

563305

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cornell Arms

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1230 Pendleton Street

City or town: Columbia State: SC County: Richland

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

	<u>11/27/2018</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

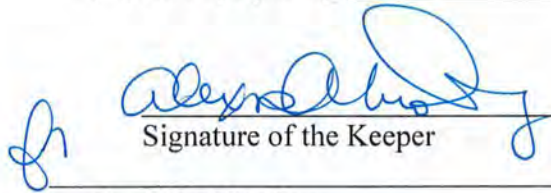
Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

 Signature of the Keeper

1-21-19 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
- COMMERCE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/specialty store
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
- COMMERCE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/specialty store
-
-
-

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick; Glass; Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Cornell Arms, located at 1230 Pendleton Street in Columbia, South Carolina, is a steel-framed eighteen-story apartment building with a red brick veneer. Constructed in 1949 by the regionally-renowned Southeastern architecture firm Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, & Wolff (LBC&W), the modern International Style building was the first high-rise built in the Southeast using funds from the Federal Housing Administration's Section 608 mortgage program. The building's cross-shaped footprint, reinforced steel and concrete construction, flat roof, minimal ornamentation, and ground floor retail space are typical features of other FHA projects of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Located on the corner of Pendleton and Sumter Streets in downtown Columbia, Cornell Arms is in an urban setting with no historic or current landscaping. Although the building has undergone some alterations over the years, Cornell Arms retains a high degree of historic integrity through its original footprint, original materials, and exterior details and fenestrations which reflect its mid-twentieth century period of construction.¹

¹ Special thanks to Caroline Doyle, Alexandra Gonzalez, Chelsea Grayburn, and Robert Olguin who wrote an early architectural description of Cornell Arms found in Jane Campbell, et al., "Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff: Building Modern Columbia." Final report prepared for the City of Columbia and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Spring 2015.

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Narrative Description

Exterior

Cornell Arms is a cross-shaped, eighteen-story, steel frame structure reaching 210 feet in height. It is located in the northeast corner of the block bounded by Sumter Street to the east, Pendleton Street to the north, Main Street to the west, and College Street to the south. This urban block of Columbia is mixed-use; in addition to the residential/commercial Cornell Arms, the block includes other commercial spaces, an educational building used by the University of South Carolina, and surface parking lots. The north-facing building features a red brick veneer in a stretcher running bond with cast stone accents. An L-shaped ground floor base supports the above seventeen residential floors that stretch in arms in each cardinal direction to form a cross. The southwest corner, the open space of the L, is occupied by the residents' parking lot. Along the north and east elevations, the ground floor extends out beyond the cross-shaped core of the building such that the exterior walls are flush with the ends of the north, east, and west arms. Atop the flat roof is a small central brick penthouse that originally contained limited kitchen facilities, a lounge area, and the building's two elevator shafts. Two maintenance rooms and a 5,000-gallon hot water tank are also located on the roof.

Ground Floor Exterior

The areas of the L-shaped ground floor that do not support the cross-shaped residential floors above are covered with a flat roof. The retail spaces on the east and north elevations are composed mostly of large, continuous plate glass and decorative slate, differentiating the ground floor from the brick veneer of the residential floors. A projecting concrete string course also demarcates the ground floor from those above.

The main entrance of Cornell Arms apartments is centered on the north elevation and occupies the ground floor of the cross's north arm. The entrance is recessed from the face of the building. The ground between the entrance and the sidewalk is covered with white and green terrazzo tiling. A projecting awning extends from the white concrete cornice to create a sheltered entryway. Above the double front doors is the original signage with the name of the building, "Cornell Arms," in teal metal lettering in Huxley Vertical font. The main entrance is composed of plate glass, divided into two doors and a center fixed pane by metal mullions, above which is a continuous one-light transom. The center pane is accented with three thin horizontal metal bars at the height of the door handles running parallel to the 12" high piece of purple quarried rock that rests at the base of the pane. The entire metal framework is painted a deep purple-brown, complementing the purple-quarried rock. The walls on either side of the quarried rock are tiled with slate and contain one single-pane window.

To the east of the main entrance is plate glass divided by vertical mullions. Two glass doors lead to a lounge area off Cornell Arms' lobby and a retail space. The northwestern corner of the ground floor is tiled with slate.

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The area to the west of the main entrance, extending from the eastern edge of the north arm to the northern edge of the east arm, is entirely composed of floor-to-ceiling plate glass divided by vertical and horizontal metal mullions. This northeast corner is the only rounded corner of the building. Centered in the rounded corner is an entrance with a metal-framed glass double doors leading to commercial space.

On the east elevation, the area from the northern edge of the east arm to the southeast corner of the L-shaped base is composed of large plate glass windows divided by vertical and horizontal metal mullions. The wall surface between the plate glass is tiled with slate. This area of the east elevation has three entrances, two of which are single doors. The third, closest to the southeast corner, is recessed, canted, and flanked by two plate glass windows. This is the main entrance to the commercial space occupying this area of the ground floor. The string course of this section of the elevation is distinguished by a black awning, below which is another simple concrete string course. The building's cornerstone is located in the southeastern corner near the ground; it includes the Freemason's "Square and Compass" symbol and the following inscription: "Colonel James F. Risher / A.D. 1949 / A.L. SQ49."

The south elevation of the ground floor from the southwestern edge of the south arm to the southeast corner is mostly brick, with one single-pane window near the slate-tiled corner. Unlike the commercial and retail spaces in the other corners of the ground floor that abut the sidewalk, the southwest corner is surrounded by a parking lot (the open area of the L-shaped ground floor). The east elevation of the south arm and the south elevation of the east arm form the corner of the cross-shaped core of the building. The ground floor of the south arm's east elevation features a small brick extension enclosing a water tank, and one single-door entrance leading to the apartment building's stair lobby. The east arm's south elevation consists of three windows and a fire door.

Residential Floors Exterior

The four arms of the cross constituting the residential floors of the building each consist of three elevations. The north arm at the front of the building is slightly shorter than the east, south, and west arms, which are of equal length. The typical window style of the entire building is a one-over-one sash metal window. Cornell Arms features corner windows that are surrounded by masonry "quoins." While not traditional quoins, the building's distinguished corners suggests the effect of quoins that run the vertical height of the building beginning above the ground floor. This design is present on all corners of the building except those on the southern arm of the cross. On each floor, thick black metal horizontal banding runs along the top and bottom of windows and encloses all windows except those forming the exterior corners of each arm, which are edged by the "quoins." Similar vertical banding runs the height of the building and divides the white masonry from the brick veneer.

North Arm of Cross

The shorter north arm of Cornell Arms' cross-shaped plan faces Pendleton Street and includes the building's main entrance. The east elevation above the ground floor consists of four bays. Moving from south to north, the first bay includes a metal framed one-over-one sash window;

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the second bay consists of a double one-over-one sash window enclosed by the horizontal banding; the third bay is solid brick veneer; and the fourth bay consists of a one-over-one sash window in the masonry corner separated from the brick veneer by the vertical banding. The north elevation is five bays. From west to east, the first bay includes the corner window; the second bay is solid brick veneer; the third bay consists of a one-over-one sash window (making the north arm the only arm to have a central window in the corresponding elevations of the other arms); the fourth bay mirrors the second; and the fifth bay mirrors the first. The west elevation consists of four bays. Moving from north to south, the first bay includes the corner window; the second and third bays are solid brick veneer (distinguishing the west elevation from the east); and the fourth bay is a one-over-one sash window.

West Arm of Cross

The building's west arm consists of a north, west, and south elevation. The north elevation, from east to west, is six bays: the first bay consists of a triple one-over-one sash window; the second bay is solid brick veneer; the third bay consists of a one-over-one sash window; the fourth bay consists of a double one-over-one sash window; the fifth bay mirrors the second; and the sixth bay is the typical corner window. The west elevation consists of three bays: the first and third bays are the corner windows; the second bay between them is uninterrupted brick veneer. The south elevation, from east to west, mirrors the north elevation.

South Arm of Cross

The building's south arm consists of a west, south, and east elevation. The west elevation, from north to south, is five bays: the first bay consists of a triple one-over-one sash window; the second bay is a one-over-one sash window; the third bay is a double one-over-one sash window; the fourth bay is solid brick veneer; and the fifth bay, the corner window, is a double one-over-one sash window, which is not set in the quoins-like masonry design nor separated by vertical banding like on the other arms of the cross. The south elevation is one bay, which is uninterrupted brick veneer. This elevation has two exhaust vents at ground level, one connected to the interior laundry and the other to the chiller. The east elevation, from north to south, is identical to the west elevation. The south arm has two ground-floor entrances which provide access to the parking lot on the south and west elevations of the building.

East Arm of Cross

The east arm, facing Sumter Street, is identical to the west arm of the cross.

Interior

Ground Floor

The ground floor of Cornell Arms is composed of four distinct spaces connected by short, noncontiguous, north-south hallways. These spaces, from north to south, include a vestibule and two adjacent rooms to the east and west, an entrance lobby, an elevator lobby, and a stair lobby.

Vestibule and Adjacent Rooms

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The first of the four spaces occupying the ground floor contains a vestibule and two adjacent rooms to the east and west. The vestibule is a transitional space connecting the exterior to the building's main lobby. As such, the vestibule visually draws on elements from the exterior, including purple quarried rock on its south, east, and west walls, and white and green terrazzo tiling on the floor that extends from the sidewalk outside through the vestibule and into the lobby. The two glass doors leading from the vestibule into the lobby are slightly tinted, obstructing the view to the interior entrance lobby. Unlike the transparent and unlocked exterior doors, a wall surfaced in quarried rock dividing two glass doors reduces visibility and creates a barrier between the public exterior and private interior spaces.

Matching fixed square windows with white molded casing are set in the east and west walls of the vestibule. The two rooms visible through these windows are similar, but the size of the western room is slightly smaller to accommodate the entrance lobby's lounge area to the west. Both rooms are accessible through a single-pane glazed door in their southern walls. The rest of the southern wall of both rooms is a single plate glass window, making the interior of the rooms clearly visible from the lobby. The western room is now a vending room, but has been used in the past as an office space. The room has wood laminate flooring that is not original and plaster walls. The room's north wall is divided by a structural column of Italian marble. On one side of the column is a small rectangular fixed window that opens to the exterior of the building; on the opposite side of the column is a built-in vertical shelving unit. The room to the vestibule's east is used as additional office space.

Entrance Lobby and Lounge Area

The vestibule leads to the second of the four spaces occupying the ground floor: the entrance lobby and its adjacent lounge area. The entrance lobby is a rectangular room that provides access to the first floor's office spaces and to the elevator and stair lobbies to the south accessed via a short north-south hallway. The lobby features a number of different textures and materials, including white and green terrazzo floor tiles; purple quarried rock in the baseboards; wood-paneled walls; and wooden chair rails. The southern wall of the lobby is covered in a wood veneer interrupted by a large rectangular plaster wall extending from the ceiling to the chair rail in the center of the elevator bank. Black metal ribbing divides the wood paneling horizontally throughout the space, which adds a geometric design to the paneled walls. Lighting in the entrance lobby is recessed behind gypsum tiles that are set in a grid pattern within a suspended dropped ceiling.

The west side of the entrance lobby extends into a lounge area that differs from the entrance lobby both in its function and materials. The terrazzo tiling of the entrance lobby ends at a black tile that divides it from the laminate wood flooring of the lounge. The entrance of this space can be closed off by a concealed large wooden pocket door built into the room's eastern wall. The western wall is plaster and the southern wall is clad in thin wood paneling. Two doors in the southern wall lead to office space and a staff break-room. The southern third of this room can be closed off from the rest of it by two large wooden folding doors. Much like the concealed pocket door to the lobby, these are generally kept open.

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The lounge area features recessed lighting around the edges of the dropped ceiling on a metal grid, similar to the lighting style in the lobby. The northern wall is composed of plate glass and divided into two large panels separated by metal mullions and a doorway to the exterior in the northeastern corner of the room. This door is kept locked, making the only entrance and exit points for residents through the building's vestibule and through a back door at the southwestern corner of the building. The plate glass paneling and the door closely resemble the retail spaces that extend along the rest of the northern elevation of the building.

Elevator Lobby

A short north-south hallway leads from the entrance lobby to the elevator lobby, the third of the four distinct spaces on the ground floor. Two original Otis elevators are located on the north side of the lobby. Boxed in structural columns that create wood-paneled pilasters flank the two elevators. The terrazzo floor tiling continues from the entrance lobby into the elevator lobby. The west end of the elevator lobby connects to the present office space, which is visible through a single pane glazed door. The offices are a series of connected rooms, simple in decoration, that lie behind the southern wall of the lounge space in the entrance lobby. The walls in these offices are painted plaster with a simple molded chair rail painted white, and imitation stone laminate floor tiles that possibly have replaced the original flooring.

