

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received AUG 19 1983

date entered

## 1. Name

historic The Wyoming Apartmentsand/or common The Wyoming Apartments

## 2. Location

street & number 2022 Columbia Road, N.W. n/a not for publicationcity, town n/a vicinity of congressional district Walter E. Fauntroy Delegatestate District of Columbia code 11 county n/a code 001

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name John L. Barr, Jr. et. al.street & number 2022 Columbia Road, N.W.city, town Washington n/a vicinity of state District of Columbia

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deedsstreet & number 6th and D Street, N.W.city, town Washington state D.C.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  nodate March 16, 1981  federal  state  county  localdepository for survey records DCRA District of Columbia Historic Preservation Divisioncity, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The following is taken from the application for landmark designation for the Wyoming Apartments submitted to the Joint Committee on Landmarks by the Kalorama Citizens Association dated 12/28/79. The date in the "Pavilion" section has been corrected (changed from 1907 to 1911) to reflect information found subsequent to the filing of the application. Other references to that date have also been corrected.

#### The Building

The Wyoming is sited on Square 2532, Lot 822 (formerly Lots 811, 812, and 813), and faces southwest onto Columbia Road at the juncture of Connecticut Avenue and California Street. A free-standing structure of majestic proportions, it is composed of two seven-story wings linked by a one-story entrance pavilion, which together form a plan in a modified L-shape surrounding a garden courtyard.

In 1905, D.C. Building Permit No. 1672 (February 18, 1905) to construct a seven-story apartment building was issued to Lester A. Barr. B.S. Simmons was listed as architect. In 1909, D.C. Building Permit No. 3303 (March 9, 1909) was listed to Barr to construct a rear addition to the first structure. Again Simmons is listed as architect. A large wing and entrance building were added during 1911.

#### South Wing

The original portion of the Wyoming, constructed between February and November 1905, is of an H-Plan, 92 feet wide and 133 feet deep. It is sited at a slight angle to the front lot line (Columbia Road), with the crossbar of the H positioned on the perpendicular. It is a seven-story structure with a cellar, built on a concrete foundation with brick footings. A flat roof covered with slag tops the building. Buff-colored brick, used throughout the neighborhood, is the primary wall material with limestone used as an ornamental motif. Its estimated cost was \$200,000. The building held 45 apartment units: six on the first floor; seven on the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors, and six on the seventh floor.

The front facade is organized in the classical columnar division of base, shank, and entablature. Its flat appearance is relieved by rusticated brick across the first story and by a shallow projecting bay. The bay is accentuated by paneled brick simulating double pilasters set to either side of the large centrally placed archway of rusticated limestone which once served as the entranceway. The building is crowned by a heavy crested cornice that utilizes a coat of arms bearing a bar sinister at key intervals. This cornice, constructed of galvanized iron and painted buff to take on the appearance of stone, was added to the building while under construction and is secured with iron brackets. The original cornice, of a restrained molding design and smaller in scale, remains in place. Rows of windows, seven vertically and seven horizontally, are placed evenly across the facade, one row tucked between each pair of paneled brick pilasters.

\* According to architectural historian Perry Fisher, buff brick became popular with the increasingly faithful rendition of classical elements and in reaction to the "ugliness" of red-brick Victorian Washington. The lightness appealed to the aesthetic of the age.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Social and Cultural History
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** 1905, 1909, 1911      **Builder/Architect** B. Stanley Simmons - Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Wyoming Apartments is one of only a small number of pre-World War I luxury apartment buildings remaining in Washington. In its essentially unaltered state, it stands as a reminder of the elegance and the quality of design, workmanship, and materials characteristic of the Golden Age of the apartment building in the early years of the twentieth century. The Wyoming Apartments in a major building designed by prominent Washington architect B. Stanley Simmons. Its buff brick and limestone Eclectic Beaux Arts facade, with its classical details and unusual, elaborate one-story, yet monumental, entrance pavilion, is boldly designed and prominently sited. The building captures the essence of the early-twentieth century departure from the Victorian styles of the nineteenth century and it stands as a monument to the emerging popularity of apartment living in Washington. Through the years, this stately apartment building has been the residence of a number of military and political figures of national significance.\*

The following was taken from the application for landmark designation of the Wyoming Apartments submitted to the Joint Committee on Landmarks by the Kalorama Citizens Association dated 12/28/79.

Lester Barr (1854-1937), prominent in Washington real estate and financial circles, was responsible for buildings in many areas of the city. He was founder of the firm Barr and Sanner which built "the first modern city dwelling in Mount Pleasant and also erected the Mount Vernon Apartment House a Ninth Street and New York Avenue, N.W., one of the first buildings of this [n.b. apartment] design." (Obituary, Washington Herald, January 18, 1937 page 4). After the company was dissolved in the 1890's Barr went on to participate in the development of the Kalorama neighborhood. 2023-25 Kalorama Street (1900), 1815-19 Belmont Street (1901), 1929-39 Mintwood Place (1904) are some of the rowhouses he financed. His most spectacular residential investment is the Wyoming, where he maintained his home from 1909 until his death in 1937 is an elegant and spacious penthouse apartment, #702, re-designed especially for the family. His son John L. Barr Sr., (1887-1969) followed in his father's business. A lawyer by education, he continued in real estate and building profession and in 1929 developed the first uptown high rise office structure, the Barr Building at Farragut Square. He, too resided in the family apartment at the Wyoming for many years, from about 1948 through 1968, and passed its management to his son, John L. Barr, Jr.

