

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Dahlgreen Courts
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2504-2520 10th Street, N.E. not for publication
city or town Washington vicinity
state District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20018

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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ 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)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling (apartment building)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling (apartment building)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: BRICK; CONCRETE

walls: BRICK; TERRA COTTA (hollow tile)

roof: OTHER: Slag

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Dahlgreen Courts is comprised of two apartment buildings that were constructed side-by-side on 10th Street, N.E., north of the intersection with Rhode Island Avenue, between 1927 and 1929.¹ Construction of the first building at 2520 10th Street, N.E. (located on Square 3844, Lot 816) began in February 1927. Work on the second building at 2504 10th Street, N.E. (located on Square 3844, Lot 820) began in December 1928 and was completed in 1929. At five stories in height, 2504 10th Street is two stories higher than its three-story predecessor to the north. Both buildings have footprints based on a U-shaped plan, thus creating courtyards that house the main entry bays. Both buildings reflect architect George T. Santmyers's preference for the Classical Revival style, although the building at 2520 10th Street is less ornate than its counterpart at 2504 10th Street. The stylized ornamentation applied to the exterior of 2504 10th Street is the result of its close proximity to Rhode Island Avenue, which was a highly traveled transportation corridor carrying vehicular and streetcar traffic. The more modest ornamentation of 2520 10th Street is complementary of the rowhouses fronting 10th Street to the immediate north, thus marrying the multi-family building to the existing single-family neighborhood. Both buildings are constructed of brick and hollow terra cotta tiles faced in coursed bricks. Limestone detailing is found on 2520 10th Street, while 2504 10th Street has cast stone creating the sills, stringcourses, and medallions, and limestone main entry surrounds. The buildings are set on concrete and brick foundations with flat roofs of slag obscured by stylized parapets. The window openings are single and paired; balustraded sleeping porches pierce the projecting bays at 2520 10th Street. Together, the buildings currently provide 96 units comprised primarily of one-bedroom apartments; they also have 14 efficiencies and 8 two-bedroom apartments.

Narrative Description

Site Description

Dahlgreen Courts, composed of two apartment buildings, is situated on the west side of 10th Street, N.E. in Washington, D.C. The buildings each sit on their own lots, which collectively are just slightly more than half an acre. Occupying the fully width of their respective lots, the buildings have a slight setback that is consistent with the single-family dwellings of the immediate neighborhood of Brookland. The U-shape of the buildings creates courtyards at the front where the main entries are located prominently. Secondary entries are found on the north side elevation of 2520 10th Street and on the rear of both buildings. Concrete-paved alleys run along the north (side) and west (rear) sides of Dahlgreen Courts. It is accessible from Evarts Street, N.E. to the north and from a short drive leading from 10th Street.

Rhode Island Avenue is located to the south with one-story commercial buildings fronting this highly traveled transportation route. These buildings date from the late 1930s. The Pioneer Laundry Building at 920 Rhode Island Avenue (1926) extends northward to the center of Square 3844, thus creating a wall along the western edge of the narrow alley that runs to the rear elevation of Dahlgreen Courts. Two-story rowhouses front the east side of 10th Street to the immediate north of the apartment buildings. Composed of 14 single-family attached dwellings, the rowhouses were constructed in 1925 to the design of architect George T. Santmyers. Like the

¹ The buildings are also referred to as 'Dahlgren' Courts. Historical references to the buildings more frequently use 'Dahlgren Courts,' although 'Dahlgreen' is inscribed on the building at 2504 10th Street, N.E.

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apartment buildings, the rowhouses reflect, albeit vernacular, the Classical Revival style. To the east is a small residential enclave consisting of freestanding, single-family dwellings representative of the bungalow and American Foursquare forms. The Craftsman-style bungalows and Colonial Revival-style Foursquares, fronting Rhode Island Avenue, 10th Street, and Douglas Street, N.E., were designed by George T. Santmyers and constructed in 1915 for owner Harry A. Kite.

Dahlgreen Courts: 2520 10th Street, N.E. (1927)

The masonry apartment building at 2520 10th Street, N.E. stands three stories in height on an English (raised) basement. The U shape of the structure is augmented by two- and three-bay wide projections that run the full height. The building is constructed of brick and terra cotta tiles faced in five-course American-bond brick. The colored bricks on the façade fronting 10th Street are tooled, while those on the side and rear elevations are red brick with a plain face. Two courses of stretcher bricks, which project slightly from the plane of the wall, serve as the stringcourses marking each of the stories. The stringcourses are aligned with the limestone sills of the window openings. Stringcourses of bricks laid in a basket weave pattern (three soldier bricks and one stretcher brick) mark the tops of the window openings. The building's flat roof, which is covered in slag, is framed by a flat parapet wall. Repointed in areas, the parapet is constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond and has metal coping. Panels are created by the slight projection of a single course of header bricks along the sides and rowlock bricks at the top and bottom. A medallion of limestone adorns the panels of the two projections and the entry bay. The circular medallion is edged by nebuly molding and has a raised rosette at the center. The limestone cornice at the base of the parapet is composed of ogee molding set below a wider fillet molding. The frieze is created by a single course of rowlock bricks and a single course of header bricks, which abut the basket weave stringcourse above the third-story windows.

The building is pierced by symmetrically placed single and paired window openings. The openings have 1/1 double-hung, metal-sash replacement windows; the fenestration pattern is original. Each of the openings on the façade is finished with a square-edged limestone sill. The window openings on the side and rear elevations are more modestly finished with rowlock brick sills. The surrounds presently are covered in aluminum, which covers any original molding (if extant).

The main entry opening is located within the courtyard created by the U shape of the structure. Set within a two-bay-wide projection, the entry is distinguished by limestone cladding. Access to the flush metal replacement door is gained by a concrete stoop and stairs, which are edged by a metal balustrade. The centrally placed entry has narrow one-light side lights framed by a square-edged aluminum surround. The original transom is composed of five fixed lights in a wood sash with aluminum-covered surrounds. The entry is flanked by narrow 1/1 double-hung, metal-sash windows with granite sills and square-edged aluminum surrounds. The Classical Revival-style entablature is composed of a running fret along the frieze, ogee bed molding, and cornice with fillets and cyma recta molding. A false parapet of limestone tops the main entry. Finished with square-edged coping, the parapet is ornamented with two slightly recessed panels with engaged Tuscan balusters.

Secondary entries, holding flush metal replacement doors, are located on the rear elevation. One of the openings is located below grade, with access provided by concrete steps. Access is now restricted by a low concrete-block wall that frames the steps. An exterior-end brick chimney protrudes from the rear elevation of the building. The shaft, rising above the roof, has been repointed and is crowned by a square-edged concrete cap.

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Interior Description

The interior of the building includes 40 apartments (2 efficiencies, 30 one bedroom units, and 8 two-bedrooms)—it originally contained 30 units. The units historically included kitchen, dining area, bath, and if an efficiency had a Murphy bed (which are no longer extant). The units are set along transverse halls. The upper floors are accessible by two enclosed dog-leg stairs, one located on each side of the main entry vestibule. Although modest, stylistic ornamentation in the entry vestibule includes a mosaic tile floor with modern basket-weave pattern, centrally placed stair with metal rail, square-edged casings finished with a narrow interior astragal bead and cornice cap with fillet, and paired panel molding on the rough-finished walls. The flat ceiling is ornamented, again modestly, with plaster cove molding and plain top molding edged by ogee molding. Shallow scrolled brackets ornamentally support the ceiling at its western end where the vestibule opens onto the hall. A medallion adorned with acanthus is affixed to the center of the ceiling. A semi-indirect pendant light with round-link chain and diffusing glass bowl set in a metal reflector hangs from the medallion; the light fixture is not original. The double-entry stair, thus providing access to the lowest floor of the building, has marble treads and risers framed by a delicate metal rail. The thin balusters alternate between spiral and square, with scrolled metalwork providing additional ornamentation to the main carriage of the stair.

