

## 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.

<b>General Property Information</b>	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #:
Property Name(s): <u>Henry Knox Field Masonic Lodge building</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>1946</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>1908 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>	

<b>Physical Character of General Surroundings</b>	
Acreage: <u>0.3006</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: <u>The building lies on level ground within a rectangular lot encompassing 13,096 square feet, situated on the southwest corner of E. Howell and Mt. Vernon avenues. It sits approximately ten feet back from the Mt. Vernon street curb. An asphalt surface parking area lies immediately to the west, while an adjacent commercial building lies south. The building contributes to the commercial character of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the main thoroughfare of an 1894 subdivision which was incorporated as the Town of Potomac in 1908 and annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929.</u>	
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	

<b>Individual Resource Information</b>	
What was the historical use of this resource?   Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc...	
<b>Governmental/office</b>	
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Governmental/office</u>	
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Vernacular commercial with Art Deco elements</u>	
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>John A. Logan, builder; W.V. Nalls, architect</u>	

# of stories 3 Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Poor Ruins Rebuilt 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); stone water table on façade**

**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.  
**Steel frame and cinder block, brick-faced**

**Walls:** Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles.  
**Red brick (6:1 common bond)**

**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 metal-frame, 3-lightm fixed plate glass storefronts, 1 oriel, 1 glass-block, and 6 double-hung 12/12-light sashes**

**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.)*

Constructed in 1946, **1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue** is a vernacular commercial building with Art Deco elements. Built as the Henry Knox Field Masonic Lodge #349, the ground floor has operated as the Potomac Station branch of the United States Postal Service continuously since the building's completion in 1947.

On 29 September 1945, The Henry Knox Field Masonic Lodge filed a new construction permit with the City of Alexandria to erect a post office and lodge hall on the southwest corner of E. Howell and Mt. Vernon avenues. [Figure 1] The architect was listed as W.V. Nalls and the builder as John A. Logan. The three-story structure would comprise a concrete foundation, steel frame, cinder block walls faced in brick, and a flat roof clad in slag upon gypsum planks. The building would measure 50-feet in the front, 50-feet in the rear, with a depth of 90-feet, encompassing 5,152 square feet.<sup>1</sup> The basement level would be excavated 12-feet from the outside grade to the cellar floor; the cellar and first floors would have a wall thickness of 16 inches, while the second and third floors would have a wall thickness of one foot. The estimated cost for the building was \$60,000.<sup>1</sup> The edifice first appears on the 1958 edition of the

<sup>1</sup> Alteration/repair permit #14607 from 1958 recorded the square footage as 4,200, while a Certificate of Occupancy (88-0781) from 1988 recorded the building's square footage as 9,000. This number (5,152) is from the City of Alexandria's Real Estate Assessment database.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the City of Alexandria, in which it is labeled a “Post Office Lodge Hall” constructed of steel joists and beams and cinder block walls faced with brick. [Figure 2] In prior editions (1921, 1931, and 1941) of the Sanborn map, the empty lot was devoid of structures.

The rectangular block is three bays wide by four bays deep, and rises three stories from a concrete foundation (only continuous brick is visible, and the façade features a low stone water table) to a flat parapet roof coped in metal. The exterior walls comprise red brick laid in a six-to-one common bond. The façade’s southernmost bay holds a secondary entrance and implies a stairwell leading to the upper floors.<sup>ii</sup> The main entrance to the ground floor is centralized and demarcated by a plain, dressed-stone surround and a transom comprising glass blocks which is punctuated by a keystone in the form of an eagle. This sits atop a single-light transom which spans the lintel of a metal-frame, single-light, glass door and a single-light sidelight. The secondary entrance is a single-light glass door in a metal frame with a single-light transom, above which is another transom comprising glass blocks. The whole is surrounded by stone: fluted pilasters flank a lintel inscribed with the words, “Henry Knox Field Lodge No. 349 A.F. & A.M.” The two upper stories of the façade are fenestrated with six asymmetrically-spaced, wood double-hung windows with 12-over-12 lights. Each sits atop a stone sill and has a lintel of soldier bricks punctuated by a small stone keystone. A seventh window, situated above the secondary entrance, is elongated and filled with glass blocks, yet retains the same sill and lintel treatment. A single-light oriel with a decorative stone surround is centered above the main entrance, on the second story. Four small keystones radiate in the cardinal directions from the stone surround. The ground floor has two storefront windows that flank the main entrance; the fixed-pane glass windows have three lights in wood mullions.

The southern elevation is blind, while the northern elevation is fenestrated with 17 asymmetrically-spaced windows of two different sizes. Like those on the façade, the wood windows are double-hung with 12-over-12 lights, stone sills, and soldier brick lintels with keystones. The westernmost bay holds a garage entrance on the ground floor. The rear (west) elevation is punctuated by ten apertures, including eight wood, double-hung windows (two on the ground floor have been bricked in) with 12-over-12 lights and two wooden doors with 15 lights and wooden mullions which access metal stairs on the upper two floors. A large chimney or exhaust stack spans the height of the building, extending above the roofline, in the southwest corner of the rear elevation. It is comprised of red brick laid in a six-to-one common bond.

