

# 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.

**VLR Listed: 9/20/2018**  
**NRHP Listed: 3/8/2019**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

Other names/site number: VDHR # 122-5797-0078; 122-5797-0079

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: 225 W. Olney Road; 740 Duke Street; 217 Grace Street

City or town: Norfolk 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Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of certifying official/Title:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

\_\_\_\_\_  
In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of commenting official:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

---

#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

---

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Business; Professional

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular)

LANDSCAPE/Parking Lot

---

---

---

---

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Business

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular)

LANDSCAPE/Parking Lot

---

---

---

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

---

---

---

---

### Materials:

(enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; METAL/Steel; CONCRETE; GLASS

---

### 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.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

The original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797) is located in a flat area directly north of the Downtown Norfolk Historic District (#122-0265) with West Brambleton Avenue dividing them. The original 54-acre district, bound by West Brambleton Avenue to the south, Boush Street, Llewellyn Avenue, and Granby Street to the west, St Paul's Boulevard and Monticello Avenue to the east, and East 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014. The district consists of 53 contributing and 38 noncontributing resources of entirely commercial, mostly one-to-two story buildings with a handful of three- and four-story buildings and one 14-story building. The style of the buildings is generally Commercial Style, but there are a few notable examples of Art Deco, International Style, and Moderne buildings. The 2018 Boundary Increase is located just west of the original district and includes four additional contributing resources: the Duke-Grace Building, a five-story building located at 740 Duke Street, and its associated two-story parking deck, the IBM Building, a three-story building located at 225 W. Olney Road, and the one-story commercial building located at 217 Grace Street. The office buildings are examples of International Style architecture constructed in 1968 and contain high levels of architectural integrity, while the ca. 1953 building at 217 Grace Street is constructed in the Commercial Style. These four resources are compatible with the existing district in terms of scale, massing, setback, style, materials, and workmanship.

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

---

### Narrative Description

The original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District is comprised of roughly 54 acres with the district being wide at its southern end while narrowing to a one-block corridor at the northern end. There are 53 contributing and 38 non-contributing resources and several parking lots of varying sizes. Most of these buildings are of masonry construction with brick, stone or stucco exterior surfaces. Large windows are prominent as a result of so many buildings being used for automobile display. Most resources fit into the familiar category of Commercial Style buildings seen in many urban developments from the early-to-mid twentieth century. There are also notable examples of Art Deco, International, and Moderne style resources. The primary artery running up the middle of the district is Granby Street.

There is minimal vegetation in this urban historic district, with some landscaping incorporated with infill construction. There are sidewalks along most streets. The overall character of the district is defined by modestly scaled commercial buildings, usually constructed to the lot line. Several buildings along or near Brambleton Avenue are the tallest and represent a transition from the Downtown Norfolk Historic District's high-rise development to the former auto showrooms and service warehouses that define the historic character of the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District.

### 2018 Boundary Increase

The 2018 Boundary Increase is approximately 2.43 acres located just west of the original district and includes four contributing resources: the Duke-Grace Building (740 Duke Street) and its associated two-story parking deck, the IBM Building (225 W. Olney Road), and the one-story commercial building located at 217 Grace Street.

The Duke-Grace Building, constructed in 1967-1969 of concrete block with a white brick veneer, is a five-story, International-Style building with a flat roof. The asymmetrical, north-facing elevation features a u-shaped entry with a raised plaza at the southeast corner of Duke and Grace Streets. The entry has horizontal ribbon widows that follow the u-shaped design, as well as earth-toned, pre-cast aggregate concrete panels juxtaposed against the alternating bays of smooth white brick and vertical tinted windows. In contrast, the building's other elevations are faced entirely with white brick and the fenestration is strongly vertical, with small aggregate concrete panels separating each story.

To the south of the Duke-Grace Building is an associated two-story concrete parking deck, which was included in the property's original design scheme. A low poured-concrete knee wall extends between the street and the parking deck's ground level. The wall is a brownish color that matches the adjacent sidewalk. Clipped evergreen hedges in gravel beds are between the wall and sidewalk. The parking deck has smooth white concrete surfaces, which is a character-defining feature of the International Style. A series of reinforced concrete piers are regularly spaced along the deck's ground level. The upper level is slightly cantilevered over the ground-level piers, creating a visual impression that it floats above the street level; use of piers to create

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

this effect was another common feature of the International Style. Geometric arches along the upper level's east-facing elevation give the look and feel of ribbon windows. An elevator tower and exterior staircase are located at the north end of the east elevation.

