

Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #:
Property Name(s): <u>Arlandria Floors building</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>1941</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post Open to Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Property Address: <u>1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue</u> City: <u>Alexandria</u> Zip: <u>22301</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Ind. City of Alexandria</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Alexandria, VA-DC-MD</u>	

Physical Character of General Surroundings	
Acreage: <u>0.4339</u> Setting (choose one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor	
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: The building lies on level ground within a rectangular lot encompassing 18,900 square feet (measuring 100-feet by 189-feet), situated on the west side of Mt. Vernon Avenue between E. Bellefonte and E. Mason avenues. Asphalt surface parking areas surround the building to the north and west, while a commercial structure lies near the property line to the south. The building contributes to the commercial character of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the Town of Potomac, which was annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929.	
Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property:	
Ownership Category: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	

Individual Resource Information	
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc...	
Commercial	
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Commercial</u>	
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Art Deco</u>	
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>Walter Von Herbulis, owner/builder; Mihran Mesrobian, architect</u>	
# of stories <u>1</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input type="checkbox"/> Renovated	

Are there any known threats to this property? **None known**

Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer “n/a.” If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

Foundation: Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete.
Concrete; continuous brick visible

Structure: Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known.
Cinder block, brick

Walls: Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles.
Yellow brick (7:1 Common bond); red brick (6:1 common bond); limestone trim

Windows: Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced?
2 full-height, 3-light, metal frame, fixed plate-glass storefront windows; 6 metal frame, 2-light, horizontally-sliding casements

Porch: Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details.
N/A

Roof: Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material.
Flat parapet

Chimney(s): List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible.
1 red brick (6:1 common bond)

Architectural Description of Individual Resource: *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated.)*

The commercial building at **1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue**¹ was built in 1941 by developer Walter Von Herbulis, then the owner of the property, to house an Acme grocery store. Mihran Mesrobian, a prolific Washington, D.C.-based architect, designed the edifice in the Art Deco style. On 22 July 1941, Von Herbulis filed for a new construction permit to erect a grocery store on the parcel described as Lot 2, Block 3 of Assessment Map 210 for the approximate cost of \$16,000. The one-story building would comprise a concrete foundation, brick and cinder block walls laid one-foot thick, limestone trim, and a flat roof clad in slag. The building would measure 50-feet in front, 50-feet in the rear, with a depth of 130-feet, encompassing 6,500 square feet.¹ [Figure 1]

The one-story building's rectangular footprint first appears on the 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginiaⁱⁱ labeled as a brick-faced, cinder-block building with iron posts and glass skylights. Additional notation suggests that the building was vacant at the time of the map's compilation. [Figure 2] The building's asphalt entrance drive and parking area, to the north, replaced a two-story, square dwelling with a wrap-around front porch and rear ancillary buildings which appeared on the City of Alexandria's Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps in 1921, 1931 and 1941. [Figures 3 and 4]

¹ This lot was addressed 422 Mt Vernon Avenue before 1940; 1802 Mt Vernon Avenue between 1940 and 1956; and 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue after 1957.
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The building rises approximately 12 feet from a concrete foundation (only continuous brick is visible) to a flat parapet roof. The façade (east elevation, fronting Mt. Vernon Avenue) and the north elevation comprise yellow bricks laid in a seven-to-one common bond, while the south elevation comprises red brick laid in a six-to-one common bond. The building is two-and-a-half bays wide, and the facade reads as a central block flanked by corner pavilions differentiated by twin brick pilasters flanking recessed brick niches. In the 21 July 1941 blueprints drafted by Mesrobian, these niches were meant to contain glass block lights. [Figures 5 and 6a] The pilasters are capped in yellow-painted molded concrete bands and a decorative square panel is centered between them, above the niches. Fluted pilasters comprising the same yellow-colored molded concrete frame the centralized entrance, which features a single full-height, metal frame glass door with a single-light sidelight and a single-light transom. The pilasters' capitals are decorated with three white stars, while a molded concrete belt-course with a chevron and fleur-de-lis pattern spans the width of the central block at the capitals' height. The belt-course acts as a lintel to the two storefront windows that flank the entrance, each full-height, three-light, fixed plate-glass windows with brick sills and metal frames. The attic is blind but decorated with horizontal striations of molded concrete; the same material copes the stepped parapet roof and comprises the decorative keystone centered above the entrance. The present structure closely adheres to Mesrobian's drawings, although there are some discrepancies and less costly materials were substituted: where Mesrobian drew a double-door entrance, there is now a single door; the keystone on the parapet roof was intended as the centerpiece of a shallow pediment; the glass block lights in the corner pavilions were discarded, as was the steel projected sash and alumilite covered transom bar; the decorative limestone elements were simplified; and molded concrete was substituted for the stone. [Figures 6a and 6b]

The six-and-a-half-bay north elevation features a secondary entrance in the second bay, comprising a double-glass door with single lights and metal frames, flanked by single-light sidelights and shaded by a red awning. The first bay holds twin brick pilasters with a recessed niche (a decorative element that is continued from the façade), and one of six punched-out, metal-frame, horizontally-sliding casements with two lights each that pierce the length of the exterior wall. Two single rows of brick footers span the length of the building, acting as continuous lintels and sills to the fenestration. The south elevation is blind, and both side elevations have metal coping in lieu of a cornice. The rear elevation, comprising red brick laid in a six-to-one common bond, was executed according to Mesrobian's drawings. [Figure 7] A single centered doorway is flanked by pairs of double-hung windows and two single double-hung windows. The fenestration is framed by two single rows of brick footers that act as a continuous sill and lintel, similar to that on the northern elevation, and each is covered with vertical iron bars. A red brick chimney is situated on the southwest corner of the rear elevation, and extends a few feet above the roofline.

