

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: Sublett's TavernOther names/site number: DHR #072-0042Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 1652 Huguenot TrailCity or town: Powhatan State: VA County: PowhatanNot 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 X C      D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:\_\_\_\_\_  
DateVirginia 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

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD: Weatherboard, Shingle

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Sublett's Tavern is a 1 ½- and 2-story vernacular frame dwelling that was originally constructed ca. 1813 to serve as a tavern along what was then called River Road or the Road to Richmond (today Rt. 711/Huguenot Trail). The building consists of four building blocks, though research has shown that they were not all built at different times. A two-story, three bay, side-gabled section on the west end of the house is connected to a 1 ½-story five bay, side-gabled section on the east end of the house by a 1 ½-story, one-bay hyphen. The hyphen is the same depth as the other two sections of the house but the division between them is demarcated by vertical cornerboards. Each section of the house has its own front door. Two brick exterior end chimneys bracket the house while an interior brick chimney is located at the ridge of the roof of the 1 ½-story section. A one-story rear kitchen ell located off the east end of the house gives it an L-shaped floorplan. On the interior, the historic floorplan remains largely intact with a hall-and-parlor plan in the 1 ½-story east section and one large room on the first and second floors of the two-story section. Separate stairs access the second floor living spaces in each of these sections. Important character defining features include the three front door openings, the original flooring, some original trim, the original stairs and overall floorplan, the heavy timber framing and 19<sup>th</sup> century construction techniques, and its overall exterior appearance and visibility from the road. The house went through a period of decline in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 1970s it needed substantial structural repairs; the Layman family undertook a full-scale restoration of the



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

property, which won the first-ever "President's Preservation Award" from the Powhatan Historical Society, between 1974 and 1982. Most of the exterior materials date to this restoration and, while the integrity of materials is only fair as a result, the house retains good integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, workmanship, and association. The 3.5-acre property also includes a well, a guest house, a barn, a garage, a shed, and areas of formal landscaping; only the below-ground portion of the well is a contributing resource.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Setting

Sublett's Tavern is prominently sited along Huguenot Trail (also known as Route 711), which runs east-west through Powhatan County parallel to the James River, located just to the north. It was an important 19<sup>th</sup> century transportation route for both locals and those passing through the county on their way to Richmond. There were also historic ferry landings on the James River to the east and west of the tavern with secondary roads connecting to Huguenot Trail. Today the surrounding area is increasingly suburban with surviving remnants of the county's rural past. All of the surrounding property is residential; the county seat of Powhatan is located about 12 miles to the southwest. The property across the road remains farmland, as do several large historic parcels on the river side of the road, but several residential subdivisions have been constructed nearby along Huguenot Trail and traffic along the road is busy. The historic tavern is located on the north side of the road and is set back from the road only 40 feet so that it would be easily visible and accessible for travelers. A boxwood hedge runs along the road in front of the property with a wooden gate directly in front of the main entrance. A straight brick path leads from the gate almost to the front porch. A break in the hedge close to the west property line accommodates a cobblestone driveway that leads past the house to a parking area and garage to the rear. In addition to the garage, there is also a guest house, a barn, and a shed to the rear of the house. A well-house is located in the front yard. The property features many mature deciduous trees and mature boxwoods in various locations.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*View of the tavern and Huguenot Trail, looking east, showing the hedge along the road. October 2024.*

The property today includes multiple elements of formal landscaping, but many of these date to the early 2000s when the then-owners, the Goodmans, were attempting to convert the property into an event space. The driveway from Huguenot Trail is cobble stone as it leads past the house through two large stone gate posts and then it transitions to gravel. On the west side of the cobblestone driveway near the road is a small gravel parking area. The stone gate posts hold a metal gate and are set within a white picket fence that extends across the property. Another white picket fence encloses a smaller area of the rear yard contiguous with the house. The gravel driveway continues to another, larger, gravel parking area located near the barn. The edges of this parking area are demarcated by cobblestones and segments of picket fencing and board fencing with boxwoods at the corners. The driveway continues toward the rear of the property until it terminates in front of the garage. Brick paths lead from a brick patio directly behind the house to the parking area and on to the barn and guest house. Another small brick patio is located in front of the guest house. There is a circular boxwood garden with a statue in the center to the northeast of the house and another small garden area with crushed shell paths just to the rear of the shed and beside the parking area. A larger garden area, enclosed within a picket fence and with crushed shell paths leading around square raised beds, is located just to the east of the barn. Numerous boxwoods are planted in this formal-looking garden which also features a sundial at the center.

\*A note about the 1970s rehabilitation and the following description

In the 1970s, the tavern had fallen into disrepair and was in danger of structural failure and possible demolition. The Layman family purchased the property at that time and undertook steps to ensure the building's structural integrity and also repaired or replaced failed and deteriorated elements. The work included installation of the wooden shingle roof, reconstruction of the collapsing foundation, new wooden double-hung windows, new wood siding (milled to match

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

the existing) and a new porch. All of the replacements were either in-kind (foundation, siding, windows) or historically appropriate (roof, porches). The building has evolved and changed over its more than 200-year history and this evolution is its own historical record; the 1970s rehabilitation is another chapter in the building's story and it resulted in the preservation and continued viability of a purpose-built early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern and dwelling. The building retains sufficient overall integrity to convey its historical appearance and character.

### Exterior Description

Sublett's Tavern is a 1 ½- and 2-story vernacular frame dwelling that rests on a brick foundation facing south on the north side of Huguenot Trail/Route 711. A side gabled roof is pierced by three brick chimneys, two on either end and one in the middle. The western end of the house is a two-story, three-bay block, while the eastern half is 1 ½ stories tall and six bays wide; both sections are single pile. A one-story rear ell with a front gabled roof extends from the east end of the rear elevation creating an L-shaped floor plan, and the two-story section has a full-width shed-roofed lean-to on the rear elevation. There are three gabled dormers on the front slope of the roof of the 1 ½ story section and two on the rear. The façade features three doors; the middle door is sheltered by a shed-roofed entry porch with steps that rise up each side, while the door in the two-story section has a pedimented hood over a wooden stoop and steps, and the door closest to the east end is accessed via a wooden stoop with a handrail. A shed-roofed porch stretches across the rear elevation between the rear ell and the lean-to.



*Sublett's Tavern, southeast oblique. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

It has long been assumed that the building represented three distinct building campaigns – first a 1 ½-story, hall-and-parlor plan dwelling with a side gabled roof was constructed, then the two-story, three-bay block with a side-gabled roof was constructed as a separate tavern, and then the two were connected with a 1 ½-story hyphen. In fact, research now suggests that they were built either all at the same time or within a seven-year window between 1813 and 1820. Sublett's Tavern underwent a substantial renovation in the 1970s. The entire house is sheathed in beaded weatherboards, and rests on a brick foundation laid in English bond. The roof is clad with wooden shingles. The windows are 9/9 and 6/6 wooden double-hung sash. All of these exterior materials date to the 1970s (the roof actually dates to 2018 replacing the wooden shingles put on in the 1970s) though they supposedly replaced in-kind the materials there at the time.

The façade of the house features the two-story, three-bay section on the left (west) end and the 1 ½ story, six-bay section on the right (east). A single bay in the middle of the façade, demarcated by vertical cornerboards, represents the section often referred to as the hyphen. For the purposes of this description, this section will continue to be called the hyphen, even though the evidence indicates that it was built at the same time as the two-story section; nonetheless, it does serve the purpose of a hyphen in connecting two different building blocks. The two-story section of the façade features three bays on the first story with a door centered between two windows. The six-panel wood door is protected by a wood and glass storm door and sheltered by a pedimented hood. The door is surrounded by a wide, plain architrave. Wooden steps and a wooden stoop with handrails provide access to the door. Flanking the door on either side are 9/9 double hung wooden windows with molded sills and paneled shutters. On the second story, two 6/6 double-hung wooden windows are vertically aligned above the first story windows. These windows have square sills and paneled shutters. The cornice is boxed and has decorative cornice end boards. There are two barred vents in the foundation, vertically aligned below the windows.

This two-story section of the house has an exterior end chimney on the west end of the house. The west elevation is dominated by this brick chimney and is otherwise blank. This double-shouldered chimney is laid in 6:1 common bond with modern brick; it is a reconstruction of the original chimney which was struck by lightning and collapsed in the 1950s.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Sublett's Tavern, southwest oblique. October 2024.*

There is a one-story, one-room deep frame lean-to that extends the full width across the rear of the two-story section. It has the same exterior materials as the rest of the house and there is no vertical seam in the weatherboards between this lean-to and the two-story block. There is a 6/6 double-hung window on the west elevation of the lean-to and two more evenly spaced on the rear elevation. On this rear elevation the second story of the two-story block features two more 6/6 double-hung windows vertically aligned above the first story openings. The windows on the rear elevation do not have shutters. As on the front elevation, the cornice is boxed with decorative cornice end boards.

The façade of the 1 ½-story, one-bay hyphen adjacent to the two-story section features a door centered on the first story and a gabled dormer vertically aligned above. The six-panel wood door is protected by a wood-and-glass storm door that matches the one on the two-story section. It is topped by a five-light transom that dates to the 1970s and incorporates glass from some of the original windows. This door is surrounded by a simple double architrave molding. This doorway, which is now the primary entrance into the house, is sheltered by a shed-roofed entry porch supported by turned wooden posts. Wooden steps ascend to the porch from either side rather than the front; the balustrade consists of a molded handrail and a single wide horizontal board below. This porch dates to the 1970s renovation and represents the Layman's attempt to restore a historically accurate entry porch. An 1889 photo of the front of the house (see page 49) shows a one-bay entry porch in this same location with a flat or low-pitched hipped roof, while the 1937 HABS photo and a 1940s photo (see page 52) shows a full-width porch that replaced this entry porch (the full width porch had completely deteriorated and is not shown in pre-restoration 1970s photos). A narrow, gabled dormer is vertically aligned above the front door; it

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

has a 6/6 double-hung window with a molded architrave. The sidewalls of the dormer and the tympanum of the gable are beaded weatherboards set flush and there are beaded rake boards in the gable. This dormer appears to be slightly narrower than the other two dormers on the front elevation, though the difference is almost imperceptible. They are otherwise detailed exactly the same. Based on photographic evidence, this dormer postdates 1889.



*Sublett's Tavern, hyphen façade. October 2024.*

The remaining five bays of the 1 ½-story section of the façade are bracketed by two brick chimneys. The one on the east end of the house is an exterior brick chimney while the other is an interior chimney that pierces the ridge of the roof between the hyphen and the rest of the 1 ½-story section (the hall-and-parlor plan section). The stack of the interior chimney was supposedly reconstructed in-kind above the roof during the 1970s restoration. The stack and corbeled cap do match the east chimney. The east end chimney appears to be original and is a double-shouldered design with a corbelled cap and a corbelled base. The shoulders are stepped and the brick is laid in 5:1 common bond.

The five-bay, 1 ½-story, hall-and-parlor plan section of the façade is asymmetrical. A door is located in the second bay from the right. Like the others on the façade, it is a six-panel wooden door protected by a wood and glass storm door; in the 1970s photos, this doorway had been altered with a pair of glazed French doors, so the existing door is a more historically appropriate replacement.. It is surrounded by a double-architrave molding, which seems to match what is shown in the 1970s photos so the molding may be original. This door is accessed via a wooden stoop with three wooden steps; the balustrade matches the one on the center porch. There are

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

four 9/9 double-hung wooden windows on the first story of this section, one to the right of the door and three to the left. All have molded sills and paneled shutters. The window opening to the right of the door was relocated slightly during the 1970s restoration so that it would be centered between the door and the corner of the house; based on photos from the 1970s, it was originally located closer to the door. The three to the left of the door are set fairly close together; two of these three were added during the 1970s restoration (the opening in the middle of the three is the original one). There are two gabled dormers in this section, one is vertically aligned above the door and the other is vertically aligned above the middle of the three windows to the left of the door (the original one). These dormers are detailed the same as the one in the hyphen though they are just the slightest bit wider. The dormer above the door was added during the 1970s restoration, while the other appears in the 1930s HABS photos and the 1889 photo of the house. There are four barred vents in the foundation, each vertically aligned below a first story window.

On the east side elevation, there are two 9/9 double-hung windows on the first story, one on each side of the chimney, and two 4/4 double-hung windows flanking the chimney in the gable. A frame bulkhead with double wooden doors located to the rear of the chimney provides access to the cellar beneath the hall-and-parlor section of the house. Behind the front section of the house is the rear kitchen ell. This section features paired 6/6 windows not quite centered on the east wall. The siding, foundation and roof of this section of the house match what is found on the front section and the materials all date to the 1970s or later. Based on photos from the 1970s, this section of the house was oddly situated prior to the restoration: it was in its current location but wasn't actually attached. There was a roughly three-foot gap between the back wall of the house and the front wall of the kitchen. A deteriorated porch structure seemed to bridge the gap prior to the restoration when the exterior walls and roofing structure of the kitchen were simply extended to meet the back wall of the house. This is marked on the interior by open mortises in one of the exposed ceiling joists in the kitchen and by the original vertical gable studs still in place in the attic. The rear elevation of the kitchen ell is blank and there are two 6/6 windows and a door on the west elevation of the kitchen ell. The door is adjacent to the main block and opens onto the rear porch that spans the rear elevation between the ell and the lean-to. This porch has a shed roof supported by plain square posts and no balustrade (the foundation of the porch structure appears in the 1970s photos though the posts and roof above are missing). Between the ell and the lean-to, the rear elevation of the 1 1/2-story section of the house features three 9/9 double-hung windows on the first story and a door that opens into the hyphen. Like the front door, this rear door is also topped with a five-light transom supposedly made in the 1970s from original window panes.



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*Sublett's Tavern, northeast oblique. October 2024.*



*Sublett's Tavern, 1970s northwest oblique. Note kitchen on left in the photo, not fully connected to main house.  
Photo ca. 1975, from the Layman family.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

### Interior Description

Today, the floorplan hasn't changed dramatically since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1 ½-story, hall-and-parlor plan section still has two rooms downstairs and two upstairs, connected by an enclosed stair. A kitchen ell connects to the rear of the hall room. The hyphen acts as a center hall for the house today and connects to both the 1 ½-story, hall-and-parlor section and the two-story tavern block. There are also both front and rear entry doors into the hyphen. Another stair that leads to the second story of the 2-story tavern block now descends into the hyphen space. The 2-story tavern block consists of a single large room on the first floor with a lean-to on the rear that includes a walk-through closet and a bathroom. The second story of the tavern block consists of a single large room and a hallway where the stair ascends. The second story of the hyphen today is a full bathroom that is accessible from both the hallway in the 2-story section and the parlor chamber in the hall-and-parlor section. A hatch to the attic above the two-story section is located inside a closet in the second-floor hallway. There is no access to the cockloft, or upper attic, of the 1 ½-story portions of the house. The attic of the kitchen ell is visible from a small door in the kneewall of the hall chamber; this same door provides the only visibility of the roof structure of the 1 ½-story section of the house. Below the house, there is a cellar with mechanicals below the 1 ½-story section and a crawlspace beneath the rest of the house.