The apartment units are also modestly finished. The floors are composed of narrow wood boards with a 6-inch baseboard replete with ogee-molded base and cap. The casings on the doors are wide square-edged surrounds with unadorned base blocks and ogee-molded cornice caps with fillets. The wood doors, which appear to be original, have two recessed panels and clear glass knobs. The window openings, which are recessed into the wall because of the masonry structure, have narrower square-edged surrounds than the entry openings. They have plain aprons, rounded stools, and ogee-molded cornice caps with fillets at the base. Bowl lights with diffused glass and metal reflectors are affixed to the ceilings.

Dahlgreen Courts: 2504 10th Street, N.E. (1928-1929)

The masonry apartment building at 2504 10th Street, N.E. stands five stories in height on a slightly raised basement. The U shape of the structure is augmented by four one-bay-wide projections that run the full height. It is constructed of bricks and hollow terra cotta tiles faced in six-course American-bond bricks, set on a concrete and brick foundation. The colored bricks on the façade fronting 10th Street are textured, while those on the side elevation facing Rhode Island Avenue are red brick with a plain face. The rear elevation is faced in standard-sized concrete bricks (blonde in color). A cast stone water table with a fillet profile also serves as a continuous sill for the first-story window openings. The flat roof, which is covered in slag, is framed by a flat parapet wall. The parapet is constructed of brick laid in seven-course American bond and has wide metal coping. The parapets over the projections and main entry bay have panels of cast stone. These large rectangular panels are each adorned with a centrally placed shield detailed with scrolls and eagles. A ribbon motif extends from the sides of the shield. Narrower cast stone panels with a triangular motif ornament the less prominent sections of the parapet. The corners of the parapet are wrapped with cast stone panels embossed with an acanthus motif in a recessed diamond. Large metal acorn finials set on narrow plinths top the corners of the building. A cast stone cornice with a cavetto profile marks the base of the parapet on the façade.

The building is pierced by symmetrically placed single and paired window openings. The openings have 1/1 double-hung, metal-sash replacement windows; the fenestration pattern is original. Each of the openings on the façade is finished with a square-edged cast stone sill. The window openings on the side and rear elevations are more modestly finished with rowlock brick sills. The surrounds presently are covered in aluminum, which covers any original molding (if extant). The rectangular basement openings have been covered and the original

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sash is not visible (and may in most cases no longer be extant). The original sash (six-light awning of wood) is visible on a single opening on the rear elevation.

The four square projections on the façade, providing much of the building's stylistic ornamentation, have sleeping porches (or sun rooms). Each story has paired openings flanked on the sides of the square projection by narrow single openings. The first story has a square-edged cast stone sill with true-and-inverted balusters of concrete. The engaged balusters sit on a square-edged plinth and are topped by a square-edged rail. Above the balustrade are single and paired wood-frame storm windows (glass is removable to allow insertion of screens). The opening is ornately finished on the façade by a cast stone hood with cavetto profile. The impostes are adorned with raised triangular rosettes. The second and third stories of the projection are modestly finished with a cast stone lintel that also marks the floor of the upper stories. The spandrel between is covered by a metal balustrade with a wave motif at the base and top. The lintel of the fourth story, supported by ogee-molded brackets, has a recessed panel decorated on the face by a wave motif. The fifth story of each projection has a lancet arch with fluting and acorn drops. French doors with multi-light side lights, some of which are extant, enclose the sleeping porches on the interior.

The main entry opening of the apartment building is located within the courtyard created by the U shape of the structure. Occupying two bays, the entry is distinguished by limestone cladding. Access to the flush metal replacement door is gained by a concrete stair, which is edged by limestone knee walls with saddleback capping. The centrally placed entry has narrow one-light side lights framed by a square-edged aluminum surround. The original transom, within a lancet arch, is composed of six fixed lights in a wood sash with aluminum-covered surrounds. The entry has a projecting lancet arch with fluting and acorn drops. The frieze above the opening has three parts, each framed in ovolo molding. The central panel, which is rectangular, is carved with the name of the apartment building, "DAHLGREEN COURTS." The flanking square panels have embossed rosettes. The outer edges of the entry bay project slightly, reading as corner towers of a medieval castle. This is further emphasized by their height above the frieze of the central bay. Each is topped by a chamfered cap with cavetto bed molding and engaged acorn finial on a plinth. A single course of rowlock bricks runs between the chamfered caps just above the central panel. Narrow one-light casement windows with cast stone sills and square-edged wood surrounds pierce the outer edges of the entry bay, flanking the main door.

Secondary entries, holding flush metal replacement doors, are located on the rear elevation. Five vehicular openings for automobiles are located on the north wall of the interior courtyard at the rear of the building. This courtyard is created by the siting of the building adjacent to the apartment building at 2520 10th Street. Three of the garage openings retain the original 21-paneled roll-up wood doors with seven fixed lights. One of the openings has a replacement door of paneled vinyl, while a second wood door has 12 panels with four fixed lights. An exterior-end concrete-brick chimney protrudes from the rear elevation of the building. The shaft, rising above the roof, lacks a cap. The elevator shaft abuts the chimney on its northeast corner. Covered by a flat roof, the shaft holds industrial windows of metal with fixed and awning sash.

Interior Description

The apartment building includes 56 units (12 efficiencies and 44 one bedrooms)—it originally contained 50 units. The units, set along transverse halls, historically included kitchen, dining area, and bath. The upper floors are accessible by two enclosed dog-leg stairs, one located on each side of the main entry vestibule. A single elevator rises from the center of the building. Rather ornate, stylistic ornamentation in the entry vestibule includes a marble floor, full-width steps, molded casing with lancet arch on the main entry, and 4-inch square-edged baseboard. The flat ceiling is adorned, again ornately, with plaster thumb-molded picture molding, frieze

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with a wave motif, acanthus cove molding, plain filler, and foliated scrolls creating the field molding. Shallow, although wide, scrolled brackets ornamentally support the ceiling at its western end where the vestibule opens onto the hall. The brackets are dressed with acanthus leaves and running ornament. Two medallions adorned with acanthus are affixed to the ceiling. A semi-indirect pendant light with round-link chain and diffusing glass bowl set in a metal reflector hangs from the easternmost medallion; the light fixture is not original. Two-light electric brackets have been affixed to the side walls. The steps to the upper vestibule, which provides access to the transverse hall and elevator, stretch the width of the space. The marble risers and treads are edged by a squared wall stringer that mimics the baseboard of the vestibule. A single metal rail, most likely added, is located at the center of the stair. The marble floors of the upper and lower vestibules provide a multi-colored checkerboard pattern with a narrow border. The opening to the elevator appears to have been partially enclosed and a narrower (single-leaf) sliding door inserted. There is no applied molding or ornamentation to the original or current opening.

The apartment units are also modestly finished. The floors are composed of narrow wood boards with a 6-inch baseboard replete with quadrant-molded base and ogee-molded cap. The reeded casings on the doors are narrow square-edged surrounds, lacking base blocks and cornice caps. The wood doors, which appear to be replacements, are flush with metal knobs. The window openings, which are recessed into the wall because of the masonry structure, have wider square-edged surrounds than the entry openings. They have stepped aprons and rounded stools. Bowl lights with diffused glass and metal reflectors are affixed to the ceilings.

