



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 102-5081

1. General Property Information

Property name: Washington Lee Elementary School

Property address: 900 Washington Lee Dr

City or Town: Bristol

Zip code: 24201

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Bristol

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building x Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 3.5

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban x Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural _____

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The property is located within a wooded residential neighborhood with rolling hills. The neighborhood sits between two historic residential districts but is a mix of early 20th century homes and mid-century homes. There are many traditional style ranch homes as well as some mid-century modern homes. The former school building is nestled into the hillside with a multi-story design approach to take advantage of the site's slope.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Mid-Century, Mid-Century Modern

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Kearfott & Jones Architects (Clarence B. Kearfott, Jr. 1917-1989)

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1967- 1968

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The former school building is a mid-century modern design with a main, central building which is two stories, a classroom wing which is also two stories and a single-story wing which includes the school's assembly spaces. The central building includes the lobby, main office, admin spaces, library and two classrooms on the main level as well as seven classrooms, a resource room and gang bathrooms on the upper level. The classroom wing includes two large classrooms on the lowest level and four classrooms on the upper level. The assembly wing includes the gymnasium, stage, cafeteria and kitchen.

The exterior of the building is largely red brick with vertical paneled infill siding. A wood screen detail is a defining feature of the façade and fills the negative spaces at the main covered entry points. The large metal windows appear to be the original windows and seem to be in good working order. The classroom portions of the building have a standing seam metal roof and the assembly portions have a white TPO or EPDM roof.

Very few interior walls have been added throughout, although some modifications have been made to the back-stage area. The interior is very simple with exposed CMU walls, stained flush wood doors and a few areas of interior storefront among the library and admin spaces. While the general condition of the building is very well maintained, the majority of the casework is damaged and the wood is delaminating. The gym features a tongue & groove wood ceiling with open span glue-lam, arched beams. The cafeteria also has glue-lam arched beams and the drawings shown a T&G wood deck but a drop ceiling has been added so the existing ceiling condition is unknown.

The only addition appears to be storage and mechanical spaces at the back of the gym. The original ceiling condition of the classrooms and admin spaces is unknown but a drop ceiling was added at some point. The lighting & HVAC systems were also replaced at an unknown time.

There are no secondary resources on the property except a playground with modern amenities and an impermanent, small fabric/tension pavilion next to the playground.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The area of significance will likely be the use as a public school and the Architecture due to the unique mid-century modern design of the exterior of the building. The associated Architect may also be an area of significance.

Architect:

"Bristol's most prominent architect of the early 20th century was Clarence B. Kearfott. Kearfott was born in 1884 and he graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1903. After several years of working as a draftsman, Kearfott moved to Bristol in 1907 and opened his own architectural firm. Over the next few decades Kearfott designed hundreds of buildings in Virginia and Tennessee including residences, commercial buildings, churches and school buildings. Within the downtown commercial district, Kearfott designed the Reynolds Arcade, the E.W. King Building at 636 Shelby Street and numerous other buildings. Kearfott continued to practice architecture in Bristol into the 1950s." (Thomason)

Clarence B. Kearfott, Jr. continued his father's legacy as an Architect in the partnership of Kearfott & Jones. Kearfott & Jones were known for other high profile, municipal projects in the area during the mid-century such as the Bristol, Va courthouse c. 1971 and Lonesome Pine Hospital in Big Stone Gap, Va c. 1973.

Architecture:

The former school was designed in the Mid-Century Modern style. The overall design follows the low, linear forms of sprawling mid-century ranches with multiple wings branching from a main, core building. It is uniquely situated on a steeply sloping site which resulted in the classrooms being located on four different levels although no portion of the structure is more than two stories tall.

Name Consideration:

The mid-century school, known as Washington Lee Elementary, served as a public school in Bristol, VA from its opening in 1968 until 2023 when the school system consolidated their elementary programs. The architect's drawings from 1967 list the project as "Washington-Lee Elementary School" so it was named as such for the entirety of the school's existence.

However, in 2020, the consolidation of the schools was put on hold due to the Covid Pandemic and the school system considered changing the name. "The names of two elementary schools are now being reconsidered as places and monuments honoring the Confederacy across the country face backlash. The Bristol, Virginia School Board is set to discuss its school naming policy at an upcoming meeting on July 6th. Two of its elementary schools, Stonewall Jackson and Washington-Lee, reference the names of Confederate generals." (Kluck – WJHL).

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)


- Kearfott & Jones Architects. (1967, June 2). Partial Construction Documents Set. Accessed 12/10/2024.
- Kluck, K. (2020, June 25). Confederate-named elementary schools to be discussed by Bristol, Virginia School Board. WJHL | Tri-Cities News & Weather; WJHL. Accessed 12/10/2024.
<https://www.wjhl.com/news/confederate-named-elementary-schools-to-be-discussed-by-bristol-virginia-school-board/>
- Thomason, Phillip. (2002). Bristol Commercial Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Virginia Department of Historic Resources. (2002, February 25). Accessed 12/10/2024.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local X Public\State Public\Federal

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: RANDALL C. EADS, C. Ty Manager / C. Ty Attorney
organization: The City of Bristol, Virginia
street & number: 300 Lee Street
city or town: Bristol state: Virginia zip code: 24201
e-mail: citymanager@bristolva.org telephone: 276-645-7333

Legal Owner's Signature: 
Date: 4/29/25

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____
Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)


name/title: Whitney Manahan, Director of Architecture & Design
organization: BurWil Construction Co.
street & number: 620 Locust St.
city or town: Bristol state: TN zip code: 37620
e-mail: wmanahan@burwil.com telephone: 423-797-1425
Date: 04/28/2025

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!



PIF BOUNDARY MAP

Washington-Lee Elementary School
City of Bristol, VA
DHR ID# 102-5081

 Proposed Boundary

0 100 200 300
Feet

