The IBM Building, constructed in 1968 of concrete block with a brick-faced exterior, is a three-story, International Style building with a flat roof. The building consists of alternating bays of brick and narrow, vertical windows on each elevation, and has a regular, symmetrical footprint. The window openings are outlined with light-colored cast concrete that contrasts with the dark brick veneer, which further emphasizes the fenestration's verticality. Along its roofline, the IBM Building also has cast concrete spandrels with vertical reliefs. This treatment and the cast concrete belt course near the building's ground level are reminiscent of the early Modern Movement's use of the three part-column shaft to define a building's massing. Although the building is situated at the corner of Grace and Duke streets, the main entry is centrally located on the north façade, which faces a large parking lot along Olney Street (originally W. Virginia Beach Boulevard). The north façade originally had three projecting awnings built of reinforced concrete and accessed by means of a raised plaza. This design later was altered by enclosing the areas between the projecting entries with materials that match the original building, including concrete and tinted glass. Presently there is a single, centered entry on the east façade. The entry is sheltered by a projecting, heavy, square, poured concrete canopy which is enclosed with metal-framed windows and doors. It is accessed from the east side by a poured concrete ramp and an adjacent set of concrete steps. The building's east elevation has a service entry and loading dock that is covered with a cantilevered concrete awning. The loading area is built of poured concrete, has metal pipe railings, and is accessed on the east side by a set of concrete steps.

The modestly-scaled, one-story commercial building located at 217 Grace Street was constructed ca. 1953 of concrete block and has a brick façade laid in common bond. The long, narrow building has a door in the east bay of the north façade and a large double-pane window in the west bay. The east side elevation has several openings including one single-pane window, a six-pane window, and a door, that were likely later additions while the west elevation is concealed by the neighboring Duke-Grace Building.

Like the original historic district, the streetscape retains much of its historic character with sidewalks along the streets. Minimal vegetation exists along Duke Street, with small hedges and a few mature trees, including one rising from the center of the landscaped plaza of the Duke-Grace Building. Several trees line the perimeter of the IBM Building, and planters front the main entry along the raised plaza. The overall character of the district is defined by relatively low-rise commercial buildings and parking facilities.

### Integrity Analysis

The Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase retains a high level of integrity that contributes to the district's areas and period of significance. The resources located within the Boundary Increase are associated with the expanding commercial corridor and financial district of downtown Norfolk during the mid-twentieth century, as well as the relatively low-rise office

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

buildings that emerged as the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District had evolved by the 1960s. Both the Duke-Grace Building (740 Duke Street) with its associated parking deck and the IBM Building (225 W. Olney Road) retain integrity of design, workmanship, and materials associated with late International Style architecture. Both buildings are blocky masses with flat roofs and smooth expanses of masonry veneers, yet each has a fenestration pattern of long, narrow window slits with strong verticality that relieves each building's otherwise rather monolithic form. Although the main entry to the IBM Building has been altered to provide an enclosed lobby or receiving area, this alteration is compatible with the materials and design of the main building.

The boundary increase area retains its historic location, setting, feeling, and association with sidewalks and minimal vegetation along the streetscape. Narrow beds planted with evergreen shrubs of different types and a few small trees are along the IBM Building's perimeter, while the Duke-Grace Building's parking deck has a narrow bed with widely spaced evergreen bushes. With inclusion of expansive parking areas in the original designs of these two buildings, the boundary increase area also displays the character of an area that dates to auto-centric transportation, with a large parking lot along the front elevation of the IBM Building (225 W. Olney Road) and the two-story parking deck associated with the Duke-Grace Building (740 Duke Street).

The small commercial building at 217 Grace Street, meanwhile, is associated with the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District's post-World War II development, when modestly scaled, minimally embellished commercial buildings were constructed. Relatively unaltered since its construction, the building retains integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its few references to the Commercial Style are primarily found in the storefront design with a large display window and single entry and a low parapet that encircles the sloping roof.

### **Historic District Boundary Assessment**

In 2018, the existing boundaries of the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District were thoughtfully examined to identify any potential areas that would be appropriate to include in the district. The boundary increase area that is presented herein includes three buildings that date to the late 1960s, when the original district had largely been built out, as well as one small early 1950s commercial building that has survived among redeveloped lots. These four buildings continue to be used for purposes compatible with their original design, with a restaurant occupying the 1953 commercial building, and the Duke-Grace and IBM buildings continuing to provide office space and, respectively, continuing to offer ample parking with a purpose-built deck and surface lot. The architectural character, historic and current uses, and streetscape of the boundary increase area also fits with the historic contexts and built environment of the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District.

