

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

LISTED
VLR 9/15/2016
NRHP 11/22/2016

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Elon Village Library
Other names/site number: DHR#005-0044
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Corner of Younger Drive (SR 703) and Camden Drive (SR797)
City or town: Elon State: VA County: Amherst
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: Library

SOCIAL : Clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE, BRICK, WOOD: Weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Elon Village Library is located in western Amherst County in the unincorporated village of Elon. The library is located on a knoll that is shared with the Elon Elementary School and Elon Baptist Church, at the intersection of Younger Drive (Route 703) and Camden Drive (Route 797). The library is a simple 16- by 30-foot frame building constructed in 1917 by the Elon community, using donated materials, as a project of the Elon Civic Betterment League. The building, a community landmark, has remained unchanged on the interior and exterior since 1924, when the rear ell was constructed. It operated from 1918 to 1965 as the only free-lending library in predominantly rural Amherst County. The building retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship. The building was placed on a prominent site in the community, and continues its association with education, an important concern of the rural area. There are no other resources on the property.

Narrative Description

Elon Village Library is located in western Amherst County in the village of Elon. It stands on its 1.05-acre hillside site, surrounded by mature hardwood trees, at the intersection of Younger and Camden Drives in a residential subdivision. The library shares its driveway entry from Younger Drive with the Elon Baptist Church and Elon Elementary School.

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The library is a vernacular, one-story, frame building measuring 16- by 30-feet. Construction started in 1917 by community volunteers with donated materials. The foundation consists of both fieldstone piers and brick piers. The fieldstone piers are on the south side and the brick piers are on the north with fieldstone infill between the piers. The rear ell, added in 1924, sits on fieldstone piers. The building is frame with weatherboard siding on the exterior. The side-gable roof has asphalt shingles. The cornices have exposed rafter tails.

The main or west elevation has an entry with a single-leaf, five-horizontal-panel door and two single 6/6 double-hung sash windows. In 1926, a one-bay stoop of fieldstone with a gable roof supported on four simple, squared posts replaced the original platform entry. The gable end of the porch has vertical boards in the apex.¹

The north elevation has a double window of two 6/6 double-hung sashes. The east elevation has a single 6/6 double-hung sash window and a brick chimney flue. The south elevation has a bank of three windows, each of which has Craftsman-style four-light sash.

In 1924, the community built the rear ell onto the original block's southeast corner. The rear ell has an asphalt-shingled gable roof and board-and-batten siding. An entry is on the south elevation; it has two bays, of which one has a single-leaf, five-horizontal-panel wood door and the other has a 3/3 horizontal-sliding sash window. At the entry is a single fieldstone used as a step. The ell's east elevation is without any openings. The north elevation has a single 6/6 double-hung sash.²

The interior of the building consists of the main room and the 1924 ell's room. The main room has a medium-gauge wood floor. There are built-in wood bookshelves on all four walls from the floor to halfway up the wall or to the lower sash of the windows. The shelves have bead-board backing. The main door and double-sash windows have molded trim with bulls-eye corner blocks. The 3/1 windows on the south wall have a simple, plain trim. On the east wall, there is a double-leaf entry with five horizontal panels and simple door trim. Hanging from the ceiling are two pendant lights which are original to the electrification of the building in the 1920s-1930s.

The rear ell's room was built as a kitchen in 1924. It has unfinished wood floors and bead-board paneling on the walls. The eastern wall has floor-to-ceiling built-in shelving and a stove exhaust in the ceiling. This room is now used for storage.³

