

**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Oaklette Historic District (131-5071)

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & Indian River Road, and Oaklette, Webster, St. Lawrence and Seneca Streets  not for publication  
number \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Chesapeake  vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Chesapeake code 550 Zip 23325

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is: \_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. Date of Action  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. Signature of Keeper  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register



Name of Property: **Oaklette Historic District**  
Location: **City of Chesapeake, Virginia**

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

Roof ASPHALT, METAL

Walls WOOD, SYNTHETICS, METAL

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Location: **City of Chesapeake, Virginia**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**      1883 – 1940

**Significant Dates**    1883 – Deed to the Oaklette United Methodist Church  
1904 - Division of Hare farm into the community of Oaklette  
1905 – Formation of Oaklette Realty Investment Corporation  
1920 – Sale of north parcel to Willoughby W. Colonna  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Cultural Affiliation**    N/A

**Architect/Builder**    Willoughby W. Colonna  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**See Continuation Sheet for other Architects**

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office.
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property: **Oaklette Historic District**  
Location: **City of Chesapeake, Virginia**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property 75

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Eastin g	Northing	
1	<u>18</u>	<u>389280</u>	<u>4076390</u>	3	<u>18</u>	<u>389500</u>	<u>4076470</u>
2	<u>18</u>	<u>389460</u>	<u>4076420</u>	4	<u>18</u>	<u>389720</u>	<u>4076680</u>

See continuation sheet.

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ date: Dec. 13, 2002

street & number P. O. Box 7638 telephone 757/623.3456

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23509

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Architectural Description**

**Summary Architectural Description**

The Oaklette Historic District is an example of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century planned, streetcar suburb. Like in most early 20<sup>th</sup>-century suburbs of the city of Norfolk, Oaklette was located on one of the many radiating streetcar lines from Norfolk and on one of the numerous waterways defining Norfolk's boundaries. Oaklette is a peninsula bound by Indian River, a tributary of the Elizabeth River, and its marshlands, and Indian River Road, which connected the late 19<sup>th</sup> century town of Berkley and Princess Anne County. Oaklette is defined by large-scale single-family dwellings of frame construction dominating the waterfront and smaller Bungalow and Colonial Revival dwellings located on the landlocked parcels. The earliest houses were constructed before World War I and were primarily occupied by families associated with the development of the early community and Oaklette church. World War I necessitated the construction of additional housing in the Norfolk/Portsmouth area, which is evident in the second wave of construction within the Oaklette district in the 1920s-era Bungalows. Later development primarily occurred during the post-World War II era found in the brick ranch houses. In addition there has been late 20<sup>th</sup> century development on vacant lots and redevelopment of larger waterfront house sites into subdivisions. Oaklette retains its early 20<sup>th</sup> century character and street pattern and overall has good integrity. It meets National Register Criteria C under the context of Community Planning and Development. The district encompasses 80 acres and contains 56 resources.

**Detailed Architectural Description**

The plan of the Oaklette Historic District is based upon traditional gridiron city planning developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The district is bound on the south by Indian River Road, from Berkley, formerly Washington Point, south of Norfolk east to Norfolk County. The district is bound on the north and east by Indian River, a tributary of the Elizabeth River. Tidal flats and the adjacent Kemp Landing development are located to the west.

The original development plan subdivided the southernmost inland lots with larger lots along the waterfront. The first plan of 1904 shows lots of 100 feet wide and 208 feet deep. The lots were oriented north-south with 100-foot frontage on Webster Avenue, Seneca Avenue and Indian River Turnpike, later renamed Indian River Road. Lots that had been previously sold for the establishment of the Oaklette Methodist Episcopal Chapel in 1884 extend from Indian River Road to Webster Avenue mid-block between St. Lawrence Avenue and Oaklette Avenue, and were shown within the plan.

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The original plat extended to the lots north of Seneca Avenue leaving the prime north lots bound by Indian River open. The lots to the east of Oaklette Avenue were divided to allow house sites to take advantage of the prime waterfront. There are two streets located-south on the east and west sides of the peninsula. The orientation of these streets and the location of the cross streets at the south end of the plat are attributed to the desire of the property owners to have the maximum number of saleable waterfront lots.

By 1905 further subdivision of the lots was made with 25-foot frontage and addition of Maple and Elm Avenues to increase saleable parcels. The depth of the lots had changed to 100-feet, which was a standard found in other suburban planned communities of Norfolk.

The Norfolk City and Suburban Railway had been established in the neighborhood in 1904 and traveled east from Washington Point along Webster Avenue, turning south on Oaklette Avenue to Indian River. The streetcar line ran from Washington Point to Indian River Park, a pleasure ground established in Norfolk County southeast of Oaklette.

Development in Oaklette had first occurred by the Hare descendants after the death of Mathew Hare. The original Hare house was located on a parcel north of the planned community on what later became the Colonna property. The Savage tract was also located to the northeast corner of the planned development. The Colonna tract remains in its original state, while the Savage tract has been partially subdivided and new houses have been developed to the south of the original dwelling.

Most houses constructed during the period of significance were constructed between 1905 and 1915. An early dwelling is 3420 Indian River Road. Constructed in 1901 adjacent to the church, it is two-stories with a central entrance. Colonial Revival elements and proportions dominate the building. It is similar in size to other large-scale houses found on the waterfront sites.

The waterfront houses are the most notable in the district. The Savage House at 824 Oaklette Avenue was constructed in 1915-1919 at the north end of Oaklette Avenue. It is 2-1/2-stories with Queen Anne and Colonial Revival details. A similar house also owned by the Savage family is located to the south on a waterfront site. 915 Oaklette Avenue is similar in form and style. These are the largest remaining waterfront houses located on the east side of Oaklette Avenue.

The west side of the community is dominated by Craftsman Bungalow dwellings constructed in the early 1920s. The best examples can be seen in the grouping of Bungalows constructed by the Colonna family at 3408 and 3440 Seneca Avenue. They are simplified and one-story with wood shingle siding.

In addition to dwellings within the district is the unique Colonna family houseboat or hunting lodge. The

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lodge was pushed inland during a hurricane in 1933 and was permanently placed at the west end of Seneca Avenue. It is two-stories encircled by porches. The boat is accessed via a small wood bridge.

The Colonna property, which dominates the Oaklette district on the northwest end, is a remnant of the original estate. The expanded Caretaker's House remains as well as the horse barn. The site remains mostly open with small farm buildings.

