

Old and Historic District Nomination Request

Section 30-930.4 (b) of the City Code notes that reviews of a proposed City Old and Historic District shall be at the discretion of the Commission unless a member of City Council or the Mayor introduces a paper proposing the establishment of a new old and historic district. To begin the review process of a proposed old and historic district, the Commission shall pass a resolution instructing the secretary to begin administration of the review process. The Commission has received a request from the Westwood Civic League to consider the Westwood Community as an Old and Historic District. Staff is requesting the Commission review the request and decided whether to introduce a resolution to proceed with the review and establishment process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY:

The Westwood community is in the western portion of the city and bound by Dunbar Street on the east, the city line on the north, Glenburnie Road on the west and Patterson Avenue to the south. The irregular pattern of the interior streets speaks to the rural origins of the neighborhood. The community was settled by formerly enslaved African Americans from the nearby Patterson Plantation, shortly after emancipation in the 1870s. Westwood Baptist Church, formerly Westwood Colored Baptist Church, has always served as the center of the community. A log church building was constructed ca. 1874 near the current intersection of Marian Street and Glenburnie Road. It was soon replaced by a small frame building which was modernized in the 1940s with a brick façade and reoriented towards Glenburnie Road. The church was enlarged in 1971. The land that comprises Westwood was transferred to the church in 1876 and subdivided into small housing plots. Westwood was annexed into the city in 1942 and has been the target of overt campaigns to displace its Black residents, demolish their houses, and wipe Westwood from the map. It is under continuous and growing development pressure from the surrounding Westhampton community.

There are approximately 115 houses in the community, that were largely constructed by the original inhabitants and their descendants over three periods of growth. The earliest between 1890 and 1900 and from 1920 to 1930. The greatest period of residential growth occurring after World War II and the extension of city utilities to the neighborhood in 1947.

A copy of the Preliminary Information Form (PIF), approved by the State Review Board is attached for additional information. The district has been determined eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

PROPERTY OWNERS AFFECTED:

There are approximately 139 parcels within the proposed National Register boundary with approximately 130 unique owners. Approximately, 76% of the single-family dwellings are owner occupied.

CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING:

The entirety of the proposed district is zoned R-5. R-5 is a single-family residential district that allows buildings up to 35 feet which is extremely out of character for a neighborhood that is made up of primarily one-story dwellings regardless of age. The parcels fronting Patterson Avenue are designated as Community Mixed-Use in the current Richmond 300, master plan. The remainder of the district is designated as Residential with a block of land shown as Public Open Space, that is reflective of an existing community playground.

INFORMATION FROM SPONSOR:

The Westwood community has been eroded along Patterson Avenue for decades with commercial development and in recent years by growing development pressures from the adjacent Westhampton area. An SUP to subdivide a large lot and develop two, out of scale houses was recently denied by the Planning Commission and withdrawn by the owner. The community is concerned that the historic character of the neighborhood will be lost along with its history and legacy as an early African American settlement.

JUSTIFICATION FOR OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION:

City Code provides specific language regarding the purpose and criteria for the establishment of old and historic districts. Districts may be created as a means by which city council may recognize and protect the historic, architectural, cultural, and artistic heritage of the city. This process of historic preservation is a part of the promotion of the general welfare and the protection of community health and public safety of the city through the identification, preservation and enhancement of buildings, structures, landscapes, settings, neighborhoods, sites, and features with special historic, cultural, artistic, and architectural significance. To achieve this general purpose, the city seeks to pursue the following specific purposes:

1. The identification, designation, and protection of historic resources throughout the city.
2. The promotion of harmony of style, form, color, proportion, texture, and material between buildings of historic design and those of more modern design.
3. The recognition and protection of appropriate settings and environments for historic districts, buildings, structures, and sites.
4. The enhancement of the quality of life for residents and the providing of attractions to visitors by preserving the historic resources of the city.
5. The education of residents and visitors about the city's historic resources.
6. The incorporation of historic preservation into the permit review process of the city.

The following criteria shall be used by the commission of architectural review in evaluating potential old and historic districts. The commission may recommend a neighborhood, district, building, structure, or site for designation as an old and historic district, if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It has significant character, interest or value as a part of the historic development of the city.
2. It is the site of an historic event which had a significant impact on the history of the city.
3. It exemplifies the architectural, cultural, economic, social, political, artistic, or religious history of the city.
4. It portrays the architectural character of a particular era in the history of the city.
5. It is a rare example of a building built for a particular purpose, a type or form of building, a particular architectural style, or a form of engineering.
6. It is the work of a designer or craftsman whose individual work has significantly impacted the city, the commonwealth, or the United States of America.
7. It contains elements of design, detail, material, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation for its time period.
8. It is related to a park, street configuration, open space, hill, body of water, or landscaped grounds of significance in the areas of urban planning or landscape architecture.
9. It constitutes a landmark of the city, owing to its unique location or unusual physical characteristics.
10. It is contiguous with a neighborhood, district, building, structure, or site that meets one or more of the criteria in subsections (d)(1) through (9) of this section, and changes to it could impact the neighborhood, district, building, structure, or site that meets such criteria.

