



preservationpiedmont

Fall 2020 Members Newsletter

Dear members,

Preservation Piedmont maintains an active voice in local public processes related to preservation. This year, Preservation Piedmont provided comments to the Charlottesville Planning Commission and City Council on the proposed Form Based Code and its impacts on historic properties. We participated in the Comprehensive Plan update by urging Cville Plans Together Steering Committee members to make preservation of older housing stock a central component of an affordable housing strategy.

We strive to recount the true and often painful stories of our history, by highlighting the contributions of the people who helped build, cultivate, and nurture this nation from its very beginning. In this way, we hope to build a more equitable future. **We supported Albemarle County's removal of the "At Ready" statue** and we continue to support removal of Confederate monuments in our public spaces because these objects represent a false narrative of history and contribute to the continued oppression of Black people.



Image credit: Zach Wajsgas/Charlottesville Tomorrow

We supported an honorary street name designation to honor the life and legacy of **Henry Martin**, a man born in slavery who worked for 60 years for the University of Virginia and fought to maintain dignity through oppression in post-emancipation and later Jim Crow Virginia. The status of this application is still under review with the City of Charlottesville.



Image credit: University of Virginia Library

We wrote to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources expressing support for listing the Jackson P. Burley High School on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Now a high school, Jackson P. Burley Middle School, named for a local African American educator and community leader, was an effort by Charlottesville and Albemarle County to provide a “separate but equal” educational facility for Black students during segregation. For sixteen years (1951-1967), Burley was the the only high school in the immediate Charlottesville/Albemarle area serving Black students. In those years of segregation, the Burley Mighty Bears won a reputation, particularly in football, as one the best teams – if not the best –

in the state. The story of the 1956 team who were undefeated and unscored upon, is recounted in a documentary, “Color Line of Scrimmage” by Lorenzo Dickerson.

Earlier in September, the state’s Department of Historic Resources has named Jackson P. Burley Middle School in Charlottesville and River View Farm in Albemarle County as historic landmarks. In 2019, Preservation Piedmont recommended to the County that they consider pursuing National Register designation for the River View property (also called the Carr-Greer House) and encouraged sensitive preservation in keeping with historic preservation standards.



Jackson P. Burley Middle School

It is an unfortunate truth that the preservation movement has historically failed to protect Black historic areas. As of 2019, only 2% of the 95,000 entries on the National Register of Historic Places focused on the experiences of African Americans. Preservationists have an opportunity and an obligation to balance the collective memory of history by advocating for protection of sites and structures associated with African Americans and other people of color.

The work that we do makes a difference.

Sincerely,
Liz Russell, President

2021 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In light of the COVID crisis, our Board has decided to waive membership dues in 2021. We hope to build our membership in efforts to reach new audiences and gain new perspectives.

If you are currently a member, your membership will be automatically renewed at no cost. We will also be accepting new memberships in 2021 at no cost. We encourage you to share information about our organization with your friends who might be interested in our work. We welcome your suggestions for new members.

Should you choose to donate as usual, your contributions would help fund our Community Preservation Grant Program and allow us to host – virtual for now – educational events and pop-up-tours to get behind-the-scenes peeks at historic properties. And while we have been limited in our membership engagement this year, we continue to advocate for historic preservation as well as support community-focused partners.

How to Keep What We Already Have:

Affordable Housing in Charlottesville and Historic Preservation

The following letter, written by board member Lucy Midelfort, was sent to the Cville Plans Together Steering Committee

Dear Committee Members,

Preservation Piedmont continues to follow the Cville Plans Together comprehensive planning process and recognizes that Charlottesville is in a housing affordability crisis. Achieving equity and greatly increasing the availability of affordable housing are both critical goals that Preservation Piedmont fully supports, and they deserve great attention, significant action, and care.

In order to mitigate Charlottesville's affordable housing crisis multiple responses and tactics will be necessary. It is entirely possible and achievable to significantly increase the availability of affordable housing while preserving historic communities and maximizing the use of older housing. In fact, using older housing stock should be a central component of an affordable housing strategy.

Preservation Piedmont urges members of the Steering Committee to consider the following with regard to Charlottesville's older housing stock:

- Historically Black neighborhoods including but not limited to Fifeville, Rose Hill, Starr Hill, and 10th & Page contain long-standing housing stock used by long-standing residents. These neighborhoods will be at great risk for speculative development, demolitions, and community displacement if zoning or other land use changes are made without safeguards, including strong disincentives for demolition.

- With Charlottesville's strong housing market and the area's consistent growth, we caution against the assumption that greater density on its own will create greater affordability:

- Historic buildings are adaptable and older houses can support a variety of needs. Greater density can be achieved by sensitively rehabilitating buildings to change from single family to multi-unit houses.

- Sensitive infill development is an appropriate way to increase density but if left to the market, these new units are

unlikely to be affordable.

