

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 district 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 district 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 #: 000-9708
District Name(s):	<u>Streamline Moderne Houses in Arlington County, Multiple Property Document</u>	
District or Selected Building Date(s):	1936-1941 <input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post	Open to the Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Main District Streets and/or Routes:	<u>8th Street South, 15th Street North, 16th Street South, 23rd Street South, 25th Street South, 25th Street North, 30th Street North, South Kent Street, North Vernon Street</u>	City: <u>NA</u> Zip: _____
County or Ind. City:	<u>Arlington County</u>	USGS Quad(s): <u>Fairfax, Alexandria, Washington West</u>

Physical Character of General Surroundings	
Acreage: <u>NA</u>	Setting (choose one): <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes: <u>Each of the dwellings is set within the suburban setting of a platted residential subdivision. Regardless of the subdivision, the houses are set back from the street with landscaped yards surrounding. Often the dwellings are sited at the top of a sloping lot that allows vistas and views from the wrapping window openings, and the banking of the basement levels and/or garages. All of the houses, with the exception of 2333 North Vernon Street, are set perpendicular to the street. Many have paved drives that lead to the attached garages. Secondary resources are limited to sheds, which are not stylistically in keeping with the Streamline Moderne style.</u>	
Ownership Categories:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal

General District Information	
What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc...	
<u>Dwellings</u>	
What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use) <u>NA</u>	
Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district:	<u>Streamline Moderne</u>
Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district:	<u>William Tapp, C.F. Cotton, Kenton Hamaker, Lawrence Tuttle, Ramond M. Talbert, C.R. Matheny, H.L. Harris, L.R. Broyhill, and Milton G. Smith</u>
Are there any known threats to this district?	<u>None known</u>

General Description of District: (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.)

Nine single-family dwellings in Arlington County reflect the distinctive architectural elements of the Streamline Moderne. Dating from between 1936 and 1941, when the style was fashionable, the residential buildings are remarkable similar in form, detailing, material, and fenestration. They stand within planned residential neighborhoods teeming with traditional architectural styles and forms, such as the popular Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, bungalow, and Cape Cod. The nine examples of the Streamline Moderne style in Arlington County are:

1. 1325 23rd Street South (1936)
2. 1215 25th Street South (1937)
3. 2116 South Kent Street (1937)
4. 4220 16th Street South (1937)
5. 4911 15th Street North (1938)
6. 4037 8th Street South (1939)
7. 4012 25th Road North (1940)
8. 2333 North Vernon Street (1940)
9. 3833 30th Street North (1941)¹

One of the finest examples of the Streamline Moderne as it was illustrated in Arlington County is the single-family dwelling at **4911 15th Street North**. Completed in 1938, the house was designed by local architect Kenton Hamaker, with significant assistance from property owner Lawrence Tuttle. Tuttle, born in the Philippines and raised in Hawaii, and his wife, Katharine Boynton of California, had purchase the ¼-acre lot in August 1937. Tuttle was an employee of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and later assistant to the commissioner of Public Roads with a degree in civil engineering. F.B. Hills of Washington, D.C. served as the builder.

The two-story single dwelling is composed of a series of different shaped boxes and canted wall panels. The building, set on a concrete-block foundation, is veneered in reused brick that has been painted white to create a uniform, modern façade. The Streamline Moderne building has an exceptionally shallow-pitched, hipped roof edged by a flat parapet of brick. The placement of the boxes making up the structure, the canted bay, and the interior brick chimney present a sense of verticality that contrasts with the horizontal emphasis created by the structure itself and the paired, triple, and bands of casement windows. The window openings are framed by rowlock brick sills that visually support the stacked soldier-brick surrounds. The octagonal-shaped dining room is illuminated with a large window opening filled with glass blocks, a popular building material used in Streamline Moderne architecture. The windows, which have been replaced, originally held four-light metal casements, which characteristically wrap around the corners of the projecting side bay. A porthole window pierces the side elevation of the main block, illuminating the interior stair. Like many residential buildings constructed in the 1940s and 1950s, the window openings on the rear elevation are larger than those piercing the façade and side elevations, allowing a blending of the interior environment and the outdoor landscape. Accordingly, the living room is located at the rear of the house, overlooking a brick terrace and the woodlands of the Forest Park subdivision of Waycroft-Woodlawn. The entry opening, located in the end bay of the façade, is deeply recessed with wide, unadorned reveals. Typical of the Streamline Moderne style, the segmentally arched opening is framed by three courses of ceramic tiles, ranging in color from aqua to green.

