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	[ ] other (explain)	

ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS				
Name of Property				
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Res (Do not include prev	ources within Prop iously listed resources in	<b>erty</b> the count)
[X] private [ ] public-local	[X] building(s) [ ] district	Contributing	Noncontributing	buildings
[ ] public-State [ ] public-Federal	[ ] site [ ] structure			structures
	[] object	1	0	objects TOTAL
Name of related multiple pro (Enter "N/A" if property is not p	<b>operty listing</b> part of a multiple property listing)	Number of con listed in the Na	tributing resources tional Register	previously
N/A		N/A	4	
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)		Current Function (Enter categories from		
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling		DOMESTIC/I	Nultiple Dwelling	
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories fro	m instructions)	
LATE 19 <sup>th</sup> AND 20 <sup>th</sup> Cer	ntury Revivals/	foundation <u>sto</u>	ne (granite)	
Classical Revival		walls <u>brick</u>		
		roof <u>asphalt</u>		
		other		

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

ABIN	GDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS	Jefferson County, New York
	of Property tement of Significance	County and State
Applic (Mark "x	able National Register Criteria ' in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property nal Register listing.)	Areas of Significance: (Enter categories from instructions) Architecture
[X] A	Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Social History
[] <b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
[X] C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance: 1908-c.1945
[] <b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates: 1908, 1910
	a Considerations 'x" in all boxes that apply.)	
[]A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Significant Person:
[] <b>B</b>	removed from its original location	N/A
[] <b>C</b>	a birthplace or grave	
[]D	a cemetery	
[]E	a reconstructed building, object, or structure	Cultural Affiliation:
[]F	a commemorative property	
[] <b>G</b>	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years	Architect/Builder:
		Addison Farwell Lansing, architect
	ive Statement of Significance the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	Harry Burns, builder
Biblio	<b>or Bibliographical References</b> graphy ie books, articles, and other sources used in preparing thi	s form on one or more continuation sheets.)
	us documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:

[X] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67	() [] State Historic Preservation Office
has been requested. NPS #37,837	
[] previously listed in the National Register	[] Other State agency
[] previously determined eligible by the National Register	[] Federal Agency
[] designated a National Historic Landmark	[] Local Government
[] recorded by historic American Building Survey	[] University
#	[ ] Other repository:
[] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record	

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#### ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property

Jefferson County, New York

County and State

. Geographical Data	
creage of Property20 acres	
ITM References Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
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	4  1 7
<b>Verbal Boundary Description</b> Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Soundary Justification Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
1. Form Prepared By	
name/titleEmily Dominijanni, Junior Associate, MHA No	ortheast [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]
organization MacRostie Historic Advisors	date <u>July 25, 2018</u>
treet & number <u>263 Summer Street, 6th Floor</u>	telephone
sity or town <u>Boston</u>	state <u>MA</u> zip code <u>02210</u>
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indica A Sketch map for historic districts and proper	iting the property's location rties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photograph	<b>is</b> of the property.
Additional items Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or	·FPO)
name	
street & number	telephone

**Estimated Burden Statement:** public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

### Narrative Description of Property

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments is located at 327 Holcomb Street/270-272 Mullin Street, at the northeast corner of Holcomb and Mullin Streets in Watertown, NY, approximately half a mile southwest of Watertown's downtown public square and half a mile south of the Black River. The building is located in an upper-middle-class area of the city that mostly contains single-family houses, including the Emma Flower Taylor Mansion (NR, 2002). Other surrounding architecture includes the First Methodist Church and wood-framed houses. There are paved walkways to entrances on the south and west elevations from city sidewalks that border the building. The south and west elevations are landscaped with grass and shrubbery. The eastern light-court is paved.

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments is a three-story yellow brick apartment building, with a raised basement level, stone foundation and flat membrane roof. The apartment building was constructed in two phases: the Abingdon (northern part), at 327 Holcomb Street, was built in 1908, and the New Abingdon (southern part), at 270-272 Mullin Street, was built in 1910. The façade of the Abingdon faces west onto Holcomb Street and the facade of the New Abingdon faces south onto Mullin Street. Together the two sections create a U-shaped footprint, with a lightwell at the eastern half of the building. The placement of the Abingdon at the north end of the lot and the common design of the lightwell show that the building was designed for expansion. While the two sections are not internally connected on the upper floors, they are connected on the basement level. The New Abingdon was constructed as an addition to the Abingdon and shares its utilities. The mix of 21 rental apartments in the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments currently includes 3 studios, 10 one-bedroom units, and 8 two-bedroom units.

# Exterior:

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments is a brick apartment building designed by Addison Farwell Lansing in a subdued Classical Revival style with three stories and an attic level above a raised basement. The building is composed of two sections. The Abingdon, at the north, has an L-shaped plan and the New Abingdon, at the south, has an irregular foot print; together they form a U-shaped footprint with a light court on the western side. The building is constructed of yellow brick set in running bond and rests upon a raised rusticated stone base. It has regular fenestration and window openings have 1/1 non-historic vinyl sash. It has the same historic wall, foundation, and cornice treatments throughout. The roofline features an elaborate denticulated and modillioned metal cornice. A paneled pressed-metal frieze course runs below the cornice, with a small molded string course between the frieze and the masonry walls. The two sections are similar, but there are some notable differences. The original Abingdon portion has a more simple, austere design, while the New Abingdon portion has a more undulating profile, subtly differentiating between the two sections. The Abingdon is narrower; its windows are topped with metal pediments; and its entrance is more elaborate, with a large porch

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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#### ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property
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trimmed like the cornice. The New Abingdon is broader; each of its street elevations has two bays with fullheight canted bay windows; and its entrance lacks a full porch.

#### West Elevation

The west elevation, facing Holcomb Street, consists of the main elevation of the Abingdon and the side elevation of the New Abingdon. The west elevation is one of the building's two prominent elevations and is three-stories with yellow brick set in a running bond. The Abingdon is seven bays and the New Abingdon is four bays, resulting in an eleven-bay composition. The north section of the building, the Abingdon, faces west onto Holcomb Street. The main entrance is in the third-northernmost bay. Set back from the sidewalk, it is accessed by a set of concrete steps and a small concrete porch. The entrance features a non-historic metal and glass single-leaf door, set within a rusticated stone surround. A small one-story portico, supported by rounded wood columns with Ionic capitals resting on rusticated stone bases and topped by a pedimented roof, shields the porch and entrance. The roof of the porch is marked by a denticulated, modillioned cornice, similar to the roof cornice. A secondary entrance into a single apartment is located in the southernmost bay, adjacent to the south half of the building (the New Abingdon). The secondary entrance has a single-leaf wood and glass paneled door and is set within a simple wood frame topped with a metal pediment. Concrete steps provide access to the entrance. The staircase has an iron railing. Windows on this elevation all are simple rectangular openings with a simple stone sill; those in the northern portion are more detailed, with a pedimented hood over the first floor windows, and a simple lintel with consoles over the upper floor windows. The windows in the New Abington southern portion have no articulated lintels.

The rest of the west elevation is made up of a side of the southern half of the New Abingdon. It has four bays, with polygonal, full-height canted bay windows in bays two and four. The edges of the main, flat portions of the bay windows are accented by interlocking bricks. Each facet of the bay has a single window opening, set with a modern 1/1 vinyl replacement double-hung unit. The first set of bay windows has windows on all three sides; the second set of bay windows only has windows on the sides. In bay one from the north, there is a basement-level entrance within a small concrete block enclosure topped with a pitched metal roof.

