



2018 Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places





PRESERVATION VIRGINIA

Preservation Virginia's 2018 Most Endangered Historic Places list includes 11 entries that represent some of this year's most pressing preservation issues. The list, which features nominations from local preservation groups and individuals, examines the threats facing Virginia's endangered historic places and offers solutions for each.

Preservation Issues Facing the Commonwealth:

- Intentional acts by local governments to demolish or replace historic resources despite strong community opposition
- Neglected historic African American sites
- The disappearing agricultural landscape in rural Virginia
- Threats to historic resources from recurring and nuisance flooding
- Flawed and incomplete federal review processes for utility infrastructure projects
- Historic sites in need of rehabilitation

In recent years, thematic listings have been included and re-listed on the Most Endangered list in addition to individual site listings to exemplify different types of historic resources, like historic African American schools, and longer-term threats, such as utility infrastructure projects. In order to better reflect our ongoing advocacy work, we have continued this trend of re-listing and updating past thematic listings this year.

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*A major update has been released about this listing since its nomination.

Historic Barns of the Shenandoah Valley

Threat: Old barns are a striking symbol of the rural landscapes throughout the Commonwealth. They symbolize the Shenandoah Valley's historic rural agricultural landscape along the I-81 corridor, which is being lost at an alarming rate to economic shifts and development pressures. Most owners of historic barns are aware of the threats to their survival, which commonly include: limited usefulness to current agricultural practices, deferred maintenance or demolition by neglect, demolition for other development, severe weather, fire, and limited access to affordable and skilled repair professionals.

Solution: Work planned in Shenandoah County will raise awareness of historic barns and help promote the greater community-based movement to organize and save historic barns in this area and beyond. The Shenandoah County Historical Society and their partners plans to do this by conducting a survey of historic barns in Shenandoah County. Information gathered by this volunteer-driven initiative may form the basis of more formal survey efforts, National Register of Historic Places listings, or local protective and commemorative activities. Further study of the barns could help inform preservation techniques, generate a list of qualified contracting services and sources of preservation materials, and ultimately, the creation of a grant funding source to assist barn owners with stabilization efforts.



Visit bit.ly/tobaccobarnpreservation to learn about the **Preservation Virginia/JTI Leaf Services Tobacco Barn Preservation Project**. This successful program has been a model for historic barn preservation and allowed Preservation Virginia to partner with organizations interested in protecting the historic agricultural resources that make their communities significant and unique.

Sandy Level F&P Depot

Threat: The Sandy Level F&P Depot was one of a series built on the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad between 1900 and 1910 by the Southern Railway. The depot, sited about 100 yards from Grassland Road and Reddies Creek in Pittsylvania County, served the rural area's transportation and commerce needs before mechanized vehicles and improved roadways became commonplace. It is located on the old right-of-way of the F&P Railroad that ran from 1880 to 1932. It is the only F&P depot that was not converted into a public store or living quarters. The depot suffers from general neglect and a section of roof that has failed.



Solution: Recently purchased, the current owners have begun to stabilize the structure and intend to restore it. They have also secured non-profit status for an organization devoted to the planned work. Their ownership of the adjacent land ensures that the depot will not face inappropriate development pressures. Discussions are underway to possibly incorporate the structure into a larger rails-to-trails project; a structure like this could serve as a visitor center as part of a trail system. Such heritage tourism efforts designed to link historic and natural resources across a region should be commended and encouraged.

Historic Properties Affected by Recurring Flooding Statewide

Threat: Land subsidence. Sea level rise. Climate change. Coastline erosion. Severe weather. Nuisance flooding. There are many labels and causes for the flooding that threatens historic resources. The problem is not relegated solely to the coast, or the Tidewater region, but can be found inland as well. The risk to shoreline and interior resources is increasing as sea level rise is projected to more than double in coming decades.

Resources such as Jamestown Island have already been impacted. Older, shoreline (tidal and riverine) communities in Virginia developed prior to our growing awareness of risks due to sea level rise or increased rainfall intensity are particularly at risk. Moreover, many properties now subject to recurrent flooding are occupied and viable structures located in areas that were not previously flood prone, but are now vulnerable due to the environmental changes that are taking place. For those properties there is increasing financial pressure as flood insurance rates are rising and property values are impacted. Premiums can be reduced by taking mitigation actions approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); however, many of these measures (elevating the structure, installing flood vents, etc.) may run counter to maintaining the historic quality and integrity of a structure.



