

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Craven Terrace**

New Bern, Craven County, CV2561, Listed 8/19/2014  
Nomination by Ashley Neville  
Photographs by Ashley Neville, February 2014



1942 Buildings



1952 Buildings

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 and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Craven Terrace

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 601 Roundtree Street

City or town: New Bern State: NC County: Craven

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A      \_\_\_ B      X C      \_\_\_ D

<hr/> <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<hr/> <b>Date</b>
<hr/> <b>North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources</b>	
<hr/> <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/> <b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<hr/> <b>Date</b>
<hr/> <b>Title :</b>	<hr/> <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>48</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>48</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling  
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling  
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Moderne  
Colonial Revival

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: \_\_\_Brick, \_Concrete, Asphalt\_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Craven Terrace was built as a low-income residential development for African American residents of New Bern, Craven County, North Carolina, and was funded by the U.S. Housing Authority. It is located just north of the Five Points area in the historic African American community of Reizensteinville in what is now the central part of New Bern. The first group of twenty-eight brick apartment buildings opened in 1942 followed by an additional eighteen buildings in 1953. There are 361 apartments at Craven Terrace. The development also includes a one-story brick community building (1942) and a one-story brick maintenance building (1953). The 1942 complex of long, mostly two-story brick buildings was designed by Kinston, North Carolina, architect A. Mitchell Wooten and the similar 1953 buildings were designed by John J. Rowland, who was Wooten's assistant on the 1942 project. The same team designed Trent Court, which was built nearby overlooking the Trent River for white residents at the same time as Craven Court. The buildings were designed using elements of both the Colonial Revival and Moderne styles. Craven Terrace retains its architectural integrity. The layout is unchanged since it was enlarged in 1953. The individual buildings have sustained only a few changes on the exterior and very few on the interior. **There are forty-eight contributing buildings and one noncontributing structure - a one-hundred-foot-long brick boundary wall built in 2010.**

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### Narrative Description

#### SITE LAYOUT AND SETTING

Craven Terrace occupies 21.95 acres in a historically African American neighborhood known as Reizensteinville. The surrounding area is primarily early to mid-twentieth-century residential homes but also includes several churches, small neighborhood stores, a former hospital (now a nursing home), and a modern community center. Duffyville, another historically African American community is located to the north. Craven Terrace is bounded by the public streets of Cedar Street on the north, Oak and Roundtree Streets<sup>1</sup> on the east, Cramer Drive on the south, and Miller Street on the west. On its eastern side, the property wraps around the Rue Chapel AME Church and the small house behind it that stands just south of the maintenance building on Oak Street. The original part of Craven Terrace, which opened in 1942, contained 14.4 acres and was bounded by Terrace Street on the north, Oak and Roundtree Streets on the east, Cramer Drive on the south and Miller Street on the west.<sup>2</sup> Terrace Street, no longer a public street, has been renamed Hamilton Drive and is one of the complex's service roads. This section consists of twenty-eight brick apartment buildings, twenty-two two-story buildings, and six one-story apartment buildings arranged in a quadrangle on flat ground with a large, slightly off-center open space. A one-story community building is located at the eastern end of the open space and partially encloses the open space on that end. The second phase, which opened in 1952, consists of eighteen

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<sup>1</sup> Oak Street changes to Roundtree Street at Elm Street about midway along the eastern boundary of Craven Terrace.

<sup>2</sup> The acreage for the original section is found on the original architectural drawings by Mitchell Wooten and on file in the office of the Housing Authority of the City of New Bern, New Bern, NC.

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brick apartment buildings, all two stories in height, and a one-story, brick maintenance building located on Oak Street. The 1953 section is bounded by Cedar Street on the north and Hamilton Drive on the south with Oak and Miller streets on the east and west respectively. At some point, the New Bern Housing Authority devised an identification system for the buildings. They are all designated with an alphabetical letter - A through Y - with the exception of the letter I. There is no building I. Because there are more buildings than letters in the alphabet, they start over with A2, B2, etc. Buildings in the 1942 section are labeled A through Y, and A2 through D2 - with no building I. Buildings located in the 1953 group are labeled E2 through W2, with no building I. These letters are shown on each building on the site plan. The front of each building in the 1942 section is the side with the ornamental bas-relief plaque, although some buildings have individual unit entrances on both sides. The 1953 buildings have no panels to mark the front; however, the flat roof porches clearly indicate the front.

The 1942 section was laid out with a large open space near the middle of the property. Buildings immediately adjacent to the central open space face the open space. These include buildings J, K, P, Q, T, and S. The exception is Building R, which like the nearby community building encloses the open space on the eastern end and faces east towards Roundtree Street instead of toward the open space. Buildings J, K, T, and S are one-story buildings and are located on the north and south side of the open space, while P, Q, and R are located on the west and east sides of the open space and are two-story buildings. Two rows of four parallel buildings are located north and south of the buildings around the open space and face north and south. These are V, W, X, Y, A2, B2, C2, and D2 on the north and A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H on the south. They are arranged to create a smaller open space between the end of C, D, E, and F on the south and X, Y, A2, and B2 on the north. On the western side of the open space, the two buildings behind P and Q are N and O, are also two stories in height and face west. Building M, facing west, and L and U facing north and south, form a U around what is now a paved parking lot but this originally was an open grassy area.<sup>3</sup> Building M is a two-story building; L and U are one-story buildings.

The additional eighteen buildings, which opened in 1953, are located on the northern side of the original complex. Two parallel rows of three buildings immediately north of the 1942 section are oriented north and south and face each other with green lawns between them. These are buildings G2, H2, J2, K2, L2, and M2. This row of buildings is enclosed on the east by building N2, which faces west, and on the western end by building F2, which faces east. The building behind F2 faces Miller Street. The northern row of buildings in the 1953 section features three parallel buildings on the eastern and western ends that face east and west and three buildings in the center of the block that face north toward Cedar Street. The buildings on the eastern and western ends, O2 on the east and W2 on the west, face the city streets. The central buildings are R2, S2, and T2. The 1953 site plans shows the area in front of R2, S2, and T2 as an open grassy space with sidewalks.<sup>4</sup> Today this area is a paved parking lot.

The main open space is located slightly off center in the original complex. Rectangular in shape, there are sidewalks around its perimeter and a north/south sidewalk bisects the open space into two equal halves. It was originally envisioned as a play area. Aerial photographs taken after Craven Terrace opened in 1942 but before it was expanded in 1953 indicate because of the lack of grass in several locations that it was probably used by children playing. Other than the area behind the community building where a small wading pool was located, the areas lacking grass do not appear to have been for organized sports. No baseball diamond or basketball hoops are shown on either the plans or in the aerial photographs. The pool behind the community building has

<sup>3</sup> Digital scans of historic photographs on file with the Housing Authority of the City of New Bern, New Bern, NC show this as a grassy area.

<sup>4</sup> Original architectural drawings for both the 1941 section and 1953 section are on file at the Housing Authority of the City of New Bern, New Bern, NC.

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since been removed. Today, there is a paved area for basketball with two basketball goals located in the northeast corner of this open space behind building R but otherwise there is no playground equipment in this central area. The lush grass indicates it is no longer used as a play area.

The small open spaces described above are centrally located on the tract of land and align with each other. The original architectural drawings indicate this was the original design and designate them as “play areas.” They continue to be play areas with swings, a jungle gym, and small metal animals for children to ride on, as well as benches.

