# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Department of Historic Resources

Stefanie K. Taillon
*Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources*

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

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April 10, 2025

Linda Nesselrodt, CLG Coordinator
Community Development Building Services Division
City Hall
116 W Beverley Street, 3rd Floor
Staunton, VA 24402

**Re: Fairview Cemetery, City of Staunton**

Dear Ms. Nesselrodt:
The Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Virginia's historic preservation office, is planning to present the **enclosed** National Register nomination for Virginia's State Review Board and Historic Resources Board for recommendation to the National Register of Historic Places and inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Because this resource is within your Certified Local Government, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is entitled to a sixty-day comment period during which the ARB may review the draft nomination and relay any comments or concerns to the DHR. I hope you will consider the enclosed nomination at your next meeting and relay your comments to us. All comments will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the Boards for consideration along with the nomination. We have scheduled the nomination for presentation to our boards on **Thursday, June 12, 2025**, and would like to receive your comments by that time in fulfillment of the comment period. This letter serves as notification initiating the sixty-day comment period and no further action will be taken on the nomination until we have received your comments, or the full sixty-day period has passed.

I look forward to receiving your comments. Should you have any further questions regarding the nomination or the register program, please contact Austin Walker, National Register Program Manager, at (804) 482-6439 or austin.walker@dhr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Jolene L. U. Smith
Director, Division of Resource Information & Register

cc: Mayor Edwards; Leslie Beauregard
Enclosure

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

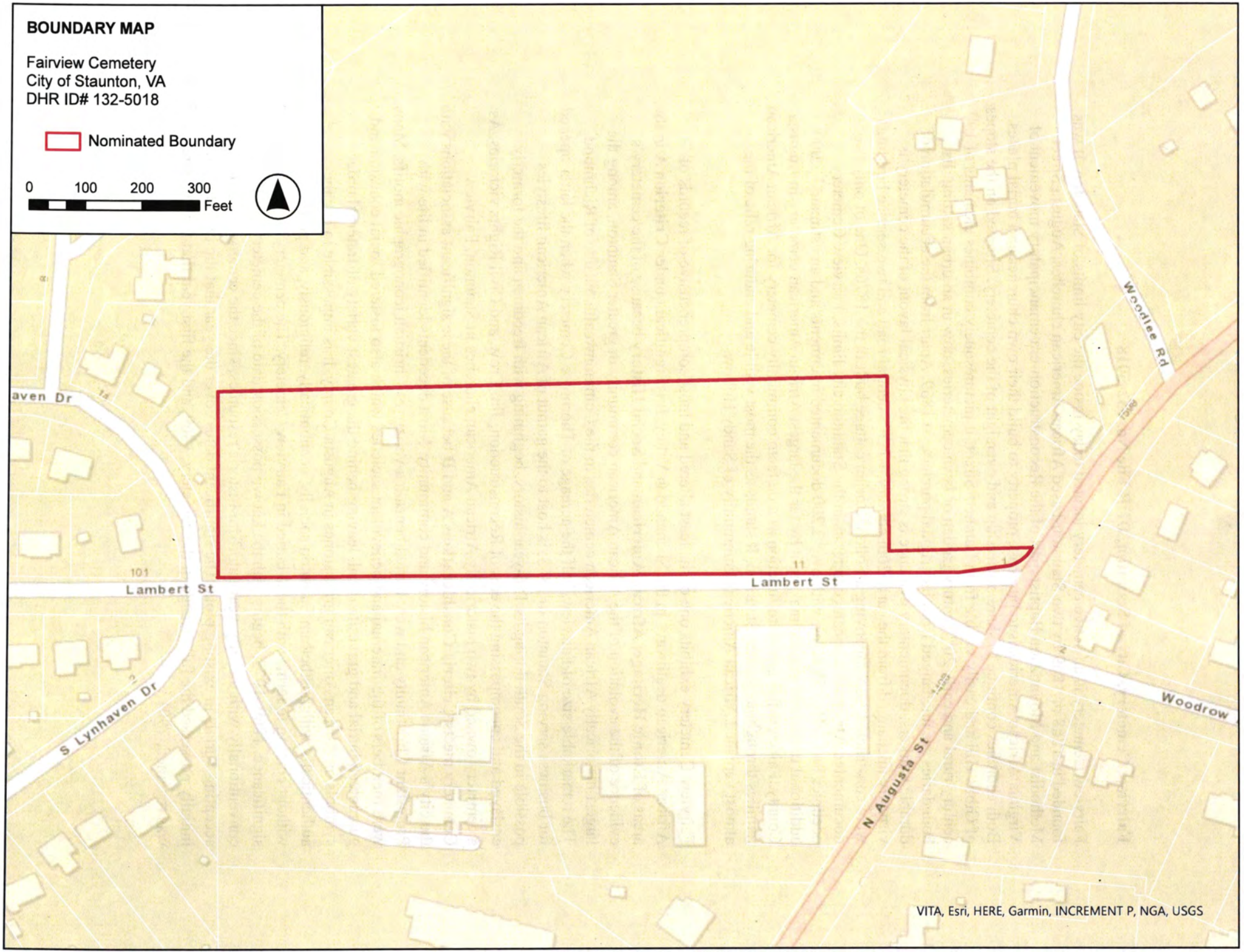
Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391

