

# SBR Draft

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Wedgwood Apartments  
Other name/site number: The View at Kessler Park  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

### 2. Location

Street & number: 2511 Wedglea Dr.  
City or town: Dallas State: Texas County: Dallas  
Not for publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

_____ State Historic Preservation Officer	_____ Date
Signature of certifying official / Title	
Texas Historical Commission State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting or other official	_____ Date
_____ State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government	

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
1	0	sites
3	0	structures
1	0	objects
7	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

**Current Functions:** Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Modern Movement: International Style

**Principal Exterior Materials:** concrete, glass, aluminum

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-9)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1965

**Significant Dates:** 1965

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Ahlschlager, Walter W., Sr. (architect); Bateson, T.C. (general contractor)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-10 through 8-16)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-17 through 9-18)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (Part I approved xx-xx-xx)
- 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 #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** approximately 8 acres

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.757391° Longitude: -96.859638°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated boundary is the legal parcel described by Dallas CAD as TRACT 1 BLK 2673 and shown on Map 1. The 8.261-acre site is on the northeast side of the terminus of Wedglea Drive, one block north of Bahama Drive. It is bounded on the north, west, and south by two and three-story, multi-unit apartment complexes and on the east by the Stevens Park Municipal Golf Course (Map 1).

**Boundary Justification:** The site includes all property historically associated with the building.

## 11. Form Prepared By

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Date: September 17, 2020

## Additional Documentation

- Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-19 through MAP-21)
- Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-22 through FIGURE-35)
- Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-36 through PHOTO-45)

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## Photographs

The Wedgwood Apartments

2511 Wedglea Dr.

Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Photographed by owner, May 2019 (except as noted below)

Photo 1

Aerial view from the southwest

Photo 2

South elevation looking northwest

Photo 3

Southwest and northwest elevations looking east

Photo 4

Southwest and south elevations with parking garage looking northeast

Photo 5

Parking garage south elevation looking north

Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019

Photo 6

Parking garage south elevation looking northwest

Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019

Photo 7

Parking garage spiral ramps facing west

Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019

Photo 8

Northwest elevation with pool and amenity area looking west

Photo 9

Pond and waterfall feature looking northeast

Photo 10

Fountain looking south

Photo 11

First floor main lobby looking south

Photo 12

Typical corridor, second floor

Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019

Photo 13

Typical apartment unit, second floor

Photo 14

Typical apartment unit, second floor

Photo 15

Typical apartment unit, second floor

Photo 16

Eleventh floor amenity area looking northwest

Photo 17

View from north end of eleventh floor looking south

Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019

**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.

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## Narrative Description

Wedgwood Apartments is an 11-story International Style apartment building on an 8.6-acre site in southwest Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. Dallas architect Walter W. Ahlschlager Sr. designed the Y-shaped building, completed in 1965, as an all-inclusive residential home for retired adults. A second, nearly identical high-rise in San Antonio is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>1</sup> There are eight resources (seven contributing, one non-contributing) within the nominated boundary. Wedgwood Apartments (Resource 1, contributing) is composed of three equally-spaced wings with a curved radius of sweeping horizontal facades. This horizontal emphasis is amplified by continuous bands of aluminum ribbon windows set back from the floor-slab edges which serve as shade devices at each level. The wings terminate at integral stair towers set back from the main facades with the terminal ends clad in windowless walls of vertically ribbed concrete panels and a central band of decorative screen block. At the top of the building an exterior balcony with cast concrete guardrails and a low gabled roof mark the location of the common room at the 11th floor penthouse on the north wing. A central drum hides the mechanical enclosure on the otherwise flat roof of the other wings. Inside, the centrally placed lobby features two elevators and a fire stair servicing the buildings other levels. Resident areas retain their original central corridor layout with low ceilings. While the lobby largely retains its original configuration, the remainder of the common spaces on the first floor have been remodeled and rearranged except for the commercial kitchen. Finishes in the central lobby are contemporary. The building's 311 apartments in 9 floorplans retain their original layouts and bathroom finishes but the finishes in the remainder of the units vary from original to contemporary. Wedgwood Apartments landscape design was a significant amenity marketed to prospective residents. Still intact, it is considered a contributing site with three individually-counted features: fountain, swimming pool, and manmade pond. Similarly, the 1965 3-story parking garage with spiral ramp and CMU screen block is considering contributing. Despite changes to the interior common areas, and a contemporary paint scheme on the exterior of the tower and garage, the Wedgwood retains a high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

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## Site<sup>2</sup>

The building site at 2511 Wedgwood Drive (Map 1), in Dallas, Texas is located southwest of downtown in a largely multi-family section of Oak Cliff and towers over the area's typically two-story apartment blocks. The beauty of the setting is enhanced by the Stevens Park Municipal Golf Course which adjoins the site to the east. This arrangement also provides sweeping unobstructed views to downtown from the building's upper floors. The Wedgwood is centrally placed on the site and its original design included amenities—covered parking and outdoor recreation—for prospective residents. The nomination argues the designed landscape and several large features contribute to the significance of the property. Smaller landscape features—like light posts, fences, and paths—are not counted separately from the site.

There asphalt-paved parking areas arranged to the south and west, and parklike grounds to the north and east (Photo 1). A three-level parking garage (Resource 2, contributing: Photos 1 & 6-8) with spiral ramps is located on the northeast corner of the site and is connected to the main building with a ground level covered walkway and a second level bridge. The site is entered from the southwest corner through a metal gate with non-historic guard house (Resource 8, noncontributing). A drive leads to a traffic circle at the building's main entrance centered on the south elevation (Figure 2). An original tiered fountain (Resource 4, contributing; Photo 10) in a trefoil shape and with integrated plantings is at the center of the circle. A canopy/porte cochere covers the north side of the traffic circle and is constructed of precast concrete T's with arched profiles.<sup>3</sup> The wide walkway to the main entrance is covered by a simple flat-roofed pergola supported by square tubular steel posts and beams, although the posts of the porte cochere and pergola have been clad in contemporary materials.

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<sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places, The Wedgwood, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, National Register #100000669.

<sup>2</sup> It is not known if the site design was executed by Ahlschlager or an outside firm.

<sup>3</sup> The porte cochere is considered part of the apartment building, and thus, is not considered an individual resource.

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A beautifully landscaped 4-acre area at the northeast side of the building is a contributing site (Resource 5). It features terraced walkways and patios that originally included recreational amenities for the building’s residents. Other original features are the a pool (Resource 6, contributing) with cabana, picnic and barbecue areas, manmade pond (Resource 6, contributing) and artificial waterfall (Resource 8, contributing). Walkways are constructed of concrete and retaining walls of rubble stone masonry (Photo 13). This portion of the site is heavily wooded primarily with large live oak trees. The original curving concrete pool (Photo 11) is located on the upper terrace and remains in use, although the original pool cabana has been removed. The man-made pond with artificial waterfall (Photo 12; Figure 9) sits at the north end of the amenity area and feeds a stone-lined artificial creek that bisects the site from north to south with water recirculated back to the pond. These water features are intact but not in working order at the time of the nomination. The entire site features original lampposts.

Table of Resources  
 (see Figure 1, Site Map)

	Resource name	Classification	Year Built	Status
1	Wedgwood Apartments	Building	1965	Contributing
2	Parking Garage	Structure	1965	Contributing
3	Fountain	Object	1965	Contributing
4	Designed Landscape	Site	1965	Contributing
5	Pool	Structure	1965	Contributing
6	Manmade Pond	Structure	1965	Contributing
7	Guard House	Building	c. 1990	Non-Contributing

## Wedgwood Apartments

### *Exterior (Photos 1-5)*

The Wedgwood is Y-shaped in plan featuring three wings (Photo 1), each connected by a curved radius. The three primary elevations are almost identical and express the building’s concrete slab construction with continuous aluminum ribbon windows setback from the slab edge at each floor to create a cantilevered sunshade (Photos 2-4). Windows are set on a continuous 3-foot high plaster base, further emphasizing the horizontality of the primary facades. The flat roof features a central drum enclosing mechanical equipment over the building’s core (Photos 1-2). At the north wing, a low gabled roof covers the 11th-floor amenity area which also features projecting balconies with cast concrete guardrails. At the terminal ends of each wing, the identical secondary facades step inward one structural bay. Secondary facades are windowless, concealing the interior fire stairs, and are constructed of vertically ribbed concrete precast panels and a central vertical band of decorative CMU breeze block (Photo 5). The south wall of the parking structure includes similar detailing (Photo 7), with alternating vertical bands of precast concrete panels and decorative CMU screen block. The precast concrete panels and breeze block were originally painted in deep tan shades that blended with the original stonework. These surfaces are now painted white and green. At the west side of the north wing, the site features a concrete patio between the main building and garage. A steep ramp provides access to the loading dock at the basement level.

Contrasting the smooth geometric lines and materials of the building are accents in rubble stone masonry. This material is used on the site but is also employed at the building entries along the central core and at the 11<sup>th</sup> floor penthouse. In these locations, the heavy rubble stone masonry walls flank the entries and carry into the lobby. Similar walls adjoin 11th floor balconies and carry into the amenity area, and adorn the south wall of the parking structure (Photo 7).

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The exterior and site of The Wedgwood remain almost entirely intact. Modifications to the site include the addition of the guard shack at the entry drive (non-contributing), resurfacing of patios at the northeast side of the building, and removal of the pool cabana. The building exterior retains its original materials but has been modified with overpainting.

The historic drawings indicate the plaster and concrete surfaces were painted with an epoxy coating, and investigations have revealed this to be of a sand color that is complimentary to the stone. Today all exterior masonry surfaces are painted white with the exception of decorative CMU block which is painted bright green. Most stonework attached to the building has also been painted white, but the stone remains exposed on-site features and limited areas of the interior. Original clear-anodized aluminum frames at doors and windows have been painted black.

### *Interior (Photos 15-19)*

The interior of the Wedgwood is entered from the primary entrance located at the reentrant angle of the southwest and southeast wings. Immediately to the left of the entry is the leasing office which has been modified from its original design and expanded slightly westward into the building lobby. Secondary entries are similarly placed to the northwest and northeast. The elevator and central stair core are arranged at the northwest side of the central lobby (Photo 15, Figure 10) with restrooms arranged behind the stair. Original finishes in the lobby included a tile floor with central carpet, plaster ceiling, and walls clad in wood paneling except the elevator bank and columns which were clad in marble. All of these finishes are missing or covered with contemporary finishes. Notably, the floor has been replaced with terrazzo in a pattern simulating the original tile and carpetin geometry, but in shades of white and bright blue.

The north wing of the first floor originally included a shopping arcade with coffee shop, commercial kitchen, sundries shop, barber shop and beauty shop. Of these, only the commercial kitchen remains, the other spaces having been reconfigured to accommodate a fitness room and other amenities. The far north end of this wing contained a medical ward with treatment rooms, but these, too, have been removed and converted to an entertainment room, multipurpose room, and mail center. Only the treatment room at the northwest corner remains partially intact. The southwest and southeast wings retain their original configuration as do the resident areas on the upper floors. Central corridors with low ceilings are flanked on either side by apartments and terminate at fire stairs. The corridors and lobbies were originally finished with carpeting, flush doors and simple wood trim. Today the carpet is missing, having been removed in favor of stained concrete floors. Doors and trim appear to have been replaced. Light fixtures also appear contemporary. Elevator lobbies on upper floors retain their original configuration and face southeast. Each lobby includes storage rooms for residents, a laundry room and janitor's closet.

