

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

VLR 6/19/9  
NRHP 9/12/0

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 Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works

other names/site number DHR # 138-5044

2. Location

street & number 1720 Valley Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Winchester vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Winchester (Independent City) code 840 zip code 22601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 of certifying official

2/20/08  
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Sub: manufacturing facility

### Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: vacant

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

### Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
 roof ASPHALT: Built-up Asphalt Roofing; SYNTHETICS: Rubber Roofing  
 walls BRICK  
 other STONE: Cast-stone lintels and coping

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**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)

**INDUSTRY**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance** 1940-1958

**Significant Dates** 1940, 1941

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** DAVIS & PLATT, INC. -BUILDERS (DORAN S. PLATT, ARCHITECT)

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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works**

**Winchester, Virginia**

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources: Richmond, Virginia

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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**Acreage of Property** Approximately 1.3 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	743843	4339305	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 Maral S. Kalbian, Architectural Historian; Margaret T. Peters, Research Historian  
organization Maral S. Kalbian, LLC date March 20, 2008  
street & number P.O. Box 468 telephone 540-955-1231  
city or town Berryville state VA zip code 22611

=====  
**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 1720 Valley Avenue, LLC C/O J. Andrew Scallan  
street & number 525 G. Street SE #1 telephone 202-544-6500  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20003

=====  
**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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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City of Winchester, Virginia

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**7. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:**

The Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works is located at 1720 Valley Avenue (U. S. Route 11) near the south end of the City of Winchester, Virginia. Sited on a 1.3-acre lot on the southeastern side of Valley Avenue, the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works building is a remarkably well-preserved example of an Art Deco-style factory. Constructed in 1940-1941 after a design by Davis & Platt, Inc., Builders, the two-story, rectangular, reinforced-concrete building is faced with brick and features a one-story rear addition dating to 1960 and a large two-story side warehouse wing from 1974. The current building and both its additions cover approximately 25, 000 square feet in area. A one-story, brick storage building with a garage facility, located along the rear property line, was constructed in 1941 and has not been in use for several years. Poorly constructed, the brick garage suffers from irreparable structural failures.

The original front section of the Coca-Cola Bottling Works building has a flat roof with a parapet decorated by cast-stone coping. The asymmetrical four-bay façade features large plate-glass shop windows on the first floor that allowed the bottling operation to be viewed by the passing public. Valley Avenue, also known as the Valley Pike, was the main north-south artery through the Shenandoah Valley until the construction of Interstate 81 in the 1960s. The building contains architectural features of the Art Deco, although somewhat restrained in their use. These include cast-stone lintels and coping as well as an entrance highlighted by alternating vertical rows of flat bricks in a two-story corbelled pattern that recede to the doorway. The second floor contains a small window above which is a large cast stone parapet bearing the Coca-Cola brand “signature” and identification of the building as a “Bottling Works”. The other sides of the building are less decorative and two of them have been covered by later additions. The interior of the building is also fairly restrained in its use of decorative detailing except for the main office, which features wooden paneling and terrazzo floors, and was visible to the public who entered the building. The manufacturing portions of the building are relatively plain with exposed concrete supports and concrete floors.

Continuously owned and operated by Coca-Cola Company, the facility was first used exclusively as a Coca-Cola bottling plant. By the mid-1970s, it functioned solely as a warehouse and distribution center until it closed in 2006. The highly visible and well-designed Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works building demonstrates the importance that the Coca-Cola Company placed in self-marketing through its architecture. It stands today as one of Winchester’s most prominent mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial buildings.

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**DETAILED DESCRIPTION:**

The Coca Cola Bottling Works building, located at 1720 Valley Avenue in Winchester, Virginia, was constructed in 1940-1941. Of reinforced concrete construction on a concrete slab with brick exterior walls and Art Deco detailing, the complex was used to bottle Coca-Cola and eventually became solely a distribution center before closing in 2006. The building retains high architectural integrity with few alterations to the original section, which measures 12,500 square feet in area. A one-story, brick-veneered wing was added in 1960 and a large, two-story, brick-veneered, concrete-block warehouse side wing was built in 1974.

