



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) 127-8184

1. General Property Information

Property name: First Presbyterian Church

Property address: 4602 Cary Street Road

City or Town: Richmond

Zip code: 23226

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

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

Building ☒

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 2.4

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban ☐ Suburban ☒ Town ☐ Village ☐ Hamlet ☐ Rural ☐

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

The church building is located on a large lot at the corner of Cary Street Road and East Lock Lane. A modest expanse of lawn separates the building from Cary Street Road. A wide walkway with flagstones extends from the front entrance to the road, and a crosswalk at the street is indicative of the church's use by the neighboring residents of Windsor Farms, an early 20th century planned community. The rear of the site includes a large, paved parking lot and a fenced-in playground. A non-contributing shed occupies a portion of the lot near the northeast corner of the church building. The site retains some landscape design features planned by noted landscape architect Charles F. Gillette, including walkways and a brick wall. A public alley borders the east side of the property.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Georgian Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Courtenay S. Welton, Walter H. Thomas (Thomas & Wagoner), Charles F. Gillette, Carneal & Johnston

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1940, 1950, 1956, 1985-1987

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 First Presbyterian Church building at Cary Street Road and Lock Lane is the result of four building campaigns between 1939-1984. The earliest portion of the church is a two-story Georgian Revival-style Education Building completed in 1940. Richmond architect Courtenay S. Welton's design utilized an elongated H-plan with gable roofs, shouldered exterior chimneys at each end gable, twelve-over-twelve wood windows, Flemish bond brick cladding, and corner pilasters. The symmetry of this section of the church was interrupted by a recess at the second-floor roof that was intended to accommodate the subsequent sanctuary addition. This recess was filled in at a later date.

The more elaborate sanctuary and tower addition that fronts Cary Street Road was designed by the Philadelphia firm Thomas & Wagoner, with Courtenay Welton as supervising architect. Originally planned to run on a north/south axis with a tower entrance close to the street, City code dictated that the 1950 addition run parallel to Cary Street Road, set back from the street. The four-stage entrance tower at the southwest corner of the building provides access to the narthex. The first stage of the tower is clad in Flemish bond brick and includes paired wood doors, a cast stone door surround with a broken pediment, and distinctive vertical and horizontal bands of cast stone vents repeating an X pattern. The second stage of the tower is stepped back from the first and features three louvered vents separated by pilasters. Acanthus leaf cresting and large urns sit atop the entablature. The third stage of the tower has clipped corners and is faced with cast stone. Cast stone consoles define the base of the fourth stage: a lead-coated copper spire topped with a crucifix. Three bays of elongated, arched wood windows separated by brick pilasters along the south face of the sanctuary addition have corresponding clerestory windows. The clerestory is recessed from the plane of the larger windows. A projecting cross gable at the east end of the addition has a Palladian window and a simple cast stone cornice. An urn relief is centered in the brick tympanum of the cross gable.

The gable-end west elevation of the 1950 addition faces Lock Lane and is more elaborate than the alley-facing east elevation. Both elevations have wheel windows at the attic level. The Lock Lane elevation has three bays of stacked windows separated by cast stone pilasters. Stone cladding surrounds these three bays. The east gable end is entirely clad with brick.

The 1950 sanctuary addition includes two small, single-story connectors that link the 1940 education wing to the sanctuary and create a large, open-air courtyard within the complex. The more public-facing

connector along the Lock Lane elevation has a projecting entry bay defined by cast stone quoins. The simpler east side connector has paired doors with a multilight transom.

A third phase of expansion was complete by 1956. This phase included the construction of a fellowship hall and kitchen extending from the northeast (rear) corner of the original building. This two-story brick addition remained true to the more staid Georgian Revival style of the 1940 building. A projecting entrance bay includes a door surround with a segmental pediment.

The final phase of expansion occurred in the 1980s when the noted Richmond firm Carneal & Johnston was hired to design a new Parish Center along the rear of the church building. Completed in 1987, the design of the new addition was highly sympathetic to the 1940 education wing. The connection to the 1956 wing created a footprint similar to that of the original building. The Lock Lane elevation of the 1980s addition utilized the same Flemish bond brick cladding, pilasters and corner pilasters, and a brick water table as that of the 1940 building.

