DHR | Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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) _116-5213_____

1. General Property Information

Property name: _Allied Chemical & Dye Organic Research Center_____

Property address: _710 S. 6th Avenue_____
City or Town: _Hopewell_____
Zip code: _23860_____

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

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):
Building __X__ Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: __5.562_____

Setting (choose only one of the following):
Urban _____ Suburban ___X__ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural_____

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

The Allied Chemical & Dye Organic Research Center is situated on a 5.562-acre parcel on the west side of S. 6th Avenue where it meets Winston Churchill Drive in Hopewell, Virginia. Located just south of downtown Hopewell, the area is suburban in character and largely surrounded by industrial and commercial properties that occupy southeast Hopewell along the James River. The L-shaped parcel is level on east side of the building facing 6th Avenue, while the rear topography features more variation. The building is set back from S. 6th Avenue and has an asphalt parking lot in front of the building. A driveway wraps around the north end of the building to the rear (west) of the building; additional parking is located on the north and west sides of the building. A large lawn wraps the front (east), south, and west of the building with mature trees. A chain-link fence encloses the majority of the parcel to the rear of the building. Three flagpoles are situated in front of the building's main entrance.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): _International Style_

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _Wigton-Abbott Corporation_

If the builder is known, please list here: _Unknown_

Date of construction (can be approximate): _1953_

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 Allied Chemical and Dye Organic Research Center was designed by Wigton-Abbott Corporation and constructed in 1953. The International Style building is a two-story masonry and steel-frame structure with a basement. The asymmetrical façade is composed of tan brick exterior walls, ribbon windows, and a flat roof that emphasizes the building's horizontality. The front of the building has three visually distinct sections: the elongated south wing, the entry core, and the boxy north wing. While the storefront windows of the north wing are broken up into sections by brown brick panels that simulate a vertical floating mass, the south wing is longer and has unbroken ribbon windows that further emphasize the horizonal mass of the building. These two juxtaposing wings are separated by an entry core that projects from the south wing and is recessed from the north wing. The entry is clad with large, rectangular red granite panels. The entry core is nearly a story taller in height than its wings, with a high parapet and floating rooftop penthouse. The double-door storefront entry is also asymmetrically located on the façade, and is accessed by a small flight of concrete steps or an ADA ramp with metal handrails. At the south end of the building is a three-story stair tower with ribbon windows and an aluminum storefront entrance.

The rear elevation of the Research Center shares the appearance of the south wing of the façade. It has two rows of ribbon windows and a tan brick exterior. A one-story wing that aligns with the façade's entry core projects from the rear elevation. In ca. 2002, a large, L-shaped warehouse addition was constructed onto the (rear) west elevation, and wrapped around the north elevation of the addition. The north elevation of the addition is flush or slightly recessed from the north elevation of the original building. The addition has a concrete block foundation, a flat roof, and vertical metal siding. Two loading doors are located on the addition's west elevation.

The interior plan of the Research Center is primarily divided into circulation spaces, large gathering spaces or labs, offices, and secondary or mechanical spaces. The first-floor lobby has an enclosed, storefront entry vestibule, which is likely modern (post 1989) based upon its intrusions into the space. The lobby is otherwise a large open space with a grand half-turn staircase to the north with metal handrails. The lobby provides access to the north, rear, and south wings. On both the first and second floor, the north wing plan includes a large open space with a few partitioned areas for offices or storage. These areas may have historically served as chemical laboratories, but this is currently unconfirmed. The south wing is composed of small subdivided offices on both floors. Offices have drywall/gypsum walls, acoustical ceiling tiles, and carpeted or vinyl tile flooring (much of which is no longer extant, though ghosting remains). The basement is primarily composed of large mechanical rooms. The interior of the building is in poor condition due to extended vacancy and water infiltration.

Other resources on the property include a ca. 1959 mechanical building on the west side of the Research Center. The mechanical building has a tan brick exterior, a flat roof, and metal coping. A metal pedestrian entry door is located on the north elevation. A large opening on the south elevation has been boarded over. Another secondary resource is located on the north side of the Research Center. While its exact construction date is unknown, it appears to have been constructed by ca. 1984 and served as a storage warehouse and/or mechanical purposes. It has exposed CMU walls and a gable roof. Double metal doors are located on the west elevation.

