

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **JAN 05 1988**
date entered **FEB 16 1988**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic San Felipe Courts Historic District

and or common Allen Parkway Village (since 1964)

2. Location

street & number 1 Allen Parkway Village N/A not for publication

city, town Houston N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Harris code 201

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | N/A in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: public |

4. Owner of Property

residential

name Housing Authority of the City of Houston

street & number P.O. Box 2971

city, town Houston N/A vicinity of state Texas 77252-9950

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harris County Administration Building

street & number 1001 Preston Avenue

city, town Houston state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texas Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 1987 federal state county local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

San Felipe Courts (known as Allen Parkway Village after 1964) consist of 68 two-story housing blocks, 12 three-story housing blocks, and two 2-story Project Center buildings occupying a site of 37 acres overlooking the Buffalo Bayou Parkway, adjacent to the Freedmen's Town Historic District (National Register of Historic Places, 1985) and downtown Houston. These buildings are of reinforced concrete and masonry construction. They were designed to comprise a planned neighborhood development of public housing.

San Felipe Courts was constructed by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston as low-income housing before and during World War II on the original site of Freedmantown*, approximately five blocks from downtown Houston. The gently sloping site is bounded on the north by the tree-lined Buffalo Bayou park development, on the south by Fourth Ward and the Freedmen's Town Historic District, on the west by Jefferson Davis Hospital, and on the east by an elevated stretch of Interstate Highway 45 and downtown Houston. The site is organized as a "superblock." It is bisected by a central lane, Valentine Street, lined with an allee of mature live oak trees. Vehicular lanes, ending in cul-de-sacs, penetrate the site from the east and west.

The Project Center buildings, containing a community center in the western block and offices and a maintenance shop and garage in the eastern block, flank the foot of Valentine Street, overlooking the Buffalo Bayou park development. The three-story housing blocks follow in a Zeilenbau configuration--parallel rows of thin rectangular slabs, their long sides facing north and south--framing long, rectangular garden courts that open onto Valentine Street. To either side of this central group of houses are the clusters of two-story blocks, 26 on the east and 32 on the west. These also are arranged in Zeilenbau formation, with the vehicular lanes penetrating alternating courts from a peripheral ring road that brackets the east, south, and west boundaries of the project. Two corridors of open space, running north-south, separate the central group of buildings from the peripheral groups to the east and west. These corridors widen to become squares of common space where the blocks of housing to each side are most densely aggregated.

* Recent research on this area revealed the original plat and historic name to be "Freedmantown." However, it has been referred to in previous work as Freedman Town, Freedman's Town, and Freedmen's Town. The remainder of this document will use the platted name in reference to this historic area.

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Housing Blocks

The housing blocks, as originally built, contained 1,000 dwelling units ranging in size from one-bedroom flats to four-bedroom duplexes. The project contained 375 one-bedroom units, 356 two-bedroom units, 190 three-bedroom units, and 79 four-bedroom units. All units are floor-through, and all units are entered directly from the out-of-doors. Duplex units have both front and rear entries.

The housing blocks are bar-like slabs in shape, small in scale, and flat-roofed. At the ends of each block a bay, containing either one or two apartments, is shifted forward, or back, of the main line of the block face to enframe the long intervening cross courts. The housing blocks are of reinforced concrete frame construction. Exterior curtain walls are of buff and burgundy-brown face brick backed by hollow tile units. Interior walls between apartments are of plastered tile, and partitions within apartments are of plaster-on-metal lath. Thin concrete canopies, cantilevered from the second-floor beams, provide sun and rain protection above doors and windows. They also accentuate the horizontality of the exterior elevations, as does the grouping of windows in horizontal bands, set within simple molded tile frames, and interspersed between panels of the burgundy-brown brick. Spur walls intervene between adjacent entrance ways and between the housing blocks to define the boundaries of the cross courts. Portions of the exterior walls are fitted with brick-faced planting troughs that run beneath the sills of the first-floor windows. Windows are steel casement type (some now have been covered with plywood); doors are of solid-core wood construction. All units originally were equipped with wooden screen doors.

Project Center Buildings

Conceived as the gateway to San Felipe Courts from the Buffalo Bayou park development, the Project Center buildings were to have been one building, the two wings of which were to be joined by a second-story bridge that spanned Valentine Street. Due to the constraints under which the project was built, however, the elevated connection was eliminated, and the single building became two. The one- and two-story buildings on the east side of Valentine Street contained the executive offices of the Housing Authority, maintenance and repair shops, and a walled parking court for service vehicles. The one- and two-story buildings on the west side of Valentine Street contained the project community center.

The east building has a J-shaped plan. Its most arresting feature is a cantilevered second-story bay at the northwest corner of the building that projects eight feet forward of the building's north face.

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This shelters the principal entrance to the office section of the building, which is approached by a flight of shallow, but monumentally articulated, steps. The projecting corner of the second-floor bay is emphasized by a horizontal band of windows, framed by a tile surround and wrapped around the corner. Windows in the maintenance section of the buildings are horizontal clerestory strips.

The west building has a T-shaped plan. The cross of the T contains, at its south end, a small library and crafts rooms; at its center, public toilets and a medical examination room; and at its north end, a kindergarten room that opens to a walled play court on the west. The stem of the T houses an auditorium and stage. The auditorium opens on the south to a paved terrace. Multiple entrances allowed all of the different portions of the building to be used simultaneously. A small second-story bay, above the clinic room, is accessible by an external stair on the east face of the building.

The box-like, flat-roofed profiling and the combination of materials on the Project Center buildings are identical to that of the housing units. The massing of the Project Center buildings is more varied, articulating volumetrically the different activities the buildings were designed to contain. The placement of the Project Center buildings on their sloping site is accentuated by the fine detailing of low retaining walls that surround the maintenance motor court and the kindergarten play court, extending the architectural lines of the complex into the gently rolling landscape.

San Felipe Courts were designed by the Associated Housing Architects of Houston, a consortium of 12 Houston architectural firms-- James Ruskin Bailey; Cameron Fairchild; Joseph Finger; Hedrick & Lindsley; Claude E. Hooton; MacKie & Kamrath; H. Edward Maddox, Jr.; H.A. Salisbury & T. G. McHale; R. G. Schneider & Company; Bailey A. Swenson; Eugene Werlin; and C. A. Johnson. Hooton, MacKie & Kamrath, and Werlin comprised the design committee, with Karl Kamrath having chief responsibility for the project's design. J. Allen Meyers, Jr. was the landscape architect. The complex was designed between 1939 and 1940. At the end of 1940 a \$1,943,683 construction contract for 564 of the 1,000 units was awarded to R. F. Ball Construction Company. This phase was completed in 1942. The remaining 436 units and the Project Center buildings were constructed between 1943 and 1944 by the Knutson Construction Company for a contract price of \$1,053,711.

The San Felipe Courts complex retains its integrity to an unusual degree. While the structures are in fair condition and many have had plywood panels inserted in the windows of disused units, the buildings have had few structural alterations or unsympathetic additions.

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Landscaping is mature. None of the historic buildings have been removed and only one modern structure, a covered basketball court north of the Community Building, has been added. The upper edges of the walls of many buildings are streaked with tar, the result of poorly executed re-roofing. This condition is visible in photographs published as early as 1957. In 1981 the executive offices of the Housing Authority were moved off the premises.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1941-1944 **Builder/Architect** Associated Housing Architects of Houston
 MacKie & Kamrath (lead firm)
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) [see narrative]

San Felipe Courts were the largest public housing project built in Texas during the decade after passage of the National Housing Act of 1937. The complex exemplifies the social ideals and planning standards of public housing of the New Deal era. It is of exceptional significance because of the very high calibre of modern architectural design and detail, a condition recognized nationally at the time of its construction. San Felipe Courts epitomized a new concept in housing to the poor of Houston during the Great Depression, and their designation as Defense Housing shortly before the United States entered into World War II provides a rare surviving link in Houston with the war effort. Eighty-two buildings in the complex are considered Contributing, and retain their basic integrity; a more recent covered basketball court is the sole Noncontributing structure. San Felipe Courts have high visibility along Allen Parkway, a major thoroughfare, and remain a source of pride to many Houstonians. They are considered of transcendent significance, and will continue to grow in importance.

San Felipe Courts were the last and most ambitious of the initial set of four public housing projects completed by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, following its institution by the City Council of Houston in January, 1938, four months after the U.S. Congress passed the National Housing Act of 1937--creating the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA)--and three months after the Texas Legislature authorized the creation of local housing authorities. The complex was constructed on a highly visible, 37-acre site at the foot of the Buffalo Bayou park development, adjacent to the city's new Civic Center complex. Because of its prominence, the buildings were designed to advertise the project to the public as a progressive example of slum clearance housing for low-income families. Modern architectural design, allied with unusually high standards of material selection and detailing, reinforced this progressive connotation. The name was changed to Allen Parkway Village in 1964, following passage of the Civil Rights Act, which allowed Blacks to occupy the housing for the first time since construction.

Architecture

The site plan and unit plans of San Felipe Courts were determined to a large extent by USHA's regulations. The Zeilenbau configuration of housing blocks of bar-like slabs in parallel rows was adapted from German social housing of the 1920s and early 1930s and was intended to provide low-density apartments with maximum sunlight and fresh air. To ensure

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cross-ventilation, apartment units at San Felipe Courts run the depth of each building. Vehicular lanes ending in cul-de-sacs, accessible only from a perimeter ring road, were threaded between every other housing row. The alternating rows contained cross courts, reserved for pedestrians only. These gave access to larger squares of common space, intended for use as play grounds. These site planning principles of separation of vehicular and pedestrian circulation and provision of generous open space, pioneered in a series of model suburban developments in the United States during the 1920s, were institutionalized in New Deal regulations in order to increase the healthfulness, security, and sense of community of re-housed slum dwellers.

The design of San Felipe Courts--featuring precisely defined contours, horizontal linearity, small scale, and crisp combination of materials, colors, and textures--especially recalled Dutch social housing of the 1920s. Two projects, J.B. van Loghem's housing blocks at Betondorp in Amsterdam (1923) and J.J.P. Oud's Kiefhoek estate in Rotterdam (1929), exhibit affinities with San Felipe Courts in the horizontal banding of the exterior walls, the precise groupings of door and window openings, the diminutive scale, the purposeful contrast of materials, colors, and textures, and the use of flat roofs. Kiefhoek, which was published extensively in the American architectural press in the early 1930s, even had low spur walls of brick, a device used at San Felipe Courts, that externally demarked outdoor space between units.

In the context of USHA housing projects, San Felipe Courts are exceptional for the quality of their architectural design and detailing. Even the most architecturally-acclaimed New Deal slum clearance projects, such as the Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia by Kastner & Stonorov and W. Pope Barney (1935) and Williamsburg Houses in Brooklyn by William Lescaze (1938), were much more severe and industrial in appearance than San Felipe Courts. The first two Houston Housing Authority projects to be built, the first section of Cuney Homes (1940) and Kelly Courts (1941), both designed by Stayton Nunn-Milton McGinty of Houston and still extant, are representative of the general architectural standards of USHA public housing. These standards also were evident in the designs of similar projects in other Texas cities: Cedar Springs Place in Dallas (1937, designed by a consortium of architects working simultaneously on the Texas Centennial Exposition at Fair Park [N.H.L., 1986] and headed by Walter Sharp with Lester Flint, Grayson Gill, Ralph Bryan, Anton Korn, Roscoe DeWitt, Everett Welch, Herbert Tatum and A.E. Thomas), Santa Rita Courts in Austin (1939, Hugo F. Kuehne and Giesecke & Harris, architects), and Victoria Courts and Alazan Courts, both in San Antonio (1941, N. Straus Nayfach, architect). These designs shared an austere, somewhat regimented image; buildings were soundly constructed, but institutional, rather than domestic, in appearance. Associated Housing

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Architects of Houston, because of MacKie & Kamrath's involvement, produced far more ingratiating architecture in their three similar but varied designs for the second section of Cuney Homes (1942), at Irvinton Courts (1942), and at San Felipe Courts.

