

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners  
 Other names/site number: Salem Steam Laundry; VDHR# 129-5143  
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 231 South Colorado Street  
 City or town: Salem State: VA County: Independent City  
 Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
    national     statewide   x   local  
 Applicable National Register Criteria:  
  x   A     B   x   C     D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>  <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>                  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p>In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

**Current Functions**

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

### **Architectural Classification**

MIXED: more than three styles from different periods

### **Materials**

FOUNDATION: CONCRETE

WALLS: BRICK

ROOF: ASPHALT

### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### **Summary Paragraph**

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners, located at 231 South Colorado Street in Salem, Virginia, was built circa 1916 for Salem Steam Laundry. The now-vacant commercial steam laundry has an irregular, compound plan due to numerous additions that were added over several decades as the business introduced new technologies and services. The original one-story, brick building mass faces East 1st Street, at the southwest corner of the complex. An example of the Industrial Commercial Style, this building is long and rectangular in form with a parapet roof and tile coping. Brick pilasters and corbelled brickwork form rectangular recesses that contain tall, narrow window openings and doors with lighted transoms, all spanned by segmental arches. Several one-story, brick additions with flat roofs append the original block. These additions are simpler in design than the original building mass, characterized by smooth red bricks and large industrial steel-sash windows. A substantial one-story, brick, Modernist addition, which dates to circa 1955, appends the east end of the building. Facing South Colorado Street and Roanoke Boulevard, this addition functioned as the new front of the business, containing the customer call office and management office. While the original building was appended over the course of several eras, consistent design features unify the building visually. The 0.65-acre parcel is located three blocks south of Downtown Salem, on the edge of the commercial core. The irregular parcel is situated at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Roanoke Boulevard and South Colorado Street. An urban creek, part of which is underground, runs along the northern property line. There are no secondary resources.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Site Description

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners stands on a 0.65-acre parcel at 231 South Colorado Street in the City of Salem. The property is located three blocks south of the Downtown Salem Historic District (VLR 1996; NRHP 1996), on the edge of the commercial core. Residential areas surround the property to the south and west. The irregular parcel is situated at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Roanoke Boulevard and South Colorado Street. South Market Street and East 1st Street border the parcel to the west and south, respectively. Public sidewalks run along South Colorado Street and East 1st Street. A sidewalk and a paved driveway also run in front of the main customer entrance. An urban creek, part of which is underground, runs along the northern property line.

### Detailed Building Description

The building has an irregular, compound plan due to numerous additions that occurred over several decades. While the additions span different eras, consistent design features unify the building visually. The original section of the building, constructed in 1916 for Salem Steam Laundry, is located at the northeast corner of East 1st Street and South Market Street. An example of the Industrial Commercial Style, the one-story brick volume is long and rectangular, facing East 1st Street. Its brick bearing walls are laid in five-course American bond, standing on a poured concrete foundation. Brick pilasters divide the south elevation into eight bays, forming rectangular recesses. The pilasters continue to the roofline, where flush, rectangular brick recesses and corbelled brick courses simulate a cornice. The roof of the original block has a low parapet with glazed tile coping. The flat roof, hidden behind the parapet, was removed in 2017 due to severe deterioration, but the steel roof trusses remain.

On the south elevation, many of the rectangular recesses contain pairs of tall, slender window openings spanned by segmental arches formed with two-course header bricks. Below the openings are concrete sills. In 2016, the previous owners removed the double-hung sash 9/9 wood windows and boarded the openings with plywood to address vandalism and security concerns. Also on the south elevation are two single-leaf doors with lighted transoms. The multi-light door in the easternmost bay provided access to the original business office. Segmental arches formed with two-course header bricks span these entrances. A segmental arch, constructed of three courses of header bricks, spans a freight opening on the south elevation. Although the freight opening has been infilled with brick and an industrial steel sash window, a concrete loading dock below the opening distinguishes its historic function. The side and rear elevations feature arched clerestory window openings; however, the windows themselves are either infilled with brick or missing. The rear wall and east wall of the original building are now interior walls due to additions on these elevations. While modifications have been made to the window and door fixtures of the original building, it is important to note that the size, shape, and spatial arrangement of these openings are still evident.

The interior plan of the original block is open with a boiler room at the southwest corner. This large open space, where the steam presses were located, served as the heart of the commercial laundry operation. The 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the outline of a small office at the southeast corner of this otherwise open space. The walls that enclosed this space no longer exist, but it was likely accessed from the exterior by the single-leaf entrance at the southeast corner of the front elevation, off East 1st Street. The boiler room houses the large boiler used to power the steam pipes and steam powered machines. The original coal-fired boiler was replaced in the 1960s by a Kewanee Beckner boiler, which could be switched between oil and natural gas. Interior finishes of the original block include concrete floors, built

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to withstand heavy machinery and resist water, and exposed brick walls. A narrow rectangular wing, subordinate in height to the main block, runs along the north side of the original building. Accessed by five-panel doors, the wing includes several small rooms, including restrooms. The wing is likely original, appearing on the 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. This brick wing features segmental arch window openings on its rear elevation similar to the original building.

