



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 134-0171

1. General Property Information

Property name: Pocahontas Fowling Club

Property address: 6216 Pocahontas Club Road

City or Town: Virginia Beach

Zip code: 23457

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: City of Virginia Beach

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: approx. 37

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property’s overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Pocahontas Fowling Club, now a private residence, is located east of Princess Anne Road on the west shore of Broad Bay in the southern part of the City of Virginia Beach and less than one-mile north of the North Carolina border. The 37-acre property consists of the former clubhouse parcel and the undeveloped parcel north of the clubhouse tract that is historically associated with the hunting club. Both parcels include areas of marshland, woodland, canals, and impoundment ponds. The property is accessed from Pocahontas Club Road by an unpaved driveway, which is gated on the east end. The clubhouse stands on a flat parcel, facing north and is surrounded by a grassy lawn that holds mature trees and a boxwood hedge. Outbuildings on the property include a garage, a former smokehouse/barn, and boat house ruins. A foot trail leads east from the house towards the canals and ponds, and ends at the shore of Back Bay. Parcels adjacent to the club property also include marshlands and woodlands, as well as active agricultural use and rural residential use.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Shingle

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Not known

If the builder is known, please list here: Not known

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1931

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The Pocahontas Fowling Club is a two-story, frame clubhouse that stands on a brick foundation, is clad with wooden shingle siding, and is covered by a slate-clad, side-facing gable roof with cross hip-roofed wings on each end, resulting in a H-shaped footprint. Exposed rafter tails extend beneath the deep overhanging eave of the roof and a wide wooden cornice encircles the house. A prominent exterior brick chimney projects from the south end of the eastern wing at the location of the communal lodge room; an interior brick chimney projects from the roof of the west wing. The metal wind gauge also projects from the roof ridge of the east wing.

The three-bay-wide central section of the front (north) elevation holds a centrally located entrance flanked by six-over-six wooden sash windows on the first-floor level; the second-floor level holds three pairs of six-over-six windows. The entrance, which features a glazed door with sidelights, is protected by a hip-roofed porch with shingle-clad corner piers and inset square columns. Window openings are flanked by paneled wooden shutters with a cut out motif of a Native American profile. Both end wings, also three-bays wide, hold centrally located entrances accessed by brick steps and featuring an architrave surround with flat pilasters and a dentilled cornice. Most windows on the clubhouse are six-over-six wooden sash; some windows have multi-pane transoms above and there are a few small, six-paned fixed windows.

The rear (south) elevation holds a shed-roofed porch that is enclosed by shingle-clad half walls with screen panels above. A door from the porch opens into the kitchen and is the only rear entrance on the building. The present owner enlarged the original small, rectangular windows in the kitchen to full size, but otherwise, the rear elevation is intact and retains the original single and paired six-over-six wooden sash windows.

Entry into the clubhouse from the front, centrally located doorway, accesses a long, transverse hallway. There are openings on the south side of the hallway into the dining room to the east and to the kitchen to the west. Openings into the side wings are present at either end of the hallway. Interior finishes generally consist of oak wood flooring (except the kitchen), wooden wall paneling and wainscoting, plaster ceilings, and a narrow wooden picture molding. The kitchen floors are finished with terra cotta tiles.

Entering the clubhouse through the door in the east end wing, one steps into a stairhall/entry hall. The wooden, winding stair rises on the west side of the hall and a doorway into the lodge room is located to the south. The lodge room occupies the majority of the first floor of the west wing. The room's wooden paneling rises the height of the walls, the ceiling is plaster, and the wooden carved fireplace is located on the south end wall. Built-in

wooden bookcases stand on the north wall of the room. The original copper lighting fixture centrally located in the ceiling also contains the interior apparatus from which to read the wind gauge.