#### South Elevation

The south elevation of the building faces Mullin Street, has six bays, and holds the main entrance to the New Abingdon. The westernmost bay has small windows providing light into apartment bathrooms. The other five bays are symmetrical around the entrance, with polygonal full-height canted bay windows in bays three and five, flanking the entrance. The bay windows are similar to those on the west side of the building. The main entrance to the New Abingdon is accessed by a set of concrete steps with simple metal handrails, giving access

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

#### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

	Name of Property
Section 7 Page 3	Jefferson County, New York
	County and State

to the first floor. The entrance features a non-historic metal and glass single-leaf door with a sidelight within a rusticated stone surround. A non-historic metal canopy is affixed above the main entrance.

#### East Elevation

The east elevation features a side elevation of the New Abingdon, the recessed lightwell holding a wood fire escape that services both portions of the building, and a back ell of the Abingdon. The side elevation has four bays; the lightwell has seven exits per floor with an additional nine window bays; the back ell of the Abingdon is blank. There are two basement-level entrances off the lightwell, one at the southeast corner into what is now a laundry room in the New Abingdon and the second into the basement of the Abingdon. Each has a single-leaf paneled door and is enclosed by a stuccoed concrete block shelter topped with a pitched roof. Doors in the Abingdon and New Abingdon are typically single-leaf metal doors with one rectangular window. Windows onto the lightwell are typically double-hung vinyl sash. Window openings in the middle bay of the ell have been shortened and infilled with brick below the sill. The remaining openings have been infilled with brown corrugated metal with vents from the bathrooms; windows openings in the northernmost bay of the Abingdon on the second and third floors are also covered with brown corrugated metal. The wood fire escapes have a simple wood railing with vertical slats. Markings on the brick in the lightwell show that approximately half of the wood fire escapes have been removed from the back ell. Wood fire escapes are topped with a pitched asphalt roof

#### North Elevation

The north elevation (all part of the Abingdon) has five bays, with an entrance at the middle bay. It is accessed by a set of concrete steps and a small concrete porch with a simple metal pipe handrail. The entrance features a non-historic metal single-leaf door set within a wood frame. A wooden canopy is affixed above the main entrance. Fenestration is functional to allow light into the apartments. Double-hung vinyl sash are set in window openings topped with trapezoidal keystone lintels. Lintels and sills are cast stone. There is a row of small rectangular windows that provides light to the attic.

### Interior:

There are twenty-one residential units in total: three studios, ten one-bedroom apartments, eight two-bedroom apartments. Although exact room use is unknown, the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments maintains its historic floor plan and original staircases and corridors. Every apartment has two means of egress. The

ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Abingdon section originally had two apartments per floor, which were split in half forming twelve units from six.<sup>1</sup> Since construction, the New Abingdon has continuously held three five-room apartments on each floor.

### **First Floor**

Abingdon (North section)

The apartments on the principal floors of the Abingdon are accessed through its main (west) entrance on Holcomb Street. On the first floor, an entrance vestibule and lobby with mailboxes leads to the staircase. Two residential units are entered through the vestibule off the main entrance. Two smaller first-floor entrances were added later – one in the southernmost bay of the Abingdon's west elevation and the other in the middle bay of its north elevation – to access subdivided one-bedroom units. All units on the first floor also have secondary entrances that open onto the lightwell.

Stairs located to the east of the lobby provide access to all floor levels. The stairs and landings are vinyl. Stairwell walls are painted, with historic wood base. Original railings are of wood, with decorative newel posts and simple pendants. On the second and third floors a corridor runs east to west just north of the staircase and accesses three of the four apartments and the lightwell. East of the staircase, a narrower north-south corridor provides a second entrance to the front/center two-bedroom unit and a smaller one-bedroom unit at the back (which also exits onto the second story of the lightwell). The corridors have historic wood baseboards.

Units in the Abingdon Apartments were renovated during a 2017 Historic Preservation Tax Credit rehabilitation project that followed the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. There are four units on each floor. In all apartments, the primary entrance opens into a living room with bedrooms and kitchens set back away from the entry. All units are minimally ornamented but feature the historic steam heat radiators, plaster walls, wood trim, and sills. Floor finishes are mainly vinyl tile in kitchens and baths and carpeting in bedrooms and living rooms. Unit kitchens have new appliances.

The first floor has a different floor plan from the second and third floors. There are four unit types on the first floor: two are accessed from the building's main entrance, one from the entrance on the west elevation and one from the north elevation entrance. The studio unit in the northeast corner of the building is accessed from the lobby through its main entrance at the southwest corner of the unit. The door opens to the main living space. A small kitchen and bathroom are located on the western side of the unit. There is an additional entrance at the southeast corner of the unit. There is the entrance to a one-bedroom unit. The door opens to the unit's living room and a corridor flows to the kitchen and bedroom. There

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This occurred sometime between 1944 and 1958 according to city directories.

ARINGDON & NEW ARINGDON ADARTMENTS

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is a secondary entrance onto the fire escape from the kitchen. The one-bedroom unit in the northwest corner is accessed from the north elevation entrance in the northwest corner of the unit. The unit entrance opens to the apartment's living room, where two double-hung windows light the space. A galley kitchen is located in the northeast corner of the unit and the bedroom in the southeast corner. There is a secondary entrance to the wood fire escape at the southwest corner of the unit. The final first floor unit is accessed from an entrance in the seventh bay of the west elevation. The one-bedroom unit door opens to the living room. The galley kitchen with door to the fire escape and bedroom are off the living room.

There are four unit types on the second and third floors. The common corridors run roughly east-to-west and north-to-south forming a "T" circulation pattern in the middle of the building. The staircase runs east-to-west along the corridor. Three of the units have entrances off the east-to-west corridor and one is accessed from the north-to-south corridor. The studio unit in the northeast corner of the building is accessed from the east-to-west corridor through its main unit entrance at the southwest corner of the unit. The door opens to the main living space, which has windows on the north and west walls. A small kitchen and bathroom are located on the western side of the unit. There is an additional unit entrance at the southeast corner of the unit to the east-towest corridor. Across the corridor is the two-bedroom unit in the southwest corner. The main entrance to the unit opens to the living room which is illuminated by windows on the western wall. A hallway runs south to the two bedrooms, which also have windows on the western wall. The bathroom and galley kitchen run along the eastern wall of the unit adjacent to the living room. There is a secondary entrance in the kitchen that opens to the end of the north-to-south corridor. The one-bedroom unit in the northwest corner is accessed from the corridor entrance in the southwest corner of the unit. There is a door to the wood fire escape perpendicular to the unit's entrance. The unit entrance opens to the apartment's living room, where three double-hung windows light the space. A galley kitchen is located in the northeast corner of the unit and the bedroom in the southeast corner. The final unit on the second and third floors is accessed from the north-to-south corridor. The unit's main entrance opens into the living room, which is illuminated by windows to the light well. A secondary entrance, galley kitchen, and bathroom are to the north of the living room and the bedroom is to the south.

