



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

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

**DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff)** 050-5118

**1. General Information**

District name(s): King William Courthouse Historic District

Main Streets and/or Routes: S.R. 30 (King William Road), S.R. 619 (Horse Landing Road), and Courthouse Lane

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 371.79

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet X Rural \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the district's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

The proposed district is centered on the historic courthouse complex and a small cluster of residences and businesses at the intersection of King William Road (S.R. 30) and Horse Landing Road (S.R. 619). Courthouse Lane cuts through the district immediately south of the courthouse complex and represents the original east-west thoroughfare where several pre-1930 domestic and commercial buildings are found. While two 19<sup>th</sup>-century residences are to the south of King William Road (road rerouted from Courthouse Lane c. 1930), post-1930s businesses (e.g., c. 1920 service station) and community infrastructure (e.g., c. 1935 lookout fire tower) are along the 20<sup>th</sup>-century highway. Other mid-to-late-20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings line Horse Landing Road, reflecting the hamlet's transition away from an early commercial hub adjacent to the courthouse to a more governmental focus encompassing an expanding number of local municipal buildings. Nearly all the buildings are relatively close to roads. Gravel drives and parking areas are most common, although the Administration Building and overflow parking areas are paved. Most buildings are also surrounded by large lawns with mature trees, except the new courthouse complex (2003), which is tucked away along a paved asphalt drive and visually hidden from the rest of the district. Between the old and new courthouse complexes is a forested area that includes multiple ravines sloping down towards a creek to the north. At the eastern edge of the district, at the intersection of King William Road and Courthouse Lane, is St. James Church (c. 1894) which includes a small cemetery surrounded by mature forest. The historic courthouse complex includes three full brick buildings, signs, and a Civil War monument surrounded by a brick wall. The buildings are separated from Courthouse Lane by an additional enclosure with a shorter brick wall. The complex is further separated from S.R. 30 by an approximately 3-acre triangular parcel of lawn.

### 3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): Georgian (Courthouse), Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional (Post Office), Gothic Revival (St. James Presbyterian Church)

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here:

n/a

If any builders or developers are known, please list here:

n/a

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): c. 1720 (courthouse; 050-0038); c. 1904 (Confederate monument; 050-0038-0001); c. 1894 (St. James Presbyterian church; 050-5064);

Are there any known threats to this district? development

#### **Narrative Description:**

*In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire historic district, such as building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district, as well as typical updates, additions, remodelings, or other alterations that characterize the district.*

King William is an unincorporated hamlet in King William County. It is known for its **historic courthouse (050-0038)**, the longest, continuously active example in the United States. While never a bustling metropolis, the district includes an assemblage of domestic, commercial, religious, and governmental buildings and archaeological sites, that span the early 18<sup>th</sup> through early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The historic courthouse complex and associated series of taverns formed the nexus from which all other nearby development occurred, first expanding along what is now known as Courthouse Lane (old S.R. 30) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Development shifted to King William Road (current S.R. 30) after its construction in 1930 and later expanded to include Horse Landing Road (S.R. 619) particularly after it was directly connected to S.R. 30 c. 1948 (KWCo Deed Book 66 pgs. 384 & 491). This precipitated the development of a series of mid-to-late-20<sup>th</sup>-century federal (post office) and local (county administration) governmental buildings culminating in the construction of the new courthouse complex nearby in 2003.

Horse Landing Road, as its name implies, originated as the overland route between the Mattaponi River and King William Road, facilitating commerce and travel across the peninsula. The intersection is at the highest elevation in the district and the overall area is generally flat, with spring-fed ravines falling to the north and south, providing both drainage for agricultural fields and potable water sources for residents and visitors. The area is an advantageous inland settlement location, existing along a major transportation route that long preceded European settlement in the area. While none of the archaeological sites identified to date include significant Archaic or Woodland period Indigenous artifact assemblages, no systematic testing of high probability areas for settlements of those periods has been undertaken to date.

The proposed district's development as a center for government began with local wealthy landowners (Richard Littlepage of New Kent County and Henry Fox of King William County) petitioning the new county in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to build the courthouse on two acres they would donate for the purpose (Dill 1984:5). Both men were among the elite and knew the creation of the county would bring with it opportunities for profitable political positions and influence, with Fox becoming one of the first Justices of the Peace for King William County. The first deed book for the county, after its separation from King & Queen County, includes two nearly identical deeds in 1702. The first references the acquisition of land for the courthouse and the second includes a minor change stating "Two Acres of Land on part of which the Court house for the said

County now Stands...” referencing the existence of the building (KWCo Deed Book 1 pgs. 35 & 76, respectively). The construction of the first courthouse marked the official establishment of this acreage as the centerpiece of county government. The construction of the second (050-0038) in the same area c. 1720 ultimately solidified this area’s prominence for the citizens of the county through till today.

The presence of the courthouse and its location at an important crossroads ensured a steady stream of people who could support nearby businesses on court days and during other governmental events. For this large, mostly agricultural county, it became an important point of assembly that brought together most of society, not excluding the poor, Indigenous, or the enslaved. Citizens of every status were involved in legal disputes and commerce. Most traveled to the district and would have dined or stayed in a tavern or ordinary during their stay. There were few permanent residents beyond those family members, servants, and enslaved African Americans who worked in these businesses or lived at the handful of neighboring plantations.