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1917-1965

Significant Dates

1917-1918

1924

1965

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Elon Village Library is nominated for its significance locally under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Education and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of a locally-designed building for use as a public lending library. Featuring simple design and decoration, the building served as a free-lending library for the rural village area of Elon in Amherst County from 1918 until 1965, which represents the property's period of significance. This building served many other uses as well, such as a community meeting house, schoolroom, and polling place throughout its history. The interior and exterior of the building remain unchanged since 1924, when the rear ell was constructed. The Elon Village Library is unusual as the first dedicated rural public lending-library building in the county, possibly in the state. Designed and built by the local community using donated materials, it was open daily from 1918 to 1965 and closed only after Amherst County established a branch public library in nearby Madison Heights and created a library within the new 1960s school building on a parcel adjacent to the Elon Village Library.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Elon Village Library is significant locally under Criterion A for Social History and Education. This is a landmark building of the Elon community. It was the idea of Theodora Stevens Lea (1872-1943), a former teacher and community worker. Several sources cite her concern about the lack of reading materials she noticed upon a visit to one of the one-room public schoolhouses in the Elon vicinity. She collected some books and magazines on her own then gathered many members of the community. Theodora Stevens Lea was the wife to Roland Lea of Speed the Plough (DHR 005-0040). She was a teacher in New York before she married and worked for many years in the Elon Community. She was recognized by Sweet Briar College with the Algernon Award for her dedication to community service. On 23 November 1915, the Elon Civic Betterment League was formed with 31 charter members, both men and women, with the purpose to improve education and health in the community. Charter members of the Elon Civic Betterment League included the Leas and George Stevens of Speed the Plough and Queena Stovall, the noted Virginia folk artist. The first project of the league was the library.⁴

The Elon Village Library is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. It is a unique vernacular building that retains its historic integrity of form, design and materials, and is essentially a time capsule, unaltered since 1924. Its one-room plan and interior design with wall shelving was likely the idea agreed upon by the Civic Betterment League members. Construction took place through community effort and donated materials which resulted in the building's appearance; they constructed the building using the materials on hand which were of varying styles. This reliance on materials available at the time is illustrated in that most of the windows used were six-over-six double-hung sash except the south wall, which contains a bank of Craftsman-style four-light wood sash. Similarly, the early 20th century

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five-paneled entry door was trimmed with 19th century bull's eye corner blocks. The lighting fixtures and former school benches which remain are original to the creation of the building. Thus, it is a truly vernacular building that was created by the Elon community members themselves and used through most of the 20th century without any alterations. The building also is the earliest dedicated library building in Amherst County, and provides important insight into the rural community's needs and resources at the time, as well as their cultural ideals and values in working together to erect a public library.

Historical Background

A lending library was originally opened in 1916 in a rented building about one-half mile from the existing building. It was located at the corner of Elon Road (State Route 130) and what is known today as Monacan Park Road. The log building soon was too small and local landholder C. W. Dameron (1856-1931) offered the current plot on which the library stands. At that time, the parcel was an open knoll and part of a field; today, it is adjacent to a residential subdivision at the corner of Younger and Camden Drives and shares its entranceway with the Elon Elementary School and Elon Baptist Church.⁵

Community members constructed the building in 1917-1918 using donated materials. Dorothy Moore, in her 1924 Elon School graduation speech about the creation of the village, noted that the foreman for the building construction was Mr. Davis, a local electrician. There was a playground in the front yard. The building was furnished with benches and a table from the former Triple Oaks School and additional furniture from community residents. The benches remain in the building. The newly completed building library opened in 1918 and operated on a daily basis with a paid librarian and volunteers. At its height, the library contained more than 2,000 volumes, with 20 of those having been donated by Dr. H. McIlwaine, Virginia State Librarian around 1916. He noted, at the time, that this was the only rural free-lending library in the state.⁶

Continuing their work using community labor and donations, the Elon Civic Betterment League built a six-room school with auditorium next to the library in 1921. The Elon Village Library doubled as the school library and was later used as an additional classroom. Beginning in 1918, the league also supported a community nurse who used the library as an office. The services of the nurse, Miss Clara Davis, were partially financed by a grant from Colgate (Soap).⁷