#### New Abingdon (South Section)

The New Abingdon section is accessed through its main (south) entrance on Mullin Street. The entrance leads to a small lobby with tenant mailboxes. Stairs located to the north of the lobby provide access to all floor levels. The stairs and landings are vinyl. Stairwell walls are painted, with historic wood base and chair rail with pressed metal wainscoting. Original railings are of wood, with decorative newel posts and simple pendants. The circulation pattern is repeated on all floors. Doors to two of the three units are located immediately to the east and west from the lobby. At the north end of the north-south corridor is a secondary entrance to one unit and the principal door to the third unit; the corridor then jogs east and north to access the lightwell.

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Units in the New Abingdon Apartments were renovated during a 2017 Historic Preservation Tax Credit rehabilitation project that followed the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. There are three units on each floor. In all apartments, the primary entrance opens into a living room or corridors. All units are minimally ornamented but feature the historic steam heat radiators, plaster walls, wood trim, and sills. Floor finishes are mainly vinyl tile in kitchens and baths and carpeting or vinyl to simulate wood in bedrooms and living rooms.

There are three unit types. The unit in the southeast corner of the building is a two-bedroom unit. Its main door opens to the living room. The living room features the unit's canted bay windows, which allow ample light into the public area. The bedrooms are located in the northeast and southeast corners of the unit with the kitchen and bathroom in between. A secondary entrance from the lightwell opens to the northern bedroom. The southwest unit is a one-bedroom unit. Its main door opens to the living room, which is flooded with light from the canted bay windows to the south. The living room flows into the dining area and continues to the bedroom and bathroom. The bedroom is also lit by the canted bay on the west elevation. The unit does not have direct access to the lightwell and its secondary entrance accesses a corridor that leads to the kitchen. In the northwest unit, the main door accesses an internal corridor that leads to the living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms on the other end. The kitchen has a secondary exit to the lightwell. Windows throughout the units have wood trim and sills. The corridor and apartment plans are similar on the upper floors – the original arrangement and layout of the rooms are intact.

A flood from backed up sewers in June 1914 appears to have required extensive repairs to interior finishes throughout the building. In the Abingdon section, "bathrooms and kitchens in each apartment were covered with six inches of water." The new section also suffered "drenching."<sup>2</sup> As a result, few of the finishes on the interior of the apartments are original, though many of the finishes are historic. Additional original woodwork in the corridors includes paneled doors, wainscoting, and stair railings.

#### Basement/Attic

The basement is accessed of the west elevation in the northernmost bay of the New Abingdon. There are two secondary entrances to the basement from the light court, one on the east of the Abingdon and one on the north elevation of the New Abingdon. Its basement is used for utilities for both buildings and for storage. An additional basement unit where the janitor lived retains its form but is no longer in use. The tenant laundry room is located in what was apparently another apartment unit for staff at the western wall of the New Abingdon. There is an attic in the Abingdon section, lighted by a row of windows; it is unfinished. There is no attic in the New Abingdon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Cellars Flooded." Watertown Daily Times. June 8, 1914.

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### **Integrity**

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments retains integrity of location and setting, and the surrounding area remains largely as it did from 1908 to 1910 when the building was constructed. The neighborhood, especially in terms of the buildings adjacent to the property, continues to consist of low-rise single-family properties with civic and religious properties scattered throughout the area.

In addition, the building has appropriate integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to convey its function and significance as a middle- and upper-middle-class apartment building in Watertown in the early twentieth century. The exterior, in particular, has strong integrity with many original features, including the decorative cornices, row-lock coursing at the edge of the canted bays, and rusticated sills and door surrounds. Rear porches were replaced in 2017 but were always a component of the building's ancillary elevations.

On the interior, the Abingdon and New Abingdon maintains its original staircases and corridors, and the original layout of the apartments can be read in the current floor plan. After the period of significance, the apartments in the Abingdon were split in half, forming twelve units from the original six, while the New Abingdon retained is original plan.<sup>3</sup> Although the janitor's apartment and the unit now used for the laundry are no longer lived in, the original use of the basement for staff is still clearly visible. The 1914 flood destroyed walls and ceilings, and some doors and trim were replaced over time, but a significant amount of the finishes are original or dates to the period of significance. The workmanship of the early twentieth century wooden trim, doors, wainscoting, and stair railings expresses the expectations of the building's middle- and upper-middle-class tenants.

Overall, the location, setting, design, material, and workmanship of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments give a genuine sense of an early twentieth century apartment building. The building has strong integrity that conveys its significance as a well-maintained apartment complex in the city of Watertown.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This occurred sometime between 1944 and 1958 according to city directories

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#### **Statement of Significance:**

#### Summary

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments, located at 327 Holcomb Street/270-272 Mullin Street in Watertown, Jefferson County, NY, is locally significant under criterion A in the area of Social History and under criterion C in the area of Architecture, as a good representative example of early twentieth century apartment housing that catered to the growing middle- and upper-middle class that was settling in Watertown during the era. Watertown's industrial boom at the end of the nineteenth century created a rising middle class whose population spike necessitated a new building type, the apartment house, which was trending throughout New York and the United States. Buildings like the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments were considered housekeeping apartments that offered janitorial services and amenities that often could not be attained in a single-family home. Positioned in a wealthy neighborhood away from the busy public square and industrial centers, the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments was located in a desirable location for this growing population. It is also significant as an example of the work of Watertown architect, Addison Farwell Lansing (1870-1929). The building's architectural design showcased the departure from early multi-family living spaces such as tenements. Lansing's interior layouts incorporated important elements of privacy for this housing type like the separation of public spaces at the front of the apartment and private areas like bedrooms at the rear. Its Classical Revival elements were intended to appeal to upper-middle class residents, project social uplift to aspiring middle- and upper-middle-class tenants, and blend into the surrounding residential community. Lansing designed the Flower Memorial Library (NR, 1980) and a home for Emma Flower Taylor, daughter of a late nineteenth century New York State governor, as well as banks, commercial buildings, schools, clubhouses, and a variety of other buildings in Watertown and the North County. The building has been in continuous use as an apartment complex from 1908 to present. The period of significance for The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments begins with its construction in 1908 and ends ca. 1945, when the apartments in the Abingdon were subdivided and the tenant population shifted from professionals to working class.

# **Apartment Living**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries upper and middle class Americans experienced a shift in housing from single-family housing to apartment living. Previously, since land was abundant and affordable, people with moderate incomes chose to live in single-family homes. By contrast, by the mid-nineteenth century in Europe, apartment dwelling was already standard practice for all classes. It began in France with the "French flat" or "apartment," which comes from the French word *appartement*.<sup>4</sup> The middle class, shaped during the Industrial Revolution, had the means and desire for more comfortable, yet affordable, living quarters in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Armstrong Hall, "Apartment Houses." In *Dictionary of American Housing*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner's Sons, 2003: 222-224.

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European cities where space was limited densely populated areas. As New York City and other cities grew in population, apartment living became essential in North America too, and the acceptability of multi-family dwellings slowly began to shift.

