



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) 056-0010

1. General Property Information

Property name: The Inn & Tavern at Meander (to be rebranded The Estate at Meander March 1, 2026)

Property address: 2333 N James Madison Hwy

City or Town: Locust Dale, VA

Zip code: 22948

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

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

Building Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 77.07 Acres

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 Inn and Tavern at Meander is situated on a prominent rise overlooking the Robinson River in rural Madison County, Virginia. The property occupies gently rolling Piedmont farmland characterized by open meadows, mature hardwoods, historic circulation routes, and river frontage. The manor house is centrally positioned within the landscape and historically oriented toward James Madison Highway, with associated outbuildings, cottages, agricultural features, and a historic family cemetery on the property. The surrounding setting retains its agricultural and rural character, reinforcing the estate's historic integrity and sense of place.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Georgian Colonial (core), with later Federal and early 20th-century refinements

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: Rev Henry Fry

Date of construction (can be approximate): c. 1766 (with evidence of earlier structural core and later additions)

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 Inn and Tavern at Meander is centered on a substantial Georgian Colonial manor house constructed or significantly expanded in 1766 by Reverend Henry Fry. Originally a long, one-story wooden residence approximately 67 feet in width, the house featured a symmetrical façade, end chimneys, and a central hall plan typical of mid-18th-century Virginia gentry architecture. Interior spaces included a large principal chamber known as the "Historic Room", measuring approximately 24 by 19 feet.

By 1800, the manor house was expanded to a full two stories with rear additions and porches along the front and back of the house, while retaining the original 1766 structure as its architectural core. Construction materials include wood framing with clapboard siding, brick chimneys, hand-hewn beams, wide-plank wood floors, plaster walls, and historically appropriate wood trim and mantels. The house reflects layered architectural evolution, incorporating Federal-period interior refinements and early 20th-century modernization.

A defining exterior feature is the prominent front portico, refined and enhanced during the Shearer family period (1928–1973), which now gives the house its recognizable façade. This work included structural stabilization, restoration of deteriorated elements, re-plastering and repainting, and modernization of mechanical systems while preserving original architectural features.

The interior retains a high degree of integrity, with original room configurations largely intact, historic finishes preserved, and later alterations compatible with the building's historic character. The house remains in active use as a historic inn, continuing a long tradition of hospitality associated with the property.

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.

- Detached Brick Kitchen (Summer Kitchen) – mid-18th century; brick construction; historically used for food preparation
- Historic Servant/Enslaved Quarters (now Robinson and Rapidan Cottages) – mid-18th century origins; stone fireplaces
- Historic Fry– Lightfoot Family Cemetery – late 18th to mid-20th century; enclosed by brick wall
- Carriage House Areas – 19th century carriage use; brick construction
- Barns and Agricultural Structures – early 20th century; cinder block construction

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.

The Inn and Tavern at Meander is significant for its direct and sustained association with major figures and events in American history, its architectural integrity as an 18th-century Virginia plantation manor, and its continuous use as a site of hospitality for nearly three centuries.

The property was patented on June 11, 1726, by Colonel Joshua Fry, a prominent surveyor, scholar, and military leader who co-authored the Fry-Jefferson Map of Virginia and Maryland, the most important colonial map of the region. Following Fry’s death in 1754 during the French and Indian War, command of the Virginia militia passed to his second-in-command, a 22-year-old George Washington—an event widely recognized as pivotal in Washington’s rise to national prominence. Local tradition holds that Washington encamped at Meander for approximately one month following Fry’s death.

In 1766, Fry’s son, Reverend Henry Fry, constructed or significantly expanded the manor house and renamed the estate “Elim.” A Methodist minister, legislator, and civic leader, Henry Fry hosted prominent contemporaries including Thomas Jefferson, William Wirt, and General Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette’s documented visit in 1824 during his celebrated “Guest of the Nation” tour further anchors the property’s national significance.

During the Civil War, Meander occupied a strategic position along the Northern Virginia Campaign corridor. Located approximately four miles from the Battle of Cedar Mountain, the property served as a staging and encampment area for both Confederate and Union forces. Colonel George D. Bayard of the Union cavalry reportedly occupied the manor house, and Stonewall Jackson’s troops encamped on the grounds prior to the August 9, 1862 battle.

In the 20th century, the Shearer family preserved and enhanced the property, including restoration of the iconic portico and modernization efforts that stabilized the historic structure. From 1991 onward, the estate was adaptively reused as a historic inn and restaurant, earning national recognition and continuing Meander’s long tradition as a place of refuge, gathering, and hospitality.

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.)

- Memoir of Col Joshua Fry (c.1880; Rev. P Slaughter, D.D)
- Local histories of Madison and Culpeper Counties
- Civil War records related to the Battle of Cedar Mountain
- Architectural analysis and photographic documentation of the property
- Henry Fry and the Planting of Methodism in Culpeper and Madison Counties in 1774 at Elim, Meander Farm (Virginia United Methodist Heritage, Fall 2025; Rev. Arthur D. Thomas)
- Meander – 300 Years: A Legacy Written Across Three Centuries (compiled historic narrative, images, and research)

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: Meander Inn LLC c/o Chris Seek

organization: _____

street & number: 4319 Argyle Ter NW

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20011

e-mail: chris.seek@solimarinternational.com telephone: (202) 251-8182

Legal Owner's Signature: 

Date: Jan 26, 2026

• • 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: Chris Seek

Daytime Telephone: (202) 251-8182

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

name/title: Kimberley Watson

organization: Meander Estate LLC

street & number: 2333 N James Madison Hwy

city or town: Locust Dale state: VA zip code: 22948


e-mail: kimberley@kaydencecorp.com telephone: (403) 620-2458

Date: January 26th, 2026

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

PIF BOUNDARY MAP

Meander Farm
Madison County, VA
DHR ID# 056-0010

 Proposed Boundary

0 1,000
 Feet











































































