The present building's design greatly adheres to the drawings prepared by Nalls on 13 September 1945. [Figures 3, 4, and 5] There are only a few discrepancies: the drawing of the façade shows a decorative cornice above the second-story windows which is not extant on the building, yet a shadow on the brick suggests that a wooden cornice was once in that position and has been removed. Also, what is now an oriel window was detailed as a medallion with the Masonic insignia in the blueprints; presumably this was removed when the lodge sold and vacated the premises. The drawing of the rear elevation exhibits ten windows, yet two on the first floor's northern and central bays have been bricked in. The north elevation has an additional window in the second bay on the third floor.

In the first decade following the building’s completion, routine maintenance included spudding of the slag roof and applying a new four-ply slag roof for a total of \$800 in 1958 as well as reroofing over existing felts and wood sheathing for \$655 in 1962.<sup>iii</sup> After purchasing the property in 1987, owners OTV Inc. altered the interior by renovating the lobby and removing interior walls.<sup>iv</sup> Later in 1987, a sprinkler and a fire alarm system were installed, while a passenger elevator was installed the following year.<sup>v</sup> Circa 1988, a concrete “penthouse” structure was built atop the roof deck, in the center, which was occupied by a business as office space in 1989.<sup>vi</sup>

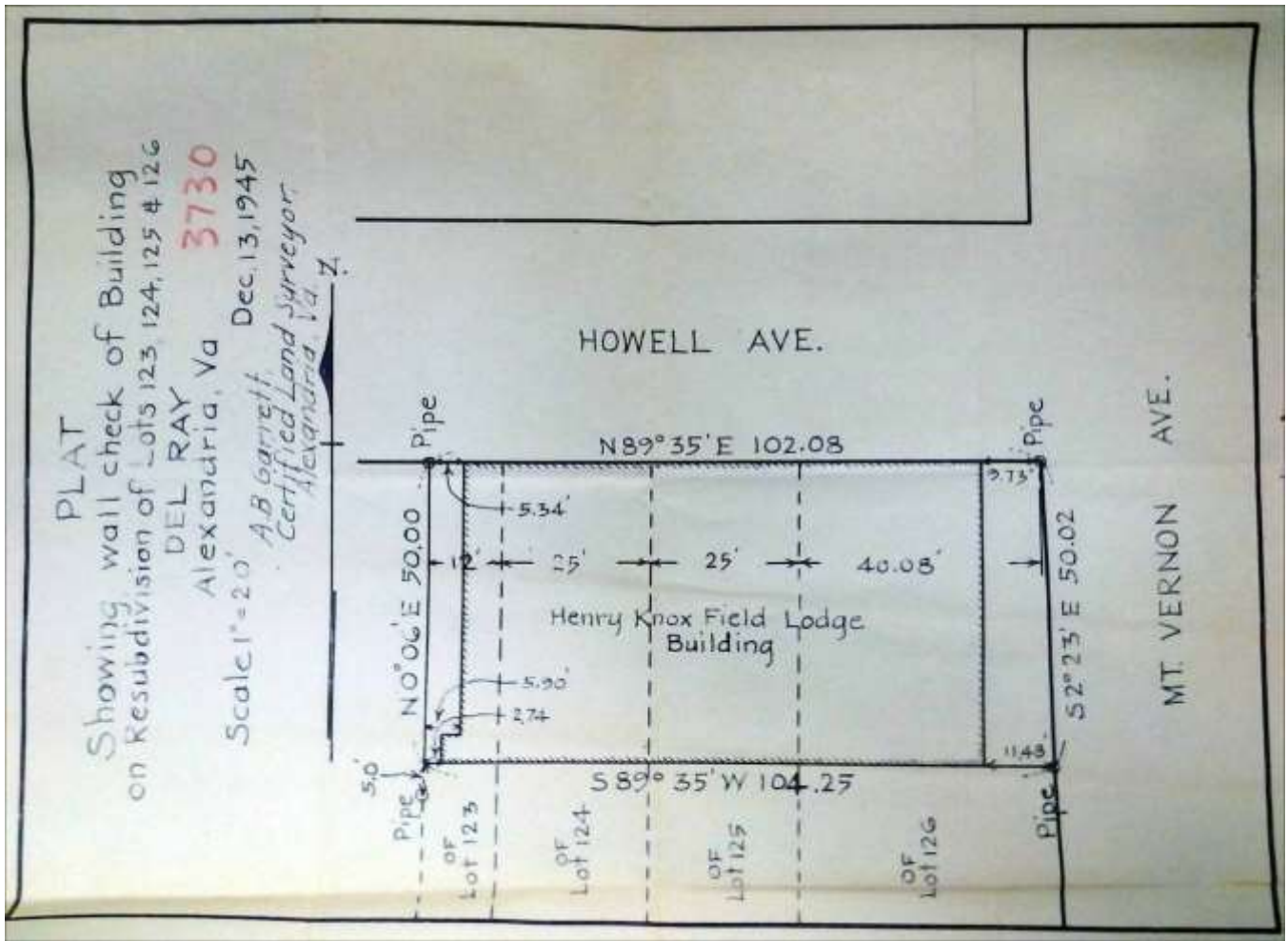


Figure 1: Plat for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by A.B. Garrett, Land Surveyor, 13 December 1945. From new construction permit #3730 from 29 September 1945 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

