

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic DistrictOther names/site number: VDHR Architectural Inventory Number: 099-5091Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 529 Waller Mill Road, Airport Road, Rochambeau DriveCity or town: Williamsburg State: VA County: YorkNot For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>		<u>2/9/2023</u> Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school/schoolhouse

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/secondary structure

WORK IN PROGRESS

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Carpenter Gothic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: METAL: Aluminum; CONCRETE; WOOD:;
SYNTHETICS: Composite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District consists of five discontiguous elements in a 1.5-mile-square area of northwest York County that bear testament to the resiliency of an African American congregation that has endured since the late nineteenth century. The first element is

(1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900. The site contains archaeological remains of the initial church building, constructed ca. 1900, soon after the church trustees purchased a half-acre parcel. This church provided a more convenient place of worship for local residents who were members of First Baptist Church, located in Williamsburg about two miles to the south. The second element is **(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901**, located on approximately 1.2 acres adjacent to the church parcel, purchased by the church trustees in 1901. The church and cemetery served the nearby abandoned community of Magruder, a mile to the north. The third element is **(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912.** The Oak Grove Baptist Church congregation provided support and led the effort to establish this school for African American students (first through eighth grades) in the Bruton District of York County. Located about one and a half miles north of the church, the two-story, four-room school served local students until a lightning strike

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started a fire that destroyed the building in 1940. From September 1942 to June 1943, the establishment of the Naval Construction Training Center (Camp Peary) displaced hundreds of families within a 10,730-acre area of northwest York County and parts of adjacent James City County.¹ With the abrupt condemnation of this area, the church trustees were compelled to sell the original church and cemetery properties to the federal government. The fourth element is (4) **Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947**; the church trustees purchased the parcel in 1943 and constructed the church building ca. 1946-1947, as suggested by the dates of deeds of trust for loans that used the parcel as collateral. This second church was about a mile west of the original church. The building incorporated fabric from the original church, such as windows, doors, a pressed tin ceiling, and probably a bell and its mounting. The fifth element of this district is (5) **Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945**. This 0.06-acre cemetery is 800 feet east of the rear of the church parcel and surrounded by a separately owned tract of more than six acres.² Although the congregation had access to the cemetery at Rochambeau Drive, it was inconvenient because of the federal government's periodic insistence on obtaining permission from the Camp Peary commander. Therefore, the church trustees purchased a second cemetery parcel in 1945 to fulfill a need during the period of difficult access to the main cemetery. Currently, the congregation owns both cemeteries and Oak Grove Baptist Church at 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091). After construction of Interstate 64 in the 1960s, the portion of Camp Peary that included Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]) and Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001) was separated from the rest of the installation and no longer practical for government use. In 1975, the federal government conveyed 214 acres of this land west of Interstate 64 to The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In 2003, the Foundation conveyed the cemetery to Oak Grove Baptist Church through a deed of gift. The site of the first church, however, remains within the large tract (currently recorded as 218 acres) owned by the Foundation. The Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]) is within Waller Mill Park, which the City of Williamsburg owns and operates. The properties within the district are all within formerly rural areas of York County that now compose the outskirts of the City of Williamsburg.

Narrative Description

Setting

The discontiguous Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic district consists of five elements in a 1.5-mile-square area of northwest York County. The suburban/rural setting lies between the Route 60 commercial/residential corridor extending from the west side of downtown Williamsburg and Interstate 64, which generally follows the drainage divide along high ground between the James and York Rivers. In this portion of the James-York Peninsula, the interstate runs along landforms

¹ Travis Terrell Harris, "Lost Tribe of Magruder: The Untold Story of the Navy's Dispossession of a Black Community" (Ph.D. dissertation, Williamsburg, Virginia, William & Mary, American Studies, 2019), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2314083593?pq-origsite=primo>, p. 38.

² Although the church owns the cemetery, currently York County's tax parcel mapping incorrectly depicts the church-owned cemetery property about 200 feet north of the actual cemetery location.

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that drain into the York River. All five elements of the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District occupy lobes and ridges up to 70 feet above sea level that overlook the upper reaches of Queen's Creek and minor tributaries. During the colonial period, small vessels could navigate the lower part of the creek to Capitol Landing, a small port that served Williamsburg. Since 1943, the upper reaches of the creek have formed a reservoir northwest of a dam located near the northern terminus of Waller Mill Road. The federal government built the dam to supply water to Camp Peary, but the City of Williamsburg purchased the 1.5-billion gallon reservoir of drinking water in 1944. In addition, the City purchased 2,400 acres of the watershed for protection of the water supply and for recreational use as Waller Mill Park.³ The presence of the park and a 218-acre forested tract owned by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has protected the vicinity of the district from the rapid residential and commercial development that is otherwise prevalent on this north side of Williamsburg.

The large tract currently owned by The Foundation was part of Camp Peary from its establishment in 1942-1943 until conveyance of the tract in a land swap in 1975. Since the construction of Interstate 64 in the 1960s, use of this tract by the federal government had been impractical because of its separation from the main portion of the installation. Northeast of the district, across the interstate, Camp Peary occupies more than 10,000 acres that the federal government purchased in 1942-1943. From the end of the Civil War until the establishment of Camp Peary, this northwest portion of York County had consisted of small farms and a village of a few hundred residents, officially named as the postal village of Magruder in the early twentieth century (Figure 1). After emancipation, many African American families had purchased parcels subdivided from the larger plantation tracts that historically occupied the area. An early twentieth-century topographic map of the area shows a pattern of secondary roads and paths connecting farms located on the landforms overlooking the branches of Queens Creek, tributaries of the creek, and tributaries of the York River.

Inventory

The following resources are associated with the discontiguous Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District:

- (1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900, ***contributing site***
- (2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901, ***contributing site***
- (3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912, ***contributing site***
- (4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947, ***contributing building***

³ Jackson Tuttle III, "History of City Government - From Oligarchy to Democracy: Governing Virginia's First City," City of Williamsburg, 1995, <https://www.williamsburgva.gov/490/History-of-City-Government>.

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o *Secondary resource: Shed, 2015, non-contributing building*

(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945,
contributing site

(1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900, contributing site

This archaeological resource comprises the remains of the original Oak Grove Baptist Church, built ca. 1900 and dismantled ca. 1943. As defined through surface observation, the site area encompasses an area about 100 feet in diameter (0.11 acre). It is in an area of deciduous woods about 270 feet west of Rochambeau Drive, which parallels the off-ramp of eastbound Interstate 64 onto State Route 143. It falls within a 218-acre tract owned by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and lies only 125 feet to the southwest of the original cemetery of Oak Grove Baptist Church (established in 1901), a 1.2-acre parcel currently owned by the church.

The original church site was identified based on cartographic research supplemented with archaeological reconnaissance. Using LiDAR Hillshade imagery and overlays of historic aerial photography, real estate parcel maps, highway construction plans, topographic maps, and modern aerial imagery, the likely position of the church site was established with reference to extant landmarks. Pedestrian survey of the area resulted in the discovery of fragments of metal roofing, a fragment of finished lumber, a metal furniture frame, and a possible electrical line-type switch. These items were identified within an area characterized by low mounds of soil and dense greenbrier vines. The distribution of disturbed soils and architectural material measures approximately 98 feet in diameter.

Documentary evidence suggests further details about the church building. Highway plans for the construction of Route 168 in the 1930s depict the footprint of the church building. It appears as a rectangle oriented roughly east-northeast; one of the plans has the additional detail of a small projection, likely an entrance tower, on the eastern end. This may have been a small bell tower. Tradition holds that the bell (with a possible 1926 date mark) in the present church came from this earlier church. A decorative bead carved on the wooden skid of the bell support structure indicates that formerly the whole assembly would have been visible in an open tower at the original church.

Site 44YO0311 represents the archaeological remains of an early twentieth-century African American Baptist church—the first building of Oak Grove Baptist Church (standing from ca. 1900 to ca. 1943). Although the survey of the site did not involve subsurface excavation, the lack of development in the vicinity since the dismantling of the church suggests that the site has retained stratigraphic integrity and research potential. Therefore, the site has the potential to provide important information regarding religious and social themes associated with the African American community during the Reconstruction Era through World War I to World War II periods (1866–1945) in the greater Williamsburg area/Southern Coastal Plain of Virginia. Site 44YO0311 is individually potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D and contributes to the NRHP eligibility of the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District (099-5091).

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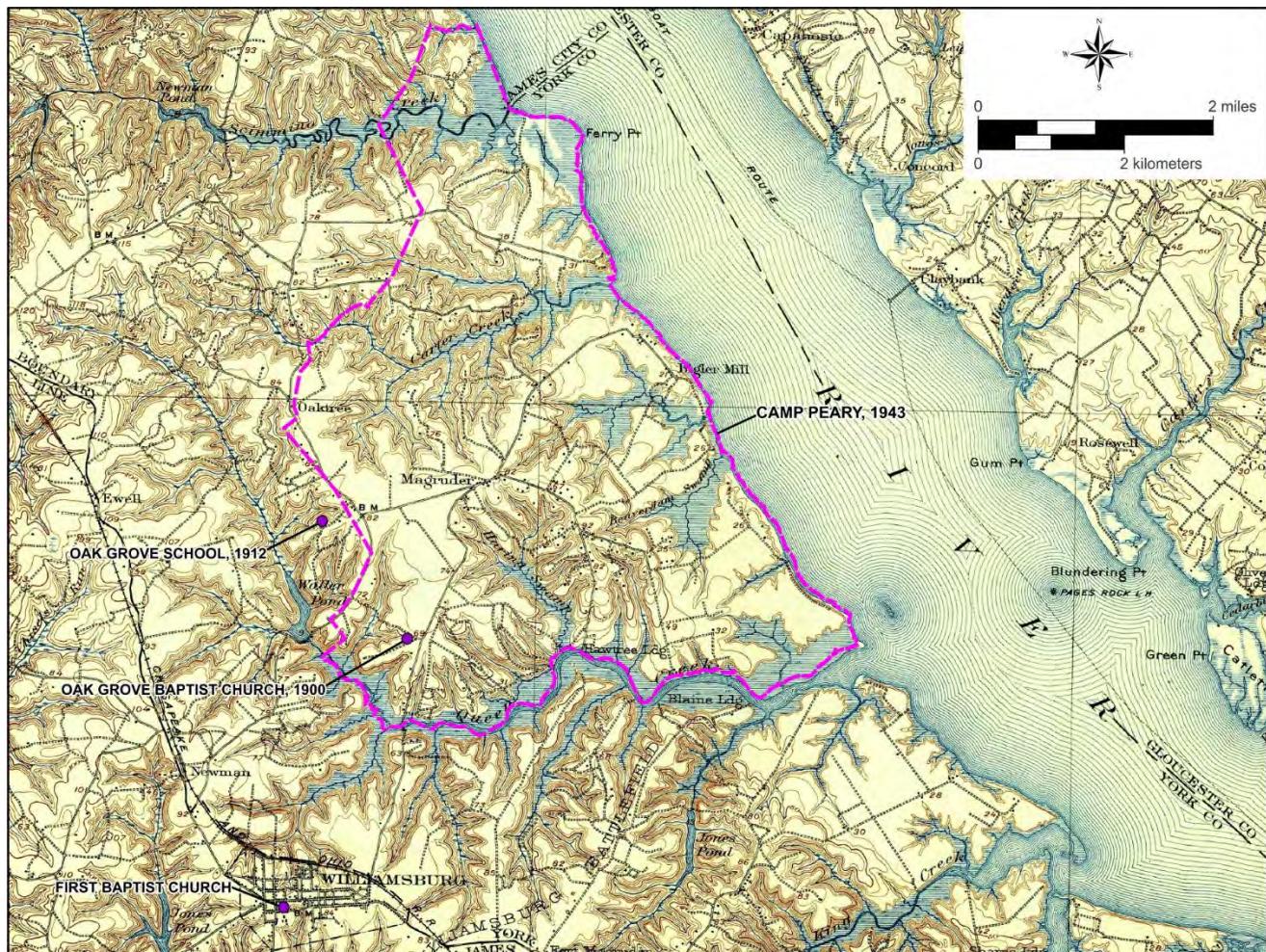


Figure 1. 1906 Topographic quadrangle map showing location of the postal village of Magruder relative to sites within the district and Williamsburg.

(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901, contributing site

This cemetery is in a wooded area along Rochambeau Drive, a feeder road parallel to Interstate 64 Eastbound. The cemetery was established after the purchase of the parcel in 1901 by the trustees of the African American Oak Grove Baptist Church, which stood adjacent to the cemetery until the federal government acquired the church and cemetery in 1943 for the establishment of the Naval Construction Training Center (Camp Peary). Burial dates range from 1907 to 2017. The cemetery contains a variety of markers, including several hand-cast and hand-carved concrete markers, typical of African American cemeteries in the twentieth century. Many are painted white or silver to provide additional contrast for reading the inscriptions.

