

**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 or 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: MUNSON HALL APARTMENT BUILDING  
Other names/site number: MUNSON HALL

**2. Location**

Street & Number: 2212 I Street, N.W.  Not for Publication  
City or town: Washington  Vicinity  
State: D.C. Code: 001 County Code:  Zip Code: 20037

**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

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau  
In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

**Munson Hall Apartment Building/Munson Hall**

**Washington, DC**

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<u>1</u>	<u>    </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>    </u>
Name of related multiple property listing		Number of contributing	
<u>Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945</u>		Resources previously	
		listed in the National	
		Register <u>0</u>	

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
<u>MULTIPLE DWELLING: Apartment</u>	<u>EDUCATION: education-related</u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
<u>Art Deco</u>	foundation: <u>CONCRETE</u>
<u>    </u>	walls: <u>BRICK</u>
<u>    </u>	<u>METAL: Steel;</u>
<u>    </u>	roof: <u>SYNTHETICS</u>
<u>    </u>	other: <u>STONE: Limestone</u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

**Narrative Description**

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

**A** Property 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.)

**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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE;  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance**

1937

**Significant Dates**

1937

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Meadowbrook, Inc., Builder  
(Monroe Warren, President)  
Robert O. Scholz, Architect

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)

previously listed in the NR

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 add. data:

State SHPO office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Specify repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property \_\_\_\_\_ 0.15 Acres

UTM References

1 1/8/ 3/2/5/8/1/6/ 4/3/0/8/0/1/1/  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Munson Hall Apartment Building at 2212 I Street, N.W. is located in Square 55, on that part of Lot 855 that was previously Lot 841 in Washington, D.C.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Square 55, on that part of Lot 855 that was previously Lot 841, on which the Munson Hall Apartment Building are currently located represent all of the land associated with the original construction of the apartment building in 1937.

See continuation sheet

**Munson Hall Apartment Building/Munson Hall**

**Washington, DC**

Name of Property

County and State

### 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Janet Emery Flynn and Laura Hughes, Architectural Historians

Organization EHT Traceries, Inc.

Date February 2008

Street & Number 1121 5<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

Telephone (202) 393-1199

City or Town Washington

State DC

Zip code 20001

### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name The George Washington University

street & number 2121 I Street, N.W., Suite 701

telephone 202/994.2371

city or town Washington

state District of Columbia zip code 20052

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

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

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**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

The Munson Hall Apartment Building, located at 2212 I Street, N.W. is located mid-block on I Street between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets, N.W. The building stands between a modern parking garage on the east and a parking lot on the west. Munson Hall is one of three brick, Art Deco-style former apartment buildings on Square 55 that are now owned and operated by The George Washington University as residence halls, along with the 1938 Milton Hall Apartment Building (2222 I Street) and the 1939 Everglades Apartment Building (2223 H Street). T-shaped in plan, Munson Hall rests on a level lot next to Milton Hall, now known as the Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis Hall. Munson Hall is 73 feet 6 inches wide, 90 feet 4 inches long, and is 79 feet tall.

The eight-story Munson Hall Apartment Building rests on a concrete foundation with exterior walls of blonde brick in an American bond pattern with limestone detailing. The building is eight bays wide at the façade (north elevation). The verticality of the eight-story building is emphasized by pilasters that extend past the horizontal bands of windows and the roof line, terminating into a stepped parapet with limestone capitals featuring geometric Art Deco motifs. The flat roof is sheathed in slag. A roof-top terrace is located atop the building.

The fenestration throughout the building is typically 1/1 double-hung wood frame windows resting on concrete lug sills. Half of the windows at the façade are single units, whereas the other half is grouped in ribbons of three. The building's façade is dominated by its eight bay fenestration and by a centrally located, eight-story, two-bay projection. Air conditioning units are a common fixture at the upper sashes of most windows. Similarly, grilles are present on most windows at the first story.

The main entrance to the building is centrally located at the first story and encompasses three bays, all of which are clad in limestone. Double-leaf, two-light metal doors with a segmental-arched, one-light transom within a coffered doorway provide access to the building. Paired one-

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light casement windows with grilles flank the entrance doors, inset in fluted limestone panels. Limestone panels featuring the same floral Art Deco motif that is present above the transom are located above the casement windows. Coffered limestone panels are located below the casement windows. An air conditioning unit is present in one of the transom spaces.

