

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

VLR Listing: 12/12/2019
NRHP Listing: 6/11/2020

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12

Other names/site number: DHR ID 122-1010

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1650 W. Little Creek Road

City or town: Norfolk State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>	<hr/>
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	<hr/>
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Fire station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

DOMESTIC: Multiple dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; STONE: Slate; METAL: Aluminum;
WOOD; GLASS

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12 is located at 1650 Little Creek Road near the Sewell's Point area of Norfolk, Virginia. The two-story, brick firehouse was constructed in 1923 in order to accommodate the expansion of the City's Fire Division into newly annexed territories. The building, designed by locally prominent architects Philip B. Moser and Erwin C. Gutzwiller, was constructed to resemble the form of an American Foursquare with Craftsman features, reflective of the early twentieth century residential architecture of the surrounding neighborhoods. The residential treatment of this otherwise utilitarian building was a popular design approach for fire stations during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The building was expanded in 1949 with the addition of a small one-story kitchen on the north elevation. The façade was altered in 1957 and again in 1998 to accommodate the introduction of larger fire engines. The recent 2019 rehabilitation, however, resulted in the reintroduction of arched door openings, restoring the building's original 1923 façade. Even with these alterations, the station retains high integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with its historical function as a firehouse.

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Narrative Description

Setting

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12, located at 1650 Little Creek Road, is situated on the southwest corner of its .3-acre parcel and has a minimal setback from the public sidewalk. A small yard with large bushes and established vegetation is located on the east and west sides of the building, and a fenced, paved parking area is located behind the building on the north side of the lot. Fire Station No. 12 is immediately surrounded by newer commercial and multi-family residential development. Directly across Little Creek Road is the new ca. 2018 Fire Station 12, constructed to replace the historic fire station. Just beyond its immediate surroundings are the historic, early twentieth century neighborhoods that Fire Station No. 12 served from its construction in 1923 through 2018.

Exterior Description

The fire station is a two-story, two-bay-wide rectangular masonry building constructed in common bond brick pattern. This building has a brick foundation, a hipped slate roof, and a single exterior-end brick chimney located at the center of the north elevation. It features Craftsman-style elements, such as the low-pitched hipped roof and the originally-exposed wide overhanging eaves. The majority of windows have wood, double-hung, one-over-one sash of varying sizes. The window openings have brick sills and aluminum exterior storm windows.

The facade, or south elevation, is two bays flanked by recessed single-story pedestrian entry wings on the east and west sides. The facade is characterized by the prominent double-bay, arched brick fire engine openings with custom wood panel doors, which were reconstructed in 2019 to match the historic configuration and appearance of the openings documented in a ca. 1924 photograph. The station's fire engine doors had been altered several times throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century to accommodate larger, higher-capacity fire engines. Symmetrically-placed, one-over-one wood-sash, double-hung windows are located above the garage openings, and an additional smaller window is located between them. Each of the flanking pedestrian wings contains a single-leaf stile and rail solid mahogany door with tempered upper glazing and two recessed lower panels, which were installed in 2019 to replicate the historic doors.

An extension of the west wing pedestrian entrance, the west elevation has a two-story projecting bay to accommodate the stairs to the second floor. Asymmetrically-placed one-over-one wood-sash, double-hung windows, of varying sizes, are located along the first and second floors. The east elevation has three, small, single-light fixed wood windows on the first floor that provide light along the hose ramp within the east wing. The second floor is lined with symmetrically-placed wood-sash, double-hung one-over-one windows.

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In ca. 1949, a small one-story addition was constructed on the north (rear) elevation to accommodate the introduction of a kitchen for the station. In 2019, this addition was expanded, both in footprint and height in order to accommodate a larger restaurant kitchen and to meet modern code compliance requirements. The addition is smaller than the historic building and is minimally visible from the principal façade. The second story of the historic firehouse retains three double-hung wood sash windows.

Interior Description

The first floor is primarily dedicated to the large fire engine garage. The rectangular space has concrete floors and painted exposed brick walls. While the station originally featured two sliding poles symmetrically spaced along the building's north-south axis, the pole on the north end of the building has been removed. The first floor also features several secondary spaces that were historically used for mechanical equipment, but have been converted into secondary uses for the restaurant, including a new bathroom. A modern dropped ceiling in the garage has been removed to expose the original ceiling, while new dropped ceiling will remain in the secondary spaces to cover mechanical and electrical systems. Flooring throughout the first-floor spaces is covered with quarry tile laid in a broken mosaic pattern or concrete.

The long narrow corridor on the east side of the building originally housed the fire station's hose ramp. In order to accommodate the new use of the building, the hose ramp was partially deconstructed to allow passage through the building's secondary spaces. Additionally, several openings have been introduced into the corridor wall to allow the space to function as a restaurant bar, and a wall at the south end of the corridor separates the restaurant's main entrance from the utilitarian space. The wing to the west of the garage bay opens directly to a stair to the second floor, where the firemen's lounges, sleeping quarters, and bathrooms historically were located. This area has been rehabilitated to accommodate the introduction of a two-bedroom apartment and a one-bedroom apartment, but with preservation of significant historic finishes and details, including door and window trim, paneled doors, as well as door hardware which remain exceptionally intact. Although a few new partitions have been added to the second floor to introduce the apartments, the historic corridor and circulation pattern, as well as historic walls have been retained.

Integrity Analysis

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12 retains integrity of location but its integrity of setting has been somewhat diminished. The property is situated on the north side of West Little Creek Boulevard, near Sewell's Point, retaining its integrity of location on its original lot. The fire station also has integrity of setting and is located near the southwest lot line surrounded by established historic neighborhoods which it served from 1923 through 2018. Fire Station No. 12, however, now is surrounded primarily by modern, non-historic multi-family residential and commercial development, as well as the new Fire Station 12 located directly across W. Little Creek Road. While Fire Station 12 was immediately surrounded by commercial properties

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during its period of significance, its setting has been compromised by recent development, new construction, and/or alterations to historic commercial buildings. Historic street patterns and their association with Fire Station No. 12 remain intact.