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey and visual inspection of the ground surface by Colonial Williamsburg Foundation archaeological staff revealed 185 graves dating from 1907 to 2017,

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along with 20 depressions and 11 GPR anomalies indicative of graves. The cemetery is notable for the presence of nine graves of veterans who served in conflicts ranging from the Civil War to the Vietnam War and in peacetime duty. Shallow trenches dug in advance of installing a new fence did not uncover evidence of additional graves, but instead revealed posthole features associated with an earlier enclosure of the cemetery along the same alignment.

The trustees had purchased an adjacent parcel to the south in 1900 for construction of a church (see 099-5091-0004, above). That building stood from the early twentieth century until the early 1940s when the U.S. Navy acquired both properties as part of the establishment of Camp Peary. Obliged to move, the congregation salvaged portions of the church fabric such as doors, windows, a pressed tin ceiling, and a church bell, and eventually incorporated them into the present church building, constructed in 1949 about one and a half miles to the west-southwest at 529 Waller Mill Road. The cemetery remained in use intermittently from 1943 to 1975 due to difficulty of access, since the Camp Perry commander often required church members to seek special permission in advance in order to enter the property. In 1975, with this area of Camp Peary separated from the main portion after the construction of Interstate 64 in the 1960s, the federal government executed a deed of exchange with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The Foundation received a 214-acre tract that encompassed the old church and cemetery as well as other tracts, while the federal government acquired land along the Colonial Parkway. In 2003, the Foundation recognized the significance of the cemetery to the congregation and conveyed the cemetery parcel (1.191 acres) through a deed of gift to the trustees of Oak Grove Baptist Church.

Several concrete markers appear to be the work of the same maker. They measure 2 to 3 feet tall and are of a uniform thickness of 1 to 2 inches. All are symmetrical around a central vertical axis. The tops of the markers are peaked with angled tops that meet at a point or are clipped. Some of these markers extend vertically in a rectangular form to a point where the sides angle inwardly at a mild slope, then outward to a larger degree before angling inwardly again to an apex. In others, the cuts along the sides are angled equally and positioned lower on the sides of the marker. At least one contains a square void cut through the marker. Most are inscribed by hand with crosses and/or decedent information.

(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912, contributing site

This archaeological resource consists of the remains of the Oak Grove School, built in 1912 and burned to the ground in 1940. The school served African American students of the Bruton District of York County prior to the 1940 opening of Bruton Heights School in Williamsburg. As currently defined through surface observations, the site extends across approximately 0.92 acre (230 feet north-south by 279 feet east-west) in Waller Mill Park (located within York County but owned and operated by the City of Williamsburg's Department of Parks & Recreation). It is within an area of deciduous woods along the north side of Airport Road (State Route 645) approximately 0.3 mile west of Rochambeau Drive and Interstate 64.

The location of the original Oak Grove School was identified based on cartographic research supplemented with archaeological reconnaissance. Using LiDAR Hillshade imagery and overlays of historic aerial photography, topographic maps, and modern aerial imagery, the likely

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position of the school site was established with reference to extant landmarks. Upon navigating to the probable location of the school site, fragments of metal roof gutters, concrete blocks, concentrations of brick, a mass of concrete, a probable well, a refined earthenware mug fragment, galvanized bucket fragments, iron barrel fragments, and a subtle road trace running northward from Airport Road were observed. In addition to the mass of concrete, the north-central portion of the site also includes several low mounds of earth indicative of building debris. A concentration of glass bottles and jars in the northwestern portion of the site dates from the second half of the twentieth century. The site measures approximately 70 meters north-south by 85 meters east-west.

The observation of surface features, such as a road trace consistent with the school's access road visible on the 1937 aerial photo, suggests that the site has retained sufficient integrity to address social and educational themes associated with the African American community during the Reconstruction and Growth through World War I to World War II periods (1866-1945) in the greater Williamsburg area/Southern Coastal Plain of Virginia. Site 44YO1263 is recommended as individually potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D, and contributes to the eligibility of the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District (099-5091) for the NRHP.

(4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947,
contributing building *and* non-contributing building

Oak Grove Baptist Church is an unpretentious Carpenter Gothic style frame church with lancet windows and a graduated entrance tower. The interior retains a stamped tin tray ceiling. Unlike many early African American church buildings, Oak Grove, while clad in aluminum siding, has not been covered in brick veneer—a common building tradition when a congregation gains the means to “upgrade” initial construction.

The church is located on a roughly 0.57-acre parcel on the east side of Waller Mill Road, a meandering road between Route 60 and Rochambeau Drive. The church parcel is in a wooded area south of Queen Creek's and the Waller Mill Reservoir. Although the surrounding area is wooded, most of the church parcel is cleared. The lot slopes down to the east. There are gravel drives north and south of the church building, and a shed to the east. Modest planting beds, edged in masonry pavers flank the entrance and hug the north and south elevations of the church. West of the building is a low brick housing for a fixed sign reading OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, with changeable sign panels below.

The frame complex of the church building is in two parts that form a T-shaped footprint. At the west is a front gabled church and at the east a cross-gabled rear support wing built between 1963 and 1982.⁴ Both are clad in aluminum siding.

The earlier portion of the building is three bays wide and three bays deep. Centered on the facade is a graduated, three-part entrance tower with a square footprint. Between the first and second, and second and third stages of the tower are skirt roofs of composite shingle. The terminal section houses rectangular louvered vents on each elevation, and is topped by a composite shingle gable.

⁴ <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>

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Recent maintenance of the church bell has revealed details about its type, mounting, date, and condition. The cast steel bell hangs on an open-bearing A-stand, with its original wheel. The bell's condition is excellent without any signs of rust. One remarkable decorative feature is a fine "bead", or accent line, around both pieces of the bell skid (also known as mounting blocks). Embossed in the side of the bell is "1926", presumably the manufacture date, and a small bell shape that may be a maker's mark. If this is the dates to 1926, it could have hung in the original church (built ca. 1900 and dismantled ca. 1943).

The principal entrance has a double-leaf door with oval glass inserts, which replaced a paneled door documented in 1999. A carriage lantern is mounted above the door. Access to the doors is by a concrete stoop that has a brick step at the west and a concrete ramp that ascends from the north. Flanking the entrance are two wooden, sash lancet windows with colored lights. The lower sash is rectangular and holds eight lights in two rows of four. The larger upper sash holds one lower row of four square lights with wooden tracery and lights above. The north and south elevations both have similar windows in each of their three bays. An exterior concrete block flue is set between the center and eastern bay of the south elevation.

The rear wing, while shorter than the church, is set on the sloping lot so that it has an exposed basement with a door at grade on the east elevation. The foundation of the wing is concrete block while that of the church is solid and parged. The wing has single-leaf entrances on its east elevation on either side of the church where it extends to the north and south. Access to each entrance is a set of poured concrete steps with a metal railing. The north elevation of the wing has two two-over-two, horizontal-light, sash windows, while the south elevation has three such windows. The east elevation has three of these windows on the main level and two in the basement. A single-leaf door at grade is set toward the south side.

The interior of the church is in the process of rehabilitation. In consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the church has retained the stamped tin ceiling in the church and entrance vestibule, the windows and window trim, the floor plan with the vestibule accessed by a double-leaf door, and an arched chancel flanked by auxiliary spaces.

Pews removed during construction will be re-upholstered, returned to the sanctuary, and arranged in two columns with a center aisle. Rotten framing members in the walls will be replaced, insulation added, and electrical wiring replaced with wiring that meets current code requirements. Walls will be finished with drywall and baseboard trim. Previous faux wooden wainscot will be not be re-installed. New carpet and vinyl tile flooring will be installed. Ecclesiastical furniture, stored off-site during construction, will be returned to the chancel.

The rear wall of the apse/chancel will be removed, and the former fellowship hall reconfigured to house a baptismal pool that will be visible from the nave. A partition wall will be added to screen the basement stairs from view. Bathrooms will be retained and the areas flanking the baptismal pool reconfigured to house a pastor's study and vesting area. Walls will be finished in drywall to match those in the church.

The stair that descends to the north services a basement with storage space and a kitchen. This space will serve as a fellowship area.

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The church building contributes to the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District. A storage shed to the rear of the church, erected in 2015, postdates the district's period of significance; therefore, it is non-contributing.

(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945, contributing site

The Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery near Waller Mill Road has twelve marked graves and two depressions thought to be unmarked graves. The cemetery has a single headstone, two concrete vaults, a flush stone marker, and approximately eight metal funeral home-issued tags. The cemetery has a number of trees but is not particularly overgrown. It has no enclosure.

The Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery at Waller Road is located east of the church in a wooded area and accessed by a cleared path from the parking area of an electrical power transformer station. Extensive nearby residential development is imminent.

The trustees of the Oak Grove Baptist Church acquired this cemetery parcel in 1945, after the U.S. Navy had condemned the first church and cemetery located about one and a half miles to the east-northeast along what is now Rochambeau Drive. Detailed survey of marker inscriptions by archaeology staff of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation indicates 14 burials dating from 1945 to 1978; two of these graves are unmarked and identified only as rectangular depressions.

Integrity Statement

The only non-contributing resource within the discontiguous district is a small shed erected in 2015 near the current church (099-5091) at 529 Waller Mill Road. The five discontiguous areas that comprise the historic district collectively retain integrity of location and setting. The extant church is currently undergoing renovations that will alter the interior floor plan, but historic materials and workmanship are being retained to the fullest extent possible. Design, materials, and workmanship at the two cemeteries are retained, as both have not been disturbed through modern construction, grading, or other intrusions; likewise, archaeological sites of the ca. 1900 church and the 1912 school show little evidence of disturbance. Information potential therefore is intact for all four sites within the district. The historic district collectively has integrity of feeling and association as the remaining elements of a Reconstruction-era African American community and as having survived a major disruption during the early 1940s when the federal government acquired most of the community's acreage through condemnation.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American

ARCHAEOLOGY: Historic – Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance

1900-1947

Significant Dates

1900

1901

1912

1913

1943

1945

1947

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

African American

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District consists of five discontiguous elements across a 1.5-mile-square area of northwest York County, Virginia, that tell the story of a vibrant and resilient African American congregation and document the early stage of segregated, free public education in the county. The elements include the site of the original church (ca. 1900), an adjacent cemetery (1901), the site of an associated school (built in 1912), the current church that replaced the original in 1947, and a second cemetery (1945). Oak Grove is a “daughter” church of First Baptist Church located in Williamsburg (two miles to the south). Generations of free and enslaved African Americans in this traditionally rural area of York County worshiped and were members of First Baptist since the founding of that church in 1776. Following the purchase of a parcel in 1900 and construction of a church building, local members of First Baptist formed their own independent congregation, which the “mother” church recognized in 1913. During this early period, the congregation played a major role, in concert with other African American churches and the local Bruton District school board, in establishing and supporting the Oak Grove School for African American students in grades one through eight (built in 1912, destroyed by lightning and fire in 1940). In 1942, with the abrupt condemnation of more than 10,000 acres for the establishment of Naval Construction Training Center (Camp Peary), the federal government compelled the church to sell its property contained within the planned boundary of the installation. Despite the hardship, the congregation purchased land for a new church and a cemetery in 1945, and constructed a church building by 1947. Since the forced move from its original location and after years of only intermittent access to its original cemetery, the church has reacquired ownership of its cemetery (2003). For these reasons, the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Education. Association of the church with the service of Rev. Frank E. Segar as pastor (1926-1967) lends significance to the district locally under Criterion A in the area of Social History due to the active leadership role that Segar played in the local NAACP and other organizations. The two cemeteries in the district are locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Art for their collections of handmade grave markers, which embody folk traditions of craftsmanship and design from a rural African American community during the early twentieth century. The historic district is locally significant under Criterion D in the area of Archaeology: Historic – Non-Aboriginal for the information potential of the ca. 1900 church site, 1912 school site, and both cemeteries. The district’s period of significance begins in 1900 with construction of the first church building and ends in 1947, the estimated completion date for the second church. The period of significance extends from 1900 to 1967, bookended by the estimated construction date of the first church and the end of the Rev. Frank Segar’s service as pastor. The discontiguous historic district meets Criteria Considerations A (for religious properties) and D (for cemeteries) because its significance is based on significant associations with the Reconstruction-era community of Magruder established by emancipated African Americans, the community’s forced abandonment in 1942-1943, and the church’s resilience in the face of this displacement.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: African American

The district is locally significant in the area of African American Ethnic Heritage as it chronicles the struggles and achievements of a community made up mostly of emancipated persons and their descendants with modest economic means through the development of Oak Grove Baptist Church and the associated Oak Grove School from the Reconstruction Era to the more recent past. Oak Grove Baptist Church is a “daughter” church of Williamsburg’s First Baptist Church, established in 1776 (NRHP 2017; 137-5071) and possibly the oldest independent African American congregation in the United States. After the Civil War, Oak Grove community residents were members of First Baptist, but these individuals, composed mostly of families of farmers, farm laborers, and oystermen, made substantial sacrifices to purchase property for a church and cemetery that was within a more convenient distance of their homes. The congregation persevered after the 1943 acquisition of their church and cemetery by the federal government for a military installation. The federal acquisition of land in predominantly African American areas of York County in the first half of the twentieth century constitutes a pattern that the federal government has repeated in the establishment of other local military installations during the first half of the twentieth century. The church was a leader among seven local African American churches that supported the establishment and operation of the local Bruton District’s Oak Grove School (1912-1940). The current Oak Grove Baptist Church, built ca. 1946-1947 about a mile and a half from the site of the original church, is testament to the resiliency of the congregation. Moreover, due to difficult access to the original cemetery during the period (1943-1975) when that property was within Camp Peary, the congregation established a small cemetery near the second church.

