

FW 3.7:1/8

PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING
SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 8

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

October 3, 1939

Region VI Headquarters Move to Fort Worth on October 2d

The second step in field location of the recently announced USHA regional offices will be effected October 2 when headquarters for Region VI will formally open at Fort Worth, Tex. Offices have been obtained in the Electric Building in that city. It is estimated that the regional staff will ultimately number some 80 persons.

The office for Region VII has been in San Francisco for some months and has demonstrated advantages in speeding up the program.

Region VI covers about 20 percent of the area of the United States and includes 26 local authorities in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Marshall W. Amis is Regional Director, and James T. Haile is Acting Assistant Regional Director.

USHA Measures Movements of Masonry To Detect Causes of Cracks in Walls

Although there is nothing experimental about the construction methods by which 160,000 new homes are being built under the USHA-aided program, at the same time USHA and local technicians are taking full advantage of the opportunity for conducting tests which should prove of value to the entire building industry. Typical of this policy is a careful study recently instituted by the USHA Technical Division, in cooperation with the New York City Housing Authority and the National Bureau of Standards, aimed at determining the causes of cracks in masonry walls which have solid concrete floor and roof slabs bearing on them.

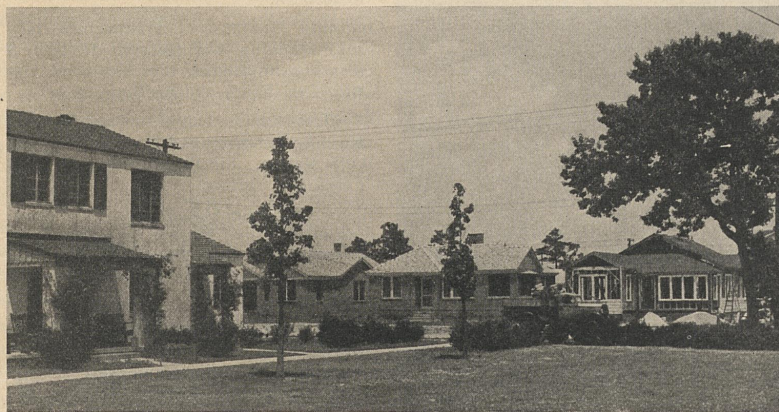
In New York's Red Hook and Queensbridge projects equipment will be set up to measure the extent and relation of various factors known or

thought to contribute to building movements resulting in cracks. Such factors include: the deflection, shrinkage, and curling of the concrete slabs bearing on the masonry walls; and the relative thermal expansion and contraction of the masonry walls and the concrete slabs.

Measuring points are located in roof slabs and exterior walls in one wing of a building in each project, where strain gages will record movements as slight as one ten-thousandth of an inch. Periodic readings will be taken during the next year covering a full cycle of weather temperature changes and the period of shrinkage of the concrete.

Supplementing the experiments at Red Hook and Queensbridge, the USHA is cooperating with the Bureau of Standards in the design of an experimental building which has been constructed in Washington and which embodies the same general type of construction. A similar complete set of measurements will be taken, analyzed, and compared with the results obtained in New York.

(See WALL CRACKS on p. 3)



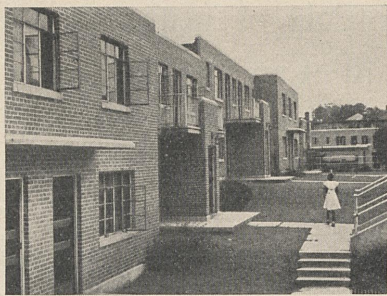
Private Real Estate Development Adjoining Durkeeville (PWA Housing Division) Project, Jacksonville, Fla. This Development is Typical of the Stimulus to the Real Estate Industry Provided by the Public Housing Program.

SLUMS COST YOU MONEY! The Louisville Municipal Housing Commission reveals in a recent pamphlet that social services for a 9-block slum area in the heart of the city cost the city approximately \$60,000 in one year. The tax revenue from this district amounted only to \$18,000—leaving a deficit of about \$42,000.



Manager's Annual Report Helps Project to Win Public Confidence

For effective public relations, University Terrace, PWA Housing Division project in Columbia, S. C., lets the record speak. The project report for 1939 demonstrates the power of facts and the value of frankness in telling the story of public housing.



University Terrace (PWA Housing Division Project) at Columbia, S. C.