Ideally located on the very busy thoroughfare of Valley Avenue (U.S. Route 11), the medium-sized industrial building is sited in an otherwise residential neighborhood and stands out from its neighboring residences both in architectural style and massing. With little setback from the street, historic photographs reveal that the 1.3-acre property originally contained a small grassy front yard, now replaced with a paved parking area, and seven-foot-tall brick walls with double iron gates that provided security to the rear of the property (**Figure 1**). The brick walls have been replaced with chain link fence, which now lines much of the perimeter with the exception of where parts of the building extend to the property lines. When constructed, it was located in the county but was annexed into the city in the 1960s. The design of the building, as well as its siting on a main artery, gave the Coca Cola product exposure to its potential customers and reflects the many ways in which the Coca-Cola Company was skillfully promoting itself during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The original portion of the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works building was constructed in 1940-1941. The architect/builder for the new building was Davis & Platt, Incorporated. Doran S. Platt, a partner in this firm, was likely the actual designer of the building. The Coca-Cola Bottling Works building is one of the best preserved examples of the simplified use of the Art Deco style in the region. The Art Deco style, which was popular for commercial buildings of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, generally emphasized smooth wall surfaces with the application of stylized geometric forms. Considering the well thought-out marketing plans that the Coca-Cola Company employed, it is not surprising that they would have wanted to build using the most up-to-date architectural styles of the period.

The Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works is of reinforced concrete construction with exterior unpainted brick walls laid in a stretcher-bond pattern with cast stone detailing. The original section is a two-story, four-bay, asymmetrical rectangular block with a rear one-story rectangular wing. The flat roofs are concealed by low parapet walls topped by cast stone coping. The main entrance is located in the southern end of the front (west) façade within a slightly projecting, two-story tower wall. The glass

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and wood door, topped by a single-light transom, is recessed within a two-story bay that is delineated by vertical stepped brickwork. Above the second-story window is a large rectangular cast-stone panel etched with "Coca-Cola Bottling Works 1940," all in the signature Coca-Cola script. The panel's segmental-arched top is decorated by two vertical rectangular projections. The other three bays of the front façade are delineated by two-story brick piers topped by cast-stone decorations in a stepped rectangular pattern that is loosely based on Mayan motifs. These tie into the vertically-grooved, cast-stone coping at the top of the roof parapet.

The three sets of first-floor windows, which almost fill the entire bay, are comprised of large, two-light, storefront windows topped by a row of four, hinged, single-light, transom windows. They are further articulated by a wide, smooth, plain cast-stone lintel that runs the entire width of each bay. Each of the three second-floor bays contains triple, 16-light, steel industrial windows with four-light central hopper windows. The three-bay, two-story, south side of the building has similar detailing to the front in that the bays are delineated by brick piers topped by stepped cast-stone decorations. The bays on the first floor also contain plain cast-stone lintels above the openings. The windows on this elevation are single 16-light, steel industrial windows with the functioning four-light central hopper windows like those found on the front elevation. The south side of the one-story rear portion of this original section contains a large multi-light steel window with a replacement roll-up aluminum garage door within an enlarged original garage-door opening. Unlike the two-story section that has a reinforced concrete roof, the one-story section has a wooden roof. The other two elevations of the original building have been covered by later additions. The windows on the rear (east) of the original rear section, where the 1960 one-story wing was added, have been removed and the window openings altered. The window openings on the north side of the building, where the two-story, 1974, warehouse addition was made, have been enclosed with concrete block.

The use of large plate-glass windows on the front of this building, which is sited along a major thoroughfare, signifies a departure from traditional designs of manufacturing facilities where production processes were concealed from the public. By placing this modern building within a residential neighborhood and allowing the bottling of Coca-Cola to be clearly visible to the passer-by, the Coca-Cola Company was using its architecture as a marketing device. A survey of known Coca-Cola Bottling facilities of the same period in the region shows that many other buildings of this type also contained large storefront windows on the first floor to display the bottling production. Although only a few are known for certain, it appears that Davis & Platt used the design of the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works on several other similar facilities including one in Frederick, Maryland; Silver Spring, Maryland; Romney, West Virginia; Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and an addition to an existing Coca-Cola facility in Alexandria, Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Their "signature" design seems to include the stepped corbelled entry, use of a large marquis, often with the Coca-Cola signature, and the use of brick walls



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with cast-stone detailing. The Frederick, Maryland, facility is almost identical to the Winchester Bottling Works building except it is a mirror-image of it and has had more alterations.

