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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Historic Landmark Case No. 15-19

### **The Lexington Apartments**

1114 F Street NE  
Square 983, Lot 855

Meeting Date: November 19, 2015  
Applicant: Capitol East Partners II, LLC  
Affected ANC: 6A  
Staff Reviewer: Kim Williams

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The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board designate The Lexington Apartments, 1114 F Street NE, a historic landmark in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and forward the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for listing at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1928, the year it was constructed.



### *History and Architecture*

The four-story, brick and concrete Lexington Apartments was constructed in 1928 by owner/developer Charles Sager and designed by architect George T. Santmyers in a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Classical Revival style. The apartment building is defined by its three-part block-like massing with a projecting entry pavilion on-center. The entry surround is the most highly articulated element of the building, featuring scored concrete simulating cut ashlar on the first story and a broken pediment surround framing the second-story window immediately above. The parapet at

the roofline also features Classical detailing, namely *bas-relief* decoration with alternating roundels and garlanded bucrania.

Developer Charles Sager built the Lexington Apartments for the city's expanding middle-class, advertising its low rents, its modern features (refrigerators and elevators), and its convenience to the city (the H Street streetcar line was just two blocks to the north, and the East Capitol Street was five blocks to the south). The building was constructed near what had been the eastern end of developed Capitol Hill, but at a time when development had already begun pushing easterly following improvements in city infrastructure, such as paved streets, water and sewer lines, and the filling in of the Anacostia flats.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE essentially created the boundary between the developed and undeveloped sections of Capitol Hill. The area east of 12<sup>th</sup> Street was considered undesirable for residential development due to the polluted and noxious Anacostia flats and to the location of the city's penal institutions on Reservation 13. By the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the boundary had pushed two blocks further east as homebuyers were looking for modestly priced houses with modern conveniences. By 1920, with city infrastructure in place, the work on filling in the flats and the construction of Kingman Lake nearly complete, and the removal of some of the facilities on Reservation 13, the eastern end of Capitol Hill was more than ripe for expanded development.

By the time Sager built the Lexington Apartments in 1928, a second wave of building was already underway as developers were confident that investments geared to a middle-class clientele would be assured. Indeed, the Lexington Apartments replaced several older buildings on the site, including two modest dwellings, a store, and small buildings associated with a coal company. As expected, the first residents of the Lexington Apartments were primarily white, white-collar workers.

### *Evaluation*

In 1989, HPRB adopted the National Register Multiple Property Document: *Apartment Buildings in the District of Columbia, 1888-1945*. Its principal purpose was to provide a context for understanding the development of the building type and its architectural and historical significance. The document divided examples into categories based on physical characteristics and chronology and established designation criteria by type and sub-type and by period of development.

The Lexington property meets the Multiple Property Registration criteria as an example of either the "Conventional Low-Rise Apartment Building Sub-Type" or the "Conventional Mid-Rise Apartment Building Sub-Type" as defined in the multiple-property document, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*.<sup>1</sup>

The Lexington Apartments meets District of Columbia Designation Criterion B ("History") and National Register Criterion A at the local level of significance for being associated with broad patterns of our history, and specifically for being associated with the construction of apartment buildings at a time when there was a pressing need to house the growing middle-class population

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<sup>1</sup> The Low-Rise sub-type is defined as being at least two and no more than four stories tall, containing at least five apartments, and is served by a single public entrance. The Mid-Rise sub-type is defined as being between five and seven stories, containing at least 15 apartments, having a single public entrance and an elevator. With its raised basement and four principal floors, and inclusion of an elevator, the Lexington could also qualify as a mid-rise example.

of the city. The Lexington Apartments was built in a newly developing area of the city in proximity to the H Street streetcar line and following city infrastructure improvements that made the eastern end of Capitol Hill a healthier and more desirable place to live.

The property also merits designation under District of Columbia Criterion D (“Architecture and Urbanism”) and National Register Criterion C at the local level of significance for embodying the distinctive elements of a type, period, method of construction, or representing the work of a master. The Lexington Apartments embodies the characteristics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Classical Revival style of architecture, namely in its Classical detailing around the entrance and at the parapet. The building is illustrative of the prolific architect, George Santmyers, and of his work in partnership with developer Charles Sager.

The building retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling and association. Its Period of Significance is 1928, the year of its construction.