Carver Nursery School
224 North Fayette Street
Alexandria, Virginia

also known as
William Thomas Post 129 of the American Legion

A HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

Prepared with Financial Support from the Historic Alexandria Foundation

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Drawings by Joy Bunch
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(Items in Parentheses are one or two page illustrations interrupting longer chapters)

Acknowledgements

This project was completed between September 2011 and September 2012. It was supported by a grant from the Historic Alexandria Foundation. The Foundation was not only generous in awarding the funds, but Mary Sterling and her staff at the foundation were also patient as the report took a little over a year to complete. The application for the grant was filed by Boyd Walker on behalf of the Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance (GAPA). Additionally, Mr. Walker provided private funds in the form of a modest stipend to cover travel costs and other expenses. On the day of the survey, William (Bill) Cromley, the property owner, provided access to the building. Al Cox of the Alexandria Historic Preservation Office within the city's Department of Planning and Zoning toured the site during the survey, as did Bill Cromley and Audrey Davis. Al also met with the preparer separately. He provided a scanned copy of the original drawings and generously offered his help throughout the project. Amy Bertsch, who was then an employee of the Office of Historic Alexandria freely shared in-depth research she had previously conducted on the building and on related buildings in preparation of discussing the topic in her column, "Out of the Attic," which appears in the *Alexandria Times*. The staff of the Virginia Room at the Barrett Library was helpful in researching the early newspaper coverage of the nursery school construction project, copies of Sanborn Maps, and other documents. John Lord of the American Association of Family and Consumer Services (formerly known as the American Home Economics Association) provided access to the society's library where some articles were found that appeared in the society's *Journal of Home Economics* around the time the building was constructed. The articles provided important insights into the national context of the Lanham Act and thus of the school. Ed Semonian, Alexandria Clerk of the Court, was very helpful when the deeds for the property were being pulled. Lewis Hicks, Audrey Davis, and several others at the Alexandria Black History Center shared information they had, including the photos and newspaper clippings from the archives of the William Thomas American Legion Post 129.

In preparing new versions of the drawings, I was pleased to have the assistance of my former coworker and former Alexandria resident, architect Joy Cecere Bunch.

This project is really about the people who attended nursery school here, who participated in the American Legion functions and held or attended community events here, and all those who made the Parker-Gray area its own special place as their neighborhood over many years. It is about a community that interacted at a building in two different functional alignments, as a nursery school and as a lodge that doubled as a kind of community center. It is also about those who have a vision that will carry the stories and culture of this facility forward to a future generation of Alexandrians.

I would like thank Boyd Walker in particular for having the vision and passion he has thrown behind the idea of saving this building and its story.

Terry A. Necciai, RA, *Preservation Architect and Architectural Historian*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
September 2012

Purposes of a Historic Structure Report

A historic structure report serves as a single document in which the past, present, and future of a historic property is analyzed and detailed accurately. It provides a format for thorough study of a historic building's past in the same document that presents its conditions and makes recommendations for its future. It is the appropriate format for laying out and discussing the solutions that are appropriate to any problems the building has. Before addressing problems, it is of the utmost importance to know exactly *what* the historic building is, what makes it significant, what its most important features are, and what the essential characteristics of those features are. It is equally important to know how to treat these features without damaging them and, in placing the building in a new use, how to do so without taking away from the building's integrity in other ways or drawing attention away from the characteristics that make the building read as a text that tells its own history. While aging, deterioration, and natural forces can lead to a building's demise, inappropriate treatment by owners and workers, even well-meaning ones, can lead to a building's destruction more swiftly than age itself.

The analysis of the past in a historic structure report establishes the building's history and significance as accurately possible, using tools such as a narrative history, the story of the people or families or institutions involved, a statement of significance, a chain of title, a photographic history, historic maps, a bibliography, and a collection of any other archival sources that help to explain the property and its story. It is especially important to understand this history not only in its external context (family or institutional history, community connections, cultural forces, etc.), but also in ways that may be represented in the history of the building materials themselves.

Providing a Statement of Significance (as understood as a component of National Register nominations) for the property is a way of defining its most important themes in terminology and concepts used by the National Register and similar programs. It establishes history by categories, criteria, and somewhat standardized nomenclature.

An architectural description provides a way of looking carefully at all the parts of the building or property and seeing how they are put together aesthetically and historically. It links the property to architectural history by using the vocabulary that architectural historians use in describing other buildings. This vocabulary mirrors an important non-verbal vocabulary that lies behind the words, the real architectural material, the formal and visual lexicon that designers used in making the building into a pleasing or consistent composition with recognizable parts. It also sets the stage for recordation and analysis of the building's current conditions. The architectural description works hand-in-hand with architectural drawings of existing conditions. Additionally, it builds on any historic drawing record that exists for the building.

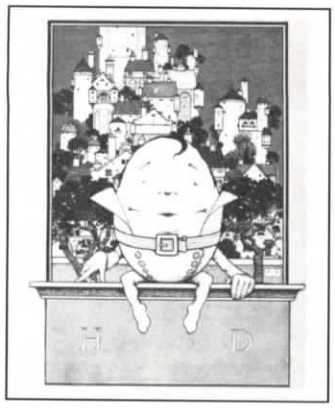
A condition assessment provides a way of studying each building component, one stick or one stud at a time, putting all the information in one place and into one format. Although the condition assessment is informed by the historic context, significance, and

building material history, as well as the architectural description, it focuses on what the current status of each component is, as well as what its deficiencies or needs are.

The treatment plan component of a historic structure report addresses the needs identified in the condition assessment, sometimes recommending treatments that solve problems identified in other documents as well. Not all work on a building is driven by restoration or attending to problems that are apparent in the historic materials. In some cases, the building needs to be retrofitted to a slightly different use, and this requires new design and a careful approach to designing for uses that were not taken into account in the original architectural process. By definition, a treatment plan in a historic structure report should relate the treatment of the building to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (NPS, 1995)[1]. The word "treatment" itself derives from the *Standards*, as the name used in the *Standards* for the four broad categories they address. The norm for historic structure reports is that they address one or the other of the two Treatments most appropriate for significant properties where repairs and adaptive work are likely to happen soon: "Rehabilitation," which means retrofitting a building to a new use with changes that are as minor as possible, and "Restoration," which refers to putting a building back to its condition at some moment in time from the past.

A properly prepared historic structure report also includes back-up data, some relevant reference data, smaller reports on specific subjects as may be needed or appropriate, etc. It is important to think of a historic structure report not primarily as a finished "report" or as a publication, but rather as a working document. It is often a product only a few copies of which will be produced and distributed, and most importantly they go to policy-makers, present and future administrators, funding sources, and present and future design team members. The master copy should be flexible, and should be treated like a medical patient's flipchart. It should always have room for new information to be appended, new sources, new conclusions, and new recommendations as the next generations of people care for and work on the preservation of the property.

[1] See: http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/ .



Historical Synopsis

The Carver Nursery School Building was built in 1944 as a facility for African American preschool children. It was one of several such schools that existed in the Alexandria area in the 1940s to provide pre-school education and/or to serve as day care centers. Most of these facilities were funded by the federal government during World War II on the premise that they would help the war effort by making it possible for women to take jobs in defense industries. The Carver Nursery School differed from most of the others as it was built using federal funds for this specific purpose, while the others were in existing buildings, such as elementary schools, or buildings built through earlier programs. The funding was allocated through the Lanham Community Facilities Act, and was the last publicly funded school of this type in the era, built as late as 1944. Although funded federally, it was also a function of the local school system and local government in the closing years of the era when all schools across the state were segregated by race (in fact, it paralleled the development of a privately funded and integrated preschool in Alexandria's Beverly Hills section and thus is tangentially related to the establishment of Burgundy Farm Country Day School,[2] which grew out of the preschool[3] as the students grew older, becoming the first integrated post-preschool facility in the state). The city owned the property, the Alexandria School District operated the facility,[4] and the Virginia Department of Education provided the architectural design.[5] Newspaper coverage at the time referred to it as "a permanent building on Queen st. where Negro children were cared for."[6] Shortly after the plans were developed and before the construction was completed, the school was named in honor of the well known African American scientist and educator, George Washington Carver, who had died in January 1943.[7]

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[2] Web site for Burgundy Farm Country Day School: http://www.burgundyfarm.org/ and page on its history: http://www.burgundyfarm.org/about-burgundy/history/index.aspx .

[3] Web site for Beverly Hills UMC Preschool: http://bhcpnet.org/ . See also: "Parents Start Own Nursery School," *The Washington Post*, 10 January 1943. [About the Beverly Hills section of Alexandria].

[4] "Five Teachers Assume Duties," *Alexandria Gazette*, 20 January 1944, page 2.

[5] "Nursery School for Alexandria" [drawings], Division of School Buildings, State Dept. of Education, Richmond, Virginia, August, 1943.

[6] "Five Nurseries in Alexandria Close Sept. 1," *The Washington Post*, 22 August 1945.

[7] Chisley, Margaret A., et al, "Margaret A. Chisley et al., vs. City of Alexandria," 14 February 2010.

The nursery school operated for fewer than six years. In the first two years, while the federal funds were available, it provided jobs for two teachers, a cook, and a janitor. The janitor's duties included carrying oil in to fire the building's heaters. After the war ended and the war-based federal funding was discontinued, the school district restructured the program, claiming they had to reduce expenses as well as charge families more to cover the budget. They reassigned the janitor to a different location saying the services were more needed there. After being told to take over the janitorial responsibilities, the two original teachers resigned in protest.[8] This ultimately led to the facility closing after only a couple of years of operation.

By 1950, the building had been rented by the city to an organization of African American veterans, a use that continued for over half a century. The lodge, an American Legion post, was named in honor of William Thomas, the first (and apparently only) African American from Alexandria to die in World War I.[9] The post did not purchase the property from the city until 1987,[10] but some interior changes were made before that date.[11] The floor plan was altered at some point (probably after 1987) to make the two classrooms and center kitchen area function more like one large room. The interior changes reinforced the building's linearity along its east-west axis. The building's exterior relationship to Queen Street, to the north, eventually became less apparent as the city operated the playground separately as a recreation facility and eventually placed an east-west chain-link fence between it and the building. The lodge also used the doorway in the gable-end facing North Fayette Street as its main entrance, with a North Fayette Street address and with a sign over the door. Once the American Legion purpose had been established, the facility was heavily used as a venue for family and neighborhood events. It was effectively a community center for activities of a certain size held by the surrounding African American community in the second half of the twentieth century.[12]

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[8] "Teachers Given Janitorial Duties in Alexandria, 2 Carver Nursery School Teachers Resign Jobs," *Washington Afro American*, 2 February 1946. and "Alexandria Teachers' Job Sacrifice Held Useless," *Washington Afro American*, 9 February 1946.

[9] City of Alexandria, Virginia, "Memorandum to: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review from: BAR Staff, subject: Consideration of a request for demolition at 224 North Fayette Street, American Legion Building," June 19, 2009.

[10] Alexandria Deed Book 1231, pages 1867-1871.

[11] It is possible that a number of the interior changes occurred incrementally. The removal of the blackboards and other wall furnishings occurred before any of the photographs in the American Legion Post's archives were taken. The resilient tile was installed after some Legion images were taken, but not others. However, the partition walls appear to have remained in place until the 1980s. Logic suggests that the removal of the partitions, installation of paneling and new light fixtures including ceiling fans, and the relocation of the kitchen occurred in one campaign and after the Legion took ownership of the building.

[12] The images William Thomas Post archives document a number of community events, including beauty pageants. The images also show participation in a number of parades. The Black History Center has other information on community activities connected to the building. Most importantly, the community-wide uses of the building came up in court case documents, specifically in a number of sworn affidavits submitted by older members of the African American community when the case was filed.

A Reflection of African American Ethnic Heritage and Social History

The property reflects African American heritage in several ways. The school began with the implementation of a progressive idea targeted at helping women of childbearing age, yet it was carried out by extending the less-than-progressive partitioned world of segregated schools. Interestingly, because other programs had already created facilities of this type for the children of the white community just a year or two earlier, the only new nursery school building needed in the Alexandria area when the new program of federal funding became available was one dedicated to African American preschoolers, a move that one might say was made specifically in order to maintain the perception that the school system was providing "separate but equal" facilities.

The controversy that unfolded between the school district and the teachers over the reassignment of the janitor may reflect racial divisions of the times. However, racism is not explicitly stated as a factor in any known written accounts of what happened. The school provided jobs for four people, presumably all African Americans, most likely living in Uptown or one of the other nearby African American neighborhoods. As the federal funding for the program ended suddenly with the end of the war, the school district had to decide if it could afford to continue the operation. Adjustments were made such as raising the fees charged to parents at all the nursery schools that were scheduled to stay open as well as in a larger daycare facility that was operated from an existing "white" public school two blocks west of the Carver Nursery School site. As the costs increased, African American charitable groups were approached to help underwrite the participation of at least some of the Carver Nursery School families.[13] However, the school district decided that the janitorial staff that had kept the nursery school building in operation in its first two years was more needed at one of the district's nursery schools for white children and that the Carver Nursery School teachers could handle the cleaning duties in addition to teaching and watching the children. Notably, this included the dangerous, dirty, and heavy work of carrying fuel oil in to fire the building's heaters as well as taking out trash and scrubbing floors to keep them sanitary for the toddlers. They were told to take over the janitorial work with no increase in pay. As a result, the two original teachers resigned in protest, a move that was covered in regional African American newspapers (the Baltimore and Washington editions of the *Afro-American*) as well as the *Washington Post*.[14] The coverage included details like the names of the teachers, Mrs. Lucille D. Smith and Mrs. Velma D. Leigh, as well as photographs of them carrying out cans of trash.[15] In a very subtle way, one senses that the newspapers are implying that racial prejudice was felt to be a factor without coming out and stating it.

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[13] "Alexandria Working Mothers Pay to Keep Child Centers," The Washington Post, 15 October 1945.
[14] "Teachers Given Janitorial Duties in Alexandria, 2 Carver Nursery School Teachers Resign Jobs," *Washington Afro American*, 2 February 1946; and "Alexandria Teachers' Job Sacrifice Held Useless," *Washington Afro American*, 9 February 1946.
[15] "Teachers Given Janitorial Duties in Alexandria, 2 Carver Nursery School Teachers Resign Jobs," *Washington Afro American*, 2 February 1946.

Teachers Given Janitorial Duties in Alexandria

Mrs. Lucille G. Smith, left, and Mrs. Velma D. Leigh, teachers at the Carver Day Nursery School, Alexandria, Va., are shown emptying trash cans following orders from Miss Margery Badger, white supervisor, that they must do janitorial work at no increase in salary. Here they are shown obtaining oil for the school heaters. Part of their new assignment is to reach the frame building by 7 o'clock each morning and start the fires, so the building will be warm for their youthful pupils arriving at 8 o'clock.

Illustration that appeared in the *Washington Afro-American*, 2 February 1946. The photo itself editorializes on the circumstances the teachers found themselves in without explicitly calling the school district racist.

The district interviewed a new candidate, Mrs. Darrine Bennett, of Brandywine, Maryland, (one woman, a recent college graduate, to do the work of both previous teachers and the janitor) and hired her, but she was in an awkward position when she learned of the protest and was asked about it in the media (it is not known how long she remained in the job after the interview occurred).[16] These developments factored into the nursery school project being abandoned shortly afterward.

The history of the building between 1946 and 1949 appears to be less well recorded. Darriane Bennett's role as a teacher, after she was hired and then interviewed by the media, has not been thoroughly researched. However, some local residents remember that Miriam Bracey ran the school in its last years. Miriam Bracey was well known in the community through the mid 1990s. She ran the Peoples Flower Shop. Founded in 1948, and located at 509 North Alfred Street, several blocks northeast of the Carver Nursery School, the Peoples Flower Shop was one of the more important African American-owned commercial establishments anchoring the neighborhood. It still exists. Gwen Day, who was born in September 1944, testified in her affidavit for the court case about the building's proposed demolition that she attended the school when Miriam Bracey taught here.[17] Based on the customs of the time, this was probably after Day was two years of age, and thus after Darrine Bennett had been hired by the school district and interviewed by the media. The current building owner, William Cromley, gave the date

[16] "Alexandria Teachers' Job Sacrifice Held Useless," *Washington Afro American*, 9 February 1946.
[17] Chisley, Margaret A., et al, "Margaret A. Chisley et al., vs. City of Alexandria," 14 February 2010.

of 1949 for when the school closed in a statement he gave to the city.[18] No further information has been uncovered on the last year or two of the school's operation.

The building became even more important to the neighborhood after that as a meeting facility used by the local African American community. As a result of being rented out to a private veterans lodge a year or two after the nursery closed, the new use not only served the needs of the veterans. The facility filled a niche as a place where a variety of events and gatherings occurred for the local African American community, a role that continued for more than half a century. Many African American families still living in Alexandria have fond memories of events that occurred here over the years.

In its final years, the legion lodge was in decline and some neighbors came to associate it with criminal activities that occurred on the property and around the building's perimeter. A recent proposal to demolish the building resulted in a court case filed on the basis of civil rights.[19] As the case showed, the building is seen very differently from two separate vantage points today, within the older African American community as represented by the members of several families with long tenure in the neighborhood, and within a large percentage of the rest of the community including those neighbors who are not African American.

The report that follows is intended to draw out as much as possible the positive qualities of this historic building and its remarkable story. As a point of beginning, the fact that this report was requested for the purposes of interpreting, documenting, and illuminating that story, and making recommendations with regard to the building as it now stands, toward its potential restoration or rehabilitation, in the context of a controversy that surrounded a proposal to demolish the building, is also, in itself, a recognition that there is more than one way to see the Carver Nursery School building, or William Thomas American Legion Post, as it stands near the corner of Queen and North Fayette Streets.[20]

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[18] Parker-Gray (Alexandria) Board of Architectural Review, from City of Alexandria, Virginia, "Memorandum to: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review from: BAR Staff, subject: Supplemental Information for BAR Case 2009-0109," 15 October 2009.

[19] Chisley, Margaret A., et al, "Margaret A. Chisley et al., vs. City of Alexandria," 14 February 2010.

[20] For a summary presentation of both sides of the debate over this property at the time the lawsuit was filed (in 2010), see: Pope, Michael Lee, Equal Protection Battle on Fayette: Lawsuit charges demolition of American Legion building would be a civil-rights violation," *Alexandria Gazette-Packet*, Alexandria, Virginia: Connection Newspapers, L.L.C., 22 April, 2010, accessed online at: http://connectionarchives.com/PDF/2010/042110/Alexandria.pdf .

Historic Context

The Carver Nursery School Building was built by the local school board as a result of federal legislation designed to provide funding for schools for infants in communities across the country, especially where defense industries needed workers to fill jobs that could be held by women of child-bearing age. Called the Lanham Community Facilities Act for its sponsor Congressman Fritz G. Lanham of Texas, the legislation had passed in 1941. It provided funds for nursery schools and daycare facilities, both newly established ones and some that had been created through other programs not long before the act passed. The federal government's stated intention in 1941 was to help young mothers take jobs in certain industries where workers were needed as the country entered World War II. However, some of the schools had been created by earlier programs justified through different premises, such as creating jobs for teachers and construction workers. The Lanham Community Facilities Act was also one of several simultaneous and related wartime programs created only months before the United States actually entered the war that were to have a profound cumulative effect on the Alexandria area. These programs worked together to effect radical changes in the neighborhood surrounding the Carver Nursery School site.