Stair Lobby

The fourth distinct space on the ground floor is the stair lobby, accessible from the elevator lobby by a north-south hallway. Another short north-south hallway connects the offices to the stair lobby. This hallway has plaster walls and an eastern door leading down to the basement. A set of fire doors with small rectangular fixed windows designate the stair lobby as a distinct, more utilitarian space than the lobbies to its north. The stair lobby's walls are exposed brick in a stretcher running bond pattern also used on the exterior of the building. The floor is covered in mosaic tiles and the baseboards are made of a black laminate tile, which provide a contrast from the quarried rock baseboards found throughout the other ground floor spaces.

Two fire stairwells, a laundry room, two semi-public bathrooms, and a set of glass double doors leading outside to the parking lot can be accessed from the stair lobby. These doors and the main doors on the north elevation through the vestibule are the only entrances to the buildings that residents may use. The two stairwells with cinderblock walls and cast concrete steps are fire stairs contained within the building's central core behind the elevators. They run from the basement up to the roof in a scissor-stair configuration, such that the two separate stairwells are contained in one vertical shaft.

Access to Retail Spaces

Doors throughout the ground floor lead to retail spaces. These spaces are not intended to provide access to the apartments, making the retail outer core around the building's north and east elevations distinct from the interior areas of the apartment building.

Basement

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The basement features a series of open spaces that house pipes, provide storage, and serve as workspaces for facilities personnel. A set of heavy doors leads to the original brick-encased incinerator, currently inoperable, which once received trash through a chute that ran almost the entire height of the building. The top floor was the only floor that did not have access to the incinerator chute.

Also located in the basement is the boiler room, which has painted cinderblock walls and poured concrete floors. This room contains the original steel boilers that are responsible for heating and circulating water throughout the building. Two water tanks, one located outside on the south side of the building and the other on the roof, send water here to be heated and re-distributed throughout the building. The outside tank provides water to floors one to nine, and the tank on the roof services the rest of the building. This includes potable water, but also water circulated through copper pipes embedded in the floors of the buildings that serves as a radiant heating system, an original feature of the building. The temperature of the water in these pipes radiates enough heat to warm the concrete floors and thus heat each apartment unit. This explains why the apartment unit floors are concrete covered with laminate tile as opposed to carpet, which would inhibit the heat.

The basement's water tank is connected to a chiller, located adjacent to the building, which provided air conditioning to the floor lobbies through a series of air ducts. The apartment units' doors originally were built with enough space between the bottom of the door and the floor to allow air circulation from the floor hallways into the apartment units. While the building has retained use of the central air conditioning, the original doors have since been replaced with lower doors, largely due to the introduction of window air conditioning units.

Residential Spaces

Cornell Arms technically has eighteen floors, but due to superstitious belief, there is no "thirteenth floor."² Thus, the numbering of the floors jumps from twelve to fourteen, making the top floor the nineteenth, rather than the eighteenth.

The typical floor plan of each of the seventeen residential floors consists of six 820-square-foot two-bedroom units, one 584-square-foot one-bedroom unit, and one 365-square-foot efficiency unit (for a total of 136 units). The eight apartments on each floor occupy the four arms of the cross-shaped building, while the core consists of the floor lobby, elevators, and stairwells. The eight units are labeled A-H, with apartment A being the northwest unit and winding counterclockwise to reach H, the northeast unit. When originally constructed in 1949, the apartment building had 119 units because apartments A and H were designed as a cohesive 3-bedroom apartment. However, the three-bedroom unit was split into two apartments by sealing off the adjoining door, making apartment A an efficiency unit and apartment H a one-bedroom unit. The two-bedroom units are located in the east, west, and south arms of the cross-shaped

² According to the original owner of Cornell Arms, Cornell G. Fuller, "New York apartment buildings don't have thirteenth floors and while I'm not superstitious, what's good enough for them is good enough for me." Quoted in MacNabb, "The Cornell Story," 15.

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building, which are of equal length. The one-bedroom and efficiency units are in the shorter north arm.

The arrangement of the floor plan makes the most efficient use of the building's mechanical equipment. Placing two apartment units per wing allowed the plumbing system to reach both rooms through the adjoining wall. The placement of each apartment's kitchen in the same place on each floor also allows for the potable water line and gas lines to run easily throughout the building. The materials, fixtures, and paint colors are consistent throughout the different units. In each apartment, the walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are concrete with a laminate tiling through which the radiant heating passes.

Floor Lobbies

Beginning in the northwest corner of the north arm of the cross is apartment A, the efficiency unit. Moving counterclockwise are apartments B and C, which are two-bedroom apartments occupying the west arm of the cross. In the southwest corner of the floor lobby, adjacent to apartment C, is a small utility room. Flanking each side of the stairwells on the south wall are apartments D and E, also two-bedroom apartments, which are inset with a small two-foot hallway and occupy the south arm of the cross. Apartments F and G are located in the east arm and are also two-bedroom apartments. Apartment H is located at the end of a small hallway that extends north from the floor's central lobby and is in the north arm of the cross. On the east side of this hallway is a small room that contained the incinerator chute. The original metal chute is still extant but is no longer functional. Located between the small room and apartment F is a utility closet.

The lobby floors on levels two through nineteen retain the original poured concrete covered with laminate tile and the walls throughout the building are of the original plaster. On every floor there are four pilasters that box in the structural supports of the building, two on either side of the elevators and two on either side of the stairs. Remnants of the original doorbell system, no longer in use, are visible in each of the eight apartments on the seventeen floors. The original mailboxes found on every floor are no longer in use and are painted over.

While floors two through eighteen are almost identical, the nineteenth floor is noticeably different. The hallway is carpeted, the crown molding is more elaborate, and the doors have Colonial Revival details including brass knockers. The more elaborate ornamentation suggests that the top floor was meant to attract a wealthier clientele than the other floors.

Two-Bedroom Units (Apartments B-G)

A typical two-bedroom apartment has a rectangular floor plan that includes five rooms, three storage areas, and one hallway.

Upon entrance of a two-bedroom unit is a three-foot long entrance vestibule that leads into the 15-by-16-foot rectangular central living/dining room. The wall closest to the entrance contains a shallow rectangular storage space with a built-in shelving unit approximately three-feet wide. Along the opposite wall are pilasters covering the building's structural supports. Centrally

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located on the wall of the apartment sharing the building's exterior is a triple one-over-one sash window.

An L-shaped hallway with a central ceiling light fixture connects the living/dining room with the rest of the rooms in the apartment. Along the interior wall of the long arm of the hallway are two doorways that lead into two separate rooms, the kitchen and a bedroom. As the hallway takes a ninety-degree turn, there are two entrances into the final two rooms of the apartment, a small, rectangular bathroom, and the second bedroom. A small linen closet with six built-in shelves is positioned in the corner of the L, adjacent to the bathroom's entrance.

The 6-by-13-foot kitchen is a rectangular galley kitchen with a central circular light fixture, built-in linoleum cabinetry, and laminate countertops. A pilaster covering the structural supports breaks up the cabinetry and dictates the layout of the kitchen as it splits the kitchen in half and places the sink on one side and the refrigerator on the other. At the center of the exterior wall is a one-over-one sash window, which provides natural light for the kitchen area.

The rectangular bedroom adjacent to the kitchen is entered from the long arm of the L-shaped hallway. Structural support columns are expressed within the corners of the wall opposite that shared by the kitchen. Off of that same wall is a walk-in closet with a single built-in shelf. At the center of the exterior wall is a double one-over-one sash window.

The second bedroom is 11-by-12-foot and is located in the corner of the building. Dividing the corner are two one-over-one sash windows. In the center of the room is a ceiling light fixture. A three-foot wide closet is in the interior corner of the room and next to a boxed-in structural column; the closet shares a wall with the bathroom.

One-Bedroom Unit (Apartment H)

Apartment H is located in the north arm of the building and shares a wall with Apartment A, the efficiency unit. The rectangular floor plan includes four rooms, three storage areas, and a foyer. The entrance leads into the foyer, off of which is a small storage space. The foyer leads into both the kitchen and the living/dining room. The kitchen, which is almost rectangular except for the small area occupied by the foyer's storage space, features built-in linoleum cabinets and a one-over-one sash window in the eastern wall of the north arm.

At the end of the foyer is a 15-by-19-foot living/dining room containing three pilasters covering structural supports on two walls and in the room/building's northeastern corner. Located in the corner are two one-over-one sash windows. Another one-over-one sash window is located on the eastern wall of the north arm.

A short hallway connects the living/dining room and the bathroom and bedroom. At the west end of the hallway is a door that once led to additional rooms when the space was part of the three-bedroom unit. Behind the door, now sealed, is the efficiency unit created out of the remaining rooms of the original, larger unit. The first door on the south wall leads into the bathroom while the door on the north leads into the bedroom. Before the bedroom is a hallway closet. The

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bedroom is a 9-by-10-foot room with a one-over-one sash window on the north wall. A built-in closet is located on the south wall.

Efficiency Unit (Apartment A)

Apartment A is located in the north arm of the building and wraps around the elevators. Originally part of a three-bedroom unit, it now shares a wall with unit H, the one-bedroom unit. The apartment includes a living room, bedroom, bathroom, two closets, and a space for food preparation.

A small entry foyer leads into the living room. On the eastern wall of this hallway is a small storage room containing shelves for kitchen appliances, food storage, and a refrigerator. The living room is 10-by-11 feet with a double one-over-one sash on the western wall. There is a closet just to the right of the window on the north wall of the room. A pilaster on the southern wall expresses the structural support. The bathroom is located off of the eastern wall of the living room.

A short hallway divides the living room and bedroom. The bedroom is 10-by-12 feet. On the southern wall of the bedroom is a closet. Two one-over-one sash windows flank a boxed-in structural support column in the northwest corner of the room. Pilasters in the southwestern and northeastern corners of the room also express the structural supports.

Alterations

Overall, the interior spaces of Cornell Arms retain a considerable level of architectural integrity and historic fabric. The ground floor retains its original floor plan and most of its original materials. Besides the modification to unit floor plans creating a one-bedroom and efficiency unit out of the original three-bedroom unit, the residential floors have mostly received minor updates to the kitchens and bathrooms. The building's original mechanical systems are still used to control temperature, distribute potable water and gas, and waste water.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1948-1949

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolff (LBC&W)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Cornell Arms is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A: Social History as a high-rise apartment building representative of the architectural response to the post-World War II housing shortage and need for higher-density, multi-family living arrangements. Cornell Arms was the first elevator apartment in the Southeast funded by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) under Section 608, the program created to increase rental units for defense workers during the war and for veterans postwar. When completed in 1949, Cornell Arms was the tallest building between Richmond and Miami. The FHA and City of Columbia alike praised Cornell Arms as a modern building ushering the city into its mid-century period of expansion and offering a new type of modern living. Cornell Arms is also eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as an excellent example of Modern architecture designed by the preeminent Southeastern firm Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolff (LBC&W) in its first years as a firm. The International Style, mixed-use (commercial/residential) building expresses LBC&W's early modern design philosophy and initiated the firm's lucrative decades-long relationship with the federal government.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Social History

Cornell Arms is representative of Columbia's response to the post-World War II housing shortage crisis. Built between 1948 and 1949 primarily to provide housing for returning veterans, the high-rise apartment building fulfilled the immediate need for rental units in downtown Columbia. Like other urban centers throughout the United States, Columbia experienced a post-World War II population boom. The number of residents in the capital city increased during the war decade by thirty-nine percent from 62,300 in 1940 to 86,900 in 1950.³ While suburbs with single-family residences had grown in the early twentieth century and continued to develop in the postwar period, architects began to build urban multi-family buildings in the late 1940s. They built both large, low-rise apartment complexes and singular high-rise elevator apartments. In its central urban setting, the eighteen-story Cornell Arms is of the latter type, occupying the corner of Pendleton and Sumter streets.

Cornell Arms & Section 608

Cornell Arms apartments was one of the first Section 608 projects in Columbia and the first high-rise (elevator) apartment funded by the program in Southeast.⁴ An amendment to the

³ John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 401.