The building's massing, arrangement of spaces, proportions, and architectural details reflect the building's historic appearance and function and retain integrity of design. Although the space has been rehabilitated to accommodate a new use, its interior spaces continue to convey their historic functions, including the large open garage and residential second floor. While new openings have been introduced into the wall that historically divided the original hose ramp corridor on the east side of the building and the garage, this space retains its original configuration and arrangement, and a partial remnant of the hose ramp block has been preserved as a nod to the original function of the space. Original materials such as the brick exterior walls, window sash and trim, slate roof, as well as historic interior materials such as doors, flooring, and trim, have also been preserved. While the historic garage and pedestrian doors have been altered over time, the recent rehabilitation has restored the openings to their historic appearance. Therefore the integrity of materials remains quite high. The construction techniques, design elements, and materials that characterize the property preserve the early-twentieth-century workmanship associated with the construction of fire stations. Fire Station 12 clearly conveys its integrity of association and feeling as a fire station that served a residential area through retention of its historic massing, façade elements, and major interior spaces. The building's Craftsman-influenced architecture also is important to its integrity of association as a fire station that dates to the era when architectural designs for such buildings was meant to blend them into their surrounding neighborhood.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1923-1970

Significant Dates

1923

1949

1957

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Moser, Philip B.

Gutzwiller, Erwin C.

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

The Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12 is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the City of Norfolk's "great annexation" of 1923 and the evolution of the City's Fire Department during the twentieth century. The building, designed by locally prominent architects Philip B. Moser and Erwin C. Gutzwiller, was constructed to resemble the form of an American Foursquare with Craftsman features, reflective of the early twentieth century residential architecture of the surrounding neighborhoods. Although the building was altered in 1949 with a small rear kitchen addition and in 1957 and 1998 to accommodate larger, higher-capacity fire engines, these modifications were representative of significant changes in the operating procedures of the Norfolk Fire Department, as well as changes in national fire-fighting technology. Fire Station No. 12 continuously served its community until 2018, when a new fire station was constructed directly across the street, and has a period of significance beginning with its original construction in 1923 through 1970. The station's long period of significance also captures the early years of Norfolk's efforts to integrate the fire department, beginning in 1967. Because Fire Station No. 12 continued to function as a significant community fire station into the twenty-first century, 1970 serves as the end date for the period of significance as the property does not meet Criteria Consideration G.

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

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

On January 1, 1923, the City of Norfolk added thirty square miles of land and approximately 30,000 additional residents into its jurisdiction, the largest single annexation the city had ever made.¹ The territory included large military installations, as well as areas surrounding the central city that were quickly transitioning from Norfolk County's rural character to more dense residential suburbs along the edge of the city's limits. In "An Ordinance for the extension of the Corporate Limits of the City of Norfolk," the city outlined numerous reasons for its intention to annex the vast swath of land from the County, largely emphasizing this increasing development along the city's perimeter. Among the concerns raised by this peripheral growth was for the public safety of both city and county residents. The City noted that the density of development in some areas "necessitates better police and fire protection," without which the "safety of life and property" were endangered.² In order to address this chief concern, the City promised to "afford police and fire protection" immediately following annexation.³

¹ *City of Norfolk, Virginia*, Published by authority of City Council, 1924; Thomas J. Wertenbaker and Marvin W. Schlegel, *Norfolk: Historic Southern Port*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1962), 323.

² "An Ordinance for the Extension of the Corporate Limits of the City of Norfolk, Pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly of Virginia, Approved March 10, 1904, As Amended," *Virginian-Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark*, 12 March 1922.

³ *Ibid.*

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The City's Fire Division greatly expanded as a result of the City's 1923 Annexation Ordinance. Making good on its promises to its new territories, the City constructed five new fire stations across the annexed area. Among the five new stations was Fire Station No. 12, located near Sewell's Point. Construction for the building was approved in April 1923 at an estimated cost of \$16,500.⁴ By 1925, all of the new stations were completed including Station No. 12, as well as No. 13 (Ocean View), No. 14 (foot of Chestnut St.), No. 10 (Broad Creek Rd), and No. 11 (Verdon Ave).⁵ Fire Station No. 12 is one of two of these stations still standing today, which demonstrated the "progress, development, and growth of the City of Norfolk..." that was prompted by and immediately followed World War I.⁶



Figure 1: Fire Station No. 12, ca. 1924

⁴ Application for Building Permit No. 15951, Department of Public Safety, Division of Building Inspection, City of Norfolk, at the Sergeant Memorial Collection; "Engine Company Number-12," Photograph ca. 1924, at the Sergeant Memorial Collection.

⁵ *History of the Norfolk Fire Department*, Norfolk, VA, originally published by the Norfolk Firemen's Relief Association, 1915, revised in 1975 by Norfolk Firefighters' Association, Norfolk, VA, 23.

⁶ An Ordinance for the Extension of the Corporate Limits of the City of Norfolk, Pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly of Virginia, Approved March 10, 1904, As Amended," *Virginian-Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark*, 12 March 1922. The original Fire Station 11 building constructed following the 1923 annexation is the only other extant station from this period.

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At the time Fire Station No. 12 was commissioned in January 1924, several residential suburbs had already been established in the area, including Titustown, Meadowbrook, Algonquin Park, Riverfront, Glencove Estates, Lochaven and Glenwood Park. Advertisements for neighborhoods like Meadowbrook and Lochaven boasted “choice” lots with room for gardening and other outdoor recreational activities including golfing at the nearby club.⁷ The Titustown neighborhood was originally developed as a model residential suburb for middle- and working-class African Americans during the Jim Crow era.⁸ Directly north of the new fire station was the U.S. Army Supply Base, and what later became the nation’s largest Navy base, at Sewell’s Point. This proximity presented unique challenges for the firefighters of Station 12 including “technical rescues, industrial accidents, and fires within cargo containers.”⁹ Fire Station No. 12, however, was able to form critical partnerships with the naval base that promoted better fire protection, as well as involvement in community activities.

