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**HANOVER COUNTY  
TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE IN THE  
PHASED SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS**



**Prepared For:**

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**September 25, 2005**



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## **AC NOWLEDGEMENT**

This architectural survey of Hanover County has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Hanover County previously has conducted two architectural surveys, the most recent being completed in March 1992. Those surveys were countywide and documented approximately 950 properties and sites that at that time were more than fifty years old (pre-1950s). In 2004, Hanover County received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) to conduct further architectural survey of unrecorded resources that are more than fifty years old, which is now pre-1960s. The previous two surveys documented all known pre-Civil War buildings as well as Civil War battlefields, and earthworks and other building types such as historic schools, churches, stores, mills, bridges, cemeteries, and early transportation related architecture such as tourist courts and motels. This current project is a survey of predominantly twentieth century residential architecture. Where other buildings types were found in the survey area, they were documented; however, their numbers are few when compared to the number of houses surveyed.

Under Hanover County's recently adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan, areas are designated for phased future development. Currently, the Phased Suburban Development Plan (PSDP) map shows areas for phased development in five-year increments through the year 2022. The areas included on this Plan are the areas to be targeted for this survey update because these areas have the most potential for threats to historic properties due to development.

The two previous countywide surveys of Hanover County were completed in 1988-1990 and 1991-1992. The first survey was documented with the context report *Historic Resources, Survey Hanover County, Virginia* and the second survey in *Survey of Historic Resources, Hanover County, Virginia, Phase I and II*. Land and Community Resources of Charlottesville, Virginia completed both projects. Both of these reports contain an extensive historic context of the county and no new historic context was prepared for this current survey. However, a context and architectural analysis report was prepared for the village of Mechanicsville based on the findings of this survey and is appended to this report.

Ashley Neville and Amber Courselle undertook fieldwork for this project. Ashley Neville and Jana Riggle performed the VDHR DSS data entry and prepared the forms and photographs. Ashley Neville authored the survey report.

## CHAPTER 2. PROJECT PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this project was to identify architectural resources that may be significant in Hanover County's history and were not included in the previous two surveys. This architectural survey will provide the county with additional information on historical architectural resources that are located within the primary growth areas of the county. The survey coverage was limited for the most part to the areas designated for future phased development as shown on the Phased Suburban Development Plan (PSDP) map. An effort was made to update the existing survey in the urban service areas by identifying which resources surveyed during the first two surveys have been lost during the intervening years.

Each property surveyed will have a VDHR DSS reconnaissance-level survey form completed and entered into the VDHR system electronically. Each surveyed resource will be placed in its appropriate context on the VDHR form and a one to three sentence statement of significance will be written for each resource that will evaluate its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Accompanying each survey form will be a site plan and a portion of the appropriate USGS topographic quadrangle map with the resource located on it. A photograph of each resource accompanies the VDHR form.

In addition to the survey, a brief report will be produced. This report contains a summary of the results of the survey, which will be used by the county as an addendum to the 1992 survey.

In addition, the results of this survey will be entered into Hanover County's GIS system so that each of the properties identified is flagged in that system as containing historic features or buildings. The GIS system is used by both staff and zoning applicants for the purpose of identifying historic features on properties being developed, which triggers the Hanover County Historical Commission or Architectural Review Board review process.

### SURVEY COVERAGE

The survey area for this project largely was restricted to the planned growth areas as shown on the Phased Suburban Development Plan (PSDP) map. This area, where the county has tried to concentrate its highest density of growth, roughly forms a semicircle along its southern border with Henrico County. It extends from the CSX railroad tracks in the west to Creighton Road in the east and from the Henrico County boundary north to the Town of Ashland, and Ashcake, Rural Point, and Pole Green roads. Other locations of planned growth are located in the Doswell/Bear Island area, Hanover Courthouse, and the Country Club Hills area west of Ashland.

The village of Mechanicsville was heavily surveyed for this project and a report prepared on the village for use in the development of a small area plan that was being prepared at the same time as the survey. The major roads surveyed included Creighton, Walnut

Grove, Mechanicsville Turnpike, Shady Grove, Atlee, Lee Davis, Pole Green, Rural Point, Studley, U.S. Rt. 301, New Ashcake, Ashcake, U.S. Route 1, Cedar Lane, Gwathmey Church, and Elmont roads. Smaller roads that connect with the larger roads were also surveyed. Mechanicsville Turnpike was surveyed only in the area of the village of Mechanicsville. Survey undertaken along this highway for the previous county surveys in the early 1990s and more recent surveys undertaken for highway projects through the Section 106 process had already documented all buildings over fifty years of age along the Turnpike in the development area and no further survey was warranted. Survey was also undertaken in the Hanover Courthouse area, particularly the area north of Route 54, the area in the vicinity of Bear Island, and previously unrecorded buildings in and around the village of Doswell.

### CHAPTER 3. SURVEY FINDINGS

Historically, Hanover developed in a dispersed, rural pattern with an economy based on agriculture and timber harvesting and its built environment reflected that pattern. The early nineteenth century saw plantations and large farms widely dispersed throughout the county. As labor became more expensive after the Civil War, many of the larger farms were subdivided into smaller farms. Family divisions also helped to create a tapestry of smaller farms. Hanover has several small villages but only one town, Ashland. Hanover enjoyed a fairly extensive network of roads as early as the early nineteenth century and the development of the railroad in Hanover beginning in the 1830s encouraged the development of small villages throughout the county. Earlier research indicated that while the majority of Hanover County villages existed in some form by the Civil War, few buildings survive from that period. Most villages consist of turn-of-the-twentieth century or early twentieth-century buildings.<sup>1</sup>

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, some areas of Hanover County were promoted as a suburb of Richmond thus suburbia is a role that is not new to Hanover although the current scale and breadth is new. The Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railway (R.F.& P.) played a major role in the development of Ashland and in the 1880s promoted Ashland as a Richmond suburb. In exchange for building a house in Ashland, the railroad gave residents commuter passes to Richmond. In the early twentieth century, the Accommodation Train transported workers to Richmond departing Ashland at 7:30 a.m. and arriving at Richmond's Broad Street Station after 8:00 a.m.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the Ashland streetcar provided a similar service. New development occurred in the places where the train or streetcar stopped. The train stopped in Gwalthmey, Elmont, and Kenwood while the streetcar stopped in Gwalthmey, Elmont, Cedar Lane and Holly Hill. Small clusters of turn-of-the-twentieth century and early twentieth-century houses stand near these stops and these areas developed because of the transportation resources and their close proximity to Richmond. This early-twentieth century development in the areas between Henrico County and Ashland were either oriented to the railroad or streetcar line, clustered at crossroads, or were aligned along the roads such as Cedar Lane, Old Washington Highway and Elmont Road on smaller lots. Doswell is another village in Hanover County whose growth was influenced by the railroad. Originally named Hanover Junction for the crossing of the R.F. & P. and Virginia Central Railroads, like Ashland and Elmont most of its existing buildings date from the turn- or early-twentieth century.