A pair of French doors on the east side of the lodge room access the dining room, which features wooden wainscoting, papered walls, and a plaster ceiling. Five-panel wooden doors lead to the front hall (on the north) and the kitchen (on the east). The kitchen has been updated, but retains its long run of original built-in cabinets and the ancillary telephone room, which was furnished with a telephone connection via Munden Point. The dining room and the kitchen are located in the central section of the building.

The second-floor level of the clubhouse holds the eight individual bedrooms used by the club's members arranged along a U-shaped hallway. The paneled bedroom doors retain the brass numbers identifying the rooms and each retains the original centrally located ceiling light fixture, a sink, a mirror, and a small closet. Push buttons that connected to a call box (likely in the kitchen) could be used to summon assistance to each room. Two bathrooms on the south end of the hallway have been renovated. Rooms are located on both sides of the hallway except on the south side, which had rooms on the north side of the hallway and a long row of windows on the south side. A closet room is located on the west end of the hallway, which provided individual, locked storage spaces for hunters' belongings.

From the front door in the clubhouse's west end wing, one enters an office that leads to a rear living space, historically used by the club's overseer. There is also a gun/map room adjacent to the office, which retains a large glass-front gun cabinet. The small, winding staircase located south of the office leads to the second floor. Minor alterations to these spaces include opening a wall between the stair and the living area to provide access to the stairs from two sides, and installing a bathroom in the back portion of the office. On the second floor, two individual rooms have been connected on the interior to create a master bedroom. These alterations have not significantly altered the floorplan or the appearance of the clubhouse.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Garage, 1991. This one-and-a-half-story, frame garage, located southwest behind the clubhouse, stands on a concrete foundation, is clad with wooden shingles, and is covered by a broad hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles and topped with a centrally located, hip-roofed cupola. Two hip-roofed dormers are present on the front (north) side of the garage. Three overhead doors open into the garage bays and an entrance door is present on the east side. An exterior wooden stair at the back of the garage leads to an upper-level deck with access into the upper floor of the garage.
- Former smokehouse/pony barn/boat house, c.1970. A one-story, frame building, located southeast behind the house, was formerly used as a pony barn and is now a boat house/storage shed. Graffiti on the wooden framing of the building that is dated "1916" indicates that it was reused from a previous building. The shed is clad with wooden shingles and is clad with a double-sloped, standing-seam metal roof. A batten door is present on the west side and a large, multi-pane window has been inserted into the north wall.
- Boat house (ruin), c.1920. The ruins of an early boat house are located on the north side of the canal that formerly opened onto Back Bay. Metal roofing and wooden framing members are visible at the site.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The Pocahontas Fowling Club was granted a charter by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1903 and the club was formally incorporated on July 14, 1904.¹ The founding officers and directors of the corporation, all of whom were from Norfolk, were W.W. King, president; E.L. Mayer, vice president; J. Leon Wood, secretary-treasurer; Lomax Gwathmey; Edmund de V. Bradford; and Frank Hitch. Membership shares in the corporation were offered at \$2,500 each (equivalent to over \$80,000 in 2023).²

The club's initial purchase of land was in 1904 from Grandy D. Doxey and his wife with parcels of adjacent marshland purchased later. A deed from 1905 between the club and Thomas Morris and his wife provided an easement for the erection of telephone poles and wires leading from the Munden Point train station to the clubhouse, thus, establishing the earliest date for a clubhouse on the property. In 1909, the club's charter was amended and the cost of membership shares increased to \$5,000 (equivalent to over \$160,000 in 2023). The membership price for the club indicates that it was one of the most exclusive in the Back Bay area at the time.³ A register for the club, maintained from the club's inception in 1904, lists numerous dignitaries who visited the club as guests. These included President Howard Taft and U.S. Senator A. Willis Robertson, and Naval admirals, Army generals, and other notables.⁴

