

## **Courthouse Manor**

<b>Address:</b>	1233 North Courthouse Road
<b>RPC #:</b>	17017002
<b>Current Owner(s):</b>	Courthouse Manor Associates P.O. Box 7139 Arlington, VA 22207
<b>Building Date:</b>	1940
<b>Current Zoning:</b>	RA8-18
<b>Existing Protections:</b>	None
<b>Current Development Pressure:</b>	None
<b>Historic Designations:</b>	None
<b>Significance Highlights:</b>	1) One of two individual garden-apartment buildings in County designed by Mihran Mesrobian; 2) Although Mesrobian's smallest garden-apartment project, it is his best example in Arlington of blending traditional and modern architectural styles.

### **Significance Statement:**

Courthouse Manor is one of the earliest intact examples of the work of Mihran Mesrobian in Arlington County, and is one of only two individual garden-apartment buildings he designed in the County. It stands as the best example of his prolific skills with merging traditional- and modern-style designs into a garden-apartment building, which stands unified alongside Mesrobian's Wakefield Manor garden-apartment complex (1943).

Courthouse Manor is a small garden-apartment building set on the southeast corner of North Courthouse Road and 13<sup>th</sup> Street North. Like many of his buildings, Courthouse Manor marries Art Deco and Moderne styles together with traditional character-defining features of the Classical Revival style, which was more familiar to residents and promoted as the style of choice by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). This coupling was performed with great proficiency by renowned architect Mihran Mesrobian. The building, encompassing 16 apartment units originally, was built by F & W Construction Company, which also was listed as the owner of the property when it was built.

Born in Turkey to Armenian parents, Mesrobian was educated at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Istanbul. He immigrated to the United States and settled in Washington, D.C. in 1921. He began working as a draftsman for Harry Wardman, one of Washington, D.C.'s most prolific and well-known developers. His work during this period included luxury hotels such as the Carlton (1926), the Hay-Adams (1927), and the Wardman Tower (1928). In his private practice, Mesrobian's Washington, D.C. commissions included the Dupont Circle Building (1931), a rug store at 1214 18<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1931), and Sedgwick Gardens (1931-1932). Mesrobian's design work during this period allow him to perfect his skill in combining distinct architectural elements under a primary style; he utilized Byzantine, Medieval, and Islamic elements and united them under a Moderne scheme. In addition to Mesrobian's residential commissions, he was also responsible for the design of several shopping centers in Arlington County and the neighboring City of Alexandria; only two of his commercial shopping centers are extant. Three of Mesrobian's other garden-apartment complexes are intact—Wakefield Manor, Lee Gardens North, and Lee Gardens South. Also surviving is the mid-rise garden apartment building, Calvert Manor.

Courthouse Manor is significant in the area of community planning and development because of its association with the early-twentieth-century rental-housing boom spurred by the establishment of the FHA. It is also recognized in the area of architecture as a unique garden-apartment building, which was designed by noted architect Mihran Mesrobian. The architectural achievement of Courthouse Manor, despite being the smallest of Mesrobian's apartment buildings and complexes, combines the best in garden-apartment planning with FHA-insured financing guidelines. This building, along with the neighboring garden-apartment complex known as Wakefield Manor, provides an architecturally significant streetscape of garden-apartment buildings.

### **Summary Description:**

Dating to 1940, Courthouse Manor is constructed of red brick laid in six-course American bond with a rectangular form. Covered by a flat roof, the building is stylistically embellished with yellow-colored bricks that act as string courses and spandrels around the window openings. The building is banked into the landscape allowing the façade on North Courthouse Road and the south elevation to read as three stories, while the north side and rear elevations stand two stories in height. The metal casement windows, devoid of applied surrounds and brick arches, are tripartite openings with a larger 4/4 or 4/6 sash flanked by very narrow 2/2 sash, which sit on stone sills. Dog-toothed bricks provide additional ornamentation to the spandrels between the stories. Pierced panels of what appear to be stone are set at the top of the second-story openings, suggesting an entablature. Short brick parapets, lacking ornate cornices, frame the roof. The main entry on North Courthouse Road is set under a projecting metal awning and framed by bands of yellow-colored brick. Secondary entries on the side and rear elevations are covered by flat roofs supported by narrow columns; these porches appear to be replacements.