



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Purpose of Evaluation

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

Evaluation sought by City of Virginia Beach Planning Department in advance of Underrepresented Communities Grant Application to list several historic districts with African-American significance.

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

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

1. General Information

District name(s): **L&J Gardens Neighborhood Historic District**

DHR File Number: **134-5608**

Main Streets and/or Routes: **Dulcie Avenue, Fairlawn Avenue, Northampton Boulevard, Yulous Avenue, Norwich Avenue, Tajo Avenue**

City or Town: **City of Virginia Beach**

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: **City of Virginia Beach**

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: **76.7**

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban **X** Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

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

Located east from the intersection of Wesleyan Drive and Northampton Boulevard, L & J Gardens is bounded by Wesleyan Drive to the west, Northampton Boulevard to the north, Norwich avenue to the east, and the parcel for Ebenezer Baptist Church to the south. Significant neighborhood streets include Tajo Avenue, Dulcie Avenue, Yulous Avenue, Fairlawn Avenue, Norwich Avenue, and Maywood Boulevard. L & J Gardens was initially separated from the Diamond Lake Estates neighborhood to the east by a gate and chain.

3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): Ranch, Minimal Traditional

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

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

Developers Walter L. "Crow" Riddick and Lillian Riddick, builder Herolin Deloatch

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): 1954-1975

Are there any known threats to this district? Storm surge, sea level rise

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.

The residential architecture of the district includes Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles with entry porches and integrated garages. A few houses exhibiting mid-century modernist qualities like peaked brows, split-level configurations, and patterned metal screen porch supports. Common exterior materials include brick veneer, clapboard siding, wood windows and doors, and asphalt shingle roofs. Typical alterations in the proposed district area include material replacements, though most houses appear to retain their original siding and windows. Secondary resources include a small number of garages and temporary sheds.

While there is some infill or the addition of a second story on one-story residences within L & J Gardens, the community remains architecturally representative of the Riddick's original subdivision featuring Deloatch's craftsmanship. The infill or additions that have taken place over time are minimal, and are clustered in the later development along Tajo Avenue.

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.

The proposed L&J Gardens Historic District is residential in nature and composed of several intersecting avenues lined by parcels of less than an acre each. Mature trees and shrubs dot level grass lawns throughout the neighborhood. The paved streets lack sidewalks.

4. District's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as when it was established, how it developed over time, and 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.

In 1954, the original section of L & J Gardens was platted along Norwich Avenue and Fairlawn Avenue. Walter L. "Crow" Riddick, an African American developer, and his sister, Lillian Riddick, invested in the subdivision to create an upper middle class neighborhood for the local African American community. The Riddicks hired Herolin Deloatch to construct homes on the newly subdivided lots and named the community after their parents, Lizzie and John Riddick. Deloatch's buildings were Ranch and Split-Level homes clad in brick and, by 1958, there were 30 families living in the community. The uniformity of design was distinct from other neighborhoods of the period and attracted African American professionals. Unlike other African American neighborhoods studied within the scope of this report, there were no nearby stores or other community buildings, indicating dependence on the automobile for daily travel and activities (Hendrix-Hawkins and Lucas 2017).

Crow Riddick was born in Norfolk and later attended St. Paul Institute in Lawrenceville, Virginia, North Carolina A&T University, and Morehouse College in Atlanta. The Riddick family was in the funeral business and Crow was director for much of his career. He was the founder and the first chairman of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic National Bank, a member of the Board of Directors of the Berkley Citizens Savings & Loan Association, the Virginia Funeral Directors and Embalmers Associations, the Norfolk Investment Company, the Oakmont North Corporation, and the Tidewater Area Business and Contractor's Association.¹

Herolin Deloatch (1921-1971), a resident of Portsmouth, designed and built throughout the Hampton Roads area. Following WWII, he joined his father's contracting business and expanded it greatly by introducing more modern designs for both residential and commercial construction. In 1953 he designed the Graves Funeral Home in Norfolk, reported to be the first funeral home purposely built to serve the African American community. Deloatch organized and became the manager of the Tidewater Area Minority Contractors Association, Inc. in 1970.

