

4747

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: New Kent Ordinary  
Other names/site number: VDHR File #063-0021  
Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 12000 New Kent Highway  
City or town: New Kent Court House State: VA County: New Kent  
Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.  
I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following  
level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
 A  B  C  D

<p><u><i>Julie W. Langston</i></u></p> <p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p><u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u></p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p><u>10/24/19</u></p> <p><b>Date</b></p>
<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><b>Date</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

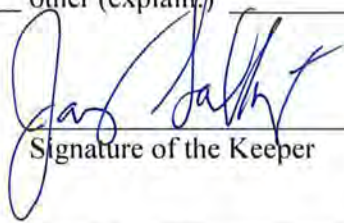
New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper

12.9.2019  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Colonial-Era Tavern

---

---

---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD: weatherboard

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

The New Kent Ordinary is located in the village of New Kent Court House, across from the county courthouse and administrative complex. The building is a one-and-a-half story brick edifice set on a raised English basement. A full-width front porch extends along the main level of the building and end chimneys flank each side of the gabled roof, which is pierced by three dormers. The earliest construction phase of the extant building dates to 1735-1736, with at least two periods of renovations during the nineteenth century. It is believed that the first period of renovation, which included reconfiguration of the chimneys, some door and window openings, and other finishes, occurred circa 1840. The original half-story roof was removed and reconfigured as a true full-height second story under a new gabled roof with a new rear shed addition circa 1880. Additional renovations occurred as part of a Colonial Revival-inspired restoration effort in the 1960s, which included returning the upper level and roof to a half-story with dormer windows and substantial renovation of the interior spaces. Soon thereafter, a historically-inspired octagonal garden shed was constructed a short distance north of the ordinary; as it postdates the property's period of significance, this building is noncontributing to the property's significance.

---

### Narrative Description

#### *Setting*

New Kent Ordinary is located at 12000 New Kent Highway in the village of New Kent Court House. The property is located on the north side of the road, directly across from the New Kent County courthouse and administrative complex. The former tavern stands near the road, indicating

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

its longtime historic association with travel along this route. To the front of the ordinary are a line of overgrown boxwood hedges, partially screening the building from the road. Two rows of boxwoods also frame a clearing extending from the rear of the building. Surrounding these gardens is an open grassy lawn with scattered trees and ornamental plantings. A small, octagonal garden shed stands behind (north of) the ordinary.

### *Exterior*

The New Kent Ordinary is a masonry building that exhibits a characteristic form and configuration as applied to a number of other documented taverns from its 18<sup>th</sup>-century period of construction. Dendrochronology reveals that the primary framing timbers were felled in 1735-1736, dating what was likely the original construction phase of the building (Oxford Tree Ring Laboratory 2019). The building is composed of a one-and-a-half story front block with a three-bay, central-passage, single-pile configuration set on a raised foundation with English basement. Inspection of exposed interior framing reveals that the building originally had a pair of interior chimneys on the rear slope, but was reconfigured to flanking exterior end chimneys in the mid-nineteenth century. During the 1880s, the building was substantially reconfigured again when the original garret level was removed and a full-height frame second story added. The current configuration of the building is the result of a restoration effort in 1964 to return the building to its original one-and-a-half-story form. Attached to the rear of the original block is a full-width one-story shed set on a full basement. This extension is believed to date to the 1880s renovation, but may have replaced an original full-width rear shed. A small one-room block is attached to the lower level side of the rear shed and was added in 1964. The brick walls of the building are laid in various bond patterns, reflecting multiple phases of construction. The walls of the main block are laid in an English bond with oversize bricks and a torus water table between the basement and main level. The gabled walls of the garret level above are American bond and range between five- and seven-course patterns and were substantially rebuilt in 1964. The rear shed has a more consistent five-course American bond consistent with a construction date in the second half of the nineteenth century, although the back wall was substantially rebuilt in 1964. The main block is topped by a side-gable roof covered in Hendricks shingles and pierced by three, gabled dormers set equidistant apart on the front and rear slopes. The exterior chimneys from the mid-nineteenth century are located centrally on each gable-end and are shouldered just below the peak of the ridgeline. The rear block is topped by a shed roof that adjoins the main roof at the eave and is pierced by two interior wall chimneys halfway down the slope.

### Front elevation

The primary façade faces south and is three-bays across with a full-width shed roof porch spanning the main level. Beneath the porch is a ground-level porch with below-grade brick flooring and steps and round metal posts and flanked by two brick-enclosed closets with board-and-batten doors. Although the outer walls of the closets are flush with the primary building foundation walls, they are not integrally coursed in, and are likely later additions. A centered entry composed of paneled double doors with double, screen doors gives access to the English basement. The entry is flanked on either side by wood, six-over-six double-hung sash windows within segmental arched

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

brick openings. Similar windows illuminate the interior of the flanking closets. Both the windows and entry are ornamented by molded and beaded wood trim.

The façade's main-level porch is topped by a shed roof that meets the main roofline at the eave. It is supported by square wood columns with plain board railings. The porch ends are clad with modern weatherboards and a newer flight of stairs extends from the west end of the porch to ground level. The steps are in the same location as a set shown in an undated pre-1964 photograph of the building. This porch shelters the centered front entry, which consists of double doors with five panels each, topped with a five-light transom above. A double set of screen doors have been added to the front entry with replica H hinges. The Greek Revival entry frame is inset to the brick walls and is molded with ovolo edge. Flanking each side of the central entry are Greek Revival windows composed of a central six-over-six double hung sash between two four-light sidelights. The window units are set within a beaded frame further embellished by molded trim.

The main block's front roof slope is pierced by three gabled dormers set equidistant apart. Each features a four-over-four sash window beneath a simple wood-clad gable and sloped weatherboard siding. This roofline and the dormers all date to restoration of the building in 1964.

#### East elevation

The east elevation of the original block is a gable end with a centered exterior chimney. The chimney is believed to date from the building's first renovation during the mid-nineteenth century when a pair of interior chimneys were replaced with exterior end chimneys. The chimney is not coursed into the original brick walls, reflecting its later construction, although the water table was replicated. A decorative metal plate added as part of the 1964 restoration is centered on the main chimney directly above the water table and has a man playing a trumpet with a scroll that says "Fire". Punctuating the east wall of the building below the water table and to the front of the chimney is one window with a six-over-six double-hung sash. Attached to the east wall just to the rear of the chimney is a small frame vestibule sheltering a bulkhead stairwell that leads into the basement. Its walls are clad in weatherboard siding and the gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The single door has a nine-pane fixed window above two inset panels below. To the rear of the vestibule is the portion of the east elevation that forms the full-width rear shed, which is believed to have been built during the 1880s. Inspection of the water table and front block brickwork indicate that an earlier full-width rear shed was replaced with the existing block.

Piercing this wall near the joint with the front block are six-over-six double-hung sash wood windows at the lower level and the main level above. These windows have narrow molded frames, however, the brickwork and joints around the windows have been reworked, indicating the openings and frames may have been repaired or possibly altered. Attached to the east wall of the rear block and flush with the back wall is a one-story single-bay addition from 1964. The wing has brick walls laid in a common bond and is topped by a gable roof covered in Hendricks shingles. A boxed cornice with end skirts adorns the roofline. An exterior gable-end chimney, the top of which has two corbelled courses, extends up the outside wall at the ridge. The interior wall chimney of the rear shed extends up the east wall on the same plane as the wing's ridge.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

### West elevation

The tavern's west elevation fenestration is similar to that of the east elevation. The east of the original front block is a gable-end with a central exterior brick chimney believed to date from the mid-nineteenth century when the building's interior chimneys were removed. The chimney is not coursed into the original brick walls, reflecting its later construction, although the water table was replicated. A decorative metal plate in the shape of a Native American warrior, added as part of the 1964 restoration, is affixed to the chimney just above the water table. Piercing the basement wall on each side of the chimney are windows with six-over-six double-hung sash within historic beaded frames. To the rear of the back window is the portion of west elevation forming the full-width rear ell, believed to date to the 1880s. The west wall of the rear shed is set back slightly from the plane of the front block and on the lower and main levels is pierced near the joint by windows with six-over-six double-hung sash. These windows have narrower molded frames consistent with a nineteenth-century date although the bottom window now has a replacement pre-hung sash. To the rear of these windows, at the far back corner of the west elevation, is an entry into the lower level of the rear ell. The doorway is set one-step below grade within a brick bulkhead. The nine-light over cross-paneled door is sheltered by a gabled portico with knee braces and wood posts. Although an entry is known to have been located there since the nineteenth century, the existing door and portico are from the 1964 restoration.

### Rear elevation

The rear elevation has a similar appearance to the façade with a full-width raised porch, however, the configuration is a later adaptation. Inspection of the interior framing and construction reveals that the existing rear shed is a relic of the 1880s renovation and replaced an original full-width rear shed. The roofline of this shed was raised slightly as part of the 1964 restoration, resulting in several additional courses of brick over the door and window openings. Today, a full-width porch extends along the rear wall's main level. The porch is sheltered by a shed roof that ties into the roof of the rear shed at the eaves. The rear slope of the main block's roof is punctuated by three equally-spaced gabled dormers similar to those on the façade. The cornice of the porch roof is simply trimmed and features exposed rafter tails. It is supported by square wood columns and horizontal railings similar to those on the front porch. The wood porch floor is also supported by a series of square wood columns set on a low brick knee wall that frames a slightly below grade ground-level porch that extends the length of the basement. The lower porch is screened with a slightly off-centered single doorway and brick step. Extending centrally from the raised porch to ground level behind the building is a wide flight of wood stairs. The date of this rear porch is unclear, but it appears in a 1937 photo of the building.

Both the basement and main level of the rear elevation have similar fenestration composed of an entry offset to the west, with a single window opening to the west and two window openings to the east. The basement entry is composed of double doors with nine lights over two wood panels each. The main level entry has a single nine-light door over angled panels with a screen door in front. All of the rear windows have replacement eight-over-eight pre-hung sash within simply molded frames that were installed as part of the 1964 restoration.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

### *Interior*

The interior layout of the building is generally intact from its historic configuration, however, many of the materials and finishes date from, or were altered, during various periods of renovation, most notably the 1964 restoration. The building's original front block consists of a single, open room in the basement; one room on each side of a central passage on the main level; and a similar layout on the second floor; small bathrooms have been added to each second-floor room. The full-width rear shed addition has a room flanking each side of a central passage on both the basement and main levels, with a small bathroom next to the passage on the main level, and a small utility room within the wing addition in the basement level. The stairwell and only connectivity between the basement and the main level is in the rear ell's central passage, while the stairwell from the main level to the second floor is in the front block's passage.

