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## ***The Beginnings of Historic Preservation in Alexandria-- Moving Toward the Creation of the Old and Historic District'***

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### **Introduction**

This paper is primarily about institutional efforts during the 1920s, 30s and 40s to establish a measure of control over the historic architecture of Alexandria.

Alexandria can tie itself quite directly to the classic date of the beginning of the historic preservation movement in this country -- the purchase of Mount Vernon by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1856. First,

George Washington had direct and continuing ties to Alexandria during his lifetime. Secondly, Ann Pamela Cunningham who formed the Mount Vernon Ladies Association also had considerable connection to Alexandria. She was the great-granddaughter of John Dalton, one of the original trustees of the town and a partner in the 18th century mercantile firm of Carlyle and Dalton.

The use of Mount Vernon as an historic house museum was a typical response as a method of preservation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and it spawned thousands of other organizations to do the same thing -- turn an old house that was the site of something or someone famous into a house museum shrine and then open the doors to the public.

Early preservation efforts in Alexandria were no exception -- they focused on individual properties and "restored" them for public educational purposes. These early efforts focused on Alexandria's close association with George Washington. For example, the Society for the Restoration of Historic Alexandria was formed in 1903 to make use of the Carlyle House as a house museum, because it was one of the "relics" of the City that had direct connections with Washington.<sup>2</sup> Other early, similar efforts, included Gadsby's Tavern, which was purchased in 1929 by the American Legion and operated as a historic house museum, and the Landmarks Society of Alexandria which was formed ca. 1934 to preserve the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary as a museum.

America's enduring love affair with a Colonial "golden age" was most strongly evident at the 1876 Centennial celebration in Philadelphia. Between then and the first part of the 20th century, the Colonial Revival movement was a powerful force that shaped much of the American landscape

and created a reverence for the by-gone and "simpler" days of the late eighteenth century. In Alexandria, this manifested itself most dramatically in the self-characterization as the home town of George Washington and veneration of the buildings associated with his comings and goings in the town such as Christ Church and Gadsby's Tavern. Plaques were attached to a number of buildings attesting to Washington's doings within and without these walls.

Beginning in the 1920s in Alexandria, as in many other cities in the country, an interest in preservation that had a somewhat wider focus emerged; one that looked to foster a greater sense of place and celebrate old architecture. During the 1920s there were only a few organizational initiatives to consider the protection of larger areas, rather than individual sites. Obviously the most famous was the restoration effort begun at Colonial Williamsburg in 1926, but not publicly announced until June 1928. That plan called for a restoration area as well as a buffer zone around the restoration section for visual protection.<sup>3</sup> Several years earlier in 1921, a Commission was created to try to protect the Vieux Carre district of New Orleans. However, the Commission had little or no power to regulate development.<sup>4</sup>

#### **The Chamber of Commerce Study**

With few precedents to go by,

the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce began to examine methods to preserve the architecture of the City. In mid-summer of 1929 a serious investigation was begun by Walter DuBois Brookings of a proposal he called Alexandria's Architectural Charm and How to Preserve It. Brookings was the appointed chairman of an Alexandria Chamber of Commerce committee on the architecture of the City.<sup>5</sup> As one of his first steps, he wrote to a number of other Chambers of Commerce, architectural magazines, City Mayors and other commissions and associations such as the Port Development Authority in Charleston, S.C. and the American Institute of Architects soliciting comments on the proposal. His outline for the study included a section titled: "Steps are necessary to assure that the future growth of Alexandria will add to and not detract from the existing architectural charm." He proposed that this be done by the "establishment of [a] committee of citizens including architects to pass upon projects..." and an "Agency...for development of a sentiment which would be effective in influencing builders to conform to the city's architectural desires."

As expressed in his outline, Brookings saw three major benefits to preserving Alexandria's architectural charm -- increased real estate values, stimulated industry and improved social life of the community.<sup>6</sup>

Among the people Brookings asked for advice was Charles Moore, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission was and is a Federal body that was formed in 1910 to review the aesthetic impact of projects carried out in the District of Columbia by the Federal government. The Commission's role in reviewing Federal projects in the nation's capitol could have served as a model for the type of review body envisaged by Brookings.<sup>7</sup>

Chairman Moore responded to Brookings that he thought the study outline was "admirably constructed" and went on to say that it was his opinion that the "town" should respond to the anticipated construction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway along Washington Street "both by the preservation of its historic buildings and also by creating sentiment in favor of a return to the colonial traditions when new structures are to be erected."

What Chairman Moore was, in part, referring to was a June 1929 agreement between the City and the Federal government concerning the routing of the George Washington Memorial Parkway along Washington Street. The City had been anxious that the memorial highway be routed directly through the City because it perceived that there would be substantial economic benefits to the City as a result. As the Gazette reported, the routing directly along Washington Street "will

mean that the vast majority of the visitors en route to Mount Vernon traveling over the boulevard will stop over in Alexandria and visit the points of historical interest."<sup>8</sup> A number of people expected that one of the principal sources of income to be derived from the Memorial Parkway would be from tea rooms which would be established to feed the "countless thousands" who would visit Alexandria's historic "shrines" as part of their pilgrimage to Mount Vernon. Tea rooms were a popular phenomenon of the first three decades of the 20th century. They were "part-home, part-business" that were operated by women and provided a very real alternative to eating in hotels and bars.<sup>9</sup>

So anxious had been the City government to ensure that the Parkway would be routed along Washington Street that the City Council passed a resolution in May of 1929 that they would refuse to consider any applications for new gasoline service stations along Washington Street until the agreement with the Federal government had been completed.<sup>10</sup> In return for agreeing to such a routing, the Federal government required the City to take certain zoning measures and to control signs along Washington Street in order to maintain the memorial character of the Parkway.<sup>11</sup>

While Brookings had set no geographical limits on the area of his study, in his

response to Brookings, Chairman Moore urged that the study area Brookings was contemplating be very broad. He advised that "The survey should be sufficiently wide to include the Theological Seminary and the entire region once embraced in the District of Columbia and afterwards retroceded to Virginia."<sup>12</sup>

Brookings presented his committee's findings to a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on September 23, 1929. They recommended "that the colonial style be adhered to wherever possible."<sup>13</sup> The timing of the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to preserve the architecture of Alexandria could not have been worse. In October of 1929, just a month after the report of the committee had been issued, the Great Crash occurred and the Chamber of Commerce then focused its energies on attracting industry to Alexandria and dropped its interest in trying to influence architectural design. Indeed, over the next decade and a half the Chamber actively fought against preservation in its efforts to bring industrial activity to the City. While the Chamber of Commerce's committee faded into the night, its ideas about how to preserve Alexandria's architectural charm did not.

### **The Early 1930s**

Beginning in 1930 The Garden Club of Alexandria took an active interest in preservation in the city. For example, in June of 1930 they



sent a letter to the City Manager condemning the sale or destruction of the "old landmarks of the city."<sup>14</sup> What the letter was obviously referring to was the removal of a 1796 brick house known as Colross from its Alexandria site to Princeton, New Jersey in the summer of 1929.

Like many cities, Alexandria began to seriously investigate the concept of zoning in the late 1920s after zoning had been declared a valid part of the police power of a local government by the United States Supreme Court in 1926 in the landmark case of Euclid, Ohio, et al. v. Ambler Realty Company. In late 1930, Alexandria began an effort to create a master plan for the city and to establish a zoning ordinance. The effort was heavily influenced by the fact that the George Washington Memorial Parkway had been routed along Washington Street. A central tenet of the planning effort was historic preservation, although it was not called that. The creation of city zoning and planning ordinances was undertaken by a Zoning and Planning Commission appointed by City Council in January of 1931. Almost immediately, the commission hired Irving C. Root, a city planner for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), as their professional staff. Root had previously established zoning regulations for both Prince Georges and Montgomery counties in Maryland.<sup>15</sup>

In order to preserve the

status quo during the period when the zoning ordinance and master plan were being considered, the City Council passed an ordinance that mandated that all new construction, additions to buildings and signs be reviewed and approved by both the Zoning and Planning Commission and the City Council before the Building Inspector could issue a permit to authorize the work. The only construction work that could proceed without approval of these governmental bodies was routine repair work.<sup>16</sup> Such detailed review of building projects by City Council would continue for more than a decade. However, the numbers of projects actually reviewed was relatively small because of paucity of building during the depression era. Nevertheless, the precedent for governmental scrutiny of building projects in the City had been established and would be followed once the historic district was established.

