

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Brentsville Courthouse and Jail
other names/site number: DHL No. 76-21 (courthouse) and DHL No. 76-231 (jail)

2. Location

street & number: 12239 Bristow Road (courthouse); 12249 Bristow Road (jail) N/A not far publication
city, town: Brentsville N/A vicinity
state: Virginia code: VA county: Prince William code: 152 zip code: 22013

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
			<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Civil War Properties, Prince William County, VA

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 4

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

June 16, 1989

Date

Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet,

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
☐ entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet,

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
☐ preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National
Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record #

Primary location of additional data:
☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Specify repository: DHL
221 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: 3.0 acres

UTM References:

A /18/ /2.82.520/ /42.85.100/
Zone Easting Northing
C / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

B / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing
D / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

This property includes Prince William County land parcels 066-01-0058 and 066-01-0057, which are located in Brentsville, Virginia, and recorded in Deed Book 1074, page 517, and Deed Book 1074, page 514, respectively.

The courthouse is on parcel 066-01-0058 and the jail is on parcel 066-01-0057. The enclosed map (1"=200") shows the configuration of the property and the exact locations of the buildings.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the three acres of property historically associated with the courthouse and jail.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jan Townsend, County Archaeologist
organization: Prince William County, Planning Office
street & number: 1 County Complex Court
city or town: Prince William

date: May 1989
telephone: (703) 335-6830
state: VA zip code: 22192

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second staircase has been blocked for installation of central heating and air conditioning. The stair newel is a square molded post with a ball finial. The rail is molded. The two flights are enclosed by waist-high matchboard. Across the balcony there is a molded rail with turned balusters. The balcony is supported by two plain, round, wooden columns which are about one foot in diameter. On a plinth base, the columns taper as they rise and have simple molded capitals. The two offices were used by officers of the court. Architrave trim is present around the doors and windows of the offices. The doors, however, are modern.

Outside, a flagstone and concrete patio measuring about 15 feet by 32 feet is located at the front entrance. The patio was installed in 1976 and replaced a stone walk which led from the courthouse to Bristow Road. There was also a stone walk that lead from the east (side) entrance to the jail. Both "stepping stone" walkways have been paved over with concrete. In 1937, according to a W.P.A. inventory, there was a huge stone doorstep at the courthouse's front entrance. This step may have been partly enclosed in the present stone and concrete series of steps leading into the courthouse.

Brentsville Jail:

The jail is located about 30 yards to the east of the courthouse. It is a sturdily constructed, two-story, gable-roofed structure. A three-bay, double-pile, central passage, I-plan building, it once had a 1-1/2- to 2-story frame addition on the rear. The jail was built about 1820 by James Driscoe Masson, whose name is inscribed on a stone tablet in the gable. The building is laid up in 5-course American bond, and it has both round and flat brick arches over the windows. The exterior brick walls are two feet thick, while the interior bearing walls are 9.5 to 11 inches thick. Along the base of the building, just above the stone foundation, are the broken remains of a molded brick water table. There is a molded brick cornice beneath the gable roof. Two chimneys project from the roof. The one on the northwest side is large and would have connected to fireplaces. On the opposite side of the building is a smaller stove chimney.

For the most part, the windows are 2/2 sliding sash, although two small, rear, second-floor windows are new 1/1 sliding sash with vertical steel bars. The doors and most of the door frames are not

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original. The one exception is a doorway on the west side of the building (on the courthouse side). The original pegged-together, single-beaded door frame appears to be intact. A new doorway has apparently been created at the rear of the building by enlarging a former window.

The interior was remodeled for offices in 1967-68 and there is little, if any, of the original woodwork left. Offices are located on either side of the stair hall. The floors are carpeted and replacement trim is around the windows and doors. The 35-inch-wide, single-flight, open-string stair has a late 19th or early 20th century mantel in the front room on the northwest side.

The rejoining and repairs of the walls done in the 1960s would not meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitating old buildings and the new rear doorway is inappropriate. These recent changes and additions to the building can be corrected, however, to return the exterior to a more authentic appearance.

Both the courthouse and jail were restored by the Prince William County Park Authority in the 1970s. Most of the work, however, was directed at stabilizing the structures. According to available sources, at least the courthouse was also repaired in the 1910s or the 1930s. Information on exactly what was done or when it was done is not available. Based on accounts from the Civil War, which are presented in some detail in the following section, the courthouse and jail were at least partly damaged by Union soldiers, and there must have been some reconstruction after the war. There is no documentation for this, however.

Although there have been alterations to the buildings, they are reversible. The basic structure of the buildings is sound. Many of the interior modifications (e.g., office partitions) are essentially temporary and easily removed. Overall, the buildings have maintained their integrity.

The courthouse and jail presently serve as the Park Authority's headquarters. The entire historical and recreation area is about three acres and is parklike in setting. An expansive lawn surrounds the buildings and continues almost all the way to Broad Run, which is to the north of the courthouse and jail. The well, which is now covered, is located on the lawn in front of the courthouse. The gallows stood on the back portion of the lot.

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Also, just to the north of the two buildings is a small gravel parking lot. A sports field is located nearer to Broad Run. A few large shade trees are located near the buildings. Flowering shrubs have been planted around the building foundations. The buildings and environs are in very good condition.

There are two noncontributing structures on the courthouse and jail parcels. One, which is located along the northern edge of the jail parcel, is a storage structure and has no historical significance. The second is on the courthouse parcel and is called the schoolhouse. It is currently used as office space. This one-room schoolhouse dates to about 1910, and is in good condition. An 1822 map of the lot shows an office in the same location. In all likelihood, the present structure is located atop what was the brick foundation of the 1822 office. This cannot be documented, however, with available information. As a result, for the purposes of this nomination, the schoolhouse is considered to be a noncontributing structure.