The Westwood community should be considered for old and historic designation under criteria 1 and 3 as an area with significant character, interest, or value as a part of the historic development of the city and for exemplifying the architectural, cultural, economic, social, political, artistic, or religious history of the city. The architecture and form of the neighborhood is representative of its long history as an African American community within the city and its deep cultural ties. The designation of Westwood offers a significant opportunity to include the architectural character and community development patterns of a resource currently not represented in any of the existing City Old and Historic districts.



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Purpose of Evaluation

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

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

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

1. General Information

District name(s): Westwood Historic District

DHR File No.: 127-6151

Main Streets and/or Routes: Stokes Lane, Marian Street, Horne Street, Park Avenue, Parish Street, Snowden Lane

City or Town: Richmond

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

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage:

Setting (choose only one of the following):

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

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

3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s):

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here:

If any builders or developers are known, please list here: Further research is likely to reveal many of the builders, some of which may have been the homeowners.

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): c. 1890s-Present.

Are there any known threats to this district? None known at present.

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire historic district, such as building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district, as well as typical updates, additions, remodelings, or other alterations that characterize the district.

General Description:

The Westwood community is located in the western suburban area of the City of Richmond. While Westwood is currently within the City of Richmond, it evolved as a neighborhood in Henrico County, starting in the 1870s (or possibly earlier). The area, once rural, is now a tight cluster of suburban neighborhoods. The busy commercial area of Patterson Avenue is nearby as well as the old Westhampton School, the section of the old school that survives is now owned by St. Mary's Hospital.

The community is bounded by Patterson Avenue on the south, Dunbar Street on the east, Stokes Street and the city line on the north, and Glenburnie Road on the west. The interior streets of the irregular grid include Marian, Horne, Parrish streets, Park Avenue and Snowden Lane. The neighborhood historic district boundaries, which follow the historic edges of the community, is almost a perfect square.

The landscape is generally flat but there is a gentle slope from the higher area of Glenburnie Road towards a slight drop of elevation at Dunbar Street (the drop is west to east). In the 19th century, Jordan's Branch flowed by the southeast corner of the neighborhood and this rural area water source may have provided impetus for settlement. Jordan's Branch was run through an underground culvert sometime in the twentieth century. The culvert generally follows the path of Willow Lawn Drive (it may be under the grassy median for an extended length), to the east of the Westwood community. There are two accesses into the Westwood neighborhood from Patterson Avenue: Glenburnie Road and Dunbar Street.

There are approximately one hundred fifteen houses in the community. The houses cover a span of 120-130 years of evolution. There are houses from the early years, dating back to the 1890s-1900. Some of the architectural styles relate to 1920s-1930s design trends. The fastest period of residential growth occurred after World War II, and especially after City utilities were extended into the area in 1947. The growth also coincided with the burst of economic growth in the 1950s and '60s throughout the United States. The Westwood Baptist Church was updated in the 1970s in a contemporary (now historic) style, but the core of the Church dates to the late nineteenth century (perhaps as early as 1870s-1890s).

The earliest aerial view available at the time of this PIF study dates to 1952. The community had more open land areas even as late as the 1955 aerial view. The open areas show path lines and evidence of small farm activity. In the 1950s, areas on Stokes and Marian streets were not yet developed. The neighborhood edge on Patterson Avenue had at least ten to fifteen houses; many appear to be two- or three-bay frame buildings

that extend longer into their parcels. The US Post Office, City Library and, in recent years, office buildings, have taken over most of the Patterson Avenue edge of the Westwood community. The greatest residential boom, based on the available aerials and USGS topo maps, shows almost a doubling of the number of houses between 1955 and 1968. Overall, the variety of architecture from earlier periods into the building out of the neighborhood represent a solid snapshot of the historic evolution of the Westwood community. The houses represent a physical story line of neighborhood success.

Architecture

There is a variety of mostly domestic architectural styles and forms throughout the community. While it is unlikely that houses from the 1870s survive, there are several houses that may date to the first quarter of the twentieth century (perhaps slightly earlier into the 1890s).