In Hanover, the village of Mechanicsville, which had been established prior to the Civil War, exploded in growth in the late 1940s and early 1950s to meet the pent-up housing demand of returning World War II veterans. This post-war development was laid out in a grid pattern with straight parallel streets in the pattern of a small town or village. Growth in Hanover increased significantly in the late 1960s and 1970s as the "white flight" from

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<sup>1</sup> Land and Community Associates, *Survey of Historic Resources Hanover County, Virginia, Phase I and II*, Report prepared for Hanover County Planning Department, 1992, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 79-80.

Richmond saw many former city residents move to Hanover County in the areas closest to Henrico County. Many settled in the areas east of the historic village of Mechanicsville along Route 360 where several new subdivisions were developed. The subdivisions were created on former farms with both straight and curvilinear parallel streets or sometimes just one street off the main road. This was the primary means of ingress and egress into the subdivisions and the road network did not necessarily connect adjacent subdivisions. This pattern of self-contained subdivisions carved out of former farmland has continued in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as Hanover has experienced unprecedented and rapid growth. It is particularly noticeable along Atlee Station Road where almost all of the historic resources documented during the 1989 through 1992 surveys have been demolished to make way for subdivisions, schools, and offices.

The geographical focus of this survey concentrated on the areas where growth is being focused by county policies. This is generally also the area closest to the city where the most growth has occurred since the mid-twentieth century. By far, the majority of resources documented for this project were dwellings built in the early to mid-twentieth century and most were not built as farmhouses, which formerly had been the predominant building type in the county. These houses, outside of the village of Mechanicsville, typically are frame and stand on small lots of an acre or two or less along the existing roads of the period and have few ancillary outbuildings. More brick houses are located in Mechanicsville than elsewhere. A garage is the most typical outbuilding found on these properties, which is indicative of the increasing importance of the automobile to growth in Hanover. Typical alterations found on these houses include vinyl replacement windows, the use of synthetic siding, additions and the enclosure of front porches. Other building types surveyed for this project include stores, two warehouses, three early motels, a mill, and two cemeteries. The two earlier surveys documented many, if not most, of the non-residential building types throughout the county leaving this survey to focus mostly on residential buildings.

Several large farms located along Old Ridge Road east of U.S. Route 1 were included in the survey. Although this area remains fairly rural, the area is included in the suburban growth area due to the presence of two large industrial plants. Plain Dealing (042-0057) and Bear Island (042-0060), both documented in the previous surveys, historically were large farms in this area and the newly surveyed farms were once a part of these larger estates. The farmhouse at Fairview (042-5162) has initials and a date, IDD 1908, incised on the rear ell chimney (Plate 1). The house is a two-story, frame I-house with exterior-end brick chimneys a form used for farmhouses in Hanover since the late eighteenth century. Also typical of Hanover, the house sits at the end of a long lane. Across the road is a larger farmhouse that appears to have evolved through several building campaigns. The farm at 10296 Old Ridge Road (042-5163) is also a two-story, frame building with two-story rear ell. The farm contains a number of outbuildings including barn, corn crib, long chicken houses, and garage. Just to the east on Old Ridge Road, another farmhouse (042-5165) was built on property that formerly was part of Plain Dealing (Plate 2). Built about that same time as Fairview, it exhibits a more modern plan instead of the traditional I-house form of Fairview. The commonalities with Fairview and 042-5163 include the use of frame construction, weatherboard siding, two-over-two light double-hung





Plate 1. Fairview (042-5162)



Plate 2. House, Old Ridge Road (042-5165)

windows and front porches; however, its squarish plan and lack of exterior brick chimneys is more typical of houses built as the twentieth century progressed rather than using the earlier and more traditional building plans.

The house at 10264 Old Ridge Road (042-5164) is an interesting example of a smaller, early-twentieth-century house built in this area dominated by two-story farmhouses (Plate 3). Perhaps it was a tenant house. It is one story, frame, sheathed with weatherboard with a cross-gable roof. Its defining feature is the three-bay front porch with well-proportioned porch pillars. This handsome porch is somewhat unusual on a house this size.



Plate 3. House (042-5164)

Several one-story farm dwellings were identified. These houses are quintessential, early-twentieth-century small farmhouses that predominate in the eastern portions of the county and appear to have evolved from a raised cottage type that was built before the Civil War. They generally are sited well back from the road at the end of a long lane and are surrounded by cultivated fields. These houses are fast disappearing from the Hanover County landscape. Their character defining features are their frame construction, one-story height, and a hip roof (usually of standing-seam metal) with two interior chimney flues. Examples of this house type are located at 8101 Bell Creek Road (042-5256) and 9050 Lee Davis Road (042-5252). The house on Bell Creek Road sits at the end of a long farm lane and during the summer was completely surrounded by corn making it almost invisible from the street. It is a one-story, three-bay, frame dwelling with hip roof of standing seam metal. There are two interior brick chimney flues and a stoop on the



Plate 4. House (042-5256)

front. The house on Lee Davis Road is similar with a hip roof with two interior chimneys flues. This house has lost its porch.

There were surprisingly few large or two-story houses identified in the more suburban sections of the survey area that originally had been the dwelling on a mid-sized farm. It could be assumed that many of this building type have already been lost to development as subdivisions replaced farms. Of those surveyed, the Agee House/Farm (042-5290) at 8250 Lee Davis Road and the Meredith Farms House (042-5289) at 8268 Lee Davis Road are both early twentieth century and are good examples of what has happened to this type of house in the suburban areas of Hanover (Plates 5 and 6). The Agee House is two-stories, frame, with hip roof, and three bays across the front with one bay recessed. The Agee House still retains a large tract of open land around the house and modern outbuildings but apparently this property will soon be developed for a new elementary school and the buildings demolished.

The Meredith Farms House has already lost its land with a late-twentieth century subdivision to its rear. It is also two-stories, frame with a gable instead of hip roof. Similar to the Agee House, it is three bays across the front with one bay recessed on the side. It has a wraparound porch and a second floor porch with a sawn railing, rare in Hanover County. Also on this property is the Baskett House (042-0219) that formerly stood at the intersection of Pole Green and Bell Creek roads. It was moved here to avoid demolition for a new commercial development. Although the Baskett House now sits on a new foundation, the exterior retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Unfortunately, the loss of its original setting on a large open tract of land surrounded with



Plate 5. Agee Farm (042-5290)



Plate 6. Meredith Farms House (042-5289)

large mature trees significantly changes the character of this resource. The Basket House was the only previously recorded resource that was resurveyed for this project.