There are approximately 311 apartments (Photos 16-17) in nine floor plans ranging from studios to three bedrooms (Figures 4-5). Typical units have galley kitchens and were originally finished with carpeting, smooth drywall walls, flush doors and simple wood trim. Most of this remains with the exception of the carpeting. Bathrooms are rather institutional with tile floors and wainscots (Photo 18).

Originally the north wing of the eleventh-floor housed amenity spaces under the low sloped roof which was articulated to the interior vaulted ceilings. Off a central gallery were arranged a library, club room, social room with kitchen and bar, meeting room, game room, hobby room and restrooms. These areas have been largely reconfigured with dropped ceilings and contemporary finishes. Most of the smaller amenity rooms have been converted to live-work spaces. The social and meeting room (Photo 19) at the terminal end of this wing largely retain their original floorplan and include floor-to-ceiling windows with sliding doors accessing the adjoining balconies. Some of the original stone masonry on this level remains unpainted, but only at the interior.

### **Parking Garage (Photos 4 & 6-8)**



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The 3-level parking garage occupying the northwest corner of the site contains over 39,000 square feet and 294 spaces. A simple post and slab concrete structure would not be noteworthy except for the detailing on the south façade. Here the architect adorned the facade with the same concrete breeze block and ribbed panels featured on the main building. At the southwest corner is a semi-circular projecting bay containing spiral ramps. The remaining sides of the garage lack notable detail. The garage is connected to the main building by a pergola at the first level and by a skybridge at the second.

## **Integrity**

The Wedgwood retains its integrity of location and the setting remains as it was at the time of the building's construction. The sweeping primary facades remain unaltered including continuous ribbon windows and concrete spandrels. Precast concrete, CMU breeze block, and accent stone are similarly intact at secondary facades, as is the large central drum capping the building core at the roof. Integrity issues are more pronounced in the public interior spaces of the tower where original finishes have been significantly modified but corridors and apartment units retain their original arrangements. The original design of the contributing site and related features is also intact, as are the materials, although some features such as the pond and its waterfall are not functioning as they should. The parking garage is entirely intact and is arranged as it was at the time of its construction. Cracking of the intact breeze block on the south façade is indicative of underlying structural issues. Paint applied to the exteriors of the main building and garage minimally diminishes the original design intent. With the exception of the stonework, these features were always painted, though in more subdued shades of tan and brown. However, these changes are minor relative to the overall integrity of the Wedgwood and its contributing resources. The building's continuous use since its opening in 1965 and the unchanged nature of the grounds and surrounding neighborhoods provide a strong sense of feeling and association.

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## Statement of Significance

The Wedgwood, currently known as The View at Kessler Park, is an 11-story apartment building completed in 1965 on a beautiful 8.6 acre site adjoining Stevens Park Golf Course in west Oak Cliff, Dallas. The building is a prominent landmark in an area comprised primarily of two story multi-family garden apartments. It is the final design of prominent architect and developer Walter W. Ahlschlager who planned the Dallas building as his own place of retirement. The striking modern design with its sweeping horizontal lines is contrasted with a beautiful site plan that includes gardens, fishpond, waterfall, and artificial creek, walking paths and swimming pool. A contemporaneous parking garage with spiral ramps shares many of the architectural stylistic elements of the tower including vertically-ribbed reinforced concrete panels and decorative CMU screen block. Interior amenities including meeting and game rooms, a restaurant, beauty salon, barber shop, club rooms and retail store provided a safe, dignified and independent home to the building's tenants. The architect died just one month after its completion having never had the opportunity to live there. The design was to be duplicated in Houston and San Antonio, but only the San Antonio project was realized. The Wedgwood reflects the architect's ability to observe and master architectural trends throughout his long career from 1912 to 1965. As a committed developer, he believed having a financial interest in his own projects were instrumental to the production of high-quality designs. With an impressive nationwide portfolio of buildings across the United States, Dallas is fortunate to be the home of the architect's penultimate design. The building retains a high degree of integrity despite a relatively recent renovation and rebranding as The View. The Wedgwood Dallas is eligible under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture as an excellent mid-century interpretation of the International Style, and as the last notable project of renowned architect Walter W. Ahlschlager. The period of significance is 1965, the date of the building's completion.

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## Elderly Housing and the Development of Residential High-Rises in Dallas, Texas

Housing for seniors in Dallas historically followed state and national trends. Prior to programs enacted as part of the New Deal, care for the elderly typically fell to families or charities. Before the 1930s a large percentage of the elderly population nationwide were fully dependent on their immediate families or charities for support. In the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, county governments in Texas also established poor farms house the indigent. Poor farms like the one established in Dallas County in 1877 served several purposes. The farms were used as county prisons for debtors, as homes for the indigent including the elderly and sick, and even as homes for orphaned children. Those who could work were required to work the farm and raise crops and livestock which were used to feed those at the farm, and for sale to offset the costs of operations.<sup>4</sup>

During this period the primary homes for seniors in Dallas were the Fowler Homes and the CC Young Memorial Home.<sup>5</sup> Each of these were associated with religious institutions, and limited membership to white church members who were willing to pay a fee and transfer their property to the organization. Regional fraternal organizations also operated homes for members and had similar requirements for admission.<sup>6</sup> These requirements made the acquisition of care and housing for blacks and the indigent particularly difficult. The onset of the Great Depression and resulting increase in poverty pushed the problem of elder care into the light. New Deal programs such as Social Security Act of 1935 sought to shift care of the elderly back to the family home both by allowing able bodied seniors to remain independent, and by helping families to better afford care of elder family members at home.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Freeman, Martha Doty (2008) "Indigent Care in Texas: A Study of Poor Farms and Outdoor Relief," Index of Texas Archaeology: Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State: Vol. 2008, Article 20. <https://doi.org/10.21112/ita.2008.1.20>

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that the Buckner Children's Home also provided a small amount of housing for seniors on their grounds.

<sup>6</sup> Homes for the Aged in the United States, Directory and Entry Requirements. Bulletin #677, 1941. United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7.

<sup>7</sup> "Why Social Security?" 1937 pamphlet published by the Social Security Administration. <https://www.ssa.gov/history/whybook.html>

3 United States Social Security Board, 1932.

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The Social Security Act assisted seniors by establishing a pension plan paid for by workers, and with cash payments for those without a regular work history. While these programs had the stated goal of allowing the elderly the support necessary to remain in their own homes and those of their extended families, they had the additional effect of providing seniors with the financial resources to pay monthly expenses to private and charitable homes for seniors. This led to the gradual reduction of poor houses and poor farms, particularly for seniors who were there largely due to poverty.<sup>8</sup> The Dallas County poor farm reflected this pattern. With the gradual reduction of the able-bodied population there, by 1940 the poor farm was in use primarily for the housing and care of the indigent and was renamed the Dallas County Convalescent Center.<sup>9</sup>

These trends and additional assistance provided to veterans returning from WWII served to stimulate the market for senior housing of all types including independent living facilities and nursing homes. Buckner Benevolences opened a large facility, called the Trew Home, on beautiful wooded acreage east of downtown Dallas in 1954.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the construction of a central building dedicated to ambulatory and nursing care, Buckner established a program whereby able bodied retirees could construct a cottage home on the property with the promise that upon their death the home would be deeded to Buckner for the benefit of future residents. The institution continued to expand for over four decades with wings added to the original Trew Home, additional cottages, duplexes, quads and a community house.<sup>11</sup> The home closed approximately 10 years ago and is currently slated for demolition.

In the years after World War II, planners, architects and government agencies sought the best ways to respond to societal trends in housing for seniors which were shaped by an increase in the numbers of seniors due in large part to improved health and longevity. Improved health also led to an increase of seniors living independently and complicated the demographic categorization of seniors.<sup>12</sup> With the Social Security retirement age set at 62 or 65, demographic studies and government programs tended to focus on seniors as the group from age 62 and over and with similar states of health. While this broad categorization did offer some valuable data and insights, it lacked the nuance of considering the significant differences of seniors over five and ten year increments, the varying health needs of individuals, and those seniors and retirees under 62.<sup>13</sup>

Those involved in the development of senior housing sought to better address these disparities. In the case of the design of multi-family housing, they observed that the placement of all seniors from fully independent to those requiring full nursing care has the result of placing independent seniors in institutionalized settings. For senior housing in general, a transitional approach to such housing was determined to be a more effective approach, both for the wellbeing of the resident and the relative cost of construction and operation. Differences in marital status, income, level of independence, and health status meant that a variety of housing types was necessary to effectively address individual needs. At the Trew Home an effective and harmonious balance was achieved by placing a variety of housing types on the same campus with housing available for every need. Few facilities offered this wide range of housing types with the norm being more targeted accommodations focused either on those in need of intensive nursing care or independent seniors. Still, the level of independence that could be achieved in a facility depended on the design of the facility and the accommodations provided.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> FATE (Foundations Aiding the Elderly), "The History of Nursing Homes". Retrieved 7/17/2018 from [www.4fate.org/links.php](http://www.4fate.org/links.php).

<sup>9</sup> James, Frances. <https://dallasgateway.com/dallas-county-poor-farm-hutchins/>

<sup>10</sup> "Dedication Held at Home for Aged." Dallas Morning News, September 20, 1954:13.

<sup>11</sup> Buckner Baptist Benevolences Archives

<sup>12</sup> Jane Jacobs. "Housing for the independent Aged." *Architectural Forum*, August 1958, p86.; Geneva Mathiasen. "Buildings for the Aging: Trends in Housing for Older People," *Architectural Record*, December 1962, p110-114.

<sup>13</sup> Mathiasen. "Buildings for the Aging: Trends in Housing for Older People," p110.

<sup>14</sup> Mathiasen. "Buildings for the Aging: Trends in Housing for Older People," p110-114.

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By the 1960s, planners argued that effective multi-family housing for independent seniors address several important factors. Certainly everyone understood that housing should be pleasant and accommodating, but these factors alone were insufficient to fully address the need. Seniors prefer to remain in their local communities and to have access to shopping, worship and other regular activities. On site amenities were desirable to facilitate independent living including activities, places for socialization, dining, shops with necessities, and even on-site medical care.<sup>15</sup> The cost for including these amenities within an independent retirement facility made the provision of affordable housing more difficult. Federal housing programs sought to bridge the gap.

At the time the Wedgwood project was announced, the federal government offered a variety of programs to promote the construction of housing for seniors. Under one such program, the Federal Housing Administration offered mortgage insurance for the construction of multiple housing rental units for the elderly. For-profit borrowers were insured for up to 90 percent of estimated value or replacement cost. This particular program was targeted at housing for more well-to-do seniors and allowed developers to construct facilities that might otherwise be financially risky. These housing developments might include those special amenities described as desirable for independent living. The Wedgewood was one such project.

### *Apartment Living in Dallas*

Prior to WWI apartment living in Dallas was rare. Apartment houses had a bad reputation as being homes for the undesirable, and before the widespread availability of water, sewer and electric services, living conditions in apartments was much more difficult than in single family homes. A serious post war housing crisis in Dallas led the community to rethink its opinion of apartments. Apartment construction in eastern and midwestern cities had proven that apartments could be as comfortable as single-family homes. The decade of the 1920s saw the construction of hundreds of apartment buildings most of which were relatively modest structures of two to three stories and decorated in popular revivalist styles of the day. High-rise residential development was limited, with most buildings of the type categorized as apartment hotels. Marketed to more affluent residences, they provided the independence and amenities of a single-family home with the conveniences of a hotel. Notable examples are the Stoneleigh and Melrose Apartment Hotels.<sup>16</sup> A second wave of apartment construction occurred after WWII with developers like Leo Corrigan replacing older units and some of the city's most stately homes along Gaston and Ross Avenues with low cost 2-story apartment blocks.<sup>17</sup> Garden apartments, complexes of apartment buildings with shared greenspaces and amenities between them, also became popular.