Several one-story, brick additions with flat roofs append the original block. These additions are simpler in design than the original building mass, characterized by smooth red bricks and large industrial steel-sash windows. A one-story, circa 1941, brick addition appends the north and east sides of the original building, creating an L-shape. The brick bearing walls of this addition are laid in a five-course American bond with a low parapet and glazed tile coping. The addition is lower in height than the original block. The 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that this addition housed an office at its south end, accessed off East 1st Street, and a dry cleaning room at its northwest corner, separated from the rest of the complex by a sliding steel fire door. The office is flush with the front wall of the original building. Three bays wide, its south elevation features a multi-light door with sidelights flanked by two rectangular window openings with rowlock brick sills. The four window openings on the east side of the office also feature rowlock brick sills. The previous owners of the building removed the double-hung sash 2/2 wood windows that filled these openings and boarded them with plywood in 2016, due to vandalism and security concerns. Industrial steel sash windows penetrate the east side and rear elevations of the 1941 addition. Although these windows remain in place, the east elevation windows became interior windows after the construction of the 1955 addition. The interior features of the 1941 addition include concrete floors and exposed brick walls. Wood joists are visible above a deteriorated wallboard ceiling throughout most of the space. The room used for dry cleaning has a steel bar joist ceiling.

A 1945 addition appends the west end of the original building's north elevation, facing South Market Street. The year of this addition is noted on an April 1947 survey of the property. The brick bearing walls of the addition are laid in a five-course American bond. The low roof parapet is capped with glazed tile coping. The addition features industrial steel sash windows with brick rowlock sills. The windows have been covered with plywood on the outside, but are still intact. A freight door on its west elevation opens onto a concrete loading dock. The interior, used for sorting, weighing, and tagging items to be cleaned, features concrete floors, brick walls, and exposed steel beams.

A spacious, environmentally controlled fur vault is located at the northeast corner of the building, along the south bank of the creek. The 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance map notes the construction year of this vault as 1947. Constructed on a poured concrete foundation, the twelve-inch thick brick bearing walls of the vault are laid in a five-course Flemish variant bond. The low roof parapet is capped with glazed tile coping. The storage vault is windowless, with the exception of two steel awning windows at its westernmost end. A heavy vault door, similar to ones found on a bank vault, secures the fur storage vault. Connecting the fur storage vault to the 1941 addition is another small addition, used to support dry cleaning functions, which has the same brick bond pattern and steel windows as the fur storage vault. A steel fire door separates this area from the 1941 addition. Concrete floors, brick walls, and exposed ceiling structures characterize the interiors of the fur vault and dry cleaning room.

A substantial one-story, circa 1955, brick addition fronts the east end of the building. Facing South Colorado Street and Roanoke Boulevard, this addition functioned as the new front of the business, containing the customer call office, as well as the business administration offices. A rotating carousel was located in the storage area behind the call office. Beyond this is the driver storage room, equipped with hanging racks and a loading dock for trucks. The Roanoke firm Wells and Meagher designed the addition.

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The design of the call office shows the influence of the Modernist Movement, with its large plate glass curtain wall, exposed aluminum frame, flat roof, and aluminum canopies. The original entrance canopy spans the length of the storefront windows, covering only the customer entrance and sidewalk. The sign on the roof that reads “PEACOCK-SALEM” was originally located on top of this canopy. A larger aluminum drive-thru canopy, added after 1960, now shelters the driveway in front of the call office. A tall brick pylon, with applied aluminum letters, extends above the otherwise flat roof. Behind the pylon is a private, canopied entrance to the business office. North of the entrance, on the front elevation, are three sets of paired aluminum windows with a course of rowlock bricks below and a row of soldier course bricks above, unifying the group of windows. Paired aluminum windows are also extant on the south elevation and in the loading dock area of the driver storage room. All sections of this addition are concrete block with brick veneer in a five-course American bond. The top of the low parapet is sheathed in aluminum coping. The interior of the call office features terrazzo floors, a perforated acoustic tile ceiling and painted block walls. The office suite, located north of the call office, consists of the owner’s office, driver’s office, claim office, and restrooms. Generally, the offices are finished with asbestos tile floors, perforated acoustic tile ceilings, and, in some spaces, a wainscot of wood paneling with painted block above. The call office storage room and driver storage room have concrete floors, painted block walls, and metal bar joist ceilings.

A late 1950s addition, which faces South Market Street, appends the north elevation of the 1945 addition. The brick bearing walls of the addition are laid in a five-course American bond with a low parapet and glazed tile coping. The addition features industrial steel sash windows with brick rowlock sills. The windows have been covered with plywood on the outside, but they are still intact. A paneled wood garage door is located on its South Market Street elevation. Painted signs reading “PEACOCK-SALEM LAUNDERERS & CLEANERS” run along the top of the north and west elevations, continuing onto the west elevation of the adjacent 1945 addition. This section of the building was used for parking route trucks, loading, and machine repairs. Interior finishes include concrete floors, brick walls, and exposed steel beams and columns.

The least significant addition to the building was added in the 1960s. This concrete block section was used for hoisting rugs to be cleaned. Due to rapid deterioration resulting from a damaged roof and a non-extant north wall, this section of the building was removed in 2017. The relatively small block enclosure was located on the north side of the property, largely obscured from view by other sections of the building. The addition was also not visually compatible with the other brick sections of the building.

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners retains the physical integrity necessary to convey its architectural and historic significance as a commercial laundry. The original building and its numerous additions reflect how the commercial laundry industry expanded and evolved from the early twentieth century to the mid-twentieth century, with the introduction of new technologies and services. The appended building retains its design, materials, and workmanship that identify it as a commercial steam laundry. Its simple, functional design and intact interior plan reflects the commercial cleaning process that occurred inside the building. Non-combustible, masonry construction and solid concrete floors were used to prevent fires, endure heavy machinery, and resist water. Large windows that maximize light and ventilation—important due to the heat and steam associated with commercial laundries—further convey its historic use. The materials and workmanship of the original building and its additions reflect the construction practices of each respective period of construction. While each section represents a different era of twentieth century industrial design, consistent design features—such as height, flat roofs with low parapets, brick bond pattern, brick color, glazed tile coping, and minimal architectural embellishment—visually unify the building. The laundry also retains its integrity of location and setting, as it still occupies its historic site

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and acreage, on the periphery of downtown Salem. With its primary design elements intact, Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners retains its attributes of feeling and association, as it continues to convey its association with the growing and evolving commercial laundry industry of the early and mid-twentieth century.

