

VLR-4/22/92 NRHP-10/15/92

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 an 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 BLANDFORD CEMETERY

other names/site number DHR File No. 123-110

2. Location

street & number 319 South Crater Road N/A not for publication

city or town Petersburg N/A vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Petersburg code 730 zip code 23803
(independent city)

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Walter C. Miller 8 Sept 92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

Blandford Cemetery

Name of Property

Petersburg, Va.

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	3	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary/Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC

MID-19TH CENTURY: Gothic Revival

Exotic Revival

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other STONE: Marble

Granite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet, Page 1.

Blandford Cemetery

Name of Property

Petersburg, Va.

County and State

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.
- 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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)

Art

Period of Significance

1702 - 1924

Significant Dates

1702, 1735, 1819

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Davidson, James

Bowie, McCleary & Wright

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 # _____
- 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:

Blandford Cemetery

Petersburg, Va.

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 189 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 28 9 0 00 4 1 23 18 0
Zone Easting Northing
2 18 2 89 29 0 4 1 22 16 0

3 1 8 2 89 1 00 4 1 2 1 90 0
Zone Easting Northing
4 1 8 28 8 84 0 4 1 22 24 0

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 Ashley M. Neville, Consultant for the City of Petersburg and
organization Historic Blandford Cemetery Foundation date March 30, 1992
street & number Route 4, Box 168 telephone 804-798-5676
city or town Glen Allen state Va. zip code 23060

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Petersburg, c/o Department of Planning and Community Development
street & number City Hall, Tabb and Union Sts. telephone 804-733-2308
city or town Petersburg state Va. zip code 23803

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

Summary Description

Blandford Cemetery, prominently sited atop Wells's Hill, is a visual landmark for the area with its obelisks, crosses and significant groupings of gravestones and fences. The site was used as a cemetery by 1702, more than thirty years before the Anglican church was built there in 1735. In 1819 the town of Petersburg purchased the church and adjacent land for use as the public burying ground. Land acquisition over the years expanded the cemetery to its present size of 189 acres and it continues to be the public cemetery of Petersburg. The cemetery boasts a wealth of funerary art and architecture. Executed in a variety of materials, styles, sizes, and decorative motifs, the gravestones reflect the changing attitudes toward death and burial. Blandford's collection of cast and wrought iron fences and gates is the largest and finest in the state and one of the best in the nation.

Descriptive Analysis

The origin of the cemetery at Blandford, that today covers 189 acres, 110 of which are developed and has approximately thirty thousand gravestones, is shrouded in history. The earliest gravestone, the 1702 stone of Richard Yarbrough, stands just northwest of the main entrance to the church. Although just a remnant today, it indicates there was a cemetery here before Bristol parish built the brick church in 1735.¹ The handsome wall that enclosed the churchyard in the 1750s is laid in English bond with cap of semicircular coping bricks. The original openings align with the west and south doors but the weathered sandstone finial do not appear in early twentieth-century photographs and may have been moved here from another site in Petersburg. The later walls along Crater Road and Rochelle Avenue, parts of which date from 1819 when the town purchased the land, extend south along Crater Road and today join the wall of neighboring St. Joseph's

¹Just a nub of the original stone survives. At some point the stone was recarved with the following: Richard Scarborough/1702/Age 87. In 1981 his descendants discovered this was in error and had a stone with the following inscription laid at the foot of the older stone: Richard Yarbrough/1702/Age 87. This stone was originally engraved as above. The centuries eroded the soft stone and with repairs errors were made. Erected by descendants of Richard Yarbrough. 1981.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

Catholic Cemetery.

As the cemetery expanded east and south of the church it included a ravine with a spring-fed stream southeast of the church. The hill on the opposite side is a prominent site for the large Confederate soldiers's section. The hills also provide panoramic vistas from the old ground to the new. The newer sections of the cemetery are more level and were actually cultivated fields until purchased by the city in the 1920s.

Cedars, yew, and boxwood, favored for their allusion to immortality as well as holly, and crepe myrtle trees, all traditional funerary vegetation, shade the older parts of the cemetery as do the large oak trees particularly visible on Memorial Hill. In the newer sections, areas that long ago lost their tree cover to farmer's fields, maple trees line the streets. On the individual grave level, roses and ivy, also heavily symbolic, often grace individual graves or squares.

The wide variety of monuments that stand in rows trace the changing attitudes toward death from the very literal and blunt beliefs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the softer, more romantic views of the Victorian era to the efficient and often terse modern attitude towards death. The early stones in Blandford are fairly plain. A scored line may be the only decorative feature such as the Colonel William C. Greenhill stone executed by James Davidson. Davidson is the earliest documented Petersburg carver in Blandford, and while much of his work was done in the early nineteenth century and, therefore was stylistically very plain, he also executed more elaborate designs, as the 1837 John H. Smith stone indicates.

The more decorative of the early stones - usually carved for someone of importance - might carry a family crest such as the 1704 John Herbert stone. The 1806 Polly Daniel stone is replete with symbolism. The death's head, winged hourglass and crossed scythe and staff graphically illustrate the literal attitude toward death in this period. Another death's head is the 1799 Elias Parker stone. Common in New England, the stones are rare in the South and usually mark the grave of someone from that area as is the case here; Parker was from Boston. Blandford also contains several other soul effigies and cherub heads.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

As a more benign view of death succeeded earlier attitudes, images of a more memorial nature appear on gravestones. The Neo-classical design of the willow tree or urn and willow became increasingly popular. The urn and stylized willow of the 1789 Jacob Parker stone is one of the earliest. The 1829 John Taliaferro stone, carved by the local firm of Bowie, Wright & Sharpe, is an excellent example. Flowers and foliage were a Victorian favorite, as exemplified by the 1869 Mary Edwards Morris stone executed by Charles M. Walsh, another Petersburg carver. Clasped hands, usually seen with one male and one female hand and cuff, and the raised index finger are also numerous in Blandford. The cemetery has a fine collection of chest and table tombs. They range from the furniture-like appearance of the 1801 Katherine Rose and 1852 Charlotte Cocke monuments to the 1847 Gothic-inspired tomb of Anne Ponsonby by Struthers of Philadelphia.

