

# Endangered Sites List 2025 for the Roanoke Valley



## Saving Historic Places Since 1996

Each May — National Historic Preservation Month — Preservation Virginia releases a list of historic places across the Commonwealth facing imminent or sustained threats. The list, which has brought attention to 200 sites in Virginia, encourages individuals, organizations and local governments to advocate for their preservation and find solutions that will save these unique locations for future generations. The program has a track record of success as only 10% of the sites listed so far were lost to demolition or neglect.

Since 1996, the RVPF has also announced a list each year of significant historic, natural, and cultural sites in the Roanoke Valley that are in danger of being lost due to neglect, deferred maintenance, demolition, or incompatible development.

The Foundation's goal is to raise awareness of the significance of these sites and to help identify options to promote their stewardship. The RVPF hopes to serve as a resource to property owners by making them aware of tools available to support the preservation of these sites.



**National Trust *for*  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.™*

## WILLIAMSON ROAD MID-CENTURY BUILDINGS

Eric Monday

Before Interstates became the main routes for automobile travel, Williamson Road (State Route 11) was the main Northern gateway into Roanoke. Residencies gave way to businesses, restaurants, family-run roadside motels, and automotive service stations. Today the corridor is an assortment of styles ranging from the 1920s to the present, with almost every conceivable style from Colonial Revival and Art Deco to Mid-Century and “Gonzo” roadside architecture represented. Continual commercial reinvention and changing pop culture has resulted in the demolition, or unrecognizable alteration, of much of the older fabric. Ongoing revitalization of the Williamsons Corridor may soon result in the few remaining original examples being erased from our collective heritage.

### **Kenny's Burgers, 4137 Williamson.**

An early 1960s fast food eatery and premiere location of a popular Southwest Virginia chain, this rubble-stone and glass main floor, topped by a soaring, Polynesian-inspired roof, has endured numerous commercial iterations over the years, but retains its original exterior façade.



Photo Credit: Becky Flinchum Lambert

### **Carlin's Amoco, 1721 Williamson.**

A beautifully restored, streamlined Art-Deco/Moderne example of pre-WW2 full-service gas stations that once graced America's highways. Constructed of concrete block covered with stucco, it sits on a concrete slab foundation.



Photo Credit: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

### **Sears City, now Roanoke City Health Department, 1510 Williamson.**

Opened in 1958, Sears ironically itself contributed to the 1960s demise of commercial life in Downtown--only to succumb to the shopping malls of the 1970s and 80s. Originally an International Style, boxy mid-century example of one-stop shopping, this site, once one of "the" retail experiences in the City, still survives-- radically altered, as nondescript office space.



Photo Credit: O. Winston Link Museum

# 1849 BELLE AIRE

Rob Logan

Belle Aire in 2012

Photo Credit: National Trust for Historic Preservation

Belle Aire, built in 1849 by Benjamin Dyerle, is an outstanding example of a Greek Revival style house. It is the second well-known large house built by Deyerle. Deyerle built several Greek Revival-style houses, inspired by a publication by noted New England architect Asher Benjamin. Each of Deyerle's houses includes touches of Deyerle's own creation, and Belle Aire is a prime example. The L-shaped home is of brick construction with stuccoed Doric pilasters at the corners. Its most recognizable feature is its 2-story pedimented portico four fluted Doric columns at each level.



It is situated on 7.1 acres, on a knoll facing Belle Aire Circle in Roanoke City, lying between Belle Aire Circle and Brandon Avenue. The house was constructed for Madison Pitzer, who died in 1861. Throughout the years, it was transferred to several other owners.



Belle Aire in 2025

Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson

In recent years, the home has become the victim of neglect. It has fallen into disrepair, keenly evident when viewing the property from the street. It is overgrown with vegetation, the grounds have not been maintained, and the house is vacant. The property is now held in a family trust. According to a relative, the family has no current intent to sell the property, but there are no plans to restore it to a livable condition either.

Belle Aire is threatened and is an important inclusion on this year's RVPF list of endangered sites.

# 1925 MELROSE BAPTIST--HOLINESS TABERNACLE

Judy Harrison



Photo Credit: Judy Harrison

Melrose Baptist Church purchased the property in 1914, and the cornerstone was laid November 1, 1925. Richmond architect H. L. Cain designed the building in the Georgian-Colonial style. Herbert Levi Cain was a church architect who was licensed to work in Virginia, West Virginia, and Florida. The construction cost was a whopping \$107,000 (almost 2 million today). The original congregation was white, reflecting the neighborhood's demographics at that time.

In 1970 Melrose Baptist sold the building to Holiness Tabernacle Church and moved to Peters Creek Road. Melrose Baptist continues to be an active congregation, upholding their motto, "Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve."

