PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 018-0211

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

Seek nomination of Mica School for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places.

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

1. General Property Information
Property name: Mica School

Property address: 11570 Willcox Neck Road
City or Town: Charles City
Zip code: 23030

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

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

2. Physical Aspects
Acreage: 1 acre

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:

Mica School is located on the east side of Willcox Neck road, near Mt. Zion Baptist Church.
3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): __________________Vernacular______________________________

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: ___________________ Possible design guidance by Tuskegee Institute______________________________________

If the builder is known, please list here: _________________________________________

Date of construction (can be approximate): ___________1915-1920____________________

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 property is currently not being used and was formerly a school for the local African American population of Charles City County, it was known as by the name Mica School. It is a one-story, wood-frame, two bay, one-teacher Rosenwald school. It has a metal roof and is clad with weatherboard. The land is mostly cleared in the front but wooded in the back. Neither the property nor the primary building is currently in use. The building is in poor condition on the exterior and interior; the windows of the building are covered in plywood. The building has one main room, one smaller room and a coatroom. The smaller room was made into a kitchen at some point but otherwise the building has no significant alterations.

The single-story frame building sits above-grade on brick piers. It has a hipped roof covered with standing seam metal roofing. The building has an L-plan with the main stem running north-south, perpendicular to the road with its north end closest to the road. The leg of the L-plan is on the west side of the stem, right of the stem as viewed from the road. The north-south stem is mostly formed of one classroom, with a covered corner porch and cloakroom along its north front closest to the road. The entrance porch provides separate access doors to the cloakroom and the classroom. The classroom has three windows on both its east and south exterior walls; windows are not banked together but are separated by small sections of clapboard wall. The projecting west leg of the L-plan is one room, connected by a door to the larger classroom. A single window is centered on its north and west elevations, and an exterior door and window is on its south elevation. An exposed brick chimney, serving former metal stoves in both main rooms, is on the east side of the common wall towards its south end.
In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- According to oral history from alumna Mrs. Jackie Wallace the school had at one point two outhouses somewhere in the back but these are no longer visible.

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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.

Mica School is listed in the multiple property listing for Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (VDHR No. 012-5041) as a Rosenwald School in Charles City County and as such is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic under Criterion A (Ethnic History – African-American) and Criterion C (Architecture). According to Fisk University records Mica School was built with a total cost of $1000 dollars with the local African American community contributing $450, the public $300 and Mr. Rosenwald $250. There has been some confusion about what it is named, the year it was built, and whether it is still in existence. Mica school remains intact today and is known locally as “Mount Zion”, due to its association with and proximity to Mount Zion Baptist Church. Micah Methodist Church was a nearby white church and a white Mica school house was also in the area. Historic records have thus variously labeled Mica School as either “Micah”, “Mica”, or “Mt. Zion”.

There is no doubt that the school known locally today as Mount Zion is also the one once known as “Mica”. Three pieces of evidence can speak to this connection. Firstly, W. D. Carter’s 1952 Masters thesis has a picture of Mica school and it is the same structure still in existence today. Additionally, School Board minutes from 1942 refer to one Charles City school as “Mt. Zion or Mica school.” Analysis of term reports from this time period also point to Mica and Mount Zion being one and the same. Term reports (which exist for 1915/16 to 1945) show that there existed in the Charles City County Chickahominy school district only four public schools in the nineteen-tens serving the local African American population. They describe the four schools as follows: public school #1 was known as “Binns Hall” and was described in 1918 as being a one room school that was not in good repair, public school #2 was known as “Sandy Point” and public school #3 was known as “Sturgeon Point” (term reports and board minutes on file with the Richard M. Bowmen Center for local History). Thus, the only candidate for “Mica” school in the Chickahominy school district is public school #4.

Public school #4 was described in the 1915-16 school term report as being a three-room school (possibly referring here to the main room, the secondary room and the coatroom) in 1915 for a cost of $400. Later in April of 1921 teacher Hattie Wallace names the school in her term report “Zion No. 4” (Richard M. Bowmen Center for local History). The current Mount Zion Baptist Church building was built by members of the local African American community in the 1880’s on the site of the former El Bethel Methodist Church (Tyler 2000). Mt. Zion church is located on west side of Willcox Neck Rd., while Mica school is located on the east side of that same road, they are fairly near each other.

Rosenwald school records confirm that Mica was built under the Tuskegee Institute but give no date for when this happened. The Home Mission Society acquired the 2 acre parcel (known as “Browns Shop”) in 1899, possibly for the purpose of using it as school. An October 1915 deed transfers the property from trustees of the Home Mission Society to the Chickahominy School District for the sum of one dollar (for so long as it remains a school). This 1915 deed specifically states that “this property has a schoolhouse on it”. This school was already built when they deeded the property to the Chickahominy School District in 1915. It is uncertain if the schoolhouse mentioned in the 1915-16 term report and also the 1915 deed was newly built to replace an older building, as is potentially inferred by the name of the parcel purchased in 1899 being called “Brown’s Store”. After construction (for a $400 cost according to the term report), Mica was likely enhanced with Rosenwald funds under the guidance of the Tuskegee Institute. The date for this renovation would have been between 1917 and 1920. A 1918 map of the area shows what is probably the white “Micah School” and another unlabeled school is marked in the location of Mica today, demonstrating its presence when surveying was done for the 1918 map.

Since Rosenwald funds were not distributed in Virginia before 1917 it seems most likely that the school mentioned in the 1915 deed transferring the property to the Chickahominy School District was a building that
was built in 1915 but extensively remodeled using Rosenwald Funds. The time period for these alterations to
the school using Rosenwald funds would be during the time when “subtype 1” schools were built under the
supervision of the Tuskegee Institute using specifications drawn up by R.R. Taylor, Director of Mechanical
Industries and W.A. Hazel, Division of Architecture, Tuskegee Institute (VDHR No. 012-5041). The school
remained in operation until 1951 when it was discontinued (Carter 1952). Once it ceased operation as a school
the property was returned to the trustees of the Home Mission Society and it has remained with them and their
descendants every since.
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.)

- Term Reports for the years 1915/16 through 1921/22 at the Charles City County Richard M Bowman Center for Local History
- Deed records for Charles City County 1899 and 1915
- Rosenwald School records at Fisk University
- Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (VDHR No. 012-504 1)
- The negro rural school and its relation to the community. Issued by the Extension Department, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915
- School Board Minutes 1942, page 51
- Sherry Brown Tyler (2000), 80% Heaven Bound Deaths & Burials in Charles City County, Virginia

5. Property Ownership  (Check as many categories as apply):
   - Private: [X]  Public\Local    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: Historic Mission School Foundation of Charles City, VA
organization: ___________________________
street & number: 7841 Adams Rd
city or town: Charles City  state: VA  zip code: 23030
e-mail: mablow73@gmail.com  telephone: 804-512-5373
Legal Owner’s Signature: ____________________________________________
Date: 21 JUL 2022

* * 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: Jacqueline M. Wallace
   - Daytime Telephone: (804) 829-6226 / 804 790-3607

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)
name/title: Nancy Phamp - Co-Director
organization: Richard M. Bowman Center for Local History
street & number: P. O. Box 123
city or town: Charles City  state: VA  zip code: 23030
e-mail: rmbowmanhistory@gmail.com  telephone: 757-784-1171
Date: 7-21-22

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

Department of Historic Resources
7/10/2022
Preliminary Information Form
Rev. December 2020
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Home Mission School (Mica Rosenwald School)
Charles City County, Brandon Quad
DHR ID: 018-0211