### Tavern Room

The large room that occupies the entire basement area of the main block was referred to as "the tavern room" during the 1964 restoration, although it is unclear if this is based in anything more than lore. This room is accessed by an entry from the front lower veranda as well as an enclosed bulkhead entry on the east side of the building. It appears that there was no communication between this room and the first floor above as part of the original construction, however, a small stairwell may have been added in the mid-nineteenth century and removed at a later date. Today the room is completely open except for two Doric column supports spaced evenly under a centered three-part summer beam that spans the ceiling. These massive beams provide structural support for the smaller joists that are joined by mortise and tenon and span the block from front to back. The room is finished in a historically-inspired way, but inspection reveals that many of the finishes and materials are not original, and many likely date from the 1964 restoration. The floors are covered with brick laid in a herringbone pattern. The walls are covered with wainscoting and plaster. The ceilings are currently open and exposed, although nail holes and stains on the joists reveal it has been plastered in the past. The wall plaster appears to be from the 1964 restoration as evidenced by metal mesh lath, and the wainscoting is applied over this plaster. The wainscoting is composed of waste-high horizontal board with a simply molded cap. The cap sits at the same level and is extended as sills for the several windows in the room. The windows sit deep in the wall due to the structural brick, and have plain relief boards. They are framed with what appears to be a historic narrow molded trim widened with a heavier plain board trim. Each end of the tavern room features a central fireplace connected to the gable-end chimneys. The fireplace mantels appear to be early-nineteenth century in construction, and are likely antiques brought to the building as part of the 1964 restoration, as they are attached over the metal-lath plaster and predate the chimneys in construction period. The four doors in the room are each trimmed with non-original beaded surrounds that abut the wainscoting. The flat-paneled double doors from the outside porch, from the tavern room into the back stair hallway, and from the east side exterior bulkhead entry are all outfitted with replica H-L hinges and rimlocks believed to be added as part of the 1964 restoration. A single doorway also pierces the rear wall near the east entry and provides access to the kitchen added in the rear ell. This doorway was added in 1964 and has a six-panel colonial-style door with modern hardware. The double-door set centrally on the back wall of the tavern room provides access to the rear addition's basement level.



New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

### Rear Shed Basement

Just through the doorway from the tavern room is a central hallway in the rear addition's basement that provides access to the basement rooms in this area, as well as a stairwell to the main level of the building. On the right side of the hall is a doorway into a modern bathroom. At the rear of the hall on the left side past the stairwell is a small bedroom. This room has vinyl tile floors, plastered walls, and sheetrock ceilings. The south and east walls have built-in open shelves from the 1960s with a small cornice that wraps around the rest of the room. On the outside wall is a fireplace with a compound molded mantel. Above the molded surround is a plain board frieze with a relatively high mantelshelf that is likely a twentieth century feature. Set beside the fireplace is a doorway that leads out to the west side bulkhead and portico. Across the central hall from this bedroom is a doorway into the kitchen. The kitchen was added in 1964 and reflects a character and appearance contemporary to that period with knotty pine wood paneling on the walls and knotty pine cabinetry. The floors are covered with vinyl tile and the ceilings are sheetrock. A fireplace with a circa 1964 mantel is set on the outside wall and an adjacent doorway leads into a utility room within the 1964 side addition. In the central hall, a stairwell along the left wall provides the only interior access to the main level of the building. This stairwell is a single, open run of stairs leading up from the rear of the hallway with a closet underneath. The stairs have plain horizontal board railings that were added in 1964. The head-opening from the floor above was also enlarged at that time.

### Rear Shed Main Level

At the top of the stairs from the basement is a landing placed one step below the floor in the main level. The final step is a dogleg to the left which leads to the central back hallway, off which are the rooms on the rear addition's main level of the rear ell, a door to the rear porch, and a doorway to the original front block. The floors in the back hall are wide plank boards that appear to date to the late-nineteenth century. A 1964 horizontal board railing surrounds the stair opening, and the walls and ceiling are sheetrock. At the rear left of the hall is a doorway into a room on the west side of the building. This room is finished with painted wood floors, paneled wainscoting beneath plaster walls, and sheetrock ceilings. The wainscoting is waist-high and consists of a row of vertical panels with wider horizontal panels above, all with quarter-round edged framing and a bullnose cap. The wood appears to be old, but possibly recycled and/or reapplied during the 1964 restoration, as evidenced by inconsistent and modern joinery. The windowsills in this room interrupt the upper panels of the wainscoting and openings are unframed. A fireplace is set centrally on the west wall with a simple mantel consisting of a molded firebox surround with a large blank relief panel above, topped by a board shelf. The mantel also appears older, possibly contemporary to the construction of the rear shed during the 1880s. Set next to the fireplace is a closet with a six-paneled door outfitted with reproduction H-L hinges and a late-nineteenth century rimlock. The frame of the door between this bedroom and the central passage appears to be late-eighteenth century with a beaded double architrave and evidence of original hinges, however, an additional trim board was added over this with reproduction hinges in 1964. Across the back hall from the west bedroom is a narrow corridor that leads to the east bedroom with a bathroom off to the side. The bathroom features 1980s-era fixtures with a large corner soaking tub, a cabinet-style vanity, and a French commode. Beyond the bathroom is a doorway to the east bedroom, which mirrors the west bedroom in layout and finishes with the exception of a slightly different

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

wainscoting composed solely of a compound baseboard with a blank panel above, topped by a compound chair rail. Back out in the hallway, a doorway at the top of the stairs provides access into the front block's central passage.

### Front Hall

The front passage is centrally located and accessed by the rear hall doorway as well as by the main entrance on the front porch. This passage has doorways to rooms on each side of the front block, as well as a stairwell to the second floor. The space is finished with wide-plank pine flooring, wainscoting and plaster walls, and sheetrock ceilings. A thin crown molding along the ceiling is believed to date from 1964. The wainscoting wrapping around the hall consists of a compound layered baseboard and chair rail with flat boards between. It is capped by a simple chair rail cap. The wainscoting appears to be historic, but its awkward joints with door frames suggest it may have been modified during later alterations. The door frames in the front hall appear to be original and consist of a beaded frame further embellished by Greek Revival trim that extends to the floor with no plinth blocks.

The main stairwell consists of a full-turn flight of stairs with a landing that extends the full-width of the back wall. The stair configuration and Georgian trim appear to date to the mid-eighteenth century. The staircase features painted risers with bullnose treads and is adorned by a flat-board wall string and wainscoting with a compound chair rail. The outer stringer is plain and capped by a narrow molded trim board beneath the balustrade. Each baluster is square and notched with two flutings on the outer surface, and the balustrade is topped by an ovolo handrail. Although the handrail likely dates to the eighteenth century, the balustrade is from the late-nineteenth or twentieth century. There are square newel posts embellished with a spherical finial. The newel drop at the second floor has been further embellished with an upside down, hand-carved pineapple added in 1964.

### West Front Room

To the left of the front hall is the west room. This room features a central fireplace on the west wall and a window on the front (south) wall. The doorway to access the room from the hall is located on the east wall, offset towards the front of the building. The flooring in the room is wide-cut heart pine with wainscoting and plaster walls with a sheetrock ceiling. The wainscoting around the room consists of a baseboard with a large bottom rail, simple panels, top rail in similar scale to bottom, ogee cap, and bullnose chair rail. The fireplace is surrounded by wood paneling with an arched firebox. The brick hearth appears to be original to the fireplace, although the bricks lining the firebox and the plaster surround are from 1964. The paneled mantel appears to be historic, although it has an added mantelshelf and does not meet the wainscoting appropriately, suggesting one feature or the other was added later or otherwise modified. The facing below the mantelshelf has three inset panels and four above the shelf. Two-piece crown molding from 1964 circles the room with a similar profile to the top of the wainscoting and protrudes slightly above the mantel. The window on the south wall is set on the outside of the wall with the inset portion on the interior trimmed out with wood. A simple trim and sill decorate the window. The window itself appears to date to the mid-nineteenth century and is built using mortis and tenon joints.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

### East Front Room

To the right side of the front hall is the east room. This room generally mirrors the configuration and finishes of the west room with slight differences in the trim. A central fireplace is set on the east wall and a window on the front wall. The wainscoting in this room differs from the west room in that, instead of having a flat panel between the baseboard and chair rail, there are a series of relief panels. The fireplace and mantel also differ slightly with a square firebox, and a wider and unbalanced mantel. The mantel features a grid of vertically-oriented relief panels with one extra column of panels to the left side. A molded frame surrounds the firebox and a mantelshelf with a cornice has been added over the first row of panels. Two additional rows of panels are set over the mantelshelf and capped by a simple cornice with one full-width relief panel stretching to the ceiling's crown molding. This mantel appears to be pieced together with both nineteenth- and twentieth-century components. Two-piece crown molding circles the room with a similar profile to the top of the wainscoting. The window on the south wall is set on the outside of the wall with the inset portion on the interior trimmed out with wood. A simple trim and sill decorate the window, which appears to date to the mid-nineteenth century.

### Upper Hall

At the top of the stairwell in the front block is a small hall that provides access to the second-floor bedrooms. The hall consists of a landing that overlooks the open stairwell with a continuation of the stair balustrade. This area features wainscoting similar to that on the first floor, although was likely reworked and/or added during the 1964 restoration of the second story. The flooring in this hall are medium-width pine boards and the walls and ceilings are sheetrock. The ceilings are sloped with the roofline, but interrupted by openings for dormer windows on the both the front and rear slope. On each side of the upper hall are doorways that lead into the upper bedrooms.

