



DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 077-0169

Purpose of Evaluation

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

Pulaski County and the Town of Draper are seeking recognition that will help foster continued revitalization of Draper and historic rehabilitation of resources within the proposed historic district.

1. General Information

Historic District name: Draper Historic District

Historic District Location (list major roads/streets) : Town of Draper (unincorporated)

Independent City or County (and Town if Applicable) Pulaski County

Ownership Categories (check all that apply)

Private X Public - Local X Public - State X Public - Federal _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: _____

Setting (choose only one of the following):

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

Briefly describe the property’s overall setting, including any notable landscape/streetscape features:

The Town of Draper, perhaps better described as a village, is located on the south side of Interstate 81 in southwestern Pulaski County, at the junction of two roughly perpendicular roads, Greenbriar Road (Route 658) and Old Baltimore Road (Route 654) that effectively serve as the town’s main street. A small number of historic commercial buildings are clustered near the road junction and adjacent to the former Norfolk and Western Railroad line, which has been repurposed into the New River Trail State Park, a 57-mile hiking and biking trail that follows the New River south to the late 19th- early 20th-century industrial towns of Fries and Galax, Virginia. The New River is a short distance from Draper.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Late Victorian styles incl. Queen Anne; Craftsman Bungalow, Colonial Revival

If the proposed district includes known work by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: N/A

If builder or developers important to the district are known, please list here: N/A

Dates of construction (provide an approximate range from earliest to latest resources): 1880s – 1950s

Narrative Description:

In the space below, describe the overall layout, building patterns, types, features, and general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include architectural styles, prominent materials, method(s) of construction, and noteworthy building details (exterior only). Describe any historic uses or functions that are still evident and an overall assessment of the current character of the proposed district

The proposed Draper Historic District consists of the entire small unincorporated town of Draper in central Pulaski County and is predominantly residential in character. All but one of the commercial resources are found at the southeast end of the district, near or adjacent to the N&W rail bed. It is estimated that the new proposed boundary encompasses approximately 25 contributing primary resources (83%) and only five non-contributing primary resources (17%). There are also a number of contributing and non-contributing secondary resources such as barns and sheds.

The Draper School site at the north end of the district (3165 Greenbriar Rd) is now missing the c. 1950 main school building (though ancillaries remain extant), having been hit by a tornado in 2011 and its remnants subsequently hauled away. The site is slated for development as a community park/green space. The remaining brick home economics building is occupied by the non-profit Pulaski Grow Youth Training Center and will be preserved, along with an extant community cannery that stood behind the razed school building. Both of the extant buildings are rare examples of their types and meet criteria for contributing building status in the district. The modern greenhouse located behind the home economics building is classified as a non-contributing structure.

There are four primary commercial properties in the district: a service garage and former gas station at the north end (3182 Greenbriar Rd) fronting onto Old Route 100, and an office building and two general stores at the southeast end of the district. The Harper-Bryson Store & Gas Station at 4297 Old Baltimore Road is on the corner of Holbert Avenue. It is a two-story front-gabled building that has what appears to be a sleeping porch across the front second story, and is the southernmost building in the district. The other store is the well-known Draper Mercantile and Trading Company (3054 Greenbriar Rd), which is certainly the town's most viable business. Its remodeled interior contains several small specialty shops and a restaurant. Adjacent to the Mercantile is a one-story frame commercial building with tall false parapets in the front. Likely built in the late 1880s or perhaps 1890s, the building is said to have functioned as an office building, possibly including a doctor's office or post office. All four of the extant commercial buildings are generally well-preserved and meet criteria for contributing building status in the district.

The Draper Christian Church (3091 Greenbriar Rd., DHR 077-0261), a frame building with bell tower, was built c. 1896. Located at the center of the district, it has recently received substantial repair and maintenance, and retains a relatively high level of historic integrity. Though determined not individually eligible in 1994, it meets criteria for contributing building status in the district.

The district's other church, Draper United Methodist (3080 Greenbriar Rd) is a significant brick building built around 1900. An unfortunate porch with stone piers supporting a serpentine-edged roof was built across the front (southwest) elevation in the second half of the 20th century; however despite its marginal exterior integrity, it retains sufficient integrity to convey historical significance and therefore meets criteria for contributing building status in the district.

