50 Most Historically Significant Houses and Structures in Virginia Beach

Published by the Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Partnership
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Virginia Beach’s architectural history begins with a collection of early eighteenth-century brick houses that are unequalled in any other locality in Virginia. Dating back more than two hundred years, these houses are the earliest examples of Virginia Beach residences that were once firmly rooted in the agricultural lifestyle and economy that characterized this area. This publication, compiled by the Virginia Beach Historical Preservation Partnership as part of Virginia Beach’s commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the First Landing, identifies these and other historically significant buildings and structures that remain in our city today in order to educate the public about their existence and increase general interest in their preservation.

Part of what makes the city’s history unique also causes a number of its historic houses and structures to remain unknown to many of its citizens. For nearly 350 years, the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach area was essentially a large, sparsely-populated rural county. It had a widely dispersed settlement pattern that included a few small villages and a growing town at the oceanfront. The sudden explosion of post-World War II development, however, very quickly transformed this mainly agrarian community into the most populated city in Virginia. As a result, no “historic area” can be easily delineated or designated in today’s city of Virginia Beach. There are, however, at least 600 identified buildings throughout the city that have some historic or architectural importance. We chose to limit our initial publication to the fifty most significant sites as that number was manageable in terms of our resources and what we thought the public could readily absorb in this initial effort. We will review the listings periodically in the future to update information and perhaps increase the number of sites included.

Our selection of the most historically significant houses and structures in Virginia Beach was influenced by research compiled by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, opinions of local history experts, and inclusion on state and national historical registers. Our selection criteria included not only the age of the structure, but also others factors such as architectural design, historical occupants, and cultural representation. Given the richness of church history in Virginia Beach, we chose to list only the oldest existing church structure, Old Donation Episcopal Church, believing that the history of the remaining religious structures might be better dealt with as the exclusive subject of a separate publication.

The Virginia Beach Historical Preservation Partnership, a combined effort of the City of Virginia Beach, The Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society, and the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association, promotes the preservation of historic places in Virginia Beach. For further information about this organization and how you may become involved, please contact the City of Virginia Beach Historic Resources Management Office at 385-5100.
One of Virginia's early vernacular manor houses, the Adam Keeling House, once known as "Ye Dudley's," is believed to have been constructed in 1735. It preserves the decorative device of chevrons, a feature associated with pre-Georgian vernacular brick architecture. The chevrons are formed by parallel rows of glazed header bricks following the angle of the gables. The closed-string and paneled parlor chimney wall appears to have been installed in the late eighteenth century. The house is at the head of a cove on the Lynnhaven River. It is located in a Historical and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
This famous brick dwelling illustrates the transition from Virginia's temporary frontier structures of the early seventeenth century to the more permanent, albeit informal, gentry houses of the early eighteenth century. The massive end chimney, irregular spacing of the openings, and lack of classical influences make the house a characteristic example of Virginia's pre-Georgian architecture. In the mid-twentieth century, The Adam Thoroughgood House Foundation sponsored a restoration project and opened the house to the public (1957). The house is on land obtained by Adam Thoroughgood and it was probably built by a descendant ca. 1719. It is located in a Historical and Cultural Overlay Zoning District. It is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
The Baxter House is a two-and-one-half-story, wood-frame side-gable dwelling on a raised three-course American bond brick foundation. Constructed ca. 1790-1820 by Isaac N. Baxter, a local doctor, this structure was designed as a vernacular interpretation of the Federal. Using frame construction clad with beaded weatherboard, the house has a simple symmetrical five-bay façade featuring a barely three-bay wide portico with square posts and turned balustrade sheltering the centrally placed front entry. Though simple in expression, its massing, proportion, fenestration and porch clearly establish its Federal Period association.
JAMES-BELL HOUSE

Oceana Boulevard
U. S. Naval Air Station Oceana
Circa 1820
Federal

Sources:
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach, Va.: The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Section 4.14.

Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II, prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the City of Virginia Beach, Department of Planning. Washington, D.C.: Traceries, 1993, 15.

