PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) ______044-5911________

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

We are seeking a historical designation of the building, because we feel the school has a long-standing historical relationship with many of our community members. From the approximately 1952 until fall of 2018, all of the local families within the Collinsville Magisterial District attended John Redd Smith Elementary. It is our desire to preserve the school so that generations to come will still acknowledge the existence of such a historical building. It is a school that contained generations of families and faculty alike and our hope is to preserve the structure and allow it to become a landmark of our community.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits?  Yes _X____  No _____
Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR’s easement program?  Yes _____  No _X____

1. General Property Information

   Property name: __John Redd Smith Elementary School__

   Property address: ___15 Primary School Road______________________________
   City or Town: __Collinsville, VA__________________________
   Zip code: ___ 24078________________________

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

   Category of Property (choose only one of the following):
   Building __X__  Site _____  Structure _____  Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

   Acreage: ___5.631 acres________________________

   Setting (choose only one of the following):
   Urban _____ Suburban __X__  Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

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

   The property is accessed by School Drive, from both Virginia Avenue and Oakland Drive. The school is elevated above Virginia Avenue and overlooks a baseball/softball field as part of this property to the rear. There are no accessory structures as part of this property.
3. Architectural Description
Architectural Style(s): Mid-Century Modern

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: J. Coates Carter

If the builder is known, please list here: Main structure (1952): C.M Weber, Additions (1961): Stanley H. Clark

Date of construction (can be approximate): Main Structure 1952, Additions (Front and Rear Attached Annex) 1961

Narrative Description:
In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The structure is of masonry construction (brick and block) on both the exterior and interior. It contains three floors, two and a half are above grade, with the below grade portion on a walk-out level to the rear of the building. It contains 22 classrooms, a library, a gymnasium with performance stage, a cafeteria and attached kitchen. Being originally constructed as a school facility, it remained used as such until its closure in 2018. The building has been protected by the locality since its closure and remains in remarkably good condition as shown in the included photographs. Original walls, doors and windows are in good condition. The main (central) part of the school was completed in 1952, with both the front and rear additions being added in 1961 and connected to the central part of the school by 2 covered, open breezeways.

The foundation of the building is constructed of continuous masonry units (CMU’s). The interior load bearing walls are also CMU’s. The floors and roof skeletal structure is constructed of steel frame, supporting poured concrete on each level, and membrane flat roof material. The front entrance porch is a flat roof structure with membrane covering, supported by running bond course brick columns. The exterior walls are running bond course brick. There is one chimney that uses the same brick construction method.

As you enter each of the 22 classrooms, you enter through a solid wood 9-light door. Over each of these doors exists multi-pane transom light windows. The exterior windows in each classroom consist of multiple steel framed, 12-single glass pane, operable double action, tilt hinged windows. The original chalk boards have been removed and replaced with white boards. Several of the classrooms have original, built in cupboard style cabinetry with period metal hardware closures, and 10-light glass doors. The closets contain custom made original shelving.

The hallways are wide corridors using a combination of terrazzo and 9” tile floors, and the walls are lined with 1”+ thick terracotta tile. These hallways lead to stair cases between floors constructed using slate treads. Natural light filters through large, square glass block grouted windows in the northern stair case.

The gymnasium is spanned by full width bar trusses and is also naturally lit by 7 large, steel frame single pane, 7-light windows. One end of the gymnasium opens to an elevated performance stage with maple flooring.

On the lower level is the cafeteria, kitchen and associated storage areas. This space is interrupted by multiple support columns supporting the poured concrete floors above. Natural light is provided by multiple steel framed, 12-single pane
glass, operable single action, tilt hinged windows. A large, poured concrete window well was installed, below-grade, to provide the depth necessary to accommodate these windows below grade.

All lighting has been replaced with fluorescent light fixtures of varied styles.