Despite the prominence of the standing early 18<sup>th</sup>-century courthouse, no other 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings survive. The colonial landscape is largely preserved through archaeological resources, with substantial integrity, although some elements are missing or obscured by more recent construction, including 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings that contribute to its overall significance. What is known indicates that the district was a small but active space in the county across more than three centuries. The archaeological resources included here highlight both the district’s significance and potential to inform our understanding of colonial courthouses and their surroundings. The archaeological evidence from Quarles’ Tavern (**Site 44KW0077**), located approximately 300 feet southeast of the c. 1720 courthouse, suggests a substantial conglomeration of support buildings surrounding an imposing main structure. While it is believed to have been built around the same time as the courthouse, but certainly no later than 1746, the tavern was an essential element to any courthouse landscape (Dill 1984:15; *Virginia Gazette*, July 3, 1746). By 1777 the site and its adjoining 600 acres (residence and plantation of the Quarles family) was described for sale twice as including “another dwelling house 36 by 18 with 2 rooms above and 2 below, a passage and 2 closets; a large store house 40 by 16; a counting house 28 by 12, with 2 rooms; a private dwelling house 40 by 16, with 2 rooms below and 1 above; a large kitchen 28 by 20, with 2 rooms; stables, corn houses, a large fertile garden” (*Virginia Gazette* (Rind) December 2, 1773 & (Dixon & Hunter) December 26, 1777). All of these are likely on the parcel to the east where the current courthouse complex now stands, and elements may have been located during that building’s construction (Lautzenheiser 2002).

The tavern itself was described as measuring 72 feet long, 20 feet wide and two stories tall with a porch running the entire length of the front. There were four rooms on each floor. This description is roughly comparable to surviving examples such as the Rising Sun Tavern (111-0088) and Hanover Taven (042-0035) in Fredericksburg and Hanover Counties, respectively. The artifact assemblage recovered in association with the tavern speaks to a high-end clientele, comparable to the finer taverns in the colony’s capital of Williamsburg. The vessel fragments include polychrome delft punchbowls and plates, Whieldon-type tea pots and plates, Chinese porcelain cups and bowls, black basalt tea wares, delicate white salt-glazed stoneware cups and bowls, intricately decorated Westerwald stoneware mugs and tankards, and other refined earthenwares, slipwares, and stonewares. At the same time, fragments of colonoware and other locally made ceramics point to the likely presence of middling planters, tenant farmers, servants, and enslaved African Americans (Donison and Brown 2023). The 1777 advertisement may have been accurate in stating “No place in this country is better calculated for a tavern than this, and none more frequented.”

Approximately 150 feet south of the historic courthouse is a second archaeological site which includes the foundations of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century building (**Site 44KW0347**) measuring 21’ by 35.5’ with a full English basement of handmade brick laid in English bond with a likely hearth on the north gable and a cellar entrance on the south gable. The function of this building is not known, and while close to the historic courthouse it is on a parcel that remained in private hands until 1914 (KWCo Deed Book 29/9). An advertisement for the rent or lease of a building titled “Brick Store House at King William Courthouse” in 1843, which may be the same as the foundation described here, not only lauded the district’s advantages as an excellent location for

business but included a description of several other nearby buildings under similar consideration (*Richmond Enquirer* 1843:1). Of the few artifacts recovered from the single test unit excavated at the building site were fragments of 18<sup>th</sup>-century delftware, wine bottle glass, and imported tobacco pipe stem fragments on the outside of the building in the older historic topsoil and builder's trench, while a mix of wire nails, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century bottle glass, and interior enameled mixing bowl were found within its rubble-filled cellar (Donison and Brown 2023). There are other 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings known to exist in the district, specifically a hotel to the south of Courthouse Lane (later known as Hill's Hotel; **Site 44KW0080**) and a clerk's office. Evidence from a ground penetrating radar (GPR) study suggests that the Hill's Hotel building included an approximately 18' by 45' brick foundation with exterior end chimneys, a cellar entrance on the south elevation, a porch on the north façade, and an outbuilding with brick foundation that measures 12.5' square. The clerk's office is likely 18<sup>th</sup> century, although there are few mentions of its construction compared to the many stories regarding its destruction by fire (along with many but not all the county's court records) in 1885 (Dill 1984:20). The location of the clerk's office was not revealed through the GPR survey, although a plat indicates it is close to or beneath the standing "Old Jail" described below, just to the east of the historic courthouse (KWCo Deed Book 15 pt. 1:253). Finally, across Horse Landing Road to the southwest of the historic courthouse complex was the stable of Mrs. N.M. Hill (**Site 44KW0079**). Likely built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the handmade brick common-bond (1:5) stable was one of the largest buildings in the district during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Documentation by HABS after 1933 clearly shows the massive building extending north-south, parallel to the adjacent road, with no fewer than 24 stalls (HABS 1937). The building and grounds known as "the stable lot of Mrs. N.M. Hill", and occasionally as the "Old Stable Lot", was converted to a field soon after the HABS documentation (between 1937 and 1947) and, ironically, replaced with a parking lot in the 1980s (KWC Deed Books 4/62, 22/473, and 100/197).

The 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century landscape, while certainly different than what is visible today, has many more above ground elements that survive. Near to the historic courthouse, the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century clerk's office and 1890 "old jail" help create the north and west bounds of the inner courthouse green (Dill 1984:24). A likely mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century brick wall (with several restorations) forms the eastern and southern bounds, and a substantial set of stairs that permit access from the south, over the wall, dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although it was rebuilt in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dill 1984:24). At the center of the green is the c. 1904 Confederate Soldier monument (050-0038-0001) and several brass plaques that reference the historic courthouse as the longest continuously active example in the country. Finally, to the immediate south is a second courthouse green surrounded by a low brick wall. This wall was built after the county purchased the 0.9-acre tract in 1914, likely following the destruction of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century building (see Site 44KW0347 above) there in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nineteenth-century buildings beyond the historic courthouse complex include three residences (**Locust Dale (050-5061)**, **Oak Dale (050-0137)**, and the **Puller House (050-0140)**) and an array of associated contributing outbuildings and other resources, including a c. 1830s quarter for enslaved African Americans (part of 050-0137) that was later moved west of Oak Dale and converted to a granary. This is the last slave quarter with above ground remains remaining in the district and was documented by Dr. Douglas Sanford in 2017 as part of the Slave Housing Database project. Twentieth-century development turned towards commercial and administrative buildings more than domestic, the exception being the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Lacy house, a "Cape Cod" style frame building now housing the county's facilities management department. At the eastern end of the district is c. 1894 **St. James Presbyterian Church (050-5064)**, which was originally built as an Episcopal church. The church property includes a cemetery (with markers that predate the church as they were moved from private residences), while a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century addition with basement was added to the church for a Sunday School. Sandwiched between Locust Dale and Oak Grove was built the **King William Ezzo Service Station (050-5063)** and associated garage, although the latter was taken down c. 2010. Directly across King William Road was built a Minimal Traditional-style building to house the area's post office. It replaced a complex of buildings directly to the north, the transition coinciding with the period following S.R. 30's rerouting in 1930. West of the post office is the c. 1935 **Lookout Fire Tower (050-5062)**. North of the