Other dwellings were constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s which are similar in style, form and massing to the earliest dwellings. Later development used modern materials and construction methods, in addition to new building forms.

The addition of post-World War II-era ranch-style houses on vacant lots is seen in three adjacent dwellings between 828 and 832 Oaklette Avenue. They are brick with hipped roofs and are a single-story.

With its variety in property forms, the Oaklette Historic District has good integrity, which makes it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Place under Criteria C for Community Planning and Development.

**Resource Inventory**

**INDIAN RIVER ROAD**

**3420 Indian River Road**

Paxson, Pascal House

This two-story, frame single-family dwelling was constructed in 1901 in the Colonial Revival style. It has a side gable roof with perpendicular ell on the north elevation. The façade is symmetrical with a central entrance flanked by paired windows. The porch is single-bay with gable roof. The windows on the first story are replacement 1/1, metal, double-hung sash and the windows on the second story are 2/2 double-hung wood sash. There is a similar porch on the west elevation.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3422 Indian River Road**

This 1-1/2-story, single-family Colonial Revival bungalow was constructed in 1931. It is frame construction with vinyl siding and a cross-gable roof with applied asphalt shingles. The façade is three-bay and symmetrical with a central entrance flanked by 3/1, wood, double-hung sash windows. The first story façade is sheltered by a three-bay porch with hipped roof, and plain wood posts. The entrance is articulated by fluted pilasters supporting an entablature above a single-light transom. Above the porch, in

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the gable, is a paired 3/1-window grouping. There is a wall dormer on the west elevation with a paired window and paired window in the gable on the east elevation. A shed-roof ell projects from the north elevation.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3424 Indian River Road**

This 1-story, Colonial Revival ranch single-family dwelling incorporates 6/6 double-hung sash windows and a single-leaf wood door. The main roof is side-gable with a dentiled cornice under the roof eaves. It is frame construction with applied vinyl siding and was constructed circa 1940.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**OAKLETTE AVENUE**

**824 Oaklette Avenue**

**Savage House**

This 2-1/2-story, single-family dwelling is designed in the Colonial Revival style and is frame construction with weatherboard on the first story and wood singles on the second story. It was constructed in 1915-1919 and is oriented to the water versus the street to the west and south. It has a gabled roof with asphalt shingles. The façade retains its 1-story, three-bay, hipped-roof porch with Tuscan posts. The windows are primarily 6/1, wood, double-hung sash. There are pedimented dormers on the north and south rakes of the roof with single treatment. The gable ends have returns with a wide frieze. There is a projecting bay on the north elevation with hipped roof.

There are two garages on site. The historic garage is frame construction with weatherboard treatment, gable roof and roll-up garage door. There are double-hung sash windows on the north and south elevations. The non-historic garage has two roll-up garage doors and is also of frame construction with vinyl siding. It is 1-1/2-story with a Palladian window above the main double garage door. It incorporates cornice returns.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**826 Oaklette Avenue**

This building is a two-story single-family dwelling constructed in 1986 and designed in the Colonial Revival style. It is frame construction with vinyl siding, and has a side-gable roof treated with asphalt shingles. The façade is three bays with an asymmetrical entrance. The first story façade is sheltered by a three-bay porch with a hipped roof and plain wood posts and balusters. On the south elevation is a one-story, side-gabled ell with an exterior brick chimney.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

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**828 Oaklette Avenue**

This building is a one-story brick, Ranch-style single-family dwelling constructed in 1955. It has a side-gable roof treated with asphalt shingle, with wide eaves. The façade has a central, recessed entrance with a single leaf door. The windows on the dwelling are 6/6, double-hung sash. There is an interior, brick chimney near the south end. On the east elevation, there is a single-story brick ell containing the garage with roll-up doors.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**830 Oaklette Avenue**

This 1-1/2 story, brick, Cape Cod single-family dwelling was constructed in 1955. It has a symmetrical façade with a central entrance flanked by two 6/6, double-hung, wood, sash windows. A simple one-bay porch shelters the entrance with wood posts supporting a flat porch roof with wide eaves. There are three vinyl-sided, gabled dormers on the façade. On the south elevation, there is an exterior brick chimney and one-story, screened porch with a flat roof and metal awnings.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**832 Oaklette Avenue**

This one-story, brick, Ranch-style dwelling was constructed in 1955. The roof is a cross-gable with applied asphalt shingles. The windows are 6/6, wood, double-hung, sash and the door is single-leaf. The porch is incorporated under the roof at the juncture of the cross-gable and has a wrought-iron post and balustrade. There are two, roll-up, wood garage doors on the facade.

To the immediate southeast of the dwelling is a two-car, brick garage. There are two wood-paneled with lights, roll-up garage doors on the façade. The roof is gable with asphalt shingles.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 - buildings)

**844 Oaklette Avenue**

The Colonna family constructed this dwelling in 1925. It is frame construction with wood shingle siding. The dwelling has a cross-gable roof with asphalt shingles. The windows are paired and are comprised of 3/1, double-hung sash frames. There is a one-bay porch on the façade with a hipped roof and battered piers. This dwelling has typical Bungalow proportions and architectural elements.

CONTRIBUTING (1 - building)

**913 Oaklette Avenue**

This building is a one-story, brick, Ranch-style single-family dwelling constructed in 1955. It has a single-gable roof with asphalt shingles and central brick chimney. The windows are 6/6, wood, double-hung sash and are grouped in 2 and 3 on the façade, except for a smaller single window. The porch is wrought iron

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with decorative posts and balusters. There are two roll-up garage doors on the north elevation.  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**915 Oaklette Avenue**

Savage House

This two-and-a-half story, single-family dwelling was constructed in 1911. The dwelling is frame clad in asbestos siding. The façade is three-bay wide with a gable roof treated with asphalt shingles. The dwelling is frame clad in weatherboard siding. The porch is located on the façade and has one-story, one-bay, and a gable roof. Tuscan columns support the roof. The roof has a pedimented gable. There is a projecting gable on south elevation with projecting canted bay. The windows on the dwelling are 1/1, double-hung sash executed in metal.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**920 Oaklette Avenue**

Buchanan House

This one-story, single-family dwelling was constructed in 1940. The building has a two-bay main block with a projecting 2-bay block on the northwest corner. The building is frame clad in vinyl siding. There is a single-leaf wood, paneled door on the façade. The windows on the dwelling are 8/8 and 6/6, double-hung sash. The roof is hipped and is treated with asphalt shingles. Piercing the roof are two interior brick chimneys.