- Adding capacity for Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADU) is another way to increase density, but changes to policy must be carefully crafted. Short-term rentals should continue to be regulated. Removing the owner occupancy requirement for ADUs would put low-income communities at risk for displacement through speculative development and potential tear-downs that are not likely to generate more affordable housing without other safeguards.

- Older housing stock tends to be more affordable than new:

- Older houses (pre-1960) tend to be considerably smaller than newly constructed houses, and hence more affordable.

- A recent national study found that Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing units are 25-40% more costly to build per unit than rehab of existing units.¹

- 90% of pre-1950 housing is habitable and does not require massive investment for any needed renovations, meaning older housing is more affordable than new/luxury housing.² Relatively modest investments in weather-proofing an older home can provide a major impact on affordability and sustainability.

- Older housing is already providing housing to lower-income families in Charlottesville, many of whom do not receive any form of housing assistance. Care should be taken to protect that housing and keep families in their homes. A data-driven survey of existing housing stock and the role it already plays in providing affordable housing could help focus planning efforts. City assistance programs to encourage rehabilitation are a great way to keep low-income families from being displaced.

- Integrity of material matters. Older buildings are made of higher-quality materials than new and these materials, often created locally, tell a story about our community. Safeguarding older structures honors the stories and lives of the unnamed people whose labor created them. Place-making matters.

In putting together a comprehensive city plan, the goals of equity and affordable housing are inextricably linked to other goals for a healthy, equitable community: providing strong education for all, care for our environment, transportation, public health and safety, and jobs that provide a living wage. All these goals rely on good design: good design of the comprehensive plan, and good design in our city. One cannot build old housing, so an essential strategy has to be, “how do we keep what we already have?”

Rassawek Update

We wrote to the Army Corps of Engineers requesting alternate sites be considered for a water pumping station that threatens to destroy the village site of Rassawek, the site of ancestral remains important to the Monacan Nation for 1,000 years. In the meantime, the **National Trust has placed Rassawek on it's 11 Most Endangered Places List.**

¹ Comparing the Costs of New Construction and Acquisition-Rehab In Affordable Multifamily Rental Housing: Applying a New Methodology for Estimating Lifecycle Costs.

² Opportunity at Risk: San Antonio's Older Affordable Housing

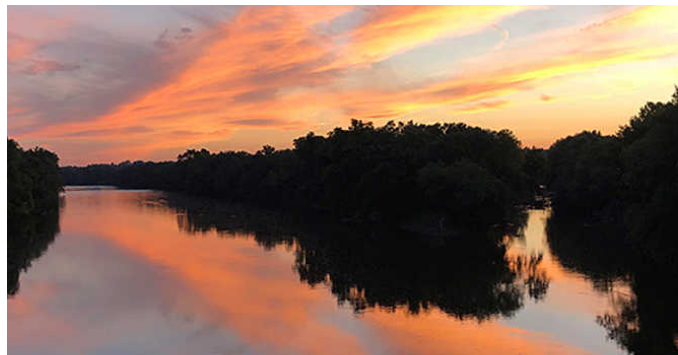


Image credit: Greg Werkheiser

GRANTS

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION GRANTS

This spring, our Board voted to donate funds normally allocated to in-person events to three community-focused organizations dedicated to keeping those in our neighborhoods and rural areas housed, healthy, and nourished.

A total of \$2,000 was distributed to the following non-profits -- selected due to their local impact, mission, and need:

The Haven works to end homelessness and functions as the front door to the homeless system of care serving vulnerable populations. The Haven is housed within the re-purposed historic First Christian Church in Charlottesville. Read more about recent programmatic changes at The Haven, in response to increased demand and need, in the **Daily Progress article here.** Donation amount: \$1,000.

B.F. Yancey Community Food Pantry provides food to neighbors in one of our rural communities. This organization has seen an increase in the households needing food since the COVID-19 outbreak. Read more about the organization and their impact in the **Daily Progress article here.** The Food Pantry operates out of the former B.F. Yancey Elementary

School, which is now a community center serving Southern Albemarle, and a former Preservation Piedmont grant recipient. Donation amount: \$500.

Cultivate Charlottesville engages youth and community in building an equitable, sustainable food system through garden-based experiential learning, growing and sharing healthy food, amplifying community leaders, and advocating for food justice. **Read more here** about how - in light of COVID-19 - this group is coordinating resources and partners to help ensure people who need food and resources most can continue to access them. Donation amount: \$500.

