

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

VLR - 9/13/00  
NRHP - 2/2/01

**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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional 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 The Tuckahoe Apartments

other names/site number DHR File No. 127-5820

**2. Location**

street & number 5621 Cary Street Road not for publication N/A

city or town Richmond vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county \_\_\_\_\_ code 760 zip code 23226

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property

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.)

*M. Cath. Sloan* 12/12/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of 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
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) _____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
		structures
		objects
2	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)

Georgian Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

LIMESTONE

roof OTHER

other CONCRETE

METAL: CAST IRON

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1929

**Significant Dates**

1929

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

W. Duncan Lee, Architect

**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 :

Virginia Dept. Of Historic Resources

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.75 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>277090</u>	<u>4160700</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**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 Anna M. R. Gray and Mary Harding Sadler, R.A.

organization Tuckahoe Association Board of Directors date June 14, 2000

street & number 5621 Cary Street Road telephone 804-282-3341

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23226

**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 Anna M. R. Gray, representative, for the owners of The Tuckahoe Apt.s (see continuation sheet)

street & number 5621 Cary Street Road telephone 804-282-3341

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23226

**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 the 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 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Tuckahoe Apartments are housed in a massive, six-story, red brick, Georgian Revival building fronting on Cary Street Road at the southern terminus of Three Chopt Road, in Richmond's Westhampton neighborhood. Constructed in 1928 as a luxury "apartment-hotel", the Tuckahoe's shared amenities still include the original brick-walled entry court, parlors, galleries, solarium, and roof terraces. The building's architecture echoes the stylistic themes of Tidewater Virginia's Colonial plantations, with jack arches, pediments, quoins, and traditional moldings. Its symmetrical footprint, conceived as two conjoined crosses, affords multiple exposures from a majority of the apartments. Octagonal stair and elevator lobbies at the center of each "cross" provide access to the apartment units on seven levels. The golf course of the Country Club of Virginia spreads in a green apron across from the Tuckahoe's facade. Neighboring the property are the exclusive homes lining Cary Street Road and its side streets, which fall to the James River less than a half mile south. The Tuckahoe was designed by architect W. Duncan Lee, one of a select group of architects favored by Richmond society in the first decades of the 20th century. The historic property includes two contributing resources: the apartment building and a site, the entry court.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

### Setting

The property for which Duncan Lee designed The Tuckahoe Apartments consisted of two unimproved lots in an irregular parcel of 1.75 acres on the south side of Cary Street Road in Henrico County. The land was bordered on the west by Hampton Hills Lane and on the east by Rio Vista Lane. Perched on the edge of an escarpment formed by a meander bend of the James River, the site for The Tuckahoe Apartments needed a lot of preparation. To level a downhill slope to the west, the eastern area was deeply excavated and shored up with a brick retaining wall ending in a steep ramp for motor car access by way of Rio Vista Lane to the building's rear entrances. At the front and center of the property a large hollow centered by a boulder took the excavated dirt as fill. Neighborhood boys fancied this hollow an old Indian campfire site and mourned its passing.<sup>1</sup>

Duncan Lee's plans called for a six-story structure enclosing 98,700 square feet. The newly graded site barely contained the 244 foot length. The depth, 138 feet, was no problem; nonetheless, Lee sited the building as far forward as possible, pressing the circular drive at its front entrance against the recently paved Cary Street Road. A grassy playground at the rear provided play space for children. On nearby Maple Avenue, Lee designed a one-story heated garage in brick and stucco to shelter 125 motor cars; the monthly fee of \$8.00 included valet parking. A period document indicates that the garage incorporated an "eighteen-hole golf course;"<sup>2</sup> no doubt one of the new miniature golf courses that had joined auction bridge and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 7 Page 2

mahjong as American pastimes. Today the garage houses maintenance operations for St. Catherine's School.

Lee's design brought the Tuckahoe's visitors from Cary Street Road through a brick and cast iron fence and into a circular courtyard paved with slate. The fence recalls the elegant *clairvoyée* that stretches across the "land front," or north elevation, of Westover Plantation (NHL 1960, VLR 1969). Echoing Westover's details, the brick piers of the Tuckahoe's fence have molded stone caps with elaborate finials including spheres, pineapples, and vases. The piers are spanned with brick knee-walls surmounted by an open, wrought iron fence. The courtyard, framed by the Tuckahoe's projecting wings, is reminiscent of the circular forecourt at Mount Airy (NHL 1960, VLR 1969). As with this famous Richmond County landmark, the visitor ascends stairs from the entry court, crosses a raised terrace and arrives at the centered entry. Again, similar to Mount Airy, the entry bay projects slightly, and is marked at the roofline with a pediment, at the base with rusticated stone, and at its sides with stone quoins.

### Exterior

The imposing facade presents a formal, five-part, Palladian composition, the centerpiece of which is a domed cupola. The cupola's open arches and balustrade recall the Bell Tower in Richmond's Capitol Square. The building's base is fully articulated at the center, with rusticated limestone framing the entry, and parging on the exterior walls of the public gallery. The attic, which encloses the penthouse apartments and shared solarium, extends between the two elevator towers, and repeats the arched windows and parging of the base. Its solid balustrade, atop the attic's molded entablature, contrasts with the open cast stone balustrade enclosing the terrace and edging the roofline of the north-facing wings.

The building's red brick walls are all laid up in English bond. The windows' gauged brick jack arches are accented with cast stone keystones and molded sills. The keystones of the first floor gallery's arched windows are scrolls. The sheer mass of the building is skillfully broken up, not only by the projecting wings, which are delineated as flanking pavilions, but also by a decorative program of cream-colored classical ornament, including molded string courses, a denticulated cornice, and stone quoins. Even the elevator penthouses are dressed up as handsome roof garden "outbuildings" with slated hipped roofs, bulls eye windows, and brick quoins.