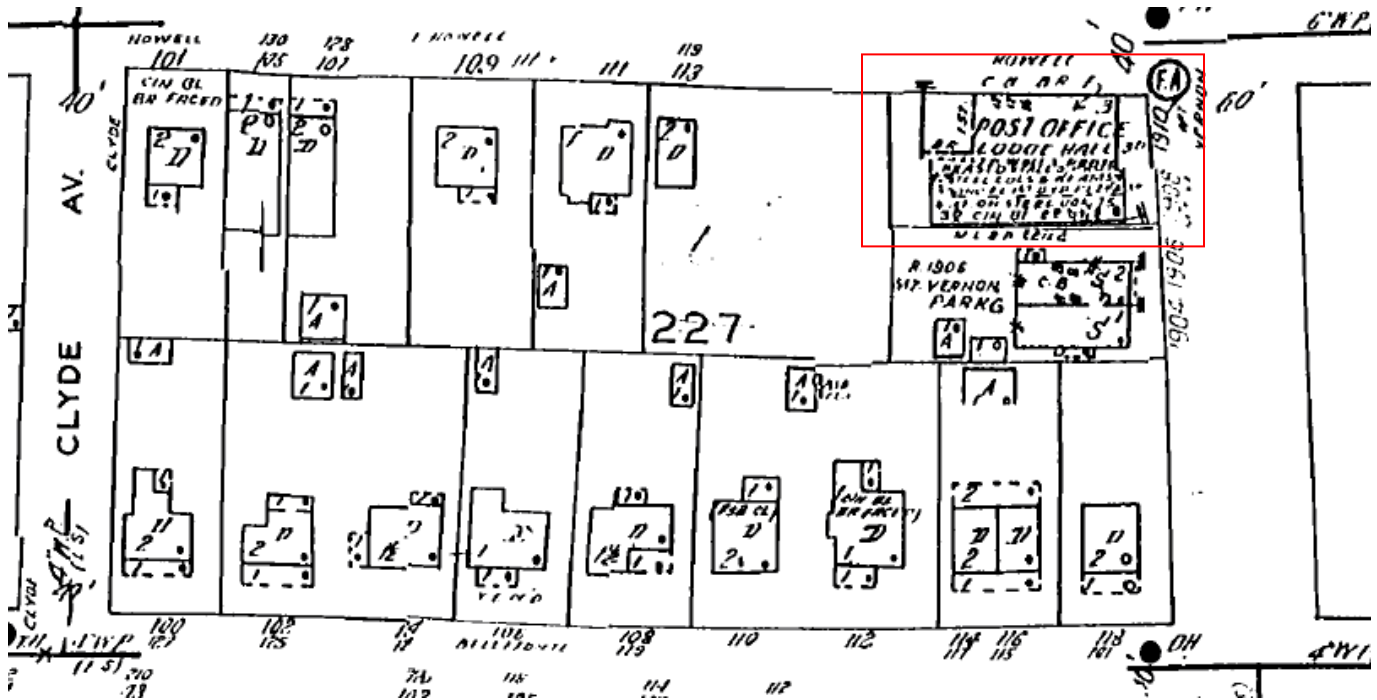


Figure 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia, 1958, Vol. 1, Sheet 42.

