

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

West Freemason Street Area Historic District

2024 Update

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Norfolk, Virginia

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Introduction

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District (DHR ID #122-0060), located in Norfolk, Virginia, was originally listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1971 and in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The original nomination identified five areas of significance at the statewide level including Architecture, Military, Social, Urban Planning, and Other: Local History with a period of significance broadly defined as “18th,” “19th,” and “20th century.” For management purposes, the end date of the district’s period of significance was roughly identified as 1922, or 50 years prior to the district’s Register listing. The purpose of this Additional Documentation is to update the West Freemason Street Area Historic District nomination to provide current information about the district’s physical condition, the contributing status of individual resources, and to provide further documentation of the significance of the district that justifies a more precise period of significance of ca. 1790-1972. The district’s historic boundary *has not changed* as a result of this additional documentation. The attached maps depict a more precise boundary due to use of GIS to identify parcel boundary and to assure the boundary does not appear to pass through any individual historic resources, such as buildings or structures.

Additional documentation provided below is organized on the basis of the current NRHP nomination form, and includes only those sections which have been changed, updated, or added to since the original listing. The following sections of the nomination form are included: Section 5, Classification (with an updated count of contributing and non-contributing resources); Section 6, Function or Use (with updated historic and current functions); Section 7, Description (including a complete and updated inventory of all resources); Section 8, Statement of Significance; Section 9, Major Bibliographical References (based on new research); Section 10, Geographic Information; Section 11, information regarding authors; and Section 12, new Additional Documentation including an updated Sketch Map (showing contributing and non-contributing resources) and photographs of buildings throughout the district. Only updated information is provided herein. Information in the original nomination that has not changed is not reproduced in this additional documentation.

Section 7 of this update includes a complete inventory of primary and secondary resources within the original district boundary, which is organized by street name and number. In May 2022, a reconnaissance-level survey of properties in the West Freemason Street Area Historic District verified the conditions of all previously documented resources within the district. All resources that were within the original boundary were surveyed, photographed, and updated in the Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (VCRIS). This nomination update provides a complete inventory of contributing and non-contributing resources. The original nomination included an inventory listing 48 resources, which was only a selection of resources that were within the district boundary. The 2022 survey and expansion of the period of significance resulted in the identification of 123 resources, including 75 contributing and 50 non-contributing resources. Not included in the count of noncontributing resources are 9 resources that have been demolished since the district’s listing.

Section 8 of this Additional Documentation expands upon the original district’s statement of significance. The period of significance is more clearly defined as ca. 1790-1972, beginning with the

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earliest contributing resources and ends in 1972, which marks the year that local activism associated with the larger historic preservation movement was initiated and ultimately resulted in the designation of Norfolk's first historic district and the long-term stewardship of the West Freemason Street Area Historic District. The district remains significant at the statewide level under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development (previously Urban Planning), Military, and Social History (previously Social), and under Criterion C for Architecture.¹ This additional documentation adds Social History: Civil Rights as an area of statewide significance for the district's association with the local Civil Rights Movement and efforts to desegregate the Central YMCA in Norfolk.

5. Classification

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
<u>77</u>	<u>50</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>78</u>	<u>51</u>	Total

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC

COMMERCE/TRADE

SOCIAL

GOVERNMENT

EDUCATION

RECREATION AND CULTURE

LANDSCAPE

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC

¹¹ "Other: Local History" was an area of significance used at the time the West Freemason Street Area Historic District originally was listed in the registers. This area is no longer used.

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COMMERCE/TRADE

SOCIAL

RECREATION AND CULTURE

LANDSCAPE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate; Second Empire; Queen Anne; Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival; Beaux Arts; Georgian Revival;

Gothic Revival; Tudor Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style; Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD; BRICK; STONE; METAL; CONCRETE

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 West Freemason Street Area Historic District is located in Norfolk, Virginia, west of and immediately adjacent to Norfolk's Downtown commercial core. The district is separated and set apart from Downtown by the prominent Boush Street, which runs north/south between the two areas. The district is bounded by the prominent thoroughfare West Brambleton Avenue to the north, Smith Creek of the Elizabeth River to the west, and College Place to the South. The district contains a range of late-eighteenth- to mid-twentieth-century residential and commercial architectural resources and includes a variety of architectural styles. The 1972 district nomination focused largely on the classically-inspired architecture from the period of the district's earliest extant buildings, constructed ca.1790, and ended with resources constructed 50 years before the nomination's publication date, or ca.1922. This additional documentation includes the second and third quarters of the twentieth century, including thirteen commercial buildings, five additional apartment buildings, and one structure. The 2022 survey resulted in the identification of a total of 128 resources, including 77 contributing buildings, 1 contributing object, and 50 non-contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing object. During the survey, a total of 9 resources were identified as no longer extant and they are not included in the aforementioned resource counts. The district, including the newly contributing resources, continues to utilize the predominant

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historic materials of brick, wood, and stone, with some limited concrete accenting elements of the few International Style buildings. The updated documentation highlights those resources that are representative of twentieth-century styles, materials, and construction methods. The district retains its feeling as suburban Norfolk neighborhood with roots in the late eighteenth century, modest growth through the nineteenth century, and a robust period of development during the suburbanization trends that influenced Norfolk's growth during the mid-twentieth century.

Narrative Description

Setting and Landscape

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District is located in Norfolk, Virginia, west of and immediately adjacent to Norfolk's Downtown commercial core. The district is separated and set apart from Downtown by the prominent Boush Street, which runs north/south between the two areas. The district is further set apart from the rest of Norfolk by another prominent thoroughfare, West Brambleton Avenue. The district is bordered by Smith Creek of the Elizabeth River to the west and College Place to the south.

The district is largely laid out on a grid from east to west with resources predominately oriented toward the street on the north or south side of each block. The relatively flat district contains varying lot sizes, but in most cases, resources are densely packed in each block and take up the majority of the lot. Resources have varying setbacks from the street depending on resource type and size, although most are minimally setback. Brick sidewalks surround each block, and crosswalks are located at each intersection connecting each part of the district. The original cobblestone streets have been retained at the far west end of the district along West Freemason Street, West Bute Street, and Botetourt Street. Additionally, while some commercial resources contain small adjacent gravel or paved parking areas, there are otherwise few driveways or off-street parking. However, despite the tightly-packed resources and extensive amount of pavement, the district contains numerous large trees and other mature vegetation. A heavy concentration of street trees also largely obscures the view of many of the buildings from the street. Several docks and boat ramps branch off into Smith Creek at the west end of the district.

Narrative Description

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District contains a range of early- to mid-twentieth century residential and commercial architectural resources and includes a variety of architectural styles. The original district nomination, which was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in December 1971 and the National Register of Historic Places in November 1972, focused largely on the classical architecture from the period of the district's earliest extant building, constructed in ca.1790, and did not have a clearly defined end date to the period of significance. Nearly ninety percent of the contributing resources originally surveyed included residential resources featuring high-style architecture such as Federal, Italianate, Colonial Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Georgian Revival, and Romanesque and built for the city's local elites. In addition to the high style residences, there were six early multi-family

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apartment buildings, all of which were constructed between 1889 and 1910. Of the resources originally surveyed, only five were nonresidential resources that predated 1922. Perhaps most notable among these was the **Old Norfolk Public Library/Andrew Carnegie Free Public Library** at 345 West Freemason Street (DHR ID # 122-0187/122-0060-0039), which was constructed in the elaborate Beaux Arts style. During this period, resources were largely constructed of brick and wood with some limited stone. These resources are discussed in greater detail in the original nomination.

Today, the construction of resources can be divided into four approximate periods: Pre-1800, 1800-1850, 1850-ca. 1920, and ca. 1922-1972, with the majority of said resources dating to 1850-1972. Two of the resources constructed prior to 1800, the **Allmand-Archer House** at 327 Duke Street (DHR ID # 122-0001/122-0060-0019) and the **Taylor-Whittle House** at 227 West Freemason Street (DHR ID # 122-0021/122-0060-0022), are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A third individually-listed property, the **Wainwright Building/Seaboard Air Line Railway Building** at 221-229 West Bute Street (DHR ID # 122-0060-0210), dates to 1926. Only a handful of buildings were constructed between 1800 and 1850. Approximately 45 percent of the resources constructed between 1850 and 1922 were discussed in the original nomination and they comprise the majority of the high-style residential resources associated with locally prominent families. Fewer than 10 percent of the 1850-1922 resources were nonresidential. The period from 1922-1972 saw a dramatic increase in commercial development, but these were not addressed in detail in the original nomination. By extending the district's period of significance to end in 1972, 20 additional resources constructed between 1922-1972 are now classified as contributing to the district, including commercial multi-family, and single-family resources.

Indicative of development and architectural trends during the early- to mid-twentieth century, the resources constructed during this period in the West Freemason Street Area Historic District predominantly included Main Street Commercial, International Style, and Art Deco buildings. Examples of the International Style within the district include **333 West Freemason Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0076), an office building designed by and used as the offices for Norfolk architects Oliver & Smith; an apartment building at **337 West Bute Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0205); and the original Central YMCA at **312 West Bute Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0061). Each includes character-defining stylistic features such as ribbon windows, alternating planes of materials, flat roofs, and a lack of traditional ornamentation.

During the mid-twentieth century, the City of Norfolk's embrace of the urban renewal movement drew opposition from residents concerned about the loss of historic neighborhoods. Several houses within the West Freemason Street Area were demolished to make way for Modern Movement commercial buildings and their associated parking lots. Additionally, at least three dwellings, at **251 West Bute Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0072), **269 West Bute Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0069), and **253 West Bute Street** (DHR ID # 122-0060-0209), were converted from single-family residences to commercial buildings. Alterations associated with these conversions subsequently have gained significance in their own right for their significant association with the historic trends that shaped the district between 1950 and 1972.

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Including the Apartment Building at 337 West Bute Street, which was constructed in the International Style, five multi-family apartment buildings were constructed during the middle quarters of the twentieth century. Among these resources, range of styles are used, including Art Deco (**410 Botetourt Street**, DHR ID # 122-0060-0066), Gothic Revival (**Wainwright Building Seaboard Air Line Railway Building**, DHR ID # 122-0060-0210), and Tudor Revival (**349 West Bute Street**, DHR ID #122-0060-0067).

Today, the district continues to consist of a mix of residential and commercial resources. A small number of commercial resources are interspersed among the residential buildings, but the largest concentration of commercial resources is located at the eastern end of West Bute Street and along Duke Street. The district retains a largely residential character, in keeping with its development patterns that were established during the mid-nineteenth century. The streetscape's principal materials of brick, wood, stone, and cast concrete create a cohesive built environment illustrative of the neighborhood's earliest history as an outlier beyond Norfolk's downtown through the city's earliest suburban development starting in the mid-nineteenth century, and continuing through the area's most rapid growth during the middle quarters of the twentieth century. These periods of development also are illustrated through the district's variegated architectural styles, beginning with the elegance of the Federal style, a high percentage of high-style Italianate, Queen Anne, and other Late Victorian era styles along with the popular revival styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially Colonial Revival and styles inspired by classical architecture such as Georgian Revival and Beaux Arts. The architectural catalog includes the Modern Movement that emerged during the second quarter of the twentieth century, such as Art Deco and International Style, the latter of which continued to be popular into the early 1970s.

Integrity Analysis

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District retains a relatively high degree of the seven aspects of integrity. Although there have been changes over time, the district retains strong architectural integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, especially with regard to its period of robust growth from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. The district also retains integrity of setting because the surrounding landscape and development, including the Elizabeth River to the west and the district's separation from the core downtown to the east, have always been and continue to be important boundaries. The district's mature landscaping, iron fences, and cobblestone streets further add to its historic character and setting. The district's integrity of feeling and association as one of Norfolk's earliest suburban neighborhoods has been maintained by the physical constraints imposed by the aforementioned boundaries as well as the primarily residential (and limited commercial) property uses that have typified the area throughout its history. Although several non-contributing apartment buildings and townhomes have been along the edge of the district, due to the City's early recognition of the West Freemason Street Area's historic and architectural significance, these newer buildings were sensitively designed and do not detract from the district's integrity.