The Tuckahoe's rear elevation, and the east and west side elevations, are carefully considered but clearly secondary, as indicated by the reduced detail. Twin, pedimented rear entry porches supported by paired piers shelter owners arriving from the parking area. The pediments' arched openings frame the fanlights and transoms over French doors entering into the shared "Lounge Room" on the east end and into the "Card Room" on the west. Today these rooms are known as the East and West Parlors. The seven original fire escapes are recessed unobtrusively at inside corners and side walls. These open steel stairs wrap around electrified dumbwaiters that convey parcels from the ground level to the kitchen doors.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 7 Page 3

**Interior**

None of Lee's architectural drawings for The Tuckahoe Apartments survive, but floor plans in an early promotional brochure illustrate sixty-four apartments varying in size from one to seven rooms (comprising a total of 306 rooms). Most of the larger apartments included maid's rooms, and additional maid's rooms with communal baths were built into the basement. Thanks to the building's wings, most apartments had multiple outside exposures; the larger apartments received light and air from three directions, a rare amenity in an apartment house. The floor plans include 110 bathrooms which featured ceramic tile in "stylish art deco colors" (lavender, rose, green) or classic black and white. In their kitchens tenants enjoyed "the last word" in appliance design, and washing machines were available gratis in the basement laundry rooms. At the top of the building, across from the penthouse entrance doors, Lee created sunrooms where tenants and their guests could exclaim over the views and, on the adjacent rooftops, gather for dancing to the music of records played on a Victrola. Each end of the building is served by a generous octagonal lobby with an elevator and an open cast-iron stair with marble (first floor) or terrazzo treads.

Additional services were offered Tuckahoe tenants by commercial enterprises that took space in the building. In 1930, Ligon's Pharmacy rented a large basement space with patio entrance on the east side of the building. It was supplanted in 1933 by Ella Binford's Tea Room, which attracted patrons from all over town and flourished under various names until 1958. For a while there was a beauty shop in the basement of the west side. The Hampton Gift Shop occupied a neighboring location, and the English Sports Shop (known familiarly as the "Bermuda Shop") did a lively business in women's wear from 1936-1950.<sup>3</sup>

Barely mentioned in The Tuckahoe Apartment's early promotional brochure are the spaces many consider The Tuckahoe Apartments' finest features: the reception lobby and long galleries whose arched openings give onto the two spacious parlors that occupy most of the first floor's central section. Beneath twelve foot high ceilings Duncan Lee deployed a progression of arcaded walls and ranks of French doors with arching overdoors. Crystal chandeliers and brass wall sconces gleam above the gallery's black and white terrazzo floors and the parlors' golden oak parquet. Deep dentils distinguish the cornice moldings and a carved chair rail tops the paneled wainscot. Richly detailed carving surrounds the East Parlor's fireplace, whose mantel and eared over-mantel derive from similar treatments at Westover Plantation. The ambiance is that of a great hall in a proud Virginia plantation house; three-quarters of a century after construction these public spaces still comprise one of Richmond's most striking interiors. Some elements, such as the oak parquet floors, molded cornices, and French doors, Lee carried over as signature elements of the apartments.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 7 Page 4

---

### The Building Today

Though the building retains a high level of integrity, this is not to say The Tuckahoe hasn't changed over the years. The original sixty-four apartments grew to sixty-eight in the 1950s when four garden apartments were created at ground level, then were reduced by apartment mergers to a total of fifty-nine, the current number. The maid's rooms have long since been converted to other usage. A majority of the original windows remain though the anodized aluminum frames of 20-year-old storm windows do the architecture a disservice. The playground at the rear of the building has long since been transformed into parking spaces, and in front, Cary Street Road is now a paved raceway for motorists hurrying to or from the vast sprawl of suburbs to the west.

The Tuckahoe Apartments will be 75 years old in 2004. Constructed in the days when "built to last" amounted to an American creed, the great building conveys to the passerby no sign of deterioration. True, here and there molded window sills have crumbled or eroded, but The Tuckahoe façade in sum still replicates Duncan Lee's 1928 presentation portrait. And on the inside, the thick gypsum block walls and plaster moldings steadfastly resist alteration, the solid wood doors continue to close true, and age enhances the golden oak parquetry.

---

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Oral communication with Thomas W. Purcell, Jr., 1999.

<sup>2</sup>Manuscripts/letters of J. Alexander McCrone, Treasurer, Monroe Terrace Corporation, 1922-1937. Archives of the Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup>Hill's Richmond City Directories, Vols. 1930-1960.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 5The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Tuckahoe Apartments were built in 1929 to provide elegant dwellings for those seeking year-round, suburban, apartment life or for owners of country estates who needed a *pied-à-terre* in the Metropolitan area. Officers of the Rosewood Construction Company, the Tuckahoe's original developer, chose Duncan Lee as their architect. The monumental, Georgian Revival apartment building is significant at the local level under *National Register Criterion C*, for the quality of its architecture. Built during the architect's prime, the Tuckahoe is the largest building Lee is known to have designed. The building handsomely exemplifies the architect's ongoing romance with Virginia's history, as expressed in his unabashed appropriation and reinterpretation of architectural features from the Commonwealth's venerated Colonial plantations. This affinity, shared among traditionalists, first took hold at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition in Norfolk, and it continues to dominate the state's residential buildings. W. Duncan Lee, a master architect in early 20th century Richmond, was one of Virginia's most capable proponents of the Colonial Revival style. The Tuckahoe Apartments, which retains an excellent level of integrity on the interior and exterior, is among his most prominent commissions.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND****The Beginnings**

As the stock market soared in the spring of 1928, ground was broken at 5621 Cary Street Road in Henrico County, Virginia for The Tuckahoe Apartments. It would be "Richmond's first suburban apartment hotel,"<sup>1</sup> the builders announced, located near the Country Club of Virginia in the rapidly growing streetcar suburb of Westhampton, seven miles west of the central city. Eventually, the builders prophesied, the city would expand to include it, "as in the case of the Wardman Park in Washington, D.C."<sup>2</sup> Its estimated cost was one million dollars. The appointed architect: Virginia-born Duncan Lee, whose presentation drawing was reproduced with the newspaper announcement. It depicted a monumental central section six stories high plus cupola, with great wings extending outward, all this of red brick in the Georgian Revival style, with balustrades, keystones, quoins, cornices and other traditional embellishments laid on royally.