The Earle M. Winslow House at **2333 North Vernon Street** in the residential subdivision of Donaldson Run is another excellent example of the Streamline Moderne as designed by architect Kenton Hamaker.

¹ The Streamline Moderne House at 4806 Old Dominion Drive, was completed in 1945, was razed in 2009.
4/20/2009

Constructed by builder Ira Henry, the Winslow House is a two-story structure with strong horizontal massing and symmetrically placed metal casement windows. Verticality indicative of early Modernistic design is provided by the projecting bays, prominently positioned exterior-end chimney, and the building's placement at the top of a sloping site. The building reflects the stripped down simplicity of the Streamline Moderne style with its smooth walls, flat and shallow-pitched roofs, bands of wrapping windows, rounded corners, and a complete lack of applied ornamentation. The deceptively simple rectangular form of the building is interrupted by a two-story square bay on the southwest elevation and a two-story semi-circular bay on the northeast elevation, thus giving the building a crucifix form. A one-story wing, which expresses the space inside with its fenestration and large chimney, extends from the southeast elevation. A narrow rectangular garage wing projects below grade from the northwest side of the dwelling, accommodating the automobile that enabled the suburban lifestyle the Streamline Moderne-style Winslow House epitomized.

The building is set on a concrete-block foundation that, like the concrete-block structure itself, is veneered in brick and covered in a smooth stucco finish. Characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style, the building is painted white. The shallow-pitched, side-gabled roof is covered in contrasting red asphalt shingles with a narrow overhang and plain fascia board. The two-story square bay projecting on the southeast elevation is covered by a shallow-pitched, hipped roof. This bay is symmetrically matched by a projecting semi-circular bay on the northeast elevation, which is covered by a conical roof. It holds paired, metal casement windows with transoms. The "suntrap-style" windows are separated by round metal poles that read as mullions and share a continuous masonry sill covered in stucco. The one-story wing on the southeast elevation has a flat roof framed by a high parapet wall to create a roof deck. The square exterior-end chimney, covered in stucco and painted white, soars above the southeast elevation of the one-story wing. An interior chimney of brick, which is not covered in stucco or painted, rises from the center of the main block to service the furnace and kitchen. This secondary chimney is not visible from ground level, which is an architectural design element typical of the Streamline Moderne style. The main entry opening holds the original hollow-core, flush door, which is pierced by a small square fixed light. The single-leaf opening is framed by wide sidelights, each with twenty glass blocks. Over the main entry on the second story is a porthole window. The wide window openings have metal-frame casements framed by fixed windows and transoms. The size of the opening, and thus the number of lights, depends on their location and the designated use of the interior spaces being illuminated. Several of the openings wrap around the corners of the structure.

The interior of the Earle Winslow House has an open plan consisting of 2,450 square feet. The dwelling, as originally built, has a living room, dining area, kitchen, study, entrance hall, three bedrooms, two baths, and garage in the basement. The open plan allows for interaction between the entrance hall, living room, and dining area, which are the public spaces. The addition provides additional bedrooms, baths, and secondary living room. The private spaces are confined to the northwest side of the house, with the entrance hall and enclosed balustrade of the winder stair segregating the public and private areas. The interior ornamentation is minimal, as the Streamline Moderne style dictated. With no reference to period detailing, the interior of the Winslow House utilizes natural and mass-produced decorative materials, such as pine, marble, chrome, and glass. Ornamentation is provided by the irregular shapes of the public spaces and master bedroom, which have squared and curved bays, and the expansive fenestration that allows a blending with the natural landscape outdoors.

