

Submitting a PIF

Once you have completed the PIF, submit it to **DHR's Archivist** at the mailing address at the top of this page or via email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov. The PIF will be forwarded to the Regional staff member who will review your PIF and will answer any questions you may have about the evaluation process. Do not include materials for other DHR programs, such as easements or tax credits, with your PIF.

Note: All submitted materials become the property of DHR and will be retained in our permanent Archive. In addition, the materials will be posted on DHR's public website for a period of time during the evaluation process.

Thank you for taking the time to prepare and submit a Preliminary Information Form to DHR!



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) 004-5047

1. General Property Information

Property name: Russell Grove High School Building

Property address: 8701 Otterburn Road

City or Town: Amelia, VA

Zip code: 23002

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Amelia Courthouse VA

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

Building X Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 6 1/2 acres

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:

The Russell Grove High School building is located at 8701 Otterburn Road (Route 614) 0.1 miles south of Leidig Street (Route 634) on the left when traveling south of the Village of Amelia Courthouse, Virginia. The renovated school building sits on a 6 1/2 acre parcel in the current Amelia County Public School campus community, across from the middle school (formerly the consolidated Russell Grove Elementary School) and Anderson Lumber Company. An additional wing (currently housing the Amelia County School Board offices) was added in 1950, and there are two white cinder brick buildings (formerly Agricultural and Shop classrooms). A semi-circular driveway approaches the

building's two main entrance doors and continues around the entire building. The front has a small lawn, dotted by two trees, the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail site marker, and a RGHS brick and cement monument, outlined by stones and plants. There are parking lots on both sides of the building. Near the left side door there is access to a basement, used as the former high school's cafeteria. In the back is an softball field. The surrounding, slightly wooded neighborhood includes another sawmill, apartment building and residential homes.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Colonial

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: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1935

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.

In September 1935, the Russell Grove High School was built as an A-framed, brick-cement building with four classrooms, an auditorium, a library, and an office. The building architectural style is Colonial with a flat roof on the remaining portion of the building. The exterior construction is brick and cinder block, with numerous wood framed windows. The outer interior walls are cement with dry wall coverings. An adjacent building was added as a workshop for boys. In the following five years, a five-room home economics cottage was constructed on the adjacent grounds. *(In the early 1940s, the Russell Gove Elementary School was constructed on additional property acquired across the street).*

The additional modern wing that was added to the original school included three large classrooms. The library, teacher's lounge and a teacher's closet, and a science laboratory with a gas chamber, and a darkroom for developing film. The library had a conference room, book repair room, shelving space for over four thousand volumes, and a sufficient searing space to accommodate the student body at that time. There were boys' and girls' laboratories and individual student lockers along the hallway. The classrooms also included modern green boards and acoustic ceilings.

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.

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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 history of Russell Grove High School began in September, 1933 in the old historical chapel located on the grounds of the Russell Grove Presbyterian Church. The school was called Russell Grove High School because of its location near the church. Until almost the middle of the twentieth century, the history of public education for blacks in Amelia was spotty, poor and deficient. In the years following the Civil War, the Virginia landscape slowly became dotted with one or two room schools to provide elementary education for African Americans.

Significant event: The widow of a Union Army officer, Mrs. Samantha J. Neil, left her home in Pennsylvania in search of her husband's body. She never found her loved one but she discovered her life's work, teaching and providing education for the newly freed slaves. Through her influence six Negro Presbyterian churches were established in Amelia and Nottoway Counties among them, the Russell Grove Presbyterian Church in Amelia County (located at the current site of Zion Hill Presbyterian Church, 16900 Zion Hill Lane, Amelia, Virginia 23002).

Significant Persons: Miss Susie Shepperson was the first teacher with one class, joined by another teacher Mrs. Bolar in a second class the following year. Meanwhile, through the efforts of the Supervisor of Education, Mrs. Estelle Wingo, the elementary teachers, the County Wide League, Mrs. Alice P. Tyler, Rev. J. R. West, Rev. I. I. Wilkinson, Mrs. Maggie Richardson, and many others, four acres of land were purchased for four hundred dollars. Those same community groups raised over \$2,500.00 toward the construction of the Russell Grove Building on the new site.