By the 1860s, two types of apartment buildings emerged: single-family houses that were converted into multifamily houses and the new trend of the French flats. House conversions were often the result of upper-middleclass families moving on to even larger and newer homes; they were not purpose-built and their occupants might be people trying to retain a claim to middle-class life. By contrast, French flats reflected a more expansive world view. Americans were simultaneously taken with French culture, architecture, and style but skeptical of the French way of life, seen by some as promiscuous. The layout of apartments in France made many Americans uncomfortable because the bedroom could be seen from the parlor. As a result, United States builders were initially hesitant to follow this pattern. In New York City, minds were swayed by the construction of luxury apartments targeted at the wealthy with floor plans adjusted to segregate living functions. Entry halls, often small, separated family space from outside corridors, and interior halls separated public family spaces from more private/personal ones.<sup>5</sup> In particular, bedrooms were arranged away from parlors. These new middleclass apartments for singles and young couples typically had one or two bedrooms.

Middle-class apartment living in the United States did not become the norm until the late nineteenth century. Prior to this, multi-unit worker housing was common, but upper-middle and middle-class residents did not approve of this lifestyle; they viewed tenements as dark, overcrowded, and unsanitary places to live. Architects, developers and realtors had to establish apartments as a unique housing typology that pushed away from these notions. Apartments were not targeted at the poor, but to middle-class families who sought an affordable alternative to the cramped tenements. They were often "luxurious beyond the purse of the private owner and free from the cares connected with heating, cleaning hallways, clearing snow and many minor duties which devolve upon the independent householder."<sup>6</sup> In 1902, a Boston-based architect, Walter H. Kilham, examined the new phenomenon of apartment living in his article, "The Apartment House" in *Brickbuilder*. He places apartments into two categories: housekeeping and non-housing keeping apartments. These apartments had different requirements starting with the placement of the unit within the building, "The hall door must be a complete barrier, giving no hint of the life behind. Walls and floor between apartments must be deafened where practical, and the windows of one apartment should on no account overlook or give on the windows of another."<sup>7</sup> For privacy the "kitchen and service portions must be effectively separated from the living portion," the private spaces, "chambers and bathrooms must be secluded" and the exterior, "in particular the entrance

<sup>6</sup> Walter H. Kilham, "The Planning of Apartment Houses," in *Brickbuilder* 11, no. 12 (January 1902): 245-252.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press, 1990), *passim*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Kilham, 245.

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must be as attractive as possible to satisfy the *amour propre* of the tenants."<sup>8</sup> Apartment buildings were required to optimize light and ventilation and needed to be "cheerful and sunny."<sup>9</sup> They offered amenities that middle class families would not have otherwise been able to afford like the most modern technological advances such as washing machines, refrigerators, gas for ranges and lighting, private bathrooms with built-in tubs and showers, hot water, and maid and janitor services.<sup>10</sup> Non-housekeeping types, which often housed larger numbers of tenants had similar requirements but also required a large and well-ventilated kitchen and a dining room for all of the residents.<sup>11</sup> Many variations of the apartment building arose targeted to a range of people from the working to upper classes. Some catered specifically to bachelors or single women, while others were built for families. Apartment buildings soon outpaced single-family dwellings in Manhattan and began to spread upstate.<sup>12</sup>

Paralleling the national trends at the time, by the end of the nineteenth century, other parts of New York State saw the rapid development of apartment buildings as apartment living became a respectable alternative to single-family living. Their inclusion into the built environment became a necessity. Cities and the needs of their populations were changing and residential architecture reflected the changes occurring in American lifestyle trends at the time. Apartment buildings in cities like Syracuse, Buffalo, and Watertown, New York, were often scaled-down and more modest versions of designs built in New York City. As more people sought efficient housing accommodations in an urban setting, architects and developers found solutions in response to this demand by adapting in smaller cities as well.

#### The Apartment House in Watertown

Watertown was settled in 1800 and within five years became the county seat of agricultural Jefferson County. It was officially incorporated as a village in 1816 and soon became an industrial center. Well-positioned along the Black River, Watertown first used its many falls to power gristmills and sawmills. Next, cotton and woolen mills were developed; they dominated the local economy until mid-century (although some diverse industries also developed in this period). By the 1860s paper mills took over as the dominant industry in Watertown. Major companies included Remington Paper Mills, Taggart Brothers, and Knowlton Specialty Paper (still located in the city).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Kilham, 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Kilham, 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Walter H. Kilham, "The Planning of Apartment Houses," in *Brickbuilder* 11, no. 12 (January 1902): 247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Sagamore Apartments, Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York, National Register #100001625.

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Transportation was another element of the city's growth. The Rome and Watertown Railroad reached Watertown in 1851, eventually connecting Rome to Cape Vincent. By 1860 passengers and freight could travel all the way to Boston via the Northern Railroad. This route became dominant but other lines also made Watertown a hub. Not only did these railroads provide opportunities for trade, the industry itself afforded many forms of employment to local people. Blacksmiths, conductors, engineers, and others kept the trains running, and rail cars and equipment were made locally. Some of the city's biggest industries included the H. H. Babcock Company (the largest carriage and wagon manufacturing company in the country) and the New York Air and Brake Company. Smaller ventures made steam engines, lamps, and clocks, as well as milling flour and baking. Companies used the railroad to import raw material and export their products. In particular, the railroad facilitated the transportation of trees from the Adirondacks to the city's paper mills. Additionally, with growing wealth, railroads brought entertainment to Watertown in the way of fairs and the circus.

The city grew rapidly between 1870 and 1910; the population nearly tripled in this period from 10,697 to 31,285. Population growth increased demand for housing. Initial development had concentrated around Public Square on the south side of the Black River; Mill Street led from the square to the first manufacturing area along the water. The first multi-dwelling houses in Watertown were two- and three-family houses, which were mostly wood frame vernacular buildings.<sup>13</sup> These houses were built in the same neighborhoods as single-family homes, similar in appearance to single family houses. By the turn of the century, apartment buildings in Watertown had developed in three main locations with the remainder scattered throughout the city: around the Public Square where apartments were located on the upper floors of commercial buildings; along the river close to the factories; and on the west side near the railroad. The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments were the most ambitious, as they were sited around the corner from the most prestigious neighborhood in Watertown.

The west side of Watertown, south of the Public Square had very little development until the 1880s. Later, modest housing was built to the north and west of the railroad lines serving these manufacturing areas and around the railroad yards just northwest of the intersection of Holcomb and Mullin Streets. However, the area around the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments developed as upper and upper-middle class housing. One block away on Clinton Street was the Emma Flower Taylor Mansion (NR, 2002), built in 1896-97 for the daughter of a late-nineteenth century governor of New York. The First Methodist Church of Watertown later moved to the back half of the lot of her residence to better serve its members. The 1909-1949 Sanborn Map shows the proximity of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments to the large houses on Clinton Street on large lots and the church.

As elsewhere, the need for middle-class housing was the motive for the development of apartment housing in the city. Apartment buildings were never as common as single-family homes in Watertown, but there were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Comprehensive Historic and Architectural Resources Survey, (New York 1989): 47-48

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around 70 in 1913 and 94 by 1933. Most of the buildings were small, with fewer than ten units, and many had as few as three or four units. One exception was the Solar Building on Franklin Street off Public Square, built in 1907 by prolific Watertown contractor, John A. Solar. This ornate, six-story building had 68 units. Unlike New York City, there was not one particular luxury building that changed opinions on apartment living in Watertown; it was the great need for housing in the early twentieth century that sparked development citywide in a range of styles to appeal to a range of tenants.