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The inventory below is the result of a reconnaissance-level survey of 128 resources (including primary and secondary resources) conducted in June 2022. Surveyors verified the conditions of all previously-documented resources within the district, as well as those not previously inventoried. The original nomination included an inventory listing a total of 48 resources, accompanied by brief architecturally descriptive details for each resource. This is considered to have been a selective survey, rather than a comprehensive inventory of all properties within the historic district boundary. The 2022 survey and additional research resulted in the identification of 76 contributing buildings and 1 contributing object, as well as 50 non-contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing object. Additionally, 9 of the resources that were previously documented are no longer extant. The following individually-listed properties are also within the boundary of the West Freemason Street Area Historic District: **Allmand-Archer House** at 327 Duke Street (DHR ID # 122-0001/122-0060-0019), **Wainwright Building/Seaboard Air Line Railway Building** at 221-229 West Bute Street (DHR ID # 122-0060-0210), and **Taylor-Whittle House** at 227 West Freemason Street (DHR ID # 122-0021/122-0060-0022).

Each entry in the inventory below identifies the primary and secondary (where applicable) resource, the resource type (building, site, structure, or object), number of stories, architectural style, approximate construction date, and contributing or noncontributing status. Resources within the West Freemason Street Area Historic District are considered contributing if they were constructed during the district's period of significance (ca. 1790-1972), are associated with the district's areas of significance, and retain architectural integrity. Alterations to contributing resources were evaluated based on the overall impact to the character-defining features of the building. A detailed architectural description and surveyor assessment for each resource has also been prepared in conjunction with the 2022 survey, and can be accessed via the Virginia Department of Historic Resources architectural survey archives and/or the Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS).

West Freemason Street Area Historic District Inventory**Botetourt Street****300 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0082***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979****Non-contributing Total: 1****302 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0102***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979****Non-contributing Total: 1****304 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0103**

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Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

306 Botetourt Street **122-0060-0104**

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

308 Botetourt Street **122-0060-0105**

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

310 Botetourt Street **122-0060-0106**

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1979

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

351 Botetourt Street **122-0028**

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0001

Dr. William Boswell Seldon House

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Federal/Adamesque, Ca 1807

Contributing *Total: 1*

Secondary Resource : Carriage House (Building)

Contributing *Total: 1*

353 Botetourt Street **122-0062**

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0086

Primary Resource: Slave/Servant Quarters (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Second Empire, Ca 1870

Contributing *Total: 1*

409 Botetourt Street **122-0060-0002**

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Vernacular, Ca 1901

Contributing *Total: 1*

410 Botetourt Street **122-0060-0066**

Primary Resource: Apartment Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Art Deco, Ca 1934

Contributing *Total: 1*

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Additional Documentation Page 10**500 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0204***Primary Resource:* **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 8, Style: Italian Renaissance Revival, Ca 1907****Contributing Total: 1****501-509 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0050***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1922****Contributing Total: 1****512 Botetourt Street 122-0060-0049***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, 1935****Contributing Total: 1****Bute Street****West 221-229 Bute Street 122-0060-0210***Wainwright Building**Primary Resource:* **Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 9, Style: Gothic Revival, Ca 1925****Contributing Total: 1****West 243 Bute Street 122-0060-0073***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1970****Contributing Total: 1****West 248 Bute Street 122-0060-0063***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1962****Contributing Total: 1****West 251 Bute Street 122-0060-0072***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 1901****Contributing Total: 1**

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Additional Documentation Page 11**West 253 Bute Street 122-0060-0209***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Commercial Style, 1941****Contributing Total: 1****West 255 Bute Street 122-0060-0071***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1958****Contributing Total: 1****West 257 Bute Street 122-0060-0003***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890****Contributing Total: 1****West 259 Bute Street 122-0060-0004***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890****Contributing Total: 1****West 261 Bute Street 122-0060-0070***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1966****Non-contributing Total: 1****West 267 Bute Street 122-0060-0005***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1890****Contributing Total: 1****West 269 Bute Street 122-0060-0069***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 1910****Contributing Total: 1****West 270 Bute Street 122-0060-0062***Primary Resource:* **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 7, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 2009**

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Non-contributing Total: 1

West 273 Bute Street **122-0182**

Joseph W. Perry House

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0006

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Second Empire, Pre 1873

Contributing Total: 1

West 309 Bute Street **122-0060-0051**

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Tudor Revival, Ca 1928

Contributing Total: 1

West 312 Bute Street **122-0060-0061**

Blocker Family YMCA/Central YMCA

Primary Resource: Gymnasium (Building), Stories 6, Style: International Style, Ca 1970

Contributing Total: 1

West 313 Bute Street **122-0060-0007**

Primary Resource: Carriage House (Building), Stories 2, Style: Vernacular, Ca 1890

Contributing Total: 1

West 317 Bute Street **122-0185**

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0008

Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1890

Contributing Total: 1

West 327 Bute Street **122-0060-0068**

Primary Resource: Apartment Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival Style, Ca 1948

Contributing Total: 1

West 337 Bute Street **122-0060-0205**

Primary Resource: Apartment Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: International Style, 1954

Contributing Total: 1

West 344 Bute Street **122-0060-0060**

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Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1960**

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 349 Bute Street **122-0060-0067**

Emrose Court

Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Tudor Revival, Ca 1939**

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 403 Bute Street **122-0011**

Collins House

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0011

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1901**

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 404 Bute Street **122-0060-0012**

Whitehurst House

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Vernacular, Ca 1905**

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 407 Bute Street **122-0060-0065**

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 1993**

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 408 Bute Street **122-0191**

Richard Taylor House

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0013

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, Ca 1802**

Contributing *Total: 1*

Secondary Resource : **Garage (Building)**

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 414 Bute Street **122-0192**

William W. Chamberlain House

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0014

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Federal/Adamesque, Ca 1850**

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 420 Bute Street **122-0016**

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0015

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Additional Documentation Page 14*William Wilson Lamb House**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, 1845**Secondary Resource : Garage (Building)***Contributing** *Total: 1***Contributing** *Total: 1***West 421 Bute Street 122-0060-0064***Primary Resource: Apartment Building (Building), Stories 5, Style: Contemporary, Ca 1986***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 424 Bute Street 122-0060-0016***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1890**Secondary Resource : Garage (Building)***Contributing** *Total: 1***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***College Place****296 College Place 122-0060-0115***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***300 College Place 122-0060-0114***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***304 College Place 122-0060-0113***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***308 College Place 122-0060-0112***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***312 College Place 122-0060-0111**

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Additional Documentation Page 15*Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***316 College Place** **122-0060-0110***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***320 College Place** **122-0060-0109***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***Duke Street****327 Duke Street** **122-0001***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0018**Almand-Archer House**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Federal/Adamesque, Ca
1790***Contributing** *Total: 1***405 Duke Street** **122-0009***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0019**Oliver Glisson House**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Italianate, 1840***Contributing** *Total: 1***409 Duke Street** **122-0060-0020***Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: No discernible
style, Ca 1905***Contributing** *Total: 1***419 Duke Street** **122-0180***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0021**John B. Lekies House**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1927***Contributing** *Total: 1*

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Additional Documentation Page 16**Dunmore Street****300 Dunmore Street 122-0060-0108***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing Total: 1****308 Dunmore Street 122-0060-0107***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing Total: 1****312 Dunmore Street 122-0060-0083***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1991***Non-contributing Total: 1****501 Dunmore Street 122-0060-0017***Naylor Arms**Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 4, Style: No Discernable Style, Ca 1900***Contributing Total: 1****Freemason Mews****315-331 Freemason Mews 122-0060-0085***Primary Resource: Garage (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, 1991***Non-contributing Total: 1****333-335 Freemason Mews 122-0060-0118***Primary Resource: Garage (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, 1991***Non-contributing Total: 1****Freemason Street****West 220 Freemason Street 122-0060-0207***St. Christopher's Hospital*

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Primary Resource: **Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Gothic Revival, Ca 1910**

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 227 Freemason Street 122-0021

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0022

Taylor-Whittle House

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal/Adamesque, Ca 1790**

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource : **Smoke/Meat House (Building)**

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 240 Freemason Street 122-0181

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0023

Hunter House Victorian Museum

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Romanesque Revival/Richardsonian, Ca 1894**

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 241 Freemason Street 122-0060-0101

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2004**

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 243 Freemason Street 122-0060-0099

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2004**

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 245 Freemason Street 122-0060-0098

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2004**

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 246 Freemason Street 122-0060-0027

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Romanesque Revival/Richardsonian, Ca 1865**

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 247 Freemason Street 122-0060-0097

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Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2004

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 248-250 Freemason Street 122-0060-0028

Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 2000

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 249 Freemason Street 122-0060-0081

Primary Resource: Apartment Building (Building), Stories 4, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2003

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 251 Freemason Street 122-0060-0096

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2003

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 253 Freemason Street 122-0060-0095

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2003

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 255 Freemason Street 122-0060-0094

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 2003

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

West 256 Freemason Street 122-0208

William H.C. Ellis House

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0030

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Italianate, Ca 1880

Contributing *Total: 1*

Secondary Resource : Shed (Building)

Contributing *Total: 1*

West 257 Freemason Street 122-0060-0093

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 2003

Non-contributing *Total: 1*

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West 259 Freemason Street 122-0060-0092

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 2003

Non-contributing Total: 1

West 261 Freemason Street 122-0060-0080

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 2003

Non-contributing Total: 1

West 300 Freemason Street 122-0183

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0031

Petty-Dickson House

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Second Empire, 1852

Contributing Total: 1

West 301 Freemason Street 122-0060-0032

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1850

Contributing Total: 1

West 303 Freemason Street 122-0060-0033

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1880

Contributing Total: 1

West 308 Freemason Street 122-0003

Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0034

Camp-Hubbard House

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, 1852

Contributing Total: 1

Secondary Resource : Fence (Object)

Contributing Total: 1

West 309 Freemason Street 122-0060-0079

Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 1987

Non-contributing Total: 1

West 313 Freemason Street 122-0060-0035

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890

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Additional Documentation Page 20**Contributing** *Total: 1***West 317 Freemason Street 122-0060-0091***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 1978***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 319 Freemason Street 122-0060-0090***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 1978***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 320 Freemason Street 122-0184***George W. Roper House**Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0036**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, 1901***Contributing** *Total: 1**Secondary Resource : Garage (Building)***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 321 Freemason Street 122-0060-0089***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 1978***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 322-324 Freemason Street 122-0060-0037***Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1906***Contributing** *Total: 1***West 323 Freemason Street 122-0060-0088***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), 1978***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 325 Freemason Street 122-0060-0087***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1978***Non-contributing** *Total: 1*

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Additional Documentation Page 21**West 327 Freemason Street 122-0060-0078***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: No discernible style, 1978***Non-contributing Total: 1****West 333 Freemason Street 122-0060-0038****This resource was included in the 1971 nomination under a different address (341 W Freemason)**Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: International Style, Ca 1964***Contributing Total: 1****West 334 Freemason Street 122-0060-0077***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Neo-Eclectic, 2019***Non-contributing Total: 1****West 338-346 Freemason Street 122-0186***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0040**McCullough Row**Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1889***Contributing Total: 1****West 345 Freemason Street 122-0187***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0039**Andrew Carnegie Free Public Library**Primary Resource: Library (Building), Stories 2, Style: Beaux Arts, 1903***Contributing Total: 1****West 348-350 Freemason Street 122-0060-0075***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1900***Contributing Total: 1****West 350 Freemason Street 122-0060-0120***Primary Resource: Double House (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, 1900***Contributing Total: 1****West 352 Freemason Street 122-0060-0041***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Other, Ca 1900*

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Additional Documentation Page 22**Contributing** *Total: 1***West 355 Freemason Street 122-0060-0121***Primary Resource: Wall (Object), Stories , Style: No discernible style, Ca 1968***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***West 358 Freemason Street 122-0188***Other DHR Id#: 122-0060-0043**John Cary Weston House**Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Second Empire, Ca 1877***Contributing** *Total: 1**Secondary Resource : Outbuilding, Domestic (Building)* **Contributing** *Total: 1***West 400 Freemason Street 122-0060-0044***Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Other, Ca 1909***Contributing** *Total: 1***West 402 Freemason Street 122-0060-0119***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1909***Contributing** *Total: 1***West 404 Freemason Street 122-0060-0045***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1905***Contributing** *Total: 1***West 416 Freemason Street 122-0060-0074***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed (more than 3 styles from different periods), Ca 2007***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***Yarmouth Street****307 Yarmouth Street 122-0060-0084***Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 2002***Non-contributing** *Total: 1***315 Yarmouth Street 122-0060-0116**