In 1908, the club's property was sold at auction. E.L. Mayer and some associates were the winning bidders at \$31,000 for the clubhouse and its 600 acres of land.⁵ By 1914, the Norfolk group sold the property to Northern sportsmen. The new members may have enlarged the original clubhouse, which was a one-story building with a central lodge room and one-story wings that held bedrooms. In 1931, a fire that originated in the pumphouse destroyed the pumphouse, the clubhouse, and a garage. A new clubhouse, the present building, was erected soon thereafter. At the time, the club had 10 members, including E.M. Allen, New York City; D.A. Carter, Springfield, MA; and John Payne, of Troy, NY.⁶

Benjamin Lafayette Etheridge worked as a guide for the club from about 1909 until about 1920, as did John Cartwright who was a guide from 1927-1939; J. Upton Waterfield was an early manager of the property and W.J. Litchfield was the caretaker in the 1930s. Norfolk owners (described by newspapers as "doctors, lawyers, and businessmen") regained ownership of the club in the 1940s and the club remained active into the 1960s. In 1963, the Commonwealth of Virginia purchased the club's buildings, 720 acres of marshland, and additional "high land" for development as the first state-owned public waterfowl hunting area.⁷ The state sold the clubhouse and surrounding acreage in 1964, and since that time the building has been a private residence. The present owner acquired the property in 1992.

Evaluation and NRHP Recommendation

In 1993, as part of the *Phase II Survey of Virginia Beach*, Tracerics completed a Preliminary Information Form for the Pocahontas Fowling Club. In its review, the Department of Historic Resources' Evaluation Team found the property individually eligible for listing under Criteria A and C with a score of 33.

The present PIF recommends the Pocahontas Fowling Club eligible for listing in the National Register under the proposed Gunning and Hunt Clubs of Princess Anne County Multiple Property Documentation as an example of a lodge-type associated property type. The property is recommended eligible under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture, Entertainment/Recreation, and Social History. The period of significance extends from 1904, the date the club was established, to 1963, when the property was sold to the Commonwealth of Virginia and became part of a state-owned wildlife management area (present-day Princess Anne Wildlife Management Area). The Pocahontas Fowling Club is eligible for listing under the MPD for its direct and important association with Princess Anne County's historic hunt clubs and its role in that economically and socially important network of owners, members, guests, and local residents who were hired as club staff and guides.

Following the proposed registration requirements for the gun clubs, the Pocahontas Fowling Club is located in the identified geographical region for the hunt clubs in the southern section of the City of Virginia Beach (formerly Princess Anne County) on the western shore of Back Bay. The present building, which replaced an earlier clubhouse that burned in 1931, was built specifically as a clubhouse for the hunt club membership—a stock corporation—and was occupied in the off-season by an overseer. The club ceased ownership in 1963, and the clubhouse has been used as a private residence since that time. The current owners purchased the house parcel and adjacent parcels in 1992. The building, which possesses excellent overall integrity, retains its H-shaped footprint, its exterior wooden shingle sheathing, original windows and doors, original wind gauge, and significant interior spaces of lodge room, gun/map room, dining room, closet room, staircase, and individual hunter's bedrooms with original door numbers, sinks, and mirrors. A basement space, which held the oil-burning furnace that provided central heating to the clubhouse and a carver's loft, also is present at the southwest corner of the house. The original telephone room, which connected with a line from Munden Point, also is intact.

None of the standing outbuildings on the property are directly associated with the property's use as a hunt club. The ruins of a former boat house, possibly from the 1920s, are visible on the north side of the canal that formerly opened into Back Bay. Through storm action and sedimentation, the eastern end of the canal is now closed off. Other canals, also now closed to the bay, are present in the marshland north of the house. The house parcel also includes one of the many impoundment ponds used by the hunt club. Other ponds are present on an adjacent property, which is under separate ownership.