Dallas's high-rise apartment market took hold in 1957 with the opening of architect Howard Meyers' 22-story 3525 Turtle Creek Boulevard.<sup>18</sup> This area along Turtle Creek became a popular location for residential high-rise development and remains so today. Turtle Creek North followed in 1962, and like 3525 was marketed to the city's affluent residents.<sup>19</sup> When the 21-story Turtle Creek Towers opened in 1964, it was an exception to this rule, claiming to offer low cost rentals.<sup>20</sup> At the time the construction of the Wedgwood was announced in 1963 the number of high-rise apartments in the city remained small.

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<sup>15</sup> Jane Jacobs. "Housing for the independent Aged," p86-91.

<sup>16</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Bella Villa Apartments.

<sup>17</sup> Dillard, Katherine. "Building of Homes Gets Green Light." Dallas Morning News, 26 May 1946: 1.; |Dallas Real Estate Genius Building Property Empire," Dallas Morning News, January 13, 1952: 12.

<sup>18</sup> Montgomery, Marjorie. "Contemporary and traditional furnishings for apartments," Dallas Morning News, September 20, 1957: 3.

<sup>19</sup> Barnes, Jeanne. "Models: Sophisticated Air for Apartments," Dallas Morning News, April 26, 1962:2.

<sup>20</sup> "Low Price High Rise has Formal Opening," Dallas Morning News, February 1, 1964:3.

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## *The Wedgwood*

On June 9, 1963, a story in the Dallas Morning News announced the construction of The Wedgwood, a building designed to, “provide past-50 luxury living.”<sup>21</sup> The building represented the ongoing expansion of housing options marketed to seniors and the newly growing high-rise apartment market. Architect Walter Ahlschlager was retained by Harry H. Davidson of Dallas and Vannie E. Cook to design the building in 1962. It was to be one of three nearly identical buildings to be constructed in Dallas, San Antonio and Houston.<sup>22</sup> The Dallas Wedgwood was to contain 311 apartments in nine configurations from studios to three bedrooms. The 8.5-acre wooded site adjoining Stevens Park Golf Course contained a lake stocked with fish, 9-hole putting green, swimming pool with cabana, shuffleboard courts, picnic areas and walking paths.

The 11-story y-shaped design allowed for the placement of the main lobby, elevator and stair core at the intersection of the three wings, limiting the walking distance for residents. The arrangement also provided an added sense of security to the building’s elderly tenants. On the first floor the building provided a small shop for necessities, beauty and barber shops, a restaurant and health clinic with full medical staff. The penthouse, with its sweeping views of the park and of downtown included club and meeting rooms, game rooms a private club and a library.<sup>23</sup> The interior décor, designed by Tiche Goettinger Department Store, was quite traditional, reflecting the conservative tastes of the building’s clientele and offering an interesting contrast to the building’s otherwise modern design. A parking garage was added to the plan sometime during construction. Ahlschlager claimed to have designed the building with his own retirement in mind, and as a champion golfer, its location adjoining the municipal golf course was certainly part of its appeal.<sup>24</sup> Ahlschlager died on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1965, just over a month after the building’s dedication on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Construction of The Wedgwood’s San Antonio unit (NR 2017) began in February 1964 in the Castle Hills section of San Antonio. Completed in October 1965, the building is nearly identical to the Dallas unit but on a slightly smaller site and with 299 rooms and lacking a parking garage. Damaged by fire in 2014, the building stands vacant but is the subject of a certified rehabilitation. The Houston unit was never constructed.<sup>25</sup>

Upon its completion the Dallas Wedgwood immediately ran into difficulty renting units and was forced to eliminate the above-fifty restriction on tenants. Still, by 1986 seventy five percent of the building was occupied by seniors. Elderly residents likened the building to living on a ship with everything they needed close at hand, but that the building was an idea ahead of its time.<sup>26</sup> Over the last three decades, the elderly population of the Wedgwood has gradually declined being replaced with a much younger clientele and with the inside amenities tailored to seniors removed or reconfigured. These interior changes and cosmetic changes to the exterior were made during a 2000c update of the building in conjunction with its rebranding as The View. Recently purchased by Westmount Realty Investments, the building and its surrounding contributing resources are scheduled for a certified rehabilitation utilizing Texas Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits.

### *Walter William Ahlschlager (1887-1965)*

Walter Ahlschlager was born in Chicago in 1887. The son of an architect, John Ahlschlager, he attended the Lewis Institute of Technology (1905-1909), followed by three years concurrently at the Armour Institute and

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<sup>21</sup> "Wedgwood to Provide Past-50 Luxury Living." Dallas Morning News, June 9, 1963: 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> "Wedgwood Complete." Dallas Morning News, February 7, 1965: 1.

<sup>24</sup> Grove, Larry. "Architect Designs Apartments for Own Comfort." Dallas Morning News, May 3, 1964: 27. "W. W. Ahlschlager, Architect, Dies." Dallas Morning News, March 30, 1965: 3.

<sup>25</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, The Wedgwood Apartments San Antonio.

<sup>26</sup> "Home Sweet Highrise: Elderly find good life at apartments." Dallas Times Herald, June 17, 1986.

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Art Institute of Chicago. The young architect joined his father's firm in 1912, and upon his father's death in 1915 entered into a partnership with real estate developers Louis H. Stafford and W.C.D. Trankle. His work with the hotel developers instilled a strong belief in him that owning a stake in his own projects produced superior designs and he continued to develop his own properties throughout his career. to assemble land and financing for construction of hotels in Chicago. Ahlschlager was involved in both design and real estate development for the remainder of his long and distinguished career.<sup>27</sup> Chicago hotel designs in which he held a financial interest included Parkway, Webster, Sovereign, Jackson Towers, and Graemere.<sup>28</sup>

From his home office in Chicago, Walter W. Ahlschlager, Inc. incorporated in 1921, the architect compiled a long list of impressive projects in his home city and across the nation. Notable early projects include:

- Sheridan Plaza Hotel (1921; NRHP 1980)
- Medinah Athletic Club (InterContinental Hotel), (1929; NRHP)
- Uptown Broadway Building (1926; NRPH 1986)
- Peabody Hotel (Memphis; 1926 (NRHP 1977)
- Roxy Theater (New York; 1927; demolished 1960)
- Carew Tower (Cincinnati; 1930; NRHP 1994)
- City Place Tower (Oklahoma City; 1928)
- Beacon Hotel and Theater (New York; 1928)

In 1938 the federal government advertised for bids on the sale of its building on Ervay between Main and Commerce Streets. Ahlschlager was part of a development team with local developer, Leo Corrigan, to construct a 36-story Art Moderne office tower on the site. The team's plan was rejected, as were the proposals of all other competitors. After demolishing the building, the government again placed the site up for sale with Robert L Thornton, president of the Mercantile National Bank placing the winning bid. Ahlschlager's previous involvement in the site and his relationship with Corrigan led Thornton to approach him for the design of the new bank tower. By April 1941 the plans were complete with construction scheduled for completion by the end of 1942. Despite the onset of World War II, owing to the power and influence of Thornton, the Mercantile was the only major American office building completed during the war and was the tallest building west of the Mississippi River.<sup>29</sup> Difficulty in obtaining materials, particularly steel and copper, delayed completion until November 1943.<sup>30</sup> The construction of the bank brought Ahlschlager to Dallas where he would remain for the remainder of his career.

Ahlschlager began his Texas career in a six-year partnership with Dallas architect James McCammon. He also partnered with his son Walter Ahlschlager, Jr. in the development firm of Ahlschlager and Ahlschlager, and owned several others including The Continental Corporation of Texas, Turtle Creek Apartment Company, Will-Walt Company and Sam-Walter Corporation. These development interests reflected the architect's early experiences with Stafford and Trankle in Chicago.<sup>31</sup>

According to the National Register Nomination File for the San Antonio Wedgwood, Ahlschlager's commissions include the Lighthouse for the Blind (1941); 3200 Rinehart Oil News Company (1950); Skillman

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<sup>27</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. The Wedgwood Apartments San Antonio. "W. W. Ahlschlager, Architect, Dies." Dallas Morning News, March 30, 1965: 3

<sup>28</sup> Ahlschlager, Walter. "Fiscal Architecture; or The Art of Making It Pay." *American Builder Magazine*, 1921.

<sup>29</sup> Mercantile National Bank. City of Dallas Landmark Designation file, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> "Architect Designs Apartments for Own Comfort." Dallas Morning News, May 3, 1964: 27.

<sup>31</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places nomination file. The Wedgwood Apartments San Antonio. American Institute of Architects Archives, Walter W. Ahlschlager file; Dallas Morning News, April 24, 1949, IV:2.

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Medical Building (1951); Maple office building (1952); Wholesale Furniture Mart (1954); and Sabena World Airlines offices (1959), J.C. Penney Company (Corpus Christi;1947). Randolph Village, at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio (1951).<sup>32</sup>

## International Style

The Modern Architecture movement arose in the early 20th century and represented a shift to building forms that emphasized function with a rejection of historical design precepts and styles.<sup>33</sup> The closely-related International Style was developed in the 1920s and 1930s and can be traced to buildings designed by a small group of modernists, of which the major figures includes Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Jacobus Oud, Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra and Philip Johnson. The Getty Research Institute defines it as "the style of architecture that emerged in Holland, France, and Germany after World War I and spread throughout the world, becoming the dominant architectural style until the 1970s. The style is characterized by an emphasis on volume over mass, the use of lightweight, mass-produced, industrial materials, rejection of all ornament and colour, repetitive modular forms, and the use of flat surfaces, typically alternating with areas of glass."<sup>34</sup>

A notable example of the style in Dallas is the Statler Hilton (NR 2009) designed by William Tabler and completed in 1956. At the time of its construction, the Y-shaped building was hailed for its use of new techniques including the implementation of cantilevered structural systems.<sup>35</sup> In addition to the similarities in plan and structure with the Wedgwood, the Statler includes a strong horizontal emphasis with the use of ribbon windows and symmetry and repetitive forms. The Wedgwood also shares striking similarities to the World Heritage Centre in Paris (1958), which features a Y-shaped plan with sweeping, curve, symmetrical primary facades and with secondary facades largely devoid of ornamentation. The Centre was the collaborative design of the world's leading Modernist and International Style architects of the day, including Lucio Costa (Brazil), Walter Gropius (Germany/United States), Le Corbusier (France), Sven Markelius (Sweden) and Ernesto Nathan Rogers (Italy), and with the collaboration of Eero Saarinen (Finland).

## Conclusion

Walter Ahl Schlager career was notable for his skill both as an architect and a developer. The stylistic evolution of his designs reflects his ability to observe and master architectural trends as exemplified by his execution of revivalist and early modernist designs prior to World War II (Uptown Broadway Building, Chicago, 1926; Roxy Theater, New York, 1927; Carew Tower, Cincinnati, 1930) and an evolution to pure modernism as exemplified by his later designs (Mercantine Building, Dallas 1943; Wedgewood, 1965). With an impressive nationwide portfolio of buildings across the United States, Dallas is fortunate to be the home of the architect's penultimate design. The building retains a high degree of integrity despite a relatively recent renovation and rebranding as The View. The Wedgwood Dallas is eligible under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture as an excellent mid-century interpretation of the International Style, and as the last notable project of renowned architect Walter W. Ahl Schlager. The period of significance is 1965, the date of the building's completion. Contributing elements include the site at the northeast quadrant of the site (pond, artificial creek, swimming pool, terraces, stone walls, and walking paths), the traffic circle and fountain at the south entry, and the parking garage.

