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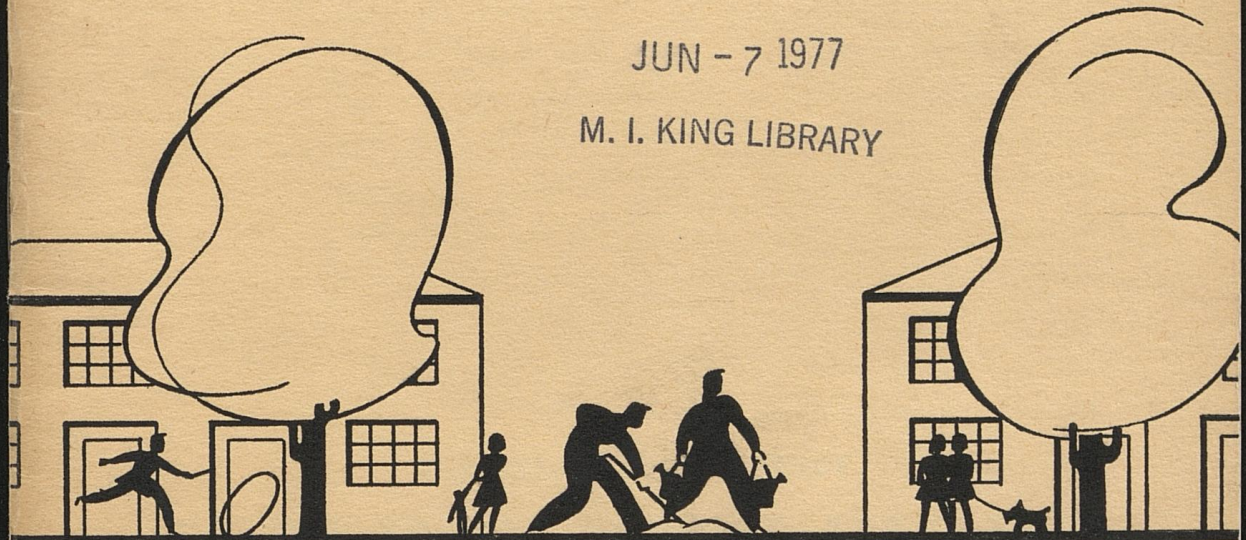
ICATIONS DEPT.

HOUSING *and* RECREATION

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UNITED STATES HOUSING AUTHORITY

PLANNING FOR

Recreation

IN

HOUSING

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
UNITED STATES HOUSING AUTHORITY
NATHAN STRAUS, Administrator

NOVEMBER 1939

HOUSING AND RECREATION

A New Pattern of

L I V I N G

THE public housing program of the United States Housing Authority should mean much more than the construction of decent dwellings for families who now live in the slums. It must mean better cities and better citizens—cities with less crime, less juvenile delinquency, and lower death rates; citizens equipped to lead fuller, healthier, and more useful lives.

As a setting for the whole life of a community, a public housing project must be designed to meet the needs and the ambitions and the hopes of all of its inhabitants, from the youngest child to men and women of more than the traditional three score and ten. Individuals who may want a quiet spot in which to relax or read, or tend a garden, should be given as much consideration in the planning of a project as those individuals, young and old, who may desire opportunities to engage in active play, or in group study or discussion.

This does not mean that all of the recreational needs of every individual in a housing project must be encompassed within its boundaries. Public parks and public recreation centers, as well as

libraries and schools, must always aid in providing adequate recreation. Consequently, any consideration of the recreational needs of the individuals in a housing project must also include a study of facilities which are available outside its boundaries.

A good rough measure of the success of a public housing project is the extent to which community activities develop among the tenant families. Wise and sympathetic guidance by the management is, of course, essential for this goal. But, in planning the site, the architect, the engineer, and the landscape architect must provide the framework or setting in which community activities will most easily develop.

Study groups, discussion meetings, and sports are forms of recreation which build character and develop better citizenship. It was this opportunity for community activity on behalf of a common goal which characterized the New England villages in Colonial days. These early American communities, with daily life centering about the village green, can teach us much in the design and planning of public housing projects.

In the following pages various elements of recreation which should be considered in the planning of outdoor spaces in large-scale housing projects are discussed. Certain simple principles are illustrated. This discussion is followed by a presentation of case studies of selected sites, and a series of suggested designs for wading and spray pools.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to show how careful planning may provide opportunity for happier and healthier living at a minimum cost for maintenance and operation. The outdoor aspects of recreation are stressed. In a forthcoming publication, the planning of space and facilities for indoor community use will be similarly treated.

NATHAN STRAUS, *Administrator.*

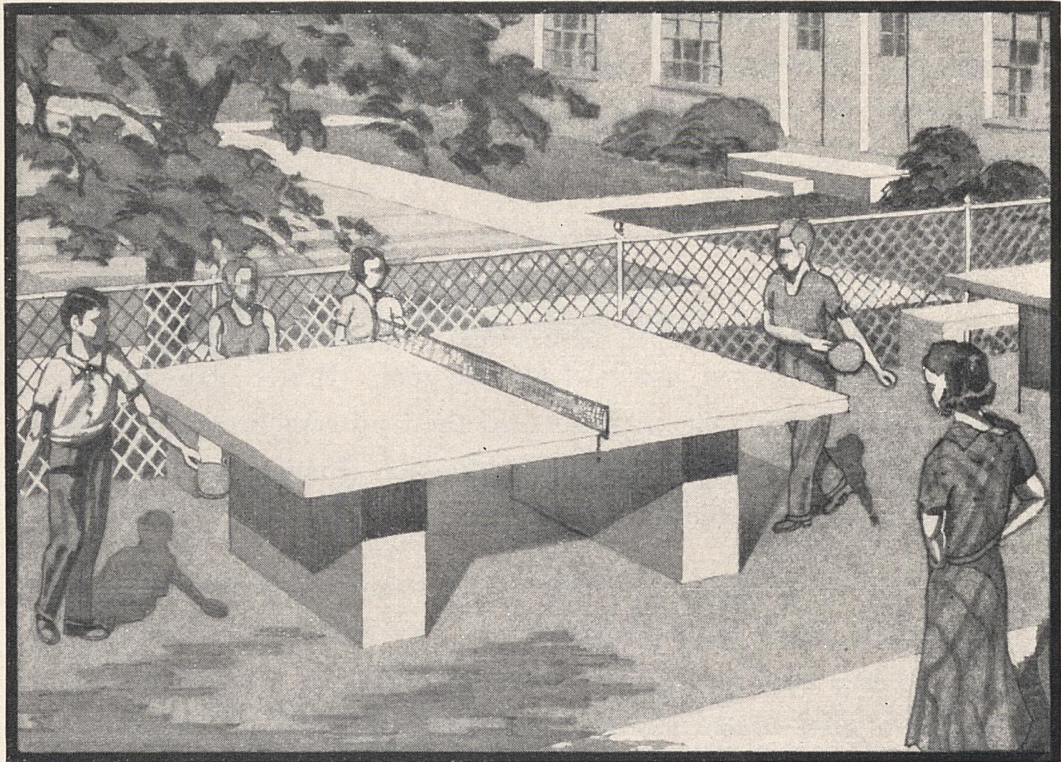
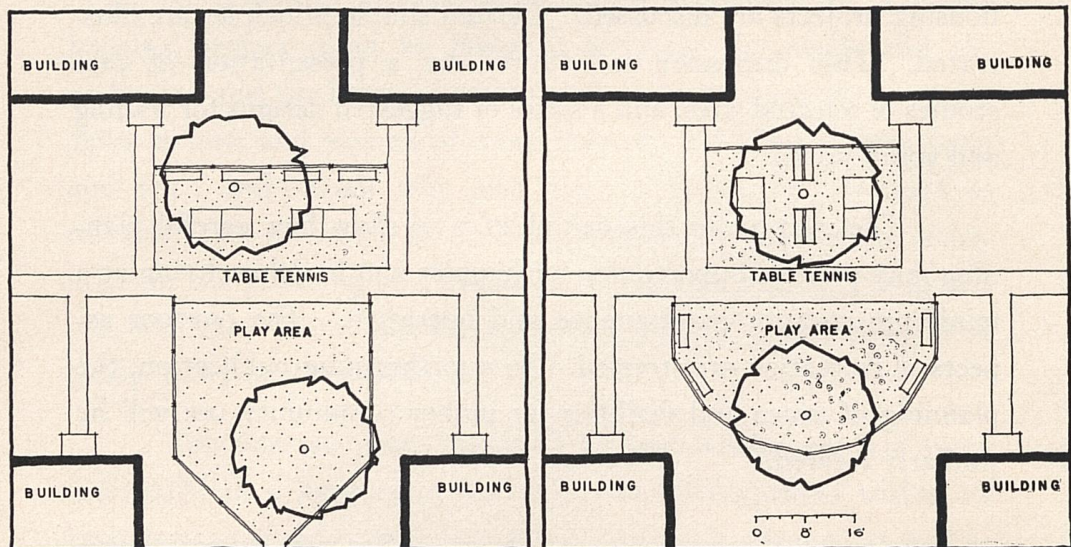


TABLE TENNIS: As a form of recreation for the entire family, this game has grown steadily in popularity. Brought outdoors, it makes a recreational feature which many in the housing project can use and enjoy. The plans below show how areas at the ends of buildings can be utilized for such play. Tables are preferably made of concrete for outdoor use.



ELEMENTS OF

Recreation

IN THE PLANNING OF HOUSING PROJECTS

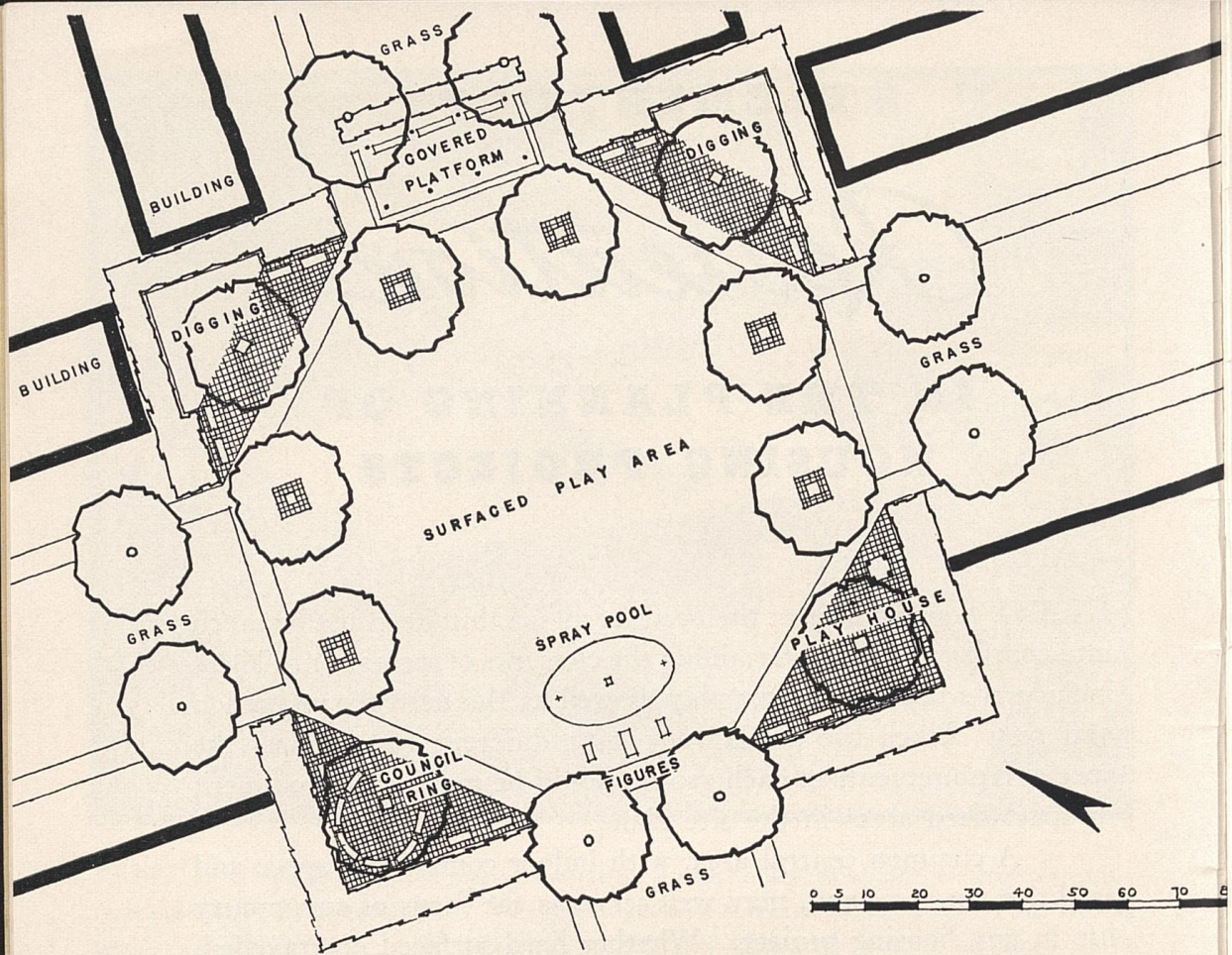
IN ANY housing project the needs of all inhabitants must be taken into consideration in determining the elements of recreation. These include the need for active play as well as the need for relaxation and rest. Since the needs vary with different age groups, the special requirements of each group should be met in the treatment of specialized areas in the site plan.

A common central area, with indoor community space and facilities near at hand, may well serve as the focus of community life in any housing project. Whether hard-surfaced or gravelled, or left with a natural earth surface, the area should be available for use by all age groups throughout the entire year.

There should be places where the child of preschool age may crawl and walk in safety, and where, when he gets a little older, he may play with wheel toys. Because the young child requires almost constant supervision, such spaces must be close to the dwellings which they serve.

School-age children require a larger area where they may engage in active play. A minimum of equipment is desirable. Since this area is likely to be noisy, it should be located at a distance from the buildings, or separated from them by a space or trees.

A large portion of the open space should be available for youths and adults. Special areas should be developed in which the adult may engage in active games, may cultivate a piece of land either for pleasure or for practical gain, or sit in friendly converse with his neighbors. The following pages present suggestions for locating and treating such specialized outdoor areas.



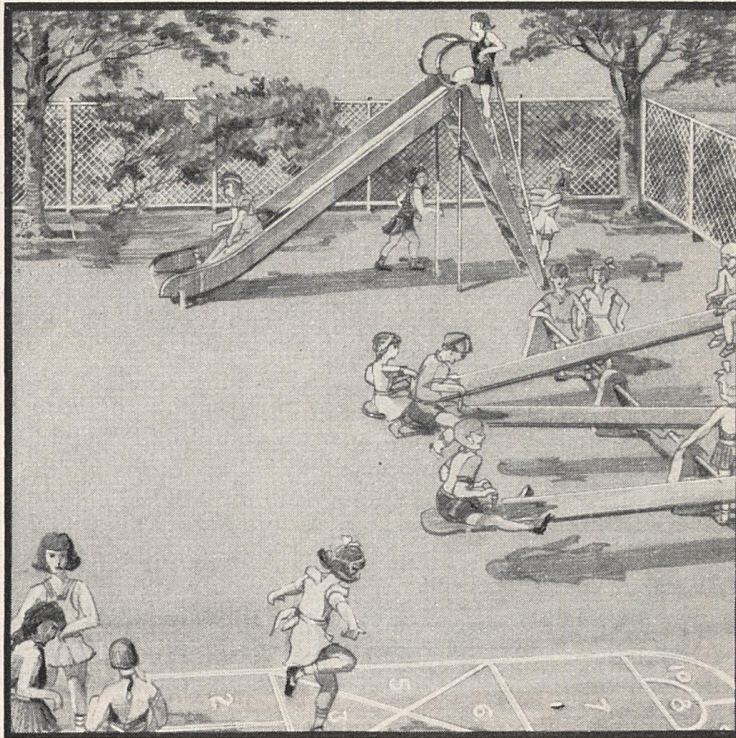
ACTIVE PLAY FOR CHILDREN

Play areas for small children should be located within sight and calling distance of the home. They should contain material for digging, play sculpture for climbing, space for running and jumping, and a hard-surfaced area for wheel toys. Some inconspicuous barrier, possibly masked by shrubbery, should bound the area. Sitting areas with space for baby carriages, from which parents can supervise the children, should be planned adjacent to these spaces.

