



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

STATE REVIEW BOARD

APPROVED MINUTES

2:00 p. m. May 4, 2016

Collections Study Room, Department of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221

State Review Board Members Present

- Joseph D. Lahendro, Vice-Chair
Dr. Sara Bon-Harper
Dr. Lauranett Lee
Dr. Carl Lounsbury
John Salmon

State Review Board Members Absent

- Dr. Elizabeth Moore, Chair
Dr. Gabrielle Lanier

Department of Historic Resources Staff Present

- M. Wagner
E. Lipford
C. Jones
M. Pulice
A. Von Lindern
M. Bezirdjian
L. McDonald
C. Loth

Guests (from sign-in sheet): Marcus Pollard (Suffolk Peanut Company; Virginia Beach Courthouse Village and Municipal Center Historic District); David Sacks (Highland Springs Historic District); Geleene Goffena (Highland Springs Historic District); Jim Hill (Virginia Commission for the Blind); Bhaskar Alan Deva (Yogaville Historic District); Alan Asangan Binstock (Yogaville Historic District); Swami Sarvadnanda (Yogaville Historic District); Susie Peters (BHR); Chip Mann (BHR)

Vice-Chair Lahendro chaired the meeting in the absence of the SRB Chair Elizabeth Moore. Vice-Chair Lahendro called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Preliminary Information Applications

The following proposals were endorsed, unless otherwise noted, with the following comments:

Northern Region.....presented by Aubrey Von Lindern

- 1. Bowman, Jacob, House, Shenandoah County, #085-0207, Criterion C

Mr. Lahendro noted some of the outbuildings are deteriorated. Ms. Von Lindern said the kitchen building was lost just a couple of years ago during a storm. Mr. Lounsbury asked if the demolished kitchen's location is known, to

which Ms. Von Lindern replied yes. Dr. Lounsbury asked when the wing was added to the main house. According to DHR records, the surveyor, Jim Massey, estimated it was constructed about 15 years after the main house. Its original function is not known, but it has a private second-floor entrance that may indicate it was partially used as a servants' quarters.

2. Brick House, Fauquier County, #030-5727, Criteria B and C

Mr. Salmon asked when Paul Mellon moved out of the house. Ms. Peters said Mellon's first wife died in 1947. Mellon remarried in 1948. He and his second wife took several years to build a new house and they ceased using the Brick House as a residence in 1955. Mr. Salmon asked why the 1961 buildings are non-contributing, and Ms. McDonald said the POS ends when the house was no longer a residence of Mellon's, and the 1961 buildings were not part of the original conception by Delano & Aldrich. Mr. Lahendro asked for the house's historic use as an entertainment complex to be documented if a nomination proceeds, as well as a site plan that identifies the contributing resources' functions.

3. Washington Graded School, Rappahannock County, #078-5187, Criteria A and C

The SRB endorsed the PIF without comment.

**Western Region.....presented by Michael Pulice**

1. Blair Apartments, City of Salem, #129-5142, Criteria A and C

Mr. Lahendro asked if there are similar properties in Salem. Mr. Pulice said this is the only garden apartment complex he is aware of in that city.

**Eastern Region.....presented by Marc Wagner and Elizabeth Lipford**

1. Highland Springs Historic District, Henrico County, #043-5334, Criteria A and C

Mr. Lahendro asked if a commercial center was part of the original design. Mr. Wagner said yes, and it is a small downtown district with: the original Methodist church; a Masonic lodge; a few storefronts from the 1890s-1900; and 1940s automobile businesses. Mr. Sacks said an original 1890s trolley depot was integrated into a Bungalow after streetcar service ended. The NRHP-listed Henrico Theater is also within the commercial area. Mr. Lahendro asked that the nomination include discussion of the commercial area, schools, parks, and other community elements in addition to the houses, as well as how it all developed over time. Mr. Sacks explained that DHR has funded a 250-property survey to ascertain the area's character and establish historic boundaries. There were three options that resulted from this survey: 1) a small commercial historic district; 2) a larger historic district that covers the neighborhood's original 1901 plat and encompasses about 1,250 properties; 3) and an even larger historic district that includes 1,700 properties which are within the total built-out boundaries of Highland Springs. The SRB endorsed the 1,250-property historic district to proceed at this time.

2. Suffolk Peanut Company, City of Suffolk, #133-5568, Criteria A and C

Mr. Lahendro asked when the facility stopped production. Mr. Pollard said it is still used for peanut storage. Processing ended in the 1990s or early 2000s. Mr. Lahendro requested that a site plan be provided that explains the function of each building/structure, also to be described in nomination. He also asked for an explanation of why there were three mills on the property. Mr. Pollard said the first was a cotton mill that wasn't needed; the second mill burned; the third mill is extant.

3. Virginia Beach Courthouse Village and Municipal Center Historic District, City of Virginia Beach, #134-5299, Criteria A and C