Heating is provided by two-gas fired boilers and pumps that circulate steam to radiators inside each classroom and corridor.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

There are no extant secondary resources.
4. Property’s History and Significance

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

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

History

Henry County, Virginia is a county located in the U.S. state of Virginia. The county seat was historically identified as Martinsville. The county's six districts are as follows, Iriswood, Blackberry, Collinsville, Horsepasture, Reed Creek, and Ridgeway. The county was established in 1777 when it was carved from Pittsylvania County in honor of Patrick Henry, who was then serving as the First Governor of Virginia. At that time, it was named Patrick Henry County. In 1785, the northern part of Patrick Henry County was combined with part of Bedford County to form Franklin County. In 1790, Patrick Henry County was split again: the western part became Patrick County and the rest remained Henry County. Other notable early settlers included: Colonel Abram Penn, a native of Amherst County who led his Henry County militia troops with the intention of joining General Nathanael Greene at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse during the Revolutionary War and Brigadier General Joseph Martin, for whom Martinsville is named, as well as; Colonel George Waller, Captain George Hairston and Major John Redd, all of whom were present at the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown. Major John Redd was one of the first settlers in Henry County and actually held the title of High Sheriff for the County and served on the Courts. He married Mary Winston Carr Waller, daughter of Colonel George Waller. They built the Bellevue Plantation in Martinsville and it is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The couple had one child together, Dr. James Moss Smith, Jr., a Henry County citizen whose son would eventually be an important part of Henry County Virginia’s history.

In 1830, Dr. James Moss Smith, Jr. was born in Martinsville, Virginia at the old “Henry House” which was used as a hospital during the Civil War. His parents were James Moss Smith and Martha Waller Redd Smith. On April 24, 1860, he married Corinna Smith of Petersburg, VA. The early days of their married life were spent in Danville, but early in 1870, they moved to Martinsville. He was elected Mayor of Martinsville and was one of its most efficient and popular officers. He practiced medicine continually after his graduation at Jefferson College of Philadelphia, in 1854. He was a confederate soldier and surgeon in Stonewall Jackson’s Brigade and is remembered as doing his greatest public service by improving the county roads. Mr. Smith secured the help of State convicts to help work on the roads and this practice is still being used today. Dr. James Moss Smith, Jr died May 19, 1919. His wife, Corinna Smith died six years later in 1925. He had seven children Charles Purnell who married Nannie Jane Brown, James Moss Smith, Jr. who married Mattie Gravely, Pattie Hairston Smith who married John Andrew Brown, Electra Smith who married Honorable Herbert G. Peters, Will Smith (W.C.), John Redd Smith who married Sallie R. Pannill and Elizabeth Smith who married Thomas N. Barbour. Even though the area he lived and worked in at this time is still called Martinsville or Martinsville West, it is better known today as Collinsville. Collinsville was named for Cap B. Collins who built a non-battery flashlight plant in 1931. An attempt was made in 1967 to incorporate the town, the petition was denied; thus, Collinsville is perhaps the largest unincorporated “town” in Virginia. It shares its name with towns in Texas, Alabama, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Australia.

One of the seven children bore of Dr. and Mrs. Smith, Jr. Mr. John Redd Smith Sr., was born in Henry County, Virginia May 19, 1872. His father’s family on all sides was of old Virginia stock, his grandfather, John Redd, having been a major in the Revolutionary war and a member of the Virginia legislature. His father was a supervisor of the county and commissioner of the same; known to be generous, impulsive and kind-hearted.

In his childhood and early youth the health of John Redd Smith was frail, but he loved outdoor sports and spending time in the country town of Henry County. He grew up to attend Rufner’s Institute in Martinsville, VA from 1892 to 1895 and was a clerk in the offices of the Norfolk and Western railway at Roanoke, Virginia.

At the end of this time, he matriculated at Washington and Lee University and studied law, graduating after a two-year course in 1897, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Law. The same year he began the active practice of his profession, in Henry
County and in 1899, he was so popular he was elected Commonwealth’s Attorney of Henry County for a term of four years. At the end of this time, he was reelected, in 1903 for a term of equal duration. When this term expired, he was again re-elected, defeating the ex-judge of the court before whom he appeared as prosecutor.10

In politics, he was a member of the Republican Party, to which he steadily adhered from the beginning and in religion; he affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Relaxation for Mr. Smith was supervising a farm nearly two miles away that he visited usually by walking.11

Mr. Smith was married to Sallie Reamey Pannill and they bore three children who were Patsy Smith (Hedgecock) who passed away in 1995, John Redd Smith, Jr. who died in 1921 at just 7 months of age and John Redd Smith, Jr. who died in 2014.12

Over the years, Mr. Smith was a well-respected steward of the Martinsville community. He was known to strongly support efforts to better education.