historic courthouse stood a single-family residence purchased by the county and used as an extension office. It stood for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until it was torn down for the construction of the county's administration building prior to 1979. Rounding out the buildings in the district are the Juvenile Courts building, a small frame ranch-style building with brick veneer that was built c. 1979, the c. 2000 neo-colonial King William County Health Department building, and the c. 2003 neo-eclectic/Colonial Revival outhouse complex.

Recent residential development is largely on the periphery of the district and excluded from the proposed bounds. Except for the Lookout Fire Tower, the tallest buildings in the district are from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, representing two-and-a-half-story heights over raised basements (and the steeple of St. James Church). An interesting array of architectural styles are represented, including classical revival houses, neo-eclectic government buildings, and gothic revival churches, a c. 1920 commercial style store/service station and garage turned lawyer's office, a minimalist c. 1950 post office, and a c. 1979 county administration building. The dominant building materials are brick and wood-frame and typical alterations to buildings include window replacements, some storefront alterations, and post-1970s additions. Overall, the district has had good integrity of plan, materials, and workmanship across the last 320+ years.

*Discuss the district's general setting and/or streetscapes, including current property uses (and historic uses if different), such as industrial, residential, commercial, religious, etc. For rural historic districts, please include a description of land uses.*

This small county seat incorporates several types of buildings related to government, commercial, religious, and residential. See above description for general setting and development patterns. The boundaries were drawn to include the greatest concentration of historic buildings while still following legal parcel boundaries in their entirety. To the north, east and west, the boundary is drawn where there is a break in the concentration of historic resources with either large tracts of undeveloped land and/or an increase in recent single-family buildings on the landscape.

#### 4. District's History and Significance

*In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as a) when it was established, b) how it developed over time, and c) significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.) Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board. If the district is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.*

The King William Courthouse has been at this location since the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century formation of the county. As the county seat it is important to the history of government and politics and reflects the challenges and perseverance of America's longest, continuously active courthouse. It also represents the development of a rural hamlet from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The proposed King William Courthouse Historic District is recommended eligible under National Register Criterion A at the state level in the areas of government and politics and at the local level for commerce, as it was the main center of commerce for the county, particularly during the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The proposed historic district is also eligible under Criterion C at the local level for its interesting collection of domestic, governmental, religious, and commercial architectural resources that span over 300 years and retain a high degree of integrity. Lastly, the proposed historic district is also eligible under Criterion D at the local level for its significant archaeological resources (both known and potential) that help complete a more accurate and textured picture of this hamlet's cultural landscape, including 18<sup>th</sup>-century taverns, brick storehouses, hotels, and quarters for the enslaved. The period of significance begins c. 1702 with the date of the first known courthouse at this location and ends c. 1950 with the construction of the Minimal Traditional U.S. Post Office, which marked the last significant new building in the proposed district until the completion of the county's Administration Building in 1979.

King William County was formed in 1702 and construction of a county courthouse began before the end of the year. A second courthouse replaced it c. 1720 and continues to serve the county. Despite an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century expansion of the courthouse, increasing the number of the windows illuminating the courtroom, and an early restoration c. 1926, it retains much of its integrity largely due to a sensitive and well-informed restoration in c. 1983 guided by Colonial Williamsburg architectural historians (Dill 1984:27). This work benefitted greatly from comparisons with two similar surviving courthouses in Hanover (042-0016) and Charles City (018-0005) along with one that no longer survives (York County's Courthouse, destroyed c. 1814). Each incorporated the clipped gables, imposing brick massing, T-shape, and arcaded piazza seen on King William County's courthouse. Over the next four decades the county and historical society sought to stabilize and restore the other buildings and structures in the historic courthouse complex, converting the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century clerk's office (earlier a jail) into the county's museum in early 2000s, restoring the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century brick wall that connects the courthouse complex buildings with each other around the same time, and converting the 1890 "New Jail" from county offices to meeting space and archive for the King William County Historical Society in the 2010s.

A recent archaeological survey, initiated in 2019 and continued through 2023, identified subsurface deposits and distinct artifact concentrations related to the courthouse and surrounding businesses from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This information identified two new archaeological sites and augmented and helped refine the 10 previously identified archaeological sites previously identified within the district, many of which concentrated around the historic courthouse complex and were established based on Lyle Browning's review of Alonzo Dill's (1984) publication and work he did prior to the expansion of the clerk's office c. 1985 (VCRIS). Dill's work was drawn primarily from map projected sites and interviews; Browning augmented these with additional details related to artifacts surface collected from each site. A GPR survey undertaken in 2022 (Chartrand 2022) revealed further evidence of significant architectural remains beneath the surface, including the footprints for no fewer than four 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings. Finally, excavations by the Fairfield Foundation, with the support of the King William County Historical Society, and with permission of King William County, included the excavation of 28 five-foot-square test units between 2019 and 2023. Two units

were excavated within the brick walled area (Site 44KW0076) and evidence of an intact, earlier topsoil layer with 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century artifacts. One five-foot-square test unit was excavated close to the northeast corner of a potential storehouse foundation within the courthouse green surrounded by the short brick wall (44KW0347). The remaining 25 test units were excavated over the site of the King William Courthouse Tavern, also known as Quarles Tavern, and its associated outbuildings (Site 44KW0077). In nearly each instance, intact stratified deposits were encountered, including unplowed topsoil within the inner brick walled courthouse green, a four-foot-deep, brick-lined cellar with intact builder's trench within the outer short brick walled courthouse green, and both an intact stratified cellar deposit within the tavern and over two dozen cultural features and three handmade brick foundations representing activities and additions associated with the tavern complex. Couple these findings with the clear delineation of Hill's Hotel and its associated outbuilding (Site 44KW0080) during the GPR survey and through shovel testing, and the many other inventoried archaeological sites nearby, the district includes significant intact stratified cultural deposits and the potential for additional sites, including quarters for the enslaved associated with Oak Dale Plantation (050-0137).

