



2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221; Telephone: (804) 367-2323; Fax: (804) 367-2391

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

The Preliminary Information Form (PIF) constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of a property for eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The PIF is **not** the same as a nomination to the Registers, but is a means for evaluating the **eligibility** of a property for listing. The PIF is evaluated by Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff and the State Review Board and their recommendations regarding the property's eligibility will be provided to the property owner in writing.

Before Preparing a PIF

Contact DHR's Archivist for assistance in obtaining any information DHR may have on file about your property, such as a previous architectural survey record or eligibility evaluation. You are welcome to use this information in preparing your PIF. Contact DHR's Archivist by phone at (804) 482-6102, or by email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov.

Staff at one of DHR's three Regional offices are available to answer questions you may have as you begin preparing your PIF. Locations and contact information for each office is at http://dhr.virginia.gov/regional_offices/regional_offices.htm. (You also are welcome to ask DHR's Archivist for the contact information.)

Preparing a PIF

A PIF consists of three equally important parts:

1. **Form:** Complete the attached form to the best of your ability, using your own research about the property to be evaluated as well as any information that DHR has provided. Remember that DHR's Regional staff also are available to assist you. The form may be completed using Microsoft Word software, typed, or hand-written. If using MS Word, the PIF can be submitted via CD, email, ftp, or other file sharing means.

Your PIF will not be evaluated if it is missing any of the following information:

- Property owner's signature
 - Contact information for the person submitting the form (if different from the property owner)
 - Contact information for the City Manager or County Administrator where the property is located
2. **Photos:** Provide color photographs of your property's exterior and major interior spaces, with emphasis on architectural features instead of furnishings. Photos typically include views of the main building from all sides, as well as important ornamental and/or functional details; any outbuildings or secondary resources; and the property's general setting. Submit photo prints on 4" x 6" glossy photo paper and digital images on CD or other file sharing means approved by DHR's Regional staff.
 3. **Maps:** A minimum of two maps must accompany your PIF:
 - **Location map:** This map shows the exact location of your property. The map can be created using Google Maps, Google Earth, Bing, or other mapping websites. A copy of a road map also may be used as long as the property's exact location and physical address are shown on the map. DHR's Archivist can assist in providing an acceptable location map with boundaries.
 - **Sketch map:** This map shows the locations of all resources on your property, such as the main building; any secondary resources (often referred to as outbuildings); major landscape features such as a stream, formal gardens, driveways, and parking areas, and the road on which the property fronts. The sketch map can be drawn by hand, or an annotated aerial view, tax parcel map or survey map may be used.

Submitting a PIF

Once you have completed the PIF, submit it to the appropriate Regional office. The Regional staff member will inform you when DHR staff will review your PIF and answer any questions you may have about the evaluation process.

Note: All submitted materials become the property of DHR and will be retained in our permanent Archive. In addition, the materials will be posted on DHR's public website for a period of time during the evaluation process.

*Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form.
Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.*



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DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 134-0399

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

The owners of this property wish to have it listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes _____ No X

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes _____ No X

1. General Property Information

Property name: Pleasant Ridge School

Property address: 1392 Princess Anne Road

City or Town: Virginia Beach, VA

Zip code: 23457

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Virginia Beach

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 1.39

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

Pleasant Ridge School sits at the southwest corner of a small rural parcel, facing west towards Princess Anne Road. The overall lot is across Princess Anne Road from the intersection with Jarvis Road. The lot has several trees, including a large oak at the rear, and a cemetery fills the rear (east) side of the property. The main church building sits at the west center of the property, while a non-historic shed is at the rear, northeast corner of the parcel. The property is covered in grass, except for a gravel driveway which is entered between the church and school building and circles around the church building before exiting back onto Princess Anne Road. The property is surrounded on all sides by actively cultivated farmland.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Vernacular

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: N/A

If the builder is known, please list here: N/A

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca 1886

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

Summary/Site Description

The Pleasant Ridge School is located south of Pungo in the Capps Shop-Centerville community of rural Virginia Beach, Virginia. Largely surrounded by open farmland, the school is oriented along Princess Anne Road and is roughly bound by a light row of trees to the north, south, and east. In addition to the school, the site also contains a church building, a small shed, and a small graveyard. The larger church building, which faces Princess Anne Road, is located at the center of the site. The church is the current use for the property. A partially-overgrown gravel driveway loops around the church building from Princess Anne Road. The school building is located south of the church on the other side of the gravel driveway. The shed is located at the northeast corner of the site, and a graveyard, with an undefined/irregular boundary is located along the rear, or east boarder of the property. A single concrete sidewalk surrounds the church building, while the rest of the site consists of an open grass lawn.