Older houses are spread throughout the neighborhood, but there is a high concentration on one block of Parrish Street. Many of the oldest houses have two- to three-bay front elevations and run deep into narrow parcels. On Parrish Street, some of these one-story c. 1900-1920 houses have small mansard roofs that extend to the rear with long shed roof lines. Others of that similar cottage dimension have a front gable. These older houses have porches, typically two bays wide and a few still show turned posts or thin Doric columns. The earlier houses are variations of simple Victorian era design and construction typical in Richmond's and adjacent Henrico County neighborhoods of the late 19th century. The house at 5314 Patterson Avenue is a good example of an intact early Westwood house; still retaining turned Victorian posts on its porch.

More rare, but also found on a few streets are two-story houses that have Mansard style front or front gable roofs and are also narrow on primary elevation, but set deeper into their parcels. There are examples of these: 913 Glenburnie Road and 5306 Marian streets.

There are a few excellent examples of hipped roof cottages; typically one story and wider than the thin and long cottages. There are good examples at: 1004 Dunbar Street and 905 Parrish Street. Both of these examples have deep porches supported on Doric columns. These houses can date from c. 1910-1930.

There is a Bungalow form house at 901 Parrish Street. It also shows a deep porch and the typical long low-slung roof of this form. The Bungalow form was popular in Richmond from about 1915-1940.

There is a very wide variety of architecture dating from the 1940s to the 1970s. Some of the earlier houses in this date range are Colonial Revival and many of the houses that were built during the late 1950s to '60s building boom are Minimal Traditional. There are some Split Level and Ranch style houses likely dating from about 1955-1970.

More research may reveal that owners may have built their own houses in some cases. There may have been favored contractors. Some of the Minimal Traditional style houses, dating to the 1950s and 1960s appear to be standard plan designs and may have been part of the popular prefabricated house industry; shipped from factory and constructed by local contractors who would customize the houses as the owners required.

The Westwood Baptist Church is an evolved building with sections that may date into the 1800s. In 1971, the building was remodeled in a light tone tan brick and a modern addition on the north side was completed in a contemporary style. This type of brick veneer updating was common across the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. The brick veneer updated the style of the buildings and at the same time provided additional enhanced insulation and fireproofing value.

The yard behind the Church contains a historic cemetery with unmarked burials that likely date to the founding period of the Westwood community—burials that may date as far back as the 1870s.

The Westwood Playground on Marian Street was where the one-story frame Westwood School stood. While the location of the school has not been determined during this PIF study, there may be some potential for archaeology at the former school location if the area has not been disturbed by new construction.

DHR Outreach Survey, July 2019

In July 2019 DHR Architectural Historian/Survey Manager Blake McDonald and DHR Public Historian Meagan Coward met with Community Historian Tammy Rose and conducted a sampling survey of some of the different forms of older buildings. Below are excerpts of their field findings. These more detailed summaries support the overall description above.

811 Parrish Street

The resource located at 811 Parrish Street is a circa 1910 one-story house built in the craftsman and vernacular style, and is in excellent condition. The structure exhibits a pyramidal hipped, metal roof with exposed rafter tails. There is a single brick chimney situated in the center ridge of the roof. The one-story, partial width porch is engaged with a hipped roof with three Roman Doric column supports. Two stone steps lead to the primary entrance situated on the porch's north corner on the northwestern elevation. The door is a paneled wooden and mostly paneled with a fan light. The structure's windows (one located near the porch's south corner, three on the southwestern elevation, and two on the northeastern elevation) consist of vinyl replacements. The rear portion of the resource (southeastern elevation) is not visible. The resource's walls appear to be clad in vinyl siding and a landscaping wall feature obstructs the view of the foundation. There are no known threats to this resource.



901 Parrish Street

This northwest facing resource located at 901 Parrish Street was built in circa 1930 and is presently in fair condition. It is a one-and-a-half story side-gabled, bungalow (somewhat craftsman-style). Both the dormer and the engaged porch display a shed roof, with the latter's roof being an extension of the main, side-gabled roof. The original roof (perhaps metal) has been replaced with asphalt shingles. There is a projecting bay covered by a gable roof that telescopes from the center of the south elevation. Two interior, sloped brick chimneys, one which displays two terra cotta pots is located on the northwest side, while the other is located on the southeastern side of the roof. The primary entrance is centrally situated and is a no-glass, fully paneled door, which is preceded by a two glass-paneled, metal storm door. Four square column porch supports. Vinyl replacement windows, except for a south-facing window located near the southeastern side of the structure, which is wooden, possibly casement, and has four panes of glass. A full glass-paneled exterior door is situated the resource's southeastern corner with five fixed windows located east of the door. The walls seem to be clad in vinyl siding, with gutters located on the northwest and southeast elevation of the resource. There is a modern one-car, front gabled garage which faces to the south elevation, two doors and one window are visible on the garage—one door and the window face the south elevation, which the other exterior garage door faces the northwestern elevation. There are no known threats to this resource.



