



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) _____

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

We would like to have this property evaluated for its potential eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No _____

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes _____ No

1. General Property Information

Property name: Culpeper Light & Power; Culpeper Waterworks

Property address: 410-414 Spring Street

City or Town: Town of Culpeper

Zip code: 22701

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

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

Building Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: .964

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

These two former municipal utility buildings are located at the west end of Spring Street near and to the southwest of downtown Culpeper, Virginia. The parcel incorporates the two buildings and a small amount of land surrounding them. The Waterworks building (on the east end of the parcel) is fronted by an asphalt driveway and small parking area to the south. It's west and east sides slope up to the north and are covered in grass. The elevated grassy slope to the north of the building is located on a separate parcel. An extension of Spring Street runs along the east side of the parcel. The Light & Power building also is fronted by an asphalt drive to the south and a gravel parking lot to the west. The asphalt driveway continues along the east side of the building and to the rear and is bounded by a curved concrete retaining wall which holds back the grassy slope to the north and east. There is one mature tree located on the south end of the parcel between the two buildings.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Moderne

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Wiley & Wilson (engineers for Municipal Electric Utility and Waterworks)

If the builder is known, please list here: F.L. Showalter, Inc, Lynchburg, VA (Contractor for Waterworks) Morris Hunter (Electrical Contractor for Municipal Electric Utility building)

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1934, 1946

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, 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 architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

Culpeper Municipal Electric Utility Building

The Culpeper Municipal Electric Utility building is a masonry structure situated at the west end of Spring Street near downtown Culpeper, Virginia. The Moderne Style building was constructed in 1934 to house the generators and electric components to provide power to the town of Culpeper. The building is currently vacant, having been replaced in recent years with a new facility at a different location. Constructed of load bearing brick masonry walls with structural steel components, the building is fronted by an asphalt drive on the south side and a gravel parking area to the west. A sloping grassy field on a separate parcel overlooks the building to the north and east. The steep slope to the east of the building is held in place by a curved poured concrete retaining wall.

The exterior of the building is composed of red brick that is accented by large window openings. Window sills are composed of cast concrete, and the window openings are topped with headers formed by brick soldier courses. The mass of the building consists of a tall center section with single-story wings flanking the central mass to the east and west. The building is capped by a series of flat roofs which are edged by brick parapet walls. The parapet walls are topped by shaped metal cap flashing. Scuppers extend through the building's brick parapet walls to carry rain runoff to the series of rectangular metal downspouts.

The building's south side is the primary elevation and holds a large vehicular entrance, as well as a smaller pedestrian door. The south elevation is seven bays wide and is asymmetrical due to the uneven lengths of the flanking east and west wings. The two-story central portion of the south elevation is accented by a pattern of projecting and receding planes, which continue along the east and west sides of the taller portion of the building. The vehicle door opening is extremely tall to facilitate the movement of machinery and generators. The head of the central vehicle door is shaped by a stepped steel lintel. Tall, narrow windows flank the vehicle door, further accenting the scale and vertical emphasis of the central portion of the building.

The east elevation of the structure faces the east retaining wall and the adjacent Culpeper building. Similar to the south elevation, the east elevation is characterized by a certain degree of formality and design, in contrast with the predominantly utilitarian nature of the building's north and west elevations. The east elevation is distinguished through the use of advancing and receding planes, similar to the treatment of the south elevation. Recessed panels, infilled with bricks in a stacked header pattern, form additional accents along the

east elevation of the east wing. Evidence of previous openings, both window openings and ventilation openings, that have been closed with brick remain visible at the first floor of the east elevation. The alteration of openings over the years illustrates the building's long lifetime of use and the evolution of technology over the years. A range of consistently-sized window openings is present at the east elevation of the building's central portion.

The north and west elevations of the building are simply finished, although the west elevation of the taller central portion is accented by the continuation of advancing and receding planes from the south side. The single-story west wing presents a U-shaped footprint to the west and holds two pedestrian doors. Window openings are present at the first and second floor levels of the west elevation. The north elevation holds a large vehicle bay opening near the western end. Similar to the treatment of the building's windows, the vehicle bay is topped by a header defined by a simple soldier course of brick. The central portion of the north elevation holds three window openings. The center window and the eastern window are extremely tall. The western window is a shorter unit and terminates at a concrete sill above the large vehicle bay opening.