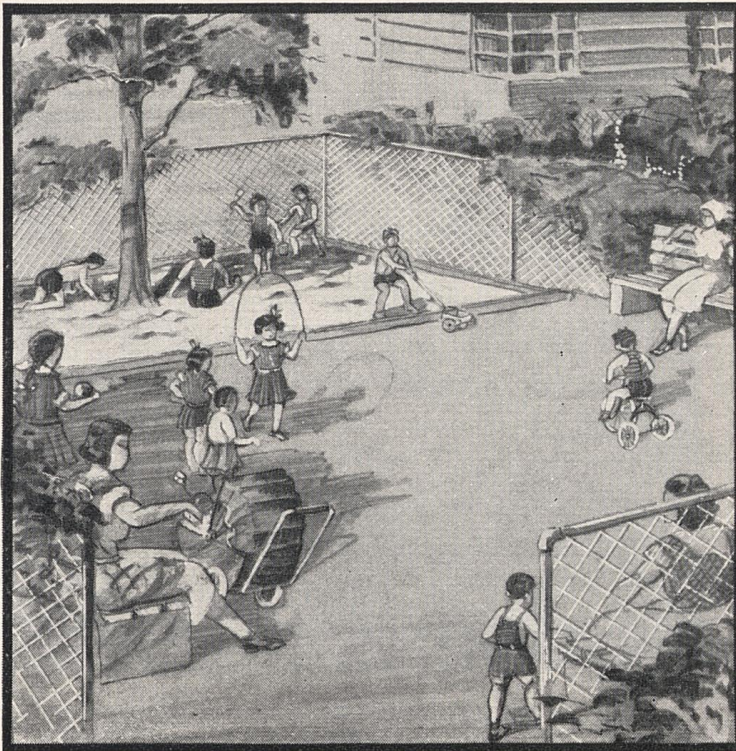
Play areas for school-age children should contain simple equipment, and should be designed for a variety of games. They should be located where children may reach them without crossing a traffic street, and should be near toilets and drinking water.

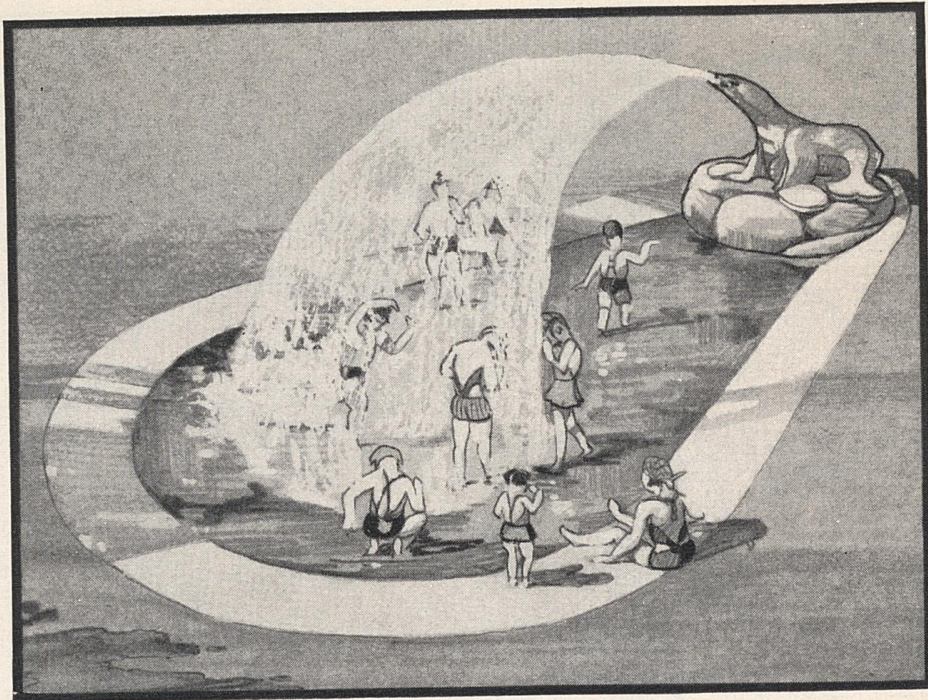
YOUNGSTERS AT PLAY

Play areas for children of school age should be designed for a variety of games. Equipment should be kept simple.



Shade and benches where mothers can sit and relax are desirable in conjunction with play areas for small children.





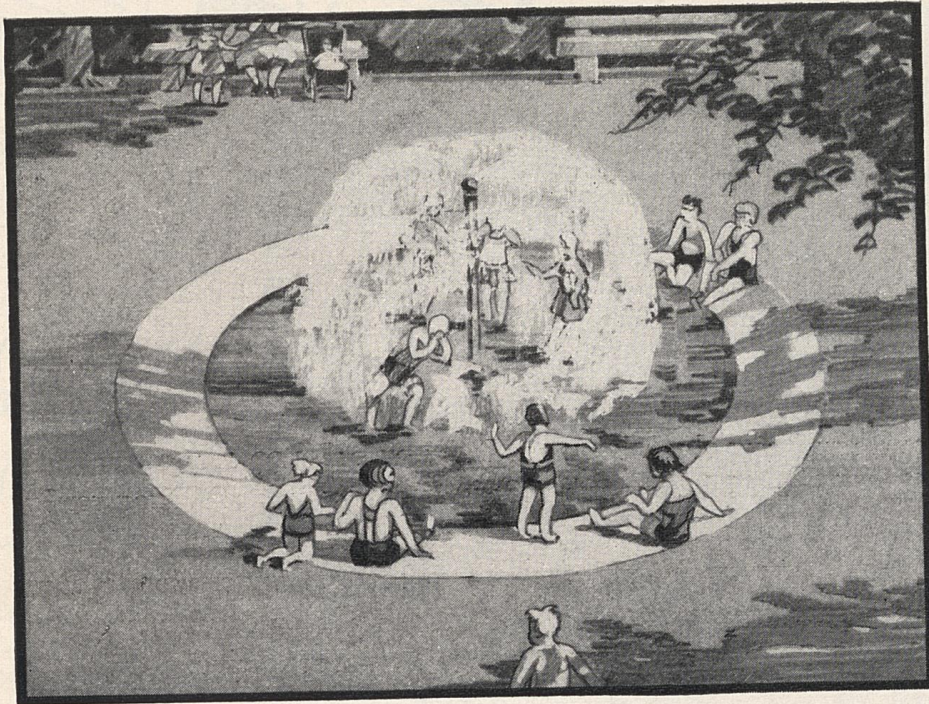
Every housing project should have a wading and spray pool.

WADING AND SPRAY POOLS

Water play is increasing in popularity, and should be provided in some form in every project. Pools may be small and need not be deep, 6 inches being a desirable maximum depth. A sloping bottom is desirable. Every pool should have some form of spray shower, with a drain so arranged that approximately 3 inches of water can be retained after the shower is turned off.

A hard-paved area surrounding the pool defines it distinctly and makes proper maintenance easier. Square corners should be avoided. Trees which overhang the pool are undesirable because catkins, seed pods, and leaves will drop into the pool.

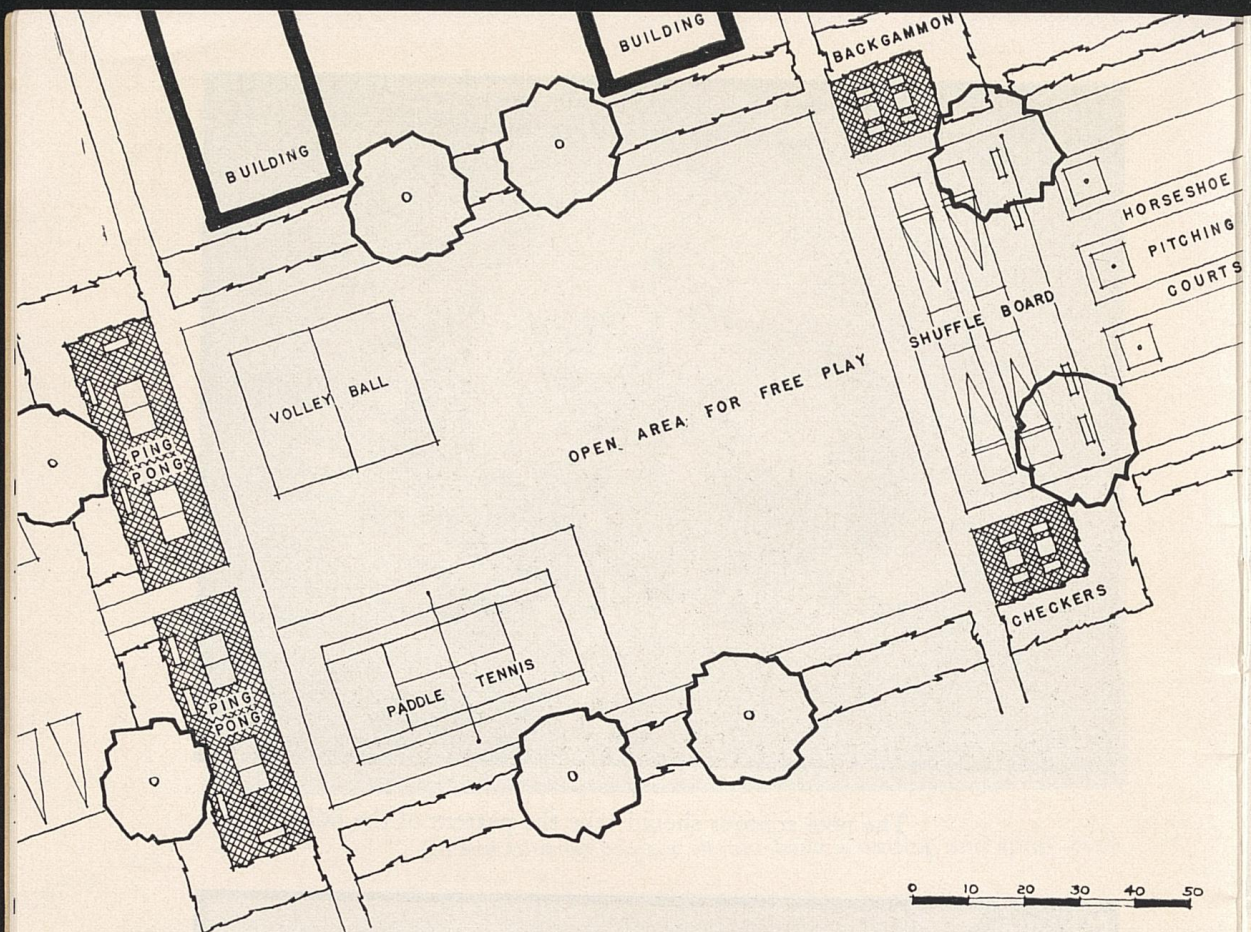
Working details and specifications for five suggested designs for wading and spray pools are given on pages 33 to 39.



The pool contour should take the pattern of the falling water.



Play sculptures can be advantageously combined with the spray.

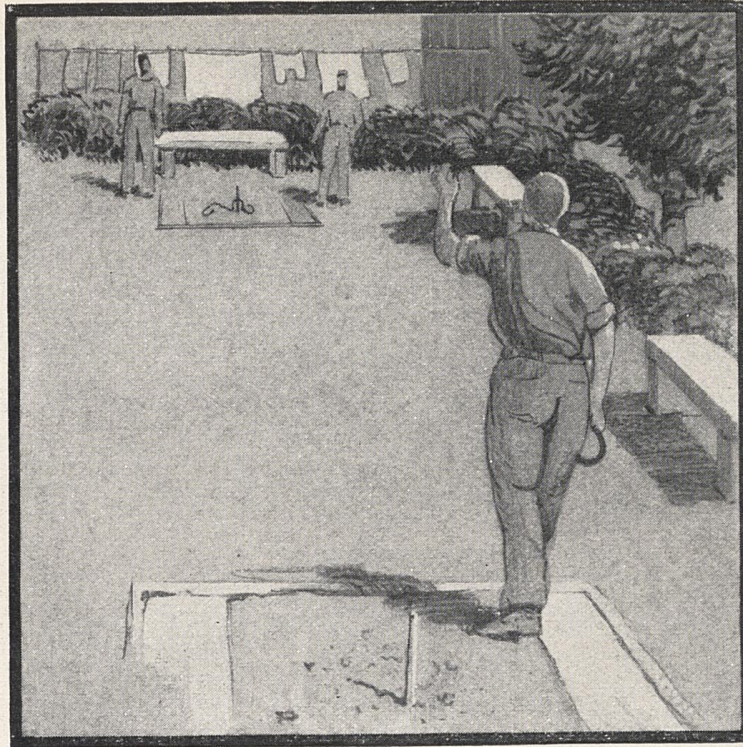


PLAY FOR YOUTHS AND ADULTS

Common areas near buildings can be used by youths and adults for less active outdoor play. In making a choice of games for which facilities are to be provided, it is well to select those games which appeal to individuals of different ages and of both sexes. Games which attract many players should be given preference over games which attract few players and many spectators. Table tennis, shuffleboard, lawn bowls, and croquet are therefore more suitable than lawn tennis or baseball.

Benches and tables should be provided for checkers, backgammon, and other table games, and should be located under shade trees or an awning shelter. Toilet facilities and drinking water should always be directly accessible from the outdoor areas.