General maintenance and alterations to the building were made in successive decades. In January 1956, the owner, Jay Kay Realty Corporation, hired day laborers to erect a 50-foot interior partition wall (comprising sheet rock) across the building's width in order to divide the space into a 50-foot by 60-foot front sales room and a 50-foot by 70-foot wood-working shop in the rear.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1959, to ready the building for new occupants (the Alexandria Auto Paint Shop), the owner commissioned a series of renovations, including interior alterations undertaken by Tuckerman-Barbee Construction and reroofing by Easterday Duckworth.^{iv} Tuckerman-Barbee Construction was retained again in 1966 to repair fire damage to the metal ceiling and roof deck of the auto paint and body shop at the cost of \$400.^v The slag roof was removed and replaced in 1973, under the aegis of Charles R. Hooff, Inc., Realtors, who also bricked-in a window in the rear shop, costing a total of \$5,000.^{vi} The most costly renovations were made in 1983, when Jay-Kay Realty, LLC spent \$43,100 to remodel the building in order to house the Del Ray Tool Rental shop and to reroof the store with a new 4-ply, built-up asphalt slag roof for \$12,550.^{vii} In 1987, a 1,000-gallon above-ground tank was installed on the premises, which was replaced by another in 1989.^{viii}



Figure 1: Plat of the parcel now known as 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by Basil M. DeLashmutt, Surveyor, September 1941. From new construction permit #3148 from 22 July 1941 for 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

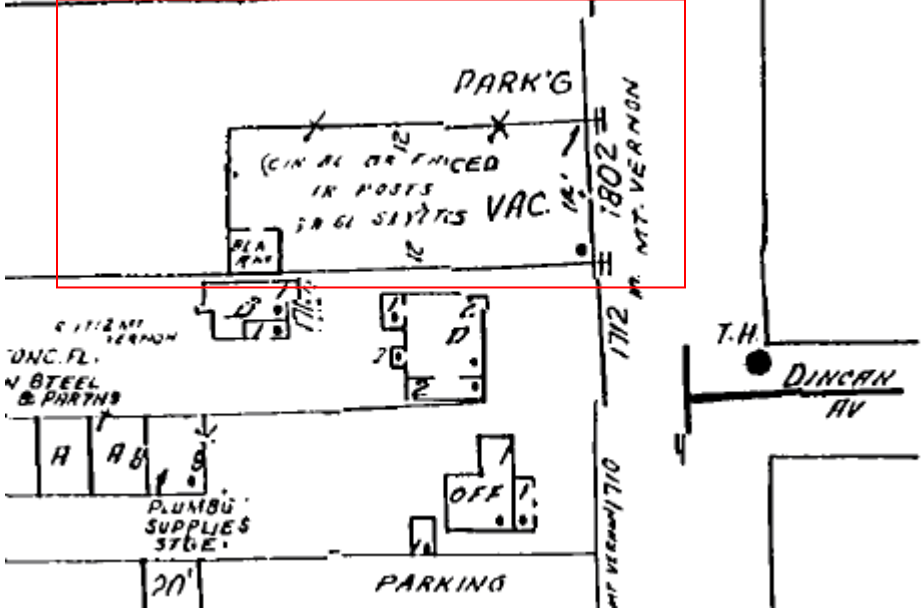


Figure 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, 1958, Vol. 1, Sheet 42.

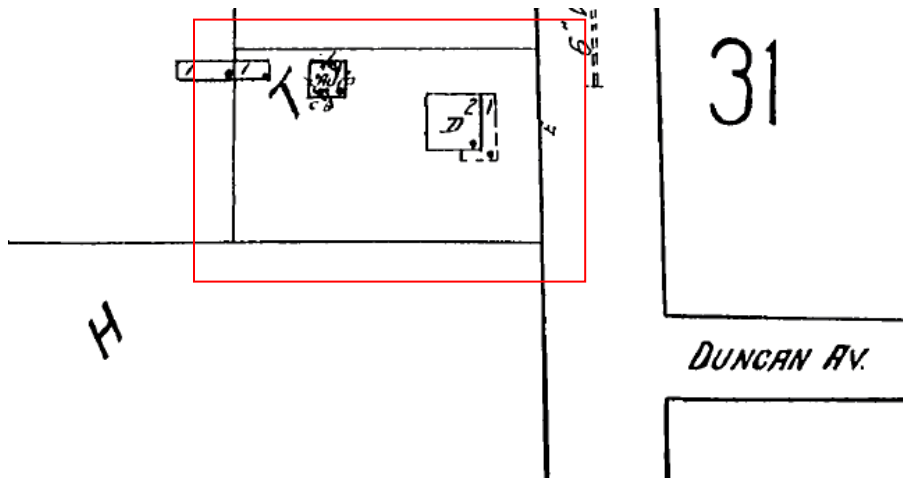


Figure 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, August 1921, Sheet 29.

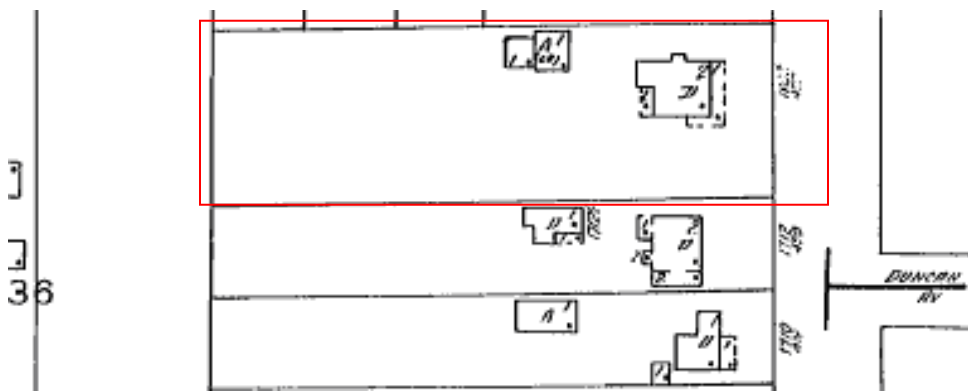


Figure 4: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, 1941, Vol. 1, Sheet 42.