The interior of the Power Plant is dominated by the expansive engine room at the center of the building which was historically filled with large scale equipment. Defined by a clear floor space with no intervening columns or posts, the room is characterized by a concrete slab floor and painted brick walls. The roof structure is exposed, and the supporting steel beams and steel roof deck that comprise the roof structure are painted.

A series of offices, storerooms, and a restroom are located to the west of the central engine room. The interior of the single-story east wing is largely composed of a single unbroken space, though it too would have housed equipment for most of the building's history. A small room is partitioned at the southern end of the space. Similar to the central engine room, the subsidiary spaces are finished with poured concrete floors, painted brick walls, and the exposed roof structure. The restroom door remains in place and consists of a single-leaf wood door with two panels. The fields of the panels are composed of diagonal tongue and groove boards.

The concrete slab floor at the engine room retains deep channels and pits that allowed workers to service the massive generators and turbines that originally filled the space. Similar channels are present in the east rooms. The interior walls of the building are generally composed of exposed brick that has been painted. The north office at the western side is defined by a concrete block wall, which is unpainted. The building's bridge crane remains in place in the tall central portion of the building. The crane, operated from below through the use of a series of chains and pulleys, allowed the movement of heavy equipment and machinery along the engine room floor.

The Culpeper Waterworks Building

The Culpeper Waterworks building is a masonry structure situated at the west end of Spring Street near downtown Culpeper, Virginia. The Moderne Style building was constructed in 1946 to serve as the municipal Waterworks for the town of Culpeper and is currently vacant. Constructed of reinforced concrete, brick masonry, and concrete block with cast concrete accents, the structure is fronted by an asphalt driveway and small parking area on the south side. The west and east sides are covered in grass and slope up to a larger grassy elevation on a separate parcel to the north of the building. The building is built into the steeply-sloping hillside, presenting a three-story elevation on the south side and a two-story mass on the north side. The primary entrance faces to the south and is sheltered under a cantilevered concrete awning. The concrete awning utilizes curved corners and recessed horizontal bands. The double entry doors are set into the ground level of the building, which is detailed at the exterior through the use of cast concrete walls with incised horizontal courses. The cast concrete suggests a rusticated base for the original three-story portion of the composition. The newer two-story addition on the west side lacks the detail of a cast concrete ground floor.

The south elevation is six bays in width, with windows aligned in recessed bays across the elevation. The brick courses in the recessed bays between the first and second story windows are set in stacked courses. The building's large windows, which are covered with plywood sheets at the exterior for security, consist of metal frame sash units. The center portions of the windows are operable for ventilation. The windows are generally consistently-sized and extend around all four elevations of the building. A pair of secondary entrances are located at the second floor level of the north elevation; although providing exterior access from the second floor, these doors are positioned at-grade due to the building's placement at the edge of the hill.

The interior of the waterworks is characterized by a variety of large open rooms and small offices, workspaces, and a restroom. The primary entrance doors on the south elevation provide access to the first floor hall. Two small offices are located to the east of the hall, and the building's elevator and stair are positioned to the west. The majority of the ground floor consists of two large, undivided rooms which historically housed large equipment and water pipes. The pipe gallery occupies the east room in the original portion of the building. The similar large open room in the later west addition functioned as an additional pipe gallery. A series of segmental concrete arches provides visual separation between the first floor hall and the eastern pipe gallery. The floor material at the building's ground floor level is composed of poured concrete.

The plan of the second floor of the Waterworks consists of large open rooms in the original portion of the building and in the west addition which also historically contained substantial equipment supporting the water supply function of the building. A corridor and workroom are positioned at the southern portion of the original building, with an operating gallery and filter tanks to the north. A second operating gallery and two filter tanks are similarly placed in the west addition. Catwalks positioned between the filter tanks provide access to the two exterior doors on the north elevation. A small restroom is situated between the elevator and the laboratory in the original portion of the building. The second level of the building is floored with square terra cotta tiles, and the wall finishes consist of painted brick and painted concrete block. The third floor of the building occupies the third level of the original portion of the structure; the west addition is limited to two stories in height. The third floor holds a series of rooms of varying sizes. Generally used for storage, the original plan of the third floor has been altered through the installation of several concrete block walls. The finishes at the third floor level consist of concrete floors, painted brick walls, and painted concrete block walls.