INVENTORY

ADDRESS	DATE	TYPE	CONTRIBUTING/ NON-CONTRIBUTING
2520 10 th Street, N.E.	1927	Building	Contributing
2504 10 th Street, N.E.	1928-1929	Building	Contributing

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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 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1927-1929

Significant Dates

1927

1928-1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Santmyers, George T. (architect)

Willis, Edward M. (builder/owner)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for Dahlgreen Courts is 1927-1929, which encompasses the construction of the two buildings making up the multi-family complex.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Dahlgreen Courts provides a significant illustration of the patterns of residential development in the Brookland neighborhood and trends in housing that lead to multi-family living in Washington, D.C. It was one of the earliest apartment complexes constructed in Brookland, costing more and standing higher than any other multi-family building erected between 1924 and 1951 in the neighborhood. The apartment complex, composed of two conventional multi-family buildings, was built in 1927-1929 by property owner Edward M. Willis to the designs of George T. Santmyers—the most prolific architect in the Washington, D.C. during the first half of the twentieth century. The architect was already well acquainted with the neighborhood, having designed many of the houses within the residential enclave of 10th Street at Rhode Island Avenue and Evarts Street. The evolution of Santmyers’s creative architectural skills and understanding of domestic forms can be examined in this enclave as he transcended freestanding dwellings and attached rowhouses to design over 440 apartment buildings in the course of his long career; Dahlgreen Courts was one of his first multi-family projects. The immediate proximity of the apartments to the highly traveled Rhode Island Avenue was advantageous to Santmyers’s designs and Willis’s sales promotions. The height of the five-story building and its ornate Classical Revival detailing intentionally advertised the apartments to passersby. Yet, the three-story building was more modest in appearance; it was erected first to ensure transition of the multi-family buildings into the immediate neighborhood composed of one- and two-story single-family dwellings. The combination of convenience and affordability attracted a diverse range of households to Dahlgreen Courts, making it a significant representative of the economic and demographic forces that affected the development of the Brookland neighborhood in the interwar period. Locally significant, Dahlgreen Courts is eligible under Criteria A and C with a period of significance extending from 1927 to 1929.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Dahlgreen Courts is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C and is significant in the areas of **Architecture** and **Community Planning and Development**. The property is being nominated under the *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), which was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. Dahlgreen Courts satisfies the following Multiple Property Document Criteria:

- A-3: Buildings that are part of clusters, corridors, or districts that illustrate patterns of development of the city;
- A-4: Buildings that reflect economic forces, both external and internal, that altered the development of the city; and
- C-3: Buildings that reflect changes in aesthetic philosophies.²

In addition to satisfying the National Register and Multiple Property Document Criteria, Dahlgreen Court meets the D.C. Landmark Criteria **(b) History** and **(d) Architecture and Urbanism** based on its historical and architectural significance.

Dahlgreen Courts is significant in the area of **Architecture**—and **(d) Architecture and Urbanism**—as a Classical Revival-style multi-family apartment complex. Dahlgreen Courts is illustrative of the early work of

² Emily Hotaling Eig and Laura Harris Hughes, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: Tracerics, 1993), F.3-F.4.

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noted local architect George T. Santmyers—Washington, D.C.’s most prolific designer of apartment buildings. Santmyers choice of architectural vocabulary for Dahlgreen Courts attempted to capitalize on the proximity of the site to Rhode Island Avenue, while marrying with the existing Craftsman- and Colonial Revival-style freestanding dwellings and attached rowhouses of the immediate neighborhood. The buildings’ unassuming design and simple plan provided affordable one- and two-bedroom units to the working- and middle-class households that occupied in Dahlgreen Courts. At the same time, Santmyers skillfully incorporated elements of the then-popular Classical Revival style into his designs for Dahlgreen Courts. This classically inspired ornamentation is particularly evident on 2504 10th Street. The details in the projecting bays are enhanced by the added height of the five-story mid-rise apartment building. Located near the corner of 10th Street and Rhode Island Avenue, the more expressive 2504 10th Street served to advertise Dahlgreen Courts affordable yet modern units. The adjacent three-story, low-rise apartment building at 2520 10th Street is more subdued and serves as a transition to the nearby rowhouses and freestanding dwellings. Through this step-down approach and its uncomplicated, yet attractive design, Dahlgreen Courts responded to its location at the southern fringe of the Brookland neighborhood.

Dahlgreen Courts is also significance in the area of **Community Planning and Development**—and **(b) History**. The adjacent Conventional Low- and Mid-Rise Apartment Buildings that form Dahlgreen Courts illustrate patterns of residential development in the Brookland neighborhood and trends in multi-family living in Washington, D.C. The buildings illustrate the integration of multi-family housing into the District of Columbia’s residential streetcar suburbs during the first decades of the twentieth century. As the city’s workforce grew following World War I, demand for affordable middle- and working-class housing led to increased densities in neighborhoods across Washington, D.C., especially neighborhoods with access to downtown by means of public transit. Dahlgreen Courts was constructed during a boom period in apartment building construction in the city that signified the widespread acceptance of the housing type. It was also one of the earliest apartment buildings constructed in the Brookland neighborhood, which prior to the mid-1920s had been comprised exclusively of freestanding single-family houses and attached rowhouses.

Dahlgreen Courts is also significant in illustrating development along the Rhode Island Avenue streetcar corridor. In Brookland, apartment buildings were developed along the major transportation and public transit routes that defined the edges of the neighborhood. The streetcar route along Rhode Island Avenue enabled federal employees and private sector workers to commute from Brookland to their downtown agencies and jobs. The combination of convenience and affordability attracted a diverse range of households to Dahlgreen Courts. Thus, the Dahlgreen Courts are significant representatives of the economic and demographic forces that altered the development of the Brookland neighborhood in the interwar period.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Construction History

Owner and builder Edward M. Willis, Jr. applied for a D.C. Permit to Build for the first of the two buildings comprising Dahlgreen Courts on February 15, 1927. According to the building permit application, the three-story brick building at 2520 10th Street, N.E. was designed by architect George T. Santmyers, Jr. As specified on the application, the building originally contained 30 apartments with 90 rooms. On November 19, 1928, Willis applied for a Permit to Build for the second Dahlgreen Courts apartment building at 2504 10th Street, N.E. Once again, Santmyers served as the architect. The five-story building brick, completed in 1929, contained 50 apartments with 153 rooms. Unlike its three-story predecessor, the building at 2504 10th Street was

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constructed with an elevator, owing to the additional height and more ornate detailing aimed to attract residents with a slightly higher income. Plats filed with the permit applications showed that the buildings had nearly identical footprints based on a U-shaped plan, with minor variations in the projections. The building permit included the approximate dimensions of 120 feet by 43 feet for 2520 10th Street and 116 feet by 84 feet for 2504 10th Street.

The Brookland Neighborhood

Dahlgreen Courts is located along the southern boundary of the Brookland neighborhood, which is separated from the Brentwood neighborhood to the south by Rhode Island Avenue. Brookland is named for Jehiel and Anne Brooks, who built their Greek Revival-style mansion known as Belair in what was in 1840 merely farmland. Not long after the building was completed the needs of the growing city brought new public facilities to the very borders of the Brooks' property. First, in the 1850s, the racially integrated Columbian Harmony cemetery was relocated to a large tract south of the farm. Then, in 1873, as John N. Pearce wrote in *Washington at Home*, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad established a branch along the western edge of the Brooks farm, with a stop just south of the mansion that enabled area farmers to load their vegetables for shipment to the city's markets. The stop, known as Brooks Station, also served the few residents living in the area. In 1885, Catholic University of America established their suburban campus to the northeast of station stop.³ Pearce continues, sharing how the area was soon to develop:

The arrival of the cemetery, train, and university set the stage for eventual subdivision of the Brooks farm. After Colonel Brooks's death in 1886, his heirs sold the property, and in 1887 the new owners recorded a plat of subdivision of 140 acres into narrow, deep lots—then the standard of suburban development. This was apparently the first recorded use of the name “Brookland.”⁴

In 1889, the destiny of the Brooks farm was sealed with the arrival of the Eckington & Soldiers Home Railway, a suburban streetcar line connecting Mount Vernon Square to Catholic University. The railway enabled middle-class households to relocate from the more urban areas of the city of Washington to the healthful elevations of Brookland and other new communities outside of Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue). As a result the original Brookland subdivision was augmented to align with 18th Street to the east. The population reached over 700 in 1891, with at least one house on most of the blocks by 1894. By then the community boasted a school, Baptist church, and “more than fifty oil lamps along the streets of the first subdivision.”⁵ The growing population required the Brookland School be enlarged in 1896 and again in 1903; the latter renovation including Georgian Revival-style embellishments. Also, by 1903, a firehouse and Catholic church has been constructed. Recognizing the development potential of Northeast Washington, the Berwyn and Laurel Electric Railway, began service in 1900 along Rhode Island Avenue, connecting the nation's capital to Laurel, Maryland.⁶ Located outside the original boundaries of the federal city in what had been Washington County, Brookland was not restricted by the 1877 building regulations that forbid the construction of wood buildings. This prompted the construction of fashionable, yet vernacular, examples of the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles. Wood-frame buildings were less expensive and more quickly constructed than the masonry buildings required within the federal city by the revised municipal building regulations, thus enabling neighborhoods like Brookland to become home to middle- and working-class homebuyers.