The circulation network at Craven Terrace consists of smaller east/west service roads that provide vehicular access and parking and a grid of concrete sidewalks that provide pedestrian access throughout the development.<sup>5</sup> The three parallel east/west service roads of Hamilton, Bryant, and Raynor Drives connect with the city streets of Oak, Roundtree, and Miller and are located at the rear of the buildings. On the northern side of the project, a U-shaped street, Bell Drive, provides additional access into the complex and additional parking. These asphalt-paved streets are fairly narrow. All but Hamilton Drive in the 1942 section have gentle concave concrete gutters but do not have vertical curbs. Hamilton Drive and the streets in the 1953 section have concrete curbs. There are three paved parking lots within the layout: a large lot accessed from Miller Street in the 1942 section, a small lot toward the northern end in the 1953 section, also off Miller Street, and the large lot on Cedar Street. All of these parking lots have concrete curbs. The two larger lots were originally open lawns that have been converted to parking. There are several wider parking areas along the three east/west service drives as well as on Bell Drive that can also accommodate residents’ cars. There is a large parking area in front of building S2 on the northern side of the complex. A concrete retaining wall with metal steps provides access from the paved lot to building S2. The parking areas were expanded slightly during a renovation in the 1990s.

The concrete sidewalks follow a grid pattern with the exception of three diagonal sidewalks. There are also sidewalks along the public streets of Cedar, Oak, Roundtree, and Miller. There is a long diagonal sidewalk across the eastern half of the large open space and a small diagonal sidewalk across each of the two small open play areas. Single sidewalks extend the length of the open lawns between the buildings. Each front and rear entrance is connected to the sidewalk by a shorter sidewalk. In four places where the north-south and east-west sidewalks intersect at the ends of the parallel rows of buildings in the 1942 section, the sidewalk forms a square as well as intersecting. The sidewalks are constructed of white concrete and all were replaced and slightly widened between 1992 and 1996.<sup>6</sup> Concrete handicap access ramps with metal pipe railings have been added to buildings K, L, M, S, T, and U. Occasionally, a building will have a wooden handicap access ramp with wooden railings.

Historic photographs indicate that there have always been clothes lines at Craven Terrace and they are shown on the original site plans for both the 1942 and 1953 sections. The original clothes lines in the 1942 section were linear and extended out from the rear entrance at an angle. In the 1953 section, the clothes lines extended straight back from the rear perpendicular to the building. The original clothes lines have been removed and replaced by umbrella-type clothes lines that are found throughout the complex located near the rear doors of the apartments. For those buildings that have entrances on both sides of the building, clothes lines are also located on both sides of the buildings as was originally planned.

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<sup>5</sup> These service roads are not public streets.

<sup>6</sup> Personal conversation, Tim Jedrey, Housing Authority of the City of New Bern, August 14, 2013.

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Silver-colored metal mailboxes standing approximately three feet high are located throughout the complex and each mailbox has multiple boxes for the residents. Each unit has an individual rolling trash bin. One dumpster is located in the parking area for the maintenance building.

A brick wall located behind building A extends from the sidewalk on Roundtree Street about 100 feet almost to Cramer Drive. Built in 2010, the majority of the wall is six feet high but the section closest to Roundtree Street stands about three feet high. It is constructed of brick laid in the same decorative bond as the 1942 apartment buildings. It features intermediate piers and a triangular-shaped top with angled bricks that create a sawtooth appearance. There is random chain link fencing in the both the 1942 and 1953 sections whose purpose is more to direct pedestrian traffic than to enclose anything. The 1953 section has more fencing than in the 1942 section.

Although outdoor lighting was called for in the original specification book, their locations or design were not on the site plan and none survive today. Today, outdoor lights are mounted on the ends of the buildings at the cornice level.

Originally, trees stood throughout the complex as shown on pre-1953 aerial photographs. Some of the trees may have been planted after the apartment buildings were constructed; however, many appear to be mature trees that survived from the former neighborhood. Unfortunately, many of the larger trees have succumbed to disease and hurricanes and very few survive today. New trees have not been planted.

The original plan called for total of twenty-nine apartment buildings to be built but only twenty-eight were constructed as aerial photos taken before the second phase of apartments was built confirm. No buildings have been demolished. On the western side of the complex on Miller Street where the large parking lot is located, the original plans called for four buildings to be built here facing either north or south. Only two of the buildings were constructed, buildings L and U. One of the north/south facing buildings was not built and another was turned east/west, which is building M. That change resulted in another open space on the western side of the project that has since been turned into a paved parking lot.

## **BUILDINGS**

### **1942 BUILDINGS**

There are a total of forty-eight buildings at Craven Terrace; forty-six apartment buildings, one community building, and a maintenance building. Of this number, the community building and twenty-eight apartment buildings were part of the first phase of construction, which opened in 1942. The remaining eighteen apartment buildings and the maintenance building opened in 1953.

In the original 1942 section, there are twenty-two two-story buildings and six one-story buildings. The length of the buildings varies in the 1942 section depending on the number of units in the building. The lengths range from 100 to 130 feet and all are 28 feet wide. All the buildings are constructed of a dark red brick laid in a garden-wall bond, which are three stretchers to a header on every course. This bond was specified on the original plans. Much of the brickwork on the 1942 buildings has been repointed. The buildings have low concrete foundations. The two-story buildings have both hipped and side-gable roofs covered with asphalt shingles, broad chimneys, both ridgeline and end, and corbelled cornices. Louvered vents flank the end chimneys on the gable-roof building. The original architectural drawings for this project called for semi-circular vents with copper louvers on the roofs but if they were built at Craven Terrace, they no longer survive. They are

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still found on the Trent Court buildings, a companion public housing development in New Bern designed by the same architects. There are twelve hipped-roofed and ten gable-roofed two-story buildings. All six one-story

buildings have side-gable roofs with broad chimneys. Usually, but not always, buildings with the same roof form face each other. The windows have been replaced from the original multiple-light metal casement windows to the current one-over-one-light aluminum sash windows. First-floor windows on the two-story buildings have screens; second floor windows do not. All windows and doors have concrete sills.

All apartments have individual exterior entrances and some units have both a front and rear exterior entrance. There are no common entrances, lobbies, or common interior corridors in these buildings. The two-story buildings have two different types of entrances, flush or projecting. The buildings with flush entrances have porches on the facade with flat concrete roofs that are cantilevered from the second floor. Some porches have plain metal poles but they are cosmetic only and provide no structural support for the roof. The buildings with flush front entrances and flat front porch roofs typically have flush rear entrances with hipped roofs that shelter the rear door. These hipped roofs over the rear door were installed in the 1990s. Fourteen buildings have this configuration with flush front entrances and flat-roof porches and flush rear entrances with hipped roofs. The projecting entrances relate to the building's floor plan. Eight buildings have projecting front and end entrances with hipped roofs and flush rear entrances with flat concrete roofs. These buildings (C, D, E, F, X, Y, A2, and B2) contain either one- or two-bedroom flats on both floors and the projecting entrances house steps that ascend directly to the second-floor flat. These buildings also have entrances (and clothes lines) on both sides of the building. The projecting entrances for second-story units are located on the front (the side with the plaques) and ends, while the flush rear entrances are for the first-floor units. Building M appears to be an anomaly. It has one-story units on both floors but with flush entrances with flat-roof porches and all main entrances are located on the front of the building.

The size and placement of windows on the 1942 buildings reflect the interior floor plans. The original windows were multiple-light casement windows, which were replaced with sash windows, and the current configuration of paired or single windows reflects the size of the original window. Generally, the living rooms and one bedroom have the larger windows but all rooms have a window. The smaller windows may be a bathroom window or a kitchen window especially if the apartment has a rear kitchen door (not all kitchens have doors). While a window serves the purpose of lighting a room, its placement on the exterior wall is designed to create an attractive appearance. Usually, but not always, window sizes are aligned vertically on the exterior walls; single windows above single windows, paired windows above paired windows, and the small kitchen or bathroom windows above another small window.

