

**ARLINGTON COUNTY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle

Other Names: Robert Shreve Fuel Company's Siding;
Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad Siding

2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Street Number: Part of RPC #11-065-001 located on the southern side of the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail near the southwestern corner of Lee Highway and Fairfax Drive, adjacent to the northern property line of 6873 Lee Highway.

County, State, Zip Code: Arlington, Virginia 22213

3. TYPE OF PROPERTY

A. Ownership of Property:

- Private
- Public
- Local
- State
- Federal

B. Category of Property:

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

C. Number of Historic Resources:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

Yes No

4. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Function: Coal trestle, coal dump, and elevated siding.¹

Current Function: The trestle is utilized as parking bays for the company's trucks.

5. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Physical Description: Until recently, the coal trestle straddled the property line of the Robert Shreve Fuel Company (RPC #11-010-011) and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) (RPC #11-065-001). The elevated coal trestle consists of 13 reinforced concrete piers with a northwest to southeast orientation. Spaced 11 feet apart, each pier is approximately 10 feet high, 15 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The piers are notched at the top to hold the railroad girders that supported the wooden railroad ties. In turn, the railroad ties supported a pair of railroad tracks. All of the girders, tracks, and ties have been removed from the center section of the trestle. The first and last three piers, however, had retained these railroad elements (See Figures 21 and 26-30 for a recent aerial view and photographs).

On June 5, 2014, Robert Shreve Fuel Company demolished approximately 30 percent of the trestle located at 6873 Lee Highway (RPC #11-101-011) along their property line. As a result, 12 of the 13 reinforced concrete piers were altered (see Figures 31-33). The railroad elements (girders, tracks, ties) on the southeastern end of the trestle were salvaged and conveyed to the NVRPA who intends to reuse the materials for future interpretation of the site on their property.

Setting: Owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle is sited on the northwestern side of Lee Highway, approximately 50 yards from the road. The structure runs parallel to the defunct Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad right-of-way now known as the W&OD Trail. The coal trestle is bounded by: the W&OD Trail to the north, 6873 Lee Highway to the south and east, and the former site of six fuel storage tanks to the west (see Figure 21). The fuel storage tanks were removed in early 2014.

Materials: The coal trestle consists of reinforced concrete piers, steel girders and tracks, and wood railroad ties.

¹ The structure is more specifically a combination of a coal dump and an elevated siding, a raised structure where coal is dumped into bins. In the early twentieth century, however, the term "coal trestle" had a broader vernacular definition and captured the extant structure. The *Herndon Observer*, likely informed by Benjamin Elliott, called the structure a "coal trestle" in numerous articles discussing its planning and construction. Therefore, the structure will be referred to as "Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle" or simply a "coal trestle" in this designation report in order to correspond to the terminology used at its time of construction.

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A. **Applicable Designation Criteria as described in Arlington County Zoning Ordinance Section 11.3, Historic Preservation Overlay District:**

Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle meets four of the eleven designation criteria as listed in Section 11.3.4.A.4, Establishment of Historic Districts. See Section K of this report for a detailed description of the criteria.

B. **Statement of Significance:**

Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle was built in 1926 in the East Falls Church neighborhood of Arlington County. The utilitarian structure reflects the former industrial and commercial landscape that existed in the neighborhood. Such small-scale commercial coal trestles were instrumental in the processing of coal for local delivery to residences and businesses. This coal trestle is a visual reminder of a critical early-twentieth-century energy infrastructure that fueled the electrification and development of Arlington County and the region. There are no other coal trestles extant within the County.

The significance of Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle is augmented by its association with the W&OD Railroad. The rail line provided a variety of services over its extensive period of operation, including the transportation of goods, freight service, and passenger service to Washington, D.C. The tracks laid for the coal trestle in ca. 1926 are the last remaining visible rails or tracks associated with the W&OD Railroad in Arlington County.

C. **Period of Significance:**

The coal trestle's period of significance, 1926-1968, encompasses the construction of the trestle by Benjamin Elliot in 1926 and the closing of the rail line in 1968.

D. **Significant Date:**

The trestle was constructed in 1926.

E. **Significant Persons:**

Joseph Cornelius Elliott (1849-1924):

Started the first known coal business at 6873 Lee Highway.

Benjamin Franklin Elliott (1882-1940):

Subsequent owner of the coal yard who had the existing coal trestle built.

Arthur Shreve (1894-1953):

Original co-owner of Robert Shreve Fuel Company.

John Shreve (1896-1947):

Original co-owner of Robert Shreve Fuel Company.

F. Cultural /Social Affiliation:

Coal industry and railroad technology in respect to coal delivery, reinforced concrete trestles, and local and regional transportation history.

G. Architect/Builder:

Zebee Jacob Groves: General contractor in East Falls Church.²

H. Narrative Statement of Historic Significance:

Brief History of the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad

In 1860, the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire (AL&H) Railroad began passenger and freight train operations from Alexandria to Leesburg.³ The original owners aspired to cross the Blue Ridge Mountains to access the coal mines of West Virginia. Various issues, however, inhibited the expansion of the line leading to continual financial troubles.⁴ The Civil War exacerbated the company's financial crisis as the Union Army confiscated the rail line. Unfortunately, the tracks were returned in disrepair, the government failed to compensate the company, and train service was not fully restored to Leesburg until 1867.⁵ The AL&H declared bankruptcy in 1878.⁶

Ownership of the railway then passed between various companies. In 1912, the W&OD Railway operated the line. The company's profits, however, dwindled in the 1920s as automobiles, delivery trucks, and paved, toll-free roads lessened the need for the railroad.⁷ It was not until 1945 that the W&OD Railroad purchased the tracks and operated the line until its abandonment.⁸ The last passenger car ran in 1951 and freight service ceased shortly before the closing of the line in 1968.⁹ The Virginia Electric and Power Company purchased

² For information regarding the construction of the coal trestle, "Classified Advertisement," *Herndon Observer*, December 23, 1926, p.5, City of Fairfax Regional Library. For biographical information on Zeebee Jacob Groves, "Zeebee Jacob Groves," United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed December 2, 2012); "Z B Groves," 1940 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014).

³ Stations included Alexandria, Old Factory, Arlington Mills (Barcroft), Carlinville, Falls Church, Vienna, Hunter's Mill, Thornton, Herndon, Guilford (Sterling), Farmwell, and Leesburg. Herbert Harwood, *Rails to the Blue Ridge* (Virginia: Northern Virginia Park Authority, 2000), 15.

⁴ Ames W. Williams, *Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, 1874-1968* (Arlington, Virginia: Arlington Historical Society, Inc., 1989), 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ In 1936, David Elkins formed a new corporation, the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad, and leased the Bluemont Branch from the Southern Railway. He purchased the tracks for \$70,000 in 1945. Williams, 93-95.

⁹ For information on the last passenger service, *Ibid.*, 95. For information on the last freight service, *Ibid.*, 131.

the track right-of-way and sold it to the NVRPA in 1978.¹⁰ The NVRPA established the W&OD Trail, a 45-mile recreational asphalt paved pathway that connects Purcellville, VA, to Shirlington in Arlington County.

Brief History of Retail Coal Yards and Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestles

In the early-to mid-1800s, coal-fired locomotives were the symbol of American progress.¹¹ Coal began to power industry and quickly became the preferred method for heating residences.¹² For example, in 1812-1813, Baltimore consumed more than 7,000 to 10,000 tons of coal annually.¹³ The material remained the primary energy agent for industry and homes until the 1920s when demand decreased due to the refinement of the internal combustion engine, the development of an oil-based economy, and its replacement with petroleum for residential heating and transportation.¹⁴

In the early-1900s, the purchase and resale of coal was divided into two major categories, wholesalers and retailers. Wholesalers were “individuals or corporations not directly affiliated with the companies whose coal they handle[d].”¹⁵ In turn, they sold the coal to retailers and/or consumers in carload amounts without ever handling the coal. Retailers on the other hand were “individuals or corporations who buy in carload lots, physically handle the coal through their own or leased retail yards..., and sell and deliver it to consumers.”¹⁶ The retailer provided storage, equipment, and means of delivery. The consumer’s increasing demand for coal resulted in the development of structures and machinery that were designed to weigh, sort, store, and transport the resource.

Hopper cars and coal trestles were developed as a result of economic necessity (see Figures 1 and 2). The hopper car is a freight car used for transporting bulk commodities, with one or more openings on the bottom through which the cargo is dumped. A coal trestle is a section of elevated railroad siding that allows coal, emptied from hopper cars, to pass between its tracks and into the coal bins or pockets below. Prior to hopper cars and coal trestles, retail dealers shoveled the coal from the car to the storage pile or wagon.¹⁷ The new technology quickened the pace of business, lowered the amount of manual labor, and increased profitability.

The basic premise was that a hopper car was pushed onto the trestle by a locomotive. The hoppers, containing the various sizes of coal, would be aligned over the appropriate bins and opened. At first, the bins were located on the ground level necessitating the need for manual labor to load delivery trucks.

¹⁰ The power company constructed power lines and holds all such equipment in perpetuity. For the sale to the Virginia Electric and Power Company, Arlington County Deed Records, “W&OD Railroad to Virginia Electric Power Company,” Liber 1687, Folio 400, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division. For the sale to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Arlington County Deed Records, “W&OD Railroad to Virginia Electric Power Company,” Liber 178, Folio 709, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

¹¹ Brian Solomon and Patrick Yough, *Coal Trains: The History of Railroad and Coal in the United States* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Voyageur Press, 2009), 8.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁵ John W. Adams, “Cost and Efficiency in the Wholesaling and Retailing of Coal,” *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (January 1924): 145, Google Books.

¹⁶ In 1924, over 40,000 individuals, partnerships, and corporations retailed coal. Ibid, 150.

¹⁷ “Modern Methods of Handling Coal,” *The Grain Feed Review* 4 (1915): 94, Google Books.

Eventually, the coal would be stored above ground level allowing for the use of gravity as chutes to deliver the resource directly into trucks.¹⁸

Before the 1900s, the majority of coal dealers utilized wooden coal trestles that required a high degree of maintenance. After the introduction of reinforced concrete as a viable means of construction in the railroad industry, the benefit of rebuilding trestles with wood lessened. Comparatively, reinforced concrete trestles had lower maintenance and insurance costs, and only a slightly higher initial investment. In 1906, the cost of building a concrete structure "... is not more than 15 percent more than that of a wooden construction, and the interest of the extra cost of a concrete trestle is much less than the average yearly expenditure for renewals and repairs."¹⁹ In "Modern Methods of Handling Coal," a sales engineer contended that "an up-to-date coal pocket of suitable size and design, and equipped with modern machinery for the handling of coal from cars to bin and wagons, is a good investment, as compared with the old system...."²⁰ The concrete coal trestle further increased a local dealer's profitability.