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## 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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1916 - 1968

**Significant Dates**

1916

1925

1941

1945

1947

1955

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Wells & Meagher Architects (1955 Addition)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners is a representative example of an early twentieth century commercial steam laundry, an industry that emerged in the late nineteenth century with the growing commercialization and mechanization of the laundry process. Built in 1916 for the Salem Steam Laundry, the original building is typical of early twentieth-century commercial architecture, with its brick walls articulated by pilasters and corbelled brickwork, defining recessed fenestration bays and cornices. The original building and its numerous additions reflect how the industry expanded and evolved over the course of the twentieth century, with the advancement of technology and the introduction of new services. Its functional design consistently includes the requisite features of a laundry enterprise, such as fireproof construction, adequate light, ventilation, and sound floors to support heavy machinery. Much of the business expansion took place under the leadership of John Lee Logan after he purchased Salem Steam Laundry in 1934. Logan renamed the business Peacock-Salem Launderers and Cleaners and immediately set out to increase its capacity, adding services and expanding the building with several additions. The laundry was the largest in Salem, even attracting clientele from surrounding counties. The business remained in the Logan family until 2000, when it was sold to Air-Lee Laundry. Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criteria A and C with significance on the local level in the areas of Commerce and Architecture for the period 1916 to 1968, encompassing its original construction through the fifty-year mark for properties where significant activities continued into the more recent past.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

**CRITERION A: COMMERCE**

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners is significant in the area of commerce as an important industry and significant employer in Salem during the twentieth century. As one of the earliest steam laundries in Salem, the business evolved and expanded over time, reflecting changes in the commercial laundry industry with the introduction of new technologies and services. Much of the business expansion took place under the leadership of John Lee Logan after he purchased Salem Steam Laundry in 1934. Logan renamed the business Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners and immediately set out to increase its capacity, adding services and expanding the building with several additions. As customer needs for laundry and cleaning services changed, Peacock-Salem remained competitive by offering specialized services, including rug cleaning, fur storage, and commercial laundering. The laundry was the largest in Salem, even attracting clientele from surrounding counties. At one point, the business serviced 18,000 private customers and more than a hundred commercial accounts. With this high business volume, the laundry grew to be a significant local employer. A majority of the employees, particularly those in the main laundry facility, were women. With its domestic and corporate customers, the expanding facility and services of the company related directly to the growth in the region's population and businesses, as well as their changing needs for laundry and cleaning services.

**CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE**

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners is architecturally significant as its functional design, materials, and plan reflect the commercial cleaning process for which it was built, as well as the evolution of the laundry industry during the twentieth century. The original 1916 building with its rectilinear form, parapeted flat roof, and brick construction embodies the characteristics of the Industrial Commercial Style. Its tall, narrow window openings, which historically contained double-hung wood windows spanned by segmental arches, are also typical of early twentieth century commercial buildings. While the window sashes have been removed, the size, shape, and spatial arrangement of the openings are still apparent. Pilasters, recessed bays, and corbelled brickwork further articulate and ornament the otherwise simple building. Subsequent additions continue to be functional in design with minimal detailing. The additions demonstrate changing trends and preferences in commercial and industrial architecture with simple, unarticulated brick walls and the use of industrial steel sash windows instead of double-hung wood windows. While each addition represents a different era of twentieth century commercial and industrial architecture, consistent design features—such as height, flat roofs with low parapets, brick bond pattern, brick color, glazed tile coping, and minimal architectural embellishment—visually unify the complex. The substantial, circa 1955, one-story, brick addition that fronts the business embraces a more Modernist aesthetic, which varies from the Industrial Commercial Style architecture prevalent in the rest of the complex. The minimalist design by the Roanoke firm of Wells and Meagher exhibits influences from the Modernist Movement with its simple horizontal form interrupted by a projecting vertical pylon, large expanses of glass storefront, low-profile canopy and stylized signage. Spanning nearly half a century, the materials, details and construction techniques of the original building and its additions reflect the building practices of each respective period. Common to all of these building phases, however, is the consistent use of non-combustible, masonry construction and solid concrete floors to prevent fires, support heavy machinery, and resist water. Large windows that maximize light and ventilation—

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important due to the heat and steam associated with commercial laundries—also convey its specialized use. Furthermore, the original building expanded by the various additions with their associated functions and design, represent the evolution of the commercial cleaning process and Peacock-Salem’s efforts to expand services and remain competitive.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

### **HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL LAUNDRIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

The emergence of commercial laundries in the late nineteenth century transformed the business of laundry from being a domestic task to an industrial process. Prior to commercial laundries, women did most domestic washing by hand at home, using a scrub board and a washtub. Households that were more affluent had the ability to hire washerwomen to perform this laborious work.<sup>1</sup> Technological advancements in the nineteenth century led to the increasing mechanization of the laundry process, although early machines were still hand-powered.