Advancements in Firefighting Technology

Norfolk’s concern over the threat of fire was evident very early in the city’s history, prohibiting wood chimneys in its original Act of Assembly in 1730. For more than a century, volunteer fire companies protected the city, until 1871 when the City of Norfolk established its first paid municipal fire department consisting of one Chief Engineer, four assistants, nine paid firemen, and forty on reserve. These men manned two horse-drawn steam fire engines and one ladder truck. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Norfolk’s population and territory expanded several times, requiring additional fire companies throughout the city. By 1915, the Department had seven fully-manned and equipped stations throughout the city, which by the end of World War I had grown to a population of approximately 150,000 persons.¹⁰

The early twentieth century also produced several devastating fires that prompted a need for more advanced firefighting technology. Prior to the city’s 1923 annexation, the department had acquired “four motor pump engines, four steamers, four aerial trucks, four combination chemical and hose wagons, two chief’s cars, one service car and one water tower,” and in 1921, purchased five one-thousand-gallon motor driven pumpers and three additional aerial trucks.¹¹ By 1924, the fire department had “fifteen pumping engines of the latest type, the finest in the country...three tractor steamers and one old horsedrawn engine in reserve.”¹² When Fire Station No. 12 was placed into commission on January 1, 1924, the city had equipped the company with the latest firefighting technology including an Ahrens-Fix Fire Engine. As firefighting technology continued to advance, new pumpers and aerial trucks were brought into service, while horse-drawn and earlier engines were retired. By the early 1940s, a new American LaFrance pumper,

⁷ “Come and live at Meadowbrook,” *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*, 7 April 1917; “Lochaven” *Virginian-Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark*, 7 October 1923.

⁸ Christy N. Frederick, *Titustown: The People, the Clothing, the Culture*, 2004, 1.

⁹ *Norfolk Fire-Rescue*, (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2006), 88.

¹⁰ *Norfolk Fire-Rescue*, (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2006), 18-29.

¹¹ City of Norfolk, Virginia, Published by authority of City Council, 1924, 35; *Norfolk Fire-Rescue*, (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2006), 28.

¹² City of Norfolk, Virginia, Published by authority of City Council, 1924, 35.

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commonly referred to as “Big Bertha,” was housed at Fire Station 12.¹³ While photographs from 1943 suggest that the crew may have had difficulty maneuvering their new pumper through the engine doors even with this early transition, it was not the purchase that would require physical alterations to their firehouse.

The substantial advancement of fire engines during the mid-twentieth century not only changed fire response but also resulted in changes to many fire stations across the country. In 1947, the National Board of Fire Underwriters developed new standards for “Class A” and “Class B” pumpers, which were outlined in *Suggested Specifications for Motor Fire Apparatus*. Class B pumpers were able to deliver 400-600 gallons per minute (GPM), while Class A pumpers produced up to 750 GPM. This increase in capacity allowed for more efficient fire suppression. Because of the increased capability and availability of Class A pumpers, Class B pumpers were phased out in 1956.¹⁴ The change in the national fire safety standards forced departments across the country to gradually swap out their aging Class B equipment for new, larger Class A pumpers. The City of Norfolk, devoted to consistent replacement of defunct equipment and to its fire safety rating, included the replacement of two 1920s pumpers in its annual budget for 1957.¹⁵

Although Fire Station No. 12 was able to accommodate the introduction of larger pumpers through the 1940s, the engines purchased in 1957 were larger than previous trucks due to their increased carrying and pumping capacity. During the spring of 1957, the Station’s truck entrance was altered, resulting in the removal of the brick arches over the openings and the accordion wood doors. These were replaced with square openings and rollup garage doors.¹⁶ These alterations allowed the taller fire engine to be easily driven into the Station’s garage bay. Like many stations throughout the country that chose to adapt their stations rather than construct new ones, Station No. 12 was again altered in 1998 to accommodate even larger fire engines. This alteration removed the brick column between the two openings in order to make them wider.¹⁷ While several of the city’s stations were demolished to make way for more modern and spacious stations, Fire Station No. 12 remains as a physical reminder of the evolution of nearly a century of firefighting technology.

¹³ Oral history interview with Retired Lieutenant Jim George, 12 October 2018.

¹⁴ Gene Mahoney, *Introduction to Fire Apparatus and Equipment*, (New York: Fire Engineering, 1986), 168; Gary Handwerk, “History Brings Us to the 1,500-gpm Pump,” *Fire Apparatus & Emergency Equipment*, 2010, <https://www.fireapparatusmagazine.com/articles/print/volume-15/issue-8/departments/pump-talk/history-brings-us.html> (accessed 11 October 2018); Bill Adams, “ISO, NFPA, and Class A Revisited,” *Fire Apparatus & Emergency Equipment*, 2014, <https://www.fireapparatusmagazine.com/articles/print/volume-19/issue-7/features/iso-nfpa-and-class-a-revisited.html> (accessed 11 October 2018).

¹⁵ *City of Norfolk, Virginia Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year 1957*, City of Norfolk, 30 October 1956.

¹⁶ “Other Council Action,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 6 March 1957; “Advertisement for Bids,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 23 April 1957

¹⁷ “Old Doors too Narrow to Admit New Firetrucks,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 11 August 1998.

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Figure 2: Fire Station No. 12, ca. 1943. Image shows difficulty maneuvering fire engine through narrow doors.

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Figure 3: Fire Station No. 12, undated (post-1957 based on alterations and record of alterations).

Fire Station No. 12 and the Community

In addition to serving as a physical landmark of Norfolk and its Fire Department's growth and development during the twentieth century, Fire Station 12 is representative of the Department's role in community outreach, philanthropy, and volunteerism. As one of the initial Red Cross First Aid Road Stations established in 1936, the members of Fire Station 12 held demonstrations of emergency treatment including the proper treatment of bone fractures and wound care. The firemen were also able to minimize the effects of an injury and potential risks for infection prior to transporting patients to the hospital. The Red Cross Road Stations were intended to fill the gap in emergency first aid treatment decades prior to the establishment of the paramedic profession.¹⁸ The first aid specialty of the crew at Fire Station 12 was highly regarded among its community, and also came in handy when a young child brought her injured dog to the station where the firemen "set his leg with splints and friction tape."¹⁹ The dog, Whitey, later became the Station's mascot and a symbol of the community's trust in its local firemen.

¹⁸ "Two Red Cross First Aid Road Stations Open," *Virginian-Pilot*, 21 May 1936.

¹⁹ "Little Dog Saved from Death by Skill of Merciful Firemen," *Virginian-Pilot*, 22 August 1941.

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During World War II, Fire Station 12 represented community resilience efforts on the home front. As men were called up to serve in the United States Armed Forces, Norfolk's Fire Department ranks quickly dwindled, leading to the establishment of the Office of Civil Defense's Auxiliary Firemen's Corps in December 1941. The volunteers "received training in the fundamentals of firefighting, laying lines, information on incendiary bombs, gases and explosives, and first-aid."²⁰ The Fire Department also suffered a shortage of equipment during the war, and the volunteer companies relied heavily on outdated, used, and donated equipment. In March 1943, Auxiliary Fire Company No. 12 demonstrated and dedicated the "first piece of mobile equipment...for use of the fire auxiliaries" in Norfolk. Station 12's auxiliary firemen were the first to acquire a truck to "rebuild it and adapt it for Fire Fighting purposes."²¹ Following the truck's successful demonstration, other stations quickly followed suit, resulting in an Auxiliary Firemen's Corps outfitted with a fleet of adapted fire engines.