The Barr family maintained a long term relationship with architect Simmons, calling on him to design not only the Wyoming, but the Mount Vernon, one of Washington's first large apartment buildings, and the high-rise Barr Building.

Simmons (1871-1931) was born in Charles County, Maryland, coming to Washington at the age of ten. He graduated from the Boston Institute of Technology (now M.I.T.) and returned to the District where he lived and practiced architecture until his death at age 60. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of the Columbia Historical Society, the Elks, and the Knights of Columbus.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approximately 1.09 acres

Quadrangle name Washington West -D.C.-MD.-VA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	8	3	2	2	6	4	0	4	3	0	9	3	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Wyoming Apartments occupies Lot 822 (old Lots 811, 812, 813), an irregularly-shaped lot of 47, 787.46 square feet, in Square 2535, in the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne H. Adams - Architectural Historian  
DCRA Historic Preservation

organization Division

date April 1982

street & number 1133 North Capitol Street, N.E.

telephone (202) 535-1282

city or town Washington

state D.C. 20002

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Carol B. Thompson*

Director

title Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

date 7/19/83

### For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Patrick Andrews*

date 9/27/83

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The base of the facade (as well as of its two adjoining sides) is rusticated brick emphasized by limestone belt courses across the top and bottom of the story. The main feature is a centrally placed, oversized entry surrounded by a rusticated limestone arch with articulated key-stone set on rusticated limestone pilasters. The entryway, originally the main public entrance to the building, was later bricked up and now contains a single window. The doorway is boldly scaled, but simply presented. The columns are crowned with crisp square lids juxtaposed with a horizontal band of circles. Unadorned archivolts draw attention toward the entryway. The name "Wyoming" is carved in stone above the entry below the arch. Windows are simple double-hung sashes with transoms and have plain broad limestone lintels and sills.

The intermediate face of the facade is dominated by paneled brick pilasters on each shallow bay. Large iron brackets at the top of the pilasters support a false balcony, actually a portion of the exaggerated belt course dividing this face from the attic story.

The attic story features a pattern of windows alternating with a design element created by inset brick in a rectangular shape. The windows above the false balconies are flanked by narrow double-hung sash windows which take on the appearance of side lights.

A most unusual feature of the building is the inclusion of individual private entrances to the service areas of several of the first floor apartments. Located in the southern elevation, these doors are rarely used today due to the lack of adequate walkways around the edge of the site.

In 1909 a seven-story addition was constructed to the rear of this wing. A modified E-plan, it is connected to the original building by way of a hallway. Once again, buff face brick was used, but decorative features were omitted. The rear wall of the addition is stepped, forming a series of narrow terraces. Too narrow to have a useful purpose as a balcony or deck, they do permit optimum exposure to light. Private entrances to first floor apartments are set between the projecting arms of the plan. The construction of this section of the building necessitated the alteration of the original '05 and '07 tiers of apartments to allow the hallways of the sections to connect. The '05 tier apartments were enlarged, while the '07 tier was eliminated.

(Continued on Form NPS-10-300)

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

North Wing

The large, seven-story wing added in 1911 is similar, but not identical in style to the original building. Variations in detailing, rather than motif, create the differences. However, the mass and form of the newer building are greatly altered from its prototype.

A significant difference is seen in the position of the belt courses of the rusticated first story as they are placed much closer together than on the South Wing's facade. This is a very effective compositional technique creating an optical illusion that compensates for the northerly rise in grade of Columbia Road.

The North Wing is basically trapezoidal in plan. The architect has created a dynamic form, capitalizing on the oddly shaped lot. The intersection of its acute angles is chamfered; the oblique face is inset and punctured by a vertical row of windows permitting an exhilarating view of Washington's cityscape.

Pavilion

The small, seemingly freestanding pavilion that links the two massive wings serves as a public entrance, with lobby and reception room, for the Wyoming. Its composition is of a grand scale and highly ornate, giving the facade the appearance of a ceremonial arch beckoning entrance through its portal.

The Pavilion is constructed of the same buff brick as are the wings, and limestone is once again used as the ornamental material. The facade is completely dominated by its purpose as a public, indeed monumental, entrance. A pair of double engaged Corinthian columns support a balustraded cornice and flank an oversized arched entry. In the archway are glass double doors with brass frame. (The contemporary doors replaced a revolving door). An iron and glass marguee in the classic French style protects the entry. The tympanum is filled with a French casement window flanked by fixed lights.