Root was an early and strong advocate for the preservation of the historic character of the City because the Memorial Parkway was routed through the City. For example, in mid-1931 Root set out on a wide ranging educational effort to explain the concept of city planning and zoning to the citizens of Alexandria. He wrote articles in the Gazette and made numerous speeches to civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club.<sup>17</sup> In a "largely attended" meeting of the Chamber together with

members of the real estate industry of the City in March, Root was quoted as saying that Alexandria was "most fortunate in having a great number of old substantial homes suitable for rehabilitation. Such a movement has already begun and with the coming of the boulevard, which will put our city on display to the entire country, it will undoubtedly grow if proper protection is thrown around such investments...Such a preservation will serve to attract many future tourists in Alexandria properties."<sup>18</sup> The following month in April of 1931 he told the Chamber of Commerce that the area east of Washington Street was proposed to be zoned residential because "the city will be on display as a result of the building of the road and that industry must not be allowed to encroach and ruin residential areas."<sup>19</sup>

The Zoning Ordinance was adopted in July 1931 and Root then set about creating a master plan for the City.<sup>20</sup> The plan which was finally adopted in 1932, was titled A New Plan for Historic Alexandria, Virginia. In the plan Root observed: "[I]n cities having an established character or type of building, it is found desirable to preserve this individuality by requiring new construction to harmonize with the old. The attractive Colonial design selected for the new Post Office at Alexandria is in harmony with present structures and there is a growing desire among the people of Alexandria to retain

the Colonial atmosphere of the community."<sup>21</sup> In other words, Root was suggesting that new architecture should be compatible with the existing.

It is interesting to reflect on the architectural styles of buildings that were being constructed during this time period. In large measure, buildings were designed in a Colonial Revival design vocabulary with a brick exterior, such as the Post Office of 1930 at the corner of Prince and South Washington Street, that was so praised by Root. (Figure 1) Not only was the building admired by Root, but the Gazette also lavished praise on the design of the building which "will be of colonial design and one of the most attractive buildings in the city when completed."<sup>22</sup>

When the building was completed the Gazette was effusive in heaping praise on the design of the building. In one article, the newspaper enthused: "Though designed to harmonize with its colonial surroundings the structure is modern in every respect...The site...is located in the midst of the city's most venerated shrines and on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway..." At its opening the newspaper noted: "hundreds of citizens inspected the new structure today and the office was greatly admired for its architectural beauty."<sup>23</sup> The George Mason Hotel directly across the street to the north was constructed in 1926 dates from the same time period and uses the traditional Colonial Revival design vocabulary that the Gazette admired.

At exactly the same time in 1930, the Virginia Public Service Company (VPS) Building was constructed across the street in an Art Deco style.<sup>24</sup> (Figure 1) While both buildings have essentially the same parti -- ground floor

retail use with offices above -- the exterior detailing and ornamentation of the two buildings created strongly conflicting sentiments about the appropriateness of architectural styles in



**Figure 1** -- Washington and Prince Street looking north, ca. 1936. The George Mason Hotel, 1926 on the far right, and the new Virginia Public Service Building, 1930, on far left. New 1930 Federal Post office located on near right.



Alexandria. In his letter to Brookings, Chairman Moore of the Commission of Fine Arts had admonished: "It seem[s] to me particularly unfortunate that the Public Service building was designed without reference to the town traditions and I hope this will be a warning."<sup>25</sup> At least in the initial planning stages, the VPS building was reported to be designed as a "purely colonial type", but by the time that the plans were made public the design motif had shifted to the point that the newspaper reported that it "will be unusually attractive and will be last word in modern office buildings."<sup>26</sup> By the time the building opened, the Gazette was lavish in its praise and enthused, "Before entering the building one cannot help but be impressed by its modernity, which a simple glance at any angle will reveal. The lines of the building are characteristic of today. The modernistic development in architecture has been given rather full play, but still there is a certain amount of restraint or refinement in design."<sup>27</sup>

In mid-1929, following the announcements of both the VPS and the Post Office buildings, but with the Depression only a few months away, the Gazette was optimistic about Alexandria's prospects and ran an extraordinary editorial. In it, the newspaper said: "We can see for the first time in the lives of the oldest inhabitants the old buildings coming down and expensive modern ones replacing

them...[The] fast turning wheels [of steam shovels] sing a requiem to the past...Those who have been slow to note the rapid march of progress must either get in line and keep step with the new spirit of the times, or join the army of 'fogyism', which is gradually but surely dying."<sup>28</sup> Within a few years, however, the newspaper would reverse course almost entirely and become a significant advocate for historic preservation.

In October 1933, a year after the adoption of the master plan with its strong preservation orientation, a local classically trained architect, Ward Brown, proposed a motion to the Alexandria Association that urged greater publicity about the historic buildings of Alexandria and the establishment of "A Fine Arts Commission". The purpose of this commission would be to provide "advice upon which the City Authorities could act." He went on to say that "The value of the historic buildings and their accessories it seems to me, are not now fully appreciated, at least not appreciated to the extent of properly preserving them and making them interesting and in some cases accessible to the public."<sup>29</sup>

The Alexandria Association was formed in August of 1932 and, during the 1930s, was the principal private organization which acted as an advocate for historic preservation.<sup>30</sup> It was and still is a private membership organization. In



its formative years the Association was principally concerned with improving the physical environment of the City and fought strenuously against a number of industrial developments along the waterfront and for the elimination of blighting and polluting industry.<sup>31</sup>

In October 1935, Root returned to Alexandria to make another presentation, this time to the Alexandria Association regarding the adopted city plan. He went a step further in his remarks than what had been included in the plan adopted by the City Council. He advocated that there should be "An art jury to safeguard the colonial architecture."<sup>32</sup> What Root appears to have been proposing was the establishment of an institutional forum to control the style of new construction in the City.

#### **Advocating Colonial Architecture**

Less than two years later on July 26, 1937, Mrs. Ward Brown, of the Alexandria Association followed-up on Root's suggestion. She wrote a letter to the Editor of the Alexandria Gazette and suggested that the newspaper publish a series of editorials aimed at the "appreciation...of the splendid architectural features of Alexandria, and their worth and value to the City." Her reason for urging the editorials was because, as she said, "It appears to me that the City is ignoring a large potential cash asset in

not making a definite [sic.] start toward attracting of a larger tourist trade, such as Williamsburg enjoys..."

She went on to make a number of suggestions which included: "The importance of appointing at once a Fine Arts Commission capable of passing on proposed alterations to the old buildings, and in certain designated parts of town, requiring new buildings to be in conformity to the eighteenth century style of architecture. Such a Commission would be composed probably of three members, to serve from one to three years, and of course be without pay. The advice of such a Commission does not have to be followed, but it should be composed of Architects and connoisseurs of art and architecture, their conclusions would be those of men trained in their lines, and therefore of value."

One other suggestion was: "The desirability of retaining as much of the old town in its original state as possible. A line of demarcation could appropriately be Royal Street North and South, both sides of the street."

Mrs. Brown closed with shameless flattery. "The Gazette is the oldest daily newspaper in the country and therefore peculiarly fitted to lead such a crusade, which would undoubtedly attract nation wide interest and admiration."<sup>33</sup>

Whatever she said worked like a charm because just four days

later on July 30, 1937 the Gazette published just such an editorial called "Colonial Alexandria?."

The editorial practically quoted Mrs. Brown's letter back to her as well as every other reader. The editorial opined, in part: "It seems to us that it would be well worth while for everyone concerned if our city government would work out a definite plan, having in mind the retention of old Alexandria with its original architecture, and requiring any new buildings erected in that part of our city to be in conformity with the eighteenth century style of architecture...We believe that the majority of our City Council are convinced of the desirability of retaining as much as possible of old Alexandria in its original state...we hope that our City Council will bear this in mind and formulate a definite plan for the preservation of historic Alexandria in its original dress for the benefit of both present and future generations."<sup>4</sup>

In fairness, the Gazette was already primed to push for some sort of historic preservation regulation by the local government. On February 15, 1937, a little more than five months earlier, the Gazette had published a major supplement to the newspaper. The supplement was boosterism at its finest and was designed to put the best face on Alexandria, which like much of the rest of the country, was suffering considerably as a result of the Great

Depression. That supplement included a whole page with the huge banner headline:

"Historic Background Aids Development" with a number of articles entitled: "Historic Landmarks Bring Additional Business to City, Tourist Trade Brings Many Thousands of Dollars to Alexandria; Many Visitors are Attracted: Chamber of Commerce Estimates Each Tourist Spends at Least \$1"; "Legion Earns Plaudits for Restoration of Old Tavern, Local Post No. 24 Salvages Old Landmark on Verge of Ruin"; and, "Restoration Projects Aid to Builders, Demand for Colonial Houses Also Brings Cash to City, 330 Homes Remodeled."<sup>5</sup>

There were a number of Letters to the Editor from citizens in the historic section of the City in response to the Gazette editorial. All supported the preservation of the "Colonial atmosphere" of the City. One noted: "The proposal to appoint a Fine Arts Commission to approve of changes in old structures of the city should win the active support of residents who have any appreciation of the city's unique charm, and I hope that the City Council will be induced to act on the valuable suggestion." Another wrote: "allow me to add to your editorial my commendation, and to express the wish that the City Fathers will take your editorial truly to heart and appoint the board of Architects suggested..." Still another reader wrote: "...I write to felicitate you...I have heard, literally dozens of expressions of

admiration and approval."<sup>36</sup> The newspaper was receiving the "admiration" that Mrs. Brown had predicted.

