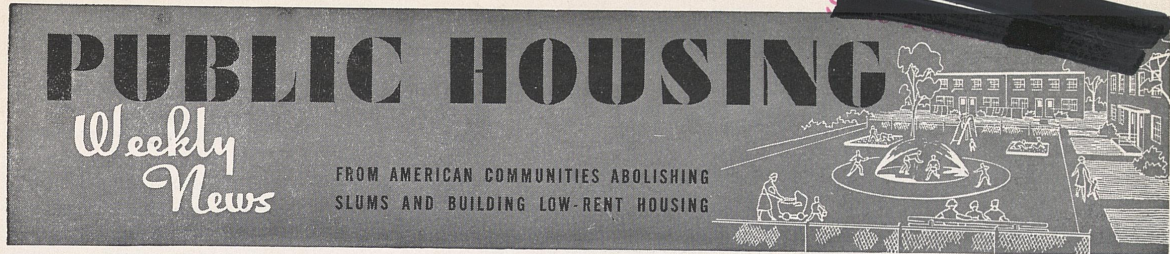


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Vol. 1, No. 21

Federal Works Agency, U. S. Housing Authority—Nathan Straus, Administrator

January 2, 1940

Standard Size Windows Cut Construction Cost

During 1940 public housing projects will save about \$80,000 in construction costs resulting from standardization of steel window casements. About 135,000 casements, it is estimated, will be used in the construction of USHA-aided slum clearance and low-rent housing projects throughout the country next year.

Installation and material costs will be reduced through elimination of odd sizes in favor of standards. The number of operations in the process of installation also can be cut to a minimum.

Instead of some 50 sizes being used, as now, five standard casement sizes have been accepted by manufacturers and USHA technicians. They will be recommended to local housing authorities, and it is expected that they will be used in about 90 percent of the 1940 construction under the USHA program.

The standardized casements are designed to admit sufficient light without excessive glass area and, therefore, to prevent unnecessary loss of heat in cold weather.

The standardization applies particularly to the ventilator or movable section of the windows. When windows wider than the standard unit are required, they will be flanked with fixed lights, or two standard sections will be installed.

The standard casements will include fixed attachments for any of several common types of curtain rods and window shades.

"Housing in Our Time" Gets Large Audience and High Praise

Although final returns have not yet been received from all agencies through which "Housing in Our Time," USHA movie short, has been presented to the public, it is conservatively estimated here that over a million persons throughout the country will have seen the film by January 1.

This estimate is based on reports by 48 local authorities who have purchased the film for showing before clubs, schools, labor unions, conventions, etc. (13 of which have arranged for its release in local theaters), and also takes account of persons seeing the film as distributed by Warner and Century circuit theaters.

Thus far, the film has been shown before management and housing authority conventions in Atlanta, Ga.; Dallas, Tex.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Huntington, W. Va.; Baltimore, Md.; Washington, D. C.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Covington, Ky.; and cities in California. Audiences for these showings have ranged in size from 50 to 1,000.

About 900 realtors at the 1939 Convention of the National Association of Real Estate Boards saw the picture, which, according to all reports, was "very well received." Many requests are now on file for the film, both with the USHA and with the United States Film Service.

There is no charge for the use of which is available for 35 and 16 mm. sound projection. The film should be secured by every local authority as an integral part of a educational program.

Great Falls Studies Housing and Tax Rate

Although it is generally acknowledged that slum clearance and low-rent housing profit the local taxpayer in the long run, it is frequently charged that the immediate effect of building a project is to increase the local tax rate. To settle this question for his city, Chairman Fligman of the Great Falls (Mont.) Housing Authority engaged William B. Findlay, well-known Montana accountant, to study "the probable increase in taxes" that might result from the proposed "Parkdale" project.

Mr. Findlay, after thorough examination of all financial factors involved, concluded that the maximum tax rate increase that could theoretically result from the construction of the project would be 11 cents on \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The owner of property valued at \$5,000 (taxable value in Great Falls—\$1,500 or 30 percent) would never be called upon to pay more than 17 cents in extra taxes on account of the housing project.

Furthermore, Mr. Findlay points out that anticipated benefits of the project (cutting of crime, delinquency, and health costs, for example) might well offset extra expenditures.

