

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Colony House Motor Lodge

Other names/site number: DHR #128-6477

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: 3560 Franklin Road SW

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

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title:	<u>3-2-2023</u> Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>6</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.)

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Googie; Wrightian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE; METAL: Steel; SYNTHETICS

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

Located at 3560 Franklin Road SW (US 220), the Colony House Motor Lodge is comprised of two motel buildings, a motel office with a porte-cochere, and a swimming pool. The 2.69-acre property, located on the outskirts of Roanoke when it was built, was strategically sited with 450 feet of road frontage along a major arterial route connecting Roanoke to areas further south and west. Designed by the Salem firm of Kinsey and Motley, Architects, the buildings reflect influences from the Googie style with cantilevered, folded plate roofs that create a repetitive geometric gable motif and demarcate the bays of each building. Concrete block walls faced with concrete brick, large plate-glass windows, slender steel columns, and cantilevered concrete slab walkways serve as unifying design features of the motor lodge and also exhibit the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the architects. Historic site features that include historic signage, breeze block walls, fencing, paved parking areas with curbing, and retaining walls – many of which were painted green – also serve to unify the property and identify its amenities. Dramatically juxtaposed against a steep and wooded hillside with signage, motel office with porte-cochere, and swimming pool situated along the road, the motor lodge is an excellent example of mid-20th century roadside architecture designed to catch the eye of passing motorists. The Colony House Motor Lodge retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property continuously operated as a motel from 1959 until 2018, when descendants of the original developers, Richard and Glover Trent, sold the property. Contributing resources are the two motel buildings, office building, swimming pool and breeze block fence, a ca. 1970 sign, a 1959 sign, and a 1959 entrance sign. The property has no noncontributing resources.

Narrative Description

Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

1. Motel Building (Building A), 1959, contributing building
2. Motel Building (Building B), 1959, contributing building

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3. Motel Office, 1959, contributing building
4. Swimming Pool, 1960, contributing structure
5. Pylon Sign, 1959, contributing object
6. Arrow Sign, 1959, contributing object
7. Pylon Sign, ca. 1970, contributing object
8. Breeze-block Wall, ca. 1960, contributing structure

Detailed Description

The Colony House Motor Lodge is located on the east side of Franklin Road (US 220) in Roanoke, Virginia, situated between the South Roanoke and Franklin-Colonial neighborhoods. The motor lodge stands on tax parcels 1100410 and 1100418 with a combined land area of approximately 2.69 acres. The three buildings and pool that comprise the property are surrounded by a steep, wooded hillside to the rear (east) and commercial properties to the west, north, and south. The motel office and pool are sited between Franklin Road and the two motel buildings, which are set back from the street, amidst a large, paved parking lot. Due to the sloped topography of the site, the pair of motel buildings are two stories at the front and one story on the upper level at the rear. Brick planters flank the motel buildings. The site features mature trees and small shrubs. A row of hedges and a wood fence along the northern property line provide screening from the adjacent commercial development. The pool is enclosed with a combination of a breeze-block wall and chain-link metal fencing, all painted green. Concrete curbs and lampposts around the site are also painted green. A paved drive between the two motel buildings accesses the rear parking lot. There are two historic pylon signs, as well as a smaller sign in the form of an arrow pointing to the entrance surmounted by a neon vacancy sign.

Located east of the motel office, the motel buildings are long, rectangular blocks set against the steep hillside. Building A is five bays wide while Building B is three bays wide. A four-bay addition appends the south side of Building B by way of a breezeway and the laundry room. The addition was built in 1984, on the former site of the motel restaurant.

The motel buildings are characterized by their distinctive folded plate roofs, which create a gable form to define each bay. The buildings are of concrete block construction faced with a natural concrete brick and plate-glass window wall enclosing each room. Constructed in the manner of an "egg crate," all masonry walls were completed before installing the wood-frame plate-glass and wood-panel wall at the front of each room. The roofs and second-floor concrete slabs of the original motel buildings cantilever out to shelter the room entrances and external corridors with metal railings featuring chain-link panels that span the facades. Slender steel columns provide ancillary support to the cantilevered roofs and slabs. The folded-plate roof and cantilevered slab are continued in the design of the 1984 addition; however, the second-story rooms of the addition are accessed from an interior double-loaded corridor rather than an external corridor.

The folded plate roofs create a defined pattern of paired rooms with mirrored entrances and plate-glass window walls separated by vertical piers of concrete brick across the facades. On each floor, within each bay, central single-leaf entrances are flanked by plate-glass window walls on each side. The wood-frame window bays each feature three horizontal panels which extend from floor to ceiling. The central panel contains a pane of glass with particleboard panels above and below. Through-wall air conditioning units have been installed in the bottom panel of the end bays. Each entrance contains a flush door sheltered by a louvered, wood screen door surmounted by a particle board panel. These louvered screen doors provided the option of natural ventilation to the rooms while maintaining privacy for the guests. Some of the louvered screen doors have been removed and the flush doors have been replaced due to security concerns. The 1984 addition emulates the design of the original motel buildings with the same folded-plate roof system and

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pattern of paired rooms with mirrored plate-glass window walls separated by vertical piers faced with concrete brick. The addition's second-story west facade does not include doors because the rooms are accessed from an interior corridor, but it is cantilevered in a manner that references Building B's second-story walkway. External concrete stairs are located at the ends of each original motel building and in the central bay of Building A. Metal railings with chain-link panels extend across the second-story walkways on the front elevations of the buildings and along the external concrete stairs. The doors to each motel room as well as the columns and railings of the cantilevered walkways are painted green.

The first story of each motel building is only one room deep due to the grade of the site, while the second story features back-to-back rooms. Each bay contains two motel rooms on the first floor and four motel rooms on the second floor (two accessed on the west façade and two accessed on the east [rear] elevation). The room layouts in each bay are mirrored. The two original motel buildings contain approximately 67 rooms. The motel rooms are rectangular in plan, each including a bedroom at the front and a vanity area with lavatory and bathroom at the rear. Building A contains two suite-style units at its north end. Interior finishes in the hotel rooms include plaster ceilings, plaster walls covered with wallpaper, and carpeted floors. The bathrooms, located adjacent to the vanity area, consists of a bathtub, sink and toilet. Bathroom finishes consist of ceramic tile floors, ceramic tile on plaster walls, and plaster ceilings.

As in the original motel buildings, the first story of the 1984 addition is only one room deep due to the grade of the site, while the second story features two rows of rooms arranged around an interior, double-loaded corridor. The rooms also have mirrored, rectangular plans. Each first-floor room opens directly from the exterior into the bedroom area with a closet, bathroom, and vanity at the rear. Each second-floor room is oriented to the interior double-loaded corridor and features a bathroom, closet, and vanity at the front of the room with the bedroom area along the exterior wall with windows. Interior finishes in the addition include plaster walls and ceilings. The floors of the entrance area and bathroom are covered with sheet vinyl while the bedroom floors are covered with carpeting.

Secondary Resources

The one-story motel office building is located at the front of the property. A porte-cochere extends from the south side to provide a sheltered entrance for guests arriving to check in to the motor lodge. The office building and porte-cochere have folded plate roofs. Round, steel columns support the porte-cochere. The walls are of concrete block construction faced with natural concrete brick. The east, south, and west elevations feature large plate-glass windows with horizontal panels similar to the motel buildings. The main entrance is on the south side and contains a flush door. A drive-thru window with horizontal panel below is also on this elevation. The east and north elevations feature secondary entrances with flush doors. The northeast corner of the building is clad with vertical-board siding. A 1959 pylon sign supported by a panel of natural concrete brick and metal supports reads "Colony House" and extends through the roof of the porte-cochere. The interior features an office with check-in counter, a lounge, and an efficiency apartment for the manager. Interior finishes consist of plaster ceilings, plaster walls, exposed brick walls, and sheet vinyl and carpeted floors.