Throughout its existence the league held benefits and fundraisers to maintain the library and the school. They built the rear ell in 1924 to be used as a kitchen. The building acted as the community meeting center as well as an election polling site. Around 1960, Amherst County replaced the 1921 community-built school building with a new school that included its own library. Around the same time, a county-sponsored branch library opened in Madison Heights, about ten miles from Elon. Miss Phyllis Lea (1893-1972) worked to keep the Elon Village Library open as well. She was the sister-in-law to Theodora Lea and resided at nearby Fair Lea. She had worked in the community most of her adult life and even taught kindergarten in the library around the 1940s. However, the library closed in 1965. The Ruritan Club maintained the

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building through the 1970s. By 1990, the Elon Civic Betterment League no longer existed. The property reverted, according to the 1918 deed, to the Elon Presbyterian Church and the Elon Baptist Church jointly. The churches decided that the Elon Baptist Church was the best caretaker for the building. Today, it is open only for special occasions and is used for storage.⁸

The Elon Village Library is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as a unique community-designed and -maintained library building using donated materials. The form, design and materials are simple and fit the building's use as a library and community center. The building remains unaltered on the exterior and interior since construction of the rear ell in 1924. It is the earliest known dedicated public library building in Amherst County.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. "Elon File." n.d.

Amherst County Deed Books. *Available at the Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, VA, Various Books and Dates.*

Esposito, Sandra F. "Speed the Plough-National Register of Historic Places Registration Form." 2006.

Florence and Holcomb Nixon. "Elon Civic Betterment League and Elon Home Demonstration Club files." n.d.

Nixon, Florence Foster. *In the Shadow of Tobacco Row Mountain: Elon, Monroe, and Other Villages.* Lynchburg, VA: Blackwell Press, 2010.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 005-0044

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approx. 1 acre

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.513870 | Longitude: -79.194440 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary is drawn to match the original one-acre parcel described in Amherst County Deed Book 78, p.555. The parcel is located on the hillside across the driveway from Elon Baptist Church and bounded by Elon Elementary School (Tax Map Parcel 121 A 53), Tax Map Parcel 121 A 55, Tax Map Parcel 121 A 51, Tax Map Parcel 121 A 56, Tax Map Parcel 121 A 57B and Elon Baptist Church (Tax Map Parcel 121 A 55). The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Location Map and Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundary encompasses the same one-acre parcel historically associated with the parcel and as described in Amherst County Deed Book 78, p. 555, and is part of Amherst County Tax Map Parcel 151 A 55. The boundary encompasses the property's historic setting and only contributing resource.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sandra F. Esposito
organization: _____
street & number: 140 Cradon Hill Ln.
city or town: Amherst state: VA zip code: 24521
e-mail: espositosf@earthlink.net
telephone: 434-946-7496
date: 30 April 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Elon Village Library
City or Vicinity:
County: Amherst State: VA
Photographer: Sandra F. Esposito
Date Photographed: November 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0001
View: Site Photo, camera facing southwest

Photo 2 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0002

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View: North Elevation, camera facing south

Photo 3 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0003
View: Main Elevation, West Elevation, camera facing southeast

Photo 4 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0004
View: West Elevation, camera facing northeast

Photo 5 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0005
View: South Elevation, camera facing northeast

Photo 6 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0006
View: South Elevation, camera facing northwest

Photo 7 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0007
View: East Elevation, camera facing west

Photo 8 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0008
View: Interior, camera facing south

Photo 9 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0009
View: Interior, camera facing southeast

Photo 10 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0010
View: Interior, camera facing southwest

Photo 11 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0011
View: Interior, camera facing northwest

Photo 12 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0012
View: Interior, camera facing northeast

Photo 13 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0013
View: Door Detail, Interior, camera facing west

Photo 14 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0014
View: Double-leaf Door Detail, Interior, camera facing east

Photo 15 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0015
View: East Room, Rear Room, camera facing east

Photo 16 of 16: VA_AmherstCounty_ElonVillageLibrary_0016
View: East Room, Rear Room, Window Detail, camera facing northeast

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

ENDNOTES

¹ This was noted in the minutes of the Home Demonstration Club, found in the private files of Holcomb and Florence Nixon and the files of the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A copy of the charter membership notes are contained in both the private files of Holcomb and Florence Nixon and the files of the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society.