The hamlet was known simply as King William Courthouse since its inception at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through today. A popular stop on the road leading to West Point, and for those crossing the county from the Mattaponi River to the Pamunkey River (often towards Williamsburg), the combination of tavern and courthouse brought together consistent groups of county citizens, visitors, enslaved African Americans, and others to conduct business and socialize and commemorate important events. The courthouse complex likely included a jail and clerk's office by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, although their exact locations are not known. The earliest known location of a clerk's office is based on an 1859 plat and it appears to confirm an account from 1890, that the "New Jail" was built on top of its location, perhaps obliterating any prior evidence of the two-story building with massive exterior chimney (KWCo Deed Book 15 pt. 1:253, Dill 1984:21). When the clerk's office burned in 1885, the existing jail (built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) was converted to the new clerk's office. Historic photographs, including two from Mrs. Lee Puller Banning reproduced in Dill's work (1984:16), show both buildings before an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century renovation added a colonnade roughly matching that of the c. 1720 courthouse, with the intent to aesthetically connect the three buildings despite their disparate periods of construction. The photos also show the Puller Tavern (see below).

The destruction of many of the county records during the 1885 clerk's office fire hinders research into King William's 18<sup>th</sup>- and early-to-mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century history, but it is possible to reconstruct the patterns of land ownership near the courthouse and pull together seemingly disconnected historical references to understand this community and how it developed from at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through today. Research is ongoing to use some of the 19 record books that survived the 1885 fire, as well as land tax records that date from 1782 onwards, to identify the property owners in the district at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

For much of the first half of the 19th century the proposed district retained its late 18<sup>th</sup>-century form, with the courthouse complex, a tavern (or two), a storehouse, and a handful of residences with numerous outbuildings. By the mid-1840s two major plantations bounded most of the courthouse complex: Thomas W.S. Gregory's to the north, west, and east, and Lewis Littlepage's across the road to the south. Each had a residence within a mile. Both still stand- Littlepage's Oak Dale (050-0137) and Gregory's Marl Hill/Parsonage/Puller House (050-0140). The lure of being near the county seat, as well as the commercial advantages of being near a storehouse and tavern, would have made these more valuable lands at a reasonable distance from navigable water. Transport of crops via the major roads intersecting within the proposed district was possible but was not competitive with riverine transportation until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The addition of "a populous neighborhood, amidst an active, enterprising and prosperous people, generally punctual and responsible men" (*Richmond Enquirer* 1843:1) made the area a potentially lucrative place for some businesses, but ultimately the hamlet's primary purpose remained county governance. It is likely that new residential development largely replaced older housing, with the only significant addition being Locust Dale (050-5061) shortly after the Civil War. Changes to the landscape prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were likely confined to the construction and

potential repair and replacement of plantation support buildings, including quarters for enslaved African Americans (and later tenant farmers) and agricultural buildings.

Our understanding of changes in the 40 years that bracketed the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is much clearer. Beyond the historic courthouse complex, Puller's tavern (Site 44KW0079) is present by that time (likely a mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction) and the longstanding tavern southeast of the courthouse (Site 44KW0077) was gone, having burned in the late 1890s. The gothic revival St. James Church (c. 1894) was built at the eastern end of the district, establishing the first and only church within the proposed district, and at least two frame single story buildings (including a store and post office) were serving the small community and may have been there as early as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Both were demolished between 1947 and 1967 and were located on the south side of Courthouse Lane opposite the Puller house (050-0140) (Garrett 2022; USDA 1937, 1947, 1967).

Investment and development in King William County's port towns, in particular Aylett and West Point, far outpaced growth at the courthouse, and the village witnessed very limited construction for much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The arrival of electricity, automobile traffic, and other infrastructure to support the courthouse added convenience but did not increase the local population or visitors in any notable way. These amenities coincided with the construction of a service station and garage (050-5063; c. 1920 and c. 1950, respectively), and two new residences: Lacy House and a house adjacent to the courthouse on Horse Landing Road (name/address unknown; later the county's extension office; demolished pre-1979). The third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the loss of both frame buildings across from the Puller house and the shift of the post office from one of them to the new post office (17 Horse Landing Road) built c. 1950. The construction of the extension of Horse Landing Road from Courthouse Lane southward to the new S.R. 30, added the convenience of direct access to the county's primary thoroughfare, which had been expanded to handle the increased automobile traffic from logging trucks and commuters traveling quickly through the proposed district. Despite the continued use of the courthouse complex as the center of government, and the addition of the county administration building in 1979, few other changes were brought to the village. Emphasis remained on automotive travel and the rural character established during the previous century.

There are several properties within the proposed district that represent regional changes in architectural styles across the proposed period of significance. Three of them are summarized below, with the fourth and earliest example being the courthouse which was described earlier. Oak Dale (050-0137) is not only an excellent example of an evolved classical revival house, but also retains several contributing secondary resources that speak to important themes within the district (Morrison 2000). The c. 1832 core of the house was built during the ownership of the Littlepage family. Today, the house consists of two and a half frame stories above a full English basement laid in Flemish bond. The exterior exhibits some classical revival characteristics, such as Doric columns across a full first floor front porch, and windows were changed on the primary north elevation from six-over-six wooden sash (which survive on the rear) to one-over-one during the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building was extended to the rear with a two-and-a-half-story wing c. 1929.