There is a garage on site to the east of the dwelling. It is frame clad in vinyl siding. The roof is hipped and there is an oversized door opening on the façade.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**1002 Oaklette Avenue**

Hermance, William House

This house was constructed in 1922 and is a simple Bungalow. It is 1-1/2-stories with hipped-roof dormers on the façade and side elevations. The building is frame clad in metal siding. The door is double-leaf and the windows are 1/1, double-hung sash. A massive addition was added to the original dwelling façade. The addition reoriented the entrance to the side now comprise of a gabled, 1-bay porch. The massive addition has a gable roof and canted bay at the gable elevation.

The original garage is intact. It is frame construction with metal siding and a hipped roof. The doors on the façade are single leaf and metal roll-up.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**1015 Oaklette Avenue**

Grath, Herbert and Thelma House

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This single-family, Colonial Revival-style dwelling was constructed in 1940-1941. The building is frame construction clad in asbestos siding and is two stories. It has a three-bay symmetrical façade with a central entrance. The entrance is comprised of a single-leaf door. The windows are 6/6, double-hung sash.

There is a shed to the southwest of the house. It is metal with a gambrel roof.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**1019 Oaklette Avenue**

Jones, George Wesley House

This one-and-a-half story house was constructed in 1925. It is a modest house with a side-gable roof dominated by a shed-roof dormer. There are four casement windows in the dormer with 6 lights per window. The porch shelters the first story and has a shed roof. The porch roof is supported by battered piers. The façade is symmetrical with 3/1, double-hung sash windows flanking the single-leaf wood door.

An exterior brick chimney is located on the side elevation.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**1020 Oaklette Avenue**

Hermance, William House

This two-story dwelling is designed in the Colonial Revival style. It is frame clad in vinyl siding. There is a single leaf door on the façade. Windows punctuate the wall planes and are 2/2, double-hung sash. The roof is gable and is treated with asphalt shingles. It was constructed between 1901 and 1905.

There is a frame guesthouse on site with a side-gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The building is frame clad in vinyl siding. There is an integral porch with a shed roof.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**1022 Oaklette Avenue**

Paxson, Samuel House

This 2-story, single-family dwelling was constructed in 1906. It is a Colonial Revival dwelling of frame construction clad in aluminum siding. The roof is gable treated with asphalt shingles. There are roof returns on the gable ends. The windows are 8/8, double-hung sash and paired on the second story. There is a one-story, gable-roof porch supported by battered piers on the façade. An addition has been made to the south elevation with a flat roof.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**RIVERSTONE WAY**

**3501 Riverstone Way**

This 2-story, single-family dwelling is frame construction with vinyl siding designed in the Modern style.

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It was constructed in 2000 and incorporates 1/1, aluminum, double-hung sash windows. There is a single-leaf, metal door on the façade sheltered by a shed-roof porch with modified bracketing details. The main roof is cross-gable with similar bracketing details. The roof is treated with asphalt shingles.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3504 Riverstone Way**

This is a 1-1/2 story, brick, Modern single-family dwelling constructed in 1999. It has a U-shaped plan with recessed entrance containing a single-leaf, metal door. The roof is side-gable with asphalt shingles. The windows are 6/6, aluminum, double-hung sash. There are two roll-up garage doors on the façade.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3505 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling is frame construction with vinyl siding and is designed in a Modern Movement style. The gable roof is treated with asphalt shingles and incorporates modified bracketing detail in the raking cornices and under the porch roof eaves. The wrap around porch has a gabled entrance and has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The porch roof is supported by turned wood posts. There is a single-leaf, metal paneled door on the façade. The windows on the façade are 4/4, double-hung, sash, metal of a smaller proportion and 6/6 in a larger proportion. There is a projecting gabled, canted bay on the west side of the façade. To the east is a garage ell with gable and large, metal roll up door.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3508 Riverstone Way**

This brick, 2-story, single-family dwelling is designed in a Modern style and was constructed in 2000. It has a hipped roof with numerous gables projecting from the façade. A projecting two-car garage bay with oversized roll-up door dominates the façade. The entrance is located on the east corner and is sheltered by a shed porch roof and is supported by a turned post. The door is single-leaf, metal with panel details and single sidelight. On the façade there is a canted bay window on the first story adjacent to a projecting narrow, gabled block with 4/4, double-hung, aluminum windows. Other windows on the façade are 9/9, aluminum double-hung sash windows.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3509 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling is frame construction with vinyl siding and is designed in a Modern style. The gable roof is treated with asphalt shingles and incorporates modified bracketing detail in the raking cornices and under the porch roof eaves. The wrap around porch has a gabled entrance and has a hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The porch roof is supported by turned wood posts. There is a single-leaf, metal, paneled door on the façade. The windows on the façade are 4/4, double-hung, sash, metal of a

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smaller proportion and 6/6 in a larger proportion. There is a projecting gabled, canted bay on the west side of the façade. To the east is a garage ell with gable and large, metal roll up door.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3513 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling incorporates brick and frame walls with applied vinyl siding. The main roof is hipped with numerous projecting gables on the façade. The porch is incorporated under the roof with a single-leaf door and sidelights. The windows are 1/1, double-hung sash and on the main projecting gabled block are paired. There is decorative brickwork between the first and second story windows on this block.

There are two metal, garage, roll-up doors on the west side of the façade. On the east elevation there is a screened porch with hipped roof. The building was constructed in 2000.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3516 Riverstone Way**

This vinyl-sided, frame, 2-story, single-family dwelling is designed in a Modern style in 1999. The dominant roof is hipped with asphalt shingles. There is a projecting, canted bay with 6/6 and 4/4, double-hung sash, aluminum windows. There are projecting gable elements on the west end with paired windows and main entrance comprised of a stoop with single-leaf door and single sidelight. ON the east elevation, there is a garage door opening.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3517 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling is of frame construction with applied vinyl siding. It is two-story and was constructed in 2000. The main roof is side-gable with projecting gable blocks on the façade. There is a gabled porch on the façade sheltering a single-leaf, metal door with oval light. The windows are paired on the façade and are comprised of 1/1, aluminum, double-hung sash panes. There is a dominant gabled block on the west end of the façade with pent roof over two, garage, roll-up doors. There are additional side-gable roof ells projecting from the east end.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3520 Riverstone Way**

This two-story, Modern single-family dwelling is designed in a Modern style in 1999. The frame dwelling has a “shake” vinyl siding, but the monumental porch is constructed of brick. The various roofs are dominated by jerkinhead gables with gable returns, including the main side-gable roof, and perpendicular, projecting blocks on the façade. The windows are metal casements and there are two garage doors on the east end of the façade. The entrance is sheltered by the monumental, 2-story, brick porch with jerkinhead gable and gable returns, and consists of a double-leaf door surmounted by transom.