The main entrance into the house is now the center door on the facade that opens into the hyphen. This interior space now serves as a center hall, measuring about 12' 6" wide and extending the full depth of the house (around 17'). The lower run of the stairs to the second floor of the two-story section descends into this hall in the rear corner; this is an alteration as the stairs originally ran the opposite direction and descended into the large tavern room on the first floor of the two-story section. This lower run of stairs is face nailed with mature cut nails with square cut heads, whereas the upper run of stairs is nailed with cut nails with T-shaped heads, suggesting that the stairs were altered in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably after the building was no longer used as a tavern. The stair has a closed stringer with turned balusters and the square newel is topped with an elaborately carved finial in the form of an artichoke or magnolia bud. The stair balustrade and the finial atop the newel post date to the 1990s or early 2000s. According to the writings of Mrs. Evelyn Jervy, who surveyed the house in the 1940s or 50s, both stairs at that time had square balusters and newels. An interior photo from 1991 shows a closed stringer stair with slender square balusters and a plain square newel with no finial; the existing newel post may be the one from the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on wear, though the finial certainly is not. This center hall features a simple board chair rail with a single bead at the top and bottom. The baseboard is similarly simple with a single bead at the top edge. There is crown molding in this space with dentils that was added by either the Laymans in the 1970s or the Goodmans after them. This space has always been an important circulation space, judging by the number of doors. One door opens into the two-story tavern section in about the middle of the space, while another opens into the large parlor or dining room in the front corner of the space. There is also a door opening into a closet located to the rear of the projecting chimney, along with the front door and a door to the back porch. These doorways all appear to have historic trim and to be original to the space (with the exception of the closet). The floor in this

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

section of the house is slightly lower than that in the sections on either side, meaning there is a step up into both the two-story tavern section and the large parlor/dining room. Flooring in this section of the house runs north-south and is slightly different from that found in the other sections of the house – the floorboards are not set as tightly together, they are not face nailed, and they show slightly less wear. Evidence visible in the crawlspace suggests that the front 5 or 6' of this hyphen may have originally been constructed as an engaged porch. If this is true, then the flooring in the hyphen must date to whenever the front wall was moved forward and the space enclosed as there is no evidence in the floorboards of this change. If the flooring in the hyphen is of a slightly later vintage than that in the other sections of the house, that could explain the slight differences in construction and wear.



*Sublett's Tavern, hyphen interior, looking from front to back of house. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Stair in the two-story section of the house, looking down at the original header marking where the stairs rose from the opposite direction than they do now. Small door is the access to the attic above the lean-to. October 2024.*

The large tavern room on the west end of the house is accessed via a door from the hyphen and a front exterior door. There is also a doorway into the rear lean-to addition on the back wall that leads to a closet and bathroom. The large tavern room is today used as a bedroom and remains a large open space. There is a fireplace on the west end wall and the enclosed rise of the stairs to the second story on the east. Originally, the lower run of these stairs descended into this room along the back wall, and that is clear from ghost marks on the flooring as well as structural members visible from the lean-to. The stairs were altered to descend into what is now the center hall during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on the nails used in construction. The fireplace is surrounded by a plain surround topped with a molded mantel shelf. The shelf is stepped at the ends and the moldings are finely detailed with a Federal profile, but there is evidence that there were originally collonettes or pilasters and some type of applied round decorative detail on the frieze that is no longer present. Ghost marks of these missing elements are visible and the account of Mrs. Jervey from before the 1950s describes the mantle shelf as being supported by



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

four fluted columns topped by medallions. A photo from 1991 seems to show pilasters, with perhaps some fluting, supporting capitals with a bulls eye motif. It is unknown when these details were removed. The flooring in this space consists of wide planks face nailed with T-headed nails. There is a simple beaded chair rail in this room and beaded baseboards. There is crown molding that dates to either the 1970s renovation or later; none was noted in Jervey's survey or the WPA survey. According to the current owner, when repairs were being made to the window sill in the front west corner of the room the top edge of some wainscoting concealed behind the drywall was exposed. This is also not mentioned in Jervey's survey or the WPA survey. Jervey does mention that there were two doorways on the rear wall of the room, one that led into half of the lean-to where the bar room was located, while the other led into the other half of the lean-to where the post office was. Unfortunately, the entire lean-to was found to be structurally unsound during the 1970s renovation and it was removed and reconstructed. The space is now accessed via a single door from the main tavern space and includes a walk-through closet and a full bathroom. The trim around the doorway does appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century vintage, however, and may very well be reused from one of the original doorways – it is a single architrave with an inner bead and an ogee backband with a fillet. This trim is also found on the inside of the original exterior doorway into this space and on the doorway from the hyphen.



*First-floor tavern room, looking west from the doorway from the hyphen. Exterior door is on the left, door into the lean-to is on the right. November 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*First-floor tavern room, looking east at the doorway to the hyphen and stair. November 2024.*

The second floor of the two-story tavern block includes a hallway where the stair ascends and a large bedroom. The stairwell is open and edged with a balustrade with turned balusters and a square newel topped with a decorative artichoke or magnolia bud finial. According to the current owner, they were told that this railing was supposedly taken from another historic property during the 1970s restoration and replaced a solid board railing. There is a window on the back wall of this hallway and a small closet on the front wall. The flooring on the second floor matches that on the first and there is a seam in the flooring that runs the full depth of the house, from front wall to back. It doesn't seem to be associated with the changes to the stair and it intersects both the front and rear walls beneath existing windows, which are believed to be original openings, so it couldn't be the location of a former interior wall. At this point, it's meaning remains a mystery. The existing partition wall between the hallway and bedroom does not seem to be original, however. The trim around the doorway between the hall and the bedroom is not 19<sup>th</sup> century and the board-and-batten door matches those used on the closets in the bedroom, which are clearly a result of the 1970s restoration. The large bedroom opens into this hallway, as does the full bathroom that now occupies the half-story of the hyphen.

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*Second floor hallway of the two-story block. October 2024.*



*Flooring in the second-floor hallway of the two-story tavern block. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

The large bedroom on the second floor of the two-story section has two windows on the front wall and one on the rear. The partition wall between this space and the hallway has been augmented with built-in closets toward the rear of the space. There was originally a fireplace centered on the west wall with a “pretty” mantel, according to Jervey. The west chimney was struck by lightning and collapsed in the 1950s and was rebuilt; the mantel may have been reinstalled at that time but was subsequently removed and the fireplace covered with drywall. This bedroom has the same beaded chair rail and beaded baseboard found in the rest of the house. There is clear evidence on the front wall, centered between the two windows, of the location of a former doorway. Cuts in the baseboard and chair rail mark the location. A couple of photos from the 1970s and earlier, prior to the siding being replaced, also show a patch in the siding where the doorway used to be. According to Jervey, no one at the time of her survey (pre-1950) could remember there ever being a second story porch on the building, and evidence of what this may have looked like has been lost with the replacement of the siding in the 1970s. It is an intriguing feature that may have been related to the function of the space as a tavern as it would have allowed guests to ascend to the sleeping room without having to go through the dining and drinking space on the first floor.



*Second floor bedroom in the two-story block. Looking at the front wall of the house where a doorway was originally located between the windows, in the current location of the wooden chest. October 2024.*

The first floor of the 1 ½-story hall-and-parlor section of the house is connected to the hyphen via a doorway into the parlor or dining room. This space, which measures roughly 18' by 17', is larger than the other room in this section of the house (called the hall because the front door opens into it), which is unusual. Typically, the hall would be larger than the parlor, and this size

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

difference may be indicative of Sublett's intent to use this space as semi-public tavern dining space while the smaller hall with the stair to the second floor would be more private family space. This parlor or dining room has a doorway to the hyphen on the west wall and a doorway into the hall on the east wall and three windows each across the front and back walls. Four of these windows were added during the 1970s restoration; only the center windows were there prior to that time. There was also an exterior door on the back wall of this room prior to the 1970s renovation; it was located to the east of the original window. There is a large fireplace on the west wall of the space; the wooden mantel features plain uprights and a plain frieze with a deep stack of Neoclassical moldings beneath a projecting mantel shelf. The molding is highlighted by a row of reeded dentils. Jervey's pre-1950 survey suggests that all of the door and window surrounds in this room were "5 ½ inches wide and closely reeded." But the existing door trim on the two doorways matches that found elsewhere in the house with a single architrave with an inner bead and an ogee backband with a fillet and both show wear suggesting a 19<sup>th</sup> century date, so this conflicting report is confusing. The windows in this space all have matching trim, which probably all dates to the 1970s when four of these windows were added. Like the other spaces in the 2-story section of the house, this room has a simple beaded chair rail and baseboard. It also has crown molding which was added in the 1970s or later. Flooring is wide plank flooring face nailed with T-headed nails.



*First floor parlor or dining room in the hall-and-parlor section of the house. Looking at the west wall into the hyphen. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Detail of mantel in the parlor or dining room. October 2024.*

The smaller of the two rooms in the hall-and-parlor section, called the hall because it includes the exterior door, is connected to the parlor on the west wall, the kitchen ell on the back wall, and has an exterior door on the front wall. It also features an enclosed winder stair to the second floor in the back corner of the room along the partition, and a fireplace on the east end wall. There is a window on the front wall beside the door and two windows flanking the fireplace. Like the other rooms in the house, the hall has a simple beaded chair rail and a beaded baseboard. Crown molding was added in the 1970s or later. The mantel in this room matches the one found in the parlor, with plain uprights and a plain frieze and a stack of Neoclassical moldings beneath a projecting mantel shelf and a row of reeded dentils accenting the molding. The trim around the door leading into the parlor matches the 19<sup>th</sup> century trim elsewhere in the house – single architrave with an inner bead, an ogee backband, and a fillet. The trim around the front door, the door into the kitchen ell, and the windows is 20<sup>th</sup> century vintage with a double architrave. The enclosed winder stair is missing a railing that was in place during Jervey's survey. She described it as having square balusters and a rail and evidence for this missing element is found in notches at the corners of the bottom stairs. A modern railing for safety is now mounted to the wall along the inside of the enclosed stair. Like most of the flooring throughout the house, the stairs are face nailed with T-headed nails.

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*First floor hall in the hall-parlor section of the house. View from the front door. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Stair in the hall-parlor section of the house. Notches on the left ends of the risers mark the former location of some type of newel or railing. October 2024.*

The enclosed stair rises to a small landing between two doorways. A dormer window lighting the landing dates to the 1970s restoration. The doorways to each of the chambers are accented with a single architrave with an inner bead and an ogee backband with a fillet. The doors themselves are board-and-batten doors and could be reproduction. The hall chamber (the room above the hall) has a fireplace on the east end wall and a 4/4 window on either side of it. There are no dormers in this room. The wide plank flooring is face nailed with T-headed nails. There is a simple beaded baseboard and no chair rail in this room. Double architrave molding around the windows probably dates to the 1970s restoration. The small brick fireplace has a segmentally arched top and the surrounding mantel is simple with plain uprights supporting a flat, recessed panel in the frieze beneath a projecting shelf. The moldings are blocky and their date is unclear. This fireplace and mantel does match the one in the parlor chamber.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Mantel in the hall chamber, second floor. October 2024.*

The parlor chamber is similar to the hall chamber except that it has a dormer on the front and rear slopes of the roof providing the only natural light. There is a fireplace, matching the one in the hall chamber, on the west wall of the room and it is flanked by two doors; the one to the left is a closet while the one to the right supposedly dates to the 1910s and connects to the half-story of the hyphen (now a bathroom). Like the hall chamber, the flooring is wide planks face nailed and there is a simple beaded baseboard. The molding on the doorway to the landing matches the 19<sup>th</sup> century single architrave detailing found elsewhere, while the molding around the doors on either side of the fireplace features a double architrave that may be a later alteration.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Parlor chamber, second floor. Looking into the room from the top of the stair landing. Door into the hyphen is in the back right corner. October 2024.*

The half story of the hyphen today is a fully modern bathroom with a tiled floor. It is accessed from both the second floor hallway in the two-story section and the parlor chamber. Dormers on the front and rear slopes of the roof illuminate the space. The door from the parlor chamber supposedly dates to 1910, and the dormer on the front slope of the roof is not shown in an 1889 photograph (see page 49) so it may date to this same renovation. The bathroom has been fully renovated and retains little visible historic material.

A kitchen ell extends from the rear of the 1 ½-story section of the house and connects on the first floor to the original hall through a wide doorway on the back wall of the hall that may have originally been an exterior door. The kitchen has been altered many times over the years and the most important surviving original elements are the board wainscoting found on the south and west walls and the exposed joists in the ceiling. The wainscoting consists of two 13 ½"-wide horizontal boards beneath a molded chair rail. Photographs from the 1970s restoration show that the kitchen ell was located in its current position when the Laymans acquired the property, but it was connected to the main house in a rudimentary fashion, almost like an enclosed porch with a flat roof. Evidence of the original south wall of the ell is visible in the kitchen in the open mortises in one of the exposed ceiling joists; the studs for the south gable end wall are also still visible in the attic. During the 1970s restoration the gable roof of the ell was extended and connected to the rear slope of the roof of the 1 ½-story section. Today the kitchen is one large room with cabinets along the north and east walls. The flooring is wood but is a recent replacement after extensive rot was discovered in the existing flooring.



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*Kitchen, looking in from the hall doorway. Note the open mortises visible in the joist closest to the photographer marking the location of the former end wall of the kitchen ell. November 2024.*



*Wainscoting in the kitchen. October 2024.*

*Attic*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

The attic of the two-story tavern section is the only portion of the attic that is fully accessible at this time. A hatch in a closet in the hallway provides access. The attic is unfinished and contains no evidence that it was ever living space. There is no flooring and no natural light. It does, however, provide a good view of some of the construction details of this section of the house. The roof is constructed as a common rafter roof system with hewn and pit sawn rafters that are pegged at the ridge. The rafters rest on a board false plate that sits atop the joists. The joists are numbered close to their ends with Roman numerals cut into the wood. The only bracing in the roof system consists of two boards nailed diagonally across the rafters; these are held in place with double-struck cut nails.