To the immediate northwest is a small, single-story, three-room frame cottage that residents date to c. 1856/7 when it served as a doctor's office and later (c. 1921) expanded to serve as a guest cottage. To the immediate southeast is a small, frame front gable shed with a severe lean to the east. It was likely built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but incorporates earlier 19<sup>th</sup>-century elements salvaged from an older building, including hand-hewn beams with evidence of machine cut nails. Most significant, though, are the cemetery of the Littlepage family to the south of the house and the quarter for enslaved African Americans (now a granary) to the west, immediately south of S.R. 30. The cemetery has evidence of at least two burials with stones noting the deaths of two children in the 1850s, and there are likely several more unmarked interments. The frame two-bay, one-story with a garret, quarter/granary building was moved to its current location c. 1920 but was previously located on the other side of S.R. 30, perhaps sitting on a brick foundation, and flanked by gable end chimneys (Sanford and Sanford 2017:1). Analysis of aerial imagery from 1937 suggests a second building was present to



the west on the next rise of the field, again immediately south of what would become S.R. 30, but previously was an agricultural field. It is important to note that the Puller house (current name; 050-0140) may be a contemporary building and the property's resources represent many of these same themes, including significant integrity and outbuildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is not discussed in detail here due to a need for brevity.

The quarter for enslaved individuals is not the only evidence for their existence within the district, but it represents a clear landmark that confirms both their contributions and lasting presence. The research undertaken by Kathy Morrison on Oak Dale indicates, as an example of the potential for similar research on other properties in the district, that enslaved African Americans were likely ever present within the proposed district. Edmund and Lewis Littlepage both owned between 1 and 9 slaves over 12 years old during the late 1820s/early 1830s. By the 1850s, Lewis owned between 12 and 15 slaves over 12 years old, although that number dropped to approximately five people by the period preceding the Civil War. Douglas Sanford's research further revealed that the 1860 U.S. Census for Junius A. Littlepage revealed he owned six enslaved African Americans and had two slave houses that year. At the very least, research into similar records for the other property owners will reveal the extent to which the population within the proposed district included African Americans. It is also clear that their contributions undoubtedly extended beyond numbers on a page and involved labor in the fields and residences, as well as in the taverns, stores, and government buildings.

While Oak Dale and the Puller house and their outbuildings exemplify domestic and agricultural themes from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the c. 1935 lookout fire tower and neighboring c. 1950 post office remind passersby of the role of the federal government (postal service) and timber industry in rural King William County. The 100' tall LS-40 Series Aermotor Company Fire Tower, fabricated in Chicago, Illinois, is based on a windmill design modified to accommodate a 7' square observation cabin on top. It consists of heavy gauge structural steel legs and horizontal beams with diagonal cross braces set into four poured concrete footers. It was built c. 1935 by the Virginia Department of Forestry for the purpose of identifying forest fires and providing an early warning system to prevent their spread and subsequent loss of life and property. In the early-to-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century these towers were nearly ubiquitous across the eastern United States with over 2000 in Virginia alone, although only a fraction survives. Attendants, often women, utilized a built-in alidade fire spotter's table and map and had minor comforts (electric heaters, phones, etc.) that are still present and in good condition within the standing tower. A recent evaluation of the tower by Davana LLC – Fire Tower Restoration (Davana 2023) stated that the tower is in reasonable condition, with a particularly well-preserved cabin, and both the county administration and King William County Historical Society are interested in preserving the building.

About 150 feet to the east of the tower is the c. 1950 post office building. Built in the Minimal Traditional style, the building represents a common form that was frequently associated with rural post offices as they transitioned away from general stores or small auxiliary buildings to more formal, purpose-built buildings designed to house this vital community services (URS Group 2012). Its construction not only represents business investment (the building is privately owned and leased to the USPS) but reflects the new intersection created by extending Horse Landing Road to the new S.R. 30 and the realignment of businesses along this primary thoroughfare. The road realignment also brought automobile traffic within fifty feet of the front of both Oak Dale and Locust Dale, significantly changing the landscapes surrounding these residences and their outbuildings.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century brought to King William some of the same challenges experienced in communities across Virginia. While conveniently located along a relatively popular rural transportation corridor, the proposed historic district and its courthouse remain in a rural county with modest growth. Much of the development in the county is centered about 10 miles west around Central Garage along the Rt. 360 corridor connecting Richmond/Mechanicsville with Tappahannock and the Northern Neck. A lack of substantial new residential development near the courthouse, despite small subdivisions constructed in the late 1990s and early 2000s on the outskirts of the proposed district, ensures

that for the moment additional development will likely remain focused on local government administrative needs. During this period the county purchased substantial acreage adjacent to the historic courthouse complex and neighboring administrative center and constructed a new courthouse complex in 2003. Situated on a massive parcel, architects isolated the new complex from the historic one out of concern for impacting its historic significance and integrity. The architects attempted to integrate iconic elements from the standing historic courthouse into the new complex, including a piazza and clipped gable roof, while setting the building back from S.R. 30 and beyond the sight lines of the historic courthouse complex. County officials followed a similar plan with the c. 2000 construction of a building to house the county's health department and other offices. This building incorporated brick construction and its size, window arrangement, and landscaping are in line with the new courthouse complex, although it was built much closer to the historic courthouse complex and is only shielded by the county's c. 1950 rancher-style juvenile courts buildings (originally built as the county's school board offices). The county's current plans include the preservation of the archaeological sites discussed here and the historic courthouse complex, and the recognition that the historic resources here are an essential part of the county's identity and is seeking a balance between preservation and accommodating for future needs for county services.