Frequently, the main difference of window placement on the buildings is the location of the windows on the ends of the buildings. The eight buildings mentioned above (C, D, E, F, X, Y, A2, and B2) with entrances on both sides and on the ends have both paired and single windows on the façade along with the small bathroom or kitchen windows and paired windows on the rear except for the end bays, which have single windows. There are no small bathroom or kitchen windows on the rear. They also have four single windows on the end along with an entrance. Buildings E and F are a bit different in that they have no end entrances but still have four single windows like the other six buildings. Buildings V and W have paired windows on the façade, paired windows on both floors of the rear along with the small second-floor bathroom windows, and four single windows with an entrance on each end.

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Buildings B, G, H, C2, and D2 have paired windows on the façade, three single windows on each end, single windows on the first floor rear, and paired windows on the second floor rear along with small bathroom windows.

Buildings N, O, P, and Q, which are all grouped together and have six units in each building, feature paired façade windows, three paired and a single window on each end, and paired rear windows on both floors along with the small bathroom windows. The windows placement on building R is similar except that there are four single windows on each end.

Buildings A and M are different from each other and the rest of the buildings. Building A, which is the only building to have five-bedroom apartments, has both paired and single windows on the façade with the paired windows located in the center of the façade and the single windows located towards the ends. The single windows light the living room and kitchen on the one-bedroom flats in this building. The five bedroom apartments are more likely to have the paired windows. There are four single windows on each end. The rear features both paired and single windows. Building M has paired windows on both the first- and second-floor façade and rear but only small bathroom or kitchen windows on the façade. There is a single window on the second floor of each end.

The number of units in a building varies in the two-story 1942 buildings, unlike the buildings that opened in 1953, which each have six units. Five 1942 buildings, N, O, P, Q, and R, contain six units. All of these buildings but R are grouped together on the western side of the open space. Building R is located on the eastern side of the open space. Building R contains four-bedroom apartments, while the other four buildings have two- or three-bedroom units. Seven apartment buildings have eight units each. They are B, G, H, V, W, C2, and D2. All but building B are grouped in pairs and are located on both the north and south sides of the 1942 section. Building A is an anomaly. It is the only building to have nine units and it is the only building to have five-bedroom units. It stands across from building B on the southeastern corner of the property. Seven buildings contain twelve units each: C, D, M, X, Y, A2, and B2, and all house only flats. All but M are grouped in pairs on both sides of the 1942 section. Building M faces the large parking lot on the western side of the complex. Building M has one-bedroom flats on both floors while the remainder of this group has two-bedroom flats on both floors. Two buildings, E and F, house sixteen units each and all are one-bedroom flats.

A character-defining feature of the two-story buildings in the original section is the decorative bas-relief concrete panels located at the second-floor level above the entrance on the front of each building. Not all entrances have a panel above them. The placement and design on the panel seems to be random. One building may have panels of all the same design while all the designs are different on another building. The panels are made of quartz aggregate and white Portland cement and were cast in molds. The panels at Craven Terrace have a rose or tan color. The same panels are found on the buildings at Trent Court, the low-income housing development for white residents that was built at the same time as Craven Terrace, but those panels are a greyish-white color. The panels portray boys playing with different toys or musical instruments. Although the architectural drawings indicated there would be four different designs, there are actually six. They include a drummer boy, a tuba player, a boy with a hobby horse, a boy throwing a ball, a boy with a hoop, and a boy on a rocking horse. There are no panels on the buildings that opened in 1953. The molds for these plaques were the property of the contractor and their fate is unknown.

The one-story buildings use some of the same building vocabulary as the two-story buildings with the same decorative brick bond, concrete foundations, replacement windows with concrete sills, and concrete porches or stoops on the front and rear. All one-story buildings have side-gable roofs and the roofs over the end units sit

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higher than the rest of the building. Originally, the end units on the one-story buildings had flat concrete roofs with a gable roof in the center of the building. New side-gable roofs were installed over the flat roofs on the end units about 1970 and the gable ends now have lapped Masonite siding. The concrete stoops on the ends units have gable roofs with metal poles that were probably added at the same time the roofs of the end units were raised. The remaining entrances on the one-story buildings have flat roofs wrapped with metal on the sides and metal poles on the stoop. The rear entrances on the one-story building have concrete stoops sheltered by hipped roofs supported by wooden diagonal brackets like the rear entrances on the two-story buildings. These are not original. The one-story buildings have both single and paired windows on the façade and paired windows on the rear in addition to the small bathroom window on both the façade and rear. The one-story buildings have either six or eight units. The six-unit buildings have two single windows on each end while the eight-unit buildings have corner windows on the front and side of each end unit.

## SECOND PHASE 1953 BUILDINGS

The second phase of Craven Terrace, which opened in 1953, contains eighteen apartment buildings, each containing six apartments. They are simpler versions of the 1942 buildings but are recognizably different. They are constructed of a lighter-colored brick, which is laid with six courses of stretchers to a course of alternating headers and stretchers. They have a more standardized form and uniform appearance than the 1942 buildings and they do not have the bas-relief plaques of boys playing that are found on the 1942 buildings. All of the 1953 buildings have hipped roofs and no ridge chimneys like the 1942 buildings. The porches feature a flat roof that extends over the doors and flanking windows. The porch floor is a concrete slab the same length and width as the roof. Metal porch poles are found on some of the porches. The rear doors are sheltered by a hipped roof with plain diagonal brackets above each door. Four buildings in the 1953 section, G2, H2, L2, and M2, have inset porches on the front and rear of each end of the building. The inset porches have a single brick pillar on the outside porch corner and a concrete floor. These same four buildings have central paired entrances while the remaining entrances are single entrances. The remaining fourteen buildings have paired entrances with a projecting brick wall that separates each entrance.

The fenestration is uniform on the 1953 buildings and reflects the two-story townhouse floor plan. The first-floor façade windows are triple windows, which light the living room, with paired windows for the second-floor bedroom. On the rear, the first floor has both single (for the kitchen) and paired windows while the second-floor windows are paired with a smaller single bathroom window. All windows are replacement one-over-one-light double-hung-sash aluminum windows.

Each of the 1953 buildings includes an integral room that contained the heating system. Three buildings, E2, F2, and N2, have the heating system housed in a one-story, hipped-roof wing on one end of the building, with a tall chimney on the end of the two-story building. In the remaining fifteen buildings, the heating room is located in the middle of the rear of the first floor, with a chimney located on the rear slope of the roof above.

## INTERIOR

The interiors of the buildings are very spartan and utilitarian, and the finishes are the same in both the 1942 and 1953 sections. All interior walls are masonry with a plaster finish except for HVAC closets of gypsum wallboard that were added during the 1990s renovations. Ceilings are plaster and most now have a swirl design. The floors are vinyl composition tile, and windows and doors have very plain trim. The bathrooms are finished with ceramic tile to a height of about six feet. Wire mold is used for electrical switches and outlets on the walls. The original room doors were two-panel doors and many survive. Most replacement doors are flush doors and most closets have flush doors. The stairs, which are always located against a wall, are a single straight run stair and have a solid balustrade on the side facing the living room. Alterations on the interior include new kitchen

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cabinets and the installation of ducts for the new heating and air conditioning system. Otherwise, the interiors of the apartments remain much the same as when they were built.

All apartments include a living room, kitchen, bedrooms, and a single bathroom. In the 1942 section, floor plans include two-, three-, four-, and five-bedroom two-story or townhouse units and one-, two-, and three-bedroom one-story units or flats. There can be a mixture of one- and two-story units in the same two-story building or the building may have all one-story units on both floors or all two-story units. The one-story buildings have one-, two- or three-bedroom units. The floor plans have not been altered.