³ John N. Pearce, “Brookland: Something in the Air,” in *Washington at Home*, Kathryn Schneider Smith, Ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 380-381.

⁴ Pearce, 380-381.

⁵ Pearce, 382.

⁶ LeRoy O. King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction*, (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company, 1972), 55.

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The bucolic setting offered by Brookland, and its accessibility by streetcar, was not lost on George T. Santmyers, Jr., one of the city's most prolific and important architects of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1915, Santmyers teamed up with property owner Harry A. Kite, and together they designed and built all 19 of the buildings on Square 3871 and 16 of the buildings on Square 3872. The houses erected by Kite as speculative development stand one to two stories in height, each set on spacious lots that were on average 40 feet wide and 100 feet deep. Santmyers dressed the one-story bungalows in Craftsman style ornamentation, while the larger American Foursquares reflected the Colonial Revival style. The houses are not high-style expressions, but rather like much of Brookland vernacular. Both the forms and architectural expressions employed by Santmyers were overwhelmingly popular in the first and second decades of the twentieth century, thus illustrating his up-to-date knowledge of domestic building trends. Moreover, the modest sizes of these well-defined forms and the vernacular application of ornamentation show the architect's proficiency in providing fashionable, well-designed single-family dwellings to middle-income residents of Washington, D.C.

The ever-increasing population of the city forced developers and builders to find a more efficient, and thus more economical, alternative form of housing. The rowhouse proved to be the perfect solution, while still offering single-family houses with front and rear yards (albeit narrow) set within residential neighborhoods. The rhythmic pattern created by the rowhouse, often augmented by front and/or rear porches in the suburban areas, came to dominate the city. Offering a faster investment for developers, rowhouses used a conventional plan and easily accessible materials, often with little high-style embellishments. Washington's builders constructed thousands of rowhouses and, so long as the market conditions remained strong, city dwellers purchased them almost as quickly as they could be erected.⁷ While rowhouse construction had dominated the residential areas of the federal city in the post-Civil War years of the late nineteenth century, its march to the outlying neighborhoods did not occur until after the turn of the twentieth century. In the neighborhood of Brookland, the rowhouse did not permeate the landscape until the 1920s; yet it came to be the single most dominating domestic form in the community during the following decades.

George T. Santmyers once again proved his proficiency and his skill at adapting to the changing aesthetic philosophies of the domestic form. Teaming up with property owner Edward M. Willis, Jr., who also acted as builder, Santmyers designed rowhouses within the residential enclave he and Harry A. Kite had begun improving in 1915 with freestanding dwellings. The construction of rowhouses in a single-family neighborhood did not alter the suburban-like atmosphere because Santmyers successfully married the two domestic forms by using many of the same materials and incorporating some of the same architectural influences; yet, the prolific architect was able to provide housing that was fashionable and up-to-date. The rowhouse construction undertaken by Santmyers and Willis commenced in 1925 with 14 attached single-family dwellings at 2606-2632 10th Street, adjacent to the future site of Dahlgreen Courts. Respective of the Colonial Revival- and Craftsman-style elements on the neighboring freestanding dwellings he designed ten years prior, Santmyers dressed the rowhouses in brick (which was then painted as an expression of individuality) and topped them with false mansard roofs augmented by a flared slope that sheltered the cornice. Exposed rafters ornamented the flared slope of the roof, which was marked at the center by a shed-roof dormer with multi-light casement windows. The buildings, all of which are extant, extended two bays wide, with a full-width front porch supported by Craftsman-style brick and Tuscan posts. They had single and paired window openings, a fenestration pattern reminiscent of the bungalow and American Foursquare forms. Two years later, in 1927,

⁷ Melissa McCloud, "Craftsmen and Entrepreneurs," in *Housing Washington*, Richard Longstreth, Ed. (Chicago, IL: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2010), 24.

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Santmyers's same design, with some minor alterations, was erected by Willis nearby in Square 3841 at 910-920 Ewart Street.

By 1920, the population of the District of Columbia had reached 437,571, which was nearly double what it had been in 1900 when the Berwyn and Laurel Electric Railway streetcar first ran to the south of Brookland along Rhode Island Avenue. Residential construction, now pushed well beyond the boundaries of the federal city, was once again being examined as developers sought new ways to benefit from the burgeoning housing demands. The purpose-built apartment building, a multi-family structure that first appeared in the city of Washington in 1880, clustered several families under one roof within independent units. The form had been unquestionably popular with developers, builders, city planners, and property owners; however, the stigma of apartment living often made it unpopular with urban residents in the late nineteenth century. The apartment building in Washington was thus intentionally presented in a more favorable light, creating a luxury hotel of sorts that provided the upper-income tenants with a great many amenities. As demonstrated in detail in the *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C.* Multiple Property Document, the federal city was populated with a number of imposing luxury apartments in the late nineteenth century reserved for the wealthiest of residents. Yet, the intense housing shortages resulting from increasing federal activities and the organization of new governmental agencies at the turn of the twentieth century required adaptation of this domestic form for middle-class residents. As they had with the rowhouse, developers sought to satisfy the needs of their growing audience. The result was a more modest apartment building that offered units at moderate rents, while still providing some of the desirable amenities. By the 1910s, as Brookland was developing into a suburban village, the apartment building had been transformed into a residential form accessible to middle- and working-class residents. This more modest example dominated the edges of the federal city, lined major transit corridors like Rhode Island Avenue, and was moving into the suburban villages as public and private modes of transportation opened up Washington, D.C. In response to the impending expansion in Brookland, the city paved Rhode Island Avenue eastward to Monroe Street in 1927 and 12th Street to Otis Street in 1931.⁸

From 1918 until 1929, 731 apartment buildings were constructed in the District of Columbia, twice the number built during the previous decade. In fact, apartment living became so popular that more apartment buildings were constructed during the 1920s than freestanding dwellings and rowhouses, and Washington, D.C. was ranked equal to New York and Chicago as cities with the highest percentage of apartment-house residents.⁹ The year 1926 was a benchmark year for Washington, D.C. because for the first time in the city's history, construction of multi-family dwellings surpassed single-family dwellings.¹⁰

The construction of apartment buildings in Washington, D.C. has been thoroughly recorded by the building permits, which document that 49 permits were issued for apartment buildings in Brookland between 1924 and 1951. This resulted in the construction of 123 buildings—only three of which are no longer extant. The first of these was the building at 2701 12th Street, N.E., which was designed by Isaac Tepper for his own construction company. Completed in 1924, the three-story building was part of an attached row developed by Berry L. and Isaac Tepper, and thus did read not as a purpose-built apartment. Within one year of the construction of this building, Brookland Courts at 1210-1218 Perry Street, N.E. was completed. The two-building complex, constructed in 1925, was designed by Louis T. Rouleau for owner/builder Charles Facchina in a very modest expression of the short-lived Mediterranean style. The buildings were sited at the center of their lots, thus providing tenants with the open space more commonly equated with freestanding single-family dwellings. In

⁸ Pearce, 385.

⁹ *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, E.17-E.25.

¹⁰ Don S. Warren, "Trend to Apartment Homes in District Growing Rapidly," *Evening Star*, 4 June 1927, 16.

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contrast, the Tepper apartment building presented a more urban setting, fronting directly onto the sidewalk with commercial space on the first floor. Construction of purpose-built apartment buildings in Brookland had begun; yet like most neighborhoods it was primarily relegated to the periphery along major transportation and public transit routes.