**Fairview Cemetery, City of Staunton, DHR File No. 132-5018**

Fairview Cemetery is an active cemetery located today inside the city limits of Staunton. It was founded in 1868 or 1869 by two Staunton-based African American churches, Augusta Street Methodist and Mount Zion Baptist, part of the Reconstruction-era emancipatory movement of Virginia African Americans to purchase property to build their own churches and burial places. Both churches continue to share ownership and oversight of the cemetery. Situated on the slopes of Gibbs Hill and easily visible from Lambert Street, it picturesquely combines elements of 19th century rural and early 20th century garden or lawn cemeteries, now in an urban setting. Its boundaries are unchanged from its original purchase in 1869. Apart from the accumulation of durable markers, documentary evidence is strong that the physical layout of the cemetery is virtually unchanged from the early 20th century, when a central road and two service buildings were constructed, accompanying a Folk Victorian cottage built in the 1870s. One of only two documented African American cemeteries in the Staunton city limits, Fairview Cemetery occupies just under six acres, with over 2,200 documented interments and an estimated 1,000 additional unmarked graves, making it by far the largest African American cemetery in Augusta County. Fairview has grown to function as a de facto community cemetery for African American families throughout greater Staunton. It stands as the most visible and enduring relic of the almost vanished African American community of Sandy Hollow.

Fairview Cemetery exhibits one of the least altered and most comprehensive of records of African American deathways in the Shenandoah Valley. It is significant under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and **Social History** because of the cemetery's evidence of the evolution of the African American community in greater Staunton, among the largest historically African American cemeteries in the Commonwealth outside of Richmond. The remarkable size of Fairview, half the acreage of Thornrose Cemetery when the latter opened for business serving Staunton in 1853, is host to the gamut of African American lifestyles possible in the South during its 156-year history, beginning with freedmen and the formerly enslaved and encompassing the eras of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights victories. As a cemetery owned by two historically African American churches in Staunton, Fairview Cemetery meets **Criteria Considerations A** and **D** because of these significant associations with the city's African American history and community. Most decedents identified in life with Protestant Christianity and were buried beneath a variety of Christian iconographic motifs. Many were members of the fraternal and benevolent societies which also fostered social cohesion and guaranteed burial and gravesite ritual, leaving behind the greatest variety of fraternal order symbols on African American gravestones in Augusta County. It is impossible to engage authentically with postbellum Staunton socially, economically, religiously, and politically without coming to terms with those buried in Fairview Cemetery. The cemetery's period of significance, 1869–1975, begins with the known possession date of the cemetery and ends conventionally with the fifty-year cutoff for historic resources, since the cemetery is still accepting burials in existing plots. The significant dates cover the year that the two churches initially possessed the full acreage of the cemetery, 1869, and the first year that the full acreage was regained, 1901.


