

309

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 26 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Orlando Apartments

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2301 Fifteenth Avenue South

N/A not for publication

city, town Birmingham

N/A vicinity

state Alabama

code AL

county Jefferson

code 073

zip code 35205

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

1-19-90
Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Amy Federman

5/15/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Multiple dwelling -

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Multiple dwelling -

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early 20th Century: Commercial style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick over terra cotta block

roof Flat, asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

This is a four-story, 20-unit apartment building constructed of terra cotta block and concrete, clad in brick in decorative patterning ranging in tone from buff to brown. It sits high on a prominence overlooking Birmingham, now made more prominent by the gash of the Red Mountain Expressway just below it to the west. The Redmont residential suburbs (now a Historic District) are just behind it to the south, and Highland Avenue and its environs are below to the east and north. Rectangular in shape, it contains two interior stairways that are at right angles to one another and are served by exterior entrance doors on the north and east sides respectively; in effect this creates two sections of apartments with different orientations, designed to take best advantage of the city view.

The ground floor is articulated by darker bricks laid with recessed courses to resemble ashlar block, capped by a concrete stringcourse marking the second floor. The upper three floors are of varitoned buff brick under a stone-capped parapet. Windows are regularly spaced six-over-one double-hung sash.

The architectural distinction of the Orlando resides in the treatment of the projecting porches on the north and west sides of the building-- the two fronts. The entrance doors on both sides are between these porch projections and are incorporated into the rhythms created by them, rather than being distinct elements on their own. The porches rest on heavy squared piers containing the same brickwork as the main building, surmounted by a stone-capped parapet punctuated here by shallow crenellations and marked by arrow-shaped stone decoration. For some reason, the easternmost porch parapet is topped by a triangle pediment. Second-story porches have ric-rac patterned brick parapet walls; upper-story porches have iron railings. They were originally open porches and remain so. The only curved line in this entire construction is the very flat segmental arch over the top-floor porches. There are two porch bays on the shorter west face and three along the longer north face.

Interior apartments have rough-plastered walls and ceilings, and hardwood floors. Entries are tiled; corridors and stairs were carpeted in the late 1930s. Stair railings and light fixtures are of iron. The interior has suffered considerable water damage and other effects of neglect in its years of vacancy since the City of Birmingham purchased it in 1978. The exterior remains intact and unchanged from its earliest years. The longer rear wall, built into the mountain and fortified by a concrete retaining wall, is the location of the fire escape stair system.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Leslie Welton, architect
Henry H. Hancock, builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Historic Background:

The Orlando was finished in 1928-- not a good time to have constructed an apartment building. Real estate developer Henry Hancock was the primary builder, and title records indicate that financial difficulties plagued the project early. Mechanics liens were held by the construction company, in which Mr. Hancock had an interest, and by architect William Leslie Welton, among others. Ultimately the familiar Depression pattern obtained, the original owners were foreclosed on, and the building was mortgaged to Prudential Life by Southern Apartments, who held it until the City bought it in 1978 as part of the Red Mountain Museum expansion program.

This building represents the late phase of a 1920s apartment-building period in Birmingham that saw many distinguished structures developed to fill the demand for apartment living in established residential areas-- in this case, Redmont. The Orlando is not a luxurious building inside, but provides modest apartments with a spectacular view. In fact, a portion of the 20 units are efficiencies. The porches, therefore, provide both the functional and architectural distinction of the building.

CRITERION C: Architecture

The Orlando represents architecture in transition from 1920s decorative motifs and crafts to a more modern profile of angular and unadorned simplicity and vertical emphasis. The basic structure on its differentiated base recalls the Chicaco style in which architect Welton created some of his local masterpieces such as the Empire (1909) and John Hand (1913) Buildings. Perhaps significantly, Mr. Welton's later Massey Building (1925) reflects elements of style related to the 1928 Orlando, although in a more flamboyant vein considering Massey's elaborate terra cotta ornament; if one considers, however, the use of finely-laid face brick and strong vertical emphasis toward a capped and decorated-- but not separately defined-- top floor, the Orlando's place in local architectural development becomes clearer. While still containing many of the decorative elements typical of 1920s commercial and large residential buildings, such as patterned brickwork at the base and stone insets below the parapet, it also adumbrates the modernist 1930s in its use of uninterrupted wall surfaces, strong functional elements such as the angular porch piers, and what a later generation would call "the integrity of the materials."