A number of properties were documented in Elmont. Like many Hanover villages, the village existed by the time of the Civil War when J.E.B. Stuart's men camped here as they were beginning their famous "Ride Around McClellan" during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign. Known then as Kilby's Station, the community later was served both by the R.F. & P. railroad and in the early twentieth century by the Ashland streetcar line. Most of the existing historic resources in Elmont date from the turn-of-the-twentieth century or early twentieth century and their location was influenced by the availability of transportation to the city. Most of the larger houses, church, and school were documented during the previous survey. This project documented some of the smaller and later buildings in the community.

At one time, Elmont boasted a railroad shelter for passengers waiting for the train. One previously undocumented railroad-related resource is the house at 11248 Elmont Crossing Lane (042-5202)(Plate 7). The house was moved to its present location and reoriented from the lot (still owned by the R.F. & P. Railway) at the corner of the railroad and Elmont Road (Route 626). At that location, it faced the railroad. Typical of much railroad construction, the house is a one-story house of frame construction with a full-width porch across the front. The porch has a decorative sawtooth cornice and sidelights flank the door. The house has a large addition to the side and rear but the railroad influence can still be seen. Other houses surveyed in Elmont include several bungalows such as 11247 Tyson Trail (042-5201) and 11284 Cobbs Road (042-5205) or small houses such as the one-story Helen Cobb House (042-5185) and the one-story stucco house near the railroad tracks at 11257 Elmont Road (042-5200)(Plate 8). One, Resource 042-5204, is a two-story, frame house that is located well off the main road but oriented to the streetcar line that passed in front of the house (Plate 9). Further afield from Elmont proper, the house at 11031 Bazile Road (042-5233) is a good example of a one-story, hip-roof dwelling with the narrow end oriented to the street. The Franck House (042-5227) is a good example of an early-twentieth century, frame, two-story house built immediately on Cedar Lane Road (Plate 10). The house at 11079 Cedar Lane (042-5231) is another.

The non-farm dwellings surveyed were built in the early twentieth century (1920s-1930) and many have bungalow or Craftsman-style influences. Bungalows were found in all areas of the survey. Two good examples of small, early-twentieth century dwellings with bungalow or Craftsman-style influences are the houses at 8466 and 8476 Atlee Road (042-5264) and (042-5265). Both are one-and-a-half stories, frame, with a gable roof and full-width front porches. Other good examples of this type and style of house are located at 9015 Atlee Road (042-52860), 4482 Pole Green Road (042-5299), and a house on U.S. Route 1 (042-5220)(Plate 12). These are larger houses with more clearly defined Craftsman-style elements.





Plate 7 Railroad House (042-5202)



Plate 8. House (042-5200)



Plate 9. House (042-5204)



Plate 10. Franck House (042-5227)



Plate 11. Small Bungalow (042-5264)



Plate 12. Bungalow, U.S. Route 1 (042-5220)



Hanover's African American residents historically were clustered in several areas of the county. The survey identified and documented several historically African American homes and farms. The Robinson family owned several properties on U.S. Route 1 south of Ashland and north of Lewistown Road in an area that is in rapid transition from residential/agricultural to commercial/industrial. The Robinson Farm (042-5213) has been standing since at least 1919 when William Robinson was born there. His father and uncles owned the land from here to the corner with Route 801 (Cobbs Road). William Robinson remembers when U.S. Route 1 in this area was unpaved and the many changes that have occurred in this area. His father was a carpenter but they also farmed and had horses, cows, and chickens. The house is a small, one-story, side-gable, frame house with small, one-bay, shed-roof porch. There is a hip-roof section in the rear that appears earlier than the front section of the house. This house is not atypical of the small houses that at one time dotted U.S. Route 1 but are rapidly disappearing as the area develops.

The outbuildings are an integral part of this farm and are somewhat unusual in this area. There is a two-story concrete-block barn with a gambrel roof of standing seam metal. A modern metal shed recently has been appended on to the front. Perhaps one of the most unusual agricultural buildings surveyed is the gable-roof structure that has been surrounded, except for the entrance, by earth and stone (Plate 13). It is known to the Robinson family as a potato house.<sup>3</sup>

A second Robinson House (042-5214) is located just south of this farm (Plate 14). Sited well back from U.S. Route 1, it is a small, one-story, three-bay, frame house with stucco cladding. It has an integral front porch, gable roof of standing-seam metal, and a central shed dormer. The windows are six-over-one light. This house exhibits elements of the Craftsman style. The house is vacant and the property is currently for sale for development.

The Hanover Recreation Center (042-5216) is located on Route 801 just around the corner from the Robinson Farm. It was built in the 1940s as a center for the surrounding African American community. It is a one-and-a-half story concrete-block, gable-roof building with a long, one-story, rear section.

Additional houses were surveyed in the nearby African American community on Lewistown Road near Route 1 and Cobbs Road. Most of the houses in this area were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s but a few earlier ones survive. The later houses tend to be brick or concrete block while the earlier houses are of frame construction. Like Route 1, new industrial development is being built in this formerly all-residential neighborhood and the survival of these houses is unlikely.

Another small African American community with buildings that were included in this survey is located just north of Hanover Courthouse. While the community is located on

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<sup>3</sup> William Robinson, personal communication, August 2005.



Plate 13. Robnison Farm Potato House (042-5213)



Plate 14. Robnison House (042-5214)

both sides of U.S. Route 301, those surveyed are located predominantly on Firehouse Road. These houses were small, one-story, frame dwellings with gable roofs. Previously documented in this community were a church and one-room school, Calvary Episcopal Church and School (042-0291).

Several small stores were documented for this project. Two were located on Route 301 in the Courthouse area. Kelly's Store (042-5168) is a fixture in this area. The building is one story, frame construction with multiple additions. The siding is a combination weatherboard and vinyl. Multi-paned storefront windows flank the recessed entry. Mr. Kelley lives in the adjacent Colonial Revival-style, one-and-a-half story, frame house. A second store in the area is now a gift shop (042-5169). Also a one-story, frame building with gable roof, its storefront has been considerably altered. The original large plate-glass windows have been reduced in size and replaced with multi-light fixed windows. The entry is still recessed and there is a porte-cochere.

A 1950s/1960s gas station (042-5175) is also located in the Hanover Courthouse community and continues to serve automobiles as a repair shop. Similar in style to the gas stations surveyed in Mechanicsville, it is of masonry construction with a smooth plaster covering. It has a glass window that wraps around the corner in the office area and two garage bays on the opposite end.

The only office building (042-5178) documented for the survey is also located in the courthouse area and serves as a bail bond and attorney's office. It is a one-story, brick building with two separate storefronts and a flat roof with parapet.