The houses found along Greenbriar Road represent several of the popular vernacular styles of the late 19th through mid- 20th centuries, including Late Victorian styles such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman Bungalow, and minimal traditional.

The district's most impressive house is a two-story frame Queen Anne at 3143 Greenbriar Road, near the north end of the district. In front, along the sidewalk, is a significant stone retaining wall. Associated with the house is a horse facility immediately to the southeast, consisting of stables and a barn with bright red roofs and a fenced riding track.

The Craftsman Bungalow at 3096 Greenbriar Road is an exceptional, well-preserved example of its type, with a single-span elliptical-arched front porch supported at each end by three squat wooden columns set upon a single square masonry pier. The two side elevations of the porch are spanned by round arches. A much more substantial, but less distinctive bungalow is located across the street at 3103 Greenbriar Road. Its front porch has individual battered (tapered) posts set atop square masonry piers.

One of the older, more prominent houses in the district (House, New River Trail State Park, 3016 Brown Rd. DHR 077-5104) is now on New River Trail State Park property and appears to be essentially abandoned, vacant and its condition only fair. The house fronts to the west onto the New River Trail, and is the only resource in the district located on the east side of the N&W rail bed. Northeast of the house is a parking lot for trail users. South of the house is a narrow tree line. Across the trail from the house is Old Baltimore Road, which terminates just northwest of the house, near Draper Mercantile, at the junction of Greenbriar Road. Though its central front gable ornament is highly crafted and architecturally distinctive, the house does not appear to merit individual eligibility; however, it meets criteria for contributing building status in the district. The two-story single-pile frame house has a symmetrical three-bay facade, and weatherboard cladding under vinyl siding. The original foundation has been replaced with concrete block. The one-story three-bay hip-roofed front porch has been removed, exposing the weatherboards behind the vinyl siding. The front windows are two-over-two wooden sash. The front doorway has a lighted transom. Across the rear elevation of the two-story main block is a one-story shed addition.

4. History and Significance

Statement of Significance

The proposed Draper Historic District comprises the well-preserved late nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century unincorporated town that was associated with a railroad depot beginning c. 1886. With its extant commercial buildings, houses, and churches, it represents the historic attributes of a small rural railroad village in the southern Great Valley of Virginia. The district appears to be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The proposed period of significance spans from the construction of the N&W Railroad Depot at Draper in 1886, which stimulated a decades-long period of growth and prosperity, to 1960, when the Draper Depot was taken out of service marking the end of growth for the village.

Historical Background

At the end of the 18th century, Joseph Russell settled on the Great Road (aka. Wilderness Road) near the present town of Draper and operated a store and distillery and one of several mills in the Draper Valley. The Draper community was originally known as Russellville. [Worsham, et. al. 1985 county survey.]

Draper village was settled mainly after Reconstruction, during the height of the American Industrial Revolution, when several nearby mineral mines, quarries, and iron furnaces and forges operated. The nearby county seat of Pulaski grew into a prosperous industrial town with numerous rail connections. With the arrival of the Cripple Creek Extension of the Norfolk and Western Railroad in 1886, the small settlement was renamed Draper for its place within the Draper Valley, and grew to become a prosperous village. The Valley had been named for John Draper, who received title to a tract of 240 acres by 1850. The Draper family holdings in the valley eventually grew to over 2000 acres. [1985 county survey report, 88.] The John Draper house remains extant, outside of the district and town limits.

The N&W's 1886 "Map of the Cripple Creek Extension" shows the small village called Draper at the 6.2 mile mark, depicting no more than eight buildings. The village appears to have grown without any deliberate town planning soon after construction of the depot, reaching its zenith around the turn of the twentieth century. The Draper Depot, a small, frame, combination freight and passenger station, operated until 1960 [Webb, 14. Only one archival photo of the depot is known to exist, in the Virginia Tech Libraries Special Collection's online N&W collection.] The Rex Milling Company grist mill began operations in Draper in 1907 and closed in the 1940s. The three-story frame building, sited near the depot, had a two-bay front façade and a front-gable roof. [Webb, 14. The mill is pictured near the depot.] Agriculture was the other major economic engine that kept the merchants at Pulaski and Draper and the railroads busy.

The recreational opportunities afforded by the New River and the biking trail have been a mainstay for the local economy in recent decades. The economy had suffered since mines and furnaces closed in the first quarter of the 20th century and finally when railroad service to Draper was discontinued in 1960. The rail line was completely abandoned in 1985.