⁴ At the project's start, H. R. Hearne, chief architect for the FHA in South Carolina, noted that Cornell Arms was the "only elevator type apartment approved by the administration in the southeast." "18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton," *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948. By July of 1951, the FHA had financed fourteen elevator type apartments in South Carolina. Five of them, including Cornell Arms and the LBC&W-designed Claire Tower

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National Housing Act in May of 1942 created Section 608, a mortgage insurance program established to facilitate the construction of housing for war workers during the war and then rental properties for veterans returning from war. As a Section 608 project (FHA Project #054-42001), Cornell Arms necessarily gave preference to veterans as potential tenants and is representative of the tendency of FHA policies to benefit the white middle class rather than lower-income families or people of other races.⁵

As the first Section 608 high-rise in the Southeast, the eighteen-story Cornell Arms apartment building made a statement about modern living in the postwar world. During and after the war, developers and architects conceived of the high-rise as a symbol of growth and social progress.⁶ Tall buildings served as visual landmarks that represented the joint efforts of developers and residents to improve a city's living conditions, as well as an attempt to boost the local economy by bringing together large numbers of people in a city's downtown area.⁷ During the postwar building boom, FHA funds supported the construction of various types of housing – single-family homes, walk-up apartments, and high-rise apartments – but the high-rises were the most modern and elegant of the types and most appropriate for urban centers. Therefore, while the construction of multi-unit high-rises like Cornell Arms pragmatically could accommodate more people more quickly following the war's end, the high-rise also came to embody ideas of postwar social and economic change. In Columbia, the addition of a modern elevator apartment to the city's skyline optimistically announced that the postwar period would be one of growth and expansion for the downtown area, and the marketing of multi-family high-rises as an attractive alternative for modern living began.

Columbia's First "Skyscraper Apartment"

The Columbia Record first announced the intended construction of a new "skyscraper apartment" to be funded by the FHA in downtown Columbia on February 4, 1948. The proposed \$1.5 million apartment, already named Cornell Arms, would have seventeen residential floors containing 119 apartments (102 two-bedroom units and seventeen three-bedroom units) over ground floor retail space. According to Senator Edgar A. Brown, who announced the proposed project, plans designed by the architectural firm Stork & Lyles, associates Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff, were nearly complete and had been submitted to the FHA for approval. In advancing the project, Brown represented the financial backer and owner of the new building, Cornell G. Fuller

apartments (1950) in Columbia, had 100 units or more. "FHA Approves 4,395 Loans for Living Units in S.C. in Year," *Columbia Record*, July 9, 1951.

⁵ Accordingly, rent was set initially by FHA standards at \$132/month for a three-bedroom unit, \$118/month for a two-bedroom unit, and \$95/month for a one-bedroom unit. "Workers Clear Site for New Cornell Arms," *State* (Columbia), May 24, 1948; Cornell Arms Construction Begins Next Tuesday; Last Financial Step Completed," *State* (Columbia), July 2, 1948; "Cornell Arms to Be Opened November 4," *State* (Columbia), October 21, 1949. In comparison, low rent apartments such as the FHA-funded Washington Carver Village in Columbia, also designed by LBC&W and built specifically for African Americans, had a rent set at eight to nine dollars per week, less than half the cost of Cornell Arms, "Negro Housing Project Will Cost \$1,834,000," *State* (Columbia), June 10, 1949.

⁶ Matthew Gordon Lasner, "Architect as Developer and the Postwar U.S. Apartment, 1945–1960," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 28.

⁷ Sidney Johnston, "Modern Apartment Complexes in Georgia, 1936-1954," National Register of Historic Places, Historic Context Report (2003), 34.

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of Barnwell, South Carolina.⁸ In the early 1930s Fuller had served as mayor of Barnwell, chairman of the local WPA, and owner of the Bank of Barnwell, which he organized with Senator Brown. He headed several construction companies, including Fuller Contracting Company, throughout the 1930s and 1940s.⁹ Herman E. Bailey, the state director of the FHA in South Carolina, encouraged Fuller to build Columbia's first high-rise apartment and gave the project its name.¹⁰ He remarked that persuading Fuller to take on the project "was one of the easiest deals I ever put across. He was sold on it from the moment I mentioned it."¹¹ The City of Columbia's FHA office was sold on it, too, as Bailey said that when the project was first proposed to the Columbia office "there was no question as to the need for additional rental housing," especially in the downtown area where demand was "most urgent."¹² Fuller, working with the Columbia law firm of Fulmer & Barnes, chartered Cornell Arms, Inc., on February 10, 1948, and filed the application to the FHA for mortgage insurance the next day.¹³

Cornell Arms was a highly-anticipated project in Columbia and received much attention in the press because of its novelty. Before construction could begin, Columbia city council and the state legislature first had to give clearance for the project because it violated the zoning ordinance limiting buildings to a fifteen-story height. In 1948, the South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 698 which amended the State Building Code to allow for construction of a structure up to eighteen stories, or 225 feet in height.¹⁴ At a height of approximately 210 feet, the State newspaper proudly announced that Cornell Arms was "expected to be the tallest [building] in both Carolinas and Georgia."¹⁵ In fact, in 1948 Cornell Arms was the tallest building yet to be constructed through the FHA's rental housing program.¹⁶

Additionally, Cornell Arms made the news because of its costly construction: with an expected total cost of \$1.5 million, the FHA agreed to insure the project at \$1,207,000, the highest loan made on a building in the state at the time.¹⁷ The John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance company of Boston agreed to finance the FHA loan. Local mortgage bankers August Kohn and Company placed the 33-year loan with 4 per cent interest rate with the Hancock Company. However, the Citizens and Southern National Bank in Columbia advanced financing during construction and

⁸ "Skyscraper Apartment House Planned for City," *Columbia Record*, February 4, 1948.

⁹ "Barnwell Native Dies in Florida," *State* (Columbia), February 21, 1972.

¹⁰ "18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton," *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948.

¹¹ MacNabb, "The Cornell Story," 15.

¹² "Loan for New Cornell Arms Apartment Completed July 1," *Columbia Record*, June 9, 1948.

¹³ "Columbia Arms is Chartered," *Columbia Record*, February 10, 1948; "Fuller Seeks \$1,266,000 in FHA Insurance," *Columbia Record*, February 11, 1948. LBC&W worked with Fulmer & Barnes on other FHA projects, including the Darlington Apartments in Atlanta; "New \$5,250,000 Atlanta Apartment House Turns Into Quasi SC Project," *State* (Columbia), April 15, 1949.

¹⁴ Prior to 1948, only Greenville allowed for buildings taller than fifteen stories by an amendment which was passed to permit the construction of the Woodside Building, MacNabb, "The Cornell Story," 15; "Skyscraper Apartment House Planned for City," *Columbia Record*, February 4, 1948; "Fuller Seeks \$1,266,000 in FHA Insurance," *Columbia Record*, February 11, 1948.

¹⁵ "18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton," *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948.

¹⁶ "Workers Clear Site for New Cornell Arms," *State* (Columbia), May 24, 1948.

¹⁷ "Workers Clear Site for New Cornell Arms," *State* (Columbia), May 24, 1948.

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then transferred the loan to the Boston firm once the project was completed.¹⁸ Corresponding to the high price tag of the project, the City of Columbia issued the largest building permit of 1948 in the amount of \$783,000 for the construction of Cornell Arms.¹⁹ With finances and necessary permits in place, the FHA granted final approval of LBC&W's blueprints and specifications for the building. The construction of Cornell Arms began at the beginning of July of 1948 under the direction of Columbia-based Congaree Construction Company.²⁰

After fifteen months of construction, Cornell Arms opened to the public on November 4, 1949. The much-anticipated opening welcomed federal and state FHA officials to the capital city, including Franklin D. Richards, the national commissioner; Clyde L. Powell, the assistant commissioner of rental housing; and Herman E. Bailey, South Carolina state director.²¹ Building owner Cornell Fuller and Columbia mayor Frank C. Owens also attended the evening gala, and hostesses served refreshments in one of the ground floor retail spaces. The guests, numbering around 10,000, inspected the ground floor shops, rooftop garden, and eight second-floor apartments, which had been furnished by the local furniture stores Lawrence Furniture Company, Kimbrell's Furniture, Maxwell Bros. & Quinn Furniture, and Tapp's Department Store. The model apartments displayed "a mixture of modern and colonial furniture." For example, the apartment outfitted by Lawrence Furniture featured a blonde-wood modern living room done in green chartreuse and red, while Tapp's displayed a traditional room in red and grey.²² Other establishments, including Standard Oil Company and Otis Elevator, sent "personal offerings," and greenhouses in the nearby Shandon neighborhood sponsored floral displays that were arranged in the lobby.²³ That day, *The State* dedicated a full page to thank the sub-contractors for "the many wonderful features of magnificent Cornell Arms." Of the twenty-three companies listed, all but five were based in Columbia, which suggests that local sponsors may have expected recognition for their contributions to the significant project.²⁴ That night, every window in the building was lighted to celebrate the opening of the state's tallest building, making Columbia's newest apartment visible from a fifteen-mile radius.²⁵

"Luxurious" Apartment Living

Appealing to the white middle class, Cornell Arms was advertised as "one of the South's tallest, most modern, luxurious apartment buildings" with its seventeen residential floors – accessed by two modern elevators – atop ground floor commercial space.²⁶ Newspapers referred to Cornell Arms as an "apartment-hotel," suggesting that the apartment building offered services of

¹⁸ "Workers Clear Site for New Cornell Arms," *State* (Columbia), May 24, 1948; "Cornell Arms Construction Begins Next Tuesday; Last Financial Step Completed," *State* (Columbia), July 2, 1948.

¹⁹ "783,000 City Building Permit Issued Today," *Columbia Record*, July 1, 1948.

²⁰ "Cornell Arms Construction Begins Next Tuesday; Last Financial Step Completed," *State* (Columbia), July 2, 1948.

²¹ "Cornell Arms to Be Opened November 4," *State* (Columbia), October 21, 1949.

²² "Cornell Arms Is Inspected By 10,000 Guests at Opening," *State* (Columbia), November 5, 1949

²³ "Cornell Arms Is Inspected By 10,000 Guests at Opening," Advertisements, *Columbia Record*, November 4, 1949; *State* (Columbia), November 4, 1949.

²⁴ See Figure 9. "Beautiful Cornell Arms," *State* (Columbia), November 4, 1949.

²⁵ "Cornell Arms Is Inspected By 10,000 Guests at Opening," *State* (Columbia), November 5, 1949

²⁶ "Cornell Arms Apts," *State* (Columbia), October 12, 1949.

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convenience traditionally found only in hotels.²⁷ In addition to modern features such as radiant heating, electricity, hot water, and General Electric stoves and refrigerators, Cornell Arms provided domestic and commercial services to make residents' lives easier. For example, Cornell Arms' management employed twenty housekeeping staff and offered maid services to residents for a fee. The building also provided janitorial services for the floors and windows and launderette services in the basement. Victor B. John, the building's manager in 1949, operated Cornell Arms as much like a hotel as possible, stationing a uniformed doorman at the main entrance.

Cornell Arms mixed-use space played a central role in the appeal of this "apartment-hotel." The design for the building designated space for commercial establishments on the ground floor "for the convenience of the occupants." Initial businesses included a cafeteria, pharmacy, florist, barber shop, gift and art shop, and a men's clothing store.²⁸ These shops were "designed to afford occupants most of the necessary shopping facilities without leaving the building," a novel and attractive idea for people living in single-family residences or walk-up apartments.²⁹

Cornell Arms made "luxurious" modern living available for the first time to residents in Columbia. Modern living in a modern city meant convenient, efficient living; services like those offered in Cornell Arms advertised a new way of life in postwar America.³⁰ As Columbia's first multi-family high-rise built during a time when white middle-class families thought suburban living and home ownership fulfilled the American dream, Cornell Arms needed to present itself to potential residents as an attractive, alternative living option to Columbia's more expensive, suburban residential neighborhoods which had developed over the previous fifty years, including Shandon (1893), Melrose Heights (1900), Fairview (1910), Oak Lawn (1925), Heathwood (1914), Rose Hill (1914), Hollywood (1921), and Forest Hills (1925).³¹ Postwar, many returning servicemen rejected the "traditional perspectives of their rural past" and sought a new start in urban centers, made more accessible and appealing by transportation and communications advancements.³² It is likely that calling Cornell Arms an "apartment-hotel" and emphasizing the convenient living afforded by in-house commercial services was part of a strategy to attract the white middle class, particularly veterans, to city living in the postwar era.

²⁷ "18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton," *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948; Historically, the term "apartment-hotel" began to be used following the Civil War and referred apartments that offered the professional staff and centralized services once only available at luxury hotels. Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981), 136; A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, *Hotel: An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 279-282.

²⁸ "Cornell Arms to Be Opened November 4," *State* (Columbia), October 21, 1949.

²⁹ "18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton," *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948.

³⁰ Benjamin Flowers. *Skyscraper: The Politics and Power of Building New York City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 94.

