NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No 10024-0018

United States Department of the Inter
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Samester Parkway Apartments

other names/site number Maryland Historical Trust Inventory of Historic Sites No. B-3992

2. Location

street & number 7000-7022 Park Heights Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Baltimore ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21215

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 8-7-98

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.		
☐ determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.		
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.		
☐ removed from the National Register.		
☐ other, (explain:)		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
15	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
15	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls brick
cast stone
roof N/A
other glass block

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1939-1948

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hal A. Miller, architect

S.L. Hammerman, developer

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository:

Samester Parkway Apartments
Name of Property

Baltimore City, Maryland
County and State

B-3992

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 3.47 acres

UTM References Baltimore West, MD quad
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	353000	4358600
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty Bird

organization Betty Bird & Associates date April 1998

street & number 2607 24th Street, NW, Suite 3 telephone 202-588-9033 202-588-9059 (fax)

city or town Washington, District of Columbia state N/A zip code 20008

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name 1311 AR1, Limited Partnership

street & number 519 North Charles Street telephone 1-410-332-1352

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21201

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 obtai a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

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

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL 3

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Samester Parkway Apartments, constructed on Park Heights Avenue in 1939, are three-story, red brick, Art Deco style garden apartments. The 72 unit complex consists of two symmetrical detached wings, massed as stacked chevrons of six apartment buildings each, that face each other across a central courtyard. The wings form a broken X that extends across the property. Architectural detail is confined to bands of black brick, elaborate frontispieces housing the entrances to individual apartment buildings, and projecting pavilions on the east end of the buildings facing Park Heights Avenue. The structural system is reinforced concrete. The typical apartment block houses six one and two bedroom apartments disposed about a central stair. Garages extend across the rear of the property on the west. The Samester Parkway Apartments are in good condition with minor alterations typical of residential rental property.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Samester Parkway Apartments are an Art Deco style garden apartment complex comprised of 12 three story red brick apartment buildings. The complex rests on a raised basement and is topped by a flat roof. The rectangular apartment buildings are massed in two symmetrical chevron-shaped wings. These wings face each other across a central courtyard that extends perpendicular to Park Heights Avenue, a major thoroughfare that forms the eastern boundary of the complex.[1] Each wing consists of six apartment buildings arranged in a stacked chevron. These buildings were historically designated with the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, and M. (See attached Floor Plan.) Four buildings step back from the paired buildings centering each wing. The two wings form an interrupted X that extends across the property.

The apartment complex is oriented to a central landscaped courtyard. Facades facing inward onto the central court and east onto Park Heights Avenue are detailed as primary facades; the walls facing the property line on the north and south are detailed as secondary facades. Each of the buildings has a prominent, central, full height entry frontispiece facing onto the central court. Fenestration is carefully composed to contribute to the overall geometry of the facade. Windows consist of two-over-two metal sash and three light metal casements. On the primary facades, black brick bands extend out from the windows at the corners of the buildings to create the effect of ribbon windows. The same treatment appears in a less pronounced manner on the secondary facades. Basement openings have metal hopper and casement windows.

The projecting entry frontispieces extend the full height of the apartment buildings. The verticality of the frontispieces contrast with the horizontal character of the complex, emphasizing the entry to the individual buildings. Two types of frontispieces are employed. Type A, which extends above the roofline of the building, projects from the building in a series of reveals and flat planes formed by coursed cast stone.[2] The frontispiece forms a frame for the recessed single windows lighting the stair. Spandrel panels of black brick below each

[1]Samester actually faces northeast onto Park Heights Avenue. For simplicity of description, the elevations facing Park Heights Avenue have been denoted "east," those facing Glengyle Avenue designated "north," the rear of the property designated "west," and the southeast elevations, "south."

[2]It is difficult to determine from visual inspection whether cast stone or limestone was used on the facade. The formwork evident in the structural system visible in the basement of the building and the reinforced concrete structural system suggests that the material is cast stone.

window provide a contrasting central element within the frontispiece. The paired buildings that face each other across the central court (Buildings C, D, J, and K) feature the Type A element. The predominant Type B frontispiece angles out from the building in brick corbels terminating at the heads of the 3rd floor windows. Black brick frames the recessed single windows at the center of the frontispiece. A panel composed of four courses of recessed brick is situated above the windows. The Type B frontispiece houses the entrance to Buildings A, B, E, F, G, H, L, and M.

Both types of frontispieces display identical entry features. Cast stone bullnose piers on black brick bases support projecting, metal clad canopies. The canopies feature rounded corners and are decorated with black horizontal strips. There are recessed light fixtures on the underside of the canopies. Glass block sidelights frame single doors, which are highlighted by the contrasting geometry of centered round windows and long, vertical metal door handles.

In contrast to the overall horizontal character of the Samester Parkway Apartments, the east ends of Buildings M and A facing Park Heights Avenue are strongly vertical. Accentuated by the steep grade, the end walls are emphasized by an architectural device similar to the Type A frontispieces. Two cast stone salients extend the height of the building and project above the facade in a stacked silhouette. A cast stone, semi-circular 1st floor terrace with recessed banding projects from the center of the frontispiece between the salients. "SAMESTER" is incised at the center of the terrace below the banding. Paired casement windows on each floor are framed by spandrel panels of black brick. Stylized geometric forms are incised on each of the salients above the 2nd floor.

The secondary facades (north and south sides, west end of Buildings F and G facing the alley) of the complex lack the distinction of the primary facades and make minimal use of black brick. Fenestration is symmetrical; bands of black brick unite windows on projecting and interior corners. Brick flues extend above the roof line of the north and south facades.

