

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration FormRECEIVED
JAN 27 1994NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name RICE'S HOTELother names/site number Hughlett's Tavern; Shirley Hotel

DHR # 66-9

2. Location

street & number Jct. of County Routes 1001 and 1002☐ not for publication N/Acity town Heathsville☐ vicinity N/Astate Virginiacode VAcounty Northumberlandcode 133zip code 22473

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

1

sites

structures

objects

2

Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 3

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

1/31/94

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Janet E. Sorenson3-1-94

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☒ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ARCHAEOLOGY

Period of Significance

Ca. 1790-ca. 1881

Significant Dates

ca. 1790

1832

1881

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located directly behind the Northumberland County courthouse at Heathsville, Rice's Hotel has been a key element in the courthouse complex since the late eighteenth century. Originally known as Hughlett's Tavern, the building served as a lodging place for visitors to the courthouse for over a century and a half. The two-story frame building follows the classic form of a small-town Virginia tavern (and later, hotel) and its gradual evolution illustrates the changing expectations of Virginia travelers between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today Rice's Hotel is a 110-foot-long structure with continuous double-tier veranda, but it began as a much smaller, two-room-plan building in the late eighteenth century. It was expanded to its present form in three major building campaigns: in the 1830s, 1880s and 1920s. John Hughlett, whose ancestors had owned land adjacent to the courthouse since the late seventeenth century, erected the original portion of the tavern before 1795. The tavern was run by a number of proprietors before John Hughlett sold it in 1824; it continued to be leased by various tavernkeepers until 1866, when John Rice purchased it. The Rice family operated it as Rice's Hotel until the 1920s, and in the following decade it was converted to apartments. In 1990 Cecelia Fallin Rice donated the building to the Northumberland County Historical Society, which plans to rehabilitate it.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

Rice's Hotel is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is a characteristic and relatively unaltered example of a nineteenth-century tavern and hotel. The hotel is architecturally interesting for its gradual evolution over a period of a century and a quarter. It is locally significant as the only early tavern surviving in the Heathsville Historic District, and its prominent location directly behind the 1850s courthouse makes it a key visual element in the district. The period of significance ranges from ca. 1790, the earliest

☒ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

Narrative Description

The extant tavern/hotel complex and the two ruinous outbuildings in the back yard are the sole above ground reminders of the 200 years of continuous occupation of the Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern property. Archaeology has shown that much more may lie below the ground surface. The land has probably changed little since the time a tavern was operated here during the last quarter of the 18th century. Prior to Foundation ownership, the west and south edges of the property had been plowed. Today, this and the rest of the back and side yards of the property are covered with brush and a number of small trees. The front lawn is grassed over and contains several large oak trees.

In 1991, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources conducted an archaeological survey of the property and located 90 features and recovered over 13,000 artifacts. Dates of features and artifacts ranged from the last half of the 18th century to the last half of the 20th century corresponding to the dates of the tavern/hotel architectural remains. Archaeological investigations were restricted to the 1.2 acres comprising the original nomination, and all areas examined were found to be archaeologically sensitive. Potential therefore exists for additional remains outside the Foundation's property.

Included in the features discovered were a number of brick walkways, trash pits, post holes, sheet refuse, and septic and utility lines. Features that extended to a depth of greater than 10" below the ground surface have survived below the plowzone to the west and south. Some features have been tested to a depth of 3' below the ground surface. Intact refuse layers observed between the kitchen and the house indicate that no major disturbances have occurred there and suggest that intact features should be present. Brick walkways found in the front yard attest to limited disturbances in that area. The archaeological remains are designated 44NB197 in the state's inventory of archaeological sites.