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Additional Documentation Page 23*Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 2002****Non-contributing** *Total:* 1**323 Yarmouth Street 122-0060-0117***Primary Resource:* **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 2002****Non-contributing** *Total:* 1**409 Yarmouth Street 122-0060-0046***Primary Resource:* **Carriage House (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1852****Contributing** *Total:* 1**York Street****West 327 York Street 122-0060-0059***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1953****Contributing** *Total:* 1**West 333 York Street 122-0060-0208***Primary Resource:* **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, 1928****Contributing** *Total:* 1**West 409 York Street 122-0060-0058***Primary Resource:* **Restaurant (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1922****Contributing** *Total:* 1**West 411 York Street 122-0060-0056***Freemason Inn Bed & Breakfast**Primary Resource:* **Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 3, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1898****Contributing** *Total:* 1**West 413 York Street 122-0060-0057***Primary Resource:* **Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1898****Contributing** *Total:* 1

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West 415 York Street 122-0060-0055

Primary Resource: **Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1949**

Contributing Total: 1

West 423 York Street 122-0060-0054

Omega Apartments

Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Italianate, Ca 1895**

Contributing Total: 1

West 425 York Street 122-0060-0053

Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1898**

Non-contributing Total: 1

West 429 York Street 122-0060-0100

York Apartments

Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 4.5, Style: Italian Renaissance Revival, Ca 1910**

Contributing Total: 1

West 439 York Street 122-0060-0052

NOAA Marine Center

Primary Resource: **Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1928**

Contributing Total: 1

Secondary Resource : **Gatehouse/Guard House (Building)**

Contributing Total: 1

Secondary Resource : **Office/Office Building (Building) Contributing Total: 1**

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

ca. 1790 - 1972

Architect/Builder

Oliver & Smith, Architects

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 West Freemason Street Area Historic District (DHR #122-0060) was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1971 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Located northwest of Norfolk's historic downtown area, the district includes the city's oldest residential neighborhood and is associated with early suburbanization trends. As Norfolk's first historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the district is representative of the City's early historic preservation efforts,

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including the shift from individual resource preservation efforts to area-oriented preservation, especially as a response to transportation-focused urban renewal and redevelopment projects. The district's original period of significance was broadly defined as being the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. This additional documentation clarifies that the period of significance begins **ca. 1790** with the earliest contributing resources and ends in **1972**, which marks the year that local activism associated with the larger historic preservation movement was initiated and ultimately resulted in the designation of Norfolk's first historic district and the long-term stewardship of the West Freemason Street Area Historic District. The additional documentation also adds context to **Criterion A: Community Planning and Development** (formerly Urban Planning) with regard to local efforts to block transportation routes that threatened the neighborhood and to establish a local grassroots historic preservation movement that took a more holistic view beyond the focus on individual buildings that characterized the movement's earliest decades. The additional documentation adds **Social History: Civil Rights** as an area of significance to the district for its association with efforts to desegregate the Central YMCA, a groundbreaking case in testing the effectiveness of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in Norfolk and in Virginia. Finally, this documentation also provides additional context under **Criterion C: Architecture**.

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

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

Originally laid out in the years immediately following the American Revolution, the West Freemason Street Area Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Community Planning and Development (Urban Planning) as an intact residential neighborhood that demonstrated residential development and architectural patterns from the Early Republic period through the early 20th century. The original nomination noted that most of the comparable early neighborhoods of the city had been "occupied by poorer classes and the buildings were allowed to deteriorate," by the mid-twentieth century. By the 1950s, these other early residential neighborhoods in Norfolk were the targets of redevelopment projects that razed historic neighborhoods that were usually home to lower-income and minority families. The City of Norfolk carried out one of the nation's first Urban Renewal programs that was quite effective in razing vast areas of the city's historic core for redevelopment. Areas targeted for Urban Renewal often closely aligned with neighborhoods in the city that were "redlined," or defined as "declining neighborhoods" during the late 1930s by the federal government's Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC), which was tasked with determining risk in residential funding. Risk, based on the HOLC reports, was typically associated with deteriorated housing conditions, high occupation of renters, low-income families, blue-collar laborers, and racial and ethnic minorities. In Norfolk, neighborhoods that were most often rated "D" class, or "definitely declining" and highlighted in red on city maps, were those with a high number of wage laborers, African American residents, and extremely poor housing conditions, with much of that housing owned by absentee "slumlords" who charged high rents but did not maintain their properties. Little, if any, assistance was provided to tenants by local, state, or federal agencies, such as enforcing even minimal housing standards. Redlining of low-income and African American neighborhoods in Norfolk is directly linked to the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority's (NRHA) target redevelopment areas. These redevelopment projects displaced high numbers of residents, and resulted in the loss of much of the city's historic built environment.

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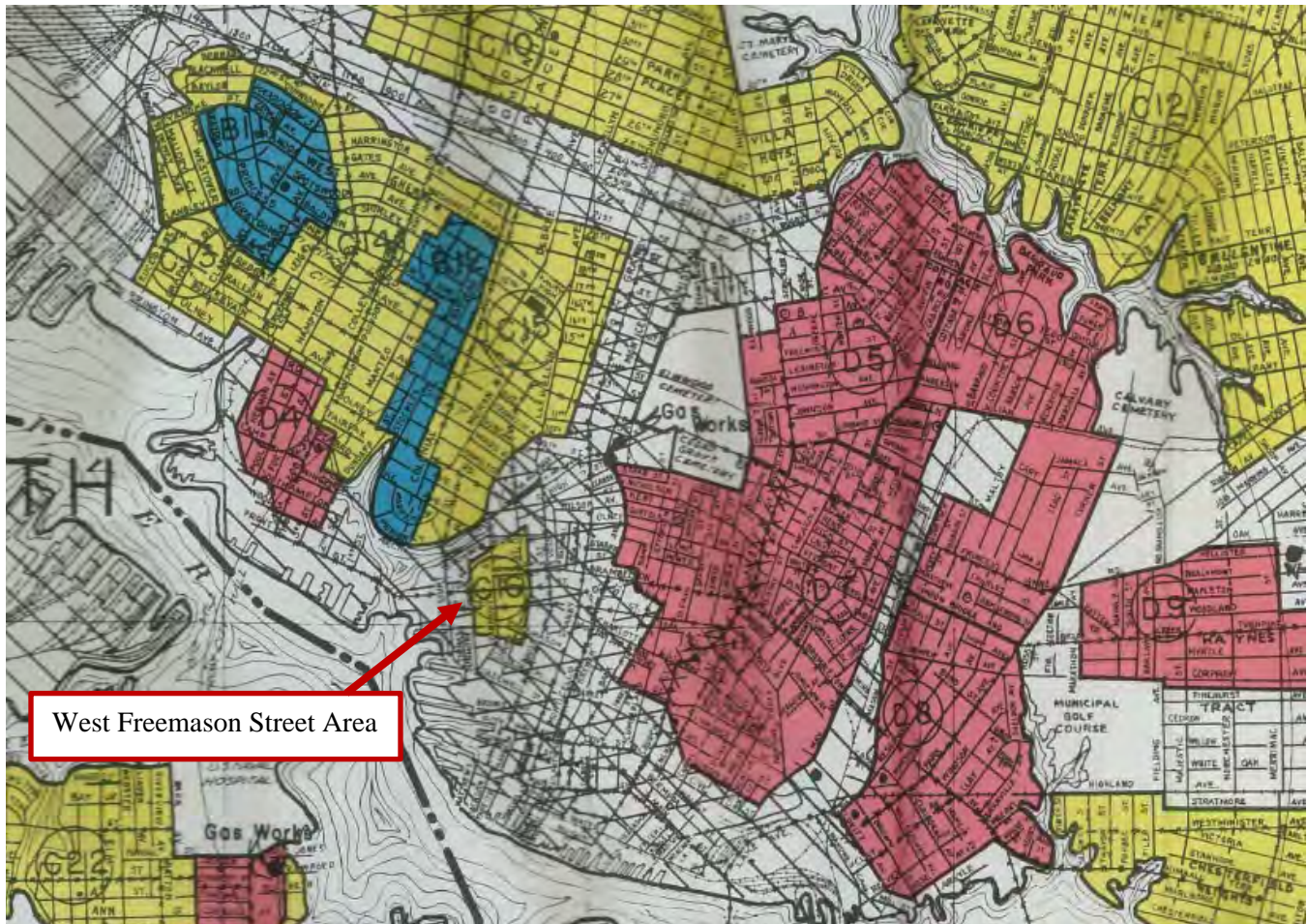
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Figure 1: Clip of Greater Norfolk and Vicinity HOLC Map, 1940, focused on Downtown Norfolk.

Amid the City's drive to modernize through Urban Renewal and redevelopment during the mid-twentieth century, the West Freemason Street Area experienced sporadic bouts of building restoration and early preservation sentiments during the late 1940s and early 1950s. While HOLC reports noted that "Residential desirability is definitely declining" in the Freemason neighborhood, the area was assigned a level "C," yellow, rather than red. This is likely due to the size and grandeur of the dwellings, though many may have been in need of substantial repairs at the time. The report also indicates that it was home to several "older wealthy families" and residents with professional (white-collar) occupations, and had no African American residents.² These factors also likely contribute to the slightly higher rating. The higher rating, however, did not automatically save the West Freemason Area from the city's redevelopment plans. Between 1953 and 1956, at least six houses and buildings within the West Freemason Street Area had been demolished for "modern structures," such as offices and parking lots.³

² Robert K. Nelson, et. al., "Norfolk Virginia," *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=about> (accessed 11 April 2023).

³ "At Old Smith Home, Ancient Freemason Site Acquired by Architect. Oliver and Smith Firm Plans Four Story Building

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Among those residences demolished was the Peter Smith Home at 333 West Freemason Street. An office building was constructed in its place, which became the headquarters for the local architecture firm Oliver and Smith.⁴

At the same time, an appreciation for classically-inspired architecture was brewing among residents and businesses in Freemason that began to give life to a grassroots preservation movement. In 1948, the house at 308 West Freemason Street, known locally as Castle Hubbard, was restored by Meeta, Inc., a Norfolk-based couturier. The company was praised for recapturing “the elegance and grace” of the “Norfolk Landmark.”⁵ By the early 1950s, demolition of houses in the West Freemason neighborhood sparked interest in organizing to prevent wholesale destruction. Following the demolition of the Milhado House at 250 Bute Street, a *Virginian-Pilot* journalist wrote “as most of these old Norfolk homes go, it will be increasingly difficult to piece together the fragments of the past.” The article also invoked a call to action noting that enough citizen interest and involvement could save these notable Norfolk homes as had been done with the Myers House on East Freemason Street.⁶

During the same decade, the City of Norfolk hired urban planner and transportation specialist Charles K. Agle to develop a master plan for the city’s redevelopment. A significant component to the urban renewal and redevelopment efforts being undertaken in Downtown Norfolk were transportation-oriented projects to provide increased vehicular access to the area. As a result, Agle’s 1956 Master Plan for the City of Norfolk included a proposal to bisect the historic West Freemason Street area with a multi-lane highway to connect the east and west parts of the city. The Agle Plan, as it became known, for the transportation route known as Waterfront Drive (later Waterside Drive) was designed in two parts as a “100 foot wide loop freeway,” the first of which would begin “at Botetourt and York, intercepting Boush at Tazewell, widening Boush to Water Street, Water Street widened to East, and East to Tidewater Drive.”⁷ If fulfilled, this proposed route would have bisected the West Freemason Street neighborhood in a diagonal, northwest to southeast direction and result in the demolition of numerous historic buildings and structures within the area. By the mid-1960s, proposed routes for Waterfront Drive were under review by the City Planning Department and City Council. With the release of proposed plans for Waterfront Drive, combined with a decade of Urban Renewal and large-scale neighborhood clearances, the issue of preserving the West Freemason Street Area came to the forefront of Norfolk planning discussions in 1964.