The interior of the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works is in surprisingly unaltered condition despite the fact it was active nearly 67 years until it closed in 2006. The floor plan of the original section includes an office on the first floor. This space is the most ornate section of the building, containing terrazzo floors, paneled wainscot, and a built-in front counter with cabinets. Although some minor modifications have been made to the space, including dropped ceilings, a new countertop, and partitioning of the front of the space, it still retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The section north of the office was used as the main bottling area and is located directly behind the large storefront windows, which allowed for public viewing of the bottling operation from the street. The sloped concrete and terrazzo floors in this open area are very well worn, and in some locations, contain floor drains. The rectangular reinforced concrete columns and the concrete slab floors above are exposed. The east end of the original section of the building is only one story in height and contains an exposed truss floor above. A freight elevator and narrow concrete winder stair are located along the south wall. The 1960 one-story wing to the rear is an open plan and is accessible through the openings that once contained the rear windows of the original building. It was used as a warehouse. Along the northeast corner of the original section is a rolling fire door of wood construction with metal fireproof cladding that dates to the 1974 addition. It covers the entrance to the two-story 1974 warehouse addition which is of concrete block construction with a brick stretcher-bond veneer on the front (west) elevation. This wing, which is exposed painted concrete block on three of its exterior elevations, features no exterior openings except for a metal door on the west side, along with two metal vents, and a metal door on the north end. The window openings on the west end of the original building (now the south wall of the 1974 wing) have been enclosed with concrete block but are still clearly apparent.

The second story of the original building contains a meeting room above the entry. The 1940 plans indicate that this was originally an open area that was later enclosed. It features a dropped ceiling, vinyl floors, and a modern door. The syrup room was located in the center bay of the three bays next to the entry and was later used as an office. Other than a men's wash room in the northeast corner of the second floor, the rest of the space is open and has exposed concrete columns and ceiling. A row of windows on the east wall that look out onto the one-story section of the original block have been closed in.

A long one-story, brick outbuilding is located along the rear property line, backing onto Roberts Street. The long building was constructed at the same time as the original building and provided maintenance areas as well as garage space. The building, which has had little or no maintenance, and was poorly constructed on loose fill, is currently structurally unsound. This is clearly evident in the bowing of the

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front brick walls and the separation of the concrete slab floors from the rear walls, which tilt backwards and are in danger of imminent collapse.

The Coca Cola Bottling Works building is one of the most visually intact examples of the Art Deco style in Winchester and one of the city's few surviving World War II-era industrial buildings. The building is located in an otherwise residential neighborhood along Valley Avenue (U.S. Route 11) in the south end of Winchester. The building's design reflects the desire of Coca-Cola to promote itself. Its visually prominent location, not far off the street, and large first-floor storefront windows allowed for the bottling process to be seen easily by passing pedestrians and motorists. The familiar Coca-Cola signature with its registered trademark seal is prominently etched at the top of the entrance tower of the building, further illustrating the marketing skill of the Coca-Cola Company.