906 Parrish Street

The primary resource located at 906 Parrish Street is a single story house, built circa 1900, and is presently in fair condition. This structure is a single story house constructed in a Vernacular style and faces the southeast. The shed (saltbox) roof, original pressed metal roof replaced with asphalt shingles (this detail is seen on the property next door that is built in the same fashion and most likely contemporary). There is a brick chimney with a terra cotta pot situated on the corner of the resource's northwestern end-wall. The walls are clad in metal siding. The engaged, single story porch exhibits decorative, iron column supports, with a single, thin additional support (perhaps made from wood) located on the northeastern corner of the porch. The primary entrance is located on the southeastern corner of the porch elevation. There is a rectangular transom light hung above the entry door, which is preceded by a metal, two paneled-glass storm door. The material of actual entry door unknown, however, it is evident that it is fully paneled and contains no glass. The foundation consists of concrete block—there may be original brick foundation (masonry piers) hidden due to the addition built on the southwestern side of the resource (this detail can be seen on the neighboring property as well). A bay projects from the resource's southwestern elevation. One vinyl replacement window hangs on the southeastern (façade) elevation of the bay, and two vinyl replacement windows hang on the southwestern elevation. On the northwestern elevation of the house, gutters are visible, with a downspout located on the western corner. There are presently no known threats to the resource.



1004 Dunbar Street

The primary resource located at 1004 Dunbar Street is a circa 1930 one-story, two-bedroom bungalow constructed in the Craftsman style with Colonial Revival decorative elements, and appears in good condition. Both the main roof and the roof of the dormer attic windows are metal and hipped. There are two interior, parged chimneys located on the the northeast and southwestern slopes of the structure. The walls are clad in clapboard siding and the windows are vinyl replacements. The primary entrance consists of a three horizontal panel wooden, half-glass entry door at the center of the southeast (façade) elevation. A transom light hangs above the entry door. The engaged, full-width, one-story porch on the southeast (façade) elevation has four Roman Doric columns along with spindle-turned balusters, which like the parameter of the porch not typically seen in Craftsman-style structures. The southeast portion of the roof overhangs the porch to provide cover. The foundation of the primary resource consists of parged brick on the original construction, and concrete brick on recent additions. On the northwest side of the building, a large portion of the rear porch has been enclosed to increase the interior space. The northwest exterior door is wooden and multiglass paneled. There are no known threats to the resource.



5401 Park Street

The resource located at 5401 Park Avenue was built circa 1910 and is in relative poor condition. This northeast-facing, one-and-a-half story house resembles a Vernacular style which incorporates Colonial and Greek revival elements—front gabled, metal roof with a fixed, square glass window on the northeast façade, which hangs above the dropped hipped porch roof. The resource exhibits a single chimney, which centrally located on the northwest slope. The engaged, one story, full-width porch is supported by four squared, wooden columns. There are two vinyl replacement windows on the northeast (façade) elevation, which hang beside the no-glass, paneled primary exterior door, located on the northeastern corner of the structure. There are two other vinyl replacement windows located southeast elevation of the resource. The walls appear to be clad in vinyl siding. Its foundation is mostly hidden by shrubbery, however, there are portions of the porch’s foundation exposed, which reveal both concrete block and brick masonry piers. The rest of the foundation is covered by two weathered, painting pieces of plywood (estimated three feet long) roughly spaced four feet apart. Three concrete steps lead up to the porch from the southeast elevation. Presently, there are no known threats to this resource.



5410 Stokes Lane

The primary resource located at 5414 Stokes Lane is a circa 1940 construction in fair condition. This southwest-facing structure is a one-story house built in a Vernacular style with Colonial revival elements, with side gables and a shed roof extension. This resource was built without chimneys and the roof appears to be clad with modern asphalt shingles. There are attic vents on both sides of the gables. The structure’s

walls are clad in vinyl siding. The engaged, entry porch is covered by a front gable extension roof with four turned, wooden spindled supports on the southwestern (façade) elevation. The railings on the porch are latticed, and there are two concrete steps that lead to the center of the porch and in front of the primary entry door. The primary entry door appears to be fully-paneled, wooden (no glass) door, preceded by a two-paned glass storm door. There are three vinyl replacement windows located on the southwestern (façade) elevation that exhibit decorative, nonfunctioning shutters. The two vinyl replacement windows hung on the northwest elevation and the two vinyl replacement windows hung on the southeastern elevation do not display shutters. A small, wooden entry porch, located on the southeastern elevation, has latticed railings with four wooden steps on the southwestern side of the porch. There is a secondary, exterior entry door located on the structure's southeastern elevation, which is covered by a metal awning. This door is half-glass (with nine lights), wooden, panel-door, preceded by a two glass-paned, metal storm door. A smaller window is located on the northern corner of the southeastern elevation. There are gutters on the southwestern (façade) elevation with a downspout on the south corner of the resource. The foundation is not visible and cannot be identified. There are no known threats to this resource.