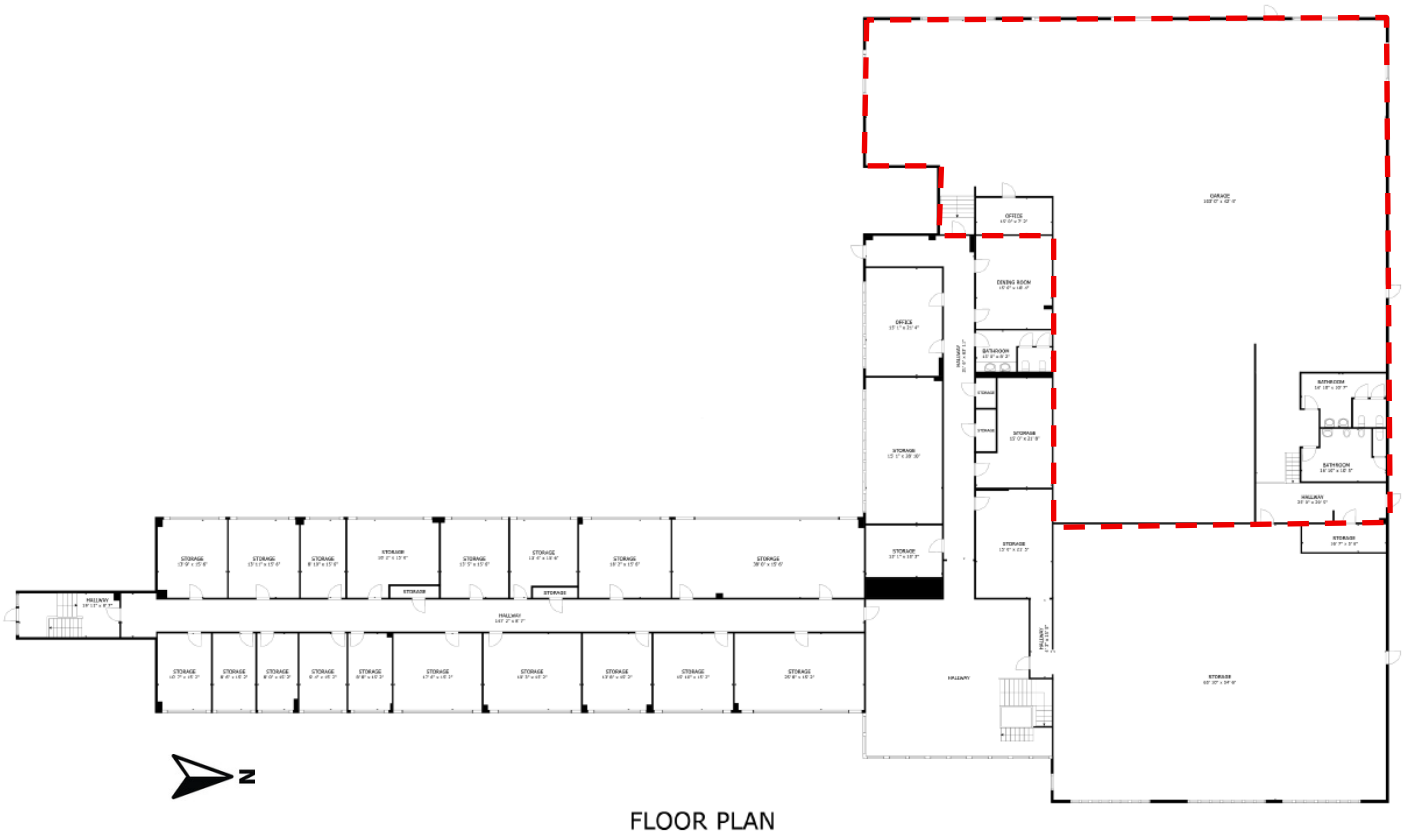


Figure 1: Typical plan for first and second floor. Dashed red line indicates location of modern addition. North arrow is approximate.

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.

- Mechanical Building, ca. 1959, contributing structure
- CMU Storage Building, ca. 1984, non-contributing building

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 Allied Chemical and Dye Organic Research Center is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Science. Constructed in 1953, the Organic Research Center served as the laboratory and offices for chemists that studied nitrogen for its use industrial and agricultural uses. Researchers at the Hopewell lab were members of the corporation's nitrogen division, and focused primarily on nitrogen fertilizer solutions produced by Allied Chemical and Dye, which were sold worldwide. The scientific contributions of the research and discoveries made at the Organic Research Center improved production of nitrogen fertilizers, which resulted in economic and agricultural benefits for American farmers and consumers. The Allied Chemical and Dye Organic Research Center closed in ca. 1989. The period of significance for the property begins with the laboratory's construction in 1953 and ends in 1976. Despite ongoing operation through the 1980s, Allied Chemical began to expand its product base and the Nitrogen Division began to shift focus in the late 1970s. Future research may reveal additional information to support the exceptional significance of the scientific findings of the Hopewell Organic Research Center after 1976, at this time it does not appear to be eligible for Criteria Consideration G.