A third store that was documented is located in the eastern end of the county on Walnut Grove Road north of Route 360. The Robertson Store (042-5292) is a second quarter, twentieth-century, one-story, frame, gable-end entry building with a full-width porch across the front and metal casement windows. The interior appears to be largely intact although the store has been closed for many years. The Robertson Store served an African American community that was located in this area. The house at 6180 Pole Green Road (042-5291) was also a part of this community and located across from the site of the now demolished East End School that stood on Pole Green Road where the new Pole Green Park and school are now located. The East End School served this community in the period before integration. Modern subdivision development on both Walnut Grove and Pole Green roads has dispersed much of this African American community.

Several transportation related resources and warehouses were documented along U.S. Route 1 for this survey. As a major north/south corridor, U. S. Route 1 was once dotted with early-to-mid twentieth-century tourist cabins, motels, truck stops, gas stations and a drive-in theatre (042-0637)(now demolished). As large chain motels have captured the travel business, many of these early motels have been abandoned or converted to other uses. The construction of I-95 further to the east also doomed many of these resources as travel shifted to the interstate. The previously surveyed Wigwam Motel (042-0310) is



Plate 15. Motel Unit (042-5219)

now vacant and endangered. The remaining motel unit at Kosmo Village (042-5219) was surveyed (Plate 15). At one time part of the Duck Inn Truck Stop and also known as City Center Motel (and odd choice of name for what was then a rural area) only the main office/truck stop building and four motel rooms in one building survive. The main building is a large two-and-a-half story building covered with smooth plaster. The former large storefront windows have been covered with paneling. The motel rooms are in one unit ó a one-story, plastered building on a brick foundation with a PermaStone wainscot on the façade. Each room has a one-bay, gable roof front porch on a concrete stoop except for the middle two rooms that share a porch. Shed roof sections on the rear housed the bathrooms. These units have long been vacant and according to the owner will soon be demolished.

Further south on Route 1 is the Cadillac Motel that continues to function in that capacity. Originally part of Speed and Briscoe, a truck stop whose business moved over to I-95 when it was built, the Cadillac Motel (042-5215) has three buildings arranged to form a shallow U-shape.<sup>4</sup> All the buildings are constructed of concrete block with a PermaStone façade. An integral porch runs the length of each building. The main building is a long, gable-roof building with center cross gable that faces Route 1. The smaller buildings flank this at a right angle at each end.

Less than a mile south on Route 1 is Maryø Old Inn (042-5218)(according to the owner) that used to be a dance hall. To the rear of the concrete-block building is an old motel unit also constructed of concrete block. Each unit in the gable-roof building has a

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<sup>4</sup> William Robinson, personal communication, August 2005.

window and door with four units in this building. Gable-roof extensions on the rear presumably held the bathrooms. This building is in poor condition.

Two metal warehouse-type buildings were documented on Route 1. Resource 042-5221 is a tall, one-story, gable-roof building sheathed with corrugated metal with a shed extension along one side. Resource 042-5222 is also sheathed with corrugated metal with a pent overhang on the side that faces Route 1 (Plate 16). It has two double-leaf loading doors and a concrete loading dock on one end of the façade. Both of these buildings are currently vacant but are typical of industrial buildings once found along Route 1.



Plate 16. Resource 042-5222

One mill (042-5276) was documented during this project (Plate 17). Although located outside of the growth areas of the county, it had been overlooked during the previous surveys. The mill has been known by several names during its existence including Flannaganø, Waddillø and Nunnallyø Mill and has recently been rehabbed for use as a retail quilt shop. The building is one story with loft, frame construction with weatherboard siding. The framing indicates that this building was constructed post Civil War possibly replacing an early mill. Historic maps show this as a øburntø mill. Although it was most recently used as a house before its rehab, much of the original equipment is still in place such as the grinding stones, grain chutes, and operating mechanisms. The Millerø House (042-5277), located across the street, is a good example of the Colonial Revival style as seen on the larger Hanover County houses of that era (Plate 18).



Plate 17. Flannagan's Mill (042-5276)



Plate 18. Miller's House (042-5277)

## CHAPTER 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### FUTURE SURVEY

This is the third survey project undertaken by Hanover County to document its historic resources. All known early historic resources were documented during the early survey as well as most of the buildings that were thought to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Due to the location of this project within the planned growth areas, more of the buildings surveyed were newer and most date from the first half of the twentieth century. Buildings constructed during the immediate post-World War II building boom that, as a building type previously had not been surveyed are well represented in this survey. Future survey should be directed at areas outside of the planned growth area where development is still occurring in the county and where the resources tend to be older than those surveyed for this project.

### NATIONAL REGISTER/VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Virginia Landmarks Register a building, structure, district, or site must possess historical significance and integrity. A resource must meet one of the criteria of historical significance defined as:

- Association with historic events or activities (Criterion A),
- Association with important persons (Criterion B),
- Distinctive design or physical characteristics (Criterion C), or
- Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

Integrity must also be evident through historic qualities including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Generally, a property must also be fifty years of age or more to be considered eligible for the NRHP.

The creation of historic districts or individually eligible resources is important because it allows property owners to qualify for state and federal historic tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. In order to qualify for the 25% state and 20% federal historic tax credits, a building must either be individually listed on the NRHP or be considered a contributing resource in an NRHP-listed historic district.

During the previous surveys, the village of Doswell and the Gwathmey area were recommended as potential historic districts. These two areas were also included within the present survey coverage area and it is recommended that they continue to be potentially eligible for the NRHP. Although Doswell has lost a number of buildings immediately west of the north/south railroad tracks, the historic core of the village is still intact. In the Gwathmey area, a recent development has occurred to the southeast but it does not impact the historic area. These two areas are again recommended as potentially eligible as a historic district.



The village at Hanover Courthouse was once a local historic district that was largely rescinded due to public outcry over being included in a historic district. Only the historic Hanover Courthouse public buildings (courthouse, jail, clerk's office), Hanover Tavern, and one other building remain in the local historic district today. The public buildings and Hanover Tavern are also in a state and National Register Historic District. Only limited survey has been undertaken in the village area but further survey and research could determine with this area is eligible for the National and state registers as a historic district. This process should only be undertaken with a significant amount of public outreach to the owners and residents of this area to include them in the process from the beginning.

The Mechanicsville report made several recommendations that are repeated here. The architectural survey in Mechanicsville has been selective and not comprehensive, but there does not appear to be the potential to create a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Virginia Landmark Register (VLR) historic district in the commercial area. There has been too much modern (late twentieth century) infill development for a cohesive historic district to be created. There also does not appear to be a large historic district that encompasses the entire residential area; however, a more thorough survey of buildings that includes almost all of the buildings in conjunction with the development of a formal historic context on the area, may identify a small residential historic district. This would more clearly develop the contributing/non-contributing status of the buildings in a potential historic district. The area in Mechanicsville known as Virginia Manor may be a potential historic district that includes Carolyn and Grace Lanes and Virginia Manor Drive. This area has a good collection of brick post-World War II dwellings that maintain a high degree of architectural integrity. There appear to be no individually eligible buildings in Mechanicsville.