At the northern boundary of the district where 14<sup>th</sup> Street intersects with Monticello Avenue, there is a recently constructed apartment building at the northwest corner, a vacant lot (site of a recently demolished one-story building) at the northeast corner, and a five-bay-wide strip mall constructed ca. 1941, located at 1300 Monticello Avenue. While the buildings at 1300

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

Monticello Avenue were constructed within the original district's period of significance and are associated with the district's significance in the area of commerce, the building facades have been altered to an extent that its historic use is no longer apparent and overall, the property lacks sufficient architectural integrity to convey its historic associations. Directly adjacent to 1300 Monticello Avenue is a fast-food chain restaurant and gas station constructed beyond the period of significance. Along the east side of Monticello Avenue between E. Princess Anne Road and E. Virginia Beach Boulevard there is a large parking lot, followed by a large public housing development along St. Paul's Boulevard between E. Virginia Beach Boulevard and Brambleton Avenue. This property dates to the original district's period of significance, but its historic use and architectural character are not related to those associated with Norfolk Auto Row Historic District.

Along the western boundary of the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District are several late 20<sup>th</sup> century residential developments including Ghent Village Apartments, Ghent Condos on the Square, and Mowbray Arch Condos. At the intersection of Boush Street and Olney Road is a newer gas station at 770 Boush Street. The building at 801 Boush St. is a former Firestone Service Store and Warehouse constructed ca. 1930. While the building's historic use is associated with the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District's areas of significance, the building was extensively altered in the late twentieth century by adding a third story with dormer windows, changing the roofline from flat to mansard, and addition of a covered walkway. The buildings at 733 and 717 Boush Street lack architectural integrity due to unsympathetic alterations, while the resources that border the original district along Brambleton Avenue were constructed between the 1980s and early 2000s, well past the district's period of significance. The Chrysler Museum Glass Studio, located at 745 Duke Street, was constructed ca. 1977, also outside the district's period of significance.

Brambleton Avenue is the southern boundary of the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District, as it serves as a clear physical boundary between the Norfolk Downtown Historic District and the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District. On Brambleton Avenue's south side, the resources at 130 and 142 York Street are contributing to the Downtown Norfolk Historic District 2001 Boundary Increase, while the Federal Courthouse (formerly a Post Office) between Granby Street and Monticello Avenue is individually listed in the National Register. The nearby Norfolk Cultural and Convention Center, including the SCOPE arena and Chrysler Hall, are considered to be significant in their own right; however they are not associated with the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District's areas and period of significance.

### **Historic District Inventory**

The resources in the following inventory are classified as contributing to the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase because they were constructed during its period of significance, are associated with the district's areas of significance under Criterion A (Commerce and Transportation) and Criterion C (Architecture), and each has integrity to convey its historic associations. The surface parking lot associated with the IBM Building is not classified as a contributing resource but is instead considered to be part of the district's overall setting, as parking lots are a common feature throughout the original district. Each inventory entry provides

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

the address, building name, date of construction, architectural style, current building use, VDHR file number, and the contributing status of the resource. Entries are keyed to the attached Sketch Map using the street address number.

**740 Duke Street Duke-Grace Building**      Other DHR Id# 122-5797-0078  
*Primary Resource: Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 5, Style: International Style, 1969*

**Contributing Total:** 1

*Secondary Resource: Parking Garage (Building)*      **Contributing Total:** 1

**217 Grace Street**      Other DHR Id#  
*Primary Resource: Vacant, Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, 1953*

**Contributing Total:** 1

**225 W. Olney Road IBM Building**      Other DHR Id# 122-5797-0079  
*Primary Resource: Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: International Style, 1968*

**Contributing Total:** 1

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

---

## 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

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

### **Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

TRANSPORTATION

### **Period of Significance**

1953-1969

### **Significant Dates**

1953

1968

### **Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### **Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

### **Architect/Builder**

Leavitt and Associates (architect)

Cameron, Little & Associates (architect)

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

**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.)

The Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase, which includes four contributing buildings, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, for its association with the expansion and evolution of the Auto Row Historic District to include general office space for downtown Norfolk's expanding commercial corridor, and in the area of Transportation, for its association with the increasing reliance on the automobile and the intrinsic inclusion of parking options in the area's 1960s design. The 2018 Boundary Increase is also locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as a good example of an intact mid-twentieth century commercial district with notable examples of International style architecture, as well as Commercial Style architecture. The 2018 Boundary Increase retains a high level of historic and architectural integrity and has a period of significance of 1953-1969. The start date is based on the construction date of the earliest building within the boundary increase area. The end date for the period of significance reflects completion of the Duke-Grace Building, for which construction had begun in 1967 and was completed in 1969.