One of the first published reinforced concrete coal trestle designs was in *Railway Age* (1906).²¹ The engineer of the retail coal trestle pocket, constructed in Murray Hill, New Jersey, claimed that it was the first coal trestle "entirely built of reinforced concrete." The small capacity elevated trestle featured enclosed bins/pockets with a capacity of about 50 tons each and coal chutes to deliver the product to trucks (see Figures 3 and 4).²²

An article in *Coal Age* (1910) featured the construction of a coal trestle and bins by H.B. Rosenberger in Doylestown, Pennsylvania (see Figures 5 and 6).²³ The author stated that "the presence of such substantial work in a small town shows how generally concrete is used throughout the country. The bins, from the standpoint of durability and economy, are far superior to wood construction."²⁴ The Murray Hill and Doylestown examples were indicative of the variations in coal trestle design. Factors that influenced the design included costs, the contractor's skill, storage availability, size of the consumer market, and the amount of coal typically purchased (see Figures 7 through 10).

Coal Trestles at 6873 Lee Highway

Based on articles from the *Herndon Observer*, Benjamin Elliott's coal trestle was built in 1926. The 1911 "W&OD Railway Track Plats" and 1916 "W&OD Railway ICC Valuation Map" indicate the likelihood of

¹⁸ "Anthracite Storage Structures and Retail Sales Yards," <http://www.ironminers.com/> (accessed April 18, 2011).

¹⁹ George Hand, "Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle Pocket," *The Railway Age* 42 no. 22 (1906): 686.

²⁰ "Modern Methods of Handling Coal," 94.

²¹ Robert W. Lesley, "A Substantial Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle," *Coal Age* 10 (January to June 1910): 256, Google Books.

²² Hand, 686.

²³ The trestle was 135 feet long, with the bins spaced at 13½ feet, and the piers and beams of reinforced concrete. Lesley, 256.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

an earlier coal trestle on the property.²⁵ While the orientation of the trestle on the 1911 and 1916 maps varies, it is probably the same trestle (see Figures 11 and 12). The siding indicated on the 1911 map may have been constructed when Joseph Elliott purchased the land between 1907 and 1911. No other information was found regarding the original trestle's design or construction date.

History of property and ownership (Elliott Coal Company and Robert Shreve Fuel Company)

Elliott Coal Company

In the late-1800s, Joseph and Martha Elliott owned a farm in Chesterbrook, Fairfax County, Virginia.²⁶ According to Goldie Thompson, Elliott's daughter, her family moved to East Falls Church in 1897 and purchased a grocery business from Sam Cockrell. Shortly thereafter, Elliott relocated the business into a three-story frame building on the northeast corner of Fairfax Drive and Lee Highway.²⁷ Thompson stated that Elliott added a coal yard and "had a delivery team of beautiful[ly] matched dappled gray horses. They were his pride and joy and he always took care of them first."²⁸ The 1910 United States Federal Census confirms Thompson's recollection noting Elliott as a retail merchant who sold both coal and groceries.²⁹

Elliott acquired property for the coal yard from 1907 to 1913. In 1907, Joseph C. Elliott and his son, Luther C. Elliott, purchased two tracts of land from Kate B. Wright for \$700.³⁰ The Elliots then purchased land from Charles I. Crossman in 1911.³¹ Two years later, in 1913, they further expanded and acquired the final section of the coal yard from J. Granville Adams.³²

The circa 1911 "W&OD Railway Track Plats" show an elevated siding near the Falls Church train station (see Figure 11).³³ The elevated siding, likely a wooden coal trestle, may have been constructed by Joseph

²⁵ For the 1911 map, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, "W&OD Railway Track Plats," <http://www.nvrpa.org> (accessed April 11, 2011). For the 1916 map, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, "W&OD Railway ICC Valuation Map 5," <http://www.nvrpa.org> (accessed April 11, 2011).

²⁶ "Joseph C. Elliott," 1880 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014).

²⁷ J.C. Elliott purchased the business and not the building. He rented the storefront from Isaac Crossman. Henry H. Douglas, "Goldie Thompson," *Historical News & Notes* (January 1972): 2, Center for Local History, Arlington County Public Library.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "Joseph C. Elliott," 1910 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed December 2, 2012).

³⁰ The lots were 6,225 sq. feet and 7,947 sq. feet. Arlington County Deed Records, "Kate B. Wright to Joseph C. and Luther C. Elliott," Liber 171, Folio 219-220, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

³¹ The lot was 7,309 sq. feet. Arlington County Deed Records, "Charles I. Crossman to Joseph C. and Luther C. Elliott," Liber 129, Folio 586, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

³² J. Granville Adams owned a blacksmith shop in East Falls Church. For biographical information, "Granville J. Adams," 1910 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014). For information regarding the purchase of the 6,723 sq. foot-lot, Arlington County Deed Records, "J. Granville Adams to Joseph C. and Luther C. Elliott," Liber 136, Folio 448, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

³³ The 1911 map shows the rail line's property boundaries as well as existing buildings, side rails, and other features. The maps were probably created around 1911 – the time that the line was being transferred from the Southern Railway to the newly named Washington & Old Dominion Railway. Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, "W&OD Railway Track Plats," <http://www.nvrpa.org> (accessed April 11, 2011).

Elliott to service his new coal yard. His daughter recalled a time when her “father broke both ankles when he fell off the coal scaffold [trestle] while shooing youngsters away.”³⁴

The earliest reference to Elliott’s coal business is in the *Fairfax Herald* on January 4, 1918.³⁵ In a letter to the editor, Herbert F. Williams, Chairman of the Fairfax Fuel Company, stated that J.C. Elliot received two car loads of coal.³⁶ Elliott continued his business until his death in 1924.³⁷ At that time, he had \$1,367 of stock in the grocery in Falls Church and \$1,758.60 of stock in the coal and wood yard including wagons, trucks, and machinery.³⁸ Benjamin F. Elliott purchased the coal and wood business property from his father’s heirs and his brother Luther.³⁹

Benjamin Elliott further expanded the business. A May 9, 1925, advertisement in the *Herndon Observer* for Elliott’s Coal-Wood-Ice stated, “I kept you warm last winter. Let me keep you cool this summer. We deliver in Falls Church and nearby places.”⁴⁰ In addition, the business section of the *Herndon Observer* noted various property improvements. Elliott acquired a third truck due to the high demand for ice, installed new scales at the coal yard, and purchased a coal loader that screened the coal into its different sizes.⁴¹ In 1926, Elliott started construction on a new trestle to increase efficiency.⁴² The coal trestle was built by Z.B. Groves, an East Falls Church contractor, who specialized in plumbing, cementing, and building.⁴³ On December 9, 1926, the first known picture of Benjamin Elliot’s coal trestle was included in an advertisement for the company (see Figures 13 and 14).⁴⁴

The reinforced concrete coal trestle, completed in 1926, is best described as a combination trestle and ground storage bin. The structure could support approximately four hopper cars (see Figures 19 and 20). The coal would have been released from the hopper into one of the storage bins that held the various sizes

³⁴ Douglas, 2.

³⁵ “J.C. Elliott Falls Church Coal Dealer,” *Fairfax Herald*, January 4, 1918, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “J.C. Elliott of Falls Church Obituary,” *Fairfax Herald*, April 25, 1924, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

³⁸ In addition, he had \$721 in the bank, \$250 in insurance, and a gasoline engine worth \$1,500. Arlington County Probate Records, Fiduciary Book F, Folio 102, Arlington County Courthouse, Probate Division.

³⁹ On July 15, 1925, Benjamin Elliott purchased the coal yard property from the heirs of J.C. Elliott. Arlington County Deed Records, “Heirs of J.C. Elliott to Benjamin Elliott,” Liber 224, Folio 113-115, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

⁴⁰ Coal dealers often sold more than one product as a seasonal business such as ice, lumber, building materials (concrete block), and grain and livestock shipping. For information related to retail coal businesses, John W. Adams, “Cost and Efficiency in the Wholesaling and Retailing of Coal,” *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (January 1924): 145, Google Books. For information on Elliott’s advertisements, “Elliott Coal Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, April 9, 1925, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

⁴¹ For the purchase of a new truck, “East Falls Church,” *Herndon Observer*, June 11, 1925, p.1. For information on the construction of the new scales, built by Z.B Groves, “East Falls Church,” *Herndon Observer*, October 1, 1925, City of Fairfax Regional Library. For the purchase of the coal loader, “Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, November 26, 1925, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

⁴² The first article stated that construction will start in the near future on the new trestle. “Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, March 25, 1926, City of Fairfax Regional Library. The second article stated that Elliott has completed plans for the erection of a new coal trestle. “Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, August 12, 1926, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

⁴³ “Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, December 23, 1926, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

⁴⁴ “Advertisement,” *Herndon Observer*, December 9, 1926, City of Fairfax Regional Library.

of coal. Then, prior to the purchase of the coal conveyor by Benjamin Elliott, the coal would have been manually lifted into wagons or delivery trucks. In order to determine the amount of coal for delivery, the trucks were weighed on a scale before and after loading the coal. Elliott's coal design was similar to various trestles located throughout the Northeast United States.

The coal industry suffered a decline in demand in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1935, Elliott defaulted on a \$9,000 loan.⁴⁵ On March 2, 1935, H.W. Kelly and W.S. Brownings sold the land at auction to Will R. Swetnam. Swetnam owned the property for three years before selling it to John and Arthur Shreve for \$11,000.⁴⁶ It is unknown who operated the coal yard during that interim period before Shreve acquired it (see Figure 22).

Robert Shreve Fuel Company

The Shreve family has a long and distinguished history in Arlington County. Colonel Samuel Shreve owned 260 acres of land in Ballston, lived in Cherrydale, and operated a general store since the 1870s. Robert Shreve, Samuel Shreve's son, is considered "one of the 'fathers' of the neighborhood."⁴⁷ Robert had various occupations and businesses including owning a fuel, coal, and ice plant in Cherrydale.⁴⁸

Census data listed Robert Shreve as the owner of a coal and ice hauling business with sons John and Arthur Shreve as his employees.⁴⁹ In addition to the Cherrydale property, the Shreve family owned a coal trestle, warehouse, and office at the West Falls Church station.⁵⁰ Robert Shreve, who died on June 5, 1936, never directly owned the coal yard at 6873 Lee Highway. His sons did not acquire the former Elliott Coal Company property until July 6, 1938 from Will R. Swetnam.⁵¹ The trade name for the business's new location became the Robert Shreve Fuel Company (see Figure 16).