Once again, Santmyers was keenly aware of the change in residential housing and became overwhelmingly adapt at designing apartment buildings. Although he had designed a few small apartment buildings by the 1920s, his most notable achievement thus far for middle-class residents was Meridian Manor at 1424 Chapin Street, N.W. Constructed in 1926, this conventional mid-rise apartment building reflected the architectural vocabulary of the period and the 14th Street neighborhood, while capitalizing on its close proximity to a streetcar line. This Colonial Revival-style apartment building, recognized locally for its architectural significance as the work of George T. Santmyers, set the stage for his work at Dahlgreen Courts just one year later.

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The atmosphere for the construction of new building forms was perfect when George Santmyers and Edward Willis teamed up once again in 1927 to produce Dahlgreen Courts. The two large lots, not yet subdivided for freestanding buildings or rowhouses, was an ideal location for the two complementary apartment buildings. The cost of construction for the modestly dressed 2520 10th Street, which stands three stories, was estimated to be \$120,000; the cost for the more ornate five-story 2504 10th Street was to be \$165,000.¹¹ The average construction cost for apartment buildings in Brookland from 1927 to the early 1950s ranged from \$5,500 to \$165,000, with the mid-30,000s being the average; thus, the estimated construction costs proposed on building permits document that Dahlgreen Courts was to be the most expensive apartment complex in the neighborhood of Brookland at the time. Moreover, it was one of the highest, with one building standing five stories. The typical apartment building constructed in Brookland between 1924 and 1951 rose only two stories in height.

An advertisement placed in the *Washington Post* on July 17, 1932 by Edward Willis touted the units in 2504 10th Street, which featured “2 rooms, kitchen, dining alcove and bath.” Rent was \$49.50 a month, or approximately \$775 in 2010 dollars. Next door, the one-room units in 2520 10th Street included a Murphy bed and rented for \$38.50 a month; a two-bedroom unit in 2520 10th Street was leased for \$46 a month. All the apartments in Dahlgreen Courts included “Frigidaire on house current.”¹²

The successful transformation from single-family housing, which Santmyers and Willis had effectively been producing since 1915, to multi-family housing within the same neighborhood was largely due to the intentional siting of the buildings, and the use of familiar materials and architectural embellishments. Firstly, the two apartment buildings of Dahlgreen Courts were set back from the sidewalk, allowing for green space at the front of the property much like the neighboring single-family dwellings and rowhouses. Additionally, because of their U-shaped plan that created an interior courtyard, Dahlgreen Courts resembled garden apartments. Garden apartments, like small houses, were viewed as an alternative to crowded city tenements that were set on narrow lots with limited light, air, and privacy. The garden apartment, however, provided an economical way to produce rental housing in suburban areas like Brookland with many of the same features as the small houses. The multi-family garden apartments provided efficient floor plans with a minimum of wasted space; more

¹¹ D. C. Application for Permit to Build, Permit No. 7778, 15 February 1997; D.C. Application for Permit to Build, Permit No. 119419, 19 November, 1928.

¹² “Edward M. Willis, Apts.,” *The Washington Post*, 17 July 1932, R8.

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natural light and ventilation; installation of modern appliances; use of durable, easy-to-maintain materials; and low lot coverage to provide an attractive, open setting; all features describing Dahlgreen Courts.

Secondly, Santmyers carefully incorporated many of the same materials and details into Dahlgreen Courts as he had with the neighboring rowhouses. Although the rowhouses, and the nearby freestanding dwellings, illustrate the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles, Santmyers was able to marry the revival-style apartment buildings to the existing neighborhood by using exterior brick cladding, corbeled brickwork, rowlock sills, modest surrounds, and single and paired window fenestration. The height of the apartment buildings, although standing three and five stories, does not overwhelm the one- and two-story freestanding houses, most likely because of their setbacks, or the two-story rowhouses, which are set on slightly raised basements. Additionally, the building at 2520 10th Street has balustraded sleeping porches recessed within the projecting bays of the façade. This feature is reminiscent of the inset porch indicative of neighboring bungalows and the full-width porches of the American Foursquares and rowhouses. Notably, within this residential enclave along 10th Street at Rhode Island Avenue and Evarts Street, the evolution of George T. Santmyers's architectural tastes and talents can be examined as he experimented with freestanding single-family dwellings and attached rowhouses dressed in Craftsman- and Colonial Revival-style elements and ultimately transcended to design apartment buildings, which in the case of Dahlgreen Courts are presented in the Classical Revival style.

The immediate proximity to the highly traveled Rhode Island Avenue, which was used by streetcars, personal automobiles and buses, would have provided residents of Dahlgreen Courts easy access to federal departments and downtown jobs, as well as markets and shopping centers. Its location on the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and 10th Street must have influenced the design. The apartment building closest to the Rhode Island Avenue at 2504 10th Street is two stories higher and features more ornamentation than its neighbor at 2520 10th Street. These features serve to advertise Dahlgreen Courts to passersby on Rhode Island Avenue, which is slightly angled as it enters the federal city boundaries. The lower 2520 10th Street is more modest in its appearance. Its scale and design serve as a transition to the adjacent two-story rowhouses and nearby single-family dwellings in the immediate Brookland neighborhood. Interestingly, the more modest, three-story building was constructed first, thus allowing residents to become accustomed to multi-family housing and the Classical Revival style that Santmyers was now employing. The building is set about midway in Square 3843, separated from the Santmyers/Willis rowhouses merely by a narrow paved drive that leads to the alley from Evarts Street. Santmyers and Willis were also responsible for three apartment buildings in the 900 block of Evarts Street (even side) in 1930 and 1931. The buildings' distance from Rhode Island Avenue on an interior street of Brookland seems to have greatly influenced the form and architectural expression as the modest apartments are largely unadorned, reading more as single-family rowhouses than multi-family apartment buildings.

While a flourishing member of the immediate neighborhood, Dahlgreen Courts also was successful as representative examples of conventional apartment buildings. According to the Multiple Property Document, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, Dahlgreen Courts can be classified as two of the eleven identified apartment building subtypes. These two subtypes illustrate the introduction and acceptance of apartment living in Washington, D.C. in the first half of the twentieth century. The first building at 2520 10th Street is a Conventional Low-Rise Apartment. This subtype is defined as having at least five self-sufficient dwelling units, being at least two and no more than four stories high, having a single main public entrance door, and not containing an elevator. The building at 2520 10th Street has 39 (originally it had 30) self-sufficient dwelling units, rises three stories in height, has a single main public entrance within the courtyard, and does not have an elevator but rather two sets of enclosed stairs. The second building of Dahlgreen Courts at 2504 10th

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Street is classified as a Conventional Mid-Rise Apartment. This subtype shares many of the same characteristics as the Conventional Low-Rise Apartment, except it has at least 15 self-sufficient dwelling units, is at least five and no more than eight stories high, and may contain an elevator.¹³ Meeting those characteristic, the second building at 2504 10th Street has 59 (originally it had 50) self-sufficient dwelling units, stands five stories in height, has a single main public entrance within the courtyard fronting 10th Street, and includes one elevator and two sets of enclosed stairs.

Another notable difference between the two Dahlgreen Court subtypes is the influence of the automobile. The rapid growth in automobile use in the 1920s had opened up suburban areas well beyond Brookland for development regardless of their proximity to public transportation. By 1930, the majority of American households owned an automobile—there were 30,000,000 households and 23,000,000 registered automobiles.¹⁴ Thus, Santmyers adapted his design of the second building at 2504 10th Street to include five vehicular openings for automobiles on the north wall of the interior courtyard at the rear. This amenity would have been greatly appreciated by prospective tenants who chose to live outside the federal city in Brookland.

