



City of Petersburg

Ordinance, Resolution, and Agenda Request

DATE: November 15, 2022

TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

THROUGH: March Altman, Jr., City Manager

FROM: Charlie Cuthbert, Jr

RE: A request to schedule a public hearing on the expansion of Local Historic District regulations to individual properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.(Page 92)

PURPOSE: To initiate the process for expansion of the Local Historic Districts to include properties designated as historic properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

REASON: To protect and preserve the City's valuable historic resources.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a resolution with 13 properites.

BACKGROUND: See attachment.

COST TO CITY: N/A

BUDGETED ITEM: N/A

REVENUE TO CITY: N/A

CITY COUNCIL HEARING DATE: 11/15/2022

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENT ENTITIES: N/A

AFFECTED AGENCIES: N/A

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION: N/A

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAMS: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. NR Properties not in Local Districts - Brief Histories



City of Petersburg

Department of Planning and
Community Development
135 N. Union Street, Room 304
Petersburg, Virginia 23803

Kate Sangregorio
Preservation Planner
804-733-2314
ksangregorio@petersburg-va.org

Individually listed National Register Properties not located within Local Historic Districts

Prepared by: Kate Sangregorio, Preservation Planner

Created: October 20, 2022

1. Blandford Church

319 S. Crater Rd., DHR ID 123-0039, listed 1972

Constructed as the principle church of Bristol Parish around 1734 to 1737, this is the oldest building in Petersburg. The north wing was added between 1752 and 1770. A new church for Bristol Parish was built in 1802, which left Blandford abandoned and to fall to ruin. City Council gave the Ladies Memorial Association approval to restore the church as a memorial chapel to the Confederate dead in 1901. The renovation included the installation of stained glass windows, made by the famous Louis Comfort Tiffany, each representing a Christian saint and the Confederate state that funded their window. Tiffany also donated one window to the project.

2. Blandford Cemetery

319 S. Crater Rd., DHR ID 123-0110, listed 1992

Burials started close to Blandford Church, the oldest dating to 1702, and spread out from there over time. The cemetery is still active, and the second largest in the state after Arlington. As part of the dedication of Blandford as a memorial to the Confederate dead, the part of the cemetery called Memorial Hill is the burial site of tens of thousands of Confederates, the vast majority of who were unnamed and brought to Petersburg from around the country. Many of the individual graves and family plots throughout the older parts of the cemetery are beautiful examples of funerary craftsmanship in their stonework and ironwork.

3. Lee Memorial Park (now Petersburg Legend's Park)

1616 Defense Rd., DHR ID 052-13-0004, listed 2000

Established in 1912, the park spans 300 acres and includes Wilcox Lake and its bathhouse, the park superintendent's house, walking trails, Civil War earthworks, horticultural resources and

informational signage, a baseball field, playground, and the Lee Park Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary. The flower and bird sanctuary was created in 1935 as part of the Works Project Administration during the Great Depression, which provided jobs for local unemployed African-American women, and resulting in most of these plant habitats' survival to the present. However, there exist accusations and firsthand accounts suggest that African American women were treated unfairly compared to their white supervisors. The collection of floral specimens compiled in the Lee Park Herbarium is complimented by the watercolor paintings done by Bessie Niemeyer Marshall. The park was popular with white residents until 1953 when a group of African American citizens filed suit to integrate swimming at Wilcox Lake. Rather than allow integration, the city closed the facilities completely, and a federal hearing was postponed indefinitely. The lake was officially desegregated by council in 2018.

4. The Peabody Building of the Peabody William's School

725 Wesley St. (facing S. Jones St.), DHR Id 123-5019, listed 2000

In 1874, the first African American school named in honor of philanthropist George Peabody was constructed on the corner of Harrison and Fillmore Streets and housed the elementary and high schools. It was one of the first partially government funded African American schools in the state. In 1920, a new Peabody school was constructed at 725 Wesley Street as an African American public high school, with its twin, the Williams building, used as a junior high. The Williams building was named for the Philanthropist and Rev. Henry Williams of Gillfield Baptist Church, but was lost in a fire in 1967. Also part of the school complex is the Giles B. Cook elementary school (originally called the Federal Street School), built in 1924. In 1951, the newest and largest part of the complex was built and took the Peabody name and use as the new high school, changing the 1920 twin buildings' name to the Henry Williams School and making them the elementary and junior high schools. Despite the passing of Brown vs Board of Education in 1954, Peabody high school was not officially desegregated until 1970. Only the 1920 Peabody Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for being built during the period of segregated school systems as well as being the oldest preexisting school in the City of Petersburg that was built for the education of African American children. The rest of the Peabody complex is eligible as an example of the development of African American educational history, the consequences of the Virginia Massive Resistance policy, and the Civil Rights Movement.