⁵ Files of Nixon and Museum.

⁶ Ibid. Dr. Henry R. McIlwaine (1864-1934) was the State Librarian from 1907-1934 (information obtained from lva.virginia.gov). The minutes noted two women who were paid librarians, Frances Elder, the first librarian, and Mary Lou Page in 1924, files of Nixon and Museum.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid; Files of Nixon and Museum.



LOCATION MAP

Elon Village Library

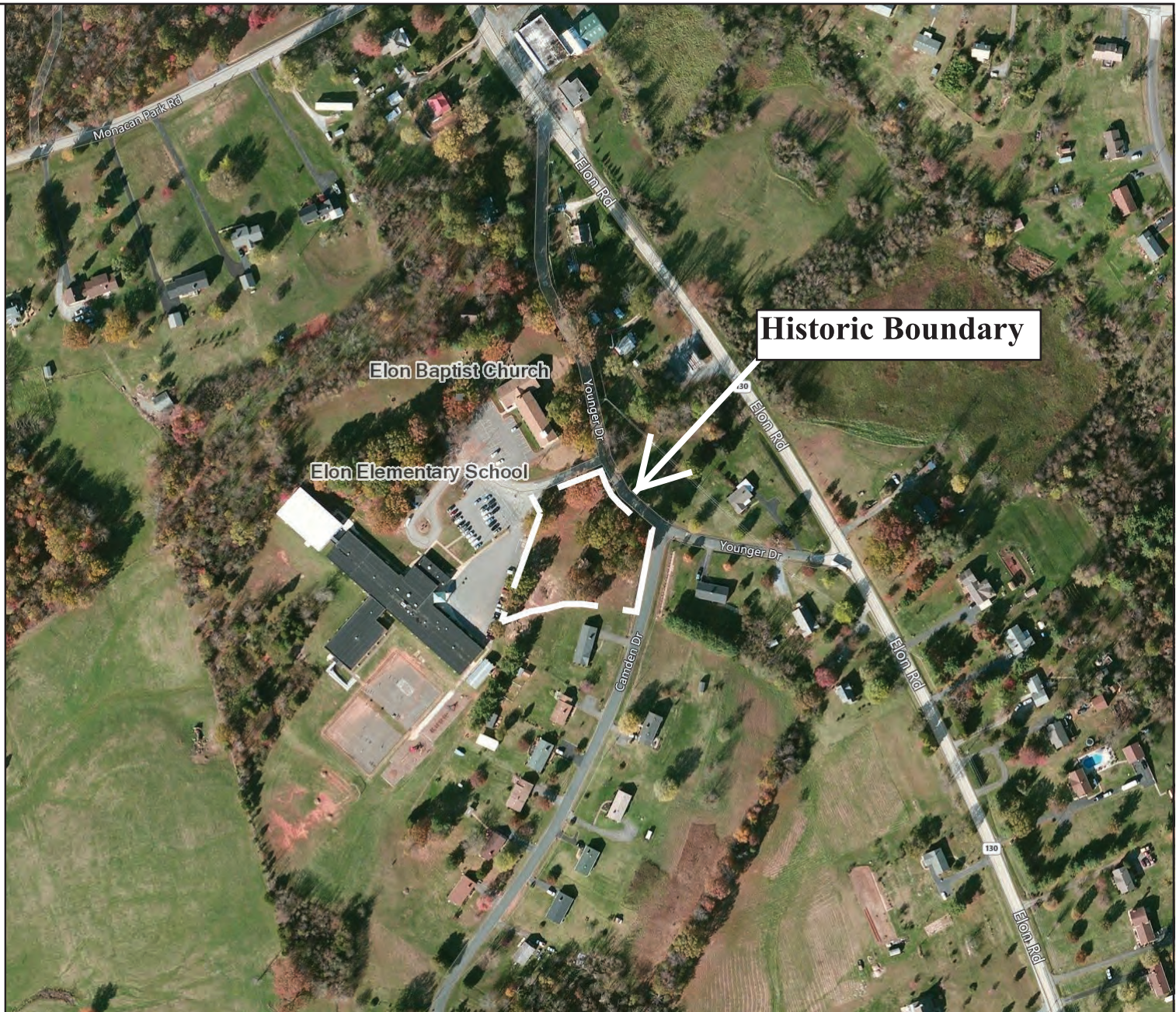