5412 Stokes Lane

The resource located at 5412 Stokes Lane is a circa 1900 one-story, southwest-facing residential structure, which is in fair condition. It reflects a Vernacular style, similar to other structures in the neighborhood built with a shed roof, of which the material is not visible and cannot be determined. There are two interior, brick chimneys located parallel with each other on the resource's northwestern and southeastern elevations. The walls are clad in vinyl siding. The engaged one-story, partial-width porch, on the southwest (façade) elevation exhibits a dropped, metal-shed roof (or awning) supported by three thin metal poles. Two concrete steps lead

up to the porch on its western corner. The primary entry door is located on the porch's western corner and is a fully paneled, wooden door, which is preceded by a full glass storm door. However, there is evidence that this resource has been altered significantly. For instance, it appears that the location for the primary entry door changed at some point. To the immediate east of the door hangs a vinyl replacement window (with a window air conditioning unit occupying half of the space). Surrounding this window, there is an apparent frame (perhaps a door frame) that extends to the floor of the porch. On both sides of this new window are two immobile, decorative shutters. A double hung vinyl replacement window possesses a metal awning, which located east of the porch of the southwest (façade) elevation. This feature is also present on the singular vinyl replacement window on the structures southeast elevation. Metal awnings are not present on the two vinyl replacement windows located on the northwest elevation. The resource's foundation is made from concrete block with some evidence of brick masonry piers visible on the structures northwest elevation. There are no known threats to this resource.



Architecture Physical Integrity

The historic registers criteria takes into consideration the condition of the historic architecture in historic district areas. The Westwood Historic District shows moderate to high physical integrity. The houses built in the earliest periods show material updates like newer siding, window and doors, but the overall form of those houses have not changed and most retain their historic porches. The post WWII houses also show some of the typical updates of siding, windows, and doors, but in many cases show a very high level of intact condition. In most cases, the forms of the houses are still historic and additions have been made that preserve the historic form. As with most areas that have older houses, there have been some replacement and newer houses built after the 1970s. These later houses share the scale and match some of the historic

forms in the community. The most significant impact on the community is the erosion of the Patterson Avenue edge. It once had a consistent row of residential architecture of about ten to fifteen houses. Now only three survive. The US Post Office, City Library, and office buildings have all been built within the last fifty years.

4. District's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as when it was established, how it developed over time, and 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.) Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

If the district is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Originally a small village located west of Richmond in then-rural Henrico County, Westwood was settled by formerly enslaved African Americans from the nearby Patterson Plantation (demolished) after the end of the Civil War. While not much is known about its early history, the Westwood community was established by 1874 when a log church facing present-day Marian Street was constructed. A small frame church, typical of rural Black churches across the South, replaced that structure soon after. Baptisms were held in nearby Jordan's Branch. In 1876, land was transferred to the church "for benefit use & disposal only of the members of the congregation known as the Westwood Colored Baptist Church," according to an undated church pamphlet, and was then subdivided into small housing plots. Small-frame vernacular dwellings, largely built by community members, began to appear around the church. Several examples of Westwood's earliest structures still stand, largely along Stokes Lane and Marian Street.

Westwood Baptist Church, as it came to be known, was modernized with a brick façade and reoriented to face Glenburnie Road in the 1940s and was then expanded in 1971 to accommodate the needs of the community. Despite these changes, the church has played an integral role in the history and development of Westwood since its inception in 1874. Perhaps most significantly, the life of this close-knit community has centered around the church for generations. This is substantiated by remembrances from several longtime residents, such as Jean Curtis, who recalled in October 2003, "...the church and the community was one. Everybody who lived in here went to that church, and if anybody got sick, you know, people would come to your home and bring you things." [Richardson, 133]

Westwood's isolated location outside city limits also contributed to the strong feeling of community. The neighborhood had its own store and school – first a log cabin and then a two-room frame schoolhouse – although these structures have since been demolished (the school was closed in 1948, but the lot it stood on continued to be used by the neighborhood's children with the creation of a playground, which survives). By the early 20th century, white residential areas began to develop around Westwood in what is today Richmond's West End neighborhood. Westwood residents worked as servants in the nearby houses of wealthy white families. African Americans living in urban Richmond apparently did not believe that Westwood existed because it was widely assumed that Black people worked in the West End but did not live there.