The James-Bell House, built ca. 1820 possibly by Joshua James II, is currently the residence for the commanding officer of NAS Oceana. The architecture of this fine house is typical of the first half of the nineteenth century and is a two-story side-gable dwelling with double interior end chimneys with parapets. The central-hall, double-passage brick structure contains six-over-six double-hung wood sash windows with a segmental arched cornice. The many large windows and extremely high ceilings lend elegance to the overall design. Maintained in its original beauty on the exterior, it still has the original wide-pine flooring and some hand-blown panes in the windows. It is the only house of this type remaining in Virginia Beach.
Once known as the Julian Powell House, the Biddle House was constructed on property acquired by John Biddle in the 1740s; the main house was probably built in 1752. It is made of brick set in the Flemish bond pattern and has one chimney on the north wall. The original house was laid out on a side-passage, double-pile plan with back-to-back corner fireplaces in the principal rooms. The staircase and all of the framing and masonry from the 1752 portion of the house are original. Craftsmen’s signatures have been found on the back of the wood on the original first floor frames, as was the custom of the time. An addition was built onto the south side of the house, possibly in the late 1890s, that included another two rooms and another separate building in the back.
This property has undergone profound changes over the last 350 years. Originally there was a small house on this site believed to have been built in 1640 on land granted to Thomas Allen. It had brick walls eighteen inches thick and only one room with a loft. A later owner incorporated the small house as part of a much larger addition. Records indicate that by 1860 the house was owned by Dr. Enoch Ferebee, followed by his son, and then by his grandson. John B. Dey acquired the house in 1914. During his ownership, the roof was raised and a sun room was added to the front. His son Furman owned the house until 1975. The subsequent owners, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Ehrenzeller, constructed a large addition to the right of the original house.
Brown's Tavern provides a good example of the rarer and more substantial dwelling types found in the area. This house, a two-and-one-half-story building built ca. 1832, is designed in a transitional Federal-Italianate style. While the general massing and certain details, including the flat stone lintels and the five-course American bond brick work, are typical of Federal period architecture, the overhanging eaves and bracketed wood cornice are more characteristic of the Italianate style. This house is known locally to have served as a tavern for travelers. A frame kitchen wing was added to the house in the mid-nineteenth century.
Camp Pendleton/State Military Reservation was established in 1912 as a rifle range facility in a remote, sparsely populated area of Princess Anne County. It became an active U.S. Army base during World War II and today serves as a Virginia Army National Guard Facility. It is defined by the intact landscape created by the dominant building type, World War II-era temporary buildings, and the examples of earlier twentieth century military and residential building types. Currently, there are 108 buildings and six sites that contribute to the Camp Pendleton Historical District. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
FIRST CAPE HENRY
LIGHTHOUSE

Fort Story Army Base
583 Atlantic Avenue
Circa 1792
Federal Lighthouse Style

Source:
Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The
Virginia Landmarks Register. File #134-0007

This landmark, commanding the entrance to Hampton Roads, was the first public works project under George Washington's administration. It was also the first lighthouse authorized, fully completed, and lit by the newly organized federal government. Put into operation in October 1792, the tapered octagonal structure was faced with hammer-dressed sandstone. It was the first of three lighthouses built by John McComb, Jr. Its function was taken over by a new tower erected nearby in 1881.

The old tower was deeded to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities [APVA] in 1930 and is now maintained as a museum. It stands near the spot where the Jamestown colonists landed in 1607 and laid claim to what would become the first permanent English colony in the New World. It is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
SECOND CAPE HENRY LIGHTHOUSE

Fort Story Army Base
Circa 1881
Federal Lighthouse Style

Source:
Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Virginia Landmarks Register. File # 134-0079.

The second Cape Henry Light Station was built in 1881 to succeed the original Cape Henry Lighthouse, which had served that area since 1792. A granite foundation supports a 163-foot-tall tower topped by a one-story black iron lantern that contains a first-order Fresnel lens. Associated structures at the same site include three circa-1881 keeper's dwellings, an 1881 brick fog signal building, an 1892 brick oil house, a 1905 coal house, and a modified 1935 fog signal testing laboratory. Owned and operated by the U.S. Coast Guard, the light station is located on the Fort Story army base on the south side of the Chesapeake Bay entrance. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
The Caraway House is possibly the oldest surviving structure in what was the village of Kempsville. It is believed to have been built shortly after James Caraway acquired its first site in 1733. Originally it was a small house with a hall and one large room downstairs and two smaller rooms upstairs. A second room and kitchen with a sloping roof were later added downstairs giving the house a saltbox shape. Occupied by the Caraway family until 1975, it was moved in the 1960s from its former location on the other side of Princess Anne Road to accommodate the changes in Witchduck Road. It has been carefully restored and still has the original shutters, many hand blown panes in the windows and the massive original chimney. Gravestones of more recent Caraway family members are located at the rear of the property. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and the Historic Kempsville Overlay.
CAVALIER HOTEL/BEACH CLUB

Atlantic and 42nd Street
Circa 1927 and 1928/1933

The Cavalier Hotel was constructed in 1927 and marked a return to the grand style of hotel that had been missing in Virginia Beach since the Princess Anne Hotel burned in 1907. The Hotel was situated high atop a sand hill to afford guests a view of the ocean and expose them to summer breezes. Famous early guests included F. Scott Fitzgerald, Rudy Vallee and Johnny Weismuller. The Cavalier Beach Club was constructed on the beach in 1928 and served hotel guests and others who purchased club memberships. It had an outdoor dance floor and events there featured big name bandleaders including Glenn Miller. The original Beach Club facility was destroyed by the 1933 hurricane and its replacement was severely damaged by the 1962 Ash Wednesday storm. The Cavalier is in operation today and remains as the main symbol of a bygone era of Virginia Beach’s resort history.