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

The areas that makes up the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797) first developed in the nineteenth century almost entirely as working-class housing. With denser, high-rise development emerging in downtown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, business owners, including a large number of automobile sales and service companies, expanded north where there was access to larger lots to build showrooms and warehouses. By the mid-twentieth century all of the dwellings had been demolished, or altered beyond recognition, in favor of this new commercial development trend. While there have been some alterations to the street patterns, the primary corridor of Granby and many of the smaller cross streets remain the same as when they were laid out for the earlier residential development. Today the district represents the continued commercial development of this section of Norfolk with new buildings following for the most part the size and massing of earlier commercial buildings. The existing historic resources date from the early twentieth century until well into the second half of the twentieth century and demonstrate a variety of styles including Art Deco, Moderne, International, Stripped Classical, and various forms of mainstream Commercial Style buildings.

During the development of the Auto Row area of Norfolk, dozens of buildings were constructed for the purpose of either selling or servicing automobiles. An extraordinary example of this is the fact that every parcel in the 700 block of Granby Street at one time or another contained a building related to the auto industry. These businesses included dealerships, repairs shops, parts suppliers and even small light industrial manufacturers, all supporting the huge expansion of the automobile industry occurring at this time in Norfolk and across the United States. The district also saw substantial retail development during this period as businesses moved north from downtown looking for cheaper land and a closer location to the residential areas of town.

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

The original district also includes several buildings associated with communications in Norfolk, including the Norfolk Newspapers Building (now the Virginian-Pilot) constructed in 1937 with a later addition in 1957, as well as the WTKR headquarters constructed in 1950, which still operates one of the city's three major local television stations. The Centre Theater (now the Harrison Opera House), constructed in 1944, is also located within the original district, and served as the primary entertainment venue in Norfolk until the 1970s.

## 2018 Boundary Increase

### *Criterion A: Commerce and Transportation*

The 2018 Boundary Increase is representative of the transition that began in the 1950s and continued into the late 1960s in the Auto Row Historic District from a focus on commercial businesses and services associated with the transportation industry to include office space for corporations supporting the functions of Norfolk's major businesses, Federal complexes, and residents. During the late 1950s through the early 1970s, the City of Norfolk, through the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) and in collaboration with private investors, began the redevelopment of the central business district with projects such as the Golden Triangle Hotel, the Virginia National Bank headquarters, the Bank of Virginia, the Norfolk Cultural and Convention Center, and the Seaboard National United Virginia Bank. The NRHA, established by the City of Norfolk in 1946, was among the first in the country to receive urban renewal funding. While the NRHA's primary purpose was to create and operate affordable housing developments in the city, they were also tasked with broader community revitalization efforts including "purchasing blighted areas for resale to private developers."<sup>1</sup> The boom of the Norfolk financial and commercial district, along with the accompanying increase in property tax revenues, completely altered and revitalized the downtown area and gave the city the momentum and money to continue that progress, which ultimately expanded outside of the traditional downtown area and into the Auto Row district.

Construction on the Duke-Grace Building, designed by Sheldon and Charles Leavitt of Leavitt & Associates, began in 1967 and was completed by 1969 on a 24,000 square foot parcel purchased from the NRHA. Harvey Lindsay & Sons, responsible for spearheading much of the initial redevelopment of Norfolk's downtown, was one of the project's investors and served as the lead leasing and management agency for the 26,000 square foot building. Sheldon Leavitt, the principal designer of the building, was also an active civic leader and supporter of NRHA activities, and served as a member of the Model City Program Planning Council from 1968-1969.<sup>2</sup> Although a separate program, the City of Norfolk's Model City Program, a five-year

<sup>1</sup>Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, History of NRHA, <http://www.nrha.us/about/history> (accessed 17 Aug. 2018)

<sup>2</sup> R. R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory*, Third Edition, 1970, [http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker\\_1970\\_L.pdf](http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker_1970_L.pdf) (accessed 20 Aug. 2018).

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

program from 1970-1975, was also among the first of its kind in the nation and sought to expand upon the goals of Urban Renewal by providing public services including medical care, workforce development and job creation, educational programs, and recreational opportunities.<sup>3</sup> With a \$1 million price tag, the Duke-Grace Building was recognized as a “small but important part of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority’s continued effort to improve Norfolk.”<sup>4</sup> The Duke-Grace Building was home to Mortgage Investment Corp., a profit-sharing and pension plan provider, the offices of Leavitt & Associates architecture firm, and several major insurance corporations including Mutual of Omaha.<sup>5</sup> With as many as seven different insurance and/or pension providers occupying the building in 1969, its association with Norfolk’s expanding financial district and Auto Row’s commercial significance is evident.

