



ROANOKE VALLEY PRESERVATION FOUNDATION MOST ENDANGERED SITES 2000

Roanoke Valley Air Quality



Roanoke Valley air quality is declining and it poses danger for people, plants and even buildings, contrary to improvement in much of the nation, recent research shows. Roanoke Valley was 18th in the nation for air pollution-related deaths--70 per year for each 100,00 residents, according to the Clean Air Task Force based in Boston. Today's pollution in the Roanoke Valley comes from motor vehicles, lawn mowers, wood stoves and solvents, as well as Midwestern power plants. Trees and buildings dissolve as air-borne sulfur becomes acid rain. Complications related to asthma and emphysema are reported in the valley.

Unlike the industrial steam era when black soot coated central cities, today's pollutants are often as bad or worse in suburban locales, multiplying the number of people affected. Mountains trap pollutants, prolonging the effect. Continued reductions in tree canopy, accelerated trends in suburbanization and the near-certain construction of Int. 73 promise to make matters worse.

What can be done? Tougher, non-grandfathered pollution controls on power plants and diesel engines; better land-use planning-clustering, planned unit developments, transfer of development rights, land banking and reforestation. An estimated 75 percent reduction in power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide would save 800 Virginia lives annually, the report said. Limiting exits on Int. 73 to a bare minimum and reformulating such products as



household paint and carpet would have a significant impact. Success is possible, as seen in the impact of removing lead from gasoline.

Anyone can plant a tree, drive a little less or support government initiatives to limit or reduce pollutants and support wise land-use practices.

Roanoke Valley Trees – Threatened by Insects, Disease and Air Quality



The average urban tree canopy coverage in the Roanoke Valley has declined below levels needed to support a healthy urban community, according to state-of-the-art satellite imaging and new computer programs in a 1999 study by American Forests. Last year's drought, insects and diseases continue to weaken and kill many species of trees, including the dogwood, Virginia's state tree. Populations of gypsy moth are building up as near as Botetourt County.

Roanoke's air quality problems from gradual warming are stressing urban trees. During the last 24 years, average tree canopy coverage has declined from 40 percent to 35 percent---5 percent below the minimum level for a healthy urban ecosystem, according to American Forests, the nation's oldest conservation organization. Trees, the workhorses of urban communities, clean the air, reduce storm water damage, cool communities, enhance property values and enrich lives. NASA scientists say tree planting is the only cost- effective means to reverse local warming effects. State urban forestry funds should be restored for a matching grant tree planting program. Greenway systems and conservation easements can be used by communities to replace trees.



Loss of Downtown Roanoke, VA Buildings for Surface Parking



Significant, unprotected buildings in downtown Roanoke could be lost to surface parking as development pressures increase. Downtown Roanoke does have one of the finest collections of late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings in the state and several historic districts protect more than 100 of these historic structures against demolition and incompatible development. A recent loss to surface parking was the Star City Diner, of marginal historic significance but too important a business location for surface parking. The Oak Hall building, built by George Payne, father of actor John Payne, formerly was at that corner. The old Sportsman restaurant-pool hall at Jefferson and Church was removed for parking.

To protect downtown historic resources, the Preservation Foundation recommends:

---Eliminate surface parking as a permitted use in the Central Business District by amending the city zoning ordinance to require a special exception permit for new surface parking lots. Downtown should be a dense urban center with a mixture of office, retail and residential uses, keeping surface parking to a minimum, using only a small area and appropriately landscaped.

---Complete a comprehensive survey to identify and designate historic resources downtown. The City is working with Hill Studio to survey more than 200 downtown properties, to be completed by the fall of 2001, culminating with a formal nomination of all eligible properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

---Develop a comprehensive parking strategy as part of Outlook Roanoke Downtown Master Plan. This plan, with the City's Vision 2001 Comprehensive Plan, should develop long-term strategies for parking including location of new parking structures, provisions for on-street parking and public shuttle routes linking the City Market to the Jefferson Center, the new Riverside Biomedical Centre and other cultural and commercial sites.

In addition, individuals can lessen the need for surface parking by riding bicycles to work, carpooling, walking or riding buses.



Virginian Railway Station Feed Store, Roanoke, VA



The former Virginian Railway depot, constructed in 1909 and used for passenger and freight traffic until 1956, is endangered by plans of Carilion Health System for a biomedical center as well as proposed routing for Interstate 73. A nearby abandoned livery stable and Old Southwest Historical District also may be affected by Int. 73. The Foundation encourages a survey to identify and evaluate all historic and architecturally significant sites in the proposed biomedical center area.

Now housing a feed and seed store, the station on Williamson Road just east of South Jefferson Street offers an opportunity to restore an historic property for adaptive reuse. It is owned by Norfolk Southern Railway. It is comprised of two separate buildings running 32 by 162 feet. Waiting rooms are at one end and a baggage and freight area are at the other. The station has a Ludovici red tile, hip roof which needs repairs to prevent leaks, dormer windows and a pebbled concrete exterior wall.