Allied Chemical and Dye's Hopewell Plant, located a short distance east of the Organic Research Center, opened in 1928. The Hopewell Plant was one of the largest producers of synthetic ammonia following World War I. It filled a critical gap in the American chemical industry that "freed the country from the need to import Chilean nitrates."[1] The Hopewell's Plant also utilized nitrogen to produce both agricultural products, as well as wartime products during World War II. Company president Hugo Riemer proposed that Allied's synthetic nitrogen was of "great importance in the feeding of America, as well as defending her."[2] Locally, Allied Chemical and Dye was one of Hopewell's leading employers and was one of several important industrial plants located along the banks of the James River.

In 1952, Allied Chemical & Dye established a specific Nitrogen Division, which was responsible for the ongoing "production and sale of ammonia and nitrogen products."[3] The Division was the "leading U.S. manufacturer of nitrogen products" in the 1950s.[4] In line with the company's long history of chemical research and product development, the Nitrogen Division hired research chemists to assist in the advancement of nitrogen products. Organic chemistry was an expanding field by the mid-twentieth century, and its importance to industrial production was expected to continue to increase over time due to the need for efficient crop production and development of nuclear weapons. When Allied Chemical and Dye opened the Hopewell Organic Research Center, its officials claimed that the research facilities based in Hopewell made the city "one of the [industrial] leading research centers of the south."[5] Additionally, the new, state of the art research facility situated Hopewell as an emerging leader in the American science frontier, which promised to open up new opportunities for the local, state, and national economy.

Research had long been a critical component of the synthetic chemical industry by the early 1950s in the United States and in Europe. At the close of World War II, Allied Chemical's research programs accelerated across the spectrum of its products. From 1948 to 1960, eight corporate research centers where established and

[1] Dr. John Crosby, "A History of Allied Chemical," Paper Presented to the American Chemical Society, Chicago, Sept 1958, Rev 1961.
[2] "Nitrogen Plant Lunch, Emblem Ceremony Held," *The Hopewell News,* 14 October 1953.
[3] Crosby, "A History of Allied Chemical."
[4] "Leading Producer," *The Hopewell News,* 12 October 1953.
[5] "Speakers at Dedication Call it Growing Field," *The Hopewell News,* 14 October 1953.

expenditures increased from $8 million to $20 million. Allied Chemical constructed its Central Research Laboratory in Morristown, N. J. in 1948. When Allied established separate divisions, each was furnished with its own research center to include up-to-date laboratories and equipment. Each of the research centers, including Hopewell's Organic Research Center, worked closely with the Central Research Lab. Although each of the divisional labs concentrated their efforts on the study of their specific product areas, they were also granted autonomy to conduct research on other fields.[6]

Hopewell's Organic Research Center was completed in 1953. The International Style building designed by Wigton-Abbott Corporation featured modern design aesthetics that had gained popularity for corporate offices and institutions. The interior included two floors of research rooms, drafting rooms, offices, and laboratories. In total, the T-shaped building provided 30,000 square feet of air-conditioned space for the Nitrogen Division's employees. In addition to modern heating and cooling, the building was flooded with light due to its expansive ribbon windows and modern light fixtures. The building was also designed with future growth in mind, as its north, south, and rear wings were constructed to accommodate the addition of another floor or additional wings. The south wing, which is visually the longest portion of the building housed offices, a drafting room, and conference rooms. The north wing had nine laboratories, two instrument rooms, stock rooms, and several offices. The central and rear wings were reserved for administrative offices, break rooms, and circulation. The penthouse, which is an aesthetically modern design, had a functional purpose. Inside the penthouse special equipment created distilled water that was piped into the laboratories. The building also featured advanced safety features for its time including individual controls for electricity, gas, steam, compressed air, and water for each laboratory. Each lab had a fireproof door and a small fireproof building was located on the site to house flammable chemicals, keeping the riskiest elements away from the building and those that worked inside when not in use.[7]

In mid-October 1953, leaders from Allied Chemical and Dye Corporate office and Hopewell Plant hosted a multi-day grand opening event for the new Organic Research Center. With local officials, employees, and Hopewell residents in attendance, Allied Chemical's executives celebrated the expansion of their research program and explained the importance of the work that would come out of the new center. They provided tours of the facilities and demonstrated the use of the specialty labs and equipment.