⁴⁵ Arlington County Deed Records, "Benjamin F. Elliott," Folio 369, Liber 67, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

⁴⁶ Arlington County Deed Records, "H.W. Kelly and W.S. Brownings to Will R. Swetnam," Folio 439, Liber 16, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

⁴⁷ Kathryn Holt, *Cherries, Characters and Characteristics: A History of Cherrydale* (Virginia: Sterling Press, 1986), 65, Center for Local History, Arlington County Public Library.

⁴⁸ Between 1928 and 1938, advertisements in the Washington-Lee High School yearbook stated "Robert Shreve Ice and Coal, Cherrydale, VA." National Register of Historic Places Form, Cherrydale Historic District, Section 8, Page 145, <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/historic-preservation/> (accessed April 22, 2014).

⁴⁹ The 1920 United States Federal Census listed Robert Shreve as owning a general hauling business. Arthur and John were employed by their father as a truck driver and a wagon driver, respectively. The 1930 United States Federal Census listed Robert Shreve as owning a coal and ice hauling business. Both sons were employed as truck drivers. "Robert S. Shreve," 1920 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014); "Robert Shreve," 1930 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014); "John T. Shreve," 1930 United States Federal Census, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed April 22, 2014).

⁵⁰ Henry H. Douglas, "Carroll Shreve," *Historical News & Notes* (April 1972): 15, Center for Local History, Arlington County Public Library.

⁵¹ Arlington County Deed Records, "Will R. Swetnam to John and Arthur Shreve," Liber 439, Folio 16, Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records Division.

The Shreve brothers successfully expanded the business by providing fuel oil. Between 1938 and 1961, the Robert Shreve Fuel Company acquired iron fuel tanks formerly located to the north of the trestle.⁵² The coal trestle functioned in a similar fashion delivering oil from railroad tank cars through hoses into tanks or trucks. The company continued to utilize the trestle for coal, but fuel oil became the dominant product (see Figures 16, 17, and 24). The installation of the tanks reflects national trends. After World War II, the cleanliness of fuel oil in relation to coal, the near instantaneous control (by means of a thermostat) of oil burners, and its increasing availability led to the displacement of coal as the choice energy source in residences.⁵³

Installation of Fuel Oil Tanks and Gasoline Tanks at Shreve Fuel Company

<u>Permit Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
9449	1938-1945	Install one 12,000 gallon oil storage tank.
6414	1938-1945	Install two 10,000 gallon fuel oil tanks.
14645	1938-1945	Install one 12,000 gallon fuel oil tank.
1720	4/11/1946	Install three 20,000 gallon fuel oil tanks as per instructions of Fire Chief Schaffel.
2779	6/13/1947	Install three 20,000 gallon fuel oil tanks.
14918	4/16/1957	Install one 4,000 gallon underground gas storage tank connected to one gasoline pump.
20887	5/19/1961	Remove one defective 4,000 gallon tank and install one 4,000 underground tank in same location (gasoline).
21458	10/11/1961	Install one 2,000 gallon tank underground in place of defective tank.

In 1953, probate records for Arthur Shreve (John Shreve died in 1947) indicate a prosperous business. Robert Shreve Fuel Company was purchased for \$262,500: \$73,500 in real estate, \$50,000 in motor vehicles, \$20,000 in oil storage tanks, \$6,000 in coal conveyors, \$4,000 in office equipment, a \$3,500 air conditioner, a \$2,000 garage, \$3,500 in miscellaneous supplies, \$80,000 in accounts receivable, and \$20,000 in inventory of coal and fuel.⁵⁴ After the brothers' deaths, Wallace Shreve and Cleveland Harrill ran the business until it was sold within the family.

⁵² Permit records indicate the installation of various fuel tanks ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 gallons. "Arlington County House Card for 6873 Lee Highway," Arlington County Historic Preservation Office (dated July 22, 1936). For historic photographs of a fuel tank car on the trestle and the oil tanks, David A. Guillaudeu, *Washington & Old Dominion Railroad* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 21 and 56.

⁵³ Harold H. Schobert, *Energy and Society: An Introduction* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002), 74.

⁵⁴ Arlington County Probate Records, "Arthur Shreve," Fiduciary Book P-1, Folio 219-220 (Arlington County Courthouse, Virginia), 219-220.

Shreve Fuel Company continued to utilize the coal trestle for the delivery of both coal and fuel oil until the abandonment of the line.⁵⁵ In 1966, the company was one of only two fuel distributors who received fuel oil by freight trains as other distributors utilized trucks (see Figure 18).⁵⁶ Also, Shreve Fuel Company was the last remaining coal dealer in the area with coal revenue totaling ten percent of their business.⁵⁷ The market for coal all but disappeared and the company stated that with the “abandonment of the [railroad] line will force it out of the coal business and will compel it to use rail facilities some nine miles away at Potomac Yard.”⁵⁸

Afterwards, Shreve Fuel Company utilized the space between the concrete piers to park its fuel delivery trucks. This necessitated the removal of many of the railroad elements such as the tracks, rails, etc., from the central portion of the trestle. Otherwise, the trestle remains in relatively good condition. The concrete piers have sustained minimal damage and its structural stability appears to be sound (see Figure 15). For further information, see Appendix Two entitled the *Preliminary Condition Survey Report for Elevated Siding on the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad*.

I. Significant Features:

The significant features of the trestle to be maintained and preserved are the reinforced concrete piers and the remaining railway components.

J. Areas Exempt from Designation:

All property outside of the limits of the coal trestle are excluded from the proposed historic district boundary.

K. Designation Criteria:

Benjamin Elliott’s Coal Trestle meets Designation Criteria B, H, I, and K as listed in Section 11.3.4.A.4 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance:

B) The property has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.

Benjamin Elliott’s Coal Trestle is associated with: 1) general railroad construction; 2) the W&OD Railroad; 3) the coal and fuel industry; and 4) the early-twentieth

⁵⁵ For additional historic photographs of the coal trestle, David A. Guillaudeu, *Washington & Old Dominion Railroad* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2013).

⁵⁶ In 1966, only the Robert Shreve Fuel Oil Company and the Esso Standard Oil Company in Leesburg received shipments of fuel oil via freight trains. “Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Abandonment of Entire Line in Virginia,” Interstate Commerce Commission, March 7, 1966, Arlington County Historic Preservation Office Archives.

⁵⁷ In 1960, Shreve received 625 carloads of fuel (481 carloads of fuel oil and 144 carloads of coal). In 1964, the company received 752 carloads of fuel (699 carloads of fuel oil and 53 carloads of coal). *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

century industrial development of the East Falls Church section of Arlington County.

H) The property has a distinctive location, or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature.

The coal trestle, along with its remaining railroad ties and tracks, is one of only a few remaining early-twentieth-century industrial structures along the W&OD Trail. In addition, the trestle's rails and ties are the last remnants of the former W&OD Railroad's tracks that remain visible in their original location. While foliage partially obscures the trestle for much of the year, the structure remains a visual feature along the trail.

I) The property is a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure representing a period or style in the commercial, industrial, or agricultural development of the county, with a high level of historic integrity or architectural significance.

The structure is representative of a simple, but effective means to process coal at a small-scale commercial retail yard in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. There are no other existing coal trestles remaining in Arlington County and few intact structures continue to reflect the county's industrial history.

K) The property is suitable for preservation or restoration.

While the historic integrity of the Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle was diminished with the partial demolition of the southern side, staff finds that the remaining trestle retains significant educational value and that it continues to meet the designation criteria required for local historic district designation. Pruning of the foliage along the trail will allow the coal trestle to continue to be a distinct visual and historical feature.

L. Conclusion:

Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle retains sufficient historic and physical integrity to be recommended for local historic designation by Arlington County. The utilitarian structure dating to 1926 is a reminder of the early industrial/commercial nature of the East Falls Church section of Arlington County, the importance of small-scale businesses to the delivery of coal to residences and businesses, the impact of the W&OD Railroad (and its predecessors) to the transportation history and physical development of Arlington, and local and regional railroad history.

7. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.11 acres (estimate)

RPC Numbers: 11065001 (NVRPA)

Verbal Boundary Description: Owned by the NVRPA, Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle is sited on the northwestern side of Lee Highway, approximately 50 yards from the road. The structure runs parallel to the defunct Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad right-of-way now known as the W&OD Trail. The coal trestle is bounded by: the W&OD Trail to the north, 6873 Lee Highway to the south and east, and the former site of six fuel storage tanks to the west (see Figure 17 and 21). The fuel storage tanks and a portion of the trestle were removed in early 2014 and June 2014, respectively.

Boundary Justification: Only the remnant of the historic coal trestle located on the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority will be included in the proposed local historic district boundary (Figure 34).

8. PROPERTY OWNERS

Name	Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA)
Address	5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

9. FORM PREPARED BY

Names/Titles	John Liebertz, Arlington County Historic Preservation Planner
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Additional research completed by:

Darren Hannabass, Member of Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)

Bernard Berne, Arlington Resident

Luis Araya, Arlington County Department of Environmental Services

Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Arlington County Historic Preservation Program Coordinator

10. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

See Appendix Two for an engineer's assessment of the trestle.

11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED

Arlington County Deed Records. Arlington County Court House, Land Records Division.

Arlington County House Card for 6873 Lee Highway. Arlington County Historic Preservation Office.

Arlington County Probate Records. Arlington County Court House, Land Records Division.

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Holt, Kathryn. *Cherries, Characters and Characteristics: A History of Cherrydale*. Virginia: Sterling Press, 1986.

"Modern Methods of Handling Coal." *The Grain Feed Review* 4 (1915): 94-96.

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Solomon, Brian and Patrick Yough. *Coal Trains: The History of Railroading and Coal in the United States*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Voyageur Press, 2009.

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Appendix One: Photographs, Aerials, and Maps



Figure 1: An example of a Norfolk and Western hopper car with lump coal. Such cars delivered coal to the Shreve Fuel Company.

Source: Virginia Tech, "Virginia Tech ImageBase," <http://www.imagebase.lib.vt.edu>.



Figure 2: Interior of a hopper car. The bottom doors opened to release the coal.
Source: Virginia Tech, "Virginia Tech ImageBase," <http://www.imagebase.lib.vt.edu>.