South of the Public Square, other apartment buildings appeared in neighborhoods that were historically middle class, single-family neighborhoods. One example, Plymouth Flats, was a Colonial Revival building constructed around 1905 at 152 Academy Street; it held just four apartments and the scale of the building fit in with the surrounding single-family homes. West of Washington Street – the "west side" of Watertown – was an even more attractive neighborhood because it was secluded from the busy commercial and industrial areas, yet close enough for easy access. The West Side developed from the 1860s through the 1890s and featured a golf course at the corner of Holcomb and Flower Streets.<sup>14</sup> This was where the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments was built between 1908 and 1910.

### The Architecture and Architects

The first half of the building – the Abingdon Apartments – was built in 1908 for Watertown lawyer and real estate professional, Abner B. Brown, who owned real estate throughout the city.<sup>15</sup> It was initially listed in the 1908 Watertown city directory under the name, the Brown Apartments; yet, an advertisement later that same year refers to it as the Abingdon Apartments. In 1910, construction began of the New Abingdon, the part of the building that faces south onto Mullin Street. "Abner Brown is starting work on the addition which will be made to the Abington apartments in Holcomb street."<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, the two buildings were known as the Old and New Abingdon, or referred to as the New Abingdon and the "annex."<sup>17</sup> At a later time, the addition was also known as the Linden Apartments.

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments were built by contractor Harry Burns and designed by A. F. Lansing, both from Watertown. The 1910 Census lists Harry Burns's occupation as bricklayer. Addison Farwell Lansing (1870-1929) was a prominent architect who worked throughout Watertown and northern New York. He was born in Vineland, New Jersey, but his mother was born in Watertown and he was related to Robert Lansing, secretary of state under President Woodrow Wilson. After graduating from the University of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Comprehensive Historic and Architectural Resources Survey, City of Watertown, NY. December 1989, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> 1908 is the year the Abingdon Apartments first appear in the directory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> "Building Material Firm Kept Busy at Watertown," The Post Standard, Syracuse. 20 April 1910.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> "Cellars Flooded," Watertown Daily Times, June 8, 1914.

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Pennsylvania in 1892, Lansing worked with the firm of Crawford Coates.<sup>18</sup> He came to Watertown four years later. At various points in his career, he worked for Horatio A. Ramsey, as a solo practitioner, and in partnership with Harry W. Greene in the firm Lansing & Greene.

Addison Farwell Lansing's most famous work was Watertown's Roswell P. Flower Library (NR, 1980), built between 1914 and 1917, when Lansing was supervising architect with the firm Orchard, Lansing, and Joralemon.<sup>19</sup> Other commissions range from a simple warehouse on J. B. Wise Place serving W.W. Conde Hardware to major landmarks like the Jefferson County Savings Bank, Annex to the New York Trust Company Building, and Jefferson Street National Bank. He also received commissions for public schools, at least two golf clubs, and the Memorial Health Building (1923) on Park Place. Lansing also designed churches and residences, including a colonial revival house on Mullin Street and the 1917-18 home of Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor on South Massey Street (where she moved after leaving the National Register-listed Emma Flower Taylor Mansion on Clinton Street).<sup>20</sup>

Lansing knew the community well and ensured that the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments fit the neighborhood. He lived nearby at 140 Ten Eyck Street and had occasionally been a guest of Emma Flower Taylor – once, in 1913, as Pickwick at a "Dickens Party." The building, although larger than the houses on either side, had an appealing yellow-brick Classical Revival façade and its scale was not out of place with the mansions on Clinton Street. The apartments offered janitor service and the latest upgrades in comfort. They also incorporated design elements that addressed contemporary concerns with light and fire safety. Light and ventilation were key components to attracting middle- and upper-middle-class tenants, and U-shaped patterns such as the plan of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments added more light than traditional light shafts. Every room had a window to the outside, and most had cross-ventilation. By the early twentieth century many cities had adopted new fire codes in response to increased concern for fire safety – these measures required secondary egress, as is found in the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments.

As Kilham described, the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments falls into the category of a house-keeping apartment. When first built, the local press touted the Abingdon as a "high class apartment."<sup>21</sup> The building was designed to draw in more wealthy tenants by offering five-room layouts, hot water, and the "finest finish and best location."<sup>22</sup> The five-room layout allowed for a clear separation of the public spaces like the interior

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Note: Another source says that Lansing was in the offices of Carter & Day in Philadelphia and S. F. Brown of Trenton, N. J. during this time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Jane K. Schweizer, "Watertown Masonic Temple," NR Nomination 1980. This appears to have been a temporary partnership; on the winning competition entry, the firm is identified as resident in Niagara Falls.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "New York Architect: Addison Farwell Lansing," in James Sullivan, Ed., *History of New York State*, *1523-1927* (New York: Lewis Historic Publishing Co, 1927), 158-159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Apartments," *Watertown Daily Times.* May 5, 1909.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "Apartments," *Watertown Daily Times*. December 10, 1910.

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corridors and living rooms, from the private spaces like bedrooms and service areas such as the kitchen. The rooms were well lit and the building's layout kept adjacent apartments separated from each other for a sense of privacy. As the typology suggests, the apartments offered residents housekeeping services through the live-in janitor in the basement apartment. Advertisements bragged that the apartments offered "steam heat and every improvement."<sup>23</sup> The workmanship of the early twentieth century wooden trim, doors, wainscoting, and stair railings sought to entice middle- and upper-middle-class tenants. In Watertown, many of the early multi-family housing options had been geared towards working class families and were located closer to the congested industrial center and commercial areas. Nestled in a residential area, the Abingdon and New Abingdon apartments truly offered a respite from the Public Square and rail yards while still being conveniently nearby.

The apartments' success is reflected by looking at the residents who called it home. The building was a short distance from the commercial center of town, and state and federal census records show that a variety of professionals and office workers lived in the building. In the 1910 census, which covered only the Abingdon, the majority of residents hailed from New York, New Hampshire, Illinois, and Canada. Tenants included a lawyer and newspaper editor, but also others moving into the middle class such as a contractor, stenographer, railroad engineer, and dressmaker. The units housed mostly families and couples. The 1920s reveal more diverse demographics, with residents born in New York, New Hampshire, Canada, Norway, England, and Greece. The mix of occupations remained firmly upper-middle and middle-class and included a bank president, treasurer, salesmen, dressmaker, and conductor (as well as the janitor for the apartments). One family of seven spanned three generations.

### After the Period of Significance

In the 1930s, professions included attorney, accountant, president of an oil company, hairdresser, and teacher. Nearly all the residents were born in New York, with a few from Indiana and Massachusetts. However, the Depression led to a change in the composition of the tenants. The building was now more than twenty years old and rents – and amenities – may have been reduced to fill vacancies. (This appears to have been the period when the apartments in the Abingdon half of the building were subdivided.) In the 1940s, resident professions included a waitress, maid, bank teller, operator, and clerks. By 1958, city directories indicate that approximately one third of the units were vacant. In 1971, the building was sold to be redeveloped as affordable low and middle income apartments. The building has been operating as an affordable housing complex since. In 2017, with the aid of historic preservation tax credits, the building was rehabilitated for continued use as an apartment building.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> "To Rent." Watertown Daily Times. October 13, 1913.