Constructed from 1967 to 1968, the IBM Building, designed by Cameron, Little & Associates of Charlotte, North Carolina, served as the commercial headquarters for International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) for the Tidewater region of Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, and served all of the Federal installations throughout most of Virginia and eastern North Carolina.<sup>6</sup> The IBM Building housed four divisions of the company including the Data Processing Division, responsible for marketing the company’s information handling systems and equipment; the Office Products Division, responsible for marketing its electric typewriters and dictation equipment; the Information Records Division, responsible for developing and marketing IBM’s data processing cards, magnetic storage media, paper forms, ribbon, and accessory equipment; and the Field Engineering Division, responsible for servicing the company’s equipment throughout the area.<sup>7</sup> In addition to housing the various divisions of IBM, the building was also home to the Computer Learning Center, where Boy Scouts learned data processing from IBM staff members. The program was widely popular, with more than 139 applicants competing for 25 spots in its first year. As J. Robert Tarbutton, the IBM Office’s branch manager, rightly predicted, “every child in school today is going to be touched by a computer.”<sup>8</sup> The introduction of IBM into Norfolk’s commercial district is indicative of the increasing importance of technology during the mid- to late-twentieth century as business practices shifted toward greater reliance on computing technologies.

Suburbanization and the increasing dependence on the automobile in the mid-twentieth century not only had significant impacts on American residential development, but commercial development as well. As early as the 1920s, business owners and city planners were beginning to raise concerns over parking availability and feared that lack of adequate parking would lead to

<sup>3</sup> Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Comprehensive Model City Program for Norfolk, April 5, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> “Downtown Office Structure to be Dedicated on Tuesday,” *Ledger-Star*, 12 June 1969.

<sup>5</sup> “Downtown Office Structure to be Dedicated on Tuesday,” *Ledger-Star*, 12 June 1969; *Norfolk-Chesapeake City Directory*, Hill Directory Company, 1969

<sup>6</sup> “New \$665,000 Office to be Shown by IMB,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 5 June 1968

<sup>7</sup> “IBM: You’re Invited to Attend an Open House at IBM’s Norfolk Office,” advertisement in *Ledger-Star*, 5 June 1968

<sup>8</sup> “New \$665,000 Office to be Shown by IMB,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 5 June 1968

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

increased decentralization of the central business districts.<sup>9</sup> Much like the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District, the parking infrastructure associated with the 2018 Boundary Increase was designed to accommodate automobile transportation and was included in the original site designs for both 740 Duke Street and 225 W. Olney Road. Directly adjacent to and on the same parcel as the Duke-Grace Building is a two-story concrete parking deck, originally designed to accommodate 50 automobiles.<sup>10</sup> Mention of the availability of “ample off-street parking” in contemporary newspapers, as well as the inclusion of the building in the original site plan illustrates the importance of automobile accommodations in the downtown area.<sup>11</sup>

Although the IBM Building parcel did not include a parking garage, parking accommodations were still an important component of the overall parcel. The building, though situated on the corner of Grace and Duke Streets, did not have a street-facing orientation. Instead, its main entry faced a large parking lot along W. Virginia Beach Blvd. (now Olney Rd.). The IBM Building’s orientation demonstrates the reliance on the automobile as a means of travel and the expectation that employees and clients would arrive by car.

The Commercial Style, one-story, vernacular building at 217 Grace Street, originally constructed ca. 1953, was the office building for Billups & Ellington Inc., a plumbing and heating company that occupied the space through the early 1970s. From the mid-1970s through the 1980s, the one-story building housed various auto-related companies including Aaacan Auto Transport and Auto Caravan Corp. The building contributes to the commercial and automotive history of the district and demonstrates the variety of trade-related businesses associated with the Auto Row Historic District.

#### *Criterion C: Architecture*

The resources making up the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase are also locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as examples of International style architecture that had become popular for office buildings and financial institutions in Norfolk by the late 1960s. With the publication of *The International Style* and the accompanying Museum of Modern Art exhibit *Modern Architecture—International Exhibition* in 1932, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson introduced the International Style concept, which was characterized by its emphasis on volume over mass, regularity of principal components and materials, and lack of ornamentation.<sup>12</sup> Architects in the United States increasingly used the tenets of the International style to design high-rise buildings, creating an American canon of International style buildings that tended to emphasize verticality rather than the horizontality

<sup>9</sup> Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 282 and 302-303; Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America: 1940-1985*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 97-9; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 174.