The imposing Streamline Moderne house at **1215 25th Street South** is one of three such examples in the Arlington Ridge neighborhood. The house was constructed for Lieutenant Commander C.F. Cotton, who according to the building permit also served as the architect. Because of his status as a naval commander (stationed at the Bureau of Aeronautics), Cotton brought his first-hand knowledge of nautical elements to the design of his Arlington County home. Talbert W. Raymond served as the builder, completing the house in 1937. The two-story house, with a large rectangular plan, is constructed of wood frame covered

in a smooth, white stucco finish. The building has a flat roof with metal coping. The two-story main block is angled to create a zigzag form against the one-story hyphen and garage wing on the side elevation. Stylistic features common to the Streamline Moderne are the unadorned stucco walls, banks of metal casement windows set flush to the outer wall, the flat roof, lack of applied ornamentation around the openings and cornice line, the asymmetrical arrangement of the fenestration on the façade, and the curved side walls leading to the main entry. The primary entry has a flush metal door with a porthole window. The building has wide metal-frame casement windows that wrap around the corners with no surrounds or sills. The extreme slope of the site allows for the rear elevation to step down, creating a series of decks overlooking the woods of Arlington Ridge. Estimated to cost \$11,000 in 1937, the notably high-priced house has seven rooms.

The house at **4012 25th Street North** was constructed in 1940 by L.R. Broyhill, who owned the real estate development company, L.R. Broyhill & Co. The building permit cites the architect as Architectural Engineering. The two-story house was constructed for owner John S. Kennedy. It is set on an elevated lot, overlooking the surrounding dwellings in the Lee Heights subdivision. The house is composed of a series of squared boxes and curved projections. The structure is brick on the first story, painted white with pink accents at the window openings and cornice lines. The second story is constructed of wood frame clad in asbestos shingles with a wavy bottom edge. Containing six rooms, the dwelling has expansive window openings that hold three-light, metal casements framed by fixed windows. The concrete sills and string courses accent the paired and tripled window openings, reading as the metal railings of a ship's decks. A large chimney is located on the façade at the intersection of the squared front bay and curved side bay. Despite its size and location, the chimney is remarkably undetected because of its lack of ornamentation and color. The upper story of the dwelling is crowned by a flat roof with a wide fascia board. The board is ornamented with a wavy motif that, like the asbestos shingles, signifies the nautical theme embraced by the Streamline Moderne style. The motif on the fascia board is more exaggerated than that of the asbestos shingles. The primary entry to the dwelling is largely obscured, located on the side elevation of the squared front bay. The sloping site allows for a below-grade garage.

Another excellent example of the Streamline Moderne in Arlington County is the single-family dwelling at **3833 30th Street North** in the neighborhood of Bellevue Forest. Constructed in 1941 for James K. Knudson, the building was erected by builder Milton G. Smith, who was responsible for a significant number of (Colonial Revival-style) residential buildings in Arlington County. The dwelling, sited on a slight rise, is constructed of concrete blocks faced in stretcher-bond brick. Unlike the other nine examples of the Streamline Moderne style in the county, this house is not painted or stuccoed, but presents the exposed brick veneer (the side elevations have been covered in synthetic siding). Additionally, the cornice line is embellished with corbeled bricks, a treatment that also serves as a string course on the northern block of the house. The structure is composed of two blocks, each rising two stories in height with a flat roof. The window openings on the first story are expansive, holding a bowed five-light window in the living room and glass blocks in the main entry vestibule. The openings illuminating the private spaces are narrower, containing paired casement windows with metal frames. The main entry is ceremoniously located at the center of the façade, with a curved bay that joins the two blocks. The entry opening is recessed on the southern side of the two-story curved bay, which is pierced with asymmetrically placed window openings holding glass blocks. The curved walls framing the entry, sheltered by a flat cantilevered roof that mimics the lintel of the bowed window, are composed of stacked brick. A one-story garage projects from the north elevation of the rectangular building, while a one-story porch (enclosed in 1943) extends from the southern elevation.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

A. MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING NAME

Streamline Moderne Houses in Arlington County, Virginia

B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Art Deco, the Precedent of Streamline Moderne
Motivation of Streamline Moderne
Streamline Moderne Houses in Arlington County: 1936 to 1945
Streamline Moderne Building Types and Character-Defining Features

C. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Streamline Moderne Single-Family Dwellings