The Culpeper Waterworks building is in good overall condition. The windows have been boarded at the exterior for security. Several of the window sash compositions are damaged, however, exhibiting broken glass panes and rusted steel muntins. The majority of the mechanical and electrical components have been removed, and a roof leak is present near the northwest corner of the third floor. The painted finishes on the interior walls and ceilings is peeling and flaking. The structure appears sound with no evidence of structural deterioration or movement.

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

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

Municipal Electric Utility

The Culpeper Light and Ice Company was initiated as the first electric generating facility in the town of Culpeper. Established by Dr. Orville Nalle and George Major in 1903, the facility was located near the town's current facility. Electric power was also generated from other sources, including the dam and turbine located at Monumental Mills, which began producing power in 1923. The Virginia Public Service Company purchased the Culpeper Light and Ice Company and continued generating power for the town. This company eventually became the Virginia Electric and Power Company.¹

As the town grew and the needs for reliable electric power increased, a referendum was introduced and approved in 1933 to create a power plant and accompanying distribution system. The site at the west end of Spring Street along Mountain Run, where an expanse of town-owned property was located and where the Culpeper Waterworks was also situated, was selected. A diesel-powered water pumping station existed on the property as part of the waterworks facility, and the new electric generation plant was constructed to encompass the existing pumping station. Personnel who maintained and operated the pumping station equipment could then also operate the electric generating equipment. This relationship continued until the pumping station equipment was removed in the early 1950's. The electric plant was planned as part of the New Deal's Public Works Administration and began operation on February 1, 1934.² The facility was designed by Wiley & Wilson, an engineering company that was founded in 1913 and continues in operation to the present day.

The power plant complex included concrete block garages with brick veneer to the west of the main building, noted as "Auto" and "Storage" on the 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. These garages were used to house the maintenance equipment and maintenance vehicles. A series of diesel fuel oil tanks were located to the north of garages. The Sanborn Map notes that the power plant building featured a roof that was composed of a steel deck on steel beams and utilized a concrete floor. The overall cost of the building project was \$158,430.00. This cost included the expenses and equipment related to the electrical distribution system. The building itself, including the engineering costs, was noted as \$17,270.00. The status of the project as part of the Public Works Administration resulted in a direct grant from the Federal government in the amount of 45% of the project cost. The total generating capacity for the facility at the time of its construction was 700 KW.³

The initial configuration of the power plant included three De La Vergne diesel engine generator units, with space planned for two additional units that would be added when the demands of the growing town required additional power. The interior features of the facility included a hand-operated bridge crane that facilitated the relocation of generators and the movement of heavy equipment. The use of water directly from the

¹ Donnie Johnston, Donnie Johnston's Culpeper, 1994.

² Donnie Johnston.

³ Mike Stover, *Memorandum, Generation System Improvements*, 2017.

adjacent Mountain Run was soon found to be unsuitable for engine jacket cooling. As a result, a closed cooling water system was installed.⁴

An additional diesel generator was installed in 1941 and was placed in one of the spaces set aside for future units. The cost of the new generator unit was \$55,000.00. Substantial additions were made to the building and its generating capacity in 1949. The diesel pumping station for the town's water system was still in place at this point, and consequently there was not space available to accommodate additional generators without adding to the building. An extension was added to the building for two new units, as well as room for offices and associated functions. Natural gas supply lines were included in the 1949 addition to serve a new dual-fuel type generator. The water system's diesel pumping unit was removed prior to 1952 and this space was made available for additions and upgrades to the building's generating systems. The power plant site continued to evolve through the mid-twentieth century. Two new buildings were constructed to the north of the main facility in 1960. The buildings were used to house oil lubricating equipment as well as to accommodate general storage needs. Generators that were outdated and past the point where repair was feasible were retired and replaced with new models. The pattern of upgrading and replacement of the equipment continued through the life of the power plant facility.⁵

The August 14, 1947 edition of the *Culpeper Exponent* relayed an accident at the plant, where an explosion involving an oil heater occurred, sending the heater head through the roof of the building. The article noted that glass was blown out of some of the windows, and that the steel frames of the affected windows were bent by the force of the explosion.⁶

The 1934 Municipal Electric Utility building remained in operation until it was replaced with a new facility on a different site. The construction of a new power plant was approved in 2002. The new facility would be situated at the Chandler Street complex, where the Chandler Street substation was already located. The estimated cost of the new generating facility was \$1,400,000.00. Advantages of the new facility were noted to include the elimination of the noise and pollution complaints related to the existing Spring Street plant. The new Chandler Street facility was dedicated in 2006.⁷

