PUBLIC HOUSING

Federal Works Agency – John M. Carmody, Administrator Vol. 2, No. 13 – September 24, 1940 U. S. Housing Authority – Nathan Straus, Administrator

Allentown Tenants Pay Less Rent Than In Slums

Tenants in Hanover Acres, USHA project in Allentown, Pa., are paying an average of $1.20 less per month per room for their new homes than they formerly paid for substandard accommodations. This proof that project rents are actually being driven below the level of slum rents appears in a recent report compiled by Anthony E. Bickel, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Allentown.

The report is a survey of the 322 families now living in the completely occupied Hanover Acres project, and includes data on family size, family income, and employment of the wage earners, besides the rent analysis.

The average annual income per family is expected to be $890, and some incomes as low as $600 have been reported. The average monthly shelter rent is $13.99. With an average utilities charge of $7.78 added, total monthly rent will average $21.77.

Of the 322 tenant families, 171 are reported as formerly living in overcrowded homes. The same families who were previously housed in 1,180 rooms now occupy 1511 rooms at Hanover Acres, having gained an average of more than one room per family.

More than 40 occupations are represented among the breadwinners at the project. WPA leads the list with 56, while the textile industry is second with 42.

Site Residents In Charleston Housed By New Building Plan

REHOUSING of actual site residents, one of public housing's oldest and most stubborn problems, is being solved in Charleston, S. C., by a well-planned system of staggered construction. Crowded on a narrow peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, Charleston was literally forced into a policy of moving families directly from demolished slum shacks to new project homes. Temporary quarters for use during construction were simply not available.

Essence of the rehousing plan was coordination of work on two recent projects. The first, Anson Borough Homes, was located on a partly vacant site in the industrial area on the Cooper River waterfront. The second project, Wragg Borough Homes, was built three blocks away on a slum site.

Staggered Construction

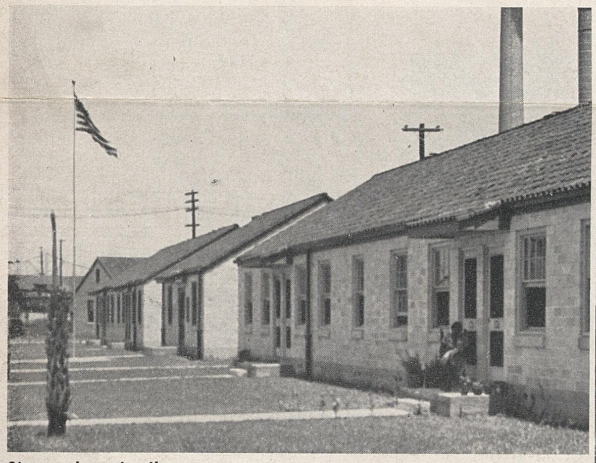
Two types of staggered construction were employed. Anson Borough Homes was built in sections, so that families could be moved into the first completed group of homes before demolition proceeded on the shacks they formerly occupied. Furthermore, while homes were being built in Anson Borough Homes, demolition was going gradually forward on the Wragg Borough Homes site, with site residents transferred to the former project as rapidly as they were removed from the latter site.

Not all site residents, of course, proved eligible for the new projects, but it is significant that, when Anson Borough Homes reach 100-percent occupancy on June 2, 115 of its 162 families were former residents of the Wragg Borough Homes site.

At Wragg Borough Homes 100 units of the 128 are now occupied, and 100-percent occupancy is expected in the near future. In the case of both projects, after site residents had been accommodated, preference was given to families previously occupying the site of Robert Mills Manor, Charleston's first USHA project, and likewise to residents on the site of S. C. 1–5, a new project on the west side of the city, now in the land acquisition and planning stages.