By 1941 when the United States entered World War II, the first phase of San Felipe Courts was under construction. Because of this national crisis, the second phase of San Felipe Courts could not have been carried out without being designated as Defense Housing. This reassignment from USHA to Defense Housing made the planning and solidity of San Felipe's construction indebted to the USHA regulations, and allowed the quality and modernity of the design to exceed other projects planned and underway as Defense Housing.

The Division of Defense Housing of the Federal Works Agency was created in April, 1941, to build 21,000 units of housing throughout the country in proximity to critical defense industries. The Division of Defense Housing and its affiliate, the Division of Mutual Ownership Defense Housing, commissioned architects directly, displaying by their choices a marked preference for modern architecture. Defense Housing had to be built quickly and for much lower unit costs than USHA housing. Therefore, construction standards were not as high and many projects seemed to have been planned as temporary expedients. In Texas the best-known Defense Housing project was Avion Village in the Dallas suburb of Grand Prairie (1941, largely wood-frame single- and multi-family houses on cul-de-sacs, still extant, Roscoe P. De Witt, architect, Richard J. Neutra and David R. Williams, consultants). Alden B. Dow of Midland, Michigan, designed defense housing at Lake Jackson, Texas, the new town in Brazoria County that he planned in 1941 for the Dow Chemical Company, in the form of free-standing, single-family houses (still extant). In this architectural historical context, San Felipe Courts stand out from the other Defense Housing projects by virtue of their apartment-style blocks, central city location, their durable construction, and the range of community amenities they provided.

At the time of their construction, San Felipe Courts were noted in a pair of articles published in the April 1942 and May 1942 issues of Architectural Record. "In both design and structure, this 1,000-unit low-rent housing project merits special study. Particularly noteworthy elements are the unit plans, integration of units of differing size into row houses, and the three-story blocks which occupy the central area." (April 1942) The second article was devoted exclusively to the design of the Project Center building, which was described as "remarkable." During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the national architectural journals extensively published low-income housing developments throughout the United States, and Avion Village was the only other Texas project that

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received as much critical attention as San Felipe Courts. Cuney Homes and a temporary Defense Housing project in the subdivision of Meadowbrook were the only other Houston projects published briefly in architectural journals.

The architects of Associated Housing Architects of Houston who designed San Felipe Courts, Frederick J. MacKie (1905-1984) and Karl Kamrath (b. 1911), opened their practice in Houston in 1937. Between 1937 and 1942 they worked in a variety of styles. But Kamrath, the designer, was drawn to modern architecture and the firm's best buildings were modern in design. In 1946 Kamrath visited Taliesin, the home and studio of Frank Lloyd Wright, and was so moved by the experience that he committed himself to Wright's Usonian architecture. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, MacKie & Kamrath were Houston's best-known modern architects and their work was published frequently in the national architectural press.

An early client of the firm was Eugene M. Bigger, a commercial printer who had MacKie & Kamrath design both his house (1938) and his printing plant (1938, demolished). The printing plant, published in Architectural Record in July 1941, was on Sabine Street, across Buffalo Drive (Allen Parkway) from San Felipe Courts. Biggers was appointed to the first board of commissioners of the Housing Authority and in November, 1939, six months after Associated Housing Architects of Houston was formed, he was elected chairman of the board. MacKie & Kamrath's first important public commission preceded the design of San Felipe Courts. This was the Fire Alarm Building in the Civic Center (1937-1940, scheduled for demolition), published in Architectural Forum in November, 1940, the first public building in Houston of modern architectural design. Subsequent major projects, in Houston unless noted, included Phyllis Wheatley Senior High School (1948); Temple Emanu-El (1940); the Contemporary Arts Association Museum (1949, demolished); offices and laboratories for the Dow Chemical Company in Freeport (1953, 1958); the Schlumberger Inc. headquarters complex (1953); the Humble Research Center (1954); St. John The Divine Church (1954); the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute (1954) and the University of Texas Dental School (1955), both in the Texas Medical Center; the Champlin Oil Company and Commercial Standard Insurance Company buildings in Fort Worth, and the First National Bank Building in McAllen (all of 1956); the Farnsworth and Chamber Buildings (1957); the Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church (1959-1972); Temple Rodef Shalom in Waco (1961); the Pasadena State Bank Building in Pasadena (1962); the City of Houston Health Department Building in the Texas Medical Center (1963); the campus of Wharton Junior College in Wharton (1965); the Science and Research Building at the University of Houston (1968); and the Big Three Industries Building (1973). Kamrath's work was consistently Wrightian in

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character, displaying his predilection for horizontal alignment, dramatic structural engineering, and finely crafted masonry work and glazing details.

Community Planning

San Felipe Courts were the most visible example of low-income public housing to be constructed in Houston, because of their location on the Buffalo Bayou park development adjacent to the Civic Center. The 37-acre site lay in the San Felipe district of Houston's former Fourth Ward, the oldest Black settlement in Houston, which now includes the Freedmen's Town Historic District (N.R.H.P., 1985). The 37-acre San Felipe Courts site had been the original center of Freedmantown and was the oldest, poorest section of the district, backing onto Buffalo Bayou north of San Felipe Road (now West Dallas Avenue). Between 1908 and 1917 this same area had been the site of "the Reservation," the city's legal vice district. After the park along Buffalo Bayou was built between 1924 and 1926, to the designs of Kansas City landscape architects Hare & Hare, to connect the newly planned Civic Center downtown to the newly planned model garden suburb of River Oaks, the Freedmantown-Reservation neighborhood suddenly gained unwelcome prominence. This was principally because it lay adjacent to Buffalo Bayou and was traversed by Buffalo Drive (later Allen Parkway), the curving thoroughfare that ran along the south bank of the Bayou between Sam Houston Park and River Oaks.

Between the late 1920s and the early 1940s a number of imposing public and commercial buildings were built along the course of Buffalo Drive (widened and renamed Allen Parkway in the 1950s), which theretofore had been largely undeveloped. These included the 12-story, skyscraper-style Jefferson Davis Hospital, just to the west of the housing site, planned in 1930 but only completed as a Public Works Administration-financed project in 1937; the Sears, Roebuck & Company store at Allen Parkway and Montrose (1929), the first suburban department store building in Houston; the cluster of Mediterranean-style printing plants west of Waugh Drive: Star Engraving Company (1930), Gulf Publishing Company (1928), and Rein Company (1928) buildings; and, on the north side of the bayou at Shepherd Drive, St. Thomas High School (1940). San Felipe Courts intended to replace a too-conspicuously located slum neighborhood in order to tie together architecturally one of Houston's most important civic corridors.

Of the four low-income public housing complexes built by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston between 1939 and 1944, San Felipe Courts were the only ones to achieve one of the specific purposes of the federal government's ambitious housing program. This was to provide safe, decent housing in well planned communities for poor Whites

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through the elimination of existing slum neighborhoods. The Housing Authority's first annual report, issued in 1940, stated:

While the Authority has planned projects to be constructed in different sections of the city where bad housing exists, one of its principal goals has been to redesign and reconstruct the old San Felipe district. This has been for years a section in which hundreds of families have lived under the worst of substandard conditions. This section lies almost under the shadow of Houston's magnificent new two-million-dollar city hall, and has heretofore defied all attempts that have been made to beautify or modernize it.

The Authority plans to build one of its major projects for white families in this old area. In addition to the building of hundreds [sic] of new modern residential structures, it will construct a beautifully landscaped 150-foot parkway along Buffalo Drive [Allen Parkway] and adjoining Houston's civic center. This will replace one of Houston's undesirable residential sections with one of the finest beauty spots in the South, and will enhance the beauty of Houston's principal scenic drive. (Houston's Public Housing Program, 1940: 9)

The incongruity of displacing Black families in a Black neighborhood for publicly subsidized housing restricted to White occupants was not lost on the residents of the San Felipe district. Despite a vigorous campaign to protest this procedure, the San Felipe community was unable to affect the Housing Authority's plans. Indeed the occasion for slum clearance proved so opportune that in mid-1940 the Housing Authority consolidated another project planned for White occupancy with San Felipe Courts and almost doubled the amount of property it acquired by condemnation. Although a notorious slum neighborhood was cleared, it did not benefit those who formerly had lived in that neighborhood.

The elimination of all but one street in the 17-block Freedmantown area enabled the transformation of the 37-acre site into a "superblock," where careful provision might be made for separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and for generous common green spaces, two popular planning techniques. Although delayed until the early 1950s, Buffalo Drive was reconstructed and renamed Allen Parkway in front of San Felipe Courts using another popular planning concept to provide protected local traffic lanes--separate from the main parkway thoroughfare--to serve San Felipe Courts and Jefferson Davis Hospital. These site-planning strategies reflected the most current notions of community planning in the United States during the 1930s, when the project was conceived. They

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were visible in other Houston projects of this period, particularly the three large Federal Housing Administration-insured garden apartment complexes built in the city: River Oaks Gardens (1938, demolished), Parkland (1940, demolished), and Wilshire Village (1940) and also in the layout of the River Oaks Courts on Pelham Drive and Sharp Place in River Oaks (1936).

Social/Humanitarian

San Felipe Courts were part of a nation-wide public program undertaken by the federal government during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to improve the living conditions of lower-income American families. F.D.R.'s New Deal bespoke concern for the conditions under which poor Americans lived; this concern had been articulated since the last quarter of the 19th century, but not acted on in any comprehensive way until the 1930s. In Texas and Houston, the action during that decade was virtually unprecedented.

Prior to the creation of the Housing Authority of the City of Houston in January, 1938, several New Deal efforts had been made to provide new housing in planned communities in the Houston area for low-income families. The earliest of these was the Woodlake Cooperative Community in Trinity County, approximately 100 miles northeast of Houston, planned by Dallas architect David R. Williams. Begun as a philanthropic endeavor by Mrs. J. Lewis Thompson of Houston in 1933, it was taken over by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to become Rural Industrial Community Project Number 1. The notion of settling unemployed families in a semi-rural setting where they might cultivate subsistence gardens guided the development of Houston Gardens, built just outside Houston on Homestead Road between 1933 and 1935 as one of the earliest projects of the Suburban Resettlement Division of the Resettlement Administration. Only a fraction of the 100 houses originally planned there seem to have been built, however. A similar project, Nira Park on Market Street Road, planned as a limited dividend venture by oilman J.S. Cullinan, had only two of its envisioned 80 houses built between 1934 and 1935.

Problematic experiences with such "resettlement" efforts led to a shift in national housing policy in the middle 1930s. This entailed building new housing for poor urban families in existing low-income neighborhoods. Such "slum clearance" projects were intended to eradicate the worst conditions existing in low-income neighborhoods, replacing them with new communities built to high standards of structural durability and domestic amenity. Non-combustible, well-serviced, and well-ventilated housing grouped in "superblocks" where there would be generous greenspace, playgrounds, amenities to stimulate community life, and

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separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic circulation were essential components of this reform movement. In order to ensure an abundance of communal outdoor space, dwelling units were usually grouped in rows of housing blocks of one-to-four (or sometimes more) stories in height. The Public Works Administration built 51 such projects across the United States between 1934 and 1937. Only one of these was constructed in Texas, the 181-unit Cedar Springs Place in Dallas (1937), the first public housing project in the state.

In September 1937 the Wagner-Steagall Act, the National Housing Act of 1937, was passed by the U.S. Congress. This established the USHA as a division of the Public Works Administration to fund up to 90% of the construction costs of slum clearance type public housing projects. These were to be built and administered by local housing authorities rather than by the Public Works Administration directly. The Texas Legislature authorized the establishment of local housing authorities in October 1937 and in January 1938 the Housing Authority of the City of Houston was created.