Ornamentation present on the building embellishes the street-facing elevations, emphasizes the verticality and height of the building, and reinforces important Art Deco design themes. Limestone belt courses with geometric motifs are located in between the sixth and seventh stories of the projections. Limestone lintels are located above the windows in ribbons of three at the eighth story. Art Deco panels are located in between the windows of the projecting bays, and in between the easternmost and westernmost façade bays at the seventh and eighth stories. These panels make the windows appear taller, drawing one's eye to the top of the building. Detailing is not present on secondary elevations.

The exterior of the building largely retains integrity of its original design with no major alterations. Modifications at the exterior include the removal of original light fixtures, the application of window grilles, and the placement of air-conditioning units in the upper sashes of the majority of windows.

**INTERIOR**

At the interior of the building, the spatial arrangement of the former apartment building remains largely intact (Note: no interior designation is sought by the application). Rooms are typically one bedroom or efficiency sized units. Original elements at the interior include marble flooring and decorative railings in the lobby, parquet flooring and arched doorways in the units, as well as molding in some hallways.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Munson Hall Apartment Building, constructed in 1937, is significant as an example of an apartment building constructed in response to rapid population growth in Washington, D.C. during the interwar period. Munson Hall was the first in a cluster of apartment buildings constructed on and around Square 55 in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood following the Great Depression. The building represents the acceptance of the high-rise buildings by middle-class households in the early- and mid-twentieth century. Munson Hall is also significant as the work of an innovative developer and a skilled architect. Developer Meadowbrook, Inc. under the direction of president Monroe Warren, was responsible for significant advances in affordable, middle-class, and luxury apartment buildings throughout Washington, D.C. and suburban Metropolitan Washington. Architect Robert O. Scholz is regarded as one of the city's most skilled apartment building designers; his Art Deco apartment buildings, including Munson Hall, are among the city's most impressive examples of the style. The Munson Hall Apartment Building is significant for its representation of the this style. Its design embodies the Art Deco style that was intrinsic in the presentation of a modern apartment building that would appeal to Washington's burgeoning middle class of federal workers during the 1930s.

The Munson Hall Apartment Building/Munson Hall at 2212 I Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C. meets National Register of Historic Places **Criterion A: Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history**; and **Criterion C: Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form**. Additionally, the building meets D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites criteria 201.1 **(d) Architecture and Urbanism** and **(f) Creative Masters**.

The area of significance is **Architecture** as an example of the work of skilled architect Robert O. Scholz and noted developer Meadowbrook, Inc. in the Art Deco style, and **Community Planning and Development** for its representation of the Conventional High-Rise Apartment building type in Washington in the 1930s. The period of significance is **1937**, documenting the



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year the building was constructed.

The Munson Hall Apartment Building is nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C.: 1880-1945* (Traceries, 1993). Munson Hall meets criteria specifically developed to evaluate apartment buildings pursuant to the D.C. Apartment Building Survey and adopted by the Historic Preservation Review Board in 1989. These criteria are:

A-2: Buildings that illustrate the development of the apartment movement as it related to the need for housing, including the introduction of the building type and its early formation throughout the city.

A-3: Buildings that form critical clusters, or districts that illustrate the patterns of development of the city.

A-4: Buildings that reflect economic forces, both external and internal, that altered the development of the city.

These criteria reference the place of the Munson Hall as one of the post-World War I boom complexes spurred by population growth of the city; the acceptance of large-scale apartment buildings by the middle-class in Washington, D.C. during the 1920s and 1930s; and Munson Hall's role in the formation of a cluster of high-rise apartment buildings in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood in the early- and mid-twentieth century. Additionally, Munson Hall meets criteria:

C-10: Buildings that are the work of skilled architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, builders, and developers.

C-11: Buildings that illustrate the work of skilled architect/developer teams.

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These criteria refer to architect Robert O. Scholz's skillful application of modern building techniques to create an Art Deco-style building that responded to the contemporary aesthetic of the 1930s. Additionally, Scholz partnered with the inventive developer Meadowbrook, Inc. to design and construct a modern building that appealed to middle class Washingtonians.

