



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) 002-0765

1. General Property Information

Property name: Hilltop

Property address: 278 James River RD

City or Town: Scottsville

Zip code: 24590

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

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

Building x Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 5.23

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:

Located on the northwest corner formed by the junction of James River Road (on the property's east side) with Warren Street (the southern boundary is formed by the James River Road extension of Warren Street) on a primarily wooded lot just northwest of the Albemarle County town of Scottsville. The site is adjacent to (across James River Rd) to the Scottsville Historic District, sitting just outside its boundary. Although technically rural, it is a 5-10 minute walk to Scottsville's historic Valley Street,

There are three outbuildings in fair to poor condition. The landscape includes many substantial trees, several of which are dead, and overgrown shrubs. Most of the property is overgrown with vines and weeds and inaccessible. A document dated 1991 from Virginia Historic Garden week, in which the home was featured, notes: "The land on which Hilltop was built adjoins "Belle Haven", the 180 acre family home of Mrs. Clara Pitts-Dorrier and Rt. 726. The old road bed can still be seen at the lower end of the property". However, this road bed is currently concealed by the overgrowth. Remnants of formal garden beds are evident, including low landscape walls of stone and slate stone pavers. Formal brick walkways lead to the front porch.

A black painted fence with pickets and wire in fair to poor condition wraps the East and South sides of the property, following James River Rd. There is a gate to the mailbox, which is located on the opposite corner from the entry driveway. The driveway parking area was previously paved, but has been disrupted by root growth of large trees.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Greek Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: A.J. Geyer

If the builder is known, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of construction (can be approximate): c. 1914

#### **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.

Hilltop is a single family home which has been occupied by four generations of the Dorrier family.

#### **From the Historic Garden Week 1991 pamphlet.** Current owner clarifications in [brackets]:

- "The Dorrier family home, "Hilltop," was built [designed?] for Charles and Clara Dorrier at the turn of the century (c. 1914) by A. J. Geyer, architect. The neoclassical, Greek Revival style home features double columned portico and a fanned doorway with beveled glass."
- "The rounded keystone are in the front hall of the main entrance to the home is a characteristic feature repeated throughout the home and in the garden pump house."
- "The outside structures are original to the home, with the pump in the garden house still working [not evaluated]" The children's play home [now a garden storage shed] was originally a ham house. The original water pump for the main house and the fixtures for the old Delco lighting system (pre-electric system as we know) are evident."

#### **Current condition and description:**

The home is wood frame with three stories with a center hall and symmetrical front façade. The basement is full height under the rear rooms and crawl space under the front rooms. The attic is unfinished. The siding, trim, main porch, upper porch, columns and balustrade have peeling paint, exposed wood, and in some areas, significant visible rot. The roof is slate and lower porch roofing is metal standing seam. Both have been patched and are in need of repair. Windows are double hung and nearly all are original with most operable. Several have cracked glass. Most have storm windows, but several storm windows are broken. The house has a concealed gutter system which appears to have some leaks evidenced by rotting wood.

On the rear, a former exterior porch was enclosed to connect a servant's quarter to the main portion of the house (now used as laundry and powder room) that does not meet code. The dining room was converted to a bedroom to accommodate a wheelchair bound resident including a home office, closets and full bath, all on asbestos flooring. A portion of this area does not match the original architectural drawing of the front elevation. There were multiple remodels of the kitchen (currently below builder grade, peeling sheet vinyl floor, cabinets without doors, big box store plam countertop). A large bathroom was added in the center upstairs hall and opens to the 2<sup>nd</sup> story porch. There is a second full bath on the rear of the home on the upper floor adjacent to the stair.

The house is heated by an oil radiator system by an underground oil tank outside the East elevation. The original oil tank remains in the basement on the West side. There is evidence of a freeze on the upstairs radiators as all but one have been replaced. Replacement radiators for the ones that froze appeared be used and are in some cases installed backwards and are not fitting the location. Plumbing system was modified several times and is a mix of copper and PVC. Both a service person for the furnace and a chimney consultant noted that the current system is unsafe, that chimneys are unlined and full of fuel. Mortar is cracked, potentially allowing carbon monoxide into the home, and at the attic wood frame members are touching the chimney brick without required airspace. The recommendation is to immediately replace the system and to not use the chimneys for any purpose. The previous owner installed window A/C units and duct taped them to the historic windows. The home is now served by city water and sewer. Electrical system has been modified several times and has not yet been evaluated. Plumbing has not yet been evaluated.