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NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3521 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling is 1-1/2 stories and is frame construction with applied vinyl siding. It is designed in a Modern style in 2000. The main roof is side-gable with hipped wrap porch roof that continues the gable ends. There are dormers on the north and west elevation that are hipped and gabled. Windows are 6/6, metal, double-hung sash. The façade is dominated by a gable block with stone treatment and two metal, roll-up garage doors surmounted bay projecting bay with paired windows and accentuated eaves.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3524 Riverstone Way**

This single-family dwelling is currently under construction (2002). It is frame construction and is without roof, window, door or other material treatments.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**ST. LAWRENCE AVENUE**

**800-831 St. Lawrence Avenue**

Colonna Estate

The Colonna Estate is a 20-acre site containing various buildings dating to the 1920s and later additions in the 1950s.

The primary resource is the Caretaker's House, which became the Colonna family house after the main house burned in 1925. This dwelling was constructed in 1918 and is frame with weatherboard siding. The main entrance is sheltered by a gabled porch with kingpost stick details. The porch roof is supported by battered piers. The main building has a cross-gable roof with kingpost stick details in the gable above the porch. There is an addition to the north of the dwelling that triples the size of the original caretaker's house, which was added in 1925. It is connected via a side-gabled hyphen. The addition has a side gable roof with a large enclosed sunporch with casement windows. The roofs are treated with asphalt shingles.

The horse barn is located to the south of the Caretaker's House and was constructed circa 1918. It incorporates a hipped roof with hipped roof porch. The building is frame construction with weatherboard siding. There is a single leaf door on the façade. The building was converted into a single-family dwelling in the 1950s.

The rock igloo is located to the southwest of the Caretaker's House was built of ship ballast circa 1925. It is dome shaped with an opening on the east elevation.

There is a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century barn of frame construction and wood siding. It has a gambrel roof.

There is a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century tennis court on site with a chain link fence surrounding a concrete pad

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with net.

There is a pool added in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on site. It is concrete.

CONTRIBUTING (2 - building)

CONTRIBUTING (1 - structure)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 - buildings)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – structures)

**900 St. Lawrence Avenue**

This 1-1/2 story, single family dwelling was designed in a modified Cape Cod-style and built in 1995. It is frame construction with vinyl siding. The façade is dominated by a projecting, gabled garage entrance with single, metal roll-up door. There is an integral porch under the main roof eaves with plain wood post and balusters, which shelters the single-leaf door. The windows are 1/1, aluminum, double-hung sash. There is a gabled dormer on the façade. To the south is a one-story ell with sliding aluminum windows and baluster on the flat roof. To the east is a wood deck.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**904 St. Lawrence Avenue**

This one-story, brick, Ranch-style single-family dwelling was constructed in 1955. It has a side gable roof with asphalt shingles. There are 6/6 double-hung, wood, sash windows on the façade and a three-part wood window on the façade. The entrance is recessed and is comprised of a single-leaf wood paneled door flanked by sidelights. To the west of the dwelling is a gabled ell, which connects to an open porte-cochere with brick piers and gable roof.

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**925 St. Lawrence Avenue**

Pierson, C. W. House

Constructed in 1905, this single-family dwelling is frame construction with weatherboard siding. The façade is symmetrical and has three bays. The roof is side-gabled and is treated with asphalt shingles. A porch dominates the first story façade and is five bays divided by wood, battered piers. The windows are 2/2, double-hung sash and the primary door is wood and single leaf. There are two gabled chimneys.

There is a frame garage on site with a gable roof and weatherboard treatment. The primary entrance is comprised of a double-leaf door.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**935 St. Lawrence Avenue**

Baker House

This house was constructed in 1910 on the foundation of the original Hare family house after it burned.

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The house was located on the current Colonna property. Captain Will Colonna moved the house to this location in 1920 after the completion of his house on the Colonna estate. The dwelling is frame clad in weatherboard with a five-bay façade. The primary door is single-leaf with panels and lights. The windows are 1/1, double-hung sash. A one-story porch dominates the facade with three bays and wood Tuscan columns. There are brick chimneys piercing the side-gable roof.

A shed on site is wood frame treated with wood siding. The roof is side-gable with asphalt shingles.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**945 St. Lawrence Avenue**

This dwelling is 1-1/2-stories and is frame with weatherboard siding. The roof is cross-gable with asphalt shingles. Windows are 3/1, double-hung sash. Constructed circa 1920, this dwelling has a projecting first story bay with a pent roof and exposed rafters sheltering the stoop.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**1040 St. Lawrence Avenue**

Jones, George Wesley House

This dwelling was constructed in 1924. It is frame with asbestos siding. A simple one-story Bungalow, it incorporates a façade porch with battered piers and exposed rafters. There is a hipped roof dormer on the hipped roof. The windows are 6/1, double-hung sash and the door is single leaf.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**SENECA ROAD**

**3340 Seneca Road**

Huffington, B. House

This single-family dwelling was constructed in 1911. It is a simple one-story Bungalow with a symmetrical façade. The single leaf entrance is flanked by 6/1, double-hung sash windows and is sheltered by a hipped roofed porch. The porch has a jack-arch frieze below the porch roof eaves. There are exposed rafters under the hipped porch roof of the dwelling.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**3342 Seneca Road**

This one-story Bungalow was constructed in 1925. It is wood frame clad in wood shingles. The windows are 3/1 and 4/1, double-hung sash. The roof is cross-gable treated with asphalt shingles. A one-story porch dominates the symmetrical façade. Wood posts support the hipped porch roof.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