Richmonders John B. Swartwout, Esq. and bank president William B. Habliston, had purchased the lots in 1910 at a cost of \$2,175 (in 1999 the land was appraised at \$1,032,500). When Habliston died in 1926, he willed his half-ownership to Swartwout; the deed of conveyance was signed by Swartwout and his wife Rosa "operating as principals of the Rosewood Construction Company."<sup>3</sup> Touting both the advantages of modern appliances and an exclusive address, the Tuckahoe's 1929 marketing brochure laid claim to:

...the best social atmosphere and environment in or around the City, and unsurpassed educational and religious advantages, and one finds an ideal

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 8 Page 6

community in which to enjoy life. Here children may be reared in the midst of refinement and culture, and may find playmates among children of families with whom they may not be ashamed in later life to be acquainted.<sup>4</sup>

The Tuckahoe Apartments was the third of three luxury apartment houses to arise in Richmond in as many years. The other two were sited in conventional downtown locations: the nine-story Stuart Court, completed in 1926 on Monument Avenue at Stuart Circle, and the twelve-story Prestwoud on Franklin Street at Monroe Park. Both were within walking distance of the city's first authentic apartment house, The Chesterfield (1902).

In the newspaper story announcing the coming of The Tuckahoe Apartments, general contractor P. Joseph Beattie<sup>5</sup> was identified as president of the Rosewood Construction Company, the building's owner and developer. While Beattie headed the construction effort and served as project spokesman in published progress reports, his partner John Swartwout provided his expertise as a lawyer and developer. Duncan Lee, Joe Beattie, and John Swartwout had worked together in the early 1920s in the design and construction of Swartwout's picturesque home at 5800 Three Chopt Road, just east of the Country Club's fairways.<sup>6</sup> Lee designed the Swartwout house in the Norman style: stucco with half-timbering, multiple gables, tall chimneys, and a round-tower entry for motorists arriving from St. Catherine's Lane. A short walk south down the lane took John Swartwout<sup>7</sup> to Cary Street Road, where he could watch The Tuckahoe Apartments going up.

The Tuckahoe's site was ideal for the project, particularly in light of the boom in Westhampton's real estate sales. By 1928 when construction got under way, prime lots in Westhampton were scarce, and Monument Avenue and the Fan District had lost some of their social cachet. Across Cary Street lay the Country Club of Virginia, which opened in 1910. Eight years earlier the electric streetcar had arrived in the area, and "Westhampton Stop No. 25" became a magnet. By 1910-1911, notes Fan District historian, Drew Carneal, "some 20-30 attractive houses were built in Westhampton by 'country lovers.'"<sup>8</sup> In the 1910s three schools with impeccable credentials left their downtown addresses for spacious Westhampton tracts; Richmond College (now the University of Richmond), Chamberlayne School for Boys (now St. Christopher's School), and Virginia Randolph Ellett's School for Girls (now St. Catherine's School).

### The building's early history

The first tenants began moving into The Tuckahoe Apartments in the summer of 1929. What appears to be an initial occupancy analysis lists a total of forty-one tenants who had leased forty-seven apartments (six tenants had rented two apartments each). A "Schedule of Rents" from the period sets a low of \$40/month for one room/one bath and tops out at \$275/month for a penthouse of seven rooms/three baths. The rent included electricity "for cooking, lighting, and refrigeration." It also paid for the services of a staff that included a "mechanic," day and night firemen for the coal-fired boilers, janitor, maids. They were headed by Joe Beattie's sister, Helen

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 7The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Lipscomb, who took charge at the front desk in exchange for a furnished apartment and \$100/month. She held this post for twenty-five years.

In October of 1929 the stock market took its famous nosedive, and in 1930 a "Tuckahoe Apartments situation" was documented in a series of letters dated February through June.<sup>9</sup> The correspondents were Perry Seay, vice president of The Tuckahoe's mortgager, American Home Bank and Trust Co., and principals of the Monroe Terrace Corporation, whose holdings included Alfred Bossom's recently completed Prestwoud (1928) and the twelve-story Monroe Terrace Apartments (1915), also designed by Bossom, a block away from The Prestwoud. The letters discuss possible sale of The Tuckahoe Apartments to the Monroe Terrace Corporation, whose president, broker Frederick P. Nolting, recommends a reduction in rents to ease a sticky financial situation. Nothing came of the acquisition scenario, and there is no evidence that the tentative reductions pencilled into the margins of the preserved Schedule of Rents were instituted.

### From 1936 to the Present

Research sheds no more light on The Tuckahoe Apartments' affairs until 1936, when a small news story in the Richmond News Leader reported a large reversal: the Rosewood Construction Company was bankrupt and The Tuckahoe Apartments had been sold on April 24 in a public auction conducted on the front steps of the building by Morton G. Thalhimer.<sup>10</sup> The trustees were Lewis Powell, Jr., and David J. Mays, with Perry Seay representing American Home Bank and Trust. The bidding was "lively," according to the report, and within half an hour the bank had bought the house and garage for \$350,000. (Payments had reduced the mortgage to \$252,000; bonds outstanding totaled \$417,000.) After refinancing the property, the bank's receivers operated The Tuckahoe Apartments for four years.