Introduction

The comprehensive survey of Arlington County, beginning in 1993, has identified nine single-family buildings that represent the Modernistic architectural style known as Streamline Moderne as it was interpreted in Arlington County between 1936 and 1941. Adaptable because of its sociological and ideological diversity, the Streamline Moderne style was commonly accepted in planned subdivisions throughout the United States, especially in California and Florida. The modernistic style's simplistic, yet stylized design, coupled with its inexpensive construction costs during a period of great economic and social instability, made the Streamline Moderne tremendously popular in the 1930s and early 1940s, especially as World Fairs. Promoting movement and speed during a period of economic instability, Streamline Moderne directly affected the designs of transportation machinery, such as ships, airplanes, and automobiles, and industrial and consumer products such as bicycles, toasters, radios, and vacuum cleaners. Yet, the Streamline Moderne style was not overwhelmingly popular as the style of choice for single-family dwellings in Arlington County, where suburban development was rampant in the first half of the twentieth century. As the fastest growing county in the Washington metropolitan area and the Commonwealth of Virginia by 1940, Arlington County became a proving ground for new housing developments, including a number supported by government programs. Developers quickly took advantage of the situation and constructed speculative housing for middle-class and professional residents. However, these dwellings overwhelmingly illustrated traditional architectural expressions like the familiar Colonial Revival style that radiated a sense of place and stability in newly platted neighborhoods. Further, the guidelines and standards generated by the federal government through the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) Small Housing Program and Low-Cost Housing Act unofficially promoted the Colonial Revival style, limiting experimentation with Modernistic styles like the innovative Streamline Moderne and its forerunner, the Art Deco style. Unlike the vast majority of single-family houses in Arlington County that were constructed by speculative developers or investors who utilized the government guidelines, the nine Streamline Moderne-style houses identified were designed specifically for individual property owners, who personally hired local architects and builders. The collaborative effort by designer and owner guaranteed individuality within the confined definition of Streamline Moderne, while at the same time ensuring the FHA's dictum of maximum accommodation within a minimum of means. Thus, each of the nine houses is exceptional and rare within its suburban subdivision, and unique and innovative among its Streamline Moderne counterparts.

Art Deco, The Precedent of Streamline Moderne

Modernistic styles like the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne first received notice in 1922, when the *Chicago Tribune* held a world-wide competition for the design of their new headquarters building. Although Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen received second prize, his innovative Art Deco design drew significantly more acclaim than the winning design of Raymond Hood, which was in the well-known Gothic Revival style.¹ Other examples of the “modern” style had been constructed as early as 1914 in Helsinki and 1923 in New York City, yet because of the publicity generated by Saarinen’s skyscraper design for the *Chicago Tribune* Tower, “the style quickly became the latest architectural fashion.”² The American Art Deco, from which the Streamline Moderne would evolve, was presented internationally in Paris at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in 1925.³ Architectural Historian Randy Juster states “this event set the stylistic tone for early Art Deco, based on earlier neo-classical style but with the application of exotic motifs such as flora and fauna, fountains and chevrons, typically arranged in geometric patterns.”⁴ A more subtle but no less important feature of this new form of architectural modernism was the complete expression of functionalism, where surfaces indicated the depth and use of the interior structure. Such examples of this, which were embraced further by the Streamline Moderne, include expansive window openings, often turning corners in public spaces, and smaller porthole windows for more private rooms.

The influence of the Art Deco in Arlington County is minimal with many of the innovative character-defining features blended seamlessly with the traditional designs of the Colonial Revival. The 32 extant resources identified that illustrate elements of the Art Deco style are commercial buildings, such as stores, movie theaters, and restaurants, and multiple dwellings, such as garden-apartment complexes. No examples of freestanding, single-family dwellings illustrating the Art Deco style have been identified in Arlington County.