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### 3346 Seneca Road

Due to the unique nature of the Colonna houseboat, both architectural and nautical terms must be used for its description. The Colonna hunting lodge/houseboat was built on a flat-bottomed Chesapeake & Ohio car float salvaged from the Colonna Shipyard. The car float is a pontoon made of creosote timbers originally used to float railroad cars across a body of water. The superstructure of the lodge is a two-story, three-bay by four-bay wood frame structure clad in covered novelty siding, also called "German siding." Windows are 6/1 wood sash. The single-leaf entry door is a three-panel wood door with a four-pane light. The scale of the lodge is small. The distance from lower deck to upper deck is seven feet. Upper-deck joists are 1x6, creating a lower deck clearance of only 6'6". The superstructure is centered on the car float, with 2'10" of clearance on starboard, port and aft decks and 5'6" of clearance at the foredeck. Two large cleats are located on the port and starboard sides of the foredeck to which a "Y" type of towrope was secured for towing to North Carolina. A two-story wrap-around porch with turned wood posts and brackets encircles the two-story superstructure. The roof is a broad radius, segmental arch, though its treatment is not visible. The Colonna houseboat is essentially a diminutive two-story lodge built atop a pontoon. The boat is accessed from a gangplank on the port side leading directly to the current main door. The main door opens into a central main room. To the left is a small bedroom with two ship beds; a 32"-wide hall leading to the foredeck; and another bedroom/office. On the right is a narrow open stair to the second story/upper deck. The galley, updated since the original construction, is located behind the stair. A small seating area blocks the door to the aft deck (there is also a gangplank from the aft deck to the bank). There is a bathroom in the aft on the starboard side. The second floor is a large modern "living room", with a utility closet and bar room (modern alteration) to the aft. The second floor is carpeted. All floors are pine (underneath carpet), and baseboards are 6"-8". Door frames and window casings are flat-planed pine and painted white. The original interior finish was an unfinished or lightly stained pine horizontal covered siding (German siding). Only the second floor utility closet retains this finish. The current interior is a vertical beaded fiberboard or masonite added sometime between the 1940s and 1970s.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

### 3404 Seneca Road

This one-story Bungalow was constructed in 1925. It is wood frame clad in wood shingles. The windows are 3/1 and 4/1, double-hung sash. The roof is cross-gable treated with asphalt shingles. A one-story porch dominates the symmetrical façade. Wood posts support the hipped porch roof.

There is a garage to the north of the dwelling of frame construction clad in wood siding. The roof is hipped and treated with asphalt shingles. Architectural details include exposed rafters under the eaves.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

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**3408 Seneca Road**

This one-story Bungalow was constructed in 1925. It is wood frame clad in wood shingles. The windows are 3/1 and 4/1, double-hung sash. The roof is cross-gable treated with asphalt shingles. A one-story porch dominates the symmetrical façade. Wood posts support the hipped porch roof.

There is a garage to the north of the dwelling of frame construction clad in wood siding. The roof is hipped and treated with asphalt shingles. Architectural details include exposed rafters under the eaves.

CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**3440 Seneca Road**

This 1-1/2-story, frame dwelling has a gambrel roof. The house is frame with weatherboard siding. Unlike the local 18<sup>th</sup> century gambrel roofed houses, the gambrel roof of this house has a more steeply-pitched upper plane, forming almost a gable at the peak, allowing for a window in what is really the 1/2 story above two lower stories. There are shallow shed dormers in the 1/2 story. There is an integral one-story porch with four bays of varying widths, chamfered wood posts with bulls-eyes and cornice brackets. Porch entrance-bay projects out from main roof with hipped extension. An entrance-bay projects from facade.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**WEBSTER AVENUE**

**3118 Webster Avenue**

This single-family dwelling was constructed circa 1900. It incorporates Colonial Revival details and massing with an L-shaped plan and cross-gable roof. The gable roof has roof returns on the gable ends. The windows are 1/1, double-hung sash. There are octagonal vents in the gables. The facade is symmetrical with a single-leaf door and three-bay porch. The porch incorporates square posts and hipped roof. The dwelling is frame construction and clad in vinyl siding. A massive addition has been made to the façade on the west end with a hipped roof that obscures the L-shaped plan. The porch and windows have been replaced.

There is a garage on site for a single car. It has a gable roof treated with asphalt shingles. The garage is frame construction clad in vinyl siding. Doors on the garage are single leaf and paneled metal roll-up.

There is a shed on site with a gable roof and single leaf door. It is frame clad in vinyl siding.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

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**3124 Webster Avenue**

This single-family dwelling was constructed circa 1900. It incorporates Colonial Revival details and massing with an L-shaped plan and cross-gable roof. The gable roof has roof returns on the gable ends. The windows are 2/2, double-hung sash. There are 6/1, double-hung sash windows in the gables. The facade is symmetrical with a single-leaf door and three-bay porch. The porch incorporates turned posts and a jack-arch frieze. The porch roof is hipped. The dwelling is frame construction and clad in asbestos siding.

There is an oversized garage on site large enough to accommodate 2+ cars. It has a side gable roof treated with corrugated metal. The garage is constructed of concrete block. Doors on the garage are single leaf and paneled metal and wood roll-up. The windows are awning.

There is a well shelter adjacent to the dwelling. It is open with a hipped roof supported by wood posts.

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

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**Statement of Significance (con't)**

**Summary Statement of Significance**

The Oaklette Historic District is an example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development surrounding the city of Norfolk. Norfolk's growing population during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century created a necessity for housing. Numerous suburban developments were planned to accommodate the increased need. The expansion of Norfolk's streetcar lines in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries facilitated the development from 1900 to 1920 by making communities accessible to the urban core. Most of Norfolk's suburbs were developed along the radiating streetcar lines in the surrounding counties. Oaklette was first planned by the Hare family who had inherited the family property who intend to capitalize on the streetcar line that was under construction through the community. It was eventually developed by a group of investors seeking to take advantage of the waterfront property on the south side of the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River and the streetcar line that opened in 1905. The district thrived until World War I when streetcar serviced ceased on the line. Development slowed, with a brief resurgence in the 1950s and addition dwelling additions in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The community was primarily attractive to both developers due to its extensive waterfront and close proximity to the urban core.

**Oaklette—Early Years**

The land on which the Oaklette Historic District is located was once the estate of Mathew Hare. In 1869, Hare had purchased the lands from Colonel William Etheredge for \$6,000.00. According to the deed of record, the property was named "Oaklette" and was comprised of 85 acres more or less.<sup>1</sup> The name "Oaklette" first appeared in 1843 on the land transfer from Thomas Tatem to John Hope. According to the deed of record, Tatem's wife, Mary, had inherited the property.<sup>2</sup> Upon Mathew Hare's death, the land was willed to his descendants who divided and sold parcels in sections between 1883 and 1920.