Historical Significance & Person: Legendary Civil Rights Attorney Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson, and the local NAACP chapter advocated for free busses. No adequate means of transportation was provided for the pupils during the first year. Though a great struggle, the pupils were being transported in private cars of teachers and parents.

Robert Russa Moton, an American educator and author, was born in the Hillsman House at (Saylers Creek Battlefield Park) in Amelia County on August 26, 1867.¹¹ He served as an administrator at Hampton Institute. In 1915, he was named principal of Tuskegee Institute, after the death of founder Booker T. Washington, a position he held for 20 years until retirement in 1935. Moton graduated from the Hampton Institute in 1890. In 1891, Moton was appointed commandant of the male student cadet corps at Hampton Institute, equivalent to Dean of Men, serving in this position for more than a decade. He was informally known as the "Major".

Moton sat on the various national boards of major philanthropic organizations with the likes of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller Jr., and his influence was considerable. When Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, provided the funding to build more than 6,000 "Rosenwald" schools for rural Southern African Americans, Moton's skills were clearly in play behind the scenes.¹² Amelia County has 12 Rosenwald schools.

As the second principal of the Tuskegee Institute, he supported the work-study program and emphasized education, integrating liberal arts into the curriculum, establishing Bachelor of Science degrees in agriculture and education. He improved courses of study, especially in teacher training, elevated the quality of the faculty

and administration, constructed new facilities, and significantly increased the endowment by maintaining his connections to wealthy white benefactors in the North.¹⁰

During the WWI (1914-1918) he went to Europe on behalf of President Woodrow Wilson to investigate the conditions of black soldiers. He delivered the keynote address at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922.

The **Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail (CRIEHT)** encompasses 15 counties and 53 historic sites all located in South Central Virginia. While some of the sites are open to the public, others are roadside markers commemorating the historic events that took place during the Civil Rights Movement. Russell Grove Presbyterian Church and School is the first stop on the historical sites trail. All sites are a part of a very specific story—how students, teachers, school administrators, and community members played a vital role in changing America for the better.

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.)

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

Private: _____ Public\Local X Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Department of Historic Resources

Preliminary Information Form

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3/7/2023

Rev. September 2022

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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 organization:

A. Taylor Harvie III, Amelia County Administrator.

street & number: 16360 Dunn Street, Suite 101

city or town: Amelia, state: VA, zip code: 23002 e-mail: taylor.harvie@ameliacova.com

telephone 804-839-0039 (Harvie)

Legal Owner's Signature:

Date: 5/17/2024

Amelia County Board of Supervisors
by A. Taylor Harvie III County Administrator

• • **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: Sylvia Hicks, president, Russell Grove Association, Inc. organization: 8701

Otterburn Road street & number: Amelia, city or town: Virginia state: 23002 zip code:

russellgrovenews@gmail.com e-mail: (804) 839-4148 telephone: Date: March 19, 2024

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

ⁱ [Ronald L. Heinemann](#). "Robert Russa Moton (1867–1940)". *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. Retrieved January 1, 2012.

- [^] ["Archived copy"](#). Archived from [the original](#) on August 4, 2016. Retrieved May 25, 2016.
- [^] Williams, Chad (2010). *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era*. University of North Carolina Press. p. 199.
- [^] Washington, Mailing Address: 1100 Ohio Drive SW; Us, DC 20242 Phone: 202-426-6841 Contact. "[Dr. Robert Moton's Address at the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial – Lincoln Memorial \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)". [www.nps.gov](#). Retrieved March 22, 2023.
- [^]



8701 State Rte 614

Amelia Court House, Virginia



Google Street View

Aug 2023

See more dates



(634) Amelia Lumber



8701 State Rte 614

Amelia Court House, Virginia



Google Street View

Aug 2023

[See more dates](#)













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