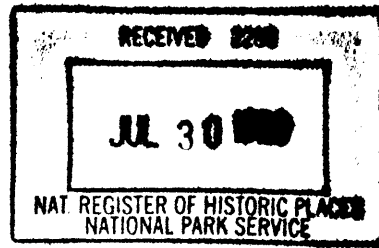


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Magnolia Street Housing Project

other names/site number C. J. Peete Project

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Washington Avenue., La Salle Street
Louisiana Avenue and Magnolia Street NA not for publication

city or town New Orleans NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Orleans code 071 zip code 70113

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jonathan Fricker 7/20/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker Date
Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National
Register
- other (explain):

Edson A. Beal Signature of Keeper Date of Action 8/27/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with columns for Contributing and Noncontributing resources, and rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Secondary Building

Sub. Multiple Dwelling
Administration

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Secondary Building

Sub. Multiple Dwelling
Administration

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick (Veneer)
roof Asphalt
other Cast Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

NA

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1941-1949

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Moise H. Goldstein—Chief Architect; Associated Architects/Jens Braae-

Jensen Consultant; R. P. Farnsworth Co., Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
X Federal agency
X Local government
University
Other

Name of repository: New Orleans Housing Authority

Magnolia Street Housing Project

Name of property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** Approximately 23.8 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 780300 33153002 15 780660 33155003 15 780800 33152804 15 780440 3315000 See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title John Tess, Presidentorganization Heritage Consulting Groupdate May 7, 1999street & number 123 NW Second, Suite 200telephone (503) 228-0272city or town Portlandstate ORzip code 97209**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS** map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Housing Authority of New Orleansstreet & number 918 Carondelet Streettelephone (504) 525-0781city or town New Orleansstate LA zip code 70130**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 1

The Magnolia Street Housing Project, completed in 1941, was the first of four large-scale housing projects built in New Orleans in the early 1940s. The complex opened to the public in January 1941, and by March the apartments were occupied. The district nomination encompasses the original 23.8 acres of the housing project. Fifty-five apartment buildings (723 apartment units), an administration building, and a gas house are located in the complex and are included in the nominated area. All the buildings are contributing resources to the district. Open play area, courtyards, small back yards, brick privacy walls, parking lots, and sidewalks were integral parts of the complex layout. Although the apartments suffer from deterioration and neglect, the buildings retain much of their integrity.

Location

The original section of the Magnolia Street Housing Project, commonly known as CJ Peete Project, is located to the west of the Central Business District and north of the Garden District. The complex encompasses about six city blocks and is bounded on the northeast by Washington Avenue, the southeast by La Salle and Freret streets, the southwest by Louisiana Avenue, and the northwest by Magnolia Street (excluding the Lafon school property -- see site map). The 55 apartment buildings in the complex are located on approximately 23.8 acres at a density of about 30 units per acre. The extension to the Magnolia Street Housing Project was completed in 1954-55 and is located northwest of the original development on the northwest side of Magnolia Street. The 1950s extension is composed of 680 units on approximately 17.7 acres. This extension is not included in the nominated area.

The neighborhood surrounding the Magnolia Street Project consists mainly of residential developments including detached homes, both owner and renter occupied, with some duplexes and a few apartment buildings. Many older New Orleans homes, often built in the typical "shotgun" style with front porches and narrow, long lots, are in the neighborhood. A hospital is immediately outside the nominated area to the south and a later school building, in the center of the complex, is also outside the district boundary. The streets outside and inside the complex are primarily two lanes with parking on both sides.

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 2**Contributing Resources**

There are a total of 57 buildings in the nominated area; all of the buildings are considered contributing resources in the district. The buildings in the complex were all completed in 1941. The district boundaries also represent the original boundaries of the housing project (see site plan). The 1950s extension to the project is not included in the nominated area as the buildings in the extension are not 50 years old.

Project Architecture

The Magnolia Street Housing Project was designed by an associated group of six architects headed by Moise H. Goldstein (see history for list of other architects) and was constructed by R.P. Farnsworth Company of New Orleans for \$2,478,980 (minus \$15,600 for a change in specifications). Bids for the project were posted in January, 1939, and in May the contract was awarded. The complex opened in early 1941.

As with other housing projects of the 1930s, the style chosen for the complex was based on traditional American domestic architecture that had its roots in European styles. The apartment buildings were constructed with elements of the Colonial style evident in the massing and building material. The rectangular form, gable and hip roofs, shallow eaves, austere detailing, multi-pane windows and doors, eave returns, half lunette and triangular vents in the gable ends, gable and hip roof porches, and prominent multiple brick chimneys are characteristics of more streamlined 1930s Colonial style. Regional design influences are evident on the front porches with the addition of decorative cast iron fluted Corinthian columns and iron grillwork supports. The interior of the apartments also share common design elements such as fireplaces, metal newel posts and railings on the interior stairway, wood stair handrail, interior wood panel doors, and wood trim around the windows and doors. The administration building displays the most elaborate detailing in its formal portico with Tuscan pilasters and posts, classical architrave, pedimented gable, fanlight and sidelights, and large multi-pane windows.

Landscaping

Landscaping in the complex is fairly minimal. The most prominent features are the mature deciduous trees seen in the lawn areas. Shrubs have been planted around the perimeter of some of the apartments. Grass has been planted in the original common areas in the front, sides, and back of the buildings. The landscaping is generally in poor condition.