### West Bedroom

The west bedroom on the second-story features a central fireplace on the west wall while a dormer window breaks on both the front and rear sloped ceilings. There are storage access doors on each side of the window on the dormer walls. All of the doors in the second floor are Colonial Revival six-panel doors with replica hinges and rimlocks that are believed to date to 1964. The west bedroom is finished with pine floors with sheetrock walls and ceilings. Much of the room and materials are from the 1964 restoration when the full-height second story was removed and replaced with the current garret-level roof. Encircling the room is knee-high wainscoting with a simple baseboard with a flat panel above that is topped with a bullnose cap. This material may date to the 1880s renovation of the building, but was reconfigured in 1964. The fireplace is centrally located on the east wall and has a brick hearth and concrete block firebox. The exterior chimneys remained in place during the restoration, and therefore the fireplace itself is original, although it was reworked at that time. The firebox is arched and lined with modern glazed bricks, and the facing is parged with stucco. The mantel is tall and features full-height fluted pilasters on each side with a central pilaster over the firebox. Blank panels are set between the pilasters and the whole piece is topped by a denticulated cornice. The mantel styling is consistent with a construction date of the 1780s and is from southern Virginia. Because of this, coupled with its application on a mid-nineteenth century chimney and over twentieth-century plasterwork, it is likely the mantel was brought from another location as part of the 1964 restoration. On the east wall of the room is a

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

doorway that provides access to a small bathroom that was partitioned off during the 1964 restoration. The bathroom contains a toilet and sink. The walls have been clad in white subway tile to the height of where the roof begins to slope the wall. A mirrored medicine cabinet is located above the sink.

### East Bedroom

The east bedroom on the second-story generally mirrors the layout and finishes of the west room with slight differences in trim. The wainscoting is similar to that in the west room, although the fireplace and mantel differ. This fireplace has a square firebox with only a narrow stucco facing. The mantel features heavy Greek Revival trim topped by a full-width relief panel with a compound cornice and mantelshelf above. This mantel is believed to date to the early-nineteenth century, although was likely altered with the mantelshelf and is also believed to have been brought to the building as part of the 1964 restoration.

### Fixtures/Mechanicals

Throughout the building a variety of fixtures, utilities, and mechanicals have been added to bring it up to modern building codes. Although some plumbing, electric, and heating were added earlier in the twentieth century, much of this was replaced and upgraded in 1964. Older heat in the building was provided by a boiler with cast-iron radiators set in the hallways and rooms throughout; a new oil furnace was installed in 1964. All of the plumbing with copper pipe was also installed at this time for the kitchen and bathrooms. The electric service dates to this time and light fixtures throughout the building were also added in the 1960s. Most light fixtures are colonial-inspired chandeliers and wall sconces. Hardware throughout the building is believed to be a mix of historic and reproduction, with some older pieces, such as brass rimlocks, having been purchased from other locations and reinstalled here.

### *Building Evolution*

#### Period I - 1736:

The original core of the building was constructed in 1736 according to dendrochronology. At that time, the building was constructed as a handsome one-and-a-half story masonry building on a raised basement. The main block of the building was one room deep, with a single room on each side of a central passage on the main and upper floors. A full-width one-story shed addition appears to have extended along the rear of the building in an unknown configuration. The original plan of the building is similar to early taverns in Williamsburg, such as the Raleigh and Wetherburn's, with a pair of large heated entertaining rooms in a front room on the ground floor with smaller rooms arranged in a shed behind. The New Kent Ordinary's ground-floor arrangement is very similar to that in the original part of Wetherburn's, with a center passage dividing two large, roughly square front rooms, both heated by corner fireplaces against the back wall. At the Williamsburg tavern, the smaller rooms in the rear shed were also heated, although it is unclear whether those at New Kent were originally fitted with fireplaces.

Inspection of the framing at the New Kent Ordinary reveals that in 1736, the building was heated by a pair of chimneys that rose up in the rear inside corner of the two front heated rooms. This is

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

clearest in the ceiling framing of the first floor, where diagonal trimmers are still in place, tenoned into early joists. These stacks were removed, likely in the early 1840s, when the present chimney stacks were built at the gable ends and the ground floor was converted into a large heated public room. The original configuration of the rear addition's rooms is unclear but an arrangement similar to the present, with three roughly equal-sized rooms across the rear, is a strong possibility.

The present full-width rear shed at New Kent is a later addition, with common-bond brick walls and a circular-sawn frame. This replaces an original shed that ran across the rear of the tavern but was of unknown depth. The evidence for this is in the area under the present shed roof. Here, where the upper part of the original back wall is visible, it is apparent that the ends of the ceiling joists, which would ordinarily (i.e., were the house only one room deep) support a false plate and the rear run of rafters and be finished with a decorative cornice, have never had anything secured to them. They project unevenly beyond the plane of the wall, sometimes about 8", in other places closer to 16". Additionally, there are no outriggers to support a false plate behind the stairwell, as there would be if the rear roof had been framed conventionally. The ends of these joists are all hewn and pit-sawn and several show where they have been split off a few inches from their end instead of being sawn through.

Below these joist ends, the top of the rear masonry wall is visible. If this masonry had been exposed to view when it was originally laid, the mortar would have been neatly finished and tooled, like the early mortar on the other three sides of the building. Here, however, it is sloppily laid and not tooled or even cleaned, as though it was never intended to be exposed. Additionally, the foundation wall on the west side seems to have been cut off at its north corner, in line with the rear wall of the front rooms. It appears that, at the basement level, the original foundation wall continued past its present point into the space of the present shed. Taken together, this evidence suggests that the tavern was covered with a rear shed from the beginning, concealing the top of the rear wall and eliminating the need to finish the rear joist ends with a proper cornice or to provide support for rafters at the back of the stair well. That shed seems to have been replaced wholesale, down to its foundations, in the nineteenth century.

The main block's second floor was fitted with a pair of large rooms on either side of the stair passage similar to the main level. These seem to have been heated. It is clear from the framing that the two corner chimney stacks were pulled forward from the rear wall by several feet. This unusual arrangement allowed them to sit closer to the middle of the second-floor chambers, where rafters rising from the rear would not cover the fireboxes.

The 1736 date of construction is also evident through a variety of existing materials and finishes in the building, including masonry walls on the south, east, and west sides, which are all laid in English bond with neatly scribed mortar joints. Two surviving early window openings in the cellar reveal that the openings were handsomely finished, with rubbed-and-gauged segmental arches and selective glazing of headers. Other than those in the arches, the early bricks are quite large. The earliest framing visible in the cellar and first-floor ceilings is all hewn and pit-sawn.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

It seems that very little interior woodwork remains from this early date, as later renovations removed all early flooring and replaced most early mantels, windows, cornices, and other fabric, with either antique material from other buildings or newly fabricated Colonial Revival woodwork. Only parts of the main stair and several interior doors have a plausible claim for being colonial work *in situ*. The closed-string staircase has a good Georgian backband framing the stringer and a handrail with an early profile. This is mortised into stout square newel posts at the base of the stair and at each landing. There are no signs of early balusters and the present replacements are square, grooved models secured with wire nails that date likely to the late-nineteenth or twentieth century.

Several early doors in the house, many with six raised panels and simple ovolo stiles and rails, may also be from the original construction period. Those in the front part of the first-floor passage are framed with single architraves with roughly ½” beads and Georgian backbands on the passage face.

#### Period II, c. 1776:

It appears that at least some renovation or modification occurred to the building later in the eighteenth century. A 1776 advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* makes reference to improvements at the tavern. The extent of this work is unclear as little material consistent with that period remains *in situ*, however, several features and finishes may be a result of this period.

A pair of early doors at the back of the rear passage on the first floor, each of which is set in handsome, late-Georgian double architraves, are the most elaborated door surrounds of any period in the building. These do not show signs of being salvaged woodwork and they are set in a masonry wall, so they seem to be *in situ*, late-colonial work. If there were other improvements made in this period, such as mantels or other doors, they are not extant.

#### Period III, c. 1842:

The next major phase of improvements to the building seems to have occurred in the second-quarter of the nineteenth century. Tavern ledgers from 1814-1839 do not reference such modifications, although an 1850 advertisement for the property indicates that a large stable had been erected in 1842. A variety of finishes and features present on the building are contemporary to that date. It is likely that the stable and improvements to the tavern were part of a single building campaign undertaken at that time. This work involved a major reconfiguration of the tavern, creating a large new room at the front of the cellar and relocating the two principal chimney stacks to the gable end walls. The new stacks are laid in five-course common bond, consistent with an 1840s date, and the two new turned columns in the cellar have a late Greek Revival profile, especially evident in their capitals. A new stair was cut through the first-floor framing to provide interior access to the new cellar room below the main stair and the new trimmers for this opening are secured to the joists using mature cut nails.

At the same time, new front and rear doors were inserted in the cellar and on the first floor and the first-floor front window sash were replaced and their openings enlarged with new sash flanked by sidelights. This work involved the removal of whatever masonry arches had capped the original openings.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

#### Period IV, 1880s to 1890s:

Yet another major renovation to the building occurred in the late-nineteenth century. The date of this renovation is believed to be 1880-1890, after the property was acquired by a new owner. The most substantial modification during this period was the complete reconfiguration of the second story and roof, with the upper level raised to a full-height second story. The old roof was discarded and the new upper-level walls framed on top of the existing masonry. The upper part of the gable-end chimneys may have been rebuilt at this time, as well. At the same time, the rear shed was also rebuilt. All extant joists in the first and second floor are circular-sawn, as are several of the studs framing second-floor partitions. This cycle of improvements included some changes to woodwork on the first and second floor, including the replacement of the balusters on the principal staircase and the creation of a new stair to the cellar in the shed. At this time, the c. 1842 stairwell in the front hall was closed off. One remnant of the interior work from this period seems to survive in the upstairs south chamber, where very low flush-board wainscoting, secured with cut and wire nails, is finished with Italianate moldings; use of wire nails was rare in central Virginia before 1890.

#### Period V, 1964:

The most recent renovations to the building began in 1964 when new owners embarked on an extensive “restoration” to make it resemble more closely its colonial-era appearance. Most obviously, this included the demolition of the 1880s second story and the restoration of the first-period roof profile, along with new dormers to light the upper level rooms. It also involved the construction of new bathrooms on the second floor and a new kitchen in the basement and other improvements to building systems.