BOUNDARY MAP
Fairview Cemetery
City of Staunton, VA
DHR ID# 132-5018
Nominated Boundary
0 100 200 300
Feet
Lambert St
Lambert St
S Lynhaven Dr
N Augusta St
Woodrow
Woodlee Rd
VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS

DHR VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

# The National and State Registers in Virginia

A Quick Guide to the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register

- Established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the **National Register of Historic Places** is the Nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

  In 1966, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, now the Department of Historic Resources. DHR is the State Historic Preservation Office responsible for nominating properties to the National Register and managing the **Virginia Landmarks Register**, the State's official list of properties important to Virginia's history. The same evaluation criteria and nomination form are used for the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

- **Key Points**

  - Listing in the National and State Registers is honorary. It recognizes a historic property's importance to its community, the State, and/or the Nation and encourages good stewardship.
  - National and State Register listings do not place any obligations or restrictions on private property owners. Owners remain free to do what they wish with their property within existing laws and reguations and are not required to restore or maintain a property in particular ways as a result of listing.
  - To ensure public participation in the process, property owners and local officials are notified and given the opportunity to comment on proposed nominations. When a nomination is submitted to the National Park Service, another public comment period is published in the Federal Register.

- **Benefits of Register Listing**

  - Owners of listed properties may qualify for Federal and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, historic preservation easements, and Federal and State grants for historic preservation when funding is available.
  - Federal agencies whose projects affect a listed property must give the Department of Historic Resources an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on the property.

- **Additional Information**

  DHR Historic Registers Program:
  https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/programs/historic-registers/

  VLR Online, an online database of State and National Register listings in Virginia:
  https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/

# The National and State Registers in Virginia

Rights of Private Property Owners to Comment or Object to a Nomination for Listing

## Supporting and/or Commenting on a Nomination

- A private property owner who supports a nomination for listing in the Registers is invited to send a letter of support but is not required to do so for the nomination to proceed. Private property owners are also welcome to comment without formally supporting or objecting to a nomination. Copies of letters of support and/or comment are provided to the Boards for review, along with the nomination to which they refer, and are included with the nomination if it is recommendeded to proceed to the NRHP.

## Objecting to a Nomination

- Per 17VAC10-20-200, a private property owner has the right to object to listing in either or both Registers. For a private property being individually nominated, each owner or partial owner may object to listing regardless of the portion that party owns. For a historic district that is being nominated, each owner of private property in the district is counted as one individual regardless of how many properties that party owns or whether the properties contribute to the significance of the district.
- An objection to listing must be provided to DHR in writing a minimum of 7 business days prior to the Board meeting. Letters of objection must be addressed to the State Historic Preservation Officer at the Department of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221.
- When objecting to listing, any owner or partial owner of private property must submit to DHR a written statement that references the subject property by address and/or parcel number and certifies that the party is the sole or partial owner of the private property, as appropriate.
  - For objections to listing in the VLR, the written statement of objection must be attested and notarized by a notary public in order to be counted by DHR in determining whether a majority of private property owners has objected to a nomination.
  - Objection letters concerning NRHP listing are not required to be notarized. Per 28 U.S. Code § 1746, a written objection should state: "I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on (date). (Signature)".
  - A property owner may submit a single written objection to listing in both the VLR and NRHP, but in order for the objection to be applied to the VLR listing, the letter must be notarized.
- If a **majority** (50% + 1) of private property owners object according to the process above, the nomination will not proceed to listing. In such cases, DHR is still required to submit the nomination to the National Park Service for a Determination of Eligibility for the NRHP, per 36 CFR 60.6(n).
- Letters of objection received a minimum of 7 business days prior to the Board meeting will be copied to Board members for review, along with the nomination to which they refer. If the nomination is approved to proceed to the NRHP, all letters of objection will be forwarded to the National Park Service to consider with their review of the nomination, along with any letters of support or comment that DHR has received.
- Letters of objection to listing in the NRHP may be submitted to DHR even after the Board meeting at which the nomination is approved. DHR will forward any letters of objection to the National Park Service. The National Park Service continues to accept letters of objection up to the date of listing in the NRHP. The National Park Service typically concludes review and approval of a nomination within approximately 45 days of receipt of the nomination from DHR.