Walls are plaster and lath in most locations, cracked in many rooms. Woodwork includes newell posts and rail at stair, arched cased opening to stair hallway, wainscot in dining room and at stair, chair rail and crown moldings in most rooms.

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.

- Garage c. 1914 Three sided garage, currently no 'roof' but corrugated metal is layed over structure to partially provide shelter. Wood walls with uneven board siding. Per DHR's 1981 survey form, there is a reference to a survey that shows a photograph of a summer house, this may have originally been that building. Poor condition.
- Ham House c. 1914. Original well within the footprint. Wood frame and standing seam metal roof. Poor condition.
- Garden House c. 1914, remodeled by Jane Dorrier for garden week. Open gazebo with central well pump. Lattice sides featuring Greek key detail at openings. Standing seam metal roof. Fair to poor condition. Well pump operability is not known.

#### 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.

Hilltop was designed and built for Charles and Clara Dorrier around 1914 and occupied by four generations of the Dorrier family of Scottsville. The Dorriers have provided three pages of original blueprints from architect A.J. Geyer (two front elevations and a roof plan). Little information is available about architect A. J. (Andrew Johnson?) Geyer.

The Dorriers have been a notable historic family in Scottsville contributing to the economy and culture of the local area. The legacy of the Dorrier family includes several important buildings and homes that are part of the Scottsville historic district. Most notable of these is the Dorrier Building on Valley Street, and Belle Haven, the Mrs. Clara Pitts-Dorrier's family home, which is adjacent to Hilltop, where Charles Dorrier was raised. In addition to their notable buildings, the Dorrier family donated the land to the town of Scottsville to create Dorrier park along the James River.

Charles and Clara were featured in several stories in the book "Scottsville on the James" by Virginia Moore. Charles ran the feed and seed store (C.R. Dorrier Mercantile, in the Dorrier building) and was a prominent citizen. Charles and Clara raised their son Gordon (Lindsay Gordon Dorrier) and his siblings Elizabeth, Charles, James and John at Hilltop. Gordon was the father of Lindsay Dorrier, Jr, who records show occupied the house with his wife Jane, and children Lindsay III and Margaret. Lindsay Jr. was living in the home until his death from Parkinsons disease in 2023 and is believed to be the most recent resident.

Lindsay Jr. was a very prominent citizen in Scottsville and Albemarle County. He contributed much of his professional career to state and local government which included two elected terms as Commonwealth's Attorney for Albemarle County, Director of Criminal Justice for the Commonwealth of Virginia under Governor Doug Wilder's Administration, and 16 years on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors representing the Scottsville District from 1976-80 and 2000-2012. He also spent his later years providing civil legal assistance and criminal defense to residents in and around his hometown, and as Legal Counsel to the Town of Scottsville.

Lindsay's wife, Jane, was an avid gardener and developed a series of themed gardens on the property. Hilltop was including in the historic garden week tour of 1991, and was featured on the cover of C'Ville magazine promoting the event.

The home was previously noted by DHR for follow up in a 1988 survey, and was also included in a list of important homes in the papers of K. Edward Lay from University of Virginia according to the University of Virginia Library.

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.)

- DHR 1981 survey
- Historic Garden week pamphlet
- Email from Claire Dorrier Reishman
- Architectural Drawings of Front Elevation and Roof plan by Architect A.J. Geyer.
- C'ville Weekly 1991 Garden Week feature.
- CVillpedia: Lindsay G. Dorrier
- Obituary for Lindsay G. Dorrier
- Scottsville on the James (book)
- Stories of Scottsville (book)
- Scottsville Museum online
- University of Virginia Library, Albert & Shirley Small Special Collections Library, Papers of K. Edward Lay
- Albemarle County GIS Property information

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

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: Catherine Heath

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 8276 Chestnut Grove Rd

city or town: Esmont state: VA zip code: 22937

e-mail: catherine@catherineheath.com telephone: 434-956-0090

Legal Owner's Signature: 