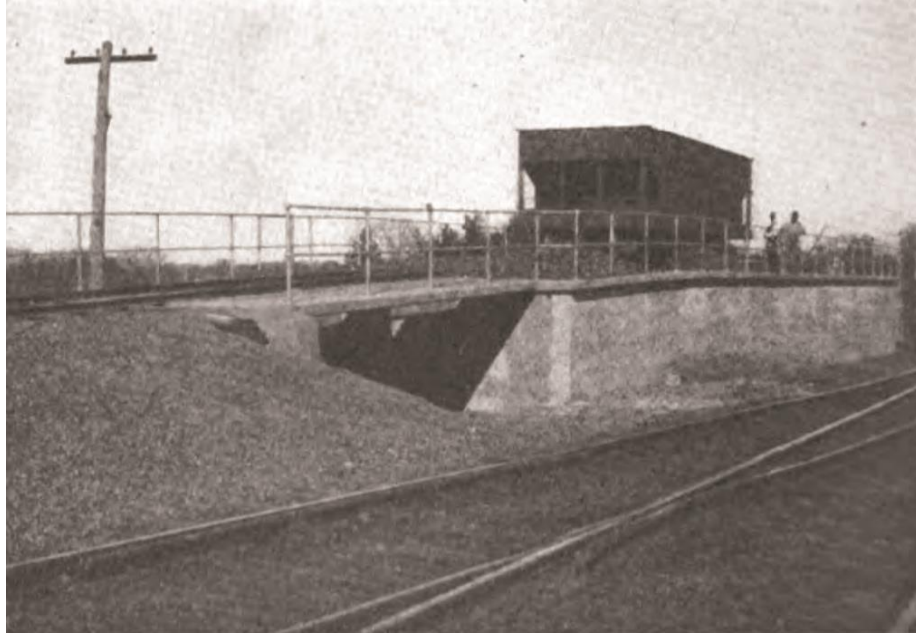


Figure 3: Murray Hill, NJ. Track Approach, 1906. The hopper car is situated on the coal trestle above the pockets. Source: George T. Hand, "Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle Pocket," *The Railway Age*, November 30, 1906, 684.

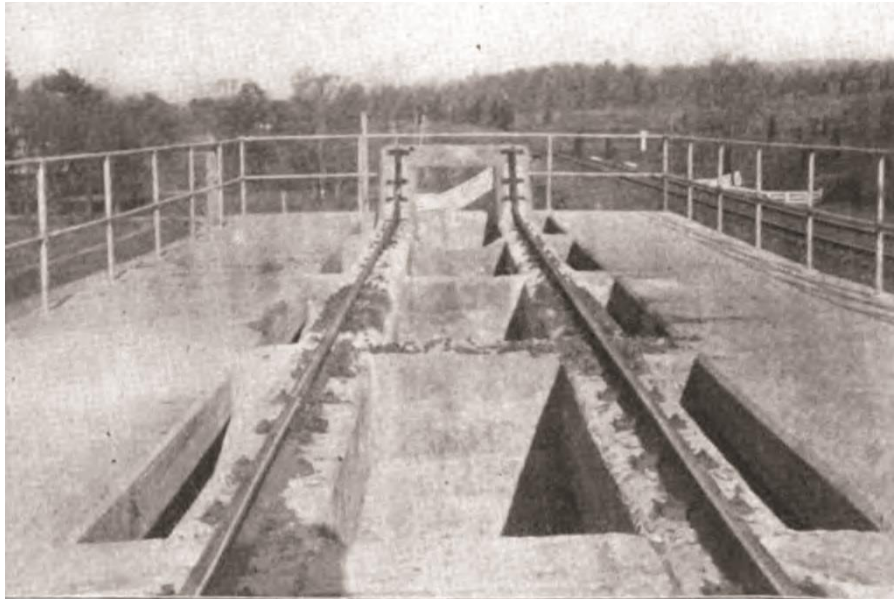


Figure 4: Murray Hill, NJ. Dumping Track and Pocket Openings, 1906. This trestle, a more complex design than Elliott's trestle, featured enclosed pockets. The coal would then travel through chutes directly into trucks, negating the need for shoveling the coal.

Source: George T. Hand, "Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle Pocket," *The Railway Age*, November 30, 1906, 685.

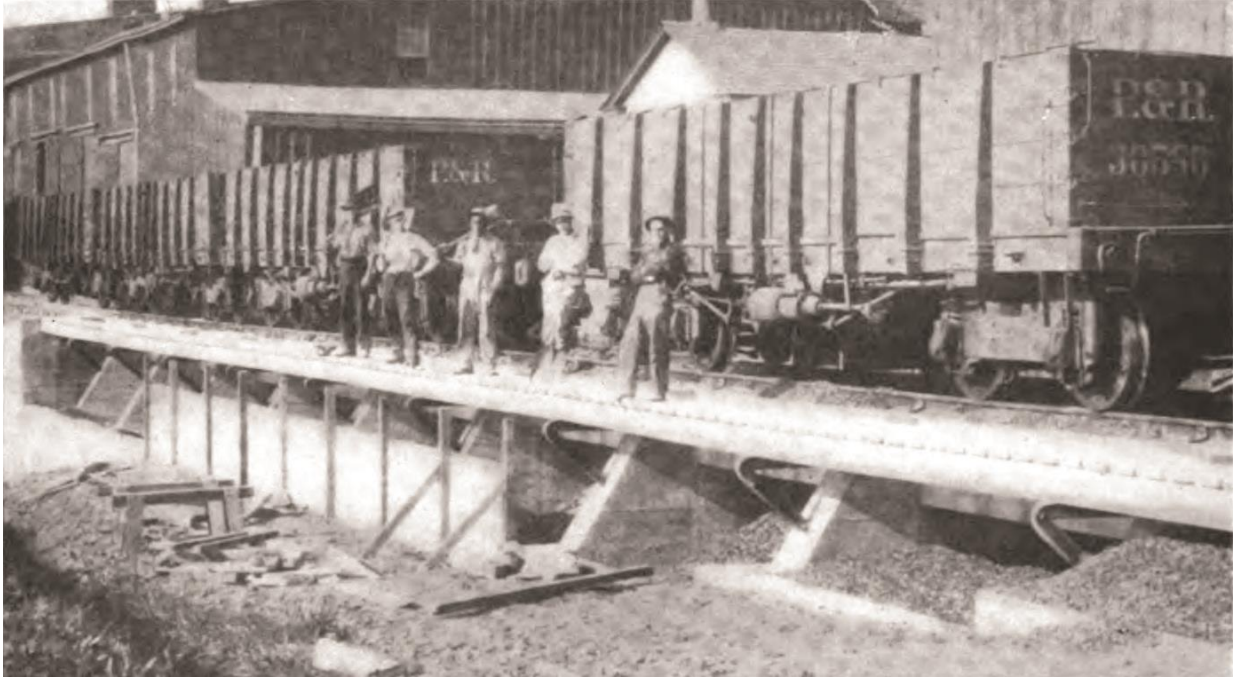


Figure 5: Doylestown, PA. A Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle and Bins, 1910.

Source: The Cement Age, "A Substantial Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle," *The Cement Age: A Magazine Devoted to the Uses of Cement* 10 (1910): 256.



Figure 6: Doylestown, PA. View of Concrete Coal Bins and Brackets Supporting Trestle, 1910. This example is similar in design to Elliott's coal trestle.

Source: The Cement Age, "A Substantial Reinforced Concrete Coal Trestle," *The Cement Age: A Magazine Devoted to the Uses of Cement* 10 (1910): 256.



Figure 7: A Link Belt Portable Wagon Loader in Operation, circa 1915. The wooden coal pocket and bins are similar in design to Elliott's concrete trestle. Note the worker shoveling coal into the wagon loader. Source: The Grain and Feed Review, "Modern Methods of Handling Coal," *The Grain and Feed Review* 4 (1915): 94.



Figure 8: Griffith Coal Bin, Rosslyn, Virginia, 1947. Note the mechanical coal conveyors and the hopper car. The trestle and bins, constructed of wood, are similar in design and function to Elliott's coal trestle.

Source: Theodor Horydczak, "Griffith Consumers Co. Coal Bins in Rosslyn for Griffith Consumers Co.," September 18, 1947, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov>.



Figure 9: A combination trestle and ground storage bin in Little Falls, New York. The design and concept is very similar to Elliott's coal trestle. The concrete piers also served as storage bins that separated the different sizes of coal.

Source: Iron Miners, "Anthracite Storage Structures and Retail Sales Yards," <http://www.ironminers.com>.

