

HAHN SHOE BUILDING
(Hahn-Lerner Block)
3101 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1281
VA-1281

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAHN SHOE BUILDING

(Hahn-Lerner Block)

HABS No. VA-1281

- Location: 3101 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington County, Virginia.
- Present Owner: Hartford Associated Limited Partnership, 6106 MacArthur Boulevard, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Present Use: Demolished in June 1990.
- Significance: The Hahn Shoe Building is one of several structures built in the 1940s during Clarendon's second building boom. Because of its siting at the corner of an unusual intersection at the east end of the business district, it was one of the most prominent buildings in the Clarendon Historic District.
- Historian: Estella K. Bryans-Munson, Spring 1990.
- Project Information: This documentation project was coordinated by the Arlington Heritage Alliance Inc., with the sponsorship of the Bell Atlantic Charitable Foundation, to mitigate the impending loss of several historic Arlington County buildings. Estella K. Bryans-Munson served as project historian, and John C. Schwartz was the large-format photographer.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1941.
2. Architect: Raymond G. Moore.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Hahn Shoe Building occupied parts of lots 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, Clarendon, and lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, section 2, Clarendon. Citations are for Arlington County, Virginia Land Records. The following is an incomplete chain of title:

Deed of Trust dated 7 July 1965: Deed Book 1590, p. 626.

Deed dated 20 April 1982: Harry Kaplan and Anna D. Kaplan to 3100 Wilson Boulevard Associates. Deed Book 2060, p. 1166.

Deed dated 19 January 1988: 3100 Wilson Boulevard Associates and Donald W. Kunz, trustee, to Hartford Associates Limited Partnership. Deed Book 2312, p. 679.

4. Builder: Muhleman and Kayhoe, Inc.

5. Original plans and construction: Plans by Raymond Moore are located in Arlington County's Planning Office. The original building permit was issued on 11 August 1941.

6. Alterations and additions: The following information was obtained from the building permit index card files in the Arlington County, Virginia, Planning Office:

marble on front of building (south façade)

11 October 1950: permit to substitute limestone for marble front and to install a new plaster ceiling

30 November 1950: permit #6527 to remodel show windows at entrance

The following alterations were made during the 1982-83 conversion of the building into a mini-mall for several Vietnamese-owned shops.

23 March 1981: permit #2794 for changes in lower level of existing building encompassing installation of walls, ceilings, and outlets.

13 July 1982: permit #5653-c for installation of lighting fixtures, drop ceiling, and three interior walls by Mitchell Electric and Home Remodeling

3 November 1982: permit #6239-c for a glass door

16 February 1983: permit #6796 for installation of a restaurant in the northeast corner of existing building

21 March 1983: permit #6990 for making a glass door on Highland Street (northeast façade) by Adam Tailor

20 June 1983: permit #7594-c for cutting a door in a wall

B. Historical Context

The Hahn Shoe Building and the Lerner Department Store (HABS No. VA-1282) occupied a block at the east end of the Clarendon commercial district. The original tenant, Hahn Shoes, was one of several chain stores that opened in Clarendon during the 1940s. The influx of chain stores coincided with an increase in the population of the Washington metropolitan area during and after World War II. In 1940, the county population numbered 57,040, then by 1950, it was 135,449.

The twenty-five acre village of Clarendon was founded in 1900; the boundaries were Jackson Street on the west, and Highland and Herndon streets on the east, with Wilson Boulevard bisecting the area. The electric trolley line of the Washington, Arlington and Falls Church Railway, installed in 1907, emanated from here to link up with two other lines that served downtown Washington to Mount Vernon, and Rosslyn to Fairfax. These facilities served the new businesses that sprang up along Wilson Boulevard as well as residents of the fledgling subdivision. The area was wired for electricity in 1913, and telephone service in 1920; the C&P central office here could accommodate 750 households. The community also boasted its own baseball team and a citizens' hall. In 1922, when Clarendon was the "most populous village in the county," its application for independent town status was denied by the state supreme court, because Arlington was "a continuous, contiguous and homogeneous community."

The historic character of the neighborhood began to decline during the second half of the century. Clarendon was chosen as the location of one of the ten Metrorail subway stations in the county, 12.2 miles of which is within its borders. Construction proceeded from the late 1960s until 1979 and surely contributed to the shift in character; concurrently, the decline of traditional businesses in the neighborhood was coupled with an influx of Southeast Asian refugees following the end of the Vietnam War and the fall of Saigon in 1975. By 1980, 5 percent of Arlington's citizens were of Asian or Pacific origin.

An examination of Washington-area telephone books indicates that Hahn Shoe occupied the building until 1981. In 1982, a number of small Vietnamese-owned shops began operating at this location. Some of the new tenants included My An Fabrics, the Nam Viet Restaurant, the Dy Nam Restaurant, a shoe-repair shop, and a pool hall. Post-demolition, the site today remains undeveloped, although construction is planned for the future. The Clarendon neighborhood is still in flux, though there is evidence of a very slow economic revival.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a one-story building in the Streamline Moderne style with a very irregular footprint.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor, prior to demolition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall size: 20,013 square feet.

