



**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)** 122-6496

**1. General Information**

District name(s): West Ghent Historic District

Main Streets and/or Routes: Hampton Boulevard, Core Avenue, Leigh Street, Greenway Court, Matoaka Street, Claremont Avenue, Orapax Street, Langley Road, Old Brandon Avenue, N Brandon Avenue, Weyanoke Street, W 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Azalea Court, Woodrow Avenue, Harrington Avenue, Gates Avenue, Brandon Avenue, Armistead Bridge Road, Spotswood Avenue, Shirley Avenue, Baldwin Avenue, W Princess Anne Road, Graydon Avenue, Graydon Place, Westover Avenue, Mallory Court, Redgate Avenue, Raleigh Avenue

City or Town: Norfolk

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

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 197.7 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

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

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

The West Ghent Historic District is a large residential neighborhood located northwest of Downtown Norfolk, Virginia. The neighborhood is generally bounded on the north and west by Norfolk Southern rail lines and property, on the south by Redgate Avenue/the Chelsea business district and the Hampton Boulevard-Brambleton Avenue junction, and on the west by Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue. The neighborhood has an organic street pattern lined with paved sidewalks, street trees, and overhead power lines. The district's primarily residential properties are generally well landscaped with trees, decorative plantings, and lawns. The Walter Herron Taylor School is centrally located within the district, and the neighborhood includes four parks, the Mallory Country Club, and the Fergus Reid Tennis Courts. The neighborhood's through traffic is primarily limited to Hampton Boulevard and, to a lesser extent, Redgate Avenue. West Ghent retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association as an early-to-mid-twentieth century neighborhood.

### 3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Minimal Traditional, International Style, Ranch

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Many of the apartment buildings in the district were designed by Philip B. Moser and other architects. Due to the size of the district, more detailed research on buildings credited to the various architects will be completed at the nomination stage.

If any builders or developers are known, please list here: Philip B. Moser (Architect); Herbert W. Simpson (Architect), B. B. Spigel (Architect); Erwin Gutzwiller (Architect); Blaine Graham Construction Company (Builders); C.C. Pierce (Builders); Graham Construction Company (Builders)

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): c.1896 – c.2005

Are there any known threats to this district? Sea-Level-Rise; major weather events

#### **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 West Ghent Historic District is located in Norfolk, Virginia, northwest of the historic Ghent neighborhood and Downtown Norfolk. It is generally bounded by Norfolk Southern on the north and west, Redgate Avenue and the Hampton Boulevard-Brambleton Avenue junction on the south, and Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue on the east. Although the neighborhood was developed in phases throughout the early-to-mid-twentieth century, its streets were mostly platted by c.1916, and the remaining western streets platted by 1921 after portions of Lambert's Creek were infilled.<sup>1</sup> The neighborhood retains its historic street pattern, as the majority of the changes to original streets occurred within the district's period of significance. Similarly, the neighborhood retains its relatively regularly sized lots, most with setbacks and lawns and/or decorative plantings and trees.

West Ghent historically and currently includes a mixture of single- and multi-family residential resources. The district includes a large number of apartment buildings, constructed mostly between c.1910 – 1978, that are concentrated along Hampton Boulevard, between Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue, and south of W Princess Anne Road and east of Langley Road. Many of the apartment buildings are U-, H-, L-, or I-shaped, with other smaller buildings square or rectangular in shape, and are constructed in a range of styles including Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Revival, and International Style. Many of these apartment buildings include flat roofs and are clad with brick, stucco, and/or concrete.

Reflective of its marketing as a high-end residential neighborhood with no-two houses alike and “charming originality of design,” the residential dwellings in the neighborhood, like the apartment buildings, are representative of a multitude of architectural styles and even dwellings of the same basic style are rarely exact copies in detail.<sup>2</sup> Common dwelling styles seen throughout the district include Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Revival, Minimal Traditional, Craftsman, International Style, and Ranch style

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<sup>1</sup> Hill Directory Company, “Hill Directory Company’s 1916 New City Map of Norfolk, Portsmouth and vicinity, Virginia,” map (Newark, New Jersey: Interstate Map Company Map and Guide Publishers, 1916); Norfolk City Planning Commission, “Norfolk and Vicinity,” map (Norfolk, VA: Norfolk City Planning Commission, March 1921).

<sup>2</sup> “Building Homes in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 27, 1918).

houses. Exterior materials include, but may not be limited to, brick, stucco, stone, concrete, wood siding, cedar shake siding, asbestos siding, and vinyl siding. As a neighborhood that developed over time to meet Norfolk's housing needs, the dwellings within the district range in construction from c.1896 to c.2005.<sup>3</sup>

Centrally located within the West Ghent neighborhood, the Walter Herron Taylor Elementary School is a modern school constructed c.1999 to replace the original Walter Herron Taylor Elementary School which was deemed outdated and in need of upgrades. The existing school is larger in footprint and design than the original school, but pays homage to the c.1917 school through its exterior brick and stucco materials. A second school, the West Ghent School, is located at the southwest intersection of W Princess Anne Road and Leigh Street and is connected to the north end of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Founded in 1930, the West Ghent School matches the church's Gothic Revival style and is clad with brick with concrete details.

The West Ghent Historic District also includes multiple recreational resources. The oldest planned greenspace area in the neighborhood is Greenway Court, located along the southern end of the district, which was originally platted c.1890 as open space around Redgate Avenue; today a portion of this area includes a playground and is known as Redgate Playground. Also in the southern section of the district, the Fergus Reid Tennis Courts are located at the southeast intersection of Redgate Avenue and Langley Road. Tennis courts were located in West Ghent by the 1920s, and the existing courts were in place by at least 1958 based on aerial photographs. At the northwest end of the district, the Mallory Country Club, constructed in 1965, includes International Style club buildings, an Olympic swimming pool, playground, and various athletic fields/courts. Located along the north end of the district, the Jeff Robertson Park (formerly Bluebird Park) was designed as a park with open spaces and mature trees for the neighborhood with paths, benches, play equipment, and athletic fields. The neighborhood also includes several smaller greenspace parks such as the Westover Memorial Park on Westover Avenue, Yellow Fever Park at the northwest intersection of Hampton Boulevard and W. Princess Anne Road, and Graydon Place. Bordering the district to the north/northwest, the Wyanoke Bird and Wildflower Sanctuary was historically part of the Norfolk Southern (Norfolk & Western) property, and was dedicated to the Nature Conservancy in 1979.<sup>4</sup> Since the property was owned by Norfolk Southern and was not part of the residential neighborhood during the period of significance, the Wyanoke Bird and Wildflower Sanctuary is not within the West Ghent Historic District boundary.