*Attic of the two-story section. Looking at the west end wall. Showing diagonal bracing and rafters pegged at the ridge. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Attic of the two-story section. Common rafters sitting on a board false plate. Note the carpenters mark at the end of the joist. October 2024.*

The only view of the roof framing above the hyphen section is through a small hole in the east gable end wall of the attic of the two-story section, where the hyphen abuts the two-story section. This juncture reveals two things of note: first, the end rafters on the hyphen are hewn and sawn and pegged at the ridge, just like those in the two-story section; and second, the sheathing of the roof on the hyphen projects past the edge of the plate into the space above the two-story section. If these two sections of the building had been constructed at different times, this juncture would have some evidence of siding on one section of the building. The rest of the cockloft (or upper attic) above the half story of the hyphen is not accessible.



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*Attic of the two-story section, looking at the junction with the hyphen roof. October 2024.*

Likewise, the cockloft of the 1 ½-story hall-and-parlor section of the house is also not accessible. The only visibility of this portion of the roof is through a small door in one of the kneewalls on the back wall of the hall chamber. This door exposes the roof framing of the rear slope of the hall-and-parlor section and the attic of the kitchen ell. The roof of the hall-and-parlor section also seems to be constructed with a common rafter system. The rafters are hewn and pit sawn and resting on a board false plate, just like in the two-story section of the house. The ridge of the roof is not visible. In situ nails are double-struck, hand-headed cut nails, though a large fully wrought nail is lying loose on top of some boxes with some splintered wood. This opening also makes it possible to lean over and view the original board soffit and some of the original siding now behind the kitchen ell. The board soffit is held in place with hand-headed cut nails and the weatherboards are plain, rather than beaded.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Rafter and original roof sheathing of the 1 ½-story hall-and-parlor section. With in-situ double-struck cut nail. October 2024.*

The attic of the kitchen is also visible from this spot. The roof framing of this section of the house has seen far more repairs than the rest of the house – multiple rafters have been replaced and the ridge board has been replaced. The framing members that remain that do look old are all sawn and more uniform than those found in the other sections of the house. Vertical studs that indicate the original location of the gable end (which is also indicated in the kitchen by the open mortises in the exposed ceiling joist) are present just a few feet from the back wall of the hall-and-parlor section of the house, confirming that these two sections were not originally connected at the roof.

### *Cellar and Crawlspace*

The foundation of the entire house was almost completely rebuilt during the 1970s due to structural failure, but the crawlspace and cellar still retain some interesting clues. It appears that the 1 ½-story hall-and-parlor section was originally constructed with a cellar, while the hyphen and two-story section only had a crawlspace. The cellar is now filled with modern mechanicals and the dirt floor is covered with black plastic. The front and side walls of the cellar are concrete block from the 1970s renovation (these walls are veneered with brick on the exterior); the historic brick walls have been completely removed along these three sides. The back wall of the cellar does appear to still be brick though it is largely concealed behind mechanical equipment; it is in poor condition and has been broken through in numerous locations. The mortar is crumbling and the bond is not discernable from the cellar. From the crawlspace underneath the kitchen this back wall does appear to be a continuous brick wall laid in 3:1 common bond.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

Overhead in the cellar, the floor joists have evidence of whitewash, suggesting that this space was usable space at one point in time. Any evidence of original barred vents was removed in the 1970s so it is not known how the space was ventilated or illuminated. The current entrance is via a large bulkhead on the east wall just to the rear of the chimney, and the bulkhead and current steps are not historic, though the original entrance may have been in the same location. With regards to the building technology of the hall-and-parlor section of the house, the floor joists and sills are fully hewn and the joists are pegged to the sills. The most interesting evidence visible from the cellar is a partially collapsed brick pier that sits just in front of (to the south of) the base of the interior brick chimney. This pier is just a couple of inches from the chimney but the two are not bonded together. The pier supports the right-angle junction of a heavy hewn beam extending crosswise (east-west) across the hyphen and an equally heavy hewn beam extending towards the front wall of the house (north-south). These two framing members are pegged together and rest on top of the brick pier. Smaller joists, whose bottoms project slightly below the sill, run east-west to the south of the heavy beam. A current theory is that this is evidence that the front section of the hyphen, from the front edge of the chimney forward, was originally an inset porch, and the heavy hewn beam running crosswise across the hyphen is there to support the original location of the front wall.



*Partially collapsed brick pier, on the left, beside the chimney, on the right, showing the pegged joint of the two heavy beams that were supported by the pier. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

The crawlspace beneath the kitchen ell is quite narrow and most of the visible structural materials in this area have been replaced. The brick foundation dates to the 1970s while all the joists and flooring needed to be replaced somewhat recently due to moisture damage and extensive rot. The most useful evidence visible from this location is the exterior of the back foundation wall of the hall-and-parlor section, which appears to be laid in 3:1 common bond.

The crawlspace beneath the two-story section is more spacious and includes valuable evidence. Like the foundation under the hall-and-parlor section, the foundation of the two-story section and the hyphen were completely replaced in the 1970s along the front and west side. Along the rear, however, original massive brick piers remain supporting the sill of the back wall. These are now encapsulated by the lean-to addition across the rear, which was reconstructed in the 1970s and has a modern brick foundation. There is also a massive brick pier beneath the partition wall between the two-story section and the hyphen. This pier is sized to accommodate two sills side-by-side and two massive hewn sills rest atop it. The sill beneath the hyphen rests a couple bricks below the sill beneath the two-story section, accounting for the difference in interior floor height. This pier, intentionally constructed to hold two side-by-side sills, is more evidence that at least the two-story section and the hyphen were constructed at the same time. The other end of the heavy hewn beam described above running east-west across the hyphen is visible, pegged into the sill just in front of (to the south of) the brick pier. All joists and sills in both the two-story section and hyphen are hewn; insulation fills the spaces between them, so the undersides of the floorboards are not visible.



*Crawlspace beneath the two-story section, looking towards the rear of the house at brick piers supporting the rear sill. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Crawlspace beneath the house. Brick pier supporting the sills of both the two-story section (on the left) and the hyphen (on the right). Note the pegged joint right of center that is the opposite end of the beam resting on the pier beside the chimney shown on a previous page. October 2024.*

Additional evidence of the heavy timber frame structure of the two-story portion of the house is visible from inside the reconstructed lean-to. When the lean-to was reconstructed, a storage space was created in the attic of the lean-to, accessible from a small doorway on the landing of the stair (shown on page 13), and a section of the framing of the back wall of the two-story section is visible from this location. The massive two-story corner posts for both the northwest and northeast corners of the two-story section are visible, as is the girder that runs between them providing the structure for the second floor. All of these framing members are either pit sawn or band sawn. This girder is pegged into the corner posts with large wooden pegs that project several inches into the lean-to space, suggesting that this rear wall of the two-story section was never an exterior wall covered with siding (and there is, in fact, no linear pattern of repeated nail holes in these framing members to suggest as much either); a lean-to with the same width and roof pitch as the current lean-to must have been an original feature. This exposed section of framing also displays corner bracing, studs, and the end of the header for the original run of stairs which descended into the large tavern room. Multiple examples of carpenter's marks are also found on this back wall.

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*View of the framing of the back wall of the two-story section visible from the attic of the reconstructed lean-to. The dark-colored horizontal framing member in the middle of the photo is the girder supporting the second floor. Note the large peg where it intersects the corner post on the left of the photo. Also note the carpenter's marks on the diagonal brace and one of the studs. October 2024.*



*View of the framing associated with the original run of stairs. Same brace as is shown in the image above. Note the ends of the headers, one of which is notched into the base of a stud. Also note the carpenter's marks. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



*View of the framing of the back wall of the two-story section from inside the attic of the lean-to. Vertical beam is the northwest corner post, horizontal beam pegged to it is the girder supporting the second floor. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

### Secondary Resources

#### *Well (ca. 1813, Contributing)*

Below ground level, the well is a deep circular shaft lined with stone. This is the portion of the well that dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and should be considered contributing. Above ground level, a brick circular shaft extends about three and a half feet. It is surrounded by a square brick platform that is about a foot tall. On top of the platform rest four wooden posts supporting a pyramidal roof structure that shelters the well. A metal pulley system above the well allows for the lowering of a bucket. A wooden frame and door on top of the brick shaft allow it to be covered when not in use. (The above-ground portion of the well is visible in the photo on page 7.) At the time of survey there was still water in the well. Everything above ground level dates to after 1991 when the property was surveyed and no above-ground evidence of the well appears in the photos.



*Looking down into the well at the 19<sup>th</sup> century stone-lined portion. October 2024.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

*Guest House (ca. 1975, Noncontributing)*

The 1 ½-story guest house is located almost directly behind the main dwelling. According to materials in the owner's possession, the Laymans constructed this building out of parts of an 1850s kitchen that they moved from Alberta, VA. It is a frame dwelling with a side gabled roof, a square plan, and a brick foundation. On the front elevation the roof overhangs the front wall by several feet creating a small porch. A pair of narrow board and batten doors in the center bay is flanked by a single window on either side. On the west side elevation, there is a window on the first story and one in the gable, while the east side elevation features two small square casement windows in the gable. A large vinyl picture window dominates the rear elevation. Windows are vinyl, the roof is standing seam metal, and the siding is wood weatherboards. The roof is clad with metal. On the interior, there is a single room on the first floor and a single room in the half-story above. The interior was in poor condition and was redone within the last 10 years.



*Guest house, southwest oblique. October 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

*Barn (ca. 1975, Noncontributing)*

Like the guest house, the story is that this building was moved here from elsewhere in Virginia during the 1970s restoration. It is a 1 ½-story frame building with a side gabled roof, a square footprint, and a large shed-roofed lean-to on the north elevation. The front faces west and has a single board and batten door centered on the wall. The north side elevation is dominated by the lean-to addition which has a sliding barn door on the front. There is also a 6/6 window in the gable on the north side. On the south side elevation there is a 9/9 window on the first story and a board and batten door in the gable. A single 9/9 window penetrates the rear elevation. The roof is standing seam metal and the siding is wood weatherboards. The interior is utilitarian storage and work space. The frame of the building incorporates historic timbers and the corner posts are heavy hewn beams.



*Barn, west elevation. October 2024.*

*Garage (2018, Noncontributing)*

The garage is the newest outbuilding on the property; it was completed in 2018. It is located near the west property line but well behind the house at the terminus of the driveway. It is a substantial front-gabled frame building on a concrete slab foundation. Two sliding barn doors centered on the south-facing front elevation conceal a large modern overhead garage door. There is a pierced vent in the peak of the front gable. There is a pedestrian door and a window on the east side elevation. The roof is standing seam metal and the siding is Hardie Plank.

*Shed (ca. 1990, Noncontributing)*

The date of construction of this small shed behind the house is estimated to be sometime in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It does not predate the 1970s renovation but it is shown in 1991 photos of the property. It is a small, square, frame building with a steeply pitched side-gabled roof located just west of the existing fenced rear yard. It faces east. The east elevation features a

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

narrow door and a narrow 4/4 window. The shed is detailed like all the other outbuildings with a standing seam metal roof, wood siding, and a boxed cornice with decorative end boards.

### Integrity Statement

Sublett's Tavern retains good integrity to the period of significance and, as a prominent local landmark and public gathering place for nearly 100 years, its survival informs our understanding of both historic architecture and 19<sup>th</sup> century commerce. The former tavern retains integrity of location because it has not been moved from its original site along Huguenot Trail and this aspect of integrity is important for a building constructed as a tavern. The location along an important transportation route and close to the James River was significant to its function as a tavern and post office. It also retains good integrity of setting, with a very modest set back from the road and high visibility from both directions. The surrounding area remains residential and retains enough large agricultural properties to preserve the setting of the tavern along an important transportation corridor among larger rural properties. The house retains good integrity of design in spite of the 1970s restoration. The original floorplan is clearly legible and largely intact and the original design of three distinct building blocks with separate entrances is still legible on both the exterior and interior. The evidence in the crawlspace, cellar, and attic illuminates our understanding of how and when each section was constructed. The 1970s restoration did replace many deteriorated materials in-kind and so the integrity of materials is judged to be fair. Important surviving original materials include the heavy timber frame skeleton of the house, two of the three chimneys, most of the flooring, some of the door trim, several mantels, and both stairs. The house retains good integrity of workmanship in the carpentry showcased by the heavy timber framing and the details of the original door trim and mantels. The framing members exhibit Roman numeral carpenter's marks in multiple locations and finely crafted mortise and tenon joinery pegged with wooden pegs. Thanks to the 1970s restoration, which saved a seriously deteriorated structure and carefully replaced damaged materials in-kind, the integrity of feeling is good. The two original stairs and three front doors help to preserve the circulation patterns that characterized a building that served both a commercial and a domestic purpose. Finally, the integrity of association is excellent. Sublett's Tavern has been a local landmark since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when it served as a spot for dining, drinking, and lodging and as a post office. These functions all drew locals and travelers together in a space where they could share news and socialize, extending the web of their communal connections. The tavern lent its name to the Post Office and eventually the surrounding community, which was known as Sublett's Tavern by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and Sublett's by the 1890s. Even though it has been a private dwelling with no public function for almost 80 years, it remains an important local landmark and draws visitors from all over. As a purpose-built tavern and dwelling dating to ca. 1813, it broadens our understanding of how taverns were constructed and functioned.

### Archaeological Potential

There has never been any formal archaeological testing conducted on the 3.5-acre Sublett's Tavern property, but the property owners have found numerous artifacts as they have engaged in routine ground disturbance and they have conducted exploratory ground penetrating radar on

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

their own, though the results were inconclusive. In addition to numerous smaller and fragmentary artifacts, they report that they have located a buried, intact, large iron pot and foundation stones for a now-missing building on the parcel to the west of the tavern. As the tavern complex would have undoubtedly included numerous secondary resources that are no longer present - including barns and stables, a smokehouse, an icehouse and/or dairy, and dwellings for enslaved people – the property should be considered high potential for intact archaeological remains. There has been significant ground disturbance over the last 50 years since the property was first restored, first by the Layman's bringing in new outbuildings intended to replace the missing historic resources, and later during the creation of the "colonial" garden beds, but the depth of that disturbance is unknown and it is possible that intact archaeological features may remain even beneath disturbed ground. Careful professional archaeological exploration of the property could provide valuable contributions to an understanding of how this early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern complex looked and functioned.