³¹ Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Robert Olguin and John Sherrer. Melrose Heights-Oak Lawn-Fairview Historic District." Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2016.

³² Edward F. Haas, "The Southern Metropolis, 1940-1976" in Blaine Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds. *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 173, 176.

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Cornell Arms & Modern Columbia

As Director Bailey predicted at the cornerstone ceremony on February 16, 1949, the construction of Cornell Arms marked the “beginning of a new era of housing in Columbia.”³³ Not entirely coincidentally, the completion of Cornell Arms occurred just as the perceived housing shortage in Columbia was coming to a close. One week before Cornell Arms opened the city council voted to abandon rent controls because “there no longer exist[ed] such a shortage in rental housing accommodations.”³⁴ In December, just one month after opening and before all units were occupied, rents were reduced 5 to 15 percent.³⁵ Cornell Arms and the nearby twelve-story Claire Tower apartments, another LBC&W project nearing completion, played a role in abating the housing shortage issue, as did the large low-rise apartments recently completed or under construction around the city, including Kilbourne Park, Myron Manor, Wales Garden, Saluda Apartments, Hall Court, Highland Park, Christine Apartments, Kings Court, Baker Apartments, Woodland Terrace, and Washington-Carver Village.³⁶

While built to address the postwar housing shortage and population boom, Cornell Arms is also representative more largely of Columbia’s mid-century downtown growth. Cornell Arms initiated the transition of the 1200 block of Pendleton Street and surrounding blocks from mainly residential to mixed-use, a trend that continued unabated with the physical expansion over the next few decades of the University of South Carolina and the state government – both across the street from Cornell Arms. Historically, this 1200 block of Pendleton consisted of wood frame and brick one-and-a-half and two-story boarding houses.³⁷ Many residences sat on long, narrow lots with secondary dwellings located in the back. By the early 1950s, the block included more commercial spaces and multi-family residential buildings. In addition to the newly constructed mixed-use Cornell Arms, there were four additional smaller apartment buildings, multiple businesses, residential homes, and a gas station.³⁸

Cornell Arms significantly changed the capital city’s urban landscape as its first skyscraper since the completion of the fifteen-story Palmetto Building in 1913. For thirty-five years no building had raised Columbia’s skyline. The construction of Cornell Arms in 1948-1949 signified that the city would welcome the construction of taller structures, including other high-rise apartments and office buildings. From the project’s inception, owner Fuller and state FHA director Bailey expected Cornell Arms to establish a precedent for the city and surrounding area, bringing modern design standards and mixed-use residential/commercial housing to central Columbia.³⁹ While one of several FHA buildings constructed in Columbia in the late 1940s, Cornell Arms’

³³ “Cornerstone Laid for Tallest S.C. Building,” *Columbia Record*, February 16, 1949.

³⁴ “Columbia Rent Decontrol Is Voted by City Council,” *State* (Columbia), October 30, 1949

³⁵ “Cornell Arms Rents Slashed,” *State* (Columbia), December 11, 1949.

³⁶ Robert Alexander, “Apartment Projects Here to Provide for Over 1,500 Families,” *Columbia Record* (June 29, 1948; R.E. Grier, “Around the State House,” *State* (Columbia), September 29, 1949; “Negro Housing Project Will Cost \$1,834,000,” *Columbia Record*, June 10, 1949.

³⁷ As a note, the 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map is the latest date for which an available Sanborn map is in color to determine the materials of the buildings. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Columbia, South Carolina, 1898, 1904, 1910, and 1919, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC.

³⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Columbia, South Carolina, 1956, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC.

³⁹ “18-Story Apartment Hotel to Rise at Sumter-Pendleton,” *State* (Columbia), February 8, 1948.

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exceptional height, costly construction, central downtown location, and “luxurious” modern conveniences gave it prominence among Columbia’s FHA projects and multi-family housing apartments, and announced a new type of modern, downtown living available to Columbia residents.

Criterion C: Architecture

When designing Cornell Arms, LBC&W worked within FHA guidelines: the building’s cross-shaped footprint, steel-frame structure, flat roof, and ground floor retail space are typical features of other FHA projects. However, while the suggestions provided by the FHA argued for the cheapest and most economical materials and designs, LBC&W chose to incorporate many “luxury” features into the state’s tallest building yet and Columbia’s first elevator apartment. The firm brought its own sense of modern design to the acclaimed high-rise building to make it an outstanding example of FHA-funded postwar housing and the first high-profile International Style building in Columbia.

LBC&W & the FHA

The four principals of LBC&W were William G. Lyles, Thomas J. Bissett, William A. Carlisle, and Louis M. Wolff. All four men had received Bachelor of Science degrees in Architecture from Clemson College in the 1930s. The architecture firm Stork & Lyles, a partnership between William Lyles and William Stork, was the predecessor of LBC&W and received the original commission to construct Cornell Arms. Stork left the firm in 1946, and Stork & Lyles dissolved during the building of Cornell Arms. Lyles and three associates from Stork & Lyles formed LBC&W and incorporated in 1948. Lyles was credited as the lead architect on Cornell Arms with Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff named associates. While Stork did not appear to actively work on the project, it is likely that his role working for the FHA during World War II helped the firm of Stork & Lyles secure this early commission from the FHA.⁴⁰

Following the war, Stork & Lyles sought work in the area where projects would surely be forthcoming: housing returning veterans.⁴¹ They were able to secure work in part because of the professional relationship Stork had formed with the FHA during the war and, perhaps, because the two architects were more willing than others to accept federal housing project commissions. According to a biography of Lyles, most likely penned by himself, postwar housing was the “one avenue [which] seemed open,” but, the author wrote, “such ‘trash’ was obviously beneath the dignity of most practitioners in so illustrious a profession as architecture.” While some older and more established firms may have thought themselves above FHA work, Stork & Lyles gladly welcomed the opportunity to make a name for themselves in the area of postwar housing for veterans. This strategy was extremely successful as LBC&W received a high number of FHA commissions throughout the 1940s: “Being virtually the only architects showing serious interest, [LBC&W] soon found themselves being sought after by builders not only in South Carolina, but in adjacent states as well.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Janie Campbell et al., “Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff: A Case Study for Researching and Preserving Mid-Century Modern Architecture” (University of South Carolina, April 2015), 164-167.

⁴¹ “William Gordon Lyles,” LBC&W file, South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, n.d., 11.

⁴² “William Gordon Lyles,” 11.

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LBC&W essentially cornered the market on federally-subsidized apartment buildings in the Southeast, and in Columbia in particular, working closely with the young law firm Fulmer & Barnes to secure FHA projects. Bill Lyles and Rudy Barnes were so successful at drumming up governmental work, apparently, that they were “recognized as ‘authorities in housing’ by bankers, builders, and entrepreneurs throughout the Southeast and particularly on Wall Street where the mortgage money generally came from.”⁴³ By 1950, LBC&W had completed twenty-two FHA-insured projects, both low-rise and high-rise apartments, under the Section 608 program alone, the tallest and most anticipated of which was Cornell Arms. The projects were insured for a total of \$16,836,400, causing LBC&W to greatly surpass their biggest competitor in South Carolina, David Cecil of Spartanburg, whose six projects were insured at \$3,492,500.⁴⁴

Overall, LBC&W designed more than 500,000 housing units through FHA funding. In Columbia, in addition to Cornell Arms, LBC&W designed Claire Tower Apartments, Christine Apartments, Highland Park Apartments, Myron Manor Apartments, Wales Garden Apartments, Washington-Carver Village, and Woodland Terrace.⁴⁵ Elsewhere, LBC&W’s notable projects included the Sergeant Jasper and Darlington Apartments in Charleston, Calhoun Towers in Greenville, and Howell House and Darlington Apartments in Atlanta.⁴⁶ When the Section 608 program came to an end in 1950, LBC&W diversified and moved on to other projects, including state office buildings and single-family homes, but their relationship with the FHA continued. Undoubtedly, LBC&W’s long partnership with the FHA paved the way for lucrative government work later in their career, including the massive state office buildings added to the South Carolina Capitol Complex in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Cornell Arms & the International Style

Cornell Arms is an International Style apartment building representative of the Modern design aesthetic that would characterize LBC&W’s work over the next thirty years. Cornell Arms set the precedent for LBC&W’s reputation as a firm that embraced modern materials such as glass, steel and concrete; simple forms and exposed structural elements; verticality and sleek functional design; and repetition and pattern.⁴⁷ Moreover, the International Style was a fitting design for Columbia’s first high-rise intended to make a statement about postwar stability and American democracy. Following World War II and as a counterpoint to the Depression years, urban American became the symbol of “expansion, progress, freedom, and rugged individualism,” and the center of an expanding and inclusive consumer culture.⁴⁸ The International Style “coupled newness with an understanding of sophistication as something other than just lavish living.” International Style structures of simple, inexpensive, and efficient design – like Cornell Arms –

⁴³ “William Gordon Lyles,” 11.

⁴⁴ “\$50 Million Rental Units Built Or Going Up Since Birth of FHA 608 Program 3 Years Ago,” *State* (Columbia), February 12, 1950.

⁴⁵ Anjuli Grantham, “LBC&W and the Making of Modernist Columbia,” LBC&W file, South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, n.d., 11.

⁴⁶ Andrew W. Chandler, “Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolff,” in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 576-577.

⁴⁷ Grantham, “LBC&W and the Making of Modernist Columbia,” 10.

⁴⁸ Andrew M. Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the Home Front* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 78.

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represented a more democratic and equitable lifestyle and became the favored architecture of urban upper-middle class clients and the U.S. government in the late 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁹

In keeping with the design standards of the International Style, Cornell Arms embraced simplified form and verticality over mass with its cross shape, structural steel frame, flat roof, and eighteen floors; rejected ostentatious ornamentation in favor of plainer detailing; featured prefabricated components in its living spaces; and was constructed of mass-produced industrial materials such as glass, steel, and concrete.⁵⁰ Its style marked a sharp contrast from other taller buildings in Columbia's downtown area, such as the Georgian Revival style National Loan and Exchange Building (1903; NR Listed 1979), and the Gothic Revival style Palmetto Building (1913; NR Listed 1980) and Union National Bank (1913). Cornell Arms was most similar to the twelve-story Wade Hampton Hotel (1940), on the corner of Main and Gervais streets, with its brick exterior, differentiated ground floor space with plate glass, and corner windows. However, Cornell Arms' exceptional height and modern construction and materials made it the first high-profile International Style building of the postwar era in Columbia.

Other architectural firms in Columbia were starting to experiment with the International Style around the same time as LBC&W. Lafaye, Lafaye & Fair, LBC&W's principal competitor in Columbia, completed the Carolina Life Insurance Company Building (Seibels Bruce Building) in 1949 (NR Listed 2016), which can be described as exemplifying a more conservative, "transitional architecture" falling between Art Deco and International Style.⁵¹ The next year, the firm designed the Veterans Administration Regional Office (VARO), along with Stork & Lyles. After Cornell Arms, LBC&W designed the International Style Sumwalt Engineering Building (1952) for the University of South Carolina. Sumwalt was the university's first Modern building with its steel-framed structure, rectilinear façade, flat roof, large windows, and box-like appearance.⁵² Cornell Arms is significant, however, as the first, and one of few, International Style buildings of the late 1940s and early 1950s in the city.⁵³

International Style & the FHA

LBC&W's choice of the modern International Style design for Cornell Arms fit the FHA's "conservative approach to modern design." The style, along with the FHA's philosophy on providing adequate and affordable housing, emphasized functional and efficient living and the use of standardized building techniques.⁵⁴ The FHA believed that "simple, direct designs which rely for their effect upon mass, scale, and proportion" were sounder investments than "those

⁴⁹ Kathleen James-Chakraborty, Ch. 25: "The Modern Movement in the Americas" in *Architecture since 1400* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 391.

⁵⁰ Another example of a mid-century International Style apartment building in South Carolina is Schuyler Apartments in Spartanburg, constructed in 1950, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014.

⁵¹ Meg Southern, "Carolina Life Insurance Company," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina, 2016.

⁵² Miriam Boyd and Josh Jackson, "Historical Review: Sumwalt," in "Planning Greene Street: A Mid-Century History," (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, Spring 2017), 8-9.

⁵³ In terms of single-family homes, the Wallace-McGee House, built 1937, is an excellent example of early International Style, and the Raymond Price House was built after Cornell Arms, in 1952.

⁵⁴ Schwenk, Sally F. "Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartment Buildings in Kansas City, Missouri," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (1992), 41.

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which strive for picturesque or unusual effect by means of over-ornamentation or a bizarre use of materials.”⁵⁵ The simple form and minimal ornamentation characteristic of the International Style made it an appropriate design style for FHA projects.