Between Dunmore, Thomas Streets,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (November 18, 1955); “A.H. Grandy Home Falling for Park Lot: One of Two Residences on Freemason Taken by Expansion,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (June 24, 1956); “Old Homes Coming Down,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (May 30, 1956); “Norfolk’s Old Homes Close to its Heart,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (December 30, 1953).

⁴ “At Old Smith Home, Ancient Freemason Site Acquired by Architect. Oliver and Smith Firm Plans Four Story Building Between Dunmore, Thomas Streets,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (November 18, 1955)

⁵ “In Which an Old House Regains The Grandeur of Bygone Years,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (March 7, 1948).

⁶ “Norfolk’s Old Homes Close to its Heart,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (December 30, 1953).

⁷ Charles K. Agle, “A Master Plan for the Central Business and Financial District, Norfolk, Virginia,” (July 1956), i-ii.

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Figure 2: Future Street and Land Use Map, Agle Plan, 1956. Approximate boundary of West Freemason Street Area outlined in Red.

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Figure 3: Proposed Major Highways, Agle Plan, 1956. Transportation plans overlaid on historic aerial image shows the path of proposed highways, and the demolition that would have been necessary. Approximate boundary of West Freemason Street Area outlined in Red.

In light of the Agle Plan recommendations to run a new multi-lane road through the West Freemason Street Area, citizen efforts to halt the demolition of individual buildings quickly turned attention toward “area preservation.” When the city began to consider implementation of Agle’s transportation recommendations in the early to mid-1960s, several different proposals were put forth by the City Planning Commission and City Council. Initially, Freemason Area residents and advocacy organizations such as the Norfolk Historical Foundation focused on the impact of the proposed traffic routes on specific buildings. Although citizens and organizations such as the Norfolk Historic Foundation pushed back against these proposed routes that resulted in demolition of individual buildings of interest, as proposals were rewritten to avoid specific buildings, attention turned toward the neighborhood’s character and historical significance as a whole. Ralph Miner, an urban planner for the City of Norfolk, described West Freemason as “a large, unbroken area of major significance.” In their report on the route, the Planning Department explained that the West Freemason Street Area was a “conglomeration” that included sidewalks of brick and smooth concrete, rectangular and diamond-shaped blocks, and many resources over 50 years old. The report also emphasized the need for protective historic zoning, but

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stated that those controls would only be worthwhile if the historic area was preserved intact.⁸ The fate of the West Freemason Area gained attention from planners and preservation advocates far and wide, including a Philadelphia city planner who stated the area should be “saved at all costs” and a Richmond preservationist who emphasized the cultural and economic positives of retaining the existing historic area.⁹

Despite proposing a route that preserved the West Freemason Street area, in 1964, City Council shot down the Planning Department and Planning Commission’s recommendations in favor of a route that saved three historic buildings, but sacrificed the rest of the neighborhood. This decision led Norfolk residents from all over the city to form the Friends of Freemason Street. The Friends group supported the urban redevelopment efforts of the city, as well as the construction of Waterfront Drive. However, they advocated staunchly for the neighborhood-level preservation of the West Freemason Street Area and a Waterfront Drive that avoided impact to the neighborhood. Additionally, the group began to push for the creation a historic zone overlay, a method for protecting an area from future unsympathetic demolition and redevelopment through additional zoning considerations. Advocacy efforts not only focused on the neighborhood’s built environment but also its general historic character, placing emphasis on preserving features such as street and sidewalk materials, fencing, and vegetation.¹⁰ Through the end of 1964 and 1965, the Friends of Freemason Street attended public meetings, held informational sessions and historic tours, and publicly urged the City to reconsider the Waterfront Drive route that threatened the historic West Freemason Street Area.

Efforts by the City Planning Department, residents, and the Friends of Freemason to preserve the West Freemason Area was the first time in Norfolk that “area preservation,” or recognition of a historic district rather than an individual building, had come to the forefront. This shift in the practice of historic preservation locally was motivated by an appreciation for neighborhood character, a recognition of the value of historic places beyond museum uses, and the desire to retain the sense of place the neighborhood evoked. West Freemason Street Area preservation efforts ultimately resulted in a new option for protection of neighborhoods in the city.

⁸ “‘Friends’ Support Planners,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (September 25, 1964)

⁹ “Freemason Area Hailed by Planner,” *Ledger-Star* (June 25, 1964); Hope Christopoulos, “Warns Against Freemason Schism: Cash Potential in Cobblestones, Says Richmonder,” *Ledger-Star* (August 15, 1964).

¹⁰ Raymond L. Bancroft, “The Fight for Freemason Street,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (September 27, 1964).

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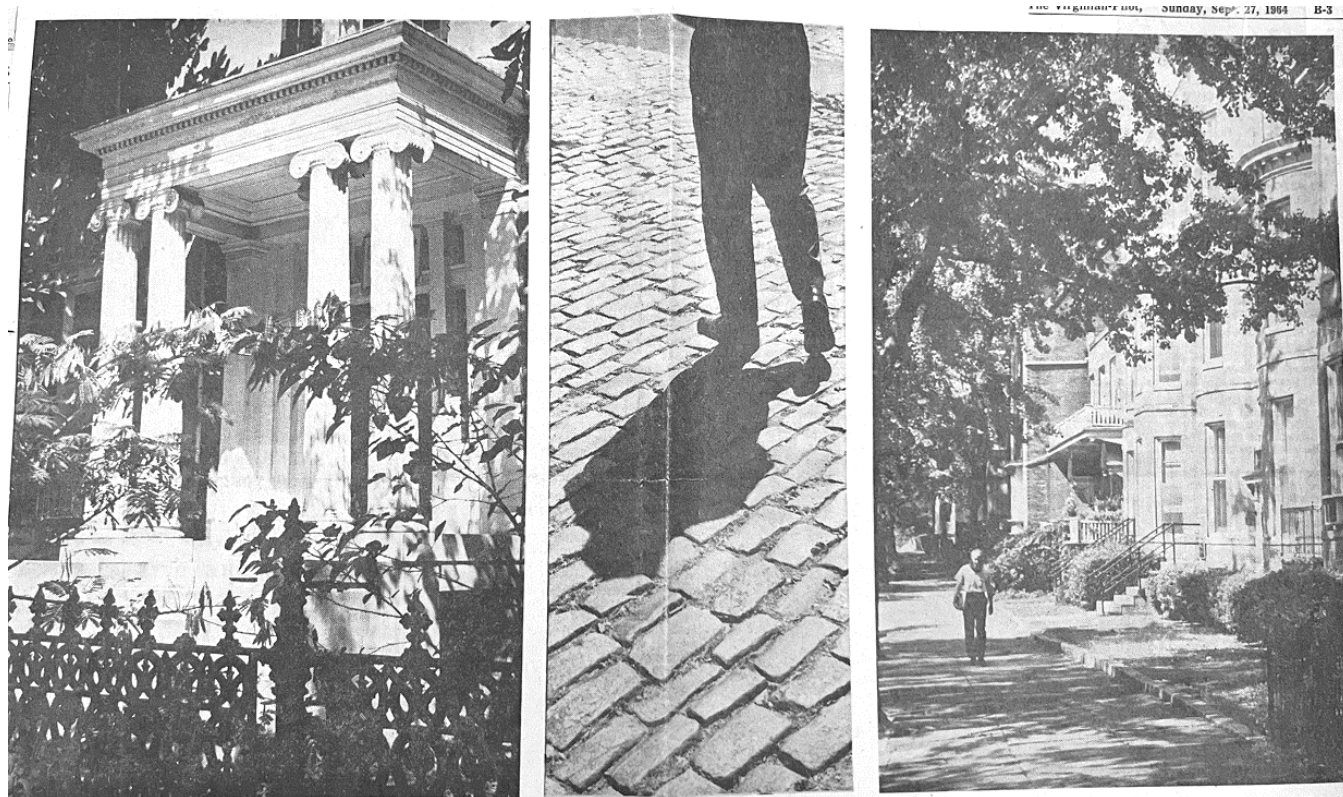
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Individual buildings alone do not create "old" atmosphere in the area.—Its strong character depends more on the combination of related visual elements. Brick and stone sidewalks, cobbled streets, well-established vegetation all contribute significantly to the over-all character . . .

Figure 4: Images show scenes of West Freemason Area historic character. The caption reads: "Individual buildings alone do not create 'old' atmosphere in the area-- Its strong character depends more on the combination of related visual elements. Brick and stone sidewalks, cobbled streets, well-established vegetation all contribute significantly to the over-all character..." (Raymond L. Bancroft, "The Fight for Freemason Street," *Virginian-Pilot*, 27 Sept. 1964).

By December 1965, the City Planning Department drafted a proposed amendment to the City's zoning ordinance for "Historic and Cultural Conservation" and published a report on the topic, *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage: Proposed Zoning for Historic and Cultural Conservation*. The report noted that until that point, the "few formal preservation accomplishments" in the city had been focused on the use and maintenance of individual buildings, primarily with museum orientations, and that this proposed ordinance would create a new type of zone known as a "historic and cultural conservation district."¹¹ Most notably, these districts would establish restrictions on building size and design, setbacks, parking, and other aspects of development that would be tailored to fit a given area. The new zoning would prevent the erection of new buildings and structures that were not cohesive with the "appearance of historic or architecturally significant buildings in such a district," and also provided a six-month delay in the demolition or removal of a "landmark" to provide an opportunity to preserve the resource in its original environment.¹²

¹¹ Department of City Planning, Norfolk, Virginia, *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage: Proposed Zoning for Historic and Cultural Conservation* (December 1965).

¹² Department of City Planning, *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage*.

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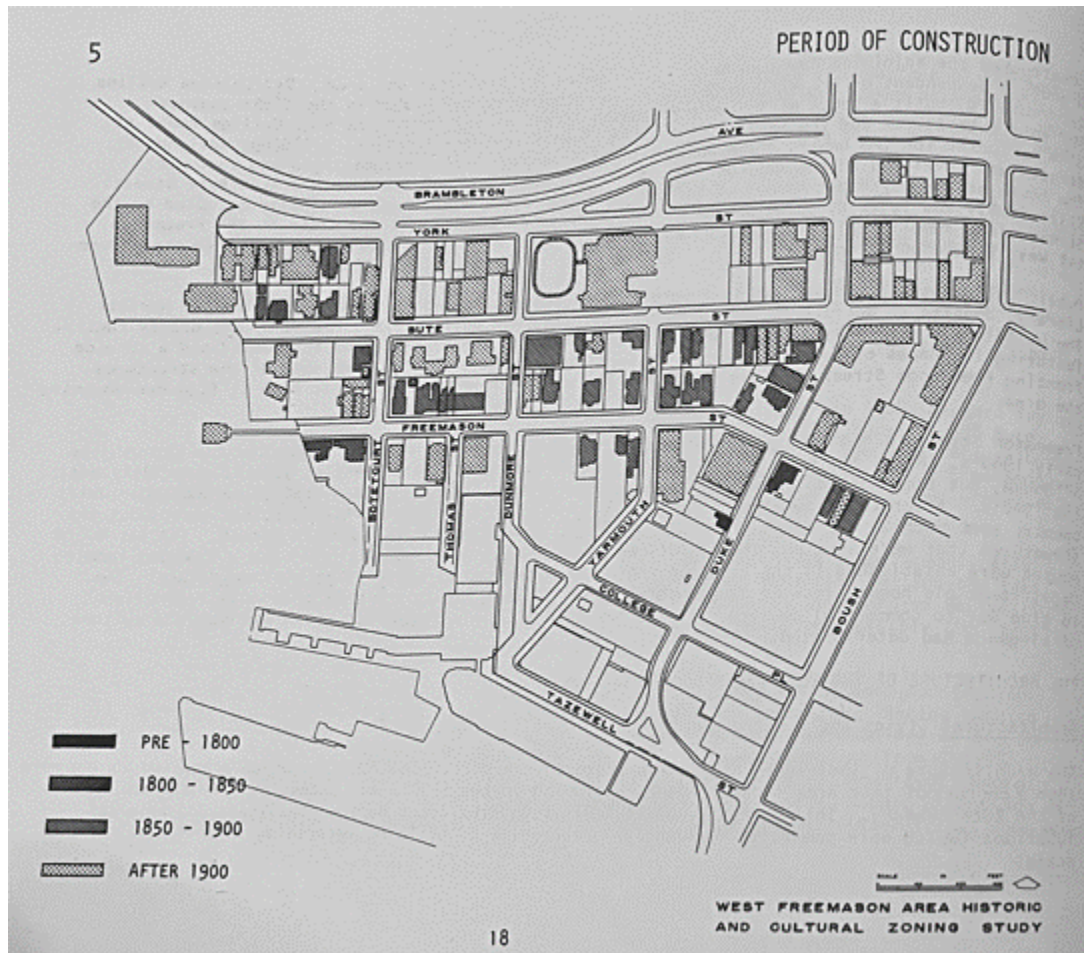


Figure 5: Map from West Freemason Area Historic and Cultural Zoning Study, June 1977, showing period of construction for existing buildings.

