

VIR 3/8/06  
NPHF 5/4/06

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn

other names/site number VDHR #127-6171

2. Location

street and number 1620 Brook Road not for publication N/A

city or town Richmond vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Richmond (Independent City) code 760 zip code 23220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

  
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
removed from the National  
Register

Date of Action

other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business, warehouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls METAL: Steel

roof METAL: Steel

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance** **Applicable National Register Criteria** **Areas of Significance**

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

(Enter categories from instructions)

- 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.

TRANSPORTATION

INDUSTRIAL ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**  
1907-1938

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

**Significant Dates**  
1907, 1938

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A

**Architect/Builder**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository : \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.15 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>283882</u>	<u>4159624</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

       See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kimberly M. Chen

organization Johannas Design Group date 17 January 2006

street and number 3313 West Cary Street telephone 804-358.4993

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23221

**Additional Documentation** Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Paul and Julie Weissend, Yellow Brook Road LLC

street and number 4212 Stuart Avenue telephone 804.355.8518

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23221

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn (127-6171)  
Richmond (Independent City), VA

**Summary Description:**

Constructed in 1907, the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn is located on the west side of Brook Road to the northwest of Richmond's central business district. Brook Road borders the property on the east, with School Street to the north. Other industrial properties define the boundaries to the south and west. A chain link fence encloses the triangular lot with a gate at the north end. Tracks once ran to the west of the building with spur lines that passed through the building. The utilitarian building was designed to service the railway's electric passenger cars, which entered and exited the building through large openings at both ends. Utilitarian in nature, the gable-roofed, T-plan building has a steel frame clad with corrugated steel panels. Today, the building appears much as it did when built. A one-story transformer station was added to the east side of the building in the 1920s with further alterations being made in the 1970s when the building was acquired by Meyer Repair and used for the repair and service of large trucks.

**Detailed Description:**

The Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn is sited on a triangular lot on the west side of Brook Road. A chain link fence encloses the partially paved lot. The building stands alone today, but the 1925 Sanborn maps shows that there were once five additional storage buildings on the property. The Sanborn also shows that there were four "workmen's shanties"<sup>1</sup> to the west and four dwellings to the south, between the car barn and Sledd Street. In the 1970s, Brook Road was widened from sixty feet to ninety feet and the dwellings and storage buildings removed.

The corrugated steel-clad, T-plan building has a structural steel frame that supports a Fink Truss gable roof. The corrugated metal stopped at the bottom of the trusses in the north and south gable-ends creating large openings through which the cars were driven in and out along rails that are still imbedded in the concrete floor. The main part of the building had a capacity for six cars. A second slightly higher gable roof crosses at the center of the building and extends beyond the sidewall on the east creating a T-shaped plan. The blacksmith and machine shop were located in the wing. A Vulcan hoist is located in this elevated area. There are three, sixteen-over-sixteen double-hung, wood-sash windows in the east elevation and two in the west elevation. Physical evidence and an old photograph would suggest that there were seven windows in each of the side elevations. A one-story transformer station was added to the east side of the building in the 1920s and a second one-story toilet addition was made to the east side of the building in the 1970s. Other alterations made to the building in the 1970s include the removal of several of the windows, and the construction of a makeshift mezzanine at the north end of the building. A portion of the east wing was removed when Brook Road was widened, in the 1970s.

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Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn (127-6171)  
Richmond (Independent City), VA

The form and structural elements of the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn were dictated by current technology and the function of the building. The Fink truss, patented in 1850, was one of the first trusses to be built from iron instead of wood. The designer, Albert Fink, a civil engineer, was born near Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany in 1827. He studied architecture in Germany, and emigrated to the United States in 1849 where he found employment as draughtsman with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and became chief office assistant of Benjamin H. Latrobe, Jr. In this capacity he was the superintendent for the design and construction of buildings and bridges. During this time, Mr. Fink was also consulting engineer to the Norfolk and Petersburg railway. In 1857, he left the service of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and became chief engineer of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.