5. Petersburg National Battlefield

DHR ID 123-0071, listed administratively in 1966

The Battlefield is partly located in Prince George County and spans 2,700 acres with a tour road and walking trails. The park consists of a vast network of fortifications and entrenchments constructed by both Union and Confederate armies during the siege of the city of Petersburg from June 1864 to April 1865. The earthworks meander for twenty-seven miles along the outskirts of the city. Prominent among these scars of war is the Crater, a large depression created on July 30, 1864 when the Union army tunneled under Confederate lines and breached them by setting off a huge charge of explosives at the end of the tunnel. A quick response by Confederate Brig. Gen. William Mahone plugged the gap. At that juncture a division of black Union troops was ordered to charge into the crater. Floundering in the mangled earth, the division attempted unsuccessfully to scale the crater's sides and were slaughtered by the Confederates. This is the only Civil War site in Virginia closely associated with African American

troops in combat that is listed in the registers. The long siege and Grant's maneuver around the Confederate right flank forced Lee to abandon his lines on April 2, 1865 and retreat west, giving up the capital in Richmond as well. The siege of Petersburg was the first instance of modern trench warfare.

6. Charles Cohen House

32 S. Adams St., DHR ID 123-0115, listed 2007

Despite being built in 1851 for Joseph Williams, the Charles Cohen House in Petersburg was named for its fourth owner, who was responsible for its current Second Empire-style appearance. Cohen's 1898 renovation used the style's characteristic mansard roof as a fashionable and economic way to add living space in a third story. Cohen was a prominent local merchant, though his business interests extended into North Carolina, Richmond, and New York. He died in 1915 and is buried in the Jewish cemetery in Petersburg. The Cohen house was sold out of the family in 1939, after which it declined, but it has since undergone an extensive rehabilitation.

7. People's Memorial Cemetery

334 S. Crater Rd., DHR ID 123-5031-0001, 2008

Twenty-eight members of Petersburg's large community of free African Americans purchased a one-acre tract to serve as a burial ground in 1840. Subsequent acquisitions of adjacent land created a cemetery complex later known as People's Memorial. Buried here are slaves, an antislavery writer whose grave is listed on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, a 19th-century member of the Virginia House of Delegates, veterans of the Civil War through World War II, and hundreds of other black residents. Numerous grave markers bearing the insignia of mutual aid societies and fraternal orders reflect the importance of these organizations to the community. In 1943 the City widened Crater Road, deeding the cemetery one acre of land to the southwest of the cemetery to re-intern the 108 displaced burials, but never reinstalled the 1906 iron fence and gate that was removed. The City undertook some beautification efforts in 2015, including a new fence, general cleaning, and paving the entrance from the road.

8. South Chappell Street Car Barn

124 Chappell St., DHR ID 123-5421, listed 2009

The sole surviving building of its type in Petersburg, the South Chappell Street Car Barn is a tangible reminder of the transportation system that encouraged the construction of residential suburbs and contributed to the decline of central-city neighborhoods. The car barn was probably constructed between 1899 and 1903 to store and repair streetcars, by either the South Side Railway and Development Company or its successor, the Virginia Passenger and Power Company. The city's first streetcar system was the creation of George Beadle, who also founded the Petersburg Street Railway Company in 1883 and used horse-drawn passenger cars. Beadle expanded the line west to the Central State Lunatic Asylum in 1888. The 1891 electrification of the lines and their expansion offered city workers transportation to suburban jobs, which encouraged many to move out of the city center. While it is a utilitarian building, the car barn has an intact historic form and details, providing a visible link to this early period in

Petersburg's transportation history. With the eventual decline of the streetcar system, the building was converted in 1936 to a bus service facility.

9. Virginia Trunk and Bag Co.

600 W. Wythe St., DHR ID 123-5423, listed 2009

Evoking Petersburg's heyday as the self-proclaimed world's leading manufacturer of trunks and valises, the Virginia Trunk & Bag Company, established in 1898, had a large facility operating in the city by 1903. The complex today retains its original buildings and structures, where the various trunk-manufacturing operations were performed, from receiving raw lumber to shipping finished products. From 1916 until 1931 the site was also the headquarters for the American Hardware Company, the parent company for at least six different trunk makers in Petersburg. At the time of its listing, the Virginia Trunk & Bag Co. represented the most intact and best preserved of the remaining trunk manufacturing facilities in Petersburg.