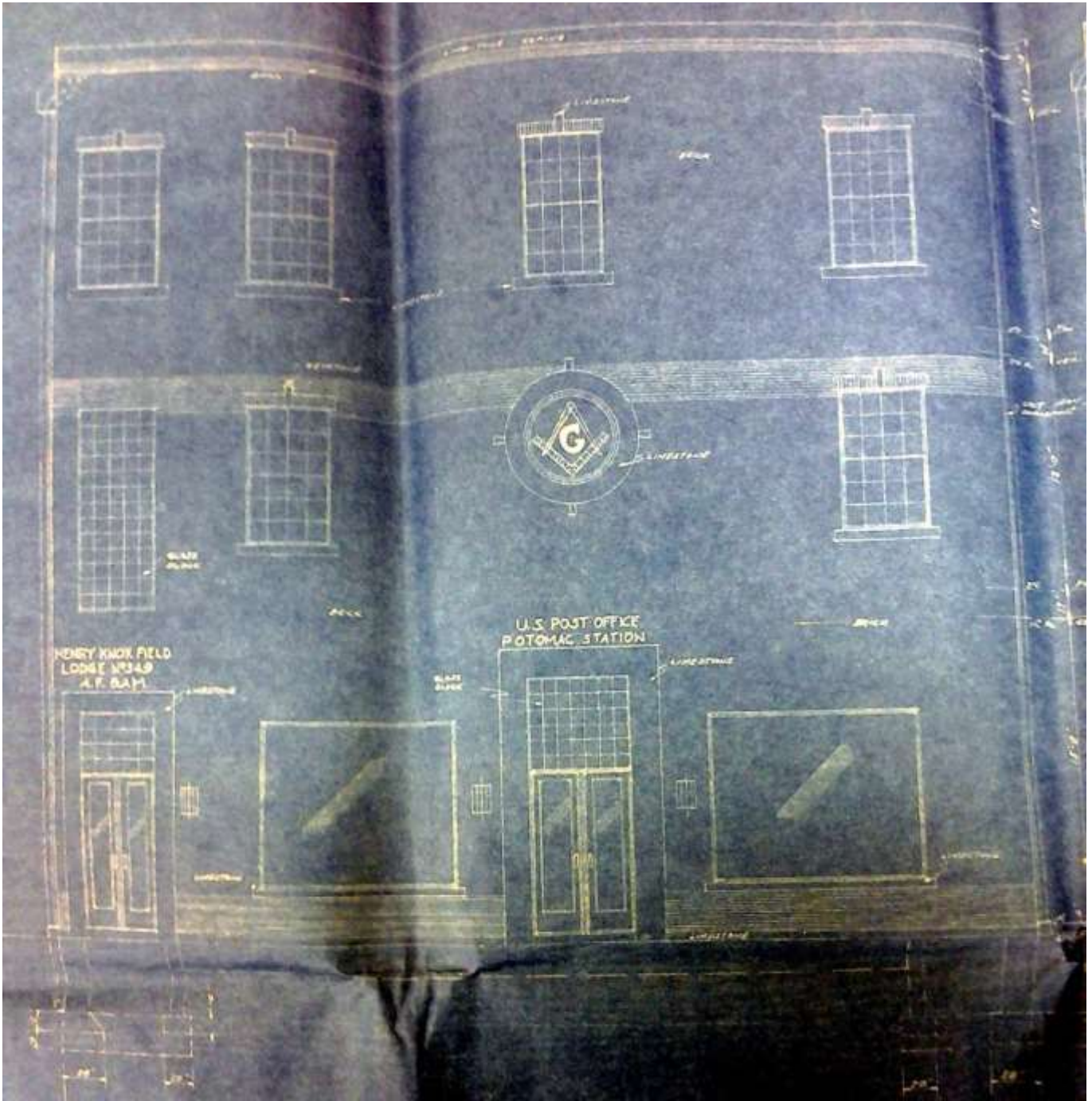


Figure 3: Front elevation of 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by W.V. Nalls 13 September 1945. From new construction permit #3730 from 29 September 1945 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.