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<sup>32</sup> National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places nomination file. The Wedgwood Apartments San Antonio.

<sup>33</sup> Dictionary of Building Preservation, Ward Bucher, editor (Publisher, Preservation Press and John Wiley & Sons, New York; 1996.); Willard B. Robinson, "Architecture," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed November 01, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/architecture>.

<sup>34</sup> "International Style | architecture". Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 2018-09-17.

<sup>35</sup> Dallas Downtown Historic District, National Register Nomination file (2009).

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National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas

Dallas Downtown Historic District

Carew Tower, Cincinnati

Medinah Athletic Club, Chicago, Illinois

Peabody Hotel, Memphis

Sheridan Plaza, Chicago, Illinois

Stoneleigh Hotel, Dallas

The Wedgwood Apartments, San Antonio



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*Dallas Morning News*

Robinson, Willard B. "Architecture," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 01, 2020,  
<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/architecture>.

# SBR Draft

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## Maps

Map 1: Boundary Map



# SBR Draft

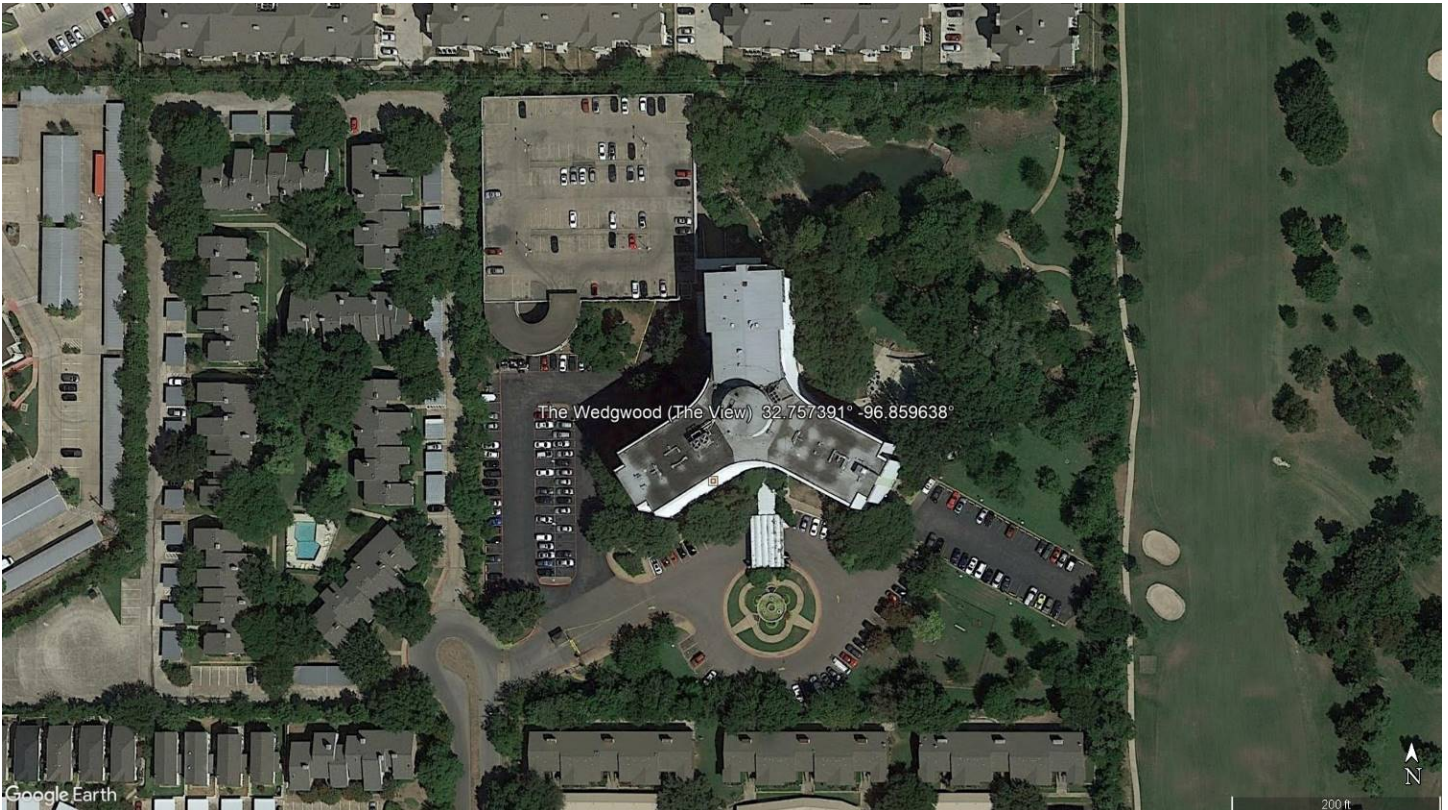
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## Map 2: Vicinity Map

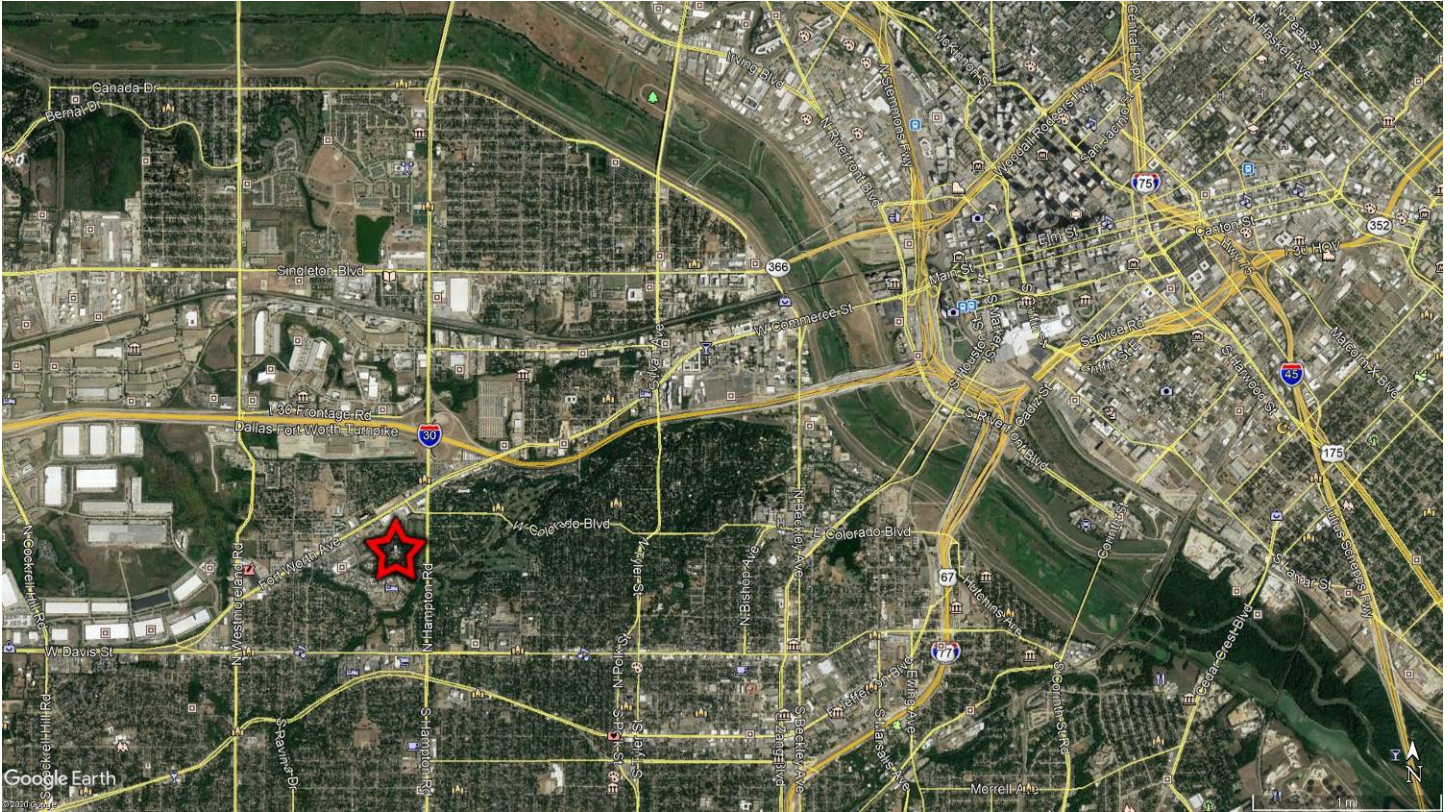
Source: Google Earth, accessed May 3, 2020

Latitude: 32.757391° Longitude: -96.859638°



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

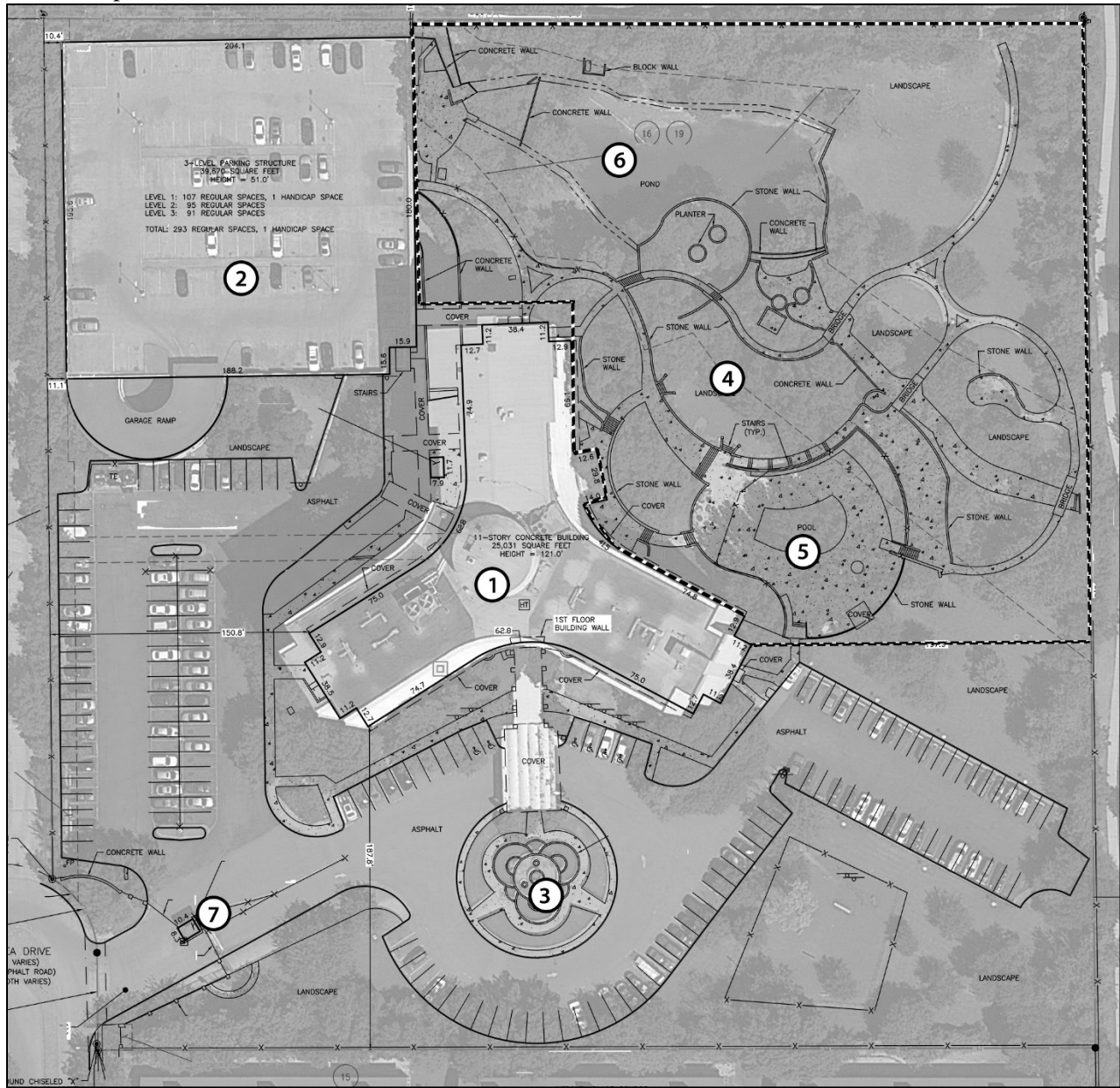
Map 3: Location Map  
The Wedgwood (The View)  
2511 Wedglea Drive  
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## Figures

