



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

Potomac Town Hall and Firehouse

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Image: The new Potomac Town Hall and Firehouse, ca. 1926. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.

As the new Town of Potomac emerged in the early 1900s where modern-day Del Ray sits, it provided key municipal services like police and fire protection and sanitation improvements. With so many buildings built of wood, fire was a serious public safety concern, and by the early 1920s, the town had two volunteer fire companies, the Del Ray Engine and Motor Company No.1 and St. Elmo Company No. 2, later consolidated as the Potomac Fire Department.

A garage was built to house a fire engine behind a former church building on Windsor Avenue but a larger building was needed. In 1925, the Town of Potomac announced plans to construct a new building that could accommodate the fire apparatus and serve other local government needs. That spring, the town organized a special committee to explore possible sites and the location on Windsor was selected. The town acquired two adjacent lots and razed the old frame building, and following a vote by residents, the town authorized that \$24,000 in bonds be sold to fund the project.

By year's end, the town had hired architect Francis Drischler and contractor David Bayliss to build the new town hall and fire station. It would also be equipped with a small jail cell downstairs and an auditorium and office space upstairs, with the entire project estimated to cost \$30,000.

On February 13, 1926, Potomac's Masonic lodge set the cornerstone before a crowd of 200 residents, and in August, when the building was finished, a celebration ceremony was held in the auditorium. This photograph of the Potomac Fire Department in front of the new building was taken around that time. The City of Alexandria annexed Potomac just a few years later, and the Potomac Fire Department ceased to exist.





**Office of Historic Alexandria
City of Alexandria, Virginia**

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.