Added in 1911 with the construction of the North Wing, the pavilion dramatically altered the aesthetic ambience of the original structure. Though small size, its elegant Beaux Arts appearance established a boldly luxuriant tone to the sedate facade of the South Wing with its Georgian overtones and more modest entrance. To link the two wings with so unusual and ornate a feature seems an obvious attempt to create an atmosphere of prestige and opulence.

The interior of the pavilion is even more splendid than the facade. Extraordinary plaster, marble, and mosaic work is among the finest found in any Washington apartment house lobby. Planned in a modified cross shape +, the Wyoming's public lobby is composed of columns and wainscoting of oyster-colored marble, strongly veined in grey, plaster walls, moldings, and ceilings, and decorative mosaic tiled floor.

Upon entering though a small vestibule, trapezoidal in shape, there is a wide hallway flanked by marble columns. The columns are set on the perpendicular in groups of three (a square pillar flanked by rounded columns of equal proportion), crowned by capitals worked in an elaborate plaster rendition of the Ionic style.

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

On either wall are a series of mullioned windows with lights colored to appear as the marble of the wainscoting, allowing light without a view. The ceiling is highly ornate and divided into sections by the decorated support beams which are held in place by the columns. The columns lead through a wide arch, its keystone mounted by a robust plaster eagle. On the ceiling, and throughout the interior, decorative moldings in high relief utilize a motif of tobacco leaves positioned tip to tip in a row creating a garland effect. The floor is composed of mosaic tile in soft tones of deep green, rust, and gold set on a grey background simulating the patterns and shapes of Oriental carpets.

The entrance hall leads into a perpendicular hallway giving access to the wings. The southern extension is decidedly larger and continues the colonnade to the elevators at its completion. This southern wall holds the elevator doors at its center with marble stairs to either side. To the west is a wide flight with stairs rising from both the front and side, filling the entire corner. To the east is a more narrow and steeper flight of stairs leading straight up.

At the end of the entrance hall is large reception area used in the past for dances and debuts. This rectangular space is entered through archways. On the piers of the arches and at similar intervals around the room are double pilasters decorated with high relief floral molding and Corinthian capitals. Modillions form a strong cornice for the room just beneath a coved ceiling. The coving is accentuated by pairs of vertical bands (placed above the pilasters) leading to the plane covered in lattice relief work. The floor continues in mosaic tile using the Oriental motif. The two interior walls are paneled with decorative moldings in the three-part design suggested by the separating archways. The exterior wall contains two sets of French casement windows and a set of French doors leading to a spacious formal garden of dogwood trees, lilac bushes, roses, and other flowering plants.

### Interiors

The Wyoming is composed of 106 apartments (76 in the South Wing and 30 in the North Wing). Individual units consist of a variety of numbers of rooms, from a small "bachelor" unit with living room, hallway, bedroom, and bath to a spacious suite boasting a large reception hall, parlor, library, dining room, kitchen, pantry, five bedrooms, trunk room, and two bathrooms. At least 35 apartments have three or more bedrooms. The largest apartments are located toward Columbia Road. Nearly all rooms have at least one window. Closets are abundant. Originally each apartment was served by its own incinerator.

Most apartments have unusual floor plans, some with many acutely angled and even six-and seven-sided rooms. The rooms are generously sized with 10 feet or 12 feet ceilings, have hardwood floors, and original woodwork. In the North Wing several apartments have shoulder high wainscoting and decorative columns. All the apartments have a distinctive character and almost no two are alike, due to the frequent changes and remodeling undertaken by creative tenants and management through the years. The Fall 1979 issue of Southern Accents featured a six-page story with color photographs of one of the Wyoming's many gracious apartments.\*\*

\*\* This apartment, #702, had been the Barr Family's home during their residency at the Wyoming.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

Alterations

The exterior of the Wyoming is intact to its completion in 1911 with the exception of the replacement of the original revolving door with double glass doors at the main entrance and the replacement of two sets of French doors with windows at the rear wall of the pavilion.

The interior, while undergoing some change, has been respected. In 1911, with the construction of the North Wing, the original public entrance, lounging room, and lobby space were eliminated and several apartments were enlarged. The main door was bricked up and replaced by a single window. The 1909 rear addition resulted in a rearrangement of the rooms in the '05 and '07 tier, enlarging the former tier and eliminating the latter. Original woodwork and flooring materials remain as evidence of this change. Various alterations through the years include the 1907-08 enlargement of the Barr family's apartment on the seventh floor of the South Wing (#702) and the corresponding reduction of the '01 apartment on that floor; repartitioning of walls in individual units; and the updating of most kitchens and some bathrooms.

In about 1915, a restaurant (with a large kitchen below) was established on the first floor in the '04 and '06 tier of the South Wing. Such restaurants were common to apartment buildings in the early part of the century. This restaurant was closed in the late 1940's and the apartments were refurnished for occupancy.