Mrs. Brown sent a copy of the editorial to the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, the agency overseeing the George Washington Memorial Parkway. In response, the Secretary of the Commission wrote to the editor of the Gazette and said that the "Commission...will be delighted to see some move along the line you suggest."<sup>37</sup>

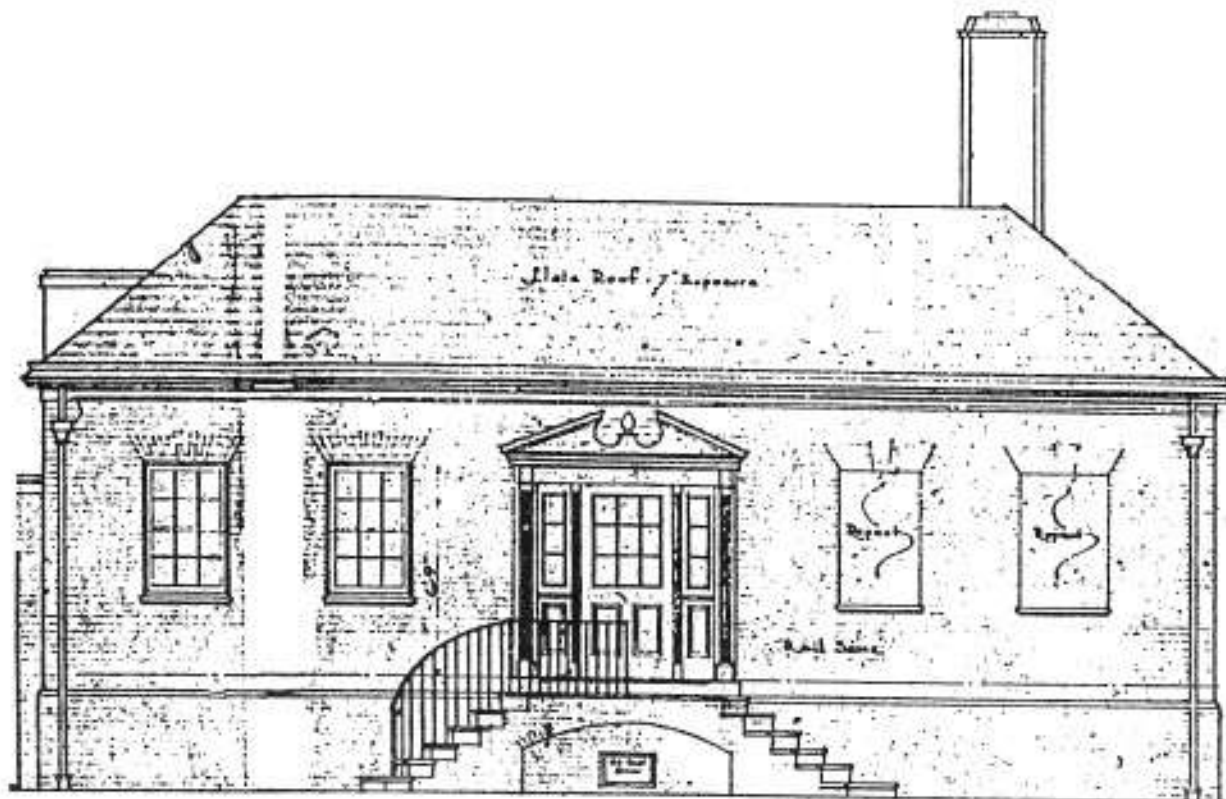
Mr. Bowman MacArthur wrote a Letter to the Editor in which he said: "I wish to commend your paper for the policy in this matter and express the hope that more editorials of the same tenor will be published in order to keep this subject before the citizens of Alexandria and the city officials."<sup>38</sup> MacArthur went further and made sure that the members of the City Council were aware of the Gazette editorial and succeeded in having it considered as a docket item by the City Council at their public hearing on September 14, 1937.<sup>39</sup>

### **Buildings That Conform**

By the late 1930s many citizens in the City had very definite ideas about how new buildings should look. What might these "new buildings in conformity with the eighteenth century style of architecture" look like? One example that apparently pleased many was the White Cross Dry Cleaning Building that was constructed

at 126 South Peyton Street in mid-1937, at the same time that the Gazette editorial was being circulated around the City. (Figure 2) In September when the building opened, the Gazette carried a front page picture of the new building citing its "attractive Colonial Design" and devoted an entire page to a description of the building and the business. The Gazette article approvingly noted: "Although modern from every practical standpoint, the new building in keeping with the historic background of Alexandria is Colonial in design, and is one of the most attractive appearing commercial structures in the city. With Flemish blond [sic.] front, the entire structure strictly adheres to the Colonial type of architecture..."<sup>40</sup> The building fronted directly on the street and was a one story, five bay brick building with a central raised doorway with a broken pedimented door surrounded with side lights, multi-light windows and a hipped roof with wood cornice. The form was simple and it was the applied decoration that produced the desired effect of an "attractive Colonial" building. What was important was the street facade of the building, the "Colonial design" was abandoned in the rear in favor of a simple utilitarian structure.<sup>41</sup> The building was demolished in 1986.

Another example is the Demaine Funeral Home at 520 South Washington Street, a four and a half story brick building



**Figure 2--**Working drawing for the White Cross Dry Cleaners, 126 South Peyton Street. Constructed 1937, Demolished 1986. "The entire structure strictly adheres to the Colonial type of architecture." Source: City Archives

that was originally constructed in 1902 as the Paff Shoe Factory. When the building was remodeled in 1947 it won high praise from the Gazette. In a front page picture and article, the newspaper said the building had been "rebuilt to maintain the historic atmosphere of the city" and "The building is of colonial design with large white columns and portico in soft gray and white."<sup>42</sup>

The desired "eighteenth century style of architecture" had deeper social connotations. It represented domesticity with a residential scale theme that had a deep resonance among many people

living in the historic section of the City. It was, in other ways, a reaction to the industrial construction that had taken place along the waterfront. As Kenneth Ames has pointed out in his Introduction to The Colonial Revival in America:

"Colonialism is not a surface phenomenon, a thin veneer over the real body of American life, but a network of communications and linkages that reaches deep into American experience and behavior...Like classicism, the colonial has no fixed symbolic content but serves instead as a nearly bottomless pool of possibilities, sometimes surprising in the



range of needs it fulfills."<sup>43</sup> Thus, an Alexandria "art jury" would be seeking architecture that was familiar, human in scale, with traditional building materials and details that were not avant garde.

By the late 1930s, then, there was considerable impetus underway for some sort of governmental mechanism to preserve the historic architecture of the City as well as to control the overt stylistic characteristics of new construction. However, the onset of World War II brought these private attempts to actively solicit governmental regulation to a standstill and it would not be until after the end of the War and from a completely different set of players that there would once again be interest in establishing governmental review of building projects in the historic section of the City.

In the interim, the Alexandria Association continued to push their architectural agenda. In 1939, the Association complained to both the City Council and NCPPC that a restaurant was being remodeled at the corner of King and Washington Street and that it was a "blatant modern building on Washington Street [that] should be discouraged." The Director of the NCPPC assured the Association that they were in full accord with the desire to "keep buildings along the Boulevard in harmony with the Colonial architecture of Alexandria."<sup>44</sup> The building that was eventually built at this site has undergone a

number of remodelings and is today the site of California Pizza Kitchen.

In May of 1940 the Association wrote to Sears, Roebuck and Company in Chicago and noted that they had heard word that Sears was planning to construct a retail store in Alexandria and said that "The Association is most interested in having new buildings conform with the 18th century architecture for which Alexandria is famous and hopes that you will erect a Colonial type building for your new store."<sup>45</sup> While Sears did not build a store in the Old Town area, the Association's protective attitude for the Parkway carried over when other major retail stores were constructed on Washington Street. For example, the Alexandria branch of the Woodward & Lothrop department store in the 500 block of North Washington Street built a little more than a decade later was constructed of brick in a Colonial Revival design vocabulary.

While formal institutional preservation efforts in Alexandria were halted during the war, individual preservation activities continued, many carried out by the thousands of new war workers who were stationed in the Washington metropolitan area during the war. Among them were Deering Davis, Stephen Dorsey and Ralph Hall, designers and architects. While they were stationed in Washington they were able, during their spare time, to compile three books on the

early architecture of Georgetown, Alexandria and Annapolis in the early 1940s. The Alexandria volume was the second one published. It appeared in 1946 and the book's introduction presented reasons for Alexandria to preserve its architecture. They wrote that, in Alexandria, many "Colonial and early Federal buildings...still stand--still in use--still beautiful--still tangible links with their builders--still valuable lessons in planning for enduring charm and utility. But meanwhile the most destructive of all wars has come and gone and our own old building are now a tragically larger share of the architectural heritage of mankind. So it is of more than national importance now that we preserve and restore what we have..."<sup>46</sup> The book appeared just as Alexandria was enacting its first historic preservation law.