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1813-1942

**Significant Dates**

1813-1845

1819

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

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

The frame dwelling known as Sublett's Tavern has long been a landmark in Powhatan County. Established in 1813 on River Road in the northern part of the county, the tavern served both a local clientele as a community gathering spot for dining, drinking, and socializing, and travelers passing through who needed a place to stay for the night. It is sited close to the road and located on a thoroughfare that runs east-west through the county, connecting farmers from the rural western counties with markets in the city of Richmond. In addition, it is also located close to the James River and in between two roads that led from established ferry landings to River Road, making it convenient to travelers and locals no matter what their mode of transport. The tavern was established by William Sublett in 1813 on land that he purchased from his brother, Thomas S. Sublett, that had originally been part of their father's estate. The physical evidence observed during this survey, in addition to documentary evidence, confirms that the building standing today was built either all at once in 1813 or within a short 7-year window between 1813 and 1820 as a purpose-built tavern and residence, and Sublett was licensed to keep an ordinary at his house from 1813 until 1845. In 1819, a post office was established at the tavern and Sublett was named the first postmaster, a post he held for nearly 40 years. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the surrounding geographic area had come to be known as Sublett's Tavern and William Sublett and his brother had established a general store across the street from the tavern on William Sublett's property. The name of both the post office and the surrounding geographic area was shortened to Subletts in the 1890s and the post office remained in operation until 1942. Sublett's Tavern is eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture with a period of significance of 1813-1942, capturing the time period during which it was built and operated as a tavern and a post office. Sublett's Tavern is significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce for its association with the significant history of taverns and post offices, both of which were important public gathering spaces in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century allowing both locals and travelers the opportunity to strengthen or broaden their social, cultural, and economic networks. Often, the functions of these property types were incorporated into pre-existing buildings: taverns in existing dwellings and post offices in general stores or taverns. But Sublett's Tavern is significant as a purpose-built tavern and residence, with multiple entrances and stairs providing evidence for the building having both a public, tavern side and a private, family side for William Sublett's family. The documentary evidence makes it clear that Sublett selected this five-acre parcel on the Road to Richmond and near two ferry crossings of the James River for the construction of a tavern in 1813 and he operated the tavern for more than 30 years. The last postmaster of the Subletts Post Office noted in 1956 that the post office had operated "right in this house for the whole 128 years" of its service. Sublett's Tavern was always intended to serve a dual purpose as commercial and residential space, and as decades and centuries passed and the commercial operations changed and eventually ceased, the physical building itself also changed, but not without retaining significant aspects of its historical character and appearance. The ghost of the second story door on the front of the two-story tavern section and the alteration of the stairs in the tavern section are physical reminders of past functions. As the commercial operations no longer needed the physical spaces constructed for



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

them, the preexisting residential functions of the building expanded to fill the void. Though Sublett's Tavern is today a fully private dwelling, it remains as a reminder of the historical development of this area and continues to be known by its historic name, with its prominent and highly visible roadside location and an exterior appearance with three doorways signifying the multiple uses that formerly could be found there. Sublett's Tavern is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture, in spite of diminished integrity of materials, as an example of a rare building form – a purpose-built early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern and residence – with physical evidence that demonstrates both how vernacular building traditions were utilized in the design of a multipurpose space, and how the building evolved over time. The surviving historic floorplan of Sublett's Tavern is indicative of the flexible spaces and multiple circulation paths that characterized an early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern and residential building. The physical evidence is also valuable in its own right – the heavy timber frame construction with hewn and pit sawn framing marked with Roman numeral carpenter's marks and joined with pegged mortise and tenon joints and early generation cut nails with hand-made, double-struck heads are all examples of building technology that would undergo dramatic changes in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as mechanization and standardization gradually replaced the individual workmanship of early craftsmen.

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

Property Ownership History

Sublett's Tavern was opened on the present site by William Sublett in 1813, when Sublett was only 23 years old. While local history has often repeated that Sublett's Tavern dates to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and was owned first by William's father, Peter Sublett, there is little evidence to support this story. It is true that the land on which Sublett's Tavern sits was part of over 600 acres owned by Peter Sublett at the time of his death in 1805, but a chancery case heard by the Powhatan County Court in 1806 regarding the division of Peter Sublett's estate (he died without a will in 1805) makes no mention of the tavern and indicates that the Sublett house went to Peter's widow, Martha. The court records provide a brief accounting of the amount of land and bonds that each of Peter's seven children and his widow is to receive. The largest parcel, 162 acres, goes to Peter's widow, Martha; it is described as "including the mansion house" and "being part of the river tract." This parcel is the only one described as including any buildings (and Martha holds this parcel until her death in 1835). In the partition of the estate, William receives "Lot No. 2," 65 acres "in the river tract" (in 1806 William would have been around 16 years old), which is in line with the acreage allotted to his siblings – the siblings each received between 65 and 85 acres. A deed recorded on May 7, 1811 indicates that William sold this land to his brother, Thomas S. Sublett, for \$877.50; the description of the property notes that it is the same tract allotted to William from the estate of his father, Peter. The County Land Tax Records for 1811 do not reflect the partition of Peter Sublett's property and still list the "Estate of Peter Sublett," as including three tracts of 533 acres, 100 acres, and 29 acres. But the following year, in 1812, the land tax records have caught up and the various Sublett heirs are listed individually. Martha is listed as owning a single parcel, totaling 162 acres on or near the James River and adjoining the lands of Thomas Harris No. 1, Thomas S. Sublett, and Francis Harris, while

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

Thomas S. Sublett is listed as owning one parcel of 140 acres “near the James River” and adjacent to Martha Sublett, Thomas Harris No. 1, Francis Harris, and Robert Wren. This 140-acre parcel seems to reflect the 75 acres that Thomas inherited from his father’s estate, according to the chancery case, plus the 65 acres that William sold him in 1811. One year later, on March 5, 1813, Thomas S. Sublett sold William five acres adjacent to his own land and on “the road to Richmond.” The land tax records of 1814 reflect this transfer and refer to Sublett’s Tavern by name – William Sublett (of Peter) is listed as owning 5 acres described as “Sublett’s Tavern” adjoining the lands of Thomas S. Sublett and Robert Wren – this is the first time that the name “Sublett’s Tavern” appears in the county records.<sup>1</sup> The notes column indicates that the land was “transferred from Thomas Sublett by Deed.” In corroboration, the Personal Property Tax Lists for 1813 lists William Sublett (of Peter) taxed for an ordinary. William Sublett (of Peter) does not appear in the Personal Property Tax lists before 1813; he was taxed again for an ordinary in 1814. William Sublett acquired another five acres from his brother Thomas in July 1814 (by deed), a transfer reflected in the land tax records for 1815 when William Sublett (of Peter) is listed as owning 10 acres, described as “Sublett’s Tavern,” with a note that says “5 acres added conveyed from Thomas Sublett by deed.” In 1815, Thomas again sold William land, this time 28 acres that adjoined the 10 acres he already owned, giving William a total of 38 acres. William did not acquire any additional land for the next 35 years; the 1850 land tax records continue to list William as owning 38 acres.

In 1820, however, the land tax records started to record the value of buildings on the land separate from the value of the land itself and it becomes clear that William had a substantial establishment – the 1820 land tax records indicate that the value of the buildings on William’s 38 acres totaled \$2400. In comparison, the “mansion house” on the 162 acres that had been occupied by Peter Sublett and was inherited by Martha Sublett (and which she continued to hold) was valued at \$800, which was still a substantial sum. The value of the buildings on William Sublett’s land also did not change for the next 30 years, with the exception of a small decrease in 1840 when the value dipped to \$2200 (at the same time the value of the mansion house on the 162-acre parcel, now the property of Thomas S. Sublett following the death of Martha, decreased to \$500, suggesting that there was a county-wide reassessment). The fact that the value of the buildings on William’s land does not significantly change after it is first calculated in 1820 suggests that no major building campaigns occurred after that date.

William Sublett had only just reached the “age of maturity” when he established the tavern in 1813 but he came from an established family. The Sublett family was well-known locally as prominent members of the community of Huguenot settlers who immigrated from France in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and settled in central Virginia. William’s father and grandfather, both named Peter Sublett, had owned the land on which Sublett’s Tavern was eventually built. Both were farmers and enslavers; Peter Sublett (the first) named 22 enslaved people in his will as property

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<sup>1</sup> The William Sublett that built Sublett’s Tavern first appeared in the land tax books in 1813; he would have been 23 years old. He was referred to as William Sublett (of Peter) because there was another William Sublett, undoubtedly a relation, who was also a landowner in Powhatan County, and this William Sublett had been appearing in the land tax books for several years before 1813. Starting in 1813, when both William Subletts were listed for the first time, they were listed as William Sublett (of Peter) and William Sublett (of Lewis).

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

to be divided between his five children, while Peter Sublett (the second) emancipated all of his enslaved people by deed in 1788. Fifteen named individuals are emancipated by the 1788 deed, though only seven were actually freed immediately; an emancipation schedule provided in the deed for the remaining eight people freed one person a year between 1789 and 1807 (there were some years in which no one was freed). In the deed Peter (the second) states, "I, Peter Sublett, of the County of Powhatan do believe 'That all men are by nature equally free and independent' and therefore from a clear conviction of the injustice and criminality of depriving my fellow creatures of their natural and dearest Right do hereby emancipate or set free the following men, women, and children..." It has been suggested that the delayed emancipation dates reflected the age of the individuals and that they were freed when they reached the age of 18 or 21, which is certainly possible, though not stipulated in the deed itself. Peter (the second) does not seem to have suffered financially following his decision to emancipate his slaves; when he died in 1805, he was described as owning "a Considerable estate, both real and personal."<sup>2</sup> A Mutual Assurance Society policy that he took out on his plantation in 1803 described it as including five buildings – a dwelling, a shed, a kitchen, a barn, and a granary – worth a combined \$1200. (This is the plantation that local historians have often suggested became Sublett's Tavern, though that does not appear to be true.)

Following Peter (the second's) death in 1805, Martha was granted 162 acres and "the mansion house" as her dower and lived there with her remaining minor children – William, Thomas, Patsy, and Judy, all of whom were granted their own portion of their father's estate consisting of between 65 and 85 acres and at least \$100 in bonds, which would be theirs when they reached maturity.<sup>3</sup> The 1810 census shows six white members of Martha Sublett's household, two enslaved people, and, interestingly, 26 free blacks. This is a substantial number of free black members of a household and raises questions about who they might have been and why they were all living on Martha Sublett's land. Some of them may have been some of the people emancipated by Peter, though that would only account for, at most, 15 of the individuals, unless, of course, families had been established and children born. Local historians have suggested that those individuals freed by Peter Sublett remained in Powhatan County for generations, so this is one possible explanation for the large number of free blacks on Martha's property in 1810. Primary sources related to African-American history recently digitized by the Library of Virginia make it possible to trace a few of the individuals emancipated by Peter Sublett and their continued connections with the Sublett family. One person who was definitely emancipated by Peter Sublett and remained in the immediate area for decades to come was Moses Hendley (sometimes spelled Henley). Peter's (the second's) deed of emancipation lists a man named Moses to be freed on December 25, 1796. In 1793, the Virginia General Assembly specified that "free Negroes or mulattoes" were required to be registered with the town clerk in a book, which would specify "age, name, colour, and stature, by whom, and in what court the said negro or mulatto was emancipated; or that such negro or mulatto was born free."<sup>4</sup> The process was

<sup>2</sup> Powhatan County (Va.) Chancery Causes, 1732-1938. Peter Sublett et al vs. Peter Sublett's Admr., 1806-004.

<sup>3</sup> Chancery Case 1806-004.

<sup>4</sup> Biographical note to the Powhatan County (Va.) Register of Estrays, Free Negroes and Mulattoes, Marriages, and Boats, 1786-1832, online at the Library of Virginia:  
[https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01LVA\\_INST/altrmk/alma990015823710205756](https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01LVA_INST/altrmk/alma990015823710205756).



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

extended to counties in 1803. This "Register of Free Negroes" for Powhatan County lists Moses Henley as emancipated by Peter Sublett and registered with the County on September 16, 1801. Also in 1801, the Virginia Legislature passed an act requiring commissioners of the revenue to annually return a complete list of all free Black Virginians within their districts, with their names, sex, place of residence, and trades. The resulting "List of Free Negroes" for Powhatan County lists names of free blacks, where they lived, and how they were employed. The 1812 List (the earliest available) includes Moses Hendley who was described as a "Boatman" living on Thomas S. Sublett's land. The 1813 List includes Moses Hendley, boatman, and wife Winny Hendley, spinner, and three children still living on the land of Thomas S. Sublett. Looking back at the "Register of Free Negroes" for Winny Hendley reveals that Winny Henley, age 35, was emancipated by deed by Moses Henley and registered May 20, 1812. In 1818, the "List of Free Negroes" indicates that Moses and Winny Hendley and five children were living at Sublett's Tavern. The family group continued to live on William Sublett's land for at least the next 15 years. The 1833 "List of Free Negroes" lists Moses Hendley Sr., "Waterman," with a wife and child living on William Sublett's land, along with three older children, who are all now listed separately – Moses Hendley Jr., Samuel Hendley, and James Hendley – all listed as "Waterman" for their occupation. This evidence offers multiple interesting threads. First, documentary evidence does suggest that some of the people enslaved and later emancipated by Peter Sublett remained in Powhatan County and became part of the local community for decades to come, and that at least one of them maintained close ties with the Sublett family.<sup>5</sup> Second, it suggests that there must have been a secondary dwelling on the 38 acres owned by William Sublett by 1818 as the Hendley family of five would not have lived in the main tavern building. Third, it raises the possibility that the Hendley family was involved in the operation of the tavern in some way, though their listed occupations of Boatman/Waterman and Spinner do not necessarily suggest a direct connection. Finally, between the sparse lines in government documents, the history of resilience and grit demonstrated by African Americans is revealed – Moses Henley probably saved for years to finally purchase the freedom of his wife and children in 1812.

In addition to the Hendley family, the U.S. Census illuminates who else was living at Sublett's Tavern in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1820 Census (the first since William came of age and established the tavern) lists William Sublett as a head of household consisting of himself and two white males between the ages of 16 and 26. Two people are listed as being "engaged in agriculture" while one is listed as "engaged in manufacturing." It is interesting that none are listed as engaged in commerce. William did not marry until 1828 so the identity of these two white males is unknown; they may have been relatives, apprentices, or simply boarders. One would assume that they assisted with the operation of the tavern, though possibly in addition to other employment. In addition, William is listed as enslaving 8 people – six children under age 14 and two women, one between 25 and 45, and one over 45. In 1830, William's household consists of himself and his wife, Mary Lackland, and one white male under age 5 (their son), plus another white male adult between the ages of 20 and 30. There were also four enslaved people listed as part of his household – one male between 10 and 23, one male between 24 and

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, in the 1893-1894 Chataigne's Directory a Mrs. A.V. Henley is listed as a General Merchant in Subletts, suggesting the possibility that the Hendley/Henley family remained in the area of the tavern through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at least.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

36, one female under age 10, and one female between 36 and 55. By 1840, William Sublett's family has expanded with three white male children and two white female children, along with he and his wife. Six enslaved people are listed as part of the household and two people are listed as being employed in agriculture. Again, no one is listed as employed in commerce, which is surprising. The 1850 census was the first to list the names of all members of the household. William Sublett, aged 60, was listed as a farmer with \$3000 in real estate. His wife Mary Sublett, from Buckingham, was listed as 42 and they had four children – Thomas E. Sublett, 20, Sarah E. Sublett, 17, Mary Sublett, 14, and William A. Sublett, 13. In 1850, enslaved people were also counted in a separate census called the 1850 Slave Schedule. It does not list names, just age ranges. William Sublett enslaved 12 people in 1850, seven of them children. In 1860, on the cusp of Civil War, William Sublett was listed as a 70-year old farmer with \$3000 in real estate and \$7125 in personal property. His household included his wife, Mary Sublett; his daughter, Sarah E. Sublett, age 28; Mary Brackett, white, age 29; and James W. Brackett, white, age 3. The connection with the Bracketts is unknown at this time; the tavern was no longer operating and most of the Sublett's children had left home, so Brackett could have been a housekeeper or just a boarder. A couple of local histories have suggested that William Sublett served as an officer in the Confederate Army during the Civil War but that seems highly unlikely given his age; it is far more likely that it was his son or another relation also named William Sublett who served in the army.

