



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) 033-5537

1. General Property Information

Property name: Union Hall Baptist Church

Property address: Intersection of Kemp Ford Road and Standiford Road

City or Town: Union Hall

Zip code: 24176

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

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

Building Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 0.51

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 triangular shaped property is located at the intersection of Standiford Road and Kemp Ford Road. The property has a single-story church building on the site that measures 22 feet by 32 feet. The entire property is overgrown with pine trees and the building is barely visible from the road.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): No discernable style

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: N/A

If the builder is known, please list here: Unknown

Date of construction (can be approximate): Estimated late 20th century/early 21st century

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 building on the property was used as a church from the early 1900s until the 1980s. The building was abandoned in the 1980s and has not been used since.

The following description was provided by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Architectural Survey Form DHR ID:033-5537 (2022 survey by T. Klatka):

The single-story church building was constructed with balloon framing, a continuous foundation of random-rubble, and a gabled-end roof covered with asphalt shingles. It measures about 22 feet wide by 32 feet long. A weatherboard exterior applied with wire nails was subsequently covered with asbestos siding. Six openings illuminate the nave, but the windows are no longer present. Two front doors, each with a set of poured concrete stairs, provide access to the interior. The western side of the roof has been breached by weather and is actively deteriorating. The interior east wall has a brick chimney that vented a stove that now sits in the nave detached and stripped of parts. The elevated sanctuary stills holds the wooded pulpit/lectern. A small rear addition measuring 8 by 16 feet is frame, rests on a continuous concrete block foundation, and includes a door with metal stairs to provide rear access to the sanctuary. The design and construction methods of the Union Hall Baptist Church building lack distinction and are similar to regional church buildings of the late 20th century and early 21st century. However, the church remains an integral reflection of a settlement system established by the first generation of enslaved people to gain their freedom and create a community following emancipation, and it symbolizes the freedom of religious expression that anchored the African American community to the landscape during the lengthy period from segregation through integration.

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.

- One unfinished concrete block foundation that measures 28 feet wide by 40 feet long.

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 Union Hall Baptist congregation started sometime before 1902 without a formal meeting place. Absent an actual church, congregations would often meet in the woods or at various neighbors' houses. There is a formal sale of the property recorded on August 1, 1902 from J.H. Dudley and his wife Sue M to Reverend R.E. Edwards and Bruce Robertson for \$1. On the deed it states: "deeded for purpose of building a Colored Baptist Church and no other purpose. In case there is no church built and used as such this deed shall be null and void." Both R.E. Edwards and Bruce Robertson were 29 at the time. So, it appears that Reverend Edwards was the Pastor for the church before there was a formal church, and he continued through property acquisition and building the church. It is believed that the parishioners build the church during the 1903-1906 era.

The Union Hall Baptist Church (Church) was a member of the Pigg River Missionary Baptist Association and was the first black Baptist church in Union Hall. This church was one of three churches in a rotation for Sunday Service. The other two churches were Mount Zion and Rising Sun Baptist. Service was held at the Church every fourth Sunday of the month. Services for the other Sundays were held at the other two churches. Each of the three churches had their own designated pastor. The Pigg River Missionary Baptist Association sponsored missionary activities such as building new churches. Individual churches like the Union Hall Baptist Church did not do actual missionary work however they supported missionary work through their contributions.

The pastors after the apparent founder Reverend R.E. Edwards include: Reverend Dent from Hardy, Reverend Robertson from Pittsylvania, Reverend Levy Martin from Pittsylvania, Reverend Lassie Jones, Reverend Miller, Reverend Vandel Muse and Reverend Wainwright (last Pastor).

The most information is known about Reverend Muse since he was available for an interview. Reverend Vandel Muse was granted a license to preach in 1981 and joined the church in 1983. Reverend Muse was ordained in 1985 and was then able to offer services including communion and baptism. Reverend Muse retired around 1987 since membership had declined precipitously. During Reverend Muse's tenure Sadie Cobbs was in charge of Pew money. Pew money consisted of contributions to the church for pews in the new church. Normally a Pastor would not touch any of the church money however he would be familiar with church finances. For some reason Reverend Muse was never briefed on church finances. Reverend Muse was pastor while the second foundation was installed for the new larger/better church. This second building was never completed due to financial limitations.

The other formal positions at churches of this era included Elders and Deacons. Key Deacons for the Church included Mr. Mose Spencer, and brothers Mr. Elliot Robertson and Mr. Sherwood Robertson. Appointment as a Deacon was typically made for the life of the appointee. There were no Elders for this church.

Prior to filling Smith Mountain Lake in 1966, the Church members would march down Standiford to a creek at the bottom to baptize babies and other members in the creek. After Smith Mountain Lake was filled, baptisms were held at the lake. Every Sunday there was Sunday school at the Union Hall Baptist Church taught by Bessie Goad. She was also known as The Mother of the Church.