GROWN-UPS AT PLAY



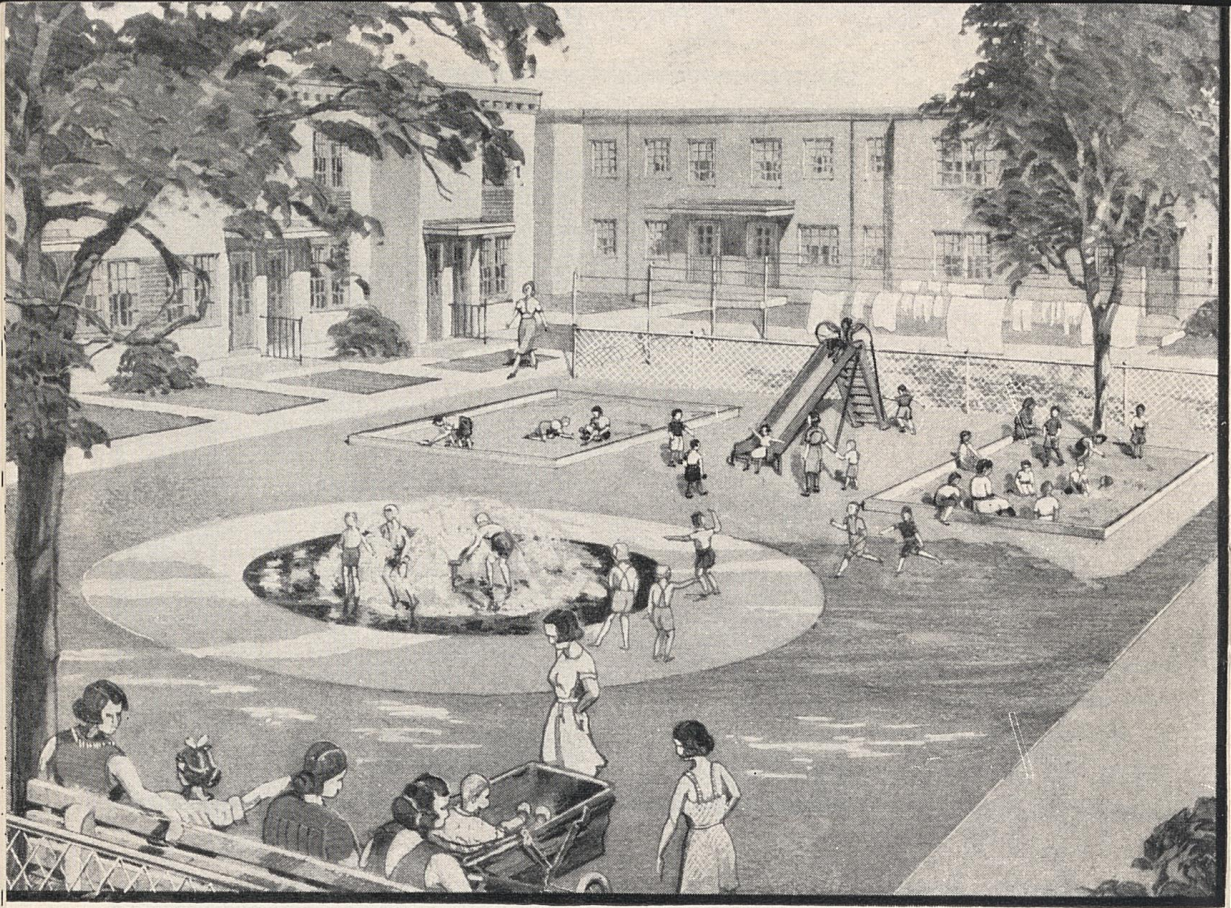
Horseshoes: This game requires a level space 10 by 50 feet, with stakes placed 40 feet apart. Boxes are 6 feet square.



Shuffleboard: Concrete is the preferred surface for this game. A level space, 6 by 52 feet, is the required playing area.

HORSESHOE
PITCHING
COURTS

50



OPEN SPACE FOR VARIED USES

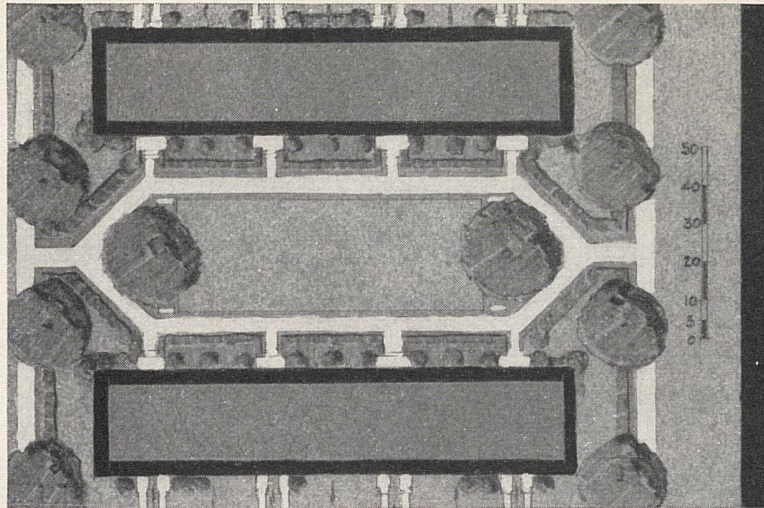
The open spaces in a housing project assure each dwelling air circulation, sunlight, and a pleasant outlook. Imaginative design and planning of these spaces gives them a wide range of outdoor uses as well: small areas may be developed for the use of one tenant family, and larger areas for community and group use.

The sketch above shows a court which provides ideal play space for young children, since the area is closely related to the dwellings. A few benches and shade trees make it possible for adults to rest quietly while watching the children.

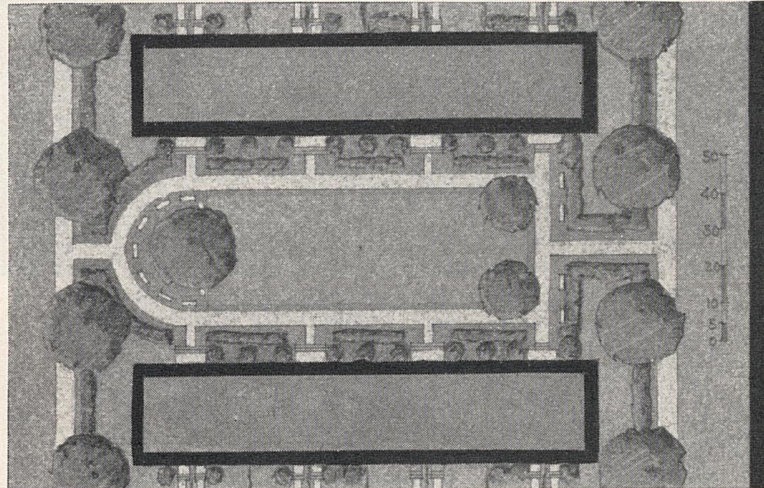
Other court treatments are possible. For example, more of the open space can be allocated to private yards, and the remaining area developed with pavement, benches, and trees as a small outdoor community room.

OPEN COURTS

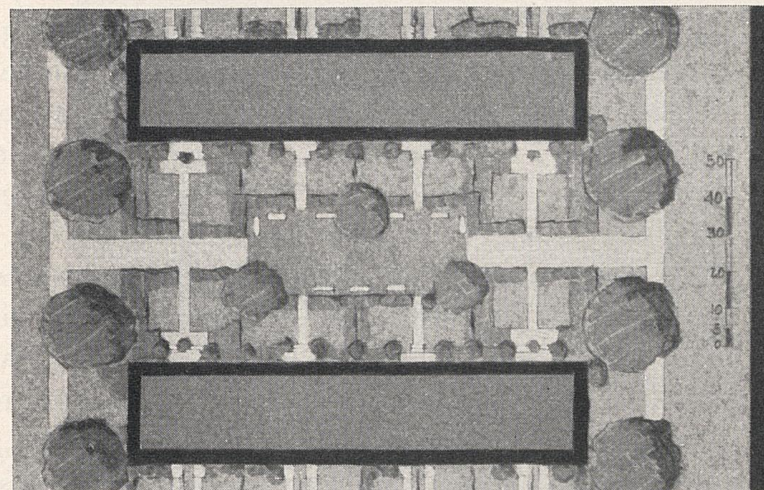
At the ends of this court are paved sitting areas, each with digging space under a tree. Tenant yards are kept small.

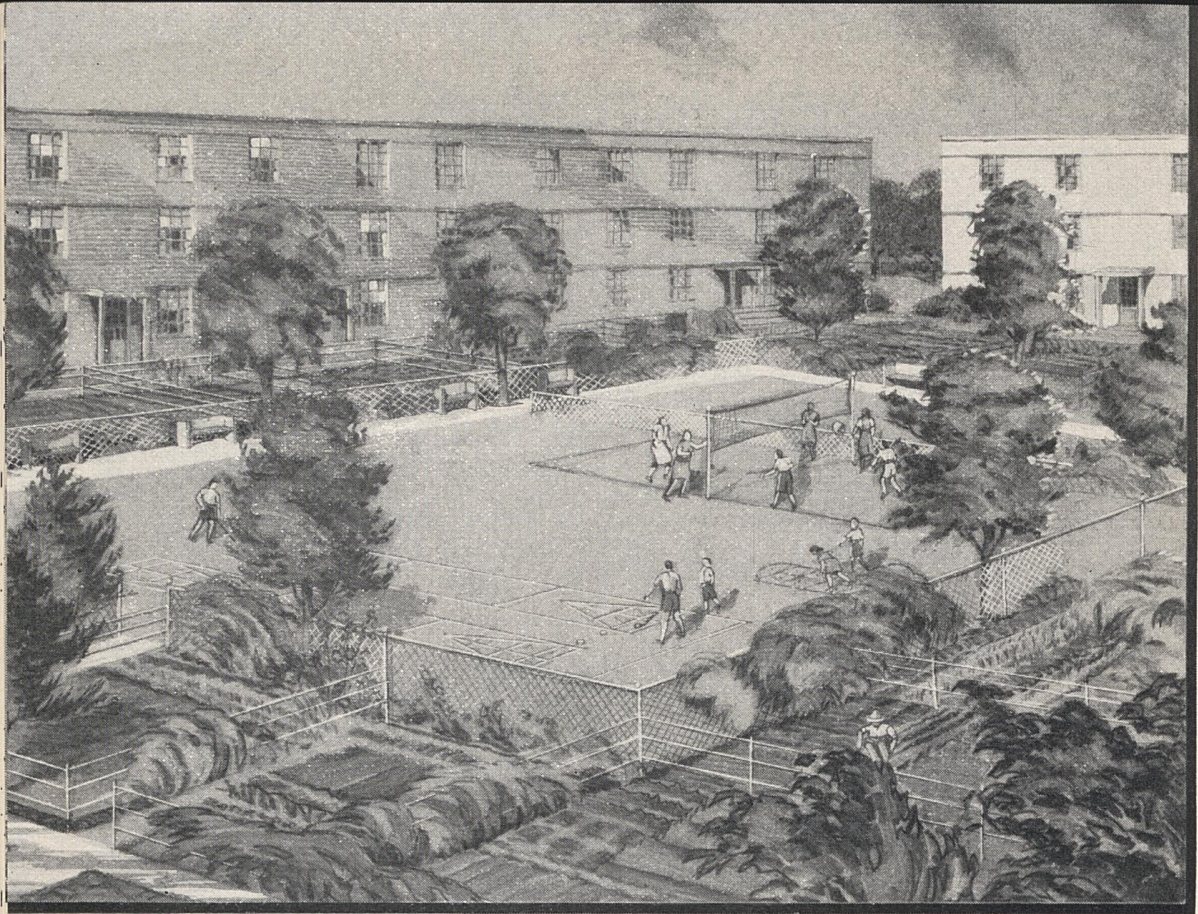


Here the central court has a semicircular play space of earth or clay gravel. Each entrance has a paved sitting area.



In this scheme tenant yards are maximum in size. A walk widens at the center to form a paved play and outdoor sitting area.





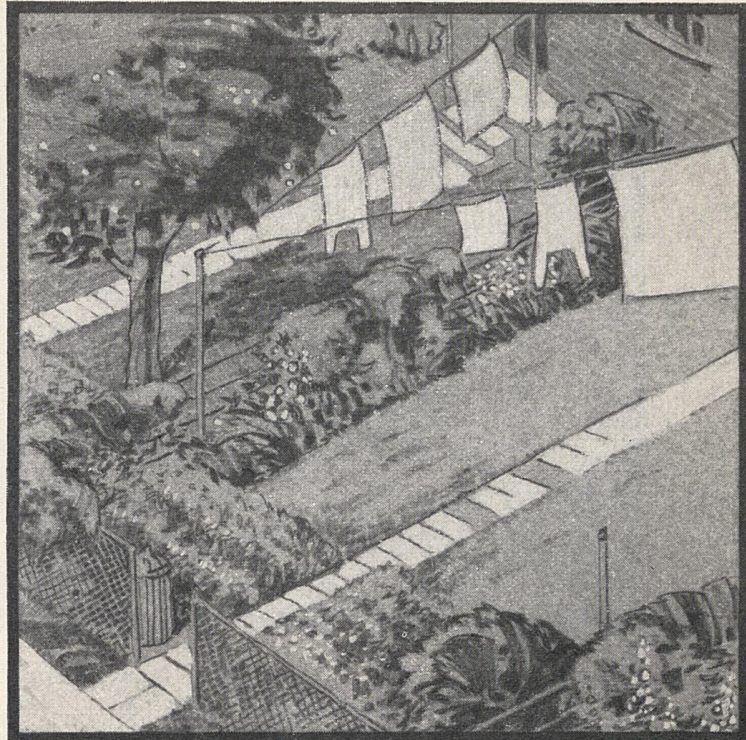
FLOWER GARDENING

The space in front of the dwelling and the yard at the rear provide opportunity for the tenant to cultivate a garden. While the extent to which families may be expected to do this will vary widely with climate, racial background, types and location of project, and management policy, the allocation of open space to the tenants for their own care is in accord with American tradition and will aid in keeping down the cost of maintenance.

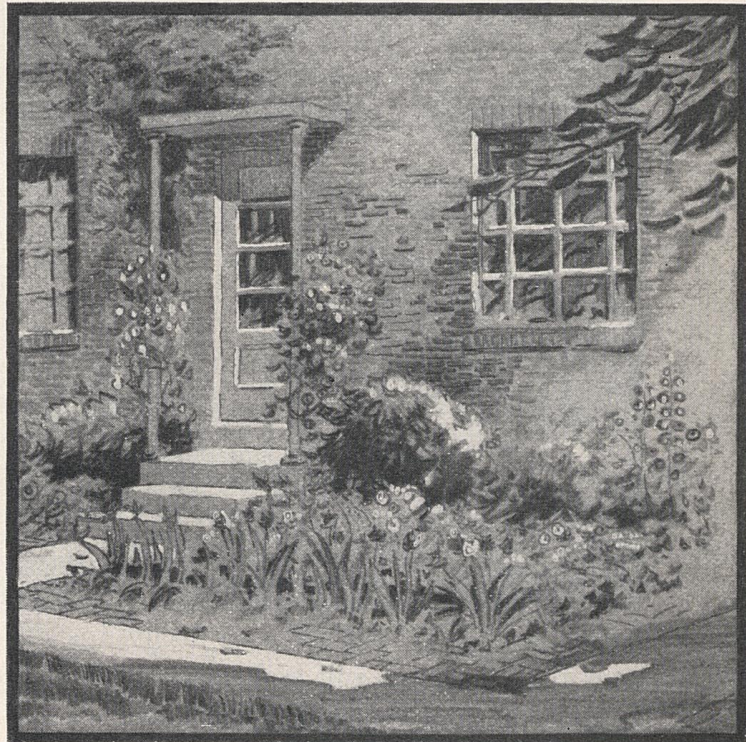
The sketch above shows how the land between the line of buildings and the common central area can be subdivided for individual maintenance. A portion of each rear yard may be gravelled, or surfaced with brick, as a sitting-out area. In the remaining area, the tenant should be free to cultivate grass, flowers, or vines as he wishes. Fencing serves to foster a sense of responsibility.