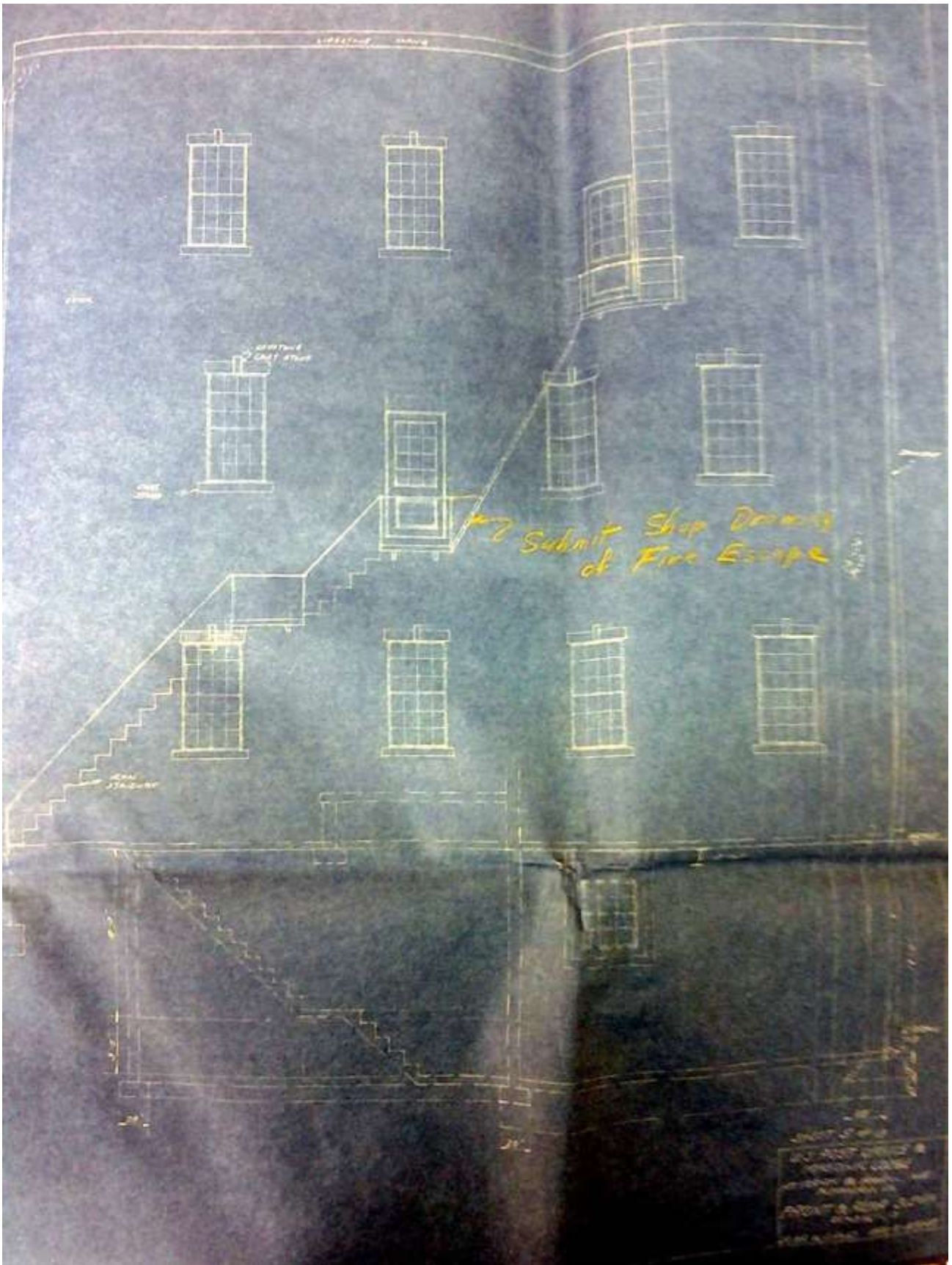


Figure 4: Rear elevation of 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by W.V. Nalls 13 September 1945. From new construction permit #3730 from 29 September 1945 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Repository: City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.



Figure 5: North (side) elevation of 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, created by W.V. Nalls 13 September 1945. From new construction permit #3730 from 29 September 1945 for 1908 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 Henry Knox Field Masonic Lodge building is situated on Lot 501, the re-subdivision of lots 123 through 126 inclusive, plus lots 121-122, in the survey of the first Del Ray subdivision – a streetcar suburb created in 1894 by Charles E. Wood and William Harmon, developers from Ohio. [Figure 6] In 1908, this community was incorporated as the Town of Potomac within the Jefferson Magisterial District of Alexandria County (renamed Arlington County in 1920), until it was annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929.<sup>vii</sup> The historic building lies within the boundaries of and yet is not considered a contributing resource to the Town of Potomac Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

On 22 January 1924, members of the local Andrew Jackson Masonic Lodge No. 120 convened on the second floor of the Potomac Trust Company building; the conclave, presided by the Right Worthy Frank W. Latham, established the Henry Knox Field Lodge No. 349, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.<sup>viii</sup> That same year, the idea for building a permanent home for the new order was raised amongst its members, who were meeting over the fire department.<sup>ix</sup> The Potomac Realty Corporation was formed,<sup>x</sup> and circa 1935, part of lot 8 on the corner of E. Howell and Mt. Vernon Avenues was purchased, on which the lodge planned to erect a small, temporary office designed by Jacob H. Poladian.<sup>xi</sup> The permit was rejected by city officials, however, and the lot remained undeveloped for another decade.

In the interim, funds were raised for a new building and the lot retained thanks to the efforts and private backing of Lodge Brother Kirwan.<sup>xii</sup> In 1945, C. Monroe Woodley, George Z. Boteler, and Truman E. Carneal (Trustees on behalf of the Henry Knox Field Lodge) purchased part of lots 123 through 126 from A.C. Slagle,<sup>xiii</sup> which (alongside lots 119-121) had been owned by the Stark and Slagle families since before the Town of Potomac was annexed by the City of Alexandria.<sup>xiv</sup> After securing a loan of \$90,000, the lodge applied for a new construction permit for a building on the southwest corner of Mt. Vernon and E. Howell avenues, to be built by John A. Logan from drawings prepared by W.V. Nalls.<sup>xv</sup> Logan (1902-1946) was the Secretary of the Henry Knox Field Masonic order in 1945,<sup>xvi</sup> and had lived in Alexandria since 1928. His occupation was given as plasterer until 1945, when he rebranded himself a builder and general contractor.<sup>xvii</sup> Logan died 9 May 1946, one month after the lodge's cornerstone was laid on 6 April 1946. [Figures 7 and 8] Following one full year of construction, the building was dedicated on 19 April 1947. It was named in honor of Henry Knox Field, an Alexandria-born lumber merchant and manufacturer (as well as a city councilman) who rose to the rank of Grand Master Mason in 1890 and the Worshipful Master of the Andrew Jackson Lodge in 1893.<sup>xviii</sup>