School

This vernacular, one-story, one-bay, rectangular school building has a brick pier foundation, weatherboard siding, and a front-gable standing-seam, metal roof with boxed eaves and eave returns. The façade features a single-leaf, six-paneled wood door, with a simple wood trim surround, accessed by a brick stoop with wooden handrails. The three-bay north and south side elevations each feature three six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash windows with wood sills and trim. The east elevation has no openings. The building appears to be in good to fair condition with some exterior deterioration, including failing paint, damaged siding, and roof corrosion, evident.

The interior features one open school room with wood floors, a painted wood board ceiling, and painted shiplap interior wood siding. An old cast iron heating stove and pipe is located towards the center of the room. Physical evidence at the south end of the rear wall suggests the possibility of a former door in that location. Modern ceiling light fixtures have been installed, but the room otherwise retains its appearance as an historic schoolroom.

Church

This one-story, three-bay, rectangular church building has a brick foundation, stretcher-bond brick veneer walls with engaged brick buttresses along the side elevations, and a front-gable asphalt-shingle roof with boxed eaves. It features a primary five-bay rectangular section with a three-bay rear addition. One concrete block interior chimney is located within the rear addition.

The façade is characterized by a one-bay, one-and-a-half-story, front-gable entrance tower topped with a square cupola with vertical board siding and a pyramidal asphalt-shingle roof. The primary entrance, which includes double-leaf, flush wood doors, is accessed through the tower via a brick stoop and brick and concrete ramp. The face of the tower also features a tiny octagonal stained-glass, wood window surrounded with brick headers. A single six-over-six, vinyl-sash replacement window with simulated divided lights is located on each side elevation of the tower. The remainder of the façade features a single six-over-six, vinyl-sash replacement window, with simulated divided lights and brick sills, flanking the tower. The north and south elevations of the main five-bay section are lined with tinted six-over-six replacement windows, with brick sills, each separated by a brick buttress. The north and south elevations of the rear addition feature smaller six-over-six, vinyl-sash windows with brick sills, as well as a single-leaf, flush wood door accessed by a brick stoop with a metal railing. The south elevation also features an additional single-leaf, flush wood door. The two-bay east, or rear, elevation features a one-over-one, vinyl-sash window, and a single-leaf entry with a six-panel hollow-core fiberglass door accessed by a brick stoop with a metal railing. The interior includes an entry vestibule which opens up to the large one-room sanctuary. The Sanctuary, which is lined with pews, features an altar alcove at the east end. It has carpet floors, drywall walls, and a semi-vaulted acoustical tile ceiling. The rear addition features a kitchen, a small office space, and has modern finishes.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

Shed

This one-story, one-bay shed has a poured concrete foundation, unpainted vertical board siding, and a front-gable asphalt-shingle roof with boxed eaves. The façade features a single opening, which includes an open single-leaf pedestrian entrance with a small wood and asphalt-shingle shed awning/overhang. A single one-over-one window, which appears to be modern, is located on the west elevation. The interior condition is unknown.

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

Summary Paragraph

Pleasant Ridge School is a one-room school house located in the City of Virginia Beach in what was formerly Princess Anne County. The school was constructed ca. 1886 as part of the two-room Charity Neck School for white students. In ca. 1915, one room of the school was moved to Princess Anne Road and renamed the Pleasant Ridge School for African American students grades one through seven. Consolidation led to the closing of the school in 1956 and the building was donated to the Asbury United Methodist Church. Pleasant Ridge School is a rare surviving one-room schoolhouse in the region, and may be the only extant example in the City of Virginia Beach. The school is locally significant under Criterion A for Education and Ethnic Heritage: African American. The school represents an important link to the era of racial segregation in schools and to the overall period of one-room school houses from after the Civil War until the completion of school consolidation in the mid-twentieth century. The period of significance of the Pleasant Ridge School begins with its construction ca 1886 and ends when the school was closed in 1956 as a result of consolidation.

History

While located today in the City of Virginia Beach, all of the relevant history regarding the Pleasant Ridge School occurred while the school was part of Princess Anne County, before the 1963 merger of the county with the City of Virginia Beach. Before the Civil War, formal education for African Americans, and dedicated schools in particular, did not exist. Some enslaved persons were educated either through biblical teachings or as required for service to the slave owners. This unofficial education of enslaved and free African Americans largely ceased after Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831. For all of its history Princess Anne County was an almost entirely rural community consisting of subsistence agriculture and small towns and villages. The crops grown in the area did not support plantations or large numbers of enslaved laborers, and there were small numbers of free African Americans. During the Civil War the American Missionary Association began to establish schools in the south, including at least one in Princess Anne County. After the Civil War several small African American communities formed, but the majority continued to work and live in an agricultural setting. During the brief period of Reconstruction, the Freedmen's Bureau operated two schools enrolling both adults and children.¹