Overall, the West Ghent Historic District retains a high degree of the seven aspects of integrity. The neighborhood includes approximately 900 resources, the majority of which include secondary resources, and, based on an initial windshield survey of the neighborhood, a high percentage of the resources would likely be contributing to the district. The neighborhood's location and setting bordered by industrial and commercial uses as well as major roadways remains the same, as do the neighborhood's lot sizes, street patterns, and building types and uses. Paved sidewalks remain through most of the district, retaining the pedestrian feel associated with early streetcar neighborhoods. Since the neighborhood developed at a transition point with the popularity of the automobile, automobiles were also considered when planning much of the neighborhood and its lots. As such, the streets remain the same, with most widening and street-alteration and re-routing projects having occurred within the period of significance. Individual resources within the district may have received alterations and replacement materials over time, but the majority appear to retain architectural integrity and there has been limited modern infill construction.<sup>5</sup> The West Ghent Historic District retains integrity of setting, location, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship as an intact example of early-to-mid-twentieth century residential neighborhood in Norfolk.

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.

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<sup>3</sup> Construction dates should be verified through survey and research and updated at the nomination stage.

<sup>4</sup> Jillian Nolin, "What's in a name?" *Virginian-Pilot* (February 11, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Field survey should be completed to verify these initial observations.

The 197.7-acre West Ghent Historic District is located in the City of Norfolk, northwest of the Ghent Historic District and Downtown Norfolk. The primarily residential district is situated west of Core Avenue and Hampton Boulevard, south and southeast of Norfolk Southern property and rail lines, and north of Redgate Avenue and the Hampton Boulevard-Brambleton Avenue junction. West Ghent is generally laid out in a grid pattern, with tree-lined streets, paved sidewalks, above-ground power lines, and public parks and greenspaces. The district is historically and currently primarily a residential neighborhood, with a mixture of single- and multi-family dwellings and apartments, as well as a small number of commercial properties, two schools, and a church.

#### **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.

#### **Statement of Significance**

The West Ghent Historic District in Norfolk, Virginia is potentially locally significant under Criterion A (Community Planning and Development) as an intact example of an early twentieth-century Norfolk neighborhood that continued to evolve through the mid-twentieth century to meet the city's housing needs. Established during a transitional period when streetcars were prominent and automobiles were increasing in popularity, the West Ghent neighborhood was connected to the city by streetcar lines, but also planned for the automobile in its streets and lots. The neighborhood experienced waves of development to meet the city's housing needs, with two of the biggest periods of development occurring after World War I and World War II. West Ghent retains its historic mixture of single- and multi-family residential dwellings and apartments, as well as its historic street grid, platting, and housing configurations. The neighborhood was also designed to feature parks, open spaces, and landscaping, and in the late-1960s was heralded by the City of Norfolk as a good example of neighborhood development and design. The period of significance for the district begins in c.1896, the date of the earliest extant dwelling, and lasts until c.1975 when the last mid-twentieth-century wave of development concluded and the majority of the neighborhood had been developed.

#### **Narrative**

During the nineteenth century, the area that later developed into the West Ghent neighborhood consisted of large, rural tracts of land with minimal development. Lambert's Creek and Tarrant Creek, along with their tributaries and marsh lands, still extended into the area as they had yet to be infilled. By 1889 the Norfolk Terminal rail line (later Norfolk & Western and then Norfolk Southern) bordered the area to the north, running to its terminus at Lambert's point, and roads such as Armistead Bridge Road and Mallory Court (both unnamed on Figure 1) had been established with limited smaller parcels and residences constructed along each. A public school had been established on the parcel that would later be the location of the Walter Herron Taylor School, and a cemetery (later the site of "Yellow Fever Park," named for its history as an 1850s yellow fever burial site) was located on Armistead Bridge Road.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Griffith Morgan Hopkins, Jr., "Atlas of the City of Norfolk, Va. And vicinity, including the city of Portsmouth. From official records, private plans and actual surveys. Plate 12," Atlas of the City of Norfolk (1889). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; A 1916 article in the *Virginian-Pilot* claims this school was historically an African American school; however, further research should be conducted to verify and support this claim. "Appropriation Made For New School Site," *Virginian-Pilot* (February 1, 1916).



