

## RALEIGH HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION APPLICATION AND REPORT

1. **NAME OF THE PROPERTY:** (If historic name is unknown, give current name or give street address)

Historic Name Capital Apartments

Current Name, or Address 127 New Bern Avenue

2. **LOCATION:** 127 New Bern Avenue Raleigh  
street city and/or county

3. **LEGAL OWNER:** Name CGM Partners, Ltd. day phone 821-4665

Address 21 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 207 Raleigh, NC 27603  
street city state zip

4. **APPLICANT/CONTACT PERSON:** Name Roland Gammon day phone 821-4665

Address 21 Glenwood Avenue Raleigh, NC 27603  
street city state zip

5. **REASON FOR REQUEST:** Property Tax Savings

6. **GENERAL DATA:**

a. Date of construction and alterations: 1917

b. Outbuildings: Yes            No X If yes, number N/A

c. Approximate acreage or dimensions: 107.32 ft. x 148.35 ft. (see plat)

d. ~~Architect~~, builder, carpenter and/or mason: C.F. York & M.W.B. Drake, Jr.

e. Use: Original Apartments Present same

f. Is the property income producing? Yes X No           

7. **CLASSIFICATION:**

a. Category: building(s) 1 structure            object            site           

b. Ownership: private X public: local            state            federal           

c. Number of resources within property: Contributing Non-contributing

buildings	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>
structures	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
objects	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
sites	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

d. National Register of Historic Places status (check one): Entered (date) Contributing 12-10-86

nominated: eligible            not eligible            not requested            removed (date)           

e. Has the property ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office? If so, by whom and when yes, see attached

8. **SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:** [Signature] date 8.16.89

#### D. Architectural Description

The Capital Apartments is a five-story apartment building designed in the Beaux Arts style. A monumental style most popular for public buildings, it is characterized by symmetrical composition, articulated massing, and arched and linteled openings. The construction material is always masonry.

Capital Apartments is constructed in a U-shape around a well on the south or main facade. This form allows for the maximum use and number of windows. The well forms a small entrance court which leads to the main portal framed by a heavy molded architrave, cornice and consoles executed in limestone.

The south and east facades of the building are constructed of yellow, textured brick. The north and west facades are finished in a common yellow brick.

Windows on the main facade and above the main entrance are double-hung in triple sash. Those of the remaining facades and facing the entrance court are single sash. All windows in the main facade have plain limestone sills and brick lintels.

The first four floors have inset balconies at each corner of the main facade. These balconies, with plain wrought iron railings, open the massing of the building, emphasizing its verticle lines. When originally constructed, the balconies on the east and west facades projected from the building. These projecting balconies have since been removed. The fifth floor has enclosed corner sunrooms instead of corner balconies which visually cap the building and form a base for the cornice. Inset balconies, also once projecting, adjoin the sunrooms on the south facade. The whole building is surmounted by a wide, overhanging cornice with pairs of stylized brackets beneath a solid, brick parapet.

The exterior of the building has sustained little change since its construction in 1917, other than the changes to the balconies and the removal of a portion of the cornice on the east facade.

All five floors of the building have the same floor plan which consist of six apartments each, ranging from smaller one bedroom units to the larger two bedroom units. All the corridors are of red quarry tile over reinforced concrete slabs while the floors of the apartments are of hardwood over concrete slabs. The entrance vestibule is floored in multi-colored tile. Its walls and ceiling are of plaster with a large ornamental crown molding. The only major change to the vestibule has been the addition of an aluminum and glass security door.

All internal walls and ceilings are finished in plaster throughout. Ceiling height is fourteen feet. Each apartment has one or more non-functioning fireplace composed of squared pilaster-post with caps boasting Arts and Crafts style decoration in a simple cross design. The heavy plain mantel shelf rest on a

## E. Historical Significance

During the first decade of the 20th century, the term "apartment house" was not used in the Raleigh City Directories. Citizens who did not own homes, depending on their marital status, rented rooms in private homes or lived in hotels, boarding houses or rental properties.

Between 1911 and 1913, the Park (or Old Raleigh) Hotel, formerly at the corner of McDowell and Martin Streets overlooking Nash Square, was converted into Raleigh's first apartment house. It was a successful venture even though the building had not been designed as a multi-family building.

In its November 16, 1916 edition, the News and Observer announced plans for Raleigh's first true apartment building, the Capital Apartments. This modern multi-storied building was to be constructed at the corner of New Bern and Blount Streets in the downtown residential area near the State Capitol.

Its builder was C. V. York, who with M. W. B. Drake, had conceived the idea of the "high-rise." York and his sons later became Raleigh's major builder/developers, constructing the Sir Walter Hotel, Cameron Village Apartments and Shopping Center and many other of the city's well-known landmarks.

The News and Observer stated that the builders had given "assurances that no convenience or comfort will be lacking in the building. The bathrooms will be tiled, provided with built in tubs and every other sanitary appliance that science has revealed. Intercommunicating telephones will be another facility that is in contemplation by the men who have made up their minds to meet the long felt demand in Raleigh for a new apartment house."

Before construction started, there were enough applicants to occupy the thirty apartments, which ranged from three to five rooms each. The success of the "multi-family" building had its impact locally. Capital Apartments was soon followed by the construction of the Vance Apartments in 1920 and the Baily Apartments in 1923, both located on East Edenton Street, and the White Apartments in 1930 on Person Street.