In 1963-64, the building underwent a major renovation at which time plumbing, heating, electricity, and elevators were updated. The entire building was rewired, permitting individual air conditioning units for the first time. The original passenger elevators, which retained iron and glass grilles and were run by operators, were replaced with automatic cars. In the lobby, postal regulations required the installation of individually locked mail boxes to replace the traditional open boxes. Kitchen facilities were added to the several "bachelor" apartments in the North Wing.

(Continued on Form FHR-8-300)



# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

The Wyoming is an apartment building of distinguished quality representing the onset of new trends in residential design in this city, and as a home of many of Washington's and the nation's military, political, cultural, and social elite, the Wyoming has stood for 75 years as a hallmark of the Kalorama neighborhood—a document to its neighborhood's history, identity, and integrity.

It was designed during the years of 1905–1911 by Washington architect B. Stanley Simmons for local developer Lester A. Barr. As it stands today, it is one of the fewer than 15 large apartment structures extant in this city from the pre-World War I period. \*\*\*It was the product of a client-architect relationship of the Barr family since 1905. Sited at the juncture of Columbia Road, California Street, and Connecticut Avenue, the Wyoming holds an important position at the edge of Kalorama Triangle, serving as the cornerstone of a concentration of large apartment houses and as a symbol of the character of its neighborhood.

The building is a pleasing eclectic combination of the Beaux Arts and Georgian styles adapted to the requirements of apartment living. The design is all the more interesting in its accommodation to the site both in plan and elevation, the uniqueness of its entrance pavilion and exquisite interior of its lobby, and the high quality of workmanship and attention to detail impossible to reproduce today. It was constructed in three stages: a single H-plan structure was built on the southwest portion of the present lot in 1905; six years later, an opulent one-story lobby with reception room and a large trapezoidal seven-story wing were added to the north; and the E-plan addition to the rear of the original portion completed the structure in 1909. The exterior is virtually intact; the interior has seen minimal alterations due to safety regulations and modernization, but without harm to the character and organization of the building.

An understanding of the building's design and development reveals important information for architectural and social historians. Originally, the Wyoming's attraction was largely the result of the fine location offering the benefits of suburban living, panoramic views, and cooler summer temperatures. The building was easily accessible by public transportation and convenient to downtown. The rapid expansion of the building reflects its success in providing desirable living quarters and, on a broader scale, indicates the city's acceptance and need for apartments. Use of steel-frame construction allowed the new scale of apartments buildings, significantly altering both the architectural style of the apartment and the requirements and life-style of the apartment dweller. In addition, the introduction of richly ornamented public interior space is evidence of the growing importance of public amenities to attract residents. The Wyoming stands out as one of the first apartment buildings in Washington, if not the first, to direct large amounts of space and expenditure toward the creation of an elegant lobby that could satisfy the sophisticated taste of the affluent tenant.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\* James M. Goode, Capital Losses, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), page 181.

\*\*\*\* A study of Washington apartments from 1900 to 1905 by Paul Alley, candidate for a Master of Arts degree in architectural history, supports this thesis. See Bibliography.

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 1

He is known to have been a prolific designer, but only a few of his designs have been studied, notably the Elks Club (919 H Street, N.W., 1906) and the National Metropolitan Bank (613 Fifteenth Street, N.W., 1905-07), both Landmarks of the District of Columbia which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of his buildings enjoy high public esteem, including the Fairfax Hotel, the Jewish Community Center (now owned by the University of the District of Columbia), the Oakland Apartments (immediately to the north of the Wyoming and constructed in the same year--1905), the Dupont Apartments, the Belvedere Hotel, the Washington Riding and Hunt Club, the Lafayette Hotel (demolished), the Savoy Theater (demolished 1971), and the Barr Building (his last major design). An article from the December 16, 1902, edition of the Evening Star said of him:

.....an architect who has added to the beauty and growth of this City. He has designed some of the largest apartment houses in the City. Among the monuments to his skill and originality: the Mount Vernon, the Gloucester, the Cumberland, the Henrietta, the Veronica, the Easter, the Franklin, and the Dupont are the most conspicuous. Mr. Simmons is capable and enterprising; these qualities added to an energetic spirit have brought to him deserved success during his comparatively short career.

His work exhibits great range of style from the small but elaborate Beaux Arts Elks Club to the elegant Georgian Revival Fairfax Hotel, the monumental Jewish Community Center, and highrise Gothic Revival Barr Building. The Wyoming is evidence of his ability to adapt to unusual site and aesthetic demands with adroitness and sensitivity. It is especially significant in that it demonstrates his command of residential needs within the context and limitations of large-scale apartment design.

For 75 years the Wyoming, a venerable and impressive apartment building, has been a landmark of its neighborhood, as well as an important address for many prominent Washingtonians. This imposing edifice is located just north of the intersection of Columbia Road, Connecticut Avenue, and California Street, a key site in the re-emergence and redevelopment of Washington. To its south is the busy Connecticut Avenue uptown commercial district and the exciting Dupont Circle shopping and entertainment center. To its north and east is the increasingly popular Adams-Morgan neighborhood. To the west lies the elegant Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhood and the core of large luxury apartment houses that line California Street and extend northward on Connecticut Avenue.