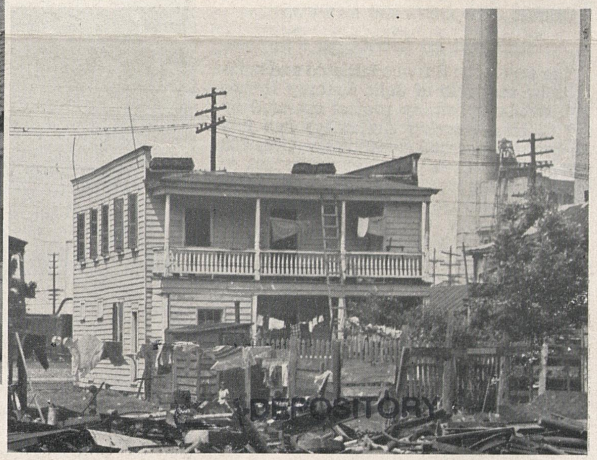
Navy Yard Defense Project

In all, Charleston has now completed or under way some 1,340 units of public housing, including a PWA project and the 400-unit defense project near the Navy Yard. To achieve such a relatively large amount of new building without serious dislocation of living conditions for the families affected is a distinct, and almost unique, accomplishment. Although operated on a small scale, the plan has proved successful in dealing with a problem that has been an obstacle to housers both in Europe and in all parts of this country for more than a generation.



Staggered construction on Charleston's two latest housing projects permitted site residents to be rehoused promptly. Shacks were torn down only when new homes were completed and ready for tenants.

Two smokestacks in upper right identify these "before and after" pictures of Anson Borough Homes project in Charleston, S. C., where the successful relocation described above has been carried out.



FROM THE

Administrator

Gadgets: There are big items and little items in a housing project. The big items—land and construction materials—claim our major attention. This is proper. But items, small in cost, may loom large in effect on comfort. Even such lowly gadgets as benches and waste receptacles may detract from or contribute to the "livability" of a housing project. The appearance of the grounds will reflect whether these humble items of equipment are mediocre or of the best possible design and construction.

I recently visited a project where the benches showed heavy wear and tear after only a few months of use. The Project Manager blamed the high spirits of the children. I blamed the construction of the benches. They were not designed to stand the hard use to which benches in projects will always be put.

Another project that I visited had grounds littered with fragments of newspapers, confectionery wrappers, etc. In fact the grounds of the project were almost as full of litter as the streets of that city. The manager of the housing project blamed the careless tenants. I blamed the inferior design and inadequate number of waste receptacles.

Moral—the design of your benches and your waste receptacles will be an important factor in the appearance of your project.

N. B.: The USHA's Management Review Division has designs and specifications of sturdy benches and efficient waste receptacles which are yours for the asking.

Nathan Straus

Tenant Job Service Proves Success In Chicago Project

The Co-op Job Service initiated and managed by residents of Julia Lathrop Homes (a PWA-built housing project operated by the Chicago Housing Authority) has just celebrated its second anniversary. Over 200 persons have been placed in permanent or temporary employment by the Service. No fees or charges are made. All registrations are confidential. Cooperation among the residents in notifying the Service of vacancies, and in registering when unemployed, has been responsible for its success. The man and wife living in the project who originated the Service have also been active in the publication of a project newspaper and in the Community Council, the governing body elected by the residents. Other public housing projects in various parts of the country have followed the lead of Julia Lathrop in establishing a cooperative free employment service.

Fort Wayne Breaks Cost Record With $1,830 Homes—Rent $10.83

Fort Wayne, Ind., has broken all cost records for USHA projects in the North, by announcement of construction awards on a 120-unit development to be built at an average net construction cost of $1,830. This figure, which includes the cost of building the houses plus plumbing, heating, and electrical installation costs, is 15 percent less than the previous record low of $2,137 for the Armistead Gardens project in Baltimore, Md.

Low Shelter Rent

An average monthly shelter rent of only $10.83 will be achieved at Fort Wayne. This is substantially lower than the average of $14.28 for all Northern projects where rents have been approved by USHA.

The Fort Wayne project will consist of one-story dwellings in twin and row houses. It will have concrete slab flooring, frame walls with asbestos siding, and sloping frame roofs covered with asphalt shingles. Interiors will be plastered.