2. Foundations: Concrete-block.

3. Wall construction: Brick and concrete-block faced with limestone tiles and polished marble.
4. Structural system, framing: Concrete-block and brick.
5. Chimneys: One metal chimney is located near the north wall.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main door is recessed in a canted east-facing entry featuring cast-concrete pilasters. The double plate-glass doors are flanked by display windows. There are three doorways in the northeast façade. The plate-glass doors, however, have been boarded over. A single glass door opening into a breezeway between the Lerner Department Store (HABS No. VA-1282) and Danceworld (HABS No. VA-1283) is located in the north façade. A wood panel door set in a metal frame is also located on the north façade.
 - b. Windows: There are seven window piercings of various sizes in the northeast façade. They are plate glass; all have been covered with plywood. Retractable awnings are located above the windows. A band of cast-concrete trim runs above the awning housing. The windows are flush with the exterior wall and have no detailing. Display windows in the canted entryway have been boarded up. Plate-glass windows in the transom above the main entry are set in a polished aluminum framework. There is a large window in the southeast façade. An opening for a window located above the glass door on the north façade has been filled in with brick.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat with a low parapet.
 - b. Cornice: A streamlined cast-concrete cornice runs along the southeast and northeast facades. The cornice of the northeast façade is punctuated by a crenellated cast-concrete cornice.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans:

- a. Cellar: Originally the cellar contained four rooms; with the recent addition of plywood partitions, it contains ten. The Dy Nam Restaurant occupied several of the cellar rooms; the others were used for storage.
- b. First floor: The main entry leads into one large room. Partitions parallel to the northeast and south walls were installed when the building was altered to

accommodate several small shops. The south partition is curved and covered with faux-wood paneling. The northeast partition of plasterboard painted white created spaces for four shops. The shop area at the north end of the partitioned section was occupied by the Nam Viet Restaurant, and contains a small kitchen with gas appliances. Storage areas are located along the west wall of the main room. Two restrooms are located in the north corner of the main room.

2. Stairways: The only stairway, a concrete single-turn stair with pipe railings, originates in the north corner of the first floor and provides access to the cellar. The stairs are painted red.

3. Flooring:

- a. Cellar: Bare concrete.
- b. First floor: Concrete. In the main room, the south half of the floor (half of the room nearest Wilson Boulevard) is covered with brown and white linoleum tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern. The north half of the floor is covered with red carpeting. The section occupied by the Vietnamese restaurant is covered with brown linoleum tile.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

- a. Cellar: All walls are painted green. The ceilings are plaster, also painted green.
- b. First floor: The concrete-block walls are covered with plywood. In the front or south half of the main room, the plywood on the west wall is painted white and gold; in the rear or north half, it is painted pink. The northeast partition is painted white. The curved partitions near the south wall are covered with faux-wood paneling. The ceiling of the main room is plasterboard painted white. In the south half of the room the ceiling is dropped about 5' below the level of the rest of the ceiling. The ceilings in all storage areas feature dropped acoustical tile.

5. Doorways and doors: There are four doorways in the northeast interior wall. Three of the openings contain glazed wood-panel doors. The doorway at the north end of the partition contains a metal door not unlike those found on bank vaults. The bathroom doors are wood panel. Two large openings in the west wall, which was an exterior wall prior to the construction of the Lerner Building, appear to have been loading bays. The metal rolling doors in these openings are no longer functional.

6. Lighting fixtures: Each fixture holds two fluorescent tubes. Most of the lighting fixtures have been removed.

7. Heating: A gas furnace is located in the cellar.

D. General Setting

The Hahn Shoe Building faces south on Wilson Boulevard and occupies lots at the intersection of Wilson Boulevard, N. Highland Street and N. Hartford Street. It is adjacent to the Clarendon Baptist Church and across Wilson Boulevard from the Clarendon subway station. To the north is the Clarendon subdivision.

Part III. Sources of Information

A. Primary and Unpublished Sources

Building Permit Index Card Files. Arlington County Planning Office.

Historic Arlington Landmarks Review Board. "Historic Resources in the Clarendon Commercial District." Report to the Arlington County Board, May 1985.

Netherton, Nan and Ross. *Arlington County in Virginia: A Pictorial History*. Norfolk: The Donning Company, 1987.

Real Estate Tax Assessment Files.

Rebeck, Andrea. "Reassessment of Clarendon Commercial District Arlington County, Virginia." Report prepared for the Arlington County HALRB, 24 April 1989.

Temple, Judy. "The Lerner Hahn Building 3101-09 Wilson Boulevard, Clarendon, Virginia." Unpublished report, 31 October 1988.

Virginiana Collection, Arlington County Public Library.

B. Published Sources

League of Women Voters of Arlington, Virginia. *Arlington Community Guide*. 6th ed. Arlington: League of Women Voters and Arlington County Government, 1989.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Consulted

The photographic archives of the Arlington Historical Society probably contain old views of the Hahn Shoe Building. The collection was closed for cataloguing during the course of this project.

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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