Amherst County, VA

DHR No. 005-0044

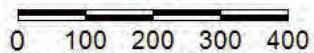
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 37.513870

Longitude: -79.194440



Feet



1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet

Title: Elon Village Public Library

Date: 7/26/2016

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

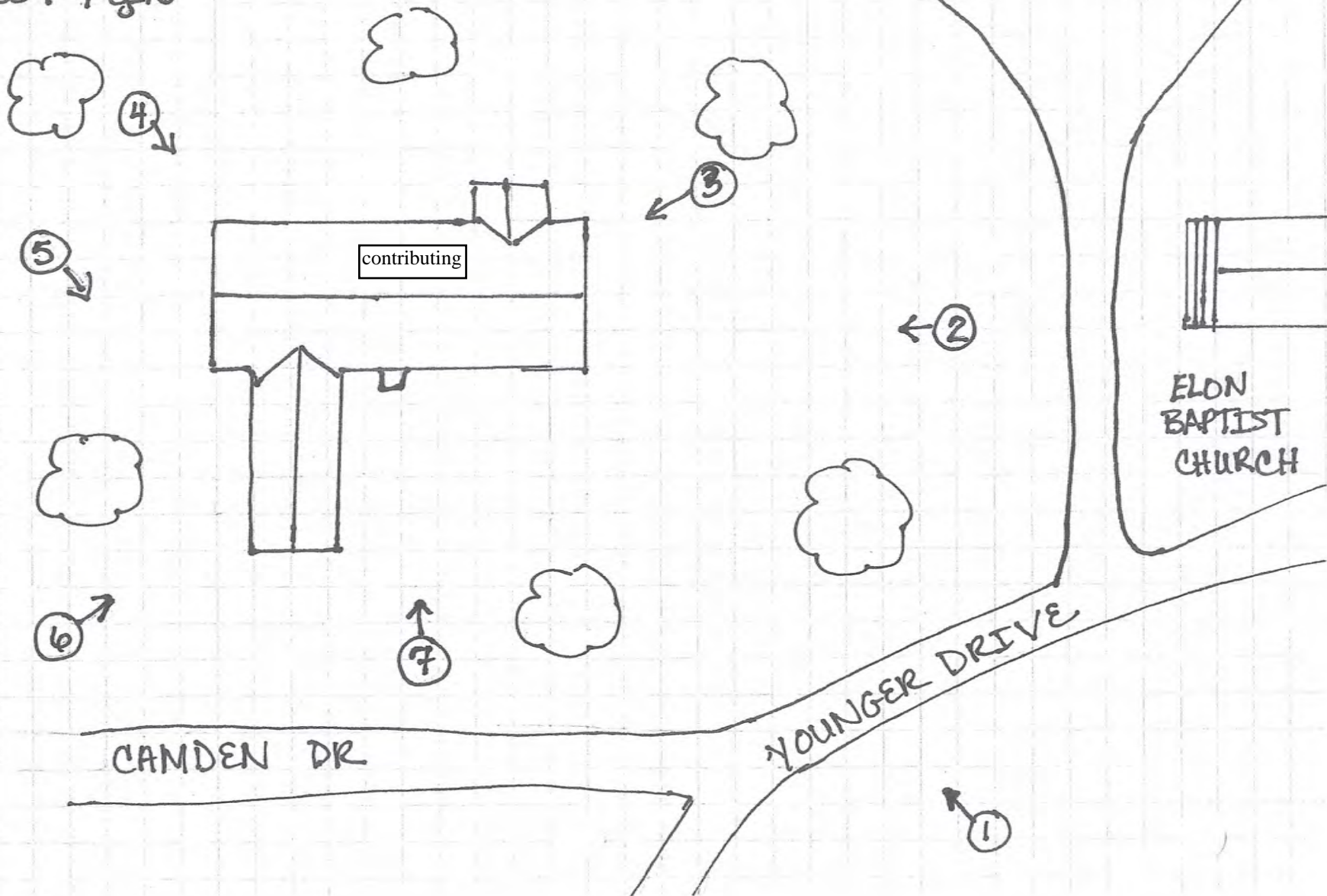
Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