<sup>10</sup> “Building to Have 5<sup>th</sup> Story,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, 18 November 1966.

<sup>11</sup> “\$1 Million, 4-Story Building Planned for Museum Area,” *Ledger-Star*, 13 April 1966; “Downtown Office Structure to be Dedicated on Tuesday,” *Ledger-Star*, 12 June 1969.

<sup>12</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, New York, 1966, p.27-29, 246, 252.

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

typical of European International style architecture.<sup>13</sup> Low-rise office buildings and office parks designed in the International style are popular throughout Virginia, and are indicative of the style's association with Modernism.<sup>14</sup> Both the Duke-Grace Building and the IBM Building share similar characteristics of the International style including concrete block construction with brick-facing exteriors, flat roofs, lack of ornamentation, raised entry plazas, and vertical ribbons of windows that give the relatively low-rise buildings a sense of verticality. Several International and Moderne style buildings are currently extant along the western edge of the Norfolk Auto Row Historic District, signaling the beginning of an architectural shift in the district. The 2018 Boundary Increase represents the final transition in mid-twentieth century architecture style and type in the Auto Row Historic District.

In addition to International-style architecture, the 2018 Boundary Increase is also significant for its Commercial Style architecture. The building at 217 Grace Street is a notable example of Commercial vernacular, similar to other one-story businesses throughout the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District. These Commercial Style buildings, typically concrete block and/or brick with flat roofs, were widely distributed in urban developments from the early to mid-twentieth century.

### Architects

Sheldon Joseph Leavitt, a prominent Norfolk architect and engineer, was the valedictorian of his graduating class at the University of Illinois in 1943. Prior to forming Leavitt Associates in 1953 he worked with Tidewater Construction Corp and A. Epstein & Sons. In addition to his work on local buildings including the Adath Jeshurun Synagogue in Newport News (c. 1961-now demolished), Synagogue in Portsmouth (c. 1955), and Sewell's Point Elementary School (c. 1967), Leavitt produced a number of significant works throughout the mid-Atlantic region including the Temple Oheb Shalom in Baltimore, Maryland, with consulting architect Walter Gropius (c. 1959). Leavitt was an active member of various civic organizations and leagues in Norfolk, serving as Director of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce from 1965-1967 and as a member of the Model City Program Planning Council from 1968-1969.<sup>15</sup> Around this time, Leavitt designed the boundary increase area's Duke-Grace Building as well. Sheldon Leavitt continues to practice as the Principal Engineer for Leavitt Associates, Inc. with offices in Norfolk, Virginia, and Brookline, Massachusetts.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Khan, International Style: Modernist Architecture from 1925-1965, (New York: Taschen, 2001), p.70, 117.

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Department of Historic Resources, "International Style (1932-1960)," *New Dominion Virginia, Architectural Style Guide*, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/NewDominion/NewDomStylGdeApril2014Version.pdf> (accessed 2 May 2018), 31-33.

<sup>15</sup> R. R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory*, Third Edition, 1970, [http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker\\_1970\\_L.pdf](http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker_1970_L.pdf) (accessed 20 Aug. 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Leavitt Associates, Inc., Consulting Engineers & Architects, <http://www.leavittassoc.com/index.htm> (accessed 20 Aug 2018).

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

Cameron, Little & Associates, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, was a prominent regional architecture firm led by principals Albert Barnes Cameron and William Brown Little. Cameron, a 1952 graduate of North Carolina State College, first formed Cameron Associates (succeeded by Cameron, Little & Associates) in 1959. The early firm was responsible for designs throughout North Carolina including the Cutter Office Building, a high-rise tower in downtown Charlotte, NC.<sup>17</sup> Little received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture from North Carolina State University in 1959 and was responsible for designs such as the University of North Carolina's undergraduate student union complex.<sup>18</sup> The firm designed the IBM Building in the late 1960s.

---

<sup>17</sup> R. R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory*, Second Edition, 1962,  
<http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/1962%20American%20Architects%20Directory.aspx>  
(accessed 20 Aug. 2018).

<sup>18</sup> R. R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory*, Third Edition, 1970,  
[http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker\\_1970\\_L.pdf](http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker_1970_L.pdf) (accessed 20 Aug. 2018).

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Fogelson, Robert M. *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell and Philip Johnson. *The International Style*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Khan, Hasan-Uddin. *International Style: Modernist Architecture from 1925-1965*. New York: Taschen, 2001.