ENDNOTES

1. State Corporation Commission Index, Library of Virginia, Richmond; "New Charters Granted," *The Virginian-Pilot*, July 15, 1904:6.
2. Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge, *Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound* (Virginia Beach, VA: CurBac Press, 1991), 55.
3. Princess Anne County Deed Book 74:444; Johnson and Coppedge, 55-56.
4. Archie Johnson, personal communication. Mr. Johnson stated that he had personally reviewed the Pocahontas Fowling Club register. At present, it is believed to be in the possession of a Norfolk resident whose family was formerly associated with the club.
5. "Pocahontas Fowling Property is Sold," *The Virginian-Pilot*, August 19, 1908:4.
6. "Fire Destroys Pocahontas Club Building," *The Virginian-Pilot* (published as *Virginian-Pilot* and *The Norfolk Landmark*), August 21, 1931: 24.
7. Johnson and Coppedge 56, 58; "Va. to Buy 720-Acre Hunt Club," *The Virginian-Pilot* (published as *The Virginian-Pilot* and *The Portsmouth Star*), March 8, 1963: 59.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

Gresalfi, Mark and Diane, property owners of the former Pocahontas Fowling Club.
2022 Personal Communication. October 18.

Johnson, Archie and Bud Coppedge.
1991 *Gun Clubs and Decoys of Back Bay and Currituck Sound*. Virginia Beach, VA: CurBac Press.

Princess Anne County/City of Virginia Beach, Land Records.
Various Dates Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Virginia Beach.

State Corporation Commission Index
Various Dates Microfilm on file at the Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Traceries
[1993] "Pocahontas Fowling Club," Preliminary Information Form. Copy on file, Archives, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

1993 *Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II.* Prepared for the Department of Historic Resources and the City of Virginia Beach Department of Planning. Virginia Beach, VA.

The Virginian-Pilot

1904 "New Charters Granted." July 15.
1908 "Pocahontas Fowling Property is Sold." August 19.
1908 "Mr. Montague Hunting Ducks." November 21.
1929 "J. Upton Waterfield, Back Bay Guide, Dies." October 9.
1931 "Fire Destroys Pocahontas Club Building." August 21.
1986 "Back Bay Was Once a Haven Where Duck Hunters Flocked." November 12.
1992 "Historic Bird-Hunt Club For Sale Is Part of Back Bay Heritage." February 5.
1963 "Va. to Buy 720-Acre Hunt Club." March 8.
2007 "Conservationist Honored for Back Bay Dedication." December 6.

The Wildfowler [A Publication of The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum and The Back Bay Wildfowl Guild]
2015 "The Pocahontas Fowling Club: Part Five in a series of Our Heritage Is Our Legacy." Winter.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Mark J. and Diane Gresalfi
organization: _____
street & number: 6216 Pocahontas Club Road
city or town: Virginia Beach state: VA zip code: 23457
e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: _____
Date: _____