From the building's completion through the present, the ground floor has been leased to the United States Postal Service and has functioned as the Potomac Station Post Office. The name "Potomac Station" refers the town's history as a streetcar suburb, and the fact that in "the last half of the nineteenth century, seventeen new post offices for new communities were established in Alexandria County, and most of them began as railroad stops."<sup>xix</sup> However, as late as 1910, Del Ray lacked such an amenity since neighboring St. Elmo maintained a postal and telegraph office easily accessible to Del Ray denizens.<sup>xx</sup> The Del Ray post office has become such a fixture, however, that great opposition was raised to its potential closure by the U.S.P.S. in 2012.<sup>xxi</sup>

The 1955 edition of Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory assessed the land at \$2,151 but valued the entire property at \$36,924 with improvements. The lodge met in the upper floors, which was listed as address 1908 ½ in the City of Alexandria Directory of 1957. The lot was expanded westward, to provide surface parking in the rear, when Brothers Woodley, Boteler, and Carneal purchased lots 121 and 122 from Eugene A. and Lorraine L. Attiliis in 1964.<sup>xxii</sup> In 1987, the lodge moved to the Scottish Rite



Temple on Braddock Road and trustees Walter Scott Downs and Phelan Enloe Tyler, Jr. sold the edifice to OTV Inc.<sup>xxiii</sup> V. Rodger Digilio, on behalf of OTV Inc. sold the property to Calalexandria Corporation in 1988, which immediately mortgaged it to the Canada Life Assurance Company and did so again in 1993. Having attained ownership of the property in 1993, Canada Life Assurance Company sold the property to Henry Knox Field LLC, the current owner.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The edifice at 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue is an example of a brick vernacular commercial building with Art Deco elements. 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 social organizations and governmental agencies. It is significant on the local and state levels in 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.