Solutions: Multiple approaches and concurrent efforts will be required to address the problems posed by recurring flooding. Some possible solutions might include (but are not limited to):

- Exploring and developing flood protection strategies that meet historic preservation needs as well as FEMA and other government standards.
- Engaging FEMA and other government leaders to develop solutions for protecting properties being impacted by recurrent flooding.
- Conducting a reconnaissance survey in Norfolk to evaluate flood risk of properties throughout the city.
- Taking existing data on properties with high flood risk and creating overlay maps that illustrate flood-prone areas.
- Introducing legislation that requires property owners to disclose if their property is prone to flooding in sales contracts.
- Establish a Secretariat level department within the Virginia government to evaluate issues surrounding recurring flooding and place their headquarters in a vulnerable area such as Norfolk.



Utility Infrastructure Proposals and Review Processes

Threat: Virginia's rich and varied resources continue to be threatened by inadequate federal Section 106 review processes for utility infrastructure projects like the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) and planned transmission towers across the James River. The Section 106 review process of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, which was included on our 2017 Most Endangered list, requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their projects on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment.

Visit bit.ly/jamesriveradvocacy to learn more about Preservation Virginia's James River legal advocacy.

Furthermore, wireless communication infrastructure projects could also threaten Virginia's historic resources. Proposals introduced at the federal level to revamp the Section 106 review process, and legislative proposals in the 2018 Virginia General Assembly session, would limit local authority to make decisions about permitting and siting wireless structures that threaten the integrity of historic districts and vibrant Main Streets.

Solution: As projects move along, it is the duty of concerned citizens, landowners, elected officials and advocates to monitor the activities of work happening on the ground to ensure that it conforms to federal restrictions and processes. Also, affected parties should consider the long-term consequences of utility infrastructure projects and advocate for suitable mitigation funding and alternatives that will offset the harm done. For more detailed information, see the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation's *A Citizen's Guide to Section 106 Review*: <http://www.achp.gov/docs/CitizenGuide.pdf>



Afton Inn*

Threat: Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR), the Afton Inn sits at the entrance to the Front Royal Historic District at the nexus of two historic commercial thoroughfares at the Main and North Royal Avenue intersection. Built in 1866, the structure is currently vacant and is owned by the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority (EDA). At the time that the Afton Inn was nominated to the 2018 Most Endangered list, demolition of the vacant structure had been supported by the Town of Front Royal despite strong opposition by residents and the town's Board of Architectural Review.

Update: On April 27, 2018, the EDA Board of Directors approved a lease agreement with Afton Inn project developer, 2 East Main Street LLC, that includes a major change to the developer's original demolition-rebuild plan. According to an article published by the Royal Examiner, 2 East Main Street LLC now has plans for limited demolition, stabilization and strengthening of the original structure, and protection of the structure during phase one of the project. Phase two will consist of renovations and an addition to the property. The project is estimated to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

We applaud decision-makers in Front Royal for adopting a sensible historic preservation approach for the redevelopment of this prominent structure.



Village of Aldie

Threat: In 2015, Loudoun County purchased three adjacent parcels from private owners in the heart of the Village of Aldie with the intention of constructing a 14,000 - 20,000 square foot fire station. The site includes the early 19th century Aldie Tavern as well as other buildings that frame the entrance to the village and contribute to Aldie's character and scale. This listing represents another example of an intentional act by a locality to demolish or replace resources central to its identity.

Solution: There is strong local support for retaining the threatened structures as well as efforts underway to help Loudoun County identify alternative sites for constructing the new fire station that is better suited to the portion of the county needing the service. A preservation-informed compromise is possible with the cooperation of both the western and eastern portions of the county. Recent infrastructure expenditures and traffic calming measures speak to the need to continue investing in the historical integrity remaining in the village of Aldie.



Boydton Institute

Threat: The Boydton Institute's site was the original campus of Randolph-Macon College that was chartered in 1830. It later became the Boydton Institute (1879-1940), a training school for African Americans (including freed slaves). The surviving structures are seriously deteriorated, and need to be made safe for visitation and educational programs by stabilizing the four-story brick ruins of the 1831 Main Building and restoring the circa 1890, two-story, frame Helensha Cottage where the headmaster resided.

Solution: The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, a non-profit organization that purchased 12.5 acres of the original campus, is committed to stabilizing the brick ruins and rehabilitating the Helensha Cottage. The cottage rehabilitation will be a part of its interpretation. Using student and volunteer labor, the Foundation plans to engage the local community college, public schools, and non-profit organizations, like HistoriCorps, with hands-on preservation practices training. The role of the Boydton Institute in the region's history, centered on education and opportunity for African Americans, will be the primary focus of the site's interpretation. The site provides a platform to describe the evolution of religion, education and civil rights in Southern Virginia and America circa 1770s through the 1940s by the examination, preservation and interpretation of historical research, artifacts and architecture.