Though the building interior has undergone several renovations, the sanctuary, narthex, and vestibule retain a high degree of integrity. Carvings at the lectern, chancel rail, and pulpit are particularly distinctive. A portion of the original 1940s chapel was subdivided during the 1950s when it was no longer needed as the primary worship space for the congregation, but it still retains its historic finishes.

The site retains brick walkways, a brick wall, and other man-made features associated with landscape architect Charles F. Gillette's plans for the site. Not all of Gillette's plan elements were constructed, but a number of these features remain intact.

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

- A non-historic shed with a gable shingle roof and aluminum siding is located at the rear of the building along the alley.

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.

First Presbyterian Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an excellent example of early suburban church architecture that demonstrates a shift away from the dominant Gothic Revival style in favor of a design more compatible with the tastes and conventions of suburban residents. The building's style reflects a return to the Colonial tradition seen utilized in adjacent residential developments. The site's man-made landscape features maintain the small-scale feel of a neighborhood church while accommodating the growing role of the automobile as a means of transportation. First Presbyterian's architecture and landscape architecture are significant as the work of highly respected local and nationally-renowned firms. The proposed Period of Significance for the district begins in 1940 with the construction of the Educational Building and ends in 1965 when the church implemented some of Charles Gillette's final landscape design recommendations.

Facing a growing trend of its membership moving westward, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church voted in 1938 to find a suitable new location west of its present site in downtown Richmond. The church selected a site along Cary Street Road and set about raising funds for the construction of the first phase of development at the property. The 1940 Education Building was designed by longtime church member Courtenay S. Welton. Often misattributed as the work of his sons, Courtenay Welton's Georgian Revival design set the tone for subsequent additions to the building. Welton's Virginia projects include the North Side Branch of American National Bank on Brookland Park Boulevard, the J. T. Horton Hotel in Fredericksburg, and work at Hampden Sydney College.

The design of the 1950 Sanctuary is the work of the Philadelphia firm Thomas and Wagoner, renowned across the country for their ecclesiastical designs. Walter H. Thomas, the lead architect on the First Presbyterian Church project, studied at the University of Pennsylvania and the Ecole des Beaux Arts before opening his own firm in 1906. Thomas was advisory architect of the Methodist Church in the United States between 1925 and 1933 and served as president to the Church Architectural Guild of America. He became the executive director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority in 1937 and served until 1942. Thomas partnered with Harold Wagoner in 1944 and led their firm's designs until his death in 1948. The design for First Presbyterian Church was one of his final projects. Partner Harold Wagoner had a lengthy career primarily devoted to ecclesiastical architecture. During the course of his career, he designed more than 500 church buildings. Unlike Thomas, whose designs followed a more traditional bent, Wagoner's work reflects a wide range of styles. His design for the First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. utilizes a traditional urban Gothic Revival style (referred to by Mr. Wagoner himself as "Immodest Gothic"). Wesley United Methodist Church in Urbana, Illinois, and the massive Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, represent some of Wagoner's contemporary designs. Wagoner twice served as president of the Church Architectural Guild of America and was at one time president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Wagoner completed the First Presbyterian Church project after Walter Thomas's death in 1948.

Renowned landscape architect Charles F. Gillette provided landscape architecture services for First Presbyterian Church in 1950 and again in the 1960s. Gillette and his wife Ellen were active members at First Presbyterian Church when they first settled in Richmond, and attended services at the Madison and Grace location. The couple later switched membership to a Presbyterian Church on Monument Avenue, but Gillette remained loyal to his former congregation. His work in the 1960s was largely provided pro

bono. Mr. Gillette only asked the church to cover the expenses of his draftsmen. Gillette's plans for the church called for simple plantings to reduce the expense and difficulty of upkeep at the site.

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.)

"C. S. Welton, Architect, Dies at Age 60," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 22nd, 1951.

City of Richmond Assessor Property Cards: 1936-1955

Gillette Papers: First Presbyterian Church correspondence and miscellany. Client No. 1018. Charles F. Gillette Drawings and Correspondence Database, Library of Virginia.

Drummond, Andrew Landale. *The Church Architecture of Protestantism: An Historical and Constructive Study*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1934

"First Presbyterian Church to Launch New Building Fund Drive Next Sunday," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 8, 1939.

"First Presbyterian to Open New Building on Dec. 20," *The Richmond News Leader*, November 26, 1940.

"Harold E. Wagoner, 81, designer of contemporary church buildings," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 23, 1986.