While the Fink truss had limitations as a bridge truss and was soon replaced, it is still a very popular roof truss because of its remarkable capacity to span long distances utilizing a relatively lightweight structural system. This system was ideal for the car barn, because it created a large open volume in which the rail cars could be serviced. Corrugated galvanised iron, first made of wrought iron, was introduced in the 1840s. In the 1890s and early-twentieth century, improved methods of steel making led to the complete replacement of wrought iron with milled steel. Iron and steel are cheaper and stronger than most metals but they corrode readily in air and water. However, when galvanized, protected with a thin coating of zinc, they become extremely durable. Thus, galvanised steel is strong, durable, relatively light and easily transported. These qualities made it very desirable for rural, industrial, and prefabricated buildings.

The Ajax Sheet Metal and Roofing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio supplied the sheet metal at the car barn. Vulcan Ironworks, of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, manufactured the hoist in the car barn. Best known as a locomotive manufacturer; Vulcan Ironworks was founded in 1849 as a small foundry to manufacture shaft hoists and other machinery for Wyoming's booming coal industry. By 1881, Vulcan's Wilkes-Barre facility included a machine shop, a foundry, a blacksmith shop, a boiler shop and a pattern store and office. The first locomotives were offered in 1888 with the acquisition of the Wyoming Valley Manufacturing Company. Vulcan became an important producer of industrial locomotives and in 1919 a new steel plant with open-hearth furnaces was built to satisfy the demands of World War I. By 1929, things were indeed very good at Vulcan, with some 1,600 employees producing both gasoline and diesel-electric locomotives, along with some battery mine units. Business declined during the Great Depression, never to recover again. World War II gave the company a short reprieve, but production ceased in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup>

The current owners plan to renovate the building and retain its industrial character. The building will be used for the storage of construction material and office space. The office space will be a primarily glass structure located at the southern end of the building. The door and window openings will be restored and the 1970s addition removed. Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits will be utilized.

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Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn (127-6171)  
Richmond (Independent City), VA

**Statement of Significance**

The Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway car barn is significant because it is one of two surviving buildings associated with the independent electric railway that provided service between the City of Richmond and the Town of Ashland from 1907 to 1938. The only other surviving building, the terminal, has been heavily altered and is no longer recognizable as a terminal building. Utilitarian in nature, the car barn incorporates industrial materials of the time – steel structure and corrugated metal siding. A number of innovations incorporated into the line made it unique – the type of car, the current utilized, and the concrete and steel viaduct. The car barn is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is eligible under criterion A because of its association with an interurban railroad that incorporated innovative technology. The car barn is eligible under criterion C because it is representative of early twentieth century industrial architecture.

**Historic Background**

Frank Jay Gould, son of New York financier, Jay Gould, envisioned an electric railway from Norfolk to Fredericksburg that would pass through Petersburg and Richmond with branches to the Northern Neck. Gould wanted a high-speed electric railway with large comfortable cars – not the local trolley system the line would later become. Incorporated in 1905, the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway integrated a number of innovations, many never before seen in the United States, namely the type of cars used, the voltage at which they were operated, and the concrete viaduct. Gould wanted cars that were fast and comfortable. The four, thirty-nine ton, fifty-five foot cars, manufactured by the St. Louis Car Company, resembled Pullman parlor cars with mahogany paneling, high backed seats, frescoed ceilings, smoking compartments, and vestibule doors.<sup>3</sup> The original rail cars were an oddity – “they were built in two sections, divided with a large transformer in the center. These cars, the only ones of their kind, were designed to absorb only as much power as was required and return the excess to the overhead wire. In this manner, enough power was left in the line to sell to customers along the right of way.”<sup>4</sup> The cars used 6,600 volts at twenty-five cycles per second instead of the customary 600-volt direct current used by trolleys. Further, no other interurban railway up to this time had used voltages higher than 3,300. A pantograph extended from the center of the car transferred power from the overhead wire to the motor. Because of high speeds envisioned for the railway, up to 90 miles and hour, the overhead wire could not be strung in the traditional manner from pole to pole. A suspended centenary system was chosen, because the slightest sag in the wire could result in the pantograph losing contact with the wire and arching. For these reasons, too, the rail line needed to be level and straight. To maintain Gould’s high standard for a straight and level rail line it was necessary to construct a half-mile long bridge that would cross Bacon’s Quarter Branch, the double tracks of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, and a number of well traveled roads. A wood trestle with steel spans over the streets and railroads was planned, but while traveling in France, Gould saw a

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Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn (127-6171)  
Richmond (Independent City), VA

concrete viaduct. Gould halted construction on the wood trestle and ordered a concrete viaduct be built. The viaduct was designed by the Trussed Concrete Steel Company of New York and was the largest bridge of its type in the United States at the time.