No cemetery in use in the Victorian period would be complete without angels, cherubs, or ladies in mourning and Blandford is no exception. The 1861 Branch T. Hurt stone executed by John W. Davies of Richmond also has a delicately carved wreath of flowers, although erosion has taken its toll. The sculpture of the mourning woman on the 1859 Robert Dunlop monument, probably imported from Italy, and the inverted torch, symbolizing life extinguished, create an exquisite monument.

Blandford contains a large collection of obelisks. Borrowed from Egyptian funerary art, obelisks are found throughout the cemetery. The Gholson monument, a double column topped with urns and linked by a garland of flowers, is a particularly striking example. It was executed by Bowie, McCleary & Wright, a Petersburg firm. The most important obelisk is the Cockade City monument. Designed by Seth Heath, Jr., and erected by Bowie, Wright & Sharpe in 1857, it marks the grave of Captain Richard McRae, who commanded Petersburg volunteers in the War of 1812.²

Mausoleums never gained the popularity in Petersburg they did elsewhere and Blandford has only a few. Nevertheless, they represent the leaders of Petersburg. The Bolling family was the major land owner in early Petersburg and their mausoleum in Ward A represents their status. William T. Mahone, a Confederate general

²The Daily Express, (Petersburg), 17 June 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

and railroad industrialist, said he wanted to be buried with his troops and his Egyptian style mausoleum stands on Memorial Hill, the Confederate section. Henry Roper was a leader in the tobacco industry. His large, granite mausoleum, built about 1910, has his initials in the stained glass window. The last major mausoleum built is the Hines-Presson mausoleum. Both Hines and Presson were Petersburg businessmen. Built circa 1924 of rusticated granite, Doric columns support a full entablature and give it a temple appearance. Scattered throughout the cemetery, the mausoleums anchor sections of the cemetery that otherwise have a linear quality.

The monuments in Blandford are made of a variety of materials. The earliest are sandstone, a soft material that weathers poorly. As a result, most are in poor condition. Slate markers are uncommon and all the early slate stones mark the graves of New Englanders. Marble is the most common medium for markers dating from the late eighteenth century until the early twentieth century. Its composition and texture allowed carvers to execute the intricate designs popular during the nineteenth century. Blandford also has a small collection of "white bronze" monuments. Neither white nor bronze--actually a zinc alloy with a blue cast--they are found in a variety of styles. Granite is the most common stone used in the twentieth century when power carving tools became available. Concrete markers gained popularity during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Usually formed in molds, they may have been a response to the Depression. The grave of James Rennie Harrison, who died at age twelve, is guarded by an ever-faithful dog and is an excellent use of this medium.

Blandford possesses the finest extant collection of nineteenth-century decorative cast and wrought iron in Virginia, and one of the best in the entire nation in terms of both quality, quantity, and variety. The ironwork at Blandford includes gates that were produced during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, and decorative iron fences, gates, and urns from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the ironwork was designed and produced by unknown artisans. There are, however, many examples of ironwork for which the manufacturer is known due to either signed works or patterns that can be traced to surviving nineteenth-century trade catalogues.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

Petersburg is known to have had skilled blacksmiths at an early era, certainly by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the community was a center for various crafts tradespeople working in iron, silver, furniture, and ceramics. Since there were few stylistic changes in wrought iron fencing or gates during the 1770 to 1815 period in Virginia, it is difficult to assign dates to surviving examples. The wrought-iron gates at the original entrance to Blandford, now along Crater Road, could well date to as early as the 1770s. Wrought-iron gates to family squares that have surrounding brick walls could also date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century or the very early nineteenth century. These early squares certainly had some type of gate when the walls were erected. What is not known is whether or not the present wrought iron gates are the original ones, or if they replaced wooden ones.

Along the eastern side of the churchyard are several very handsome examples of wrought-iron fences and gates, with cast-iron ornamentation, that appear to date from 1815 to as late as 1835. The fence surrounding the Anderson Square is very much reminiscent of the fence erected in 1818 in nearby Richmond to enclose the State Capitol grounds. That fence, designed by the French artist Paul Alexis Sabbaton, features spears that resemble those on this fence. It is certainly possible that Sabbaton designed this fence. Nearby is the Dunlop Square, which has one of the most extraordinary iron fences and pair of gates in the entire cemetery. This wrought-iron fence and the cast-iron gate panels, with their crossed bones and funereal urns, are rare survivals and the work of someone very skillful in the production of cast and wrought iron. These gates are perhaps the earliest surviving major examples in Blandford Cemetery of ironwork that utilizes funereal motifs in its design.

While much of the early ironwork at Blandford Cemetery is believed to have been made locally (both Petersburg and Richmond had iron foundries), the vast majority of the decorative iron from post-1830 appears to have been produced elsewhere. Petersburg foundries produced little decorative iron, concentrating more on machinery and locomotive parts. Richmond, on the other hand, had a number of manufacturers of decorative iron and there is Richmond-made iron at Blandford. There is far more surviving iron, however, from New York and Philadelphia. The port of Petersburg certainly had much to do with bringing so much northern iron to the city, and perhaps the great rivalry between Petersburg and Richmond during the nineteenth

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century played a role as well in getting out-of-state iron to Petersburg.