Date: 1/25/26

**•• 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: \_\_\_\_\_

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: \_\_\_\_\_

city or town: \_\_\_\_\_ state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Hilltop**  
Scottsville, VA



**FRONT ELEVATION**



**LEFT SIDE ELEVATION**



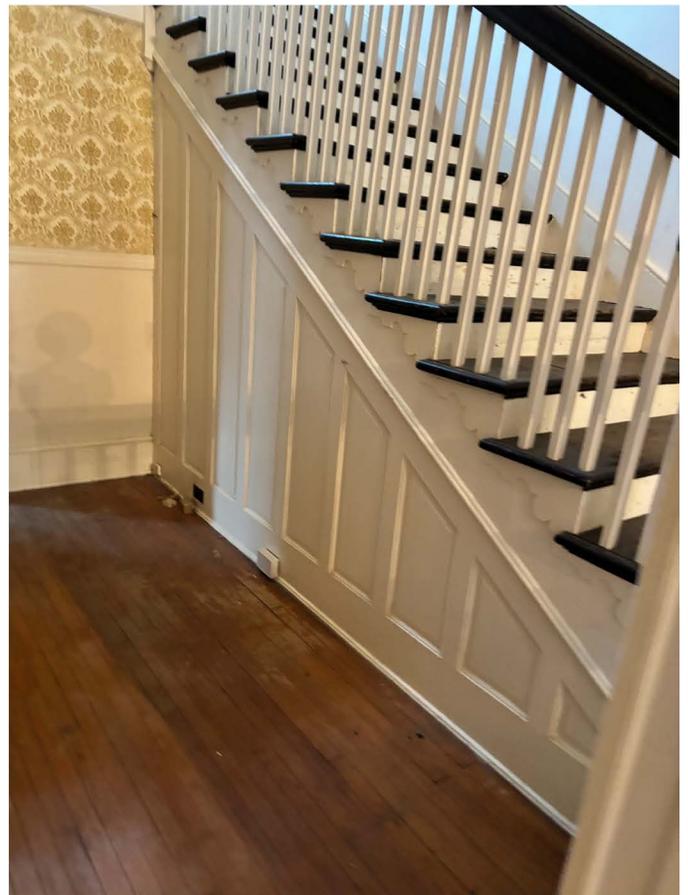
**RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION**



REAR ELEVATION



# INTERIORS



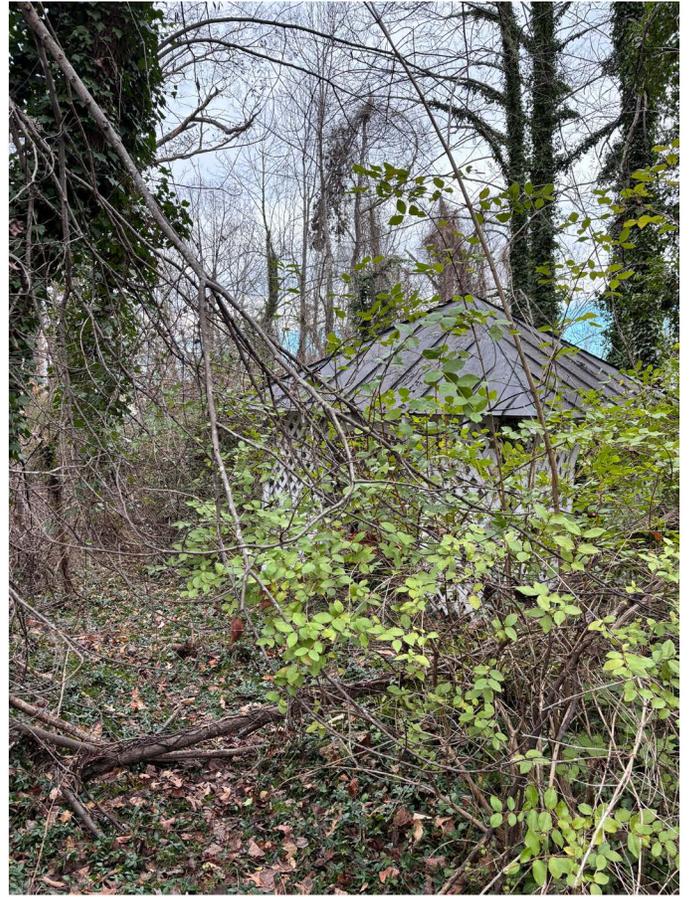


HAM HOUSE (SHED)