The Munson Hall Apartment Building is significant as an example of a Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building Sub-Type. As described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, a Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building type is composed of buildings that contain at least 27 self-sufficient apartments, is at least six and no more than twelve stories high, has a single main public entrance, and was designed to hold an elevator. Examples of this building type were typically constructed between 1922 and 1945. Conventional High-Rise Buildings played a critical role in the development of apartment buildings in the District of Columbia. These buildings employed modern technology such as steel-frame structural systems and passenger elevators to create tall buildings that accommodated many units on a small footprint. This efficient use of land led to greater affordability of housing units and greatly altered the course of residential patterns in the city.

As stated in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, examples of Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building must retain sufficient integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, associations and feeling to convey their associative, artistic, or informational values. Munson Hall has undergone minimal alterations since its construction in 1937. The building retains a high degree of integrity and continues to visually convey its artistic value as an Art Deco-style apartment building in Washington, D.C. and thereby its role in the apartment building movement in the city.

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**THE BUILDING:**

The Application for a D.C. Permit to Build number 205711 dated August 17, 1937 lists Meadowbrook, Inc. as the owner and builder and Robert O. Scholz as the architect of Munson Hall. According to the application, the estimated cost of the building's construction was \$175,000. At the time of its construction, the 84-room building contained space for 72 families. Munson Hall was the first of two companion buildings constructed by Meadowbrook and Scholz on I Street, the second being the 1938 Milton Hall (2222 I Street). Munson Hall was the first apartment building to be erected south of Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. in more than six years after the lull in housing development caused by the Great Depression. Munson Hall's Art Deco style established the design precedent for the cluster of apartment buildings on Square 55 and those surrounding it on adjacent squares.<sup>1</sup>

Munson Hall and the other Art Deco apartment buildings created a dramatic change in the scale of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood (the area bounded by 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the east, Rock Creek Park on the west, the Potomac River to the south and Pennsylvania Avenue to the north). Prior to World War I, Foggy Bottom was comprised largely of narrow two-to-three story rowhouses. The neighborhood was home to a socio-economically diverse range of families: from households headed by military officers and government officials living near the White House to working-class families and laborers living near the industries situated on the riverbank.<sup>2</sup> After the first zoning code was introduced in 1920, the section of the neighborhood north of I Street was zoned for high density residential uses. The first multi-story apartment buildings were constructed in Foggy Bottom in the 1920s, replacing the preceding frame and brick dwellings. Great portions of the neighborhood were eventually transformed by construction of high-rise apartment build-

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas M. Cahill, "The Week's News in the Real Estate Field," *The Washington Post*, 30 January 1938, R1; "Downtown Apartment Building Being Completed," *The Washington Post*, 12 March 1939, R9.

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Sherwood Unger, "Foggy Bottom: Blue-Collar Neighborhood in a White-Collar Town," in *Washington at Home*, Kathryn Schneider Smith ed. (Washington, D.C.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), 55-59.

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ings.<sup>3</sup>

After a hiatus in apartment construction in the Depression years of the early 1930s, developers resumed building apartment buildings in Foggy Bottom in the vicinity of The George Washington University. The Munson Hall Apartment Building was completed in 1937, and consisted almost entirely of one-room apartments, that were intended to be rented by federal employees who, according to the *Washington Post*, would benefit from the apartments' "proximity to Potomac Park and the river, as well as the well ventilated corridors that should make it delightfully cool in the summertime."<sup>4</sup>

The 1940 and 1954 City Directories provide a profile of the residents of the Munson, which opened for occupancy in 1938. The residents who rented the one room apartments were drawn to "beautifully appointed lobby, spacious carpeted corridors and the quiet atmosphere of charming livability."<sup>5</sup> Over half the employed residents worked for the government including jobs at the Securities & Exchange Commission, Treasury Department, Bureau of Engraving, Justice Department, War Department, Veterans Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Federal Trade Commission, Agricultural Department, Census Bureau, Commerce Department, and the State Department, generally in lower level white collar jobs such as clerk, stenographer and secretary. Private sector employees included a physician for the Emergency Department, an Associate Professor at The George Washington University, nurses, and shop managers. Two janitors and the resident manager for the Munson Hall Apartments lived in the building as well as sales people for both the Hecht Company and the Woodward & Lothrop Department Store.