FAIR
VIEW CEMETERY

**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 Property

Historic name: Fairview Cemetery
Other names/site number: DHR ID# 132-5018
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

## 2. Location

Street & number: 11 Lambert Street
City or town: Staunton State: VA County: Independent City
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ 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 _X_local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

**_X_A ___B ___C ___D**

**Signature of certifying official/Title:** **Date**

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

**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**

## 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: | [X] |
| Public – Local | [ ] |
| Public – State | [ ] |
| Public – Federal | [ ] |

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Building(s) | [ ] |
| District | [ ] |
| Site | [X] |
| Structure | [ ] |
| Object | [ ] |

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 2 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 4 | 2 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**
**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
FUNERARY: cemetery

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
FUNERARY: cemetery

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
OTHER: Rural Cemetery

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: Marble, Granite, Limestone, Sandstone; METAL: Bronze, Copper; CONCRETE

**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**

Fairview Cemetery is an active cemetery located today inside Staunton city limits. It was founded in 1868 or 1869 by two Staunton-based African American churches, Augusta Street Methodist and Mount Zion Baptist churches, part of the Reconstruction-era emancipatory movement of Virginia African Americans to purchase property to build their own churches and burial places. Both churches continue to share ownership and oversight of the cemetery. Situated on the slopes of Gibbs Hill and easily visible from Lambert Street, it picturesquely combines elements of nineteenth-century rural and early twentieth-century garden or lawn cemeteries, now in an urban setting. Its boundaries are unchanged from its original purchase in 1869. Apart from the accumulation of durable markers, documentary evidence is strong that the physical layout of the cemetery is virtually unchanged from the early twentieth century, when a road down the middle of it and two service buildings were constructed, accompanying a folk Victorian cottage built in the 1870s. One of only two documented African American cemeteries in the Staunton city limits, Fairview Cemetery occupies just under six acres, with over two thousand two hundred documented interments, with an estimated thousand more in unmarked graves, making

it by far the largest African American cemetery in Augusta County, both in acreage and number of burials. Although Fairview was explicitly created to serve the needs of the two churches, it has functioned as a de facto community cemetery for African American families throughout greater Staunton, and thus is an example of a town cemetery. It stands as the most visible and enduring relic of the almost vanished African American Sandy Hollow community. Buried in its acreage are the movers and shakers of post-Civil War Staunton: educators, journalists, AMA-accredited physicians, lawyers, pastors, political activists, decorated soldiers, a plethora of business-owners, members of many fraternal orders, former enslaved and freedmen, representatives of all economic classes and walks of life.

## Narrative Description

### Setting

Fairview Cemetery is today located near the center of the Gibbs Hill neighborhood in Staunton, which combines residential streets, professional buildings, small businesses and the main post office. The cemetery is bounded on the southern border by busy Lambert Street, most of which is faced by the Staunton Main Post Office and the Staunton Medical and Professional Center, a 1960s-vintage two-story professional office park, with almost no Lambert Street buffer defined by mature trees. There is no fencing between the cemetery and the lawn of the private residence that borders it on the western leg of the rectangle, near the North Lynnhaven Drive loop. Almost all of the long northern cemetery perimeter is wooded, completely concealing the sizable Gibbs property at the summit. A greenhouse business on the northeast and east borders is partially concealed by natural woods.

### Physical Description

Fairview Cemetery sits on a northeast/southwest ridge. It is sited on a south facing slope. The slope percentages range from 7% to 30% with most slopes falling into the 10% to 15% range. The highest elevation is approximately 1570 feet above sea level. The lowest is approximately 1495 feet at the southeast corner of the site for a total of 75 feet elevation change. There is a stepped, broad stone wall of native bluestone flanking the western entrance off of Lambert Street, a lower stone entrance on the eastern elevation of the same bluestone, and a short sandstone wall at the back of a rectangular concrete slab at the cemetery's highest elevation, but otherwise there are no cemetery-maintained fencing or walls separating the cemetery from Lambert Street or surrounding properties. The western entrance incorporates two matching concrete obelisks with inscriptions facing Lambert Street "FAIRVIEW EST. 1869."