Source:
CHURCH POINT MANOR HOUSE

4001 Church Point Road
Circa 1860
Revival and Italianate

Source:
The Virginian-Pilot/Ledger Star (Norfolk, Va.), November 1994, Real Estate Weekly Section.

The Church Point Manor House is significant as one of the rare nineteenth-century farmhouses still surviving in the northern half of Virginia Beach. Built ca. 1860, it is a brick Victorian house that exhibits a mix of architectural approaches that has been described as a "revival style and 'Italianate' with some Greek influence." The building was renovated in 1994 and a wing added to accommodate a bed and breakfast operation. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District.
COOKE-ROYSTER COTTAGE

7700 Oceanfront Avenue
1917
Beach Cottage

Sources:
Reconnaissance Architectural Survey Report:
City of Virginia Beach. Staunton, Va.: Frazier

Property owners.

F. S. Royster (founder of Royster Fertilizer) began construction on this large two-story beach cottage at the north end of the beach in 1915; it was completed in 1917. Built for his four children, it became known as the Cooke-Royster Cottage after one daughter, Fannie W., married Richard D. Cooke, a lawyer and former mayor of Norfolk. The shingle-clad dwelling features a wide, two-story veranda which extends along the sides of the cottage. It stands today as a rare example of a once common house type found in the resort area. Its current owners, the Brock family, have restored it along the lines of its original design using its original framing and foundation.
In 1819, Princess Anne County decided to relocate the courthouse. The relocation was very controversial among Princess Anne County citizens and was finally decided by a commission of Norfolk residents appointed by the Virginia General Assembly. The relocation of the courthouse from Kempsville to the geographical center of the county was finally accomplished in 1823. The county's sixth courthouse was originally constructed in a T-shape, but a square-shaped structure resulted after additions were added in the early twentieth century. During this time, white pillars were added to the building's front façade. As it stands today, the courthouse is considerably modified from the original structure. Proposals have been made to Virginia Beach City Government to identify its earlier construction and perhaps restore it to that design. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District.
The deWitt Cottage was built in 1895 by Bernard P. Holland, Superintendent of the Norfolk, Albemarle and Atlantic railroad and later the first mayor of the town of Virginia Beach. In 1909, Norfolk businessman Cornelius deWitt purchased the house. In 1990, the deWitt family entered into an agreement that allowed the Virginia Beach Foundation to renovate the building and the City of Virginia Beach to take ownership in return for an annuity fund for the three surviving deWitt daughters. Upon completion the house was leased to the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild which operates it today as the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
EDGAR CAYCE HOUSE

315 35th Street
Circa 1925
Craftsman

Source:
City of Virginia Beach, Department of Museums and Historic Resources, City of Virginia Beach Historical Register, Property #27.

The Edgar Cayce House was built circa 1920 – 1925 and is a typical beach cottage in a modified craftsman style. It has a side gable roof with a large dormer projecting from both the south and north elevations and on the first level a front porch that extends across the width of the house. It was the first home lived in by noted psychic Edgar Cayce in Virginia Beach, where he founded the Association for Research and Enlightenment. It is listed on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
EDGAR CAYCE HOSPITAL

215 57th Street
Circa 1928

Source:
City of Virginia Beach. Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #20.

Edgar Cayce constructed the Cayce Hospital for alternative health and healing purposes in 1928. It was built in the typical beach hotel style of the 1920s. The building originally featured an open veranda around three-quarters of the building. Edgar Cayce lost ownership of the building in 1931 during the Depression. The hospital building was used as a beach club, hotel and a Shriner’s clubhouse, among a number of other uses prior to the Association for Research and Enlightenment’s purchase of the property in 1956. It is listed on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
FERRY PLANTATION HOUSE

436 Cheswick Lane
Circa 1830
Federal

Sources:
City of Virginia Beach. Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #2.
Friends of Ferry Plantation.