Dahlgreen Courts was designed and constructed for the middle- and working-class markets. City directories and the 1930 U.S. Census provides a profile of the original occupants of Dahlgreen Courts; the diversity of households included newlyweds in their twenties, families with young children, middle-aged husbands and wives, parents living with their grown children, and elderly couples. The occupants were exclusively white, which reflected the composition of the surrounding neighborhood of Brookland in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The heads of household tended to be employed in middle-class occupations such as merchants, salespeople, bookkeepers, teachers, typists, foremen, and nurses. Many of the wager earners worked as clerks and secretaries for federal departments, thus requiring their homes to be conveniently located near Rhode Island Avenue.¹⁵

Constructed during a boom period in apartment building construction in the city that signified the widespread acceptance of the housing type, Dahlgreen Courts marks the turning point of multi-family housing in Brookland. By 1929, when the second building at 2504 10th Street was opened for leasing, Brookland was home to 18 multi-family apartment buildings. Over the next ten years, as the burgeoning population demanded, another 100 buildings were constructed. The majority of the apartments erected in the 1930s were garden-apartment complexes composed of four or more buildings. With one exception, the buildings all stood two stories in height. Expectedly during World War II and the lean post-war years, only three apartment buildings, each three stories in height, were constructed in Brookland. This also marked the conclusion of new growth in Brookland, which by this time had been fully established and developed, forcing new construction to look elsewhere. Despite development pressures in the second half of the twentieth century, Brookland retains all but three of the apartment buildings constructed between 1924 and 1951.

Owner/Builder: Edward M. Willis, Jr.

Historical research has revealed sparse information about Edward Mott Willis, Jr., the builder and original owner of Dahlgreen Courts. A native of the District of Columbia, Willis was the son and namesake of a local businessman. His father, Edward M. Willis, Sr., was the general manager of the Home Ice Company. The junior

¹³ *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, F.6-F.11.

¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Bicentennial Edition, Parts 1, 2* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), Series A335-349, 42 and Series Q 148-162, 716.

¹⁵ Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002), District of Columbia, Enumeration District 357, Sheets 45A, 45B, and 46A.

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Willis was born September 27, 1880 and entered the real estate business while in his twenties, buying and selling lots on speculation.¹⁶ In 1920, Willis' occupation was recorded in the U.S. Census as a builder.¹⁷ It was not until 1925, however, that Willis first appears on building permits as an owner/builder. His first known development was the block of two-story brick rowhouses located between 2606 and 2632 10th Street, N.E.—the houses that border Dahlgreen Courts to the north. These rowhouses were designed by George T. Santmyers. In fact, Willis worked almost exclusively with Santmyers. Between 1925 and 1937, they collaborated on at least 27 projects. Santmyers and Willis primarily designed and built rowhouses, but they also constructed at least three apartment buildings. After 1935, Willis also retained the architectural firm of Dillon & Abel on a handful of projects. The last development undertaken by Willis and recorded in the D.C. Building Permits occurred in 1937. He is known to have maintained his offices in the Investment Building at 1501 K Street, N.W. and moved his home to Bethesda, Maryland, by 1942, when he registered for the World War II draft. Yet, by this time, he was 61 years old and thus disqualified for enlistment. Willis died at the age of 65 in 1945 at his home, Beacon Hill Farm, in Leesburg, Virginia.

Architect: George T. Santmyers, Jr.

George T. Santmyers, Jr. (1889-1960) practiced architecture in Washington, D.C., for fifty years. While Santmyers is credited with the design of commercial buildings, banks, churches, public garages, and thousands of private residences, he is most celebrated for his contribution to apartment building architecture in the nation's capital. As the architect for over 440 apartment buildings in the course of his long career, Santmyers devoted his skills and energy to producing notably designed buildings with efficient plans.

Santmyers was born in Front Royal, Virginia, and spent his early years in Baltimore, Maryland. He moved to Washington as a teenager, completed high school, and began several years of training through apprenticeship in the offices of local architects. Santmyers's name first appears on a building permit in 1909, and by 1914, at age twenty-five, he had opened his own architectural office. The work produced by his office was by far more proficient than those of any other Washington, D.C. architect. The D.C. permit show Santmyers designed 15,689 buildings by 1949, while only a handful of other architects designed more than 1,000 buildings and no other listed in the permit database designed more than 1,600.¹⁸ Still designing and operating his office in 1960, Santmyers completed his last apartment building design just six months before his death at the age of 72.

In the first decade of his practice, almost all of Santmyers's commissions were for single-family dwellings, predominantly rowhouses although freestanding buildings were noted. He also designed a few small apartment buildings and rows of one-story stores. Beginning in the mid-1920s, while continuing to design many hundreds of rowhouses, he began receiving commissions for larger and more elaborate apartment buildings. Santmyers designed apartment buildings in a variety of styles, using more traditional, classically inspired architecture in his early buildings; entering a transitional phase based on classical precedents with elements of twentieth-century modern architecture; and culminating in work designed in full-blown expressions of the Art Deco, Art Moderne and International styles in the 1940s and 1950s.

Santmyers's early apartment buildings from the 1920s were typically Colonial Revival in style, symmetrical in composition, and employed a formal vocabulary based on architectural elements associated with the American

¹⁶ See, for example, "Real Estate Transfers," *The Washington Post*, 15 March 1911, 11.

¹⁷ Ancestry.com, *1920 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009, Washington, D.C., Enumeration District 323, Sheet 3.

¹⁸ D.C. Building Permit Database, State Historic Preservation Office, Washington, D.C.

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Georgian and Federal periods. A majority of these buildings featured a centrally located entry adorned with a prominent portico, symmetrical fenestration patterns with molded lintels, and classical embellishments such as enclosed tympanums and ornate entablatures. His design of apartment buildings was in keeping with the traditions of the time and reflected the architectural expressions accepted nationwide. Two notable examples from this period of Santmyers work are the Colonial Revival-style Meridian Manor at 1424 Chapin St., N.W., (1926), and the Tudor Revival-style building at 3901 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., (1927). In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Santmyers began to tentatively employ a more modern aesthetic, with a slight simplification of the composition and ornamentation of his designs. Often he presented traditional revival elements such as pilasters, stringcourses, and symmetrical fenestration with modern materials and embellishments such as glass bricks and stylized interlacing with reeding or fluting. These elements are closely tied to the Classical Revival style, which Santmyers favored for rowhouse and modest apartment design during this period. The two buildings comprising Dahlgreen Courts are excellent examples of Santmyers's proficiency with the vocabulary of high-style expression and his ability to apply that architectural knowledge in various ways.

The apartment designs of Santmyers in the late 1930s reflect the influence of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The New Deal agency, created in 1934, espoused many of the principles of planning and design that had been developed and advocated by forward-thinking urban planners, architects, developers, social reformers, and others in the post-World War I era who wanted to apply principles of well-planned communities and modern, quality living spaces and conveniences to housing for moderate income families. The principle mechanism through which FHA operated was to provide mortgage insurance that made the financing and construction of low and moderate income housing a more secure investment. While the FHA avoided mandates on architectural style, its guidelines sought to encourage quality of design and materials while achieving economy through simplification of architectural detail, reliance on form, massing and materials to create aesthetically pleasing effects, efficient use of living space, and use of innovative materials. It favored the construction of low rise and garden apartment buildings set on ample grounds that provided light and ventilation in contrast to the urban tenements of the nineteenth century.

Santmyers was responsible for designing some FHA-insured apartment buildings for moderate-income families and many of his buildings of the late 1930s, whether or not they were FHA-insured, reflect the planning principles espoused by the agency. The buildings completed during his stylistically transitional period of the late 1930s reveal his experimentation with the amalgamation of traditional and modern aesthetics and materials that would prove both economical and aesthetically pleasing to residents. His designs more strongly reflect his predilection for the modern aesthetic, thus representing a stylistic tension between historic precedents and modern styles that was occurring both in his work and in the fields of architecture and design generally. The Fort View Apartments at 6000-6020 and 6030-6050 13th Place, N.W., constructed in 1938-1939, are a significant example of his transitional period, illustrating Santmyers's exploration of the continuum of traditional and modern architectural expressions. At the same time, he also designed one of his best-known mid-rise buildings, The Normandie at 6817 Georgia Avenue, N.W. In the years leading up to World War II, Santmyers moved further toward the modern aesthetics, exploring asymmetrical compositions and modern materials.

