

FINAL  
OMB NO. 1024-0018  
EXP. 12/31/04

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only  
received \_\_\_\_\_  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name

historic Lockefield Garden Apartments

7 CONTRIB

and/or common Lockefield Gardens

2. Location

street & number 900 Indiana Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis, Indiana N/A vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state Indiana code 018 county Marion

code 097

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Indianapolis Housing Authority

street & number 410 N. Meridian Street

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of

state Indiana 46204

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Center Township Assessor

street & number 1321 City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis

state Indiana 46204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Preservation Work Paper, Regional  
title Center Plan, Indianapolis

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date January, 1981

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Indianapolis

state Indiana

# 7. Description

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

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Lockefield Gardens is located on a superblock bounded by Indiana Avenue on the north, Blake Street on the east, North Street on the south and Locke Street on the west. The neighborhood surrounding Lockefield contains a variety of architectural styles. There are a few residences and small businesses along Indiana Avenue and Blake Street, although the latter has a few vacant lots, as well. The area along North Street consists of parking facilities for Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, and the area west of Locke Street is occupied by the Wishard Memorial Hospital complex.

The superblock on which Lockefield sits is basically a rectangle, with the northeast corner cut off by the angle of Indiana Avenue. In general, the superblock is bisected lengthwise by a tree-lined mall. On each side of the mall is a row of chevron-shaped apartment buildings; a series of town houses is at the south end of the property; and a smaller building with a large courtyard terminates the north end of the mall.

Being nominated here are the chevron-shaped buildings along Blake Street, including buildings number 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 24 (see map). The nominated structures include the administration building at the corner of Indiana Avenue and Blake Streets (24), the two apartment buildings attached to it, as well as the four chevron apartments along Blake Street. The nomination excludes all of the town houses and all of the chevron apartments along Locke Street and Indiana Avenue, since demolition of these structures is planned. The open site plan of the complex is maintained in the nominated area so that each side of each building faces open space.

All of the buildings in Lockefield were designed in the International style and are constructed of brown and tan brick, with modest trim of brown brick and limestone. All are of reinforced concrete construction, with flat roofs of varying heights, and all have metal casement windows.

At the north end of the nominated area is the administration building, a two-story, curvilinear structure flanked by two, one-story wings with seven commercial shop areas each (see photo #1). Access to the manager's office was obtained through a central portal in the two-story section. The shops are separated from each other on the facade by a series of dark brick striations which form pilasters, dividing the facade into fifteen bays (see photos #8 and 9). Brick moldings surround the window and door openings. The building is topped by a narrow limestone coping.

The apartments attached to the administration building and the apartment buildings along Blake Street are nearly identical to each other (see photo #1). They are chevron in plan with a long, three-story west arm and a shorter, four-story east arm.

The apartments along Blake Street have ground floor garages which add a one-story northeast wing to the chevron plan.

A typical building has an entrance/stair tower on each end of each arm. The stairways are lit by vertical ribbons of windows. The longer arm of each building has an additional central entrance/stair that is simpler in design. The main facades, which face south onto courtyards, have alternate bays of two or four window sash. Each sash consists of a four-light, movable casement and one fixed light above. Rear facades have projecting blocks opposite the more ornate stair towers, and feature paired sash or smaller bathroom windows (see photos #2 and 3).

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On each building, a high, dark brick foundation reaches from the ground to the middle of the doorway (see photo #6). This foundation is penetrated by basement windows. A limestone course and a pattern of dark brick striations immediately above the foundation constitute the remainder of the surface decoration. Each doorway is surrounded by limestone; doorways alternate between a simple stone surround, and stone surrounded by brick, topped by an extra stone molding (see photo #3).

The once manicured grounds are now overgrown. The young trees first planted on the mall, however, are now fully grown, making the mall a most attractive feature of the complex. Renovation plans will retain the mall.

# 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1935-37

Builder/Architect William E. Russ and Merritt Harrison

**Statement of Significance (to be completed)**

The significance of the Lockefield Garden Apartments has been well established during proceedings of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, concerning demolition proposals for the complex. That significance falls within three basic areas. Quotations are from the Department of the Interior's Report dated May 29, 1981 (copy attached).

First, the complex "is significant as one of the Nation's first group of federally initiated, funded, and supervised peacetime housing projects. As one of the economic recovery programs of the Public Works Administration during the New Deal, the program sponsored 51 housing projects across the United States from 1933 to 1937, and was the precursor of the long-term program of federally subsidized low-rent housing established by the Wagner-Steagley Act of 1937...At this time [1934] the Housing Division undertook direct responsibility for the construction of the proposed projects to encourage a greater number of localities to submit proposals and to speed up the construction of approved projects." Thus, the construction of Lockefield Gardens marked a radical departure from previous federal policies, by directly involving the federal government in the construction of housing projects, something that had previously been considered a local matter.