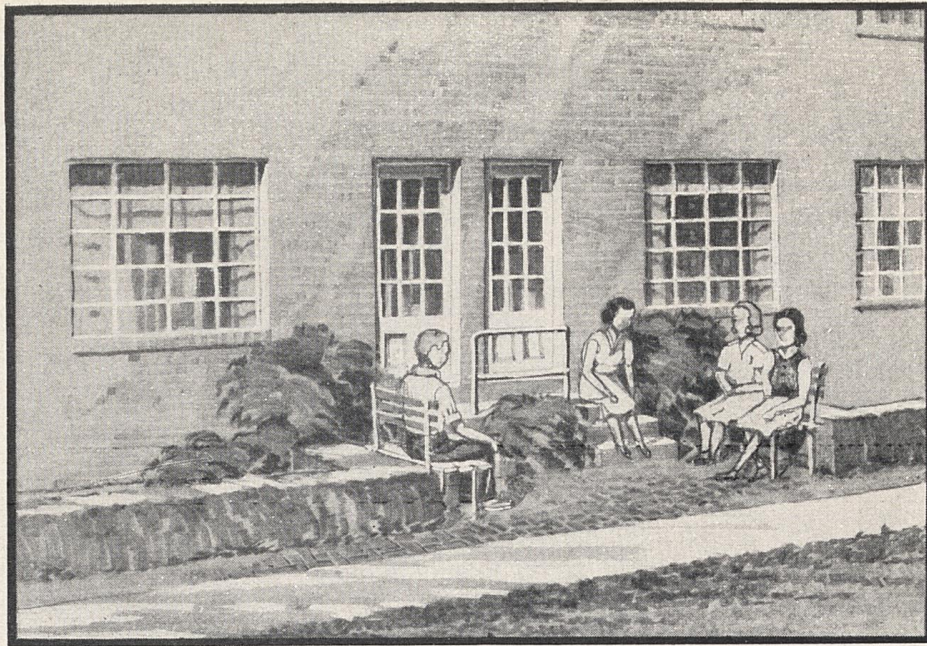
THE GARDEN

Rear yard: The extent of project maintenance of grounds is reduced when each family has its own plot of ground.



Front entrance: Here, as in the rear yard, each family can cultivate a small flower garden during the leisure hours.





A typical entrance, flanked by two benches, which serves as a small outdoor sitting area for two families. In many localities, additional shade will be required if the area is used during the daytime.

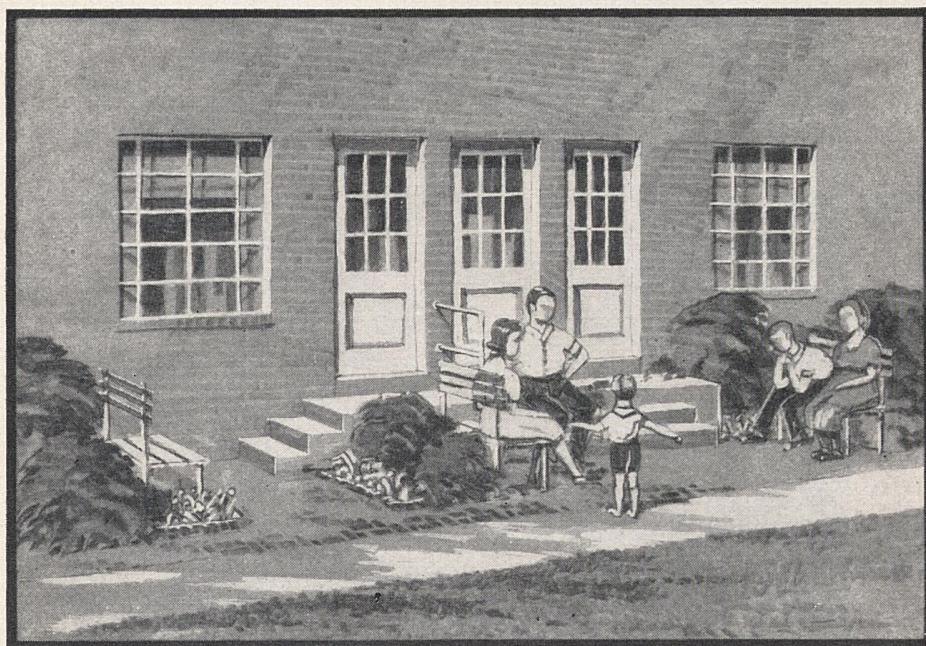
NEIGHBORLINESS AT THE ENTRANCE

The entrance door, the threshold, and the ground just around it are important design features in a housing project. The vicinity of the entrance door is used as rest and play space by mothers and children during the day. In the evening it becomes a gathering place for the whole family.

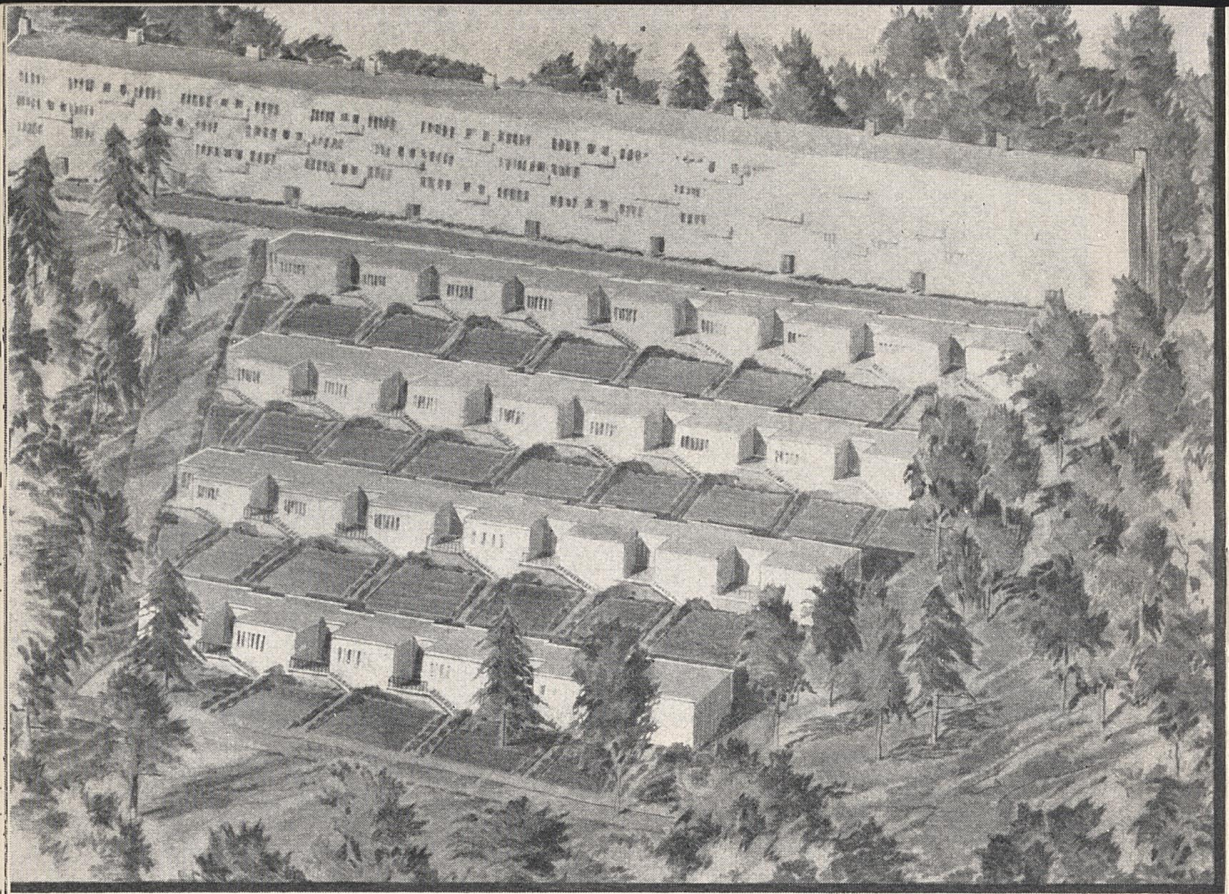
There should always be a paved area of sufficient size for several people to gather, some perhaps sitting on benches and others on the steps. Each entrance and platform should have individuality as well as privacy, for too frequently in row houses we see a monotonous series of uninviting concrete steps. Careful attention to detail will make this space a useful extension of the home at little if any additional cost.



Grade conditions here make several steps necessary. These are less conspicuous when placed parallel to the wall and give an easy and pleasant approach. Greater privacy is provided each entrance.



A possible treatment where three entrances occur together, one leading to an upstairs flat. Even here each family has an outdoor place close to the dwelling for relaxation and neighborliness.



USE OF NATURAL FEATURES

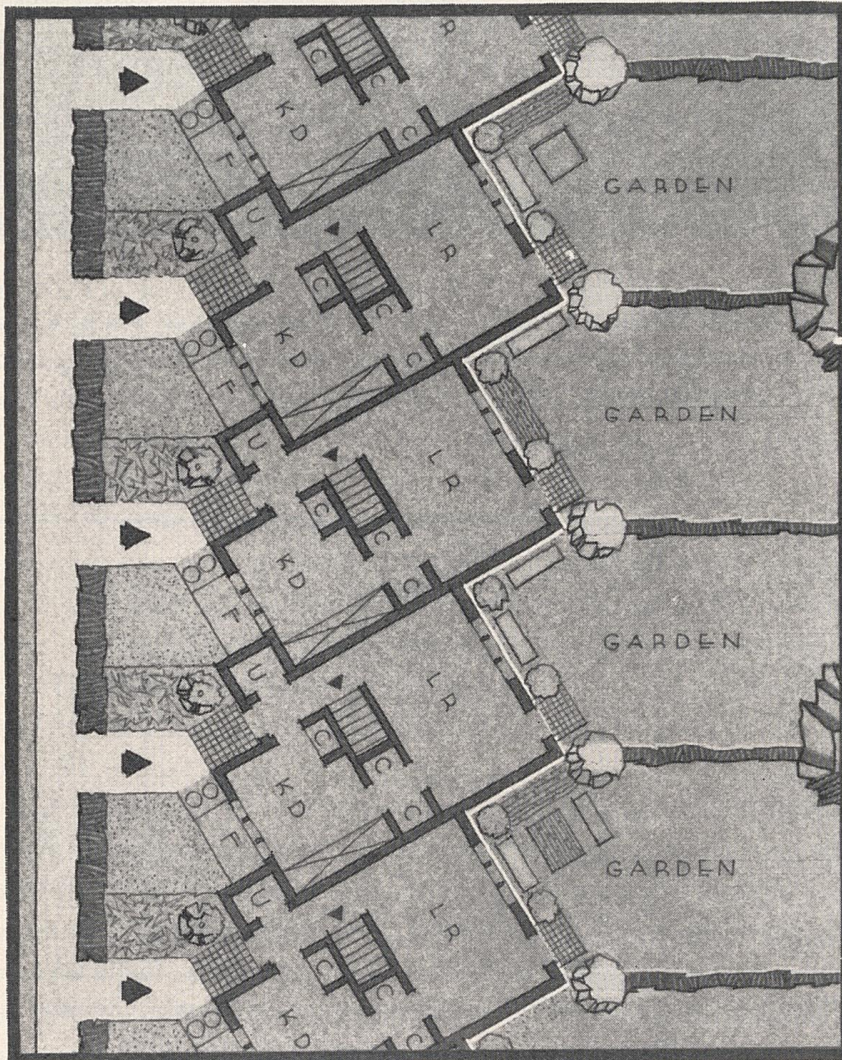
This famous "Housing Estate" in Stockholm, Sweden, demonstrates how intelligent planning can turn to advantage unusual conditions in the project site. Each dwelling has free circulation of air, unrestricted sunlight, and view.

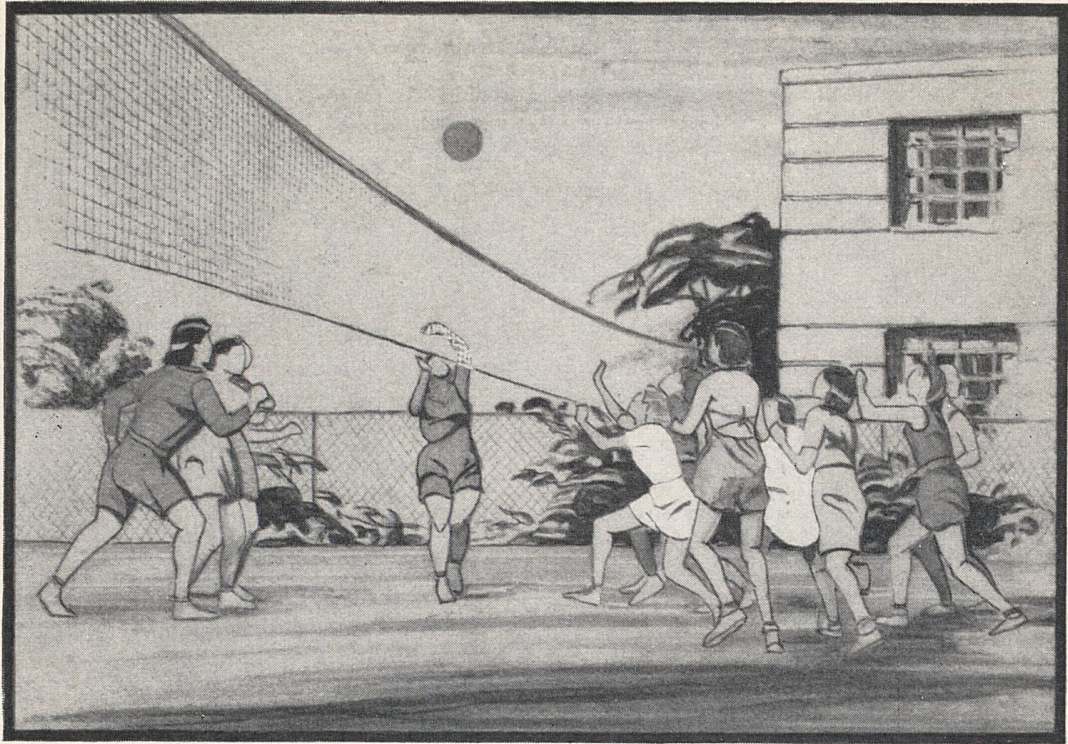
Buildings parallel to land contours give maximum economy in excavation and foundation costs. Their placement, with the tallest at the highest point in the site, makes maximum use of the views from the windows.

Much of the woodland is preserved for community use. In this wooded area, residents can hike and picnic and enjoy living in natural surroundings. These contributions to healthy and enjoyable community life are made possible by imaginative planning to make the best use of special site conditions.