#### **The Alexandria/Williamsburg Comparison**

One recurring theme that was a constant in any discussion of the preservation of historic architecture in Alexandria during the 1930s was a comparison to the restoration that was on-going at Colonial Williamsburg. Many observers noted that Alexandria had many more extant 18th century buildings than did Williamsburg and believed that preservation in Alexandria should follow the route of Colonial Williamsburg and turn the town into a tourist attraction. In her letter to

the Gazette, Mrs. Brown had noted that the tourism potential of Alexandria could be made comparable to Colonial Williamsburg. In 1937, the Alexandria Association wrote to City Council about the same issue. They said that: "By planning future restorations, and by careful preservation of still existing material, Alexandria could shortly be made a serious rival of Williamsburg in the interest of the traveler."<sup>47</sup>

Throughout the period there were a number of efforts to find a benefactor for the town who would do for Alexandria what Rockefeller had done for Williamsburg. Henry Ford was approached with just such a proposition, but his attention was focused elsewhere at Greenfield Village in Michigan. Even the Reverend Dr. Goodwin, Rector of Bruton Parish, who had first enticed Rockefeller to become the patron at Williamsburg, was approached to see if he could suggest someone who might become a patron for Alexandria.

When there was a threat to the survival of the Carlyle House in early 1941, the President of the Alexandria Association, Joseph Crockett, wrote to Kenneth Chorley then the President of Colonial Williamsburg seeking to have Williamsburg take over the building. He said: "We believe that this old landmark has a historic interest comparable to that of Williamsburg, and earnestly invite your consideration of it as a worthy addition to the

Rockefeller...preserved antiquities." Chorley responded: "...we have found it essential...to confine our restoration work to Williamsburg, and...I am afraid it would not be wise for us to consider the acquisition of any property outside of the restoration area of Williamsburg." Crockett thanked Chorley for his letter and said, with obvious disappointment, "I regret that Colonial Williamsburg...is unable to extend its activities to Alexandria."<sup>48</sup>

In early 1941 Pulitzer prize winning authors Thornton Wilder and Van Wyck Brooks both spent several months in Alexandria conducting research for new books. In separate interviews with the Alexandria Gazette, they both noted the obvious comparison between Alexandria and Williamsburg. Wilder was forthright in his assessment that Alexandria should not adopt the Williamsburg restoration approach which he characterized as "a fine reproduction, but I think the sustaining of the picturesque should not mean the denial of the 20th century." However, he said that he thought Alexandria was at a cross roads "of danger in losing the old and rushing toward the new." He went on to say that the ideal city was one "in which authorities have consciously restrained the more conspicuous forms of advertising and extremist types of art, and have provided unrelenting care for the old buildings."

Brooks echoed Wilder's sentiment and told the Gazette, "You have more of a town here" than Williamsburg, and he made the other obvious comparison, "I should say that Alexandria has 10 times as many fine old houses as Williamsburg."<sup>49</sup>

The wholesale Williamsburg museum approach never did materialize for Alexandria. However, Alexandria did benefit quite directly from the lessons that had been learned about the preservation of eighteenth century architecture in Williamsburg. Beginning in the 1930s, and continuing for several decades, a number of architects who had been involved in the original restoration project at Williamsburg received architectural commissions to work on historic Alexandria buildings.<sup>50</sup>

#### **The George Washington Memorial Parkway Controversy**

Following the end of the War there was considerable proposed construction activity in Alexandria, some of which involved requests for rezoning parcels along Washington Street to allow for increased development. By 1946, the 1929 agreement between the Federal government and the City regarding the preservation of the memorial character of the George Washington Parkway was monitored by the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (NCPPC) and the National Park Service, both Federal agencies.

Beginning in early 1946, NCPPC had lodged a number of protests with the Alexandria City Council regarding the approval of rezonings to allow increased development along sections of Washington Street.<sup>51</sup> By June of that year both the NCPPC and the National Park Service strongly condemned the actions of City Council in rezoning seven parcels on Washington Street from residential to commercial. In May, the Director of Planning at the NCPPC wrote to the Acting Director of the National Park Service: "In my opinion this action of the council is definitely a major breaking point in the zoning policy along Washington Street...This appears to be a good court case on which to test the agreement between the United States and the City of Alexandria...."<sup>52</sup> Both agencies sent strongly worded letters to each Council member stating that they were pulling out of the 1929 agreement because Council was not acting responsibly to preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.<sup>53</sup> It was the implicit threat of the National Park Service that they had the right to condemn properties and demolish buildings along Washington Street which did not contribute to the memorial character of the Parkway.

The concern of the NCPPC and the National Park Service is quite understandable in light of the relationship during the 1930s that was enjoyed between the City and the Federal

government over the Memorial Parkway agreement. For example, in 1932 City Council considered an application to rezone portions of Washington Street at Franklin and Jefferson Streets from residential to commercial. At the hearing, there was considerable public opposition because citizens felt such a rezoning would violate the terms of the 1929 agreement with the Federal government. The Council denied the rezoning requests.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the 1930s the City routinely referred rezoning and building permit applications to NCPPC for review and comment for projects fronting on Washington Street and just as routinely incorporated their comments as conditions of approval. For example, in April 1939, NCPPC commented on the proposed construction of an ice cream stand at the corner of Washington and Montgomery Streets. In the close of the letter outlining their comments to the City Manager, the Executive Officer of the NCPPC noted parenthetically, "We appreciate very much the cooperation which has been extended by the City of Alexandria in carrying out the purpose and intent of our agreement."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the City sought to self-regulate with respect to the agreement. In March of 1939, the City's Planning Commission firmly rejected, on its own motion, a request to rezone a parcel of land just to the east of the George Washington Memorial Parkway at Slater's Lane from



residential to industrial. In doing so, the Planning Commission motion specifically stated that the rezoning would be a "direct violation with the express agreement of the City with the United States Government" with respect to the memorial parkway.<sup>56</sup> The Marriott Hot Shoppes in the 900 block of North Washington Street was approved by NCPPC in early 1940 and the City placed conditions on the building permit that required compliance with the conditions recommended by the NCPPC.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time that concerns about rezonings of Washington Street were being expressed by the Federal agencies in 1946, NCPPC said it had under serious study the construction of an elevated roadway along the waterfront of Alexandria as a means of assuring access to Mount Vernon because they were convinced that the commercial rezoning of Washington Street would result in so much increased traffic that the memorial character of the road would be eliminated.<sup>58</sup> This elevated waterfront roadway was especially troubling for the City. Almost all of the industrial activities in the City were sited along the waterfront. If the elevated roadway were constructed in that area, it would almost single handedly destroy the major source of employment in the City as well as a major source of tax revenue to support City operations. It was the hardball played by these two Federal agencies that led directly and swiftly to the enactment of the Old

and Historic Alexandria District ordinance in August of 1946.

### **The Charleston Ordinance**

Largely in response to the criticism leveled at Council by NCPPC and the National Park Service, in May of 1946 Councilman Paul L. Delaney asked the City Attorney to draft an historic district preservation ordinance. The ordinance was modeled after an existing historic district ordinance in Charleston, S.C.<sup>59</sup> Oral tradition in the community holds that Councilman Delaney came upon the idea of protecting the historic architecture of Alexandria following a visit to Charleston where he learned about that City's historic district ordinance. The proposed Alexandria ordinance specifically included the preservation of the "character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway" as a stated policy.<sup>60</sup>

According to contemporary newspaper accounts, Delaney had specifically asked that the proposed ordinance include a provision that would prevent an owner from tearing down an historic building. The City Attorney disagreed publicly with the Councilman about the constitutionality of such a provision. However, the City Manager ignored the City Attorney's concerns and mandated that the proposed ordinance contain such a provision.<sup>61</sup>

The controversy over the rezonings on Washington Street

and the creation of an historic district was summarized neatly by an article that appeared in the Gazette on July 1, 1946: "On the heels of a denunciation of the zoning practices of City Council, with respect to Washington St. and the Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the much talked of 'Charleston' ordinance, creating an 'Old and Historic Alexandria District,' has been prepared by City Attorney Joseph M. Pancoast, and copies have been distributed to City Councilmen this weekend."<sup>62</sup>

As the ordinance moved its way from introduction to passage during the late spring and early summer of 1946 there was considerable controversy in the community regarding the preservation of several properties on or near Washington Street.