Following the war, the crew of Fire Station 12 continued to serve the community through volunteer and philanthropic efforts. For more than twenty-five years, firemen turned Station 12 into a toy repair shop in the months prior to the Christmas holidays. Firemen, in partnership with Council of Social Agencies, the nearby military installations, and various women's clubs, repaired thousands of dolls each year during the mid-twentieth century. These dolls were then distributed to underprivileged children throughout Norfolk.²² Such partnerships with philanthropic clubs are representative of the significant place that local fire stations had in their communities. Fire Station No. 12 continued to serve as the heart of its surrounding neighborhoods throughout the mid-to-late-twentieth century.

²⁰ *Norfolk Fire-Rescue*, (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2006), 30.

²¹ *History of the Norfolk Fire Department, Norfolk, Virginia*, 1975, 41; Marvin W. Schlegel, *Conscripted City: Norfolk in World War II*, (Norfolk, VA: The Virginian-Pilot and The Ledger Star, 1991), 281.

²² "Battered Dolls Being Re-Made for Yule Gifts," *Virginian-Pilot*, 15 October 1950.

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Figure 4 : Auxiliary Fire Fighters for Station No. 12 with Engine, ca. 1943

African Americans and Women in the Norfolk Fire Department

The Norfolk Fire Department began a long struggle toward integration of the department and its stations in the late 1960s. Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination in hiring, promoting and firing practices on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin, it was not until March 1967 that Norfolk Fire Department hired its first African-American male.²³ Lyman Snead, Jr. was reportedly the first African-American to pass the Fire Department's qualifying examination.²⁴ It was Harry L. Snead, Lyman's younger brother, however, who became the first African American to make it through the year-long probationary period, in 1968.²⁵ The milestones achieved by the Snead brothers came more than two decades after the first black police officers were hired in Norfolk. It is believed that this significant gap was due to the nature of the working and living conditions of the fire department. With most aspects of daily

²³ With the exception of a few newspaper articles, the history of the integration of Norfolk's Fire Department has gone unrecorded in the written record. In an effort to document and preserve this significant component of the department's history, Commonwealth Preservation Group conducted a series of oral history interviews with retired Norfolk firefighters. Much of this section comes from individual and group interviews conducted during May-July 2019. These interviews are held in the archives of Commonwealth Preservation Group.

²⁴ "Baptism on Job Comes First Day: Once He Ran From Fire-Now He Runs To Them," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 18 March 1967.

²⁵ Group Interview with retired African American Firefighters, 8 June 2019, Oral History Project, Commonwealth Preservation Group.

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life, including public facilities, still segregated, Norfolk's early African-American firefighters believed that integrating the sleeping, dining, and restroom facilities was a major factor that delayed the employment of black men in the department.²⁶ When integration of the Norfolk Fire Department did occur, it received significant pushback among white firefighters and the community, and Norfolk's early black firefighters faced discrimination from derogatory language and racial slurs to alleged discrimination in promotion decisions.²⁷

When Norfolk firefighter Frank Branch reported that he was "jumped over" several times on the promotion list even though he had "scored higher than anybody," a group of approximately 13 men formed the local chapter of the United Black Fire Fighters (UBFF) to address such issues of discrimination. The UBFF members, including Branch and Snead, as well as Wayland J. Eley, Louis Johnson, Thomas Mitchell, David Williams, James Wilson, Archie Pew, Melvin Snead, Terry Spellman, David Harrison, Eddie Pretlow, and Charles Gore, pressed then Vice-Mayor Joseph Jordan to address the discrimination. In September 1975, Branch was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, becoming the first black officer in the Norfolk Fire Department.²⁸ Even in his new position, however, Branch continued to face discrimination, stating, "As a black officer, everything I do is going to be watched to see if I can measure-up."²⁹ Branch and the UBFF members continued to fight for equal treatment and fair hiring and promotion practices through the 1970s. Following multiple lawsuits by the UBFF and its members, as well as by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the City of Norfolk filed a consent decree in August 1978.³⁰ The consent decree required that the city award 30 percent of all entry-level firefighter positions to qualified black applicants, as well as to women.³¹

²⁶Group Interview with retired African American Firefighters, 8 June 2019, Oral History Project, Commonwealth Preservation Group

²⁷ Frank Branch, "Frank Branch Oral History Interview," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark on June 24, 2019, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019); Group Interview with retired African American Firefighters, 8 June 2019, Oral History Project, Commonwealth Preservation Group; Marti Germann, "Fire Dept. Hiring, Promotions Blasted," *New Journal and Guide*, 10 April 1976.

²⁸ Frank Branch, "Frank Branch Oral History Interview," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark on June 24, 2019, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019); Eva Finney, "Fire Dept.'s First Black Officer: Everything I do is Going to be Watched," *New Journal and Guide*, 4 October 1975.

²⁹Eva Finney, "Fire Dept.'s First Black Officer."

³⁰"Black Firefighters Sue City of Norfolk for Racial Discrimination," *Journal and Guide*, 10 Dec. 1977; "Black Firemen Prepare for Next Court Battle," *New Journal and Guide*, 14 Sept. 1979.

³¹ *United States of America v. City of Norfolk*, Consent Decree, Civil Action No. 78-418-N, 28 August 1978.

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Figure 4: Far Left: Frank Branch, Jr., ca. 1975. Branch was the first African-American firefighter to reach the rank of officer in 1975.