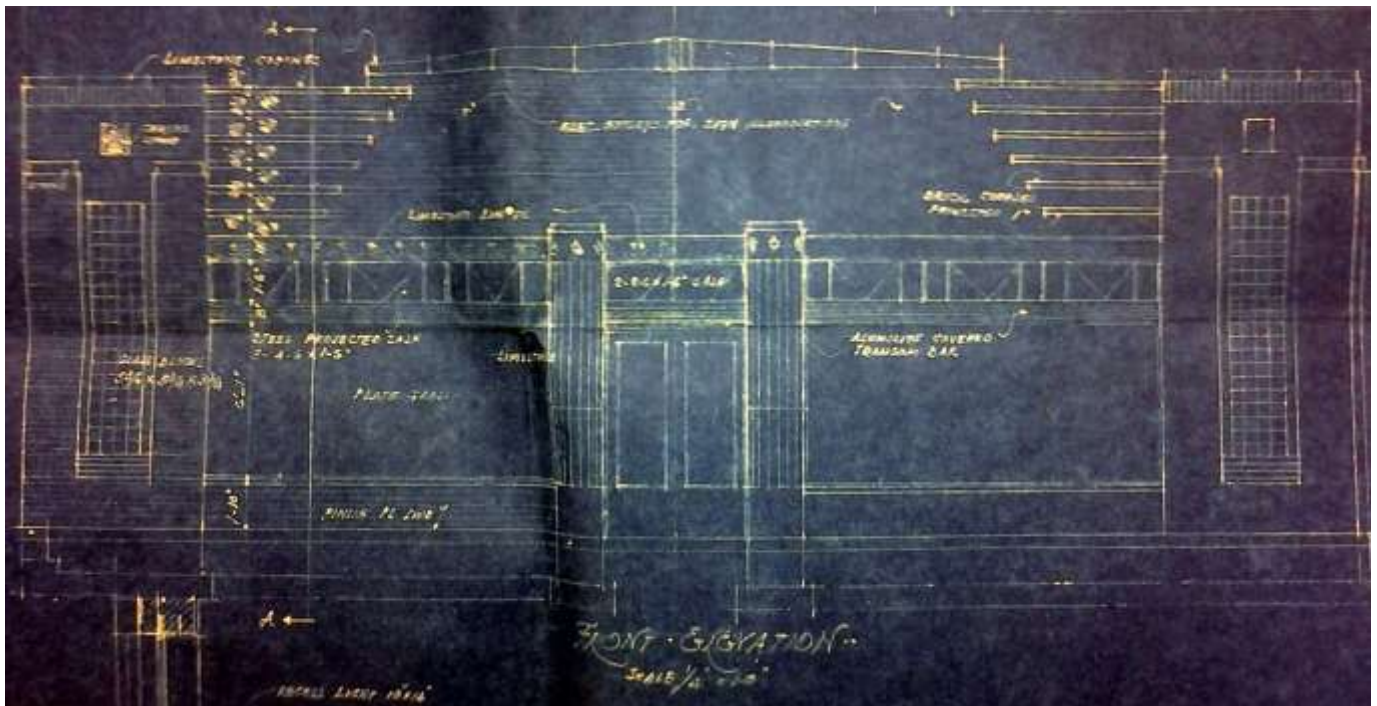
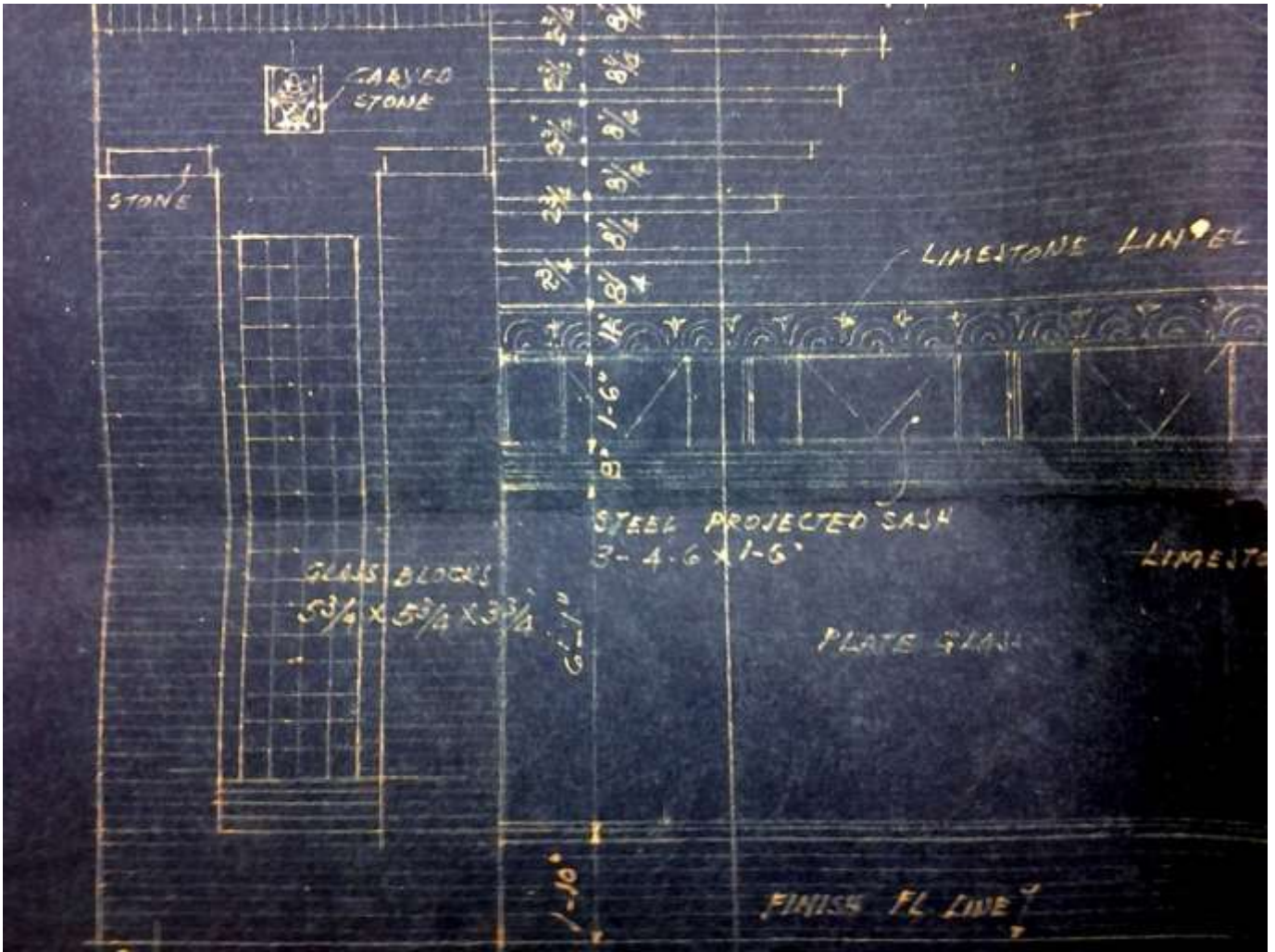