## **ENDNOTES**

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- <sup>1</sup><http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=coca%20cola&w=38714066%40N00-> warehouse Silver Spring, MD;  
<http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=coca%20cola%20williamsport&w=all> bottling plant Williamsport, PA;  
[http://www.gazette.net/stories/110107/busiflo54729\\_32357.shtml](http://www.gazette.net/stories/110107/busiflo54729_32357.shtml) bottling plant Frederick, MD;  
<http://www.thebottlingworks.com/index.htm> bottling plant in Romney, WV  
[http://www.ci.alexandria.va.us/planningandzoning/pdf/historic\\_expansion\\_reportattach.pdf](http://www.ci.alexandria.va.us/planningandzoning/pdf/historic_expansion_reportattach.pdf) bottling plant Alexandria, VA.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works at 1720 Valley Avenue (U. S. Route 11), located within the corporate limits of the City of Winchester, is significant as a well-preserved soft drink bottling facility of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in the northern Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. A landmark on the well-traveled Route 11, its visibility to both those who lived in the community as well as to those visitors driving past, is a testament to the central role of Coca-Cola in 20<sup>th</sup>-century America. The familiar trademark of Coca-Cola graces the façade recalling one of the most successful commercial products of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like communities around the nation, as well as throughout Virginia, buildings that housed the production of the best known “drink” in the world adopted architectural styles recognized as up-to-date and modern, such as the Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and Moderne, emphasizing the contemporary product so closely identified with the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The architect/builder of the bottling plant was Doran S. Platt, in the partnership of Davis & Platt, Inc. Builders of Takoma Park, Maryland. Winchester’s bottling plant, constructed just before the United States’ involvement in World War II in 1940 and opened in 1941, functioned for 36 years as both a bottling and distribution center; it continued its central role in distribution of Coke for an additional 30 years, finally closing in 2006. The evolution of the building’s function closely parallels the history of the Coca-Cola Bottling Works throughout the country. The building derives its significance from its stately and familiar form and its prominent role in the history of mass production and sophisticated marketing that characterized the birth and flourishing of “Coca-Cola” from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

Retaining remarkable integrity and featuring the familiar signature on its facade associated with world-renowned Coca-Cola, the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works building is significant at the local level under Criterion A, representing an important business and manufacturing facility for the region and the City of Winchester. It is a significant visible reminder of arguably America’s most popular consumer product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from which the soft drink was distributed in the familiar Coca-Cola trucks throughout the area. The Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works is also locally significant under Criterion C for its remarkable integrity, retaining its original massing of space, well-preserved and little altered design, and physical presence in the Lower Shenandoah Valley community of Winchester. The period of significance spans the years from its construction in 1940 through 1958 for its continued use as an industrial facility.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

Coca-Cola dates to 1886 when the curiosity of John Pemberton, an Atlanta pharmacist, led him to concoct a syrup formula that, when mixed with soda water, resulted in a soda drink that would quench the thirst of millions for the next 125 years. Pemberton died two years later, only five months after he

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and his partners filed for incorporation of a business to produce the new drink. The name and distinctive “flowing” script for Coca-Cola came from Pemberton’s bookkeeper, Frank Robinson. Atlanta businessman Asa Candler, who had worked for Pemberton in the 1870s, acquired the rights and patents for Coca-Cola in 1891, and his business acumen and visionary marketing skills moved Coca-Cola to a new level. Candler, however, did not envision bottling the new soft drink; rather he saw it as remaining a beverage sold at soda fountains. Consequently, in 1899, he agreed to sell exclusive bottling rights for Coke to two young Chattanooga, Tennessee, lawyers, Benjamin F. Thomas and Joseph B. Whitehead, for a token one dollar. Thomas had served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War and observed the popularity of a bottled fruit drink, leading him to envision that such a product might find an enthusiastic reception in the United States. Five years earlier, the first Coca-Cola actually had been bottled on a limited basis in Mississippi, but Candler’s primary focus remained on manufacturing and selling the precious syrup only for resale at soda fountains. The two Tennessee men, joined by a third Chattanooga lawyer, established the first franchised Coca-Cola bottling operation in Chattanooga. They later divided the entire country into three territories and sold the exclusive bottling rights or franchises to local businessmen. One of the most lucrative areas was the Middle Atlantic region, and Richmond was one of the early franchises.<sup>1</sup> Walter Sams, a Georgia native who had owned and operated the Coca-Cola bottling works in Staunton as early as 1920, moved to the Richmond operation by 1930.<sup>2</sup> He was responsible for establishing Coca-Cola bottling enterprises in thirteen communities in five states, including Staunton, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and Winchester in Virginia; Hagerstown and Cumberland in Maryland; Romney and Fairmont in West Virginia; York, Chambersburg, and Williamsport in Pennsylvania; and Lima in Ohio. Mr. Garland Whitlock, a 50-year employee of the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works, recalls that Mr. Sams, after assuming primary responsibility for the building of the Winchester building on Valley Avenue, regularly visited the Coca-Cola business there and took a deep personal interest in all its operations.<sup>3</sup>