Second, "...Lockefield Garden Apartments is significant for its innovative design, which strongly reflects the European prototypes of large-scale housing and urban design of the 1920's and the principles of the International Style. Furthermore, Lockefield Garden Apartments became an officially recommended model for federally subsidized housing projects and has had influence on the development of public and private housing in the United States. Authorities agree that Lockefield Garden Apartments is particularly important because of its innovative site-plan, exceptionally low coverage of the site (less than 20%), and high quality of construction." The buildings within the complex are also one of the city's most significant examples of the International Style.

The third area of significance was not addressed in the Department of the Interior's Report but is the area most recognized locally: Lockefield Gardens is significant because of its unparalleled importance to the local black community. The Lockefield Garden Apartments was erected in an area that, in the early 1930's, suffered from conditions more deplorable than any that exist today in Indianapolis. Houses faced each other along open gullies. Only a few water pumps and outhouses serviced the area. When Lockefield was built, it became a source of pride and of hope for the local community, especially its black citizens. There had never been such a large-scale undertaking in the city for the sole benefit of black residents. To live in Lockefield was considered an honor: prospective tenants were thoroughly investigated in terms of background, moral character, and living habits. Not only was Lockefield to provide quality housing; it was also to promote a higher standard of living. Interior decorators from local department stores conducted demonstrations for the tenants on how to create an aesthetic environment for the family. Pre-school facilities were available, and adult education classes were offered.

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Of the three apartment complexes available to blacks in the city, Lockefield was the only one which would allow children. Most of the young tenants of Lockefield grew into productive adults. Many achieved recognition on a national level for their success in sports, music, broadcasting, and community service. A very large percentage of local blacks who became lawyers, legislators, doctors, or other prominent citizens came from Lockefield, demonstrating that the proper environment could certainly improve the quality of life. Most members of today's black community were either Lockefield residents themselves, or had friends or family members who were.

Lockefield also generated business along Indiana Avenue. Commonly referred to as "The Avenue", it became a mecca for the black community from the 1930's to the 1960's, and still remains central in the minds of most members of the community, although activity there has dwindled.

The seven buildings nominated here are those which will remain after the demolition proposed by the Indianapolis Housing Authority. The removal of the structures along the west side of the mall, and those at the south end, will clearly compromise the integrity of the original site plan of the complex, making that area of the significance no longer applicable. The other areas of significance, however, will still be well represented by the remaining structures.

The surviving buildings will stand as a symbol of the hope that Lockefield Gardens provided to the citizens of the local black community. Perhaps never again will one place be so central to their daily life and culture. Moreover, the facades presented to Blake Street will still afford an idea of the federal government's first venture into direct welfare in this city, and one of the first in the nation.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Selected articles and issues of: The Indianapolis Star, The Indianapolis News, The Indianapolis Recorder, Lockefield News, The Indiana Preservationist. Telephone interviews with former residents and management of Lockefield.

--Continued--

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9 1/2 acres

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	6	5	7	0	6	8	0	4	4	0	3	1	1	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B 

1	6	5	7	0	6	8	0	4	4	0	3	3	8	5
Zone	Easting		Northing											

C 

1	6	5	7	0	7	4	0	4	4	0	3	4	5	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

D 

1	6	5	7	0	8	1	0	4	4	0	3	3	8	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

E 

1	6	5	7	0	8	0	0	4	4	0	3	1	1	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

F 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

G 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

H 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deirdre D. Spencer/on behalf of Midtown Economic Development Industrial Corp.

organization (M.E.D.I.C.)

date July 7, 1982

street & number 701 Indiana Avenue

telephone 317/637-4361

city or town Indianapolis

state Indiana 46202

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*J. M. Redman*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-5-83

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Department of the Interior's Report on Lockefield Gardens Public Housing Project,  
May 29, 1981.

Executive Director's Report: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. "Lockefield  
Garden Apartments, Indianapolis, Indiana." June 11, 1981.