The cemetery combines two distinctive styles, corresponding to the eras of their creation and the topographical features of the acreage. The two western acres, under continuous administration by the two churches since 1869, exhibit features of a nineteenth-century rural cemetery, with little formal ordering of burials or fixed plot dimensions, evidence of many unmarked graves, a sparse admixture of native and specimen trees, and possibly what had once been uninscribed fieldstone

markers piled reverently around an old tree stump. The north-western portion occupies a swale, with some bluestone outcroppings. The eastern portion of the old cemetery follows the ascent of Gibbs Hill. The view from a crumbling fifteen-foot by twenty-foot concrete slab at the summit provides a dramatic vista of nearby Betsy Bell Mountain and the distant Blue Ridge Mountains. What function the foundation slab originally served is unknown. Mention is made in an 1883 newspaper article about the construction of a superintendent's house, which perhaps rested on this foundation.[1] This concrete slab is considered a noncontributing structure of the cemetery. Two service buildings were constructed on the western portion of the cemetery during the twentieth century, judging from the choice of cinder block construction material. The roadbed beneath an asphalt road leading from the western entrance that loops between a square service building and the concrete slab foundation may or may not have been constructed in the nineteenth century. Grave markers in the old cemetery generally face east, with three however that face due west, the only such orientation in the entire cemetery. Headstones are made of marble or granite, range in legible dates between 1884 and 2019, and include tablet, obelisk, slant, flat/bevel, pulpit, neoclassical, veteran-issue, and block designs. Iconography includes crosses, flowers, fruit, grain and leaves, and symbols for fraternal orders. Some footstones are present. At least three family plot layouts are identifiable, two with concrete curbs or metal fences. Plastic and silk flowers are often seen on the more recent interments. Gravesite plantings include yucca, bearded iris, Colorado blue spruce, arborvitae, vinca minor. Of these plantings only yucca and possibly vinca minor can be considered markers typical of African American cemeteries in Virginia.[2]

The central and eastern cemetery landscape, by contrast, embodies the twentieth-century open "garden" or lawn cemetery look, with north/south ordered rows of burials and open access alleys, mostly uniform plot dimensions, scattered prefabricated concrete benches, a small mortuary, an anachronistic nineteenth century cottage, mature specimen plantings of non-native trees, a central one-lane road that doubles as a walking path, and a stone-lined eastern entrance off of Lambert Street with a loop asphalt road. Most grave markers throughout the cemetery face east, the direction of the rising sun, symbolically positioned for the Christian resurrection. A metal flagpole was donated by a fraternal order, built atop a bluestone foundation near the center of the cemetery, just south of the asphalt bisecting road. It is not known whether this stone base predated the flagpole and served other purposes. The flagpole and its pedestal are considered a noncontributing structure of the cemetery. Headstones are made of marble, granite, concrete, bronze and copper, and range in dates from 1901 to 2025. Designs include tablet, block, flat/bevel, slant, plinth wing, pulpit, obelisk, pedestal, neoclassical, veteran-issue flat and tablet, and temporary funeral home metal and plastic markers. Some are topped with lamb or angel sculptures. Iconography includes crosses, churches, Gothic windows, flowers, fruit, grain and leaves, and symbols for fraternal orders. Some of the more recent ones include etched portraits or images of cherished objects associated with the deceased. Plastic and silk flowers are often seen, along with American flags on Memorial Day. A number of family plot layouts with concrete or

[1] *Valley Virginian*, April 12, 1883, pg. 3.
[2] Lynn Rainville, *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 15, 49, 62.

stone curbs are visible. Some footstones are present. Gravesite plantings include yucca, bearded iris, vinca minor, holly, barberry, yew, boxwood, Norway spruce, sugar maple, and crape myrtle.

Fairview Cemetery bears by far the largest and most varied visual lexicon of community membership in benevolent and fraternal orders of any African American cemetery in Augusta County. At least five members of the original "Alpha Consistory" of the first African American Prince Hall Order of 32nd Degree Grand Masons in the state of Virginia, founded in 1897, are buried in Fairview, two of whom have headstones with the familiar interlocked Masonic compass, ruler and "G."[3] A bronze marker from the 1940s includes an Elk's head with clock dial and initials standing for Improved Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks (of the World). There is one engraved example of the Prince Hall Order of the Eastern Star "FATAL" symbol. There are five examples of three interlinked chain links, the symbol of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Masonic and Odd Fellow symbols are combined on two headstones, unsurprisingly, since many community members held memberships in multiple fraternal orders. Membership in many other African American fraternal orders and burial societies for decedents in Fairview are attested in newspaper obituaries and archival sources. These include Knights of Pythias, White Cross Burial Society, Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria, Independent Order of St. Luke, Grand United Order of Galilean Fisherman, Daughters of the Sphinx, Courts of Calanthe, Grand United Order of True Reformers, Daughter of Elks, Household of Ruth.[4] Several of these orders were state wide or national in constituency, illustrating vital connections of the greater Staunton African American community with social and cultural movements outside Augusta County.