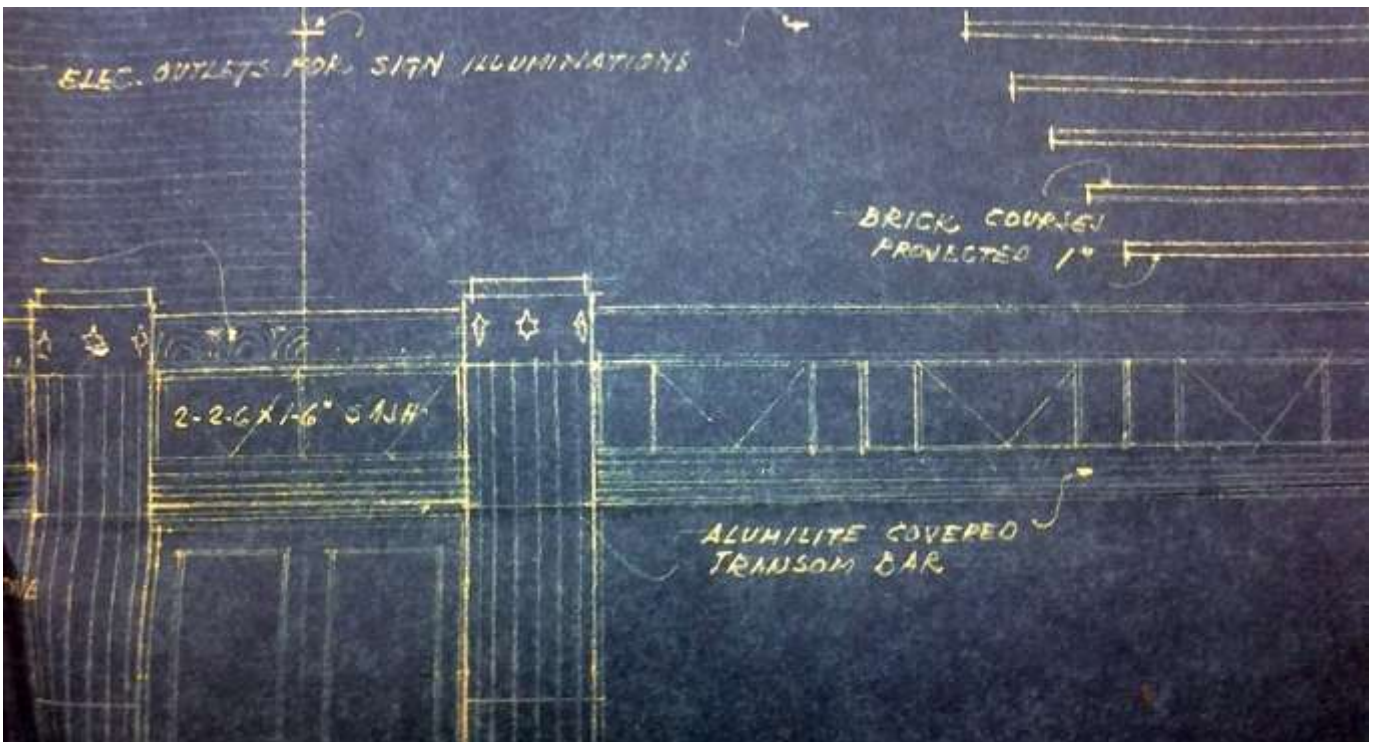