•• **Signature required for processing all applications.** ••

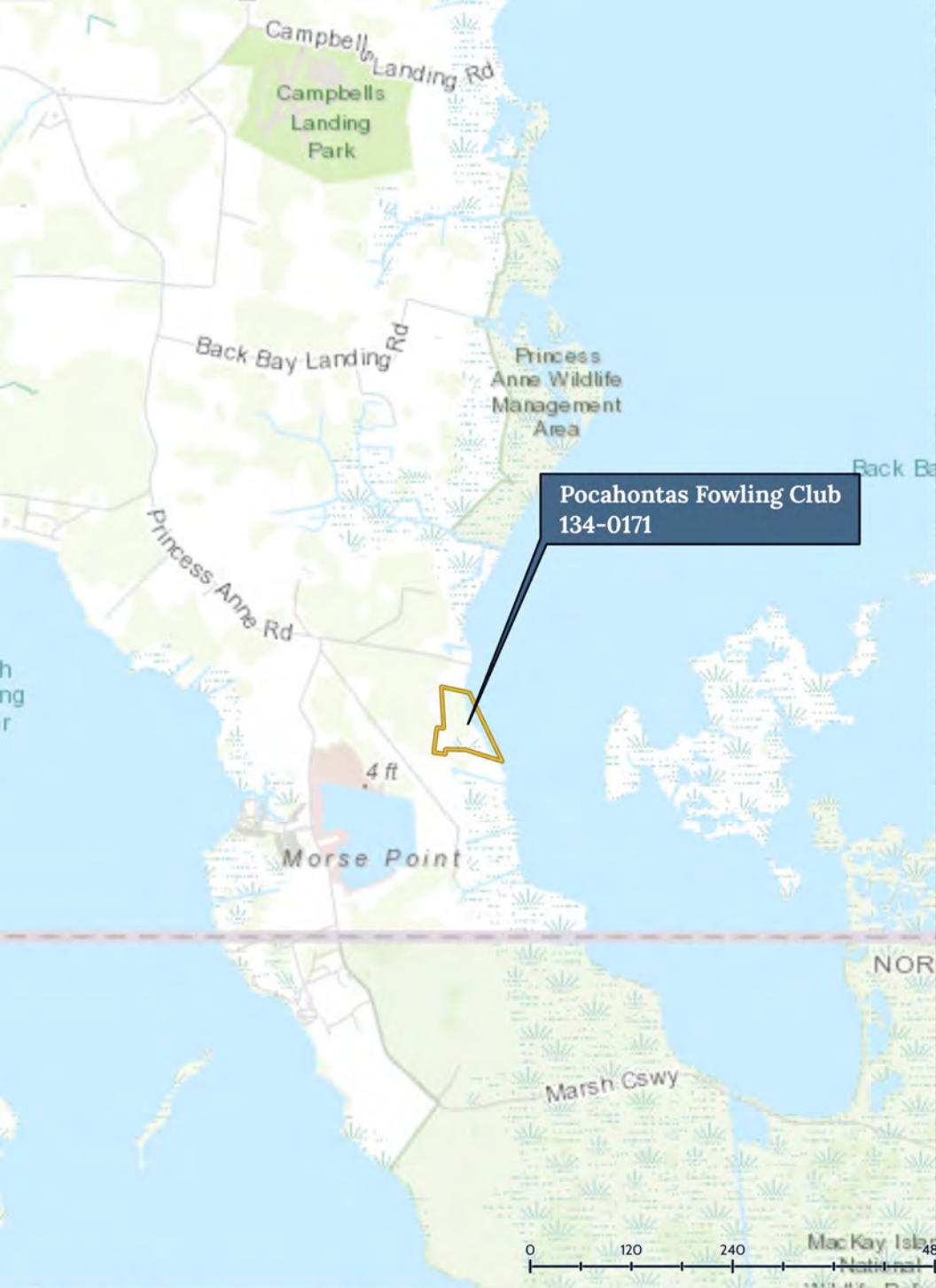
In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____
Daytime Telephone: _____

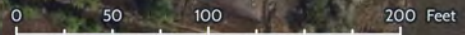
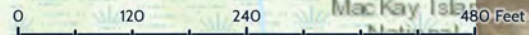
Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Debra A. McClane/Architectural Historian
organization: Debra A. McClane, Architectural Historian
street & number: 4711 Devonshire Road
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23225
e-mail: dmcclane1@verizon.net telephone: 804/233-3890
Date submitted: 3/27/2023


PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!