Only three buildings identified during this survey are recommended potentially individually eligible: Flannigan's Mill (042-5276), the Miller's House (042-5277), and Greymont (042-5235) a large Colonial Revival-style house on Hickory Hill Road. Ideally the mill and the Miller's house would be listed as a district that includes both buildings although they could also be individually listed. Few mills survive in Hanover County and fewer still that have original equipment in place. Although the mill has been rehabbed for another use, it continues to maintain good architectural integrity. The Miller's House is located across the road from the mill and together they form an intact milling complex. Greymont, built in the early twentieth century, is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style used for a large country estate.



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## **APPENDI A: LIST OF SURVEYED RESOURCES**

DHR #	Hanover County Resource Name	Quad
042-0219	Basket House, Lee Davis Rd (Rts 627 & 642)	Studley
042-5090	Mechanicsville Alternator and Starter	Richmond
042-5091	Ridgeway Electric	Richmond
042-5092	Washington and Henry Lodge 344	Richmond
042-5093	Hanover Cleaners and Shape Up Barbershop	Richmond
042-5094	Steve W. Creech, CPA, PC and Bob's Hair Shop	Richmond
042-5095	House, 8103 Mechanicsville Turnpike	Richmond
042-5096	New Creations Day Spa and Salon	Richmond
042-5097	House, 8115 Mechanicsville Turnpike	Richmond
042-5098	Kitchenettes and More	Richmond
042-5099	Mechanicsville Cleaners	Richmond
042-5100	House, 8132 Mechanicsville Turnpike	Richmond
042-5101	Dave's Auto Sales	Richmond
042-5102	House, 8145 Mechanicsville Turnpike	Richmond
042-5103	House, 7315 Barnette Ave	Richmond
042-5104	House, 7360 Edgeworth Road	Richmond
042-5105	House, 7337 Strain Ave	Richmond
042-5106	House, 7290 Edgeworth Road	Richmond
042-5107	House, 7247 Grace Lane	Richmond
042-5108	House, 7240 Edgeworth Road	Richmond
042-5109	Computer MD	Seven Pines
042-5110	West Funeral Home	Seven Pines
042-5111	Digital Sign Lab	Seven Pines
042-5112	West House	Seven Pines
042-5113	House, 7367 Atlee Road	Richmond
042-5114	House, 7371 Atlee Road	Richmond
042-5115	House, 7377 Roosevelt Ave	Seven Pines
042-5116	House, 7372 Roosevelt Ave	Seven Pines
042-5117	House, 7371 Roosevelt Ave	Seven Pines
042-5118	House, 7422 Fullview Ave	Richmond
042-5119	House, 7368 Fullview Ave	Seven Pines
042-5120	House, 7358 Fullview Ave	Seven Pines
042-5121	House, 8064 Rose Hill Drive	Seven Pines
042-5122	House, 8134 South Mayfield Lane	Richmond
042-5123	House, 8137 Atlee Road	Richmond
042-5124	House, 8325 Meadowbridge Road	Richmond
042-5125	House, 8332 Elwin Drive	Richmond
042-5126	House, 8257 Meadowbridge Road	Richmond
042-5127	House, 8005 Shady Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5128	House, 8033 Shady Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5129	House, 7231 Cold Harbor Road	Seven Pines
042-5130	House, 7101 Cold Harbor Road	Seven Pines
042-5131	House, 7061 Cold Harbor Road	Seven Pines
042-5132	House, 7364 Whitlock Farms Road	Seven Pines
042-5133	House, 6162 Westhaven Drive	Seven Pines
042-5134	House, 6156 Westhaven Drive	Seven Pines
042-5135	House, 6158 Westhaven Drive	Seven Pines
042-5136	House, 6242 Westhaven Drive	Seven Pines
042-5137	House, 6255 Westhaven Drive	Seven Pines
042-5138	House, 6287 Westhaven Drive	Studley
042-5139	House, 8121 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5140	Smith House, 10290 Lewistown Rd	Yellow Tavern
042-5141	Tyler House, 10097 Lewistown Rd	Yellow Tavern
042-5142	House, 5424 Bellswood Drive	Seven Pines
042-5143	House, 8019 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5144	House, 8006 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5145	House, 7766 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5146	House, 7605 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5147	House, 7565 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5148	House, 7566 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5149	House, 7517 Walnut Grove Road	Seven Pines
042-5150	House, 6572 Creighton Drive	Seven Pines
042-5151	House, 8110 Woodbridge Road	Seven Pines
042-5152	Abandoned House, 10106 Kings Dominion Blvd (Rt 30)	Ashland
042-5153	House, 10040 Kings Dominion Blvd (Rt 30)	Ashland
042-5154	House and Tenant House, 10001 Kings Dominion Blvd (Rt 30)	Ashland
042-5155	Abandoned House, Kings Dominion Blvd (Rt 30)	Ashland
042-5156	House, 16433 Bullfield Road	Ashland

DHR #	Hanover County Resource Name	Quad
042-5157	House, Doswell Road	Ashland
042-5158	House, 10644 Doswell Road	Ashland
042-5159	House, 10499 Oak Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5160	House, 10382 Old Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5161	House, Old Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5162	Fairview	Ashland
042-5163	Farm, 10296 Old Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5164	House, 10264 Old Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5165	House, Old Ridge Rd	Ashland
042-5166	House, Old Ridge Road	Ashland
042-5167	Point Breeze (current)	Ashland
042-5168	Kelley's Store	Hanover
042-5169	Swan & Drake Gift Shop	Hanover
042-5170	House, 13311 Hanover Courthouse Road	Hanover
042-5171	House, 13264 Firehouse Road	Hanover
042-5172	House, 13272 Firehouse Road	Hanover
042-5173	House, Firehouse Road	Hanover
042-5174	House, Route 301	Hanover
042-5175	Gas Station, Route 301	Hanover
042-5176	Multiple House, 7997 St. Paul's Church Road	Hanover
042-5177	Office Building, 8108 Virginia Manor Drive	Richmond
042-5178	Hanover Law/Bail Bonds	Hanover
042-5179	House, 7251 Carolyn Road	Richmond
042-5180	House, 7251 Carolyn Road	Richmond
042-5181	House, 7259 Carolyn Lane	Richmond
042-5182	House, 7263 Carolyn Lane	Richmond
042-5183	House, 7271 Grace Lane	Richmond
042-5184	House, 7267 Grace Road	Richmond
042-5185	Helen Cobb House	Yellow Tavern
042-5186	Emmett Cobb House	Yellow Tavern
042-5187	House, 11387 Cedar Lane	Yellow Tavern
042-5188	House, 11397 Cedar Lane	Yellow Tavern
042-5189	Maplewood, 11408 Cedar Lane	Yellow Tavern
042-5190	House, 11147 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5191	House, 11151 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5192	Roger Buchanan House	Yellow Tavern
042-5193	House, 11159 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5194	House, 11162 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5195	House, 11168 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5196	House, 11257 Kenwood Church Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5197	Dishman House	Yellow Tavern
042-5198	Sally Vistrum House	Yellow Tavern
042-5199	Maxey House	Yellow Tavern
042-5200	House, 11257 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5201	House, 11247 Elmont Road	Yellow Tavern
042-5202	Railroad House	Yellow Tavern
042-5203	Viola House	Yellow Tavern