Figure 5: Front elevation of 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by Mihran Mesrobian, 21 July 1941. From new construction permit #3148 from 22 July 1941 for 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.



Figures 6a (above) and 6b (below): Front elevation of 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue, details, by Mihran Mesrobian, 21 July 1941. N.b., the notation for glass blocks , steel projected sash, limestone lintel, and alumilite covered transom bar -- elements not currently extant. From new construction permit #3148 from 22 July 1941 for 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.



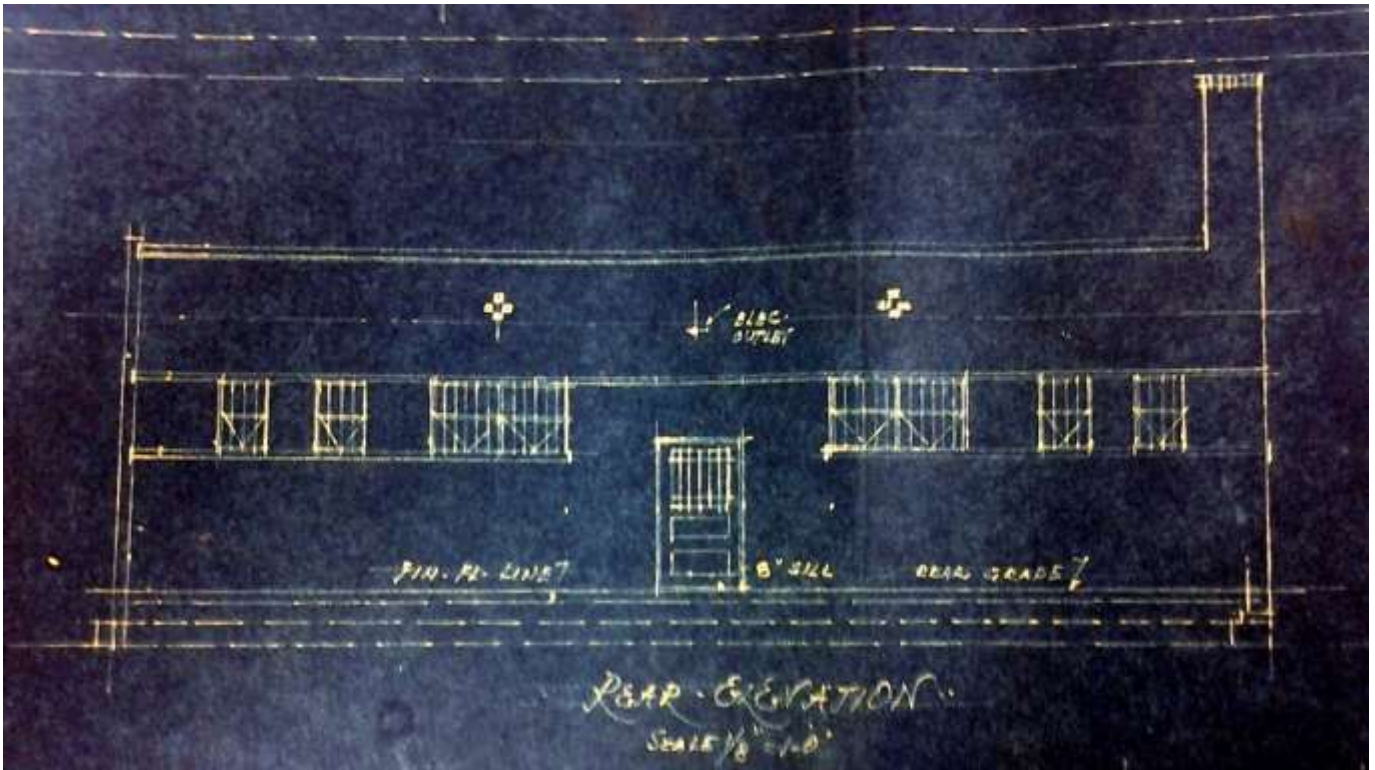


Figure 7: Rear elevation of 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by Mihran Mesrobian, 21 July 1941. From new construction permit #3148 from 22 July 1941 for 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

The site of the Arlandria Floors building comprises Lot 5 of Block 1, Section 1 of the subdivision of Braddock Heights. It is also legally described as Lot 2 [Block 3, Assessment Map 210] of James Duncan's lands. In the early 20th-century, most of the land flanking Mt. Vernon Avenue south of the Bellefont Avenue (the southern border of Del Ray) belonged to various members of the Duncan family, and remained largely undeveloped despite being conveniently situated between Old Town and the Town of Potomac. [Figure 8] Development quickened after this area was annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1930. This building lies outside of the boundaries of the Town of Potomac Historic District (1992), and is therefore not listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1931, the lot and its dwelling were sold by M.L. and Anna Bates to Paul J. Bamberger.^{ix} The Bambergers retained the property until 1940, when they sold it to Bessie Turner, who in turn sold it to Charlotte and James R. Harman the following year.^x The Harmans dwelled at 422 Mount Vernon Avenue, presumably as renters, between 1920 and 1940. According to the U.S. Census from 1940, James Harman was a machinist who was born in Berkeley County, West Virginia in 1873. The Harmans sold the property six days after purchasing it in 1941 to Fred Gosnell and Walter Von Herbulis. Von Herbulis filed for a new construction permit in July 1941, after which time the dwelling was demolished and replaced by the present commercial structure.^{xi}

Walter O. Von Herbulis (1894-1967) was the son of Hungarian émigré and prominent architect, Adalbert "Albert" Olszewski Ritter Von Herbulis (1860-1928).^{xii} A native of Falls Church, Virginia, Von Herbulis resided in Washington, D.C. circa 1940 and his occupation was listed as "builder."^{xiii} Von Herbulis partnered with Fred Gosnell to form the F&W Construction Company, which "built homes, shopping centers and apartment buildings"^{xiv} and "was responsible for the construction of many projects in the Washington Metropolitan Area... [including] Lee Gardens North (1949-1950), Court House Manor at 1233 North Court Road (1940), Lewis Heights Apartments at Fort Belvoir, Keswick Gardens in Richmond, the Parkchester Courts (1952) in Anacostia, and Rhode Island Plaza in Northeast, Washington, D.C."^{xv} In 1940, the F&W Construction Company retained architect Mihran Mesrobian to design a shopping center on North Glebe Road in Arlington,^{xvi} and to design the grocery store at 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue in Del Ray the following year.