The advent of steam-powered laundry machines by the mid-nineteenth century led to the growth of the commercial laundry industry, with the term “steam laundry” coming into common usage by the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> New machines were gradually introduced that performed specific steps in the laundry process. In the 1880s, large washing machines and mangles powered by steam had become widespread, mechanizing a physically demanding part of the process that required the least amount of skill. Between 1900 and 1910, machines were introduced that performed skilled jobs, such as ironing and starching. The increasing use of mechanized equipment, division of labor, and growing scale of commercial laundries further distinguished commercial operations from laundry done in the domestic sphere.<sup>3</sup>

The commercial laundry business became more prevalent in the early twentieth century. The first census of commercial laundries was taken in the United States in 1909. The count only included commercial establishments that used power driven machinery. The census counted 5,186 commercial laundries in the United States with 124,214 workers. Most of the laborers in these laundries were women, comprising 71.2 percent of the workforce. The laundry business continued to grow in the years leading up to World War I, as the number of laborers increased by 19.3 percent between 1909 and 1914.<sup>4</sup> By the 1920s, the mechanization of all principal processes was complete.<sup>5</sup>

### **SALEM STEAM LAUNDRY**

Salem Steam Laundry, the business that would later become Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners, was one of the earliest commercial laundries in Salem. The State Corporation Commission granted a charter to the business in May 1908. Its officers were N.B. Gray, president; J.S. Wells, vice president; and Joseph J. Anderson, secretary and treasurer.<sup>6</sup> The business opened in July 1908. Its original location was on the east side of South Colorado Street, behind the Tabernacle. The plant was a large, wood frame building measuring 30 feet by 100 feet.<sup>7</sup> According to the *Salem Times-Register and Sentinel*, the new laundry was “equipped with all the modern machinery necessary to the business” and was an “up-to-date modern steam laundry.”<sup>8</sup> The business continued to improve its operations, with the installation of a new power engine, boiler, and washer in 1910.<sup>9</sup>

In May 1916, Salem Steam Laundry, Inc. purchased land at the northeast corner of South Alabama Street and 1st Street, a block north of its original location. On this parcel, the business constructed a large, one-story brick building. This new building had the requisite features of a modern commercial

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laundry of the era, including fireproof construction, suitable drainage and ventilation, abundant light, and strong floors to support heavy machinery.<sup>10</sup> A large boiler room was located at its southwest corner. The massive coal-fired boiler, which filled this entire room, connected to a maze of steam pipes that powered the machines. The technological advances and improved machinery that had revolutionized the laundry business by this time likely motivated the construction of this new building. Salem Steam Laundry sold its original wood-frame plant on South Colorado Street, which burned to the ground soon thereafter in December 1917.<sup>11</sup>

In March 1917, the *Salem Times-Register and Sentinel* printed an extensive article commending the progress of Salem Steam Laundry under the management of N.B. Gray. The article promoted the business, stating, "There is no reason why the citizens should patronize an out-of-town firm when they have such a modern and up-to-date establishment here at home." The article mentioned the excellence of equipment, skilled labor, and prompt and efficient service as some of the notable features of the business. The enterprise was said to use the best supplies for cleaning garments, without any of the strong acids that could damage delicate fabrics. Employing a large workforce, the plant ran continuously to support the immense business it had established. The article also mentioned that the business provided an excellent delivery service, with wagons calling for and delivering all work quickly and at the lowest possible prices.<sup>12</sup>

The laundry did a weekly family wash, with the work returned to the customer to be starched or dried as desired. Shirt and collar work were also done in "the most approved manner." It is likely that the family wash services continued to be a major part of the business. In the twenties, laundries across the nation worked to attract and educate middle class, female customers. Laundry owners would run advertisements on the radio and at local movie theaters. The Laundrymen's National Association led tours of women customers through laundries and ran advertising campaigns in popular women's magazines, like *Good Housekeeping*, in an effort to reach female consumers.<sup>13</sup> Strong demand for family wash continued until the advent of the first viable electric washing machines for home use in the 1930s. Family wash still accounted for over 80 percent of services provided by most commercial laundries in the early 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

On September 9, 1925, a fire of unknown origin devastated Salem Steam Laundry. The estimated loss was between ten and fifteen thousand dollars. Newspapers as far away as Newport News reported on the fire. It is unknown whether the building was a complete loss after the fire. In *Salem: A Virginia Chronicle*, Norwood Middleton claims that the laundry had moved into a modern building by the end of November 1925, built to replace the one lost in the fire.<sup>15</sup> However, the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show the same building footprint in 1922 and 1932, supporting that some sections of the original building may have survived.<sup>16</sup>

Salem Steam Laundry continued to be one of only a few laundry businesses in Salem throughout the twenties. The 1927 Salem phone and business directory lists only the Salem Steam Laundry and a small one-man Chinese laundry service. The directory advertised two Roanoke laundries, as well.

#### PEACOCK-SALEM LAUNDERERS & CLEANERS

Salem Steam Laundry operated until 1934, when John Lee Logan bought out Frank Wiley with the intention of expanding the laundry's capacity and services. Together with his brother, Joseph D. Logan, John Lee Logan registered a new corporation, Peacock-Salem, Inc. with the Virginia State Corporation Commission in November 1934. John Lee Logan, born in 1893, was raised in Salem. He

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was connected to tobacco companies in Richmond and New York before joining the United States Army. Logan participated in the Pancho Villa Expedition into Mexico prior to World War I. Upon the outbreak of World War I, Logan reenlisted and served in France as a captain in the 314th Field Artillery. Logan returned to Salem at the end of the war and found work as the manager of the Salem Steam Laundry, for which his brother Joe had served as legal counsel.<sup>17</sup>

