



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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November 7th, 2016
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8.1 HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERVIEW

The area now known as Old Town North includes a rich range of historic resources and sites spanning three centuries and predating the founding of the City itself, notably West’s Point where Hugh West established a tobacco inspection house at the foot of Oronoco Street in 1732. Although the structure no longer exists, this area and the surrounding farm land owned by John Alexander and his brother, along with land stretching south along a cove of the Potomac River (River) to what is now Duke Street, formed the foundation of the City as first established in 1749. West’s Point is one of a number of Old Town North’s cultural resources and sites that mark the first early European settlement of the area. The 19th-century saw the rise of industry and multiple modes of transportation in this area that continued well into the 20th-century. By the 1930s, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (now known as the George Washington Memorial Parkway) had opened and brought tourism and auto-oriented development.

Through this chapter and the anticipated Old Town North Historic Interpretation Guide, the OTN SAP Update broadly compiles known resources in one place, understanding that there are additional resources that have yet to be discovered and documented. Recommendations pertaining to possible options for interpreting known resources on both public and private development sites and other strategies for promoting Historic Preservation and interpretation in Old Town North are also the focus of this chapter. Incorporating the past through historic interpretation contributes to defining the area’s unique identity.

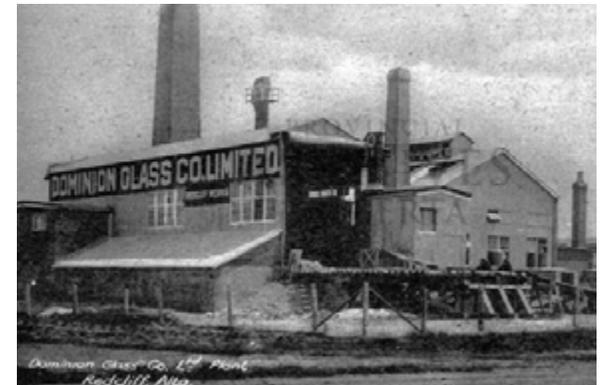
In addition to this current planning process, earlier planning efforts also recognized Old Town North’s history including its significance in the development of the City itself. The 1992 Old Town North Small Area Plan included several key Historic Preservation goals and recommendations that are still relevant today, such as the:

- A. 1992 Old Town North Small Area Plan Historic Goals
 - To preserve and protect the remaining portions of the Alexandria Canal;
 - To preserve significant archaeological resources which represent this area’s heritage such as historic wharves, sunken vessels, industries and the Cross Canal neighborhood; and
 - To encourage public appreciation of Alexandria’s maritime past in the north Waterfront.

- B. 1992 Old Town North Small Area Plan Summary of Historic Preservation Recommendations:
 - 1992 Old Town North Small Area Plan Historic Preservation recommendations included development of guidelines to preserve significant resources through the development of public and private projects and through preservation of the City’s maritime heritage.