**APPENDI B: MECHANICSVILLE REPORT**

**AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF  
MECHANICSVILLE, VIRGINIA**



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# **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF MECHANICSVILLE, VIRGINIA**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mechanicsville has a long history dating to at least 1816 when citizens petitioned to build a turnpike. However, the Mechanicsville of today is very much a post-World War II and late-twentieth-century development. This report focuses on the architectural history of Mechanicsville and those buildings constructed during the post-war period and before. In this report, the name Mechanicsville Turnpike is used for the road that runs through the village of Mechanicsville; the newer by-pass is called the by-pass. The architecture defines the geographic limits of this study and is very tightly focused on the historic village of Mechanicsville. A change in construction date for buildings delimits the range of this report. Areas that have a majority of buildings constructed beginning in the late 1950s into the 1960s and later were not included in this report. Nothing southeast of the by-pass was included in this study although that is where most of the military action occurred during the Civil War. In that area, only the pre-Civil War Catlin House survives, although heavily altered. That area southeast of Mechanicsville Turnpike is chiefly late twentieth-century subdivisions and thus was not included in this study. Northwest of Mechanicsville Turnpike, the study area included the streets of Atlee, Luck, Pickett, Signal Hill, the older parts of Strain and Edgeworth south to Elm and southeast to Mechanicsville Turnpike. The triangular area located between Atlee and Shady Grove Roads was also included.

This report was prepared for the Hanover County Planning Department. The author would like to thank Helen Yates and Carl Berkley, who both lived in Mechanicsville in the mid- to late 1940s, for sharing their extensive information and memories about Mechanicsville.

## **EARLY MECHANICSVILLE**

Mechanicsville is one of Hanover's early villages and is documented in Civil War photographs and shown on maps of the war. At the time of the war, Mechanicsville consisted of only a dozen buildings including two blacksmith shops of which the village derives its name. The Lumpkin House, shown in a period photograph (Plate 1), stood at the crossroads. The Binford House, known as Waverly, was located on the southeast side of Mechanicsville Turnpike. The Battle of Mechanicsville, also known as the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek or Ellerson's Mill was one of the Seven Days' Battles of the 1862 Peninsula Campaign and took place nearby. None of the buildings in Mechanicsville that were standing during the Civil War survive today.





Plate 1. This Civil War-era photograph shows buildings located in Mechanicsville. Unfortunately, none survive today. The Lumpkin House is located on the far left.

## **TWENTIETH-CENTURY MECHANICSVILLE**

The earliest surviving buildings in Mechanicsville date to the early twentieth century ó 1920s-1930s ó but most of Mechanicsville's buildings were constructed in the post-World War II period. A construction boom occurred after the war to meet pent-up demand and the acute housing shortage the country faced when soldiers returned from the war, married, and began raising families. This period includes the construction of the commercial area along Mechanicsville Turnpike as well as homes located northwest of the commercial area. In the late twentieth century another building boom occurred with the construction of multiple office buildings located on Hanover Green Drive, a new post office and several new banks. In the residential areas, there is a mix of a few early twentieth-century houses, post-war houses and late-twentieth-century dwellings in addition to two churches.

A few early-twentieth-century dwellings survive in Mechanicsville and most are located along Mechanicsville Turnpike or just off the main thoroughfare. These houses generally have been converted to other uses such as offices. These houses show evidence of the Craftsman or Bungalows style. The main difference between these early houses and the later post-World War II houses is the presence of porches ó usually full-width porches.

The use of round porch columns is more likely to be found on houses of this period than later dwellings. These houses in Mechanicsville are generally frame, one-story, with a side gable roof with wide eaves (Plates 2 and 3).



Plate 1. This white frame dwelling was probably built some time in the 1920s or 1930s.



Plate 3. This is a good example of a brick Bungalow-style dwelling in Mechanicsville.

At the end of World War II, Mechanicsville apparently was a somewhat sleepy hamlet with several farms in the area. Waverly, the Binford House shown on Civil War maps, was located on the southeast side of the Turnpike. It stood until the 1970s when it was demolished to make way for commercial development.<sup>1</sup> Other large farms included Meadowbridge, located northwest of the village, and the Berkley House, located on the triangular section of land between Atlee and Shady Grove roads. Small cottages and Bungalow-style houses were located along Mechanicsville Turnpike. One long time resident of Mechanicsville who moved here in 1948 remembers the pretty cottages along Mechanicsville Turnpike. She also remembers the hill (Mechanicsville sits on high ground) that you saw as you crossed the bridge over the Chickahominy River coming from Richmond. The hill was green and grassy then, but its vision has been lost in the jumble of buildings constructed since then along with the growth of trees.<sup>2</sup> Commercial buildings have replaced most of the early cottages, as the area immediately along the highway became the commercial and business center of the village.

The commercial area of Mechanicsville is situated along Mechanicsville Turnpike. Located at the intersection of Mechanicsville Turnpike and Atlee Road is the Tri-County Bank, now the office of the Oliver-Winters Insurance Agency, that had branch offices in Hanover, Doswell, and Beaverdam in addition to the branch in Mechanicsville.<sup>3</sup> This was the site of the Lumpkin House that is shown on Civil War maps and in period photographs. The appearance of the bank with its Doric frontispiece and pedimented, denticulated cornice was designed to project an image of stability and security. An addition on the northeast side housed the post office. The dark replacement windows in the addition significantly change the look of the building. To the rear of the bank and located on Atlee Road is a one-story, banked, masonry building that was built about 1948 as the West Funeral Home (Plate 4).<sup>4</sup> It now houses a church. Its design is simple but the gable-end entrance, on both levels, gives it the appearance of a religious institution, which it now is.

There are several early commercial buildings located on Mechanicsville Turnpike between Atlee Road and Hanover Green Drive. The two-story, brick building on the northwest side of the road housed Brooks Hardware Store (Plate 5). It appears that a central door on the second floor has been enclosed leading to the possibility that the building had a two-story, two-level porch at one time. The first floor façade of this building has been altered by the addition of red brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern over the original storefront. The one-story building immediately adjacent on the south side has housed a restaurant for many years. In 1947, it was an Atlantic Richfield filing station but a Mrs. Doyle converted it to a restaurant and ran it for many years.<sup>5</sup> The original section of the building is constructed of brick and probably originally had a hip roof. A concrete-block façade faced with Permastone was later added and a frame vestibule was built onto that. Across the street, Heath's Radio Shop is also an early commercial building in Mechanicsville (Plate 6). It originally was the Mechanicsville Motor Company that for many years was run by the Avery family who sold Ford cars and trucks. This one-story, gable-front building has Craftsman-style knee brackets under the





Plate 4. West Funeral Home, located on Atlee Road.