There are known examples of cast and/or wrought iron at Blandford Cemetery that were made by the following firms: Barnes (Richmond, Va.); Wickersham (New York, N.Y.); and Robert Wood and its later incarnation as Wood & Perot (Philadelphia, Pa). The surviving ironwork appears in a variety of styles that were popular during the nineteenth century and there are a number of examples, primarily of gates, that incorporate funereal iconography that was so important to the design of gravestones and mausoleums of the era.

There are numerous examples throughout Petersburg and in the cemetery of works by J. B. Wickersham (later called Hutchinson & Wickersham, then The Composite Iron Works), of New York City. Most of these fences in Blandford are standard designs that were often used in residential areas as well as in cemeteries. Because of this, funereal motifs used on these fences and gates are applied elements, usually a finial atop fence posts, as gate heads, or cresting along the top of fence rails. One fence head design by the Wickersham firm, that appears atop various gates at Blandford Cemetery, has a flaming urn motif, a design element intended to symbolize eternal life. The 1857 Wickersham catalogue describes it as, "intended to suit Gates in Cemetery Enclosures, with the name of the owner attached."³ One of the several examples at Blandford, the Old Square, has the date 1870 and the name J. B. Old applied.

Robert Wood (Philadelphia, Pa.) was an important iron manufacturer and Blandford possesses a number of signed examples of work by this firm. Robert Wood manufactured iron from the late 1830s until the mid-1850s when his firm became Wood & Perot. Wood appears to have been America's first important manufacturer of ironwork designed specifically for use in cemeteries. His works, especially in gate designs, often incorporated funereal symbolism. Work by Robert Wood and the later Wood & Perot were popular in cemeteries throughout the South.

Wood and Perot was perhaps the most important manufacturer of

³Victorian Ironwork, A Catalogue by J. B. Wickersham,
(Philadelphia: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 1977), p. 43.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

decorative ironwork in the mid-nineteenth century. From a technological standpoint, they were unequalled and they fashioned some of the most imaginative designs ever created in iron. Blandford Cemetery possesses a good assortment of works by this firm, many of which appear in their 1858 catalogue. Especially noteworthy examples include the Ligon Square fence and gate and the Sutherland Square fence and gate that appear as a unit in that catalogue (often the purchaser would mix and match gates and fences in a manner different from that illustrated in a catalogue).

The most important decorative iron at Blandford Cemetery is that used at the Cockade Monument. Erected in 1857 to honor the Petersburg volunteers in the War of 1812, this monument's iron has been attributed to the firm of Wood & Perot. The gilded cast-iron eagle that tops the marble shaft is more than likely the work of the firm. A pair of identical eagles, incorporated in a fence design known to be the work of Wood & Perot, flank the entrance gates to the old Statehouse in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and are contemporaries of the Cockade monument. No documentation has surfaced for the Cockade Monument fence and gate; however, it is of a very sculptural design that is so complex that few, if any other, iron manufacturers in the United States were technologically capable of producing it. It is also interesting to note that this firm produced the extraordinary cast-iron monument for James Monroe in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery two years after the erection of the Cockade Monument.

Symbolism fills the fence design. Oak leaves symbolize valor; olive branches, peace; battle axes, crossed rifles, and swords symbolize battle arms laid to rest; military hats stand for the Cockade Volunteers who received their name from a unique cockade design that was attached to the hats of their uniforms. Along the rim of the fence are seventeen stars representing the number of states during the War of 1812, and a shield on the gate also has seventeen stars.

Numerous fences by Wood & Perot at Blandford reflect the Gothic style that enjoyed a revival during the 1840s and 1850s. The Ligon Square fence and gates, a design that appears in the 1858 Wood & Perot catalogue, incorporates a naturalistic vine and tree trunk motif. This pattern was created as a response to the growing interest in the romantic or park-like landscape design for cemeteries that was then sweeping the nation. The posts of this

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

fence are in the form of broken tree trunks that usually symbolize a life prematurely ended. In fact, most of the stones within this plot indicate early deaths. An arch surmounted by a rose garland tops the entrance gate (presently damaged). Roses are a widely used symbol of innocence.

The J. T. Morris Square has an extremely interesting fence, probably made by Wood & Perot. Its pattern illustrates a series of symbols that include crossed shepherds' crooks, three links of chain, and a heart (or soul) in the palm of a hand. The gate to this square contains a design that appears on other fences in Blandford. It suggests a Gothic-style window, but uses a vine motif, and is extremely three-dimensional and heavy. This pattern combines the period interest in both Gothic design and in the romantic landscape. A few examples of this design in the cemetery are signed Robert Wood, while others have no signature, perhaps later castings by Wood & Perot or pirated works made by local firms.

The Bolling Mausoleum, a fine Gothic Revival-style structure built of granite and King of Prussia marble by Bowie, Wright & Sharpe in 1857, has a cast-iron gate that is most certainly the work of Wood & Perot.⁴ The gate's design uses a variety of symbols associated with funereal monuments: a winged hourglass symbolizes the transitoriness of life; a funereal urn; an inverted torch stands for the passing of life; and a garland of flowers and ivy that have various meanings including sorrow, purity, and innocence. This design has been attributed to Wood & Perot since elements of it, including the torches, winged hourglass, and garland, are identical to those on known Wood & Perot gates. The exceptional marble statue of the angel Gabriel for many years stood in the yard of the mausoleum until moved inside for security.⁵

Blandford Cemetery is unique in Virginia. It has a variety of funerary art in its monuments, cast- and wrought- iron gates and fences that span almost three hundred years of changing attitudes of death and mourning. Sited on the highest point of the

⁴Petersburg Daily Express, 9 September 1857.

