NPS Form 10-900-b
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900-A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

__X_New Submission ____Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Public Housing Projects in Memphis, Tennessee 1936-1943

B. Associated Historic Context

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

I. **The social history of Depression/WWII-era public housing projects in Memphis, Tennessee.**

C. Form Prepared By

name/title; **Judith Johnson, Historic Preservation Analyst**
Julie Johnston, Intern
organization; **Division of Housing and Community Development**
date; **March 18, 1996**
street & number; **701 N. Main Street** telephone; **(901) 576-7310**
city or town; **Memphis** state; **TN** zip code; **38107**

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. The submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Harper — 6/11/96

Signature of certifying official — Date

Deputy SHPO, Tennessee Historical Commission — _____

State of Federal agency and bureau — Date

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

_____ _____

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

E. Statement of Historic Context

(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

See Continuation Sheet

F. Associated Property Types

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

See Continuation Sheet

G. Geographical Data

(List all jurisdictions and geographical units or portions covered by the multiple property group.)

The geographical area surveyed and considered for inclusion in this nomination include the boundaries for the City of Memphis, Tennessee.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

See Continuation Sheet

I. Major Bibliographical References

(List the major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

See Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
National Register Registration Form for each property

E. The social history of Depression/WWII-era public housing projects in Memphis, Tennessee.

Public housing projects in Memphis, Tennessee reflect important national architectural and social patterns in the built environment. The stock market crash of 1929 precipitated the worst economic depression in the history of the United States and ended the political career of then President Herbert Hoover. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president in 1932, he promised economic relief from the federal level to the nation in the form of federal relief and reform programs collectively known as the "New Deal". The fact that one third of the jobless were in the building trades spurred the creation of federal housing policy that addressed several different areas of housing activity (Wright, 220).

Roosevelt never wavered in his commitment to home ownership. Certainly the first and one of the most important measures of his administration were the programs to stabilize mortgages by the establishment of an elaborate bureaucracy to regularize the practices and procedures of lending institutions.

The second aspect was the construction of new towns. During the 1930s, about thirty communities of "subsistence homesteads" (Cumberland Homesteads NR 9/30/88) and three "greenbelt" towns, one in Maryland, Wisconsin, and New Jersey, were developed. Although talented landscape architects, city planners, and architects took part in the design of the new towns, work proceeded slowly and the result never fulfilled initial idealistic expectations. In the south, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), an independent government agency created in 1933 to undertake the planning and development of the Tennessee River basin, created massive public works projects complete with examples of worker housing and community buildings (Norris District NR 7/10/75) that were never followed nationally (Handlin, 204).

A third area of housing activity was the direct promotion and construction of low-cost projects for those whom private enterprise did not provide. The original approach, conceived in the waning days of the Hoover administration, was to make funds available for limited dividend companies, private organizations based on the semi-philanthropic model favored by nineteenth century reformers. Although Hoover expected the developers to be content with a 6 percent profit because of the public welfare involved, few were. When Roosevelt took office, he authorized the Public Works Administration (PWA) to build housing directly (Handlin, 205).

The housing programs undertaken by the federal government in 1932-34 set the pattern for the architecture of housing projects in many cities throughout the nation for the rest of the decade. In these works, the older traditions of American philanthropic housing, apartment house layout, and Beaux-Arts planning collided with new ideas of housing developed by European modernists in the 1920s which were introduced just as the federal housing programs began .

Between 1932 and 1934 the PWA built forty-three projects. In its first stage, the PWA Housing Division was restricted to 30 percent federal grants for limited-dividend or non-profit corporations, including labor unions, which sponsored housing. Many of these exemplified both the initial aspirations that reformers had for public housing and the problems the program later encountered. Of all the PWA projects, the Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia was conceived with the most advanced architectural and programmatic ideas (Handlin, 206). Its architects were European emigres Oskar Stonorov and Albert Kastner and its sponsor was the progressive American Federation of Hosiery Workers. John Enelman, head of the union, together with architect Stonorov and Catherine Bauer, a principal adviser and executive secretary of the Labor Housing Conference, wanted to do more than provide economical housing. They opted to promote widespread demand for decent housing among all American workers (Wright, 224).