Although not the first city in Virginia to enact such legislation, Norfolk's early efforts came behind only 5 other Virginia cities: Alexandria, Charlottesville, Leesburg, Richmond, and Williamsburg.¹³ Two years later, in December 1967, Norfolk City Council unanimously voted to amend the city's zoning ordinance and incorporate the historic and cultural conservation district zoning.¹⁴ The West Freemason Street Area would not become a local Historic and Cultural Conservation District until 1978, however, the City and grassroots efforts to preserve the West Freemason Street Area were credited as the impetus for the ordinance's creation and design, and also provided the path for the Ghent Historic and Cultural Conservation District as Norfolk's first local historic district.¹⁵ Following the successes of the grassroots preservation efforts in West Freemason, other neighborhoods were able to advocate for the development

¹³ Department of City Planning, *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage*. Due to its early embrace of Urban Renewal, however, Norfolk's downtown experienced a higher rate of loss of historic resources than these other cities.

¹⁴ Staige D. Blackford, "Zoning Recodifying Voted," *The Virginian-Pilot* (December 13, 1967).

¹⁵ Staige D. Blackford, "Zoning Recodifying Voted," *The Virginian-Pilot* (December 13, 1967); Department of City Planning, *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage*.

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of neighborhood conservation programs as opposed to total redevelopment. These neighborhood conservation plans, which considered the existing built environment and neighborhood demographics, became a key element of Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority's programming during the mid-to-late twentieth century, with participation from neighborhoods all over the city.

While the West Freemason Street Area was not the City's first local historic district, it was the first historic district in Norfolk to be nominated to and listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and within Norfolk had only been utilized for individual properties by the early 1970s. However, in an effort to continue preservation advocacy efforts in the West Freemason Street Area, a historic resources survey was undertaken and National Register Nomination was developed for the district. Following the requirements of the time, the district focused on a period that began with the district's earliest extant building, constructed ca.1790, but did not include explication of specific start and end dates to the period of significance. On December 21, 1971, the West Freemason Street Area Historic District was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the following year, on November 7, 1972, the district became Norfolk's first historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The local preservation advocacy efforts and listing in the historic registers is directly tied to the lasting integrity and historical significance of the district. The efforts to save the neighborhood from the path of new transportation routes and redevelopment is also directly associated with the larger national trends in historic preservation theory and practice.

As explained above in the architectural analysis, the district has eight resources that date between the 1930s-1950s, with just three dating to the 1930s, two to the 1940s, and three to the 1950s. Of the 1930s buildings, one is a Tudor Revival apartment building, thus referencing the district's historical revival design tradition, and one is Art Deco, a Modern Movement style that was particularly popular from the 1920s-1940s in Virginia. The third building is Commercial Style, a style that the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has identified as dating primarily to 1874-1940, although attributes of the style continued to be utilized for sensitively designed, smaller-scale commercial buildings throughout the twentieth century. Four sub-styles of Commercial Style also have been identified – Main Street, Crossroads, Industrial, and Office High-Rise.¹⁶ Main Street and Crossroads Commercial Style buildings are primarily frame and masonry buildings that characterized downtown areas and crossroads villages from the post-Civil War period through the early twentieth century and typically feature a one-story storefront with large display windows, a frieze where signage is painted or attached above the storefront, and a decorative cornice; parapets also may be present that shield the roofline from view. The Industrial Commercial Style is more utilitarian in design but often feature a first story with decorative elements, such as windows and doors with hoods, arches, corbels, and other treatments, such as a beltcourse in contrasting material, as well as a cornice or parapet with decorative details. Industrial Commercial Style buildings range from small resources such as vehicular service buildings to large manufacturing facilities. The Office High Rise variation emerged a bit later, around 1900, as the first multiple-story office buildings were being constructed with reinforced concrete (later buildings may have structural

¹⁶ Chris Novelli et al., *Classic Commonwealth: Virginia Architecture from the Colonial Era to 1940* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2015), p. 79-87.

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steel framing). These buildings have the same three-part form of the period's high-style commercial buildings, composed of a base (storefront level), shaft (middle stories where offices and apartments are housed), and capital (decorative cornice and/or parapets). The 1935 Commercial Style building at 512 Botetourt Street is an example of the Industrial Commercial Style, and has a stripped-down façade with multiple-sash windows, brick veneer walls, and a low parapet with cast concrete coping.

The district's two 1940s Commercial Style buildings are at 253 W. Bute Street, which is an example of the Main Street substyle, and 415 W. York Street, a diminutive example of the Industrial Commercial Style. The two Commercial Style buildings in the district that date to the 1950s are at 255 W. Bute Street, a ca. 1958 example of the Main Street substyle, primarily represented with its pedimented entry bay and plain cornice, and 327 W. York Street, another example of the Industrial Commercial Style as applied on a small building. At 337 W. Bute Street, the district's earliest example of the International Style is an apartment building with wraparound corner windows, a centered entry bay with a cast concrete three-story panel that is reminiscent of a pre-World War II Art Deco treatment, brick veneer walls, a plain cornice, and cast concrete insets adjacent to the corner windows. The sash have two-over-two lights in a horizontal configuration that lends a sense of horizontality to an otherwise vertical form.

Of the 5 resources in the district that date to the 1960s, two of these are 248 W. Bute Street, a low-slung, two-story, brick-veneer building, and 344 W. Bute Street, a one-story, brick-veneer building with multiple storefronts topped with multiple-light transoms. Both are examples of the Commercial Style's Industrial substyle as they lack decorative embellishments but their materials, form, massing, and fenestration recall typical Commercial Industrial buildings of the early twentieth century. At 333 W. Freemason Street, this government office building has a distinctive International Style design that includes character-defining features of the style, such as horizontal massing that is emphasized by contrasting first- and second-story masonry materials and a cantilevered three-part overhang. The first story is clad with a smooth, white, grey-veined material that mimics the appearance of marble while the second story has a red-brick veneer. The appearance of pilasters is created with two vertical panels of the white material but the overhang itself is not supported by these as the material extends up to the roof's edge without touching the overhangs. A low brick knee wall extends across the front of the property, adding to its sense of horizontality. Window openings are relatively few and are filled with single-light sash. The overall effect of the design and materials evokes the lightness of International Style design and the Modern Movement's emphasis on use of materials, proportions, and interplay of light and shadow to provide ornamentation in lieu of classically inspired and traditional applied elements of earlier styles. The remaining two 1960s resources are a noncontributing wall at 355 W. Freemason Street and a noncontributing commercial building of no discernible style at 261 W. Bute Street.

Just two contributing resources postdate 1970. They are The Williams School Gymnasium at 312 W. Bute Street, which is associated with The Williams School, a private school established in 1933 and housed in a stone-faced, Tudor Revival Building at 419 Colonial Avenue (beyond the district boundary). The International Style, multiple-section gymnasium has two stories but rises higher than some earlier buildings due to the greater interior height needed for the gym's athletic functions. The gymnasium's ornamentation is represented through use of its construction materials, such as brick soldier courses at the foundation, between the first and second stories, and along the roof's edge, and narrow, vertical

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windows with multiple-light sash. Adjacent to the gym section is a one-story entry bay accented with an inset glass block panel alongside commercial-type, aluminum-framed entry doors, and a lower, two-story section with brick veneer along the first story and a smooth, stucco-like finish on the second story. Finally, the Commercial Style building at 243 W. Bute Street, built ca. 1970, is an example of the Main Street substyle with a smooth, pale brick veneer, cornice overhang with beehive-pattern, pressed-metal roofing, clipped corner with entrance, and large display windows topped with multiple-light transoms.

The infill construction that occurred in the historic district after 1972 has been limited. Additionally, the style, form, massing, and materials of these resources are sympathetic to the district's character. Six buildings in the 300 block of W. Freemason Street, built in 1978, are three-story, multiple-family buildings with red-brick veneer, polygonal two-story window bays, and recessed entries fronted by brick stoops with metal railings. Similarly, the six buildings in the 300 block of Botetourt Street, built in 1979, are four-and-a-half-story multiple-family buildings with decorative porches, multiple veneer materials and colors, and entry bays with front stoops. Due to the engagement of local residents, property owners, and other interested parties, and to the City of Norfolk's careful planning with regard to the West Freemason Street Area, the infill buildings that postdate World War II have not disrupted the prewar street grid, spatial relationships, massing, form, and streetscape. The historic district's integrity of setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association are remarkably intact and a testament to the urban planning practices the City has deployed in this neighborhood since the 1950s.

Criterion A: Social History: Civil Rights

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of **Social History: Civil Rights** for its association with Norfolk's Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century and the racial integration of the city's Central YMCA. Following passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a group of local African American college students were denied access and membership to the historically Whites-only **Central YMCA** (312 West Bute Street, DHR #122-0060-0061), also known as the Central Y, in 1965. Their membership denial and the refusal of the Central Y to integrate led to student protests onsite, and an NAACP federal class action lawsuit seeking an injunction on the Central Y's segregation policies. This case was one of the first times that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had been put into action in Norfolk, and the Norfolk U.S. District Court Case was the first in the state and second in the country to be brought against a nonprofit institution under the public accommodations section of the Civil Rights Act. Its groundbreaking efforts make the case significant at both the local and statewide level.

Early African American History in Norfolk and West Freemason

Like most communities in Southeast Virginia, Norfolk's racial history stretches back to the colonial period. The colonial economy initially relied upon cultivation of tobacco by enslaved Africans labor, and as the colony diversified, enslaved laborers work both in urban and rural settings. By 1790, enslaved

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African Americans accounted for just under half of Norfolk's population.¹⁷ Norfolk was also home to a relatively high number of free Black people, due in large part to a law passed in 1782 that allowed enslavers to voluntarily manumit enslaved persons.¹⁸ Although an 1806 amendment to the 1782 law required all manumitted African Americans to leave the state within 12 months, Norfolk did not begin enforcing this requirement until the 1830s.¹⁹ By this period, a defined African American neighborhood had been established within Norfolk, roughly bound by Water Street (Waterside Drive), Queen Street (Brambleton Avenue), Church Street (St Paul's Boulevard), and Catherine Street (Bank Street) (Figure 6).

As was common in urban areas and major port cities, many enslaved persons were skilled and semi-skilled artisans and laborers whose experiences in urban bondage varied from those enslaved in rural areas. Even while enslaved, many were permitted to live within the predominately African American section of the city, rather than on the property of their enslavers, and were also frequently permitted to seek additional employment.²⁰ Enslaved and free African Americans in Norfolk worked in various occupations including as shipbuilders, sailors, oystermen, laborers, carpenters, plasterers, painters, sailmakers, pilots, riggers, blacksmiths, domestic workers, and many other trades.²¹ Additionally, enslaved African Americans were typically allowed "latitude in their social and religious activities" amongst free African Americans, as long as they did not break any laws or social customs.

Although Norfolk's African American neighborhood was located outside of the West Freemason Street Area, some of the prominent White members of Norfolk society who lived within West Freemason enslaved African Americans. It is unknown whether or not they lived at the West Freemason properties or were permitted to live elsewhere, but it is likely that at least some were employed at and may have lived within the district's residences or on the property as domestic workers.²² Following the Civil War,

¹⁷ Tommy Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk, 1775-1865*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1976), 42.