Between 1939 and 1941 the Housing Authority of the City of Houston built 2,215 units of public housing for occupancy by low-income families, concentrated in four housing complexes. These projects were built with substantial subsidies from the USHA. They were built as the first increment of a program aimed at providing decent housing for the occupants of 25,680 substandard dwellings. This motivating figure had been reached by the Housing Authority of Houston through a survey of local housing conditions conducted by the Work Projects Administration and published in 1939. The new projects were segregated racially and ethnically. The first two to be constructed, Cuney Homes in Third Ward (1940 and 1942) and Kelly Courts in Fifth Ward (1941), were for Black families. The next pair to be built, Irvinton Courts (1942) in Fifth Ward and San Felipe Courts in Fourth Ward (1942, 1944), were for White families. San Felipe Courts were the authority's premiere project because of the complex's large size (it contained 45% of the authority's total dwelling units) and their prominent location. In addition to dwelling units, San Felipe Courts were designed to accommodate a wide range of community activities and services, as well as the executive offices of the Housing Authority.

Because of the United States' accelerated preparation in 1941 for World War II while the first phase of San Felipe Courts' construction was underway, it was designated as Defense Housing. In 1943 the Housing Authority reported that 300 of these first 564 units were occupied by low-income defense workers and another 57 units by the families of servicemen. The Authority's annual report for 1944-1945 stated that the completed complex housed 4,064 occupants.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 8

San Felipe Courts comprised the largest single USHA housing complex constructed in Texas during the 1940s. During the periods of construction, it was described as the largest public housing complex in the southern United States. It was the only slum-clearance type development undertaken by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston among its four initial projects. It was the most prominently situated development in Houston to benefit low-income White people and to represent this particular facet of New Deal programs designed to respond to the social crisis emphasized by the Great Depression. It then became the one permanent example of public housing in Houston built specifically as Defense Housing.

In 1964 the name San Felipe Courts was changed to Allen Parkway Village. This action resulted from the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the shift from a White-only project to one accepting Blacks and other minorities. It was at this time that the area of the project returned to those who had originally settled Freedmantown and the Reservation area of Houston's Fourth Ward.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 37

Quadrangle name Houston Heights

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| A | <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| B | <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

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| C | <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> |
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| D | <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> |
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| E | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> |
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| F | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> |
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| G | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> |
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| H | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> | <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|

| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Fox, Fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas

organization Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village date December 1987

street & number 924 Allen Parkway Village telephone 713/951-9188

city or town Houston state Texas 77019

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

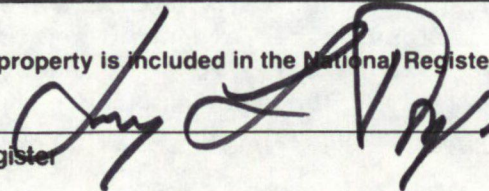
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 23 Dec. 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 2/16/88

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

"11 Architects Chosen on Housing Project Given Blanket Power to Divide Work," Houston Post, 13 May 1939.

Bauer, Catherine. "Planned Large Scale Housing: A Balance Sheet of Progress," Architectural Record, 89 (May 1941) 89-105.

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Casciato, Maristella with Franco Panzini and Sergio Polano, Olanda 1870-1940, Citta, Casa, Architettura, Milano: Electa Editrice, 1980.

Cuff, Dana. "Beyond the Last Resort: The Case of Public Housing in Houston," Places, A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design, 2 (Number 4, 1985) 28-43.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

"Housing Authority Approves \$6,800,000 More for Slum Projects Here,"
Houston Post, November 1939.

"Housing Project Bids Approved," Houston Post, 3 January 1941.

"Lawyer Takes Slum Clearance Fight to Capital," Houston Post, 21
April 1940.

"436 New Units Added to San Felipe," Houston, 24 (June 1943) 36.

Pommer, Richard. "The Architecture of Urban Housing in the
United States During the Early 1930s," Journal of the Society of
Architectural Historians, 37 (December 1978)
235-264.

"San Felipe Housing Site Swap Arranged," Houston Post 28 June 1940.

"San Felipe Courts," Houston Post, 7 September 1941.

"Thirteen Housing Developments: Kiefhoek Housing Development,"
Architectural Forum, 56 (March 1932) 273-275.

"War Needs--Housing: Houston, Texas," Architectural Record, 91 (April
1942) 47-50.

"War Needs--Community Facilities: Project Center Building,"
Architectural Record, 91 (May 1942) 52-53.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

The nominated property consists of the entire subdivision entitled "Housing Authority of the City of Houston, Texas Project 5 - 4 (& 5-7) No. 21532," as approved on 14 March 1941 and recorded in Harris County Map Records, Volume 17, page 61. Boundaries are indicated on the enclosed map as outlined in red. This is the full tract historically associated with San Felipe Courts.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

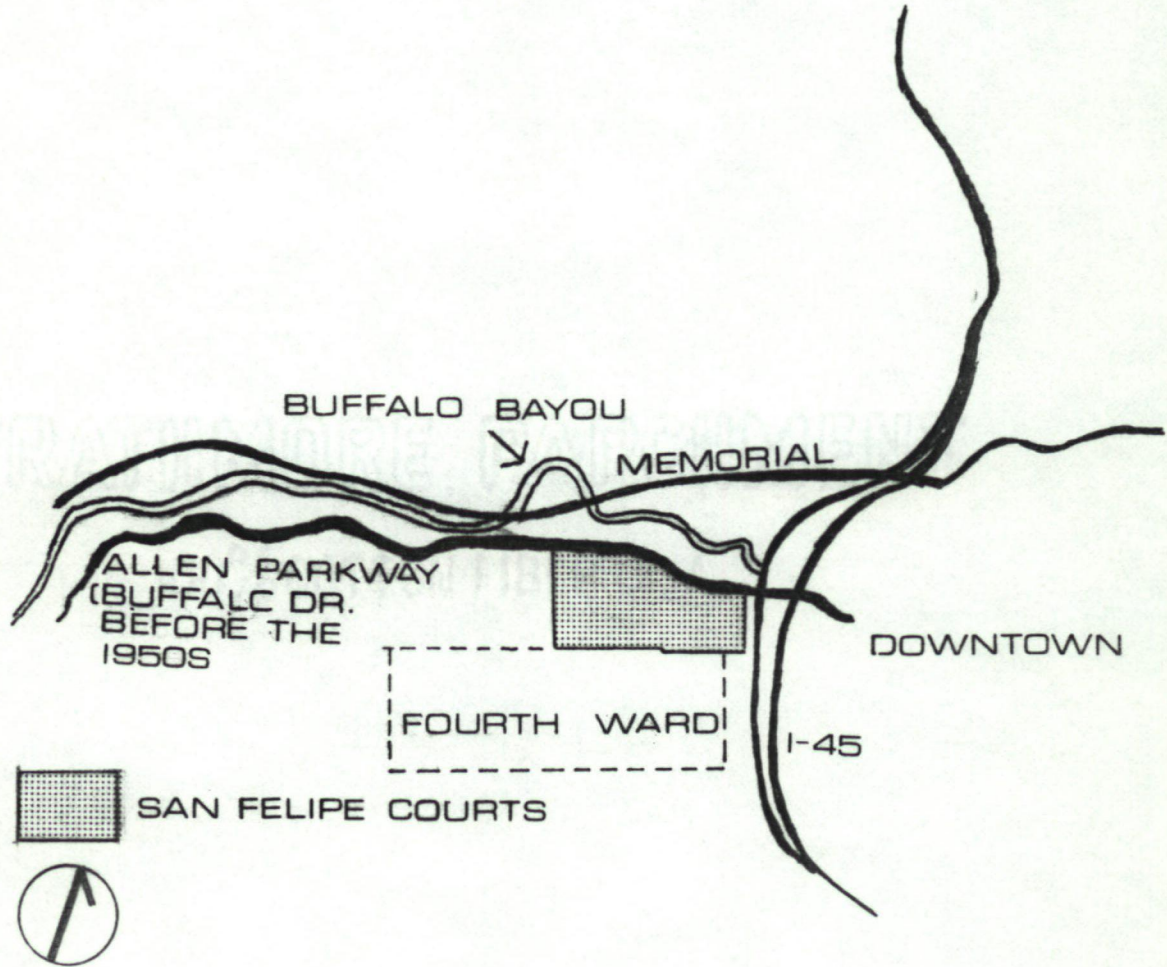
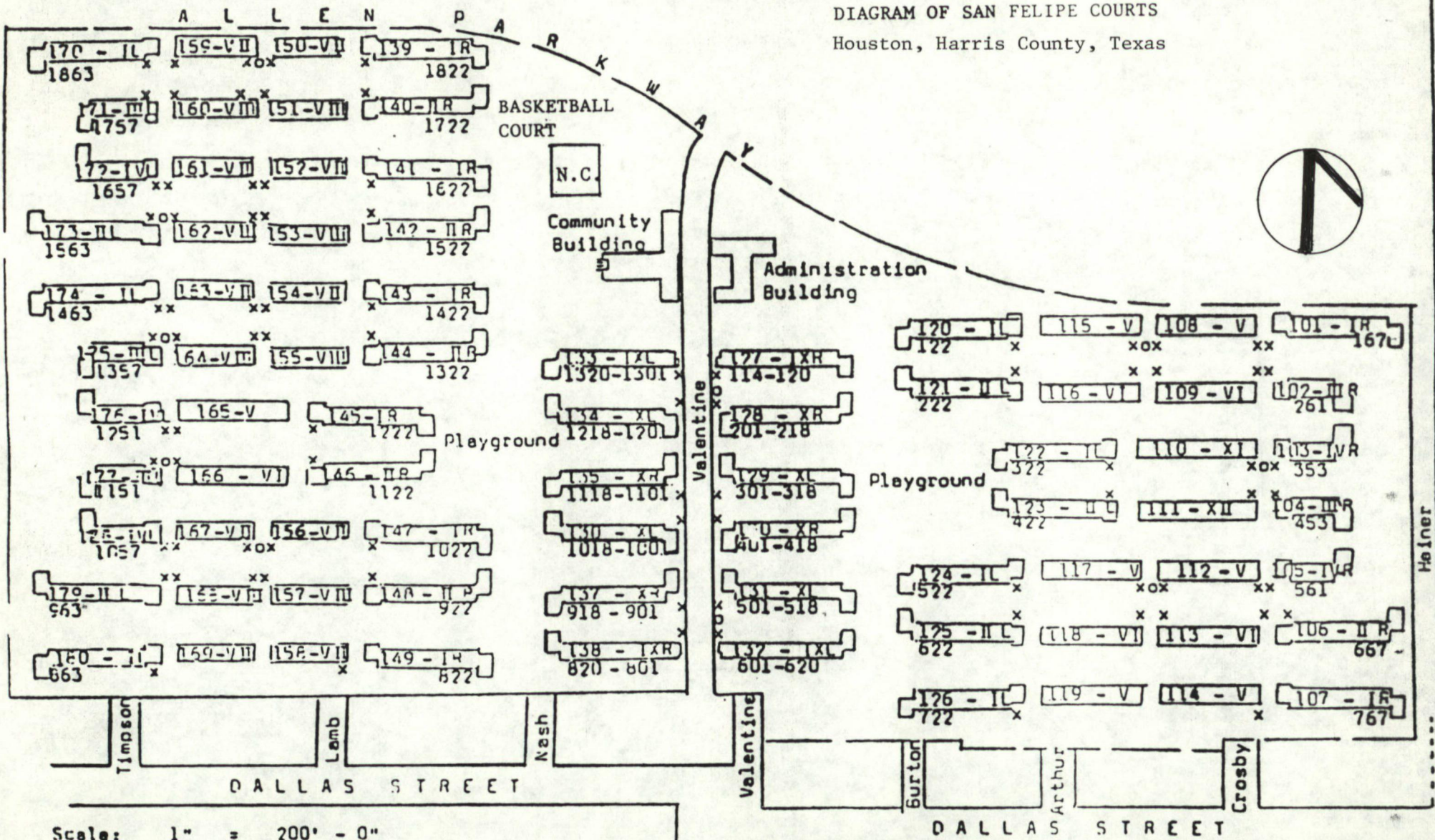


