VLR: 8-13-85
NRHP: 9-12-85

127-248

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common FAN AREA HISTORIC DISTRICT (DHL FILE No. 127-248)

2. Location

street & number EIGHTY-FIVE BLOCK AREA IN WEST RICHMOND ROUGHLY BOUNDED BY N. HARRISON STREET, W. MAIN STREET, W. GRACE STREET AND N. MULBERRY STREET N/A not for publication

city, town RICHMOND N/A vicinity of

state VIRGINIA code 51 county (CITY) code 760

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
X district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	X unoccupied	X commercial	X park
___ structure	X both	___ work in progress	X educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name MULTIPLE OWNERS

street & number N/A

city, town RICHMOND N/A vicinity of state VIRGINIA Zip Code 23220

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. RICHMOND CITY HALL

street & number 900 EAST BROAD STREET

city, town RICHMOND state VIRGINIA Zip Code 23219

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title (1) Historic Landmarks Division Survey (file no. 127-248) (See Continuation Sheet # 264) has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date May, 1983 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Landmarks 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state VA Zip Code 23219

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	X community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics government	X other (specify)
		___ invention		Urban History

Specific dates 1817 - 1930 **Builder Architect** Various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fan Area Historic District is significant both for its architectural cohesiveness and for its association with Richmond's transformation from village to city in the half-century following the defeat of the Confederacy in the American Civil War. Tracing its distinctive street plan to the abortive attempt in 1817 to develop the Town of Sydney as a western suburb of Richmond, the district is more closely linked to the city's westward residential expansion in the late 19th and early 20th century through the annexation of increasingly larger areas of Henrico County in 1867, 1892, and 1906. The growing demand for better housing and improved city services by a new urban white middle class spurred architects, builders, and real estate speculators to promote the construction and sale of entire blocks of residences in the Fan Area. Characteristic of development in the eastern or Lower Fan during the period 1885 to 1895, the pattern of speculative building came to be repeated on a larger scale in the western or Upper Fan during the period from 1906 to 1915. Notwithstanding this decade-long hiatus between the area's two major building campaigns, the district conveys an agreeable feeling of harmony that depends not so much on uniformity of architectural style as on intrinsic qualities of good urban design such as uniformity of roof and setback lines; compatibility of texture and type of materials; scale of openings; careful planting of trees; and details of a succession of architectural styles represented in the district. The basic component of the district is not the individual dwelling but the typical Fan Area block of rowhouses or semi-detached townhouses, most constructed of brick, usually two or two-and-a-half stories in height, with frame porches on the front facades and false mansard slate roofs. While a number of the district's 85 blocks lack individual distinction, each contributes to the creation of a rhythmic streetscape that is seldom broken by visual intrusions. This remarkable architectural cohesiveness reflects the deliberately conservative cultural taste of turn-of-the century Richmonders and the fortuitous circumstance of contemporary building practices, which allowed for a relatively small number of local architects and contractors to fashion out of whole cloth much of the fabric of the neighborhood.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

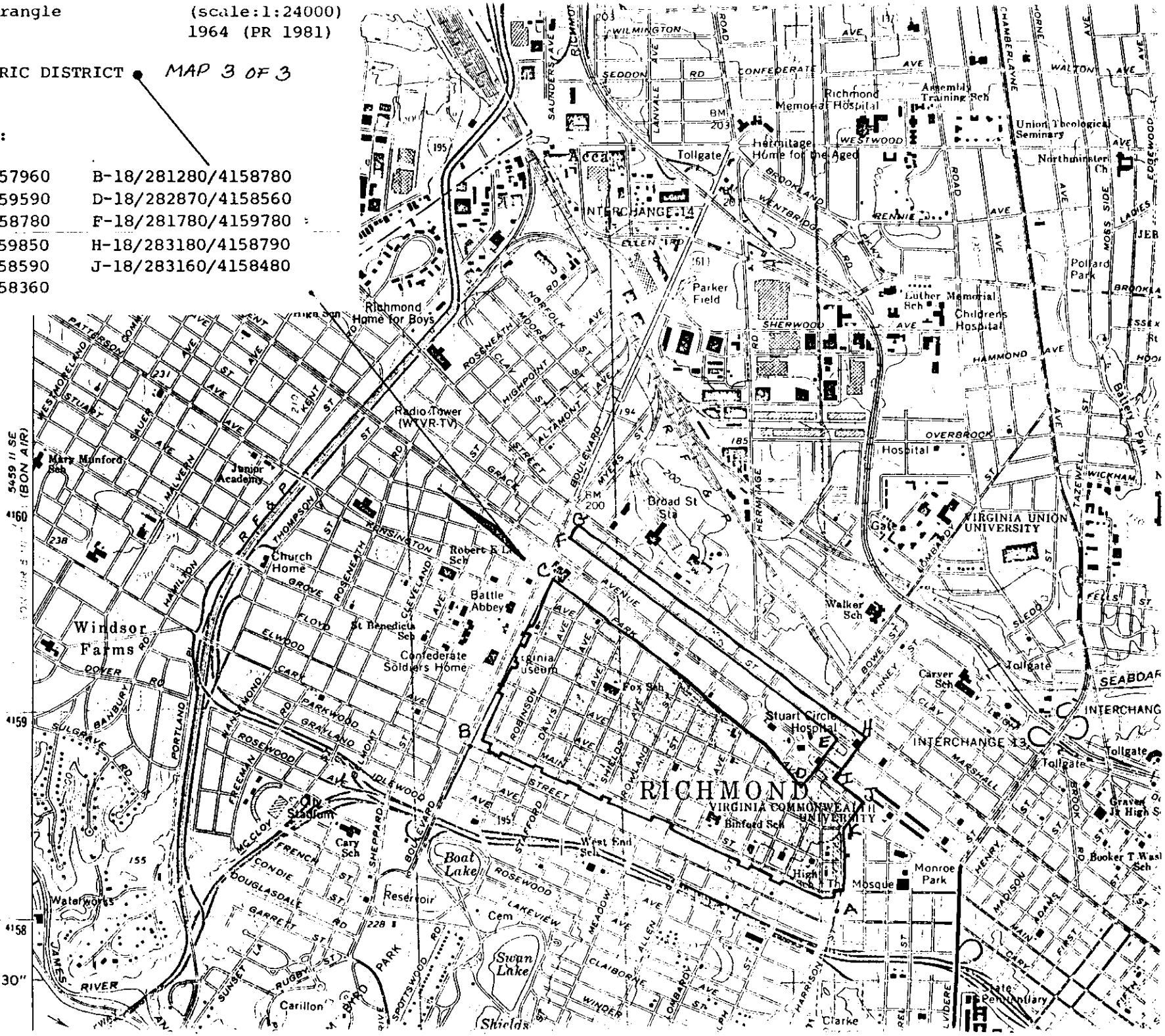
(The information for the pre-1900 historical background is largely derived from an unpublished manuscript on the Fan by Drew St. J. Carneal. Use of this material without Mr. Carneal's express permission is prohibited.)

The land comprising the present-day Fan Area Historic District was originally part of a land tract granted to William Byrd I by the British Crown in 1675. The Byrd family used the land for timber, tobacco and grazing of livestock until 1769. At this time William Byrd III, harassed by creditors, disposed of his Richmond lands by lottery, dividing the area into numbered lots and awarding them to "fortunate adventurers", as the winners were called. Some of the winners never claimed their prizes and others never bothered to

(See Continuation Sheet # 257)

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Richmond, VA 1964 (PR 1981)

FAN AREA HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP 3 OF 3
Richmond, VA

UTM References:

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