In 1940, after four years of receivership, The Tuckahoe Apartments were sold to a group of investors headed by Walter F. Lipford, Richmond, for \$335,000.<sup>11</sup> Three Washington, D.C., businessmen trading as the Tuckahoe Investment Company paid Lipford heirs \$900,000 for the building in 1964.<sup>12</sup> In 1967 Anne Holt Massey, trustee for investors operating as the Tuckahoe Group, bought The Tuckahoe Apartments for \$1,025,000.<sup>13</sup> Principals of the Investors Development Corporation paid \$3 million for The Tuckahoe Apartments in 1980, and in 1981 converted the rental building into a condominium.<sup>14</sup>

### The Architect: Duncan Lee

In 1928, when at 44 years old, Duncan Lee was awarded the commission to design the Tuckahoe, he was "the best known designer of fine homes in the city...with a growing reputation nationwide for residential design."<sup>15</sup> Born in Ashland, Virginia, 15 miles north of Richmond, he was the youngest of four children born to Clifton Lee and the former Martha W. Gatch of Norfolk. His birth certificate confirms his full name as Duncan Lee, but the name's brevity began to bother him when he found himself competing with three big-time New York architects who

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetThe Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, VirginiaSection 8 Page 8

dropped not a syllable of their more ample names: William Lawrence Bottomley, Alfred Charles Bossom, John Russell Pope. Lee took to flourishing his name with a prefixed "W.," and although he laughed about it with his family, he thereafter added the initial to his signature. Today his name routinely appears in the historical record as "W. Duncan Lee" and occasionally as "Wallace Duncan Lee."

Duncan Lee's grandfather, the Rev. Leroy W. Lee, was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk and edited *The Christian Advocate*, a widely read religious periodical of the day published in Richmond.<sup>16</sup> His son Clifton became a realtor active in the Ashland-Richmond area, sending his children to public schools in both localities. Thus Duncan Lee knew the city well by the time he entered architecture in 1904 as a draftsman in the Richmond office of George Russell Tolman, former MIT instructor. Soon Lee moved on to become a partner of the then "dean of Richmond architects," Marion J. Dimmock,<sup>17</sup> and when Dimmock died in 1908 Lee established his own practice and "began a steady climb into the ranks of Richmond's, and the Commonwealth's, most renowned architects."<sup>18</sup>

One of his first commissions was the addition of a large oval dining room to Virginia's Executive Mansion (NHL 1988, VLR 1968), built in 1813 to Alexander Parris' design in Capitol Square. Architectural historian Robert P. Winthrop praises this work as "sensitively handled...not disrupt(ing) the historic character of the house."<sup>19</sup> Lee was soon immersed in designing "the better class of private residences, of which he would design some 300 in Richmond."<sup>20</sup> To the grandeur of Monument Avenue (NHL 1997, VLR 1969), where "Duncan Lee and William Lawrence Bottomley were the most expensive and the most sought after" architects, Lee contributed thirteen important residences.<sup>21</sup> To Richmond's famous Fan District (NRHP 1985, VLR 1985) he added "a number of smaller-but-upscale dwellings" and the "refined and civilized" Sussex Apartments, in which he adroitly combined several revival features.<sup>22</sup>

Richmond's prestigious "West End," which included Westhampton, became Duncan Lee country. Dozens of his designs have been documented along Cary Street and Three Chopt Roads; in the enclaves of Westmoreland Place, Stratford Crescent, Hampton Gardens; near the Country Club's entrance on St. Andrew's Lane. Many more await identification, for Lee's records were lost to us, and his oeuvre has never been researched with the diligence due his talent and versatility. "Lee made use of numerous styles and seems to have been skilled equally at all of them," observes Winthrop. "Spanish, Georgian, Norman, or Cotswold Cottage, he designed fine examples of each."<sup>23</sup> These designs for city living established his reputation, but his country houses were his masterworks. In particular, American architecture owes him a debt for the key role he played in the preservation of two of Virginia's great plantation houses and the recreation of a third:

Carter's Grove (NRHP1969, VLR 1969), in James City County, had stood essentially unaltered since the 1750s until Duncan Lee, with the patronage of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald McCrae, undertook its extensive "renascence," as he modestly called it.<sup>24</sup> Tuckahoe (NHL 1969,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetThe Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, VirginiaSection 8 Page 9

VLR1968), west of Richmond, built in the early 1700s by a scion of Virginia's illustrious Randolph family, was acquired in 1935 by Mr. and Mrs. N. Addison Baker; they commissioned Lee to supervise the meticulous repairs and renovations that brought new life and comfort to the H-shaped mansion.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Evelynton (NRHP1989, VLR 1988), near Charles City, was designed by Lee for Mr. and Mrs. John Augustine Ruffin, Jr., to replace a dwelling built by an earlier Ruffin on land bought from William Byrd II. Encompassing 15,000 square feet of Georgian Revival architecture and appointments, it was completed in 1937.<sup>26</sup>

In 1931 Duncan Lee entered six projects in the architectural exhibits section of the "Tournament of Arts and Crafts" sponsored by the Richmond Academy of Arts.<sup>27</sup> He carried off top honors in the Residences Category for his design of a country house, "Glen Roy" (1927), the magnificent Westover-style mansion Lee designed for H. Watkins Ellerson, president of the Albemarle Paper Manufacturing Company.<sup>18</sup> Lee's commission to design The Tuckahoe Apartments had followed closely the Ellerson commission.<sup>28</sup> There were ninety architectural exhibits in all; including Marcellus Wright's design for the John Marshall Hotel and Baskerville & Lambert's submittal for the Richmond Public Library. In addition to "Glen Roy" Lee's entries included his presentation drawing of The Tuckahoe Apartments, a large work of art, 38" x19.5" meticulously rendered in pencil with tinted washes. The drawing now hangs in the Tuckahoe's east parlor.