Background

In November 1993, the Department of Historic Resources conducted an archaeological survey of the Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern property. Sixty-five test units were hand-excavated across the site within the boundaries of the existing 1.2 acres on the National Register. All but three of these were confined to the back yard of the tavern/hotel complex. Eight machine trenches were also dug following the hand work, all confined to the back yard. Test units were excavated by natural layers to subsoil or until features were encountered. With the exception of the machine trenches, all fill was screened through $\frac{1}{4}$ " mesh.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

Remains of brick walkways were discovered in both the front yard and back yard. In the front yard, a 5' wide walk lined up on the front door to the 18th-century tavern. This walk was made up of brick pavers mortared together and appeared to terminate with a curb 31' from the entrance. This walk overlay a 3½" layer of whole oyster shell which in turn overlay another brick walk. The north edge of this second walk lay directly in line with the north edge of the upper walkway but extended at least 1'3½" beyond the end of the first walk.

Another 5' wide brick walkway was discovered lining up with the southern front entrance to the 1830s addition. Soft broken brick tile were found alongside hard-fired brick in this walkway suggesting use and repair over a period of time. The sides of the walkway were edged with brick. None of these bricks were mortared together. Approximately 1' north of this walkway, 3" deeper, lay another brick feature. This feature was comprised of dry laid brick on the same orientation as the other two walkways but without an edging. Probing indicated an extensive amount of this brickwork lay at this same level in the surrounding area.

At the back of the tavern/hotel, two areas of brick walkway were found. One connects the east kitchen door to the back of the 1830s addition. This walk is 3½' wide made up of 9" square brick tiles with an edge of regular brick all dry laid. Thirty-five feet west of the tavern, this walk makes a "T" extending north to the east entrance to the smokehouse.

Five feet west of the western facade of the tavern/hotel another apparent brick walkway was discovered. This brick was dry laid and set in random fashion. The relationship of this walk to the extant complex is not established. It is centered on the entrance to the northern 1920s addition, and also centered on the rear entrance to the early tavern.

In addition to the brick walks, nearly two dozen post holes have been found across the site. Most of these were located within trenches 1 and 5. Trench 5, 170 feet west of the south end of the building complex, has a clustering of 16 holes. Three of these, of similar size, shape, and content, appear to be part of a small structure, measuring at least 4' x 9'. Another four holes in that trench, are in line with one another, and spaced at 10' intervals. These holes are on a N-S axis lying parallel to the long axis of the hotel complex and may represent the partial remains of a building. Trench 7, cut perpendicular to one of these holes, uncovered a circular hole filled with brick 18' to the west. This would suggest building dimensions of approximately 18' x 30'. The 7 holes in Trench 1 are ±6" in diameter and have no observable pattern.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

On the west side of trench 1, approximately 4' west of some of these small post holes lie eight rectangular features several feet square or rectangular. Seven of these are on a line parallel to the west side of the building. A 1' x 1' test hole was excavated in the northeast corner of two of these holes and found them to extend to nearly 3' BMG. Artifacts dated to the first quarter of the 19th century and included pearlwares, whiteware, brick, glass, and salt glazed stoneware fragments. Some shell fragments were also found. Function has not been determined, although they are believed at this point to be either garden related or privy remains.

Two oval features partially exposed in trench 5 cut into the subsoil and measure a minimum of 13' and 21' in length respectively. The former was tested and extended to $\pm 3'$ BMG and contained an abundance of brick rubble, at least 6 shell edged pearlware plates, and a 1792 silver 4 real piece. The latter was not tested, but contains 20th century glass on the surface.

Three charred timbers, one in trench 4, and two in trench 5, were located imbedded in the subsoil just below the plowzone. The three timbers each measured 10" x $\pm 4'$ and roughly defined an area 18' x 60'. The timbers burned in situ, firing the clay around them almost to the color of red brick. These timbers may have served as wooden piers or steps to a structure or structures situated along the southwest side of the tavern/hotel quadrangle.

In addition to the above mentioned features, sheet refuse was found over the whole back yard area between the tavern/hotel complex and the kitchen. Trenches bearing piping for everything from water to sewage were also found during the testing. Three to four septic systems appear to have been located.

Artifacts numbered in excess of 13,000. Although the span of these artifacts dated from the second half of the 18th century to the present, the majority dated to the 19th and 20th centuries. Only seven of the 90 features were tested, and some of these were 20th century. The predominance of the late artifacts is because most of the testing dealt with the late sheet refuse surrounding the surviving buildings. The finds ran the gamut from by-products like slag and aluminum pop tops to toy marbles and toothpaste tubes. Ceramics and glass dominated the finds and included coarsewares to fine porcelains. Architectural materials and faunal materials were present as were seven coins and one musical instrument.

