



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES**

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 052-5122

**Purpose of Evaluation**

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

We want to preserve the house and its history so that future generations can see firsthand how their forefathers lived prior to the Civil War.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

**1. General Property Information**

Property name: DUFF MANSION HOUSE

Property address: 4354 KANE GAP ROAD

City or Town: DUFFIELD

Zip code: 24244

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

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

Building X Site \_\_\_\_\_ Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 0.8 ACRE

Setting (choose only one of the following):

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

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

The house is located on a small knoll. There are Norway spruce, maple, chestnut, and dogwood trees in the yard. Nearby are a dairy barn, cow barn, and a smoke house. There are lots fenced in around the barns, with a creek running alongside the property. A hay field across the highway is directly in front of the house, with pasture land and two other hay fields adjoining the property. The setting is pastoral.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Vague Federal- and Greek Revival-style references

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: Unknown

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca. 1830

#### **Narrative Description:**

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, 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 architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The original house is two rooms wide, and two rooms lengthways, with an open stairway and a spacious hall room in the middle. The original upstairs front porch had windows and/or screens, and was a "sleeping porch". The left hand of the rear was an open roofed two-story porch. The original configuration of the right rear contains a kitchen with built-in storage areas. On the second floor above the kitchen is a room with a bin which could easily hold a ton of flour/meal which was accessed in the kitchen closet with a bin/sifter. The dining room is between the kitchen and living room (which is in the right front right of the house), and connected to the kitchen by both a door and a pass-through shelved cabinet, through which to pass the food to keep the heat from those who were dining. Immediately above the dining room were the living quarters for the slave cook. Her quarters were accessed by a tight spiral staircase located on the right side of the dining room. To the rear of the kitchen is a springhouse with a built-in concrete water trough to hold crocks of dairy products. In later years, the spring water was piped in from several hundred yards up the mountain. The water runs 24/7 in the springhouse.

A bathroom was added which included a sink, claw foot tub, and commode. The walls are shiplap, and the floor is wood.

The house's interior has original floors, plaster (hand-split white oak splines with horsehair plaster), staircase, doors, built-ins, and chimney presses. The wood is walnut.

The house rests on split log sills, limestone rocks and brick. The cellar walls and floor are brick with large limestone rocks (steps) leading down into the cellar. The house is a frame house with four fireplaces, two of which are brick and two remodeled with concrete. The kitchen chimney is made of handmade brick.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

February 2018 survey:

1) A 19<sup>th</sup>-century smoke house is located close to (behind) the house. The one-story front-gabled building is constructed of sawn “plank” logs, half-dovetail-notched at the corners, on a fieldstone foundation. The exterior was clad with vertical boards, but only those on the front remain. The building is in deteriorated condition.

2) Also behind the house is a long, rectangular one-story dairy barn, constructed of concrete block ca. 1940. It has a side-gable roof clad with V-crimp sheet metal panels. Although not currently in-use, the building is in reasonably good condition.

3) East of the house is a fairly large, front-gabled frame hay barn, in somewhat deteriorated condition. The exterior is clad with unpainted vertical boards.

#### 4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as 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.)

According to family lore, the Duff Mansion House is the last surviving structure built and lived in by the family of Archibald Scott, who was a victim of the infamous Cherokee Chief Bob Benge, who, along with his children, was killed elsewhere on the original property. In later generations it became the foremost of local plantations in the Pre-Civil War period. The house was later owned by the Duff family, for whom the nearby town of Duffield was named.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

February 2018 survey:

The Duff Mansion, as it is known locally, appears to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture/Craftsmanship, at the local level of significance. The frame house, built ca. 1830, has intact, cut-nailed weatherboards behind the aluminum siding. The foundation is constructed of coursed limestone ashlar stonework. The house interior is exceptionally well preserved, the work of local craftsmen presumably working on-site. The woodwork throughout the house, including the central and secondary staircases, fireplace mantels, built-in chimney presses and other cabinetry including a punctate-tin pie safe and kitchen pantry, and numerous doors, is fashioned of Walnut lumber likely felled on the property. Virtually all of the many doors, including those of the cabinetry, match in both materials and design, each hand-planed with two to five peaked panels providing authentic vernacular character. Some of the best-preserved doors, on the second floor, have three to five panels and original hardware. The mantels lack stylish carvings, but are highly simplified vernacular adaptations of regional Federal-style designs. The central stair design is typical of the 1820s and 1830s in the region, with newels in the form of slender colonettes, and the balusters are square in cross section. The interior walls and ceilings are treated with three-coat plaster applied to riven lath fastened with machine-cut nails. The floors throughout the house are also original heart pine, although some later flooring has been applied on top of the original floor in the first-floor central passage. Throughout the house, particularly in the enclosed rear porch and one-story rear ell, is an abundance of hand-planed wooden material. The small basement under the southeast corner of the house, entered via an exterior bulkhead with limestone steps, has common-bond hand-made-brick walls, perfect for food storage year around.

**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:  EUNICE AND MARY RUTH LASTER

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

street & number:  4354 KANE GAP ROAD

city or town:  DUFFIELD  state:  VA  zip code:  24244

e-mail:  mrlaster5@gmail.com  telephone:  276-546-2426

Legal Owner's Signature:  Eunice Laster Mary Ruth Laster  Date:  April 2018

**•• 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. 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 or City Manager.

name/title:  DANE POE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

locality:  COUNTY OF LEE

street & number:  P.O. BOX 367

city or town:  JONESVILLE  state:  VA  zip code:  24263

telephone:  276-346-7714