Other members of the Great Falls Housing Authority are: Fred J. Martin, Vice-Chairman; J. George Graham, L. E. Taylor, and Frank E. Wilcocks. The Executive Director is R. H. Willcomb. John L. Slattery is Attorney, and A. V. McIver is the Authority's Architect.

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Current Housing Literature

METROPOLITAN'S PARKCHESTER, *Architectural Forum*, December 1939, pp. 412-426.

The story of Parkchester, the low-cost housing project of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., located in the Bronx, New York City. Illustrations, floor plans, layout, map, statistical recapitulation, and construction outline.

CONSTRUCTION OF PARKCHESTER ADVANCING, *Real Estate Record*, Dec. 16, 1939, pp. 5-6.

Brief description of the layout of the Parkchester project, its service facilities, and the progress of its construction to date.

A PROPOSED ROLE FOR ARCHITECTS IN CITY PLANNING, *Architectural Record*, December 1939, pp. 56-62.

Discusses ideal city planning and indicates that the architect's role is to direct the city building process and actually create fine cities. Illustrations showing the progress of city planning in Washington, D. C.

ARCHITECTS' FEES, UNITED STATES HOUSING AUTHORITY PROGRAM, by Walter R. McCornack, *The Octagon*, November 1939, pp. 7-8.

Statement of the position taken by The American Institute of Architects with regard to schedule of architects' fees proposed by the USHA.

HOUSING AND ARCHITECTS: A CRITICISM, by A. C. Shire; A REPLY, by Frederick L. Ackerman, *Architectural Forum*, December 1939, pp. 464-466.

Excerpts from Mr. Shire's indictment of the architectural profession and Mr. Ackerman's reply, which appeared in the September and October issues of the *Octagon*, respectively.

ANTI-TRUST ACTION AND AMERICAN HOUSING, by Corwin D. Edwards, *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*, November 1939, pp. 456-463.

Describes the housing situation in the United States today, the purpose of the anti-trust action, the scope of the proceedings and the hoped-for results of the investigation.

THIS LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECT PLEASES TENANTS AND PAYS ATTRACTIVE DIVIDENDS, *Concrete Builder*, Winter, 1939, p. 7.

Description of Reid Court, a privately financed concrete low-cost housing project in Fredericksburg, Va.

MASS PRODUCTION METHODS FOR LOW-COST HOUSES, *National Real Estate Journal*, December 1939, pp. 25-27.

Description of West-Side Village, a low-cost house development in Los Angeles, planned and built by Mr. Fritz B. Burns, Los Angeles realtor. Illustrations and floor plans.

HAS DETROIT SLUMS? by Susanne Stoddard, *The American City*, December 1939, p. 61.

How a camera contest for amateurs sponsored by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of Detroit drew the public's attention to the need for slum clearance and better housing.

A STUDY OF LOW-RENTAL VACANT DWELLING UNITS IN THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN, Vacancy and Rehousing Bureau sponsored by New York City Housing Authority, Work Projects Administration Project 665-97-3-20. New York, 1939. Various pages mimeographed.

A survey of desirable vacancies available in the low-rental range. Tabulations, analyses, and brief histories of each of 10 areas in Manhattan are included, as well as descriptions of conditions and classifications of vacant dwelling units. Tables and map.

HOUSING PROJECTS MAKE RAPID PROGRESS, by Roy Kerr, *The Dixie Contractor*, Dec. 20, 1939, pp. 5, 11, 20.

Progress of USHA's housing projects in southern States.

Community Relations in Low-Rent Housing

By RUTH T. MORRELL, Assistant Manager
Cedar Springs Place, Dallas, Texas

(NOTE.—The following article has been shortened to meet space requirements)

One of Management's greatest needs is happy tenant and community relations. This relationship is three-sided: tenant-to-tenant, tenant-management, and both of these with the surrounding neighborhood. In the neighborhood around Cedar Springs Place there was almost no opportunity for community activity prior to the opening of the project.

The City of Dallas, therefore, built a small park adjacent to the Project. The Project and the Park were opened in September 1937, and immediately young people of the neighborhood were attracted by recreational and community opportunities. From the first, the problem of relations with the outside community has been present.

