

---

---

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Historic Landmark Case No. 18-04

### The Fulford

2518 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Square 2565, Lot 48

Meeting Date: December 21, 2017  
Applicant: Glenn Arms Preservation LP (owner)  
Affected ANC: 1C

---

---

The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board designate the Fulford apartments, 2518 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, a historic landmark in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, and requests that the nomination be forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for listing as of local significance, with a period of significance of 1911, the building's completion date.

The Fulford merits designation under National Register Criterion C and District of Columbia Criterion D ("Architecture and Urbanism") for embodying the distinguishing characteristics of a particular building type and a design significant to the District of Columbia, specifically, middle-class apartments and a "conventional low-rise apartment building," as classified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*.

The apartments also meet National Register Criterion A and D.C. Criterion B ("History") for being associated with a second phase of residential development of the Adams-Morgan and Meridian Hill neighborhoods.

The Fulford was constructed in 1910-1911, and named upon its completion. Its architect was Carroll Beale, a self-employed civil engineer, residential builder and innovator in concrete construction. The four-story brick building has an Italian Renaissance façade, a popular revival style for such buildings during that period, but likely here adopted in emulation of the first mansions and embassies erected in Meridian Hill during the previous three years.

Mary Foote Henderson's vision of an elite "Avenue of the Presidents" and embassy row along 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Meridian Hill had petered out before her death, despite her successful development of several mansions and their inspiration of several more. Notwithstanding her husband's investment in the construction of the Kenesaw (3060 16<sup>th</sup> Street; 1905), apartments did not fit Mrs. Henderson's vision of development along 16<sup>th</sup> Street, namely the promotion of a certain scale, the attraction of a certain quality of buildings and residents, and, most important, the protection of views. Yet, while she was still active, apartment buildings sprang up on the margins of her extensive landholdings, taking advantage of the exclusivity of the neighborhood, and would soon fill in among the mansions. Many of these apartments were luxury residences, as the convenience of apartment living increasingly appealed to the affluent.

Farther still on the outskirts of the neighborhood, the Fulford is not a luxury apartment building, but it illustrates middle-class emulation of the acceptance of apartments by the rich, filling a continuum of the apartment building type from the tenements inhabited by the poor. The Fulford's early tenants were government clerks, professionals, teachers, policemen, construction workers, and service workers. Similar development in this area was spurred by the extension of streetcar lines up 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Connecticut Avenue at the end of the nineteenth century, resulting in a cluster of apartments between Ontario Road and 14<sup>th</sup> Street, north of Florida Avenue and south of the Piney Branch stream.

The Fulford is nominated under the context provided by the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, adopted by the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board and the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The document traces the physical development of the apartment building type and classifies subtypes according to their design and characteristics and how they represent the development of the city. The Fulford falls within the "Conventional Low-Rise Apartment Building" subtype, i.e., purpose-built multi-unit buildings of at least three units on two to four floors, having a single main entrance and no elevator.

The MPD establishes that apartment buildings may be listed under National Register Criteria A, B and/or C, but that they must meet one or more specific sub-criteria. The Fulford meets the following registration criteria:

- A-2: Buildings that illustrate the initial development of the apartment movement as it relates to the need for housing, including the introduction of the building type and the specific forms seen in this early period throughout the city.
- A-3: Buildings that are part of clusters, corridors, or districts that illustrate the patterns of development of the city.
- A-6: Buildings that reflect changes in the development of social attitudes toward multi-unit living as expressed through their interior architectural organization.
- C-6: Buildings that illustrate expressions of architectural styles, either rare, notable or influential to the aesthetic development of the apartment building or to architecture in general.
- C-10: Buildings that are the work of skilled architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, builders or developers.

The building retains strong integrity, although its integrity of design, materials and workmanship have suffered from poor window replacements, the installation of through-wall mechanical units on secondary elevations, the removal of side porches, and the presumed removal of a front balustrade. The original, front-loaded entry stair was also unfortunately replaced, and the living units have lost most of the original finishes, despite the retention of the plan overall.

The property contains a couple of notable landscape features. The first is a rustic granite retaining wall typical of early twentieth century Washington. It bounds a shallow lawn, a lawn that wraps around the building's sides.