In discussing the underlying philosophy which was followed in designing this project, Architect George L. Walling compares his task with that of designing a factory. The aim was to produce structures for a definite use at the lowest possible cost. Careful study was made of building costs in minor residential developments, and these minimum costs served as a yardstick in designing the project units.

Six Principles Observed

The following principles were considered basic in making preliminary designs:

1. All nonessentials were eliminated.
2. Typical parts were repeated without variation.
3. All building units were of standard and stock sizes.
4. No method of construction or building system of proprietary nature was incorporated in the design.
5. Only methods of workmanship understood by a village carpenter were used.
6. Only materials available in any lumber yard were used.

Only a Beginning

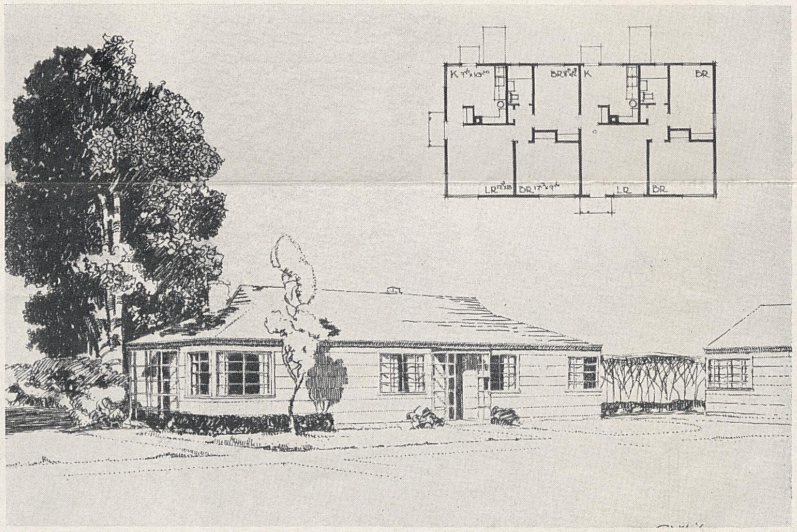
Successful as this method of low-cost design has proved in Fort Wayne, it is felt that the project is only a beginning, and that even greater economies can be effected in the future by pursuing a similar line of attack.

Each of the dwellings will have a living room, kitchen with space for dining, bathroom, and storage space. The number of bedrooms will range from one to three. Every home will be equipped with modern plumbing and electrical conveniences, a gas stove for cooking, and a stove for heating.

The houses will be erected on a vacant site of 17½ acres about 2 miles from the downtown business section, in an area which has been developed with medium- and low-priced homes. Schools, churches, stores, and places of employment are conveniently situated.

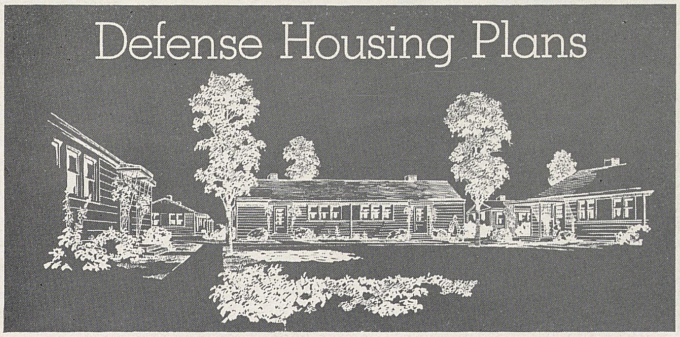
Land For Gardens

The site is to be developed on three sides, leaving approximately 20 percent of the land open in the center for subsequent development or for tenant gardens. Recreational facilities are available at Rockhill Park, adjacent on the north, and another park and amusement center half a mile distant.



Lowest costs ever achieved for a Northern project were reached in the 120-unit Fort Wayne (Ind.) project, architect's rendering of which is shown above. Contract awards set the net construction cost at $1,830 per home. Both twin and row houses will be built. Typical floor plan for twin house (insert) shows two-bedroom units. Stoves will be used for heating.