In May there were protests against a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which would permit offices in certain residential zones where there were historic properties. The ordinance change had been proposed because there was a shortage of office space in Alexandria. Historic preservationists were alarmed about the proposed change because as J. Howard Joynt, a well known advocate for preservation, said, the ordinance changes would "disrupt rather than preserve historical architecture, since interiors of homes would have to be changed" if offices were permitted.<sup>63</sup>

In June, a number of residents protested the rezoning of 804 Prince Street from residential to commercial to allow the building to be used as a medical clinic. Although the owner, Dr. Harrison Picot, pledged that the exterior of the building "will not be changed one iota", preservationists protested the change of use rezoning. Judge William B. Snow told City Council at the public hearing that "We would like to see all these houses in the downtown maintain their beauty." Another, Rebecca Ramsay Reese, a staunch preservation advocate, said: "most of us put our homes above money."<sup>64</sup>

The concern evidenced by a number of citizens about the maintenance of the interiors of historic buildings went well beyond anything that was being contemplated by City Council as part of the historic district ordinance.

In August, citizens also protested the planned rezoning of the corner of King and Washington Street to allow construction of an office building which it turned out was never built.

The ordinance was finally passed by City Council on a close vote of 4-3 on its third reading on August 13, 1946, but not without extensive opposition during, what the newspaper account the next day described as, a "stormy...session." The ordinance was championed by Councilman Delaney who had introduced the bill and by

Councilman Thomas A. Hulfish. Leading the opposition was the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, the organization which little more than a decade before had been the leading institutional advocate for the creation of a control mechanism over architectural development. The Chamber, joined by the Real Estate Board of Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax, opposed the bill because it would "infringe on the rights of the individual to use his property in a lawful manner...and...restrict and prohibit the orderly development and progress of the City of Alexandria...and

the enforcement...would lead to hardship and inconvenience."<sup>65</sup>

While the Chamber's opposition fell short of preventing passage of the ordinance, their opposition was successful in reducing the overall size of the historic district. As originally proposed in May, the boundaries were Montgomery Street on the north, Hunting Creek on the South, the Potomac River on the east and West Street on the west. As finally passed in August the western boundary was shifted eastward five blocks to Alfred

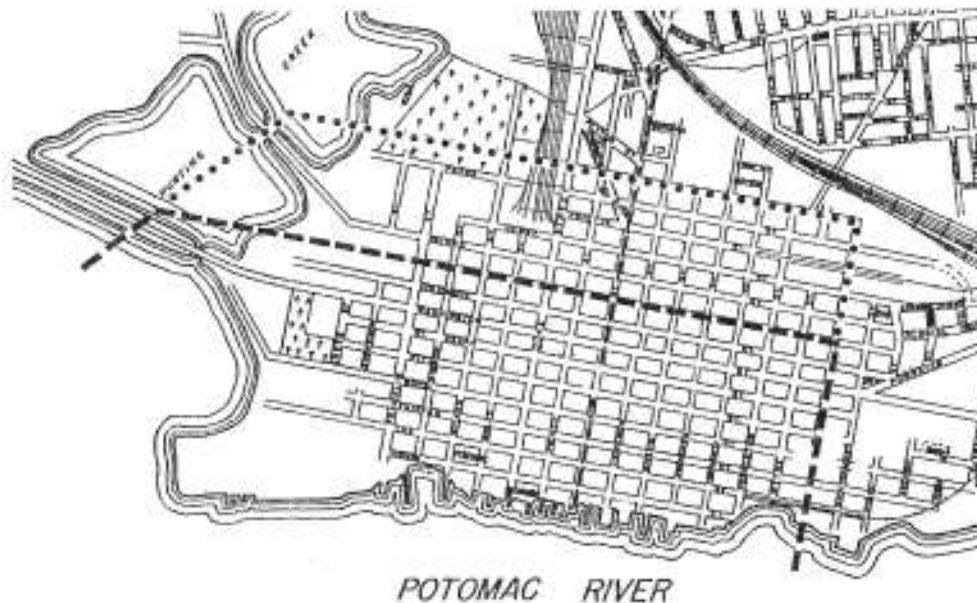


Figure 3: Map of the Old & Historic Alexandria District

..... Boundary Proposed, May 1946  
 - - - - - Boundary Adopted, August 1946

Source: Real Property Survey Alexandria, Virginia, Works Progress Administration, May 1939. City of Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning Files. Map redrawn for clarity.

Street. (Figure 3)

The opposition also led to a change in the composition of the membership of the Board. As originally proposed, the Board would be composed of five members, four appointed by the Council and the City Building Inspector. As finally passed the membership had been increased to seven with the stipulation there be one member of the City Planning Commission and a licensed real estate broker as members. These two members, it was believed, would be more sympathetic to development interests than the members who were appointed because they had "knowledge of and demonstrated interest in the historical character of the old part of the city."<sup>66</sup>

#### **Membership of the First Board of Architectural Review**

The first Board was composed of seven members appointed by City Council. City Councilman Everett A. Hellmuth, a member of the Planning Commission, was appointed Chairman.<sup>67</sup> The other members appointed were: Anthony Lash, the City Building Inspector, who was named Secretary as stipulated in the Ordinance; Ward Brown, a local architect; Mrs. Robert Reese (Rebecca Ramsay Reese) and Mrs. Charles B. Moore, both prominent local preservationists; and, Eppa Kane, a real estate broker. The ordinance required that two "certified architects" be members of the Board.<sup>68</sup> Initially, however, one of the two positions for architect members was left vacant at the

request of Councilman Delaney. He had nominated Milton Grigg, one of the original Williamsburg architects who was, in 1946, beginning work on the restoration of the Ramsay House. Grigg, who was an Alexandria native, had established an architectural firm in Charlottesville, but Delaney expected that Grigg would be moving back to Alexandria and then could be appointed to the Board.<sup>69</sup> Grigg, however, never did return as a resident of Alexandria and City Council appointed Worth Bailey, a prominent local and national preservationist, in his stead.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, Ward Brown died before he could attend any meetings of the Board, and Council appointed Delos Smith, an architect who had been part of the Historic American Buildings Survey program with the Department of the Interior in the 1930s, to this architect slot.<sup>71</sup>

The first meeting of the new Board of Architectural Review was held on October 11, 1946.

From the beginning, and continuing to the present day the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review has had among its members figures of importance on the national preservation scene. This fortunate circumstance is due almost exclusively to the close proximity of Alexandria to Washington which is the seat of the Federal historic preservation program.



### **1947 Efforts to Overturn the Historic District Ordinance**

Within months of its passage, there was serious opposition mounted to the historic district ordinance and a well organized effort undertaken to repeal the law. The initial

clash came in early April 1947 and involved the rezoning of a parcel on South Washington Street called the McGuire House, which is today known as the Lyceum. (Figure 4) The owner of the property had asked the City Council to rezone the property to permit



**Figure 4 --** 1946 view of the McGuire House, constructed 1839 201 South Washington Street. (Lyceum) It was the proposed rezoning of this building in 1947 that lead to efforts to repeal the historic district ordinance. Alex. Library

the construction of a six story office building. The rezoning request drew vigorous opposition from preservationists in the community who were emboldened by their success in achieving passage of the historic district ordinance and the rezoning was eventually denied by Council. The owner then sued the City over the Council's action and, at the same time, offered the property "to anybody who would cart it off his property." He was particularly outraged that the newly passed ordinance would not permit him to raze the building without the approval of the Board of Architectural Review.<sup>72</sup>

A few weeks later, a motion was introduced in City Council to repeal the law. At the initial hearing to schedule formal consideration of the recision, the vote to schedule such a session in May passed easily 5-3, more than enough to assure passage of a repeal of the law. The opposition to the law was led by Councilman John Ewald who was quoted as saying the ordinance was "too broad." He was opposed by Councilmen Everett Hellmuth, who was simultaneously serving as the Chairman of the Board of Architectural Review, and Paul Delaney who had initially introduced the historic district legislation. At the initial hearing, Hellmuth said, "The ordinance is one of the best things we have in Alexandria" and went onto to say "it merely seeks to harmonize the architecture in the various areas in an endeavor to promote progress

and at the same time please the eye."

Outright repeal was favored by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Merchants Association. However, in early May, the Alexandria-Arlington-Fairfax Real Estate Board passed a motion to present to Council that called for a less stringent result and suggested instead modifications to the ordinance. The Real Estate Board felt that the ordinance would "seriously effect" commercial development on King Street and called upon Council to limit the application of the ordinance to residential properties where the Real Estate Board felt it had "some good qualities."<sup>73</sup>

The Alexandria Association and preservationists were quite concerned and passed their own motions to encourage Council to keep the historic district ordinance.<sup>74</sup>

At the public hearing in late May on the issue of repealing or amending the historic district ordinance, Council also considered again the rezoning of the McGuire parcel. Both were approved. The McGuire property was zoned to allow the construction of the office building and the City Attorney was directed to draft changes to the ordinance. The changes that the Council approved were the elimination of all properties fronting on King Street with the exception of the intersection of King and Washington Street as well as all properties within 200 feet

of Washington Street and elimination of the provision that would require Board approval for the demolition of a building. Council also authorized appointment of a committee to examine other changes that could be made to the ordinance in relation to what was called "business progress."