The floor plans in the 1942 section have variations. In the three- and four-bedroom two-story units, some of the townhouses have all of the bedrooms on the second floor. Other units have one bedroom on the first floor and the remaining bedrooms on the second floor. All five-bedroom units have one bedroom on the first floor, which opens off the kitchen, and four bedrooms on the second floor. There is also a difference in stair placement in townhouse plans. In all of the five-bedroom and some of the three- and four-bedroom units, the stair rises in the center of the unit on the wall between the kitchen and living room. In other three- and four-bedroom townhouse units, the stair rises on the demising wall between apartments. All units have only one bathroom regardless of the number of bedrooms.

The apartment buildings in the 1953 section have floor plans for two-, three-, and four-bedroom units and all are two-story townhouses. There are no flats in the 1953 section. These buildings are notable for having either a pantry or separate dining area adjacent to the kitchen, which the earlier buildings did not have.

There are twelve different building types at Craven Terrace based on their floor plan which also determines their exterior fenestration. There are nine different buildings types in the 1942 section and three different types in the 1953 section. They are as follows:

#### 1942 Buildings

A - 1-BR flat and 5 bedroom townhouse  
B, G, H, C2, D2 - 3 and 4 bedroom townhouses  
C, D, X, Y, A2, B2 - 2 bedroom flats both floors  
E, F, M - 1-bedroom flats both floors  
K, T, S - 1 story, 1 bedroom flat (2), 2 bedroom flat (2), 3 bedroom flat (2)  
J, L, U - 1 story 1 bedroom flats  
N, O, P, Q - 2 and 3 bedroom townhouses  
R - 4 bedroom townhouse  
V, W - 3 and 4 bedroom townhouse (arranged differently than B, G, H)

#### 1953 Buildings

E2, F2, N2 -2 and 3 bedroom townhouses with pantry  
G2, H2, L2, M2 - 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom, 4 bedroom townhouse all with dining room  
J2, K2, O2, P2 - 2 bedroom townhouse with dining room or pantry

#### COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Community Building, opened in 1942, is located on and oriented east toward Roundtree Street in the 1942 section. It is a one-story, brick, flat-roofed building with a T-shaped footprint. The brick is laid in the same

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garden-wall bond as the apartment buildings. In 1971, a brick addition was built onto the northern end of the original building. The addition continued the garden-wall bond pattern. The main entrance is located on the eastern side where the top of the T and the stem meet. The recessed entrance consists of a single-light glass-and-aluminum door flanked by full-height storefront windows. A single brick pillar supports the roof above the recessed area. The long northern section features windows in groups of three with a same-size lower light and transom and a taller center light. Unlike the apartment windows, these windows have brick sills. The rear features a six-bay porch or terrace as it was labeled on the original plans that is now inset between the projecting wing on the southern end and the 1971 addition on the northern end. Narrow brick pillars support the flat roof. Secondary entrances are located on both the northern and southern ends of the building. A tall chain-link fence encloses the rear of the building and the area is used for the storage of old appliances.

On the interior, the main entrance accesses a small lobby. To the north is one large open room that can be used for community events and meetings. A kitchen area is located at the entrance to this space. The southern end of the building contains the lobby, restrooms, offices, and storage rooms. The northern addition houses children's bathrooms, an office, and a mechanical room.

#### MAINTENANCE BUILDING

The maintenance building was constructed at the same time as the 1953 apartments and was enlarged in 1975. The entire building is brick, and both the original building and the addition are laid in the same bond as the 1953 apartments – six courses of stretchers to a course of Flemish bond. The original building has a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles with two semicircular louvered vents on the roof. The main entrance is on the northern end with two pedestrian doors and a loading door. The eastern side features four paired windows. The 1975 addition wraps around the south end and eastern side and has a loading door on its northern end and a loading door and pedestrian door on the eastern side. The addition has a flat roof.

The interior features an office at the southern end of the original building and work and storage rooms. All but the office, which has modern paneling and an acoustical tile ceiling, has exposed brick walls and a concrete floor. The work spaces in the original building have a plaster ceiling while the addition has exposed ceiling joists.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
ARCHITECTURE  
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

1942-1953  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1942  
1953  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Wooten, Adolphus Mitchell  
Rowland, John Judson  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Craven Terrace, a public housing project designed and constructed for African American residents and located in New Bern, Craven County, North Carolina, meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. A. Mitchell Wooten, a native of nearby Kinston, and his associate, John J. Rowland, finished designing Craven Terrace by October 7, 1940, and the complex was completed in the spring of 1942. The apartment buildings include decorative cast-stone Moderne-style bas-relief panels. After 1950, Rowland designed additional buildings for Craven Terrace, but without the decorative panels. These were completed in 1953.

Craven Terrace meets Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage as an example of well-planned public housing that helped alleviate a housing shortage for low-income African American residents in New Bern and eliminate substandard housing. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a little-changed low-income housing project designed by architect A. Mitchell Wooten according to the standards for public housing set by the Public Works Administration and continued under the United States Housing Authority, including common areas, low-density site coverage, and quality construction.

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The architect used forms and elements associated with the Colonial Revival style and also incorporated ornamental detailing drawing on the Moderne style.

Craven Terrace retains a high degree of architectural integrity. All of the apartment buildings, community center and maintenance building remain standing and the layout of the buildings and their spatial relationship remains the same (landscape, design, setting). The buildings have experienced few alterations except for the replacement of windows; the interior floor plans are unchanged (materials and workmanship). Overall, Craven Terrace retains its sense of feeling and association. The period of significance is from 1942, when the project was opened for occupation, to 1953, when the second and final phase of construction was completed.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

New Bern, presently the largest community in Craven County, originated as a small port town located on the south bank of the Neuse River, which empties into Pamlico Sound about forty miles to the east. Swiss settlers established New Bern in 1710, and it served as the capital of North Carolina during and after the American Revolution until 1788, when the capital was moved to Raleigh.

Between 1800 and 1930, blacks composed more than fifty percent of New Bern's population. By the time of the Civil War, the town's free black population totaled approximately twelve percent of the town's residents. Like many other urban centers, New Bern attracted free blacks because of better economic opportunities, especially for skilled laborers and craftsmen, compared with rural areas. In addition, free blacks had greater liberty in urban environments, where they were more numerous and therefore less noticeable individually than in the countryside. Both slaves and free blacks were commonly employed as sailors, shipyard workers, and in several other skilled trades. When the Union army occupied New Bern (1862–1865), the town became a magnet for slaves escaping to Federal lines. After the war, New Bern's African Americans shared in the general increase in prosperity as a result of the growth of the lumber, shipping, and seafood industries. By the end of the century, black businesses were bustling despite the disfranchisement movement and the era of racial segregation that developed in consequence.<sup>7</sup>

During the antebellum and postwar eras into the late nineteenth century, blacks and whites did not live in separate neighborhoods, as slaves lived with their owners and free blacks lived near or in their places of employment. During the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, local black entrepreneurs formed banks and other businesses, and developed their own residential neighborhoods and commercial areas as racial segregation became the norm. Black neighborhoods included Smithtown (just south of Greenwood Cemetery), James City, Dryborough, Pavie Town, and Reizensteinville. The last-named area, which Charles Reizenstein laid out in 1891 and developed until about 1907, was largely demolished in 1941 for the construction of Craven Terrace.<sup>8</sup>

Over time, in New Bern as in many other American towns and cities, the housing stock deteriorated, especially for low-income workers and the poor, who tended to live in less-well-constructed dwellings than higher-income workers. Reformers for decades had sought federal involvement in addressing housing needs. It was not until the Great Depression, however, that a sympathetic federal administration sought to find a solution to the

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<sup>7</sup>Penne S. Sandbeck, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Isaac H. Smith, Jr., House," New Bern, N.C., 2001, Section 8, p. 1, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, N.C.; Thomas W. Hanchett and Ruth M. Little, *The History and Architecture of Long Wharf and Greater Duffield: African American Neighborhoods in New Bern, North Carolina* (Report prepared for New Bern Historic Preservation Commission, 1994), 2, 4–5, 7, 10–11, 17–18.