In November 1883, the descendants of Mathew Hare sold a parcel of land for \$1.00 to the Trustees of the Oaklette Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church, South for "a place of Divine Worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."<sup>3</sup> The trustees of the church were Joseph B. Doughty, James H. Whitehurst, George R. Hare, William H. Merton, and Arthur J. Newton.

The church's organizer was Miss Fanny Whitehurst, daughter of James Whitehurst. She was

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concerned over the lack of religious training that was available in the immediate area. Her desire for a church was so strong that she used the old kitchen of the family house, which was located on the current site of the church, south of Indian River Road. She used the kitchen from 1880 until 1883 when the Hare family descendants deeded a parcel on their land for the construction of the church. Their only demand was that the church be named "Oaklette" to honor their donation. The church building opened in 1884 and was located on Indian River Road in a grove of oak trees at the intersection of St. Lawrence Avenue.<sup>4</sup>

A parsonage was constructed on the adjacent lot in 1899. The two buildings along with a one-room schoolhouse, which had been constructed on site just shortly after the Civil War, rounded out the pre-1900 grouping of buildings. The buildings remained on site until 1931, when a fire broke out in the parsonage and it was destroyed. Fortunately, the church was spared great damage and could be repaired. A new parsonage was built, which still remains at 3422 Indian River Road.<sup>5</sup>

In August 1895, Jonathan Pierson made an application for a post office at Oaklette. His application included the proposed names of Avery or Page. According to the application, the mail was supplied from Norfolk six times per week.<sup>6</sup> The addition of the post office to the early community had benefits for its potential development. The location of the post office at the Indian River Turnpike Bridge, which dated before the Civil War, also provided a center for the convergence of the local population. This was additionally anchored by the Oaklette church and school.

The Indian River Turnpike was originally a dirt road paved with oyster shells. This was typical during the 19<sup>th</sup> century since it could be resurfaced with shells from the plentiful oyster population in the brackish-water tributaries and creeks. The Indian River Turnpike Company was formed in 1878 to collect tolls for the wood drawbridge.<sup>7</sup> The road was the main east-west route that led from Berkley at Washington Point and Norfolk to the south in the area of Great Bridge and Norfolk County.

The Consolidated Turnpike Company of Norfolk, Virginia acquired the company in 1900 as a part of an Act passed in 1899-1900 by the Board of Public Works in Richmond to consolidate various toll companies and standardize rates for traveling. Consolidated Turnpike acquired a number of toll roads and bridges including the Norfolk and Princess Anne Turnpike Company, Tanners Creek Draw Bridge Company, Eastern Branch Turnpike and Toll Bridge Company and Indian River Turnpike and Toll Bridge Company.<sup>8</sup>

What was perceived to be an easy resolution to the standardization and improvement of toll roads and bridges soon proved difficult as the Consolidated Turnpike Company fell into receivership in 1903. The receivers operated the company until 1905 when Consolidated Turnpike Company was declared

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unfit to collect tolls by a Norfolk County judge. The reorganization of the company was made by March and toll collection resumed. The tolls were finally abolished at the bridge in 1913, when bridges and roads were transferred from private ownership to the local government.

Joseph Paxson, Oaklette resident, was the toll collector and bridge tender at the bridge until 1913. He saw the improvement to the bridge from a wood draw to an iron swing bridge in 1905. He also witnessed the continuation of the trolley service or streetcar service across the bridge in 1905.<sup>9</sup>

In 1904, the Hare descendants officially platted a portion of their property dividing it into parcels, which they filed in Norfolk County. They were trying to capitalize on the growth of suburban developments that had begun to appear in 1890. Since the streetcar tracks were under construction through the property, they would be able to take advantage of the convenience for residents to travel to the nearby cities.

The plan that the Hare descendants submitted was comprised of inland lots divided by cross streets and two major north-south streets, which maximized the salability of the waterfront parcels. This was common in the Norfolk region as seen in plans by numerous local developers, such as Bellamy and Hough and the New Norfolk Company. Roads were constructed to run parallel to the waterfront maximizing waterfront real estate. The lots were usually larger, while inland lots were smaller and the density was higher.<sup>10</sup>

In 1905, a number of parcels were sold from the Hare descendants to C. W. Pierson. Lots were between \$200.00 and \$400.00 depending on width.<sup>11</sup> Other lots were sold directly to Oaklette Realty and Investment Corporation, which had been formed in 1905.

Like the Hare descendants, Oaklette Realty wanted to take advantage of the growing streetcar suburban development occurring in outside of the city of Norfolk. The success of Norfolk's first suburb Ghent, which had been planned in 1890, was a benchmark that other developments used as a model. Like Ghent, Oaklette had prime waterfront real estate and streetcar access to the city. It also afforded the serenity of the countryside since it was primarily located in an undeveloped area.

### **Streetcar Suburbs**

The streetcar ushered in the second stage of suburbanization of the United States' landscape. Suburbanization evolved from the ability of wealthy Americans who were able to commute into the densely populated cities from remote towns that were becoming popular on the outskirts of cities in Chicago and New York. This ideal became the prototype for suburban planning and ideas of model

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living by the middle classes. With the advent of the streetcar in 1888, the ability for middle America to realize the dream of more pastoral settings became a reality.<sup>12</sup> Open land in surrounding areas of densely populated cities became prime breeding ground for planned suburbs.

The first groups to suburbanize were the middle and upper-middle classes. The first suburbs are defined by larger lots and houses, such as the Ghent neighborhood in Norfolk, which was Norfolk's first planned suburb. Shortly after its formation in 1890, other suburbs were developed following the streetcar lines that radiated from the city center.<sup>13</sup>

The streetcar's advantages to the average commuter were defined by the ease and speed at which the suburbanite could travel into the city to shop, work and commune. The average travel time to the city from the suburbs via streetcar was between 10 to 30 minutes.

The streetcar suburbs were planned with easy access to the streetcar line. The average foot-travel time for individuals to a nearby streetcar line were between 5 and 10 minutes. The suburbs also continued the gridiron plan found within cities, which maximized land area usage, and formed a familiar street system for residents.

Another factor in the rise and popularity of the streetcar suburb was the freestanding house. The freestanding single-family house was considered to be the alleviation of the densely populated city, and the improvement of life through the improvement in environment. This became most attractive to the working classes that were confined to the less desirable areas of the inner city. The suburban ideal was also marketed to this class through more modest scale houses and slightly more dense suburban communities. Though these communities were denser than those of the upper to middle classes, it still afforded similar benefits even without larger lots.