Of Armenian descent, Mesrobian was born in Turkey in 1889 and studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Istanbul. He worked as a municipal architect in the coastal city of Izmir, then worked as an assistant to the palace architect in Istanbul before serving as a military engineer during World War I. With his family, Mesrobian immigrated to the United States in 1921 and settled in Washington, D.C.^{xvii} By 1924, he had become the in-house draftsman for D.C.-area developer Harry Wardman, for whom he designed a number of luxury hotels in the city, including the Carlton Hotel (1926), the Hays-Adams Hotel (1927), and the Wardman Tower and Arcade (1928).^{xviii} Mesrobian established his own private practice after Wardman declared bankruptcy in 1930, expanding into residential-cum-commercial projects such as Wakefield Manor apartments (1943) and the adjacent Wakefield Shopping Center (1945) in Arlington.^{xix} The latter was owned by William Parreco and Walter Von Herbulis, suggesting that Mesrobian retained a fruitful association with Von Herbulis throughout the war and postwar years. Mesrobian remained a prolific architect in the area until his death in 1975.^{xx}

In November 1941, the property was sold to Lillian Kotz.^{xxi} Lillian and her husband Jacob lived in the District of Columbia in the 1920s and 1930s, and owned Jay Kay Realty Corporation, which, over the successive decades, managed the property at 1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue (the company's name appeared on repair and alteration permits throughout the 1950s and early 1960s). The 1955 edition of Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory listed the owner of 1800 Mount Vernon Avenue as Jacob Katz [sic], and

assessed the land value as \$7,705 and \$18,177 with improvements. The firm of Jay Kay Realty formally assumed ownership in 1983 when the property was transferred from the estate of Tibe Kotz.^{xxii} Jay Kay Realty, LLC retained the property until 2002, when the company sold it to Arlandria Floors; that company was liquidated in 2007,^{xxiii} and since that date, the building has been owned by John P. and Mary C. Bresnahan, Trustees.²

The edifice at 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue is a good example of a brick vernacular Art Deco style commercial building. Taken in its context, the building is significant as an intact element in a larger commercial fabric that speaks to Del Ray's rise in the 1930s and 1940s. The building reflects the growing importance of Mt. Vernon Avenue as a commercial thoroughfare and exhibits the theme of trade: Between 1940 and 1955, the building housed the Acme Grocery store, then the Saah Bookcase Shop (cabinetmakers) in 1957. The building was vacant through the final years of the 1950s, then occupied by the Alexandria Auto Paint Shop between 1960 and 1962, followed by Earl Scheib's Auto Paint Shop until 1967. Like many of the commercial buildings lining Mt. Vernon Avenue, this one remained vacant and in disrepair through the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. Between 1984 and 1989, it housed the Del Ray Tool Rental store owned by Dale Shaffer. In 2002, it became Arlandria Floors.^{xxiv}

The building is significant on the local and state levels as characteristic of the Art Deco style (criterion C); for its association with local persons of significance, including area developer Walter Von Herbulis and prominent D.C. architect Mihran Mesrobian (criterion B); and for its role in the development of Del Ray as an urban enclave (criterion A) concurrent with Northern Virginia's growing regional importance in the interwar years and the country's transformation from a predominantly rural to an urban character. It retains integrity in its setting, location, design, materials, and feeling.

² The City of Alexandria Real Estate Assessment database lists the current owner as Brevic Development LLC, and the owner as of January 1, 2014 as John P. and Mary C. Bresnahan, Trustees.
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Figure 8: Map showing Duncan family holdings in the area east of Braddock Heights. N.b., "Poor House Road" is present-day Monroe Avenue. Howell & Taylor, "Map of Alexandria County, Virginia for the Virginia Title Co., Alexandria" 1900. Repository: Center for Local History - Arlington Public Library.



1. 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade (east) elevation, straight angle, facing 268⁰ W. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



2. 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade (east) elevation, detail entrance pilasters, straight angle, facing 268⁰ W. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