Pocahontas Fowling Club
134-0171

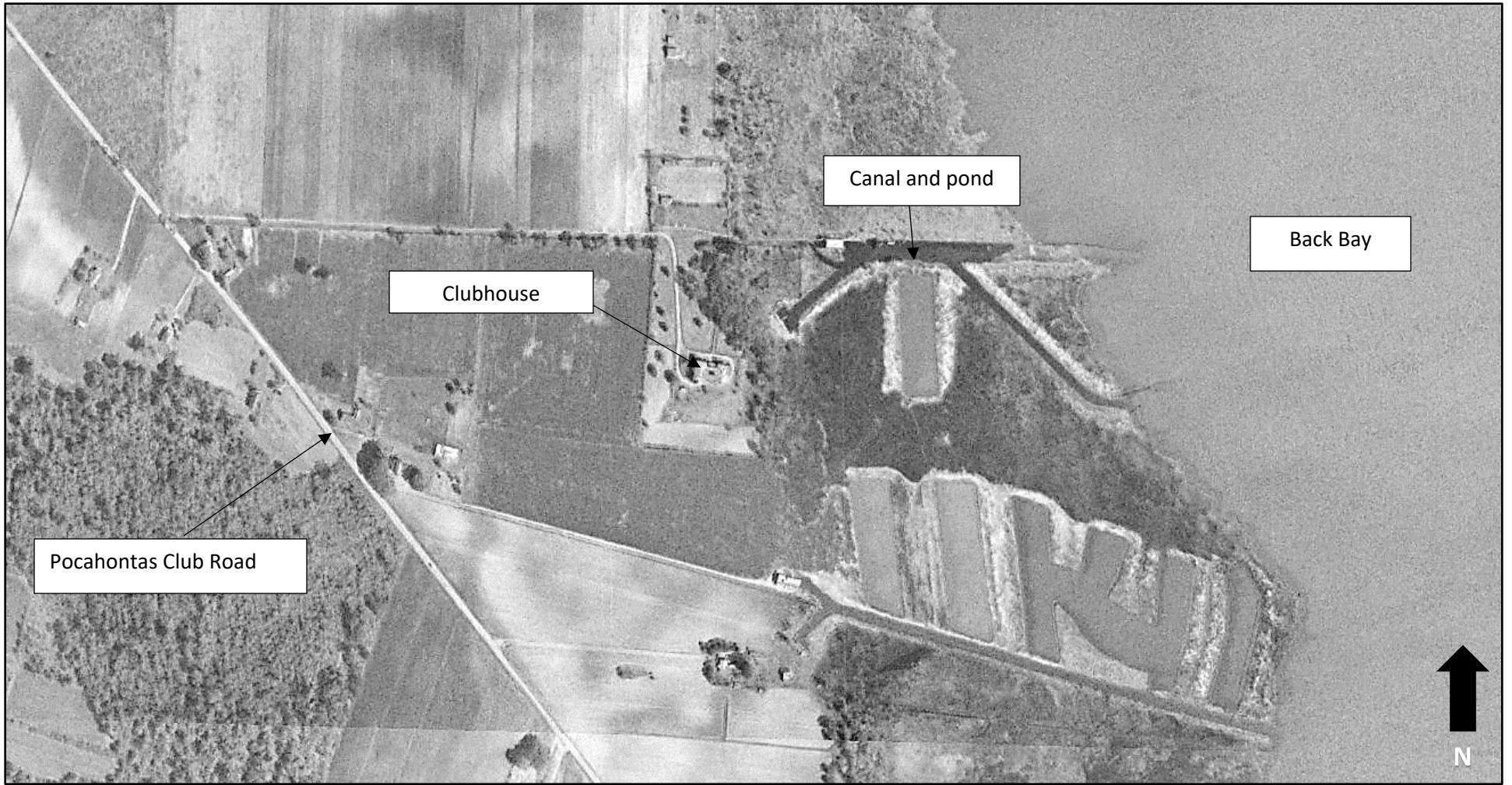


Pocahontas Fowling Club
City of Virginia Beach, Knotts Island Quad
DHR ID: 134-0171

-  Listed Resources
-  134-0171

Created By: D. Bascone 4/3/2023
 Sources: VDHR 2023, ESRI 2023, VDOT 2023, VGIN 2023
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1958 Aerial Photograph of Pocahontas Fowling Club Property, Princess Anne County, VA 134-0171. Source: City of Virginia Beach GIS



2021 Aerial Photograph of Pocahontas Fowling Club Property, City of Virginia Beach, VA 134-0171. Source: City of Virginia Beach GIS



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Looking_north_along_driveway



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Looking_W_from_foot_path_towards_clubhouse



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Exterior_front_elevation_looking_S



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Exterior_front_central_entrance_door



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Exterior_east_end_wing_looking_N



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Exterior_rear_elevation_looking_NE



134-
0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Exterior_front_elevation_west_end_wing.