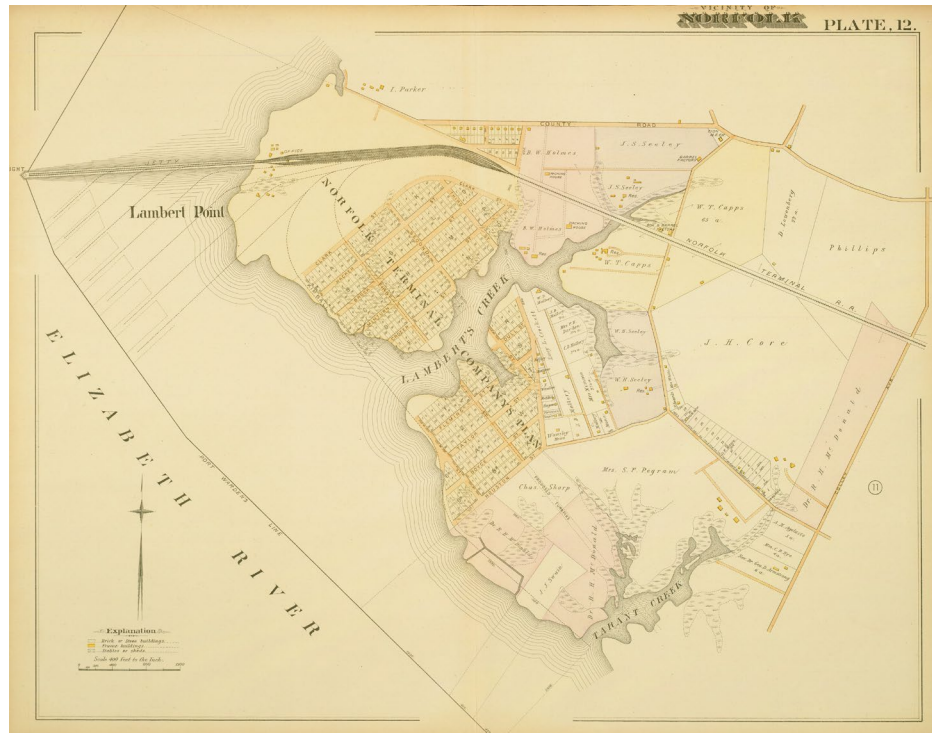


Figure 1: 1889 “Atlas of the city of Norfolk, Va. And vicinity, including the city of Portsmouth.” Showing the area that developed into West Ghent (NW section) and surrounding areas. Courtesy of the Sargeant Memorial Collection at Slover Library, Norfolk, Va.

In 1890, the City of Norfolk annexed the area known as Atlantic City along with a “large tract of undeveloped land,” as its second city annex and the city’s sixth ward. This annexation followed the 1887 Brambleton annexation, which had led to an increase in the city’s population and “encouraged future city annexations.”<sup>7</sup> The Norfolk Company was chartered in May 1890 “for the purpose of buying, selling, proving, and developing real estate in Norfolk,” and during this time streets in the undeveloped sections of land began to be planned and laid, and the Company began selling tracts of land to developers. This early development focused primarily in the Ghent area, and by 1900-1910, the area originally platted as “Ghent” had been almost entirely developed as one of Norfolk’s most fashionable neighborhoods.

<sup>7</sup> City of Norfolk, “Neighborhoods: Norfolk 1890 Annexation,” (April 22, 2019). Accessed September 15, 2025.

<https://www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/877/Norfolk-1890-Annexation?bidId=>.

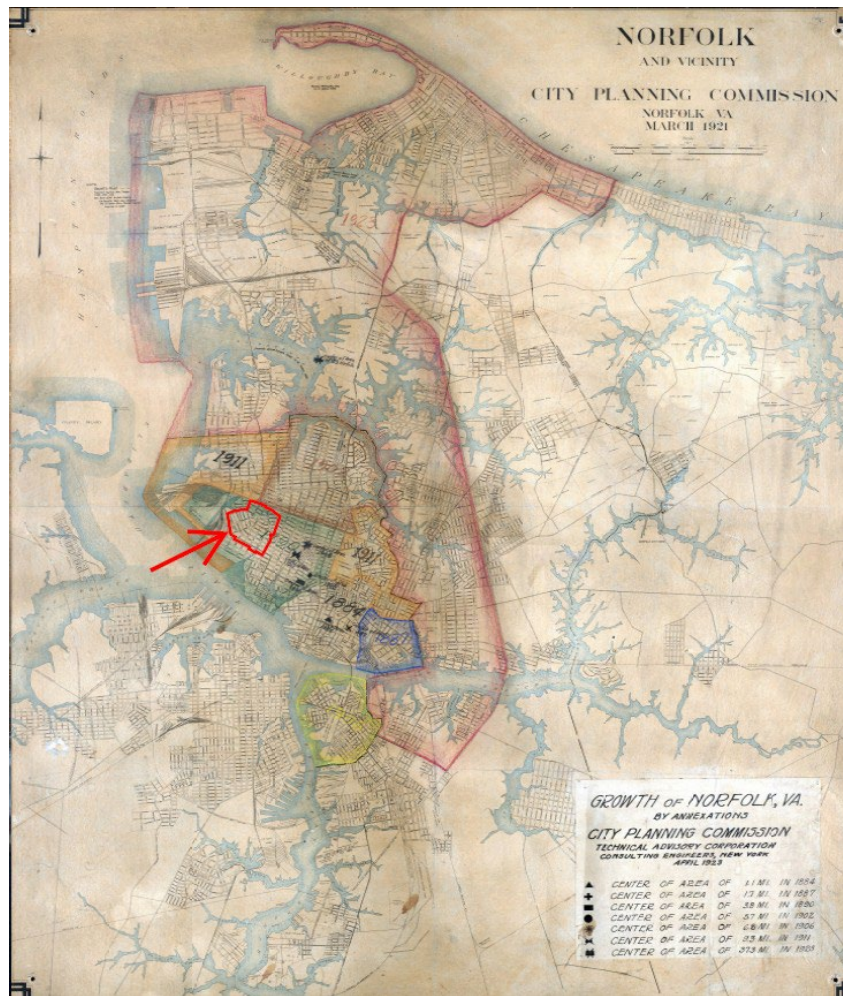


Figure 2: 1923 "Growth of Norfolk, VA. By Annexations. City Planning Commission." West Ghent Historic District boundary outlined in red and called out by the red arrow. The West Ghent neighborhood is located within the map's blue-green outlined area labeled "1890." Courtesy of Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA.

Although development in this period heavily focused on the Ghent neighborhood, the land to the northwest, later known as West Ghent, also began to be subdivided and platted at this time. Between 1890 and 1909, large tracts of land in West Ghent primarily in the south and southwestern portions, began to be subdivided by existing property owners (like the Mallory property along present-day Mallory Court), or were acquired by the Norfolk Company and conveyed to developers like The Ghent Company, West End Annex Company, The West Ghent Company, the Westover Company, and the Redgate Realty Corporation.<sup>8</sup> By 1912, the area was being referred to as "West Ghent" and, along with "North Ghent," was viewed as an "extension of the original Ghent" that was "being built up rapidly" with "many handsome homes."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Ghent Company, "Sheet 0188," (1890). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; E.C. Freeman, "Plan of Mallory Property," (June 2, 1893). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; F. Haenselman, "Showing Property of H.A. Crockett, Atlantic City Ward," (April 16, 1898). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; S.F. Day, "West-End Annex Co., Norfolk, VA," (January 3, 1899). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; S.F. Day, "West End Annex Co Adjoining Ghent, Norfolk, Va.," (April 5, 1900). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; "Property of the Redgate Realty Corporation," (February 1906). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; W.H. Taylor, Jr., "Plan "C" of the Westover Company Between Colley Ave and Claremont Street," (1908). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; W.H. Taylor, Jr., "Amended Plat Showing Proposed Change and Extensions of Westover Ave etc.," (April 7, 1908). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; W.H. Taylor, Jr., "Plan "D" of the Westover Company Colley Ave to Langely Road," (1909). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA;

<sup>9</sup> "Norfolk A City of Many Pretty Residential Sections," *Virginian-Pilot* (March 21, 1912).



