

VLR-10/21/80  
NHRP-6/28/82

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Shepherd's Plain

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Route 178, on Nandua Creek \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Pungoteague \_\_X\_\_ vicinity of First congressional district (Paul S. Tribble)

state Virginia code 51 county Accomack code 001

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> museum</span>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> park</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <span style="float:right"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> religious</span>
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> scientific</span>
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> transportation</span>
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <span style="float:right"><input type="checkbox"/> other:</span>

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. Curtis A. Roos

street & number Shepherd's Plain

city, town Pungoteague state Virginia Zip Code 23422

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Accomack County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Accomack state Virginia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys** (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

(1) title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1960, 1962 Inventory 1967  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

Shepherd's Plain, an Accomack County residence, is situated on an inlet overlooking Nandua Creek and Kusian Cove off Route 178 near Pungoteague.

The rectangular 39' x 54', double-pile structure was built between 1755-1775 and has a wood-frame core of five bays flanked by brick ends. The ends are executed in Flemish-bond brick and have a Flemish-bond water table. The north end is distinguished by fanciful brickwork: one first-floor window has a rusticated surround of raised quoins and rubbed brick jack arches with raised brick caps. The second-story windows have gauged arches. A two-course belt course, ramped over the rusticated window, runs above the first-story windows. The quoins on the north end follow the rake of the roof. The south end has raised brick quoins and a belt course. Both the north and south chimneys were rebuilt in the 20th century. The wood-frame elevations are covered with late 19th-century weatherboarding.

The water side (west) and land side (east) elevations have double-door entrances that constitute later replacements. The west entrance has a double-light transom. Both the east and west porches and steps have been removed. An early, but not original, gable-roof north bulkhead was removed in recent years exposing a segmental-arched opening. The south bulkhead has a gable-roof entrance with an early door frame that may have been removed from an above opening which now serves as a window.

Fenestration on the east and west elevations consists of replacement 2/2 hung-sash windows. The south elevation has 2/2 replacement hung sash on the first story and 6/6 hung sash on the second story. An attic opening on the north elevation has 2/2 hung sash. A modillioned cornice embellishes the eaves on the east and west elevations.

Shepherd's Plain has a central-hall plan. The central hall contains an open-well, open-string stair to the second floor. The stair has a turned newel, urn-and-column balusters, sawn brackets, and a molded handrail. An original peg board survives under the stair. The passage has a finely molded chair rail and cornice.

The northwest parlor is the most elaborate room in the house. The north wall is fully paneled and has fluted Roman pilasters flanking a three-panel overmantel above a simply executed architrave. A raised-panel wainscot embellishes the remaining walls. A dentil cornice runs the room's perimeter. The original architraves and paneled doors survive, but the original hearth was removed by vandals. The paneling in both the northeast and southeast rooms also has been removed. Molded cornices and door frames survive. The southeast room retains its original paneling. Its south wall is fully paneled and has a three-panel overmantel with the original architrave cut by a Victorian period surround. An original cupboard is positioned to the east of the fireplace. A molded chair rail and cornice embellish the room. Original door and window frames survive as well.

The second-floor rooms are less elaborate than the first. The end walls have fireplaces framed by architraves flanked by cupboards and paneling. The rooms have molded chair rails and molded cornices and also run the perimeter of the hall.

No original outbuildings have survived. The house has retained a relatively unobstructed setting on Nandua Creek and Kusian Cove. Open fields provide the remaining vistas. A later barn sits in a field to the west of the house.

RCC

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** third quarter 18th century **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Completed in the third quarter of the 18th century, Shepherd's Plain is a formal, two-story Georgian residence built for Edward Ker, a prominent Accomack County planter and politician. The architectural significance of the house is enhanced by the rare examples of rusticated trim on the brick ends. Also notable is the fine interior woodwork, especially the parlor paneling. These skillfully crafted details of brick and wood illustrate not only the architectural preferences of the Eastern Shore's wealthy class, but the capabilities of the region's craftsmen in executing sophisticated designs taken from 18th-century English builders' guides.

The house stands on land patented in the mid-17th century by William Andrews, an earlier settler of the Eastern Shore. The property remained in the Andrews family until 1693 when it was purchased by John Shepherd. The Shepherd family owned and probably lived on the land until the mid-18th century. In 1740, at the death of John Shepherd (the first John Shepherd's grandson), the property was inherited by his two daughters, with his daughter Margaret buying out her sister in 1755. Margaret married Edward Ker who erected the present dwelling.