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<sup>3</sup> Suzanne Berry Sherwood, "Foggy Bottom, 1800-1975: A Study in the Uses of an Urban Neighborhood," *GW Washington Studies* No. 7 (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1978), 21.

<sup>4</sup> "New Apartment Building Opened," *Washington Post*, 3 April 1938.

<sup>5</sup> "New Apartment Building Opened," *Washington Post*, 3 April 1938.

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In 1971, the Munson Hall Apartment Building became Munson Hall, a residence hall for graduate students of The George Washington University. The residence hall was converted into undergraduate housing in 1981.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS**

With the expansion of the federal workforce during World War I, thousands of new workers arrived in Washington to staff the new agencies. During the War, housing construction had been stunted by material shortages. Consequently, there was a large demand for housing once construction resumed in the early 1920s. Developers responded to the demand by constructing apartment buildings. Prior to this period, Washington exhibited an aversion to large-scale multi-family housing. This aversion was overcome by developer's efforts to build attractive apartment buildings that would be acceptable to the upper- and middle-classes. From the end of the World War until 1929, 731 apartment buildings were constructed in Washington, 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 single-family units, and Washington was ranked with New York and Chicago as cities with the highest percentage of apartment house residents.

With the stock market crash in 1929, and the subsequent lack of investment capital, housing construction slowed. When it resumed in the mid 1930s, apartment buildings continued to predominate over single-family houses. Between 1935 and 1941, 60 percent of the \$102 million expended for residential housing went toward apartment buildings. The increased demand for apartments was largely the result of federal salaries that failed to keep pace with housing prices, placing single-family residences out of the reach of many government workers. During the Depression, federal programs brought droves of new residents to Washington, effectively inverting the percentage of new construction of houses versus apartment units. By the end of the decade, apartment units outranked single-family houses by 70 percent. This popularity changed the char-

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acter of Washington's real estate investment industry. Apartment buildings, with their accompanying speculative investment potential, became Washington's prime real estate venture.<sup>6</sup> Competition between apartment buildings developers was fierce. Architects and developers like Scholz and Warren became leaders in the field by offering apartments buildings like Munson Hall that combined affordability with urban amenities. Advertisements highlighted the buildings' "modern downtown apartments featuring ventilating doors, painted walls, parquet floors, Venetian blinds, and carpeted corridors." Potential residents were also enticed with "the roof deck and evergreen garden that adjoins the building." These features were designed to appeal to the middle-class. The apartments were also priced for the middle-class market. A one-room apartment with a foyer, sun porch, dressing room, kitchen and bath, and two exposures rented for \$56.50 in 1940 (approximately \$850 in 2009 dollars); a two-bedroom unit with a foyer, dinette, kitchen and bath rented for \$77.50 (less than \$1,200 in 2009 dollars).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to offering affordable amenities, developers employed innovative building techniques to distinguish their apartment buildings from the competition. These innovations resulted in changes to the form of apartment buildings, as exemplified by Munson Hall's steel frame construction. Changes to building form were also seen in the emergence of modern architectural styles. The use of modern styles for Washington apartment buildings between the 1920s and 1930s stands out as the single most significant change in the building type in those years. The predominant style of apartment buildings shifted from the Classical Revival and Eclectic Styles of the 1920s to the Streamlined Art Deco and International Styles in the 1930s. Unlike the Revival styles of the previous decades, Art Deco conveyed a "feeling of velocity and machine elegance."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> D.C. Apartment Building Survey prepared by the D.C. Preservation League and Tracerics in 1987 under the D.C. Office of Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Grant Program.

<sup>7</sup> "8 Good Reasons why You Should Live Downtown," *Evening Star*, 21 July 1940.

<sup>8</sup> James Goode, *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), 329; Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 35.

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**THE BUILDER:** Meadowbrook, Inc.