The FHA pamphlet *Planning Rental Housing Projects* (1947) outlined the agency’s guidelines for projects funded by Section 608. While the FHA did not demand explicit aesthetic requirements, it encouraged specific “physical characteristics which are deemed desirable in rental housing projects” and proper planning methods to create attractive and enduring housing.⁵⁶ The FHA provided sketches and floor plans of what it termed acceptable housing designs that, characteristically, featured minimal ornamentation and affordable materials. The pamphlet included “best practices” on all matters of architectural planning and design, from the shape of an apartment building to the use of incinerators to the positioning of bathroom and kitchen fixtures. The pamphlet also recommended that Section 608 apartment projects take on one of six plan types: the strip unit, the corner unit, the L unit, the T unit, the Z unit, the cross unit, and the offset cross unit.⁵⁷ According to William Lyles of LBC&W, the firm believed the cross to be the optimal design for Cornell Arms’ setting because it “makes it possible for every single apartment to be placed at a corner,” providing the maximum amount of sunlight and open view for every apartment on each of its seventeen residential floors.⁵⁸

For twenty years, architects had studied the use of the cruciform or cross-shaped building that Le Corbusier first proposed in *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning* (1929).⁵⁹ Le Corbusier’s work posited theories for an ideal city that included high-rise cruciform office buildings situated amongst apartment duplexes that formed a centralized community as a solution to the increasing congestion of cities. Known as the “towers-in-the-park” philosophy, Le Corbusier believed high-rise buildings could mitigate the effects of overcrowding and urban pollution. As Le Corbusier expanded and refined his theories on urban centers, he argued that high-rise towers would shelter residents, and provide “all the necessary services” and bring “efficiency and economy of time and effort.”⁶⁰ While Cornell Arms was not part of a larger complex of buildings or isolated on a “superblock” like Le Corbusier’s towers in the park, it did incorporate both living and commercial spaces in an urban center. It is possible that LBC&W used components of Le Corbusier’s well-known “towers-in-the-park” philosophy when deciding upon the cross-shape design for Cornell Arms.⁶¹

As an elevator apartment, the FHA considered projects like Cornell Arms “a little swankier than the walk-up type,” leading the public to expect “a more imposing entrance and more spacious public corridors.”⁶² Elevator apartments were of luxury quality, rather than essential quality,

⁵⁵ See Figure 10. Federal Housing Administration (FHA), *Planning Rental Housing Projects* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1947), 6.

⁵⁶ FHA, *Planning Rental Housing Projects*, 5.

⁵⁷ FHA, *Planning Rental Housing Projects*, 8.

⁵⁸ Ray Dilley, “South Carolina’s Tallest Building Reaches for the Sky,” *State* (Columbia), January 16, 1949.

⁵⁹ Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, (Architectural Press, 1947).

⁶⁰ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, (London: Dover Publications, 1985), 58.

⁶¹ Campbell, et al., “Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff: Building Modern Columbia,” 104.

⁶² FHA, *Planning Rental Housing Projects*, 9.

Cornell Arms

Name of Property

Richland County, SC

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meaning they were built using “elements of elaboration and decorative effect and special equipment” rather than “the lowest permissible standards of quality.”⁶³ Cornell Arms fit this category of a “swankier” apartment with its doorman and large entrance lobby finished with Tennessee marble, mahogany paneling, and terrazzo floors.⁶⁴ The architects mixed concrete and brickwork alongside gypsum tile and terrazzo to create rich details and contrasts amidst the FHA’s suggested inexpensive materials.⁶⁵ LBC&W’s decision to include these elements suggest that the firm intended Cornell Arms to be more luxurious than the majority of FHA buildings that followed the austere design standards recommended by the FHA, ultimately distinguishing Cornell Arms as a superior FHA project.

Cornell Arms was an early manifestation of LBC&W’s modern design philosophy, embracing the fundamentals of FHA design standards, but also incorporating elevated design aesthetics and amenities to appeal to residents of a growing, modern capital city. In June of 1953, four years after Cornell Arms was completed, Louis M. Wolff of LBC&W described the firm’s understanding of modern architecture: “A modern building is honest when it achieves utility and strength.” The architect’s choice of materials, textures, and colors, and his attention to the movement of light and spatial organization, help a building achieve beauty. Traditional styles of architecture, Wolff described, had become “inefficient, expensive and wasteful” and unable to express “versatility and flexibility to meet changing tenancy and activities.”⁶⁶ Over the next three decades, the four principal architects of LBC&W refined their modern philosophy as “Total Design” and cultivated the firm’s relationship with the City of Columbia and state governments, expanding its modernist portfolio through a range of contemporary styles including the International Style, Brutalism, and New Formalism.⁶⁷

⁶³ FHA, *Planning Rental Housing Projects*, 6.

⁶⁴ “Cornell Arms to Be Opened November 4,” *State* (Columbia), October 21, 1949.

⁶⁵ For further details of the building’s specifications see, Stork & Lyles, “Specifications, Commission No. 634, Cornell Arms, Columbia, S.C.,” May 19, 1948, Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolff Visual Materials Collection, Box 13, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

⁶⁶ Louis M. Wolff, “Modern Architecture – Its Purposes and Aims,” *South Carolina Magazine: Architectural Issue*, January 1953, 8.

⁶⁷ For a working list of LBC&W projects, see the LBC&W file at the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Columbia, SC.

Cornell Arms
Name of Property

Richland County, SC
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government

Cornell Arms
Name of Property

Richland County, SC
County and State

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.44 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.998644° Longitude: -81.030921°

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Cornell Arms
Name of Property

Richland County, SC
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The building's north boundary is along Pendleton Street. Sumter Street bounds the building to the east. Adjacent parking bounds the building to the west and southwest. Adjacent property forms the southern boundary. The boundary corresponds to Richland County parcel number R11304-08-04, marked by the blue line on the accompanying Richland County GIS Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were selected because they have historically formed the property's boundaries.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stephanie Gray
organization: Ward Brandt Consulting, LLC with funding from the Richland County Conservation Commission
street & number: 1435 Shirley St., Apt. 1
city or town: Columbia state: SC zip code: 29205
e-mail segray@email.sc.edu
telephone: 440-488-8359
date: August 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Cornell Arms
Name of Property

Richland County, SC
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Cornell Arms

City or Vicinity: Columbia

County: Richland

State: South Carolina

Photographer: Robert Olguin; Stephanie Gray

Date Photographed: February 10, 2015; September 2, 2017

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

- 1 of 23: North elevation, camera facing south.
- 2 of 23: Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.
- 3 of 23: Southeast elevation, camera facing northwest.
- 4 of 23: Southwest elevation, camera facing northeast.
- 5 of 23: Northwest elevation, camera facing southeast.
- 6 of 23: Main (north) entrance, camera facing south.
- 7 of 23: Northwest corner, camera facing southeast.
- 8 of 23: Rounded northeast corner, camera facing southwest.
- 9 of 23: East elevation, camera facing west.
- 10 of 23: Southeast corner, camera facing northwest.
- 11 of 23: Vestibule of north (main) entrance.
- 12 of 23: North-south hallway connecting the entrance and elevator lobbies.
- 13 of 23: Lounge area to the west of the entrance lobby.
- 14 of 23: Built-in wooden door to lounge area
- 15 of 23: Northern wall of lounge.
- 16 of 23: Elevator lobby.
- 17 of 23: Stair lobby.
- 18 of 23: Incinerator in basement.
- 19 of 23: Boiler room in basement.

Cornell Arms

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20 of 23: Original mailboxes sealed with paint.

21 of 23: Nineteenth floor lobby.

22 of 23: Efficiency unit bathroom.

23 of 23: Efficiency unit bedroom.

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Figure 2: "View of Cornell Arms Apartments during construction and South Main and Sumter Streets, aerial," February 20, 1949. Russell Maxey Photograph Collection, Richland County Public Library.

Figure 3: "Cornell Arms, construction," May 5, 1949, Russell Maxey Photograph Collection, Richland County Public Library.

Figure 4: "Cornell Arms, construction," June 30, 1949. Russell Maxey Photograph Collection, Richland County Public Library.

Figure 5: "Cornell Arms Apartments," December 30, 1949, Russell Maxey Photograph Collection, Richland County Public Library.

Figure 6: "Cornell Arms Apartment, Columbia, S.C.," Color postcard, published by Asheville Post Card Company. Photograph by Munn and Teal. Postcards of the Midlands Digital Collection, Richland County Public Library.

Figure 7: Advertisement in *South Carolina Magazine*, November 1949, pg. 16.

Figure 8: "Cornell Arms, Columbia, S.C." from *Selections from the Work of William G. Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolff, Architects and Engineers*, 1950. Call No: 720.9757 L98s, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

Figure 9: *The State* (Columbia), November 4, 1949.

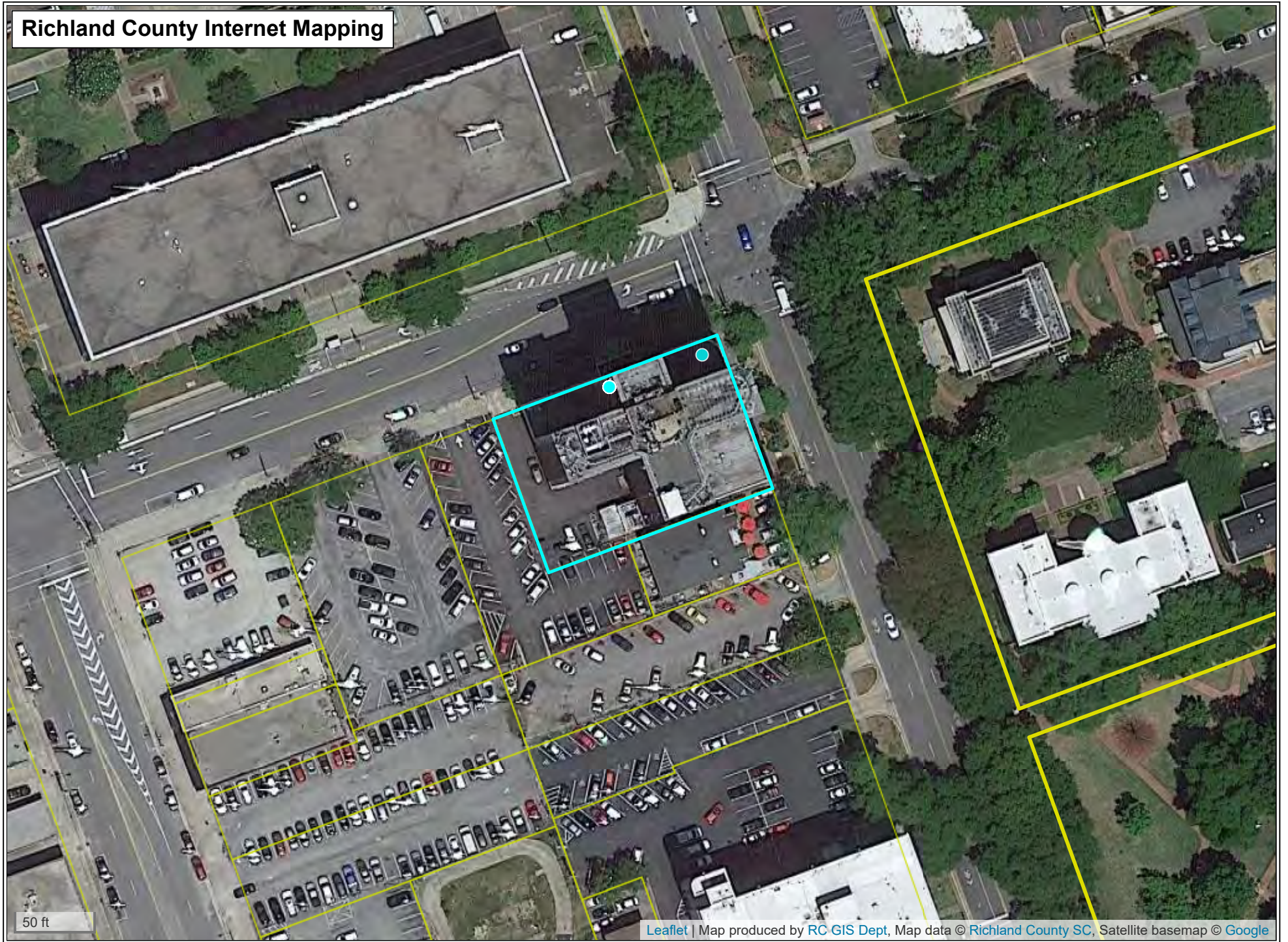
Figure 10: "The Five Basic Building Unit Plans," Federal Housing Administration. *Planning Rental Housing Projects*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1947, pg. 8.