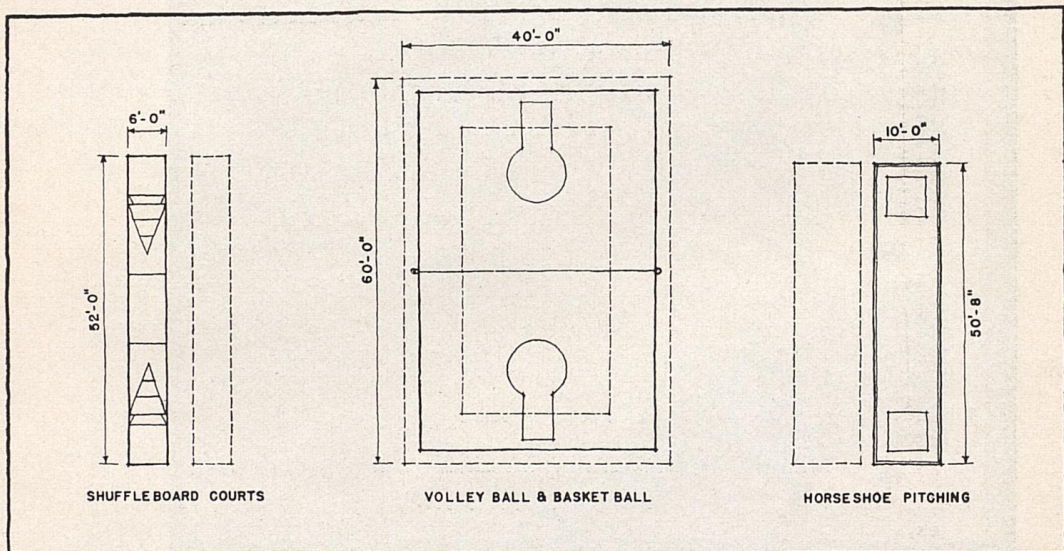
PLANNING FOR A DESIRED ORIENTATION

A staggered arrangement of row houses provides individual dwellings and gardens with added privacy. Where a gridiron street pattern is fixed and cannot be changed, the staggered arrangement may make possible a more desirable orientation of buildings. For two-story row houses with flat roofs, the cost is approximately 10 percent greater than that of a straight-front row. Three-fourths of this additional cost is due to increased walls and foundations, and one-fourth to additional plumbing since each dwelling in this scheme requires its own separate plumbing stack.





VOLLEY BALL: This game, in which 12 to 16 players can participate, is one of the multiple recreational uses of the central area. Court dimensions, as shown below, can be varied to accommodate larger or smaller groups. A 3-foot net, with the top 8 feet from the ground, is tightly stretched between two uprights erected outside the court at the center line.



FIVE CASE STUDIES IN

Site Planning

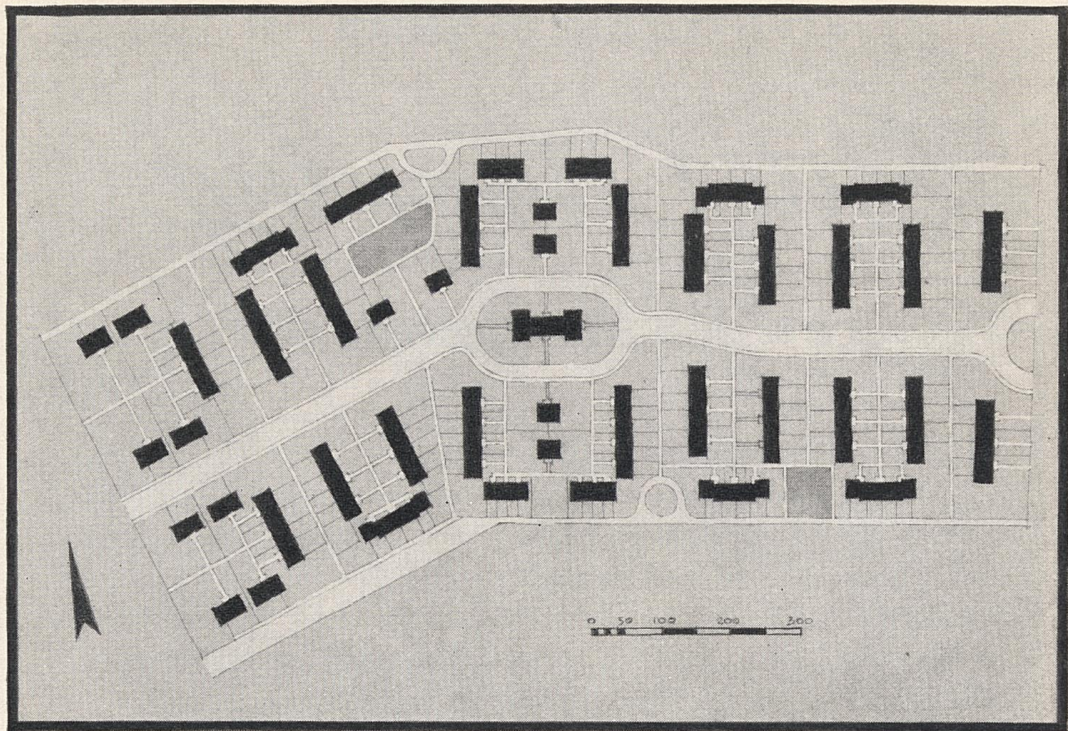
FOR RECREATIONAL USE

STUDIES of typical site plans, showing the development of five different housing projects with special reference to space for recreation are illustrated in the following pages. The projects analyzed are characteristic of various regions: the North, the East, the South, the Midwest, and the West. Large cities and small are included, also slum-clearance projects with relatively high population densities and projects with low densities on vacant land.

These case studies are not intended to represent ideal solutions. Several of the studies show solutions that are far from ideal, because of the necessity for curtailing desirable community activities in the interest of necessary economy. The studies, however, are illustrative of the many, and often conflicting, requirements which must be balanced in the developed site plan. Each study shows certain features of design which are interesting.

In one case, proper solution of the problem of service traffic through the project makes possible the development of a large central area with a community building that is accessible to all dwellings. In another, skillful planning of buildings for greater utility and operating economy is reflected also in the pooling of open space, resulting in a considerable saving in the ground area needed for the project.

For reasons of economy as well as operating efficiency, all recreation facilities planned within the project should be carefully correlated with other recreation facilities available within the community. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to supplement recreational space and facilities in the housing project with additional space, facilities and leadership to be supplied by other public and private agencies in cooperation with the local housing authority.

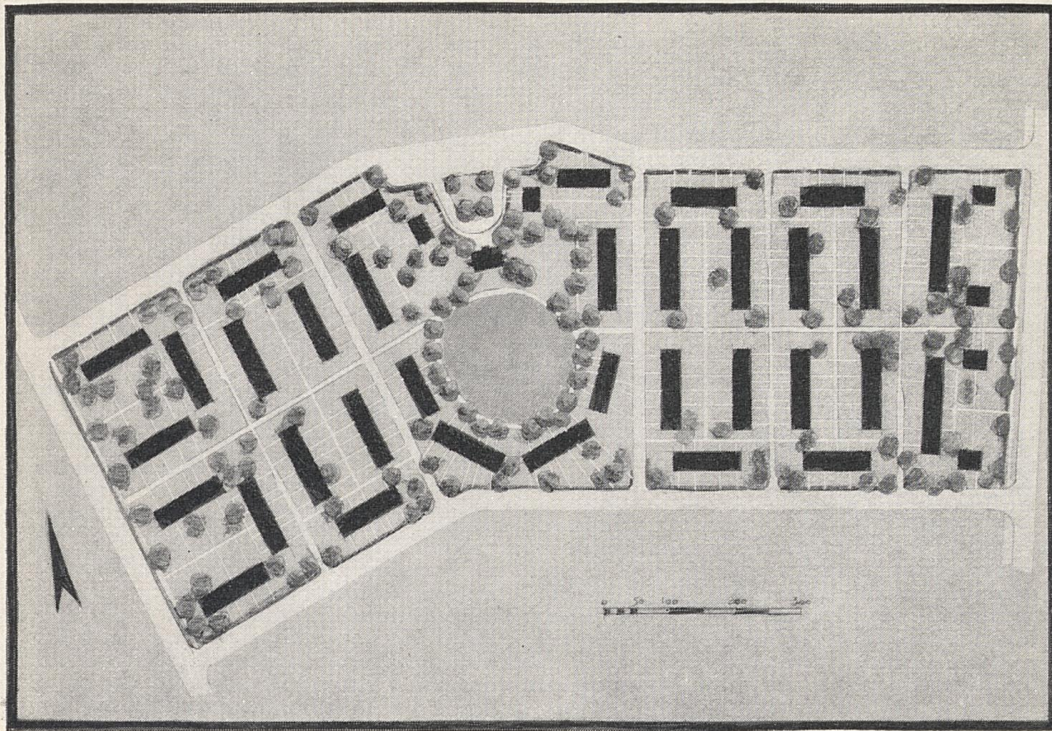


First Site Plan Study

A HOUSING PROJECT IN A MIDWESTERN CITY

A housing project, unlike an ordinary residential neighborhood which is laid out in a gridiron pattern, can often be planned in large areas, called superblocks. Even in the case of a slum site, the cooperation of the city council may be enlisted to permit the closing of some streets so that the existing city blocks can be combined into superblocks which will give the inhabitants more open space for recreation as well as greater safety.

In the first site plan study, shown above, the buildings are arranged skillfully but a street divides the neighborhood in the traditional way. As a result, the community building and the space around it, which forms the heart of the project, is separated from every dwelling by a traffic street. This is a potential hazard, especially to children, which should be eliminated by proper planning.

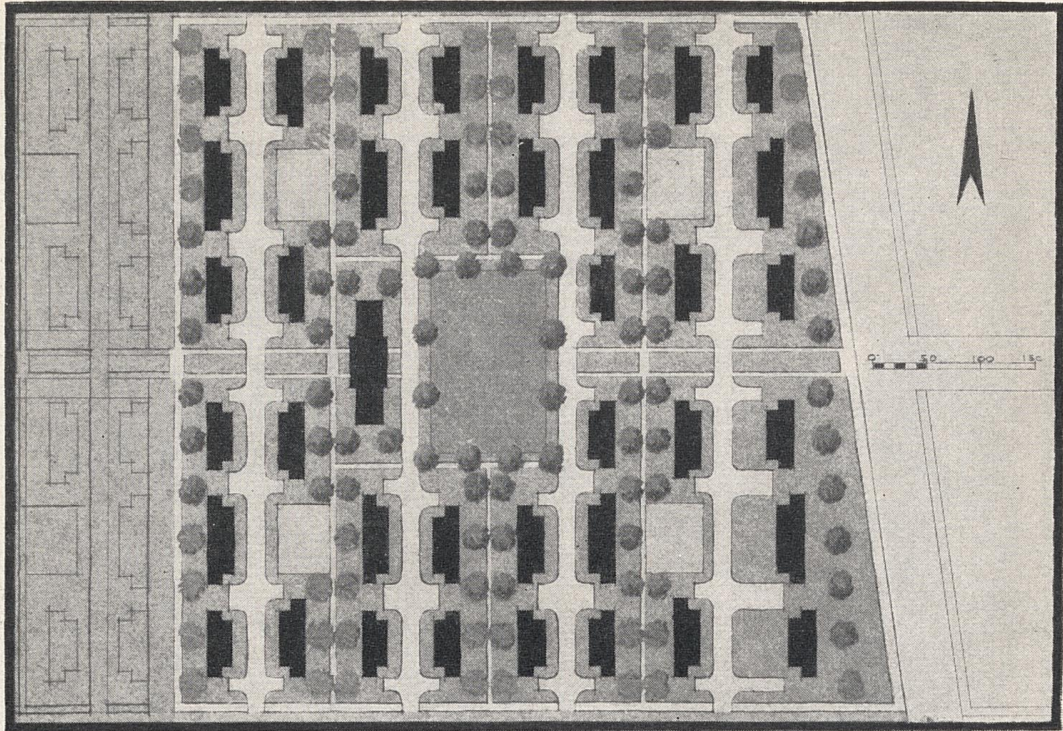


Revised Site Plan Study

In the revised study for this project in a midwestern city, all vehicular traffic is routed around the boundaries of the project. The two narrow cross drives, shown in the plan above, are used only by trucks making service deliveries. Children may walk freely through the project without danger of being hit by automobiles.

The community building, which has convenient and inconspicuous facilities for parking and servicing, is placed adjacent to the central recreation area. This grouping provides a focal point for the community life of the housing project. In addition, small play areas are provided in the courts between buildings for the use chiefly of young children.

Area of site: 16.75 acres. Character of site: 40 percent urban slum; terrain slopes to a low area in the center of the site. Character of adjacent facilities: large well-developed park adjacent to project on the north. Number of dwellings: 206. Types of buildings: two-story row houses; end unit flats, one- and two-story. Coverage: 13.8 percent. Density: 12.3 families per acre.

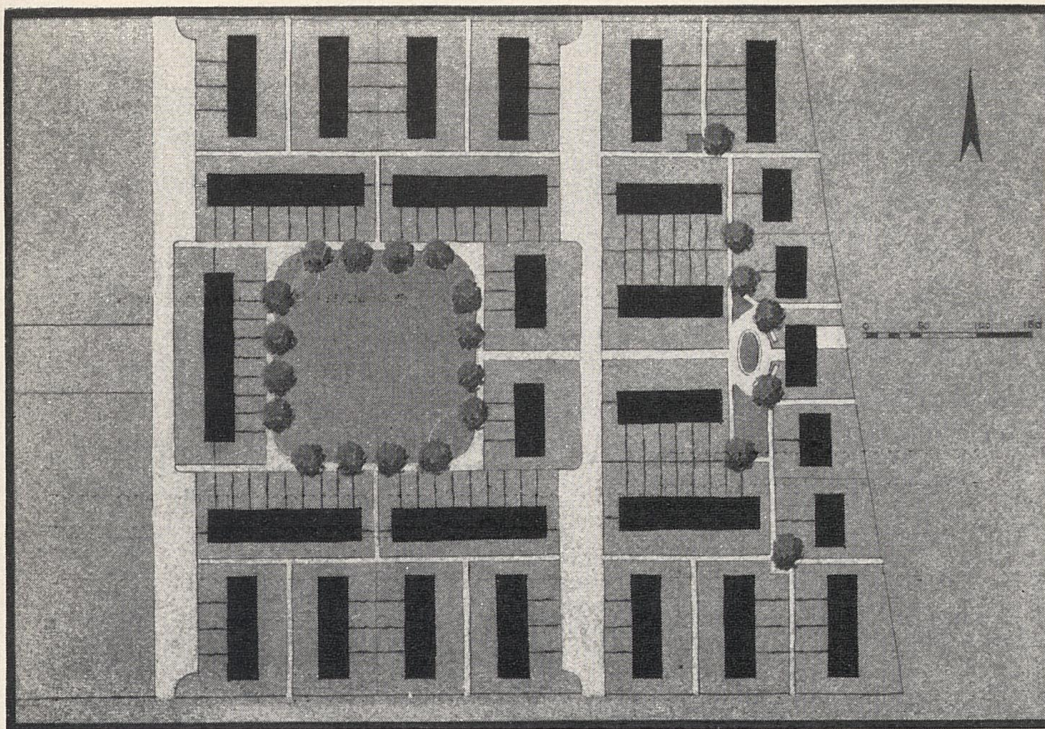


First Site Plan Study

A HOUSING PROJECT IN A SMALL SOUTHERN CITY

The first stage in the evolution of a site plan for this project in a small southern city shows an open village-like group of one-story houses. The plan is here developed as an independent unit, with a playground at the center of the tract.

Later, with an expansion of the housing program, it was decided that the project could be doubled in size in the future by building additional units to the west. This meant that the present development would have to be integrated with the future development. Moreover, an estimate based on this first study showed that considerable reduction in the cost per dwelling unit had to be made. To achieve a more economical plan for the present development which might be logically expanded under the future program, further study was necessary.