Under the direction of its president Monroe Warren, Meadowbrook, Inc. was considered one of Washington's most innovative real estate development firms in Washington, D.C. in the mid-twentieth century. Typically, Monroe Warren worked with his brother R. Bates Warren. Their projects included luxury high-rise apartment buildings such as the impressive eleven-story, Art Deco-style Kennedy-Warren (1929) located at 3133 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Shortly after the construction began on the Kennedy-Warren, Monroe and his brother completed the Tilden Gardens at 3900-3930 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.; Cleveland Park Gardens in the 3000 block of Porter Street, N.W.; and the Army and Navy Apartment at 2450 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.<sup>9</sup> Monroe and Bates Warren were considered pioneers in the construction of cooperative apartments. Their work also included single-family homes in Woodley Gardens and the Leland community in Bethesda. Other notable projects included the developments of Fairlawn Village, Grasslands, Landover Hills, and Meadowbrook.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, Meadowbrook constructed a number of mid-sized, middle-class apartment buildings in neighborhoods such as Foggy Bottom, Cleveland Park and Woodley Park. These buildings were "modern"—both in the technology used and the architectural design. An *Evening Star* article from August 30, 1930 lauded the Warren brothers, stating that they have "done much to further the private development of Washington by the construction of apartment buildings."<sup>11</sup> Monroe Warren and local architect Robert O. Scholz had been friends and boating companions since the 1920s. In addition to Milton and Munson Halls, Meadowbrook and Scholz collaborated to design and build numerous homes in Arlington Forest, Virginia.

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<sup>9</sup> "Monroe Warren Dies in France," *Montgomery Journal*, 20 January 1983; "Monroe Warren, 87," *The Washington Post*, 21 January 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Goode, *Best Addresses*, 258-259.

<sup>11</sup> "Business Romance Hidden in Building," *Evening Star*, 30 August 1930.

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**THE ARCHITECT:** Robert O. Scholz (1894-1978)

Robert O. Scholz, architect of Munson Hall, specialized in apartment building design during his thirty-year career as a Washington architect and builder. Many of his better-known buildings command prominent corner lots on major Washington avenues. At the outset of his career in the 1920s, Scholz's buildings were designed in Classical Revival styles, but by the 1930s he espoused the Art Deco style and became one of Washington's leading designers of Art Deco apartment buildings.<sup>12</sup>

Robert O. Scholz was born in New York City on September 25, 1894. His parents had recently immigrated from Germany and the family moved to Chicago where Scholz's father painted china for the Marshall Field Company.<sup>13</sup> He attended grammar school and three years of high school in Chicago. From 1911 to 1914, he enrolled at a technical college, the Armour Institute, in Chicago, but did not receive a degree. Scholz worked as a draftsman in the office of H. Clyde Miller in Chicago from 1914 to 1917 and then worked for a year as an engineer for the Kalman Steel Company. During World War I, Scholz served in the Navy, moving to Washington to work for the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks as an engineer, where he remained until 1920.

Scholz began designing apartments in 1920, when he became an architect for Howard Etchison, a prominent builder who was active in apartment house construction in Washington, D.C. from circa 1910-1925. The next year he took a position as architect in the office of noted Washington architect George N. Ray, who was known for his neo-classical commercial buildings.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wirz, Hans and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco Design in the Nation's Capital* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Pres, 1984), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Robert R. Scholz (son of Oscar Scholz), interview with Andrea F. Schoenfeld, EHT Tracerics, Inc., July 18, 2006. Washington, D.C.

<sup>14</sup> Information on education and early employment is from Scholz's Application to Register as an Architect in the District of Columbia, dated July, 1925. Some dates differ from those he gave in an application to re-register on



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In 1922, Scholz set up his own practice and also formed a partnership with David A. Baer, a lawyer who had recently become a builder specializing in apartment buildings. During the 1920s, Scholz was actively involved in apartment house construction as an architect, builder and owner. Scholz was joined in the business by his younger brother, Oscar Richard Scholz, who worked on the building side of the business. Trained as a draftsman, Oscar Scholz came to Washington at age sixteen and supervised construction throughout his career.

