

VLR-10/19/94 NRHP-2/8/95

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oakton Trolley Station
other names/site number VDHR File No. 29-477

2. Location

street & number 2923 Gray Street not for publication N/A
city or town Oakton vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Fairfax code 059 zip code 22124

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/30/94
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance 1905-1939

Significant Dates 1905
1939

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Washington and Fairfax Electric Railroad Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

- Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .30 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 2 columns: Zone Easting, Northing. Values: 1, 2, 3, 4.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Adrienne Stefan and Tom Macklin
organization date July 11, 1994
street & number 2923 Gray Street telephone 703-242-1595
city or town Oakton state VA zip code 22124

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name
street & number telephone
city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Summary

The Oakton Trolley Station, located in Oakton, Fairfax County, is a medium-sized three-story vernacular-form building. It was built in 1905 by the Washington and Fairfax Electric Railway Company, which ran trolleys from Fairfax City to downtown Washington, D.C., from 1904 until 1939. The station, currently a private residence, retains its original appearance and most of its early twentieth century exterior. It has a rectangular plan, with a wrap-around open porch, weatherboards and a tin roof. A two-room addition, in the same style and materials as the original building, was recently added at the rear of the station. The interior restoration has been completed in a fashion sympathetic to the original building with appropriate wallpaper, fixtures, molding, and hardwood floors. For the moment, the setting remains fairly unchanged, with the trace of trolley roadbed extending into the woods east and west, and most of the adjacent houses built in similar style to the station.

Description

The Oakton Trolley Station is a medium-sized three-story vernacular-form building located in Oakton, Fairfax County, between the city of Fairfax and the town of Vienna, two blocks off Route 123 to the north and Blake Lane to the south. The small area within these two larger roads corresponds to Willis R. Gray's planned 1902 subdivision in Oakton, which is still known as "Gray's Oakton." Here Gray arranged to have the Washington and Fairfax Electric Railway Company build one of their trolley stations in his subdivision in 1905. The trolley ran from the District of Columbia through Arlington to Vienna, Falls Church, Dunn Loring, and Oakton into Fairfax City. Since the station's construction in 1905, the building has been in almost continuous use--as a trolley station until 1939, then as a post office and general store,¹ and finally as a boarding house². Restoration work was completed in 1988, following a period of several years when the house was only intermittently inhabited.³ It is presently a private residence. Except for an addition at the rear, the station retains its original appearance and most of the early twentieth century

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Description (continued)

exterior architectural detailing. The interior has been modernized with the intention of incorporating the appropriate style and materials of the trolley station's era. The local community continues to refer to it as the "Oakton Trolley Station" and part of the raised trolley roadbed remains visible outside the station.

The original station has a rectangular plan, approximately 24.4 feet by 38.8 feet, with a two-story bay window measuring about 10 feet across located on the south elevation. A 90-foot wrap-around open porch which functioned as a sheltered waiting platform is located on the west and south facades. The original brick foundation is visible on the north and eastern facades; there is no basement or cellar area. The cedar weatherboards are plain on the two story wall areas. The gable ends and dormer face are sheathed in fishscale shingles. The weatherboard and shingles are separated by a flat trim board. Window and door surrounds are plain flat boards with simple moulding. The cornerboards have small caps, while the fascia consists of flat board trim. The open eaves include patterned rafter ends.

The main entry is more sophisticated. It includes a double door with bevelled glass, probably original⁴, and some simple carved decoration in the lower door panels. The door hinges are also decoratively formed. The wrap-around porch has tongue-and-groove floor and ceiling with turned railings and supports. The porch's highlight are the spindle braces. There are two French doors, opening out from the dining room onto the south side of the porch, corresponding to the boarding area for the trolley passengers. The roofs were and are of tin.

In 1986-87, an addition was put on the eastern side, at the rear of the house, extending the width of the structure (24.4 feet) and approximately 15 feet in depth. The addition now contains a family room and kitchen and, except for the modern kitchen interior, has been completed in a fashion that is sympathetic to the original building.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7,8 Page 3

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Description (continued)

The interior floors of the station are of hardwood. The walls are papered downstairs and painted on the second and third floors. All the rooms have simple-wood floor and crown molding; the dining room and the family room feature plain wainscoting. The second and third floors have always been used as residential space, originally housing the station-master.⁵ However, the plumbing has been completely modernized. The light and plumbing fixtures, where possible, are all replicas appropriate to the early twentieth century. The living room contains a large antique carved oak mantelpiece which is not original to the house but is appropriate to the period.

The setting of the station remains--for the moment--fairly rural and unchanged; the trace of the trolley roadbed and right of way can still be seen extending into the woods to the east and west. Two of the four or five houses visible from the station are of the same style and approximately the same period. Four acres of wooded area bounds the station on the south and a small farmed lot on the north.