In 1846, the Virginia Legislature gave Henry County and 15 other counties in the State the option of operating a system of public schools for all white children if the County would approve the levying of taxes for the purpose. Henry County voters approved it despite the opposition of large landowners who would bear the brunt of the tax. By 1848, 22 schools had been established with 1,480 pupils in attendance. There were two –five-month terms each year.13

In 1887, an all-white school opened named the Ruffner Institute named after William H. Ruffner and the first Superintendent of Henry County Public Schools. It was funded by local aid from the Peabody Fund- (founded after the American Civil War, the Peabody Education Fund was established by George Peabody in 1867) and local contributions. The Ruffner Institute became the first public graded school in Henry County. It taught both elementary and high school subjects with three grade school teachers and one high school teacher. The building was a four-room, makeshift structure that evolved from an original two-room building on College Street in Martinsville. In 1885, it had 381 students. The Ruffner Institute continued to serve until the opening of Martinsville High School at Cleveland Avenue and Brown Street in 1906. The city of Martinsville became a separate school division on September 1, 1930. Even with small schools in varying locations for both white and African-American pupils, there were no reported schools in the immediate vicinity of Collinsville, VA. Most white children had tutors or were taken to nearby white schools and African-American children in the area were either non-educated or had to find transportation to the nearby Rock Run Elementary School or Samuel H. Hairston Elementary. In 1949, the African-American school Richard H. Clarke School was opened in the Chestnut Knob area of Henry County and then in 1956 another African-American School, Mary Hunter Elementary opened in the Bassett area of Henry County.15

When the need arose for an elementary school located specifically in the Collinsville District, Mr. John Redd Smith offered a free tract of land for the school at no cost. Even though the Board chose another site at 100 School Drive, today, the land that was offered for the elementary school by Mr. Smith, houses the local Recreational Facility or YMCA. The Board never forgot Smith’s generous offer.16

At its meeting on February 6, 1951, the Henry County School Board voted unanimously to name the new $340,000 school after Mr. John Redd Smith. It was stated in the minutes, that Mr. Smith was an old resident of the County, having taken a wholesome interest in its people for a long time and having played some part in the development of Collinsville. With these things in mind, the motion carried and the school was named after Mr. John Redd Smith.17

Even though he did not live to see it, John Redd Smith Elementary opened in 1952 with an enrollment of 586 students with 14 classrooms and 15 teachers under the direction of Mr. E. M. Dickerson. Students attended grades 1-7 there until Collinsville Primary opened nearby in 1967 and housed the first grade through 3rd grade students and John Redd Smith Elementary would educate grade levels 4-7. This later changed in 2004 and pre-k-2nd attended Collinsville Primary and John Redd would serve 3-5. Fieldale Collinsville High School became a Middle School would service grades 6-8.

Mr. Curtis Wall was a favorite principal for 20 years at John Redd Smith Elementary. He began his career there in 1961 after being an Administrator at Sanville Elementary in Bassett, Virginia. He was a part of the school’s integration period that began around 1967 as the African-American children became a part of traditionally “all –white” schools. All area African-American schools were closed or closing at this time. Mr. Wall counseled thousands of students over the years
and admitted to being pleased years after his retirement, by being addressed by now grown students as “Mr. Wall”. Many more teachers and administrators passed through the halls over the school’s lifespan and John Redd Smith Elementary remains an integral part of Henry County’s history. It was a sad day for staff and many citizens of the Collinsville community, when the last day school day came May 25, 2018. A new and bigger school named Meadow View Elementary, opened just a couple of miles away. John Redd Smith Elementary school has a history with the community that has resonated for many years and will for many more years to come. The rich history cultivated by the namesake of the school and the long-term impression upon Henry County families for 66 years is astounding.