This architecturally significant building is located on what was known as Pleasant Land Co. property at the start of the 20th century. Businessmen formed an association to locate fairgrounds here in 1901, a process continuing for years. Norfolk and Western Railway tracks, trolley lines and storage barns were nearby.



Adams, Payne, Gleaves Livery Stable #2, Roanoke VA

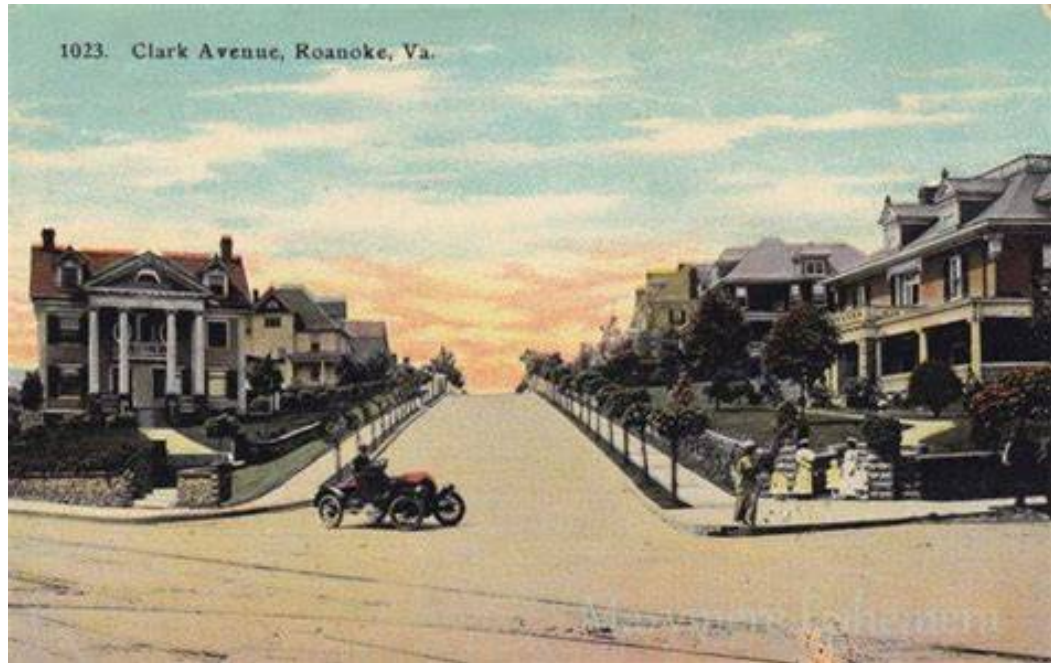


Development of Roanoke City as the industrial hub for Southwest Virginia was in large part accomplished from building material provided by Adams, Payne & Gleaves Co. Its complex of buildings ranged from the brick and kiln yard that was operating prior to 1890 in what is now South Roanoke Park, to the planing mill at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Jefferson Street, SE. Their company's No. 2 stable is the last known livery stable standing in the city and it is now used as a two-story brick storage building by Virginia Scrap Iron.

A company slogan for Adams, Payne & Gleaves was "everything for building but hardware." Deliveries of material were done by the horses and mules that provided most all modes of transportation in Roanoke. Horse stables once operated throughout the city. On Dec. 4, 1890, the first electric streetcar trial run was successfully completed when the car traveled several hundred yards on a 220-volt motor. Gasoline powered motor cars swarmed over the valley and the day of the horse-powered transportation industry was over. The stable buildings that housed the horses and that were not put into adaptive use also began to disappear.



Clarke Avenue SW, Roanoke, VA – Impact of Proposed Interstate 73 on Historic District



Clarke Avenue, part of Old Southwest historic neighborhood, may be affected if the central corridor for Int. 73 is chosen. Although the Virginia Department of Transportation draft environmental impact statement said the district has been avoided for an exit, a noise wall may be an option to reduce the sounds of traffic. Even if an exit is not constructed nearby, the 23 houses on Clarke Avenue could be at risk by increased traffic through the corridor.

Clarke Avenue, part of a nationally and state-designated district, has five houses 100 years old and 20 others that are at least 75, according to Roanoke's Geographic Information Service. Most houses are American Foursquare, two and a half stories, with hipped roofs, dormers and Tuscan columns. Several have slate roofs and balustrades. One architecturally outstanding structure is 1345 Clarke, a Colonial Revival Queen Anne house with Ionic columns, a curvilinear balustrade and beautiful interior woodwork.