In 1914 the West Ghent Boulevard Company, Inc. purchased an eighty-three-and-a-half-acre tract of land known as the “Core Tract” from J. H. Core to develop a “first-class residential section” located north and west of the original Ghent neighborhood.<sup>10</sup> This new West Ghent neighborhood was located north-northeast of the areas already beginning to be developed and referred to as “West Ghent,” and included a 100-foot-wide boulevard as part of the development to connect it with the rest of the city.<sup>11</sup> The neighborhood was marketed as a “high class” neighborhood with “a restriction upon the class of homes that can be built in the section.”<sup>12</sup> In addition to the asphalt paved roads designed to accommodate automobile access, an existing double track street car line ran along Redgate Avenue to the south, and a new single track line had been proposed to run up Colley Avenue and west along Gates Avenue to provide more direct street car access to the neighborhood (Figure 3). By 1916, the new West Ghent Boulevard was paved with asphalt, water and sewer had been laid over most of the property with gas and electric lights available, and plans were made to improve “Spottswood” and Shirley Avenues, as well as several other streets, and lay sidewalks.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 3: 1914 "West Ghent Boulevard Company, Inc., Norfolk, Virginia." The “Core Tract” area purchased by the West Ghent Boulevard Company for development of the West Ghent neighborhood. The existing double track street car line is shown along Redgate Avenue, as is a “Proposed Car Line” running north on Colley Avenue and west on Gates Avenue. Courtesy of the Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA.

<sup>10</sup> “New Residential Section Near Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (February 18, 1914); W. H. Taylor Jr., “West Ghent Property of West Ghent Boulevard Co. Inc., Plat “A,”” (June 1914). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; “Plat “B” West Ghent Property of West Ghent Boulevard Co. Inc.,” (September 1914). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; “Plat “D” Property of the West Ghent Boulevard Co. Inc.,” (February 26, 1915). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA.

<sup>11</sup> “New Residential Section Near Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (February 18, 1914).

<sup>12</sup> “You Can Build a New Home in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (July 25, 1915); “Many Lots Sold in West Ghent Section,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 28, 1915).

<sup>13</sup> “Many Lots Sold in West Ghent Section,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 28, 1915); “Many Lots Sold,” *Virginian-Pilot* (May 21, 1916).



The City also began efforts to purchase sixteen lots in West Ghent in 1916 for an elementary school adjoining the existing city-owned school lot on Armistead Bridge Road, which newspapers claim was “where an old colored school formerly was.”<sup>14</sup> The plan to purchase these lots and construct a school also included the proposal to close Armistead Bridge Road west of Colley Avenue and open Baldwin Avenue on the west side of the school lot to connect to Colley Avenue. The new Baldwin Avenue would also be wider than the existing Armistead Bridge Road to allow lots along this section of road to be laid out as “regular proportioned city lots.”<sup>15</sup> Construction of the Walter Herron Taylor School, located at the intersection of Claremont Avenue and Armistead Bridge Road, began in the winter of 1916 and was completed by the fall 1917. The school was named for a “local banker, lawyer, author, and railroad executive... [who] served in Norfolk municipal offices and as a State Senator.”<sup>16</sup> The Taylor School was advertised as being “the largest and most modern grammar school building in the city,” fireproof throughout, and including an “especially well lighted” 960-seat auditorium.<sup>17</sup> It was also designed so that, as the neighborhood’s population increased, additions to the school could easily be made without remodeling the present building and the existing heating systems could be connected and extend to any new additions.<sup>18</sup> Soon after its opening, in 1918, the school was used as an emergency hospital during the Spanish Flu epidemic, providing space to care for approximately 500 patients at a time.<sup>19</sup> Despite the forethought for expansion by the school’s architect John Kevan Peebles, the Walter Herron Taylor School was demolished in 1999 and replaced by a new, modern school.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 4: Advertisement for the West Ghent neighborhood promoting the neighborhood’s benefit of “Health To Mind And Body,” as well as the Walter Herron Taylor School. “West Ghent,” *Virginian Pilot* (September 8, 1918).

As a result of World War I, Norfolk’s population surged and housing needs were at a peak in 1918. While plans for subdividing and developing the West Ghent area had been underway since 1900, immediately following the West Ghent Boulevard Company’s land purchase and initial development in 1914, World War I began and Norfolk’s real estate “slumped. No one would build, no one would buy vacant lots and among other things West Ghent went flat.”<sup>21</sup> However, with the end of the war in 1918, the West Ghent area saw a notable increase in residential construction. An effort described in newspapers as “probably the largest and most important enterprise in the construction of homes attempted in the Norfolk district in many years” was initiated in 1918 to build “one hundred or more modern houses for single homes and apartments” in West Ghent.<sup>22</sup> The undertaking was significant due to its timing during “the peak of housing needs in this district, in the face of financial difficulties and the restrictions placed on building materials by the war industries

<sup>14</sup> “Appropriation Made For New School Site,” *Virginian-Pilot* (February 1, 1916); Additional research should be completed to verify the claim that this site formerly housed an African American school.

<sup>15</sup> “Appropriation Made For New School Site,” *Virginian-Pilot* (February 1, 1916).

<sup>16</sup> Yolanda Brown, “100+ Years of Excellence: History of Taylor,” W.H. Taylor Elementary School. Accessed September 16, 2025. <https://www.npsk12.com/domain/1417>.

<sup>17</sup> “Taylor School To Be Big Building,” *Virginian-Pilot* (March 28, 1916); “New Taylor School Is Near Completion,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 2, 1917).

<sup>18</sup> “New Taylor School Is Near Completion,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 2, 1917).