The first female firefighters in the Norfolk Fire Department were hired in 1979. When Pamela Ells-Johnson, the first female in the department, was hired, many of the male firefighters were surprised and shocked to see a woman among their ranks.³² According to Charles Gore, “At the time we were fighting so hard for black representation, we didn’t realize the female representation was so lacking.”³³ Charlie Britt served as the captain of Station 14, where the first three females in the department were stationed. In an interview, he recalled being asked to closely monitor the actions of the women. He stated, “I knew that they didn’t want women in the Fire Department. I was sent down to watch ‘em closely and mark ‘em down for anything they didn’t do right.”³⁴ Portia Rawls, Norfolk’s second and highest ranking black female firefighter, recalled that when she walked into the room for the written examination, “the room got silent,” and she “realized very quickly...during the application process that [she] was an anomaly.”³⁵ Women were at a disadvantage for even meeting the qualifications of firefighter based on Rawls’s memory of the agility test. Not only were the exercises designed for the physical strengths of males, but female applicants were also forced to wear the turn out gear designed for

³² Marcia Hawkins, “Marcia Hawkins Oral History Interview, May 28, 2019,” Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 29. The name of the first female is based on reminiscences of Marcia Hawkins, fourth female hired, and the first female to achieve rank of Assistant Fire Chief.

³³ Charles Gore, “Charles Gore Oral History Interview: Norfolk Fire Department, June 18, 2019” Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), p. 17.

³⁴ Charlie Britt, “Charlie Britt Oral History Interview, July 2, 2019,” Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 10.

³⁵ Portia Rawls, “Portia Rawls Oral History Interview, July 1, 2019,” Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 4.

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men, making it more difficult for them to perform the required tasks.³⁶ Those women who made it through the written and agility tests faced additional challenges during the early years, and some remember discrimination and harassment upon joining the department.³⁷

Despite continued discrimination and intimidation, minorities and women in the Fire Department remained committed to their careers. Branch and his fellow African-American firefighters were grateful for the support of the UBFF as well as a majority of their white colleagues. Retired Norfolk firefighter Charles Gore remembered a defining moment in his career occurred on his first day. The captain of his station quickly reprimanded the station's cook, who refused to make meals for Gore, and also reported that "out of 11 people, 9 of 'em were on my side the first day. And that was important for me for the rest of my career in the Fire Department."³⁸ Similarly, though Captain Charlie Britt had been given instruction to find any faults he could with the women assigned to his station, he expressed to Carolyn Wallace that he intended to grade her fairly. Although Wallace moved away from Norfolk when her husband received a military transfer, she continued to correspond with Britt and his wife for many years.³⁹ Portia Rawls also recalled the support she received from the "renegade" crew at one of her duty stations, stating that "they were probably some of the most loyal people in the department."⁴⁰ While most of the department's retired African-American firefighters agree that the department has made great strides toward integration and equality, many also acknowledge there is still much work to do. For Lawrence Brown, the department still has a "long way to go" to ensure that the fire department reflects the community that it serves. In an interview, Brown stated, "I'm not going to sit here and tell anybody a lie that we've reached the mountaintop. I don't even know if we're halfway. But we're better than we started out."⁴¹

Fire Station No. 12 Analysis of Resource Rarity and Architectural Integrity

Following the annexation of 1923, the City of Norfolk had fourteen firehouses in commission across the city. In addition to Station No. 12, the only extant early twentieth century stations are Station No. 4, constructed ca. 1903, and Station No. 11, constructed ca. 1923. Each of these extant stations retain their overall integrity associated with their historic functions. At the same

³⁶ Portia Rawls, "Portia Rawls Oral History Interview, July 1, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 5; Marcia Hawkins, "Marcia Hawkins Oral History Interview, May 28, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 23.

³⁷ Portia Rawls, "Portia Rawls Oral History Interview, July 1, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019); Marcia Hawkins, "Marcia Hawkins Oral History Interview, May 28, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019).

³⁸ Charles Gore, "Charles Gore Oral History Interview: Norfolk Fire Department, June 18, 2019" Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), p. 9.

³⁹ Charlie Britt, "Charlie Britt Oral History Interview, July 2, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 10.

⁴⁰ Portia Rawls, "Portia Rawls Oral History Interview, July 1, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 7.

⁴¹ Lawrence Brown, "Lawrence Brown Oral History Interview, July 10, 2019," Interviewed by Ashlen Clark, (Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019), 8.

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time, however, these stations have also been altered to accommodate the changes in firefighting technology. Station No. 4 originally housed horse-drawn pumpers, and therefore its openings were much too small to accommodate large pumpers. Although the wooden double doors were replaced with metal roll-up doors on Station 4, ultimately, the station was abandoned in 1983. The engine bays were altered on Station No. 11 in 1998, around the same time as Station No. 12, to accommodate new equipment purchased by the City. Alterations to fire station doors are common among Norfolk's firehouses, especially where buildings were rehabilitated rather than demolished for more modern facilities in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12 is, therefore, a rare historic resource associated with the City of Norfolk's early twentieth century growth patterns and the evolution of firefighting technology and safety standards.

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Secondary Resources

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Newspapers

Virginian-Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark

Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch

Virginian-Pilot

Norfolk Journal and Guide

New Journal and Guide.

Oral History Interviews

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA
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Branch, Frank. "Frank Branch Oral History Interview." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark on June 24, 2019. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Britt, Charlie. "Charles Britt Oral History Interview, July 2, 2019." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Brown, Lawrence. "Lawrence Brown Oral History Interview, July 10, 2019." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Gore, Charles. "Charles Gore Oral History Interview: Norfolk Fire Department, June 18, 2019." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Hawkins, Marcia. "Marcia Hawkins Oral History Interview, May 28, 2019." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Rawls, Portia. "Portia Rawls Oral History Interview, July 1, 2019." Interviewed by Ashlen Clark and Kayla Halberg. Norfolk, VA: Commonwealth Preservation Group, 2019.

Other Primary Resources

Application for Building Permit No. 15951. Department of Public Safety, Division of Building Inspection, City of Norfolk. Sergeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library.

City of Norfolk, Virginia Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year 1957.

"Engine Company Number-12," Photograph ca. 1924. Sergeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library.