The Wyoming itself is situated at the edge of Kalorama Triangle, a small residential district within the large Kalorama neighborhood. In the 1900's its site was at the heart of the area then known as Washington Heights. While its boundaries have shifted northerly and it has acquired the new name of Kalorama Triangle, this distinctive residential area has retained its integrity and holds some of the city's most gracious architecture. The Wyoming has many distinguished neighbors: beautiful old apartment buildings like the Altamont, 2029

(Continued on FHR-8-300)

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Connecticut Avenue, the noted Lothrop Mansion, now an annex to the Soviet embassy and containing the office of the U.S.S.R. Trade Representation to the United States; the embassies of Iceland, Malta, and the Republic of Gabon; and groups of town and row houses illustrating the range and quality of Washington's turn-of-the-century architects.

The Wyoming was built on the Lansburgh Tract affording it a wonderful view of Oak-Lawn, a grand four-story Second Empire mansion (built in 1820; remodeled in 1873; demolished in 1952) to the immediate south. On the Oak Lawn property grew the "Treaty Oak," over 400 years old and the largest oak tree in the District of Columbia. The tree was reputed to have marked the scene in the late 17th century of treaties between the first English settlers and local Indian tribes. The area constituted the last large undevelopment acreage near downtown when in 1952, the mansion was razed. The property is now the site of the massive Washington Hilton Hotel which, with its curved-band of windows over massively proportioned facades, is an overscaled neighbor even for the majestic Wyoming.

The development of Washington during the city's first century focused on the area known as Washington City. But in the 1890's with the introduction of public mass transportation and the increasing population and land values, the city began serious expansion beyond Florida Avenue (formerly Boundary Street). Kalorama, once considered to be out in the country, was one of the areas which benefited from this growth. Soon large and gracious homes studded the subdivision streets and roads on the western side, while groups of fine row houses built on speculation were seen to the east. The incorporation of the Country into the city borough and the expansion and transformation of Connecticut Avenue into a major thoroughfare had kindled this development and by the First World War much of the land was filled with different varieties of residences: mansions, town houses, row houses, large and small apartment buildings.

The neighborhood which has recently been given the name Kalorama Triangle is defined as the area between Columbia Road, Connecticut Avenue, and Calvert Street. While newly named, the area is rich in history. Characterized by unusual street patterns, hilly terrain, and a variety of architecture, Kalorama Triangle's diversity serves to provide it with a strong identity. Architectural historian Perry Fisher writes of the area:

Columbia Road (one of the oldest routes of land travel in the Washington area) runs through the heart of what is distinctly an early 20th century community developed for the upper-middle and upper classes. The growth of the district was directly tied to the extension in 1896 of excellent street-car service. This area was called Washington Heights. It is a neighborhood of well-constructed row houses and apartment buildings. It is also one of the most racially, ethnically, and economically diverse parts of the capital. (page 126)

California Street, Connecticut Avenue, and Columbia Road are the only concentration of large apartment houses in the Kalorama district. At the turn-of-the-century the heights above Florida Avenue

(Continued on FHR-8-300)

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

attracted massive apartment house development which aroused the ire of many residents who felt that such structures were alien to the character of the city. (page 124)

-Perry Fisher, "Kalorama, " in Washington on Foot edited by Allan A. Hodges (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Planners, 1976), pp. 124 and 126.

However, apartment living caught on quickly. This influx of apartment buildings precipitated a widespread change in attitude towards the suitability of apartment residence. Andrew Alpern, AIA, in his book, Apartments for the Affluent, writes:

.....apartments in the United States represent a relatively new housing concept. It has only been since 1869 that those who consider themselves above the laboring class have been willing to make their homes under shared roof. Prior to that it would have been unthinkable for a family of even modest social aspirations to live in anything but a private dwelling, however humble such a house might be.

-Andrew Alpern, AIA Apartments for the Affluent, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 1.

Some of the same factors which caused the expansion of the city's limits--public transportation, increasing population and costs--combined with the Washington's often short term and seasonal residencies, the expansion of government agencies and the resulting demand for housing for the affluent, and the large amounts of undeveloped land immediately surrounding the developed city--helped to make the concept of apartment life much more palatable. The apartments themselves were also improving, becoming larger and more attractively designed as they competed for affluent tenants.

The earliest apartments contained most of the elements of a private house, though often assembled in a manner far from functional. The arrangement of the service spaces in particular was seldom designed to save time or energy of those who regularly used them. But with household help cheap and easy to obtain, and wives who spent most of their time at home, most men were blissfully ignorant of these inadequacies. However, as more

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

and more people abandoned the keeping of private houses in the city with the attendant necessity for small armies of servants to maintain them, builders found it expedient to attend more carefully to the planning of the new apartment houses in order to attract tenants.