A rectangular swimming pool is located towards the front of the property, directly south of the office building. The pool area is enclosed with a mixture of breeze blocks and chain-link metal fencing, all painted green. The chain-link fencing along the east side stands on a brick retaining wall. The northeast corner of the enclosure features a curved brick wall that forms a bench on the pool side. A tall ca. 1970 pylon sign with metal supports reads "Colony House Motor Lodge" and stands along the north side of the driveway.

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A smaller 1959 sign in the form of an arrow pointing to the entrance surmounted by a neon vacancy sign stands along the south side of the driveway.

Statement of Integrity

The Colony House Motor Lodge possesses a high level of integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship for the period of significance from 1959 to 1972. With its unaltered exterior and intact interior plans and finishes, the Googie-style motel buildings retain their original designs by Kinsey and Motley, Architects as well as the materials and workmanship of G.G. Fralin & Son, General Contractors. The 1984 addition, although built outside the period of significance, reinforces this integrity as it emulates the original design by extending the motel building with the folded-plate roof system and plate-glass window walls while sensitively differentiating it with minor modifications and an exterior staircase serving as a separation. The motor lodge is comprised of two motel buildings (including addition), an office, and a pool which retain integrity of association and feeling as they clearly convey the architectural and historical significance of a mid-20th century roadside motor lodge. The property retains its integrity of location and setting as it continues to occupy its original site and acreage along Franklin Road, a major arterial route in Roanoke City.

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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.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1959-1972

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kinsey and Motley Architects (architect)

G. G. Fralin & Son (contractor)

McQuail, Inc. (interior designer)

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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 Colony House Motor Lodge, built in 1959 at 3560 Franklin Road (US 220), is an excellent example of a mid-twentieth century motel in Roanoke, Virginia, that reflects the changing travel, vacation, and lodging trends in the United States during the prosperous years following World War II. Designed by the Salem firm of Kinsey and Motley, Architects, the motel is a simplified, yet rare, local example of the popular Googie style used nationally in mid-twentieth century motel and other roadside architecture. Also exhibiting influences from Frank Lloyd Wright, the simple, functional design of the rectilinear building blocks is characterized by the strong horizontal lines of the cantilevered exterior walkways and accented by the folded-plate roof system, with its dominating geometric pattern intended to catch the eye of passing motorists. Developed by local businessmen Richard and Glover Trent, who also owned a concrete-block company, the property's concrete block and slab construction with a combination of natural concrete brick and plate-glass window walls also utilized recent innovations in building technologies and materials. Sited dramatically along a major arterial route with the natural backdrop of a wooded hillside, the motel is designed to appeal to passing travelers as it juxtaposes the modern conveniences of automobile travel with the allure of the great outdoors. Taking advantage of 450 feet of road frontage, the property features an office with porte-cochere and swimming pool, as well as prominent signage at its entrance, two buildings of guestrooms accessed directly from exterior corridors, and ample parking for automobiles directly outside each motel room. As a rare surviving and intact example of this mid-twentieth century building type and style in Roanoke, the Colony House Motor Lodge is eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A and C with significance on the local level in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, respectively. The period of significance begins with its construction date of 1959 and ends in 1972, the 50-year mark for a building that continues to function in its original capacity but does not meet Criteria Consideration G.

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

Historical Background

Developed by brothers Richard and Glover Trent, the Colony House Motor Lodge was designed by the Salem firm of Kinsey and Motley, Architects and constructed by G. G. Fralin & Son, General Contractor in 1959.¹ Richard Trent owned Building Units Company, a manufacturer of steam-cured building blocks and bricks, drain tile, and concrete blocks located in the Norwich neighborhood of Roanoke. The concrete block and bricks used to construct the Colony House Motor Lodge were produced at their plant. Soon after the motel opened, Building Units Company closed. Glover Trent also served as president of Graves-Humphrey's, Inc., a Roanoke-based hardware and building material supplier. He was an active member of the Rotary Club of Roanoke, serving as president in 1959. He staffed the motel office after work each day until the night manager arrived. His and Richard Trent's children also worked there during the summer and winter school breaks.²

The Colony House Motor Lodge occupies a prominent parcel on Franklin Road (US Route 220), one of the main arteries in Roanoke. Following the route of the early Carolina Road that branched off from the Great Road towards North Carolina, Franklin Road serves today as a gateway to Roanoke as it connects downtown to southwest Roanoke County and Franklin County. Although Franklin Road is currently a major commercial corridor, at the time of its construction it was located in Roanoke County on the outskirts of

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the city amongst wooded land and suburban neighborhoods. The Colony House predates the nearby retail centers of Townside Festival Shopping Center and Tanglewood Mall, as well as the junction of Interstate 581 and US 220.

Soon after its completion, the Colony House Motor Lodge was featured in the November 1960 edition of *The Virginia Record* published by the Virginia chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The article boasted the modernity and efficiency of the design by Kinsey and Motley, Architects as well as the utilization of modern building materials and construction techniques by the Trent brothers and G.G. Fralin & Son, General Contractors. The topography of the site – 450 feet wide by 200 feet deep with a slope of 65 feet – was described as it provided both opportunities and challenges to accommodate the 45 motel rooms with provisions for an additional 12 rooms. It noted that the 300-square foot rooms – decorated in shades of brown, beige, and olive green – featured two double beds, two easy chairs, and a combined desk/dresser with a dressing area at the rear that included a screened area for hanging clothes, a vanity with sink and an adjacent bathroom. Finishes consisted of wall-to-wall carpet, ceramic tile, and plaster walls and ceilings. Room amenities included a through-wall air conditioning/heating unit, telephone, luggage racks, and television. The article noted that secretarial and babysitting services were available upon request. The motel also included a 600-square-foot meeting room with a kitchenette and bathroom. The “gatehouse,” which was located at the entrance immediately across from the swimming pool, consisted of a lounge, office, and efficiency apartment for the manager. The article also mentioned that the swimming pool was enclosed on two sides by masonry screens to provide privacy to the bathers from the nearby highway.³

As in all of its articles, *The Virginia Record* listed each of the trades associated with the construction of the Colony House Motor Lodge. In addition to Kinsey and Motley, Architects and G.G. Fralin & Son, General Contractors, the following trades are listed: McQuail, Inc., interior decorators; Ralph E. Mills Co., Inc., Salem, excavating; Concrete Ready Mixed Corp., concrete; Harry Leady, masonry; I.N. McNeil Roofing & Sheet Metal Works, roofing and insulation; Roanoke Iron & Bridge Works, steel; Home Lumber Corp., windows, window walls, and millwork; Binswanger & Co., Inc., glazing; Moore & Glass Plastering, Salem, plaster; Marsteller Corp., ceramic tiles; Cates Building Specialties, Inc., steel bucks; Clark Wrought Iron Works, handrails; Engleby Electric Co., Inc., lighting fixtures and electrical work; American-Standard, plumbing fixtures; and Weddle Plumbing & Heating Co., plumbing.⁴

The motel originally included a restaurant, known as Town and Ranch, which served steak and seafood to both guests and local residents. Another popular amenity provided by the motel was the swimming pool, located at the western edge of the property and clearly visible from the road. As use of the swimming pool was limited to motel guests, local families would often stay at the motel for a few days in the summer so they could take advantage of the pool. Although the restaurant burned down during the early 1980s, the pool remains in good condition. A motel addition replaced the restaurant in 1984.