Carr-Greer Farmhouse

Threat: The Carr-Greer Farmhouse, built by emancipated slave and landowner Hugh Carr, is a circa 1880 frame I-house with at least two late 19th - early 20th-century additions. Located on the fringes of Charlottesville, the Carr-Greer Farmhouse is one of the few surviving vestiges of the once-vibrant rural African American community of Union Ridge-Hydraulic Mills. From 1979 until 2017, the Carr-Greer Farmhouse was the home of the tenant caretaker for Ivy Creek Natural Area, a joint city/county park. The farmhouse, which suffers from deferred maintenance, was vacated due to its condition.

Solution: The Carr-Greer Farmhouse is currently owned jointly by Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. The Ivy Creek Foundation (ICF), a managing partner for the property, has been working closely with both localities to develop a coherent and sustainable plan for restoration/rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the site. In 2017, Albemarle County commissioned a third-party structural evaluation of the property to assess its most pressing needs. A National Register of Historic Places nomination is also currently being written. The historic farmhouse is clearly seen as an asset to the region and its history is being successfully promoted through multiple channels. The investigations underway jointly by both localities and the ICF serve as a model for how publicly-owned resources can be successfully incorporated into a long-range preservation plan.



Grace Heritage Center

Threat: The Grace Heritage Center, formerly Grace Methodist Episcopal Church in Lincoln was built in 1885 by African Americans with the support of the Quaker community. Although the congregation still maintains an active cemetery there, the old stone church has been in disrepair and out of use since 1950. The church sits on a 1/2 acre lot within the Quaker village of Lincoln (an 18th century village that was home to Loudoun's last active Quaker meeting). It lies within the Goose Creek Historic District in western Loudoun County.

Solution: The western portion of Loudoun County is under enormous development pressure, and risks losing its rural character and a unique history that weaves together two vital strands of human experience: the shared history of the area's Quaker settlers and the African Americans brought to the county as slaves. The Grace Heritage Center, once rehabilitated for community use, promises to preserve a significant social, religious, cultural and racial chapter in Loudoun's and America's past, in tangible form, to share with present and future generations.



Green Pastures (Longdale) Recreation Area

Threat: In the 1930s, the Clifton Forge Chapter of the NAACP requested that the U.S. Forest Service construct a recreation area for use by the African Americans in the area. During this era, segregation in America was the norm and African Americans were prevented from using forest facilities until the 1950s. The plans were approved in 1936 and construction of the recreation area began in 1938. On June 15, 1940, the area was dedicated as “Green Pastures Recreation Area” and opened to the public. Green Pastures was built by the Dolly Ann Civilian Conservation Corp Camp F24. The dam, which was built by hand, the bathhouse, picnic shelter and the two restroom facilities are all original. On April 23, 1963, the name of the recreation area was changed to Longdale, matching the community name, which is also a historic district.



Essentially unchanged since it opened in 1940, the CCC and NPS-style naturalistic landscape elements like the dam and rock-lined sandy beach, bridges and roofed structures suffer from deferred maintenance and a lack of capital improvement investment. Forest Service funding cuts and the relocation of its James River District office further contribute to the threat to this unique resource.

Solution: Green Pastures, the only African American segregated recreation area in Virginia managed by the Forest Service, is currently being nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. A recently-formed Friends of Green Pastures group is helping to maintain the site and to raise funds for its preservation. Federal funding for the Forest Service to stabilize and maintain this cultural landscape would be the ideal solution. In addition, further study of the historical landscape aspects of the site, as well as an assessment of its physical needs, would help to plan for its long-term preservation.

Roanoke Fire Station No. 7

Threat: Constructed in 1922, Fire Station No. 7 sits at the gateway to historic Grandin Village in the City of Roanoke. The eclectic Revival-style fire station was one of the original public structures built in the neighborhood. The two-story building’s architecture conveys a sense of stability, safety and civic pride. If the city moves forward with its plans to demolish the building, it would destroy that sense of place and continuity. The listing represents yet another example of an intentional act by a locality to demolish a resource central to its identity.

Solution: Alternatives to demolition exist. Experienced architects and developers have worked with the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation to create two proposals to retain the historic fire station and provide emergency responders with the state-of-the-art facility they need. Moreover, these designs could save taxpayer dollars. In recent years, Roanoke has consistently pursued thoughtful, creative and coordinated solutions through collaborations between local government and the private sector. We encourage the exploration of these options and urge Roanoke City Council to work with Grandin Village residents to find a reasonable, historic preservation-oriented solution that saves this resource.

