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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**

Historic Landmark Case No. 18-03

**Glenn Arms Apartments**

2524 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Square 2565, Lot 18

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

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The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board designate the Glenn Arms Apartments, 2524 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 1916, the building's date of construction.

The Glenn Arms 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 apartment building was constructed in 1916 by J.E. Fox for owner and architect George N. Bell (of the firm Hunter & Bell). It was not known by a name until it and its next-door neighbor, the Fulford, came into common ownership and were collectively renamed the Glenn Arms. Lacking another historic name, 2524 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW is still referred to as the Glenn Arms.

The Glenn Arms is not only a few years later than its neighbor, the Renaissance-style Fulford, but its expression is quite distinct. Much as the earliest purpose-built apartment buildings in Washington were designed like scaled-up Victorian rowhouses, the front block of the Glenn Arms looks similar to semidetached urban Craftsman-style homes, with even a dormered partial attic. The two-story homey architecture belies the extent of the building, an atypical plan, defined by several light courts, stretching nearly the depth of its lot.

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 Glenn Arms is not a luxury apartment building, but it illustrates middle-class emulation of the acceptance of apartment living by the rich, filling a continuum of the apartment building type from the tenements inhabited by the poor. The early tenants were "a range of middle and working-class residents." 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 Glenn Arms 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 Glenn Arms 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 Glenn Arms meets the following registration criteria:

- 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, but it has had its windows and exterior doors replaced.