The interior of the Samester Parkway Apartments retains much of its original floor plan and finishes. While the exterior appearance of the apartment buildings varies, their interior appearance is virtually identical. As originally designed, each block had six one and two bedroom apartments disposed about a central stair. Basements housed storage. The metal stair rail and glass block enframed door provided architectural interest for the stair hall, which was the only public area within each apartment block. The apartment units feature parquet floors, entry foyers, small galley kitchens, generous living rooms, and small closets. Many apartments have dining rooms. Some units have half baths as well as full baths. All bathrooms are tiled. While the units have baseboards and simple architrave molding around doors and closets, the metal windows were installed without molding and the rooms have no cornices. The reinforced concrete structural system of the buildings is expressed in the basements.

The Samester Parkway Apartments are situated on a terraced lawn at the southwest corner of the intersection of Park Heights Avenue and Glengyle Avenue in a neighborhood of diverse building types. The site of the Samester Parkway Apartments is several feet above street grade. Broad stone trimmed steps, which appear to postdate the construction of the complex, provide access from Park Heights Avenue on the east. A deteriorated concrete retaining wall running along Park Heights Avenue is topped with incised banding. There is a utilitarian brick retaining wall along the north (Glengyle Avenue) and a chain link fence separating the complex from Northwestern High School on the south. A high brick wall extending across the west end of the property closes the western vista

and screens two ranks of garages. Two openings in the wall lead to the rear alley and the sixty simple, brick garages. The garages have wood paneled overhead doors and boxed cornices of lapped wood below a flat roof.

Concrete walkways line the perimeter of the center courtyard and lead to each building entrance. As with the articulation of the apartment buildings, the center court has received the greatest attention to landscape with the north and south side yards being treated as secondary spaces. The grounds have large expanses of grass, mature trees, and generous planting beds located along the perimeter of the buildings and in other focal points. Short metal mushroom lamps light the courtyard area.

The Samester Parkway Apartments, which are in good condition, have had minimal exterior alterations. The primary changes to the exterior of the property have been the ca. 1950s small jalousied porch addition to the owner's unit attached to the south wall of Building M, alterations to the front steps on Park Heights Avenue, and the overgrowth of the trees, shrubs, and foundation plantings, particularly the cedars around the entrances. Various recent fixtures such as ca. 1970s tall metal torchere lamps, ca. 1950s and ca. 1970s benches, and a split rail fence have been placed within the courtyard. The more extensive changes to the interior are consistent with the property's continuous use as rental apartments. While the complex essentially retains its original floor plan, a small proportion of the units have been changed by combining two original units into one, inserting units in the basement, and reconfiguring units by capturing space in an adjoining unit.[3] Individual units have been modernized by the installation of carpet, dropped ceilings, and modern kitchen and bathroom fixtures. Additional closets have been installed in some units. Built-in shelving and cabinets have been constructed in many living rooms and dining rooms. With the exception of the small jalousied porch on Building M, which has been attached to a secondary facade and is minimally visible from the street, all of these changes are typical of residential rental property in continuous use. Samester Parkway Apartments retains its integrity as an outstanding example of Art Deco style design.

[3]The 1940 and 1942 City Directories suggest that the two 3rd floor units in Building K were combined at an early date to form a single, large unit. The owner's unit in Building M also combines two units into a single unit that occupies the entire floor.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Samester Parkway Apartment complex, constructed in 1939, is an excellent example of an Art Deco style garden apartment complex. Designed by architect Hal A. Miller for prominent Baltimore developer Samuel L. Hammerman, the Samester Parkway Apartments illustrate the impact of European modernism on American architectural design. The Samester Parkway Apartment complex incorporates the facade geometry, stylized ornament, surface contrast, and emphasis on new materials found in Art Deco styling. It illustrates the important role Federal Housing Administration (FHA)'s federally insured mortgages played in the development of garden apartments in the mid-20th century and offers a distinct, local variation of the garden apartment typology. The locally significant complex meets National Register Criterion A as an early example of FHA-financed garden apartments in Baltimore and Criterion C as an excellent example of the American translation of European modern architectural style.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Architect Hal Miller (1903-1951) designed the Samester Parkway Apartment complex for the S.L. Hammerman Organization, Inc. The garden apartment complex, which was constructed in 1939, was financed with a $325,000 FHA-insured mortgage held by Lincoln National Life Insurance.[1] The complex was among the first projects in Baltimore constructed under the Federal Home Administration's FHA-207 program and helped establish developer Samuel Lawrence Hammerman's long association with FHA mortgage financing.[2] S. L. Hammerman (1891-1965), a pioneer in the use of federally insured mortgages at the close of the Depression, prospered in his partnership with the Federal Home Administration in the decades that followed. During its early years, the Samester was home to professional and managerial employees including architect Hal A. Miller. S.L. Hammerman and his wife resided in the owner's unit on the first floor of Building M at the end of their lives.

The Samester Parkway Apartments, named for Samuel L. Hammerman and his wife Esther Borstein Hammerman, illustrate the far-reaching impact of FHA mortgage insurance. The Samester was financed through the FHA-207 program, which was designed to provide federal mortgage insurance for multi-family housing. Established by the National Housing Act of 1934, the Federal Housing Administration was a New Deal program formulated to address serious problems brought about by the Depression. Up until that time, financial institutions typically provided only short term, unamortized home mortgages. These mortgages would be renegotiated and the debt rolled over every three to five years. By 1932 mortgage lending collapsed as banks could no longer refinance short-term home loans, leading to widespread foreclosures of family homes. Federal mortgage insurance was designed to create a more stable system that would address the problems of mortgage financing on both a short term and long term basis.

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[1]Table II in "Matching Rental Housing to the Market," p. 10.

[2]S.L. Hammerman's mortgage brokerage later represented the New York Life Insurance Company in Maryland. By 1939, New York Life had financed over 20% of FHA's large-scale housing projects, representing over a third of rental housing mortgages covered by FHA insurance. New York Life also held a quarter of the FHA-insured mortgages held by insurance companies. (Alfred Aiken, "The New York Life's Insured Lending," pp. 4 and 21. Projects in the region included Colonial Village in Arlington, Brentwood Village in D.C., Dream's Landing in Annapolis, and Northwood in Baltimore.)