Grandin Theatre, Roanoke, VA



The Grandin Theatre, Roanoke's oldest movie house, located in the Raleigh Court section, has financial problems because of strong competition from new multiplex theaters like the Valley View Grande. Owner Julie Hunsaker said she hopes the theater will remain open until December but she is uncertain about its future. Opened in 1932, the Grandin was a popular theater for decades but it closed twice. The Mill Mountain Theatre operated there in the 1980s. Jim Lindsey, brother of Hunsaker, bought the building in 1986 and managed the operation until she bought it. The movie house is a major anchor in a mixed-use community in Raleigh Court-Virginia Heights.

Foreign films, festivals, parties and art shows have been featured but the opening of large theaters by national chains with many screens has left smaller business like the Grandin in jeopardy. More public support would ensure the continuation of a landmark business and ensure the stability of the shopping area.

Brubaker-Huffman Home, Roanoke County, VA

A brick home built by Benjamin Brubaker near Hanging Rock in 1851 and later owned for many years by his great-grandson, Levi Huffman, is threatened after a vacancy of more than 10 years and the family's uncertainty about a future use. Nearby property behind the house has been acquired by Jim Walter Homes and American Electric Power Co. and widening of Int. 81 is



expected to take more land. The Sons of the Confederacy have expressed an interest in the property, according to Mrs. Estelle Ronk, last of four children of Levi Huffman. The Battle of Hanging Rock, a rear-guard engagement in which Confederate forces fired on a retreating Union army, occurred here on June 21, 1864.

Located on what was once a large farm in Northwest Roanoke County before construction of Int. 81, the home now has only about 5 acres of land, including several outbuildings. The three-story brick home has a gabled roof and large chimneys at each end. Its walls are more than 12 inches thick. Brick for the house was burned nearby and window glass was hand-blown at the site, according to family tradition.

Howbert House Archeological Site, Roanoke, VA

Two years ago, the Preservation Foundation placed the 200-year-old Howbert House on its Endangered Sites list and it has since been dismantled and moved into storage where it is for sale by a local contractor. The house on the northeast corner of Peters Creek Road and Salem Turnpike was across from the location of New Antrim Presbyterian Church and a small settlement. Though the house is gone, the archeological complex on the grounds is threatened by development. Inappropriate development would destroy the site. The Foundation recommends an archeological study of the site.

Originally an early German farmstead believed built at the end of the 18th century or the start of the 19th century, it may have served as a tavern and hotel since it was on the main turnpike to the western frontier, historians say. Archeological evidence would hold the key to these historical questions and would include remnants of farm-related outbuildings, privies, ice storage pits, a springhouse and possibly historic materials since it is situated on a knoll overlooking Peters Creek. The site is significant because very few sites of this time period in the Roanoke Valley have been studied. The site promises to tell us more about early frontier life here, as well as answering questions about New Antrim community, transportation and migration of ethnic groups.

Wiley House, 300 West Main Street, Salem, VA

A major expansion of the Salem Post Office has threatened the Queen Anne home built by Dr. Oscar Wiley and his wife, Malvinia, in 1883. Dr. Wiley, a prominent Salem citizen and a leader in the state medical community, was president of the Medical Society of Virginia and a founding member of the State Medical Examining Board.

The house site is to be used for the entrance driveway of the enlarged post office. Once a duplex and more recently vacant, the structure is presently used as a construction office by the contractor for the project. The Salem Historical Society has hopes of relocating and renovating the house for resale and investment in a new revolving fund to be used in saving other threatened



structures. The home would make an attractive restoration, said David Foster, Salem society president.

Pleasant Grove, Roanoke County, VA



Pleasant Grove, a Georgian style home west of Salem, built by Joseph Deyerle in 1853, is threatened by the widening of U.S. 460. The proposed highway project will not destroy the antebellum house but it will take most of the front yard, impacting the viewshed of one of the most beautiful historic sites in the county, as well as archeological resources. On the grounds are significant and well-kept original outbuildings, including the kitchen, a two-story brick building which may have been a slave-servant quarters, and an unusual overhang brick springhouse that is a classic example of the local folk approach to architecture.

A corner brick bearing Deyerle's name and other brick fragments found in a garden east of the house suggests that the builder made them in a kiln on the property. Two chimneys are on each end of the house, allowing each room to have its own fireplace. The house has a unique Ionic portico built by Gustavus Sedon, a skilled 19th century carpenter who carved unusual panels, mantels and molding for the interior. Pleasant Grove is a registered historical site which has been well preserved by the current owners, the Cabel Layne family.



DR Music Center, 101 East Lee Avenue, Vinton, VA



In downtown Vinton, VA, Donald and Rhonda Wray operate DR Music Center in an old brick building, once the location of the Peoples Bank of Vinton and later a clothing store and a pharmacy. A Clover Creamery sign on a wall was uncovered when siding was removed. The building has an interesting parapet across the top.

The owners said they have no plans for restoration.