The work included substantial changes to interior woodwork, and wall, floor, and ceiling surfaces. Plaster was renewed and replaced and flooring largely removed and replaced. The owners purchased antique woodwork and wainscoting from other buildings in Virginia and reinstalled it in the principal rooms, making adjustments and repairs to make this material fit. The mantel in the first-floor east room, for example, has been extended to the ceiling with a new panel, while the old wainscoting reinstalled in this room has been patched and manipulated to fit around corners and the door opening. In this room, the owners had an entirely new crown molding fitted and seemingly made some repairs to the inside face of the door casing. Much of the antique woodwork selected for the building seems to date from the first decade or so of the nineteenth century, with punch-and-gouge-work, quirked moldings, and relatively delicate neoclassical profiles.

#### *Secondary Resource*

#### Garden Shed: Noncontributing

Also referred to as the “armory,” this small building is located approximately 140 feet to the rear of the ordinary. The exact date of construction is not clear, but it appears likely to date to the late-1960s. The one-story building has an octagonal form topped by an octagonal roof. The walls are constructed of concrete block with a brick veneer, and pierced by a paneled door on the front and

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

double-hung sash windows on alternating walls. Although designed in a Colonial Revival-inspired manner, the building is not known to be based on any actual or documented historic outbuildings on the property.

### Archaeological Potential

Although there have been no systematic, professional archaeological investigation on the property, there exists a moderate to high potential for archaeological deposits that may shed additional light on the construction of the tavern, layout and circulation patterns of now-vanished ancillary structures, and lifeways of both the occupants of the building and the enslaved African Americans who lived and worked on the property prior to the Civil War. Additional outbuildings are known to have existed on the property into the twentieth century and their sites could be targeted for investigation. Despite likely disturbance to the archaeological record from several renovations to the tavern, intact subsurface deposits and features may still be present and could contributing information in understanding the history and significance of the property.

### *Integrity Analysis*

The New Kent Ordinary has undergone multiple renovations and remodeling over its 280-year existence, including a substantial restoration effort conducted in 1964. As such, the building retains materials and attributes from a wide timeframe, and continues to convey characteristics and features from each phase of its evolution. Overall the building retains a relatively high degree of integrity to its period of significance that extends from its original construction in 1736 up to the 1964 restoration.

With regards to the seven aspects of integrity defined by the National Register program, the tavern retains integrity of location as it has not been moved and remains in the place where originally constructed. The property also retains integrity of setting as its site alongside today's Route 249 remains largely intact, with the narrow, curving road alignment seeming little changed over the years. The tavern occupies a cleared domestic yard surrounded by woods and stands across from the still-active county courthouse complex in the small village of New Kent Court House. The property retains moderate integrity of design as the configuration of the building was changed substantially in the 1840s, more dramatically in the 1880s, and again during the 1964 restoration, however, each campaign is considered a significant event in the building's evolution. The property also retains fair integrity of materials, including original framing, brickwork, and interior finishes such as flooring, plaster, staircases, and other materials. The historic materials have been supplemented with application of historic-age materials likely salvaged from other historic properties in Virginia; such salvaging was considered appropriate according to historic preservation theory as it existed during the early 1960s. The relative lack of major alterations in the past 55 years mean that that the restoration work of 1964 has integrity of design and materials, thus reflecting the preservation principles of that era. The tavern also has integrity of workmanship, with intact evidence of each phase of building evolution. Hand-hewn and sawn timbers with worked mortise and tenon joints from the eighteenth century are present throughout the building's



New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

main block, and additional brickwork from that period, including relatively ornate segmental arches and torus-shaped water table remain. Interior molded and beaded trim and wainscoting also reflects quality construction. An attention to detail can be seen on work from 1964 where effort was made to match or replicate various trim components, brickwork, and other features. Some aspects of this work later proved to be ill-advised, such as the use of Portland cement and metal-track window sash, and altering of original mantels with salvaged pieces; but the use and later abandonment of such techniques is important in the history of preservation theory. Integrity of feeling is intact as the building continues to convey a sense of time and place through its commanding location at the bend in the highway across from the courthouse as one enters town. The exterior reflects its historic appearance as a result of restoration according to early documentation, and the raised full-width porch alerts viewers of its public-oriented function as an ordinary. The New Kent Ordinary retains integrity of association for its documented use as a tavern and dwelling for over 150 years. Although its ceased operating as a tavern during the 1930s and currently is vacant, these factors do not of themselves diminish integrity of association.

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1736-1964

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Hague, E. S. (general contractor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The New Kent Ordinary is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its role as a tavern in New Kent Court House between the 1730s and early twentieth century. The ordinary is one of the most notable and recognizable buildings in the small village of New Kent Court House and the county of New Kent. A tavern or ordinary is believed to have been at this general location since the 1690s when New Kent County was established, however, dendrochronology reveals that the earliest portions of the extant building date to 1736, when the tavern served as a place to dine and stay, particularly on days that county court was in session across the road. The building was substantially renovated during the 1840s, contemporary to an extant ledger book which documents several visits by then-President John Tyler. During 1880-1890, another substantial renovation took place that expanded the building. The property continued to function as an ordinary into the early-twentieth century, but was reported to have been abandoned during the 1930s. In 1964, Richmond attorney Hunter Martin acquired the building and embarked on a restoration project heavily influenced by the Colonial Williamsburg model of historic preservation. Martin aimed to restore the ordinary to its colonial appearance using historical sketches and accounts as a guide. The building stands today as an evolved example of an early- to mid-eighteenth century tavern that remained in use for almost two centuries, during which two major renovation campaigns occurred, and as an example of an early 1960s restoration informed by then-current historic preservation theory, making it locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The building's construction date in 1736 places it amongst the earliest extant buildings in New Kent County. The property's period of significance thus begins in 1736, which dendrochronology has shown is the building's earliest construction date, and ends in 1964, when Hunter Martin undertook the property's restoration.

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### *Historical Background*

#### **Context: New Kent Court House**

New Kent County was formed from York County, one of Virginia's original eight shires in 1654. When King & Queen County was separated from New Kent in 1691, the New Kent county seat was moved westward to the new geographic center of the county, putting it in the present-day location of New Kent Court House (Harris 1977). In 1691, the Bassett family owned large tracts of land in the area, and either gave or sold a tract of land for the location of the new courthouse. This location was on the well-traveled main route from Williamsburg to Richmond and easily accessible for landowner and residents throughout the county (Collis 1789).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Virginia planters and their enslaved workers lived on dispersed and isolated plantations. They transacted their business with the outside world at

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

numerous landings up and down the many creeks and rivers that make a lacework of the whole Chesapeake Bay region. Church and court were virtually the only institutions that periodically brought the community together at places that a man or woman could reach on foot or on horseback. Each county had its courthouse town, often no more than a crossroads at which were the courthouse itself, stocks and a pillory, and county jail. Lawyers often built small office buildings adjoining the courthouse compound, and sometimes an enterprising merchant would open a general store (Harris 1977).

To support court days, and all those from the county who visited, most county seats contained at least one tavern or “ordinary” to lodge and entertain the county people who converged on the place on court days. As one eighteenth-century planter described a typical scene: “Colonel Armistead and Colonel Will Beverly have each of ‘em erected an ordinary well supplied with wine and other polite liquors for the worshipful bunch. Besides these, there is a rum ordinary for persons of a more vulgar taste. Such liberal supplies of strong drink often make Justice nod and drop the scales out of her hands” (Harris 1977).

Such was the case with New Kent Court House which contained the primary courthouse along with clerks’ and attorneys’ offices, a jail, various stores, and dwellings, as well as several taverns, one of which was the New Kent Ordinary. The location of the town along the Williamsburg route made it a frequent stop for visitors. As was a common threat to towns throughout the era, several fires occurred in the New Kent village during the colonial period, each destroying various buildings. The 1690s courthouse burned in 1775 and another fire in 1787 destroyed the clerk’s office, jail, and other nearby homes (Trout 2009).

Between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, little change came to New Kent Court House. In 1835, the state *Gazetteer* described the community as “Besides the usual county building, this village contains 10 dwelling houses, 6 mercantile stores, and 4 taverns – no house of public worship, the C.H. being made use of for that purpose... New Kent C.H. may be considered a healthy place, there being no ponds or other stagnant waters within four miles of the village. Population 41 persons; of whom one is a physician” (Martin 1835).

During the Civil War, the location of New Kent along the main road through the Virginia Peninsula once again made it an important stopping point. Several skirmishes occurred in the vicinity, and it was briefly used as a camp for the Union Army in 1862. A *Philadelphia Inquirer* article published at that time stated “A half dozen dilapidated-looking houses constitutes the village of New Kent Court House.” Another contemporary account goes on, “New Kent Court House contained several stores and taverns, and about a dozen dwellings. None but a few slaves constitute the inhabitants of the village all else gone to the war or to decay” (n.a. 1862). Several buildings in town were briefly commandeered by Union forces in 1862, and the courthouse, jail, and records building were burned upon their exit.

The Reconstruction Era returned the village to a quiet place with only minimal construction and development. A new public school and purpose-built church were constructed in the late-nineteenth century, and the burned courthouse was repaired and put back in use until replaced with

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

a new courthouse building in 1909. A number of houses and small commercial buildings were also built (Trout 2009).

The twentieth century continued with slow growth for the village. Additional improvements were made to the courthouse complex in the years following the completion of the 1909 building, and in 1929 a new school was built in the village with money from the State Literary Fund. In 1968, the segregated New Kent School was the site of significant events of the Civil Rights movement. Following petitions by local African American residents to integrate the county schools, New Kent established a “freedom of choice” plan that reinforced the status-quo segregation. A suit was filed and eventually landed in the Supreme Court. When the decision of *Charles C. Green et al. V. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia, et al.* was handed down, it was recognized as the most significant public school desegregation case that the Supreme Court decided after *Brown v. Board of Education* (Trout 2009). In recognition of the significance of this event, the New Kent School has been listed in the NRHP and designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) (VDHR# 063-5011).

As the second-half of the twentieth century progressed, the village of New Kent slowly began to shrink again as residents moved away in search of more jobs and modern urban amenities. The completion of I-64 in the 1970s took commerce and transportation away from the village, resulting in the closure of many local businesses. In recent years, however, this trend has slowly begun to change as I-64 has now allowed the county to become a bedroom community for both Richmond to the west and Williamsburg and Hampton Roads to the east. New businesses have emerged, homes and small neighborhoods have been built, the school expanded, and slowly the village of New Kent Court House is returning to a vibrant community, although it has scarcely outgrown its colonial beginnings (Trout 2009).