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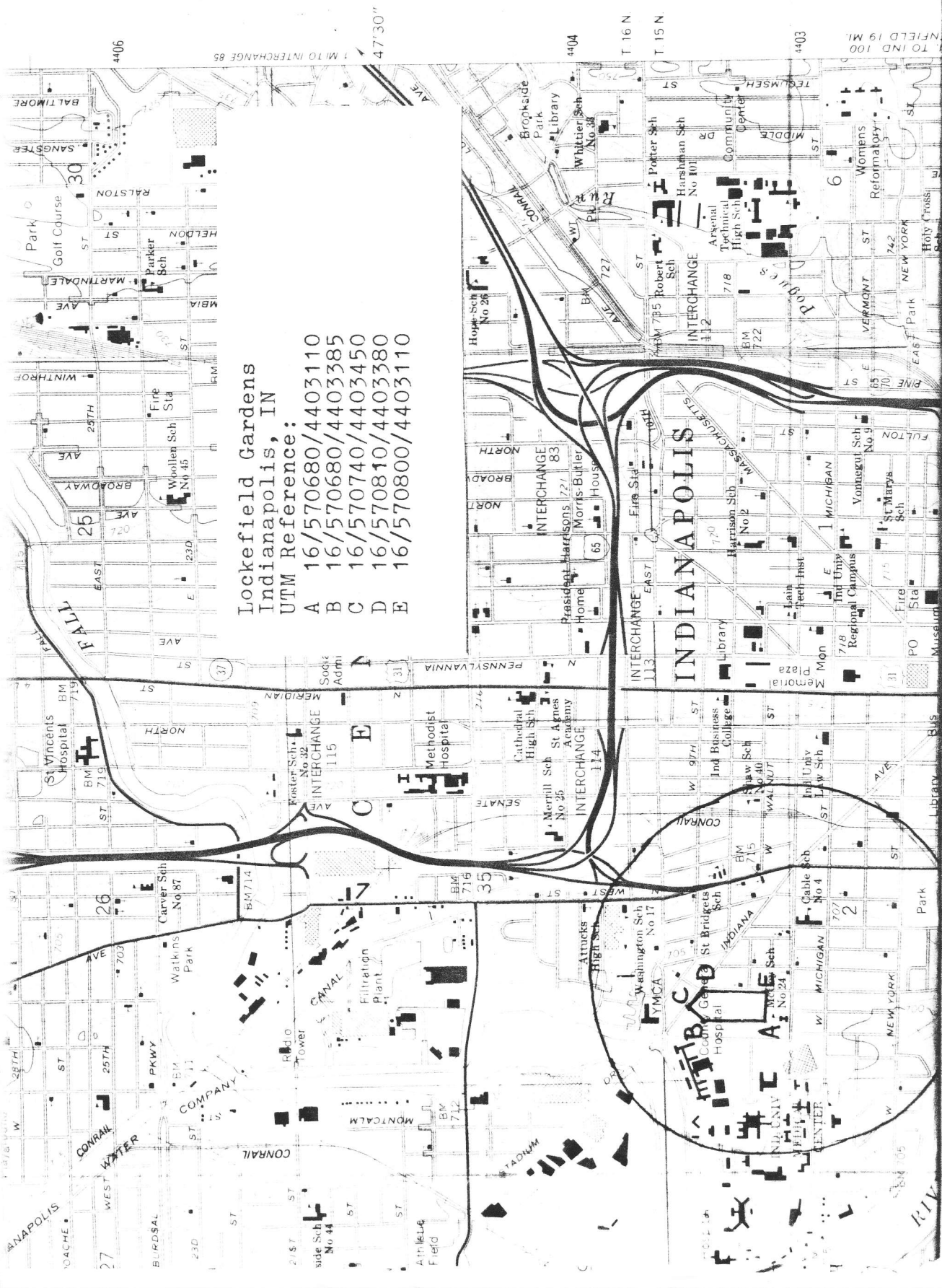
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Verbal Boundary Description:

Part of the East 1/2 of the East 1/2 of outlots 157 and 158. Beginning at the southwest corner of Indiana Avenue and Blake Street; thence south along the west curblineline of Blake Street to the southeast corner of lot 3 in Harris Subdivision; thence west 379.2 feet to the southwest corner of lot 10 in said subdivision; thence north to a point directly west of the starting point; thence northeast in a line perpendicular to the south curblineline of Indiana Avenue, to that curblineline; thence southeast along the south curblineline of Indiana Avenue to the point of beginning.

should be  
420.2 feet—  
see plat map





**Lockfield Gardens  
Indianapolis, IN**

**UTM Reference:**

- A 16/570680/4403110
- B 16/570680/4403385
- C 16/570740/4403450
- D 16/570810/4403380
- E 16/570800/4403110

**INDIANAPOLIS**

1 MILE TO INTERCHANGE 85  
47'30"

4406  
4404  
T 16 N  
T 15 N  
4403

ANAPOLIS  
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