

Historic Resources Inventory – Essential Properties

Dan Kain Building

Address:

3100 Washington Blvd.

RPC #:

19006196

Current Owner(s):

Trophy Property Ventures, LLC
3100 Washington Blvd., #100N
Arlington, VA 22201

Building Date: 1946

Current Zoning: C-R

Existing Protections:

Arlington County Local Historic District;
Commercial Condo

Current Development Pressure:

None

Historic Designations:

Arlington County Local Historic District, 1988
Building renovated 2005
To be converted to restaurant in 2009

Significance Highlights:

Excellent example of Streamline Moderne style

Significance Statement:

The Dan Kain Building, originally known as Sheff Store, was constructed in 1945-1946 for property owner and real estate developer, Frank Lyon, by the building company of Muhleman & Kayhoe, Inc. The building is a superb illustration of the Streamline Moderne style, which was designed by architect Donald H. Drayer. Lyon used the building as rental property, first leasing it to Sheff Jeweler's Battery Company, which was an appliance store. Throughout much of the 1940s and 1950s the building was occupied by Lacy's, an electronics chain store. In 1962, it was

Coles Colonial Furniture. By the mid-1960s, it became home to Dan Kain Trophies, Inc., the largest wholesale and retailer in the area for trophies, ribbons, medals, and hollowware. Founded in 1961, Dan Kain Trophies remained in the building until 2004, when it was renovated. The building at 3100 North Washington Boulevard is not only known for its longtime occupant but also for its distinctive Streamlined Moderne form, lack of stylized ornamentation, and massing that wraps around the corner of Washington Boulevard and North Highland Street. At the time of the building was constructed, Clarendon had grown from a planned residential subdivision that expanded with additions and ultimately was transformed into the commercial, social, and cultural center of Arlington County. Thus, the construction of a building like the Dan Kain Building with distinctive streamlining and that exemplified modernity was essential to attract patrons. Drayton, who worked previously in the Office of the Architect of the Public Buildings Administration, emerged after World War II as “an important commercial architect in the capital area, designing motels, offices, shopping centers, and apartments.” Drayer’s design for the Dan Kain Building uses a smooth, taut, limestone skin; the windows have aluminum frames and there is an aluminum band along the top.

The Dan Kain Building, a visual landmark for county residents, is a Local Historic District. The building is significant because of the role it played in the continued commercial development of Clarendon, once a residential subdivision. The building is also significant as an excellent example of the Streamline Moderne style, utilizing character-defining features unique to Clarendon and Arlington County.

Summary Description:

The Dan Kain Building is a two-story masonry structure clad in limestone tiles. Its most notable feature is the cylindrical corner above the recessed entry protruding beyond the flat roof. The entrance is flanked by limestone pilasters, which anchor the building visually to the intersection of North Highland Street and North Washington Boulevard. Plate-glass display windows separated by flush columns of limestone are each bordered in aluminum and capped by a molded aluminum band. The entire façade is framed by a concrete string course; a molded concrete cornice outlines the roof. A three-paneled, glass-block bay highlights the two-story wing that abuts the east elevations. The flat roof is underscored by a molded concrete cornice.