Figure 11: "Floor Plans," South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

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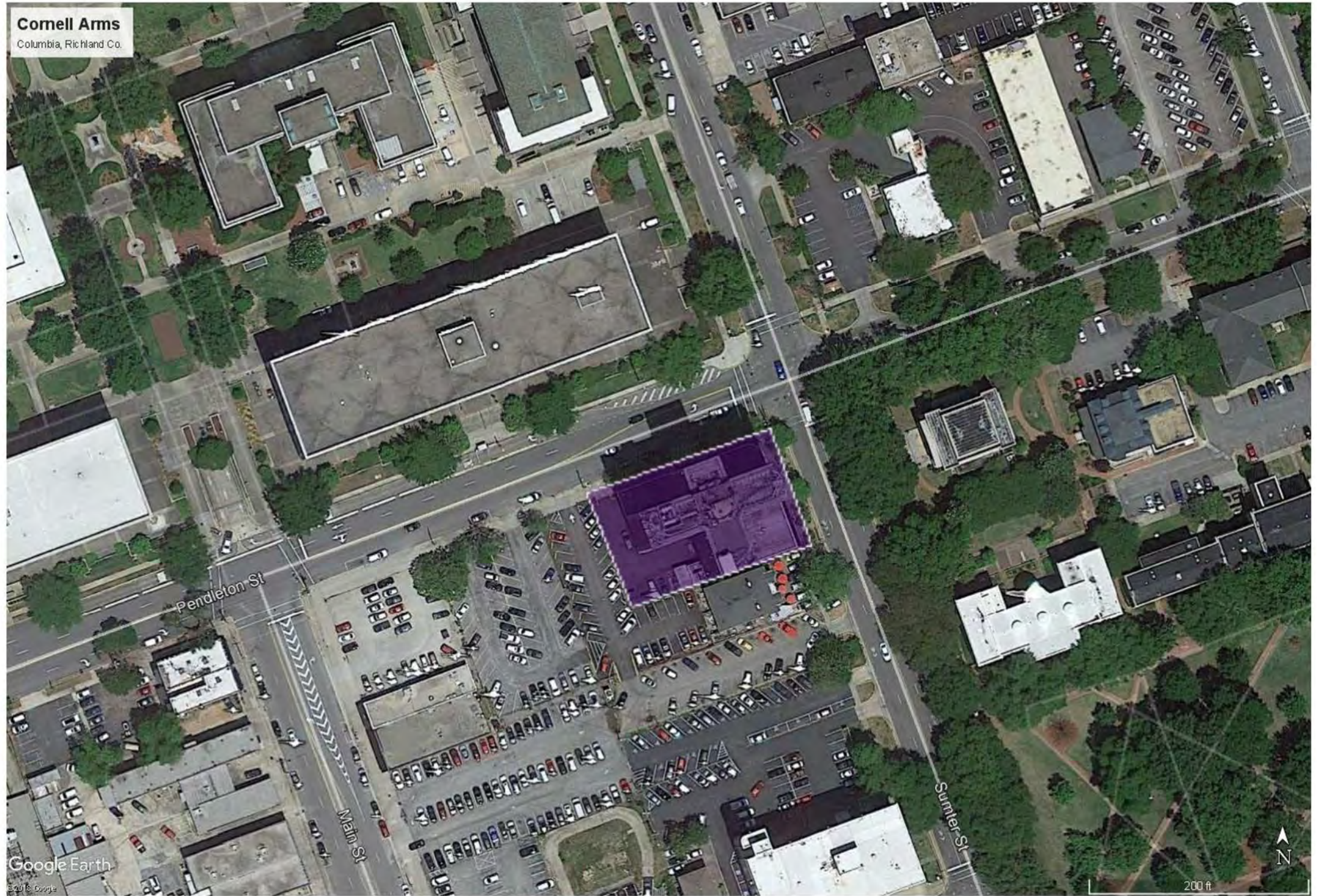
Richland County Internet Mapping



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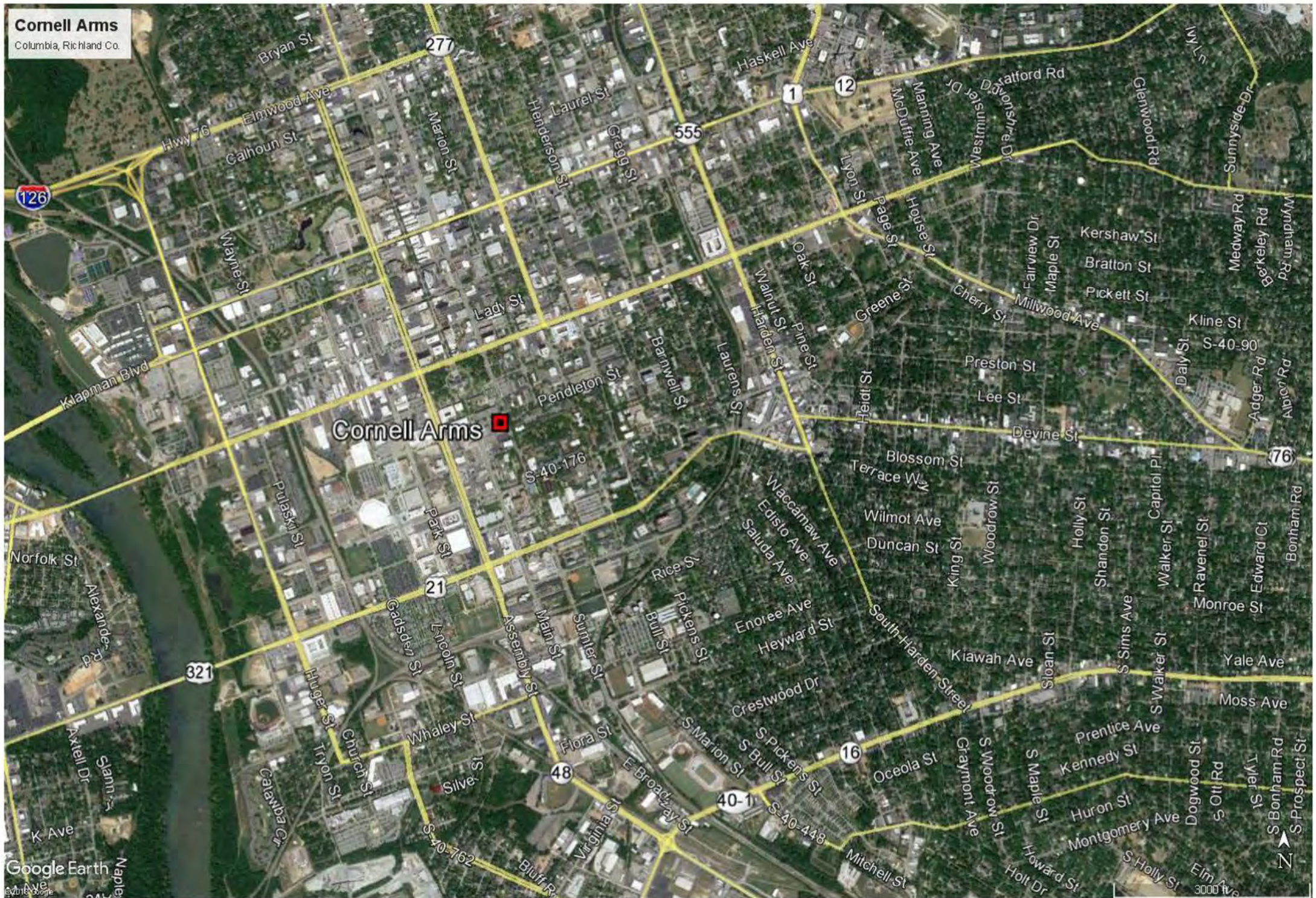
Cornell Arms

Columbia, Richland Co.



Cornell Arms

Columbia, Richland Co.

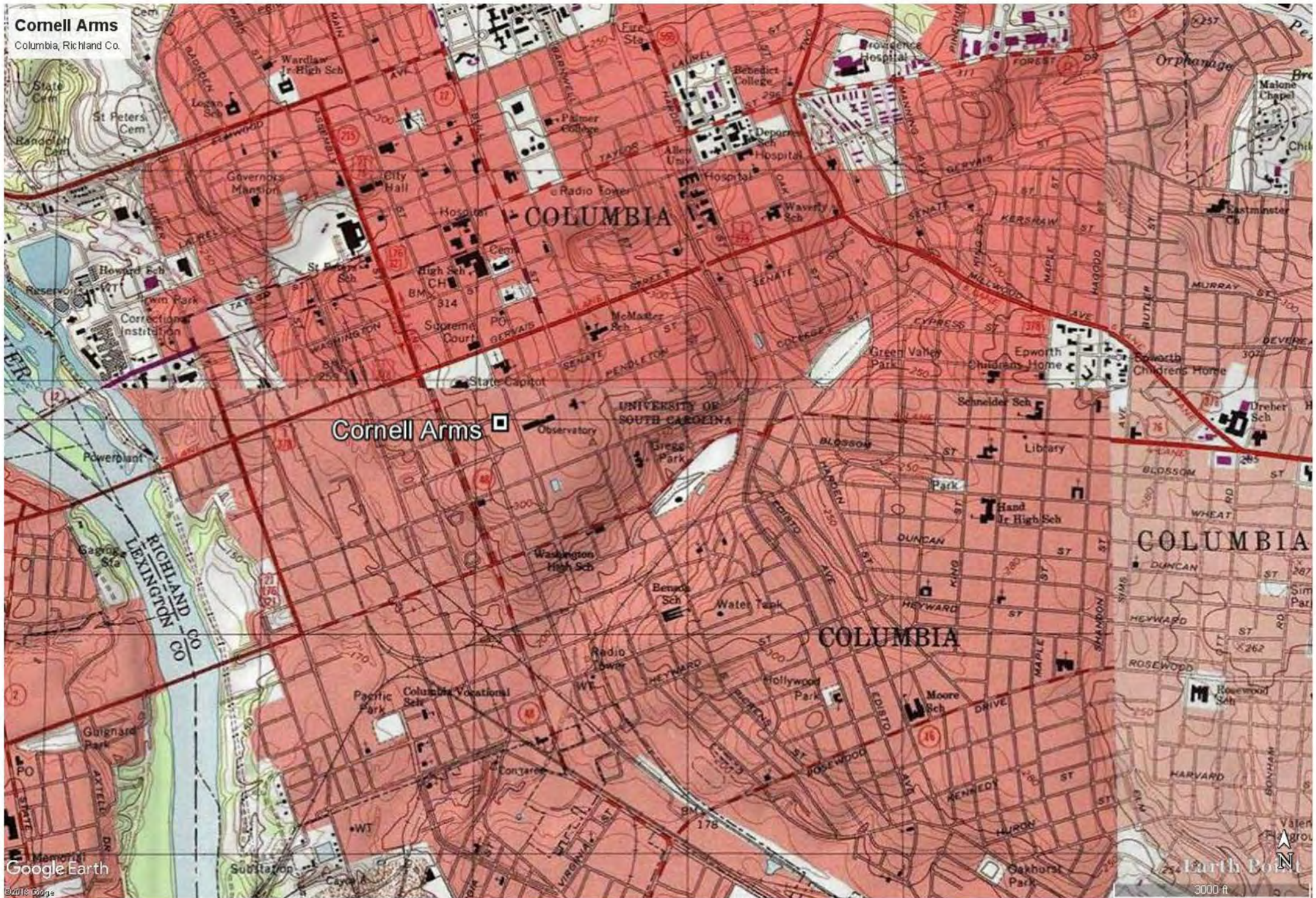


Cornell Arms ■



Cornell Arms

Columbia, Richland Co.