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 3 **Project Layout**

The complex was designed in a layout typical of 1930s and early 1940s government housing projects. The project area was divided into six blocks and each block had eight to ten apartment buildings arranged in clusters around common yard and service areas. There are eight different apartment building types used in the complex. Each building varies slightly by a change in height, roof form, window and door fenestration, and/or porch details.

A school building (not a part of the housing project) is located in the middle of four blocks (see site plan). Many of the streets in the interior of the complex were closed off and used as common front yard areas or linear parks. According to the original plan layout, these former streets were known as S. Robertson Street Park, Toledano Street Park, and Sixth Street Park. These former streets provided a safe environment for pedestrians, especially children, as well as parks and common yard areas for the residents.

The streets (Washington, La Salle, Louisiana, and Magnolia) around the perimeter of the complex are open to automobile traffic as is the street (Freret) crossing through the development. The street on the southwest side of the school property, Seventh Street, is also open to traffic. The interior streets (Sixth, Toledano, and Robertson) are closed to automobile traffic and were designed for pedestrian use as outdoor, linear parks and common yard areas. The streets define the various blocks within the complex.

Similar apartment building layouts were used in Blocks I through IV: three buildings were sited in the center of the block forming a U-shape and the other apartment buildings were placed around the center buildings in a larger U-shape (see site plan). Areas formed in the middle of the central apartments were used as common play or front yard areas. The apartments in the center configuration fronted these common areas. Generally, the buildings in the outer U-shaped configuration faced outward either to a street or a linear park (former street). All of the apartment buildings' rear elevations face one another creating common back yard areas. Sidewalks connected the back yards and the rear stoops with the front yards and porches. Parking areas were also designed as part of the original layout and were located around the back of the central apartments. Brick privacy walls were also constructed throughout the complex. The original plans show outdoor public showers in Block I, between Blocks III and IV, and between Blocks V and VI; these are no longer extant.

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 4

The irregular shaped blocks (Blocks V and VI) in the western portion of the complex are somewhat different in plan. The blocks are bisected by Toledano Street Park creating four smaller apartment clusters. Each of the smaller clusters have four apartment buildings; Block V also has the administration building within its boundaries. The front elevations of the apartment buildings face outward to either a street or a linear park (former street). The rear elevation of the apartment buildings and administration building open onto the common back yards and parking areas.

There are eight different apartment building types in the Magnolia Street Housing Project. Although the apartment buildings are similar in design, each building type represents a change in the number of units, height, length, roof forms, window fenestration, and/or porch details. The use of different building types creates a more human scale and sense of neighborhood. The different building types are numbered alphabetically, A through H, according to the original plan. Building J refers to the administration building.

Building Types According to Block

The following is a discussion of the number of the apartment building types located in each block (see site plan). Different combinations of apartment building types are sited in each block, which creates variety within the six blocks in the complex. A more detailed analysis of building types will follow this section.

Block I is in the northern corner of the complex and has ten apartment buildings within its boundary. There are five different building types represented in this block: Types A (two buildings), B (two), E (two), F (two), and G (two). The three apartment buildings in the center of the block are three-story buildings (E and G) and are flanked by smaller two-story (A and F) apartments. The row of three apartments that forms the southeast border of Block I are all three-story buildings.

Block II is located along Washington Street between Blocks I and III. There are nine apartment buildings located in this block; a theater (not in the nominated area and currently used as a community center) is along the northeast boundary of the block. Five apartment building types are represented in this block: Types A (one building), B (five), E (one), F (one), and H (one). The three apartments in the center of the block are three story buildings (Bs) as are the three apartments (B and E) which line the

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 5

northwest boundary of the block. The apartments (A, F, H) that flank the central buildings are one and two stories.

Block III is in the eastern corner of the complex and has ten apartment buildings within its boundary. There are five different building types represented in the block: Types A (two buildings), B (two), C (two), D (two), and E (two). The three apartment buildings in the center of the block are two and three-story buildings (C and E) and are flanked by two and three-story apartments (A and D). The row of three apartments that form the northwest border of Block III are all three-story buildings (B and E).

Block IV is in the southern corner of the complex and has ten apartment buildings within its boundary. There are five different building types represented in the block: Types A (one buildings), B (three), C (two), D (two), and E (two). The three apartment buildings in the center of the block are two and three-story buildings (C and E) and are flanked by smaller two and three-story apartments (A and D). The row of three apartments (B and E) that form the northwest border of Block IV are all three-story buildings.

Block V is along the southwest border of the complex and has eight apartment buildings within its boundary as well as the administration building (J). There are seven different apartment building types represented in this block: Types A (one building), B (one), C (one), D (one), E (two), F (one), and G (one). This block is irregular in plan and is bisected by Toledano Street Park which creates two apartment building clusters. Four buildings are located in the cluster on the northeast side Toledano and five buildings, including the administration building, are on the southwest side of the former street. The layout is less formal than Blocks I through IV although the common front and back yards, building orientation, and parking areas are common to all the blocks.

Block VI is in the western corner of the complex and has eight apartment buildings. There are seven different apartment building types represented in this block: Types A (one building), B (one), C (one), D (one), E (two), F (one), and G (one). This block is irregular in plan and is bisected by Toledano Street Park which creates two apartment building clusters. Four buildings are located on either side of Toledano. The layout is

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 6

less formal than Blocks I through IV although the common front and back yards, building orientation, and parking areas are a common feature to all the blocks.

Building Types: General Description

Exterior: A total of 55 apartment buildings (723 apartments), one administration building, and a gas meter house are located in the district. The eight apartment building types, A through H, represented in the complex share similar design characteristics and materials, and are composed of different arrangements of standard unit types within each building type. There are four different unit types which range in size from 15'6" to 45' 6" in length and are 27' wide. These unit types are combined into the various one, two, and three bedroom apartments within each building type.