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Phillips Atlas of Birmingham Apartments, Archives of the Birmingham Public Library
Records of the Jefferson County Board of Equalization
Title Records

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1

UTM References

A

1	6
---	---

5	1	9	6	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	0	6	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 5 and 6, Webb & Wood's addition to the South Highland Survey, Birmingham, Ala.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Present boundary is the original surveyed property on which this building was built.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Nelson/ Historic Preservationist; Steven M. Kay/AHC Reviewer
organization Operation New Birmingham date November 20, 1988
street & number 2025 Third Avenue North telephone (205) 324-8797
city or town Birmingham state Alabama zip code 35203

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

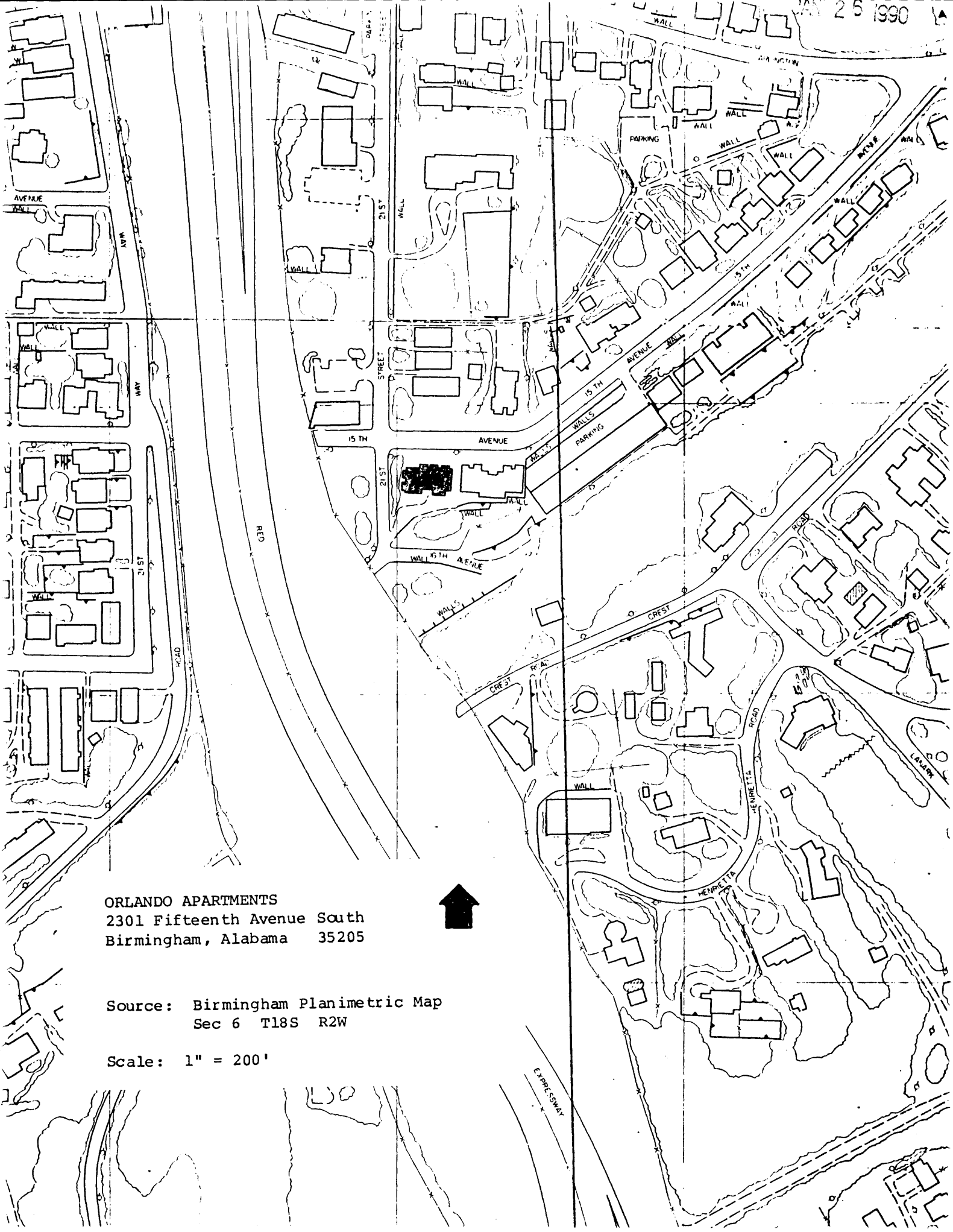
JAN 26 1990

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance, continued:

After nearly a decade in which its fate hung in the balance because of the City's plans to demolish it for expanded Museum facilities, it was sold to local developer Christopher Boehm in 1988 for rehabilitation to its original residential use.



ORLANDO APARTMENTS
 2301 Fifteenth Avenue South
 Birmingham, Alabama 35205



Source: Birmingham Planimetric Map
 Sec 6 T18S R2W

Scale: 1" = 200'

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

JAN 26 1990

Section number Photo graphs Page 1

Information in items 1-5 is the same for all photographs listed.

- 1) Orlando Apartments, 2301 15th Avenue, South
 - 2) Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama
 - 3) Linda Nelson
 - 4) January 1990
 - 5) Photographer
-
- 6) 15th Avenue facade, camera facing southwest
 - 7) Photograph #1
-
- 6) 15th Avenue facade, camera facing southeast
 - 7) Photograph #2
-
- 6) Northwest Corner elevation, camera facing southeast
 - 7) Photograph #3
-
- 6) Detail of west elevation, camera facing east
 - 7) Photograph #4
-
- 6) Detail of piers, camera facing northeast
 - 7) Photograph #5
-
- 6) Detail of main entrance, camera facing south
 - 7) Photograph #6
-
- 6) Rear elevation, camera facing north
 - 7) Photograph #7