

# Department of Historic Resources

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## ELEVEN HISTORIC SITES ADDED TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

*—New listings cover sites in the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Fairfax, Hanover, Henrico, and Stafford; and the cities of Alexandria, Charlottesville, and Richmond (2)—*

*—Boundary Increases were approved for three previously listed sites in Harrisonburg, Hopewell, and Richmond—*

*—VLR listings will be forwarded for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places—*

*—An expanded summary for each listing is provided at end of this press release—*

RICHMOND – The commonwealth’s 20<sup>th</sup>-century history in the areas of suburban planning and growth, African American history and civil rights, and in public education, among other themes, are highlighted in eleven historic sites added to the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) by the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) last week.

Community planning and development through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century underlie the new VLR listings of the Highland Springs Historic District in **Henrico County** and the North Belmont Neighborhood Historic District in **Charlottesville**.



Highland Springs arose as an electric streetcar suburb beginning in 1890 and featured a simple grid plan with small lots of one- and one-and-a-half story residences for white working class families. A variety of modest vernacular and definable residential architectural styles, dating from the 1890s to the 1960s, can be seen in the district. The mid-20th century saw the period of greatest growth in Highland

Springs, which derives its name from its elevated site and abundant springs scattered throughout the area, a few of which serve as the focal points of small community parks.



and the business section of the district.

In **Charlottesville**, the North Belmont Neighborhood Historic District covers about 75 acres located in the southeastern part of the city. The Belmont Land Company and the Charlottesville Land Corporation developed the neighborhood beginning in 1891. The district's period of significance stretches from around 1820, when Belmont Mansion was constructed, to 1960, when a new bridge opened in the district and significantly altered connections between the largely residential area



Post World War II growth and development supported construction of the Lee Medical Building in **Richmond** along the city's celebrated Monument Avenue. Facing the Robert E. Lee Monument, the six-story Colonial Revival building is the most prominent design of prolific local architect W. Harrison Pringle and the best-known project of local builder and developer Franklin A. Trice.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century African American history underscore new listings in **Stafford County** and **Alexandria**.



Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church and its cemetery were founded in 1870 in **Stafford County** by formerly enslaved African Americans under the auspices of a benevolent organization working with the Freedmen's Bureau. An 1870 church building was replaced by a new church constructed on the site in 1951. The later church is where the Stafford County branch of the NAACP was formed, and where in 1960 meetings convened with Civil Rights lawyers seeking to integrate

Stafford County's public schools, the first such meetings in the Fredericksburg area.



Founded around 1897 in the **City of Alexandria** as an unconstructed burial ground, Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is important to the history of the "The Fort" community, a village formed by African Americans on the site of the dismantled Civil War-era Fort Ward. Today's cemetery consists of burials marked by commemorative markers as well as many unmarked graves identified by archaeologists.

Oakland Baptist Church continues to own the cemetery, the only surviving privately owned African American cemetery in Alexandria.



Segregated public school education in 1930s Great Depression-era Virginia is embodied in **Fairfax County**'s Original Mount Vernon High School. Built during the segregation era, the high school opened only to white students when completed in 1939, with construction funded by the Public Works Administration (PWA). Designed in a Colonial Revival Institutional style, the school desegregated in 1965.

In **Amherst County**, regional religious history during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is revealed in the VLR listings of the El Bethel Methodist Church and Emmanuel Baptist Church.



Erected around 1930 on a natural rise, El Bethel Methodist Church is the second church built on the property and was constructed with materials recycled from the earlier circa-1857 church it replaced. One of two remaining public buildings of the once thriving Allwood community, the church combines Classical Revival and Late Gothic Revival stylistic elements, and is one of two existing Great Depression-era churches in the county. Regular services at the church ended 1989, and the El Bethel Community Association now uses the building for community events today. Enhancing the site's importance is the Allwood Cemetery, historically associated with, and located behind the church. The cemetery contains more than 300 graves and is the only active public burial ground in the area.



Emmanuel Baptist Church was constructed around 1907 on the outskirts of the former milling community of Sandidges. The Late Gothic Revival-style building features a three-story bell tower and is an important example of early 20th century ecclesiastical architecture in Amherst County, where few early 20<sup>th</sup> century church buildings have survived or remain largely unaltered and historically intact.

Other sites approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register last week during the quarterly meeting of DHR's State Review Board and Virginia Board of Historic Resources include:



- Kenwyn (presently known as Wynandra), built in 1929 in **Richmond**, is an exceptional early 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Revival-style house designed by well-known architect Carl Max Lindner Sr., and enhanced with garden designs by landscape architect Charles Freeman Gillette.