Over the past five years, the building has sustained considerable damage due to a leaking roof. This has resulted in structural deterioration, a collapsed staircase, and the growth of black mold. Although the congregation of Holiness Tabernacle was forced to move out, they are trying to protect the stained-glass windows from recent vandalism. Like other churches, it has an aging congregation with limited resources for repairs.

# HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS due to City of Roanoke Zoning Amendments

Alison Blanton

Roanoke City's historic neighborhoods are one of its most valuable assets and the new zoning ordinance approved by City Council in 2024 pose a threat to these neighborhoods by encouraging demolition of historic buildings. To promote the development of more affordable housing, which we agree is desperately needed, the City significantly increased the allowable density per lot by right throughout the City. Believing that this increased density had the potential to make the land more valuable than the historic building on it, given the increased development potential, RVPF repeatedly advocated against the zoning changes as a threat to our historic neighborhoods. While the City responded that this was unlikely to happen, the recent demolition of four early 20th century buildings on Richelieu Avenue (2202, 2208, 2212, and 2216) for a new apartment building in South Roanoke is proof of this threat.



Photo Credit: Evie Slone

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This new development by right at the gateway to South Roanoke not only results in the demolition of four historic buildings but will change the historic scale and character of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the project does not support the goal of more affordable housing in the city as it replaces 10 affordable units with 22 new market-rate ones. The RVPF is not against affordable housing, we simply believe that the zoning changes that promote higher density development by right are too broad. Affordable housing could be better achieved through the existing processes of rezoning or special use permits that can take into consideration the historic value of the existing building and context of the surrounding neighborhood to ensure that these valuable assets are not lost.



Photo Credit: Whitney Feldmann

# RURAL CHARACTER OF ROUTE 221

Mike Kennedy

The demolition of a 19th century farmhouse on Poage Valley Road in Roanoke County highlights the threat to the rural nature of the U.S. 221 corridor at the base of Bent Mountain. In February, ABoone Real Estate demolished the house on the Old Poage Farm, a landmark for generations of residents and travelers, saying it was in too poor a condition to save.

The farm, home of the Poage family since before the American Revolution, had been purchased by the Roanoke County School Board for \$2.5 million in 2008 for a new school that was never built.

ABoone Real Estate bought the 55-acre parcel in September 2024 for \$1.1 million. Developer Alexander Boone had initially sought to rezone 16 acres of the site, now zoned for single-family homes, to build 138 town homes, 11 single-family homes, and a small commercial district. After the development plans were widely criticized in a public meeting last December, the developer withdrew the rezoning request, saying a revised development plan would be submitted in spring or summer.

Many residents of the Back Creek area are concerned about losing the rural character of the area as well as the increased traffic on the two-lane highway. Save Poage Valley ([savepoagevalley.com](http://savepoagevalley.com)) has been organized to inform and advocate for preservation in the Poage Valley.

Going forward, we recommend that the Planning Commission and the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors keep in mind the existing character of the area, the valley residents' wishes, and the capacity of U.S. 221 in the area when a new rezoning plan is submitted.



Photo Credit: Mike Kennedy

# Breckenridge Law Office--Eminently Endangered

Alison Blanton

Located in the center of Fincastle and directly behind the former Botetourt County courthouse (now demolished), the Breckenridge Law Office is now eminently threatened by the plans to construct a new courthouse complex. Starting out as a one-room law office as early as 1791, the building expanded over the years to become part of the Western Hotel in the 1850's and later used as apartments by Dodd and Dodd in the 1930's. Since 1965, the Botetourt County Historical Society and Museum have occupied this building before having to vacate it due to the recent courthouse demolition.

The RVPF listed this significant historical resource as endangered in 2021; however, the County responded with an assurance that the law office would be relocated rather than demolished. In spite of these plans, the County reversed course in late June 2025 and announced that the building would be demolished due to its deteriorated condition. The RVPF encourages Botetourt County to seek advice from preservation-sensitive professionals with experience in stabilizing and moving historic buildings before proceeding with this irreversible action that will result in the loss of one of the most historic and significant buildings that survives as testimony to the important role Botetourt County and the courthouse played in the settlement of the western region of Virginia and beyond.



Photo Credit: Mike Pulice

## BULLDOZER AWARDS



### ABoone Real Estate Inc and Roanoke County School Board ...

**for the loss of Poage Mill Farm and Farmhouse.** The demolition of the 19th century farmhouse on Poage Valley Road at the base of Bent Mountain in Roanoke County illustrates the direct threat to the rural nature of the U.S. 221 corridor.



Photo Credit: Maribeth Mills

### ABoone Real Estate Inc and Boxley Family LLC ...

**for the recent demolition of four early 20th century buildings on Richelieu Avenue (2202, 2208, 2212, and 2216) for a new apartment building in South Roanoke.** This illustrates the direct threat of our historic neighborhoods due to the City of Roanoke's zoning amendments.



Photo Credit: Whitney Feldmann