

**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

**1. Name**

historic Greenstone Apartments

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 1116-1118 Poplar Avenue and 200 Waldran Blvd., N.      not for publication

city, town Memphis      vicinity of      congressional district Eighth

state Tennessee code 45 county Shelby code 157

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name James H. Murray and Charles M. Reisman

street & number 200 Waldran Boulevard, N.

city, town Memphis      vicinity of      state Tennessee 38105

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Registrar

street & number Shelby County Courthouse

city, town Memphis      vicinity of      state Tennessee 38103

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Memphis Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes      no

date January, 1978      federal      state      county  local

depository for survey records Memphis Landmarks Commission

city, town Memphis      vicinity of      state Tennessee 38103

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Located on a lot bordered by Poplar Avenue on the south, Waldran Boulevard on the west, and the right-of-way for Interstate-255 on the north and east, the Greenstone Apartments consist of three three-story rectangular buildings containing a total of eighteen units. Two of the buildings--one facing Waldran and the other facing Interstate-40--are perpendicular to the rear elevation of the third, which is set back thirty feet from Poplar Avenue. The two rear buildings are linked to the Poplar building by brick and stone arches and a paved courtyard. The basement walls of each building are adjoining a separate basement beneath the courtyard houses a common furnace and water heater. A paved parking area is located west and northwest of the building.

The construction of Interstate-255 through Midtown had a great impact on the environment of the Greenstone Apartments. Aside from many adjoining structures being demolished, the grounds and adjoining facilities were greatly altered. The original carriage house was intact and in use both as an apartment and as a storage area. This, along with a double row of garages and a maintenance man's apartment, were demolished. Waldran Boulevard was reduced to a two-lane street with the remaining space being deeded to the Greenstone owners to help compensate for the loss of property on the east side.

The only alteration to occur to the exterior elevations of the Greenstone Apartments has been the creation of a patio between the Poplar building and the Waldran building. The cast iron grating was removed from the arch connecting these two buildings and relocated to a new brick arch approximately twelve feet toward the center courtyard. The enclosed area was then built up to the level of the first floor and surfaced with slate. An opening was cut through the northwest side of the Waldran building and this connection serves as the owner's guest bedroom.

The distinctive name for the apartment is derived from the green and white sandstone used on the Poplar and Waldran elevations. This stone, brought from Ohio, was salvaged from a house built in 1890 which had previously occupied the site.

The Greenstone Apartments are not easily categorized as to style. However, certain influences can be detected. A lack of highly developed detailing marks the departure from eclecticism and a move toward modern architecture. This was typical of many buildings of the period. It is also important to note that the architect for the Greenstone Apartments was Hubert T. McGee, who also designed Clarence Saunders' home, now known as the Pink Palace. In both designs one sees the same sense of scale and a similar fenestration pattern. Also, the use of rusticated stone in both structures recalls Renaissance architecture. This is reinforced by the use of columns and carved stone around the entrances to each of the three buildings.

The major exterior design elements in the Greenstone Apartments are the rusticated green and white stone, projects in the form of a turret and two bay windows, the columned entrances, the generous use of glass and the rhythm of the window spacing. Also of note is the original stone and cast iron fence along the street in front of the Waldran elevation. Constructed with load-bearing masonry walls for the exterior and the interior stairwalls, the building has a hip-roof covered with slate, except in the

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Waldran building in which the slate was removed and replaced with asphalt shingles. Basement walls are load-bearing masonry utilizing many of the original house walls and footing. The footings are spread masonry, reflecting early building techniques in which concrete was not extensively used or trusted. Interior walls are constructed of wood lathing covered with plaster, as are the ceilings.

The Poplar and Waldran elevations are very similar. Each is covered with rusticated green sandstone, which is accented by bands of white stone used between stories and around window openings. The size of the masonry blocks varies from course to course, further emphasizing the rustification. Mortar joints are beaded, adding visual textural interest.

The Poplar elevation, which contains six bays, is enclosed by a turret at the west end and a three-sided bay near the east end. In the turret, each of the three stories contains two windows—one facing south and one facing west—in which the glass and frames are curved to match the radius of the turret. This glass, as is nearly all the glazing in the building, is original from the 1920s and is distinguished by rippling and slight visual distortion. Each window in the turret, and the building, is one-over-one double hung sash. In the bay a single window is located in each side. In the center of this elevation is the entrance, in which granite columns supported by stone piers carved with garlands flank double leaf glass-panelled doors. The columns support a lintel composed of a block of sandstone topped by a band of stone carved in a foliated motif. The architrave of the doorway also features stone carved in the same motif. This entire doorway was salvaged from the 1890 house. In front of the doorway is a semi-circular porch with stone piers like those supporting the columns and a stone balustrade. The interest in the remainder of the elevation is provided by the rhythm of window openings. - To the right of the turret is a single window in each story. In the next bay, windows are grouped in threes, with the side windows slightly narrower than the center window. The bay to the right of the entrance is of the same design. In the two stories above the entrance, windows are grouped in pairs. This bay is topped by a gable flush with the wall surface. The window arrangement provides a horizontal contrast to the vertical thrust of the turret, bay window and entrance bays.

The west elevation consists of two sections, the side elevation of the Poplar building and the main elevation of the Waldran building. The two are linked by a stone arch. As was mentioned earlier, both sections are faced with the same stone used on the Poplar elevation. The two bays behind the turret each contain a single window in each story, although those in the first bay are smaller. In the Waldran building, there are six bays. The first two bays—moving south to north—contain groupings of three windows. The next bay contains the Waldran entrance, which is very similar to the Poplar entrance. However, there is no carved architrave, the porch is smaller and rectangular, and there are single windows in the upper stories. The bay north of the entrance contains a triple grouping of windows. Each of the three sides of the bay window and the bay north of it contain single windows.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Since there was only enough stone to cover the Poplar and Waldran elevations, the remaining outward elevations of the two rear buildings are covered with red-brown brick laid in stretcher bond while the courtyard elevations are faced with a medium-brown brick. In each of these elevations, windows occur either singly or in groups of three. All feature wood surrounds and stone sills.

The most significant and dominant single element in the buildings' interior space is the reassembled solid mahogany curved staircase in the Poplar Avenue building. A feature of the house which originally sat on the site, the staircase is typical of late Victorian, turn-of-the-century architectural detailing. The carving is heavy, featuring a ribbon and fruit motif that is repeated on the interior doors. This heavy detailing is combined with classical egg and dart molding around the edges and the panelled surfaces. It is questionable whether the mill work was custom designed and carved for the original residents or if these were stocked items assembled from catalogues supplied by specialty lumberyards. Such catalogues were popular during the 1920s, and many examples from them can be seen throughout the Midtown area. Since the circa 1890 date may predate this technique and the quality of the carving is exceptional, the mill work may well be unique to this structure. A Gothic-style feature of the Poplar lobby is the heavy cast iron chain-supported chandelier. This was most likely a 1920s addition.

The non-eclectic look is most dominant inside the individual apartments. Ceiling moldings are only large enough to accommodate picture hangers and are not used at all in auxiliary spaces, such as baths, hall, kitchens, and closets. The door and window trim is large, but not ornate, and is typical of that used from the 1900s through the 1930s. Originally all the wood trim and doors were stained dark mahogany. The changing tastes of the early 1930s are evident from the fact that the new owners began painting the mill work as the apartment became available. In every instance where the wallpaper has been removed to plaster, no paint has been found on the plaster itself, indicating that all the walls and ceilings were papered directly over the finished plaster work by the contractor.

The interiors of the buildings are distinguished by the craftsmanship and quality of materials and the large open floor plans with generous amounts of natural light and ventilation. All wood flooring is of first quality random length tongue and groove red oak, except in the kitchens and closets where first quality pine was used. However, by the 1930, all kitchen flooring had been covered with linoleum. Each kitchen had a floor drain to accommodate iceboxes with no evident electrical provisions for refrigerators. The bathroom floors are covered with one-inch hexagonal tiles. The walls below the chair rail used a special water-resistant plaster scored to resemble tile. All of the bathtubs have exposed pipe showers with overhead curtain tracks. All metal fittings in the apartments are solid brass, including many original light fixtures. The building is heated by a pressurized heating system. Cooling was facilitated by the use of large fans located in the attics above the grating. Each kitchen has a louvered door, which allows air to be drawn out the door, up to the attic and out the dormer windows. During the summer, awnings were hung above windows on the east and west sides.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

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Each building is serviced by separate service and entrance stairways from which all kitchen doors and entrances open respectively. The basic floor plan of the apartments reflects a life style and physical requirements different than that evident in today's apartments. However, they do adapt to contemporary needs. Each kitchen has a walk-in pantry. Separating the kitchen and dining room is a butler's pantry. The dining room also opens onto the wide central hall. Another unusual element of the apartments, particularly for this period, is a large amount of closet space. Each room has its own closet.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1927 Builder/Architect Hubert T. McGee

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Greenstone Apartments lies in the unique manner in which architect Hubert T. McGee designed a multi-family dwelling that was and still is one of the finest in the city. The building is also significant for the quality of craftsmanship evident in both the exterior and interior.

The Greenstone Apartments' history goes back to about 1890, when George Arnold began construction of a home on the eastern edge of the city. Part of his holdings included a steamship line, which brought the green and white colored sandstone down the river from Ohio. The late Victorian house was built in the Neo-Gothic Revival style that was popular at the time. The house passed from George Arnold to Seneca B. Anderson and then to the Jennings family. In 1925 the house and estate were sold again. This time a developer purchased the estate with the idea of demolishing the house and salvaging the material to build an eighteen-unit apartment building to fit into the elegant neighborhood. The building was completed in 1927; tenants occupied the building in 1928.

The design and materials for the Poplar and Waldran elevations of the Greenstone (and of course its name) came from the 1890 house. Another consideration in designing the apartments to resemble the house might well have been to make the neighborhood more receptive to an apartment building in its midst.

The rusticated stone and the corner turret are evidence of a Renaissance influence on the structure. However, the lack of definite style or highly developed details from any particular period marks the early stages of modern architecture. Hubert T. McGee was the architect for both Greenstone Apartments and Clarence Saunders' "Pink Palace." In both buildings, we see a similar window arrangement, the same sense of scale, and, again, a Renaissance influence.

Superior craftsmanship is evident in the reassembled curved mahogany staircase in the entrance hall of the Poplar Avenue building. The stairway is carved in a ribbon and fruit motif; this is combined with classical egg and dart molding. In the individual apartments, the woodwork is plain but of high quality. Mahogany is used for baseboards as well as door and window trim. Red oak is used for flooring. On the exterior the beaded mortar joints and unique decorative effect achieved by the use of both green and white rusticated sandstone point to exceptional masonry work.

The boundaries of this nomination were drawn to the dimensions of the lot on which the three buildings are situated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Series of interviews: Mrs. Carl A. Robinson, Memphis, Tennessee, summer, 1978  
Memphis City Directories, 1927-1928  
Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Insurance maps of Memphis, TN, 1897 to 1927.

## 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property .9

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis, Tenn.-Ark.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	5	7	7	1	2	3	0	3	8	9	2	9	7	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 boundaries of the Greenstone Apartments property are shown as marked in red on the enclosed Shelby County Tax Assessor's map, scale-1"=100'.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kay Benton and James Murray

organization Memphis Landmarks Commission

date November 20, 1979

street & number 22 N. Front Street

telephone 901-528-2834

city or town Memphis

state Tennessee 38103

## 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 Herbert L. Hoge

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 19 March 1980

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

W. Ray Luce  
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/14/80

Attest: Kristin J. O'Connell  
Chief of Registration

date 5/13/80

GREENSTONE APARTMENTS

SITE PLAN

1"=40'



I-255



Maldran Boulevard

Offstreet parking

200

8111

1116

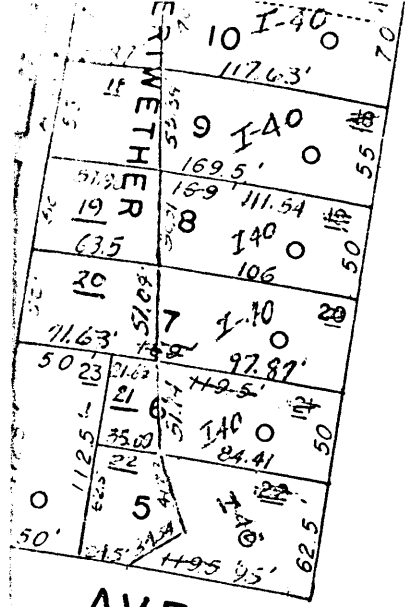
Poplar Avenue

GREENSTONE APARTMENTS  
MEMPHIS, SHELBY COUNTY, TN

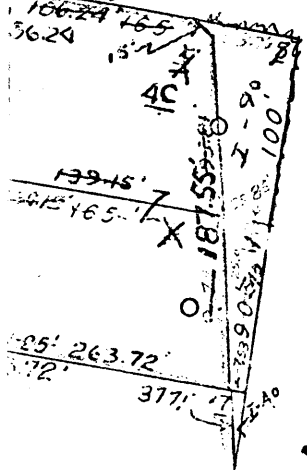


Greenstone Apartments  
Shelby County Assessor's Map

1"=100'



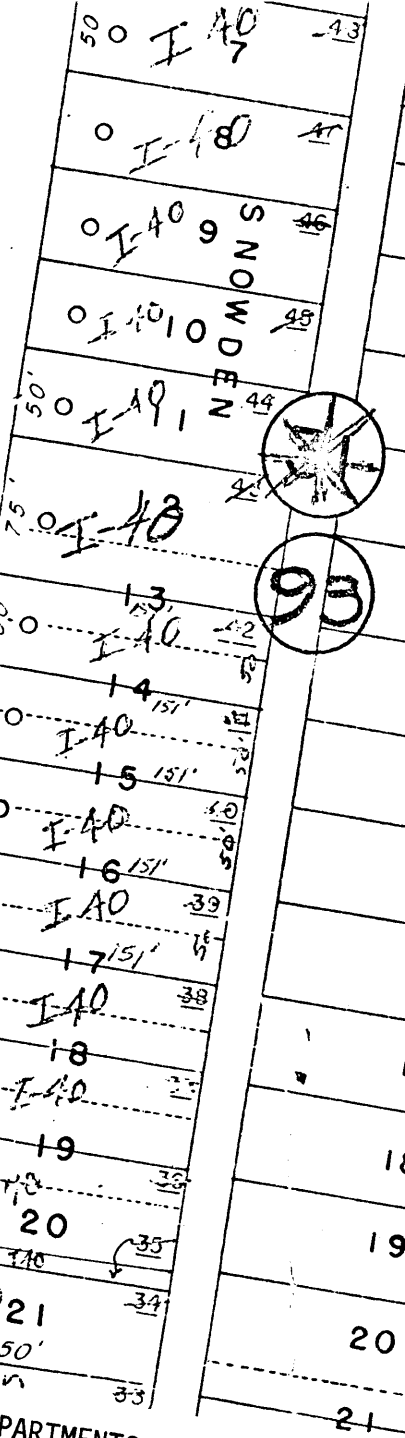
AVE.



WALDRAN

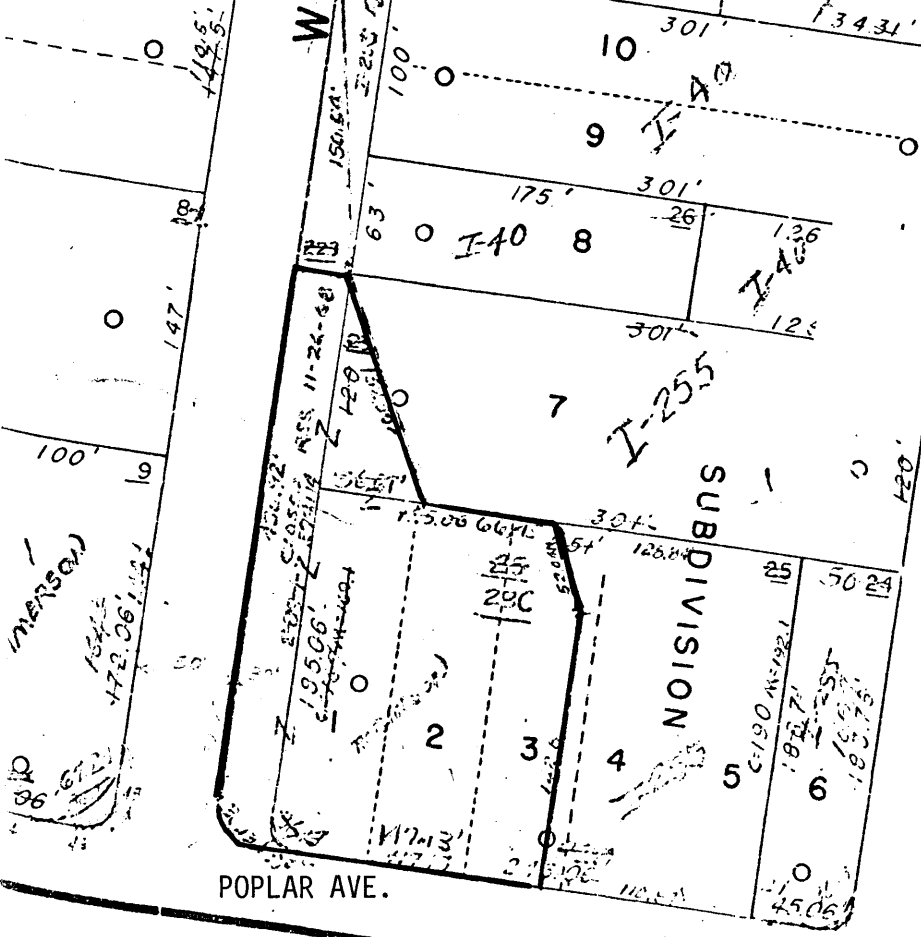


LEWIS



SNOWDEN

GREENSTONE APARTMENTS  
MEMPHIS, SHELBY COUNTY, TN



SUBDIVISION

POPLAR AVE.