<sup>19</sup> “987 New Cases Yesterday Total; Death Took 13,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 10, 1918); “Emergency Hospital Opened,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 7, 1918).

<sup>20</sup> “Taylor School To Be Big Building,” *Virginian-Pilot* (March 28, 1916);

<sup>21</sup> A. C. Hathaway, “West Ghent: Home Sites of Quality,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 1, 1918).

<sup>22</sup> “Large Housing Plan Launched,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 19, 1918).

board.”<sup>23</sup> The Chicago-based North Shore Improvement Company was selected to begin this building campaign in cooperation with the West Ghent Boulevard Company, Inc. and the government by constructing an initial 25 homes, to be followed by additional construction in increments of 25 buildings. It was expected that the new West Ghent construction would “aid materially in relieving the housing situation.”<sup>24</sup> By June 1919 the *Virginian-Pilot* reported that West Ghent had the most active section of construction in Norfolk over the past 12 months, despite a great deal of building in all residential districts, and attributed much of that construction to The North Shore Improvement Company.<sup>25</sup>

VIRGINIAN-PILOT AND THE NORFOLK LANDMARK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1918.

# West Ghent Home Sites of Quality

## LADIES---LISTEN TO ME



**A home is a life time affair, therefore you cannot be too careful as to its location. These homes tell you what other think of West Ghent.**



**No matter how expensive you purchase your home will be, it will be more too good to be among these West Ghent homes.**

and learn about the ill winds that have been blowing you so much, very much good.

**It's leading up to your own-ership of a home all your own, just very soon.**

Years ago a wealthy miser, John Cure, who among other holdings, owned a farm right in the heart of the west end, just near to Ghent.

When the electric car line was built to the Jamestown Exposition, the promoters tried to secure the right of way, the shortest route, directly through John Cure's farm, but John Cure didn't want improvement, he said "No."

The car line went the greater distance along the present route.

This is all wind No. 1 that blows you some good. For had John Cure sold, the Home-sites I can now let you have would all be sold.

About the time John Cure refused to let the car line go through his farm, he was offered \$15,000 per acre for his land, but, like all others, John Cure wanted to hold, for the highest dollar his land would ever be worth. Cure did not sell, but old deeds marked up to John Cure and put the way into other hands, and about eight years after John Cure refused \$15,000 an acre his home sold at \$14,000 an acre.

The purchasers opened up West Ghent.

John Cure refusing \$15,000 an acre was all wind No. 2 that blows you much good, because had he sold, the car line would have gone through, and there would now be a doubly built up settlement on the Home-sites you can now secure.

West Ghent was opened up, for sale, in 1914.

The most phenomenal selling property ever put on the market around Norfolk was West Ghent, it went like wildfire.

West Ghent is the only Norfolk property sold almost exclusively to Norfolk gentlemen purchasing West Ghent lots purchased with intention of building homes.

While making rapid sales, the salesmen were chosen as to whom they let buy West Ghent lots, selected a select people.

A few months after the sale of West Ghent was started, Germany forced that business world war caused in August, 1914.

In a twinkling all Norfolk's real estate was dumped. No one would build, no one would buy vacant lots and among other things West Ghent went flat.

This was all wind No. 3 that blows you some much good, for had sales and building not been stopped you wouldn't have been able to now secure a Home-site in this desirable property at double the price it today, therefore, these ill winds have been blowing, holding back sales and building until you have this opportunity to secure one of these West Ghent Home-sites of Quality.

West Ghent is next door to the very best section of Ghent, and in every way Ghent's equal.

West Ghent has sold during really "a hidden period," in fact, I don't believe one-tenth of the people of Norfolk have ever seen West Ghent, or even know where it is.

Considering the dormant period, there are more homes built in West Ghent than in any subdivision ever put on the market around Norfolk comparing the length of time on the market; you double the number.

There is a great demand for Home-sites of Quality such as West Ghent offers, and who indeed are those who seek out, find West Ghent and look it over, or better still come to my office and a representative will satisfy you. You'll be surprised to find how close it is West Ghent, and you may rest assured these Home-sites of Quality are not going to be long on the market, for the demand exceeds the supply.

Securing the Home-site is the first step towards the ownership of a home, and Norfolk's most select homes are not along the car line. They are more secluded, prettier, more desirable.

If you face a dealer is own a home of quality such as West Ghent offers, come and secure a West Ghent Home-site of Quality.

A. C. Hathaway, 312 Dickson Bldg.

**THE SUPPLY IS LIMITED**

History of lots between Norfolk's Ignatius section and Turner's Creek who are offering to sell the very cheapest lot below \$100.00, has never again to be again at that price because the lots can't be reproduced at that price, and in the most desirable section, like Ghent and West Ghent, it won't be long when the western end and any person they are chosen to sell, for the dealer is extremely difficult, and as the demand increases the price must advance.

Literal three years ago many lots between the business section and Turner's Creek were offered at one-half the price that they cost the original promoters many years ago. Some could not find purchasers even at that one-half price and are now glad, while those who did find purchasers and sold are now. The purchasers of lots three years ago have made handsome profits.

**A. C. Hathaway, 312 Dickson Bldg.**




**PRICES MUST INCREASE**

Thousands of people are seeking homes in the Ghent and West Ghent sections. They are there in absolutely no comparison between the Exposition bubble and the substantial "age-making enterprises bringing untold number of people to Norfolk. They are not so for so creating any real value in real estate, the Exposition was a bubble, while the present developments are building a foundation to create lasting, growing values and unless they immediately secure a lot in the Ghent or West Ghent section later the price will be prohibitive, for it is laying for work.

Oh, brother, remember the fact I am going to start a selling campaign to close out the remaining West Ghent lots.

If you had opportunity to get a West Ghent lot on the monthly payment plan. Of course you can pay cash if you wish.

If you are, when you will need in your home today that it may be placed at the top of the list. My salesmen will call on those at the top first, giving opportunity for the first choice untold lot.

**A. C. Hathaway, 312 Dickson Bldg.**

# West Ghent Home Sites of Quality

Figure 5: "West Ghent: Home Sites of Quality," *Virginian-Pilot* (September 1, 1918).