The Cripple Creek Extension and North Carolina Branch

After forming in 1881, the Norfolk and Western Railway realized the need to connect the industrial center of Pulaski (then called Martin's Station or Martin's Tank) with the mines and furnaces around and southwest of Draper, all located along the New River and its tributaries, with other rail corridors and distant markets. One of the tributaries of the New River was Cripple Creek, chiefly in neighboring Wythe County, where several iron furnaces including the Raven Cliff and Speedwell furnaces were located. The N&W acquired the rail bed built through the Draper Valley by the short-lived New River Plateau Railroad Company to connect with the N&W line at Pulaski. The N&W annual report in 1882 stated that the extension would be built to reach "a continuous belt of mineral deposits, which for the quality, quantity, and diversity of character is probably

unsurpassed by any mineral section in the United States.” The N&W’s new railroad line was about 50 miles long and was originally called the Cripple Creek Extension. Construction started in late 1883 and 28.8 miles had been built by 1887. It and later became part of the N&W North Carolina Branch with the Cripple Creek spur line following the creek valley. The rail line reach the industrial town of Fries, on the New River, in 1901, just as the town’s textile mills had reached full production, and reached Galax via a short spur in 1906. “The construction of the Cripple Creek Extension made Pulaski even more important as a rail center, since additional train shops and maintenance facilities were needed to service the branch’s substantial traffic.” [Webb, 13.] An N&W timetable from 1887 shows that it took only 20 minutes for the passenger train to reach Draper from Pulaski, a 4.5-mile stretch. The next stop was Allisonia, another 20 minutes (1.8 miles) down the line from Draper. [Webb, 103.]

Also located on the New River and the Cripple Creek Extension was the village of Fosters Falls, which had an industrial iron furnace of its own. After the tracks reached Fosters Falls in October, 1886, the railroad built a depot there, similar to the one built at Draper (no longer extant). Fosters Falls is a listed historic district and the headquarters of 57-mile linear New River Trail State Park, itself an eligible, but unlisted historic district (DHR 077-5068).

Among the mineral resources mined in 1903 in the areas along the New River and the Cripple Creek Extension in Pulaski and Wythe counties were hematite iron ore, magniferous iron ore, copper, zinc and lead. Among the iron furnaces were those named Speedwell, Cave Hill, Ivanhoe, Cripple Creek, Fosters Falls, Raven Cliff, Bertha (1881-1911), Beverly, Eagle, Irondale, Wythe, Brown Hill, Walton, Pierce, Radford, Cedar Run, Boom, Pulaski and Dora (1890-1917). The Altoona Coal Mine, north of the Town of Pulaski, was also connected by rail beginning in the 1870s. [Mineral resources and Railway Facilities map, ca. 1903, updated from C.R. Boyd map of 1891, depicted in Webb book, 1995.]

Sources:

Map of the Cripple Creek Extension of the New River Division of the Norfolk and Western Railroad. Office of the Chief Engineer, Roanoke, Sept. 9, 1886. University of Virginia Libraries online digital collection.

Neville, Ashley. New River Trail State Park Historic District reconnaissance survey, 2001. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

Pulice, Michael J. “Fosters Falls Historic District” nomination, 2009. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

Virginia Tech Libraries Imagebase: Special Collections online N&W images collection.

Webb, Munsey W. *Norfolk and Western Railway Company: North Carolina Branch*, Self-published book, Pulaski Va., 1995.

Worsham, Charlotte. Draper Historic District reconnaissance survey form, 1985.

Worsham, Gibson et. al. Pulaski County Reconnaissance Level Survey, 1985. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

5. Applicant Information

Sponsor (Individual and/or organization, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet.)

contact person for sponsor/title: N/A
organization: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____
e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Sponsor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than contact person/sponsor listed above)

name/title: Mike Pulice
organization: VDHR
street & number: Western Regional Office, 962 Kime Ln
city or town: Salem state: VA zip code: 24153
e-mail: michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov telephone: 540-387-5443

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 City Manager or County Administrator (and Town, if applicable).

name/title: Danny Wilson, Planner/Zoning Administrator
locality: Pulaski County
street & number: 143 Third St. Suite 1
city or town: Pulaski state: VA zip code: 24301
telephone: 540-980-7705

Town (if applicable) N/A

name/title: _____
locality: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____