Criterion A: Education

The district is locally significant in the area of Education for its inclusion of the site of the first school for African American students in the Bruton District of York County. The Oak Grove School is an example of an early rural African American school in the segregation era of Virginia’s free public education system, supported through a combination of public funding from the local school district and privately through local churches such as Oak Grove Baptist.

Criterion A: Social History

The district is locally significant in the area of Social History under Criterion A; the cemetery (099-5091-0001) is potentially eligible for individual listing but also contributes to the Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District significance for Social History. The church provides an example of the prominence and growth of the Baptist denomination in the local African American community during the late nineteenth century, with influences beyond worship. The outreach of the church extended into areas such as education, as demonstrated by the support from the congregation for the nearby Oak Grove School. The district’s association with an African American congregation forced to move by government condemnation is evidence of disproportionate actions against minority communities during the twentieth century. The cemetery (099-5091-0001) contains a variety of markers, including several hand-cast and hand-

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carved concrete markers, typical of African American cemeteries in the twentieth century. Many are painted white or silver to provide additional contrast for reading the inscriptions. Both the markers themselves and the information recorded on them contribute to the district's significance in the area of Social History as they provide physical evidence of the community's residents and funerary traditions of a rural African American community during the early twentieth century.

The Rev. Frank E. Segar was the longest serving pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church, from 1926 through 1967. During these years, Segar led the congregation through the difficult challenges of condemnation of its original church and cemetery along Rochambeau Drive through the purchase of a new parcel, construction of a new church building at 529 Waller Mill Road, and establishing a second cemetery near the newly built church. Besides the difficulties facing his congregation, Segar took on the responsibility of leadership in the contemporaneous Civil Rights Movement. Emblematic of the energetic leadership of Baptist and other clergy in the movement, Segar was a member of the York-James City-Williamsburg Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).⁵ This organization drew support from African American churches in most communities, but Reverend Segar was particularly active in his membership.⁶ He also served in the countywide league for the improvement of schools in Williamsburg and James City County. His leadership in this area is consistent with the support of Oak Grove Baptist Church for the Oak Grove School, which served African American students within the Bruton District of York County. He also was a founding member of the Tidewater Baptist Ministers' Association and was a member of the Order of Good Samaritans, a temperance organization.⁷

Criterion C: Art

The district is locally significant in the area of Art for the varied collection of markers in the first cemetery (099-5091-0001) established in the early twentieth century along Rochambeau Drive. Funerary art includes several hand-cast and hand-carved concrete markers, with craftsmanship and design representative of African American cemeteries in Virginia's Tidewater region during the twentieth century. Many markers are painted white or silver to provide additional contrast for reading the inscriptions. The cemetery is also notable for numerous examples of veterans' markers recognizing military service in each American conflict since the Civil War.

The cemetery reflects a range of burial practices. Charlotte King notes the evolution and influences on African American graves and cemeteries. She writes that by the early twentieth century these graveyards could reflect African, European, and American influences, and "some

⁵ History of the Oak Grove Baptist Church, 1914-1984", typescript on file, First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Va.; "Branch History" [York-James City-Williamsburg Branch of the NAACP], <https://www.yjcwnaACP.org/branch-history/>

⁶ Brian James Daugherty, "Keep on Keeping on: The NAACP and the Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Williamsburg, Virginia, William & Mary, 2010), 15.

⁷ Rev. Segar Dies In Williamsburg, *Daily Press* (Newport News, Va.), May 15, 1972; Colette Roots, of Oak Grove Baptist Church, noted that this congregation and other Black churches in the vicinity provided regular monetary support for Oak Grove School during its years of operation (1912-1940), personal communication, April 1, 2022.

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burial rituals survived as beloved practices, recalling cultural beliefs brought by the enslaved from the societies in Africa from which they were abducted.”⁸

The setting of the cemetery hearkens back to traditions of slave cemeteries, which were often located in wooded areas.⁹ Scholar Lynn Rainville notes that, whether or not this is reflective of African practices transplanted in the United States, early African and African American cemeteries generally are notable for plantings that contrast with the “sterile, pruned lawns found in many white cemeteries.”¹⁰ Charlotte King concurs: “Formal landscaping was not typical of 19th and 20th-century African American cemeteries. Graves were often randomly placed, and to maintain tranquility and avoid disturbing the spirits, no attempt was made to control the growth of vegetation.”¹¹

Ruth Little describes the characteristics of a typical rural African American cemetery per a North Carolina statewide cemetery survey: “It is sited in a wooded area; high grass, undergrowth, and trees prevent the observer from gaining a clear vista of the entire graveyard. Individual graves are generally oriented east-west, but they are not placed in even rows. Families are loosely grouped, and the placement of individual graves within the family grouping has no established order, so that the rhythm of the overall design is irregular and strongly individualistic.”¹² The Oak Grove cemetery exhibits this random pattern of burials typical of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African American cemeteries.

The grave of Natalie Kenya Banks at Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001) is covered with small white pebbles. Ross Jamieson notes that surface coverings in white, whether ceramics, stones, or shells, are culturally significant.¹³ Charlotte King expounds: “White was the favored color of grave decorations, for its association with the world of the spirits and dead. White seashells, symbols of immortality and water, were often left on African American burial sites, along with a variety of other white objects.”¹⁴ She further associates this practice with the Bakongo people of the Congo and Angola region.

Another aspect of grave marking typical in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is the use of concrete either as markers poured in molds with stamped or free-form lettering, or in commercially available blocks for enclosures. Mary Potter’s poured concrete marker is inscribed by hand “AT REST /MARR/Y POTTE/R WAS B/ORN OCT/ 20 1868/ DIED MA/ Y22 1930”, with each line of text resting on an inscribed horizontal line.

One particularly striking series of markers consists of concrete formed in molds but hand inscribed, each standing roughly two feet tall. All have squared sides. One has a top that tapers to

⁸ Charlotte King, “Separated by Death and Color: The African American Cemetery of New Philadelphia, Illinois.” *Historical Archaeology* 44, no. 1 (March 2010): 125–37.

⁹ Lynn Rainville, *Hidden History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Charlotte King, “Separated by Death and Color,” 127.

¹² M. Ruth Little. *Sticks & Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers*. The Richard Hampton Jenrette Series in Architecture & the Decorative Arts. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 237.

¹³ Ross W. Jamieson, “Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices.” *Historical Archaeology* 29, no. 4 (December 1995): 51.

¹⁴ Charlotte King, “Separated by Death and Color,” 128.

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a triangular point, others are notched at the sides with a hexagonal or pentagonal shape resting on a rectangular base. One is notched with a hexagonal form on top of a rectangular base with a square area “cut out” of the top providing a view through the marker. Another marker, slightly damaged and listing, has a rectangular base with a smaller squared collar for a small, vertically oriented rectangular element topped by a second squared collar and a triangular pediment. All of the markers in this series appear to date to the first quarter of the twentieth century. Aligned in a row, most if not all are associated with the Robinson family with markers created by a single artist. To date there is no known precedent for these forms, or known markers of similar design.

The setting, vegetation, and grave groupings are landscape design aspects common to African American cemeteries of this era in the south. The cemetery also reflects cultural design influences in the material and appearance of individual graves. The blanketing of graves in white pebbles, the use of poured concrete for headstones with hand-inscribed lettering, and the use of formed concrete in abstract geometric forms are all culturally inspired choices that display artistic values in their selection and execution.

Criterion D: Archaeology: Historic – Non-Aboriginal

The sites of both the original Oak Grove Baptist Church (44YO0311) and the Oak Grove School (44YO1263) retain sufficient stratigraphic integrity and research potential to provide important information about social, educational, and religious themes in the Williamsburg area, York County, and the Southern Coastal Plain of Virginia during the early years of the Jim Crow era of segregation in Virginia. Research questions that can be answered through investigation of the sites include

1. What was the role of social and religious institutions in the African American community in rural Virginia during the early twentieth century and how was Oak Grove Baptist Church associated with these roles? What are representative aspects of the material culture of such institutions at this time?
2. How did the church feature in the religious lives of its congregants, and how was this coupled with themes of community cohesion and mutual aid?
3. Does Site 44YO1263 offer insight into the role of education in the lives of African Americans in rural Tidewater Virginia during the early twentieth century? Do the artifact deposits and features demonstrate how African Americans maintained a school despite having fewer resources than what was allocated for white schools? Can the artifacts, assemblages, and architectural features allow for interpretation of activities that represent innovations or adaptations to institutionalized racism?

Criteria Consideration A:

The discontiguous historic district meets Criteria Consideration A (for religious properties) because its significance is based on historic associations with the Reconstruction-era community of Magruder established by emancipated African Americans, the community’s forced abandonment in 1942–1943, the resilience of the congregation in the face of this displacement, and the contributions of Rev. Frank E. Segar in leading the community from 1927-1967 while also working as a civil rights activist at the height of the Jim Crow era in Virginia.

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Criteria Consideration D:

The discontiguous historic district meets Criteria Consideration D (for cemeteries) because its significance is based on the varied collection of funerary art and significant cultural practices of African Americans of the period. The Rochambeau Drive cemetery (099-5091-0001) offers good representative examples of the design, craftsmanship, and materials of markers found in African American cemeteries in Tidewater Virginia during the early twentieth century. In addition, the cemeteries have significant associations with the Reconstruction-era community of Magruder established by emancipated African Americans, the community's forced abandonment in 1942–1943, and the resilience of the Oak Grove Baptist Church congregation in the face of this displacement.

Developmental History

(1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900

(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901

The congregation of Oak Grove Baptist Church traces its roots to First Baptist Church, a “mother church” for several African American Baptist churches in the Williamsburg area. First Baptist originated in 1776 when the free black Reverend Moses held services for a congregation of both free and enslaved African Americans in the open air at a brush arbor on Green Spring Plantation, about seven miles west of Williamsburg. By 1781, the enslaved preacher Gowan Pamphlet gathered the congregation in a wooded area called Raccoon Chase, less than two miles south of town. The worshipers soon found a more amenable, central location in Williamsburg when the Cole family volunteered the use of their carriage house on Nassau Street. Influenced by the revivalist, evangelical preachers who visited Williamsburg during the Great Awakening of the 1760s and 1770s, Pamphlet applied for his church to join the Dover Baptist Association in 1791. Two years later, the association admitted the “Baptist church of black people at Williamsburg; agreeably to their request.” By then the congregation had grown to 500 worshipers. The church continued to flourish during the antebellum period despite repressive laws against large gatherings of African Americans that followed the Nat Turner Slave Rebellion of 1831 in Southampton County. Testament to the success of First Baptist Church was the construction of a wooden meetinghouse by 1818, followed by a large brick church on Nassau Street in 1856.¹⁵

Among the large congregation flocking to the “African Baptist Church” in Williamsburg were residents of northwest York County. Prior to Emancipation, many of the worshipers were enslaved on local plantations within several miles of Williamsburg and faithfully walked the long distance to this closest church in the absence of any other modes of available transportation. Since this sometimes meant setting out before sunrise, these rural worshipers became known as “nightwalkers”.¹⁶ Due to the inconvenient distance for travel to First Baptist on foot, preachers

¹⁵ Linda Rowe, “Gowan Pamphlet (Fl. 1779-1807),” in *Encyclopedia Virginia* (Virginia Humanities, accessed March 6, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/pamphlet-gowan-fl-1779-1807>, 2021); Johnny Diaz, “Archaeologists Unearth Foundation of Historic Black Church Formed in 1776,” *New York Times*, October 7, 2021. The current First Baptist Church (137-5071) in Williamsburg was listed in the NRHP in 2017.

¹⁶ Colette Roots, Oak Grove Baptist Church, personal communication.

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sometimes led the local worshipers in services held locally outdoors as an alternative to the services in town.