There are several individuals who may, with further research, prove significant under Criterion B for their contributions to the district. According to research undertaken by Kathy Morrison, Edmund Littlepage of Oak Dale (1832-51) was a respected teacher at nearby Rumford Academy, a prep school for the College of William & Mary, and a surveyor. Lewis Littlepage, Edmund's brother, owned Oak Dale from 1838-1853 and served as Commissioner of the County and deputy for the High Sheriff. His son, Dr. Junius A. Littlepage, owned Oak Dale after his father and practiced medicine there (1856-81), was a "noted surgeon" and a Justice of the Peace (1861). Subsequent owners included clerk of the court Ben C. Garrett (1883-85), retired Colonel James C. Johnson (1893-1900) of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry, who was also clerk of the circuit court and previously served as superintendent of King William County Schools. Later owners also operated the single-story frame stores that existed across Courthouse Lane from the courthouse, including T.A. Henley (1901-09) and J.D. Gresham (1910-27). While it is perhaps reasonable to assume that many of the business owners and office holders may have lived near the courthouse throughout its history, additional research into other residents may reveal their significance to the proposed district.

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Browning, Lyle

1991 King William County Clerk's Office Addition Archaeological Investigation. Report prepared for Wright, Jones, & Wilkerson – Architects. Report on File at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

Chartrand, Robert T.

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Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)

1937 King William County Courthouse & Stable, State Route 619, King William, King William County, VA. Call Number: HABS VA,51-KIWI,1--6; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540. Accessed 8/17/2023: <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/va0667.photos.163153p/>

Lautzenheiser, Loretta

2002 Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey Proposed New Courthouse Tract, King William County, Virginia. Coastal Carolina Research, Inc. On file, Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

Morrison, Kathy

2000 Preliminary Information Form (Draft). Provided by the author, the form compiled research (1992-98) but was never submitted.

2022 Personal Communication. February 3, 2022, phone conversation. Previous owner of Oak Dale.

National Archives

1937 Aerial Photograph, Can #ON007851, EX1103; "Aerial Photograph of the Mall in Washington, DC, 06/03/1940"; Aerial Photographs, compiled 1935–1970; Records of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Record Group 393; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

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1967 Aerial Photograph, Can #ON007851, EX1103; "Aerial Photograph of the Mall in Washington, DC, 06/03/1940"; Aerial Photographs, compiled 1935–1970; Records of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Record Group 393; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Puller, Cary and Cindy Puller

2022 Personal Communication. Interview at their home Marl Hill/Parsonage/Puller House at King William, Virginia, on January 29, 2022.

Sanford, Douglas W., and Juliet W. Sanford

2017 Oak Dale frame building, King William County, Virginia. Entry in "Slave Housing Data Base" at the Center for Historic Preservation, University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Virginia. On file at the Center and with the property owner.

Terranext, LLC

2014 Phase I Cultural Resources Site Assessment, Proposed Cellular Antenna Rawland Site, 351 Courthouse Road, King William, Virginia 23086. Terranext Project No. 11101075. On file, Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

URS Group, Inc

2012 USPS Nationwide Historic Context Study: Postal Facilities Constructed or Occupied between 1940 and 1971. Report prepared for the U.S. Postal Service. Report is on file with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

Vana, David

2023 Inspection Report for the King William Fire Tower (June 16, 2023). Report is on file with the King William County Historical Society.

Wolf, Michael L.

2022 Personal Communication. August 1, 2022 via email. Included photograph of his grandmother, Rosalie Hill, and mother, Dorothy Hill, in front of the King William County Courthouse c. 1926.

**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local X Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Applicant/Sponsor** (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Dr. David A. Brown/President

organization: King William County Historical Society

street & number: 227 Horse Landing Road - OR - P.O. Box 233

city or town: King William state: VA zip code: 23086

e-mail: kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org telephone: 804-815-1066

Applicant's Signature: 