An engineering improvement in the construction of houses is also believed to have benefited the rise of the suburbs in the United States. The balloon-frame method of construction invented in the 1830s proved to be a cost-effective means of house construction. The system was based upon a light framing method of wood using 2-by-4-inch studs nailed together, which distributed the weight of the building to the various areas of the frame. This system was also much cheaper and is believed to be as important to the development of the suburbs as the streetcar, since it reduced the cost of house construction and allowed the average family to afford a freestanding house.<sup>14</sup>

**Oaklette—Creation of a Norfolk Suburb**

The Oaklette Realty and Investment Corporation was formed in August 1905. Its officers are listed as

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Isaac W. Paxson, President; Alfred Y. Paxson, Vice-President; C. W. Pierson, Treasurer, Secretary, and General Manager; Jonathan W. Paxson, Director; and Pascal W. Paxson, Director.<sup>15</sup> Their purpose was to buy and sell parcels of land, and build houses for sale. They limited their saleable lots to 5 acres.

Joseph Paxson was the bridge tender for the Indian River drawbridge just east of the Oaklette neighborhood.<sup>16</sup> The post office was located at the crossing, and by 1900, Joseph Paxson had become postmaster.

On December 29, 1904 the Norfolk Suburban Railroad had completed the trolley line between Oaklette and Washington Point, which continued to Norfolk. The opening of the trolley signified Oaklette's connection with the city. The 4-mile trip to Norfolk took only ½-hour and trolley service ran every hour. The last car left Oaklette at 6:30pm for its end station at Washington Point.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the connection to Washington Point, the streetcar enabled Oaklette residents to have access to the ferries, which connected Washington Point with Norfolk and Portsmouth. The ferry service, which terminated in 1955, ran continuously between the three points. Since Oaklette was 5 miles from the cities, the streetcar became an important link to the urban center.

This was short-lived as the streetcar ceased operation in the late 1910s, stranding the residents from their primary connection to the city. Their fortitude was not lost in this drastic change. In 1917, the Indian River Transit Company was formed. Officers included S. S. Paxson of Oaklette and A. W. Kemp from the adjoining community, Kemps Landing.<sup>18</sup> The transit company was organized to provide a transportation service via automobile or carriage between Indian River and Norfolk. This early form of taxi service provided residents with additional means of transportation, but the cessation of the trolley curbed additional development of Oaklette until the World War II period. This was evident from Joseph Paxson's diary, which states most houses were constructed between 1895 and 1920 with most constructed in the period of 1905-1915.

Upon the dissolution of the streetcar line, Oaklette had once again become a fringe area without public transportation and was dependent on property owners to provide their own means of transport. This slowed growth and development, which allowed the original large lots to maintain their size and the community to remain in a less dense state than those who were developed along the remaining streetcar lines. Examples of these types of developments can be found in Norfolk such as Lafayette Residence Park, Colonial Place and Riverview, which are all listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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### Colonna Estate

In 1879, Charles J. Colonna founded a shipyard on the south side of the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River in 1920.<sup>19</sup> () The shipyard is still active today and remains in the Colonna family.

Captain Will Colonna purchased the prime 20-acre site at the head of St. Lawrence Avenue where he constructed his 16-room house.<sup>20</sup> Colonna's house was a large Colonial-Revival inspired building using Colonna's extensive ship-related knowledge as inspiration for architectural details. The house used ship sources for the staircase and ship's knees under the roof eaves. The house burned twice in 1923 and in 1925. The 1925 fire led to the demolition of the building due to the extensive fire damage.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the house, Captain Will constructed numerous structures for the entertainment of his children. Still on site is a rock igloo constructed of ship ballasts. He also constructed a rock basket out of ballasts. Upon acquiring the grounds, Colonna landscaped the property by planting 101 pecan trees in a grid pattern.<sup>22</sup> The family collected pecans every year, which became an annual family event.

After the demolition of the Colonna house, the family moved into the Caretaker's House located on the west side of the estate. The house was expanded at the north and south ends to accommodate the family. The horse barn was also converted to use as a residence for the sister of W. W. Colonna.

In April 1923, Clarence Russell Hare sold three parcels to B. O. Colonna on St. Lawrence Drive. They were listed as 100, 101 and 102, where 953 St. Lawrence Drive is presently located.<sup>23</sup> According to the Colonna family history, the original house lying on the Colonna property was moved to St. Lawrence Avenue after the completion of the Colonna House in 1920.<sup>24</sup> The house dated to 1910, and was built on the site of the original Hare house. According to Joseph Paxson's diary, the Hare house burned in 1910 and was replaced with the house now located at 935 St. Lawrence Avenue.

In addition to the buildings constructed for the family, Colonna also constructed a number of modest Bungalow-style houses at the south of the property, which he rented. The houses line the north side of Seneca Avenue and were constructed prior to the final demolition of the family house. The houses were rented to middle and working-class families, who worked for the surrounding industries, such as the Ford Truck plant which had opened in 1921. Most of the houses on Seneca Avenue are still owned by the Colonna family descendants.

In addition to the rental property, the Colonna floating hunting lodge or houseboat is also located

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within the Oaklette boundary. According to Will Colonna, the floating lodge was constructed by Captain Will in 1927 and was towed to Blackwater, North Carolina by tug for annual hunting trips. In 1933, a hurricane tore the lodge from its mooring in the creek adjacent to the property and pushed it into the tidal flats that had become flooded. Upon the water receding, the lodge was landlocked and could not be moved to deeper water. The lodge was moved further inland and a dike was built to prevent further harm. It has remained in its present location since.<sup>25</sup>

The Colonna property remains in the Colonna family and is primarily rental property. Most of the grandeur of the original estate is gone.

### **World War II—Mass Suburbanization to Today**

The increase in population in Norfolk and Portsmouth seen during the World War II period was due to military presence and the mobilization of a work force to support the war effort. This dramatic increase in the population had a resounding effect on suburban development. An increase in the amount of housing needed to lodge the wartime workforce, led to the subdivision of existing suburban development planned during the period between 1900 and 1930. Numerous suburban communities were also developed at this period, along with shopping centers and other commercial cores.

Oaklette's building continued into the 1920s with modest bungalows constructed on various lots throughout the neighborhood. Building had ceased just prior and during the World War II period in Oaklette as large parcels were held within families. This caused many lots to remain open until the post-World War II period.