Three distinctively styled buildings reflect different eras and have served multiple uses. A square building on the eastern edge of the western "rural" landscape, north of the western entrance to the cemetery, was constructed of cinder block core but is now clad in beautifully set sandstone and has a double door on the north elevation wide enough to accommodate a small carriage or hearse. It has tall 9x3 windows with metal mullions on the east, west and south elevations. The building has a central brick chimney but no stove or fireplace. A disused vehicular loop road leads from the western entrance around it. The building has in recent years been used for storing tools and small detached headstones, but it might have once functioned as a mortuary. Given the use of cinder block fabric and little used surrounding road, the building probably dates from the early twentieth century. This "storage building" is considered a contributing structure to Fairview Cemetery.

Facing the central road, built into the hillside, not far from the square "storage building," is a small rectangular one-story flat-roofed mortuary. Built of cinder block with a mica aggregate, it has a wooden double-door entry and a parapet wall with the legend "FAIR VIEW CEMETERY" picked out in raised serif capital letters. With small cased openings on the east and west elevations, three steps leading up to the entrance and no sign of a chimney, the building reportedly functioned as a mortuary in years past. It is speculated that it was made from a type of

[3] *Richmond Planet*, June 5, 1897, pg. 1.
[4] Terry Shulman, "Fraternal Orders Filled Niche for Victorian Males," *Daily News Leader*, May 7, 2005, pg. 16.

kit available in the early twentieth century. This mortuary is considered a contributing structure to Fairview Cemetery.

The largest of the three structures is a cottage situated on a gentle slope near the eastern boundary of the cemetery property and facing south onto Lambert Street, known as "Shea House" after its builders and first occupants. Clad in clapboard siding, the front portion of this one-and-half story, three-bay, two-pile folk Victorian structure rests on brick piers with later cement block infill. A later addition with bathroom plumbing is present on the north elevation. The rear portion of the structure sits at ground level and has a brick and rubble foundation. The pyramidal roof with centered front gable is covered in standing-seam metal. Windows throughout the house are wood, six-over-six, double-hung sash with architrave surrounds on the first floor and plain trim above.

On the south/front elevation, the center bay is recessed creating a covered front porch under the gable. The porch is accessed from the yard by cast-concrete steps centered on the porch opening. Flanking this opening, square posts embellished with scroll-sawn corner brackets appear to support the gable and are spanned by a simple square spindle railing on either side. The gable over the porch has one centered window with plain trim. Three doors open onto the porch: the four-panel front door surrounded by sidelights and transom, and two additional four-panel doors – one leading to the projecting bays. The projecting bays on either side of the porch are symmetrical and each has one window with architrave trim. Scroll sawn brackets under the eaves further detail this elevation. The east and west elevations are mirror images and each feature two window-openings with architrave trim and a centrally-placed gable dormer with plain trim.

A one-story, standing-seam metal, shed-roofed addition with six-panel door is centered on the rear/north elevation and spans the space between the original, symmetrically located window openings on this elevation. There is a small, one-light opening to the west of this door with no existing casement. A single-lane asphalt driveway leads directly from Lambert Street north along the east elevation of the cottage. This driveway does not connect with the asphalt road that bisects the cemetery and terminates in the bluestone-lined eastern entrance.[5]

To a remarkable extent, Shea House preserves the design features and very fabric of its original construction. Beneath the canvas and wallpaper is the original plaster on lathe, including seven-foot cove plaster ceilings throughout the second story rooms. The sash windows, fireplace surrounds, interior staircase, doors, flooring, clapboard siding, Victorian gingerbread trim, standing-seam metal roof and chimneys all appear to be original. The fireplaces were filled in years ago.

Based on deeds and land tax records, it is likely that this house was constructed by Edward and Bridget Shea in 1876 and used as a residential dwelling until the building was sold along with the adjoining property to the two Staunton churches in December 1900. Although the dates are

[5] Most of the design-specific description of "Shea House" is quoted verbatim from Frazier Associates, *Fairview Cemetery: Landscape and Preservation Master Plan*, April 2005 (unpublished report), pgs. 15–17. Used with permission.

approximate, the churches used "Shea House" as a residence for cemetery caretakers and their families, and as a rental property, from 1900 until the 1980s or 1990s. It has been vacant since that time. As of 2024, the building is being stabilized and rehabilitated as an information center for the cemetery. "Shea House" is considered a contributing structure to Fairview Cemetery.

