

CLARK HOWELL HOMES, BUILDING 12-A
(TECHWOOD/CLARK HOWELL HOMES REDEVELOPMENT AREA)
500 Lovejoy Street
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2309 - C

HABS
GA
61-ATLA,
63C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

CLARK HOWELL HOMES,
Building 12-A

HABS No. GA-2309-C

HABS
GA
61-ATLA,
63C-

Location: 500 Lovejoy Street
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

U.S.G.S. Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
~~E~~ Northing: 741385, ~~E~~ Easting: 3739300
N

Present Owner: Atlanta Housing Authority
739 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30365

Present Occupants: Multiple occupants

Present Use: Public housing
To be demolished

Significance: Building 12-A is a typical residential building in Clark Howell Homes, which is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Clark Howell Homes is the first public housing project to be completed by the Atlanta Housing Authority, which was created in May of 1938. Clark Howell Homes is a representative example of pre-World War II housing projects constructed by local housing authorities nationwide with the assistance of the United States Housing Authority. Clark Howell Homes was designed by the prominent Atlanta firm of Hentz, Adler, and Schutze. The project was named in honor of Clark Howell, Sr., one of several Atlanta businessmen who were instrumental in securing federal funds to alleviate slum housing conditions in Atlanta during the 1930s.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Ground was broken for Clark Howell Homes in mid-June of 1939, followed by the demolition and clearance of slum dwellings at the site. The construction contract was awarded August 1, 1939, and construction began in August or September of 1939. The first units were ready for occupancy in early November of 1940, and the last units were completed early in 1941. Specific dates of construction for Building 12-A are not known.
2. Architect: Principal architects were Hentz, Adler and Shutze of Atlanta. Associate architects were J. Warren Armistead, Jr., A. Ten Eyck Brown, Ivey and Crook, and Francis P. Smith, of Atlanta. Landscape architect was Edith Henderson of Atlanta.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta constructed Clark Howell Homes and has owned the project throughout its history.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Mion Construction Company of Atlanta was awarded a general construction contract (including plumbing, heating, electrical work, and site improvement) of \$2,227,752. Robert G. Lose was the structural engineer, and Newcomb and Boyd were the mechanical engineers. Slum dwellings at the site were demolished and cleared under a separate contract prior to construction. Total cost of the project was approximately \$3,300,000. Specific construction costs and suppliers for Building 12-A are not known.

B. Historical Context

From 1933 to 1937, the nation's first federally funded public housing projects were constructed by the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration (PWA) in an effort to eradicate slum housing on a grand scale while also creating much-needed jobs and decent low-cost housing during the Depression. Beginning in 1941, the federal government scrambled to construct scores of public housing projects to meet defense housing needs created by the advent of World War II. The historical context of Clark Howell Homes is the phase of public housing development that occurred between the Depression-era experiments of the PWA and the war-time defense housing projects. Clark Howell Homes is a representative example of the public housing projects constructed by local housing authorities nationwide with the assistance of the United States Housing Authority (USHA). Established by the U. S. Housing Act of 1937 (the Wagner-Steagall Bill), the USHA sponsored 130,000 new units in 300 public housing projects between 1937 and 1941.

The USHA program represented a continuation and refinement of the PWA's public housing program. The PWA program had been criticized because its fledgling projects, including Techwood and University Homes in Atlanta, featured construction costs and rental rates, which, even with government subsidies, were considered too costly to benefit slum dwellers as originally planned. As provided for by the U. S. Housing Act, the USHA program responded to shortcomings in the PWA's approach and replaced the PWA's short-term, Depression-era program with a permanent framework for the nation's public housing system. The U. S. Housing Act increased budget allocations for housing project subsidies and also decentralized the federal housing program. Under the new program, the federal government would make loans and pay subsidies to local housing authorities that would, in turn, build and operate public housing projects designed to accommodate lower-income tenants. In addition to providing a much larger budget allocation than the allocation for the PWA program, the 1937 act legislated a lower per-unit construction cost for projects built by local housing authorities than the per-unit construction costs associated with the PWA projects, with the result that per-unit rents could be lower and more affordable.

By the time the U. S. Housing Act was passed in November of 1937, the city of Atlanta was poised to take advantage of the new program, since a local precedent for public housing development had been established by Atlanta's early involvement with the PWA's Housing Division in the construction of Techwood and University Homes. The General Assembly of Georgia adopted legislation to allow Georgia cities to establish local housing authorities and, on May 18, 1938, the Atlanta City Council and Mayor Hartsfield created the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). In the fall of 1938, AHA secured USHA loans totaling \$15,011,000 to finance a comprehensive program of slum clearance and public housing construction for the city of Atlanta. After careful consideration, AHA chose to place its first housing project, Clark Howell Homes, directly adjacent to Techwood Homes, so that the amenities and facilities of the two projects would work together to produce a common, positive environment for their residents while also creating a cost-efficient arrangement for project maintenance and management. AHA adopted a resolution to name its first project in honor of the late Clark Howell, Sr. who had served as publisher of the Atlanta Constitution and played a key role in Atlanta's early involvement in public housing construction under the PWA.