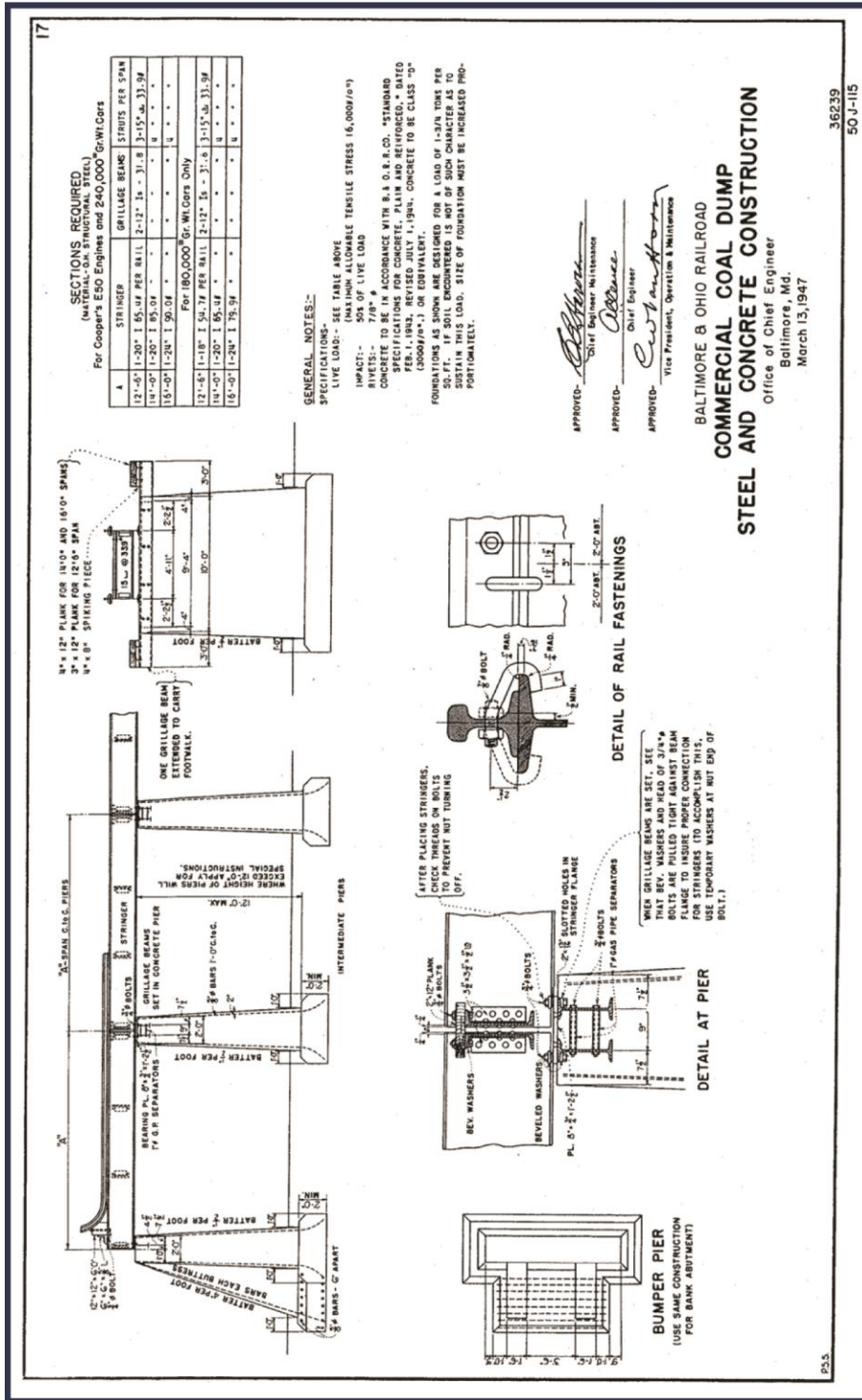


Figure 10: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Steel and Concrete Commercial Dump, 1947.

Source: "B&O Concrete and Steel Commercial Coal Dump Trestle from the 1945-1955 B&O Maintenance of Way Book," in Ed Bommer, "Modeling A 1947 B&O Concrete and Steel Coal Dump Trestle," *The B&O Modeler* 5, no. 6 (November/December 2009): B&O Railroad Historical Society Print): 13.

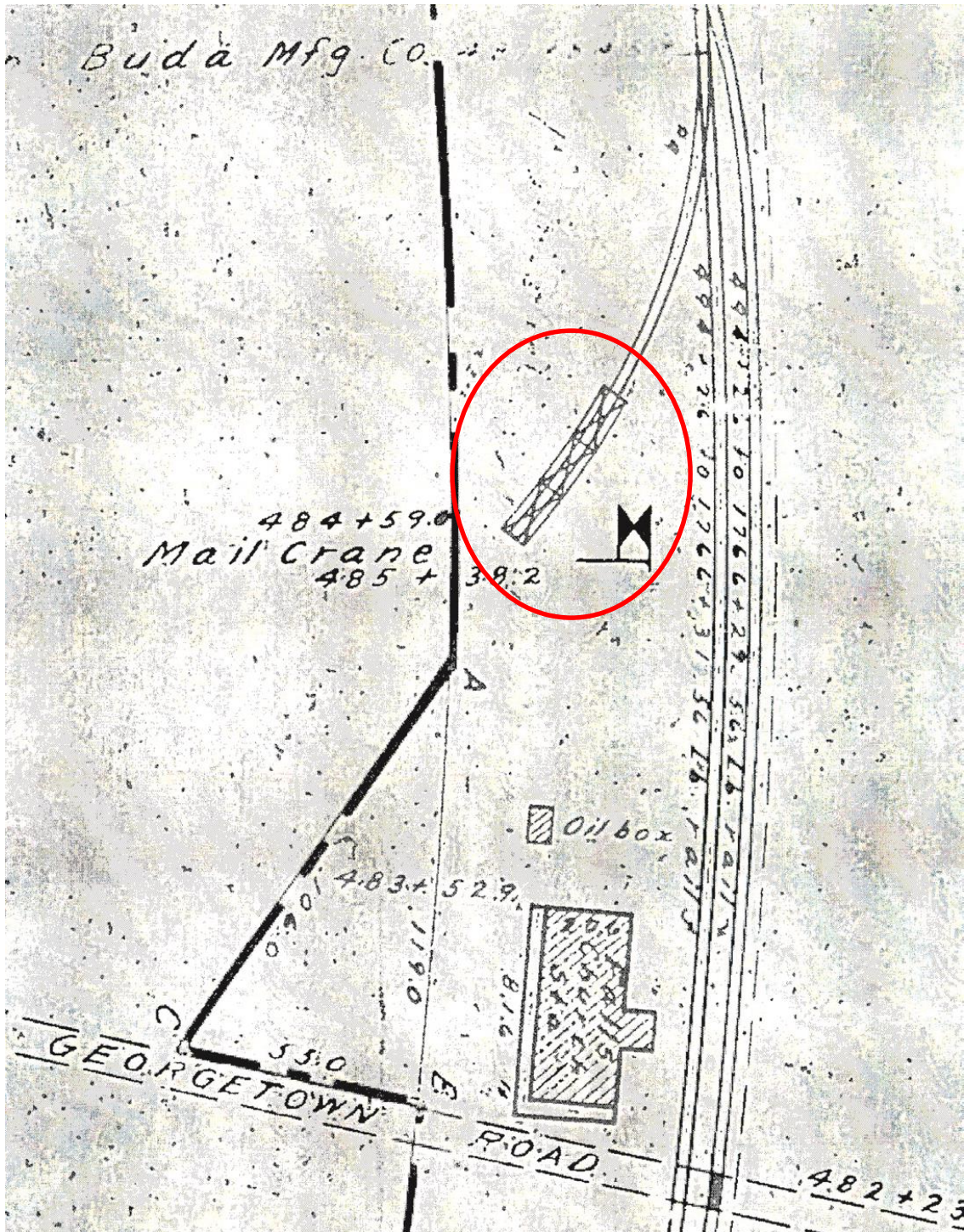


Figure 11: Washington & Old Dominion Right of Way Maps, circa 1911. The first known coal trestle (elevated siding) is circled in red.

Source: Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, <http://www.nvrpa.org>.

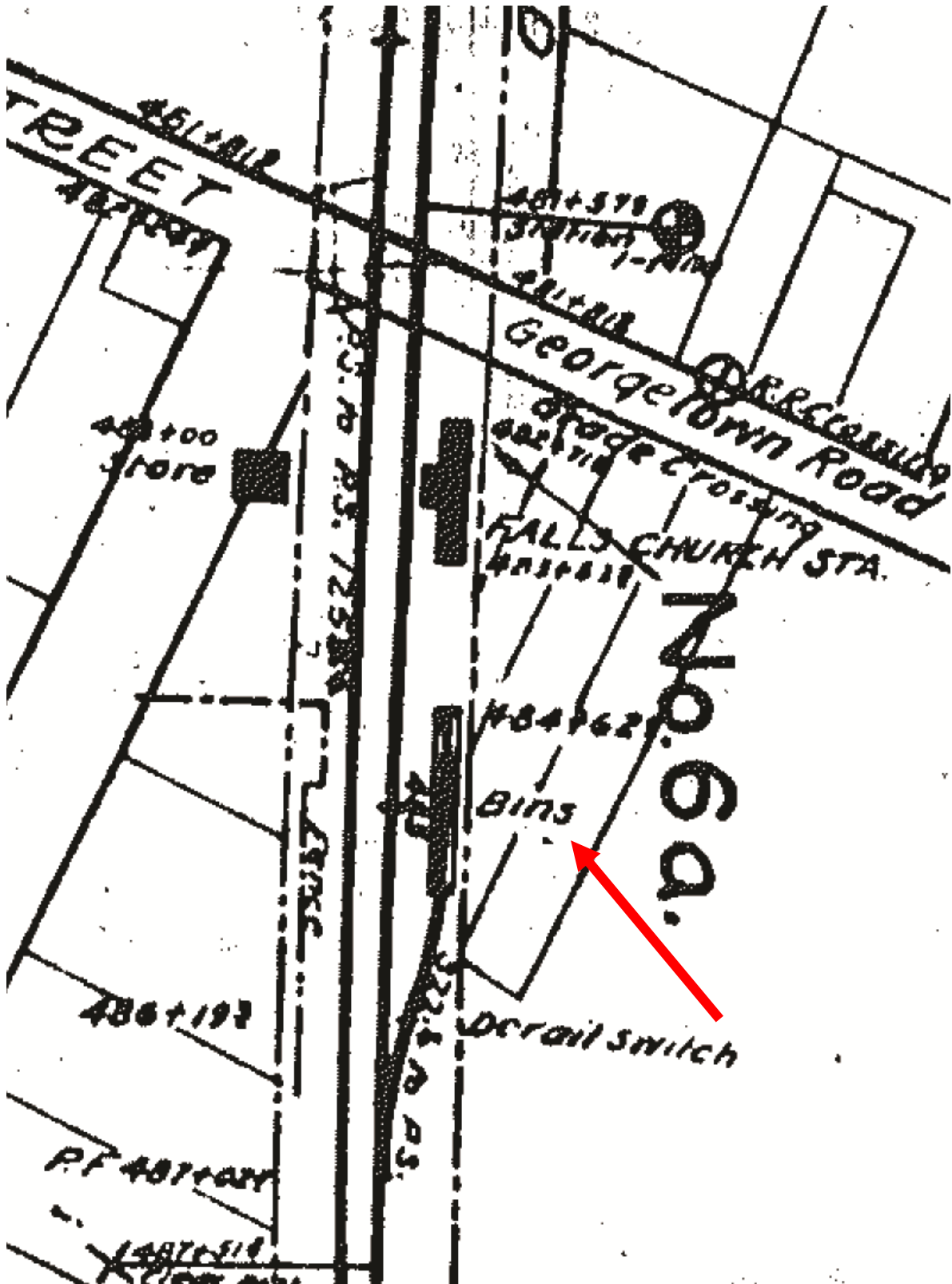


Figure 12: Washington & Old Dominion 1916 ICC Valuation Maps. Note the word “bins” next to the elevated siding annotating the presence of coal bins.

Source: Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, <http://www.nvrpa.org>.

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All Coal Loaded Over An Electric Screen

Figure 13: This is the first known image of the coal trestle. Benjamin Elliott Coal Advertisement, 1926.
 Source: Herndon Observer, "Classified Advertisements," *Herndon Observer*, December 9, 1926.