⁵Sergei Troubetzkoy of Staunton, Virginia, wrote the paragraphs on cast and wrought iron in Blandford Cemetery.

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surrounding land, its grounds are one of contemplative beauty and monumentality.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

7. (Description)

Materials

Other STONE: Slate, Sandstone

METAL: Bronze, Iron, Cast iron

8. (Significance of Property)

Architect/Builder

Bowie, Wright & Sharpe
Walsh, Charles Miller
Davies, John W.
Mountjoy & Rogers

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Blandford Cemetery reflects the long history of Petersburg and surrounding areas. The traditional values, religious tenets, economic and social status, legal regulations, and even the natural environment of Petersburg are found there. The cemetery surrounding the brick Anglican church (ca. 1735) is now the third largest cemetery in Virginia, after Arlington and Hollywood. Two Virginia governors, a revolutionary war British general, three Confederate generals, and thirty thousand Confederate dead are buried at Blandford. Its collection of decorative cast- and wrought-iron fences and gates is the finest in Virginia. Its gravestones are a collection of sculpture that ranges from intricately carved marble statues to modern sculpture in bronze, and reflect the changing attitudes towards death from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Justification of Criteria

Blandford Cemetery is eligible under Criteria C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of several types and periods, represents the works of master stonecarvers, possesses high artistic values, and represents a significant and distinguishable entity of funerary art. More specifically, Blandford Cemetery possesses a collection of monuments and mausolea of high quality construction and materials expressive of funerary symbolism and design that span nearly three centuries and possesses an outstanding collection of cast- and wrought-iron fences, gates, and funerary objects.

Blandford Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D as a cemetery that derives its primary significance from age as the oldest cemetery in continuous use in the Petersburg area and from the distinctive design features of its funerary art.

There is one contributing building and three noncontributing buildings in the cemetery. The contributing building is Blandford Church that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. This nomination is for the large cemetery that surrounds the colonial church and churchyard. The three noncontributing buildings are a small cemetery office, a reception center for the Petersburg Department of Tourism, and a small storage building.

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Section number 8 Page 12 Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

The period of significance for Blandford Cemetery begins in 1702 with the earliest documented gravestone (that of Richard Yarbrough) and includes the construction of the brick church in 1735 and the purchase by Petersburg in 1819 of the church and surrounding land in order to create a municipal cemetery. The end of the period of significance is 1924, the year that marks the construction of the Hines-Pressen Mausoleum, the last major mausoleum built in the cemetery. It also coincides with the diminished use of elaborate and highly decorative monuments typical of the Victorian and turn-of-the-century eras and with the rise of the plain granite marker popular today.

Historical Background

Blandford became the municipal burying ground of Petersburg in 1819, but the oldest gravestones, the 1702 Richard Yarbrough stone and the 1704 John Herbert stone, indicate this area was used as a cemetery 117 years before the town purchased the land and more than thirty years before the Anglican church was built on Wells's Hill. While it is possible these graves were moved here after the church was built, strong local tradition holds they are original and there is no evidence to dispute this. Why the hill was chosen as a site for a cemetery and when burials first began here is not known; however, the siting of cemeteries on high ground or slopes was a common southern practice.

In 1735 construction began on a brick church on this site and the vestry held its first meeting in the newly completed church in August 1737. Fifteen years later, in 1752, the vestry contracted with Richard Bland to build the north wing and a brick wall around the churchyard. They were not completed until 1769.

The town of Blandford was established in 1748, eleven years after the initial construction of the church. When William Poythress laid out the town, the church and cemetery were Lot 100, a triangular-shaped lot on the southeastern edge of town. Blandford became a thriving tobacco center with numerous Scottish factors. In 1784 the small towns of Blandford, Pocahontas, Ravenscroft, and Petersburg combined to form Petersburg and Blandford gradually declined while Petersburg prospered. With the disestablishment of the Anglican church after the revolutionary war and the population shift westward, the congregation abandoned the brick church on Wells's Hill for a new one on Courthouse Hill in Petersburg. After 1805 services were held only sporadically at Blandford and the church gradually fell into disrepair and ruin.

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Blandford Cemetery, City of Petersburg, Virginia

In 1817 the Petersburg town fathers considered the need for a public burying ground and the old churchyard on the edge of town was a logical choice. This was a period of growth and rebuilding after the disastrous fire of 1815 destroyed nearly two-thirds of Petersburg. Within two years some three hundred brick buildings rose from the ashes and the growing town needed a cemetery. The Town Council appointed a committee to study the problem and a year later, in 1818, John Grammer, a prominent citizen, a member of St. Paul's Vestry, court clerk, and committee member, reported that he had secured a Land Office Treasury Warrant for approximately four acres that included the church and old burying ground. On March 1, 1819, Grammer conveyed the property to the town of Petersburg.¹ This formed the nucleus of Blandford Cemetery; it and the church are two of the few surviving historic properties of the once prosperous town of Blandford.

From this beginning Blandford continued to grow as Petersburg grew. Additional land acquisitions began in 1843 when the town purchased the thirty acre Loomis-Southwood tract.² This was also a period of prosperity in Petersburg that saw the construction of buildings such as the Courthouse and the Exchange (now known as the Siege Museum). The Common Council formalized management, passed a cemetery ordinance, and made plans to repair the church so that funerals could be held there.³ (There is no record that the church, vacant for over forty years by then, was repaired.)

In 1854 the town purchased an additional twenty acres from Herbert Whitmore⁴ and this was the size of the cemetery before the Civil War. During the siege of Petersburg, burials at Blandford were suspended due to its close proximity to the battlefield, and the

¹Common Council Minutes, 1805-1825, p. 125 and 151, Clerk's Office, City Hall, Petersburg, Va.