-Alpern, Apartments for the Affluent, p.1

As constructed in 1905, the Wyoming was a large and stately building, but the 1911 addition not only generously increased its size but gave it a new and distinctly prestigious look. The opulent entrance was testimony to prospective tenants of the quality, status, and respectability of life within its walls. The 1909 addition, bringing the building's number of units over 100, is testimony to the success of the design.

Over the decades, an extraordinary group of people have made the Wyoming their home. Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower were the Wyoming's most noted tenants. Four countries have maintained legations in the building—Cuba (1906-09), Greece (1911-14), Montenegro (1919-20), and Norway (1911-31). Senators, Representatives, high military officers, diplomats, and leaders in the arts, politics, and society have all chosen the Wyoming.

The Wyoming has consistently been the home of some of Washington's and the nation's most prominent citizens. Over 120 residents regularly found their names in Who's Who in the Nation's Capital (1921-22, 1929-30, 1934-35). A study of the Elite List and Blue Book from 1906 to 1933 shows the Wyoming to have had a consistently high number of residents among Washington society. Though the Wyoming did not have more listings than any other apartment house in any year examined, it always ranked very high. Over this quarter of the century, Stoneleigh Court (demolished 1969) was the only apartment house that consistently had more listings and the Highlands (now a hotel, its facade altered and damaged) was the only other apartment building that had as many.

The relative standing of the Wyoming is remarkably stable. In the eight years for which a comparison was made, its rank ranged from second to eleventh with an average of sixth. There is no trend, either upwards or downwards. This stability is in striking contrast to many other buildings. The Portner, which was first in 1908 with 98 listings, fell to 14th in 1918 with 28 listings and had only seven listings in 1927. The Rochambeau and Woodley declined likewise. On the other hand, new buildings were constructed, and some of them, such as Meridian Mansions and 2029 Connecticut Avenue, had large numbers of listings. The relative standing of the Wyoming was nevertheless maintained.

While notable, the Wyoming's consistently high ranking was not unique. And these comparisons while revealing are not conclusive. In particular, the comparisons of the number of people listed in various buildings depends not only upon the composition of the tenants, but also on the number of apartments. What does stand out as a valid generalization is the consistently high ranking of the Wyoming over the quarter of a

(Continued on Form-8-300)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

5

century during which a number of buildings originally ranked high fell markedly and during which many new buildings were constructed with some attaining high rank.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969), Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe during World War II and President of the United States from 1953 to 1961, is the most famous person to have lived in the Wyoming. Residing there from early 1927 until September 1935, except for a 15-month period in Paris, Eisenhower, his wife Mamie, and his young son John lived first in Apartment 210 and then, after returning from Paris, in Apartment 302. Except for the White House, Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower lived together at the Wyoming for a longer period than at any other home until their retirement to Gettysburg.

The Military

Over 70 high ranking military officers have resided at the Wyoming. The building has long been regarded as a stronghold for the many professional soldiers who are detailed to Washington. Indeed, residence at the Wyoming has often been considered a social cachet among military families.

Admiral William Shepherd Benson, U.S. Navy (1885-1932), the country's first Chief of Naval Operations, lived at the Wyoming from 1918 to 1923. Benson became Chief in May of 1915, organizing the new and ill-defined office, centralizing the Navy's administration, and preparing the fleet for the onset of war. During the First World War, Benson proved both himself and the concept behind the new post, ably administering the growing Navy. In 1919 he served President Wilson as Naval Advisor to the Peace Mission at Versailles, retiring in September to serve as Chairman (1919-21), and a Commissioner (1921-28) of the U.S. Shipping Board and trustee of the Emergency Fleet Corporation (1920-21). He also served as the first president of the National Council of Catholic Men (1921-25).

A most accomplished and colorful resident was Rear Admiral Charles Dwight Sigsbee, U.S. Navy (1845-1923). A hydrographer, inventor, and artist, as well as a naval officer, Sigsbee was the Captain of the Maine when that battleship was blown up (or exploded) in Havana precipitating war with Spain. During the Civil War he took part in the battle of Mobile Bay under Admiral Farragut. His bold act of scuttling the steamer Blake to save it from a terrible storm in the Gulf of Mexico brought him legendary fame among sailors. He was commander of the cruiser squadron of the North Atlantic fleet sent to France to return the remains of John Paul Jones to this country. Spending much of his career in hydrographic work, Sigsbee invented several devices and introduced new methods for deep sea exploration and served as Chief of the Hydrographic Office during 1893-97. He published Deep Sea Sounding and Dredging (U.S. Coast Survey, 1880) and Personal Narrative of the Battleship Maine (1899). A talented artist as well, many of his cartoons signed only with the letter "S" were published in New York's Daily Graphic.