- The Little River UDC Jefferson Davis Highway Marker is located five miles north of Ashland in **Hanover County** along U.S. Route 1. Composed of gray granite and just over four-feet in height and 29-inches wide, the Little River marker was dedicated in 1936 and is one of sixteen erected in Virginia along the Jefferson Davis Highway between 1927 and 1946 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC).



- Established around 1817 for James Gilliam, Jr. (1776-1841), the 109 acre Gilliam-Irving Farm is one of the earliest existing examples of an evolved middle-class farmstead in **Appomattox County**. In addition to the main house, the property contains 14 standing secondary buildings and two known cemeteries, all of which contribute to the property's historical importance.

In addition to those new VLR sites, the DHR boards approved boundary increases for three previously listed sites including two historic districts.



- A boundary increase for the **Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District** expands it to include five historic buildings associated with the foundry complex known as P. Bradley & Sons. Established as P. Bradley & Co. in 1856 and relocated in 1867 to the current site, during its years of operation the foundry concentrated mostly on casting high-quality plows of its own pattern and executing other

general foundry work. During its peak, the foundry's reach extended throughout Virginia and into Maryland and Pennsylvania. The foundry ceased casting in 1961.



- The Downtown Hopewell Historic District boundary increase extends the district to incorporate several buildings that underscore the rise of automobile ownership in the post-World War II era. The expanded district now includes two service stations, an auto parts store, and an automotive dealership designed in the Art Moderne style. The expansion also features a two story former jail constructed in 1928 in a style known as Stripped Classicism.



- Previously listed in 1981, the nomination for **Richmond's St. Luke Building** has been updated and its boundary designation enlarged to include a two-unit row house that was historically and functionally associated with the Order of St. Luke and its headquarters in the St. Luke Building at 900 St. James Street.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources will forward the documentation for these eleven newly-listed VLR sites and boundary increases to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Complete nomination forms and photographs for each of these sites can be accessed on the DHR website at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

Listing a property in the state or national registers is honorary and sets no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property. The designation is, first and foremost, an invitation to learn about and experience authentic and significant places in Virginia's history.

Designating a property to the state or national registers—either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district—provides an owner the opportunity to pursue historic rehabilitation tax credit improvements to the building. Tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The tax credit program is voluntary and not a requirement when owners work on their listed properties.

Virginia is a national leader among states in listing historic sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places. The state is also a national leader for the number of federal tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year.

Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs play significant roles in promoting Virginia’s heritage and the preservation of the Commonwealth’s historic places and in spurring economic revitalization and tourism in many towns and communities.

### **Expanded Summaries of Sites:**

The Highland Springs Historic District, in eastern **Henrico County**, arose as an electric streetcar suburb that began in 1890 when Edmund S. Read, of Massachusetts, purchased land to create a community of modest, affordable houses near Richmond. Highland Springs featured a simple grid plan with very small lots of one- and one-and-a-half story residences for white working class families, which distinguished it from Richmond’s other contemporary street car suburbs intended for more upscale residents. An exception to the district’s array of modest dwellings are houses on larger lots close to Read’s residence or on lots adjacent to Nine Mile Road, residences that display sophisticated architectural styles such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Non-residential buildings in the district include institutional and commercial structures, churches, schools, an Art Deco theater, a Masonic Hall, and a post office, all of which continue to serve the Highland Springs community. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century saw the period of greatest growth in the district, as reflected in the large numbers of existing dwellings from that era built in Minimal Traditional or Ranch styles. A variety of other modest vernacular and definable architectural styles, dating from the 1890s to the 1960s, can also be seen in the district. The community’s name derives from its elevated site and several abundant springs scattered throughout the area, a few of which serve as the focal point of small parks in Highland Springs.

Important for its association with late-19<sup>th</sup> century suburban development adjacent to **Charlottesville**, the North Belmont Neighborhood Historic District covers about 75 acres located in the southeastern part of the city. The Belmont Land Company and the Charlottesville Land Corporation developed the neighborhood beginning in 1891 and through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the district’s houses and buildings date from the 1890s through the 1940s, representing the area of initial development, with the exception of some buildings dating to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The southern part of the district is also composed mostly of mid- and late-20<sup>th</sup> century resources, with a few late-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The district’s period of significance stretches from around 1820, when Belmont Mansion was constructed, to 1960, when a new bridge opened in the district and significantly altered connections between the largely residential area and the business section of the district. Containing 392 contributing resources, the district retains its character-defining architecture and exhibits and overall appearance of historical integrity.

Kenwyn (presently known as Wynandra), built in 1929 in **Richmond**, is an exceptional early 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Revival-style house designed by architect Carl Max Lindner Sr., and enhanced with garden designs by landscape architect Charles Freeman Gillette. Both men, well-known designers in the Richmond area, were at the height of their careers when they designed Kenwyn for Edward Victor Williams and his wife, Kate.