Limited information on the specifics of the day-to-day operations and discoveries made by employees of the Organic Research Center is available, which is common for corporate conglomerates that have undergone mergers or are no longer in operation. However, a history of Allied Chemical prepared in 1961 noted a significant discovery made by scientists in Hopewell. Through testing and experimentation, scientists at the Hopewell Organic Research Center discovered a nitrogen fertilizer solution for direct application in the late 1950s.[8] This discovery allowed for the production of liquid nitrogen fertilizer in place of dry pellets. Liquid fertilizer was easier to apply and coated the soil more evenly resulting in better crop yields.[9] Allied Chemical advertised the new fertilizer product as a way to make the American farmer's work less strenuous and more profitable. Liquid fertilizer was produced at Allied Chemical's Hopewell plant as well as a plant in Pulaski, Virginia until the late 1970s. During the 1980s, Allied began to reduce its nitrogen production and diversify its products further. By the mid-to-late 1980s, the Nitrogen Division of Allied Chemical and Dye was dissolved. Other corporations such as Acadian, however, continued to produce and sell liquid nitrogen fertilizer.

While additional details regarding the closure of Allied Chemical's Hopewell Organic Research Center remain unclear and require additional research, it appears based upon tax records that the company sold the property in

[6] Crosby, "A History of Allied Chemical."
[7] "Striking Features are Incorporated in New Buildings," *The Hopewell News,* 12 October 1953.
[8] Crosby, "A History of Allied Chemical."
[9] "The 1960s," https://www.willardag.com/timeline/blog-post-title-two-yds34 (accessed 1 April 2026).

1989. It is therefore likely, based on the larger conglomerate's general activities, that the research operations concluded sometime in the mid to late 1980s.

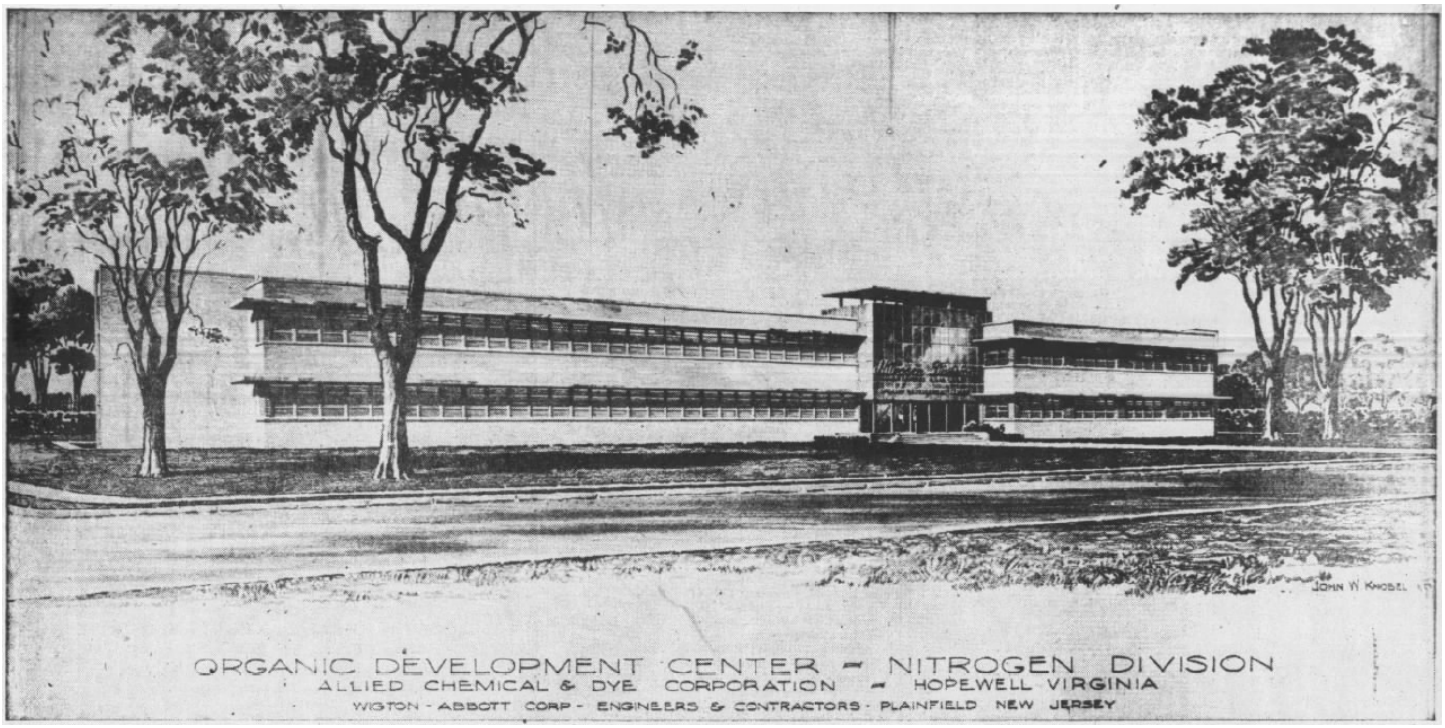


Figure 2: Architectural Rendering of the Organic Research Center by Wigton-Abbott in *The Hopewell News,* 12 October 1953.