Figure 1: Site Map



Resource	Resource Name	Classification	Year Built	Status
1	Wedgwood Apartments	Building	1965	Contributing
2	Parking Garage	Structure	1965	Contributing
3	Fountain	Object	1965	Contributing
4	Designed Landscape*	Site	1965	Contributing
5	Pool	Structure	1965	Contributing
6	Man-made Pond	Structure	1965	Contributing
7	Guard House	Structure	c. 1990	Non-Contributing

\*the black and white perimeter line denotes the rough boundary of the contributing landscape site.

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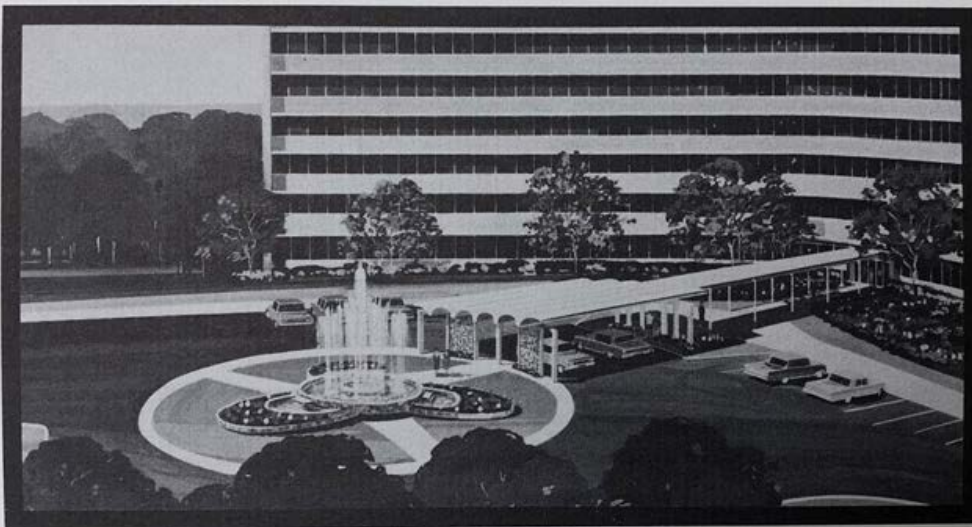
Figure 2: Rendering – Aerial view from the northeast. Source: Wedgwood marketing brochure. Clippings Files. DPL-  
Dallas History and Archives Division.



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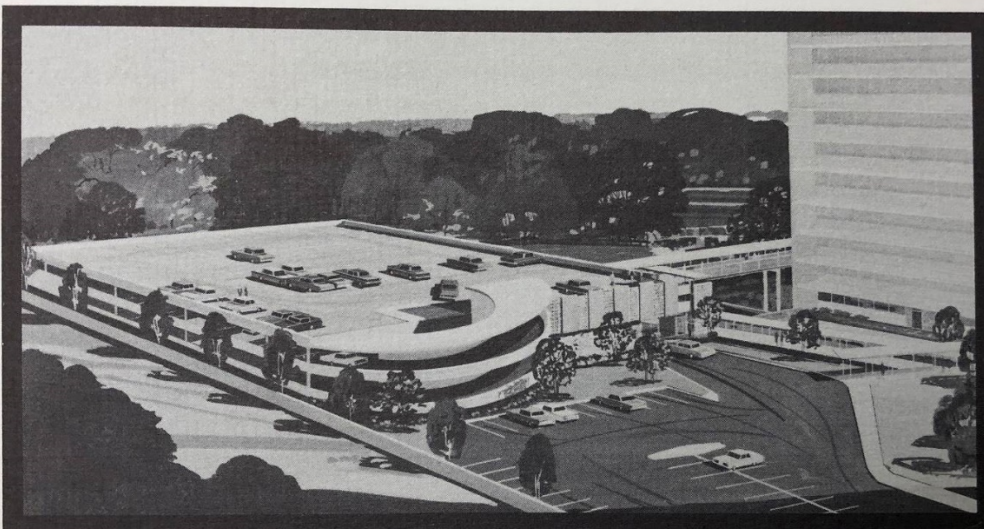
Figure 3: Rendering – Aerial view of entry court from the southeast. Source: Ibid.



**MAGNIFICENT MAIN ENTRANCE** — The continuous waterplay of a scintillating fountain greets you with crystalline charm. A graceful canopy across the curved driveway shelters you from the elements.

Figure 4: Rendering – Aerial view of parking garage from the southwest. Source: Ibid.

**SPACIOUS COVERED GARAGE** — Covered spaces for 200 cars with additional parking space on the roof. A total of 88,000 square feet of parking facilities with covered access to the main building on both first and second floor levels.

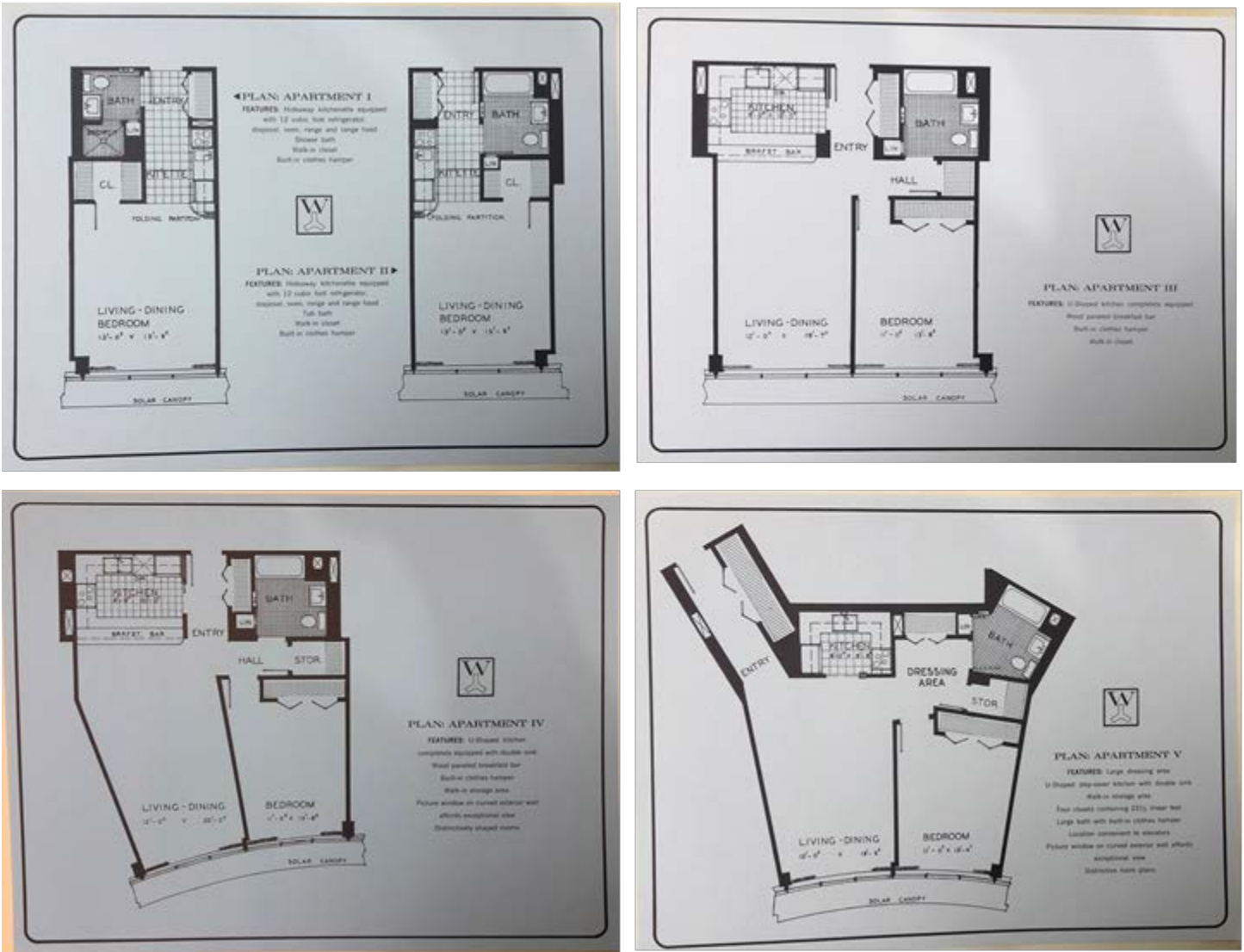


The covered garage and special main entrance have been added since the initial rendering shown on the cover of this brochure.

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Figure 5: Apartment plans 1-5. Source: Ibid.





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Figure 6: Apartment Plans 6-9. Source: Ibid.



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Figure 7: Building under construction in 1965, view from southwest. Source: DPL, Archives Division Clippings File.

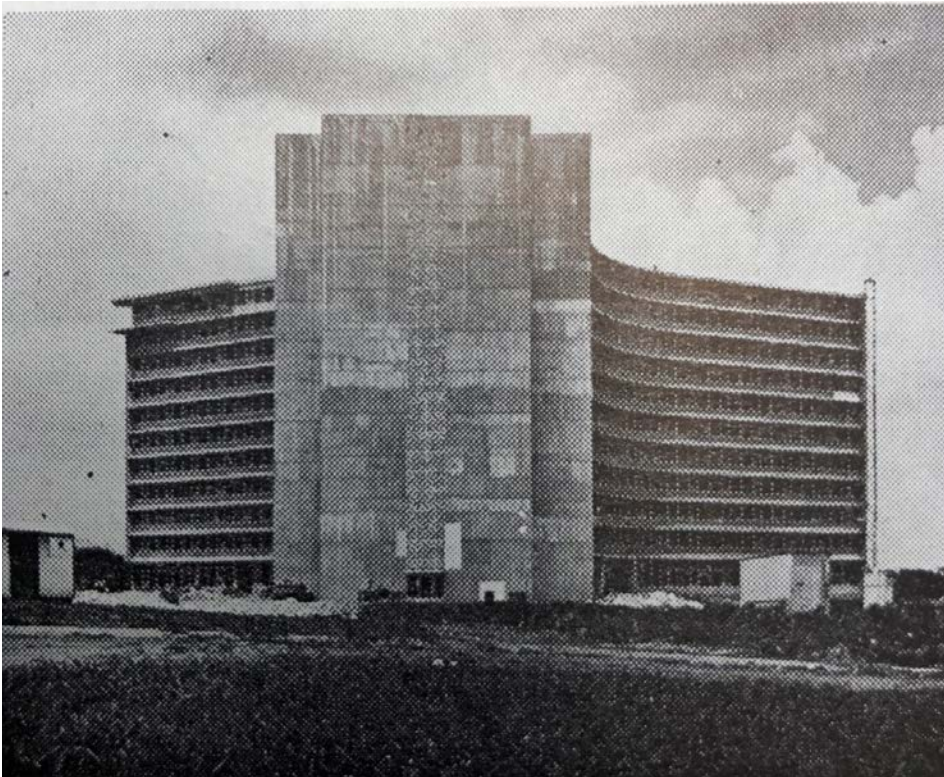


Figure 8: Aerial view of completed buildings and site from the southwest. Source: "Wedgwood Complete." *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1965.