By 1961, investors added additional lots along newly-named Tajo Avenue, terminating in a cul-de-sac, and created Dulcie Avenue and Yulous Avenue. Lots facing Northampton Boulevard (Route 13) and Wesleyan Drive (then Burman Road) brought the neighborhood to its current boundaries. The property at 5941-5949 Northampton Boulevard was re-subdivided in 1976 abutting the Tajo Avenue cul-de-sac, but the new lots did not alter the neighborhood boundaries.

L & J Gardens became a suburban enclave for African American professionals from Virginia Beach and Norfolk. The majority of the homes were owner-occupied and physically separated from the area's white suburban development by Northampton Boulevard, Wesleyan Drive, and the iron chains blocking the entrance to Diamond Lake Estates. Residents represented a variety of professions including doctors, educators, community leaders, and government workers. Prominent community members include: John L. Perry, Virginia Beach's first black city council member; Hugo

¹ Omega Life Membership Foundation. Bro. Walter "Crow" Riddick. Olmf.org/about-olmf/founders/bro.-walter-crow-riddick.
Department of Historic Resources

Madison, civil rights lawyer; Ray Bloomer, Federal Bureau of Investigations employee; and Hattie Goodman, the first secondary teacher for Princess Anne County's African American students (HawkinsHendricks and Lucas 2017).

National Register of Historic Places Integrity and Eligibility Evaluation: The resources in L & J Gardens possess good overall integrity with regard to location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials and workmanship. The community retains the setting and feeling of a post-World War II upwardly mobile African American community and the boundaries have not been altered since the 1961 addition of Dulcie, Tajo, and Yulous Avenues. Front yards retain concrete driveways and the lots are uniformly maintained, including grassy front yards. The neighborhood's historic streets have been minimally impacted by the development of Northampton Boulevard and Wesleyan Avenue as major local thoroughfares. The lots are relatively uniform in size and have mature trees in the rear yards. The neighborhood also maintains a high level of design, materials, and workmanship as the neighborhood has undergone few modifications over time. Residences retain their brick cladding and few additions have detracted from the overall architectural character of the neighborhood. While there are development pressures to the south, north, and east of the community, particularly with the opening of a fast food restaurant to the northeast, those encroachments have not yet detracted from the intact nature of L & J Gardens.

Because L & J Gardens retains good overall integrity and has significant historical associations with leaders of the African American community in Virginia Beach/Princess Anne County, and the neighborhood is recommended as potentially eligible for listing as an NRHP historic district. The neighborhood is significant under the Architecture and Community Planning themes for its development as a neighborhood, particularly for its creation as a community tailored to African American professionals. Additionally, it is eligible under African American Ethnic Heritage for the role residents played in African American education, professionalism, and civil rights in Virginia Beach and Norfolk. While the lots were relatively affordable, the Riddicks designated a preferred builder, Herolin Deloatch, in order to create a consistent architectural aesthetic across the community. In a period when other African American communities did not have paved streets or city services, L & J Gardens was a unique example of a newly-constructed community for African Americans with fully integrated drainage systems.

L & J Gardens demonstrates a significant aspect of suburban development and planning with a consistent design scheme for both lots and housing. Likewise, the community is an intact example of historic residential development for African Americans in Princess Anne County/City of Virginia Beach; therefore, the neighborhood is recommended potentially eligible under Criterion A. The neighborhood also relates to historically significant persons at the local level, including John L. Perry, the first black member of Virginia Beach City Council, and Hattie Goodman, the first secondary teacher for Princess Anne County's African American students. As a result, the neighborhood is potentially eligible under Criterion B. As a group of buildings, the resources in L & J Gardens represent one primary period of construction during the 1950s-1970s that coincides with the rapid suburban expansion of Virginia Beach. Despite the rapid population growth throughout that period, this is the only uppermiddle class African American neighborhood documented during this project. The area, therefore, is eligible under Criterion C. Archaeological investigations have not been undertaken in the area, therefore, L & J Gardens' eligibility under Criterion D cannot be assessed at this time.

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

Private: X Public\Local _____ 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: Mark A. Reed, Historic Preservation Planner

organization: City of Virginia Beach

street & number: 2875 Sabre Street, Suite 500

city or town: Virginia Beach state: VA zip code: 23452-7385

e-mail: MReed@vbgov.com telephone: 757-385-8573

Applicant's Signature: 

Date: 12/02/19

•• 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: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

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

name/title: _____

organization: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

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.