DIAGRAM OF SAN FELIPE COURTS
Houston, Harris County, Texas

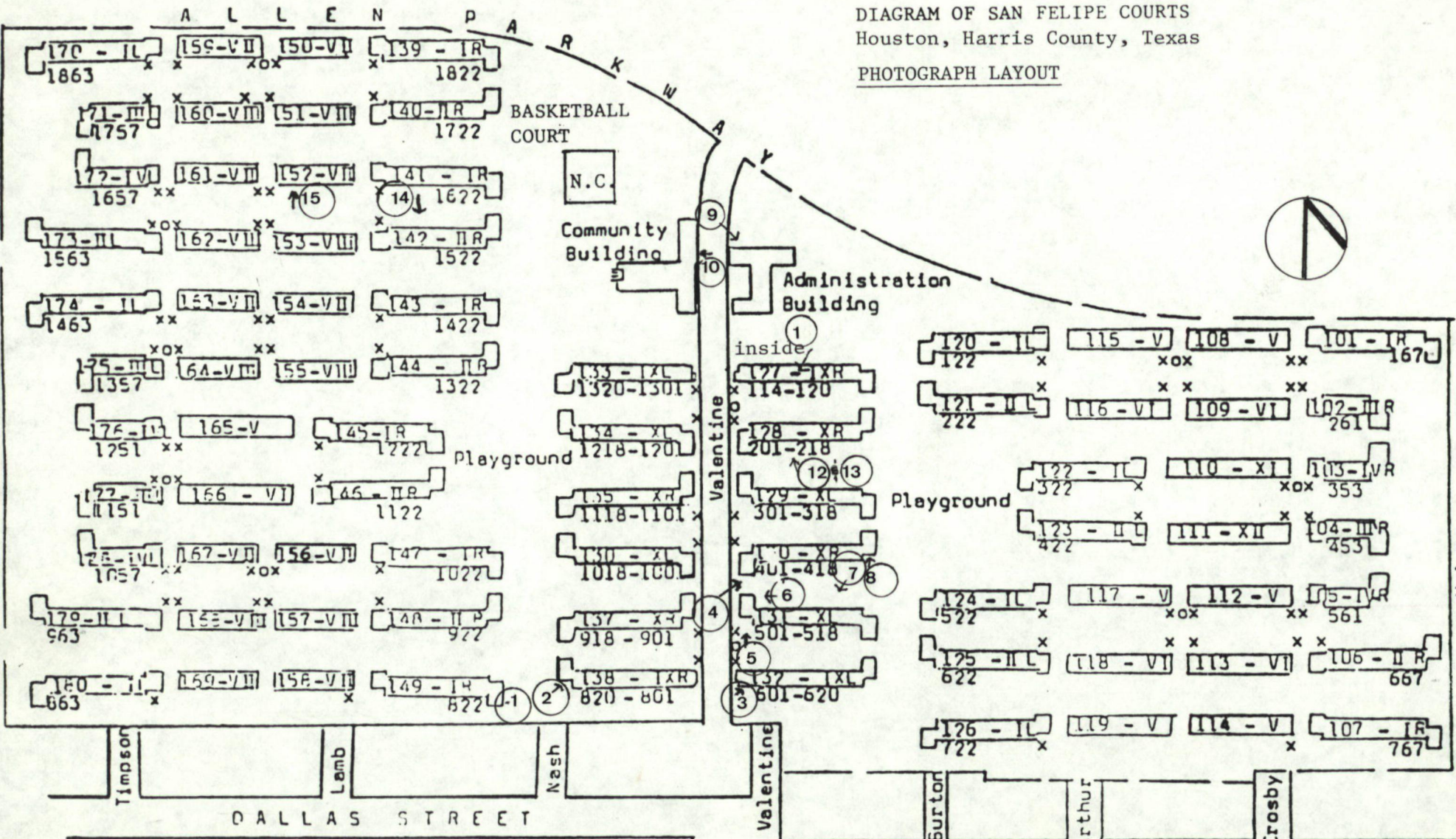


Scale: 1" = 200' - 0"

KEY PLAN

N.C. NONCONTRIBUTING

DIAGRAM OF SAN FELIPE COURTS
Houston, Harris County, Texas
PHOTOGRAPH LAYOUT

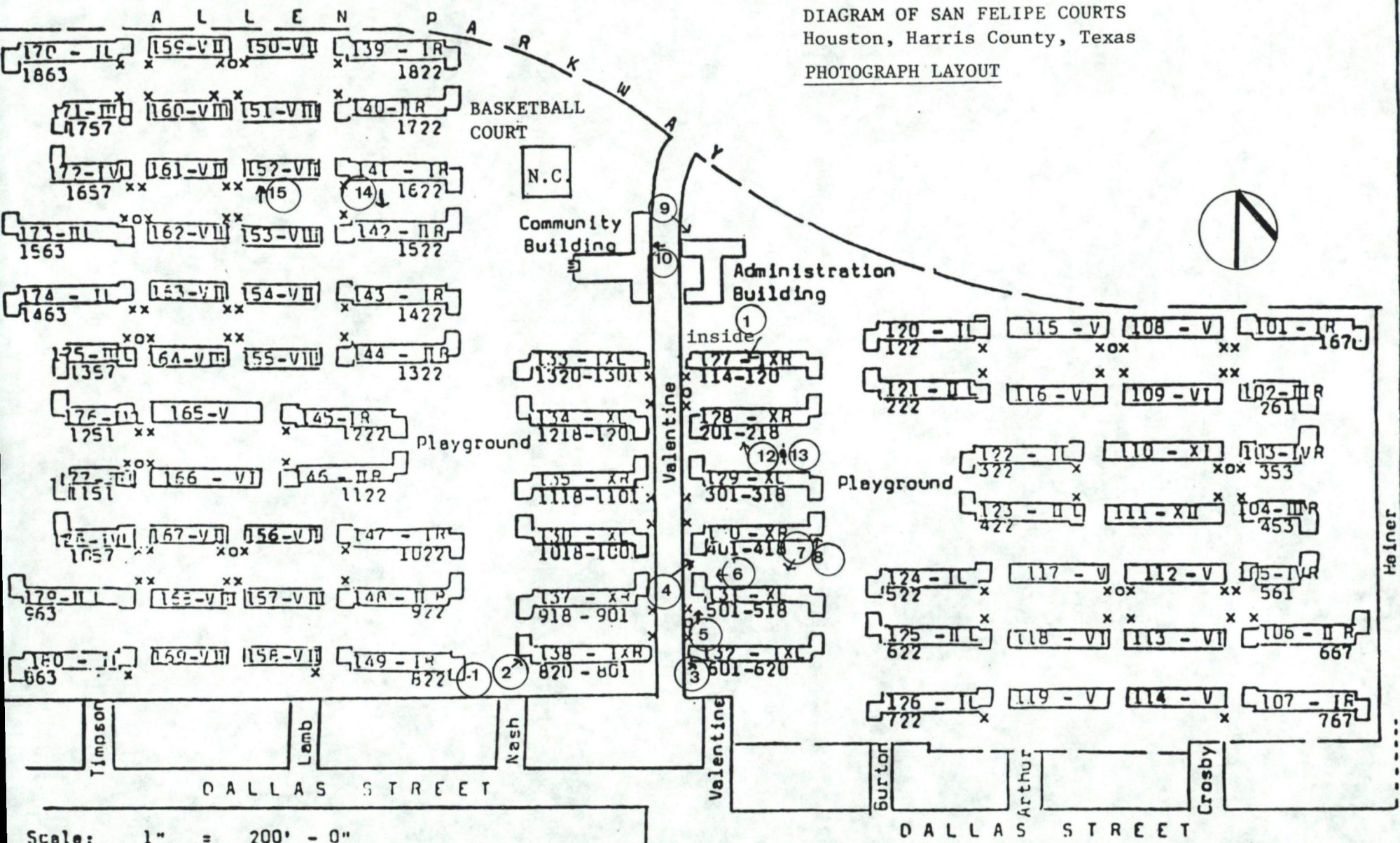


Scale: 1" = 200' - 0"

KEY PLAN

N.C. NONCONTRIBUTING

DIAGRAM OF SAN FELIPE COURTS
Houston, Harris County, Texas
PHOTOGRAPH LAYOUT



Scale: 1" = 200' - 0"

KEY PLAN

N.C. NONCONTRIBUTING

250
88000042

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

~~Substantive Review~~

San Felipe Courts Historic District
Harris County
TEXAS

JAN - 5 1988

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/89

Date Due: 2/5/88 - 2/19/88

Action: ACCEPT 2-16-88

_____ RETURN _____

_____ REJECT _____

Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Please see attached justification for listing a less than fifty year old property which was provided for Jerry Rogers to use in evaluating the nomination.

Recom./Criteria Accept - A, C

Reviewer Noble

Discipline Historian

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|----------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| | Public Acquisition | Accessible | |

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Condition | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*) _____

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name _____
UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

REQUEST FOR DECISION ON PROPERTIES ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE LAST 50 YEARS

Names of Nominated Properties:

San Felipe Courts Historic District

Recommendation:

Accept

Others (see attached): yes ___ no X

Explanation of recommendation:

X attached to this sheet

___ attached to individual property evaluation/return sheet

___ attached to MRA/Theme cover evaluation/return sheet

Additional Comments: The City of Houston, TX, acting as owners of the property included within this historic district, have objected to the nomination. Because this proposed historic district is located in immediate proximity to downtown Houston, the city feels that it would be more beneficial to sell this property to developers and use the money earned through the sale to provide low-income housing elsewhere in the city. The current occupants of this historic district, now called Allen Parkway Village, are very much in favor of preserving the housing project. The Resident Council of Allen Parkway Village, acting on behalf of the occupants, hired a historical consultant to prepare the nomination. The Texas State Historic Preservation Office supports the nomination because they feel the housing project is exceptionally significant at a national level, and also because of concerns that possible demolition and development of this site would adversely impact the adjacent Freedmen's Town Historic District, previously listed on the NR in 1985.

Reviewer: Bruce Noble

Date: 2/16/88

San Felipe Courts Historic District

Reviewer's Comments:

The nomination for San Felipe Courts Historic District, constructed between 1941 and 1944, makes a strong case for eligibility under criterion A and C and also for exceptional significance at the national level. San Felipe Courts was the last and most ambitious of the initial set of four public housing projects completed by the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, following its institution by the City Council of Houston in January 1938--four months after the U.S. Congress passed the National Housing Act of 1937. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the first phase of San Felipe Courts was under construction. Due to the national war crisis, construction could only be completed after the project was designated as Defense Housing. Thus, San Felipe Courts is significant both for its association with the Depression and World War II.

Whereas Defense Housing was often hastily constructed for temporary occupancy, strict regulations guided the construction of U.S. Housing Act projects. The reassignment from USHA to Defense Housing made the planning and solidity of San Felipe's construction indebted to the USHA regulations, thereby allowing the quality and modernity of the design to exceed other projects planned and underway as Defense Housing. This is the foundation upon which the nomination bases the case for the historic district's architectural significance.

Prior to construction of the housing project, the 37-acre site lay in the San Felipe district of Houston's former Fourth Ward, the oldest Black settlement in Houston. Between 1908 and 1917, this same area was known as "the Reservation," the city's legal vice district. The decision to construct San Felipe Courts as public housing for White occupants was part of the city's overall slum clearance plan for this portion of Houston. On this basis, the nomination justifies San Felipe Courts' significance under the area of community planning. The housing project was opened for Black occupancy following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the project's name was changed to Allen Parkway Village at that time.

Finally, the nomination claims and justifies social/humanitarian significance based on San Felipe Courts association with the nation-wide program undertaken by the federal government during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration to improve the living conditions of lower-income American families.

The case for national significance is based on the fact that the complex embodies the social ideals and planning standards of New Deal-era public housing. The nomination file includes period journal articles which indicate that San Felipe Courts' high

calibre of modern architectural design and detail was nationally recognized at the time of the complex's construction. In short, the nomination is well-written and well-documented and makes a strong case for the eligibility of this important historical resource.