Physical Organization

The 2-acre 30-pole western portion of Fairview Cemetery that has been in continual possession of the two churches since 1869 exhibits some family groupings, but there is no consistent evidence for a formal burial grid or uniform size of plots. Most durable markers face east. Natural bluestone outcroppings in the swale would have limited burials in those places. The depressions of many unmarked graves were once visible in the meadow-like region of the western cemetery. With a few large indigenous trees, scattered, irregularly placed markers, and steep slope along Gibbs Hill, this portion of the cemetery best preserves the "rural" cemetery ambiance. All of the legible markers that date between the 1880s and 1900 are located in this section of the cemetery, together with burials as late as 2019. It is possible that the western entrance off of "cemetery road" (Lambert Street today) existed in the nineteenth century, and also possible that the connecting loop road led close to whatever structure was situated on the fifteen-foot by twenty-foot concrete foundation at the cemetery's highest elevation. The current sandstone-faced storage building inside the loop road, with a cinder block core, is a twentieth-century installation. The absence of pre-1900 marked graves near the slab foundation and eastern side of the nearby loop road suggest that this portion of the old cemetery was unavailable for burials, despite the picturesque views of Betsy Bell Mountain and the distant Blue Ridge Mountains.

There is both strong physical and documentary evidence for consistent gravesite organization in the eastern portion of the nearly three and one-half acre property that returned to cemetery use in 1900. Beginning a few dozen feet to the east of the mortuary, grave markers generally follow north-south lines, with most headstones facing east. This grid pattern runs all the way to the eastern border and down to the Lambert Street perimeter. The row designations map prepared by Rivanna Archaeological Services clearly illustrates this pattern.[6] On the section and plot map, the regular north/south lines correspond to columns 1-12G (north half) and 13-23 (south half).[7] The typical plot/lot is a fifteen-foot square, often divided into east and west or north and south halves, with each half plot/lot accommodating the possibility of four or five inhumations.

Evidence that this grid was imposed at an early point in the twentieth century stems from multiple sources. An eight-foot by three-foot canvas map of Fairview Cemetery, formerly owned by the Jones Funeral Home, attests to this basic grid pattern.[8] A small, handwritten ledger book

[6] Rivanna Archaeological Services. "Fairview Cemetery: Row Designations," in *Fairview Cemetery Staunton Virginia: Inventory of Monuments and Inscribed Names*, May 2008, pg. 3. Used with permission.
[7] Rivanna Archaeological Services. "Fairview Cemetery: Section & Plot Designations," in *Fairview Cemetery Staunton Virginia: Inventory of Monuments and Inscribed Names*, May 2008, pg. 4. Used with permission.
[8] The canvas map was scanned at the University of Virginia by Rivanna Archaeological Services in 2008. The original is currently in the possession of McCutcheon and Jones Funeral Home, Waynesboro.

also belonging to the undertaker Kenneth L. Jones records the names of plot owners, keyed for most entries on the canvas map.[9] Inside the front cover, the ledger book is inscribed "Record of Plot Owners of Fairview Cemetery, Staunton, Virginia," and "This book is the property of Kenneth L. Jones." The ledger consists of 152 numbered pages, organized alphabetically by plot owners' surnames. The top portion of most pages is written in an elegant flowing cursive script using a nibbed fountain pen, whereas the lower portion is written with a ball-point pen in a markedly different hand. Many of these top-page entries are for people buried prior to 1945, before Jones gained his undertaker license and started his funeral home business. The canvas map also records names of plot owners in different hands, many of which also predate Jones Funeral Home activity. Newspaper obituaries tie several of these inhumations to two earlier funeral homes that operated in the Staunton area, S. M. Wilkes & Co. and Hamrick Funeral Home. One example of such a ledger book entry (the first one recorded, p. 3) is for Samuel Adams, a trustee of Fairview Cemetery, 1888–1896, who was buried with an extant marker dated 18 March 1897. It is evident that Kenneth L. Jones (b. 1905) "inherited" both the ledger book and the canvas map, updating both through decades of applied bookkeeping and gravesite use.