AHA purchased the first parcel of land for Clark Howell Homes in March of 1939 and awarded the construction contract at the beginning of August. Construction began in the fall of 1939 and continued into 1940. To facilitate the application process for prospective tenants, application offices were established in the summer of 1940 at the Clark Howell site as well as at several Atlanta stores. Promotional brochures were distributed to publicize the project, and AHA opened "demonstration apartments" for public inspection at the end of June of 1940. During the first week of November, 1940, Clark Howell's first families began moving in, and the last units of Clark Howell Homes were ready for occupancy early in 1941.

Clark Howell Homes was only the first product of a large-scale program of public housing planning and construction undertaken by the AHA during its initial years of operation. AHA forged ahead with aid from the USHA, completing John Hope Homes in 1940 and Capitol, John Eagan, Grady, and Herndon Homes in 1941. For the design of its early housing projects, AHA sought the expertise of some of Atlanta's most prominent architectural firms,

including Hentz, Adler, and Schutze (for Clark Howell Homes) and Burge and Stevens (for John Hope Homes).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Distinguishing features of the Clark Howell buildings include brick veneer facades with glazed header bricks, cantilevered concrete entrance canopies, wrought iron railings, and brick dentil cornices on buildings with hipped roofs. The project's townhouse-style buildings feature a combination of hipped roofs and gabled roofs, contributing to an overall architectural character that is more traditional in appearance than the adjacent Techwood Homes project, which features flat-roofed buildings of a more streamlined, modern style.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Building 12-A is a two story, rectangular building with overall dimensions of 185'-0" x 27'-0".
2. Walls: The exterior walls are load-bearing masonry with exterior brick facing.
3. Structural systems, framing: The roof is wood truss construction, floors are concrete with a series of interior columns on the first floor for support.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doorways of residential units were originally painted in different, bright colors, with a matching color on the front and rear door of each unit, to create a sense of individual identify for each residence. The original doors have been replaced. The cantilevered concrete canopies over the doorways are original.
 - b. Windows: The original double-hung windows have been replaced.
 - c. Roof: The roofs of residential buildings originally featured S-shaped barrel tiles.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: Though dimensions and layouts differ slightly by floor, architectural drawings prepared by the firm of Hentz, Adler & Shutze show that the first floor plan included kitchens and dinettes, living rooms, and closet space. The second floor was predominantly the sleeping area, with bedrooms, baths, and closet space located on this floor. The floor plans of

the two end units were slightly different, housing kitchen and dinette areas along with the usual amenities.

2. Stairways: There are stairwells in every unit leading from the living rooms on the first floor to the bedroom areas on the second floor. The end units have the stairwells rotated into the center of the unit, in between the kitchen and living rooms.

3. Flooring: The units have poured cement floors covered in linoleum.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls are painted cement, while the ceilings are constructed with plaster.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Doors are constructed of wood with open doorways between the rooms on the first floor. The bedrooms, baths, and closets have doors for privacy.

b. Windows: Refer to Section II.B, Description of Exterior.

6. Decorative features and trim: Interior decorative features and trim are minimal. Exterior ironwork lines the sidewalks outside the building.

7. Hardware: Metal stair railings are located within the units.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The building was originally heated by steam-heat; however, extensive modernization of the units took place in the early 1980's and it is likely that changes to that system were made at that time. A central air conditioning unit is not present within this building.

b. Lighting: The original light fixtures are present in some of the units, however upgrades to the system were probably made since the projects' opening.

c. Plumbing: The extent of changes to the plumbing system of this building are unknown, however, it is likely that changes were made during the extensive modernization which took place from 1980 to 1984.

d. Other (elevators, etc.): This building has no elevators or other special equipment.

9. Original furnishings: Details regarding the extent of original furnishings within building 12-A are unknown.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The rectangular shaped building forms a U-shape with the other two buildings located within this block and is oriented toward Lovejoy Street. Sidewalks connecting the three buildings are located throughout the block with iron fences around each of the building yards.
2. Historic landscape design: Historic landscape plans are not available, although a number of green ash trees and sugar maple trees are located along Lovejoy Street and Pine Street and were probably original to construction.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Historic views: Reproductions of historic views of Clark Howell Homes accompany this submittal to the Historic American Buildings Survey. Original historic photographs are archived at the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). Photographs appear in many of the AHA annual reports and historic newspaper articles listed in the bibliography at Section C.
- B. Interviews: The Atlanta History Center has transcripts of interviews with Atlanta citizens (Manuscript Collection #637) conducted from 1977 to 1980 by Clifford Kuhn and later excerpted and compiled into a book, Living Atlanta: An Oral History of the City, 1914-1948. For first-hand accounts of project construction and subsequent living conditions at Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes, interview transcripts were reviewed for two individuals: landscape architect Edith Henderson, who designed the landscape plan for Clark Howell Homes and Techwood Homes; and Waldo Roescher, Techwood Homes resident from 1936 to 1949. Specific citations for transcripts are provided in the bibliography at Section C.
- C. Bibliography: The Atlanta Housing Authority has an extensive collection of newspaper clippings, annual reports, and pamphlets pertaining to the AHA and its properties. Many of the articles and other documents identified in this bibliography were obtained from the AHA. Other information was obtained from the Atlanta History Center, the files of the State Historic Preservation Office, the archives of the Coca-Cola Company, and the Development Office of the Atlanta Union Mission.
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Albert Kahn & Schervish Vogel Collaborative, Detroit, Michigan. "Techwood Clark Howell Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program: Section 106 Report (Revision 2.0)." Prepared for the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, and the Integral Partnership of Atlanta, May 1995.
 2. Secondary and published sources:

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_____. Tenth Report of Operations: 1950-1951. Atlanta: Atlanta Housing Authority, 1951.

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- "Clark Howell Homes To Be Occupied by First of September." Atlanta Constitution, 14 July 1940.
- "Clark Howell Homes To Open for Public Inspection Sunday." Atlanta Constitution, 27 June 1940.
- "Clark Howell Homes on View." Atlanta Constitution, 30 June 1940.
- "Clark Howell Open House." Techwood News, 6 July 1940.
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- "Dreams Do Come True: A Real Life Story About Three Atlantans." Atlanta Journal, 7 November 1940.
- "Federal Aid to Bring New Homes for Old." Atlanta Constitution, 18 June 1939.
- "First Land Is Bought for Howell Homes." Atlanta Constitution, 23 March 1939.
- "First Projects of the USHA Are Opened in Four Cities." Newsweek 14 (17 July 1939): 42-43.
- "\$14,250,000 Atlanta Program of Slum Clearance Starts With Selection of Site." Atlanta Journal, 12 February 1939.
- "Gay Colors Adorn Housing Project." Atlanta Journal, 5 August 1940.
- "The Great Experiment Falts: Two Faces of Techwood Homes." Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 27 October 1974.
- "Ground Broken for New Project." Atlanta Constitution, 18 June 1939.

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- "602 Units First of \$14,250,000 Slum Clearance." Atlanta Constitution, 12 February 1939.
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- "Techwood Homes: Symbol of Despair, Hope." Atlanta Journal, 24 May 1983.
- "Techwood Project Comes Full Cycle: From Slum to Slum." Atlanta Journal, 19 September 1980.

"\$3,300,000 Housing Project for Atlanta is Approved." Atlanta Constitution, 12 February 1939.

Towards Equal Opportunity in Housing in Atlanta, Georgia: A Report of the Georgia State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. By Dr. Vivian W. Henderson, Chairman. Atlanta: May 1968.

"Two Million Contract Let For Housing." Atlanta Constitution, 1 August 1939.

"Uncle Sam Uses Atlanta as His Housing Laboratory." Atlanta Constitution, 28 August 1938.

"U. S. Gets First Permanent Housing Authority." Architectural Record 82 (October 1937): 38.

"USHA Breaks First Ground in \$800,000,000 Slum War." Newsweek 12 (1 August 1938): 33-34.

"Where Hundreds of Families Will Be Happily Housed." Atlanta Constitution, 14 July 1940.

"Who Wants Techwood?" Atlanta Weekly [Atlanta Journal and Constitution], 15 March 1981.

D. Supplemental material: Following this narrative format text are two 8-1/2" x 11" sketch drawings, as follows:

- historic site plan of Techwood/Clark Howell Homes with building 12-A indicated.
- site plan of existing conditions of Techwood/Clark Howell Homes with building 12-A indicated.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS documentation packet is being prepared in compliance with a stipulation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that addresses the impact of the Techwood/Clark Howell Homes HOPE VI Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) Project on the Techwood Homes Historic District, the Clark Howell Homes Historic District, the Georgia Institute of Technology Historic District, and the Anne Wallace Branch Carnegie Library. The MOA is dated March 19, 1993. Parties to the MOA are: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, and the Techwood/Clark Howell Resident Association.

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CLARK HOWELL HOMES, BUILDING 12-A
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HISTORIC SITE PLAN, CLARK HOWELL HOMES, BUILDING 12-A