After Lee completed his work for the Tuckahoe and only months after the building opened, the Great Depression took hold, and bad economic times deepened in the ensuing years. Architectural commissions were all but non-existent. In 1936 Duncan Lee sold the house he had built for himself, his wife, and son at 12 Stonehurst Green, very near the Country Club's tennis courts.<sup>29</sup> The Lees moved back to a townhouse at 1603 Davis Avenue in the Fan District, where they had lived earlier in his career.

Duncan Lee died in Richmond on March 13, 1952, at the age of 67, and was buried in the family plot in Hollywood Cemetery. He and his wife, the former Elizabeth Marbury Everett of Washington, D.C., had moved ten years earlier from the Davis Avenue house to an apartment at 1208-A West Franklin, across the street from St. James Episcopal Church, where Lee worshipped. The newspaper accounts of his death emphasized Lee's "specialty of country estates and the restoration of Colonial mansions."<sup>30</sup> His membership in the Richmond Light Infantry Blues was noted, and his affiliations with the Commonwealth Club, the Country Club of Virginia, and the American Institute of Architects, as well as his appointment to the Advisory Committee of Architects for Colonial Williamsburg. Sadly, Duncan Lee directed his family to destroy his records after his death.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 8 Page 10

### Conclusion

The Tuckahoe is owned and operated by its residents who elect from among themselves the members of a Board of Directors. Preservation issues command prime time at the Board's meetings. Those who choose to live at The Tuckahoe consider its architectural character central to its charm, and apartments do not as a rule last long on the market. Handsome detailing is combined with many-windowed rooms and other appealing amenities. Lee's design for the Tuckahoe's Georgian facade and lofty lobby convey the qualities of a great plantation house that somehow found its way into the city.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> "Will put up \$1,000,000 apartment here." *Richmond News Leader*, March 24, 1929, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> The property was included in land annexed by the City of Richmond in 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Records of the Circuit Court of Henrico, 1926, Deed Book 236C, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Early promotional brochure for The Tuckahoe Apartments. Copy in the collection of Mrs. Anna M. R. Gray.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Joseph Beattie died in his native Richmond on June 19, 1943, at the age of 52. His father, of Scottish lineage, contributed as a stone mason to the construction of the Jefferson-designed State Capitol in downtown Richmond. At his death Beattie was president of Colonial Homes, Inc. He built many residences in various sections of the city, and after masterminding the construction of The Tuckahoe Apartments, he was commissioned to build the Lock Lane Apartments (1938) at 4701 Grove Avenue, where he and his wife, the former Hettie Gary, lived for a time. After her husband's death Mrs. Beattie lived at The Tuckahoe Apartments until 1980, when she moved to Charleston, West Virginia, to live with a son, P.J. Beattie, Jr. At age 84, the younger Beattie survives his father, as do five grandchildren.

<sup>6</sup> "Attractive new home on old Norman lines." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 9, 1923.

<sup>7</sup> John Swartwout was noted in his obituary as "long well-known here as a member of the bar and as a real estate developer [who] took an active part in the development of various sections of the city or its suburbs." In the early 1920s he partnered his father-in-law, LeRoy E. Brown, principal in the real estate firm of J. Thompson Brown & Co., in developing "Grove Crest," a group of homes near Grove and Malvern Boulevard. He was a member of both the Richmond and Virginia State Bar Associations, and his club memberships included the Commonwealth Club and the Country Club of Virginia. He was buried in Hollywood Cemetery. Two grandchildren, Mrs. Susan Swartwout and John B. Swartwout III, are living in Richmond as this is written.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 8 Page 11

<sup>8</sup> Drew StJ. Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District*. Council of Historic Richmond Foundation, 1996, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> Manuscripts/letters of J. Alexander McCrone, Treasurer, Monroe Terrace Corporation, 1922-1937. Archives of the Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>10</sup> "Tuckahoe property sold at auction." *Richmond News Leader*, April 25, 1936.

<sup>11</sup> "Tuckahoe sale authorized by court." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 17, 1940.

<sup>12</sup> "Apartment building to be sold." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 31, 1964.

<sup>13</sup> "Quick turnover: apartments sold for \$1,025,000. *Richmond News Leader*, September 22, 1967.

<sup>14</sup> "Investors buy The Tuckahoe." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 19, 1980; "Apartments sold for \$3 million." *Richmond News Leader*, October 20, 1980; "Apartment conversion proceeds." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 15, 1981.

<sup>15</sup> Robert P. Winthrop, *Architecture in Downtown Richmond*. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1982, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> *History of Virginia, Vol. 4, Biography*. Chicago/New York: American Historical Society, 1924, pp. 28-30.

<sup>17</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, a Biographical Dictionary*. Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Carneal, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>19</sup> Winthrop, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>20</sup> *History of Virginia*, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Kathy Edwards, Esme Howard, and Toni Prawl, *Monument Avenue: History and Architecture*. Washington: Historic American Buildings Survey, 1992, pp. 52, 231.

<sup>22</sup> Carneal, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>23</sup> Winthrop, op. cit., p. 240.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 8 Page 12

<sup>24</sup> Duncan Lee, "The Renaissance of Carter's Grove." *Architecture Magazine*, Vol. 67, No. 4, April 1933, pp. 185-194; Mark R. Wenger, *Carter's Grove: the Story of a Virginia Plantation*. Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1994. In recognition of this work Lee was appointed to the Advisory Committee of Architects for Colonial Williamsburg. Today, as a star in the Williamsburg Foundation's firmament, Carter's Grove is the target of 200,000 visitors every summer.

<sup>25</sup> Jessie Ball Kruzen, *Tuckahoe Plantation*. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1975, pp. 12-13, dust jacket.

<sup>26</sup> Ann M. R. Gray, onsite interview with Evelynton staff, 1999; David King Gleason, *Virginia's Plantation Homes*. Baton Rouge/London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, p. 26. Today Evelynton is the locus of guided tours and catered social functions directed by a granddaughter, Lisa Ruffin Harrison. Her brother, Saunders Ruffin, continues to make Evelynton his home.