¹⁸ Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk*, 42, 47.

¹⁹ Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk*, 84-85.

²⁰ Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk*, 161.

²¹ Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk*, 163-164.

²² "Harrison Allmand," 1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com [database online] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004). Accessed March 6, 2023. <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92900938:8055?tid=&pid=&queryId=a97f301b07d85a3d9d623d0594f0d8d5&phsrc=XXKp159&phstart=succ> [essSource](#); "Harrison Allmand," 1830 U.S. Federal Census, Ancestry.com [database online] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Accessed March 6, 2023. https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8058/images/4411346_00854?usePUB=true&phsrc=XXKp159&phstart=succ [essSource](#) [&usePUBJs=true&pId=914539](#); "Harrison Allmand," 1810 U.S. Federal Census, Ancestry.com [database online] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010). Accessed March 6, 2023. https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7613/images/4433172_00119?usePUB=true&phsrc=XXKp159&phstart=succ [essSource](#) [&usePUBJs=true&pId=661152](#); "William W Lamb," 1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com [database online] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004). Accessed March 6, 2023. <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92898430:8055?tid=&pid=&queryId=162a53bd37f11ec5d3c9ea152313b436&phsrc=XXKp160&phstart=succ> [essSource](#); "Conway Whittle," 1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com [database online] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004). Accessed March 6, 2023. <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92899381:8055?tid=&pid=&queryId=50345e5988bed0b74e2e76f6d201b987&phsrc=XXKp163&phstart=succ>

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the West Freemason neighborhood remained a predominantly White, upper-income neighborhood. Emancipated individuals likely moved to nearby established African American neighborhoods as Norfolk remained a highly segregated city well into the late twentieth century.

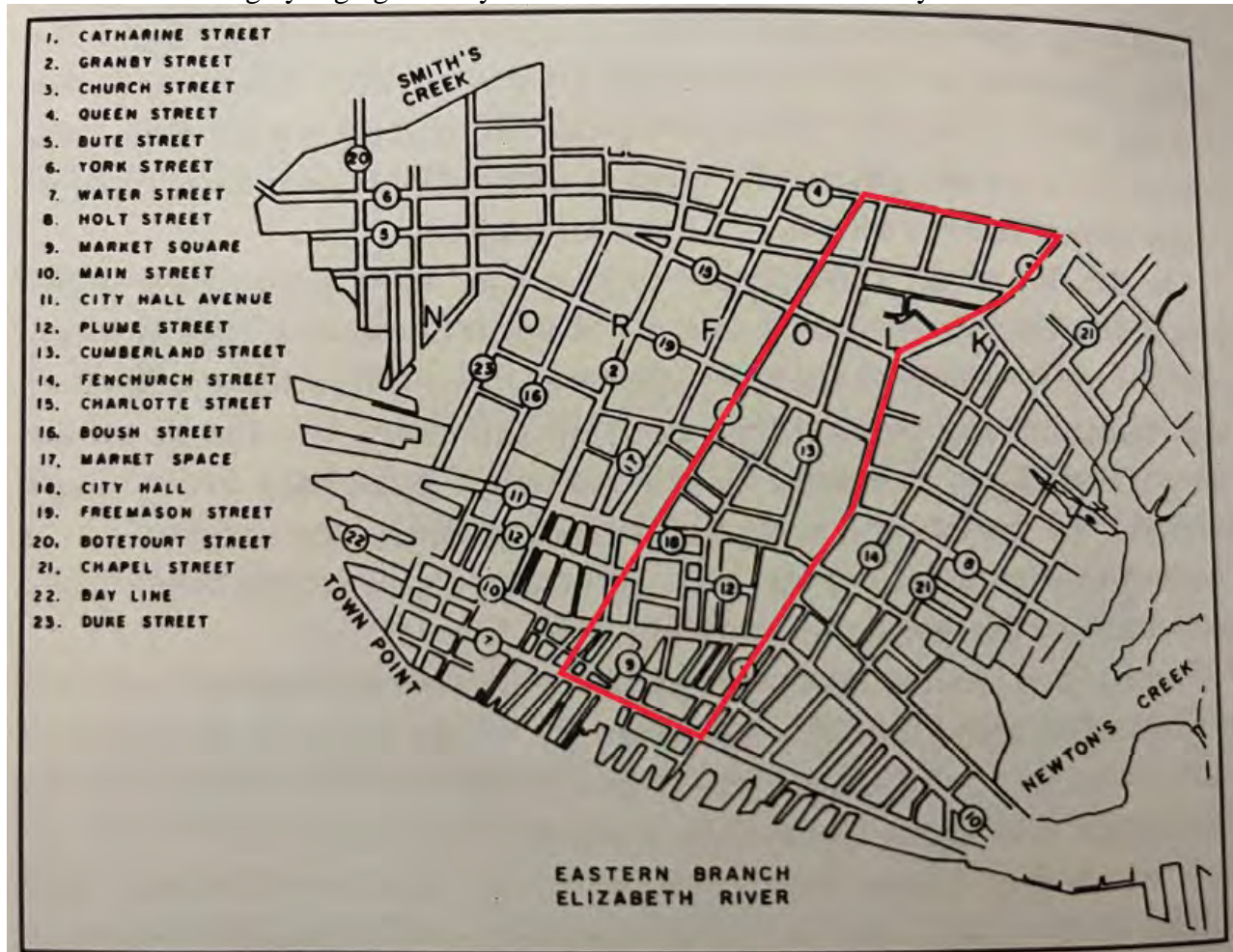


Figure 6: "Norfolk, 1850." The red line indicates the general area of the African American neighborhood in Downtown Norfolk by 1830. *Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia: 1790-1860*.

The Civil Rights Movement and the Central YMCA

The Norfolk Central YMCA, previously located on Granby Street in Downtown Norfolk, began planning for a three-phase expansion program in 1929 that began to take shape in 1948.²³ Like many other social and fraternal organizations, the Central Y looked to the West Freemason Street Area for its new home. Throughout its history from ca. 1790 to 1972, the district was home to a number of fraternal and social organizations and societies. Among these were the Freemasons, YWCA (demolished),

[essSource](#); Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk*, 165.

²³ "Central 'Y' to Begin Three-Phase Expansion with Erection of Physical Education Building," *The Virginian-Pilot* (Aug 5, 1948).

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Khedive Shriners (demolished), Virginia Pilot's Association (demolished), Norfolk Boat Club (432 West Freemason Street, outside of district boundary), the International Order of the Odd Fellows (209 West Freemason Street, outside of boundary), Phi Pi Chi fraternity (**Petty-Dickson House**, 300 West Freemason Street, DHR ID # 122-0060-0031; 122-0183), and the Tau Kappa Epsilon (**Camp Hubbard House**, 308 West Freemason Street, DHR ID #122-0060-0034; 122-0003). By 1951, the Central Y had completed and opened their new physical education building, at the corner of York and Yarmouth Streets in the West Freemason Street neighborhood, that was equipped with a "swimming pool, gymnasium, handball courts, dressing rooms, massage facilities, and a sun-bathing deck on the roof."²⁴

Like most public and private facilities during the Jim Crow Era, however, the YMCA in Norfolk operated separate branches for Black and White members. The Central Y, located in the West Freemason Street Area, was designated for the use of White members only, and a separate branch, known as the Hunton Branch, located near Tidewater Drive, was open to African American members.²⁵ Racial tension between the two branches peaked in 1956 when the Hunton Branch's executive secretary, Horace G. Christopher, was charged with "serious mismanagement of the branch's financial affairs," and let go from his position by the Central Y.²⁶ However, members of the Hunton Branch openly disagreed with this action and voted to retain Christopher in his position as executive secretary and severed their connection to the Central Y to become an independent branch.²⁷ Following this separation, the Central Y continued to admit only White members, and the Hunton Branch, though predominantly African American, admitted members of both races.

On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This act was "the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction," and outlawed discrimination in public places, public accommodations (both privately and publicly owned), and employment. In January 1965, DonCosta Seawell, a student of the Norfolk Division of Virginia State College (Norfolk State College, now Norfolk State University), who held a Philadelphia membership to the YMCA, entered Norfolk's Central Y with the assumption that the facility had been integrated and he would be able to use the provided amenities. Seawell was permitted to access the Central Y and began swimming, but was quickly told that he could not continue to swim and would need to leave the facility.²⁸ This prompted a group of 13 African American students from the Norfolk Division of Virginia State College's Student Committee Against Discrimination to request membership applications to the Central Y the following week.²⁹ These requests for applications were denied by the Central Y's general secretary, Charles Griffin. The Central Y expressed that the applications would not be granted under "duress and pressure," and that the question of African

²⁴ "Athletic Plant of Central 'Y' toured by 750," *The Virginian-Pilot* (November 26, 1951).

²⁵ "New \$500,000 Building Another Chapter in YMCA's Progress Story at Norfolk," *The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* (1952).

²⁶ Robert C. Smith, "Unmistakably Racial Feelings Stirred: The Christopher Case: A Split in YMCA Ranks," *The Virginian-Pilot* (October 31, 1957).

²⁷ Robert C. Smith, "Unmistakably Racial Feelings Stirred: The Christopher Case: A Split in YMCA Ranks," *The Virginian-Pilot* (October 31, 1957).

²⁸ "Norfolk State Students Troop into Central Y: Students, Integration Leaders to Map YMCA Infiltration" *Ledger-Dispatch* (February 3, 1965).

²⁹ John A. Moreau, "Board Ponders Negroes: Y Turns Away 13; Pressure Charged," *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 3, 1965).

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American membership to the Central Y was still under discussion by the Board.³⁰ The response by the Central Y prompted the United Communities Fund, an agency which provided substantial funding to the YMCA, to require any organization receiving funding from UCF to issue a policy of non-discrimination in membership and hiring by April 1, 1965.³¹

After their initial denial of membership, three of the Norfolk State College (NSC) students – James Gay, DonCosta Seawell, and John Savage – again sought membership at the Central Y in early February and were denied.³² Two others sought lodging at the Central Y, which included a dormitory space, and although they were told on the phone that beds were available, they were denied at the front desk and told that beds were available for “persons white, sober and clean.”³³ Local newspapers cited the Central Y’s refusal to admit African American members as a series of events that may result in Norfolk’s “first test of the Civil Rights Act.”³⁴ This continued refusal also resulted in the involvement of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who sought to achieve desegregation of the Central Y through negotiation but was open to pursuing the issue in court if necessary.³⁵

The Central Y continued to uphold their policy of segregation when their Board of Directors delayed making any decisions relating to the branch’s integration due to a lack of a quorum at their Board meeting on February 17, 1965. Following the delay, 50 students picketed outside of the building the following day, February 18, 1965. Notably, this demonstration included African American NSC and Booker T. Washington High School students, as well as White students from Old Dominion College (ODC, now Old Dominion University).³⁶ A second demonstration occurred one week later including 83 NSC and ODC students. The demonstrations garnered attention from the local community, and other organizations began to speak out against the Y’s action, including a service organization within the Central Y known as the “Y’s Men.”³⁷

On February 24, 1965, the NAACP filed a class action suit at the U.S. District Court against Norfolk’s Central YMCA, which sought an injunction requiring the Central Y to desegregate under the public accommodations section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.³⁸ The case was part of a “national campaign by the Legal Defense and Educational Fund of the NAACP” to desegregate southern YMCAs using the public accommodations section. The Norfolk injunction was the second case filed as part of this national campaign, following a case involving the Charlotte, North Carolina, YMCA the previous week; however, it was the first suit filed in Virginia against a “tax-exempt nonprofit organization” under the

³⁰ John A. Moreau, “Board Ponders Negroes: Y Turns Away 13; Pressure Charged,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 3, 1965).

³¹ John A. Moreau, “Board Ponders Negroes: Y Turns Away 13; Pressure Charged,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 3, 1965).

³² “Y Again Turns Down Negro Memberships,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 4, 1965).

³³ “Civil Rights Test: YMCA Controversy Could Go to Court,” *Ledger-Dispatch* (February 4, 1965).