The Colony House is a notable motel in Roanoke history. Many traveling salespeople stayed at the hotel when visiting Roanoke along with family and friends of residents of South Roanoke, an affluent neighborhood east of the motel. According to Richard Trent’s son, Mac Trent, the hotel was recognized as the “guest room of South Roanoke,” during its heyday. Musicians and athletes who came to Roanoke for events at nearby Victory Stadium were also known to stay at the Colony House, including Herman’s Hermits, Jim Brickman, Lou Rawls, Lulu Roman, and Johnny Unitas.⁵

Virginia State Senator Granger MacFarlane leased the Colony House from the Trent family and ran it for approximately 25 years. MacFarlane, who was involved with the local chapter of the Red Cross, allowed

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families whose homes had burned down to stay at the motel. The motel closed in 2018 when the Trent family sold the property.⁶

Criterion A: Commerce

As automobiles became more affordable, roads improved with interstate construction, and more employers began providing paid time off, Americans took to the road in their cars for vacations and business travel in increasing numbers during the prosperous years following World War II. Trends in tourism and lodging changed in response to accommodate the shift in transportation from trains to automobiles and the rising number of middle-class travelers. Built in 1959 along US Route 220, the Colony House Motor Lodge in Roanoke exemplifies the evolution of roadside motel accommodations in the mid-20th century.

Roanoke, which traces its development as a city to the establishment in 1882 of the Norfolk & Western Railway headquarters, experienced this shift in transportation as 1958 marked the beginning of the railroad's decline. That year, Norfolk & Western changed to diesel engines and laid off approximately 2,000 employees. The competing railroad in Roanoke, the Virginian Railway, had recently discontinued passenger service in 1956. Over the next several decades, the number of motels located on major roadways rather than the railroad in Roanoke, including the Colony House Motor Lodge in 1959, increased significantly. This new trend in lodging development represented a major shift in a city where the railroad had dominated travel for more than half a century and lodging accommodations had been concentrated downtown in convenient proximity to the railroad.

Americans first began traveling the country via roads rather than the railroads with the emergence of the automobile in the 1920s and 1930s. This newfound freedom gave American tourists the mobility to explore areas beyond that of the railroad stations and allowed travelers to stay at locations other than the traditional downtown or destination/resort hotels. At first, American travelers camped out along the roadways as there were no lodging options. As tourism increased, municipalities erected tourist camps that provided campsites, parking, and sanitary facilities to automobile travelers at little to no cost. In the early 1930s, a new lodging type appeared, the cabin camp (later known as the cabin court or motor court), which offered an enclave of cabins for tourists to spend the night. These courts provided a measure of autonomy to travelers as they could lock their doors and park their cars nearby and not have to enter a public lobby. In contrast to hotels, these cabin courts were "decentralized, modern, and outside the confines of the traditional city."⁷ By 1932, the American Automobile Association (AAA) estimated as many as 30,000 motor courts and other forms of roadside lodging existed to accommodate the automobile traveler.⁸ During the Jim Crow era of segregation, such accommodations were racially segregated. In Virginia, all of these types of accommodations catered either to White or Black customers.

During the prosperous years following World War II, the number of roadside accommodations nationally doubled to 60,000 between 1946 and 1956 as more Americans owned automobiles and had paid vacation time.⁹ During this period, the motor court evolved into motor inns or motels ("motor hotels"), which typically consisted of buildings of one or two stories of adjoining rooms which were accessed from an exterior corridor or walkway. These buildings were surrounded by a large parking lot with spaces directly outside of guests' rooms. Popular during the 1950s and 1960s, these motels were designed to be modern in appearance, with vertically stacked rooms enclosed by concrete, glass, and metal exteriors. During this era, "breeze blocks" became popular and were often used to provide inexpensive yet expressive ornament to the buildings. These perforated concrete blocks featured geometric designs that allowed light and air to pass through while maintaining a sense of privacy for guests. The Colony House Motor Lodge features these character-defining breeze blocks in the swimming pool enclosure, which provides both privacy and visual

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interest from the road. The new motel building type also featured lighted signs that caught travelers' eyes as they searched for a place to spend the night; the extant signs at Colony House is typical of such signage. Porte-cocheres sheltered guests as they checked into the office building, which was separate from the motel buildings, as is found at Colony House. Typical amenities offered by motels included swimming pools, color televisions, air conditioning, and in-room telephones. Motels were erected amidst expansive parking lots to ensure ample parking spaces for guests.¹⁰ Motels owned and operated by individual owners started declining in popularity in the 1970s as corporations began standardizing and franchising motels, such as Holiday Inns. According to historians Jakle, Sculle and Rogers, "in 1962 only 2% of motels were franchises and by 1987 franchises accounted for 64% of the industry."¹¹

Located on a major north-south route, Roanoke benefitted from the growth of automobile tourism from its beginning in the early 1900s. In July 1909, the local newspaper reported that the *New York Herald* announced that the route through Roanoke was to be selected as part of the proposed National Highway to connect New York and Atlanta.¹² The new highway would follow the future US Route 11, established in 1912, through the valley of Virginia and Roanoke. Although city directories listed only seven motels in the Roanoke-Salem area in 1955, including Clark's Motel for Black patrons on US Route 220 and three of the earlier motor or tourist court types, this number would increase dramatically over the next decade. Except for the Whitehall Motor Court at 3016 Williamson Road NE, all these motels were located several miles outside the city limits. By 1959, the number of motels listed in local directories increased to 22 with 20 of these located along US Route 11 (including twelve on Williamson Road NE) and two on US Route 220. These motels were all locally owned with the first two motels owned by national chains – Holiday Inn and Howard Johnsons Motel—first appearing in 1959. By 1960, there were 35 motels listed in Roanoke and Salem with 32 of these located on US Route 11 (including 22 on Williamson Road NE) and only one listed on US Route 220. By 1965, there were forty-one motels listed in Roanoke with 21 located on Williamson Road NE. While a definitive survey of surviving mid-twentieth century motels in Roanoke has not been conducted to date, a cursory review suggests that most of these motels are no longer extant or have been extensively remodeled. Retention of Colony House Motor Lodge by the same family throughout its years of operation is a noteworthy aspect of the property's history. The endurance of the family-owned motel as corporate-owned chains proliferated is indicative of the appeal of the motel lodging option to a broad swath of travelers from the mid-twentieth century into the early twenty-first century.

Criterion C: Architecture

Designed in 1959 by Kinsey and Motley, Architects, the Colony House Motor Lodge is a well-preserved and rare, albeit simplified, example of Googie architecture in Roanoke. The Googie style, an extension of the earlier Streamline Moderne style, is a type of futuristic architectural design influenced by the emergence of car culture and the Space Age in the late 1950s. The style, which was more prevalent and pronounced in the western states of the U.S., was especially popular for roadside architecture, such as motels, diners, and gas stations. Googie designs were intended to attract passing motorists, using eye-catching characteristics like geometric shapes, hard angles, cantilevered roofs, tailfins, starbursts, and glass curtain walls.

Mid-twentieth century trends in motel operations, streamlined architectural styles, and innovations in building materials and technology clearly informed the design of the Colony House Motor Lodge. Sited along a major arterial route to Roanoke, the motel complex features prominent signage and ample parking to attract automobile travelers. The simple, rectilinear forms and lack of ornamentation promoted a sense of cleanliness and efficiency. Meanwhile, the dominant geometric form of the folded-plate, cantilevered roofs used the traditional gable form of residential architecture to advertise the hospitality offered by the motel units to passing travelers. Using the latest innovations in building technology, the buildings were

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constructed in an “egg crate” manner with the masonry walls of concrete block and cantilevered steel and concrete slabs completed first followed by the addition of the concrete face brick and plate-glass window walls.

The layout and design of the motel complex reflected the operations of a modern motel. The convenience of the separate office building with its porte-cochere at the entrance and motel buildings with units accessed directly from the parking lot provided a sense of autonomy and anonymity not offered by the traditional downtown hotel with its interior lobby. The cantilevered roof and concrete floor slab of the motel buildings, as well as the exterior stairs, provided common areas in an efficient manner as they created external corridors that sheltered guests and gave direct access to their units. The lack of an interior, double-loaded corridor also allowed units oriented “back-to-back” to share a common plumbing wall. Although each guest room featured a through-wall air-conditioning/heating unit, louvered screen doors at each room entrance also offered natural ventilation while maintaining privacy for the guests. The expanse of glass in the window walls provided ample natural light to the guest rooms as well as high visibility to the registration desk and lounge area in the office building. The prominent signage, including a neon “vacancy” sign and other motel amenities – such as the swimming pool at the entrance with its breeze block enclosure and the restaurant (demolished) at the southern end of the complex – also reflected the evolution of the mid-century motel designed to attract travelers in passing automobiles.