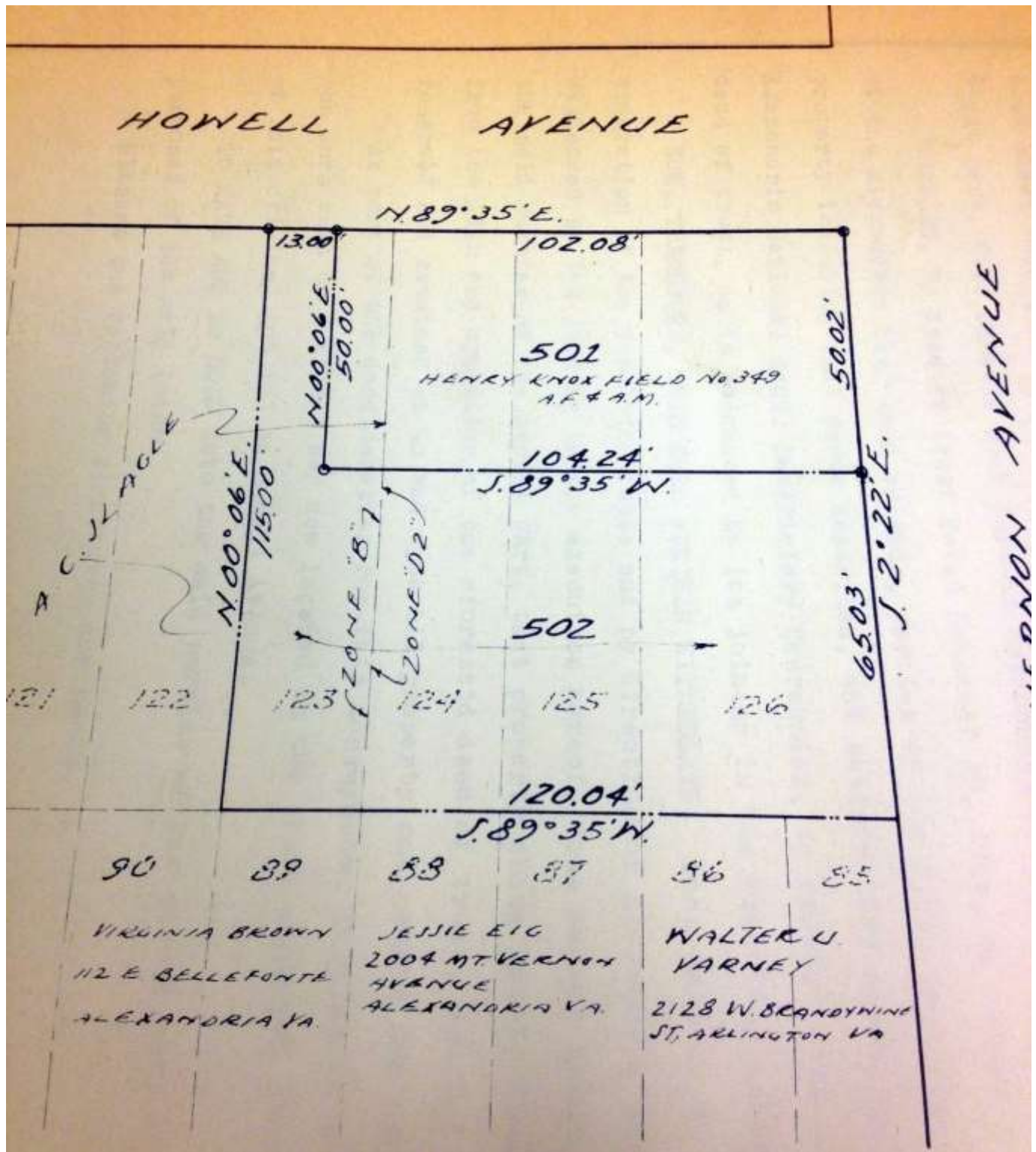


Figure 6: Plat of Lot 501, showing the re-division of lots 123 through 126 inclusive of Del Ray. Created by Cecil J. Cross on 2 October 1945. From Alexandria City Deed Book 220, page 506 from 11 October 1945. Repository: Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.



Figures 7 and 8: Cornerstone ceremony in 1946. Photographs printed in *The Alexandria Gazette* 8-9 January 1987. Found in Manuscript Box 049, folder 6, Gallagher Collection: Captioned Photographs from the Alexandria Gazette. Repository: Special Collections/Local History of the Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library.







1. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade (east) and south elevations, oblique angle, facing 270° W. Photo by Gwen White, 4/6/14.





2. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade, detail secondary entrance, straight angle, facing 259° W. Photo by Gwen White, 4/6/14.  
3. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade, detail main entrance, straight angle, facing 259° W. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



4. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade and north elevation, oblique angle, facing 230° SW. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.





5. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. North elevation, oblique angle, facing  $126^{\circ}$  SE. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.

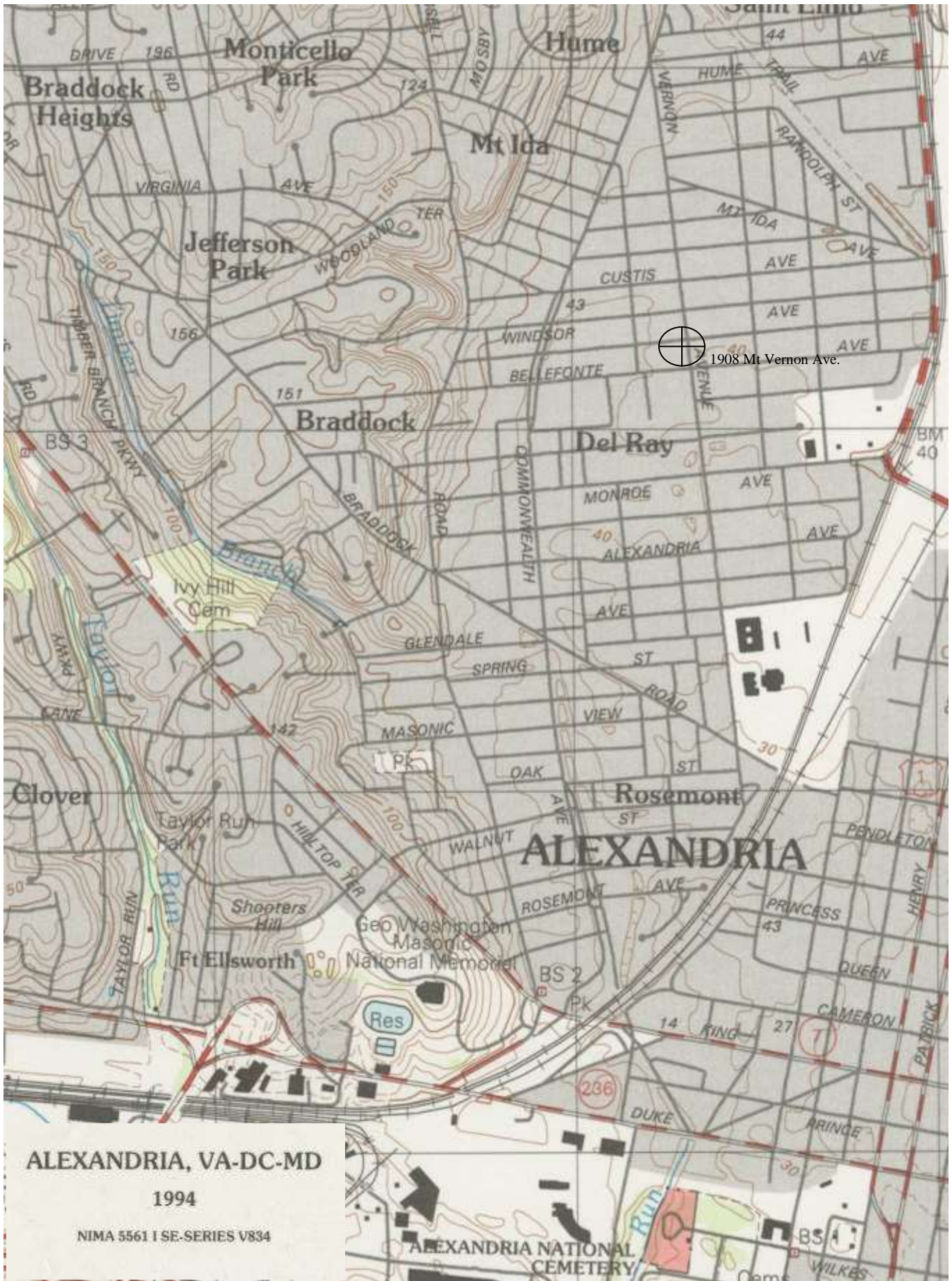


6. 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Rear (west) elevation, straight angle, facing  $78^{\circ}$  E. Photograph by Gwen White, 4/6/14.