In the 1940s Santmyers fully embraced the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and International styles, abandoning all elements of the period revival styles. The buildings from this later period comprise his most celebrated works; several of his most noted works date from 1941. The Art Deco style Delano at 2745 29th Street, N.W. was included in James Goode's book, *Best Addresses*, and was described as having one of Washington's finest remaining Art Deco lobbies. Three other important pre-World War II apartment buildings or complexes

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designed by Santmyers are Macomb Gardens in Woodley Park, Park Crest in Glover Park, and The Yorkshire on Sixteenth Street, N.W.

During World War II, the federal government imposed controls on building materials, allocating them for the construction of modestly priced housing in areas, including metropolitan Washington, D.C., where the influx of war workers had created severe shortages of affordable housing for rent or purchase. The D.C. permits show that Santmyers designed numerous apartment buildings, flats, and rowhouses in this period when the output of many other architects dwindled to a trickle. These modest buildings were built principally in the northeast and southeast quadrants of the city; some were constructed in the southwest quadrant. After World War II, Santmyers continued to design rowhouses and apartments to meet the postwar demand for reasonably priced housing. He also worked in partnership with James Thoman and, as described by Goode, “designed a number of prominent modernistic apartment houses” in the 1950s including Wiltshire Parkway and Wiltshire Crescent on Connecticut Avenue and Tunlaw Park in Glover Park.

Today, Santmyers is most celebrated for his Art Deco, International style and Art Moderne apartment buildings from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, but his legacy of housing stock designed over half a century, ranging from modest rowhouses to grand apartment buildings, and from Colonial Revival style to the Modern Movement, is larger than that of any other Washington, D.C., architect. George T. Santmyers died in Wheaton, Maryland, in 1960.

Assessment of Integrity

In order to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, a property must retain sufficient integrity, or the ability to convey its significance. The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. The Multiple Property Document, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, provides additional guidance to assess the integrity of apartment buildings in the District of Columbia. The Multiple Property Document states that in order to possess integrity, a conventional apartment building like those of Dahlgreen Courts must “retain the architectural composition, ornamental details, and materials of their original primary exterior elevation.” The Multiple Property Document recognizes that many building have undergone changes, however, “reversible alterations, such as the removal of ornamental detailing, replacement of doors, windows, and their enframements, and scarring of first floor architectural elements (while certainly not appropriate) are common and do not necessarily diminish the building's contribution to the historic context.”¹⁹

Dahlgreen Courts sufficiently maintains all seven aspects of integrity. The apartment buildings retain their original location near the intersection of 10th Street and Rhode Island Avenue on the southern edge of the Brookland neighborhood. Moreover, this location as originally envisioned by Edward Willis and exploited stylistically by George T. Santmyers has not changed. Rhode Island Avenue remains a highly traveled transportation corridor leading to and from the original boundaries of the federal city; 10th Street, along with intersecting Douglas Street and Evarts Avenue have remained residential. No infill seems to have occurred and few of the buildings in the immediate neighborhood have been razed. Dahlgreen Courts reflects integrity of design, workmanship, and materials as envisioned by Santmyers and implemented by Willis in the late 1920s. Although elements including doors and windows have been replaced, these alterations are common, reversible and do not diminish the buildings’ integrity. Similarly, some of the open sleeping porches have been enclosed, but the porches remain intact. The openings have been enclosed with paired double-hung windows and/or

¹⁹ *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945*, F.5.

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screens that are set on the interior of the openings and thus do not alter the exterior appearance of the porches and do not compromise the integrity of the buildings. Views from the interior outward and from the exterior inward are retained by the use of 1/1 sash and screens. The fenestration patterns, surrounds, lintels, sills, stairs, and balustrades associated with these openings are fully intact as originally constructed.

The buildings still function as multi-family apartment buildings for Brookland residents, and therefore retain their integrity of feeling and association.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.63
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>0327218</u> Easting	<u>4309895</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

Dahlgreen Courts is composed of two apartment buildings—2520 10th Street, N.E. and 2504 10th Street, N.E. The boundary includes all of Lots 816 and 820 in Square 3844. The lots front directly on the west side of 10th Street, just north of its intersection with Rhode Island Avenue. Concrete-paved alleys run along the north (side) and west (rear) sides of Dahlgreen Courts. The alley is accessible from Evarts Street, N.E. to the north and from a short drive leading from 10th Street. The adjacent commercial buildings on Rhode Island Avenue and the rowhouses to the immediate north of the short drive frame the property, but do not have any historic connection to Dahlgreen Courts.

Dahlgreen Courts
Name of Property

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Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Dahlgreen Courts has been historically known as 2520 10th Street, N.E. (located on Square 3844, Lot 816) and 2504 10th Street, N.E. (located on Square 3844, Lot 820) since their construction in 1927-1929.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Trieschmann/Architectural Historian and Paul Singh/Preservation Planner
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 7, 2010
street & number 1121 Fifth Street, N.W. telephone 202/393-1199
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001
e-mail ltrieschmann@traceries.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 and 2520 10th Street, N.E., looking southwest
1 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., looking north from Rhode Island Avenue
2 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., looking northwest
3 of 15.

Dahlgreen Courts
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., looking south from alley
4 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., Interior Courtyard and Entry, looking west
5 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., Entry Vestibule, looking east
6 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., Entry Vestibule, looking west
7 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2520 10th Street, N.E., sample apartment unit
8 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., looking west
9 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Tracerics
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., looking southwest
10 of 15.

Dahlgreen Courts
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., Interior Courtyard and Entry, looking west
11 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., Side Elevation, looking southeast
12 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., Entry Vestibule, looking east
13 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., Entry Vestibule, looking southwest
14 of 15.

Name of Property: Dahlgreen Courts
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: July 2010
Description of Photograph(s) and number: 2504 10th Street, N.E., sample apartment unit looking northeast
15 of 15.

Property Owner:

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

name Dahlgreen Courts LLC
street & number 1330 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. Suite 116 telephone 202-223-3405
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20036

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dahlgreen Courts

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Apartment Buildings in Washington, DC MPD

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 1

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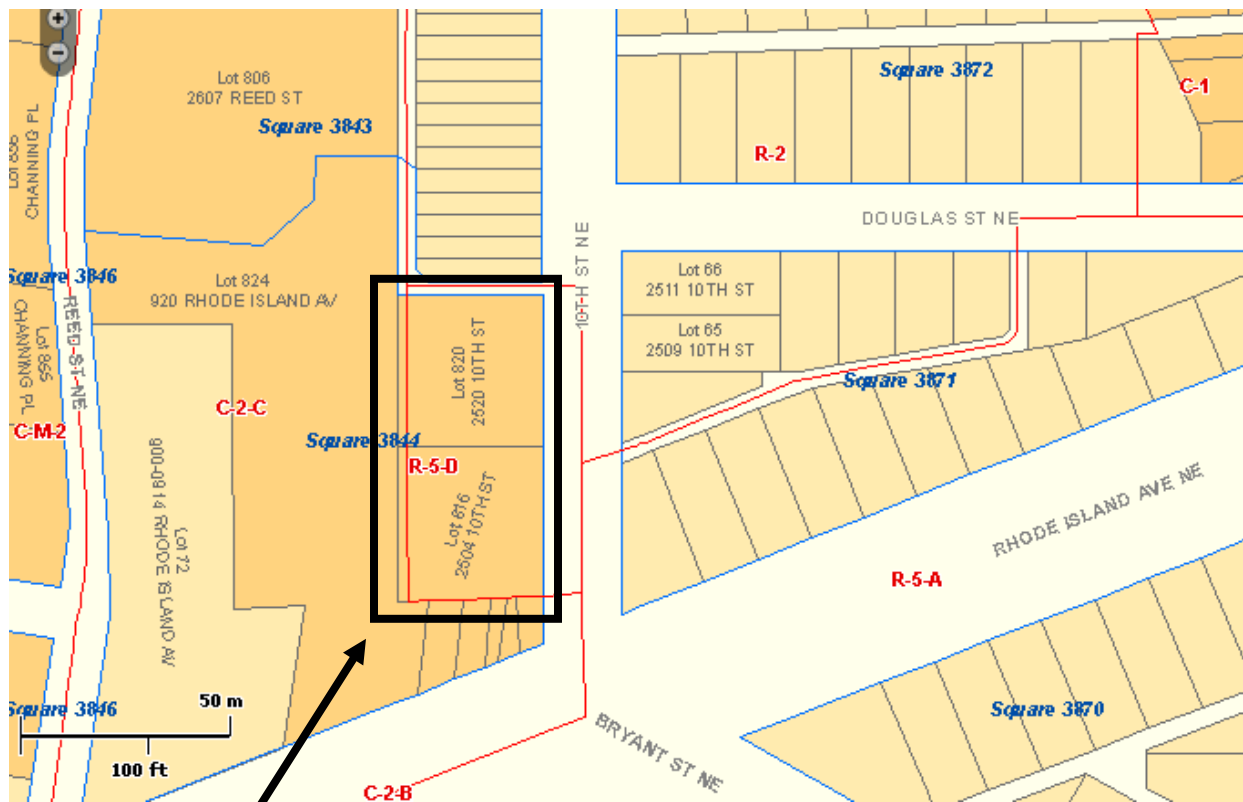
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dahlgreen Courts
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
County and State Apartment Buildings in Washington, DC MPD
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 2