Home owners could apply for long-term financing at reasonable interest rates that they could repay in monthly installments. In the short term, federal mortgage insurance would attract private capital to real estate financing, preventing foreclosures; in the long-term it would create a more stable structure for financing home ownership. Renewing a financial structure for residential real estate also helped jump start construction, creating desperately needed job growth. The program attracted banks and insurance companies because the program addressed their concerns about loan liquidity. The Federal Reserve system accepted these insured mortgages as collateral and the Home Loan banks and Reconstruction Finance Corporation created a secondary market for the mortgages. Moreover, foreclosure losses were discharged with bonded debentures rather than with property itself so that banks were not saddled with non-performing assets that they could not liquidate for cash.

Construction of rental apartments had traditionally been a highly speculative venture, resulting in only piecemeal development of multi-family housing in selected, well-established markets. Section 207 of Title II of the Housing Act provided federally insured mortgages "for the purpose of providing housing for persons of low income, which are regulated or restricted ... as to rents, charges, capital structure, rate of return or methods of operation."[3] The FHA could essentially regulate what was built, what rents were charged, and what rate of return the entity developing and managing the property could receive for their projects. Because their underwriting was a critical requirement for loans during the Depression, the FHA exercised a powerful influence over the form of multi-family housing in the 1930s.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, this program for "large-scale housing" represented less than 5% of FHA-insured mortgages.[4] Despite its small size in the universe of insured mortgages, FHA mortgage insurance for large-scale housing revolutionized apartment development, producing housing for over 28,000 families by 1940.[5] FHA mortgage insurance provided capital for multi-family rental projects and their underwriting standards ensured the success of the projects in which they participated. By insuring high-quality projects that were responsive to the rental market, FHA set new standards for amenities in rental housing. Their requirements for low land coverage and light and air served as a powerful incentive for the construction of garden apartments and the development of garden apartments as a speculative real estate typology. Most importantly, FHA changed the appeal of modest apartments as a vehicle for investment. Prior to FHA, rental property had a 30% foreclosure rate; after FHA's first five years only 5 of the 224 mortgages for large-scale housing it insured had been foreclosed. Moreover, FHA countered the existing tendency of lenders and developers to direct capital to the production of higher income rental units, steadily driving down the per room rental rate of projects as the program proceeded.[6]

Colonial Village, a 276 unit garden apartment complex in the northern Virginia suburbs completed in 1935, was the first multi-unit project constructed with an FHA-insured loan.[7] Developed by Gustave Ring and designed by Harvey Warwick, Colonial Village received widespread national publicity upon its completion. Ring, an experienced apartment developer, knew the pioneering work of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright at Sunnyside,

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[3]Arthur Ferguson, "The FHA as It Enters Its Third Year," pp. 20-21. Section 207 of the Act provided that insurance was available only to "Federal or State instrumentalities, private limited dividend corporations, or municipal corporate instrumentalities."

[4]Ferguson, p. 4.

[5]"The Revised Rental-housing Rules, p. 27.

[6]"FHA Experience with Rental Housing," p. 11 and p. 24.

[7]"FHA Experience with Rental Housing," p. 11.

Radburn, and Chatham Village. Ring and Warwick produced a Colonial Revival style apartment complex comprised of clusters of small apartment blocks set back from the street and grouped around landscaped courtyards. The project was an overwhelming success, spurring FHA, lenders, and developers to pursue garden apartments as an ideal typology for rental housing.[8] By 1940, FHA had insured large-scale housing in 34 states serving over 40% of cities with a population of 100,000 or more. Although FHA insured mortgages for construction of elevator buildings, rowhouses, and detached frame developments, two-story garden apartments came to dominate their portfolio.[9]

The success of Colonial Village and other early FHA garden apartments motivated lenders to fund similar projects. Alfred Aiken, the president of New York Life Insurance noted,

> Most of the projects [funded by New York Life] are garden-type apartments, a type only recently developed in the United States. They represent a salutary trend, both from a social and economic point of view. In the past it has been the general practice of owners and promoters to utilize apartment sites as intensively as local laws and restrictions permitted, with consequent crowding of structures and loss of tenant appeal. The garden-type apartment development has sometimes as little as 25 to 30 percent of the land utilized for buildings, the remainder being used for playgrounds and landscaping.
>
> Some of the garden-type apartments are so large as to constitute almost independent communities. As a consequence, through tactful management and the encouragement of community activities, tenants can be inspired with pride and interest both in their own quarters and the development as a whole. Thereby loss of tenants and depreciation can be reduced and, because of the satisfaction derived from an attractive residential environment, the maintenance of the development can be assured.[10]

Aiken stressed that the relatively low rents of these projects attracted a broad market, reducing turnovers and vacancies. He promoted FHA's close examination of potential projects, since agency scrutiny ensured viable locations, significantly better construction, and professional development and management of apartments.[11]

Because of their vested interest in eliminating non-performing loans, FHA set underwriting standards for insured projects and were diligent in their pre-approval review. While these standards may have promoted success in the market, they reflect a distinct value system often at odds with the values of urban life. FHA carefully examined the neighborhood of a prospective project, noting its relationship to land use and real estate trends in the area. They surveyed existing housing in the neighborhood to determine property values, rate of mortgage delinquencies, type,

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[8]James Goode, *Best Addresses*, pp. 332-336. Ring was a major developer of Washington apartments during the 1920s. His long-time collaboration with architect Harvey Warwick no doubt contributed to the functional success of the plans for Colonial Village.

[9]"The Revised Rental Housing Rules, p.14. While not directly connected with FHA, the Public Works Administration appointed Henry Wright as a consultant to their Housing Division in 1933, giving him a voice in New Deal housing policy. (Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* p. 673.)