United States of America v. City of Norfolk. Consent Decree, Civil Action No. 78-418-N. 28 August 1978.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA
County and State

- Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Sergeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library;
Commonwealth Preservation Group Oral History Archives, Norfolk; Virginia Department of
Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 122-1010

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .3

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.916250 | Longitude: -76.307080 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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

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

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA
County and State

The National Register boundary for the Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12 is coterminous with the property's current tax parcel, recorded as GPIN 1520309563 by the City of Norfolk. The true and correct .3-acre historic boundary is shown on the accompanying Location Map and Sketch Map of the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register boundary of the property coincides with the current tax parcel and contains the historic building and land associated with the original property. As such the property's historic setting and all known historic resources are within the boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kayla Halberg, Preservation Project Manager; Victoria Leonard, Preservation Associate

organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group

street & number: PO Box 11083

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23517

e-mail: kayla@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com

telephone: 757-905-4380

date: December 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12

Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12
Name of Property

Norfolk, VA
County and State

City or Vicinity: Norfolk

County: N/A

State: Virginia

Photographer: Kayla Halberg (KH)

Date Photographed: 11/2019 and 02/2020

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

Photo Number of 20	Description	Camera Direction	Date
1	Façade of Fire Station	N	02/2020
2	Façade and east elevation oblique	NW	02/2020
3	Façade and west elevation oblique	NE	02/2020
4	West Elevation	NE	11/2019
5	East elevation	NW	11/2019
6	East and north elevation oblique	SW	11/2019
7	Interior of fire engine garage	NE	02/2020
8	Interior of fire engine garage	SE	02/2020
9	Hose ramp corridor	N	11/2019
10	Hose Ramp Stair	N	11/2019
11	View into former mechanical space (now restroom corridor)	N	11/2019
12	First Floor Restroom (former mechanical space)	N	11/2019
13	First floor lounge (now kitchen prep)	SE	11/2019
14	First floor kitchen addition	E	11/2019
15	First floor kitchen addition facing historic fire station	S	11/2019
16	Second floor corridor showing opening to fire pole	S	11/2019
17	Second floor kitchen	N	11/2019
18	Second floor lounge space	S	11/2019
19	Second floor corridor facing fire bell	N	11/2019
20	Second floor lounge facing fire pole	W	11/2019

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Historic Images Log

Figure No.	Caption
1	Fire Station No. 12, ca. 1924, Sergeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library
2	Fire Station No. 12, ca. 1943. Image shows difficulty maneuvering fire engine through narrow doors. Courtesy of Norfolk Fire-Rescue.
3	Fire Station No. 12, undated (post-1957 based on alterations and record of alterations). Courtesy of Norfolk Fire-Rescue
4	Auxiliary Fire Fighters for Station No. 12 with Engine, ca. 1943. Courtesy of Norfolk Fire-Rescue.
5	Far Left: Frank Branch, Jr., ca. 1975. Branch was the first African-American firefighter to reach the rank of officer in 1975. Courtesy of Norfolk Fire-Rescue.

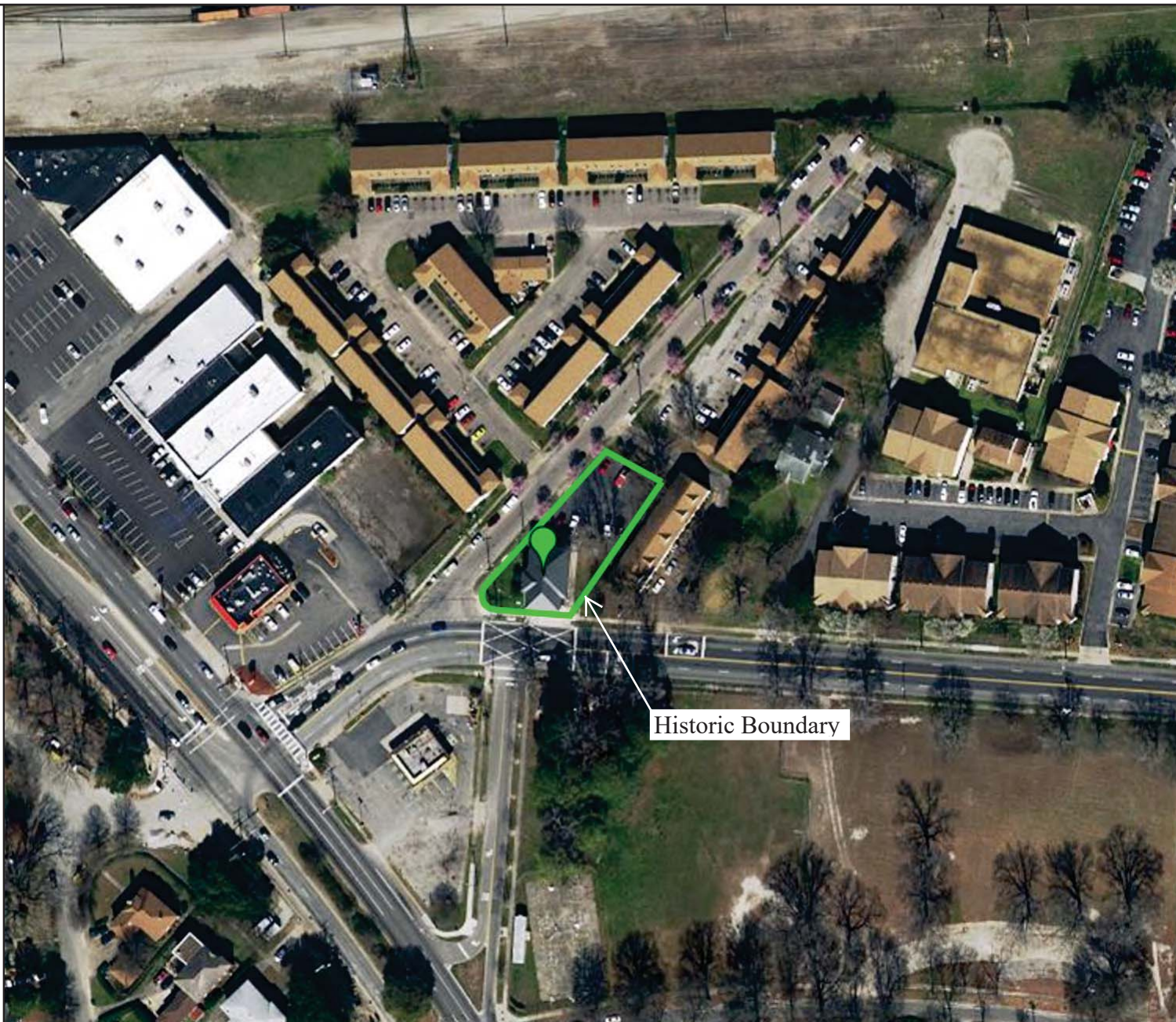
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain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

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

LOCATION MAP

Norfolk Fire Department
Station No. 12
1650 W. Little Creek Road
Norfolk, VA
DHR ID 122-1010