Culpeper Waterworks

The town of Culpeper was historically provided with water from private wells located on the residential lots and adjacent to certain business establishments, as was typical in communities before the widespread provision of running water. The old town water pump was located on the northwest corner of Main and Locust Streets prior to the Civil War.⁸

Town water has been provided within the limits of Culpeper since 1895. The civil engineer in charge of construction of the first water works pumping station was General William Nalle, a graduate of Virginia Military Institute. Nalle was later appointed Adjutant General of Virginia. The pumping station was located where the 1933 power plant was later constructed at the west end of Spring Street. The standpipe was

⁴ Mike Stover, *Memorandum*.

⁵ Mike Stover, *Memorandum*.

⁶ "Oil Heater Explodes at Power Plant Sunday," *Culpeper Exponent*, Thursday, August 14, 1947, p 3.

⁷ Mike Stover, *Memorandum*.

⁸ Donnie Johnston.

constructed as part of the early facility, and water supply mains were installed throughout the town. The early pumping station, however, did not provide a filtration system.⁹

The current Spring Street building was constructed on the site of the city's first filtration plant and is located on the banks of Mountain Run. The initial filtration plant was built in 1925 and was demolished in 1945 to make way for the construction of the new facility. The Culpeper Waterworks was constructed in 1946, with a later addition provided to the west. The engineering firm of Wiley & Wilson of Lynchburg and Richmond designed the building and the layout of its processing machinery. The firm was founded in 1913 and continues in operation to the present day. The contractor was F.L. Showalter, Inc., of Lynchburg. The filters in the processing facility were provided by the Roberts Filter Manufacturing Company of Darby, Pennsylvania.

The Culpeper Waterworks facility was placed in operation on September 1, 1946. In 1947, the plant was noted to be in operation twelve hours per day. The waterworks had a capacity of one million gallons of treated water per day when it first began operation, or 350 gallons per minute. The *Culpeper Exponent* noted in 1947 that "Two low-head pumps take the liquid from the raw water well into the mixing basin, where it flows by gravity through the coagulation basin, into the filters and down into the clear water well. There it is chlorinated and pumped out with the two high-head pumps through the mains of the town". A laboratory for the purpose of testing the water was located in the building on the second floor and technicians tested the product four times per day. Samples were sent to the State Health Department in Richmond twice a month along with monthly written reports. The town manager was quoted in the August 7, 1947 edition of the *Culpeper Exponent* that the Culpeper Waterworks was one of the most modern in Virginia.¹⁰

The facility was designed to utilize a rapid sand filtration system, which is a physical process to purify drinking water through a sand filter. The process requires power-operated pumps, regular backwashing of the system, and flow control of the filter outlet. Stages of pre-treatment and post-treatment are necessary to create the final product. The process uses chlorine, alum, soda ash, and lime at the time of post-treatment. The source for the water supply for the waterworks was provided by two impound lakes to the west of town. Lake Pelham and Mountain Run Lake continue to provide water for the town of Culpeper. A groundwater well located on Spring Street was also used to supplement the water plant with adequate amounts of emergency raw water.¹¹

According to architectural plans, the waterworks was expanded and upgraded in 1966 to include an additional pipe gallery, operating floor, and filter tanks in a large two-story addition to the west of the original three-story building. The waterworks building was indicated on the 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance map to be of fireproof construction, with concrete posts, beams, floors, and roof, as well as brick walls. The coagulating basin was located to the north of the building. The town council authorized the construction of a new water treatment facility on a different site in March 1994.

Criterion A

The planning and construction of the Municipal Electric Utility and the Culpeper Waterworks illustrates the period in the early twentieth century when small and mid-sized municipalities across the country began to see the consolidation and evolution of smaller utilities into larger entities that could meet increased demands of the growing population. The advances in technology and the need for increased capacity provided the

⁹ "Town of Culpeper Bicentennial Celebration" brochure, *Culpeper Star-Exponent*, 1976.

¹⁰ "Culpeper's Water Filtration Plant One of the Best in State," *Culpeper Exponent*, Thursday, August 7, 1947, p 1.