### **Context: New Kent Ordinary**

The property on which the New Kent Ordinary is located is believed to have been owned by Colonel William Basset of “Eltham” and “Bassett Hall” in Williamsburg during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Bassett acquired large holdings in New Kent by Royal grant. A tavern is said to have been built in the vicinity at the time of or shortly after New Kent and King William counties were separated in 1654, although the first New Kent courthouse was not built until 1695 (Elliot n.d.). Based on dendrochronology, the earliest known construction phase of the existing building dates from 1735-1736.

During this early period, the ordinary played a small role in the American Revolution as well as the personal life of George Washington. During one three-year period, 1757-1760, Washington recorded passing along the road in front of the ordinary five times (Maass 2017). At that time, New Kent Highway (present-day Route 249) was an important transportation corridor through the Virginia Peninsula and to and from the capital in Williamsburg (Rice 1972). George Washington recorded his stops at the tavern on May 12, 1768, and November 11, 1773, in which he “Dind [sic] at New Kent Court House,” believed to be in reference to the ordinary which was across the road from the courthouse (Maass 2017).

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

Throughout this period (and extending well into the nineteenth century), the property and building were still owned by the Bassett family, although it seems the building was rented out or leased to tenants to manage. A listing in the *Virginia Gazette* posted by Burwell Bassett advertised the Ordinary for rent for a term of 7 years in October 30, 1778 (Bassett 1778). That listing states that “the buildings and repairs to be made will be agreed upon on the day of the renting” which may be a reference to a large fire that consumed the New Kent County courthouse and some of the surrounding village on March 24, 1775. Subsequent records from the 1780s identify the innkeeper as James Warren (New Kent Historical Society).

During the years of the American Revolution, the location of the ordinary along an important colonial-era road that linked major settlement areas made it a landmark and stopping point for military and government officials. In September and again in November 1781, as well as in July 1782, American and French forces marched past the ordinary on their way to and from Yorktown (Maass 2017). Correspondence between innkeeper James Warren and Louis Alexander Berthier, a French officer on General Rochambeau’s staff related to the boarding of two “hussars” and their horses at the tavern. French General Francois-Jean de Chastellux recorded stopping at the ordinary on April 8, 1782, when he wrote, “I lodged in a rather good inn where we were served an excellent super composed chiefly of sturgeon and shad.” Chastellux also tells of an early morning walk around the building and his fascination with the song of a mockingbird (New Kent Historical Society).

The building continued to operate as an ordinary and hotel for the courts, with a variety of other functions on the property including a working farm and storehouse, during the nineteenth century. Tax records reveal that during the antebellum era, the tavern remained under the proprietorship of the Warren family, with Robert and Richard Warren the lessees in 1817 (New Kent County Tax Records 1817). Ledger books for the period 1814-1839 document daily operations of the tavern and that the favorite drinks seemed to have been champagne and brandy. It also reveals that the ordinary was visited on a number of occasions by the 10<sup>th</sup> President of the United States and nearby Charles City County, Virginia, native, John Tyler (Tavern Ledger Books 1814-1839). An advertisement in the *Richmond Whig* dated November 3, 1835, listed the property as for rent or sale, describing it as not only a tavern situated at the site of the county and superior court, but with land attached sufficient for farming and timbering (n.a. 1835).

The property was advertised for sale again in 1848, and then again in 1850 with a more complete description:

Tavern, Farm and Appurtenances at New Kent Court House for sale. The tavern, storehouses, land &c at New Kent Court House is offered for sale privately until the 2d Thursday in September, when it will be publicly offered (that being court day), unless sooner disposed of, and possession will be given on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. The tract of land contains 7 to 800 acres, mostly in wood which is worth now, on the river, \$2.25 cts per cord. There is now on the farm more wood than would pay for it over and over again. The cleared land (not 200 acres) is productive in all the crops suited to our climate, and there is fine marl in abundance on the premises. The tavern affords a fine market for

New Kent Ordinary

New Kent County, VA

Name of Property

County and State

the products of the farm, and has attached, besides a storehouse, a commodious stable, with 64 stalls and ample carriage room. This building was finished in 1842, and covers 3,680 square feet. The location is healthful, the advantages of living seldom equaled – fish, crabs, and oysters to be had in their season at the door as they pass on to Richmond. Venison to be had on the farm. Distance from Richmond 30 miles, Williamsburg the same, and from the wharf on the river, at Cumberland, about 14. The Eltham Railroad would pass directly this place, increasing much its prospective value. The present occupant, or my friend, J.D. Christian, will show the farm to any desirous to see it, and oblige. – G.W. Bassett” (n.a. 1848; n.a. 1850).

After having been in the Bassett family for over 150 years, the ordinary and property were finally sold in 1859 to John W. Pierce and Telem Taylor, who in turn sold it to John D. Christian. Christian owned the property at the outbreak of the Civil War, but sold it in 1864 to Charles Palmer. This deed was initially recorded in the Circuit Court of Richmond due to the presence of Federal forces in New Kent, but was later recorded in the county after the end of hostilities (New Kent Historical Society).

Through the years of the Civil War, the tavern was once again the stopping point for opposing military forces and their commanders. During the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, Union General George B. McClellan established a communications headquarters at the ordinary (Trout 2009). The courthouse and much of the surrounding village were later burned, although the ordinary was spared from destruction.

After Charles Palmer’s death, his holdings in New Kent, including the ordinary, were sold by his administrators to Robert Speed Taylor on December 21, 1875 (New Kent County Land Records 1875). The extended Taylor family remained the owners of the property for nearly the next century. Robert S. Taylor was responsible for extensive modification and renovation to the building during his ownership, perhaps simply to update and expand it or possibly to address maintenance and repairs needed after the Civil War. Under Taylor’s oversight circa 1880, the garret level of the building was removed and a full second-story built atop the main level.

From Robert S. Taylor, the property passed to his son, Robert Walker Taylor, in the early twentieth century. The building continued to operate as a tavern until 1937 following the death of that Taylor, at which time it became vacant for a number of years. At that point, the property went into dispute and eventually Robert W. Taylor’s nephew, Dr. Robert G. Krug, a professor of chemistry at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, was granted the building by chancery court decree. That transfer, in 1949, occurred following interpretation of Taylor’s will, which resulted in the still-large property being subdivided amongst family members. The tract granted to Robert Krug with the ordinary contained 15.8 acres at that time (New Kent County Deed Books 1949).



New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State



*New Kent Ordinary, undated view showing full second story (since removed)*

It is unclear how the ordinary building was used, if at all, by Krug, in the years following his acquisition, but in 1957 it was rented by a local women's club to function as a local history museum during the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jamestown Celebration (Kinnier 1957). Following that event, the building once again sat vacant until being purchased by Hunter W. Martin in 1964. Martin was a prominent attorney in Richmond and a proponent of local history and preservation. Upon his acquisition of the property, Martin embarked on an extensive restoration of the ordinary to return the building to its colonial appearance. For guidance on restoration principles, he looked to nearby Colonial Williamsburg, and based his project upon historic drawings, photographs, and other documentation available to him, while salvaging and using historic materials from other buildings when available.

### **Context: Early Historic Preservation and Colonial Williamsburg**

The earliest recognized act of intentional "historic preservation" occurred in the mid-nineteenth century when a group of women formed the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association to purchase the former home of George Washington. Mount Vernon was threatened with disrepair and deterioration when it was seen by Louisa Bird Cunningham while traveling the Potomac River. Cunningham wrote to her daughter, Anne Pamela Cunningham, "If the men of America have seen fit to allow the home of its most respected hero to go to ruin, why can't the women of America band together to save it?" Anne Cunningham took a deep interest in the issue, and over the course

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

of the next five years, created the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association and gathered support to purchase the plantation with 200 acres in 1858. The association continued to oversee and sponsor restoration of the main house as well as a collection of furniture, artifacts, and other materials of historic interest related to Washington. These pioneering efforts in the field of preservation set a precedent and served as a model for the future (George Washington's Mount Vernon n.d.).

During the 1920s, a variety of larger-scale historic preservation efforts and movements began with city-wide focuses such as the Preservation Society of Charleston, the oldest community-based historic preservation organization in the United States founded in 1920; and the Vieux Carré Association, formed in 1926, to preserve and protect the French Quarter of New Orleans. Also during this decade, one of the largest privately-funded preservation projects, and one that has served as a model for scholarly research and restoration, began in Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1926, the Reverend Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, rector of Bruton Parish Church, shared his dream of preserving the city's historic buildings with philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. Goodwin feared that scores of buildings and structures that had figured in the life of the colony and the founding of Virginia would soon disappear forever. Rockefeller and Goodwin began a modest project to preserve a few of the more important buildings. Eventually, the work progressed and expanded to include a major portion of the colonial-era town, encompassing approximately 85 percent of the 18th-century capital's original area (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation n.d.).

Over the decades since the project began, Colonial Williamsburg has employed the skills and expertise of historians, researchers, architects and architectural historians, archaeologists, carpenters and craftsman, paint analysts, and others to guide the accurate restoration and reconstruction of dozens of buildings. The staff at Williamsburg developed and evolved pioneering techniques and practices to respect the history and significance of the buildings they worked on, in the process creating a set of guiding principles that informed public and private historic preservation efforts over the next forty years.

In 1966, passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) created the first nationwide program for historic preservation in the United States. At first, the NHPA provided regulation only for federally-owned buildings, but eventually expanded to included federally-funded efforts of all types, most notably infrastructure projects, and later, guidance for private investment in historic preservation through tax incentives. In 1976, the first *Preservation Project Standards* were developed by W. Brown Morton III and Gary L. Hume, as a list of operational procedures for administering projects funded under the National Park Service's Grants-in-Aid program. The three original treatments eligible to be funded by this program were later expanded to seven: *acquisition, protection, stabilization, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation* and *reconstruction*. The following year, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* were published, providing examples of treatments to historic buildings in a "Recommended" vs. "Not Recommended" format. The *Standards* have been revised and reissued by the National Park Service a number of times in the following decades, but continue to provide professionally vetted approaches for sensitively and respectfully preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, or reconstructing historic buildings (National Park Service n.d.).

