



Winchester National Register Historic District PROPOSED EXPANSION AREA

Source: 2015 nomination for an expanded district

The Winchester Historic District Expansion Area is composed of two historic areas adjacent to the Winchester Historic District in Winchester, Virginia. The two areas together cover approximately 125 acres and include 497 resources of which 395 are classified as contributing (79 percent) and 102 noncontributing (21 percent). The western portion of the expansion area has two basic components: the residential neighborhood along Stewart Street and adjacent blocks, and the Amherst Street corridor which is more mixed in character with large eighteenth and nineteenth century houses and later commercial and transportation-related buildings. The southern portion of the expansion area along Gerrard and Pall Mall streets is also mixed with residential and commercial buildings. Construction is typically small-scale—primarily one and two-story houses—with the exception of the eight-story Winchester Memorial Hospital (a non-contributing resource). Styles run the gamut from Georgian (Glen Burnie, a 1790s house that is the oldest identified resource in the area) through Queen Anne and early twentieth century eclectic styles like Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival, to modernism beginning around 1950. Frame, stone, and brick are the most common building materials and techniques. Secondary resources are common; many houses from the first half of the twentieth century are accompanied by garages.

Description

The Winchester Historic District Expansion Area is composed of two historic areas adjacent to the Winchester Historic District. The original Winchester Historic District, defined in a 1979 nomination and minimally enlarged on two occasions, covers an approximately forty-five-block area at the historic heart of the City of Winchester. The 1979 district included the original town plat of 1744 and areas associated with the additions of 1752, 1758, and 1759. The expansion area also includes lots from the 1758 and 1759 additions as well as areas to the west of Stewart Street which were in farm use until ca. 1890 and lots along Morgan Street and West Piccadilly Street which were created from out-lots platted in 1752.

The two areas that compose the expansion area are discontinuous, separated by the 700 and 800 blocks of South Washington Street which are part of the existing district. The south expansion area is composed of lots laid out in the Wood Addition of 1758 and the Fairfax Addition of 1759 between Germain and Gerrard streets, plus a small area on the east side of South Kent Street which was developed beginning by 1874. This south area is similar in character to adjacent areas of the existing district with dense residential development that was underway by 1874, though the development is generally later and is modified by commercial development dating largely to the second half of the twentieth century and focused on the

Loudoun/Gerrard intersection where major thoroughfares to the south of the area funnel into the historic core area.

The west expansion area is larger and more varied in character. Stewart Street, laid out in 1758 but only lightly developed until the early twentieth century, forms one stem of the roughly L-shaped area; it and adjacent lots on cross streets like Cecil, Clifford, Cork, and Leicester streets hug the southwest edge of the existing district. These cross streets rise up the high ground on the west side of Winchester known historically as Bower's or Academy Hill. The other stem of the L projects westward from the middle of the existing district along Amherst Street to the Glen Burnie tract about a third of a mile west of the existing district boundary. Amherst Street was Winchester's principal link to the communities and counties to the west and in the nineteenth century was designated the Northwestern Turnpike. The street parallels Town Run, an important early water source for the town which issues from Town Spring and sources on the Glen Burnie tract. During the nineteenth century the elevated, hilly north side of the street saw the construction of large suburban residences such as Hawthorne, the Hexagon House, and Selma. West Boscawen Street (formerly Water Street) branches off of Amherst Street to form a triangular area at the edge of the existing district that was the location of a mill in the mid-nineteenth century and, in 1889, was chosen as the terminus of the Cumberland Valley Railroad line connecting Winchester to Martinsburg, West Virginia. Train stations and warehouses were constructed in and around the triangle, giving it a more utilitarian feel than other parts of the expansion area. Amherst Street, as the in-town segment of US Route 50, also attracted commercial development in the early and mid-twentieth century.