A three story Federal-style home of brick laid in a three-course American bond stands near the site of the third courthouse in Princess Anne County (1735-1751) and the home of Col. Anthony Walke. The present house was built using the best brick salvaged from the earlier Walke Manor house that burned in 1828. The front or land side of the home is dominated by a two-story porch constructed more recently in the Colonial Revival-style. The interior features original mantels and flooring. A ferry service was operated on the site from 1642 until well into the nineteenth century. The house is owned by the City of Virginia Beach. It is currently being restored by the Friends of the Ferry Plantation House, Inc. and is open to the public. It is located in a Historical and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
In 1933, the Commonwealth of Virginia bought the more than 2,888 acres that make up First Landing State Park from the Cape Henry Syndicate Inc. for $157,000. Originally named Seashore State Park and built mainly by African American workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the park opened in 1936. In 1965, the park's natural area was included in the National Register of Natural Landmarks because of its distinction as the northernmost location on the East Coast where subtropical and temperate plants grow and thrive together. In 1999, the park was renamed First Landing State Park to commemorate the area as the site of the historic first landing of the Virginia Company that went on to settle Jamestown. Twenty overnight cabins are available for visitor use, including five CCC-era cabins. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
FRANCIS LAND HOUSE

3131 Virginia Beach Boulevard
Circa 1805 – 1810
Georgian

Sources:
Official Records. City of Virginia Beach, Department of Museums and Historic Resources.

The Francis Land House was constructed by Francis Moseley Land ca. 1805 – 1810. It is a one-and-one-half-story brick gambrel roof building constructed in the Georgian style. Original woodwork is intact in the entry hall and dining room. The house was expanded in the twentieth century, first by the enlargement of the half-story to a full story in 1912 by J. P. Sheets, next by a basement excavation and finishing, and finally by additions constructed on the back in 1954 by Colin Studds. Owned and operated as a historic house museum by the City of Virginia Beach, the Francis Land House is open to the public. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
Designed in 1953 by Frank Lloyd Wright and built in 1959-60 by Andrew B. & Maude Cooke, this house is one of only three Wright-designed houses in Virginia. The current owner bought the hemicycle-designed house in 1983 after viewing photographs of the house in the American wing of the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. The interiors are in excellent condition and all of the furniture that was designed by Wright still exists with the house.
In 1914, the Virginia General Assembly gave 343 acres of land in the vicinity of Cape Henry to the federal government for use as a military fortification. It was consequently named Fort Story in honor of General John Patton Story, a noted coastal artilleryman in his day. During both World War I and World War II, it was utilized as an important defense facility that guarded the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay. Today, it is used as a military shoreline training facility. Some of its historical buildings still remain from the World War II era and include a chapel, train station and commanding officer’s quarters. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
Lancaster Lovett built the main house, which consisted of four rooms, prior to 1738. Several renovations and enlargements have occurred since then, including one with a date of 1791 incised on a brick that may have been placed there by its then current owner, Lemuel Cornick. One of the house's outbuildings was used as a kitchen and is thought to have been built by John Stratton, ca. 1638. The English bond brick exterior of this earlier outbuilding has been plastered over and painted, but its two unusual outside doors remain.
GRESHAM (IVES) HOUSE

4152 Blackwater Road
Circa 1851
Rural farmhouse

This is a good example of older Princess Anne County farmhouses designed on a three bay, side-passage plan. The dwelling rests on a foundation of cut logs and brick piers. Roof construction features mortise and tenon joints held together by wooden pegs. The porch is a later addition. According to local tradition this property was the site of military activity during the Civil War.

Sources:

This large, imposing house built of blue Vermont granite was constructed on the shores of Crystal Lake in north Virginia Beach in 1905 by Dr. John Miller Masury and his wife Martha. It was designed by the Norfolk architect Arnold Eberhand. It is significant for both its historical association as an early gambling establishment, the Crystal Club, and for its unique architectural character. The interior and exterior of the house retain a high degree of integrity and are in excellent condition. One of its most well-known preserved features is its grand ballroom. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
HERMITAGE HOUSE

4200 Hermitage Road
Circa 1699 with additions in 1834 and 1940
Federal

Sources:

Property owners.