Building outline not to scale.  
2014.







## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>i</sup> New construction permit #3730 from 29 September 1945 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>ii</sup> Paul Falkenbury, Richard Layman, Mike McGlynn, Bill Prestwood, and Laura Vining "Documentation of Mount Vernon Avenue, The Del Ray Community" Washington/ Alexandria Center, November 1990, pg. 30.
- <sup>iii</sup> Alteration/repair permits #14607 from 12 December 1958 and #18548 from 13 July 1962 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>iv</sup> Alteration/repair permits #44070 from 31 July 1987 and #44109 from 10 August 1987 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>v</sup> Installation permits #6251 from 14 December 1987; #6258 from 21 December 1987; #00750 from 30 March 1988 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>vi</sup> Certificate of Occupancy 89-254 from 2 May 1989 for 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>vii</sup> Susan Escherich, "Town of Potomac Historic District," National Register of Historic Places, 1992, page 2.
- <sup>viii</sup> Robert L. Crabill, "History of the Town of Potomac" 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. June 1993.
- <sup>ix</sup> Escherich, Section 8:57
- <sup>x</sup> "Lodge History," *Grand Lodge of Virginia*, website, accessed 7 June 2014 at: <http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/lodges/349/history.asp>
- <sup>xi</sup> New construction permit #637 from 21 August 1935 for Howell and Mt Vernon [1908 Mt Vernon]. Owner: Potomac Realty Co.; architect: JH Poladian. Part of lot 8, block 21, map 211. Office. Frame structure with a foundation of cement block piers, front: 12'; rear: 20'; 1 story (6'). Roof: pitch with asphalt shingle. Cost: \$ 300. The accompanying blueprint reads, "not 5,000 sq. ft. in lot; This does NOT comply with the requirements of Ordinance No. 109, 8/21/25." City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>xii</sup> "Lodge History," *Grand Lodge of Virginia*, website, accessed 7 June 2014 at: <http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/lodges/349/history.asp>
- <sup>xiii</sup> City of Alexandria Deed Book 220, page 506, 11 November 1945: A.C. Slagle, Grantor, to C. Monroe Woodley, George Z. Boteler, and Truman E. Carneal, Tr., Henry Knox Field Lodge, Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- <sup>xiv</sup> City of Alexandria Deed Book 138, page 344, 3 May 1937: Jarvis Stark, Grantor, to Mary R. and A.C. Slagle, Grantees. City of Alexandria Deed Book 216, pages 472-475, 18 November 1944: heirs of Jarvis and Mollie Stark, Grantors, to Stark and Slagle (A.C., J.E., and M.A. Slagle), Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- <sup>xv</sup> New construction permit #3730 from 3 November 1945 for 1908 Mt Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- <sup>xvi</sup> See plat in City of Alexandria Deed Book 220, page 506.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Derived from United States Federal Population censuses accessed via Ancestry.com and Alexandria City Directories.
- <sup>xviii</sup> See Crabill. Also, "Lodge History," *Grand Lodge of Virginia*, website, accessed 7 June 2014 at: <http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/lodges/349/history.asp>. Also, *Andrew Jackson Lodge No. 120 A.F. & A.M.*, website, accessed 7 June 2014 at: [http://www.andrewjackson120.org/aj120\\_history.html](http://www.andrewjackson120.org/aj120_history.html). See also "Henry Knox Field Dead: Leading Alexandria Merchant was 57 Years Old," obit. *The Washington Post*, 1 August 1917: 9.
- <sup>xix</sup> Escherich, Section 8:37.
- <sup>xx</sup> Escherich, Section 8:47.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Tom Jackman, "NoVa residents battle to save local post offices," *Washington Post*, 28 March 2012.
- <sup>xxii</sup> City of Alexandria Deed Book 614, page 77, 30 October 1964: Eugene A. and Lorraine L. Attiliis, Grantors, to C. Monroe Woodley, George Z. Boteler, and Truman E. Carneal, Tr., Henry Knox Field Lodge, Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> City of Alexandria Deed Book 1212, page 277, 14 May 1987: Walter Scott Downs and Phelan Enloe Tyler, Jr., Trustees of the Henry Knox Field Lodge #349, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Grantors, to OTV Inc., Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> See City of Alexandria Deed Books 1466, page 1583; 1427, page 1135; 1232, page 1303; and 1232, page 1301. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.