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

### **Context: Restoration of the New Kent Ordinary**

In 1964, Hunter Martin acquired the New Kent Ordinary and began a restoration effort to return the building to its colonial-era appearance. Although the restoration was largely completed within a year, the project became a hobby for Martin, who continued to acquire antiques and architectural pieces, and worked on the property throughout his lifetime. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the appearance and character of the tavern had been change due to replacement of the upper garret level by a frame second story. A variety of written materials and sources contained information about the tavern's changing appearance over many decades. Martin engaged local historians and worked himself to collect as much historical data about the property as possible. Extensive research into the early history of the building identified the original owners, a possible construction date, and builder. Property ownership was traced back to the original Royal Grant to the Bassett family, which included reference to a seventeenth-century tavern at the New Kent Court House. Nothing, however, conclusively provided a builder or date for that building. Further investigations gathered numerous colonial-era accounts and newspaper records linking George Washington to the building as well as French military leaders. A nineteenth-century ledger book provided detailed documentation of guests and visitors, what they purchased and paid, and other financials for the tavern. All of these records provided brief glimpses into the operation of the New Kent Ordinary, but little physical description on which to base the restoration.

The earliest visual documentation of the tavern's appearance prior to its 1880s remodeling was a Civil War-era sketch of New Kent Court House and the adjacent village made on May 19, 1862, by a member of the Union Army. A copy of the sketch was included in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. This drawing provided a moderate level of detail of the New Kent Ordinary as well as several outbuildings on the property, including the large stable added in 1842. The drawing's perspective is from the west, and depicts four dormers on the front roof slope, as opposed to three that other contemporary documentation depicted. It did not show a rear shed on the building as others do. Another Civil War-era sketch, made by Robert Knox Sneden, depicts a similar vantage, with again a moderate level of detail of the New Kent Ordinary. This sketch features three dormers on the front roof slope, as well as a rear shed with a chimney. A third Civil War-era sketch drawn by Lt. J. Donaghy of the 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteers and on file at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts provides another good view of the building from the east. This sketch depicts three roof dormers and a rear shed that extends to the east wall of the building, but is cut short of showing a rear porch.

The most detailed depiction of the building from this period is a drawing made by local resident Colonel Richard P. Cook, a native of New Kent County born in 1813 who served as a county magistrate beginning in 1866 (VAGenWeb n.d.). The exact date of his sketch of the ordinary is unclear, but it is widely believed to be circa 1875. The sketch illustrates the building from a front oblique in tremendous detail. It was on this sketch that Hunter Martin primarily based his restoration of the building.

Martin employed Richmond-based general contractor E.S. Hague to perform the construction work. He provided the builders with copies of the circa 1875 Cook sketch with a detailed order for

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

how to complete the work (Martin 1964). Although removing the 1880s second story and restoring the roofline to its earlier, garret-level configuration was the largest component of the project, the work also included repair and work to a number of other building components, including the porches, windows, doors, brickwork, and interior. To complete the interior finishes, Martin had the plaster walls patched or redone, although most ceilings were covered with sheetrock to conceal new plumbing and electric work placed between joists. Martin's accounts and personal records also reveal the acquisition of a variety of salvaged historic materials from various locations throughout Virginia to install in the building. This included a variety of brass locks and door hardware from an estate sale in Louisa County; two mantels, a lock, and wainscoting from an antique dealer in South Hill in Mecklenburg County; and assorted other doors and building materials he gathered over the course of traveling. When actual historic materials were not available or suitable, he employed craftsmen and artisans to fabricate features such as the tavern "fenders" he ordered for the fireplaces from *Peter Potts Authentic Americana* in Rhode Island (Martin 1964). To finish the building, Martin utilized a paint scheme consistent with those found at Colonial Williamsburg. All of the walls and ceilings in the building were whitewashed, while the wainscoting, door and window trim, and mantels were all painted in dark colors and door panels were accented with contrasting colors. All lighting fixtures were "historically-inspired" chandeliers and candle sconces throughout the building.

Besides the architectural materials, Martin's restoration included collection of a large number of historic and reproduction furnishings for the building. The walls were decorated with portraits, maps, and other art that pertained to the building and New Kent. These were acquired from local shops, collectors, or when necessary, ordered from afar. There are accounts of contacting museums and galleries to obtain reproduction prints of various paintings, including one depicting French General Rochambeau along the route in front of the building on his way to Yorktown, then on display at the National Gallery in Washington D.C. (Martin 1964). The tavern was also furnished with fine antiques and oriental rugs, lending the interior space what was believed to be a historically appropriate character. Martin's restoration project gained extensive publicity as local newspapers published articles on the tavern's history and how it was to be saved and preserved by its new owners.

Believed now to be the oldest building in New Kent Court House, and one of the oldest and most recognizable in the county, the tavern became a show-piece for local history and preservation after Martin's 1964 restoration. Images of the building were hung as artwork in the county courthouse and offices. In 1979, a new county seal for New Kent was adopted that contained a picture of the New Kent Ordinary. The seal depicts three men, representing whites, African Americans, and Virginia Indians, surrounded with the county's natural wealth: fish from its teeming rivers, and corn, wheat, timber, tobacco, and other farm bounty. It also shows a side view of the historic New Kent Ordinary and depicts one of the county's numerous deer (Daily Press New Kent Gets A County Seal After 325 Years. Feb 25, 1979).

In 2009, a preliminary evaluation and study for a historic district encompassing the ordinary and others throughout the village of New Kent Court House was prepared and accepted by the County Board of Supervisors and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The local New Kent

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

historical society has continued to research the community and specifically the ordinary, much of the information of which was used to prepare this nomination.

### **Criterion A: Commerce**

As a resource type, taverns have long been established as significant in the commercial, social, and governmental affairs of communities across Virginia from the colonial era through the nineteenth century. Taverns provided a resting place for travelers and served as gathering places for travelers and residents alike on important community occasions such as courthouse and election days. Often the largest public, non-religious building in a community, taverns also acted as a nexus for commercial activity, especially when enterprising tavern owners expanded operations to include stables for rent to drovers and stagecoaches, easily marketable and transportable agricultural products, and auxiliary services such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and coopers. Auctions of real and personal property (including enslaved people) occurred at taverns as well and a tavern might also double as the local post office (Gibbs 1968). From the colonial era through the Civil War, many taverns used enslaved African American workers for tasks ranging from tending crops and livestock to working in skilled crafts and trades. Such depth and breadth of activity at a typical tavern explains why a community's tavern often was at the heart of its commercial life.

Historic records demonstrate that the New Kent Tavern filled many of the roles generally identified for taverns from the early eighteenth through the late nineteenth century. Perhaps the best-documented period is 1814-1839, due to the survival of a collection of ledger books that detail daily operations. Evidence that the tavern fulfilled a variety of functions also is found in G. W. Bassett's 1850 advertisement for the property's sale, which mentions the tavern itself, various storehouses, productive agricultural land as well as woodlands, a 64-stall stable and carriage room, culinary offerings of oysters, fish, crab, and venison, and the property's convenient location between Williamsburg, Richmond, a wharf on the York River, as well as near an anticipated railroad. The tavern's locally prominent role also is noted in the observations recorded by Revolutionary War generals George Washington and Francois-Jean de Chastellux, and certainly played a decisive role in its use as a communications headquarters by Union General George McClellan during the Civil War.

The substantial size and scale of taverns, especially when compared to other buildings even in a courthouse village, not only indicated their stature in community life but kept them easily recognizable when their historic use ceased, such as happened to the New Kent Tavern during the 1930s.

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

In addition to its significance from historical associations and events, the New Kent Ordinary is also architecturally distinct and noteworthy. Initially constructed in 1736, the building is a fine example of colonial-period vernacular architecture as applied to a tavern. That construction date also places it amongst the earliest extant buildings in New Kent County. The plan of the building was a common one throughout this part of Virginia in that period, consisting of a one-and-half-

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

story building set atop a raised English basement. Interestingly, an inspection of the framing reveals that the building was originally constructed with a pair of interior chimneys, set in the rear corner of each room. These were later removed and rebuilt as flanking gable end chimneys as part of a renovation of the building believed to have taken place in the mid-nineteenth century. The English bond brickwork is also reflective of the building's early date of construction, and although typical for that period has become increasingly rare as buildings of this age have been lost. The intact heavy timber framing further exemplifies the period of the building and reflects the availability of raw materials and skilled labor that went into the construction of the building. Reflecting its intended use as a tavern, the building features a full-width veranda and porch on the front façade. Similar porches may be observed on other contemporary taverns in Virginia such as the Raleigh Tavern in Roanoke County, Hunters Head Tavern in Loudoun County, Michie Tavern in Albemarle County, and Tankersly Tavern in Lexington. These porches alerted travelers to the public nature of the building and provided an inviting gathering space for guests. The interior of the building also reflects typical modestly embellished finishes of a contemporary tavern such as baseboards, chair rails, architraves around doorways and window openings, several paneled doors, mantelpieces, and some rather plain field paneling in the principal first floor rooms. Few features can be dated with precision, although a handful are believed to date from the original construction, and others likely date to the mid-nineteenth century renovation. A variety of materials are believed to date from the late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth century, but do not appear original to the building, or at least to be *in situ*, and may have been brought to the building as part of restoration efforts in the 1960s.

The 1960s restoration is considered in and of itself a significant event despite the confusion that it brings to conclusively dating and assigning materials to the building. When Richmond attorney Hunter W. Martin purchased the New Kent Ordinary with the intent of restoring it to its colonial appearance, the field of Historic Preservation and restoration was in its infancy. Up to that time, treatment of historic properties was based on renovating buildings to how one believed they may have looked, or even how they assumed the original occupants would have wanted them to look had they had better tools and technology. This led to the wholesale renovation of many homes and buildings with incompatible and inappropriate finishes throughout the first-half of the twentieth century. The trend was particularly prevalent in the 1920s when a wave of wealthy purchasers acquired old country estates and attempted to "recolonialize" them in the wake of the ongoing Colonial Revival revolution. Rockefeller's Colonial Williamsburg project aimed to instead restore and reconstruct buildings based on contemporary documentation to provide a more accurate template. This included review of original drawings and maps, personal accounts and builder's orders, comparison to other like examples, and in many cases archaeological investigation.