Prominent in Richmond's social and civic affairs, Williams was the successful manager of the Allen & Ginter branch of the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company (later, American Tobacco Company). Kenwyn, one of the first houses built in Westhampton's Paxton neighborhood, sat just beyond the city limits at the time of its completion in the Henrico County countryside. The area grew more attractive as a place for country homes after the creation of T.C. William's Windsor Farms, where Gillette completed several design projects, including for T.C. William's Agecroft Hall and the adjacent Virginia House. Lindner, who also designed apartment houses and churches, was a sought-after designer for residences in Richmond's fashionable neighborhoods, typically executing his designs in a variety of revival styles. One of Lindner's finest architectural compositions, Kenwyn is an impressively large and detailed example of the Georgian Revival style surrounded by Gillette's landscaping.

The Lee Medical Building, which faces the Robert E. Lee Monument on Richmond's celebrated Monument Avenue, is the most prominent design of prolific local architect W. Harrison Pringle and the best-known project of local builder and developer Franklin A. Trice. Lee Medical Building was completed in 1952 after a sustained battle between the building's owner and developer who fought for its construction and neighboring homeowners who bitterly contested its development. The six-story Colonial Revival building was speculatively developed with the hope of providing offices, laboratories, and outpatient medical facilities for doctors and dentists in the well-established Monument Avenue residential neighborhood. An understated earlier example of the same building type in Richmond is the 1920s Medical Arts Building at N. 2nd and Franklin streets in downtown Richmond. What distinguishes the Lee Medical Building is its commanding orientation toward the Lee monument and multiple design elements that complement the Lee circle and Monument Avenue.

The Little River UDC Jefferson Davis Highway Marker is located five miles north of Ashland in **Hanover County** along U.S. Route 1. Composed of gray granite and just over four-feet in height and 29 inches wide, the Little River marker was dedicated in 1936 and is one of sixteen erected in Virginia along the Jefferson Davis Highway between 1927 and 1946 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to commemorate Jefferson Davis, the first and only president of the Confederate States of America. A nationwide memorial project of the UDC, the Jefferson Davis Highway began in 1913 and continued until 1947 when the highway's terminal marker was placed in Arlington. Stretching to San Diego, California, the Davis highway was a southern counterpoint to the nation-spanning Lincoln Highway. The Little River marker is situated near to where the left wing of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army rested on May 23-26, 1864 while Lee's forces faced Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant on the north side of North Anna River.

Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church and its cemetery were founded in 1870 in **Stafford County** by formerly enslaved African Americans under the auspices of a benevolent organization working with the Freedmen's Bureau. The church and cemetery are significant to the history and growth of the black community in the White Oak area after the Civil War and through the eras of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights. The cemetery marked a turning point for African Americans who could now bury community members in a sanctioned burial ground during funerals officiated by a black pastor, instead of a white one, as law required prior to the Civil War. The site of the 1870 church building, subsequently demolished after construction of a new church in 1951, has the potential to yield archaeology important to understanding the area's black community during Reconstruction and beyond. The 1951 church is also important for its association with the Civil Rights movement. The Stafford County branch of the NAACP was formed there, and in 1960 meetings convened there with Civil Rights lawyers seeking to integrate Stafford County's public schools, the first such meetings in the Fredericksburg area. Unsuccessful integration attempts led by student members of the Bethlehem congregation resulted in a U.S. court ruling that desegregated schools in the Fredericksburg area.

Founded around 1897 as an unconstructed burial ground in the City of **Alexandria**, Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is important to the history of the "The Fort" community, a village formed by African Americans on the site of the dismantled Civil War-era Fort Ward. Today's cemetery consists of burials marked by commemorative markers—about 50 in all—as well as many unmarked graves that have been identified by archaeologists. The cemetery represents a history, not unlike African American history across the nation, where

African Americans organized daily activities, economic resources, and methods for preserving life and burying their family members with constraints, limited resources, and segregated conditions. Oakland Baptist Church continues to own the cemetery, which is the only surviving privately owned African American cemetery in Alexandria.

Completed in 1939, **Fairfax County's** Original Mount Vernon High School was constructed under the federally funded Public Works Administration (PWA). To accommodate the need to update public school facilities, as well as spur the economy, the PWA was initiated by President Franklin Roosevelt to fulfill the goals of the "New Deal" program. Built during the era of Jim Crow segregation, the school was open only to white students. The school building is a good example of the then-popular Colonial Revival Institutional design, one of the design options listed under the PWA program. Early additions to the building such as a gymnasium/cafeteria, which echo the Colonial Revival design, were planned and funded under PWA funding. The school's ever-growing student body reflected the growth of the metropolitan area after World War II, and by 1960 it accommodated approximately 1,300 students. Former Governor Charles "Chuck" Robb is one of the notable graduates from Mount Vernon High School. The school desegregated in 1965.