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#### Conclusion

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments is locally significant as an example of a middle to upper-middleclass housing option in Watertown in the first part of the twentieth century. The building served its target population from 1908 through the Depression, and, today, operates as public housing with a mix of low and middle-income residents. The original architectural layout of multi-bedroom flats derived from precedents in New York City that made apartment living acceptable to the middle class, and reflected new standards for access, safety, and household convenience. It incorporated elements of light and fire safety, and, additionally, offered janitor-service, which was essential to attracting more wealthy tenants to the building and a key component to the housekeeping typology. Very few of these building types remain today in Watertown.

The Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments also reflect one aspect of the practice of Addison Farwell Lansing, one of Watertown's best-known architects. These apartments are not as high-style as the Flower Library or South Massey Street home of Emma Flower Taylor, but they show Lansing's ability to adapt and appeal to a different target audience to provide much-needed housing in the city of Watertown. It retains a good level of historic integrity.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section <u>9</u> Page <u>2</u>

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

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---15th Census of Population, 1930. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. http://www.ancestry.com/.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the enclosed maps with scale.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments consists of all property historically and currently associated with the building.

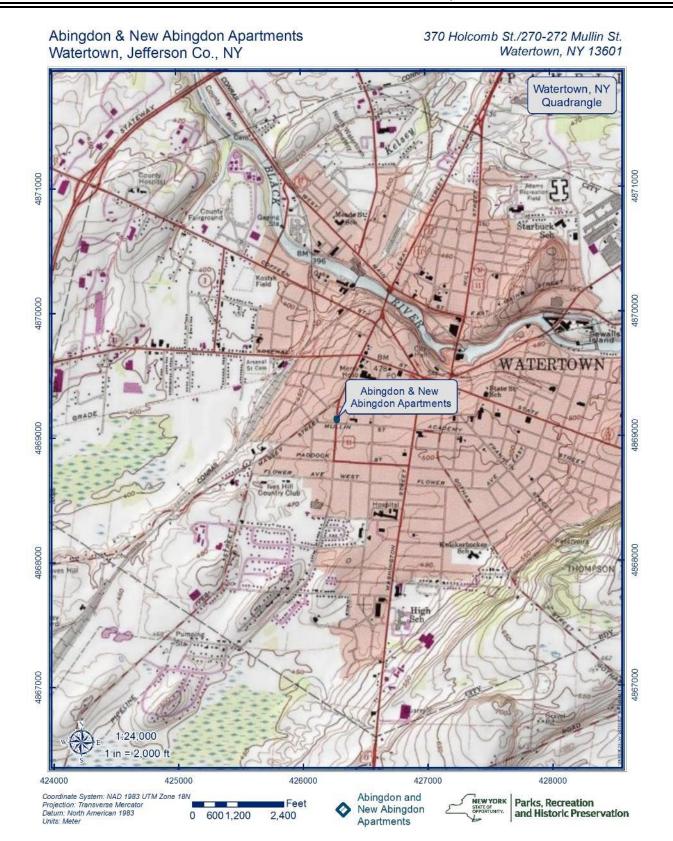
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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



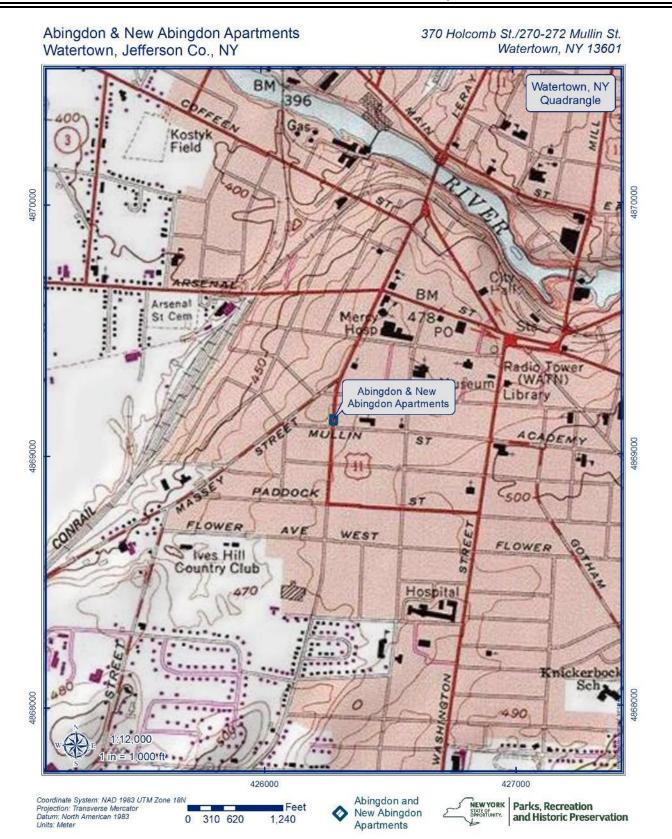
OMB No. 1024-0018

# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 3

ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



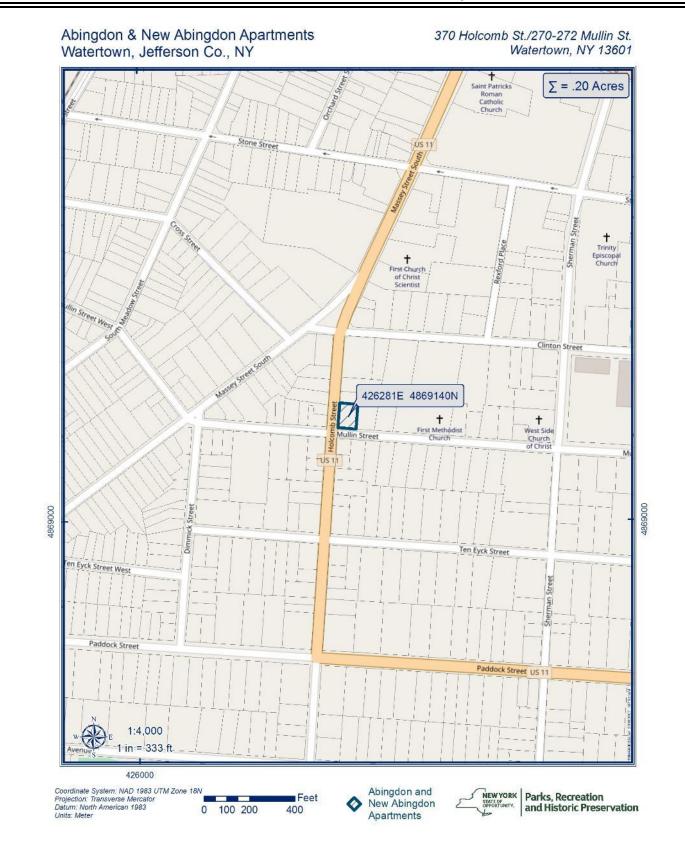
OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



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**United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