In Virginia, very few mid-twentieth century motels have been listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) has just one motel, Colony House, in its survey database for the City of Roanoke. Although VDHR has survey information for 252 properties classified as motels, the vast majority of these have not been evaluated for Register eligibility. Construction dates for these resources range from roughly 1915 to 1977. Of these resources, 105 predate 1945, while 77 resources were built between 1945-1956. In 1957, when Colony House Motor Lodge was constructed, three other motels also were built, one each in James City, Loudoun, and Hanover counties. The remaining 66 resources in VDHR’s inventory were built between 1958-1977. Only five of the 252 surveyed properties have been recommended eligible for the Registers: Martin Manor (088-0041) in Spotsylvania County; Hall Place (046-5101) in Isle of Wight County; Carlann’s (034-5066) in Frederick County; an unnamed motel (112-0067) in Warren County; and an unnamed motel (003-5039) in Alleghany County. In the past two years, three motels in Virginia Beach have been listed in the Registers as part of the City’s historic preservation program: Jefferson Manor Motel Apartments (VLR/NRHP 2021; 134-5383), Crest Kitchenette Motel (VLR/NRHP 2022; 134-5866), and Blue Marlin Lodge (VLR/NRHP 2022; 134-5398). Therefore, the Colony House Motor Lodge is locally significant not only for its architectural design, historical associations, and high level of integrity, but also as a representative example of a significant resource type that has, to date, not been identified extensively in the Roanoke area.

Kinsey and Motley, Architects

The Salem, Virginia, firm of Kinsey and Motley, Architects designed the Colony House Motor Lodge. Roy M. Kinsey (1920-2010), a native of New York, received his degree in architecture from the University of Virginia in 1946 after serving in World War II. Kenneth L. Motley, FAIA (1929-2017) grew up in Roanoke before attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) where he received his architecture degree in 1953. Both architects began their careers at the Roanoke firm of Smithey & Boynton, Architects and Engineers before leaving to form the partnership Kinsey and Motley, Architects in 1955. Francis A. Shane (1933-2019), who also received his degree in architecture and engineering from Virginia Tech in 1958, began his career at Smithey & Boynton as well. Shane soon joined Kinsey and Motley in 1963 and the firm was renamed Kinsey, Motley & Shane, Architects and Engineer in 1964. Following the

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death of Louis P. Smithey in the 1970s, Motley left the firm to return as a partner to Smithey & Boynton. He later acquired the firm after Henry B. Boynton's death in 1992 and renamed it Motley and Associates. After Kenneth Motley retired in 1995, his son Benjamin Motley took over leadership of the firm, which continues today as RRMM Architects. Kinsey continued to practice until his retirement in 1985 and the firm, which became Kinsey, Shane & Associates operated into the early 21st century.¹³

Kinsey and Motley, Architects designed a wide range of building types throughout the Roanoke and New River valleys, including banks, schools, churches, office buildings, manufacturing plants, libraries, and residences as well as several motels. Influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy of organic architecture, the unifying characteristic of these various projects was their Modernist approach to design that was simple in form while creatively exploring the use of new materials such as concrete, steel, and plate glass. They also integrated nature into the building designs by utilizing traditional exterior materials on the interior, including stone and brick for walls, floors, and planters. Extensive use of plate glass provided views to the outdoors while clerestory windows brought natural light to the interior. The incorporation of decks, screened porches, covered walkways, planters, and landscaping served to further integrate the building, site, and surrounding context in their designs.

The Colony House Motor Lodge, completed in November 1959, appears to be one of Kinsey and Motley's earlier commissions. While many of its design elements follow the typical design for motels with the exterior corridors directly accessing the individual rooms, the dominant form of the repetitive gables created by the folded-plate roof system combined a new building technology with a traditional residential form. While the site was primarily paved for parking, the backdrop of the wooded hillside and the use of green paint color on the doors, railings, fencing, breeze-block walls, and other site features, along with the swimming pool, attempted to achieve a natural setting. This creative design served to market an updated version of the traditional Virginia hospitality to passing automobile travelers through its eye-catching form and natural setting.

Kinsey and Motley employed the folded-plate roof system again in their 1960 design for Northview Methodist Church in Roanoke. This growing congregation, organized in 1959, requested a design "which would typify the progressive thinking and growth of their religious beliefs, while possessing a spiritual atmosphere."¹⁴ The gables formed by the folded-plate roof featured clerestory windows to help achieve this effect. The masterplan for the site called for a campus-type development with three buildings connected by covered walkways. The church itself, which was circular in form, was prominently sited to be viewed from two nearby highways. To make the buildings fully accessible and welcoming, there were no steps and all classrooms opened directly to the exterior with the site characterized by "rolling lawns" and a playground with ample parking to the side and rear.¹⁵

Located in the Edgehill Estate neighborhood behind the Colony House, the 1962 residential design for the home of Doctor and Mrs. Henry Brobst took advantage of the steeply wooded site to create a six-level house that fully incorporated the outdoors into the design. Constructed of brick and redwood siding, the house featured stone flooring, exposed brick walls, and planters on the interior. A walled, Japanese-style front courtyard, screened porches, cantilevered decks, and a covered walkway further integrated the indoor and outdoor spaces of this residence.¹⁶ Another innovative design by Kinsey and Motley, Architects was the 1967 office building for General Stone and Materials Corporation at 1401 Franklin Road SW in Roanoke. At the request of the company, the building was designed to advertise its products. The simple, rectangular building features uncoursed green serpentine marble on the ground level with sculptured aggregate panels in parabolic shapes on the upper level. A stone wall screens the entrance. The serpentine marble was crushed to make terrazzo for the exterior walks that extended into the building as the interior

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floors. Clerestory windows light the first level while also giving the illusion that the second story above was suspended. In spite of its commercial function and modern design, the building sits back with a generous grass lawn to respect the traditional residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.¹⁷ The First National Exchange Bank Branch at 301 McClanahan Street in the South Roanoke neighborhood, designed by Kinsey and Motley in 1967, also utilizes stone interior walls and flooring, plate-glass windows, and a landscaped courtyard with benches and planters to successfully integrate the interior and exterior spaces.¹⁸ One of the final projects by Kinsey, Motley & Shane, Architects and Engineer prior to Motley's departure was the 1971 design for the Southwest Virginia Savings and Loan Association building. Located at the corner of Campbell Avenue and Second Street in downtown Roanoke, the three-story building continued to utilize modern materials in an innovative design. The steel frame building is clad in a combination of glass curtain wall, marble, and aggregate concrete. The first-story banking lobby features a recessed glass curtain wall with an integrated exterior planter extending along the full Campbell Avenue elevation.¹⁹ In a return to their early venture into "roadside architecture," the firm also designed the unusual round showroom for Hart Motors in 1971. Located in Salem at 1341 E. Main Street (US 11), the steel frame building features a Parachute-form roof and a glass curtain wall to maximize visibility of the automobiles for sale to passing motorists.

These buildings and many others designed by Kinsey and Motley, Architects, and their successor firms, continue to contribute to the architectural fabric of Roanoke, Salem, and the surrounding region. The range of building types they designed – including newly-established churches, consolidated schools, roadside architecture, bank branches, manufacturing plants, college facilities, municipal buildings, and residences – represent the rapid growth and changing trends in development of the area and its economy following World War II. Their Modern designs, integration of nature, and innovative use of new building materials and construction techniques are indicative of the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright and his philosophy of organic architecture. Today, their designs clearly convey the era in which they were built as they reflect the advances in technology as well as changing trends in popular tastes during the second half of the twentieth century.