At the Council meeting Hellmuth made what was characterized as "an impassioned speech" during which he envied against "the vicious and vile rumors against the board" and the "witch hunt" that was being carried on by opponents of the Board. He further said that in the eight months since the Board had been meeting it had reviewed a total of 64 cases and had "immediately passed 50, and rejected completely only 4." He went further to make the novel argument that review by the Board was worth at least \$1,000 to every property owner, because, as he said, the Board had "two qualified architects and a cross-section of public representation, whose opinion...carried a monetary value." Largely as a result of Hellmuth's efforts and those of another Board member, Rebecca Ramsay Reese, Council decided to take no final action on the changes to the ordinance until the committee reported back sometime early in the summer.<sup>75</sup>

The committee appointed by the Mayor the following week was composed of representatives of the principal organizations advocating repeal or the

modification of the ordinance - Retail Merchants Association, Real Estate Board and the Chamber of Commerce - as well as a representative of The Historical Society and the principal Council supporters of the ordinance, Councilmen Hellmuth and Delaney, along with the City Attorney.<sup>76</sup>

The community was outraged that the Council appeared completely willing to take back what it had just approved less than a year earlier and the almost cavalier reconsideration and then approval of the rezoning of the 100 and 200 blocks of Washington Street, both north and south, which included the McGuire house. A number of groups banded together after holding what were characterized as small "indignation meetings" and called for a mass meeting of all those who were concerned about the Council's action. The groups were the Alexandria Historical Society, Alexandria Association, The Garden Club of Alexandria and the Alexandria Little Theater. They were later joined by the Colonial Dames of America and the Penwomen's Society. The "mass meeting" was scheduled for June 13, 1947 and was held in the auditorium of the George Washington High School.

The meeting was attended by well over a hundred and a resolution was passed to support the Board of Architectural Review and the ordinance and to protest the Washington Street rezoning. The group mounted a sophisticated public relations

campaign to garner public support and influence the Council decision. Marshall Allen, formerly a public relations official at Colonial Williamsburg, directed the effort. As a first step, Ronald Lee, the chief historian for the National Park Service and one of the most important figures in the 20th century historic preservation movement, spoke to the crowd at the meeting and addressed the Council's rezoning of portions of Washington Street.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the Alexandria Association voted to commit \$500 to the effort to fight Council's proposed repeal of the Charleston ordinance.<sup>78</sup>

Next, the group enlisted the support of United States Senator Burnet Maybank of South Carolina, who had been the Mayor of Charleston at the time their historic district ordinance had been enacted in 1931. Senator Maybank wrote a letter to the group and the Gazette dutifully printed his response in which he wrote: "In order to maintain our [Charleston's] historic buildings we enacted the so called zoning law, which the State Supreme Court declared legal. At first there was much opposition to the law, but after several years of its working the people all realized the great benefits to the community, and I believe that 90 per cent of our people are now in favor of it." Maybank's letter thus addressed the principal arguments in opposition to the Alexandria ordinance: that over time an historic district

ordinance would prove beneficial and garner the support of a majority and that such a law was, indeed, legal.

At the same time, the group addressed the issue of rezoning Washington Street and the likely demolition of the Lyceum. They secured the endorsement of Joseph Downs, the curator of American art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Downs noted in his letter that the Metropolitan had mounted a large exhibition in 1943 on Greek Revival architecture and had used the Lyceum as the cover illustration. He went on to say: "There is no doubt that we must make every effort to preserve as much of the cultural past as we can..."<sup>79</sup>

The opponents countered with their own campaign. In an unusual by-lined article in the Gazette, unnamed sources were quoted as questioning the constitutionality of the ordinance.<sup>80</sup> By the middle of July it was reported that the City Attorney had drafted changes to the ordinance that would overcome legal challenges. The changes would not require the Board of Architectural Review to approve demolition of buildings and would delete Washington and King Streets from the historic district boundaries.<sup>81</sup>

Over the summer, other events in the City focused the Council's attention away from the challenges to the ordinance. In August, the City Manager resigned at the request of the Council



following the resignations of both the Chiefs of Police and the Fire Department and there was a great deal of debate about the power and form of a City Manager type of government.<sup>82</sup> In the midst of all this, the Mayor formally appointed a committee to oversee the bicentennial celebration of the City's founding which was to take place in 1949. As the newspaper reported, "The announcement of the committee to work out the bi-centennial celebration comes at a time when the city has before it much related subjects as the validity of the so-called 'Charleston Ordinance', zoning and re-zoning permits in certain historical sections of the city, and the restoration of certain old buildings..."<sup>83</sup>

At its first meeting in September, Council again took up the issue of the rezoning of Washington Street for more intense commercial development. There was continued strong opposition to the rezoning proposal. At the public hearing on September 9th, there was considerable public testimony from "hundreds in the audience" and there were petitions presented in opposition. The whole hearing was quite contentious and lasted a reported six hours. A representative of the Federal government from the Bureau of Public Roads testified about the 1929 agreement to maintain the memorial character of the Parkway. In the end, Council compromised and re-zoned only a small section of the west side of Washington Street

rather than the entire four block area. The issue of changing, repealing or modifying the historic district ordinance was not brought up. The citizens left with what was called a "triumphant feeling."<sup>84</sup>

With such strong citizen interest, Council members began to realize the political implications of changing the ordinance. Elections for Council were only a few months away in the spring of 1948. By the beginning of the winter, a number of candidates had announced their intention to seek Council seats. As one said, "I have been shocked and disappointed by the utter disregard of some of our members of City Council to the petitions and pleadings of our citizens in recent months. After all the city does not belong to members of Council." In December, Paul Delaney, the original champion of the historic district ordinance, announced that he would not be seeking reelection and in February, Hellmuth was apparently feeling confident enough in the continued existence of the Old and Historic Alexandria District that he also announced that he would not seek reelection.<sup>85</sup>

Since it was passed in 1946, the so-called Charleston Ordinance has been amended a total of 33 times. The ordinance and the members of the Board of Architectural Review who have served throughout the years have been the glue that holds together the architectural heritage of

an 18th century town. It and they continue to be a significant force in the preservation of the historic architecture of Alexandria and are sympathetic to new development.

In most respects, the historic preservation movement in Alexandria has been a microcosm of the events that were taking place in preservation throughout the country. While Alexandria's historic district ordinance was one of the first in the nation, a number of other cities adopted similar legislation within a few years. For example, in Washington, D.C. discussion about protection for the historic architecture in Georgetown had begun by the Fine Arts Commission as early as 1933. However, like Alexandria more than a decade would pass before the passage of a law creating a historic district commission for Georgetown in 1950.<sup>86</sup> Today, the issues and concerns facing both Alexandria and Georgetown are virtually parallel and many of the solutions are common to both historic districts.

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**Figure 5** -- A 1924 View looking south of the west side of the 300 block of N. Washington St.-- since razed. In Wm. F. Smith & T. M. Miller's A Seaport Saga, p. 178

#### ENDNOTES:

1. A version of this paper was presented to the Alexandria Historical Society on September 25, 1996 in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review.
2. "Our first stop has been to open the house, remove the dust of ages and make the place possible for visitors...." "Society for the Restoration of Historic Alexandria," Notes and Queries, Virginia Historical Magazine, v. 11, 1903-1904, pp.218-220. I thank T. Michael Miller, Alexandria City Research Historian, for bringing this information to my attention. See also this paper pages 34-36
3. Walter Muir Whitehill, "Promoted to Glory..The Origin of Preservation in the United States," in With Heritage So Rich, (The Preservation Press, Washington, D.C., 1966, reprinted, 1983), p. 145.
4. Walter Muir Whitehill, "The Right of Cities to Be Beautiful," in Ibid., p. 150.
5. Brookings (1873-1950) was a Harvard educated lawyer who had a hugely successful business career in the timber and lumber industry. See, Who Was Who in America, Vol. 3, 1951-1960, (Marquis Publishing, Chicago, IL, 1963), p. 106. He had been an unsuccessful candidate for the Board of Directors of the Chamber in early 1929. "Nominees for Trade Body Directors," Alexandria Gazette, March 14, 1929, p.1. Hereafter, AG.
6. "Alexandria's Architectural Charm", Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. Alexandria City Archives, Historical Records, Box 3, CMO Misc. Alpha Files, Acc. #171. Papers donated by Mary Brookings Imrie (Mrs. Walter C.), 1972. Hereafter, CMO Files. I am grateful to John Hackett, former City Archivist, for drawing my attention to these papers in 1993. The other members of the Chamber of Commerce committee were E.S. Leadbeater and George F. Downham.
7. See Kohler, Sue, The Commission of Fine Arts, A Brief History 1910-1990 (The Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, DC, 1990), see esp. pp 1-6.
8. "River Route is Favored for Mount Vernon Boulevard," AG, January 22, 1929, p.1.
9. "Citizens Give Views on Zoning Ordinance," AG, June 23, 1931, p.1. The article quoted V. Ward Boswell as saying: "if Alexandria is to be benefited next year from the countless thousands coming here it must be through tea houses and places of

like character on Washington Street. The people of Alexandria, he declared, cannot live on simply seeing visitors 'going' through." On the tea room phenomenon, see, Cynthia A. Brandimarte, "'To Make the Whole World Homelike' Gender, Space, and America's Tea Room Movement," Winterthur Portfolio, v. 30, no.1, Spring 1995, pp.1-19.