<sup>8</sup>Sandbeck, "Isaac H. Smith," 2–3; Edward F. Turberg, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "New Bern Historic District Additional Documentation and Boundary Expansion," New Bern, N.C., 2002, Section 8, p. 7, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, N.C.; Hanchett and Little, *Long Wharf and Greater Duffield*, 61.

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problems created by massive unemployment (particularly in the construction industry), homes lost to foreclosures, deteriorating neighborhoods, and the lack of affordable housing. As a result, the Public Works

Administration (PWA; 1933) was established to fund and support various projects including public housing. The PWA had a Housing Division to address the deteriorated-housing portion of the larger agency mission to launch public works projects to create jobs. The division made low-interest loans to housing corporations to fund projects, but only seven proposed projects received funding between 1932 and 1935; none were for African American housing. In 1934, the loan program ended and the PWA began the direct funding and construction of housing projects. Three years later, fifty-one direct-build projects were either underway or completed, with twenty-one for black tenants only, twenty-four for whites only, and six for both whites and blacks. Because the Housing Division competed with other WPA programs for funding, however (and those programs usually were successful in diverting the division's dollars), public housing advocates demanded a separate agency devoted only to housing and slum clearance. In 1937, with the passage of the United States Housing Act, the advocates were victorious. The act created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) to oversee a federally funded public housing program under the control of local housing authorities, a model that continues in operation today. Local governments, including New Bern's, generally were amenable to federal dollars being used to reduce local unemployment, eliminate substandard housing, and improve the environment. As a further benefit to towns and cities, the local authorities frequently engaged skilful architects to design the projects, which often resulted in attractive and architecturally interesting residential buildings including single-family dwellings, duplexes, and apartment buildings.<sup>9</sup>

With the creation of the USHA and the prospect of receiving federal funding, interest grew in improving New Bern's housing stock, much of which had deteriorated into both white and black slums. On December 5, 1939, twenty-six city residents presented a slum-clearance petition to the New Bern Board of Aldermen that included a request to create a local housing authority to apply for federal funding and oversee the project to demolish deteriorated dwellings and construct new public housing at low rents. Two days later, the board scheduled a public hearing on the proposal for December 18. Before the hearing was held, however, several property owners in the city voiced their opposition to the project out of concern that it would reduce property values as well as real estate tax revenues.<sup>10</sup>

At the December 18 public hearing, the New Bern Board of Aldermen voted eight to one to approve the petition to establish the New Bern Housing Authority and pursue funding for public housing because the city had "unsanitary and unsafe inhabited dwelling accommodations." Furthermore, the board's resolution declared, the

said lack of safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations in the City of New Bern, North Carolina, available for all the inhabitants thereof, at rents which persons of low income can afford, compels such persons to occupy overcrowded and congested dwelling accommodations; that the aforesaid conditions cause an increase in and spread of disease and crime; that the clearance and reconstruction of the areas in which unsanitary and unsafe housing conditions exist are public uses and purposes, and it is in the public interest that work on such projects be instituted as soon as possible in order to relieve unemployment which now constitutes an emergency; that it is

<sup>9</sup> For a summary history of the public housing programs of the New Deal and beyond, see Paul R. Lusignan, Judith Robinson, Laura Bobeczko, and Jeffrey Shrimpton, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949," draft, 2004, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

<sup>10</sup> *New Bern Tribune*, December 6, 8, and 17, 1939

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necessary to the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety that this resolution become effective without delay.<sup>11</sup>

The New Bern Housing Authority held its organizational meeting on December 21 and employed Kinston architect A. Mitchell Wooten to design the project. Wooten and members of the authority immediately began work on the funding application and arranged to meet with USHA officials, who visited New Bern early in January 1940. The group toured the city and made a preliminary survey of deteriorated dwellings for possible clearance and replacement. Wooten and the local housing authority members subsequently toured Wilmington, which had constructed public housing, to see the results. On January 18, a USHA appraiser and the local authority members focused on two parts of the city for consideration: the South Front and Bern Street area, also called Long Wharf (the future site of Trent Court, for whites) and Five Points (largely Reizensteinville, where Craven Terrace would be constructed for blacks).<sup>12</sup>

On February 21, 1940, the New Bern Housing Authority applied to the USHA for \$1,500,000 in federal funding to clear the deteriorated housing and construct new public housing on the Craven Terrace and Trent Court sites. Wooten observed that the “housing units would provide for a total of 460 families. In the white section, . . . there would be 180 dwelling units of 772 rooms, and 280 colored units of 1,203 rooms. . . . Parks and playgrounds and other recreational facilities are provided in both white and colored sections.”<sup>13</sup>

At about the same time, the New Bern Housing Authority applied to the North Carolina Utilities Commission for a “certificate of public convenience and necessity” to exercise the right of eminent domain to acquire property for the housing projects. The commission granted the certificate on April 8, 1940.<sup>14</sup>

By mid-June, the USHA had approved the application for the two projects, Wooten was completing designs for the Long Wharf project, and the work there was expected to begin shortly, with the Five Points project to follow. The New Bern Housing Authority gave the name Trent Court to the white project on June 24. Wooten spent part of the week in Washington to obtain approval for his design, which was the third draft to be considered. On July 20, the New Bern authority solicited construction bids for Trent Court, to be opened on August 20.<sup>15</sup>

As the plans for Trent Court progressed, early in August federal officials in Washington reviewed drawings for the yet-unnamed public housing project for blacks in the Five Points area. On August 26, the final boundaries of the project were completed and sent to the USHA for approval. In September, the New Bern Housing Authority established a black “housing advisory committee” to make suggestions concerning finish details for the new housing units as well as playground and other needs, including a name for the project. Because so many substandard houses in the area were to be demolished, thereby displacing large number of black families, the authority decided to complete half of the new units and move the families in before completing the demolition and construction of the second half of the project, to avoid what it called a “refugee problem.” Although most of the houses in Reizensteinville were demolished, the black residents there rallied to save Rue

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., December 19, 1939; North Carolina, Office of the Utilities Commissioner, Chief Clerk’s Office, Utilities Commission Case Files, Case 1946, Housing Authority of the City of New Bern to the Utilities Commission, 1940–1941, 1950, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

<sup>12</sup> *New Bern Tribune*, December 22, 26, and 30, 1939; January 5, 9, and 19, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., February 21, 1940.

<sup>14</sup> North Carolina, Office of the Utilities Commissioner, Case 1946, 1940–1941, 1950.

<sup>15</sup> *New Bern Tribune*, June 12, 25, and 29, July 6, 10, and 20, 1940. Trent Court is a contributing resource within the New Bern Historic District (Additional Documentation and Boundary Expansion, 2003).