[10]Alfred L. Aiken, "The New York Life's Insured Lending," p. 4.

[11]Aiken, p. 20.

number, and condition of housing units, and whether units had garages and "mechanical refrigeration." They noted ethnic, racial, and demographic characteristics of the neighborhood as well as "care of property and person."[12] They evaluated location in terms of public transit and transportation routes, including the frequency and fare for public transportation and how well transportation connected to employment centers. FHA noted neighborhood amenities that responded to suburban ideals: public and parochial schools (including school capacity), libraries, commercial entertainment, churches, parks and recreation centers, "rivers, lakes, woods, or other scenic values," and civic centers. Locations too close to commercial and industrial development, railroads, heavily traveled roads, or "inharmonious elements" were downgraded. FHA was especially interested in projects situated in "the observed direction of the city's residential areas," projects in underdeveloped areas where land values would increase over time.[13]

Following a market-driven strategy, FHA promoted projects that embodied aspects of their earlier successes so that new projects would be quickly leased upon completion. They soon found their per/room rental analysis irrelevant as smaller units rented at lower monthly overall rent had the highest occupancy rate regardless of the per room rent. There was strong unmet need for small apartments (2 bedrooms or less) that lower income tenants could rent. FHA determined that broadest target for their rental housing was families earning between $1000 and $3000 annually, a group constituting 61% of all urban families not on relief. Consequently FHA suggested that apartments targeted at families making $1500/year would hit the broadest possible market. FHA paid close attention to local market conditions and would deny higher rent projects in favor of lower ones after a saturation point was reached at certain rent levels.[14]

FHA's priorities placed a premium on careful site planning and architectural design; the agency encouraged hiring skilled planners and architects.

> Modern multi-family housing presupposes an improvement in design far in advance of traditional practice. In relating the obtainable rents to those current in the neighborhood or community some weight may be given to the improved character of the housing to be built. This may not result in an opinion that more rent can be obtained for the new project, but may lead to a conclusion that a higher occupancy ratio will be achieved even in the face of local competition at somewhat lower rentals.[16]

Clearly seeking to counteract tenement typology, FHA promoted an ideal based on visionary housing schemes of the early 20th century. Open space was particularly important "to afford a pleasant outlook from the rooms, and ...a measure of protection against ... future adverse use of adjacent property." FHA demanded that apartment complexes be massed to eliminate the long corridors, air shafts, and light courts that formerly characterized moderate-income rental housing. "Good views from each room over garden spaces" replaced "showy public spaces" as project attractions.[16]

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[12]Col. Cornelius Bread, "Locations for Large-scale Housing," p. 25.

[13]"Locations for Large-scale Housing," p. 17. This philosophy no doubt helped contribute to abandonment of center cities as FHA sought to avoid "any possible decline in the neighborhood character."

[14]"Matching Rental Housing to the Market," pp. 8-11 and p. 26 and "Revised Rental-housing Rules, p. 27.

[15]Col. Cornelius Bread, "Locations for Large-scale Housing," p. 24.

[16]Eugene Klaber, "Planning and Large-scale Housing," pp. 9, 23 and 24.

Maryland real estate developers hesitated to pursue FHA loan guarantees for large-scale housing. In the mid-1930s, the Baltimore *Sun* carried an editorial lamenting Maryland's failure to take advantage of the program. Spurred by the approval of the Falkland, a 178 unit project in Silver Spring, the *Sun* wrote, "It was anticipated that much greater advantage would be taken of the Government's offer to promote this kind of housing than has been done. In this State there has appeared little disposition to adopt the plan, which may be due to the fact that the Government is taking pains to see that it is not tied up with prospects that do not commend themselves as sound financially."[17]

Baltimore, in particular, presented an anomalous market for apartment living. Its residents were not quick to embrace the concept of apartments. A 1911 *Harper's Monthly* article claimed, "...in all of Baltimore, there can scarcely be more than a dozen apartment buildings!"[18] Baltimore was, after all, the city of rowhouses, which were available to rent or buy for residents at any income level. The garden apartment was particularly well suited to this city of individual homes. As the advertising of the period touts, garden apartments offered all the conveniences of a modern apartment, as well as features more commonly associated with individual residences -- good ventilation and natural light, generous storage areas, semi-private or private entrances, low-scale buildings, quiet, well-landscaped settings, and on-site garages or parking spaces. As a distinct, local variation on the typology, garden apartments like Oaklee Village advertised that each unit had its own exterior entrance.[19]

The FHA large-scale housing program in Maryland added hundreds of garden apartment units to Baltimore area housing stock. Completed in the spring of 1936, Dundalk Housing (272 units), developed by Charles Stockhausen and Robert J. Gill to serve workers at Dundalk's industrial plants, was the Baltimore area's first FHA-insured large-scale housing project.[20] Dream's Landing (56 units) in Annapolis and Northwood (388 units) in Baltimore were completed by the end of 1938. Developed by the Roland Park Company, Northwood offered one and two bedroom garden apartments sited on 23 acres.[21] Construction began on Hilton Village (148 units) in Baltimore during the latter half of 1938.[22] Oaklee Village (180 units) and Samester Parkway Apartments were underway by the latter half of 1939.[23] During 1940, construction began on three projects: Piney Branch (28 units) in Silver Spring and Dunmore (48 units) and Liberty Park (136 units) in Dundalk.[24] Developer S.L. Hammerman opened the 36 unit Dunmanway Apartments in Dundalk in 1939. Lincoln National Life Insurance Company held a $142,500 mortgage on the property.[25] His company was also responsible for the Dunmore Apartments (1940), also in Dundalk.[26] Perhaps reflecting the relative lack of importance of large-scale multi-family apartments in

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[17]"Maryland Large-scale Housing Project Insured," p. 20. (Feb. 1937)

[18]Apartment Query File, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library (Harrison Rhodes, *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 122, Feb. 1911, p. 416.)