Edward Ker is first recorded as a tobacco farmer in 1757, when he was reimbursed for tobacco stored in Pitts warehouse which had accidentally burned. In 1770 Ker signed the non-importation act as a representative from the Eastern Shore and subsequently served on a committee of the House of Burgesses to study the general state of trade in the colony. He was appointed a justice of Accomack County in 1773. Although Ker generously contributed to the cost of defending the Eastern Shore during the Revolution, questions were raised about his loyalty to the American cause near the close of the war. However, Ker was exonerated by Colonel George Corbin in a letter to the Governor in 1782. After the Revolution he became interested in establishing a school on the Eastern Shore while he remained an active member of St. George's Parish. Ker is listed among the trustees for the proposed "Margaret Academy" in 1786 and as an overseer of the poor of his parish from 1789-90.

When Ker built Shepherd's Plain, he adapted what had become the conventional 1½-story, brick-ended Eastern Shore house into a larger two-story, double-pile Georgian residence. Ker's architectural ambitions particularly are evident on the north wall which contains a rusticated window surround, raised drip caps, corner quoins, and quoins that follow the rake of the roof. This rather fanciful treatment of the brick end presumably was inspired by details in English builders' guides such as those illustrated in Batty Langley's, The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs, plates XXIX and XLI, which was published in London in 1750. The treatment of the interior is distinguished by fine woodwork. In addition to its paneling, the north parlor has fluted Roman Doric pilasters which probably were inspired also by a mid-century builders' guide.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Accomack County Land Tax Books, 1809-40.  
 Foreman, H.C. Virginia Eastern Shore and Its British Origins, Easton, Maryland, 1975.  
 Langley, Batty. The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs. London, 1967.  
 Nugent, Nell. Cavaliers and Pioneers. Baltimore, 1963.  
 Whitelaw, Ralph T. Virginia's Eastern Shore. Gloucester, Mass., 1968.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 46 acres

Quadrangle name Pungoteague, Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	1 8	4 2 6 0 0 0	4 1 6 5 0 6 0	B	1 8	4 2 6 2 5 0	4 1 6 4 7 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	4 2 4 9 0 0	4 1 6 4 5 0 0	D	1 8	4 2 4 5 5 0	4 1 6 4 7 0 0
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point 800' S of Nandua Creek, at intersection of private drives; thence extending 1300' SSE along W side of private drive; thence extending 1000' SSW; thence extending 700' W to Kusian Cove; thence extending 800' NW along shoreline; thence extending 1800' NNE to point of origin.

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 1980

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Tucker Hill, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date OCT 21 1980

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Shepherd's Plain, Accomack County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 6,7,8 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (cont.)

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1973, 1977, 1980 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION (cont.)