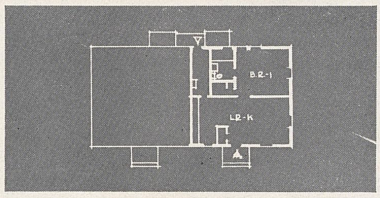
Defense Housing Plans



TO speed defense housing by cutting to a minimum the time needed for the preparation of architectural plans, the USHA Technical Division has just issued a series of superstructure working drawings which can be readily adapted to the requirements of local authorities in all parts of the country. These drawings, with accompanying standard specifications, will relieve local architects of more than half the routine work normally required for defense housing project plans.

Reproduced on this page are floor plans included in the first series of superstructure working drawings. Intended for homes built of frame construction, the same floor plans will be retained in a forthcoming series of drawings to be prepared for masonry construction.

Carrying out its long-established policy of furnishing all possible technical assistance to local authorities without impairing local initiative, USHA provides basic working drawings and leaves to local architects full freedom of adaptation. Foundation requirements, for example, are omitted from the plans, since they are closely controlled by local conditions and will require adaptation in each case. Changes in other items, which local preference may indicate, can readily be made.



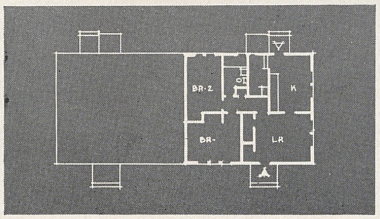
1 bedroom twin house

The various types of unit illustrated (single houses, twin houses, and flats of several sizes) may be combined in any fashion indicated by the selected site of the project. Sample site and detail grouping plans are provided to aid local planners in making their own site plan and utility layout.

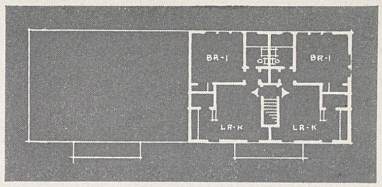
Units for which complete working drawings are furnished in the present series include: one-bedroom, one-story twin dwellings (two houses); two-bedroom, one-story twin dwellings (two houses); three-bedroom, one-story twin dwellings (two houses); four-bedroom, one-story single (one house); two-story building comprising eight one-bedroom flats.

Governed by such factors as family composition in the community, local architects may work out any required combination of the above units. The utmost flexibility of planning may, therefore, be achieved without altering any basic designs. In the matter of site planning, also, local terrain and local preference will determine final decisions, but the USHA supplies examples of effective layout to illustrate the possibilities for best utilization of sites.

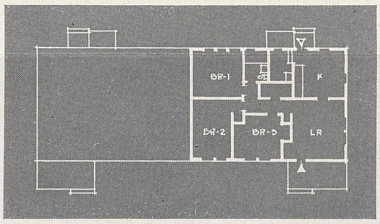
With the exception of the flats, all homes in this series are designed for individual heating systems, using coal fuel.



2 bedroom twin houses



1 bedroom flats 2d floor



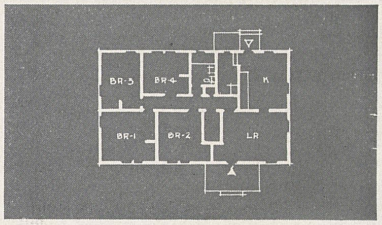
3 bedroom twin house

A "Standard Specification" dummy which accompanies the working drawings should prove an additional time-saver, since it minimizes the detail work in the preparation of this document.

Local architects who wish to take advantage of the standard specification dummy will find it a convenient guide in computing essential data. As with the drawings themselves, everything which can be foreseen as both useful and feasible is provided.