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Figure 9: Waterfall. View from the west. Source: "Wedgwood Complete." *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1965.

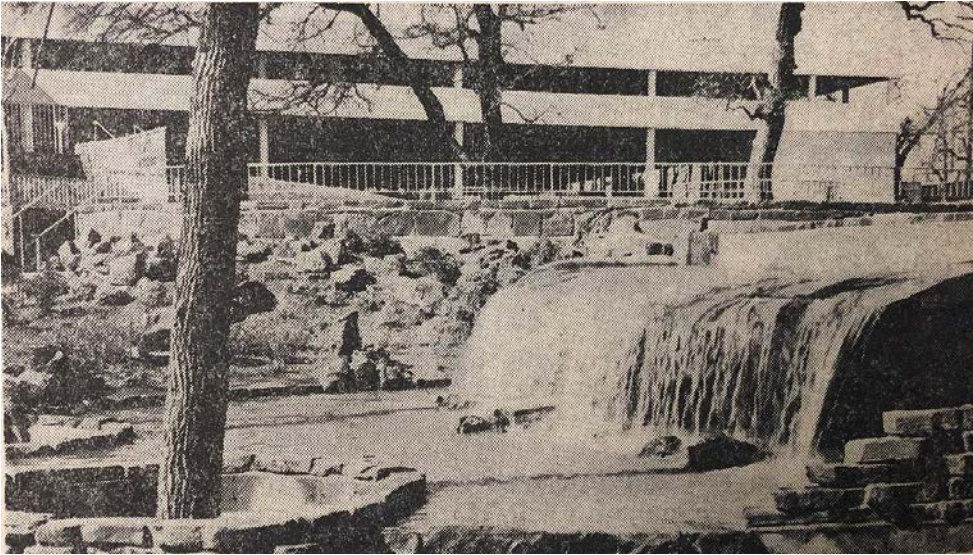
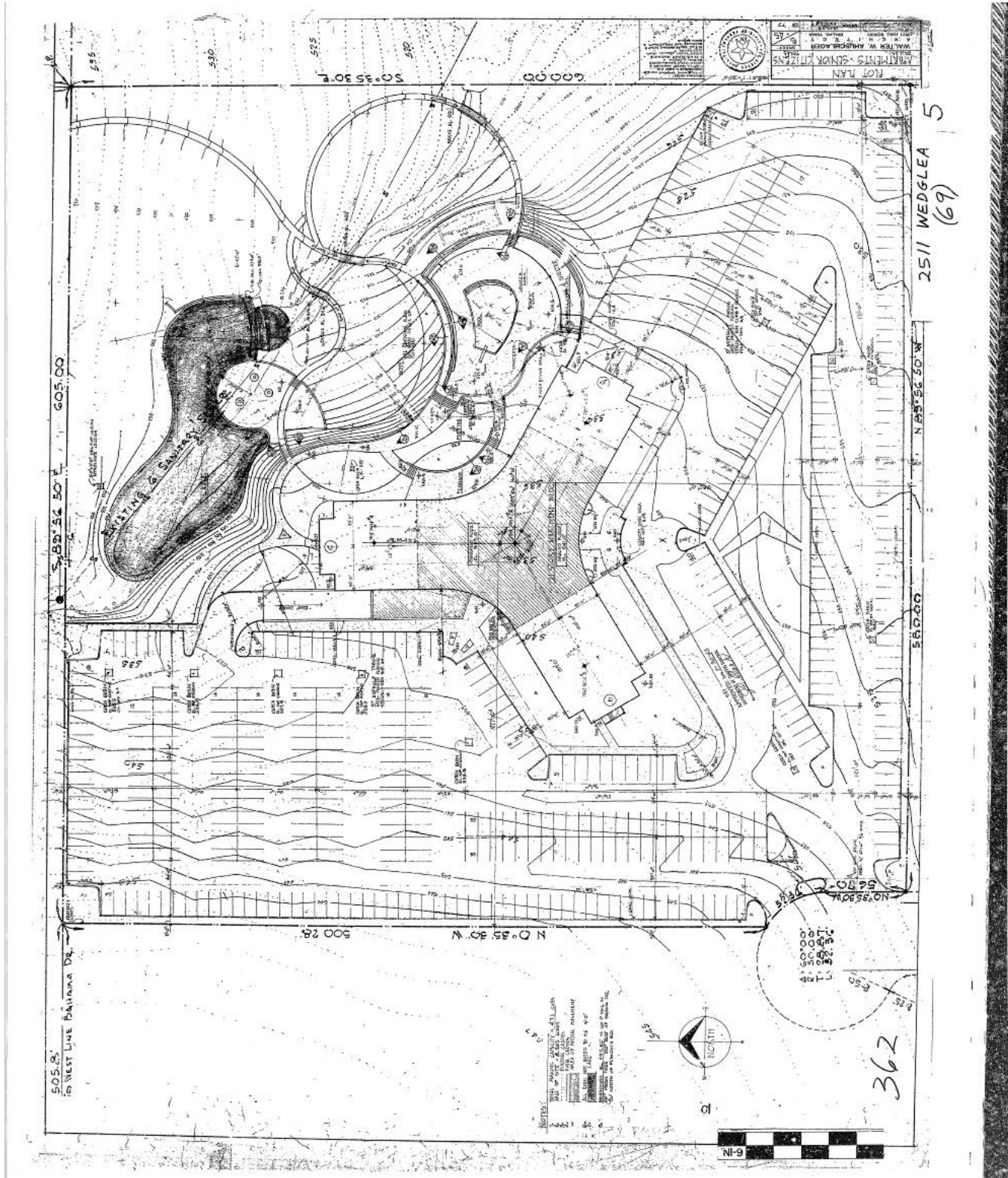


Figure 10: First floor main lobby facing south. Source: "Wedgwood Complete." *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1965.



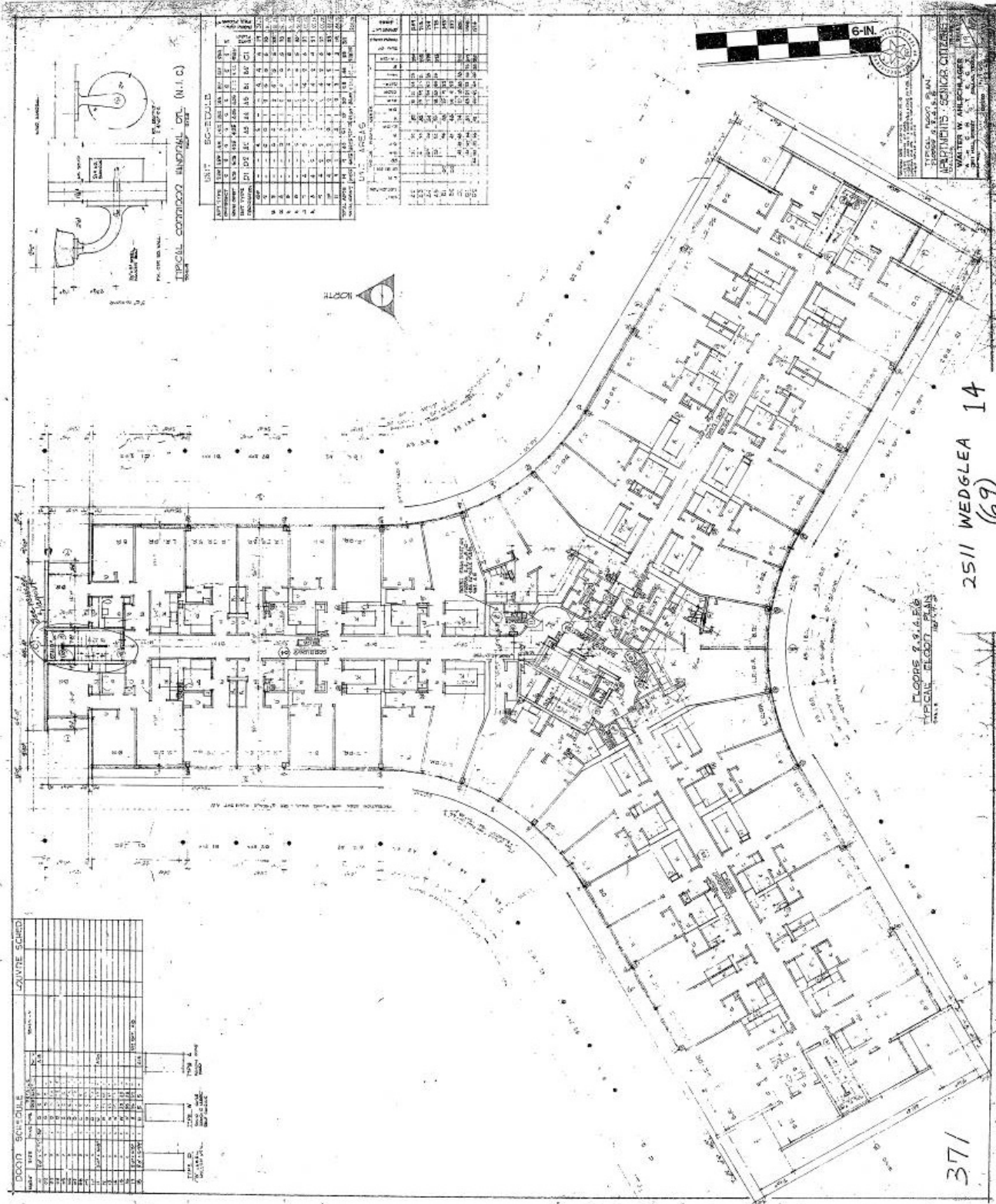
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 11: Site plan. Source: City of Dallas Permit Archive.