Colony House Motor Lodge
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Berrier, Ralph Jr. "Colony House still vintage '50s motor lodge." *Roanoke Times*, June 2015.

"Colony House Motor Lodge Roanoke." *Virginia Record* Volume 82, Number 11 (November 1960).

Elliott, Julia Trent. Telephone Interview with author, April 27, 2022.

"First National Exchange Bank," *Virginia Record* Volume 90, Number 2 (February 1968).

"Francis Allison Shane." *Virginia Record* Volume 86, Number 5 (May 1964).

Fulghum, Jim. "Early Years of Motoring in Roanoke, VA." ca. 2007
(<https://hswv.pastperfectonline.com/archive/4B66DFE8-7FE1-4FB5-B6AB-221118391549>).

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Liebs, Chester H. Liebs. *Main Street to Miracle Mile*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

McClane, Debra A and Kristin H. Kirchen. "Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort Motels and Hotels (1955-1970)." DHR File No. 134-5721, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, November 2020.

"OBIT – MOTLEY Kenneth Leighton." *Roanoke Times*, January 3, 2018.

"Obituary for Roy Milton Kinsey." John M. Oakey & Son Funeral Home and Crematory, 2010
(<https://www.johnmoakey.com/memorials/Kinsey-Roy/1866317/obituary.php?Printable=true>).

"Roanoke Church with Unusual Roof." *Virginia Record* Volume 82, Number 11 (November 1960).

"Southwest Virginia Savings and Loan Association." *Virginia Record* Volume 93, Number 2 (February 1971).

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“Two New Residences.” *Virginia Record* Volume 84, Number 11 (November 1962).

Whitwell, W.L. & Lee W. Winborne. *Architectural Heritage of the Roanoke Valley*. Charlottesville, Va: The University Press of Virginia, 1982.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #128-6477

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.69 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 37.236162 Longitude: -79.969038

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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

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

The historic boundary corresponds to the lot lines of 3560 Franklin Road, recorded by the City of Roanoke as parcel numbers 1100410 and 1100418. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Tax Parcel Map and Sketch Map + Photo Key.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundary includes the 2.69-acre property associated with the Colony House Motor Lodge during its period of significance and thus includes its historic setting and all known associated historic resources.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kate Kronau & Alison Blanton

organization: Hill Studio

street & number: 120 Campbell Avenue SW

city or town: Roanoke state: VA zip code: 24011

e-mail: kkronau@hillstudio.com/ ablanton@hillstudio.com

telephone: (540) 342-5263

date: August 2022

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,

Colony House Motor Lodge
Name of Property

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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: Colony House Motor Lodge

City or Vicinity: Roanoke City

County: N/A State: Virginia

Photographer: Kate Kronau

Date Photographed: April 2022

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

- 1 of 16. Front, view south
- 2 of 16. Front, view northeast
- 3 of 16. Building A, Front, view south
- 4 of 16. Building A, Rear, view north
- 5 of 16. Building A, Front balcony, view southwest
- 6 of 16. Building A, Typical motel room interior, bedroom, view west
- 7 of 16. Building A, Typical motel room interior, bedroom, view east
- 8 of 16. Building A, Typical motel room interior, bathroom, view southwest
- 9 of 16. Building B, Front, view south
- 10 of 16. Building B, Rear, view west
- 11 of 16. Building B, Typical motel room interior, view northwest
- 12 of 16. Building B, Typical motel room interior, view south
- 13 of 16. Office, view north
- 14 of 16. Office, lobby, view south
- 15 of 16. Office, breakfast room, view west
- 16 of 16. Pool, view south

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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

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et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Historic Images

1 of 2: Colony House Motor Lodge, December 1959, courtesy of Julia Trent Elliott

2 of 2: Colony House Motor Lodge, Town & Ranch Restaurant (demolished), date unknown, courtesy of Julia Trent Elliott

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Image 1: Colony House Motor Lodge, December 1959, prior to construction of swimming pool, image courtesy of Julia Trent Elliott

Colony House Motor Lodge
Name of Property

City of Roanoke, VA
County and State



Image 2: Colony House Motor Lodge, Town & Ranch Restaurant (demolished), date unknown, courtesy of Julia Trent Elliott

Colony House Motor Lodge

Name of Property

City of Roanoke, VA

County and State

ENDNOTES

¹ "Colony House Motor Lodge Roanoke," (*Virginia Record* Volume 82, Number 11 [November 1960]), p. 16.

² Julia Trent Elliott, Telephone Interview with the author, April 27, 2022.

³ "Colony House Motor Lodge Roanoke," p. 16.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ralph Berrier, Jr., "Colony House still vintage '50s motor lodge," *Roanoke Times*, June 20, 2015.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 171-181

⁸ Ibid, p. 177.

⁹ Ibid, p. 183.

¹⁰ Debra A McClane and Kristin H. Kirchen, "Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort Motels and Hotels (1955-1970)," (DHR File No. 134-5721, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, November 2020), p. 3, 10, 14, 16, 30-31.

¹¹ Lori Henderson, "America's Roadside Lodging: The Rise and Fall of the Motel," (*Historia* 19 [Spring 2010]), p. 32.

¹² Jim Fulghum, "Early Years of Motoring in Roanoke, VA," ca. 2007

(<https://hswv.pastperfectonline.com/archive/4B66DFE8-7FE1-4FB5-B6AB-221118391549>), p. 8-9.

¹³ "Obituary for Roy Milton Kinsey," John M. Oakey & Son Funeral Home and Crematory, 2010,

<https://www.johnmoakey.com/memorials/Kinsey-Roy/1866317/obituary.php?Printable=true>; "OBIT – MOTLEY Kenneth Leighton," *Roanoke Times*, January 3, 2018, p. 4B; "Francis Allison Shane," (*Virginia Record* Volume 86, Number 5 [May 1964]), p. 7, 9.

¹⁴ "Roanoke Church with Unusual Roof," (*Virginia Record* Volume 82, Number 11 [November 1960]), p. 21.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Two New Residences," (*Virginia Record* Volume 84, Number 11 [November 1962]), page 20.

¹⁷ W. L. Whitwell & Lee W. Winborne, *Architectural Heritage of the Roanoke Valley*, (Charlottesville, Va: The University Press of Virginia, 1982), p. 177.

¹⁸ "First National Exchange Bank," (*Virginia Record* Volume 90, Number 2 [February 1968]), p. 10, 54.

¹⁹ "Southwest Virginia Savings and Loan Association," (*Virginia Record* Volume 93, Number 2 [February 1971]), p. 14-15.