The Lanham Community Facilities Act made the operation of preschools possible in many communities, but the act's funds were only used to build new buildings in those places where new construction was necessary. Where facilities were already in place, the legislation helped to start nurseries within existing public schools as well as extending the work of earlier programs. It financed the continued operation of many existing nursery schools and daycare centers, some of which had been built shortly before the program was created and specifically designed to incorporate the latest ideas about nursery school design. Administrative funds helped a number of preschools and daycare centers that had been established almost a decade earlier to sustain their activities in buildings built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The administrative costs of some even older "laboratory" schools, a facility type that was most often found at or near college campuses, were also to be financed through the Lanham Act. Some of the funded facilities had been created within existing school buildings or other recently built buildings associated with related programs, like the WPA, even where the building had been built for a completely different purpose. In Alexandria, for instance, a Lanham Act nursery school was established in a small frame building at the intersection of Mount Vernon and Commonwealth Avenues that had been built in 1919 as a medical clinic for young mothers and their babies.[21] By the 1930s, the WPA had operated a sewing center in the clinic building, but that building was repurposed for a second time under the Lanham Act program to serve as a nursery school. (The building has subsequently been repurposed again, as the home of a collaborative society of artists known as "Del Ray Artisans." The building itself has been renamed the Nicholas A. Colasanto Center, in honor of a former city manager and five-term member of Alexandria City Council.)

[21] "Five Nurseries in Alexandria Close Sept. 1," *The Washington Post*, 22 August 1945.

The program funded at least six facilities in Alexandria. In August 1945, the schools were listed in a newspaper article as: Mount Vernon Nursery School (the clinic building, also known as the WPA sewing center), Washington Nursery School (in the historic Alexandria Academy building on South Washington Street), a nursery school at the Chinquapin Village Recreation Building (a newly built neighborhood of housing for defense workers), a nursery school in a temporary building on the grounds of George Mason School on Cameron Mills Road, and Carver Nursery School, as well as a large daycare center at Jefferson School (the white public school two blocks west of the Carver Nursery School site).[22] By September 1945, it was reported that four nursery schools were closing (the wording and number given at that time suggest that either the Chinquapin Village facility or the one at George Mason School may have already closed before this), but that three of them would be reopening under a new plan. The three listed to reopen were the one at the Mt. Vernon Avenue location, Carver Nursery School, and the school at the old Alexandria Academy.[23]

Although the idea was promoted in 1941-1945 as a temporary program to aid the war effort, and may have been discussed even earlier, the concept that nurseries allowed women to work caught on immediately. In fact, there was enough demand for such schools to support additional facilities privately.[24] Thus, some privately funded facilities were opening in Alexandria even before the government facilities were built, picking up on what the government was presenting as their idea. The interest in using private funds to pay for nursery schools helped to keep these and additional schools and daycare centers in operation after the war ended. The Carver Nursery School, however, filled an important niche since public schools were to remain strictly segregated for more than a decade into the future. On the other hand, in related developments, alternatives to segregated schools were just then beginning to appear. Ultimately, the Carver Nursery School was short-lived, apparently because the African American community had less clout with the public school system and less money available to continue the work privately. It was also created only two decades before Segregation was destined to end.

One of the earliest examples of a privately funded school for the same purposes was in the Beverly Hills section of Alexandria, a then-new suburb about three miles northwest of the original city. In Beverly Hills, the community started the school in a rented space provided by a newly built local church, and parents built their own playground equipment for it.[25] The pastor of the church was one of the leaders of the effort. The Beverly Hills community boasted in 1943 about how their facility had opened right at the beginning of the effort to set up the government-funded schools by avoiding the "red tape" of

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[22] "Five Nurseries in Alexandria Close Sept. 1," *The Washington Post*, 22 August 1945.
The title of the article derives from the five that were set up as nursery schools. The daycare at Jefferson School is also discussed, but not counted in the five (in the title) because it was set up to care for toddlers without being on a nursery school format.

[23] "[Four] 4 Nurseries Close Down as Funds Expire," *The Washington Post*, 30 September 1945; and "Five Nurseries in Alexandria Close Sept. 1," *The Washington Post*, 22 August 1945.

[24] "Parents Start Own Nursery School," *The Washington Post*, 10 January 1943; also see web site of Beverly Hills UMC Preschool: http://bhcpnet.org/ .

[25] Ibid.

government programs[26] (the school is still in existence; its web site currently lists its date of founding as 1939).[27] The same community leaders in Beverly Hills established the Burgundy Country Day School in 1946, acquiring a farm outside the city and setting it up to serve as a private alternative to the local public schools. The day school idea appears to have resulted from the success of the cooperative nursery school as well as an interest in providing a means for racially integrated education. The school was designed to serve as an alternative to public schools for a wide range of families of different incomes, especially those who could not afford other private schools. Beverly Hills is an example of how new developments at the fringe of Alexandria, where new residents coming to the city during the war, brought new ideas and new sets of values. Arguably a 1940s outgrowth of the nursery school movement, the Burgundy Country Day School actively recruited a select group of African American students and thus became the first integrated school in the state of Virginia.[28]

The Influence of the Works Progress Administration

Before the Lanham Act, creating jobs had been an impetus for building new schools through the Works Progress Administration, although the idea of nursery school education had already come to the fore long before the WPA era. The WPA nursery schools were based on earlier programs, such as the laboratory schools operated within or near many teachers' colleges. They are representative of how society was then adopting and implementing new ideas and adjusting them to evolving circumstances. While the WPA's overall intent had been to create jobs, it had also created a system for advancing the progressive ideas that had been suggested by older institutions initially with slightly different purposes in mind. At first, the preschool and daycare center movement had had a limited geographic impact because the first schools were almost always established through teachers' colleges. There, faculty and students majoring in education used them to study how children behaved and learned. In a broad sense, though, these early schools and the later WPA schools and Lanham Act "war nurseries" were all part of a larger continuum of related programs that developed as American culture and the country's political system responded to the changing circumstances of the first half of the twentieth century, a time when educational innovations were becoming increasingly relevant or were increasingly felt to be necessary. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, their relevance seemed to spike as the country was experiencing major and rapid changes fueled first by a deep economic depression and then by an international war that demanded that ordinary citizens try to help the cause in every way that they could.

Older Ideas Pushed forward by Evolving Circumstances

In the changing circumstances, certain progressive ideas like the preschool movement blossomed into multi-faceted institutions while the specific rationale used to provide funding kept changing. One aspect or some benefit or another of the program would be emphasized depending upon the trends of that particular moment in time. For the WPA, building nursery schools was just part of a larger effort to create jobs for unemployed

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[26] Ibid.
[27] http://bhcpnet.org/ .
[28] http://www.burgundyfarm.org/about-burgundy/history/index.aspx .

construction workers, professionals, and others. As new schools and daycare centers had been built, however, it became clear both that they needed a source of funding and that they could serve an important societal purpose in allowing young mothers to leave their homes and take jobs. This would be true whether their reason for doing so was family income, career considerations, a need for a change of scenery, or because the local economy had new jobs that needed to be filled for one reason or another. The government had learned in building schools through the WPA that having more facilities for young children not only created jobs for teachers, design professionals, and construction workers, but it also made it possible for mothers of infants to go to work. Women who had been confined to the home in earlier generations simultaneously came to the realization that with nursery schools in place they could have a family and still pursue careers and take jobs when and where they were needed. What began as a way to help families whose income was not adequate evolved into a program that made more people available to meet the workforce needs of the war effort, whether income was the main consideration or not for the family of any given, newly employed individual. The Lanham Community Facilities Act refocused the concept on the need to place women of child-bearing age in the workforce where the funding could be justified as helping to meet the needs of the war effort. At minimum, this logic emerged as the political impetus that made the program's funding stream possible and it helped to rationalize the government's financial involvement.

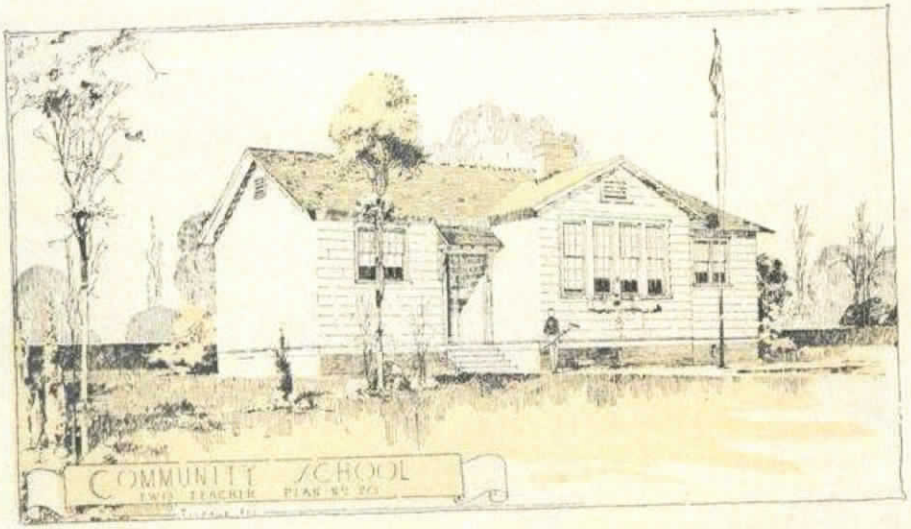
The Markings of a Specific Moment in Architectural History

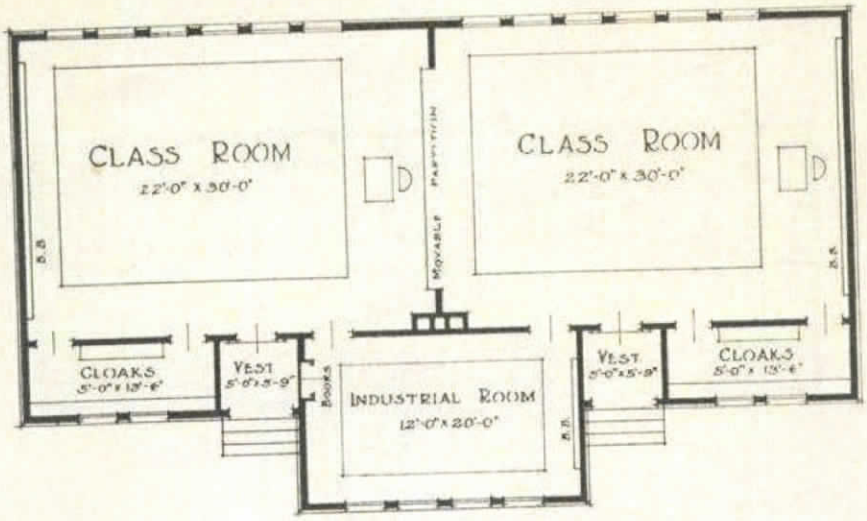
Although the Carver Nursery School was not built with WPA funds, the building has characteristics often associated with the era in which WPA was an active force in American architecture. Many of its individual features are typical of the 1930s and 1940s, a time when there had been very little new construction of any kind for over a decade apart from the work of federally funded programs. The building also bears similarities to mail order buildings and to other schools built in the South for African Americans in the period when all public schools there were segregated.

Sears Houses, Rosenwald Schools, the Craftsman style, and the American Bungalow

At the time, new mass-produced building materials had just become available as alternatives to the more laborious methods traditionally used in putting buildings together. The craftsman style evolved with new ideas for frame houses, often inexpensive details made of wood that looked exotic and were easily mass-produced. Two-story buildings in this style often followed the format of the American Four-Square, a building type sometimes thought of as a style by itself. Houses that were similar in detail, but one to one-and-a-half stories in height were often called bungalows. Bungalows were typically marked by their spacious porches, hipped roofs with sprocked edges, and dormers frequently containing bedrooms. These features lent themselves to mass-produced building components and delivery, usually by railcar, of a kit of pre-made parts for assembling the house on-site. After Sears, Roebuck, and Company developed a niche for dealing in mail-order buildings, the company's president, Julius Rosenwald became a leading benefactor of school buildings for African Americans, particularly in rural areas of the South. Consequently, many craftsman-style frame "Rosenwald"

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLANS





FLOOR PLAN NO **20**
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

—5—

Rosenwald "Plan for a Two-Teacher School" (from http://historysouth.org/_ischools/twoteachew.html)

schools appeared in the rural landscape in areas where African Americans lived. These schools looked somewhat like the mail-order bungalows that Sears sold, though a little larger. They are also frequently similar in size and style to the Carver Nursery School, although some are two or three times as large. The economy and timing of the emerging construction methods made frame schools with Craftsman style detailing common, particularly in locations where a one-story building would suffice. Some of the construction details associated with the Craftsman style were typical of this era for reasons other than just style: the details were often common, mass-produced building materials, including pre-fabricated components that were available on the open market at the time, but they also represented new ideas implemented through manufacturing, were less expensive or more efficient ways to build, and/or they were innovative materials that became popular for other specific reasons in a rapidly changing society strained first by economic problems and then by the war. The inexpensive construction materials associated with the era and with the Craftsman style were most often used in frame construction. They included techniques and materials like factory-milled lumber, manufactured sheet goods that could be used in place of wet-applied plaster, unfinished rafter ends at eaves, simplified trim around interior and exterior openings for windows and doors, and low-maintenance exterior siding. These less expensive alternatives to more typical brick or masonry construction are more often found in rural locations and segregated schools built for African American children. When schools were being built

Images of what war-time Nursery Schools were like in the era of the Lanham Community Facilities act, from http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/ece-policy-quiz/ . The top right image is dated 1945.

for integrated districts or as segregated facilities primarily for white children, brick construction tended to be almost universal. Brick buildings detailed in the Classical Revival style, Colonial Revival style, Prairie style, or Collegiate Gothic seem to have been preferred where brick or stone-walled construction could be afforded. Another factor was the emergence by the 1920s of building codes that generally outlawed frame construction for two-story school buildings.

A Model within the Larger Realm of the Lanham Community Facilities Act

Newspaper stories in the mid-1940s said that 2,500 schools across the country were being financed by the Lanham Community Facilities Act.[29] It is not known at this writing how many new school buildings were actually built with Lanham Act funds, since the program also helped to continue the work of many schools and daycare centers that had been built by other programs. However, the newspaper coverage of that time also suggests that Alexandria was considered a model community for other parts of Virginia to emulate, a place where the government could show what could be done to help teachers, families, and the war effort together. For instance, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported on 21 January 1944 that Alexandria's then-new director of nursery schools, Dr. Martha Rinsland, had invited Dr. Bess Goodykoontz, the national assistant commissioner of education in Washington, along with several others, to tour "Alexandria's federally sponsored day care centers."[30] The entourage was to include a woman on the staff of the Virginia Department of Education and another woman then serving as the city's supervisor of elementary grades. The model included segregation, as that was the state of affairs across Virginia at the time. Improvements were then underway at the center on Mt. Vernon Avenue and the newspaper had just reported in its previous edition that the construction had begun at the Queen Street facility (still to be named Carver Nursery School). Notably, since the WPA and related programs had provided new buildings just a few years earlier for the white portion of the Alexandria area, the Lanham funds were used specifically to "catch up" by building a facility for the African American minority.

More than Just Schools or Daycare Facilities

In the era of the Lanham Community Facilities Act, community-based nursery schools began to tackle unusual issues that are not always apparent in either the buildings or the press coverage from the time. In some areas of the country, for instance, the goal of helping young mothers enter the work force sometimes meant keeping children at night while the women were assigned to night shift. An example was in Lawrence, Kansas, where special policies were developed at nursery schools and daycare centers so that the children whose mothers were on night shift were not interrupted by returning parents who arrived at odd hours while the children were likely to be asleep.[31] Security was another consideration in setting such policies. At the Lanham Act-funded Maritime Child Development Center in Richmond, CA, one classroom was set aside to be a 24-hour

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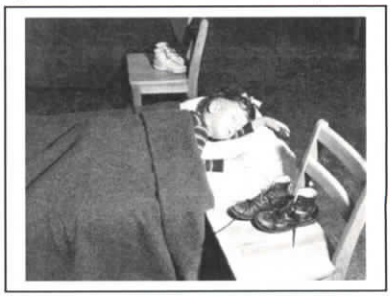
[29] "Nursery School Scene," *The Afro American*, 12 June 1943.
[30] "Nurseries Have Guest from District," *Alexandria Gazette*, 21 January 1944, page 3.
[31] Evans, Mary Elizabeth, "Nursery Lessons Learned in Wartime, *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 38, 1946, pages 257-260.

nursery to help mothers who worked evening shift or night shift.[32] This kind of scheduling suggests that the uniformity of nursery school hours may also have led families and employers to adopt more workplace schedules than they might have done otherwise. Commentators, who analyzed the first nursery schools of this time, focused on what could be learned about how students took naps, ate meals, interacted with one another, and similar aspects of the experience. Literature from the time reflects the amazement of teachers as they observed the children during break time when they had been told to lie down on their mats for a few moments; many of them fell asleep even though no one had told them to do so![33] The data gathering was only informal in this case, but commentators still wrote it up in national journals, and the people involved were making an effort to apply a scientific approach to what they were learning about toddlers and their parents as they launched a new kind of social institution.



The Process of Getting the Building Built: A Federal, State, Local Collaborative Effort

Although the funding was federal, the initiative took on the appearance of an idea that had originated in the local school system. Virginia's Department of Education developed the plans for the building at Queen and North Fayette Streets, and the Alexandria School Board was responsible for setting up and managing the facility.[34] The city acquired the land after the design had been developed,[35] and they continued to be the owner of the parcel and building for many years after the school had closed. Apparently because it was taken as a "given" that public schools were all managed through existing local school boards, the school was established through the normal steps a school board takes in setting up a new facility. The local media covered the process step-by-step as they would for any other school district project, while treating the Lanham Act purely as a grant source the district had reached out to in order to achieve its local objectives, as if the initial idea of having more nursery schools had first come up at a local board meeting. The title block of the drawings indicates they were produced by the "Division of School Buildings, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia," and they are dated August 1943.[36] The school was built almost exactly as shown on the plans (the changes that were made to the design, while minor, follow a logic that seems to be self-apparent, as discussed further, below). Though the building looks similar to some other school

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[32] "Designed for 24 Hour Child Care." *Architectural Record* 95, no. 3 (1944): 84-88. [Cited in National Register nomination for Maritime Child Development Center, Contra Costa County, Richmond, California, NR 2004.]

[33] Evans, Mary Elizabeth, "Nursery Lessons Learned in Wartime, *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 38, 1946, page 258.

[34] "Alexandria School Head Makes Annual Report," [Alexandria Bureau of] *The Washington Post.* Jul 14, 1944, pg. 6, and "Five Teachers Assume Duties," *Alexandria Gazette*, 20 January 1944, page 2; also, "Nursery School for Alexandria" [drawings], Division of School Buildings, State Dept. of Education, Richmond, Virginia, August, 1943, and Application for Permit to Build (at S.W. corner of Queen & Fayette) 11 January 1944.

[35] Alexandria Deed Book 204, pg. 237.

[36] "Nursery School for Alexandria" [drawings], Division of School Buildings, State Dept. of Education, Richmond, Virginia, August, 1943.

buildings of the era, it is believed that the plans were a custom design for this project, and the exact same design was not used elsewhere. The uniformity and symmetry of the plan, however, including the equal detailing of the design on sides facing toward streets and those facing away from streets suggests that the designers began with the assumption that the parcel was almost perfectly level and that orientation to a street, or providing a specially designed façade, was not a major consideration. They certainly did not design a building that resembled or reflected any effort to relate to the commercial storefronts, movie theaters, row houses, and other building in the surrounding blocks of the neighborhood. In terms of street orientation and how the building meets grade, the project is not customized to this specific site, and it is possible that the architect who prepared the plans never saw the site. On the other hand, however, the drawings do refer to the west gable end (facing North Fayette Street) as the "Front Elevation" and the east gable end as the "Rear Elevation," yet these labels are accompanied by almost no effort at differentiating the street side from the opposite side architecturally.