In January 1935, the Logans opened the Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners in the building of the former Salem Steam Laundry.<sup>18</sup> According to Bud Grubb, the last manager of the laundry and the brother of the longest serving manager Odell Grubb, John Lee Logan chose the name 'Peacock' as he believed the bird's colorful image embodied the bright, colorful image of clean clothing. Logan purchased a peacock from a local farm, had it stuffed and placed it in the call office of the laundry.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1932 and 1939, the services offered by laundry were expanded when a separate brick room for dry cleaning was constructed along the creek. The new building allowed for the separation of volatile dry cleaning solvents from the other laundry services. This added service was necessary for the laundry to sustain itself, as during the interwar period electric washing machines were becoming accessible to more Americans. In 1929, an estimated six million washing machines were used in American households.<sup>20</sup> The change in men's fashions during this period also lessened the need for commercial laundry services as the soft-collared shirt, easier to wash and iron at home, replaced the starched white-collar shirt.<sup>21</sup> Commercial Launderers found that these new challenges could be overcome through significantly mechanized plants, standardized methods, and consistent services and prices.<sup>22</sup>

#### **EVOLUTION & GROWTH OF PEACOCK-SALEM**

The business expanded in size and services under the leadership of John Lee Logan. While the corporation owned the building and the assets, John Lee Logan owned the land. Over the course of several years, Logan was able to purchase a few neighboring parcels, a strategy that was essential to the eventual expansion of the plant. The businesses added the first of two additions in four years in 1941.<sup>23</sup> This addition, which appended the north and east sides of the original plant, included an office, as well as special machinery used to process laundry. The addition also joined the dry cleaning building with the original laundry building, using a mechanized firewall and automatic closing door in case of fire. The next addition was added in 1945, on the north elevation at the building's western end. This addition housed large industrial scales used for sorting, weighing, and tagging laundry. In 1947, the business added a spacious vault onto the northeast corner of the building along the south bank of the creek. The room is accessed by a massive vault door with a combination lock, similar to that of a bank. The addition provided a secure and climate controlled storage space for furs and other valuable garments.

The laundry expanded with the growth of Salem. The population of Salem surged in the 1940s and 1950s, increasing from 5,737 in 1940 to 6,823 in 1950. The establishment of facilities such as the Roanoke Veterans Administration Hospital in 1934, the Neuhoff Meat Packing Plant in 1936, the Maid Bess Garment Company in 1937, and the Salem Full Fashioned Hosiery Mill in 1938, created jobs that attracted new residents to town.<sup>24</sup> By 1940, a study conducted by the Chamber of Commerce determined that Salem was economically prosperous and stable, with a diversity of business and industry.

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

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The laundry services provided by the business evolved as the business grew, reflecting changing trends in the laundry industry. After World War II, electric washing machines and dryers for domestic use became increasingly affordable. The increased availability of consumer credit made purchasing washing and drying machines for middle-class homes simpler.<sup>25</sup> Thus, it became both cheaper and easier for households to do their own washing and drying. The Peacock-Salem Laundry managed to stay in business during this time by developing a quality pick-up and delivery service that catered to clients that could not or preferred not to do their own cleaning, particularly commercial businesses. The delivery service greatly expanded the client pool geographically as the laundry's trucks provided service to Montgomery County, Daleville in Botetourt County, and Franklin County. Route men wore distinctive uniforms year-round, similar to a chauffeur, with caps and high leather boots. The laundry also remained competitive by offering services that could not be performed in the home and were not offered by any other business in the valley, including rug cleaning, fur storage, and commercial laundering.

According to the employee roster from 1948, the Peacock-Salem Laundry employed 72 workers: 44 worked in the main laundry facility, 15 in dry cleaning, 8 in the call office and general administration, and 8 drivers. Additionally, there were three officers/directors employed by the company. The majority of the employees, particularly those in the main laundry facility, were women. The employees who worked with the laundry machinery needed to have specialized skills specific to the piece of equipment they operated. Often these skills were passed on within family units. Family connections were important throughout the duration of the company. The Logan brothers started the company together, and the Grubb brothers, Odell and Bud, worked and managed the laundry from the 1940s to the 1990s.<sup>26</sup>

Economic prosperity in Salem continued after World War II, with business expansions and the start of new enterprises. Large businesses such as Yale and Towne, Graham-White Manufacturing and General Electric built locations in Salem, employing hundreds of people. Salem's population also surged with annexations of Roanoke County that occurred in 1953 and 1960. Between 1950 and 1960, Salem's population increased from 6,823 to 16,058.<sup>27</sup> Many Salem businesses, including the Peacock-Salem Laundry, began expanding their businesses to support the needs of the growing population.<sup>28</sup>

A major expansion of Peacock-Salem Laundry was completed in 1955. Wells & Meagher Architects of Roanoke drew the plans for the expansion in 1954. With the construction of this addition, the front of the business changed from the south elevation to the east. This addition contained the call office and other business offices, including Logan's private office. An electric carousel is located in the storage area behind the call office. During the laundry's operation, the carousel transported orders ready for pick up directly to the customer counter. The storage area behind the call office was equipped with hanging racks and direct access to a loading dock for route trucks. A late 1950s addition was constructed on the north side of the 1945 addition. This addition features a garage door, as it was used for parking, loading and repairing route trucks. The addition also served as a dedicated maintenance and storage area for spare parts, supplies, and equipment.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Peacock-Salem Laundry significantly expanded to service over 18,000 private customers along with more than a hundred commercial accounts.<sup>29</sup> These commercial accounts included governmental, wholesale, retail, service and institutional (15%), churches (20%), medical (60%) and industrial. The laundry cleaned all the uniforms for Lewis-Gale Hospital, Elizabeth Arden, General Electric Drive Systems, Norfolk Southern, Oak Hall Industries, and Rowe

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

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Furniture. The significance of the corporate clients the laundry service was unmatched in the area. The most famous customer of the business was Elvis Presley, who had his performance jumpsuits cleaned at Peacock-Salem when he performed in the Roanoke Valley in the 1970s.<sup>30</sup>

Joseph (Joe) D. Logan, son of John Lee Logan, eventually took over the business in the 1970s. He and his wife, Florence Kime Logan, would operate the business until Joe's death in 1995. Florence continued to operate the laundry with her daughter Lee Logan Frederick, but the missing expertise of Joe took its toll. In 2000, Florence closed the operational portion of the laundry and sold the corporate name, customer list, and exclusive leasing rights of the laundry building as a pick-up and delivery call office to Air-Lee Laundry, which operated out of the front office for a short time. Florence Logan died in 2003, passing the ownership of the property to her daughters. The building permanently fell silent in 2012 when Air-Lee passed to new ownership. After standing vacant for several years, a local real estate developer purchased the building for redevelopment in 2017.