10. Sutherland House

606 Harding St., DHR ID 123-0006, listed 2011

The Sutherland House is one of the most architecturally significant Civil War-era houses in Petersburg. The house, which features two unusual chimneys, was built circa 1860 by George Washington Sutherland, a prosperous city grocer, and his wife. An existing one-room brick dwelling built in 1838 was adapted by Sutherland to serve as an ell to the new house, and a two-story frame addition was completed by 1877. The interior features ornate plaster ceiling medallions, wide-plank heart pine floors, eight fireplaces, and twelve-foot-eight-inch ceilings. The contributing two-story, four-room brick service building to the rear, contemporary with the main house, is one of few such dependencies to survive in Petersburg.

11. Trailways Bus Station

108 W. Washington St., DHR ID 123-5493, listed 2015

The Trailways Bus Station in downtown Petersburg was the site of civil rights protests and sit-ins that occurred during 1960 and 1961. As one of the stops on the both the historic Journey to Reconciliation and Freedom Ride civil rights campaigns, the bus station witnessed events that were a critical part of the Civil Rights Movement in Petersburg and the state. Constructed in 1946 and to date the only mid-20th-century, unaltered Trailways bus station in the Streamlined Moderne style documented by DHR, the building retains the architectural features that marked racial segregation. With separate bathrooms, water fountains, and waiting areas, it was specifically designed to convey and enforce the requirement that there be strict separation of whites and African Americans to the extent possible as then set forth under Virginia law. In 1960, after a period of sit-ins in the station, the president of the Bus Terminal Restaurants, Inc. executed company policy to not refuse service based on race. This made Petersburg's Trailways station one of the first integrated bus terminals in Virginia.

12. Christ and Grace Episcopal Church

1545 S. Sycamore St., DHR ID 123-5506, listed 2020

Locally important in Petersburg for its Gothic Revival architecture, Christ and Grace Episcopal Church arose in two sections through two separate building campaigns. It began in 1925 with construction of Grace Church Chapel, a parish house built for a future church complex, designed by architect Frank Watson, a leading proponent of the Gothic Revival style. The chapel served as the home of Christ Episcopal Church from 1928 until 1953, the year it merged with Grace Church and became Christ and Grace Episcopal Church. In 1955, church officials approved adding a nave and chancel to the complex and the completed church opened in 1957 to the blended congregations. Since then, the building has remained largely unaltered. The church exemplifies the architectural designs Episcopal parishes erected during the first decades of the 20th century, the height of the Gothic Revival movement. It is notable for continuing that design aesthetic into the mid-20th century, under the guidance of architect William Heyl Thompson, who adapted the Gothic Revival design to the reduced expectations of the post-World War II era. From start to finish, the same architectural firm oversaw the church's plans during its 30-year span of growth.

13. Byrne Street USO Club (The Beaux Twenty Club)

464 Byrne St., DHR ID 123-5054, listed 2022

The Byrne Street USO Club was constructed in 1942 as a United Service Organization (USO) facility offering recreational services and entertainment programs for African American troops during military segregation in World War II. This was the only African American USO Club, while there were four designated for whites. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the USO on February 4, 1941, to maintain morale among soldiers shortly before the country entered the Second World War. The U.S. military provided supplies and labor for the construction of USO buildings, and they were built according to standardized plans. Until the end of World War II, the Byrne Street USO Club functioned as a space for Black servicemen to socialize safely and for the troops and their families to receive aid. Virginia State University acquired the property in 1948 and ensured the clubhouse remained in use as a recreational center for the African American community in Petersburg after the war. The Beaux Twenty Club, a male civic and service organization formed by the community's Black businessmen, including Virginia's first African American mayor H. E. Fauntleroy, Jr., made the Byrne Street USO Club building its headquarters from the 1960s to ca. 2018.

14. The Jarratt House

808-810 Logan St., DHR ID 1233-0114-0002, listed 2022

Built circa 1820 as a rental property by John Wilder, a white man, the Jarratt House is the lone surviving brick Federal double house and the only antebellum building surviving on Pocahontas Island. The settlement at Pocahontas Island began during the mid-18th century, and originally was a river community dominated by White residents. Pocahontas Island transformed into a largely African American residential and commercial neighborhood during the early 19th century and has substantial associations with Virginia Indian tribes. Petersburg had the largest free Black population in antebellum Virginia, and more free Black persons resided on Pocahontas Island than in any other part of Petersburg.

The Jarratt House also is associated with Lavinia Sampson, a member of the Pamunkey tribe, who owned the property from 1853 to 1877 and rented out rooms to sailors. The house then came under ownership of the Jarratt Family, whose ancestor, Richard Jarratt, is suspected to be one of the first free mulatto Blacks born on Pocahontas Island. The locally prominent Jarratt Family kept the house in their possession until 1991 when they donated it to the City of Petersburg.