[19]"Oaklee Village Garden Homes, *Baltimore American*, Oct. 1, 1939.

[20]"First Baltimore Housing Project is Completed," p. 19. These units had a $12/room rent with the average monthly rental set at $41. (June 1938)

[21]"Northwood Apartments," p. 28.

[22]Table I in "Matching Rental Housing to the Market," p. 9.

[23]"The Revised Rental-housing Rules," p. 13.

[24]"Rental Housing Projects Placed Under Construction During 1940," p. 33.

[25]Table II in "Matching Rental Housing to the Market," p. 10.

[26]"Rental Housing Projects Placed Under Construction During 1940," p. 33.

Maryland's housing stock, many of the principals associated with these projects hailed from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area where apartments were an important component of residential real estate. For example, Louis Justement designed Dream's Landing and Hilton Village and Harvey Warwick was associated with Northwood. Gustave Ring's Ring Construction Company was the builder for Northwood and Bethesda-based Newbold Development constructed Dream's Landing.[27]

The Samester Parkway Apartments, completed in 1939, illustrate the influence of FHA underwriting standards. Upper Park Heights Avenue was ripe for development, encouraged by the city's major public improvement program for the avenue, undertaken with Works Progress Administration Funds in 1938. As bus service replaced trolleys, the old trolley line was removed from the east side of the street, the street widened to 54 ft., and the macadam surface upgraded to concrete. At the same time, sewer and water mains were laid where the trolley tracks had run.[28] By 1939, with road construction complete, upper Park Heights Avenue offered a spacious setting only minutes from downtown by bus or car. Baltimore's economy provided another incentive for building. Although much of the country remained in the grip of economic depression in 1939, Baltimore was on the road to recovery, thanks to rising orders from abroad that fueled its shipbuilding and aerospace industry.[29]

The site plan and landscaping for the Samester-Parkway Apartments clearly show the impact of FHA's garden apartment ideal. The apartment buildings covered 17% of the site, compared to 18% for the much larger Colonial Village and the 20% to 25% generally recommended for garden apartments.[30] The stepped chevron grouping of buildings provided open space for the complex and multiple exposures for the six units in each building. All units had at least two exposures; many had three. The site planning also created a hierarchy of exterior space. The primary facades of the buildings face more formal, intensively landscaped space in the central public area between the two wings. This treatment contrasts with more private open lawn on the south and the open space on the north facing the secondary facades of the buildings. These informal areas, particularly the enclosed area on the south, may have been used for play areas. A 1939 advertisement for the Samester lists "Children's Playground," as an amenity.[31] Garages were critical to the project's success since Baltimore City did not permit overnight automobile parking on city streets.[32]

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[27]Guy T.O. Hollyday, "America Builds for Her Renter Millions," pp. 7 and 23; Vertical File for Architectural Awards. FHA encouraged developers to hire architects experienced with apartment house design and may have quietly insisted on hiring expert architects like Justement and Warwick as a condition of approval for the loan guarantee.

[28]"Park Heights Ave. to Get New Paving, *Evening Sun*, December 16, 1937; "Set to Speed Park Heights Paving Project," *Evening Sun*, March 14, 1938; and "Cracks, Bumps Plentiful on Park Heights Avenue," *Evening Sun*, May 3, 1938.

[29]Sherry Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City*, p. 347. By 1940, FHA noted an increase in applications from industrial areas and suggested that this increase provided an early warning of the need for housing serving defense industries. (FHA's Program at the Six-year Mark," p. 40)

[30]James Goode, *Best Addresses*, p. 336 provides the site coverage for Colonial Village. FHA's underwriting ideals worked in favor of large projects on the order of Northwood (Baltimore City), the Falkland (Silver Spring), and Colonial Village (Arlington, Virginia) that created self-contained villages.

[31]Classified advertisement, *Baltimore Sun*, Sept. 1, 1939.

[32]Guy T.O. Hollyday, "America Builds for Her Renter Millions," p. 23. Northwood also featured garages.

Particular attention was paid to landscaping the Samester Apartments.[33] Plantings include mature trees that appear to predate construction as well as dramatic flowering cherry trees. Both S.L. Hammerman and Hal Miller were noted for their attention to natural settings. Hammerman served as president of the Baltimore City Park Board, presiding over the expansion of the zoo and fighting off attempts to locate a civic center in Druid Hill Park. He was chairman of the Maryland Department of Forests and Parks from 1962 until his death in 1965 and championed the acquisition of Assateague Island as a national park. He refused to let workmen cut down trees when his Ramblewood development was under construction. "At his own residence, the Samester Apartments, he reportedly spent more than $1000 to preserve a huge flowering tree that plant experts said would die. The tree, nursed and cared for, outlived Mr. Hammerman."[34] Hal A. Miller, the architect for Ramblewood and Samester, was as adamant as S.L. Hammerman about preserving trees. Miller held that working with the existing landscape was an essential element of architectural design.[35]

The Samester-Parkway Apartments boasted the advanced apartment design FHA championed as a key to a project's market success. The complex utilized reinforced concrete construction. A 1939 advertisement for the property noted the following amenities: "Bruce parquet hardwood floors, every room an outside room, individual incinerator, tile baths and showers."[36] The unit plans within Samester suggested a more gracious standard of living than typically found in the floor plans of other, contemporary FHA garden apartments in the region. In order to use space efficiently and create low-priced rents, apartment floor plans typically dispensed with halls and entry foyers. Bedrooms often opened directly into living rooms. Similarly, bathrooms were sometimes accessed through bedrooms rather than through more public areas of the unit. An alcove off the kitchen often provided the only function-specific space for dining. Samester included only one and two bedroom apartments; there were no efficiencies. Every unit at Samester had an entry foyer; most units were arranged so that bedrooms were accessed from the foyer or a separate area, similar to an entry foyer, serving bedrooms and the bathroom. Most units included large, separate dining rooms; several units featured a separate half bath off one of the bedrooms. All units had closets.