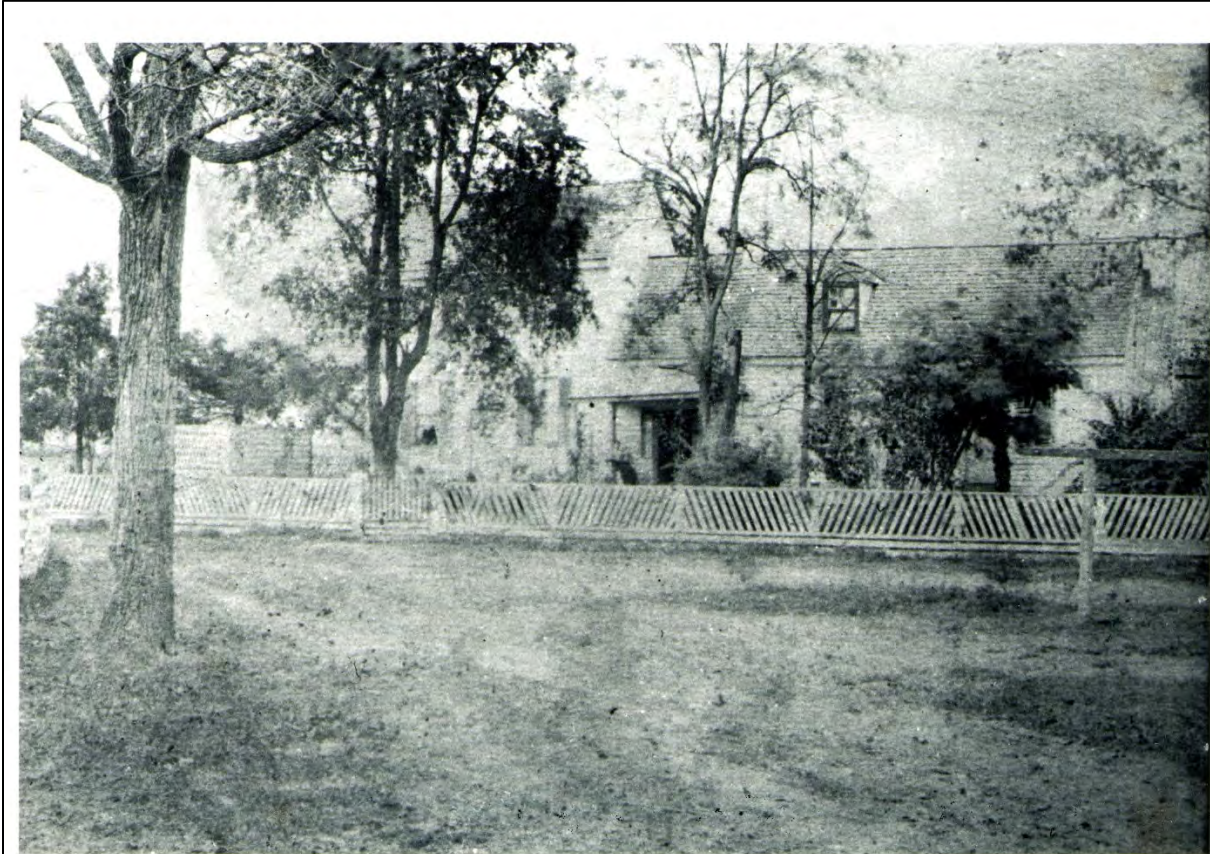
Sublett's Tavern remained the property of William Sublett until his death in 1872. Following his death, the property was sold to William W. Campbell, who had married Sublett's daughter, Sarah E. Sublett, in 1871 (when she would have been nearly 40). The Campbell's owned the property and operated the store and post office for 13 years before selling it to John H. Gresham. Gresham held it for only a year before he died and his heirs sold it to Maurice Evans in 1890.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Sublett's Tavern, ca. 1889, front elevation. Note the single front dormer and the entry porch. Photo from the collection of the owner.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

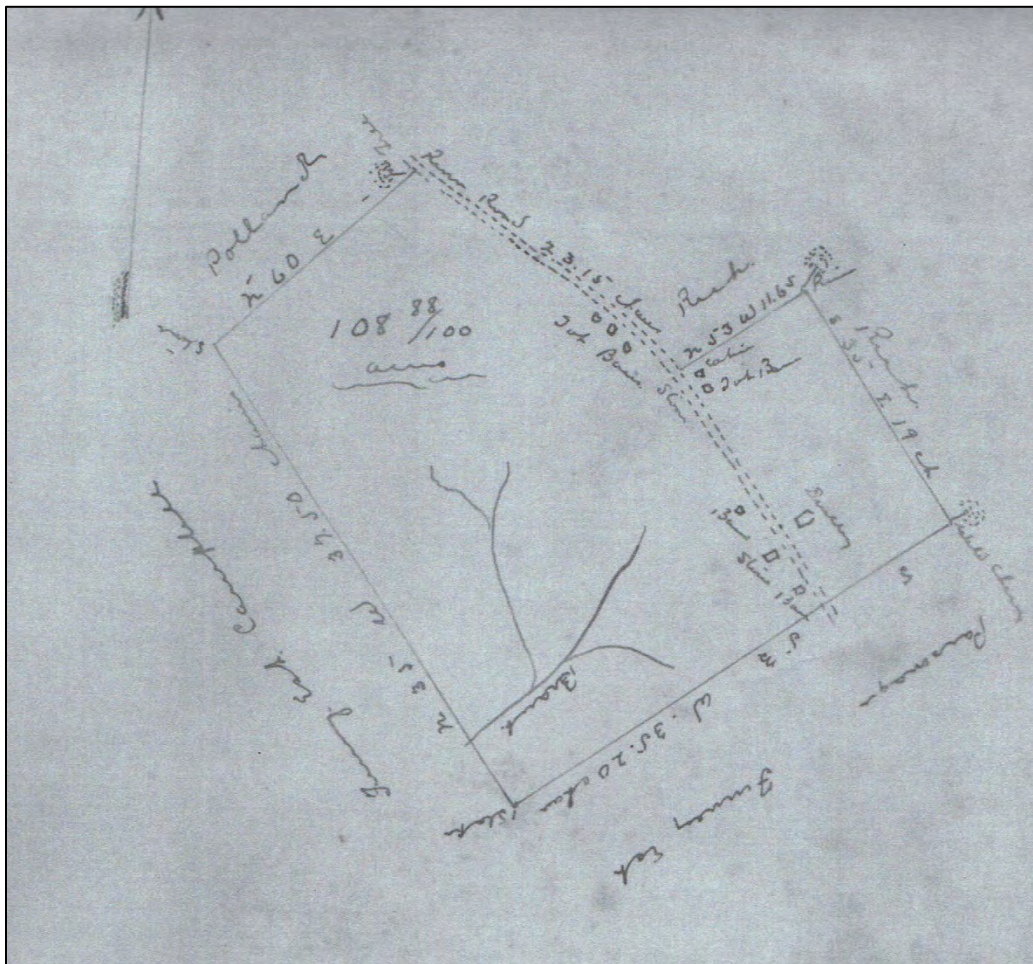


*Sublett's Tavern, ca. 1889, view from across River Road to the south, looking north at the tavern property. Tavern is the blurred building in the center of the photo. The store is the gable-front building with the chimney and the shed lean-to just to the right of center. It was located on the south side of River Road right across the street from the tavern. Photo from the collection of the owner.*

Evans operated the store and served as postmaster for nearly 14 years; when Evans' heirs sold the property to Andrew and Isaac Porter in December 1903, it was described as "parcel of land at Sublett's...with the storehouses and dwelling thereon" now occupied by Maurice Evans. Andrew Porter and his brother Isaac each held a half interest in the property for 10 years until 1913 when Isaac and his wife, Grace, granted Isaac's share to Andrew. A 1913 plat of the property associated with this transfer (the earliest plat located so far) shows that the property totaled almost 109 acres at the time and included numerous buildings along River Road. The former tavern and dwelling is labeled on the plat as "Dwelling" on the north side of the road. Directly across the street from the dwelling is a building that may be labeled "Store" (the handwriting is extremely difficult to make out but the word certainly starts with an 'S'). There are five other buildings shown on the property on the south side of the road, though their labels are less clear (three of them seem to start with a 'B'), and two other buildings on the north side of the road, though not close to the dwelling. One of the buildings on the north side of the road might be labeled "cabin."

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



Andrew G. Porter owned the property for the next 50 years until his death in 1963 when it passed to his wife, Lucia Wills Porter. When she died in 1973, the property was divided and the son of Andrew and Lucia, Andrew G. Porter, Jr., sold 3.5 acres on the north side of River Road, including the tavern/house building, to Thomas and Paula Layman in 1974. The Laymans embarked on an extensive restoration of the building, which was in poor condition when they acquired it. Their work included the in-kind replacement of all the siding, a new brick foundation to replace one that had become structurally unsound, new windows to replace deteriorated sash in kind, a new cedar shake roof to replace a failing metal roof, and new entry porches on the front to replace a badly deteriorated full width porch that postdated 1889 (based on photographic evidence). In addition, they connected the kitchen to the main house by extending the roofline. They also moved two historic buildings to the property to take the place of missing outbuildings. In 1982, the Layman's were awarded Powhatan Historical Society's first "President's Preservation Award" for their work to preserve and restore Sublett's Tavern. During the first decade of the 2000's the next owners, Robert and Shirley Goodman, made plans to open the tavern as an event venue, planting a "colonial" garden and requesting zoning



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

approval for their commercial venture, but it ultimately fell through. Another period of neglect followed during the 2010s until the current owners, Josef and Linda Noe, acquired the property in 2017 and worked to restore the building as a private dwelling.



*Sublett's Tavern during the ownership of A.G. Porter, ca. 1940s, southeast oblique. Note the patched weatherboards in between the two second story windows, the two front dormers, and the full-width porch. Photo from the collection of the owner.*



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



*Sublett's Tavern, ca. 1975, front elevation, east end in foreground. Photo courtesy of the Layman family.*

### Significance under Criterion A: Commerce

Sublett's Tavern is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern that operated for nearly 30 years and a rural post office that operated for nearly 120 years.

### *Taverns in Early America*

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the New Republic, the term “public house” was the formal name for an establishment that sold alcoholic beverages and provided lodging to travelers, but the contemporary terms “tavern,” “inn,” and “ordinary” were all used interchangeably to mean the same thing.<sup>6</sup> Sublett's Tavern was so named in tax records when it was first established in 1813, while court records describe William Sublett being granted “a license to keep an ordinary.” The selling of alcohol was strictly regulated by the local courts, meaning that operators of ordinaries had to be licensed each year and were taxed on their establishments. A person caught selling alcohol without a license would be subject to a hefty fine by the courts. For the local governments, a tavern license was essentially a quid pro quo agreement with the operator – in exchange for the ability to sell alcohol – a profitable venture –

<sup>6</sup> A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, *Hotel: An American History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007: 15.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

the licensed operator agreed to provide lodging for travelers, a public need.<sup>7</sup> The 1845 ordinary license for William Sublett stated that Sublett agreed to “provide in his said ordinary, good wholesome, and cleanly lodging and diet for travelers, and stableage, fodder, and provender, or pasturage and provender, as the season shall require, for their horses” and would not “suffer or permit any unlawful gaming in his house nor suffer any person to tittle or drink more than is necessary.”<sup>8</sup> Tavern operators were respected members of their community and, in order to be granted an ordinary license, the courts had to believe that they were of “good character” and would not allow excessive drinking or gambling in their establishment; the intent of the government in licensing taverns was to ensure adequate shelter for travelers while simultaneously controlling the sale of alcohol.<sup>9</sup>

The local courts also set the prices for food, drink, and lodging at such establishments – in 1809 in Powhatan County, the local court decreed that “dinner with toddy” would cost 50 cents, “French brandy per pint” would also cost 50 cents, while “grog” would cost only 16 ½ cents; “lodging per night” would cost 12 ½ cents, while “stableage and provender” for horses for 24 hours would be 75 cents.<sup>10</sup>

Most taverns in early America were dwelling houses that also sold alcohol and rented beds to travelers, rather than being purpose-built structures. As a result, there were no distinctive architectural features nor a particular identifiable form that they all shared; rather, their appearance and architectural design tended to follow the vernacular residential traditions of the local community.<sup>11</sup> They were often located in areas convenient to both travelers and locals – at crossroads, in courthouse towns, along important transportation routes. Sublett's Tavern is located along a popular east-west thoroughfare through the county, and, in addition, is also located close to the river and in between two prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century ferry landings. Consequently, it was a convenient spot for locals to stop for a drink or a meal and for travelers to stop for a night. While the government's primary objective in licensing taverns may have been the assurance of reliable shelter for travelers, taverns primarily served a local drinking clientele and provided beds for travelers as a secondary service.<sup>12</sup> These establishments operated on a “household model of hospitality,” in which the food, drink, and accommodations were offered directly by the proprietor in his own dwelling space and often involved members of his family.<sup>13</sup> Private bedchambers were not the norm; sometimes travelers wanting a bed for the night had to share not only a room with strangers, but a bed.<sup>14</sup> There is some question, however, that Sublett's Tavern followed this pattern, based on primary source documents. Local diarist Blair Bolling, who had a plantation in the northeast portion of Powhatan County and traveled extensively around Virginia and beyond in the early- and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, provides a fascinating day-to-day accounting of his own travels from 1810 until his death in 1839 and he

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<sup>7</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Richard T. Couture, *Powhatan: A Bicentennial History*, Richmond: Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1980: 358.

