

Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

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

General Property Information	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #:
Property Name(s): <u>"Del Ray Building"</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>1938</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post Open to Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Property Address: <u>2423-2425-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue</u> City: <u>Alexandria</u> Zip: <u>22301</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Ind. City of Alexandria</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Alexandria, VA-DC-MD</u>	

Physical Character of General Surroundings
Acreage: <u>0.1466</u> Setting (choose one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: <u>The building is situated on level ground within a triangular, 6,385 square-foot lot¹ bounded by Mt. Ida Avenue on the northeast, Mt. Vernon Avenue on the west, and E. Uhler Avenue on the south. The building rests on its property line and contributes to the commercial character of Mt. Vernon Avenue, the main thoroughfare of an 1894 subdivision which was incorporated as the Town of Potomac in 1908 and annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929.</u>
Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property:
Ownership Category: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal

Individual Resource Information
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc...
<u>Mixed-use: commercial, office, and residential</u>
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Religious (church) and residential</u>
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Art Deco</u>
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>Jacob H. Poladian</u>
of stories <u>2</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renovated
Are there any known threats to this property? <u>Deterioration, inappropriate alterations</u>

<p>Resource Component Information</p> <p>Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer “n/a.” If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.</p>
<p>Foundation: Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete. Concrete, continuous brick visible</p>
<p>Structure: Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known. Wood framing, steel beams, and cinder block</p>
<p>Walls: Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles. Red brick (6:1 common bond)</p>
<p>Windows: Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced? First story: Metal frame, single-light, multi-pane plate glass; Second story: 4 metal frame, single-light double casements that slide horizontally and one single light casement. Yes, they have been replaced.</p>
<p>Porch: Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details. N/A</p>
<p>Roof: Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material. Flat, composite shingles</p>
<p>Chimney(s): List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible. One small stovepipe on rear addition</p>

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

This Art Deco-style commercial structure, the "Del Ray Building"ⁱⁱ at **2423-2425-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue**, was built in 1938 by local developer Jacob H. Poladian. The two-story building encompasses approximately 6,362 square-feet and contains commercial space on the first floor and residential space on the second. Trapezoidal in plan to fit within its triangular-shaped lot, the structure was built measuring 66 feet in the front and 32 feet in the rear, with a depth of 90 feet.ⁱⁱⁱ Originally, it was built to house two stores (with storage/utility rooms in the rear) on the first floor and 12 offices above, which fanned from a central, double-loaded corridor. Two gendered lavatories also were located on the second floor, accessed from the centralized hallway. [Figures 1 and 2] On 4 November 1941, Poladian filed a repair and alteration permit with the City of Alexandria to install bathrooms on the second floor in order to convert the offices into small apartments; henceforth, the building was known as the "Del Ray Guest House."^{iv}

According to the City of Alexandria's Department of Real Estate Assessment building valuation record from 1945, the structure comprised 18 rooms, 11 tiled bathrooms, and 15 apartments. Original construction materials included wood framing, brick, and tile.^v Red brick exterior walls, laid in a six-to-one common bond, arise from a concrete foundation, although only continuous brick is visible on the street level. In 1938, Poladian spent \$1,300 to excavate a partial basement laid in cement.^{vi} The building terminates in a flat parapet roof clad in composite tiles.^{vii}

The 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Alexandria, Virginia shows the lower floor of the Del Ray Building bisected by an interior wall, creating one roughly triangular interior space and one rectangular space flanking a small, central vestibule (address 2425), which holds wooden stairs that lead to second-floor apartments. [Figure 3] It also shows an L-shaped ancillary building is in the rear of the lot. By 1958, the Sanborn map reflects changes made to the building and site: the ancillary structure was removed and replaced by an attached addition in the rear constructed of brick-faced cinder block at the cost of

\$1,800.^{viii} [Figure 4] Two interior partitions, possibly erected in 1946,^{ix} subdivide the northern store into additional retail spaces; the first time the number 2429 Mt Vernon Avenue (previously the building was addressed 2423-2425-2427) appears in the Alexandria City Directory is in 1945, when the newly crafted space was occupied by Hicks and White.^x The interior, according to the 1945 building valuation record, comprised plaster walls, woodboard, softwood trim, and tin. The floor was concrete and sub-floor atop wood joists, while the flooring was both hardwood and softwood throughout, save for the tiled bathrooms.^{xi}

Alterations continued to be made to the building over ensuing decades. While under the proprietorship of the Poladian Construction Corporation, the building's assessed value depreciated between real estate assessments made in 1954 and 1959, although no reason for the depreciation was noted and the land value remained the same during that time period.^{xii} Under subsequent owners, alterations were made frequently throughout the 1970s and 1980s.^{xiii}