The new 1870 Virginia constitution required the establishment of county public schools. By the 1880s there were twenty-one white schools and ten schools for African American children in Princess Anne County spread across Pungo, Seaboard and Kempsville magisterial districts. Schools during this period in rural areas were usually one-room as a result of the dispersed population and poor means of transportation; children were educated with their neighbors. In the early twentieth century a process of school consolidation began nationally, which consisted of closing and merging as many as possible small one-and-two room schools into larger "consolidated" schools. In Princess Anne County in 1913 there were twenty-five one-room schools. By 1923 the number of one-room schools had decreased to seventeen; however, eleven of those were African American schools. Another account claimed that in 1937 there were nineteen African American elementary schools, and all of them were one-room, and most of those had no plumbing. Regardless, the process of consolidation was much slower for the African American community than the

¹ Edna Hawkins-Hendrix, *Black History, Our Heritage, Princess Anne County Virginia Beach, Virginia, a pictorial history* (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Edna Hawkins-Hendrix, 1998), 38, 41-42, 55, 107-08; Stephen S. Mansfield, *Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach, a pictorial history* (Norfolk, Virginia: The Donning Company Publishers, 1989), 50-51, 67-68, 75-76; Edna Hawkins-Hendrix and Dr. Joanne J. Lucas, *History of African-American Communities in Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach* (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission, 2017), 6.

larger school system. There was not a fully consolidated elementary school for African Americans in Princess Anne County until Seatack Elementary School opened in 1952. By the time of the *Brown v Board of Education* case in 1954 Superintendent Frank W. Cox declared that ninety percent of the African American children in the county has school facilities at least equal with those of white students. This left only a handful of one-room schools such as Pleasant Ridge remaining.²

The history of the Pleasant Ridge School spans several periods of educational history in Princess Anne County. The school was first a two-room school for white students located on Charity Neck Road, near to the Charity United Methodist Church, and was called the Charity Neck School. The property for the school was purchased in 1886 by the Trustees of the Public Free School of Pungo Magisterial District, Princess Anne County. It was acquired “For the purpose of erecting a House for the Public Free School.”³ The school is assumed to have been built soon after. The school remained at that location until the smaller section was moved about a mile to its current location in 1915 to serve as a one-room school for African American children. The school was then renamed the Pleasant Ridge School. Local tradition is that there was a previous school serving African American students at this location which burned and the current building was moved here to replace it.

An interview with Reverend Johnnie E. Williams and his wife, Nevla, in 1983 provides excellent early oral history linked to the site. Mr. Williams was once president of the Pleasant Ridge PTA and organized a committee of parents to a School Board meeting to request a new school; he believed this was part of what led to the construction of the Seaboard Elementary School in 1956. During this time the school taught students from first grade through seventh grade, with school starting in late September and ending in March so that children could help their families plant crops. Mrs. Williams remembers some students not arriving at school until mid-October, after the cotton had been picked.⁴

In addition to “the three R’s” (reading, writing, arithmetic) lessons included everyday skills such as sewing and cooking. Mrs. Williams recounted how students alternated taking the wash bowl towels to be washed and ironed at home; and students brought their lunch in pails. Sometimes the teacher would bring a hot lunch made by Effie Munden, from the Munden farm across Princess Anne Road. Before she was married, Mrs. Munden taught children in the Pleasant Ridge School building when it was still part of the Charity Neck School.⁵ An article in 1945 listed the Pleasant Ridge School as being “a one-room school with grades one through three” serving a total of twenty-five pupils, five fewer than the year before.⁶ Pleasant Ridge School continued to operate as a one-room school for African American children until it closed in 1956.

Interviews conducted with five former students of Pleasant Ridge School in April of 2022 revealed a wealth of information about the school, the typical school day, the overall student experience, as well as information about the larger African American community which the school served. The time period during which these five students attended the school ranged from 1934 until its closing in 1956. The former students uniformly spoke fondly of their time at Pleasant Ridge. All of the them recalled walking a long distance, sometimes along the railroad tracks, to a school that covered first through seventh grades taught by a single teacher. The teachers who were remembered by name were Rowena Towe, Mrs. Holloman, and Mrs. Reid. Mrs. Mohammed and Mrs. Williams-Bell both specifically remembered cooking peaches on the stove in the classroom as a favorite memory. Both male former students interviewed remembered Mrs. Holloman as a strict disciplinarian; sometimes she would joking ask “do you want ice cream or cake?” when it came to punishment. Mrs. Williams-Bell also remembered first through third grades attending in the morning, and fourth through seventh in the afternoon to accommodate everyone in the one-room building.