Motivation of Streamline Moderne

By the early 1930s, “another, more diffuse influence affected the Modernistic style—the beginning of streamlined industrial design for ships, airplanes, and automobiles,” which gave way to the short-lived and futuristic Streamline Moderne.⁵ The Streamline Moderne, also known as Moderne, Streamline Deco or Art Moderne, was a stylized architectural expression that followed the Art Deco style in its rejection of traditional ornamentation in favor of the “modern values of movement.”⁶ Historian David Gebhard clarifies the differences:

...the first [Art Deco] reflecting the dominance of the triangle and ‘T’-square coupled with stylized classical derived ornamentation, and the second [Streamline Moderne] reflecting the French curve and compass.⁷

Experimentation with curved forms, one of the most character-defining features of Streamline Moderne architecture, began with the 1914 construction of a theater designed by Henri van de Velde for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne and Eric Mendelsohn’s three department stores in Germany in the late 1920s. In 1931, Norman Bel Geddes designed the *House of Tomorrow*, which anticipated and possibly inspired many Streamline Moderne houses. As described by Donald J. Bush in *The Streamline Decade*, Bel Geddes believed that this new Modernistic design could reverse many of the mistakes of recent housing, warning “that its acceptance would require some jettisoning of old ideas and ideals. Clients would have to realign their priorities and have faith in progressive architects if improvements were to come.”⁸ Bel Geddes proclaimed:

...it must be realized that at the moment we are only on the threshold of what in a few years will undoubtedly be the universal architecture; and to be able to visualize what that

architecture will be like, the interested person must realize the principles which are governing those architects and designers who are trying to create what we may call the twentieth-century style.

Far less opulent and more restrained than the Art Deco of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Streamline Moderne was an economic and stylistic response to the devastating effects of the Great Depression (1929-1941), when building materials were scarce. The American adaptation included “sleek, mechanically perfect curves...at the corners of the buildings, in cylindrical helix stairs, circular windows, and spherical knobs.”⁹ In its usual manifestations, the style “shunned the color experiments and expensive materials of Art Deco and happily relied on synthetics—plastics, plywood, ivory-colored Formica, black glass, and chrome strips.”¹⁰ Architectural historians acknowledge the style:

...differed from the High Art Modern Architecture of the early 1930s in that it continued to regard design as ‘styling’ and that architecture should represent or perform as an image rather than be used as a space to radically change ones everyday life. The boosters of Streamline Moderne argued that their purpose was not to create an architecture that functioned in the same way as the ocean liner, airplane, or locomotive; rather the buildings would symbolize those things and therefore remind one of the ‘modern’ future.¹¹

The Streamline Moderne, emerging during a period of great economic strife, was intentionally used to reduce financial burdens (metaphorically and figuratively) and ensure simple living by providing a less expensive design that was technologically advanced. Futuristic machines of transportation, like the automobile and airplane, provided the best means for this transformation. Author Alan Gowans explains:

[designers popularizing the innovations of streamlining] intended to improve the industrial fabric and provide jobs for everybody again. There were not glorifications of machines or subordinations of human interest to theories of scientific materials, but ‘streamline’ practical solutions to problems plaguing human life: superhighways that would make driving easier, cars that would make driving safer and easier, better-looking and better-working radios and clocks and washing machines. Streamlining referred not to some mystical ‘new Modern spirit,’ but to the reduction of complexity to simple, easier-flowing shapes for the benefit of beholders and users in every aspect of life—machines, buildings, furniture. Streamlining expressed and coped with Depression economies; it justified harsh necessities in terms of aesthetics, showing how the efficiencies of exposed steel-cage construction of factory-made materials like glass brick could be made attractive to the user.¹²

Streamline Moderne Houses in Arlington County: 1936 to 1945

While the rest of the nation was experiencing an unprecedented decline in housing construction and economic stability due to the effects of the Great Depression, a period of economic strife commonly marked by the stock market crash in October of 1929, Arlington County was experiencing tremendous growth and development. A 26-square-mile county located along the Potomac River in Northern Virginia, Arlington County has served as a suburb of the District of Columbia and the cities of Georgetown and Alexandria since the late eighteenth century. During this early period, prominent citizens routinely established summer homes, large country estates, and farmsteads in what was to become Arlington County. At first development was slow, as the areas within and immediately surrounding the nation’s capitol were established. Arlington County remained predominantly rural throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with only insignificant changes in population. It was not until World War I (1914-1918) and the ensuing widespread growth in all government offices, which attracted employees from across the country to the Washington, D.C. area, that Arlington witnessed any large-scale development.