Poladian's blueprint for the front elevation shows a symmetrical facade divided vertically into five bays by six prominent, fluted pilasters (executed in yellow brick) which peak above the roofline: two equally-sized bays flank a central half-bay which holds the main entrance (to 2425). This central pavilion is differentiated by full-height pilasters, while the outer edges of the building are quoined with similar full-height pilasters. The two interior pilasters, however, are truncated, terminating in horizontal marquees above large plate glass windows that flank recessed double doors on the ground level. Four large multi-light windows are centered in each bay on the second story. The central, single door is flush with the street and has a stepped "sunburst" decorative element above as well as a narrow multi-light window on the second floor.

As built, the structure mirrors the ideal faithfully, albeit with some minor changes: the secondary entrances are not recessed and do not hold double doors. Only the northern entrance (2429) is centered in its double bay; the southern entrance (2423) is positioned in the interior of its double-bay, adjacent to the central entrance. All three contain single-light glass doors in metal frames; two (2429 and 2425) have multiple-light sidelights and single-light transoms, while one (2423) lacks sidelights and a transom. Large, multi-light storefront windows flank the secondary door at 2429, while those on the south bays (2423) are half-height shop windows. A contemporary awning covers yet mimics the decorative element above the central door (which may be still in situ) while awnings extend over the shop windows.

The windows on the second floor reflect the position, size, and shape of those in Poladian's drawing, but are single-light, double casements with metal frames and concrete sills. The cornice is metal coping that hides the flat roof. Red brick pilasters continue on the side elevations, dividing each of them into seven bays. On the south side, the elevation is punctuated by seven single-light, double casements that slide horizontally and concrete sills on the second floor, while five of the bays hold small horizontal hoppers (two with single lights and three with three lights) on the first floor. A wooden garage door punctuates the sixth bay. The one-story rear addition (six-to-one common bond) extends eastward and is blind save for two wooden doors on its southern elevation. The northern elevation of the building is similar to the southern, except that the sixth bay has two small windows rather than one double casement (intimating the hall restrooms) on the upper level, while the first floor lacks hoppers; instead, the fenestration includes two multi-light windows and a single-light, metal-frame side door. Although the building shows signs of age and distress and the fenestration has been replaced, it retains much of its original form and Art Deco character. It is in fair condition.