² E. E. Ferebee and J. Pendleton Wilson, Jr, *An Economic and Social Survey of Princess Anne County*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Record Extension Series, 1924) 31, 48, 52; Mansfield, *Princess Anne County*, 68, 173; Edna Hawkins-Hendrix, *Black History, Our Heritage*, 109.

³ *Deed and Will Books, Princess Anne County, Virginia*, #61, p.223.

⁴ Mary Reid Barrow, “Halls of academia were only one-room,” *The Beacon*, January 11/12, 1983, 6.

⁵ Barrow, “Halls of academia,” 6.

⁶ “Schools,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, September 14, 1945, 34.

As for life outside of the school day, every one of the former students mentioned the importance of their church and family as the two most important aspects of their community besides school. Students remembered working on the farm, doing chores; Richard Beary remembered he and friends making their own toys. School events, such as plays, were held at church because the school was so small. Mrs. Williams-Bell remembered competing on the track team against local schools for “colored children” and winning the last competition she can remember, including receiving a trophy cup.

Integrity

Pleasant Ridge School retains strong integrity with weatherboard siding and its original front-gable roof configuration. The entry has an historic single-leaf, six-paneled door. The north and south elevations retain six-over-six, double-hung wood-sash with wood sills and trim. The interior is almost unchanged with a painted wood board ceiling and wall siding. The unpainted wood flooring is also intact. The north wall has a large wood cabinet seen in earlier photographs, now restored. The south wall has a seam in the wood paneling which appears to be a former door opening. This may be the access point to the second part of the school when it was located on Charity Neck Road.

While the school building was moved, and Special Consideration G will be addressed in any final nomination, the moving of the school building has done nothing to diminish its important history. In fact, with its transition from a white school to an African American school, the moving of the building becomes part of its history rather than a detraction from it.

The church was constructed in 1949 and is a contributing resource on the property. It is a brick veneer, one-story, three-bay building with a front-gable roof and engaged brick buttresses on the side elevations. The front entry is topped with a square cupola with a pyramidal roof.

Oral History

As part of this research project, members of the Asbury United Methodist Church (the current owners of the school) completed five oral history interviews with former students of Pleasant Ridge School. Information from these interviews is included in the text of this form. Additionally, all five interview forms are attached to this submission.

Bibliography

Deed and Will Books, Princess Anne County, Virginia, #61, p.223

Ferebee, E.E. and J. Pendleton Wilson, Jr. *An Economic and Social Survey of Princess Anne County*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Record Extension Series, 1924.

Frazier Associates. *City of Virginia Beach, Reconnaissance Level Phase I Architectural Survey Report*. Staunton, Virginia: Frazier Associates, 1992.

Hawkins-Hendrix, Edna. *Black History, Our Heritage, Princess Anne County, Virginia Beach, Virginia, a pictorial history*. Virginia Beach, Virginia: Edna Hawkins-Hendrix, 1988.

Hawkins-Hendrix, Edna. *History of African-American Communities in Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach*. Virginia Beach, Virginia: Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission, 2017.

Jaquelyn Williams Mohammed, interviewed by Gina Owens, April, 2022.

John C. Penn, interviewed by Georgia Allen, April, 2022.

June Isabell Dozier Key, interviewed by Chasta Mangum, April, 2022.

Lucas, Joanne Harris, "The History of Princess Anne County Training School and Union Kempsville High School, Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach, Virginia, 1925-1969." Doctoral Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2013.

Mansfield, Stephen S. *Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach, a pictorial history*. Norfolk, Virginia: The Donning Company Publishers, 1989.

Newbill and Beale, Inc. *Preliminary Information Request, Pleasant Ridge School*. Virginia Beach, VA, July, 1990.

Richard A. Beary, interviewed by Georgia Allen, April, 2022.

Ruth W. Williams-Bell, interviewed by Gina Owens, April, 2022.

Traceries. *Survey of the City of Virginia Beach, Phase II*. Virginia Beach, VA, May, 1993.

The Virginian-Pilot, various.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Georgia Allen and Chasta Mangum, Trustees

organization: Asbury Christian Fellowship Church

street & number: 1392 Princess Anne Road

city or town: Virginia Beach state: VA zip code: 23457-1541

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Marcus Pollard

organization: Commonwealth Preservation Group

street & number: 536 W 35th Street

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23508

e-mail: marcus@commonwealthpreservationgroup.com telephone: 757-651-0494

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager

name/title: Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager

locality: City of Virginia Beach

street & number: 2401 Courthouse Drive

city or town: Virginia Beach state: VA zip code: 23456

telephone: 757-385-4242