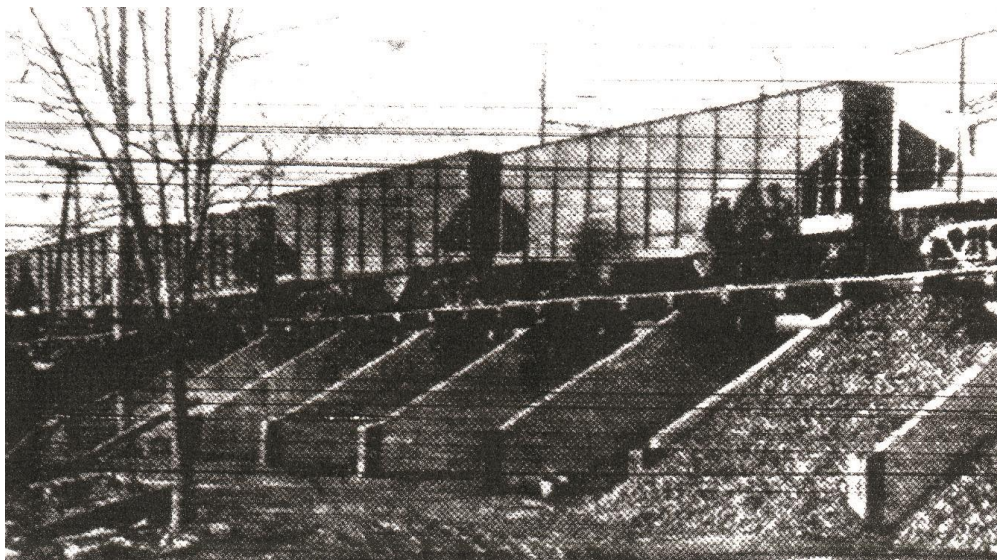


Figure 14: Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle, 1926. An enlarged view of the previous image. The hopper cars shown already emptied coal into the two bins on the right.
 Source: Herndon Observer, "Classified Advertisements," *Herndon Observer*, December 9, 1926.



Figure 15: Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle, 2010. Shreve Oil Company trucks now park in between the concrete piers. The tracks were removed for this purpose.
Source: Darren Hannabass.

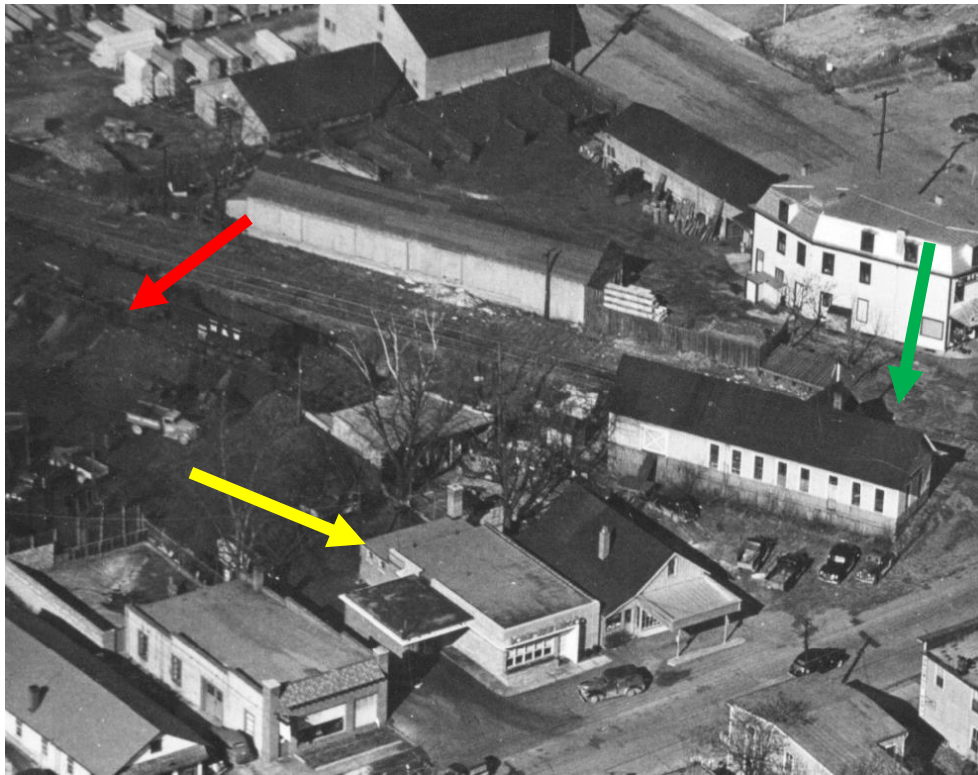


Figure 16: East Falls Church Aerial, 1946. The Shreve Fuel Company was receiving a coal delivery from a N&W coal hopper. The red arrow indicates the location of the trestle and hopper cars, the yellow arrow notes the location of the Shreve office building, and the green arrow points to the no longer extant East Falls Church train station.
Source: Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Local History Room, Falls Church.

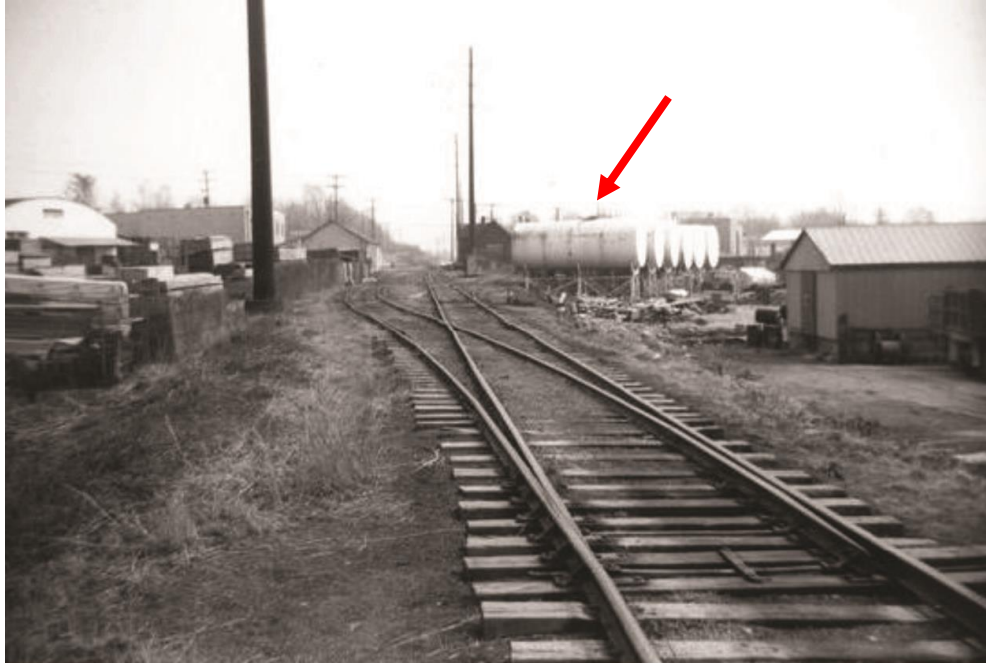


Figure 17: Washington & Old Dominion Tracks in East Falls Church, 1968. The red arrow indicates the location of the Shreve Fuel Company oil tanks.

Source: Henry H. Douglas, "W. & O.D. Tracks in East Falls Church," March 1968, Library of Virginia Online Catalog, <http://www.lva1.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com>.



Figure 18: Shreve Property, 1966. The railroad siding and trestle are on the right side of the image. Coal would still have been delivered to Shreve Fuel Company on the tracks at this time.

Source: Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.



Figure 19: Aerial Photographic Image of Arlington County, Sheet 6, 1934. The red arrow indicates the location of the coal trestle.

Source: Arlington County GIS.

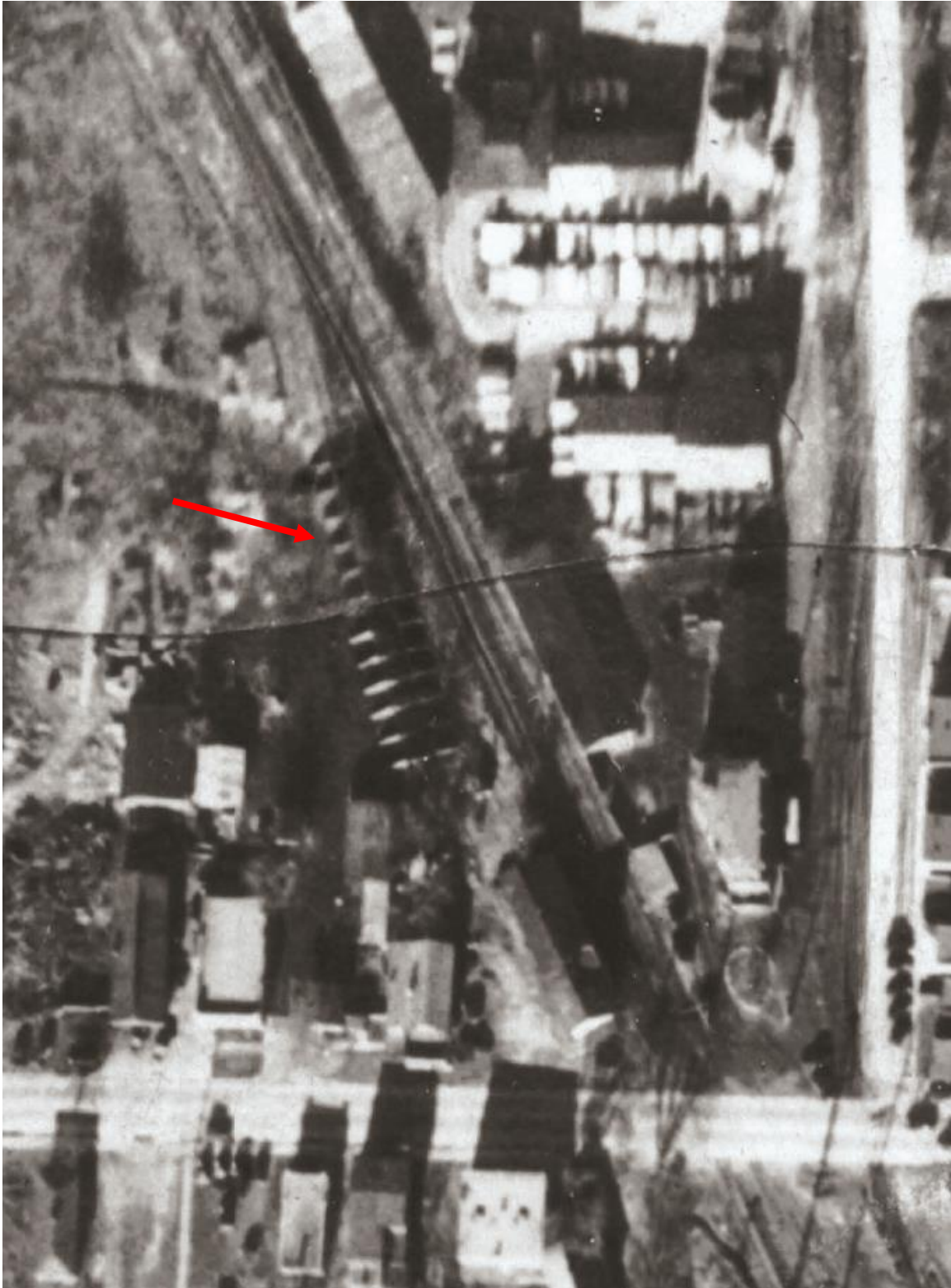


Figure 20: Aerial Photographic Image of Arlington County, Sheet 4, 1934. The photograph above is an enlarged view of the previous image. The red arrow indicates the location of the coal trestle.