In 1942, Westwood was annexed by the City of Richmond. It soon became the target of an overt campaign to displace its Black residents, demolish their houses, and effectively wipe Westwood from the map as the West End area around it became predominantly white and affluent. Westwood's residents were denied essential city services, such as water and sewer, even though their taxes increased after annexation. In the summer of 1945, white residents of nearby developments complained about the sanitary facilities in Westwood and deemed the neighborhood a potential source of typhoid. Except for a few houses on Patterson Avenue, houses in Westwood were served by traditional outhouses or "dry closets," a privy that the City emptied at two-week

intervals. Residents were forced to draw water from one public hydrant on the corner of what is now Willow Lawn Drive and Patterson Avenue. The community's 300 residents also used open wells, all deemed to be a health hazard and were condemned. In July, after a review found that all of Westwood's wells were polluted, the Board of Aldermen rejected without comment a measure to extend sanitary service to the neighborhood (this even though funds were available to connect sewer and water lines). The Aldermen explained that they felt connecting Westwood to sanitary lines might cost twice the \$50,000 price estimated by the director of Public Works. The *Richmond News Leader* noted that "It was also learned today on good authority that some members felt that the improvements would be followed by an enlargement of the Negro settlement at Westwood, where 65 families now live."

A second overt displacement tactic in 1945 was a proposal to demolish the entire neighborhood for the creation of a park. Residents would have to leave their homes after two years from the time the City acquired any one property. Public hearings were held on the matter, but the idea was dropped after large numbers of Westwood residents showed up in opposition. A year later, in 1946, the park idea was revisited. This time, the proposal called for allowing the existing residents to live rent free in their homes for the rest of their lives, but their children would have to move out once their parents had died. Additionally, Westwood Baptist Church would be allowed to function as long as there was an active congregation; the church cemetery would be placed in perpetual care and a wall would be built around it. The reason claimed for the phased destruction of the Westwood community was the need for a park in this part of the city, but no real evidence of this need was ever demonstrated. Several West End associations were on record as supporting the park, saying that it would "result in the greatest good for the greatest number," despite the fact that there was plenty of green space in this part of the West End at that time. The attack on Westwood was clearly seen as a racially motivated attempt to eliminate this area of Black residences from the heart of an otherwise all-white area. The park proposal was apparently scrapped with the change in makeup of the Council of Aldermen in November 1946.

By this time, 40 young World War II servicemen and women had returned home to Westwood. Some of them had married and wanted to build houses there. This chapter in the neighborhood's architectural development is evident in the large number of postwar homes that survive there. Even though Westwood was a thriving community, most residents were still being denied essential city services in early 1947 and conditions had grown worse as a result; Reverend Alfred M. Waller, of Westwood Baptist Church, advised the City's Streets Committee that 12 homes had city water, but that the other 53 did not and were forced to get their drinking water from a city hydrant on Patterson Avenue. Westwood, because of these poor conditions, was likened to "a post-slavery settlement" in a page one article appearing in the February 19, 1947, issue of the *News Leader*. Printed photos of condemned wells and open sewers there accompanied the piece.

Despite this impassioned plea, a proposal was revived yet again to demolish Westwood to create a park. On April 5, 1947, a mass meeting was held at Westhampton School. Several groups presented their positions on the matter. L. Gleason Gianniny, a white attorney who spoke on behalf of groups who supported the proposal, insisted there were "hundreds of places for them [Westwood's residents]" either south of Cary Street or east of Meadow Street. Walter Cragie, head of the Richmond Community Council, spoke on behalf of nearby white residents like himself when he said that the Westwood issue was "racial, pure and simple," describing Westwood's residents as "a helpless minority." He offered a written proposal to run city utilities into Westwood. Gianniny countered this by saying "let's move them all out on Cary Street Road" (where Cragie lived) if he was so intimately acquainted with Westwood residents (a common jab towards white people who spoke out in support of African Americans). A lead editorial, "Westwood—Touchstone for Richmond," by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* prompted letters of support from readers; as a result, the city council passed a resolution to extend water and sewer mains to the neighborhood on April 8, 1947.

In the 1950s, Westwood became the focus of an effort to desegregate a nearby school. Some years earlier, in 1948, the closure of the school in Westwood meant that its students had to be bussed to Carver School,

approximately five miles away, instead of the all-white Westhampton School, which was only two blocks away. After the passing of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which ruled that the racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional, Senator Harry Byrd, of Virginia, called for “Massive Resistance,” a group of laws intended to prevent integration, even if it meant forcing all-white schools to close. In 1958, three Black students from Westwood applied to attend Westhampton, which then was threatened with closure. This time, the *Richmond News Leader*, with its front-page headline, “3 Negroes Apply in Westhampton,” was not as liberal in its editorial stance. In 1961, following a federal court decision in *Warden v. Richmond School Board*, Daisy Jane Cooper, a 12-year-old resident of Westwood, became the first Black student to integrate Westhampton Junior High School. A year later, she became the first to integrate Thomas Jefferson High School.