Samester's rents reflected its amenities. By 1940 the average FHA-insured apartment unit rented for $50/month, including heat and hot water.[37] A 1939 advertisement notes that rents in the Samester Parkway Apartments ranged from $48 to $80. Rents at the Samester Parkway Apartments at $14.57/room were higher than similar complexes in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan area. Hilton Village rented for $13.75/room, Dunmanway for $13.00/room, Oaklee Village for $12.75/room. With no vacancies in 1939, Northwood rented at $15.50/room.[38]

Samester Parkway's modern architectural style represented a distinct departure from traditional architectural styles commonly found in FHA projects as well as conservative architectural expression favored in Baltimore. The Samester Parkway Apartments are likely the most fully developed Art Deco style garden apartment complex in the

[33]FHA underwriters for Maryland clearly placed a premium on mature landscaping. In the Falkland (Silver Spring), Northwood, and Samester, the developers went to great lengths to preserve existing trees. (Northwood Apartments, p. 28).

[34]"S.L. Hammerman Rites Tomorrow" *Sun*, Jan. 20, 1965.

[35]William Stump, "Man in the Street: Hal A. Miller," *Sun*, Dec. 27, 1953.

[36]Classified advertisement, *Baltimore Sun*, Sept. 1, 1939.

[37]"FHA Experience with Rental Housing," p. 24.

[38]"Matching Rental Housing to the Market," pp. 9 and 10; "The Revised Rental Housing Rules, p. 13; and Guy T.O. Hollyday, "America Builds for Her Renter Millions," p. 7.

city. Baltimore has relatively few examples of Art Deco style buildings; only a small percentage of these structures are residential. Not only was Baltimore conservative in its architectural preferences, Baltimore apartments of the 1930s and 1940s tended to draw on traditional architectural vocabularies. Most exhibited detailing drawn from Colonial revival, Georgian revival, and Gothic revival sources. Samester Parkway was recognized for its design soon after construction, winning the Baltimore Association of Commerce's honorable mention for superior design and construction in 1940.[39] *Baltimore Deco: An Architectural Survey of Art Deco in Baltimore* demonstrates the singularity of the Samester Parkway Apartments by including the complex as its only apartment house.

The Samester Parkway Apartments provide an emphatic statement of modern design principles. The Samester Parkway Apartments strongly resemble European housing schemes featured in American architectural periodicals in the 1920s and 1930s. These European projects featured striking brick work, geometric composition, and an absence of historicized detail. Designers relied on carefully composed fenestration patterns, brick detail, and contrasting materials to articulate facades. The Samester Parkway Apartments combine the rigid axial symmetry and internal logic of Beaux Arts design methodology with innovative, "modern" details such as bullnose columns, metal windows, round windows, and glass block. Like later, canonical International Style buildings, the design of the Samester Parkway Apartments emphasizes volume over mass, and the horizontal over the vertical. Its black brick bands and corner windows provide Samester with the visual equivalent of ribbon windows -- an architectural statement that the facades are curtain walls. The black brick bases supporting the masonry columns and the corbelled brick frontispieces further emphasize brick as decorative cladding rather than structural material. The Samester Parkway Apartments are an exceptionally fine example of modern styling that illustrates the more traditional antecedents of the International Style.

The market for which Samester Parkway was designed may have played a role in the choice of its architectural style. Both S.L. Hammerman and architect Hal A. Miller identified with the project. Hammerman named the development after himself and his wife and Miller resided there. The two men clearly created an apartment complex directed to people who would respond to this advertisement:

SMART PEOPLE
Are Choosing the Beauty
and Charm of the New
SAMESTER-PARKWAY
Apartments of Tomorrow[40]

They were also addressing renters excluded from other markets. Contemporary commentary on Northwood, the pioneering 388 unit complex developed by the Roland Park Company, notes that it was "restricted." Prior to the 1948 Supreme Court decision in *Hurd v. Hodge* and *Shelley v. Kramer*, discriminatory land covenants forbidding the sale of property to specific ethnic, religious, and racial groups were commonplace in suburbs like Roland Park that developed in the late 19th and early 20th century. In contrast, the Samester Parkway Apartments were constructed in what geographers refer to as the "Jewish wedge" west of Falls Road. Excluded from property controlled by the Roland Park Company and the Baltimore Country Club, Baltimore's Jewish community claimed

[39] "The Association's First Architectural Awards," *Baltimore*, July 1940.
[40] Classified Advertisement, *Baltimore Sun*, September 1, 1939.

the area in the northwestern portion of the city. The Suburban Club, enclave of the Jewish elite, was situated at Park Heights and Slade Avenue.[41] "A Good Address" is the first benefit listed in the classified advertisement for Samester Parkway Apartments. Colonial Revival architecture may have held little appeal for a group whose assimilation was limited by their religious and ethnic background. While S.L. Hammerman and Hal Miller produced Colonial Revival garden apartments in Dundalk and Ramblewood, the apartment building they constructed for their own use was in the modern mode.

Samester Parkway Apartments appealed to a distinguished group of tenants in its early years. In addition to architect Hal A. Miller (Unit G-2), tenants listed at the complex in both 1940 and 1942 included Abraham Greenfield (manager, Standard Beauty Supply), Benjamin Snyder (salesman), Maynard Stillman (employee at Shirtcraft Co.), Harry Grosser (district manager, Sun Life Insurance), Albert Stern (manager, Baltimore Clothes Co.), Louis Rosenbush (manufacturer's agent), Bernard Savage (lawyer), William Raches (advertising manager for the *News Post*), Ellis Fell (vice principal, School No. 22), and Harry Siegel (cloth cutter). In 1942, Albert Hutzler, Jr., scion of the Hutzler retailing family, lived in Apartment K5. Since Apt. K6 is not listed as vacant, it is likely that the present large apartment that occupies the entire third floor was formed from two apartments for his use.