The Only New African American Lanham Act Nursery School Building in Alexandria
Of several nursery schools operated with Lanham Act funding in the Alexandria-Arlington area, this was the only building known to have been built specifically as a nursery school for African American children. Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia and across the American "South" were, of course, strictly segregated by race at the time. Although the school district was involved from the beginning in overseeing the operation of the facility, as reported in local newspaper coverage, its role ultimately changed when the Lanham Act expired. Without the outside funding, the school board decreased the services at the Carver School, eventually leading to its closure.

Establishing the school took several steps across at least a year. By June 1943, no less than a year before the current building was built, press coverage indicates that a nursery school of some sort was functioning with several African American toddlers on the rolls, as part of or within the larger daycare facility at Jefferson School, a public school for white students two blocks south of the Carver Nursery School site. It was apparently recognized to be a temporary location, and it may have been a separate facility that the community felt was needed to accommodate the young of African American families, housed within the same walls as the larger daycare center for white children. The children shown in the accompanying photograph all appear to be African American. The coverage says that the facility was funded through the Lanham Act.[37] In August of that year, two months after the first story appeared, the state completed the architectural plans for the new building which future newspaper accounts would call a "permanent" facility.[38] The city bought the real estate in November.[39] The building permit was issued the following January,[40] and the building was completed by July 1944.

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[37] Kiddies in Many States Get Day Care through Uncle Sam's War Nurseries," [also, same page: Leave Care of Tots to Your Uncle Sam,"] *The Afro American*, 25 September 1943, page 20.
[38] "Nursery School for Alexandria" [drawings], Division of School Buildings, State Dept. of Education, Richmond, Virginia, August, 1943.
[39] Alexandria Deed Book 204, pg. 237
[40] Application for Permit to Build (at S.W. corner of Queen & Fayette) 11 January 1944.

Earlier History of the Parcel Where the School Stands

The tract of land where the school was to be built had remained relatively undeveloped for over 150 years. Although the city ended up with a playground on what eventually became an adjoining parcel next to the building, the playground was created in tandem with the school. Before 1944, it was almost vacant land, except for a few small houses that appear to have been poorly built or otherwise short-lived. When the timing of the design and the building permit are compared to the chain-of-title, it becomes clear that the City of Alexandria acquired the real estate in November 1943 for the express purpose of building the nursery school and adjoining playground here as one project.

This particular property has passed in and out of private hands and through different, but minor, uses. It remained largely an open, undeveloped parcel from the 1790s forward, and, while still in its original private ownership, it even had a public (or military) use, as the location of a powder magazine before the city street grid was extended across the area in 1798.[41] The powder magazine had been in use at the time when troops left Alexandria in 1794 marching to Western Pennsylvania to suppress the insurrection triggered by the Washington Administration's tax on whiskey. After the street grid was developed, the tract remained in the possession of Gustavus Alexander, a member of the founding family for whom Alexandria was named.[42] The open parcel, which was described as "one quarter square," or one-fourth of a city block, remained generally undeveloped as it passed through the hands of several of Alexander family descendants.[43] One or two rental houses appeared on the land from time to time, as shown on *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, but about every other map (as drawn in increments of five to ten years) shows the center of the tract as vacant.[44] Bordering the parcel was a line of longer-lasting row houses labeled on the maps as "Negro Tenements."[45] They appeared at the back of the lot, away from all the adjoining streets, although they briefly had their own access alley. They were at the western edge of the present property boundary, mostly within the lines of what is now the next parcel to the west. Their location, neighboring William Peck's lumber and coal yard, which occupied the next parcel west, suggests they could have once housed workers at Peck's enterprises.[46] The open tract was passed down through Alexander descendants with surnames including Swann[47] and Smoot,[48] until

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[41] "Ye Old Powder House," *The Fireside Sentinel* (Lloyd House newsletter), Vol. I, No. 2, April 1987.

[42] Alexandria Deed Book 18, pages 533-534 and Deed Book 19, pages 121-122.

[43] See other deeds listed in chain-of-title matrix on page 44 of this report.

[44] Sanborn Insurance Maps for years: 1896, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1921, 1941, & 1958. Also see copies of these maps as presented on pages 34-35 of this report.

[45] See Sanborn Map references to Negro Tenements on 1896, 1902, and 1907 maps.

[46] The adjoining property to the west had been William Peck's lumberyard, coal yard, and general storage facility until he died in 1913 [?]; Peck was the builder of many of the houses in the Uptown/Parker-Gray area. The complex was leased and later sold to various parties after his death. The property that later became the Alexandria Laundry was also used for "general storage" as part of the larger lumberyard / coal yard parcel in Peck's time

[47] Alexandria Deed Book 18, pages 533-534.

[48] Alexandria Deed Book 69, pages 545-546. The Smoot family, related by marriage to the Alexandria family, founded Smoot Lumber in the early nineteenth century. The main lumberyard in Alexandria

Betty Smoot, a widow, sold it in 1919 to the Alexandria Laundry, a business that was then leasing a large commercial building on the next parcel to the west (previously, part of the Peck complex, labeled as general storage on some maps). From the Alexandria Laundry, the open parcel passed into the possession of William J. McClure, Sr., in 1927.[49] McClure died in 1928, leaving it to his wife and children, including William J. McClure, Jr.[50]

Two-thirds of a year passed from the time the city purchased the property until the building was completed. However, the drawings bear an even earlier date than the deed. The timing may be reflected in the generic aspects of the design. The plans were drawn up by the state's Division of School Buildings in August. This places the design activities at least three months before the city purchased the property from William J. McClure, Jr., which the deed record indicates was in the fall of 1943. The building permit was not issued until the beginning of 1944, and the building was not completed until mid-summer. This sequence makes it seem logical that the city and school board would have had the site in mind before it was purchased. It suggests that the building was designed specifically for this site, but also leaves the possibility open that it was designed to be suitable for any relatively level that might be available should this particular purchase not go through. In any event, the development of the property appears to have been an ongoing process across at least eleven months, from August of one year to July of the next.

What Sensitivities the Coverage in African American Newspapers Reflects

The new nursery schools generated local interest, and the topic was covered in several papers, including the *Alexandria Gazette*, *The Washington Post*, and in the regional African American newspapers. The coverage in African American papers included both the Baltimore and Washington editions of a paper called the *Afro-American*. Coverage in the *Afro-American* gives a sense of how it was seen from inside the community, as defined at the time more by racial lines than by geographic ones. At the beginning of the year-long process, the *Afro-American's* coverage appears to reflect community excitement about the project, extending perhaps as far as Baltimore, since it was specifically mentioned in that city's edition of the paper in some of the articles that appeared.[51] In covering the controversy that unfolded when the janitor was reassigned and the teachers resigned in protest, the *Afro-American's* tone appears much more jaded, although the articles about the event are succinct and simply state the facts.[52] The simple facts of the case were likely to be easy enough to be interpreted by readers from within

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through most of the city's history, it is still in operation though now at a suburban location. The family lived in the Uptown/Parker-Gray area in this period.

[49] For William J. McClure, Sr., will, see: Alexandria Will Book, 296-298.

[50] William J. McClure, Jr., deed, see: Alexandria Deed Book 204, pg. 237.

[51] "Nursery School Scene," *The Afro American*, 12 June 1943, and Kiddies in Many States Get Day Care through Uncle Sam's War Nurseries," [also, same page: Leave Care of Tots to Your Uncle Sam,"], *The Afro American*, 25 September 1943, page 20.

[52] "Teachers Given Janitorial Duties in Alexandria, 2 Carver Nursery School Teachers Resign Jobs," *Washington Afro American*, 2 February 1946, and "Alexandria Teachers' Job Sacrifice Held Useless," *Washington Afro American*, 9 February 1946.

the African American community. Also, the choice of photographs, which were apparently staged for some of the articles about the teachers resigning, may be telling. They clearly convey the irony and pain of the difficult situation, doing so through photojournalism rather than words.

Relationship to Other Federal Activities Changing Alexandria at this Moment

The need for the facility may have appeared particularly intense in the Alexandria African American community in the early 1940s because of other similar programs that were changing the nature of the community. The community was the focus of attention of several federal programs at this time. Funding had just been allocated to create new housing under the premise that new residential units were critical to the war effort as they would provide places of residence for workers in defense-related industries.[53] The funding for the housing projects was really several different allotments that created different development projects, in some cases with strikingly different architectural appearance, demographics, or other characteristics. Alexandria then had three or four industrial plants that were of strategic importance during the war, such as the U.S. Naval Torpedo Station and a Ford Motor plant that the United States Government had acquired in 1942 for war-related uses (built in 1932, Ford had operated the plant for only 10 years; the government acquired it to serve as an extension of the U.S. Naval Torpedo Station and apparently for other ballistics and naval manufacturing during the war).[54] Hundreds of units of public housing were under construction in Alexandria between 1941 and 1944 (i.e., between the Lanham Act's passage and when the nursery school was built) on the premise that they would help the war effort by adding to the number of residential spaces available in Alexandria and by making Alexandria a more attractive place for workers to live.

A second concern reflected in the housing efforts was the removal of blighted houses and blighted neighborhoods. Some commentators at the time saw the two issues as one continuum, arguing that the new housing would make happier and better workers of local citizens, in addition to increasing the number of livable units in the areas that had been labeled as blighted. From the point of view of the Alexandria African American community, however, another interpretation is also apparent. Many privately owned residences were removed, one entire neighborhood (called "The Hump"[55]) disappeared, African Americans were excluded by legal covenants from living in or owning houses in certain adjoining city neighborhoods, and the only hope for staying in the area where

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[53] EHT Traceries, Inc., Samuel Madden Homes, Section A…History and Building Documentation, Report prepared for the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, July 2003.

[54] Cullinane, John, Associates, *Historic Resources Assessment of the Old Ford Plant*, John Cullinane Associates, Washington, D.C., 2007.

[55] EHT Traceries, Inc., Samuel Madden Homes, Section A…History and Building Documentation, Report prepared for the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, July 2003; also: African American Historic Sites Self-Guided Tour, Alexandria Black History Resource Center, undated brochure, posted at http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/brochures/OHABrochureAfricanAmericanSelfGuidedTour.pdf ; and A Remarkable Journey [Brochure], accessed online at: http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/blackhistory/BHCourageousJourney.pdf .

their neighborhood had been, while these private property owners were in many cases giving up long-time family homes, was to become tenants in publicly owned units.

People were likely to see Alexandria's transformation at this time very differently depending upon the frame of reference of the observer. From the local point of view, across Alexandria, and especially in the white community, the benefit of the federal initiatives could be seen as giving the area a more uniform appearance and encouraging local residents to become a more consistent and unified workforce in the local factories. At the same time, the new construction projects made the community more desirable to an ever-increasing number of incoming workers. In a sense this was massive social engineering, at the cutting edge of new ideas about how families might live and thrive. Yet it was also carried out following the distinctive lines that defined racial segregation in the era. The Carver Nursery School facility was a small piece of this much larger reinvention of local neighborhoods where African Americans lived. The nursery school provided a modest educational anchor at the edge of the Queen Street business district. Simultaneously, a few blocks away, what had been whole neighborhoods of African American residences were being cleared and replaced with a larger number of public-owned brick residences where the local families could relocate as renters. In the northwest quadrant of the city's original street grid, where the neighborhoods of Uptown, The Hump, and Colored Rosemont[56] came together, the number of new houses built in the 1940s outnumbered the number of existing houses left standing, and more than half of the new houses were built as publicly owned housing.

Documents Do Not Make It Clear Where the Mothers Worked

The known documents about the Carver Nursery School do not indicate where the young mothers were expected to work. The school was built next to the Alexandria Laundry, one facility that employed women at the time, including cleaning military uniforms. It was also near a number of retail and wholesale establishments, movie houses, restaurants, and similar businesses where a woman may have taken a job as a clerk, cook, or waitress. Mothers who left their children here may have worked at one of the riverfront industrial facilities where torpedoes and naval vessels were made and repaired. There were, of course, other factories, stores, homes where domestic help was in demand, and many other employers in the community. However, with the reorganization of housing facilities in the neighborhood, the nursery would not have been directly on the route from the new defense housing to the actual defense industries at the waterfront except for a small number of families living at the western fringe of the new developments. This geographic distribution suggests that the defense industry argument may have been less directly true for families that used the Carver Nursery School. Some women may have worked as support staff to the growing industrial facilities. For families who were living in defense housing, one parent may have worked in smaller businesses on Queen Street, King Street (the main business district for the white community), or in other jobs. In the expansion of the community, however, many jobs would have been available that were only indirectly related to the defense industries, such as working at one of the military plants, clerking in a store that was needed by the defense industries, doing related work

[56] Ibid.


Kiddies in Many States Get Day Care Through Uncle Sam's War Nurseries

Union Denies Strike Threat

Page 20 The Afro-American, September 25, 1943

Ex-Principal Takes Over New Job

Morgue Keepers Wince as Kin Identify Train Wreck Victims

such as laundering uniforms, or providing domestic help to military families. Despite the image in other areas of the country, where Defense funding paid for nursery schools that allowed "Rosie the Riveter" to hold a factory job while her husband was at war, the record is not clear that this would have been the case in Alexandria, and the geographic location suggests that the women may have worked in smaller facilities at jobs that were less industrial in nature.

First Coverage Related to an Earlier Facility, before the Current Building Was Built

As mentioned above, publicity began to appear about the school and how it functioned as much as a year before the current building was completed, suggesting that the facility might have first operated from a temporary location. When a photo of an African American child was published in the *Baltimore Afro-American* on 12 June 1943, the caption said she was eating "her midday meal at a war nursery school in Alexandria, VA." It goes on to state that the school is "financed in part from funds under the Lanham Act."[57] Clearly, it is a reference to an earlier facility serving the same purpose, but a year before the Carver School was completed. The location of the school where this particular photograph was taken is not provided, and the caption with the photograph does not indicate for certain that the child was at a segregated school. At any rate, it was not the building now in existence at Queen and North Fayette Streets, as the drawings for that design would not be finished for two more months, and the building itself would not be completed for another eleven months. A collage of photographs that appeared in the *Afro-American* on 25 September 1943[58] includes an image of three children who appear to be African American for which the

African American child eating at a Lanham Act School in Alexandria, from the Afro-American, 12 June 1943.

[57] *Baltimore Afro-American* on 12 June 1943.
[58] *Afro-American* on 25 September 1943.

caption says that the children are at a school housed in the annex of Jefferson School, (two blocks south of the Carver Nursery School site). The facility is referred to as "Uncle Sam's War Nurseries" in the headline and as an "FWA war nursery" in the caption. In addition to a large daycare facility located at Jefferson School, this may have also been a segregated nursery for African American children housed in the same building, using the location as a temporary accommodation until Carver Nursery School was built.

Although the provision of some kind of Lanham Act school with at least some African American children was highlighted in this press by the summer of 1943, the construction of the current building for the Carver Nursery School was not actually approved until the building permit was issued, on 11 January 1944. As mentioned above, the approval for the building was discussed in newspaper articles in January and February 1944, and the building was completed in the summer. The completion of the project was announced in a 14 July 1944 newspaper story. The project clearly drew the attention of the African American media, appearing in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. editions of the regional African American newspaper, *The Afro-American*, and it appeared numerous times in both the *Alexandria Gazette* and *The Washington Post*. The racial lines were always mentioned in the *Alexandria Gazette* and *The Washington Post*, most often characterizing the new building as a facility for "Negro children." The *Afro-American's* coverage presented the information conveying the idea that African Americans attended their own schools more as a "given" that did not need to be explicitly stated, beyond what the images themselves communicated non-verbally.

The Introduction of a Segregated African American Nursery School after Others Existed
There were several other Lanham Act nursery schools in Alexandria that served white children. Some of the other schools were in older buildings and may have opened earlier through funding from the WPA. It is conceivable that the first African American students attended one of the predominantly white schools, whether in integrated or separate sessions, until the new building was finished. However, based on the cultural divisions of that time, it seems much more likely that the image published in the *Baltimore Afro-American* is of a child at a special but temporary nursery school established for African American children in a separate space at the Jefferson School Annex, operating as a segregated facility in tandem with Lanham Act funded daycare facility there.

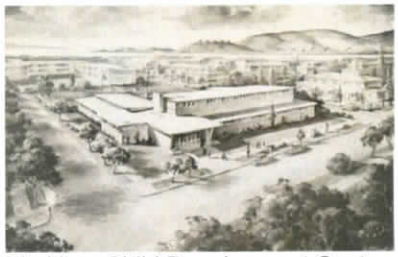
The First and Only New Building as a "Permanent" Nursery School for Black Children
It is clear from the press stories that followed the June 1943 coverage that the new building built in 1944 at Queen and North Fayette Streets was the only "permanent" location in the area built as a nursery school for African American children, and it is also clear that the June 1943 photograph is announcing the same general initiative. An article that appeared in The *Washington Post* in 1945 lists the locations of Lanham nursery schools in Alexandria as follows: the Old Alexandria Academy building on Washington Street, the Recreation Building in the then newly-built Chinquapin Village, in a

temporary building at George Mason School on Cameron Mills Road, at the former WPA sewing center on Mount Vernon Avenue (the building built by the WPA in 1919 as a medical clinic), and the new building at Queen and North Fayette Streets. The article describes the Carver Nursery School Building as follows: "a permanent building on Queen st. where Negro children were cared for." The larger daycare facility was also in

These images from a family's private album, now part of the William Thomas Post archives, show a Christmas event at the Carver Nursery School. They are the only photographs of children inside the school that apparently have survived.

operation at this time at Jefferson School. Another important consideration is that the Jefferson School facility apparently made no pretentions of being a teaching facility, as it was always clearly identified as a "daycare" center in the press coverage.

Other Nursery Schools and the Lessons Learned



Maritime Child Development Center, Richmond, California

The Carver Nursery School may not have followed the more aggressive trends in the nursery school movement. Some of the larger nursery school facilities built with Lanham Act funds were located at military bases. The Maritime Nursery School, for instance, built in association with the United States Marine Corps Housing Division #1 at Richmond, California, occupied a building built with Lanham Act funds.[59] Even though it was built specifically for nursery school use, it was so large that the design looks more like something suitable to serve as a small town high school. A two-story facility, the first floor alone has six classrooms, each with its own toilet facilities at one end and a glass wall with doors opening out to a common playground at

[59] See: http://richmondconfidential.org/2011/09/30/a-world-war-ii-preschool-rings-again-with-children%E2%80%99s-shouts/ .

the other side. The facility was large enough to have a sizable area dedicated to serve as a waiting room for adults. It also had offices and similar spaces, and part of the building was two stories tall, an area large enough to contain several more classrooms.[60]

An article in the May 1946 edition of the *Journal of Home Economics* discussing the topic "Nursery Lessons Learned in Wartime" focuses on the school funded by the Lanham Act at the University of Kansas campus at Lawrence. A summary of the discussion appears at the beginning of the article: "Working with children throughout their entire day — beginning with breakfast and ending with the bath before bedtime — has given us an insight not to be achieved from textbooks nor from the comparatively limited contacts of the traditional nursery school."[61] The Lawrence facility studied the dietary habits of the children, sorting out what it would take to get them to eat certain vegetables. The staff engaged in debate with parents about whether vaccinations were necessary or not. The children were taught things like how to plant a garden and how to take the pits out of fruit. Another 1946 article in the *Journal of Home Economics* discusses how nursery school "laboratories" could be expensive to run, though the lessons learned were worthwhile.[62] By comparison, the Carver Nursery School was at the "traditional nursery school" end of the spectrum. There were no bathing facilities, children were apparently not kept beyond traditional daylight hours, and the school district thought it excessive to provide a dedicated janitor for this particular school.