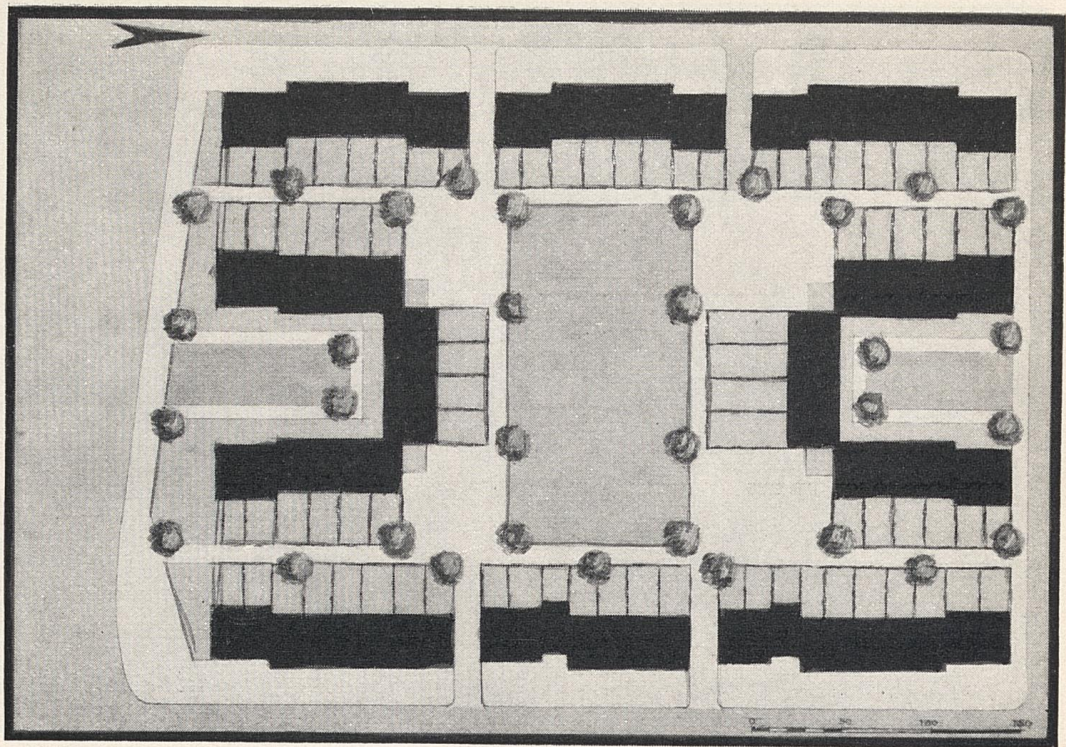


Revised Site Plan Study

The revised study shows a group of two-story buildings around a one-acre playground at the center. The use of two-story buildings has left more land for community use, and reduced the costs of site development. The cost of land per dwelling unit has also been reduced by increasing the number of families to be accommodated by the project.

The playground is located where it will best serve both the present and future development, and is more accessible because two service drives have been eliminated. Together with the open space, the spray pool, and the administration building, the playground is a logical and attractive feature of the plan.

Area of site: 8.76 acres. Character of site: slum; terrain flat. Character of adjacent facilities: slums; no playground nearby. Number of dwellings: 148. Types of buildings: one- and two-story row houses; one-story semidetached houses; two-story end unit flats. Coverage of site: 18.3 percent. Density: 16.9 families per acre.

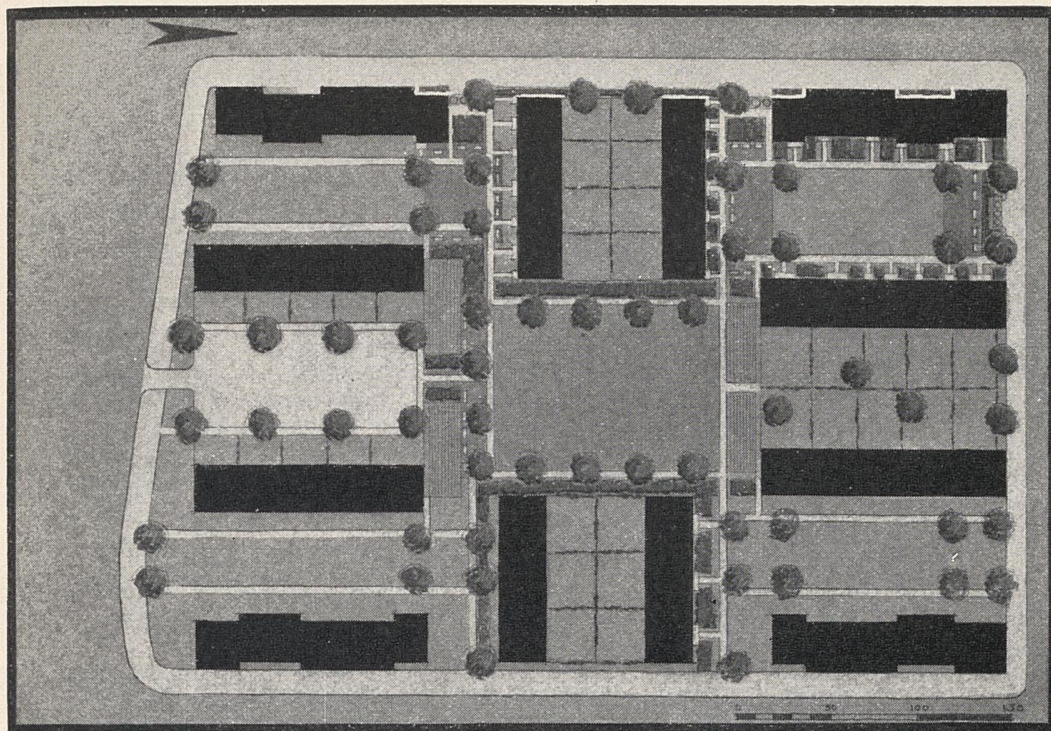


First Site Plan Study

A SLUM CLEARANCE PROJECT IN A LARGE EASTERN CITY

All blocks of this project in an eastern city, of which only one block is illustrated here, are surrounded by traffic arteries. Development of a superbloc scheme was not feasible in this slum site, and consequently, for protection against traffic, each block must provide its own space for play and ordinary outdoor activities.

This first study of a typical block shows many dwelling units fronting on public sidewalks. Parking facilities are scattered through the interior of the block, with the result that children in most of the dwellings would have to cross both parking areas and service drives to reach the play space at the center. Furthermore, this scheme does not provide enough units to justify the high cost of the land; a greater density is necessary if low rentals are to be achieved.

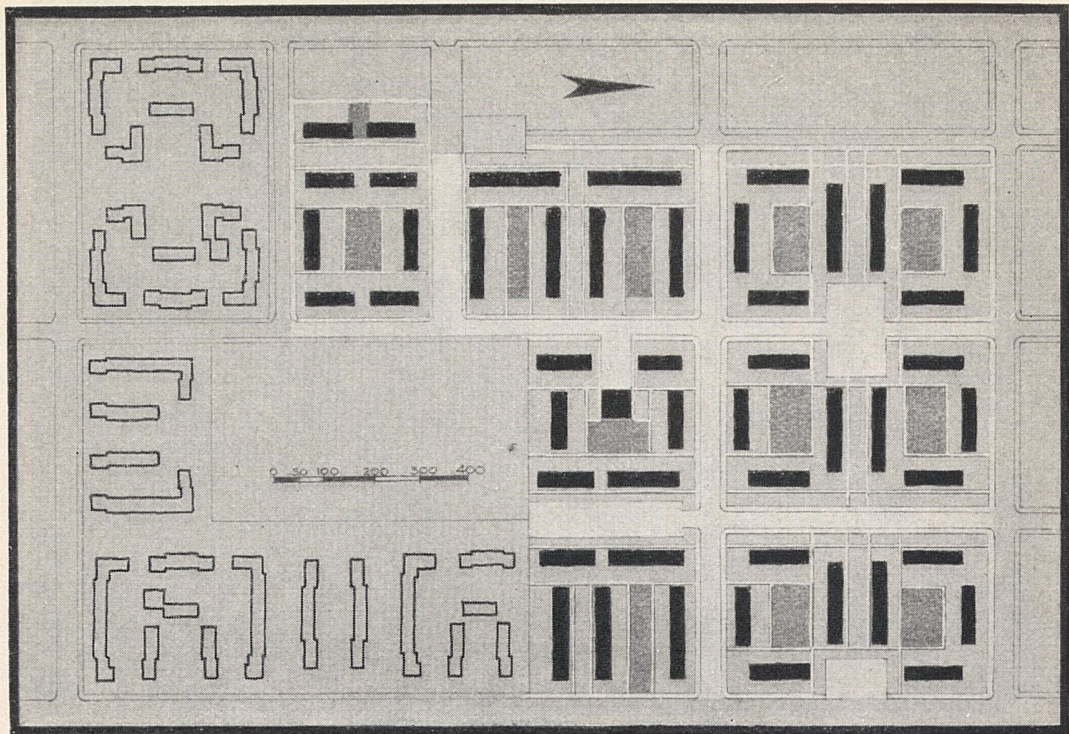


Revised Site Plan Study

In the revised study, the number of dwelling units has been increased, thereby reducing the cost of land per dwelling unit, and the entire plan has been made more livable. Parking facilities have been centralized and segregated at the edge of the block, directly off the street. This leaves the entire central area free of service drives and makes access to the play space safe and easy. There is a central play space against which only the ends of buildings abut—a partial protection against noise.

All of the buildings are entered from walks within the project, and are accessible to sitting-out space. Occupants without yards of their own can use the community drying yards.

Area of site: 3.44 acres. Character of site: slum and blighted area; gently sloping. Character of adjacent facilities: 3 schools and playgrounds, within 2 to 5 blocks, open to public after school hours; no parks nearby. Number of dwellings: 140. Types of buildings: two-story flats; three-story combination row houses and flats; Coverage of site: 25.8 percent. Density: 40.7 families per acre.

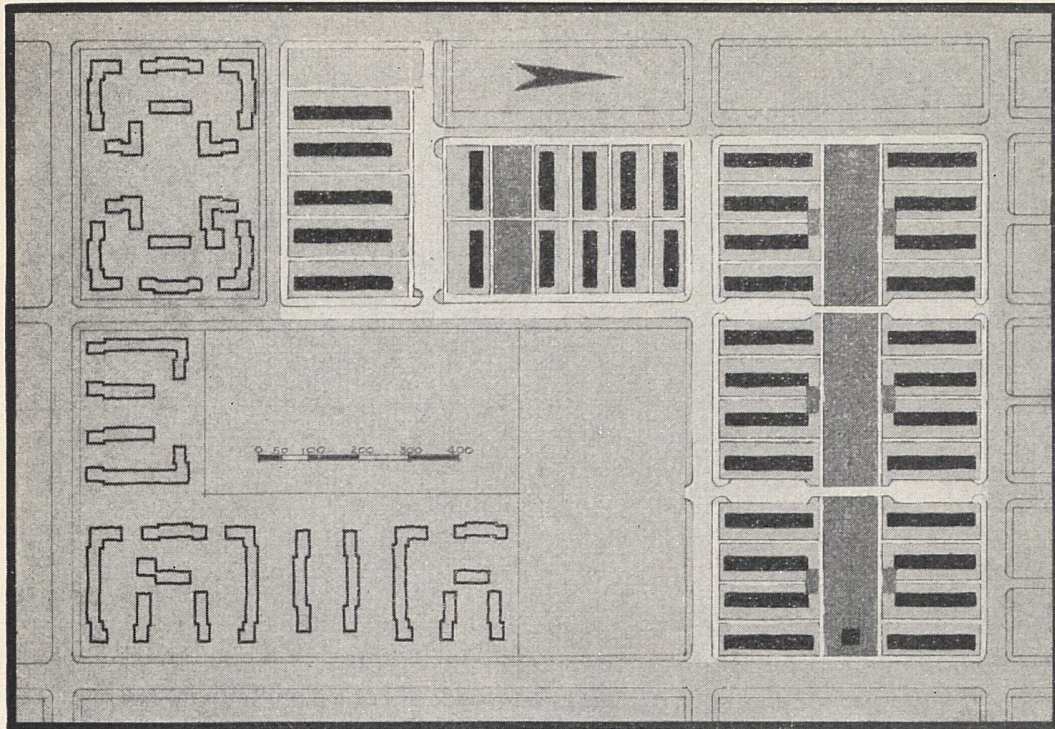


First Site Plan Study

ADDITION TO A PROJECT IN A WESTERN CITY

With new funds available for much needed low-rental housing in this western city, the local housing authority decided to build an addition to an existing project which had been constructed by the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration rather than to build on a site in another part of the city. A major reason for this decision was a well-equipped playground adjoining the project; space for active sports was therefore not needed.

The first study for this large addition shows an open court arrangement with a small play space in each court. (Existing buildings are indicated in outline.) All of the existing city streets are carried through the plan, and widened at intervals to form parking areas. Thus none of the advantages of the superblock—concentration of open space, safety, greater openness—is gained.



Revised Site Plan Study

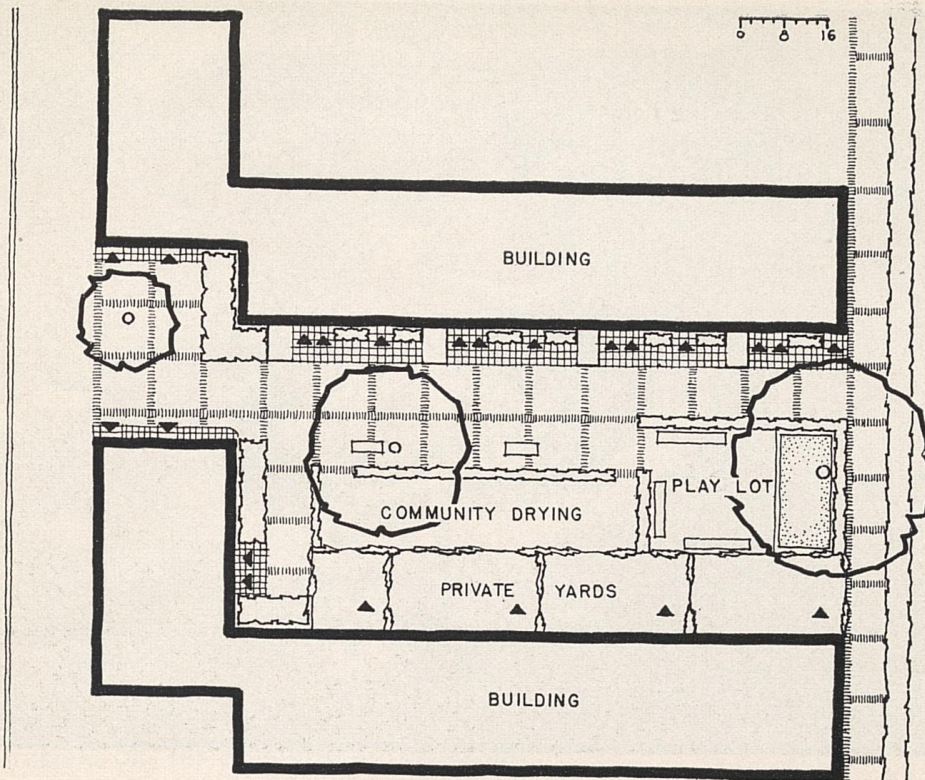
The second study for the addition shows the buildings set closer together. Existing streets are diminished in width and restricted to use as service lanes. The land is used with great economy. As a result, the same number of families may be accommodated on a smaller tract, and the area to be purchased is reduced.

The three blocks at the right, which in effect form a superblock, illustrate planning which is most economical when city streets and utilities are in good condition. The long open area between the two ranks of buildings allows sun and air to enter. Noise is also less objectionable when the buildings do not face the common open area.