The Rev. Alexander Tabb served as pastor of Oak Grove from the 1880s (while the church met outdoors) until his death in 1917. Born ca. 1860 in Mathews County, Tabb moved to York County sometime after the Civil War, whether alone or with his parents.¹⁷ On June 25, 1887, the clerk and the pastor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church (an African American church formerly located in the Reconstruction-era, majority Black `village of Magruder in what is now Camp Peary) signed a letter commending Tabb “to the confidence and fellowship of sister churches where ever providence may direct and being a coworker of the Ministry we also recommend him to preach when ever he is called upon in the improvements of his gifts in preaching the Gospel”.¹⁸ Alexander Tabb may have been traveling at the time of the 1900 census, when the enumerator listed his wife Elmora as head of the household on the family farm, with three sons in the home.¹⁹ Tabb’s grandson, Rev. James B. Tabb, recalled that his grandfather often traveled to preach at other churches and owned a buggy and several horses. In addition to Oak Grove, he credited Alexander Tabb with establishing other churches.²⁰

On February 7, 1900, Mrs. C. P. Langhorne of Lynchburg, Virginia, conveyed a half-acre parcel to the trustees of Oak Grove Baptist Church for \$10.²¹ The trustees were John B. Whiting, William Robinson, W. W. Wilson, Samuel Jones, and Robert Cooke. All of the trustees appear as residents of the Bruton District of York County. The county assessor designated this property Tract 400.

John B. Whiting was a local resident and owned property adjacent to the church in the early twentieth century. His gravestone in the church cemetery and the application to obtain it indicate that Whiting served in Troop B of the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry even though he was originally from Virginia. In order to make his way to the north so that he could enlist, Whiting used the alias John C. Coleman. Whiting likely had escaped slavery and was avoiding capture on his way north. Whiting died in 1935. After receiving an application for a veteran’s gravestone in 1938, the War Department shipped the stone to Williamsburg the following year.²²

A year-and-a-half after acquiring the parcel to build the church, the trustees purchased adjacent land on the northwest for a church cemetery. Purchased on June 15, 1901, from Andrew and Caroline Christ, the triangular-shaped cemetery parcel reportedly amounted to 1 acre and 23 roods. The estimate of the parcel size may have been incorrect, however, as the current cemetery only encompasses about 1.2 acres (although the parcel no longer includes the “point” of the

¹⁷ Rev. Alexander Tabb, Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912-2014 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. A marriage certificate put Tabb’s birth year at 1863; FHL Film Number: 34443; Reference ID: p20 cn647.

¹⁸ Original letter in possession of Oak Grove Baptist Church.

¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census.

²⁰ Interview with Rev. James B. Tabb, 1984, James City County Oral History Collection, Box 2, 84-087, William & Mary, Earl Gregg Swem Library, Williamsburg, Va.

²¹ York County Deed Book 24, p. 589.

²² Gravestone application, U.S. War Department, November 16, 1938.

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triangle to the west). Based on one rood being equivalent to 0.25 acre, the area stated in the deed would have been 6.75 acres. The county assessor's designation for this parcel was Tract 401.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the population of this northeastern portion of York County was overwhelmingly African American. The Bruton Magisterial District of York County, extending from the western limits of Naval Weapons Station Yorktown (established in 1918) to the northwest limit of the county along Skimino Creek, included 1,070 African American residents and only 379 whites.²³

The founding pastor, Rev. Alexander Tabb, served until his death in 1917. His replacement, Rev. L. W. Wales, was the pastor until his resignation in 1926. The next pastor, Rev. Frank E. Segar, was long-serving (1926-1967) and notable beyond the congregation of Oak Grove Baptist Church. In 1942, he was among nine charter members who founded the York-James City-Williamsburg branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He also was a member of a temperance league. His leadership during the church's forced displacement at the height of the Jim Crow era in Virginia helped to assure the congregation's survival and he continued as a leader during the gains made by the Civil Rights Movement.²⁴

In July 1934, the pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church was among five local Baptist ministers taking part in a special end-of-month religious service at the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp SP-9 in Matoaka Park; the CCC camp buildings formerly stood in the vicinity of the William & Mary fraternity housing and Kaplan Arena. The congregation of Oak Grove also participated in the service for Company 360. Except for one company stationed at Williamsburg at the beginning of the program, all of the companies at Camp SP-9 consisted of African American recruits ranging from 82 to 200 men and white officers, foremen, and clerks. The camp included frame barracks, administrative buildings, and a mess hall, along with two brick smokehouses. The corps assigned a unit of African American workers to develop Matoaka State Park (since incorporated into William & Mary and comprising the New Campus and College Woods areas at the west end of campus) in the 1930s. The unit also took part in archaeological excavations on Jamestown Island and other federal projects in the Williamsburg area.²⁵

On January 10, 1939, the church conveyed a portion of its two properties to the Virginia Department of State Highways. The narrow strips of land along the northwest edges of the

²³ U.S. Bureau of the Census.

²⁴ History of the Oak Grove Baptist Church, 1914-1984", typescript on file, First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Va.; "Branch History" [York-James City-Williamsburg Branch of the NAACP], <https://www.yjcwnaacp.org/branch-history/>

²⁵ "Baptist Churches Will Participate In Camp Services," *Daily Press*, July 20, 1934; Susan H. Godson et al., *The College of William & Mary: A History*, 3 vols. (Williamsburg: King and Queen Press, Society of the Alumni, College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1993), vol. II, p. 666; Charles (Col. USA) Hunter Ret., "Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in Williamsburg 1933-1942" (Williamsburg, Virginia: Williamsburg Area Historical Society, 1990); Joseph Carvalho III, "Race, Relief and Politics: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Virginia, 1933 - 1942" (Master's thesis, Williamsburg, Virginia, William & Mary, 1977), 57.

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cemetery and church properties totaled 0.14 acre for the right-of-way of Route 168, which followed part of the alignment of present Rochambeau Drive.²⁶

Major reconfigurations of road patterns and some encroachment onto the church properties occurred in the early 1940s with the construction and improvements of Route 168. Before the construction of Interstate 64 along the James-York Peninsula in the 1960s, Route 168 comprised a major thoroughfare, with some portions built as a divided highway, running from the eastern outskirts of Williamsburg to the vicinity of Barhamsville.

In 1943, the church and cemetery parcels were among the dozens of parcels amounting to 10,730 acres that the federal government acquired through condemnation (Order Vesting Title No. 4) to establish Camp Peary, an installation for training U.S. Navy Construction Battalions ("Seabees").²⁷ A plat of all of the acquired properties keyed by parcel number identifies the parcels, though the labels for Tracts 400 and 401 are mistakenly reversed on the map. The government compensated the church trustees with \$850. The trustees argued that this amount only covered the value of the church building and lot, however, and excluded the value of the cemetery parcel. A lawsuit ensued, brought by the trustees and twelve other owners seeking suitable compensation for their properties. It was not until May 20, 1957, that the U.S. District Court issued a final decree, awarding \$150 (minus \$1.90 in back taxes) to the church trustees in additional compensation.²⁸

The handling of property acquisition for Camp Peary had been very controversial due to poor planning and disrespectful treatment of property owners. In some cases, construction contractors showed up to begin building roads on properties before the government notified landowners of condemnation plans. Some residents had as little as two weeks to vacate their houses, so that they did not have time to find a new home to purchase or rent. Many African American residents of the now-deserted village of Magruder temporarily moved into the aforementioned former Civilian Conservation Corps barracks located on what is now the campus of the College of William & Mary. The Rev. Archibald Ward, Jr., a white pastor of the Williamsburg Baptist Church, was especially outraged by the mistreatment of local residents. His complaints were published in the local press, and he sent letters attempting to rectify the situation to members of Congress and even to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.²⁹

From 1943 until the 1970s, few burials took place in the Oak Grove Cemetery along Rochambeau Drive because church members had to go through a cumbersome process of obtaining permission to access the site from the installation commander. Hurdles to gaining access also inhibited descendants of those interred from maintaining the cemetery.³⁰

²⁶ York County Deed Book 53, p. 443; Virginia Department of Highways

²⁷ York County Deed Book 59, p. 105.

²⁸ U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Newport News Division.

²⁹ "Moving at Magruder Raises Problems" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 20, 1942; Rev. Archibald F. Ward, Jr., personal papers, Special Collections, William & Mary.

³⁰ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Archaeology Department, Oak Grove Cemetery survey forms, 2021; Colette Roots, personal communication, 2022.

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On March 31, 1975, the United States government and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation entered into an agreement to exchange certain tracts of land. All of the property conveyed by the government to The Foundation was part of the land acquired in 1943 for the establishment of Camp Peary, while the federal government acquired areas along the Colonial Parkway from Colonial Williamsburg.³¹ The site of the Oak Grove Baptist Church and cemetery were within 214 acres known at Colonial Williamsburg as the Camp Peary West tract.

On December 24, 2003, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation conveyed a 1.191-acre parcel comprising the evident limits of the Oak Grove church cemetery to the trustees of Oak Grove Baptist Church.³² The Foundation reserved an ingress/egress easement along the southeast edge of the property.

In 2021, the church members obtained assistance from the Archaeology Department at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in defining the limits of the cemetery. This included ground penetrating radar survey and excavation of shallow trenches to identify any potential unmarked burials. These measures allowed the church to remove damaging tree falls and to install a perimeter fence without disturbing any of the graves that may not have been obvious from the ground surface depressions or grave markers.

(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003
[Site 44YO1263]), 1912

One aspect of the Reconstruction era that followed the Civil War and Emancipation was legislation that mandated universal public education, regardless of race.³³ Prior to Reconstruction, there was little support at the local level for publicly run and financed schools in the southern states. Rural schools in Virginia (as elsewhere in the south), in addition to excluding the enslaved population, were underfunded and had short terms (typically as an accommodation to the agricultural cycle).³⁴ The poverty rate was high, so there was little enthusiasm for tax increases in support of public education, but more significant was a pervasive attitude that education, which was denied to the enslaved population, was of little use to working class whites.³⁵

³¹ York County Deed Book 275, p. 321; Plat Book 9, pp. 35-36. Land acquired for Camp Peary in 1943, Plat Book 3, p. 61.

³² York County, Instrument 04007026. There were nine church trustees named in the deed: Deacon Eugene Robinson, Brother Bruce Bartlett, Brother Larry Blizzard, Sister Ethel L. Brown, Brother Douglas Dillard, Deacon Robert Hall, Sister Bernice Lee, Brother James Madison, and Brother James P. Tabb, Sr.). Plats of the property were attached to the deed (Land Record 030037183) and another filed in Plat Book 7, p. 364)

³³ Edward Gaynor, Rebecca Yokum, and William A. Link, *Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Library, Special Collections Department, 2000), 7.

³⁴ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 149.

³⁵ William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870–1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 8.

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Virginia's first State Superintendent of Public Instruction, William Henry Ruffner, wrote the law encoding the Commonwealth's responsibility for Black education, but mandated that Black schools be segregated. The law established the Department of Public Instruction, which consisted of a superintendent, a state Board of Education, and local officials, and permitted contribution of tax revenues from the state, as well as from cities and counties. Initially, there was much opposition to what was perceived as the "imposition" of public education on the state. Some Virginians felt that public education usurped the authority of parents over children and threatened to "reshape the social order," while others felt that a secular, state-controlled school system was a violation of "God's law". Ultimately, public education in Virginia was accepted by the white majority both because it was recognized that rejecting universal education would result in additional interference from forces outside (and north of) the Commonwealth, and due to the efforts of Ruffner to point out that segregated public schools would maintain the social order and provide a trained workforce.³⁶ In addition, while the system was overseen by the state, localities had significant control over selection of trustees and textbooks.

Access to education for African Americans was embraced as an opportunity and a source of community pride. In Virginia, as elsewhere, local communities provided the schools and students, while teacher salaries were funded through the state. White dominance of local school boards meant that funding for schools was preferential towards white schools. Even school terms were longer for white schools.³⁷ In many instances, African American parents provided funds, labor, or goods to build and maintain schools. When movements to modernize public education arose in the early twentieth century, it was done at the expense of African American schools. For the most part, in the rural South, Black education remained in the one- or two-room schoolhouse, while white schools experienced modern reforms and curricula and the establishment of high schools. Into this vacuum came "Industrial Education," a somewhat vague concept that appealed to Southern whites by providing a minimal vocational education for African American students (and future workers), but allowed Northern philanthropists to support it financially. In reality, the concept of "Industrial" education enabled a number of philanthropic organizations (Jeanes Fund, General Education Board, John F. Slater Fund, Rosenwald Fund), individually and through the existing African American educational organizations of Hampton Institute (Virginia) and Tuskegee Institute (Alabama) to support improvements to rural African American school buildings in the south and provide training for teachers. The aim of these philanthropic organizations was to get local and state governments to increase public tax support for African American schools.³⁸

In 1911, the Bruton District School Board voted to build a new school for African American students. On June 7, 1911, Daniel D. Andrews and his wife, Ada, sold a 3-acre parcel of their property along the north and west of the "main road to Ewells station" to the York County School Board District No. 1 for \$150.³⁹ Three years earlier, Daniel Andrews had acquired the property from Andrew Christ, the same property owner who had sold a parcel to the trustees of

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18–20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁸ Gaynor, Yokum, and Link, *Jackson Davis and the Lost World of Jim Crow Education*, 8–9, 11.