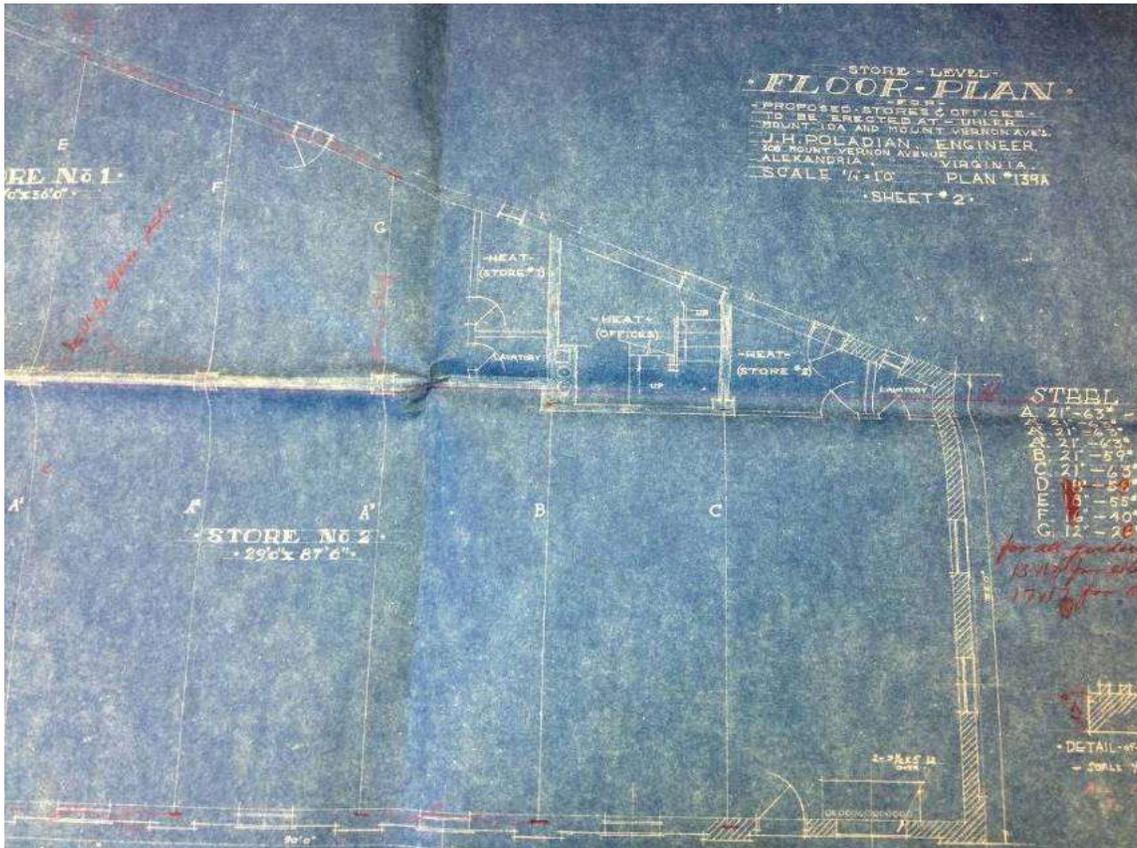


Figure 1: Floor Plan, first story, ca. 1938 by J.H. Poladian. From new construction permit 1789 from 17 August 1938 for Uhler, Mt. Ida and Mt. Vernon avenues (Lots 1128-1130 Del Ray Map 1). City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

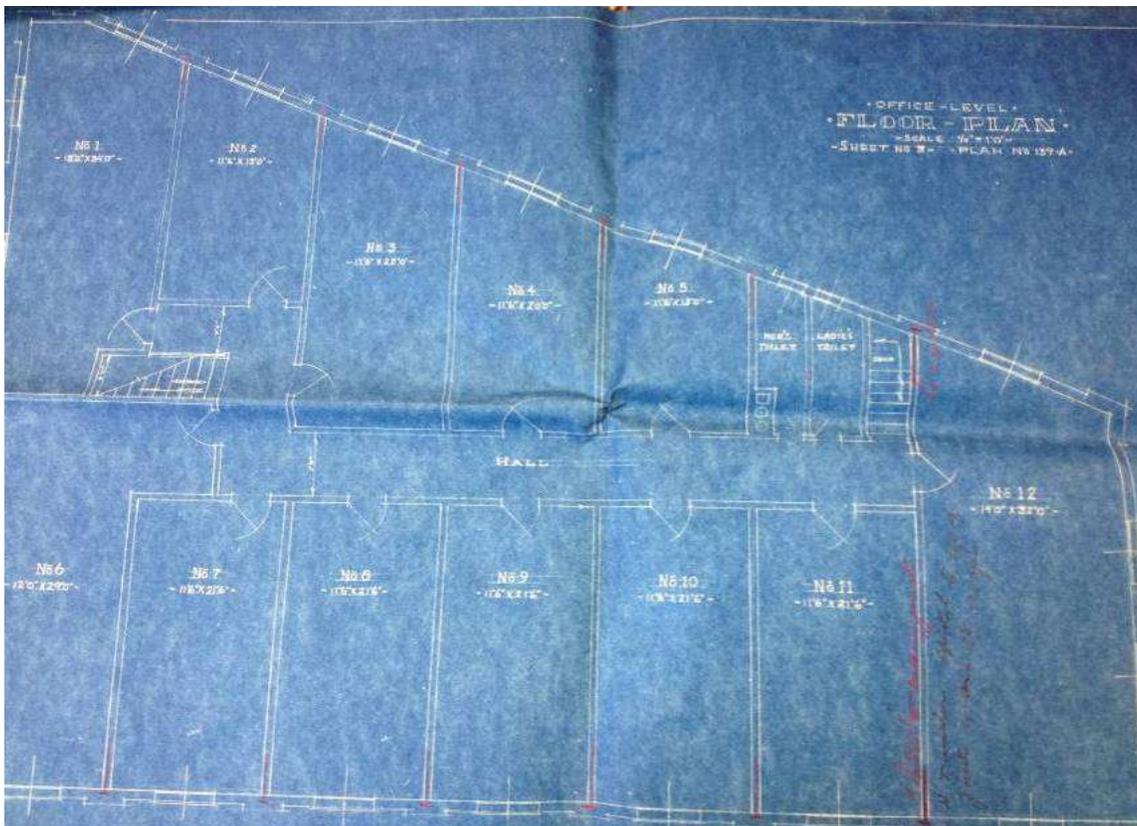


Figure 2: Floor Plan, second story, ca. 1938 by J.H. Poladian. From new construction permit 1789 from 17 August 1938 for Uhler, Mt. Ida and Mt. Vernon avenues (Lots 1128-1130 Del Ray Map 1). City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

