



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES**

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 321-0010

**Purpose of Evaluation**

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

This property is owned by Rappahannock Community College, which desires to recognize its architectural and historic importance to the Town of Warsaw and the Community College.

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

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

**1. General Property Information**

Property name: Chinn House

Property address: 5554 Richmond Road

City or Town: Warsaw, VA

Zip code: 22572

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

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

Building ☒ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 1.5 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban ☐ Suburban ☐ Town ☒ Village ☐ Hamlet ☐ Rural ☐

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

The house is sited on a large, flat grassy lot with several older trees. There are no outbuildings on the lot, which lies on the south side of Route 360 in Warsaw. The building, owned by Rappahannock Community College, is accessed by way of a sidewalk from a large parking lot situated behind the building. The buildings of the college are to the rear of the house.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Colonial Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

If the builder is known, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca. 1908

**Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):**

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, 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 materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The former residence is a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay (w/w/d/w/w), hip roof, frame Colonial Revival building. The building rests on a brick foundation, has walls clad in vinyl siding, and is covered by an asphalt shingle roof pierced by two brick chimneys. Hip-roof dormers pierce each slope of the roof, and the top of the building is crowned with a decorative balustrade. Wood pilasters adorn the corners. Most windows contain six-over-one wood sashes flanked by operable shutters. The central main entrance contains a wood panel door set in a decorative surround featuring leaded sidelights above wood panels framed by pilasters supporting a simple entablature. The entrance is sheltered by a single-bay, single-story, flat-roof porch. Simple round columns support an entablature featuring a cornice with dentils topped by a decorative balustrade. A simple turned railing lines the porch deck and stairs. A three-sided bay window is located above the entrance. A single-story circular bay with alternating windows and wood panels projects from the first story of the west elevation. The east elevation features a flat roof porch sheltering a side entrance and flanking windows. A hipped-roof porch spans the east side of the two-story rear ell, sheltering a second side entryway. A rear entrance opens on to a small stoop to the west of the ell.

A wooden wheelchair ramp was added to the east elevation entrance. On the back of the house is a two-story ell that houses the original kitchen on the first floor and small bedrooms on the second floor. The kitchen has an entrance with transom window and is sheltered by a 3-bay wood porch with chamfered posts and a hipped roof.

The interior has excellent integrity. A large center hall features a wide foyer with fireplace, with a walnut, stained Colonial Revival mantel and over mantel with mirror. An elaborate stained oak staircase ascends 4 steps to a landing, turns and ascends along the east wall of the hall to another landing that is lit by a multi-pane window. Newel posts are square, paneled posts on plinths and topped with ornate turned pendants.

The front parlor, to the west of the foyer, is accessed through double-pocket doors. The parlor features a walnut stained neo-classical mantel with green tile firebox surround and hearth. The west end of the room is extended by a 3-bay curved wall. East of the entry hall is the dining room, also with a fireplace with green tiles and Colonial Revival mantel with mirrored over mantel. A side hall intersects the main hall just before the staircase. The side hall leads to the east facade entrance. Another parlor is on the south side of this hall. At the back of the central hall is a perpendicular hall that contains the entrance to the kitchen ell, the basement stairs, and the back stairs. A door with an ornate glass and lead filigree separate the main hall from the back hall. Original wood floors survive throughout the house. The kitchen contains original built in cabinetry on the south wall. Modern appliances, cabinets and counter tops have been added.



The second floor rooms have been converted to office spaces, some with carpet. Original mantels and tile hearths survive in every room, all neoclassical in style. The large second floor hall features original wood floors, unpainted hardwood stained doors and trim and a large 4-bay ribbon window with operable casements and transoms above.

The Rappahannock Community College completed a cosmetic rehabilitation of the house in 2019. The work was well executed and included: repairing, prepping and painting all wood exterior trim, windows, doors, shutters and porches, installing new "invisible" storm windows and doors, painting all interior walls and trim, converting rear first floor parlors and second floor rooms to offices, mostly with new paint and carpet (no partitions were added), and upgrading existing bathrooms and kitchen.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and millpond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- There are no secondary resources.
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#### **4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)**

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

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

The Chinn House is potentially eligible under criterion C as an excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture in the Town of Warsaw. Its form and detailing, including entry porches and bay windows, are exemplary of the hip-roof variation of the style that was particularly popular around the turn of the twentieth century. It is one of only three houses of comparable scale in the town, the other two designed more towards the Victorian style and the Craftsman style. As Commonwealth's Attorney at the time, Judge Chinn built his home within walking distance of the Richmond County Courthouse in ca. 1908 for his wife, Sally Fairfax Douglas and their five children.

The Chinn House may also be eligible under criterion B for its association with Judge Chinn.

This was the home of Justice Joseph W. and Sally Douglas Chinn, and was donated to the Rappahannock Community College by their heirs in their memory. Plaque on the side door states: "In memory of Joseph W. Chinn and Sally Douglas Chinn, 1969." Before being donated to the college, it had been divided into apartments and later used as a rooming house.

Joseph William Chinn was born in 1866 and descends from a long line of politicians from the Northern Neck region who served in both the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. Choosing law as a profession, Joseph W. Chinn graduated from the University of Virginia law school and passed the bar exam in 1890. He began his private practice in the Town of Warsaw, soon to be elected as Commonwealth's Attorney for Richmond County, a position he held for 24 consecutive years. Following his service to the County began a series of appointments to higher courts: Judge of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit of Virginia in 1915, the Special Court of Appeals in 1925, and Commissioner of Fisheries in 1930. In 1931, Governor Pollard appointed him to the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia and in 1934, he was appointed to a 12-year term, which he did not complete due to his death in 1936.

Locally, he gave much of his time and attention to positions he held on: the Board of Directors for the Mumford Bank, the Northern Neck Telephone and Telegraph Company, the Northern Neck State Bank in Warsaw (first president), School Superintendent for Richmond County, and the Vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church. He also served on the Board of Directors for the University of Virginia.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_W.\\_Chinn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_W._Chinn)
- VCRIS, Record for the Chinn House, 321-0010
- Site visit, DHR staff, 2016 and 2019
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**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Local \_\_\_\_\_ Public\State X 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.)

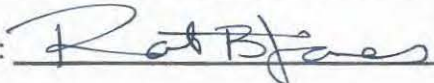
name/title: ROBERT B JONES ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR

organization: VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

street & number: 300 ARBORETUM PLACE

city or town: RICHMOND state: VA zip code: 23237

e-mail: BJONES@VCCS.EDU telephone: 804-819-4917

Legal Owner's Signature: 

Date: 12/14/20

• • *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: Elizabeth Lipford

organization: Eastern Regional Preservation Office, Department of Historic Resources

street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23221

e-mail: elizabeth.lipford@dhr.virginia.gov telephone: 804-482-6454

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!