Other notable people associated with Westwood include Arthur Ashe, the pioneering professional tennis champion and civil rights activist whose likeness was turned into the first non-Confederate statue to be installed on Monument Avenue, and Dr. Benjamin Lambert, III, an optometrist who served nearly 30 years in the Virginia House of Delegates and the State Senate. In Ashe’s autobiography, he spoke fondly of Westwood. By 1932, his maternal grandparents had moved there from Georgia, settling in a (still standing) bungalow at 903 Glenburnie Road. In 1938, Ashe’s parents were married in the living room and lived in the house for a time. His grandmother, Jimmie “Big Mama” Cunningham, was a deaconess at Westwood Baptist Church, a place that Ashe was still visiting in the last years of his life.

Despite numerous attempts to erase Westwood from the city map, the area remains a unique enclave of small homes owned by generations of African Americans and is an important tangible reminder of a rare surviving settlement founded by Black Virginians after emancipation. Some older houses remain among residences constructed in the post-World War II building boom (although Patterson Avenue has lost many historic buildings to 21st century commercial and institutional buildings). In 2021, a state historical marker sponsored by the Friends of Westwood Playground and issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, was installed at the intersection of Dunbar Street and Willow Lawn Drive.

Westwood is nationally locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Ethnic Heritage (Black), Religion, Politics/Government, and Community Planning and Development as a surviving example of an African American neighborhood in Virginia that dates to the Reconstruction Era despite the construction of modern buildings (both residential and commercial) during the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The period of significance begins with the founding of Westwood Baptist Church, by 1874, until the 1971 expansion of the church.

References:

Arthur Ashe. *Days of Grace*. New York: Random House, 1993.

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Henrico County Government. *The Westwood Community: Built on Faith and Resilience*. YouTube. February 5, 2018. <https://youtu.be/js-1aP1SWtY>.

Historic Aerials-Netronline: <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>

Hoffman, Steven J. *Race, Class and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870-1920*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004.

Nichols, Brenda Dabney. *African Americans of Henrico County*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010.

Richardson, Selden. *Built by Blacks: African American Architecture and Neighborhoods in Richmond*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011.

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

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

6. Applicant/Sponsor (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Cyane Crump, Executive Director (history & significance by Amanda Davis, volunteer/architectural description by Marc Wagner, VDHR)

organization: Historic Richmond Foundation

street & number: 4 East Main Street, Suite 1-C

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23219

e-mail: crcrump@historicrichmond.com telephone: (804) 643-7407

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

name/title:

organization:

street & number:

city or town: state: zip code:

e-mail: telephone:

7. 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.