As a result, between 1910 and 1920, the population of the county grew by 60 percent. The population growth was sustained when the Roosevelt administration created the New Deal programs in an attempt to jump-start the economy and provide employment for all classes of Americans. The New Deal programs more than doubled the number of available government civilian jobs between 1930 and 1940. As a result, the Washington metropolitan area was stricken by a severe housing shortage.¹³ As Arlington County improved its public infrastructures and transportation routes to and from the nation's capitol, the once-rural county quickly became an attractive alternative to living in the city. Between 1930 and 1940, Arlington County doubled in size from 26,615 to 56,200 residents, becoming the fastest developing county in the Washington metropolitan area and the Commonwealth of Virginia by 1940.¹⁴

With its convenient location near Washington, D.C. and its vast amount of open space ripe for development, Arlington County became a testing ground for new housing developments, several supported by government programs. Guided by such federal programs as the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), developers quickly began to plat subdivisions and construct housing for the middle class and working professionals. The FHA's approval process for mortgage insurance and publication of housing and subdivision standards allowed the institution of a national program that regulated home building practices for many decades. The *FHA's Principles of Planning Small Houses* (1936) and circulars such as *Property Standards, Recent Developments in Building Construction, and Modern Housing* addressed issues of construction, materials, housing standards, and principles of design. As explained in the Multiple Property Documentation form, "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960," the FHA housing types ensured comfort while being "void of non-essential spaces, picturesque features, and unnecessary items that would add to their cost." The houses being constructed throughout Arlington County followed the FHA's principle for "providing a maximum accommodation within a minimum of means. Houses could be built in a variety of materials, including wood, brick, concrete block, shingles, stucco, or stone. To increase domestic efficiency, new labor saving technologies were introduced: kitchens were equipped with modern appliances, and the utility room's integrated mechanical system replaced the basement furnace of earlier homes."¹⁵

Yet, these publications did little to promote innovative modernistic designs of the Art Deco or Streamline Moderne styles, which actually lent themselves well to small house construction with no applied ornamentation that "would add to their cost." In fact, the character-defining features of the Streamline Moderne-style house ensured its construction was economically feasible for middle-class property owners in Arlington County. The smooth, often white, exterior walls were created by stucco spread over a concrete-block structure. The indicative flat roof was less expensive to construct than the multi-gabled roofs of neighboring houses. Each dwelling was equipped with modern appliances, an element promoted in the Streamline Moderne model homes showcased at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. The flowing, open plan deleted non-essential spaces by connecting public rooms and confining private spaces, thus "providing a maximum accommodation within a minimum of means."¹⁶ "Unnecessary ornamentation was removed and sharp angles [of traditional housing] replaced with simple, aerodynamic curves. Exotic woods and stone, [which added great expense to construction costs] were replaced with cement and glass."¹⁷ Despite the fact that the Streamline Moderne house met all of the qualifications of the FHA and small house construction directive, the style was not overwhelmingly embraced by developers, financiers, and even property owners.

A comparative study for the period between 1936 and 1945, when Streamline Moderne houses were being erected in Arlington County, shows the estimated construction costs for these innovative, stylized dwellings was analogous to neighboring dwellings that followed the FHA's principles for small houses. Construction costs ranged from \$4,000 to \$11,000, the difference defined primarily by the number of full baths and bedrooms. The least and most expensive of the nine dwellings were both built of wood frame covered in stucco with a concrete-block foundation. The average construction cost was \$7,000 to \$9,500,

for a concrete-block structure covered with stucco on a foundation of either concrete blocks or brick. Building permits show all of the examples in Arlington County were equip with modern appliances and amenities such as electricity, gas, air conditioning, hot air, and oil heating.