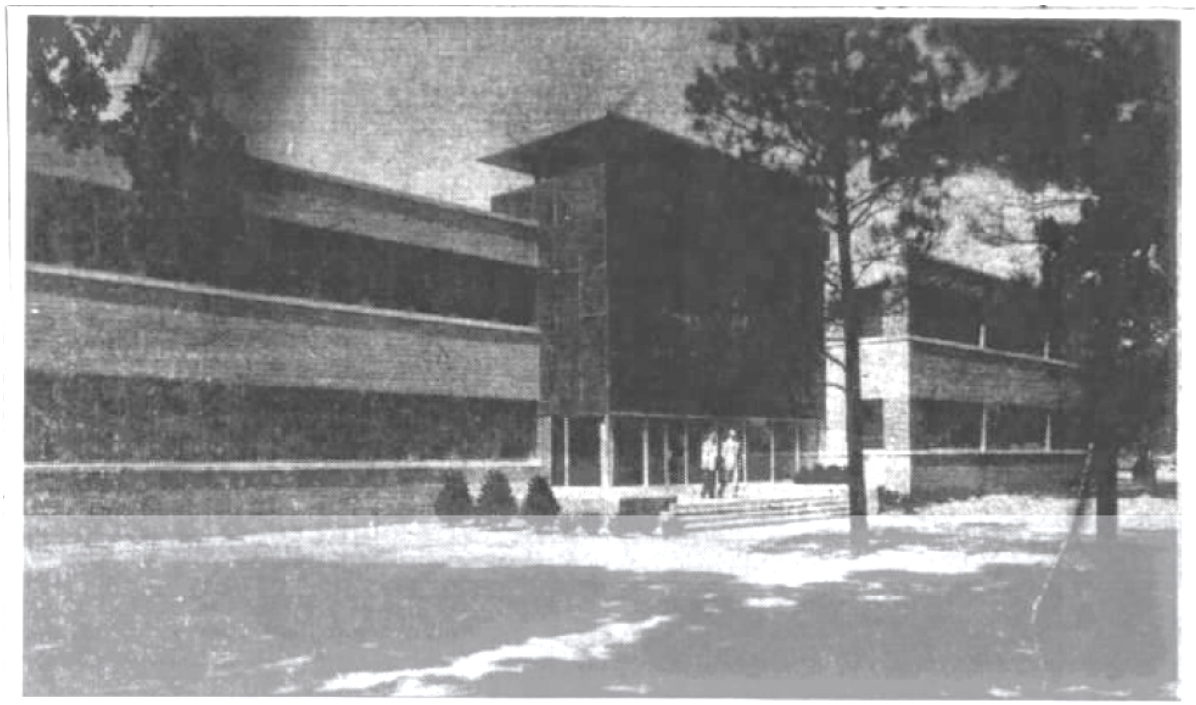


Figure 3: Image of the front of the Organic Research Center in *The Hopewell News*, 12 October 1953

Figure 4: Opening Ceremony of the Organic Research Center with Company Executives, employees, local residents and officials in attendance. The main entry lobby is in the background. Courtesy of The Hopewell News, 14 October 1953.

Figure 5: Image inside Allied Chemical and Dye's New Jersey Research Center, ca. 1967. While finishes may have been different, the long corridor flanked by smaller offices and research room resembles the plan of the Hopewell Research Center.

