

BUCKINGHAM APARTMENTS COMPLEX,
SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX
525 North Glebe Road
Arlington
Arlington County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1339-B

HABS
VA
7-ARL,
13B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
BUCKINGHAM APARTMENTS COMPLEX, SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX
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Location: The swimming pool complex is located at 525 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia.

USGS Washington West, DC, MD & VA
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
18.317500.4304098

Significance: The construction of the swimming pool complex within the Buckingham community is significant as an integral component of the original plan for Buckingham. In the late 1930s, Buckingham was envisioned as a self-contained community. Buckingham offered well-designed buildings within a park-like setting in which all the amenities of a town were within walking distance. The inclusion of retail, recreational, entertainment, and educational facilities in the original scheme conceived by Henry Wright and Allie S. Freed did much to promote the impression of Buckingham as a full-service community. The abandonment of plans for a community center in the 1940s removed a significant element of the original scheme. The swimming pool complex, assumed the role of community center for the complex in the summer.

Description: The swimming pool complex is sited at the northern-most boundary of the Buckingham complex. Vehicular and pedestrian entrance to the pool is via 5th Street. The complex lies immediately to the north of Building 12; the heavily travelled Glebe Road is to its west. The construction of the swimming pool facility extended the northern boundary of the Buckingham Apartments complex from its original (1937) edge at Building 12. The swimming pool structure comprises two, one-story buildings connected by a breezeway. Constructed of concrete block with a hipped roof, the building is simple in character while utilitarian in presentation. Diamond patterns inscribed in the exterior concrete block provide the singular decorative feature. A standing seam metal roof tops the building. The concrete walls of the building are painted white and blue. Originally housing showers, toilets, and changing room facilities, the interior of the facility has served as a laundry facility since the 1980s.

The pool is a full-size Olympic swimming pool, with a large concrete walkway surrounding the pool. Two raised lifeguard stations are positioned at the east and west ends of the pool. The pool is constructed of poured concrete in an irregular S-shape form. The pool basin ranges in depth from two to five feet. A hexagonal baby pool is located at the northern most point of the swimming pool complex.

History: The Buckingham swimming pool was constructed in 1966, as one of the last amenities of the self-contained community known as the Buckingham Apartment Complex. Presently, the structure serves as a laundry facility for residents of Building 11 and 12.

Sources: Paradigm Management Company, Washington, D.C., and the National Register Nomination for the Buckingham Complex prepared by Arlington Heritage Alliance, Inc., 1991.

Historian: Laura Harris Hughes, Traceries, Architectural Historian, 1994.