¹¹ *Culpeper County Comprehensive Plan*, 1999.

impetus for the addition to the power plant in 1947 and the addition to the waterworks in 1966. The steadily-increasing municipal demand, as well as the increasing standards and guidelines to be met in water quality testing, was addressed through the 1946 construction of the waterworks. The anticipated building booms following the scarcity of building materials and the general lack of large-scale construction projects (at least those unrelated to the war effort) during WWII were reflected in the new facilities, which would help to ensure steady, reliable, and uninterrupted supplies of power and water to the town of Culpeper. The construction dates of the two buildings are separated by twelve years and the period of social and economic change that was wrought by WWII. The power plant was conceived and constructed during the depths of the Great Depression, with support from Public Works Administration funding. The waterworks was constructed in the first year of growth and optimism that occurred immediately after the end of WWII. Power plants and waterworks facilities from the early-to-mid twentieth century are relatively uncommon; having the two utility plants together on one site is even less so. These two purpose built utility plants served the Town of Culpeper for more than half a century and still very much convey their original purpose and have strong architectural integrity. They are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for Industry.

Criterion C

Despite more than a decade that separates the construction of each facility, the buildings are unified through their use of the Moderne style. The rectilinear massing, simplicity of detail, and clean lines that characterize the designs of the buildings both expresses the modern period's confidence in technology and the municipality's conscious limitation of superfluous ornament that would unnecessarily increase the cost of construction. Despite the spare nature of the buildings and the restriction of ornament, the buildings clearly express their industrial functions and utilize features that convey the stylistic influences of the Moderne style. Traditional red brick that is used in the construction of both buildings reflects the building materials used historically throughout town and also helps to visually soften the industrial nature of the structures and allows them to relate to the surrounding residential neighborhood. Cast concrete details contrast with the traditional brick cladding and illustrates the increasing popularity and economy of the material. The emphasis on the verticality of the buildings, contrasted with horizontal accents, enriches the compositions and gives the buildings a dynamic quality that reflected the active mechanical and technical processes that were originally housed in each structure. These two buildings together, retaining so much of their historic material and setting, and with a high level of integrity are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for Architecture.

The Culpeper Municipal Electric Utility and Waterworks are eligible at the local level with a Period of Significance beginning in 1924 with the construction of the power plant, until 1968 when both plants were still operating and serving the Town of Culpeper.

References:

Culpeper County Comprehensive Plan, 1999.

"Culpeper's Water Filtration Plant One of the Best in State," *Culpeper Exponent*, Thursday, August 7, 1947.

Johnston, Donnie. Donnie Johnston's Culpeper: A 20th Century History. Mapleleaf Press, Culpeper, VA, 1994.

"Oil Heater Explodes at Power Plant Sunday," *Culpeper Exponent*, Thursday August 14, 1947.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: Culpeper, Oct. 1931 – Nov. 1958, sheet 7.

Stover, Mike (Director Town of Culpeper Light & Power), *Memorandum, Generation System Improvements*, 2017.

“Town of Culpeper Bicentennial Celebration” brochure, *Culpeper Star-Exponent*, 1976.

Town of Culpeper Department of Planning and Community Development and the Town of Culpeper Planning Commission, *The Culpeper 21 Plan*, 1994.

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: Culpeper Lofts LLC

organization: _____

street & number: 16215 Wolf Creek Road

city or town: Montpelier state: VA zip code:

23192

e-mail: gaskin@echelonresourcesinc.com telephone: 804-641-0655

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: Edwin Gaskin

Daytime Telephone: 804-641-0655

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

name/title: Bryan Townes; Marcus R. Pollard

organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group

street & number: PO Box 11083

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23517

e-mail: marcus@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: 757-651-0494

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

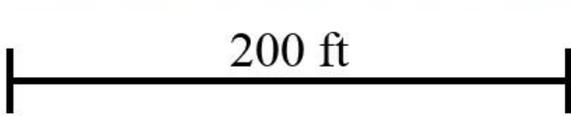
name/title: John Egertson, County Administrator