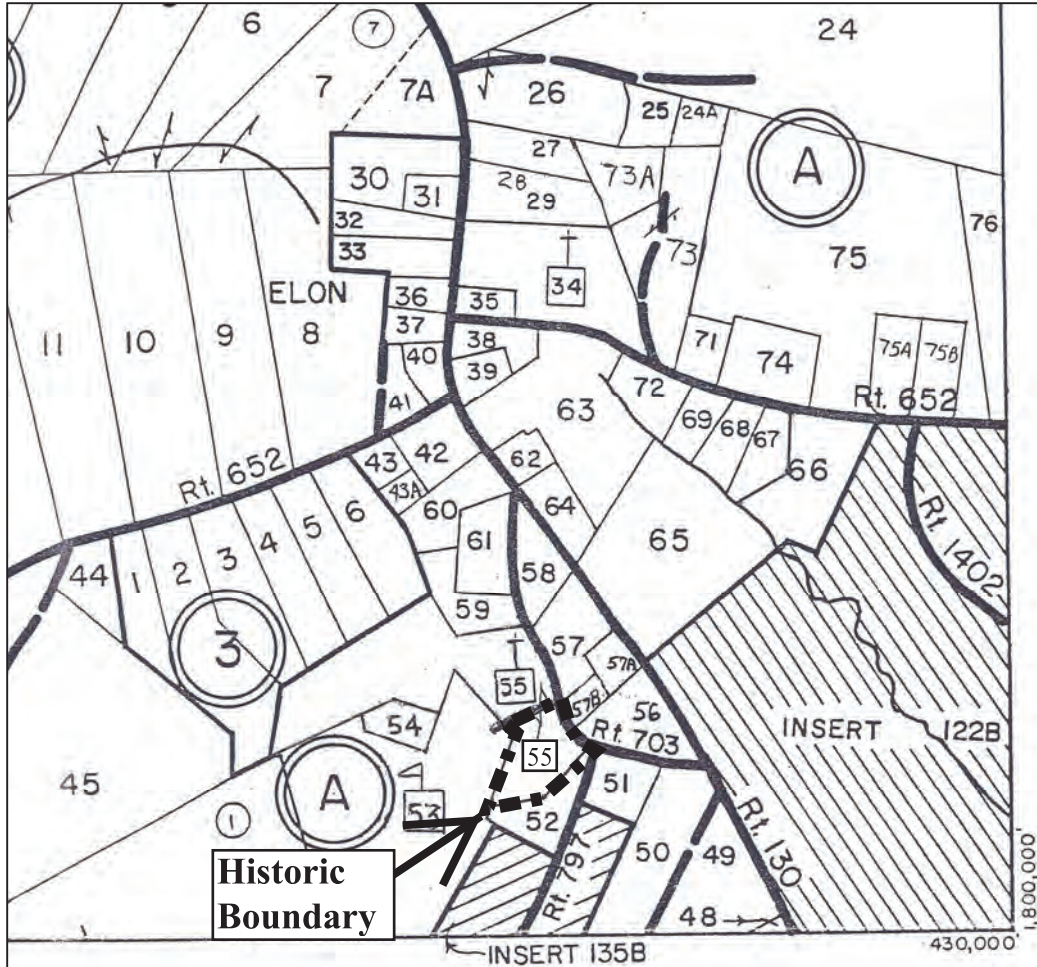
ELON VILLAGE LIBRARY
(005-0044)
AMHERST COUNTY VA
SITE MAP &
EXTERIOR PHOTO KEY
PHOTOS 1-7 of 16