10. "Halt Any More Gas Filling Stations on Washington Street," AG, May 17, 1929, p.1.

11. Memorandum of Agreement between the City Council of the City of Alexandria and the United States of America, represented by the Secretary of Agriculture, dated June 20, 1929.

12. Letter, Charles Moore, Chairman to Mr. W. DuB. Brookings, October 8, 1929. City Manager Office Files. One might speculate that one of the reasons for Moore's very helpful response to Brookings was that both were members of the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC during the late 1920s.

13. "City Park Movement Revived," AG, September 24, 1929, p. 1. Brookings presentation was listed as one of the highlights of the year when the Chamber reviewed its record for that year the following March. "Trade Body Work Review," AG, March 22, 1930, p.5.

14. "Light Franchise is Before City Council," AG, June 27, 1930, p. 1.

15. "Zoning Body Now Acting on Permits," AG, January 26, 1931; and, "Progress on Zoning Work Being Made," AG, January 30, 1931.

16. "Zoning Body Now Acting on Permits," AG, January 26, 1931, p.1. See also, City of Alexandria Ordinance No. 114, January 7, 1932.

17. See, for example, "Benefits of Zoning Are Enumerated...by Irving C. Root, Zoning and Planning Engineer for Alexandria," AG, February 19, 1931, p.1. and "Root Tells of Zoning Plans Here, Engineer for City Speaks before Rotary Club Today," AG, March 10, 1931, p.1. See also, "Park Body is Told of Zone Work in City, Special Committee to Confer with Irving C. Root on Subject," AG, March 12, 1931, p.1. Interestingly, Walter Brookings was the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's Parks Committee.

18. "Talk on Zone Work Made to Realtors, Root Tells Audience Zoning Has a Tendency to Stabilize Real Estate Values," AG, March 14, 1931, p.1.

19. "Zone Work Explained by Planner, Irving Root Appears Before Chamber of Commerce at Its Meeting, Tells of Changes, Mount Vernon Boulevard a Factor in New Ordinance, Root Says," AG, April



14, 1931, p.1.

20. "Zoning Ordinance Is Now Effective," AG, July 27, 1931, p.1.

21. "A New Plan for Historic Alexandria, Virginia, by Irving C. Root, City Planner, 1932 for Alexandria City Planning and Zoning Commission." Alexandria Library Lloyd House, Alexandria Association Files, Box 263E, Folder 8. Hereafter Lloyd House Files. The copy in the Association's files is dated 1935 and contains the note "This report and four maps prepared by the Commission were adopted by the City Council of Alexandria as the City Plan." The proposed plan and accompanying maps were published as a legal notice in the Alexandria Gazette on September 19, 1931. The master plan was adopted in July 1932. See, "New Planning Law Adopted by Council," AG, July 27, 1932, p.1.

22. "A Colonial Type P.O. is to be Built," AG, May 28, 1930, p.1.

23. "To Complete New Federal Office Soon," AG, January 1, 1930, p. 13; and, "New Post Office Opened Today," AG, December 15, 1931, p.1. See also, "Post Office Cornerstone Laid Today," AG, February 23, 1931, p.1; and, "New Post Office Will Open for Business Next Tuesday," AG, December 12, 1931, p. 1. The architect for the building was William G. Noll.

24. See, Ross, Helen P., "The Last Word in Modern Office Buildings: The Virginia Public Service Building in Alexandria, Virginia," George Washington University, unpublished mss., 1986, Board of Architectural Review Staff files.

25. Moore Letter, CMO Files. op.cit.

26. "The Virginia Public Service to Erect a Big Office Building," AG, November 9, 1928, p.1; "Approve the Plans for an Office Building," AG, January 23, 1929, p.1; and, "As New Home of Virginia Public Service Co. Will Look When Completed," AG, April 16, 1929, p. 1.

27. "Thousands at Opening of Building," AG, April 25, 1930, p.1.

28. "A Greater Alexandria," AG, May 21, 1929, p.4.

29. Handwritten note by Ward Brown. Alexandria Association Minutes, October 2, 1933. Lloyd House Files, Box 263E, Folder 6.

30. See, Wunsch, Aaron, "Alexandria, Virginia's 'Stormy' Preservation Legacy: The 1946 Historic District Ordinance." Unpublished mss. University of Virginia, 1995. Board of Architectural Review Staff files and Adam, William Robert, "The Alexandria Association 1932-1942 and Other Notes," (1983), Lloyd

House Files, Box 263E.

31. The Association became the parent organization of the Old Town Civic Association, 1952, and the Historic Alexandria Foundation, 1954.

32. Alexandria Association Minutes, October 7, 1935. Lloyd House Files, Box 263E, Folder 8.

33. Mrs. Ward Brown, President, Alexandria Association to C.C. Carlin, Alexandria Gazette, July 26, 1937. Alexandria Association Files. Lloyd House Files, Box 263E.

34. "Colonial Alexandria?", editorial, AG, July 30, 1937, p.4.

35. "Historic Background Aids Development", AG, February 15, 1937, p. 5.

36. "Letters to the Editor," AG, August 3, 1937 p. 3.

37. T.S. Settle, Secretary, NCPPC, to Editor, Alexandria Gazette, August 26, 1937, Lloyd House files, Box 263BB, file 9.

38. Ibid., August 17, 1937, p. 5.

39. "City Council Will Gather This Evening," AG, September 14, 1937, p. 1 and "Repeal \$20 Sewer Tax Law of 1931", AG, September 15, 1937, p. 2.

40. "New White Cross Plant," p. 1 and "White Cross Cleaners, Formal Opening of New Building Today," p. 5, AG, September 28, 1937.

41. The building was designed by C. Stafford Kelly, Cert. C.E. of Alexandria. The designer had indeed specified "true Flemish bond" on the front. Alexandria City Building Permit No. 1315, March 9, 1936. Alexandria City Archives Building Permit Records.

42. "New Demaine Funeral Home Historic Colonial Design, AG, July 11, 1947, p.1. Building Permit #11, April 15, 1902, Code Enforcement Bureau files. The original shoe factory was designed by the Washington, DC architectural firm of Speiden & Speiden.

43. Ames, Kenneth L., "Introduction," in Alan Axelrod, ed., The Colonial Revival in America, (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), p. 5.

44. Letter, Mrs. J.H. Forshaw, Secretary to The Park and Planning Commission, November 9, 1937 and A.E. Demaray, Acting Executive Officer, NCPPC, to Mrs. Forshaw, November 21, 1939, Lloyd House files, Box 263BB, file 9. The building the

Association was complaining about was the United Cigars-Whelan Store which opened in March of 1940 and was described as "The entire treatment of the store is in the most up-to-date manner." "United Whelan Firm Boasts Modern New Establishment Here," AG, March 20, 1940, p. 7.

45. Letter, Ann D. Forshaw, Secretary, Alexandria Association to Sears, Roebuck Company, Chicago, IL, May 28, 1940. Alexandria Association Files. Lloyd House Files, Box 263E.

46. Davis, Deering, Stephen Dorsey and Ralph Hall, Alexandria Houses, 1750-1830, (Bonzana Books, NY, NY, 1946), p.5.

47. Alexandria Association to City Council, July 26, 1937, Lloyd House files, Box 263BB, file 6.

48.. Joseph P. Crockett to Kenneth Chorley, February 21, 1941; Chorley to Crockett, February 25, 1941; and Crockett to Chorley, March 4, 1941. Lloyd House files, Box 263BB, file 17.

49. "Alexandria in Danger of Getting Old and New All Mixed Up, Says Thornton Wilder, Upon Leaving," AG, February 13, 1941, p. 1. "Distinguished Author Spends Two Months in Alexandria Studying Southern Writing, Van Wyck Brooks Preparing History of American Writing," AG, March 17, 1941, p. 5.

