

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 Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1, 2, 3 West Cleveland Drive (Please See Section 7 – Address List) [] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14215

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

State or 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 or 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

date of action

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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	
<u>59</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>59</u>	<u> </u>	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

0

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 & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick/ Stone

roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development
Politics and Government

Period of Significance:

1941 - 1942

Significant Dates:

1941, 1942

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

William I. Hohasuer Architecture & Engineering

Godfrey Weinstein, General Contractor

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 Building 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 repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 20.83 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 190041 4761532
Zone Easting Northing

3 18 189757 4760954
Zone Easting Northing

2 18 190021 4760954

4 18 189813 4761426

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 Jason Wilson & Tom Yots, M.S., M Arch. [Edited by Daniel McEneny- NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studio date 06/10/2010

street & number 257 Lafayette Avenue, #3 telephone 716.725.6410

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14213

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name Mark Chason, Ken-Ville Associates, L.P.

street & number 105 Kenville Road telephone 716.833.1000

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14215

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, D.C. 20503

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Narrative Description of Property

Overview-

The Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex is located at 105 Kenville Road in the City of Buffalo, New York, on 20.83 acres directly adjacent to the Town of Cheektowaga. It was built in 1941-42 for developer Godfrey Weinstein and was designed by the New York City firm of William I. Hohasuer Architecture and Engineering. Godfrey Weinstein served as the general contractor for the project. Kensington Gardens is a multi-unit apartment complex containing one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in a variety of detached and semi-attached buildings. The buildings are grouped around grassed courts facing the curving interior streets of West Cleveland Drive and New Southgate Road and bordered on the edges of the complex by Kensington Avenue and Eggert Road. There are 10 court areas created on the site and three building types within the courts. The first, Type A, is a duplex unit with three bedroom flats on each of the two floors. The second, Type B, is a four unit 2-story multiple dwelling containing 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and the third, Type C, is an eight unit multiple dwelling similarly containing 1 and 2 bedroom units on each of two floors. Type B and C buildings are grouped to form contiguous u-shaped courts and the Type A units stand as individual structures along the curving streets with front, back and side yards around each building. The attached site plan (**Figure 2 – Site Plan**) shows the distribution of the various apartment types throughout the buildings. As built, there were a total of 280 apartment units in 59 detached or semi-attached buildings. That number of units remains today.

The Exteriors-

The larger, multi-unit buildings at Kensington Gardens were constructed on slab with a small basement space or well, reached from the outside, to accommodate the heating system in each building. The three-bedroom duplexes have full basements. The structural system is hollow fire tile with a facing of red-orange brick laid in common bond with seventh course headers. Each building is covered by an asphalt shingled hip roof with ventilators in the form of half-round dormers. Kensington Gardens is designed in the Colonial Revival Style with various stylistic treatments of the trim. Windows have been replaced and are in one-over-one configuration in pairs and single units with simple wood trim and stone sills. Most windows are without lintels, although some paired units have decorative hoods with layered moldings and central keystones, all done in wood. Entry doors to each building are flanked by pilasters supporting a layered flat header and topped in one of three Colonial Revival styles: 1. a wooden fan, 2. a broken curved pediment with inset stylized pineapple, and 3. an expanded, layered header with a dentil molding. The three-bedroom duplexes (Type A) have an octagonal single pane window above the entry, lighting the staircase. The larger multi-unit buildings (Types B and C) contain a central pedimented gable above the entry bay. The pediment is chamfered on some units. In each of the courts, the center building has on the rear a brick chimney that originally serviced an incinerator.

The Interiors-

The apartments remain in their original one-, two-, and three-bedroom configurations and show minimal changes from their as-built layouts (**Figure 3 - Floor Plans**). Each unit has a kitchen, a separate dining area and a single bathroom (**Photo #10**). The finishes in the bathrooms and kitchens were updated after the war to take advantage of better materials that would not have been available during wartime. Many of these units were updated again during 1950-1970. All apartments have hardwood floors, plaster walls and simple painted window and wall trim (**Photo #11**). Narrow baseboards and ceiling moldings are present in most rooms. Some

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original solid wood doors remain. The entry doors, most of which have been replaced, lead to enclosed straight and turned stairways leading to the upper apartments.

Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex, City of Buffalo, New York - Address List

Addresses (1, 2, 3 West Cleveland Drive is the Property's Tax Addresses)
397 through 479 Eggert Road (odd numbers only)
1 through 15 West Cleveland Road
35 through 69 West Cleveland Road
81 - 83 West Cleveland Road
2 through 88 West Cleveland Road
1 through 37 New Southgate Road
2 through 16 New Southgate Road

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Description of Significance

The Kensington Garden Apartment Complex is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics and Government as an example of a World War II era worker housing community in the City of Buffalo, New York. In 1940 the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) identified Buffalo as a city in need of housing to support the workers employed in the areas numerous war related industries, which included aeronautics giants Curtiss-Wright Corporation and Bell Aircraft. The Kensington Garden Apartments were constructed in close proximity to these critical wartime industries in northern Buffalo by a private developer with support and guidance from the federal government.

Under Criterion C, Kensington Gardens is locally significant in the area of Community Planning and Development as an example of a medium sized FHA financed worker housing community. Drawing on principals from successful Garden City Movement¹ models, the FHA released a series of architectural briefs published in 1940 for the construction of multiunit housing. In this way the FHA influenced the physical design of numerous apartment communities across the United States with the creation of superblock neighborhoods that included curvilinear streets isolated from main thoroughfares, two- to three-story detached and semidetached multifamily units with uniformity in design and materials, and landscape elements including garden courts and pedestrian path systems. Constructed between 1941 and 1942 by NYC based developer Godfrey Weinstein, the Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex retains the features associated with this type of mass building construction and is remarkably intact from the period of construction.

Federal Housing Administration

The history of financing in the United States housing industry dates back to the 18th Century origins of our country with early community-centered institutions based on the "Terminal Building Societies" begun in England during that period. Lending occurred within a town from a pool of money created by the residents and loaned to the participants in the institution. Within time, these were more formalized and became Savings and Loans institutions, remaining locally controlled and operated.

The Great Depression of the 1930's had a devastating effect on the housing industry due to the high unemployment and its consequential effect on the public's ability to invest in housing and to repay existing mortgage loans. Additionally, the precipitous drop in the value of the housing stock (as much as a 50% decline) drastically reduced the collateral that was available to property owners. The Hoover administration's answer was to shore up the local S & L's with help from Federal Banks, but the focus remained local, lending only within 50 miles of the S & L's home offices (HUD 5). In his inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt stated "Our greatest primary task is to put people to work" (Roosevelt 1). When the Roosevelt administration entered office in 1933, the situation in the housing industry had worsened to the point that two million construction workers were out of work and the mortgage process had stagnated due to the difficult terms and limited value of the loans. FDR approached the problem with a more nationally-focused solution.

¹ Sir Ebenezer Howard founded the Garden City Movement in late 1898 in the United Kingdom with his book *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Howard's urban planning concept consisted of planned, self-sufficient communities that relied upon a surrounding greenbelt for food. His 'garden city' was "to raise the standard of health and comfort of all true workers of whatever grade" through the use of shared greenspace, low density housing, and wide, tree-lined boulevards connecting all uses.

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The FHA was created by the National Housing Act passed by Congress in June of 1934. The program was designed by notables within the Roosevelt Administration: Winfield Riefler, Miles Lanier Colean, Frances Perkins, Marriner Eccles, Averell Harriman and Henry Wallace. This Act was intended to stimulate the moribund housing construction industry and thus help to alleviate the severe unemployment situation in the height of the depression which was especially high in the construction industry.

As a second consequence of the Act, the amount and quality of housing improved for American families, especially working families. The FHA established standards that influenced the planning of neighborhoods as well as the design of individual housing units and complexes. Further, amendments to the act in 1938 both increased the insurance to 90% of the value of the home and extended the payments to as many as 25 years. The FHA standards required that housing be built where most needed, especially for areas with war-related industries and that accessibility by public transportation be readily available as well as proximity to needed services. Suitability of the site was stressed, with tree cover, soil conditions and air quality listed as important factors. In addition to these requirements, were 'desired standards' that resulted in curvilinear street plans, generous land surrounding the individual units and long blocks giving fewer cross streets. Subsequent actions of the FHA resulted in the construction of subdivisions and complexes that reflected these requirements and standards.

The City of Buffalo: War Industry and the Need for Worker Housing

Between 1939 and 1945, industries throughout the City of Buffalo and the immediate surrounding area received over \$5 billion dollars in war supply contracts from the federal government; only four other U.S. cities received more government contracts (LaChiusa 1). The aviation industry in Buffalo received a great deal of these contracts due to the rich history of automobile and airplane manufacturing already established in the area earlier in the century. One of these was the Curtiss - Wright Corporation.

The Curtiss - Wright Corporation was formed in 1916 when The Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company and Wright Aeronauticals merged making the entity the largest aviation company in the country. After the merger, the company made its corporate headquarters in Buffalo, New York located on Northland Avenue. Before the merger, The Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company was the world's largest World War I aircraft manufacturer, producing military aircraft for the Allied war effort (LaChiusa 1).

Due to the lack of orders during the Great Depression, Curtiss - Wright scaled back production dramatically, closing one of their two Buffalo manufacturing facilities. By 1941 however, the company would rebound on the heels of World War II by constructing and opening 'Buffalo Plant 2' on Genesee Street in Cheektowaga, New York (across from the present-day Buffalo-Niagara International Airport). With that expansion, Curtiss - Wright increased their employee base from 5,300 in 1940 to 43,000 three years later. During the period of peak production, Plant 2 would produce close to 18,000 military aircraft and employ 40,000 laborers from 1941 to 1945 (LaChiusa 1). This dramatic increase in the number of employees created an unprecedented need for worker housing in the Buffalo area. At that time, most existing high-density housing was located in the downtown Buffalo area, and there was a move to instead build housing for workers nearer to the Curtiss Wright facility in Cheektowaga on the City's eastern border.

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Also headquartered in Buffalo was Bell Aircraft, who also played a major role in producing aircraft for the war effort. In 1935, Lawrence Dale Bell, the then vice president and general manager of Consolidated Aircraft decides to form his own company when Consolidated moves to San Diego. In 1940 Bell Aircraft moves into their brand-new plant in Wheatfield, New York near the present-day Niagara Falls International Airport. The plant, which was paid for by the federal government, employed 32,022 people by the end of that year. In 1942 Bell builds and flies the first American jet plane, the P-59 Airacomet at the present-day Tri-Main Plant in Buffalo (LaChiusa 1). Bell Aircraft also operated a production plant on the east side of Buffalo located off of Delevan Avenue.

In addition to the famed Curtiss - Wright Company and Bell Aircraft, the Buffalo area boosted several airplane manufacturers contributing to the war effort including Scott Aviation, Argonaut Aircraft Company, the Gwinn Aircar Company, Wendt Aircraft Corporation, Buffalo Aeronautical, and the aviation divisions of Carborundum and National Gypsum (Sterns). Each of these plants contributed to increasing employment in the Buffalo area and with that the rising demand for worker housing.

Of the dozens of factories in the Buffalo area doing war-related work in the early 1940's, several were in the immediate vicinity of the Kensington Gardens Apartments. In addition to the above mentioned Curtiss Wright facility, they include Dunlop Tire and Rubber, Buffalo Arms Corporation, Spencer Lens Company and Ubelhoer Bros Inc, an aircraft supply specialty company.

Godfrey Weinstein, Developer

Godfrey Weinstein gained notice in the 1930s when he successfully developed two projects during the Depression in his native New York City. Weinstein, who grew up in the lower east side of Manhattan, first learned the building trade and later became a contractor in the City. During the Great Depression he later developed a high rise building at 1400 Broadway for a prominent New York family, which featured the successful innovation of showroom space located in front of open workspace on each floor. This project was successful in a difficult time for construction and Weinstein was asked by a New York City bank to adapt a recently foreclosed Bronx building from single room occupancy to more traditional family apartments. Weinstein agreed if the bank would give him the property and finance the construction. The bank agreed, and this project likely sparked Weinstein's idea for a form of supported housing during the Depression.

Godfrey Weinstein was a friend of James A. Farley, advisor to New York Governor and Presidential Candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt. Farley was involved with the General Builders' Corporation, a building supply company with which Weinstein had worked on some of his New York City projects. A letter from Farley to Weinstein written in November of 1932 provides insight into their relationship. During the first month of FDR's administration Godfrey Weinstein wrote an extensive letter to Farley, who would become FDR's Postmaster General, outlining an idea for a federally supported housing agency that would jump start the Depression-era construction industry. Weinstein based his idea on the successful projects he had pursued in New York City and suggested to his friend that such a program could be done on the federal level. Referring to the years since the stock market crash of 1929, Weinstein begins his letter stating: "Attempts to put men to work have failed to touch one of the largest possible sources of employment... That source is the necessity for reconstructing the thousands of apartments, homes and factories throughout the nation which have been allowed

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to become depreciated and obsolete during the past four (4) years.” He goes on to suggest that “...a Federal corporation be formed which will lend money to property owners so that they can again make their homes and buildings attractive to tenants and their factories modern and sanitary.” The seven-page letter continues by outlining how this could be accomplished, giving examples of Weinstein’s own successes in similar operations. He concludes by saying “The government would be [providing] a service which the country needs and which no individual or group of individuals can supply.” Fifteen months later, on June 27, 1934, the Federal Housing Administration was established to provide insurance to mortgages and to thus restart the construction industry.

Godfrey Weinstein would, himself, develop early FHA-backed projects in the New York City area, the first being on Staten Island. In 1940 he asked the FHA to identify where housing was needed most, resulting in a trip to Buffalo that led to the Kensington Gardens housing complex, which was insured by the FHA.

The Kensington Gardens Apartments in Buffalo

New York City developer Godfrey Weinstein came to Buffalo in 1940 at the suggestion of the Federal Housing Administration due to the identified need for housing for war related workers in the Buffalo area. The land identified for the complex was on the eastern most border of the City of Buffalo and, consisting of farm parcels, was truly a rural setting within the city limits. The original property consisted of 22 acres of land with a total of 280 units in one-, two- and three-bedroom apartment configurations.

Under Section 207 of the National Housing Act, the FHA became involved in the development of standards for the creation of multiunit housing communities. Taking the model from the success of garden city planned communities for Radburn, NY (1928-29, NHL 2005) and Chatham Village, PA, (1932-36, NHL 2005), the FHA design approvals called for shared green-spaces, low density housing, and wide, tree-lined boulevards connecting all uses. Typical of many of the period’s planned communities; the buildings were designed with Colonial Revival influences. Over 50 detached or loosely connected buildings housed the units and they were grouped in U-shaped formation or as clustered two family structures. True to the Garden City philosophy, the built structures occupied only 19 percent of the original 22 acres with “50 per cent...landscaped with lawns, trees and shrubs” and allowing for ample recreation space. Within, the apartments (in various sizes to accommodate the needs of a variety of workers) boasted cross ventilation, hardwood floors, separate dining areas in even the smallest units and kitchens equipped with gas refrigerators and ranges. Automatic oil burners heated the buildings. When built it was the largest privately constructed housing project in the City of Buffalo. The table below reflects the variety of war-industry related workers living in Kensington Gardens shortly after its completion in 1942:

Table 1 – Sample List of Individuals Residing at Kensington Gardens Apartments in 1946

Name	Address	Occupation
Ben F. Moyle	4 West Cleveland Drive	Lens Grinder
William Milligan	5 West Cleveland Drive	Press Operator
Genevieve F. Graham	6 West Cleveland Drive	Bell Aircraft
Roger R. Williams	7 West Cleveland Drive	Sheet Metal Worker

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Loren M. Wood	8 West Cleveland Drive	Electrical Engineer
Francis W. Morgan	9 West Cleveland Drive	Airplane Pilot
Noel V. Wood	16 West Cleveland Drive	Chemical Engineer
Harold A. Hollister	16 West Cleveland Drive	Lab assistant
Jacob J. Pauly	17 West Cleveland Drive	Assistant Foreman
Doris Z. Krantz	18 West Cleveland Drive	Clerk
Russell C. Duncan	18 West Cleveland Drive	Research Engineer
Chase E. Hoff	20 West Cleveland Drive	Research Engineer
William C. Kessel	24 West Cleveland Drive	Department Supervisor - National Gypsum
Chase F. Kiefer	24 West Cleveland Drive	Electrical Engineer
William A. Rade	26 West Cleveland Drive	Instructor
Julius K. Johnson	28 West Cleveland Drive	Foreman
Glenn A. Tompkins	30 West Cleveland Drive	Metal Man
Ted A. Becker	32 West Cleveland Drive	Draftsman
Robert R. Watkins	32 West Cleveland Drive	Draftsman
John A. Schwert	34 West Cleveland Drive	Foreman
Robert J. Unger	35 West Cleveland Drive	Tire Builder
Alex D. Waxman	37 West Cleveland Drive	Supervisor - Eastman Machinery
Joseph Becker	42 West Cleveland Drive	Inspector
Nicholas Insana	42 West Cleveland Drive	Engineer - Buffalo Aeronautical Corp.
Joseph Bassen	43 West Cleveland Drive	Food & Drug inspector at Federal Security Agency
Edwin Wolcott	44 West Cleveland Drive	Electrician
Jason O'Neill	44 West Cleveland Drive	Employee - BNE Corp.
George Howard	45 West Cleveland Drive	Safety Engineer
Jesse L. Segal	46 West Cleveland Drive	Accountant - State Department of Social Welfare
George Bartlett	48 West Cleveland Drive	Engineer

Source: *Buffalo City Directory 1946, Street Listings, pg. 47*

Created on 10.20.2009 by Preservation Studios LLC

Conclusion

The Kensington Gardens Apartment Complex is historically significant as an intact and extant example of federally-supported worker housing designed to improve the lives of its inhabitants based on FHA endorsed designs and standards for garden apartment communities. It remains in nearly original configuration with a high degree of integrity. It is additionally significant for its association with the national movement to provide a government presence in the housing industry during the Depression as subsequently done with the FHA.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Justification

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Additional Information
Map 1- Sanborn V.6 - 1939 (corrected 1961)



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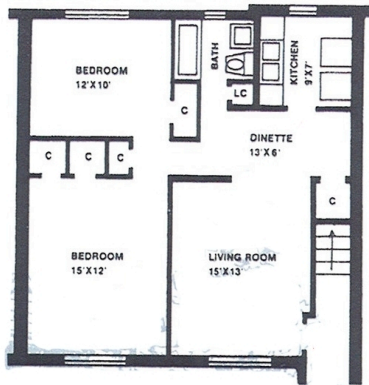
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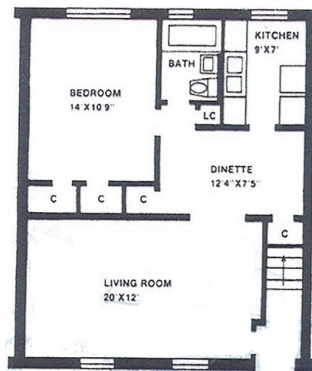
Figure 2 - Kensington Gardens - Interior Floor Plan

Kensington Gardens Apartments - Floor Plans

2 Bedroom



1 Bedroom



3 Bedroom