Intent upon building an interurban railroad, Frank Jay Gould purchased the Brook Turnpike in 1902. Chartered in 1812, the Brook Turnpike improved travel between Richmond and northern portions of the state, and for a long time it was the only road leading north from the City of Richmond. In the 1830s, a trip north to Washington still required a thirty-eight hour stagecoach journey along the turnpike. A special act of the General Assembly chartered the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad in 1834. The charter contained a number of unique features, including a statute prohibiting the construction of a railroad between Richmond and Washington or any portion thereof. Based on this statute, the State Corporation Commission was unwilling to grant Gould a charter for its new railroad. After a Virginia Supreme Court decision and no objection from RF&P Railroad, the charter was granted in 1905. The Richmond to Ashland section was the first to be built. Railway management was anxious to begin service and opened the 5.2-mile section between Richmond and Lakeside on 27 July 1907, months before the rest of the line was ready for operation. The single-track railroad could not accommodate the scheduled runs while managing the ongoing construction required to complete the line to Ashland. As a result, business was suspended six days later, until 28 October 1907, when the 14.8 miles between Richmond and Ashland finally opened for business. Construction costs totaled \$994,000. Gould had plans to begin immediate construction on the line to Tappahannock, but the stock market panic of 21 October 1907 made investors nervous. The Virginia Passenger and Power Company and the Richmond Passenger and Power Company, both controlled by Frank Gould, were in receivership. As a result of these events, the line was never completed. The railroad continued to operate until 20 December 1917, but the short section of track was never profitable. The heavy Pullman-style cars showed abnormal wear because they weren't designed for frequent local stops. The line was put up for auction in August 1918 and the highest bidder offered \$90,000 and wanted to scrap the assets. The trustees rejected the bid because the tracks and real estate alone were worth \$140,000.

In 1919, Oliver J. Sands and Jonathan Bryan bought the franchise for \$135,000 and the Richmond-Ashland Railway was chartered on 15 April 1919. A bond issue of \$200,000 helped finance the purchase price and start-up costs. The new railway would operate as an interurban streetcar line between Richmond and Ashland. The line was converted to cheaper to operate 600-volt D.C. current instead of the 6,600-volt current originally used and four streetcars were acquired second-hand. There were a number of grade crossing accidents and on 16 July 1922 there was a head on collision between two trolleys that injured six people. "Expenses incurred due to the collision and several crossing accidents strained the financial resources of the company."<sup>5</sup> In 1936 when the original thirty-year franchise expired, the company's deficit had reached \$171,619 and their bond indebtedness was \$161,500. The bond interest had been in default for six years. On Tuesday, 22 March 1938 the last



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trolley left Ashland and the copper wire and rails were sold for scrap. Virginia Electric and Power Company purchased the railroad's right of way to run electric transmission lines in 1937. The City of Richmond purchased the Brook Road right of way lying within the corporate limits. "When Brook Road has been improved, as we plan to improve it, real estate values, both along Brook Road and on Chamberlayne Avenue, are bound to be enhanced, and we will have a new and badly needed outlet to Route 1."<sup>6</sup>

Frank Jay Gould was the youngest of six children born to Jay Gould and his wife, Helen Day Miller. Jay Gould was an American financier and railroad speculator – a prototypical robber baron. Along with James Fisk and Daniel Drew, he wrested control of the Erie Railroad from Cornelius Vanderbilt and in 1869 he precipitated a financial panic, when he and Fisk attempted to corner the gold market. When Jay Gould died in 1892, at the age of 57, he left an estate valued at seventy-seven million to his children. In 1909, Frank Jay Gould incorporated the Virginia Railway and Power Company. The goal was to acquire Richmond and Tidewater Railways and related companies, and provide light and power, operate street railways, and distribute manufactured gas. Among the Richmond acquisitions were the Richmond Railroad and Viaduct Company, the Richmond and Petersburg Electric Railway Company, the Richmond Traction Company, the Virginia Passenger and Power Company, and the Richmond Passenger and Power Company. The Richmond Passenger and Power Company, established in 1887 by Frank Sprague as the Richmond Union Passenger, was the first commercially successful electric street railway system in the world. In 1913, the Virginia Railway and Power Company built its head quarters building at 702 East Franklin Street -- twelve-story "skyscraper" designed by Alfred C. Bossom. In 1925, Gould sold his controlling interest in the Virginia Railway and Power Company to Stone and Webster and the name was changed to the Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO). Gould died in Paris in 1956.