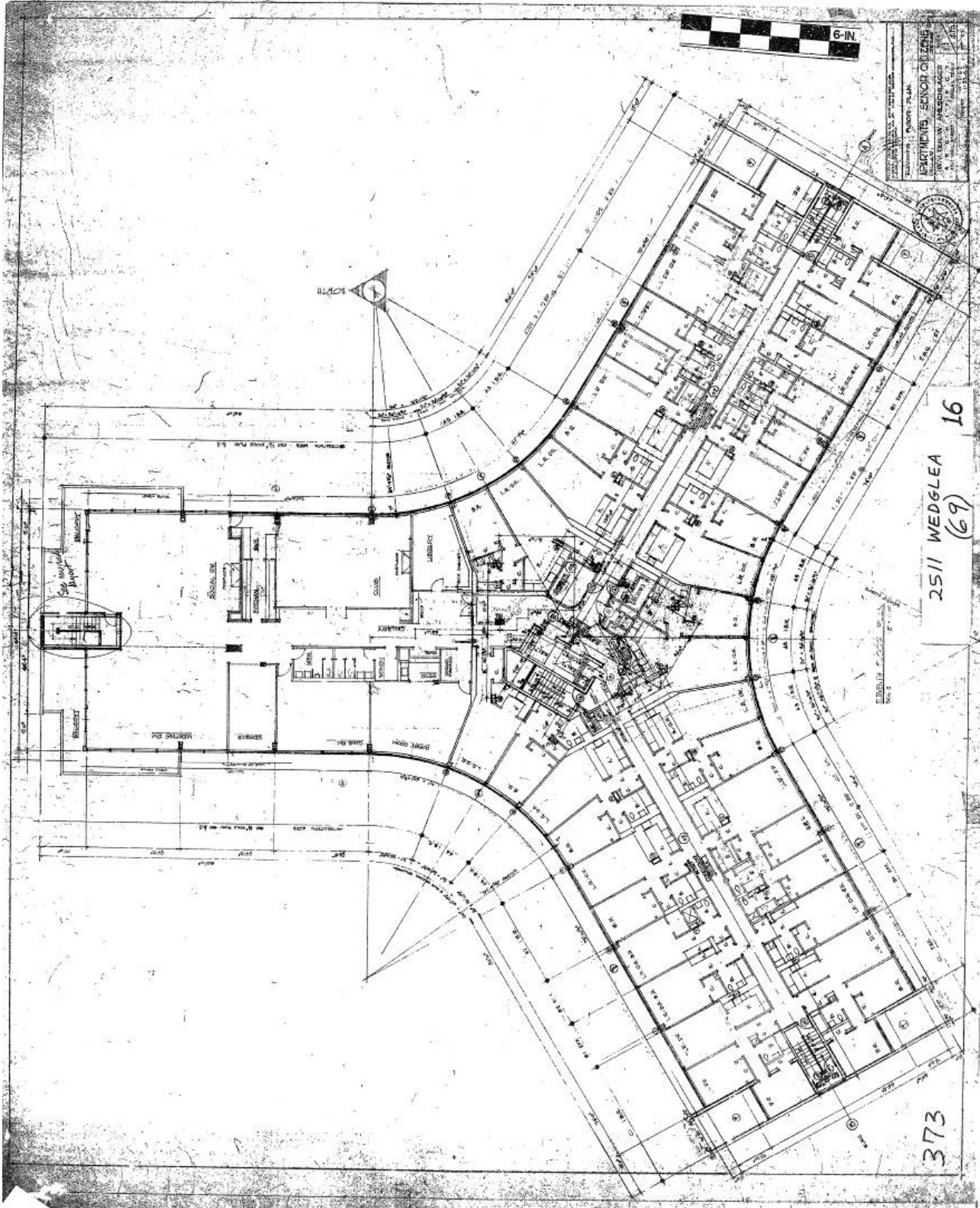
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 12: Representative plan for floors 2-10. Source: City of Dallas Permit Archive.



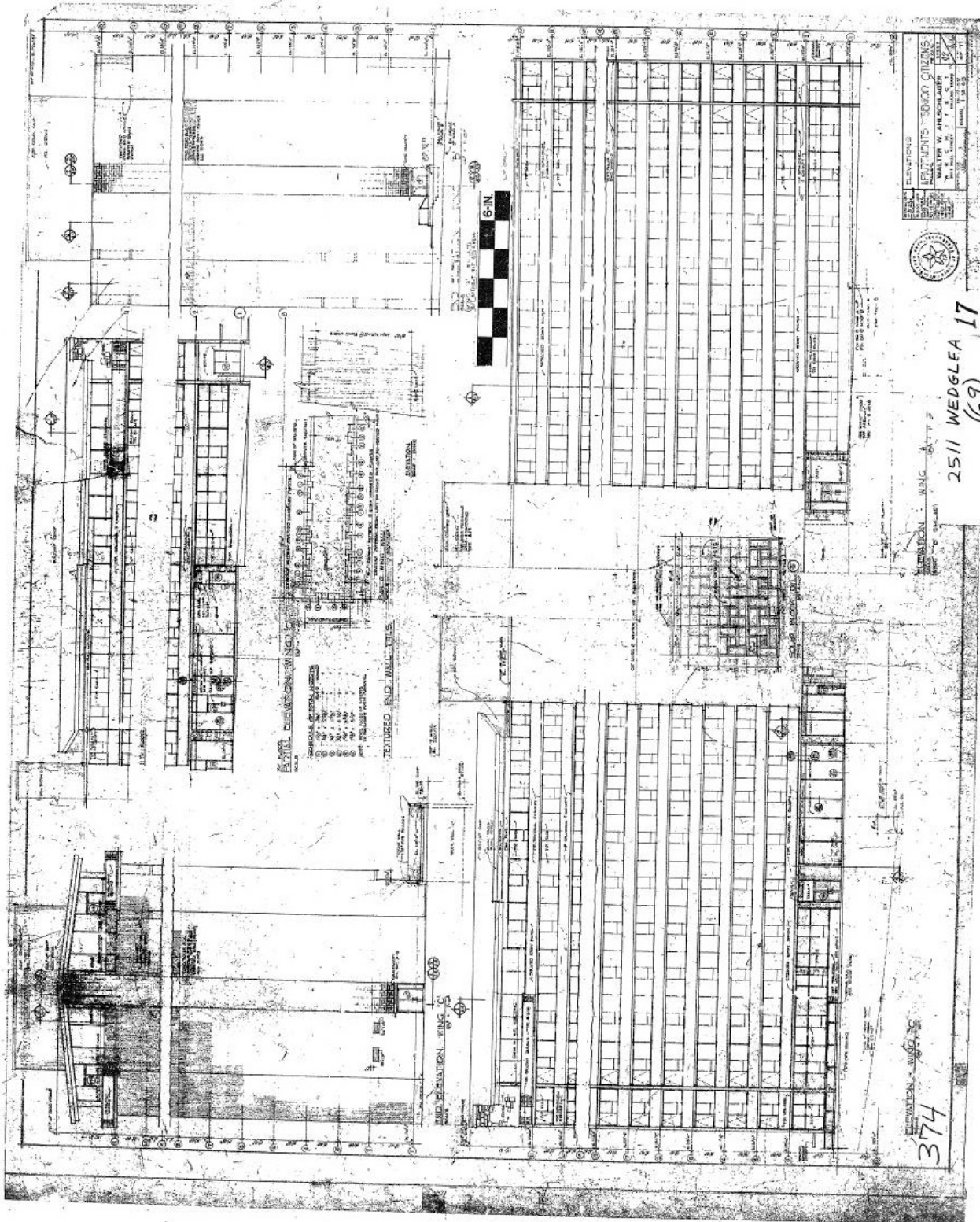
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 13: Eleventh-floor plan. Source: City of Dallas Permit Archive.



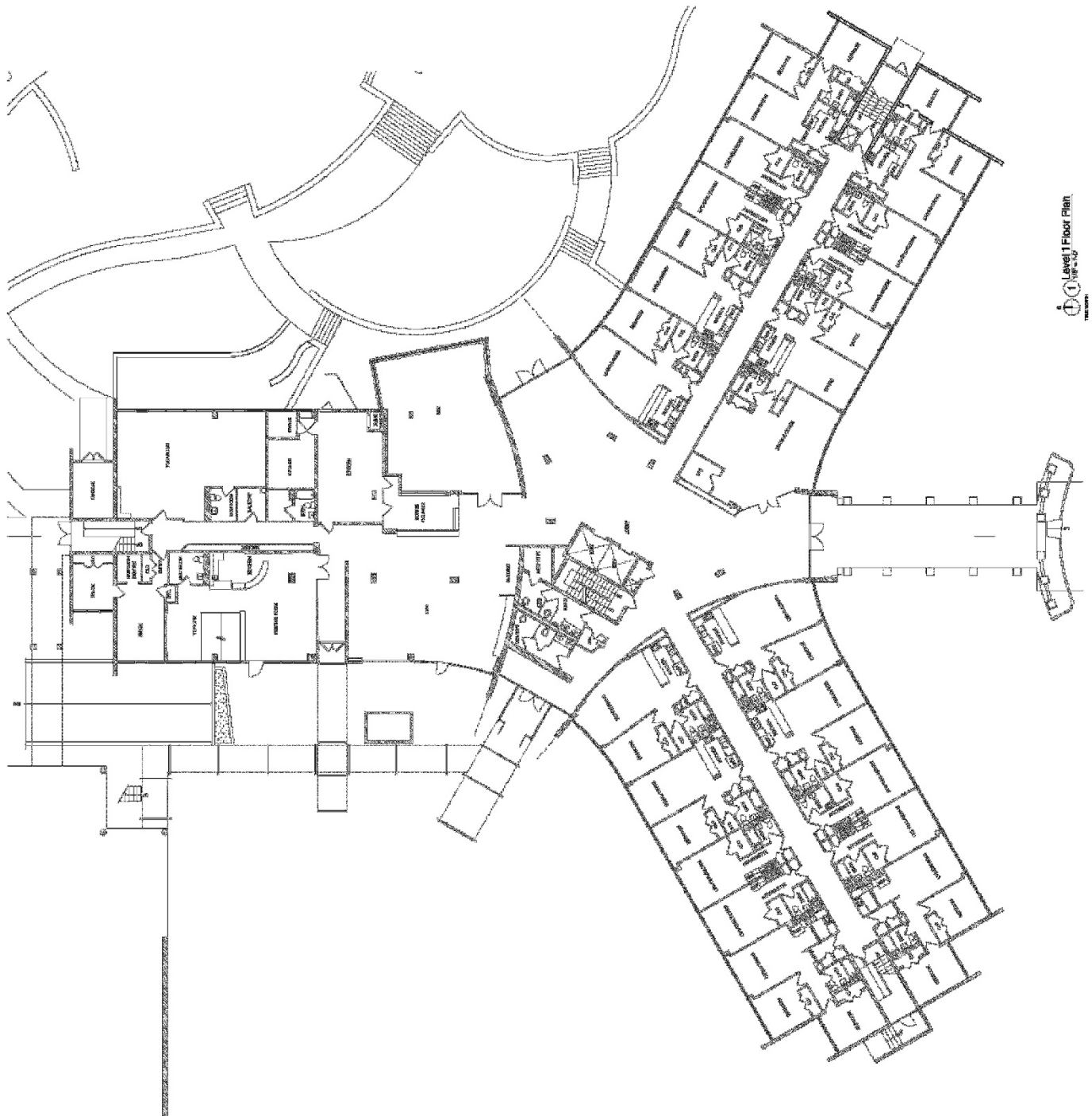
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 14: Elevations. Source: City of Dallas Permit Archive.