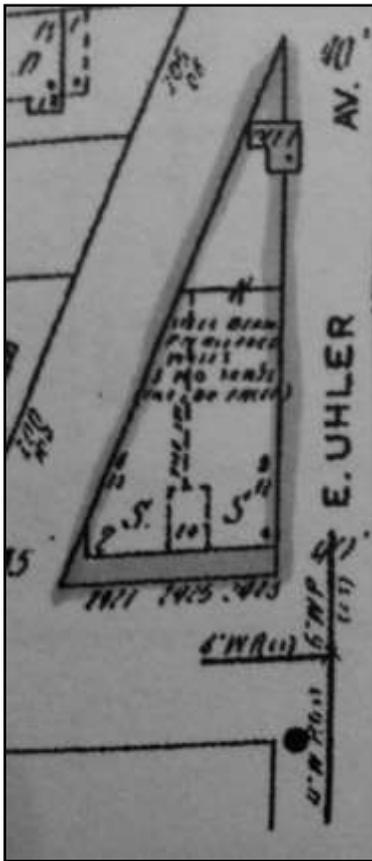


Figure 3, left:
Sanborn Fire
Insurance Map
of Alexandria,
VA. Vol. 1,
1941, sheet 45.

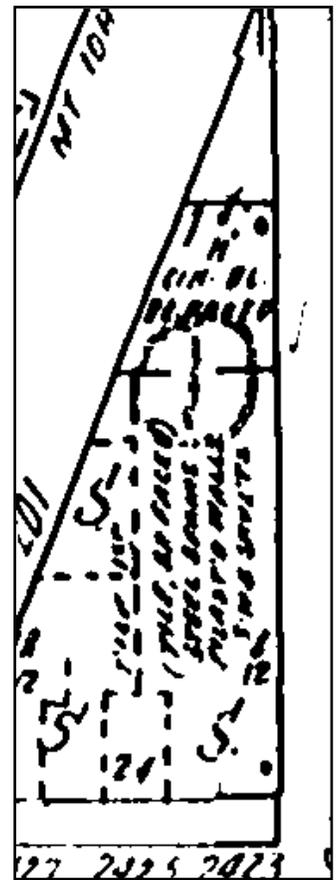


Figure 4, right:
Sanborn Fire
Insurance Map
of Alexandria,
VA. Vol. 1,
1958, sheet 45.