Statement of Significance

The Oakton Trolley Station is significant for its association with the development of urban and suburban transit in the northern Virginia/District of Columbia area. The Washington and Fairfax Electric Railway Company, which the station served, was used extensively in the first decades of the century by both local businesses and commuters to move produce, goods, and people from the smaller northern Virginia communities into Washington, D.C., and into the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. The larger stations were all designed in similar style; the Oakton Trolley Station is the only surviving example. The trolley line also served other community functions such as bringing mourners to funeral services at the Flint Hill cemetery, which also bordered on the line.⁶

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Historical Background and Significance

The Washington and Fairfax Electric Railway Company was chartered in February 1901. The trolley company began service to its western terminus of Fairfax Court House on December 2, 1904. Willis R. Gray, who had sold the railroad a right of way on his land in Oakton, also encouraged the company to build a station in his Oakton subdivision. In 1905 the trolley company built the station and ticket office, part of which was leased to Robert Ballard for a store. A post office was also in the building at this period.⁷

The Washington and Fairfax Electric Railway was extensively used from the beginning by farmers shipping produce into the city, mail carried both ways, and florists sending flowers from the Oakton area. (At the turn of the century, the Oakton area boasted several mail-order nursery businesses in addition to its local farms. Gray himself was among these nurserymen, having begun his mail-order flower business in 1901. Gray's nursery business did not prosper after World War I; Gray himself blamed this decline on the advent of the automobile which allowed people to buy their plants directly rather than through the mail.)⁸

During and after World War I, the line also served a large and increasing number of commuters. This began to change in the mid-twenties as the trolley was challenged by the development of public and private vehicle transportation and competition from rival public transportation lines in the District of Columbia. For the first time in 1929, the trolley line failed to show a profit. The final blow was the loss of its Washington terminal at 12th and Constitution Avenue, N.W., which was torn down in the thirties to make way for a new post office building. The company continued to lose money and finally ended all service in September 1939.⁹

After the demise of the trolley, the Oakton Trolley Station continued to be used as a general store and post office. It served as a post office into the fifties. The building was then used intermittently as a boarding house. Following a period when it was not inhabited, in the mid-eighties, the building was restored. The

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8

5

Section number _____ Page _____

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

owners conducted badly-needed repair and maintenance work, such as the removal and replacement of damaged siding.¹⁰ The garage was built (again in the appropriate style) on an area where a similar outbuilding once stood. The original outbuilding was probably a chicken coop.¹¹

The area surrounding the Oakton Trolley Station, still known as "Gray's Oakton," has not changed much in the last forty years and has a community spirit which is fairly uncommon in the highly mobile, highly developed northern Virginia area. Although threatened by ubiquitous real estate development, it still retains a large portion of its quiet character and provides us with a glimpse of an earlier Fairfax County.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Endnotes

1. Evans, D'Anne A. The Story of Oakton, Virginia: 1758-1990. Oakton, VA: The Optimist Club of Oakton, 1991, pp. 82-83.
 2. Personal interview 23 February 1992 with Ralph and Pat Hughes, previous owners of the property, who restored the building.
 3. Evans, D'Anne A. Op. cit., p. 119.
 4. Personal interview with Ralph and Pat Hughes (see note no. 2, above). The Hughes were not certain of the origin of the glass, but believed the complete doors were original.
 5. Stuntz, Connie Pendleton, and Stuntz, Mayo Sturdevant. This Was Vienna, Virginia. 2596 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna, VA, 1987, p. 250.
 6. Stuntz, Connie Pendleton, and Stuntz, Mayo Sturdevant. Op. cit., pp. 248-252.
 7. Evans, D'Anne A. Op. cit., pp. 82-84.
 8. Ibid., pp. 78-82 and 95-97.
 9. Stuntz, Op. cit., p. 252.
 10. Evans, D'Anne A., Op. cit., p. 119, and 26 February 1992 interview with the Hughes.
 11. Personal interview with Ralph and Pat Hughes (see note no. 2).
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 7

Oakton Trolley Station
Oakton, Fairfax County, VA

Bibliography

Evans, D'Anne A. The Story of Oakton, Virginia: 1758-1990.
Oakton, VA: The Optimist Club of Oakton, 1991.

Stuntz, Connie Pendleton, and Stuntz, Mayo Sturdevant. This Was
Vienna, Virginia. 2596 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna, VA, 1987.

Verbal boundary description

The property's legal lot and parcel number on the county Tax Map is: Oakton RWY STA, # 047-2-01-0063A. (A Plat is attached outlining the boundary of the property within Gray's Subdivision, Section 3.) The property is divided into two parcels, as follows: Parcel 1: Beginning at a point where Northwest side of the right of Arlington and Fairfax Railroad Company intersections of Northeast side of a public highway designated as Gray Street on a plat of Gray's Subdivision of Oakton, recorded County; thence with the line of said public highway North 29 degrees, 56 minutes, West 50 feet to a point; thence on a line North 63 degrees, 54 minutes, East 220 feet to a point; thence on a line South 85 degrees, 12 minutes East 97.13 feet to a point on said Northwest line of said right of way; thence along said Northwest line of said right of way South 63 degrees, 54 minutes, West 300 feet to the place of beginning, being a tract of irregular shape and containing 0.27 of an acre, more or less.

Parcel 2: All that certain lot designated as outlot "C" of the property of John R. and Regina K. Moore on plat attached to a Deed of Dedication and Resubdivision recorded June 8, 1988 in Deed Book 7049 at page 1617, among the land records of Fairfax County, Virginia. (This lot being the trolley right of way.)

Verbal boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property coincides with the current property lines for 2923 Gray Street. This is a reasonable boundary as 2923 Gray Street includes the complete trolley station building. The present boundaries also include the complete width of the 40-foot trolley roadbed right-of-way for the length of the property.