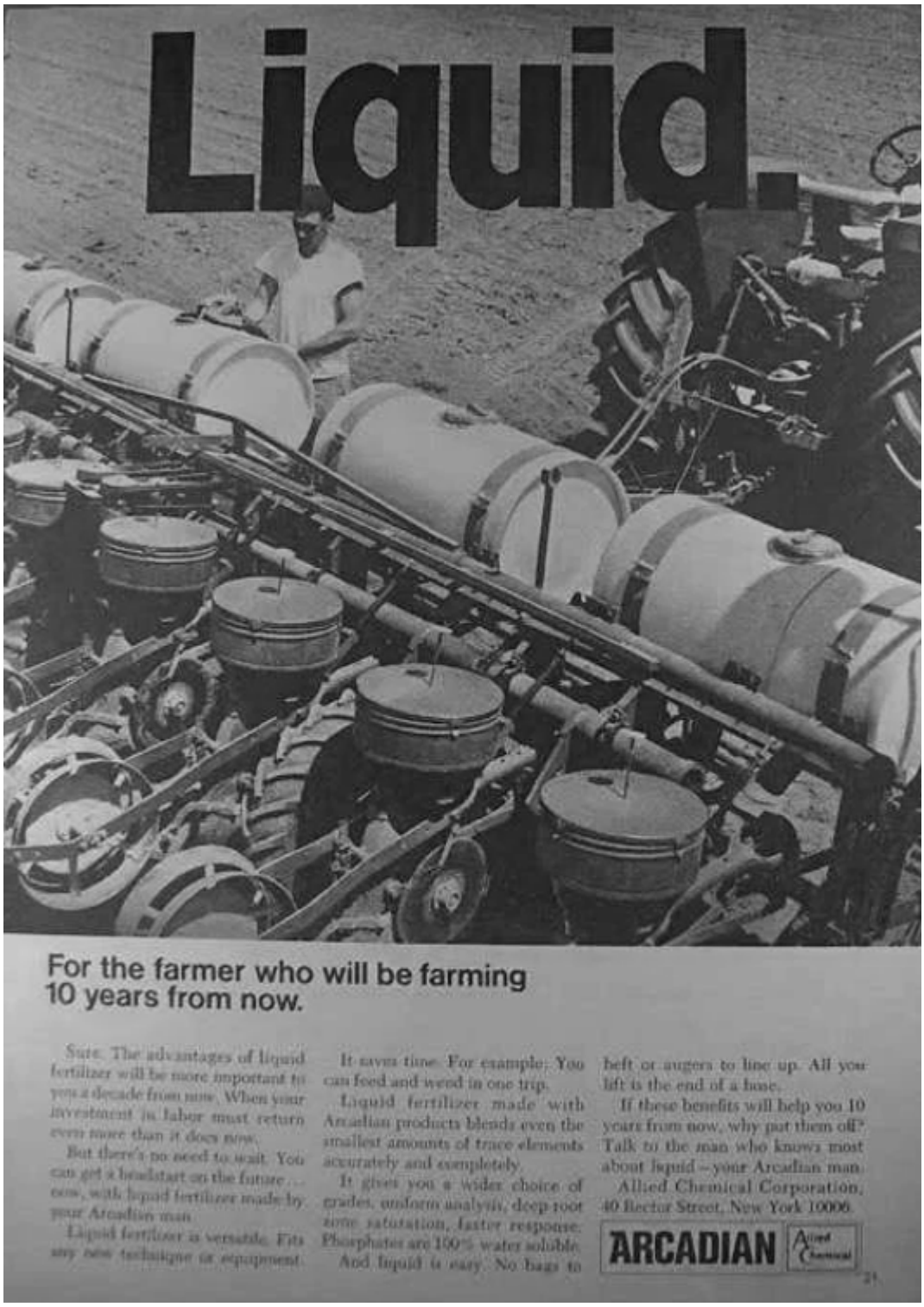


Figure 6: Allied Chemical Liquid Nitrogen Advertisement, ca. 1967.

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.)

- See Footnotes

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: _Delta Citation LLC & Powhite Land Company_____
organization: _Delta Citation LLC & Powhite Land Company_____
street & number: _14054 Wiley Circle_____
city or town: _Midlothian_____ state: _VA_____ zip code: _23114_____
e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: _____
Date: _____

• • 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: _Kayla Halberg_____
organization: _Commonwealth Preservation Group_____
street & number: _536 W 35th Street_____
city or town: _Norfolk_____ state: _VA_____ zip code: _23508_____
e-mail: _Admin@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: _757-923-1900_____
Date: _April 6, 2026_____