With the exception of the car barn and the terminal little remains of the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway. The Richmond terminal at 814 West Broad Street is still standing and occupied by the Richmond Glass Company. However, the exterior has been sheathed with a metal cladding that completely obscures the classical facade designed by the architectural firm of Noland and Baskervill. The former terminal building is listed as a contributing building to the Broad Street Commercial Historic District Boundary Increase. The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority removed part of the viaduct in 1958 as part of a slum clearance project and to build Carver School. Another portion was taken down to make way for the Richmond Petersburg Turnpike (Interstate 95). The remainder was demolished by the City of Richmond in 1965. The north abutment was still visible from Sledd Street in 1983. The Virginia Dominion Power Company's, formerly VEPCO, power transmission line has preserved the character of the cuts and fills with little alteration since they purchased the right of way in 1937. The Ashland Depot, at the corner of Maple and England streets was replaced with the Ashland Post Office in 1940.

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Richmond (Independent City), VA

**End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> 1925 Sanborn Map

<sup>2</sup> J.R. Welsh, "The Vulcan Iron Works" (unpublished, p.1)

<sup>3</sup> Carlton Norris McKenney, Rails in Richmond, (California, 1986), pg. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Neil November, "I Remember When..." Richmond Times Dispatch, 26 December 1948

<sup>5</sup> Sanford Terry, "Richmond-Ashland Car Line Was A Shoestring Operation" Highball, March-April 1983, pg. 8.

<sup>6</sup> "Veeco Buys Ashland Right-of-Way" Richmond Times Dispatch, 4 November 1937

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Richmond (Independent City), VA

**Bibliography**

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November, Neil, "I Remember When..." Richmond Times Dispatch, 26 December 1948

Richmond Times Dispatch "Vepco Buys Ashland Right-of-Way", 4 November 1937

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Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn (127-6171)  
Richmond (Independent City), VA

**Geographical Data**

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Car Barn is described as City of Richmond tax parcel N0000475003.

Boundary Justification

The parcel currently associated with the Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Car Barn is described as City of Richmond tax parcel N0000475003.

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Richmond (Independent City), VA

**Photographic Index**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

**Property:** Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn  
**Location:** 1620 Brook Road, Richmond, Virginia  
**Photographer:** Kimberly M. Chen  
**Date:** 27 June 2005  
**Negatives File:** Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia  
**Negative Number:** 22548

Photo 1 of 11, Vulcan Hoist  
Photo 2 of 11, Interior looking N  
Photo 3 of 11, Interior looking NW  
Photo 4 of 11, Interior looking E  
Photo 5 of 11, Fink Truss  
Photo 6 of 11, Interior looking S  
Photo 7 of 11, Interior looking SW  
Photo 8 of 11, Brook Road, NE corner looking SW  
Photo 9 of 11, NW corner looking SE  
Photo 10 of 11, SW Corner looking NE  
Photo 11 of 11, South Elevation

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<sup>1</sup> 1925 Sanborn Map