Norfolk City Directories (various). The Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, VA.

*The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* (various).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1970). The Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, VA.

Teaford, Jon C. *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America: 1940-1985*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, "International Style (1932-1960)." *New Dominion Virginia, Architectural Style Guide*.

<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/NewDominion/NewDomStylGdeApril2014Version.pdf>, 31-33.

*The Virginian Pilot* (various).

---

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_ 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; City of Norfolk Sergeant Memorial Collection

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DHR No. 122-5797

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.43

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: 36.85657                          Longitude:-76.29205  
2. Latitude: 36.85639                          Longitude:-76.29125  
3. Latitude: 36.85515                          Longitude:-76.26142  
4. Latitude: 36.85505                          Longitude:-76.29151  
5. Latitude: 36.85502                          Longitude:-76.29194

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

1. Zone:                          Easting:                          Northing:  
2. Zone:                          Easting:                          Northing:

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:  
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase is bound by Duke Street to the west, W. Olney Road to the North, the southern lot line of 740 Duke Street (Parcel 1427889453) and 217 Grace Street (1427980426) to the south, and the western boundary of the original Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797) to the east. The true and correct boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map and Photo Key.

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

The boundaries delineate a clearly defined group of intact historic buildings and streetscapes from a particular period of commercial development in the history of Norfolk when businesses began to emigrate in large numbers out of the traditional historic downtown. The Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase is contiguous with the original district listed in 2014 and includes buildings that are associated with the district's historic patterns of commercial development and architectural significance.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kayla Boyer Halberg; research assistance by William B. Inge and Marcus R. Pollard

organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group

street & number: PO Box 11083

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

e-mail: kayla@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com

telephone: 757-905-4380

date: August 2018

---

**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.

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

City or Vicinity: Norfolk

County: Independent City

State: Virginia

Photographer: Kayla Halberg

Date Photographed: 4/16/2018

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

Photo 1 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0001

View: Grace Street View of the Duke-Grace Building (740 Duke Street) and IBM Building (225 W. Olney Road), Facing W

Photo 2 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0002

View: Duke-Grace Building, facing SE

Photo 3 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0003

View: Streetscape showing the Duke-Grace Building at center with its associated parking deck at right and the IBM Building IBM at left, facing NE

Photo 4 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0004

View: Duke-Grace Building, Rear Elevation and Ramp Entrance, facing NE

Photo 5 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0005

View: Parking deck associated with the Duke-Grace Building, facing E

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase  
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA  
County and State

Photo 6 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0006  
View: Commercial building at 217 Grace Street and the Duke-Grace Building (740 Duke Street), facing SW

Photo 7 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0007  
View: Duke-Grace Building, primary facade, facing S

Photo 8 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0008  
View: IBM Building (225 W. Olney Road) at Duke and Grace Streets, facing NE

Photo 9 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0009  
View: Street (side) elevation and primary façade of the IBM Building, facing NW

Photo 10 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0010  
View: Primary façade of the IBM Building take from within its associated parking lot, facing SW

Photo 11 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0011  
View: IBM Building, showing the north façade as it is oriented toward the parking lot instead of the adjacent street, facing SW

Photo 12 of 12: VA\_NorfolkCity\_NorfolkAutoRowHD2018Increase\_0012  
View: Detail view of the IBM Building's main entry on the north façade, facing SW

**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.

**Legend****LOCATION MAP**

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District  
2018 Boundary Increase  
Norfolk, VA DHR #122-5797

Location Map Coordinates:

- 1- Lat:36.85657 Lon:-76.29205
- 2- Lat:36.85639 Lon:-76.29125
- 3- Lat:36.85515 Lon:-76.29142
- 4- Lat:36.85505 Lon:-76.29151
- 5- Lat:36.85502 Lon:-76.29194

 Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

 Existing Boundary of Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797)



Feet

0 50 100 150 200  
1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



**Title: Norfolk Auto Row 2018 Boundary Increase**

**Date: 6/19/2018**

**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.

**Legend**

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District  
2018 Boundary Increase  
Norfolk, VA  
Sketch Map and Photo Key

  Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

  Existing Boundary of Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797)

1 Photo Location and Direction

C Contributing Resource



Feet

0 50 100 150 200  
1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



**Title: Norfolk Auto Row 2018 Boundary Increase**

**Date: 6/19/2018**

**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.

Legend

Norfolk Auto Row Historic District  
2018 Boundary Increase  
Location Map Extended  
to include Existing Historic  
District

