preston, History of Southwest Virginia. Johnson City, TN.; The Overmountain Press, 1989, p. 651.
5. Will Book 26, page 264, Washington County Registry of Deeds, Abingdon, Virginia.
6. Deed Book 87, page 249, Washington County Registry of Deeds, Abingdon, Virginia.
7. Interview with Mr. V.N. (Bud) Phillips, Bristol Historical Association, Inc. July 26, 2000.
8. Deed Book 213, p.424, Washington County Registry of Deeds, Abingdon, Virginia.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section 9 Page 9

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dorman, John Fredrick. The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia. Louisville, KY: General Printing Co., 1973.

Phillips, V.N. (Bud). Interview with the author. July 26, 2000.

Summers Lewis Preston. History of Southwest Virginia. Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1989.

Summers Lewis Preston. "Walnut Grove, Now a Business Center Once was Preston Domain". Washington County News. (March 4, 1971): p. 2C and P. 8C.

Washington County, VA. Deed Book No. 87 pg. 249.

Washington County, VA. Deed Book No. 213 pg. 424.

Washington County, VA. Will Book No. 26 pg. 264.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia**

Section 10 Page 10

**10. Geographical Data:**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated 4.16-acre property is shown as parcel number 142-A-22 on the tax parcel maps for Washington County, Virginia. The boundaries are depicted on the accompanying map (Exhibit A).

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for The Grove include the main house and its 4.16-acre setting. This includes all trees, shrubs and site elements that are associated with the house.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section 11 Page 11

**11. Additional Documentation:**

All photographs are of:  
The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia  
VDHR File Number 095-0021  
Ashley L. Robbins, AIA, ASID, photographer

All negatives are stored with the Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: south elevation, entrance façade;  
view looking north  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 1 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: west elevation;  
view looking east  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 2 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: east elevation;  
view looking west  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 3 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: north elevation, rear façade;  
view looking north  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 4 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: central hall, main staircase;  
view looking north  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 5 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: central hall, main staircase;  
view looking northwest  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 6 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: southwest parlor;  
view looking south from northwest parlor  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 7 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: Southwest Parlor;  
view looking southeast from northwest parlor  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 8 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: library;  
view facing east at the bookcase  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 9 OF 10

DATE: June 1, 2000  
VIEW OF: southwest bedroom, second floor;  
view facing northeast from central hall  
NEG. NO.: 19177  
PHOTO 10 OF 10

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Grove  
Washington County, Virginia

Section Exhibit Page 12

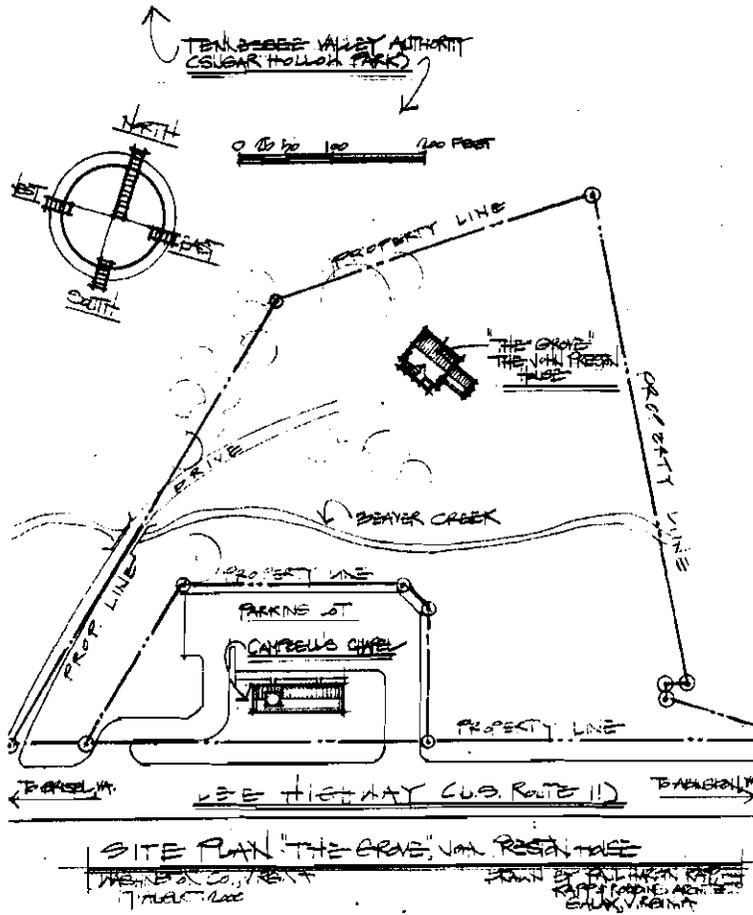


Exhibit A: Site Map of The Grove, Washington County, Virginia.