The grand event of the Church was Homecoming which was held annually on the fourth Sunday of June. This event was significant for the Church and held outdoors since it was traditional for churches of that era to hold their Homecoming outdoors. The Church held services in the morning and afternoon on this day. Lunch was served midday between services. Lunch was served to the west of the Church where the men set up benches and tables and put saw dust on the ground to make a nice surface. Lunch meals were brought by Church families plus other woman who were not members but lived in the nearby community. The woman typically cooked for days before this event and always came dressed to the nines. A typical menu included fried chicken, ham, potato salad, green beans, slices of white bread and an assortment of cakes and pies. Bottle sodas were iced down in galvanized tubs.

The Church had no AC so when it was hot the windows were open, and parishioners used fans to cool themselves. The Church got electricity likely in the 1950's when electricity was brought to Franklin County, so they had electrically powered lights after that point. The Church used a wood stove to provide heat. Services typically included grand singing, padding feet, and clapping hands. After the sermon and the last song, the Pastor would always say "The doors are now open. Is there anybody that would like to accept Christ as your lord and savior." People seeking to be members would self-nominate at that time. Members were required to be baptized. If they were baptized at another church they could be transferred to the Church from their old church. If they were not baptized, they were placed on the baptism schedule.

It appears the Church ceased to exist in the late 1980's because key leaders died out without replacements and members died or migrated to other churches.

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.)

- Franklin County records for Tax Map #0660001700
- Interviews with the following people:
 - Mr. Brooks: 90 years old and has lived a mile from the church since he was born.
 - Barbara Board: 69 years old and attended the church as a young girl.
 - Jimmy Spencer: son of the late Deacon Mose Spencer
 - Paulette Chitwood: Union Hall native who has completed limited research on the Church.
 - Debbie Crawford: Has lived in Union Hall since the 1970's and is knowledgeable about the area.
 - Reverend Vandel Muse: Second to last pastor at the Church 1981-1985
- County deed of transfer dated August 1, 1902.

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: County of Franklin _____

organization: N/A _____

street & number: 1255 Franklin Street Suite 112

city or town: Rocky Mount state: VA zip code: 24151

e-mail: chris.whitlow@franklincountyva.gov telephone: 540-493-1804 _____

Legal Owner's Signature: Christopher J. Whitlow, County Administrator

Date: 7/1/24

***** 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: N/A _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

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

name/title: N/A _____

organization: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Date: _____

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

Re: Union Hall Baptist Church

Dan Quinn <dmq8991@verizon.net>

Wed 7/3/2024 2:03 PM

To: Pulice, Michael (DHR) <michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov>

Hi Mike,

Thanks for visiting the site and for your heads up on potential concerns. We are fortunately to have an experienced project manager on our team who has done several restoration projects. He sent me the following information. Does this text help our cause?

"Good afternoon, just so we all understand the language, my interpretation of reconstruction is tear down and rebuild a replica. Rehabilitation is to replace and repair existing structures. Having restored and rehabbed numerous other structures similar and older and in worse shape I would estimate you could save 60 to 70 percent. It's structure is built from rough cut local lumber still available locally today. Foundation repair has already been done in spots and should be continued with, money permitting a stone veneer replicating the original. The structure is very simple and poses no technical challenges. Yes it is quite deteriorated but still salvageable and authentic."

Dan Quinn
dmq8991@verizon.net

On Wednesday, July 3, 2024 at 10:45:08 AM EDT, Pulice, Michael (DHR) <michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov> wrote:

Dan,

I stopped by to look at the church yesterday and am concerned about its condition, which could potentially preclude a determination of eligibility for the registers. I will do my best to persuade the evaluation committee next week that the building is eligible, but I can't offer any assurances. Even if they can be convinced, I think that the building's current condition will hurt the chances of obtaining any kind of state or federal government grant for historic preservation because the grants cannot be used for reconstruction, and it looks like reconstruction might be the only option. With this in mind, I would encourage that a limited amount of cosmetic work be done to make the building more presentable, and that contractor estimates for restoration/rehabilitation vs. reconstruction be considered before applying for a state/federal grant.

For the moment, let's wait and see what the committee decides next week. I'll be in touch.

Mike

From: Dan Quinn <dmq8991@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 6:43 PM
To: Pulice, Michael (DHR) <michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov>
Subject: Re: Union Hall Baptist Church

Mike,

Thanks. Should we start researching and working on grant opportunities? Is there anything you can send us to get a jump start?

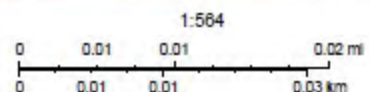
Dan Quinn
dmq8991@verizon.net

Franklin County, VA



6/28/2024, 9:52:53 AM

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| Green Box Locations | Local Roads | Federal Hwy | Parcels | Lakes |
| Manned Sites | Blue Ridge Parkway | State Hwy | 911 Addresses | Major Stream |
| Unmanned Sites | Highways | Roads Name Labels | County Boundary | |
| Railroads | Federal Hwy - Bus. | State Route Labels | Streams | |



Franklin County VA, 2019, Franklin County GIS, 2020, Franklin County VA, 2020, Franklin County, VA GIS, 2022



Sketch of Union Hall Church





