<sup>9</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 188.

<sup>10</sup> Couture, 357.

<sup>11</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 31.

<sup>13</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 143.

<sup>14</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 17.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

mentions Sublett's Tavern several times in his writing. In the earliest reference, in September 1819, Bolling mentions that he "dined at Mr. Sublett's," but several entries from 1829 are more interesting.<sup>15</sup> On June 25, 1829 he writes, "In the forenoon visited my Aunt Meade and her daughter, Mrs. Stockdel, at Mr. Sublett's Tavern where they are boarding in order to get the benefit of a mineral spring contiguous thereto."<sup>16</sup> (This mineral spring would have been Huguenot Springs, located a short distance to the east down River Road.) He mentions subsequent visits to his aunt at Sublett's Tavern on June 30 and July 3, suggesting that the ladies remained at the tavern for a period of longer than a week.<sup>17</sup> Given this, it would seem unlikely that ladies of the gentry class traveling to "take the waters" at a spring would be sharing a room with strangers for more than a week. This evidence might suggest that William Sublett offered private, or at least semi-private, rooms suitable for "boarding" for more than a night, accommodations that would seem to be atypical for other similarly situated taverns in the South in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Taverns were of varying sizes depending on their location and the number of patrons they could typically expect to serve. A 1973 study of taverns in 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia found that they generally consisted of between 6 and 10 rooms and that unspecialized interior spaces were preferred because they could be used for multiple purposes.<sup>18</sup> Spaces for dining, drinking, and sleeping were necessary, but the degree to which these activities were conducted in separate spaces, and the degree to which they overlapped with the tavernkeeper's own domestic spaces, varied from tavern to tavern. Beyond the main building, a tavern complex would have included many of the same domestic outbuildings found on a typical plantation or farm – a kitchen (in the South, by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, this most often would be a separate building), an ice house, a smokehouse, possibly a dairy – in addition to barns, stables and paddocks to accommodate the horses and carriages of travelers. In the South, of course, dwelling spaces for enslaved people would also be a part of the larger tavern complex if the tavernkeeper was an enslaver; depending on the number of enslaved people that he owned, this might take the form of a standalone dwelling or it might consist of spaces within buildings constructed for other primary purposes, such as the attics of kitchens and the lofts of stables. The 1937 WPA survey of Sublett's Tavern indicates that there had been a six-room slave quarter somewhere in the yard that either collapsed or was torn down, according to the account of the "informant," Lucia Porter. No photos of this building have been located and it is not clear why Mrs. Porter or the WPA surveyor concluded that it was a dwelling for enslaved people. A six-room quarter would have been extremely large and, according to census data, William Sublett never enslaved more than 12 people at a time (the 1850 slave schedule records that he enslaved 12 people, 7 of whom were children under age 16, while the 1820, 1830, and 1840 censuses record that he enslaved fewer than 10 in each of those years). It is possible that the building that Mrs. Porter took for a large quarter actually served another purpose or was intended to serve multiple purposes – housing for Sublett's enslaved workforce plus housing for the enslaved people traveling with tavern guests, or possibly additional guest rooms for travelers, for example (see discussion above about possible evidence

<sup>15</sup> Blair Bolling, *Blair Bolling's Journal of His Travels, 1810-1839*: 20.

<sup>16</sup> Bolling, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Bolling, 106.

<sup>18</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 16.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

for the existence of private rooms available for longer stays). Other outbuildings are also known to have been located on the tavern property, though none survive today; the existing outbuildings are either new construction (the garage) or were old buildings relocated to the property by the Laymans to take the place of missing outbuildings (the guest house and the small barn). The surrounding property should be considered to have high potential for archaeological remains of the larger tavern complex.

Beyond being important components of the local economy, taverns served significant social and civic functions as well. Particularly in the rural south with counties dominated by agriculture and few towns or villages, taverns were gathering spaces for all sorts of functions. Certainly they served as spaces for white men to gather and socialize over brandy or grog, but they also hosted social gatherings like dances or musical performances of interest to a broader clientele; they provided important spaces for discussions about local news and local and national politics, occasionally hosting speeches by traveling politicians; they hosted important quasi-governmental functions like coroners inquests, post offices, and local polls for voting in elections. Sublett's Tavern was also a post office, beginning in 1819 and continuing until 1942, and a County polling place at least by 1852 and continuing until at least the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Researchers have also pointed out that taverns, and, perhaps to a greater extent, early hotels, served the unique function of bringing together both locals and "strangers," or travelers, in an environment of shared hospitality thereby connecting all participants to a larger network of news, commerce, politics, and social thought.<sup>19</sup>

### *Taverns in Powhatan County*

In 1813, the first year that William Sublett was licensed to keep an ordinary in Powhatan County, he was one of eight people to be so licensed. This was only a slight increase from the six that were licensed in 1812, but there were eight licensed in 1811, and nine in 1814, so the number was holding relatively steady year to year. There are several names on the 1813 list, along with Sublett's, of other individuals who also ran well-known taverns in Powhatan County for extended periods – Thomas Scott, Hugh French, Daniel Michaux, and Elizabeth Kerr. Thomas Scott and Elizabeth Kerr both ran taverns in Scottville (the county seat, later renamed Powhatan) during the first 30 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while Hugh French's tavern was located on Buckingham Road, the main east-west road through the county along the ridge between the Appomattox and James Rivers.<sup>20</sup> The 1835 Gazetteer of Virginia noted that there was one tavern in the postal village of Genito and three taverns in Scottville, plus one "house of entertainment" in the postal village of Smithsville at the time; Sublett's Tavern is listed as a post office (as opposed to a more substantial "postal village") with no additional description.<sup>21</sup> The Gazetteer, which provides a general description of each county in the Commonwealth and then lists the towns, villages, and post offices therein, would probably not have captured those taverns, like

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<sup>19</sup> Sandoval-Strausz, 232.

<sup>20</sup> Elmer H. and Agnes E. Gish, *French's Tavern*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Martin and William Henry Brockenbrough, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia ...* Charlottesville: J. Martin, 1836: 264-265.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

French's Tavern, that were located along transportation corridors but outside of a town or village, unless they also served as a post office, like Sublett's.

In addition to Sublett's Tavern, there are three other taverns, or buildings that are reported to include older buildings that were at one point used as taverns, located in Powhatan County that are listed on the National Register – French's Tavern, Red Lane Tavern, and Mosby Tavern. All have been altered to various degrees, but all share a similar history as local gathering places. The building known as Mosby Tavern is reported to include within its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century walls an early 18<sup>th</sup> century two-room tavern, though it cannot, in its current condition, convey any of the architectural character of such an establishment.<sup>22</sup> French's Tavern is also listed with an early to mid -18<sup>th</sup> century construction date as a dwelling that was expanded and used as a tavern in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tavern keeper Hugh French, like William Sublett, was a well-respected member of the community who operated a tavern for several decades. French's Tavern has also been altered in some significant ways but it reportedly includes an early 19<sup>th</sup> century "swinging wall" that allowed the proprietor to open up the parlor into the center hall to accommodate large events.<sup>23</sup> Red Lane Tavern is an example of a smaller tavern in a rural location where the tavern operation was reportedly in the basement of a 1 ½ story dwelling.<sup>24</sup> From the nomination, it is not clear if Red Lane Tavern provided lodging or just food and drink. None of these listed examples appears to be a purpose-built early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern of comparable form to Sublett's.

#### *Post Offices in Powhatan County*

From the early days of the new Republic, postal service was a vital government function. For the many small towns, villages, and crossroads communities and the vast numbers of rural farmers, the mail was the thread that connected them to their own community and the wider world. In rural counties, post offices were established along major transportation corridors and in established villages, often collocated in existing buildings that served a communal function, such as general stores or taverns. The mail would be brought by stage or by boat, and later by rail, depending on the transportation advantages of a given locality. A post office was first established with the name Sublett's Tavern on March 8, 1819 and William Sublett was named the first postmaster.<sup>25</sup> It continued in operation through the Civil War and in 1890 the name of the post office was simplified to Subletts. William Sublett continued to serve as postmaster until 1858. According to the records of the General Services Administration, an early mail route serving the tavern was mail route No. 2010 from Richmond via Bellona Arsenal to Sublett's Tavern to Fine Creek Mills to Jefferson to Cartersville; from 1830-1834 this route was "let" to Nathaniel Childers of Richmond who traveled its 49 miles once a week.<sup>26</sup> The 1835 Gazetteer of

<sup>22</sup> Robyn Horton. *Mosby Tavern*. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Gish.

<sup>24</sup> Kimberly M. Chen and Lyle Browning, *Red Lane Tavern*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Evelyn Byrd Pendelton Jervey, *Jervey Collection*, Powhatan County Historical Society, "Sublett's Tavern." Includes a letter from the General Services Administration dated December 4, 1952 that details some early history of the post office.

<sup>26</sup> *Jervey Collection*.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

Virginia enumerates seven post offices and postal villages in Powhatan County – the postal villages were named as Genito, Jefferson, Scottsville (the county seat), and Smithsville, while Sublett's Tavern, Ballsville, and Flat Rock warranted only abbreviated listings as post offices. Napoleon D. Crosby was appointed postmaster in 1858 and served until 1866 when William Sublett was reappointed to serve until his death.

Research suggests that William Sublett last received a license to operate an ordinary in 1845 and that he had expanded his operation to include a general store possibly several decades earlier. In Elliott & Nye's 1852 Virginia directory, William Sublett is listed as a merchant and there are no listings for taverns or hotels. By this time, Sublett's Tavern has also become a larger geographical place name, as two attorneys and three physicians are listed in Sublett's Tavern. By 1877, Chataigne's Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer lists Sublett's Tavern as one of ten post offices in Powhatan County, while W.W. Campbell, owner of the tavern property and postmaster in the 1870s and 1880s, is listed as one of three general merchants located in Sublett's Tavern. The listings are similar in the 1880s directory with W.W. Campbell listed as both postmaster of Sublett's Tavern and merchant (Mrs. W.W. Campbell is also listed as a florist in Sublett's Tavern in the 1884-1885 Directory); by the 1890s, the name has been shortened to Subletts and Maurice Evans is listed as both postmaster and general merchant. The 1937 WPA survey states that the post office at Sublett's Tavern was a small room located in the rear lean-to on the two-story section of the building, adjacent to the small barroom. Unfortunately, this entire lean-to was rebuilt in the 1970s so no in-situ physical evidence remains. An old post office box was found during renovations of the house and remains in the possession of the current owner. The last postmaster for Subletts, Andrew G. Porter, suggested in a newspaper article in 1956 that the post office, which closed in 1942, had operated "right in this house for the whole 128 years" that it was in service, with the exception of a brief period during the first world war when he ran a large store on the opposite side of the road.<sup>27</sup> According to the records of the U.S. Postal Service, the Subletts Post Office was discontinued from April 1908 until March 1909, when it was reestablished.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Hamilton Crockford, "Andrew Porter Keeps Life Interesting," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. January 21, 1956.

<sup>28</sup> *Jervy Collection*.



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State



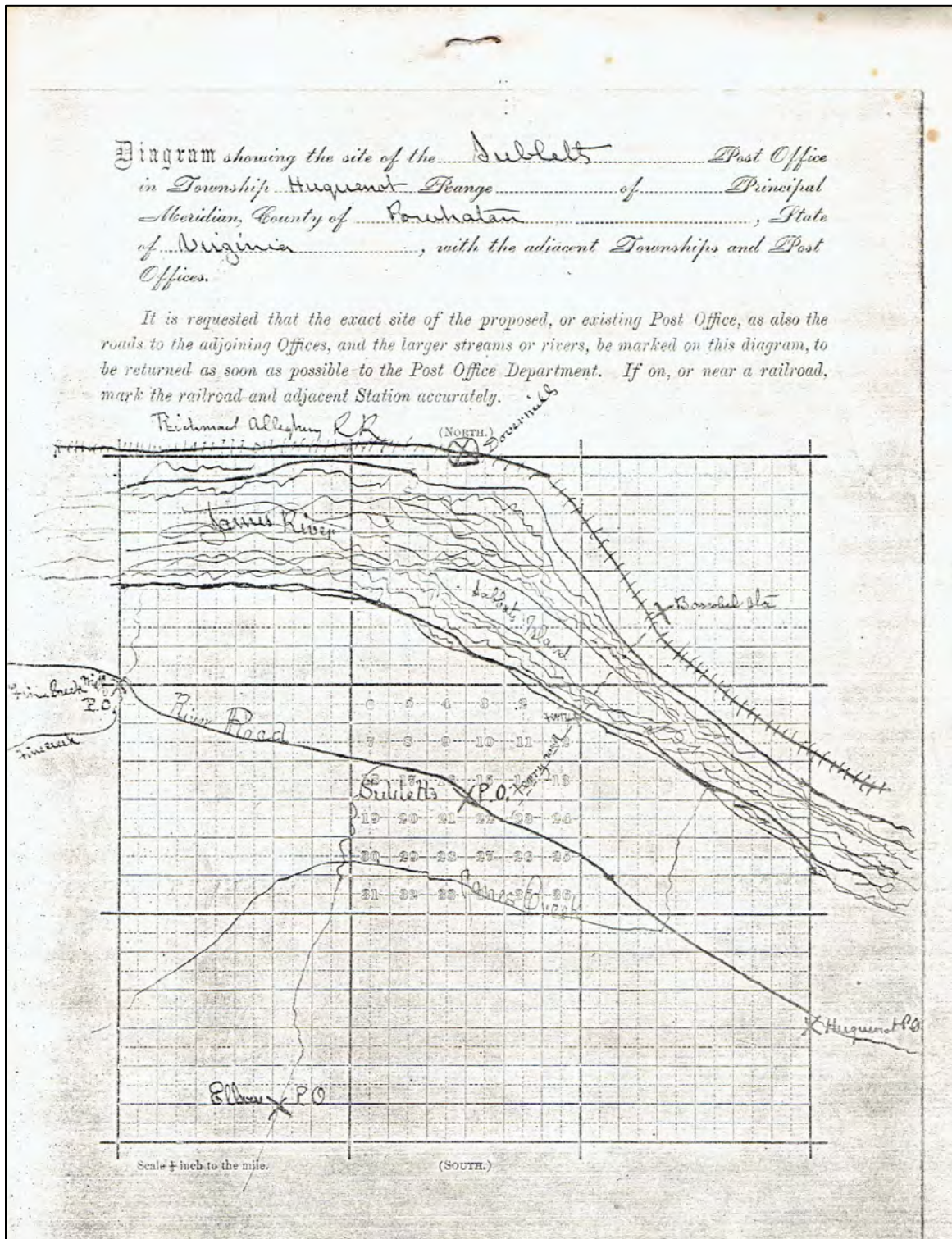
*Post office box found in the house during renovations. In the collection of the owner. November 2024.*

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State



Map of Subletts Post Office, drawn May 1890 by Maurice Evans. In the collection of the owner.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

As the location of both an early 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern and an early 19<sup>th</sup> century post office, Sublett's Tavern today is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce because of the important function that it served within the web of commerce, communication, and community during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Significance under Criterion C: Architecture

Sublett's Tavern is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century purpose-built tavern that represents the vernacular form and building traditions of central Virginia. Unlike many taverns of the time, which were constructed as private dwellings and then used as taverns for a few years, Sublett's Tavern was originally constructed to serve as a tavern along an important transportation route. While local history has often repeated that the 1 ½-story section of the tavern was a dwelling constructed in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century as the Sublett family home, and then the two-story section was built beside it in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to serve as a tavern, and then a hyphen connecting them was completed at a later date, the architecture and historic documents both suggest that the entire building standing today was completed in the seven years between 1813 and 1820 by William Sublett to serve as a tavern. Although the 1970s "restoration" resulted in the loss of some original materials, it did ultimately have the effect of saving an important historic resource that was on the brink of collapse, and it does preserve an early 19<sup>th</sup> century heavy timber frame tavern with carpenter's marks on the framing members, pegged mortise and tenon joints, early generation cut nails with double-struck heads, and evidence of a popular vernacular dwelling type adapted to a combination of residential and commercial use.