Source: Arlington County GIS.

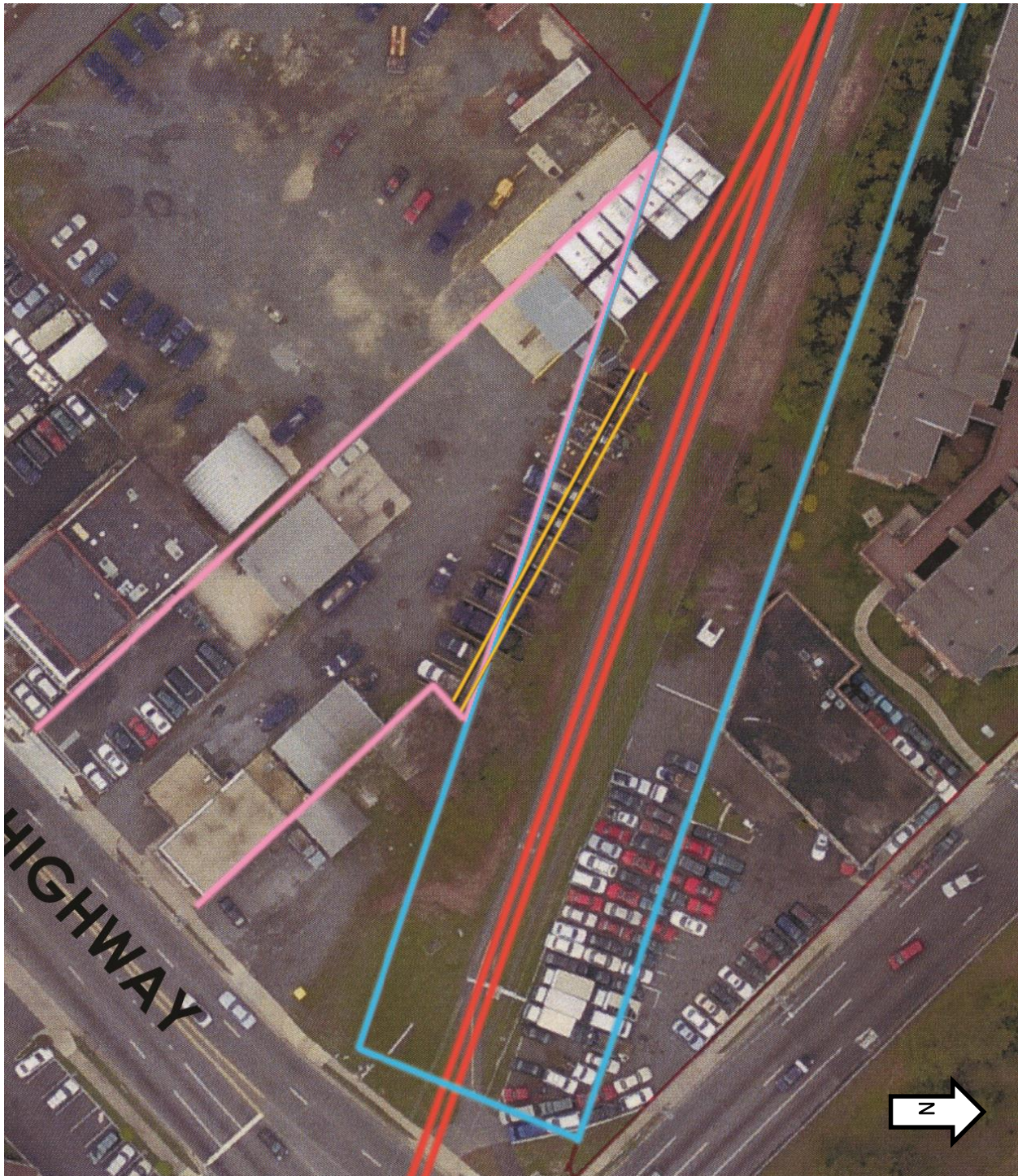


Figure 21: Aerial of property, 2007. The red lines indicate the former W&OD railroad track, currently the W&OD trail. The blue rectangle is the property owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. The pink lines are the boundaries of Robert Shreve Fuel Company. The black lines are the reinforced concrete piers and the yellow lines are the coal trestle tracks.

Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program.



Figure 22: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1935. The map does not note the property owner, but does indicate a railroad siding (see red arrow).

Source: Arlington County Public Library, Center for Local History.

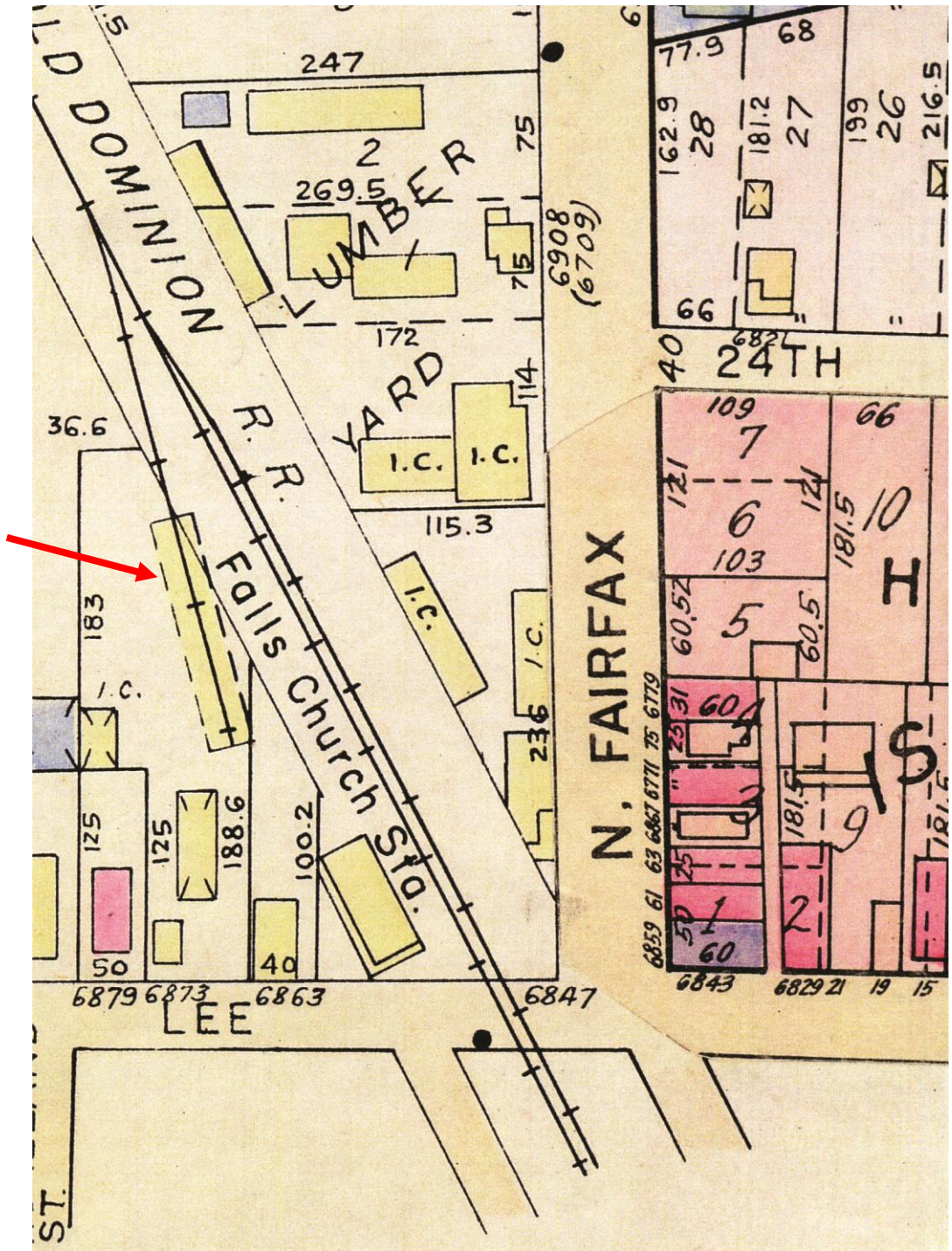


Figure 23: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1942. The red arrow notes the location of the coal trestle.
 Source: Arlington County Public Library, Center for Local History.