In addition to single family homes and duplexes, approximately 27 apartment buildings were constructed between 1918 and 1927 within the West Ghent neighborhood. These new apartments were primarily concentrated along West Ghent Boulevard (now Hampton Boulevard) and within the area between West Ghent Boulevard and Core Avenue, though some were spread throughout the southern section of the neighborhood. According to the *Virginian-Pilot*, an estimated 90% of the apartment buildings in West Ghent were designed by Norfolk architect Philip B. Moser.<sup>26</sup> This number of new apartments in the area, in addition

<sup>23</sup> "Large Housing Plan Launched," *Virginian-Pilot* (October 19, 1918).

<sup>24</sup> "Large Housing Plan Launched," *Virginian-Pilot* (October 19, 1918); "Building Homes in West Ghent," *Virginian-Pilot* (November 27, 1918).

<sup>25</sup> "Building Records Smashed During Past 12 Months By More than \$2,000,000," *Virginian-Pilot* (June 30, 1919).

<sup>26</sup> "Imprints Significant: Municipal Building Carvings Show Architect and His Wife," *Virginian-Pilot* (May 20, 1955).

to the handful of apartment buildings that were constructed between 1910-1915, led to newspapers referring to the area as “the new West Ghent apartment house district” by 1924.<sup>27</sup>

As the West Ghent neighborhood continued to be marketed and grow, developers and advertisers highlighted the “charming originality of design” of the buildings within the neighborhood, claiming that “no two [homes] will be alike.”<sup>28</sup> The homes and apartments were also heralded as having all modern conveniences and materials, and, reflecting the increasing importance of the automobile in American life, many homes and apartments advertised the inclusion of garages. Although the neighborhood marketed its accessibility for the increasingly common automobile through asphalt paved streets and garages, the neighborhood still included streetcar lines along Redgate Avenue, and later trolibus and jitney routes, to connect it to the rest of the city.<sup>29</sup>

Since its inception, the West Ghent neighborhood also promoted and placed emphasis on greenspace and landscaping. Greenway Court was included on plats as early as 1890, and 1918 advertisements noted that “attention is being directed to grounds, as well as to buildings, roomy lawns being provided.”<sup>30</sup> The district includes five historic parks or green space areas: Jeff Robertson Park (originally established in 1930 as Bluebird Park and renamed for Jeff Robertson in 1954<sup>31</sup>), Graydon Place, Westover Memorial Park, and Greenway Court Park, and Redgate Playground. Although now considered by residents to be a part of the West Ghent neighborhood, the Weyanoke Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary was historically part of the Norfolk Southern (Norfolk & Western) property that was later donated to the Nature Conservancy in 1979 since the land could not be developed due to its proximity to a residential area.<sup>32</sup> From the 1920s through the 1960s, residents and supporters of the West Ghent neighborhood have remained vocal to ensure the neighborhood retains its green space, gains new greenspace, and/or replaces greenspace that has been lost. The district even utilized the planting of pine trees along the property line of the Norfolk & Western Railway (now Norfolk Southern) in the late 1950s to combat air pollution from the railyard.<sup>33</sup>

Following trends in apartment reforms from the early twentieth century, West Ghent’s apartment buildings also place an emphasis on access to ventilation and sunlight as the majority of the district’s apartment buildings advertised that all apartments had exterior views, ample natural light, and many included sunporches/sunrooms. This is also visible through the form of the apartment buildings, as many are constructed with a court design in a U-, H- or L-shape, or in an I-, square, or rectangle shape for smaller apartment buildings. Similarly, the neighborhood included opportunities for community and recreation through the Fergus Reid Tennis Courts, Mallory Country Club, and Bluebird Park (Jeff Robertson Park) athletic fields, as well as through The West Ghent Outdoor School which met at the corner of West Ghent Boulevard and Armistead Bridge Road from 1916-1921 and then returned to West Ghent at the corner of Princess Anne Road and Hampton Boulevard in 1930.<sup>34</sup> Although developed later in 1965, the Mallory Country Club, which features an Olympic Swimming pool, locker rooms, snack bar, wading pool, picnic area,

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<sup>27</sup> “The Old Dominion Removal,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 23, 1924). Resource counts should be verified and updated through field survey and research at the nomination stage.

<sup>28</sup> “Building Homes in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 27, 1918).

<sup>29</sup> West Ghent Boulevard Company, Inc., “West Ghent Boulevard Company, Inc., Norfolk, Virginia,” (1914). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; City of Norfolk Department of City Planning, “Map of the City of Norfolk and Vicinity Showing Trolley Routes – Norfolk, Virginia (1924),” (1924). Sargeant Memorial Collection, Slover Library, Norfolk, VA; “New Route for Trolibus Sought to Meet Approval,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 15, 1922); “New Jitney Line for West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (January 26, 1921); “Disputed Jitney Routes Become Effective Today,” *Virginian-Pilot* (March 7, 1921); “Civic Center,” *Virginian-Pilot* (July 15, 1953).

<sup>30</sup> The Ghent Company, “Sheet 0188,” Plat Map (1890); “Building Homes in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 27, 1918).

<sup>31</sup> City of Norfolk, “Jeff Robertson Park,” Jeff Robertson Park Plaque.

<sup>32</sup> Jillian Nolin, “What’s in a name?” *Virginian-Pilot* (February 11, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> “6,000 Pines Will Combat Polluted Air,” *Virginian-Pilot* (August 8, 1957); “N&W Plants Pines in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (January 16, 1958).

<sup>34</sup> “Open-Air School Opens October 1,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 14, 1930).

and badminton and paddle tennis court, further promoted the value of recreation and community opportunities in the neighborhood. The country club was also significant as the “first nonprofit corporation designed to provide recreation for a specific neighborhood in Norfolk...[where] each member owns a voting share of stock.”<sup>35</sup>

Other community resources established in the district in the 1920s-1930s were St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church and the associated West Ghent School. On June 30, 1920, the parishioners of St. Andrew’s Episcopal church held a cornerstone laying ceremony for their new building constructed to serve parishioners in and around the West Ghent neighborhood.<sup>36</sup> A decade later in 1930, Charlotte Ferebee established a small, private school associated with St. Andrew’s. Originally named the Ferebee School, the school taught children aged 2 to first grade.<sup>37</sup>

Development within the district continued into the mid-twentieth century, with another wave of construction initiated in response to the increased housing needs after World War II. While a few additional apartment buildings were constructed during this time, a significant number of single-family homes or duplexes were constructed in the west-northwest section of the district, which, had not yet been as densely developed as other portions of the district. The development in this section continued the neighborhood trend of “originality of design,” for even though many of the dwellings represented common architectural styles of the mid-twentieth century, few were constructed with the exact same details. The new construction also continued to place the same value on greenspace and nature, following the established pattern of setbacks and decorative and street plantings seen throughout earlier portions of the district.