³⁹ York County, Deed Book 31, p. 189.

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Oak Grove Baptist Church for a cemetery in 1901.⁴⁰ In May 1912, Andrew Jones, of Williamsburg, received the contract to build the Oak Grove School. The two-story, four-room building, measuring 28 by 50 feet, would serve as a consolidated school for African American students in the district.⁴¹ There was also a small office in an upstairs dormer, and sometimes one of the classrooms served as an auditorium. A small “steeple” penetrated the roof and housed the school bell. Wood stoves heated the building, as evident from a request for bid for “20 cords stove wood, mixed” announced in a newspaper in August 1932. There was no connection to an electrical grid so that lighting consisted of gas lamps.⁴²

Funding for initial construction of the school and continued support came from a “patrons’ league” to supplement the funding provided by the school district. Oak Grove Baptist Church was prominent among the local African American churches that contributed. In June 1934, the patrons of Oak Grove School passed resolutions thanking Principal M. H. Christian for successfully raising the school’s standards over the previous year.⁴³ In order to improve the school beyond the means provided by the Bruton School Board, an active Patron’s league sponsored activities and raised additional funds. In April 1936, the patrons held a “program in connection with national Negro health week” with speeches by a clergyman from Jamaica, the supervisor of African American schools in York and Warwick counties, and singing by a choral group from the Hampton Institute.⁴⁴

One student who recalled his attendance at the school was the Rev. James E. Tabb, speaking in a 1984 interview. He recalled that the large building’s four classrooms each contained two grades of students. In later years, the configuration accommodated nine grades. He mentioned pledging allegiance to the flag outdoors, which suggests that the schoolyard contained a flagpole, although it could have been attached to the building.⁴⁵

In late July 1940, lightning struck the school, igniting a fire that burned the building to the ground. By this time, a larger school for African American students, covering all grades, was about to open that fall in Williamsburg. The new Bruton Heights School would accept African American students from the Bruton District of York County, along with students from Williamsburg and James City County. With this new facility available, the Bruton school board did not attempt to rebuild the Oak Grove School.⁴⁶

In 1999, former students and descendants, the mayor of Williamsburg, and York County officials attended a ceremony for the unveiling of a historic marker near the visitor center of Waller Mill

⁴⁰ York County, Deed Book 29, p.82.

⁴¹ “Contract Is Awarded for Oak Grove School,” *Daily Press*, May 16, 1912.

⁴² “Bids Wanted,” *Daily Press*, August 31, 1932; “Oak Grove School Plaque Dedication, February 27, 1999, Waller Mill Park” ceremony flyer.

⁴³ “Oak Grove (Williamsburg Bureau),” *Daily Press*, June 10, 1934.

⁴⁴ “Patrons of Oak Grove School To Meet Today,” *Daily Press*, April 5, 1936.

⁴⁵ Interview with Rev. James B. Tabb, 1984.

⁴⁶ Rowe, “A History of Black Education and Bruton Heights School, Williamsburg, Virginia,” Research Report Series (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, 2020; republished, originally published in 1997); Interview with Rev. James B. Tabb, 1984; Interpretive marker for Oak Grove School in Waller Mill Park.

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
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Park. The marker includes interpretive text about Oak Grove School, a photograph of the building, and a schematic map showing the approximate location of the school site somewhere along the north side of Airport Road, which bisects the park east-west.

(4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947

Following the condemnation of church property within Camp Peary, the church trustees sought to establish another church within a convenient distance of congregation members' homes. One of the trustees of the church, Charles Bartlett, and his wife, Etta, conveyed a 0.11-acre lot for the current church to the trustees Ezekiel Jones, Charles Bartlett, and Wanda Robinson on November 1, 1943.⁴⁷ The property had 50 feet of frontage on the east side of Waller Mill Road and extended back 100 feet to the east. This was part of a larger property along Waller Mill Road that the Bartletts had acquired in 1899 from Samuel Harris, an African American businessman and reportedly the richest man in Williamsburg at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Charles Bartlett had served as a church deacon since 1927.⁴⁹ The 1940 census had listed him as a farmer living on Mill Road.

Preparations to construct a church building may have begun soon after April 17, 1946, when the church used the parcel as collateral to secure a loan of \$1,000 with the Peninsula Bank and Trust Company in Williamsburg. Trustees F. [Frank] E. Segar [also church pastor from 1926 to 1967], Charles Bartlett, and Ezekiel Jones executed the deed of trust with the bank's trustee, R. A. Duncan. On November 1, 1947, the same trustees executed a second deed of trust with Duncan for \$1,700. Various church members volunteered their labor and expertise to construct the building⁵⁰

On November 9, 1949, Charles Bartlett and his wife, Etta, conveyed a 50-foot-square parcel adjacent to the east (rear) line of the 50-by-100-foot parcel containing the church to the church trustees.⁵¹ This allowed

Sometime after 1963, church member Oscar Howard built the brick addition at the rear of the frame building. Mr. Howard was a brick mason who had learned the trade through courses at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University).⁵²

(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945

With access to the original cemetery on Rochambeau Drive cut off or difficult to access due to the establishment of Camp Peary, the church sought a new parcel for burial of church members. On March 23, 1945, Martha S. Henderson and her husband, John, both Williamsburg residents, conveyed a 1.07-acre parcel to the trustees of Oak Grove Baptist Church (Ezekiel Jones, Charles

⁴⁷ York County, Deed Book 60, p. 70.

⁴⁸ York County, Deed Book 26, pp. 31-32; Robert P. Maccubbin, ed., *Williamsburg, Virginia: A City before the State, 1699-1999* (Williamsburg, Virginia: City of Williamsburg 300th Anniversary Commission, 2000), 122.

⁴⁹ "History of the Oak Grove Baptist Church, 1914-1984".

⁵⁰ York County, Deed Books 61A, p. 241; 64, p. 441.

⁵¹ York County, Deed Book 237, p. 627.

⁵² Oscar Howard and Colette Roots, personal communication 2022.

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Bartlett, and Winder Robinson).⁵³ The deed referred to the land as the Oak Grove Cemetery. Although the deed referred to a blueprint plat, there was none attached to the deed in the deed book, nor did one appear in any of the plat books. Boundaries of the parcel included a stream that marked the Cannaday estate on the north, Martha S. Henderson's land on the east and south (incorrectly labeled as Dr. J. M. Henderson's on the plat), and on the west by Henry Robinson's land and that of the George Lee Cook estate. Dr. James McKiel Henderson was a white doctor who lived on North Henry Street in Williamsburg and died in 1958.⁵⁴ Martha Spencer Henderson was the second wife of Dr. Henderson. Although the cemetery parcel extended to the center of a Virginia Power and Electric Company right-of-way, the utility would retain an easement on the cemetery property. The church trustees agreed to build a fence along the east and south boundaries of the cemetery and exclude land south of the edge of the utility right-of-way.

Field recording of the cemetery indicates that it lies about a hundred feet south of the area where York County has mapped the parcel. As mapped by the county, the parcel would straddle the unnamed stream bottom rather than occupying the upper portion of the southern slope as it does. The cemetery near Waller Mill Road had fallen out of use in the 1970s when the church obtained easier access to the original cemetery. The presence of the Dominion Power high voltage corridor near the small cemetery also made access more difficult. Over several decades, younger church members were no longer aware that the church possessed this small cemetery parcel near the church. The cemetery came to their attention again in August 2021 when timber clearing for an adjacent subdivision development encroached into the cemetery, causing some deep ruts near the graves.⁵⁵

⁵³ York County, Deed Book 63, p. 84.

⁵⁴ United States Census Bureau, 1940 population census;
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/85608974/john-mckiel-henderson>)

⁵⁵ Em Holter, "Gravesite belonging to historic Black church discovered behind power plant on Waller Mill Road; members seek access and question possible move of graves," *Virginia Gazette*, August 31, 2021.

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
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Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA; William & Mary Center for Archaeological Research, Williamsburg, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 099-5091

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.87 (total area)

Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900, 0.11 acres

Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901, 1.19 acres

Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912, 0.93 acres

Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947, .58 acres

Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945, 0.06 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

(1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900

Latitude: 37.303796 Longitude: -76.686063

(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901

Latitude: 37.304474 Longitude: -76.685698

(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912

Latitude: 37.318131 Longitude: -76.699542

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(4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946-1947

Latitude: 37.299418 Longitude: -76.706466

(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945

Latitude: 37.299537 Longitude: -76.703417

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004 [Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900

The historic boundary of this archaeological site encompasses an area of 0.11 acres where artifacts and surface features were visible during field reconnaissance in March 2022.

(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901

The historic boundary of this site follows the boundary of the 1.19-acre parcel it occupies, as defined in the York County assessor's office records (GPIN F16a-0534-4471).

(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912

The historic boundary of this archaeological site encompasses an area of 0.93 acres where artifacts and surface features were visible during field reconnaissance in March 2022.

(4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946-1947

The historic boundary of this 0.58-acre parcel containing the Oak Grove Baptist Church is the same as defined in the York County assessor's office records (D16b-4566-2529).

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(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945

The historic boundary of this archaeological site encompasses an area of 0.06 acres where marked burials or surface depressions indicative of unmarked burials were mapped by Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists using Global Positioning System equipment in 2021.

The true and correct historic boundary for each discontiguous portion of the historic district is shown on the attached Sketch Maps, each of which has a scale of 1"=200'. All known associated historic resources are encompassed within each boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

**(1) Oak Grove Baptist Church [west of Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0004
[Site 44YO0311]), ca. 1900**

The historic boundary was selected based on archaeological reconnaissance methods using surface observation of features and artifacts only, without subsurface excavation. The fieldwork confirmed the location and extent of the church building site evident through georeferencing of an early twentieth-century topographic map, USDA aerial photography, highway plan drawings, and Bare Earth rendering of LiDAR imagery.

(2) Oak Grove Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), ca. 1901

The historic boundary of this site is based on research of the chain of title in the York County circuit court records, conversations with church members, and shallow trenching along the site perimeter by Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists in 2021 that confirmed the absence of burials beyond the area of an early twentieth-century perimeter fence.

(3) Oak Grove School [north side of Airport Road/State Route 645] (099-5091-0003 [Site 44YO1263]), 1912

The historic boundary was selected based on archaeological reconnaissance methods using surface observation of features and artifacts only, without subsurface excavation.

(4) Oak Grove Baptist Church, 529 Waller Mill Road (099-5091), ca. 1946–1947

The historic boundary of this parcel is based on research of the chain of title in the York County circuit court records and current assessor office records.

(5) Oak Grove Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), ca. 1945

The historic boundary of this site is based on surface observation of marked burials and evidence of surface depressions indicative of unmarked burials. Survey and mapping by Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists in 2021 confirmed that this cemetery is mapped incorrectly in the York County assessor office records.

11. Form Prepared By

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
Name of Property

York County, VA
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name/title: David Lewes, Historian, and Elizabeth J. Monroe, Archaeologist; Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Architectural Historian
organizations: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research; Hanbury Preservation Consulting;
street & number: _____
city or town: Williamsburg state: VA zip code: _____
e-mail: dwlewe@wm.edu; maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com
telephone: (757) 221-2579; (919) 828-1905
date: June 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Unless otherwise indicated, the following information applies to all photographs.