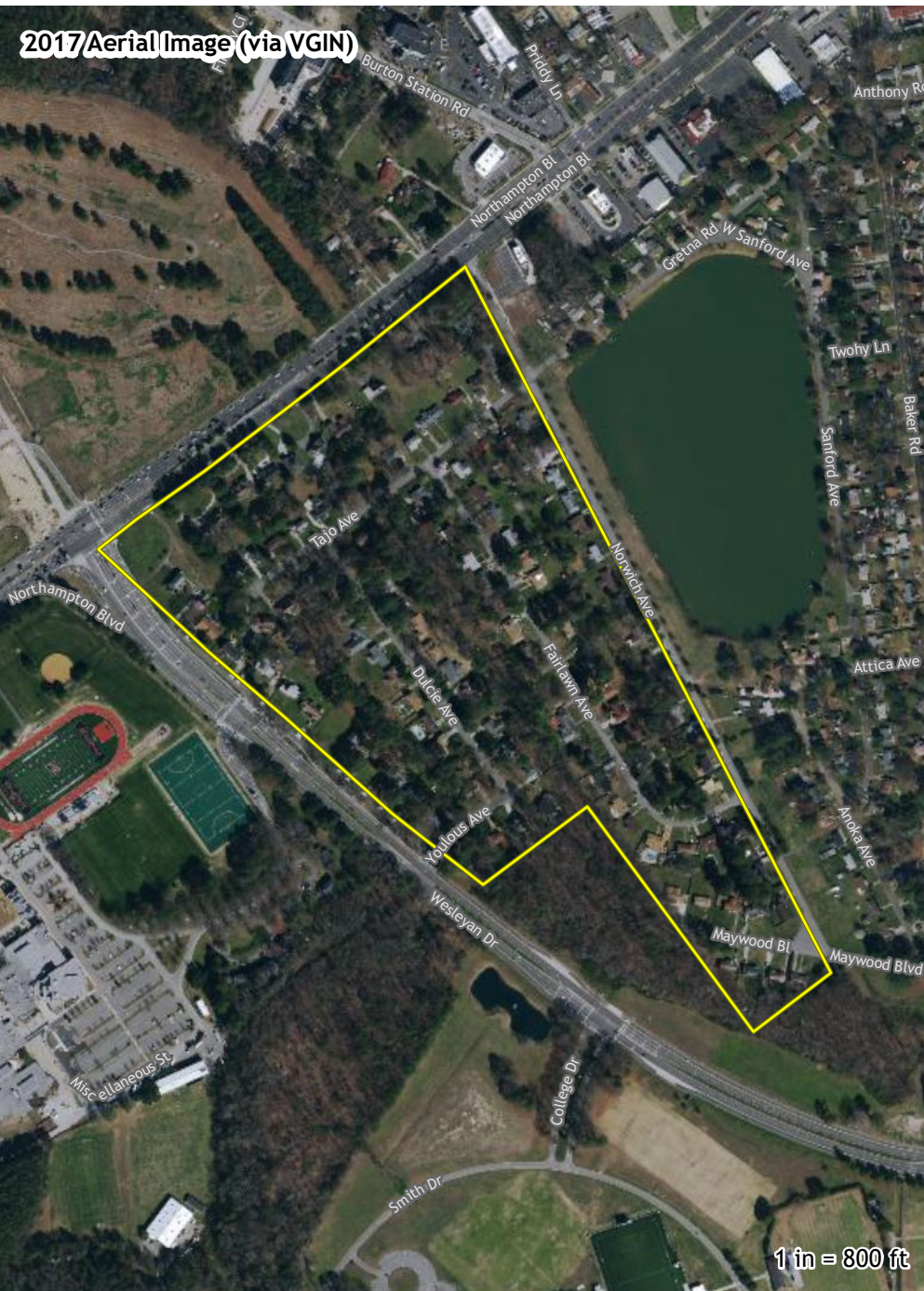
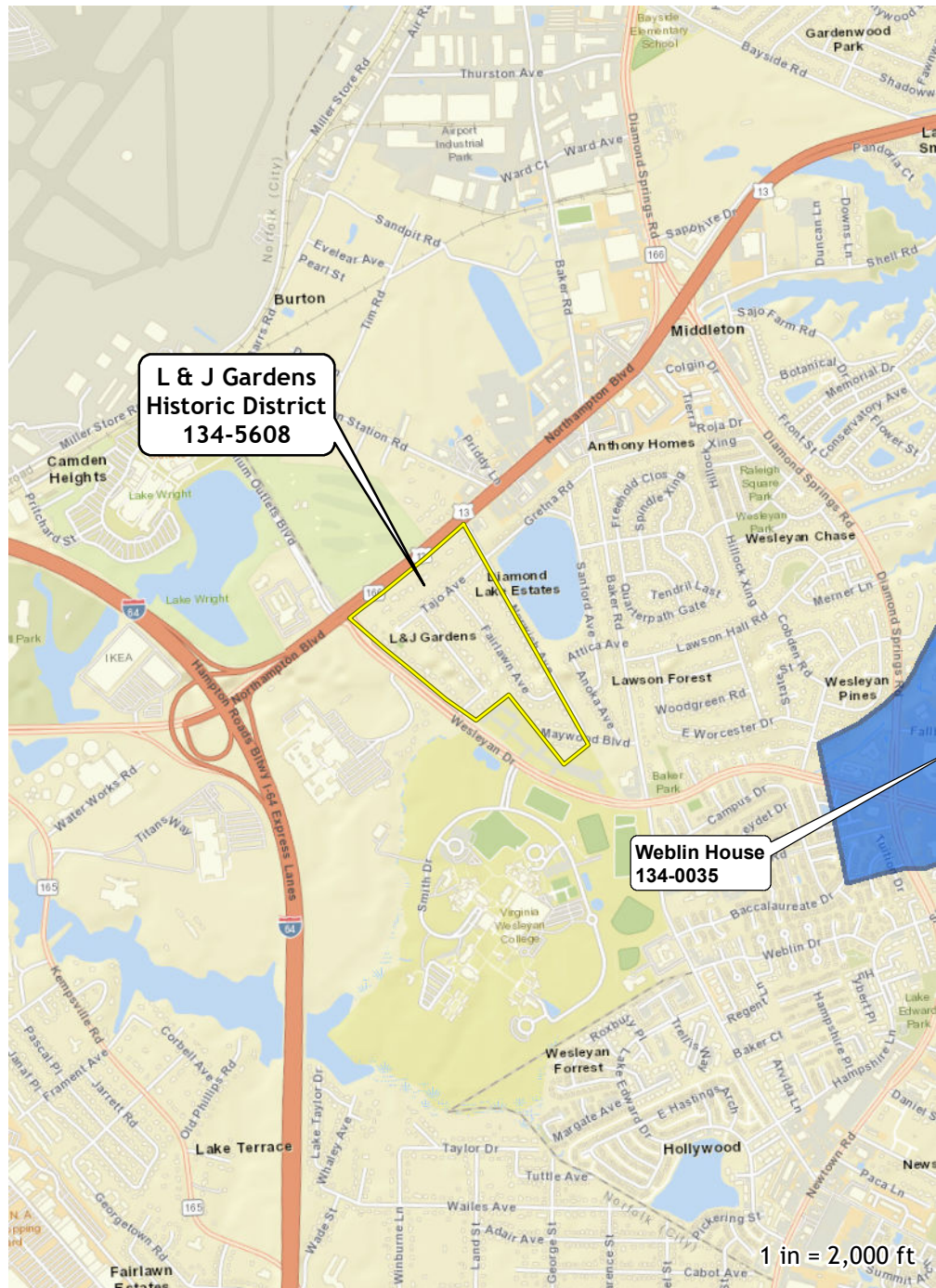
name/title: Same as above

locality: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

telephone: _____



L & J Gardens Historic District
City of Virginia Beach, Little Creek
and Kempsville Quads
DHR ID#: 134-5608

134-5608
 Architecture



Created By: D. Bascone December 03, 2019
 Sources: VDHR 2019, ESRI 2019, VDOT 2019, VGIN 2019
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