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Figure 15: Current 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan

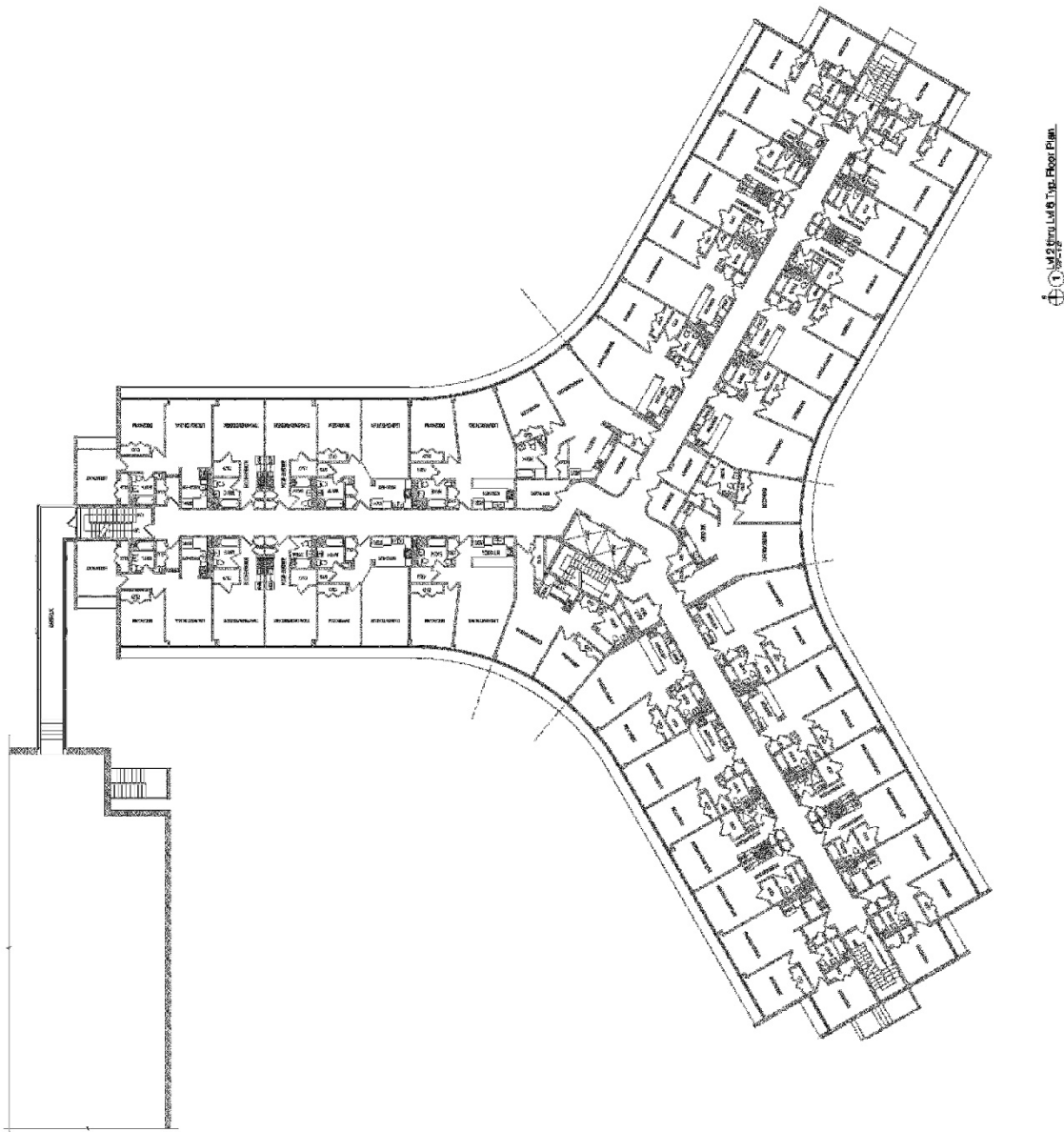




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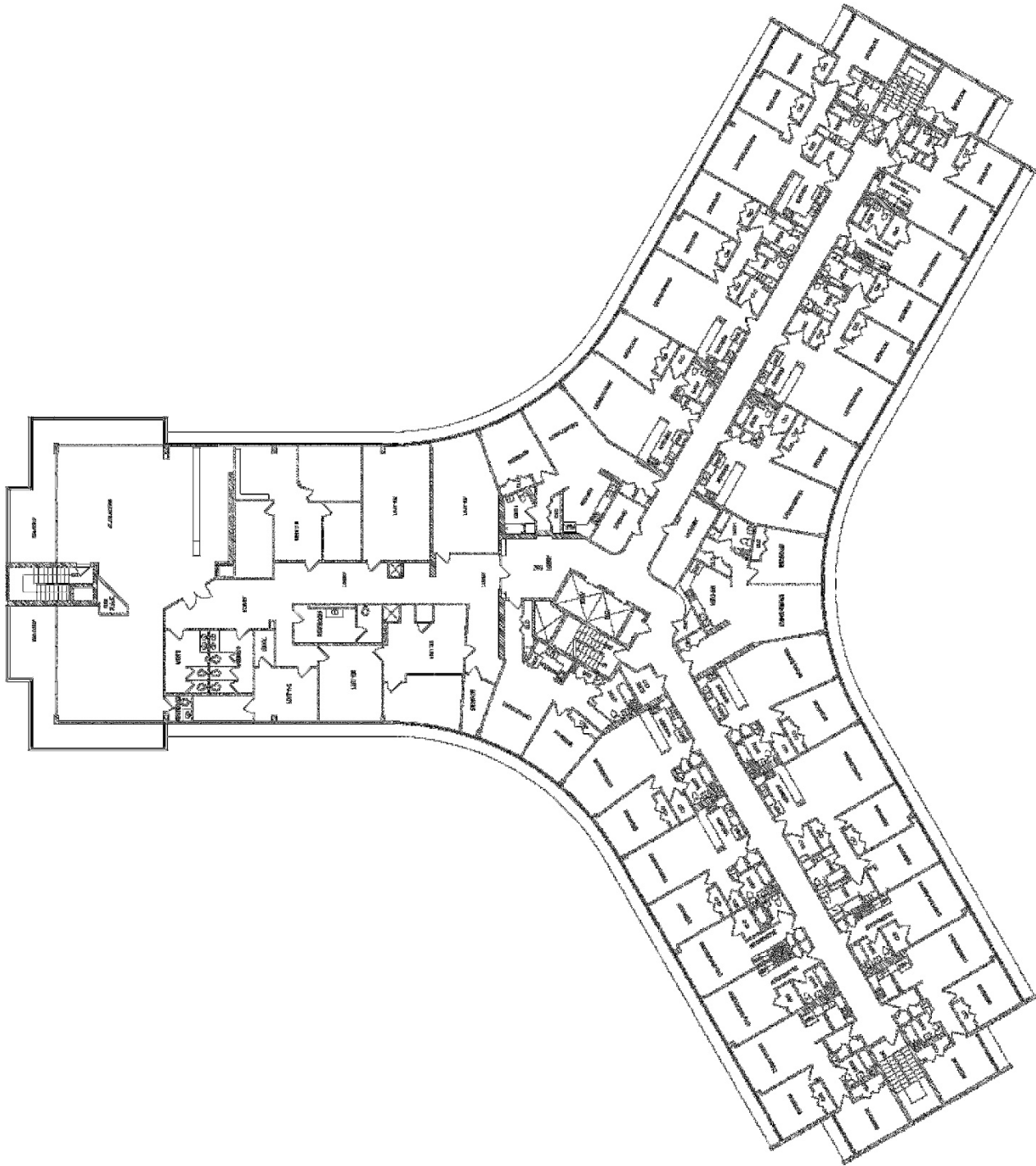
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Figure 16: Current 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan (Representative of Apartment Floors)



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 17: Current 11<sup>th</sup> Floor Plan.



Level 11 Floor Plan  
11  
11  
11

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## Photographs

The Wedgwood Apartments  
2511 Wedglea Dr.  
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas  
Photographed by owner, May 2019 (except as noted below)

Photo 1: Aerial view from the southwest. Photographed by owner, May 2019



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 2: South elevation looking northwest. Photographed by owner, May 2019



Photo 3: Southwest and northwest elevations looking east. Photographed by owner, May 2019



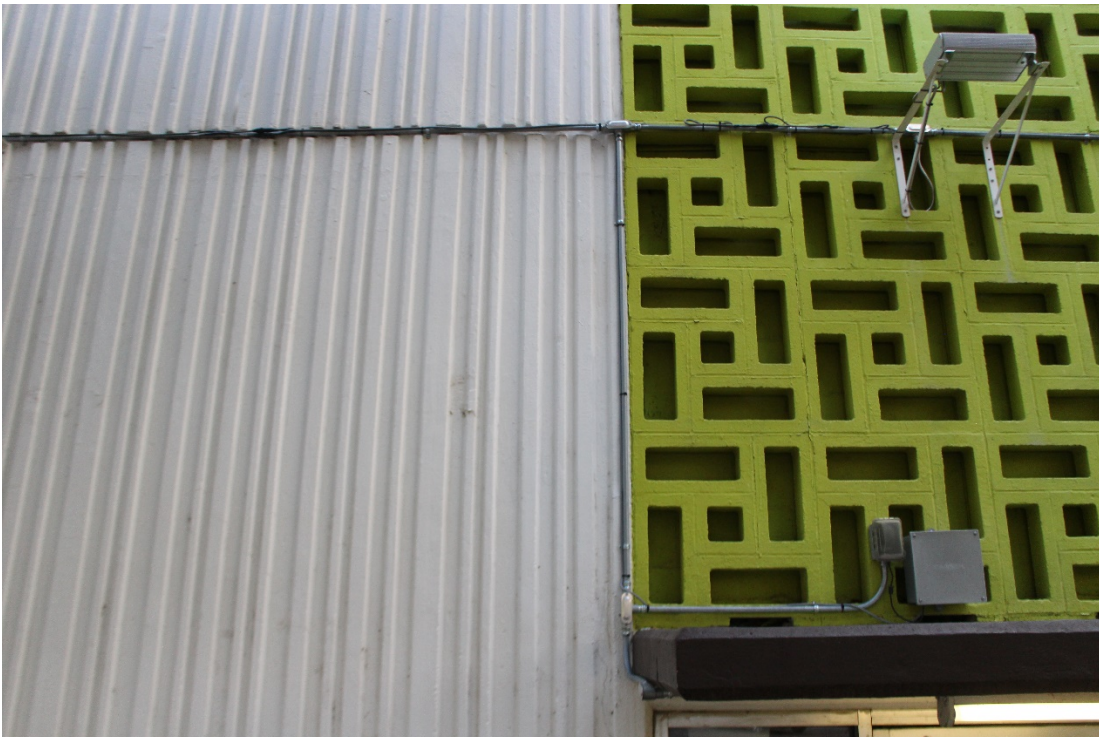
Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 4: Southwest and south elevations with parking garage looking northeast. Photographed by owner, May 2019



Photo 5: Southwest and northwest elevations looking east. Photo by Jay Firsching, December 2019.



# SBR Draft

Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 6: Parking garage south elevation looking north. Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019



Photo 7: Parking garage south elevation looking northwest. Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019.



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 8: Parking garage spiral ramps facing west. Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019.



Photo 9: View at entry canopy facing south to circle drive. Photographed by Jay Firsching, December 2019



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 10: Fountain looking south. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



Photo 11: Northwest elevation with pool and amenity area looking west. Photographed by owner, May 2019





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Photo 12: Pond and waterfall feature looking northeast. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



Photo 13: Typical steps and retaining walls at amenity area looking northwest. Photographed by Jay Firsching, December 2019.



Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 14: First floor main lobby looking south. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



Photo 15: Typical corridor, second floor. Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019.



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Photo 16: Typical apartment unit, second floor. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



Photo 17: Typical apartment unit, second floor. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



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Photo 18: Typical apartment unit, second floor. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



Photo 19: Eleventh floor amenity area looking northwest. Photographed by owner, May 2019.



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Wedgwood Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 20: View from north end of eleventh floor looking south. Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2019.



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