²Deed Book Liber 18, p. 310, Clerk's Office, Circuit Court, Prince George County, Va.

³Common Council Minutes 1835-1847, p. 263.

⁴Deed Book Liber 21, p. 498, Clerk's Office, Hustings Court, Petersburg, Va.

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church was used as a hospital.⁵ Several gravestones bear the scars of the shelling.

In 1866 Petersburg purchased twenty-five acres from the heirs of Elizabeth Orgain.⁶ The next purchases of land did not occur until the 1920s: thirty-five acres in 1920⁷ and 79.28 acres in 1927.⁸ The northern portion of the last purchase had been a part of New Market, the famous Southside Virginia horse-racing course. The southern portion was a part of the farm called Spring Garden. The foundation and chimney of the house stand a short distance to the east in what is now the Petersburg National Battlefield Park.

In 1953 and again in 1963 the city purchased two small parcels where the cemetery office and reception center are located.⁹ Today the cemetery covers approximately 189 acres, with 110 acres of that developed.¹⁰

From the beginning, the Petersburg Common Council concerned itself with the design, landscaping, and enclosure of the cemetery; however, few formal plans survive to indicate what changes have

⁵Blandford Church and Cemetery were only three-fourths of a mile from the siege lines and Cemetery Hill was a Union objective. A Confederate redoubt stood approximately where Ward DD of the New Ground is today.

⁶Deed Book Liber 27, p. 199-201, Clerk's Office Circuit Court, Prince George County, Va.

⁷Deed Book Liber 77, p. 339, Clerk's Office, Circuit Court, Prince George County, Va.

⁸Deed Book Liber 90, p. 336-337, Clerk's Office, Circuit Court, Prince George County, Va.

⁹Deed Book Liber 188, p. 338 and Deed Book Liber 256, p. 104, Hustings Court, Petersburg, Va.

¹⁰There is a discrepancy of about six acres between the total amount of land listed in the various deeds for the cemetery and the number of acres by actual survey. The 189 acre figure is based on a planometric done by the city of Petersburg.

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been made to the site over the years. Walls and fences to enclose the cemetery and family squares were always a concern. The brick wall that encloses the colonial churchyard was constructed in the 1750s when the north wing was added. Such a wall was very expensive for the period and might have cost as much as a year's salary for the minister. Most churches built wooden post-and-rail or pale fences.¹¹ In 1819, council commissioned the construction of a "good and decent brick wall and proper gate."¹² At least part of the present wall along Crater Road and Rochelle Avenue are thought to date from this period. The gates at the Virginia and Venable Avenue entrances are believed to date from the early twentieth century. Elevation drawings of gates drawn in 1928 by Charles Gillette, the noted landscape architect, are comparable to the present gates.¹³

The number of brick enclosures in the colonial churchyard suggests that the division of land into family squares is an old custom at Blandford. In the late 1750s Colonel William Poythress requested permission to enclose his family plot and the nubs and outline of this wall are still visible.¹⁴ In 1823 the Common Council regulated the fencing of squares by taxing fences at a rate of \$.25 per square foot of land enclosed and the charge was retroactive.¹⁵ The earliest fences for squares were probably wood. Sketches and watercolors done in the nineteenth century by the Simpsons, local

¹¹Dell Upton, Holy Things and Profane, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 200.

¹²Common Council Minutes 1805-1835, p. 135.

¹³In 1928, Charles Gillette drew a series of plans for the recently acquired land. They featured winding roads, small circular parks, a small lake, and a rest house. These plans were never executed and are now housed at the Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

¹⁴George Carrington Mason, Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1945), p. 91.

¹⁵Common Council Minutes 1805-1835, p. 268.

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artists, indicate the widespread use of wooden fences in Blandford.¹⁶ Unfortunately none survive. The most frequently used material for fences in Blandford is cast and wrought iron and Blandford boasts one of the best collections of these fences in Virginia.

Blandford developed in a grid plan with the majority of wards laid out in rectangular blocks of individual squares or groups of squares. The first mention of any design plans was in 1844 when a portion of the recently purchased Loomis/Southwood tract was divided into wards. The town surveyor and later the city engineer laid out most of the plans for Blandford.¹⁷

The first design plans for Blandford were being attempted during the rise of the rural cemetery movement. This movement promoted planned cemeteries and a park-like atmosphere and, not coincidentally, followed changes in attitudes towards death. The abandoned church with its ivy-covered walls induced more than one correspondent to describe it as an ivy-clad ruin, a necessity in that romantic period. Although Blandford may have undergone various landscaping changes in keeping with this fashion, Memorial Hill, with its curving paths and circular flower beds, was Blandford's major response to this trend.

While there are numerous stones in Blandford on which carvers left no record, those that did represent a variety of local, state, and national stonecarvers and their firms. There are stones in Blandford from Petersburg, Richmond, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Connecticut, and New York. Such a wide range of carvers indicates the trading patterns and the sophistication of Petersburg residents who were aware of national styles and trends and sought to bring them to Petersburg.

At least fifteen carvers from Petersburg have been identified thus

¹⁶For more information on the father and son artists as well as their sketches and watercolors see Pictures of the Past, Petersburg Seen by the Simpsons 1819-1895 by James H. Bailey, published by the Fort Henry Branch, APVA, 1989.

¹⁷Common Council Minutes 1857-1865, p. 177.