Portners Brewery, 1869-1932

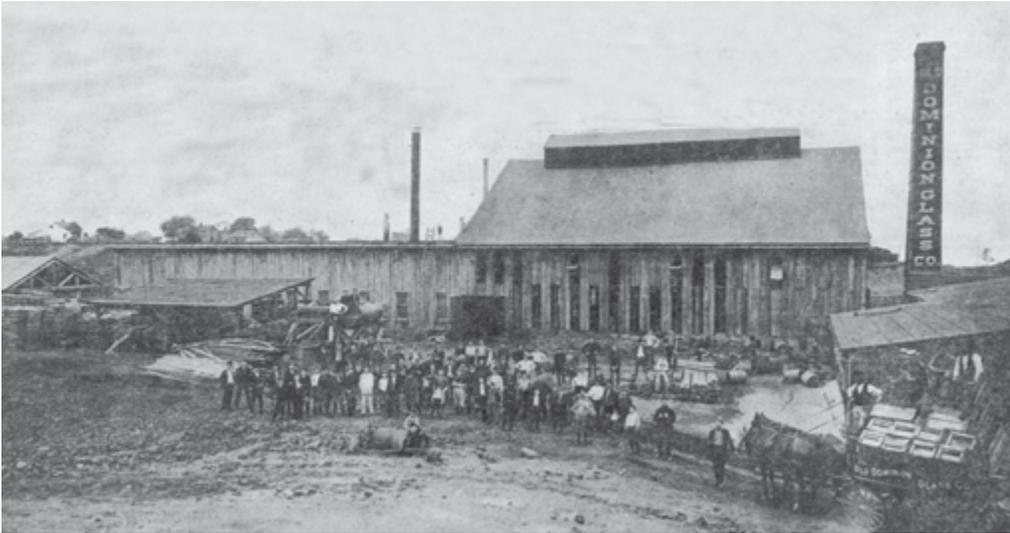


Old Dominion Glass Company, 1901-1928



Alexandria Roller Rink & Bowling Center, 1948-1986

8.2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES



During Phase I (Plan Framework Phase) of the current planning process, general community consensus developed around the following Historic Preservation goal and objectives:

Goal

Further identify, protect and enhance the historic, architectural and archaeological elements and resources of Old Town North

Objectives

- Preserve, integrate and celebrate historic and archaeological resources to maintain neighborhood authenticity;
- Promote cultural richness and an understanding of the history of the neighborhood;
- Define, enhance and reinforce the special character of Washington Street corridor in connection with the Washington Street Standards and other tools;
- Incorporate historic interpretation in the natural environment;
- Celebrate railroad history; and
- Develop policy to analyze and preserve buildings significance in Old Town North.

8.3 OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Activities & Historic Preservation Subcommittee of the Advisory Group met twice during the period of January and March 2016 to study and test ideas and concepts from the Plan Framework Phase of the OTN SAP Update planning process. The subcommittee recognized the extensive information which the City and community had generated in the Plan Framework Phase and in the years and decades prior to that to better understand and interpret Old Town North’s history. As a result, a key recommendation by the subcommittee, with consensus from the full Advisory Group, was to develop a document, titled Old Town North Historic Interpretation Guide (Guide), to summarize known Old Town North historic resources by theme areas and to provide strategies to help guide the community, developers and City in interpreting the resources and sites. Other important recommendations by the subcommittee are also included in the final section of this chapter.