The project houses 122 white and Negro families and is 100 percent occupied, with a waiting list of 500 families. In spite of the fact that the average family income of tenants amounts to only \$76 a month, the total loss from uncollected rents over 16 months came to only \$38.16.

The report records a heavy turnover of tenants during the first year, almost none the second. The chief causes of turnover were loss of jobs, changes in family composition, and moving out of town. The reported facts reveal the growth of community consciousness and the extent to which the project's success has been due to active tenant participation in the community life and even in the responsibilities of management. The tenants have their own association, and have organized social, educational, and athletic events. The Columbia Public Library has established a branch at the project.

With commendable frankness, the report discusses the nature of opposition to the project and to public housing and the effective educational steps taken to overcome that opposition. It should prove valuable to managers of public housing projects.

President Praises USHA Motion Picture

After seeing "Housing in Our Time," the USHA's 20-minute sound film, at the White House, President Roosevelt made the following statement:

"With half the world torn by the forces of destruction, 'Housing in Our Time' sounds a call and shows a way to construction. It is a call that wisdom in the United States will heed.

"The strength and stability of American democracy lie in a self-respecting citizenry. The USHA film reveals the extent to which their living conditions makes self-respect so difficult for millions of our people. But it also demonstrates that the slum can be removed, that decent, low-rent housing can be provided; that men, money and materials can be put to work for the benefit of all."

Tenant Selection Conference Called in Washington

Tenant selection can make or break public housing. Its vital importance is perhaps not fully recognized; certainly successful procedures have to be carefully planned. For these reasons, the persons responsible for tenant selection in 24 projects to be opened in the near future are attending a special tenant selection conference in Washington, October 2-7.

Discussions will be conducted on Objectives of Tenant Selection, Tenant Selection and Community Relations, Coordination of Tenant Selection and Public Relations, Development of the Local Program, Statutory and Local Policies of Admission, and related subjects.

Speakers and discussion leaders from outside the USHA include Ernest Bohn from Cleveland, Coleman Woodbury of the National Association of Housing Officials, Alfred Kastner, Washington architect, and Dorothy P. Schoell of the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Universities and Colleges Report Wide Variety of Housing Courses

Housing has found its way into the schools. Letters to USHA from over 400 institutions reveal that 133 junior colleges and colleges either teach housing courses or have courses relating to housing.

Of those institutions listing no courses, several indicated that plans are now under way to include housing in next year's curriculum. Many schools that do not have specific housing courses point out that courses in architectural design, sociology, building construction, and home economics include instruction in housing.

The following list of college housing courses is incomplete, as reports are still being received. The list will be continued until all have been reported.

ALABAMA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE—Special Problems in Housing (School of Architecture and Allied Arts). Open only to architectural majors. Professor E. Walter Burkhardt.

ARIZONA, UNIVERSITY OF—Housing Problems (School of Home Economics). 2 semester hours. Miss B. Eleanor Johnson.

CALIFORNIA, UNIVERSITY OF—Architecture 117a-117b—Group Housing. 2 units each semester. Professor Howard Moise.

COLORADO STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION—F&IA 292—Housing and Its Related Problems (Division of Home Arts, graduate curriculum). 4 quarter hours graduate credit. Miss Margaret Moore Roubush.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY—Architecture 141-142—Planning and Housing Design. 8 points each session. Sir Raymond Unwin, Carl Feiss, and visiting critics.

***—Architecture 143-144—Planning and Housing Research and Design. 8 points each session. Sir Raymond Unwin, Carl Feiss, and visiting critics.

***—Architecture 145—Planning and Housing History and Theory, including social factors. 2 points Winter Session. Sir Raymond Unwin, Carl Feiss, and special lecturers.

***—Architecture 146—Planning and Housing History and Theory, including economic, legal, and administrative problems. 2 points Spring Session. Sir Raymond Unwin, Carl Feiss, and special lecturers.

(See COLLEGE COURSES on p. 4)

10/17/39

Labor and Business Join To Back Ohio Project

Public housing is an issue on which all forces can unite. In Warren, Ohio, the A. F. of L., the C. I. O., the Republic Steel Company, the Chamber of Commerce, and other major business groups have made common cause to assure the construction of Trumbull Homes, a 226-unit \$1,000,000 low-rent housing project on which tentative contracts have been let by the Warren authority.

A group of 225 property owners and nearby residents opposed rezoning the site for multiple dwellings, claiming the project would depreciate the value of their holdings.