Location Coordinates:
Latitude: 36.916250
Longitude: -76.307080



Historic Boundary



Feet

0 50 100 150 200

1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title: Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12, Norfolk, Virginia (DHR ID 122-1010) **Date:** 10/11/2018

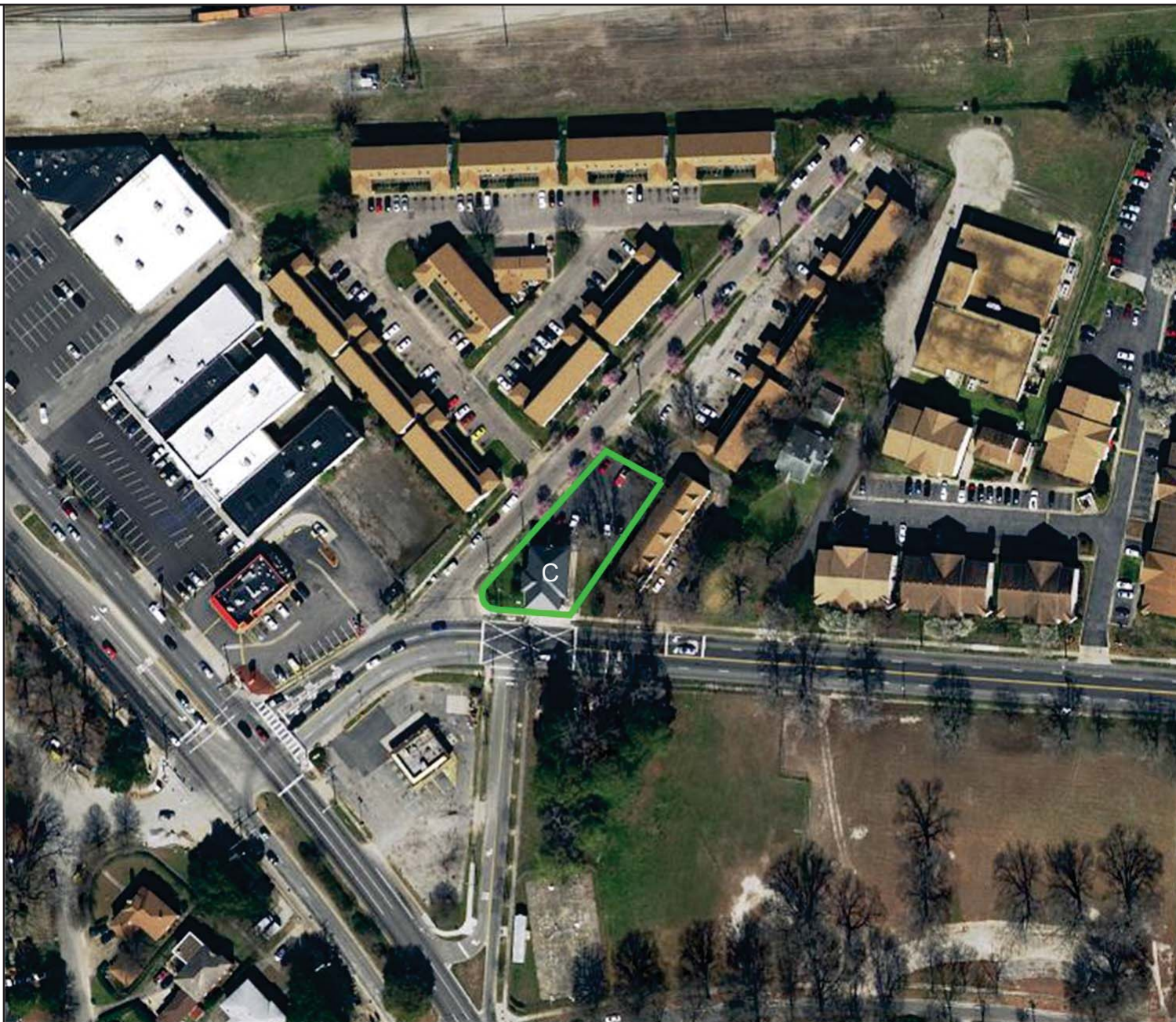
DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information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

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

Legend

SKETCH MAP
Norfolk Fire Department
Station No. 12
1650 W. Little Creek Road
Norfolk, VA
DHR ID 122-1010
C- Contributing

 - Historic Boundary



Feet

0 50 100 150 200

1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title: Norfolk Fire Department Station No. 12, Norfolk, Virginia (DHR ID 122-1010) **Date:** 10/11/2018

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

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PHOTO KEY (exterior views)

Norfolk Fire Department
Station No. 12
1650 W. Little Creek Rd.
Norfolk, VA
DHR ID 122-1010