locality: Culpeper County

street & number: 302 North Main Street

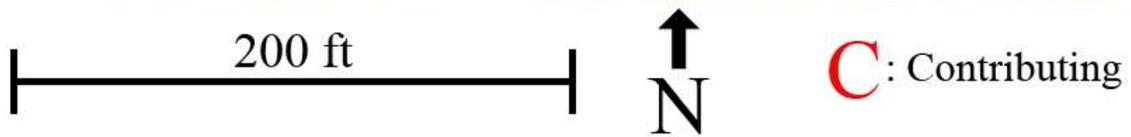
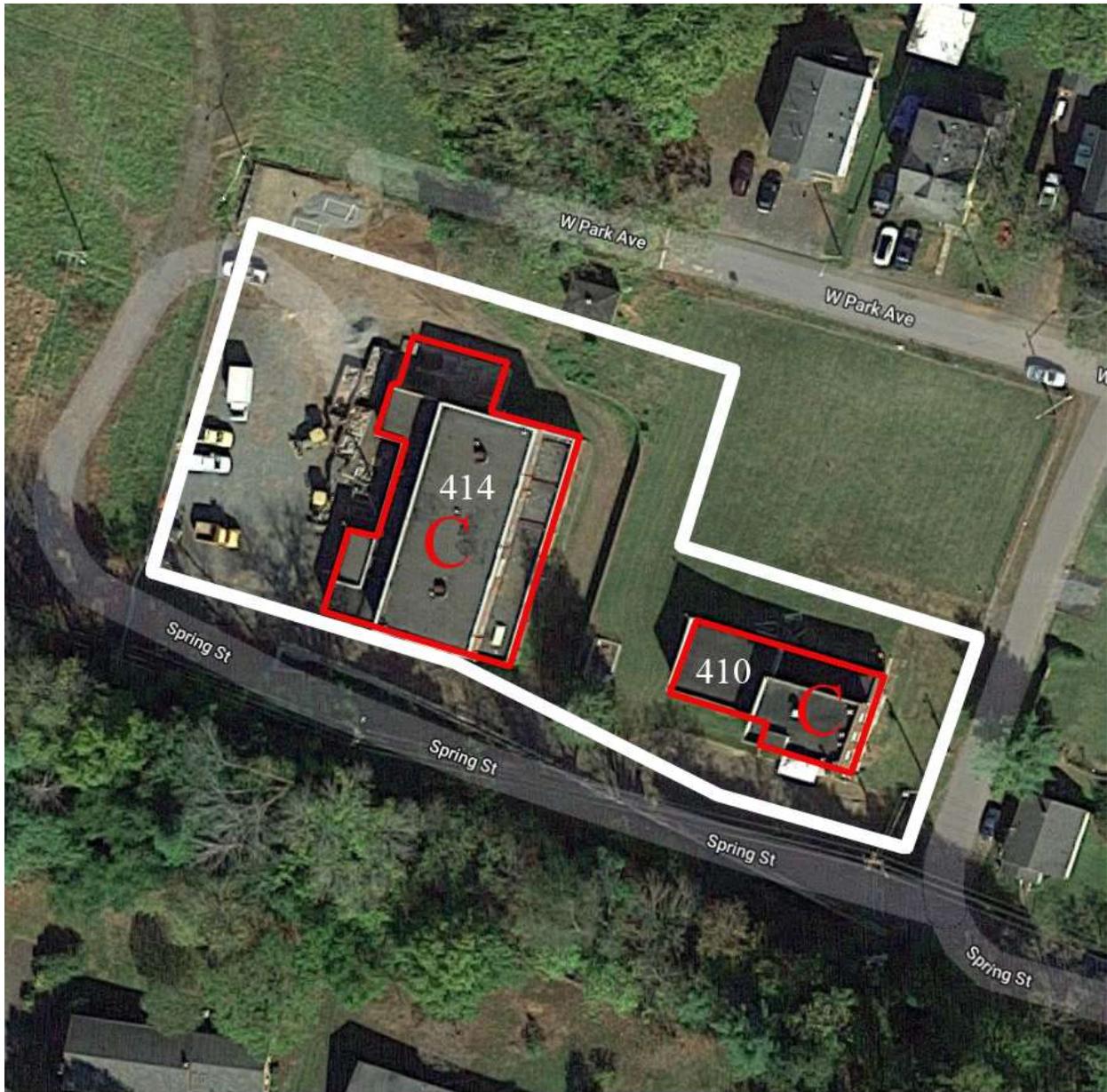
city or town: Culpeper state: VA zip code: 22701

telephone: 540-727-3427



Coordinates:
38.469030, -78.003598

Culpeper Utilities
410, 414 Spring Street
Culpeper, VA 23192



Culpeper Waterworks, 410 Spring Street &
Culpeper Light & Power, 414 Spring Street
Culpeper, VA 23192