Figure 8.01: Theme Areas from the November 2015 Old Town North Charrette

8.4 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ANALYSIS

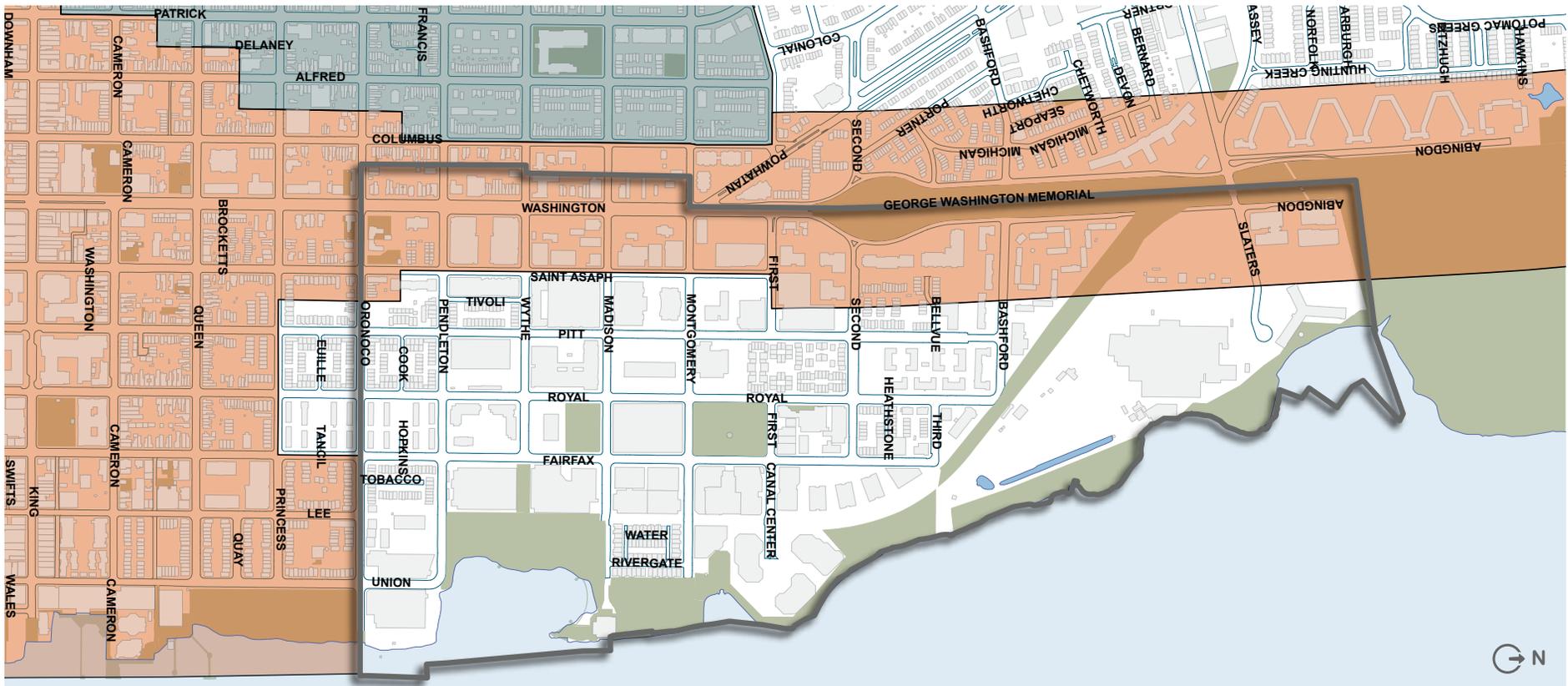
To understand the evolution, development and history of Old Town North, related materials and information were gathered to understand Historic Preservation in this area. The following existing resources and materials were reviewed:

- Old and Historic Alexandria District (1946): The City's Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD) is the third locally designated historic district in the country. Designated by the Alexandria City Council in 1946, OHAD was originally established to control development along the George Washington Memorial Parkway (Parkway) as it passed through the City as Washington Street. Over the years, OHAD's boundaries have changed. Today, as reflected in Figure 8.02, OHAD generally runs from the southern boundaries of the City at Hunting Creek north to Four Mile Run and from the River on the east to near the King Street Metro Station on the west. Additionally, the portion of the Parkway within the City's boundaries and a 500 foot buffer zone on either side is included within the boundaries of OHAD and subject to local design review by the OHAD Board of Architectural Review.
- National Register nominations for the Alexandria Historic District (1969, amended in 1984) and the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (1981), and the Parkway (1995).
- Washington Street: A Review of Washington Street and its Memorial Character (2012) - This presentation highlights architecturally and historically notable buildings on Washington Street. While not an exhaustive list of all the notable or significant buildings on Washington Street, it is a representation of different architectural styles from a range of time periods that should be considered when understanding the overall character and memorial nature of Washington Street.
- Alexandria Master Plan, Historic Preservation Chapter, Old Town North Small Area Plan (1992): This document identified some of the known and potential historical and archaeological resources within the planning area and provided the starting point for an initial understanding of the history of Old Town North with the caveat that additional research was needed to further identify significant sites.

Building on the OTN SAP Update goal and objectives for Historic Preservation, the following documents were generated during the Plan Framework Phase to better understand the existing resources and to contemplate future needs for documentation, preservation and interpretation:

- [2015 OTN Self-Guided Historic Tour Brochure and Map](#)
- [Buildings of Merit on the George Washington Memorial Parkway since 1932](#)
- 2015 Photographic Survey Catalogue of Existing Buildings in Old Town North (Hard copies are available to view in the Planning and Zoning Department).

Figure 8.02: Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD)



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- Old and Historic Alexandria District
- Parker-Gray District

Note: The Old and Historic Alexandria District extends south throughout most of the Old Town area.

8.5 HISTORICAL THEMES AND INTERPRETATION

THEME AREAS

Old Town North’s historical theme areas are reflected in the Old Town North Historical Themes Overview Map, Figure 8.03. It reflects Old Town North’s development patterns and land uses and explains the integration of the people, places and events over time.