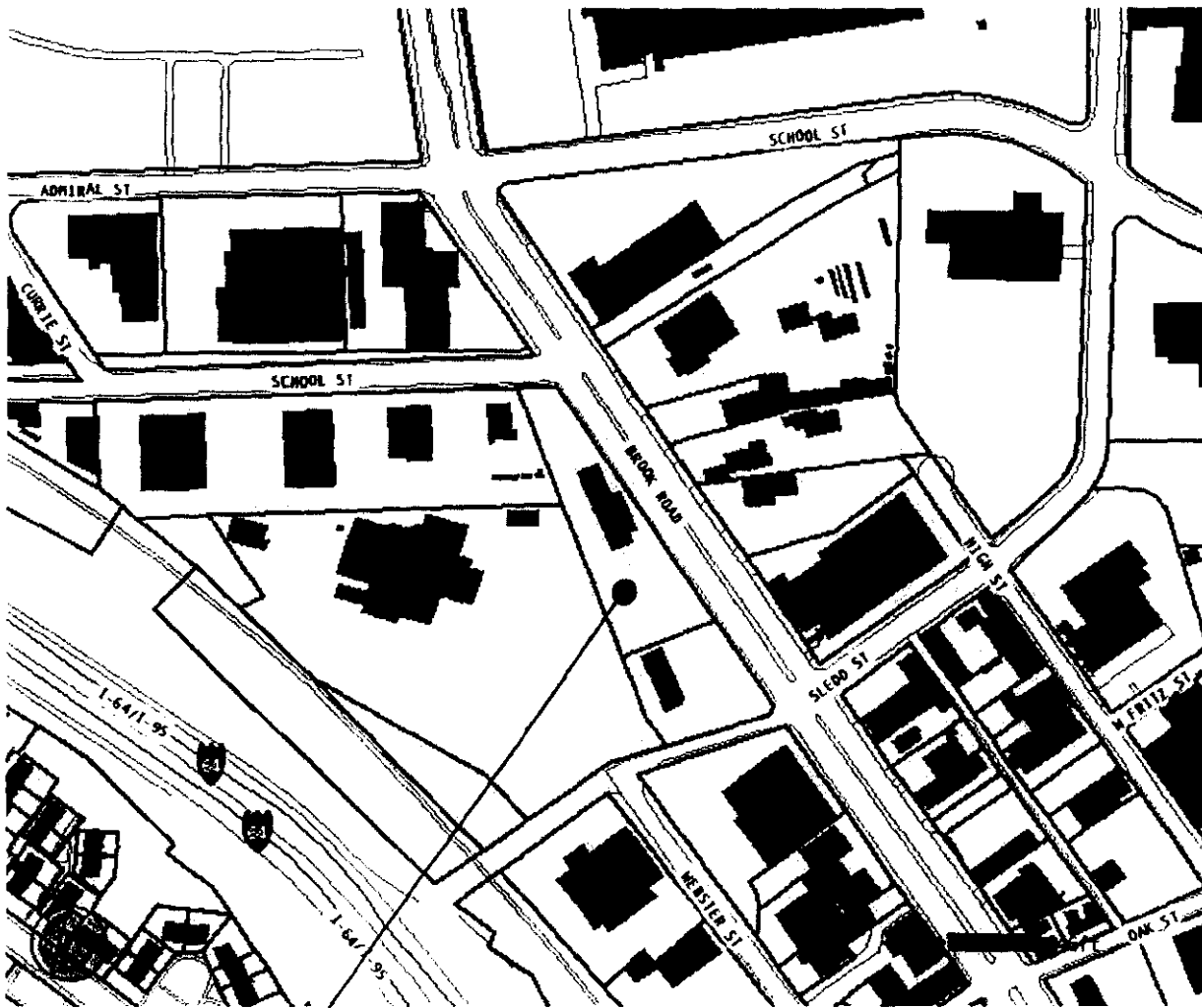
<sup>2</sup> J.R. Welsh, "The Vulcan Iron Works" (unpublished, p.1)

<sup>3</sup> Carlton Norris McKenney, Rails in Richmond, (California, 1986), pg. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Neil November, "I Remember When..." Richmond Times Dispatch, 26 December 1948

<sup>5</sup> Sanford Terry, "Richmond-Ashland Car Line Was A Shoestring Operation" Highball, March-April 1983, pg. 8.

<sup>6</sup> "Vepco Buys Ashland Right-of-Way" Richmond Times Dispatch, 4 November 1937



**Richmond & Chesapeake Bay Railway Car Barn  
(127-6171)  
1620 Brook Road  
Richmond, VA**

17-6171  
RICHMOND AND  
CHEAP TIDE BA  
RAILWAY CAR  
BARN  
RICHMOND, VA  
18 ZONE  
283882E  
4159624N