³⁴ “Civil Rights Test: YMCA Controversy Could Go to Court,” *Ledger-Dispatch* (February 4, 1965).

³⁵ “Civil Rights Test: YMCA Controversy Could Go to Court,” *Ledger-Dispatch* (February 4, 1965).

³⁶ “Students Picket YMCA,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 19, 1965).

³⁷ “Y Again Refuses Students,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 24, 1965); “Integrate YMCA, Y’s Men Urge,” *Ledger* (Feb 19, 1965).

³⁸ “3 Students Say Rights Violated,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 25, 1965); “Halt Sought in Marches on YMCAs,” *Ledger* (Feb 26, 1965).

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Civil Rights Act.³⁹ The case's attorneys – Victor J. Ashe and J. Jugo Madison of Norfolk, and Jack Greenberg and Michael Moltsner of New York City – argued that the Central Y was in violation of the public accommodations section of the Civil Rights Act as it provided “lodging to transient guests and contains more than five rooms for rent; its operation affects interstate travel, commerce, trade, traffic and communication; and its swimming pool is available to the public, customers and patrons of the YMCA.”⁴⁰

Initially, in early March 1965, the Central Y's Board of Directors held its ground and refused to voluntarily desegregate its facilities, opting to fight the U.S. District Court suit and issuing a six-page editorial explaining their organization's history, views, and justifications for delaying integration.⁴¹ However, a few days later on March 8, 1965, in an “attempt to clarify the meaning” of the multi-page statement, the president of the Central Y's Board of Directors, Robert R. MacMillan, issued a statement that the Central Y would be adopting a policy of nondiscrimination, serving “all civilians, regardless of race, color or creed.”⁴² By late March, the Central Y had formally agreed to integrate its membership, facilities, and programs, and a federal court order was signed by U.S. District Judge Walter E. Hauffman dismissing the NAACP suit in early April.⁴³ Terms of the court order included placing responsibility on Central Y officials to “prevent discriminatory obstacles” for African American applicants and to “expedite all memberships.”⁴⁴ Immediately after the suit was settled, three NSC students filed applications for membership at the Central Y, and on May 2, 1965, Joseph L. Wiggins and Johnny B. Jones were the first African Americans to be admitted as members to the Central Y.⁴⁵

The effort to integrate Norfolk's Central YMCA is of statewide significance and led to the first case filed in Virginia against a nonprofit organization under the Civil Rights Act as well as only the second case filed nationally through a national campaign by the NAACP to integrate the country's YMCAs. Although the case was settled and dismissed before going to trial, like the preceding suit in Charlotte, it contributed to the development of a precedent for filing lawsuits, specifically against YMCAs as well as other nonprofit organizations, for violation of the public accommodations section of the Civil Rights Act. Newspapers at the time noted that the results of the Norfolk and Charlotte cases against the YMCA were expected to result in a “wide pattern of integration throughout the country...particularly in associations in the south.”⁴⁶ When the Norfolk case was filed in February 1965, 180 local branches of the YMCA around the country still practiced complete or partial segregation. However, by the time an injunction was filed against the Raleigh, North Carolina, YMCA in October 1965, this number had

³⁹ “3 Students Say Rights Violated,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 25, 1965); “Halt Sought in Marches on YMCAs,” *Ledger* (Feb 26, 1965); “NAACP Sues Local ‘Ys’ on Desegregation Issue,” *New York Amsterdam News* (March 6, 1965); “Segregated Y.M.C.A.’s,” *Chicago Daily Defender* (March 3, 1965).

⁴⁰ “3 Students Say Rights Violated,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (February 25, 1965).

⁴¹ “Central Y to Fight Integration: In Policy, In Court,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (March 5, 1965).

⁴² “Central Y to Accept All Races,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (March 8, 1965).

⁴³ “Norfolk Y backs down,” *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD: April 3, 1965); “Rights Agreement Reached: NAACP Leader Certain YMCA Will ‘Play Fair,’” *New Journal and Guide* (April 10, 1965).

⁴⁴ Wayne Woodlief, “NAACP Suite Dismissed, YMCA Agrees to Integrate All Facilities and Programs,” *Ledger* (March 26, 1965).

⁴⁵ “Central Y Accepts 2 Negro Members,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (May 2, 1965).

⁴⁶ “Wide Impact Forecast in Norfolk YMCA Suit,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide* (February 27, 1965)

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dropped to 61 branches; only two in Virginia remained segregated.⁴⁷ The injunction was also Norfolk's first local test of the Civil Rights Act.⁴⁸ Additionally, after NSC students were directed to halt protests at the Norfolk Central YMCA while the NAACP handled the federal injunction, the students shifted their focus to the integration of the Portsmouth Central YMCA. Amid the protests and ongoing federal injunction filed against the Norfolk Central YMCA, the Portsmouth branch chose to desegregate in order to avoid legal action.⁴⁹

Criterion C: Architecture

The West Freemason Street Area Historic District Update is significant at the statewide level under **Criterion C** in the area of **Architecture**. The 1971 nomination documents the district's architectural significance as an assemblage that includes resources dating from Revolutionary War through the early twentieth century, making it "a fascinating chronology of American architectural styles since the colonial period."⁵⁰ Within the historic district, the Taylor-Whittle House was listed in the NRHP in 1971 for its statewide significance in the area of Architecture as an outstanding Federal style dwelling dating to the late eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the Federal-style Allmand-Archer House within the district was individually listed at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture in 1971.

In addition to the early architectural types and styles that are discussed in more detail in the original nomination, the historic district includes various early to mid-twentieth-century Commercial Style and International Style buildings postdating 1922 up to 1972. The historic buildings constructed during the second and third quarters of the twentieth century buildings add to the district's significant catalog of architectural styles with locally significant iterations of two of the most influential styles of the period, Commercial Style (and its four subtypes found in Virginia) and International Style. As noted above, design and construction of the buildings date from 1922-1972 feature materials, construction methods, massing, form, and setbacks that are harmonious with the district's streetscapes. Of the 1930s buildings, one is a Tudor Revival apartment building, thus referencing the district's historical revival design tradition, and one is Art Deco, a Modern Movement style that was particularly popular from the 1920s-1940s in Virginia. The variety encompassed by the Commercial Style is displayed at 512 Botetourt Street, also dating to the 1930s, two 1940s Commercial Style buildings at 253 W. Bute Street and 415 W. York Street, 1950s buildings at 255 W. Bute Street and 327 W. York Street, 1960s buildings at 248 W. Bute Street and 344 W. Bute Street, and an early 1970s building at 243 W. Bute Street. Individually, the resources express variations of the Commercial Style, ranging from Main Street to Industrial and Office High-Rise. Although applied to buildings of varying scales, from a one-story shop to a multiple-story office tower, the versatility of Commercial Style design is displayed through deployment of common characteristics, such as a pedestrian-oriented first story with clearly defined entrances, limited decorative treatments at entrances, window openings, and cornices, and use of masonry materials, including contrasting colors and textures to define spaces. Meanwhile, the International style

⁴⁷ "Suit Against Raleigh YMCA Seeks to Halt Segregation," *Los Angeles Sentinel* (October 21, 1965).

⁴⁸ "Civil Rights Test: YMCA Controversy Could Go To Court," *Ledger-Dispatch* (February 4, 1965).

⁴⁹ "Portsmouth Central YMCA Pressed to End its Color Line," *New Journal and Guide* (March 13, 1965).

⁵⁰ James W. Moody Jr., National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form for the West Freemason Street Area Historic District, November 1972, section 8, p. 3.

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government office building at 333 W. Freemason Street is a lovely International Style design featuring character-defining stylistic attributes, such as horizontal massing emphasized by contrasting first- and second-story masonry materials and a cantilevered three-part overhang, smooth exterior masonry cladding, and two narrow vertical panels of pale, veined, stone-like material that are a play on traditional pilasters. The lightness of International Style design and the Modern Movement's emphasis on use of materials, proportions, and interplay of light and shadow to provide ornamentation are embodied in this small-scale office building that, despite the modernity of its architecture, harmonizes well with neighboring buildings featuring traditional design and revival styles. For these reasons, the district today collectively expresses more than two centuries of Norfolk's variety and breadth of American architectural history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Newspapers

Afro-American (Baltimore, MD)

Chicago Daily Defender

Los Angeles Sentinel

New Journal and Guide

New York Amsterdam News

The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch

The Norfolk Ledger-Star

The Virginian-Pilot

Other Primary Resources

Agle, Charles K. "A Master Plan for the Central Business and Financial District, Norfolk, Virginia." July 1956.

Department of City Planning, Norfolk, Virginia. *Preserving Norfolk's Heritage: Proposed Zoning for Historic and Cultural Conservation*. Norfolk: Norfolk Department of City Planning. December 1965.

"Conway Whittle." *1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*. Ancestry.com [database online]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc. 2004. Accessed March 6, 2023.
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https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7613/images/4433172_00119?usePU B=true&_phsrc=XKp159&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=661152

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https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8058/images/4411346_00854?usePU B=true&_phsrc=XKp159&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=914539

“Harrison Allmand.” *1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*. Ancestry.com [database online] Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc. 2004. Accessed March 6, 2023.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92900938:8055?tid=&pid=&queryId=a97f301b07d85a3d9d623d0594f0d8d5&_phsrc=XKp159&_phstart=successSource

“William W Lamb.” *1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules*. Ancestry.com [database online]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc. 2004. Accessed March 6, 2023

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/92898430:8055?tid=&pid=&queryId=162a53bd37f11ec5d3c9ea152313b436&_phsrc=XKp160&_phstart=successSource

Secondary Resources

Bogger, Tommy. *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk, 1775-1865*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Charlottesville: University of Virginia. 1976.

Bogger, Tommy. *Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia, 1790-1860: The Darker Side of Freedom*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia. 1997.

Moody, James W., Jr. National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form for the West Freemason Street Area Historic District. November 1972.

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 # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

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Additional Documentation Page 45 Federal agency X Local government University X OtherName of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources; Norfolk Public Library
Sargeant Memorial Collection, City of NorfolkHistoric Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #122-0060**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property 29

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude CoordinatesDatum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.853996 Longitude: -76.298713

2. Latitude: 36.853841 Longitude: -76.291113

3. Latitude: 36.851077 Longitude: -76.291186

4. Latitude: 36.851231 Longitude: -76.298786

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

The true and correct boundary is shown on the attached map entitled West Freemason Street Area Historic District, Norfolk, VA (122-0060) Sketch Map. The map has a bar scale of 1" = 200'. The boundary of the historic district has not been changed as a result of this additional documentation.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses all of the known historic resources and the historic setting associated with the West Freemason Street Area Historic District.