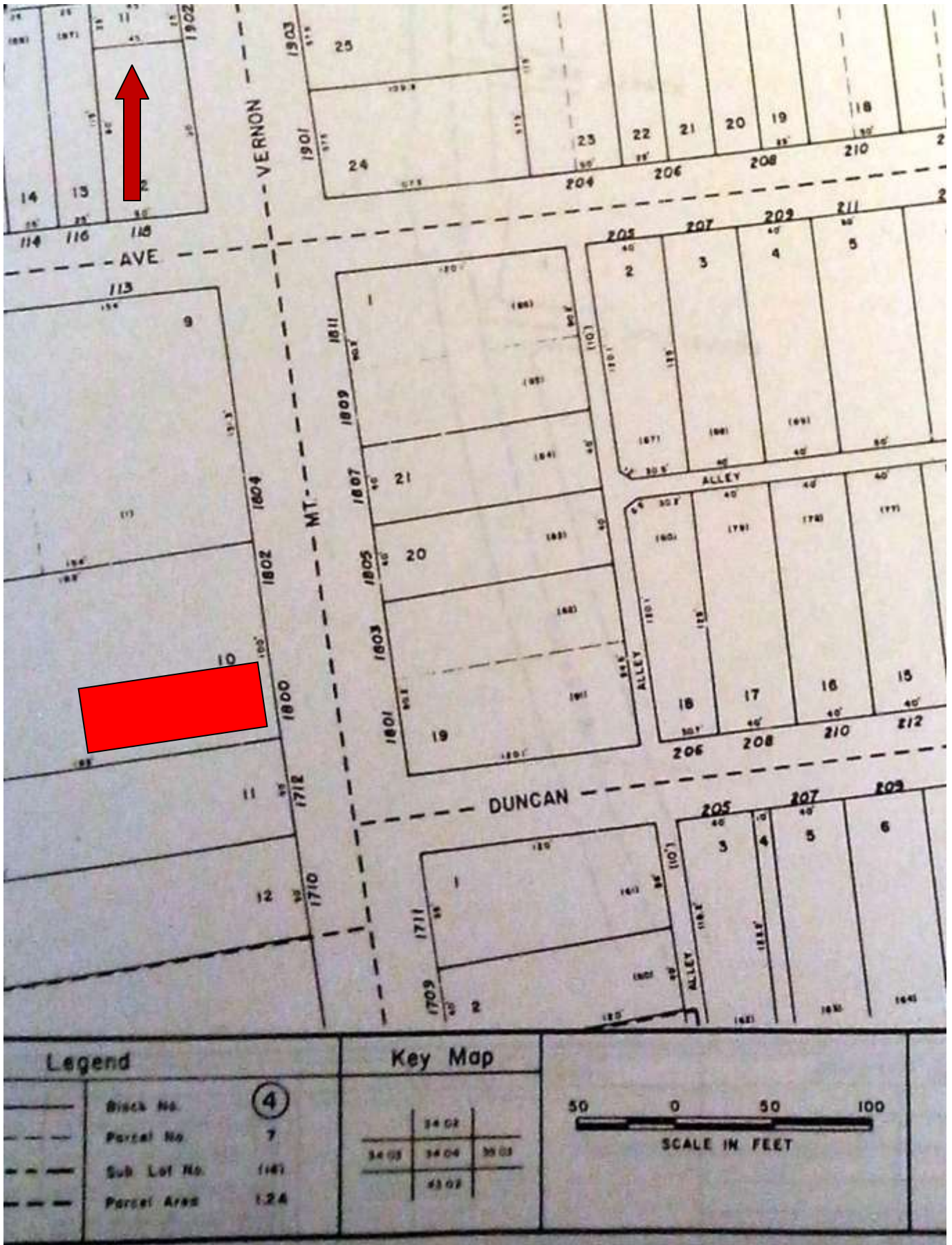
3. 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Half of north elevation, oblique angle, facing 232° SW. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



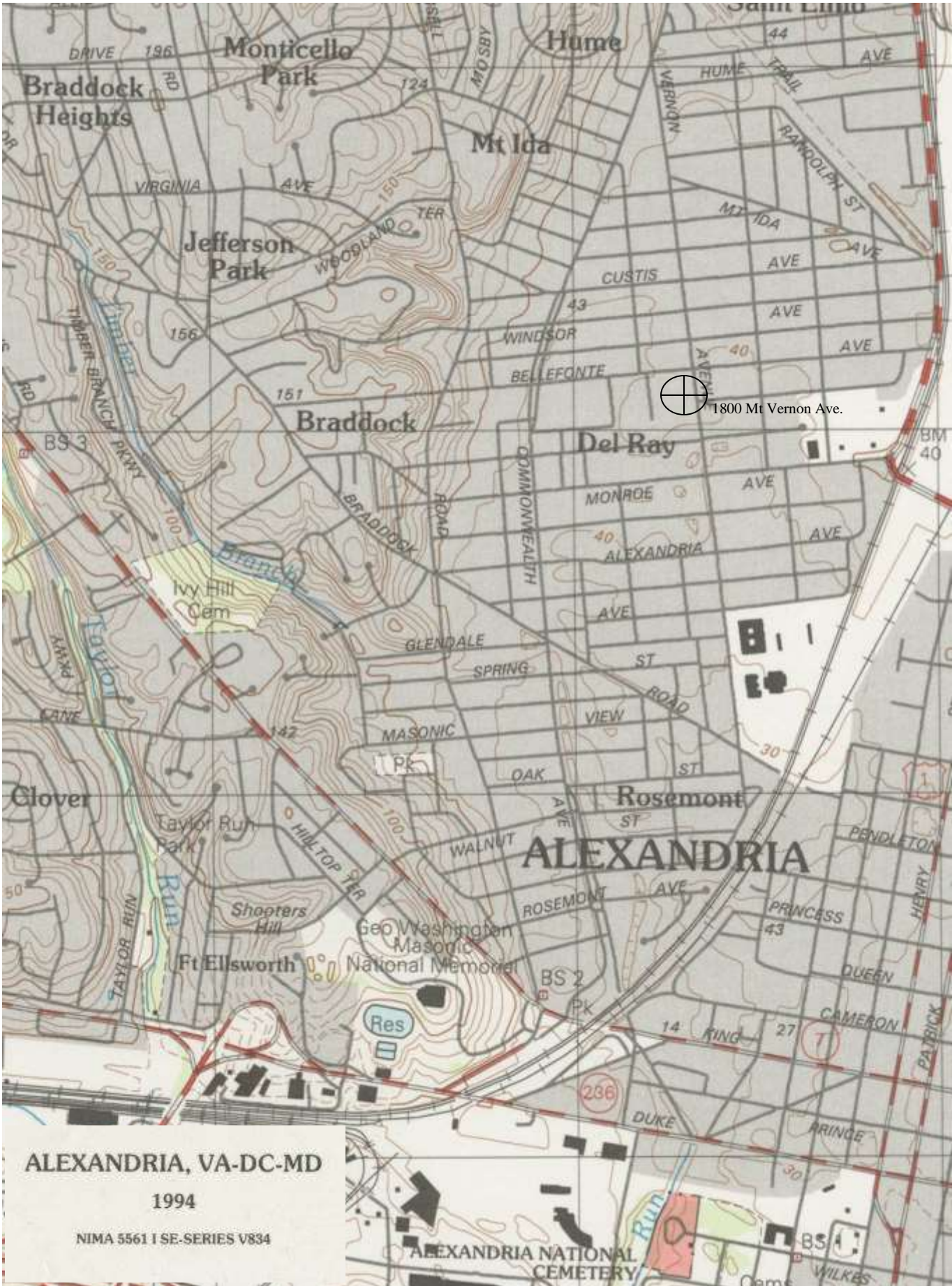
4. 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Rear half of north elevation, oblique angle, facing 232° SW. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