Legend

 County Boundaries

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Colony House Motor Lodge

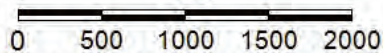
City of Roanoke, VA

DHR No. 128-6477

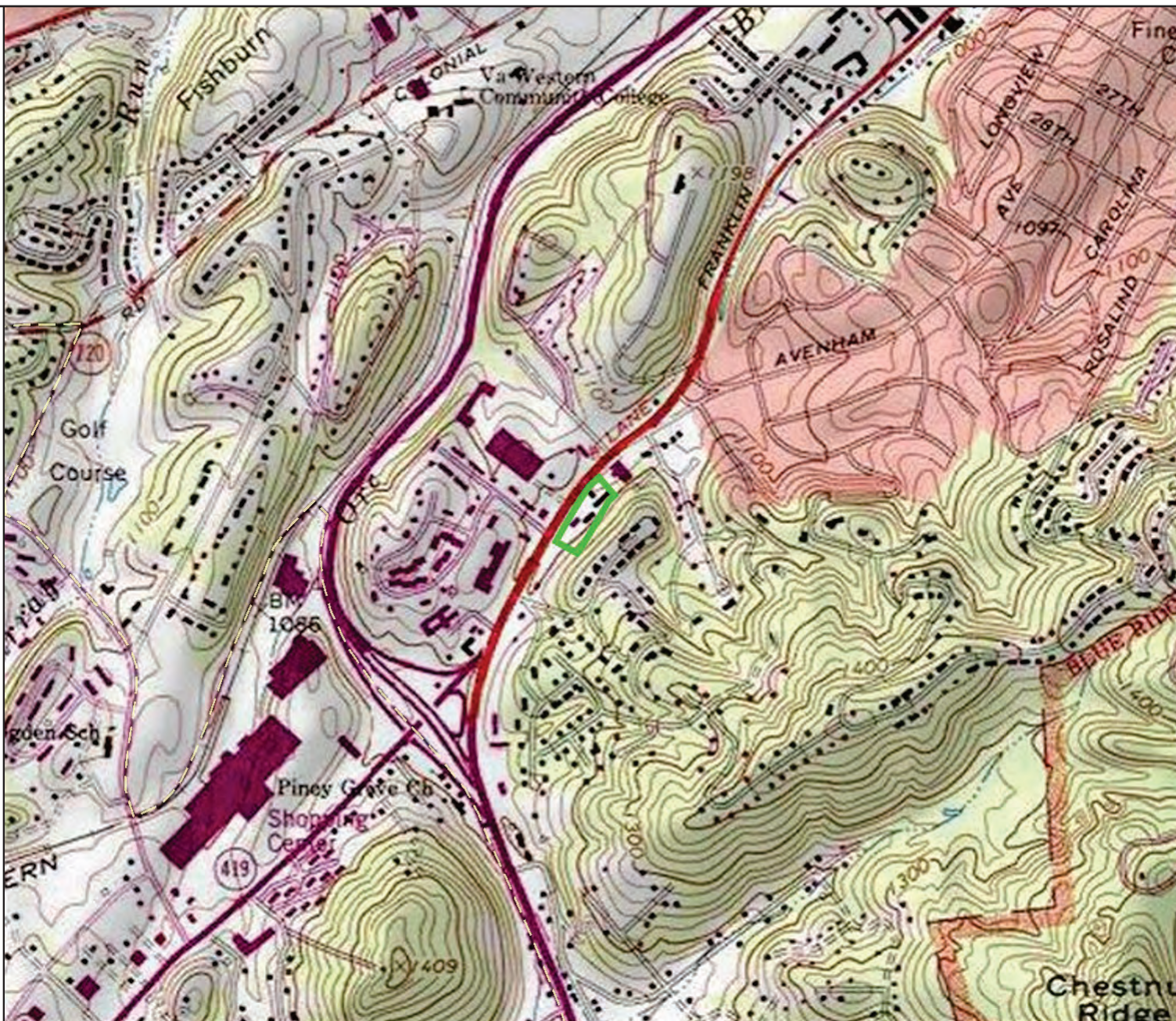
 Historic Boundary



Feet



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Title:

Date: 11/30/2022

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 to 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

County Boundaries

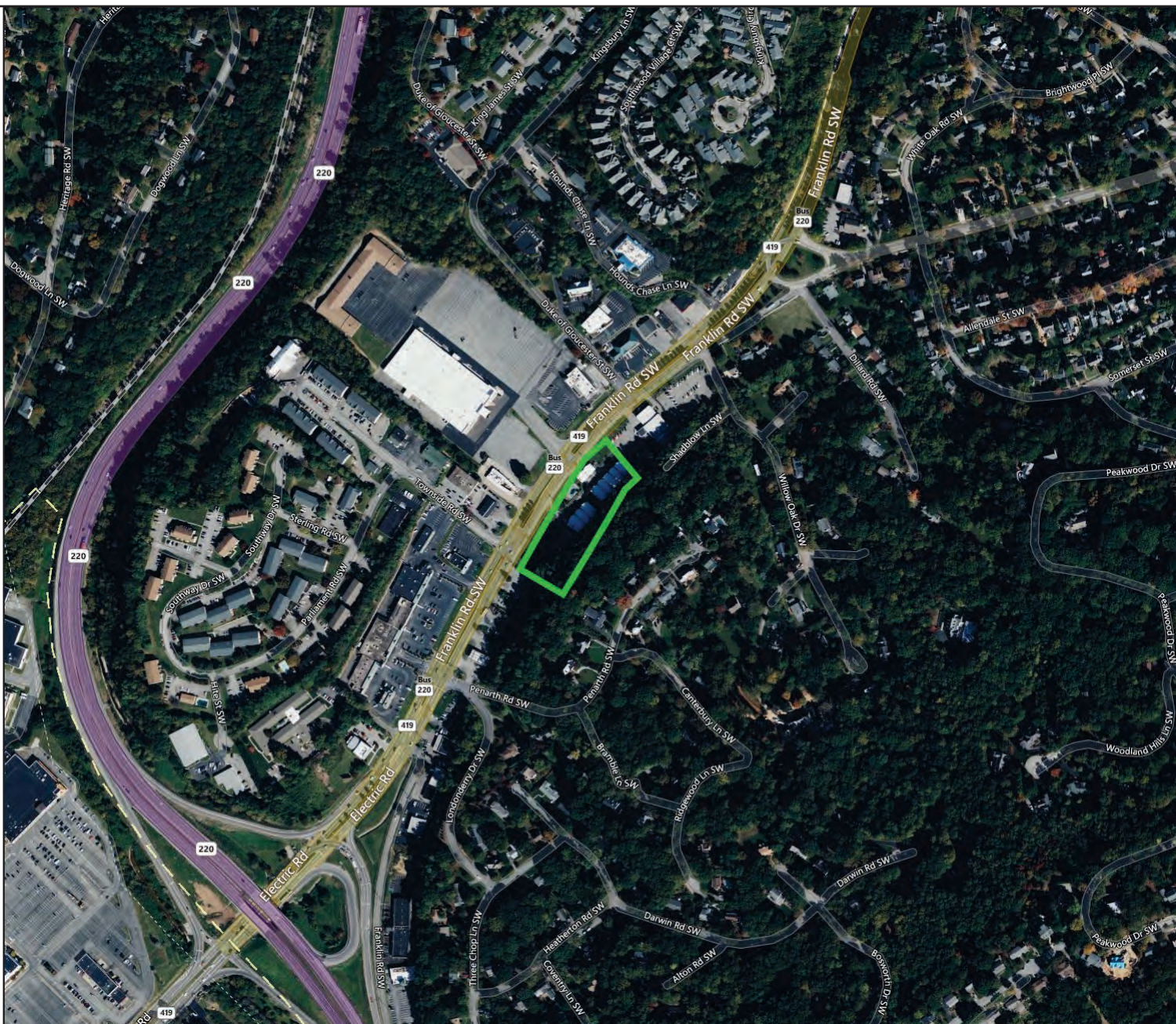
AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY
Colony House Motor Lodge
City of Roanoke, VA
DHR No. 128-6477

Historic Boundary



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Title:

Date: 11/30/2022

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Legend

County Boundaries

LOCATION MAP

Colony House Motor Lodge

City of Roanoke, VA

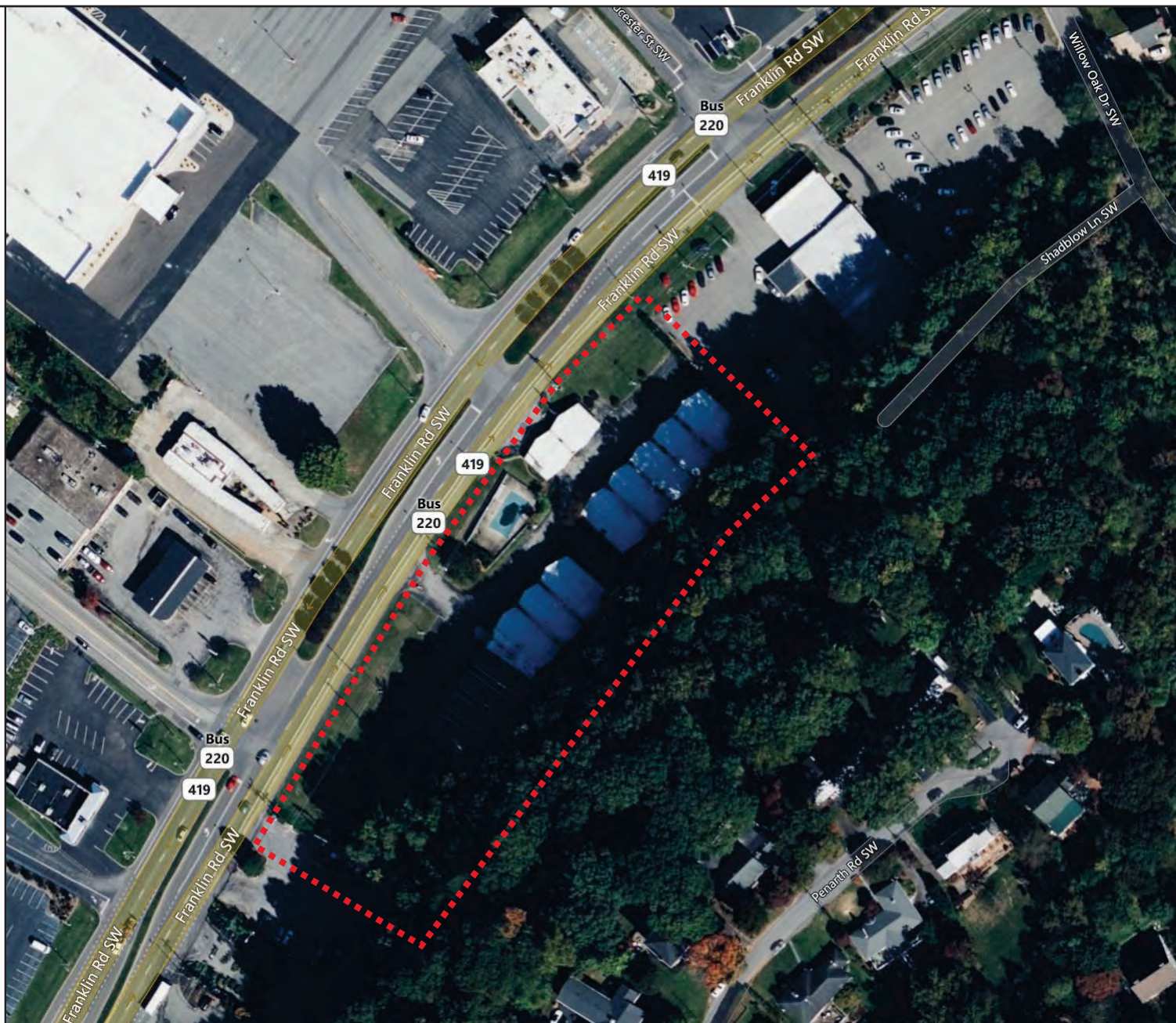
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Longitude: -79.969038

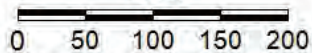
Historic Boundary



VGIN Aerials (with labels)
Map created in V-CRIS



Feet



1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title: Colony House Motor Lodge

Date: 8/11/2022

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Sketch Map/Photo Key

Colony House Motor Lodge
3560 Franklin Road SW
City of Roanoke, VA; DHR #128-6477

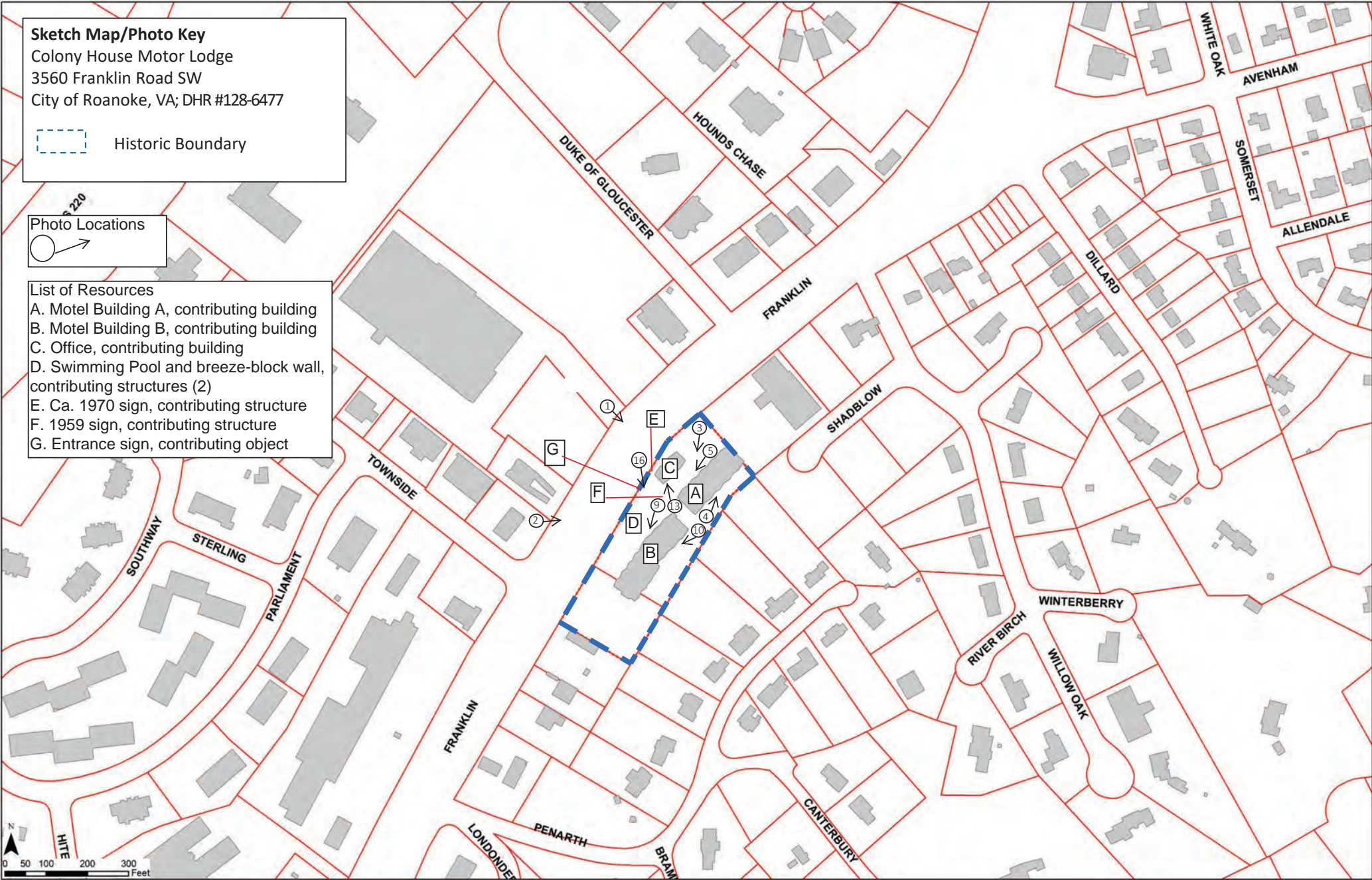
 Historic Boundary

Photo Locations



List of Resources

- A. Motel Building A, contributing building
- B. Motel Building B, contributing building
- C. Office, contributing building
- D. Swimming Pool and breeze-block wall, contributing structures (2)
- E. Ca. 1970 sign, contributing structure
- F. 1959 sign, contributing structure
- G. Entrance sign, contributing object