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Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church from the wrecking ball; it still stands at Oak and Elm Streets on the eastern side of the project.<sup>16</sup>

On November 8, bids for the million-dollar project—the advisory committee had named it Craven Terrace—were opened for “construction work, heating and plumbing. Landscaping contracts [would] not be let until after the first of the year.” In the meantime, the construction of Trent Court was proceeding, with the foundations for two buildings poured and the footings for five others completed. In addition, excavations for the project playground were underway along the Trent River. Originally planned for the center of the project, the playground (it no longer exists) was relocated five blocks south to the riverfront to allow for the construction of new roads.<sup>17</sup>

The building activity under way in New Bern had given employment not only to construction workers but also to architects such as Adolphus Mitchell Wooten, known professionally as A. Mitchell Wooten, and his associate, John Judson Rowland, who were the designers of Craven Terrace and Trent Court. A native of Kinston, North Carolina, Wooten was born on June 30, 1905, the only child of Harry Cobb and Wita Mitchell Wooten. The elder Wooten was a bookkeeper and agent for the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, while his father-in-law, Adolphus Mitchell, was the developer of a residential suburb in Kinston called Mitchelltown. A. Mitchell Wooten was educated at the Virginia Military Institute and at Georgia Tech, and toured Europe to learn more about its architecture. After working in New York City, where he exhibited an interest in the Art Deco and Moderne styles, Wooten returned to Kinston before November 1933, and opened his own practice, A. Mitchell Wooten and Associates.<sup>18</sup>

Employing several draftsmen, Wooten soon was busy designing houses for local businessmen, mostly in the then-popular and conservative Colonial Revival style. Despite the Great Depression, pockets of prosperity persisted in eastern North Carolina because of the tobacco trade, and tobacco men had the financial means to commission new houses. In addition, there were very few architects in that part of the state. Soon, Wooten added public buildings to his repertoire, in part because of the connections he formed through his domestic architecture. Between 1936 and 1940, Wooten and his firm designed two courthouses, Lenoir County, completed 1939, and Jones County, completed 1940; an auditorium and dormitory complex; an armory; and five public housing projects, four in North Carolina and one in Virginia.<sup>19</sup>

In 1937, John Judson Rowland (1904–February 17, 1963) joined Wooten as a principal in the firm. Rowland was educated at the University of Illinois and Yale University, and was an instructor at Georgia Tech from 1933 to 1937. He worked with Wooten on the courthouses and late in the 1930s assisted in the design of the public housing projects. Wooten was named the architect of the Kinston Public Housing Authority when it was formed on December 4, 1939 (the organizational meeting was held in Wooten’s office). Soon, the firm was designing two public housing projects in Kinston: Simon Bright Homes for white residents and Tower Hill Homes (later renamed Mitchell Wooten Court) for blacks. In New Bern, at about the same time, the firm designed the Trent Court and Craven Terrace housing projects. The partners also designed the Swanson Homes (1941) public

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., September 24 and 27, 1940; Hanchett and Little, *Long Wharf and Greater Duffield*, 78.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., November 7, 1940.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., December 1, 1940; Penne Smith, “A. Mitchell Wooten, Architect, of Kinston, North Carolina,” M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 1999, pp. 4, 11–16, 24–25.

<sup>19</sup> Smith, “Wooten,” 26, 59–60.

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housing in Portsmouth, Virginia. Sadly, Wooten did not live to see any of these projects completed; he suddenly died of a heart attack in New York on November 30, 1940, at age thirty-five.<sup>20</sup>

The designs and details of the housing projects in both Kinston and New Bern are very similar, with attractive decorative panels enlivening the buildings' facades. An as-yet unidentified sculptor at the Cranbrook School, located in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, west of Detroit, designed the molds and models for the bas-relief cast-stone panels that adorn the Craven Terrace apartment buildings. These panels are a terra-cotta color in contrast to the identical panels on the buildings at Wooten's contemporaneous projects, Trent Court in New Bern and Mitchell Wooten Court in Kinston, where they are grayish-white. The panels, with six different images, show boys playing with toys and musical instruments. They also appear on the Simon Bright Homes, another public housing project of Wooten's in Kinston. The Cranbrook School, which George and Ellen Booth organized as a community school in 1922, quickly expanded and eventually became known for its focus on science and the arts. Booth engaged architect Eliel Saarinen in 1925 to plan various buildings on the campus, where artists and sculptors there created works for projects such as Craven Terrace.<sup>21</sup>

Public arts components such as these panels were found in PWA housing projects and continued under the USHA program. The terra-cotta frieze on the entrance to Langston Terrace in Washington, D.C., for example, is an important example of art incorporated into low-income public housing. Wooten's response to this encouragement for public art were the concrete, bas-relief ornamental panels that are found on the facades of the Craven Terrace buildings that opened in 1942. The specification book for Craven Terrace stipulated that the contractor furnish the panels, gave specifications for the material, and required the contractor to allow \$500 to pay a sculptor for a full-scale model, which was to be shipped from Cranbrook, Michigan.<sup>22</sup>

Because the new housing projects were constructed on the site of slum housing, local planners faced an "evacuation problem" by July 1940, when the displaced residents had to be housed elsewhere temporarily. More than one hundred families from the Trent Court area alone, for instance, needed short-term residences while the housing authority pushed the new work forward as quickly as possible. In December 1940, the New Bern Housing Authority let the \$588,500 contract for constructing the Craven Terrace apartment buildings to the Fowler-Jones Construction Company of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Fowler-Jones was constructing Trent Court at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

A sign appeared where Craven Terrace was going up: "On this site, Craven Terrace, a low-rent housing project is being developed by New Bern Housing Authority under loan contract with Federal Works Agency, United States Housing Authority."<sup>24</sup> As of May 1, 1941, the United States Housing Authority reported, the 253-unit

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<sup>20</sup> John J. Rowland, Architect, "Questionnaire for Architects' Roster and/or Register of Architects Qualified for Federal Public Works," September 1, 1946, on AIA Historical Directory of American Architects on American Institute of Architects Web site, [http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/Rosters/RowlandJohnJ\\_roster.pdf](http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/Rosters/RowlandJohnJ_roster.pdf), accessed September 8, 2013; "Rowland, John J.," North Carolina, Death Collection, 1908–2004, on Ancestry.com Web site, accessed September 8, 2013; Smith, "Wooten," 60–61, 74–80, 83; Paul R. Lusignan, Judith Robinson, Laura Bobeczko, and Jeffrey Shrimpton, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933–1949," draft, 2004, Appendix 4, pp. 10, 19, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C.; *Greensboro Daily News*, December 1, 1940.

<sup>21</sup> A. Mitchell Wooten and John J. Rowland, "Specifications, Craven Terrace, USHA Project NC 5-2, New Bern, North Carolina, Housing Authority of the City of New Bern, North Carolina, October 7, 1940," New Bern Housing Authority, New Bern, N.C.; Cranbrook Schools Web site, <http://schools.cranbrook.edu/home>, accessed September 7, 2013. Cranbrook is credited in the specifications but the sculptor is not named.

<sup>22</sup> A. Mitchell Wooten, "Specifications, Craven Terrace, USHA Project NC 5-2, Kinston, NC, 1940, Div. 11-2."

<sup>23</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, July 25 and December 22, 1940.

<sup>24</sup> Wooten and Rowland, "Specifications."

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Craven Terrace was intended to eliminate 160 “unsafe or unsanitary” dwellings. Of those, 152 were located on the construction site and 8 were off of it. When these data were compiled, 63.2 percent of the targeted dwellings had been demolished.<sup>25</sup>

The first residents of Trent Court moved into its 116 apartments during the last week of July 1941, and the project was officially dedicated on August 11, 1941, when North Carolina governor J. Melville Broughton was the featured speaker. By September, all of the Trent Court apartments were occupied, and more than a hundred applications had been received for the 253 units under construction for black families at Craven Terrace; it was hoped that they would be completed by the end of the year. Craven Terrace was dedicated on April 12, 1942.<sup>26</sup>

In April 1950, the New Bern Housing Authority asked the North Carolina Utilities Commission to approve the construction of two to three hundred new low-cost housing units at Craven Terrace and Trent Court. The previous November, New Bern had approved the expenditure of \$90,000 for planning and surveys; the Public Housing Administration had added \$70,000 for the same purpose in December. The application to the Utilities Commission also noted, “Many persons who appeared before the board of aldermen of the city of New Bern in opposition to the housing authority . . . now express themselves publicly that they were mistaken in their attitude and that the building of said projects was one of the finest things that has ever been done in the City of New Bern and that there is a great need for additional dwelling units.”<sup>27</sup> On April 26, 1950, the Utilities Commission granted the Authority’s request to once again exercise the power of eminent domain for the new units.<sup>28</sup>