To show the means by which happy relations are fostered, it is necessary to name the channels through which they are expressed. In Cedar Springs Place the principal activities are:

FULL RECREATION PROGRAM for both young people and adults, including baseball, volleyball, basketball, softball, tennis, and supervised play for children.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM including adult study classes, kindergarten, pre-school groups, Bible story hour for children.

SOCIAL PROGRAM including Mothers Club, monthly Game Night sponsored by leaders of the Pre-School group, project dances sponsored by various tenant leaders, and the celebration of the first and second anniversaries of the opening of the project.

VARIOUS OTHER ACTIVITIES include: Health Center maintained by City Health Library; "Nip 'n' Tuck" boys' group, and "The Projector," publication "of, by, and for" the tenants.

The tenant-management-community relations may best be shown by giving details of a few of these activities.

Tenant-to-Tenant.—Through study courses, group organizations such as the Credit Union, and the many games and social programs, tenants come to know other tenants and a neighborly spirit is fostered. Perhaps the outstanding means of creating this friendly attitude is the little newspaper, "The Projector," all done by tenants, from securing ads, to cutting stencils.

Tenant-Management.—For the whole operation period, tenant-management relations have been good, and varied activities have been encouraged. Please note "encouraged." We think the demand for any particu-

(Continued on page 3)



Cedar Springs Place, PWA Housing Division project in Dallas, Tex., opened in 1937.

The most convincing evidence that the USHA is clearing slums and providing homes for the lowest income groups must come from a check-up of projects. Brentwood Park in Jacksonville, Fla., one of the first projects to be constructed with USHA assistance, has just released a summary of facts concerning the first 187 families to be accepted as tenants.

USHA-41, the card report from which these facts were compiled, is a record of each tenant from the time he enters until he leaves a project. One set of the cards is kept in USHA headquarters in Washington. Under this system USHA's Research and Statistics Division will have in its possession detailed information on tenants in each project. Tabulations and analyses will be a regular service to the local management offices.

The average weekly family income of the 187 Brentwood Park families is only \$13.85. The highest weekly income is \$19.03 for a family of six; the lowest is \$5.54. The average family size is 3.4 persons. Obviously the project houses none but low-income families. But before becoming Brentwood tenants they paid an average of \$20.55 per month for shelter and utilities in slum dwellings. For the same kind, but much better, facilities at Brentwood they pay an average of \$13.22 per month. The savings, \$1,370.74 per year, go to local

Keeping Up With USHA Research

First Data on Family Income of Tenants Reported From Jacksonville, Fla.

merchants who supply other necessities of life.

Second, slum clearance: "Almost without exception these families were overcrowded (as many as five persons living in one room) and were without private baths and toilets." One hundred and twenty-one of the 187 formerly shared baths and toilets, often with as many as six families; 52 of them were without adequate heating facilities. For every unit in the Brentwood project, one substandard dwelling offering no better, or worse, accommodations than those vacated by the Brentwood tenants, has been demolished.

The Brentwood tenants now have 31 percent more room, with the conveniences of electric lights, electric ranges, electric refrigerators, space heaters, and hot water, at 36 percent lower rent.

Tenant occupations: The two trades with the largest representation in the project are those of cab driver (23) and clerk (21). Truck drivers are next, with 19; and bakers and salesmen are fourth, with 9 each. Altogether, there are 48 occupations

represented in the project. Following regulations established by the local housing authority, not more than 10 percent of the tenants were taken from relief or WPA.

USHA-41 cards will be kept up to date by all project managers, and be submitted to Washington periodically from all projects.

"Community Relations in Low-Cost Housing"

(Continued from page 2)

lar activity should come from the tenants, then Management should lend hearty endorsement and every possible assistance.

Tenant-Management-Community.—While playground activities and other things are highly valuable, I would mention two more unusual things: One is the Toy Loan Library, sponsored and operated by the Junior College Club. This "Library" was furnished with quite a collection of toys for all ages, from baby rattles and stuffed bunnies to baseball bats and bikes. Children from the project and community at large borrow toys just as they do books from the public library.

The second illustration is the "Nip 'n' Tuck" boys' club, an organization of boys who wear their name on their sweater backs instead of having it hurled at them by irate citizens. They participate in project games and other activities, but their greatest interest is their own soccer team. Their weekly meetings are attended by the whole group, and they elect presiding officers, study their adopted rules, and plan their activities.