<sup>27</sup> Programme of the first Tournament of Arts and Crafts, conducted by the Richmond Academy of Arts, 1931; "Reviewing the Academy," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 2, 1931.

<sup>28</sup> Sited on a rise at the end of a long drive through woodland, Glen Roy is a Georgian Revival powerhouse. Flanked by unusually large two-story wings, a central section three stories high carries the requisite complement of dormers and chimneys. Telescoping out to the east are more two-story wings, one for servants quarters, one a garage. All this plus a capacious basement add up to an estimated 22,000 square feet. The superb woodwork designed by Lee for Glen Roy is said to have been executed by Italian craftsmen; according to one awed visitor of the time, "The china closets in the dining room are the most exquisite and beautiful things you have ever seen." The current owners acquired Glen Roy in 1945 after Ellerson died (and his widow moved to The Tuckahoe Apartments); they have carefully preserved the great sheaf of Lee's architectural drawings entrusted to them by Mrs. Ellerson.

<sup>29</sup> An "Irish cottage," Lee called it: two and a half stories of stucco with flush-mounted, rough-hewn lintels above casement windows, its roof covered with thick slates worked into eyebrows over the second-floor bays. In the rear, a similarly distinctive garage sheltered the architect's Hispano-Suiza, a rare Spanish "sporting machine" of the day.

<sup>30</sup> "Duncan Lee, architect, dies at age 67." *Richmond News Leader*, March 13, 1952.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section Number 9 Page 13

---

**Bibliography**

Will put up \$1,000,000 apartment hotel here. *Richmond News Leader*, 24 March 1929

Drew St. Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District*. Richmond, Council of Historic Richmond Foundation, 1996

Robert P. Winthrop, *Architecture in Downtown Richmond*. Richmond, Whittet and Shepperson, 1982

John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, a Biographical Dictionary*. Richmond, New South Architectural Press, 1997

W. Duncan Lee, *The Renaissance of Carter's Grove: the Story of a Virginia Plantation*. Architecture magazine, Vol. 67, No. 4, April 1933

Mark R. Wenger, *Carter's Grove: the Story of a Virginia Plantation*. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1994

Jessie Ball Thompson Kruzen, *Tuckahoe Plantation*. Richmond, Whittet and Shepperson, 1975

Author's on-site interview with Evelynton staff, 1999

*Programme of the First Tournament of Arts and Crafts*, conducted by the Richmond Academy of Arts 1931. Archives of the Richmond Public (Main) Library

Louis H. Manarin and Clifford C. Dowdey, *History of Henrico County*. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1984

City's largest apartment house nearing completion. *Richmond News Leader*, 22 September 1967

Investors buy The Tuckahoe. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 October 1980; Apartments sold for \$3 million. *Richmond News Leader*, 20 October 1980; Apartment conversation proceeds, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 15 February 1981

Duncan Lee, architect, dies at age 67. *Richmond News Leader*, 13 March 1952

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

The Tuckahoe Apartments  
Richmond, Virginia

Section 10 Page 14

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

All that piece or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Henrico, Va., on the south side of Cary Street Road, or River Road, approximately opposite the entrance to the Country Club of Virginia. Beginning at a point on the said south side of Cary Street Road one hundred (100) feet west of the western line of Rio Vista Lane, and a point being marked by an iron pipe, thence running in a westwardly direction along said south line of Cary Street Road and fronting thereon one hundred and fifty-three and sixty-three hundredths (153.63) feet, thence running back from said front and between lines that are approximately parallel to Rio Vista Lane, the western one of said lines being two hundred and eighteen and sixty-four hundredths (218.64) feet. *Deed Book 236C, Records of the Henrico County (Va.) Circuit Court, dated 6<sup>th</sup> day of May 1926*

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the perimeter of the parcel as described above (designated after annexation by the City of Richmond in 1942 as lots 30-97. See map.) This property has been known as The Tuckahoe Apartments since construction of the building was completed in 1929.

THE TOURNAI APARTMENTS  
CITY OF RICHMOND

W-21-469

CC VA.