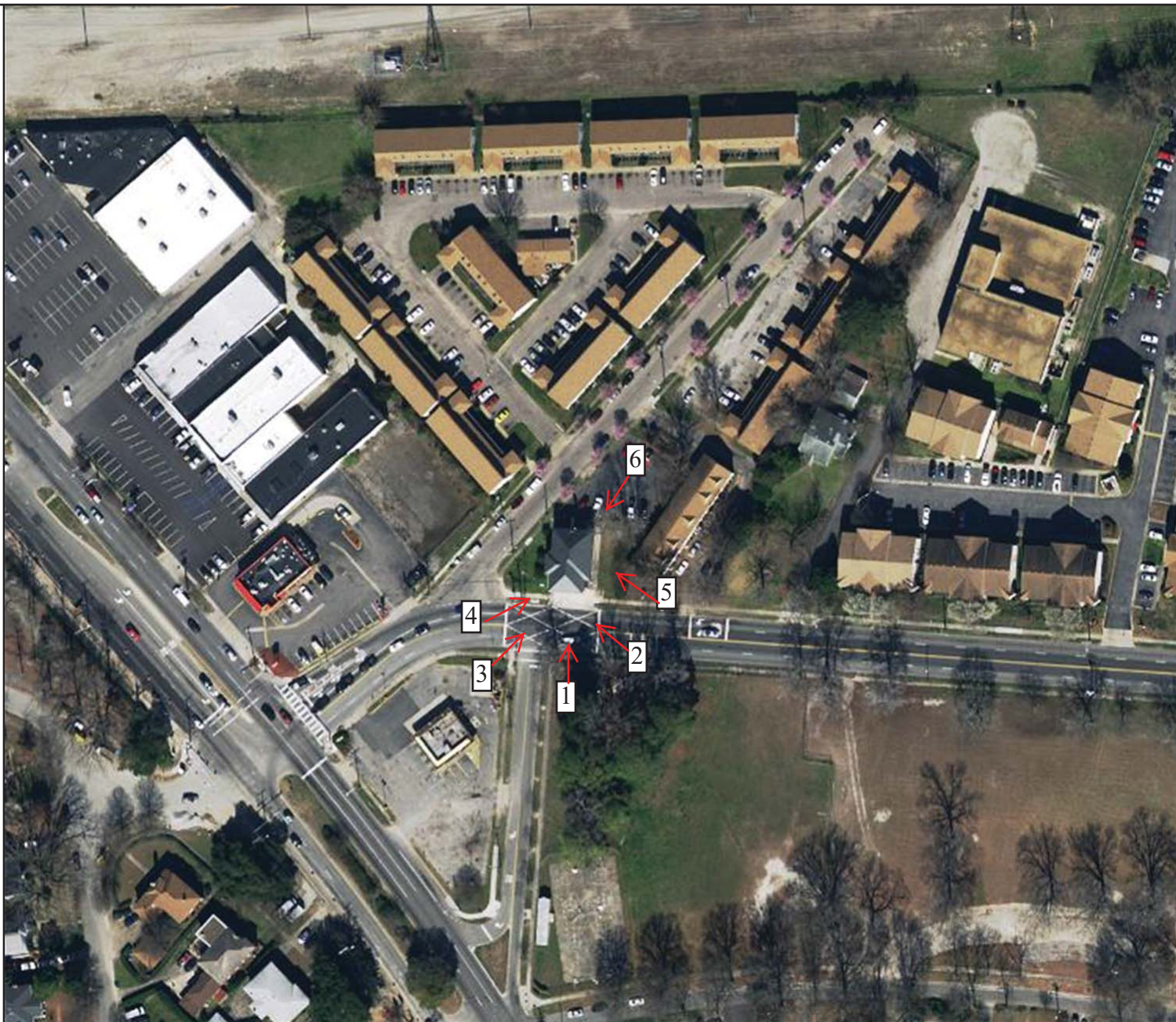


 Photo Locations



Feet

0 50 100 150 200

1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title:

Date: 3/16/2020

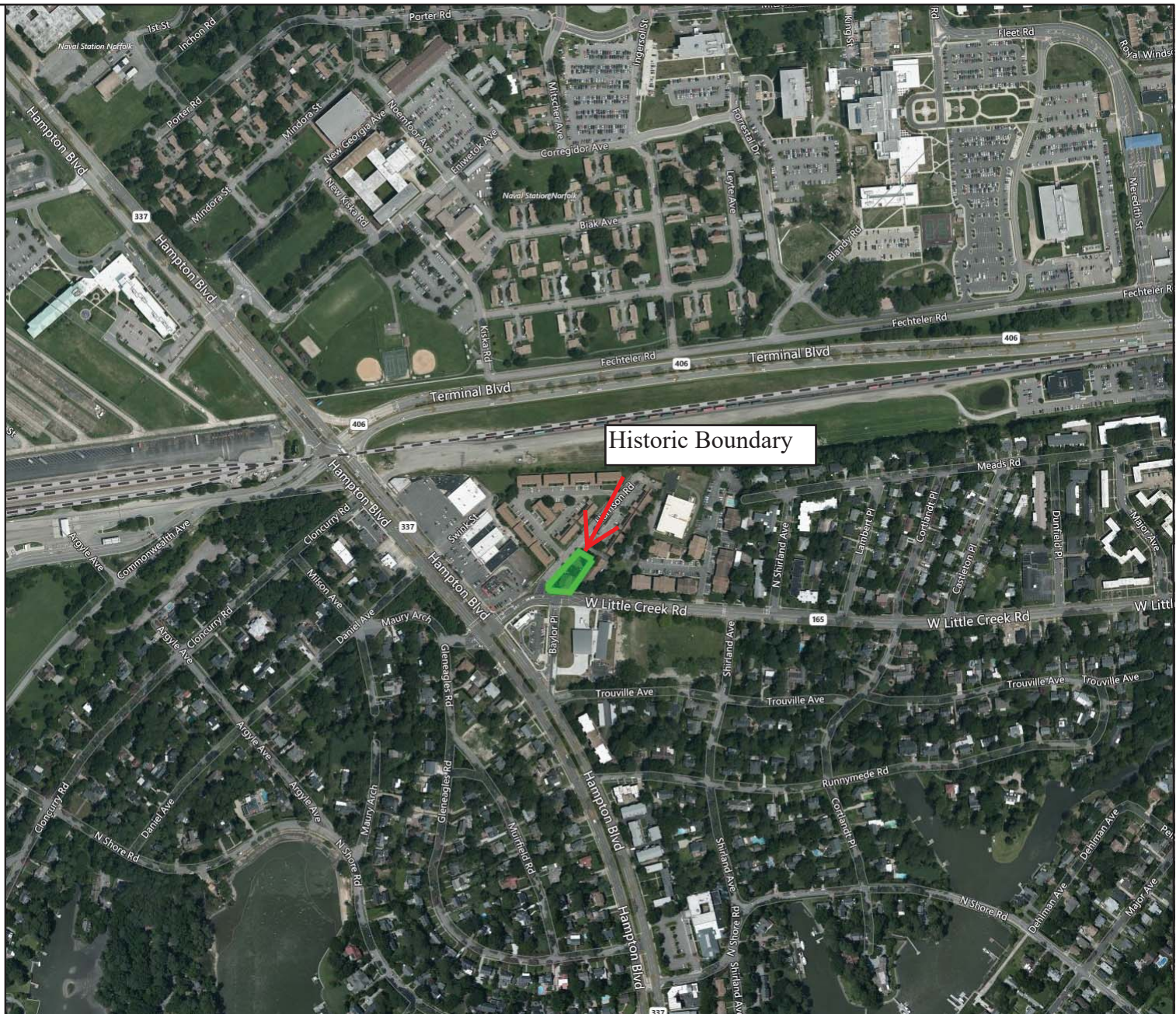
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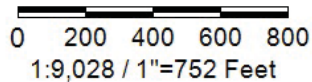


AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY

Norfolk Fire Department
Station No. 12
1650 W. Little Creek Rd.
Norfolk, VA
DHR ID 122-1010



Feet



Title:

Date: 3/16/2020

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

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