And what has been Management's part in all this? Lending every encouragement to each group and taking time always to discuss group problems or plans. When a "Nip 'n' Tuck" boy will brave the Management office to make personal apology for some infringement of rules, we think it is pretty safe to say that the Management-tenant-community relations are mutually wholesome and helpful.



The average income of tenant families in Brentwood Park, Jacksonville, Fla. (shown above), is \$13.85 a week.

Construction Bids

Bid Openings Definitely Scheduled

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Allegheny Co. (Pa.-6-2)	288	1-12-40
Camden (N. J.-10-1)	275	1-12-40
Harrisburg (Pa.-8-2)	200	1-12-40
Jacksonville (Fla.-1-1-A)	368	1- 4-40
Los Angeles Co. (Calif.-2-4)	500	1-12-40
New Haven (Conn.-4-1)	442	1- 4-40
New Orleans (La.-1-3)	916	1- 9-40
New Orleans (La.-1-5)	903	1-25-40
Tampa (Fla.-3-3)	328	1-17-40

Bid Openings Tentatively Scheduled¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Augusta (Ga.-1-3)	276	1-18-40
Bristol (Va.-2-1)	142	1-30-40
Bristol (Va.-2-2)	56	1-30-40
Gary (Ind.-11-1)	305	1-29-40
Washington (D. C.-1-2)	246	1-23-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening. None of the bid openings shown here have as yet been definitely scheduled.

Construction Report Analysis

During the week ended December 22, five new projects, totaling 1,521 units, went into construction. The largest of these was a 700-unit project in Baltimore, Md. Both the average over-all cost of new housing per unit and the average net construction cost per unit declined slightly as a result of the new projects added.

Chattanooga Board Plans Equivalent Elimination

At a recent meeting of the Chattanooga Condemnation Board plans were discussed for eliminating some 300 substandard houses in connection with the Housing Authority's two projects now well under way.

The Condemnation Board meeting was called by Dr. W. C. Sanford, City Director of Health. The other members are W. C. (Billy) Smith, City Building Inspector, and Chief Robert Jones of the Fire Department. City Attorney Joe W. Anderson was asked to meet with this group and explain the duties of the committee with particular reference to the housing program.

The Condemnation Board will be charged with the duty of eliminating approximately 300 substandard houses in various sections of the city. This work must be done within 1 year after the housing units now under construction are completed. The two projects are scheduled for completion by July or August 1940.

The City is allowed to include all houses that have been eliminated since the Housing Authority's program was started in July 1938 in the number of substandard dwellings that must be eliminated. Credit also will be given for the 430 dwellings destroyed by the Housing Authority in connection with the two housing projects under construction.

The *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans newspaper, recently presented Col. L. Kemper Williams, former President of the National Association of Housing Officials, and now Chairman of the New Orleans housing authority, with the *Times-Picayune* loving cup for outstanding civic achievements.

The presentation of the cup was public, at Kingsley House, within sight of the St. Thomas Housing Project.

3 Regional Conferences To Meet Early In 1940

The early weeks of the new year will see housing authorities all over the country meeting in regional conferences to plan their work for 1940. A schedule has already been announced for a series of such conferences on Housing Administration and Management to be conducted by NAHO in cooperation with USHA and the local housing authorities.

Conferences scheduled to date are: Region I, Boston, Jan. 8-13; Region II, Philadelphia, Jan. 15-20; Region V, Detroit, Jan. 22-27. In each case the local housing authority will act as host. Special sessions have been scheduled for social workers, educators, and other groups interested in public housing. The expanded schedule for 1940 results from a growing demand for periodic pooling of housing experience gathered in all parts of the country.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended December 22, 1939	Week ended December 15, 1939	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction	144	139	+3.60
Number of dwellings under construction	57,621	56,100	+2.71
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing	\$258,684,000	\$253,262,000	+2.14
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit	\$4,489	\$4,514	-0.55
Average net construction cost ² per unit	\$2,835	\$2,850	-0.53

¹ 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.

² The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

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Material for PUBLIC HOUSING should be addressed to Informational Service Division, U. S. Housing Authority, Washington, D. C.