Date: 10/2/23

**•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••**

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Dr. David A. Brown

Daytime Telephone: 804-815-1066

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

name/title: Dr. David A. Brown/Co-owner

organization: DATA Investigations LLC

street & number: 1759 Tyndall Point Lane

city or town: Gloucester Point state: VA zip code: 23062

e-mail: fairfield@fairfieldfoundation.org telephone: 804-815-1066

Date: 10/2/23

**7. Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager.

name/title: Percy C. Ashcraft/County Administrator

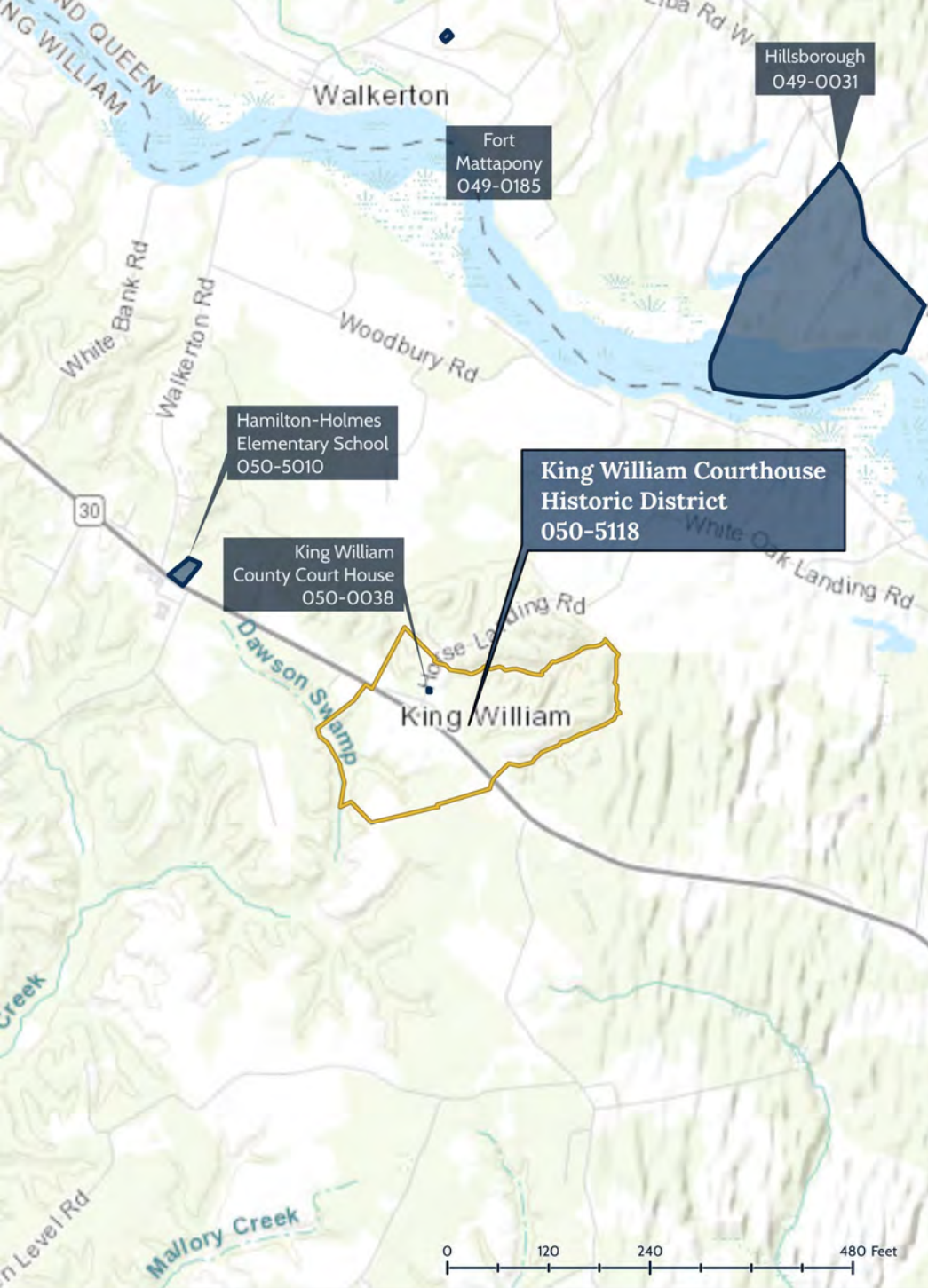
locality: King William County

street & number: 180 Horse Landing Road #4

city or town: King William state: VA zip code: 23086

telephone: 804-769-4926





# **King William Courthouse Historic District** **King William County, King William Quad** **DHR ID: 050-5118**

Listed Resources  
 050-5118

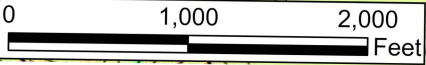
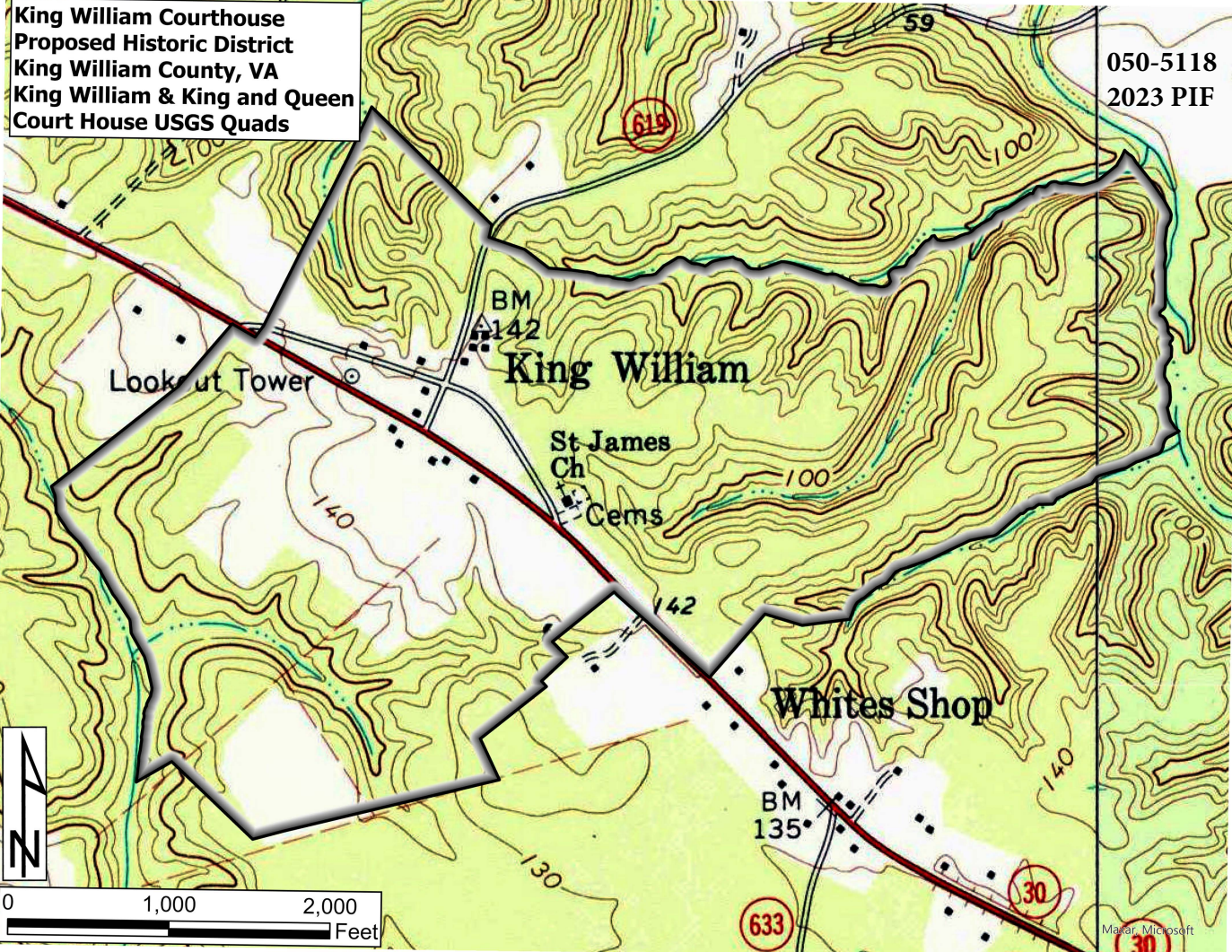
Created By: D. Bascone 10/11/2023  
 Sources: VDHHR 2023, ESRI 2023, VDOT 2023, VGIN 2023  
 Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually.