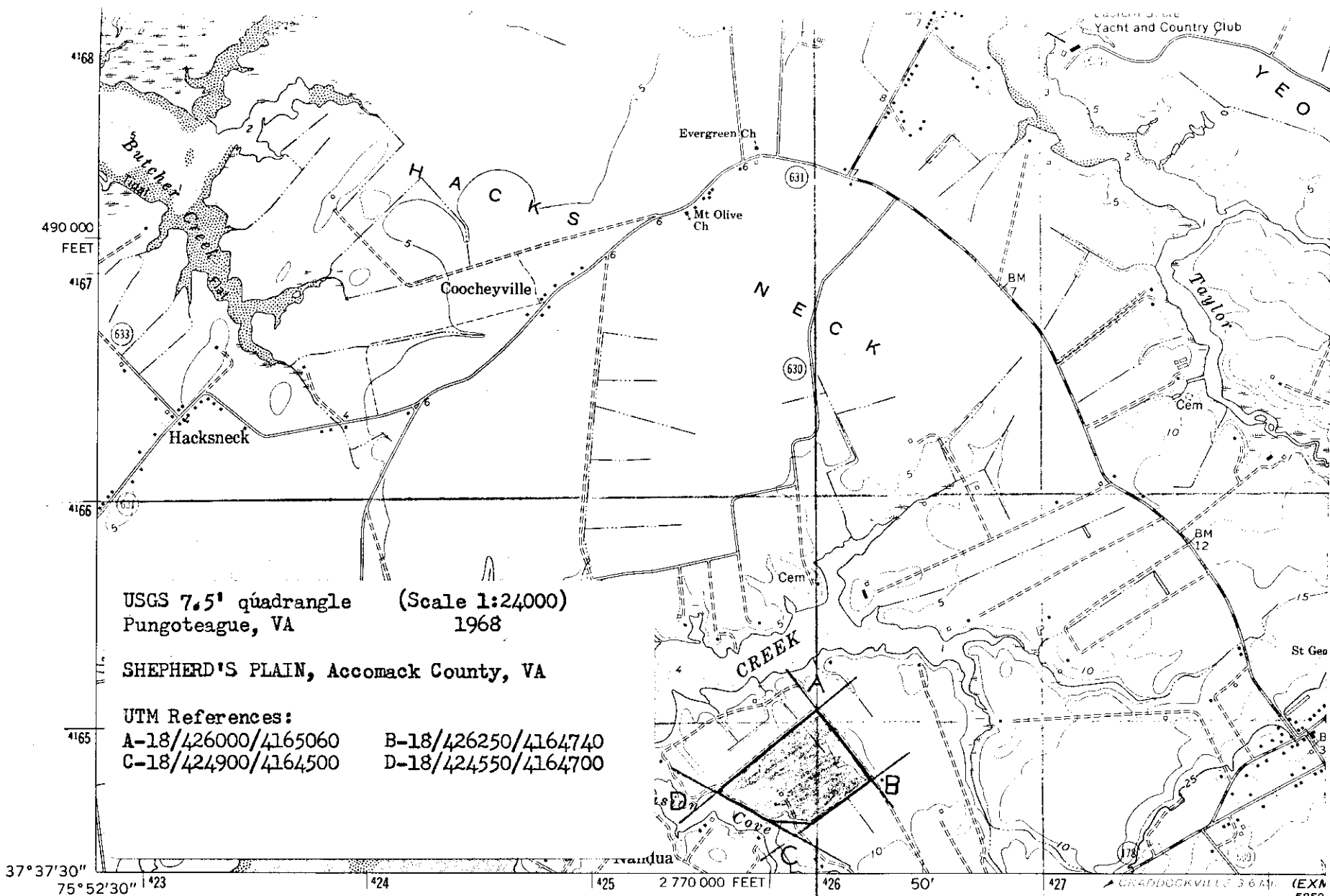
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The nominated property of approximately 46 acres consists of the main house and a small portion of the peninsula on which it sits. The property is situated between Nandua Creek and Kusian Cove and encompasses a small fraction of the original 350 acres owned by Margaret and Edward Ker. Ker was a tobacco farmer and the original "plain" surrounding the dwelling was used for raising this highly lucrative crop. Access to the residence was provided both by land and by Kusian Cove.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

On Ker's death the property passed to his wife Margaret who died shortly thereafter. By the late 1790s the property was in the hands of his eldest son, The Reverend George Ker, and remained with his widow until her death in 1822. After passing through the hands of a number of owners during the 19th and 20th centuries the house was acquired in 1974 by Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Roos who are in the process of restoring it. In spite of a long succession of owners and a period of abandonment the house has retained its salient architectural features. The grounds that surround the house on Nandua Creek and Kusian Cove have kept an appearance suggestive of an 18th-century setting. The land to the east of the house still is farmed.

MTP/RCC



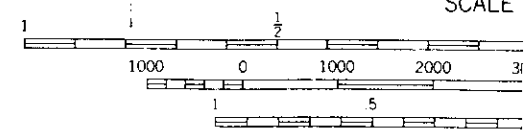
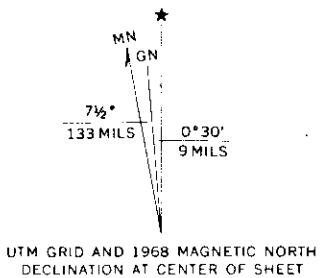
USGS 7.5' quadrangle (Scale 1:24000)  
 Pungoteague, VA 1968

SHEPHERD'S PLAIN, Accomack County, VA

UTM References:  
 A-18/426000/4165060 B-18/426250/4164740  
 C-18/424900/4164500 D-18/424550/4164700

(JAMESVILLE)  
 5859 III SW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
 taken 1967. Field checked 1968  
 Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1943  
 Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts  
 564 (1970) and 568 (1969). This information is not intended  
 for navigational purposes  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18,



SCALE  
 CONTOUR INT  
 DATUM IS ME  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN  
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE  
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TID

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATION  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL  
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RES