A combination of land tax research, deed research, and property tax research shows very clearly that William Sublett acquired 5 acres in 1813 and established Sublett's Tavern immediately that same year. The oft-repeated idea that the 1 ½-story section of the house dates to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and was the home of Peter Sublett, William's father, is debunked by the 1806 Chancery case that divides Peter's real estate and personal property following his death and clearly states that his widow (and William's mother), Martha, will inherit his "mansion house." In the description of the acreage and location of the property given to each of his children, no other buildings are mentioned. It is possible that the 1 ½-story section was standing as a secondary dwelling at that time and it just wasn't described, but this seems unlikely given the details provided in the chancery case. Another theory that is repeated in a couple of places in the local history is that William Sublett bought the 1 ½-story section from John Flournoy in 1790 and Flournoy was living there at the time. First, the William Sublett that established Sublett's Tavern was born around 1790, so clearly he didn't buy property that same year; there were multiple William Subletts in Powhatan County in both the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and this has led to confusion by earlier researchers. Second, the land tax records clearly indicate that William Sublett established Sublett's Tavern in 1813 on 5 acres of land that he acquired from his brother Thomas S. Sublett. All of the 140 acres that Thomas owned in 1813 was formerly part of Peter Sublett's estate (the 75 acres that he inherited directly plus the 65 acres that William inherited and sold to him), so it is true that Sublett's Tavern was built on lands previously owned by Peter Sublett and not John Flournoy.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

The land tax records for Powhatan County do not record the value of the buildings on a property until 1820; that year, for the first time, there is a separate column for the value of buildings separate from the value of the land and they indicate that Sublett's Tavern was valued at \$2400 that year. That value does not change for the next thirty years, with the exception of a small decrease to \$2200 in 1840. This suggests that there were no major building campaigns after 1820; therefore, the building that stands today was standing in its current configuration by that date.

The architectural evidence of the building itself is aligned with the documentary evidence. The building technology and the visible construction sequencing support the idea that the entire building was constructed by 1820. Due to a loss of evidence during the 1970s restoration and a lack of visibility of several areas it is not possible to say for certain if the hall-and-parlor section was built first and then the rest of the building was added within the next 7 years or if it was all built at the same time, but the evidence is clear that the two-story section and the 1 1/2-story hyphen were built contemporaneously, and the building technology visible therein (heavy timber frame construction with common rafters pegged at the ridge; pegged mortise and tenon joints; carpenter's marks on framing members; early hand-headed cut nails; brick chimney laid in 5:1 common bond) is consistent with a construction date in the 1810s.

A 1 1/2-story, single-pile, hall-and-parlor plan dwelling with brick end chimneys was the most common type of dwelling in Virginia by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, so in this way, William Sublett built within the regional vernacular. The floorplan of Sublett's dwelling is a bit unusual, however, which may be attributed to his intent to use it as a tavern. In most hall-and-parlor plan dwellings, the front door opens into the larger of the two rooms which contains the stair to the second floor and the largest fireplace. This room, called the hall, was the room in which entertaining and dining occurred, while the smaller room, the parlor, was for sleeping and more private family spaces. At Sublett's Tavern, however, the front door opens into the smaller of the two rooms. This room has the enclosed stair to the second floor and a fireplace, but it is relatively narrow. The other room is more spacious with a substantial fireplace; it has a door connecting it to the hall and another beside the fireplace leading into the hyphen (although there are three windows on both the front and back walls in this room today, prior to the 1970s renovation by the Laymans there was only one window on the front and one on the back; there was also a door on the back wall of this room). Architectural evidence viewed from the crawlspace suggests that the front five or six feet of the hyphen may have originally been an engaged porch and this is the area that the door from the parlor opens into. Therefore, the parlor was accessible from both the hall (family space) and this now-missing inset porch that provided access to the hyphen and to the two-story section of the building (tavern spaces) giving this parlor room the flexibility to be either tavern space or family space, flexible spaces being a hallmark of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century taverns.

On the second floor, the enclosed stair in the 1 1/2-story section leads to a landing which provides access to one room on each side, each with a fireplace. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was no connection on the second floor between the hall-and-parlor section and the hyphen. The door

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

between the two was reportedly installed in 1910. The presence of two staircases in the two ends of the house also suggests that there was no internal communication on the second floor originally. This supports the idea that the house was built to serve as both a tavern and family living space for William Sublett and his family. The family spaces would have been in the hall-and-parlor section while the tavern spaces were in the larger rooms in the two-story section and hyphen.

The western half of the building – the two-story, single-pile, single cell block with a 1 ½-story hyphen connecting it to the hall-and-parlor section – has consistently been interpreted as the tavern. The architectural evidence visible in the crawl space clearly indicates that these two sections (the two-story block and the hyphen) were constructed at the same time – massive brick footers that still exist beneath the partition wall between these two sections were originally constructed wide enough to support two side-by-side sills. Also visible in the crawlspace is another heavy timber beam that runs perpendicular to these sills in a surprising location – bisecting the hyphen space about six feet from the existing front wall. This beam extends from the west sill to an east sill and the two are joined with a pegged mortise and tenon joint and rest atop the remains of another brick pier that is situated hard up against the end chimney on the west end of the 1 ½-story hall-and-parlor section. This suggests that there was the need to support a wall located above this beam in the hyphen. Such a wall would have bisected the hyphen space and intersected with the wall to the hall-and-parlor section right between the chimney and the door leading from the parlor to the hyphen. A logical explanation is that the tavern was originally designed to have an inset porch fronting the hyphen and this space was modified later to become interior space. This modification probably occurred at the same time as the reorienting of the stair in this section of the building.

Today a stair to the second floor ascends from the rear corner of this hyphen but it is clear that this stair was originally designed to be a partially enclosed dog-leg stair accessed from the large room in the two-story section. The upper flight of stairs remains original but the lower run of stairs, along with the winders turning the corner, were relocated at some point in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century (based on the presence of fully mature cut nails in these steps) to rise from the hyphen. These modifications - enclosing the porch space and adding the stairs - have created a fairly typical center hall in the hyphen, with front and rear doors and a primary stair. But when the space was constructed it would have been simply a small room with access to the porch, the large room in the two-story section and, possibly, a rear porch (due to modifications it isn't possible to tell if there was originally a doorway on this rear wall in the location of the existing door, though it seems likely).

The large room on the first story of the two-story section measures approximately 23 feet by 17 feet, a substantial space. There is an end fireplace centered on the west wall and the enclosed rise of the stairs on the east wall. Marks in the floor indicate where the original lower run of stairs descended. There are two windows flanking a door centered on the front (south) wall. The back wall has a doorway that leads into the lean-to, now a closet and bathroom. According to Evelyn Jervey, who documented many of the old houses of Powhatan in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when she visited the house there was the ghost of a second doorway on this wall that also led

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

into the lean-to and she was told that the doorway on the left led into the barroom, which was located in half of the lean-to, while the doorway on the right led into the post office which was located in the other half. Unfortunately, the entire lean-to was structurally unsound by the 1970s and the Laymans had to remove the entire structure and reconstruct it so any evidence of this is now gone. (There may still be evidence of the two doorways inside the wall but that is not currently visible.) Evidence on the second floor of the two-story section suggests that there may have been a second story porch or exterior stair on the front of this part of the building; cuts in the chair rail and baseboards suggest a door-sized opening between the two windows on the front elevation on the second floor. An old photograph in the collection of the owner also shows patched weatherboards in this location (see photo on page 52). There was originally a fireplace centered on the west wall of this second floor space but it was removed when the west chimney was struck by lightning and had to be rebuilt in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today the second floor space of the two-story section of the building is divided into a large room and a hall with the stair. The possibility of a large second-floor sleeping room that could have been shared by multiple strangers would not have been incompatible with the evidence found at other late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century taverns. The ghost of a door on the front could suggest that an exterior stair may have allowed a person to ascend to the sleeping room without passing through the main tavern room.

The second story of the hyphen is today a modern tiled bathroom and evidence of how it may have originally been used is not readily apparent. The door trim on the hall side of the connecting door between the second floor hall and the current bathroom does appear to be early 19<sup>th</sup> century vintage suggesting that there was finished usable space in the hyphen originally. Unfortunately, we do not know if there was any effort to heat this space using the chimney that rose up between the hyphen and the 1 ½-story section. The doorway connecting this bathroom with the parlor chamber was added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and there was not originally a way to access the second floor of the family space from the second floor of the tavern space. Today, the bathroom is illuminated by two dormer windows, one on the front and one on the rear, but the windows themselves date to the 1970s restoration and the framing of the dormers isn't visible to determine when they date to. The dormer on the front elevation is not shown in the 1889 photo of the house (see photo on page 49) but does appear in the 1937 HABS photo, so it probably dates to the 1910 renovation, along with the connecting door between the two sections of the house and the nearly full-width front porch. It would be logical, given the suggestion that there was a doorway into the space from the top of the stairs, that this space would have been illuminated by at least one dormer and been used as a lodging room for the tavern, but the evidence to support this with any certainty is not currently available.

All of this physical evidence uses the same architectural vocabulary – the form, scale, and decorative details – found on private dwellings of the middle and gentry class in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in central Virginia, but the way that the building blocks are combined and connected speaks to Sublett's intent to use the building as a tavern and provide multiple points of access for different types of visitors.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

Likewise, the heavy timber frame construction of the tavern is connected to the building traditions of the piedmont and Chesapeake areas of Virginia going back several centuries and ultimately derived from the building traditions of the English settlers. The common rafter roof joined at the ridge and resting on a board false plate was an innovation of Chesapeake carpenters dating from the seventeenth century that persisted into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century due to its practicality.<sup>29</sup> Sublett's Tavern provides glimpses of the carpentry traditions that, quite literally, provided the framework for, first, a prosperous colony and, then, a growing state. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century found the building trades on the precipice of modernization and mechanization. The combination of hewn, pit sawn, and milled lumber used in Sublett's Tavern epitomizes this confluence, while the joinery on display in the framing is an example of a craft that would be displaced by the rise in popularity of balloon framing by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Even the nails used at Sublett's represent a moment of change – the hand-headed cut nails found in the tavern were only in use for a couple of decades between the rose-headed, fully wrought nails of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, and the fully mature cut nails with machine-cut heads that dominated the market by the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As a purpose-built tavern dating from between 1813 and 1820, Sublett's Tavern is significant at the local level in the area of Architecture because it is an example of a building constructed to serve both a commercial and a domestic function along an important transportation route utilizing the building technology and architectural vocabulary of the local vernacular building traditions but adapted to serve the functionality of a tavern.

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<sup>29</sup> Cary Carson and Carl R. Lounsbury, *The Chesapeake House*, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013: 236-238.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

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Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

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Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

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Sandoval-Strausz, A.K. *Hotel: An American History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Ward, Roger G. *1815 Directory of Virginia Landowners (and Gazetteer)*. Athens, Ga: Iberian Pub. Co., 1997.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia



Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 072-0042

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 3.5

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.590570                      Longitude: -77.755893

2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

2. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

3. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

4. Zone:                                      Easting :                                      Northing:

Sublett's Tavern  
Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA  
County and State

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

The boundaries of the listed property coincide with the boundaries of the associated tax parcel recorded as 019-58F by Powhatan County. It borders Huguenot Trail along the south side and other tax parcels on the north, east, and west. The enclosed tax parcel map, retrieved on November 11, 2024, from the Powhatan County Geographic Information System, shows the exact boundaries.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries represent the portion of the original 38 acres associated with the tavern in 1815 that remains under single ownership and associated with the tavern building. The property's historic setting and all known associated historic resources have been included within the historic boundary.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kristin H. Kirchen/Principal Architectural Historian  
organization: Iron Dog Preservation, LLC  
street & number: 532 Pantela Drive  
city or town: North Chesterfield state: VA zip code: 23235  
e-mail: irondogpreservation@gmail.com  
telephone: 804-516-8200  
date: February 2025

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

## Photographs

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

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Sublett's Tavern

City or Vicinity:

County: Powhatan

State: Virginia

Photographer: Kristin H. Kirchen

Date Photographed: October and November 2024

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

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0001

1 of 44 Southeast oblique.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0002

2 of 44 Southwest oblique.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0003

3 of 44 Main entrance, hyphen, front elevation.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0004

4 of 44 East end chimney.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0005

5 of 44 Rear elevation and setting.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0006

6 of 44 View looking east down Huguenot Trail, past the tavern.

Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0007

7 of 44 Guest House, southwest oblique.

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0008  
8 of 44 Barn, northeast oblique. House in the background.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0009  
9 of 44 Shed, northwest oblique, and garden.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0010  
10 of 44 Garage, south elevation. Guest house in background.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0011  
11 of 44 Brick path in front of the house. Looking south towards the hedge and road.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0012  
12 of 44 Hyphen, view from front door.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0013  
13 of 44 Hyphen, looking at front door and doorway into tavern room.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0014  
14 of 44 Hyphen, looking into parlor/dining room.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0015  
15 of 44 Hyphen, stair.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0016  
16 of 44 Tavern block, first floor, looking west from door to hyphen.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0017  
17 of 44 Tavern block, first floor, looking east at stair and door to hyphen.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0018  
18 of 44 Parlor/dining room, looking east.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0019  
19 of 44 Parlor/dining room, looking west at fireplace and door to hyphen.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0020  
20 of 44 Parlor/dining room, mantel details.
- Photo VA\_PowhatanCounty\_Sublett'sTavern\_0021  
21 of 44 Hall, view from front door.



Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0022  |
| 22 of 44 | Hall, looking west from in front of fireplace at stair and door to parlor.                                |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0023  |
| 23 of 44 | Hall, mantel.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0024  |
| 24 of 44 | Hall, stair.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0025  |
| 25 of 44 | Kitchen, looking from door to hall into kitchen.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0026  |
| 26 of 44 | Tavern block, second floor, hallway, looking south towards front of house.                                |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0027  |
| 27 of 44 | Tavern block, stair looking down.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0028  |
| 28 of 44 | Tavern block, second floor bedroom, looking at front wall of house.                                       |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0029  |
| 29 of 44 | Hyphen, second floor, looking into hyphen from tavern block.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0030  |
| 30 of 44 | Parlor chamber, second floor, looking west from landing at top of stairs.                                 |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0031  |
| 31 of 44 | Parlor chamber, west wall, mantel.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0032  |
| 32 of 44 | Hall-and-parlor section, second floor, looking east from parlor chamber across landing into hall chamber. |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0033  |
| 33 of 44 | Hall chamber, second floor, looking east from landing at top of stairs.                                   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0034  |
| 34 of 44 | Hall chamber, second floor, mantel.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0035  |
| 35 of 44 | Old post office box from the Sublett's Tavern post office, found in the building by the current owner.    |

Sublett's Tavern

Name of Property

Powhatan County, VA

County and State

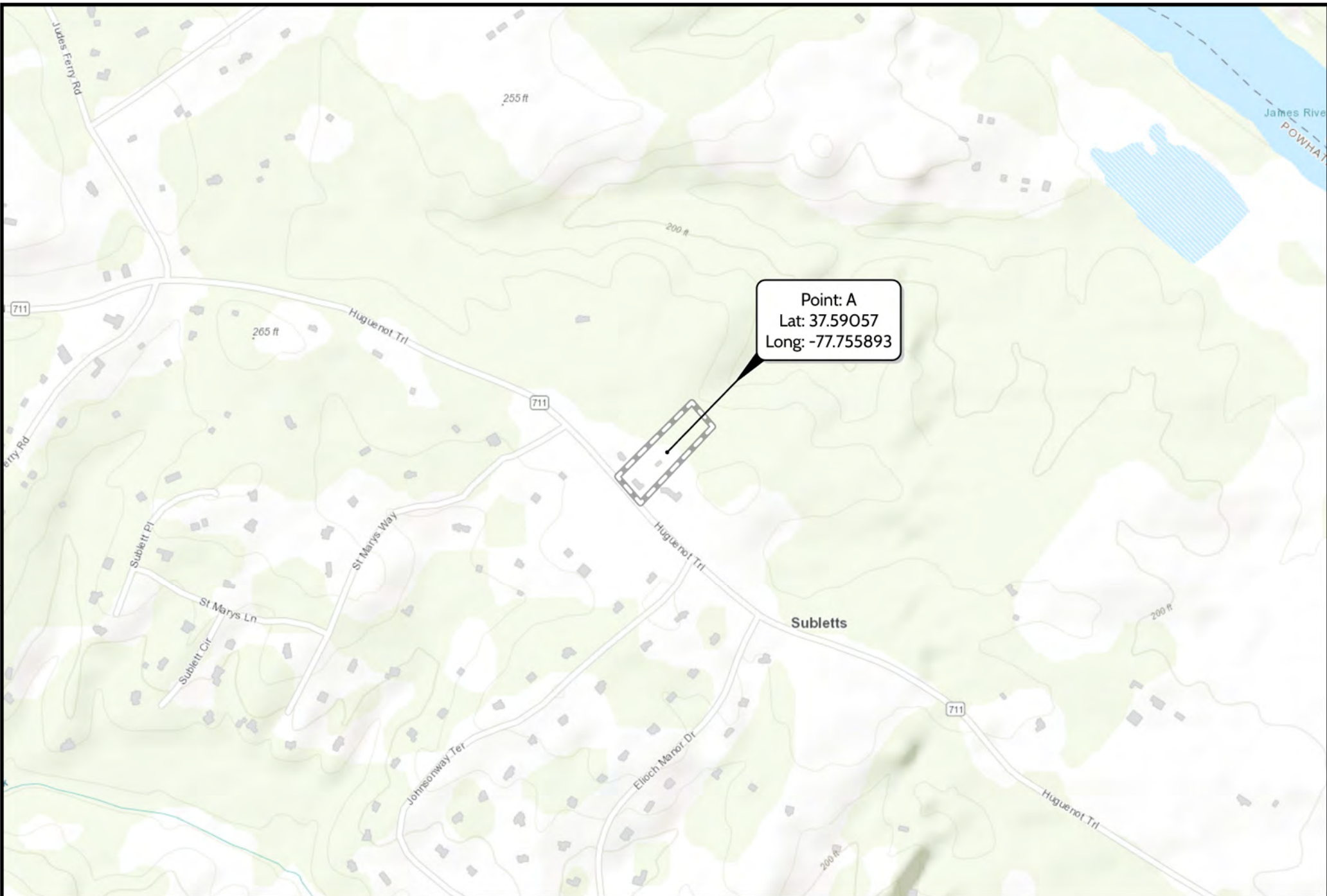
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0036  |
| 36 of 44 | Tavern block, attic, looking at west end wall and front slope of roof.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0037  |
| 37 of 44 | Tavern block, attic; rafter, joist, and board false plate along rear slope of roof.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0038  |
| 38 of 44 | Tavern block, attic; looking at place where hyphen roof abuts tavern block.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0039  |
| 39 of 44 | Inside of lean-to attic, looking at back wall of two-story tavern block.  |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0040  |
| 40 of 44 | Attic of the kitchen ell, looking north from the hall-and-parlor section.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0041  |
| 41 of 44 | Crawlspace under the two-story tavern block, looking toward the brick piers underneath the rear sill.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0042  |
| 42 of 44 | Crawlspace under the two-story tavern block, brick pier supporting the side-by-side sills of the tavern block and the hyphen.                               |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0043  |
| 43 of 44 | Crawlspace under the two-story tavern block, brick pier with two side-by-side sills at different heights.   |
| Photo    | VA_PowhatanCounty_Sublett'sTavern_0044  |
| 44 of 44 | Cellar under hall-and-parlor section, looking at fragment of brick pier (left) beside chimney (right), supporting pegged right angle junction of two beams. |

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

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

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



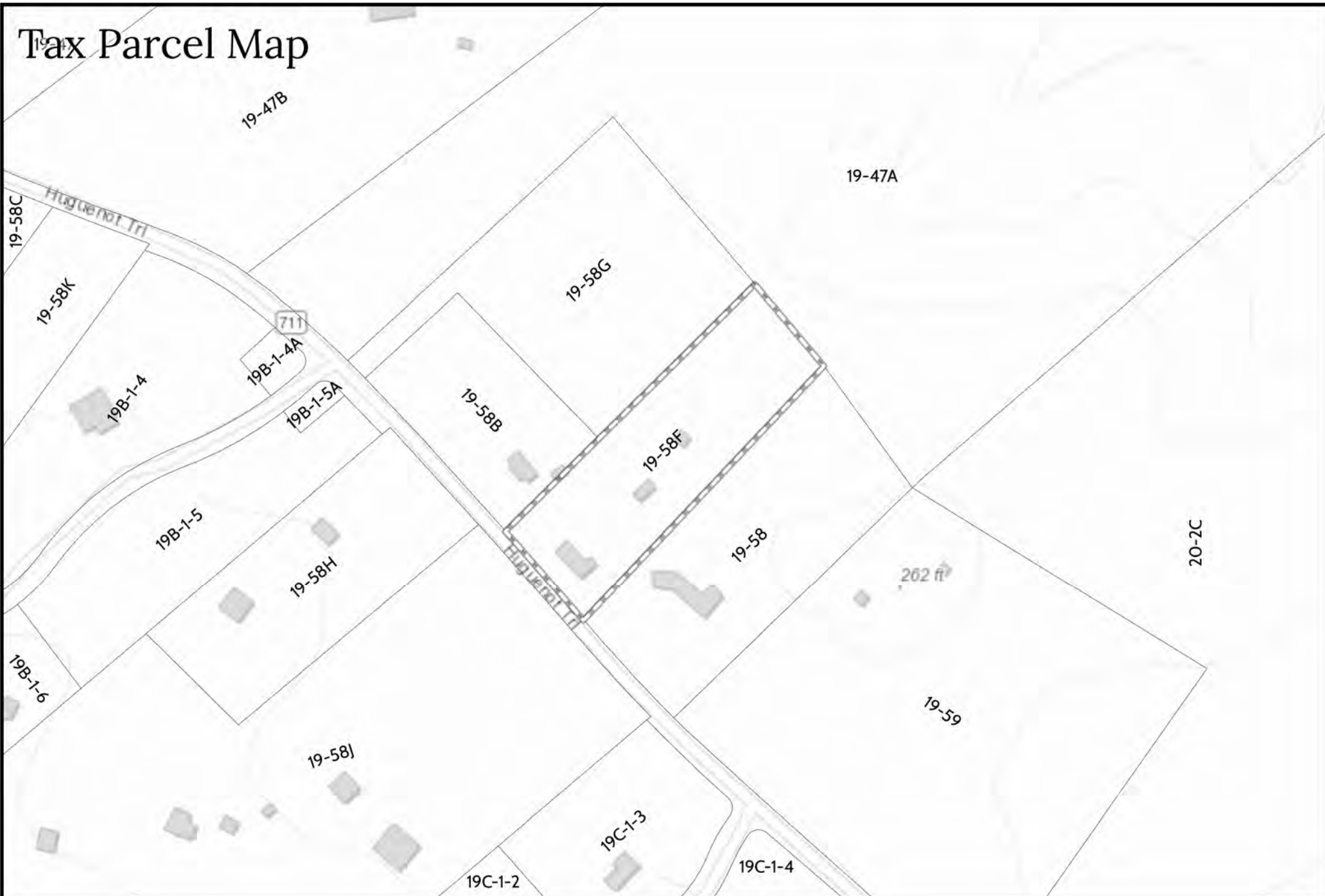
Sublett's Tavern  
Powhatan County, Virginia  
DHR ID: 072-0042

Spatial Reference: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere  
Software: ArcGIS Pro 3.1.0  
Date: 11/21/2024  
Created By: D. Bascone, VDHR

0 400 800 Feet



# Tax Parcel Map



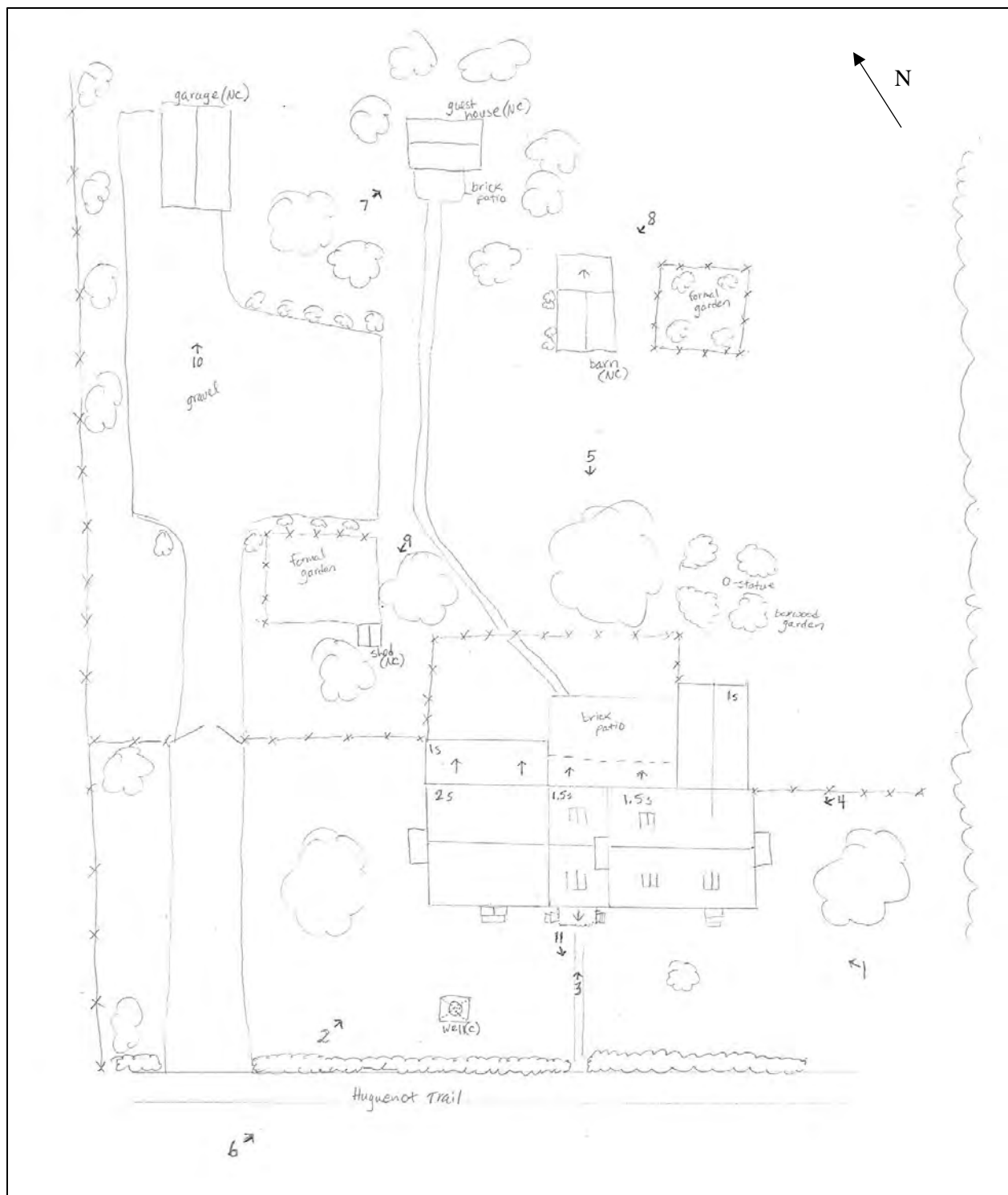
Sublett's Tavern  
Powhatan County, Virginia  
DHR ID: 072-0042

Date of Parcel Data: 11/21/2024  
Software: ArcGIS Pro 3.1.0  
Created By: D. Bascone, VDHR

0 190 380 760 Feet







072-0042  
 Sublett's Tavern, Powhatan County, Virginia  
 Sketch Map and Photo Key  
 November 2024  
 Not to scale















































































































































































