

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ottari Sanitarium

and or common Coburn Apartments

2. Location

street & number 491 Kimberly Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Asheville

N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina

code 037

county Buncombe

code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: apartments

4. Owner of Property

name Ms. Ann C. Stringfield

street & number 2517 Patriot Way

city, town Greensboro

N/A vicinity of

state NC 27408

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Buncombe County Courthouse

street & number Register of Deeds

city, town Asheville

state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Buncombe County Historic Properties Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-79 federal state county local

depository for survey records N. C. Division of Archives and History, 13 Veterans Drive

city, town Asheville

state North Carolina 28805

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Coburn Apartments building is an adaptation of a utilitarian building constructed for use as an osteopathic sanitarium in 1912. It is located on a knoll at the base of Kimberly Mountain in north Asheville, and fronts on Kimberly Avenue, one of Asheville's leading residential thoroughfares, which curves to the west, forming the south and west boundaries of the property. The site contains three acres and is bounded on the east by Country Club Road, an extension of Charlotte Street. The lot is grassy on the Kimberly Avenue frontage and wooded as it rises up the mountain to the rear of the building. A driveway forms an arc from Kimberly Avenue to Country Club Road.

Today the Coburn Apartments building is a cream stucco-over-brick structure and is approximately two hundred feet long by twenty-five feet deep, containing three distinct building blocks. To the west, or left end of the building as one faces it, a wing extends to the rear approximately twenty-five feet.

Behind the west wing, some twenty-five feet removed from the main structure, is a two-story service building, built for the power plant which provided steam heat. It now contains an apartment and storage area. About twenty-five feet from the northeast corner of the main building is the outline of the old cistern. It supplied water to holding tanks in the basement floor below the kitchen of the original building.

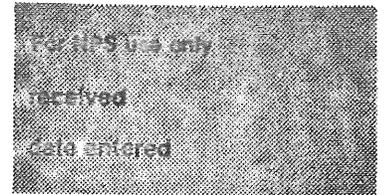
When the Ottari Sanitarium was built in 1912, it consisted of one large, rectangular building approximately fifty feet by sixty feet, now the east section of the building. It was of brick, three stories in height, with hipped roof. An ell projected slightly to the front at the west end of the rectangle and a two-story kitchen wing projected to the rear. Porches at the second and third story levels covered about one-third of the front facade and shielded the entrance. A documentary photograph of 1912 shows awnings extending from the second and third floor porches. Windows at that time appear to be four over four.

In 1923 the Ottari Sanitarium was considerably enlarged and cosmetically altered. A fourteen bay addition, three stories high, was built to the west of the original building, connected to the original building by a two-story and basement block. These new additions contained casement windows which opened to porches for each new room. Between porch and room in each unit was a brick wall containing door and plate glass window. Roofs of the new buildings were flat with parapets which feature slightly Spanish detailing, stepped between each bay and rising in a curve over the connecting block. On the ground floor of the west addition an auto passageway was built, allowing access to the kitchen and to the power plant. Today this driveway continues north to a parking shed on the rear of the property.

At the time of the 1923 additions, the open porches of the original block were enclosed and the projecting ell was given clipped corners, a low cornical roof and casement windows. A shed roof set against the projecting ell and resting on a wall with arch on the east covered the entrance at the ground level. A brick string course was added between the second and third floors and the entire building was stuccoed.

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In 1912 the original block contained eighteen rooms and suites, all with private porches. The additions of 1923 gave the Ottari Sanitarium a total of forty bedrooms, thirty-five baths and thirty porches.

Reception rooms were in the original block and were entered from the ground level under the two tiers of porches. From the rear of the reception room stairs with oak hand rail rise to the second and third stories. Closed today on the first floor, the stairs are open to the second and third floors and have dark oak balusters and newels. The original kitchen and dining room opened from a hall which now connects the old building with the two newer buildings and runs east to west the length of the entire building. Stairs to other levels lead off from this hall, and all apartments open onto this hall. The original kitchen, now an apartment, had a sub-basement with water storage tanks. Several apartments contain simple fireplaces and all have casement windows to the front or southern facade. Today in the new addition, kitchen facilities occupy the porches in each unit, but the window and door between bedroom and porch remain in place. An owner's apartment was built on the second level of the new building at the southwest corner, and contains casement windows on the southern and western exposures. Today the roof of the original block is dark green asphalt shingles and all trim is painted brown. Plumbing fixtures of the 1920s are in use in the two additions.