The bottling franchises would purchase the Coca-Cola syrup through the Coca-Cola Bottling Works in Chattanooga and mix the special Coke recipe, made in Atlanta, with soda water. Giant strides in bottling technology led to far greater efficiency and product consistency. The 1916 redesign of straight-sided Coke bottles to the well-known Coca-Cola bottle shape by the Contour Bottle Company of Terre-Haute, Indiana, was enthusiastically received, and the new contoured bottle was granted a rare trademark status by the U. S. patent office.<sup>4</sup> By the 1920s, when the predecessor Winchester Bottling Works was built at 25 Gerrard Street, bottled Coca-Cola had outpaced fountain sales.<sup>5</sup>

Examination of the rich collections of early photographs from Winchester and Frederick County reveal that the Coca-Cola signature was ubiquitous. Signs outside of country stores, gas stations, and lunch rooms abounded.<sup>6</sup> The extent of the advertising is a measure of the successful method for marketing the soft drink that dominated the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Robert W. Woodruff, the chief executive officer of the

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Coca-Cola Company in the 1920s, matched his predecessor Asa Candler in imaginative marketing and is recognized as largely responsible for the aggressive effort to make Coca-Cola part of the national lexicon. Winchester, along with its sister communities in the Commonwealth, clearly followed that lead.

By the late 1930s, it evidently became obvious to the local Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling enterprise that larger quarters were required. The site they selected could not have been better in terms of its visibility to both the Winchester community and the travelers along U. S. Route 11 through the Valley. All of the lots selected were unimproved, lying just south of Winchester's corporate limits in what was known as "Henry's Sub-Division." A plat prepared by Walker McC. Bond, dated August 12, 1939, and attached to the deed, confirms the location. There were several interesting caveats to the deed from J. Henkel Henry, his wife Edith P. Henry, and Emmett L. Henry and his wife Elsie V. Henry that speak not only to the physical surroundings in the 1940s, but also to the entrenched racial prejudice. A directive in the deed states that "No cattle or hogs shall be kept upon said property; nor shall these lots been sold, conveyed or occupied by a Negro or a person of Negro extraction." The first directive implies that the property was within a developing suburban area where raising livestock would be inappropriate, and the second reflects the strong racial discrimination that still existed in real estate transactions of that day. The deed also directs that the main building to be erected on the parcel was not to cost less than \$4,000, a substantial sum in that time and indicating that the building was intended to be quite large.<sup>7</sup>

The architect/builder for the new building was Davis & Platt, Incorporated. Doran S. Platt (1884-1965) was a partner in this contracting firm. It is likely that Walter Sams, with his regional experience with Coca-Cola enterprises in the western Maryland, northern Virginia, and West Virginia areas, would have been familiar with Platt's work, which may have included several other Coca-Cola bottling facilities. Platt, a native of Takoma Park, Maryland, was educated at McKinley Technical High School and George Washington University in Washington. Takoma Park, located on the eastern boundary of the District, was one of Washington's first suburbs. Platt was purportedly the first baby born in the newly established community, and his father was one of the founders of the town. Platt appeared in the 1926 Washington, D. C. directory as "architect" and later as "building contractor."<sup>8</sup> In 1930 he was working in a partnership as Davis & Platt, Builders, Inc. The Davis and Platt building firm is mentioned in histories of that community where Platt lived his entire life. One of the historic houses in the community is attributed to him.<sup>9</sup> He continued to live and work in Takoma Park even after the business relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland, in 1949.<sup>10</sup> No information on Platt's partner, Davis, has been located.<sup>11</sup>

Other communities in Virginia saw construction of soft drink bottling plants in this time period. In