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far.¹⁸ Two of the best known and well represented are James Davidson and Charles M. Walsh. Davidson's work is found here from 1814 to 1840. He was also the coroner for Petersburg, and served as the cemetery keeper (now known as superintendent) from 1843 until his death in 1861. The next generation of local stonecarvers is best exemplified by Charles Miller Walsh.¹⁹ He carved in Petersburg from about 1865 until his death in 1901 when his sons took over his firm, the Cockade Marble Works. It is one of the ironies of Blandford that both Davidson and Walsh, whose signatures appear on many of the stones, are both buried in unmarked graves.

There are several stones in Blandford from the marbleyard of John W. Davies. Probably the most important of the Richmond carvers, his stones in Blandford demonstrate the high quality of his work. Other Richmond carvers include J. H. Brown, John T. Rogers, William Mountjoy, and Mountjoy and Lyon.

One of Blandford Cemetery's most notable features is Memorial Hill, where a reported thirty thousand Confederate soldiers are interred. It was a vast undertaking by the Ladies Memorial Association of Petersburg. Established in May 1866, the association is one of the oldest continuously active women's groups in the country and their first task was to provide a proper burial for the Confederate dead.

During the siege, when burials in Blandford were suspended, the Confederate dead were hastily buried in churchyards, scattered cemeteries, and on neighboring farms. The Ladies Association identified and cared for these graves and when Petersburg donated

¹⁸The list of stonecarvers whose work stands in the cemetery is not complete. The Historic Blandford Cemetery Foundation has undertaken a survey of all stones and fences. When this information is computerized a more complete understanding of this aspect of cemetery research will be available. Attached is a partial list of stonecarvers derived primarily from the oldest sections of the cemetery.

¹⁹For more information on Charles Miller Walsh see the article by Martha Wren Briggs, Charles Miller Walsh: A Master Carver of Gravestones in Virginia, 1865-1901, Markers VII, (Needham, Mass.: Association for Gravestone Studies, 1991).

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land at Blandford, they created the area now known as Memorial Hill. Thus began a project that continued for many decades.

In May 1868 the Ladies Association chose a design for this area drawn by Henry D. Bird, a civil engineer and local resident. The design called for sections of varying size for each of the Confederate states separated by curving paths and circular flower beds with space at the top of the hill set aside for a monument.²⁰ In 1884 an iron arch designed by William S. Simpson in the Gothic style was erected at the entrance to Memorial Hill, but was replaced in 1914 by the present stone arch. Burns and Campbell, a local stoneyard that also erected many gravestones in Blandford during this period, constructed the arch from plans drawn by Richard A. Munden, a Petersburg architect. Burns and Campbell also installed the individual state markers between 1917 and 1919.²¹

On June 9, 1899, the cornerstone for the soldiers monument was laid with appropriate Masonic and military ceremonies. The following year the completed statue was unveiled with much fanfare. Virginia Governor Philip W. McKinney presided over the ceremonies and Colonel W. Gordon McCabe spoke. Miss Lucy Lee Hill, daughter of General A. P. Hill, unveiled the white bronze statue of a Confederate soldier, accoutered as an infantry private, atop a six foot granite shaft. The monument was cast by Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut.²² The cast-iron bandstand was erected in 1908 to replace an earlier wooden speaker's stand.

Blandford has been the primary burial ground of Petersburg and surrounding counties and therefore both local leaders and those who rose to state-wide importance are buried here. The Scottish factors who created much of the early growth of Petersburg are here, as are the later industrialists in tobacco, cotton, flour, and railroads. Two Virginia governors, William E. Cameron and

²⁰Minute Book No. 1, p. 44, Ladies Memorial Association papers, Centre Hill, Petersburg, Va.

²¹Ibid, p. 66.

²²Ibid, p. 84-85.

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William Hodges Mann;²³ a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, John Fitzhugh May (1784-1858); three Confederate generals, William T. Mahone, David A. Wiseiger, and Cullen A. Battle; and revolutionary war General William Phillips, the highest-ranking British officer buried on American soil, are interred at Blandford.

While death may be the great leveler, burial places are not. The scions of Petersburg society are marked with monuments that leave no doubt as to the owner's stature. The Bolling, Roper, and Dunlop monuments all attest to the status of the families they memorialize. Those who lived on the fringes of the dominant society are likewise buried on the fringes. In Blandford, the poor, the unconnected, and the "persons of color" were buried on the edges. There are several sections in Blandford set aside for paupers. While these areas appear empty, there are graves there, they are just not marked.

Petersburg was a segregated city with a segregated cemetery. The situation concerning the burial of blacks at Blandford in the early years is unclear, but an 1837 ordinance prohibited their burial there.²⁴ Slaves were sometimes buried in their master's square, but that does not account for the large number of slaves and free blacks who lived in Petersburg and are registered in the Blandford records.

In 1850 Councilman William Hinton sought to establish of a black section, noting the "propriety of providing a burying ground for persons of color by the city." After initial resistance by the Council, such a section was authorized in 1851 to be located on the eastern extremity of the cemetery and separated from it by a

²³William Evelyn Cameron was born in Petersburg in 1842. He was a newspaper editor in Petersburg and Richmond and served four terms as Mayor of Petersburg. He was governor from 1882 to 1886. William Hodges Mann, born in 1843 in Williamsburg, was a judge and a legislator from Nottoway County. While in the state legislature, he fathered Virginia's most progressive education legislation to that time. He served as governor from 1910 to 1914.

²⁴1837 Ordinance

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fence.²⁵ In 1899 a separate road was opened to this section and on a 1928 map of the cemetery it is referred to as the Colored Cemetery. Burials at Blandford are no longer segregated by race; however, because of family connections, most burials of African-Americans continue to be located in this section.