NOW ACCEPTING 2021 APPLICATIONS

Preservation Piedmont is currently accepting applications for its Fall 2020 Community Preservation Grants Program! We welcome proposals from non-profit organizations, individuals, and self-organized collaborators that embrace and promote public awareness and protection of historic resources. **Learn more and apply online.**

LETTER FROM A GRANT RECIPIENT

This spring, we awarded Jackson P. Burley Varsity Club a grant for the creation of a book titled ‘Unforgettable Jackson P. Burley High School,’ discussing the important and powerful history of Burley High School. Lucille Smith, who is spearheading the project, writes an overview for Preservation Piedmont Members:

The Jackson P. Burley Varsity Club (JPBVC) was very pleased to receive a \$1,000 grant from Preservation Piedmont. The Club is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization, which exists to improve the awareness, history and maintain the legacy of Burley High School. The grant will assist JPBVC volunteer, Lucille Smith to complete a project, which will document and publish a book about the history of the school, which was located in the City of Charlottesville. In 1949, with the forward thinking of the combined School Boards of the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Jackson P. Burley High School was built. It met the educational needs of students from the 3 area African American High Schools in Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

The high schools united as one in 1951, replacing the overcrowded, small, inadequate facilities, labeled, “separate but equal.” The new school provided never before offered opportunities, educationally, and through cultural events and athletics. The book will also provide a historic overview of the 3 segregated high schools. It will include an architectural description, pictorial overview and reflections from students, administrators, faculty, and staff from 1951 - 1967.

It is of utmost importance to document the school’s history, as there is very little on file, with the exception of a few articles on the internet, some school board minutes, and a few newspaper articles detailing the school’s history. The first graduating class was 68 years ago, and many of the students and staff are no longer with us, but the memories still linger. The time is now to begin preservation of as much information as possible to keep the history alive in honor of those who contributed to the success of the students.

COVID-19 has slowed the research process, but I continue to work interviewing and writing Reflections from students, administrators, faculty and staff. Success will be the publication of a book!



Image credit: Lucille Smith

VIRTUAL PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

11/11 - 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Piedmont Area Preservation Alliance (PAPA) | While we are disappointed to cancel our in-person events due to the pandemic, we are excited to announce we will be hosting our first virtual event this Fall. Join us for the **Virtual Fall PAPA Meeting**, which will be a webinar format featuring updates from our partners. Keep an eye out for details in your email!

The Piedmont Area Preservation Alliance (PAPA) is a regional umbrella organization formed in 2007 to encourage preservation organizations to build a communication network. Its stated mission is to sustain the cultural and ecological resources of Central Virginia. PAPA facilitates sharing of organizational news primarily at an annual gathering. The social and networking event is hosted by one of the member organizations, and is usually held at a historic building. Each organization is asked to have a representative make a short presentation about their organization’s recent activities.

We look forward to when we can gather in person again, but we are excited to move forward within this virtual format. The organization reports will shine a light on how PAPA organizations have continued to meet their missions despite challenges created by the COVID-19 Pandemic. We hope to see you all there!

AVAILABLE NOW FOR STREAMING

Preservation Virginia | **Visions of Race in Early Republic Richmond** (and click the link for other virtual resources on the APVA website)

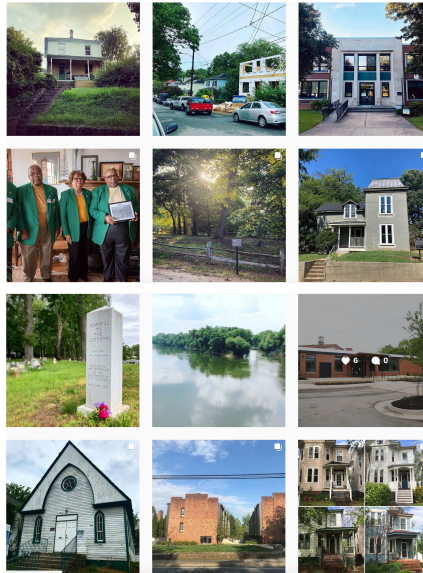
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SOCIAL MEDIA



This Spring our board took the opportunity to stay more connected with our membership virtually by building our Facebook page and creating an Instagram account. Some of our favorite photos and posts are highlighted here. Don't forget to follow us on Instagram and Facebook @preservationpiedmont to stay connected via social media!

MID-CENTURY PIEDMONT

Calling all lovers of mid-century modern architecture! We are planning to compile a database of known mid-century buildings (commercial and residential) in the Piedmont region. Stay tuned as we build our list! And please reach out to us if you are interested in helping us put this together.

Send us an email with any buildings you think we should include in the database: preservationpiedmont@gmail.com.

Top: Hartman Memorials; Bottom: Zion Union Baptist Church | Images credit: Richard Guy Wilson



Join or Renew

By becoming a member of Preservation Piedmont, your support will enable us to continue educating the public, monitoring local governments, and undertaking projects that encourage responsible actions toward our historic resources. You will be updated on regional preservation issues and accomplishments through our newsletter, and offered special opportunities throughout the year to visit and tour historic sites.

For 2021, we are offering membership for free. Please contact us (preservationpiedmont@gmail.com) to find out how to join or invite new members.