Although some plowing has occurred on the western and southern boundaries of the Foundation property, archaeological integrity is good as shown by the surviving features across the site and by the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 4

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

nearly complete survival of sheet refuse between the kitchen and the main complex, tavern/hotel complex.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5 Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

Narrative Statement of Significance

As the result of archaeological testing, the existing National Register property nomination is being amended to include criterion D under area of significance, data category archaeology, subcategory historic non-aboriginal. Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern is considered significant for the period circa 1795, the time it first shows up in the historical record, to circa 1935 when it ceases being used as a hotel.

The archaeological site at Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern encompasses the 1.2 acres of the register property, including the main structure and its two ruinous outbuildings. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources conducted archaeological investigations on the site in 1991 and located intact cultural deposits associated with the continuous evolution of the tavern/hotel complex over 200 years.

Although limited in scope, the survey has revealed otherwise unavailable research data pertinent to a more complete understanding of the chronology and historic development of the property, the spatial order of structures and landscape modifications, the activities associated with the running of the tavern and hotel, and information on the regional economy and status of the owners and their clientele based on architectural construction and remodelling, material cultural, and food remains.

Background

Based on similar known sites it is expected that archaeological evidence for buildings and structures such as stable and carriage houses, barns, kitchens, smokehouses, dairies, privies, storage facilities, chicken coops, servants quarters, wells, still houses and forges might all likely be present. It is also probable that landscape features like fences, ditches, hedges, and plantings and gardens may survive below ground.

The potential for retrieval of this kind of information is excellent. An archaeological survey has already located ninety features, in addition to sheet refuse, surviving at the site below ground. Although some plowing has occurred at the western and southern boundary of the property, numerous features have been located below the plowzone in those areas, and elsewhere the property is relatively undisturbed. Thus, the integrity of the site is very good.

Research questions are many. In a regional sense, no archaeology has been attempted on similar sites. Reporting on work at Shields Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg in 1990 authors stated that

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

relatively few taverns have been archaeologically investigated in depth (Brown 1990).

Some questions relate to the chronology of the property. No date of construction is known for the tavern. What preceded the tavern on the site? A courthouse was established adjacent to the property in 1681. Was there a predecessor to the surviving tavern? Will the archaeological evidence corroborate the architectural dating of the various additions to the tavern and the time placement of the outbuildings?

In the evolutionary development of the tavern/hotel, oral history suggests that an overflow building was located somewhere to the rear of the tavern/hotel. Was there in fact an overflow building to the west? Was it built before or after the later known additions to the tavern itself? Did the location have anything to do with the visitors, their association with the court, their social status, or any other factor?

Other questions relate to the presence and layout of buildings, structures, and landscape features mentioned earlier. Do the numbers and diversity of remains have bearing on the social and economic environment of the region over time? Are there distinct public and private areas surrounding the tavern/hotel set off by fencing, hedgerows, and trees or separated by space? Does the location of the courthouse have any bearing on the plan of the tavern property? Is the placement of privies, smokehouses, stables, and cow barns in any way dependent upon the proximity of nearby private or public buildings, the location of other activity areas, or prevailing winds? How might the layout of a rural tavern compare or differ with an urban tavern? A kitchen and smokehouse survive in ruinous condition 160 years after their construction. Are there predecessors to these buildings that went with the earlier tavern?

Archaeological remains should provide good comparative information on foodways. Does the proximity of the tavern/hotel to the Chesapeake Bay predispose it to a different kind of culinary fare than might be expected at other similar properties further inland? Are foods served in rural taverns similar to that served in urban taverns? Would there be any differences that might be noted regarding production of foodstuffs in the country versus the city (reflected in butchery and gardening practices)? Did garbage disposal differ in a rural versus an urban setting? Located next to the county courthouse, and having survived from the late 18th century into the 20th century, would suggest that the hotel/tavern enterprise might have been a successful one. Does the material culture support this contention? Should we expect to see in the artifactual record a quality that suggests success?