Plate 5. Brooks Hardware Store on the right and Mrs. Doyle's restaurant on the left.



Plate 6. The former Mechanicsville Motor Company now Heath's TV.

eaves and a ribbon of transoms above the large storefront windows. This building has the most original storefront in Mechanicsville. The concrete-block section was added to the rear in 1947 by Baldwin Construction Company.<sup>6</sup>

Further south on Mechanicsville Turnpike stands a block of one-story, brick commercial buildings that was largely built in 1947 by Baldwin Construction Company (Plate 7, 8). Mr. Baldwin lived at Atlee and constructed many of the buildings in Mechanicsville in this period. The two-story Washington Henry Lodge building anchors the north end. Although the lodge was chartered in 1923, this building may have been constructed shortly after the remainder of the block. The Lodge building earlier housed a drug store. It has a recessed entry with angled sides, a typical storefront entry of this period. The Holland Furnace Company of Holland, Michigan originally occupied the south end building. The building that now houses Lipscomb Appliances was a later infill but continued with the same architecture.<sup>7</sup> The unifying features of this block are its brick construction throughout, large storefront windows, and panel above the storefront outlined in header bricks. Modern signage obscures most of these panels and the addition of the metal false-front cornices on the two buildings on the south end adds a disproportionate height to this end of the block. However, this is the most intact block of historic buildings in Mechanicsville. Like most modern strip shopping centers, this commercial block is set back from the street with parking in front.



Plate 7. Commercial block in Mechanicsville with Washington and Henry Lodge on the north end.



Plate 8. Most original commercial block in Mechanicsville.



Fewer early commercial buildings survive on the southeast side of Mechanicsville Turnpike. Several dwellings from the 1930s and/or 1940s remain on this side of the highway from the period before commercial expansion along Mechanicsville Turnpike. Two service stations that were probably built in the early 1950s are located on this side (Plate 9). The most intact has two garage bays on one side of a central entry with large glass windows and curved corner on the opposite end. Four parallel strips of glass blocks highlight a tower above the entry. Service stations, or filling stations as they were also known, with this same architectural design once dotted the country. The other early service station has been altered losing much of its architectural integrity. The Loving Produce Stand is also located on this side of the highway. Simply an open pole shed, the stand reflects the continued presence of agricultural in Hanover County.



Plate 9. Former service station located on southeast side of Mechanicsville Turnpike.

The residential areas of Mechanicsville are located to the northwest of the commercial area. The street names in the residential areas reinforce the history of the village for those who know it. Elm, Oak, and Dogwood were named, of course, for trees but many of the other names have special significance. Although there is no evidence on which to base it, the name Signal Hill is thought to derive from the fact that Mechanicsville is situated on a hill that could have been used as a signal station during the Civil War. Strain Avenue is named for the man who owned the land prior to its development. Luck Avenue is named for Buford Luck who developed Hanover Farms and the area between Atlee and Shady Grove roads. Grace Lane was named for his wife. Edgeworth was named for Edgeworth tobacco brand produced by Larus & Company who established the

local radio station WRVA. Its transmitter was located in Mechanicsville for a short period.<sup>8</sup>

The majority of post-war houses in Mechanicsville for which a style can be associated were built in the Colonial Revival style. This style borrowed architectural elements from the early Georgian and Neo-classical styles that were popular in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. While interest in the Colonial Revival movement first appeared in the late-nineteenth century, the re-creation of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. served to popularize and spread the Colonial Revival style especially here in Virginia. For soldiers returning from a war to begin a family, what would be more fitting than a house style that harkened back to the early days of their country. While the early Colonial Revival-style houses tended to be large and accurately detailed, changing post-war tastes and needs led to a simplification of the style. These later houses are most often side-gabled, with stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely replicated them. Houses in this style as built in Mechanicsville typically are simple and fairly small, side-gable houses with shallow roof overhangs, an off-center cross gable, one or one-and-a-half story with two front gable dormers, a gable entrance porch or shaped hood over the front door and multi-light windows of both sash and casement. There are also a few one-story, gable-end entry houses scattered through this area. While the majority of the post-war houses in Mechanicsville are frame, they were also built in brick and concrete block. The original siding for the frame houses appears to have been asbestos shingle but many have been covered with aluminum and vinyl siding. As families expanded, additions were built onto the original house. Outbuildings tend to be limited to garages or small storage buildings.

Virginia Manor is a U-shaped, two-block, largely residential area formed by Grace and Carolyn Lanes that are connected at the north end by Public Lane. However, sitting at the open top of the U and perched on the edge of the hill is a one-and-a-half story, brick, Colonial Revival-style office building (Plate 10). The building has a main block with Colonial Revival-style entry, cornice, and dormers and flanking one-story wings. Brick jack arches with contrasting keystones top each of the multi-light windows. Although larger than its neighbors, its stylistic detailing, brick construction, and domestic scale is sympathetic to the surrounding houses. It is thought that this building housed the transmitter for WRVA radio between 1935 and 1939. A 326-ft, all wood, self-supporting radio tower also was built in Mechanicsville by WRVA when it moved its transmitting capabilities from its original location in the Larus & Brothers buildings at the corner of 21<sup>st</sup> and Main Streets in Richmond. The radio studios, however, remained in the city. The radio station was begun in 1925 by Larus & Brother Company, which made among other products, Edgeworth Pipe Tobacco, hence the name of the street that runs in front of this building. In 1939, WRVA moved its transmitter and tower to the Varina area (Lou Dean, personal communication, 5 July 2005.)

The houses located on Grace and Carolyn lanes that form the legs of the U are excellent examples of small Colonial Revival-style houses and were built between 1940 and 1948, a bit earlier than the homes in Hanover Farms or the area between Atlee and Shady Grove





Plate 10. Colonial Revival-style office building in the Virginia Manor area.



Plate 11. This house retains most of its original details and has a finely detailed front door surround.

roads. The houses on Carolyn Lane are one-and-a-half story, side-gable with gable dormers, a sawtooth cornice on some of the houses, asymmetrical façade with multi-light windows, and classically detailed front door surrounds. Although the door surround does not survive on all the houses, several still have the fluted pilasters supporting an entablature with frieze and a cornice. The house at 7262 Carolyn Lane retains most of its original features and exhibits a high degree of architectural integrity (Plate 11). Grace Lane has a wider variety of houses. Like those on Carolyn Lane, most are constructed of brick. However, several have a gambrel roof and/or symmetrical three-bay facades. Few of these houses have additions.