11. Form Prepared Byname/title: Ashlen Stump, Victoria Leonard, Kayla Halberg, Erica Howardorganization: Commonwealth Preservation Groupstreet & number: 536 W 35th Streetcity or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.comtelephone: 757-923-1900

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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.
- **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: West Freemason Street Area Historic District 2023 Update

City or Vicinity: Norfolk

County: N/A

State: VA

Photographer: Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG)

Date Photographed: 3/17/2023

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

Photo Number of 35	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
1	York Street, View Toward 270 West Bute Street	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
2	York Street, Corner of Dunmore and York Street, View Toward 300 Block at 327 and 333 West York Street	SW	3/17/2023	CPG

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Photo Number of 35	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
3	York Street, Corner of Botetourt Street and York Street, View Toward 400 Block	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
4	West End of York Street, View Toward 439 West York Street	W	3/17/2023	CPG
5	West End of York Street, View Toward 400 Block, 429 West York and 425 York Street in Foreground	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
6	West End of West Bute Street, View Toward North Side of 400 Block of West Bute Street	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
7	West Bute Street, View Toward North Side of 300 Block of West Bute Street	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
8	West Bute Street, View Toward South Side of West Bute Street/349 West Bute Street	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
9	West Bute Street, View Toward North Side of West Bute Street/312 West Bute Street (Blocker Family YMCA)	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
10	West Bute Street, View Toward South Side of West Bute Street/300 Block Between Dunmore Street and Yarmouth Street	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
11	West Bute Street, View Toward South Side of West Bute Street/300 Block Between Dunmore Street and Yarmouth Street (409 Yarmouth Street in Foreground)	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
12	West Bute Street, View Toward South Side of West Bute Street/200 Block	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
13	Corner of West Bute Street and Duke Street, View Toward 221-229 West Bute Street/The Wainwright Building	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
14	Corner of West Bute Street and Duke Street, View Toward South Side of West Bute Street/200 Block (243 West Bute Street in Foreground)	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
15	Corner of West Bute Street and Duke Street, View Toward North Side of West Bute Street/248 West Bute Street	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
16	Duke Street, View Toward 400 Block	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
17	Intersection of Duke Street and Freemason Street, View North Toward 220 West Freemason Street (Wainwright Building in Background)	N	3/17/2023	CPG
18	Intersection of Duke Street and Freemason Street,	S	3/17/2023	CPG

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Photo Number of 35	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
	View South Toward 227 West Freemason Street/Whittle House			
19	Duke Street, View Toward East Side of Duke Street, 327 Duke Street in Foreground	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
20	West Freemason Street, View Down Freemason Street at 200 Block	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
21	West Freemason Street, View Toward North Side of 200 Block	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
22	Corner of Yarmouth and West Freemason Street, View Toward 303 West Freemason Street	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
23	Corner of Dunmore Street and West Freemason Street, View Toward West Side of Dunmore Street	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
24	Corner of Dunmore Street and West Freemason Street, View Toward South Side of 300 Block of West Freemason Street	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
25	West Freemason Street, View Toward South Side of Upper 300 Block of West Freemason Street, Toward 333 West Freemason Street	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
26	West Freemason Street, View Toward South Side of Upper 300 Block of West Freemason Street, Toward 345 West Freemason Street/Andrew Carnegie Free Public Library	SW	3/17/2023	CPG
27	Corner of West Freemason and Botetourt Street, View Toward South Side of Upper 300 Block of West Freemason Street Toward 355 West Freemason Street	SE	3/17/2023	CPG
28	West Freemason Street, View Toward North Side of Upper 300 Block of West Freemason Street	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
29	Corner of West Freemason and Botetourt Street, View Toward East Side of Botetourt Street	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
30	Corner of West Freemason and Botetourt Street, View Toward North Side of 400 Block of West Freemason Street	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
31	West End of West Freemason Street, View Toward 416 West Freemason and 421 West Bute Street on the North Side of West Freemason	NW	3/17/2023	CPG
32	Botetourt Street, View Toward East Side of 300 Block	SE	3/17/2023	CPG

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Photo Number of 35	Description	Camera Direction	Date	Photographer
33	Corner of College Place and College Cross, View Toward College Place Apartments Between Dunmore Street, College Place, and Yarmouth Streets	NE	3/17/2023	CPG
34	Yarmouth Street, View Toward College Place Apartments Between Dunmore Street, College Place, and Yarmouth Streets	W	3/17/2023	CPG
35	Yarmouth Street, View Toward West Side of Yarmouth Street, 303 West Freemason Street in Foreground, 300 West Freemason Street in Background	N	3/17/2023	CPG

Historic Images Log:

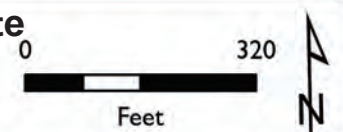
Image No.	Caption
1	Clip of Greater Norfolk and Vicinity HOLC Map, 1940, focused on Downtown Norfolk
2	Future Street and Land Use Map, Agle Plan, 1956. Approximate boundary of West Freemason Street Area outlined in Red.
3	Proposed Major Highways, Agle Plan, 1956. Transportation plans overlayed on historic aerial image shows the path of proposed highways, and the demolition that would have been necessary. Approximate boundary of West Freemason Street Area outlined in Red.
4	Images show scenes of West Freemason Area historic character. The caption reads: "Individual buildings along do not create 'old' atmosphere in the area-- Its strong character depends more on the combination of related visual elements. Brick and stone sidewalks, cobbled streets, well-established vegetation all contribute significantly to the over-all character..." (Raymond L. Bancroft, "The Fight for Freemason Street," <i>Virginian-Pilot</i> , 27 Sept. 1964)
5	Map from West Freemason Area Historic and Cultural Zoning Study, June 1977, showing period of construction for existing buildings.
6	"Norfolk, 1850." The red line indicates the general area of the African American neighborhood in Downtown Norfolk by 1830. <i>Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia: 1790-1860</i> .

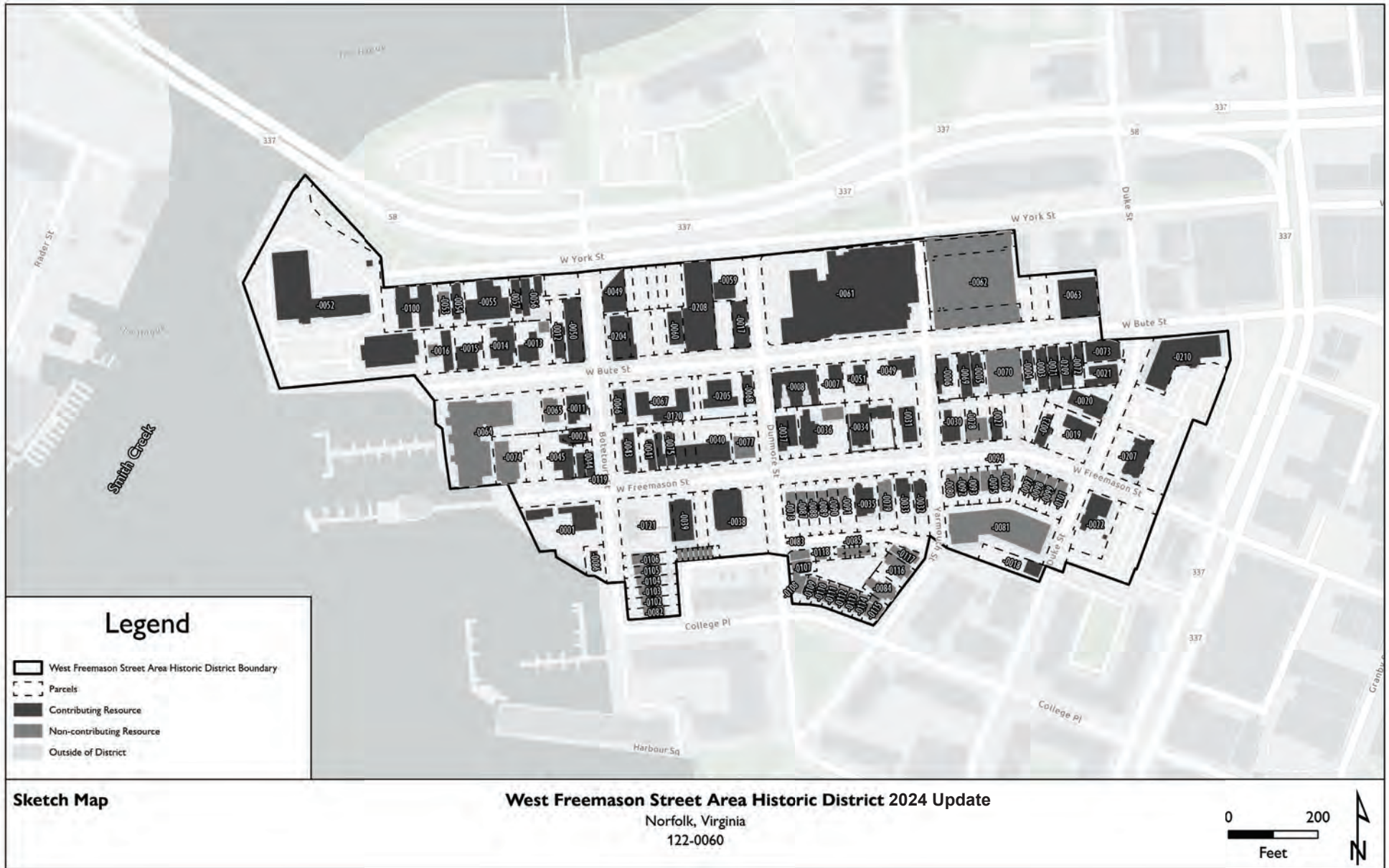


Location Map

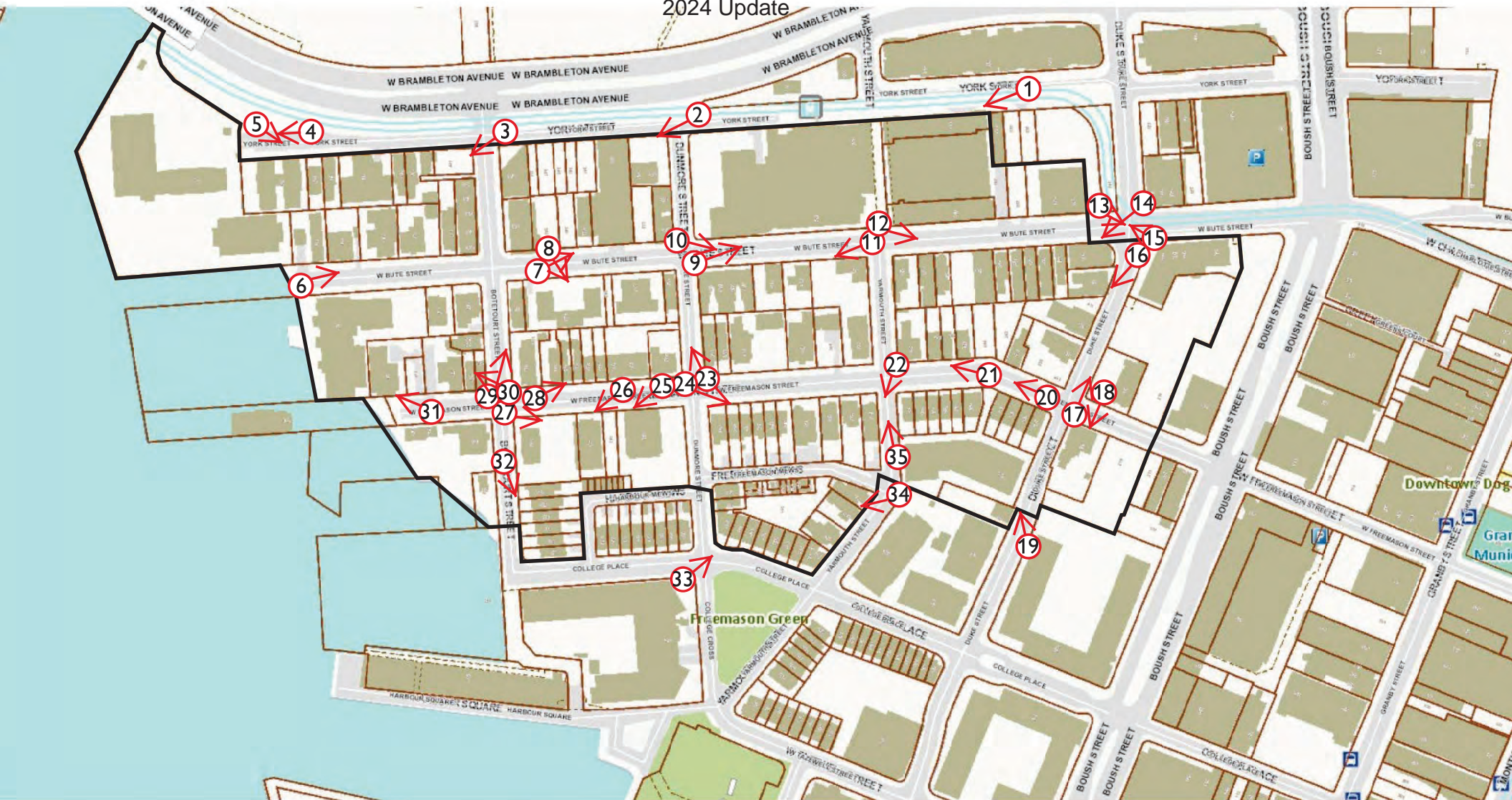
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□ = Property Boundary ○➔ = Photo Number and Direction