Cornell Arms

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA

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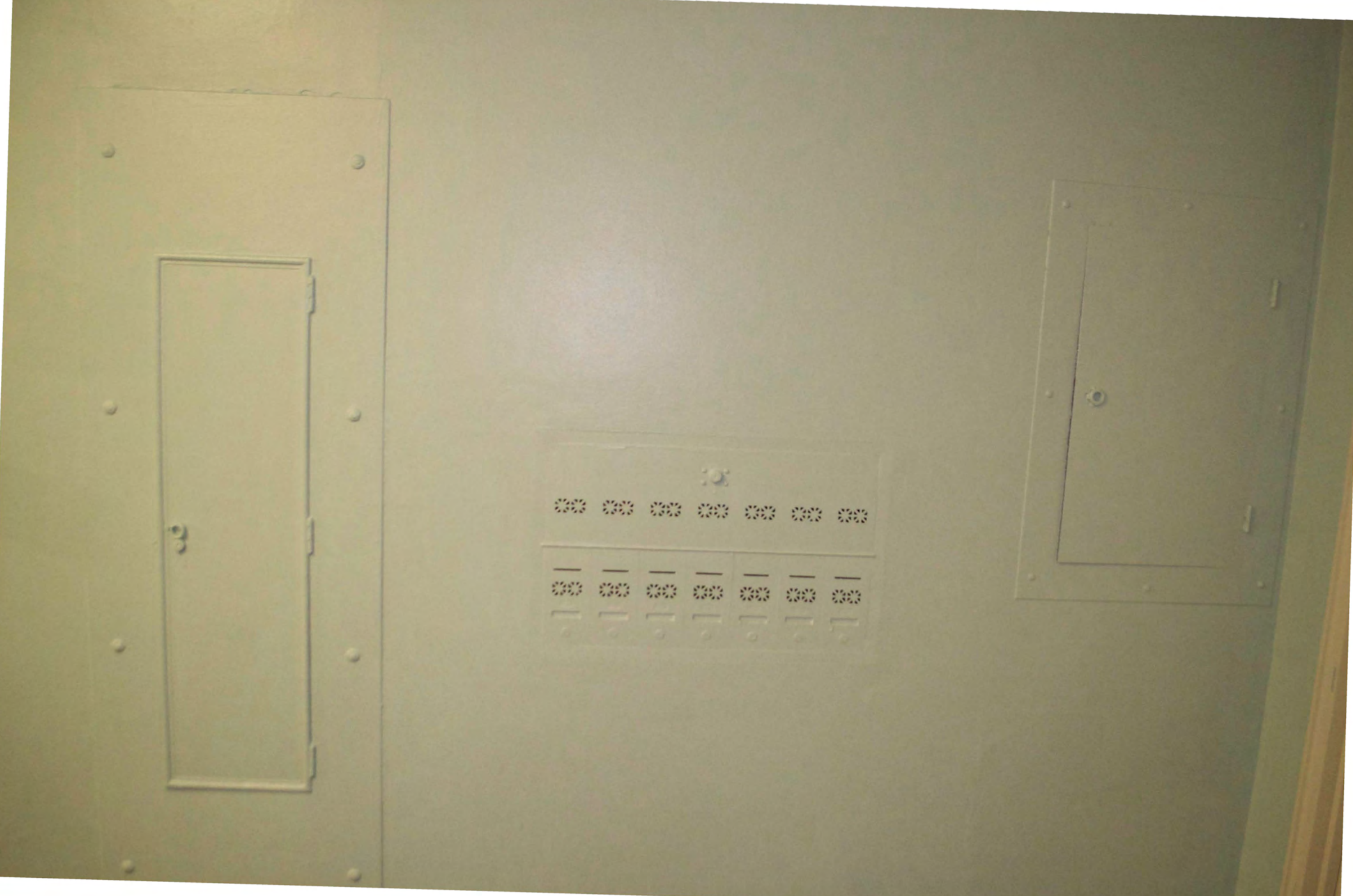










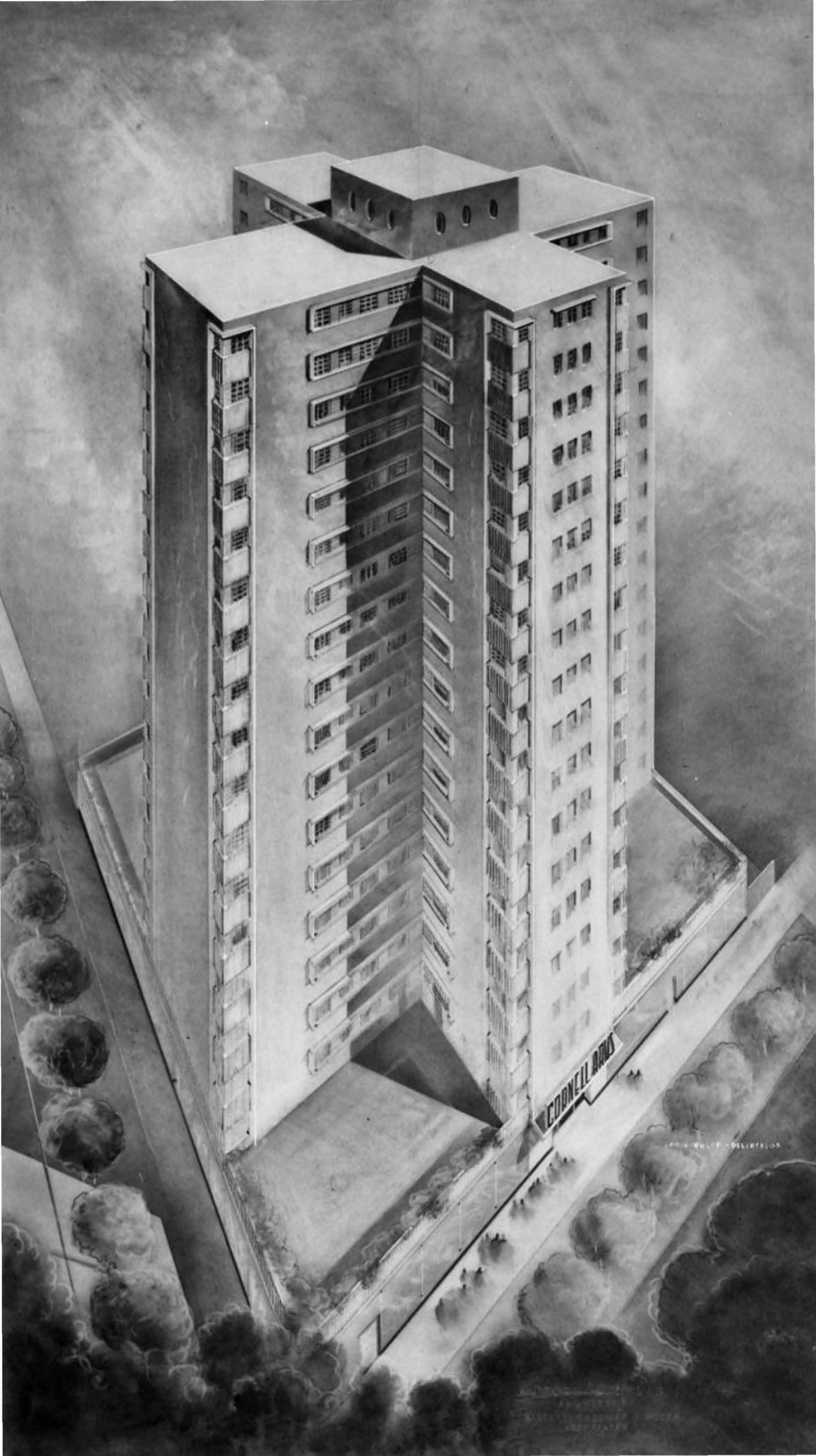




19







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177

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CORNELL ARMY
GENERAL STORE
F.R.A.

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FOOD AT

SODA LUNCH

ICE CREAM

RESTAURANT



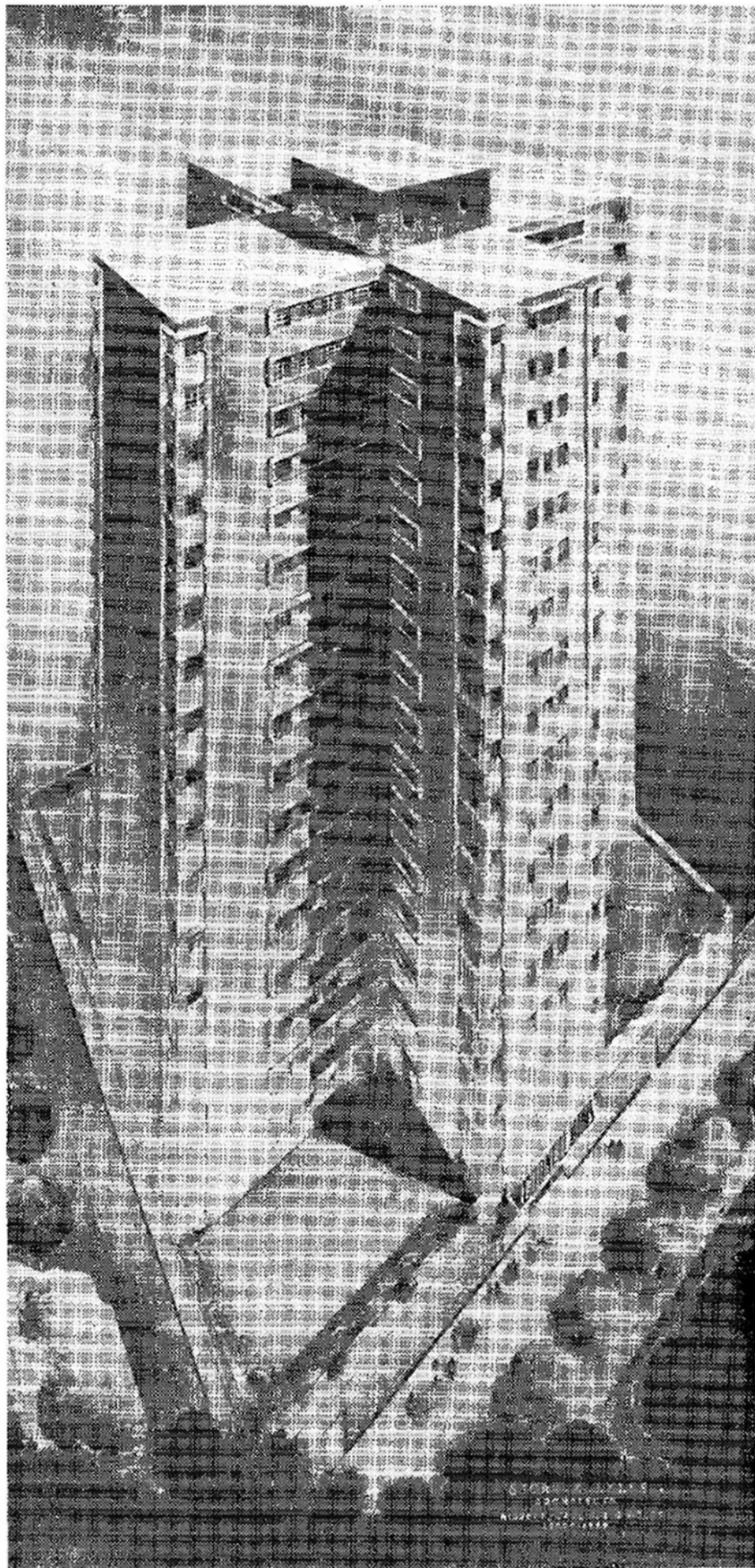
C-142

Cornell Arms Apartment, Columbia, S. C.