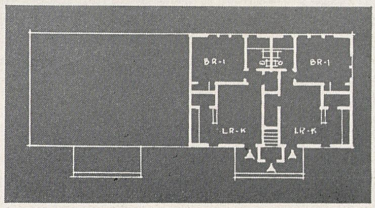
Complete directions for use of the plans and specifications are also supplied to local authorities. By utilizing these various types of aid, architects engaged on defense housing in every part of the country will be able to reduce their working time in preparing plans by at least 50 percent. Since speed is a prime factor in defense housing, with the need for new homes in this category mounting more rapidly each week, any elimination of routine work is an essential contribution to the program. At the same time, it is highly important to safeguard against the relaxing of standards which often accompanies stepped-up production. The Technical Division plans were prepared with both these ends in view.

One of the most substantial services yet rendered to local housers, this scheme was developed primarily to aid production of defense housing by increasing efficiency and abolishing duplication of effort. Extensive as is the aid provided by this first series of working drawings, it is considered as merely the first step in the direction of greatly expanded advisory service called for by present emergency needs. Additional plans, covering other types of construction, heating systems, and the like, will be made available in the future.



4 bedroom single house

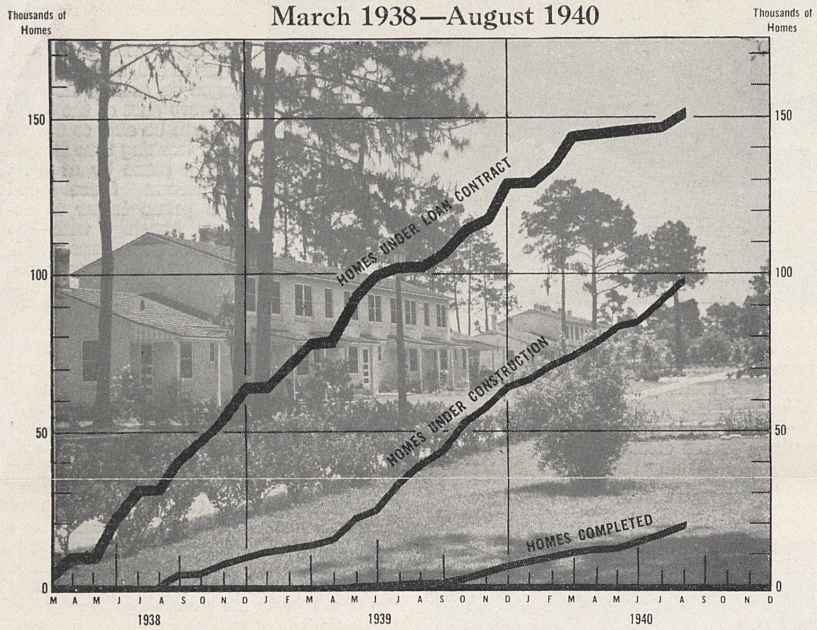
Distribution of this material follows drastic cutting by USHA and local authorities of the time required for many other stages of project planning and construction. The timetable on defense projects has already been speeded to a pace considered impossible a few months ago by taking advantage of the experience and initiative of local housing authorities. Added to these benefits of a decentralized program is the service which USHA itself can render through its greater research facilities.



1 bedroom flats 1st floor

New Homes Month By Month

March 1938—August 1940



Defense Loans Reach Thirty-One Million

USHA provisions for defense housing passed the $31,000,000 mark in loans and allocations and exceeded 8,100 homes recently when President Roosevelt approved loan contracts of $2,694,000 for 5 projects totaling 658 dwellings for Army and Navy enlisted and civilian personnel in 4 communities.

Since July 25 the President has approved USHA loans aggregating $24,144,000 for construction of 21 defense housing projects totaling 6,408 dwellings in 17 communities, and also has approved USHA allocations to the War and Navy Departments of $7,225,000 for 1,725 dwellings in 4 other defense centers. Five of the USHA projects are under construction, and bids have been opened for two others. Tenants will move into the first homes in early December.

The new loans are:

Moline, Ill.—Loan of $886,000 to the Housing Authority of the City of Moline for a project of 200 dwellings for families of enlisted and civilian personnel at the Rock Island Arsenal.