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1927, a Coca-Cola Bottling plant was built in Leesburg [DHR 253-0035-0210]. This would have been contemporary with the first Winchester facility. In 1930, bottling company facilities that still survive were constructed in Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore [DHR 065-0342] and in the City of Norfolk [DHR 122-0478]. Subsequently in 1932, the same sort of building was constructed for Coca-Cola in Alexandria, which was enlarged in 1945 with an addition designed by Davis and Platt,<sup>12</sup> and in Blackstone [DHR 142-0007-0024] in Virginia's Southside area. Another bottling plant for Coca-Cola's rival Pepsi Cola was built in Norfolk in 1938 [DHR 122-0754]; finally, in 1945, another bottling facility was constructed in the City of Richmond [DHR 127-6136-0061]. There likely were a number of other bottling facilities in Virginia's primary population centers, but the preceding represent those that survive today and that date from the period contemporary with the Winchester facility. Today, there continue to be at least 19 Coca-Cola active bottling facilities in Virginia.<sup>13</sup>

The new Coca-Cola Bottling Works in Winchester opened in 1941, just before the outbreak of World War II. The date is confirmed by the facility in its new home on Valley Avenue appearing in the Pifer Printing Company's "Winchester Census" prepared in late 1940, as well as the date of 1940 on the building. In the directory, it is called the Coca-Cola Bottling Works, although it still appears in the category of "beverage distributor," suggesting that both functions were carried out from the Valley Avenue complex. Ellis Harbaugh is identified as the "manager," a position he held until his death in 1952. A charming letter written to the editor of The Winchester Star, in response to the news story about the bottling plant closing in late 2006, provides a discussion of Mr. Harbaugh, who had served as manager at the Gerrard Street location as well. The letter's author, Doug Butler, a long-time Winchester resident, says that Harbaugh promoted the new location on Valley Avenue. Butler goes on to recall that as a high school sophomore, he watched the construction of the new Valley Avenue plant under Harbaugh's supervision.<sup>14</sup> One of the ads in the Winchester Directory for 1942/43, called on readers to "Drink Coca-Cola in Bottles," confirming the efforts of the local bottling companies to encourage drinking Coke from bottles rather than solely at soda fountains. The Coca-Cola Bottling Works and the Coca-Cola Company were separate entities and their interests were not always the same. The rising costs of sugar were an on-going point of contention because the agreement in the early 1920s assumed a set price for sugar which was far lower than in the 1940s and 50s. The bottlers wanted to hold the Coca-Cola Company to the contracted earlier price. The Atlanta operation supplied the syrup to the bottling company in Chattanooga, who in turn sold it to the franchised local bottlers. As cited above, Walter Sams, headquartered in Richmond, managed the Coca-Cola franchise that included the Winchester facility.<sup>15</sup>

Ellis Harbaugh was succeeded as manager of the Winchester bottling enterprise by Henry Lowry who served in that capacity until his untimely death in an accident in 1986. From recollections of various Coca-Cola Bottling Works workers and drivers recorded in The Winchester Star in December, 2006, it

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is evident that the bottling company was very active and supportive of good causes in the Winchester community. It provided meeting spaces for local organizations and supplied Coca-Cola to numerous community events. Many of its workers and drivers were long time employees, who saw the changeover from being a bottling operation to being solely a distribution center for local restaurants, grocery stores, and convenience stores in 1976.<sup>16</sup>

During the period when the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works mixed the syrup and soda and bottled the soft drink, the large storefront windows on the building's first-floor facade offered an excellent viewing point for people walking or driving past. Long-time (1942-1989) employee Garland Whitlock recalled that many children took advantage of this chance to see their favorite drink bottled. They were often invited inside for a tour of the plant and a free "Coke." Whitlock also said that the syrup was prepared on the upper level, and when the valves were opened, gravity allowed the precious syrup to fill the bottles. A similar plant in Elmira, New York, also features the over-sized windows that purportedly were to allow public viewing of the manufacturing process. Whitlock went on to say that often classes of school children would visit to see how Coke was made. A testament to the central position of Coca-Cola in the Winchester community is a quote from Whitlock, a 50-year plus employee of the operation. He said, "It was great. It was wonderful. I never had a day where I didn't look forward to going to work. We had a nice group of people. Most of them were good employees and we did a good job." Another employee, route driver Sid Messick said, "We were like a family. When we did a run, we'd have to load our own trucks. When you got done, you'd help the other guys load their trucks. We all helped each other."<sup>17</sup> Such camaraderie and loyalty have become rare in today's corporate world.

The Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works building has been a continuing presence on the Winchester scene for nearly 67 years as both a social and industrial enterprise. Its strong local image reflects the central place that "Coke" holds on the American marketing stage. At the same time, the local bottling works filled an important niche in the local community. The distinctive building retains a remarkable level of integrity and still stands as a highly visible landmark on Winchester's primary north-south street, recalling the time when drinking Coca-Cola stood nearly alone atop the list of America's favorite pastimes.

## **ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> Ely Jacques Kahn. The Big Drink: The Story of Coca-Cola. [New York: Random House, 1960], 69-71.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Peters Interview with Mr. Garland Whitlock of Winchester, January 3, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> [http://solarnavigator.net/sponsorship/coca\\_cola.htm](http://solarnavigator.net/sponsorship/coca_cola.htm), "Coca-Cola History."  
<http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/ourcompany/history/bottling.html> "History of Bottling."

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<sup>5</sup> Winchester City Directory, [Winchester: Pifer Printing Company, 1940]; More Images of the Past: A Photographic Review of Winchester and Frederick County, Virginia, [Winchester: Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 2005], 65. This building at one time housed the Sanitary Dairy, owned by H. N. Funkhouser.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 59, 67, 85, 100.

<sup>7</sup> Winchester Deed Book 178, 3394-397 (including plat), August 12 and August 22, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> Expansion Architectural Survey Report (Prepared by Pamela Scott, Historic Takoma, Inc. for the DC Office of Historic Preservation), October 31, 2002. <http://takomadc.info/HistoricDistrict.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.historictakoma.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Obituary "Doran S. Platt," Washington Post, May 28, 1965.

<sup>11</sup> Davis's surname is not known.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.ci.alexandria.va.us/planningandzoning/pdf/historic\\_expansion\\_reportattach.pdf](http://www.ci.alexandria.va.us/planningandzoning/pdf/historic_expansion_reportattach.pdf); 12, 13.

<sup>13</sup> Coca-Cola Directory (Virginia) [www.wavesurge.org](http://www.wavesurge.org).

<sup>14</sup> The Winchester Star, December 7, 2006, letter to the editor from Doug Butler, Winchester resident.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the differing roles of the Coca-Cola Company and the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, see Thomas Oliver The Real Coke, The Real Story, [New York, Random House, 1986] Chapter 1-4; and E. J. Kahn, Jr., The Big Drink, The Story of Coca-Cola [New York: Random House, 1950, 1959, 1960], Chapter 7, "The Most Important Businessman in Town" 69-81.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Igoe, "Coca-Cola was More than a Drink for Local Employees," The Winchester Star, December 2, 2006. (A-1, A-7).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. A-7; Margaret Peters interview with Garland Whitlock, January 3, 2008.



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## **10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The nominated boundaries include the land currently associated with the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works as shown on the City of Winchester Tax Map 231-04-K-04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 20, 21, and 22 located in the Winchester Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court at the Judicial Center in Winchester, Virginia.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The boundary of the Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works includes the building and lot associated with the property as held by the current owner and as is historically associated with the building since its construction.

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION-**

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are of:

Property: **Winchester Coca-Cola Bottling Works**; VDHR File Number: **138-5044**

Location: **Winchester, Virginia**

Date of photograph: **November 2007**

Photographer: **Maral S. Kalbian**

Negatives filed at Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia.

Photo 1 of 8

Southwest view

Negative no. 24110 [1]

Photo 2 of 8

View: Detail, front parapet

Negative no. 24109 [33]

Photo 3 of 8

View: South view

Negative no. 24110 [14]

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Photo 4 of 8  
View: Southeast view  
Negative no. 24110 [15]