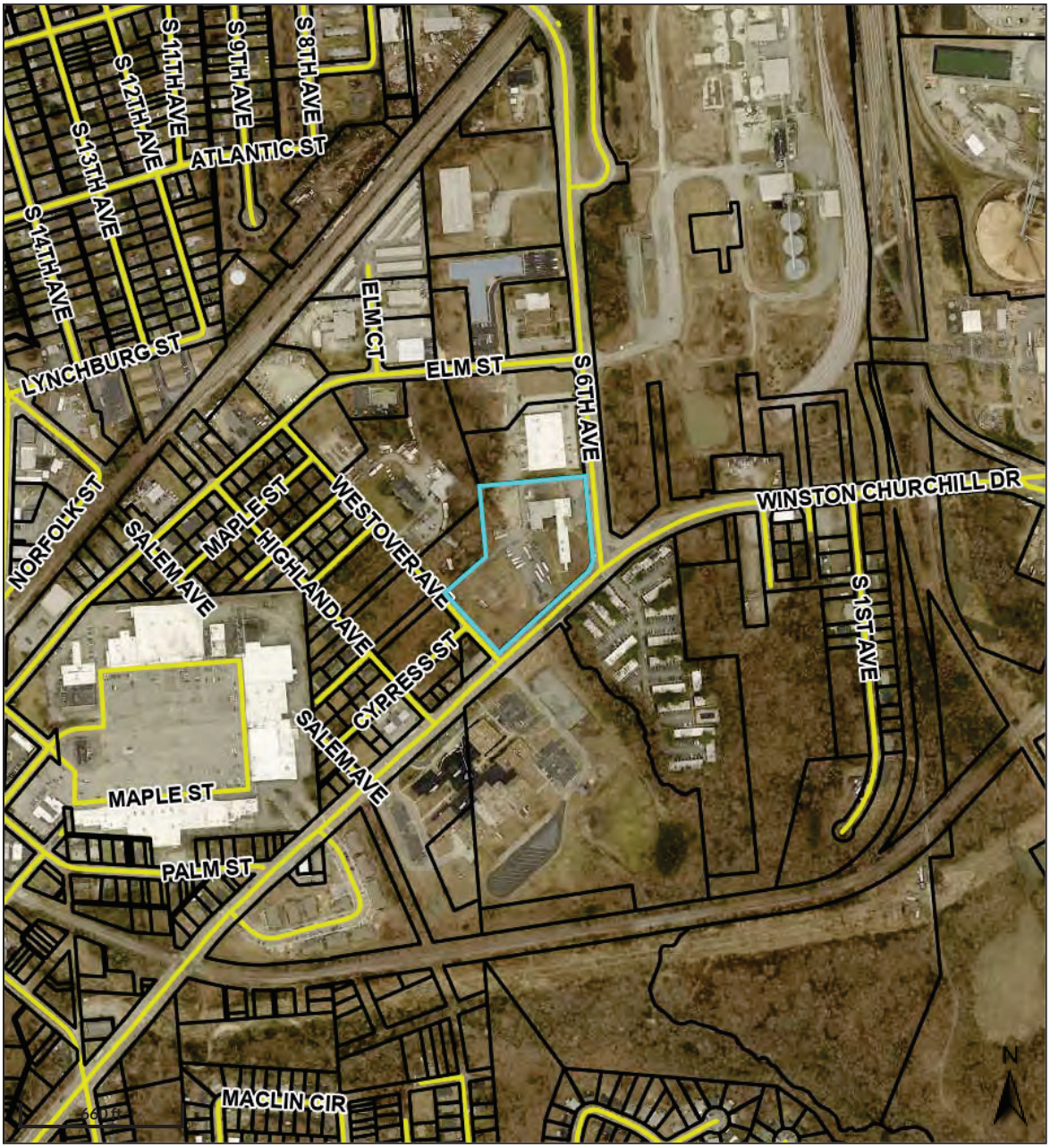
PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!

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.

qPublic.net™ City of Hopewell, VA

Allied Chemical and Dye Organic Research Center (DHR ID 116-5213)