Legend

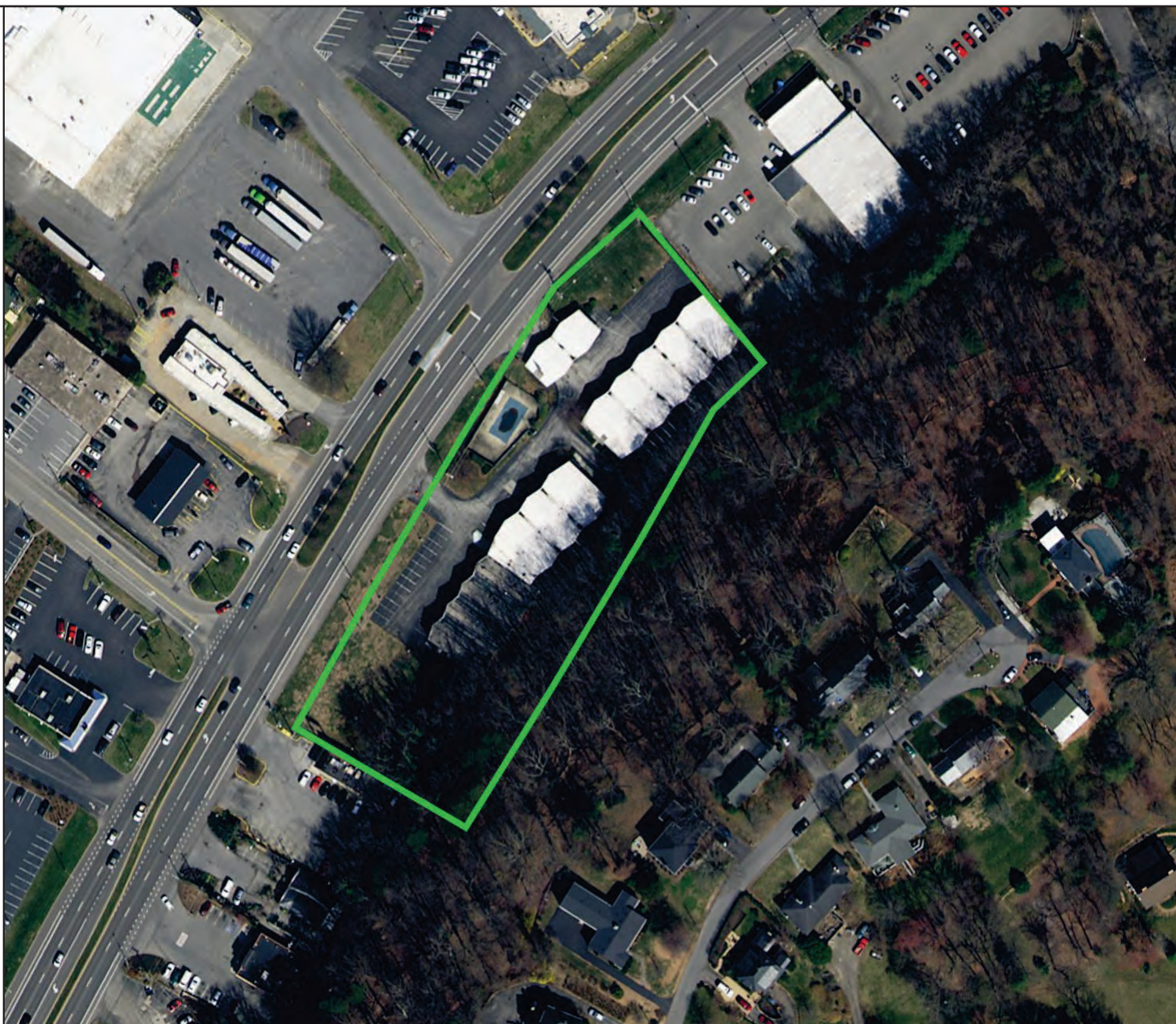
 County Boundaries

AERIAL VIEW

Colony House Motor Lodge

City of Roanoke, VA

DHR No. 127-6477



 **Historic Boundary**



Feet

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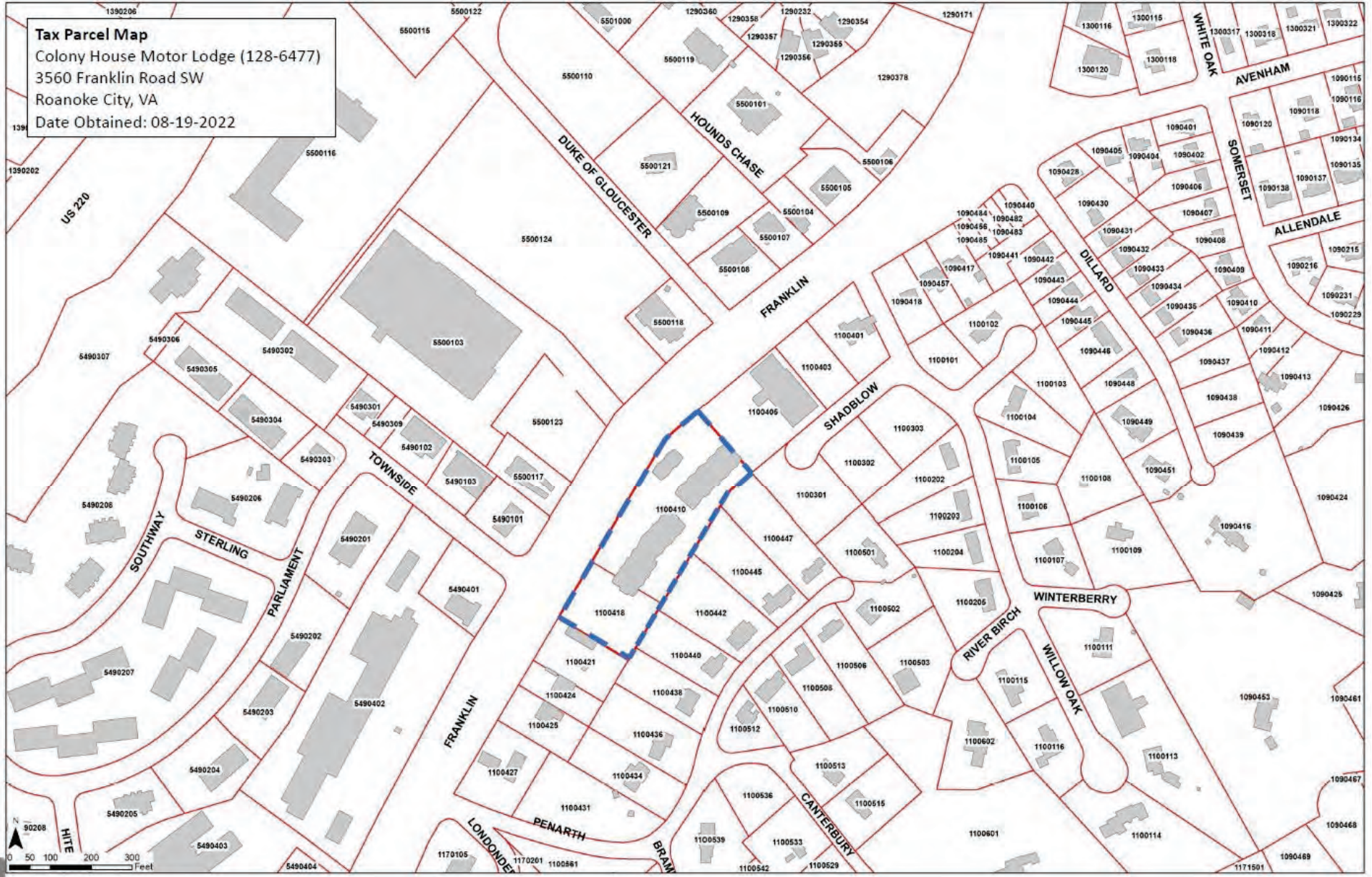
1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

Title:


Date: 11/30/2022

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City of Roanoke, Virginia, GIS Website: <https://gisre.roanokeva.gov/jsp/>

 Historic Boundary