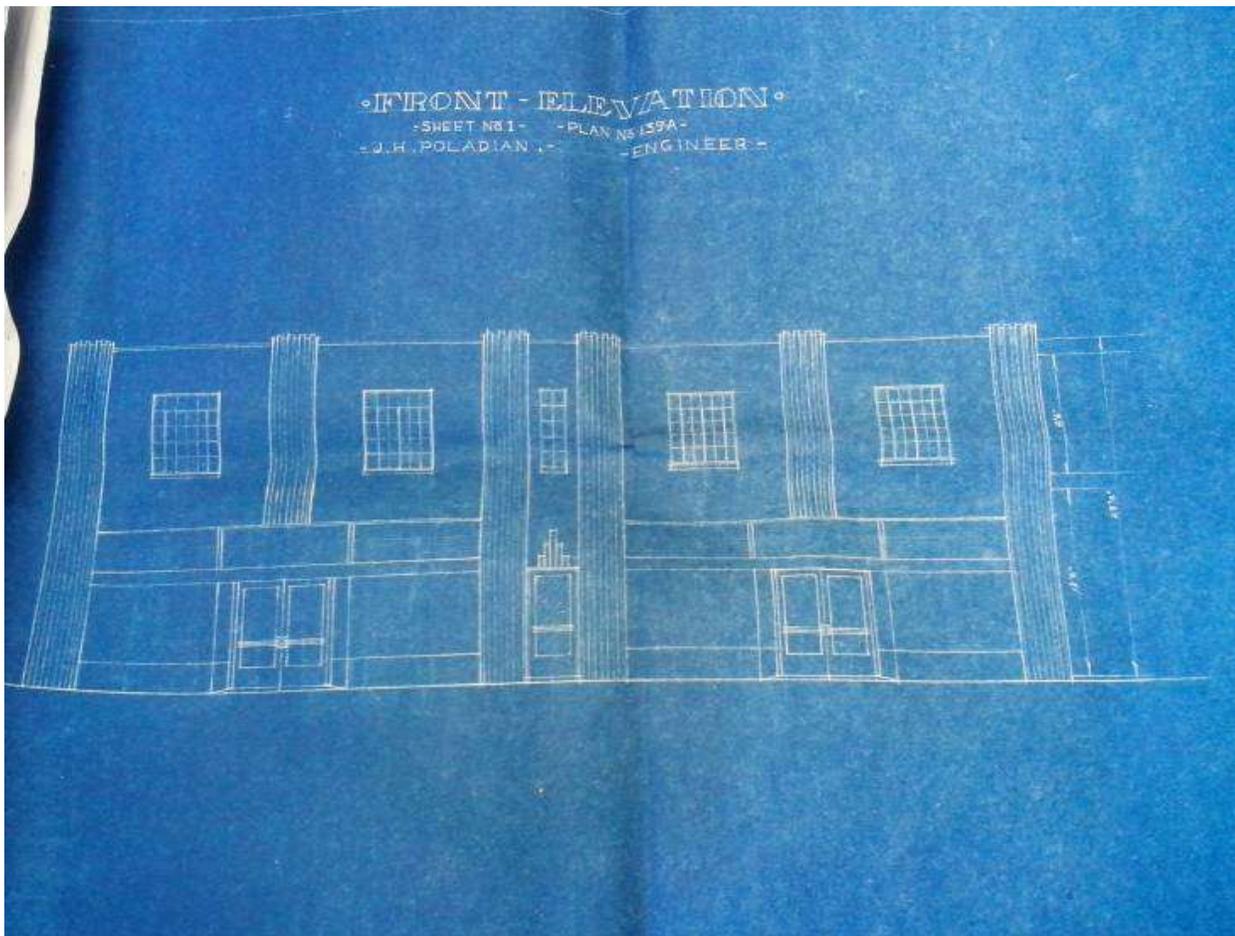


Figure 5: Front elevation, ca. 1938 by J.H. Poladian. From new construction permit 1789 from 17 August 1938 for Uhler, Mt. Ida and Mt. Vernon avenues (Lots 1128-1130 Del Ray Map 1). City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.

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

The site of the Del Ray Building is a triangular parcel originally platted as lots 1128-1129-1130 in the first Del Ray subdivision, a streetcar suburb created in 1894 by Charles E. Wood and William Harmon, developers from Ohio. In 1908, this community was incorporated as the Town of Potomac within the Jefferson Magisterial District of Alexandria County (renamed Arlington County in 1920), until it was annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929.^{xiv} It lies within the boundaries of and is considered a contributing resource to the Town of Potomac Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

In 1900, the undeveloped parcel at the northern extreme of Del Ray belonged to H.L. Wilkins, and the land was assessed at \$150.^{xv} The lot was adjacent to the disreputable St. Asaph's racetrack and gambling establishment, situated to the northeast (across Mt. Ida Avenue), which operated until 1904.^{xvi} The 100-acre racetrack site was redeveloped as the Abingdon residential community in the 1920s, yet this parcel remained undeveloped through 1931, when the Mutual Ice Company of Alexandria built a retail facility assessed at \$1,503 in 1932.^{xvii} In March 1931, the Mutual Ice Company purchased the three lots from Margaret G. and James Armstrong as well as Henry C. and Margaret C. Goodnow, who had purchased it three months prior from Milton and Mary Fagelson.^{xviii} In 1937, the ice company sold the property to H. Diradoor, widow, who sold it mere days later to Jacob H. Poladian.^{xix}

Of Armenian descent, Jacob Harry Poladian (1891-1964) was born in Aintab, Turkey, the son of a builder. At the age of 17, in 1908, he immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, eventually settling in Troy, New York, to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, wherefrom he earned a civil engineering degree in 1918. His studies were interrupted by World War I, during which he enlisted in the Army and was deployed to France. Upon returning from war, having gained his United States citizenship, he settled in New Jersey, where he met his wife, Edna, whom he married in 1925. After working as a builder in New York City, he moved to Alexandria in 1935 where he engaged in building private residences.^{xx} In the 1940 United States federal census, he resided at 2421 Taylor Avenue in Alexandria with his wife, his son J. Harry, Jr. and daughter S. Isabel.^{xxi} With his four brothers who had emigrated from Turkey, Poladian established the Poladian Construction Company in June 1936.^{xxii} In Alexandria City directories between 1936 and 1942, his occupation was given as a builder, and his office was listed as located on Mount Vernon Avenue.^{xxiii} Over the next 24 years, Poladian would develop and manage numerous buildings in Alexandria.