(Continued on FHR-8-300)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 6

Lieutenant General Raymond A. Wheeler, U.S. Army (1885-1974), was Assistant Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia from 1922 to 1926. During World War II, he directed the development of a transportation network from the Middle East to the U.S.S.R. through Iraq and Iran, and then was responsible for the construction of the 200-mile Ledo Road linking India and China for the first time. He went on to become the Commanding General of the India-Burma Theater in the last months of the war. From 1945 to 1949, he was Chief of Engineers of the Army. Near his retirement in 1949 he moved to the Wyoming, where he lived until 1959. During these years and until 1964 he served as engineering advisor to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, carrying out such tasks as representing IBRD in the long-lasting dispute between India and Pakistan over the waters of the Indus Basin. He also carried out several United Nations assignments, most notably to direct the clearing of the Suez Canal in 1956-57.

A long time resident (1937-71) was Lieutenant General Thomas B. Larkin, U.S. Army (1890-19). Moving to the Wyoming at his retirement, Larkin had left a long and illustrious career as a professional soldier. In Eisenhower's wartime letters to Marshall, Eisenhower commends Larkin's outstanding work as Chief Engineer and Chief of Staff of the Service of Supply in North Africa. Larkin went on to become Commanding General of the Services of Supplies in the North African theater in February 1943 and later was appointed deputy commander and chief of staff of the communications zone in the European theater.

Indian fighter, Brigadier General John Joseph O'Connell, U.S. Army (1840-1927), lived in the Wyoming from 1914 until his death. O'Connell left a professorship in mathematics and literature at Seton Hall College to enlist in the army at the beginning of the Civil War. He served in the 1875 Black Hills Campaign against the Sioux Indians, in the Geronimo Campaign against the Apaches in 1882, and in the Pine Ridge Indian Campaign in 1894. In the Spanish-American War, he swam from his boat to the shore of Cuba as the first American Officer in command of troops to land.

Other notable military figures include: Lieutenant General John B. Coulter, U.S. Army (1891-1968), who commanded the I and IX Corps in the early part of the Korean War and was made deputy commander of the Eighth Army in Korea; Lieutenant General Willard G. Wyman, U.S. Army (1898-1969), who was singled out by Eisenhower as one of an exceptional group of men whom he met in 1941 and tried to keep close to him during the war, and who was later commanding general of the IX Corps in the Korean War and, prior to retirement, the commanding general of the United States Continental Army Command; Rear Admiral James H. Oliver, U.S. Navy (1875-1928), who served as Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Commandant of the Virgin Islands Naval Station (1919-19); Major General David C. Shanks, U.S. Army (1861-1940), who was responsible for organizing the embarkation for over 1,500,000 troops from New York and New Jersey ports to France during the First World War; and Rear Admiral George H. Rocks, U.S. Navy (1868-1946), Chief Constructor of the Navy during 1929-32 and subsequently head of the Webb Institute of Naval Architecture.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

Albert Baird Cummins (1850-1926), a resident of the Wyoming during 1913 and 1914, achieved distinction even before his election to the Senate in 1908. He had been chief attorney in a farmers' suit against the barbed wire trust that led to a decision of the United States Supreme Court which completely overthrew that monopoly. As governor of Iowa from 1902 until he became Senator, he had "transformed that state in much the same manner that LaFollette had reconstructed Wisconsin." He broke the political domination of the railroad, greatly strengthened their regulation, achieved a direct primary, and popularized tariff reform.

In his early Senate years Cummins was one of the leading insurgent Republicans against the Taft Administration. "There was in the Senate no greater authority upon railroad problems," and he successfully led the insurgents in completely revamping the Manns-Elkins railroad act. Cummins "was generally admired for his intellectual abilities, possessing, in Senator Clapp's view, 'one of the best trained minds I know, with a power of analysis which is absolutely marvelous.'"

Like the other insurgents, Cummins generally opposed President Wilson's policies, whether his many proposals of domestic legislation, his movement toward World War I, or the Treaty of Versailles. The principal exception was the Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914, which Cummins helped to frame. He sought the Republican presidential nomination in 1916 but won support only in the insurgent heartland of North Central states. He later went on to chair the Senate's Interstate Commerce and Judiciary Committees and served as President pro tempore. His principal accomplishment in these later years was the Transportation Act of 1920, which returned the railroads to private management and laid the basis for their financial rehabilitation.

Walter F. George (1878-1957), son of a tenant farmer who regularly received the Congressional Record, lived at the Wyoming near the start of a 34-year Senate career that was to see him judged by the Washington Post editorial written upon his death as a person "who in his day became the most powerful man in the Senate."

George was elected to the Senate from Georgia in 1922, after having been a state Supreme Court justice, and in the early Roosevelt years supported most of the New Deal legislation. By the late 1930's he often voted more conservatively and was one of the three Democratic Senators whom President Roosevelt tried the hardest, and unsuccessfully, to unseat in the 1938 primaries.

In late 1940, George became Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and led the fight in the Senate for Lend Lease, which he later judged the most important matter he had ever carried. In mid-1941 he became, instead, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, which he held until 1955 except during four years when the Democrats were in the minority.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 8

In 1955, at President Eisenhower's request, George again became Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He was also elected President pro tempore. He played a major role in encouraging President Eisenhower to meet the Soviet leaders in Geneva in 1955--the first such conference since World War II--and to start ambassadorial talks with the People's Republic of China. George's death was noted by a lead editorial in the Washington Post and a major front-page article in the New York Times.

Senator Henry Fountain Ashurst (1874-1962) of Arizona was called in his Washington Post obituary "the last of the Senate's swashbuckling orators, who wielded words like a dueling sword and considered inconsistency a jewel." Ashurst resided in the Wyoming in 1915, just a few years after the onset of a senatorial career that was to extend 28 years (1912-1940) and would see him as chairman of the Judiciary Committee for the last eight. One of the first two Senators to represent Arizona, Ashurst was considered the "show horse" compared to his colleague, Carl Hayden's "work horse" demeanor.

Howard Sutherland (1865-1950), first a Representative (1913-17) and then a Senator (1917-23) from West Virginia, served in the Congress for ten years. A candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1920, he distinguished himself afterwards as Chairman of the American Advisory Committee on Economic and Industrial Questions concerning the proposal of a ten year naval holiday.

After his years in Congress, President Coolidge appointed him the Alien Property Custodian (1926-33). Sutherland remained in Washington, living at the Wyoming from 1936 until his death.

Walter Irving McCoy (1859-1933), Representative from New Jersey, served in the House from 1911 to 1914. In that year President Woodrow Wilson appointed him an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, and in 1918 appointed him its Chief Justice, a post that he held until his retirement in 1929. His wife, Kate Baldwin McCoy, was noted in Washington for her interest in welfare work. She devoted a great deal of her time to the Americanization School, together with Justice McCoy, and to the George Baldwin McCoy Post of the American Legion, named after their son who was killed in World War I. They resided at the Wyoming from 1914 to 1923.

South Trimble (1864-1946), a resident of the Wyoming in 1930, was a Representative from Kentucky for three terms, 1901-1907. He served as Clerk of the House of Representatives from April 1911 to May 1919, when he left office to operate a plantation in Alabama. When the Democrats next secured a majority in the House, Trimble was once again elected its Clerk. He served from December 7, 1931, until his death in Washington on November 23, 1946. He was nominated Clerk 17 times, and the 23 years that he held office was longer than anyone before him or since. He took great pride in the fact that his signature as Clerk had made official the largest appropriation bill ever passed by a legislative body to that time--the \$43,820,000,000 Army bill of 1943.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 9

Daniel Alexander Sutherland (1869-1955), a Delegate from the Territory of Alaska, resided at the Wyoming from 1923 to 1926. A pioneer, in 1898 he crossed the country from his home in Essex, Massachusetts, to Circle City, Alaska. Sutherland was involved in the mining and fishing industries of the Territory, serving as a member of the Alaska Senate during 1912-20. He was a delegate to the Congress from 1921 through 1930.

James T. Lloyd (1847-1944) of Missouri lived in the Wyoming for a brief time during his twenty year career in the House of Representatives (1897-1917). From 1901 to 1908 he was Minority Whip, the second ranking position in the party leadership, which he left to serve during four years as chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee. After leaving Congress he practiced law in Washington for several years before returning to Missouri. He was president of the District of Columbia Board of Education in 1924 and 1925 and president of the chamber of commerce in 1925.

Lester Barr and his elder son, John L. Barr, Sr., both long-time residents, have already had their accomplishments discussed for their role in construction and maintaining the Wyoming and other notable buildings. Another son, L. Stewart Barr (1893-19) was an inventor and author. During World War I, he distinguished himself by his courageous flying over enemy territory. He returned to the United States to study airplane design and engineering, holding two plane patents that were tested by the U.S. Government in the 1920's.

\* The Joint Committee on Landmarks has amended the designation of the Wyoming Apartments, a Category III Historic Landmark in the District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites, to include the Interior of the Entrance Pavilion. The Committee also recommended that the Interior of the Entrance Pavilion be given special prominence as part of the National Register form. The reasons for including the Interior of the Entrance Pavilion in the designation and the recommendation are as follows:

- 1) One of the best marble and plaster luxury apartment house lobbies from its period in Washington, it remains essentially intact and retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, craftsmanship, feeling, and association.

(Continued on Form FHR-8-300)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 10

- 2) It is a rich visual reminder of the successful emergence of the apartment building as an acceptable, even fashionable place to live and its design and ambience embody the characteristics of both the early-twentieth century apartment house and the Golden Age of that building type.
- 3) As a major design by prominent Washington architect B. Stanley Simmons, FAIA, it represents the work of a master and it possesses high artistic value for its skillful handling of luxurious materials, spatial composition, and light to form a harmonious composition that created a new visual and emotional image for the Wyoming Apartments.

(Continued on Form FHR-8-300)

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only  
 received  
 date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

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**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 3

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 4

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_ Item number 9 Page 5

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(Continued on form NPS-10-900)