Longest, George C. *Genius in the Garden: Charles F. Gillette & Landscape Architecture in Virginia*. Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1992.

Sadler, R. Jackson, and F. Claiborne Johnston, Jr. *Footprints of the Saints: A Narrative History of First Presbyterian Church Richmond, Virginia 1812-2012*. Richmond: First Presbyterian Church.

Tatman, Sandra L. and Roger W. Moss. *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1985.

Thomas, Walter H. and Harold E. Wagoner. *Sanctuary First Presbyterian Church*. 1947-1949. Architectural drawings, First Presbyterian Church archives.

"W. H. Thomas Dies at 71; Designed Public Buildings," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 5, 1948.

Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955*. Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

Welton, Courtenay C. "Corrects Mistake in Building Credit," Letter to the Editor, *The Richmond News Leader*, December 12, 1958.

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

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

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

name/title: Clark Lewis, President, Board of Trustees

organization: Presbytery of the James

street & number: 4602 Cary Street Road

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23226

e-mail: kcrabtree@fpcrichmond.org telephone: 804-358-2383 ext. 122

Legal Owner's Signature: _____

Date: 09/09/24

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

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

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

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

name/title: Catherine Easterling

organization: Sadler & Whitehead

street & number: 212 E. Grace Street

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23219


e-mail: catherine@sadlerandwhitehead.com telephone: 804-873-6252


Date: 7/29/2024

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



First Presbyterian Church
City of Richmond
DHR ID# 127-8184

 Resource Boundary


0 100 200
 Feet




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



First Presbyterian Church
City of Richmond
DHR ID# 127-8184


 Resource Boundary


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 Feet





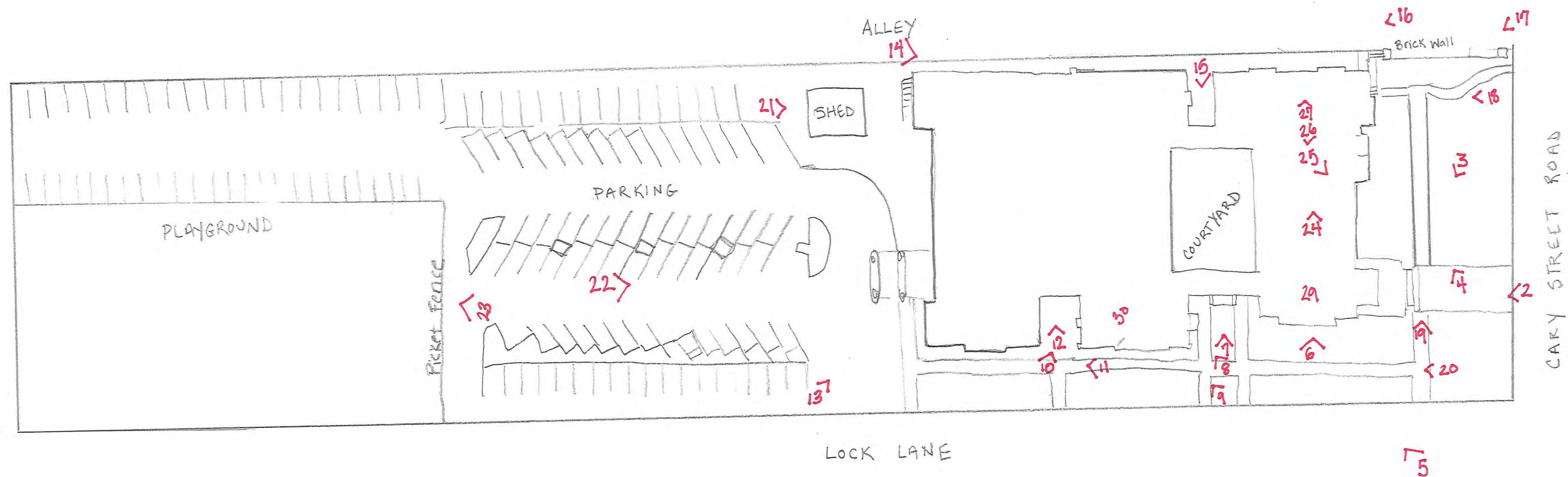
First Presbyterian Church
City of Richmond
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 Resource Boundary

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



SKETCH MAP with Key
 First Presbyterian Church
 4602 Cary Street Road
 Richmond, VA 23226































































