

Alexandria County Almshouse and Burial Ground

Alexandria County Board of Supervisors Property ca. 1880s-1920s

Summary

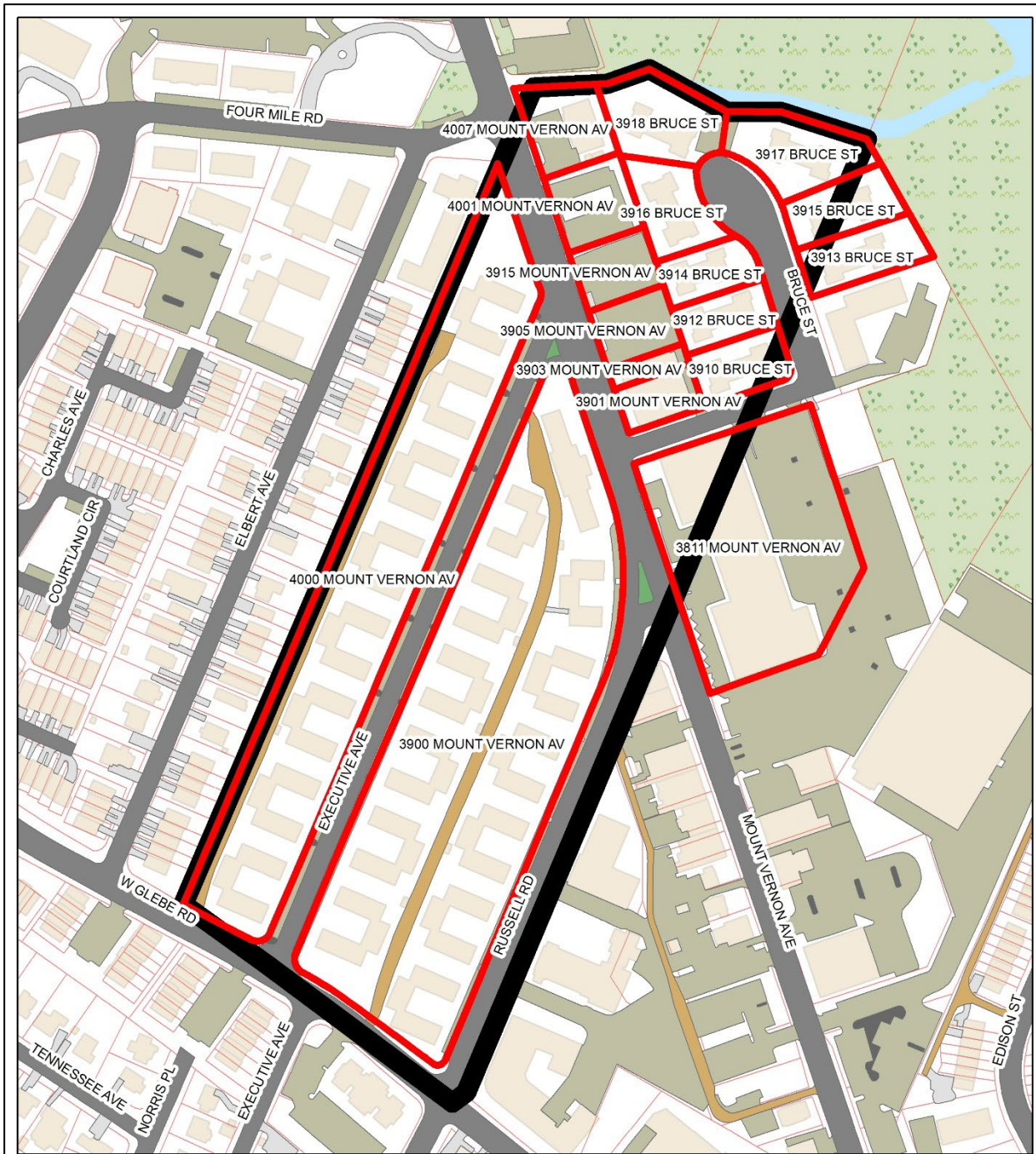
Recent research by Alexandria Archaeology, a division of the Office of Historic Alexandria, a department of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, has identified the location of a previously undocumented historic cemetery within the modern boundaries of the City of Alexandria. This cemetery was associated with and located at the Alexandria County almshouse, which was established, owned, and operated by Alexandria County (today known as Arlington County) between approximately 1880 and 1900. Records suggest the County used this cemetery between approximately 1891 and 1918, before selling the property in 1919. This almshouse and cemetery were on approximately 20 acres of County-owned land, located between West Glebe Road and Four Mile Run, bounded on the east by Russell Road, and currently intersected by Mount Vernon Avenue in what is now the Arlandria/Chirilagua neighborhood of the City of Alexandria. The City of Alexandria annexed this area from Arlington County in 1930.

In 1939, the cemetery was rediscovered by excavation crews linked to the construction of one of the current Presidential Gardens apartment buildings. The full extent of the cemetery was not then determined, and an unknown number of human remains were disinterred, collected, and reburied at the City's potter's field, Penny Hill Cemetery. The exact location of this cemetery at the former almshouse lot is currently unknown; however, the sequence of construction at the site suggests an area in the southwest quadrant of the lot, close to the location of the former almshouse. The extensive development of this parcel, including the extension of Mount Vernon Avenue through the property and the construction of the Presidential Gardens and Beverly Plaza subdivisions, may have impacted additional buried cultural resources (including graves), but the extent of this impact is not currently known.