Other notable apartment buildings, besides the famous Alban Towers, designed by Scholz included 2755 Macomb Street, N.W. (1926), 3707 Woodley Road, N.W. (1926), and the Bishop's House, 3010 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. (1927). Scholz also designed the row of elegant Classical Revival-style town houses in Kalorama at 1806-1818 24<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1924) that was constructed by Baer & Scholz. The firm also built the Blackstone Hotel (1926) at 1016 17<sup>th</sup> St., N.W. (demolished). According to the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Office's Building Permit Database, Robert O. and Oscar R. Scholz are credited with the design of 149 buildings between 1919 and 1947.<sup>15</sup>

The last major project of the firm of Baer & Scholz was the Keystone apartment building. As was typical of the larger Baer & Scholz buildings, it was located on a prominent site: the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, N.W. close to Washington Circle. Unlike many of the firm's earlier buildings, it was distinctly modern in style with Art Deco detailing.

In the early 1930s, Scholz founded his own firm, the Robert O. Scholz Company, with his brother. Although the firm of Baer & Scholz was listed in city directories as late as 1936, it does not appear to have been active in apartment construction after 1931.<sup>16</sup> The Scholz firm was

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February 19, 1951.

<sup>15</sup> District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office's Building Permit Database 2006, funded in part by a U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant administered by the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>16</sup> There are no entries for Baer & Scholz as owner or builder of any apartment buildings constructed after 1931 in

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small: its professional staff consisted of Scholz, his brother Oscar, and a draftsman.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, as the United States emerged from the Depression, Scholz designed six large apartment buildings, including the Munson (1937) and the Milton (1938) in Foggy Bottom. All six apartment buildings have Art Deco detailing. Scholz was interested in technology and innovation, according to his nephew, Robert R. Scholz.<sup>17</sup> He designed decorative elements in aluminum, newly popular in that period. He experimented with systems for cooling apartments by forcing air through hallways and, in 1940, designed one of Washington's first air-conditioned apartment buildings, the General Scott, at 1 Scott Circle, N.W. The other Scholz apartment buildings of this period were the Eddystone at 1301 Vermont Avenue, N.W., (1937) the Bay State at 1701 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., (1939) and the Pall Mall at 1112 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1940).

The principal men involved in the financing, ownership and construction of Scholz's apartment and commercial buildings were a close-knit group of friends who had known each other since the 1920s. Scholz was a yachtsman and some of his business associates were boating companions, as well. These included E. C. Baltz, founder and president of Perpetual Building Association, and Monroe Warren. Scholz listed Ernst as the owner of the Eddystone, Bay State and General Scott apartment buildings.<sup>18</sup>

Scholz's apartments were designed for Washington's middle-class federal office workers. Most of the residents were single or young married couples without families. The apartments were centrally located in the downtown area, on or near major streets. The majority of apartments were planned with efficiencies, and a few one-bedroom units. Although the apartments were relatively small, the lobbies were designed to create an air of elegance. Typical features in-

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the D.C. Apartment Building Survey prepared by the D.C. preservation League and Tracerics in 1987 under the D.C. Office of Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Grant program.

<sup>17</sup> Robert R. Scholz, interview with Andrea F. Schoenfeld, EHT Tracerics, July 18, 2006, Washington, D.C.

<sup>18</sup> Robert O. Scholz File, Board of Examiners and registrars, D.C. Archives, Washington, D.C.

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cluded a step down lobby, designed to give greater height to the lobby within the constraints of the District of Columbia's building height restrictions, reception desk, switchboard and operator to serve residents, domed ceiling with indirect lighting, streamlined detailing and marble floor.

The General Scott and Pall Mall were the last large downtown apartment buildings Scholz designed. Many of his later buildings were for commercial use, although he also designed the suburban Pooks Hill Apartments in Bethesda, Maryland in 1949. Scholz's brother and business partner Oscar Scholz died in 1954.<sup>19</sup> After his brother's death, Scholz became involved in oil drilling investments and did not actively continue his architectural practice, although he still maintained an office. Scholz officially retired from his architectural practice in 1954 and died at the age of 82 in 1978.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "O. R. Scholz, Official of Architects and Contractors Firm," *Evening Star*, 23 November 1954.

<sup>20</sup> "Robert O. Scholz, Architect, Builder in Area 50 Years," *The Washington Post*, 8 June 1978, C16.