Located across the inlet from the Thoroughgood House, Hermitage House is a one-and-one-half-story, wood-frame farmhouse constructed in three stages. Elements of the first four-bay component are believed to date from 1699 when John Thoroughgood built a house on his portion of Adam Thoroughgood's Grand Patent. The second component was constructed in 1834 by the Woodhouse family, who added federal-style crown molding, recessed panel wainscoting throughout the house and a central passage. Finally, in 1940, the final stage was completed, adding indoor plumbing and a kitchen. There are three outbuildings, as well as a large subterranean brick cistern now used as a basement to the house. These outbuildings are some of the few antebellum outbuildings to survive in Virginia Beach. The property remained a working farm until the mid-1950s. Notable modern owners include Admiral John Belling, commander of the USS Forrestal during its disastrous fire. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
In the late 1800s and early 1900s, scores of waterfowl hunt clubs existed in Princess Anne County, many of them patronized by wealthy northern sportsmen. In 1907, George Bonbright, a banker and stock broker from Rochester, New York, and George Eastman, founder of the Eastman Kodak company, purchased 402 acres of marsh on North Bay in Princess Anne County and built a clubhouse. The partners named their property Horn Point Club as the marsh was shaped like a ram's horn. Horn Point is a grand specimen of that era and is one of the few clubs remaining today. It is owned and maintained by the fourth generation of the same New York family that built it in 1907.

Sources:
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1999, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach, Va.: the City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Sect. 4: 32.

WILLIAM OR JOHNATHAN WOODHOUSE HOUSE

2380 London Bridge Road
Circa 1760

This house was built ca. 1760 by the prominent Woodhouse family and was occupied by them for several generations. The letters "W W P" and the date "1760" are etched into two bricks on the east side of the house indicating that William and Pembroke Woodhouse were the original owners/builders of this home. Once owned by the Princess Anne Hunt Club, this one-and-one-half-story home with a distinctive steeply pitched Dutch gambrel roof and shed roof dormers is acclaimed as a fine example of vernacular domestic architecture for this period. It is listed on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.

Sources:
Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II, prepared for the Department of Historic Resources and the City of Virginia Beach Department of Planning, Washington, D.C., Traceables 1993, 27.
Kenstock is an extraordinary and well-preserved example of French Revival style architecture and of the eclectic architectural styles that became popular at the height of Virginia Beach's early development as a resort during the beginning of the twentieth century. The exterior verandas and shingles relate the cottage to beach cottages built at that time and the two-story structure was replete with servant quarters. A columned porch surrounds the lower story and the roof is steeply hipped with dormer windows. The interior retains all original woodwork including mantels and stairways. One shingled outbuilding, a garage, remains on site.

Sources:
Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II, prepared for the Department of Historic Resources and the City of Virginia Beach Department of Planning, Washington, D.C.: Traceries, 1993, 102.

Property owners.
LYNNHAVEN HOUSE

4405 Wishart Road
Circa 1725
Post-Medieval

Sources:
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of City of Virginia Beach. Virginia Beach: The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Sect. 4.1.

City of Virginia Beach. Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #16.

Built ca. 1725, the Lynnhaven House is a very outstanding example of Tidewater Virginia vernacular architecture. Built by Francis Theleball, a Huguenot, it is constructed of brick set in the English bond pattern and has been restored to about 85% of its original features and construction. The house was given to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities [APVA] by the Oliver family in 1971. The City of Virginia Beach operates and manages it as a historic house museum and will acquire the property from the APVA in 2008. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
OAK HILL FARM

1040 Caton Drive
Circa 1790
Federal

Possibly built by a member of the Woodhouse family ca. 1790, this Federal style brick house has two stories with an attic overlooking Broad Bay. There is an addition in the rear of the house. There may have been an older home on the existing foundation, as the foundation in the cellar is very old. The house is in excellent condition.

Source:
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach, Va., The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, #164, 4-13.
OLD COAST GUARD STATION

2401 Atlantic Avenue
Circa 1903

Source:
Virginia Department of Historical Resources.
The Virginia Historical Landmarks Register, File #134-0047.

The original Seatack Life Saving Station was constructed in the late 1870s under a Congressional authorization to the United States Life Saving Service, which became a part of the U.S. Coast Guard Service in 1915. The current structure, which is much larger, was constructed in 1903 in response to increased maritime traffic and tourism in the area. It is owned by the City of Virginia Beach and operated by a private foundation as the Old Coast Guard Station Museum. The Station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
OLD COMFORT

1437 N. Woodhouse Road
Circa 1832

Source:
City of Virginia Beach, Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #19.

This three story home, constructed in 1832, is also known as the "Henry Woodhouse House". Woodhouse was the seventh generation of his family to live in Princess Anne County. The house was constructed on land originally granted to the Woodhouse family in 1630. He constructed the home using logs cut from what is now First Landing State Park, floating them in Broad Bay and through the Narrows into Linkhorn Bay to the building site. The large hand-hewn heart pine timbers are still visible in the basement. The clay used to make the bricks to construct the chimneys is also found in the Alanton vicinity. The home remained in the Woodhouse family until approximately 1906. An addition connecting the original kitchen to the main house was added, and the windows between the chimneys and the front porch have all been added since 1906. It is listed on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
OLD DONATION CHURCH

4449 North Witchduck Road
Circa 1736; 1912 – 16 restoration

Sources:

Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of City of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach - The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Sect. 4.2.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Virginia Landmarks Register. File #134-0025.