In familiarity with and close proximity to Williamsburg, Hunter Martin based his restoration of the New Kent Ordinary on historic documentation, the approach employed by Williamsburg, but not officially recognized as best practice until a decade later when the Secretary of the Interior published *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* which included guidance for building *Restoration*. For interior finishes, Martin retained and restored as many original materials and components as feasible, and when necessary applied contemporary materials and features salvaged from other properties throughout Virginia. While this practice would no longer be acceptable as it

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

confuses what is original to the building and provides a false sense of character, at the time it was considered a novel and good-faith motivated approach to restoring the building. While it does not appear that Martin had any direct coordination with staff from Colonial Williamsburg to guide the architectural restoration process, he did contact Archaeologist Ivor Noel Hume over artifacts found on the property during the effort and asked Research Historian Cary Carson to provide a letter of recommendation to the Kent Historical Society (of England) to obtain a plaque memorializing the building.

At present, the New Kent Ordinary continues to stand as a prominent building in New Kent Court House and reflects it's over 280 years of existence. Following the 1964 restoration, the building was returned to its colonial-era appearance so that passersby may recognize this piece of New Kent County and Virginia history. The building continues to retain a high level of integrity, conveying its original character as well as evidence of its noteworthy twentieth century restoration. Because of its unique and recognizable architecture, with significance from its original colonial period construction through its twentieth century restoration, the New Kent Ordinary is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

\_\_\_ “Col. Richard P. Cook.” New Kent Co., Virginia Biographies. VAGenWeb Genealogical Project – New Kent County. Available online at:  
[https://www.vagenweb.org/newkent/nk\\_bio.html](https://www.vagenweb.org/newkent/nk_bio.html)

\_\_\_ “To be Rented on the premises, to the highest bidder, on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> of November next, being New Kent court day, for the term of seven years” Advertisement by Burwell Bassett. *Virginia Gazette* October 30, 1778.

\_\_\_ “For Rent or Sale” *Richmond Whig*. November 3, 1835.

\_\_\_ “To the Public....” *Enquirer (Richmond)* August 8, 1848.

\_\_\_ “Tavern, Farm, and Appurtenances at New Kent Court House for Sale.” *Richmond Whig* August 2, 1850.

\_\_\_ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 15, 1862 issue

*Charles C. Green, et al. v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia, et al.* 391 U.S. 430, United States Supreme Court, Decided May 27, 1968

Clarke, Ethel C. Correspondence with Hunter Martin regarding 1817 New Kent County Tax List. *Chesterfield County Virginia Historical and Genealogical Research Service*. May 8, 1964.

Colles, Christopher, *A Survey of the Roads of the United States of America*, 1789, reprinted by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Williamsburg History. Available online at:  
[www.history.org](http://www.history.org)

Elliot, Robert C. “Washington Slept Here – New Kent Ordinary Restoration is Scheduled by Present Owners.” Newspaper Clipping on file at the New Kent Historical Society.

George Washington’s Mount Vernon. *Mount Vernon History*. Available online at: [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org).

Gibbs, Patricia Ann. “Taverns in Tidewater Virginia, 1700-1774.” M.A. Thesis, College of William and Mary (1968).



New Kent Ordinary

New Kent County, VA

Name of Property

County and State

Gray, Author O. *Washington's Burgess Route, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol XLVI, No. 2, October 1938

Harnsburger. Sketch of the New Kent Ordinary 1932. On File at the New Kent Historical Society.

Harris, Malcolm H. *Old New Kent County, Some Account of the Planters, Plantations, and Places in New Kent County*, 1977. Volume 1, Page 93.

Johnston, Francis Benjamin. "Tavern, Court House vic. New Kent County, Virginia" *Historic American Buildings Survey*. 1930, revised 1952. Manuscript on file at the Library of Congress.

Kinnier, John. "More than 200 Years Old – New Kent Tavern to Be Museum." *Times-Dispatch* May 3, 1957.

Klee, Jeffery. Site visit and notes on March 24, 2019.

Lanier, Gabrielle M. & Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

Martin, Hunter W. Personal correspondence, records, ledgers, photographs, and accounts. On file with the New Kent Historical Society.

Martin, Joseph and Brockenbrough, William Henry. *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia*, 1835. J. Martin

Maass, John R. *George Washington's Virginia*. The History Press: Charleston, SC. 2017.

New Kent County Deed Books. On file at New Kent County Courthouse.

New Kent County Land Tax Books. On file at the New Kent County Courthouse.

New Kent County Will Books. On file at the New Kent County Courthouse.

New Kent Historical Society. Research and materials regarding the New Kent Ordinary. Vertical files.

Oxford Tree Ring Laboratory. Dendrochronology of the New Kent Ordinary. Performed March 2019.

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

Perkinson, Pat. "Historic Tavern in New Kent Area will be Restored". *Richmond Times-Dispatch* June 28, 1964.

Rice, Howard C. Jr. and Brown, Anne S.K. *The American Campaign of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*. 1972. Princeton University Press.

Trout, Stran L. "New Kent Court House Historic District". *Preliminary Information Form (PIF)*. 2009. Manuscript on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. VDHR File #063-0122

Upton, Dell. "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth Century Virginia," *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986.

---

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** VDHR File #063-0021

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 1.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

New Kent Ordinary  
Name of Property

New Kent County, VA  
County and State

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.518680 | Longitude: -76.978490 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The New Kent Ordinary is located at 12000 New Kent Highway in the village of New Kent Court House, in New Kent County. The historic boundary is drawn to be coterminous with the property's current lot lines on the east, south, and west sides of the tavern and to encompass the building's rear boxwood garden and yard, which is likely where a variety of outbuildings stood during the tavern's historic period of operations. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Sketch Map.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the southern portion of two tax parcels acquired by Hunter W. Martin in 1964 during his acquisition and restoration of the New Kent Ordinary. The acreage historically associated with the New Kent Ordinary fluctuated over time as a result of the original Royal Grant and subsequent acquisitions and subdivisions by owners. The associated property had somewhat of a fluid boundary due to the arrangement of the tavern's operation. From at least 1736 to the mid-nineteenth century, the building sat on a roughly 800-acre property owned by the Bassett family, however, they leased the tavern out to a number of innkeepers and proprietors during that time. Elsewhere on the property were working fields, a variety of barns and agricultural outbuildings, storehouses, secondary dwellings, and other buildings. With each lease period, the size of property managed with the tavern changed dependent upon the lease agreement and what the particular lessee wished to hold. The surrounding property was subdivided several times leading up to and during the early- to mid-twentieth century, by which time it was eventually tapered down to roughly 15 acres as part of

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

the execution and division of the land by family will. In 1964, Hunter Martin acquired two parcels set immediately adjacent to the road that contained the ordinary and a small domestic yard around it that was believed to be the historic core of the ordinary's associated property. The historic boundary is drawn to encompass the tavern and its immediate surroundings, which have high potential for intact archaeological deposits, as well as to capture the property's historic setting.

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Robert J. Taylor, Jr.

organization: Dutton + Associates, LLC

street & number: 1115 Crowder Drive

city or town: Midlothian state: Virginia zip code: 23112

telephone: 804-897-1960

date: April 2019

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
    **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: New Kent Ordinary

City or Vicinity: New Kent Court House

County: New Kent

State: Virginia

Photographer: Robert J. Taylor, Jr. (unless otherwise noted)

Date Photographed: December 2018

Photo 1 of 36: General View, south (front) elevation, facing northwest

Photo 2 of 36: West elevation and front oblique, facing northeast

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

Photo 3 of 36: West elevation and rear, facing southeast

Photo 4 of 36: Rear from boxwood garden, facing south

Photo 5 of 36: Rear oblique, facing southwest

Photo 6 of 36: East elevation, facing west

Photo 7 of 36: Original front block at junction with later rear shed, facing east

Photo 8 of 36: Detail of original segmental arch, lower level, facing north

Photo 9 of 36: Front lower level porch, facing west

Photo 10 of 36: Detail of original water table, facing east

Photo 11 of 36: Greek Revival front door, first level front, facing north

Photo 12 of 36: Detail of original English bond brickwork, facing north

Photo 13 of 36: Greek Revival period front window, facing north

Photo 14 of 36: General setting from east, facing west

Photo 15 of 36: General setting from west, facing east

Photo 16 of 36: Circa 1964 garden shed, facing north

Photo 17 of 36: Interior view of first level front doors, facing south

Photo 18 of 36: View of first level stairwell, facing north

Photo 19 of 36: View across first floor central stair passage, facing west

Photo 20 of 36: Detail of east front room door, facing west

Photo 21 of 36: View of west front room, facing west

Photo 22 of 36: Detail of west front room mantel, facing west

Photo 23 of 36: View of stairwell closet and patch in floor for former lower level stair, facing northeast

Photo 24 of 36: Detail of original newel and handrail, facing east

New Kent Ordinary

Name of Property

New Kent County, VA

County and State

Photo 25 of 36: View of second floor landing, facing south

Photo 26 of 36: Detail of Federal period second floor east room mantel, facing east

Photo 27 of 36: View of second floor east bathroom, facing northwest

Photo 28 of 36: View of second floor west room, facing west

Photo 29 of 36: View of first floor rear passage, facing north

Photo 30 of 36: View of rear west room, facing west

Photo 31 of 36: View of rear bathroom, facing south

Photo 32 of 36: View of rear east room, facing east

Photo 33 of 36: View of rear lower level stairwell, facing west

Photo 34 of 36: View of lower level rear west room, facing west

Photo 35 of 36: View of lower level rear east kitchen, facing east

Photo 36 of 36: View of lower level front space, facing northeast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Virginia Cultural Resource Information System

**LOCATION MAP**

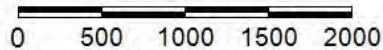
New Kent Ordinary  
New Kent County, VA  
DHR No. 063-0021

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Latitude: 37.518680  
Longitude: -76.978490



Feet



1:18,056 / 1"=1,505 Feet

**Title:**

**Date: 10/17/2019**

*DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.*

*Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.*



**AERIAL VIEW**  
**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, VDHR #063-0021**

**Map Source: Google Earth Pro**





**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**  
**VDHR# 063-0021**  
**Sketch Map/Photo Key (Setting), Page 1 of 5**