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

Page 7

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

Various other questions might be considered. Are there other differences between urban and rural taverns which will be manifested in the archaeological record? A number of brick walkways have been located archaeologically. Is it likely that, given the proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and the potentially large supply of mollusks available, that we might find shell walkways present on the site?

Archaeological survey has found extensive features and refuse layers on the hotel/tavern property. Four brick walkways have been identified, and two other areas with brick pavers have been found also, probably some walkway or patio area. Should there be a walkway of some sort to every building or activity area across the site? Will walkways not made of brick be discernible in the archaeological record? Post holes have been encountered, some believed to be part of fencelines, and others believed to be from a post building. Ephemeral remains of a small post building, possibly a chicken coop, have also been found.

Three areas in the back yard are immediately of interest. In the southwest corner, in the vicinity of the reported overflow building, a great number of post holes and two large pits were uncovered. Four of the postholes may be from a post building and may be the source for the artifacts in the early pit. Artifacts from the early pit date between 1785 and 1820 while artifacts from the other are from the 1900s. Will the artifacts found associated with the "outbuilding" be comparable to the artifacts associated with the main tavern and hotel? On the southern edge of the property three charred timbers that were burned in situ lie on axes conforming to the tavern/hotel. These may be the partial remains of a barn or other building. Seventy feet west of the back of the tavern, a machine trench partially exposed eight rectangular features of undetermined function. Two immediate interpretations that come to mind are garden features, or privy pits. Are the features deep enough for privies? Are the holes large enough to serve as planting beds for some horticultural purpose? Will soils analysis support either of these interpretations. If these are not garden related, where is the garden and what is it comprised of?

Over 13,000 artifacts have been recovered from the property. Most of these artifacts came from topsoil layers and from the sheet refuse layers near the rear of the tavern/hotel. While most of these artifacts date from the 20th century, collectively they span the second half of the 18th century to the present day. The backfilled pit near the southwest corner of the property yielded nearly complete remains of seven pearlware plates and a 1792 Spanish silver coin. Will a careful comparative study of artifacts recovered from across the site shed light on the social and or economic status of the various occupants over time? With such a potential wealth of artifacts, how will this collection compare

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

with other well documented inland sites, or well urban sites. Evidence indicates numerous artifacts have been deposited here. Considerable change has taken place in the built environment over time, land tax records too, show considerable fluctuation over time. Could this then provide a somewhat unique opportunity to compare and contrast economic change over time as viewed by the three disciplines of history, architecture, and archaeology? The research potential seems good.

The numerous archaeological features, layers, and artifacts discovered by the limited testing of the site, the integrity of those remains, and their potential for yielding important information not yet known about this national register property support the amendment to the nomination to include criterion D.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 9 Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

Major Bibliographical References:

Hazzard, David K., and David H. Dutton. Archaeological Survey of Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern (44NB197). Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1993

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Rice's Hotel/Hughlett's Tavern Site Stewardship Plan. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1993.

Brown, Gregory J., et al. Archaeological Investigation of the Shields Tavern Site, Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Department of Archaeological Research, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section PHOTO Page 10 Rice's Hotel (Amendment)
Northumberland County, Virginia