In the early 1950s, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority initiated the Atlantic City Redevelopment Project, which included the widening and extending of Brambleton Avenue by way of a new bridge over the Hague to a new junction with Hampton Boulevard. This extension was planned in conjunction with a potential widening of Hampton Boulevard to accommodate the increasing traffic volume, especially the level that was anticipated to follow the opening of a second tunnel connecting Norfolk to Portsmouth in this area.<sup>38</sup> This planned widening, however, was strongly protested by West Ghent residents in 1960 when more than 1,000 residents signed petitions opposing the widening of the roadway between 21<sup>st</sup> Street to Redgate Avenue. Residents argued concerns about the safety of children going to and from Walter Herron Taylor Elementary School and Blair Junior High School, concern about additional bottlenecking at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street underpass, and concerns about the damage the increased truck traffic would cause to the area’s homes.<sup>39</sup> Despite these protests, the widening of Hampton Boulevard by 14 feet was approved in December 1960, and the widened roadway, junction with Brambleton Avenue, and Portsmouth tunnel were opened by 1962.<sup>40</sup> The location of the new Hampton Boulevard-Brambleton Avenue junction south of Raleigh Avenue established a physical southern boundary for the West Ghent neighborhood.

In 1967, the Norfolk City Planning Commission published “The General Plan of Norfolk” describing the desired plan for future development in the city. In this document, the City highlighted West Ghent as an “existing neighborhood with much to recommend it,” as it already followed their ideal development for residential areas. Key features of the neighborhood’s design were the central location of the school; a park,

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<sup>35</sup> “Cinema, Club, Apartment: 3 Projects Heard Without Opposition,” *Virginian-Pilot* (January 23, 1965); “It Opens With a Splash,” *Virginian-Pilot* (July 5, 1965).

<sup>36</sup> “Masons Assist in Laying St. Andrew’s Corner-Stone,” *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* (July 1, 1920).

<sup>37</sup> West Ghent School, “History,” West Ghent School, About Us. Accessed September 16, 2025. <https://www.westghentschool.com/about-us/history/>.

<sup>38</sup> “Linked to Second Tunnel: New Highway Skirting West Ghent Projected,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 12, 1958).

<sup>39</sup> “Route Protest Grows: Tunnel Link Project Hit,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 11, 1960); “Petition Signed by 1,000: Fight Widening of Boulevard,” *Virginian-Pilot* (October 16, 1960); “Widening Objection Plea Fails,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 8, 1960).

<sup>40</sup> “Widening Objection Plea Fails,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 8, 1960); “Hampton Routing Approved,” *Virginian-Pilot* (December 9, 1960); “New Tunnel Extolled,” *Virginian-Pilot* (August 15, 1962).

general play area, and open spaces; development pattern of low, medium, and high density; an “effective” circulation pattern which limited the location of through traffic around the neighborhood; and the location of commercial businesses that were nearby but not inside the neighborhood.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, this plan considered Hampton Boulevard to be West Ghent’s eastern boundary, excluding the historically associated blocks between Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue. This boundary may have been a result of the widening of Hampton Boulevard which created a modern visual and physical division between the east and west sections of West Ghent. The historic development pattern, however, clearly and intentionally included the area between Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue as part of the West Ghent neighborhood.

Differing from some other Norfolk neighborhoods, West Ghent does not appear to have experienced a significant shift in the racial makeup of its residents since it was established. In 1956, the *Virginian-Pilot* reported changes in school enrollments throughout the City that indicated changes in the racial makeup of certain neighborhoods; however, the lower enrollment rates at Walter Herron Taylor Elementary School were credited to its location in a “comparatively old” section of Norfolk that was “drawing from declining school age populations.”<sup>42</sup> Newspaper articles and city directories show that at least a small pocket of African American residents resided along the western end of Langley Road since the neighborhood first developed, with the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* (now the *New Journal and Guide*) claiming that

“...when the white population began to move westward in [Norfolk,] Negroes were already in possession of choice sites on Colley avenue, Southampton avenue and Langley road in Atlantic City and Ghent...Those who desired to sell for figures that seemed attractive did so and voluntarily removed to other sections of town. Those who refused the offers of more money than their places were worth and elected to remain where they were, did so and have enjoyed their constitutional right of quiet possession for from 40 to 60 years. As a result, there are here in Norfolk as in other ancient southern cities little Negro communities with white communities, in Atlantic City, West Ghent, Bollingbrook, Titustown, Campostella, etc.”<sup>43</sup>

Given this description of offers to buy out Black residents, in addition to the central location of the originally segregated Walter Herron Taylor School (White), it is likely that West Ghent was intended to be a White neighborhood.

Residential development in the West Ghent neighborhood continued through the 1960s and 1970s, with single family homes filling in many of the remaining available lots in the northwestern section of the neighborhood, and apartment buildings constructed along Hampton Boulevard and in the section between Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue. This last wave of development continued until about 1975, after which remaining open lots gradually received infill construction from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. Although the West Ghent neighborhood was not formally considered a “conservation area” by the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) like the Ghent neighborhood was, the neighborhood has been effective in retaining the majority of its historic resources, landscapes, and development patterns.

### **Criterion A: Community Planning and Development**

The West Ghent Historic District is potentially eligible at the local level under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as an intact example of an early twentieth century Norfolk neighborhood that evolved through the mid-twentieth century to meet the housing demands of the growing city. The neighborhood is also representative of an early-to-mid-twentieth century neighborhood that developed during a transitional time for transportation, where streetcars were still prominent, but automobiles were on the rise. The streetcar revolutionized the development of, and access to, neighborhoods outside the city core. Early

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<sup>41</sup> Norfolk City Planning Commission, “The General Plan of Norfolk,” Department of City Planning (November 1967), pg 54-55.