For many years, these apartments remained fully occupied with a waiting list. They were occupied by persons of various ages and occupations, and were extremely popular because of the modern amenities, provided maintenance and convenience to downtown shopping and government and business offices.

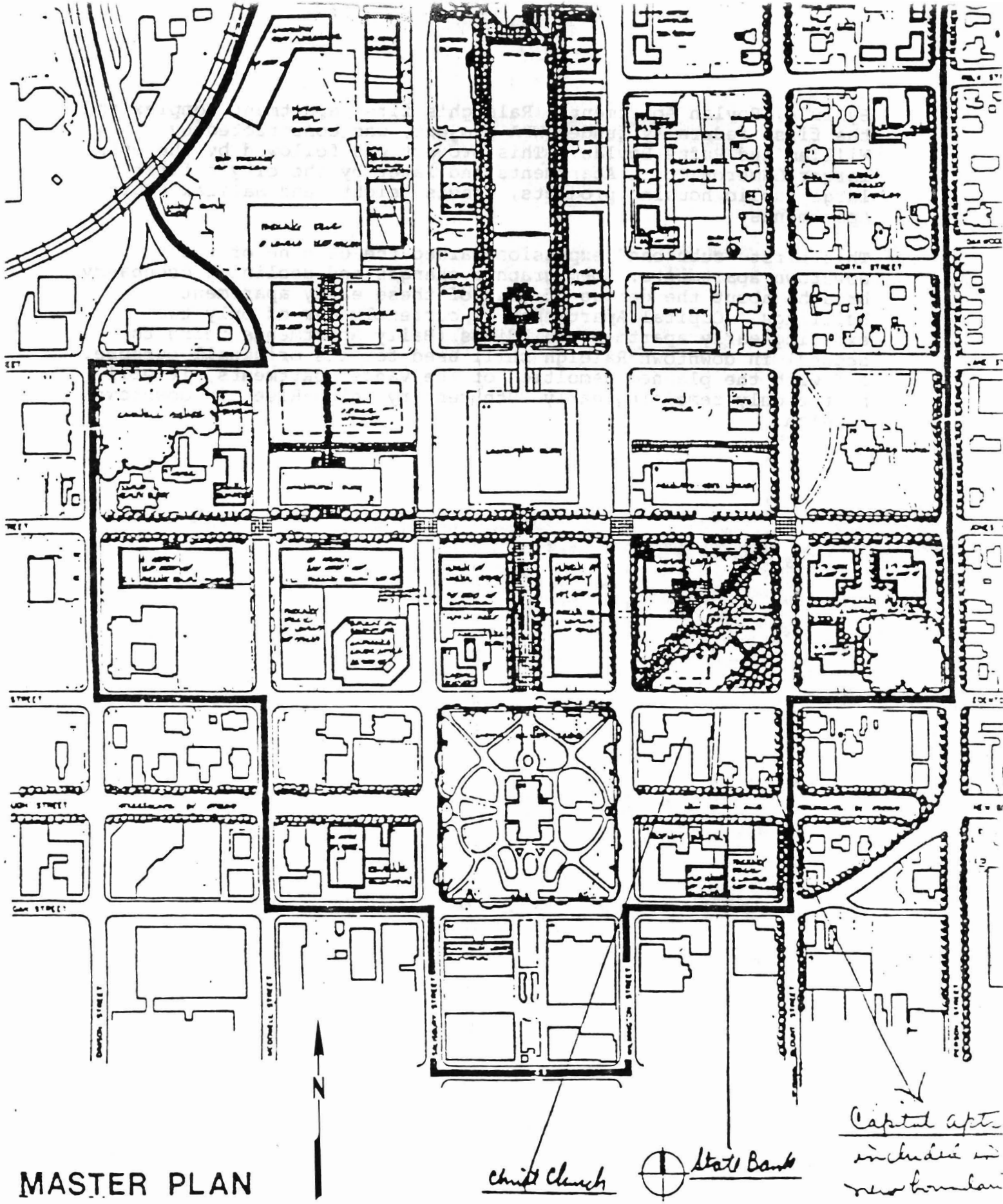
Following the Stock Market crash of 1929, Raleigh apartments experienced a revival as many families who had lost their homes became apartment dwellers. This demand for rental housing was also the beginning of the decline of Raleigh's multi-storied inner city apartment houses.

coved cornice above a frieze board with stylized Greek Key design. Hearths are of red quarry tile. Two-part molded door and window surrounds are found throughout the building as are molded baseboards. Some larger apartments still retain French doors and columned vestibules. Columns are all square with Arts and Crafts caps identical to those found on the mantel pilasters.

By 1934, Boylan Apartments, Raleigh's first apartment complex and the first federally funded WPA project, was constructed by William and Rufus Boylan. This project was followed by the even larger Cameron Court Apartments and later by the city's first large public housing projects, Chavis Heights and Halifax Court Apartments.

This first "suburban" expansion marked the decline of the downtown apartments. Demographic changes and declining occupancy brought about the demise of most of these early apartment buildings. Capital Apartments is currently one of only two existing early apartment buildings (Baily Apartments being the second) in downtown Raleigh still used for its original purpose. And with the planned demolition of the Vance Apartments, it will be the only remaining early 20th century "high-Rise" in downtown Raleigh.





MASTER PLAN  
STATE GOVERNMENT CENTER

1:100  
MAY 5 1966

Part IV

Capital apt.  
included in  
new boundary  
(over plan)

## Plat Map