The apartment building types are either two or three-stories high with gable or hip roofs covered with asbestos cement tile shingles. The buildings all have shallow eaves. Brick, side vented chimneys cap the roofs; the tops of the chimneys are covered with concrete caps. Small triangular metal vent dormers are on the roofs. Eave returns embellish the sides of the gable roof buildings. Half round metal gutters, with metal downspouts, are hung from the front and back of the roofs' edges. The downspouts often delineate the bays on the front elevations of the apartments, reflecting a change in the interior apartment units. Constructed of 8" wide hollow clay tile, the exterior walls have a brick veneer laid in a common bond pattern.

The window fenestration is symmetrical. Windows are a combination of four over four, six over six, and eight over eight, double-hung wood sash windows, which are slightly recessed from the building surface and void of trim. The sills are stone and the windows are either grouped in pairs or stand singularly.

The front porches have either gable or hip roofs that have decorative slender, cast iron fluted Corinthian columns or iron grillwork supports. The decorative grillwork on the supports is designed with two motifs: a series of vertical "X"s and an organic leaf design. A thin iron railing encloses the sides of the concrete porches. The railing sides are composed of simple vertical members with a central cutout "X" pattern in the center. The entrance doors have wooden, multi-pane windows on the upper portion of the door and solid wood panels on the lower portion. The doors generally have wooden screen doors. The porch steps are made of concrete.

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7

The back of the apartments have doors similar to the front entries that open to the common yard and parking areas. The doors either open up to a sidewalk or low concrete stoops. Generally, metal fire escapes extend vertically across the back of the building (installed in the 1950s). The buildings have concrete foundations punctuated with rectangular cast iron grills, which function as air vents for the crawl space.

Interior. The apartments are either one, two, or three bedroom units laid out on one or two floors. Stairs that lead up to the upper floors of the units are made with concrete treads, metal balusters and newel posts, and wooden handrail. Closets are generally under the staircases. The concrete slab floors are covered with asphalt tiles and the clay tile walls are finished with plaster. Wood trim surrounds the windows and doors. The diagonal fireplace, in the corner of the living room, has brick surrounds and fire box, a concrete outer hearth, and a wood mantel. The interiors are in different states of disrepair.

Building Types: Specific

The following is a more specific building type description for the eight apartment building types represented in the complex. A discussion of the other two buildings types, the administration and gas meter house, follows the apartment types.

Building Type A

Building Type A, a four-plex, is the smallest of the apartment buildings in the complex, measuring 27' by 63'9". Two-stories high, the building has a gable roof. There are eight of these building types in the complex. Each Building Type A has four, two bedroom apartments. The living room, closet, and kitchen are on the first floor, and two bedrooms, closets, and a bath are on the second floor.

Decorative features specific to this building type include: half lunette windows with recessed wood louvered vents on the gable ends; eave returns; two gable entrance porches with shiplap wood siding on the gable ends; exposed porch rafters; and decorative iron grillwork porch supports.

Building Type B

Building Type B, a 15-plex, is the second smallest of the apartment buildings and measures 27' by 123' 9". Three-stories high, the building has a hip roof. There are 14 of these building types located in the complex. Each building has a combination of one and two bedroom apartments. According to the original plan, there are 168 one bedroom units

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 8

(each with three rooms), 28 two bedroom units (each with four rooms), and 14 two bedroom units (each with 4 1/2 rooms). The one bedroom units have a small entrance hall, kitchen, living room, bedroom, and closets. The two bedroom units have either 4 or 4 1/2 rooms on one or two floors.

Decorative features specific to this building type include: a central hip roof porch flanked by two smaller gable porches; iron grillwork and fluted Corinthian columns; and shiplap wood siding on the gable end of the porches.

Building C

Building Type C, a 16-plex, is the second largest apartment building type in the complex and measures 27' by 196' 5 1/2". The building type is a combination of two and three-stories high and has a gable roof. The two-story section is attached to the end of the three-story section. There are six of these apartment building types in the complex. Each unit has a combination of two and three bedroom apartments. According to the original plan, there are 48, two bedroom units (each with four rooms), 24 two bedroom units (each with 4 1/2 rooms), 12 two bedroom units (each with 5 rooms), and 12 three bedroom unit (each with 6 rooms). Each apartment includes bedrooms, a kitchen/dining room, a living room, a bathroom, and closets.

Decorative features specific to this building type include: two entrance gables on the two-story section and two long hip roof entrance porches on the three-story section; slender fluted Corinthian fluted columns supporting the hip porch roofs; iron grillwork supports on the gable porches; eave returns, and triangular vent louvers in the upper portion of the gable end.

Building Type D

Building Type D, a 16-plex, is the largest apartment building type in the complex, measuring 27' by 197' 2". The building type has a combination of two and three-stories, and has a gable roof. The two-story wings are attached to the end of the central three-story section. Building Type D is similar to Building Type C; Type D has the wings on both ends of the three-story section. There are six Building Type D's in the complex. Each unit has a combination of two and three bedroom apartments. According to the original plan, there are 48, two bedroom units (each with four rooms), 24 two bedroom units (each with 4 1/2 rooms), 12 two bedroom units (each with 5 rooms), and 12 three bedroom unit (each with 6 rooms). The apartments include bedrooms, kitchen/dining rooms, living rooms, bathrooms, and closets.