Rowland designed the new units—eighteen apartment buildings—as simplified versions of the 1941 apartments, minus the decorative bas-relief cast-stone panels. On January 14, 1953, the New Bern Housing Authority received bids for the construction of 108 new dwelling units at Craven Terrace. The work was expected to start in February.<sup>29</sup>

Over the next few decades, the Craven Terrace project became not only a home to its residents but also a center for New Bern’s African American community. Home demonstration clubs operated there beginning in the 1950s. Inevitably, in part because of the politics of racial segregation and white domination of the local housing authority, conditions at Craven Terrace deteriorated and early in the 1960s it became a focus of equitable-treatment activity in New Bern. A meeting of residents (including whites from Trent Court) at Craven Terrace on August 23, 1965, resulted in some improvements in maintenance and pest control. Craven Terrace has remained a predominately African American residential community to the present.<sup>30</sup>

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

There are two distinct phases to Craven Terrace. The first group of twenty-eight brick apartment buildings opened in 1942 followed by an additional eighteen buildings in 1953 for a total of forty-six apartment buildings containing 361 units. The complex also includes a one-story brick community building (1942) and a one-story brick maintenance building (1953). The 1942 complex of long, one- and two-story brick buildings was designed

<sup>25</sup> John M. Carmody, Administrator, *Second Annual Report, Federal Works Agency, 1941, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), 401.

<sup>26</sup> *Greensboro Daily News*, August 4, 1941; *ibid.*, September 22, 1941; *Burlington Daily Times-News*, April 11, 1942.

<sup>27</sup> *Rocky Mount Evening Telegram*, April 13, 1950.

<sup>28</sup> North Carolina, Office of the Utilities Commissioner, Case 1946, 1940–1941, 1950.

<sup>29</sup> *Rocky Mount Evening Telegram*, January 14, 1953.

<sup>30</sup> Karen M. Hawkins, “Coastal Progress: Eastern North Carolina’s War on Poverty, 1963–1972,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, pp. 90, 202, 206–208.

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by Kinston, North Carolina, architect A. Mitchell Wooten and the similar but all two-story 1953 buildings were designed by John J. Rowland, who was Wooten's assistant on the 1942 project.

The 1942 section features long, two-story, dark red brick buildings with a garden-wall bond and have both hipped and gable roofs. They have contrasting cast-concrete window sills and foundations, cantilevered, flat, front porch roofs, and ornamental bas-relief panels on the façade. There are also six, one-story, side-gable-roofed buildings in the 1942 section. The buildings have a variety of floor plans that range from one-, two-, and three-bedroom one-story flats, to two-, three-, four-, and five-bedroom two-story townhouses. The buildings in the 1953 section are all two stories in height, constructed of a lighter colored red brick laid in a six course bond, and have hipped roofs. They have both paired and single entrances and flat-roof porches. Four buildings have inset porches on each end and three buildings have a one-story wing that houses the heating room. All the units in the 1953 are two-, three-, or four-bedroom two-story townhouses. The 1953 units also have a pantry or dining room adjacent to the kitchen.

The Housing Division of the Public Works Administration (PWA) was created in 1933 to carry out slum clearance, provide low-rent housing, and at the same time create jobs for architects and engineers. Although the PWA had a centralized organization, it encouraged the architects of their early projects to be creative and innovative in their design and use of materials. Creativity in design was as important, if not more so, than cost control. Influences on PWA projects included the Garden City movement that took a unified approach towards creating new living spaces, as well as the European Modernist movement. The ideals of Garden City movement were incorporated into planning for housing, and garden apartments provided a way to build more attractive apartment buildings. The planners eschewed the typical grid-street system found in cities and avoided street frontage for the buildings. They embraced the use of courtyards and open space. The apartments had compact building interiors without corridors, on-site community centers, and a public art component.<sup>31</sup> In 1935, the PWA Plans and Specifications Branch prepared plans for public housing complexes that encompassed these standards. They included a central common area, high standards of construction, and low-density site coverage by buildings of 20 percent. These plans were available to architects across the country.<sup>32</sup>

Public housing was built to offer a distinct alternative to the congestion and squalor of the slums by providing clean and orderly low-rent housing to the urban poor. The site plan, the relationship of buildings to each other, and the repetition of design and form were used to create a community cohesion that was distinct from the surrounding neighborhood. The size of the Craven Terrace buildings and their siting is far different from anything else standing in New Bern other than the companion complex of Trent Court, which was designed by the same architectural team. Public housing projects between 1933 and 1949 typically contained multi-family, low-rise residential buildings situated around large open spaces and recreational areas. The buildings were usually arranged in parallel rows to take advantage of maximum light and ventilation. Smaller city blocks were combined to form a superblock that featured limited traffic flow, pedestrian walkways, and park-like open spaces.<sup>33</sup> The buildings were primarily three- to five-story walk-up apartment buildings or two-story row houses. The construction material was usually brick although some concrete-block and wood-frame buildings were constructed. Borrowing from the early-twentieth-century Bauhaus design in Europe and later constrained by cost considerations, most of the housing complexes contained functional buildings with a "utilitarian design that had long unembellished lines, flat roofs, and minimal architectural decoration. The few decorative elements that were built included cantilevered concrete or metal canopies at entries, brick or concrete beltcourses, and

<sup>31</sup> Lusignan, Sec. E, p. 19, Simone Monteleone Moffett, Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia: 1934-1954, 2002, Sec. E, p. 7, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Sec. E, p. 25, 30.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Sec. F, p. 70.

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simple quoining. Original windows were either metal casement or wood sashes, many of which have been replaced.”<sup>34</sup>

Functional modernism dominated the design of housing projects, resulting in very utilitarian buildings. Functional Modernism was the idea that buildings “should reflect to the degree possible, the utilitarian ideas of European architectural precedents in public housing.” The style of the project was left to the local architect and it usually conformed to regionally preferred forms such as the Colonial, Georgian, or Spanish Colonial Revivals.<sup>35</sup> The basic style of Craven Terrace is Colonial Revival but with ornamental detailing that drew on the Moderne style. The architect who designed the project, Mitchell Wooten, was skilled in using both.

Housing programs began to change with the passage of the United States Housing Act of 1937, which established a permanent low-rent public housing program as a partnership with the local public housing authority, which played an increased role. The strict cost guidelines of the program increased the emphasis on economy and a greater standardization of design. Although more control for the design of projects lay with the local housing authorities, who hired local architects, there was by this time a large volume of literature on public housing that laid out standards and typical site and building plans.

The design of Craven Terrace reflects these trends in public housing in the late 1930s. The public housing paradigm of parallel rows of buildings, limited street frontage, smaller blocks combined into a superblock, restricted traffic flow, pedestrian walkways, and large open spaces is all found at Craven Terrace, especially in the 1942 section. The original 1942 complex was designed around a large central open space with smaller open spaces on both the north and south side of the complex. Ample sidewalks provided for pedestrian travel but vehicular travel was limited to only three east/west service roads in the original section and only one in the 1953 section. There are no north/south service roads in Craven Terrace.

Buildings were deliberately sited facing each other, which created open lawns between the buildings and helped to create a sense of community. The apartment buildings are sited in rows or groups with buildings that have the same fenestration and/or floor plan facing each other. For example, buildings C and D face each other and have the same number of units (12), the same floor plan (two-bedroom flats) and the same exterior fenestration. Their immediate neighbors on both the east and west sides have a different number of units, different floor plans, and different exterior fenestration. A group of four buildings, N, O, P, and Q, are situated in two parallel rows that back up to each other. All four buildings have six units each, two- and three-bedroom townhouses, and the same exterior fenestration. There is more diversity of building types in the 1942 section than in the 1953 section and there is a deliberate variety to the placement of the buildings to avoid creating enclaves of one type of building. Buildings with different number of units, floor plans, and fenestration are mixed together like a typical neighborhood of mixed building types and styles.

