

William & Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review

Volume 5 (1979-1980)
Issue 1 *Environmental Practice News*

Article 3

November 1979

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Repository Citation

Glenn S. Hayes, *Nominating Property for the Virginia Landmarks Register*, 5 Wm. & Mary Envtl. L. & Pol'y Rev. 4 (1979), <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmelpr/vol5/iss1/3>

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NOMINATING PROPERTY FOR THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

Historic landmark status gives landowners a tool to protect the aesthetic and environmental well-being of their property. For example, this protection is one way to avoid eminent domain proceedings. Historic landmark requirements also may support restrictive covenants to protect the significance of property in historic regions. Thus, understanding the process for getting landmark status on the Virginia Register may benefit individual property owners or communities as a whole.

In Virginia, the Virginia Landmarks Commission evaluates and designates sites and structures as historic landmarks. An application to the Commission must contain the location of the property, a photograph of any structures and the owner's name, address and telephone number. Applicants also must submit a documented history of the property explaining its historical or architectural significance to the state. Special architectural distinctions should be included.

On receipt of the application, the Register Committee of the Landmarks Commission determines whether the property meets initial registration criteria. If the application has merit, the Committee authorizes a staff investigation. The staff analyzes the site, surveys architectural features, and submits a report to the Committee for formal consideration. If the property qualifies, the Committee makes a formal motion to recommend acceptance by the Commission.

Commission approval constitutes official listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register. In addition, the Landmarks Commission automatically processes the accepted property for consideration as a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior.

Applications should be submitted to: Ms. Cory Hutchins, Registrar, Virginia Landmarks Commission, Governors Street, Richmond, Virginia.

G.S.H.