City of Virginia Beach. Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #4.

This all brick one-story building with an interior balcony was originally constructed in 1736 as the third Parish Church of the Lynnhaven Parish. The parish was first established in 1637. The end walls extend above the roofline and are capped with concrete. The main windows of the church are arched fourteen-over-nine wooden double-hung sashes. On the north and south wall there are two windows which are smaller and sit higher and out of line with the others in order to allow light onto the hanging pews of the wealthy parishioners. The interior contains one central aisle flanked by pews on either side with a large vaulted ceiling above. The church burned in 1882, destroying all but the walls. Restorations took place between 1912 and 1916 and in 1966. The site was the location for the Princess Anne County Courthouse in the late seventeenth century and the adjacent graveyard holds graves from the eighteenth century. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
Pembroke Manor, constructed in 1764, is a two-story, Georgian style home made of brick set in Flemish bond pattern and capped with a wooden hipped roof. The front and rear facades are five bays wide, while the north and south facades are both two bays wide. The windows are nine-over-nine wooden double-hung sash. There are two interior brick chimneys. A renovation was completed in the 1890s, which added a bathroom, Victorian tin to the attic walls, and glass transoms above all of the interior doors. Originally twelve fireplaces were used to heat the home. In 1999 the interior bookcases were redone in solid mahogany modeled after the original pattern found in the building. The front doors, modeled after the originals, were redone in solid mahogany in 2000. The house was constructed by Jonathan Saunders who died a year after its completion. His son, Capt. John Saunders, was evicted from the property as a Loyalist who fought for the British during the Revolutionary War. Originally encompassing 800 acres, including today’s Virginia Beach Central Business District, it is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District, is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
Pleasant Hall, also known as the Peter Singleton House, sits at the corner of Princess Anne and Overland Roads. It was built by merchant George Logan, a Tory who sided with Lord Dunmore, Virginia's last royal governor. He allowed Dunmore to use the home as his headquarters following the skirmish of Kemps Landing in November 1775. An inquisition in 1779 officially declared Logan a Tory, which led to the confiscation of all of his property by the State. The Whitehead family gave Pleasant Hall its name in the twentieth century. Pleasant Hall is a fine example of Georgian architecture of the second period with distinctive interior woodwork. It is a brick home of Flemish bond that originally boasted two wings which are now lost. A modern addition was built on the back of the building in the early 1990s. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources holds a conservation easement on the property. The home is located in the Historic Kempsville Overlay District and is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
PLEASANT RIDGE SCHOOL

1392 Princess Anne Road
Circa 1880s
American School House

Source:
City of Virginia Beach. Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #38.

Pleasant Ridge School is a very plain one-room schoolhouse which was moved to its current site in 1915. It sits on a brick pier foundation and has a metal seamed roof and wood planked walls and floor. The original structure was part of a two-room school built in 1886 on Charity Neck Road for the education of white children. When that school was replaced by a newer one, one of its rooms was moved to the current site to serve as a school for African Americans. It is reported that the move was made by Walter Brock and Reuben Lamb using skids pulled by horses. Pleasant Ridge continued to educate young black children until it was closed in 1956. Today, the school has been restored and furnished to appear as it did when it was in operation and is available for public visitation. It is listed on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
POCAHONTAS HUNT CLUB

6216 Pocahontas Club Road
Circa 1926 - 1931

Source:
Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II, prepared for the Department of Historic Resources and the City of Virginia Beach Department of Planning, Washington, D.C.: Traceries, 1993, Appendix E.

Also known as the Pocahontas Fowling Club, the Clubhouse was constructed between 1926 and 1931 in the Shingle style. The two-story structure, now a single family residence, is seven bays wide and three bays deep. The H-shaped lodge has a hipped and cross-gabled roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter. The roof is clad with slate shingles. The wood-shingled walls are supported on a log foundation with brick infill at the building line. The six-over-six double-hung, wood sash windows vary in shape and size, and the window surrounds have a projecting cornice and sill. The Pocahontas Fowling Club, incorporated in 1903, was comprised of a group of Norfolk sportsmen who began purchasing property along Back Bay near the Virginia/North Carolina border. They originally constructed a small one-story clubhouse which was destroyed in the 1920s and then replaced it with the current structure. The Club hosted several dignitaries including President William Howard Taft, Senator A. Willis Robertson and several military leaders.
RICHARD MURRAY HOUSE
3300 Harlie Court
Circa 1780
Georgian

Source:
City of Virginia Beach, Department of Museums and Historic Resources. City of Virginia Beach Historical Register. Property #56.