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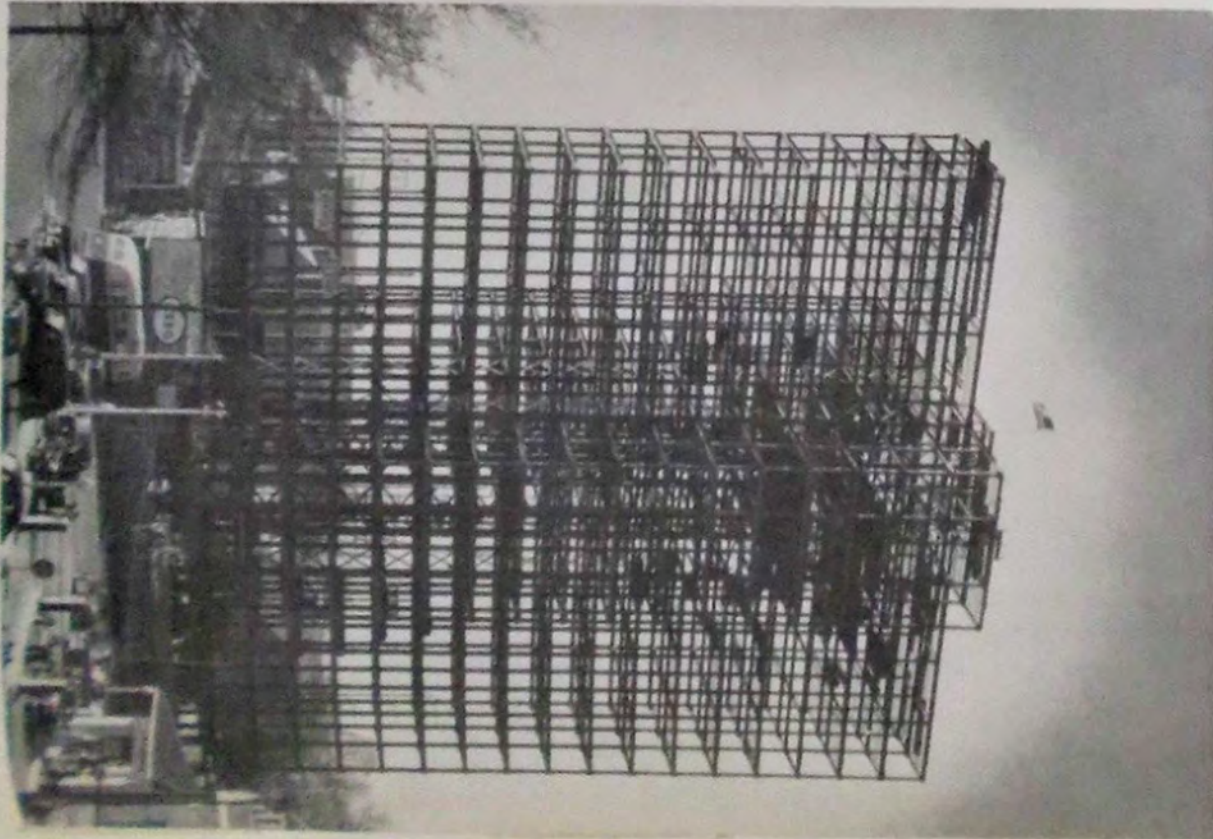
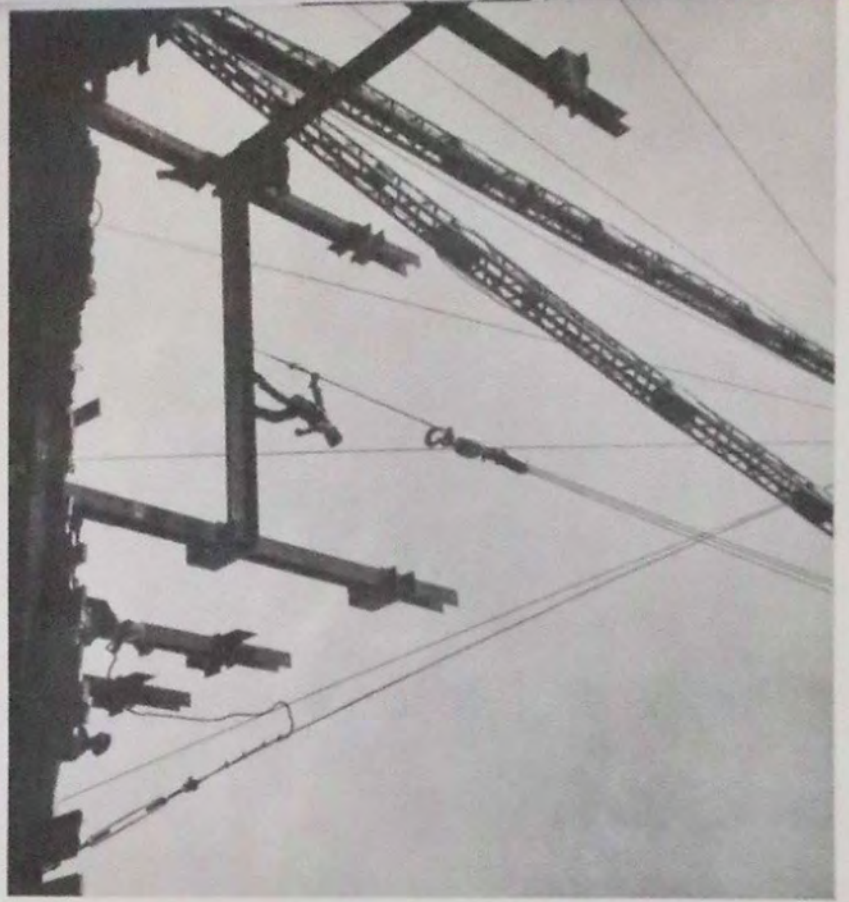
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(Painting and Polishing Supplies)

CENTRAL ROOFING AND SUPPLY COMPANY

Seaboard Park
Columbia, S. C.
(Wood Lath, Plaster, Cement and Portland Tile)

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Hempden and Huger Streets
Columbia, S. C.
(Beams, Columns, and Millwork)

COLUMBIA WINDOW CLEANING COMPANY

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Columbia, S. C.
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GEORGE E. NORMAN ROOFING COMPANY

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Charleston, W. C.
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1122 Huger Street
Columbia, S. C.
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MERRY BROS. BRICK & TILE COMPANY

Augusta, Georgia
(All Hard Burned Structural and Facades Clay Tile)

HOLANS COMPANY, INC.

1487 Taylor Street
Columbia, S. C.
(Electric Supplies and Plumbing Supplies)

MARQUARDT CAST STONE COMPANY

Two Notch Road
Columbia, S. C.
(Street Concrete Tiles)

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CORNELL ARMS
Were Made Possible By The
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BUFF HARDWARE COMPANY

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(Hardware Specialty for All Years
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PERRY-MANN ELECTRIC COMPANY

Seaboard Park
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OTIS ELEVATOR COMPANY

28 Bank Street
Atlanta, Georgia
(Passenger Elevators)

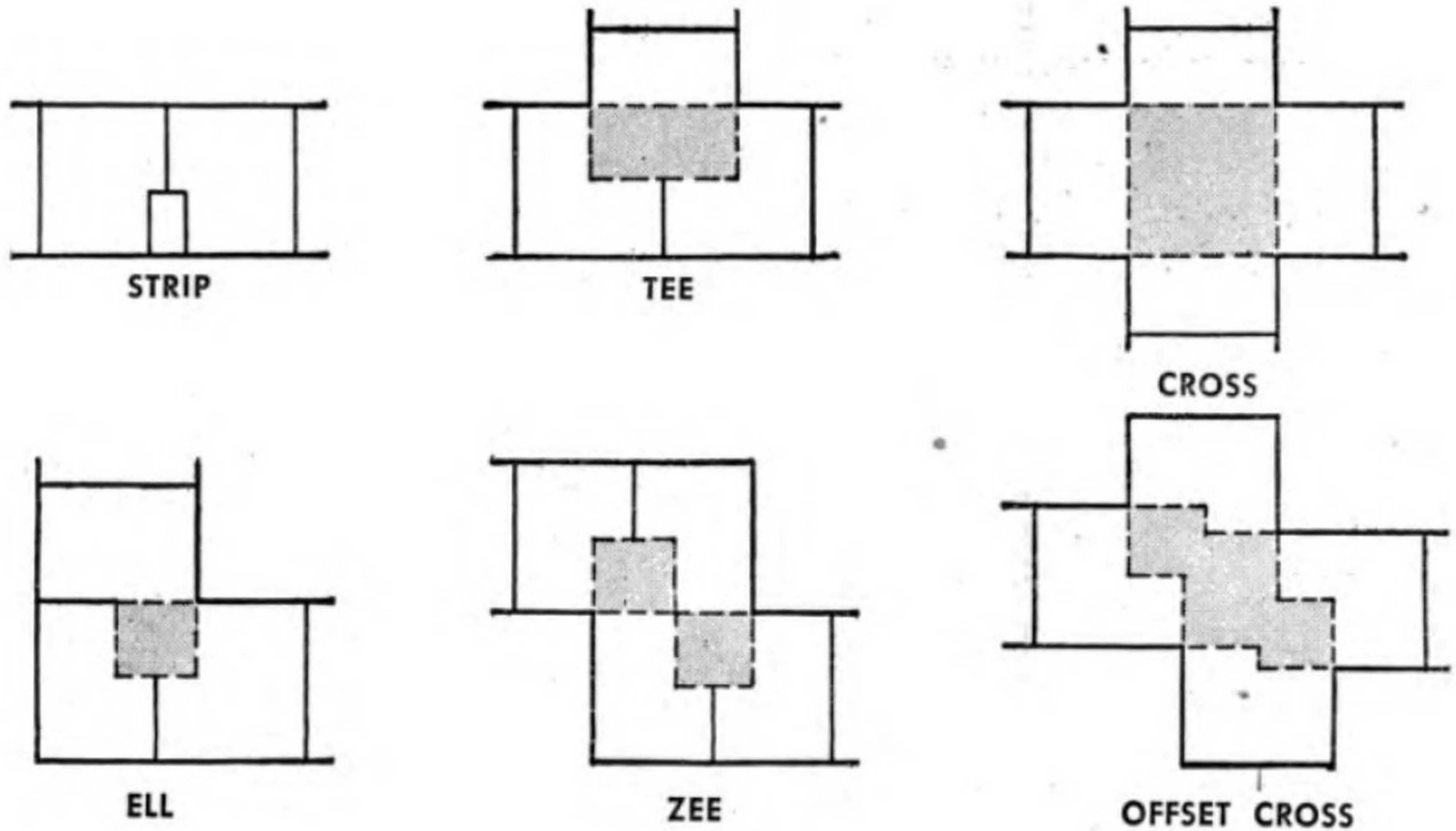
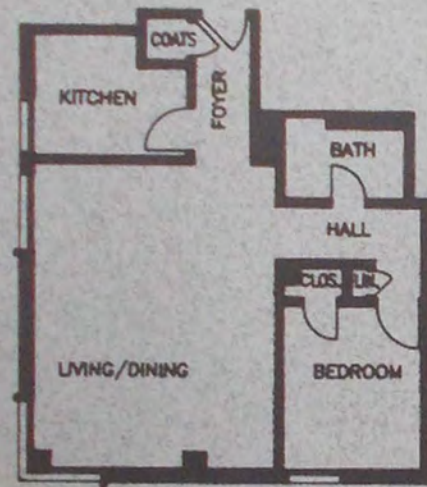


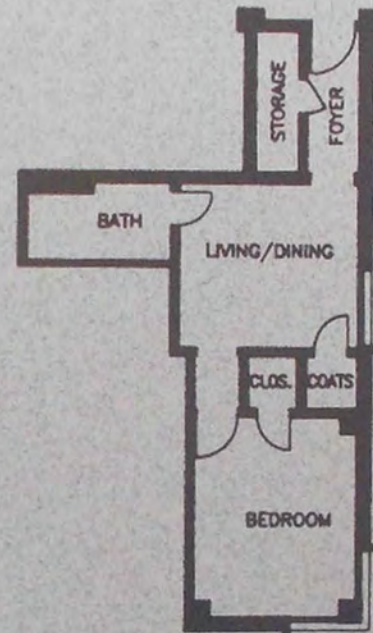
FIGURE 1.

The Five Basic Building Unit Plans with a variant of the cross; shaded areas indicate portions having no outside light. (See Page 12 for combination of units.)

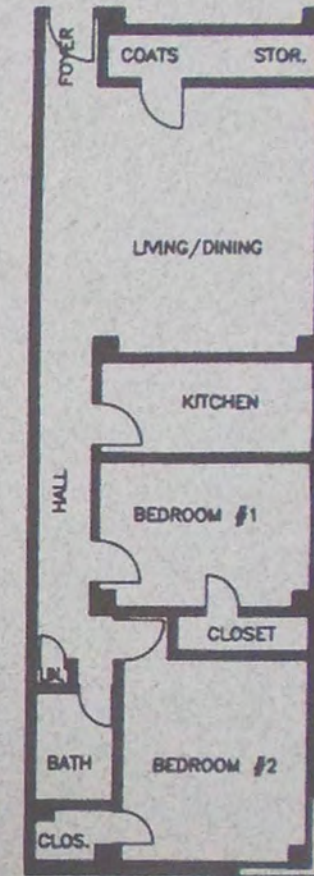
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EFFICIENCY
365 SQ. FT



TWO BEDROOM
820 SQ. FT

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Property Name:

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State & County:

Date Received: 11/27/2018 Date of Pending List: 12/10/2018 Date of 16th Day: 12/26/2018 Date of 45th Day: 1/11/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

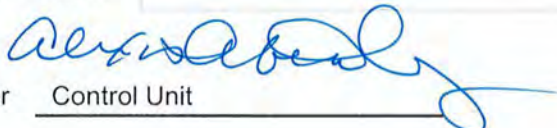
Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/11/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer  Control Unit Discipline _____

Telephone _____ 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.



November 27, 2018

Dr. Julie Ernstein
Deputy Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for the Cornell Arms in Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina. The nomination was approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion C at the local level of significance. We are now submitting this nomination for formal review by the National Register staff. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Cornell Arms to the National Register of Historic Places.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6179 or e-mail me at vharness@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Virginia E. Harness". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

Virginia E. Harness
Architectural Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, S.C. 29223