<sup>42</sup> “School Rolls Show Shifts in Population,” *Virginian-Pilot* (September 7, 1956).

<sup>43</sup> “Three Colored Citizens Submit Minority Report,” *New Journal and Guide* (July 13, 1946).



neighborhoods required proximity to the city which assumed pedestrian access or horse-based transportation to reach jobs and return to home. The first electric streetcar was established in Richmond, Virginia in 1887 and the concept of the “streetcar suburb” was established. These streetcars extended into formerly remote or rural areas and substantially expanded the geographically and economically viable areas for residential development. The less expensive land outside the cities, and the readily available transportation back to the jobs in the cities, led to an increase in home ownership, particularly for the White middleclass. In West Ghent, a double track streetcar line ran along the south end of the district on Redgate Avenue, and during the neighborhood’s early development, a second line to the neighborhood was proposed. However, differing from other streetcar suburban neighborhoods, West Ghent marketed early in its development the presence of asphalt paved roads and the availability of homes and apartments with garages. Most of the lots in the neighborhood were sized to accommodate driveways and garages for automobiles, and most of the streets were designed to accommodate automobile traffic. Any necessary street widening or adjustments were largely completed within the period of significance.

Development of the West Ghent neighborhood also began during the height of the City Beautiful Movement in the United States. The City Beautiful Movement, popular between the 1890s – 1920s, was an urban planning movement that developed in response to increasing populations, congestion, and public health concerns in urban areas, and focused on planning cities in a similar manner to those in Europe. The movement incorporated aesthetically pleasing built and natural environments that frequently provided features such as open and landscaped outdoor space, a more planned built environment, and grand boulevards and streets to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic.<sup>44</sup> Although only on a neighborhood scale, the West Ghent Historic District embodies ideals that are reflective of the City Beautiful Movement that was occurring around the same time as the neighborhood’s beginnings. The neighborhood incorporated, and marketed, the large West Ghent Boulevard (Hampton Boulevard), restrictions on the “class of home” that could be built, and “beautiful trees,” parks, and open spaces available.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, during the district’s period of significance, the West Ghent Garden Club became one of the neighborhood’s most active organizations and promoted the upkeep and preservation of the neighborhood’s landscaping and greenspace. The emphasis on having plenty of available outdoor open and greenspace for the neighborhood’s residents continued through the district’s period of significance, and continues today.

Despite some variations in the descriptions of what constitutes West Ghent, and what does not, the West Ghent Historic District encompasses the neighborhood area that was historically and consistently referred to as West Ghent throughout its development. This area that was commonly considered West Ghent is bounded by Norfolk Southern on the north, west, and southwest; Redgate Avenue and the Hampton Boulevard-Brambleton Avenue junction to the south; and Hampton Boulevard and Core Avenue to the west.

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

The West Ghent Historic District is also potentially eligible at the local level under Criterion C for Architecture for its intact and eclectic collection of late nineteenth century to late twentieth century buildings, including a large number of architect-designed apartment buildings. Many of the apartment buildings are U-, H-, L-, or I-shaped, with other smaller buildings square or rectangular in shape, and are constructed in a range of styles including Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Revival, and International Style. Many of these apartment buildings include flat roofs and are clad with brick, stucco, and/or concrete, representative of their respective styles, and were designed by local architects such as Philip B. Moser, Herbert W. Simpson, and B. B. Spigel. Reflective of its marketing as a high-end residential neighborhood with

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<sup>44</sup> “City Beautiful Movement,” Britannica.com. Accessed September 17, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/City-Beautiful-movement>; “City Beautiful Movement,” Oxford Bibliographies. Accessed September 17, 2025. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780190922481/obo-9780190922481-0069.xml>.

<sup>45</sup> “You Can Build a New Home in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (July 25, 1915); “Many Lots Sold in West Ghent Section,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 28, 1915).

no-two houses alike and “charming originality of design,” the residential dwellings in the neighborhood, like the apartment buildings, are representative of a multitude of architectural styles and even dwellings of the same basic style are rarely exact copies in detail.<sup>46</sup> Common dwelling styles seen throughout the district include Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Revival, Minimal Traditional, Craftsman, International Style, and Ranch style houses. Exterior materials include, but may not be limited to, brick, stucco, stone, concrete, wood siding, cedar shake siding, asbestos siding, and vinyl siding. As a neighborhood that developed over time to meet Norfolk’s housing needs, the dwellings within the district range in construction from c.1896 to c.2005 and its emphasis on “high-end” dwellings resulted in excellent examples of a multitude of architectural styles.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Building Homes in West Ghent,” *Virginian-Pilot* (November 27, 1918).

<sup>47</sup> Construction dates should be verified through survey and research and updated at the nomination stage.

**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: Tim Foley  
organization: Lightwell Development  
street & number: 112 Granby Street #400  
city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508  
e-mail: foley@buildlightwell.com telephone: 703-434-9474

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

• • *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: Tim Foley

Daytime Telephone: 703-434-9474

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

name/title: Ashlen Stump  
organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group  
street & number: 536 W 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508  
e-mail: admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: 757-876-923-1900  
Date: 10/1/2025

**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: Patrick Roberts, City Manager

locality: City of Norfolk

street & number: 810 Union Street, Suite 1101


city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23510

telephone: 757-664-4242



# PIF BOUNDARY MAP

West Ghent Historic District  
City of Norfolk, VA  
DHR ID# 122-6496

 Proposed Boundary


0 1,000  
Feet





## PIF BOUNDARY MAP

West Ghent Historic District  
City of Norfolk, VA  
DHR ID# 122-6496

 Proposed Boundary




0 1,000  
Feet





## PIF AERIAL-VICINITY MAP

West Ghent Historic District  
City of Norfolk, VA  
DHR ID# 122-6496

-  Proposed Boundary
-  Ghent Historic District  
(VLR 1979, NRHP 1980)
-  North Ghent Historic District  
(VLR 1999, NRHP 2001)

0 1,500  
Feet

































































