The C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. sponsored a joint Labor Day picnic to enlist support of the rezoning ordinance. The Republic Steel Company, the Packard Electric Division of General Motors Corporation, the Warren Telephone Company, the Chamber of Commerce, banks, and other leading business institutions also backed the program.

As a result of these activities, the ordinance passed the required three readings, and on September 18 was finally adopted. An injunction to halt proceedings, filed by a householder, was denied by the court.

Wall Cracks

(Continued from p. 1)

Cracks in exterior walls add to maintenance expense. Masonry must be pointed up, or, when water leaks through, interiors are damaged. It is hoped that data obtained from strain-gage readings will throw light on the relative importance of the several types of building movement, and that, as a result, future construction technique may eliminate these unsightly cracks. Since maintenance charges constitute a significant factor in the rentals in USHA-aided projects, the results of this experiment will be closely watched by housing experts. The private construction industry may likewise be expected to profit by any successful conclusions drawn from this study.

Pan-American Conference to Study Basic Housing Problems at Buenos Aires Meeting October 2-7

While Europe is at war, the Americas are meeting on a constructive problem of social and economic significance to all—public housing. The Pan-American Conference on Housing which meets in Buenos Aires, October 2-7, grew out of a resolution passed by the Seventh International Conference of American States, at Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1933.

The program will include discussion of the basic problems of public housing—financing and subsidy, design and construction, management, and public relations.

Although this first Pan-American Conference on Housing goes far beyond anything heretofore attempted, it has a distinguished historical precedent. In 1573, following a meeting of the most renowned architects and city planners in Spain, King Philip II issued a series of ordinances specifying in detail how all cities and towns in the New World were to be laid

out. Each town, for instance, must have a commons for recreation and the pasturing of cattle. Seaports must be oriented to the prevailing winds. Fisheries, slaughterhouses, tanneries, and other filth-producing industries, must be located below the town and near the sea or river, where refuse could be disposed of and the winds could carry away the smells.

The Buenos Aires conference will seek, in effect, to recapture some of the basic principles of city planning laid down by the Spanish King, readjusted, however, to meet modern needs, primary of which is public housing.

The United States will be represented at the conference by Mr. Silver L. Tesone, Principal Architect of the USHA; Raymond T. Cahill, Assistant Administrator, Federal Housing Administration; and C. B. Baldwin, Assistant Administrator, Farm Security Administration.



Public Housing Aids Real Estate. Renovation of Old House Near Williamsburg (PWA Housing Division) Project, Brooklyn, N. Y. Many Rundown Buildings in the Vicinity Have Been Rehabilitated Since the Project's Completion.

College Courses

(Continued from p. 2)

***—Architecture u86—Housing Developments. 2 points Spring Session. Dr. Carol Aronovici.

***—Architecture u181-u182—Housing. Applied Problems in Development and Management. Winter and Spring Sessions. Carl Feiss, other members of the University, and special lecturers.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY—Housing. 713 (College of Architecture). 2 hours credit.

***—Housing from the Standpoint of Home Economics (College of Home Economics). First term. 2 hours credit. Professor Morin.

GEORGIA SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY—Architecture 120—Town Planning and Housing. 2 hours credit. Richard Bauer.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY—Regional Planning 1c2: Housing. (Graduate School of Design). Second half-year. Assistant Professor Martin Wagner.

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK—Sociology 56.11—Housing. 3 credits. Dr. Rosalind Tough.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY—Housing Seminar. Open to graduate students only. Faculty Committee on Housing.

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH—45—From the Small House to the Regional Plan. Albert Mayer.

***—46—Introduction to Public Housing. Charles Abrams.

***—47—Public Housing in 1940. Charles Abrams, Chairman; special lecturers.

***—48—Housing Management. Charles Abrams, Chairman; special lecturers.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY—Housing and Home Ownership. Open to seniors and qualified special students. 2 points. Mr. Bryant.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY—C11 Housing (School of Commerce). 2 semester hours. Coleman Woodbury.

SIMMONS COLLEGE—Housing (School of Home Economics). 2 year hours. Mrs. Eleanor Manning O'Connor.

SMITH COLLEGE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (Cambridge)—Design 5c—Architectural. 9 hours, two semesters. Albert E. Simonson and G. Holmes Perkins.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY—A-111—Urbanism (Department of Architecture). 2 credit hours, 2 semesters. Instruction is collaborative.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY—American Housing Problems (Home Economics Department). 2 credits. Assistant Professor Peabody.