Thus the history of Petersburg is reflected in Blandford Cemetery. The leaders and common folk of Petersburg, from its early industrial beginnings, through its role in the Civil War, to the present day, are represented at Blandford. Its gravestones, fences, and plan combine to create a visual history of the area that spans almost three centuries and traces changing attitudes of life and death in a major southern city.

²⁵Common Council Minutes 1847-1853, p. 226.

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STONECARVERS

Petersburg Stonecarvers

James Davidson	1814 - 1840
Bowie, McCleary & Wright	1824 - 1853
Bowie, Wright & Sharpe	1829
Bowie & Wright	1840 - 1861
Robert Sharpe	1853 - 1860
Robert Wright	1852
Charles Miller Walsh or Cockade Marble Works	1865 - 1901
G. E. Browder	1863
Browder, Gill & Co.	1866
Browder and Gill	1868
John McGill	
Robert Browder	
Nathaniel Browder	
Burns & Campbell	1877 - 1924
Ramkey & Murray	1880
George Ramkey	
Charles Murray,	
A. G. Andrews	1934 - Present

Richmond Stonecarvers

Alan Lyon (A. M. Lyon)	1830 - 1846
Mountjoy & Lyon	1836
J. T. Rogers	1841 - 1847
Mountjoy & Rogers	1846
John W. Davies	1859 - 1861
Wallen & Wray	1877
J. H. Brown	1886 - 1890

Norfolk

R.D.	1846
Cooper/Cooper Marble Works	1914

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Baltimore

A. Gaddess	1830 - 1864
Hugh Sissun	1836
Gaddess Brothers	1877

Philadelphia

Struthers	1843 - 1847
E. Greble	1859

Connecticut

N. Price & Son	Norwalk	1811
D. Ritter & Sons	New Haven	1833

Other Locations

S.P.D.S.C. Br-----teds	New York	1820
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No Location Known

G. M. W.	1826
C.Mc. C.W.	1842
A. Leslie	1847
B.B. Johnson & Co.	1851
A.C. Crann_____	1852
B & W	1852 - 1862
Cranmere	1853
Wood	1870
Jacque Lipchity	1962
C & M W	nd

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(Geographical Data)

UTM references

E	18/288760/4122210
F	18/288720/4122280
G	18/288360/4122100
H	18/288000/4122500
I	18/288120/4122540
J	18/288100/4122600
K	18/288460/4122690
L	18/288490/4122680
M	18/288790/4122810
N	18/288760 4122880

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for Blandford Cemetery are tax parcels 20-1-1, 20-6, and 20-7.

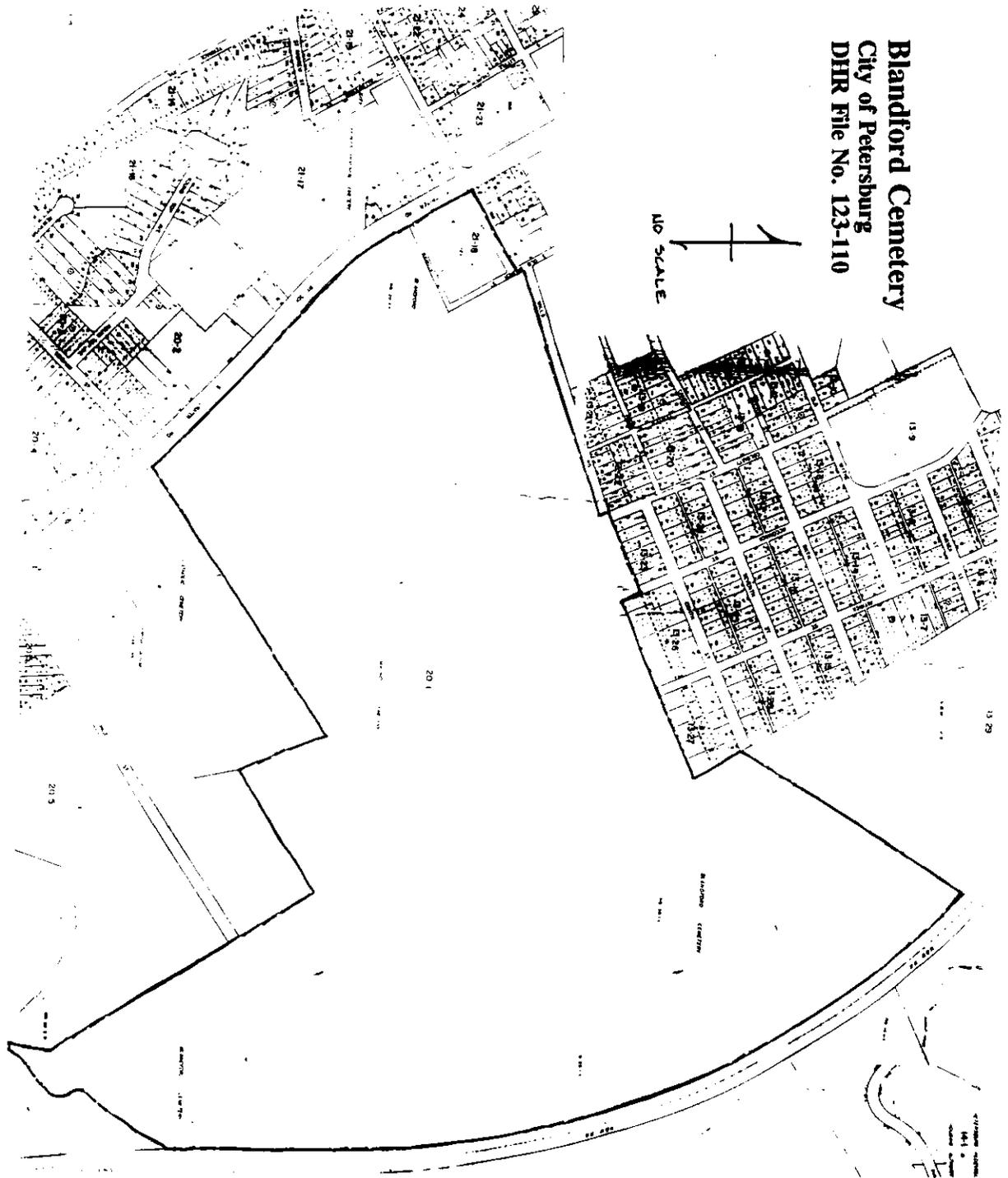
Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the nominated property are the same as the boundaries for Blandford Cemetery. It includes all the land designated as Blandford Cemetery by the owner, the city of Petersburg.