The design of the Carl Mackley Houses expressed the groups beliefs. The common recreational and service facilities --which included recreational facilities, an underground garage, a laundry, a library and numerous meeting rooms--received more attention than the 284 tiny living units (Wright, 225). The framework for these facilities was not the block of row houses favored by Philadelphians nor the 1920s apartment blocks of New York City. Instead, Stonorov and Kasstner designed a series of parallel walk-up apartment blocks, with re-entrant angles on the end and setbacks in the middle. This configuration produced series of court spaces which were joined by passages underneath the blocks. The buildings were oriented north-south to allow light into all the apartments. Facades were flat, with severely punched-in windows and porches. Flat roofs were used for laundries and roof terraces (Handlin, 206). Residents were encouraged to organize forums on socialized medicine and political issues. To them, as Bauer had hoped, subsidies for housing represented one of many basic rights the government should guarantee for all its citizens.

The Carl Mackley Houses' site plan was different from anything in the immediate context. Nevertheless, the development was still small enough (4.5 acres) not to seem like a project. It still fitted into the pattern of city blocks that would be used in the development of the adjacent

vacant land. The same can be said of the scale and detailing of the buildings. Since the project was only three and four stories high, it was not so out of character with adjacent buildings as to preclude a sense of continuity in the area (Handlin, 206).

This was less the case with the projects that were constructed by the United States Housing Authority (USHA), which superseded the PWA in 1937. Many of the projects that USHA built in small towns had only several dozen units and therefore were innocuous. However, those built in large cities tended to overstate qualities that were evident in the Carl Mackley House, but were not yet so pronounced. They often covered dozens of acres and their characteristic housing type increasingly diverged from anything in the surrounding area.

Beginning in 1934, the PWA, which undertook slum clearance and low-rent housing in the cities, was the most widely known of the government's early public-housing efforts. In its first stage, the PWA Housing Division tried to acquire land to erect housing units but that proved to be extremely difficult and expensive. The task became impossible in 1935 when the courts ruled the federal government had no right to condemn private land for low-cost housing because it was not considered a public purpose (Wright, 225).

Since the states and municipalities did have the right to purchase and raze property, PWA officials set up local housing authorities, which were then responsible for deciding where to situate public housing and whom to place there. This localization restricted the federal governments ability to promote integration of blacks and whites, of poor and non-poor. The PWA allocated half its housing for blacks, stipulating that this would not change existing relations between the races. The agency required that housing for blacks have the same amenities as that for whites (Wright, 225).

Black or white, residents of PWA housing were never destitute but the "deserving poor," with steady, moderate incomes. PWA projects staffs favored lower-middle-class families who had been hurt by the depression, those who social workers believed would most benefit from the experience. There were no stipulations that a project had to accept people who had been evicted from their homes by slum clearance, and, in fact the overwhelming majority of those people could not afford the rents set by the PWA (Wright, 226).

Such was the case locally when the Memphis Housing Authority, established by the United States Housing Act of 1937, chose as the first two sites for the segregated housing projects, two

of the most overcrowded and impoverished areas of Memphis. The 26 acre area for the white public housing project, called Lauderdale Courts, was in the eastern portion of the original settlement of Memphis, known as the "Market Square slums," containing some housing stock dating as far back as the 1820s. Many buildings lacked indoor running water, plumbing, and electricity. Of the over 315 poor white families living in this area, most could not even afford to pay the modest rents set by the housing authorities and so were displaced to other substandard housing (CA,1-28-40).

Living conditions were even worse at the site where the black housing project, Dixie Homes, was to be located. There was no city water or sewerage connections. Most of the 550 black families living in the shacks, built on sticks which strattled the Quimby Bayou, in the area known as the "Queen Bee Bottoms" or "Greasy Plank", were also displaced by the slum destruction although a few managed to move into the projects (CA, 1-28-40).

Dixie Homes and Lauderdale Courts were constructed simultaneously by the PWA at a cost of over six million dollars and designed by a partnership headed by architect J. Frazer Smith with numerous other architects contributing to the project. Structural engineers were Gardner & Howe and Harry B. Hunter. Robert M. Hoshall was the mechanical engineer and John F. Highberger was the landscape architect.