King William Courthouse  
Proposed Historic District  
King William County, VA  
King William & King and Queen  
Court House USGS Quads

050-5118  
2023 PIF



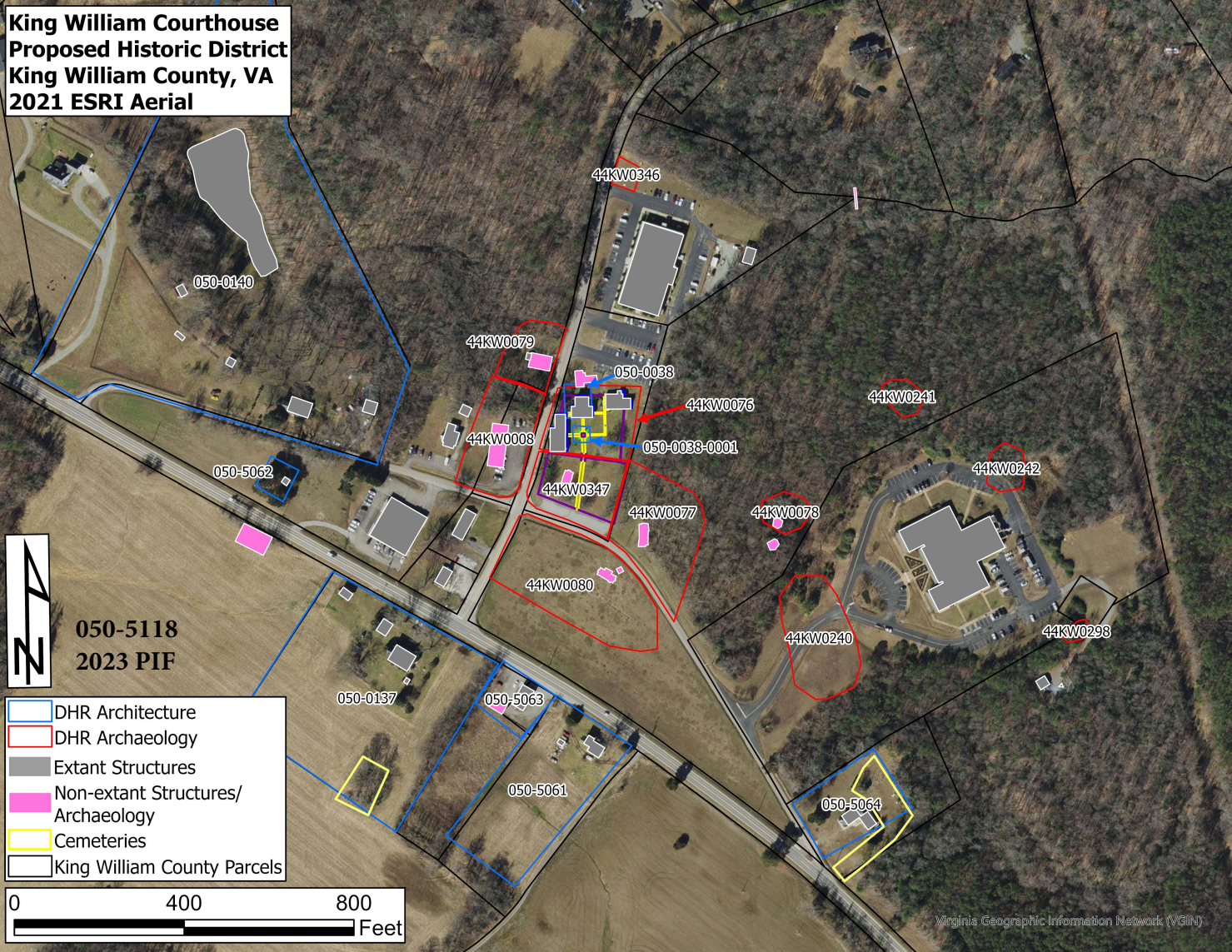
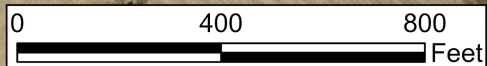


**King William Courthouse  
Proposed Historic District  
King William County, VA  
2021 ESRI Aerial**



**050-5118  
2023 PIF**

- DHR Architecture
- DHR Archaeology
- Extant Structures
- Non-extant Structures/  
Archaeology
- Cemeteries
- King William County Parcels







050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_AE\_44KW0076\_TU3\_Feature4\_in-progress\_Ceramics5





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_AE\_44KW077\_TU\_14\_Layer\_F\_Plan





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_AE\_44KW77\_TU\_5\_BaseofLAYERB-signboardpic





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_AE\_TU\_3\_Base of Layer B5





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Clerks Office Courthouse Monument Jail (1)





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Courthouse\_Rear-Admin Building



050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Health Dept and Lacy House (1)





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Locust Dale and Esso (1)



050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Oak Dale Cottage and Quarter (1)





050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_Oak\_Dale\_PO-JuvenileCourts FireLookoutTower



050-5118\_King\_William\_CH\_HD\_2023\_St James Presbyterian Church (1)