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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Historic Landmark Case No. 16-21

### Glade Apartments

1370-1372 Fort Stevens Drive NW  
Square 2791, Lot 2

Meeting Date: November 17, 2016  
Applicant: Athena LLC, a subsidiary of Manna, Inc. (owner)  
Affected ANC: 4A

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The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board designate the Glade Apartments, 1370-1372 Fort Stevens Drive NW, as a historic landmark in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. HPO further recommends that the Board request the nomination be forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for listing as of local significance, with a period of significance of 1939, its date of construction.

The property merits designation under D.C. Criterion D (“Architecture and Urbanism”) and National Register Criterion C for “embody[ing] the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types... or... [being] expressions of... urban planning, siting or design significant to the appearance and development of the District of Columbia or the nation,” specifically, for being a good example of an Art Deco-style low-rise apartment building.

The property is also significant under District of Columbia Criterion B (“History”) and National Register Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development, for being “associated with historical periods ... or patterns of growth and change that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture or development of the District of Columbia or the nation,” in that they are associated with the physical and social development of the Brightwood neighborhood during the interwar period, as a consequence of transportation improvements, a new zoning ordinance, Depression-era population growth, and perhaps the influence of Federal Housing Authority apartment-development standards.

The property qualifies for designation under the Multiple Property Documentation Form “Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945.”

### Background

Until the early twentieth century, the Brightwood area of northwest Washington remained mostly rural. It had been the site of important transportation routes from at least 1822, when the turnpike to Rockville was constructed. The road network was augmented during the Civil War to serve the line of defensive fortifications, but it was not until the implementation of the Highway Act and the construction of streetcar lines that the neighborhood’s population growth took off. Streetcars and bus lines and cheap land values induced considerable construction of multi-family buildings during the interwar period, and permitted by a new zoning ordinance,

they concentrated along the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, especially near the intersection with Missouri Avenue. Their construction shot up during the Great Depression, as housing demand and government financing pushed the production of apartment units well beyond that of houses.

The Glade Apartments were constructed and opened in 1939. The three-story building was designed for the Standard Construction Company by George Santmyers, Washington's most prolific architect. He designed at least 440 apartment buildings, in addition to single-family homes and other building types. The Glade was one of several of his commissions in Brightwood.

Two years later than his nearby Valencia Apartments (which the Board designated in September), the Glade better demonstrates Santmyers assurance with the newer Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, in fact, a combination of the two, and his continued evolution from the Colonial Revival. Two years later, he would produce a somewhat similarly styled U-shaped apartment building on a larger scale at the Delano, 2745 29<sup>th</sup> Street NW. He had previously produced limestone frontispieces at the entries of some of his red-brick Colonial apartments, but here the stepped and buttressed and bas-reliefed elements are thoroughly Deco. So, too, are the street-facing piers at the north end of the building and the columns of glass block lighting the stairs. These vertical elements are balanced by Moderne horizontal "streamlining" in contrasting brick.

The property's landscaping is unremarkable: a modern split-rail fence, some bushes and trees, and a curbed concrete lead walk. The most notable feature of the site is the unusual orientation of the building oblique to the street, a consequence of fitting it onto a modest parcel carved out of an irregular "square" bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 13<sup>th</sup> place, Peabody Street and Fort Stevens Drive, some of which street are remnants of nineteenth-century roads.

### **Evaluation**

Following a thorough survey of pre-1946 apartments in the District of Columbia, the Board and the National Register of Historic Places adopted the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945," intended to designate quality examples of physical subtypes of the broader building type throughout Washington.

The Glade Apartments qualify for designation as a representative example of the "Conventional Low-Rise Apartment Building" subtype as described in the multiple-property form, because it exhibits the characteristics of the subtype, namely, being purpose-built, between two and four stories tall, containing more than five units, but lacking elevators. With its modernistic styling, it is a more visually interesting specimen than some other apartments in the neighborhood, and it qualifies under the following registration criteria:

- A-3, for apartment buildings that are "part of clusters, corridors or districts [such as Brightwood] that illustrate the patterns of development of the city";
- A-4, for buildings "that reflect economic forces [here, the extension of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street streetcar line, the creation of a zoning ordinance in the 1920s, and rapid population growth during the Great Depression]... that altered the development of the city";

C-5, for buildings “that reflect changes in aesthetic philosophies” [specifically, the adoption of Art Deco and Moderne]; and  
C-7, for buildings “that are the work of skilled architects...”

The property retains high integrity, with the exception of window and door replacements and the stuccoing of the spandrels at the north face of the building.