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 9

Decorative features specific to this building type include: central entrance gables on the two-story wings and two long hip roof entrance porches on the three-story section; slender fluted Corinthian columns supporting the hip porch roofs; iron grillwork supporting the gable porches; eave returns; and lunette shaped louvered vents on the gable ends.

Building Type E

Building Type E is a 15-plex and measures 27' by 156' 9". The building type is three-stories high and has a gable roof. There are 11 apartment buildings designed in Building Type D. This building type has two basic apartment sizes. According to the original plan, there are 110, two bedroom units (each with four rooms), and 55 two bedroom units (each with 4 1/2 rooms). The units have a small hallway, a kitchen, living room, a bathroom, bedroom, and closets. The two bedroom units, with 4 rooms, are located on the upper two stories and have the living room on the second floor, and the bedrooms and bath on the third. The two bedroom units, with 4 1/2 rooms, are all on the ground floor.

Decorative features specific to this building type include: three hip roof entrance porches supported by iron grillwork and fluted Corinthian columns; and small triangular vent windows are on the upper portion of the gable ends.

Building Type F

Building Type F, an eight-plex, is two-stories high and has a hip roof. The building measures 27' by 141' 9". There are five of these building types located in the complex. This type of building has two unit sizes. According to the plan, there were 20 two bedroom units (each with five rooms) and 20 three bedroom units (each with six rooms). These five and six room apartments represent the largest units in the complex. The two and three bedroom units have the living area on the first floor, and the bedroom and bathroom on the second floor.

Decorative features specific to this building type include: a long central hip roof entrance porch flanked by smaller hip roof porches; and iron grillwork porch supports and slender, fluted cast iron Corinthian porch columns.

Building Type G and H

Building Types G and H are both three-stories high and are identical in design with the exception of their length. Building Type G measures 27' by 138' 3" and Building Type H

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 10

measures 27' by 92' 9". These building types have hip roofs. There are four Building Type G's and only one Building Type H in the complex. According to the plan, there were 72 one bedroom units (each with three rooms) in Building Type G, and three, one bedroom units (each with three rooms) in Building Type H. Decorative features specific to this building types include small gable porch roofs with iron grillwork supports.

Administration Building: Building J

The T-shaped administration building is the most elaborate building in the complex. One-story in height, the building has a hip roof covered with asphalt composition shingles. A gable roof intersects the hip roof on the front elevation. The gable extends over the classically detailed entrance portico which has a front pediment sheathed with wood shingles. The wooden molded architrave spans the top of the four Tuscan portico columns. Classical pilasters flank the entrance door. The wooden entrance door is decorated with a fanlight transom window and sidelights (covered over). A row of brick soldier coursing surrounds the door and is only broken by a keystone above the entrance. Concrete stairs lead down to the sidewalk.

The walls are constructed of hollow clay tiles covered with a brick veneer. A concrete foundation supports the building. A majority of the windows have been boarded over with the exception of a few large multi-pane steel windows; the side elevations are composed mainly of windows. A large delivery door is in the center of the rear elevation. The roll-up metal delivery door is flanked by windows, which have been boarded over.

Two bronze plaques are on the front of the building which were installed when the buildings were constructed. The plaques acknowledge all the organizations and people involved in the development and construction of the housing project.

Gas Meter House

There is one gas meter house located in Block IV of the complex. The small brick building measures 19' by 22' and has a flat roof. Commercial steel, multi-pane windows are on all the elevations and double doors are on the southwest corner which is designed at a diagonal. The building has metal gutters and small metal louver vents near the cornice line and foundation. A concrete foundation supports the building.

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 11

Condition

The buildings in the complex suffer from various stages of deterioration, mainly due to lack of maintenance and non-occupancy of some of the buildings. Graffiti can be found on the brick exterior on many of the buildings. Deterioration is evident in the wooden elements such as the window sashes and doors. The interior plaster in some of the units is in a state of disrepair and the paint is peeling from the walls. The exterior brick veneer is in fair-good condition depending on the unit.

Alterations

There have been only minor alterations to the buildings and grounds of the complex. Alterations to the buildings include some moderate window and door replacements. Fire escapes were added to the buildings in the 1950s and updating of the electrical system was completed in more recent years. There has not been any new construction in the original project area; the 1950s extension did not impact the original layout of the complex as it was built across Magnolia Street.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 1

The Magnolia Street Housing Project (C. J. Peete Project) was designed by architects Moise Goldstein (chief architect), and Thomas Harlee, Frederick Parham, N. Courtlandt Curtis, Richard Koch, Charles Armstrong (associate architects). Other consultants on the project were: Jens Braae-Jensen, structural engineer, Frank Chisholm, mechanical engineer, Orloff Henry, electrical engineer, William Wiedorn, landscape architect, Frank Hugh Waddill, civil engineer. The Magnolia Street Housing Project is significant under Criterion A for its association with the establishment of the early federal low-income housing program as defined under the New Deal and President Franklin Roosevelt. The Magnolia Street Housing Project is significant at the local level as it represents the implementation of federal programs to stimulate the local economy and resolve slum problems. It embodies the principles, policy and standards of the PWA and later WPA programs. Completed in 1941, and planned to house New Orleans' African-American poor population, the Magnolia Street Housing Project was the first of seven such projects to be constructed in New Orleans.

The Magnolia Street Housing Project reflects the foremost principles of low-income housing design philosophy of the 1930s. The layout of the "superblocks", arrangement of the buildings around courtyards, low building heights and architectural style are typical features of New Deal housing design. The period of significance is 1941 to 1949. The year 1941 marks the completion and opening of the Magnolia Street Housing Project. The year 1949 is the 50 year cut off date for National Register eligibility.