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners  
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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DHR File No. 129-5143

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** 0.65 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.290602°

Longitude: -80.055597°

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is coterminous with the lot lines of tax parcel 121-9-4 as recorded by the City of Salem. The attached Sketch Map + Photo Key shows the true and correct boundaries.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the 0.65-acre property associated with Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners and thus includes its historic setting and all known historic resources.

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

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Salem, VA

County and State

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Katherine Gutshall  
organization: Hill Studio, PC  
street & number: 120 Campbell Avenue SW  
city or town: Roanoke state: Virginia zip code: 24011  
e-mail: kgutshall@hillstudio.com  
telephone: 540-342-5263  
date: March 2018

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

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## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners

City or Vicinity: Salem (City)

State: Virginia

Photographer: Katherine Gutshall

Date Photographed: February 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 16: East (Front) Elevation, view west

Photo 2 of 16: East (Front) Elevation, view south

Photo 3 of 16: North Elevation, view southwest

Photo 4 of 16: West Elevation, view southeast

Photo 5 of 16: South Elevation, view northeast

Photo 6 of 16: Call Office, view north

Photo 7 of 16: General Business Office, view northwest

Photo 8 of 16: Call Office Storage, view southeast

Photo 9 of 16: Drivers Storage, view southeast

Photo 10 of 16: View west to former Dry Cleaning Area

Photo 11 of 16: Ramp to Drivers Storage, view east

Photo 12 of 16: Fire Door to Dry Cleaning Area

Photo 13 of 16: Vault Door to Cold Storage

Photo 14 of 16: Original Steam Laundry, view northwest

Photo 15 of 16: 1945 Addition, view southwest

Photo 16 of 16: Late 1950s Addition, view southwest

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald, 17
- <sup>2</sup> Mohun, 27
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, 70
- <sup>4</sup> Wang, 67
- <sup>5</sup> Mohun, 149
- <sup>6</sup> Salem Times-Register and Sentinel, Volume 42, Number 52
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid
- <sup>8</sup> Salem Times-Register and Sentinel, Volume 43, Number 9
- <sup>9</sup> Salem Times-Register and Sentinel, Volume 44, Number 52
- <sup>10</sup> Mohun, 66
- <sup>11</sup> Salem Times-Register and Sentinel, Volume 30, Number 131
- <sup>12</sup> Salem Times-Register and Sentinel, Volume 51, Number 45
- <sup>13</sup> Mohun, 156
- <sup>14</sup> Fitzgerald, 7.
- <sup>15</sup> Middleton, 287
- <sup>16</sup> Preliminary Information Form
- <sup>17</sup> Peacock-Salem Watchword is Quick Service
- <sup>18</sup> Middleton, 315
- <sup>19</sup> Transcript of Family History
- <sup>20</sup> Mohun, 250
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, 150
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, 152
- <sup>23</sup> Middleton, 335.
- <sup>24</sup> Middleton, 314-15
- <sup>25</sup> Fitzgerald
- <sup>26</sup> Transcript of Logan Family History
- <sup>27</sup> Middleton, 440
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid, 350
- <sup>29</sup> Peacock-Salem, Inc. 1948 Business Records.
- <sup>30</sup> Transcript