710 S. 6th Avenue, Hopewell, VA



Overview

Legend

- Parcels
- Roads
- Water

PIF Location Map
Lat: 37.292969
Long:-77.290921

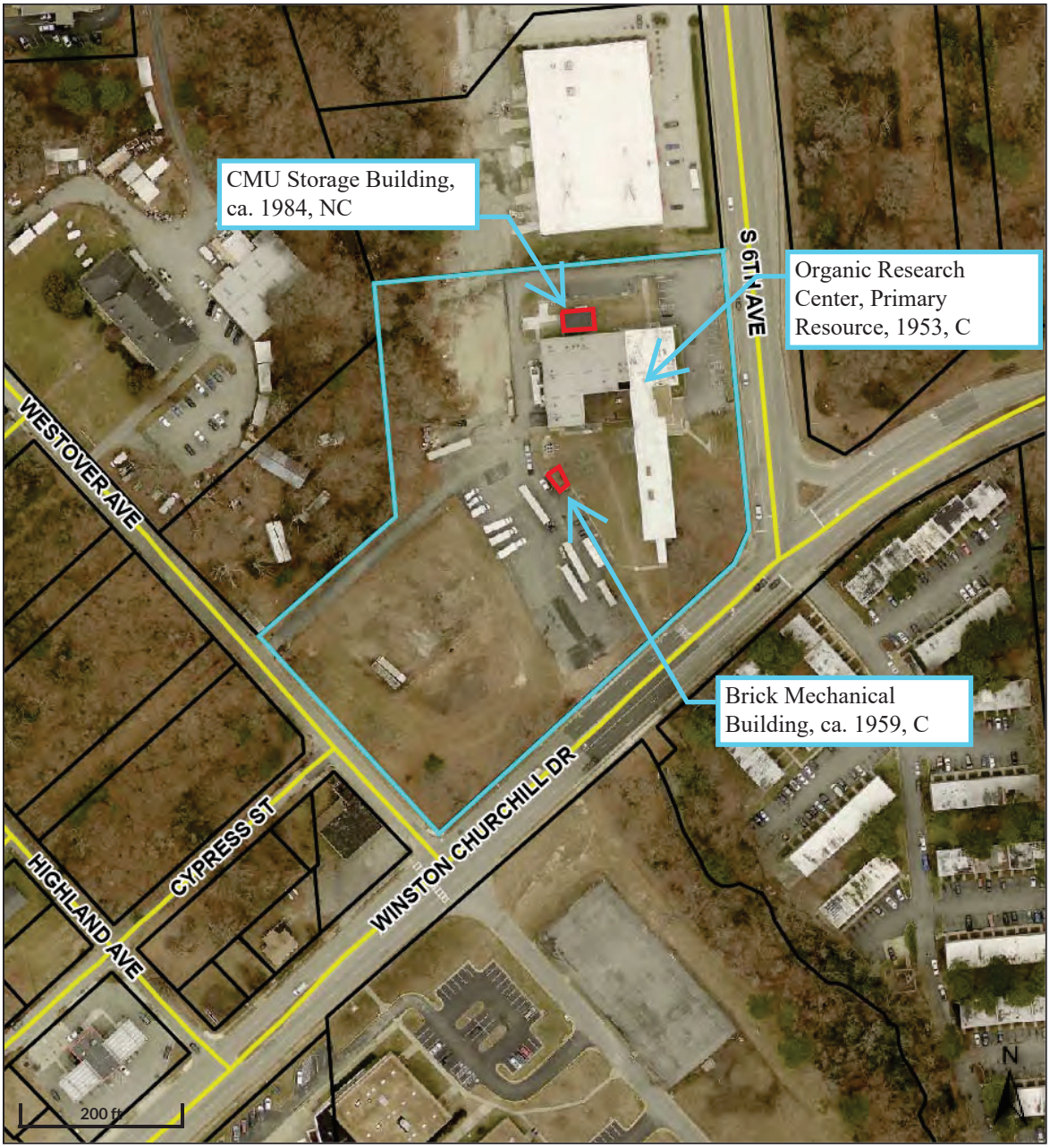
Property Boundary

Parcel ID	0610162	**Alternate ID**	0610162	**Owner Address**	DELTA CITATION LLC & POWHITE LAND COMPANY LLC 14054 WILEY CI MIDLOTHIAN, VA 23114
Sec/Twp/Rng	n/a	**Class**	4 Commercial/Industrial		
Property Address	710 S 6TH AVE HOPEWELL	**Acreage**	5.562		
District	02				
Brief Tax Description	PARCEL AR 5.562 ACS SUBDIVISION: MISCELLANEOUS ACREAGE (Note: Not to be used on legal documents)				

qPublic.net™ City of Hopewell, VA

Allied Chemical and Dye Organic Research Center (DHR ID 116-5213)

710 S. 6th Avenue, Hopewell, VA



Overview

Legend

- Parcels
- Roads
- Water

PIF Sketch Map

- Property Boundary
- Secondary Resources

Parcel ID	0610162	**Alternate ID**	0610162	**Owner Address**	DELTA CITATION LLC & POWHITE LAND COMPANY LLC 14054 WILEY CI MIDLOTHIAN, VA 23114
Sec/Twp/Rng	n/a	**Class**	4 Commercial/Industrial		
Property Address	710 S 6TH AVE HOPEWELL	**Acreage**	5.562		
District	02				
Brief Tax Description	PARCEL AR 5.562 ACS SUBDIVISION: MISCELLANEOUS ACREAGE (Note: Not to be used on legal documents)				


710
710


NO
TRESPASSING


WIN
All Deliveries Around Back
NO TRESPASSING


EXIT


KEEP
DOOR
CLOSED


FIRE


EXIT
WINSOME
Cub Cadet


DANGER
HAZARDOUS WASTE
STORAGE AREA