During the 1950s, families subdivided parcels or sold off smaller parcels, which fueled building in Oaklette. The period of the 1950s reflects increased development of house sites and construction of ranch-style houses. Norfolk saw increased suburban development in the 1950s with the creation of additional suburban development that was delayed due to the World War II. Numerous new neighborhoods were carved from vacant lands north and east of the city.

In 1955, the Oaklette Methodist Church, which had been established in Oaklette at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, constructed a new building.<sup>26</sup> With the existing site unable to sustain the growing congregation and needed space, the church moved to a location on the south side of Indian River Road, on the Whitehurst land. The original church remained on the site and was used as a community center until it was demolished in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The parsonage remains and a new house was constructed on the site.

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Norfolk County also faced changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the formation of the city of Chesapeake and numerous annexations of land by the city of Norfolk. Norfolk sought to increase its borders and systematically annexed portions of Norfolk County from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1963, the city of Chesapeake was formed from the remaining lands of Norfolk County.

In 1989, a former house that sat on the east side of Oaklette Avenue a 12-acre site was burned. The site was an ideal parcel for development due to its waterfront location and width. In 1998, a new cul-de-sac development of 11 houses was built. The threat to the historic integrity of the neighborhood of new development on the large waterfront lots is constant due to ownership changes and current zoning regulations.

**Conclusion**

Oaklette remains a desirable community for middle class families today and many of the descendents of the original families reside within its boundaries. Due to its architectural and planning integrity, the Oaklette Historic District meets Criteria C for Community Planning and Development.

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2. Norfolk County Deed Book 68, 282.
3. Norfolk County Deed Book 129, 177-178.
4. Cross, Charles B., Jr. and Eleanor Phillips Cross, Chesapeake: A Pictorial History, Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company Publishers, 1985, 94.
5. Oaklette Methodist Church, "Oaklette Methodist Church; 1884-1994," Chesapeake, VA: Oaklette Methodist Church, 1994, 8-9.
6. U. S. Post Office. Post Office Records, Norfolk County, Microfilm, Roll 618, 687-688.
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8. Walke and Old, Attorneys and Counselors at Law, "Letter to Board of Public Works, Richmond, Virginia," August 23, 1900.
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13. Traceries.
14. Ames, 28.
15. State Corporation Commission Records, Book 57, 345.
16. Cross, 108.
17. Paxson, Joseph P., "Diaries", Chesapeake, VA: Ann Harris Early, 1899-.
18. State Corporation Commission Records, Book 97, 153.
19. Cross, 99.
20. Cross, 135.
21. Colonna, W. W., Jr., Colonna Papers: histories involving Colonna family mainly Tidewater area. State of Virginia, U.S.A./[compiled by W. W. Colonna, Jr.], Norfolk, VA: Colonna's Shipyard, Inc., 2000, 13.
22. Ibid., 7.
23. Norfolk County Deed Book 531, 351.
24. Colonna, 7.
25. Cross, 142.
26. Ibid., 147.

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**Geographical Data (con't)**

**UTM References (con't)**

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
5	<u>18</u>	<u>389720</u>	<u>4076480</u>
6	<u>18</u>	<u>389880</u>	<u>4076250</u>
7	<u>18</u>	<u>389840</u>	<u>4076130</u>
8	<u>18</u>	<u>389680</u>	<u>4076060</u>
9	<u>18</u>	<u>389560</u>	<u>4076140</u>
10	<u>18</u>	<u>389380</u>	<u>4076300</u>
11	<u>18</u>	<u>389470</u>	<u>4076120</u>
12	<u>18</u>	<u>389520</u>	<u>4076200</u>
13	<u>18</u>	<u>389460</u>	<u>4076230</u>
14	<u>18</u>	<u>389480</u>	<u>4076270</u>

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Oaklette Historic District boundaries are found on the attached map, and are roughly bound by Indian River on the east and north, tidal flats of Indian River on the west, and Indian River Road on the south.

The boundaries are inclusive of the following City of Chesapeake plate and parcel numbers:

Plate 0134, Insert (13D)

Lots:

1, 1A	2, 3C	3, 108	3, 142	4, B	21, 20	23, 1	23, 8
1, 3	2, 3D	3, 127A	3, 143	4, C	21, 21	23, 2	23, 9
1, 4	2, 24	3, 128A	3, 146	4, D	21, 53	23, 3	23, 10
1, 5	3, 80	3, 129A	3, 152	4, E	21, 55	23, 4	23, 60
2, 1	3, 84	3, 145A	3, 153	5, 6	21, 56	23, 5	23, 60A
2, 2	3, 98	3, 134	4, 1	21, 18	21, 57	23, 6	
2, 3A	3, 103	3, 141	4, 2	21, 19	21, 58	23, 7	

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the Oaklette Historic District reflect the boundaries of the original Oaklette Realty Investment Corporation plan along with the Colonna and Savage tracts. The district reflects the remaining development found during the period of significance.

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**Photographic List**

Key:

1. Name of property, or, for districts, the name of the building or street address followed by the name of the district.
2. County/City, State where the property is located.
3. Name of the photographer.
4. Date of photograph.
5. Location of original negative.
6. Description of view indicating direction of camera.
7. Photograph number.

Photograph List:

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Houses on Indiana River Rd.
7. Photograph Number 1

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. 915 Oaklette Ave
7. Photograph Number 2

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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6. Savage House
7. Photograph Number 3
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. 3440 Seneca Ave
7. Photograph Number 4
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Looking east at Seneca Ave
7. Photograph Number 5
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Colonna horse barn
7. Photograph Number 6
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Colonna houseboat
7. Photograph Number 7
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia

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3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Bungalows on Seneca Ave
7. Photograph Number 8

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Colonna Caretaker's house
7. Photograph Number 9

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Looking south on St. Lawrence Ave
7. Photograph Number 10

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. 945 St. Lawrence Ave
7. Photograph Number 11

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. 1040 St. Lawrence Ave
7. Photograph Number 12

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1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Map of Norfolk, 1931
7. Photograph Number 13

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Oaklette plat map, 1904
7. Photograph Number 14

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Savage Tract, 1955
7. Photograph Number 15

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Colonna Tract with grounding of houseboat
7. Photograph Number 16

1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002

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5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Colonna Estate
7. Photograph Number 17
  
1. Oaklette Historic District
2. Chesapeake, Virginia
3. Kimble A. David
4. August 2002
5. Virginia Department of Historic Resources
6. Oaklette plat subdivision of lots, 1906
7. Photograph Number 18