Other evidence for the early and consistent employment of a plot grid includes alleyways between the burial rows, the existence of the east-west road that bisects the cemetery, linking the two entrances from Lambert Street, and the fact that markers dating to the first decade of the twentieth century are sprinkled across the post-1900 cemetery boundaries, preserving the grid organization. There is one prominent burial inside of the looping road terminating in the eastern entrance, but no sign of burials near the nineteenth-century cottage, nor along the narrow strip of land that extends east to Augusta Street, what was the Valley Turnpike. There does not appear to have been any restrictions on the design, height or material of the durable markers.

Integrity Statement

Fairview Cemetery occupies the same plat of land that was sold to the two churches in 1868 or 1869. While there are records and oral tradition that a portion of it was used for pauper burials and a mass grave for yellow fever victims, the cemetery has served the burial needs of the two churches, together with the African American community in greater Staunton and Augusta County, for 156 years. The overall design layout and major features of roadways, service buildings, cottage, gateways and panoply of markers are largely unchanged since the early twentieth century. The "new" section dating from December 1900 evidences grid organization and grave orientation that has been maintained since that date. While the surrounding real estate has transitioned from rolling farms to urban vistas, the cemetery itself abides as a unique example of a merged rural and garden cemetery, a 5.87-acre time capsule from the previous centuries, the most accessible and least altered survival of the African American Sandy Hollow community. Therefore, the site retains a remarkable integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

[9] Rivanna Archaeological Services. *Burial Plot Ownership Records From the Jones Funeral Home Ledger Book*, July 2008. Used with permission.

## 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.)

- [X] 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.)

- [X] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [X] 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

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ETHNIC HERITAGE – African American
SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**
1869-1975

**Significant Dates**
1869
1901

**Significant Person**
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**
N/A

**Architect/Builder**
N/A

**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.)

Fairview Cemetery exhibits one of the least edited and most comprehensive of records of African American deathways in the Shenandoah Valley. It is significant under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Ethnic Heritage: African American** and **Social History** because of the cemetery's evidence of the evolution of the African American community in greater Staunton, among the largest historically African American cemeteries in the Commonwealth outside of Richmond. The remarkable size of Fairview, half the acreage of Thornrose Cemetery when the latter opened for business serving Staunton in 1853, is host to the gamut of African American lifestyles possible in the postbellum South, beginning with freedmen and the formerly enslaved in 1869, encompassing the eras of Reconstruction, Jim Crow and civil rights victories, adding physicians, lawyers, veterans, activists and educators to the earlier farmers, laborers and domestics in 2,200 documented burials spanning 156 years. As a cemetery owned by two historically African American churches in Staunton, Fairview Cemetery meets **Criteria Considerations A** and **D** because of these significant associations with the city's African American history and community. Most decedents identified in life with Protestant Christianity and were buried beneath a variety of Christian iconographic motifs. Many were members of the fraternal and benevolent societies which also fostered social cohesion and guaranteed burial and gravesite ritual, leaving behind the greatest variety of fraternal order symbols on African American gravestones in Augusta County. It is impossible to engage authentically with postbellum Staunton socially, economically, religiously, and politically without coming to terms with those buried in Fairview Cemetery. The asserted period of significance, 1869–1975, begins with the known possession date of the cemetery and ends conventionally with the fifty-year cutoff for historic resources, since the cemetery is still accepting burials in existing plots. The significant dates cover the year that the two churches initially possessed the full acreage of the cemetery, 1869, and the first year that the full acreage was regained, 1901.

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

Social and Cultural Background

Fairview Cemetery was located in the rural Sandy Hollow community on property that was probably once part of the Selma Plantation. An 1884 map by local cartographer Jed Hotchkiss identifies a public schoolhouse named Fairview, located near the unmarked Fairview Cemetery.[10] The same map detail employs Hotchkiss' shorthand for modest African American

[10] Jedidiah Hotchkiss and Joseph A. Waddell, *Historical Atlas of Augusta County, Virginia. Maps from Original Surveys, by Jed. Hotchkiss., Top. Eng. Its Annals, by Joseph A. Waddell. Physiography, by Jed. Hotchkiss* (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins & Co, 1885), 64–65.