Samuel Lawrence Hammerman was a self-educated, self-made man who was eulogized by Mayor McKeldin as "Mr. Baltimore" upon his death in 1965. A 1956 biography closed with, "his hobby, in which he has achieved great distinction, is public service."[42] A politically active civic leader, Hammerman devoted himself to the city and state park system and to Jewish community activities. Born in 1891 on Long Island to Austrian parents, Hammerman left the family's farm at the age of fifteen. In 1918, he married Esther Borstein, the daughter of a Trenton rabbi, moved to Baltimore and formed his first real estate venture shortly after his army discharge. In Baltimore he began developing houses in Glen Burnie, still a rural area at the time. By the 1940s, Hammerman's growing real estate development and property management concerns were joined by a thriving mortgage loan business. Hammerman developed Dundalk for Bethlehem Steel and Ramblewood for the Abell estate. In addition to his business interests, Hammerman was active in Democratic politics and was a major figure in local charitable, civic, and Jewish community affairs. A delegate to the Democratic National Conventions in 1940, 1944, and 1948, Hammerman was a Baltimore City Jail Commissioner from 1930 to 1938. He served on the boards of the Better Business Bureau, Hebrew Home for the Incurables, Seaboard Zionist Organization, United Jewish Appeal, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. On Hammerman's death, Mayor McKeldin remarked, "[in] many ways, Sam Hammerman was 'Mr. Baltimore' himself, for he understood deeply and was an integral part of our city's aspirations, personality, growth and municipal pride."[43]

In 1956 the S.L. Hammerman Organization employed 150 people and managed more than $20 million commercial and residential properties with annual real estate sales of $12 million. Hammerman owned numerous apartments and commercial buildings in Baltimore and its suburbs including Ramblewood Apartments (1941) at Loch Raven and Belvedere; the Dunmanway and Dunmore Apartments (ca. 1940) in Dundalk; Springlake (1959), a club community in Dulaney Valley; Jefferson Building (1961) at Courthouse Square in Towson; and the Claymont Garden Apartments in Claymont, Delaware. Hammerman's Company served as mortgage loan correspondent for

[41]See Sherry Olson, p. 256.
[42]Radoff, *The Old Line State*, p. 1003
[43]Obituary for S.L. Hammerman, *Sun*, January 20, 1965 and Radoff, *The Old Line State*, pp. 1001-1004.

New York Life Insurance Company. It is noteworthy that his considerable business acumen took second place to his civic works in his obituary.[44]

Hal A. Miller (1903-1953), like S.L. Hammerman, was Jewish. Born in Canada to Polish immigrants, he received a B.S. in architecture from McGill University in 1925. Disturbed by "class distinction" in Canada, he moved to New York where he worked as a draftsman for New York Edison and as an architectural engineer for the New York Central Railroad. Miller also studied architectural design and housing design at Columbia and City College. He met his wife, Minnie Kitt, at Columbia and moved to Baltimore, his wife's home town, opening offices on St. Paul Place in 1936. Miller became Hammerman's preferred architect, designing a string of Hammerman projects, beginning with the Samester Parkway Apartments and including the Dunmanway, Dunmore, and Ramblewood Apartments. He specialized in "modernistic designing and the erection of thoroughly up-to-date apartments." Garden apartment complexes he designed include Dunmanway and Dunmore in Dundalk, Ramblewood, Suburban Park, Park Central in Baltimore, Claymont in Claymont, Delaware, and Suburban Park in Norfolk, Virginia. A 1953 *Baltimore Sun* article described the architect as one who "believed strongly in functionalism, in the complementary use of glass and brick."[45] A number of Miller's projects were in the Art Deco style, including the Paramount Theatre (1946) located at 6650 Belair Road and the General Vending Sales Corporation Building (1946) on Biddle Street. Miller also designed the WBAL transmitting station and the Forest Park recreation center. A charter member of the Maryland Society of Architects and a member of Har-Sinai Temple, Miller belonged to the NRA and "greatly enjoy[ed] target practice."[46]

The combination of Miller's architectural training and commitment to modern styling, Hammerman's personal involvement with his namesake project, and the Samester Parkway's market produced a distinctive response to the developing typology of FHA insured garden apartments. For the most part, garden apartments of the period incorporated the ideals of the garden city movement and its antipathy to urban experience. The concept of small, semi-detached apartment blocks grouped around cul de sacs embodies a yearning for the rural picturesque. The form of Samester is deeply rooted in its urban cultural milieu. While each of the apartment buildings is a separate structure, the massing at Samester Parkway groups these buildings into a distinctly urban footprint that contrasts with the small, detached clusters of buildings that constitute many garden apartments. The biaxial symmetry of Samester Parkway's plan harks back to Beaux Arts civic ideals for the City Beautiful. The formality of its landscape suggests manicured city squares and parks rather than the garden suburb ideal. It is appropriate that Hammerman and Miller developed this urbane small-scale garden apartment complex in Baltimore, a city noted for the distinct character of its rowhouse neighborhoods.

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[44]Obituary for S.L. Hammerman, *Sun*, January 20, 1965 and Radoff, *The Old Line State*, pp. 1001-1004.
[45]William Stump, "Man in the Street: Hal A. Miller," *Sun*, December 27, 1953.
[46]Cucchiella, p. 58 and Frederic Kummer, *The Free State of Maryland*, pp. 966-968.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Samester Parkway Apartments are situated on a corner lot at the southern corner of the intersection of Park Heights Avenue and Glengyle Avenue. Park Heights Avenue forms the northeast boundary of the property; Glengyle Avenue forms the northwest boundary. The southwestern boundary is set 377.64 ft. southwest of the northeastern boundary along Park Heights Avenue; the southeastern boundary is set 400 ft. from the northwestern boundary along Glengyle Avenue, as described more fully in the metes and bounds description found in the land records of Baltimore City Liber 1127, Folio 421.