The Decline of the Lanham Act and the Closure of the Nursery School

The nursery school project was short-lived, as the Lanham Act funding expired in 1945, not long after the war ended. Although the expectation at that time was that mothers would prefer to stay at home, the number of working mothers and the resultant demand for such facilities actually increased after the war, leading to many private daycare facilities. When the Lanham Act was in effect, parents paid a small amount for the daycare service. However, the required contribution more than doubled, from $12.00/month for each child to $27.00/month, after the Lanham Act expired.[63] When the Virginia school system took the school over without Lanham Act funds, the facility became embroiled in the controversy over the janitor and the teachers resigning.

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[60] Barber, Alicia, "Maritime Child Development Center" [Historic American Buildings Survey report], HABS No. CA-2718, summer 2001, accessed online at: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/CA3066/ .

[61] *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 38, 1946 [The organization that published this journal, formerly the American Home Economics Association, is now known as American Association of Family and Consumer Services. The article was retrieved from the library at their corporate offices on Columbus Street in Alexandria.]

[62] Read, Katherine H., "A Human Relationships Laboratory," *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 38, 1946, pages 634-636. [Courtesy American Association of Family and Consumer Services, 400 North Columbus Street, Alexandria, Virginia.]

[63] "[Four] 4 Nurseries Close Down as Funds Expire," *The Washington Post*, 30 September 1945, and "Alexandria Working Mothers Pay to Keep Child Centers," *The Washington Post,* 15 October 1945.

When the Building Became the Home of the William Thomas Post

A few years after this, in 1950, the building was leased to a veterans' organization, the William Thomas Post 129 of the American Legion. The post had been established in the 1930s. It was named for William Thomas, the first (and possibly only) African American soldier from Alexandria to die in World War I. Previous to leasing the Carver Nursery School building, the lodge met at the African American USO (United Service Organizations) facility, a building that stood several blocks north of the Carver Nursery School building until it was demolished in 1978.[64] The William Thomas Post rented the Carver building from 1950 until they purchased it from the city in 1987. They only owned it outright for 15 years, offering it for sale in 2002.[65]

The Building as a Center of Activities When it Housed the William Thomas Post

The American Legion post held many social events in the building over the years, including veterans events, beauty pageants, family functions, and similar activities. Many of these are recorded in the lodge's archives, which include newspaper clippings and many photographs of lodge-sponsored events. A report developed by Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning for the discussion of the property, says: "The American Legion sponsored such activities as Boys State, youth programs, sports teams and participated in parades."[66] Former participants have also identified a number of kinds of events that occurred there.[67] Ferdinand T. Day, a local leader in the African American community, said in his deposition that "The Legion Post was a center of positive cultural and social activity for the Parker-Gray community. The Legion was a place where without hesitation we could take children." Day recalled that his friend Ira Robinson kicked off his campaign to become the first African American city councilman

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[64] Parker-Gray (Alexandria) Board of Architectural Review, from City of Alexandria, Virginia, "Memorandum to: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review from: BAR Staff, subject: Supplemental Information for BAR Case 2009-0109," 15 October 2009.

Alexandria was an important center of USO activities, an institution established nationally in 1941 to provide entertainment to soldiers. Because of the segregated culture of the era, two USO facilities were built within a few blocks of each other (the USO building that served white soldiers is still standing and now serves as a wing of Jefferson School). The USO organization was disbanded in 1947, but it was reinstituted three years later during the Korean Conflict, and has remained in existence since. The name USO derives from the organization being a united effort of six social service groups that the federal government had approached asking them to assist in providing programs to entertain and boost the morale of the troops during their off time. The six groups were mainly organizations with religious ties that provided similar services to civilian young adults, like the YMCA, YWCA, and Salvation Army.

[65] Parker-Gray (Alexandria) Board of Architectural Review, from City of Alexandria, Virginia, "Memorandum to: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review from: BAR Staff, subject: Supplemental Information for BAR Case 2009-0109," 15 October 2009; see also Alexandria Deed Book 1231, pages 1867-1871 Alexandria Deed Book 0.080006108, pages 400-406, and Alexandria Deed Book 0.090002664, pages 596-597; also see other deeds and legal documents listed in the chain-of-title matrix on page 44 of this report.

[66] Parker-Gray (Alexandria) Board of Architectural Review, "Memorandum from BAR Staff to Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review, Subject: Consideration of a request for demolition at 224 North Fayette Street, American Legion Building," City of Alexandria, Virginia, 19 June 2009.

[67] The former participants listed kinds of events held at the facility in affidavits prepared for the Civil Rights court case over the building's future. See: Chisley, Margaret A., et al, "Margaret A. Chisley et al., vs. City of Alexandria" [the Civil Rights lawsuit to save the building], 14 February 2010.

since Reconstruction. Lillie Finklea recalls that "The Legion would regularly host social functions for African Americans of all ages on Friday and Saturday nights, such as dances, cabarets, and buffet dinners... It was a center not only for Parker-Gray but for members of the African American community from all over Alexandria." Vera Henderson says that "...there were very few public establishments where African Americans could freely congregate, other than the Legion... The Legion was used for every type of community function weddings, funerals, cookouts, or birthdays. My most fond memories of the Legion were the dances."[68]

Conversion to the William Thomas Post Involved only Minor Changes to the Building
From the organization's photo archives, recording these events, it appears that the interior partition walls that defined the two classrooms remained in place until approximately 1987, although the bookcases, cubby holes, and similar built-in furnishings were apparently removed.[69] This suggests that the events were small enough in attendance to fit into either one or the other of the classrooms. Several of the photos in the archives show that at least some of the events were held out-of-doors, apparently beside the kitchen door, using the building as a backdrop and extending into the area now occupied by the playground. A remodeling project was undertaken around the time that the lodge bought the building. They removed the center kitchen, relocating kitchen functions to an area off to the side next to (west of) the rest rooms. This made the two classrooms into something more like one large space, though the open area is still interrupted by a chimney and a bumped-out area occupied by the rest rooms (which are still in their original location) as well as the new kitchen.

The current design of the interior is a blend of unchanged walls and finishes, typical 1970s or 1980s remodeling materials, and two or three unfinished projects. Some aspects may have been left incomplete either in the ca.1987 campaign or in a later effort. The physical evidence appears to be that the lodge became less busy or less relevant at a point, possibly because the age of typical African American veterans who were part of the community. Therefore the expansion to make the interior more spacious for larger events and the effect of dressing it up with remodeling materials may have corresponded with decline. At any rate, if the intention was to spur on a renewal of interest at that time, it now appears to have failed. The lodge is still in existence, having relocated to Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood, but it may never again have the integral role in a surrounding neighborhood that it had when it operated from the North Fayette and Queen Street location.

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[68] Ibid.

[69] A copy of the photo archives of the William Thomas Post 129 of the American Legion is found on file at the Alexandria Black History Center. Many of the photographs show legion events, a number of which involved both African American legionnaires and members of all-white lodges meeting together, as well as parades the post participated in, and some events aimed at involving the outside community such as beauty pageants.

Changes to the Neighborhood since the 1980s
The neighborhood has experienced far-reaching changes since the 1980s. Many historic houses have been rehabilitated, and many new infill buildings have been built. Several large industrial buildings and about many units of public housing have been demolished to make way for new construction. Some blocks now contain mid-rise apartment buildings or similar buildings containing condominiums. The African American population has decreased, especially as older families have faced the increased real estate prices that accompanied these changes.

Themes the Building Reflects Tangentially
The building also reflects several themes tangentially. For instance, it was named for George Washington Carver, the famous African American educator and scientist who died in January 1943, the year the school project was authorized. However, it had only a short life as an education facility, nurseries were not a special concern of Carver's, it was built in an area with no known direct connection to Carver, and its name happens to reflect a momentary commemoration of Carver's famous career at the moment his life drew to a close. This is in contrast with the significant themes that are strongly reflected in the building, including its function as a locally established, federally funded nursery school, built during segregation, its relationship to the Lanham Act, and its relationship to the local African American community.

Several other themes remain linked but are not major sources of significance of the buildings as it stands. For example, for over 50 years, it contained a lodge named for William Thomas, a soldier who died a quarter century before the building was built. As important as the name "William Thomas" has become in identifying this building, it bears little direct or known relationship to his death during World War I. In construction and style, it resembles the Rosenwald Schools, built by Julius Rosenwald, leader of the Sears, Roebuck, Company. The Sears name is well known among historians of twentieth century architecture, particularly because of the mail-order kit houses the company sold. It is, of course, more than a coincidence that Rosenwald schools resemble the mail-order houses that Sears sold. The Carver Nursery School building clearly resembles both. It has some of the key architectural characteristics of kit buildings and Rosenwald Schools, but the connection is deceiving in both cases, as it was not a kit building, but a publicly funded project using a design developed by a staff architect at the state's board of education. Similarly, some of its characteristics (e.g., the gabled canopies on knee braces over the doorways) are characteristic of the Bungalow style of architecture, a style sometimes identified as Craftsman style. However, the building is not a clear example of this style.

Transfer to the Current Ownership
In 2002, when the lodge decided to sell the building, the city had first-right-of-refusal by a covenant in the deed, but when offered it, they decided not to exercise that option. There was an interim buyer, Christopher Carter, who bought the building in 2002[70] and

[70] Alexandria Deed Book 0.080006108, page 400-406 (additional information is found in city mortgage book references; see information in chain-of-title matrix, page 44 of this report).

sold it in 2009 to William Cromley, a developer in the Uptown/Parker-Gray area.[71] Cromley is also former chairman of the Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review (BAR). His proposal to demolish it, though approved by council, was stopped in court.

[71] Alexandria Deed Book 0.090002664, page 596-597.

Statement of Significance[72]

Also known as the William Thomas American Legion Post #129, the Carver Nursery School building derives its primary significance, across an extended period of time, from its association with the African American community of Alexandria, Virginia, in the middle decades of the Twentieth century. Like several other institutional edifices in the surrounding neighborhood, it represents a category of buildings that collectively embody and convey the ethnic heritage and African American social history of "Uptown," a neighborhood sometimes called "The 16th Census Tract." Without the presence of these institutional anchors in the neighborhood's townscape, which is otherwise almost entirely made up of private residences and privately owned business locations, the collective ethnic heritage would be less evident and less tangible.

At a time when it was legal to exclude people from buying or occupying real estate on the basis of race, most of the real estate in the Uptown neighborhood had no such restrictions. As a result, it came to be historically associated with African Americans. This was not because anyone was compelled to live within Uptown's bounds (and there were always some non-African Americans living, owning real estate and businesses, and/or working in Uptown), but rather because some other neighborhoods nearby excluded African Americans from residency or property ownership. Even setting aside the presence in legal documents of some very crisp lines between areas where African Americans could live and where they could not, the identification of the neighborhood with race and ethnicity, from the point of view of the African American citizen, was because enclaves of people who knew each other or were related in other ways lived in close proximity to one another and shared certain institutions and facilities in the neighborhood, people who collectively enjoyed the freedom of association that institutions within ones own neighborhood could provide. Among Alexandria's various African American neighborhoods, Uptown was also perceived as the better place to live because it contained the schools and stores, many churches, and some of the better houses available to the African Americans of Alexandria.

Although Alexandria's large street grid, as laid out in 1798, came to have about six other African American neighborhoods that developed at different times in the nineteenth century, Uptown became the largest by approximately the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century. A force that attracted African Americans to this particular part of the city was the proximity to schools. Both Parker-Gray Elementary School and later the Parker-Gray High School, the city's most important public schools for African American citizens in the twentieth century Segregation era, were located near the northern edge of the larger neighborhood. The neighborhood had over 20 blocks of residences, and, in the

[72] This section is included, not only because all historic structure reports should contain a statement of significance, but also because the question of the building's significance has been raised from time to time. The author of the present report also wrote the National Register nomination for the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District and served as project manager for other team members who conducted field survey of over 1,300 buildings in the district. As it was his decision initially to mark this building as a Contributing Resource within the National Register district, the attempt here is to explain the point of view that that decision reflected in more depth than may be available elsewhere.

era when the nursery school was built, Queen Street is believed to have had the largest concentration of businesses that were serving the African American community of the city as a whole. Not all of the businesses were owned by African Americans, but this was the main alternative to business areas nearby where white consumers predominated. The core area of the business district was primarily a two-block section of Queen Street within view of the nursery/legion building, an area that served as the neighborhood's main defining anchor (the length of the business district extends about two or three more blocks if one includes churches and a few stores at slightly scattered corner locations). The building is at the southwestern corner of this core area. Uptown also had a number of social institutions that anchored it, including several active lodges and at least a half dozen churches. Both were distributed in various parts of the larger neighborhood.

The fact that African American toddlers first attended nursery school at a school for white students just a couple blocks away, at Cameron and West Streets (at the Annex to Jefferson School, now known as Jefferson-Huston Elementary School), while Carver building was in the planning and construction phases, was possibly of equal importance in the location of the new school. In some ways, it is surprising that the African American children were housed there for a season, apparently in an integrated facility or a separate classroom, but the *Afro-American* newspaper has articles with photographs showing the students and stating in at least one caption that they were attending a facility funded by the Lanham Act at Jefferson School. Jefferson School was just a block off of King Street, Alexandria's main east-west business street, but also at approximately the point where the African American neighborhood of Uptown began, at Uptown's southwest corner. Placing Carver Nursery School two blocks east and on a slight diagonal north of Jefferson School, further "out" from the business district, and literally in a small bungalow-like building within the African American business district, shows a sense of hierarchy on the part of the nursery school's planners. The modest size and style of the building and the way it is setback from Queen Street all combine to make it seem unassuming and architecturally unrelated to the surrounding Queen Street business corridor. However, the location and the design clearly show that it is the smaller and less expensive facility in comparison to the Jefferson School building that stood at that time. Jefferson School, originally built as a white high school for the city, had been expanded to a campus of two brick school buildings by this time. While the modest design of the Carver Nursery School building makes it seem like the designers made no effort to make it match the small business district around it, the unassuming style expresses that it is secondary to the King Street area and the Jefferson School campus.

After the facility closed as a school and became home to an American Legion lodge, the building began to serve a larger sector of the community and became even more important to the community as a whole. The American Legion operated here for half a century, and the lodge made the building available to families and other organizations that held community events here. The lodge's archives contain images and articles that depict many of these gatherings that continue to be important in the collective conscious of the community members, many of whom have subsequently moved to other areas.

Education was important in defining either the area known as Uptown or the larger area now known as Parker-Gray. Notably, the name Parker-Gray, as now used for the neighborhood as a whole, was derived from the names of the two schools for African Americans that once served as the neighborhood's main anchors (names which were, in turn, derived from two different educators who had served as teachers in two other educational facilities for African Americans before 1920, one of which was in another building that once stood in this neighborhood). The larger neighborhood surrounding the Queen Street business district is now usually discussed in terms of a city-designated historic district to which the name Parker-Gray was given in 1984. What is now considered the Parker-Gray district, however, was considered three or more small neighborhoods before it became associated with the two larger schools and the name they shared, i.e., "Parker-Gray." The Parker-Gray area has been a focus of historic preservation activities and regulation by the City of Alexandria since the city designated it a city historic district in 1984. More recently, in 2010, after a multi-year project documenting over 1,300 resources, roughly the same area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District. Ethnic History of African Americans and the Social History of the Segregation Era are major Areas of Significance in the National Register nomination.

The Parker-Gray Historic District is so-named because it contained the sites of the city's only African American high school as well as an elementary school that preceded it (both schools simultaneously used the name Parker-Gray after the high school was built). The two Parker-Gray schools were located on separate sites, a couple blocks north of the approximate boundary of the area called Uptown, one (Parker-Gray Elementary School) at the edge of a neighborhood called The Hump and the other (Parker-Gray High School) within what was then called "Colored Rosemont." The two teachers whose surnames were combined to create the name of the school were John Parker and Sarah Gray, the principals of two even earlier African American schools. One of these, Hallowell School, was located in Uptown.

The Carver Nursery School building is near the center of the area historically known as Uptown. The boundaries of the city designated Parker-Gray Historic District define it as a larger area than Uptown, although Uptown itself was more of a descriptive term used by residents and apparently did not have firm boundaries. The district incorporates at least two other neighborhoods historically associated with African Americans (The Hump and Colored Rosemont), as well as some blocks and some streets that were not exclusively African American. In fact, some blocks within the city-designated historic district are areas where real estate developments allowed property ownership only for people defined as white, via legal covenants before the practice became illegal (e.g., Buchanan Street).

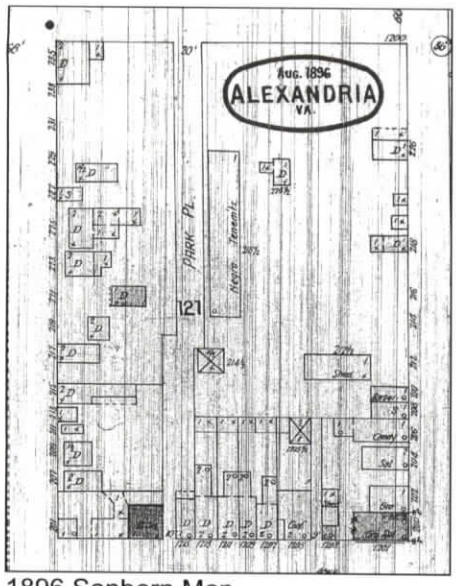
The two Parker-Gray school buildings and the Hallowell School were demolished years ago, but like the Carver Nursery School, they were used in the first half of the twentieth century when the city's schools were segregated. Although segregation of schools by race was a topic that evolved through many phases in Alexandria's history, especially in

the nineteenth century, the early twentieth century was a time when the practice had become a matter of institutional policy at the local and state government levels. The policy took on a characteristic defensiveness in the decades when it was a matter of intensive debate across the United States. The choice of this area for the city's African American schools, at a time when the practice of segregation was in a brief period of becoming even more rigid and ideologically intense, went hand-in-hand with the relative importance, by this time, of the northwest quadrant of the original 1798 city grid as Alexandria's largest African American neighborhood and a social center with institutions that served the African American community of the rest of the city.

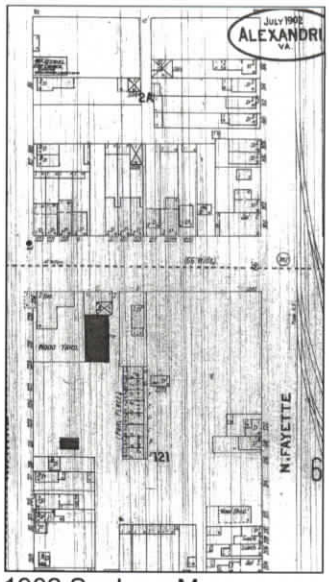
Though used as a school facility for just a few years, and only used as a nursery school, the Carver Nursery School building is the only building still standing in the Parker-Gray area to have been built as a public school. It may be the only building built as an African American segregated public school, and the only building used as a segregated public school in the twentieth century still standing anywhere in the city. (The historic district also has at least one building built as a parochial school for St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, a church built to serve African American Catholics.)