Ms. Lipford asked about the parking lots included within the proposed historic district. Mr. Pollard said all of them were designed to serve the complex's administrative buildings and were part of the original master plan. Ms. Lipford asked about earlier courthouse resources. Mr. Pollard said a newer administrative building is on the site of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century jail. Ms. Lipford asked if any 19<sup>th</sup>-century village courthouse resources are present or if their locations are known. Mr. Pollard said the Buffington-Whitehurst House has high archaeological potential. The spaces at the rear of the courthouse were extensively disturbed during the 1960s construction activity within the

complex. Mr. Pollard said the archaeology was related to the property's history as a plantation and to African American cultural deposits. Mr. Wagner asked if the boundary around the Buffington-Whitehurst House should be expanded. Mr. Pollard said it could be expanded based on the archaeological potential. Ms. Lipford asked about the Kellam House; Mr. Pollard said the full parcel is included, and encompasses quite a bit of acreage. Dr. Lounsbury recommended looking into land and court records for plats of the historic courthouse square (usually 2 acres) and for the jail area (usually about 10 acres), as well as location information for a tavern. Other early buildings also might be shown which could inform the archaeology potential discussion. Dr. Lounsbury also said photographs from the 1905 dedication of the Confederate monument on the courthouse square might be available from newspaper articles at the time. Dr. Lounsbury recommended that the courthouse buildings themselves have significance at the state level for being representative of a local government center across two centuries, from the Colonial era to the post-WWII expansion of government services. Dr. Lounsbury said that the historic district's commercial enterprises are typical of a courthouse town because the public buildings have always been magnets for commercial development. The 1920s auto repair shop would have replaced an earlier livery, again showing change over time in the district. The SRB agreed that the historic district is significant at the state level.

4. Virginia Commission for the Blind, City of Richmond, #127-6808, Criteria B and C

Mr. Lahendro asked if the property was a state government building used to investigate conditions for blind workers. Mr. Wagner said yes, and it also was used for advocacy. Mr. Hill said the organization provided training to blind workers, marketed products made by the workers, and noted that the complex included a showroom where the goods were shown. Mr. Lahendro asked if this property was associated with a state facility in Staunton. Mr. Hill said that the agency head (Watts) assisted with training programs at the Staunton facility but there was not a formal relationship. Mr. Lahendro asked if the property has architectural features specific to its association with the blind. Mr. Wagner said no.

5. Yogaville Historic District, Buckingham County, #014-5067, Criteria A and C, Criteria Considerations A and G

Mr. Lahendro asked about the property's areas of architectural history significance. Ms. Lipford explained that the community was founded by Swami Satchidananda, a teacher who dedicated his life to interfaith and antiwar movements; he rose to national prominence during the late 1960s when he led a prayer at the Woodstock music festival. Ms. Lipford said the ashram as a whole was evaluated with the temple complex as an important component, and also looked at the complex as an example of Vastu Shastra design tenets, which originated in India hundreds of years ago and remain in use today. Mr. Lahendro asked if any of the residential or educational buildings also show an Eastern influence. Mr. Deva explained that Vastu Shastra principles were used in the whole community, such as the symmetry of the quad, and the temple complex was inspired by ancient Indian stone temples but adapted to current use; i.e., instead of a temple tank for ablutions, there is a manmade lake. The lower level of the temple is designed to show similarities among all the world religions, while the upper level is designed to convey a message of unity of faith without a need for words. Mr. Binstock explained that he designed the quad area to be similar to a college campus or a small town where a variety of needs are met, along with symmetry of design and placement of resources.

Ms. Lipford said the property was evaluated in the context of the U.S. interfaith movement which has origins in the 1890s (notably the Congress of World Religions at the 1892 World's Fair). Interfaith groups formed across the U.S. as a result. Mr. Lahendro asked how the historic district meets Criteria Consideration G. Ms. Lipford explained that the vision and principles for the complex originated in the 1960s, and that this religious property is unique in Virginia, and it is associated with a significant ethnic/religious group under-represented in the NRHP. Swami Sarvahnanda explained that the first version of the Lotus Temple was published in the 1950s by Swami Satchidinanda, who founded the Yogaville ashram. The property was always envisioned as a community, not a commune, that included a variety of religious practitioners from multiple faiths. She cited two Sikh temples in Reston and Herndon, in which religious members also purchased adjacent properties to create a community, as the closest similar examples to a religious community like Yogaville in Virginia. She also likened it to traditional Jewish communities that are oriented around a temple, and a historic community such as Tangier Island where the traditional lifeways and economy are being maintained. The Yogaville community's interests also include care for

the environment, a sustainable economy, and the senior community. Mr. Lahendro asked if the nomination's discussion of Criterion C would include guidance on the community's future development. Mr. Deva said the Vashtu Shastra principles will remain in use in the future as they have been since the community was established. The five elements – earth, air, water, fire, and ether – are central to Vashtu Shastra. Mr. Lahendro recommended that the nomination include a clear explanation of how these principles were applied at Yogaville and their origins.

Mr. Binstock explained that a “temple zone” is informed by the three main components of the temple complex (the LOTUS Temple and two shrines), with approaches to it continuing to be layered; the quad area is organized the same way. The residential buildings do not use the same formality in their spatial relationships. Dr. Bon-Harper asked if Criteria Consideration G applies to the historic district. Ms. Lipford said yes. She added that the LOTUS Temple itself was evaluated for individual eligibility and the staff recommended it did not meet Criteria Consideration G in its own right but preferred to evaluate it within the context of the entire ashram. Mr. Wagner explained that the temple's design was in process for many years before construction began. The temple design existed first and Swami Satchidananda searched for the right place on which to build it and found it in Buckingham County. Mr. Deva explained that sites in California and Connecticut were seriously considered but rejected. The Buckingham County site worked because of its rural character, the “S” bend in the nearby river, and the calm setting where people from everywhere could travel. Mr. Salmon said the property could be nationally significant, but a thorough comparative analysis is not possible presently. However, the property's state significance seems appropriate based on what is known now. Ms. Lipford said that staff at the Smithsonian Institution support the property's NRHP eligibility due to its significance to Indian culture in the U.S. The University of Virginia's special collections museum also is working to partner with the archives at Yogaville.

Mr. Lahendro adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.