Poladian arrived in Alexandria at an auspicious time. Unlike other regions, the Washington area was buttressed to a degree from the precipitous economic downturn, as the federal "government grew ... during the Depression and World War II, and the demand for housing remained high as new jobs were created to serve the needs of the growing federal presence."^{xxiv} Del Ray's location between the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad (1855-1968) and the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway (1890-1930), as well as its proximity to U.S. Route 1, ensured it would thrive as a bedroom community for federal workers. Having been annexed by the City of Alexandria in 1929, new attention was turned towards Del Ray and to the Mt. Vernon Avenue corridor, in particular, which was thought of as a secondary commercial thoroughfare to Alexandria's King Street. Between 1938 and 1939, 51 new construction permits were issued for the area, including two to Poladian, who built another Art Deco building on the opposite side of East Uhler Avenue from the Del Ray Building in 1939.

In 1955, Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory published information on 2423-2427 Mt. Vernon Avenue, owned by the Poladian Construction Corporation: the size of the building was ascertained as 6,466 square feet, the lot worth \$6,140, and the assessed value with improvements \$19,729.^{xxv} The Del Ray Building was retained by the Poladian Construction Corporation until 1965, at which point it was divested to Reuven and Sheila Lev-Tov.^{xxvi} The Lev-Tovs sold it to Charles and Tillie Chidakel in 1967, who, in turn, sold it to William J. and Elizabeth Helen Castell in 1969.^{xxvii} The Elizabeth H. Castell Trust

held the property for 20 years, selling it to Thomas J. Foltz in 1989.^{xxviii} Foltz sold it to Rafat and Shaista Mahmoods the following year, who transferred ownership to the First Agape Baptist Community of Faith Church (current residents and owners) in 2003.^{xxix}

The Del Ray Building is not only significant for its architecture, as a fine example of the Art Deco style then in fashion, but, taken in its context, as an intact element in a larger commercial fabric that speaks to Del Ray's heyday, as it evolved from town to city. The building reflects the growing importance of Mt. Vernon Avenue as a commercial thoroughfare: between 1940 and the present, the building has housed a number of neighborhood merchants, including numerous doctors' and dentists' offices, a dance studio, Thurston's Beauty Shop, the Benjamin Franklin five-and-dime store, the Alexandria Piano Service, Burch's Cleaners and Laundry, retail stores, realty offices, sandwich shops, and most recently, the First Agape Baptist Community of Faith Church.^{xxx} The evolution of the building from an office to a residence also reflects Washington's growth in the years leading up to World War II and to local housing shortages in wartime: although the permit to create the "Del Ray Guest House" was issued a full month before Pearl Harbor, the first draft registration was held on 16 September 1940, and Washington was already feeling the crush of influx of personnel before war was officially declared.

Thus, the building is significant on the local and state levels as characteristic of vernacular brick Art Deco style (criterion C); its association with local personages of significance (criterion B); and its role in the development of Del Ray as an urban enclave (criterion A) concurrent with Northern Virginia's growing regional importance in the interwar years and the country's transformation from a predominantly rural to an urban character. It retains integrity in its setting, location, design, materials, and feeling.



1. 2423-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue. Facade (west elevation), oblique angle, facing NE (47°). Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



