



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

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

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 038-5392

1. General Property Information

Property name: Mt.Carmel Church & School

Property address: 1759 Clito Road (Route 650)

City or Town: Fries vicinity

Zip code: 24330

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

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

Building x Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 0.40

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural x

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

The church occupies the northeastern corner of the 0.40-acre trapezoidal-shaped parcel on the west side of Clito Rd (Rt. 650); 1.7 miles east of Carsonville Rd, 4.4 miles west-southwest of the Town of Fries, 7.25 miles west-northwest of the City of Galax, and 9 miles north of the North Carolina line. The church building stands only about 10 feet from the (gravel) road, and the banks of Elk Creek, where baptisms were performed, are just beyond the road, less than 50 feet from the church. Just 400 feet northeast of the church, Elk Creek is joined by Knob Fork and takes an abrupt turn to the southeast on its way to the New River, 2.4 miles distant. A circa 1950 shed-roofed one-seat privy stands a few feet to the north, near the northeast corner of the church.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Vernacular Gothic Revival

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

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca. 1897

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

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The one-story, front-gabled, weatherboarded frame building's footprint measures approximately 35 by 25 feet. The foundation of massive, unsquared stones, incorporating a full basement (with a very low ceiling) is the building's most notable feature. The triangular-transomed side-wall window openings are thought to be original, although the windows themselves are replacements. The front door has been replaced, but the doorway has a triangular transom. It is the building's only doorway other than a basement entrance in the south (side) elevation. A handicap ramp and landing at the front entrance are relatively recent and of rudimentary design and construction. Two window openings flanking the front door are conventional rectangles that were possibly added well after construction, possibly when school use began. The rear (east) wall has no fenestration.

The building's original massing remains unaltered (except for a small storage shed appended to the north side) as does the general setting and larger geographical context. The interior has been remodeled and original finishes covered, yet many early or original materials survive intact. The pews are all identical, likely locally made and original to the building. A pot-belly woodstove near the center of the nave, its flue vented through the north (side) wall, remains in-place and functional. An old upright piano, with bench, resides in the northeast corner.

Please list any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- 1) A ca. 1950 shed-roofed one-seat privy stands a few feet to the north, near the northeast corner of the church.
- 2) The nearby creek is the site of baptisms during the historic period.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

According to local informants, the building was erected during the last few years of the 19th century (ca. 1897) by local residents for use as a non-denominational church, although it was occupied mainly by Methodists for most of its existence. During the early-mid 20th century, it was also used as a public school operated by Grayson County Schools. The building ceased to be used for any regular function in the 1980s, although it continued in use for various community functions until fairly recently. An extant curtain hung on a rod in front of the raised dais was reportedly used for performances. The building is so close to Elk Creek--its banks are immediately across the road--that floods, including the massive flood of 1944, reached and damaged the sanctuary. A notch in the southeast (exterior) corner board is said to represent the high-water mark. The church's close proximity to the water made baptisms convenient, and local residents--one a pastor of a nearby church--confirm that baptisms did indeed take place there.

Architecturally, the church is rather typical for its time and place: a modest one-story, front-gabled, weatherboarded frame structure on a full basement. The basement is the most remarkable feature, constructed of enormous stones that surely allowed the building to withstand numerous flash floods and even more serious flooding events. The nave-plan interior has been repeatedly remodeled, obscuring original materials. The original wide-board floor, for example, is covered by more modern flooring, but is intact and visible from the basement. The plain architecture is representative of the many small churches built in the early years of highly mountainous Grayson County, which remains one of the least developed, and sadly, one of the poorest counties in Virginia. The church was built and used by a close-knit community called Clito, which had an agricultural and light-industrial economy, but is now largely residential in character.

Given its long history and countless past functions, the property remains important to the community; so much so that six gentlemen were waiting on-site for the DHR staff visit on a weekday morning, and a vibrant discussion followed. The property is therefore recommended potentially eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History. Further research might also support Education and/or Religion as areas of significance.

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

- On-site interviews of local citizens Mitchel Funk, Danny Boyer, Sheriff Richard Vaughan and others by Mike Pulice, DHR Western Region architectural historian on 8/30/2024.
- The Grayson County Historical Society was consulted and could provide no information about the property. Historic newspapers from the 1930s and later, made available by the Galax Public Library, were searched, but no references to Mount Carmel Church (or school) were found.

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

Private: _____ Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: _____ No legal owner _____

organization: _____

street & number: _____

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

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: _____ N/A _____

Date: _____

• • *Signature required for processing all applications for privately-owned properties.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____ N/A _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: _____ Mike Pulice, DHR Western Region architectural historian _____

organization: _____

street & number: _____


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


e-mail: _____ michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov _____ telephone: _____

Date: _____ 10/23/2024 _____



Mount Carmel Church and School
Grayson County
DHR ID# 038-5392

 Resource Boundary


0 100 200
 Feet





Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN), VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS



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 Feet





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