The location itself is central to the Uptown neighborhood's layout. This may have been an important factor in its continued use for decades, as it was more than a members-only lodge: according to local African American residents, it served informally as a center of a wide range of community-based activities. One block east of it was a very active African American Elks lodge where nationally known musicians performed from time to time. By contrast to the Elks lodge, situated in a large, multi-story brick building, however, the Legion post appears to have been more available for community-oriented and family-scaled events. It is also located near the western end of a two-block-long business district along Queen Street. From at least as early as the 1940s through 1960s, essentially the last decades that racial segregation of schools and real estate was legal or considered acceptable, the Queen Street corridor was the city's main concentration of businesses owned by and/or serving the African Americans. An available and readily accessible facility for community activities in the heart of the neighborhood, it was an active community focal point where African American citizens held both public and private community functions. The local African American community continues to recognize it as an important place where memorable events were held in the era when these same citizens were barred from using many other facilities a few blocks away to the south or east. This was clear in affidavits submitted by local African American citizens in the court case over the building in 2010.

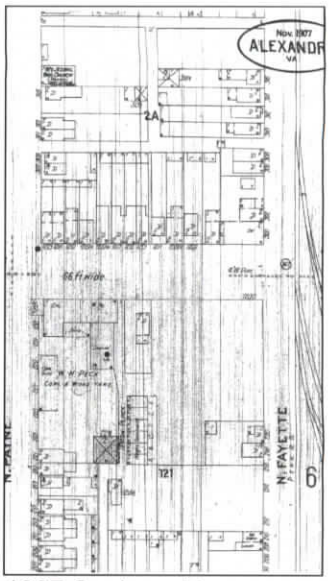
Additionally, the site has an important pre-history, and this story may have made the property available for the construction of the nursery school when the federal funding became available. The larger parcel had been the location of a powder magazine in the late eighteenth century. The choice at that time would have been to build out and away from existing residences. The property on which the powder magazine stood may have always been privately owned, as it was in the possession of the descendants of Gustavus Alexander, the family for which the city was named, and handed down through this



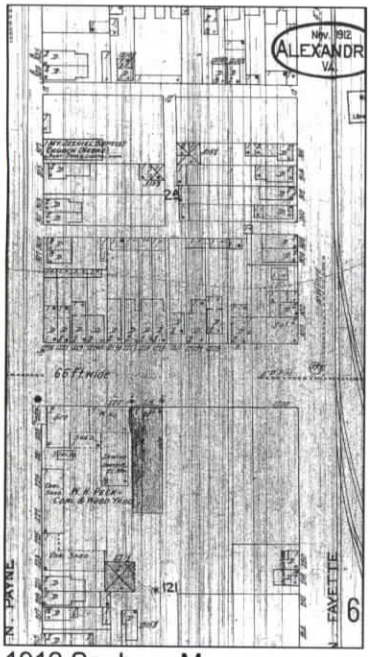
1896 Sanborn Map



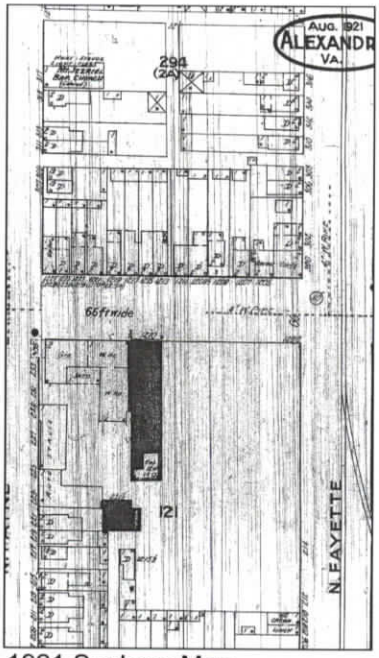
1902 Sanborn Map



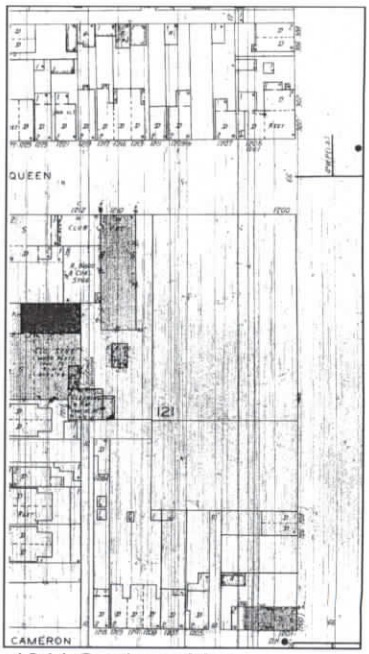
1907 Sanborn Map



1912 Sanborn Map

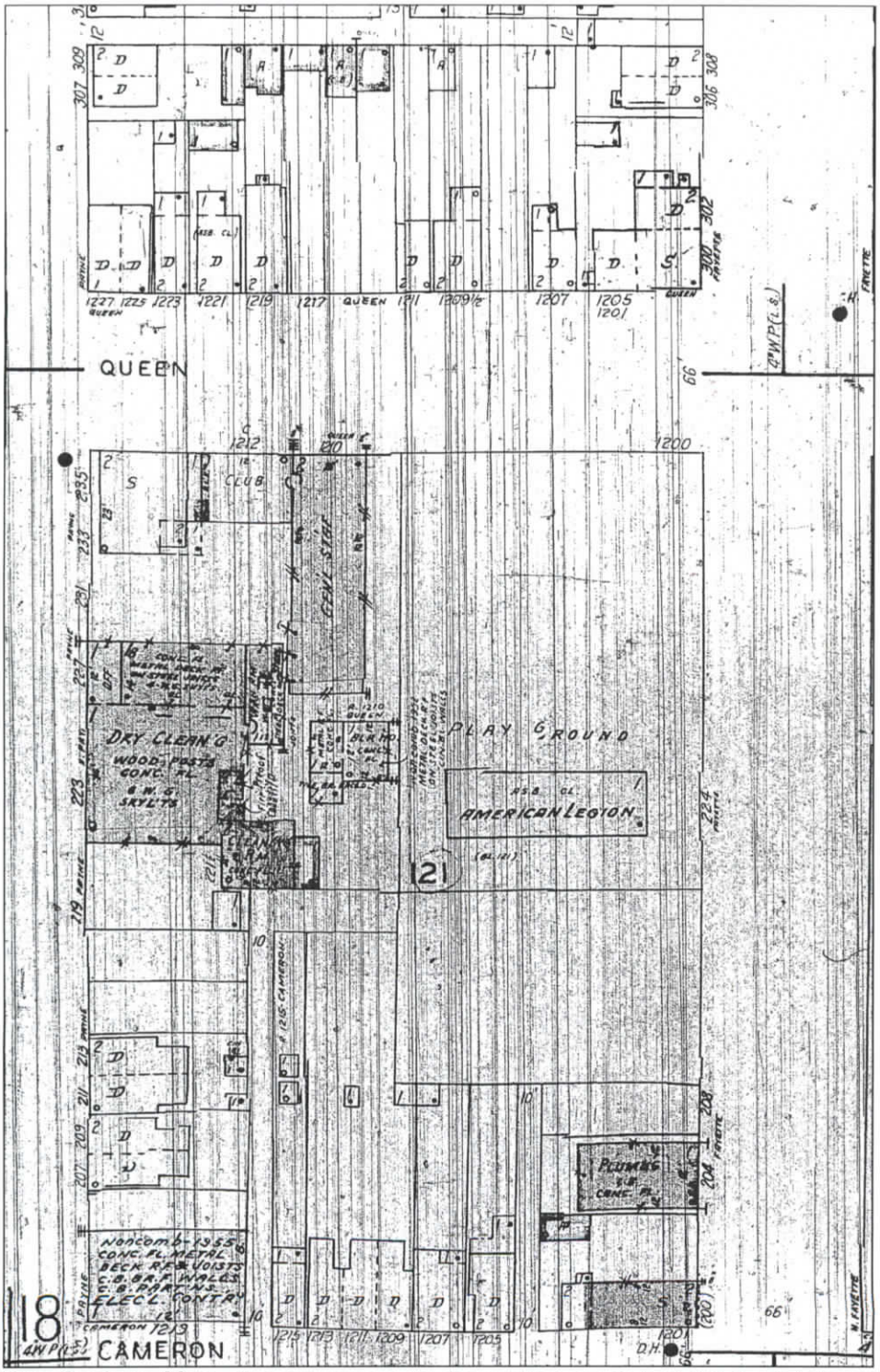


1921 Sanborn Map



1941 Sanborn Map

The Sanborn Maps depicting the site before the building was built raise interesting issues that could relate to potential for archeological investigations. Behind the site, overlapping the footprint of the current condominium building that once housed the Alexandria Laundry, there was a row of small houses labeled as "Negro Tenements" (without an indication of how many houses) on the 1896 map. The 1902 map shows these as 10 houses, labeled as "Tenements / Partly Dilapidated." An 11th house of about the same size is shown off to the side, near the current northwest corner of the Carver Nursery School building. The 1907 map shows the same row as six units, as if two (plus the one off to the side) had been torn down. Up to 1921, the maps all show a house at 218 N. Fayette, near what is now the southeast corner of the Carver Nursery School. In 1896, there were two small buildings, possibly one-room dwellings, north of this, plus a larger house at 226 (overlapping the current playground area). The 1902, 1907, and 1912 maps show a house adjoining 218, at 220 N. Fayette. Based on what is drawn, it appears to have evolved from the time depicted in one map to another. By 1941, these houses are all gone. Notably, the northern area of the lot, where the playground is now, has no houses shown along Queen Street in any of these maps.



1958 Sanborn Map The map shows the Carver Nursery School Building labeled as "American Legion." There may have been a map produced ca.1944, but it is not on file at the local library. The 1958 map has a paper patch updating the building and playground (such patches were commonly used on Sanborn Maps in this era to provide inexpensive and efficient updates). It is apparent from the broken lines at the top left corner of the building rectangle, also apparent in the misalignment of the letters saying "Playground." The patch may have been to update the name of the building.

family over generations, it remained largely undeveloped. Just west of the southwest corner of the property was a row of small houses occupied by African Americans. They were shown on fire insurance maps as "Negro Tenements" as late as 1907 (shown on Sanborn Maps as one rectangle in 1896, as 8 units "partly dilapidated" in 1902, and as six units in 1907; although what was left of the buildings in 1907 had been cleared by 1912). The property was associated with the Alexandria Laundry for a few years, but apparently remained undeveloped. Closer to North Fayette Street and/or Queen Street, about three small houses appeared on the fire insurance maps at various times and then disappeared by the next edition of the map; they were located near the southeast corner and northwest corner of the current building footprint. Their foundations would have only barely overlapped with the current building's foundation.

The Property's Relationship to the Uptown/Parker-Gray National Register Historic District

The building is listed as contributing in the National Register nomination for the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District. The district was nominated on the basis of three Areas of Significance: Social History (under National Register Criterion A), African American Ethnic Heritage (also under Criterion A), and Architecture (under Criterion C). The Carver Nursery School Building is an important example of a resource that is contributing under both of the Areas of Significance that fall under Criterion A.

The determination that it is a contributing resource was made on that basis in the process of writing the nomination, but this particular property was not felt to be of equal significance under Criterion C (Architecture). Criterion C (Architecture) was not relevant to the evaluation, because the building differs greatly from most other examples in the neighborhood where Criterion C was more relevant. The building has an important architectural story embodying a distinctive style of construction, but in addition to the fact that this story is unrelated to the architecture of the surrounding buildings, the details of how, why, by whom, and for whom it was built were not known to the preparers of the National Register nomination at the time the nomination was written. The architecture is starkly different from the district's individual private homes, which were evaluated primarily from a Criterion C point of view because the Criterion A significance of these properties was less apparent.

From the point of view of Criterion C, the unusual placement of this building a few feet back from the street, centered in the southern half of an otherwise open site, with only a modest door facing toward the street, together with its distinctive 1940s design, made it separate rather than an integral part of the neighborhood's "architectural" urban fabric. It was also not integral to the story of the evolution of styles and interwoven urban design of the other buildings near it, the buildings that generally give form to the district as a whole. Row houses and townhouses were the main type of resource discussed under Criterion C in the nomination. Being architecturally unlike the surrounding buildings, as this particular building is, would not have been a basis in favor of determining it contributing under Criterion C. Under criterion C, the document as then submitted, argued Criterion C significance on the basis of the architectural consistency of nineteenth and twentieth century row houses and other closely-related buildings.

On the other hand, the nomination provided Criterion A arguments for inclusion of all institutional buildings and commercial buildings, including some that are not architecturally related to the neighborhood's major visual themes or architectural trends. While architecture (Criterion C) was not the basis for its contributing status, the building was definitely regarded as contributing as a result of its Criterion A role in the community's fabric.

Thus, the contributing status of this building derived specifically from Criterion A, in both of the above-mentioned Areas of Significance, for its role as a center of social

activities in the community. Like all buildings known to have housed institutions where community social activities were held, either the activities specifically reflecting African American Ethnic Heritage or more broadly reflecting Social History in the Segregation Era, it was listed as "contributing" in the resource inventory section of the nomination.

Furthermore, in the Historic Context section of the nomination, detailed information was given, to the extent that it was then available, on all such known facilities. Notably, the churches, lodge facilities, and business buildings, including two theaters, were seen in the argument laid out in the Statement of Significance narrative of the nomination as historic anchors in the neighborhood's ethnic heritage because tremendous demographic changes have occurred, many families have moved in and out of the neighborhood, and the African American public schools for which the neighborhood was named (the two schools named "Parker-Gray," and the Hallowell School) have been demolished along with several other community centers. (The only other contributing/historic school building still standing in the neighborhood is St. Joseph's, a Roman Catholic parochial school associated with a Roman Catholic parish established to serve the city's African American Roman Catholics). Entire blocks of houses once associated with African American residents are likewise missing. Areas at the fringe of the neighborhood, where real estate covenants (before the 1960s) allowed only white families to buy the property, had row houses built of brick. The frame houses in certain other parts of the neighborhood, where African Americans lived, were more vulnerable, especially when federal programs became available to clear away some of the less desirable buildings on the basis of findings of blight. The churches, business buildings, and buildings used by a half dozen fraternal societies were the main anchors left to reflect African American heritage in the Uptown/Parker-Gray neighborhood, and in general, most remain in place today.

Initially, when the Virginia Preliminary Information Form (PIF) was prepared, it was thought that there were no extant school buildings in the proposed district area. By the time that the nomination was prepared, the building's origin as a nursery school had come to light, but the original name "Carver Nursery School" was not known to the preparers. Thus, under the name William Thomas American Legion Post, the building was listed as contributing and its history was included (at a level of detail reflecting what was known about it at the time) in the context statement.

The Role of Uptown in the Larger 1798 Street Grid of Alexandria

Within the city's 1798 street grid, Alexandria had historically contained a number of neighborhoods with individual identities where the city's African American citizens traditionally resided. The grid was much larger than the developed area of the city for most of the nineteenth century. The area around Queen Street and extending to the north, as well as several blocks east and west of North Fayette Street, was occupied mainly by industrial uses and open land into the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century. The city's urban fabric of row houses, storefronts, and other buildings was established first along the river. A few decades later in the city's history, the dense built fabric began to grow to the west along the main east-west streets, such as King and Duke Streets.

Running perpendicular to these streets, Washington Street, which provided a similar north-south axis, also became built-up. These streets were the main roads into the grid from various directions, and they divided the city into four quadrants. Most of the larger, more substantial buildings reflecting the community's wealthy and some of its more prominent citizens were located either close to the river or along or within view of these main corridors. The African American neighborhoods tended to be defined as areas a few blocks off of these main axes. Further away from the main streets, much of the land, however, remained open.

The northwest quadrant was essentially the last large area of the grid to be transformed into a residential community. Between the Civil War and World War II, a half dozen small neighborhoods and one or two larger ones associated with African American community developed in a pattern around the King Street/Duke Street core, in the four quadrants defined by King and Washington Streets, in most cases a block or two from these central streets. As they emerged, one by one, these neighborhoods were areas where African Americans resided and operated businesses, churches, social clubs, and other community institutions. Most of the small neighborhoods were anchored by at least one institution, usually a church, and/or a place of employment. The Queen Street business district was one of the last places to become a focal point in this larger pattern.

An Egg-Like Design: Significance in the Area of Architecture and How the Design Reflects its Role as a Specially Designed, New Kind of Educational Facility

Apart from the way it relates to the larger historic district around it, part of the significance of the Carver Nursery School Building derives from Architecture and Education. The aspects of the school that reflect significance in the Area of Architecture are less apparent if one looks at it mainly for ornamental details and outside the context of the specific educational purpose for which it was built. The "architecture" in this case is not the style but the way the design met the functional needs of the interior and exterior uses by toddlers, teachers, and parents. The building also serves as a text for architectural history of a more mundane kind: it is a remarkable record of the efficient, inexpensive, and innovative use of building materials from the particular time in which it was built. Looking for a specific exterior style or comparing this particular building to the appearance of other frame buildings surrounding it in its Alexandria context is not an especially fruitful exercise, but it is appropriate to see it in the context of what was happening nationally in the building trades and education at that moment, and for how the designer applied what was available for a modest price to a very specific purpose. The building's architectural significance is apparent when one studies the floor plan and site plan to see how the designer addressed the special considerations of the building's function.

This is an early example of a building built expressly to serve as a school for toddlers, a place where trained staff provided special care for very small and vulnerable people, young children whose mothers had dropped them off on their way to work. The building was designed as an interior and exterior play space for these little ones, with cubby holes for their coats and other possessions, and with food cooking not far from the classroom space so they wouldn't have to worry about being hungry. Rest rooms were nearby to accommodate any remaining steps in the potty training process, and to make things like water and towels available when some food or drink was spilled. It was a secure design that gave teachers what they needed to keep the pupils within view, with doors placed logically where they needed to be but also with an eye to security. The kinds of things that a teacher might need when an accident occurs were readily available. Just out of view were a couple of smaller rooms that could serve as private places to address discipline issues when they arose, etc. The design met these needs and then arranged the remaining components according to internally organized symmetry. Plumbing and heating, for instance, were clustered at the center to minimize the length of runs. Equal egress was provided in two directions in the event of an emergency (plus a third entrance/exit added to the plans after they were first developed, directly connecting the kitchen and the playground). Perfectly symmetrical windows were placed at the four corners of each classroom with regard to light (especially the south windows), and views (especially the north windows overlooking the playground), as well as cross-ventilation on warm days. The design also showed almost no concern for the structure or function of the surrounding community (which one might see as an appropriate way at the time to distinguish this as a nursery school as opposed to a retail location or other facility the general public might be tempted to enter and explore), although placing the playground

on the Queen Street side was a touch that enhanced the school's visibility to the greater community.

The building also reflects significance in the Area of Architecture as an example of how new building materials were used in the brief era of transition from the end of the Great Depression, when very little was being built due to economic hardship, to the beginning of the war years when the country was cautiously embracing new opportunities to expand and build. It was a time when the modest amount of construction then being planned specifically targeted certain kinds of projects, particularly those that would help in the war effort. The design makes use of mass-produced, uniform materials, from factory-pressed brick and dimensional lumber, to gypsum wallboard, asbestos-based cement-fiber siding simulating wood shingles, and factory-made doors, windows, hardware, and fixtures. Virtually every material used in the building was uniform in character and dimensions and used in more than one location. Each was easily interchangeable with readily available replacements in the event of breakage, inexpensive, easy to assemble, and efficient according to the standards of the time. These qualities were trade-offs with the hierarchical characteristics of traditional buildings, where handcrafted elements had often been used to create focal points, and where front wall details were often of a very different quality from those used at the backyard of the typical building. In the Carver Nursery School, the building materials are symmetrically organized in a way that accommodates almost no hierarchy. The door leading in from North Fayette Street was completely interchangeable with the one on the opposite wall, as were most of the interior doors, most of the windows, most of the hardware, the trim, the fixtures, and most other elements of the design.