The buildings in both sections have a minimalist design with flat brick walls uninterrupted by watertables, beltcourses, or recessed panels, and with simple cantilevered flat concrete roofs above the entrances. The only decorative elements on the 1942 Craven Terrace buildings are the contrasting cast-concrete trim (foundations, front stoops, and window sills) and the cast-stone bas-relief architectural panels of boys at play located above the entrances. The facades of the 1953 buildings are simpler with a more uniform appearance than the 1942 buildings. The flat roofs of the porches are longer than the earlier buildings and there is a projecting brick wall either between the paired entrances or on one side of a single entrance. The interiors of buildings in both sections have similar finishes, which are very plain. They include plaster walls and ceilings, very simple door

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Sec. F, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Sec. E, p. 27, Sec. F, p. 71.

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surrounds, and floors of vinyl composition tile. Everything is designed for simplicity and durability and they have changed very little over the years.

As housing programs matured and became institutionalized within a large bureaucracy after 1937, designs became standardized and had less artistic creativity. Concern over cost control became more important.<sup>36</sup> Although the first section of Craven Terrace was designed in 1940 when the trend was moving toward more standardization, it is the buildings in the section that opened in 1953 that demonstrate this change in design approach. The 1953 buildings are more spartan than the earlier apartment buildings with a more austere facade lacking the decorative concrete panels. The longer flat porch roofs of the 1953 buildings added to this simpler appearance. The 1953 section does not have the variety of different types of buildings and there is a utilitarian sameness to the buildings. All of these buildings have six units, all have townhouse plans, and all but the four buildings with inset porches have the same fenestration. The 1953 section continues the practice of siting buildings facing each other and in groups, but this section lacks the diversity both of building types and placement seen in the earlier plan. Because all of the 1953 buildings have a two-story townhouse plan, they have a defined front and rear door. All of the front doors are located on the same side of the building unlike some of the 1942 buildings, which have the main unit entrance on both sides of the building. In the 1953 section, this means all of the clothes lines are located at the rear of the buildings with much less clutter in the lawns of the facing buildings creating a more streamlined appearance. Even the landscaping is minimal in the 1953 section and residents do not plant flowers or show other forms individualism that is found in the 1942 section where residents have created flower beds.

Mitchell Wooten was adept at designing public buildings in both the Colonial Revival style and the Moderne style. His initial plans for the 1937 Jones County Courthouse were drawn in the Moderne style; however, the courthouse that was ultimately built was a Colonial Revival-style edifice. Perhaps the conservatism of the rural county resulted in the change of the appearance of the building, although the floor plans remained essentially the same.<sup>37</sup> Although his Moderne-style plan for the Jones County courthouse was not used, the Lenoir County Courthouse that Wooten also designed employed the Moderne style with late Art Deco decorative motifs.<sup>38</sup> It was built in 1939.

Stylistically, Craven Terrace exhibits characteristics of both the Colonial Revival and Moderne styles. Wooten was proficient at designing in both the Colonial Revival and Moderne styles. His use of red brick for his public housing apartment buildings along with hipped roofs, broad brick chimneys, and semicircular louvered vents builds are elements of the Colonial Revival style that was popular in the region as elsewhere at this time. At Craven Terrace and Trent Court, however, his spare use of detailing, the flat roofs of the entrance porches as well as the bas-relief architectural panels show the influence of Moderne. Mitchell Wooten was one of the few architects in eastern North Carolina who was designing buildings with sensitivity to both Moderne and Colonial Revival styles and ornamentation.<sup>39</sup>

Wooten's first two public housing projects, the Simon Bright Homes and Mitchell Wooten Courts, were constructed in Kinston, North Carolina, in 1940 where his practice was located. His last project is thought to be Swanson Homes in Portsmouth, Virginia. Another similar public housing project, Dale Homes, is located near

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Sec. E, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, "Wooten," pp. 65-66.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

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Swanson Homes in Portsmouth. Although the two-story buildings at Dale Homes are strikingly similar to Swanson Homes, and to his Kinston and New Bern projects, it could not be determined if Wooten or Rowland were the architect for either project.

All of the public housing projects associated with Wooten or his firm are similar in their layout of parallel rows of buildings with open space somewhere on the property. The apartments were predominantly two-story red-brick buildings with hipped or gable roofs, broad chimneys, and semi-circular louvered vents in the roof, which no longer survive at Craven Terrace. Other commonalities among these projects are the garden-wall bond pattern of the walls, paired façade windows, and contrasting cast-stone window sills. Mitchell Wooten Courts is unique as the only project with buildings that have projecting beltcourses and brick window sills instead of the contrasting cast-stone sills. Simon Bright Homes, Mitchell Wooten Courts, and Swanson Homes all have gable or hipped roofs over the entrances some with white trim, and Swanson Homes goes even further with square wooden posts and side balustrades. The changes to these porches appear to be later additions and give the buildings a more Colonial Revival appearance. Only Craven Terrace and Trent Court have retained their flat cantilevered roofs over the entrances unencumbered by later changes. The later buildings at Simon Bright Homes appear to be almost identical to the 1953 buildings at Craven Terrace, although some of the porch roofs are different.

Craven Terrace and its companion Trent Court represented a new type of housing for the residents of New Bern when they were built. The architects, Mitchell Wooten, for the early section, and John Rowland for the later 1953 buildings, incorporated the best-practices for publically funded low-income housing projects including central open space and high standards of construction, as well as low density of development and public art. While the type of housing might have been new for the area, the design used for Craven Terrace incorporated both Colonial Revival and Art Moderne elements that would have been familiar to area residents because they were used on other local buildings including private homes and public buildings.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** CV2561

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 21.95

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.111827 | Longitude: -77.052452 |
| 2. Latitude: 35.111887 | Longitude: -77.049420 |
| 3. Latitude: 35.111086 | Longitude: -77.049420 |
| 4. Latitude: 35.111077 | Longitude: -77.049808 |
| 5. Latitude: 35.110918 | Longitude: -77.049798 |
| 6. Latitude: 35.119026 | Longitude: -77.049420 |

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7. Latitude: 35.108908                      Longitude: -77.049299  
8. Latitude: 35.108847                      Longitude: -77.052329

**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property consists of Craven County tax parcel 8-008-304, as shown on the attached Google map at a scale of one inch equals three hundred feet.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the nominated property include all the land that historically was associated with Craven Terrace.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Ashley Neville & John Salmon  
organization: Ashley Neville LLC  
street & number: 112 Thompson Street, Suite B-1  
city or town: Ashland state: VA zip code: 23005  
e-mail: ashleyneville@comcast.net  
telephone: 804-798-2124  
date: December 26, 2013

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Craven Terrace

City or Vicinity: New Bern

County: Craven State: North Carolina

Photographer: Ashley Neville

Date Photographed: February 24, 2014 and March 21, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 18. 1941 buildings, view to the west
- 2 of 18. 1941 buildings, view to the west
- 3 of 18. 1941 buildings, view to the west
- 4 of 18. 1941 buildings, view to the west
- 5 of 18. 1941 section view across open space, view to the northwest
- 6 of 18. 1941 section playground, view to the southwest
- 7 of 18. Building B2, view to the northwest
- 8 of 18. Building D2, view to the northwest
- 9 of 18. Building R, rear, view to the northeast
- 10 of 18. Ornamental bas-relief plaque
- 11 of 18. Building S, view to the northwest
- 12 of 18. View east on the Bryant Drive service road
- 13 of 18. 1953 buildings, view to the west
- 14 of 18. Building P2, view to the northeast
- 15 of 18. Building H2, view to the northeast
- 16 of 18. Community Building, view to the northwest
- 17 of 18. Maintenance Building, view to the northwest
- 18 of 18. Noncontributing brick wall, view to the northwest

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.