Background

In October 1929, only months after Republican President Herbert Hoover took office, the stock market crashed. Industrial production soon followed the stock market giving rise to the worst unemployment the country had ever seen. By 1933 at least a quarter of the work force was unemployed. Although Hoover tried to alleviate the situation, he made some critical mistakes. This almost guaranteed a Democrat would become the next president.

New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt's campaign speech promised a "new deal" for the "forgotten man". On Inaugural Day, March 4, 1933, he declared "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Although Roosevelt took office amid a terrifying economic and social crisis, he immediately set about restoring public confidence. His first action involved shoring up the broken banking system. He developed a domestic program known as the

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 2

New Deal, much of which was enacted within the first 100 days of his being elected into office. Between 1933 and 1939, Roosevelt undertook actions to bring about economic relief as well as reforms in industry, agriculture, finance, labor, and housing.

The New Deal and Public Housing

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was created in 1933 and included a housing division. Between 1933 and 1937, the PWA Housing Division built 51 public housing projects. In March of 1934, the National Housing Act was passed, transferring ownership of ongoing future slum clearance projects to the Federal Emergency Housing Corporation (FEHC). The PWA Housing Division and the FEHC jointly oversaw the nation's public housing projects until 1935 when President Roosevelt closed the PWA.

Responding to pressures from both the left and right, President Roosevelt shifted the New Deal emphasis onto the assistance of labor and other urban groups. Congress created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. Social reformers of the time believed the previous work of the PWA was not sufficient in the area of public housing. These housing reformers lobbied successfully for additional public housing programs and in 1937 the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act established the United States Housing Authority (USHA). The federal government authorized \$800 million for additional slum clearance. By 1942, USHA had built 100,000 units in more than 140 cities, at which time it became the National Housing Authority. Public housing programs slowed during World War II; however, the Housing Act of 1949 revived the programs.

The statute limited USHA assistance to cities with permanent housing commissions, which would administer the new low-rent units. This led to the establishment of permanent local Housing Authorities in many cities.

In August 1938, a government report on economic conditions in the South was released. It included President Roosevelt's description of the South as "the nation's No. 1 economic problem." Few areas of the country were as affected by the Great Depression as the South. The suffering was the worst in the years just prior to the New Deal because public relief was extremely inadequate. "The many federal and state surveys in the 1930s showed that municipalities throughout Dixie contained the nation's most serious housing problems."

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 3

New Orleans had a decline of 70 percent of its manufacturing output and retail volume declined 60 percent between 1928 and 1933. Blacks were first to be laid off and as other higher paying jobs disappeared, whites took jobs typically held by blacks. To add insult to injury, in 1931 Mayor T. Semmes Walmsley proposed the enforcement of a twenty-three year old ordinance that forbade the hiring of non-registered voters by city contractors except when there was an excess of work and lack of eligible labor. Thus the situation, though bad for New Orleans whites, was even worse for the blacks.

In New Orleans, half of the city's 516,000 residents lived in substandard complexes, representing 40 percent of all city residences (in 1936-37). Housing construction had not kept pace with increase in population. Between 1929 and 1935, the city grew by 60,000, while only 2,000 new residences were built. Black families occupied 2/3 of the substandard residential structures.

Prior to the development of the seven public housing projects, the condition of housing in New Orleans was extremely poor. Tulane University School of Social Work students described these conditions in a 1934 report:

"Many of the housing areas are characterized by fantastic names such as the Pepper, the Yellow Dog, the Lizard, the Ark and the Red Devil. The Red Devil located at 2816 Faret Street is a long narrow two-story building. Rows of houses surround it on all sides. This tenement is divided into 36 rooms. There are four toilets in the front yard for the use of the occupants of the building. On the lower gallery are six sinks with cold running water. None of the rooms have electricity or gas. One tenant stated that there are approximately 115 individuals in the tenement. The rooms rent for one dollar a week."

Although other large southern cities benefitted from federal funds as a result of the formation of the FEHC, the federal government rejected New Orleans' request for a five million dollar housing proposal in 1934. This was due to a controversy between the Interior Secretary and Louisiana Senator Huey Long. President Roosevelt rejected yet another bid when the PWA housing division was closed down in 1935; thus public housing came late to New Orleans compared to other cities around the country.

Led by Mayor Maestri and other commercial and business leaders, New Orleans officials sought to make up quickly for projects lost during Huey Long's residency (he died in 1935). The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) was established in March 1937 in

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 4

conformance with Act 275 of the Louisiana Legislative Session of 1936. Minutes from the March meeting describe housing conditions in New Orleans: "Petitioners aver that unsanitary or unsafe dwelling accommodations exist in the City of New Orleans and that such unsafe or unsanitary conditions arise from overcrowding and concentration of population, the obsolete and poor condition of buildings, improper planning, excessive land coverage, lack of proper sanitary facilities and the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes."

Joining Mayor Maestri and prominent New Orleans individuals were Louisiana Senators Allen Ellender and John Overton, and in March, 1938, President Roosevelt personally approved \$7.2 million for the construction of the Magnolia and St. Thomas projects, totaling 1,400 units. Construction on the first complexes began in mid-1939 and USHA officials had already announced the approval of \$20 million for another five projects: Iberville, Florida Avenue, Lafitte, Calliope Street and St. Bernard. By mid-1942, seven housing projects totaling almost 5,400 units were completed. The first six housing projects in New Orleans created more than \$11.5 million for payrolls and building supplies.