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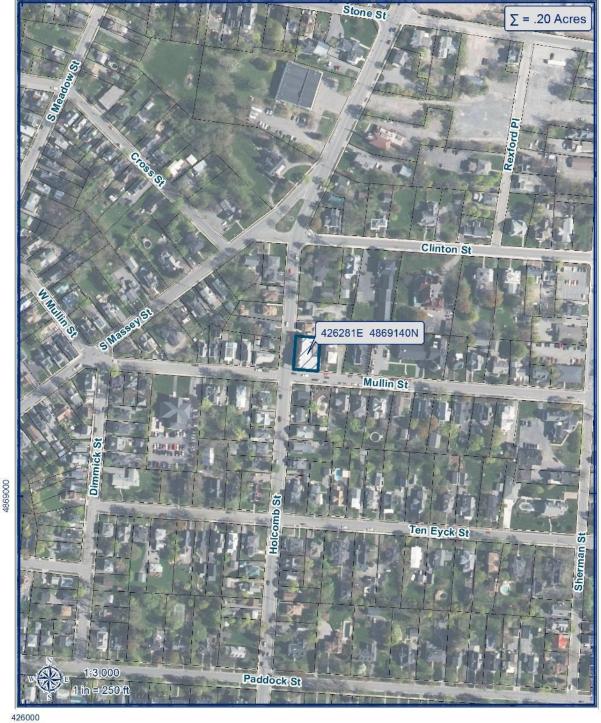
Section 10 Page 5

ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York **County and State** 

Abingdon & New Abingdon Apartments Watertown, Jefferson Co., NY

370 Holcomb St./270-272 Mullin St. Watertown, NY 13601



486900C

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N Projection: Transverse Mercator Datum: North American 1983 Units: Meter

Feet 0 75 150 300

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NEW YORK OFFORTUNITY. And Historic Preservation

#### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

#### Photo Log:

Name of Property:	Abingdon & New Abingdon Apartments
City or Vicinity:	Watertown
County:	Jefferson
State:	New York
Photographer:	Emily Dominijanni
Date Photographed:	February 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, south and east elevations, looking northwest
Photo 2 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, south elevation main entrance, looking north
Photo 3 of 15: Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments, south and west elevations, looking northeast
Photo 4 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, west elevation, looking east.
Photo 5 of 15: Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments, north and west elevations, looking southwest
Photo 6 of 15: Abingdon Apartments, north elevation main entrance, looking west
Photo 7 of 15: Abingdon Apartments, north elevation, looking southwest
Photo 8 of 15: Abingdon Apartments, north elevation, looking southwest
Photo 9 of 15: Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments, courtyard, looking south
Photo 10 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, interior stair, looking south
Photo 11 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, interior corridor, looking northwest
Photo 12 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, unit bedroom, looking south
Photo 13 of 15: New Abingdon Apartments, unit living room, looking south

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

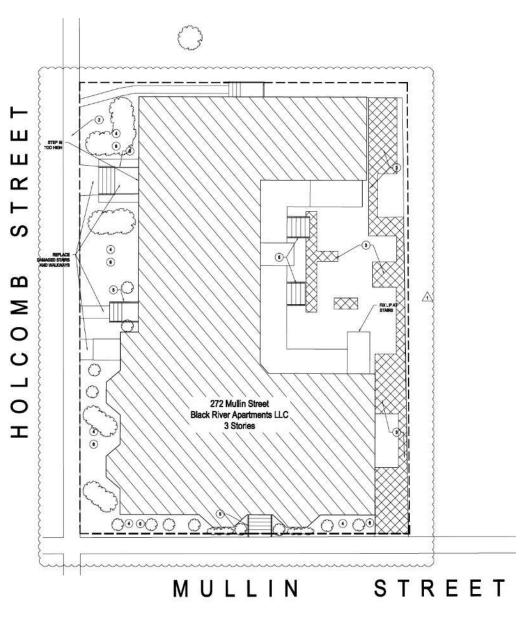
### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 11 Page 2

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

#### Additional Information



Current Site Plan

OMB No. 1024-0018

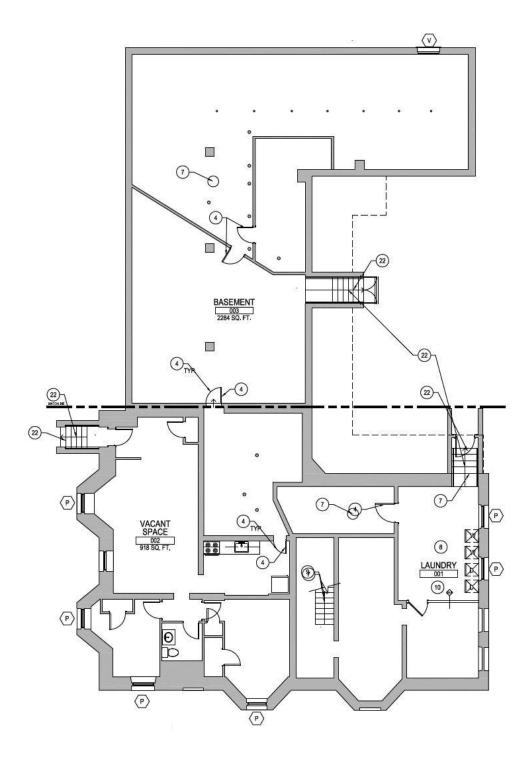
# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State

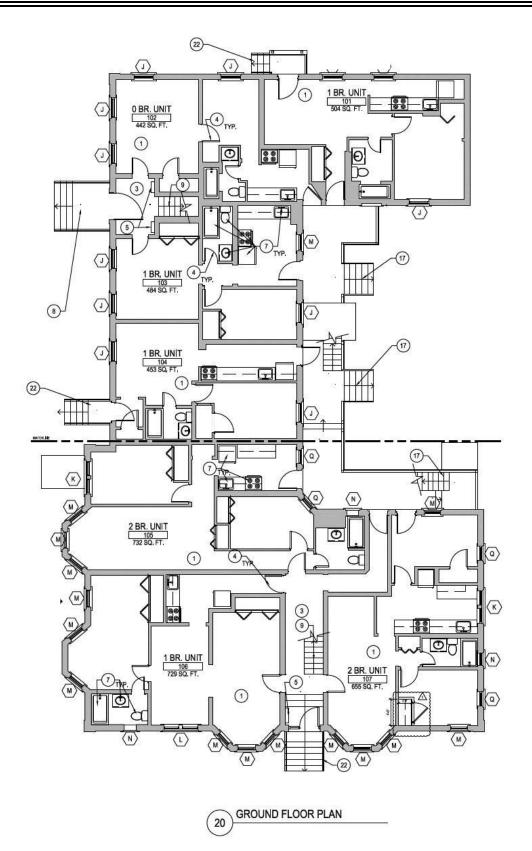


10 BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

#### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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#### ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



Figure 1. Residential neighborhood prior to construction of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1902* 