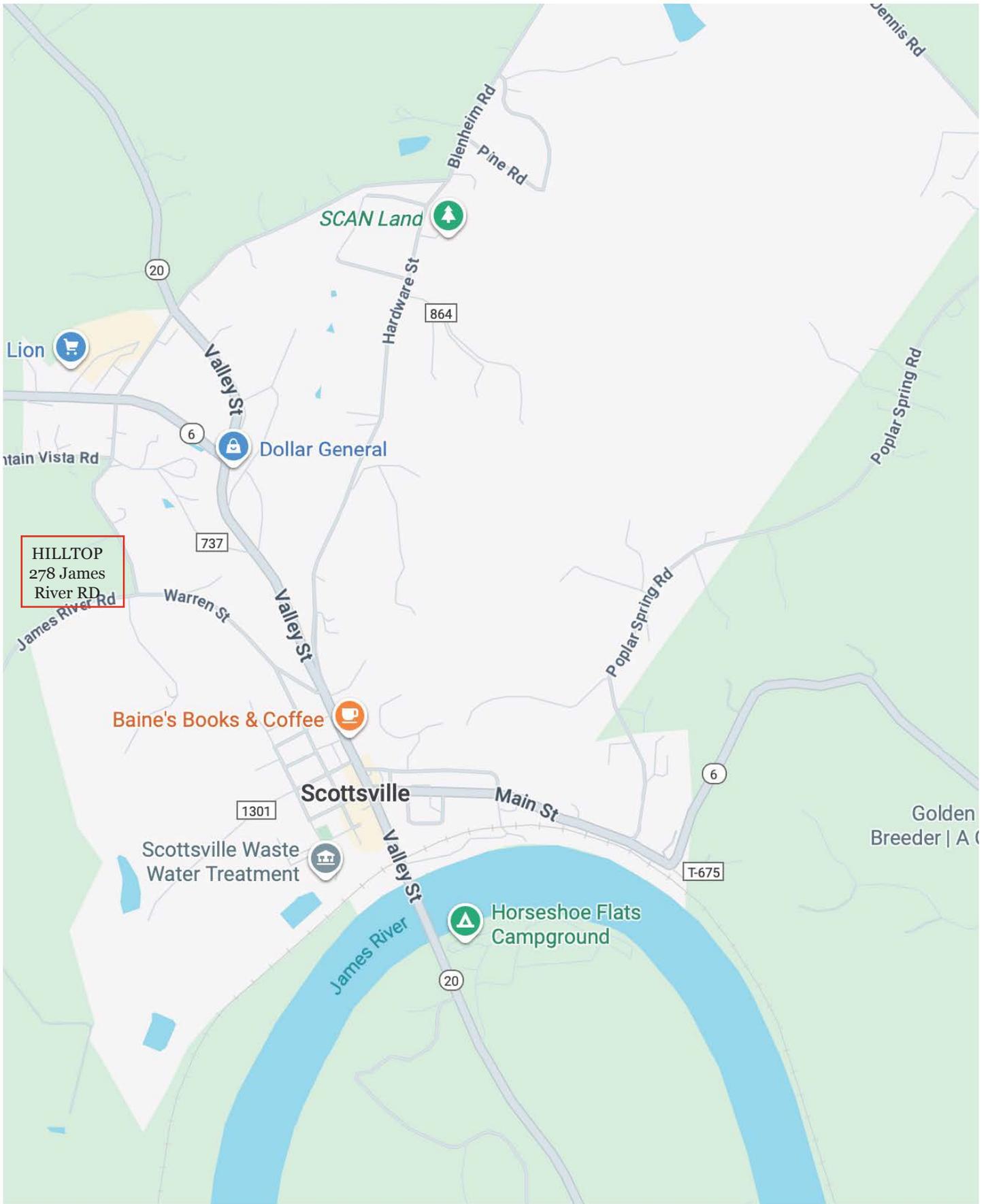


GARDEN HOUSE



GARAGE





LOCATION MAP



## SKETCH MAP & SITE AERIAL































