At about the same time Virginia Manor was being developed or shortly afterward, Buford Luck developed Hanover Farms. The area on the west or Richmond side of Atlee Road along Signal Hill, Luck, Picket, and Strain avenues is known as Hanover Farms. In this area Luck built small, one and one-and-a half story, frame dwellings. These houses on Pickett are typical of Hanover Farms (Plate 12). As noted earlier, the great majority of these houses do not have front porches but small stoops topped with a gable hood or pediment. The house on the right has a front pediment creating a cross gable roof while the house on the left has two gable dormers.



Plate 12. Houses on Pickett Avenue in Hanover Farms.

Most of the houses along Atlee Road are of brick construction. There also appears to be a greater variety among these houses. It appears that these houses may not have been part of a formal development such as Hanover Farms but individually built. The two



churches in Mechanicsville are located on Atlee Road near the intersection with Signal Hill Road.

Luck also developed the area between Atlee Road and Shady Grove Road in the later 1940s after he began Hanover Farms. The farmhouse for this land is still standing (Plate 13). This is one of the earliest houses that survives in the immediate area and was probably constructed between 1880 and 1900. It is a single-pile, central-passage plan house with two exterior-end brick chimneys laid mostly in five-course American bond. It has a major addition on the east end. This was a typical house type found on farms through the eastern half of the county from the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth century. The house was purchased in 1947 by the Berkley Family and previously had been owned by the Bruce family who purchased Walnut Lane that was located on the east side of Beaverdam Creek from Mechanicsville.<sup>9</sup>



Plate 13. Berkley House on Fullview Avenue.

In this area, Luck used two different types of building materials. He built the same type of frame houses as found in Hanover Farms although more of them seem to be only one story in height (Plate 14). He also built small, side-gable houses of concrete block (Plate 15). These houses are unique in Mechanicsville and perhaps in Hanover County for the quoins that are found on the building edges and around the front door. Decorative quoins were occasionally used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on houses or buildings of the wealthy to accentuate the edges or external angle of a wall. With raised or rusticated quoins, bricks or stones projected beyond the surface of the wall. Quoins became popular again in the Colonial Revival period but are generally seen on the large



Plate 14. Frame houses on Roosevelt Avenue.



Plate 15. Concrete-block with raised quoins, three-bay façade.



and grand Colonial and Classical Revival-style houses. Quoins can be seen on the large houses along Monument Avenue in Richmond. It is very unusual, then, for quoins to be found on houses of this size and built of concrete block (Plate 16).

These concrete-block houses appear to have several varieties of facades. They are found in a three-bay variety with the front door slightly off-center. There are also four-bay types with both regular size and short windows located near the top of the wall. All have a chimney flue on the rear roof slope. Many of these have a flat façade with no stoop or hood. Several houses have gable hoods above the front door supported with wrought iron posts. It is not known if there were original. It appears that the original windows in these houses were steel casement windows but only a few of this window type survive today. With the exception of replacement windows, these houses appear little changed on their exterior.

Mechanicsville has a wealth of immediate post-World War II architecture that is an overlooked resource. It is one of the few areas in the county that has a good stock of small houses. Although these houses are small, they are well detailed with decorative features that produce a cohesive and in some cases classic appearance. While there is a much smaller stock of commercial buildings that survive from the early to mid-twentieth century, those that do survive contribute to the sense that Mechanicsville is a community.



Plate 16. Concrete-block house with raised quoins around door and at each end of façade, four-bay facade.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General Architectural Recommendations

Mechanicsville is a microcosm of Hanover County. It has lost all evidence of its early history, save for its name and modern development threatens to overwhelm its sense of place. However, Mechanicsville retains a good representation of post-World War II architecture. This quality, which is relatively unique in Hanover County, frequently gets lost in the noise and clutter of the late twentieth-century development. In the commercial areas new construction or alterations to the existing historic buildings frequently are not sympathetic to the earlier buildings. Replacement windows, new facades, additions to facades, and signage have had the greatest impact on historic commercial buildings in Mechanicsville. This report did not include an in depth evaluation of storefronts on historic commercial buildings in Mechanicsville but a cursory review indicates that Heathø TV appears to have the most intact original storefront.

In the residential areas of Mechanicsville, the individual residences have a fairly good degree of architectural integrity. Changes largely relate to use of modern synthetic sidings, replacement windows, and additions; however, these have not been so unsympathetic or overwhelming as to obscure the original architectural character of the houses. More recent infill construction probably has had a greater impact on the residential areas than changes to individual buildings.

The application of several preservation principals would encourage the appropriate treatment of Mechanicsvilleø surviving post-World War II architectural heritage.

- *Respect the historic design character of a building.* Donø try to change its style or make it look older, newer or more ornate than it really was. Confusing the character by mixing elements of different styles creates a confusing appearance. Build on its strengths; donø try to reinvent the building. Simplicity is your friend.
- *Seek uses that are compatible with the historic character of a building.* Compatible uses will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.
- *Modern alterations, additions, or new construction that are not historically significant can be removed.* Most alterations less than fifty years old generally lack historic or architectural significance.
- *Appropriate signage is important for commercial buildings.* Inappropriate signage can hide or overwhelm character-defining features of a building.

### National Register/Virginia Landmarks Register Eligibility

The architectural survey in Mechanicsville has been selective and not comprehensive, but there does not appear to be the potential to create a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Virginia Landmark Register (VLR) historic district in the commercial area. There has been too much modern (late twentieth century) infill development for a cohesive historic district to be created. There also does not appear to be a large historic

district that encompasses the entire residential area; however, a more thorough survey of buildings that includes almost all of the buildings in conjunction with the development of a formal historic context on the area, may identify a small residential historic district. Virginia Manor may be a potential historic district that includes Carolyn and Grace Lanes.

The creation of historic districts is important because it allows property owners to qualify for state and federal historic tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. In order to qualify for state and federal historic tax credits, a building must either be individually listed on the NRHP or be considered a contributing resource in an NRHP-listed historic district. There appear to be no individually eligible buildings in Mechanicsville. Much of the current building boom in the historic areas of Richmond is the result of the use of historic tax credits. It is unfortunate that few areas in Hanover can take advantage of this financial resource.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Waverly, see *Old Homes of Hanover County, Virginia*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Yates, personal communication, 28 June 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Land and Community Associates, *Survey of Historic Resources, Hanover County, Virginia, Phases I and II*, p. 84).

<sup>4</sup> Helen Yates, Carl Berkley, personal communication, 28 June 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Helen Yates, Carl Berkley, personal communication, 28 June 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Berkley, personal communication, 28 June 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Berkley, personal communication, 28 June 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Yates, personal communication, 28 June 2005, Lou Dean, personal communication, 5 July 2005.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on Walnut Lane, which is no longer standing, see *Old Homes of Hanover County, Virginia*, p. 58. The subdivision known as Bruce's Estates now occupies the site although the cemetery survives.