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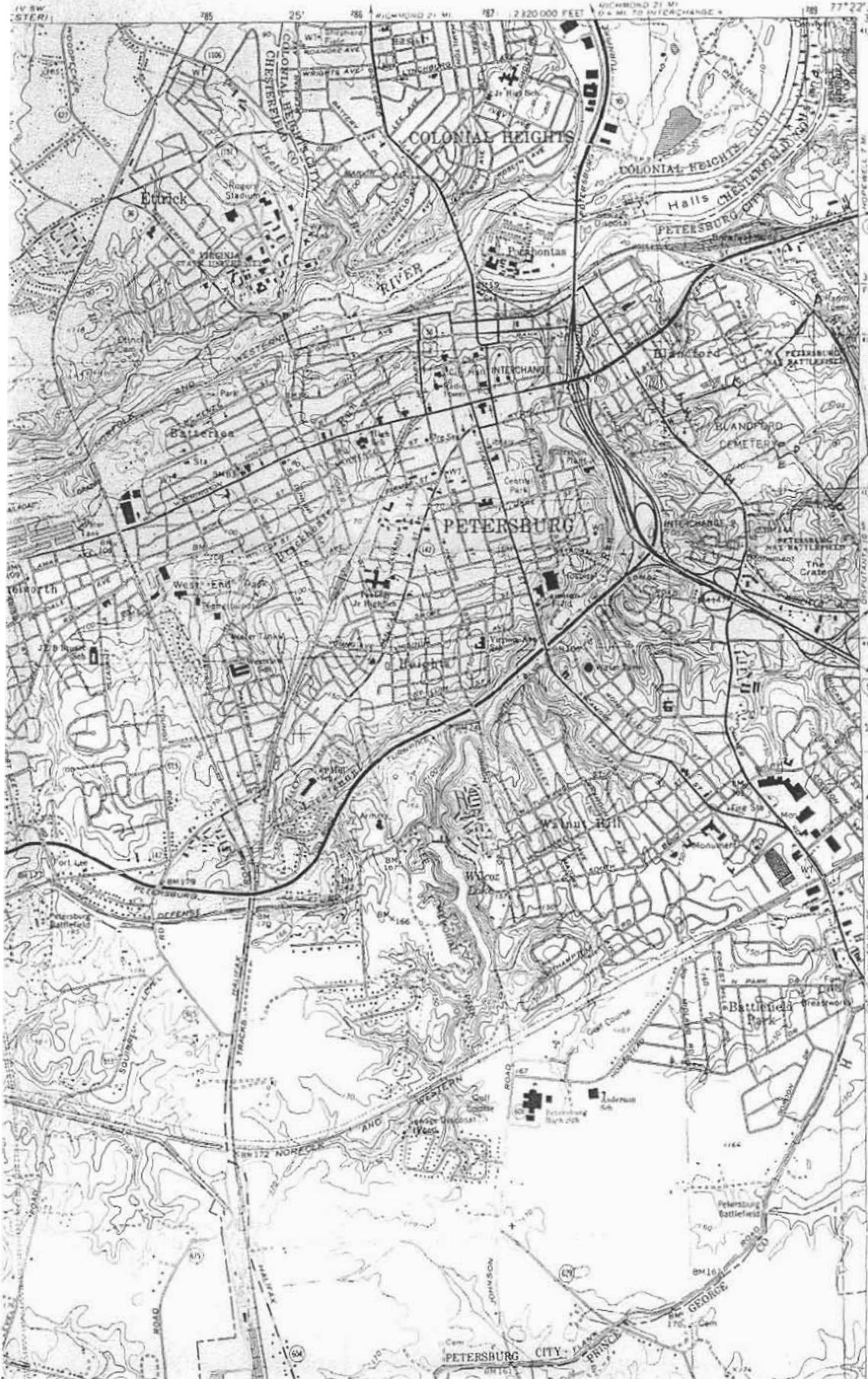
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PETERSBURG QUADRANGLE
 VIRGINIA
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

1954
 1:25,000
 1:50,000



BLANDFORD CEMETERY
 CITY OF PETERSBURG, VA
 UTA REFERENCES:

A	18	287000	4123180
B	18	287250	4122160
C	18	287500	4121900
D	18	288040	4122240
E	18	288200	4122210
F	18	288720	4122280
G	18	288360	4122100
H	18	288500	4122500
I	18	288120	4122540
J	18	288100	4122600
K	18	288400	4122480
L	18	288190	4122460
M	18	288730	4122810
N	18	288760	4122860

A	18	287000	4123
B	18	287250	41221
C	18	287500	41219
D	18	288040	4122
E	18	288720	4122:
F	18	288760	4122:
G	18	288360	4122:
H	18	288000	4122:
I	18	288120	4122
J	18	288100	412
K	18	288400	412
L	18	288400	412
M	18	288700	41
N	18	288760	4128

PRINCE GEORGE
 5058 111 NE