The building is an unusual design solution to serve an unusual new purpose, and to do so expediently and without wasting funds. The design focuses on inexpensive materials, internal functions, and simple principles like symmetry. Perhaps most important was that it was designed from the point of view of serving the needs of toddlers and their teachers. The school faced a special challenge of providing an intermediate experience between the home life of an infant and the school life of a grade schooler, a somewhat new concept at the time, falling somewhere between the two more concrete worlds that every child experienced at home and at elementary school. The teachers endeavored to help young pupils become acculturated to what would occur in classrooms as they grew older, while also accommodating the special needs of such young and fragile attendees. It was more than just two classrooms. The facility provided for storage of coats and blankets in cubby holes and niches rather than lockers, it had a kitchen where meals were prepared, it had flexible space for children to take naps, and it had two rest rooms close by, much closer and more intimately connected to the classroom space than they would have been the case in many public schools at the time. It had big windows to let in light and air, making it suitable for working on artwork, learning to hold a pencil, or focusing attention on the teacher. Perhaps most importantly, it provided a suitable interior play space, and the building was well connected to an adjoining playground where the pupils could spend much of their time outside. It even had a small room labeled "Isolation Ward," where a problem, such as an uncontrollable child, or a sick child (or some similar situation), could

be handled separately in a safe place until parents or others could come to retrieve the subject.

Apart from two rooms, the "Isolation Ward" and the room opposite it (which was labeled "storage" on the drawings, although it would have been equally suitable to serve as a teachers' office, an infirmary, or something similar), the building had a perfectly symmetrical floor plan. The design showed no effort at creating a special relationship to North Fayette Street, the street immediately to the east. As mentioned elsewhere, the north doorway, facing Queen Street, appears to have been added into the design during construction. It is logical, from the exterior, to have had a doorway on the Queen Street side. It is equally logical, in consideration of kitchen functions, to have had a doorway that the cook might use in coming and going. However, these two functions, one relating to the building presumably fronting on Queen Street and connecting the playground to the interior, and the other relating to the coming and going of the cook, are at cross purposes. It would not have made perfect sense to take groceries and other provisions through the playground and in and out of a center front door, and it would not be advisable to send the children out to the playground through the kitchen past the water heater and where hot food was boiling on the stove. The latter was especially true considering the cramped design of the kitchen and the door-swing conflict this door appears to have had with an adjoining door into one of the classrooms.

If one looks at the design without the north doorway, somewhat different circulation patterns become apparent. Children who have been at work or play indoors in either of the two classrooms on a nice day might be led out of the building through the nearest exit, going east or west, and then might have taken a few steps north to the playground. Although the steps are on an east-west axis and do not turn north, they would have equally accommodated going from either classroom to the playground that filled the large open area bordering the north side of the school.

The building thus is like an egg. More than any consideration for how it might be entered, it was designed for the purpose of exiting, as the chick hatches out of the shell when it has reached the appropriate age and strength. No special provision was made to relate one elevation or doorway more to the street and to make another wall or doorway clearly the building's back wall or back door. The two gable-end walls are almost identical, including the canopies, the concrete steps, the gable vents, the siding, and other characteristics. The doorway added into the design on the side facing Queen Street is almost the same again. The building is simply like an egg, perfectly symmetrical and suited to the fragile world of the infant. One might break in, but it was designed to serve the purposes of the baby chick that is already inside and about to come out. The design relationship between the classrooms and the playground might have been handled differently, had the kitchen not been placed at the center of the north wall. However, in the original design, when there was no north door, the two halves of the building were equally related to the playground, a space that half of the classroom windows looked out into; undoubtedly, the children looked out the windows waiting for the chance to run to the swing-set or play in the sandbox.

The significance of the design is in how the architect accomplished this, i.e., how the building was to be focused on what the preschooler thought about and did, as well as what the teachers and cook needed. These needs included plumbing facilities at the building's center and easy access from one interior room to another. However, the focus of the design was on the simplicity of the two classrooms and their relationship to central plumbing functions as well as access to an exterior playground, all accomplished through symmetry. Unlike other buildings around it, very little of the design has anything to do with dressing up the front wall to address the street. The building barely acknowledges that there would be any streets nearby, people circulating, or the rest of the community looking in. In fact, this egg of a building was set apart from those things by a custom-designed picket fence that surrounded the property, keeping the children safely inside and giving the rest of the community a clear sense of where the boundary was.

There is a constant temptation to see this building in a very different light, because it occupies a place in the street grid and row house rhythms of Alexandria. All around it are narrow town-house-style row houses, about 20 feet wide, with party walls to either side. The façade of each row house is a variation on one or another of several familiar stylistic themes. Each row house thus occupies a hierarchical place in the rhythms of the street as houses almost always did before the 1910s. Not only is the design of almost every row house a function of how far it is from the city's core streets, but each parcel has a hierarchy from front to back, and from public to private, reinforced by the way each house was designed. One expects each building to have a façade, a formal face oriented to the street and to the passersby, which carries a predicable, grammatical symmetry and communicates something about how one might enter the private realm. One looks to this face as one looks to the face of another person. The side walls of almost every house, meanwhile, are blank and offer no such expression. The back walls and residual backyards define private space, personal leisure, and any messy functions like the place to keep the trash can or the sheds where the fire wood and tools are kept.

Do not expect the typical hierarchies of nineteenth and early twentieth century row houses and storefront buildings at the Carver Nursery School. They are only barely there. The school has two chimneys and no doorway on the south side of the building, a wall that runs perpendicular to the street. This is as close as the building has to a blank side wall or a completely functional rear wall. The southwest corner has a small, low door in the west elevation, south of the stairs, leading into the crawl space. This too makes one side seem a bit like a back. However, otherwise, the west wall (where the crawl space door is) and the east wall (facing North Fayette Street) are nearly identical. What makes the building odd is not that these were illogical design decisions, but only that they are a different approach to design from the hierarchical front-to-back and rhythmic street-wall structure of many buildings of a comparable size surrounding the site.

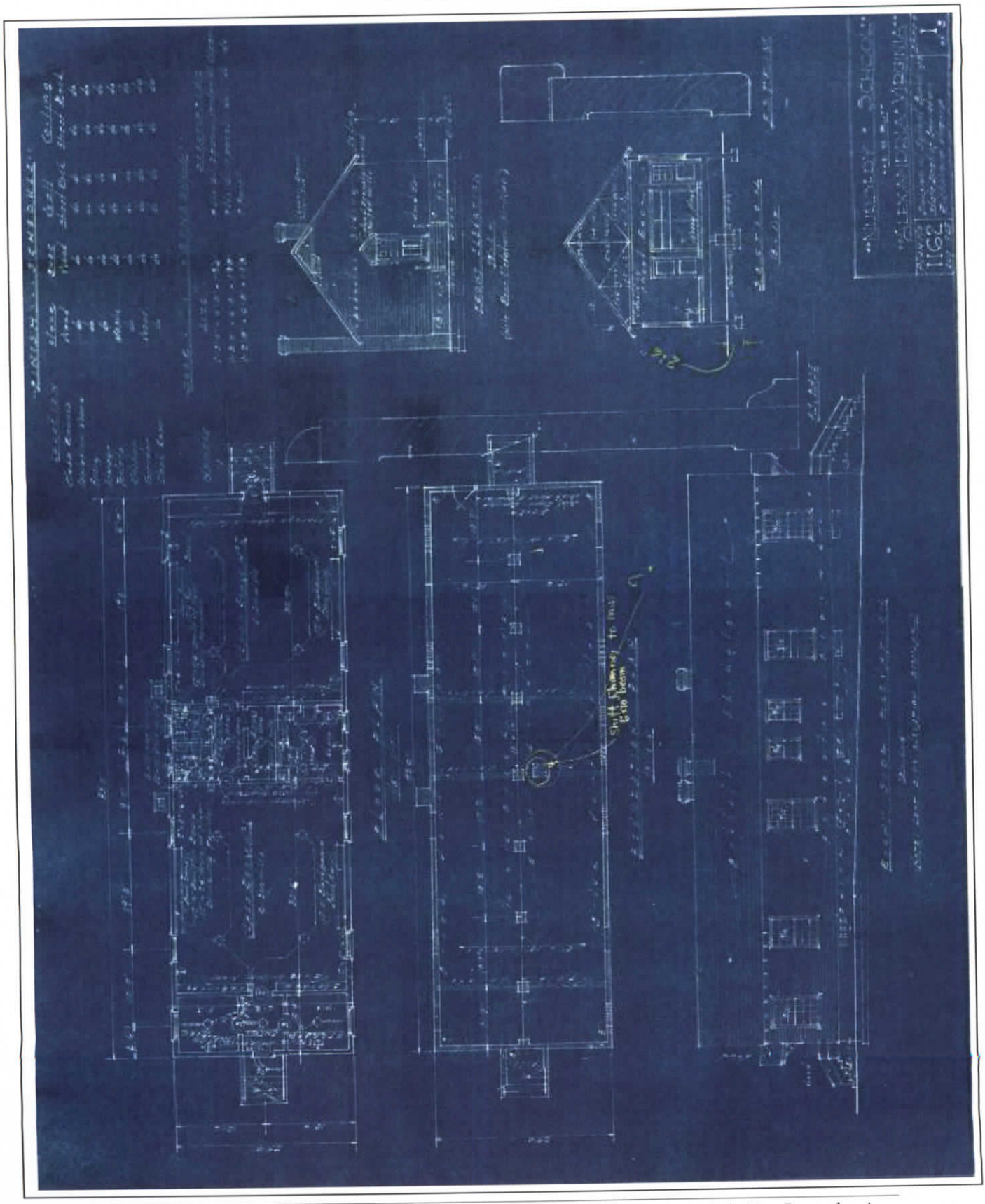
Furthermore, the symmetrical design characteristics became somewhat muddled when the American Legion took the building over, making minor modifications to it. The association between the building and the playground was dissolved, as the city retained

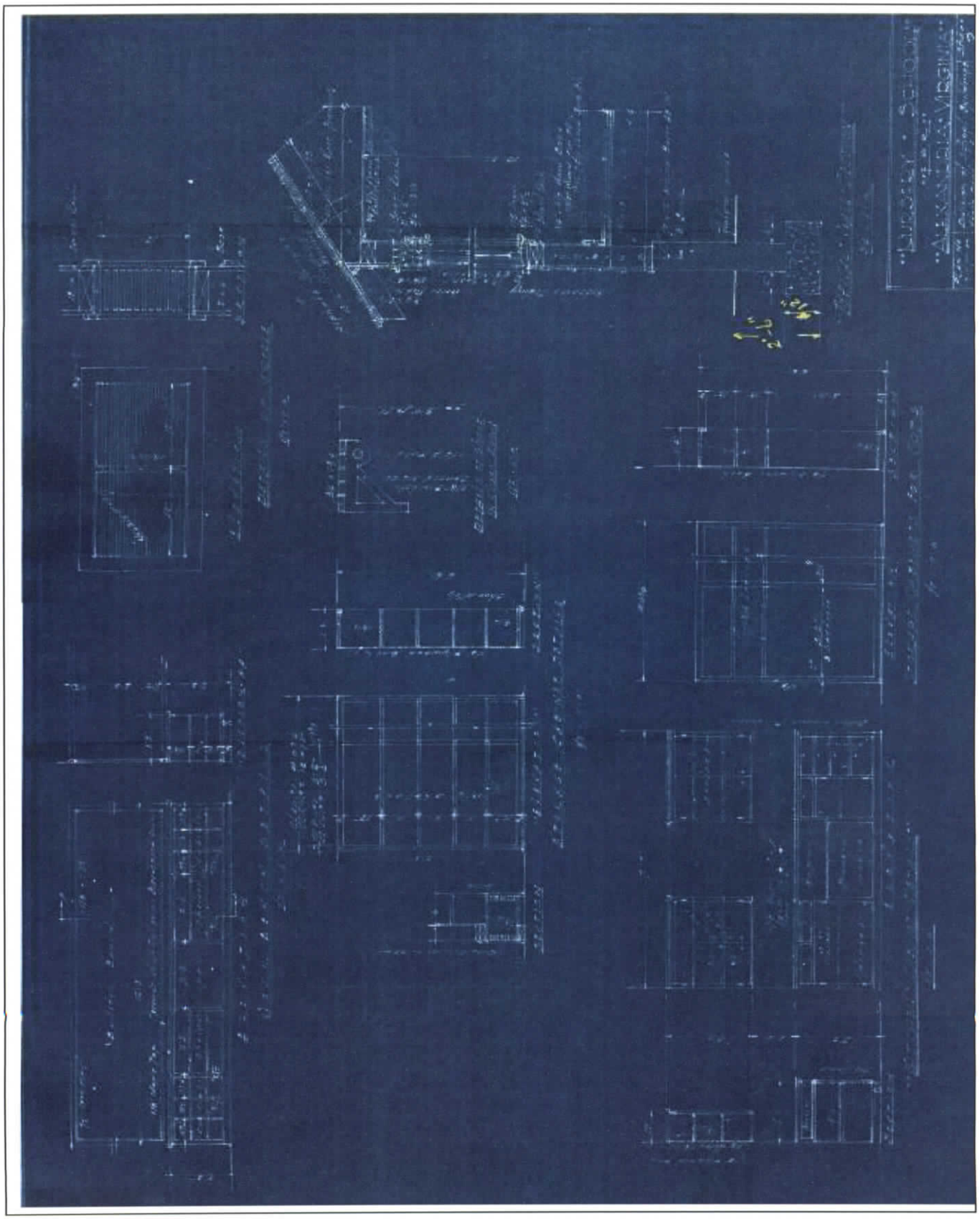
the playground, treating it as a typical recreation facility, and renting out the building separately to the American Legion post, eventually selling it to them. The picket fence went away and was replaced by a chain-link fence around the building, with a fence line giving equal space to the building on both the north and south sides, drawing a line between the building and the playground. The Legion hung a sign over the North Fayette Street entrance. When they bought the building, they opened up the center of the interior, changing it from two classrooms linked by a cloak room and kitchen into one open linear space with a bump-out for the rest rooms and kitchen near the center, adding a new kitchen space in a rest room-sized niche west of the rest rooms. With the two small rooms remaining on the North Fayette Street side, the design became more a linear space behind an entrance vestibule. With equal-sized yards to both sides, it began to look more like an oddly mutated version of a more typical Alexandria building, facing and relating principally to North Fayette Street, only with part of its face missing (there are no windows, for instance, in the east wall). Seen in this light, things like the location of the chimneys and rest rooms placed off-center to one side, seem much more random. The windows in the side elevations, spaced for two classrooms and a kitchen that are no longer there, follow a rhythm that appears to interrupt itself with smaller openings (where the smaller window and narrow door were once appropriate when the space was a kitchen). The same openings now even seem to violate their own symmetry.

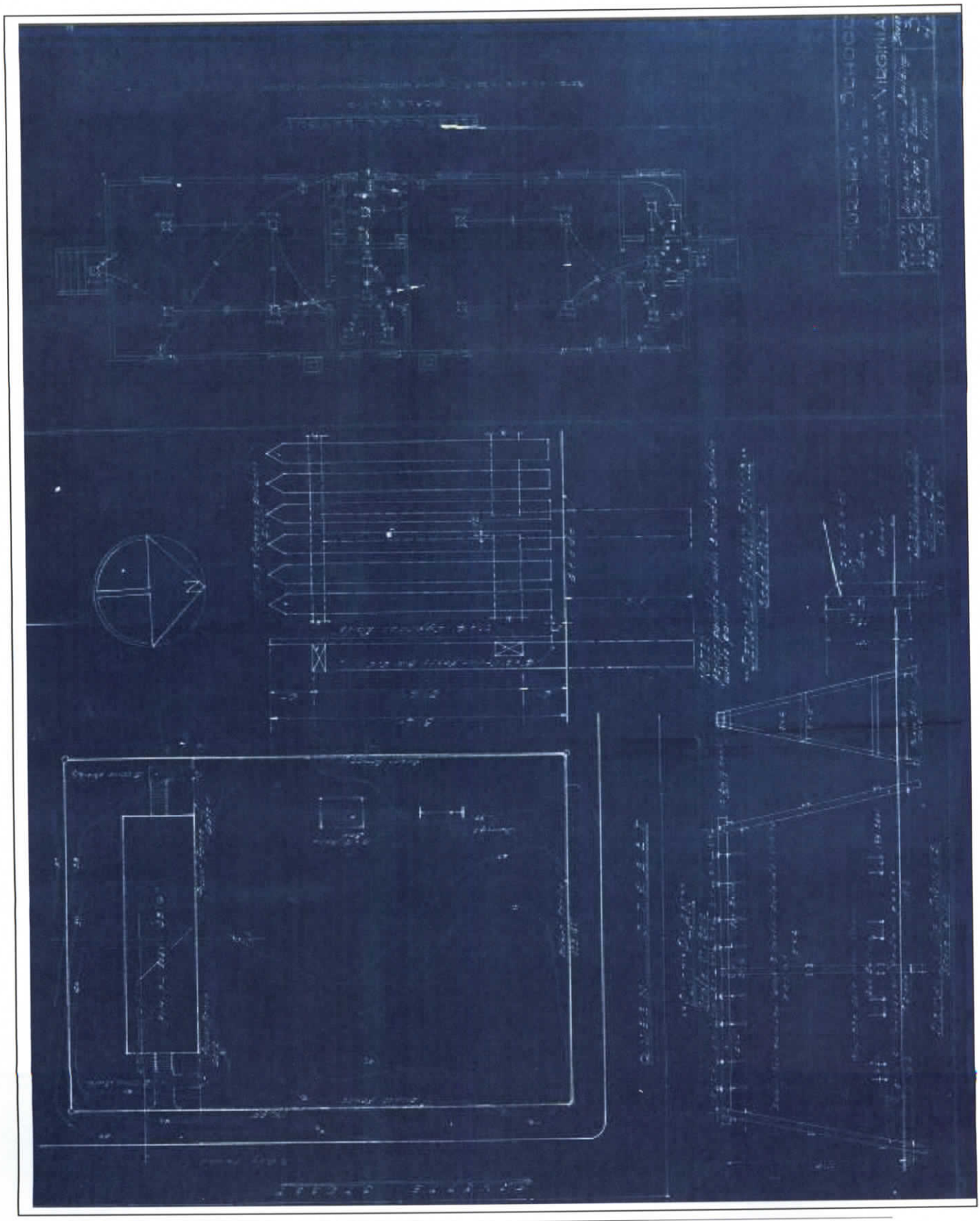
The same things that make the design unusual, strikingly unmatched to the architecture of the buildings around it, therefore, are part of the building's architectural significance. As simple as the appearance is, and as expedient, inexpensive, and temporary-looking as the choices of building techniques and materials may be, the design of the original interior (now partially dismantled) and the intact exterior that remain reflects an internally organized concern for nursery school activities. This quality is a strong argument for architectural significance, all the more so in consideration that the building relates somewhat awkwardly to the architectural themes of older buildings around it. Architecture, in this case especially, is not the act of copying or even necessarily harmonizing with the setting. It is the act of designing a building for a purpose. These functional design considerations were part of the world of nursery schools, where a new kind of school and a new building type had been evolving for decades, yet the mid-1940s was a new and special time with highly unusual circumstances in the American and world-wide economies, in the world of American federal funding and policymaking, and in the rapidly evolving urban community of Alexandria. This building quintessentially reflects those times.

from			to					
Grantor's	Grantor's		Grantee's	Grantee's	Recorded	Recorded	Recorded	Date
Last Name	First Name		Last Name	First Name	Book	Page		
Alexander	Gautamus B.		Swann	Rosina				
Property Description: This was an inheritance from her father (Rosina was Gautamus Alexander's daughter) in front on Fayette Street 176' - 7" and extending westwardly in depth 123' - 5"								
Swann	Rosina		Smoot	William B.	DB 18	533-534	6 April 1887	
Property Description: The "being the same property" clause of the 1887 deed provides above description					B 19	121-122	2 August 1887	
Property Description (in 2 August Deed): 176' - 7" x 123' - 5"								
				also see:	will book 2 page 8			
Smoot	Benj.		& W. A. Smoot, Jr. & wife Hattie A. Smoot, Lewis E. and Mary Smoot, Elizabeth S. and Robert W. Fuller,	Alexandria Laundry	DB 69	545-546	1--December 1919	
Property Description: Beginning at the intersection of the south side of Queen Street with the west side of Fayette Street and running thence south on Fayette Street one hundred and seventy-six feet seven inches, to Queen Street, and thence south on Queen Street one hundred and twenty-three feet five inches...								
Alexandria Laundry			Rosina	Gardner L. & James R. Caton Jr.	DB 69	545-546	1--December 1919	
Property Description: Beginning at the intersection of the south side of Queen Street with the west side of Fayette Street and running thence south on Fayette Street one hundred and seventy-six feet seven inches, to Queen Street, and thence south on Queen Street one hundred and twenty-three feet five inches...								
Alexandria Laundry			McClure	William J. Jr.		470-471	15--August 1927	
Will of William J. McClure, Sr. to wife & children					WB	296-298	27--November 1928	
McClure	William J. Jr. (et al)		City of Alexandria		DB 204	pg. 237	1--November 1943	
Property Description: 176' - 7" x 123' - 5"								
City of Alexandria			The American Legion Post 129		DB 1231	1867-1871	10--December 1987	
Property Description: 63' - 0" x 123.42'								
Carter	Christopher	mortgage	Mortgage Trustees, LLC			419-440	30--June 2008	
Carter	Christopher	deed of trust	Jeffrey Kaselman & David Weinhaus, trustees			400-406	9--April 2008	
American Legion Post 129		deed	Carter	Christopher	0.0800006108	400-406	9--April 2008	
Carter	Christopher		Crowley	William	0.0900002664	596-597	18--February 2009	

The above matrix serves as an index to the deeds and other documents forming the property's chain-of-title.







