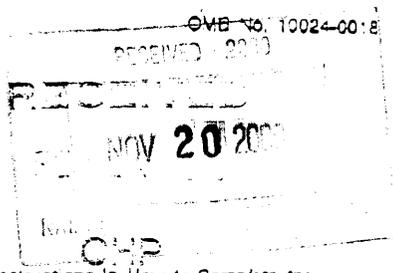


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cooper Arms

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 455 East Ocean Boulevard not for publication N/A

city or town Long Beach vicinity N/A

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David Alvey 11/16/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper Cal B. Fagan Date of Action 12/28/2000

Cooper Arms
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Period Revival: Eclectic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete, stucco
roof Asphalt
other Artstone ornament

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1924

Significant Dates

1923-24, date of construction

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Curlett & Beelman, architects

Scotfield Construction Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Cooper Arms
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	11	3900075	3736760
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Portia Lee, Ph.D., Principal

organization California Archives date February 9, 2000

street & number 3315 Griffith Park Blvd. #303 telephone (323-664-4203

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90027

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Cooper Arms Homeowners Association

street & number 455 East Ocean Avenue telephone _____

city or town Long Beach state CA zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

**Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California**

SECTION 7, NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Cooper Arms is a twelve-story, steel frame reinforced concrete building with outside walls of brick finished in smooth stucco. The L-shaped condominium building containing 159 apartments was completed in 1922. The preeminent example of "own-your-own" ownership apartment living built in Long Beach in the early years of the decade of the 1920s, it is situated at 455 Ocean Boulevard, at the northwest corner of Ocean Boulevard and Linden Avenue in southwestern Long Beach. A luxury high-rise in the Period Revival style with Italian Renaissance, Classical Revival and Adamesque architectural and decorative features on both interior and exterior, it was designed by architects Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman. The Cooper Arms plan incorporated ground floor commercial space and a fenced garden on the Ocean Boulevard frontage. The building is almost totally intact, having kept substantial integrity with minimal alteration to historic features.

SETTING

The Cooper Arms is situated on a rectangular lot, 100 feet by 202 feet, at the corner of Linden Avenue and Ocean Boulevard, and is located one block west of Atlantic Boulevard and 2 blocks east of Long Beach Boulevard. The main entrance to the property is along the Linden Avenue frontage, approximately 50 feet north of the intersection. The Linden Avenue elevation extends westward to a narrow alley that forms the north boundary of the lot, separating the building from the low-rise multi-family housing that continues northward to Broadway Street. After traveling west along the alley, the lot turns to the south, skirting the edge of the building's west wing and running along the wall separating Cooper Arms' garden from a neighboring 2 story apartment building to the west. Cooper Arms' frontage along Ocean Boulevard allows 400 feet of unobstructed ocean view across the Boulevard, an arterial thoroughfare along the shorefront with a divided landscaped median.

Approximately a quarter-mile west of the property along Ocean Boulevard is the Burton W. Chace Civic Center. Directly south across Ocean Boulevard from the property is the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, part of a complex development built in the 1980s that contains the Long Beach Arena, Shoreline Park, the Aquarium of the Pacific and the Downtown Long Beach Marina. These properties have been constructed on fill between Ocean Boulevard and Queensway Bay a narrow channel that funnels the Los Angeles River into the Pacific Ocean. At the time the Cooper Arms was built, the Pacific Ocean beachfront was visible across Ocean Boulevard and since the fill had not taken place, the ocean shore was closer and more accessible.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Exterior Massing and Decoration

The Cooper Arms, a steel frame reinforced concrete building with outside walls of stucco-faced brick, carries a parapet roof. The building consists of one narrow, deep wing following the boundary of the lot north and south along Linden Avenue, and one smaller, shallow wing extending westward from it to form a perpendicular ell. These contiguous wings, which join at a point about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the depth of the lot, rise 12 stories in height. A garden with frontage along Ocean Boulevard is incorporated into the space created by the building's design scheme. A low ornamental wrought-iron fence along the sidewalk encloses the garden along Ocean Boulevard. The building's organization is tripartite, following the pattern of the Chicago-style business building.

The base. Double engaged pilasters frame the corners of the building whose deep and narrow north-south wing can be entered either from Ocean Boulevard or Linden Avenue. The Ocean Boulevard entrance is arched, presenting a decorated tympanum and central keystone. Flanking the entrance are tall arched windows with centered keystones containing circle-top divided lights with turned wood semi-circular muntins and three-part straight mullions. The upper circle, or crown of these lights may also operate as transoms. This Italian Renaissance window treatment is the most prominent design feature of the building, constituting a fenestration and entry pattern which is also repeated on interior windows and glass doors throughout the interior and exterior of the ground floor level. The Ocean Boulevard entrance opens to an arcade that contains the ground floor shops of the building. Doors from the arcade allow the shops access either to Linden Avenue or the garden.

Ten similar arched windows and double corner pilasters characterize the base on the Linden Avenue elevation. This entrance is signaled by a copper-and-glass marquise with its original tin underside. The marquise is elaborately decorated with urns connected by metal Adamesque swags; its upper edge carries leaf ornament and a central medallion in which is inscribed a stylized 'CA,' the building's coat of arms. Below the marquise, a fanlight surmounting double glass entry doors carries an escutcheon with symbols representing sunset, shelter, peace, and fellowship. A torch illuminates the Latin motto, which reads, "Beata domus coniuncta sub tecto, "a happy household under one roof."

Piano nobile. Pressed terra cotta blocks appear on the piano nobile of the west elevation of the north-south wing that overlooks the garden. Intended to be visible from Ocean Avenue, this

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

art stone presents the Adamesque motifs that characterize the building's ornamentation. Placed between windows and balcony doors, the blocks run along the facade at the mezzanine level, alternating figures of a wreathed urn, circular medallion with a classical profile, angel and plinth torch, which flanks the figure of the angel. The torch also appears standing alone, marking the ell junction.

The shaft - Window treatment on the nine stories of the shaft consists of rectangular double hung windows with shallow reveals. Variation in their arrangement pattern provides the building's rhythmic composition. On the narrow Ocean Avenue elevation, rectangular double-hung windows are paired, flanking a center row of triple windows whose central French door carries a transom and opens onto a wrought iron balcony. The fenestration pattern on the west-facing elevation of this block has a single window row near the corner and tripartite rows separated by similar balcony rows. Ell fenestration is similarly varied. On the east-facing Linden Avenue elevation and the northerly rear elevation along the alley, rows of double-hung windows separating similar balcony rows alternate double and triple rows with a single set near the corner. The wrought-iron balconies, supported by ornamental corbels, are accessed through a Palladian arrangement of a central French door with fanlight and flanking casements. Sheet metal caps cover the nosings.

The building cap, or terminating cornice, carries a row of decorative brackets below a rolled-edge parapet. At this level, rectangular casement windows above the dividing course are generally paired. Overlooking Ocean Boulevard, single openings with tripartite casements appear on either side of the center balcony. Carved artstone medallions similar to those on the piano nobile decorate the cornice line.

Interior

The ground floor of the Cooper Arms contains both public and private space. The deep wing with entrances on Linden Avenue and Ocean Boulevard was designed for retail shops and has maintained that use. At the present time the shops housed along the Arcade include a coffee bar, flower shop, framing shop, and delicatessen. Shops on the east side of the arcade can be entered either from Linden Avenue or the arcade corridor; Shops on the west side have entrances from the arcade and doors onto the garden. The arcade corridor continues to the Linden Avenue entrance formed by a second corridor called the Spanish loggia. At this point, the wings of the

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

building join. The Spanish Loggia runs along the north side of the garden and terminates in a small office, which at one time served as a library. The east-west ell comprises the Spanish loggia, entry vestibule, an enclosed administration office that is entered through glass doors, a post office room with owners' mailboxes, the main lounge and the final extension of the arcade. After the arcade crosses the Spanish Loggia, it continues past the post office lobby to terminate at a staircase. Here the ceiling is coved and a circular medallion incised with a wreathed urn has been placed in the lunette. Above it, the ceiling pendentives are outlined in metal fittings. One flight of stairs goes up to a meeting room with an adjoining bathroom. The corresponding stairway goes down to the basement. Floors throughout the ground floor interior are Italian terrazzo; some areas are carpeted.

The lounge of the Cooper Arms was constructed with considerable emphasis on decorative detail. It has an eclectic decorative composition typical of the 1920s era of the building's construction. Adam ornament, such as the Egyptian-derived lotus, swags, rinceau patterns and medallions inscribed with urns and profiles, predominates, and combines harmoniously with the formal marble front of the room's Louis XVI fireplace.

The painted concrete ceiling beams form an elaborate pattern of intersecting members. These beams are supported by three parallel rows of concrete columns with elaborate plaster decoration. On each column is a cap incised with a lotus. An Egyptian wave pattern separates the cap from a short decorative pier that extends to the ceiling. It is incised on all four sides with similar neo-Egyptian ornament: both upright and reversed tripods festooned with garlands supporting a bowl of fruit. At the pier-ceiling juncture, the ceiling is stenciled in an abstract floral pattern. Below the cornice line is a running frieze of stylized Adamesque floral ornament below a narrow band of lotus and bud running ornament. On the north side of the lounge the characterizing neo-classical windows open onto iron balconies. When the apartments were advertised for sale after completion, newspaper notices and advertisements noted that Los Angeles premier furniture store, Barker Brothers, supplied the furniture for the main lounge and the "ladies lobby." Some original furniture remains in the lounge.

Solarium. The twelfth floor solarium occupies a major portion of the top floor of the west ell. It was designed to function as a ballroom, meeting room, banquet room and all-purpose informal entertainment center. It has the same functions today, with the exception of a ballroom, and contains kitchen and bathroom facilities. The room still has the original domed ceiling, but it has been covered with a historic acoustic tile. Lotus and bud molding and ornamental lanterns on either side of the main entry door are original, as are the radiators in niches along the wall with

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

decorative metal grills. Fenestration in the room is varied consisting generally of 2-over-8 casement windows and French doors that open onto wrought-iron balconies on the north, west and south. Hardwood floors, carefully constructed at the time of construction to absorb noise and provide correct resilience for dancing, are in good condition.

Apartment Units and Service Areas

The Cooper Arms has 159 individual apartments. Since the building was purpose-built as a cooperative, original owners, known as “blue-print” owners, were able to request favored variations in individual floor plans and built-in amenities such as book cases, breakfast nooks and cabinetry. Many original blue-line drawings of the original unit plans exist. They indicate that first-time buyers modified their single, double or triple apartments.

According to an ad in the *Long Beach Press* offering the building’s first-mortgage coupon bonds, the building would contain 406 rooms divided into 160 apartments “of two, three, and four rooms, plus bath.” Apparently, as built, one blue-print owner was allowed to purchase and combine a single and triple apartment to create one of the penthouses on the twelfth floor, thus lowering the apartment count to 159.

Apartment floors have double-loaded corridors with terrazzo floors. A telephone connected to the lobby office gave residents notice of the arrival of visitors and merchandise deliveries and could put residents through to other building occupants. Each individual apartment had steam radiators, an electric vacuum outlet, tiled sinks and bathrooms, kitchenette with a gas stove and refrigerator, paneled hardwood doors and hardwood trim. Smaller apartments had ‘disappearing’ beds. An incinerator opening was accessible on each floor.

The central basement contained the power plant and machinery that provided Cooper Arms modern amenities: a central heating system, water heater that provided “instaneous” hot water, an incinerator, and central refrigeration unit that controlled the temperature in the refrigerators of the individual units. It also had dressing room space and lockers for exercise-minded owners and sea-bathers. The building was originally planned to have a salt-water plunge, but this was not constructed.

Alterations

Structural alterations to the building consist of modifications to meet the fire code such as the enclosure of open stairwells, removal of the basement incinerator, and covering over its channels

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 6

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

on each floor. Room arrangement in the lobby has been reconfigured. The space that was originally the “ladies lounge” and a private office is now the building administration office and the post office lobby. The building’s apartment corridors appear substantially unchanged and many apartments have kept original bathroom and kitchen features as well as decorative cabinetry and cornices. On the exterior the building appears to have kept almost total integrity.

Integrity

Cooper Arms conveys its significance by possessing specific aspects of integrity required by National Register criteria. The building is on its original location; it has kept the combination of elements of space, building, form and plan that constitute integrity of design. In addition the character-defining Period Revival decorative elements remain intact. Some degree of integrity of setting was lost when the waterfront area across Ocean Boulevard was filled and developed. However, the most important element of its setting, the Pacific Ocean view offered most apartments, remains unchanged. There has been a relatively small loss of integrity of materials, since the property has kept interior and exterior fabric dating from the period of its construction. A seismic retrofit in 1988 was extremely sensitive and resulted in a small loss of historic fabric

Integrity of workmanship and feeling are nearly intact and are especially evident in the plaster ornamentation of the lounge which demonstrates the skill of craftsmen in the decades of the 1920 to execute period revival ornament and express its aesthetic. The associative criterion in the case of Cooper Arms is very strong as the building was purpose-built as an owner cooperative and has never deviated from that ownership system. Finally the original, much advertised Barker Brothers furniture in the public lounge still remains to strengthen the Period Revival ambience of the room.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

SUMMARY

The Cooper Arms is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, Design/Construction, as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction that is the work of master builders and possesses high artistic values. Planning began in 1922 and the building was completed in 1924. The building stands as the pre-eminent example of an own-your-own apartment building whose planning scheme, amenities, location and architectural design set the pattern for the elegant owner-occupied apartment hotel buildings that were built in the ensuing years of the decade. Master architects Alexander Curlett and Claud Beelman designed Cooper Arms in the eclectic Period Revival style with neo-classical and neo-Egyptian ornamentation, establishing an architectural model of high-art Period Revival design that was influential in the subsequent development of the city of Long Beach's waterfront high-rise apartment district.

Building Chronology

Planning for the Cooper Arms began in April of 1922. "Long Beach to Have Finest Apartments in Whole Southland, F.C. Waterbury Tells Architects to Go Ahead With Great Structure At Ocean and Linden, Facing 400 Feet on Sea," trumpeted an article in the *Long Beach Daily Telegram* which was accompanied by an illustration entitled "Queen of California's Residence Buildings." The building to be called the Carma-Leon Grande, (Spanish for beauty, strength and grandeur, it was reported) was to be designed by architects Thorton Fitzhugh and Will Teal. The L-shaped building was a somewhat grandiose conception that represented an amalgam of stylistic elements: roof escutcheons, rustication and arches, together with a circular, domed, rooftop solarium. Lionel Mayell, the developer of the eight-story Artaban Apartments, and L.Y. Cooper were listed among the prominent men forwarding the project. Waterbury's role was financial director,

By July a name change had taken place and an architectural metamorphosis was about to happen. A *Press* article reported the launching of the project now referred to as the Cooper Arms. The Cooper Arms Selling Agency put out a brochure and took out advertisements in newspapers urging prospective buyers to view the floor plans on display and select an apartment immediately so that construction could begin. The building was described both as a "modern classic" and as "Spanish style of architecture. The building would have retail shops on the ground floor whose rent would pay a major portion of the upkeep expense of the building.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

The Long Beach Press reported the awarding to the contract on March 4, 1923 and work was completed a year later, March 8, 1924. The large illustration that accompanied the 1923 article must have caused readers who had followed the development to rub their eyes. The design was a scaled-down, much refined, Period Revival scheme of smooth stucco with a dentilled cornice, Italian Renaissance Revival window treatment, engaged pillars and an intricate interior ground floor plan that incorporated a "Spanish" loggia. Adamesque artstone plaques and medallions graced the piano nobile that overlooked a city-lot-sized garden enclosed with an elaborated wrought-iron fence. The architects were now identified as Alexander (Alek) Curlett and Claud Beelman of Los Angeles, a firm that was actively engaged in Long Beach institutional building. The general contractor, Scofield Engineering Construction Company, had an extensive project record and had worked with Curlett & Beelman on other important commissions.

No further changes appear to have been made in the construction team. The Cooper Arms residents were happily settled by July 30, 1924 when the *Long Beach Press* thoroughly documented the building's appearance. The construction team was highly praised and their work reported - everyone from architects, general contractor, the building manager, furnisher and providers of amenities - to the refrigeration company and sub-contractors who provided the cork insulation, as well as the sand and gravel purveyors whose contribution was described as "fully 400 tons of quality quartz sand."

Overview and Context

The Cooper Arms sales brochure stated that it was the sixth cooperative to have been built in Long Beach at the time of its opening, adding that the cooperation plan had been particularly successful in Long Beach due to the progressive spirit of the city and its "pleasurable environments." The composition of the building's Board of Directors indicates the occupations and status of the men who promoted the flourishing real estate market that followed World War I. Lionel V. Mayell, the secretary of the Cooper Arms Building Company, was a Long Beach real estate developer identified in promotion materials as the successful promoter of the cooperative Artaban Apartments which were located just north of the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Ocean Boulevard. Bankers, "capitalists, real estate salespersons and attorneys made up the Board. William F. Prisk, owner and editor of the *Long Beach Press* and J.J. Penny, part owner and manager of the *Long Beach Daily Telegram* insured good publicity for the enterprise.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

The man who gave his name to the apartments Larkin Y. Cooper, was a midwesterner, a Kansas feed and grain dealer. Once in Long Beach he became a land developer, specializing in the ownership of key corner lots. The Coopers' home and guest houses were situated on the northeast corner of Linden Avenue and Ocean Boulevard.

The couple also owned the opposite property, the northwest corner of Linden Avenue and Ocean Boulevard. Cooper Arms' brochure called it a commanding site and gave the couple credit for both civic spirit and the personal dream that some day an architectural masterpiece would be erected on the site. "They [Cooper and his wife] saw the fulfillment of their ideals, reported the brochure, " and quickly consented to assume a liberal share of the obligation tending to the erection of this building."

The total obligation amounted finally to 1,500,000. Larger and much more expensive than the earlier cooperatives, Cooper Arms owners would be faced with considerable upkeep costs. Citing the Hotel Maryland in Pasadena and the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles as examples, the Board of Directors determined to have shops in the building and apply the income to general maintenance. The sales team stressed this novel idea in Long Beach building, claiming that in time the revenue from shops would pay all but a very small portion of the total expense of operating the building. In addition the Board of Directors took out display ads in the newspapers inviting investors to participate in the \$875,000 mortgage bond offering that was financing the construction.

Although Cooper Arms was the largest and most expensive cooperative to date, its building finance scheme was quite successful. In the depression year of 1938, Cooper Arms owners, together with Governor Frank F. Merriam and other civic dignitaries celebrated the liquidation of the debt in a banquet in the solarium. Long Beach Chamber of Commerce President stated, "What you have done is an achievement of which the city of Long Beach can be proud."

Two important luxury high-rise apartments, now National Register properties, were built after the Cooper Arms: the Chateausque style Villa Riviera in 1929 also located on Ocean Boulevard, and the Italian Renaissance Revival Willmore built in 1927 on the edge of the Civic Center. Like the Cooper Arms, both are City of Long Beach Historic Landmarks. Marked resemblances are apparent in the building histories of the three properties and the amenities they offered. However, ownership patterns have varied. Villa Riviera and Willmore apartment had

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

less success as “own-your-own apartments. The Villa Riviera, like Cooper Arms, was developed by Lionel Mayell as a cooperative, but was taken over by private owners and then finally reconverted to a cooperative in 1955. The Willmore, also constructed as a cooperative, went into private hands, then converted to condominiums in 1990.

A comparison of the three buildings indicates that the later buildings incorporated many of the features of Cooper Arms, such as a ballroom, solarium, lounge, restaurant, shops, dressing rooms and showers, and servants quarters in the basement. All three buildings are designed in the Period Revival styles favored in the decade of the 1920s. The two later buildings could boast garages on the premises; Cooper Arms had a valet system in which owners cars were ferried from a nearby garage. Unlike Cooper Arms, the Villa Rivera and Willmore made no provision for a garden, apparently preferring to maximize density.

The building of all three apartments reflects the building boom in Long Beach after World War I when expansion in port facilities, oil and real estate industries made the city of Long Beach a desirable principal residential location, as well as resort city. The importance of Cooper Arms, the first to be planned and built, claimed by its builders as the largest own-your-own apartment building in the West, signaled this civic transformation through its elegant exterior architecture and interior opulence. Its significance lies in the fact that it set the pattern for the luxury apartments to come, particularly the beachfront Villa Riviera whose builders also emphasized architectural style - the Chateausque. The Willmore, lacking a beachfront site and views, in its turn emphasized size as well as its opulent Italian Renaissance Revival architecture.

Cooper Arms is distinguished architecturally by its important character-defining features: distinguished wrought iron balconies and fence enclosing the garden, simple and graceful neo-classical pilasters, doors, and window treatment; an intricate volumetric pattern of space arrangement to afford access to garden and shops utilizing the famous Spanish loggia. These elements combine to make it an outstanding example of eclectic Period Revival architecture. There is no other comparable example of the style in Long Beach in a shorefront location that was purpose-built as resident-owned apartments, a use that has been continuous since its construction.

Architects

Alexander (Aleck) Curlett and Claud Beelman were premier practitioners of the art of Period Revival building in Southern California. Highly regarded for their skillful and tasteful use of opulent decorative materials, they established their practice in 1919 and continued it until 1928.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

In their joint practice, the firm's prominence rested on the design of Los Angeles business buildings, such as the Roosevelt Office building and Pacific Southwest Trust and Savings Bank, as well as renowned Period Revival work like the Heinsbergen Decorating Company and the Elks Club in Los Angeles, which architectural historian Henry Withey calls the firm's outstanding achievement in architecture. After the 1933 earthquake in Southern California, Curlett limited his practice to school reconstruction and public works administration. Beelman went on to become a master of Art Deco style with the design of the Eastern Columbia Building in 1929 and the Garfield Building of 1930 in Los Angeles.

The skillful use of stylistic elements and fine arts details characterizes Curlett and Beelman's Period Revival designs. Their Chateausque Pacific Coast Club in Long Beach at East Ocean Boulevard and 1st Place, begun in January of 1924, was widely reviewed and recognized after its completion with articles in professional journals. Also on Curlett and Beelman's drawing boards, or under construction in Long Beach at the time Cooper Arms was underway, was the Farmers and Merchants Bank at 3rd and Pine Streets,(1923) and the Security Trust and Savings Bank at 1st and Pine Streets.(1924). These two major Long Beach financial institutions, formal and monumental in plan and massing with Renaissance Revival decorative details, set the tone and character for the business district which aspired to rival that of Los Angeles. A similar ambition on the part of Long Beach real estate developers shifted the choice of architects from a local firm to Curlett and Beelman in order to present buyers with an elite residence appropriate to a cultured metropolitan city with a marvelous oceanfront. Cooper Arms indicates the power of the architectural firm's reputation and their ability to utilize Period Revival style to connote the spirit of a new city that was at once cultivated and enterprising.

Architectural Style

Cooper Arms exhibits a variety of Period Revival elements and ornamentation. Italian Renaissance elements are prominent on the exterior; a flat roof, recessed entry porch, elaborated first-story arched windows and symmetrical facade - characteristics borrowed from Italian models and popularized in America at the end of the 19th Century by the work of architects McKim, Mead & White. The exterior decorative elements at the piano nobile level on the garden elevations, as well as the elaborate interior decoration of the lounge, are taken from the Early Classical Revival, or Adam Revival style which flourished in its original form in England and America from 1780 to 1840. The cornice of the Cooper Arms which is accented by a narrow

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 6

**Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California**

row of dentils, recalls an Early Classical Revival feature, as do the windows, which are generally double-hung with thin wooden muntins, and aligned horizontally and vertically in symmetrical rows. Adam ornament, named for the English architect Robert Adam who popularized ornamental elements seen in his travels to Italy and the Mediterranean, in the Cooper Arms utilizes swags, garlands, urns and geometric designs for decorative emphasis

Cooper Arms' architecture offers a characteristic Southern California Period Revival eclecticism. Its exterior demonstrates restraint and harmony, characteristics derived from Italian Renaissance Revival, while its decorative elements recall the English neo-classicism of the 18th century which had reinterpreted the decorative art of Pompeii and Egypt. Cooper Arms states its modernism through architects' Curlett and Beelman's use of the Chicago commercial building organization. The resulting composition reflects the design principles of all the influences present and the resulting combination is an ordered arrangement of parts elaborated with an effective and pleasing decorative scheme, perfectly conceived to convey the spirit of high-style, high-rise, Long Beach shorefront residential living.

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

Original Sources

Building Permits

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

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Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section 10 Page 1

Cooper Arms
Long Beach, California

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property are those of the parcel on which it is located: Block 114, Lots 29, 30, 31 and 32 of the Long Beach Townsite Tract.

Boundary Justification

The building is located on a rectangular lot bounded by the lot line of the Ocean Boulevard frontage on the south, the lot line of the Linden Avenue frontage on the east, the north lot line of the property boundary on the alley, the wall and property line of the adjoining property on the west.

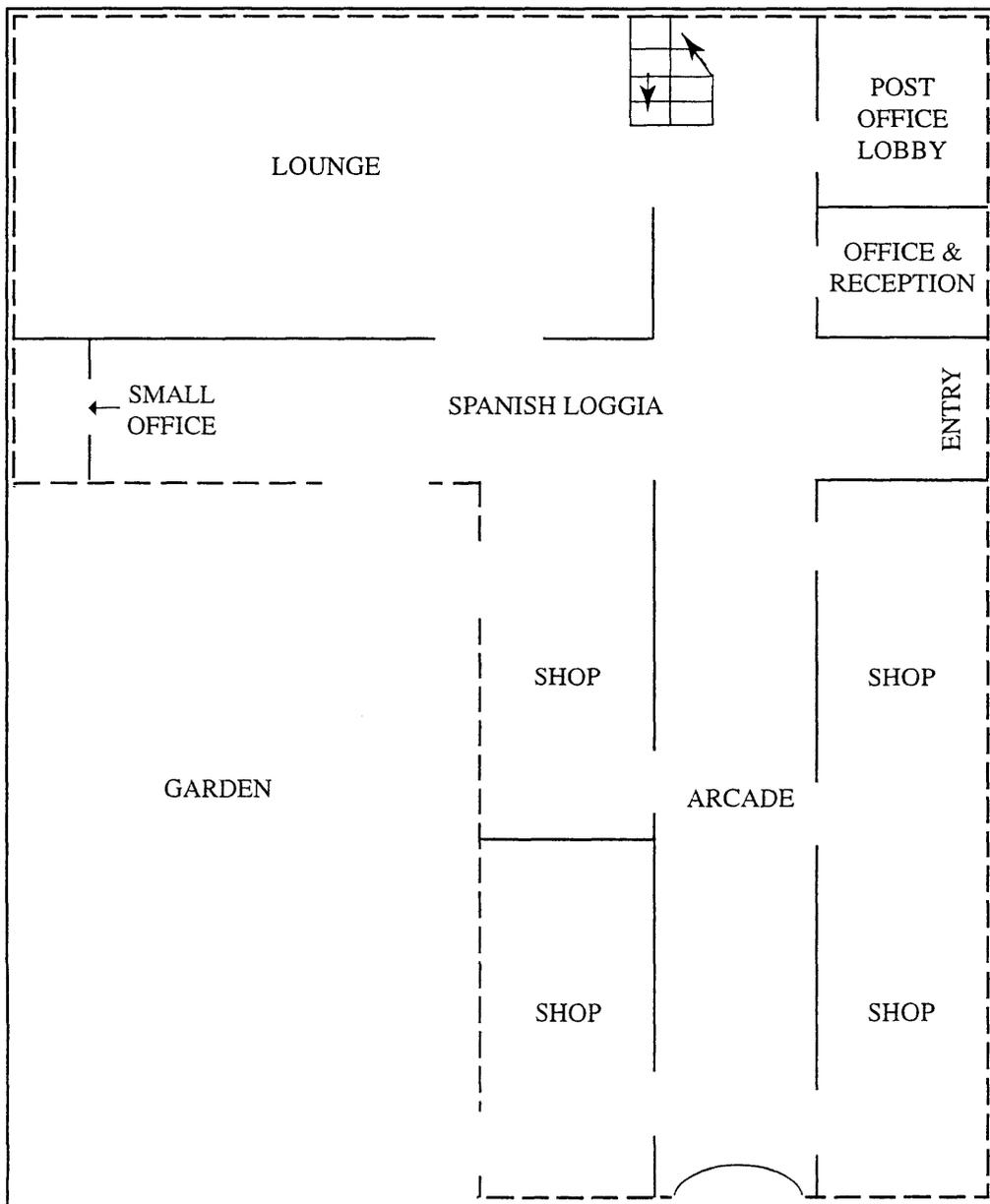
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SKETCH MAP
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



Boundary of Property ———
Footprint of Building - - - -

ALLEY



OCEAN BOULEVARD

LINDEN AVENUE

**United States Department of the Interior
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Section number Photos Page _____

Cooper Arms, Los Angeles County, CA

For Photo #1, Photographer is unknown, date of photo is ca. 1925. Location of negative is Long Beach Historical Society, Long Beach, California.

For Photos #2 & #3, Photographer is unknown, date of photo is ca. 1980. Location of negative is Long Beach Historical Society, Long Beach, California.

Photo #4, Photographer is Portia Lee, date of photo, February, 2000. Location of negative is California Archives, 3315 Griffith Park Boulevard, #303, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

Please note: The building's current appearance remains the same as that shown in the 1980 photos. Because of development in the area after 1980, it is now not possible to obtain these complete views of the building.