This Dutch Colonial style home overlooking Kings Creek, has a gambrel roof and Flemish bond brick. The home stands two stories high and has a full basement. The beams are all hand hewn. The original paneling, heart pine floors, staircase and fireplaces have all been retained. There is a modern one-story addition off of the rear of the home. The site also contains the original smokehouse/root cellar. Richard Murray, part of the Murray family who settled along this tributary of the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River, constructed this home between 1777 and 1786, as verified by a brick with the builder's initials and the date "1786" located in the wall. Another family member, Thomas, lived in a home on the other side of this tributary (see page 50). Murray descendants were prominent residents of the western edge of Princess Anne County for several generations. The Murray families raised flax as a cash crop and prepared the flax fiber for rope making. The descendants of Richard Murray lived in this home until 1908 when the Shumadine family purchased it. The Shumadine family started the Shumadine Diary on the original twelve acres and remained there until 1984 when the current owners purchased the home for renovation. The home is on the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
RICHARD KELLAM HOUSE

2384 Princess Anne Road
Circa 1700s

Source:


The earliest part of this house was reportedly built in the 1700s and added to in the 1800s and early 1900s. It was acquired by Princess Anne County Clerk of the Court Abel Kellam in 1895 and is still occupied by his descendants. The paneling in the dining room and the living rooms, said to be copied from the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, is of particular interest. It is located in a Historical and Cultural Overlay Zoning District.
The Roland Courts Theater was built ca. 1925 at the same time the New Casino, later called the Peppermint Beach Club, was being built. Both structures reflected the Mission Revival Style. The Roland Courts Theater, the sole remaining section of what were three connected buildings, has a curved parapet, suggesting its recreational function as a theatre. (The Peppermint Beach Club also had a curved parapet.) The Roland Theater was used to stage amateur productions as well as to show movies. The building was later converted to apartments. The property is within the 17th Street Commercial Corridor and is currently unoccupied and a prime candidate for demolition.

Sources:


SHIRLEY HALL

1109 S. Bay Shore Drive
Circa 1940
Georgian Revival

This Georgian Revival residence was designed in 1940 by William Graves Perry of the Boston firm of Perry, Shaw and Hepburn, the premier architects for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. The house has massive twin chimneys and is laid in the Flemish bond brick pattern with random glazed headers and cypress floors from an 1840s Louisiana plantation. The staircase was removed from a farmhouse dating to 1826 in old Princess Anne County and installed in the house. The residence was originally built for James and Margot Devereaux of Norfolk. The house was named "Shirley Hall" after the present owner’s wife. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Sources:
Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Virginia Landmarks Register. File #134-5003.
The Virginia Beach Beacon. Supplement to The Virginian-Pilot/Ledger Star (Norfolk, Va.), January 10, 1999.
Sajo Manor was part of a grand estate assembled in the late 1930s and named after its original owner, Sam Jones. Up until the 1980s the manor house and its various outbuildings presided over a 300-acre farm located in the Bayside Borough. It is an extremely large and elegant mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival house with a brick exterior and a classical facade. The interior is noted for its exquisite hand-carved interior woodwork by Italian furniture makers.
THOMAS WOODHOUSE HOUSE

3067 West Neck Road
Circa 1810
Federal

Source:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Virginia Landmarks Register. File #134-0058.

Also known as the Fountain House or Simmons House, this dwelling is believed built by Captain Thomas Woodhouse in 1810. He died in 1813 and is buried on the property. The dwelling is a two-story wood frame building clad in weatherboard. The gabled ends are marked by exterior Flemish bond brick chimneys. The north parlor mantels feature a Classical surround with a heavy cornice. Several outbuildings still exist that contribute to the historic context of this property. Examples of contributing buildings include a smokehouse and the original kitchen that was constructed circa 1904 as a separate building with a five-course American bond brick chimney. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
TALLWOOD

1616 Tallwood Manor Court
Circa late 1700s
Dutch Colonial

Tallwood, built ca. 1740, is a significant example of the type of house found in Virginia Beach from the late eighteenth-century through the early nineteenth century. Its one-and-one-half-story elevation, gambrel roof, and central-passage plan resemble the Francis Land House, although Tallwood features an asymmetrical four-bay arrangement. Such houses were generally associated with the eighteenth-century planter elite who began to build permanent dwellings of this type by the end of the Colonial period. Tallwood is a rare survival of this house type in the northern part of Virginia Beach.