Building Material History

Carver Nursery School was constructed of approximately a dozen original, identifiable, and datable building materials. The building may have had one or two other features at this scale (e.g., 1940s plumbing fixtures) that are now gone, and it has smaller scale items, such as nails and other fasteners, which are not analyzed below. It is noteworthy that the building has such a limited variety of building materials, that the materials are generally all identifiable and from the same period of construction history, and that so little has been added, mainly interior surface remodeling materials and fixtures. It was always a simple composition using typical, but mass-produced and inexpensive materials from the period, items that generally represented innovations in a time when the construction industry was at the end of a deep period of depression-era austerity, when there was almost no privately funded construction activity. However, it was also built at a turning point, a time when the country was about to enter a new decades-long cycle of economic expansion. This building was in many ways a sign of things to come.

Identifiable Building Materials:

1. Pressed red brick
2. Dimensional lumber (including stick-built trusses, exposed rafter ends)
3. Asbestos fiber cement siding
4. Asphalt roof shingles
5. Craftsman style canopies
6. Concrete steps and pipe railings at stoops
7. Gypsum wallboard
8. Linear wood details: baseboard, quarter-round, picture rail, and lattice strips
9. 6/6 and 12/12 double hung windows
10. Two-panel doors with plywood panels (with related hardware)
11. Sanitary casing
12. Schoolhouse light fixtures (fragments) and related electrical fixtures
13. Tile flooring and remodeling materials, generally dating from ca.1980

Pressed Red Brick — The red brick used in the foundation and in the chimneys is factory-made pressed brick, as was typically used in construction after about 1910, with a finish and color tone that is typical of 1930-1960.

The brick used in the building differs from earlier kinds of brick found in many of the surrounding buildings. However, it was designed to resemble the earlier, handmade product. Its uniformity, hardness, and density are the result factory processes introduced after 1880. Prior to 1880, virtually all brick was handmade in molds and then fired in primitive kilns on or near the site. In the era of handmade brick, the exact color of a given unit was dependent on the composition of locally available clay fired at a low temperature. Bricks were slightly irregular in form, tended to look soft at the edges, and varied in hardness and appearance depending upon how close a given brick had been to the fire. However, careful selection of the handmade brick allowed bricklayers to control

the variations and create uniform walls. The factory-made brick used in constructing the Carver Nursery School foundation, although generally uniform in appearance, has a similar range of texture and color to the earlier handmade product.

By the 1940s, both the bricks and mortars were made using factory processes. It had become possible, over time, to make both very hard. Factory-made brick and Portland-cement-based mortars developed hand-in-hand with several innovations between the 1880s and the 1940s. As harder mortar became available, products were developed that caused the bricks to bind together in a form that behaved monolithically. The Carver Nursery School Building was built at the end of this evolutionary process, when all brick walls tended to behave monolithically. Unlike its handmade nineteenth century predecessors, the construction method used at the Carver Nursery School gives the walls the capacity to resist diagonal forces and remain bonded as one composition.

The combination of factory-made brick and modern mortar also made walls much more waterproof. In the factory, bricks were pressed with heavy machinery to make the clay denser, producing a stronger and more waterproof end product, as is the case with the brick at the Carver Nursery School. Sometimes glazes were added to coat the exterior surfaces, although that is not the case here. The clay could also be brushed with a wire brush or a wire comb to give the surface texture, a common effect in buildings from the 1930s-1960s. In the absence of a glazed or brushed finish, the pressed brick process sometimes creates a slightly irregular surface, especially in common grade brick, as found in the bricks used in this building's foundation and chimneys.

The walls were built on concrete spread footings. This, too, was a relatively new construction technique, developed after the introduction of Portland cement in the United States. Earlier walls relied on placing larger stones at the bottom to serve this purpose. The availability of Portland cement made it possible to make concrete, a very hard stone-like product composed of cement, sand, and larger aggregate, all bonded together by adding water, forming it, and letting it dry out as one monolithic unit in a chemical process called hydration. The introduction of concrete added the possibility of controlling the width of the footing as well as making it behave monolithically.

A note was added to the drawings to say that the bottom of the footings needed to be at 2'-6" below grade. This dimension is based on a regional frost line (the depth to which cold weather freezes the soils). At this depth, the upside-down "T" shape of the spread footings keeps the building from being pushed gradually out of the soil as a result of the freeze and thaw cycle of a given year.

To provide support at the center of the building, a row of seven piers was to be built down the building's longitudinal center line. Like the walls, the piers are also built on spread footings. Three of these piers fall beneath east-west partition walls. The others piers provide support near the center areas of the floor, with two piers near the center of each of the two large classrooms. Near one of the piers, a chimney rises to serve the water heater (and possibly other intended purposes, such as a vented cook stove) in the

kitchen. The piers at walls are tied to the exterior walls and interior partitions above by tripling the floor joist at that location so it serves as a beam. One of these triple joists accidentally fell too close to the center of the chimney, and a note was added to the drawings saying "shift chimney to miss 6"x10" beam." The piers support a longitudinal, east-west summer beam. The two piers at the center of each classroom thus carry all the floor joists in that particular classroom reducing deflection in the floor by way of the summer beam. The piers also counteract deflection in the floor through the diaphragm effect of all the joists being nailed to the same layers of flooring.

The drawings do not show steel reinforcement bars in the concrete spread footings, as would be used today. However, they do show steel anchor bolts at the top of the foundation wall, anchoring the wood frame elements of the building to the brick foundation walls, to prevent the building from sliding off or lifting off the foundation in wind or in major lateral motion (such as impact in an accident or lateral movement during an earthquake). These characteristics all help the building to behave monolithically in response to any movement in the soils as well as wind loads and other similar forces. They also allow for a small amount of movement, as is needed in building materials, but the materials are not as flexible as those used in many of the neighborhood's older buildings.

To allow air to circulate to keep the bricks, wood framing, and floor materials dry, ventilation openings were left in the brick walls. The drawings for the building show a slightly different design for the ventilation openings, but the current design provides an equivalent amount of ventilation (just a different brick pattern and a distribution pattern for the openings based on a different kind of symmetry). The brick foundation walls provide only a crawl space for maintenance of the air cavity beneath the floor. Access to the crawlspace is provided via a short door in the building's southwest corner, where the grade of the surrounding land is lowest. The foundation walls are only a few feet high. They provide a separation from grade to keep insects out of the wood, enclosing the resultant area to keep out animals.

Dimensional lumber — Once the brick foundation walls had been laid, the remaining walls, floor, ceiling, and roof were framed using the standard-sized dimensional lumber, as used in that era. Dimensional lumber developed with light wood framing. Heavy timber framing has been common for centuries in English-speaking countries, Germanic countries, and other parts of the world where suitable timbers are available. Light framing evolved in the nineteenth century, primarily in the United States. Light framing uses members that are small enough that they can be easily cut to straight ends, at manageable lengths, and fastened together with nails, while heavy timber construction requires cutting mortises and tenons and pegging them together or using large metal fasteners such as through-bolts.

From the 1860s through about 1900, the most common kind of light wood frame construction was balloon framing, a technique in which walls were framed with wood studs that extended upward from the basement wall to the roof edge. The exterior walls

were typically two or more stories in height, and floors were usually added-in after the exterior form was in place. of tall or multi-story buildings required long wood members, of a variety of lengths, to serve as studs.

Around 1900, builders realized the advantage of standard lumber lengths and of framing walls that were only one story tall where possible. Placing each floor over a one-story-tall wall frame added rigidity, because the outer rim of the floor frame could serve as a rigid belt around the building. A new technique developed called platform framing in which walls were framed one story at a time, while a floor frame was placed over each set of wall frames. Walls for each successive story could be framed on this platform, and several floors could be thus erected using wall frames, over floor frames, over other wall frames, over other floor frames, and so forth. Buildings also became slightly shorter as platform framing was introduced, a recognition that wood frame walls work best in buildings that are only rarely more than two or two-and-a-half stories tall.

Light framing techniques, such as balloon framing and platform framing, allowed for the mass production of standardized lumber sizes. After the introduction of platform framing, lumber could be pre-cut into several standard lengths based on one-foot or two-foot increments, and it was rough-cut in the other two directions into thicknesses based on two-inch increments, such as 2x4s, 2x6s, and so forth. Gradually, manufacturers in the building industry, as well as architects, engineers, and builders, realized that the individual studs and joists could be slightly smaller than what the two-inch-increment names of the sizes suggested. The earliest lumber sizes were left with rough edges and saw marks at true "2x" dimensions, but these were gradually reduced, especially as manufacturers began planing the sides of each piece of wood to make them smoother and easier to handle. The sizes became standardized in 1970, after several incremental reductions in the thickness dimensions between about 1900 and that time. The lumber used at the Carver Nursery School building is one of these incremental phases. The pieces, where visible, show straight saw-marks, always running perpendicular to the long axis of each piece and perfectly parallel to one another (indicating they were sawn with a band saw), and yet they have also been lightly planed to an almost smooth surface. Construction in Alexandria from the 1920s through 1940s frequently shows this lightly planed evidence of band-sawn wood, even in visible trim elements.

In designing the structure, the architect indicated for the building to be erected using balloon framing techniques at the floor and ceiling lines, as shown in the wall section details on the drawings. Although balloon framing had generally been replaced by platform framing by this time, these construction details cut down on the amount of lumber and thus the cost. The design, as a result, is a blend of the two techniques. Before framing the floor, the wall frames were to be placed on top of the foundation walls. The bottom of this frame, a single 2x4, served as the sill plate. It is anchored to the foundation wall by 12-inch-long, 1/2-inch diameter anchor bolts on 48-inch centers. The wall studs are 2x4s on 16-inch centers. The top of each wall frame is a double 2x4 serving as the top plate of the wall. At the bottom of the wall frame, 2x10 floor joists are placed alongside each stud and nailed into place with no indication of a longitudinal (in

this case, east-west) rim joist. This is a typical balloon frame detail for the bottom of a wall at the first story. The flooring is then fastened to the joists. The drawings call for two layers of flooring: 13/16" tongue-and-groove wood sub-flooring and 25/32" wood finish flooring. The flooring was apparently covered with resilient tile at a later date.

The height of the walls appears to have been changed to a slightly higher dimension after the drawings were prepared. The likely reason was that the insertion of an exterior north-facing door from the kitchen to the playground involved adding a canopy above the opening, and without a slight increase (of about a foot) in the height of the walls, the canopy would have overlapped at its peak with the bottom edge of the roof eaves.

The roof frame is a series of stick-built Howe trusses composed of 2x6s and 1x6s. The bottom chord of the truss serves as the ceiling joists of the rooms below. The top members are the rafters. The rafters and bottom chord are called out on the drawings as 2x6s, as is also the case with the two diagonals supporting the mid-span of each rafter, while the three vertical members and a small diagonal brace at each lower corner are all called out on the drawings as 1x6s. The 2x6s were used for those members that act in compression and/or that need to serve as nailing surfaces in fastening the roof sheathing in place as well as the gypsum wallboard ceiling. The 1x6s were used in those locations where the members are only in tension and where no surfaces materials need to be nailed to their edges. Like the studs and floor joists below them, the trusses occur on 16-inch centers. The use of the thinner members (1x6's) also allow them to be fastened easily to the 2x members.

The ceiling joist members rest on the double 2x4 plate at the top of the wall. The double 2x4 supports the roof truss in the event that it falls near the center of the space between wall studs. The rafters are bird-mouthed with a notch to seat on the plate. The rafter ends have a uniform overhang of about 16 inches (not dimensioned on the drawings). They end with a diagonal cut that leaves a vertical outer edge at the cut. Following a typical detail of the time, they are painted and left exposed. The drawings call for the roof to have 13/16" sheathing finished with asphalt shingles.

Asbestos Fiber Cement Siding and Asphalt Roof Shingles — The walls are sheathed with wood and finished with a material typically called "Asbestos siding," as called out on the drawings. Asbestos siding is a kind of fiber cement siding, a cast material made of sand, Portland cement, cellulose fibers, combined with other similar materials. This combination of materials creates a cardboard-like material that is light-weight, thin but sturdy, and that can be easily fastened into place for applications such as exterior siding. As a broad category, it is also called "concrete siding." The fiber content makes it less brittle and thus easier to cut and nail in place, especially on slightly uneven surfaces.

Asbestos siding made use of relatively new materials and technology. Cellulose is a generic term for cellular material from plants. Wood is perhaps the oldest and most commonly used cellular plant material used in construction. Between ca.1900 and the 1930s, the construction industry discovered several industrial waste products that could

be put to use as building materials. One was cellulose fibers that were left over in the production of certain foods, for instance the fibrous part of sugar cane after the sugar had been extracted. Sheets of cellulose, without the concrete materials, were also a new material at the time. For instance, sugar cane fiber was pressed into 4' x 8' boards, a product called Celotex. The boards had several uses. They were similar to Homasote, a cellulose product made from recycled newspapers pressed together to make sheets that receive pins easily and could be used to make bulletin boards. Celotex was used as a lath material behind wet-applied plaster, and it eventually became a common material for exterior insulation and/or sheathing. It could be made into a finished siding material (as in Inselbric) or used behind aluminum siding as sheathing, giving the exterior walls a high insulation value. Asbestos siding was an early product that came with these other ideas. It added Portland cement and asbestos to the cellulose to create dense shingles. The asbestos made it fireproof.

Asbestos was discovered in 1905, but the siding product was developed in the 1920s. It remained in use until the early 1970s when government reports revealed that airborne asbestos fibers cause cancer. Its use was outlawed in the United States in the mid-1970s. Asbestos siding was more popular in some other countries than in the United States, notably England and Australia. In some countries, such as Australia, it was especially popular to use large, nearly square sheets of it as exposed exterior panels on houses.

Asbestos emerged as a health hazard in a series of developments between the 1940s and 1973. It is dangerous when it turns to air-born dust. The laws against using asbestos were largely targeted toward the manufacturing industries, but schools and other institutions began hiring specialized contractors to remove it. The concern is often over varieties of asbestos where is might be easily knocked loose, such as the bands of asbestos used as insulation to wrap ducts and pipe. In pipe insulation, dust from the wrapping materials, found in basements near other utility systems, could theoretically get into heating and ventilation ducts. Removal, however, in many cases creates a danger that might not be there if the asbestos were left in place. When asbestos is an ingredient in stable siding materials, it does not normally pose a hazard, especially if kept coated with paint or any other coatings that keep the material from releasing airborne fibers. The danger is when it is allowed to deteriorate and turn into a dust-like form or if it is sawn or broken (e.g., in removal) in a way that creates dust. The greatest difficulty can be finding a suitable place where it can be sent to dispose of it.

Asphalt Shingles — The asphalt shingle roof reflects a product that was becoming increasingly popular at the time, though not an entirely new idea. Asphalt roofing was first developed in the 1840s.

Asphalt roofing products developed initially as one of the ideas for what to do with coal tar, a by-product of making artificial gas for gaslights. At first, the tar was not only free, but the gas manufacturers were willing to pay people to take it away. Eventually, though, it found dozens of new uses as the American chemical industry developed, fueled in part by the discovery that a wide range of dyes for fabrics could be made from it. A new

range of industries developed as chemists discovered new ways to make things from the waste products of other bituminous materials and processes, not only coal gasification, but also the coking process, and eventually the oil-refining industry. The discovery of competing uses of coal-derived waste products also drove the evolution of roofing materials. Naturally occurring asphalt (from tar pits) was tried when coal tar became less available, and then a similar tar-like material became available from the petroleum industry.

Roofing could be made in place by combining tar, sand, and other ingredients. Early manufacturers attempted to make a pre-manufactured version of this by impregnating felt or paper with coal tar and then coating it with a material like sand to dry the surface so it could be packaged and handled and would be stable when installed. Roofing sheet goods, such as tar paper, emerged as a product by 1889 and appeared in mail order catalogues by 1900. The product was refined into a shingle form by 1903. After 1910, there was an effort on the part of the National Board of Fire Underwriters to eliminate wood shingle roofing. Asphalt shingles emerged as the appropriate, inexpensive alternative. The patterns to which the material was cut were based roughly on the appearance of wood shingles. Even the name "shingle" is a reference to wood, as other alternatives for roofing, such as slate, tile, or standing seam metal used different terminology. When metal roofing became available in the form of metal shingles, around 1880, it was in the form of "shingles," pressed and shaped to mimic the appearance of wood shingle roofing.

In those years when the economy was booming after 1900, other, more expensive kinds of roofing were popular, whether ceramic tile, slate, metal, or other products. Asbestos tiles, as well as other cement fiber composite products, were also popular as roofing materials in the early decades of the twentieth century. In time, though, the economic downturn represented by the Great Depression, followed by the emergence of World War II and the material shortages it brought with it, limited both the number of new projects and the average budget by the 1940s. The building material industry was also looking for ways to meet the new economic, societal, and technological challenges of the times by increasing factory production and minimizing harder to control hand-crafted methods of construction. By the time the war was in full swing, most construction projects reflect an ethic of austerity, and only the less expensive, less extravagant materials tended to be in use. By the 1950s, factory-made asphalt shingle roofing was ubiquitous, especially on small frame buildings, residences, and projects that were not intended to be the center of attention.