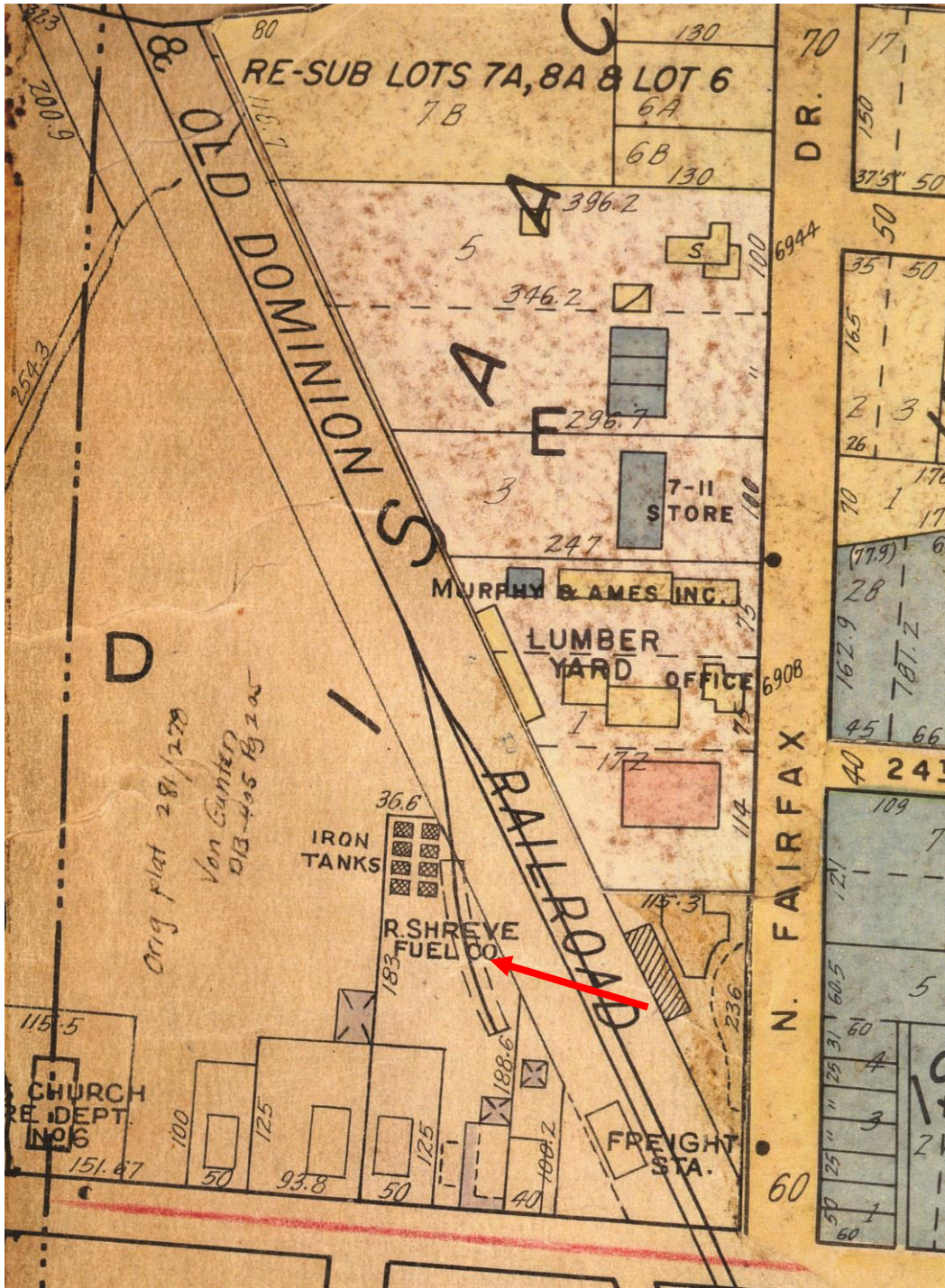


Figure 24: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1952. The map states the property was owned by R. Shreve Fuel Co. The map shows the property's coal trestle and fuel oil tanks. The red arrow notes the location of the coal trestle. Source: Arlington County Public Library, Center for Local History.

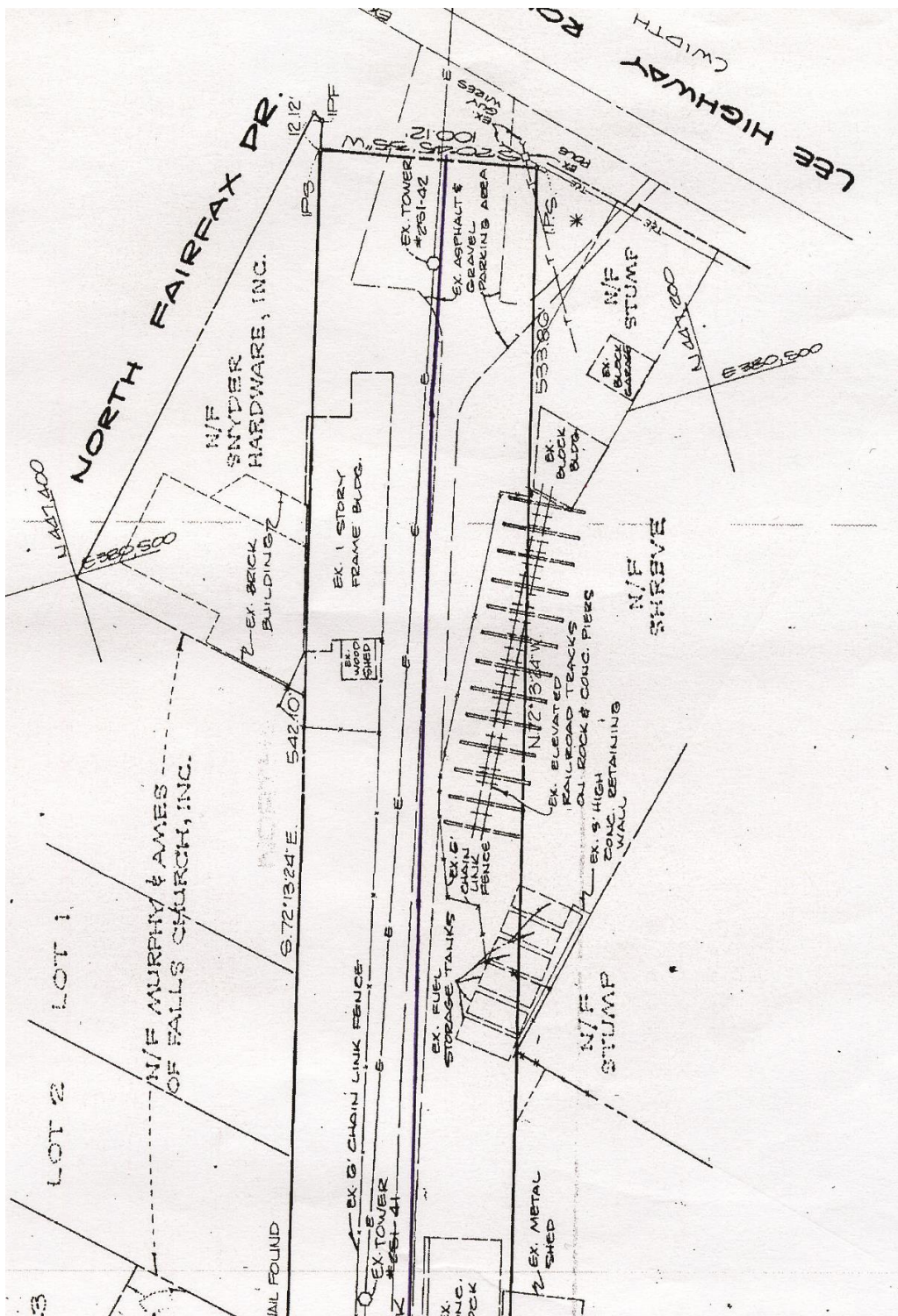


Figure 25: Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Plat, 1979. The map shows “elevated railroad tracks on rock and concrete piers.”

Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program.



Figure 26: Looking northwest towards coal trestle from subject property.
Source: Darren Hannabass.



Figure 27: Looking northwest towards coal trestle from subject property.
Source: Darren Hannabass.

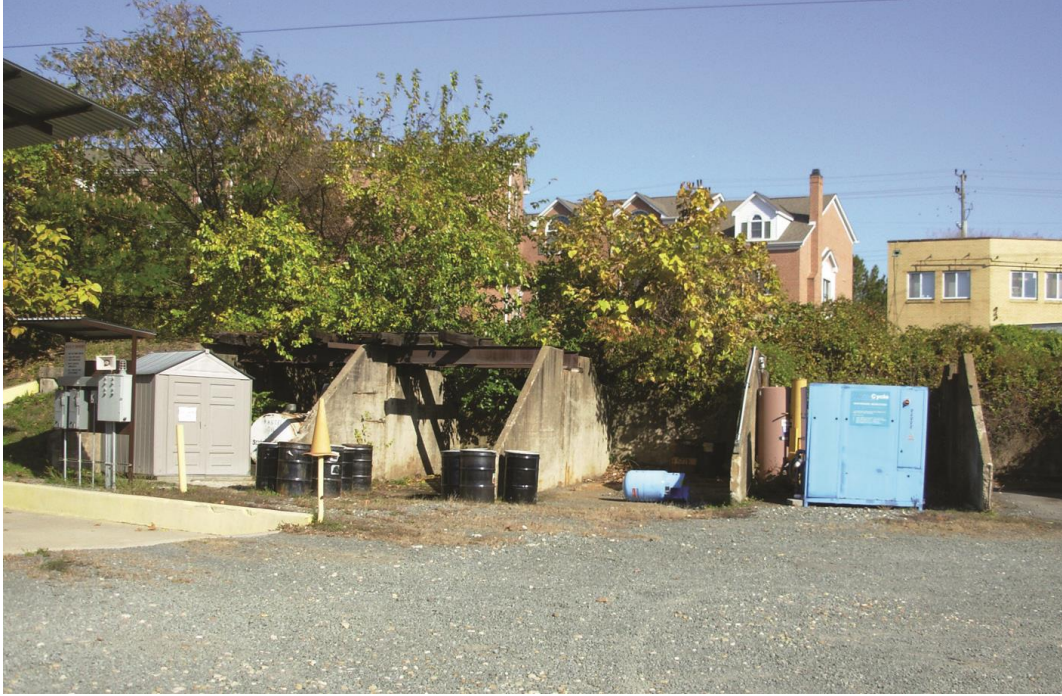


Figure 28: Looking north towards coal trestle from subject property.
Source: Darren Hannabass.



Figure 29: Looking southeast towards coal trestle from subject property.
Source: Darren Hannabass.



Figure 30: “Overgrown W&OD Railroad Trestle, Arlington, Virginia,” 2007. Looking from the W&OD Trail towards the remaining rails and ties at the east end of the coal trestle.

Source: Alan Kotok, Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/runneralan/460531874/>

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Figure 31: Active demolition of Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle, looking northwest near Lee Highway. The pink lines on the concrete piers represent the property boundary and the extent of demolition of the trestle.
Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program Staff, June 5, 2014.



Figure 32: Active demolition of Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle, looking southeast from the W&OD Trail. The pink lines on the concrete piers represent the property boundary and the extent of demolition of the trestle. The above tracks were salvaged and conveyed to the NVRPA.

Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program Staff, June 5, 2014.



Figure 33: Completed partial demolition of Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle, looking northwest near Lee Highway.
Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program Staff, August 26, 2014.

Figure 34: Proposed Historic District Boundary for Benjamin Elliott's Coal Trestle