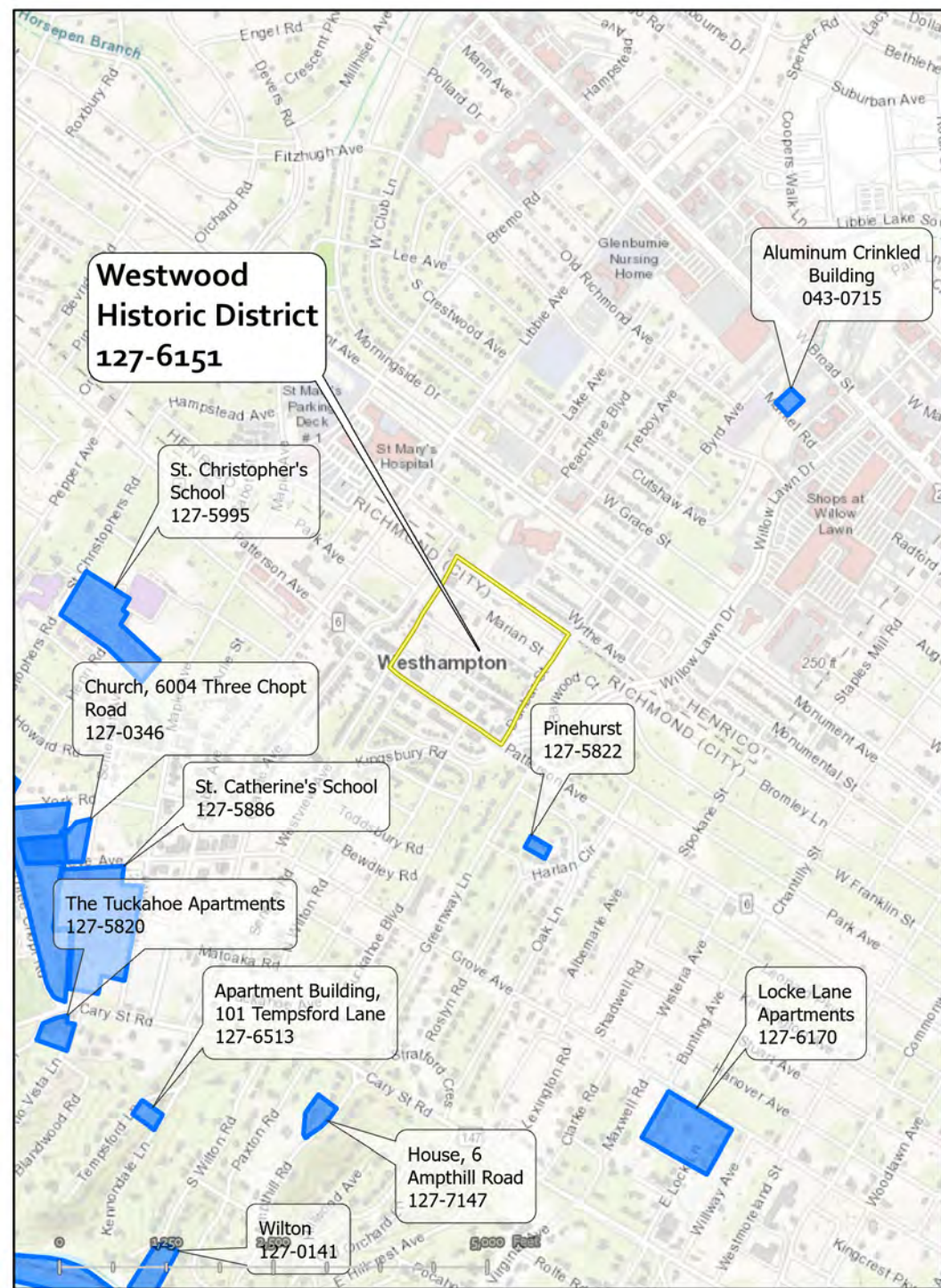
name/title:

organization:

street & number:

city or town: state: zip code:

telephone:



Westwood Historic District
 City of Richmond, Bon Air Quad
 DHR ID: 127-6151

- 127-6151
- Listed Resources

Created By: D. Bascone8/1/2022
 Sources: VDHR 2020, ESRI 2020, VDOT 2020, VGIN 2020
 Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually





127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_805Glenburnie_Road_USPostOffice_Looking_Southeast_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_908_Parrish_Street_Northwest_Elevation_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_5305_Horne_Street_Northeast_Elevation_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_5306_Horne_Street_Southwest_Elevation_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_5432.5_PattersonAvenue_KissandMakeup_Looking_Northeast (2)



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Glenburnie_Road_Looking_Northeast__2__VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Glenburnie_Road_Looking_Southwest_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Marian_Street_WestwoodPark_Looking_Northeast (2)_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Marian_Street_WestwoodPark_Looking_Southwest (3)



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Parrish_Street_Looking_Southwest (3)_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Parrish_Street_Looking_Southwest_VCRIS



127 6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Patterson_Avenue_WesthamptonProfessionalPark_Looking_Northeast_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Stokes_Lane_Looking_Southeast (3)_VCRIS



127-6151_WestwoodHistoricDistrict_Stokes_Lane_Looking_Southeast__2__VCRIS



127-7210_1004DunbarStreet_2019_exterior_southwestern_elevation_VCRIS



127-7211_901ParrishStreet_2019_exterior_northwestern_elevation (2)_VCRIS



127-7212_906ParrishStreet_2019_exterior_northwestern_elevation__2__VCRIS



127-7212_906ParrishStreet_2019_exterior_northwestern_elevation_VCRIS



127-7213_811ParrishStreet_2019_exterior_northwestern_elevation (2)_VCRIS-EDIT



127-7214_5401ParkAvenue_2019_exterior_northeastern_elevation__2__VCRIS



127-7215_5412StokesLane_2019_exterior_southwestern_elevation_VCRIS



127-7216_5410StokesLane_2019_exterior_southeastern_elevation_VCRIS



127 7217_WestwoodBaptistChurch_2019_exterior_front_northwestern_and_southwestern_elevation_VCRIS



127 7217_WestwoodBaptistChurch_2019_exterior_rear_southwestern_and_southeastern_elevation_VCRIS