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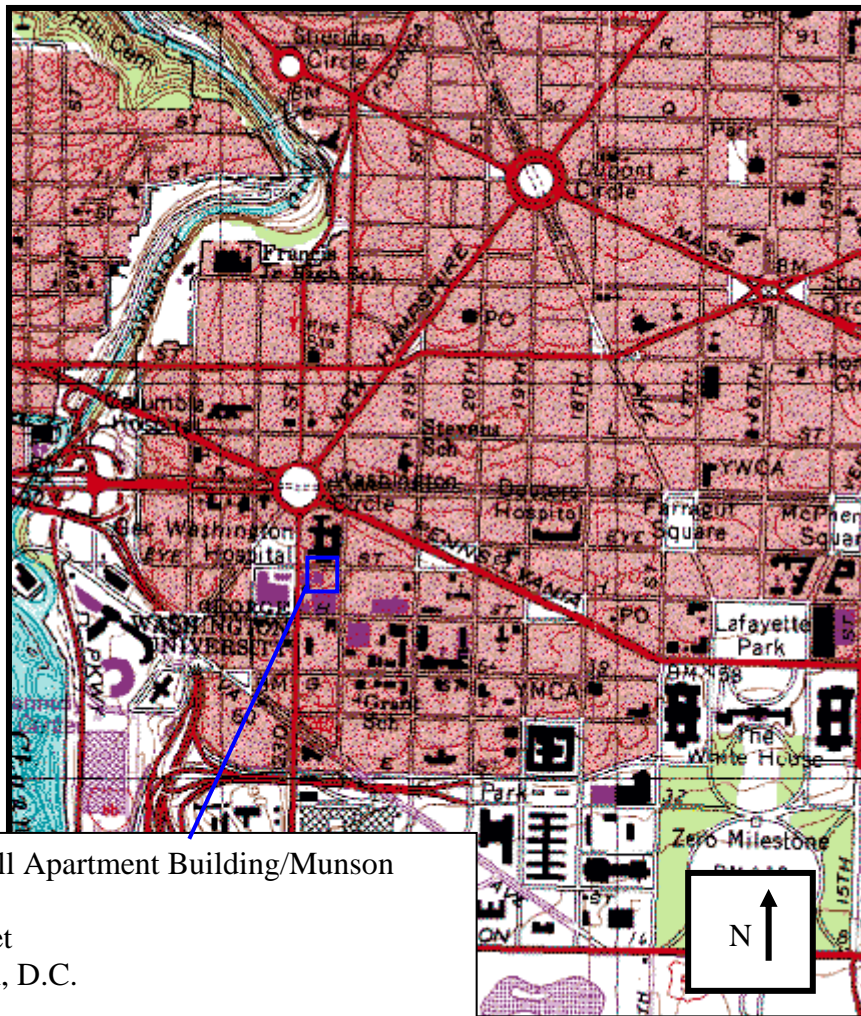
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USGS Quad Map: Washington West, *Topozone* 2006