Rantoul, Ill.—Loan of $465,000 to the Champaign County Housing Authority for a 100-dwelling project for families of enlisted and civilian personnel at Chanute Field, Army Air Corps Technical School.

Seattle, Wash.—Loan of $564,000 to the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle for project of 150 dwellings for families of enlisted and civilian personnel attached to the Sand Point Naval Air Station.

Selma, Ala.—Loan of $779,000 to the Selma Housing Authority for 2 projects totaling 208 dwellings to house enlisted and civilian personnel of the Army Air Corps Specialized Flying School.

Tenant Relations Articles Reprinted From Weekly

Aiding the exchange of experiences among local authorities is one of USHA's clearing house functions. With this in mind, tenant relations articles appearing in PUBLIC HOUSING over the past year have recently been reprinted. The experiences of local housing authorities and housing managers are grouped under seven headings: Planning Community Space; Community Activities; Relocation; Tenant Selection; Tenant Maintenance; Tenant-Management Relations; and Demonstrations in Home Furnishings.

The reprints will also be sent to cooperating national agencies in the fields of health, recreation, education, library service, welfare, pre-school education, home economics, and consumer services. Many of these national agencies will distribute the reprints to their local affiliates, encouraging them to assist local projects.

Corrections

Although the "model home" pictured on page 4 of Vol. 2, No. 11 of PUBLIC HOUSING is located in Beaver County, Pa., it was not built, as reported, "with USHA aid." On page 5 of the same issue Columbus, Ga., was incorrectly listed as Columbus, Ohio, in the "Projects Approved By President" box.

Schedule Of Bid Opening Dates[1]

Project location, number, and name (when available)	No. of units	Date of opening
Aguadilla (P. R.–3–8)	199	Oct. 7
Champaign Co. (Ill.–6–3, Defense): *Rantoul*	100	Oct. 3
Cincinnati (Ohio–4–2): *English Woods*	750	Oct. 3
Columbus (Ohio–1–3): *West Rich Street*	252	Oct. 1
Decatur (Ga.–11–1): *Allen Wilson Terrace*	200	Oct. 15
Danville (Ill.–11–1): *Fair Oaks Park*	179	Oct. 3
Danville (Ill.–11–2): *Beeler Terrace*	50	Oct. 3
Granite City (Ill.–5–1): *Ridgedale Homes*	151	Oct. 1
Jackson (Tenn.–7–1)	100	Oct. 7
Jackson (Tenn.–7–2)	96	Oct. 7
Key West (Fla.–13–1)	136	Oct. 3
Key West (Fla.–13–2)	84	Oct. 3
Manati (P. R.–3–2): *Felix Cordova Davila*	194	Oct. 8
Newark (N. J.–2–8): *Felix Fuld Court*	300	Sept. 26
Norfolk (Va.–6–1, Defense)	500	[2] Sept. 26
North Little Rock (Ark.–2–1)	152	Oct. 15
Pawtucket (R. I.–2–1R)	310	Oct. 15
Rock Island (Ill.–18–1, Defense)	305	Oct. 1
San Antonio (Tex.–6–1A)	248	Oct. 16

[1] There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.
[2] Information not definite.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended September 12, 1940	Week ended September 5, 1940	Week ended September 15, 1939
Number of projects under construction [1]	271	267	95
Number of dwellings under construction [1]	97,809	97,450	40,894
Total estimated over-all cost [2] **of new housing**	$422,639,000	$421,481,000	$189,420,000
Average over-all cost [2] **of new housing per unit**	$4,321	$4,325	$4,632
Average net construction cost [3] **per unit**	$2,714	$2,717	$2,904

[1] Includes projects which have been completed.
[2] Includes: (*a*) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (*b*) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (*c*) land for present development; (*d*) nondwelling facilities.
[3] The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

Publication is approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget, as required by rule 42 of the Joint Committee on Printing.
For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. Subscription price $1 domestic, foreign $1.80 per year. Single copies, 5 cents.
Material for PUBLIC HOUSING should be addressed to Informational Service Division, U. S. Housing Authority, Washington, D. C.

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