THREE CHOPT ROAD

W-21-429

ST. CATHERINE'S LANE

W-21-406

SEE W-21-381  
CARD 7

RIVER ROAD

UTILITY EASTMAN RIV  
TO... 1971  
394.57

CARY ST. AD...  
ROAD

CARY STREET

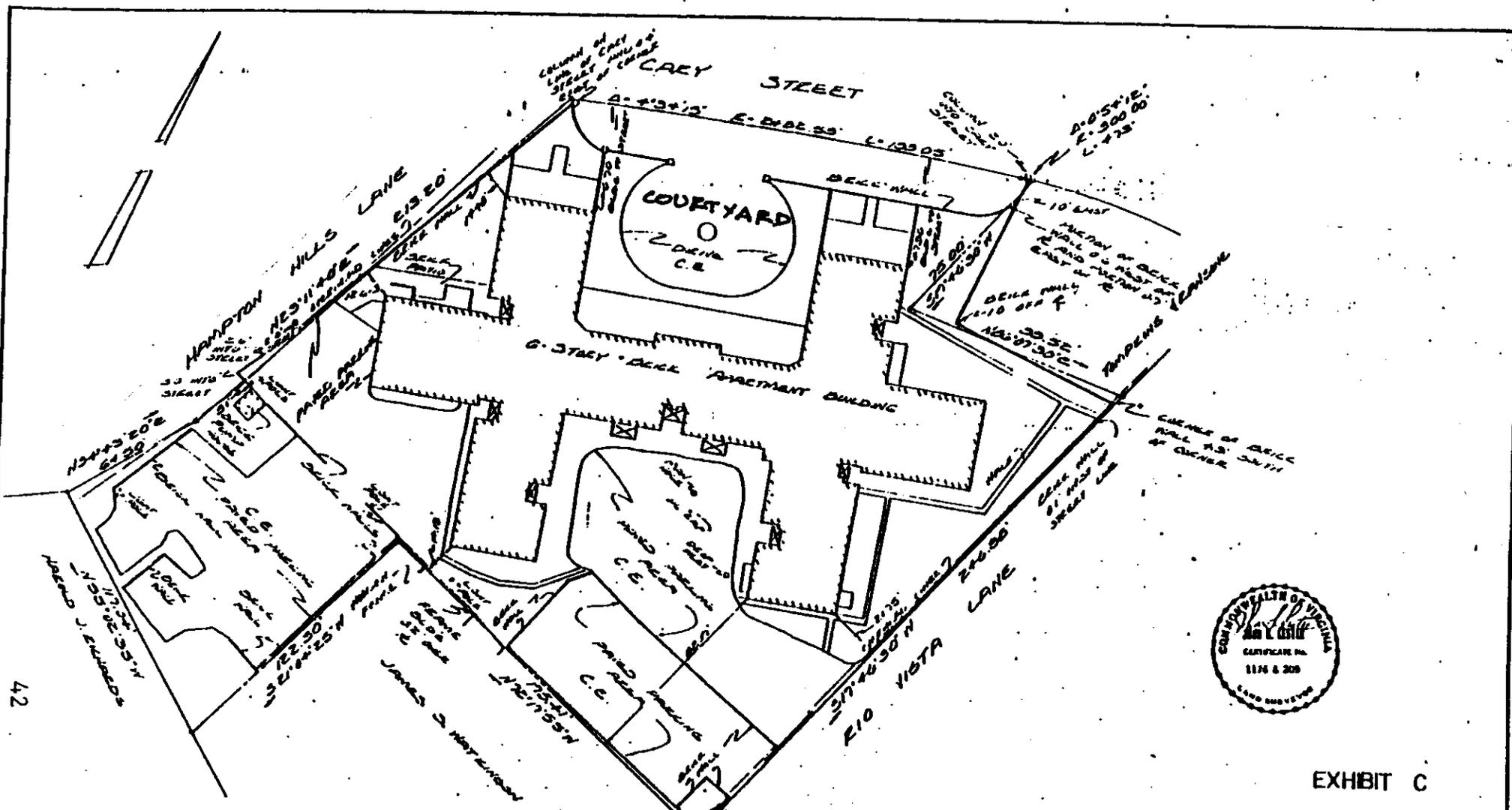
W-22-162

W-22-85

RIO VISTA LANE

BLA WOOD  
ROAD





42

WE DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE SURVEYED THE SUBMITTED LAND AND DO FURTHER CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT SHOWS LOCATION AND DIMENSIONS OF THE SUBMITTED LAND AS ACCURATE AND THIS PLAT COMPLES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 85-79.68(1) OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA AS AMENDED. ALL STRUCTURES ARE COMPLETE, EXCEPT AS SHOWN.

LEWIS & OWENS, INC.  
 BY: *J. L. Lewis*



NOTE:  
 L.C.E. = COMMON ELEMENT

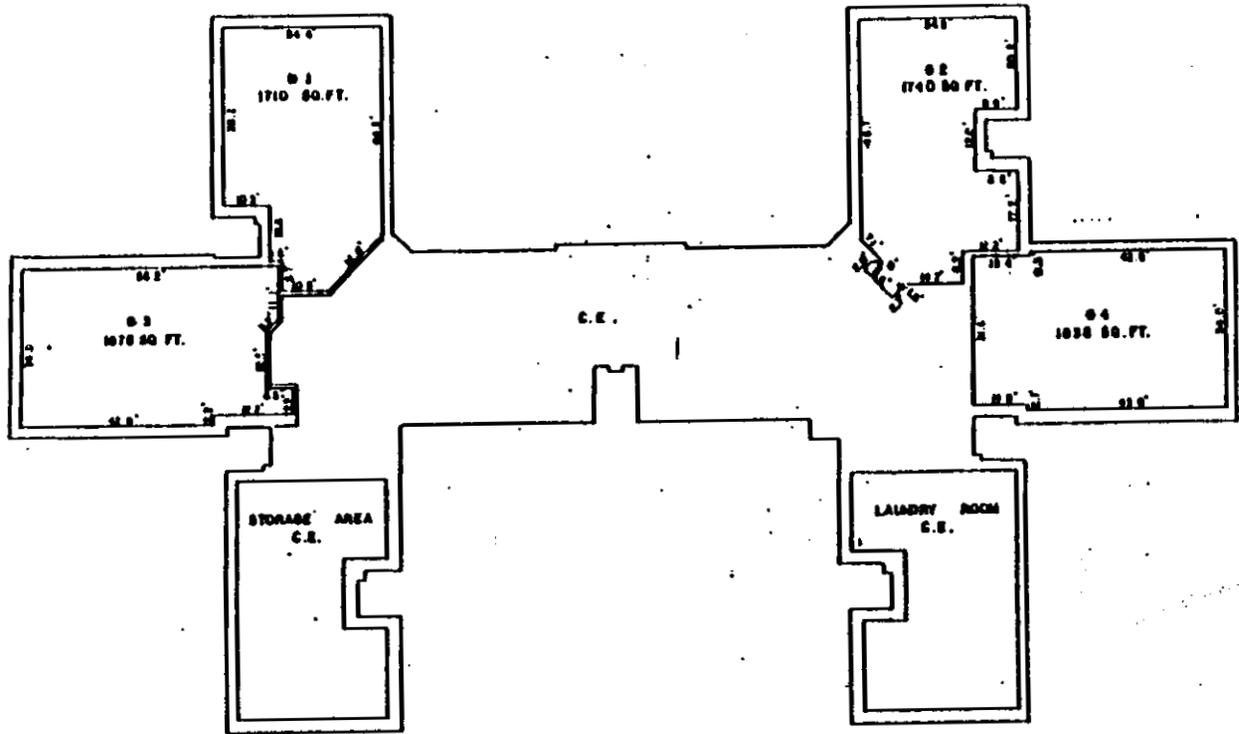
GRAPHIC SCALE  
 0 30 60 90

EXHIBIT C  
**THE TUCKAHOE  
 A CONDOMINIUM**

LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF  
 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 4, 1980  
 LEWIS & OWENS, INC.  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS  
 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

43



### BASEMENT

WE DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE SURVEYED ALL OF THE UNITS OR PORTIONS THEREOF AND FURTHER CERTIFY THAT THE PLANS ARE ACCURATE AND THAT THEY COMPLY WITH SECTION 55-70.50(1) OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, AS AMENDED. ALL STRUCTURES ARE COMPLETE, EXCEPT AS SHOWN.