Thus, asphalt shingles were a logical and expectable roofing material for the construction of the Carver Nursery School. On a given roof, they are also typically short-lived, lasting no longer than 30 years. The current roof was installed in 1960, according to a statement that current building owner William Cromley made in a document submitted to the city.[73] It is well past the point when the sections exposed to the most severe weather have failed.

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[73] Parker-Gray (Alexandria) Board of Architectural Review, from City of Alexandria, Virginia, "Memorandum to: Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review from: BAR Staff, subject: Supplemental Information for BAR Case 2009-0109," 15 October 2009.

Craftsman Style Canopies — The canopies found over the building's three exterior doorways are not strictly speaking a building material, but a design executed in wood. The knee-braces make use of heavy wood components, joined in an angular fashion with structural joints. Though common in the era in Craftsman style and Bungalow style designs, they are reminiscent of detailing in slightly earlier Mission style furniture (in some areas, they are roughly contemporary with the use of Craftsman style details in architecture, but the use of these details in furniture generally appeared before their application to exterior architectural details). The horizontal members of each canopy have diamond-cut ends, and the vertical members end at the bottom with lamb's tongues. The ends of the diagonals are joined into the horizontal and vertical members with a joint that is slightly recessed at the shoulder of the mortise that is reminiscent of square-rule barn framing. The Face of the gable-end of each canopy has trim shaped to resemble a capital letter "A" (different from the design shown on the drawings; see below). This corresponds with a three-faceted ceiling of thin wood strips of tongue-and-groove, center-bead boards. The bead-board is the product that was typically used in porch ceilings at the time. Each canopy had a light fixture mounted in the center facet of the ceiling. The east and west entrances had small lights, possibly (or eventually) recessed. The canopy on the Queen Street side has a fixture mounted toward the front, with a large, rigid metal shade that appears to date from before 1960.

The detailing of the canopy was a common stylistic theme at the time, and it is possible that all or parts of a given canopy were mass-produced. The canopies are not exactly as shown on the drawings. The drawings appear to show canopies with a similar design except having flat ceilings and vertical siding coming down to a straight horizontal edge in the gable end, in place of the capital "A"-shaped trim.

The excerpt from the drawing on the left shows a design for a slightly simpler canopy with a flat ceiling and vertical boards in the gable end. The canopies were actually built (above right) with a three-faceted ceiling. Trim in the shape of a capital letter "A" covers almost all the surface of the gable end.

Concrete Steps and Pipe Railings at Stoops — The stoops accessing the three entrances use typical materials and detailing of the time. It is interesting that brick side-walls were used in building the stoops. This probably resulted in a hollow space beneath

the steps and a lighter design even in comparison to pouring a similar hollow form from concrete. However, the brick construction took time, labor, and presumably more expensive materials than concrete would have; a later generation would have used concrete in some form at the sides. Concrete was then still a relatively new material. Concrete allows for a wide range of design options, but designers in this period were still experimenting with how the parameters of concrete installation, style, durability, and other factors ideally intersected.

The pipe railings at the sides of the stoops are not original. The drawings called for wood railings. The wood railings are visible at the kitchen door in at least one image in the William Thomas Post archives. A single half post fastened to the wall east of the kitchen door remains of this design. A similar half post remains fastened to the west wall south of the door in the gable end opposite North Fayette Street. Another photo in the archives shows the edge of the porch on the North Fayette Street side of the building with a scar where railings had formerly been attached to the wall. Scars are still visible in on both sides of the door in this location, though patched with some kind of filler material and painted.

The current welded pipe railings were a common solution at the middle of the twentieth century. These are welded railings with finished, curved joints. This design required more time and craftsmanship that threaded members assembled from pre-made parts, although the railings may have been manufactured and purchased as a whole assembly. If so, that might explain why no railing was placed on the west stairs, where the drop in grade created a longer run, and thus a need for a longer railing, something that would have been more expensive, especially if it would have had to be special ordered. The pipe railings were installed in sleeve holes that anchor into the concrete. It is not clear if these holes were originally there to hold the wood railings, but the concrete has split in one or two locations, perhaps because of the way the holes were cut.

Gypsum Wallboard — The interior walls are finished with boards made of gypsum plaster. The use of gypsum wallboard in this building was one of the most innovative and cost-saving aspects of the design. Wallboard was then a new material. It cut out several labor-intensive steps in the construction.

Prior to about 1900, most interior walls in America were finished with lime-based plaster on wood lath or directly applied to masonry. Lime plaster was popular because it could be made from local materials available in almost any area. Lime is a product of burning either limestone or seashells. Gypsum is derived from a chemically similar stone found only in certain places. It was most commonly associated with France, where there are large deposits of gypsum. For this reason, one variation on gypsum plaster is called "plaster of Paris." Both kinds of plaster are principally comprised of calcium. Lime plaster is good for handcrafted flat surfaces, especially over masonry and in any place where minor amounts of moisture might be present. Gypsum, on the other hand, is suitable for decorative work and can be used to produce highly refined finishes, but it is also easily damaged by moisture. Plaster was always popular because of its versatility

and because its stone-like properties were fire resistant, a consideration when lighting and heating involved open flames, especially below wood frame parts of buildings.

Around 1900, there was shift away from lime plaster and toward using more gypsum. This was partly because of the availability of better transportation systems, but also because decorative plaster details were in fashion at the time. Eventually, building material manufacturers got the idea of casting plaster between sheets of paper and making it available to install as sheet goods, without needing to install lath and eliminating the multi-step process of applying one layer of plaster on top of another.

The first version of gypsum wallboard was invented in the 1890s. The plaster was pressed between up to four alternating sheets of wool felt paper. The sheet goods were installed without any special provision for covering the edges. As the material evolved, it became more popular between the 1910s and 1930s. Heavy paper replaced the felt, and only two sheets of paper were used, one on each outer side. Some wallboard sheets were specially made to serve in place of lath as a substrate to a heavy white coat of plaster, and some were made for a thin plaster coating. In the 1940s, it was common to tape the edges with a paper tape that did not produce completely hidden seams. The fact that wallpaper was still popular may have been a factor, as the seams were not as noticeable with wallpaper on top as they are when the surface is painted. Eventually, as wallpaper became less popular and wallboard became more ubiquitous, techniques were developed for hiding the seams with plaster "joint compound."

Early in the process, as the new product was evolving, some buildings, such as the Carver Nursery School had most of their seams hidden behind strips of wood (the ceiling joints at Carver Nursery School have lattices strips covering them). Interiors already contained traditional trim elements that could serve this purpose, including baseboard, picture moldings, and casings around doors and windows. The various kinds of wood trim traditionally provided a way to conceal the edges, even of wet-applied plaster. At a school, there were many wall-mounted features, such as chalkboards and bulletin boards, that could be placed strategically to hide joints in vertical surfaces (each classroom had a blackboard on the north wall between the two windows and a bulletin board on the south wall, also between the windows, an indication that students were expected to sit at desks facing north with southern exposure light coming in from behind them). Around the time the school was built, the gypsum wallboard industry was still resolving the problem of finding a way to hide joints that appeared in exposed walls and ceilings at the regular increments provided by the manufacturers of sheet goods, which became fixed at some point as sheets of four feet by eight feet.

Linear Wood Details — The interior is finished with a wood baseboard, a picture rail at the edge of the ceiling, and lattice strips at seams in the ceiling. The baseboard has a quarter-round strip added to it, but not as a shoe-molding at the bottom; the quarter-round is instead at the top where it serves as a decorative cap to the main profile of the baseboard. A shoe-molding is also provided in the drawings (later removed in most areas); it has a cyma-reversa ogival profile. The picture rail profile is a standard wood

product, approximately a scotia-molding profile, dimensioned on the drawings as ¾ inch x 2.5 inches. The baseboard is ¾-inch wood, 5½ inches tall, not counting the quarter-round at the top. On the drawings, the strip of wood used as the baseboard is indicated as being back-milled, a technique used to lighten the weight of the wood and make it less likely to warp. This was another new innovation that had barely arrived by the 1940s.

Double-hung Windows — The windows are double hung with counterweights fastened by ropes on pulleys. The weights are missing in several places. The windows in the classrooms (2 large windows in each with a solid wall between them) and the two smaller eastern rooms have a 12/12 pane pattern. Those in the kitchen and bathrooms have a 6/6 pane pattern. They are traditionally constructed (what are now called true-divided-lights) in wood sash frames within weight-box jambs. The outer face of the weight-box jambs is 6 inches wide, with an equal lintel board and an equal apron beneath each sill. At the top of each lintel board is a simple strip of wood serving as a drip edge, a typical detail of Bungalows and Craftsman style construction of the era.

The windows are the classic window type that was common for about a century before the Civil War. Before the 1870s, the glass sizes used in windows of this pattern were based on the technological limitations of the blown glass industry at the time. This type of window came back into vogue with the Classical and Colonial Revivals after the 1890s. By the time the Craftsman style became popular, the bottom sash was often built as one pane, and the divided upper sash could be any combination of three or more panes, in a blended unit called a "bungalow window." The 6/6 and 12/12 sash types were slightly more popular than bungalow windows by the 1920s and 1930s, because it was easy to see out of the lower sash and also to clean it. However, the larger glass size was expensive, especially for locations where it was likely to get broken. This consideration outweighed the expense of using extra wood muntins in the assembly, so that sashes of 6 to 12 panes remained popular, including in the lower half of the window, in some kinds of buildings such as schools. There was also a theory that the muntins, when painted white on the interior side, diffuse the natural light improving the ambient light in certain applications.[74]

Two-panel Doors with Plywood Panels (with Related Hardware) — The doors in the building are consistent. They use two door types that were very common by this time.

The exterior doors had six to nine lights of glass in the upper half, with three horizontally oriented raised wood panels in the lower half. The glass provides a way to see who is trying to enter or exit, as well as letting in light. The framework outlining the panels and securing the glass in place is partly designed for security, since both the glass and panels can be easily broken, but in each case only opening a hole that would generally be too small to let in an intruder.

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[74] See: Jack A. Sobon, *Build a Classic Timber-Framed House*, Adams, Massachusetts: Storey Communications, 1994, page 30.

The interior doors consistently have two panels each. Such large panels were not possible until the invention of plywood. In this era it was considered an indication of how new building materials were making better things possible to have doors with as a small number of panels as possible. In fact, one-panel doors of this era were called "miracle doors." The two-panel door, however, was more typical in Craftsman style construction, common in bungalows and other simple buildings of the era. The break between the top and bottom panels usually corresponded with the location for the latch/lock hardware. Placing a center rail, or "lock-rail," in this location made the doors sturdier in case an intruder tried to break through the lock. The strength was also needed most at the center because use of the doorknob and lock hardware led to the center part of the door being impacted over and over in the course of everyday use.

The hardware that remains in place is about half from the original construction. Simple escutcheons were used at the doorknobs. They are pressed metal, narrow in width and proportion, with a beveled edge. All are now painted the same color as the door where a given escutcheon appears, but, in the original design, they probably had a painted brass or antiqued finish. The original doorknobs appear to be the ones that are pressed metal. Because it is difficult to make a spherical shape from pressed metal, they were made in two parts, and the outer part has fallen off in some locations. Some of the doors have glass doorknobs. Although glass doorknobs were used in this era, it is believed these were installed later when the pressed metal knobs failed. Most of the doors have mortised box-locks, usually with a key, but sometimes with a turn button. The original 5-knuckle hinges are still in place at several openings. Some of the hinges were modified to add springs. Some doors have early closers that could be original. The large closer still present at the front door is visible in some of the photos in the Legion Post archives.

Hasps and other non-historic hardware items have been added over the years in a number of places. It is relatively obvious which items are not original.

Sanitary Casing — The doors and windows are trimmed with a characteristic detail of the era, called "sanitary casing." This is a simple board with a rounded edge toward the door or window opening, mitered at the corners, and capped by a back band of wood that is slightly ell-shaped in profile (rabetted on one side to meet the wider board) and that has two rounded edges, giving an overall form that is softened by the absence of sharp edges.

Sanitary casing was an innovation from about 1920. It followed decades in which heavy, ogival profiles were used as casings, incorporating layered pieces of wood around each opening, sometimes with fluting, sometimes mitered and sometimes with cornerblocks. Door and window trim tended to be as ornate as possible in many designs from before about 1910, and then the trend shifted toward simplification. The details of the earlier woodwork types had cultural, historical, and logical origins, but they had evolved into forms that were better characterized as ornate flourishes than as clear representations of any classic precedents. Mitered sanitary casing was the simplest form of door and window trim found until even smaller profiles were introduced in the 1950s.

Schoolhouse Light Fixtures (fragments) and Related Electrical Fixtures — The building has fragments of typical electrical fixtures from the 1940s. The fixtures are plainly located on the original electrical diagram in the 1943 plans. This includes a kind of light fixture now called a "schoolhouse fixture." It also includes some early light switches, electrical outlets, and some other items that may be from the original construction. The exterior light at the canopy over the kitchen door stoop is an example of one of the fixtures that could be original or at least (whether always installed here or not) manufactured about the same time that the building was constructed. A large percentage of the building's electrical fixtures reflect changes. Some of the light fixtures appear to have been altered, and then the majority of them were changed ca.1980.

Schoolhouse fixtures were by far the most common kind of lighting in schools by 1900. They involved an escutcheon at the ceiling, in effect an inverted metal cup, from which a rod or chain descended about two feet. At the bottom of the rod or chain was another cup-like metal component with small screws designed to be turned by hand to hold the neck of a glass shade in place. The shades were typically (though not always) closed at the bottom, white glass, and nearly globe-like in shape, but molded to give them somewhat of a bell-like form, almost the shape of some varieties of summer squash. The color and shape were based on design considerations. The white glass protected the eyes as electric filaments burned much brighter than the flames of earlier gaslights, candles, or oil lamps. The white glass also diffused the light evenly across the room, and the bell-like form created an ideal shape to direct the light coming down in all directions. The fixtures were placed in a grid of four equally spaced units per classroom ceiling. The electrical diagram also shows one ceiling fixture centered in each remaining room or space, although it is not clear what kind of fixtures these originally were.

Tile Flooring and Later Remodeling Materials — A large percentage of the building's interior surfaces are covered with recent remodeling materials. This includes resilient tile on the floors, the paneling and decorative edges at the top line of the paneling, decorative cornices at windows, newer light fixtures, new partition walls, some door and hardware components, and the current plumbing fixtures.

The current floor is resilient tile. It is in poor condition, dirty, splattered with paint, and otherwise damaged. It is not the original floor finish. The drawings call for wood finish flooring over sub-flooring, as mentioned elsewhere. The tile was not investigated in detail.

Resilient tile was made of a variety of materials between ca.1900 and the present. It was an effort to make something similar to ceramic tile, but cheaper, less hard, and more suitable to the slight irregularities of wood surfaces. One early version of resilient tile was a variation on linoleum. Linoleum (which evolved as a variation on painted floor cloths) is a built-up material with a burlap base and coatings of tar, paint, and other materials, usually produced in large sheets, but sometimes cut into small tiles. The upper layers of linoleum consisted of thick coatings of paint with decorative patterns. Linoleum, however, failed when the top layers wore away exposing the lower layers that

were not intended to be seen. Rubber tile was an improvement on linoleum tile because the colored material was solid, not layered, and thus never showed inappropriate colors when worn or scratched. Later, other improvements were made as the rubber base material was replaced by vinyl. In an early version of vinyl tile, asbestos was added to give the tile a fibrous quality and make it fireproof. Sometimes the size and general age of the tile is enough to give a clue of whether asbestos was an ingredient. (The size of these tiles was not checked when surveyed, but a separate asbestos study was done by the owner, a copy of which is attached as an appendix)

The paneling is simulated wood on plywood, a product that became popular in the 1960s and remained common until the 1980s. Made of thin sheets of plywood, the wood-grained appearance was created using a photograph of stained wood. The simulated wood finish is further enhanced by a texture that leaves grain-like openings in the surface. The paneling appears to have been in place for at least 20-30 years. Some lodge photographs that may be from the 1970s appear to show a lighter-colored finish of paneling. This may be the same paneling before the current dark brown paint was added over it.

Architectural Description

The Carver Nursery School Building, also known as the William Thomas Post of the American Legion, is a rectangular, one-story building on a nearly level parcel near the intersection of Queen and North Fayette Streets, in the Uptown area of Alexandria, Virginia. It has a gable roof, and the frame walls rest on a partially exposed basement of brick walls, about five courses tall in most exposed areas, enclosing a crawl-space that is ventilated by a pattern of slot-like openings formed by missing headers in the brick. The building is distinguished by the way it is set back in the middle of a larger site, its Craftsman-style details, and otherwise by its stark and plain character. It reflects an era of austerity and the beginning of trends in public policy and architecture that led toward mass-produced building materials and components and simple, functionally targeted designs. The Craftsman-style details include exposed rafter ends at the eaves, canopies supported on knee braces at entrances, multi-paned wood sash windows, and asbestos-cement siding that has been in place since it was constructed. Built in the first half of 1944, it is 25 feet wide in the elevation facing North Fayette Street and 83 feet long in the elevation facing Queen Street. Although the building is visible from two perpendicular streets, neither street-facing elevation is clearly articulated as a façade (the word "Front," however, was used on the drawings for the North Fayette Street side, and the word "Rear" was used for the opposite side). It has equally detailed entrances at or near the center of three of the four elevations.

Exterior

The four walls of the building are similar, with no special emphasis on any one side. The opposing walls (the east vs. west gabled walls especially, but also the long north and south eave-side walls) are nearly indistinguishable in design, making the building seem somewhat faceless or less oriented to the street than usual. The east and west gable-end walls were built to be as identical as possible. The original design for the north and south walls differed only in that two tall out-built chimneys appear near the center of the south elevation, though a further differentiation came about in placing a door near the center of the north wall apparently while the building was under construction. Minor adjustments were also made in the locations of basement ventilation openings, apparently to reflect a different sense of symmetry after the kitchen door was inserted into the design.

The east wall of the building is gabled and faces North Fayette Street. A doorway is centered under the gable end. The doorway is accessed by poured-in-place concrete steps with pipe railings to either side. Above the door is a canopy, as described below, and above that, there is ghosting in the paint where there was formerly a sign for the American Legion Post. The top 30% (measured by height) of the gable end has louvers that appear to have been designed exclusively to ventilate the attic, with little concern for aesthetics. The elevation has no windows and otherwise presents a blank face to North Fayette Street. A virtually identical design centered on a matching doorway is found in the building's west elevation, opposite the elevation facing North Fayette Street. Because it is near the back corner of the parcel, where the property backs up to other backyards, this doorway currently faces into trees and a fence at the property line. The terrain drops

slightly toward the property line, resulting in the set of steps that access the door being longer at this side. The steps at the west gable end descend eight or more risers while there are only five risers in the steps on the North Fayette side. The lower terrain at the rear also accommodates a short door for access into the crawl space under the building located just north of the southwest corner of the foundation wall. The door is to the south of the steps, where it is also the least visible from the two perpendicular streets passing by the building. Unlike the North Fayette Street entrance, the steps at this side (the west side, and located very near the western property line) have no railings. However, a remnant is visible of a wood railing that previously was found here. The intended purpose of these steps may have been primarily for emergency egress, rather than as a regularly used entrance or exit. The top of the west wall has louvers that match those on the North Fayette Street side. In the long north wall of the building facing Queen Street are seven openings, one of which, near the center of the elevation, is a door, while the other six are windows. The building's south wall similarly has seven bays of openings, but on this side they are all windows. There are also two tall, symmetrically placed, out-built brick chimneys near the center of the south elevation, but this is the only one of the four elevations that has no doorway into the building.