In 1937 apartment units were constructed inside the sanitarium, giving the Coburn Apartments an arrangement of six four-room apartments, ten two-room apartments and seventeen one-room apartments. Today there are thirty one-bedroom apartments and three two-bedroom apartments. The exterior remains essentially as it was in 1923.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) medicine and community development
Specific dates 1912, 1923	Builder/Architect Unknown			

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ottari Sanitarium, commonly known as the Coburn Apartments, attained its present exterior appearance in 1923 when the original 1912 sanitarium building was considerably enlarged and remodeled. It is a cream-colored, stuccoed masonry building approximately two-hundred feet long, twenty-five feet deep and three stories in height. The 1923 addition displays some faint Spanish flavor in its mission parapet. The Ottari Sanitarium was built and operated by Dr. William Banks Meacham as a model osteopathic hospital. Dr. Meacham was a figure of national stature in the young field of osteopathy, serving as president of the National Osteopathic Association in 1916 and 1917. Dr. Meacham lost the property in the financial collapse of 1929-30 and it eventually became public property, owned jointly by the city of Asheville and Buncombe County, which governments oversaw its conversion to apartments in 1937. In 1940 the property was sold to Harry Cutler Coburn, who renamed it the Coburn Apartments and in whose family ownership remains today.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. Ottari Sanitarium reflects Asheville's long history as a health resort.
- B. It was built by Dr. William Banks Meacham, a national figure in the emerging field of osteopathy.
- C. The building was one of the earliest hospitals built solely for the practice of osteopathy and reflected the "state of the art" of that medical philosophy.

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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page one

The clear, bracing air and moderate climate of Asheville and western North Carolina have long been considered conducive to good health. "Asheville is now the established and most noted health and pleasure resort in America," proclaimed real estate pamphlet of 1899.¹ Said Asheville historian F. A. Sondley, "The Asheville country had become a health resort about as soon as it was settled....From the time of the building of the Buncombe Turnpike Road, Asheville and its vicinity became more than before a resort for health by people from South Carolina and Georgia and other Southern States and later from all parts of the United States."² The Asheville City Directory for 1921 lists twenty hospitals and sanatoria in Asheville alone.³ By 1928, this number had increased to twenty-two and many of these institutions were large and lucrative.⁴ The rest, fresh air and relaxation, provided in abundance in Asheville and western North Carolina, were the only known cure for tuberculosis and other ailments prevalent in the decades before the discovery of antibiotics.

Physicians looking for beneficial climates and locations were also interested in new approaches to the study of disease itself. Shortly after the Civil War, Dr. A. T. Still established the first School of Osteopathy.⁵ He attempted to treat the "whole person," and he placed great emphasis on the relationship between musculoskeletal structure and organic function. His students were taught to recognize structural problems and to treat them through manipulative therapy.⁶ An early student of this new branch of medical practice was William Banks Meacham, who received his degree as Doctor of Osteopathy from the Boston Institute of Osteopathy in 1901. Meacham, born in Senatobia, Mississippi, in 1873, received degrees from Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, in 1895, and from Harvard College in 1898.⁷

In 1903, with his bride, Genevieve Cockran Meacham, Dr. Meacham moved to Asheville.⁸ He established a practice in osteopathy with Dr. Lula A. Rockwell, with offices in the Legal Building in downtown Asheville.⁹ In 1912 he purchased seven acres of land on Ottari Road in the little railroad village of Grace, two miles north of Asheville.¹⁰ Near the intersection of Ottari Road and Charlotte Street Extension (now Country Club road) he planned the "... finest private sanitarium ever built."¹¹

Meacham's sanitarium, perhaps the nation's first strictly osteopathic hospital, was built in Asheville's newest residential location.¹² He advertised it as "... one-half mile from the Asheville 18-hole golf course" and close to the Grove Park Inn, scheduled to open in the summer of 1913.¹³ In addition, his property adjoined the "Kimberley Lands" of E. W. Grove, where Asheville's leading developer planned a residential neighborhood called Kimberley. Meacham's property lay along the base of Kimberley Mountain and on the edge of Grace and the Beaverdam Road. He announced in the local newspaper that it "... combines the advantages of the city and the restful quiet of the country," with "...views of mountains for forty miles."¹⁴

By the end of 1912 the Ottari Sanitarium was ready for patients with eighteen rooms and suites, all with private porch.¹⁵ The Ottari was so successful that in October 1918 Meacham and E. W. Grove signed a legal covenant whereby each party agreed that for fifty years they would

"...not erect or suffer to be erected, licensed or suffer to be licensed on any lot part or parcel...any commercial, mercantile or manufacturing

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establishment or any factory of any kind or character or any building to be used as a tenement, lodging house or hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis...and will not at any time, during said period permit or suffer to be used, any building of any kind or character now situated on said premises or hereinafter to be erected thereon, for any of the purposes above set out."¹⁶

In 1916 Meacham purchased an additional 3.2 acres from the Eugene Way estate, and added another 3.2 acres in 1922.¹⁷ In 1923 approximately twenty more rooms were added to the original structure with the construction of a large, three-story addition, connected to the original building by a third building, giving the Ottari a total of forty bedrooms, thirty-five baths and thirty porches.¹⁸