LEWIS & OWENS, INC.  
 BY: *Robert W. Owens*



NOTES:  
 UNIT - NO. 001-008  
 C.E. - COMMON ELEMENT  
 L.C.E. - LIMITED COMMON ELEMENT

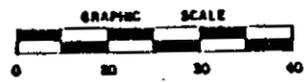
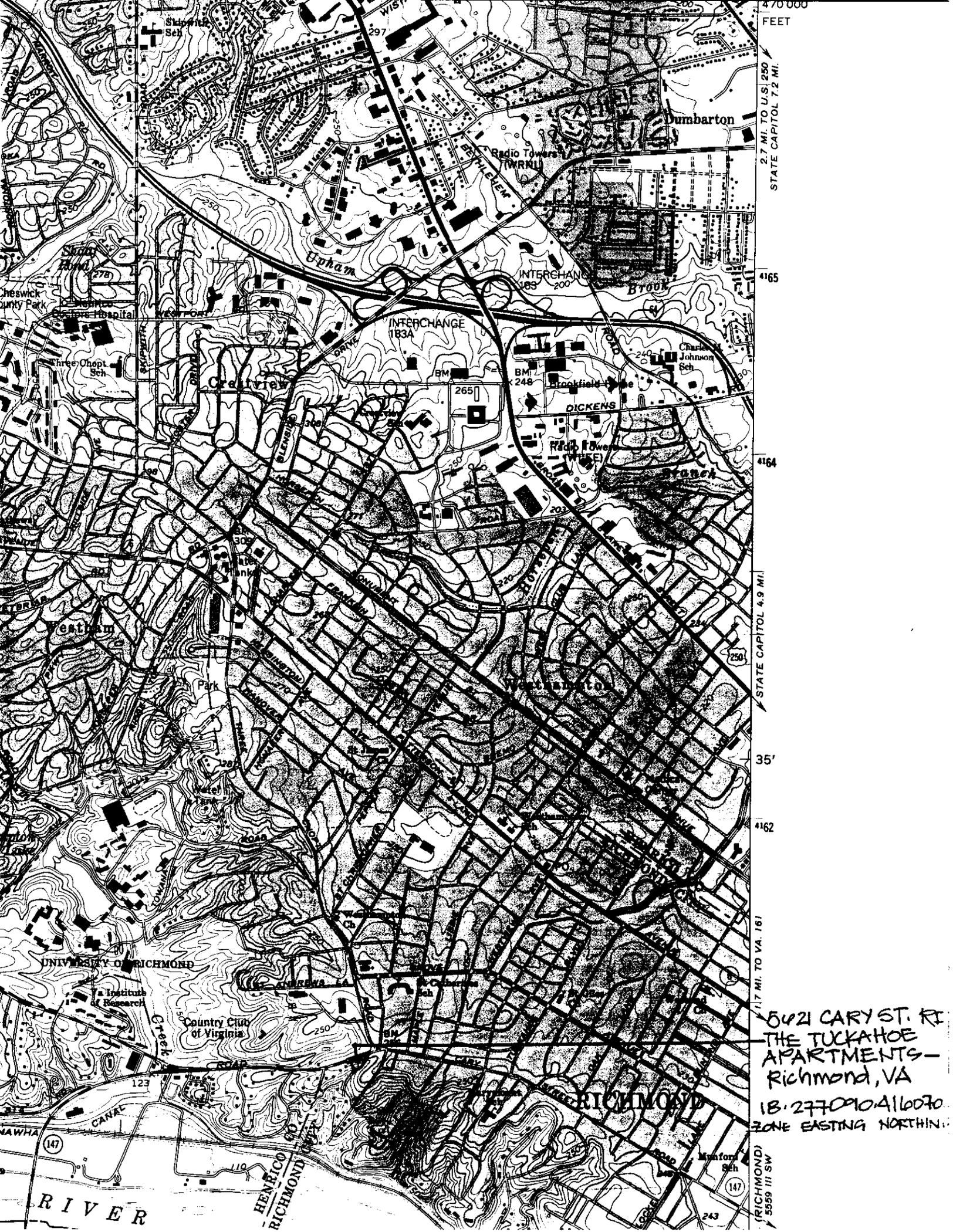


EXHIBIT C-1  
**THE TUCKAHOE  
 A CONDOMINIUM**  
 LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF  
 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA  
 NOVEMBER 11, 1980  
 LEWIS & OWENS, INC.  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS  
 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



470 000

FEET

2.7 MI. TO U.S. 250

STATE CAPITOL 7.2 MI.

4165

4164

4163

4162

4161

4160

4159

4158

4157

4156

4155

4154

4153

4152

4151

4150

4149

4148

4147

4146

4145

4144

4143

4142

4141

4140

4139

4138

4137

4136

4135

4134

4133

4132

4131

4130

4129

4128

4127

4126

4125

4124

4123

4122

4121

4120

4119

1.7 MI. TO VA. 161

5421 CARY ST. RT.  
THE TUCKAHOE  
APARTMENTS -  
Richmond, VA  
18.2770910.416070  
ZONE EASTING NORTHIN.

(RICHMOND)  
F 5559 III SW