Boundary Justification

The boundary corresponds with the legal description of the property and encompasses the full extent of the Samester Parkway Apartments property including apartment buildings, green space, and garages.

5662 IV NE
(REISTERSTOWN)
B-3992

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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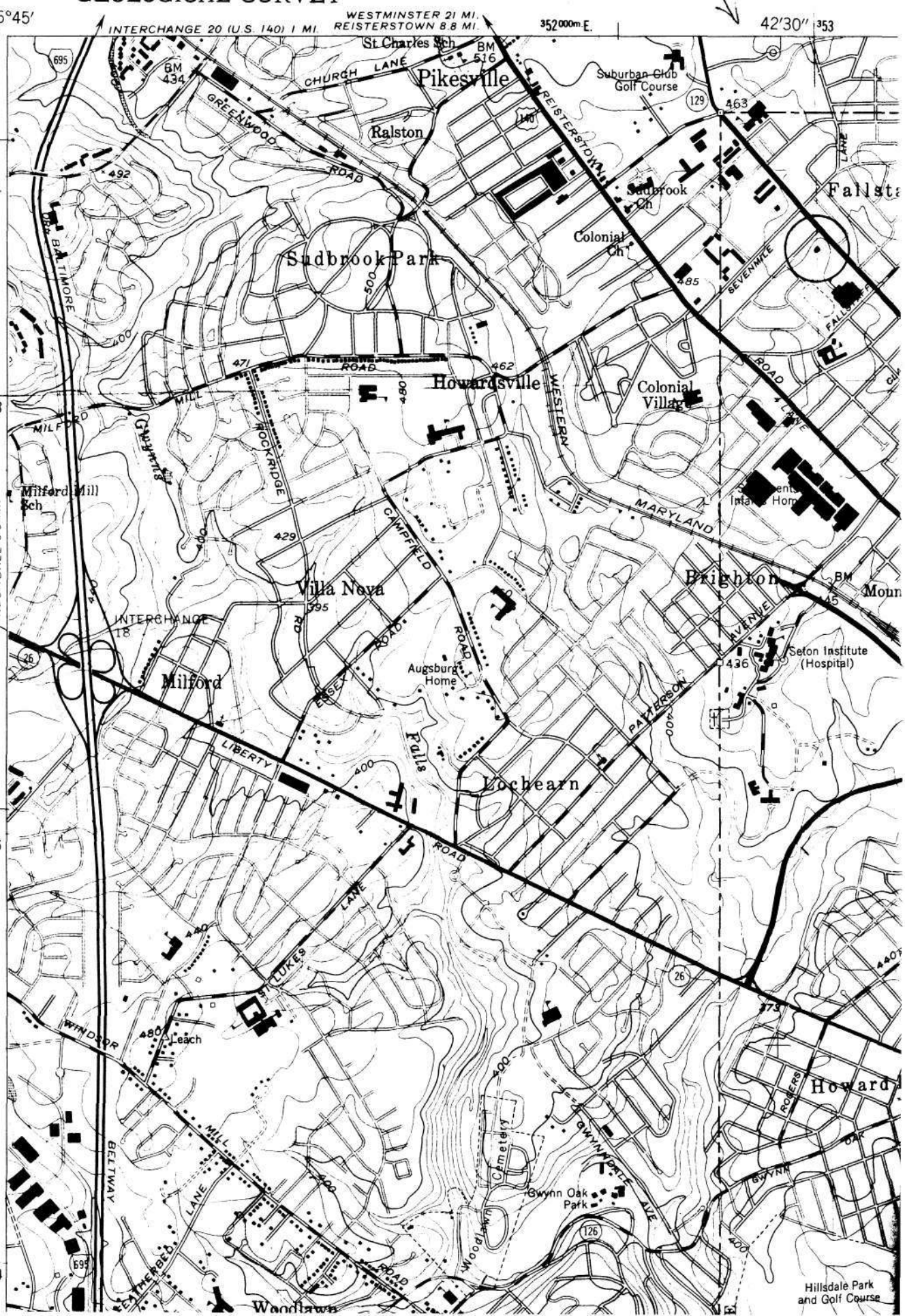

B-3992
SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

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VIEW OF COMPLEX FROM NE; BLDG A IN FOREGROUND

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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
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BLDGS J & K FROM N SHOWING TYPE A FRONTISPIECE
3 OF 11

S022 +2 T01031 P042

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BALTIMORE CITY, MD
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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1998
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REAR OF COMPLEX (BLDG F IN FOREGROUND) VIEW FROM NW
5 OF 11

S022 +2 T08588 P011

B-3992

SAMESTER PARKWAY APARTMENTS
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1998
MD SHPO
VIEW FROM SE SHOWING SECONDARY FACADES OF BLDGS G, H, & J
6 OF 11

S022 +1 T00381 F020

B-3992
SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1993
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EAST FACADE OF BLDG M FROM NE
7 OF 11

S022 +1 T00677 P040

B-3992
SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1998
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BLDG E FROM WEST THROUGH REAR WALL (TYPE B FRONTISPIECE)
8 OF 11

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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
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APRIL 1998
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GARAGES FROM NORTH
9 OF 11

S022 +2 T08674 P016

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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1998
MD SHPO
STAIR HALL
10 OF 11

5022 41 180185 P026

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SAMESTER PARKWAY APTS.
BALTIMORE CITY, MD
BETTY BIRD
APRIL 1998
MD SHPO
INTERIOR
11 OF 11

S022 +1 T00791 P031