Additional Context
Even though the deep South grew rich on cotton, during the 1800’s Henry County Virginia was most known for its money-making tobacco crops. More specifically, Henry County was known for its plug tobacco. In 1902, John David Bassett envisioned making furniture from trees he was cutting along the Smith River. With his two brothers and his brother-in-law, he organized the Bassett Furniture Company, growing into the largest manufacturer of wood furniture in the world. In 1906, two other men who were former tobacco farmers founded the American Furniture Company and in 1924, Thomas B. Stanley, who would later become Governor of Virginia, founded Stanley Furniture Company. That same year, Clyde B. Hooker gave Martinsville another furniture factor by founding Hooker Furniture Company. Two years later, the Gravely family founded the Gravely Furniture Company in Martinsville. Having the Dick and Willie railway system in place, proved beneficial for the furniture companies to grow and thrive.

Not only was Henry County, Virginia booming with furniture industries, the textile industry was also making its way to the scene. In 1909, the Martinsville Cotton Mill was organized. Even though it eventually went bankrupt, Marshall Field and Company started construction on the Fieldcrest Towel Mills and in 1917; the area around it took the name in honor of the company, becoming Fieldale. William Pannill founded Pannil Knitting company, the Jobbers Pants Company was established and Sale Knitting Company was established and soon after Lacy Manufacturing Company. Thus, making the Henry County/Martinsville area known as the “Sweatshirt Capital of the World”.

Other major industries in the Henry County area included the addition of E.I. Dupont de Nemours in 1941, it was built on the Smith River in Henry County and at that time was the largest nylon plant in the world. The company even boasted to have provided the first pair of stockings to Eleanor Roosevelt. The plant was a large employer for Henry County at around 4600 employees. After several years of downsizing, the plant closed in 1998.

The 1900’s also boasted a mirror company known as Virginia Mirror along with a lumber company, founded by G. T. Lester; both are still in operation today. Nationwide Homes was organized in 1959 by Ralph C. Lester and began manufacturing modular homes in 1969.

A myriad of businesses formed and remain in Henry County today. The 1950’s was a great time to live and work in Henry County. Bassett Industries, Fieldcrest Mills and Dupont even provided some workers with housing and utilities. Other businesses such as banks, restaurants and shops began to open up with the influx of money into the local economy.

Conclusion
With more families moving to the Henry County area to work, schools were also being built or expanded to accommodate. John Redd Smith Elementary was opened in 1952, to service the Collinsville area of Henry County.

Mr. John Redd Smith passed away on January 31, 1952 at the age of 79. He is buried in the Oakwood Cemetery in Martinsville, Virginia where his father donated the land in which they both and many other contributors to our local history are buried.

10. Book-Men or Mark in Virginia by Lyon G. Tyler
11. Book-Men or Mark in Virginia by Lyon G. Tyler
17. Henry County School Board Minutes of February 6, 1951
18. Article provided by the Bassett Historical Society entitled Home Town-Collinsville
John Redd Smith School has enrollment of 586
5. Property Ownership  (Check as many categories as apply):
Private: _____  Public\Local ___X__  Public\State _____  Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)
Name/title: Henry County Board of Supervisors
Organization: Local Government
Street & number: 3300 Kings Mountain Road
City or town: Collinsville  State: VA  Zip code: 24078
E-mail: thall@co.henry.va.us  Telephone: 276-634-4602

Legal Owner’s Signature: ______________________________________________  Date: ____________

**Signature required for processing all applications.**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.
Contact person: _________________________________________________________
Daytime Telephone: ____________________

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)
Name/title: Lee H. Clark
Organization: Henry County Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspections
Street & number: 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Mailing address: P.O. Box 7, Collinsville, VA 24078
City or town: Collinsville  State: VA  Zip code: 24078
E-mail: leclark@co.henry.va.us  Telephone: 276-634-4624

6. Notification
In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.
Name/title: Tim Hall, County Administrator
Locality: Henry County, VA
Street & number: 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Mailing address: P.O. Box 7, Collinsville, VA 24078
City or town: Collinsville  State: VA  Zip code: 24078
E-mail: thall@co.henry.va.us  Telephone: 276-634-4602
LOWEL LEVEL

FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

John Redd Smith