The following development patterns and land uses can be used to interpret the cultural landscape of OTN:

- African American Life
- European Settlement
- Industry
- Military
- Native American Settlement
- Suburbanization
- Transportation

The Waterfront is integral to many of this area’s themes. The themes cover the different settlement patterns of Native Americans and early European settlers as well as African American communities and daily life. Military activity associated with the French and Indian War and the Civil War occurred in this area. The development of both industry and transportation, and the associated connections between these two themes, defined much of the 19th- and early 20th-centuries. The construction of the Parkway in the 1920s as a transportation corridor and memorial landscape as well as suburbanization in this area characterized several decades of the 20th-century. As a result of the evolution of this area and understanding of the themes, one can better understand how Old Town North evolved into a mixed-use neighborhood by the end of the 20th-century.

ANTICIPATED OLD TOWN NORTH HISTORIC INTERPRETATION GUIDE (GUIDE)

Many of the physical buildings and sites associated with Old Town North’s historical events and people are no longer extant, making it difficult to appreciate the rich history of the area. Instead of a traditional historic preservation plan, an Old Town North Historic Interpretation Guide (Guide) is envisioned to create a broad framework for understanding the historical development as well as to provide creative solutions for historic interpretation based on established themes. The Guide will be an Appendix to this document.

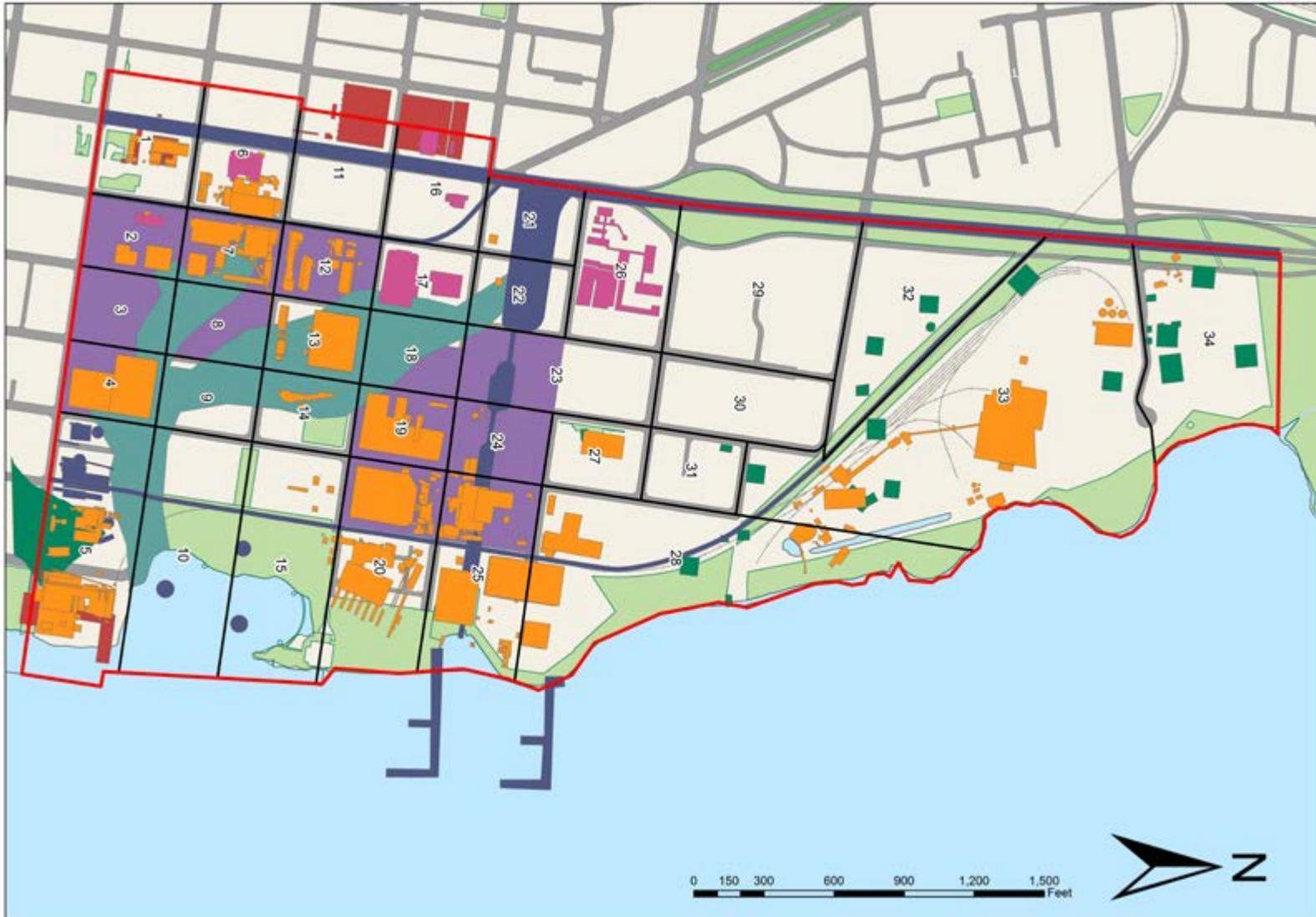
Purpose of the Guide:

The Guide will seek to accomplish the following:

- Provide an overview in the form of a historical narrative of the neighborhood’s cultural landscape development from early settlements to the 1960s;
- Provide a broad foundation that can be built upon through individual efforts to create a comprehensive history of Old Town North’s cultural resources as additional research projects are undertaken;
- Identify themes in the neighborhood’s cultural landscape for interpretation; and
- Convey concepts for interpretive strategies to apply to private redevelopment sites, public infrastructure and open space or community-led initiatives, featuring a mix of both on-site and off-site strategies as well as creative options for integrating interpretation into the built environment, corridors, and open space as well as via digital initiatives.

The Guide is not intended to provide a comprehensive and complete history of Old Town North nor to dictate the exact requirements for historic interpretation at specific sites but rather to provide a range of different ideas for interpretation, some more traditional and others more innovative. As development progresses, compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and Archaeology Code requirements will provide the framework for incorporation of future research and discoveries and implementation of greater integration of history into the design and site plans for specific projects. A comprehensive historical interpretive plan that focuses on the length of the Waterfront, including sections of Old Town North, can be explored as a future project.

Figure 8.03: Old Town North Historical Themes Overview Map



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|--|--|
|  African American Life |  Native American Settlement |
|  European Settlement |  (Sub)Urbanization |
|  Industry |  Transportation |
|  Military | |

Prepared by: Alexandria Archaeology
Office of Historic Alexandria - 11/04/2016

8.6 HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The anticipated OTN Historic Interpretation Guide will be created as part of this planning process. It will be utilized as a guide among other resources and processes by the public, developers and the City for interpreting the history of private and public sites in Old Town North.
2. Old Town North has a rich history on nearly every block though it may not be readily apparent. All Development Site Plans (DSPs) or Development Special Use Permits (DSUPs) projects will incorporate an interpretation component as part of the review and approval process.
3. Consideration will be given to how projects adjacent to Washington Street/the Parkway can contribute to and enhance the memorial character of the Parkway, pursuant to Washington Street Standards.
4. Consideration will be given to the development of streetscape design guidelines for Washington Street to continue the City's commitment to protect the memorial character of the Parkway, pursuant to the Old Town North Design Standards and Guidelines and the 1929 Agreement with the Federal Government.
5. Where significant historical buildings or elements remain, whether or not the site is located within the Old and Historic Alexandria District, consideration will be given for incorporating character-defining elements into the final site design as part of an interpretive strategy.
6. The power plant site retains significant elements that convey the City's 20th-century industrial heritage. Working with staff, character-defining portions of these elements will be reused on site and integrated into the final design, as feasible.
7. The use and retention of canal stones, railroad lines, and other historical features that may come to light in archaeological investigations (such as foundations, outlines of wells and privies, etc.) will be integrated as interpretative elements and historic artifacts in public and other spaces as feasible within Old Town North.