Name of Property: Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

City or Vicinity: Williamsburg vicinity

County: York State: VA

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church (099-5091), southwest corner

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0001.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

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View: Oak Grove Baptist Church (099-5091), east half of south elevation and rear wing,
view to northeast

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0002.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church (099-5091), interior view toward main entrance

Date Photographed: August 2021

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0003.jpg

Photographer: Elizabeth Lipford, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church (099-5091), interior view of northwest corner of sanctuary
showing main entrance and examples of lancet windows

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0004.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church (099-5091), interior view of stairs and basement

Date Photographed: August 2021

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0005.jpg

Photographer: Elizabeth Lipford, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001),
view to northwest

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0006.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001),
interpretive sign

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0007.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001),
markers detail view

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0008.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001),
segment of original enclosure fence

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0009.jpg

Photographer: David Lewes

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
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View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), formed concrete markers

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0010.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [along Rochambeau Drive] (099-5091-0001), marker of Civil War veteran John B. Whiting

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0011.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), view to northwest

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0012.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), detail of markers

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0013.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery [near Waller Mill Road] (099-5091-0002), detail of marker

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0014.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Site (44YO0311 / 099-5091-0003), view to west toward site in background

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0015.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Site (44YO0311 / 099-5091-0003), mounded building debris at core of site, view to southeast

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_00016.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Site (44YO0311 / 099-5091-0003), metal roofing material

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
Name of Property

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Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0017.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove Baptist Church Site (44YO0311 / 099-5091-0003), early twentieth-century two-track road trace running along south side of site, view to east

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0018.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), concrete construction material at core of site

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0019.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), well feature

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0020.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), gutter material, view to south

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0021.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), metal detecting with hits marked by pin flags, view to southwest

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0022.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), roofing tile fragment

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0023.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

View: 099-5091_Oak Grove School Site (44YO1263 / 099-5091-0004), trace of original access road, view to north

Date Photographed: February 2022

Image: VA_YorkCounty_OakGroveBaptistChurchHistoricDistrict_0024.jpg

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
Name of Property

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benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Title:

Date: 4/26/2022

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

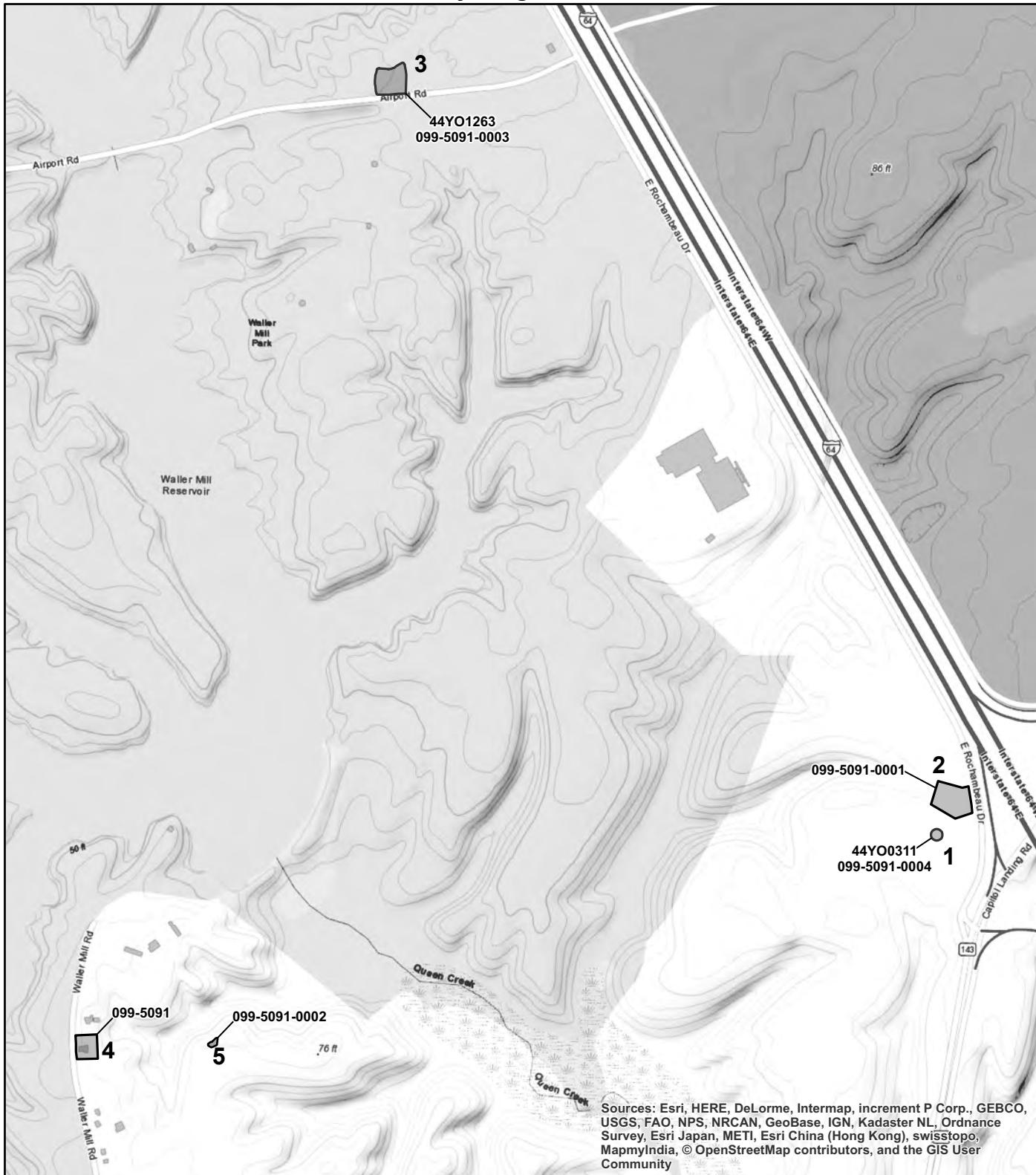


Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400

1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

LOCATION MAP - Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District York County, Virginia; DHR# 099-5091



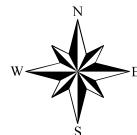
1 Latitude: 37.303796 Longitude: -76.686063

2 Latitude: 37.304474 Longitude: -76.685698

3 Latitude: 37.318131 Longitude: -76.699542

4 Latitude: 37.299418 Longitude: -76.706466

5 Latitude: 37.299537 Longitude: -76.703417



1,000 0 1,000 Feet

1 inch = 1,000 feet

Coordinates are recorded at the approximate center point of each discontinuous section of the historic district.

AERIAL VIEW - VICINITY

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400
1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

Title:

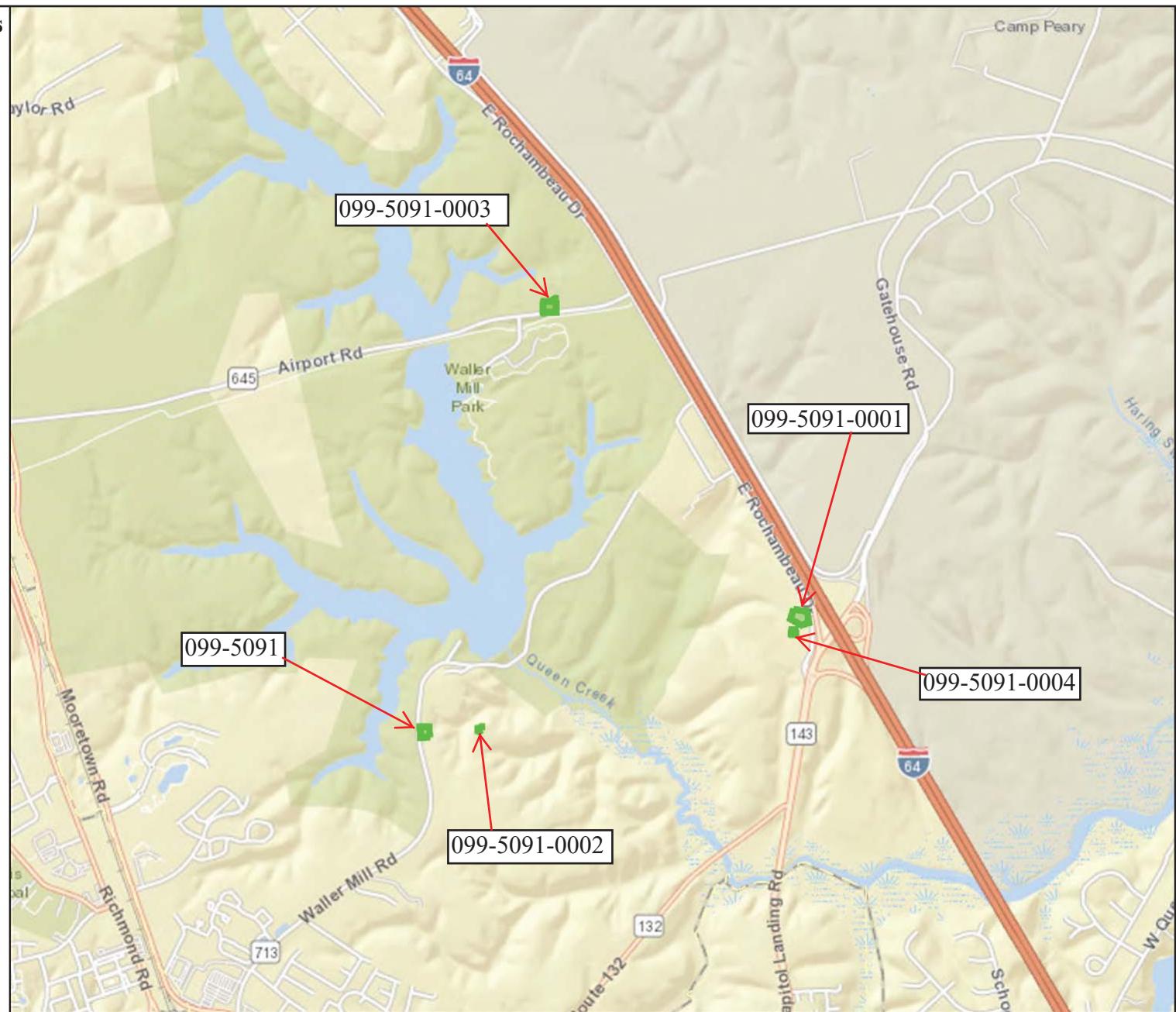
Date: 4/26/2022

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

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ROAD MAP

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

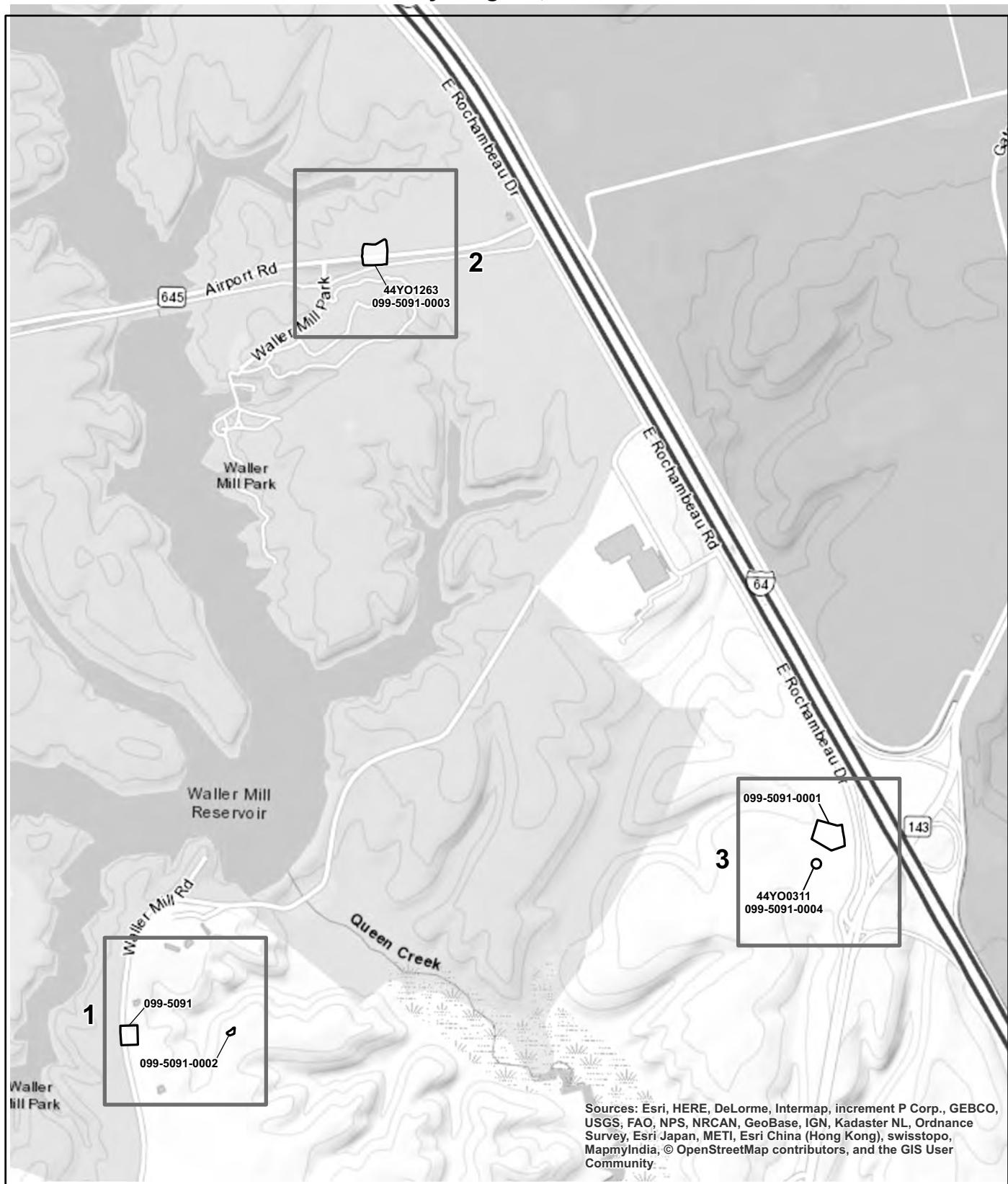
York County, VA
DHR No. 099-5091**Title:****Date: 4/26/2022**

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

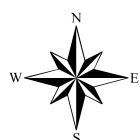
Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

0 600 1200 1800 2400
1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

SKETCH MAP (1 of 4) - Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District York County, Virginia; DHR# 099-5091



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.