Area of site: 19.05 acres. Character of site: 65 percent slum; slightly sloping ground. Character of adjacent facilities: city park and playground adjoin site. Number of dwellings: 422. Types of buildings: two-story row houses; some two-story end unit flats. Coverage of site: 19.6 percent. Density: 22.2 families per acre.



Area of site: 18.1 acres. Character of site: urban slum bounded on two sides by railroads and docks; terrain flat. Character of adjacent facilities: river and docks to the southwest; two open spaces within site, one closed to public use; small playgrounds within one to three blocks. Number of dwellings: 950. Types of buildings: two-story row houses; three-story flats; three-story combination row houses and flats. Coverage of site: approximately 30 percent. Density: 52.5 families per acre.

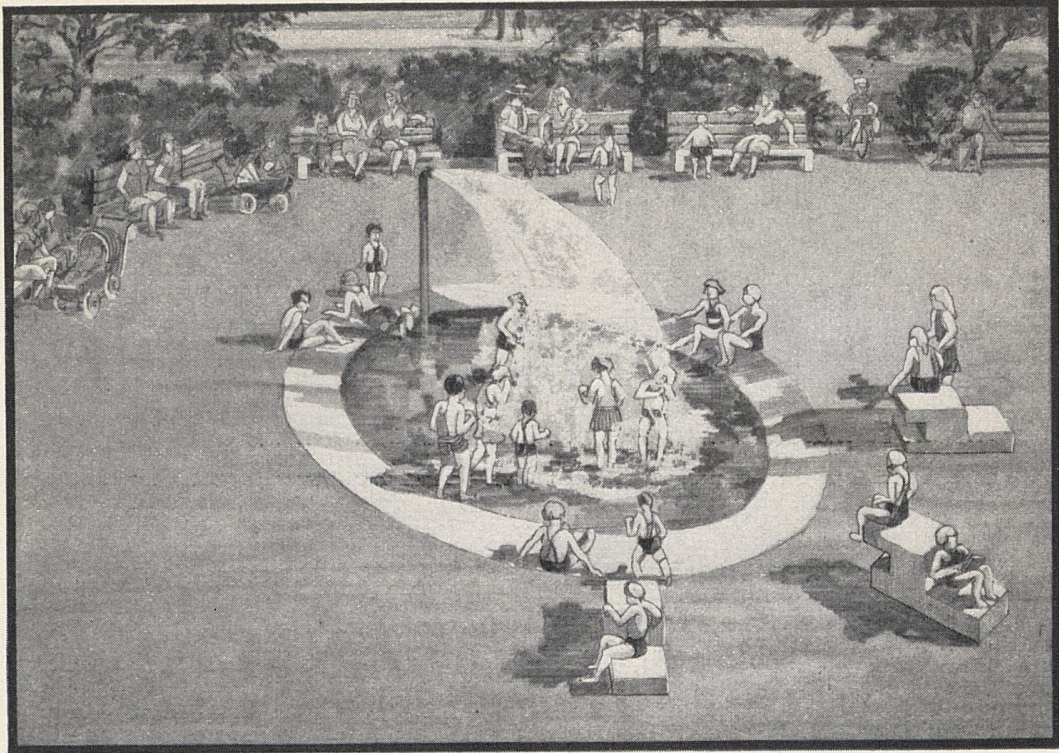


Detail of a typical court

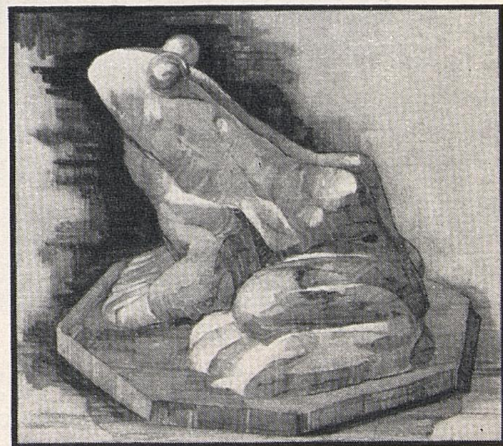
A SLUM CLEARANCE PROJECT IN A NORTHERN CITY

In this project, as the site plan at the left shows, the three-story L-shaped buildings permit an economical use of the ground area. Each dwelling has a desirable outlook and ample sunlight. The community building is well located between two open spaces—a churchyard and a public playground. The playground, however, is separated from the northern section by a traffic artery.

The building courts, a typical detail of which is illustrated above, show a skillful balance of private and community land use and many of them open toward the central open spaces. The first-floor tenants have small kitchen gardens, and the rest of the land is developed for general use with a paved sitting-out space for informal visiting and with a pleasant play area for little children.



THE SPRAY POOL: Benches should be provided nearby where mothers may sit in the shade and watch their small children at play in the pool. Play sculptures, used in conjunction with the water source or separately, as shown in this sketch, are attractive features which serve the need of growing children for climbing and exercising.



PLAY SCULPTURES: These typical figures are designed to serve as climbing apparatus. They have distinct planes, but no sharp edges. They may be cast in concrete with surface hardener and integral color. Combined with sprays, the figures delight children.

SUGGESTIONS FOR

Spray Pools

DESIGNS AND SPECIFICATIONS

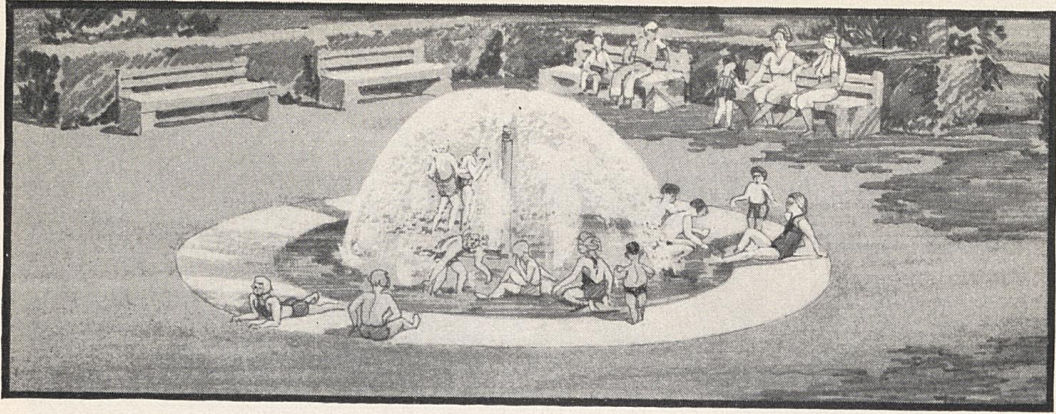
AS AN example of the detailed treatment to be given the various elements of recreation in forthcoming USHA publications, five types of wading and spray pools are presented in the following pages. These pools have been designed as shower basins, for economy of initial cost, and are arranged so that approximately 3 inches of water may be retained in the basin after the shower is turned off, for economy of operation.

Four types of water source are shown. These are important as design elements, for the shape of each pool is determined by the contour of the falling water. The pools may be constructed of concrete or the bituminous material used in surrounding areas.

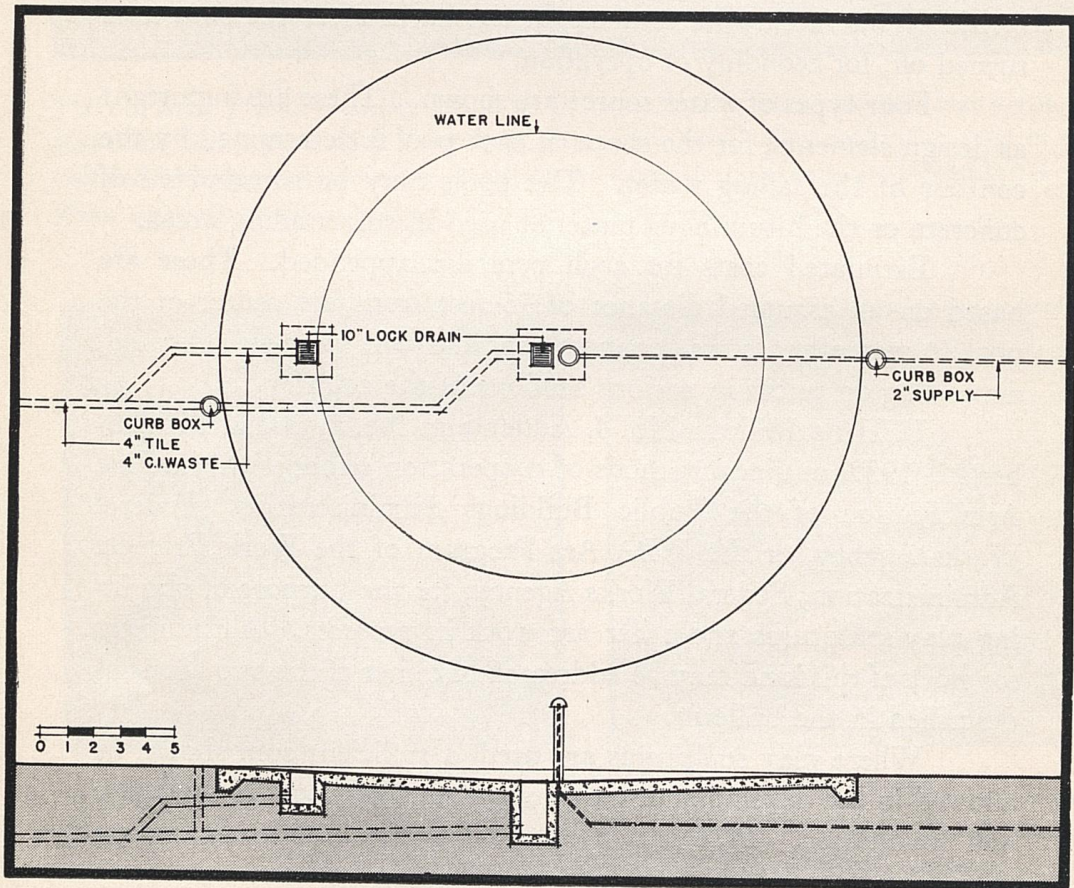
Estimated costs for each pool are appended. These are based on an assumed distance of 75 feet from the center of the pool to water and sewer connections, and will vary as indicated, depending on prices in various sections of the country.

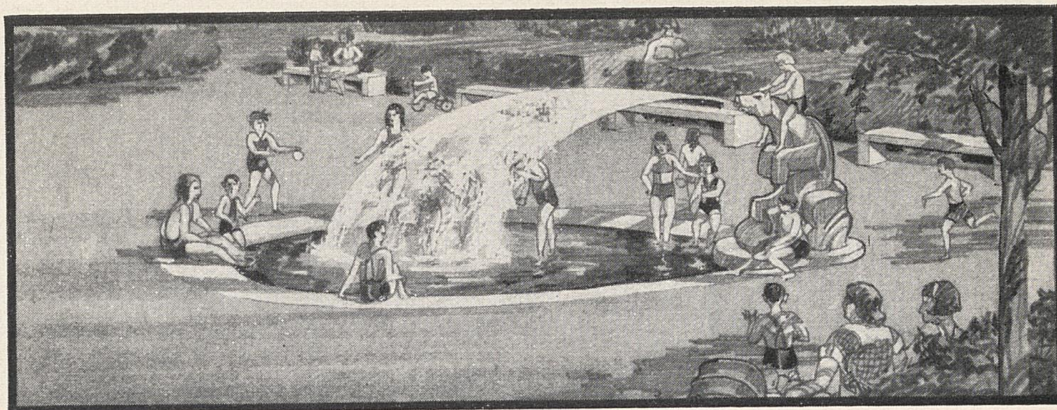
USHA's Bulletin No. 4, Addendum No. 1, issued September 12, 1939, outlines methods of cooperation either with the Fine Arts Section of the Public Buildings Administration, Federal Works Agency, or the WPA Art Program of the Work Projects Administration, Federal Works Agency, for the purpose of obtaining play sculptures and other art work in projects. All inquiries for work of this kind may be addressed to either of the two agencies described in the bulletin.

Where play sculptures are used, a sufficient sum should be allowed in the development cost budget to cover costs of the figure and foundation. Preparation of the foundations for the figures should be included in the general construction contract.

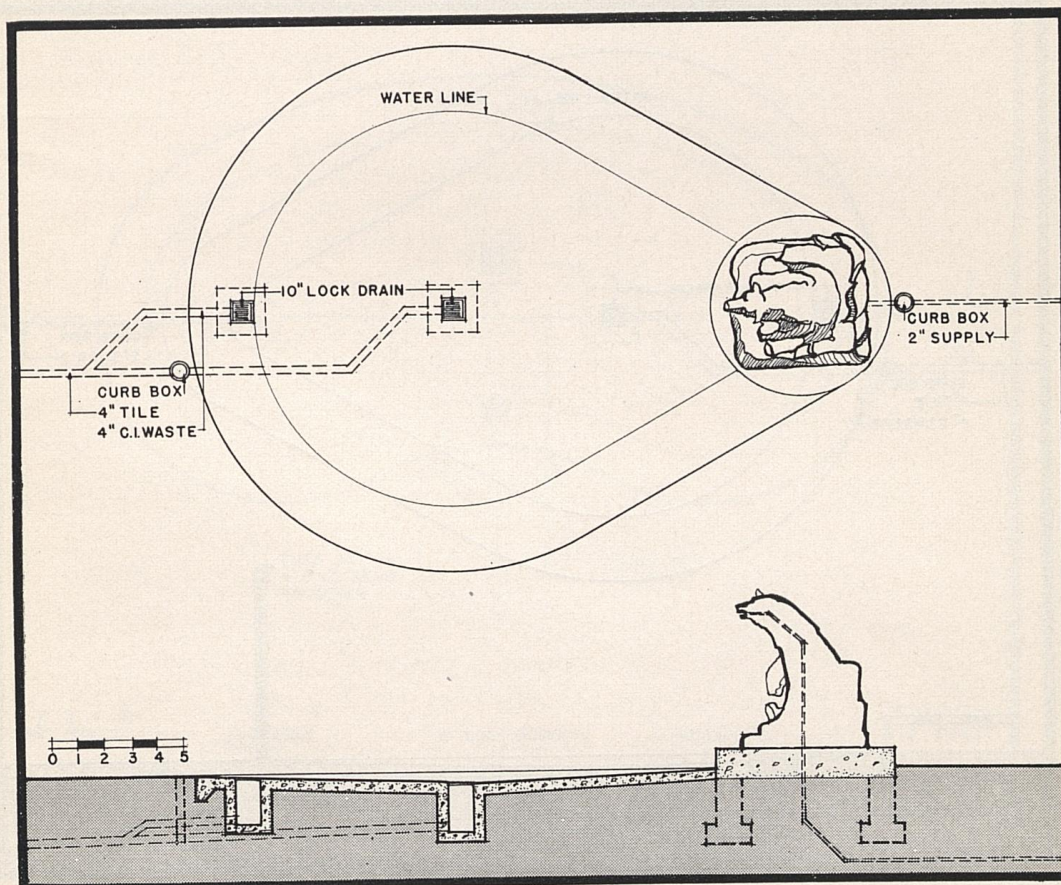


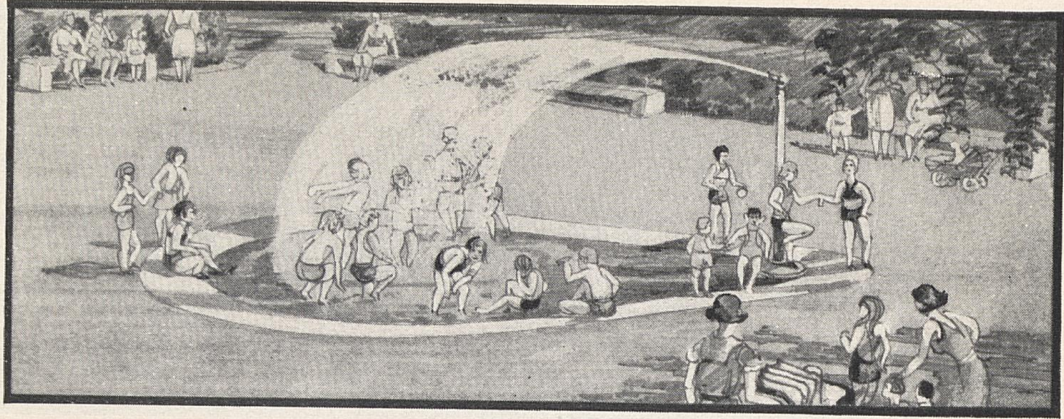
SPRAY POOL NO. 1: A circular basin, 24 feet in diameter and sloping 4 inches to center, equipped with a valve-controlled center drain, overflow drain, and 3-foot standard with spherical shower dome. It is estimated to cost from \$355 to \$455.