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 6

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

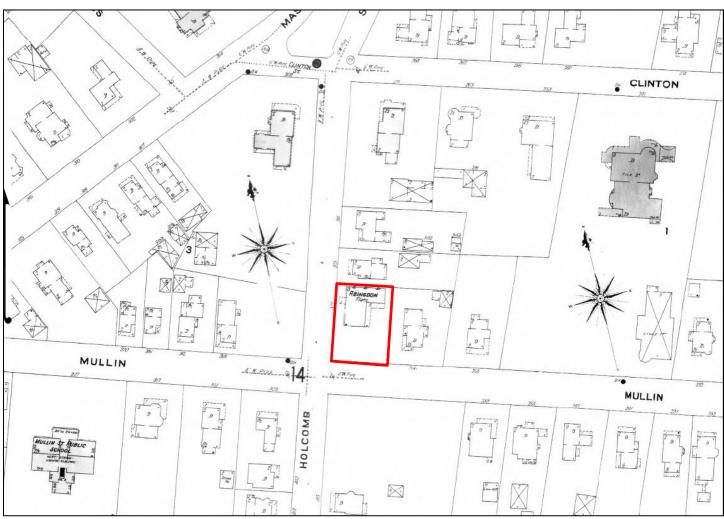


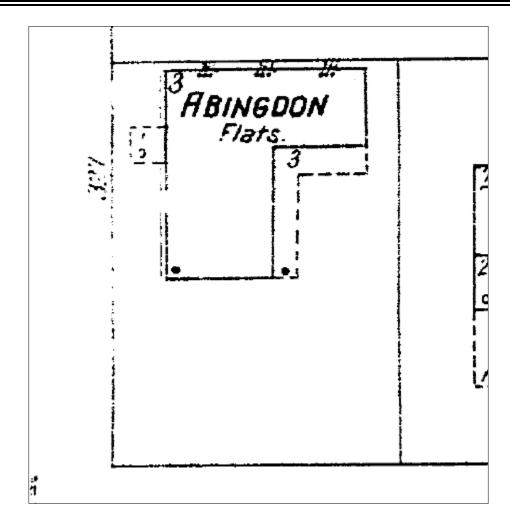
Figure 2. Residential neighborhood post construction of the Abingdon, but before the New Abingdon Apartments were built, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1909.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section <u>11</u> Page <u>7</u>

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State



Detail, Sanborn Map (1909)

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# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

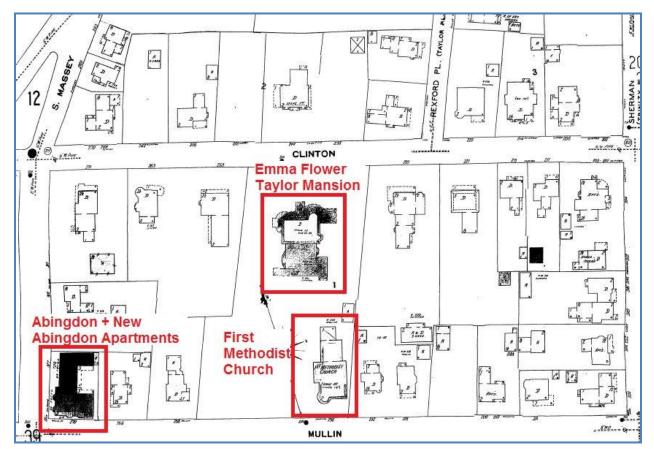


Figure 3. Residential neighborhood of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1949

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section <u>11</u> Page <u>9</u>

# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

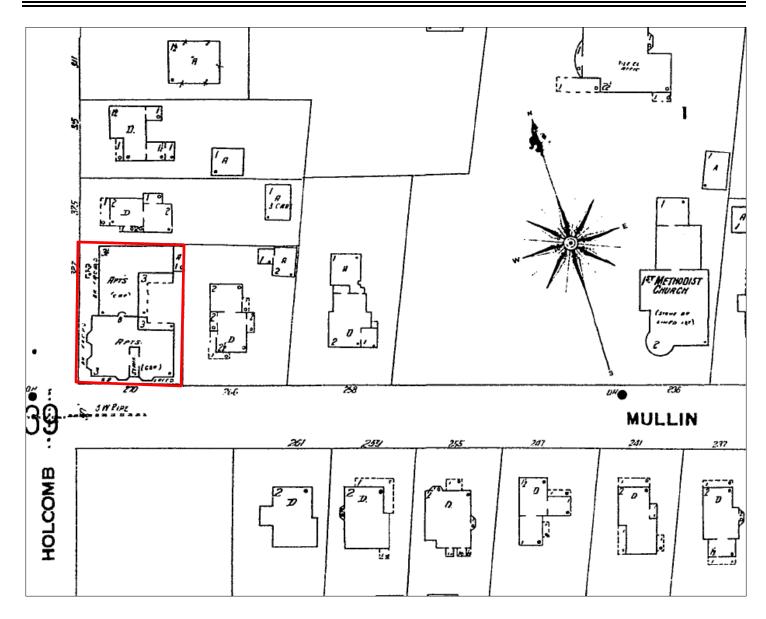


Figure 4. Residential neighborhood of the Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1958

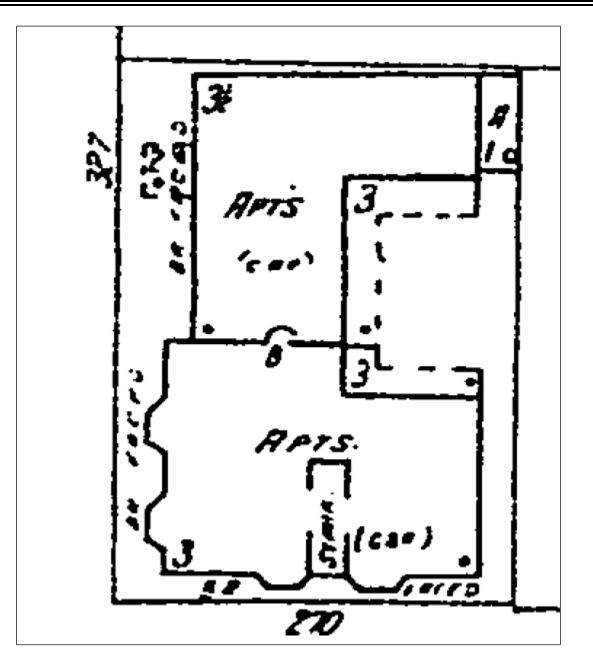
OMB No. 1024-0018

# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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# ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS



Detail, Sanborn Map 1958

NPS Form 10-900a (8-86)

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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## ABINGDON & NEW ABINGDON APARTMENTS

Name of Property Jefferson County, New York County and State



Figure 5. Abingdon Apartments, ca. 1980s Source: Nostalgic Watertown NY































## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination					
Property Name:	Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments					
Multiple Name:						
State & County:	NEW YORK, Jefferson					
Date Received: Date of Pending 10/2/2018 10/25/2018			e of 16th Day: I 11/9/2018	Date of 45th Day: 11/16/2018	Date of Weekly List: 11/9/2018	
Reference number:	SG100003114					
Nominator:	State					
Reason For Review:						
Appeal		<u>X</u> PDIL	<u>X</u> PDIL		Text/Data Issue	
SHPO Request		Landsca	Landscape		Photo	
Waiver		National	<u>National</u>		Map/Boundary	
Resubmission		Mobile F	Mobile Resource		Period	
Other		TCP	TCP		Less than 50 years	
		CLG				
X Accept Return Reject11/9/2018 Date						
Abstract/Summary Comments:						
Recommendation/ Criteria						
Reviewer Alexis A		Discipline	Historian			
Telephone (202)35		Date				
DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No						

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



## Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO Governor ROSE HARVEY Commissioner



27 September 2018

Alexis Abernathy National Park Service National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following eight nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Norwich Pharmacal Company Warehouse, Chenango County Christ Church, Nassau County First Reformed Church of College Point, Queens County First African Methodist Episcopal Church: Bethel, New York County North Park Branch Library, Erie County Methodist Episcopal Church of Jacksonville, Tompkins County Chandler Street Industrial Buildings, Erie County Abingdon and New Abingdon Apartments, Jefferson County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

00

Kathleen LaFrank National Register Coordinator New York State Historic Preservation Office