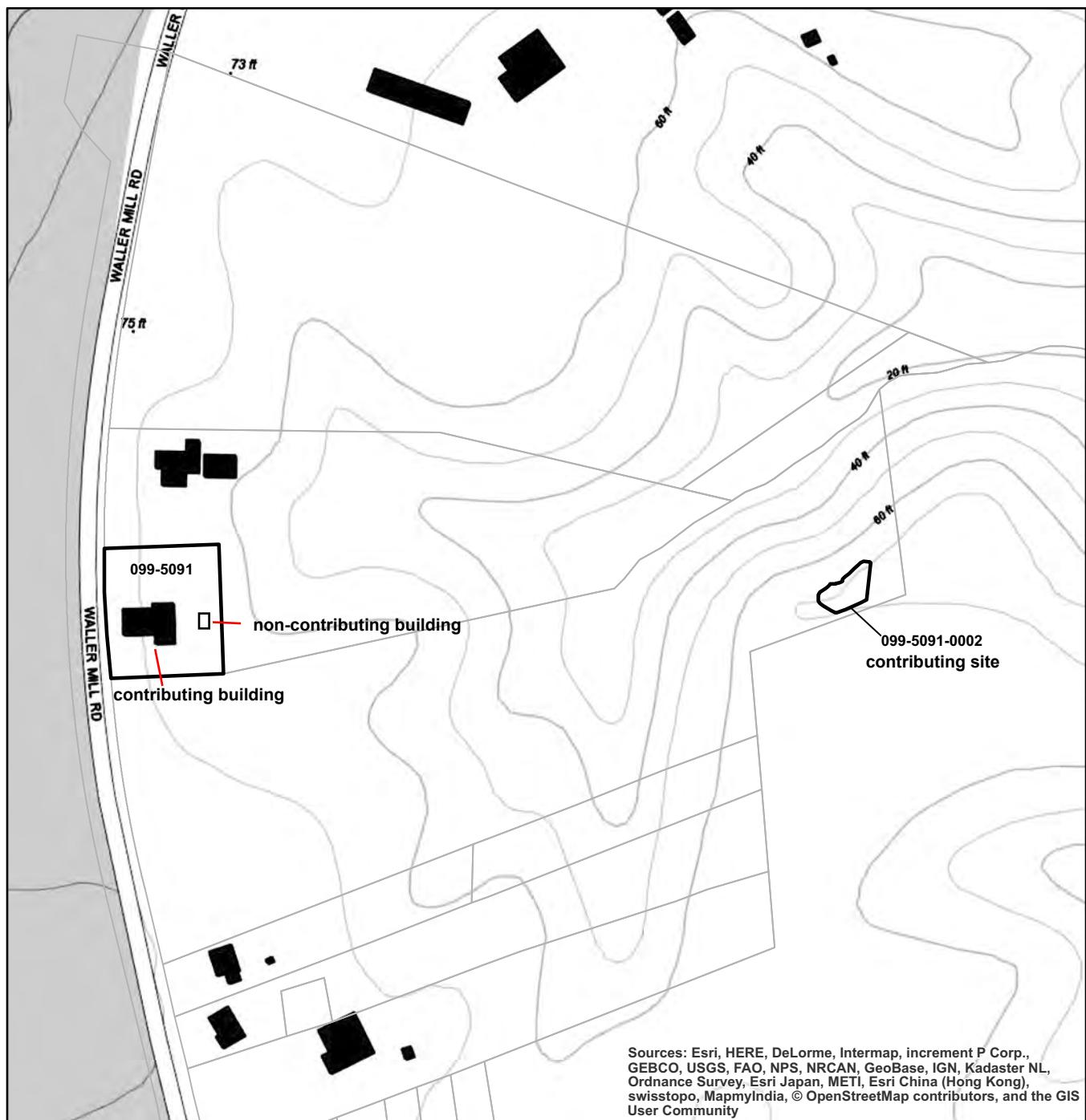
1 inch = 1,200 feet

1,000 0 1,000



Feet

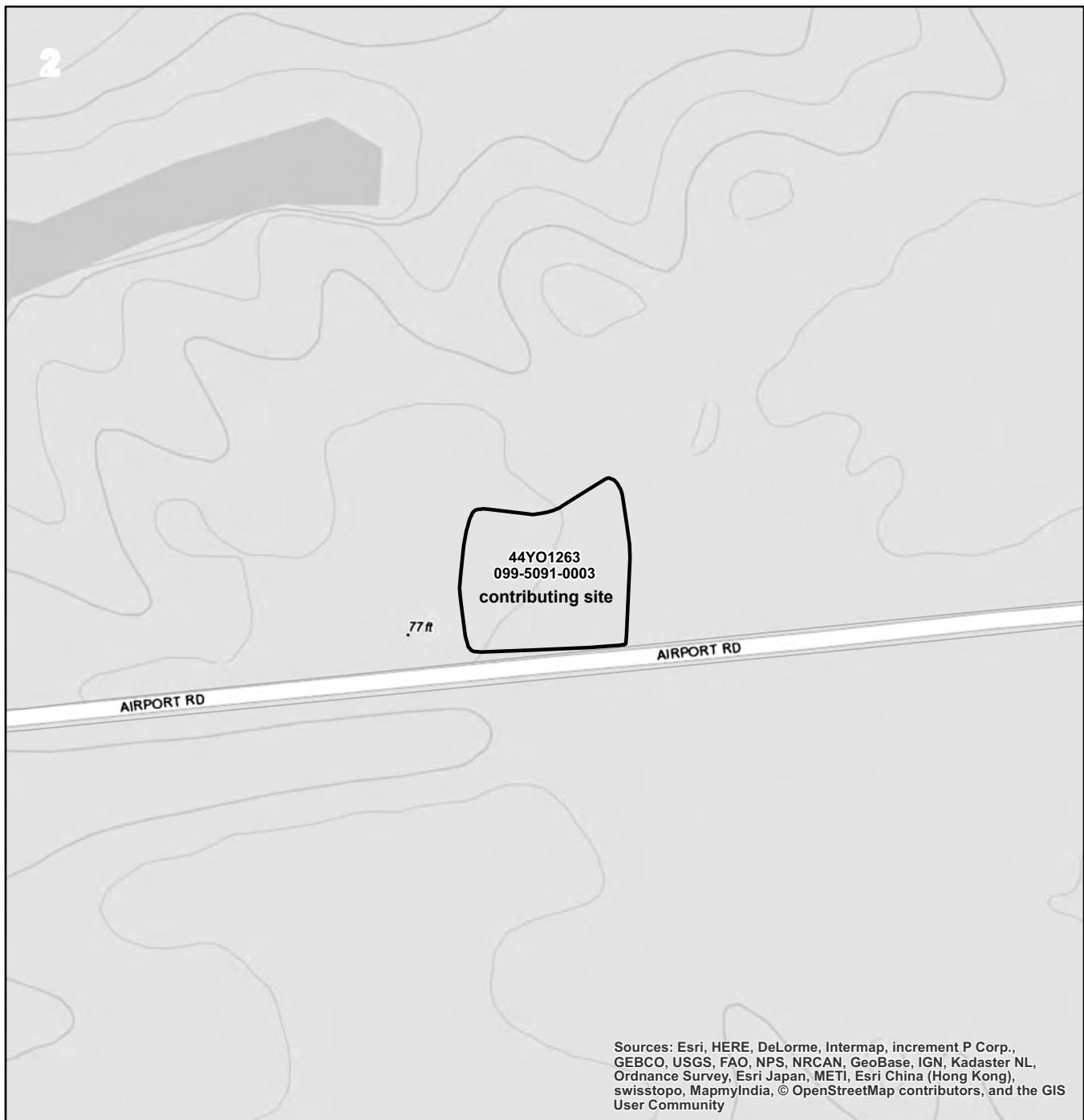
SKETCH MAP (2 of 4) - Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
York County, Virginia; DHR# 099-5091



1 inch = 200 feet

200 0 200
Feet

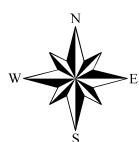
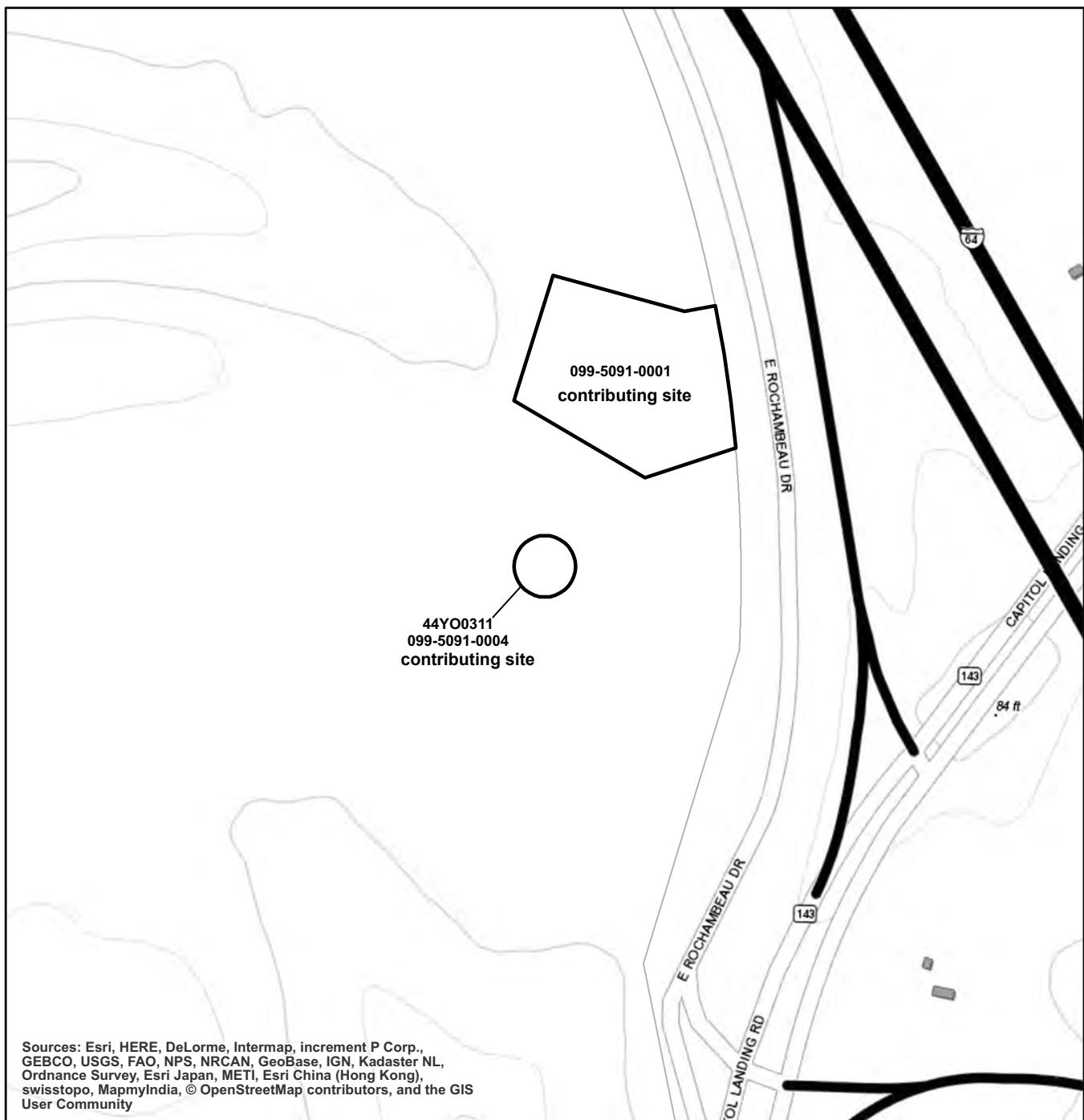
**SKETCH MAP (3 of 4) - Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
York County, Virginia; DHR# 099-5091**



1 inch = 200 feet

200 0 200
Feet

SKETCH MAP (4 of 4) - Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District
York County, Virginia; DHR# 099-5091



1 inch = 200 feet

200 0 200
Feet

PHOTO KEY (1 of 4)

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Feet

0 20 40 60 80
1:1,128 / 1"=94 Feet

Title:

Date: 4/26/2022

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PHOTO KEY (2 of 4)