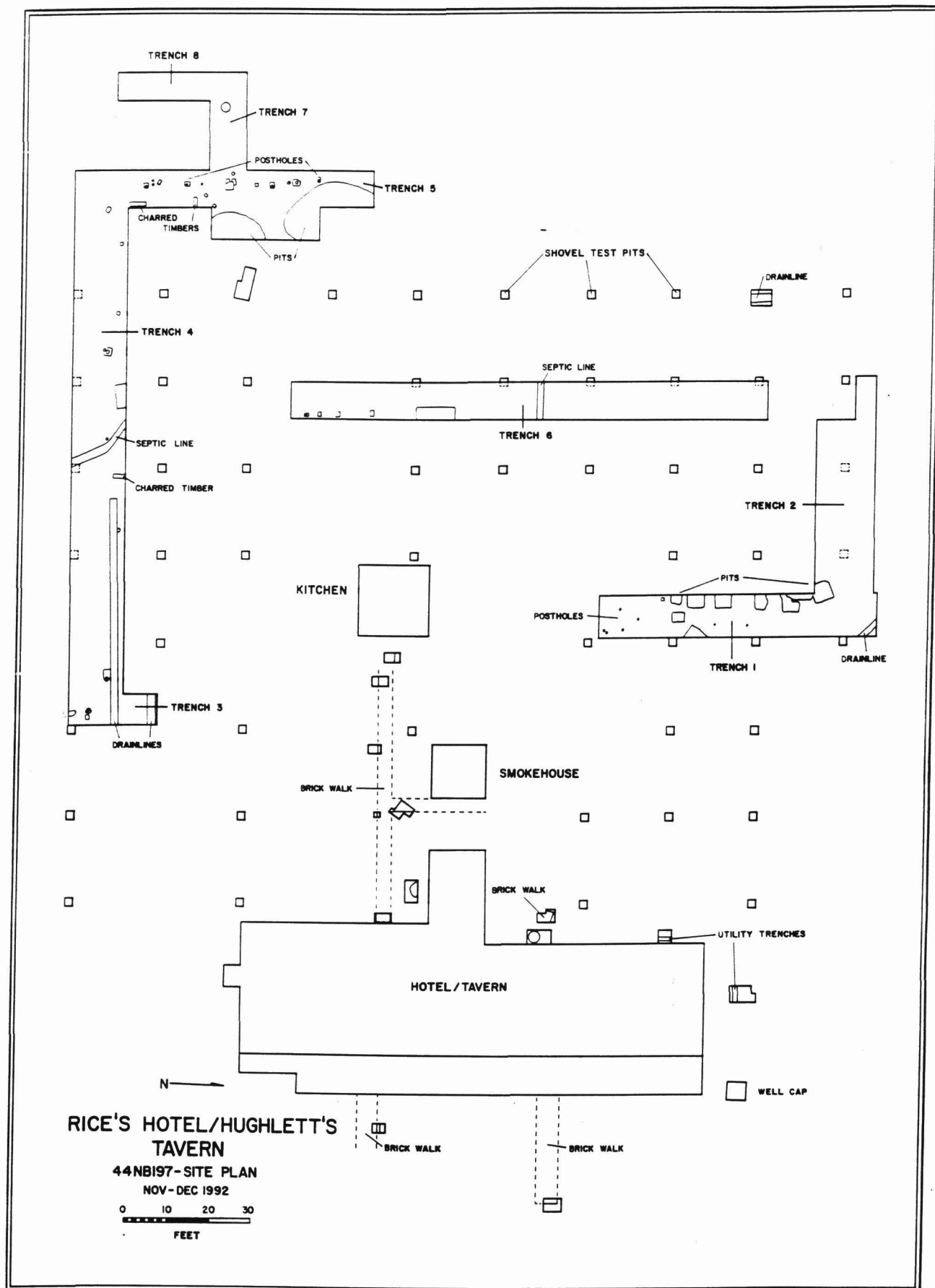
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are of property at:

RICE'S HOTEL/HUGHLETT'S TAVERN
Heathsville, Northumberland Co. Virginia
VDHR File #44NB197

1. CREDIT: David K. Hazzard
DATE: 1992
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
Richmond, Virginia
VIEW OF: Back yard of hotel/tavern complex during excavation;
facing east
NEG. NO: 5d
FILE NO: 44NB197
PHOTO: 1 of 2

2. CREDIT: David K. Hazzard
DATE: 1992
NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia Department of Historic Resources,
Richmond, Virginia
VIEW OF: shovel test pit with pearlware plates and Spanish
silver 4 real 1792 coin in situ, screening in background; facing
north
NEG. NO: 13
FILE NO: 44NB197
PHOTO: 2 of 2



Plan of archaeological test units and features at the hotel/tavern complex.