Source:
THOMAS MURRAY HOUSE

3425 South Crestline Drive
Circa 1791
Dutch Colonial

This Dutch Colonial style house has five bays, a gambrel roof, Flemish bond brick pattern, and double inside brick chimneys. At each end of the house the chimney is flush with the exterior wall. Five of the original fireplaces, four identically designed mantles, and original heart pine floors remain. The house was built in 1791 by Isaac Murray, Thomas’ father. David Murray settled on the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River about 1650 and Murray descendants were prominent residents of the western edge of Princess Anne County for several generations. The Murray families raised flax as a cash crop and prepared the flax fiber for rope making. The Thomas Murray house is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.

Sources:
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of the City of Virginia Beach. Virginia Beach, Va.: The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Section 4: 10.

Mansfield, Stephen S. Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach, a Pictorial History. Norfolk, Va.: Donning, 1989, 42, 44.
Major Thomas Walke III’s will of 1759 bequeathed to his son, Thomas, a plantation house described as being under construction. This brick house is presumed to be that plantation house. The house is a three-story Georgian style with three bays and is laid in the Flemish bond brick pattern. It features inside double chimneys, a central passageway, and a corner staircase similar to Pleasant Hall (ca. 1769). The style of the paneling, benefit of molding, seems to be a regional type. The original floor plan survives. Known for many years as Brick House Farm, the property has been called by its present name since 1939, derived from Wolfsnare Creek which ran nearby. The brick was painted white and a kitchen wing was added in the early twentieth century and remains intact. The house is owned by the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society. It is located in a Historic and Cultural Overlay Zoning District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
WEBLIN HOUSE

5588 Moore's Pond Road
Circa early 1700s
Post-Medieval

Sources:
Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The Virginia Landmarks Register. File #134-0035.
Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites by Age and Location: as of July 1, 1989, prepared by the Office of Research and Strategic Analysis of the City of Virginia Beach. Virginia Beach, Va.: The City of Virginia Beach, 1990, Section 4-15.

With its hall-parlor plan and massive end chimney, the Weblin house is representative of the "Virginia style," a vernacular house type evolved from the post-medieval farmhouses of the western and upland regions of England and employed by Virginia settlers from those areas. The house was once thought to have been built ca. 1670 for John Weblin, Jr., who inherited the property from his father ca.1670. Recent studies of similarly styled houses in Virginia Beach date them to the early 1700s. The steep gable roof was changed to a gambrel roof in the early nineteenth century. The interior has undergone modifications, but the original floor plan survives. It remains today as one of the oldest houses in Virginia Beach. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the City of Virginia Beach Historical Register.
It is uncertain if the house was built by Francis Whitehurst or his son Daniel. The year 1793 is etched on a brick in the chimney. The original house was smaller with one room below and a stairway that rose to two small rooms above. The outside walls were clapboard with a gambrel roof in front and sloping roof in the back as in a saltbox. The Whitehurst family lived in the house until the 1930s and made considerable changes. The house was enlarged and the clapboard siding was replaced with brick, laid in the Flemish bond pattern. The large outside chimneys on each end of the house are original and inside the house, the mantels are believed to be original as well. This property is situated within a Historic and Cultural Zoning Overlay District and is owned by the City of Virginia Beach.
Three inventories of historical structures in Virginia Beach were conducted in 1990, 1992 and 1993. Additionally, a historical management resource plan which addressed the inventories was compiled in 1994. These documents are not for general distribution but may be viewed at the office of the Historic Resources Division of the Virginia Beach Department of Museums and Historic Resources located at the Francis Land House.

City of Virginia Beach Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites, Office of Research and Strategic Analysis (City of Virginia Beach, 1990).
Survey of the City of Virginia Beach Phase II, Tracerlies (City of Virginia Beach, 1993).
Historic Resources Management Plan, PMA Architects and Planners (City of Virginia Beach, 1994).

City of Virginia Beach Official Records

Official records referred to herein may also be viewed at the office of the Historic Resources Division of the Virginia Beach Department of Museums and Historic Resources located at the Francis Land House.

Historical Registers

Two historical listings are cited herein as sources. One is maintained by the City of Virginia Beach Department of Museums and Historic Resources and the other is maintained by the State of Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Information from both may be accessed from the Internet.

The Virginia Landmarks Register, Virginia Department of Historic Resources: Richmond, Virginia.
City of Virginia Beach Historical Register, Department of Museums and Historic Resources: Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Books

Books on Virginia Beach History are not always in long supply. You can find these three in the Virginia Beach Library and most of the time in the gift shops of Virginia Beach’s historic house museums.

Kellam, Sadie Scott and V. Hope Kellam, Old Houses of Princess Anne County (Westminster, Maryland: Heritage Books, 2005).

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