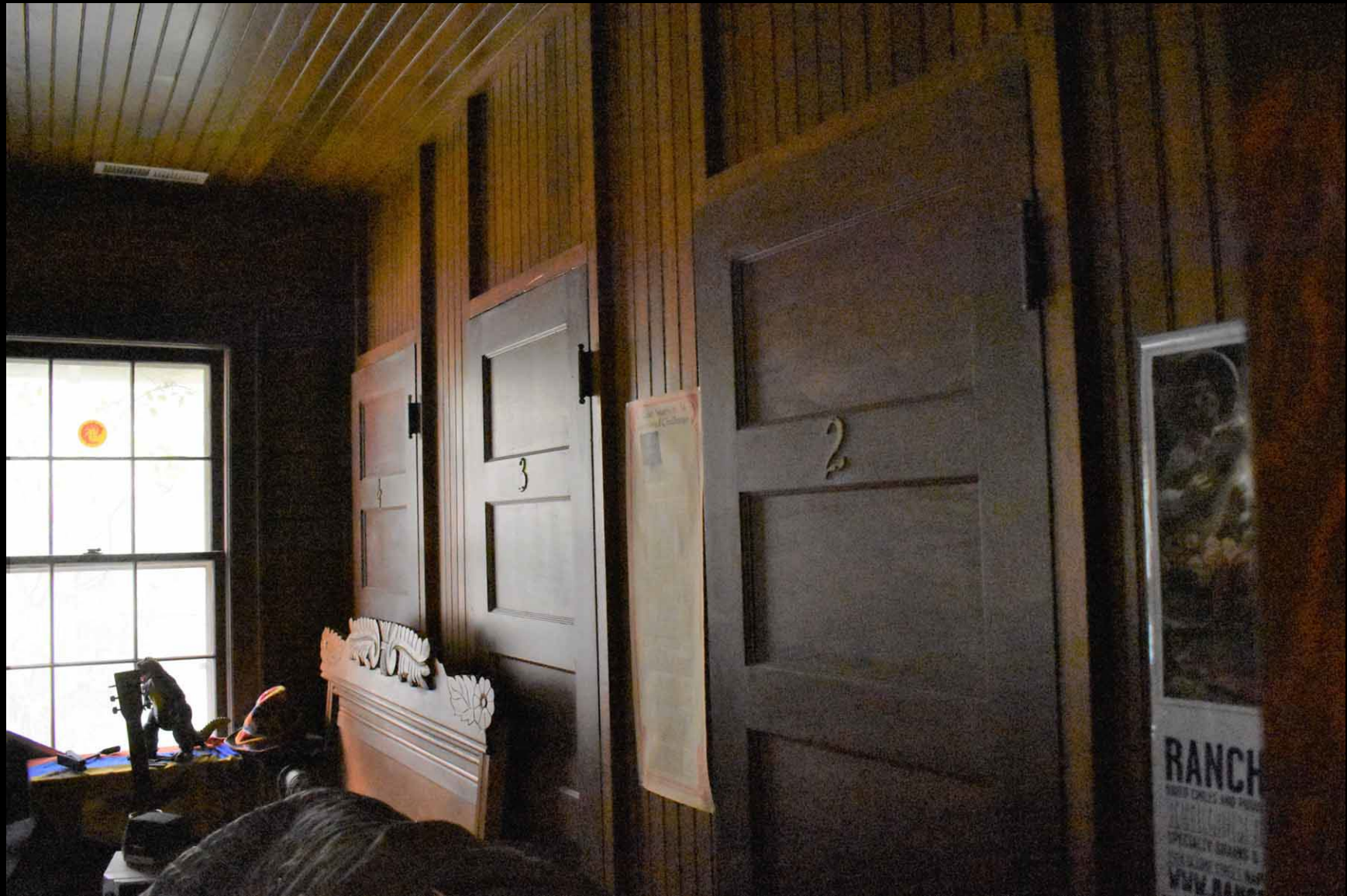


134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior__looking_W_from_lodge_room_to_dining_room