William Banks Meacham was well known in the field of osteopathy. In 1916 he was elected president of the National Osteopathic Association. He was re-elected to this post in 1917 and held several offices in the North Carolina Osteopathic Association and the North Carolina Board of Osteopathic Examination and Registration.¹⁹ He was a trustee of the A. T. Still Research Institute in Chicago. His sanitarium was a showplace for osteopathic practice, and an inventory from 1930 gives an indication of its opulence. Included in that inventory are Persian rugs, silk draperies for the "parlor", mahogany furniture, wine glasses, finger bowls, gum rockers, willow rockers, invalid chairs, and "...2 brass bird cages, with (canaries), and 1 glass aquarium with fish."²⁰

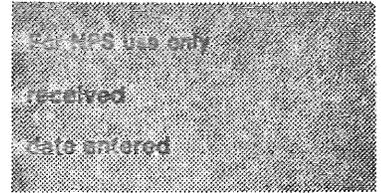
The additions of 1923 necessitated a new mortgage and Meacham, like many other Ashevilleans, was caught up in the "boom" mood of the era. In addition, his health was poor and his marriage had failed.²¹ After 1928 he began to sell lots in various parts of Asheville.²² On April 17, 1930, the contents of the Ottari Sanitarium were sold and the property itself, foreclosed by the Central Bank and Trust Company of Asheville, was sold at the courthouse door on May 14, 1930.²³ In July, 1931, following the failure of the Central Bank and Trust Company, the property was awarded to W. E. Shuford and the Blue Ridge Building and Loan Association.²⁴ On September 30, 1933, the Buncombe County Board of Financial Control received the property from the Blue Ridge Building and Loan Association following the collapse of that banking institution.²⁵ The City of Asheville obtained a one-fifth interest in the property and the Buncombe County Commission a four-fifths interest.²⁶ The two governments, in an agreement arranged by Asheville realtor, J. B. Jackson, agreed to convert the property into apartments.²⁷ In 1937 the building was re-opened as the Kimberley Apartments, having been divided into six four-room apartments, ten two-room apartments and seventeen-one room apartments.²⁸

On July 1, 1940, the Kimberley Apartment building was sold under a deed of trust foreclosure to Harry Cutler Coburn of Asheville and the building was re-named the Coburn Apartments.²⁹

Harry C. Coburn was born in Brooklyn, Connecticut, in 1886, the son of Dr. Milton Coburn and Abbie Cutler Coburn. He was a graduate of the Massachusetts Nautical Training School and the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. After naval service, he

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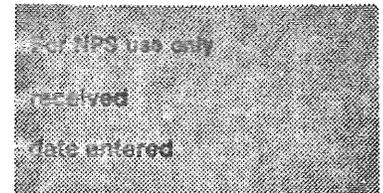


Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page three

moved to Asheville in 1928 and became a civic leader, interested in the development of Asheville as an industrial city. He and his wife, Agatha, maintained the apartment building as it had been when purchased in 1940, making some interior changes to accommodate thirty one-bedroom apartments and three two-bedroom apartments. After the death of Coburn in 1948, ownership remained in the Coburn family.³⁰

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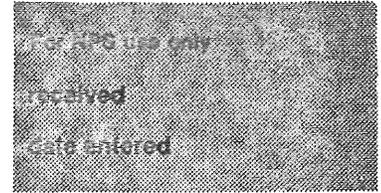
Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8 Page four

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Campbell, J. M. Real Estate, Asheville, Nature's Sanitarium (Asheville, 1899), not pages.
- ² Sondley, Foster A., LL.D., History of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Spartanburg: Reprint Company, 1977, reprinted from the 1930 edition), page 626.
- ³ Asheville City Directory for 1921.
- ⁴ Asheville City Directory for 1928.
- ⁵ "Osteopathic Medicine", Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Macropaedia Volume 13, 15th edition, 1974), pages 765-766.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ The Asheville Citizen-Times, November 20, 1928, "Who's Who and Why in Asheville."
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Buncombe County Deed Book 181, page 304.
- ¹¹ Asheville City Directory, advertisement, 1923.
- ¹² Gray, Idyl Dial, ed., Azure-Lure: A Romance of the Mountains, A Souvenir of Asheville and Western North Carolina (Asheville: Advocate Publishing Company, 1924), page 124.
- ¹³ The Asheville Citizen-Times, September 29, 1912.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Buncombe County Deed Book 224, page 147.
- ¹⁷ Buncombe County Deed Book 207, page 465 and Book 267, page 7.
- ¹⁸ The Asheville Citizen-Times, September 9, 1937.
- ¹⁹ The Asheville Citizen-Times, November 20, 1929.