J. Frazer Smith (1897-1957) was born in Canton, Mississippi. He attended Mississippi A & M College and the Georgia Technical Institute. In 1917 he entered the Naval School of Architecture. After the war ended in 1919, he finished his architecture degree and moved to Memphis. He then worked for the firm Mann and Gatling where he designed 35 buildings in his first year. He later practiced with Smith and Burnham and worked independently as well. It is a great tribute to his versatility as an architect, and to his mental agility, that he could, in roughly the same years, both write a history of the early nineteenth-century plantation architecture of the Middle South, White Pillars, and also plan housing projects sensitive to recent international developments in housing design. Other buildings designed by Smith include the LeBonheur Children's Hospital and Western State Hospital at Bolivar (NR 6.25.87). During the Depression years, Smith was also the regional chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) (Herndon, 167).

Anker Hansen (1896-1958) was born in Racine, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Illinois. In Memphis, he was first employed by the firm of Pfeil and Awsumb and became an

independent in 1921. In addition to designing many prestigious Memphis residences, he also designed schools, churches, hotel and apartment buildings. His commercial works include service stations, retail stores, factories, a hydraulic laboratory for the Corp of Engineers at Vicksburg, a milk plant, the Union Bus Terminal, shops and warehouses, as well as Dixie Homes, Lauderdale Courts and Lamar Terrace housing projects (Herndon, 87).

Walk C. Jones, Sr. (1874-1964) was born in Memphis, Tennessee. As a boy he worked in the offices of Mathais H. Baldwin (the Fontaine and Lee Houses- Victorian Village District NR 12/11/72) and received instruction from him. He worked as an office boy, pupil and employee of Burke, Weathers, Shaw, Alsup, and Hain. In 1908 he established Jones and Furbringer with Max Furbringer. This successful partnership lasted until 1935. In 1931, his son Walk Jones, Jr. became a partner. Among the structures he planned are the University of Tennessee Medical Units, the Shelby County Courts building, the Shrine Building, Temple Israel on Poplar Avenue, and several pumping stations. Mr. Jones was an original member of the City Planning Commission and chairman of the Memphis Housing Authority from 1935-1940 (Herndon, 107).

Edwin B. Phillips (1889-1957) was born on St. Simmons Island, Georgia. He received a B. S. in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1913. After working on residences and schools in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, he relocated to Memphis in 1919. From 1919-1921 he was a partner in Allsup and Phillips designing residences, schools, factories and hotels. He was partner in the firm of Spencer and Williams from 1925-27. Later he practiced independently in Memphis and did much work in Arkansas (Herndon, 148).

The public housing projects in the United States are all based on principals of site organization and design. These principals, drawn from the 1932-34 prototypes, are based on the theory that a housing project is not merely a collection of dwelling units or an aggregation of families. Rather, the housing project provides a basis for a way of life for its inhabitants with the planned framework of a neighborhood and on a larger scale, a community. The organization and physical delineation of this framework constitutes site planning. The site plan provided solutions to the technical problems of dwelling unit design, such as the provision of utilities, location relative to circulation, privacy, sun and air circulation, access, and a pleasing arrangement. The site plan was also developed to serve the needs of a group--needs for social contact, active and passive leisure time activity and common services (Architectural Record, 85).

The superblock was regarded as a primary principle of low-rent housing project design. The superblock contains one or more common open spaces bounded in whole or in part by through traffic streets, but not intersected by such streets. Directly related to the superblock are two corollary principles. The first involves the design and construction of streets and walks to serve particular functions--as through traffic, local traffic, service lanes and pedestrian walks. This articulate street pattern results in economy of paving and utility costs, as well as desirable privacy for residential areas and freedom from traffic hazards.

The second involved a pooling of open spaces within the superblock to permit the most economical arrangement of buildings and thereby the most advantageous use of all open areas. Some of these were common areas developed for group actives; others were used by tenant families for drying yards and gardens which were maintained by them (Architectural Record, 87).

Smith and his design team reflected the design principals of public housing in the site plans for the Lauderdale Courts Public Housing Project. Lauderdale Courts is done in a reduced Colonial Revival style, with the one, two and three-story group houses organized in attractively planned arrangements. The project contained 66 buildings with 449 units consisting of two, three, four and five room apartments. The three story units housed central laundry rooms in the basement along with recreational rooms for children in bad weather. Housed in the administration building were a large and a small assembly room, a club room, toilet facilities and a kitchen for community activities. Less than a fourth of the total ground area is covered by buildings. The remainder is devoted to lawn and gardens landscaped to conform to the natural slope of the land, and to equip play spaces. Over the past 60 years, Lauderdale Courts has lost only one apartment building to demolition for the development of a high rise apartment complex.

In 1938 when Lauderdale Courts was completed and ready for occupancy, the average monthly gross rent (including heat, lights, water, gas and refrigeration) for two-room units was $16.40, three rooms was $19.75, four rooms was $24.65 and five rooms was $27.90 (CA,1-28-40).

The superblock plan is also evident at Dixie Homes, constructed for blacks, in a high quality Modern style design. The axis of Pauline Street enters the complex and then bends off either side to form the curve of Pauline Circle. From the geometrical center point of the circular drive, walkways radiate outward to bisect two courtyards and to establish the axes on which diagonally-placed buildings are set. All the brick two-story apartment buildings are surrounded by wide lawns, to allow plenty of light and air between them, and plenty of play area for children. Some

of the apartment buildings have reinforced concrete balconies with curviliniar corners (Johnson, 126).

The 663 units ranged in rent from $12.56 for two rooms up to 22.76 for five rooms. The average yearly income of the families living there was $895. Social amenities consisted of two Boy Scout Troops, a spacious playground area, and three social rooms for parties. An annual garden contest was held and a branch of the Cossitt Library was established on the grounds.

Criticism plagued the PWA projects from the onset. Since the agency was in business to provide jobs, there were few restrictions on costs. Often PWA housing was of better quality and design than most private housing which angered builders and Realtors. They claimed public housing would diminish home ownership by making tenement occupancy so attractive. Public housing as architecture was permanently visible, a solid investment of the taxpayers' money, while the individual units were usually small and spartan, designed to encourage the idea that this was not a place to settle for long (Wright, 226).

These first two Memphis PWA projects were not exempt from these criticisms as they were planned primarily to provide employment during the Depression when construction activity was at its lowest ebb. They also were planned for the purpose of clearing a slum, but not with idea of providing the lowest possible rent for future tenants of new housing. Rents in Memphis averaged $7.24 a room in 1938. Often even the low rents of these projects were too expensive for the very low-income people that were displaced by slum clearance (CA, 1-28-40).

With passage of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937, power shifted even more to the local communities; instead of owning and operating public housing, the U. S. Housing Authority (USHA) provided guidelines and loaned money to the local authorities. In order to keep the rents low, the USHA also granted annual contributions to the housing authority that made up the difference between the tenants' rent (based on one-fifth of income) and the actual operating costs (Wright, 227).

Advocates of public housing believed that a combination of well-designed housing and the elimination of tenements would alleviate social problems. They tied slum clearance to new housing construction, requiring the "equivalent elimination" of one substandard dwelling for each new dwelling unit. This pleased private builders, since it meant that the housing stock would not increase. The provision was intended to curtail moving the poor into the suburban

fringe or other parts of the cities. USHA would, in fact, entrench inner-city ghettos because it moved poor people from substandard housing to better housing but did not alter the existing social order or segregation pattern of the city (Wright, 227). This was definitely the case locally where the construction of the low-income housing units actually lowered the property values which exacerbated the abandonment of the inner-city neighborhoods around them.

Unlike the PWA housing, which met the needs of temporarily impoverished people, the new USHA programs were designed for the very poor. Every public-housing tenant had to come from an income level that was at least 20 percent below the bracket that could afford the least expensive private housing. There were serious drawbacks to this approach. A family would be forced to vacate the premises if their income rose above the designated 20% limit. This became a strong disincentive to families to increase their income because often the private market was still out of their reach while the public housing was no longer available to them. The 20 percent bracket between private and public was to large a gap for them to breach (Wright, 229).

Public housing in the 1940s was sturdy and functional, designed to last through the government's sixty year mortgage. It was also purposefully cheap and austere. Congressional regulations prevented government support of projects with "elaborate or expensive design or materials". No housing authority could spend more than $4,000 dollars per family unit or $1,000 per room. Site planning in projects prior to the Second World War emphasized ample outdoor play areas and walkways for adults rather than the solar orientation of the mid-1930s avant garde (Wright, 229).

Despite these constraints, authorities sanctioned the construction of quality housing. The best work looked to regional traditions rather the universal ideas of modern architecture, so that public housing in a neighborhood would be relatively unobtrusive.

By the end of 1940, there were 350 USHA projects completed or under construction all over the country including two more projects in Memphis, Tennessee. The Memphis Housing Authority (MHA) embarked on another pair of low-income housing projects; the $3.5 million W. H. Foote Homes located southeast from Vance and Wellington for blacks and the $2 million Lamar Terrace located southeast of Lamar and Camilla for whites (CA, 9-17-38).

A historically black area of town known as the "Turkey Bottoms" was slated for slum clearance to provide land for the Foote Homes Housing Project. However, sizeable acreage (134 parcels) was needed to provide for the 34 acres necessary to build the project. In addition to Turkey

Bottoms, MHA condemned homes, businesses and schools in the former "silk-stocking district" located around the Vance-Pontotoc area that had fallen on hard times. This established area was well integrated and the development threatened displacement of some prominent families of both races who had lived there for generations. Both black and white residents joined in protest, controversy ensued and the location of the project was hotly debated. Ultimately, MHA prevailed and the fine Italianate townhouses, beautiful Eastlake mansions and established businesses were demolished along with the tiny shotguns and row houses to provide space to construct 700 apartment units. In some cases, the buildings were burned as a training exercise for the Memphis Fire Department's new equipment (MHA, 16).

The architects for Foote Homes were J. Frazer Smith, M. H. Furbringer and Dudley Jones. Harlan Bartholomew and Associates, out of St. Louis, were the landscape architects. Since construction costs were limited, certain construction features found in Lauderdale Courts and Dixie Homes were eliminated such as the large concrete basement spaces found in the older projects. It was established that no room would rent for more than $4 a month which gave these new projects the lowest rents of any low-income projects in the nation (CA, 9-17-38).

Max Furbringer (1879-1957) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended Washington University and spent four years at the Beaux Arts Society in France. He worked in St. Louis and Buffalo, New York. In 1900 he designed buildings for the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo. Arriving in Memphis in 1901, he was associated with Jones and Furbringer until 1935 when he formed Furbringer and Ehrman. His works included the old Temple Israel on Poplar. Furbringer wrote the building code for the city of Memphis and was chairman of the City Planning Commission for ten years. He maintained a special interest in slum clearance. He also served on the City Board of Adjustment and the Memphis Housing Authority. He was a regional director for the American Institute of Architects and wrote a book entitled Domestic Architecture.

As with the earlier projects, the Lamar Terrace project also involved slum clearance. However, in this instance, the residents of Roper's Alley were black and were being displaced to construct a white housing project that would "remove the Negro slums which have a tendency to blight the white residential property" (CA, 9/17/38). The 25.6 acres known as Roper's Alley was ultimately cleared to provide space to construct 400 units. The project architects were Everett Woods, Joe Wallace and Anker F. Hansen. Smith tried to achieve some sort of visual pleasure through the irregular placement of houses and through landscaping, which has largely disappeared. Lamar Terrace opened for occupancy on May 4, 1940.

After the construction of Lamar Terrace, the second white housing project, it was felt that there was enough low-income housing for whites. However, due to the pressures of segregation, there were only small areas of the city where blacks were legally allowed to rent. This resulted in a tremendous shortage of decent, affordable housing for the city's black citizens. The need was so great that a third black housing project began development in 1940. The location was in an area known as "Shiner town" located near LeMoyne-Owen College, the city's historically black college (CA 8-26-40).

The first phase of LeMoyne Gardens was constructed in 1941. The 26 acre project contained 60 buildings and 500 apartments. The project cost was $1,446,043 which included tile roofing instead of the copper roofing used on earlier projects. Project architects were Walk C. Jones, Walk C. Jones, Jr., Herbert M. Burnham and Howell B. Mulbry. The S & W Construction Company was awarded the construction contract.

Walk C. Jones, Jr. (1904-1972) was born in Memphis, Tennessee. He studied at Washington and Lee University and University of Illinois. He graduated from Yale University in 1928. From 1928 to 1930 he worked at a firm in Knoxville. In 1930 he traveled to Europe and upon returning entered the firm of his father, Walk C. Jones. In 1935, Walk, Jr. was named his father's partner. Together they were responsible for designing many of the Memphis Light, Gas, and Water substations. Jones, Jr. is responsible for designing Baptist and Methodist Hospitals, the Burrow Library at Rhodes College (Southwestern at Memphis NR 7/20/78), and the Church of the Holy Communion.

Herbert M. Burnham was a partner in the firm of Burnham and J. Frazer Smith from 1924-1928.

Even with the construction of LeMoyne Gardens, the pressures on black Memphians to find affordable or even available housing due to segregation patterns continued to exacerbate during World War II. Since the only residential construction allowed was war worker housing, an $1,500,000 addition to LeMoyne Gardens began in May, 1942. Preference was given to black war industrial workers employed in plants such as Fisher Aircraft Corporation, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Memphis Army Quartermaster Depot and the Kennedy Hospital on Getwell. The rents in the 100 additional units ranged from $8 to $33 a month (CA, 2-2-43). The two story units were placed on a 15 acre site, making a total of 40 acres in the LeMoyne Gardens area. The Addition to LeMoyne Gardens was the first public housing project for war workers in Memphis, Tennessee.

After World War II, the housing market changed. Federally subsidized slum clearance was promoted to rebuild urban centers and create tax bases. The Housing Act of 1949 and the Urban Renewal Act of 1954 actually destroyed many low-income ethnic areas, demolishing entire neighborhoods and displacing poor people who did not choose to live in public housing up until that time. Segregation and racial tensions became critical issues. Suddenly public housing had long waiting lists of blacks due to displacement caused by urban renewal and the segregated renting practices found in most white areas. The face of public housing changed from a temporary stop on the way up the economic ladder to become the last refuge for people who were disheartened and hostile (Wright, 234).

F. Associated Property Types

F-I: Name of Property Type

Public Housing Complexes

F-II: Description

The public housing complexes constructed between 1936 and 1943 represent a distinct period of history in Memphis, Tennessee. The architectural style is Modern Style with touches of Colonial Revival and minimalist Colonial Revival.

The Colonial Revival Style is very similar to Classical Revival with its renewed use of Greek and Roman architectural forms. However, Colonial Revival is distinguished by a dignified simplicity reminiscent of the designs found at Colonial Williamsburg including red brick construction, hipped roof porches with copper roofing and decorative porch supports.

After the popularity of the Colonial Revival style came the influence of the Federal government upon the first two public housing complexes in Memphis through the New Deal programs of the Public Works Administration. These new styles blended the Classical lines and associations of the Colonial Revival style with the three tenants of Modernism: volume rather than mass; the chief visual motif of a modern building was the reflection of the underlying regular rhythm of the structural mass; and lastly, elaboration of architecture served no positive function. Dominant on theses public housing projects is a sense of verticality and smooth planes. Casement windows help emphasize this vertical movement. Ornament on these buildings is subtle and mostly confined to porch treatments. These building complexes break with earlier traditions in architecture but clearly embrace earlier principles.

The later USHA projects exhibit a sparse minimal Colonial Revival style found on the unrelenting two-story rectangular buildings with belt courses, end chimneys and Colonial Revival door surrounds or porches.

The 1936 public housing complexes are composed of brick veneer buildings of various sizes and scales ranging from rows of single story flats, some interspersed with two story townhouses to three story flats with full basements arranged in courtyards, rows and circles set on sites that

range from 26 to 40 acres. The later complexes display only two story brick veneer buildings. Since careful site planning is fundamentally a very important part of the low-rent housing problem, it must be correlated with various factors specific to each site such as provision of utilities, location relative to circulation, privacy, sun and air circulation and access. The stately malls and elegant axes of the early PWA projects and Lamar Terrace give way to rows of rectangular, two-story buildings relieved only by children's play areas and parks in the later projects.

Secondary buildings included administrative offices with community rooms, laundry facilities, boiler rooms for steam heat, and recreational facilities for children including a sprinkling pool. Other features included drying yards for clothing, and garden areas for flowers and vegetables that also cut down on lawn maintenance.

Due to cost constraints and public policy, the interior plans of the housing project complexes in Memphis, Tennessee from 1936 to 1943 were purposefully austere and lack decoration and embellishment. The units did contain wooden parquet floors, plaster walls and as a cost cutting measure, no doors on the closets. Every apartment was two rooms deep to ensure light and air and came equipped with modern bath and kitchen facilities. Ceiling and lighting elements were merely functional and also lacked ornament. Later complexes placed kitchens and baths strategically to share plumbing lines and thus cut costs even further.

F-III: Significance

Public Housing Complexes built in Memphis, Tennessee from 1936-1943 are significant through their association with the Social History theme under Criterion A. The public housing complexes were an integral part of President Roosevelt's New Deal federal reform and relief programs of nation-wide slum clearance and home building programs. The projects represent the local and federal governments efforts to provide housing and employment in a time of desperate need. Public housing complexes built under the New Deal era are also eligible under Criterion A for their strong association with African-American heritage since housing projects were separated by race but equal in services and quality. The public housing projects developed in Memphis followed this rule by building a separate housing project for each race at the same time.

Public Housing Complexes in Memphis, Tennessee, are also significant under criterion C for their contribution to local architecture. This multiple property nomination considers the Modern

and the minimalist Colonial Revival styles of architecture as well as the governments' impact on site design concepts. In addition, it considers the works of many of the leading Depression-era architects in Memphis, Tennessee. The public housing projects developed in Memphis during 1936-1943 are prime examples of depression-era and WWII-era public housing projects. The individual public housing complexes are assessed as to whether they are good representative examples of that style within their local context, especially in the context of public architecture, and whether the integrity of the complex is intact.

F-IV: Registration Requirements

Public Housing Complexes which possess significance for Social History and/or African-American heritage under Criterion A and significance for architecture under Criterion C may still not be eligible for listing in the National Register if they no longer possess architectural and historical integrity. The integrity of a property is assessed by evaluating its design, workmanship, materials, setting, location, feeling, and association, and how, and to what degree, these characteristics have been altered since the property's period of significance.

The integrity test may be more strictly applied when the nomination is for architectural significance under Criterion C. Some Memphis public housing complexes retain a high degree of exterior and site integrity; almost all their interiors have been modernized.

Buildings that have experienced unsympathetic interior alterations---involving modernization of kitchens and baths---may remain eligible as a contributing element in a public housing complex historic district.

The architectural significance of the of the housing projects lie in both the design of the individual buildings as well as their placement within the framework of the complex. Formal site plans which are found in the housing projects of this era characterize government housing projects of the time and must also be assessed for integrity. To be considered eligible, the majority of the buildings must be intact. However, landscaping can have been altered.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The multiple properties listing of public housing in Memphis, Tennessee, is based upon a 1988-1995 architectural resources inventory of the city of Memphis, conducted by Memphis Heritage, Inc. under the auspices of the Tennessee Historic Commission and the City of Memphis, Division of Housing and Community Development. The inventory surveyed more than 15,000 structures. A total of four Memphis public housing projects constructed between 1935 and 1955 were recorded. For each property recorded, locations were noted on a Memphis City tax map, the buildings were inventoried on computerized forms, a site sketch was made, black and white 35mm photograph was taken, research was conducted and a narrative architectural and historical descriptions were written. The survey of the Memphis public housing projects was conducted between 1988 and 1995 by Judith Johnson, Jane Koweleski, Richard Silverman, Mark Harrison, M. A. Haley and Kim Isbell.

I. Major Bibliographical References

Commercial Appeal, "Addition is Assured for Housing Project." 3-19-42

Commercial Appeal, "A Dream Four Years Ago, City's Home Projects Stand Ready for Inspection Friday." 1-9-1938.

Commercial Appeal, "Better Home Life is Goal." 5-17-1953.

Commercial Appeal, "LeMoyne Housing Unit Opens April 1." 2-2-1943.

Commercial Appeal, "Lowest Housing Rate Assigned to Memphis." 1-9-1938.

Commercial Appeal, "Memphis will Spend $5,500,00 for New Projects in Housing." 9-17-1938.

Commercial Appeal, "New Housing Project Will Cost $1,059,449." 6-2-1942.

Commercial Appeal, "Slum Clearance" 1-28-1940.

Handlin, David P. American Architecture. New York, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989.

Herndon, Joseph L. "Architects in Tennessee until 1930, A Dictionary." Masters Thesis, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University, New York, New York, 1975.

Johnson, Eugene and Robert D. Russell. Memphis, an Architectural Guide. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

"Low Rent Housing." Department of the Interior, United States Housing Authority, 1938.

"Memphis Housing Authority 1952-1953 Annual Report." Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis Housing Authority, 1954.

"Planning for Low-Rent Housing." *Architectural Record*, March 1939.

Pommer, Richard. "The Architecture of Urban Housing in the United States during the Early 1930's." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Volume 37, Number 4, December 78.

Silverman, Richard. "Lauderdale Courts Coverform." Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis Heritage, Inc., 1989.

Silverman, Richard. "LeMoyne Gardens Coverform." Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis Heritage Inc., 1988.

Wright, Gwendolyn. Building the Dream. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981.