A reaction to the austere economic times and the futurist mobility of transportation machines, the Streamline Moderne provided an emphasis on the future. However, the style's tenure was short lived as the devastating effects following World War II (1941-1945) set in. As Juster states, "by the war's end, the 'e' in Moderne was gone and the Streamline gradually came to occupy a small subdivision of the dominant International Style."¹⁸ As a result, only nine single-family dwellings in Arlington County reflect the architectural expressions commonly associated with the Streamline Moderne style. The latest example, located at 4806 Old Dominion Drive (razed 2009), was completed in 1945; a time when Arlington County's returning veterans yearned for traditional housing more closely identified with the Colonial Revival style. Historian Gebhard ponders if the reality of World War II, with "its realization of so much of science fiction in the development of the bomb, faster than sound jets and of the rocket...made people less interested in the Streamlined as a symbol of the future."¹⁹ Although the ubiquity of modern architecture continued nationwide until the early 1970s, its effect on the residential buildings in Arlington County had clearly ceased decades earlier. Modernist architecture left its mark on the landscape of Arlington County with a few illustrations of Streamline Moderne and International Style dwellings; however, it could not overcome the extraordinary popularity of the Colonial Revival style, which had been embedded in the minds of Arlington County's builders and homeowners since the turn of the twentieth century.

Streamline Moderne Building Types and Character-Defining Features

Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, Streamline Moderne architecture was a relatively common design style for both single- and multi-family housing, commercial and industrial buildings nationwide. The style was most popular for dressing up public and commercial buildings such as courthouses, post offices, city halls, skyscrapers, movie theaters, bus stations, airport terminals, and museums, as a way of promoting sociological and ideological diversity.²⁰ Although there are several public and commercial examples of the style in Northern Virginia and the Washington metropolitan area, the Streamline Moderne is much less commonly seen in the residential neighborhoods. The style, reaching its peak nationally in 1937, was not endorsed as the architecture of choice by the FHA or local mortgage institutions that overwhelmingly promoted the historical precedents of the Colonial Revival style, which recalled the past and thus evoked stability. Yet, the relative absence of the Streamline Moderne, along with other architectural styles such as Craftsman and Spanish Colonial Revival, help define the pre- and post-war architectural culture and identity of Arlington County.

The character-defining features of the Streamline Moderne, elements portrayed on each of the nine extant examples in Arlington County, are its smooth surfaces, curved corners, and horizontal emphasis. These elements all contribute to the feeling of aerodynamic force generated by transportation machinery, such as ships, airplanes, and automobiles. Nautical elements, such as metal railings or porthole windows, are commonly featured. These details are noted at 2116 South Kent Street (1937) and 2333 North Vernon Street (1940). The lack of surface ornamentation emphasizes the smooth, often white, finish of the walls and the soft round corners, which is illustrated at 4012 25th Street North (1940) and 3833 30th Street North (1941). Flat roofs, incised string courses, and horizontal bands of windows create a distinctive streamlined look that is often highlighted by the use of suntrap (curved) and/or wrapping windows. These distinctive window openings are found at 2333 North Vernon Street, 4220 16th Street South (1937), and 1215 25th Street South (1937). Ornamentation is restricted to mirrored panels, glass wall blocks, cement panels, and occasionally a metal panel with low relief decoration that is confined to the entry or window openings. Glass block, for example, was noted at 2333 North Vernon Street, 4220 16th Street South, and 3833 30th Street North. The primary entry opening at 4911 15th Street North (1938) is ornately finished with three

courses of ceramic tiles, ranging in color from aqua to green. The color of the tiles is a striking contrast to the painted white brickwork of the structure.²¹

Natural materials, such as wood and marble, are blended with mass-produced decorative elements such as aluminum, stainless steel, and glass, for use as surrounds, railings, and balusters on the interiors of the buildings. The interior of 2333 North Vernon Street, for example, has pine flooring and stair rail, pine paneling in the den, chrome fixtures and hardware, and a black marble mantel that is in sharp contrast to the white walls and ceiling. The innovative features of the house at 4911 15th Street North were a collaborative effort of architect, Kenton Hamaker, and property owner, Lawrence Tuttle. These elements were specifically designed to maximum accommodation within a minimum of means, all the while ensuring the expression of functionalism from the exterior was maintained. The house provides a chute on the second story that leads to the laundry room next to the kitchen, shower on the first floor, dark room on the second floor, telephone room off stair, and small bedroom and bath on the lower story for parents/live-in maid. A unique and problematic element of the design was the gutters, which are located behind the parapet walls thus obscuring them from view. The invisibility of such utilitarian features as gutters and chimney stacks, as illustrated by all nine of the extant examples in Arlington County, is characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style.