ELON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

→ N
NOT TO SCALE

PARKING AREA



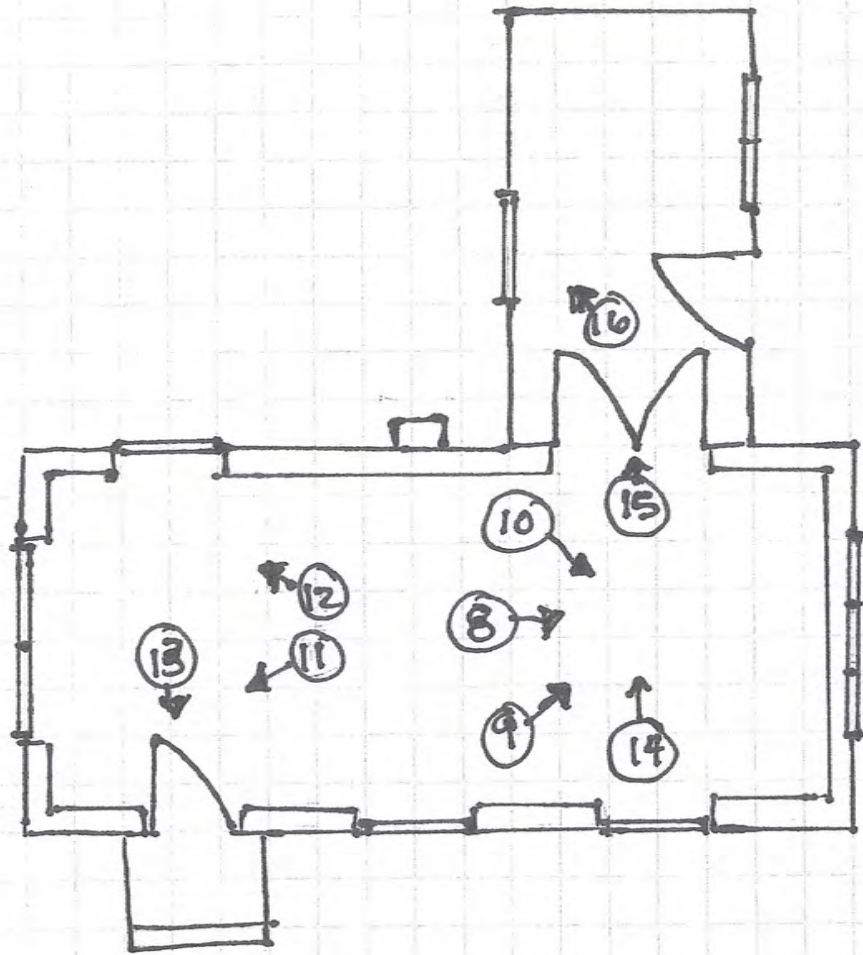


**Historic
Boundary**

ELON VILLAGE LIBRARY
 005-0044
 AMHERST County, VA
 ENLARGED
 TAX MAP PARCEL
 121 A 55

SECTION 121





ELON VILLAGE
LIBRARY
(005-0044)
AMHERST COUNTY VA
INTERIOR PHOTO KEY
PHOTOS 8-16 of 16



NOT TO SCALE