5. 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Façade and front half of south elevation, oblique angle, facing 291⁰ W. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



Building outline not to scale.
2014.



ENDNOTES

- ⁱ New construction permit #3148 from 22 July 1941 for 1802 Mt Vernon Avenue, owner Walter Von Herbulis. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ⁱⁱ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, 1958, Vol. 1, Sheet 42.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Alteration/repair permit #12512 from 20 January 1956 for 1800-1802 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{iv} Alteration/repair permits #15138 from 9 July 1959, and #15330 from 10 September 1959. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^v Alteration/repair permit #23188 from 6 July 1966. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{vi} Alteration/repair permits #30357 from 23 October 1973, and #30461 from 18 December 1973. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{vii} Alteration/repair permits #39126 from 26 September 1983, and #39184 from 13 October 1983. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{viii} Installation permits #5994 from 21 May 1987, and #03407 from 20 June 1989. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{ix} City of Alexandria Deed Book 115, page 500, 25 March 1931: M. L. and Anna Bates, Grantors, to Paul J. Bamberger, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records. For derivation of title and plat, see Arlington County Deed Book 211, page 92 and Deed Book 161, page 219.
- ^x City of Alexandria Deed Book 162, page 393, 21 May 1940: Paul J. and Helena Bamberger, Grantors to Bessie Turner, Grantee. City of Alexandria Deed Book 177, page 163, 24 July 1941: Bessie Turner, Grantor to Charlotte and J.R. Harmon, Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xi} New construction permit #3148 from August 1941 for 1802 Mt Vernon Avenue, owner Walter Von Herbulis. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{xii} "A.O. Von Herbulis Dies on Falls Church, VA., Car: Prominent Architect is Victim of an Attack of Acute Heart Disease," obit., *The Washington Post* 15 April 1928: 7. Also cited on "Adalbert Olszewski Ritter "Albert" Von Herbulis" *Find a Grave*, website, accessed 11 June 2014 at: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=20135870>
- ^{xiii} United States Federal Population Census 1940. Accessed via Ancestry.com, 11 June 2014.
- ^{xiv} "Walter Von Herbulis, Building Firm Head," obit. *The Washington Post* 26 September 1967: B5.
- ^{xv} Laura V. Trieschmann and Carrie Albee, "Glebe Center," National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 2003, Section 8: page 8.
- ^{xvi} *ibid.*
- ^{xvii} Armenian Museum of America, "The Architecture of Mihran Mesrobian," *Arlington Patch* 29 April 2014. Accessed 11 June 2014 at: <http://arlington.patch.com/groups/the-armenian-museum-of-america-presents-/p/the-architecture-of-mihran-mesrobian>
- ^{xviii} Anne H. Adams, "Wardman Park Annex and Arcade," National Register of Historic Places nomination, December 1983, Section 8: page 2.
- ^{xix} G. Martin Moeller, Jr. *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012) 131. See also "Wakefield Shopping Center," *Historic American Buildings Survey* Library of Congress, HABS No. VA-1279. Accessed 11 June 2014 at: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/va/va1500/va1546/data/va1546data.pdf>
- ^{xx} "Mihran Mesrobian. 86, a retired architect who designed a number of hotels in Washington, died Sunday at his home, 7410 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase." obit., *The Washington Post* 26 September 1975: C10.
- ^{xxi} City of Alexandria Deed Book 177, page 113, 30 July 1941: Charlotte and J.R. Harmon, Grantors to Fred Gosnell and Walter Von Herbulis, Grantees. City of Alexandria Deed Book 181, page 413, 12 November 1941: Fred Gosnell and Walter Von Herbulis, Grantors to Lillian Kotz, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xxii} City of Alexandria Deed Book 1103, page 412, 22 July 1984: Estate of Tibe Kotz, Grantor to Jay Kay Realty LLC, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xxiii} City of Alexandria Instrument No. 20005681, 31 January 2002: Jay Kay Realty LLC, (Nathan Kotz, Manager) Grantor to Arlandria Floors, Grantee. City of Alexandria Instrument No. 70024799, 2 November 2007: Arlandria Floors, J. Bresnahan, Tr. Grantor to John Bresnahan, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xxiv} Occupancy derived from various certificates of occupancy and alteration/repair permits, as well as Alexandria City Directories from various years. See the City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center for the former, and the Special Collections/Local History of the Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library for the latter.