The available evidence suggests there could still be undocumented human remains buried on this property.

Recommendations

The Alexandria County almshouse and associated burial ground will be registered by Alexandria Archaeology as an archaeological site with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Alexandria Archaeology will review any ground disturbance as part of the Archaeological Protection Code to ensure work is done by a qualified archaeologist.

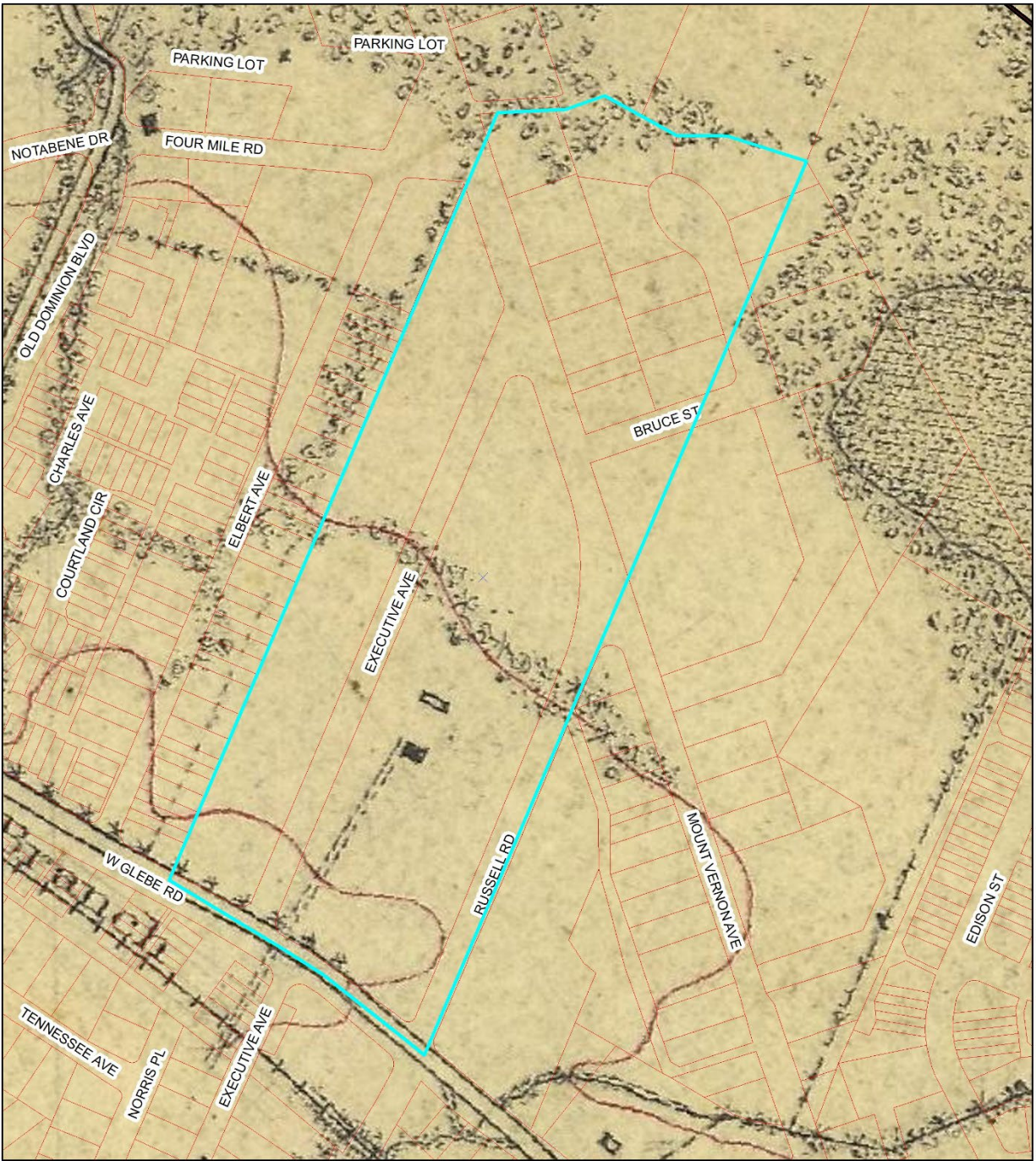


Modern Parcels

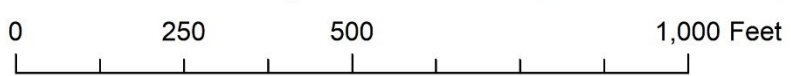
Alexandria County Board of Supervisors Property



Modern parcels associated with the former Arlington County almshouse property.



1902 US Coast Survey
 Alexandria County Board of Supervisors Property



Location of the Alexandria County almshouse, US Coast Survey, Potomac River, West Shore, Alexandria and Arlington Counties, VA, 1902.

Old Graveyard Is Uncovered In Alexandria

Alexandria — An ancient graveyard containing an unknown number of bodies was uncovered here by a steam shovel excavating for a new apartment project.

The steam shovel was working on the foundation for a new unit of the Presidential Gardens apartment house at Mount Vernon Ave and Russell Road when the discovery was made.

City officials said there was no way of estimating the number of bodies in the plot, nor could any record be found showing when the graveyard was established or who was buried in it.

The officials added that in all probability it was the burial plot of some early Virginia family.

Dr. William Lewis Schafer, city health officer, issued a permit under which the remains unearthed by the shovel were placed in a box and buried in Penny Hill Cemetery — the city's potters field.