Bruce Noble, Historian
National Register



822-863

San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #822; camera facing west

Photo 1 of 15

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER

1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #820; camera facing northeast

Photo 2 of 15

2

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #601; camera facing northeast

Photo 3 of 15

3

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Buildings #401 and #301; camera facing
northeast

Photo 4 of 15

4

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER

1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008

(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #501; camera facing north

Photo 5 of 15

5

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Buildings #501 and #401; camera facing west

Photo 6 of 15

6
PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #501; camera facing southwest

Photo 7 of 15

7
PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER

1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #418; camera facing northeast

Photo 8 of 15

8

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Community Building; camera facing west

Photo 10 of 15

10

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Interior of Building #114

Photo 11 of 15

1/
PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #201; camera facing north

Photo 12 of 15

12

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Interior view of Building #201

Photo 13 of 15

13

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

Building #1522; camera facing south

Photo 14 of 15

14

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER
1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 869-3390



San Felipe Courts Historic District
Houston, Harris County, Texas

1 Allen Parkway Village
Photo by Paul Hester, December 1987,
negative with photographer in Houston

West side of Building #1622; camera facing
north

Photo 15 of 15

15

PAUL HESTER PHOTOGRAPHER

1501 Oxford Houston, Texas 77008

(713) 869-3390

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name

San Felipe Courts Historic District

County, State

Harris, Texas

Reference Number

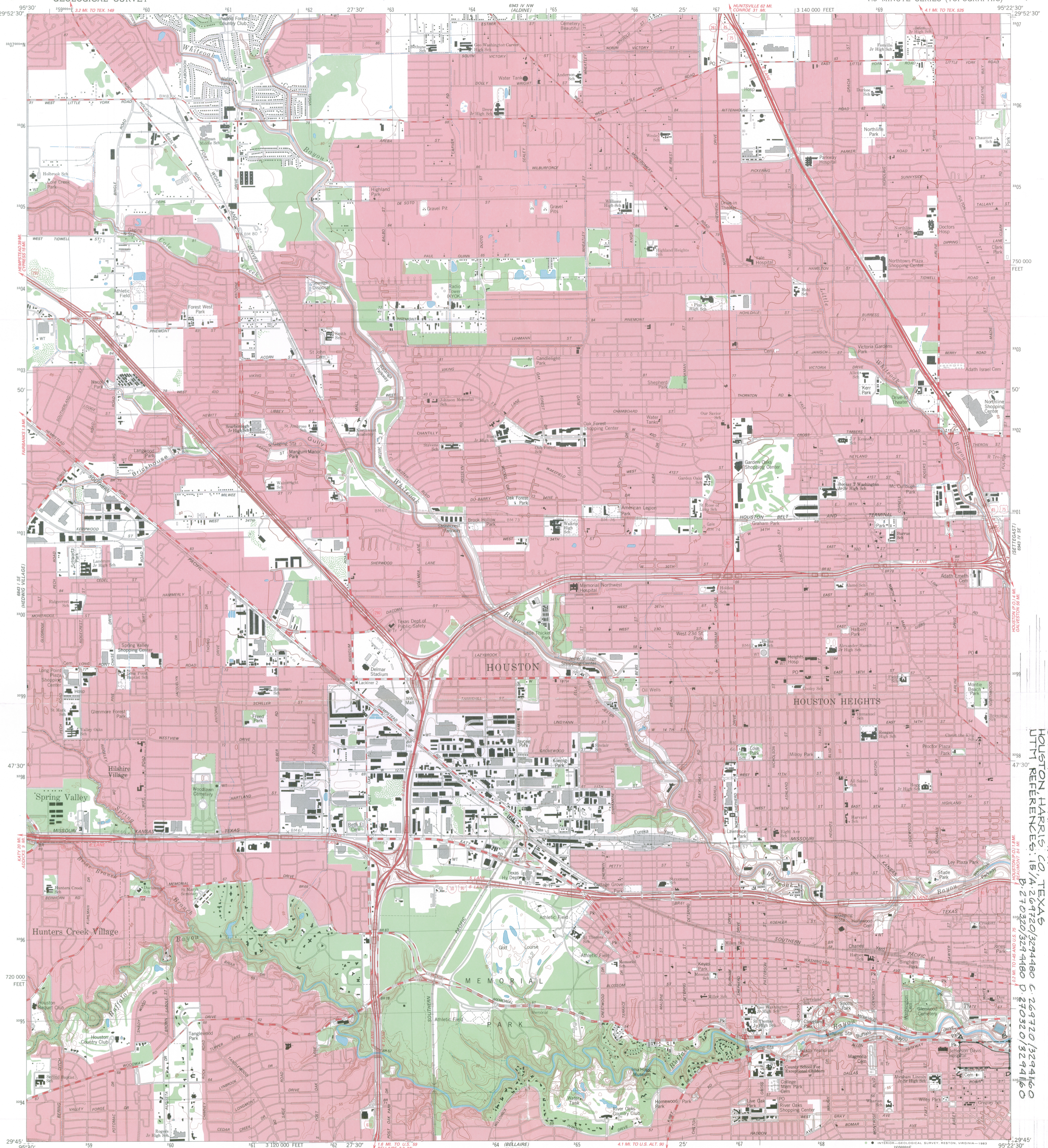
88000042

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

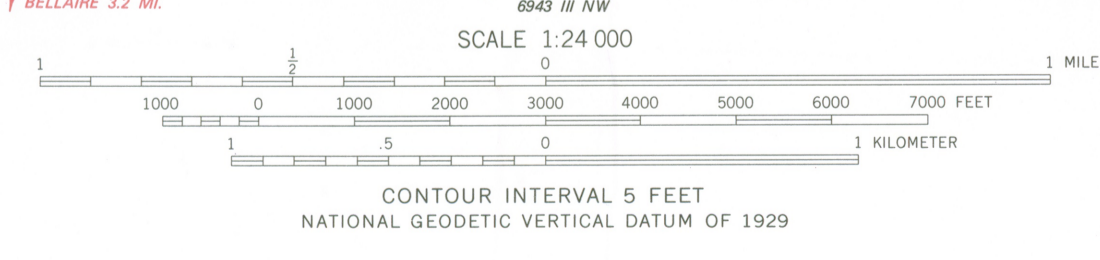
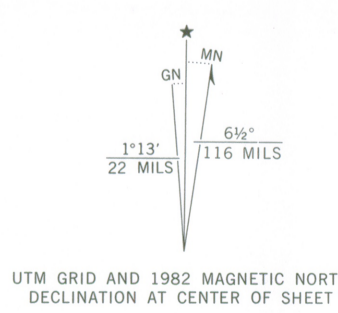
Nomination Form

Photographs (Photograph 9)

USGS Map



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1976. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1982
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas coordinate system, south central zone (Lambert conformal conic) 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15 1927 North American datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 20 meters south and 22 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
A portion of this map lies within a subsidence area
Contouring based on 1973 adjustment of vertical control



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Primary highway, hard surface | Light-duty road, hard or improved surface |
| Secondary highway, hard surface | Unimproved road |
| Interstate Route | U. S. Route |
| | State Route |

HOUSTON HEIGHTS, TEX.
N2945-W9522.5/7.5

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2995-432

1982
DMA 6943 IV SW-SERIES V882

SAN FELIPE COURTS
ONE ALLEN PARKWAY
HOUSTON, HARRIS CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCES: 15T/4-269720/3294480 C-269720/3294480
D-1270320/3274480 D-105201/3294480



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

P. O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77252-9950 • (713) 961-1541

RECEIVED
OCT 2 1987

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

GERRY E. PATE
Chair

ZINETTA BURNEY
Vice Chair

SHARON E. KATZ
VIDAL G. MARTINEZ
JOHN ZIPPRICH II

EARL PHILLIPS
Executive Director

September 25, 1987

Mr. Curtis Tunnell
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P. O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Tunnell:

Enclosed is the required statement by the owner certifying ownership of public property located in the City of Houston. Also enclosed are my comments supporting my request that you do not consider the Allen Parkway Village for entry to the National Register of Historic Places.

In the event you need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Earl Phillips,
Executive Director

EP:dd

TO THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

Re: Texas Historical Commission's Notification
August 29, 1987 to the Executive Director of
Housing Authority of the City of Houston, that the
State Review Board will meet on October 3, 1987 to
consider nominating Allen Parkway Village to the
National Register of Historical Places.

Statement of the OWNER under Section 60.5(g)
of 36 Code of Federal Regulations.

I am the Executive Director of Housing Authority of the City of
Houston and I am authorized to make statements on behalf of that
entity.

I certify that the Housing Authority of the City of Houston is
the sole and lawful owner of the property known as Allen Parkway
Village, 1600 Allen Parkway, Houston, Texas 77019.

I protest and object to the listing of Allen Parkway Village to
the National Register of Historical Places.

I also submit my written comments in support of my objection to
the listing.

Housing Authority of the City of Houston

Earl Phillips
Earl Phillips,
Executive Director

Dated: 9-25-87

Sworn and Subscribed to before me this 25th day of
September, 1987.

Marcia Johnson
Notary Public, State of Texas
My commission expires: 7-15-90
MARCIA JOHNSON

TO THE
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

RE: The written notification dated August 29, 1987 to the Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Houston, that the State Review Board will meet on October 3, 1987 to consider nominating Allen Parkway Village, to the National Register of Historic Places.

Comments in support of the notarized statement submitted by Housing Authority of the City of Houston, objecting to the listing of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places.

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Once the HACH sells the Allen Parkway Villages it will have sufficient money to acquire housing for current and additional tenants. HACH's concern for residents of public housing is paramount. That is why one-for-one replacement of units and relocation of residents has been a major part of the plan since formal application was made to HUD in 1984. That is why replacement will be in smaller, livable developments located throughout the city, but always convenient to shopping centers, schools, churches, and accessible to public transportation. Most of the available information clearly shows that Allen Parkway Village should be torn down. Additionally, HACH has received City Council resolution supporting the sale of Allen Parkway Village. It also received City certification that disposition conforms to the City's housing assistance plan.

...Allen Parkway Village Lacks Architectural Significance

HACH submits that its property, Allen Parkway Village, is not an eligible property to be nominated to the National Register. HACH further submits that this property has no significant relation to American history. After its construction in the year 1944, people lived there. In many other localities the same situation exists. Its architecture is commonplace; not unlike government barracks of the type which can be found in many other areas.

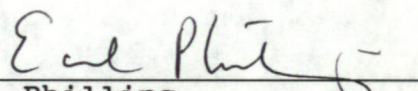
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the construction. There is no room to consider any culture to associate it with because there is none. It is not an object that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship. There is nothing unique about the design. The materials and workmanship are common.

No event or events have taken place at the development which have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The buildings in Allen Parkway are not associated with the lives of significant persons in our past. The buildings do not have any artistic value and they do not represent any significant or distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. The buildings will not yield any information regarding our history or any prehistoric life.

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HACH therefore lodges its strong protest and objection to the property being nominated to the National Register of Historic places and submits that Allen Parkway Village should not be considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.



Earl Phillips
Executive Director,
Housing Authority of
the City of Houston

EP:dd



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

P. O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77252-9950 • (713) 961-1541

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ZINETTA BURNEY
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JOHN ZIPPRICH II

EARL PHILLIPS
Executive Director

September 25, 1987

Mr. Curtis Tunnell
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P. O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Tunnell:

Enclosed is the required statement by the owner certifying ownership of public property located in the City of Houston. Also enclosed are my comments supporting my request that you do not consider the Allen Parkway Village for entry to the National Register of Historic Places.

In the event you need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Earl Phillips,
Executive Director

EP:dd

TO THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

Re: Texas Historical Commission's Notification August 29, 1987 to the Executive Director of Housing Authority of the City of Houston, that the State Review Board will meet on October 3, 1987 to consider nominating Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historical Places.

Statement of the OWNER under Section 60.5(g)
of 36 Code of Federal Regulations.

I am the Executive Director of Housing Authority of the City of Houston and I am authorized to make statements on behalf of that entity.

I certify that the Housing Authority of the City of Houston is the sole and lawful owner of the property known as Allen Parkway Village, 1600 Allen Parkway, Houston, Texas 77019.

I protest and object to the listing of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historical Places.

I also submit my written comments in support of my objection to the listing.

Housing Authority of the City of Houston

Earl Phillips
Earl Phillips,
Executive Director

Dated: 9-25-87

Sworn and Subscribed to before me this 25th day of September, 1987.