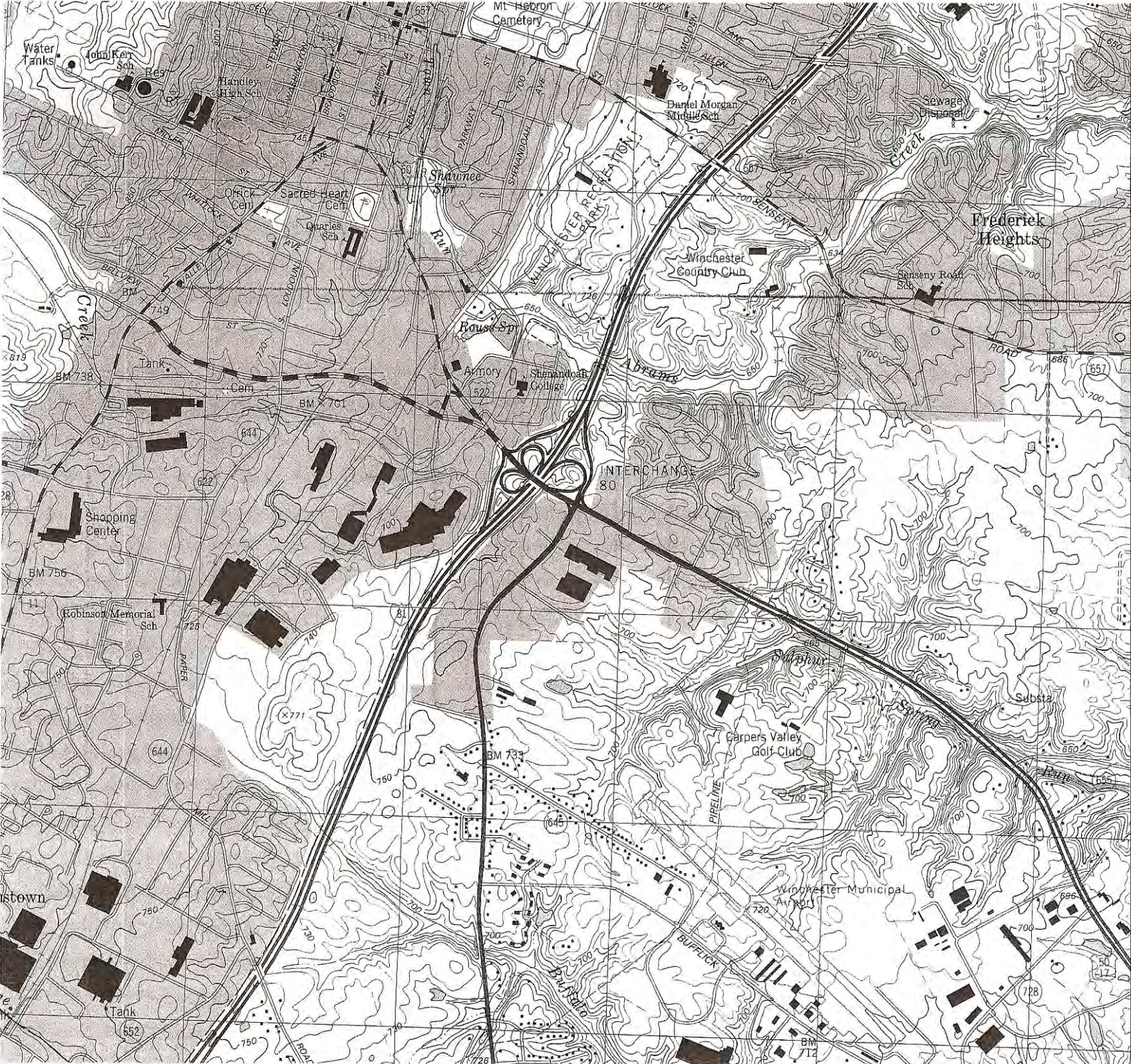
Photo 5 of 8  
View: Garage  
Negative no. 24110 [16]

Photo 6 of 8  
View: Front office  
Negative no. 24110 [33]

Photo 7 of 8  
View: 1<sup>st</sup> floor, looking toward staircase along south side  
Negative no. 24109 [20]

Photo 8 of 8  
View: Main bottling area, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
Negative no. 24109 [32]





Winchester Coca-Cola  
Bottling Works  
# 138-5044  
CITY OF WINCHESTER, VA  
10' UTM Reference

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