As the expansion area's varied origins would suggest, its buildings are varied in date, materials, and function. The Georgian style house Glen Burnie at the expansion area's western tip, which dates to the 1790s, is the area's oldest identified resource. Large suburban villas were constructed between it and town in the nineteenth century with more modest but still large frame houses in the Queen Anne and other Victorian styles constructed on the 300 block of Amherst in the decades around 1900. Scattered residential development also occurred during the nineteenth century in the Gerrard/Pall Mall area at the south end of the expansion area. Most residential development in the expansion area occurred along Stewart Street and adjacent cross streets beginning around 1920 and continuing to around 1950. Whole blocks of frame, brick, and stuccoed houses in the styles popular during the era—the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles—were constructed, many accompanied by rear garages, the most common secondary resource type in the expansion area. Residential construction was usually in the form of single-family dwellings although a few duplexes and (in the Gerrard/Pall Mall area) apartment blocks were erected. The expansion area was largely built out by mid-century and subsequent development was more in the nature of infill on remaining lots or replacement of earlier buildings. Later construction consisted of such resources as Ranch houses and cinder block commercial buildings of typically car-related function such as diners and repair garages. Sporadic construction continues to the present; witness the construction of the Georgian Revival medical office building at 120 South Stewart in 2014.

The expansion area's largest single building, Winchester Memorial Hospital, is a 1964 and later building that replaces a hospital campus dating to the first half of the twentieth century. The hospital functioned as a development magnet in the first half of the twentieth century but staffing needs resulted in parking pressures that have led to the creation of surrounding parking lots, the most significant negative factor in the historic character of the expansion area, although Sanborn maps suggest several of these hospital-related lots may already have been in existence by the end of the period of significance. The Gerrard/Pall Mall area has also seen erosion from the demolition of resources to clear space for parking and non-contributing

commercial development. Despite these intrusions, the expansion area retains good overall integrity in both its historic building stock and the character of its streets and blocks. Streets are typically tree-lined, as they have been since at least the 1930s as shown in historic photographs. Houses are typically surrounded by yards with gardens and shade and ornamental trees, although house lots in the Gerrard/Pall Mall area are often sparsely landscaped in part owing to the density of development in the area. Limestone retaining walls are common along sidewalks and occasionally along lot lines. Brick and concrete are less often used for walls. Wrought iron fencing is present with or without brick or limestone walls along some residential front yards.

Overall, the expansion area retains the historic character it had attained by the end of the period of significance in 1964. Little demolition has occurred in the Amherst/Stewart area since 1964, except potentially in the blocks surrounding the Winchester Memorial Hospital which are now occupied by parking lots. These lots were not present ca. 1937, as shown in an aerial photography from that period, although some or all of the lots may have been created by the end of the historic period. Several historic houses on Amherst Street have had large modern rear additions that, although they dwarf the size of the houses to their front, have left the historic fabric relatively unchanged on the exterior. The houses—320, 324, and 812 Amherst Street—remain, in the judgment of the SHPO, contributing resources. The additions to 320 and 324 Amherst are two-story apartment blocks of vinyl-sided frame construction. The addition to 812 Amherst is a three-story office block of brick-veneered block construction. The Gerrard/Pall Mall area has seen more extensive modern development although it too retains the basic character it had achieved by the end of the period of significance.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the expansion area were determined as the result of a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) entitled “Winchester Historic District (Boundary Expansion/Amendment 2012)” reviewed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 2013. About the resources contained in the expansion area, the PIF states: “The buildings/areas were initially left out of the historic district because they were not surveyed, and some had not yet met the fifty-year requirement; both of these requirements have been fulfilled.” The PIF goes on to state: “These buildings help complete the architectural story and historic context of the City of Winchester between the late eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, and should be included in the historic district.” Reexamination of the boundaries in 2015 suggested minor additions, subtractions, and refinements. The additions added such resources as 332 Amherst and 802 S. Kent which were left out of the 2012 survey and do not belong to adjacent areas that might qualify as future district expansions or standalone districts. The subtractions removed peripheral resources that do not have a strong historical connection to the district, that are likely soon to be demolished, or that in aggregate include large non-contributing resources. The principal refinement adjusted the western tip of the expansion area where the draft boundaries included the historic core of the Glen Burnie tract. The boundaries in this area were brought into closer alignment with those described in the 1979 individual nomination for the property. The boundaries along Amherst Street include areas within the locally designated Historic Winchester District.