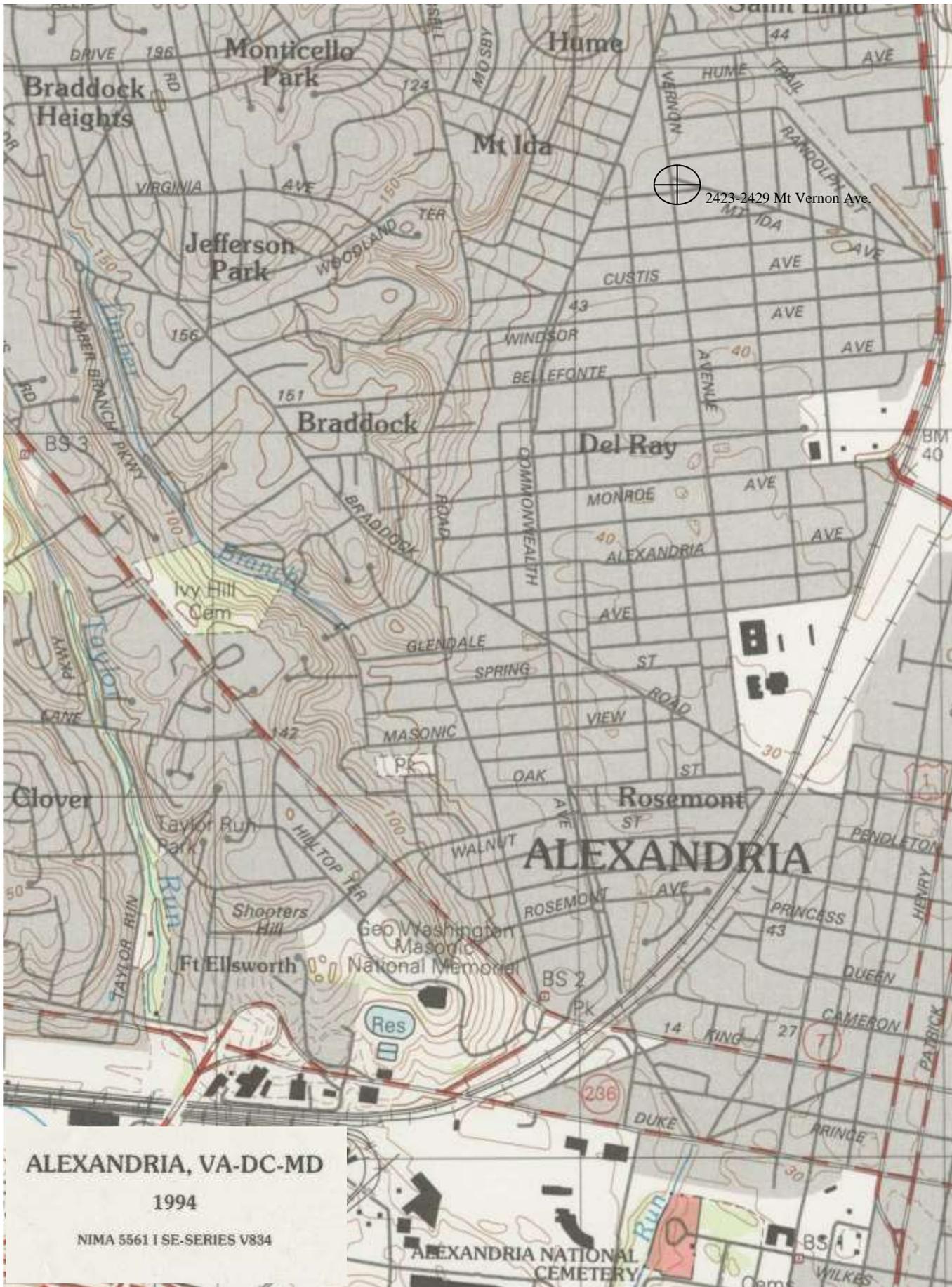
2. 2423-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue. South elevation, oblique angle, facing 328⁰ NW. Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



3. 2423-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue. North elevation, oblique angle, facing 128⁰ SE. Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



4. 2423-2429 Mt. Vernon Avenue. East (rear) elevation of addition, straight angle, facing 274⁰ W. Photograph by Gwen White 4/6/2014.



