

Kennedy Buildings  
416-18 King Street  
Alexandria  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-670

HABS  
VA  
7-ALEX,  
142-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## KENNEDY BUILDINGS

HABS  
VA  
7-ALEX,  
142

Location: 416-18 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Present Owner: Demolished in 1968 by the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority as part of an urban renewal project in the old commercial center of Alexandria.

Statement of Significance: This is a modest brick row that forms a part of the main commercial thoroughfare of King Street. An unusual recessed bay window at the second floor of 416 King Street (a later alteration) provides architectural interest.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Date of erection: c. 1850

Sometime after the death of James Kennedy in 1820, his "dwelling house and two stores" were replaced by the brick buildings known as 416 and 418 King Street. Since these buildings are similar to the building at 420 King (see Samuel Miller Building, HABS report VA-671), it is probable that Eliza Kennedy and Samuel Miller, the then owner of 420-22 King Street, agreed to erect these buildings. (It is also probable that the building at 420 King had a twin at 422 King Street, which was later demolished, or substantially remodeled.) If these assumptions are correct, the buildings were probably erected around 1850, after Eliza Kennedy became the sole owner of the property.

## 2. Architect: Unknown

## 3. Original and subsequent owners: Eliza Kennedy was the first owner. Upon her death the property went to the heirs of her niece, Eliza Barton. In 1903, the property was conveyed to Lillie C. Reid.

On April 23, 1804, Robert William Kirk and his wife conveyed to Jacob Fortney for \$1,820, the lot of ground on which the buildings at 416 and 418 King Street were later erected, described as:

Beginning at the dividing line of lots 55 and 113  
on the south side of King Street, 123 feet 5  
inches west of Royal street;  
South with the dividing line 176 feet 7 inches;  
West parallel to King Street 30 feet 10½ inches;  
North parallel to Royal and Pitt streets 176 feet  
7 inches to King Street;  
With King street to the Beginning.

The deed further describes this land as that part of lot 113 sold to James Kirk, father of Robert William Kirk, by Robert Alexander. (James Kirk, an early mayor of Alexandria, is frequently mentioned by Nicholas Cresswell in his Journals. Cresswell stayed with James Kirk when he first arrived in Alexandria in 1774. However, the evidence now available indicates that at that time Kirk was living on or near the river, between Duke and Wolfe streets.)

On May 11, 1818, the heirs of Jacob Fortney conveyed this property to James Kennedy for \$6,100, describing it as a "tenement and lot of ground" (with the same boundaries as above), and as including "all appurtenances whatsoever to the said tenement and lot of ground."

In his will, recorded November 14, 1820, James Kennedy, "bookseller," left a one-third interest to his wife, and a one-third interest to each of his unmarried daughters, Eliza and Susannah, in "my dwelling house, two frame stores, and lot of ground on King Street purchased by me ... from the executors of Jacob Fortney." The will further provided that when his wife died, her one-third interest was to go to his married daughter, Sarah Gird.

B. Bibliography:

Alexandria Deed Books G (Circuit Court), p. 530; F-2, p. 343; K-3, p. 386 and p. 388; 50, p. 99 and p. 101. Alexandria Will Books 2 (Orphans' Court), p. 401; and 4 (Orphans' Court), p. 405.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

This row of two-story buildings is typical of the modest mid-nineteenth century buildings that lined King Street. The store-fronts, cornice, and windows were drastically altered in the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Two stories, originally two-bay fronts.
2. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick, common bond.
3. Chimneys: Interior chimney for double units.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to 416 King (a later alteration) is recessed and situated to the left of the shopfront. An arched passageway extends along the right of this building. The shop entrance to 418 King is recessed and at the center of flanking shop windows.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The windows at the second floor of each building are later alterations. An angular tripartite window arrangement at the second floor of 416 King can be described as a recessed bay window.
5. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Modillioned cornices of a later vintage crown the buildings.

C. Site:

The buildings face northward along the south side of King Street.

Prepared by Mrs. Hugh B. Cox of  
The Historic Alexandria  
Foundation  
June 1968  
Edited by  
Antoinette J. Lee  
November 1975

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken in 1968 to document the commercial and residential buildings of downtown Alexandria which were to be demolished in an urban renewal project. The project was cosponsored by the Historic Alexandria Foundation and the Historic American Buildings Survey. Mrs. Hugh B. Cox was the historian and George Eisenman supplied the photographs. The material was edited and updated in 1975 by Antoinette J. Lee, working on contract for HABS.