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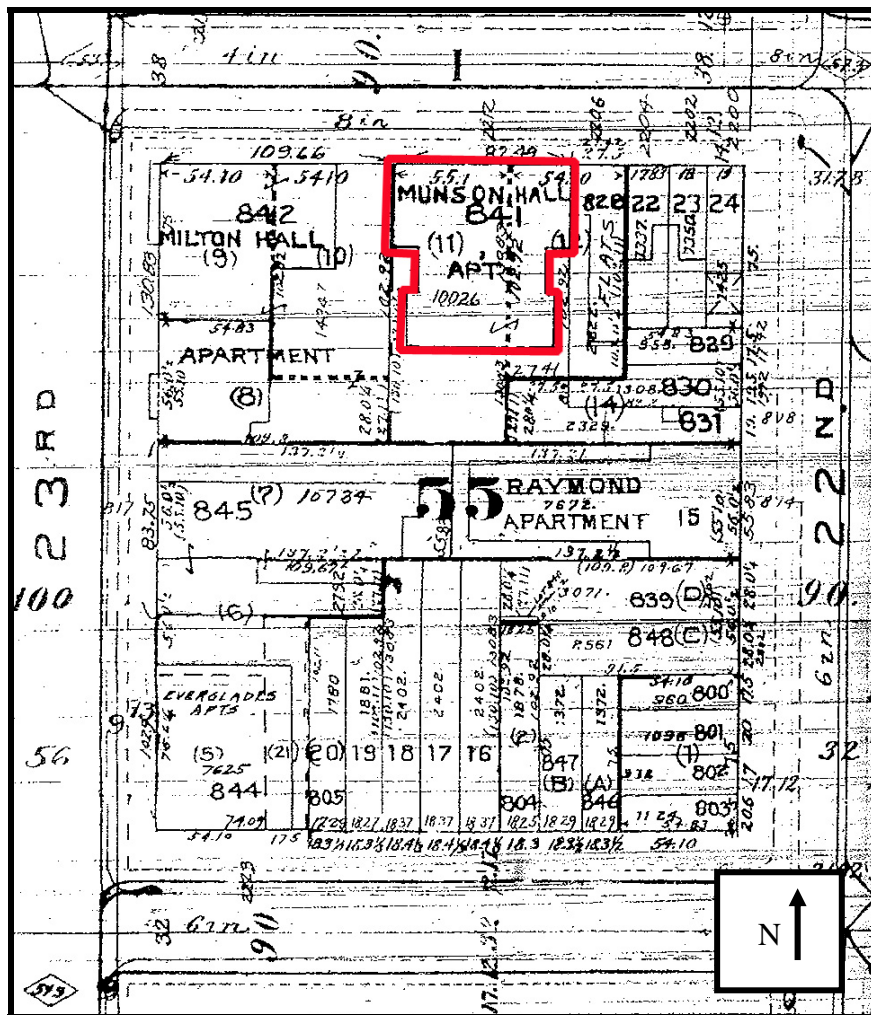
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*Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District of Columbia, Vol. 1 (1960), plan 8.*





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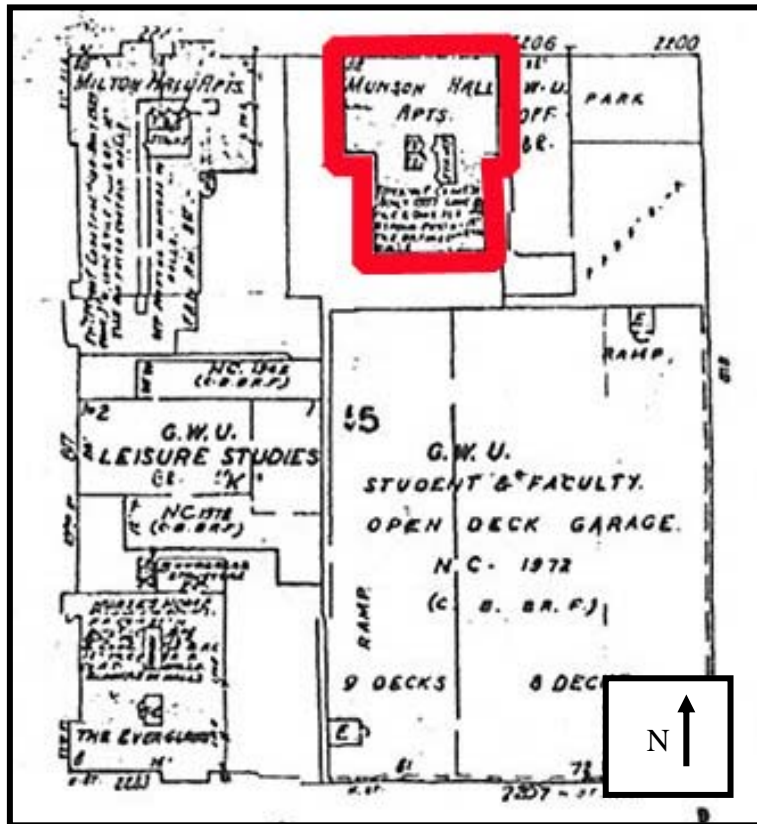
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*The Sanborn Building and Property Atlas of Washington, D.C., Vol. 4 (1999), sheet 44.*





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*Washington Star*, July 21, 1940

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1 room, foyer, sun porch, dressing room, kitchen, bath, 2 exposures. **\$56.50**

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**RENT includes ELECTRICITY**  
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A detailed black and white architectural illustration of the Munson Hall apartment building, a multi-story structure with many windows and a prominent entrance on the ground floor. The building is shown from a low angle, emphasizing its height. There are some trees and a street in front of the building.