¹ The winning design, by Raymond Hood, reflected the Gothic Revival style.

² McAlester, 465.

³ The terms “Art Deco” and “Moderne” are derived from the title of the Exposition, although they did not come into common usage until the 1960s; see William Morgan, *The Abrams Guide to American House Styles*, (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 341-342.

⁴ Randy Juster, “Introduction: Decopix, the Art Deco Architecture Site,” <http://www.decopix.com/New%20Site/Pages/Directory%20Pages/Intro.html>.

⁵ McAlester, 465.

⁶ Patrick Pascal, *Kesling Modern Structures Popularizing Modern Design in Southern California 1934-1962* (Los Angeles, CA: Balcony Press, 2002), 10; quoted in Jon L. Wilson to Roxanne Tanemori, City of Santa Monica, memorandum, 6 December 2007, “Preliminary Historic Assessment: 2310 33rd Street.”

<http://www01.smgov.net/planning/landmark/agendas/2007/2310%2033rd%20Street%20Preliminary%20Assessment.pdf>.

⁷ David Gebhard, “The Moderne in the U.S., 1920-1941,” *Architectural Association Quarterly*, 2 (January 1970), 7.

⁸ Donald J. Bush, *The Streamline Decade*, (New York, NY: George Braziller, 1975), 134-135.

⁹ Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), 332.

¹⁰ Whiffen and Koeper, 332.

¹¹ Pascal, *Kesling Modern Structures*, 10.

¹² Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Function and Cultural Expression*, (New York, NY: Icon Editions, 1992), 251.

¹³ “Miles L. Coehan Will Head Two FHA Divisions,” *The Washington Post*, 9 May 1937. James M. Goode, *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington’s Most Distinguished Apartment Houses*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1988), 332.

¹⁴ “Arlington Seen as Good Home Investment,” *The Washington Post*, 20 September 1940.

¹⁵ Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, and Sarah Dillard Pope, “Historic Residential Suburb in the United States, 1830-1960,” National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, Section E: 31.

¹⁶ Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, and Sarah Dillard Pope, “Historic Residential Suburb in the United States, 1830-1960,” National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, Section E: 31.

¹⁷ Randy Juster, “Introduction: Decopix, the Art Deco Architecture Site.”

¹⁸ Randy Juster, “Introduction: Decopix, the Art Deco Architecture Site;” Only two single-family buildings in Arlington County reflect the architectural design influences of the International Style.

¹⁹ Gebhard, 18.

²⁰ Gowans, 252.

²¹ McAlester, 465-467; Morgan, 340-349; “Art Moderne Architecture,” Colorado Preservation, Inc.

http://www.coloradopreservation.org/newdeal/nd_artmoderne.htm; James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, *House Styles in America: The Old-House Journal Guide to the Architecture of American Homes*, (New York, NY: Penguin Studio, 1999), 241; Sarah Cunliffe and Jean Loussier, editors, *Architecture Styles Spotter’s Guide: Classical Temples to Soaring Skyscrapers*, (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2006), 222-223; and Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 321.

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)			
Mr. <input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Miss <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Laura V. Trieschmann	EHT Traceries, Inc.
1121 Fifth Street, NW		Washington	DC
(Address)		(City)	(State)
ltrieschmann@traceries.com		202-393-1199	
(Email Address)		(Daytime telephone including area code)	
Applicant's Signature: <i>Laura Trieschmann</i>		Date: March 2009	

Notification			
In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.			
Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/>	Dr. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Hon. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Arlington County		Michael Leventhal	Historic Preservation Coordinator
(Locality)		(Name)	(Position)
Arlington		2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700	
(City)		(Address)	
	VA	22201	703/228-3813
	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

EHT Traceries has been engaged by the Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development to survey and document Streamline Moderne-style residential buildings in Arlington County. The comprehensive survey of Arlington County, most of which has been conducted using cost-share funding, identified nine Streamline Moderne dwellings as potentially eligible for listing individually under the thematic study of a Streamline Moderne Multiple Property Documentation form because of their unique and innovative architectural expression.

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places recognizes the rarity of this distinct residential style in Arlington County and assists property owners with tax credits.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No
 Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes No