1. Name of Property

historic name Kinston Apartments
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 1313 McAdoo Street not for publication N/A
city or town Kinston vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Lenoir code 107 zip code 28501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 X meets X does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant __ nationally __ statewide __ locally. (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources 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 commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  

X entered in the National Register  
X determined eligible for the National Register

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

See continuation sheet.  
See continuation sheet.  
See continuation sheet.
### 5. Classification

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Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

SOCIAL/clubhouse

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Art Moderne

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

roof Concrete Shakes

walls Brick

other

#### 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 a 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.

Period of Significance
Ca. 1940

Significant Dates
Ca. 1940

Significant Person
(Neather if Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder
Wooten, A. Mitchell

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository:
Kinston Apartments

Name of Property

Lenoir County, North Carolina

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  2.537 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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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  Jeffrey S. Smith and Sherry Joines Wyatt

organization  Landmark Asset Services

date  February 16, 2003

street & number  406 East Fourth Street

telephone  (336) 722-9871 ext 106

city or town  Winston-Salem

state  NC

zip code  27101

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

(Choose from the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name  Floyd II Limited Partnership/Jim Sari

street & number  406 East Fourth Street

telephone  (336) 722-9871 ext.102

city or town  Winston-Salem

state  NC

zip code  27101

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.).
Kinston Apartments
Lenoir County, North Carolina

Narrative Description

The five buildings that comprise the Kinston Apartments complex were completed circa 1940 and are situated on approximately two and one-half acres just north of downtown Kinston in the northern section of the Grainger Hill neighborhood. The rectangular-shaped, double-pile buildings were constructed on the east side of McAdoo Street directly across from Emma Webb Park, a major city recreation area built between 1935 and 1936. The apartment complex is surrounded on its remaining three sides by a residential neighborhood comprised primarily of single-family homes. Developed from the 1930s through the 1960s, this neighborhood features Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional, Period Cottage, Cape Cod, and Ranch style houses with many mature trees. All five apartment buildings contribute to the significance of the apartment complex, but a newly constructed one-story, brick, community building is a non-contributing resource.

The Kinston Apartments buildings are positioned in a U-shape, creating an open, park-like courtyard that is planted with mature oak trees and lined with concrete walkways. The U opens westward to McAdoo Street and the neighboring park. Backing up to North Independence Street and making up the “base” of the U is the long, five-bay, rear building, historically identified as building D-E-F, based on the entrances of the building. Perpendicular to this building are two, five-bay wide buildings, B-C and G-H, which are nearly as long as the rear building, and form the “sides” of the U formation. These buildings front the open courtyard and have rear entrances that access parking areas to the north and to the south. Apartment buildings A and I, smaller than the other buildings and three bays wide, are located at the western ends of buildings B-C and G-H and front McAdoo Street.

The brick apartment buildings are executed in the Colonial Revival style with Art Moderne and Art Deco influences. The buildings have two stories and full basements. There are subtle differences between the five buildings in terms of size, form, and detail. The rear building (D-E-F) is the largest building and has a patently Colonial Revival form with a side gable central section and lower, hip roof end wings. The gable ends of the five-bay wide central block have large, slab-like chimneys. Two round-headed dormers are located on the front slope of the roof. Entrances D and F have simple, projecting brick surrounds and small, one-story lattice porches while entrance E, the central entrance, has a larger lattice entrance porch. Buildings B-C and G-H are identical. They have hip roofs with small, hip-roof projections at their rear corners. The buildings have three, round-headed dormers on the front elevation, and each of the two entrances have projecting brick surrounds and small lattice porches. Buildings A and I are identical and are
smaller than the other three buildings. The hip roof buildings have the larger-size lattice porch similar to entrance E and have two, round-headed dormers on the forward slope of the roof. Like buildings B-C and G-H, buildings A and I have small two-story, hip roof projections at their rear, courtyard-side corners. Adding interest to all of the buildings' rear elevations are projecting, hip roof ells. These projections create an undulating rear facade.

The buildings retain their original concrete shake roofs, which were designed to imitate slate. The dormers are sheathed in copper that has weathered to a verdigris finish. The original windows were metal-framed, multi-light casements that were replaced ca. 1995 with six-over-six vinyl double-hung sash. In a rehabilitation completed in 2003, all of the replacement windows were replaced with six and eight pane casement windows that closely replicate the original sash. The dormers retain their original three-light, casement windows.

The structure of the apartment buildings is hollow core tile faced with brick according to the 1955 Sanborn map. The red brick used in the buildings varies from true red to dark brown-gray. The buildings are laid in five-course American bond and exhibit a variety of interesting decorative features. In addition to the entrance surrounds already mentioned, the buildings' windows have wide projecting brick lintels and sills. The window that surmounts each entrance is flanked by short, single-brick, projecting, horizontal bands simulating rustication. A small row of soldier course bricks, set such that their edges project and create a sawtooth design, is located directly beneath this window. Each building also has a wide, projecting cornice band. Other decorative features include the small entrance stoops covered by flat-roofed porches with decorative, latticework done in a stylized manner. The wooden front doors are executed in the Art Deco style and have three, octagonal lights and matching screen doors. Ghost marks on the brick suggest that the rear entrances also originally had small porches similar to the front entrances. The combined Art Deco and Art Moderne styling is continued in the front stair halls with the geometric stair balustrade. The balustrade consists of a gently curving handrail with reeded edges, three flat, horizontal rails, and cylindrical vertical members. Newel posts with reeded details support the balustrade. Inside the apartments, small details, such as the embossed basket weave pattern on the doorknobs and the stepped escutcheon, exhibit Art Deco stylistic influences.

The buildings each contain four apartment units, with the exception of buildings D and F, which have two three-bedroom apartments. Although the floor plans differ slightly, the features of the apartment units are very similar. Each apartment has plaster walls and solid wood, single-panel doors. The doors have molded surrounds with plinth blocks. The baseboard is plain with a
quarter-round top and toe molding. There is a narrow picture rail. Wood floors were found beneath the carpet during the 2003 rehabilitation and cleaned and refinished, while the kitchen has modern vinyl flooring. The bathrooms retain the original, black and white tile floors with marble thresholds and black and white tile walls (two-thirds height). In the 2003 rehabilitation, original kitchen fixtures like the refrigerator, oven, sink and cabinets were replaced. Most units have several closets with narrow, single-panel doors. The apartment plans typically consist of an open living room – dining room arrangement with a small hall connecting these spaces to the bedroom(s) and bath. The kitchen is located off of the dining or living area and has the rear entrance door. Each dwelling unit has both a rear and front door that open into the separate front and rear stair halls.

Apart from the replacement windows and kitchen cabinetry, and flooring, the buildings are virtually unchanged; some units even contain original light fixtures. None of the buildings have had additions or other changes that significantly alter their historic character. Thus, the Kinston Apartments, marked by notable stylistic features on the interior and exterior, retain a high level of integrity.
The Kinston Apartments represent an important housing form that was innovative for its 1940 completion date. The design of the apartment complex is attributed to local architect, A. Mitchell Wooten, who also designed two contemporary public housing projects in Kinston. This attribution is based on oral history and the buildings’ stylistic similarities to the other housing projects. The Kinston Apartments’ Colonial Revival style design was traditional and the style was widely used in residential building design during the first half of the twentieth century. However, the five brick buildings also exhibit Art Moderne and modernist elements, and the distinctive functional modernity of the design sets them apart in Kinston. It is noteworthy that the apartment complex itself, the “garden apartment” or “superblock,” was not often implemented in eastern North Carolina. This combination of traditional building design and modern features in a park-like environment, offered the residents of The Kinston Apartments the best of city living in a suburban setting. By following the tenets of the garden apartment, Kinston Apartments were convenient to downtown, for work and shopping and, simultaneously, close to the suburban offerings of large shade trees and play areas for children. Renovated in 2003, the superblock form of Kinston Apartments remains intact and the integrity of the apartment complex is high. Therefore, the Kinston Apartments are locally eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C for architecture.

Historical Background

Established in 1762, Kinston, like many towns in eastern North Carolina, has a rich early history and played an important role in the development of North Carolina during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kinston’s antebellum growth was steady but the town itself was primarily a meeting place for government and trade dealings. Following the Civil War, many rural residents came into the city to look for employment. Kinston became a retail destination in the latter part of the nineteenth century and its booming economy continued into the first two decades of the twentieth century. Kinston’s population grew from 1,762 in 1890 to 4,106 to 1900 and again it increased to 9,771 by 1920 and 15,492 by 1940, developing into a thriving city that reflected many nationally popular trends, one of which was suburban development.

During the first decades of the twentieth century a construction boom followed to meet...
the housing demands resulting from the population influx. New development took place north of Kinston’s central business district and the area became known as the Grainger Hill neighborhood. The Grainger Hill neighborhood has some of Kinston’s finest examples of Queen Anne, Craftsman, bungalow and early Ranch style homes and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as The Hill-Grainger Historic District. The Kinston Apartments are located along the perimeter of the Grainger Hill neighborhood.

Along with the Mitchelltown neighborhood to the west of downtown and the Trianon neighborhood to the east, Grainger Hill constituted the bulk of Kinston’s early twentieth century suburban expansion. The increased accessibility of the automobile contributed to the burgeoning national trend of suburban residential development during the 1920s and 1930s. By the early 1920s, approximately one-half of the area encompassed by The Hill-Grainger Historic District was developed, and in 1921 Mayor Joe Dawson described the development as follows: “Gradually, about 1890, Kinston began to go north and northeast across the open fields . . . and there was the foresight and vigorous spirit of development . . . that opened up that splendid section of the city. . .”

The suburban expansion that occurred in the neighborhood during the 1920s resulted in the construction of Grainger High School in 1924 and Emma Webb Park in 1935-1936. The park, constructed with WPA assistance, was especially important to the continued development of Grainger Hill during the 1930s, ‘40s, and ‘50s since it provided a recreational outlet that was close to the suburbs. It was a magnet for the growing middle-class neighborhood of Parkview, north of Grainger Hill, with amenities such as a swimming pool, dance hall, gazebo, bandstand, and tennis courts.

Fueled by the convenience to downtown and with perks such as Emma Webb Park, suburban development took the form of modest Tudor and Colonial Revival houses during the 1930s and 1940s, as was typical of early twentieth-century neighborhoods across eastern North Carolina. The Depression affected local residential and commercial development, stifling construction and the manufacturing industry, but by the late 1930s signs of Kinston’s recovery was evident. By 1941, the Grainger Hill neighborhood was almost entirely developed, but the fringe areas, especially to the north, provided space for the second wave of suburban expansion.

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after World War II marked by the construction of Parkview Shopping Center, the city’s first suburban shopping strip, in 1951-1952. In 1954, Kinston’s features were described: “there is a new and modern shopping center at the top of Queen Street hill (Parkview). There are lovely residences and apartment houses scattered all about.” At that time, the city had five banks, three hotels, a city bus line, three radio stations, a gas plant, several shirt factories, three funeral parlors, a hosiery mill, a bus station, and the main office of the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad.

Architecture Context

With the first suburb, came the combination of “open space, fresh air, and greenery of the country with an efficient arrangement of houses.” Suburban expansion first occurred in the larger cities of the United States in the 1860s in the form of planned communities. Rail lines and horse-drawn cars transported commuters to the industrialized urban centers for work and business dealings and returned the commuters to their picturesque, semi-rural homes. Beginning in the 1880s, streetcar suburbs lured a wide range of working class, middle class, and upper-middle class people away from many urban centers. Streetcar usage began to slow in the 1920s but was still relied upon by the middle and working classes while the automobile began to meet the increased transportation demands of the upper and upper-middle classes as early as 1908 with the introduction of Henry Ford’s model-T. With this trend, the automobile suburb began to take shape.

Part of the suburban expansion in many cities across the United States was the twentieth-century development of a new housing idiom, the garden apartment, or superblock complex. The superblock concept had its roots in the work of Ebenezer Howard and other early “Garden City” designers and was brought to its fullest fruition in projects funded by the Federal Housing Authority’s “608” financing program during the late 1940s and early 1950s. As a concept, however, the essential characteristics of the superblock were in place several years prior to World War II as illustrated by the communities of Radburn, New Jersey (1928) and Greenbelt,
Maryland (1935). A superblock development consisted of several, multi-family units set in a park-like environment without through-streets and automobile parking shielded from the development’s naturalistic setting.8

Although not especially common in eastern North Carolina, the superblock was commonly used in and around Washington, D.C. and other cities in the northern part of the United States during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Kinston’s industrial and commercial traffic may have been on a smaller scale than the nation’s capital, but the components of this urban setting were the same and, thusly, made the “garden city” setting of the Kinston Apartments equally successful as its metropolitan counterparts. Despite Kinston Apartments’ modest, five-building complex, it does represent the crucial superblock design principles. The proximity of the apartment site to Emma Webb Park enhanced the connection of the apartments to their naturalistic setting. The garden apartment provided close proximity to several modern conveniences - employers, merchants, and banks - and provided housing close to a green space, thus giving the resident the best of both the urban and rural setting.9

Very little is known about the specific details of the development of the Kinston Apartments. In March 1939, the lot for the “proposed apartment house site” was officially platted. According to deed research, in June 1939, T. A. Loving and Company of Goldsboro, North Carolina, sold the property to the Kinston Housing Corporation. The 1940 Kinston City Directory was the first directory to list occupants of the apartments. At that time, some of the buildings were still vacant and, apparently, still under construction. According to Penne Sandbeck, Hyman Stadiem, a local businessman, owned by the apartments by 1950. In a January 2003, interview with Mr. Stadiem’s son, David, A. Mitchell Wooten, his partner John J. Rowland, and local real estate developer Ely Perry were identified as involved in the initial construction. This oral history is the only evidence linking A. Mitchell Wooten as the designer of the Kinston Apartments. No corroborating evidence has been found concerning Ely Perry’s association with the construction project.10

10 Oral history, 57-58.
A. Mitchell Wooten was apparently Kinston’s first formally trained architect and was a true innovator for Kinston’s architecture. Wooten introduced the Art Moderne style and modernism to the area by tempering it with the more traditional and accepted forms of Colonial Revival architecture. Kinston Apartments certainly illustrates these ideas using a mix of red brick, rectangular, Colonial Revival-influenced forms, including round-headed dormers, with unexpected touches of Art Moderne in the unusual interior hand rails, stylized lattice-work at the entry stoops, and projecting brick bands on the façade.

While the superblock plan was often utilized for low-income housing projects, it was also used in fashionable housing for white professionals. Examples of this kind of development are Charlotte’s Selwyn Village and Scotland Colony (both circa 1950) located near Myers Park or Winston-Salem’s Ardmore Terrace Apartments (c.1950) in the upper-middle class Ardmore neighborhood. At Kinston Apartments, the 1946 Kinston City Directory shows that a range of middle-class professionals -- a manager of the Freezer Locker Plant, a cashier, and a podiatrist -- were tenants.

Wooten’s usage of the superblock was employed for two public housing projects that he designed while on retainer with the Kinston Housing Authority: the Simon Bright Homes, for lower-income whites, and Mitchell Wooten Courts, originally called Tower Hill Homes. Wooten attended night school at the New York School for Social Reform in the early 1930s. The focus his coursework was the development of schools and multi-unit residential complexes. Surviving class project sketches completed by Wooten illuminate the connection of his work during this period to the Kinston projects. One sketch illustrates rectangular buildings situated in a U-plan with Art Deco entrances and minimal exterior decoration not unlike Kinston Apartments and Wooten’s Kinston public housing projects.

The circa 1939 Simon Bright Homes, named for one of Kinston’s founding fathers, was the first project that Wooten designed for the Kinston Housing Authority, and with this housing development, Wooten introduced Kinston to the Art Moderne style. The flat-roofed, two-story brick buildings are pierced by casement windows that wrap around the corners of the building and feature, as their only decoration, “cast concrete plaques showing children at play.” Six blocks away, Wooten located Tower Hill Homes/ Mitchell Wooten Court (1939). Eighteen,

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11 Little, 140.
12 Little, 236.
13 Smith, 93-94.
14 Little, 140.
hipped-roof, two-story brick buildings comprise this complex built for African-Americans. The buildings feature stringcourses, corner windows, modern interior brick chimneystack, and as with Simon Bright homes, relief plaques of children playing various musical instruments and toys. Both complexes are located in East Kinston and were designed to “provide a safe and attractive environment for low-income families, contained rows of apartment buildings built around courtyards, with play areas for children and a community building.”15 Both Wooten and the Housing Authority sought a “‘livable and moral’ alternative to the crowded tenements and shotgun rows” that dominated the landscape in east Kinston.16 Wooten also designed two public housing complexes in New Bern, NC. Trent Court was built for low-income white members of the New Bern community and Craven Terrace, for low-income African Americans. The buildings featured many of the same modernist details and superblock planning as well as Wooten’s trademark plaques that featured children at play.17

The Kinston Apartments stand as an example of the expanding multi-family housing suburban development in Kinston and are illustrative of the city’s participation in this national trend. The Apartments represent the use of garden city planning ideas and are a good example of Wooten’s unique synthesis of traditional and modern stylistic influences. Kinston Apartments are also significant in their use of the superblock concept on a small scale to construct fashionable apartments for Kinston’s white professionals. It is also notable that the c. 1940 date of the Apartments is well before the widespread usage of large superblock projects during the immediate post-World War II period.

15 Little, 148.
16 Little, 219.
17 Little, 141.
Bibliography


Sanborn Maps, 1949 (revision of 1930). Sanborn Map Company, New York:

Stadiem, David, former co-owner of the Kinston Oaks Apartments. Interview with the author January 2003.


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10  Page 1  

Kinston Apartments
Lenoir County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description

Tract delineated by heavy solid line on 1”=200 feet scale, Tax Parcel Map, Lenoir County.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the property.
KINSTON APARTMENTS
KINSTON
LENOIR COUNTY, NC
Plat Map, 1939
Lenoir County Map Book 2, Page 122