50. Such as Walter Macomber, Thomas Tilston Waterman and Milton Grigg

51. "Rezoning Pleas Before City Council," AG, May 14, 1946, p. 1.;

52. John Nolen, Director of Planning, NCPPC to A.E. Demaray, Acting Director, National Park Service. National Archives, RG 30, Box 1386. Quoted in Cultural Landscape Report, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Volume One: History, Prepared by EDAW, Inc. for the National Park Service, National Capital Region, (n.d.) v.1, p. 59.

53. "Zoning Agreement is Voided, Council's Action is Criticized," AG, June 27, 1946, p. 1.

54. "Rezoning of Washington St. Protested," AG, May 5, 1932, p.1 and "Efforts to Open Part of South Washington Street for Commerce Defeated," AG, May 6, 1932, p.1.

55. Arno B. Cammerer, NCPPC to Carl Budewsky, City Manager, April 7, 1939. Building Permit #26?? [illegible in original], May 1, 1939. Code Enforcement Bureau files.

56. Minutes, Alexandria City Planning Commission, March 9, 1939. Department of Planning and Zoning files.

57. See Building Permit #2389, February 28, 1940, Code Enforcement Bureau files.

58. "Proposed Highway Opposed", AG, May 8, 1946, p. 1. See also, for example, "Elevated Highway Favored," AG, May 21, 1946, p. 1 and "Edward Kelly, Member of City's Planning Commission, Upholds Policies of Leaders," AG, September 4, 1946, p. 1. A year later there was still consideration being given to the elevated waterfront highway idea by the NCPPC and a newspaper account noted: "Some officials were wondering today if this was the Federal government's reaction to this city's recent rezoning of part of Washington street, which is a section of the Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway." "Elevated Highway Through City Considered by Park Commission," AG, September 19, 1947, p. 1.

59. "Rezoning Pleas Before City Council," AG, May 14, 1946, p. 1 and "Law Would Save Historic Buildings," AG, May 22, 1946, p. 1.

60. "Citizens Laud Historic Zone Legislation," AG, May 15, 1946, p. 1.

61. Ibid.

62. "Charleston Ordinance Is Ready, Historic Sites, Homes Protected," AG, July 1, 1946, p. 1.

63. "Citizens Laud...", op cit.

64. "Historic Home Is Rezoned Over Protest," AG, June 26, 1946, p. 1.

65. "Charleston Ordinance Adopted," AG, August 14, 1946, p.1.

66. City of Alexandria Ordinance No. 470, Section 34. Approved August 13, 1946.

67. "Architectural Board Names Chairman," AG, October 12, 1946, p. 1.

68. Ordinance No. 470, op.cit.

69. "Architectural Review Board Is Appointed," AG, October 2, 1946, p. 1.

70. While Grigg did not return to live in Alexandria, he did establish an architectural office in Alexandria during the 1950s because of the amount of work that his firm was doing in the City such as the restoration of Ramsay House and the renovation of the City jail. His office was located at 1420 Prince Street.



71. "Ward Brown, Architect, Dies Sunday," AG, October 14, 1946.
72. "Zone Laws Face Test in Hearing April 10," AG, April 3, 1947, p. 1.
73. "Modified Charleston Ordinance Favored," AG, May 13, 1947, p. 1.
74. Alexandria Association Minutes, May 5, 1946. Lloyd House files, Box 263E, file 15.
75. "City Council Debates Zoning Policy Tomorrow; Charleston Act Repeal Hearing Listed, Ewald Leads Fight Against Present Law," AG, May 26, 1947, p. 1, and "Council To Amend Charleston Ordinance, McGuire Property Rezoning Granted by Vote of 7-1," AG, May 28, 1947, p. 1.
76. "Charleston Ordinance Study By Leaders, Mayor Wilkins Names Body to Report Findings," AG, June 7, 1947, p. 1.
77. "Mass Meeting to Consider Historic Sites," AG, June 6, 1947, p. 1; "Mass Meeting Friday Night," AG, June 12, 1947, p. 1; "Zoning Law Gets Airing Tonight, Mass Meeting Scheduled at Auditorium," AG, June 13, 1947, p. 1; and, "Resolution Drafted at Mass Meeting," AG, June 14, 1947, p. 1.
78. "Zoning Laws Historical Value Cited," AG, June 20, 1947, p. 1.
79. Zoning Laws Historical Value Cited," AG, June 20, 1947, p. 1.
80. Dave Payne, "Charleston Ordinance Validity Doubted, Three Disputed Portions of Bill are Under Study," AG, June 27, 1947, p. 1.
81. "Charleston Ordinance Revision is Ready, Pancoast Sends Two Changes in Law to Council," AG, July 15, 1947, p. 1.
82. Dave Payne, "Joseph M. Pancoast Gets City Manager Appointment, Temporary Seat, Council Says; Broader Powers Strengthen Post," AG, August 1, 1947, p. 1.
83. Phil Warren, "Mayor Wilkins Appoints 17 on Committee to Arrange Bi-Centennial Celebration," AG, September 5, 1947, p. 1.
84. "Rezoning Question Arouses Citizens, Washington St. Project Before Council Tuesday," AG, September 4, 1947, p.1 and Dave Payne, "Two Petitions for Rezoning Washington Street Granted, Four Requests Revised After Lengthy Debate," AG, September 10, 1947, p.1

85. "Ray Gallagher In First Ward Council Race," AG, January 16, 1948, p.1. The quotation is from 5th ward candidate John T. Worthington; and, "Col. Hellmuth Not to Seek Re-Election," AG, February 19, 1948, p.1

86. Kohler, Commission of Fine Arts History, pp. 97-103.

## *Society for the Restoration of Historic Alexandria*

### *Board of Managers.*

*Mrs. Eleanor S. Washington Howard, President*

*Miss Fanny M. Burke, Vice-President*

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*Mrs. Albert D. Brockett, Corresponding Secretary*

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*Nicholas P.T. Burke, Miss Frances Scott Herbert,*

*Mr. Kosciusko Kemper, Mr. John R. Zimmermann*

*Alexandria, Va. July 1st, 1903*

*Recently there was organized in Alexandria, Virginia, the "Society for the Restoration of Historic Alexandria." The objects of this society, as set forth in the constitution, are "to mark, restore, and preserve places of historic interest in Alexandria, particularly the Carlyle House; to encourage historical research in relation to the city of Alexandria; and to celebrate, as in times past, the birthday of George Washington.*

*No city is more intimately associated with the daily life of General Washington than Alexandria, situated as it is midway*

*between Washington and Mount Vernon. To restore and preserve those relics connected with the life of Washington, is the work now undertaken by this society, which finds itself so rich in opportunities thought not in money.*

*The Carlyle House, situated at the corner of Cameron and Fairfax streets, has been selected as the first object of interest to preserve. Built by John Carlyle, its hospitality was extended by him in 1755 to the English General Edward Braddock, and here invited to meet him were six colonial governors--Dinwiddie, of Virginia; Shirley, of Massachusetts; Delancey, of New York; Morris, of Pennsylvania; Sharpe, of Maryland, and Dobbs, of North Carolina. ... Here Braddock summoned young Washington from Mount Vernon and offered him a commission as Major in the British army, and here, contrary to the advice of Washington, was planned that disastrous expedition to Fort Duquesne. Here Washington from early manhood until his death was a frequent and welcome guest, "Lodg at Col. Carlyles" being repeatedly found in his diary.*

*Our first step has been to open the house, remove the dust of ages, and make the place possible for visitors, who come from all parts of the union, as the register for each day will testify. At present our means only permit us to rent the building, but our purpose is to secure permanent possession, and then to remove the dilapidated hotel which now surrounds the Carlyle House and to restore the grounds to their original beauty.*

*It is also our intention, in time, to take charge of, preserve, restore or suitably mark the other places of interest in Alexandria, made famous by the frequent presence of George Washington.*

*Such is the scope of the work as outlined by its founders. The immediate necessity of effort is only too evident, for these shrines of the nation are rapidly passing into ruin and decay, and unless cared for now will soon remain only a memory. We earnestly desire your*

*co-operation and support and would be glad to have you become a member of the society and to interest others in the work.*

*Membership fees, etc. as provided by the constitution, are as follows:*

*SECTION I. Any person shall be eligible for membership upon the payment of one dollar for each year.*

*SECTION II. Any person contributing ten dollars shall be an Associate Member, and exempt from the payment of annual dues.*

*SECTION III. Any person contributing twenty-five dollars shall be an Honorary member, and exempt from the payment of annual dues; said person shall be presented with a bronze souvenir, suitably engraved. ...*

*SECTION V. Any person contributing two hundred and fifty dollars shall be an Honorary Founder. Said Founder may, if he or she so desires contribute a portrait, photograph, or other likeness, which shall be preserved and exhibited in a room to be known as the "Founders' Gallery," and shall be exempt from the payment of annual dues. ..."*

*Source: Virginia Historical Magazine, Vol. 11, pp. 218-220*

**Alexandria Historical Society, Inc.**  
**201 South Washington Street**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

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