Dahlgreen Courts, 2504-2520 10th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C.
Lots 816 and 820, Square 3844

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dahlgreen Courts

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

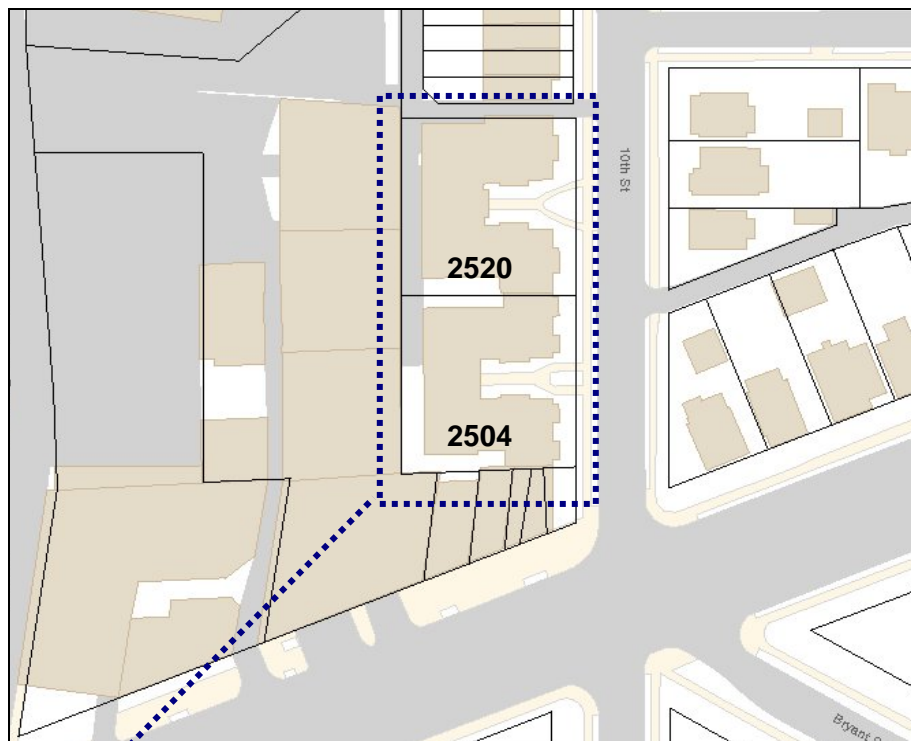
County and State

Apartment Buildings in Washington, DC MPD

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps

Page 3



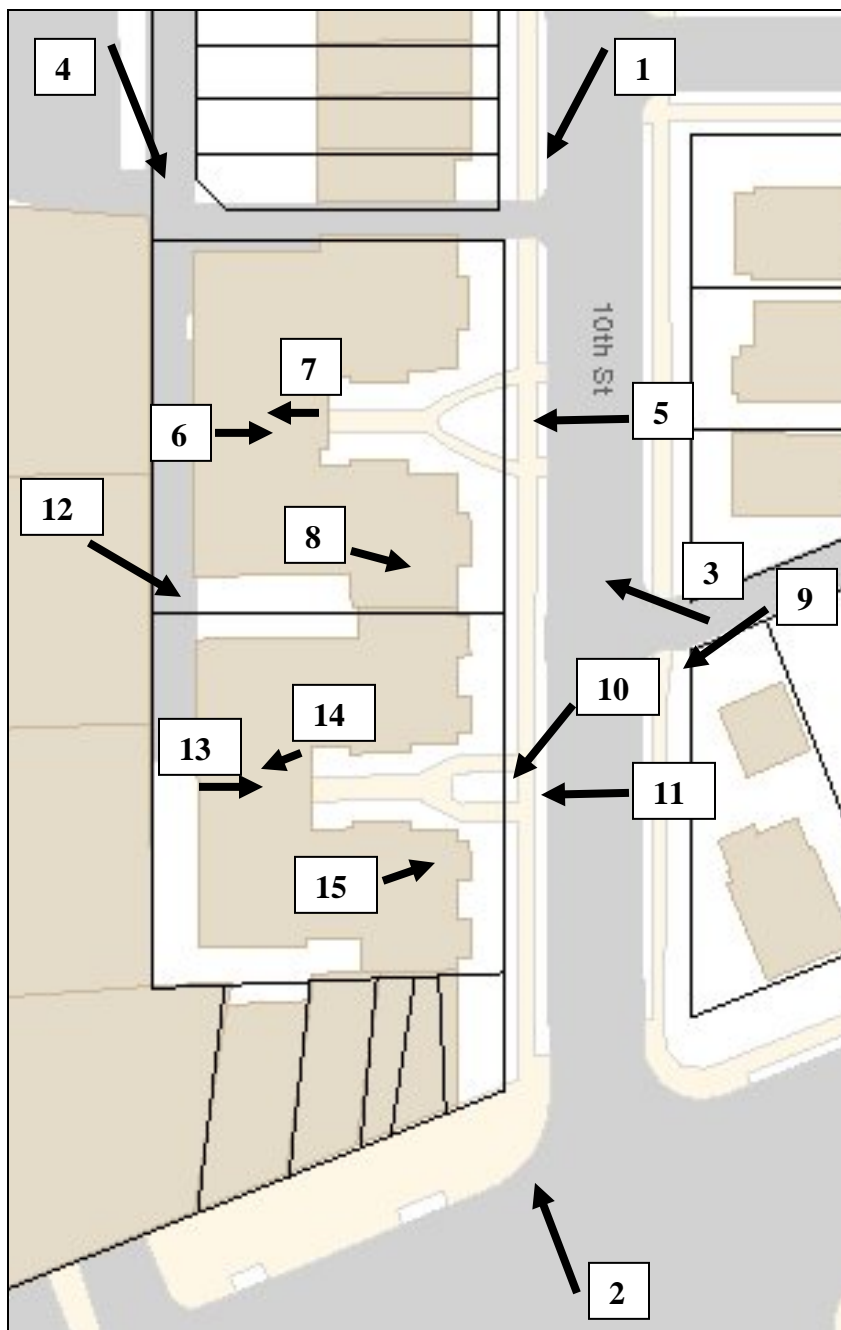
••• Dahlgreen Courts, 2504-2520 10th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C.
Lots 816 and 820, Square 3844

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Dahlgreen Courts
Name of Property
Washington, D.C.
County and State
Apartment Buildings in Washington, DC MPD
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 4



Photographic Key
Dahlgreen Courts, 2504-2520 10th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C.
Lots 816 and 820, Square 3844

Key: Shows Direction of View and Photograph Number **10** →