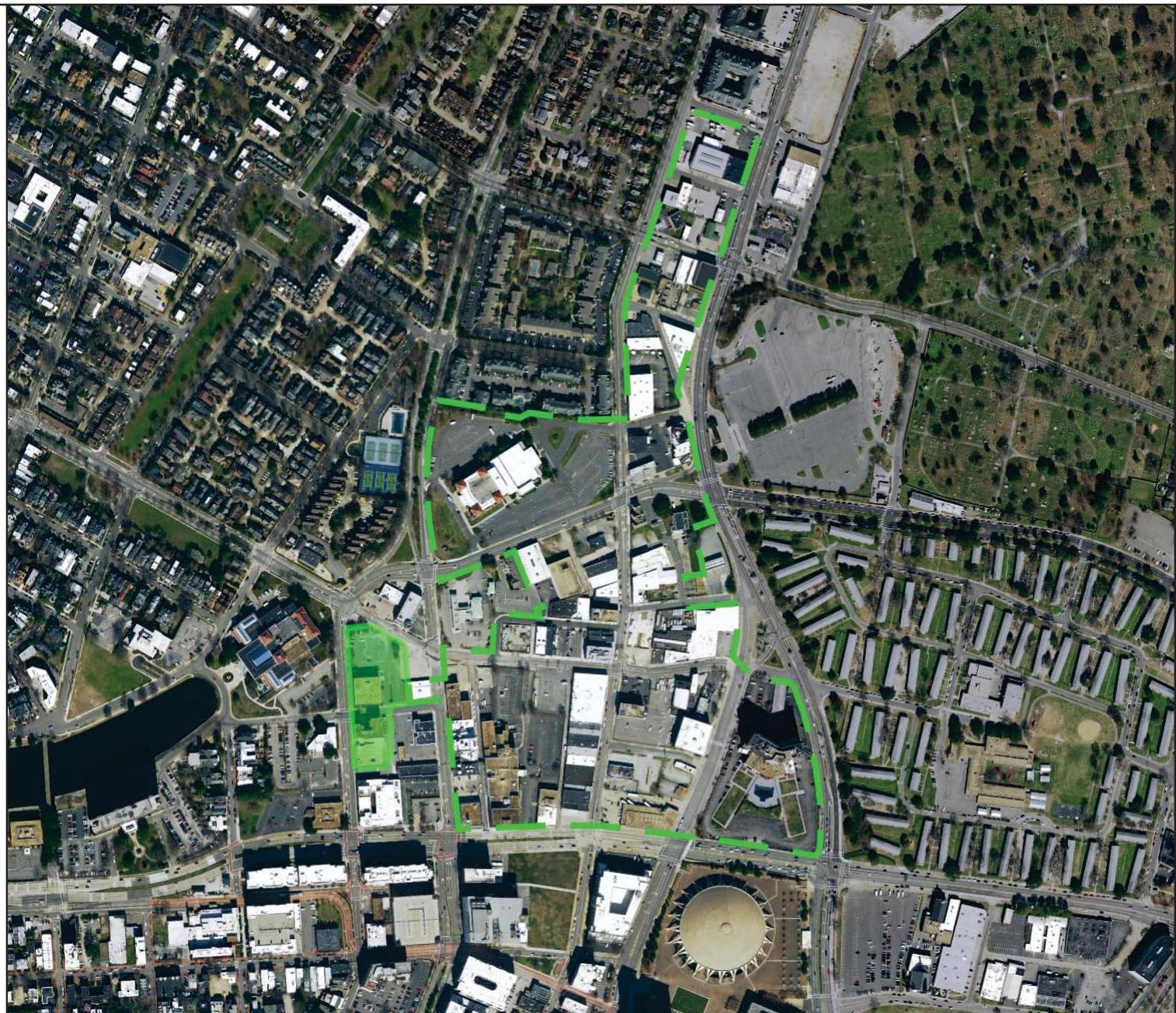
Norfolk Auto Row Historic District 2018 Boundary Increase

Existing Boundary of Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (#122-5797)



Feet

0 200 400 600 800  
1:9,028 / 1"=752 Feet



**Title: Norfolk Auto Row 2018 Boundary Increase**

**Date: 6/19/2018**

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100003483

Date Listed: 3/8/2019

Property Name: Norfolk Auto Row Historic District (Boundary Increase)

County: Norfolk (Independent City)

State: VA

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

#### Section 5: Resource Count

The resource count is amended to include 3 Contributing Buildings and 1 contributing structure for a total of 4 contributing resources

The parking structure appended to the Duke-Grace Building at 740 Duke Street is better classified as a Structure.

The Virginia State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

#### **DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**  
**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**