 Historic Boundary

 Photo Direction

**LIST OF RESOURCES**

**A. New Kent Ordinary  
 (contributing)**

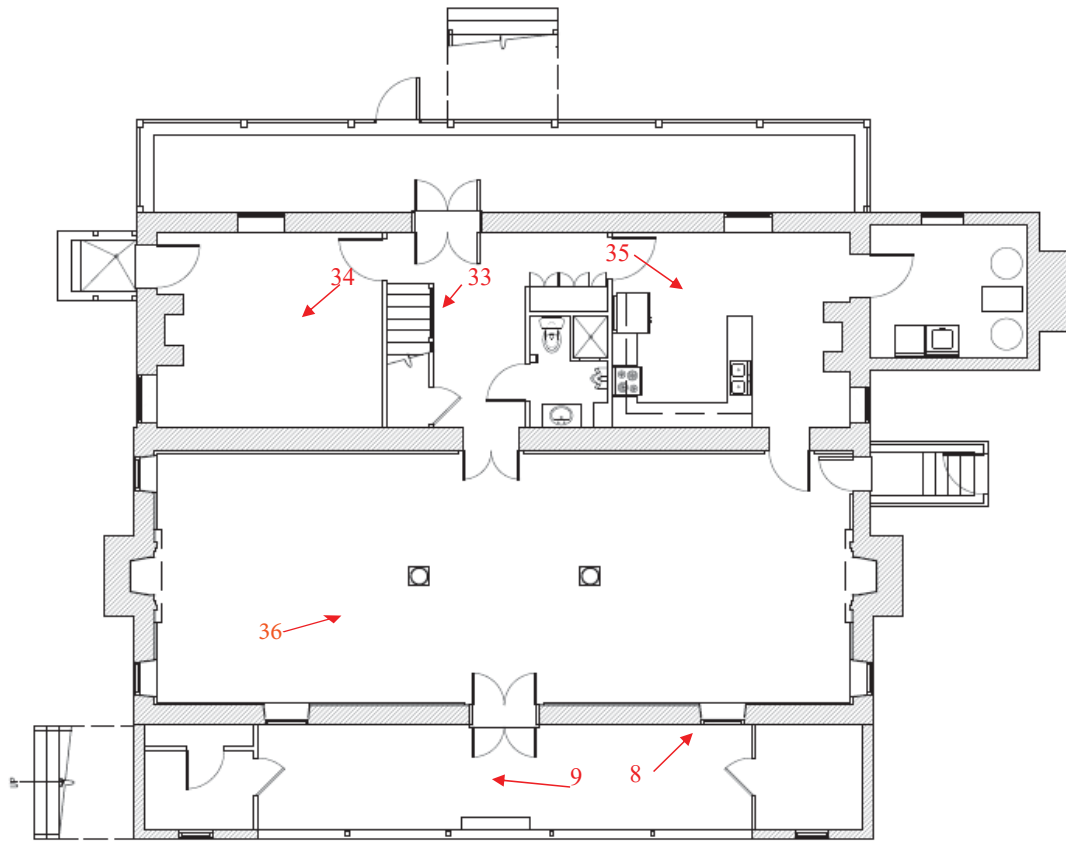
**B. Garden shed  
 (noncontributing)**



**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**  
**VDHR# 063-0021**  
**Photo Key (Primary Building), Page 2 of 5**



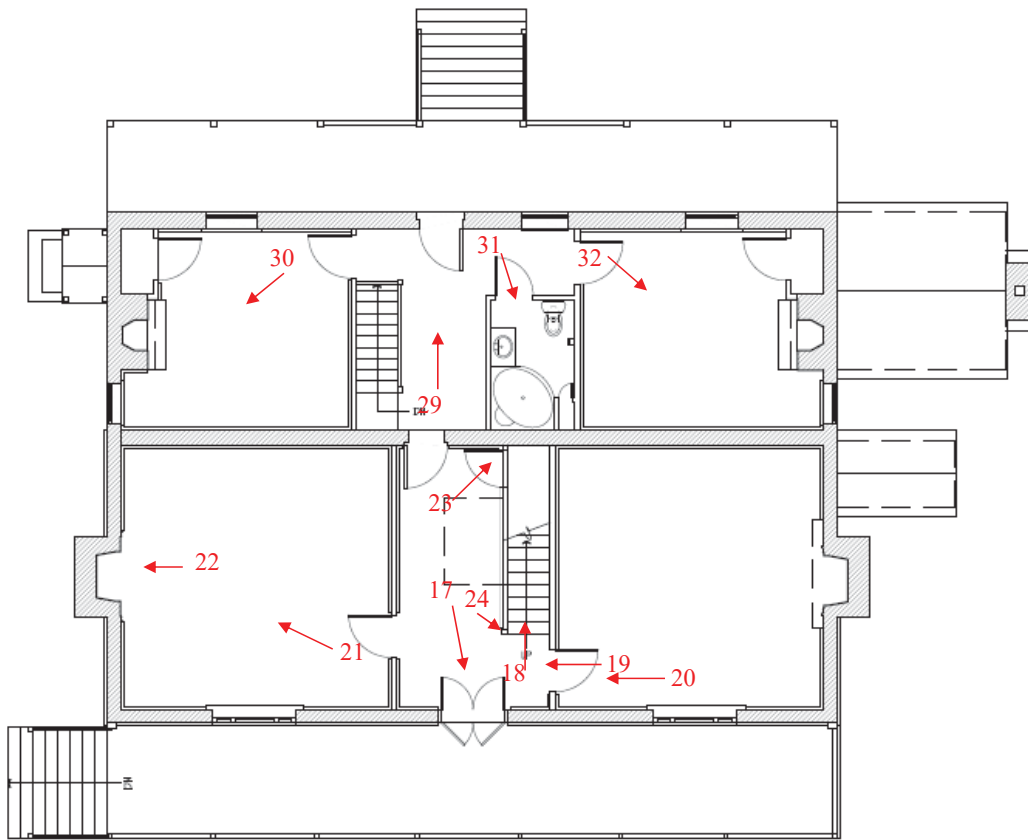
 Photo Direction



**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**  
**VDHR# 063-0021**  
**Photo Key (Lower Level Interior), Page 3 of 5**

1 ↗ Photo Direction

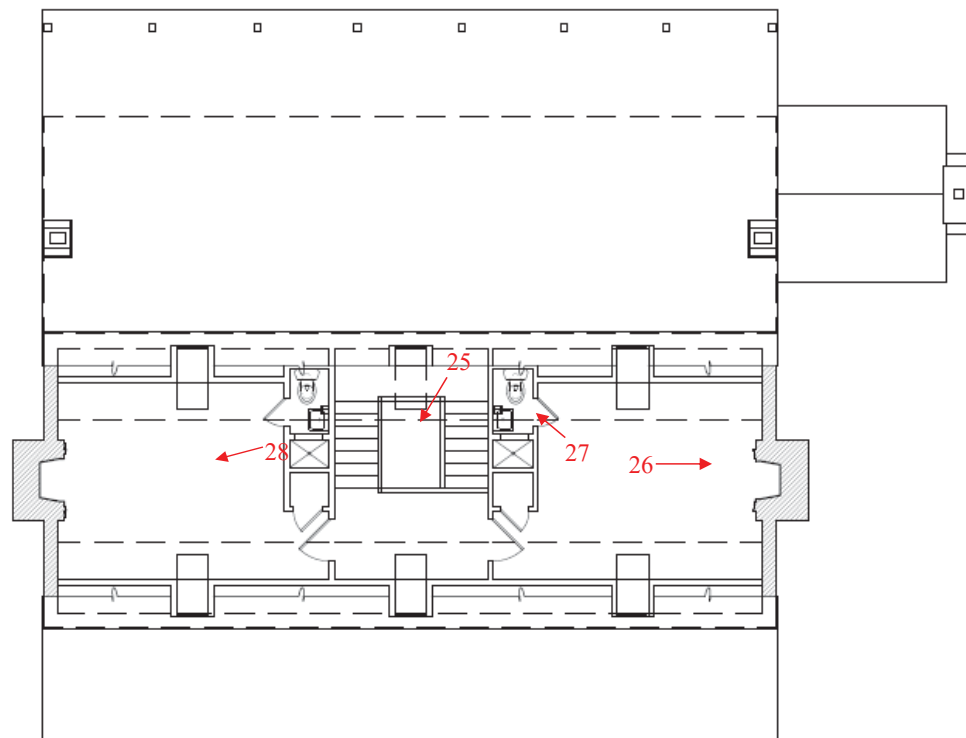




**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**  
**VDHR# 063-0021**  
**Photo Key (Main Level Interior), Page 4 of 5**

 Photo Direction





**New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**  
**VDHR# 063-0021**  
**Photo Key (Upper Level Interior), Page 5 of 5**

**1** ↗ Photo Direction





















































































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: New Kent Ordinary

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: VIRGINIA, New Kent

Date Received: 10/25/2019      Date of Pending List: 11/14/2019      Date of 16th Day: 11/29/2019      Date of 45th Day: 12/9/2019      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG10004747

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

X Accept       Return       Reject      12/9/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Locally significant example of an "ordinary" - a combination Inn and tavern constructed to take advantage of visitors to the courthouse. It is an excellent example of early 18th century construction, whose carefully considered restoration in 1964 removed many of the changes made in the 19th century.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Matt Strickler  
*Secretary of Natural Resources*



Julie V. Langan  
*Director*

Tel: (804) 367-2323  
Fax: (804) 367-2391  
[www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov)

October 24, 2019

Joy Beasley  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service, National Register Program  
1849 C St., NW (Mail Stop 7228)  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Re: New Kent Ordinary, New Kent County, Virginia**

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **New Kent Ordinary** to the National Register of Historic Places. Submitted for your review, the nomination has been considered, and approved, by the State Review Board and the Virginia SHPO has recommended it for listing.

This property has 1 owner and the Department of Historic Resources received no letters of objection concerning the nomination. Any letters of comment or objection have been copied at the end of the nomination material, along with any FPO notification letters.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct phone line is 804-482-6439.

Sincerely,

Lena Sweeten McDonald  
National/State Register Historian

Enclosures

Western Region Office  
962 Kime Lane  
Salem, VA 24153  
Tel: (540) 387-5443  
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office  
5357 Main Street  
PO Box 519  
Stephens City, VA 22655  
Tel: (540) 868-7029  
Fax: (540) 868-7033

Eastern Region Office  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23221  
Tel: (804) 367-2323  
Fax: (804) 367-2391