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

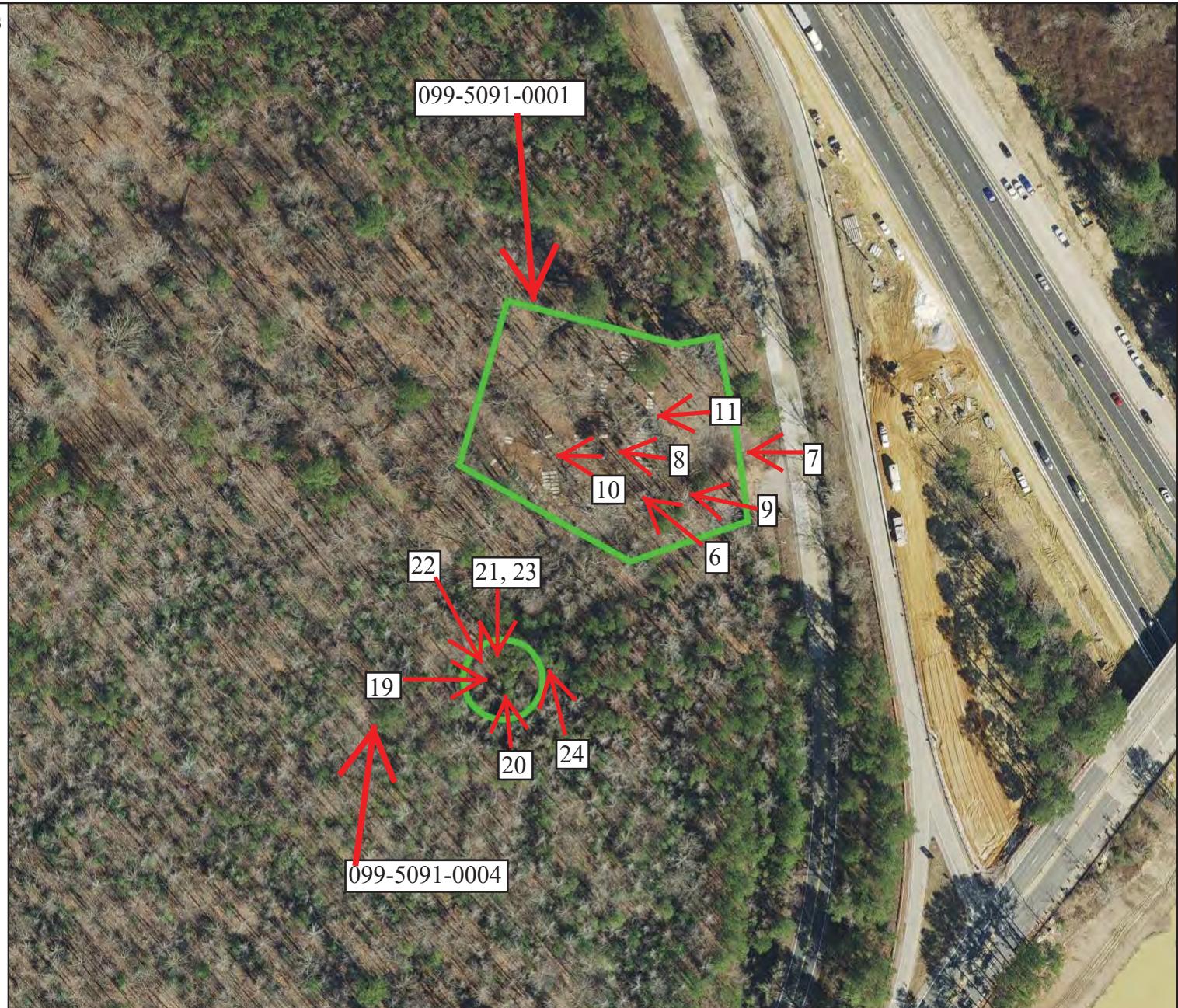
York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Feet

0 50 100 150 200
1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



Title:

Date: 4/26/2022

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PHOTO KEY (3 of 4)

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

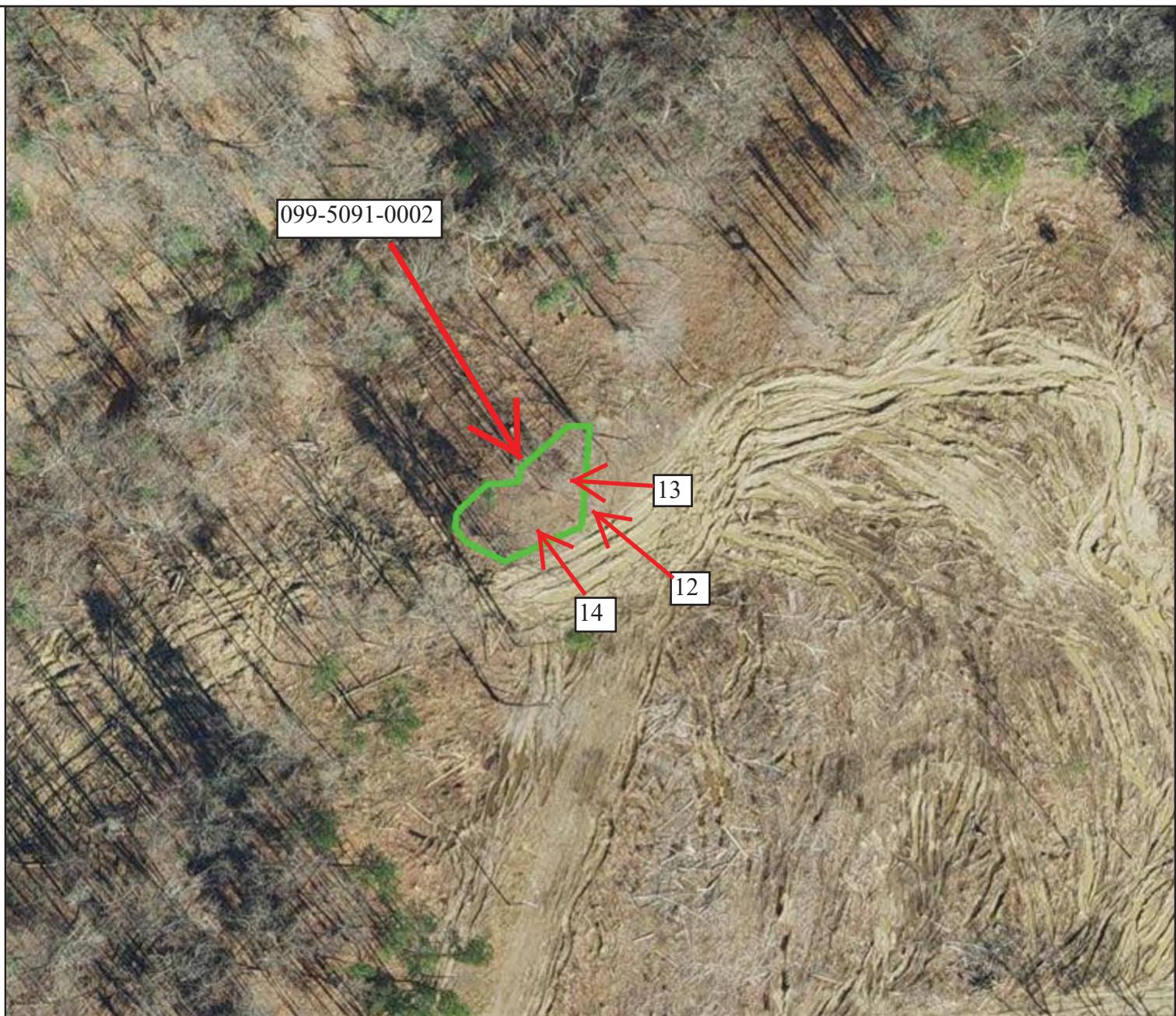
York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Feet

0 20 40 60 80
1:1,128 / 1"=94 Feet



Title:

Date: 4/26/2022

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PHOTO KEY (4 of 4)

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

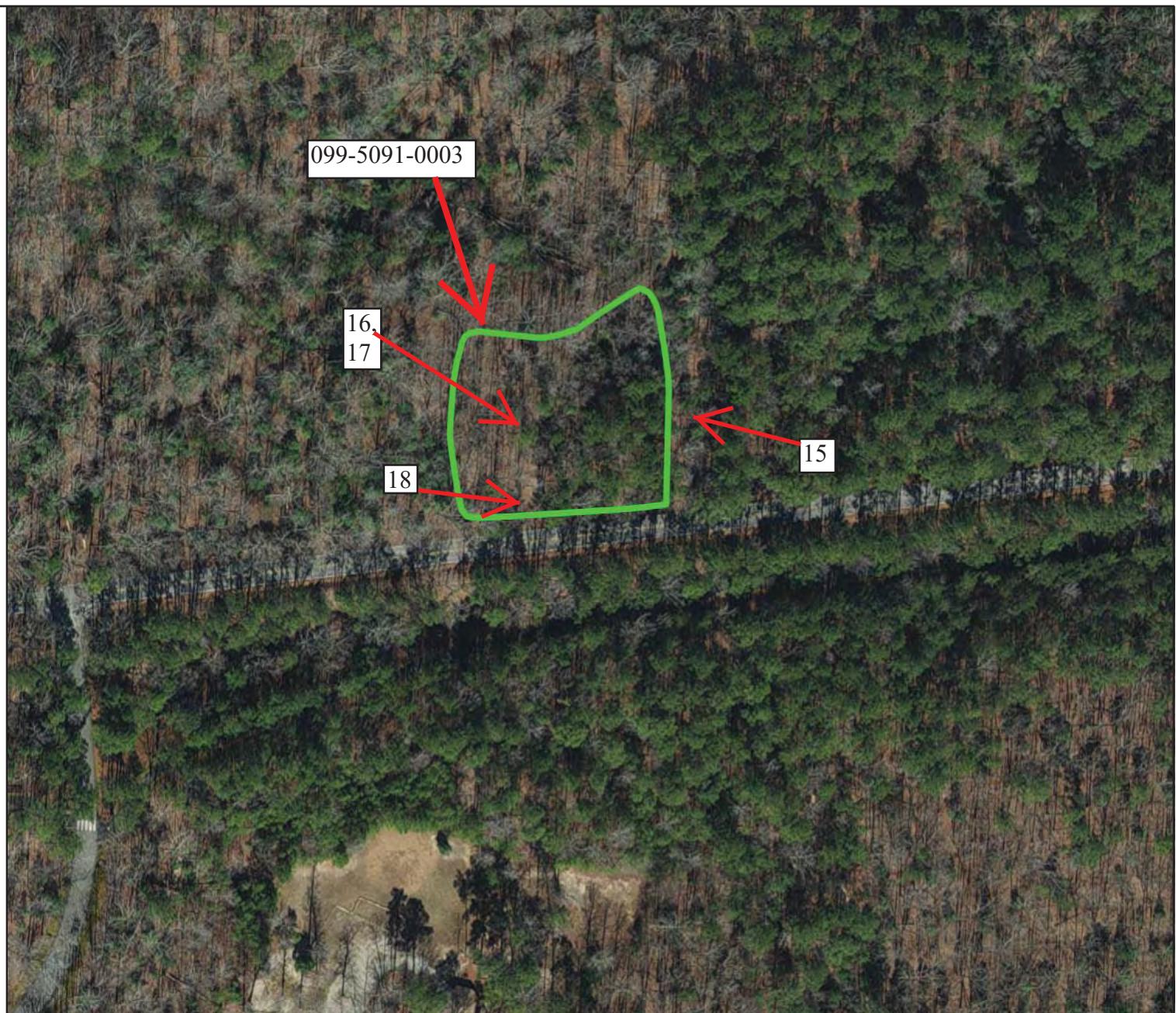
York County, VA

DHR No. 099-5091



Feet

0 50 100 150 200
1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet



Title:

Date: 4/26/2022

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number SLR Page _____

Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic
 District

Name of Property

York County, VA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100008134

Date Listed: 3/13/2023

Property Name: Oak Grove Baptist Church Historic District

County: York County

State: VA

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



 Signature of the Keeper

3/13/2023
 Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The SLR is issued to clarify the areas of significance for the district.

The areas of significance noted in Section 8 are Art, Education, Ethnic Heritage, and Archeology. The narrative provides justification for Ethnic Heritage, Education, Social History, Art, and Archeology.

The significance under Education is not justified by the extant resources. The Criterion D significance does provide research questions pertaining to education and African Americans. The site of the school lacks sufficient historic integrity to reflect significance under Criterion A, but does under Criterion D. The Social History significance is supported by extant resources and should be included as an area of significance.

SECTION 8:

EDUCATION is hereby dropped as an area of significance.

SOCIAL HISTORY is hereby added as an area of significance.

 The VA SHPO has been notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)