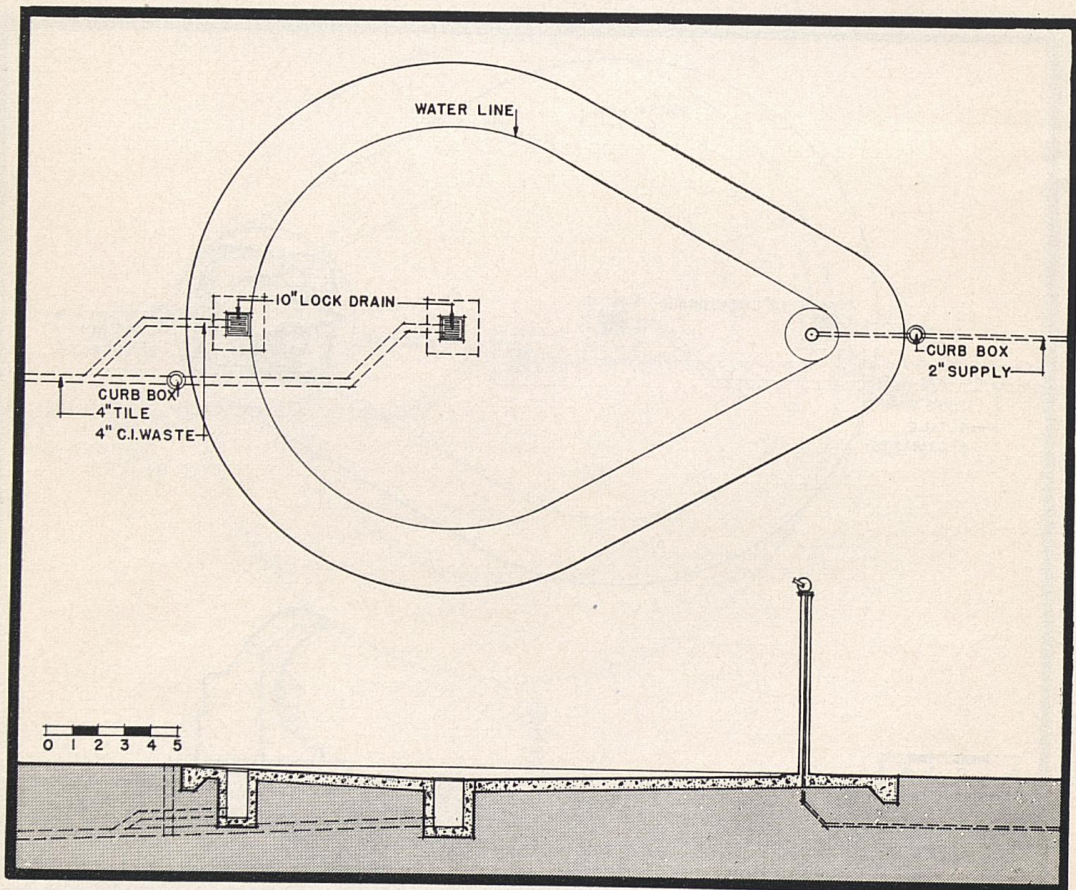


SPRAY POOL NO. 2: A fan-shaped basin with a slope not greater than 4 inches, a valve-controlled center drain, overflow drain, and a spray nozzle at one end concealed in a sculptured figure. It is estimated to cost (exclusive of sculpture) from \$350 to \$440.



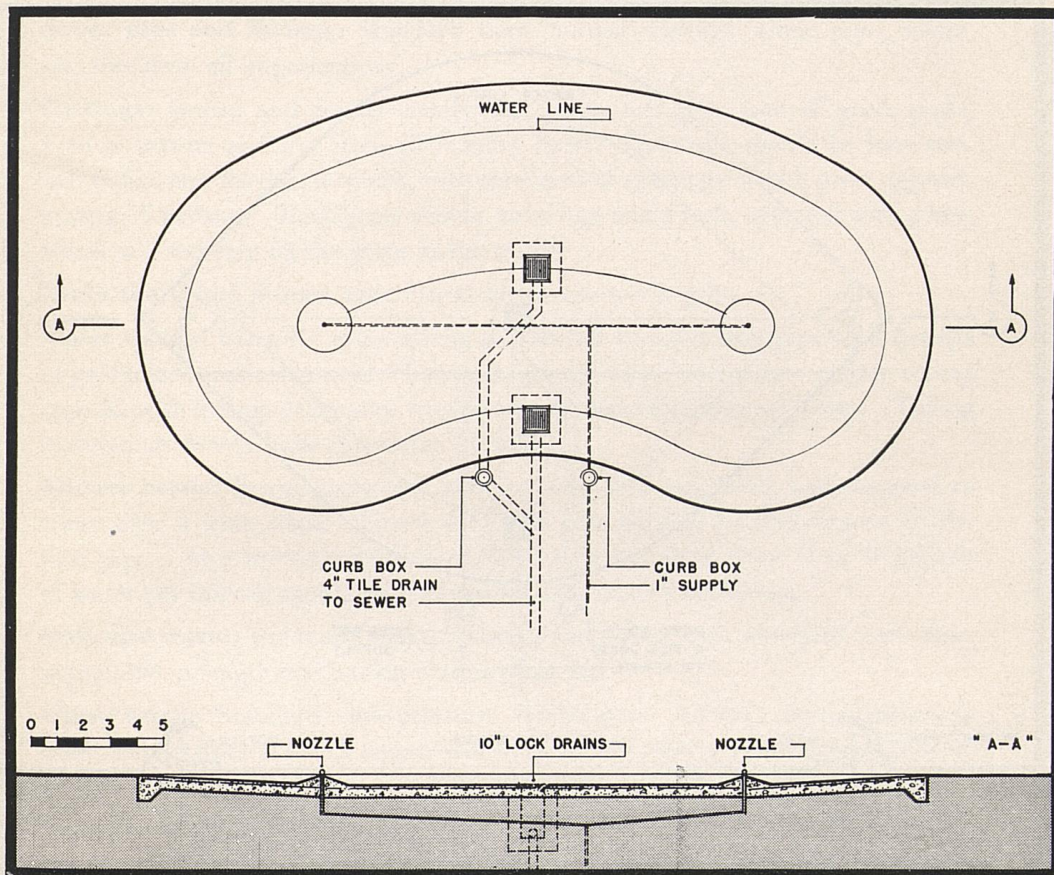


SPRAY POOL NO. 3: A fan-shaped basin with a slope not greater than 4 inches, equipped with a valve-controlled center drain, overflow drain, and an adjustable spray nozzle at one end on a 7-foot standard. It is estimated to cost from \$320 to \$400.



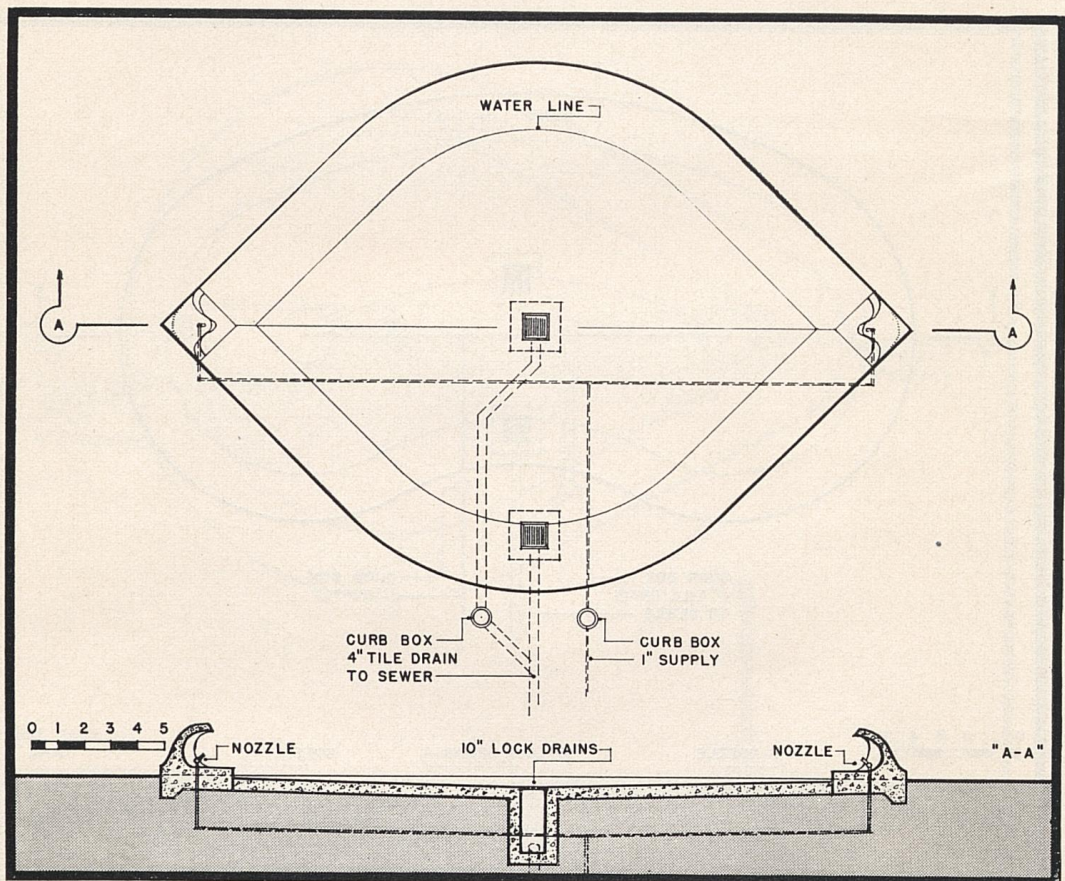


SPRAY POOL NO. 4: A kidney-shaped basin with a uniform slope of 4 inches to the center, equipped with a valve-controlled center drain, overflow drain, and two flush-type circular spray nozzles set above the water line. It is estimated to cost from \$345 to \$430.





SPRAY POOL NO. 5: A lozenge-shaped basin equipped with a valve-controlled center drain, overflow drain, and a nozzle spray at each end under a protective stone or concrete hood or sculptured figure. It is estimated to cost (exclusive of sculpture) from \$350 to \$435.



SUGGESTED SPECIFICATIONS FOR WADING AND SPRAY POOLS

Cement: A standard Portland cement meeting requirements of The American Society for Testing Materials.

Sand: Sharp, clean river sand or particles of crushed rock of hard and durable quality.

Coarse aggregate: Cleanly washed gravel or crushed rock of hard and durable quality, free from soft particles or deleterious materials. Only crushed stone should be used for bituminous mixtures. All material must pass 1-inch ring and 95 percent be retained on No. 4 screen, unless otherwise specified.

Concrete mix: 1 part of cement, 2 parts of sand, 4 parts of coarse aggregate, plus 6 pounds of hydrated lime for each sack of cement and only sufficient water to produce a plastic workable concrete.

Steel mesh reinforcement: Standard welded fabric made of No. 8 gage wire, with 6-inch spacing crosswise, and weighing not less than 30 pounds per 100 square feet.

Reinforcement bars: Standard deformed steel bars, rolled from new billet stock of intermediate grade.

Sewer pipe and fittings: Standard hard burned vitrified sewer pipe, sound, and free from all imperfections.

Castings: Grates and frames neatly cast from soft gray iron of good grade, even in texture and free from all foundry flaws. Openings should be from one-half to five-eighths inch in width, with total area of openings in each grate approximately 35 percent. Each grate should have lugs and a lock, operated with a key, which will securely fix the grate in the frame.

Drain tile: Hard burned agricultural tile in 12-inch lengths.

Water lines: "Class B" extra strong galvanized wrought iron pipe with fittings of galvanized malleable iron. For underground lines hard drawn copper tubing type K, with fittings of brass or wrought copper suitable for sweat joints. Tubing and fittings should have clearances for solder.

Shower heads: Brass, perforated with 1-16- to 3-32-inch holes, and designed to spray over a wide angle. Fitted with iron pipe threads for attachment to the riser pipe. At a working pressure of 50 pounds, not more than 30 to 40 gallons of water per minute should be required for satisfactory operation.

Stop and waste: Standard make, bronze, and fitted with standard curb box, adjustable in length and having a removable lid.

Water valves: Standard low-pressure double-gate valves, bronze-mounted. Stem should have a 2-inch square nut. To fit the nut, a valve key, with stem 6 feet long, is required.

Posts for water lines: Standard galvanized wrought iron pipe, 5 inches in diameter, cut to length and furnished with fittings.

TENANT ORGANIZATION FOR RECREATION

TENANT organization for recreation develops spontaneously soon after a housing project is occupied. Persons interested in softball leagues or dramatic groups or social clubs or nursery schools for their children, or gardening or hobbies, find others in the project interested in the same activities. Together they seek a place for their play and possibly some trained leadership.

The success or failure of this self-organized program depends to a large extent on the attitude of the housing manager. He or she must combine with a knowledge of property management, accounting, and maintenance, an understanding of people. The housing manager should know the distinction between "management leadership" and "management interference."

Domination and rigid control by the housing manager may possibly result in a logical program in theory and an attractive program on paper. It is doubtful, however, whether such a program will meet the needs of the tenants. It is certain to throttle tenant leadership and organization. The manager or management aide may assist with the coordination and scheduling of activities, but, in all cases, tenant initiative should be permitted and tenant responsibility encouraged.

If the housing manager is familiar with the many uses to which the resources both of the project and the community can be put, he can suggest activities which will meet tenant needs. If he is familiar with methods of leadership, he can informally train volunteer tenant leaders to supervise different activities. The manager can also direct tenant groups to books, pamphlets, and manuals describing all kinds of recreation and how they should be organized.

Most important of all, the housing manager, with limited funds for community activities, must recognize the value of obtaining certain services from established local agencies. For materials and equipment, professional advice, and trained leadership, he should turn to libraries, schools, museums, public recreation departments, parks, foundations, public works agencies, settlement houses, community councils, colleges, universities, and civic and fraternal organizations.

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