Though the construction of these public housing units was successful in providing employment and better housing, the program was not without inadequacies. Monthly rents were \$8 to \$23 for a one to four bedroom unit. These may seem reasonable, but a minimum income guideline ruled out all jobless, WPA workers, and the lowest income families. New Orleans public school teachers did not earn enough to qualify. Conversely, by the mid-1940s, one third of public housing residents' income had increased to well above the allowable maximum. Because of a lack of private homes in New Orleans, there was little turnover in these public housing complexes, thus depriving some of the more needy population. Also, the number of public housing units was still inadequate. By 1940, at least half of all New Orleans residences were still substandard and in the early 1950s less than 25 percent of New Orleans homes were owner occupied compared to 35 percent nationally.

Public Housing Design History

The idea that living environments influence people's behavior has been part of the housing movement from its earliest days. Since the mid-nineteenth century, philanthropists and moral reformers have been seeking ways to solve urban housing problems. The general belief was that the slums threatened the safety, health, and morals of the poor and that slum clearance was the solution to the problem. After the Depression, there was strong

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 5

public support for federal assistance for housing. A public housing design philosophy evolved in the early 1930s, much of which was inspired by European examples. According to Karen Franck in her essay "Changing Values in U. S. Public Housing and Design," the site and building design of public housing has undergone three stages in its sixty-year history:

"1) semi-enclosed courts with walk-up buildings in the 1930s and early 1940s; 2) open space between lines of row houses and walk-up buildings, or around widely spaced elevator buildings, starting in the 1940s and extending into the 1960s; and 3) private yards and semi-enclosed or fully enclosed courts for row houses and other low-rise buildings in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s."

The philosophy of 1930s public housing design focused on community building, for example the arrangement of buildings around courtyards. This philosophy was later supplanted by a more bureaucratized, efficient character in the 1940s. Buildings were generally arranged in a more linear fashion with large open spaces on the fronts and sides. This design philosophy continued into the 1960s with the building heights increasing every decade. These high rise public housing complexes quickly proved disastrous and many have since been demolished. Public housing design theory from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s is similar to the earlier philosophy of the 1930s, with the emphasis on smaller scale buildings. A more recent public housing philosophy is that of scattered density. In this case low-income housing is scattered throughout neighborhoods, avoiding high concentration in any one area. Other recent ideas for public housing complexes include: mixed income housing, some low-income home ownership, on site facilities such as job training centers, day care centers, and elderly housing facilities.

The Magnolia Street Housing Project

In 1938 plans were developed for the construction of two low-income housing developments in New Orleans. These were the Magnolia Project for blacks and the St. Thomas Project for whites. Construction began in 1939 and the Magnolia Street Project (LA-1-2) was completed in March, just one month before the St. Thomas Street Project (LA-1-1). Architects for the project were listed as: Moise Goldstein, chief architect, Thomas Harlee, Frederick Parham, N. Courtlandt Curtis, Richard Koch, Charles Armstrong. Other consultants were: Jens Braae-Jensen, structural engineer, Frank Chisholm, mechanical engineer, Orloff Henry, electrical engineer, William

CONTINUED

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6

Wiedorn, landscape architect, Frank Hugh Waddill, civil engineer. Advertisements for bids on the Magnolia Street Project were placed in New Orleans, Chicago, Washington and New York papers in January and February of 1939. R. P. Farnsworth Company was the low bidder with a base bid of \$2,478,980. In March of 1939, advertisements for bids were placed for the St. Thomas Street Project. The Calliope Street Project was also bid out in 1939. In 1940, the Iberville Street Project and the Lafitte Avenue Project were put out to bid.

The buildings were designed to have a life expectancy of sixty years. With concrete foundations, brick and hollow tile walls, metal staircases, wood block or asphalt tile floors laid on concrete floor slabs and asbestos shingle and tile roofs, the buildings were designed for minimal maintenance and long life. Each unit would have a living room, kitchen, bathroom, and from one to three bedrooms. Dining space was combined with the kitchen in some instances and in others the living room and dining rooms were combined. Each unit contained a refrigerator, gas range, gas water heater, bathtub, sink, and closet space. Units were heated by circulating fireplaces or coal or wood burning stoves.

The annual Housing Authority report for 1939 described the goals of the design:

"There is no institutional aspect to these homes- each family has absolute privacy with assigned space in a drying yard in the rear of the building each occupies, available for use at any time. In planning these projects consideration was given to the welfare of the tenants not only in the matter of providing a large amount of open space, but in the arrangement of this space. There will be playgrounds where the smaller children may play in safety and these playgrounds will contain various features including shower pools and playground equipment. Since with few exceptions there will be no city streets passing through the projects, the hazards of traffic to children will be minimized. The rentals to be charged are not expected to exceed \$4.00 per room per month including electricity, gas and water."

The housing project designs of the 1930s were intended to be distinguished from the previous slum environment; therefore the housing complexes were placed in "superblocks" separated from the surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings faced each other around courtyards, creating a sense of community. The Colonial details such as the gable roofs and the porches, as well as the varied building types of the Magnolia

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 7

Street Housing Project, contribute to the feeling of neighborhood and community. Sitting on the front porch, one can visit with neighbors on both sides and across the courtyards.

The area that was to become the Magnolia Street Housing Project was inhabited by 862 families and by April 22, 1939, it was completely evacuated. Relocation was done with the support and assistance of community leaders such as clergy, educators, labor leaders, etc. The newspapers cooperated by not printing rumors and horror stories that were circulating about the loss of homes. As a result, no evictions were necessary. Relocation took a total of 36 days. The Housing Authority established a field office to help ease relocation anxieties. A representative at the site would assist the area residents with their housing searches. Files were kept on each family and their location and former occupants were accepted first before occupancy was opened up to others.

On Sunday January 12, 1941, the Magnolia Street Housing Project was opened for public inspection. According to the HANO Annual Report, thousands of people showed up to view the units. On January 15, the first families moved in. A special edition of the *Times-Picayune* contained numerous stories and photographs of the project.

Though originally, there were no social services planned to accompany the housing projects, over the years HANO gradually added services such as a day care center, preschool, a youth center, and X-ray services. Through the cooperation of the following agencies, many services were made available to tenants both on and off site: Orleans Parish School Board, Council of Jewish Women, National Recreation Association, YWCA, Office of Civilian Defense, Boy and Girl Scout Organizations, local colleges, USO, American Red Cross, Orleans Neighborhood Centers, Kingsley House, War Emergency Department, Division of Audio-Visual Aids, Office of War Information, N.O. Public Library, N.O. Department of Public Health, N. O. Department of Public Works, Family Service Society, Higgins Industries, local churches, Emergency Food Department, State Department of Agriculture and the Council of Social Agencies. (HANO, 1942-44) Numerous classes were offered such as canning, sewing, folk dancing, and nursing classes. Baseball teams were organized and games were held between the different housing projects. Indoor and outdoor movies were shown. Special events were held every month such as kite contests, block dances, seafood suppers, bingo parties, etc.

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Cleveland Joseph Peete

Cleveland Joseph Peete managed the Magnolia Housing Project from 1952 to 1978. He was well liked by the residents, as described in this letter sent to HANO after Peete's retirement: "He has been such a humane person to all of us and helped us out of our difficulties all he could. I've known Mr. Peete all these years and he has been a friend and a gentleman to all of us."

Peete was praised for the quality of his work in 1959 by general housing manager George L. Bott: "Your interest and special efforts in improving the exterior appearance of your project has been noteworthy. It has also been gratifying to observe the improved maintenance operations as the result of special efforts on your part. You are to be commended for these special efforts and also for the manner in which you have, with special resourcefulness and foresight, established excellent tenant management relationships."

Peete was born in Opelousas, Louisiana in 1908. He moved to New Orleans during his high school years and then attended Xavier University graduating in 1953 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy. He began work at HANO in 1946 as a cashier at the St. Bernard Development and by 1952 was working at the Magnolia Project. For many years he worked as development manager and pharmacist. Mr. Peete died on June 4, 1980. The Magnolia Project grew over the years to be referred to as the C. J. Peete project and the name was officially changed in the 1980s.

Current Condition and Future Plans

The buildings in the complex suffer from various stages of deterioration, mainly due to lack of maintenance and non-occupancy. Graffiti can be found on the brick exterior on many of the buildings. Deterioration is evident in the wooden elements such as the window sashes and doors and peeling lead paint is rampant. The interior plaster in some units is in a state of disrepair with paint peeling from the walls. The exterior brick veneer is in fair-good condition depending on the unit. Some units are in such poor condition as to be uninhabitable.

Currently a Mixed Finance Proposal for the Magnolia Street Housing Project has been prepared and is soon to be implemented. The HANO and UniDev, L.L.C. have joined together in a public/private partnership to improve the Project. Register status is necessary to obtain the 20% tax credit. The proposal blends these features: physical

CONTINUED

Magnolia Street Housing Project

Name of property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9

improvements to residential buildings; community facilities to support self-sufficiency programs crucial to resident empowerment; density reduction; economic integration; a mix of rental, elderly housing, and home ownership; deep involvement of many members of the community and residents; expansion of self-sufficiency programs; additional community services; and over \$45 million of private and non-HANO financing. It is expected that redevelopment will begin before the end of the 1999 year.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Blum, John M., etc. *The National Experience*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. 1981.

Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago. 1992.

Harris, Cyril. *American Architecture; An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1998.

"Housing Authority of New Orleans", Annual Reports. 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942-1944, 1945, 1946.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1994.

"Neighborhood Profile." Office of Policy Planning. City of New Orleans. 1978.

Newman, Oscar. *Defensible Space*. New York: Macmillan. 1972.

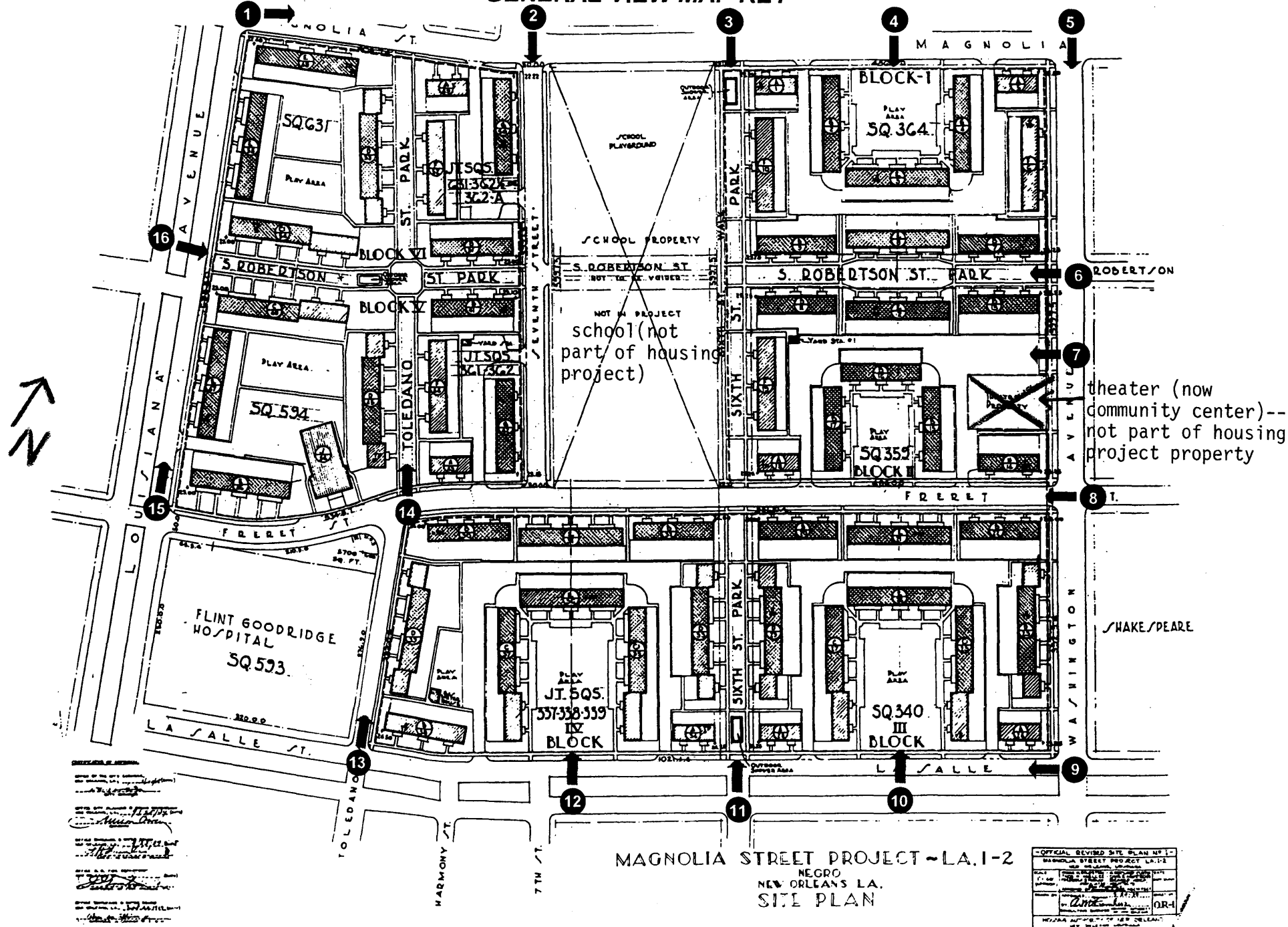
Smith, Douglas L. *The New Deal in the Urban South*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press. 1988.

Times-Picayune. 1939, 1940, 1941.

Varady, David P., Preiser, Wolfgang F.E., Russell, Francis P., editors. *New Directions in Urban Public Housing*. New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers. 1998.

MAGNOLIA STREET HOUSING PROJECT (Orleans Parish, LA)

GENERAL VIEW MAP KEY



DEVELOPER'S RECORD
OWNER'S RECORD
RECORD OF DEEDS
RECORD OF MORTGAGES
RECORD OF LIENS
RECORD OF EASEMENTS
RECORD OF ENCUMBRANCES
RECORD OF UNPAID TAXES
RECORD OF OTHER RECORDS

MAGNOLIA STREET PROJECT - LA.1-2
NEGRO
NEW ORLEANS LA.
SITE PLAN

OFFICIAL REVISID SITE PLAN NO. 1-1
MAGNOLIA STREET PROJECT LA.1-2
NEW ORLEANS, LA.
REVISION NO. 1
DATE: 12/20/61
DRAWN BY: [Signature]
CHECKED BY: [Signature]
APPROVED BY: [Signature]
LOCAL AUTHORITY: [Signature]
OR-1

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Magnolia Street Housing Project nomination follow the historic property lines of the housing project.

Verbal Description

Beginning at the corner of the district at the intersection of Magnolia Street and Washington Avenue, then southeasterly along the southwest side of Washington Avenue approximately 408 feet then southwest approximately 150 feet, then southeast 100 feet, then northeast 150 feet to the intersection of Washington Street, then 494.09 feet to the eastern most corner of the district at the intersection of Washington Avenue and La Salle Street, then southwesterly along the northwest side of La Salle Street 1021.14 feet to the intersection of La Salle Street and Toledano Street, then northerly along the northeast side of Toledano Street to the intersection of Toledano Street and Freret Street, crossing to the northwest side of Freret Street, a total of 383.86 feet, then southwesterly along the northwest side of Freret Street approximately 315 feet to the intersection of Freret Street and Louisiana Avenue, then northerly along the easterly side of Louisiana Avenue 695.80 feet to the intersection of Louisiana Avenue and Magnolia Street, then northeasterly along the southeast side of Magnolia Street 408.94 feet to the intersection of Magnolia Street and Seventh Street, then southeasterly along the SW side of Seventh Street 599.75 feet to the intersection of Seventh Street and Freret Street, then crossing Seventh Street and proceeding northeasterly along the northwest side of Freret Street to the intersection of Freret Street and Sixth Street, then northwesterly along the southwest side of Sixth Street 599.75 feet to the intersection of Sixth Street and Magnolia Street, then northeasterly along the southeast side of Magnolia Street 486.00 feet to the point of beginning.