Marcia Johnson
Notary Public, State of Texas
My commission expires: 7-15-90
MARCIA JOHNSON

TO THE
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

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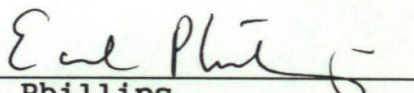
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Earl Phillips
Executive Director,
Housing Authority of
the City of Houston

EP:dd

Harris Co.
objection



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

P. O. BOX 2971 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77252-9950 • (713) 961-1541

COMMISSIONERS

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EARL PHILLIPS
Executive Director

October 7, 1987

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
P. O. Box 37127
National Park Services - 413
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Attached is my owner's petition of appeal from the nomination by the State Historic Preservation Officer of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places. Also attached is a copy of my certified statement opposing the nomination. Please advise me of your decision as soon as a determination is made.

Sincerely yours,

Earl Phillips
Executive Director

Enclosure

EP:dd

cc: Board of Commissioners

The Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places

**Re: Nomination of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of
Historic Places**

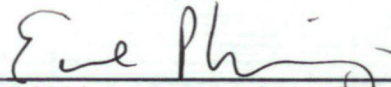
Petition under CFR 36 - Section 60.6 (t) to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, opposing the nomination of the property Allen Parkway Village, and appealing to him to reject the nomination.

The grounds of the Petition

Petitioner, the Housing Authority of the City of Houston opposes the nomination of Allen Parkway Village, to the National Register of Historic Places, on the following grounds, and requests the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, to substantively review the nomination and to reject the nomination.

1. Housing Authority of the City of Houston, hereinafter referred to as "HACH", contends and submits that its property Allen Parkway Village, does not meet the National Register criteria, and therefore should not be listed in the National Register.
2. HACH in its comments in support of the notarized statement objecting to the listing of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places brought out detailed facts about Allen Parkway Village, which do not bring the property anywhere near the criteria for evaluation.
3. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Review Board, erred in nominating the property to the National Register of Historic Places. They did not take notice, nor did they consider the facts with regard to Allen Parkway Village, which make out a strong case to disregard the property as worthy of preservation.
4. HACH's contention that Allen Parkway Village does not meet the criteria for evaluation, has been improperly rejected. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Review Board ought to have held that Allen Parkway Village has no significance at all of any kind, that it is not associated with American history, that its architecture is most commonplace, that because of its recent origin, it has no archeological importance, that its value in engineering is nothing unusual, that it does not represent any culture worth its name, that nothing of historical importance took place, that historically no importance can be attached to it, and that it is undoubtedly not worthy of preservation.

5. A copy of the comments in support of the notarized statement submitted to the Historic Preservation Officer, objecting to the listing of Allen Parkway Village to the National Register of Historic Places, is attached to form a part of this petition. HACH's case opposing the nomination is contained therein.
6. Petitioner requests the Keeper of the National Register to take into consideration each and every fact set out in the comments and to substantively review the nomination.
7. Petitioner prays that its objection to listing be considered favorably, make a determination of the non-eligibility of Allen Parkway Village, and reject the nomination.



Earl Phillips, Executive Director
Housing Authority of the City of Houston

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

December 23, 1987

Carol Shull, Chief, National Register Branch
ATTN: Bruce Noble, Architectural Historian
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed is the nomination for the San Felipe Courts Historic District (Allen Parkway Village) in Houston, Harris County, Texas. This district is adjacent the Freedmen's Town Historic District listed in the National Register in 1985.

The San Felipe Courts (1941-44) were designed and initially executed as Depression-era housing, but completed as Defense Housing during World War II. They are being nominated at a national level of significance in the categories of architecture, community planning, and social/humanitarian. Moreover, San Felipe Courts are less than fifty years of age and therefore must be evaluated for exceptional significance as representatives of the Depression and US entry into World War II.

We are enclosing two articles regarding the architecture and planning of the Courts. Please retain these as supportive materials with the nomination. In addition, the original objection letter from the Housing Authority of the City of Houston, the owners, is enclosed.

Finally, we are requesting substantive review of the nomination because of its age and level of significance.

Thank you for your review.

Sincerely,

Curtis Tunnell

State Historic Preservation Officer

CT/WDJ

JAN 5 1988

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WASO-11
(Revised 4/87)

ROUTING SLIP

(Indicate routing order by number - strike out office when cleared)

| ✓ | INTERIOR MAIL STOP | NPS ORG. CODE | OFFICE TITLE | ✓ | INTERIOR MAIL STOP | NPS ORG. CODE | OFFICE TITLE |
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| | 3106 | 001 | DIRECTOR | | 3116 | 470 | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCES |
| | 3412 | | Assistant to the Director (Science & Technology) | | L ST. | 473 | Senior Scientist |
| | 3320 | | Assistant to the Director (Tourism) | | 3021 | 475 | Air Quality Division (WASO) |
| | 3410 | | Assistant to the Director (Park Initiatives) | | 3021 | 479 | Water Resources Division (WASO) |
| | | | | | | 490 | Wildlife & Vegetation Division (WASO) |
| | 3106 | 002 | DEPUTY DIRECTOR | | 3120 | 500 | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS |
| | 3127 | 003 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | | L ST. | 501 | Environmental Sanitation Officer |
| | 1229 | 010 | Office of Equal Employment Opportunity | | 3310 | 600 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, VISITOR SERVICES |
| | L ST. | 023 | Office of International Affairs | | | | Youth Activities |
| | 3043 | 040 | Office of Public Affairs | | 3227 | | Engineering & Safety Services Division |
| | 3211 | 170 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE & CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS | | L ST. | 610 | Ranger Activities Division |
| | 3211 | 180 | Legislation | | 3310 | 650 | Land Resources Division |
| | 3222 | 190 | Congressional Liaison | | L ST. | 660 | Concessions Division |
| | | | | | L ST. | 680 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, INTERPRETATION |
| | 3130 | 199 | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, BUDGET & ADMINISTRATION | | | 700 | Interpretation Division |
| | 1226 | 205 | Policy Division | | L ST. | 710 | |
| | 3126 | 199 | DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, BUDGET & ADMINISTRATION | | 3116 | 760 | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT |
| | 3126 | 200 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PERSONNEL & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | | 1210 | 762 | Environmental Compliance Division |
| | L ST. | 230 | Administrative Services Division | | 3013 | 763 | Planning & Special Studies Division |
| | 3323 | 240 | Personnel Division | | L ST. | 765 | Recreation Resources Assistance Division |
| | 2328 | 260 | WASO Personnel | | L ST. | 775 | Recreation Grants Division |
| | L ST. | 270 | Information & Data Systems Division | | | | <u>FIELD OFFICES</u> |
| | L ST. | 280 | Employee Development Division | | L ST. | 472 | Geographic Information Systems (Denver) |
| | L ST. | | Mather Training Center | | L ST. | 475 | Air Quality Division (Denver) |
| | L ST. | | Albright Training Center | | L ST. | 479 | Water Resources Division (Ft. Collins) |
| | L ST. | | FLETC (Glynco, Ga.) | | L ST. | 1100 | Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) |
| | | 300 | COMPTROLLER (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR) | | L ST. | 1200 | Rocky Mountain Region (RMR) |
| | L ST. | 310 | Finance Division | | L ST. | 1600 | North Atlantic Region (NAR) |
| | 2711 | 330 | Budget Division | | L ST. | 2000 | Denver Service Center (DSC) |
| 1 | 3127 | 400 | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES | | L ST. | 3000 | National Capital Region (NCR) |
| | | 408 | Curatorial Services Division | | L ST. | 4000 | Mid-Atlantic Region (MAR) |
| 2 | L ST. | 413 | Interagency Resources Division | | L ST. | 5000 | Southeast Region (SER) |
| | L ST. | 418 | History Division | | L ST. | 6000 | Midwest Region (MWR) |
| | L ST. | 422 | Park Historic Architecture Division | | L ST. | 7000 | Southwest Region (SWR) |
| | L ST. | 424 | Preservation Assistance Division | | L ST. | 8000 | Western Region (WR) |
| | L ST. | 429 | HABS/HAER Division | | L ST. | 9000 | Pacific Northwest Region (PNWR) |
| | L ST. | 430 | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ARCHEOLOGY | | L ST. | 9700 | Alaska Region (AR) |
| | L ST. | 434 | Anthropology Division | CENTRAL FILES _____ MAIL ROOM _____ | | | |
| | L ST. | 436 | Archeological Assistance Division | | | | |

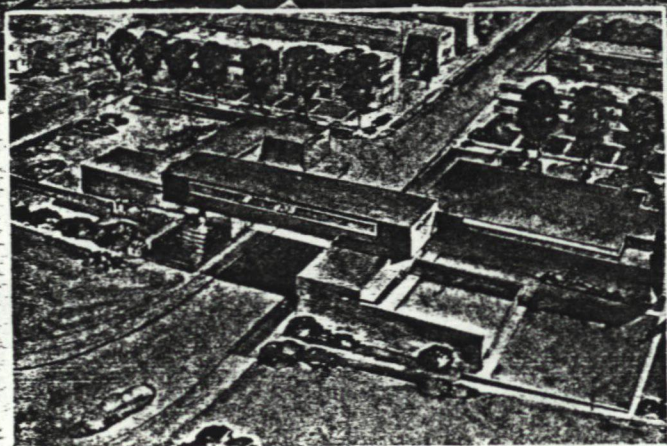
REMARKS: Less than 50 yr old nomination. Due 2-17. This is controversial because the city opposes listing & is likely to get some press coverage.

SIGNATURE H13

DATE 2-15-88



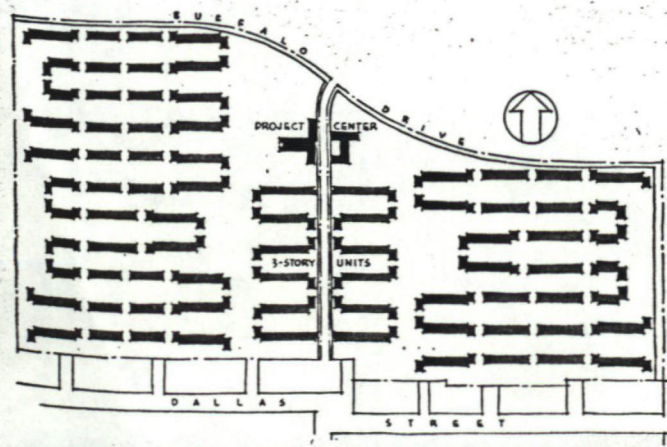
St. Thomas Photo



HOUSTON, TEXAS

"SAN FELIPE COURTS." IN both design and structure, this 1,000-unit low-rent housing project merits special study. Particularly noteworthy elements are the unit plans (see next page), integration of units of differing size into row houses, and the three-story blocks which occupy the central area (see page 50). The remarkable Project Center Building spanning the internal thoroughfare (shown in the rendering at left) will be analyzed in detail in the May RECORD. The 80 row houses, 12 of which are three stories in height, are oriented to face north or south, providing maximum ventilation from prevailing breezes. Circulation throughout the project involves crossing but the single transverse street.