134-

0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_bedroom_door_with_brass_number



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_closet_room



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_fireplace_in_lodge_room



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_first-floor_hallway_looking_E



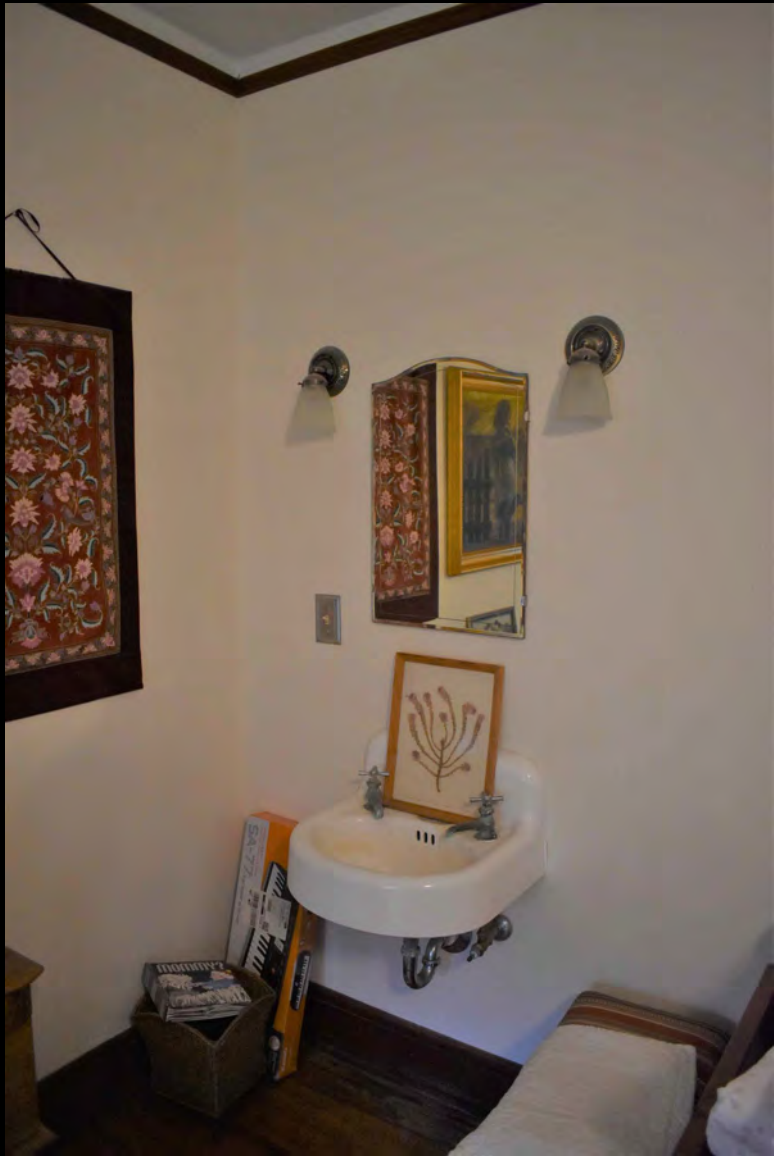
134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_front_entrance



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_lodge_room



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_second_floor_south_hallway



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Interior_sink_and_mirror_in_bedroom



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Secondary_resource_garage



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Secondary_resource_office



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Secondary_resource_former_pony_barn



134-0171_PocahontasFowlingClub_2022_Boat_house_ruins