WESTERN ILLINOIS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE—Home Economics 420—Housing the Family Group. 4 hours credit. Miss Eva Colby.

USHA Units One-Fourth of August Home Building

New dwelling units to be built under the USHA program accounted for more than one-fourth of all residential building permits issued during August in 2,087 American cities, according to a release of the U. S. Department of Labor. The permits issued during August provide for 30,969 family-dwelling units, of which 7,960 are in USHA-aided projects.

All residential building permits issued showed a counter-seasonal rise of 21 percent from the preceding month; private building increasing 15 percent, and publicly financed construction 43 percent.

Need for USHA-Aided Building Increased by European War

The USHA low-rent housing program assumes an added significance to American communities faced with an increased housing shortage due to the new European War. This statement was made by A. C. Shire, Director, Technical Division, USHA, at a dinner Sept. 16, at the New York World's Fair, sponsored by the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians.

"Housing accommodations will probably have to be provided for workers in American industries speeded up because of the war," Mr. Shire said, "but in time of war we must plan for peace and build for peace," and such buildings must be designed in accordance with concepts of good housing.

"It is ironic," he said, "to reflect that now, while our communities are still struggling with the housing deficit that grew out of the last war, we are heading for an even greater housing shortage."

Construction Bids

State and local authority	Project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
BID OPENINGS DEFINITELY SCHEDULED			
Cincinnati, Ohio.....	OHIO-4-3.....	264	10-18-39
Columbia, S. C.....	SC-2-1.....	236	10-18-39
Columbus, Ga.....	GA-4-1-R.....	360	10-2-39
Harrisburg, Pa.....	PA-8-1.....	200	10-9-39
Los Angeles Co., Calif.....	CAL-2-2.....	300	10-5-39
McComb, Miss.....	MISS-3-1.....	90	10-24-39
Meridian, Miss.....	MISS-4-3.....	80	10-30-39
Mobile, Ala.....	ALA-2-1.....	100	10-5-39
Peoria, Ill.....	ILL-3-1-R.....	400	10-9-39
Peoria, Ill.....	ILL-3-2.....	606	10-9-39
Reading, Pa.....	PA-9-1.....	400	10-6-39
Tampa, Fla.....	FLA-3-1-R, Part II	184	10-30-39

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF BID OPENINGS¹

Boston, Mass.....	MASS-2-2.....	873	10-31-39
Butte, Mont.....	MONT-3-1.....	225	11-17-39
Charlotte, N. C.....	NC-3-1.....	254	10-30-39
Corpus Christi, Tex.....	TEX-8-2-R.....	198	10-26-39
Corpus Christi, Tex.....	TEX-8-3-R.....	102	10-26-39
Gary, Ind.....	IND-11-1.....	305	11-6-39
Holyoke, Mass.....	MASS-5-1.....	167	11-6-39
Lexington, Ky.....	KY-4-1.....	86	10-23-39
Lexington, Ky.....	KY-4-2.....	206	10-23-39
Lowell, Mass.....	MASS-1-1.....	536	10-27-39
New York City, N. Y.....	NY-5-3.....	1,531	10-23-39
Ponce, P. R.....	PR-1-1.....	300	10-24-39
San Francisco, Calif.....	CAL-1-2-R.....	472	10-31-39
Zanesville, Ohio.....	OHIO-9-1.....	324	10-30-39

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 September 22, two new projects went under construction. The addition of the new projects—South Jamaica in New York City and Edgar Allen Poe Homes in Baltimore, with 448 and 298 units, respectively—caused a fractional increase in the average over-all cost per unit and in the average net construction cost per unit for all projects under construction. The estimated over-all cost of new housing per unit in the South Jamaica project is \$4,453 and the average net construction cost per unit is estimated at \$2,973. The Baltimore project will be built at an over-all cost per unit of \$5,242 and net construction cost per unit of \$3,231.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended Sept. 22, 1939	Week ended Sept. 15, 1939	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	97	95	+2.11
Number of dwellings under construction.....	41,640	40,894	+1.82
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing.....	\$192,977,000	\$189,420,000	+1.88
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit.....	\$4,634	\$4,632	+0.04
Average net construction cost ² per unit.....	\$2,907	\$2,904	+0.10

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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