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- 20 Buncombe County Deed Book 442, page 529.
- 21 The Asheville Citizen-Times, November 20, 1929.
- 22 Buncombe County Deed Book 433, page 228; Book 365, page 627; Book 366, page 214.
- 23 Buncombe County Deed Book 424, page 527.
- 24 Buncombe County Deed Book 441, page 592.
- 25 Buncombe County Deed Book 459, page 527.
- 26 The Asheville Citizen-Times, September 9, 1937.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Buncombe County Deed Book 529, page 536.
- 30 The Asheville Citizen-Times, December 4, 1948.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Weaverville, NC

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	3	5	9	8	7	0	3	9	4	3	7	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached Buncombe County tax map. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn A. Humphries, Consultant

organization N.C. Division of Archives and History date September 12, 1986

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 919-733-6545

city or town Raleigh, state NC 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 12, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY

Item number 9

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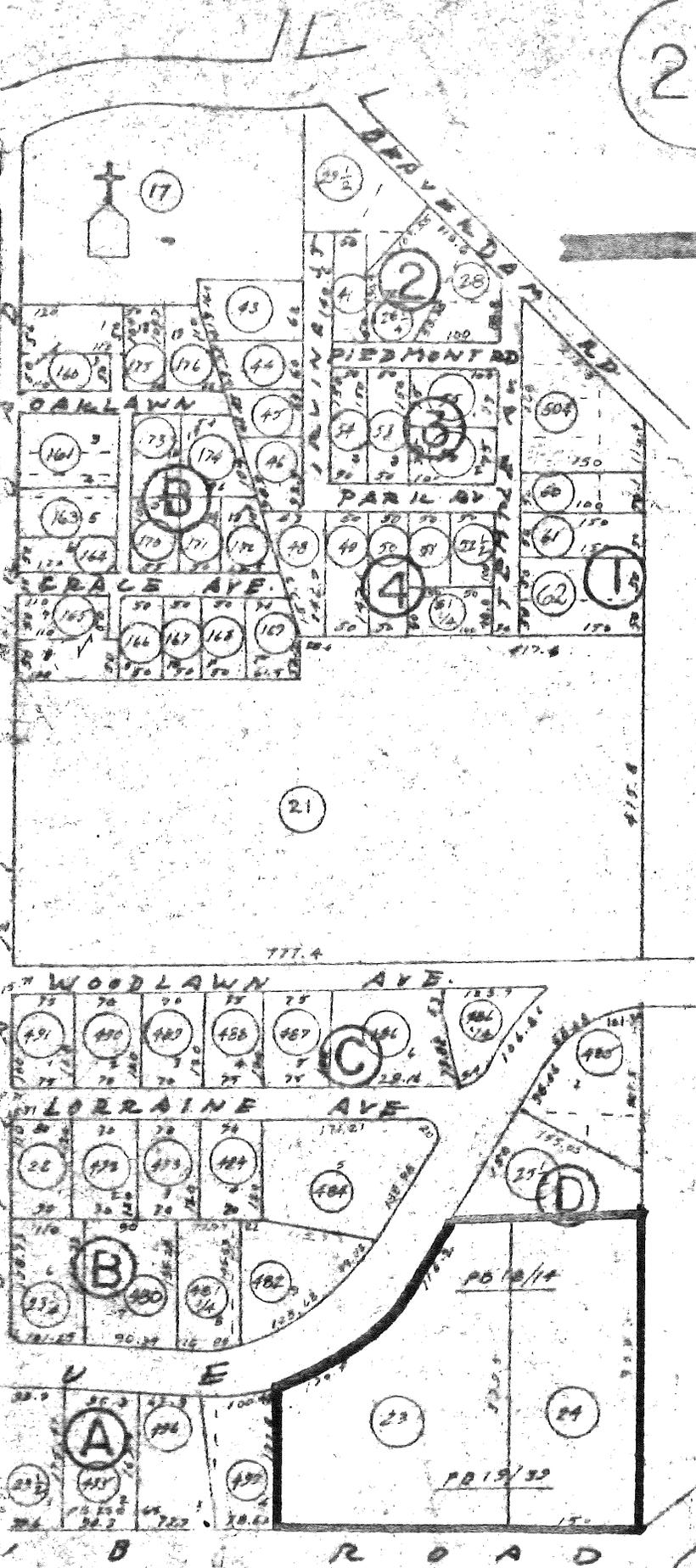
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Sondley, Foster A., LL.D., History of Buncombe County, North Carolina. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1977.

23



Ottari Sanitarium (Coburn Apartments)
Buncombe County
Buncombe County Tax Map
Ward 9, Map 6, Lots 23-24
Approximately 3 acres
Boundary of nominated property outlined in red