ALEXANDRIA, VA-DC-MD

1994

NIMA 5561 I SE-SERIES V834

ALEXANDRIA NATIONAL CEMETERY

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ City of Alexandria Real Estate Assessment database, Account No. 13576510, Assessment Map 034.02-04-01. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ⁱⁱ The name associated with this address first appears in City of Alexandria's directory in 1940.
- ⁱⁱⁱ New construction permit #1789 from 17 August 1938 for Uhler, Mt. Ida, and Mt. Vernon avenues (Lots 1128-1130 Del Ray Map 1). City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{iv} Alteration/repair permit #4314 from 4 November 1941 for 2425 Mt. Vernon Avenue. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center. Also, see Alexandria City Directory from 1942.
- ^v The Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Alexandria from 1941, however, lists the building materials as brick faced steel beams. The original building permit, #1789, specified a "large brick commercial/office building with concrete foundation." From notes compiled by Susan Escherich for the NRHP nomination for the Town of Potomac Historic District, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks File No. 100-0136-0644, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. Repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.
- ^{vi} Alteration/repair permit #2755 from 7 September 1938 for Mt. Vernon and Uhler avenues. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{vii} "Building Valuation for 2423-25-27 Mt. Vernon Ave.", 21 July 1945, City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment.
- ^{viii} Alteration/repair permit #5316 from 1 August 1943 for Mt. Vernon and Uhler avenues. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^{ix} Alteration/repair permit #7003 from 11 March 1946 for Mt. Vernon and Uhler avenues: \$200 to erect partitions. City of Alexandria Archives and Records Center.
- ^x Alexandria City Directory 1945. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library.
- ^{xi} "Building Valuation for 2423-25-27 Mt. Vernon Ave." 21 July 1945, City of Alexandria Department of Real Estate Assessment.
- ^{xii} The land was assessed as \$6,184 in 1954 and in 1959, but whereas the building was assessed at \$19,729 in 1954, it was valued at \$19,150 in 1959, suggesting that either poor workmanship or neglect caused the overall value to depreciate.
- ^{xiii} See Alteration/repair permits #27938 from 25 January 1971; #30135 from 19 July 1973; #44409 from 29 October 1987; Alt 04020 from 29 August 1989; and Inst 04266 from 18 September 1989, which entail "repairing store," "install dropped ceiling and paneling," "conversion of storage room to trash room," and adding "trash room sprinkler (2) heads."
- ^{xiv} Susan Escherich, Town of Potomac Historic District, National Register of Historic Places, 1992, page 2.
- ^{xv} Alexandria City Records: Landbooks and Tax Assessments index. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library.
- ^{xvi} Escherich, section 8: page 42.
- ^{xvii} The first time a structure appears on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the City of Alexandria is 1941. The 1931 Sanborn shows the lot vacant, so the Mutual Ice Co. must have built the structure later in the year. This information (and the suggestion that W. W. Rye applied for a building permit for a gas station on the site in 1935) was compiled by Susan Escherich for the NRHP nomination for the Town of Potomac HD and can be found in the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks File No. 100-0136-0644, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA.
- ^{xviii} City of Alexandria Deed Book 105, page 248, 23 December 1930: Milton and Mary Fagelson, Grantors to Margaret G. Armstrong and Henry C. Goodnow, Grantees. City of Alexandria Deed Book 106, page 107, 17 March 1931: Margaret G. and James Armstrong, Henry C. and Margaret C. Goodnow, Grantors to Mutual Ice Co. of Alexandria, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records. For derivation of title, see Arlington County Deed Book 176, page 92.
- ^{xix} City of Alexandria Deed Book 140, page 265, 8 November 1937: Mutual Ice Co. of Alexandria, Grantor to H. Diradoor, widow, Grantee. City of Alexandria Deed Book 151, page 169, 17 November 1937: H. Diradoor, widow, Grantor to Jacob H. Poladian, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xx} "Jacob N. Poladian, 73, Engineer, Home Builder" obit. in *The Washington Post* 3 June 1964: City Section, B9. One of Poladian's houses in Del Ray is a frame Tudor Revival (1935) 108 E. Bellefonte Avenue which is a contributing resource to the Town of Potomac Historic District. From, Escherich, section 7: page 10.
- ^{xxi} He lived in that house at the time of his death, 24 years later. See "Jacob N. Poladian, 73, Engineer, Home Builder"
- ^{xxii} Biographical information on Jacob H. Poladian provided by granddaughter Joann F. Poladian, 111 Lake Cook Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22304.
- ^{xxiii} United States Federal Population census, 1940.
- ^{xxiv} Escherich, section 8: page 51.
- ^{xxv} Lusk's Northern Virginia Real Estate Directory, 1955. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library.
- ^{xxvi} City of Alexandria Deed Book 638, page 451, 28 October 1965: Poladian Construction Corporation, Grantor to Reuven and Sheila Lev-Tov, Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xxvii} City of Alexandria Deed Book 664, page 634, 24 March 1967: Reuven and Sheila Lev-Tov, Grantors to Charles and Tillie Chidakel, Grantees. City of Alexandria Deed Book 700, page 77, 28 July 1969: Charles and Tillie Chidakel, Grantors to William J. and Elizabeth Helen Castell, Grantees. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.
- ^{xxviii} City of Alexandria Deed Book 1282, page 1051, 10 May 1989: Eugene Schonberger for the Elizabeth H. Castell Trust, Grantor to Thomas J. Foltz, Grantee. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

^{xxix} City of Alexandria Deed Book 1294, page 280, 22 February 1990: Thomas J. Foltz, Grantor to Rafat and Shaista Mahmood, Grantees. City of Instrument No. 30010416, 18 March 2003: Rafat and Shaista Mahmood, Grantors to First Agape Baptist Community of Faith Church. Alexandria Clerk of the Court - Court of Records.

^{xxx} Alexandria City Directories, 1940-1980. Repository: Special Collections, Barrett Branch, Alexandria Public Library. See also "Interview with John and Mary Sullivan," 6 September 2003. Conducted by Mary Baumann in Alexandria, Virginia for *Alexandria Legacies*, City of Alexandria Office of Historic Alexandria, Oral History Program, page 18-19, in which Mary Sullivan recalls a dentist's office, a hardware store, and the Ben Franklin five-and-dime store in what is now the First Agape Baptist Community Church building.