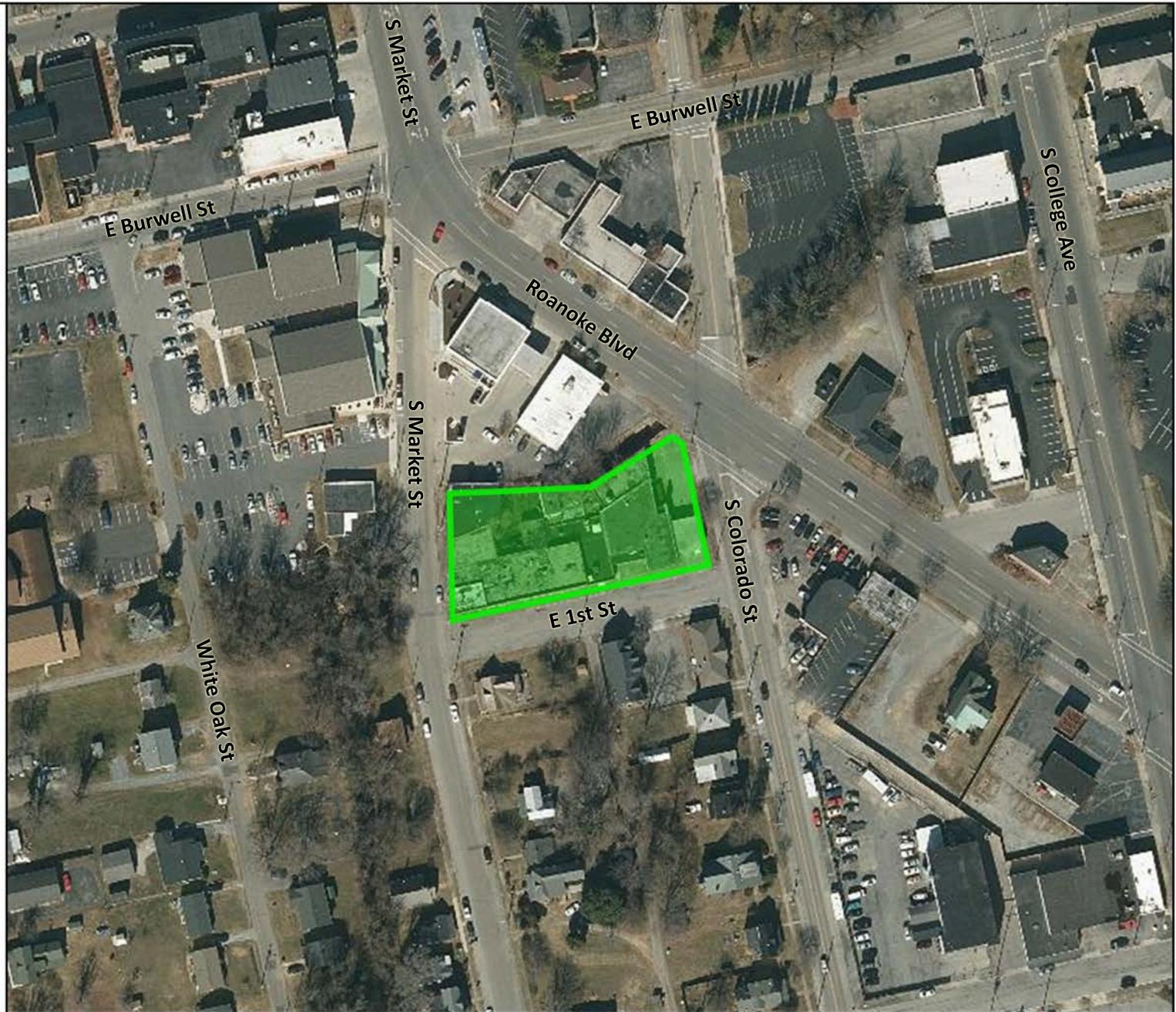


Digital Location Map

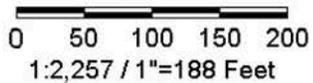
Peacock - Salem Launderers & Cleaners  
VDHR ID # 129-5143  
231 S. Colorado Street  
Salem, VA