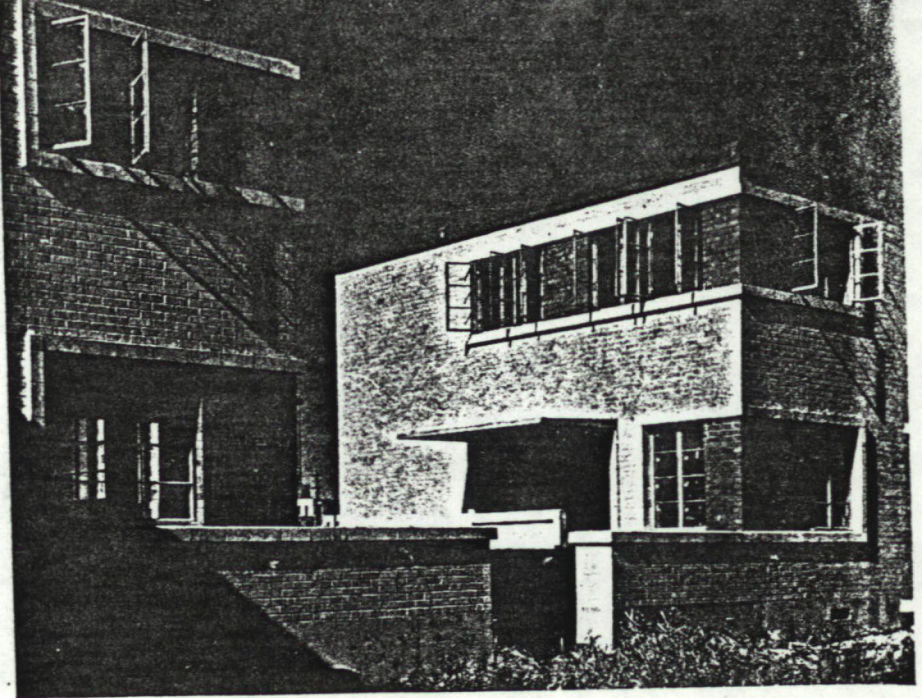
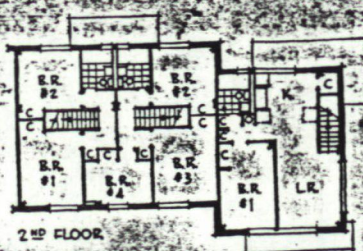
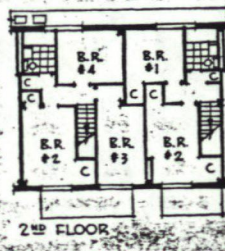
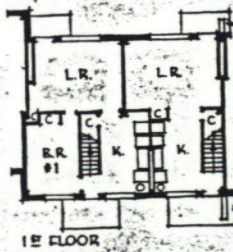
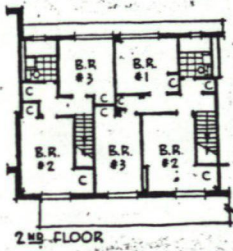
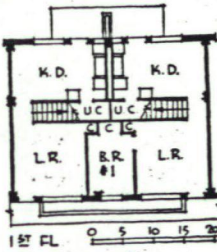
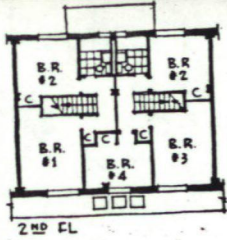
Design Committee: MacKie & Kamrath; Claude E. Hooton; Eugene Werlin. Executive Committee: Hiram A. Salisbury; Joseph Finger; H. Edward Maddox, Jr. Site Planner: C. A. Johnson. General Contractors: R. F. Ball Construction Company



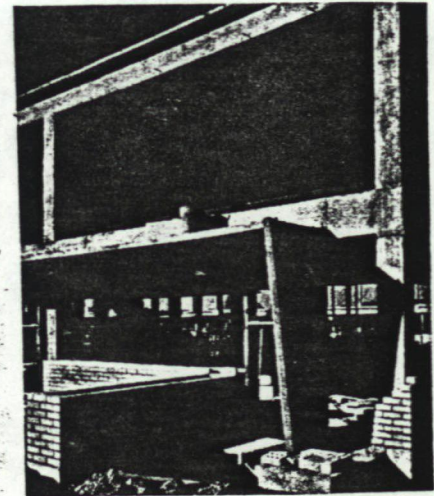
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS
ASSOCIATED HOUSING ARCHITECTS OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

James Ruskin Bailey; Cameron Fairchild; Joseph Finger, Inc.; Hedrick & Lindsley, Inc.; Claude E. Hooton; MacKie & Kamrath; H. Edward Maddox, Jr.; Hiram A. Salisbury; R. G. Schneider & Co., Inc.; Bailey A. Swenson; Eugene Werlin

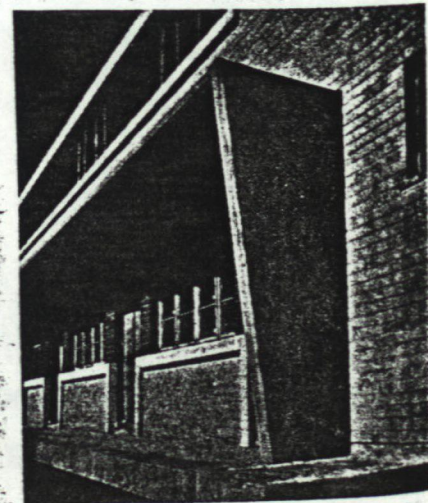
Coordinating Architect: C. A. Johnson



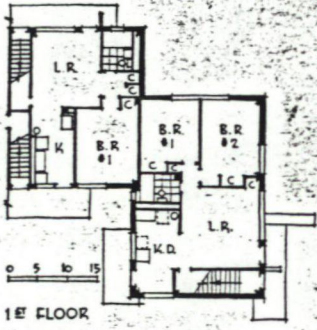
OF THE 1000 dwelling units, 440 are on one floor; the remainder are two-story apartments. Figuring the kitchen and dining space as $1\frac{1}{2}$ rooms, units are 3, 4, $4\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$ and $6\frac{1}{2}$ rooms (see typical plans at left). In the two-story buildings, all apartments have both front and rear entrances, with the exception of end units which have ventilation on three sides. All rooms are planned to obtain cross ventilation. The buildings are of fireproof construction with reinforced concrete frame. First floors are of pan and joist construction; other floors are solid slab poured on forms lined with hard-surfaced construction board to form smooth ceilings. Walls (see section opposite) are cavity type, with exterior face of 4-in. brick; interior, 3-in. hollow tile plastered. Interior partitions are 2-in. metal lath and plaster, except between units, where 4-in. hollow tile plastered partitions are used. The project is heated by natural gas circulating heaters in each apartment.



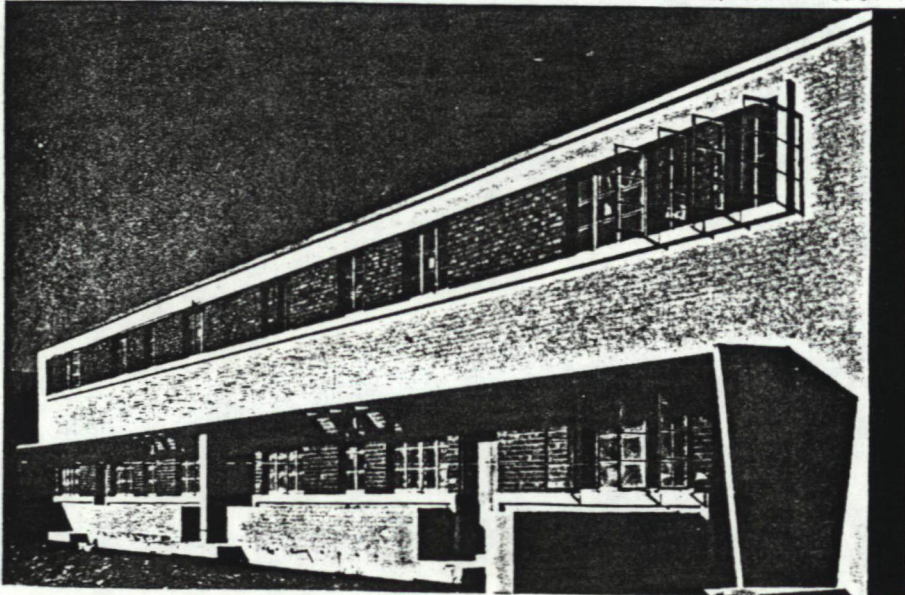
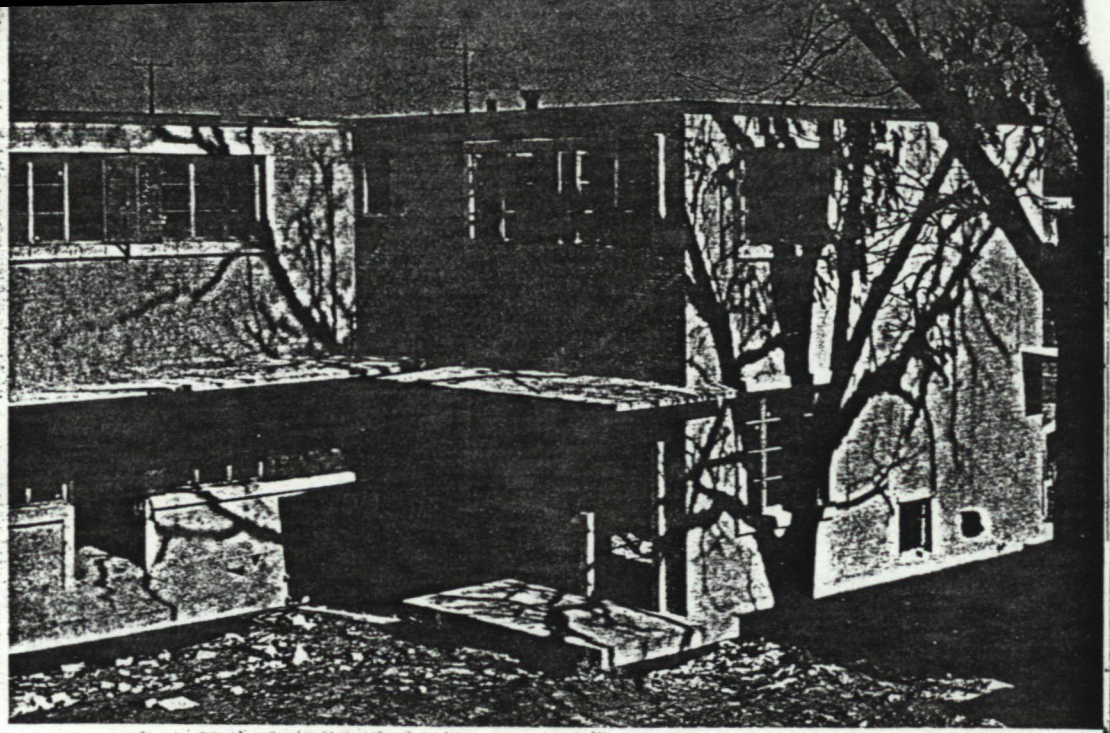
Concrete canopy returns to floor slab . . .



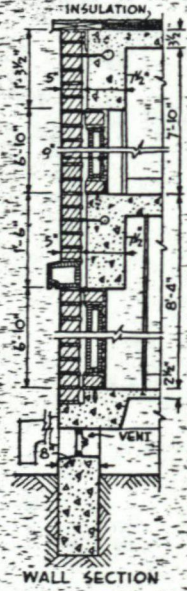
. . . making integral section cast in place



Treatment of end unit of a two-story row house. The second floor plan repeats the first



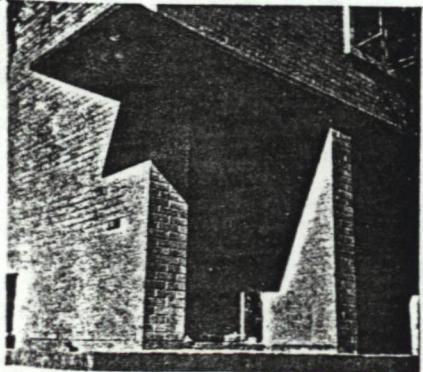
Burgundy brown brick and black mortar between windows; elsewhere reddish buff



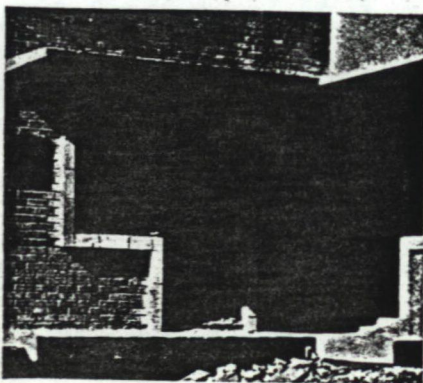
Note doorstep slab integral with wall structure, earth filled beneath after completion

Photos by St. Thomas

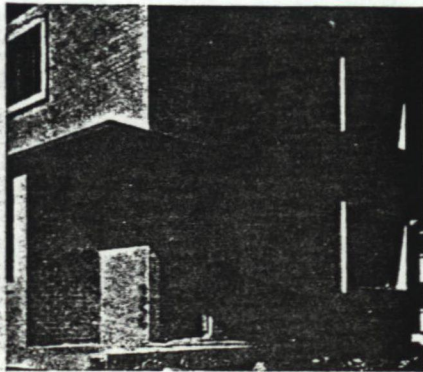
DOORWAYS



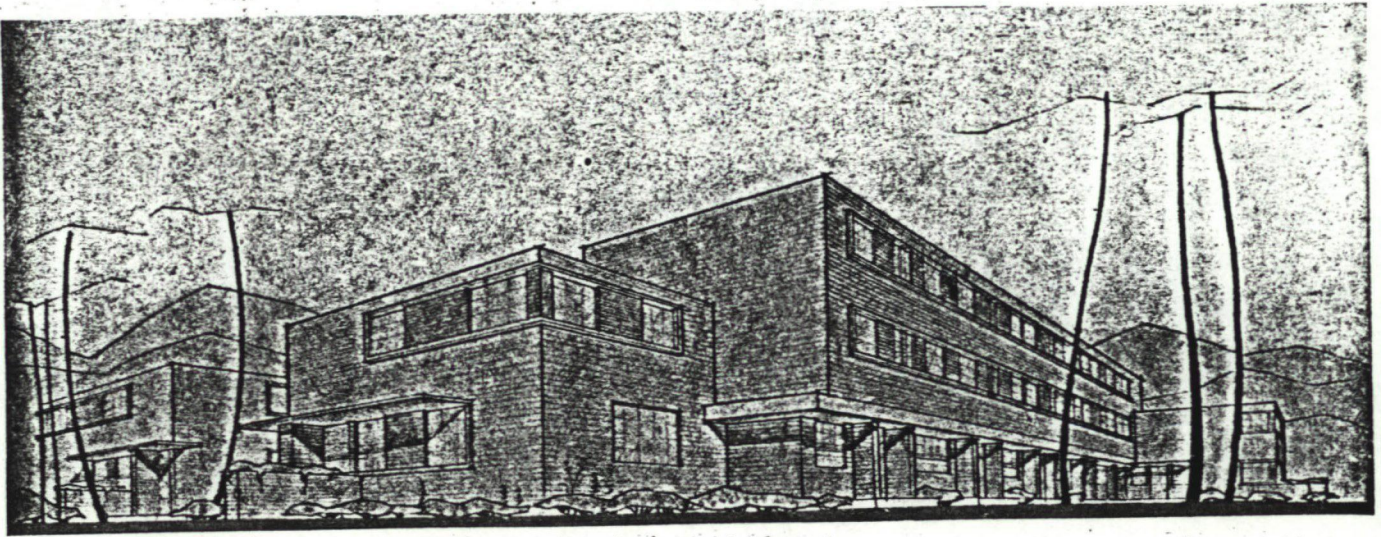
Adjacent entrances separated by a fin



Openings bordered by projecting tile



Entrance shielded by concrete canopy



THREE-STORY UNITS

IN THE CENTER of the plot, bordering the internal thoroughfare, are the 12 three-story row houses. Planned so that all dwelling units have front and back exterior openings, flats are located on the ground floor, living quarters of two-story apartments are on the second, and bedrooms and baths of these apartments occupy the top floor. Similar in construction to the two-story units (reinforced concrete frame and floors, cavity type walls), the taller buildings are a welcome visual contrast to the monotony of so large an area of buildings of similar height. Within the project are three large playgrounds, and park areas are provided between the fronts of row houses. All buildings are serviced either from the cross street or from service drives projected from the east and west boundary drives.

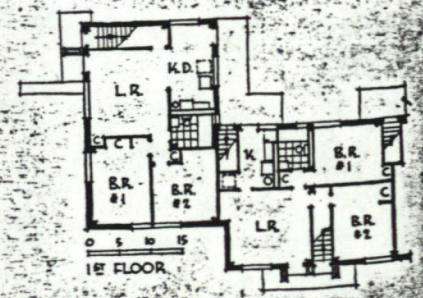
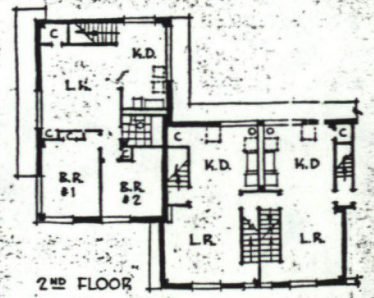
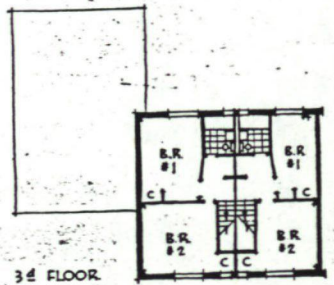


Photo by St. Thomas

shown here range from standard types of frame construction to remodeled buildings to new structures that were planned to meet local conditions.



Brownwood, Texas



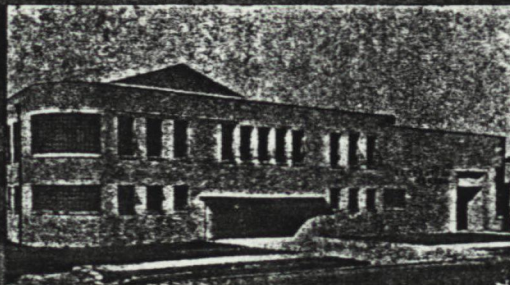
La Jolla, California



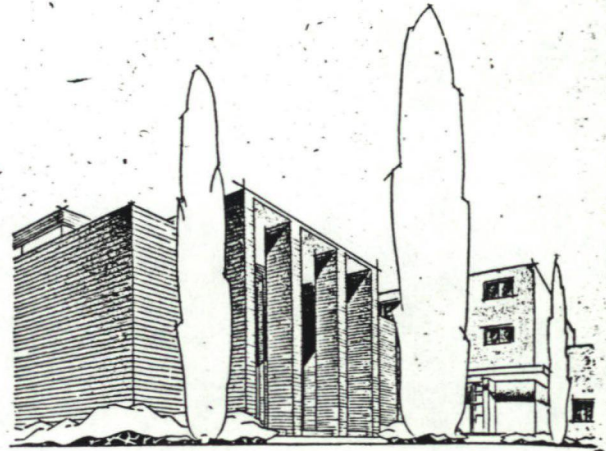
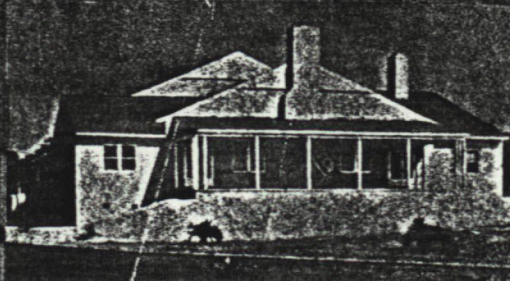
Edgewood, Maryland



Spring Lake, North Carolina



Anniston, Alabama

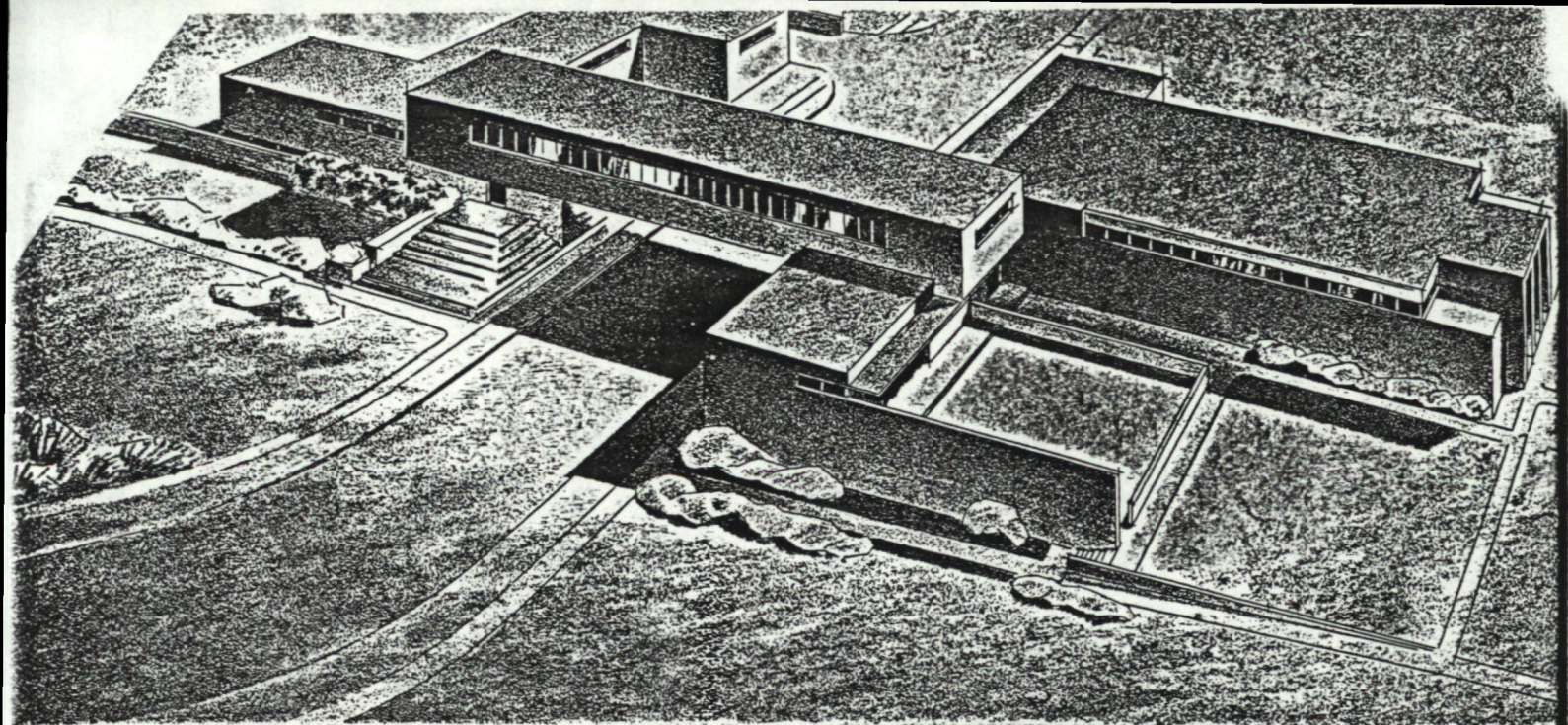


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Architect; C. A. Johnson. Design Committee: MacKie &
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mittee: Hiram A. Salisbury; Joseph Finger; H. Edward Maddox, Jr.

PROJECT CENTER

PLANNED TO SERVE San Felipe Courts, 1,000-unit low-cost housing project at Houston, Texas (ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, April, 1942), this remarkable scheme for a community center bridges the single street that cuts across the project site. Another unique aspect of the building is that the plan includes the business and administrative offices not only for the San Felipe project but for all of Houston's housing projects. Construction has currently been suspended in order to conserve essential materials; because the design has so many features of special interest, however, and because it contains facilities for almost every type of activity, we include it in this study.

In addition to the administration area and public rooms, space is provided for rental offices, storage space for tenants and a series of project maintenance shops—carpentry, painting and mechanical repair. Among the social facilities are the large auditorium with its own exterior entrance, a large assembly room, craft rooms, a clinic and a pre-school room. The auditorium with its stage is designed to house large gatherings, such as community discussions, public lectures, dramatics, dances or other community entertainment. The assembly room on the second floor was planned as a home demonstration workroom and as a meeting place for scout troops. Note the folding wall between the assembly room and its kitchen, which gives the area use flexibility. The clinic (adjoining the pre-school room on the first floor) is planned as a public health center. Also provided is a project library and reading room. The pre-school room and adjacent play court are for the care of children who are left there by working parents.



BUILDING

THE PLAN. Maintenance and business office areas occupy the eastern portion of the first floor. Serving the repair shops is a trucking dock with access drive from the street. In the right-hand area are rooms for community use. Outside stairways and a balcony allow safe foot passage from one part of the project to the other.