Erected around 1930 on a natural rise, El Bethel Methodist Church in **Amherst County** is the second church built on the property and was constructed with materials recycled from the earlier circa-1857 church it replaced. One of two remaining public buildings of the once thriving Allwood community, the church is also one of two existing Great Depression-era churches in the county. Combining Classical Revival and Late Gothic Revival stylistic elements, the building's only alteration since 1930 was a redesign of the pulpit during the 1960s. Significant features today include the property's site design, the building's temple form with portico, and, on the interior, its barrel-vaulted ceiling and collection of stained-glass windows. The church was used for regular church services until 1989, when its congregation merged with the Mount Pleasant Church and abandoned El Bethel. In 1999, the Pedlar Ruritan Club adopted the building as a community improvement project, and repaired and restored it. The same year, the Methodist Church deeded the property to the El Bethel Community Association, which uses the building for community and special events. Enhancing the site's historical significance is the Allwood Cemetery, historically associated with, and located behind the church. Containing more than 300 graves, many those of former church members, it is the only active public burial ground in the area. In continuous use since 1899, the cemetery contributes to the El Bethel Methodist Church property's overall historical significance.

Established around 1817 for James Gilliam, Jr. (1776-1841), the 109 acre Gilliam-Irving Farm is one of the earliest existing examples of an evolved middle-class farmstead in **Appomattox County**. The frame house features restrained but elegant interior finishes and a massive chimney of dressed sandstone. In addition to the main house, the property contains fourteen standing secondary buildings and two known cemeteries, all of which contribute to the property's historical importance. The Gilliam-Irving Farm has a period of significance ranging from about 1817 to 1940, extending from initial construction and ending with the period in which the last major alterations were made to the house. The property is locally important for its distinctive architecture and original fabric, including fine stonework, unusual stair balusters, and a mid-19th century air-dried tobacco curing house with unusual construction features.

Emmanuel Baptist Church was constructed around 1907 in central **Amherst County** on the outskirts of the former milling community of Sandidges. The Late Gothic Revival-style building features a three-story bell tower and is an important example of early 20th century ecclesiastical architecture in Amherst County, where few early 20<sup>th</sup> century church buildings have survived or remain largely unaltered and historically intact. Of the four documented existing churches in the county built between 1901 and 1940, Emmanuel is the only church featuring canted walls and multiple-part, lancet-arched stained glass windows, and is one of just two designed with auditorium seating. The present church building is the product of three building phases: The original building including a rear ell was constructed around 1907; a one-story rear addition was erected in 1969; and a breezeway and two-story rear addition that were completed in 1996. These later additions to the rear of the church do not greatly affect the original building's integrity of design or feeling.



## **Boundary Increases:**

Previously listed in 1981, the state and national register nomination for **Richmond's St. Luke Building** has been updated and the boundary designation for the property enlarged to include 902-904 St. James Street, a two-unit row house that was historically and functionally associated with the Order of St. Luke and its headquarters in the St. Luke Building at 900 St. James Street. The St. Luke Building once served as the national headquarters of the Independent Order of St. Luke, a mutual aid society founded in 1869. The Order's mission to foster African-American economic independence was largely realized through enterprises housed in the St. Luke Building, including the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, printing facilities for the St. Luke Herald, and offices for the Order.

A boundary increase for the previously-listed **Downtown Hopewell Historic District** extends the district to incorporate several buildings associated with transportation, commerce, and local government. Underscoring the use and ownership of cars in the post-World War II era, the expanded district now includes two service stations, an auto parts store, and an automotive dealership designed in the Art Moderne style. The expansion also features a two story former jail constructed in 1928 in a style known as Stripped Classicism.

A boundary increase to the previously-listed **Harrisonburg Downtown Historic District** expands it to include five historic buildings associated with the foundry complex known as P. Bradley & Sons, and among the oldest surviving examples of this type of industry in Harrisonburg. Established as P. Bradley & Co. in 1856 and relocated in 1867 to the current site, the property is illustrative of the changing industrial process that occurred there from the late-19th century through the early 1960s, and collectively the buildings retain much of their historic fabric. During its years of operation, the foundry concentrated mostly on casting high-quality plows of its own pattern and executing other general foundry work, with its reach extending throughout Virginia and into Maryland and Pennsylvania. The foundry ceased casting in 1961 and by 1994 the remaining operational Bradley foundry buildings were sold.

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