Lat: 37.290602°  
Lon: -80.055597°

WGS84  
Map Source: VCRIS



Feet

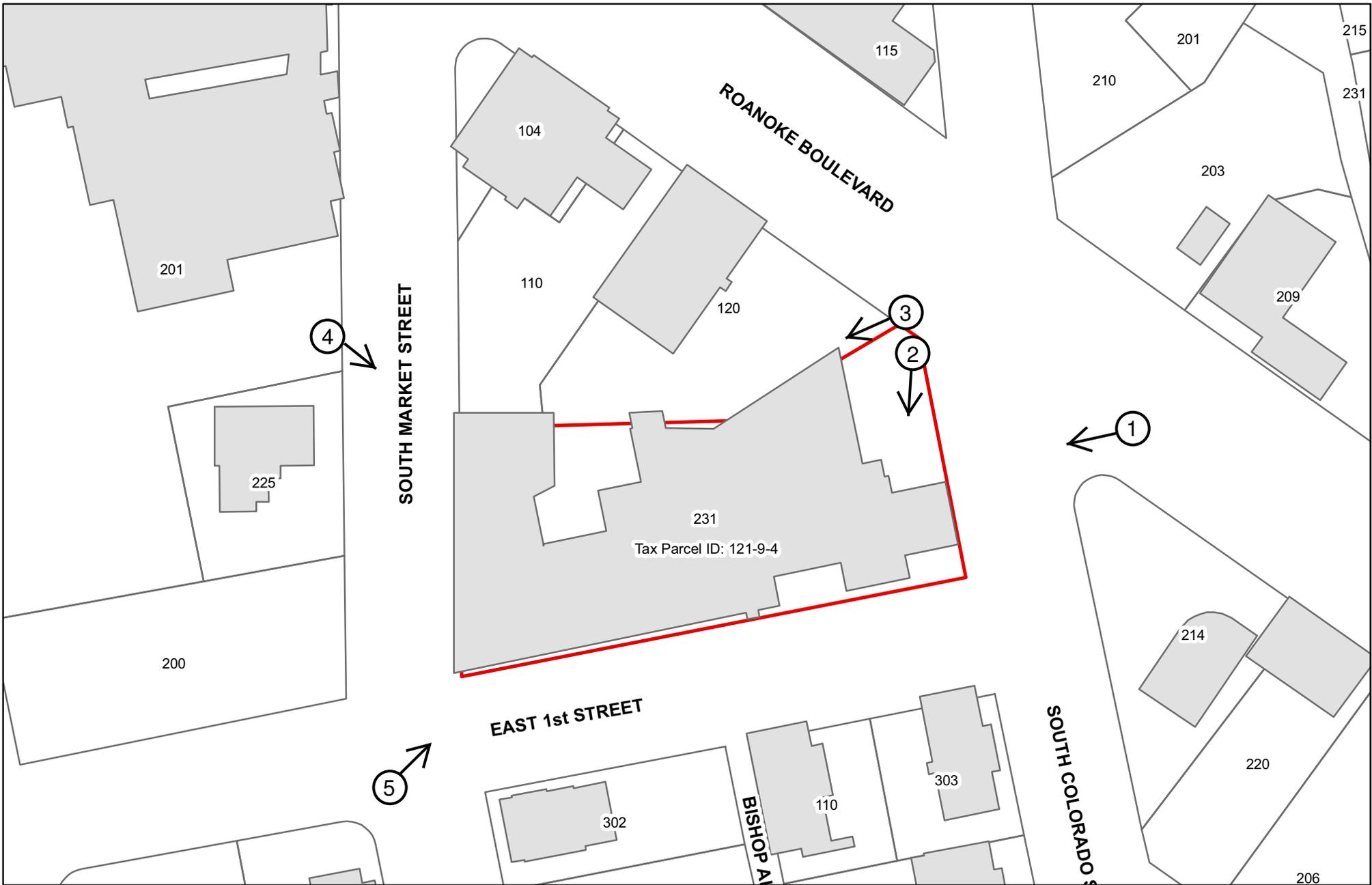


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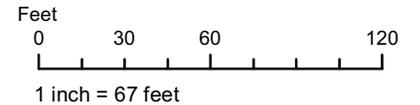
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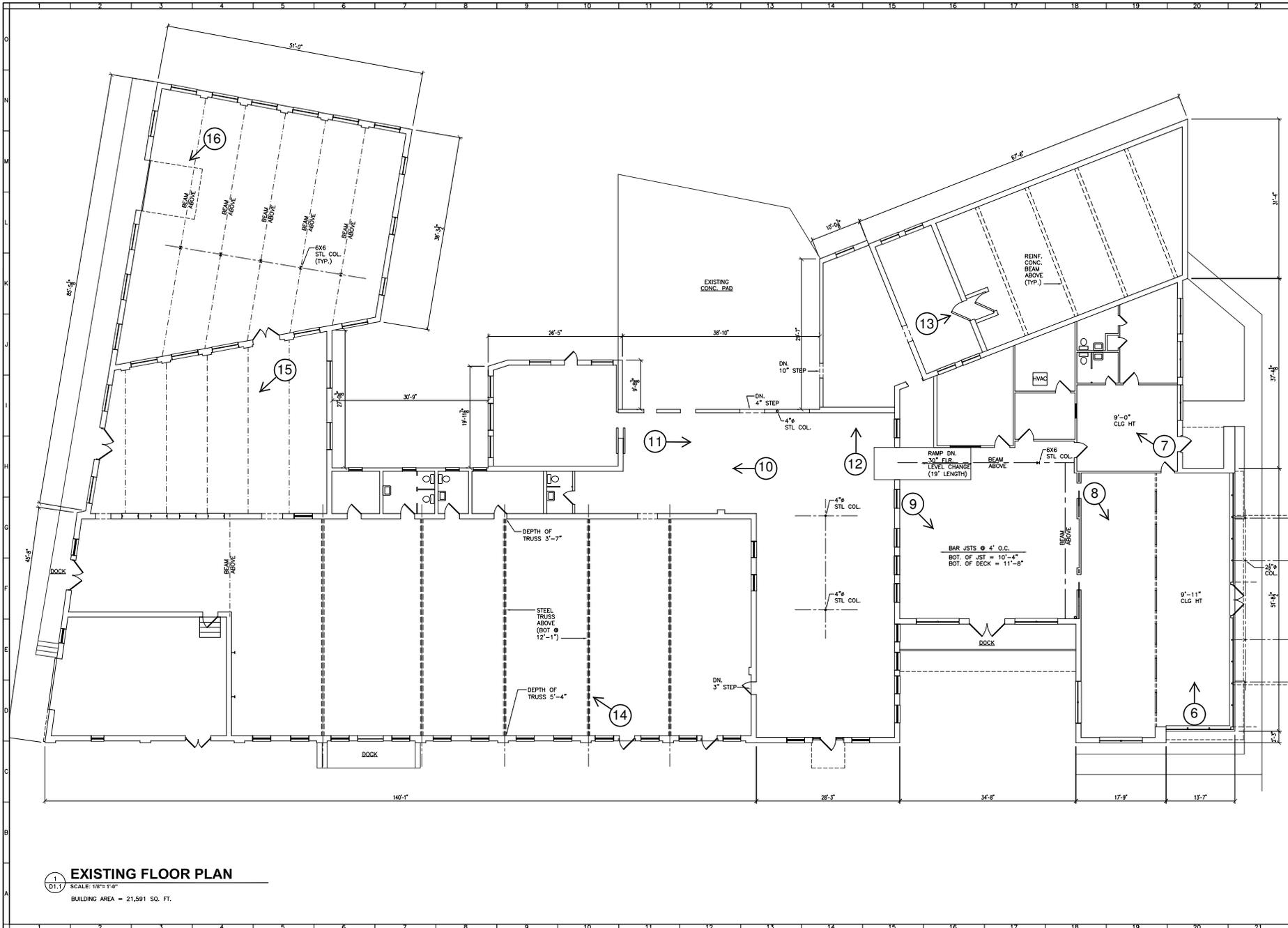
*DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.*

*Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.*



**Sketch Map + Photo Key**  
**Peacock-Salem Launderers & Cleaners**  
**VDHR ID # 129-5143**  
**231 S. Colorado Street**  
**Salem, VA**





**1**  
D1.1  
**EXISTING FLOOR PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"  
BUILDING AREA = 21,591 SQ. FT.

**PRELIMINARY**  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

**PEACOCK-SALEM BUILDING**  
RENOVATIONS  
**EXISTING FLOOR PLAN**  
231 S. COLORADO STREET  
SALEM, VIRGINIA 24153

DRAWN BY BSH/RWP  
DESIGNED BY RWP  
CHECKED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE 02/09/2018  
SCALE \_\_\_\_\_  
REVISIONS: